

Political Problems

A letter, **Dec. 6, 1862**, that started a big controversy in the 120th OVI. [Myers became a part of the 120th on 5 Sept 1862 and resigned 5 Feb 1863 because of illness.]

This letter was written by Captain Wm G. Myers [Co G] on board the steamer "Fort Wayne", 6 Dec, 1862. It was written to Benjamin Harshey in Chippewa Twp, Wayne Co OH and was supposed to be confidential. But Mrs. Harshey was reading the letter when another person was present and that person reproduced it from memory and sent it others. It ended up being sent to the Wayne County Democrat newspaper and being published. It was also sent to Col. French at Vicksburg.

He is accusing some of the officers of being soft on the South as many of the Democrats were in Ohio at the time. This article also addressed the fact that Wm Myers had taken over Company G when the original person to raise the company, John McSweeny, "abandoned and deserted" the company. Myers had been advised by his physician that he should not take the company because of a previous physical problem. Myers did take the company in spite of this advice and later had to resign because of the problem. More about McSweeny later.

[Wooster Republican newspaper, Thurs 2 Apr 1863, pg 2, Available at GenealogyBank]
"On Board the Steamer "Fort Wayne", **Dec. 6, 1862**

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After giving you a general history of the boys, I now want to give you a special history. So I will direct this epistle to you and Elias Galehouse, and of course it is *confidential*. First, then, our Colonel, Lieut.-Colonel and Major, and Quartermaster, are all wool-dyed Locofocos', and out of the ten Captains we have four of the same stripe, and six Republicans. So you see our Regiment is controlled by Democrats, so far as Regimental officers are concerned, but fortunately our Captains are all intelligent men, and each as competent to make a Colonel, if need be, and nearly all are better scholars than the Colonel. So you see it will be a hard matter to impose on us or boys. E. V. Dean, is the *controlling Democratic Spirit* of this Regiment. He is Quartermaster. He will sometimes take a Democratic paper and get at the head of the table and read aloud some *denunciation* of the President, and then comment on these articles before the boys for their *edification*. We listened to this till we become tired of it. Then I told him that I thought he was endangering his position in the Regiment by every such declaration, that I thought the President who was Commander-in-Chief of the army, would not encourage him or any man in speaking *disrespectful* of his *superiors* in the army. He is liable to be turned out of office any day. I have determined to permit no man to abuse the President, and at the same time be an *officer under him*. To-day the left wing of this Regiment, that is the officers agreed to each give his plan of settlement of our difficulties, provided we were delegates in a National convention to settle on terms of conciliation. I agreed that if the rebels would ask an armistice, and I was sent as a delegate in convention, I would agree to let them do with their slaves in the States as they pleased, but I demanded the *unconditional restriction* of slavery in all our territories. If we asked more, the slaveholders would not consent to it at *this time*, whatever they may do in the *future prosecution* of the war. Our Republicans generally agreed with me, and the Democrats generally took up the ground of Popular Sovereignty. They all think the President is wild on this Proclamation, and his last inaugural. I think when the President issued his Proclamation, he had confidence, that if there was a day set, offering liberty to the slave, that he would profit by it, and take a part in this rebellion. If the President should be disappointed in this, his Proclamation would only aggravate the South without doing any good. I hope he won't be disappointed, but that the slaves will rise in a body and make a strike. I look for a proposition for a compromise through some one like Ben Wood of New York; and what I fear most of all is, that if Congress calls a Convention and the South and Democracy [peace Democrats] of the North united will have a majority, and more than all, I fear that many of the Republicans will be drawn into a premature settlement, because they are getting tired of the war and would like to see their friends at home again. If all you Republicans at home *do your duty*, we can at least restrict slavery in all territories and secure free homes for all our children. This is the *wrong time* for Republicans to be *frightened*.

You were deceived last fall by the Democrats. They seemed to be doing nothing, but now they boast of their victory and say, see how the people have *changed* on this war question. *This* should not have been allowed. Mark this, if this question is settled on any other terms than slavery restriction in the territories, then good-bye to the Republican party and the *future peace of the country*. Better sacrifice the lives of some of the best men than give it up now. It would *disgrace* us among our own *children*.

Yours respectfully, W. G. Myers."

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