

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

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

Headquarters 20~ Mich. Inf.
Opposite Fredericksburgh Va.
Dec. 1st 1862

Dear Father

I have recd. your letters of the 17th & 24th of Nov. enclosing stamps & gloves and am very glad of them. I have done without any gloves so far & will see that Orville gets a letter of thanks. You can send the mittens by the time the gloves are worn out & the "sleeping cap" as soon as possible.

We came here the 21st of Nov. after a tiresome march - night & day - from near Warrenton. We have made no demonstrations towards destroying the enemy yet - which makes considerable talk about Washington - but I think Burnside knows what he is doing. The land is covered with soldiers here & it is nothing but a large camp for mls. and there are a great many old Regts. here. I do not hear much dissatisfaction among the troops at McClellan's removal - it is pretty certain that he did not follow the Rebs from Md. as he might & that he was implicated in the surrender of Harpers Ferry & in fact - that he might have ended the War before this time - but Burnside has the job now & every soldier I have heard express himself - has perfect confidence in him & does not think of anything but success. He has a large army of old troops here and a large reserve in case they fail, and still another reserve to kick every Reb - after he is dead.

We are very comfortable here - have what we want to eat - Can look over the River and see the City & the Rebs at work on their fortifications & wonder what Burnside is going to do with them. I think when we get started we will not stop until something will happen to end the Rebellion forever. I think when the fight commences it will be all fight & nothing else until we go into winter quarters at Richmond.

I am Sergt. Major now - have got through carrying a musket & knapsack & have an easier time. The position is not a very high one but when earned by enlisting as a private at this time - doing all kinds of duty marching nearly a thousand mls. with a soldier's baggage - &c is honorable -the next place to a Com'n - & a place that is sought for by fifty Sergts. I have charge of all details from the Regt. for Regt'l. Brigade or Division guard or picket duty - make the detail - form & inspect the Guard & report them for duty.

Bancroft of my class took dinner with me today & I fed him in Coffee hard bread -baked beans & raw salt pork. He has been promoted since the Sharpsburgh fight from 1st Sergt. to 1st Lt.

Eaton is with the 50th Mass. at N. Y. City waiting to embark in Banks Expedition. He goes as a clerk in the Quater [sic] Masters Dept. & thinks they will leave the City in about ten days. We are the only fighting men of our class.

I have an A - tent now with the Regt'l Clerk & we have built a fireplace & chimney in the old Virginia style & get along "right smart" as they express it here. We have done picket duty since we have been here on the old Washington farm - the farm that George Wash'n cut the cherry tree on - it is about one mile from here. We are camped in sight of the City of Fredericksburgh & near the "Lacey House" a fine residence owned at present by a major in the Rebel Army.

The R. R. from Falmouth to Alexandria & Washington has been put in running order since we have been here & we get our supplies in that way -there is also telegraph communication with Wash'n. We seldom see a newspaper here and you probably know more about the movements of the different armys than we do.

I am positive we have been making a forward movement for several weeks and some of the time moved most too fast.

We have changed Brigades lately and are in the 1st Brigade now - 1st Division & 1st Grand Division of the Army of the Potomac - 9th Corps.

We have no snow here yet - but frosty - cold fall weather - with an occasional rain storm.

Yours &c,
Wm. A. Barnard