Robert C. Arnett Papers (R0138)

Collection Number: R0138

Collection Title: Robert C. Arnett Papers

Dates: 1917

Creator: Arnett, Robert C., 1849-1944

Abstract: The Robert C. Arnett Papers contains photocopies and transcripts of a memoir of the engagement at Fredericktown, Madison County, Missouri on October 21, 1861, by a native of the town on whose farm the fighting occurred. Arnett claimed to have reported on Federal troop strength to General M. Jeff Thompson before the battle.

Collection Size: 0.01 cubic foot
(1 folder)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla. If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shs.mo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See Rights & Reproductions on the Society’s website for more information about reproductions and permission to publish.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] Robert C. Arnett Papers (R0138); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The papers were loaned for photocopying to the University of Missouri by the Madison County Historical Society on July 15, 1982 (Accession No. RA0132).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Robert C. Arnett Papers can be found in the following collections:

W.E. Patterson Civil War Memoir (C3292)
Historical Note:

During the American Civil War, Union and Confederate forces engaged at Fredericktown, Missouri on October 21, 1861. The fight at Fredericktown was precipitated by General M. Jeff Thompson’s move toward Saint Louis with 2500 Missouri State Guard troops. Union forces from Pilot Knob and Cape Girardeau, ordered to intercept Thompson, converged on Fredericktown only to find that the rebels had withdrawn. The Federals began pursuit and were attacked a short distance from town. Outnumbering Thompson’s force by almost two to one, the Union troops finally broke the rebel line and forced them to flee toward Bloomfield, Missouri. Worried that the rebels might take the opportunity to attack Cape Girardeau, Missouri, the Union command broke off the pursuit.

Robert C. Arnett was born on February 5, 1849, in Madison County, Missouri to Duncan and Eliza Arnett. When Union and Confederate forces clashed on his family’s farm in October 1861, Robert had a front row seat to the engagement. He remained in Fredericktown, Missouri, until his death on July 24, 1944.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in its original order in one folder.

Scope and Content Note:

Arnett’s memoir of the battle compares favorably with official reports and published accounts, but it also includes two incidents not mentioned elsewhere. Although he was only twelve years old at the time of the engagement, Arnett says that he was asked by General Thompson to go into Fredericktown to ascertain whether Federal troops from Pilot Knob had joined the force from Cape Girardeau. Arnett made it in and out of Fredericktown without difficulty, but it is not clear whether he returned with any useful information for Thompson. Arnett also recounts a meeting several years after the battle with Colonel Leonard Ross of the 11th Missouri Infantry, who had returned to visit the battlefield. Ross, according to Arnett, claimed that Colonel W. P. Carlin, commanding the Federal column from Pilot Knob, had been drinking and was unable to lead his troops. Ross then assumed command and led the troops into the battle.

Container List:

Box 001  f. 1   Memoir, 1917

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