The Filson Historical Society

Dunn family
Papers, 1854–1977

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for this collection, see the Curator of Special Collections, James J. Holmberg.

Size of Collection:
2 cubic feet

Location Number:
Mss./A/D923
Dunn family
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Scope and Content Note

The collection contains 131 letters written between 1854 and 1929 by members of the Vincent Dunn family and their relatives living in Missouri, Illinois and central Kentucky. The majority are written by and to Vincent’s oldest son, Lewis, a member of Co. I, 3rd Ky. Cavalry Rgt. (USA). Vincent’s family members were strong Union supporters and the letters between Lewis and his parents and siblings often reflect their views. Their opinions on slavery and emancipation generally did not support the Union cause, however. Relatives in Missouri were very strong supporters of the Confederacy and the letters of Prudence Creath are especially harsh with regard to the war, Lincoln, emancipation and government policies in general. Lewis’ letters to his family and relatives describe aspects of daily life in a U.S. cavalry regiment and he provides brief descriptions of several battlefields, both during and after the battles, including those of Shiloh, Perryville, Stones River and the Atlanta Campaign. There are several military records, including a roster of Co. I, 3rd Ky. Cavalry Rgt., pension correspondence and documents listing inventories and disposition of military supplies and equipment for the Company. The collection includes two broadsides, one a general military order from Brig. Gen. Shackleford directing post commandants in Kentucky to enforce the laws pertaining to an approaching state election in 1863; the other is an 1866 notice directed to all soldiers and sailors who had served the Union and voices concern on the part of several Union officers that the proposed 14th Constitutional Amendment may be too punitive for White men in the South who had suffered long enough. A group of unidentified photographs have been transferred to the photographic collection.
Biographical Note

Vincent Dunn, a farmer living in Grayson Co., Ky. was born 4 June 1811. He and his wife, Elizabeth, had 5 children. The eldest, Lewis, age 22, joined the 3rd Ky. Cavalry Regiment (USA) as a 2nd Lt. in October, 1861. He served throughout the war and saw action in several battles, particularly the Battles of Perryville and Stones River. He probably died within a year after the war ended. Their younger son, James, possibly joined the same regiment and died most likely of measles in January, 1862. Vincent died 16 June, 1893, at the age of 82. He and his wife had several relatives living in Missouri, Illinois and central Kentucky. Several members of this extended family kept in touch frequently over the years through correspondence.
Dunn family
Papers, 1854–1977

List of Folders

Folder 1: Correspondence; 1854 – 1860
Folder 2: Correspondence; 1861
Folder 3: Correspondence: January – June, 1862
Folder 4: Correspondence: July – December, 1862
Folder 5: Correspondence; 1863
Folder 6: Correspondence; 1864
Folder 7: Correspondence; 1865 – 1866
Folder 8: Correspondence; 1868 – 1977
Folder 9: Correspondence, envelopes; undated
Folder 10: Personal military documents; 1861 – 1929
Folder 11: Military documents, records; 1863 – 1864
Folder 12: Military documents, records; 1865
Folder 13: Miscellaneous documents, receipts, newspaper clippings
Folder 14 (Oversize): Broadside, 1866
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Subject Headings

Atlanta Campaign, 1864
Dunn family
Freemasonry - United States
Kentucky - History - Civil War, 1861-1865
Kentucky - Politics and government - 1861-1865
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865 - Public opinion
Military pensions
Missouri - History - Civil War, 1861-1865
Perryville, Battle of, Perryville, Ky., 1862
Racism - Kentucky
Shiloh, Battle of, Tenn., 1862
Slaves - Emancipation - Kentucky
Stones River, Battle of, Murfreesboro, Tenn., 1862-1863
Tennessee - History - Civil War, 1861-1865
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Cavalry operations
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Prisoners and prisons
United States - History - Civil War, 1861-1865 - Public opinion
United States. Army - Equipment and supplies
United States. Army - Military life - History - 19th century
United States. Army. Kentucky Cavalry Regiment, 3rd (1861-1865)
United States. Constitution 14th Amendment