

Camp of 20th Mich. Infty.
In the rear of Vicksburg July 2d 63

Dear Sister

Your letters of June 5th & 13th came the same day. We are here in the land of the Cypress & myrtle yet - and just at present about twelve miles East of Vicksburg giving Johnston a chance to come from the Big Black river & take us if he cares any thing about helping Pemberton out of a bad situation. Genl. Grant was along here yesterday & said he shouldn't wait here much longer for Johnston - if he didnt come soon he should take the city & said it had got to fall within ten days anyway so you can make up your mind that we have the City about the time you get this letter. I can hear the mortar boats distinctly this morning. They keep shelling the City - in order to keep the Rebs in their works & make them attend to their business. They say they are going to have a Ball the 4th & if we will come they will entertain us.

We are having pretty warm weather & generally lay in the shade during the day and move about a little after the sun goes down. I have a good darkie to do my cooking & washing - and you can get something of an idea how we live if you can imagine [sic] a person in the shade - enjoying the fragrance of the magnolia (which is in full bloom) looking around at the contrabands - alligators - snakes - musquitoes [sic] with bills as long as a knitting needle - ~~XXXXXXXX~~ and comparing the situation to all the other places he ever was in as he whistles "Janie [?] at the Gate" & listens to the sounds of War - & awaits in silent anxiety for the news of the greatest victory of the rebellion. Our principal duty here so far has been work on fortifications (rifle duty) in Grant's rear and picketing and scouting for Johnston between the Yazoo & big black. There is nothing particularly new. Johnston is no trouble to us - & Vicksburg has got to fall - and in a short time.

I hope John will get Father a place at Grass Lake & think you will like Michigan. It is one of the most popular states just now that we have and it is not very hard work to live there. I believe I will have to write to John.

I want all the news when Mother gets back & all the W. news. I cannot ask for a furlough now in the face of the enemy - and am to [sic] far from home to think of making the journey in 20 or 30 days leave - but will be there perhaps when Vicksburg falls & we are sent back to Ky. I havn't my mustering papers yet so that I can get my pay. They are on their way to the Adj't. Genl's. Office Wash'n. for consideration.

Remember me to Uncle Chas., Jule & the loyal young Ladies of W. & say to them that I will see them when this "Cruel War is over" (as the Copperheads express it).

I do not know how we will celebrate the 4th - but reckon we will have enthusiasm enough by listening to the Seige of Vicksburg.

Yours in the Old Miss'i. State-

Wm. A. Barnard, Lieut. Com'dg Co. "C"

[Added across top of first page] - Direct your letters via Cairo to follow Regiment. We are having a great time picking blackberries now. There is a right smart of them here - and peaches and figs will soon be ripe. We have cucumbers & green corn from the gardens of our brethren and try to live comfortably. Good bye.

W.A.B.