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007-02-01
C. Fiske Harris Collection on the Civil War and Slavery Manuscripts
1852-1865

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Number: 007-02-01

Title: C. Fiske Harris Collection on the Civil War and Slavery Manuscripts

Creator: Harris, C. Fiske (Caleb Fiske), 1818-1881

Dates: 1852-1865 (bulk 1861-1865)

Quantity: 6 boxes (total 2.4 linear feet)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition: Original materials purchased from the estate of C. Fiske Harris in 1884 with gift from the Rhode Island Library Association; George M. Turner letters acquired by the library in 1961; Wight letters donated by Louise Harris; Gallagher letters purchased from Tyson's in 1964.

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

Custodial history: Material was acquired from collectors.

Processed by: Processed by Robin Alario in 2012. Finding aid was updated by Kate Wells in 2018.

Conservation: Unknown.

Language: Materials are in English.

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Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to use the following citation format:
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INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Separated material Not applicable.

Published descriptions Not applicable.

Location of originals Not applicable.

Location of copies Not applicable.

Publication note Not applicable.

Subject headings Rhode Island-- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Sources
 United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Personal narratives
 United States. Army -- Military life -- History -- Personal narratives
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 United States. Army. Rhode Island Artillery Regiment, 1st (1861-1865)
 United States. Army. Rhode Island Artillery Regiment, 3rd (1861-1865)
 United States. Army. Rhode Island Infantry Regiment, 2nd (1861-1865)
 United States. Army. Rhode Island Infantry Regiment, 3rd (1861-1865)
 United States. Army. Rhode Island Infantry Regiment, 5th (1861-1865)
 United States. Army. Rhode Island Infantry Regiment, 11th (1861-1865)
 United States. Army. Connecticut Infantry Regiment, 18th (1861-1865)
 United States. Army. Infantry--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
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 South Carolina--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
 Florida --History--Civil War, 1861-1865
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 African Americans--Attitudes--History--19th century.
 African-Americans --South Carolina--Social life and customs--19th century.
 George Washington (ship)

 Diaries. lcgft
 Personal correspondence. lcgft
 Photographs. lcgft

 Alexander, Brown L.
 Bacon, Henri Eugene

Barber, James Albert
Blackman, George B.
Blair, John
Bullock, Ellen
Bullock, John C.
Bullock, Robert
Cady, James
Chandler, E.A.
Collins, M.E.
Dailey, Albert
Dailey, Charlotte F.
Elsbee, James H
Gallagher, John M.
Gaylord, N.M
Hadley, Ambrose
Irving, Nathan
Nickerson, Thomas O.
Paine, Amos
Randall, George W.
Robins, Charles W.
Spencer, Jonathan
Sprague, William, 1830-1915
Sweet, Esek J.
Thornton, Reuben A.
Turner, George M.
Turner, Henry E.
Wight, Emma
Wight, Mage
Wight, Samuel
Williams, Alonzo

SEE ALSO

007-01-01, C. Fiske Harris Collection on Civil War and Slavery Monographs
007-01-02, C. Fiske Harris Collection on Civil War and Slavery Pamphlets
007-04-01, C. Fiske Harris Collection on Civil War and Slavery Ephemera
005-02-01, Daniel Berkeley Updike Autograph Collection
022-02, Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors Society Records

HISTORICAL NOTE

The collection includes letters and papers from a variety of individuals who served in Rhode Island military units during the American Civil War.

Lieutenant Henri Eugene Bacon (1837-1897) served as 2nd Lieutenant, Company F, 11th Regiment, Rhode Island Infantry. He was born in Pawtucket, Bristol County, MA (now Rhode Island) and worked as a bookkeeper at the time he served in the war. He served for nine months, writing letters home to

his wife Emma and their two young children, Lillian (1) and Walter (infant). Bacon was mustered out on July 13, 1863 and returned home to his family.

Corporal James Albert Barber (1841-1925) was born in Westerly, Rhode Island on July 11, 1841 to Matthew and Phebe (Hall) Barber. He worked as a fisherman and boatman for most of his life and served as Captain of the Watch Hill Life Saving Station. At the age of 20, he enlisted in the 1st Regiment, Rhode Island Light Artillery. He was eventually made Corporal in Company G, 1st Rhode Island Volunteer Light Artillery. Barber was at the battles of Antietam and Fredericksburg and involved in other action with his company from November 1861 through June 1865. In April 1865, at Petersburg, Virginia, he was one of 20 chosen artillerymen who voluntarily accompanied an infantry assaulting party and captured guns to turn on the enemy, an act for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on June 16, 1866. Barber married Hannah J. Tourgee on March 14, 1865. They had seven sons, four of whom survived to adulthood. Barber died on June 26, 1925 and is buried in River Bend Cemetery in Westerly, RI.

