

Alexandria and Fairfax Counties [Virginia] Civil War Correspondence

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1861-1862



Title Statement

Alexandria and Fairfax Counties [Virginia] Civil War Correspondence
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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2013.029

Unit Date

1861-1862

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The Alexandria and Fairfax Counties [Virginia] Civil War Correspondence consists of 40 letters by 31 soldiers, dated between 1861 and 1862. Letters were written by soldiers stationed in and around Alexandria and Fairfax counties and Washington, D.C., in the first 12-16 months of the American Civil War.

Creator

Ash, William (3rd Regiment, Vermont Infantry)

Creator

Baskin, J. T.

Creator

Cole, Henry

Creator

Cole, Luther

Creator

Davis, George E. , d.1863 (Company F, Harris Light Cavalry)

Creator

Dixon, William D.

Creator

Edwards, Clarke S. (Clarke Swett), 1824-1903

Creator

Gerry, C. E.

Creator

Green, Josiah M.

Creator

Gregory, W. B. (William Bartleman), 1829-1887

Creator

Guion, J. Marshall, 1822-1891

Creator

Hanna, James W.

Creator

Hersum, George L. (5th Regiment, New Hampshire Infantry)

Creator

Hunt, Melvin (72nd Regiment, New York Infantry)

Creator

Lacaster, G. W.

Creator

Lukens, Franklin B. (Company E, 3rd Regiment, New Jersey Infantry)

Creator

Kyger, Henry C. (5th Regiment, Wisconsin Infantry)

Creator

Miller, Henry

Creator

Nickerson, Melville P. (2nd Regiment, Maine Infantry)

Creator

Penman, Abraham (12th Regiment, Pennsylvania Reserve Infantry (41st Volunteers))

Creator

Rappleyea, Jeremiah C. (1st Regiment, New Jersey Infantry)

Creator

Stewart, Peter (79th NY Highland Guard)

Creator

Stickley, Peter B., 1825-1861

Creator

Turrill, Reuben

Creator

Van Fleet, Abraham

Creator

Way, Alexander M. (Alexander Moore), 1826-1890

Extent

0.3 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Source of Acquisition

The Alexandria and Fairfax Counties [Virginia] Civil War Correspondence was donated to Special Collections by Michael S. Mitchell in July 2013. An additional 21 letters, as well as a print, were donated to Special Collections in October 2017.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Alexandria and Fairfax Counties [Virginia] Civil War Correspondence was completed in October 2013. The 2017 accession was processed in May 2019.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Alexandria and Fairfax Counties [Virginia] Civil War Correspondence, Ms2013-029, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

See individual creators in the inventory below for available biographical information.

Scope and Content

The Alexandria and Fairfax Counties [Virginia] Civil War Correspondence consists of 40 letters by 31 soldiers, and the letters date from 1861 and 1862 and were written by soldiers stationed in and around Alexandria and Fairfax counties and Washington, D.C., in the first 12-16 months of the American Civil War. The majority of the letters were written to family members and contain mostly news from home, camp life, and local events. However, most letters also include some piece of war news or battle/skirmish description and opinions about the war. Some letters include transcripts.

Keywords

Civil War

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

Washington (D.C.) -- Maps

Virginia

Virginia -- History

Existence and Location of Copies

Some letters and transcripts have been digitized and are available online.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

This collection is by material type: correspondence then print. The correspondence is arranged alphabetically by creator's surname, with unknown surnames at the end arranged alphabetically by given name.

Description of Subordinate Components

Ash, William

Unit Date December 22, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

Scope and Content

This letter was written from William Ash at Camp Griffin, December 22, 1861, during the American Civil War, to his cousin. He writes about recent fighting and news from other regiments.

Baskin, J. T.

Unit Date October 3, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Content

J. T. Baskin, a Confederate soldier during the American Civil War, wrote a letter to his sister on October 3, 1861, describing the Yankees advance and how they are much stronger. He talks about marching, and the sickness that has traveled through the camp. He also describes some of his daily experiences such as guard duty. Transcript included.

Existence and Location of Copies

This letter has been digitized and is available online.

Cole, Henry & Luther

Unit Date August-October 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Content

This folder includes three letters written from two brothers to their sister Annie during the American Civil War. The first letter is written from Henry and Luther on August 2, 1861, and is written on stationary with a picture of the United States Capitol on it. They describe life in their squad, and how their cabin is set up. The second letter was written on August 2, 1861, by brother Henry. Henry describes the weather and his assignments, and he also describes his food that he gets to eat. The third letter was written by brother Henry on October 9, 1861. He describes their location and what is in his haversacks, and he also gives a description of the landscape around him. Transcripts included.

