

Staniels, Rufus P. Letter

Rufus P. Staniels Letter

1863



Title Statement

Staniels, Rufus P. LetterRufus P. Staniels Letter, 1863 Ms.1990.003

Author: John M. Jackson

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specref@vt.edu
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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2020-09-08 Finding aid notes updated to new department standards. juliags

2021-03-11 LM Rozema added missing notes for an unprocessed collection, added FA title and filing titles, added FA date from EAD, and added component with instances previously attached to collection level.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1990.003

Unit Date

1863

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Letter attributed to Rufus P. Staniels, captain in the 13th New Hampshire Infantry during the American Civil War, written from camp opposite Fredericksburg, Virginia, beginning January 5, 1863.

Creator

Staniels, Rufus P.

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 Rufus P. Staniels Letter was purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1990.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the Rufus P. Staniels Letter commenced and was completed in August, 2022.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Rufus P. Staniels Letter, Ms1990-003, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical / Historical

Rufus Putnam Staniels, son of Charles H. and Elizabeth N. Johnson Staniels, was born in Chichester (Merrimack County), New Hampshire in 1833. The 1850 census shows 17-year-old Rufus Staniels working as a farmer and living in the Concord, New Hampshire home of Charles H. and Sarah A. Staniels. In the 1860 census, Staniels is described as a 23-year-old sewing machine agent, living in the Concord home of Augustus H. Wiggin. Staniels enlisted in Company C, 13th New Hampshire Infantry at Concord on August 29, 1862. He was elected second lieutenant and mustered in with the company on September 19. On February 20, 1863, he was promoted to first lieutenant and transferred to Company H. Severely wounded at the Battle of Cold Harbor on June 1, 1864, Staniels was promoted to captain on July 15. Staniels mustered out with his company on June 21, 1865. On November 28 of that year, he married Selina Aiken Cook (1838-1915).

The Concord city directory for 1867 describes Staniels as a clerk in an insurance office, but he seems to have been operating his own insurance agency by 1870. The 1890 directory lists him as secretary of the Concord Mutual Fire Insurance Company and among the city's justices of the peace. Rufus P. Staniels died in Concord on January 4, 1890, and was buried in Blossom Hill Cemetery, Concord.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of a single letter attributed to Rufus P. Staniels, captain in the 13th New Hampshire Infantry during the American Civil War. Written to "My Darling Selina" from a camp opposite Fredericksburg, Virginia, the letter is dated January 5, 1863 and was written over the course of a week. After briefly discussing news of family and friends, Staniels describes at length the recent grand review of Sumner's Division by General Burnside, commenting on the service of the regiments participating and providing his impression of Burnside's appearance. Staniels thanks Selina for the newspapers recently received and compares the Fredericksburg battlefield illustration in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* to that in *Harper's Weekly*. He notes the post-battle condition of local houses and complains of the lack of religious services in camp: "[O]ur Chaplain makes no great exertion ... he does not go around among the soldiers at all ... I have not seen him in our company [street?] three times since we have been out here."

Keywords

Civil War

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

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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General

This collection had been purchased, accessioned, and originally cataloged as the Rufus P. Stanick Letter. Further research in 2022 led to new information on attribution, and the collection's title was revised to reflect this newfound information.

Description of Subordinate Components

Letter

Unit Date 1863

folder 1