

Harter, Matthias Letters

Matthias Harter Letters

1862-1865



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1996.005

Unit Date

1862-1865

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Three letters from Matthias Harter, a private in Company C, 9th Iowa Infantry, written during the American Civil War to his wife Sallie, and discussing such subjects as the Battle of Altoona Pass, General George McClellan's declining reputation, the price of food for civilians, General William Tecumseh Sherman's farewell speech to Harter's division, and the effects of war on a veteran.

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to research.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

The letters from a Civil War Union Soldier were donated to Special Collections and University Archives in 1996.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the Letter from a Civil War Union Soldier commenced and was completed in October, 2023.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Matthias Harter Letters, Ms1996-006, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical / Historical

Matthias Harter, son of Andrew and Susanna Albright Harter, was born in Mancheter (Summit County), Ohio, on May 18, 1825. He is listed among the "preparatory" students at Allegheny College (Meadville, Pennsylvania) in 1848, and in 1855 he obtained a bachelor of science degree from the University of Michigan. That same year, Harter married Sallie M. Hall (1835-1923); the couple would have five children. Harter worked for a short time as a teacher at Mount Union College (Alliance, Ohio), then relocated with his family in Cedar Falls, Iowa, where Matthias Harter taught in the high school. By early 1860, Harter was teaching in Missouri, but he returned to Iowa and was living in Independence by the outbreak of the Civil War. On August 27, 1862, he enlisted in Company C, 9th Iowa Infantry, mustered into service on October 14. He reenlisted on January 23, 1864 and was mustered out with his regiment at Louisville, Kentucky, on July 26, 1865. (Accounts claiming that Harter enlisted in the 9th Ohio Infantry appear to be in error.) After the war, the Harters returned to Summit County, Ohio, where Matthias Harter established the Akron File Works in 1868. The business had passed to other hands by 1877, and the 1880 federal census of Summit County lists Harter as a farmer. Remembered by newspapers as a prohibitionist and strict vegetarian, Matthias Harter died on October 10, 1906, and was buried in Glendale Cemetery, Akron.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains three letters written by Matthias Harter, a soldier in Company C, 9th Iowa Infantry, to his wife, Sallie Hall Harter, during the American Civil War. In the first letter, written at Davenport, Iowa, on September 28, 1862, Harter requests many foodstuffs from home and describes swimming and bathing in the river with other soldiers. Writing from Rome, Georgia, on October 9, 1864, Harter conveys news of the recent Battle of Altoona Pass and of the declining reputation of General George McClellan ("McClellan stock is tumbling down every day.") He notes the cost of food among civilians and advises Sallie on things to buy and on the care of their children, then mentions, with somewhat suggestive language, his desire to give Sallie "one of those old fashioned baths." In a letter dated July 4, 1865, at First Division headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky, Harter recounts General William Tecumseh Sherman's farewell address. He also announces that he should soon be home and cautions Sallie that he, like other veterans, has been changed by his wartime experiences. The collection also contains the first page of the July 27, 1864, edition of *The Guardian of Independence* (Independence, Iowa) featuring the text of a lengthy patriotic speech delivered by Rev. J. M. Boggs at the recent Independence Day firemen's celebration.

Related Materials

[Matthias Harter Papers](#) at the University of Michigan.

Keywords

Civil War

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

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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General

This collection was donated, accessioned, and originally cataloged as "Letters from a Civil War Union Soldier." Research in the course of processing in 2023 revealed the writer of the letters to have been Matthias Harter, and the title changed to reflect the new information. Evidence supporting the attribution to Harter may be found in the collection's control folder.

Description of Subordinate Components

Letters

Unit Date 1862-1865

folder 1