

A Yankee Writes to God's Land ~ 1864

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Murfreesboro Tenn. Dec 14th 1864

Sister Mary

I suppose that you think that I am very slow about writing to you, but it no use writing to you as we have no communication with "Gods Land" & have not had for over two weeks or with any other place We arrived here on the 27th of last month which was two weeks ago last Sunday. I wrote to you on the monday following but as the last mail that was sent from here left that day I suppose that you did not get it I wrote to you to send me my boots Johns shirt & one for myself. I want you to send me 1 small tin bucket. one that will hold about a quart with good tin ears not high one get a lid made that will fit it with a ring in the top of it and fill it with good fresh butter. try & get all of the buttermilk out of it, about 1/2 gallon of dried apples in a poke, a 1/2 paper of pins 1 darning needle, & a bunch of woolen yarn enough to darn 4 or 5 pairs of socks. Our Regiment has been in two fights since we came to this place the first one was on the evening of Sunday the 4th. We started from camp about 2 OClock.PM & marched about 5 miles to a place called Overalls Creek when about 1/4 of a mile of this side of the creek we were halted formed in line & ordered to lie down. (The creek is between here & Nashville on the pike) We laid here some 20 minutes when we were ordered forward in line of battle. We continued to advance in line until we reached the Creek. & most of the companies were just on the point of wading when we were _____aft faced & ordered to cross the Turnpike bridge (the colors were on the Pike) Here we were again formed in line of battle on the other side of the creek & ordered to advance slowly in the face of fire of a brigade & two pieces of artillery. We advanced about 60 rods in this manner when were ordered to lie down & laid here some 10 minutes when Milroy came riding along in front of the lines waving his sword & ordering us to get up & give them fits we got up & gave them one volley when we were ordered to lie down again pretty soon we were ordered up & at them again when we went forward at this time we went about 40 rods when the 12th Indiana Cavalry charged the battery & spiked the guns but were not able to bring it off the field as the horses were all killed or wounded except two or three. When the cavalry got back we were ordered back to the creek about 3/4 of a mile & then across the bridge again the bridge was situated in a hollow so as that the artillery could not touch us or we should not have got across so easily. We lost three wounded in our company. Thomas Biddison, B.N. Green, J.C. Dew & John Whan Biddison in the arm, severe. Green hand severe, Dew hand slight (in camp). Whan in finger slight. There were several wounded very slight W.H. Boyles was knocked down

by a ball as was Richard Jones. & H.H. Stanbus we lost none killed there were two killed in Co. "D" Parish and White. Old man Ludrie was severely wounded in the breast the Regt lost six killed. The Col. had his horse killed, the Lt. Col, Maj & Adj. had theirs wounded. On the 7th While I was on Picket the Regiment was ordered out again with the 177th 178th & 181st O.V.I. & 8th Minesota on a Reconnaissance in force they marched about 12 miles when they came upon the Rebels behind some breastworks of logs these they charges Co. "C" being deployed as skirmishers the went in and on over them capturing a good many prisoners. Co. A got two guns & the battleflag of the first & fourth Florida that "Murfreeshoro" inscribed on it. Our company lost but one man wounded Samuel Tanner. The tallest man in the company was hit in the arm below the elbow severely. The Major was killed while leading the line of skirmishers. Co. "D" had two killed again Corpl. Nathan Smith and private Taylor. & Elijah Tuckers boy Josephus was wounded in the head the Reg. lost 9 killed & 56 wounded, in this fight these were several of our company hit Orderly Sergant Maxwell was knocked down by a ball on the head W.H. Boyles knocked down as was also Jones. So was E.M. Young. I missed that fight by about 1/2 hour The most of the Carthage Boys were in the fight none of them were hurt. The Rebs lost about 300 men prisoners & a good many wounded & if what the boys say is true there are a good many more of them out there dead We are living on half ration of bread & beef we have plenty of coffee it is said Thomas will be in tomorrow or next day with the Mail & I dont know how many thousand men but a good many. The boys will be glad to see him & the Mail, especially the Mail. Selden Stout has the measles Sam Calloway is getting better he will be back to the company soon I think There are Some 12 or 15 of the company sick with the Measles Otherwise the health of company is good we are living in our tents yet the most of the boys have chimneys in them I shall write no more at present.

Signed: Kos

December 17th 1864

I thought this was a rainy day & I could do nothing else that I would write the roll of our company & have it ready to send to you. I believe that I left of_ at the end of the 2nd fight after that the next thing of any importance that occurred was a foraging expedition we went out with 2 regiments the 174th & 177 O.V.I. We went about 4 miles. & got 40 wagons full of corn besides some Cattle Sheep & Hogs besides the corn that the boys brought in their Haversacks every one that went brought in a Haversack full of shelled corn this They made into mush & Pan cakes. There was good living in camp for two days. We have been on short rations for the last three weeks or ever since we came here we are now on half rations of corn meal & fresh meat, the meal we have made into mush & take the grease & fry the mush. We dont sift the meal as we have no sieve. We have plenty of salt yet the day before the Rebs captured a part of a train of cars from Stevenson with 10 days rations for the garrison. They captured 16 cars out of 19 & the Engine those that escaped got off with 40 of the escort there were 300 of the 61st Illinois on the train the Major, one Lieutenant & 40 men were all that escaped they fought the

rebels all night & laid track at the same time they were within one mile of where the road was good & about 5 miles from here we went out that day on another foraging expedition & went nine miles on the Shelbyville Pike I dont know how much we got that day as we were in the advance going out & in the rear of the Regiment [*struck over*] train coming in We ran on to one rebel battery as we were crossing the Pike they fired about 4 rounds from two guns, they did not hit anyone in the regiment. & as soon as we got across the pike where we could charge them they got up & left as hard as they could drive. We staid there two hours or about that when the wagons being all full we started back & got back to camp by about 1/2 past 7 after a march of about 20 miles & 6 miles of that through corn & cotton fields & the mud about half shoe top deep. there has hardly been a day since we have been here that we have not heard heavy canonading in the direction of Nashville but as for who it is that is fighting there we do not know any thing about it any more that if it was in China I suppose that you hear every day. It is now more than a month Since I have seen a newspaper hat is it is more than a month old. the latest paper that I have heard of was dated the 13 of December.

