

A Guide to the Clayton G. Coleman Papers, 1858-1863 MS.0021

Clayton G. Coleman papers
1858-1863

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS.0021

Unit ID

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Unit Date

1858-1863

Language

English

Creator

Coleman, Clayton G. (Clayton Glanville), 1840-1908

Extent

4 items

Physical Location

Manuscripts stacks

Repository

Virginia Military Institute Archives

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Biographical / Historical

Clayton Glanville Coleman was born in Roxbury, New Kent County, Virginia in 1840. He entered VMI in July 1856 as a member of the Class of 1859, but did not graduate. After leaving VMI in 1858, he attended the University of Virginia and the Medical College of Virginia, from which he was graduated in March 1861.

Coleman served as a Lieutenant Colonel, 23rd Virginia Infantry Regiment (1861-1862) and after September 1862 he was a physician in the Confederate Medical Department. After the Civil War, he continued the practice of medicine until 1871, when he became a civil engineer.

Coleman married Anna Sherrard Breedin, daughter of Enoch C. and Lucy Singleton Breedin, of Winchester Virginia. The couple had four children: Sherrard, Robert, Lucy, and Caroline. Coleman died on October 7, 1908 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Scope and Contents

The Clayton G. Coleman papers consist of three letters written to Coleman's sister Lucy during the Civil War, and an autograph album containing inscriptions written by his classmates at VMI, the University of Virginia, and the Medical College of Virginia (circa 1858-1861).

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1859

Antietam, Battle of, Md., 1862

Confederate States of America. Army—Medical department

Winchester (Va.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1850-1859

Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Soldiers—Virginia—Correspondence

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Infantry Regiment, 23rd

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Medical care

University of Virginia—Students

Autograph albums

Correspondence

Steuart, George H. (George Hume), 1828-1903

Description of Subordinate Components

Autograph album

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1688

Unit Date 1856-1857

Language English

Scope and Contents

The album contains inscriptions and autographs of Clayton G. Coleman's classmates at VMI.

Keywords

Autograph albums

Civil War correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1689

Unit Date 1862-1863

Language English

Extent 3 items

Letter to Lucy Coleman

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1690

Unit Date 1862 September 27

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Winchester, Virginia. Letter discusses the Battle of Antietam and caring for the wounded.

