

William C Benedict Letter

Camp Rolla December 5 (1862)

[image at top of first and last sheet of paper:

weeping woman and the face of a soldier and this caption: COL. E. D. BAKER, Killed at the Battle of Ball's Bluff, Virginia, Oct. 21st, 1861.]

[writing on top of first and last sheet of paper:

Ah! never shall the land forget
How gushed the life-blood of her brave,
Gushed, warm with hope and courage yet,
Upon the soil they fought to save.
BRYANT.]

Dear Brother,

It is now about ½ past 10 PM and I am sitting up with our orderly who is sick with the measles. There are a great many cases of the measles in this regiment at the present it seems as though there is not a man that has had them with the exception of that the regt [sic] have been very healthy so far. We are staying in our tents yet we have not commenced to build barracks as we do not know whether we shall stay here or not yet I am afraid if we do not make a move pretty shortly there will be a great many deaths as it is very unhealthy staying in these tents in cold weather. It is very pleasant here now not very cold but just about right we have had a light fall of snow about 2 inches but it soon disappeared. I wish you could be here now to see the troops there are about 23,000 quarterd [sic] around here Seigle [sic] is here with several thousand. Asboth [sic] is here with several thousand and Wyman is here with several thousand which makes quite a camp. I have seen the time I would go several miles to see so many troops [crossed out] soldiers but it is getting too common to be interesting. You have not gone to Bedloes Island yet have you if you go you must give me your directions so I can write to you occasionally. I received a letter from Irving a few days ago a long letter it was too just such as I like to get it is the first time I have received a letter from him since I have been in Camp Rolla. Our 1st Lieut [sic] has been promoted to Quartermaster and our Captain has been offered the position of second Surgeon in the Regt and has accepted and will take his place in a short time I expect. I expect our Orderly will be one of the Lieuts [sic] and who will be the Captain I do not know. I should like to be [crossed out] join those that are going down the Mississippi this winter very much and [crossed out] and I dont [sic] know but our Regt will go we would see some hard times and some fun I think and we would stand a good chance to see some fighting which we wont [sic] if we stay here I am afraid. Have you read the Presidents [sic] message and

[three illegible words] you think of it. I have not read all of it yet but the boys here think it does not come quite up to the point. I expect we shall have some pretty tall fighting one of these days. the old saying is there is always a calm before a storm. I think we are having a calm and in a few days we will have a storm. There was quite a skirmish a few days ago a few miles from here at a place called Salem between about 300 secesh under Col Freeman and about 100 Union men under Major Bower which resulted in a complete rout of the Rebels our men lost about 15 killed and several wounded. How many lost on the other side I do not know. Col Freeman is prowling around here. considerable and he will get the spots taken off of him shortly if he is not careful. I expect Johnny and Wilbur will have gay times I should like very much to be with them or in the expedition somewhere. I expect they will see some pretty hard times though before they see New York again. The capturing of Slidell and Mason was a pretty grand thing. if they could only come across Jeff Davis some time and nabb [sic] him it would be grander still I pray God they may. I should like very much to see your Regt out on Parade I expect they are pretty well drilled but I guess they could not beat the Illinois 36th much. we (and I say it without bragging) have the name of being the best drilled Regt in the west. I should like to send a challenge to you to meet your humble servant on a trial of the Manual of arms. I do not know but you could beat him but I doubt it a trifle but I have written a long epistle and must suspend give my love to all the girls and boys and write soon to the subscriber.

Wm C. Benedict

Excuse the mistake I made in writing on the wrong sheet.

[Image – Union Soldier seated with rifle]