

# WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

30 Elm Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts

## ARCHIVES

Johnson, Alexander H.,  
Papers

1995.80

Processed by William F. Carroll, C.A.  
February, 1999

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### Collection Information

Abstract: Major A.H. Johnson was a New Bedford native who enlisted in the 54<sup>th</sup> Reg't., Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, and served as musician during the Civil War. As drummer boy, he was one of the youngest enlistees in the military. The collection includes documents relating to his native American ancestry, as well as military-related documents.

Finding Aids: Finding Aid in print form available at Worcester Historical Museum Library and Archives.

Preferred Citation: Worcester Historical Museum Archives, 30 Elm Street, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Provenance: Donated by Richard Massey, descendant of Alexander H. Johnson, in 1995.

Access: The Finding Aid is cataloged in MARC under the following subject headings (LCSH, AAT, TGM, GMGPC)

Johnson, Alexander H., Major, ca. 1847-1930.  
Massachusetts. Militia. 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry – Biography.  
Drummers (Musicians) – Massachusetts – Worcester.  
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Participation, Juvenile.  
Grand Army of the Republic. Col. George H. Ward Post, No. 10 (Worcester, Mass.) – Biography.

See Also: Worcester Historical Museum Library, Clippings files.  
Worcester Historical Museum Archives. Additional accessions of Alexander H. Johnson Papers.

### Biographical Information

Alexander H. Johnson was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts about 1847, said to be the son of a Narragansett Indian father and mother, and descendant of King Philip. He was raised by a black family in New Bedford. His adoptive father was William Henry Johnson, a prominent attorney in New Bedford.

Johnson enlisted at age 14 in the United States Navy as drummer boy prior to the outbreak of hostilities in the Civil War, and served aboard the frigate Sabine for about eight months. He then enlisted in the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers in March, 1862, and served as musician throughout the hostilities. He was mustered out August 20, 1865.

Johnson lived in Worcester for the rest of his life, and was active as a musician and promoter of drumming. He was a member and active in the affairs of Col. George H. Ward Post, No. 10, G.A.R. in Worcester, in which he held the rank of Major.

Johnson died in 1930 at the age of 83.

## Scope and Content

The collection includes information concerning the ancestry of Alexander H. Johnson, including census forms, resident lists, ship's rosters, lists of Native Americans resident in the area, and other similar information, ranging from the 1770s to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also included are numerous records of Johnson's military career, including his discharge, applications for veterans pension, application for disability pension, and related documents, ranging from the 1880s to the 1920s. Miscellaneous items include cards hand written by Mr. Johnson illustrating his handwriting, and materials on the frigate Sabine, on which he served early in the 1860s, and the schooner Dobbin.

Items are photocopies of the originals, acquired by Johnson's descendants from various federal sources. The collection has been arranged topically.

### Series Description

Series 1. Family History/Genealogy. This series includes letters relative to Johnson's ancestry, excerpts from official records, lists of Native Americans, and various documents which illustrate the family ancestry.

Series 2. Military Papers. Records include discharge papers, numerous affidavits in regard to pension and disability applications and burial claims, and other documents relating to Johnson's service with the 54<sup>th</sup> Reg't., Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry.

Series 3. Miscellaneous. Includes copies of cards handwritten by Johnson, and information from the United States Coast Guard relative to the schooner Dobbin and the frigate Sabine, on which Johnson served in the early 1860s.

