McA 5778.F

CIVIL WAR VOLUNTEER SALOONS
AND HOSPITALS EPHEMERA COLLECTION

1861-1868

1.88 linear feet, 2 boxes

Series I. Volunteer Refreshment Committees, 1861-1868
Series II. Citizens’ Volunteer Hospital, 1862-1865

May 2006
Descriptive Summary

Repository
Library Company of Philadelphia
1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5698

Call Number
McA 5778.F

Creator
McAllister, John A. (John Allister), 1822-1896.

Title
Civil War Volunteer Saloons and Hospitals Ephemera Collection

Inclusive Dates
1861-1868

Quantity
1.88 linear feet (2 boxes)

Language of Materials
Materials are in English.

Abstract
The Civil War Volunteer Saloons and Hospitals Ephemera Collection holds ephemera and a few pieces of correspondence (including letters to and from Samuel B. Fales, William M. Cooper, and Arad Barrows) that illustrate and describe the workings of the Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Saloon and the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon, which provided meals, newspapers, bathing facilities, and changes of underwear and socks, to soldiers passing through Philadelphia. Between them, the saloons operated twenty-four hours a day and depended solely on contributions of time and goods from local citizens and merchants. The ephemera is somewhat similar for each group, and consists primarily of donation acknowledgements, event tickets and programs, flyers, and circular letters that the committees used to raise funds.

Administrative Information

Restrictions to Access
The collection is open to researchers.

Acquisition Information
Gift of John A. McAllister; forms part of the McAllister Collection.

Processing Information
The Civil War Volunteer Saloons and Hospitals Ephemera Collection material was formerly housed in a folio album that had been created after the McAllister Collection arrived at the Library Company. The material was removed from the album, and arranged and described in 2006, under grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the William Penn Foundation. The collection was processed by Sandra Markham. Any views, findings, conclusions or
recommendations expressed in this finding aid do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Preferred Citation
This collection should be cited as: [indicate specific item or series here], Civil War Volunteer Saloons and Hospitals Ephemera Collection (McA 5778.F), McAllister Collection, The Library Company of Philadelphia. For permission to publish materials or images in this collection, contact the Coordinator of Rights and Reproductions, Library Company of Philadelphia, 1314 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA 19107-5698. Please include complete citation(s) when making a request. See the Library Company’s website, http://www.librarycompany.org/, for further information.

Online Catalog Headings
Subject Names
Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon and Hospital (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Saloon
Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Committee
Cooper Shop Soldiers’ Home
Citizens Volunteer Hospital Association (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Fales, Samuel Bradford, 1808-1880
Cooper, William M., d. 1880
Barrows, Arad, 1818-1888

Subject Topics
Soldier’s homes--Philadelphia
Benefit performances--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia
Charities--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia
Lectures and lecturing--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia
Canteens (Establishments)--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia
Fairs--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
Philadelphia (Pa.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Civilian relief
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--War work.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Medical care
Advertisements--Lectures and lecturing
Philanthropy
Women

Document Types
Tickets
Clippings
Memorabilia
Ephemera
Letters

Related Collections
The Historical Society of Pennsylvania holds three groups of records that cover the administration and activities of the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon: the Samuel B. Fales Collection (Coll. 1580), the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon and Hospital record and scrapbook (Coll. 2038), and the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon Telegrams (Coll. 2074), which together contain the records of troops passing through Philadelphia, hospital admissions and deaths; records of Southerners separated from their families; the Ladies Union Volunteer Refreshment Committee minutes; miscellaneous tickets, envelopes, and memorabilia; and several hundred telegrams sent to inform the Union’s committee of troops arriving in Philadelphia. The society’s Edward S. Hall Papers (Coll. 256) include material relating to the Cooper Shop and Soldier’s Home.

Biographical/Historical Notes
The concept of the Civil War volunteer refreshment saloon came about in April 1861, when hundreds of enlisted men from all over Pennsylvania began to stream into Philadelphia on their way to fight in the South. They were followed by thousands more soldiers from New England, New York, and the West who arrived in Camden by train, crossed the Delaware River by ferry, and disembarked at the Washington Avenue piers in southeast Philadelphia. Once there, they waited for trains going south from the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad depot on Washington at Broad Street. No government or military agencies had made provisions for feeding or caring for these transients, so Philadelphians stepped up to help by delivering coffee and sandwiches from their own homes to the men in the streets.

