

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

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

Columbia Ky. May 14th 63

Dear Father

I have received your letter & papers - & a letter from Ellen lately. We left Lebanon the 27th of last month & have been marching most of the time since. We were ordered to this place at first to do provost duty but had hardly got here when we were <sup>[sic]</sup> were ordered in light marching orders to reinforce Col. Jacobs (Col. ~~Conley~~ <sup>Conley</sup> brigade of Cavalry) on the Cumberland river at horse shoe bottom - as soon as we reached him he ordered us with two pieces of artillery to go with him to Monticello & help drive Pegram with five thousand Rebs. from that place but Col. Wolford <sup>[?]</sup> got the start of us & drove them out the night before we got there. We stopped there two days & then came back to the river where we had to cross in high water with a small ferry boat - it took us three days to cross & the Infantry was the last to cross - just as we were all across our pickets were attacked and we sent reinforcements - 292 in all of our men & about 100 of the Cavalry - dismounted - the next day we had a regular bushwhack fight all forenoon & in the middle of the afternoon we sent one piece of artillery to shell them & found they had been reinforced & greatly outnumbered us - Morgan & his whole forces were there - we made a stand & held our position - Morgan had about 100 killed & wounded & we had five or six killed & about twenty wounded. We finally fell back to the river & crossed. It took us about three hours to cross but Morgan did not follow us - he sent in a flag of truce & demanded an unconditional surrender but Col. Jacobs sent back word that if he wanted us he must come & take us - we took three or four of Morgan's men who told us they never fought such men as we were before - & never received such a check from such a small force before in Ky. We had to leave our dead & some of the wounded - but Morgan took care of them, dressed their wounds and sent them down to the ford & delivered them over the next morning. We gained a splendid reputation for fighting and have sustained the reputation of Mich. troops. No State has better men in the field than Mich. & not one Regt. has any particle of dishonor attached to it.

Our brigade with the exception of the Mich. 8th ( who are building a bridge across the Green river) are here - & we have a brigade of Cavalry & a battery here - and are waiting for Morgan who has said he is going to Louisville or die in the attempt - he is obliged to make a raid somewhere to keep from starving.

Ellen writes me that you think of going to Ausable Forks - if you can get a better support there. Perhaps it is as good a place as Willsboro - but I never fancied one place more than the other and wish you could get a better place than either. I am as well as usual but have had some ague & got pretty well worn out on our march - but have got rested & something to eat & feel better.

Yours &c

Wm. A. Barnard

[Added on the side & top of the first page]-

I got the stamps & they came just in time as I was entirely out.

I am 1st Lt. of Co. "C" promoted Apl. 25th. I shall try & get a leave of absence in about two months if I can for 30 days & visit you.

W.A.B.