

West, O. Waldo Correspondence

O. Waldo West Correspondence

1864



Title Statement

West, O. Waldo CorrespondenceO. Waldo West Correspondence, 1864 Ms.1989.066

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

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|-------------------|---|
| 2020-09-01 | Finding aid notes updated to new department standards. juliags |
| 2021-05-13 | LM Rozema added missing notes for an unprocessed collection (abstract, source, processing, bio note), added FA title, added FA date from EAD, and added component with instances previously attached to collection level. |
| 2021-05-14 | LM Rozema changed J. Waldo West to O. Waldo West after finding records on Ancestry.com for Oliver Waldo West and reviewing letter. |

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1989.066

Unit Date

1864

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Three letters from Oliver Waldo West, a lieutenant in the 1st New York Dragoons during the American Civil War, written between January and July 1864 to friend Sarah L. (Lyra) Stilson of Corning, New York.

Creator

West, O. Waldo (Oliver Waldo)

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Source of Acquisition

The O. Waldo West Correspondence was purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1989.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the O. Waldo West Correspondence commenced and was completed in February 2022.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], O. Waldo West Correspondence, Ms1989-066, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Oliver Waldo West, son of Perry and Melissa Carpenter West, was born June 2, 1842. The 1860 federal census lists 18-year-old Oliver W. West living in the home of his parents in North Dansville (Livingston County), New York and working as editor of the *Livingston Democrat*. West enlisted in the 130th New York Infantry at North Dansville on July 31, 1862, and by late August was serving as an orderly sergeant in Company G. The 130th was converted to a cavalry regiment on July 28, 1863, and designated the 19th New York Cavalry. Just six weeks later, on September 10, 1863, the 19th was re-designated the 1st New York Dragoons, with West serving as a lieutenant in Company K. He would later be breveted a captain. West was captured at the Battle of Todd's Tavern on May 7, 1864, and held at Richmond, Virginia before being transferred to prison at Columbia, South Carolina. He was paroled on April 26, 1865. After being mustered out of the service on June 30, West returned to Dansville. Later that year, he was admitted to practice law in New York. He served as Dansville village clerk in 1867 but by the following year had opened a practice in New York City. In 1871, West entered into a law partnership with Josiah Porter and James A. Deering. The 37-year-old West appears in the 1880 census, living in a hotel with presumed wife, Mary C. West. (According to West's obituary, the couple would have two children.) Oliver Waldo West died on March 11, 1889, and was buried in Green Mount Cemetery, Dansville (Livingston County), New York.

Scope and Content

This collection contains three letters written by O. Waldo West, lieutenant in the 1st New York Dragoons during the American Civil War. Dated between January and March, 1864, the letters are written to Sarah L. Stilson of Corning, New York, whom West addresses as Lyra. The letters are signed "Waldo" or "W." The letters focus largely on personal matters. On January 24, West writes from Dansville and describes his great joy at being home on 10 days' leave and the possibility of seeing Stilson. West writes from camp at Washington, D. C. [postmark] on February 9, apologizing for not having visited while on leave, then noting that he had been placed in command of his company and that his division had recently gone on reconnaissance across the Robertson River. In his letter of March 5, West mentions having served on General Pleasanton's staff and the prospect of his becoming company commander before veering into chatty news of

mutual acquaintances, then mentions visitors to camp, including a woman with whom he played chess.

Related Materials

The Sarah Stilson Correspondence at the University of Notre Dame contains 25 pieces of correspondence between Stilson and West.

Keywords

Civil War

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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General

This item had been purchased, accessioned, and originally cataloged as the J. Waldo West Correspondence, but a 2021 examination of the signature in the first letter revealed the first initial to be an O, rather than a J.

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit Date 1864

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