

## Marcus A. Emmons Papers

1858-1864

1 folder (0.1 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 034



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A 21 year-old farmer from Hardwick, Mass., Marcus A. Emmons enlisted in the 21st Massachusetts Infantry in August 1861, and saw active service in North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Having survived many of the great battles of the eastern theatre, Emmons was killed in action at Bethesda Church on June 2, 1864.

The letters and journals that comprise this collection document Emmons' tragically brief experience in the Civil War. Both letters date from April 1864, while the 21st Massachusetts was stationed in Annapolis, Md., prior to the campaigns of that summer. One journal includes some miscellaneous pre-war accounts, a complete list of the Civil War volunteers from Hardwick and their regiments (some with notation of fate in service); a list of conscripts added to Co. K, 21st Mass., in 1863; a list of Civil War battles; military accounts; recruits added to the regiment in 1862, listing place of residence; and a roster of Co. K, 21st Mass. Infantry, with place of residence and fate in the service. The other journal begins as a spelling exercise book and includes diary entries for Mar.-

Sept., 1862, discussing farm work.

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## Background on Marcus A. Emmons

A 21 year-old farmer from Hardwick, Mass., Marcus A. Emmons enlisted for three years' service in August 1861. Joining Co. K of the 21st Massachusetts Infantry, he was mustered into federal service late in the month and shipped out almost immediately for garrison duty in Annapolis. As part of Ambrose Burnside's expedition to North Carolina beginning in January 1862, the 21st took part in several major engagements, including the battles of Roanoke Island, New Berne, and South Mills, before they were sent to Virginia during the summer to join the main body of the Army of the Potomac. Emmons' regiment sustained heavy casualties in the long succession of battles (Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, and Fredericksburg), but particularly at Chantilly in September 1862, where they sustained 35% casualties.

Between March 1863 and January 1864, the 21st Massachusetts Infantry served in Kentucky and eastern Tennessee, but they returned to the Army of the Potomac for the spring campaigns of 1864. Emmons performed exceptionally well in the military, earning promotion to Corporal (Nov. 10, 1862) and then Sergeant (Sept. 1, 1863), before his reenlistment in January 1864. His regiment, however, suffered heavily. Around the time that Emmons was killed in action at Bethesda Church (Battle of Cold Harbor) on June 2, 1864, the 21st had been reduced from around 1,000 men to barely 100, forcing them to consolidate into the 36th Massachusetts Infantry.

Emmons was described by his comrade, James Madison Stone, as "an awkward, unsoldierly appearing man," but a man of "considerable intellectual ability and a man of splendid character, and, so far as I ever saw, he was as brave as the bravest, without any show or parade, but always did his duty faithfully."

## Scope of collection

The letters and journals that comprise this collection document Marcus Emmons' tragically brief experience in the Civil War. Both letters date from April 1864, while the 21st Massachusetts was stationed in Annapolis, Md., prior to the campaigns of that summer. One journal includes some miscellaneous pre-war accounts, a complete list of the Civil War volunteers from Hardwick and their regiments (some with notation of fate in service); a list of conscripts added to Co. K, 21st Mass., in 1863; a list of Civil War battles; military accounts; recruits added to the regiment in 1862, listing place of residence; and a roster of Co. K, 21st Mass. Infantry, with place of residence and fate in the service. The other journal begins as a spelling exercise book and includes diary entries for Mar.-Sept., 1862, discussing farm work.

## Inventory

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Emmons, Marcus A.: Journal  
1858-1864

Emmons, Marcus A.: Letter from Marcus A. Emmons to brother; Annapolis, Md.  
1864 Apr. 12  
Drill. Review by Abraham Lincoln, U.S. Grant, and Ambrose E. Burnside.

Emmons, Marcus A.: Letter from Marcus A. Emmons to brother; Annapolis, Md.  
1864 Apr. 12  
Drill. Regiment veterans have drawn the new pattern Springfield rifles with the recruits and exempts taking the old guns. Negro regiments have been sent to Hilton Head: "I wish there was 500,000 Negro soldiers in the field and I wish they had a 100,00 of the Northern Copperheads just ahead of them in line of battle opposed to the Rebs and would make them fight for their country. I think it would take some of the Copperhead out of them." Barbarity of Fort Pillow massacre.

Emmons, Marcus A.: Spelling exercise book and journal  
1859-1860

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Provenance unrecorded.

### Bibliography

Stone, James Madison, *Personal Recollections of the Civil War* (Jazzybee Verlag Jurgen Beck, 2012).

## Related Material

Transcripts of other Civil War letters from Emmons are housed in the collections of the Hardwick Historical Society.

## Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Aug. 2013.

## Language:

English

## Copyright and Use (More information )

*Cite as:* Marcus A. Emmons Papers (MS 034). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

## Search terms

### Subjects

Farmers--Massachusetts--Hardwick

Hardwick (Mass.)--History.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

United States. Army--Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, 21st (1861-1864).

### Contributors

Emmons, Marcus A. [main entry]

### Genres and formats

Diaries.

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