

Colonel John C. Whiton Scrapbook, c. 1882-1909

Repository: Hingham Public Library
Manuscript Number: MSC # 36
Creators: John Chadwick Whiton and Marion Chadwick Whiton
Processed By: Jennifer Williams. Finding aid completed in June of 2015.
Extent: 1 Nonstandard Box (1 Scrapbook)
Access: Open for research.

Provenance

This scrapbook was created by Colonel John Chadwick Whiton between approximately 1882 and 1905. Several additions were made by his daughter, Marion Chadwick Whiton, after his death in 1905. The scrapbook was gifted to the Hingham Public Library by an anonymous donor.

Biographical Note

John Chadwick Whiton was born in Hingham, Mass. on August 21, 1828 to Elijah and Mary (Lincoln) Whiton. John grew up in Hingham with his seven siblings, all of whom attended the local public schools. After finishing his education John entered the retail industry as a clerk at a Boston grocery store. A few years later he began working at John P. Whiton's wholesale store, where he would remain until 1862. On October 19th of that year he married Ann Maria Sprague, daughter of Jairus Sprague, with whom he would have one surviving child.

In April of 1861 John began his civil war military service as captain of Company A, Second Battalion, Massachusetts Volunteers – also known as the Boston Tigers, one of the most well-known military groups in Massachusetts. He was stationed at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor until May 21, 1861, when the battalion was relieved. Over one year later, on August 27, 1862, John began recruiting soldiers for the Forty-Third Massachusetts Regiment.

He became the Regiment's Lieutenant-Colonel, leaving Massachusetts on October 24, 1862 for North Carolina. During the next few months he participated in the Goldsboro expedition, fighting in the battles at Kinston, Whitehall, Springbank Bridge, Blount's Creek, and Little Washington. He also worked with the regiment to perform garrison duty, construct roads, and build fortifications. John mustered out of service with the rest of his regiment on July 30, 1863. In October of that year he was appointed the superintendent of recruiting for Plymouth County, a position he would hold until April of 1864.

On April 28, 1864 the Fifty-Eighth Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry left for Virginia under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel John C. Whiton. The regiment was often engaged in combat, participating in the battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, North Anna, Totopotomoy Creek, Bethesda Church, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. John suffered a fractured rib at Bethesda Church after being hit in the side by a musket ball and was unable to fight for a brief period of time. On April 2, 1865 John was recognized for his hard work in the form a brevet commission to the rank of Colonel.

On May 10th, Union soldiers learned of the surrender of General Lee. John and his regiment marched to Washington and were present at the grand review before returning to Massachusetts. He mustered out of service on July 26, 1865. John returned to civilian life and in September of 1865 he obtained a position as the chief clerk in Boston's auditing department.

In 1873 John became superintendent of the correctional facilities on Deer and Rainsford Islands in Boston Harbor. He later obtained the position of treasurer and steward of the Women's Reformatory Prison in Sherborn, Mass. but returned to Deer Island in 1883. Six years later he again switched positions and began working as the master of the Suffolk County House of Correction in South Boston. While there he obtained a reputation as a firm but fair corrections officer and was considered to be "one of the most able and responsible officials in public service."¹ John often worked one-on-one with the inmates, encouraging or admonishing them as needed and overseeing their work projects. John remained in this position until the House of Correction closed in 1902.

Throughout his adult life John was an active member of several different organizations. He was a Master Mason at the Columbian Lodge in Boston, a member of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion and the Grand Army of the Republic, an active participant in the Wardens' Association, and a director of the National Prison Association. John Chadwick Whiton died of apoplexy and arteriosclerosis on January 3, 1905. He was buried in the Hingham Center Cemetery.

Arrangement

This collection has been arranged into the following series:

- Series I. Colonel John C. Whiton Scrapbook, c. 1882-1909

Series I. Colonel John C. Whiton Scrapbook c. 1882-1909

Box 1

This series is composed of one scrapbook created by Colonel John Chadwick Whiton between approximately 1882 and 1905. After his death in 1905 it was completed by his daughter Marion Chadwick Whiton, who last added to the scrapbook in approximately 1909. The materials in the scrapbook are mostly newspaper clippings, although there are also newsletter clippings, memorial pamphlets handed out at funerals, poems, and pages taken from books.

The contents of these materials focus mostly on the military and prison system in Massachusetts. Many of the clippings are reprints of Edward H. Rogers' book entitled *Reminiscences of Military Service in the Forty-Third Regiment, Massachusetts Infantry, During the Great Civil War, 1862-63* which discusses the history of Company H as seen through the eyes of the author. Other items are articles written about veterans after the Civil War, including events held by the Loyal Legion, regiment reunions, battle anniversary observances, tributes to President Abraham Lincoln, and veteran deaths.

¹ *American Series of Popular Biographies: Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Boston: Graves & Steinbarger, 1901), 227.

Clippings discussing the prison system center on such subjects as professional conferences, the daily lives of prison inmates at the Suffolk House of Correction and Deer Island reformatory institution, Col. Whiton's opinion on incarceration laws, prisoner riots, prison overcrowding, and prisoner intake procedures.

Other subjects discussed in the scrapbook include the lives and deaths of John's family and friends, religion, poetry, Presidents Taft and Roosevelt, and McKinley, music, and John's death in 1905.

Note: Some of the materials have fallen out of the scrapbook and have been placed within a folder for preservation purposes.