

Waynesville Post Hospital Report

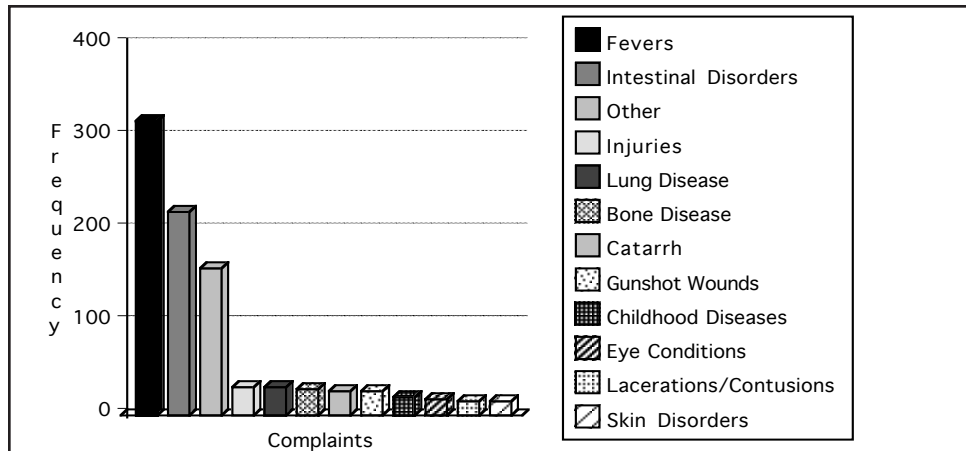
The following analysis is based upon records found at the National Archives, Washington, D.C. in August 1994.

These medical reports were a part of the records of the 13th Missouri State Militia, renumbered the 5th in 1863.

These reports, numbering 21 ledger size pages, began May 24, 1862 and concluded October 27, 1863, a little less than half of the time that the post in Waynesville was in operation. The 13th MSM, under the command of Colonel Albert Sigel, was dispatched from Boonville to Waynesville by order of General John Schofield. It arrived in Waynesville on June 7, 1862. The first nine complaints (illnesses diagnosed) were entered prior to arrival. They were entered either in Boonville or en-

route to Waynesville. The hospital closed in June of 1865 but the balance of the reports were not found in the National Archives' records.


The record shows 905 persons treated for the period May 24, 1862 through October 27, 1863. Nine of those were entered in the record prior to arrival in Waynesville. Therefore, there were 898 admissions to the hospital in Waynesville during the seventeen months of the record span. That is an average of 47.35 per month. The single busiest day was September 19, 1862 with 19 admissions. Ten of the admissions were for diarrhea and dysentery. Six were for intermittent fever. Added to these were one case of abscess, one of tonsillitis, and, ironically, one case of constipation.



NAMES.	Rank.	Regiment or Corps.	Company.	Complaint.	Admitted
James Gillick	Corpl	13 Reg't Cav	A	Diarrhoea	Sept-19
Friedrich Spatan	Priv	"	B	"	"
Thomas Kayden	"	94 Ill Vols	D	Dysentery	"
John B. Bean	"	19 Iowa	F	Intermittent	"
James Good	"	19	D	Diarrhoea	"
John C. Carr	"	20 Miss Vols	A	Intermittent	"
John B. Bates	"	"	B	"	"
George Smiley	"	"	"	Dysentery	"
Henry Stewart	"	"	"	Diarrhoea	"
Patrick Burk	"	"	J	Diarrhoea	"
Nathaniel Standish	"	"	P	Abscess	"
Edwin S. Martin	"	"	B	Diarrhoea	"

Admitted to duty.	Deserted.	Discharged from Service.	Int to General Hospital.	On Purlough.	DIED.	REMARKS.
15-5					Nov 12-5	
			Nov 22-5			
					Nov 15-5	
					" 28-5	
24				Nov 21-5		
15-5					Nov 14-5	
15-5						
26-5						

A patient's record spreads across two pages of the hospital record book, a log of patients and complaints at the Post Hospital. It resides in the stacks at the National Archives and Records Administration building in Washington, D. C.




