

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

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

Camp 20th Mich. Infty.
Before Petersburg Va.
July 23d 1864

Dear Sister

I have your letter of July 11th saying that Aunt Mary and Uncle Albert are visiting you and that there was a picnic in contemplation to Flat Rock - & wish I was there to pic-nic with you - or wish I could serve the Govt. by pitching my tent on Flat Rock & holding the position for the next sixty days.

There is nothing new here - Grant's ways are devious & past finding out & I expect we are still "fighting it out on this line" - although we get along from day to day without incident - battle or bloodshed - our works are very near the Rebs. but there is no firing, by mutual consent of both pickets - except artillery. We may have a bloody battle for the possession of Petersburg soon and we may remain here until winter without fighting - we do not know any more about our movements than you do - still we are ready for action at any moment and get in line of battle with as much unconcern as if we were just getting out for inspection. Nothing excites the men - & they will take notice of no firing from the enemy until they see them in line coming towards us and hear the bullets whistling over their heads. We are in strong works on both sides & each waiting for the other party to make the attack.

I was over to the 2d Corps last week and found Tom Turnbull & Horace Smith of Willsboro. They are both well and seem to stand the service without much trouble - Tom is in the Ambulance Corps - which is a safe place and says his time will be out in about two months - when he intends to return to Willsboro & live with his Father until "provisions are lower" - Ed Lynch the boys told me was "back sick" in some of the Hospitals around Washington. The weather here has moderated considerably & we get along quite comfortably - our hot days are followed by cold nights - & we sleep soundly and keep in the shade during the day. Write me all the W. news & let me know when Arthur Cheeney will return & I will go to him for further particulars. I am well as usual & have nothing to write.

Yours &c

Wm. A. Barnard
Lt. Com'dg. Co. "H" & "A"
20th Mich. Vol. [?]