

Captain William A. Barnard, 20<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry, 1862-1865.

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

Camp of 20<sup>th</sup> Mich. Inf'ty.  
Near Vicksburgh Miss. June 19<sup>th</sup> 63

Dear Father

We have been here several days, to reinforce Grant - but he does not seem to need us - & we are in camp north of the City between the Yazoo and Grant's line of battle. We had a fine journey down the river from Cairo - & enjoyed it much. We were fired upon along the Arkansas shore by guerillas several times but no one hurt - one of our horses was wounded. We landed first at Youngs point opposite Vicksburg at the head of the Canal that Grant commenced - which was in my opinion not intended to turn the course of the river - so much as it was to get the attention of the enemy & be a headquarters for runaway niggers - while Grant was opperating [sic] elsewhere. Grant has Vicksburgh completely surrounded. The gunboats hold the river & Grant has the City well guarded his right resting on the river above - and his left on the river below the City - so that the Army fights Pemberton during the day and the gun and mortar [sic] boats during the night - keeping them constantly busy. Grant calls them his prisoners [sic] - Johnson made an attack last Monday in Grants rear while we lay at Youngs pt. - Grant whipped him badly and took two thousand prisoners & yesterday our scouts captured 500 XXXXXXXX head of cattle & 200 mules & horses on their way to Johnson.

Grant lives on the enemy & while on the march takes planters & all their slaves & all the mules, horses, cattle, grain & provisions he can find. Grant has been bombarding the City & fighting them for thirty days and will take it finally - with everything there is there. We had the pleasure of watching the mortar boats two days & nights as they threw their 250 lb. shells into the City. We were in plain sight of the mortar boats and the City & could hear Grant's musketry and artillery in the rear - it was not as noisy as the battle of Fredericksburg but rather more successful - as we shall starve them out in time.

Youngs pt. is completely covered with runaway Niggers - the Govt. furnishes them tents & rations and they are having quite a holiday. All the men & boys that are large enough are furnished with guns & equipments & organized into Regts. with white officers. I saw the 2d Miss. & found a Nigger from Port Gibson who was well acquainted with Butler of my Class. He saw him last winter & says he is "getting on well" but doesn't [sic] live in Port Gibson now. The provost duty in Memphis is mostly done by Nigger regts. and we saw them all along Arkansas & northern Louisiana. We expect to go to work soon fortifying the bluffs here north of the City.

Yours &c

Wm. A. Barnard