

Milton Barnes to Rhoda Barnes

NOTE: In this letter Milton Barnes refers to meeting a lieutenant from Maryland who appeared to be a distant relative. The Barnes family of Barnesville, Ohio were descendents of migrants from the Barnesville, Md., area. There were several Maryland cavalry and infantry units with Federal forces in the valley.

Strausburg [Strasburg] Va.

April 6th 1862

My dear wife

I intended to write you again before I left Winchester, but when I got up this morning I found Capt Hirst at the hotel just going to start for the Reg. so for the sake of his company I packed up immediately and came along with him - he belongs to [the] 62d and is the man [who] went through Cambridge last Monday night. I was tired staying in Winchester at [\$]2.00 per day with nothing to eat--so I started with him on foot to break myself in, intending if gave out to get into an army wagon, with which the road is full, and go back - but we hadn't gone far till we were overtaken by a hay-wagon and got on - rode till we got tired and then walked awhile. at noon stopped in a little town on the road for dinner - seeing [no] hotel open I looked around - I saw a little house by the side of the street - told Capt. Hirst I'd bet we could get dinner there - went to the door - found two old people, very nice looking poor people - asked for dinner in about 15 minutes - sat down to the best dinner since I have left home. I ate heartily - for which we paid 50 cents a piece - - the old lady was tickled mightily with our generosity - saying the soldiers were not in the habit of paying any thing - they proved to be [sincere?] people[.] we got in here middle of afternoon and concluded to stay all night again and rest. I feel first-rate after my travel[.] I walked about 8 miles. There are plenty of troops here - I met one Lieut. from Md. with [whom] I scraped a relationship, but it was very remote - I have also been talking

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April 6th 1862

- 2 -

with a Md Capt. who is personally acquainted with your uncle - Mr. David Vance in Marshall's office - he speaks very highly of him. of course I told him of my dear wife[.] My trip thus far has been very fine - I have had splendid weather ever since I left home. Charly went with Bill Abbott home yesterday[.] he is secesh - like anybody else in this country - but harmless now that the sceptre is passing away from them. Our Reg. is about 12 miles still above here. The road is guarded strong all along. We see little else now but blue coats. The secesh uniform is a light drab coarse and ugly as mud. The country along here is very fine and rich[.] The valley is about 15 to 20 miles wide[,]high mountains on each side. splendid farm house[s], full of niggers. Winchester is chuck full of Darkies - of all shades. You can hardly tell where the line of demarkation is - I wrote you the next morning after we got to Winchester. I do hope you have got it, dear. Our Paymaster is within the lines paying off the Regiments - I will get to ours before they are payed. I had hoped to meet with our sutler or get some money to send you before this - but will have to wait till pay-day - as I learn that the sutler and all the Reg. are strapped - so dear you must try and get along as well as you can till I can get it to send, which I hope wont be many days - I am a little tired, dear Rhoda and my good wife will have to excuse this hasty, short and uninteresting letter as I [am] standing at the counter in an old barroom crowded with soldiers, talking all around me - but they dont bother me much after all for my thoughts are with you and the rest of the loved ones at home - and my trust in that Higher power which you, dear wife have so often wished me to, and who I trust will take care of me and you and ours.

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- 3 -

Now my dear I will go to bed, I think I will enjoy my sleep well
after my walk[.] The mail facilities are so poor fear you wont get
my letters very promptly - but I will still writ[e] frequently[.]
Truly and ever faithful love to Dear Mother and Tirza
yours Milton Barnes.

[On top margin of Page 1.]

Yesterday I visited Jas. M. Mason's house in Winchester - you know
Mason & Slidell of the Trent affair - I procured several interesting
paper[s] I will send to you the first opportunity. I intended to send
them with Charly but started in too big a hurry - and did not get to
see him. He will be home perhaps before this reaches you and call -