

PRITZKER MILITARY MUSEUM & LIBRARY

104 S Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603

archives@pritzkermilitary.org

312-374-9333

Chauncey S. Aldrich Collection

Creator:	Mason C. Aldrich and Chauncey S. Aldrich
Dates:	1862-1865
Quantity:	5 Folders
Acquisition:	Donated by Mason C. Aldrich, April 2, 2008
Identification:	PMML Item # 800244, OCLC# 231380109, Call# PAPERS 00009
Language:	English
Citation:	[Document Title]. The Chauncey S. Aldrich Collection, [Box #, Folder#]. Pritzker Military Museum & Library, Chicago, IL
Finding Aid:	Written by Kathryn Hofherr, June 2008; Updated by Kat Latham, 2013; Updated by Andrea Martinez, 2018

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Biographical Note

Chauncey Soper Aldrich was born and raised in McDonough, New York in 1833. While in his twenties, Aldrich taught at an academy until being admitted to the New York bar. In 1861, at the age of 27, Aldrich joined hundreds of his fellow New Yorkers in volunteering for military services during the Civil War. Together they formed the 85th New York volunteers.

Aldrich began his career as a 2nd Lieutenant and rose to the rank of captain within two years. In 1862, Aldrich was stationed on Meridian Hill in Washington D.C. but spent the next three years with the 85th working their way throughout the south. The 85th took part in a number of major battles, including the Siege of Yorktown, the Seven Days Battle, and the Battle of Plymouth in April of 1864.

In mid-April 1864, the New York 85th, traveling aboard the Massasoit, came under attack by Confederate forces. The fighting ended with the 85th Regiment surrender to the Confederates at Plymouth. They were taken prisoner on April 20. After marching south for four days they were put on a train to be moved to various prisoner of war

camps throughout the south. They eventually found themselves at the camp in Columbia, South Carolina. Five months passed without any information on the war. On October 11, 1864, Aldrich and four fellow officers from the 85th escaped. It was a full day before the Confederates set the bloodhounds after them, but Aldrich and his officers had too much of a head start. For the next month, the officers made their way north. On November 18, 1864, Aldrich's birthday, they arrived safely in Rochester, New York.

Aldrich was honorably discharged from the military on December 16, 1864. He spent the next few years giving speeches in New York. He then moved throughout the country before eventually settling in Colorado where he died in 1909.

Scope and Content of the Collection

The collection contains typed transcripts of Captain Aldrich's diary which documents his day to day activities including: letters written and received, services attended, drills, and military engagements. Included in the diary is Aldrich's account of his escape from a Confederate prison at the end of 1864. The remainder of the collection is comprised of an address in McDonough, New York, a newspaper clipping mentioning Aldrich, a questionnaire Captain Aldrich filled out pertaining to his experience as a prisoner of war, a note from one of Aldrich's descendents, Pat Aldrich, and a scanned image of Captain Aldrich. The bulk of the collection concerns Captain Aldrich's military service for the years 1862-1865.

Arrangement

The collection arrived with no discernable arrangement and was rearranged in a more efficient working order by PMML staff. The collection consists of three series and is contained within five archival folders.

Rights

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Related Collections

Richard L. Howard Collection

Separations

Item Number	Description	Date	Location
32075306	Photograph	n.d.	Photograph Collection

Key Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the Library's online catalog. Researchers interested in materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog using these subject headings.

Names

Aldrich, Chauncey S.

Subjects

United States--Army--New York Infantry Regiment, 85th (1862-1864)
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Personal narratives.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Prisoners and prisons.

Container List

Box	Folder	Item ID #	Title	Dates
Series One: Person Writings				
SM1	1	32075301	Diary	1862-1864
	2	32075302	Address given by Aldrich	1863
	3	32075303	State of New York, Bureau of Military Record Questionnaire	1965
Series Two: Genealogy				
	4		Genealogy	
		32075304	Newspaper Clippings	1865
		32075305	Note on Family Legend by Pat Aldrich	n.d.