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1859

Antietam, Battle of, Md., 1862

Confederate States of America. Army—Medical department

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate Correspondence

Jackson, Stonewall, 1824-1863

Lee, Robert E. (Robert Edward), 1807-1870

Transcription

Winchester Sept 27th/62 My Dear Lucy- Your very kind and interesting letter to Anna, bearing date the 9th inst., has just come to hand today through the hand of Mr. Howard, who came up from Orange; and although Louise had rec'd one of a later date from Fannie, yet I do assure you it was read with the greatest interest. I have been here now since the 16th, at which time I came from Md. We or rather I was in Md. ten days, during which time I was in Frederick City & Hagerstown. In the former county we were rec'd with a good deal of kind feeling, but with not so much in the latter (Washington Co.), as that county had already furnished 14 companies to the Federal Army, 11 of wh[ich] surrendered at Harper's Ferry. I suppose you have heard of the surrender of 13000 to Gen. Jackson with any quantity of arms, stores etc. but the hottest battle of the war was fought near Sharpsburg Md. on the 17th inst. The battle lasted all day and the loss was terrific on both sides, the enemy fighting with more desperation than ever before. We call it a victory and the Yankees did so at first too; we held the ground and both sides were too much [wasted] to renew the fight. Next day: we fell back across the Potomac and the enemy then commenced shelling us and boasted that they had driven us across. They acknowledge the loss of sixteen generals. We had two generals killed and ten wounded. Winchester has been perfectly crowded with the wounded- there having been more than 3000 here at one time and continually passing through. The N.Y. Tribune says if we had followed them, their army wd have been annihilated, and Gen. Lee says he could have done so with 5000 more fresh troops: but men had been marched so much and were so broken down, that we had 60,000 stragglers. Our army is now between Martinsburg and Williamsport and along the river. Our Brigade lost eight out of ten in the last fight, and my company lost 22 out of 23 men. I don't suppose you have heard of any of the killed in the different fights; well they are so many that I could not begin. Cols. Botts, Neff and Baylor of the 1st Brigade were killed in the battles at Manassas. Every one of your acquaintances in the 4th Ala. and the 11th Miss. were killed or wounded and indeed I reckon it is almost the case in every Regt. Joe Sherrard is a 1st Lieut. In a cavalry comp. I am going into the Med. Dept. and expect to go to Richmond next week for that purpose. We are staying at your Aunt Anne's and the house is crowded with wounded. Sunday 28th, Anna having stopped me from writing last night, I will finish my epistle this morning. We have just returned from church, where we heard service from Mr. Meredith and a most elaborate sermon from a Mr. Scott. Our army is at Bunker Hill, and it is thought we will have another fight there or at this place. Although I have been sick, yet I have had my hands full attending to the wounded; on the first day I dressed 43 wound[sic] and since that time I have had 27 under my charge. Even the sidewalks of the streets are full of wounded and there is a great scarcity of surgeons, and no place for their accommodation. There are now 6000 wounded here. Anna and I leave here for Louisa on Tuesday, where I shall go to Richmond to stand examination before the board. Your uncle Joe speaks of taking a house at Capon Springs and sending his family up there. Louise says if the enemy occupy W. again she will stay a short time to get some articles of clothing, which cannot be procured now, and then come out into our lines.

Letter to Lucy Coleman

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1691

Unit Date 1862 November 4

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Winchester, Virginia. Letter discusses hospitals and care of wounded, General George H. Steuart, movement of Longstreet's Corps, and other troop activity in the area.

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1859

Confederate States of America. Army—Medical department

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate Correspondence

Steuart, George H. (George Hume), 1828-1903

Transcription

Winchester Nov. 4th, 1862 Dear Lucy- Your very kind and truly interesting letter bearing the date October - came duly to hand before I left home and I do assure you it was read with the greatest pleasure and should have been answered before now; but I was just on the eve of leaving for W. and then upon arriving here, I had to write Fannie, as I had not written to her since she left Va. Anna returned to W. with me and has been here ever since. I have had my hands full ever since, for upon arriving here I was assigned to the charge of two Hospitals- the N.S. P. Church and Lovett House Hospital containing more than one hundred sick and wounded and a great many very bad cases: but although I have been until the last few days so busily engaged I have only lost five patients out of one hundred and eighty treated, while other Hosp'ts have lost a much greater proportion. Dr. McGuire told me that he lost fourteen patients on night before last at the Union Hosp't! There are not more than one thousand sick here now. Gen. Longstreet's corps moved over the Blue Ridge some days since and it is reported that two of his Divisions met Sigel's Corps at Piedmont Station [M.G.] R.R. and completely routed him; and it is also reported that Jackson's Corps, which for several days has been encamped about Berryville, was on the move yesterday to cut off his retreat. We have no forces now in front of W. except cavalry and I should not be surprised if the Yankee cavalry made or attempted a raid on this place at any time; although we have six companies of the 1st Md. Regt here doing nothing as usual, except disturbing the quietude of the town and committing depredations upon its citizens. Gen. George Stewart, who is nothing more in my opinion than a Baltimore rowdy is commandant of this post, assuring enough dignity but with far less politeness than an Eastern monarch. Gen. Stuart (JEB) had a fight with the "Yanks" yesterday at Aldie Loudoun Co. and took eight hundred cavalry prisoners. I do not think W. will be evacuated; for they could gain nothing by so doing; and then they cannot spare the requisite force as they need them in front of our army. I heard the other day by a gentleman just from Frederick City that the enemy had fifteen thousand sick and wounded there. I suppose you have seen that it is currently reported and believed at the North that Lord Lyons and Count Mercier, ministers from England and France, are about to arrive with instructions from their governments to propose an armistice of six months for the adjudication of a settlement of difficulties; and in case of a refusal by the North, the recognition of the Southern Confederacy follows. Your Uncle Joe went to Farmville about ten days ago and intends returning as soon as he makes out the quarterly return of the Bank, provided the Yankees do not take possession before he can do so. He took serv't Amelia with him at her request, as she was decidedly averse to being with Yankees again. We are sending off the sick very fast from here, and I do not know at what time we may be ordered off to another point. Anna and Louise start this week to Orange where they will pay a visit to sister Mary's from thence they will go to Louisa where they will spend some time, and then Louise will go to Richmond where you know she has a situation in the Treasury Dept. I am making an endeavor to be ordered to Staunton and Dr. Hay is very anxious to have me there. If I am successful, I shall keep house there, and will have Anna with me all the time. Louise had been quite sick, but is well again now. How do you like your situation and how do you like teaching? Write to us often and let us hear from you. I do not know where to direct this letter' so I shall direct it to Fannie to be forwarded. The girls and Aunt Ann all write with me in sending best love. Excuse haste and believe me as ever Your most affectionate brother C. G. Coleman, Jr. Direct to Bumpass Louisa Co.

