JOHN H. GRAY
LETTERS, JANUARY–OCTOBER 1863

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 Manuscript Folder (3 letters)

COLLECTION DATES: January–October 1863

PROVENANCE: Raynor’s Historical Collectible Auctions, Burlington, North Carolina, June, 2019

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2019.0176

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:
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains three letters written by Gray to family members in Piqua, Ohio, while serving in the 101st Indiana Regiment, January–October 1863.

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.”

The letter of 25 October 1863 was 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.

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