

C Cunningham, Samuel W. (1822-1863), Letters, 1861-1863
3006 1 roll of microfilm

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INTRODUCTION

The Samuel W. Cunningham Letters consist of the correspondence of Cunningham to his wife Nancy during the Civil War. Cunningham was a private in the 22nd Illinois Infantry.

DONOR INFORMATION

The State Historical Society of Missouri acquired this collection in an unknown manner (Accession No. 888).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Samuel W. Cunningham was born in 1822 and moved to Salem, Illinois, in 1850. In 1855 he was ordained a ruling elder in the Salem Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Cunningham enlisted in Company G of the 22nd Illinois Infantry on 11 June 1861. Both he and his son George were wounded and taken prisoner at the Battle of Stone River, Tennessee, on 31 December 1862. George was sent to Richmond, Virginia, and then Maryland. Samuel was soon paroled and hospitalized in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where he contracted typhoid fever and died on 15 February 1863.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Samuel W. Cunningham Letters consist mainly of letters written by Cunningham to his wife, Nancy, while he served with the 22nd Illinois Infantry during the Civil War. Also included is correspondence from the Army to a descendant of Cunningham regarding his service record and an obituary, presumably from his hometown newspaper.

Cunningham's letters describe camp life in Missouri, Mississippi, and Tennessee. He was stationed for several months each at Bird's Point, Missouri, Corinth, Mississippi, and Nashville, Tennessee. He makes reference to some skirmishes fought by his unit but provides little detail. The letters also describe conditions at the hospital in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, his desire to return home to recuperate, and his anxiety over the fate of his son.

Cunningham's return home was delayed due to railroad repairs and he was forced to stay at the hospital longer than expected. The last item in this collection is a letter of condolence from Cunningham's company commander to his brother John. The commander cites this delay as the cause of Samuel's contraction of typhoid fever and his subsequent death.

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