

Collection #
SC0003

**JAMES A. ADAMS
CIVIL WAR LETTERS, 1862–1865**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1862–1865

PROVENANCE: Brookville Town–Township Library, 1969

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ACCESSION NUMBER: 1969.0217

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

James A. Adams served for three years with Co. L, 45th Regiment, 3rd Cavalry. He enrolled on Sept. 13, 1862 at Indianapolis by Capt. Powers and mustered on October 23, 1862 at Indianapolis, by Capt. Norris. At the time he was 24 years old, with blue eyes, dark hair, fair complexion and 5 feet 7 inches tall. He was born in Fayette Co., Indiana and was a teacher. He was recruited into Co. A, 8th Cav., 39th Regiment and mustered out at Lexington, North Carolina on July 20, 1865. Promoted Com. Sergt. Transferred from Co. L, 3rd Cavalry.

45th Regiment, Indiana Infantry, 3rd Indiana Cavalry:

The Regiment was originally organized on August 22, 1861 at Madison, Indiana. In September, uniting with the original 6 companies an additional 4 companies were added totaling 10. They were designated as the 3rd Cavalry under the command of Lt. Col. Scott Carter and sent to Kentucky. In December of 1861, they joined General Joseph Hooker's Division at Budd's Ferry to break up the contraband trade between Baltimore and Virginia. In July of 1862, the 3rd took part in the Battle of Fredericksburg – acting initially as scouts and subsequently as a Reserve Unit.

In the summer of 1863, they were assigned to General John Buford's First Division. They entered Gettysburg on June 30th. The next day the Division held the Rebels in check for two hours until reinforcements arrived. After the battle, it pursued Lee's Army. The 3rd took part in several minor actions during the remainder of 1864. On May 4th, 1865 the 3rd crossed the Rapidan River and fought several cavalry actions, among them, Spotsylvania Court House and Yellow Tavern. In August, 198 veterans and recruits were organized into two Companies, A and B and then sent to the Shenandoah Valley.

On October 19th, the Battalion participated with Sherman's Army in an action at Cedar Creek, its last engagement in the Shenandoah Valley. During the march through Georgia with Sherman, the remaining troopers were consolidated with the 8th Indiana Cavalry and remained with the 8th until muster-out at Lexington, N.C., July 20, 1865.

39th Regiment, 8th Indiana Cavalry

The Regiment was organized at Indianapolis and mustered in on August 29th, 1861. In September, the 39th was sent to Kentucky, camping near Elizabethtown. It marched to Nashville, Tennessee with General Buell's Army in the spring. It was engaged in battle at Shiloh and was encamped there until it participated in the siege of Corinth, Mississippi. In November, it was heavily engaged at Stones Crossing, Tennessee where it lost 31 killed, 118 wounded and 231 missing.

In April 1863, the regiment was mounted and served as mounted infantry that year. In June, it was in a fight with General Joe Wheeler's Cavalry near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. On

September 19th and 20th, 1863 it took part in the Battle of Chickamauga in Eastern Tennessee. The Regiment was changed from mounted infantry to cavalry in September, 1863, joining the command in the field on October 15, 1863 as the 8th Indiana Cavalry.

It was engaged in courier duty during the winter and re-enlisted as a veteran organization on February 22, 1864 and given furlough in April. It took part in a raid around Atlanta and made a charge which routed the enemy who had surrounded 1,200 Union Troops and opened the way for their escape. In campaigns to Savannah and through the Carolinas it participated in many battles and skirmishes. At Averasboro, North Carolina it charged and routed Colonel Albert Rhett's South Carolina Brigade of Infantry which was 10 times the 8th's number, losing 14 killed and 59 wounded.

A detachment, left in Tennessee, fought General Joe Wheeler's Cavalry at Franklin and other points. It also saw action against General Nathan Bedford Forrest's Cavalry. At Savannah, February 20, 1865, the veterans and recruits of the 3rd Indiana Cavalry were transferred and consolidated with the 8th Cavalry. The last battle in North Carolina was fought at Morrisville Station, where the 8th Cavalry whipped General Wade Hampton's force. It was on duty in North Carolina, until July 20, 1865, when it was mustered out.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

Indiana State Library, Archives Division: Adjutant General's Record

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The following Civil War Letters of James A. Adams are located in the Adams Family Papers, Brookville Town-Township Library, Brookville, Indiana. They were loaned to the Indiana Historical Society for photocopying. The collection consists of photocopies of those twelve letters, written by Adams between November 28, 1862 and July 2, 1865.

Several letters are written to Adams' sister, Catharine (Adams) Allison. Catharine's brother served in the Union Army and her husband was openly sympathetic, and perhaps secretly active, according to the Adams Papers, on behalf of the Confederate cause. In several of his letters, James Adams makes observations, which might otherwise be cryptic, but which at once become plain when the above opposition of Mr. Allison's allegiance is known. This was one reason for the unhappiness of this marriage that ultimately resulted in divorce.