Corporal John Blair (about 1842-1865) served in Company C, 2nd Regiment, Rhode Island Infantry. Records note that he was born in Scotland about 1842. He mustered in on June 5, 1861 in Providence, R.I. and was promoted to Corporal on 23 Dec 1862. He was possibly killed on May 5, 1865 at the Battle of Wilderness.

Private John S. Bullock (1843-1862) was born to Robert H. and Ellen Bullock of Bristol, Rhode Island and served in Company D, 3rd Regiment, Rhode Island Heavy Artillery. He died at the age of 19 on Jan 18, 1862 from illness in Hilton Head, South Carolina and was buried in Beaufort National Cemetery.

Private James Cady (born ca. 1841) served as a private in Company C. 18th Connecticut Volunteers. He was from the area of South Woodstock, CT. He enlisted on 1 Dec 1863 in Springfield, Massachusetts and mustered out on 27 June, 1865 at Harpers Ferry, VA.

Mrs. Charlotte F. Dailey (1820-1885) was a Providence reformer. In December 1862, Governor Sprague requested that Dr. Lloyd Morton and Mrs. Charlotte F. Dailey take a tour of inspection to various hospitals to ascertain the condition of sick and disabled Rhode Island soldiers. Mrs. Dailey traveled for 5 weeks and 4 days visiting 61 hospitals and 5 camps in Washington, DC, Baltimore, Md. York, Harrisburg and Philadelphia, Pa., Newark, NJ, New York, NY from December 1862 to January 1863. While she traveled, Mrs. Dailey wrote letters home to her husband Albert (1819-1877), a Providence lumber merchant, who was home with their children Charlotte (Lottie) age 19, Albert age 15, Martin age 12 and Maude age 7.

Walter E. Gardiner (1817-1885) of South Kingston, R.I. worked in the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the Civil War. He died on March 13, 1885 and is buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Corporal John M. Gallagher (1843-1864) of Exeter, R.I. served with Co. C. 5th Regiment. RI Volunteers from 1862-1864. He was originally enrolled in the Burnside Division in Exeter, RI October 23, 1861 and was mustered in December 16, 1861. He re-enlisted as a Veteran Volunteer on January 5, 1864. In

February of that year, he became ill and convalesced in the General Hospital in Washington, D.C. Corporal Gallagher died on May 21, 1864 in Foster General Hospital, New Berne, N.C.

A group of letters in the collection were sent to George Brayton Blackmar of Warwick, R.I. from various individuals. Blackmar (1844-1908) was the son of Brayton and Polly Blackmar. In 1865, he was working as a store clerk. It is unclear why he didn't serve in the military during the Civil War or how he knew the individuals who corresponded with him.

Private Ambrose F. Hadley (1842-1924) was born in Massachusetts and lived in East Greenwich, R.I. He enlisted on June 5, 1861 and served with Company H. 2nd Regiment RI Volunteers. He reenlisted on Dec. 26, 1863, was transferred into Company C and was wounded at the Battle of Wilderness on May 5, 1864. He mustered out on 13 Jul 1865 at Hall's Hill, VA. He later settled in Nebraska as a farmer. He died on May 18, 1924 and is buried in Fall River county, South Dakota.

Private Nathan Irving (1845-1911) was born in Providence, R.I. and was living in Warwick, R.I. in 1860 which is likely where he became friends with George B. Blackmar to whom he wrote. He enlisted on Aug. 4, 1862 in Company E, Illinois 72nd Infantry Regiment. He transferred to the 97th Company 2nd Battalion Illinois Veteran Reserve Corps on Rock Island Garrison in Illinois in Oct. 1863. He remained in Rock Island after the war until his death in 1911.

Private George W. Randall (1840-1899) of Providence served with Company D. 11th Regiment RI Volunteers. He was mustered in October 1, 1862 and mustered out July 13, 1863. He is buried in Locust Grove Cemetery, Providence, R.I. It is unclear how he knew George B. Blackmar to whom he wrote.

Private Charles W. Robins served in Battery E. Rhode Island Light Artillery, Brineys Division. He enlisted in the National Cadets on July 27th, 1861. In 1864, he served with the Randolph Battery Division B 3rd Corps. It is unclear how he knew George B. Blackmar to whom he wrote.

Private Reuben A. (L.) Thornton (1842-1918) was born in Johnston and lived in West Warwick, R.I. He served with Company C. 11th Rhode Island Volunteers in Washington DC and was mustered out of service on July 13, 1863. It is unclear how he knew George B. Blackmar to whom he wrote.

