

**Stephen F. Come
Correspondence, 1861-1865**

20174

QUANTITY: 1 folder (39 items)
ACCESS: Open to research
ACQUISITION: Gift of Sharon Campbell, July 1991
PROCESSED BY: Sarah Schelde, Volunteer, July 2011

Biographical Note:

Stephen F. Come was born in October 1829 in Canada and immigrated to the United States in 1848. He enlisted in the Civil War on January 25, 1864, in Chatham, Columbia County, New York, and was mustered in the next day as a private with the 15th New York Heavy Artillery, Company M. Come spent much of his time, from August 1864 until May 1865, at the City Point Hospital in Virginia. He and his company were mustered out on August 22, 1865, and returned to his home in Chatham, where he resumed work as a shoemaker. He was married to Mary Come from approximately 1850 until their deaths, and together they had 10 children.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection consists chiefly of letters sent by Stephen Come to his wife, Mary, between the dates of February 13, 1864, and August 29, 1865. Largely personal in content, they detail the health of Stephen Come and his family, their desires to see each other once again, and details on neighbors and friends at home and those who had enlisted (most notably someone named Ransom). Come and his company spent the majority of the time out of battle, so there are no descriptions of military strategy; instead he focuses on the quality of life and conditions in camps and at his position at the City Point, Virginia, hospital. The letters from Stephen Come to his wife are written in various styles, which may be related to a note on the 1865 New York State census saying that Come could read, but not write. Thus, it is very likely someone else scribed the letter as Come dictated its content. The balance of the collection includes letters Come received from a friend, Joseph Bruley, who was serving in the 30th New York Infantry, that discuss issues of friends and neighbors and his time at the Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia; a letter addressed to Mary Come from a third party, discussing finances; a post-war letter addressed to Stephen Come from a friend, detailing civilian life; a list of prices of fabrics for Come's shoemaking; and envelopes addressed to Mary Come.

Item List:

Folder	Item	Description
		Letters written by Stephen F. Come to Mary Come (Wife)
1	1	Poughkeepsie [N.Y.], February 13, 1864? Writes that he has been there in Barracks since leaving home; wishes for a likeness of his wife and youngest to be sent, and he will do so in return when available; wants word if she has received the check and twenty-five dollars sent

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		from him; mentions all is well with him and also with Ransom (?); mentions he will most likely be leaving the next Monday or Tuesday for Fort Shyler [Fort Schuyler?], New York.
1	2	Near Branly Station [Brandy Station, Va.?], April 4, 1864 Writes that he has been moving around a lot recently, first to Fort Schuyler, then to Fort Leyon [Lyon]; discusses possibility of going back to Georgetown; states present quarters are not comfortable; wants to know if she has received the 100 dollars sent March 21 st , and wants postage stamps sent to him.
1	3	Fort Lyon, Va., April 20, 1864 Mentions receiving the likenesses and sending out his own; asks if Ransom is at home, since he hasn't heard from him since he went to Albany; discusses the Army of the Potomac and briefly General Grant; mentions being behind the army as it moves, and feels he is not in any danger at the moment. [Letter is written phonetically.]
1	4	Fort Lyon, Va., April 30, 1864 Discusses getting over a bout of diarrhea that has been commonplace throughout the company, which he posits is because of the different water; mentions that pay will be sent some time but a stop to letters being sent out until further notice is being started, which Come thinks has to do with rebels getting information; says that there is a possibility of battle and the men are in good spirits for it; also says his army group is in the reserve artillery and may instead guard forts over going into battle.
1	5	Camp in field, June 4, 1864 Letter written on way (10 miles from) Richmond, Va.; mentions he is in better health, asks after Mary and the cow.
1	6	Near Petersburg [Va.], June, 26, 1864 Tells wife he has been ill in the hot weather, but that his company has been relieved from the fighting going around; states they have marched a very long way from where they started; asks after money to be sent to buy tobacco.
1	7	The entrenchments near Petersburg [Va.], July 11, 1864 Writes that he wishes he could have spent Independence Day with her, and hopes to be able to get a furlough soon; prays for safety and an end to the war; says Ransom has been put in his company; advises her on financial situations; mentions a man [name illegible] to whom he has not had time or paper to write and asks her to pass on a message to him; also mentions war-related information. [The letter is very faded and difficult to read in detail.]
1	8	Camp near Petersburg [Va.], July 25, 1864 Writes that he was sorry to hear Mary was sick, and warns her to be careful of her health; adds that hearing from her cheers him up the most and wishes he could be at home; says he should be paid soon and will express mail it; mentions they may go to Washington in the fall (a rumor); talks about the rainy weather there as opposed to the drier weather at home; asks her to pray on his behalf and writes of God and religion in regards to their separation.
1	9	City Point [Va.], August 12, 1864 Says he is glad to hear the family is in good health, and he is as well; mentions

