

The Filson Historical Society

**Rapp – Idleman family
Papers, 1861-1883**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these letters, see the Curator of Special Collections, James J. Holmberg.

Size of Collection:
0.66 cubic feet

Locator Number:
Mss./A/R221

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Scope and Content Note

The collection largely consists of letters written by their siblings and close friends to William Rapp and Clara Idleman Rapp during the Civil War and the post-war years up to 1883. Two of William's brothers served in Ohio infantry regiments and their letters describe daily military life and movements and engagements of their regiments. A third brother living in Terre Haute, Ind., and San Francisco, Calif., writes of personal experiences in those cities and events occurring between 1861 and 1883. William kept a diary during 1864 in which he describes daily life in the 121st Ohio Infantry Regiment and early engagements of the Atlanta Campaign. Other Ohio soldiers in Union regiments write to Clara, a number of whom are apparently courting her. After the war, several relatives and friends write to Clara, relating family events and activities related to Smithville Academy, a teacher preparatory school in Ohio. Clara kept a diary during 1870, in which she describes daily family events, chronic personal health problems and teaching activities.

Tintypes from this collection have been transferred to the photo department.

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Biographical Note

William C. Rapp was born in July 1844 in Wurtemberg, in what is now Germany. He and several brothers and sisters immigrated to the U.S., probably in the early 1850s and presumably with their parents. They settled in Marion County, Ohio. William enlisted in the 121st Ohio Infantry Regiment in August 1862. In the Atlanta Campaign, he was wounded in the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain (June 1864) and spent the rest of the war recuperating in military hospitals. After being discharged in April 1865, he moved to Richland County, Ill. and became a storekeeper. By 1871, he had returned to Marion County and married Clara R. Idleman. Clara was born in Marion County, 7 April 1847, the daughter of S. and C. A. Idelman. . She had one sister, Lydia, and two brothers, Will and Cicero. She attended Smithville Academy in Ohio and became a schoolteacher. She and William had one child, a son, Orlando. Clara had a long history of health problems and by 1873 her health had markedly deteriorated. She died 8 Jan. 1874 at the age of 26, presumably from tuberculosis. In 1883, William was remarried to Ida M. Walters, a 32 year-old widow with 3 children. William died between 1900 and 1910.

Jacob J. Rapp, William's older brother, was born ca. 1837. In 1861, he was in the newspaper circulation business in Terre Haute, Ind. By 1866, he had moved to San Francisco, Calif, where he held numerous jobs, primarily as a rooming house clerk. Another brother, George David, enlisted in the 4th Ohio Infantry Regiment in 1861, serving as corporal. A fourth brother, Louis Frederick, was born ca. 1839 and enlisted as a private in the 82nd Ohio Infantry Regiment in 1861. Little is known regarding a fifth brother, John. There were at least 3 sisters, Margaret Rapp Yager (Jaeger), Caroline Rapp Franklin and Elizabeth (Lib) Rapp Myers.

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List of Folders

- Folder 1: Correspondence to William C. Rapp; 1861
- Folder 2: Correspondence to William C. Rapp; January – April 1862
- Folder 3: Correspondence to William C. Rapp; May – Nov. 1862
- Folder 4: Correspondence to William C. Rapp; 1863 – 1865
- Folder 5: Correspondence to William C. Rapp; 1866 – June 1868
- Folder 6: Correspondence to William C. Rapp; July 1868 – 1869
- Folder 7: Correspondence to William C. Rapp; 1870 – 1883
- Folder 8: Correspondence to William C. Rapp; undated
- Folder 9: Correspondence to Clara Idleman Rapp; 1862 – 1865
- Folder 10: Correspondence to Clara Idleman Rapp; 1866 – 1868
- Folder 11: Correspondence to Clara Idleman Rapp; 1869 – June 1870
- Folder 12: Correspondence to Clara Idleman Rapp; July 1870 – 1871
- Folder 13: Correspondence to Clara Idleman Rapp; 1872 – 1873
- Folder 14: Correspondence to Clara Idleman Rapp; undated
- Folder 15: Miscellaneous correspondence
- Folder 16: William C. Rapp diary, 1864 – 1865
- Folder 17: Clara Idleman Rapp diary, 1870-71
- Folder 18: Business, tax documents, Confederate currency etc.
- Folder 19: Miscellaneous Civil War era poems, one by Pvt. W. C. Rapp
- Folder 20: Dance, wedding invitations; teaching certificate, newspaper clippings etc.
- Folder 21: Oversize documents: annual newspaper greetings to subscribers; advertisements by Civil War bounty, claims agents

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United States. Army. Ohio Infantry Regiment, 82nd (1861-1865)

United States. Army. Ohio Infantry Regiment, 121st (1862-1865)

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