Corporal George Mead Turner (1843-1917) was born in Providence, R.I. in 1843 to Amos and Betsy Turner. "Pop" as he was generally known, enlisted on November 20, 186 into Company A. 3rd R.I. Artillery He served primarily in Hilton Head, South Carolina. He was on the U.S. Gunboat George Washington when it was attacked and blown up by the rebels. He barely escaped by swimming to shore. He mustered out on Aug. 31, 1864. He moved back to Providence where he married Julia Turner and worked as a teamster. He is buried in Swan Point Cemetery, Providence, R.I. His best friend was Alonzo Williams, of Scituate, also of Company A. For more information about Turner, see Hammerstrom, "Souvenirs of War," *Rhode Island History*, 70.2 (Summer/Fall 2012): 74-86.

Dr. Henry E. Turner (1816-1897) was a physician from Newport during the time of the Civil War. He and his wife Anne had four children.

Sergeant Samuel Wight (1839-1863) was born in Rhode Island in 1839 to Alfred and Mary Ann Gross Wight. He had one older sister Sarah (b. 1838), and two older sisters Marietta (b. 1842) and Emma (b.

1847). He married Mage (1831-1905) and He enlisted in the 2nd Regt RI Vols on June 23, 1861. He was promoted to corporal on Aug. 1, 1861 and to sergeant on July 25, 1862. He died on May 10, 1863 in Campbell Hospital in Washington, DC of a wound to the thigh received at the Battle of Salem Heights and is buried in Soldier's Home Cemetery in Washington, D.C. and has a grave marker in Johnston, R.I.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

This collection contains original manuscript writings of relating to the experience of Rhode Islanders serving in the Civil War. The bulk of the collection includes correspondence between Rhode Island soldiers and loved ones at home. Also included is correspondence of Charlotte F. Dailey who inspected Union convalescent hospitals and reported on the experience of Rhode Island troops. Also included is a field diary for the year 1862 written by Private James Albert Barber of Company C, 1st Regiment, Rhode Island Light Artillery. The diary, written in the field, recounts the daily activities and actions of Company C. The handwriting is difficult to read and Barber's spelling is largely phonetic but the diary contains first hand accounts of some of the major battles of the war immediately after they happened. As a group, the materials depicts camp life for soldiers, battles and interactions with Confederates, slaves and free Blacks as well as discuss domestic matters on the homefront.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

The collection is arranged alphabetically by name and then chronologically by document. Acquisitions made after the initial gift were integrated into the original Harris Collection at an unknown date.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

| Title | Date | Box | Folder |
|---|----------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Bacon, Henri Eugene papers Includes 72 letters, map of "A" camp on Miner's Hill and military pass. Notable people mentioned in Lieutenant Bacon's letters are: Col. Rogers, "Old Blinker Pitman" formerly of 11 th Regiment now in command of 2 nd R.I., George Drury, George Hall, Mess Capt. Taft, Lewis Fairbothor, Lieut. Hudson, Byron Johnson, Henry Tyler of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, Capt. Lawrence, Gen. Cowdin, Capt. Taft, Quartermaster Seward of the 1 st RI Cavalry, Gen. Hallack, and Gen. Gordon | Oct. 27, 1862 - June 24, 1863 | 1 | 1-73 |
| Barber, James Albert field diary Includes original and facsimile copy of the diary, obituary and photograph. | 1862 | 1 2 | 74 1-3 |
| Blair, John letters | Oct. 5, 186? - | 2 | 4-5 |

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|--|-----------------------------------|---|-------|
| Includes two letters written from Camp Brightwood. Letters mention Washington, D.C., rebels along the Potomac, thoughts about "negroes", fight at Bolivar opposite Harpers Ferry. | Oct. 20, 186? | | |
| Bullock, John C. letters Includes 11 letters from and to Bullock as well as letters related to Bullock's death. Bullock's letters were written from locations including Camp Sherman, Fort Monroe, Camp Hamilton, and Fort Welles. Letters related to his death were written to the family from various members of Company D, 3rd RI Volunteers. | Oct. 11, 1861 - March 11, 1862 | 2 | 6-17 |
| Burnside, Ambrose plate | n.d. | 2 | 18 |
| Cady, James letters Includes 21 letters (originals and typed transcripts) from Cady written from Martinsburg, VA, Harpers Ferry, VA, Halls Town, VA and U.S. Hospitals in Claysville, MD and Chester, PA. All letters are to Amos Paine in South Woodstock, CT. | Jan. 6, 1864 - June 14, 1865 | 2 | 19-40 |
| Cady, James (A. Lincoln) dispatch Includes dispatch to John D. Stevenson from Harper's Ferry from A. Lincoln and reply | Feb. 17, 1865 | 2 | 41 |
| Chandler, E.A. letter Includes letter from Chandler to cousin George M. Turner written from headquarters Bat E 1st RI, Fort Wadsworth, VA. | Jan. 5, 1865 | 2 | 42 |
| Collins, M.E. letter Includes letter to cousin George M. Turner. | July 17, 1864 | 2 | 43 |
| Dailey, Charlotte F. report "Mrs. Dailey's Report Upon the Disabled Rhode Island Soldiers" Report Upon the Rhode Island Soldiers; Their Names, Condition, and in what hospital they are. Made to His Excellency, Gov. Sprague, And presented to the general assembly of Rhode Island, January session, 1863 by Mrs. Charlotte F. Dailey Commissioned by the Governor to visit the hospitals, etc." Providence: Alfred Anthony, Printer to the State, 1863 | 1863 | 2 | 44 |
| Dailey, Charlotte F. letters | Dec.. 18, 1862 - May 12, 1863 | 2 | 45-58 |

