

William D. Rogers Letters

Biographical Information

1st Fla Infantry Regiment (enlisted May 1861)

Enlisted in 1st Florida Infantry Regiment May 1861 and then transferred to 15th Confederate Cavalry

Dec. 1864 POW Ship Island, Miss.

Died in prison and buried in grave 143

1st Florida

Camp Magnolia

June 10th 1861

Dear Papa and Mother

I again write you a few lines in forming [sic] you that I am well and in fine spirits. Papa why is it none of you dont [sic] write to me. I havnt [sic] heard from home since I saw Jimmie in Pensacola. You cant [sic] imagine what pleasure it would give me to hear from you every day. please write as often as you can.

I am so situated now that there is no chance for me to come home until after I am discharged. there is only one man allowed to leave the regiment a day and that with a commissioned Officer. we have to take it in Alphabetical order commencing with Capt [sic] Brights [sic] Company. my name commencing [sic] with R. you see it will be nearly two months before I can get off and ta-t [sic] only for twenty four hours. if I can find out the exact time I will write to you so you can meet me in Pensacola.

I sent word to Sister by William to send me some check shirts but I have not got them yet Jim also promised to send me Bill but that hasnt [sic] come either I have to go on guard every other day. Yesterday and last night there was thirty of us on coast guard, we have to be on duty two hours and off four. it went very hard with me at first but I am getting used to it now and dont [sic] mind it at all. I do wish you could come down to see me and take a view of the Fla Regiment, They are the worst drilled and sorryest [sic] looking set of men I ever saw I hate to say it but it is so. there is not one of Capt [sic] Brights [sic] Company but what is ashamed to acknowledge that he belongs to the Regt. If is impossible for you to come for Gen Bragg has issued orders for no citizen to come to the Yard if he does he is taken prisoner. direct your letters and any thing you have to send to me in care Capt [sic] A H Bright. 1st Regiment Fla [sic] Volunteers, near Navy Yard Fla.

Give my love to all and kiss the children for me. Jennie too if she will let you. I will write as often as I can. No more at present but Remain Very Affectionate son Wm D. Rogers

excuse this as I have neither pen nor ink

Camp near Tullahoma, Tenn.

January 22nd 1863

Dear Father and Mother

I write you a few lines informing you that I still continue in the best of health and am getting along first rate. I received my clothes by Capt. Leigh and am a thousand times obliged. Everything is the nicest you ever saw, couldnt [sic] have been made to fit any better if they had been cut by a tailor. Everybody admires them. I could have sold them out for almost any price. I was offered ten dollars a piece [sic] for my shirts, but it was no use talking money couldnt [sic] buy anything I got from home. I have no other clothing now except one jacket but what was made at home. even the old that I have is the one Jim Amos gave me when I was home on furlough, it is just as good now as it ever was, and I think will last me the balance of the War. I got my clothes the day before Christmas, and that night I took a good wash all over, and next morning, I shaved, dressed up and went to the scales and weighted [sic] even one hundred and fifty one pounds (151 lbs) dont [sic] you think I have fattened some. We had a very pleasant time which consisted of Bake Goose, Beef Steak, fresh Pork, Sweet Irish Potatoes, corn bread biscuit and some real genuine [blank] brought all the way from Kentucky, everything passed off very pleasantly and I am compelled to say that I havent [sic] had a better time since I been in Tenn. than I had that day.

The next day I [blank] set upon to write home, but I was doomed to be disappointed for the next morning just as I was finishing breakfast the long roll was beat and we had to fall in line in double quick time. I just had time to put on both my shirts, put one pr [sic] socks in my coat pocket (I had no knapsack) fold my Blanket around me and start right off to meet the Yanks we went out about two miles and formed a line of Battle to wait for them to come. But our cavalry and a Brigade of Infantry fought that was on Picket fought them so hard, all day that they didn't just reach us. We went then to a little place call Lavergne, twenty miles from Nashville and about eighteen from Murfreesboro it commenced raining about an hour by sun and at dark we were ordered back to camps to cook up two days rations and be ready to fall in at four oclock [sic] next morning. I tell you I have had to cook a good many nights since I have been in the Service but that was the worse time that I ever had in my life. it rained the whole night and the coldest rain I think I ever felt we managed though to get our food cooked and at four o clock [sic] struck tents, loaded wagons and started for Murfreesboro where our army was. the Yanks were coming in too large for us so we had to Skedaddle, it took us two days to get there, the roads were so bad we formed another line in the extreme right of our train line where we awaited their coming the second time, this was on Sunday we staid [sic] in that position without anything much occurring except some pretty heavy skirmishing until the next Wednesday when they attacked us in heavy force on our left and centre and after a hard fight we succeeding in driving them back with great slaughter. They didn't show themselves over on the right—our Brigade was ordered to reinforce the Center so we waded the River about half leg deep and double quicked [sic] to where

