



## **Guide to the Alonzo Reed letters, 1864-1866**

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## Table of Contents

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<a href="#">Summary</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Background</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Administrative Information</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Names and Subjects</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Collection Inventory</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Letters, 1864-1866</a> .....	6

## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

Alonzo Reed letters, 1864-1866

**Creator:**

Reed, Alonzo

**Source:**

John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American History and Culture

**Abstract:**

Union soldier in the 102nd Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops. Collection consists of 21 personal letters of Alonzo Reed written while stationed in South Carolina during the latter part of the Civil War. Reed seems to have written some of the letters himself, while others were written for him by friends; all are addressed to his mother. He seems to have been in a camp in Detroit, Michigan, then was stationed in Hilton Head, S.C. in the summer of 1864; he remained there until 1865, when he was sent to Charleston, S.C., and then to Savannah, Georgia, and back to eastern S.C. for the duration. The letters indicate that Reed's regiment was often on picket duty, but also provide some descriptions of warfare and the ransacking of plantations. Reed, who was nearly illiterate, provides brief insights into daily camp life in terms of references of illnesses, hunger, not being paid for many months, and life as a soldier in the midst of war. Reed occasionally refers to the reception they received from both whites and blacks in the South. He also writes about fixing railroad supply lines and utilizing surrendered Confederate soldiers to aid in this work. In November 1864, he inquires as to whether African American men are being allowed to vote in the North and indicates that they are in the South. Arranged in chronological order.

**Extent:**

0.1 Linear Feet  
21 items

**Language:**

Material in English

**Collection ID:**

RL.01073

**Permalink:**

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1g078>

### **Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Alonzo Reed letters, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## **Background**

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### **Scope and Content**

Collection consists entirely of 21 personal letters from an African American Union soldier, Alonzo Reed, written to his mother while stationed in South Carolina during the latter part of the Civil War. Some of the letters were written by Reed, some by other individuals, and indicate that Reed's regiment was often on picket duty, though they also provide some descriptions of warfare and the ransacking of plantations during marches. A brief sketch of the letters is also included in the collection folder.

Reed, who was nearly illiterate, provides brief insights into daily camp life in terms of references of illnesses, hunger, not being paid for many months, life as a soldier in the midst of war, and the desire to have news, photos, and writing supplies from home. Reed occasionally refers to the reception they received from both whites and blacks in the South. He also writes about fixing railroad supply lines and utilizing surrendered Confederate soldiers to aid in this work. In November 1864, he inquires as to whether African American men are being allowed to vote in the North and indicates that they are in the South. Arranged in chronological order.

### **Biographical/Historical**

Alonzo Reed was an African American soldier from Spring Wells, Michigan who served as a private in the 102nd Regiment Infantry, U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

### Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

### Acquisition Information

The Alonzo Reed letters were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a purchase in 1937.

### Processing Information

Processed by Rubenstein Library staff.

Encoded by Jessica D. Carew and Paula Jeannet, April 2014.

Accession(s) described in this finding aid is from 1937.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Names and Subjects

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- African American soldiers
- African American soldiers -- Correspondence

- African American soldiers -- Social conditions -- 19th century
- Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877) -- African American troops
- Soldiers -- United States -- Correspondence
- Georgia -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- African Americans
- South Carolina -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- African Americans
- United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Participation, African American
- United States. Army -- African American troops
- Reed, Alonzo
- United States. Army. Colored Infantry Regiment, 102nd (1863-1865)
- United States. Army -- Military life
- John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American History and Culture

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## Collection Inventory

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### Letters, 1864-1866

**Physical Description:** 1 folder

**Scope and Contents note**

Correspondence consists of 21 letters from Alonzo Reed to his mother both during and just after the U.S. Civil War. Also included within this collection is a brief descriptive sketch of unknown origin concerning Alonzo Reed and the collection. Several of the letters were written while Reed was stationed in Beaufort S.C., and they appear to pinpoint his location as Coosaw, S.C. (designated in the letters with variants such as Car Soil and Crew Saw).

Letter, 8 Mar., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, Detroit, Mich., to Mother (Francis Reed)	Folder 1
Letter, 14 Aug., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, Winnsboro, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 2 Sept., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, location unknown, to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 19 Sept., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, Beaufort, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 24 Oct., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, Car Soil, Beaufort, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 1 Nov., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, Car Soil, Beaufort, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1

Letter, 15 Nov., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, location unknown, to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 8 Dec., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, Crew Saw, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 29 Dec., 1864, from Alonzo Reed, Beaufort, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 4 Jan., 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Crew Saw, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 11 Jan., 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Crew Saw, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 5 Feb., 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Camp of the 102nd U.S.C.T., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 25 Feb., 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Charleston, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 21 Mar., 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Savannah, Ga., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 15 May, 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Somerville, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 16 May, 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Somerville, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 9 July, 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Charleston, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 13 July, 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Charleston, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 15 July, 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Charleston, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 9 Aug., 1865, from Alonzo Reed, Chester, S.C., to Mother	Folder 1
Letter, 14 Apr., 1866, from Alonzo Reed, Spring Wells, Mich., to Mother	Folder 1
Brief descriptive sketch regarding Alonzo Reed and his letters.	Folder 1

[Return to Table of Contents](#)