



Carthage, Missouri Civil War Battle Collection (R0167)

Collection Number: R0167

Collection Title: Carthage, Missouri Civil War Battle Collection

Dates: No date

Creator: Unknown

Abstract: The Carthage, Missouri Civil War Battle Collection contains photocopies of an unsigned memoir recounting the battle of Carthage in Jasper County, Missouri that took place on July 5, 1861. Contextual evidence indicates that the author might have been Archy Thomas, a soldier in the Missouri State Guard from Carrollton, Missouri.

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@shsmo.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] *Carthage, Missouri Civil War Battle Collection* (R0167); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The collection was donated to the University of Missouri by Susan F. Deatherage on May 20, 1983 (Accession No. RA0178).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Carthage, Missouri Civil War Battle Collection can be found in the following collections:

John T. Buegel Civil War Diary (C1844)

Processed by: Processed by John F. Bradbury, August 15, 1983. Revised by Kathleen Seale, October 23, 2020.

Historical Note:

The Battle of Carthage was one of the largest engagements of the Civil War when it occurred. It was precipitated by the Federal column sent into southwestern Missouri in the summer of 1861, to intercept pro-Southern Missouri Governor Claiborne Jackson and to prevent the junction of Missouri State Guard troops with Confederate forces out of Arkansas under General Benjamin McCulloch. Led by Franz Sigel, the Federal force of about 1,100 men consisted largely of Saint Louis Germans, many of whom were veterans of military service in Europe. The rebel force was much larger, but consisted of unorganized and untrained recruits. About one-third of the estimated 6,000 Missouri troops were unarmed.

Sigel encountered Jackson's army about twelve miles north of Carthage on July 5, and the battle began with a lively artillery duel. Although the Federal troops had the advantages of superior arms and training, the Missourians soon threatened to envelope the Union line by sheer weight of numbers, forcing Sigel to order a withdrawal. Through skillful use of his artillery, Sigel managed a series of rear-guard actions that allowed his troops to retreat slowly to Carthage. Nightfall ended the engagement, and, under cover of darkness, Sigel's soldiers continued their retreat toward Sarcoxie, thus eluding the rebels.

Both sides claimed victory at Carthage. Sigel was acclaimed for slipping from the grasp of a larger force and for managing a skillful retreat, the first of several retrograde movements he made during the war. For the Missourians, victory was more tangible, the results of which they were to demonstrate at the Battle of Wilson's Creek in August. The Union withdrawal bought valuable time in which to complete their organization and begin training, and opened the route southward for supplies and reinforcements from the Confederacy. The junction of Missouri and Confederate troops the day following the battle meant that plans could be made for an offensive to recapture the state. Having evened the score for their previous defeat at Boonville, the morale of the state troops was considerably improved, and they had gained needed battle experience along with their first victory. With Sigel and his force temporarily out of the way, the rebels could also work the lead mines near Granby for much-needed ammunition.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in its original order.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains photocopies of an unsigned memoir recounting the battle of Carthage in Jasper County, Missouri on July 5, 1861. Contextual evidence indicates that the author might have been Archer 'Archy' Thomas, a soldier in the Missouri State Guard from Carrollton, Missouri. The battle memoir is consistent with official reports and secondary accounts of the fight. It is signed only by "An Eyewitness" to the battle, who was a member of the Missouri State Guard. Although there is some internal evidence to suggest that Thomas was the author, the handwriting and phrasing of the memoir are not clear enough to make a certain identification of the writer. Other than the commanding generals, General Monroe Parsons and a Colonel Pritchard are the only officers mentioned in the account. Parsons commanded the Sixth Division,

Missouri State Guard, and Pritchard was in Hughes's Brigade, Fourth Division, so it seems likely that the author was a member of one of those divisions.

Container List:

Box 001 f. 1 Battle of Carthage memoir, no date

Index:

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