Letter to Lucy Coleman

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1692

Unit Date 1863 February 25

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Jerdone Castle, Louisa County, Virginia. Letter discusses their mother's death.

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1859

Confederate States of America. Army—Medical department

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Correspondence

Transcription

Jerdone Caste- Louisa Co- Va Feb. 25th, 1863 My dear Lucy- Your very kind and exceedingly interesting letter bearing the date the [blank] inst. came to hand on yesterday, and I need hardly say that we were delighted to hear from you once more, for it had been more than a month since we had had a line from you, and we were feeling quite uneasy about you: for both Anna and I had written to you, and rec'd no answer. I suppose you will be surprised when you get this to find that we are at home! Yes we were called home by one of the most distressing and painful occurrences that is our lot to experience in this world- the death of our poor dear mother: she died very suddenly on the 15th inst. with either Diphtheria or membranous croup. So sudden was her death that even Julia who was staying with Mary and Mary herself only arrived a few minutes before she died. I rec'd a letter from Pa dated the 13th which only casually mentioned that she was a little complaining on the next day she went to bed and then Julia and Mary were sent for. A physician was sent for, a thing that is sadly needed in this neighborhood: and on the next morning she told them she was dying. I had just rec'd orders from the Medical Director to break up my hospital and he had given me orders to travel on an inspection tour from Richmond to Wilmington, through every Regt. and Hosp't in the whole Dept. and was turning over the Hospital supplies when I rec'd a dispatch (about 2 o'clock PM) that my mother was dead. I completed the task of turning over the supplies, and went before the Examining Board and asked for a furlough of twenty days, which they readily granted offering to give one as long as I wished, as they had been anxious for me to take one for some time on account of my health. We left Goldsboro the same night at nine o'clock, and reached home on Wednesday in time to be present at the burial. Just to think of it!! That there was no other white person there except Pa, and she was so anxious to see her children before she died. But it is said that everything happens for the best and we should bear everything with an even resignation. William got here on Monday evening and Johnie[sic] and Clarence on Friday from the Va. Mil. Institute. We are quite lonely here now- no one but Pa and Julia here: Mary went home on Monday, William on yesterday and Johnnie and Clarence today. We saw Louise in Richm'd as we came through; she was suffering a little from a cold. She and Miss Nellie Palmer are coming up on Saturday to spend awhile with us. I shall not return to N.C. if I can help it, but shall endeavor to be stationed somewhere in Virginia. No more at present. I wish you could come on and stay sometime with us. Excuse haste. Write soon to Your fond and affectionate brother C.G. Coleman, Jr