Letter from Henry and Luther

Unit Date August 2, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

This letter has been digitized and is available online.

Letter from Henry

Unit Date August 2, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

This letter has been digitized and is available online.

Letter from Henry

Unit Date October 9, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

This letter has been digitized and is available online.

Davis, George E.

Unit Date March 19, 1862

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Biographical Note

George E. Davis enlisted with Company F, Harris Light Cavalry in September 1861, during the American Civil War. He died June 22, 1863, in an Alexandria hospital, from wounds received in action.

Scope and Content

This letter was written by George E. Davis on March 19, 1862 to his Father and Mother, during the American Civil War. On the letter is a picture of George Washington with the inscription "The Father of our Country." He tells his family that as soon as he gets paid he will send money home. He also describes his movement from camp to camp. Transcript included.

Existence and Location of Copies

This letter has been digitized and is available online.

Dixon, William D.

Unit Date November 20, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Content

This letter was written on November 20, 1861, by William D. Dixon to his wife Martha, during the American Civil War. He says that he hopes to return home soon, and that he sent her money. He then describes the weather and how the cold affects him, but that he is healthy. He also asks her to give messages to several family members. Transcript included.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Edwards, Clarke S.

Unit Date August-October 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 17 (folder)

Biographical Note

Clarke S. Edwards was born in 1824. He lived in Bethel, Maine, prior to the start of the American Civil War. After the attack on Fort Sumner, Edwards formed a company of men, eventually Company I, 5th Regiment, Maine Infantry. Edwards began the war with the rank of captain and was later made a colonel in January 1863. He was brevetted Brigadier General of US Volunteers in March 1865. Following the Civil War, he returned to his farm and family in Maine. He died in 1903.

Scope and Content

The folder contains three letters from Clarke S. Edwards to his wife in Bethel, Maryland, written between September and October of 1861 during the American Civil War. He writes about his health, their letters/sending money, regiment activities, and the availability of supplies.

Letter

Unit Date September 29, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

The envelope has been digitized and is available online.

Letter

Unit Date October 22, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Letter

Unit Date October 25, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Faulk, David K.

Unit Date March 2, 1862

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 18 (folder)

Scope and Content

This letter was written from David K. Faulk to his mother from Camp Pierpont, March 2, 1862, during the American Civil War. Faulk describes regimental travels, his recent receipt of pay, and his concern that she shouldn't worry about him.

Gerry, C. E.

Unit Date September 22, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scope and Content

This letter was written by C. E. Gerry on September 22, 1861, to his friend George, during the American Civil War. He says it will be a quick letter, and that he has run out of stamps. He describes some of the other "boys", and he asks George to write back soon. Transcript included.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Green, Josiah M.

Unit Date December 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 19 (folder)

Scope and Content

This folder contains two letters from Josiah Green to his wife, written from Camp Griffin on December 7 and December 23, 1861, during the American Civil War. Both letters are primarily full of discussions of both of their health, the state of the mail, and some war news Green has picked up.

Letter

Unit Date December 7, 1861

Letter

Unit Date December 23, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Gregory, W. B.

Unit Date January-March 1862

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Biographical Note

William Bartleman Gregory served as an Assistant Surgeon (and later Surgeon) for several regiments from Alabama and Georgia during the American Civil War. Prior the war, Gregory studied and practiced medicine in Alexandria, Virginia. He returned to Alexandria and resumed his career following his parole in 1865. He died in 1887 and is buried in Alexandria, Virginia.

Source: "Dr William Bartleman Gregory", Findagrave.com,
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18728501/william-bartleman-gregory>.

Scope and Content

W. B. Gregory wrote two letters to Bill in 1862. In the first letter which is written on January 29, 1862, during the American Civil War. He describes the delay of mail and how he has not received mail lately. He asks several questions about Bill and Lizzie. He closes the letter by asking Bill to send him some items such as pantaloons, tobacco, and stamps. The second letter was written on March 4, 1862. He starts the letter by discussing by describing life in the quarter. He tells what he has done in the last several weeks, and he closes asking if he can find out if the tailor in Culpeper can make a Confederate uniform coat. Transcripts included.

Letter

Unit Date January 29, 1862

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Letter

Unit Date March 4, 1862

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Guion, J. Marshall

Unit Date September 15, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 20 (folder)

Biographical Note

J. Marshall Guion (1822-1891) served with the 33rd Regiment, New York Volunteers, during the American Civil War. He later transferred to Company K, 1st New York Veteran Cavalry as a captain.

Scope and Content

This letter was written by J. Marshall Guion to his brother from "Camp Advance," September 15, 1861, during the American Civil War. The letter includes Guion's take on recent military and camp activities.

