



UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA

Notes on Military-Carceral, and Military-Clinical Spaces of the American
Civil War

Autumn Keesbury

Fall 2025

Chapter 1

Military-Carceral Spaces

Overview

During the Civil War, we see many instances of the intersection of the carceral and the military: of course in the form of the Prisoner-Of-War (POW) camp, but also in the less obvious forms of the internal disciplinary structures of the military, the observation and documentary knowledge of troops, and, more abstractly, in the panoptic geometries of both POW and military camps. I wish to explore these points of intersection, and in particular I wish to do this with reference to the particular convergences and divergences between the carceral spaces necessitated and developed by military means, and those more classical carceral spaces of the type Foucault investigated in *Discipline and Punish*.¹

1. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*, Second Vintage Books edition, ed. Alan Sheridan, Description based on publisher supplied metadata and other sources. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc., 1995), ISBN: 9780307819291.

Chapter 2

Military-Clinical Spaces

The approach I am taking to the intersection of the military and the carceral during the Civil War has been studied in some depth by McNutt and several others.¹ McNutt makes frequent reference to Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* as a means of understanding the relations of power in Civil War military prisons, and indeed the Foucaultian analysis of spaces is somewhat commonplace in military-geographic studies on POW camps (see, for instance, Moran and Turner). The same cannot be said of the approach I wish to take in understanding the intersection of the military and the clinical.

Indeed, much of the literature on the medical aspects of the Civil War concerns the techniques of care, or otherwise the more individual aspects (Devine 2016). It is this gap, most of all, that I wish to fill. In order to do this, I want to look at the notes of and correspondences of doctors working with the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) both during and immediately following the war. In these materials (those which are most prescient to this investigation are included in the References), I have noticed several very interesting patterns, and, since I have been reading these records at the same time as I have been reading Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic*, I have been able to connect theory to content, and *vice versa*.²

These connections and patterns, and their meaning in the history of American medical thought, are as follows:

EPIDEMIC MEDICINE

I believe that much of the medicine of the Civil War constituted an epidemic medicine, in the sense of the 19th century medical understanding of the term. As Foucault describes, around the period we are considering, an epidemic was "more than a particular form of a disease ... it was an autonomous, coherent, and adequate evaluation of disease".³ The epidemic is thus not described solely in relation to its effect on the patient, but as a sum of circumstances which was at once exactly equal to and much greater than its parts. Indeed, no possible factor, no matter how small or ordinary, was disregarded in the act of classification and negation of the epidemic. What is considered, too, is not merely a set of extrinsic or circumstantial conditions (climate, hygiene, etc.), but also includes intrinsic factors such as time of year, geographical location, and proximity to bodies of water.

As might be expected, such a phenomenon, understood as an integration of all possible variables over all others, poses a unique challenge in terms of medical response. It is for this reason that a medicine of epidemics demands a constant supervision and documentation, and that, through continuous observation of all factors and their necessary interpretation and re-interpretation, the medicine of epidemics

1. Ryan K. McNutt, "The Devil's outriders: a LiDAR and KOCOA investigation of the battle of Buckhead Creek, 1864," *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* 19, no. 3 (June 2024): 187–220, ISSN: 1574-0781, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15740773.2024.2365175>; Ryan K. McNutt, "Panopticonism, Pines and POWs: Applying Conflict Landscape Tools to the Archaeology of Internment," *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* 16, no. 1 (January 2021): 5–27, ISSN: 1574-0781, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15740773.2021.1978208>; Ryan K. McNutt, "The archaeology of military prisons from the American Civil War: globalization, resistance and masculinity," *World Archaeology* 51, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 689–708, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.2020.1739553>; Ryan K. McNutt and Emily Jones, "For want of a nail? Proxies for analysing POW and guard access to supplies at a Confederate prison camp," *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* 14, nos. 2–3 (September 2019): 181–211, ISSN: 1574-0781, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15740773.2019.1732062>.

2. Michel Foucault, *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*, Translation of Naissance de la clinique - Originally published: New York, Pantheon, 1973 (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), ISBN: 0679753346.

