Finding aid for the A.B. Hutchinson and H.H. Woolsey American Civil War correspondence and personal effects collection. 2013.008.r

Finding aid prepared by Rand Boyd

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Title: A.B. Hutchinson and H.H. Woolsey American Civil War correspondence and personal effects collection.

Identifier/Call Number: 2013.008.r

Contributing Institution: Frank Mt. Pleasant Library of Special Collections and Archives, Leatherby Libraries

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 1.96 Linear feet (4 boxes)

Date (inclusive): 1861-1888

Abstract: A collection of letters and personal realia from 2nd Lieutenant Alfred Bergen Hutchinson (1840-1921) and his brother-in-law, Captain Henry Harrison Woolsey (1836-1864), who both served in Company E of the New Jersey 5th Volunteer Infantry Regiment during the American Civil War.

Location note: Leatherby Libraries

creator: Hutchinson, A.B., (Alfred Bergen), 1840-1921

creator: Woolsey, H.H., (Henry Harrison), 1836-1864

Biographical/Historical note

2nd Lieutenant Alfred Bergen Hutchinson (1840-1921) and his brother-in-law, Captain Henry Harrison Woolsey (1836-1864), both served in Company E of the New Jersey 5th Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

Hutchinson and Woolsey enlisted in August of 1861 as part of New Jersey Governor Charles Olden's order to raise four infantry regiments for Federal service. Both men rose through the ranks, Hutchinson was given the rank of 1st Sergeant (July 24, 1862), eventually making 2nd Lieutenant (March 2, 1863). Woolsey was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant on enlisting (August 28, 1861) and was made acting commissary for the regiment. He was promoted on May 9, 1862 to first lieutenant in E company. Woolsey was later promoted to captain of Company H on June 6, 1863. The regiment was sent to Budd's Ferry in Charles County, Maryland to join Brigadier General Joseph Hooker's Third Brigade under immediate command of the brusque and harsh regular army officer Colonel Samuel H. Starr. The regiment eventually joined the New Jersey Second Brigade, Colonel William J. Sewell commanding. Hutchinson was born to George H. Hutchinson and Ida V. Bergen and had four sisters, Sadie, Marianna, Emman and Thirza (to whom Woolsey was wed). He enlisted in August of 1861 for three years and mustered out on October 7, 1864. He married Calista Esther Dunbar in 1873 and had one child, Alfred Dunbar Hutchinson. The 1900 census records his occupation as real estate.

Woolsey was the son of Ephraim Woolsey and Eleanor Van Cleve, and a graduate of Princeton, Class of 1856. He opened a law office in Hoboken, New Jersey in 1859, but set aside his practice to fight the South. He eventually succumbed to injuries sustained at the Siege of Petersburg while leading the 5th Regiment on June 17, 1864, dying on the 19th. His final words: "I die in a glorious cause and feel that I have not lived in vain for this world or the world to come." Tragically and unbeknownst to him, his beloved wife Thirza had died just two days before. They were buried together in the same grave on the same day.

Arrangement note

This collection is arranged by material type:

Series 1: Correspondence, Hutchinson

Series 2: Correspondence, Woolsey

Series 3: Photographs

Series 4: Documents and ephemera

Series 5: Realia

Scope and Contents note

A collection of 32 letters, two framed photographs, two broadsheets, a homemade American flag, and other personal effects from 2nd Lieutenant Alfred Bergen Hutchinson (1840-1921) and his brother-in-law, Captain Henry Harrison Woolsey (1836-1864), who both served in Company E of the New Jersey 5th Volunteer Infantry Regiment during the American Civil War.

Hutchinson Correspondence:

1. ALS, 2pp., Toledo [Ohio]: January 19, 1861. A pre-Civil War letter in which he mentions a fire at the American Hotel in Toledo and how the firemen were not well trained.

2. ALS, 4pp., Alexandria, Virginia: September 22, 1861. Hutchinson recounts his Company's sudden departure from Burlington, New Jersey to Washington, then down the Potomac to Alexandria, Virginia where they stayed at the Marshall House Inn, famous as the location of the first Union casualty of the war, Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth. He describes how after Ellsworth was killed soldiers destroyed everything in the house: "The windows are smashed, doors unhinged & the floors &
beams, where our patriotic Col. spilt his blood for our country have been completely cut away chip by chip as relics of times past."

3. ALS, 4pp., Meridian Hill [Washington, DC]: October 31, 1861, with original mailing envelope. He recounts missing the "grand review" before McClellan because of illness, an inspection by Colonel Starr and his harsh treatment of the men: "Starr is perfectly abhorred by all the regiment. The officers can scarcely bear his niggardly tyrannical orders any longer. The whole camp is up in arms tonight & nothing is talked of but Col. Starr."