James A. Adams, the writer of the Civil War letters, is buried in the "Adams Cemetery," or Christian Tabernacle Cemetery, in Section 36, Range 11 East, Township 13 North of the Second PM, Fayette County, Indiana.

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1862:

Nov. 28-29

Adams, James A., Camp Carrington near Indianapolis,
To Catherine V. Allison:

“Dear Sister.” Have comfortable quarters, with officers, as I am secretary to the Captain. Gives schedule for a typical day: Get up at 6 and feed horses, etc. We drew our sabers this week. About 2000 men in this camp, including 2 companies of Third Cavalry, Tell J.D. Allison (Catharine’s husband) that I want him to write to me whether he is mad at me or not. 4p.

Dec. 1

Camp Carrington

“Dear Father.” Mentions persons at home: Daily, Brisons, Thomas. Encloses map he has drawn of the camp [lacking]; description of lay out of camp. 5th Cavalry may leave this week. Message for Martha Catharine Linville. Has been to an oyster supper and party. 4p

Dec 7

To Thomas B. Adams. “Dear Brother.”

Mentions persons at home: Mr. Day; Mr. Redy(?). Boys from Janes Creek are all right. George W. Titsworth went to Cedar Grove and arrested 2 men belonging to the 3rd Cavalry. Nearly all the recruits are gone from Indianapolis; only 175 in Camp Morton, according to newspaper. Drummed out a drunken disobedient soldier; description; given over to Civil authorities who will work him for 20 days on the streets with a ball and chain to his leg. News of Allen Vanter, cousin, who is in hospital (p.2) 4p

CONTAINER

Folder 1

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1863:

Folder 1

May 7

“Dear Father.”

Sorry to hear of death of Aleista. Father considering moving to Everton. Arrest of Vallandigham hailed with joy by everybody not tainted with treason. Arrested a deserter. Written at Camp Carrington. 2p.

1864:

Folder 1

Mar. 1

Knoxville, Tenn. To sister Mrs. Catharine V. Allison. On Feb. 16 marched from Maryville to Knoxville, 16 miles. Had food rationed, but alright now. Camped now on Holston River, opposite Knoxville. Had a fight on the 20th; resulted in a draw; my horse shot and died. [Holston River, Tenn., battle.] Gen Sherman is plowing his way through Mississippi and Alabama; Rebels are deserting by hundreds. Sends respects to Dow [probably James D. Allison] 3p.

April 29

Folder 1

“Dear Brother.”

Lists persons from whom he has received letters. Comments on contents of brother’s letters and newspapers sent. Glad Father got out profitably with his store. Mention of persons at home: Louis Johnson, Miss Meeks. On 24-27 went to Greenville, Raytown, Jonesboro, Watauga River; pulled 2 men out of the river. Fight 25th-26th. [Watauga Bridge, or Carter’s Station, Tenn., battle] Written at Knoxville. 4p.

May 17

Folder 1

Camp Left Wing, 3rd Indiana Cavalry, Chattanooga Valley, Ga.

To Mrs. J.D. Allison. “Dear Sister.” Saw Thomas Crowley, Oskar Allison and Charley Carr, did not see Allen Linville or John Secrest though they were here. Sister’s husband is displeased with soldier’s letters; discusses the problem. 4 p.

May 17

Folder 1

Camp Left Wing, 3rd Ind. Cavalry, Chattanooga Valley, Ga.

To Miss Cecelia Allison, "Dear Niece." I like what you say about butternuts. We are 5 miles south of Chattanooga between Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain. Mentions Francis. Added: Letter to Martha Francis: Dear Niece." 2p.

July 24

Folder 1

Camp 3rd Ind. Cavalry, Cartersville, [Tenn.]

"Dear Sister Catharine." Sorry Mr. Linville is critically ill. Asks to be remembered to Mr. Secrest and Nancy Ann. 2p

1865:

Folder 1

Jan. 1

Savannah, Georgia

To Catharine V. Allison. "Dear Sister." Glad Abe Lincoln was re-elected. Was in battles at Jonesboro, Sweet Water River, Nose Creek, Vanwert, Lovejoy Station, Beaucreek Station, Macon, Waynesboro. Entered Savannah Dec 21. 4p

May 1

Folder 1

Near Durham Station, N.C.

To "Dear Sister Catharine." Sorry to hear of death of Lt. Secrest. Sorry the Railroad up the Whitewater Valley is a failure. I left the hospital at Savannah on March 6th; details of trip. Joined the Regiment the 26th; found it consolidated with the 8th Ind. Cavalry. I regret Abe Lincoln's death so much.

July 29

Folder 1

Greensboro, N.C.; Co. A. 8th Ind. Cavalry.

To Sister Catharine. Is J.D. [Allison] a preacher now? Advice to sister in her troubles with her husband. Sorry to hear of death of Judge and of Caesar (a boy) and John Secrest. I loved Abe Lincoln better than I hated Jeff Davis, and I despised him more the words can express.

n.d.

Allison, Catharine (Mrs. J.D.)
To parents W.B. and Martha Adams.
Difficulties with her husband. 2p.

Folder 1

CATALOGING INFORMATION

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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, SC 0003).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.