

Carpenter, Riley Letters

Private Riley Carpenter letters
1862-1864

Title Statement

Carpenter, Riley LettersGuide to the Private Riley Carpenter Letters MSS 16891

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16891

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1770

Unit Date

1862-1864

Mixed Materials [X031674512]

BW 59 (box)

Container

001 (folder)

Language

English

Extent

0.03 Cubic Feet 1 letter-sized file folder

Condition Description

Good

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is minimally processed and open for research.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was a gift from the descendants of Private Riley Carpenter, including Mimi Porter, to the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia on 3 February 2023. In loving memory of Daniel M. Rogers, who started the family on the search.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16891, Private Riley Carpenter Letters, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical / Historical Description

Riley Carpenter was born on August 12, 1821 to Abner and Nancy Carpenter in Brattleboro, Windham County, Vermont. He had three brothers, Welcome, Charles, and Parley, and two half-siblings, Abner and Submit. He was married to Lovicy Adelia Pratt Carpenter (1826-1913). The couple had eight children together, all of them living to adulthood. Six of the Carpenter children were born before the Civil War. During the Civil War, Riley served as a Private in the 150th Regiment, Pennsylvania Infantry. The 150th, nicknamed the "Bucktails," was known for exceptional bravery and high casualty rates, given their presence at the costliest battles of the Civil War. Colonel Langhorne Wister raised the 150th Pennsylvania Infantry in Philadelphia and Harrisburg in September 1862. Carpenter served in Company C of the 150th. His Company was present at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Bristoe, Mine Run, Petersburg, and Appomattox. The 150th was mustered out in June 1865. Riley remained a Private from his enrollment in the Union Army in 1862 to at least 1864, the extent of his letters. After the war, Carpenter built a home in Crawford County, Pennsylvania. Riley died on July 21, 1910, at eighty-eight years of age, in Crawford County. He was interred at the Kingsley Cemetery in Steuben Township, Crawford County, joined by his wife in 1913.

Source "Riley Carpenter." Find A Grave. Accessed 1 May 2025.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/115048388/riley-carpenter>

Content Description

This collection contains six letters written by Private Riley Carpenter, a Union soldier in the 150th Pennsylvania "Bucktails" unit. The letters are from camps in Rappahanock, Warrington, and Culpeper, Virginia. The letters' content discusses battles, waiting periods at various camps, fellow soldiers, and Riley's longing to be home with his family. Five letters are addressed to his wife, Lovicy Adelia Pratt Carpenter, residing in Crawford County, Pennsylvania, and the other is to Carpenter's son, James. All letters are postmarked between 1862 and 1864.

Related Materials

Related materials on Private Riley Carpenter can be found in the John L. Nau III Civil War History Collection (MSS 16459) in document box 16, folders 9-16.

Keywords

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

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

letters (correspondence)

United States. Army. Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment (150th : 1862-1865)