4. ALS, 4pp., Meridian Hill [Washington, DC]: November 27, 1861, with original mailing envelope. Reports that drunkenness commenced around the camp upon getting paid and that the guard house is filled so "all around it are squads of men with logs on their shoulders undergoing punishment for drunkenness." He also explains that Thirza has found a boarding house "hardly five minutes walk from us" so "Harry can run over & see her often."

5. ALS, 4pp., Meridian Hill [Washington, DC]: November 29, 1861, written on letterhead with an image of the capital and with the original mailing envelope. A letter about the regiment moving down the Potomac 30 miles to the opposite side of Aquia Creek. Also his reservations about Col. Starr being in command and a visit with Thirza before departing.

6. ALS, 4pp., [No place]: December 16, 1861. Talk about camp life and his disillusionment with it; serving picket duty across the river from the Confederates firing on Union ships as they move about; and ruminations on why the Union ships don't attack: "Our fleet could soon route them but they hold back for some reason we cannot understand & only fire at them a little. I just play ball with them and cannot see why they do not go into there and rout them at once." Also he asks about Thirza; "How does she seem to stand the separation from Harry again? She had quite a time getting home."

7. ALS, 4pp., "Camp Baker": December 26, 1861, on letterhead with an image of the capital and with the original mailing envelope. Includes some lamentation about not being home for Christmas but explains that he stays busy with guard duty. Also some comments on religion and the poor moral character of most soldiers.

8. ALS, 4pp., "Camp Baker": February 22, 1862, with original mailing envelope. Comments about the eagerness of the men "to participate in the contest," seeing the glow of the Confederate campfires across the river, and a description of the enemy's cannon's fire: "It is a beautiful scene to see them firing. When a bomb bursts in the air it makes a small white peculiar shaped cloud about the size of a peach basket. This cloud moves off slowly and gradually expands until it is lost in oblivion."

9. ALS, 4pp., "Camp Baker": March 4, 1862, with original mailing envelope. Describes drilling in plain sight and range of the Confederate cannons without being fired upon; that he and Harry are becoming expert sewers of buttons and repairs; and this pleasing description of camp life: "The moon is shining brightly & the wind has fallen so without, all is beautiful & the soldiers, as if inspired by the charms of nature, are singing, playing on various instruments, dancing & talking as happily as though they were on a pic-nic. You would be surprised to see how contentedly we live."

10. ALS, 4p., "Camp Baker": March 17, 1862, with original mailing envelope. Various comments about camp life, not being able to wave at some female visitors to General Hooker because they were drilling, and how some soldiers were finally able to get across the river to the Confederate batteries, but aside from a few stragglers, the enemy had withdrawn.

11. ALS, 4pp., "Camp Baker": April 1, 1862. A letter about the tedium of drilling, a snafu with the mail, and how Harry, after finally receiving a "very blue" letter from Thirza, requested a leave of absence "but could not get much satisfaction."

12. ALS, 4pp., "Camp near Yorktown": April 26, 1862. A lengthy description of preparation for the Battle of Williamsburg, which required working on the batteries with only a small blind of trees separating them from the enemy: "How silently we work. Men are not allowed to speak above a whisper. No fire or lights are allowed, not even the light of a pipe. Thus we work as thieves in the night. The men need no telling to be quiet for they know & feel the danger as soon as they arrive at the works. We take our rifles & stack them beside us as we work. No doubt the enemy will be surprised when the woods are cut & they see such a formidable battery so very near them. The work is going on rapidly & soon 27 heavy batteries will be ready to pour death into the rebel ranks. The time is near at hand."

13. ALS, 8pp., "Seven Pines Camp": June 14, 1862. A letter about being dug in and at the ready "on the very field where Gen Casey had his men before the great bloody battle." Hutchinson also describes being sent out beyond the lines to cut down trees, only to be fired upon by Confederate artillery. He also describes in detail having to dispose of the dead soldiers from the Battle of Seven Pines where the regiment lost 64 men: "We dug holes right beside them, then took our shovels & pushed them in. Then ran away for awhile until the smell had somewhat subsided. ... Some of them only had dirt thrown over them just as they layed & now portions of their bodies may be seen protruding from the slight covering of earth."

14. ALS, 4pp., "Camp Seven Pines": June 23, 1862, with original mailing envelope. A letter sent two days before the beginning of the Seven Days Battles in which he says they feel very good in this position, that he has been made acting sergeant major, and "Richmond will be approached by siege & if so its acquisition is but a questions of time." The attack ultimately failed and Richmond remained in Confederate hands for another three years.
15. ALS, 8pp., "Camp near James River"; July 3, 1862, with original mailing envelope. Details of the retreat of the Army of the Potomac from Seven Pines to Malvern Hill, where it was finally able to turn back the Confederate advance. "One afternoon during our retreat our forces had a terrible engagement with a strong force of the rebels. It was a heavier battle than any I have heard. We drove them back & slaughtered them by the hundreds & I believe we might have followed them back over our own breast works, but that was not McClellan's plan so at night we fell back again. In one engagement three of our company were cut down with a cannon ball. Two were killed outright & the third John Ashmore had his arm taken off."

