

**RIGBY, ALFRED A., B. 1841.**  
**Alfred A. Rigby diary, 1862-1865**

Emory University  
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**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Rigby, Alfred A., b. 1841.  
**Title:** Alfred A. Rigby diary, 1862-1865  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 368  
**Extent:** 1 microfilm reel (MF)  
**Abstract:** Microfilm copy of the diary of Iowa schoolteacher and Union soldier Alfred A. Rigby, who served in the 24th Iowa Infantry Regiment during the Civil War.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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**Administrative Information**

**Restrictions on Access**

Unrestricted access.

**Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

**Source**

Loaned for microfilming, 1961.

**Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Alfred A. Rigby diary, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

**Processing**

Processed by MRD, 1961.

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## **Collection Description**

### **Biographical Note**

Alfred A. Rigby (born January 11, 1841) served in Company B, 24th Iowa Infantry Regiment during the Civil War. Before his enlistment on August 7, 1862, he had lived on a farm near Mt. Vernon, Iowa. The Regiment saw action in Iowa, Virginia, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Georgia. He was in the battles of Port Gibson (1863) and Cedar Creek (1864). He remained in the army until he was discharged on August 2, 1865.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The collection consists of a microfilm copy of the manuscript diary of Alfred A. Rigby, 1862-1865. The diary is approximately 600 pages with entries between August 12, 1862 and December 31, 1865. Rigby comments on his activities in Iowa military camps (including references to the immorality and lack of religion he found), travel down the Mississippi River, foraging parties, traitors, skirmishes and battles, slavery, troop leadership, fighting fire in Savannah, Georgia, and Southern women.

### **Arrangement Note**

Arranged in chronological order.

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## Container List

Box	Folder	Content
MF1	1	1862 August 12-26. Tipton, Iowa. Parted with family. Found "many depraved minds" in his company - "profanity and obscenity run rampant." Here and throughout the journal are references to immorality and his own efforts to undertake religious "enterprises" among the troops.
MF1	2	1862 August 27-October 20. Camp Strong, 2 miles South of Muscatine, Iowa. Describes camp. Finds abundance of office seekers. He enlisted, he said, to overcome "evil" of fears and worldly cares in his life and camp experience had accomplished this result. Criticizes a surgeon whom he calls a "quack." Complains of unfairness in granting furloughs and strictness of discipline. Thinks war will be a social blessing by "development of reform." Expresses satisfaction that Camp went heavily, Republican, in 1862 election (October 14).
MF1	3	1862 October 20-28. Enroute from Camp Strong to Helena, Arkansas. Boarded boat and traveled down the Mississippi stopping at Mantarnse, Keokuk and passing Alexandria and St. Louis, Missouri., Quincy, Illinois, and Hannibal Missouri. Received cheers from places passed. Stopped at St. Louis and Memphis. Complained that a "stupid nigger" upset his ink, but added, "it would not be orthodox to get mad at contrabands." Talked to slaves and found that they seemed to understand the Emancipation Proclamation and thought it "all right."
MF1	4	1862 October 28-November 13. Camp at Helena, Arkansas. Describes foraging party that took corn, hogs, chickens and articles from a deserted plantation house. Rigby often went "foraging" but condemned "vandalism."
MF1	5	1862 November 15-21. Trip by steamship up White River.
MF1	6	1862 November 21-April 11, 1863. Camp near Helena. Short expedition to cut railroad communications between Pierce's army and Vicksburg. Rigby bitterly denounces traitors, expresses disgust at wire pulling in election of officers and praises the Emancipation Proclamation - "glorious...God had a hand in it." When Gen. Gorman was replaced by Gen. Prentiss, Rigby wrote: "One villain less in Helena!" Later wrote that Gorman was an able commander; Col. Kenny an egotist, arrogant and uninformed; Dr. Ely, "truly our regimental butcher." When ordered to join squad unloading supplies from boats, Rigby wrote that it seemed "strange that the powers that be should make deck hands of soldiers while there are plenty of negroes inside the lines." Later he comments on growth of abolitionist sentiment in army accompanied by announcement by Gen. Thomas of his intention to raise a Negro regiment.
MF1	7	1863 April 17-21. Camp six miles below Carthage.
MF1	8	1863 April 21-May 1. Traveling toward Port Gibson. Regiment's transports shelled by Confederates with no Federal losses (April 28). Rigby takes part in

