

Information Sheet

R Mead, Cyrus A., -1862.
166 Letter, 1861.
One folder, photocopies.

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 Civil War letter from Cyrus A. Mead, 42nd Ohio Infantry, Camp Chase, Ohio, to his sister in Eaton, Ohio. Mead noted sickness in the regiment and remarked on the regimental officers, including Col. James A. Garfield, who later was President of the United States.

Cyrus A. Mead enlisted in Co. A, 42nd Ohio Infantry, in late summer of 1861, probably in his hometown of Freedom, Ohio. Mead had been a student at the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute at Hiram, Ohio, before the war, and he joined many other graduates of the school in that regiment. Its popularity undoubtedly had to do with its commander, Col. James A. Garfield, former Principal of the Eclectic and Ohio state senator. Along with the rest of the 42nd and thousands of other soldiers from Ohio, Mead was trained at the large camp of instruction at Camp Chase, near Columbus, Ohio.

Mead's letter to his sister was written after his return to camp following a furlough and visit home. He remarked that, upon his return, his army comrades seemed "more reckless, less moral and refined" than they had been previously. He also noted the deplorable health of the regiment, which counted almost ten percent of its number on the sick list. Measles had already killed two members of Co. A, almost two months before the 42nd sustained a casualty due to enemy action.

Col. Garfield was also alarmed at the increasing spread of disease in his regiment. Garfield's Civil War letters, published as *The Wild Life of the Army*, contained repeated references to sickness in camp, and, on 10 March 1862, he wrote his wife that Cyrus Mead and Elam Chapman, another former student at the Eclectic, had visited him. Both were ill, and they tearfully pleaded for sick leaves to return home. Garfield told both of them of his own bouts with sickness, "talked to them till they felt brave," and sent them to be treated by the medical officer. His moral support was only a temporary palliative, for Garfield wrote on 30 March 1862 that Mead and Chapman had both died, probably of typhoid fever.

r163 *24 February 1983* *James E. Price* *Loaned for photocopying*

Index Cards

Camp Chase (Ohio)
Garfield, James A. (James Abram), 1831-1881
Mead, Cyrus A., -1862
Military bases—Ohio—Camp Chase
Ohio—History—Civil War, 1861-1862
United States. Army. Ohio Infantry Regiment, 42nd (1861-1864)
United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865