

Caperton Family Papers

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1861-1862, n.d.



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1991.034

Unit Date

1861-1862, n.d.

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Photocopied, typed transcripts of letters written by Mary Eliza Henderson Caperton to her husband George Henry, then serving in the Confederate Army, most written from Whitethorne, in Montgomery County, Virginia, between May and October, 1861, and concentrating on news of the Preston family, relatives, and mutual acquaintances; fears of a slave rebellion; a fire at Whitethorne; and the deaths of Ann Barraud Taylor Preston and Col. James Francis Preston. Also includes typescript extracts from the diary of George H. Caperton.

Creator

Caperton family

Creator

Caperton, George Henry (Nelson County, Va.)

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Source of Acquisition

The Caperton Family Papers were donated to Special Collections and University Archives in 1991.

Processing Information

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Preferred Citation

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Biographical Note

George Henry Caperton Sr., son of Hugh and Jane Erskine Caperton, was born in Union (Monroe County), (West) Virginia on December 13, 1828. After graduating from Virginia Military Institute in 1851, Caperton reportedly studied medicine in Richmond, Virginia, then earned a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1853. On August 23, 1854, Caperton married Mary Eliza Henderson. Born January 15, 1836, she was the daughter of Walter and Eliza Royall Holcombe Henderson. By 1859, Caperton had established a medical practice near the Watering Branch, in the area of Lynchburg, Virginia. The 1860 census lists the Capertons living with their two young children in Campbell County, Virginia. On May 28, 1861, Caperton enlisted as a private in Company G, 2nd Virginia Cavalry; he was appointed regimental quartermaster sergeant on June 19. He was listed absent sick beginning in September, and received a medical discharge on March 12, 1862. On June 11, he was commissioned a lieutenant, assigned as aide-de-camp to General John Echols. In March, 1863, Caperton was appointed an assistant surgeon, serving at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, and as medical director of the Department of Southwest Virginia. By March 19, 1865, according to muster rolls, Caperton was living at home in Union. Following the war, Caperton reportedly practiced medicine for a time in Baltimore. The 1870 federal census lists a George H. and Mary E. Caperton in Amherst, Virginia, with George described as a farmer. The Capertons remained in Amherst County as late as 1880; the census for that year records George as a physician. Two years later, the Capertons were living Fayette County, West Virginia, where they seem to have remained. George Henry Caperton died in the hospital at Cantonsville, Maryland, on January 13, 1895. Mary Elizabeth Henderson Caperton died on February 4, 1900. Both were buried in Green Hill Cemetery, Union, West Virginia.

Scope and Content

This collection contains photocopied, typed transcripts of papers relating to the George Henry and Mary Eliza Henderson Caperton family of Virginia. The majority of the collection consists of 17 letters written by Mary Eliza to her husband while he was serving in the Confederate Army during the American Civil War. All but one of the letters was written from Whitethorne, the home of Mary Eliza's sister-in-law, Sarah Ann Caperton Preston, in Montgomery County, Virginia, between May and October, 1861. Mary Caperton's letters concentrate on news of the Preston family, relatives, and mutual acquaintances, particularly news of their participation in the war. She also writes of fears of a slave rebellion, local union sentiment, conditions in Norfolk, a fire at Whitethorne, and the deaths of Ann Barraud Taylor Preston and Col. James Francis Preston.

A final letter was written by Mary Eliza at "Ivy Ledge," the Capertons' home in Campbell County, Virginia, on August 13, 1862, and focuses on personal news and her daily household activities and mentions thefts by soldiers and recent battlefield deaths. The collection also contains photocopied, typed transcripts of extracts of George H. Caperton's diary for 1861-1862. The extracts commence with December 25, 1861, in camp near Centerville, Virginia. The last entry is dated January 17, 1862. Also included is a two-page biographical sketch of Caperton.

Keywords

Montgomery County (Va.)

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

Civil War

Blacksburg (Va.)

Women -- History

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

Black, Harvey, 1827-1888

Preston family (Montgomery County, Va.)

Caperton, Mary Elizabeth Henderson (Nelson County, Va.)

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Description of Subordinate Components

Papers

Unit Date 1861-1862

folder 1