

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Smith, Henry Rogers, Papers, 1862-1869

LOCATION(S):

Mss. boxes "S"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

one manuscript box

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For a biography of Smith, see *General Catalogue of Meadville Theological School* (Chicago: Meadville Theological School, 1945), p. 128.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Gift of granddaughter, Emily D. Smith, 1981 and 1983

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

Henry Rogers Smith (1842-1919) was born in Leominster, Mass., the son of Isaac and Mary Buss Hills Smith and the nephew of Joel Smith (1812-1888), president of the Union Comb Company in Leominster. Henry R. Smith served in the 36th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, from 1862 to 1863, but saw little action due to a chronic illness. He attended Meadville Theological School in Meadville, Pa., from 1865 to 1868, and graduated from the Boston School for the Ministry in 1869. Smith served as a Unitarian minister in Barre, Mass., from 1869 to 1878, and then became a partner with his uncle in Joel Smith and Company in Leominster from 1879 to 1885.

This collection consists primarily of letters from Smith, written while he was a photographer's assistant, and during his Civil War service and his studies at Meadville and Boston, to his parents and sister, Charlotte Hills Smith (1840-) in Leominster. Before enlisting in the army in August 1862, Rogers spent the months of January through March 1862 in Poolesville, Md., with Charles Marcellus Pierce (1835-1868), a photographer from Leominster. They were there mainly because of the 15th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment, but also did some photography work for the local citizens.

During the war, Smith wrote of his training at Camp Wool [probably named for John Ellis Wool, Major-General in the Civil War] in Worcester, Mass., his arrival in Brooksville, Md., military movements, marching and guard duty, and army rations. There are letters relating to the antics of a Union soldier who penetrated Confederate territory and visited with several people there before returning to his regiment; black slaves and their reactions to the war; the administration's treatment of Generals Fremont, Lane, and Stone; and Abraham Lincoln's review of the regiment in October 1862.

Smith became severely ill in October 1862 and spent a good deal of time in convalescent camps in Alexandria, Va., and Knoxville, Md. He wrote of the wretched conditions of these camps and copied a newspaper article concerning abuses in convalescent camps.

There are two letters written to Smith from fellow soldiers, friends from Leominster. The first, dated 28 January 1862 from Camp Hooker, Doncaster, Md., is from Charles A. Chase (-). Chase was a member in the Company Band, 1st Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. In his letter he discusses his experience at Bull Run; his regiment's sport at firing at vessels on the Potomac; General John Charles Frémont (1813-1890); General James Henry Lane (1814-1866); slaves near his location; the growth of tobacco, which he considers a filthy weed, and corn; and his wish that Smith come and visit.

The second letter, dated 24 June 1862 from Fair Oaks, is from Thomas B. Ross (-). Ross was a member in Company A, 15th Massachusetts Regiment. In his letter he discusses picket duty and his feelings regarding the war (e.g., feelings of loneliness and down-spiritedness).

Three items, the first entitled "Description of a Days March," the second entitled "From our Correspondent with the Army of the Potomac" and signed by "Knapsack," and the third entitled "March of Gen. Burnside's Army from Antietam Iron Works to Pleasant Valley, Md., Oct. 7th 1862" and signed by "Napsack" all describe the same day's march of the 9th Corps.

Smith's letters from the theological schools in Meadville, Pa., and Boston, Mass., relate to his studies, accommodations, active social life, public lectures, sermons by Unitarian ministers, and his efforts to acquire a parish in 1869.

There is a letter, dated 14 September 1862, written by J. D. Henry (-) in Champlin, Minn., to his friend, Isaac Smith (-), in Leominster. In it, Henry details the terrors of frontier Indian-fighting, including the involvement of white renegades, massacres, atrocities, and generally intense fear of the Sioux. He also referred to the poor state of the agricultural economy in Minnesota.

Another item in the collection pertaining to Isaac Smith is a list of the apple varieties grown on his farm in Leominster.

Finally, the collection includes a few letters from Charlotte H. Smith for the period April to June 1866. These letters were directed from Lowell, Mass., to her mother in Leominster, and concern her work as a dressmaker's apprentice in Lowell. Other mentions include her social activities, a few of her work responsibilities, and church attendance.

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American Antiquarian Society
MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT

HENRY ROGERS SMITH, PAPERS, 1862-1869
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