

C Stephens, Thomas White (1839-1922), Diaries, 1861-1864, 1912-1913
2282 .3 linear feet

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

INTRODUCTION

Eight diaries and various diary pages of a corporal in Company K, Indiana Infantry, 20th Regiment. The last diary contains entries about life Topeka, Kansas in 1912 and 1913. See also C169, Stephens Family, Papers, 1863-1875, 2008.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Thomas White Stephens Papers were donated to the University of Missouri by his son, Frank Fletcher Stephens, on 24 June 1965 (Accession No. 3624).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas W. Stephens was born 27 August 1839 to John and Sarah Shultz Stephens. He wished to become a physician but the Civil War interrupted his studies at Greencastle (later DePauw) University.

With his younger brother, James, he enlisted in Company K of the 20th Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry on 15 July 1861. Their regiment was assigned to the Army of the Potomac. They were mustered out on 30 July 1864,

During the War, Stephens became engaged to Mary Elizabeth Tyler (1839-1920), and they were married 27 August 1864. They had eight children: Thomas Edward, Caroline Elizabeth, James Albert, George Asbury, John Francis, and Frank Fletcher, Harrison Tyler, and Mary Isabel.

A few years after their marriage, they moved to Kansas. Stephens was a leader in the frontier community in establishing a district school and in forming a local organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was a farmer until he retired in 1903 and moved to Topeka. He died in 1922 in Washington, D.C., while living with one of his sons.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Thomas Stephens collection is comprised mainly of a series of diaries written during Stephens's service in the Indiana Infantry during the Civil War. Typewritten transcripts are included.

The diaries document the movements of Stephens's unit and describe the Battles of the Wilderness, Gettysburg, and Spotsylvania; prison conditions; medical facilities; and military life. The final Civil War diary discusses his discharge from the Army and marriage to Mary Tyler, family news, and his health.

The 1912-1913 diary concerns life in Topeka, Kansas, including religious meetings, weather, and family.

FOLDER LIST

f. 1 1861-1862. Diary and various pages of diary entries. Entries cover enlistment at Camp Tippecanoe, Lafayette, Indiana; movement to Mount Washington; Camp Bolger; through Baltimore to Fortress Monroe. Additional loose pages are copies from the original diary.

f. 2-5 1862, October 2. Army record [copy by Stephens from the original with notes on missing sections]. Covers maneuvers around Washington, D.C. and North Carolina; illness in Philadelphia; imprisonment in New York; service at Fort Schuyler; description of New York City; movements around Brandy Station; the Wilderness Campaign.

f. 6-7 1862 June-October. Concerns Battle of Glendale, Virginia, June 1862, and description of Libby Prison and Belle Island Prison, Richmond, Virginia. Union army medical facilities, daily military activities and duties, Indiana politics, family news, religious readings and meetings.

f. 8-10 1863, January-July. Concerns military action in northern Virginia and Maryland and the battle of Gettysburg, July 1863. Description of Soldiers Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Indiana politics, military life, weather, family news, religious readings and meetings.

f. 11-17 1863 August-1864 May. Military action of the Army of the Potomac, first description of Battle of Spotsylvania, May 1864. Daily military duties, weather, health, family news, religious readings and meetings.

f. 18-23 1864 January-September; 1912-1913. Military action in northern Virginia, including the Battle of Spotsylvania; Stephens's discharge, return home, and marriage. Religious readings and meetings, daily military activities, family news, health, and weather.

This diary is a copy Stephens made from his original diary at an unknown date. The original entries for January 18-May 26 are in the previous diary (see folder 11) and the typed transcript in folders 14-17.

The 1912-1913 entries concern life in Topeka, Kansas. Religious meetings, scripture, weather, reading, planting, and family.

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