



State Library of Massachusetts - Special Collections Department

Manuscript 37

Papers relating to the Lt. Thomas Jackson Cate Civil War Sword, 1895-1921: Guide

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Call Number: Manuscript 37

Extent: 1 folder (9 items)

Preferred Citation Style: Papers Relating to the Lieutenant Thomas Jackson Cate Civil War Sword. State Library of Massachusetts Special Collections.

About This Finding Aid: Description based on DACS.

Processed by: Finding aid prepared by Katie Seitz, October 4, 2013.

Abstract: This collection documents the donation of the Civil War sword of Thomas Jackson Cate to the State of Massachusetts.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection comprises 9 letters and documents concerning a sword used by Lt. Thomas Jackson Cate during the United States Civil War, primarily administrative letters regarding its donation to the State of Massachusetts. Cate's original 1895 handwritten document stating his intentions for the sword is included.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Thomas Jackson Cate (1829-1912) served as a lieutenant in Company F of the 6th Regiment of the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia Infantry during the Civil War. On April 19, 1861, his regiment marched through Baltimore, MD and was attacked by rioters, suffering the first four casualties of the war. His experience as a mason made him invaluable to the Union Army and he was tasked with building the first ovens that baked bread for soldiers' rations. After the war, Cate settled in Lawrence, MA, where he worked as a bricklayer, contractor, and builder. He died there on September 8, 1912.

Cate willed the sword he carried during his Civil War service to his male descendants bearing his full name, and if the line should end, to the State of Massachusetts to be placed with other relics of the "Old Sixth." His grandson, Pvt. Thomas Jackson Cate, 2nd, died in 1918 during World War I, and as he had no children, the sword was given to the State by his widow. The sword was originally on display in the Senate Reception Room of the State House of Massachusetts. Its current location is unknown.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Arrangement

The papers are arranged in chronological order.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research during the Special Collections Department's regular hours.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with Special Collections staff.

Languages and Scripts

The collection is entirely in English.

Container List

Item #	Folder Title	Date
1	Notarized document handwritten by Cate or his deputy, describing his wishes related to the sword and belt. Signed by Cate and witnessed by John R. Poor	Oct. 10, 1895

2	Transcription of Cate's original document	undated
3	Note, handwritten, describing the object's provenance	undated
4	Transcription, typewritten, of above note	undated
5	Letter from Sergeant-at-Arms Charles O. Holt to Massachusetts Governor Channing H. Cox about the donation of the sword	March 19, 1921
6	Letter from Governor Cox to Sergeant-at-Arms Holt authorizing acceptance of the donation	March 21, 1921
7	Letter from Sergeant-at-Arms Holt to Governor Cox confirming receipt of the sword	March 25, 1921
8	Letter from Sergeant-at-Arms Holt to Mrs. Jesse M. Rutter thanking her and Mrs. Thomas Jackson Cate, 2 nd for the donation	March 25, 1921
9	Letter from Governor Cox to Sergeant-at-Arms Holt acknowledging receipt of the donation	March 29, 1921