

Receipt log of Clothing Distributed to the 117th United States Colored Troops

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December 31, 1864

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Descriptive Summary

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Container

1/1 (Oversize_Folder(Within_an_OSBox))

Language

English

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.13 Cubic Feet 1 large oversize folder

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

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Biographical / Historical

Among the sixty-five men named in this document are Moses Thorton, James Moor, Orland Goodrich, Sergeant Burril Johnson, Benjamin Jarrold, Godfrey Riddle, Benjamin Royal, Corporal William Thompson, Washington Towey, Thomas Uriah, Wesley Hewitt, Oscar Leftridge, Sergeant Mack Woodford, and Ambrose Grubbs. Each soldier has signed with an "x" and the words "his mark" between his first and last name (all names are written in the same hand). The signature of witness "Lieut. J. B. Johnson" appears to the right of each soldier's signature. Listed here are thirty-three articles of clothing, including trousers for privates (35), uniform coats for privates (65), flannel shirts (35), drawers (35) infantry bootes (16), great coats (3), blankets (2), caps (10), rubber ponchos (1), and blouses lined (2). The final three items (caps, rubber ponchos, and blouses lined) are added in manuscript to the columns. A few printed notes appear below the filled-in document: "Mounted men may, at their option, receive one pair of 'boots' and two pairs of 'bootees,' instead of four pairs of bootees"; "As the Metallic Shoulder Scales, Letters, Number, Castles, and Shells and Flames, will last for many years, they will be borne on the returns as company property, in the same manner as are sashes, knapsacks and straps, haversacks, canteens and straps, and other articles of camp and garrison equipage, and will be charged to the soldier only when lost or destroyed through neglect." On the verso, a table lists the fourteen articles of clothing each soldier was allowed during his enlistment and his proportion for each year respectively, as established by the Secretary of War.

Early in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln observed, "The colored population is the great available yet unavailed of force for restoring the Union." Two months later, the War Department issued General Order #143, which sanctioned the creation of the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT). The 117th U.S. Colored Troops was organized at Covington, Kentucky from 18 July to 27 September 1864, during which time it was attached to the Military District of Kentucky, Dept. of the Ohio. In October of 1864, the 117th was ordered to Baltimore, Maryland, and then to City Point, Virginia, to take part in siege operations at Petersburg and Richmond, where it was attached to the Provisional Brigade, 18th Corps, Army of the James, until March 1865. In December 1864, the 117th was attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 25th Corps. On 9 April 1865, the 109th, 114th, 116th and 117th U.S. Colored Infantry units were present at Appomattox Courthouse during the surrender of Gen. Robert E. Lee. The 117th performed guard duty at Petersburg and City Point, Virginia, from April to June 1865.

Following the war, the 117th was sent to Texas as part of an American build-up intended to discourage French operations in Mexico. In June 1865, the unit moved to Brazos Santiago, Texas, and in July performed guard duty at Brownsville and on the Rio Grande. The 109th, 114th, 116th, 117th, 118th, and 122nd operated along the Rio Grande River until September 1866. USCT veterans were assigned to various posts to prevent former-Confederates from establishing their defeated government and army in Mexico. Later, the USCT patrolled the border to stop ongoing violence in Mexico from spilling into the U.S., and to discourage bandits and Native Americans from attacking civilian communities. On 10 August 1867, the 117th was mustered out, as the final African American unit to leave the Rio Grande.

Capt. Peleg T. Griffith (1836-1918) was twenty-six years-old when he enlisted as a private in the 9th Minnesota Infantry, Co. E in August 1862. In July 1864 he re-enlisted as a Captain and was commissioned into the 117th U.S. Colored Troops. In 1865 he was discharged in a hospital.

REFERENCES: "117th United States Colored Troops" at The Civil War in the East online; "Rio Grande Valley Civil War Trail" at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley online.

<https://www.jamesarsenault.com/pages/books/7786/capt-peleg-t-griffith-lieut-j-b-johnson/document-of-117th-u-s-colored-troops-company-f-detailing-clothing-acquired-we-the-undersigned-non?soldItem=true>

Content Description

This collection contains a receipt log (18"x22") of provisions given to the African American infantry during the Civil War. The top of the document states that "WE, the undersigned Non-commissioned Officers,

Artificers, Musicians, and Privates, of [Co "F" 117th U.S. C.S.], do hereby acknowledge to have received of [Capt Riley I. Griffith] the several articles of clothing set opposite our respective names." There are about sixty-five names listed. The receipt includes the date of issue (Dec. 30, 1864), name and designation of the soldier, the types of clothing (privates, trousers, flannel shirts, caps, rubber pouches, and blouses, etc) with signatures of the recipients, and the witness signature of Robert B. Parker, 1st Lt. On the verso is printed "Statement exhibiting the allowance of clothing to each soldier during his enlistment ... as established by the Secretary of War."

Keywords

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

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Participation, African American

United States. Army. Colored Infantry Regiment 117th (1864-1867)