16. ALS, 4pp., "Camp near Harrison's Landing, Va": August 14, 1862. He speaks about readying for a long march but having to wait several days for more orders, Harry being recommended for captain, and how the "stay at home friends are trembling in their shoes for fear of being drafted," but that he "feels inclined to think the war will be ended in two or three months."

17. ALS, 6pp., "Camp near Alexandria"; September 1, 1862, with original mailing envelope. He recounts his experience at the Second Bull Run, how Harry was wounded by standing in the open to encourage his men, the way their brigade was nearly closed in by Confederate forces before artillery pushed them back, and their retreat back to Alexandria.

18. ALS, Manassas Junction [Virginia]: November 14, 1862, with original mailing envelope. He recounts his brigade encountering a far superior Confederate force under General Patterson and needing to withdraw before they were discovered. Also of Harry's efforts to keep Thirza close by: "He is going down to Washington this afternoon to see her & perhaps will bring her back with him. He has made arrangements with a farmer near our camp for boarding & fear it will be rather lonesome for her here."

19. ALS, 4pp., "Camp near Fredericksburg, Va": December 6, 1862, with original mailing envelope. Various comments about camp life, particularly how to keep warm, and a sudden snow storm that has prevented what was to be a 12-day march along the Pamunkey River.

20. ALS, 4pp., "Camp near Falmouth": January 11, 1863, with original mailing envelope. He asks his sister about Christmas, and tells her how he imagined himself at home with his family. He also describes an inspection by General Mott, who personally spoke with him, and his hope for promotion.

21. ALS, 4pp., "Camp near Falmouth": February 3, 1863, with original mailing envelope. Letter about surviving the winter in camp where the only threat is boredom; how he hopes the rumors of forthcoming furloughs are true because he will come home to visit for the first time in 18 months; and that a man his sister recently met is misrepresenting himself as a friend of his and Harry's: "It is a disgrace the way affairs go on in the north."

22. ALS, 4pp., "Camp near Falmouth": March 26, 1863. A letter requesting supplies ("A couple of dozen paper collars, 13 inches, & a nice silk neck tie, some letter paper & envelopes, but no eatables"), careful directions how they should be sent out immediately (before the company leaves the camp), and some pleasantries about the family.

23. ALS, 3pp., "Camp near Falmouth": March 27, 1863. A follow-up letter to the one sent the day before telling his sister not to send his suit because he was bought a new one from a fellow "gone home on a leave of absence."

24. ALS, 2pp., Salem, New Jersey: August 7, 1863, with original mailing envelope. A relatively short letter about being sent to Salem, New Jersey with two officers to start a recruiting office.

25. ALS, 4pp., Caletts Station, Virginia: October 27, 1863, with original mailing envelope. Talk of visiting relations in Washington, the long walk back to camp, and marching all day in the rain to a new, unknown location near the Confederates.

26. ALS, 4pp., Brandy Station, Virginia: December 3, 1863. An account of a long march over several days where the brigade was mostly held in reserve during the Mine Run Campaign near the Rapidan River, and encountering some sporadic Confederate troops but with little engagement.

27. ALS, 4pp., Brandy Station, Virginia: March 24, 1864. A mournful letter of how he misses his family, the dullness of camp life, and that Grant will be arriving shortly to inspect the men for a coming engagement with Lee.

28. ALS, 1pp., Washington, DC: May 21, 1864, with original mailing envelope. A short letter telling his sister he was wounded "slightly in the left hand," in the Second Battle of Fredericksburg, and "if I do not hurry up my wound will be healed before I get home."

29. ALS, 4pp., "Near Petersburg, Virginia": July 2, 1864. He laments terrible losses sustained by the regiment in the last several months: "When we left Brandy Station we numbered over 300 men, now we have 150. My Company has had 2 killed, 7 wounded & 2 missing." Among the dead was Harry: "I never knew an officer more beloved by those around him than was Harry. Since our sad loss I have felt so forcibly the utter emptiness of all worldly pleasures."

30. ALS, 6pp., Chicago: November 14, 1869. A post-war letter in which he reminisces about home and describes the different people staying at his boarding house.
31. ALS, 4pp., [Titusville, Pennsylvania]: November 2, 1875, with original mailing envelope. Includes a lengthy description of a poor local farmer who found oil on his farm and made a deal with Mayor John Fertig to lease the well.

