

Captain William A. Barnard, 20th Michigan Infantry, 1862-1865.

Envelope: Miss Ellen A. Barnard, Willsboro, Essex County, New York.

Camp in "Pleasant Valley"
between South Mountain & the
Blue Ridge, three miles from
Harpers Ferry, Oct. 9th 1862

Dear Sister

I received letters from Father, Ed. & yourself several days ago - all at the same time, dated Sept 14th, 18th, & 29th and one from Emily & you this morning dated Sept 27th & will be obliged to answer them all now as my conveniences for writing are not the best I ever had. We broke camp day before yesterday at the mouth of the Antietam & came here with Burnside's Corps. - about ten miles march over the Blue Ridge Mountains. The soldiers like Wilcox very well I believe but have been in no battle with him yet. They all feel safe under McClellan. I am well as usual & get enough to eat such as it is - we have salt pork - salt beef - fresh beef - bacon - rice - beans - sugar & coffee & "Hard Tack" (and soup) & can do our own cooking & cook our rations as we like. We have shelter tents now & live comfortably - a soldier can eat everything he can get hold of & be sick all the time or he can eat his rations & nothing else & be healthy & on duty if he takes proper care of himself. I haven't been sick at all & am on duty always when the Company is out. I have just been drilling a squad in the manual. I saw in one of the Detroit papers that Corpl. Higby was wounded severely. I have enquired for his Regt. but they have not been near us yet. Let me know where Ed Lynde is & I will try and find him when we camp near the Sharp Shooters again. I have seen Bancroft and have recd. a letter from Eaton lately saying that he is a private in the 50th Mass. now in camp at Boxford Mass. & acting as clerk to the Col. & expects to be down this way soon. They are nine month men under the last call for 300,000.

I expect Ed. appreciates my patriotism about as well as any one. I wish I had five or six caps to send him. I want him to be a little delicate about getting that blue coat threadbare that I sent in my carpet bag. Tell him I haven't but 75 cents at present & that is in _____ tickets & shall not probably have any money to send home until I get a commission & better pay - as it is **proper, convenient** & necessary ~~that~~ a soldier to have a little money by him & I now get just about that - i.e. it is due me. I haven't got it yet. I hope the draft will take effect in Willsboro & give the W. Rebels a little experience at soldiering. The Cons. Republican is paid for for one year & will be sent to Willsboro.

Remember me very kindly to the Willsboro people & tell them I will try & see them as soon as I can get relieved from chewing Hard tack & practicing the manual of arms down here in the Army of the upper Potomac. We are down in a valley here wedged in on all sides by mountains & have to look up an angle of about 60° to see the sun rise. I like the climate well - the days are very warm & the nights are rather cool. It is much healthier than Mich. with its swamps & stagnant water & very much like New England - plenty of springs of good cool water & running streams from the mountains to wash in. The 10th N. H. Regt. have been here side of us but left this morning & the 7th R. I. are now packing up to leave us. I do not know where they are going any better than they do - & they will not know until they get orders to halt & pitch their tents.

Harry Young told me about Dick's death. I will try & see Oak Smith & Lt. Cunningham if we should happen to camp near them or pass them on the march. They must have been on the road from Baltimore to Washington when Oakley wrote we passed the Relay House. It is a fine place to live. I never saw a pleasanter place to live than along the Baltimore & Washington R. R.

I think I have answered all the questions I found in looking over your letters & shall be happy to answer all questions - touching my experiences as a soldier. I am laying here in my tent writing on a board - & intend to cook my dinner soon - for eatables I have a few beens [sic] - fresh beef - hard tack - sugar & coffee - I get all my war news from the daily papers & know nothing about the movements of the Army further than that we shall go into winter quarters probably as soon as the muddy weather comes unless they send us south to fight this winter.

Burnside has told the men lately that he will send them all home in a month or two. He looks just like his picture (did you get all those pictures that I sent home with my plunder). I have written every time we have changed camp & you will get the letters sooner or later - write often & write all the news.

Yours &c,

Sergt. W. A. Barnard
20th Army Corps
Washington D. C.

Put "9th Army Corps " on my letters when you direct them.

W. A. B.