

VIVANDIERES

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

Narrowly defined, a vivandiere was "a woman formerly accompanying troops to sell provisions and liquor to the soldiers; a female sutler" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary Unabridged). Laundresses, prostitutes, female combatants, and other camp followers, including wives of enlisted men and non-commissioned officers, were often referred to collectively as "vivandieres," whether they fit the dictionary definition or not. As a result, the number of actual vivandieres present in Union and Confederate armies depends upon the interpretation of the term.

Definitions of the terms "cantiniere" and "vivandiere" appear in the following source with a basic difference between the two--although both performed the function of sutler, the cantiniere was recognized by authority, but the vivandiere was not. See:

Farrow, Edward S. Farrow's Military Encyclopedia. NY: Mil-Naval Pub, 1895. Vol. 1, p. 282 & Vol. 3, p. 570. U24F24.

That women accompanied Civil War soldiers into the field with their regiments is an historically-established fact. Documenting their presence within a specific regiment is nonetheless difficult. Much of the postwar literature on women concentrates on medical and relief services. Women who left behind published memoirs, more often than not, were wives of officers and, in the view of the day, were not considered vivandieres/cantiniere. Examples of officer's wives present at one time or another with their husbands in the field appear in Septima Collis, A Woman's War Record... (E527.5.114th.C64) and Mary S. Logan, Reminiscences of the Civil War and Reconstruction (E661L84). Mary Logan, wife of Major General John A. Logan, also authored Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife: An Autobiography (pub in 1913 but not on file here). According to Mary Massey, Bonnet Brigades (E628M3), the Logan book is a valuable source on women accompanying the armies, because it contains comments on women other than officers' wives in camp and field.

Apparently, only one vivandiere/cantiniere has received scholarly attention. Marie Tepe accompanied the 114th PA Inf Regt throughout much of the war. Interestingly, that was the same regiment commanded by the husband of Septima Collis. See:

Bauer, Cricket. "Viva la Vivandieres." Mil Images Magazine (May/Jun 2000): pp. 2-24. Per.

Bixley, Lawrence G. "Gettysburg Mystery Photo: A 2nd Look." Mil Images Magazine (Jul/Aug 1982): pp. 24-25. Per.

Note esp the left photo on p. 25.

Gladstone, William. "Gettysburg Mystery Photo...More Answers & More Questions...." Mil Images Magazine (Mar/Apr 1982): pp. 16-19. Per.

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Melchiori, Marie V. "The Death of 'French Mary.'" Mil Images Magazine (Jul/Aug 1983): pp. 14-15.
Per.

Mills, H. Sinclair Jr. The Vivandiere: History, Tradition, Uniform and Service. Collinswood, NJ:
C.W. Historicals, 1988. 22 p. E628M54.