

BURTON, JAMES, D. 1865?

James Burton diary, 1864

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Burton, James, d. 1865?
Title: James Burton diary, 1864
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 120
Extent: .25 linear ft. (1 box)
Abstract: Diary of New York Union soldier James Burton mainly while he was imprisoned at Andersonville Prison in 1864.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

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Source

Purchase, 1975.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], James Burton diary, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by LMM, November 7, 1975.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Lieutenant James Burton, of Syracuse, New York, enlisted in the New York Volunteers (Company F, 122nd Infantry Regiment) in 1862. He fought with his regiment until April

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20, 1864, when he was captured at Plymouth, North Carolina and subsequently sent to the Confederate Military Prison at Andersonville, Georgia. He remained at Andersonville five months. On September 11, because of the fall of Atlanta, Confederate officials removed most of the prisoners to other camps. Buxton was sent to a camp near Charleston, South Carolina. On December 10, he was exchanged and returned to his unit. According to a note in his diary, Burton died in 1864. However, evidence in a newspaper clipping about Burton's death, laid in the diary, indicates that he died of consumption at Syracuse probably in 1865 and was buried at Cazenova, New York.

Neither the date of Burton's birth nor the exact date of his death are known. The only relative mentioned by name is his wife, Sarah.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of an 1864 diary of James Burton. From January through April 20, Buxton's regiment was in North Carolina, at first near New Berne, then Plymouth. The entries during this time are irregular and only occasionally contain details of the military situation or observations about the area. Most of the diary (April 20 - September 11) was written while Burton was a prisoner at Andersonville. He writes about the crowded conditions, the poor rations, lack of proper clothing and shelter, rumors of exchanges and attempted escapes, and the sickness and death around him. On many days he enters only the word "monotony." On September 11, he was among a group of prisoners removed from Andersonville to a camp near Charleston, South Carolina where on October 14, 1864, he ran out of space in the small diary he kept. There are no entries after this date except for a brief note to say that he "got aboard of a boat under the old Flag Dec. 10/64." Although the entries in the diary are not lengthy, the writing is clear and the observations well expressed so that Burton's diary gives a fairly good account of the life of a prisoner at Andersonville.

