

Fragment of a letter. Believe incident on page 1 refers to the capture of a forage party by Morgan's raiders which occurred near Murfreesboro in Jan., 1863.

105th-OVI

John W. Nesbitt
105 OVI
Murfreesboro, Tenn.
January 1863

It is a shame that such neglect cannot receive due punishment. It is also a shame that such noble and true soldiers must be risked in an enemial country under such neglectful officers as to let them be surprised and captured, who if they had been rightly handled would sooner have suffered death while defending their train than to be captured by a scarcely superior force. Constantine Brennaman who has been sick in a hospital at Danville ever since the Perryville battle came to the company last night. He looked firststrate. James McCurley is about getting his discharge of disability he has been in the hospital at Louisville ever since the 17th of Sept '62 and I presume he will start home from there. James in his letter spoke about Adaline Showers being married. About two weeks ago while I was looking over the Mahoning Herald I saw an account of her marriage, to Amos Ripple. I was very much surprised at seeing it for I thought that Bund thought too much of her children to bestow the hand of her pet daughter upon such a worthless scamp as Ripple.

We are still in the same place and no sign of a forward movement. I hope when the 2nd OVI again goes into service that they will come to this army for it is a very nice country for cavalry and another thing James and I might meet sometime which I would like very much. The prospects are good now for us to be payed off. There is over seven millions of dollars on the way to this army. We will soon have been in the service 6 months and the full pay for that time would be 78 dollars but we received one month's pay at Covington, Ky. Consequently the government only owes us for five months which amounts to 65 dollars. When we get payed off I will send some home if I can get any change.

I believe I have not told you for some time what we have to eat for fear I have not I will tell you now. We get crackers, salt pork (sometimes fresh beef) beans, hominy, coffee, sugar, salt, vinegar, and sometimes we get bacon. I drew some flour yesterday and it would do you good to see us use it. Part of it is used in pancakes and the ballance is made into biscuit which are very good. Our cook did not know how to raise the biscuit. I told him I had seen biscuit raised with lye. The boys all laughed at me. I persisted (for I had seen mother try it) so the cook tried it and it does firststrate. We are to get some bread in a day or two. But I would rather have good army crackers than either flour bread or any substitute. Hoping that you are all well and enjoying yourselves, I will close for the present.

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This leaves me midling well & hoping to be better. Excuse all errors and accept this from your sone and brother,

J. W. Nesbitt

Give my respects to all inquiring friends. Tell Mary Jane that I will write to her soon. Nothing more but remain yours forever,

J. W. Nesbitt

Write soon and often.

Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Wednesday, Feb 11th, /63

Dear brother:

Yours of the 26th ult. came to hand in due time and with it came one from Sarah and one from Nannie Wishard and one from Thos. McConnell. I was very glad to read all of them but more particularly those from you and Sarah. I am very thankful for those stamps there was 12 of them instead of ten. I am very glad to know that you are well again and that you feel at home in camp after your visit. I think an old soldier must feel better in camp, than in a house. I slept in a house a few nights ago and we had to raise all the windows before we could sleep. The health of our reg't is just midling at present. There are 7 of our Co. sick at present, four of them are in the hospital and the other three are in camp yet. Henry Myer & Solomon Fishel are sick in quarters. John Ellinger is pretty sick in the hospital. It is impossible for me to tell what their diseases are. I presume you know as well as I do what diseases a soldier is subject to. My health is very good. I have a hard cold but that does not amount to anything in the army. Isaac & Samuel Raub are well. Isaac is doing guard duty at the division headquarters he stays in town all the time and I have not seen him for some days. Our division returned on the evening of the 8th from a scout of six days in the enemies country. We made our headquarters or camp at Readyville (12 miles east of this place) and from there we scouted and done some foraging. I saw Robert Lowery, Malen Stacy at Readyville. They both look and feel well. They are in the 41st OVI and are stationed at Readyville with the rest of the brigade. We went to Readyville on the 3rd and on the night of the 4th at 10:00 our brigade started on a night scout. There was a detail of 50 men taken out of our reg't did not speak a loud word. We went over hills through vallies over field through lanes until daylight when we go to the innermost pickets of the rebel camp having avoided the outer picket posts. We would have bagged the yellow buggars if daylight had not prevented it. We were discovered by one of their guards who fired at us and alarmed the camp and before we could get to the place they were gone. They were cavalry and we had none with us. Our skirmishers gave them a few shots but without effect. There was about 500 of them in all. We returned disappointed. It was rumored that there was about 800 rebel cavalry at Woodberry about 7 miles east of Readyville. On the morning of the 6th our division started toward Woodberry to capture them. Within four miles of the town our brigade turned to the left and the other brigade to the right with the intention of going round the town and meet in the rear of the enemy and cut off their retreat, while they would be attacked in front by part of the brigade from Readyville. The other brigade succeeded in getting round the town first so the attack was made and the rebels retreated and made their escape before we could get to the place. I do not know the no. of killed and wounded on either side. There was 60 rebels taken prisoners and some few of our first brigade was taken. We captured 2 of their pickets posts taking 3 prisoners. One of their pickets fired into our brigade (the bold scamp) just as though he could whip all of us. The other brigade returned to camp and we occupied the town that night. The citizens said it was secesh for breakfast and yanks

