Preliminary Guide to the Stanford - Smith Families Papers, ca. 1802-1868

Collection number: Wyles Mss 43

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Stanford - Smith Families Papers,
Date (inclusive): ca. 1802-1868
Date (bulk): (bulk 1861-1865)
Collection Number: Wyles Mss 43
Creator: Stanford - Smith
Extent: .4 linear feet (1 document box)
Repository: University of California, Santa Barbara. Library. Department of Special Collections
Santa Barbara, California 93106-9010
Physical Location: Del Sur
Language: English.
Access Restrictions
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Preferred Citation
Stanford - Smith Families Papers. Wyles Mss 43. Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.
Acquisition Information
Undetermined.
Biography
The Stanford and Smith families of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, were joined by the marriage of George W. Smith and Sophie J. Stanford. The families also shared a common experience during the Civil War, centered on the 102nd Regiment of the Pennsylvania Infantry. George W. Smith and his friend George Shoop joined the regiment's Company F on September 1,
1861. Sophie’s brother, Benjamin R. Stanford, joined the regiment’s Company M two days later.

George Smith’s brother, Richard G. Smith, had already joined Company K of the 62nd Pennsylvania Infantry in July, and Sophie’s other brother, Duncan Stanford, would serve in Company C of the 16th Regiment of the U.S. Infantry. George had another brother, William D. Smith, who spent the war living in Chicago with his wife and infant daughter. His sister, Mollie E. Smith, was also married, to a Mr. Hayes. Their parents, Emily and David Smith, remained in Allegheny County and maintained correspondence with their distant sons.

The 102nd Pennsylvania Infantry was organized by Colonel Thomas A. Rowley after his previous command, the 13th Regiment, was mustered out of service in August of 1861. As troops were badly needed in Washington, D.C., a detachment of five companies was sent out during the recruiting process. Finally, twelve full companies were manned and sent east for training. For most of the war, the regiment actually saw little fighting, often being held in reserve or placed on guard duty. However, their few battles were intense, and they occasionally suffered terrible losses. In December 1863, all but a handful of men agreed to re-enlist, and the 102nd Regiment became a “veteran organization,” at which time they were entitled to an extended furlough while the ranks were replenished with new recruits. After several bitter fights in the summer and fall of 1864, the regiment was ready to move deeper into Confederate territory when the war came to an end the following spring. The 102nd Regiment was finally mustered out of service on June 28, 1865.

Private George W. Smith had been discharged on a surgeon’s certificate on December 9, 1862. Private Richard G. Smith had been wounded and captured by the enemy in June and was then discharged on December 30, 1862. Private Benjamin R. Stanford was wounded in two separate battles, and was discharged in September 1864 at the expiration of his term of service. Only George Shoop, having attained the rank of corporal, remained with the company until it was mustered out of service.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection mainly contains Civil War era correspondence to/from George Shoop, George W. Smith, and Benjamin Stanford, soldiers with the Pennsylvania Infantry, 102nd Regiment (Vol.), as well as Richard G. Smith, William D. Smith, and Duncan Stanford, all from Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Further information about Pennsylvania in the Civil War may be found in works such as:

Bates, Samuel P. History of Pennsylvania Volunteers (1869-1871).


Box 1: 1 - 12
Correspondence

Box 1: 1
Shoop, George - to friend George W. Smith, 1862 - 1865

Box 1: 2 - 4
George W. - mainly to family members, n.d.

Box 1: 5
Smith, Richard G., 1862

Box 1: 6
Smith, William D., 1861 - 1862

Box 1: 7 - 10
Stanford, Benjamin R. - mainly to family members, n.d.

Box 1: 11 - 12
Stanford, Duncan - mainly to sister Sophie, 1864 - 1868

Box 1: 13
Miscellany, 1802 - 1868