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11-18-1862

Letter from John W.A. Gillespie to Rev. William Chadwick

John W.A. Gillespie

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From the 78th Regiment.

LA GRANGE, TENN. Nov. 18, 1862.

REV. WM. CHADWICK:

This will inform you that we left Bolivar on the 3d inst. and reached this place on the evening of the 4th, without opposition from the rebel powers. When we left Bolivar, it was generally believed that there would be a collision between Grant's and Price's respective armies, (in a few days.) But notwithstanding our forces have penetrated to the reported rebel stronghold, (Holly Springs, Miss.) no engagement of any consequence has yet occurred. In three small skirmishes, our men have come off victorious, taking a number of prisoners each time. The rebels have evacuated Holly Springs, and are now reported in strong force on the banks of the Tallibatchie river, ten miles south of Holly Springs, and thirty-five miles south of this place. The prisoners taken thus far, (about two hundred in number) are pretty comfortably clothed, and seem to be very sanguine of final success.— They also express themselves very much satisfied with the results of the late elections in the North. Not that they expect any less fighting for a few months to come, but that the feeling North is becoming more moderate, more conciliatory, and that a democratic Congress will change the whole aspect of affairs in the Northern States. Having been a Democrat all my life, you may be sure that such expressions from open and avowed rebels and traitors (to the best government ever given to man), was to say the least, rather unpleasant. And I pray God to impart a spirit of true patriotism and determination in the heart of every man North, until this accursed rebellion is crushed. Until broad winged peace shall rest over a united and prosperous nation. If northern sympathizers could see what I have seen, and hear what I have heard from the lips of *deep dyed-Southern traitors*, they would blush with shame to think they had ever asked for, or thought of conciliation. I am as anxious to see this bloody, terrible strife ended, and that soon, as any man North or South can be.— But while rampant treason stalks abroad throughout our beloved land, and while armed rebels stand ready to bring shame and disgrace upon our glorious old stars and stripes, I shall ever be proud to raise an arm in its defence.

General Grant's headquarters are at the residence of a notorious Secessionist in town. Of course the old traitor disliked to be in such close proximity to the *invaders of southern soil* and the enemy of *Southern rights*, but as he cannot see any safe way to help himself, of course he has to grin and bear it, with the best grace possible. Major General McPherson is also quartered in town.

Our Brigade, composed of the 20th, 69th and 78th Ohio Regiments and the 23d Indiana Regiments, is encamped in a large and beautiful field, a half mile from town, and just along side of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. We have three or four trains each day from Jackson, and get the Cincinnati papers on the day after publication. You can readily perceive that we are not much behind the times, so far as the news is concerned.

Col. Mortimer D. Leggett commands our Brigade, and a better, braver, and more popular officer, cannot be found in this branch of the service. He stands very high at headquarters, and his communit (especially the men of his own Regiment,) are very much devoted to him, and will follow whenever he leads. Gen. John A. Logan, the honored Statesman, true patriot and gallant soldier, commands our division. Gen Logan is one of the finest looking officers in the service, and his appearance alone will at all times

command the respect of those who approach him. In the battle at Fort Donelson, while gallantly leading his men into the thickest of the fight, he fell from his horse, severely wounded, having been shot with a Minnie ball, through the left shoulder. His men, after the battle, were loud in their praises of their daring, dashing and gallant leader, and now having entirely recovered from the wound received there, he will in the future (when occasion requires,) be found where the bullets fly thickest, and the danger is greatest. The Union army, encamped near La Grange and Grand Junction (three miles from here) is at least ——— strong. The men are well armed, well equipped, and in fine spirits, and ready, when the word is given, to strike another blow for the Union.

The men of our regiment are generally very healthy. The new recruits are fast learning their places, and will make fine soldiers.

Lieut. Col. Z. M. Chandler, is in command of the regiment. Capt. John T. Rainey will probably receive the appointment of Major. Having given you all the news of importance, I shall bring my letter to a close, hoping that it will find you and your good lady, in the enjoyment of good health, and be honored with an answer soon. I subscribe myself, very truly your friend and Brother.

JOHN W. A. GILLESPIE,

Capt. Co. G, 78th Reg't. O. V. I.

TELEGRAPHIC.

November 18, 1862

From the 78th Ohio Regiment¹

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¹ Daily Zanesville Courier, December 3, 1862, p. 3

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