

WIGHTMAN, EDWARD KING, 1862-1865.

Edward King Wightman letters, 1862-1865

Emory University
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Wightman, Edward King, 1862-1865.
Title: Edward King Wightman letters, 1862-1865
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 463
Extent: 1 microfilm reel (MF)
Abstract: Microfilm copy of the letters of Union soldier and journalist Edward King Wightman, who served in the 9th New York Infantry Regiment during the Civil War.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Source

Loaned for microfilming, 1965.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Edward King Wightman letters, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by MRD, 1965.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Edward King Wightman (1835-January 15, 1865) enlisted as a private in Company B, 9th New York Infantry Regiment (Hawkins' Zouaves), August 30, 1862. He graduated from New York University in 1854 and obtained his master's degree in 1857. During the five years prior to his enlistment he wrote for various trade journals in New York City. He served first in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry, then in the fall of 1862 he went to Warrenton, Falmouth and then to Fredericksburg, Virginia where he took part in the battle of December 13. Early in February 1863 his regiment was transferred to Newport News where he served for sometime as clerk for the provost marshal of the 9th Corps. In April he moved to Suffolk, Virginia, and the following month, when the original members of the regiment were sent home, he and other recruits were transferred to Capt. Morris' battery, 3rd Division, 9th Army Corps. About mid-June, 1863 he was transferred to Company H, 3rd New York Infantry Regiment. He spent the remainder of his service with this unit. In July 1863, he participated in a raid on the railroad between Richmond and Fredericksburg, and the following month moved to Folly Island near Charleston where, except for a 30-day furlough, he remained until late April 1864 when the regiment moved to Virginia and participated in skirmishes and battles in the Petersburg area. He participated in the unsuccessful attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina on December 25, 1864 and was killed in the second and successful attack on Fort Fisher the following month.

Publication Note

Wightman, Edward King, *From Antietam to Fort Fisher : the Civil War letters of Edward King Wightman, 1862-1865*, Rutherford : Fairleigh Dickenson University Press ; c1985. London ; Cranbury, NJ Associated University Presses, c1985.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of a microfilm copy of 135 typescript letters by Edward King Wightman written mainly to his father and one letter dated January 16, 1865, by Sergeant John W. Knowles, which tells of Wightman's death. The fact that Wightman was an educated and articulate man is clearly evident in the letters which give in great detail various aspects of army life including food, clothing, equipment, diversions, discipline, morale, officer-soldier relations, and attitude toward Confederates. They are also more candid than those of most enlisted men. He is particularly critical of regimental and company officers but high in praise of the enlisted men. His regiment was in a supporting role at the battle of the Crater; he was very critical of the performance of the African American troops in that engagement, though he spoke favorably of their conduct in an earlier engagement. He was patriotic and his morale, which was remarkably good, reached its lowest ebb in the weeks following Fredericksburg.

Arrangement Note

Arranged in chronological order.

