

**Guide to the Joseph Leland Cosby Papers, 1862-1897
MS0299**

**The Mariners' Museum Library
at
Christopher Newport University**

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library

Title: The Joseph Leland Cosby Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1862-1897

Catalog number: MS0299

Physical Characteristics: 27 letters, military pass, daybook, muster roll

Language: English

Creator: Cosby, Joseph Leland, 1835-1925

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joseph Leland Cosby (1835-1925) was born in August 1835 in King and Queen County, Virginia, where he resided at the time of his enlistment into the Confederate army. He served four years in the 34th Regiment Virginia Infantry in Henry Alexander Wise's Brigade. On May 31, 1862, he was wounded in the battle at Seven Pines. He was listed at that time as 4th Sergeant. In September 1863, Wise's Brigade was sent to South Carolina as a reserve unit. The brigade was stationed in Saint Andrews Parish, near Charleston. In May 1864 Wise's Brigade was ordered back to Richmond. It joined Bushrod Rust Johnson's Division and became part of the Department of North Carolina and Southern Virginia under General P. G. T. Beauregard. Later the division joined the Army of Northern Virginia.

Following the war Cosby worked as a blacksmith for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. He married Columbia "Lum" A. Nunn after the war and had seven children. At the time of his death on October 1, 1925, Cosby resided at 816 27th Street in Newport News, Virginia. He is buried in Section O, Lot 45 at Greenlawn Memorial Park, Newport News.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection includes letters, a military pass, daybook, and muster roll relating to the Civil War service of Joseph Leland Cosby who served in Company "K", 34th Regiment Virginia Infantry in Wise's Brigade, Confederate States Army. Cosby wrote from Camp Jenkins Farm and Camp Little Britain Island in South Carolina during 1863/64 when the Brigade was stationed near Charleston. Most of the letters are from 1864 when the army defended Richmond and Petersburg.

Cosby described to his sweetheart, Lum, the religious revival that swept the army, his hopes of being married during the war and romance, the duties of a sentry, the conditions and fighting in the trenches near Petersburg, the poor rations, his reasons for fighting, his desire for peace, and his dreams. Other details include correspondence from the Virginia Hospital in Petersburg while Cosby recuperated from an illness; letters from the division hospital where he recovered from boils and a slight but lingering wound; and Cosby's last letter from the Chimborazo medical complex near Richmond that discussed his bout with typhoid fever.

Cosby kept a tiny daybook that documents some of his activities, but it is very faded and it not very detailed. The muster roll, lists not only names of the members of Company

“K”, but also in some cases what happened to them, whether they were killed, transferred, discharged, wounded, etc.

The material organized into 32 folders. It is arranged in ascending chronological order, thereafter by material type.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession number

CK 158

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1990

Restrictions

Collection is open to all researchers.

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Preferred Citation

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Note to Users

Due to the fragile and rare nature of the collection, researchers are requested to handle the materials with caution and in accordance with proscribed archival practices. When using these materials, please preserve the original order of the collection.

FILE GUIDE

BOX 1

Folder 1 Finding Aid

Folder 2 Background Information

Folder 3 Correspondence
April 3, 1864: Camp Little Britain
To Lum. Ink on blue stationary, 2 sides.

Folder 4 Correspondence
April 6, 1864
To Lum. Pencil on blue stationary, 2 sides. Tells her he dreamt they married.

Folder 5 Correspondence

April 17, 1864: Camp Jenkins
To Lum. Ink on white stationary, 2 sides.

Folder 6 Correspondence
April 21, 1864: Camp Jenkins Farm
To Lum. Ink on blue stationary, 2 sides.

Folder 7 Correspondence
April 24, 1864: Camp Little Britain Island
To Lum. Ink on blue stationary, 2 sides.

Folder 8 Correspondence
May 23, 1864: Virginia hospital
To Lum. Pencil on blue stationary, 2 sides.

Folder 9 Correspondence
June 15, 1864: Prince George County
To Lum. Pencil on blue stationary, 2 sides. Faded.