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It is obvious from the graph on the preceding page that fevers of various types and intestinal disorders were the main afflictions. Together, they accounted for 59% of the maladies. There were 32 discrete types of fevers listed for a total of 312 "complaints" or cases. Remittent fever (107 cases) was the most common, defined as "one that shows significant variations in 24 hours but without return to normal temperature." The next most common illness (58) was "fever intermittent quotidian" or malaria. There were 24 cases diagnosed as typhoid fever. The most common intestinal disorders were diarrhea (110) and dysentery (48).

The "Other" category accounted for

17% of the cases. Gunshot wounds comprised only 2.8% of admissions. This was generally true for other locations during the war. Two-thirds of the fatalities during the Civil War were not from battle related wounds but from disease. Of the 618,000 deaths on both sides, 414,000 were the result of disease.

The rather large category of "Other" (158) contains a surprising variety of complaints, ranging from anemia to Whitlow (a herpes finger infection.) We were surprised that so many different diagnoses were possible in 1862-63. They did recognize many different medical conditions, even if the treatments were not very effective



This replica of a major amputation kit used by Civil War surgeons is on display at the Old Stagecoach Stop. Doctors gained the nickname "sawbones" during the war from the soldiers' perception that the surgeons were all too ready to amputate a limb, but the extreme bone and tissue damage cause by the Minié ball left them little choice.

By today's standards, medical practices during the war seem crude and, in some instances, the cure was worse than the illness. Diarrhea could be fatal, even though an effective remedy, paregoric, was known and used. However, instead of administering the paregoric alone, it was used in conjunction with other drugs that exacerbated the diarrhea. One of those drugs was calomel, a mercury compound. Antiseptic procedures were generally unknown until Joseph Lister's innovations shortly after the war.

The seventeen months of records includes Dr. John Fetzer's tenure (see "Personages," page 46.) Thirty-two soldiers died at the hospital during this seventeen month period, a mortality rate of 3.6 percent.

A closer look at the hospital records discloses some other interesting information. Two of General John Schofield's bodyguards were admitted to the hospital, one on the General's trip down the Wire Road to Springfield and northwest Arkansas to take command of the newly created Army of the Frontier. The other bodyguard landed in the hospital as General Schofield returned to St. Louis to recuperate from illness.

A father and son, both privates in the 13th MSM and both named Charles Wagoner, were admitted on September

5, 1862. The elder Wagoner suffered from rheumatism and the son had a fever. The father was subsequently employed as a hospital cook.

The column headed "Regiment or Corps" shows the variety of origins of troops passing through Waynesville or serving detached duty from the district headquarters at Rolla. In these early months, they included units from Arkansas, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois, as well as Missouri.

The teamsters employed by the Army also kept the post surgeon busy. Their afflictions were less microbial, such as contusions and wounds to the abdomen, no doubt inflicted by their four-footed charges. Frostbite occurred in the winter and sunstroke in the summer. There was also a case of a gunshot wound to the face.

In March of 1863, Dr. Fetzer began filing a monthly report detailing the patients in the hospital, numbers treated, patients discharged, those sent to the General Hospital at Rolla, or died. In June, he began including statistics regarding the "Strength of the Command," by now renumbered as the 5th Missouri State Militia. Typically, that strength stood at 11 officers and 262 enlisted men, for a total of 273 Union soldiers garrisoned at Post Waynesville.

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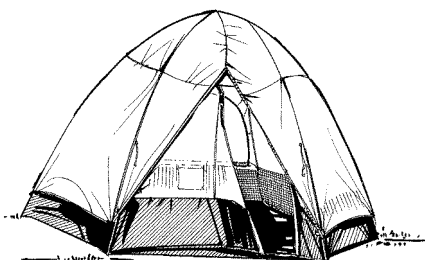
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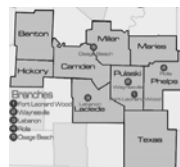
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