

Information Sheet

R **Ruyle, William A.**
33 **Letter, ca. 1864.**
 41 pages, typescript.

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

This is a transcript of a long letter from Ruyle to his father, describing his wartime experiences with the 5th Regiment, Missouri Infantry (Confederate), 1862-1864. It includes accounts of the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern (Pea Ridge), Arkansas, and events prior to the surrender of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

John W. McReynolds, past president of the Historical Society of Polk County (Mo.), gave this copy of the Ruyle transcript to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Rolla.

Very little is known about William A. Ruyle other than the information contained in this manuscript, which is an autobiographical letter to his father describing his life during the Civil War. In an introduction, Ruyle asks that, in the event of his death, someone "... finish my letter by giving a detail of my last days, the manner of death, burial, etc." The manuscript begins with Ruyle's enlistment in the Confederate Army on 11 January 1862. His account ends rather abruptly around 1 March 1864.

In company with thirty other men, Ruyle enlisted at Pleasant Prairie Chapel in Polk County, Missouri. Ruyle was elected a sergeant of the group, which was initially organized as a cavalry company. They were later transferred to the 5th Missouri Infantry. Under generals Sterling Price and Earl Van Dorn, the 5th Missouri participated in the battle of Elkhorn Tavern, Arkansas. After this Confederate defeat, the 5th Missouri was transferred to Corinth, Mississippi, and took part in the battles of Corinth, Iuka, and Bakers Creek, Mississippi. Ruyle was captured along with his regiment at Vicksburg.

Ruyle was paroled at Vicksburg and was sent to a parole camp at Demopolis, Alabama. He remained at Demopolis only four days before leaving the camp and crossing the Mississippi River into Arkansas. He located the Confederate company organized from exchanged prisoners from Vicksburg. This company performed scouting duties along the Mississippi and Arkansas rivers.

It is not known whether Ruyle survived the war. His service record at the Missouri State Archives indicates only that he left while on parole to join the cavalry on the west side of the Mississippi.

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10 September 1980

John W. McReynolds

Gift

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