

# A Guide to the Clayton G. Coleman Papers, 1858-1863

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## History

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## Title Statement

A Guide to the Clayton G. Coleman Papers, 1858-1863

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

**Collection number**

mss 00021

**Language**

English

**Physical Characteristics**

The papers consist of four items.

**Repository**

Archives, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute

## Administrative Information

**Access**

There are no restrictions.

**Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

**Acquisition Information**

The three letters in this collection were purchased from Chesapeake Galleries in April 1981. The autograph album was donated by Lucy Singleton Coleman in 1935.

**Preferred Citation**

Clayton G. Coleman Papers, mss 00021, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia.

## Alternative Form

A portion of the Coleman Papers are available in full-text format on the VMI Archives website at:

<http://www.vmi.edu/archives/manuscripts/ms021.html>

## Autograph Album Entries

## Biographical/Historical Information

Clayton Glanville Coleman, physician, was born at Roxbury, New Kent County, Virginia in 1840. He entered the Virginia Military Institute in July 1856 as a member of the Class of 1859, but did not graduate. After leaving VMI in 1858, he attended the University of Virginia and the Medical College of Virginia, from which he was graduated in March 1861. He served as Lt. Col., 23rd Virginia Infantry Regiment(1861-1862) and after September 1862 as a physician in the Confederate Medical Department. After the war, he continued the practice of medicine until 1871, when he became a Civil Engineer. He married Anna Sherrard Breedin, daughter of Enoch C. and Lucy Singleton Breedin, of Winchester Virginia. They had four children: Sherrard , Robert, Lucy, and Caroline. Clayton Coleman died October 7, 1908, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

## Scope and Content Information

The papers consist of three letters written to Coleman's sister Lucy during the Civil War, and an autograph album containing inscriptions written by his classmates at VMI, the University of Virginia, and the Medical College of Virginia, ca. 1858-61. The letter of September 17, 1862, from Winchester, Virginia, discusses the Battle of Antietam and caring for wounded; November 4, 1862, Winchester, Virginia, discusses hospitals and care of wounded, General George Steuart, movement of Longstreet's Corps, and other troop activity in the area; Feb 25, 1863 is largely personal, discussing his mother's death.

## Contents List

### Autograph Album, 1856-1857

**Scope and Content**

The album contains inscriptions and autographs of Coleman's classmates at the Virginia Military Institute.

### Correspondence, 1862-1863

#### Letter to his sister Lucy, 1862 September 17

**Scope and Content**

Written at Winchester, Virginia. Coleman discusses the Battle of Antietam and caring for wounded.

"...But the hottest battle of the war was fought near Sharpsburg Md on the 17th inst. The battle lasted all day and the loss was terrific on both sides, the enemy fighting with more desperation than ever before.

We call it a victory and the Yankees did so at first too; we held the ground and both sides were too much worsted to renew the fight next day. We fell back across the Potomac and the enemy then commenced shelling us and boasted that they had driven us across. They acknowledge the loss of sixteen generals. We had two generals killed and ten wounded. Winchester has been perfectly crowded with the wounded--there having been more than 3000 here at one time and continually passing through. The N. Y. Tribune says if we had followed them, their army wd have been annihilated, and Gen. Lee says he could have done so with 5000 more fresh troops. But men had been marched so much and were so broken down, that we had 60,000 stragglers...."

## **Letter to his sister Lucy, 1862 November 4**

### **Scope and Content**

Written at Winchester, Virginia. Coleman discusses hospitals and care of wounded, General George Steuart, movement of Longstreet's Corps, and other troop activity in the area.

"...I have had my hands full ever since, for upon arriving here I was assigned to the charge of two Hospitals--the N. S. P. Church and Lovett House Hospitals, containing more than one hundred sick and wounded, and a great many very bad cases. But although I have been until the last few days so busily engaged, I have only lost five patients out of one hundred and eighty treated, while other hospitals have lost a much greater proportion. Dr. McGuire told me that he lost fourteen patients on night before last at the Union Hospital! There are not more than one thousand sick here now...."

## **Letter to his sister Lucy, 1863 February 25**

### **Scope and Content**

Written from Jerdone Castle, Louisa County, Virginia. A discussion of their mother's death.

"...reached home on Wednesday in time to be present at the burial....She was so anxious to see her children before she died. But it is said that everything happens for the best and we should bear everything with an even resignation."