Guide to the John Ellis Wool Correspondence, 1830-1866

64.1

Special Collections
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library
Plattsburgh State University College
Plattsburgh, N. Y. 12901

Prepared by
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Revised by Debra Kimok
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Title: John Ellis Wool Correspondence
Dates: 1830-1866
I.D.: 64.1
Creator: John Ellis Wool
Extent: Sixteen Items, .1 linear feet
Language of Material: English
Access Restrictions: None
Location: Special Collections, SUNY College at Plattsburgh (518) 564-5206
http://www.plattsburgh.edu/library/specialcollections
Preferred Citation: John Ellis Wool Correspondence, 64.1 [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections, SUNY College at Plattsburgh.
Processed By: Kathryn Stanley and Debra Kimok
Subject Headings:
Wool, John Ellis, 1784-1869
Plattsburgh (N.Y.), Battle of, 1814
Trail of Tears, 1838-39
Cherokee Indian Removal, 1838-1839
Mexican-American War, 1846-1848
American Civil War, 1861-1865
Biographical Information

John Ellis Wool was born in Newburgh, N.Y. in 1784. When he was four years old, both his parents died and he was sent to live with his grandfather, James Wool, at Troy, N. Y. At the age of twelve, he left school to pursue a bookselling career. He was successful until disaster struck in 1810, when his store burned to the ground.

Left open to pursue other options, Wool seized the opportunity of the War of 1812 to enlist in the military. He recruited volunteer infantry troops from around the Troy area, and was commissioned Captain. Wool distinguished himself at Queenstown Heights and Plattsburgh, earning promotions from both encounters. By the end of the War of 1812, he held the brevet rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and was determined to carry out the rest of his life in the regular army.

Wool was made Inspector General of the U.S. army in 1816, and would continue to rise in rank, all the way to Major General. He was involved in many military conflicts and exercises, including the Trail of Tears (the removal of the Cherokee nation to Oklahoma), the suppression of the Canadian rebellion of 1837, the Mexican-American War, and the American Civil War. He particularly distinguished himself in the Mexican-American War and it has been suggested that his brand of military discipline and thoroughness was largely responsible for the victory at Buena Vista.¹

A seventy-five foot monolith was erected in the center of Troy, N.Y. as tribute to Wool.

During the early Civil War years, Wool commanded the Department of the East for the Union, saving Fortress Monroe. He was retired from active service due to old age and infirmity on August 1, 1863.

Scope of the Collection

The materials comprise sixteen items and contains a small selection of the correspondence of General Wool between 1830 and 1866, military orders, originals and copies of letters, newspaper clippings, and one periodical article.

Letters concerning Wool’s major military campaigns are included, as well as correspondence dealing with his views on slavery and abolition. The later letters and newspaper clippings suggest that Wool was highly regarded as a prominent veteran, combat soldier and patriot, but did not escape controversy over his attitudes and temperament.

Container List

Box 1

1/1 Correspondence by John Ellis Wool

1/1/1 Correspondence: Brigadier-General Wool to Major-General A. Macomb, Oct. 22, 1830.

1/1/2 Correspondence: Brigadier-General Wool to John W. Eaton, Secretary at War, Nov. 19, 1830. Two copies.

1/1/3 Military Orders: General Wool to the officers of the Army of Occupation, Monterey, Mexico, May 9, 1848. (Copy)

1/1/4 Correspondence; Wool to Philip Roberts Esq. of Beekmantown, N. Y., Jan. 6, 1859. (Typescript)

1/1/5 Correspondence: Wool to the Order of United Americans, Feb. 14, 1860. (Copy)

1/1/6 Correspondence: Wool to Benson J. Lossing of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., May 10, 1860.

1/1/7 Correspondence: Wool to Lossing, May 24, 1861.

1/1/8 Newspaper clipping of correspondence: General Wool to John A. Griswold, M. C., Aug. 30, 1863. Date of publication and newspaper unknown.

1/1/9 Correspondence: Wool to Lossing, Aug. 31, 1863.


1/1/11 Correspondence: Wool to Lossing, Oct. 9, 1866.

1/2 Correspondence to John Ellis Wool

1/2/1 Correspondence: Congressman Elisha H. Allen to Wool, April 13, 1847.
Correspondence: Jas. B. Murray to Major-General Wool, Dec. 27, 1850. (Copy)

Correspondence: J. M. Washington to Major-General Wool, Dec., 1, 1851. (Copy)

**Newspaper Clipping and Periodical Article**

Newspaper clipping: “Defence of General John E. Wool, Before the Court of Enquiry Begun and Held at Knoxville (Tenn.) on the 4th September, 1837.” *National Gazette and Literary Register (Philadelphia)*, No. 5435, 1838.


**Supporting Materials in Special Collections**


Weise, A. J. *Troy’s One Hundred Years*. Troy, N.Y.: W. H. Young, 1891.