

MSA 84, Folders 1 - 11

Esther M. Thayer (ca. 1830 - ?), Correspondence, 1862 - 1865

Scope & Content

This collection of Civil War correspondence consists of letters written to Esther Miller Thayer (ca. 1830 - ?) of Warren, Vermont, by her husband, Willard M. Thayer (1830 - 1864), her brother-in-law (?) Andrew J. Butler (1837 - 1887), and her sisters, Emma, Lucy, and Sestina. The majority of the letters in the collection were written by Willard Thayer to his wife and children while he served as a corporal in Co. B of the 10th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers.

The collection was given to the Vermont Historical Society by Barbara Maughan, great-great-granddaughter of William Thayer (ms. acc. no. 92.11). Ms. Maughan transcribed Willard Thayer's letters (MSA 84, Folder 8). Her general arrangement as well as her placement of each letter in a plastic sleeve have been retained. The collection is stored in 11 folders.

Genealogy

Willard M. Thayer (Aug. 20, 1830 - Sept. 22, 1864) and Esther R. Miller (March 27, 1833 - 1917) were married on January 3, 1854, in Warren, Vermont. They had three children: Herbert E. (March 30, 1856 - ?), Willard Philander (Feb. 16, 1859 - Nov. 20, 1941), and Ida Elizabeth (Oct. 18, 1861 - Feb. 16, 1954); the latter is the great-grandmother of the donor of the collection.

Willard Thayer enlisted in Co. B of the 10th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers on August 19, 1862, and died in Brooklyn, New York, on Sept. 23, 1864, of "chronic diarrhea." He is buried in the Warren Village Cemetery. Esther Thayer married Orvis Whitcomb on April 15, 1866, in Warren; they had one daughter, Hattie Esther.

Esther's brother James E. Miller (b. 1833) enlisted June 10, 1863, in Co. L of the 11th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers and died of "disease" in Annapolis, Maryland, on Feb. 16, 1865. He is also buried in the Warren Village Cemetery.

Andrew J. Butler of Reading, Vermont, who was Esther Thayer's brother-in-law (?) enlisted Dec. 19, 1863, in Co. H, 6th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers and was discharged June 26, 1865. He died in Reading, Vermont, on March 20, 1887.

Organization of the Correspondence

The collection is organized in three series:

- I. Willard M. Thayer (1830 - 1864), Letters, 1862 - 65

MSA 84, Folders 1 - 11
Civil War Diaries and Letters

Page 2

- II. Andrew J. Butler (1837 - 1887), Letters, 1861 & 1865
- III. Miscellaneous, 1864 - 65

I. Willard M. Thayer (1830 - 1864), Letters, 1862 - 65

Willard's letters to his wife begin in August 1862 and continue until July 22, 1864. Although he was wounded Nov. 27, 1863, he does not allude to it in his letters. His request for furlough in March 1864 (MSA 84, Folder 11) was denied. He writes of his Regiment's involvement in the Spotsylvania campaign, May 10-18, 1864 (MSA 84, Folder 7).

II. Andrew J. Butler (1837 - 1887), Letters, 1861 & 1865

This series contains just two letters. The first of these letters, which has been transcribed, was written to both Willard and Esther Thayer, while Butler served in Co. H of the 6th Vermont Regiment. The second was written to Esther after Willard's death.

III. Miscellaneous, 1864 - 65

This series contains letters written to Esther by her sisters in the summer of 1864 during the period Willard was ill and immediately following his death. Sestina wrote for Willard from Brooklyn who was too ill to write.

It also includes Willard Thayer's application for a furlough, March 1864, several envelopes addressed to Esther Thayer (no stamps), and an unidentified reminder for an overdue bill.

Inventory

MSA 84

I. Willard M. Thayer (1830 - 1864)

Folder 1	Letters, August 1862 - October 1862
2	_____, November 1862 - December 1862
3	_____, January 1863 - March 1863
4	_____, April 1863 - July 1863
5	_____, August 1863 - September 1863
6	_____, October 1863 - March 1864
7	_____, April 1864 - June 1864

MSA 84, Folders 1 - 11
Civil War Diaries and Letters

Page 3

8 _____, transcriptions, 1862 - 1864

II. Andrew J. Butler (1837 - 1887)

9 Letters, 1861 & 1865

III. Miscellaneous

10 Letters, 1864 - 1865

11 Other items

Priscilla Page
May 1993