

Information Sheet

R **Leach, John Miller, 1830-1907.**
1147 **Diary, 1861-1863.**
 One folder, photocopies.

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This is a typescript of a diary by John M. Leach, a member of the Tenth Cavalry Regiment, Eighth Division, Missouri State Guard, and the Sixth Missouri Infantry (CS). The diary begins on 2 September 1861 and continues through 29 July 1863. It describes operations around Pea Ridge, Arkansas; Corinth, Mississippi; and Vicksburg, Mississippi.

John M. Leach was a native of Ohio County, Kentucky, and was a resident of Cass County, Missouri, when the Civil War broke out. He became a member of Company F, Tenth Cavalry Regiment, Eighth Division, Missouri State Guard. Leach and his company saw no action before they joined the Missouri army at Springfield on 22 December 1861. On the first day of January 1862, Leach left the state force and joined the Confederate service in what was known as Adams's or Fleming's company. Consolidated with John M. Weidemeyer's company and assigned to Colonel Thomas H. Rosser's battalion of Colonel William Y. Slack's brigade (2nd Missouri Brigade) on 3 March 1862, Leach and the others participated in the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, after which they proceeded east of the Mississippi River with the rest of the Confederate army. After joining in the defense of Corinth, Mississippi, in May 1862, Leach's battalion was organized as part of Colonel Eugene Erwin's Sixth Missouri Infantry (CS). Leach and several others transferred to Captain Francis M. McKinney's Company F in July 1862.

The Sixth Missouri Infantry suffered severe casualties in the Battle of Corinth, Mississippi on 3 October 1862. Captain McKinney was among those killed; Leach suffered a wound to his right arm, was captured, and hospitalized at Iuka. He was exchanged at Jackson, Mississippi, on 13 November 1862, and rejoined his regiment at Grenada, Mississippi. The regiment was engaged in fighting at Grand Gulf, Port Gibson, Edwards Station, Baker's Creek, and Big Black River Bridge as operations around Vicksburg developed in the spring of 1863. The regiment entered the fortifications of Vicksburg on 17 May 1863. Leach and his comrades were closely engaged on 25 June 1863, when Colonel Erwin was killed in action, and again on 1 July 1863. Surrendered with the Confederate army at Vicksburg, Leach was paroled and obtained a furlough. He traveled to Knoxville, Tennessee, in late July and apparently did not return to the army.

Leach's Civil War diary exists in the form of a twenty-three page typescript apparently prepared for newspaper publication. The typescript was among the personal papers of Joseph Ney Foster (d. 1975), a co-editor and co-owner of the *Hartford (Kentucky) Republican*, 1911-1913, and grandfather of the donor, Joe F. Webb. According to Mr. Webb, who researched the diary and its provenance in his grandfather's papers, John M. Leach lived after the war in Ohio County, Kentucky, the same county where the *Hartford Republican* was published. Marginal notations and editorial corrections also indicate the typescript's newspaper origins. It is not known if the original diary still exists.

The diary begins on 2 September 1861 at High Blue, Missouri, when Leach was with the Missouri State Guard, and continues through his Confederate service and capture at Vicksburg, Mississippi. It ends on 29 July 1863, when Leach was in Knoxville, Tennessee, trying to return

to Kentucky to visit family there. The most detailed parts of the diary feature operations around Corinth, Mississippi, in 1862, and Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1863.

Included with the typescript is an introduction to the diary by the donor, Joe F. Webb, containing his research on the provenance of the diary and its author, John M. Leach.

r1302 *31 October 2006* *Joe F. Webb* *Gift*

Index Cards

Adams, Bob.	16 May 1862
Adams, J. W.	1 Jul 1862
Arkansas—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Baker's Creek (Miss.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Big Black River Bridge (Miss.), Battle of, 1863.	
Bowen, John S.	22 Apr 1863
Bryant, William.	11 Dec 1861
Burr, Montgomery S. (Lieut.)	2 Jul 1863
Cass County (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Chaudwin, B. F.	1 Jul 1862
Chaudwin, F. M.	1 Jul 1862
Confederate States of America. Army. Missouri Infantry Regiment, 6 th .	
Cooper, Stephen (Major)	8 Dec 1862
Corinth (Miss.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Cunningham, Rob.	2 Sep 1861
Dugan, C. L.	20 Jun 1863
Dunlap, R. M. B.	2 Jul 1863
Dye, J. A.	1 Jul 1862
Eaton, E.	2 Jul 1863
Edwards Station (Miss.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Erwin, Eugene.	16 May 1862, 1 Jul 1862, 1 May 1863, 25 Jun 1863
Erwin, William H.	2 Sep 1861
Fleming, D. P.	2 Sep 1861, 3 Mar 1862, 16 May 1862
Foster, Joseph Ney.	
Franklin, T. J.	1 Jul 1862
Gill, T. A.	25 Feb 1863
Grand Gulf (Miss.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Grenada (Miss.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Hedgpeth, Isaac N.	1 Jul 1862
High Blue (Mo.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Iuka (Miss.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Jackson (Miss.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	
Jackson, Charles.	16 Jun 1863
Leach, John Miller, 1830-1907.	
Lipscomb, W. S. (Lieut.)	25 Feb 1863, 25 Jun 1863
Mallonee	SEE Mallovee
Mallovee	11 Jul 1863
Marvin, C. R.	19 Jun 1863
McKinney, Francis M.	1 Jul 1862, 3 Oct 1862

Mississippi—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.
Missouri State Guard.
Missouri—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.
Morristown (Mo.).
Murphy, D. C. 3 Mar 1862
Oldham, N. B. (Lieut.) 20 Feb 1863
Oldham, S. J. 1 Jul 1862,

Oldham, W. H. (Capt.) 2 Sep 1861, 6 Oct 1861, 4 Dec
1861, 20 Feb 1863, 1 May 1863, 11
May 1863, 2 Jul 1863

Parish, Caleb (Lieut.) 3 Oct 1862, 12 Oct 1862
Pea Ridge, Battle of, 1862.
Port Gibson (Miss.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.
Pooge, Sim. 13 Nov 1862
Reynolds, Thomas C. 22 Apr 1863
Sigman, D. 1 Jul 1862, 27 Jun 1863
Stahl 11 Dec 1861
Terrell, G. W. 2 Jul 1863
Vaughn, Joseph. 16 May 1862, 1 Jul 1862
Vicksburg (Miss.)—History—Siege, 1863.
Viers, E. 27 Jun 1863
Weidemeyer, John M. 3 Mar 1862, 16 May 1862
Weidermier, J. SEE Weidemeyer, John M.
Williams, Henry. 16 Jun 1863
Wilson 11 Dec 1861
Yeoman, T. T. 3 Oct 1862
Young, W. N. 2 Jul 1863