As the numbers swelled, residents quickly organized to find a better way to care for the troops who loitered in the neighborhood. The result was the founding of two friendly rivals: the Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Saloon and the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon. The former was created when prosperous barrel makers William M. Cooper and Henry Pearce offered for use their two-story brick building on Otsego Street below Washington, two blocks from the river. Cooper retrofitted the shop’s fireplace to make a huge stove for brewing the gallons of coffee needed hourly, set up tables for serving meals, and remained president of the saloon’s committee through the end of the war. The Union saloon, first known as “Brown’s,” was organized by merchant Barzilai S. Brown. It began as a street corner picnic table with a coffee boiler, but moved into a former boat shop and rigger’s loft on the southwest corner of Washington Avenue and Swanson Street. The saloon’s chairman was Arad Barrows, and the financial manager was Samuel B. Fales.

Both saloons opened for service in late May 1861. At no charge to the servicemen, they provided meals, newspapers, bathing facilities, changes of underwear and socks, and assistance in
writing letters to loved ones at home; postage also was provided for free, and the recruits left
for the South with their haversacks filled. Between them, the saloons operated twenty-four
hours a day as they depended solely on contributions of time and goods from neighborhood
citizens and merchants. Those donations were supplemented by funds raised at a benefit fairs,
concerts, and lectures held around the city, some of which benefited both organizations.

Each saloon had a “committee of reception” that worked with the transportation companies to
receive advance notice of troop arrivals. When a regiment’s appearance was imminent, a small
cannon was fired to alert volunteers to duty. The Cooper Shop’s first recorded patron group
was the 8th New York, a regiment of 780 men who landed at the pier on May 27. The following
day three more arrived: the 9th New York (812 men), the 2nd New York (450 men) and the
Garibaldi (1,100 men). Shortly after opening, the saloons also began to feed the thousands of
injured soldiers who were making their way back from the battlefields to their homes in the
north. By the time the saloons closed their doors in August 28, 1865, they had dispensed more
than 1,000,000 meals. Within hours of the official closing ceremonies, however, it was
discovered that more troops were arriving in the city, and a call went out to reopen both
saloons. The Cooper Shop declined to do so, but the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon went
back into business, serving some 30,000 more men before completely closing on December 1,
1865.

In addition to feeding transients, the saloons’ committees branched out to create hospitals, thus
relieving the local families who had been taking the sick and wounded into their homes. The
Cooper Shop Hospital opened on October 29, 1861, with eleven beds set up in the second floor
of their building, and in March 1862 expanding to hold sixteen more. The staff consisted of two
volunteer physicians, the brothers Nebinger, and a manager, Anna M. Ross, but was otherwise
staffed by neighborhood women. The Union Volunteer Hospital was opened in a separate
building next door to their saloon which was soon after replaced by a larger facility that
hospital held 100 beds. The Union Volunteer hospital treated more than 30,000 sick and
wounded soldiers in its time.

The Cooper Shop also provided two other services to the military veterans: a dedicated burial
lot in Philadelphia’s Mount Moriah Cemetery, and a home for soldiers and seamen who were
honorably discharged, disabled and in distress. The Cooper Shop Soldiers’ Home was located at
northwest corner of Race and Crown streets in buildings owned by the city of Philadelphia that
had been used as a government hospital. It opened on December 22, 1863, merged three years
later with the Soldiers’ Home of Philadelphia, and closed in 1872. Ephemera from the Soldiers’
Home of Philadelphia is filed in the McAllister Collection’s Civil War Miscellanies (McA 5786).

Operating at the same time, the Citizens’ Volunteer Hospital was a separate organization from
the refreshment saloons, and was located at the northeast corner of Washington Avenue and
Broad Street, across from the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad depot. Opened in
September 1862, it functioned as a reception and triage unit, keeping there the most severely
wounded men while sending the others to the temporary hospitals set up in and around the city. Citizens’ Volunteer Hospital had the capacity to hold between 400 and 700 patients, and by May 1864 reported that it had treated 50,000 men. It closed in August 1865.

