

George Kurth Collection

Guide to the George Kurth Archival Collection, Company I, 18th Wisconsin Infantry

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository

Civil War Museum, Resource Center Kenosha, Wisconsin

Language of Material

Material in English

Abstract

This collection consists of 1 document detailing George Kurth's service in the 18th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. It is titled "The Life of George Kurth" and is written by himself.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Use Restrictions

No photocopying, please

Preferred Citation

(Identification of Item). The George Kurth Collection, The Civil War Museum,
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Provenance

The George Kurth Collection was copied, as written, from the originals.

Processing Information

Processed by Emily Roeck (2024)

Biographical note:1

George Kurth was born on January 20th, 1834 in Witzenhausen, Germany. In 1852, his family set sail for America and ended up in Lewiston, Pennsylvania. His older sister got married and moved, so his family followed them to Columbus, Wisconsin in 1854. He did a lot of farm work, and bought his own 40 acres. When the war broke out, George enlisted on December 7th, 1861 because he wanted to see the world. He listed his residence as Elba, Wisconsin. Private Kurth was later captured by the Confederacy but escaped, falling ill afterwards. He survived the war and lived to tell about it.

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Doc.#1 of 1:

This is the story of George Kurth's life. Throughout 10 pages, he dates the days and means of travel to the United States, as well as all the work he did since his arrival. The battles he was in were Pittsburg Landing, Corinth, Port Gibson, Champion Hill, and Vicksburg, where they took many Confederate prisoners. He fell ill for two months, going home for another month, then back to his regiment in Huntsville, Alabama. He details their movements and timeline accurately, saying little on his feelings on the matters- other than that he likes to work and does everything to the best of his ability, even when sick. They had to surrender on October 5th, 1864 at the Battle of Altoona in Georgia, even though they wanted to keep fighting. From here, they were taken prisoner but were treated well enough- having a pint of coarse cornmeal and a teaspoon of salt

every 24 hours. He made friends with a Confederate soldier who he confided in and labeled a “forever friend.” He escaped and later found some Union soldiers. He made his way to Clearville, Maryland, where he later fell ill and was back in the hospital. He reached Milwaukee on March 30th, 1865, 3 years after his enlistment. He was reunited with his friends and family who helped nurse him back to health, but he was never the same.

A note on the 18th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment:

The regiment was organized out of Milwaukee and mustered into federal service on March 15, 1862. The regiment left Wisconsin for St. Louis, Missouri, on March 30, and then traveled to Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, from March 31-April 5. On April 6, 1862, the 18th Wisconsin participated in the Battle of Shiloh. Subsequently, the regiment also fought at Corinth, Iuka, Port Gibson, Champion Hill and the Siege of Vicksburg.

Later in the war, the 18th was part of General Sherman’s Army on the March to the Sea, the campaign through South and North Carolina, and the Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina.

The regiment lost 225 men during service. Four officers and 52 enlisted men were mortally wounded. Two officers and 167 enlisted men died from disease.