

**AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS**

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Willoughby, William Augustus, Papers, 1861-1864

LOCATION(S):

Mss. boxes "W"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

one manuscript box

CONTENTS LIST:

yes

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For further information concerning the active service of the 10th Regiment, Company A, see W. A. Croffut, *Military and Civil History of Connecticut, 1861-1865* (New York: Ledyard Bill, 1868), see Regimental Index. For biographical information on Willoughby, see Miranda Goodrie Willoughby, *The Willoughbys of Connecticut* (Riverside, R.I., 1976), pp. 17-20.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Gift of Raymond Royce Willoughby, 1930

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

William Augustus Willoughby (1817-1887), the son of William Augustus and Sarah (Hall) Willoughby, was born in Virgil, N.Y., on 29 July 1817. He grew up in New Haven, Conn., where he learned the trades of wheelwright and carriage maker. Willoughby removed to Derby, Conn., where he owned a small shop and where he married, on 23 March 1845, Nancy Royce (1828-1906). They returned to New Haven, where Willoughby worked a variety of jobs. The Willoughbys had three children: Lillia Vian (1851-1852?); Raymond Howard (1858-1923); and Lillia Vian (1866-1937).

Willoughby enlisted as a private with Company A, 10th Connecticut Infantry Volunteers and served for the period September 1861 to October 1864. He apparently served as cook and as a clerk to the sutler before seeing active duty during the latter part of his enlistment. He died on 18 September 1887 in Westville, Conn.

This collection contains Private Willoughby's letters to his wife, as well as typescript copies of these originals. There is also a typescript copy of a diary kept by Willoughby from January to October 1864 (when he was mustered out), in addition to a folder of Willoughby family genealogical material.

The letters contain informative references to the Company's training camp in Annapolis, Md., and its subsequent service in parts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Virginia. There are detailed descriptions of the hard life on board troop ships, the soldiers' poor diet, the high mortality rate due to disease and poor medical care, the rigors of picket duty, and the ineffectiveness of corrupt and frequently drunken officers and physicians. He included descriptions of Southern topography and the devastated villages, as well as his opinions concerning notable generals, the effectiveness of black troops, and the Union's chances of success. The majority of the earlier letters were written from encampments in St. Augustine, Fla., and New Bern, N.C.

Many letters are devoted to Willoughby's entrepreneurial activities, with orders to his wife for shirts, caps, shoes, and large quantities of foodstuffs that he sold to his fellow soldiers at a sizable profit,

frequently in return for the purchase of their state bounty drafts. Upon Willoughby's return to New Haven, soldiers wrote to him with further orders for clothing.

Beginning in the latter part of 1863, Willoughby saw active duty in Petersburg and Deep Bottom, Va., and during the siege of Charleston, S.C. These letters contain descriptions of battles, Confederate charges, ambushes, life in trenches, long marches, and the high Confederate desertion rate.

Willoughby's diary is even more informative concerning the war itself, through vivid descriptions of the Petersburg fighting, camp life, "socializing" in nearby towns, the execution of a deserter, and Willoughby's feelings upon returning home in October.

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT

WILLIAM AUGUSTUS WILLOUGHBY, PAPERS, 1861-1864
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