

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

Envelope: Rev. S. A. Barnard, Willsboro, Essex County, New York

Camp near Warrenton Va.
Nov. 12th 1862

Dear Father

Since I wrote last we have been constantly on the march after Stewart's Cavalry. Our Cavalry & Batterys have been following them up and the Infantry have been hurried along to support them - we camped one day & night on the Rebl. Genl. Ashby's farm - near "Ashby's Gap" in the Blue Ridge. He had a fine Residence but we soon desolated it - burnt all of his fence rails - & butchered all of his hogs - sheep & poultry - from there we marched to near Manassas Gap - stopped one night and came here. We have had no fight yet - but hear our artillery nearly every day shelling the Reb. Cavalry - they make a dash & disperse and hide about the mountains. They have captured one of our supply trains lately & we are out of bread entirely at present but expect some every minute. We have full rations of everything else & as a general thing have plenty to eat - at the last place we stopped we had five Sisish ~~sheep~~ ^[sic] sheep & two hogs in our Co. & have had all the fresh meat we wanted since, we draw fresh beef every day from the Quartermaster. The cattle are driven along with the wagon trains and butchered as we need them.

We are right in the midst of the Rebs now and have to look out for our sick & stragglers or they are taken prisioners. ^[sic]

Genl. Burnside has command of the Army of the Potomac now & we expect to do something - old soldiers say this is the most successful campaign so far, that they have been in. We have not found the Rebs in force yet but expect to have a hard fight before we get to Richmond - and the rumor is that we are to be there before many days.

I have a prodigious appetite and am getting strong & healthy & like the living here much. I find the climate is an improvement on Mich. and that it is better for my health to be here than in the Land Office with the ague part of the time. The country about here is like New England - hilly & mountainous - with running streams & plenty of good water. We have a fine opportunity to see everything traveling on foot.

We have had one snow storm but the weather generally is pleasant & we expect to winter farther south. I would like to have you send me a few postage stamps occasionally as I cannot get them here & sometimes - want them - & I want Ellen (or a detail from the Ladies So. of W.) to make me a night cap - something to keep my head warm nights - made of woolen or worsted in an ornamental style - like a smoking cap. Send it by mail - & a pair of Army Mittens if they can be found or made - they are made with a thumb & one finger - thus  & can be sent by mail.

The State Election in Mich. has gone Republican. & Mr. Lacey is re-elected to the Land Office.

Write often & direct now to

Wm. A. Barnard
Sergt-Major, 20th Mich. Inf.
Wash. D. C. 9th Army Corps.