

## Company K Civil War Photograph Album, c. 1861-1908

**Repository:** Hingham Public Library  
**Manuscript Number:** MSC #31  
**Quantity:** 1 box (1 Photograph Album)  
**Processed By:** Stephanie McBain and Jennifer Williams. Finding aid completed in May of 2015.  
**Access:** Open for research. Some materials have been placed in protective enclosures and should not be removed from them.

### Provenance

This album was created by an unidentified individual between approximately 1861 and 1908. It was gifted to the Hingham Public Library by an anonymous donor.

### Historical Note

Company K was part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, whose members were informally known as the “Minute Men” during the United States Civil War. They were first ordered to three months of active duty on April 19, 1861 when the Adjutant General of Massachusetts issued Special Order No. 35. The company was sent to Washington, D.C. on April 21<sup>st</sup>, where they were mustered into service in early May. They remained in the city until May 25<sup>th</sup>, when they were transferred to the shoreline near Alexandria, VA.

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment M.V.M. was one of three Massachusetts regiments to fight in the Battle of Bull Run, the first major encounter between the confederate and union armies in Virginia. It was a difficult battle for both sides, with confederate soldiers experiencing communication failures and the union troops unable to execute their complex combat plan. In the late afternoon confederate reinforcements arrived, allowing their troops to penetrate the union line. Confusion ensued as union soldiers frantically retreated to Washington. Nine men in Company K were killed in the battle and two men died from disease. The regiment was mustered out of service on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1861.

In August of 1862 a call was issued for 300,000 militiamen to serve for nine months, with a quota of 19,080 men assigned to Massachusetts. The 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment volunteered for duty, which helped the state to avoid the use of the draft. The troops were mustered into service at Camp Lander in Wenham, Mass. between September 16<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. Once the officers had also been mustered in the regiment was ordered to depart for North Carolina. They arrived in that state on October 26<sup>th</sup> and headed for New Bern. During the next several months the company was involved in multiple battles. In December the soldiers joined the Goldsboro expedition, which required them to march 180 miles and participate in the battles of Kinston, Whitehall, and Goldsboro in only eleven days.

In March of 1863 confederate troops began what is sometimes called the “siege of Little Washington.” General D. H. Hill surrounded the town with confederate troops, leaving it cut off from outside communication. In April Company K accompanied other members of the 5<sup>th</sup>

Regiment to end the stalemate. It took several weeks, during which both sea and land battles were vigorously fought, before Hill was ousted by union troops. The Company then moved on to the Gum Swamp expedition, during which time they endured multiple confederate attacks. Each assault was repelled and prisoners were taken, but not without considerable losses. On June 22<sup>nd</sup> the company boarded a ship for Boston, where they arrived three days later. The soldiers were mustered out of service at Camp Lander on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

In July 1864 the regiment returned to active service, this time in the state of Maryland. For one-hundred days they performed guard duty at Fort McHenry, Fort Marshall, Federal Hill, and other locations throughout the eastern half of the state. The regiment was mustered out of service for the final time on November 16<sup>th</sup> at Readville, Mass.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection consists of one album containing photographs and postcards related to Company K of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment M.V.M. during and after the Civil War. Most of the images depict the daily lives of soldiers living in army camps in Massachusetts, Virginia, and North Carolina. Also included are images of the areas in which the regiment was stationed, transport trains, the regiment's trip to the Central Canada Exhibition in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the unveiling of a war memorial to Massachusetts soldiers in the National Cemetery located in New Bern, NC.

### **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into the following series:

- Series I. Company K Civil War Photograph Album, c. 1861-1908

### **Series I. Company K Civil War Photograph Album, c. 1861-1908**

#### **Box 1**

This series consists of one photograph album containing images related to Company K of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment M.V.M., most of which were taken during the United States Civil War. The majority of the photographs focus on the regiment's camps in Massachusetts, Virginia, and North Carolina. Images depict the every-day lives of soldiers, including army drills and reviews, religious services, troop transport by train and horse, meal times, living quarters, and recreational activities. Also included are images of the areas in which the regiment was stationed, including scenic shots of landscapes, important buildings, and bridges.

The album also contains images of the regiment's 20<sup>th</sup> century trip to the Central Canada Exhibition and their attendance at the 1908 unveiling of the war memorial to Massachusetts soldiers in the National Cemetery at New Bern, NC. Although many of the images are unlabeled, several photographs include handwritten captions. Some photographs have come loose from the pages and have been placed in protective enclosures.