

MILTON BARNES to RHODA BARNES

NOTE: Captain Milton Barnes describes his trip from Ohio to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. He apparently departed from Cambridge, Ohio, his residence and passed through his hometown, Barnesville, en route to Wheeling. [Barnesville was named for his ancestors who migrated from Maryland at the close of the 18th century.] The Union officers he mentions seeing are Major General John C. Fremont - then commander of the Department of the West - and well known as "The Pathfinder", explorer of the west and first candidate of the Republican Party for President in 1856; Brigadier General Benjamin Franklin Kelley; and Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans, later a commander of the Army of the Cumberland in which Barnes fought from late 1862 until mid 1864. Barnes' reference to the Ohio Secretary of State is of interest in that Barnes was elected to this position twice after the war [1876 and 1878] and several memtos of this period are included in this collection. He also mentions his brother Frank Barnes, who later joined the Army ~~and~~ and was wounded.

Thursday April 3d, 1862

Winchester Va. "Taylor House"

My dear, very dear wife

and all loved ones at home Arrived here late last night, very tired and sleepy, so have deferred writing until this morning. got a good night's rest, and a hot cup of coffee and now feel better. of course my thoughts, my most anxious thoughts, like winged spirits are wending their way back to you and home. I need not tell you how the spirit of sadness like an incubus weighted upon my spirit as I left you, and of the struggle between the promptings of public duty and private affections--you know it all dear and appreciate it all.---I had an interesting and very pleasant trip all the way except last night coming up from Harper's Ferry in a train crowded to suffocation with passengers and moving at the rate of 3 miles per hour--But you want all the particulars dont you? So you shall have them in some kind of shape. I met on the train at Cambridge [Ohio] B. Rush Cowan, [Ohio] Secretary of State and Paymaster in the Army, and passed the time with him to Bellaire. The train only stopped at Barnesville [Ohio] about 3 minutes. our folks, Papa, Mamma, Ruth, Sadie and Frank were at the station. I just had time to step out and say good bye to them, and it was so dark I couldn't see their faces.

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poor Mamma seemed to be affected very much--so did they all--but she the most. This did not tend to relieve my feelings, already overflowing. I put my soldier boy off at Bellaire, and Charly Moore and I went on up to Wheeling for the night--at his suggestion put up at the Old Monroe House. had most wretched fare but slept well as the train did not start out till 10--I went down to the McClure House to get a peep at Gen. Fremont. I planted myself in the doorway to the breakfast room. thinking I should recognize him from his portraits without difficulty but he and his staff all passed in and I had to have him pointed out to me after all- he was sitting at the far end of the room, which was kind of foggy, and I got a side view only, and at that distance. He was the last man among the large number of military distingues at the McClure that I should have taken for Fremont, expecting to see see a kind of Mexican Mustang of a man with black hair long and parted in the middle with black whiskers accordingly-instead of that I saw a small plain man with neat blue uniform [,] hair closely cropped and brushed to one side-temples [,] white whiskers and mustache cropped pretty short [,] quite grey-almost white-I should have taken him for a Presbyterian preacher-he sat talking with his staff-sipping his coffee out of the cup but holding it in the saucer-he ate but little talking all the time-aside from the above description I saw nothing peculiar about him except an occasional glance of the eye. a dark brilliant, flashy-french looking eye-his top head is high round and full-forhead [?] good medium height-getting tired waiting I turned around a moment for something--but when I returned\*my bird had flown! <sup>[Benton Fremont]</sup> Jessie was there but not at table and saw her not. Saw Gen. Rosecrans and Gen. Kelly [sic] both fine looking men- took the train at ten,

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for a trip through the Mountain country--and mountain country it is sure--I stood most of the time on the hind end of the train to see the country better--it becomes mountainous as soon as the road leaves the river at Moundsville--15 miles below Wheeling--the road winds about among the hills in all directions--turning and twisting about, now up a narrow ravine--now around the spur of the mountains, now through a tunnell--now across a bridge and through another tunnell, and so on indefinitely. The hills [are] steep rocky, and projecting out over head almost perpendicular--skirted along the banks the streams with hemlock and laurel--which was some little relief from the leafless and barren appearance of the hills--3 o'clock P.M. took dinner at Grafton where the Parkerburgh [Sic] road come [s] in, a little town in the upper Monongahela--the scenery along here was very pretty--leaving that river we commencing [Sic] climbing western slope of the mountains a steep grade for perhaps 30 miles--before reaching the summit ~~we~~ ~~after~~ ~~we~~ ~~crossed~~ --we came upon the Cheat river--here suddenly opened out upon the view one of the wildest and most gorgeous scenes imaginable--opened wide my eyes to catch if possible the whole scene--the road leads along the side of the mountain--below on the left--down, down, the precipice for hundreds of feet is the Cheat river dark and rapid looking not larger than a mill race [Sic]--its banks fringed with dark pine trees--and the interminable laurel--on the opposite side--rising abruptly--up--up comes the hug~~g~~ mountain monster--but look again up, up, you gaze until your head grows dizzy with the sight--across it seems but a stones throw, but

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trees look little larger than walking sticks-we now come to the famous trussell bridge-a short span-200 feet high-not across cheat river as I expected, but across a deep gorge in the side of the mountain [,] all solid iron framework-I was so occupied with the natural scene before me that I cared but little for the bridge-it was but the puny work of man-that man must be an idiot who can see nothing in this but a big hill. The scene was so impressed upon my nervous system that it haunted me all night-and robbed me of a whole night's sleep-as you approach the summit of the mountain, the atmosphere becomes very cool and bracing-and as the weather was mild and clear its effect was most delightful. here is a range of high table land-for 20 miles tolerably level-called here the "glades" it was here the sun left us sinking behind a sheet of cloud forming an irregular semicircle. I stood watching the sun hide behind the edge of the cloud, now ~~fringing~~ <sup>fringe</sup> it with gold, as I caught the last view of it, a huge column of smoke from the engine rolled back hiding from view everything but the deep painted [?] gold fringe-I involuntarily clapped my hands with <sup>a</sup> kind of <sup>ext</sup> extasy-it was the most superlatively beautiful scene I ever witnessed, so from hence to Cumberland by night.

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The town is occupied by two regiments of infantry and some cavalry. The streets are thronged with blue coats--secession is played out here and many men who risked their all in it are ruined, but they are mum. Everything is quiet and safe. This is a tolerably good house-but crowded with officers. <sup>[I]</sup> I think I will stay here a few days until I get acclimated.

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[Top margin of first page]:~~You will direct your letters to me, 62d Ohio~~  
Reg.-Gen Shields ~~division via Winchester, Va.~~ ["Shields" partly obliterated.]

I hope to get a letter from you as soon as possible after receiving this-  
Now my dear Rhoda adieu for the present, my love to Mother and kisses for  
Tirza--will write again in a day or two. There is now regular mail from  
here. I am well with quite a feeling of security Keep in good heart dearest  
Goodbye Dear Wife and believe me your ever faithful husband M. Barnes

[Left margin of second page]

Enclosed you find a scrap with the proper address.