



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Christian A. Fleetwood collection

1879-1911

Sc MG 111

Home to Harlem Project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Summary

Creator: Fleetwood, Christian A. (Christian Abraham), 1840-1914

Title: Christian A. Fleetwood collection

Date: 1879-1911

Size: 0.01 linear feet (1 folder)

Source: Purchase, Fleetwood, Edith, 1977

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Allison Hughes.

Abstract: Collection of material relating to Sergeant-Major Fleetwood during the Civil War and after his return to civilian life; and individual black soldiers before and during the Spanish American War (War of 1898). Collection includes a biography of Fleetwood; a letter from a colleague of Fleetwood's to the retired President of Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) concerning himself and Fleetwood; an 1897 clipping regarding a speech by Fleetwood at a black high school in Washington, D.C.; and handwritten and typed sketches about black soldiers in various infantry and cavalry regiments, noting incidents of bravery (1879-1898).

Preferred citation: [Item], Christian A. Fleetwood collection, Sc MG 111, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Creator History

Christian Abraham Fleetwood, Civil War Medal of Honor recipient, Sergeant-Major, Fourth United States Colored Troops, Union Army and Major, National Guard, District of Columbia. Fleetwood was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1840. His parents were free blacks & his father was employed as head house steward of a wealthy family in the sugar trade. This family provided for Fleetwood's education and at 16 he made a trip to West Africa, visiting Liberia and Sierra Leone. On his return to the United States he attended Ashman Institute, now Lincoln University, in Pennsylvania. From 1860-1863 he worked at a shipping and merchant company in Baltimore, intending to return to Liberia in the fall of

1863. Also during this period Fleetwood and several associates founded the Lyceum Observer, the only black owned journal in the South.

In April, 1863 Fleetwood enlisted in the Union Army. He was promoted to Sergeant-Major and he performed clerical duties at regimental headquarters until June, 1864 when he went into combat. He was awarded the Medal of Honor on April 6, 1865, for his courageous and brave conduct at Chapin's Farm, Virginia. After his discharge from the Army, Fleetwood, one of the more educated black Medal of Honor recipients, was employed by the War Department from 1881-1892. Fleetwood also held the rank of Captain and Major in the District of Columbia National Guard and was active in the public school student military cadet program. As a civilian he often made speeches to national guard organizations, community groups, and was an outspoken advocate for full recognition of the black serviceman. In 1898, during the Spanish-American War, an attempt was made to establish a black regiment under Fleetwood's command. Racial prejudice prevented this from occurring. In addition to being a soldier, Fleetwood was also a vocalist, patron of the arts, and choir-master. He died on Sept. 28, 1914.

Scope and Content Note

Collection of material relating to Sergeant-Major Fleetwood during the Civil War and after his return to civilian life; and individual black soldiers before and during the Spanish American War (War of 1898). Collection includes a biography of Fleetwood; a letter from a colleague of Fleetwood's to the retired President of Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) concerning himself and Fleetwood; an 1897 clipping regarding a speech by Fleetwood at a black high school in Washington, D.C.; and handwritten and typed sketches about black soldiers in various infantry and cavalry regiments, noting incidents of bravery (1879-1898).

Key Terms

Subjects

African American soldiers -- Biography
African Americans -- Maryland -- Baltimore -- History -- 19th Century
Soldiers -- United States
Spanish-American War, 1898
Spanish-American War, 1898 -- Campaigns

Geographic Names

United States -- Armed Forces -- African Americans
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Campaigns
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Participation, African American

Names

Fleetwood, Christian A. (Christian Abraham), 1840-1914
United States. Army