

C Simpson, Avington Wayne (1834-), Diary, 1861-1865
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INTRODUCTION

This diary, kept by a Polk County, Missouri, resident, contains short concise entries dealing with the daily events of a Confederate Missouri State Guard unit organized in July 1861. Simpson participated in the 1864 summer campaign through the Kennesaw Mountains, including the fall of Atlanta.

DONOR INFORMATION

The State Historical Society of Missouri acquired this collection in an unknown manner (Accession No. 888).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Avington Wayne Simpson was born in Wayne County, Kentucky, 28 November 1834. He moved with his parents, Avington and Lucinda Payne Simpson, to Missouri in 1841. A resident of Polk County, Simpson enlisted in 1861 as a Confederate soldier for the stated purpose of "sustaining and maintaining Southern rights and principles."

Simpson was elected third lieutenant in Captain Bradford's Company, Missouri State Guard on 16 July 1861. On 1 October 1861 he was elected first lieutenant and served until the expiration of his term on 26 December 1861. Simpson then returned to Polk County until January 1862, when Captain A.C. Bradford organized a company to act as General Sterling Price's bodyguard. Simpson was elected second lieutenant.

Simpson's military service was continuous from this date until the capture of his entire garrison at Spanish Fort in Alabama on 9 April 1865. The prisoners were paroled in mid-May at Meridian, Mississippi. Simpson remained in Alabama until the first of August, then returned to Missouri. The diary ends on 6 August 1865. No further information on Simpson could be found when the collection was processed.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This diary, which begins 16 July 1861, will not be useful for battle accounts or stories of heroism and action. It does give insight into the daily routine of Confederate soldiers fighting through southern Missouri, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia.

The diary is filled with the mundane details of routine and boredom, daily notes on living conditions, waiting for supply wagons, shifting troops to new locations, and the amazing amount of time spent at leisure in private homes.

Another aspect of interest is the frequency with which prayer meetings, preaching, and days of fasting and prayer were held by entire regiments and "strictly observed." The cost of clothing and food obtained by individuals and the company mess to supplement the issued food is also enlightening.

Simpson notes skirmishes but gives no details. During the battle at Corinth, Mississippi, he was away from his unit suffering from yellow jaundice and visiting friends. During the battle at Vicksburg, he was on a recruiting mission into Missouri. Simpson participated in the 1864 summer campaign through the Kennesaw Mountains and the subsequent fall of Atlanta; however, his entries for those dates are not descriptive.

Following the diary entries are two pages of genealogical information on the Payne and Simpson families.

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