

PECK FAMILY PAPERS, 1862-1885

Collection #
SC 2529

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Processed by
Charles Latham
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USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1862-1885

PROVENANCE: Mary Wilson, Tujunga, CA, 15 September 1993

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: SC 2368 Grigsby-McDonald Papers (McDonald served in the 53rd Indiana Regiment)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 93.0667

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Rufus A. Peck, of New Providence, Clark County, Indiana, was commissioned in January 1862 as Captain of Company E, 53rd Indiana Volunteers. Organized in New Albany under Walter Q. Gresham as Colonel, the 53rd was

sent to Indianapolis to guard 4,000 prisoners at Camp Morton. Peck found his regiment "a splendid lot of men," and the prisoners "a hard looking set." In March the regiment was sent, via St. Louis, to Savannah, Tennessee, to join the army which was moving toward Corinth. It saw action near Shiloh and at Hatchie, rushing across a burning bridge to charge the enemy lines. Peck was wounded, and the next month resigned his commission. His letters to his wife Lydia indicate that he owned considerable farm property. His first letter to his wife mentions a pension, which may indicate that he was not young when he began his military service.

His son, Theodore, took courses in 1868 at the Louisville branch of Bryant & Stratton Co.'s International Chain Business Colleges.

Sources: Materials in collection
W. H. H. Terrell, *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 2

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling two folders, contains correspondence of 1862-1863, a school certificate of 1868, and a marriage license of 1885. It is arranged chronologically.

In Folder 1 is the Civil War correspondence, March-October 1862, of Captain Rufus A. Peck, 53rd Indiana Volunteers, his wife Lydia, and their son Theodore. In his letters Peck describes his regiment's assignments, at Camp Morton and then in the environs of Shiloh in Tennessee. He describes health problems-- an outbreak of the "mesels," troops burning bales of southern cotton, and Confederate troops living on "mule beef" and molasses. A letter of 5-17 tells of a skirmish where the troops first "saw the elephant," and one of 10-9 tells of being wounded. On 10-27 he writes, "I have some very nice goblets to send to you...that the seses [Secesh] officers had to drink licker out of... I would like to drink some out of them...how good it would be."

In a letter of 4-29, Lydia Peck tells of bartering cloth for domestic service, and potatoes for "tree molasses."

In Folder 2 letters of November 1862 and February 1863 from cousin Louise Gorton and her husband (William to her, Billy to Rufus Peck) describe Gorton's business affairs in Springfield and Memphis. The collection ends with Theodore Peck's matriculation certificate at business college, and with the 1885 marriage license of Samuel J. Lea and Carrie Elmeda Brown in Chattanooga.

CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Peck family

SUBJECT ENTRIES: United States. Army. Indiana Infantry Regiment, 53rd (1862-1865)

Soldiers--Indiana--New Providence

Shiloh, Battle of, 1862

Marriage licenses--Tennessee--Chattanooga

Camp Morton (Ind.)

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Prisoners and prisons

Indiana--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Personal narratives

New Providence (Ind.)

ADDED ENTRY: Peck, Rufus A.

END