

Object Accession #: 3786ar
Object Digitized Files: D-3786arA, D-3786arB, D-3786arC
Transcription File #: D-3786arD

1862-09-08/1862-09-09 LETTER FROM P. BENNER WILSON TO HIS BROTHERS AND SISTER

[Note: Sept. 8, 1862 was a Monday. This letter was also written on Sept. 9, 1862 as indicated within the letter. William was P. Benner Wilson's brother and Mary was his sister.]

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Arlington Heights

Washington, Sept. 8/62 *[Sept. 8, 1862]*

Dear Bros & Sister

I arrived here yesterday with my squadron of Cos. [Companies] B & F [2nd PA Cavalry]. We were with Genl. [General] Sturgis as his escort or body guard. But yesterday we got an order to report to the Regt. [Regiment]. We laid at Alexandria [VA] two days and at Ball's Cross Roads¹ three days. We had a very pleasant time whilst we were there. Charly Hale² & Judge Casey son³ was *[sic]* there. We may be probably sent back, but it is uncertain.

I recvd. [received] two letters & one paper from William and one from Mary dated Augt. [August] 18. I have not recvd. [received] since. I have not heard if that money was recvd. [received] I sent home for the men from Culpepper [VA], being seven hundred & twenty two dolls. [dollars].

I had to buy another horse. I drew a check and endorsed by Gilliland⁴ for 80 dolls. [dollars]. I got the horse very cheap. He is an iron grey. I got him for 77⁵⁰ dolls. [dollars]. He is worth 140 (symbol for dollars). The man wanted money very bad.

I wrote you a long letter written by a lead pencil which I had mailed on Washington last week. I suppose it would puzzle you to read it as I had such a poor opportunity of writing. I gave you the account of the Battle we had at Bulls Run.

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I hardly can account for escaping, being honest it was a Providential occurrence. Jno. Jack⁵ recvd. [received] a flesh wound. I have not seen an account of the killed & wounded. There was a great many. I

¹ Ball's Crossroads – in Arlington, VA; intersection of two roads, one from Georgetown to Fairfax Court House and Warrenton, and the other from Alexandria to the Leesburg Pike

² Charles Huston Hale (1837 – 1872) - listed as a Bellefonte, PA lawyer in censuses; served in the 28th PA Militia from June 1863 – July 1863; mustered in the 19th Infantry Regular Army as a 1st Lieutenant on Aug. 5, 1861; promoted to Captain on June 25, 1862; mustered out as Captain in the 19th Infantry Regular Army on April 28, 1865

³ Isaac Knettle Casey (1844 – 1867) - son of Judge Joseph Casey; born in Pennsylvania; mustered in June 4, 1862 as Captain, U.S. Volunteers Aide-De-Camp; mustered out Feb. 2, 1866 as Major

⁴ Col. James Gilliland (1804 – 1889) - helped with P. Benner Wilson's military officer appointment by Gov. Curtin; born in Buffalo Valley, PA; at start of Civil War was appointed Captain of a company from Snow Shoe, PA but was re-assigned to the Quartermaster-General's office due to his age; appointed by Gov. Curtin as commissary and quartermaster of the 1st Regiment of PA Veterans based in Washington D. C.

⁵ John Jack – assumed to be either in Company F or B but does not appear on the Bates rosters; insufficient information to identify further

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hear that Jackson⁶ has crossed into Maryland down by Purdy Point & Edward's Firy [Ferry] with about 40 thousand men. We have sent a great many men down under Genl. [General] Burnside⁷. There was on Saturday night passed through place on their way, 28 Regiments of Infantry & 110 pieces of artillery at one time. I hope we will bag them. I suppose it is their idea to get up into Penna. [Pennsylvania] to get something to subsist on.

I see by the Gov. [Governor's] Proclamation⁸ that the state is to be placed under arms.

I was very sorry to hear of the death of Mr. Abram Valentine⁹.

I saw Doct. [Doctor] Irvin¹⁰ & Doct. [Doctor] Hale¹¹ who were telling me of it. I heard that Docts. [Doctors] McCoy¹² & Mitchell¹³ were in Washington. I was sorry that I did not see them. They left the day before I got to Washington.

Tell Martha Kephart¹⁴ that Miles¹⁵ was well the last time I saw him which was about a week ago. It was since the Battle.

I just heard that we were to report to Genl. [General] Buford¹⁶ which I suppose we will have to leave in a short time. I will write to you and let you know where we will be sent.

I have not been very well for the last two weeks. My system is very much out of order. There is very I eat but what I throw up. I am afraid

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I have the *[illegible disease]*. I never was as thin as I am at the present time but I have not given up. I am still doing duty every day. If I was at home I know I would be in bed. I hope I will be getting better soon. I have had considerable pain in my side & breast. Ask Doct. [Doctor] Potter¹⁷ or *[Doctor] Mitchell* what would be good for me to take. I throw up a great [deal] and in the morning I feel bad sometimes. I get awake at night and have to vomit. Tell Doct. [Doctor] Potter that our Surgeon Doct. [Doctor] Taggart¹⁸ is going to resign. I wish that Doct. [Doctor] Potter could get the appointment in our Regt. [Regiment].