they were fighting but we were most too late as the Yanks had fell back about two miles to a very strong position and it was getting too late to follow them up. we, that is our right didnt [sic] fire gun but every other Regt in our Brigade got into it pretty deep and suffered severly [sic]. we had 8 or 9 wounded by shell and grape shot but none killed, about dark our Brigade was put in the front line and those that had been fighting all day were put in the rear to rest. our position was in a cedar thicket where the hardest of the fighting had been and I never saw the like of dead Yanks in my life as there was strewed in that place. there was at least ten Yank to one of our men. We staid [sic] there all night in line and I tell you we had a cold time for we were too close the enemy's lines to have a fire and it was freezing weather, we were certain that they would renew the attack next morning but they didnt [sic] the reason why I cant [sic] tell unless it was because it was New Year, or they were satisfied they couldn't whip us. We kept our position in the cedars all day thursday [sic] and Friday until about twelve oclock [sic] when the 4th Brigade of Gen. Withers Div. came in and took our place. I then saw Co. J. C. B. Mitchell, whose Regt took our place and also our old Friend Johny Bunch who is Adjutant in Col Mitchell's Regt, John Carter is Capt [sic] of Co in that Regt but I didnt [sic] see him as he had been wounded a few days before in a little skirmish with the Yanks and had gone home I believe on furlough he was slightly wounded in the arm. We were all pretty certain that we would go to the rear to rest and warm a little after being relieved in the Cedars, but no such good luck, tis true they carried us where it was warm enough but nary rest. They took us back across the river near to our first position and pitched us right into the Yanks before we knowed [sic] what we were about and I tell you I never want to go to into another such a fight as long as I live, we whipped them at first like then but and drove them back about half miles but they received heavy reinforcements and drove us back to where the fight first commenced. I never felt the least frightened until we were ordered back and then I was badly scared my back itched the whole time, but thank god [sic] I escaped untouched, that is called a drawn battle but I think we were whipped, we attacked them with too small a force. our loss is 136 killed and wounded in the Regt, 10 from our Co. Col. Miller got his thumb shot off and has gone home on furloug [sic].

Well Papa I reckon you and Mother will get tired reading this so I will bring it to a close. I received a letter yesterday from Sister and was very glad to hear that you were all well and that you had a good time Christmas. You cant [sic] imagine how bad I want to see you all. I am thinking about you all the time and dream about home nearly every night. Give my love to all and kiss the children for me tell Miss Sallie Crosby and Miss Amanda King, that one or other of them must wait for me as I expect to come home some of these days. You must all write to me as often as you can. Direct your letters to the place, Chattanooga, Tenn. and I will be certain to get them. I will write as often as I can, Good Bye for this time Your affectionate Son Wm D. Rogers

Camp near Tullahoma Tenn.

January 30th 1863

Dear Sister

I received your kind and welcome letter yesterday and as I have a chance of sending a letter by hand to Montgomery I concluded I would answer it. I still keep in very good health with the exception of a Diarrhea which I have had now about two weeks. I have taken a good deal medicine but nothing at all does it any good if you see a chance please try to get me a bottle Brandy and send to me and let me know the price and I will send you back the money as soon as we are pd [sic] off may be Capt [sic] Williams would be the best one to send it by if you can see him. There is nothing new up here, it is getting dull again, but I dont [sic] think it will be long before we have plenty amusement—as we hear very heavy cannonading out to the front today. I expect the Yanks are advancing again, but I hope not as their visits are getting most too often and they stay so long too. I dont [sic] like that, we lay in line of battle 10 days at Murfreesboro without any tents and part of the time without fire, it was an awful time but I stood it like a man, Frank Overman is missing but we dont [sic] know whether he is killed or not. we lost ten from our co. thank God though I escaped untouched. Ras is well and hearty. I will close as this is all the paper I can make of scraps in the whole co. write as often as you can. my love to all Your Affectionate Brother
William D. Rogers

