

**A Guide to the
Maine Militia Record Book, 1839**

MCC-00198

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General Information

Collection Title: Maine Militia Record Book, 1839

Date Range: 18 February – 23 April 1839, ca. 1862-1864, 1930s, n.d

Accession Number: MCC-00198

Shelf Numbers: AB-198, UM-198

Quantity: 1 bound volume, 2 telegram forms

Introduction

The "Maine Militia Record Book, 1839" is a bound volume containing handwritten regimental orders, related reports and personal observations concerning the detachment of the A Company of the Light Infantry of the 4th Regiment, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division of the Maine Militia from their mobilization into active service on 18 February 1839 through their discharge on 23 April 1939. The volume was donated to the Archives in January 2001. The title "Maine Militia Record book, 1839" was assigned by Archives staff to provide a short, accurate description of the primary contents of the collection.

In addition to the 25 pages of handwritten entries related to the "Aroostook Expedition" of 1839, the volume also contains schoolwork (arithmetical and penmanship exercises) written one or more individuals, probably between 1862 and 1864.

Inserted into the volume were two telegram forms, containing what appears to be a draft handwritten telegram from the 1930s requesting payment for accommodation at the Jordan House in Ellsworth, Maine.

Provenance: The entries related to the 1839 "Aroostook Expedition" appear to have been recorded by N.K. Sawyer, who served as a sergeant and recording clerk for the A Company of Light Infantry of the 4th Regiment, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division of the Maine Militia.¹

The school work entries which appear to date 1862-64 appear to have been done by Augustus E. Sawyer of Ellsworth, Maine and possible other individuals, including Richard Moody of Belfast, Maine.²

¹ N.K. Sawyer is listed as sergeant in the roll of draftees on the opening page of 1839 entries in this volume. On pages 7 and 8, comments concerning the arrival of orders are signed N.K. Sawyer, clerk."

² Signatures for both names appear frequently among the exercises.

The two pages of draft telegram inserted into the volume were created in the 1930s, possibly by the proprietor of the "Jordan House," a hotel in the Ellsworth, Maine region.

Chain of Custody: during the period 18 February – 23 April 1839, the bound volume appears to have been in the custody of N.K. Sawyer, the recording clerk of the A Company of Light Infantry of the 4th Regiment, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division of the Maine Militia.

In the early 1860s³, one or more individuals copied schoolwork on most of the remaining blank pages in the bound volume. The frequent appearance of a signature reading "A. E. Sawyer" and "Augustus E. Sawyer, Ellsworth, Maine" suggests that Augustus E. Sawyer was the principal creator of the 1860s entries; the name "Henry W. Sawyer" also appears, as does Richard Moody of Belfast.⁴

According to Albert H. Davis' History of Ellsworth, Maine, and "N. K. Sawyer," also known as Nathaniel K. Sawyer, came from Buxton, Maine to Ellsworth as a young man, where he settled, married and, between 1869 and 1873 served as a customs collector.⁵ The 1870 federal census for Ellsworth lists and N. K. Sawyer, customs collector, with a household which includes two sons, Henry W., and Augustus C.⁶

Although it cannot be said with absolute certainty, all available evidence suggests that following his discharge, N.K. Sawyer brought home the record volume from his Maine Militia experience, that it eventually came to be considered a piece of family property, and that his son Augustus was the creator of the schoolwork entries dating 1862- 64.

The draft telegrams inserted in the volume, which date to the 1930s and wish relate to business in Ellsworth, Maine, suggest that the volume remained in private hands in the Ellsworth region through the first decades of the 20th century.

The volume and telegrams eventually went on the market and were purchased by N. Flayderman & co., a firm specializing in military and nautical antiquities.

³ Dated entries suggest that these entries were made between 1862 and 1864.

⁴ Connections between Richard Moody and Augustus Sawyer or his family have yet to be determined.

⁵ Davis: pp. 159-60.

⁶ The census record reports Augustus's middle initial as "C" rather than as "E", however, census records frequently contain minor errors of this type. In the 1860 census, Augustus's middle initial is in fact listed as "E." Augustus' reported age in the 1860 census is 12; the 1870 census reports his as aged 22, he was therefore somewhere between 12 and 14 years old at the time the 1862-64 schoolwork entries were made in this volume

The donor purchased them in 1996 and donated them to the Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes in January 2001.

