

Collection #
BV 1500

**73RD INDIANA INFANTRY REGIMENT
LETTER BOOK, 1862–1867 (BULK 1862–1865)**

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Processed by
Charles Latham
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 letter book

COLLECTION DATES: 1862-1865

PROVENANCE: Mabel James, Logansport IN, 21 April 1992

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RELATED HOLDINGS: Job Barnard papers, SC 2269; Stanton J. Brumfield papers, SC 0144; *History of the 73rd Indiana Volunteers* (Washington: Carnahan Press, 1909); *Third Annual Reunion of 73rd Regiment* (Plymouth, Ind.: Republican Print, 1888)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1992.0445

Notes: Cataloged as: United States. Army. Indiana Infantry Regiment, 73rd (1861-1865) Letter Book, 1862-1867 (bulk 1862-1865)

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The 73rd Indiana Infantry Regiment was mustered in at South Bend on 16 August 1862, with Gilbert Hathaway as colonel. Its men came from all over the northern part of the state, with sizeable contingents from LaPorte, Valparaiso, Crown Point, Michigan City, Plymouth, Calumet, and Logansport. The regiment went immediately to Kentucky, where its first assignment was to chase Bragg's forces south into Tennessee. By 20 November the regiment was at Nashville. For several days at the end of December 1862 and the beginning of January 1863 it was in heavy fighting at Stone River.

In April 1863 the 73rd was assigned to Colonel A. D. Streight's Independent Provisional Brigade, which had the mission of penetrating the enemy's territory and cutting his communications. Embarking at Nashville, the regiment sailed down the Cumberland and up the Tennessee, landing at Eastport, Mississippi. From 30 April to 2 May they were in heavy engagements at Day's Gap, Crooked Creek, and Blount's Farm, all in Alabama. Colonel Hathaway was killed at this last engagement, and five days later Colonel Streight himself surrendered. The enlisted men in the regiment were soon paroled and returned to Nashville while the officers were sent to Confederate prison camps.

In March 1864, Major Alfred B. Wade, who had been recently released, assumed command. In the spring of that year the regiment guarded the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. In the following summer they were on picket duty along the Tennessee River, with headquarters at Triana. In September they were ordered to Decatur, Alabama, where they held off an attack on 1 October. On 26 October Hood with 35,000 men besieged Decatur, but was held off.

In the winter of 1864-1865 the 73rd moved to Stevenson, Alabama, then to Huntsville, then to guard the Mobile and Charleston Railroad with headquarters at Larkinsville. In the summer of 1865 the regiment was mustered out at Nashville.

Source: W. H. H. Terrell, *Report of Adjutant General, Indiana*, Vols. II and VI

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of the letter book of the 73rd Indiana Infantry Regiment, with entries running from September 1862 through January 1867-- in other words through almost its entire existence. The book seems to have been kept by the regiment's second colonel, A. B. Wade. Letters, official papers, and drafts of telegrams are tipped in, and a number of muster rolls are inserted at the end. All told, the letter book comes close to giving a complete documentary history of the regiment.

Entries include correspondence to and from the unit: orders from headquarters to the regiment; reports, requests, and complaints from the regimental commander to headquarters. Subjects discussed range from routine personnel matters to more serious affairs:

- recommendation that a captain be dismissed for drunkenness and incompetence;
- request for permission to use fifty Negroes to clear brush along the Tennessee River so that pickets can get a clear

view;

- request that a provost be appointed so that deserters and other miscreants can be tried and punished, as they have not been for over a year;
- a Confederate order picked up on the battle field ordering a unit to retreat to the other side of town ("Come fast");
- a demand from Confederate General Buford that Wade surrender his position at Athens, Alabama.

Because of its fragile condition, use of this letter book should be restricted.

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, BV 1500).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.