- Battle of Port Gibson and gives a detailed account of his impressions of the battle.
- MF1 9 1863 May 1-21. Regiment pursuing enemy towards Jackson, Mississippi.
- MF1 10 1863 May 21-July 21. Near Jackson, Mississippi. The two armies face each other from fortified positions, skirmishing occasionally. Upon talking with Confederate prisoners and deserters, Rigby found some "intelligent but very depraved." Many from Vicksburg were suffering from malnutrition. Confederates evacuate Jackson, partly burning town and planting torpedoes (July 17). Rigby was part of a detail to destroy railroad between Jackson and New Orleans.
- MF1 11 1863 July 21-August 3. Moved towards Vicksburg.
- MF1 12 1863 August 3-19. Camp at Butler's Ditch. Viewing the South with increasing approval, Rigby wrote, "With the curse of slavery banished from this fair land it will become the Eden of the world."
- MF1 13 1863 August 19-September 13. Camp near New Orleans, Louisiana
- MF1 14 1863 October 23-November 1. Near Opelousas, Louisiana.
- MF1 15 1863 November 1-5. Camp near [?] Bayou, Louisiana. Rigby's Division took part as reinforcements in resisting an enemy attack (November 3).
- MF1 16 1863 November 5-16. Vermillion Ville [sic] Louisiana.
- MF1 17 1863 November 17-December 19. New Iberia, Louisiana (3rd. Div. 2nd Brigade). December 25, 1863-January 21, 1864. Algiers, Louisiana. Several paroled prisoners, who joined regiment complained of being poorly fed. Had sold their buttons for corn meal.
- MF1 18 1864 January 21-March 5. Matsonville, Louisiana [?] March 26-April 1. Alexandria, Louisiana
- MF1 19 1864 April 1-7. Sent to Natchetoches [?] as reinforcements.
- MF1 20 1864 April 8-12. Mansfield, Louisiana. Took part in battle at Mansfield and were forced to retreat until reinforcements from 19th Army Corps arrived. Assigned to guard supply train.
- MF1 21 1864 April 12 May 13. Grandeure, Louisiana and return to Alexandria. Praised leadership of Smith on the march. Intense feeling against Gen. Banks. Skirmishes and general movements against enemy followed by slow retreat (May 2-12). On May 13, army broke camp and burned Alexandria - "one of Banks famous retreats", wrote Rigby.
- MF1 22 1864 May 13-22. March from Alexandria to Morganza. The march was punctuated by minor engagements. A report (May 16) that Grant had won a complete victory over Lee brought this entry: "It is the general opinion that the whole story is a humbug palmed off on the troops."
- MF1 23 1864 May 22-June 13. Morganza, Louisiana
- MF1 24 1864 June 14-17. New Orleans, Louisiana
- MF1 25 1864 June 20-26. Kennerville, Louisiana
- MF1 26 1864 June 28-July 7. Thibodaux, Louisiana

- MF1 27 1864 July 7-22. Algiers, Louisiana
- MF1 28 1864 July 29. Fortress Monroe. Rigby's Division went by ship from New Orleans to Chesapeake Bay. At Fortress Monroe, were ordered to Washington.
- MF1 29 1864 July 31. Washington, D. C. Rigby found civilians much concerned for soldiers' welfare.
- MF1 30 1864 August 1-4. Monocacy, Maryland [?] Virginia [?]
- MF1 31 1864 August 4-6. Harper's Ferry, Virginia
- MF1 32 1864 August 6-10. Halltown, Virginia. On August 8, Rigby wrote that Gen. Sheridan had taken command of the troops. He quoted: "Altho' a small man there seems to be a good deal of him!" and wrote that he had "much confidence in him as a commander." After leaving Halltown, Rigby's division marched to Berryville, then to Strasburg; skirmishing all along.
- MF1 33 1864 August 16-17. March to Winchester, then to Berryville. Rigby believed Longstreet was threatening an invasion of Maryland.
- MF1 34 1864 August 20-21. Command reorganized. Now a member of 4th Brigade, 2nd Division, 19th Army Corps. Cannonading and heavy skirmishing resulted in a night march to Halltown where they went into line of battle.
- MF1 35 1864 September 3. Engagement near Berryville, Virginia [?]
- MF1 36 September 4-19. Camp near Winchester, Virginia. On September 19, Rigby had part in battle near Winchester.
- MF1 37 1864 September 20. March to Strasburg.
- MF1 38 1864 September 22. Overwhelm fleeing Confederates and take 1700 prisoners. Rigby reaffirms confidence in Gen. Sheridan.
- MF1 39 1864 September 25-October 27. Harrisonburg, Virginia Sheridan's troops laid waste the countryside. Rigby took part in and describes the Battle of Cedar Creek (October 19).
- MF1 40 1864 October 28-January 6, 1865. Camp near Winchester, Virginia. On December 28, Rigby's Brigade was broken up and he was assigned to the 3rd Brigade.
- MF1 41 1865 January 7-13. Camp Carroll, near Baltimore, Maryland Transported by boat from there to Georgia.
- MF1 42 1865 January 25-28. Savannah, Georgia. Fire broke out in Savannah, exploding rebel magazine. Rigby's company helped fight the fire.
- MF1 43 1865 February 28-March 12. [Missing from diary].
- MF1 44 1865 March 12-13. Newbern, North Carolina
- MF1 45 1865 March 13-April 9. Morehead City, North Carolina. On April 8, Rigby was assigned to 10th Corps.
- MF1 46 1865 April 10-May 1. Goldsboro, North Carolina. Said of the students of a female seminary, "on the average they are a fair specimen of clay eating, snuff suckers." He attributed the backwardness of the South to the institution of slavery. Rigby was indignant at news of Lincoln's assassination but finally

concluded it might be a blessing in disguise because of his conciliatory attitude toward the rebels.

- MF1 47 1865 May 2-4. Morehead City, North Carolina.
- MF1 48 1865 May 7-11. Savannah, Georgia. It was the duty of every soldier, wrote Rigby, to "enlighten the minds" of ex-slaves, but it was best for slaves to remain with their old masters until the government could provide for them. Rigby took part in a march from Savannah through Sisters Ferry, Black Creek, Waynesboro, Brian Creek, Augusta, Hamburg, South Carolina.
- MF1 49 1865 May 31-June 20. Sand Hill, South Carolina. Visited a powder mill.
- MF1 50 1865 June 25-July 18. Savannah, Georgia. July 18-24. Sailed to Baltimore.
- MF1 51 1865 July 27-August 2. Camp McClellan, near Davenport, Iowa [?] Paid and discharged.
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