Predating the United States Sanitary Commission by a few months, Philadelphia’s volunteer refreshment saloons and their hospitals are considered to be the first great patriotic charities of the Civil War period.

**Collection Overview**

The Civil War Volunteer Saloons and Hospitals Ephemera Collection contains material related to three charitable organizations founded by Philadelphians during the first months of the war. It is arranged in two series: Volunteer Refreshment Committees; and Citizens’ Volunteer Hospital. It is arranged in two series: Series I, Volunteer Refreshment Committees, and Series II, Citizens’ Volunteer Hospital.

**Series I, Volunteer Refreshment Committees (1861-1868)** holds ephemera and a few pieces of correspondence that illustrate and describe the workings of the Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Saloon, the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon, and both of their hospitals. The ephemera is somewhat similar for each group, and consists primarily of donation acknowledgements, event tickets and programs, flyers, and circular letters that the committees used to raise funds.

The Union saloon files hold a few different items, including a pair of visiting card-sized print pieces, one which illustrates the cannon which was fired to announce the arriving troops, and another to show the carved and gilded eagle that was mounted on the roof of the saloon. Also within the files is a selection of small cardstock folders with lithographed illustrations of the saloon and hospital buildings which, according to annotations by Samuel Fales, were placed under each soldier’s plate at mealtime. Printed on the inside are histories of the organization, names of the committee members, and on some, a welcoming statement and list of places of interest within the city.

One unique piece was sent to McAllister by Fales: a printed circular letter addressed to contributors to “The Association to Procure Employment for Rebel Deserters, who have taken the Oath of Allegiance to the United States,” a group that was formed on March 23, 1865, two weeks prior to the end of the war. The circular serves as a financial report covering the expenditures made by the association’s executive committee, whose major contribution to “weakening the enemy’s ranks” was in distributing one night 30,000 copies of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* to Lee’s army. The paper contained a report of the public meeting that outlined the goals of the association, and resulted in the desertion of more than six hundred men the next day. When the war ended and its work was finished, the committee voted to give their remaining funds specifically to the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon, as that organization
had provided meals to the deserters while the Cooper Shop had refused to do so. Fales tied one of the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon’s special green tickets, which a deserter could redeem for a meal, to the circular, and annotated the circular to explain its presence.

Following the subseries for each saloon is one for material printed for both saloons, which reflects cooperative endeavors to raise funds for both organizations at once. Also there is a single ticket to the grand closing events for the saloons, which was held at the Academy of Music on August 28, 1865.

Newspaper clippings about the saloons can be found both in Box 1 folder 19, and in Box 2 folder 21. The oversize clippings held in Box 2 include an enumeration of the troops entertained in the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon, with a brief history of each organization.

Series II, Citizens’ Volunteer Hospital (1862-1865) holds just five pieces of ephemera related to that hospital and its fundraising efforts.
SERIES I. VOLUNTEER REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES 1861-1868

Arranged in three subseries: Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Committee; Union Volunteer Refreshment Committee; and Combined Committees.

Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Committee

1 1 Hospital 1862, undated

Refreshment Saloon

2 Correspondence 1862-1866

Ephemera

3 Donation receipts and acknowledgements 1861-1864

4 Fundraising appeals 1864, undated

5 Fundraising events 1861-1864

6 Miscellaneous 1864, undated

7 Soldier’s burial lot undated

8 Soldier’s Home 1863

Union Volunteer Refreshment Committee

9 Deserters circular and meal ticket 1865

10 Hospital circa 1862

Refreshment Saloon

11 Donation receipts and acknowledgements undated

12 Fundraising appeals 1861-1865

13 Fundraising events 1861-1864

14 Illustrated card folders 1861-1865

15 Rules and regulations placard circa 1861
SERIES I. VOLUNTEER REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES, cont.

Union Volunteer Refreshment Committee, cont.

Refreshment Saloon, cont.

[1] 16 Miscellaneous 1862-1863, undated

Combined committees

17 Fundraising events 1861-1864

18 Closing ceremonies 1865 Aug 28

19 Newspaper clippings 1861-1868

See also Box 2 folder 21 for oversize clippings

SERIES II. CITIZENS’ VOLUNTEER HOSPITAL

20 Ephemera 1862-1865