⁶ General Thomas Jonathan 'Stonewall' Jackson (1824 – May 10, 1863) - Confederate Army general who commanded Confederate troops in the east in support of General Lee; he was shot in his left arm by his own pickets requiring amputation of the arm, and he died from pneumonia due to his weakened condition

⁷ Major General Ambrose Burnside (1824 – 1881) - U.S. army officer (1847 – 1861), Union Major General (1861 – 1865), inventor, industrialist and politician; U.S. Senator from Rhode Island (1875 – 1881); Governor of Rhode Island

⁸ Governor Andrew G. Curtin's Proclamation of Sept. 11, 1862 – General Order #36 where 50,000 freemen of Pennsylvania are 'called for immediate service to repel the now eminent danger from invasion by enemies of the country'.

⁹ Abram Valentine (1795 – Aug. 29, 1862) – born in Downingtown, PA; resident of Centre County, PA

¹⁰ Dr. Irwin – insufficient information to identify further

¹¹ Dr. Hale – insufficient information to identify further

¹² Dr. McCoy – insufficient information to identify further

¹³ Dr. John S. Mitchell (1825 – 1874) - doctor living in Bellefonte, PA in 1860 census; Union captain from April 15, 1861 – Aug. 1, 1861

¹⁴ Martha Jane *Mitchell* Kephart (1816 – 1885) - mother to John Miles Kephart

¹⁵ John Miles Kephart (1839 – 1930) - mustered in Dec. 20, 1861 as 2nd Lieutenant in the 84th Regiment, PA Infantry; mustered out Dec. 31, 1864 as 1st Lieutenant and Regimental Quartermaster in the 84th Regiment, PA Infantry

¹⁶ General John Buford, Jr. (1826 – 1863) - U.S. Army cavalry officer and Union Brigadier General; graduated from West Point; died during the war due to failing health

¹⁷ Dr. George L. Potter (1819 – 1879) - youngest son of General James Potter; surgeon of the 45th PA Regiment from Oct. 12, 1861 to Aug. 1, 1862; surgeon of the 145th PA Regiment from Sept. 12, 1862 to May 31, 1865; promoted to surgeon of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 2nd Corps, Army of the Potomac

¹⁸ Dr. William Hembel Taggart (1830 – 1899) - mustered in Oct. 12, 1861 as Regimental Surgeon of 2nd PA Cavalry (59th PA Regiment); resigned Sept. 21, 1862; enlisted in Navy as Acting Assistant Surgeon from Oct. 1, 1864 – Jan. 18, 1865

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I intend going into Washington in the morning and I will not finish this letter until then. We are lying at Arlington Heights near Arlington House about one half mile from the Long Bridge near the road running parallel with the river about half way between the Long Bridge & the Aquaduct Bridge.

I have not seen any of our new Regts. [Regiments] from Penna. [Pennsylvania]. What is the number of the Regts. [Regiments] they are in [?] Let me know if you can ascertain.

Our men are getting along very well. I only had one man wounded. He was by the name of William Johnson¹⁹. There was a shell struck and killed his horse and broke his leg. I believe he is getting along very well. He was sent to the Hospital.

I believe I wrote in my last letter that Geo. Corman²⁰ was killed. I was but a short distance from him but could not get to see him. Nelson Lucas²¹ was among the killed.

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Washington, Sept. 9

Doct. Taggart gave me a certificate to come to Washington to [recover] my health. My constitution is very much broken down. I hope I will be getting better. Shortly my liver is very much out of order and a very severe pain in my breast & side. I am staying at a Boarding House on 17th Street 495. Mrs. Hicks²² is the lady who keeps the house. She has about 20 boarders. She is very kind to me and I get all the attention I can ask for. I hope in the course of a a [sic] week or ten days I will be fit for duty. I feel pretty bad today.

If I get any worse I will write to you. I would like to see you all very much particularly Mary as I have not seen her for so long.

Remember me to all inquiring friends. Write immediately on receipt of my letter and direct Washington, 495 – 17th Street.

From your affectionate Brother,

Benner

¹⁹ William Johnson - mustered in Feb. 13, 1862 as a private in Company F, 2nd PA Cavalry (59th PA Regiment); insufficient information to identify further

²⁰ George Corman (~1826 – Aug. 9, 1862) - Captain of Company F, 56th PA Infantry; a Centre County resident who mustered in Nov. 4, 1861; wounded at Gainesville, VA on Aug. 28, 1862 who died of his wounds on Aug. 29, 1862; he was a tanner

²¹ Nelson Lucas – insufficient information to identify further

²² Mrs. Hicks – insufficient information to identify further