

Barracks at Elmira
August 24, 1863

Dear Sister,

I arrived at the place on the evening of the day I left Gouverneur after a very pleasant trip indeed. If you wish to know the particulars of my journey, I refer you to a letter written home which will edify you on the point, where in you will also find a short description of this place etc.

I was four days ahead of the rest of the detachment and there are only two of us here now. Our business is to guard conscripts and all the non commissioned officer. We have to do duty as privates, I have been on guard 3 days since I came here. I am on today. It is not very hard work as we are allowed to sit down most of the time, but it looks strange to see orderly sergt. etc. walking the "beat." When off duty we go where we please and no one stops us. We live better here than at any soldiers' depot I was ever at. We have butter twice a day and save enough of it so we can have it 3 times a day if we like. For supper we have pudding and milk and at other meals coffee, bread, beef, soup & potatoes quite different from what the soldier usually gets. We are in the midst of the first growing part of the state and apples and pears are as plenty as blackberries and nearly as cheap; You may judge from this that at present the prospects for starving are rather small. As yet we have learned nothing in regard to the time of our departure from this place; but we shall probably remain here at least a month yet.

My respects to Mr. Hurlbert and tell him if he gets drafted or goes on in, he should try for the horse cavalry as walking is hard work. As for yourself learn to sing this sorry song I send you and "when this cruel war is over" I will come and hear you sing it.

Yours
John