

Collection #
SC 3585

**JOHN H. GRAY
LETTERS, 1862-1864**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 Manuscript Folders (12 letters + transcripts)

COLLECTION DATES: 1862-1864

PROVENANCE: Raynor's Historical Collectible Auctions, Burlington, North Carolina, June, 2019; October, 2019

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2019.0176; 2019.0305

NOTES: Includes transcriptions

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John H. Gray (1841–1930) was born in Miami County, Ohio. In August 1862, he enlisted as a corporal in the artillery of Company D of the 101st Indiana Infantry and was mustered out in June 1865. After the Civil War, Gray returned to Ohio and married Elizabeth A. Gibbon (1847–1911), and they had three children. Sometime after the war, Gray became a minister and died in Cincinnati.

Sources:

Ancestry, Library Edition, accessed 20 June 2019

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains twelve letters written by Gray to family members in Piqua, Ohio, while serving in the 101st Indiana Regiment, December, 1862-September, 1864.

In his 13 December, 1862, letter he writes to his parents from Castillion Springs, Tennessee expressing his disapproval of Lincoln's freeing "Negroes" stating that he is "inciting servile insurrection."

On 22 January 1863 he writes to his family from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, describing the fighting they encountered outside Murfreesboro fight John Hunt Morgan and his men. He goes on to write that he doubts the rebellion will be squelched for another twenty years stating: "each Rebel has it implanted within himself that he is fighting for freedom, and while they think so and keep their arms, they will hold out for time to come."

His letter of 3 February 1863 was also written to his family from Murfreesboro. He writes of encountering Confederates while on reconnaissance. He also expresses his approval of the Emancipation Proclamation allowing Blacks to serve in the army even though most of his comrades disapprove. His logic was that: "Negroes are having the best time because they are permitted to remain at home and enjoy themselves while white folks are exposed to all the suffering incident to army life."

Gray gives a detailed account of the regiment's actions at the Battle of Chattanooga in his letter of 27 September 1863. He describes moving the guns off the field and the Rebels being within twenty yards of them as well as running out of ammunition attempting to hold their position and relating that the enemy was upon them with "Shell bursting in our ranks killing horses, grape & cannister, just mowing down whole hordes of men. Rifle balls thick as hail."

The letter of 25 October 1863 was also written from Chattanooga, Tennessee, where they were staying in houses. In this letter he talks more about the generals they are serving under: Grant, Rosecrans, Reynolds, and Baird. He continues as the regiment moves from Chattanooga to Wabash where the living conditions were harsher, and rations have been cut. He anticipates a retreat in the future. The company had originally seventy-eight men; at the time of his writing, it was down to forty-two.

By 1864 the regiment was in Georgia, and he writes from Ringgold on 24 April 1864 on the starvation in the south and goes on to tell of the murdering of Union Prisoners captured at Fort Pillow in Tennessee. His letter of 5 September 1864 gives a detailed description of their regiments part in fall of Atlanta including destroying railroad tracks and driving back the enemy with great success.

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