Folder 10 Correspondence
July 12, 1864: Petersburg
To "My dearest friend." Pencil on blue stationary, 4 pages. He writes that they have been in the trenches seven days, and are being shelled every day and night.

Folder 11 Correspondence
July 23, 1864: Petersburg, in the trenches
To "My dearest friend." Pencil on white paper, 2 sides. Paper badly discolored.

Folder 12 Correspondence
July 31, 1864: Petersburg
To Lum. Pencil on blue stationary, 2 sides.

Folder 13 Correspondence
August 6, 1864: Petersburg
To Lum. Pencil on white stationary, 2 sides.

Folder 14 Correspondence
August 24, 1864: Petersburg
To Lum. Pencil on white stationary, 2 sides.

Folder 15 Correspondence
September 17, 1864: Petersburg
To Lum. Pencil on white stationary, 2 sides.

- Folder 16** Correspondence
October 17, 1864: Petersburg
To Lum. Pencil on white stationary, 2 sides.
- Folder 17** Correspondence
October 25, 1864: Petersburg
To Lum. Pencil on white stationary, 2 sides.
- Folder 18** Correspondence
October 29, 1864: Petersburg
To Lum. Pencil on white stationary, 2 sides.
- Folder 19** Correspondence
December 11, 1864: Division hospital
To Lum. Ink on blue stationary, 2 sides. He has a slight wound.
- Folder 20** Correspondence
January 25, 1865: Division hospital
To Lum. Pencil on white paper, 2 sides, torn.
- Folder 21** Correspondence
January 29, 1865: Division hospital
Addresses not given, though to Lum. Pencil on white paper, 4 pages.
Paper badly discolored and tearing.
Has been in the hospital for almost two months and his wound is not quite healed.
- Folder 22** Correspondence
February 5, 1865: Division hospital
To Lum. Pencil on white paper, 4 pages.
- Folder 23** Correspondence
February 18, 1865: Trenches
To Lum. Pencil on white paper, 4 pages.
- Folder 24** Correspondence
February 23, 1865: Trenches
To Lum. Ink on white paper, 2 sides. Discolored.
- Folder 25** Correspondence
March 9, 1865: Chimborago Hospital
To Lum. Pencil on white paper, 2 sides. He has been sick with typhoid fever.
- Folder 26** Correspondence
April 15, No Year

To Lum. Pencil on white paper, 2 sides. Signed by Cosby, "Army of Northern Virginia". Faded, nearly illegible.

- Folder 27** Correspondence
May 10, No Year
To Lum. Pencil on white paper. Indicates that they will be married later in the month.
- Folder 28** Correspondence
May, No Year
Postcard. Addressed to Mrs. C. A. Cosby, Stevensville, King & Queen, VA. Written in pencil and is badly faded. Nearly illegible.
- Folder 29** Correspondence
December 12, 1874: Fairhaven(?) Church
To Frannie. Ink on white paper, 2 sides, some bad discoloration. Full of news of about people.
- Folder 30** Daybook
Small 7 x 11 centimeter book. Written in pencil. Greatly faded and fragile. Sporadic documentation of names of those killed, some accounts, a description of Christmas day 1864 when he was in the hospital.
- Folder 31** Military Pass
Two-sided scrap of paper. It says: Corpl. Cosby & private Butler beyond the line & back by 2 1/2 O'Clk. (Signed by) Th. J. Page Com. B.
April 13th 1862 per N. Ryland.
- Folder 32** Muster Roll, 1897
Three 8.5 x 14 ledger sheets. Entitled *Roll of Capt A. F. Bagby's Co. K 34th Virginia Infantry, Wise's Brigade B. R. Johnson's Division A. W. Va.*
List of names of Commanding Officers, Sergeants, Corporals and Privates.
Lists whether killed, died, wounded, transferred, or discharged.

SOURCES CONSULTED

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- Wallace, Lee A. *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations, 1861-1865*. 2nd ed. Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, 1986.
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SUBJECTS

United States-History-Civil War, 1861-1865-Personal narratives, Confederate
Peninsular Campaign, 1862

Confederate States of America. Army. Virginia Infantry Regiment, 34th

Cosby, Joseph Leland, 1835-1925