Descriptive Summary

Creator: Morrison, Silas.
Title: Silas Morrison letters, 1862-1865
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 385
Extent: 1 microfilm reel (MF)
Abstract: Microfilm copy of the letters of teacher and Union Army sergeant Silas Morrison during the Civil War.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
Unrestricted access.

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Source

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], Silas Morrison letters, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing
Processed by EK, 1961.

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Collection Description

Biographical Note
Silas Morrison was sergeant, Co. B, 110th Ohio Regiment. The donor of the letters, who is his
great-niece, says that he had been a school teacher before going into the army. In 1862 - 1863
he was in western Virginia in the Winchester and Strasburg area. In 1864 he was in Co. K, 3d
Regiment, Veteran Reserve Corps, awaiting assignment in the vicinity of Washington, D. C.
In May of that year he had been in an army hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, but the letters give no
indication of when or how he came to be hospitalized. In 1865 he was in camps in Pennsylvania
and Connecticut, waiting to be discharged. He was quite well educated and wrote at some length.
He was apparently related to David Hamilton, whose letters are also on reel 280. Both men seem
to have been of Maryland background.

Scope and Content Note
The collection consists of a microfilm copy of nine letters of Silas Morrison from 1862-1865.
All but the first of which were written by Silas Morrison to his brother, John L. Morrison. The
first letter is from John Kough, a Maryland cousin. From December 9, 1862-May 31, 1863, Silas
wrote four letters from camps in Virginia. In the first (Camp Jessie, New Creek, Hampshire
County, Virginia) he gives a lengthy description of the location of the camp, makes derogatory
comments about officers, says he is studying "phonography" and teaching it to another soldier.
The effect of his remarks about officers and the leadership of the Union Army in general is
that the common soldiers are willing and able, but that the cause is suffering from incompetent
military leadership on high levels. (This was before Grant took command in the East.) The next
3 letters were written from camp near Winchester, Virginia, January 2, 1863 and he tells about a
march from Petersburg to Moorefield in December 1862, and a scouting party towards Strasburg
on which they had to climb the Branch Mountains. He describes conditions in the Shenandoah
Valley at that time. On May 20, 1863 he speaks of the reactions in camp to Vallandigham's
arrest. Again on May 31, 1863 he mentions his feeling that if the army had better leadership the
war would soon be over. On May 22, 1864 he writes from the U. S. General Hospital, Cleveland,
Ohio, but does not say how or when he came to be hospitalized. He had been transferred from
the Seminary U. S. General Hospital at Columbus, Ohio. By this time John Morrison was also
in the army. The remaining letters (November 24, 1864-July 2, 1865) were written after Silas
Morrison's transfer to the Veteran Reserve Corps. On December 8, 1864 he writes from Depot
Camp, V. R. C., Cliffburne Barracks, D.C., where he is waiting for assignment to duty. On May
8, 1865 he is in Scranton, Pennsylvania, still in the army. He speaks of his sorrow at Lincoln's
death and pays an eloquent tribute to Lincoln. In his July 2, 1865 he is at a Depot Camp at
Hartford, Connecticut, awaiting his discharge from the army.

Arrangement Note
Arranged in chronological order.