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|--|----------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Includes 13 letters from Dailey to family members from National House, Philadelphia and Baltimore and 1 letter to Dailey from Gov. William Sprague. | | | |
| Dailey, Albert letters Includes 4 letters from Dailey to his wife Charlotte F. Dailey. | Jan. 17, 1862 - Dec. 31, 1862 | 2 | 59-61 |
| Gardiner, Walter E. letters Includes 7 letters from Gardiner several of which are likely to Charlotte F. Dailey. | March 15, 1852 - July 7, 1863 | 2 | 62-68 |
| Gallagher, John M. letters Includes 15 letters written by Gallagher to Jonathan Spencer of Exeter, RI and to sister Mary J. Gallagher. | Jan. 10, 1862 - March 8, 1863 | 2 | 69-83 |
| Hadley, Ambrose letter Includes 1 letter from Hadley to George B. Blackman of Warwick, RI. | April 16, 1864 | 2 | 84 |
| Irving, Nathan letters Includes 2 letters written by Irving to George B. Blackman of Warwick, RI. | May 4, 1864 - Sept. 4, 1864 | 2 | 85-86 |
| Randall, George W. letters Includes 3 letters from Randall to Joe Dailey | Oct. 20, 1862 - Oct. 31, 1862 | 2 | 87-89 |
| Robins, Charles W. letters Includes 17 letters from Robins to George B. Blackman of Warwick, RI written from Camp Sherman, Fort Monroe, and various locations in Virginia. | Oct. 11, 1861 - Oct. 20, 1864 | 2 3 | 90-93 1-13 |
| Thornton, Reuben A. letter Includes 1 letter from Thornton to George B. Blackman of Warwick, RI. | March 15, 1863 | 3 | 14 |
| Turner, George M. biographical notes | n.d. | 3 | 15 |
| Turner, George M. letters Includes 197 letters from Turner to family members; written from Camp Sherman, Camp Sprague, Hilton Head, Beaufort and Folly Island,, SC, Jacksonville, FL. | Sept. 11, 1861 - | 3 4 | 16-114 1-98 |

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|---|---------------------------------|---|--------|
| Turner, George M. casualty lists Includes 2 casualty lists. First from 4th detachment on George Washington; second of the 3rd Regt R.I. Volunteers at the Battle of Jones Island. | n.d. | 4 | 99-100 |
| Turner, George M. table of distances from Cummings Point Battery | n.d. | 4 | 101 |
| Turner, Henry E. summons Includes Summons to Surgeon H.E. Turner May 25, 1863; Summons to Surgeon H.E. Turner August 29, 1864; Handwritten note to Surgeon H.E. Turner Head Quarters, Artillery Co. Newport May 9, 1863 from Henry Bull, Jr. Clr[?] and Qtr. Master | May 25, 1863 - Aug. 29, 1864 | 5 | 1 |
| Turner, Henry E. treasury notes Includes payment due notices, notes, letters related to monies owed. | Aug. 24, 1861 - Jan. 8, 1863 | 5 | 2 |
| Wight, Samuel letters Includes 93 letters written by Wight to wife Mage Wight, written from Washington, D.C., Camp Brightwood, Camp Winfield Scott, various locations in Virginia and Campbell Hospital. Includes letters written by Mage Wight to her husband Samuel. Also includes letters and papers written to Mage Wight related to the death, funeral and pension of Samuel Wight. | June 23, 1861 - Jan. 1, 1864 | 5 | 3-95 |
| Wight, Samuel daguerrotypes | n.d. | 6 | |
| Anthony, Henry J. pocket bible | n.d. | 6 | |
| Whipple, Miss M.E. travel pass to New Orleans | Oct. 22, 1864 | 6 | |
| Miscellaneous cartes de visite and photographs | n.d. | 6 | |