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		he was detailed the 31 st of July to go to City Point Hospital; mentions he has been moon blind [unable to see at night] for 5-6 weeks, but thinks that he will go back to the front after his eyes heal; tells her not to sell 'boot trees' and discusses other business deals; mentions Ransom got the letter with five dollars; says he received the children's letters and that he is sending along a book for Mary; expects pay any day soon.
1	10	City Point, Va., August 23, 1864 Discusses rumors of him being ill; says he has gotten over being moon blind after 8 weeks; was detailed from his regiment on July 31 st ; does guard duty every three days, which is work he enjoys as he hears the battles have been pretty bad since; discusses getting a watch that he may be able to sell, and being paid and sending those 70 dollars; mentions letter was dictated to another soldier who was detailed with Come.
1	11	City Point, Va., September 11, 1864 Writes he has been there for six weeks and plans to stay "until the regiment goes into winter quarters and perhaps longer"; mentions possibility of a winter furlough; mentions the increase from 850 to 2,340 men in the regiment and that they have been in two or three battles since he left; asks for postage stamps and says he has 40 dollars coming to him at some point.
1	12	City Point, Va., September 25, 1864 Says he is still having problems with his eyes; mentions it has been 8 months since he enlisted; mentions a soldier, Frank Brig, who his wife may know; says that the soldiers think the war will be over by the fall election; preparing for winter at City Point by putting up 'log shanties'.
1	13	City Point, Va., November 25, 1864 Mentions his wife was very ill, which was why there was a gap in letters; mentions Thanksgiving meal being sent to the soldiers who are in the hospital, although not him; says that conditions there are very good; says he would not be able to get a furlough until the new year; sent her 50 dollars on October 13 th ; mentions he has news from Ransom; requests 2 dollars for tobacco and stamps, since he won't be paid until January; can hear the "cannons of Pikets firing".
1	14	City Point, Va., January 2, 1865 Says there is no snow on the ground (responding to wife's mentioning sleighing in her letter to him); explains why he did not seem to understand who she meant by John J in a previous letter (a neighbor); says this is a short letter because he is in a hurry.
1	15	Near City Point, Va., January 8, 1864 [1865?] Discusses the possibility presented of him getting a furlough that month or early the next, and therefore asking for \$15 in order to be prepared; says state money will not work there.
1	16	City Point, Va., February 10, 1865 Says he has not received an answer to last three letters; may or may not get a furlough; mentions fighting has been going on and his regiment lost 200 men (killed, wounded, and missing); says it was still a gain for the Union.
1	17	City Point, Va., February 20, 1865

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		Mentions not having received the \$15 requested and then sent by Mary; says there is a chance of a furlough by March 20; mentions another 3 killed from his company, says he has it very good with his position at City Point; mentions there is talk of peace and of payment soon.
1	18	City Point, Va., April 2, 1865 Says he sent \$50 on March 29; mentions the fighting going on near Petersburg and the Rebel prisoners; says the Union expects to have the city by morning; says he will not get a furlough at this time but believes the war will be over by July 4; mentions his regiment is guarding an ammunition train.
1	19	City Point, Va., April 9, 1865 Mentions the Union army has captured Petersburg and Richmond, and that the Confederates are 'demoralised'; believes war will be over within the month; mentions that his major was killed but his company is safe (including Ransom). Post script mentions the surrender of General Lee to Grant, and the celebrations undergoing.
1	20	City Point, Va., April 14, 1865 Mentions again the surrender by Lee and rumors of surrender by Johnson; saw 7,560 Rebel prisoners; mentions seeing the wounded General 'Ewell' [?]; mentions a Mr. Hall on the Steamer <i>Seneca</i> , and that he will write to Nicolas White; will send her a \$5 confederate bill he got from a prisoner.
1	21	City Point, Va., April 29, 1865 Mentions the 'whole southern army' has surrendered and believes he will be soon discharged; mentions the assassination of President Lincoln and the capture of the assassin; updates and says he has seen the <i>Seneca</i> but not Mr. Joe Hill.
1	22	Camp between Alexandria?, [Va.] and Washington, May 18, 1865 Mentions leaving City Point the 8 th and arriving in Alexandria the 10 th , and setting up a hospital 3 miles from Alexandria on the 11 th ; says the corps are camped nearby; believes he will be home in about 3 weeks; tells her not to worry over him or work too hard.
1	23	Camp near Alexandria [Va.], June 11, 1865 Says he has not heard from her since May 2; says he might not be home for 2 or 3 months, despite being discharged, because of an issue between the major and his higher ups; has sent a bundle with trinkets home; says they will not get paid until they are discharged, but then will get monthly pay.
1	24	Camp near Washington, [D.C.], June 21, 1865 Says she still has not answered and he is 'uneasy'; mentions again he will not be paid until after being discharged, a total of 136 dollars; says he is no longer with the hospital, but back with his original company.
1	25	Fort Ellsworth near Alexandria, Va., June 30, 1865 Comments on the letter he has received from his wife stating she had been sick; says there is no sign of being paid or discharged; regrets he cannot meet with family visiting at home; talks about the death of a Joseph Hall.
1	26	Fort Albany [Va.], July 22, 1865 Mentions moving to current location on the 16 th , and visiting D.C. on the 20 th