Alexander H. Johnson Papers  
1995.80  
Series 1, Family History/Genealogy

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	1995.80.1.1	Letter. Ron, from Richard Massey, October 9, 1996, re ancestry of Major Johnson.
1	1	1995.80.1.2	Letter. Richard Massey from Tina V. Furtado, June 3, 1996, re Alexander H. Johnson's parentage.
1	1	1995.80.1.3	Excerpt. Vital Records of New Bedford, indicating marriage of William Henry Johnson and Hannah N. Perry, June 28, 1936.
1	1	1995.80.1.4	Excerpt. Death Record, Peter Perry, November 9, 1934, in the Sandwich Islands.
1	1	1995.80.1.5	Excerpt. United States Federal Census, 1850, New Bedford, Massachusetts.
1	2	1995.80.1.6	Roster. List of crew of ship Pacific. Nd. (Photocopy)
1	2	1995.80.1.7	List. Part of 1777 military census of Smithfield, Rhode Island. (Photocopy)
1	2	1995.80.1.8a-b	Application. Mary Ann Johnson's application for share of money appropriated for New York Indians, by Act of Congress ... 1900. 2 p. 2 copies. (Photocopy)
1	2	1995.80.1.9a-b	List. Fall River (or Troy) Indians, Hassanamisco Tribe, supplementary list, and Dudley Indians. Nd. 2 p. (Photocopy)

Alexander H. Johnson Papers  
1995.80  
Series 2, Military Papers

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	3	1995.80.2.1	Military decorations earned by A.H. Johnson. (Photocopy)
1	3	1995.80.2.2	Military discharge of Alexander H. Johnson, August 17, 1865. (Photocopy)
1	3	1995.80.2.3a-c	Affidavits. Alexander H. Johnson's military record, in regard to military pension application. 3 p. (Photocopy)
1	3	1995.80.2.4a-d	Company Muster Roll. Alexander H. Johnson, Musician, Co. C, 54 <sup>th</sup> Reg't. Mass. Inf. (Col'd.) 4 p., (Photocopy)
1	3	1995.80.2.5	List. Alexander H. Johnson, Musician, 54 <sup>th</sup> Mass. Inf. (Col'd.) Card Numbers. (Photocopy)
1	3	1995.80.2.6	Soldier's Certificate 515081, Veteran Alexander H. Johnson. (Photocopy)
1	4	1995.80.2.7a-b	Records. Proof of disability form, Alexander H. Johnson, August 28, 1889. 2 p. (Photocopy)
1	4	1995.80.2.8a-b	Records. Invalid claim form, Alexander H. Johnson, July 19, 1908. 2 p. (Photocopy)
1	4	1995.80.2.9a-b	Records. Inability affidavit form, Alexander H. Johnson. August 21, 1889. 2 p. (Photocopy)
1	4	1995.80.2.10a-b	Records. Declaration for pension form, Alexander H. Johnson. May 13, 1912. 2 p. (Photocopy)
1	4	1995.80.2.11a-b	Records. Declaration for pension form, Alexander H. Johnson. January 9, 1928. 2 p. (Photocopy)
1	4	1995.80.2.12	Records. Declaration for pension form, Alexander H. Johnson. April 27, 1926. (Photocopy)

Series 2, continued



1	4	1995.80.2.13	Records. Adjutant General's Office, re disability for Alexander H. Johnson. June 29, 1889. (Photocopy)
1	5	1995.80.2.14	Records. Adjutant General's Office, re Alexander H. Johnson. May 18, 1916. (Photocopy)
1	5	1995.80.2.15a-b	Records. Invalid claim for pension form, Alexander H. Johnson, February 26, 1889. 2 p. (Photocopy)
1	5	1995.80.2.16	Death certificate. Alexander H. Johnson, died March 19, 1930. (Photocopy)
1	5	1995.80.2.17a-b	Affidavit supporting Burial Claim filed with the United States Veterans Bureau, March 25, 1930. 2 p. (Photocopy)

Alexander H. Johnson Papers  
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 Series 3, Miscellaneous

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	6	1995.80.3.1	Certificate of attendance, African-American Civil War Monument Freedom Foundation, Inc., to Alexander H. Johnson, presented September 10, 1966, "Tribute to Civil War soldiers ... " (Photocopy)
1	6	1995.80.3.2a-b	Cards. Illustrations of Major Johnson's handwriting. 2 p. (Photocopy)
1	6	1995.80.3.3	Excerpts. United States Coast Guard records on vessels Dobbin, topsail schooner, and Sabine, sailing frigate. 7 p. (Photocopy)