for supper. The citizens in this country say if the war don soon close starvation will close it. They have nothing to eat but corn-bread and meat and they have no clothing but what they had when the war broke out. The soldiers say they have got used to it and they don't care whether they have anything to eat or not.

I had to stop to read your letter of the 4th inst. which came in today's mail. Do not be offended if I answer two with one, for I have a good many letters to answer and not much time so I will have to be brief. I am glad to hear that you are well and enjoying yourself. The selection for that light battalion has not been made yet. They are to be elected by ballot so I cannot tell whether I will be one of them or not. There was a brigade of our troops captured near Franklin, Tenn. a few days ago. They were attack and overpowered by rebels part of whom were negroes. I have not heard the particulars so I cannot give them. (Turn over.)

I do not know whether I will get home this spring or not. The only furlough that can be got in this reg't carries a fellow feet foremost. The parolled boys are not exchanged yet and have not taken up arms yet. If you came down here I will try and get transferred. You said in your other letter that Nannie Wishard is a good girl that is true. She writes a splendid letter. They are well composed and they contain some sentiment. I think Mirancy has improved in her letter writing and Sarah likewise. When you write again give me M. J. Anderson's address and I will write to her. It is rumored that we are to move soon but I don't know where to. I think we are moving (scouting) the greater part of the time. Chancy Rily is in our brigade now, he is Dr. Fowler's assistant.

We have been payed off up to the first of Jan 1863 making nearly four months pay. We rec'd \$48.10 dollars and ten cts. I payed all my debts and sent 22 dollars home and have enough left to do me until next payday. If you do not get payed off now let me know and I will divide with you. There is near three months pay due us now and it is rumored that we are to get it soon.

Well I will close. Excuse all errors and oblige your brother,

J. W. Nesbitt

P. S. Give my best to all the boys. Write doon and often nothing more but remain ever your brother,

John

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park
PO Box 2126
Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia 30742

Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Wed, May 5th, 1863

Dear parents & sisters,

It being some days since I wrote to you, I thought I would drop you a few lines this wet morning to let you know that I am still living and well and holed up in a pup tent (shelter tent). My health is good, Joseph Rummel and Henry Nyer are getting better. The rest of the boys are well except Ben Dean and he is pretty sick. Isaac is well he is detailed as Mechanic from our co. to go with the pioneer corps. They left the reg't yesterday morning. There was 20 men taken from the reg't making two from each co. one a mechanic and the other a laborer. I think it will agree with Isaac much better than soldiering, and he will get 40 cts. per day extra for every day he works. You may not know what I mean by pup tent. Well I will tell you. A few days ago we turned our Sibley tents over to the Quartermaster and each man got in their stead a piece of canvass about 6 ft square with a row of buttons and buttonholes on each of three sides. Then two boys button their pieces together and placed it over a pole (which is supported by two forks that are driven in the ground) We then stake the lower ends of the canvass to the ground forming quite a tent about 4 ft. high in the center. Both ends of it are open, but we can close them with an oil-cloth blankets incase of a blowing rain. They are very cool in a hot day. The boys will sit in them and bark at folks passing by and for this reason they are called pup-tent. I have no doubt you have read of little prairie dogs siting at the entrance of their underground houses and barking at passers by. Well this scene is just like it. No matter where you go some one will stick his head out and bark at you.