Hanna, James W.

Unit Date October 17, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 21 (folder)

Scope and Content

This folder contains a letter from James W. Hanna, written at Camp Pierpont, October 17, 1861, during the American Civil War, to his friend, Richard Lyons. He talks about skirmishing with the Confederate soldiers and how much he is enjoying life in the army.

Hersum, George L.

Unit Date January 1, 1862

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 22 (folder)

Scope and Content

This folder includes a letter from George Hersum to May, likely his wife, written at Camp California, dated January 1, [1862] (see note below), during the American Civil War. He talks about the slowness of the mail, sending money, and a visit/news about a friend, James W. Dean.

Please note: The creator dated this letter as 1861, but given that it mentions fighting at Bull Run (First Bull Run), is it more likely from 1862.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Hunt, Melvin

Unit Date October 4, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 23 (folder)

Scope and Content

This folder contains a letter from Melvin Hunt to his sister, written on October 4, 1861, during the American Civil War. He writes of helping to build a fortress near the capital (complete with a small drawing), sending money home, and his intention to write more. He also includes several lines of poetry.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Lacaster, G. W. (Whit)

Unit Date February 25, 1862

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 24 (folder)

Scope and Content

This folder consists of a letter from G. W. (Whit) Lacaster to Melia, written at Manassas, February 25, 1862, during the American Civil War. He writes of mutual friends, mentions a blockade on the river, and the hope for an early victory.

Lukens, Franklin B.

Unit Date September-December 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Biographical Note

Franklin B. Lukens served in Company E of the 3rd Regiment, New Jersey Infantry, during the American Civil War.

Scope and Content

F. B. Lukens wrote a letter to his mother and father on December 9, 1861, during the American Civil War. The letter is short and he mentions that there is a man missing who has not been found. He talks about a woman who is a Secessionist and her slaves. He closes by asking them to write soon. Transcript included. A second letter, donated in 2017, was written his brother from Virginia, September 1861, and discusses regiment news and a recent skirmish, and includes a request for items from home.

Letter

Unit Date September 12, 1861

Letter

Unit Date December 9, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Kyger, Henry

Unit Date October 17, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 25 (folder)

Scope and Content

This letter, written by Henry Kyger, was to his aunt and cousin, dated October 17, 1861, during the American Civil War. He writes of recent regiment activities, the location of the Confederate Army, his approval of General McClellan, and the destruction of the nearby countryside.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Miller, Henry

Unit Date October 13, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Scope and Content

This letter is written by Henry Miller to his friend on October 13, 1861, during the American Civil War. He says we spend most of our time cutting down trees. He describes their his daily tasks and military procedures. He closes by saying they are camped 12 miles outside of Washington in Virginia. Transcript included.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Nickerson, Melville P.

Unit Date September 21/24, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Biographical Note

Melville P. Nickerson served in the 2nd Regiment, Maine Infantry, during the American Civil War.

Scope and Content

Melville Nickerson, of the 2nd Maine Infantry, wrote a long letter to his sister on September 21, 1861, during the American Civil War. He starts off the letter saying it will be a long letter, and then on September 24th he adds that he had not had a chance to write again because he was on duty and the rest of the letter is added on then. He has been working on cutting down trees so they have better range with their guns. The letter is written with an old fashioned quill pen. He describes some of the other letters he has received. He also talks about his travel through Boston. Transcript included.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Penman, Abraham

Unit Date October 13-14, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Biographical Note

Abraham Penman served in the 12th Regiment, Pennsylvania Reserve Infantry (41st Volunteers), during the American Civil War.

Scope and Content

Abraham Penman wrote a letter to his wife on October 13, 1861, during the American Civil War. He says there numbers are increasing daily, and describes how their camp is set up. On the 14th, he adds he received a letter from her and is happy that everything is going well at home.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Rappleyea, Jeremiah C.

Unit Date February 16, 1862

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Biographical Note

Jeremiah C. Rappleyea served in the 1st Regiment, New Jersey Infantry, Company H, during the American Civil War.

Scope and Content

J.C. Rappleyea wrote a letter to his mother on February 16, 1862, during the American Civil War, and also included with this letter is the envelope it was mailed in. He tells his mother about the weather and his location, and says he is happy she made it safely to his Uncle Josey's. He says they may be ordered to move to Kentucky soon and if so he will see fighting. The next time he is paid he will send some to his

mother. He closes by saying he must go to church and includes a verse from a hymn.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Stewart, Peter

Unit Date September 18, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Biographical Note

Peter Stewart enlisted in the 79th New York Highland Guard with his brother, William, in May 1861, during the American Civil War.