Physical Characteristics/Condition: The bound volume measures 21x38cm (approx. 8.5x13") and is bound with cardboard covers and a leather spine stamped "LETTER."

It contains approximately 100 pages of lines, unpaginated paper⁷. The binding is fragile. The pages, though embrittled, are in good condition. The 1839 entries, which are written in ink, are very legible; the 1862-64 schoolwork entries, written in pencil, vary in legibility but most are readable. The telegram forms are somewhat brittle but intact, and the ink entries are easily read.

Preservation Actions: Archives staff removed the telegram forms from the volume and enclosed them in polypropylene sheet covers for separate storage. The volume itself has been wrapped and boxed.

Access: This collection is available to researchers without restriction. With the permission of the Archivist, and in accordance with existing archival photocopy policies, researchers may make one copy of the material for their personal use for research purposes. They must quote "Maine Militia Record Book, 1839. MCC-00198, Arcadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent" as a source if the item is used in papers or publications.

The "Aroostook Expedition": Historical Note⁸. Sergeant N. K. Sawyer, the recording clerk for the A Company of Light Infantry of the 4th Regiment, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division of the Maine Militia used the expression "Aroostook Expedition: to title his 25 pages of entries documenting his unit's three months of active duty, This "expedition" was part of a mobilization, in the early months of 1839, of more than 1000 Maine Militia soldiers whose orders where to proceed to sites along the Aroostook River, there to aid Maine's land agent in policing public lands. The 1830 mobilization of the Maine Militia represents the tensest chapter in the long, drawn-out dispute between the United States and Great Britain over the northeastern boundary of Maine, which dragged on from 1783 Treaty of Paris until the Webster-Ashburton treaty of 1842.

Immediate factors leading to the mobilization of the Maine Militia in 1830 may be summarized as follows: by 1837-1838, illegal trespass lumbering operations were occurring on a massive scale in the disputed territory along the rich woodlands

⁷ A manufacturer's label on the inside of the front cover suggests that the volume was produced by David Bugbee of Bangor, Maine.

⁸ Historical information for this note was gathered from Geraldine Tidd Scott's book *Ties of Common Blood: A History of Maine's Northeast Boundary Dispute with Great Britain, 1783-1842*(Bowie, Maryland:Heritage Books, 1992) and from "Fortifications on Maine's Northeast Boundary, 1828-1845." An article by the same author which appeared in *Maine Historical Society Quarterly* *ol.29,Nos.3&4*(Winter-Spring1990):118-141.

bordering the St. John and Aroostook Rivers and their tributaries, Maine's politicians were impatient with the escalating timber theft, the stalled border negotiations between and provincial officials.

In late 1838, Maine governor Edward Kent ordered a state survey of timber depredations. Land agent George W. Buckmore's report, submitted by Kent's successor Governor John Fairfield to the Maine legislatures in a secret joint session on 23 January 1839, described extensive illegal timber operations in the disputed territory and surmised that nothing short of an armed force of at least fifty men could break them up. The next day, the legislature approved a resolution to send up a civil posse of about 200 men under the leadership of newly appointed land agent Captain Rufus McIntire to stop the trespassing in the valley of the Aroostook.

While executing his orders, McIntire was arrested by Provincials in early February 1839 and taken to Fredericton. On 13 February, lieutenant Governor John Harvey of New Brunswick issued a proclamation directing Maine to recall her civil force and notifying Governor Fairfield that military force would be used to ensure Great Britain's jurisdiction over the disputed territory. Major troop movements took place in New Brunswick.

Fairfield considered Harvey's proclamation a declaration of war. As Commander-in-Chief of the Maine Militia, Fairfield issued a general order dated 16 February 1839, directing a detachment of 1000 men, under the command of Major General Isaac Hodsdon, Third Division Commander, to rendezvous at Bangor and Lincoln, proceed to the Aroostook River, and aid the land agent in policing the public lands.

Hodsdon's detachment from the Third Division, including all officers, numbered 1069 men organized into one company of cavalry, one company of artillery, and four companies of light infantry. Among units called into active service was a detachment from the A Company of Light Infantry of the 4th Regiments, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division of the Maine Militia, under the command of Captain Daniel Dority.

