

10-2004

MS-061: Charles A. Rubright Collection

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Recommended Citation

Light, Stephen H., "MS-061: Charles A. Rubright Collection." (October 2004). Special Collections and College Archives Finding Aids. Special Collection and College Archives, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College.

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MS-061: Charles A. Rubright Collection

Description

The Charles A. Rubright Collection consists primarily of three journals he kept throughout the war and a letter he sent from Andersonville Prison camp to his sister. Also included are postwar news clippings about Rubright, the hymn book he kept while in the army, and a letter addressed to him from a Confederate veteran thanking him for a donation made towards the establishment of a soldiers home for infirm veterans.

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Keywords

Civil War, 106th Pennsylvania, 69th Pennsylvania, Seven Days battles, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Overland Campaign, Petersburg, Andersonville Prison

Disciplines

History | Military History | United States History

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special collections

Guide to MS-061:
Charles A. Rubright Collection



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections and College Archives

Stephen Light
October 2004

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Processed by Stephen Light
October 2004

Size

1 box, 0.27 feet

Dates

Inclusive: 1862 – 1884

Biographical Note

Charles Andrew Rubright (May 14th, 1842-1915) was born in Mielhousen, Germany, the son of Bernard and Marie Rubright. At a very early age, Rubright's family immigrated to America, settling in the town of Jarrettsville, Maryland. Following Bernard's death in 1850, Marie Rubright married a man by the name of Daniel Dorman and the family moved to Williamsport, Pennsylvania in December of 1856. In Williamsport Rubright began to learn the trade of bricklaying. On August 15th, 1861, at the age of 19, Rubright enlisted as a private into what would become Company F of the 106th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Rubright served throughout the war, rising to the rank of corporal and taking charge of the regiment's pioneers. He saw action in many of the important battles and campaigns of the Eastern theater, including: the Seven Days battles, Antietam, Fredericksburg, the Chancellorsville campaign, Gettysburg, Grant's Overland campaign, and Petersburg.

At the battle of Jerusalem Plank Road (part of the siege of Petersburg) on June 22nd, 1864, Rubright was captured. Eventually winding up at the notorious Andersonville Prison camp, he would remain there until the camp was liberated on April 28th, 1865. At the time of his liberation, Corporal Rubright weighed a meager 84.5 pounds.

Following the war, Rubright became a successful bricklayer and architect, opening his own Brick Works and designing many public buildings in Williamsport, including two railway depots. He married Amelia Trousseau and they had three children: Carrie Mabel, William Charles, and Rutherford Dorman. Rubright died in 1915 in Corning, New York.

106th Pennsylvania Volunteers

The 106th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers was for the most part organized in the city of Philadelphia, with Turner G. Morehead as its Colonel. Soon after moving to the front the 106th was placed into the Philadelphia Brigade, commanded by Colonel E.D. Baker. At the battle of Balls Bluff (where Baker was killed) the regiment sat on the north side of the Potomac, unable to reinforce the other regiments of the brigade because of an inadequate supply of transportation across the river. The regiment took part of McClellan's Peninsula campaign, where it was present at the siege of Yorktown and fought in the battle of Fair Oaks and during the Seven Days. At the battle of Antietam one-third of

the regiment fell in less than ten minutes in a stand made near the Dunker Church. It again fought bravely at the battle of Fredericksburg, remaining under enemy fire from noon until darkness. At the battle of Gettysburg the regiment bore a significant role in turning back Wright's Confederate brigade at the angle on the 2nd day of the battle, capturing over 200 Confederates in the process. The regiment took part in Grant's 1864 campaign, being especially hard hit in assaulting the Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania on May 12th. The regiment continued to serve through to Petersburg, suffering heavily during the campaign. On July 27th, 1864 those who had reenlisted for 3 more years were organized into a 3 company battalion, and continued to serve until the end of the war with the 69th Pennsylvania.

Scope and Content Note

The Charles A. Rubright Collection consists primarily of three journals he kept throughout the war and a letter he sent from Andersonville Prison camp to his sister. Also included are postwar news clippings about Rubright, the hymn book he kept while in the army, and a letter addressed to him from a Confederate veteran thanking him for a donation made towards the establishment of a soldiers home for infirm veterans.

The journals make up the bulk of the collection, and contain almost daily entries from October of 1861 through December of 1863. They provide a first hand look at life in the army, and in some cases provide vivid battle descriptions. Among the best of these descriptions is Rubright's account of the battle of Gettysburg. His journal contains an excellent description of the fighting on the second and third days. One of the newspaper clippings contains a specific account of Rubright's personal involvement in the battle. This account describes how the pioneers of the regiment were taken captive while working in front of the main line, but were able to reverse the roles on their captors when the rest of the regiment charged and drove the Confederates back. While several accounts of this event exist, they all seem to come long after the war (around the 1890s), and the fact that Rubright himself doesn't mention the event calls into question whether or not it actually occurred.

All of the journals have been transcribed, attempting not to change any spelling or grammatical errors. In some cases errors which may have confused the reader have been corrected in footnotes at the bottom of a page.. Rubright's first journal entry, from October 22, 1861 – March 14th 1862, contains two separate copies. It would appear that he copied his original entry and sent the copy home for posterity's sake. In this case only one of the copies was transcribed, as noted.

This collection would be useful for those looking for an interesting and vivid account of a soldier's life, including camp life in general as well as battle experiences. Not all the battle descriptions are as vivid as they could be, but there are few that are well detailed. Rubright's letter home from Andersonville would also be of interest for those studying prisoners and prison camps.

Box List

Box 1

- 1-1 Journal Entries, October 22, 1861 – March 14th, 1862 (27 pages)
- 1-2 Journal Entries, June 21, 1862 – February 28, 1863 (90 pages)
- 1-3 Journal Entries, March 1, 1863 – December 31, 1863 (37 pages)
- 1-4 Rubright to sister, from Andersonville Prison, July 14th, 1864
- 1-5 Soldier's Hymn Book
- 1-6 John E. Lane (R.E. Lee Camp, No. 1), to Rubright, July 21, 1884
- 1-7 Miscellaneous Newspaper clippings
(Includes sketch of Rubright upon release from Andersonville and account of Rubright's actions at the battle of Gettysburg, July 2nd 1863.)

Contact Information

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