

C Clapp, Fayette, (1824-1864), Diary, 1862-1863
2430 8 folders

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INTRODUCTION

Diary consists of "letters" written to Clapp's wife during service in the Mississippi Fleet of the Union. As a surgeon, Clapp participated in Grant's campaign to take Vicksburg, the Yazoo Pass Expedition, and the Battle of Grand Gulf. Provides glimpses of shipboard life, comparisons of army and navy, observations on slavery, and familial concerns.

DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Susan Bickley on 27 Aug 1980 (Accession No. 4300).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Fayette Clapp had an atypical background. Born in Chesterfield, Massachusetts, he studied at Princeton before taking his bachelor's degree at Brown University. He received his medical degree at Castleton, Vermont, and practiced in San Francisco and the Sandwich Islands before settling in Columbia, Missouri, in 1855 and marrying Catherine Lynch, daughter of a prominent Catholic family there. He served in the U.S. Army from November 1861 to October 1862, when he resigned due to ill health. Shortly afterward he joined the Navy and began serving during the period covered by his diary. Following this period he continued to serve in the gunboats until his health forced him to return home. Clapp died on 29 August 1864, shortly after rejoining his family and moving to Illinois.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Written in journal form, these letters deal with Clapp's experiences from December 1862 through August 1863. During that period, he served as ship's surgeon aboard the "tinclad" Marmora and the ironclads Benton and Louisville. Clapp writes of the positive aspects of naval service, having served previously in the army. His detailed entries on the tactical management of the Vicksburg campaign, especially the Yazoo Pass Expedition and the Battle of Grand Gulf, are generally accurate without startling revelations. In describing the scene on the gundeck during one engagement, Clapp creates a vivid portrait. His feelings about war, separation from family and child-rearing are often sprinkled with literary quotations, and his remarks give insight into the impact of war on one individual's life.

FOLDER LIST

f. 1-2	During this period Clapp served on <i>Marmora</i> and <i>Benton</i> . He writes a great deal about disciplining his sons and advising his wife on their proper upbringing. Description of life on a naval gunboat and comparison with his experiences in the army recur throughout. In particular, the day-to-day routine and discipline, including courts-martial are important. Clapp receives word of his mother's death and is profoundly shaken, making death a frequent topic. The fleet moves to the mouth of the Yazoo and prepares to attack Vicksburg. Details of various ships and their officers appear. References to medical problems such as smallpox are mentioned. Debts become a concern for the family.
f. 3-4	Problems relating to the training of "German" soldiers brought on board to be trained as gunners are described. The outbreak of typhoid and the arrival of smallpox vaccine are the medical concern of these weeks. Refugees, black and white, are becoming a problem for the fleet. Child-rearing and homesickness are frequent topics. Movements of ships above and below Vicksburg, including a sketch of the river, appear regularly. After returning to <i>Marmora</i> , details of the Yazoo Expedition are the primary topic. The unreliable nature of newspaper accounts of the war is a recurring topic with a correspondent aboard. Clapp addresses the problem of blacks who leave their masters- - he thinks they are better off staying. Also a brief description of General Ellet's "Marine Brigade."
f. 5-6	The Yazoo Pass Expedition continues as a primary topic. The operation is cancelled, 4 April, but the return trip remains important for days, along with recriminations relating to the failure of the expedition. On 13 April Clapp is transferred to <i>Louisville</i> and remains there through end of diary. Captain Owen and the run past Vicksburg become important topics. The disease problem increases with warm weather and mosquitoes. The description of the gun deck of <i>Louisville</i> during the Battle of Grand Gulf deserves special note. Ferrying prisoners and details of Grant's advance attract Clapp's attention, including a transcription of a Confederate letter describing the Battle of Grand Gulf. Rumors and facts relating to Grant's success at Vicksburg and increasing depression with inactivity characterize later entries.
f. 7-8	Concern with problems created by the increasing number of free blacks becomes marked- -Port Gibson requested military protection from them. Recounts various rumors of military activity. Clapp's health is unstable in the heat. With approach of birthday (6 June) homesickness and the need for leave become overwhelming. His attitude toward blacks becomes increasingly negative. Confederate deserters appear in larger numbers. The "Emancipation Proclamation," is a good way to

	damage Southern economy. Detailed description of Fourth of July celebration followed by the news of Vicksburg's surrender. Shipboard tensions increase with Clapp becoming fearful of losing the captain's support. Rumors about military activity continue but getting leave takes precedence as Clapp considers a transfer to escape animosity of <i>Louisville's</i> officers.
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