

Lewis, F. B. Letter

F. B. Lewis Letter

1845



Title Statement

Lewis, F. B. Letter F. B. Lewis Letter, 1845 Ms.1992.015

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1992.015

Unit Date

1845

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Letter from an enlisted man in the United States Army, written at Fort Columbus (now Fort Jay), New York Harbor, in 1845, to his brother, expressing in detail his bitter feelings about foreigners in the army and disparaging U. S. Military Academy graduates.

Creator

Lewis, F. B.

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

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The collection is open to research.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

The F. B. Lewis Letter was purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1992.

Processing Information

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Preferred Citation

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Biographical / Historical

F. B. Lewis was an enlisted man serving in Company B of an unidentified regiment within the U. S. Army in 1845. Evidence suggests that the writer may have been the Frederick B. Lewis who married Catharine F. Prince in Norristown (Montgomery County), Pennsylvania, on November 2, 1834. Both were natives of Norristown. The couple had two children. The U. S. Army Register of Enlistments shows that Montgomery County native Frederick B. Lewis, a 26-year-old printer, enlisted for five years in the U. S. Army at Philadelphia on April 1, 1841. He served in Company B, 2nd U. S. Artillery and was discharged at Fort Columbus, New York, on November 3, 1845. Lewis re-enlisted for five years on November 27, 1845 at Fort Mifflin (Philadelphia) and was assigned to Company D, 2nd U. S. Artillery. A note within his enlistment record states that Lewis deserted on February 13, 1846.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of a single, three-page letter written by F. B. Lewis, an enlisted man serving in Company B of an unidentified regiment within the U. S. Army. Written from Fort Columbus (now Fort Jay) in New York Harbor on January 23, 1845, the letter is addressed to Lewis's brother, William Lewis of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Lewis's letter concentrates largely on his efforts to secure a discharge from the army. He writes at length and bitterly of the degradation of the army through the "admission of Foreign Renegades and unprincipled Brats (in the shape of Lieutenants) from West Point." He particularly complains of favoritism shown to soldiers of English and Irish origin over those born in the United States. Of officers who had graduated from the U. S. Military Academy, Lewis writes that they are "poor gentlemens' sons, and are placed at West Point, because they cannot be supported at home in idleness and ... are too elevated in society(!) to learn an honest profession ...". Lewis also writes obliquely of some domestic problems which may have led to his enlistment.

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Description of Subordinate Components

Letter

Unit Date 1845

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