

Joseph Andrew Jackson Lightburn, (1824-1901), Military Artifacts of the Civil War, ca. 1860- 1865, 2011 A&M 3948

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Descriptive Summary

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Abstract

Military artifacts owned by General Joseph Andrew Jackson Lightburn (1824-1901) during his service as a Union officer during the American Civil War. Lightburn served in the western Virginia campaign of 1861, the siege of Vicksburg, and in the Atlanta Campaign, among other activities. Artifacts include: battle sword with scabbard, 44 Colt Revolver (1860 Model), compass / sun dial, bullet mold, cap box containing one small round ball, two epaulets, storage container for epaulets, and dress sword with scabbard. There is also a group photograph of three of General Lightburn's great grandchildren (2011).

Creator

Lightburn, Joseph Andrew Jackson, 1824-1901.

Extent

1.69 Linear Feet 1 ft. 8 1/4 in. (1 record carton, 15 in.); (1 small flat storage box, 3.5 in); (2 swords in a composite flat storage box, 1.71 in); (1 photograph, 0.01 in) Swords Dimensions Sword A -- Handle width: 4 in.; Blade length: 31 in. Sword B -- Handle width: 3.75 in.; Blade length: 35 in.

Physical Location

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Repository

West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

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Biographical / Historical

Joseph Andrew Jackson Lightburn (September 21, 1824 to May 17, 1901) was a farmer, soldier and Baptist Minister; he served as a Union general during the American Civil War. Born in Pennsylvania, he grew up in Lewis County in western Virginia.

When the Civil War began Lightburn was appointed colonel of the 4th (West) Virginia Infantry Regiment on 14 August 1861. His regiment served under McClellan in western Virginia early in the War. In 1862 he served in the District of Kanawha opposing Confederate General William W. Loring.

Appointed a general in 1863, Lightburn participated in the siege of Vicksburg, and later in the Atlanta Campaign of 1864 under Sherman, where he replaced fallen commander James B. McPherson as commander of the 2nd Division. He returned home to recover from a wound he received during the siege of Atlanta. Upon recovery he resumed service as a general, ultimately commanding the 2nd Division in the Department of West Virginia until his resignation of 22 June 1865.

After the War he served as a minister at the Broad Run Baptist Church. He died in Broad Run, West Virginia, where he is buried in a churchyard.

Scope and Contents

Military artifacts owned by General Joseph Andrew Jackson Lightburn (1824-1901) during his service as a Union officer during the American Civil War. Lightburn served in the western Virginia campaign of 1861, the siege of Vicksburg, and in the Atlanta Campaign, among other activities. There is also a group photograph of

three of General Lightburn's great grandchildren (2011) with subjects identified.

Artifacts include battle sword with scabbard; 44 Colt revolver (1860 model); compass / sun dial; bullet mold; cap box containing one small round ball; two epaulets; storage container for epaulets; and dress sword with scabbard.

Regarding battle sword:

General Lightburn owned two battle swords, but wore only one sword at a time during battle. General Lightburn was wearing this battle sword during the Vicksburg siege when it was struck by an enemy bullet, leaving a deep dent in the scabbard. The fact that the bullet hit the sword instead of General Lightburn probably saved his life.

(text by donor)

Regarding .44 Colt revolver (1860 model):

General Lightburn carried two 44 Colt Revolvers (1860 Model) during battle; General Lightburn's son, Luther Grant Lightburn inherited this one. Years later, Luther's teenage son, Joseph B. Lightburn, having borrowed the gun to use for hunting, mistakenly loaded it with too much powder so that when it fired, it mushroomed. The gun was hammered back into place and never used again. Joseph B. Lightburn inherited the gun, which he left to his son, Joseph B. Lightburn, Jr.

(text by donor)

Regarding cap box:

General Lightburn kept his bullets in this cap box.

(text by donor)

Regarding two epaulets:

For dress occasions, according to custom, General Lightburn wore these epaulets on his shoulders. The "4" on one of the epaulets is the number of his first regiment, which he helped organize and which he trained: the (West) Virginia Fourth Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

(text by donor)

Regarding dress sword:

Lewis County presented this dress sword to General Lightburn after the war along with a gold colored fabric battle sash; the latter was mistakenly sold during an estate sale. (A commanding general wore a sash around his waist so all could see who was in charge at the battlefield.) Even though West Virginia had become a separate state in 1863, the following inscription on the sword in one place still mistakenly refers to our state as Virginia:

Brig. Gen. J. A. J. Lightburn

From the

Citizens of Lewis County, West Va.

As a testimony of their appreciation

of his gallant service in the suppression

of the Rebellion of 1861

Weston, Va., July 4, 1865

(text by donor with minimal editing)

See also collection A&M 750, "Lightburn, Joseph Andrew Jackson (1824-1901). Papers," for additional information regarding the dress sword; it includes a typescript copy of a newspaper article regarding a Fourth of July celebration honoring General Lightburn, held at Weston, West Virginia, in 1865, which includes a transcription of a speech delivered by him.

Keywords

Lewis County (W. Va.)

Civil War - West Virginia 4th Infantry.

Lightburn, Joseph Andrew Jackson, 1824-1901.