Our co. manifested their liking for Lieutenant P. F. Mansfield by presenting him a sword and belt worth 43 dollars. It was bought by subscription. It was presented to him last Monday evening, and I had to perform the solemn duty of presenting it. You may smile at me calling it a solemn duty, but with the emotions that then arose in my breast it could not be otherwise than solemn. Mansfield and I became attached to each other immediately after entering the service and it is not likely that 9 months experience in the most trying scenes of soldier life would slacken the friendship, no, it brings us closer to each other, it strengthens the ties of friendship and I hope will make us friends forever. All these emotions arose in my mind and with fewer words than I had intended in the name of Co. H, I presented the sword. Mansfield replied in very few words and with the same emotion. After which we gave him three rousing cheers and the scene closed. I know we will ever find a friend in Lt. Mansfield. I received a letter from James on the 1st inst. dated the 25th of Apr. at Summerset, Ky. It contained his picture which looks very natural except the way he wears his whiskers. He was well when he wrote but very busy.

Camp near Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Sunday, May 17th/63

Dear parents & sisters,

I have written to you since I heard from you but thinking you are anxious to hear from me I thought I would drop a line today. to let you know that I am well & enjoying myself first rate. Isaac is here at present (having come over on a visit) and he is well. I think pioneering suits him better than soldiering alone. Joseph Rummel is getting better slowly. The discharge papers for Henry Myer were made out last evening but it is not known whether they will be approved by all the officers that have to examine him if they are approved Henry will be discharged. George & Peter Spitler are well. The health of the boys generally is good. Since I last wrote we have moved camp $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles southeast of the old camp on the Woodberry pike. Our camp is on the edge of a piece of woods. Our whole brigade is camped in line on the right of the pike & Wilder brigade on the left of the pike. Ours is the most beautiful camp I ever seen, the little pup tents caused it to look at a distance like small flakes of snow covering the ground. The fields in front are covered with beautiful clover which completes the beauty of the scene. Lt. Clark came to camp today but what his business is I cannot tell, he is discharged from the service, probably he came to settle up his business. I have not heard from James since I wrote home.

I am glad to hear that Mary Jane has joined the church and concluded to live a different life. We have preaching today at 1000 and I liked the sermon very much. I wish we could have a good Chaplain with our regt. I think good preaching has a great effect on the soldier. This preacher told us that he seen boys playing card as he passed their camp and he asked them if they could not find better employment. One of them made the following reply, "This is the only way we can pass away the time. Well, now I think he was wrong, I can't find time to do all that I should ~~do~~ alone playing cards even were I so disposed. If I am not busily engaged I can always find something to read or be employed some way without playing cards. It is very likely that this army will move forward before long, from the fact that Hooker was defeated & Grant don't appear as though he was going to do anything, and I suppose there will be nothing to keep the public mind agitated if Rosecrans don't do something. The public may prepare for victory instead of defeat when Rosecrans moves forward. he don't go into anything blindly and when he gets in he knows how to do something. I was on picket day before yesterday. I like it very well though I did not get any sleep at night, but it is not the business of pickets to sleep.

Bengiman Dean of our Co. died a few days ago, his disease was some kind of fever and inflammation of the stomach. He was a middle aged man & had a family. I forgot to tell you in my last letter that I sent my overcoat home about the first of this month. I sent it in a box with several