

Collection #
M 0940

**ISAAC NEWTON WINANS
MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR MEMOIR, CA. 1860s**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 half size document case

COLLECTION
DATES: ca. 1860s

PROVENANCE: Dixie Kline Richardson, Indianapolis, IN, March 2000

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2000.0428

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In his memoir, Isaac Newton Winans indicates he was from Cloverdale, Putnam County, Indiana. In 1847 during the Mexican-American War, Winans enlisted from Owen County, Indiana, as a private in Company B of the 4th Regiment Indiana Volunteers. This regiment was raised by Captain Jesse I. Alexander of Gosport, Owen County, Indiana.

During the spring of 1847, Company B of the 4th Indiana traveled with Colonel Willis Arnold Gorman to the mouth of the Rio Grande River, near Mier. They moved to Vera Cruz in September 1847. Winans' regiment then left Vera Cruz, heading for Mexico City along with General Joseph P. Lane's troops. On 9 October 1847, Captain Samuel Hamilton Walker and his men informed Lane about a group of Mexican soldiers inhabiting the town of Huamantla. Winans' regiment and Walker's Mounted Rifleman participated in attacking the town. After Huamantla, the 4th Indiana moved to the city of Puebla, Mexico to relieve Lt. Colonel Thomas Child and his besieged troops at Fort Loreto. The 4th Indiana also participated in the Atlixco Affair on 19 October 1847, although Winans himself was ill and did not take part. The 4th Indiana remained at Puebla until April 1848, when they returned home.

When the Civil War broke out, Winans enlisted as a captain with Company B, 31st Regiment Indiana Infantry on 5 September 1861. He served until 19 November 1862. The Civil War pension files indicate Winans died around 1892, leaving behind a wife named Jane and a minor child named Zora.

Sources:

Information in the collection

Handbook of Texas Online. Available at: <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/>

History of Owen County, Part I of II, 1962. (Indiana Historical Society, F532 .09 T3 1962)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of a handwritten memoir authored by Isaac Newton Winans recounting his service with Company B of the 4th Regiment Indiana Volunteers during the Mexican-American War. Winans wrote his recollections approximately fifteen years after he served. Names of officers mentioned include Col. Willis Arnold Gorman, Lt. Col. Ebenezer Dumont, and Lt. Michael C. Lilly.

Winans describes the organization of the regiment and its members, voting for field officers, and the trip to Mexico through New Orleans and Galveston, Texas. He relates stories of marches and difficult steamship crossings, including a boiler explosion on the steamship *Ann Chase* during her maiden voyage. Winans provides details on his trip up the Rio Grande and San Juan Rivers, the various landscapes and towns he sees, establishing camp, treasure hunting, stealing food from Mexican people, and illnesses and deaths from measles, diarrhea, and yellow fever. He includes some accounts of Mexican-American War battles fought previous to his enlistment.

Winans writes about the 9 October 1847 attack on Huamantla resulting in the death of Captain Samuel Hamilton Walker. Afterwards, Winans describes participating in ending the Siege of Puebla, relieving Lt. Col. Thomas Child's troops. He provides lengthy descriptions of the city and its inhabitants, life at the garrison, and the hanging of three prisoners. Winans also gives a second-hand account of the Atlixco Affair occurring on 19 October 1847.

Winans tells of the trip home via New Orleans, mustering out, being welcomed by the citizenry, and regimental reunions in Gosport. He praises the Mexican-American War's "rank and file" soldiers. Not uncommon during this era, Winans' fervent patriotism and prejudice is evident throughout his account. He valorizes American soldiers and uses derogatory terms to refer to Mexican inhabitants and their beliefs, including religious and burial practices.

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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, M 0940).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.