Signed: Kosciusko Elliott

ROLL OF CO "E" 174th O.V.I.

Capt. George Campbell

1st Lieut. James Clements, 2nd Lieut. Alfred D. Henry [*Henry*]

1st Sergt. Lybrand Maxwell, 2nd Sergt. E.M. Young, 3rd Sergt. Jno. A Cuscaden, 4th Sergt. James B. Spicer, 5th Sergt. J.W. Clement.

1st Corpl. William Butler, 2nd Corpl. Hiram C. Frost, 3rd Corpl. Dexter Newton, 4th Corpl. J.I.B. Newton, 5th Corpl. S.S. Newton, 6th Corpl. Jno.P. Harris, 7th Corpl. Jno W. Lawrence, 8th Corpl. Jno. Wood.

Privates

Wm. H. Atkinson.

Chas W. Banks, H. D. Black, Hiram Blazer, Thomas Biddison, J.W. Bryson, J.L. Burrows, Wm. Burton, Wm. H. Boyles,

Samuel Callaway, D.L. Carmichael, H.C. Chalker, Henry Cotrill, C.C. Carder, Worthy Crippen, Marion Cline.

William Day, George Daft, James C. Dew, Henry C. Dew, W.W. Dixon, Joshua Dunlevey, David Dunlevey, H.H. Dugan, Ruben Dye, James Decker.

Samuel Easton, Kosciusko Elliott, John Ely, Mire Ewers.

H.T. Finley, Jos W. Finley, Zenas Frost, Lewis Fulton.

Russell B. Glazier, David Graham, Enos. J. Goff, William Green, George N. Green.

John Hall, James H. Henry [*Henry*], Morris Handshaw, William Hooper.

Richard Jones.

Abraham Lewallan, Jonas Lewallan, David Lake.

Hugh Martin, Wm. H. Martin, Robert D. McKinney, Joseph McLaughlin, Benjiman Maxwell, William Matheny, Joseph Moreland.
Soloman Newton, Ruben Noland, B.B. Norris, James L. Norris (Drummer).
Robert Orr, William Osborne.
John Parsons, Peter M. Parsons, William Phillips, George Powell.
Jared C. Ross, Catherinus Rutherford
Franklin Shanks, James Skinnin, Elisha Sission, Jacob Six, James A. Spencer, H. H. Staubus, Selden C. Stout.
Samuel Tanner, James N. Tucksbury, Jacob Tittle, Joseph Tittle
James F. Wakeman, William Walburn, Wellington Wetherbee, James Wetherbee, John Whan, Julian White, Jackson J. Wood, Adam Wood.

Provenance:

This transcription was made from a photocopy of an old letter that was in the ownership of Diane Mercer of Mercer's Memories of Priest River, Idaho. Photocopies of the original letter were purchased in 1992 by Fred Smoot. This letter was transcribed and printed in the Warren County Genealogical Association Journal, Vol I, No 3. Fall 1992. It is with the cooperation of the WCGA that this letter is being re-published. Betty M. Majors, P.G., re-typed this letter for us.

Notes:

At Mercer's Memories the original letter was accompanied by a fine American walnut table surveyors table with a table top cabinet, and some collateral material. The table, cabinet and the other items originally were the property of Kosciusko Elliott. Kos, as he called himself, was formerly a civil war soldier (U.S.A.) and later a surveyor in Missouri.

The collateral material included Kos' Missouri Surveyors License (1872), two photographs of Kos (one in uniform), U.S.A. uniform buttons, a G.A.R. metal and two sheets of a letter sent by Kos to his sister during the war.

Company "E" of the 174th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry was mustered in on 18 August 1864 at Camp Chase (Columbus) Ohio, and was mustered out on 28 June 1865 at Charlotte, North Carolina. The 174th moved from Ohio to Nashville and Murfreesboro, Tennessee, then Decatur and Athens, Alabama, then returned to Murfreesboro in late November 1864. The Regiment participated in the Battle of Overalls Creek on 4 December and in the Battle of the Cedars on 7 December.

During 1864, a union garrison was built, just northwest of Murfreesboro, called Fortress Rosecrans. The 174th would have been attached to that command.

During the time covered by Kos's letter, General Nathan B. Forrest C.S.A. had been disrupting the railroad around Murfreesboro. General Robert H. Milroy U.S.A., in charge of the defenses of the railroad, had just arrived from Tullahoma Tenn.

The letter referred to "cannonading" which would be the Battle of Nashville, 15 and 16 December, where General John B. Hood C.S.A. was defeated by General George H. Thomas U.S.A. Hood retreated into Alabama with Forrest in rear guard.

The 174th returned to Ohio during mid January 1865, but later can be found near Kinston, North Carolina, when in early March 1865 the unit took part in the Battle of Wise's Fork. The "Stevenson" referred to would be Stevenson, Alabama which was a junction on the "Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad".

The more complete and accurate official "Roster of Ohio Troops" is available on microfiche from most L.D.S. libraries.

Kos was probably named after Taddeus Kosciusko (Tadeusz Kosciuszko) 1746-1817, Polish patriot and a general in the American Revolutionary Army.