

Information Sheet

R **Standifird, Aquilla, 1838-**
458 **Civil War diary, 1862-1865.**
 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 the Civil War diary of a sergeant and, later, lieutenant of Co. D, 23rd Iowa Infantry. The diary covers duty in Missouri, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, 26 July 1862 -- ca. 15 April 1865. Included are descriptions of service in the Army of Southeastern Missouri, the Vicksburg Campaign, including the battles of Port Gibson, Champion's Hill, Big Black River Bridge, and Milliken's Bend, and furlough and medical leave in Iowa.

Aquilla Standifird was a twenty-three year old farmer at Drakeville in Wayne County, Iowa, when he "concluded to enlist." He joined a company of volunteers organized at Corydon, Iowa, on 26 July 1862, and was elected first sergeant. The company was mustered into United States service as Co. D of the 23rd Iowa Infantry on 19 September 1862. The regiment completed its organization at Des Moines, then moved to Keokuk for transportation to St. Louis, Missouri. The troops began their first active duty on 8 October at Ironton, Missouri, the railhead of the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad. The 23rd Iowa was then ordered to Patterson, where the Army of Southeastern Missouri was assembled. Under the command of Brig. Gen. John W. Davidson, the army began a winter campaign which lasted until the end of February 1863, and which is one of the most obscure operations of the Civil War in Missouri. After marching to the Missouri/Arkansas border and back to Iron County, the Army of Southeastern Missouri was broken up in March 1863 when the need for infantry became imperative for the Vicksburg Campaign. Most of the infantry at Ironton and Pilot Knob, including the 23rd Iowa, marched to Ste. Genevieve and embarked on the downriver trip toward Vicksburg. The Iowa troops landed at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, on the west side of the Mississippi River above Vicksburg, on 28 March 1863.

Standifird was promoted to 2nd lieutenant of Co. D in April 1863, just as the regiment began the sequence of marching and fighting which culminated in the surrender of Vicksburg in July. The 23rd Iowa first came under fire at the Battle of Port Gibson, Mississippi, on 1 May, and took part in the battles of Champion's Hill on 16 May and Big Black River Bridge on 17 May. Standifird escaped injury although ten men in Co. D were wounded and the regiment's colonel was killed at Big Black River Bridge. The Iowans took up positions in the siege lines surrounding Vicksburg on 20 May, but were pulled out of line and sent to Milliken's Bend on 6 June. The regiment was heavily engaged in the battle there on 7 June and lost sixty-five killed and wounded. The dead included one man who was shot to death as he stood next to Standifird. The survivors were sent back to Vicksburg and were present when the city was surrendered on 4 July 1863.

Lieutenant Standifird contracted ague at Vicksburg and suffered from its effects for the remainder of his military service. He returned home to Drakeville on furlough in August. His leave was extended for medical reasons through December 1863, during which period he was hospitalized twice at Keokuk. Denied a medical disability at Keokuk, Standifird rejoined his regiment, then at Indianola, Texas, in February 1864. He resigned his commission due to jaundice and general debility on 12 March at Matagorda Island, Texas, and was discharged on 27 March. He took a steamer for Keokuk and reached Drakeville on 16 April. Four days later he wrote "To day will end this diary In this sketch I have tried to get the exact fact as it occurred. Possibly at some time it will be read by some one long after the writer has answered the last roll call." A postscript to the diary notes that he was commissioned captain of the Wayne County company of Iowa Militia in August 1864. The company "kept watch for any act by those inclined to be disloyal," and was disbanded in April 1865. Standifird noted that he did not receive any compensation for his time or the burden of responsibility in the militia.

The army diary of Aquilla Standifird is one of thousands of such documents left by soldiers during the Civil War which provide the details of army life not found in official military reports. Standifird's diary is particularly useful for research on the Army of Southeastern Missouri and the Vicksburg Campaign. There are good descriptions of camp life in Missouri, especially at Patterson and the encampments at West Plains, the Eleven Point River, the Current River, and in Iron County. There is also an account of the destruction of Dallas in Bollinger County. The entries on the Vicksburg Campaign include descriptions of the engagements at Port Gibson, Champion's Hill, and Big Black River Bridge, Mississippi, and at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana. Researchers working on the home front during the war will be interested in the accounts of Standifird's furlough to Drakeville and hospitalization at Keokuk.

*r504**20 March 1991**Lynn Morrow**Gift*

Index Cards

Alton (Mo.)
 Arcadia (Mo.)
 Army of Southeastern Missouri
 Big Black River Bridge (Miss.), Battle of, 1863
 Black River (Mo.)
 Bollinger County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Carter County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Champion's Hill, Battle of, 1863
 Dallas (Mo.)
 Drakeville (Iowa)
 Eminence (Mo.)
 Farmington (Mo.)
 Howell County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Indianola (Tex.)
 Iowa—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Iowa Infantry—23rd Regiment. SEE United States. Army. Iowa Infantry Regiment, 23rd
 Iron County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Iron Mountain (Mo.)
 Ironton (Mo.)
 Jeffers, W. L.
 Keokuk (Iowa)
 Kinsman, William F., -1863
 Louisiana—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Matagorda Island (Tex.)
 Milliken's Bend (La.), Battle of, 1863
 Mississippi—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Missouri—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 New Madrid (Mo.)
 New Madrid County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 New Orleans (La.)
 Oregon County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Patterson (Mo.)
 Pilot Knob (Mo.)
 Port Gibson (Miss.)
 Reynolds County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Saint Louis (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Sainte Genevieve (Mo.)
 Shannon County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Standifird, Aquilla, 1838-
 Texas—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
 Thomasville (Mo.)

United States. Army. Iowa Infantry Regiment, 23rd

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Van Buren (Mo.)

Vicksburg (Miss.)—History—Siege, 1863

Wayne County (Iowa)

Wayne County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.

West Plains (Mo.)

Young's Point (La.)