

CW/VFM-82: *Capt. Johannes (John) Sachs of the 5th Maryland, Co.K*

Document, n.d. Narrative of Capt. John Sachs, 5th Maryland Regiment, about his experiences as a prisoner in Confederate hands and as a fugitive from Southern captivity, as told to Rev. Jacob Blas, a German Lutheran preacher, and written in German. File also includes a literal translation of the account, biographical information about John Sachs, photographs of Sachs in uniform, and a letter from a fellow prisoner to Sachs' son.

The 5th Maryland mainly saw action at the battles of Antietam (9/16-17/ 1862) and Winchester (6/13-15/ 1863). The majority of the regiment was captured at the battle of Winchester. So even though the regiment was present at the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865, the majority of the men originally in the regiment weren't.

History of John Sachs as told to Grace Sachs by her father (E.P. Sachs), 3/3/1925:

John Sachs and his wife immigrated from Mittelsinn, Germany to Canton, MD around 1850. In 1856, after taking up dairy farming, Sachs moved his family to Adams County, PA. In 1861, Sachs enlisted with the 5th Maryland Volunteers and was mustered into service on September 4th. He was elected to 2nd Lieutenant of his company upon its organization. After the battle of Antietam, he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant. By the time he was mustered out, he held the rank of captain.

Photocopy: 2pp

First-hand Account of Sachs' Imprisonment written by Rev. Jacob Blas:

Sachs was taken captive on June 15th, 1863 in the Battle of Winchester by the 32nd Georgia. He and three other officers (two lieutenants and a sergeant) escaped on November 4th. They hid in the woods until nightfall, and then began to journey toward the Union lines. During their long journey, there was a lack of food, and generally had to rely on black families to feed them. Occasionally, Sachs posed as a Confederate in order to keep the good opinion of the region. With the help of black families, he was able to escape to the Blue Ridge Mountains and into Tennessee.

Original document: 19pp

Photocopy: 19pp

Typed translation (the original is in German): 9pp

Photocopy: 10pp

Letter from William E. Hodge to E. P Sachs, Esq. (3/12/1886):

Hodge describes the escape of himself, two lieutenants, and E.P. Sachs' father from the Confederate prison in Columbia, SC. Unfortunately, during their flight to Union territory, all but Sachs were captured and returned to Confederate possession. His letter mentions his hardship during the time that he was being moved around Georgia and South and North Carolina in order to keep the prisoners away from Sherman. They were finally released on 3/1/1865.

Original document: 2pp

Photocopy: 2pp

Article from "The Hanover Record" by Dr. C.E. Goldsborough (circa 1905-1910):

Dr. Goldsborough was a surgeon in the Union Army, and knew Sachs. He decided that Sachs' story needed to be told because he was "one of the most gallant men who left Adams County to serve as a soldier in the great civil war." He describes what was related to him by Sachs upon his safe arrival within Union lines. Sachs was sent home in January of 1865, and died on November 5th, 1867.

Original document: 1pp

Photocopy: 1pp

Keywords: Union – East – Maryland – 5th; Letters; Prisoner of War; Army – Infantry;
Soldiers – Commissioned Officers

Location: Civil War Vertical File Manuscripts, Special Collections & College Archives,
Musselman Library at Gettysburg College.

See also: [Civil War Sources in Special Collections](#)