

Dean, Otis, Diary

Otis Dean Diary

1864-1865



Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2008.010

Unit Date

1864-1865

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The collection contains the diary of Otis Dean, a private in Company E, 56th Massachusetts Infantry during the American Civil War.

Creator

Dean, Otis, 1821-1907

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 Otis Dean Diary was purchased by Special Collections in 2008.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Otis Dean Diary commenced and was completed in March 2008.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Otis Dean Diary, Ms2008-010, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Otis Dean, a private in Company E, 56th Massachusetts Infantry during the American Civil War, was born on March 1, 1821 at Raynham, Massachusetts, the son of Chandler Robbins Dean and Abigail [Bissn?]. Dean married Augusta Dunbar (born October 1826) on January 4, 1848. By 1850, the Deans were living in Foxborough Massachusetts, where Otis Dean was employed as a boot-maker.

Dean enlisted in the Union Army as a private on December 30, 1863 and was mustered into Company E of the 56th Massachusetts on January 12, 1864. Wounded in battle at Peebles' Farm (September 30), Dean was captured by Confederate forces and held at Richmond. Paroled on October 8, 1864, Dean entered an army hospital at Annapolis, Maryland. He was granted a furlough later that month and spent several weeks recuperating at home and in the hospital at Readville, Massachusetts. After spending several additional weeks in hospitals at Annapolis and Germantown, Pennsylvania, Dean rejoined his regiment on March 20, 1865 and was discharged on June 15, 1865.

Returning to Foxborough, Dean by 1870 had become a farmer and the father of eight children (Mary, Frederick, Arthur, Edwin, William, Ernest, Harry and Herbert). The 1880 census found the family living in Arcadia Township, Iowa. Though no occupation was listed for Dean, three of his sons, living in the same household, were listed as farmers. By 1900, the Deans had again moved westward and were living in San Bernadino County, California. Otis Dean died on March 21, 1907; his wife, in 1911. Both are buried in Bellevue Cemetery of Ontario, San Bernadino County, California.

The 56th Massachusetts Infantry was recruited during the fall and winter of 1863 at Readville, Massachusetts. By February 1864, the entire regiment had been mustered into service. On March 20, the 56th left Massachusetts for Annapolis, Maryland, where it remained for approximately a month. Following the line of the Orange & Alexandria Railroad, the regiment arrived at Bealeton Station on April 30 and remained encamped there until May 4, when it joined the rest of the Army of the Potomac in the Wilderness Campaign. The 56th saw heavy action during the following month and participated in the assault against Petersburg in June and July 1864. The regiment participated in the battle of Weldon Railroad (August 19) and Peebles' Farm (September 30). In November, the 56th went into winter camp at Fort Davis and Fort Alexander Hays. The 56th joined in the final assault on Petersburg and the pursuit of Lee's forces and was mustered out on July 12, 1865.

Source:

Hancock, Daniel W. and Karen L. Hancock. "Hancock and Olson Family History." 26 March 2008 (<http://hancockonline.net>).

Scope and Content

This collection contains the diary of Otis Dean, a private in Company E, 56th Massachusetts Infantry during the American Civil War. The diary entries begin with January 4, 1865, with Dean listing the uniform and materials issued to him in camp. In very concise entries, Dean describes mostly routine personal and unit activities (making particularly careful note of the clothing and equipment issued to him), but he also

mentions battles at North Anna River and Peebles' Farm; an inspection by generals Grant and Burnside; prices of various goods, and the names of comrades killed, wounded and captured. The diary's entries conclude with June 13, 1865: "I washed my shirt."

Keywords

Civil War

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

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

Existence and Location of Copies

The collection has been digitized and is available online.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Description of Subordinate Components

Diary

Unit Date 1864-1865

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