Scope and Content

Peter Stewart's letter is to his sister and was written on September 18, 1861, during the American Civil War. He says he is in good health but has not written often because the company has had hard times. He mentions Bull Run. He describes a skirmish, and mentions William and his good health. He closes by saying he hopes the war doesn't last much longer and that he has to go back to work.

Existence and Location of Copies

The collection has been digitized and is available online.

Stickley, Peter H. (or B.)

Unit Date August 13, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 26 (folder)

Biographical Note

Peter Stickley was born on November 18, 1825, likely to Jacob H. and Catherine Stickley. He enlisted with the 10th Regiment, Virginia Infantry in April 1861 during the American Civil War. He died of disease at home in Strasburg, Virginia, in December 23, 1861. He is buried in Saint Pauls Lutheran Church Cemetery in Strasburg, Shenandoah County, Virginia.

Source: "Peter Blind Stickley", Findagrave.com, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16763248/peter-blind-stickley>.

Scope and Content

This folder contains a letter from Peter Stickley to his parents and family, dated August 13, 1861, during the American Civil War, from Fairfax Station, Virginia. Stickley writes of the weather, his regiment's location, the availability of supplies, regiment life, and things he would like from home.

Turrill, Reuben

Unit Date March 7, 1862

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Scope and Content

Reuben Turrill's letter is written to his Uncle and Aunt Covill on March 7, 1862, during American Civil War. He describes the brigade drill he has been participating in, and says they should receive orders soon. He says he likes being a soldier more than he thought he would, but still it is not the life he wants. The envelope is included with the letter. Transcript Included.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Van Fleet, Abraham

Unit Date September 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Scope and Content

Abraham Van Fleet wrote two letters to his parents in September 1861 during American Civil War. The first letter was written on September 10, 1861, and the envelope is included with the letter. He describes his

daily duties such as picket guard, and says the rebels fired cannons at them. He says as soon as he gets his pay he will send as much as he can spare to them. The second letter was written on September 30, 1861. He says that they have possession of Rebel entrenchments and describes how they got them. He says he also sent them the Baltimore Clipper which describes how they took the Hills. Transcripts included.

Letter

Unit Date September 10, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Letter

Unit Date September 30, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Way, Alexander

Unit Date August-December 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 29 (folder)

Biographical Note

Alexander Way was born in 1826. In October 1851, he married Emeline Serriur (who he calls "Emy" in his letters). The couple had at least four children. Prior to the American Civil War, he worked as a bookkeeper. Way enlisted with Company G, 1st New Jersey Volunteer Infantry as a captain in 1861. In 1863, he transferred to Company S and was promoted to major. He was wounded at Wilderness in 1864, and between that and his service at Gaines Farm in 1863, he was brevetted lieutenant colonel in 1865. Following the war, he worked in real estate and insurance. Way died in 1890 and is buried in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Scope and Content

This folder includes four letters from Alexander Way to his wife, Emy, written between September and December 1861, during the American Civil War. He writes about his concerns for her and their children, exchanges of mail/packages/money, and regiment orders and activities (including visiting a captured and wounded prisoner in the hospital).

Letter

Unit Date August 28, 1861

Letter

Unit Date September 27, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Letter

Unit Date December 2, 1861

Letter

Unit Date December 24, 1861

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

The envelope has been digitized and is available online.

[Unknown], David

Unit Date December 10, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 27 (folder)

Scope and Content

This folder includes a letter from "David" to "Respected Friend Kate," from Camp Pierpont, December 10, 1861, during the American Civil War. He writes of his company's health, who is visiting home on furlough, a foraging expedition, and regiment life.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

[Unknown], Frank

Unit Date August 5, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 28 (folder)

Scope and Content

This folder contains a letter from "Frank" to his cousin Henry, written from Georgetown on August 5, 1861, during the American Civil War. Frank writes of a visit from someone who fought at Manassas and the details of the battle and family news, especially his uncle's possible plans to sell land.

[Unknown], Jonathan

Unit Date August 26, 1861

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Scope and Content

This letter is written by Jonathan [Unknown] to Sallie and was written on August 26, 1861, during the American Civil War. He starts off saying that he knows she complains he doesn't write often but he writes as often as he could. She wants to visit him, but he says as happy as that would make him there is no where for them to stay. He talks about the clothing she sent him. He says the health of his regiment is not good and several have died of pneumonia. He says that he thinks they will advance on Washington soon. He tells her to give his love to several people. Transcript included.

Existence and Location of Copies

The letter has been digitized and is available online.

Print, "Return of Federal Foraging Parties into Camp, NE Annandale Chapel, Va."

Unit Date n.d.

folder 1