

Gustav Tafel Papers

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13 December 2012 for the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table, www.cincinnatiwrt.org

I'm happy to announce that the **Gustav Tafel Papers, 1847-1994 (Ms 1070)** are now available in the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, Cincinnati Museum Center. Though this collection is only two boxes, it is incredibly rich in its description of Tafel's thoughts, actions and family life through the many letters and other writings it contains. The inventory is on our website under Archives and Manuscripts at <http://library.cincymuseum.org/>

Gustav Tafel was born in October 13, 1830 in Munich, Bavaria to Dr. Leonard and Caroline (Vayhinger) Tafel. While his parents immigrated to Philadelphia and then to other cities in 1847, Gustav chose instead to follow his grandparents who had immigrated to Cincinnati in 1832. By nature a social person, Tafel quickly became involved with the German community in Cincinnati, especially the Cincinnati Turnverein which in 1848 was the first Turner organization in America. Turners stressed the importance of a healthy mind and body and emphasized the value of gymnastics training at which Tafel excelled. There were few areas of Cincinnati life that Tafel was not involved in. He was an editor of the *Cincinnati Volksblatt*, a lawyer, an Ohio Legislator and also Cincinnati's mayor 1897-1900. Tafel died on November 12, 1908 and is buried at Spring Grove Cemetery with his family.

A large portion of the collection are his Civil War letters and papers. He was a Lieutenant in the 9th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, one of the German regiments also mentioned in the exhibit. In May of 1862 he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of a new mostly German regiment, the 106th Ohio Voluntary Infantry. Both the 9th O.V.I. and the 106th O.V.I. were organized at Camp Dennison near Cincinnati. The 106th O.V.I. fought at Perryville and later at Hartsville where they were captured and later paroled, as well in countless other skirmishes. They also spent quite a bit of time near Nashville and in Alabama in operations against guerillas and guarding the railroads. Though Tafel was shot in the leg he served for the entire war.

This was a fascinating but challenging collection to work on since almost all of it is in the old German script. Manuscripts Department volunteer Melanie Marsh spent years painstakingly translating every item and Fred Schroeder finished up the small amount she was unable to finish. Needless to say, this collection would not be accessible at the level it is now without their hard work.

The inventory is online with selected items scanned including letters (with translations), medical discharge papers and other military documents.

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