after we had done drilling we were invited in to the cotage where I saw some monstrous portraits of the presidents there was one about a foot square of which I had 2 years to make and cost 100000 after having rested there awhile they invited us to take some California wine there was only one by besides myself that did not take it I was all tired out and it was hard to refuse but I did it after changing my mind half a dozen times (

Marched to the arsenal which was over five miles with out stopping to rest and it is twice as hard to march as to walk we drill in the arsenal in the evening from 8 till half past 10

Dear Brother you must excuse me for not writing before for I have been on an excursion to New York before starting we had to clean our gun and put 6 collar tooth brush a pair of white gloves in our cartridge box strap our overcoat on our back being folded these equipped we started from the high lands on the long dreadful excursion we marched down to the depot in Worcester distance about two miles and got on board the cars for Providence the drummer and bugler played on leaving
2nd.

every station till we reached Providence. We marched to the Armory of the first light infantry. It was a splendid Armory. The best we ever saw on the excursion. We unloading knapsacks and rested a little while. Then we drilled in the streets and the Mayor made a speech. We then went to the armory and put on our packs and march to the steamboat arrived on board at 5 o'clock PM. the steamboat name was Electra. We sailed down the bay all right but when rounding point growth about half of the boys were sea sick we went to bed about 9 o'clock part of the boys slept on a mattress laid on the floor some were sea sick all night when we got up in the morning we were about 20 miles from New York. we had a good view we landed in north river about 9 in the morning we took breakfast on board the boat and stayed there till 8 o'clock when we marched off of the boat preceded by the best band in New York and a string of policemen. We marched through Wall street to the ferry and crossed over to Brooklyn and marched to the armory of the 98 Regiment. We then unloading our knapsacks and ate a buck fast (such as it was) and rested ourselves after resting awhile we put on our knapsacks and marched to the city hall of New York and drilled before Major Hoffman.

3rd.
for women, but got late. So we marched to the Providence Armory and the Colonel let us go out in the streets for the first time during the excursion. After we returned to the armory, we drilled a little and it was the best during the excursion. Then we went out and heard some men talking. They said they were going to leave their regiment and join the Highlanders so that they could learn to drill. I suppose they said it only in jest.

When we were marching through the streets of Providence, there was an alarming fire, and there were two steam engines when we arrived at the Highlanders. I went right to my room, laid on the bed, and took a nap.

We then marched a little way and waited for the horse cars. We took the ferry and crossed over to Brooklyn. Then we marched to the armory, arrived there about 10 o'clock, laid down to sleep. The hard boards awoke me at 4 o'clock. Washed, ate breakfast, and rested. About 11 o'clock we marched to the Brooklyn civic Hall and drilled before Mayor Booth. Then we marched 3 miles and took dinner at A. S. Barnes & Co. After dinner we drilled a little while

and then got into the horse cars and rode to the armory. Put on packs and marched to the boat. Thus having marched all around and then...
Nothing for we had to keep our eyes to the front all the time and they would not let us go out once all the papers said we drilled better than any other company that ever drilled there and we did not drill half as good as we could for we were all tired out marching.

Came back please set the paper of the first day tall. I could not get the second days paper because I had to march right down to the foot before we started from New York. I saw an ocean steamer from Panama arrive when sailing out of the harbor the band played on passing every vessel I saw the iron clad Dunderberg the strongest vessel in the world which was sold to the French for $3,000,000 also saw the old constitution which was in the war of 1812 passing on further on blackwell island I saw a band of convicts and a lot of jail and on the end of the island there is one man who for a great many years has been to work thinking that he is building fortresses he has made a little fort with drawbridges and he was at work when the steamboat went by I read the story in the true flag long ago but did not believe it the man is crazy. I did not see any thing of importance until we reached Providence the next day we got in the horse cars and rode to the care
Little Pring now and Hang and all the folks were mind about leaving father about the saddle. There are about 74 students here now. Dr. Grayish going to be at home the fourth day. School is going to close at one o'clock in the afternoon. Can I start right off and stay in Boston all night. How is Kelly and very now do thy hand Muth to do. I speak for one on the fourth. Has father got home from the west yet. What is Walter doing at home. Are we going to have many Pears this year. Tell Grandfather to give me some cherries. I had to pick up rocks this morning. I do not because my bureau was not in order. My room mate had to the same thing because the room was not in order. He was orderly and the orderly is responsible for the room and we take turns being it.

Continued

But had not read more than lines before I was asleep and when I woke I found one of the cadets standing over me with a boot in his hand. After he went out I laid down again and did not wake until one of the boys woke me and told me that the signal had sounded so I got up and was just in time to answer to my name and to go to supper after supper. That is at seven. I went to bed and did not wake till the morning. Got up and went to breakfast. They did not put any guards on that day and we did not have to go to church.
or learn our Bible lesson this is the first time since I have been here we always have to go to church rain or shine.

e So I had time enough to stay and I used it well. We have a great many more privates now than we did before the excursion we only drill two hours a day while before the excursion we drilled 3 1/2 hours. We also are allowed to go to the city every other day from the hour of 11 till 2 in the afternoon if we do not have too many elements or we do not have any extra study thus ends the long dreaded excursion and the Colonel says he is satisfied with our drilling this is the first time he has said so and some of the boys told him so we received the news

of being the best drilled company in that city that is we are the second best drilled to the West Pointers and some of the best speakers said that they had seen the west pointers drill and said that we drilled better than they did.