**Hutchinson Items:**
33. Two calling cards.
34. Silver napkin holder engraved with "M.A.H." and "A.D.H. '82." Likely once owned by Hutchinson's sister, Marianne, and later his son, Alfred Dunbar.
35. American Flag with 33 stars. Measuring 100" x 70". The 33-star flag was only used for a brief period from 1859-1861 but this example was reportedly sewn by Hutchinson's wife Calista in 1888. The tight and consistent stitching points to machine-added construction but the uniform aging to the flag certainly places it on the mid- to late-19th Century.

**Woolsey Correspondence:**
36. ALS, 2pp., "Bivouac at Seven Springs": June 21, 1863, with original mailing envelope. A letter grumbling about poor mail delivery, that the brigade is stalled 20 miles outside of Washington, and that their cavalry are skirmishing daily with rebels in the mountains. Written just two weeks before the Battle of Gettysburg.

**Woolsey Items:**
37. Photograph in oval frame. Measuring 9.25" x 11.25". Features Woolsey in his Union dress uniform with hat, sword, and sash. Fine photographs in very good contemporary oval gilt frames with moderate wear to the gilt and rear panels which are loose and have been secured with tape.
38. Photograph in oval frame. Measuring 9.25" x 11.25". Features Thirza, which has a note that incorrectly states: "Died the day word of his death arrived." Fine photographs in very good contemporary oval gilt frames with moderate wear to the gilt and rear panels which are loose and have been secured with tape.
40. *Psalms and Hymns Adapted to Social, Private and Public Worship in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication 1843. Full morocco with raised bands and gilt lettering on the spine, blind stamped boards, gilt edges, and gilt name on the front panel. Very good with moderate rubbing to the edges.

**Miscellaneous:**
41. "United States Military Record: Company E. 5th N.J. Volunteers". Broadsheet. Measuring 18" x 23.5". 1863. A color lithograph "Memoranda" printed with the regiment's history to that point and listing Hutchinson and Woolsey under the "Promoted" header. Good with tears, spots, and tape at the top edge; still partially attached to cardboard backer.
42. Wood box with lid stamped: "Noiseless Self-Inker Dater." Measuring 7.75" x 4.25" x 3". Used to store the Hutchinson letters.
43. Silk patch, uniform. Measuring 1.5" x 15". Diamond-shaped patch embroidered with blue edging and "Hooker" in red.
44. Two small silver salt shakers.
45. Minié ball. Compressed from impact. Possibly the one that wounded Hutchison in the hand.

**Conditions Governing Access note**
This collection is open for research.

**Conditions Governing Use note**
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**Preferred Citation note**
[Item title / description; Box "n" / Folder "n"], A.B. Hutchinson and H.H. Woolsey American Civil War correspondence and personal effects collection (2013.008.r), Frank Mt. Pleasant Library of Special Collections and Archives, Chapman University, CA.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
New Jersey -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.
Box 1

**Series 1, Correspondence, Hutchinson 1861-1875**

Language of Material: English  
Physical Description: (3 folders)  
Scope and Contents note  
29 letters from Hutchinson to his sisters detailing his promotions, battles and wounds during the Civil War. The last two letters are post-war.  
Subjects and Indexing Terms  
Hutchinson, A.B., (Alfred Bergen), 1840-1921

Box 1

**Series 2, Correspondence, Woolsey 1863**

Language of Material: English  
Physical Description: (1 folder)  
Scope and Contents note  
One letter from Woolsey to his wife, June 21, 1863 complaining about the lack of mail.  
Subjects and Indexing Terms  
Woolsey, H.H., (Henry Harrison), 1836-1864

Box 2

**Series 3, Photographs mid 19th century**

Language of Material: English  
Physical Description: (2 framed albumen print photographs)  
Scope and Contents note  
Two framed albumen print studio photographs, one of Woolsey in officer's uniform and the other of his wife Thirza Hutchinson.

Box 3, Box 1

**Series 4, Documents and ephemera late 19th century**

Language of Material: English  
Physical Description: (1 folder, 1 box)  
Scope and Contents note  
This series contains two hand-written calling cards of Hutchinson as a lieutenant, a small silk patch with "Hooker" embroidered on it (possibly a brigade/divisional patch from the war or from Hutchinson's involvement in the Grand Army of the Republic?), a hand-written card explaining the flag in the collection and a type-written note explaining the contents of the small wooden box in the collection, a certificate of recognition from the governor of New Jersey to Hutchinson for his war service and a broadsheet detailing the war record of the 5th New Jersey Volunteers.

Box 4, Box 3

**Series 5, Realia mid to late 19th century**

Language of Material: English  
Physical Description: (2 boxes)  
Scope and Contents note  
This series contains a 32-star American flag purportedly sewn by Hutchinson's wife, Calista. A small wooden box that originally held the Hutchinson letters, a small sterling silver traveling set of salt and pepper shakers owned by Hutchinson, a sterling silver napkin ring, a smashed Minie ball, an officer's sash owned by Woolsey and a book of Psalms owned by Woolsey.