

Letter From Scott, James written Saturday, September 27th, 1862

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We had a brigade review at Covington. There was about six thousand soldiers there and one battery of artillery. It all looked very well for them that stood and looked on, but for us that had to do the marching it was not so pleasant. We started from camp at ten o'clock and went out a mile south of our camp, formed the Brigade with the artillery in front. We were then 5 miles from where the review was to take place. At 11 we started and got there at one o'clock and rested half an hour and ate dinner which consisted of crackers, fried ham, and water. After dinner we formed in line for inspection, then the General rode along in the front of us and took a short look at us. As he rode by we then formed in companies and marched by the left flank around the Commons, then we was drawn up in line of battle and the artillery gave us a salute, then we started for our camp where we arrived just at sun down all tired and hungry so we made the coffee. We have the regular coffee three times a day and plenty of it and just as good as ever. We have no cream for it but we have plenty of sugar for them that likes, and there is but three that don't take it and I am one of them. We have to eat sea biscuits. The only fault I have to them is that they are so hard that I can't chew them, so I break them up in my coffee and let them soften so that by taking half an hour I can make out a hearty meal, but still I should rather have a loaf of yeast rising even if it was a little sour. We have plenty of good corned beef, two meals, and good smoked ham once every day, then we have plenty of beans, vinegar, rice, potatoes, and now we have plenty of apple sauce and will have till frost comes for the farmers have all left the country. There is just men enough here to dig the potatoes and make some cider. The country is completely ruined, the fences all broke down and burnt up to cook with. All the timber cut down so that the rebels would have nothing to hide themselves in. The fields is all dug up in rifle pits and entrenchments. We are camped in as good a peach orchard as ever I saw in my life and if we stay here it will be ruined. You have no idea of the destruction, desolation, that an army, just to see the fine houses laying waste. The house that our regiment occupies as hospital is a large square two story high and is well finished inside as I ever saw any place. The 96 Ohio Reg. uses another just as good. All the commanders, Regiments and Brigades, occupy vacant houses for their head quarters with a file of soldiers standing guard in front while they are enjoying themselves over their brandy inside. We got rid of considerable of our work now that we had to do, that is getting up our wood and water, since our teams got to running. We have six wagons with 6 mules on each wagon, so that they have all the wood and water that the regiment use, which is considerable of a saving of manual labor, although we do not have too much exercise for our health which is a great deal better than one could reasonably expect taking everything into consideration. There is only 11 in the hospital from the Regiment and not one from our Company, and what is in the hospital has a good time, plenty of room, and three Doctors to wait on them, and I think they are good and attentive doctors. There is six from each company detailed for picket duty each day. They go out from two to three miles and keep watch for the enemy and I don't believe there is half as many Rebels here as there is in La Fayette County. I consider it all waste of time and money keeping so many soldiers here for I don't believe there will ever be any fighting done in these parts. The citizens of Cincinnati and vicinity was a good deal worse scared than hurt for I don't think they ever was in much danger. That is my opinion about it, however I may be mistaken.

Camp Bates, Sept. 30th, 1862

I am just returning from picket. We were three miles out from camp. There is sixty men detailed each day from our Reg. with twenty four hours rations and we are then divided in three posts, twenty men at each post. Two men are on guard at a time and they are changed every two hours in the day time and every hour in the night. It was the first time that I was out and I like it very much for we have a good chance to draw apples, sweet potatoes and all such things all of which go very well for a change. To be sure there is a little more danger of a fellow getting popped by some of the butternut devils, but I don't think there is many of the boys ever thinks of any such things as rebels. All they seem to think of is to get something to eat. What few folks is left pretend to be very good Union men. Whether are or not is not for us to decide. One thing is certain, no one can travel without a pass from the commanding officer of this Division. I think it takes a letter a good while to get here from Wyota. The last one I got from home was wrote on the 11th. I have wrote some three or four home since I came here. I shall after this write once every week and I want you to do the same. If you can, tell McConnells folks that Asa is well. Since I commenced writing this I heard that the Colonel has received marching orders. I don't know whether it is so or not. There is a good many troops leaving here every day. I will write soon and let you know whether we are going or not. Give my respects to all the friends. When you write Direct as usual. No more at present.

