

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

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

20th Mich. Inf'ty.
Camp "Park" Ky. Aug. 17 1863

Dear Father

We have been here about a week eighteen miles south of Lexington and have some prospect of a rest after the fatigue of our Miss. Campaign. It was the hardest Campaign the 9th Corps ever had - we were included in the forces assigned Sherman to watch Johnston during the seige and worked on fortifications most of the time.

The day Vicksburg surrendered we started for Jackson to attack Johnston & had one of the hardest marches in the heat and without good water that we ever had. We finally got into position at Jackson & dodged shell & bullets six days until Johnston evacuated and then went north to Madison and destroyed about ten miles of R. R. and burned a large amount of cotton and returned to Vicksburg - waited about two weeks and then were crowded into transport for Cairo and into freight cars from Cairo to Cincinnati and have gone into camp here to rest and recruit the health of the men. The extreme heat & poor water - with the marching we done caused a great amount of sickness among the men and about used us up. Grant in a congratulatory order before we left complimented us highly on our dicipline [sic] & eagerness in following Johnston & fighting him - told us to inscribe "Vicksburg" & "Jackson" on our banners - & said we deserved the highest honors our Country could award. When we joined Grant's Army we were looked upon by the Western troops & their officers as Eastern troops that had never won a battle and knew nothing about fighting and did not amount to much anyway.

But in our march on Jackson the 9th Corps beat everything on the route marching - went around in the rear of Jackson - formed in line of battle, the moment we got there, drove in the enemy's skirmishers and took position in front of the Rebl. works & kept up heavy skirmishing for two days before Sherman got his Western troops into position.

Sherman sent word to us that we were father [sic] in front than he wanted us and was afraid we would all get taken prisisioners [sic] but we held our position & done every thing they would let us do. There was one division of Western troops assigned to our Corps and went into position on our right - but as fast as the Rebs. fired on their skirmishers they would fall back. They saw us go in and we got a reputation at once all through the Army for keeping the best line of battle they ever saw & being of some service in case of a fight. The Western Army is a regular rabble [?] compared with Lee's troops and if Grant was on the Potomac with his troops he would probably meet with as many disasters as other Genls. there. I am on duty but feel the effects of Mississippi yet. I have received no pay from the Govt. since last Oct. & they owe me ten months pay. I have had some trouble in getting mustered but hope to arrange my papers soon - & shall get my money all at one payment & will send you some of it.

Will write to Ellen soon - have not received any letters from home for several weeks.

Yours &c

Wm. A. Barnard

X[Added along the side of the first page] - I have not recd. your letter from Mich. yet.

W.A.B.