

Spencer, George A. Correspondence

George A. Spencer Correspondence

1862-1864



Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1989.100

Unit Date

1862-1864

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Three letters from George A. Spencer, of Company I, 7th Rhode Island Infantry during the American Civil War, written from points in Rhode Island, Maryland, and Kentucky, to his parents.

Creator

Spencer, George A.

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 George A. Spencer Correspondence was purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in two accruals: the 1862 and 1863 letters in 1989, the 1864 letter in 1990.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the George A. Spencer 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], George A. Spencer Correspondence, Ms1989-100, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

George A. Spencer, son of Edward and Alice Rice Spencer, was born in Smithfield (Providence County), Rhode Island on August 31, 1844. The 1860 federal census lists 15-year-old George A. Spencer living in the Bristol (Bristol County) Rhode Island home of Edward and Alice Spencer. George Spencer enlisted as a private in Company I, 7th Rhode Island Infantry on August 16, 1862 and mustered into service the following month. He was listed as missing in action after the Battle of Fredericksburg but returned to his regiment and mustered out of service on June 9, 1865. He married Nancy B. Buffington (1848-1923). The 1870 federal census lists the Spencers among the residents of Bristol, with George employed as an engraver, Nancy, as a seamstress. By 1880, the Spencers were living with two young sons in Attleboro (Bristol County), Massachusetts, where George was employed in a jewelry shop. The Spencers continue to be listed as Attleboro residents through the 1910 census. George A. Spencer died in Attleboro on September 19, 1914, and was buried in Bristol (Bristol County), Rhode Island.

Scope and Content

This collection contains three letters from George A. Spencer, a private in Company I, 7th Rhode Island Infantry during the American Civil War, written from Rhode Island, Maryland, and Kentucky. In the first letter, addressed to his mother from Camp Bliss [Rhode Island] on August 21, 1862, Spencer asks his mother to bring him a Smith & Wesson "Severn Shooter and A box of cartridges," then reports on a soldier being punished: "[T]here is a man here to day with his head through the head of A barrel he was put there for getting drunk." He includes a small sketch of the man and barrel. Apparently waiting to be exchanged at Camp Parole (Annapolis, Maryland) on February 2, 1863, Spencer again writes to his mother, listing his recent purchases (a vest, portfolio, handkerchief, painkillers, and molasses), then inquires of acquaintances at home and relays news of individuals in his company. Writing to his parents from Point Isabel, Kentucky on February 9, 1864, Spencer reports that he has been working on Sloan's Hill, building a corduroy road, then relays some camp rumors about the regiment's future, and expresses pessimism about a recent Congressional act: "I guess that law that congress passed about sending clothing to Soldiers by Mail will be Laid on the table same [as] the bill to raise the Soldiers pay was that was laid on the table and then thrown under the table and then kicked out of doors ..." The letters are accompanied by three stamped envelopes.

Keywords

Civil War

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

Rights Statement for Archival Description

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit Date 1862-1864

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