

CW/VFM-63: Bernard Markward, 121st Pennsylvania, Co. B

Letters, 1864-1865 written by Markward to his wife and children while serving with the 121st. Pennsylvania Volunteers. 14 letters.

Bernard Markward joined the 121st PA Infantry on August 20th, 1862 as a member of Company B. He spent some time at Libby Prison when he was captured on October 1st, 1864. He would serve with the unit until it mustered out.

The 121st Pennsylvania was organized in Philadelphia around the end of August of 1862. This unit saw action at the major engagements of Fredericksburg (12/12-15/1862), Chancellorsville (5/2-5/1863), Gettysburg (7/1-3/1863), Spotsylvania (5/8-12/1864), Petersburg (6/16-18/1864), and were present for Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse (4/9/1865). The regiment was mustered out on June 2, 1865.

Letters from Markward to His Family (14):

11/24/1862- He sent a letter to his daughter promising her gifts and telling her to behave herself.

Original document: 1pp. (2 copies)

10/23/1863-This is a letter to the whole family, letting them know that he is well and that he received their last letter. He says there is talk of the regiment being sent home, but he doesn't think that's going to happen; so he tells them not to expect him home. Otherwise he simply gives an account of camp life and normal activity.

Original document: 1pp.

11/22/63-This is a love letter to his wife; this is probably the date of their anniversary.

Original document: 1pp.

1/4/1864-In this letter, he informs his family of his illness (he thinks it might be typhoid) and residence in the hospital. He also mentions that men might be moved, and if he is one will ask to be moved to Philadelphia. The description of his ailments is quite detailed.

Original document: 1pp.

7/10/1864-This letter contains a brief mention of skirmishing near Petersburg, Virginia.

*9/16/64-also mentions skirmishing; unknown location.

5/25/1865-This letter contains a brief mention of Lee's surrender.

*Overall, these letters are about camp life and convey his desire to be with his family soon. There are a couple with no dates.

Keywords: Union – East – Pennsylvania – 121st; Letters; Army – Infantry; Soldier – Privates

Location: Civil War Vertical File Manuscripts, Special Collections & College Archives, Musselman Library at Gettysburg College.

See also: [Civil War Sources in Special Collections](#)