

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

Name of collection:	Location:
Cross, Joseph, Civil War Letters, 1862-1865	Stacks

Size of collection:	N.U.C.M.C. #:
1 manuscript box (130 letters)	RLIN id:

Sources of information on collection:

Korzenik, Diana, *Drawn to Art: A Nineteenth-Century American Dream* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985)

Waite, Major Otis F. R., *New Hampshire in the Great Rebellion* (Claremont: Tracy, Chase & Company, 1870)

For additional information on the Cross family, please see the *Cross Family, Collection, 1785-1938; 1967*

Source of collection:

Purchased from Elizabeth Cross, 1995

Collection description:

Joseph Cross (1818-1896), the second of ten children of Benjamin (1793-1846) and Susanna (Foster) Cross (1798-1878), was born in Swanzey, N. H. In 1841, Joseph removed to Manchester, N.H., where he worked as a farmer and as a watchman for the Amoskeag Corporation. He married, on 6 May 1845, Deborah Perry Wilder (1818-1895), of Peterborough, N.H., daughter of Abel (1779-1858) and Deborah (Perry) Wilder (1784-1862). They had three children: Joel Foster Cross (1846-1925), Emma Augusta Cross (1850-1933), and Henry Clay Cross (1852-1913).

On 29 August 1862, Cross enlisted into Company E of the Eleventh Regiment of New Hampshire Infantry Volunteers. In November 1862, just before the Battle of Fredericksburg, he "... was detailed a cook & ... exempted from carrying a gun & clear[ed] from the regular drills." The regiment was also engaged in the Siege of Vicksburg, the Siege of Knoxville, the battle of the Wilderness, the battle of Spottsylvania, Petersburg, Pegram's Farm, Hatcher's Run, and pursued Lee to Appomattox Court House, among other smaller duties and engagements. Though he did not participate in the battles, Cross helped carry the wounded from the battlefields and delivered coffee to the troops. He was mustered out,

along with the rest of the regiment, on 4 June 1865.

In March 1866, Joseph became superintendent of Manchester's work farm, City Farm. He resigned from that position in 1872 when the responsibilities became too great. The family moved to town and, for the period 1873 to 1875, Joseph listed his occupation as model- and pattern maker. They removed to a farm in Merrimack, N.H., in 1875 and remained there until their deaths; Deborah died on 5 December 1895, and Joseph died nine months later on 6 September 1896.

This collection contains the one hundred thirty letters Joseph wrote home to his family during his three years in the Civil War. Each envelope is numbered

(cont.)

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Collection description (continued):

(envelope number three is missing), excepting one (the last), "... which enabled the family to know if one of the sequence had been lost in its delivery north." The letters, dated from 14 September 1862 to 20 May 1865, describe details of his military duties, camp life, and the activities of his regiment; including marches, skirmishes, picket duty, encampments, inspections, rations and supplies, and illnesses and deaths. He also describes his health, the weather, and the scenery of the areas in which he travelled.

The letters also contain husbandly and fatherly advice to his wife and children. He mentions his loneliness and his desire to return home, but not before the defeat of the Confederates.

See Contents List.

16 June 2010

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Joseph Cross, Civil War Letters, 1862-1865

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