

John Castelli Rathbone, Colonel, Civil War Letter and Parole Pledge, 1862 A&M 3781

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1862



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Abstract

Single leaf with two documents on front and back (recto and verso) respectively. On one side is an apparently unsent letter authored by Colonel John Castelli Rathbone, 11th West Virginia Volunteer Infantry, from Spencer (West) Virginia to the commanding officer at Ravenswood, (West) Virginia, dated 2 September 1862. Rathbone urgently requests reinforcements against an expected attack by Confederate cavalry. The verso is a "true copy" of the parole pledge signed by Rathbone and other members of his unit after their surrender to Confederate General Albert G. Jenkins, dated 2 September 1862. Rathbone's unit was captured during Jenkins' Raid on western Virginia. See historical note for further information concerning Colonel Rathbone.

Creator

Rathbone, John Castelli

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Biographical / Historical

John Castelli Rathbone, or "Cass Rathbone" as he was better known, joined the 11th West Virginia Volunteer Infantry 29 October 1861. He was promoted to the rank of colonel 15 February 1862. His troops, lacking sufficient arms and other supplies, were attacked by Confederate General Albert G. Jenkins and his troops at Spencer, (West) Virginia on 2 September 1862. Rathbone was compelled to surrender to Jenkins and he and his troops were taken prisoner. Rathbone was paroled later that year.

Rathbone was dismissed from the service 7 January 1863 for cowardly conduct. Rathbone's dismissal is remarkable, as it was done without a court martial or even an explication of the charges against him. His dismissal was eventually revoked by President Andrew Johnson on 18 May 1866. However, Rathbone's reputation never recovered.

Before joining the Union army Rathbone had been the founder and operator of the oil fields at Burning Springs, (West) Virginia. He argued persistently for the importance of the oil fields, but was largely ignored by his superiors. Burning Springs was destroyed on 9 May 1863 by Confederate Brigadier General William E. Jones.

Keywords

Roane County (W. Va.)

Civil War -- Jenkins, Albert G. Brigade

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Prisoners and prisons

Civil War - raids and raiders.

Civil War - Union soldiers - West Virginia.

Civil War - West Virginia 11th Infantry.

Civil War - West Virginia.

Civil War - WV 11th. Inf.

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
Jenkins, Albert Gallatin, 1830-1864
Rathbone, John Castelli