

Object ID: *MG0828_SeriesB_F01*

Document: *incomplete letter Thomas Welsh to brother August 7, 1846*

Transcription:

August
Camp Rio Grande ~~July~~ 7th 1846

Dear Brother

I once more take up my pen to inform you of my return to the sunny South in the Character of a soldier. I suppose it does not surprise you at my turning Soldier for you know what an excitement was raised when the declaration of war was made public and the call was made for the young Americans to Volunteer their services to fight for their Country. You know with what enthusiasm the call was hailed, and my patriotism being high, I immediately volunteered in a company being raised in Cincinnati and not being immediately received into service by the Gov. of Ohio we crossed over into Kentucky where we were received in the character of Kentuckians and after being organized and mustered into the service of the U States we Started for the seat of war. We started from Louisville on the 29th of June, by steamboat for New Orleans, where we arrived on the 6th of July when our regiment was ordered into encampment, on the old Battle ground where the Americans under the heroic Jackson, covered themselves with Glory, more than thirty one years ago. During my stay I had the opportunity of examining the Battle field, which still shows some of the relics of the dreadful action of the 8th of January 1815.

On the 10th of July we broke up our encampment and embarked on board ship and set sail on the same day for Texas, during the passage across the gulf which occupied ten days we had nothing but calm's, or contrary winds and there being five hundred men crowded on one ship, rendered it very sickly, so much so that three men died and were consigned to the deep blue sea, which cast a gloom over us during our voyage. On the 20th of July we landed at Brazos Santiago, nine miles below the mouth of the Rio Grande river. We remained at Brazos 4 days when we took up our line of march to join Gen. Taylor's army, but after marching twenty miles over the sandy plain with a scorching sun pouring its hottest streaks upon our devoted heads- and when we were on the eve of giving out from weakness- the order for a halt was passed along the line which sounded like welcome news to our brave Battalion. After a good nights sleep on our blankets spread on the sand and knapsack for pillows, we awoke in the morning prepared to resume our journey, when we were ordered to take up our position on a hill Just ahead of where we lay and where we are now encamped,

We have been in Camp at this place for near two weeks, but as we are pleasantly situated we do not complain for want of action, Our Camp is one mile from the Rio Grande- and by its course twelve miles from where it empties into the gulf of Mexico.



Burita, which contains about twelve houses and which is rendered memorable by the action of the 8th & 9th of May, is within sight of our camp, and the Battle ground is about five miles from us. Since we have been encamped at this place various other troops have taken up position on our right and left so as to form a line of Camp's as far as the eye can reach

of Second Regiment Kentucky Volunteers Texas
[written across top of page, upside down]

Analysis:

1. *Genealogical notes (probably prepared by Blanton Charles Welsh) identify his brother as William Welsh, who “went south before the Civil War; was never heard from. His widow lived for years in Washington.” The notes also identify two sisters, Mary Welsh, who married William Bell of Columbia, and Catherine (“Kate?”) Welsh, who married John H. Rich of Bainbridge*

Although the Civil War was still 15 years away, this letter informs William of Thomas’ “return” to the south, suggesting the possibility that Thomas has already been south previously, or perhaps that William has already gone south. Could William have been in Washington? And could this be a reason for Thomas’ being in Washington in 1844 (see Doc. # TW-A-02, Memorandum of the travels of Thomas Welsh)?

2. *Paints a picture of a 22-year old recruit, imbued with patriotism and enthusiasm, and eager for the glory of war and honor of serving his country. Military Service Records from the National Archives indicate that he enrolled at Covington, KY on May 22, 1846, and reported for duty on June 9, 1846 at Louisville, KY.*

Scope and Content:

Incomplete letter, written by Thomas Welsh to his brother, William, and dated Camp Rio Grande, August 7, 1846. Details his enlistment and deployment to Mexico upon the outbreak of war.

