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J. Edward James letters finding aid

Title: J. Edward James letters
Collection No: MSS.0069
Extent: 0.25 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1862-1865

Abstract: The Civil War letters of J. Edward James consist of forty handwritten letters in the date range of December 1862-June 1865 to his sister Elizabeth James (later Elizabeth James Lamberson) of Galena, Illinois. The letters were written in various Southern states—Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia—where James fought during the war.

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Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
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Publication date: 2023 May

Biographical Information

James Edward James was born on 1842 September 7 in Liverpool, England, the son of James R. Edwards, who died in 1854. James settled in Galena, Illinois, and on 1862 August 5, he enlisted to fight for the Union cause in the United States Civil War. On 1862 September 5, he was mustered in as a private in Company A, Illinois 96th Infantry Regiment in Rockford, Illinois.

After being mustered out as a commissary sergeant on 1865 June 10, James established a photography studio, The J. E. James Studio, in Galena, Illinois. At one point, he was in business partnership with his brother-in-law, David Harvey Lamberson, who had married his sister Elizabeth around the end of 1863. James married Kittie L. Purkey (born circa 1845), and the couple had at least four children. James continued to work as a photographer in Galena until his death on 1878 May 10. Kittie managed the photography studio until she remarried later at an unknown date.

Scope and contents

The Civil War letters of J. Edward James consist of forty handwritten letters in the date range of, December 1862-June 1865, to his sister Elizabeth (Lizzie) James of Galena, Illinois. In addition, there are two handwritten letters which were written by a sweetheart, C. W. Wagganer, to Lizzie James in the spring of 1861 from Independence, Iowa. All correspondence except for those two aforementioned letters pertains to the camp life of a Union soldier stationed in the South during the Civil War and his concerns for the welfare of his family and hometown.

The letters cover the campaign movements of the Third Brigade, First Division, Fourth Army Corps from Kentucky through Tennessee down to Georgia with Sherman and back to Illinois. In 1863, the 96th was transferred to the Second Brigade of the same Division. Also described in the correspondence are some of the campaign movements in such battles as Franklin, Shelbyville, Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain, Big Shanty, and Atlanta. Arrangement of the letters is chronological.

Subject terms

Civil War era

Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, 96th (1862-1865)

United States. Army.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Correspondents

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

- 1 C. W. Waggoner to Lizzie James, Galena, Illinois:
 - 19 May 1861 (Independence, Iowa)
 - 5 June 1861 (Independence, Iowa)
- 2 J. Edward James to Lizzie James, Galena, Illinois:
 - 26 December 1862 (Harrodsburg, Kentucky)
 - 2 January 1863 (Danville, Kentucky)
 - 22 January 1863 (Danville, Kentucky)
 - 2 March 1863 (Nashville, Tennessee)
 - 31 March 1863 (Brentwood, Tennessee)
 - 19 April 1863 (Franklin, Tennessee)
 - 26 April 1863 (Franklin, Tennessee)
 - 3 May 1863 (Franklin, Tennessee)
 - 11 May 1863 (Franklin, Tennessee)
 - 4 June 1863 (Triune, Tennessee)
 - 21 June 1863 (Triune, Tennessee)
 - 29 June 1863 (Murfreesboro, Tennessee)
 - 5 July 1863 (Wartrace, Tennessee)
 - 24 September 1863 (Chattanooga, Tennessee)
 - 30 September 1863 (Chattanooga, Tennessee)
 - 9 November 1863 (Nickojack Cove, Georgia)
 - 29 November 1863 (Lookout Mountain, Tennessee)
- 3 J. Edward James to Lizzie James Lamberson, Galena, Illinois:
 - 5 December 1863 (Nickojack Cove, Georgia)
 - 13 December 1863 (Nickojack Cove, Georgia)
 - 27 December 1863 (Nickojack Cove, Georgia)
 - 3 January 1864 (Nickojack Cove, Georgia)
 - 8 February 1864 (Georgia)
 - 11 March 1864 (Cleveland, Tennessee)
 - 27 April 1864 (Blue Springs, Tennessee)
 - 22 June 1864 (Big Shanty, Georgia)
 - 12 July 1864 (Georgia)
 - 24 July 1864 (Atlanta, Georgia)
 - 4 August 1864 (Atlanta, Georgia)
 - 22 August 1864 (Atlanta, Georgia)
 - 10 September 1864 (Atlanta, Georgia)
 - 26 September 1864 (Atlanta, Georgia)
 - 17 October 1864 (Dalton, Georgia)
 - 2 December 1864 (Nashville, Tennessee)
 - 11 December 1864 (Nashville, Tennessee)

17 March 1865 (Strawberry Plains, Tennessee)

28 March 1865 (Russellville, Tennessee)

1 May 1865 (Nashville, Tennessee)

25 May 1865 (Nashville, Tennessee)

3 June 1865 (Nashville, Tennessee)

9 June 1865 (Nashville, Tennessee)