Tullahoma Tenn.
April 17th 1863

Dear Papa and Mother

It is with great that I take my knapsack on my knee my pen in hand to write you a few lines informing you that I am very well at present and hope they may find you all enjoying the same. I have no news at all to write everything is exactly the same as when I wrote last the only thing that has transpired since then that is worth relating is a review we had the other day. A general review of Breckenridges [sic] Div. Genl. Hardee, and Polk were both present and after we had passed round in review, they called on Genl. Breckenridge for three of the best Regiments he had they wanted to see them drill and decide which was the best. Genl. B. selected our Regt. the 18th Tenn. and the 20th Lou. as the best he had and we at once commenced our Regt drilled first Lieut [sic] Col. Mashbourne of the 3d Fla drilled us we all did our best as we wanted to get the praise. but 18th Tenn. beat us and got the praise for being the best and our Regt 3d best just before our Regt. quit the Col got us in line of Battle across the old field and told us he wanted us to make a charge just like we did when we charged the Yanks. we started in common time but didnt [sic] get far before he gave us the command charge Bayonets [sic] Double quick march when the front rank come to a charge and the rear rank to right shoulder shift arms, we make the charge and yelled with as much spirit as if the Yanks had been there sure enough. the Genls [sic] waved their hats to us and said was very well done but the 18th Tenn. beat us. they went

through the same that we did and when they made the charge they got about half way across the field yelling as loud as they could. when all at once the Drum tapped and they all dropped like they were dead even the Col and his horse both come down the horse lay as close the ground as he could get and the Col right behind him. They all lay for several minutes before they got up. It beat anything I ever say in my life and I never did hear such cheering in my life as was done when they dropped. they got the praise and well do they deserve it for they beat anything drilling that ever I saw. the Col has his horse trained to lay down when the men do.

I received a letter from Jenny and Lester the other day and also one from Johny. I have written to Jenny and Johny both today.

Well Papa and Mother, Goodbye for this time. Kiss all the children for me and write soon to your affectionate Son

Wm D. Rogers

Camp Near Tullahoma Tenn

April 17th, 1863

Dear Brother,

I received your kind letter a few days ago and was truly glad to hear from you. I have nothing of much interest to write but will fill up with something everything is very quiet up here and no talk now of fighting soon. We had a grand review of Breckenridges [sic] Div. the other day and after it was over then was a test drill between the three best Regiments, the 18th Tenn., the 20th Lou. and our Regt. were the ones selected, each being from a different Brigade. our Regt drilled first and I was certain that we would get the praises but 18th Tenn. beat us all to smash. I tell you they beat anything drilling that ever Ive [sic] yet seen. I wish you could have been there to have seen it. there was a great many people there from the County. I believe every woman within twenty miles of Tullahoma was there and nearly every one of them with a basket of what the Boys call Iron clad pies so called on account of their being tough and hard. I should have liked mighty well to have bought some from them to just to have got to talk to them as there was some of them mighty good looking. but as I had no money, I had to content myself by looking at them. Johny how do you flourish with the girls now. some one told me the other day that you were about to get married. but they didnt [sic] know who the young lady was. I suppose though it is Miss Alice. I dont [sic] want you to get in too big a hurry but wait until I can come home as I should like mighty well to be present on that important occasion. so that I can stand up with you.

We are having beautiful weather now and I cant [sic] imagine what old Rosencrans is waiting for but he hasnt [sic] forgot the lesson we gave him at Murfreesboro I dont [sic] reckon.

We drill four hours a day now, two hours Company drill and two in the evening. Battalion drill. Our Co are sharpshooters and are armed with Minnie and Enfield Rifles. We drill every morning in skirmish drill. I like the drilling very well. but it dont [sic] know how I will like it when it comes to fighting as the Skirmishers always have to open the fight. Johny you dont [sic] know how bad I want to see you. I would give anything in the world if I was in the same Co. with you. I wish you would see if any of your Boys would swap with me. I would try a transfer but I know it would be no use as we are not in the same Comm if your Battalion was up here I think I could get one. if I cant [sic] get in before I intend to join your Co when my time is out. which is only ten months now. if I am allowed the privilege of reenlisting but I hope and pray we will have peace before that time as I am sick and tired of the war and want to be a free man once more. What kind of rations do you get. We get 1 1/4 pounds corn meal and 1/2 lb [sic] bread per day, sometimes we get a little rice and some peas but very seldom. Well Johny I will close as I cant [sic] thing [sic] of anything more to write now. Give my Respects to John Grater and tell him his Brother Lervis is well remember me also to my other friends and write soon too [sic] your Affectionate Brother

Wm D. Rogers

P. S. If there anything about Miss Jennie Hamiltons getting married, if so write me word who the lucky man is as I am deeply interested in that quarter myself.

Tell Grandison Howdy for me and that I would like mighty well to see him.

