


3-22-1862

## Letter from John W.A. Gillespie to Editor

John W.A. Gillespie

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From the 78th Regiment.

CRUMPT'S-LANDING, TENN. RIVER, TENN. }  
 Saturday night, March 22d, 1862. }

EDITOR COURIER:—

Owing to want of opportunity I have deferred writing since our departure from Fort Donelson. To-night I am on duty as officer of the guard, and have head-quarters at the Sutler's tent. As all seems quiet on the Tennessee, I have concluded to inform our friends at home that we are getting "away down South, in Dixie." I will not give you particulars of our march from Dover to Fort Henry, but suffice it to say, that the roads were in a terrible condition, consequently our progress was slow and tedious. We left Dover on Friday morning the 6th inst and reached Metal Landing, near Fort Henry, on the following evening, the distance being 14 miles.

We remained in camp at the latter place until Saturday, the 15th, when we struck tents, marched down to the river and boarded the steamer *H. Choulean*. The day was rainy, ~~windy and disagreeable; the night dismal,~~ gloomy and foggy, making altogether a very unpleasant day and night for all hands, in consequence of the whole regiment being ~~crowded on one boat, but was attracted to suit~~

ourselves to circumstances, and I presume that we fared as well as any other regiment with the same number of men could have done. When the fog raised on Sunday morning the 16th, we started on our way up the Tennessee, and reached this place on Tuesday evening following. The country on either side along the river banks, was in many places beautiful and romantic, and was much admired by all on board. Before landing at this place on Wednesday, we learned to the satisfaction of the entire regiment, that we had been brigaded with the 76 Ohio regiment, and that *Lew Wallace* was our Major-General—

The 76th is now encamped along side of us. The 20th, and 56th Ohio Regiments are also in our brigade. We are encamped in the woods a half mile from the landing, and are rather pleasantly situated for soldiers. How long we will remain here is to me unknown, but every thing seems to indicate that a forward movement will be made very soon, if not sooner. We have now ten days rations on hand, three of which are cooked. When we start from here, everything will be left behind except rations, blankets and ammunition, as these things are very essential to our comfort and safety, in an enemy's country—

We will try and take a sufficient amount to provide for emergencies. We will doubtless leave here on Monday morning for . . . where it is said there are a hundred thousand rebels (?) strongly fortified. As there are several Federal soldiers encamped hereabouts, I am of the opinion that something now will be done towards the crushing out of this great rebellion within a very few days—

As I am not permitted to tell all that I hear I will just say to you, *watch the telegraph office, and await events*. They will crowd together thick and fast within the coming two weeks, or I am not a judge of small matters.

Forty-two refugees came into camp yesterday. They are all dressed in buttercut jeans, and in appearance are very much like the Fort Donelson prisoners. All of them profess to be strong Union men, and seem quite anxious to be armed and led against their traitor neighbors, who they say, are destroying the property of Union men wherever found. They also confirm the report in regard to the number of rebels at . . .

35 miles from here, but say that a large number of the force there assembled, will not fight against the "old flag," and are only awaiting an opportunity to let their power be felt against those who would trail it in the dust. If this be true, (and I am inclined to believe it,) Tennessee will soon be clear of the rebel army, and her loyal citizens will be able to defend themselves, and rest secure beneath their "own vine and fig tree."

On Friday night, the 14th, George Richey, a member of Capt. Munson's company, (A) slept the sleep which knows no waking. He had never fully recovered from an attack of measles which he had at Camp Gilbert. Exposure at Fort Donelson caused a relapse, and now his body lies in the cold grave far away from the home and friends he loved so well. The officers and men of his company did all that they could for his recovery, but all in vain, death came and took him from our number. On Saturday evening before leaving camp for the boat, we buried him with the honors of war. He was a young man of many christian virtues, and was beloved by all who knew him in the Regiment. His grave is three miles above Fort Henry, on the right bank of the Tennessee river. A head board, with his name and age thereon marks the spot.

I must close by saying that Will Ross requests me to give his respects to the Courier, He, and Mr. Samson, who arrived from Zanesville yesterday, are quietly snoozing while I write.

Lieut. Ross has left us for his home in your city. While at Fort Donelson, he received injuries from a fall which has permanently disabled him for military duty. Lieut. Ross, by his quiet, unassuming manners, won the esteem of his officers and soldiers, and all regret that ill health has compelled him to leave us.

Lieut. Col. Hawkes, left us at Dover, and went home sick. He was very much reduced in flesh and strength, and it was the opinion of the physicians that he would not recover his health very soon, if ever. Major Carnahan is now acting Lieut. Colonel, and Capt. Munson, acting Major.

Orderly Sergeant Cassidy has been appointed temporary 2d Lieut. of Company C. Captain Spencer was left sick at Dover. I believe he has not been heard of since.

Yours &c.  
 JOHN W. A. GILLESPIE.

The New York Evening Post speaking of . . .

March 22, 1862

From the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment<sup>1</sup>

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Saturday night, March 22d, 1862

EDITOR COURIER: --

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We remained in camp at the latter place until Saturday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, when we struck tents, marched down to the river, and boarded the steamer *H. Chouteau*. The day was rainy, \_\_\_\_\_ and disagreeable, the night dismal, gloomy and foggy, making altogether a very unpleasant day and night for all hands, in consequence of the whole regiment being crowded on one boat, but we all tried to suit ourselves to circumstances, and I presume we fared as well as any other regiment with the same number of men could have done. When the fog raised on Sunday morning, the 16<sup>th</sup>, we started on our way up the *Tennessee*, and reached this place on Tuesday evening following. The country on either side along the river banks was in many places beautiful and romantic, and was much admired by all on board. Before landing at this place on Wednesday, we learned to the satisfaction of the entire regiment that we had been brigaded with 76 Ohio regiment, and that *Lew Wallace* was our Major General – The 76<sup>th</sup> is now encamped along side of us. The 20<sup>th</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> Ohio Regiments are also in our brigade. We are encamped in the woods a half mile from the landing and are rather pleasantly situated for *soldiers*. How long we will remain here is to me unknown, but everything seems to indicate that a forward movement will be made very soon, if not sooner. We have now ten days' rations on hand, three of which are cooked. When we start from here, everything will be left behind except rations, blankets, and ammunition, as these things are very essential to our comfort and safety, in the enemy's country – We will try take a sufficient amount to provide for emergencies. We will doubtless leave here on Monday morning for \* \* \* where it is said there are a hundred thousand rebels (?) strongly fortified. As there are *several Federal soldiers* encamped *hereabouts*, I am of the opinion that something now will be done towards crushing out \_\_\_ this great rebellion within s very few days – As I am not permitted to tell that all that I hear, I will just say to you *watch the telegraph office, and await events*. They will crowd together thick and fast within the coming two weeks or I am not a judge of small matters.

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<sup>1</sup> Daily Zanesville Courier, March 28, 1862, p. 2

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