

FINDING AID to the

**ERASTUS HOLMES, 1832-1910
CIVIL WAR PRISONOR
DIARY AND MEMOIR, 1864-1870**

MSS 37
(.1 linear ft.)

By

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SCOPE AND CONTENT STATEMENT

The typescript contains entries from Erastus Holmes' diary from Jul. 27, to Nov. 6, 1864. The entries cover his infantry's fighting in the Civil War in Georgia, their surrender, and Holmes' experiences at Andersonville Prison in Georgia. Following the diary entries, Holmes has written his reflections of events that occurred during the war and his stay in prison. This memoir appears to be written around 1870, as Holmes makes a reference that it's been five years since he returned from the war.

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Erastus Holmes was born in Warrant Cty., Ohio in 1832. During the Civil War he fought in F Company of the 5th Indiana Cavalry at the rank of quartermaster sergeant. He died in Indianapolis in 1910. (Data obtained from Pedigree Resource File at www.familysearch.org).

PROVENANCE

The diary typescript was donated to the Hanover College library by Harry H. Houghtalen.

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SERIES 1 DIARY AND MEMOIR TYPESCRIPT

Fd. 1 Diary and Memoir Typescript, 1864 Jul. 27-ca. 1870
 42 p.

The first twenty-five pages are Holmes' diary entries from Jul. 27-Nov. 6, 1864, and there are two pages of maps , one of Holmes' journeys across South Carolina and Georgia and the other of Andersonville Prison. From July to mid-September the entries are descriptive and detail his experiences in the Civil War and surviving at the Andersonville Prison. He describes the terrible death and sickness in camp and the general lack of humanity emanated by both prisoners and guards. He also mentions his activities of buying and trading with Rebel guards. He then resold food to prisoners, which he explains in his memoir as being illegal, but one of the only ways to eat. In mid-September Holmes gets sick and his entries are brief until the diary ends in November. During this month and a half many captured soldiers are being transferred out of the prison through prisoner exchanges.

The second half of the typescript is a memoir written by Holmes five years after the end of the Civil War. He reflects on his initial excitement of going to war and the lack of glory in war. He discusses his enlistment and gives more details of his battles and what lead to the capture of his infantry by Rebel soldiers. At one point Holmes reminisces about coming home from the war and how happy he was to see his family, while also remembering others who didn't return to their families. Many of his descriptions of soldiers dying at the prison show horrific aspects of being a prisoner of war.