3. Foucault, pp. 23.



“circumscribes, where gazes meet, the individual, unique nucleus of these collective phenomena”.⁴ The knowledge of an epidemic, then, requires a complete yet contradictory set of facts, derived from numerous and heterogeneous gazes distributed regularly throughout the social body.

This organizational structure which facilitated the synthesis of a homogeneous picture of an epidemic through the superimposition and cross-checking of gazes was present in the Armies of the United States during the American Civil War, at all levels of administrative functioning. Regimental surgeons and hospitals were tasked with documenting individual cases, meteorological data, and various other information situated at a similar level. Then there were the surgeons of the general hospitals, tasked with investigating and recording extraordinary cases which may be exemplary, but also with conducting research into the nature of various conditions which were difficult or time-consuming to treat. Lastly, and situated near the highest administrative level, were the doctors who worked directly for the USSC, and whose duty it was to visit and write high-level reports on the conditions of hospitals under the Sanitary Commission's control. Taken together, the USSC encompasses the four parallel, unlimited series which extend the space of medical knowledge infinitely described by Foucault:⁵ the study of topographies (conducted at the top level by doctors like S.B. Hunt⁶), meteorological observations (like those collected by Lyman⁷), monitoring epidemic (see the reports on outbreaks in hospitals⁸), and the description of extraordinary cases (for example Howard's report on a case of death during the administration of chloroform⁹).

4. Foucault, *The birth of the clinic*, pp. 25.

5. Foucault, pp. 28.

6. S. B. Hunt, *Medical Topography of the region west of the Mississippi*, United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).

7. Dr. Lyman, *Weather Record Jan.-Feb. 1863*, United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).

8. *An account of the epidemic of hospital gangrene at Chattanooga, Tenn. 1863-1864*, United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).

9. Benjamin Howard, *A case of death during the administration of chloroform*, United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).

Bibliography

- Abbott, Samuel W. *Notes on the health, ventilation, temperature, etc. on board Monitor "Catskill"*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- An account of the epidemic of hospital gangrene at Chattanooga, Tenn. 1863-1864*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Andrew, G. S. *Letter to Dr. Elisha Harris regarding sanitary history*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). 24 Feb. 1866. La Porte, IN.
- Andrews, E. *Report of no. of patients, etc. for Oct. 1862. U.S. General Hospital, Mound City, IL*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- . *Tabular statement of medical and surgical cases for one month. Mower Hospital*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- . *U.S. Marine Hospital. St. Louis, MO. Statistics for 1863*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Avery, G. W. *Report of sanitary management of the US forces at Ship Island, Miss. 1861-1862*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Battlefield of Chattanooga*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Map.
- Bush, David. "Interpreting the latrines of the Johnson's Island Civil War Military Prison." *Historical Archaeology* 34, no. 1 (March 2000): 62–78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03373631>.
- Canale, D. J. "Civil War Medicine From the Perspective of S. Weir Mitchell's "The Case of George Dedlow"." *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences* 11, no. 1 (March 2002): 11–18. ISSN: 0964-704X. <https://doi.org/10.1076/jhin.11.1.11.9108>.
- Clendenin, Dr. *Death rates; hospital records of St. Louis and other hospitals*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). 4 Dec. 1865.
- Clendenin, W. C. *Hospital Statistics*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Consolidated morning report of the sanitary condition of General Peck's Brigade*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). 11 June 1862.
- Cook, L. M. *Report upon the condition, removal, etc. of wounded from Chickamauga*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Surgeon in charge 1st Division Hospital (field).
- Crosby, A. B. *Report on ambulances and hospital tents*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Division Surgeon 1862.
- Cross, C. Wallace. "The Incarceration of a Regiment." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (1997): 80.
- De Vera, Samantha Quiambao. "A Dream Deferred: Reconstructing Families and Policing Black Refugees in Border States during the Civil War." *The Journal of African American History* (San Diego) 110, no. 2 (2022): 283–309. <https://doi.org/10.1086/734917>.

