

Information Sheet

R **United States. Army. Missouri Infantry Regiment, Phelps's.**
272 **Quartermaster account book, 1862.**
 One volume.

MICROFILM

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These are accounts of Lt. Robert B. Owen, Quartermaster of Phelps's Regiment at Rolla, Lebanon and Springfield, Missouri, January—May 1862. Included are records of receipt and issue of food, forage, clothing and camp equipage, lists of civilians employed by the army, and notes on wagon trains in quartermaster service.

Col. John S. Phelps organized the regiment which bore his name in September—December 1861. It was raised at Rolla, largely of Union refugees from southwestern Missouri. By special arrangement with the Federal government, the regiment was classified as an independent unit of Missouri Volunteer Infantry. It bore no numerical designation. The members enlisted for a term of six months rather than the customary three years. After service at Rolla, the regiment joined the Army of Southwest Missouri in February 1862. It saw action at the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, losing twenty-five officers and men killed. The unit was mustered out in May 1862.

Robert Bentley Owen was a resident of Springfield, Missouri, who belonged to Colley B. Holland's company of Home Guards. Owen came to Rolla after the Battle of Wilson's Creek in August 1861. He enlisted in Phelps's Regiment, and was commissioned lieutenant and quartermaster of the regiment. He was later promoted to captain and served as the quartermaster of the District of Southwest Missouri. He was among the last of the Federal soldiers to leave Springfield, remaining there until December 1865 to oversee the dismantling of government posts in the region.

The records kept by Lt. Owen illustrate the nature of typical duties of quartermasters, easily the most harried officers of any command. The post was one of great responsibility, involving the supply of everything required by the troops with the exception of arms and ammunition. Clothing, accouterments, tents, camp stoves, fuel, forage, and the transportation required to move it, all came under the purvey of the quartermasters. They directed the movement of government wagons trains, hired civilian teamsters and craftsmen, and conducted a considerable cash business in supplies gathered from the local areas.

The quartermaster records of Phelps's Regiment cover nearly the entire term of the regiment's service. They are useful for studying the regiment and the District of Southwest Missouri. The accounts include records of clothing and other supplies issued, wheat and forage received from mills in Laclede County, cash accounts for purchases of subsistence stores, notes on the movements of wagon trains and repairs made to the same, and records of government animals issued from the public stables at Springfield. Records which also have genealogical applications include lists of civilian employees of the quartermaster and commissary departments at Lebanon and Springfield, and a list of the effects of deceased soldiers from Phelps's Regiment. Among the officers associated with Lt. Owen in quartermaster service were Capt. E. B. Baldwin, and Captain, later General, Philip H. Sheridan. The latter in his memoirs makes reference to the Missouri activities which are recorded in the accounts of Phelps's Regiment.

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Shelf List

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