

Knapp, Edgar, Letters

Edgar Knapp Letters

1862-1864



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2002.015

Unit Date

1862-1864

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection includes correspondence received by Edgar R. Knapp while he was a steward at the U.S. military hospital in Annapolis, Maryland. Sixteen letters from his brother at home in Michigan, one from his sister, and eighteen from hospital patients or their parents.

Creator

Knapp, Edgar, b. abt.1836

Extent

0.25 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Edgar Knapp Letters were purchased by Special Collections in April 2002.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Edgar Knapp Letters was completed in May 2002.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Edgar Knapp Letters, Ms2002-015, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Lieutenant Edgar R. Knapp (ca. 1836-?) of Adrian, Lenawee County, Michigan, was a steward at the United States military hospital in Annapolis, Maryland from 1862-1864. His brother H. Knapp was probably Henry Knapp (1813-1893), who is listed in the 1860 census as a doctor in Adrian, Lenawee County, Michigan. Randolph Knapp, whose death is the subject of some of the correspondence, was born in 1840 in Michigan and died at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Sources: 1860 Michigan Federal Census, page 383; Gravestone Records of Lenawee County, Michigan, collected by Harriet Cole Clark (Adrian, Michigan: 1933), 34.

Scope and Content

The Edgar Knapp Letters span the years 1862-1864 and are comprised of 40 letters received by Edgar Knapp while he was working as a hospital steward at the U.S. military hospital in Annapolis, Maryland. They are divided into Family Correspondence and Hospital Correspondence. The collection also contains two invitations to Masonic functions in Baltimore, Baltimore Commandery No. 2.

The Family Correspondence series date from 1862 to 1863. It contains 16 letters from Edgar Knapp's brother H. Knapp and one from his sister, both of whom were living in Adrian, Michigan, during the war. Like Edgar, H. Knapp was a medical man. He avidly followed war news and related political events and kept Edgar informed about work and family life in Adrian. Both H. Knapp and his sister were civilian supporters of the Union who did not (during this correspondence) support radical abolitionists. H. Knapp is an unusually capable correspondent who animates every topic he discusses, from the family's horses (e.g. "He is black (and) sleek as a mole...tough as a knob, got a good swingel (and) bollox.," to the feared loss of their brother Randolph at Gettysburg. Two letters relay news from the front 16 and 17 July: "Ran went into Battle of the 3d July (and) charged on the left flank of Genl Lee, where they had the Infantry to deal with." Additional details extend over three closely written pages.

Hospital Correspondence contains letters Knapp received from soldiers for whom he was responsible when they were recuperating in Annapolis. It also includes letters from deceased soldiers' parents, who wrote to Knapp requesting that he send specified personal effects, their son's body, or information regarding their child's final days. Letters in this series date from 1862 to 1864. Together with his letters from home, in which the battlefield loss of a brother figures prominently, this correspondence provides insight into the news and daily concerns that passed through the mind of a military hospital steward during the Civil War.

Keywords

Civil War
Folk, historical, and patent medicine
Medicine
Medicine, Military -- History
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Existence and Location of Copies

This collection has been digitized and is available online.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Description of Subordinate Components

Family Correspondence

Unit Date 1861-1863

from H. Knapp

Unit Date 1861-1863

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

from sister

Unit Date 1863

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

General Physical Description note 1 letter

Hospital Correspondence

Unit Date 1862-1864

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3-5 (folder)

Arrangement note

alphabetical by correspondent

Baltimore Commander No. 2 Masonic Invitations

Unit Date 1864

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

General Physical Description note 2 invitations