

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

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

Newport News, Va.
Feb. 20th 1863

Dear Father

I have received your letter of Feb. 2d & one from Ellen since giving an account of the Fair & c - the 9th Corps left Fredericksburgh on the 14th inst. and reached here the 18th after an interesting trip down the bay. We took the cars from Fredsbg. to Aquia ? Creek & the Steamer Robt. Norris down the river & bay - & had a fine journey with the exception of rain most of the time - passed Fortress Monroe & saw the Union & Lincoln guns - Rip Raps - Hampton & two "Cheese boxes" watching for Rebl. gun boats. One of the Rebl. gun boats was down here several days ago & one of our Monitors followed it back beyond Fort Darling. We are on the north bank of the James river - and have the finest camping ground I have seen yet. We are right on the bank of the river - which rises about 40 feet above the level of the water & the land is sandy enough to be free from mud even in wet weather. The river I think is four or five mls. wide here - & looks to be about the width of Lake Champlain at the mouth of the Boquet. ? Genl. Wilcox is in command of the 9th Corps now, Genl. Poe of the first Division & Col. Fenton of the brigade. There are no troops here now but the 9th Corps. Hooker is left with the army opposite Fredsbg. and the men say he will fight the Rebs every where he can find them after it is better traveling there & he gets started. I have never seen Segel ? - he is in command of a Corps - on Hooker's right near Falmouth.

I am 2d Lt. in Co. 6, which is now the ranking Co. & has the post of honor on the right of the Regt. 2d Lt's pay - every thing computed is \$105.50 pr month, 1st Lt's pay \$110.50, Capt's \$120.50, Majors' \$179.00 - Lt. Col's \$198.00 & Col's \$222.00 - Every Com'd. officer buys his equipments - uniform - & rations - We get plenty of oysters now for \$1.00 pr gallon - right out of the shell - & can get fish when a boat comes in here - & can buy ham, potatoes, soft bread, pork & beef of the Brigade Com'sy. It has rained most of the time since we have been here & we have had a bad time to arrange our quarters - but it cleared away last night & we are comfortable today & in the pleasantest place I have found yet & where we can see something.

Yorktown is 12 mls. from here & Williamsburgh 11, I believe - We have troops at both places.

I got Ellen's letter just as we landed here & will answer when I have more time. I have recd. only \$29. from the Govt. yet & have used it to buy a sword and some necessary clothing since my promotion. We have no snow yet but comfortable - May weather.

Yours &c,

Wm. A. Barnard

(Added on the edge of the first page) --

We passed the ground where the Monitor & Merrimac had their fight & saw the wrecks of the "Congress & Cumberland" which lay near the shore about two miles from here.

W. A. B.