

Collection #  
SC 3021

**ROBERT H. CRIST  
CIVIL WAR LETTERS, 1861**

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

Timothy C. Rainesalo  
May 23, 2014

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

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 folder

COLLECTION DATES: Sept. 21, 1861, Oct. 16, 1861

PROVENANCE: Raynor's Historical Collectible Auctions, Burlington, NC

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

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

ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: BV 3052- BV 3054, E506.6 21st G47, E601 .H26 1882

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2014.0116

NOTES:

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert H. Crist was a resident of Martin County, Indiana. On July 24, 1861, he enlisted as a Private in Company F of the 21<sup>st</sup> Indiana Infantry. He served with the regiment until February 2, 1863 when the 21<sup>st</sup> Indiana was transferred to heavy artillery service and designated the 1st Indiana Heavy Artillery. Crist stayed with the newly formed Company L of the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery for the remainder of the war, earning several promotions for field conduct. He became 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of his Company on November 18, 1863 and rose to the rank of 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant on September 9, 1864. On March 1, 1865, he became Company L's Captain, leading his men until he was finally mustered out with the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery on January 13, 1866 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

After the war, Crist relocated in Illinois. Sometime in the 1870s, he joined several of his comrades in the Illinois Department of the Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization of Union veterans dedicated to preserving the bonds of comradeship and fellowship forged during the war. Crist served in "Bowen" Post #17, located in Wilmington, Illinois. As a member of the GAR, he participated in Memorial Day ceremonies and other Civil War commemorative activities and also advocated for proper dispersal of Union veterans' pensions. He died on October 26, 1912.

### The 21<sup>st</sup> Indiana Infantry & 1<sup>st</sup> Indiana Heavy Artillery

The 21st Indiana Infantry Regiment was organized at Indianapolis on 24 July 1861 under James M. McMillan as colonel. It earned the nickname of the "Jackass Regiment" for frequent use of mules to transport supplies for ports to inland battlefields. It moved to Baltimore, Maryland, staying there until early in 1862 when it moved out for Louisiana. Under the command of General Benjamin F. Butler, the regiment became the first Union unit to reach land in Butler's attack and capture of New Orleans in May 1862. It continued service throughout Louisiana, taking part in the Battle of Baton Rouge in August, 1862, and the sieges of Port Hudson from May 24 to July 9, 1863.

General N. P. Banks changed the regiment to the First Heavy Artillery in February 1863. From then until it was mustered out in 1866 the regiment served around the Gulf in several locations: in the Red River Campaign from March to May of 1864, the assault, capture and occupation of Forts Gaines and Morgan, and the capture Mobile Bay, Alabama, from August 1864 to April 1865. Troops remained behind in the Gulf region on guard duty until the regiment was finally mustered out in 1866.

Sources:

Civil War Database

Faller, Phillip E.. *The Indiana Jackass Regiment in the Civil War: A History of the 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry/1<sup>st</sup> Heavy Artillery Regiment, with a Roster* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc.), 2013.

Grimsley, James. *Civil War Letters of Major James Grimsley, Company B, 21st Indiana Regiment, First Heavy Artillery* (Gosport, IN: Fortnightly Club, Gosport History Museum), 1998. Call Number: E506.6 21st G47.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection contains two letters written by Crist in 1861. The first, written September 21, 1861 to “friends” from Camp Dix, Baltimore, discusses in great detail the activities of camp life, including the process of selecting men for guard duty. Of particular note is his account of the conduct and punishment of drunken AWOL Union soldiers guilty of “huckstering” women and his own daily activities around the camp. The second, written October 16 to “Sister Parna” from Camp Murray, Baltimore is composed on special patriotic stationery. In addition to comments on England and France possibly intervening on the South’s behalf, Crist includes a hand drawn plan of the camp.

## **CONTENTS**

### CONTENTS

Robert H. Crist Civil War Letters, September 21,  
1861, October 16, 1861

### CONTAINER

Folder 1

## 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, SC 3021).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.