

Detroit Daily Tribune
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From the Ninth Regiment

*Location of Camp Duffield – The Secesh and the Regiment – Building Fortifications –
Disaffection with the Arms – Improved Health – A Bogus Report of a Bogus Report –
Marching Orders*

Correspondence of the Detroit Tribune
CAMP GEO. DUFFIELD, West Point, Ky.
November 6th, 1861

Thinking perhaps a few words from the Ninth Regiment may interest your readers, I have concurred to say something of our whereabouts and prospects. We are encamped on the South bank of the Ohio, just above the mouth of Salt Creek, on a high clay bottom, in the midst of a “secession” orchard. Opposite and a little below is the antiquated and dilapidated village of West Point, which looks as if it had passed all its “halcyon days” of prosperity and vigor some centuries ago. On three sides of us rise high, rocky bluffs, well covered with timber, and almost inaccessible from the river side. Hardin county is one of the strongest “secesh” counties in Kentucky. West Point only gave six votes for the Union at the last election, so you may well imagine that the people did not welcome us with any great amount of éclat; on the contrary they appeared to think of us somewhat as a nuisance. This feeling, I am happy to say is considerably modified by time and better acquaintance. One gentleman I conversed with, a few days since asked me if it was true that all field officers of the regiment were Democrats, and when I assured him they were of the most radical cast, he said he never expected such a state of facts could exist. – He, in innocence, had believed that only the “abolitionists” were in arms to subjugate the South and free the slaves. Many, even here had imbibed the idea that not only their property, but their women and household goods were all to be confiscated by these crazy abolitionists. They have so far recovered from their hallucinations that they will chat, eat, smoke, and – shall I say drink? – yes, but that’s no name for it, with our officers and men as often as they can get a chance. I think if we could stay here a few mouths they would become quite reconciled to *such* Northern Arabs as the Michigan Ninth.

At present our regiment, and the Indiana Thirty-seventh camped about half a mile above us, are engaged in fortifying the hills that surround our camp. We have built a fine pontoon bridge across Salt River, and a fine road up the side of the mountain to the South west. About five acres of heavy timber has been slashed on top of the hills, and quite a fort is in the process of erection. We have already here some nine or ten pieces of cannon which will all be in position at the close of the week. When all this is done, we shall present a very formidable obstacle to the progress of a secession army. Our battery commands the old turnpike leading from Louisville to Nashville, Tenn., as well as the entire navigation of the Ohio and Salt rivers, the latter of which is navigable for some ten

or fifteen miles from the Ohio. It is said this point is to be made the great depot of stores and center point of operations for Gen. Sherman's division, though the headquarters are some twelve miles further in the interior. Two or three steamers are plying constantly between here and Louisville. Whether the powers that be uttered to keep us here or not, we have no means of knowing, though things look that way now. This may be for the best, though many would prefer a field of more active service.

One thing we all feel vexed about. We have not been supplied with arms as expected. Our guns are nothing less than old smooth bore muskets changed to camp locks, just like those used for drill at Fort Wayne, only a deal heavier and poorer. Not one issued can be got to fire off short of a good half hour of coaxing and tinkering. The whole regiment is dissatisfied and chagrined at such treatment. Col. Duffield is doing all he can to remedy the end, but Ohio Generals and Indiana Colonels seem to think they are good enough for raw Michiganders. We invoke the attention of our friends in Michigan to this in the hope they will aid us in our endeavors to secure better and more decent arms, if possible.

The health of the Regiment is improving. A few days ago we had two hundred men sick for duty, but the measles have nearly disappeared, and we are having fair weather which has reduced the sickness fully one half.

Quite a stir was made in camp by the report that a telegraph had appeared in the Detroit papers that our regiment had been badly cut up in a skirmish with the enemy. Of course, it passed as a good joke on us, though we did not like to have such a report sent home to disquiet our friends so soon after entering the field. Such a thing may possibly happen, but we prefer to wait awhile and have it in trial.

We are all very hungry for Michigan news. Only two Detroit papers have found their way into camp since our arrival. Please, remember us occasionally when you look over the list of dead-heads.

Yours truly,

A. _____ C.

P.S. – A report had just reached camp that we are to move soon to the mouth of Green River. A large number of mules, wagons, ambulances, &c., have just come into camp, which seems to indicate traveling is soon to be done by somebody. But I can only guess, for in Kentucky nobody knows an hour in advance what they are to do, or where they are to go.