

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

Camp of 20th Mich. Infty.
Vicksburg Miss. June 22d 63

Dear Mother

I hear from home that you are on a visit to Groton, Boston & Wilton for several weeks - and hope the change from Willsboro will be a comfort to you. We are continually ^{moving} from one place to another and have finally reinforced Grant, & compose a part of the Army before Vicksburg. We came from Louisville over the Cincinnati & St. Louis and Illinois Central R. R. 's to Cairo and then took transports for Youngs pt. opposite the City of V. We had a pleasant and interesting journey down the river - stopped at Memphis twenty-four hours - went to the Theatre - visited the nigger regiments - made quite a raid through the City - & left. While passing along the Arkansas shore we were fired upon every few hours by guerrillas ~~[sic]~~ but no one seriously hurt. We killed one "grill" & had one of our men scratched on the head with a bullet. They would fire whole volleys of musketry at us as we stood crowded together all over the boat - and we would fire from the boat - but they did not seem to hit us and after we got used to them a little - enjoyed our trip as well as excursionists [sic] in more peaceful times. Our Regt. is stationed north of Vicksburg about ten miles between the City & the Yazoo river. All of the 9th Corps is here occupying the bluffs north of the City & watching Johnston's movements. Vicksburg is not yet taken and probably will not be before the patience of the people at home is exhausted but Genl. Grant has the City completely surrounded & keeps up a heavy artillery fight day and night and has most of the time for the last thirty days. They have not much to eat in the City and there are about 18000 rebs there besides the women & children and when they get out of provisions they will be obliged to starve to death or surrender & Grant will give them their choice. He has men enough here to take Vicksburg & take care of Johnston in his rear and sooner or later the place must fall.

The 9th Corps will remain here until that time & then go back to Ky.

The general health of our men is good. We go blackberrying & fishing - stir up the crocodiles & rattle snakes - have good Nigger boys to do our cooking - black our boots &c and try to live as the Mississippians do and make ourselves comfortable - by dividing our time as much as possible between meditation & repose.

Remember me to all -

Yours &c

Wm. A. Barnard
Lt. Co. "C"