

WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

30 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts

ARCHIVES

Johnson, Major Alexander H.,
Papers

1997.133

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

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Collection Information

Abstract: Major A.H. Johnson collection consists of an autographed segment of a parchment drumhead, along with supporting documentation and clippings relative to the life and military career of Mr. Johnson.

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 in 1997 by Agnes Alexander, 205 Beaconsfield Road, Worcester, who was given the drum head by Maj. Johnson.

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. 54th 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.

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 54th 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 features a piece of parchment drum head, on which is inscribed Maj. A.H. Johnson, his unit designation, and the dates 1861-1865. Included with the collection are documents relating to the provenance of the article, and several newspaper clippings with biographical information and the military background of Johnson.

Series Descriptions

Series 1: Includes autographed drumhead segment, documentation relative to the provenance of the item, and newspaper clippings of biographical and military information about Alexander H. Johnson.

Johnson, Major A.H., Collection
1997.133
Series 1, Papers

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	1997.133.1.1	Inscription on parchment. "Drum Head. Major A.H. Johnson. Drummer boy of the 54 th Mass. Vol. Reg. 1861-1865."
		1a-b	Aqp. (a) 100% enlargement.
1	1	1997.133.1.2a-b	Memoranda. Notes on provenance and historical background of drum head.
		2c	Aqp.
1	2	1997.133.1.3a-d	Clippings. Obituary, biographical information, Maj. A.H. Johnson. [S.l., s.n., nd] 4 p. Aqp.