

Clifton, Allen J. Correspondence

Allen J. Clifton Correspondence

1863



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2020-09-02 Finding aid notes updated to new department standards. juliags
2021-05-17 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.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1989.072

Unit Date

1863

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Two letters from Allen J. Clifton, a private in Company B, 51st Pennsylvania Infantry during the American Civil War, written from Camp Convalescent, Virginia to his sister and brother regarding his desire to be home and the difficulty in obtaining a medical discharge.

Creator

Clifton, Allen J.

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

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Source of Acquisition

The Allen J. Clifton Correspondence was purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1989.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the Allen J. Clifton 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], Allen J. Clifton Correspondence, Ms1989-072, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical / Historical

Allen Joseph Clifton, son of Alexander J. and Sarah Anna Nagle Clifton, was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania on October 21, 1843. In 1851, he moved with his family to Easton (Northampton County). After attending private schools, he worked for the Easton *Express*, then as a clerk in his father's shoe store. On September 10, 1861, he enlisted as a private in Company B, 51st Pennsylvania Infantry. Following the Battle of Chantilly (September 1, 1862), Clifton spent some time in Harewood Hospital (Washington, D. C.), then rejoined his regiment at Pleasant Valley, Maryland. He was among the provost guard detailed to protect Clara Barton. After being wounded at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Clifton refused the amputation recommended by doctors and left the hospital to request assistance from Barton, who bandaged his arm. He recovered at Trinity Church Hospital in Georgetown before transferring to Camp Convalescent and later rejoining his regiment in Kentucky, pursuing Confederate raider John Hunt Morgan. The 51st would soon participate in the siege of Vicksburg and would remain in the western theater until spring 1864. The regiment participated in the Battle of the Wilderness and the siege of Petersburg. Clifton was briefly captured at Spotsylvania Court House but escaped. Following completion of three years' service, on October 9, 1864, Clifton moved to Oil City, Pennsylvania and engaged in the oil business for a few years before returning to Easton. In 1868, he married Mary Alice Mettle (1849-1906); the couple would have five children. Clifton was a conductor on the city's horse-drawn trolleys, then in 1869 was hired by the Central Railroad of New Jersey as a car checker. Over the next 37 years, he served the company in several capacities, ending his employment there as a general yard master. He worked briefly for Ingersoll Rand and the Lehigh & Hudson Railroad before retiring, then served as jury commissioner for Northampton County. Allen J. Clifton died on April 28, 1931, and was buried in Easton Cemetery.

Scope and Content

This collection contains two letters written by Allen J. Clifton, a private in Company B, 51st Pennsylvania Infantry during the American Civil War. Both letters are written from Camp Convalescent, Virginia. Writing to his sister, Mary L. Clifton, on March 20, 1863, Clifton expresses his hope to be home soon. On April 4, 1863, Clifton writes to an unnamed brother, complaining about the lack of letters from home and of the difficulty in

receiving a medical discharge. "[T]here is a dam old haired cuss examining here now," Clifton writes, "and he will not Discharge any one unless he is dead and then he must be cold."

Keywords

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

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Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit Date 1863

folder 1