

Information Sheet

R Murray, Thomas.
522 Correspondence, 1862-1867.
Two folders.

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

These are letters addressed to Thomas Murray of Davenport, Iowa, by relatives serving in the Union army during the Civil War. Included are letters from a brother, William Murray, and a cousin, Thomas Murray, both of whom served in Company C of the 20th Iowa Infantry in Missouri and Arkansas. There are also postwar letters regarding the grave of William Murray, who was killed at Prairie Grove, Arkansas.

The 20th Iowa Infantry was organized at Clinton, Iowa, in August 1862. The regiment moved to St. Louis on 5 September, thence to Rolla and Springfield, arriving at the latter on 24 September. The 20th was part of a brigade led by Brigadier General Francis J. Herron which became the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Division of the Army of the Frontier. Based in Springfield, this army operated in southwestern Missouri and northwestern Arkansas against Confederate forces led by General Thomas C. Hindman. The Army of the Frontier's first combat came at Newtonia, Missouri, in October 1862. The campaign climaxed two months later at the Battle of Prairie Grove, near Fayetteville, Arkansas, on 10 December 1862.

The Murray collection consists of letters written to Thomas Murray at Davenport, Iowa, by a brother and two cousins serving in the military. A single letter, by cousin James Murray, was written at Fulton County, Illinois, while James was serving in an unspecified Union regiment. The largest group of letters are by William Murray, Thomas's brother. They begin at Camp Kirkwood in Clinton County, Iowa, and follow the progress of the 20th Iowa by steamboat and train to St. Louis and Rolla, and the march which took the soldiers to Springfield, Newtonia, and McCullah's Spring in Missouri, and the area around Fayetteville, Arkansas. William Murray's letters contain descriptions of the campaign and the country, comments on camp life, and news of acquaintances and friends. William's letters end just two weeks before his death at the Battle of Prairie Grove. His grave on the battlefield was erroneously marked as belonging to the 20th Wisconsin Infantry. Postwar correspondence by Thomas Murray concerns the misidentification of his brother's burial place.

The collection also includes three letters written to Thomas Murray in 1863 by a cousin also named Thomas Murray. He also served in the 20th Iowa Infantry. In 1863, the Army of the Frontier moved back into Missouri to be nearer the railheads at Rolla and Pilot Knob. Two letters, from Camp Culver in Wright County and Camp Totten in Phelps County, describe the army's eastward march. In June 1863, the Army of the Frontier was broken up and sent to join forces operating against Vicksburg, Mississippi. The 20th Iowa was among the reinforcements. Thomas Murray wrote from Vicksburg describing the journey from Missouri and events in Mississippi.

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Shelf List

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Folder 1: Original letters (see filing order, below).

Folder 2: Typewritings (in the same order as the originals).

James Murray letter

Regiment unspecified

1862 18 Jan James Murray, Fulton [Ill.], to cousin (with cover).

William Murray letters

Co. C, 20th Iowa Volunteer Infantry

1862 24 Aug William Murray, Camp Kirkwood, Clinton County, Iowa, to Thomas Murray, Davenport, Iowa (with cover)
 1862 08 Sep William Murray, Benton Barracks, St. Louis, Mo., to father, Charles Murray, Davenport, Iowa (with cover)
 1862 10 Sep William Murray, Benton Barracks, St. Louis, Mo., to brother Thomas Murray, Davenport, Iowa
 1862 19 Sep William Murray, Gasconade River [Laclede County, Mo.], to father and mother
 1862 25 Sep William Murray, Springfield, Mo., to brother Thomas Murray, Davenport, Iowa (with cover)
 1862 08 Oct William Murray, Newtonia, Mo., to father Charles Murray
 1862 03 Nov William Murray, Pea Ridge, Ark. to brother Thomas Murray, continued 6 November from Marysville, Mo. (with cover)
 1862 29 Nov William Murray, Camp at Mccoluck [McCullah Spring, Stone County?], Mo., to brother
 1867 14 Feb L. D. Jernigan[?], Fayetteville, Ark., to "Dear Eld"
 1867 05 Mar Thomas Murray, Davenport, Iowa, to the Adjutant General of Wisconsin, Madison (with cover)
 1867 07 Mar Adjutant General of Wisconsin, Madison, to Thomas Murray, Davenport, Iowa (with cover)

Thomas Murray letters

Co. C, 20th Iowa Volunteer Infantry

1863 08 Mar Thomas Murray, Camp Culver [Hazelwood, Wright County, Mo.], to cousin
 1863 08 Apr Thomas Murray, Camp Totten [Phelps County, Mo.], to cousin (with cover)
 1863 16 Jun Thomas Murray, Rear of Vicksburg, Mississippi, to cousin

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