Wm D. Rogers

Camp near War Trace
April 26th, 1863

Dear Papa and Mother

In my last letter I promised you that I would write every opportunity I get and as we are resting today I thought I would write you a few lines not knowing when I would get another chance. We are camped two miles north of War Trace. We left Tullahoma on the morning of the 24th and arrived here last evening about 3 o'clock pretty tired and hungry. Several of the boys went out foraging and amongst them one of my Mess. They hadn't been gone long before they captured a hog that would weigh about 180 lbs. My mess mate brought in one of his hams about dark and we had a bully supper. we have to be mighty sly about it though as the orders are very strict about shooting hogs. I dont [sic] approve of molesting private property myself but then under the circumstances I cant [sic] blame the boys much. We were clean out of meat and ought to have drawn yesterday evening but the wagons were delayed on account of bad roads and didnt [sic] get here until today and another thing this is a Union County. every man in it is a unionist and we cant [sic] get anything at all from them without pressing it.

The boys have been amusing themselves all the morning catching squirrels. they have caught 16 this morning whenever they see one digging and honking it makes no difference what kind of a tree height its [sic] in. Well I hardly know what to write. we dont [sic] know anyone, nor where we are going than when we had started. its [sic] reported that the Yanks are falling back to nashville [sic] and that part of our forces were in eight miles of Murfreesboro. yesterday evening we will leave here tomorrow next day and I expect we will be fighting in less than a week. you must write to me as often as you can. I havent [sic] recd [sic] a letter from you in sometime [sic] now and I feel uneasy. I will write every chance I get tho [sic] it may be sometime before I get another chance after we leave here. I continue in the best of health and stood the march first rate. I hope this will find you all well. Give my love to all the children and believe me as ever Your affectionate Son.

William D. Rogers

Camp near War Trace, Ten.

May 1st, 1863

Dear Papa and Mother

I again write you a few lines informing you that I am in good health at present and sincerely hope this may find you all enjoying the same. I have no news of importance to write to you the excitement about fighting has nearly died away, and every thing is about as dull as it was two weeks before we [blank] Tullahoma. The Yanks had advanced somewhat upon our comming [sic] out they fell back to their breastworks at Murfreesboro. I was on guard at Headquarters a few nights ago and I heard some Officers talking they dont [sic] seem to think that we will fight up here at least not [blank] there is not as much talk about our marching from here now as there was the day after we got here. we still have orders tho [sic] to keep in readiness to march at a moments [sic] warning. The [blank] corps of our Division has gone out. they started in the direction of Sparta, and are now working the roads between here and that place. A great many still think we are going into Ky again and I sorter think so myself now since our Pioneers have started We went through Sparta last summer on our way into Ky. if you will look on the map you can see where we are and which direction Sparta is. We are camped on Luck River about half way between Shelbyville and McMinnville. We crossed the Cumberland River last summer at a little place called Carthage, which you will also see on the map. I wish I could be at home this evening. I could point out our whole rout [sic] through Ky. [blank] you, Papa and Mother, you dont [sic] know how bad I want to see you all. I would give any thing in world if I could first get to see you again even for a few days. I would have so much to tell you all, what I have been through and seen in the last year for you know I have been through as big Battles as has ever been fought, Shiloh, Perryville and Murfreesboro and I could relate a good many incident connected with each battle.

You dont [sic] know how uneasy I am about home. I havent [sic] heard from you in [blank] so long this is the fourth letter I have written since I received one. Johnny nor Jim neither one has answered my last letters. I cant [sic] imagine what is the matter. The rest of the Boys all get letters every evening and poor me, I cant [sic] get none. I wish some of you would write at least once a week. It has been nearly three weeks now since I have received a letter. Well I believe I will close. Give my love to all the [blank] and write often to. Your affectionate Son

Wm D. Rogers

P. S. Please send my pants and socks the first opportunity and continue to direct your letters To Tullahoma Tenn. [blank] Divisions

Ship Island

Feb. 17th 1864

Dear Father, Mother

It is just 3 months to day since we were captured. I have heard from you but once, very indirectly then we heard by a letter through Mr. Robbins that you were well, which of itself afforded me great pleasure but I would like very much to know how you are getting along generally and if you have moved since I was captured. I have looked anxiously for the day of our exchange ever since I have been here but I am about out of all hopes any time soon at least. My health has been still is very bad. Johnie is in as good health as it ever has been in fact that generality of the prisoners are very healthy. You can tell Mrs. Robbins and Newton that Mr. Robbins and Newton are well and etc. We have been very kindly treated since we have been here. the last [blank] here has been exceedingly kind to me. There is nothing else I can write of interest to you. I can continually hear talk of exchange but alas the talk ends. Hoping to hear from you soon, and often I will close by sending love to all and accept the same from your affectionate son Direct to me prisoner war W. D. Rogers Ship Island

[image--Sept 20th 1861 Pensacola Fla William D. Rogers 1st Fla Inf Regiment]

[image--John Franklin Rogers 15th Confederate Cavalry Regiment]

[image—same as first one above]