

Gilbert, Wright Papers

Wright Gilbert Papers

1865-1907



Title Statement

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Author: John M. Jackson

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specref@vt.edu
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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2008.064

Unit Date

1865-1907

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The collection consists of the papers of Captain Wright Gilbert, 6th New York Heavy Artillery, including Civil War diary, family photos, and correspondence.

Creator

Gilbert, Wright, abt. 1836-1906

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open to research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Wright Gilbert Papers were purchased by Special Collections in 2008.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement and description of the Wright Gilbert Papers commenced and was completed in August 2008.

Preferred Citation

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Biographical Note

Wright Gilbert was born in New York around 1836. He enlisted as a private in Company E of the 168th New York Infantry on January 23, 1863, and mustered out as a sergeant on October 31 of that year. In 1864, Gilbert enlisted in the 6th New York Heavy Artillery at Peekskill. He was mustered in as a first lieutenant in Company B on April 23, 1864. On February 14, 1865, he was mustered in as captain of Company G, then transferred back to Company B on March 5. He mustered out with the company at Washington D. C. on August 24, 1865. In post-war New York census records, Gilbert is listed as a grocer, living in Putnam and Westchester counties. He was a member of the Crosby Post (302) G.A.R. in Brewster, serving for a time as senior vice-commander. He married twice; with his first wife, Margaret Perry, he had three children: Alice, Herbert and Percy. He fathered four additional children with his second wife, Marion. Wright Gilbert died in 1906.

The 168th New York was mustered into service at Newburgh, New York on January 23, 1863 for nine months' service. The regiment saw action at Walkerton and Yorktown, Virginia in early June and was mustered out at Newburgh upon completion of its term on October 31, 1863.

The 6th New York Heavy Artillery had been organized as the 135th New York Infantry in September 1862. The regiment was converted to an artillery unit later that year. Within the Railroad Division of the 8th Corps, Middle Department, the 6th served in the defense of the Upper Potomac beginning in January 1863. Later, the 6th participated in several battles, including the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and Cold Harbor before participating in the siege of Petersburg. The regiment was mustered out of the service on August 24, 1865 near Washington D. C.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains the papers of Wright Gilbert, a captain in the 6th New York Heavy Artillery during the Civil War. The collection includes Gilbert's Civil War diary, a few pieces of correspondence (including one wartime letter), a collection of family photos, and ephemera.

Gilbert's diary spans the entire year of 1865. The diary commences with Gilbert noting the regiment's position ("Bermud[a] front Va near the Dutch Gap"). In very brief entries, Gilbert proceeds to record the activities of the day, such as picket and court-martial duties, together with observations on the weather and camp health. He notes military engagements (January 25, 1865: "Rebel Gun Boats com down the James an try to get by the obstructions") and significant events of the day, such as receiving word of Lee's surrender and Lincoln's death. He frequently records small financial transactions in the diary. Following the end of combat, Gilbert frequently mentions his work, cleaning the streets of Petersburg and completing the

company's paperwork, as well as recreational activities such as baseball. Beginning in September, most of the entries seem to relate to the construction of Gilbert's house and store.

Accompanying the diary are several letters, including one written by Gilbert at Bermuda Hundred, Virginia on February 8, 1865. Gilbert describes weather conditions and his living quarters and mentions the many Confederate deserters crossing the lines. In an 1893 letter to his daughter, Gilbert describes some of his experiences in battle. The collection also contains a 1900 letter to Gilbert from fellow veteran of the 6th New York Artillery Henry Irving, in which Irving describes his home on the edge of the South Mountain battlefield (the building having once served as General McClellan's headquarters) and a recent trip to Petersburg, comparing it to the city they had known in after the war. Also included are several letters received from M. W. Sutton following Gilbert's death and recounting experiences with Gilbert in the war.

Together with these materials is a brief description of Gilbert's service with the 6th and an inspirational printed circular letter regarding Colonel J. Howard Kitching and addressed to the 6th New York Artillery. Completing the collection is a set of 10 photos of members of the Gilbert family

The collection also contains a small collection of seemingly unrelated materials, including: an 1835 letter from H. Goddard of Portland, Maine to John S. [Barron?]; an 1823 letter to Captain Jamie Drysdale, of the 23rd Bengal Native Infantry in India, from a relative in Jerviston, Scotland, regarding his uncle's estate and other financial matters; an 1845 letter to Messrs. Lindsay & Blackiston, of Philadelphia, from Jacob Ernst, of Cincinnati, regarding the purchase of books; an 1829 letter from C. Cushing of Newburyport, New Hampshire, to Thorndike Putnam, of Hampstead, New Hampshire, regarding a stone for the grave of Putnam's brother; an 1853 letter from E. Matson, of Wrightsville, Pennsylvania, to H. James, of Baltimore, regarding timber business; an 1853 letter from Partridge & Goold, of New York to Mr. Waldron, regarding the sale of rollers; and an 1855 letter from J. H. Bumstead & Company to William Waldron, of New Brunswick, New Jersey, regarding an order for a grounding machine part.

Keywords

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

Civil War

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by material type, then chronologically. Miscellaneous letters not directly related to the Gilbert family are found at the end of the collection.

Description of Subordinate Components

Diary

Unit Date 1865

folder 1

Letters

folder 1

Wright Gilbert to Mrs. Miller

Unit Date 1865

Wright Gilbert to [Alice Gilbert]

Unit Date 1893

Henry Irving to [Wright Gilbert]

Unit Date 1900

M. [Michael] W. Sutton to [Wright Gilbert]

Unit Date 1905

Frances Miller to Mr. Gilbert

Unit Date 1907

M. [Michael] W. Sutton to [Percy] Gilbert

Unit Date Feb-Apr 1907

General Physical Description note [2 items]

Circular addressed to the 6th New York Heavy Artillery

Unit Date [1865]

folder 1

Description of Wright Gilbert's military service

Unit Date n.d.

folder 1

Photographs

folder 1

Alice Gilbert Williams

Unit Date n.d.

Carrie Lawrence

Unit Date n.d.

Martha Smith

Unit Date n.d.

Thurmul McMahon

Unit Date n.d.

Margaret Perry Gilbert

Unit Date n.d.

General Physical Description note [2 items]

"Aunt Daisy"

Unit Date n.d.

Wright Gilbert

Unit Date n.d.

Wright Gilbert in G.A.R. uniform

Unit Date n.d.

General Physical Description note [2 items]

Ann Maria Wright

Unit Date n.d.

"Helen and Leslie"

Unit Date n.d.

Miscellaneous letters

Unit Date 1823-1855

folder 1

[J?] Drysdale to Captain Jamie Drysdale

Unit Date 1823

C. Cushing to Thorndike Putnam

Unit Date 1829

H. Goddard to John S. [Barron?]

Unit Date 1835

Jacob Ernst to Lindsay & Blackiston

Unit Date 1845

E. Matson to H. James

Unit Date 1853

Partridge & Goold to Mr. Waldron

Unit Date 1853

J. F. Bumstead & Company to William Waldron

Unit Date 1855