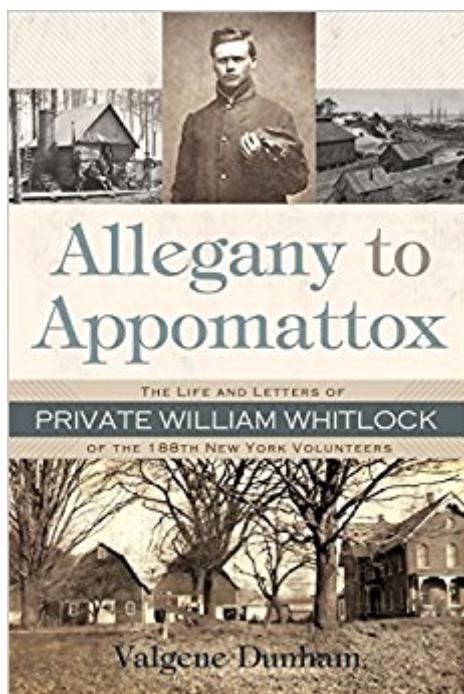


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Allegany To Appomattox: The Life And Letters Of Private William Whitlock Of The 188th New York Volunteers



Synopsis

On September 7, 1864, William Whitlock, aged thirty-five, left his wife and four children in Allegany, New York, to join the Union army in battle. More than 100 years later, his unpublished letters to his wife were found in the attic of a family home. These letters serve as the foundation for *Allegany to Appomattox*, giving readers a vivid glimpse into the environment and political atmosphere that surrounded the Civil War from the perspective of a northern farmer and lumberman.

Whitlock's observations tell of exhausting marches, limited rations, and grueling combat. In plainspoken language, the letters also reveal a desperate homesickness, consistently expressing concern for the family's health and financial situation and requesting news from home.

Dunham's detailed descriptions of the war's progress and specific battles provide a rich context for Whitlock's letters, orienting readers to both the broad narrative of the Civil War and the intimate chronicle of one soldier's impressions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dunham's ability to place Private Whitlock-and the reader in the time and place of the Civil War, whether on the family farm in upstate New York, in the mind-numbing routines of military life, or in the battlefield environment of the Civil War's Eastern theater makes this a meaningful and memorable contribution to the historical genre of Civil War letters literature. --Rod Gragg, author of *Confederate Goliath: The Battle of Fort Fisher* In *Allegany to Appomattox*, the story of William Whitlock and the largest Whitlock family is interwoven into the broader narrative of the Civil War.

Focusing on Whitlock's letters to his family as well as an assortment of primary documents from the era, Dunham captures the experiences and challenges of a farmer and father leaving his world to fight for his country. Though firmly rooted in Whitlock's home region of western New York, this unique insight into life as a Civil War soldier goes far beyond place and serves as a commentary on the human condition that is universally relatable. --The Hudson River Valley Review: A Journal of Regional Studies

Val Dunham is the author and co-author of numerous book chapters and over forty-five journal articles.

Syracuse University Press has previously published a history book that I wrote and they thought I might enjoy this one because the concept is similar to another book I am now researching. The book follows a single ancestor's participation in the Civil War and puts his activities into historical context. I like his approach and really appreciate all the good research that went into it. The highlight, of course, is the fact that he found a lost bundle of letters from his ancestor that had not previously been public. The sad part is that his ancestor died in battle, leaving a widow and four kids to fend for themselves.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Source material is always great to read, and these letters from a regular foot soldier give a clear and interesting picture of the day-to-day activities and thoughts/concerns of such a foot soldier in the Civil War. Additionally, the author, Val Dunham, has done an absolutely masterful job of placing each letter in context as to time and place, as well as providing other interesting perspectives and information from the religious denomination of the chaplains to desertion rates/impact on each side etc. For anyone interested in the Civil War whether professional historian, buff or layman, it is a great read

I really love this book. If you are a fan of history, particularly of the Civil War or the Lincoln era, you will want to add this to your collection. The author, Valgene Dunham, has done an incredible job researching the material included in this work. There are quite a few photos, and it was not only interesting, but somehow ethereal to see what the land looked like during this historical period. I thought the photos added a lot to the book, allowing the reader to glimpse the world William Whitlock speaks of through his correspondence. The part of this book that captivated my attention, was the reproduction of the letters William wrote to his family. Being able to glimpse the events he

saw through his own words was fascinating and kept me up late into the night reading. I appreciated that the letters were not edited and were presented with spelling errors and all. It gave me the opportunity to compare the world of today with the historical period being discussed. This book offers an excellent viewpoint for the reader of the Confederate strategy as well as that of the Union. I have read a lot of different historical books that talked about Appomattox, but this one far exceeded the others. If you love history and get excited when you have the chance to reach back into the past and learn, this is a book you will not want to miss. This review is based on a digital copy from the publisher.

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