

W. W. ATCHISON

LETTER, 1861

Collection #
SC 2574

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Processed by
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USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 item

COLLECTION DATES: 1861

PROVENANCE: C. Wesley Cowan, Terrace Park, OH

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 292, Lew Wallace Papers

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1996.0454

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

W. W. Atchison (fl. 1861), the son of B. F. Atchison, was a resident of Zionsville, IN. He served as a trustee in Eagle Township, owned a general store, and was involved with the grain trade. He was appointed Deputy Adjutant General

for the 8th Congressional district of Indiana.

John J. Atchison (fl. 1861-63) was a member of the Boone County Regiment of the Indiana Legion during the Civil War. He served as first lieutenant in the Zionsville Union Guards (commissioned in 1861). Atchison also served as first lieutenant in the Loyal Guards (commissioned in 1863) before being promoted to captain.

Lewis (Lew) Wallace (1827-1905) was born to David Wallace, an Indiana Governor, and Esther French (Test) Wallace in Brookville, Indiana. Wallace was a lieutenant in the 1st Indiana infantry during the Mexican War (1846-1847). In 1848 he edited a Free Soil Party paper to oppose the election of Zachary Taylor for president because he believed Taylor treated Indiana regiments badly during the Mexican War. After the election, Wallace became affiliated with the Democratic Party. He was admitted to the bar in 1849 and soon began practicing in Indianapolis. A short time later, he moved to Covington, Fountain County, where he was elected prosecuting attorney in 1850 and 1852. Wallace moved to Crawfordsville in 1853 and was elected to the Indiana State Senate three years later as a member of the Democratic Party.

In 1861, Governor Oliver P. Morton appointed Wallace Indiana Adjutant General. For his recruitment services, Wallace was commissioned a colonel in the 11th Indiana Regiment and distinguished himself in battle at Romney, Virginia. He was soon promoted to general and fought at Fort Donelson and Shiloh in 1862. He was also in charge of the defense of Cincinnati (1862-1863), and was credited with saving the city from falling into Confederate hands. In 1864, he commanded a Union force of 5,800 at the Battle of Monocacy that held off an army of 28,000 Confederates and prevented the capture of Washington, D.C. Wallace was a member of the court-martial which tried conspirators in the Lincoln assassination.

Wallace was also involved in acquiring arms and men for Mexican rebels fighting the French (1865-1867). In 1867, he returned to Crawfordsville, and was a Republican Party candidate three years later. Wallace was named to the committee to oversee counting of disputed ballots in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina after the 1876 presidential election. From 1878 to 1881, Wallace served as governor of the New Mexico Territory. He was then named U.S. Minister to Turkey, a position he held from 1881-1885. While in Turkey, Wallace won the confidence of the Sultan to an unusual extent.

Wallace was probably best known as an author. Among his works were: *The Fair God* (1873); *Ben-Hur* (1880); *The Life of Benjamin Harrison* (1888); *The Boyhood of Christ* (1888); and *The Prince of India* (1893).

Wallace was married to Susan Elston in 1852. She was the daughter of Col. Isaac C. and Maria A. Elston. Mrs. Wallace was a frequent contributor to newspapers and periodicals.

Sources: Harden, Samuel. *Early Life and Times in Boone County, Indiana*. (rr F532.B6 H2 1973)
Terrell, W.H.H. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana*. (rr E506.2.I39 T4 1865)
Collection Guide - M 292, Lew Wallace Papers.
C. Wesley Cowan (dealer)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of one letter from W.W. Atchison to his father, B.F. Atchison, dated June 22, 1861 from Zionsville, IN (Boone County). W.W. Atchison comments on the presence of secessionists in the vicinity of his father and the need to "clean them out at short notice." He speaks of Indiana troop movements, and that some local soldiers were engaged with Colonel Lew Wallace at the battle of Romney, Virginia. Atchison goes on to discuss his duties mustering men into service, and speculates that J.J. Atchison will soon be called into active service. He also mentions low grain prices due to the war.

CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Atchison, W. W.

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Zionsville (Ind.)--History--Sources

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

END