James Scott

Camp Bates, Ky., Oct. 7th, 1862

As I have nothing much to do this morning I thought I would write a few lines. I was on guard last night and I am excused from duty today. I think last night was as fine a night as I ever saw in my life. It is no trouble to stand guard when the nights are pleasant and clear, but when they get wet and cold it will not be so nice, but it will have to be very bad if a man can't stand it two hours on guard and four hours off, and the four hours they have a tent to sleep in. We have moved our camp about one mile south of where we were. We have better ground for a camp then where we were, but I don't think we will stop here very long for all the soldiers round here are moving off. The news here are very cheering now. We have a good chance to get the news here for the daily papers are brought into camp every morning regular so that you need not send any more papers to us while we are here for we get the news before you do. I got four papers Saturday night that you sent but there was no news in them that we had not seen before, so you can save your postage stamps and write more letters for letters are more acceptable to us than papers. There is some of the boys that has never got a letter yet from home and if their folks could hear them swear when the mail is distributed they would write oftener.

Wednesday, Oct. 8th:

We have finally left Camp Bates. We started at 8 o'clock this morning and went down by Covington which is 5 miles from our camp and about 2 miles south west. There we met with the 96 Ohio Reg., the 83rd Indiana, the 118th Ohio, the 10th Kentucky Cavalry, and the 5th Battery of Indiana and 9th Ohio Battery, and parts of two Ill. Regiments which make up our brigade. The days was very warm and the roads was very dusty and carrying our knapsacks and guns, cartridge boxes with 40 rounds in them, and two days rations in our haversacks, and marched in all about 18 miles. We are camped in a nice meadow with plenty of good apples. We had plenty of good coffee for supper and I think the regular old coffee is the best after all. We will have to sleep without tents tonight but the weather is so dry and clear that would just as sleep without a tent as not. Well the drum is beating so I must stop.

Thursday evening: [Oct. 9]

We started this morning at 5 o'clock. The road is good and the weather very warm and we all feel rather sore and stiff. Carrying knapsacks is not so nice a thing as it is cracked up to be, but about 11 o'clock the Colonel ordered us to uncling knapsacks which we all did in a hurry for some of the boys had given out, so we rested about an hour and loaded our knapsacks on a wagon and started off as fresh as ever at about one o'clock. We met a company of cavalry coming in with 9 guerrilla prisoners and hard looking customers they were. We stopped at 2 o'clock on a very high hill. We made about 15 miles and if ever you saw a tired lot of boys it was then. Our Capt. was used up, his feet was all blistered and a good many of the boys had very sore feet. For my part I stood it first rate. My feet is sound as a dollar. Our wagons is on the rear end of the train which brings it about 3 miles back. Well the Capt. is calling for twenty men to volunteer to go and help the wagons up the hill, so I will go and stop for the present.

10 P.M.:

I have got back without the wagons. We stopped in the valley about 2 miles from camp to wait for the teams and after we had been there about half an hour when a messenger came and told us we had orders to march in 30 minutes so that we could not get there by that time, so we came back on the double quick, up a very steep hill which took the wind out of the best of us so when we got there we found the boys all up and harnessed and ready for the road, so we got our traps on in a very few minutes, so when we were all ready the order was countermanded, so the wagon squad was called out again, but I concluded I should not go tonight again so I thought I would finish up my journal for today. The 96th caught a rebel about dusk. He was agoing off with a saddle on his back when they halted him and he threw it into the brush and run his best off through a field when a cavalryman got after him and struck him over the head with his saber which brought him to the ground. They then brought him into camp and had his head dressed. He is a fine looking man, but sulky as a mule and won't answer any questions at all. Well the boys are coming back with the wagons so we will have our blankets and try to sleep some for we will have to start early in the morning.

Friday noon: [Oct. 10]

We started about 4 1/2 o'clock this morning and marched on do the Licking Valley before we got our breakfast. We had some crackers in our haversacks that kept our concious at ease, but it was ahard march of 8 miles without our regular coffee, but we have plenty of water, and good coffee. The water is rather poor but any kind goes here. After we had ate our dinner we loaded our wagons and was all ready to start, it commenced to rain, so we were ordered to pitch our tents which pleased us all very much, so I am writing under cover as comfortable as circumstances will permit. The whole brigade is camped here together. When we first came here the boys was tired and hungry so the boys went into the confiscation business pretty strong. The artillery boys and cavalry boys killed some 8 or 10 large hogs and the other boys killed sheep, geese, turkeys, chickens, and everything that they could get their hands on so we have all the fresh meat we will for some time. I don't know how long we will stay here now, not longer than till the weather settles. We are on the road to Lexington to reinforce Buell, or at least that is the suposition among the small fry officers. The country as far as I have seen is a rough, baren country and no farming or anything else going on. The timber is good and just such as we had in Ohio. I had a letter from Sarah McConnell last night. It was wrote on the 11 of Sept. so it was old news but it was the best letter I have got for many a day. Just the kind I like for she gave some

account of what was going on the neighborhood. I don't expect that we will get very regular mail any more or not until we get settled down again, but the mail will follow after awhile & I expect that this Brigade will be kept moving for a while.