- Derbes, Brett. "Prison Productions: Textiles and Other Military Supplies from State Penitentiaries in the Trans-Mississippi Theater during the American Civil War." *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 55, no. 1 (2014): 40–64. <https://doi.org/10.12794/metadc84198>.
- Devine, Shauna. "'To Make Something Out of the Dying in This War': The Civil War and the Rise of American Medical Science." *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 2 (2016): 149–163. ISSN: 2159-9807. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cwe.2016.0038>.
- Finley, Surgeon General. *Orders from surgeon General Finley relative to hospital inspections by members of the Sanitary Commission*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Flint, Amos S., and Dr. Anderson. *Report of 2nd Division field Hospital 15th A.C., Vicksburg; organized May 19, 1863*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). By Asst. Surgeon Amos S. Flint, 8th MO.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Second Vintage Books edition. Edited by Alan Sheridan. Description based on publisher supplied metadata and other sources. New York, NY: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc., 1995. ISBN: 9780307819291.
- . *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. Translation of Naissance de la clinique - Originally published: New York, Pantheon, 1973. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. ISBN: 0679753346.
- Frost bite. Diet of prisoners in Richmond*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Hall, J. C. *Cholera Caution to the Public!* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Broadside enclosure letter 19 Dec. 1865. Sketch illustrating procedure to guard against cholera.
- Hammond, General. *General Hammond's plans. Treatise on Hospitals*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Hawk, Alan. "An Ambulating Hospital: or, How the Hospital Train Transformed Army Medicine." *Civil War History* 48, no. 3 (September 2002): 197–219. ISSN: 1533-6271. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cwh.2002.0036>.
- Herschbach, Lisa. "'True clinical fictions': Medical and literary narratives from the Civil War hospital." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 19, no. 2 (June 1995): 183–205. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf01379410>.
- Hilgard, Col. *Coast survey maps and charts*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Letter from Col. Hilgard. 10 Nov. 1865.
- Holt, Harold Wright, and William E. S. Flory. *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of 19th- and 20th-Century Mass Internment*. Edited by Gillian Carr. 44:460. SpringerLink 3. Description based upon print version of record. New York, NY: Springer, 2013. ISBN: 9781461441663. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1117420>.
- Hospital Gangrene*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Hospital map. Battle of Gettysburg*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Howard, Benjamin. *A case of death during the administration of chloroform*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Hunt, S. B. *Hygienic history of the Alabama campaign of the spring of 1865, including the capture of Mobile*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- . *Medical geography of the region east of the Mississippi*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- . *Medical Topography of the region west of the Mississippi*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- . *Report on convalescent camps*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).

- Hunt, S. B. *The influence of scorbutic diatesis on surgical accidents*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Jones, J. *Investigation on Hospital Gangrene*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Prof. J. Jones.
- Justice, Benjamin. "Mass incarceration and the making of citizens." *History of Education* 43, no. 3 (May 4, 2014): 408–417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760x.2014.884636>.
- Kutzler, E. A. "Captive Audiences: Sound, Silence, and Listening in Civil War Prisons." *Journal of Social History* 48, no. 2 (December 2014): 239–263. ISSN: 1527-1897. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jsh/shu130>.
- Leale, Charles A. *Gunshot wound of upper third of tibia; recovery without amputation*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Lyman, Dr. *Weather Record Jan.-Feb. 1863*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- McDonald, A. Dr. A. *McDonald's notes upon sanitary experience in the field and at depot hospitals*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- . *Massachusetts School for the Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). 26 Dec. 1865.
- McNutt, Ryan K. "Panopticonism, Pines and POWs: Applying Conflict Landscape Tools to the Archaeology of Internment." *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* 16, no. 1 (January 2021): 5–27. ISSN: 1574-0781. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15740773.2021.1978208>.
- . "The archaeology of military prisons from the American Civil War: globalization, resistance and masculinity." *World Archaeology* 51, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 689–708. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.2020.1739553>.
- . "The Devil's outriders: a LiDAR and KOCOIA investigation of the battle of Buckhead Creek, 1864." *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* 19, no. 3 (June 2024): 187–220. ISSN: 1574-0781. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15740773.2024.2365175>.
- McNutt, Ryan K., and Emily Jones. "For want of a nail? Proxies for analysing POW and guard access to supplies at a Confederate prison camp." *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* 14, nos. 2–3 (September 2019): 181–211. ISSN: 1574-0781. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15740773.2019.1732062>.
- Medical Dept.: Organization rules and regulations*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Meskill, Matthew. "An American Resolution: The History of Prisons in the United States from 1777 to 1877." *Stanford Law Review* 51, no. 4 (April 1999): 839. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229442>.
- Miscellaneous regulations, etc. in the hospital at Richmond, VA*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Moran, Dominique, and Jennifer Turner. "Carceral and military geographies: Prisons, the military and war." *Progress in Human Geography* 46, no. 3 (March 2022): 829–848. ISSN: 1477-0288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03091325221080247>.
- Notes on Water*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Opening remarks upon food as a hygienic element*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Pokorny, Marie. "An Historical Perspective Of Confederate Nursing During the Civil War, 1861-865." *Nursing Research* 41, no. 1 (January 1992): 28–32. ISSN: 0029-6562. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006199-199201000-00006>.
- Read, A. N. *Memo of hospitals inspections 1865*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Reforms in the sanitary service of armies in the Prussian and German States*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Translated from "Our Times", Berlin 1866.