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		for shoemaking supplies [his trade)]; mentions getting paid the 16 th (?); says volunteers will probably be discharged soon.
1	27	Fort Woodbury [Va.], August 12, 1865 Heard from Ransom that [Mary Come] was getting better; says his regiment is being mustered out and should be in New York by the end of the next week.
1	28	Hartes Island [Hart's Island, N.Y.], August 29, 1865 Says he has arrived in 'Old' York State and must stay there a few days before he can go home. Left Fort Woodbury the 24 th and arrived in New York City the 25 th .
		Miscellaneous Correspondence to Stephen and Mary Come
1	29	Joseph Bruley to [Stephen Come], September 8, 1861 Inquires after Come's health and after a watch that should have been given to a Jonas; asks for his brothers' addresses to send them mail; says his company is 'going out on Pickets'; mentions a fort visible from 2.5 miles away; recounts tale of a man sentenced to be shot for sleeping during his post.
1	30	Receipt, C[hatham] Center [N.Y.], December 31, 1861 Stephen Come, [bought] of A. Weiderwax; prices of fabrics and thread, amounting to a total of \$9.98.
1	31	Joseph Bruley to [Stephen Come], Richmond Libby Prison, [Va.], December 28, [1862] Mentions delay in writing due to much marching and time in battles; mentions one group had only 20/80 men left; says he was sent to the prison, spent Christmas there, where food is a bit of bread and some soup
1	32	Joseph Bruley to [Stephen Come], Camp Parole, Annapolis, Md., February 6, 1863 Says boys were drunk for 3 or 4 days but have now run out of money; asks for news from someone [name illegible] and asks Come to give a ring to Henry which JB made in prison; mentions there is a lot to eat but nothing to do where he is.
1	33	Joseph Bruley to [Stephen Come], Camp Parole, Annapolis, Md., February 18, 1863 Mentions not being able to get back that winter but that their time is up in three months; states he was in prison for four weeks, and three of them only had bread and water, and the cells were filthy; asks after people they know who may be enlisting; says there is much to eat but not to do; says there are 8,000 men at the camp but many will be sent out soon.
1	34	Wm A. Augur to Mary Come, West Pittsfield, [Mass.], 1864 Discusses believing that Mary Come is having a hard time due to a lack of money coming in from Stephen Come; mentions a way of letting the money go through him in order to have detailed receipts of it; talks about the money due and waving off interest if paid in a few weeks.
1	35	Theodore A. Corby to [Stephen Come], Jeffersonville, [N.Y.], September 30, 1865 Details his journey home after leaving New York City "that Sunday Evening"; has not started work yet; visited Buffalo and Canada after returning home; talks

Folder	Item	Description
		about possibility of going to Buffalo to learn bookkeeping; recalls time at City Point helping Come.
		Covers
1	36	Addressed to Mrs. Mary [Come], Chatham Centre, Col Co, NY. Top right corner cut out (the stamp).
1	37	Addressed to Mrs. Mary Come, Chatham Centre, Columbia Co, NY. Square in Top right cut out.
1	38	Addressed to Mrs. Mary Come, Chatham Centre, Columbia Co, New York. Square in top, center-right cut out.
1	39	Addressed to Mrs. Mary Come, Chatham Senter [sic], Columbia Co, N.Y. Square in top, center-right cut out. Top left corner printed "U.S. Christian Commission. Soldier's Letter." Also written on cover is 'J. O'Neill. Lieut of [?]'

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