The troops assembled in Bangor on 21 February and over the next week, 28 military units traveled to Houlton. Two companies subsequently remained at Presque Isle; the rest moved on to Fort Fairfield in mid-March, including Dority's Unit. By that time, Lieutenant Governor John Harvey had massed New Brunswick troops on the north bank of the St. John River.

Although vigorous and serious in nature, Maine and New Brunswick's saber-rattling was short-lived. In Washington, all branches of federal government were alarmed by the prospect of war. President Martin Van Buren dispatched Major General Winfield Schott, his favorite troubleshooter and successful arbiter in

several former national crises, to act as pacemaker. Scott succeeded in securing the passage of two Congressional bills, one authorizing the president to call out the militia for six months and to accept the service of 50000 volunteers, and the other to place to the president's credit ten million dollars. In addition, Scott, who was good friends with Harvey, corresponded with him, laying the groundwork for a truce.

On 23 March, 1839 Harvey agreed to a proposition made by Scott, whereby Harvey would declare that it was not his intention, without new instructions from his government, to attempt military possession of the disputed territory or to seek by military force to expel the armed civil posse or troops of Maine. The Maine Legislature, on the same day, passed a resolve stating that whenever Maine's Governor was fully satisfied that Harvey had abandoned all intention of occupying the disputed territory with a military force, he should be authorized to withdraw the troops, leaving the land agent with a sufficient posse to protect the state's timber.

By 30 March, Governor Fairfield had directed the troops on the northeastern frontier, pending the arrival of a sufficient civil force, to return to Bangor and be discharged. The A Company of Light Infantry of the 4th Regiment, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division of the Maine Militia mustered out on 23 April, 1839.

Scope and Content Note The "Aroostook Expedition" collection consists of three separate and unrelated documents, two of which are contained in a bound volume and the third of which is a two-page draft telegram.

Maine Militia Records, 1839

UB – 198

These 25 pages of handwritten entries document the activities of the detachment of the A Company of Light Infantry of the 4th Regiment, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division of the Maine Militia, from their mobilization into active service on 18 February 1839 through their discharge on 23 April 1839. Recorded by Sergeant N. K. Sawyer, who acted as Company clerk, they include regimental orders, rolls, and personal notes. Although Maine Militia regimental orders are documents elsewhere,⁹ this particular document includes informal entries by Sawyer which provide unique information about the daily movements of the A Company as well as personal observations about the experiences of this military unit.

Schoolwork, 1862-64, n.d.

UB-198

These entries consist of what appears to be schoolwork (arithmetical and penmanship exercises) written between 1862 and 1864, probably by Augustus E.

⁹ Adj. Gen. Rufus C. Vose, *General Order Book, Maine Militia*, Maine State Archives; Maine State Archives; *Official Hodson Papers*, Maine Historical Society.

Sawyer of Ellsworth, Maine and Possibly other individuals as well.¹⁰ These entries shed light on educational practices during this period.

Telegrams 1930s

UM-198

The two telegrams forms, contain what appears to be a draft handwritten telegram from the 1930s requesting payment from the Country Commander of the American Legion for accommodation at the Jordan House in Ellsworth, Maine. The Jordan House is located at 48 Pine Street in Ellsworth. The *Maine Register* lists it as being in operation in 1930-1.

Related Collections. Researchers interested in Maine's northeast boundary dispute may wish to consult with the Joseph Audibert Journal and Papers (MCC:93-00028). Joseph Audibert enlisted in the United States Army at Fort Sullivan in Eastport, Maine in January, 1842 and was stationed at Fort Kent, Maine from 6April 1843 to 12 September 1845.

Sources Consulted

Davis, Albert H. *History of Ellsworth, Maine. Lewiston, Me.:* Lewiston Journal Printshop, 1927: p. 159-60 ("N. K. Sawyer" entry).

Scott, Geraldine Tidd. "Fortifications on Maine's Northeast Boundary, 1828-1845" *Maine's History Society Quarterly, col. 29, nos. 3 & 4* (Winter-Spring 1990): 118-141.

Scott, Geraldine Tidd. *Ties of Common Blood: A History of Maine's Northeast Boundary Dispute with Great Britain, 1783-1842.* Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, 1992.

United States Federal Census for Ellsworth, Maine, 1860 and 1870.

¹⁰ N.K. Sawyer had a son, Augustus, who according to federal census records was 12-14 years old in 1862.