- Reilly, Robert F. "Medical and Surgical Care During the American Civil War, 1861-1865." *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings* 29, no. 2 (April 2016): 138-142. ISSN: 1525-3252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08998280.2016.11929390>.
- Report concerning the treatment and condition of the wounded who fell into the hands of the enemy at Chickamauga.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Table showing percentage of recoveries. 12 Jan. 1864.
- Report of General Field Hospital, Dept. of Tennessee organized at Chattanooga, TN 23 May 1864.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Report of no. of cases (medical and surgical) treated in Hospital, 55th Regt. Ills. Vol. Infantry 1 Jul. 1863 to 1 Apr. 1864.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Report on quarantine and hygiene regulations in New Orleans, Louisiana.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Subjects include yellow fever and sailing vessels. Commissioner of Health.
- Report on the mental condition of soldiers from the Newberg Lunatic Asylum.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Russell, Ira. *Dr. Russell's report. Hospital L'Overture.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Alexandria, VA.
- . *Report on Slough Hospital.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). 9 Sept. 1865. Slough Hospital, Alexandria, VA.
- . *Reports by Dr. Ira Russell.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Rutherford, Blake S. "Prison Labor in America: History, Race, and State Power." *Tennessee Journal of Race, Gender, & Social Justice* 13, no. 2 (April 2024). ISSN: 2693-3225. <https://doi.org/10.70658/2693-3225.1237>.
- Smith, D. P. *Record of all men discharged from the service of the U.S. at Fairfax Seminary Hospital 1865.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Smith, Heber. *Meteorological Register.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). 1 Nov. 1865.
- Spencer, F. Rush. *Consolidated morning report of sanitary condition of Smith's Division camp on Chickahominy 28 May 1862.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Medical Director.
- Springer, Paul J. *Transforming Civil War prisons: Lincoln, Lieber, and the politics of captivity.* 1. ed. Edited by Glenn Robins. Critical moments in American history. New York: Routledge, 2015. ISBN: 9780415833370.
- Tyler, D. M. *Michigan Asylum for the Insane.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). 4 Sept. 1865. To Dr. G. R. Andrews. Concerns insanity in soldiers.
- U.S. General Hospital Lovell; Portsmouth Grove, Rhode Island.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). History, organization, location, construction, etc.
- Union Prisoners.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Warden, H. *Consolidated statement of Mound City General Hospital from its foundation 1 Oct. 1861 to 31 Dec. 1863.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Weather records.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). 1864.
- Weather Report.* United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a).
- Williams, Timothy. "The Intellectual Roots of the Lost Cause: Camaraderie and Confederate Memory in Civil War Prisons." *Journal of Southern History* 86, no. 2 (2020): 253-282. <https://doi.org/10.1353/soh.2020.0036>.
- Wilson, Benya. "The Civil War and the Transformation of American Medicine." *Journal of Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Research* 13, no. 2 (2021).

Woodworth, Jno. M. *15th A.C. Tabular statement, showing the percentage taken sick from 1 Sept. 1863 to 1 Apr. 1864*. United States Sanitary Commission Records (GPD E621 .U657 1996a). Act. Med. Inspector 15th A.C.