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Letter from John W.A. Gillespie to Editor

John W.A. Gillespie

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From the 7th Regiment.

COUNTY LEWIS, TARA, FEBRUARY 22, 1862.

Saturday night, March 22d, 1862.

Having no war of opportunity I have decided to

return to Tennessee. I have concluded to return

in the next week. I have informed the regiments in

North Carolina, in Dilworth, that I will not give

up the cause, but I must, so that the enemy is in

this country. We left Nerl, reached Magnetic Landing, and returned to

our camp at the latter place, the 15th, when we struck

the road to the east. The country is on the

wholly beautiful, and the people are

friendly. We left on the 16th, and arrived at our

camp on the 19th. The weather was

very cold, and the country was

snowy. We will remain here for a few days,

and then return to the east.

The 2d and 5th Regiments are

under arms, and are ready to

move at any moment. We will

be ready to move at any moment.

There are about two thousand

Federal soldiers on the

camp. The number of men who

are under arms is very small. I

will not give up the cause, but

I must return to Tennessee.

February 22, 1862.

On Friday night, the 14th, George Rieley

self and his brother, who

are in arms, were killed by an

attack of the enemy. On Saturday morning,

before leaving for Tennessee, we

were attacked by a

squad of the enemy. We

were able to take a few

prisoners.

Lorrin's House has left the

army. He is a

brave man, but

he has been

ill. His

quietness and

calmness have

been

a

blessing to

the

army.

Lorrin Col. Rawson left at dawn, and

went home. He was very

much

ill, and

the

physician said

he

would not return.

This is a

great

blow to

the

army.

Ordinary Sergeant Canady has been

wounded.

Spencer was left sick at

home.

Age 18.

A. GILLESPIE.

The New York Star, February 22, 1862.
March 22, 1862

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. Tonight 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. Choutean. 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 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 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 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 here abouts, 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.

Forty-two refugees came into camp yesterday. They were all dressed in butternut 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

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1 Daily Zanesville Courier, March 28, 1862, p. 2
(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 wine and fig tree.”

On Friday night, the 14th, George Richey, a member of Capt. Munson’s company, slept the sleep which knows no waking. He had never fully recovered from an attack of measles which he had at Camp Gilbert. Exposures at Fort Donelson cause 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 (sic) 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 saying that Will Foss requests me to give his respects to the Courier. He, and Mr. Sampson, who arrived from Zanesville yesterday, are quietly snoozing while I write.

Lieut. Ross has left 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 over, and went home sick. He is 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 2nd 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