What kind of weather is it at home now. I expect to be at home in two weeks or 13 days. Ask father if I can buy a saddle. I was in hope that I could have a new suit to come home in but it played them out wearing them on the excursion tells our to write and send all the papers that are they going to do on the Fourth. How is David getting along out west and what is Christopher C. doing now how does our garden look now have we had any peaches yet or cherries Howie.
It is beautiful weather here now. I should like to see Perrie very much; do you think she will be at home the fourth. How are Thomas and Sarah's Fall getting along. Has Eva learned to ride horseback yet? I guess I shall come home in my citizen clothing. I have got tired of the very sight of these old boots. They are handy for I should have had to get another pair. But see them for riding. He makes me wear boots and have our home bucked inside and a pair of gloves to ride with. Father got me a pair of buckskirt gloves and they are the best things that I ever
I saw I wore them all winter
and used them every morning
and rode with and that make
gloves but quicker than any
thing else and there is now
a hole in them and I think
that they will last me till
next winter. Please send
the catalogue that Mr. Horne
told you. For I want to
look at it. You know when
I started away I told you
that the boys would drink and
smoke and you said that
it would not be so. I never
saw so many folks drink in
my whole life as I have seen
here in one day little fellow
13 years drink like pirates and
smoke and boys my eye
are chewing all the time.

P.S. Tell father to send
$50 dollars for I have
got to settle up.

From your son,

J. P. Benne

3 Dec. 1863
Dear Mother

You must excuse me for not writing before, for I have been on an excursion to New York. Before starting we had to clean our guns and put 6 collars toothbrush, a[nd] two pair of white gloves in our cartridge box, strap our overcoat on our back being folded thus equipped we started from the High lands on the long dreaded excursion. We marched down to the depot in Worcester distance about two miles and got on board the cars for Providence. the drummers and bugler played on leaving [over page, “2nd”] every station till we reached Providence. we marched to the armory of the first light infantry. it was a splendid armory, the best we saw on the excursion. we unslung knapsacks and rested a little while. then we drilled in the streets and the mayor made a speech we then went to the armory and put on our packs and march to the steamboat arrived on board at 5 oclock PM the steamboats name was Electra we sailed down the bay all right but when rounding point judith about half of the boys was sea sick we went to bed about 9 oclock part of the boys slept on a mattress laid on the floor some were sea sick [next page, “3rd”] all night when we got up in the morning we were about 20 miles from New York. we had a good view we landed in north river about 6 in the morning we took breakfast on board the boat and stayed there till 8 oclock when we marched off of the boat preceded by the best band in New York, and a string of policemen we marched through Wall street to the ferry and crossed over to Brooklyn and marched to the armory of the 23 regiment We then unslung our knapsacks and ate a breakfast such as it was and rested our selves after resting awhile we put on our knapsacks and marched to the city hall of New York and drilled before Mayor Hoffman [over page, “4th”] after we had done drilling we were invited into the city Hall where I saw some monstrous portraits of the presidents there was one about a foot square & woven with silk which took 2 years to make and cost $10,000. after having rested ther awhile they invited us to take some California wine there ws only one boy besides myself that did not take it. I was all tired out and it was hard to refuse but I did it after changing my mind half a dozen times. We then marched to the arsenal which was over five miles Without stoping to rest and it was twice as hard to march as to walk We drill in the arsenal in the evening from 8 till half past 10 [next sheet; “5th”, “Continued”] We then marched a little way and waited for the horse Cars took the fery and crossed over too Brooklyn, then marched to the armory arrived there about 12 oclock laid down to sleep on the hard boards awoke at 6 oclock, washed, ate breakfast and rested about 11 oclock we marched to the Brooklyn city Hall and drilled before Mayor Booth. then marched 3 miles and took dinner at A. S. Barnes Esq. after dinner we drilled a little while and then got into the horse cars and rode to the armory, put on packs and marched to the boat. thus having marched all round and seen [over page; “6th”] nothing for
we had to keep our eyes to the front all the time and they would not let us go out once. All the papers said we drilled better than any other company that ever drilled there and we did not drill half as good as we did for we were tired out marching.

Enclosed please see the paper of the first days drill. I could not get the second days paper because I had to march right down to the boat before we started from New York. I saw an ocean steamer from Panama arrive. When sailing out of the harbor the band played on passing every vessel. I saw the iron clad Sunderberg [Dunderberg?, first letter over-written] the strongest vessel in the world, which was sold to the French for $3,000,000. Also saw the old constitution which was in the war of 1812 passing. On further on Blackwell island I saw a band of convicts and a lot of jails and on the end of the island there is one man who for a great many years has been to work thinking that his is building fortifications. He has made a little fort with drawbridges and he was at work when the steamboat went by. I read the story in the True Flag long ago but did not believe it. The man is crazy. Did not see anything of importance until we reached Providence the next day. We got in the horse cars and rode to the cars for Worcester by got late. So we marched to the Providence armory and the Colonel let us go out in the streets for the first time during the excursion. After we returned to the armory we drilled a little and it was the best during the excursion. When we went out I heard some men talking they said they were going to leave their regiment and join the Highland so that they could learn to drill but I suppose they said it only in joke. We took the cars for Worcester and arrived there all safe. When we were marching through the streets of Worcester there was an alarm of fire and there were two steam engines. When we arrived at the Highlands I went right to my room laid on the bed and took a paper to read but had not read more than lines, before I was asleep and when I awoke I found one of the cadets standing over me with a boot in his hand. After he went out I laid down again and did not wake until one of the boys woke me and told me that the signal had sounded. So I got up and was just in time to answer to my name and go to supper. After supper that is at seven I went to bed and did not wake up till the signal sounded in the morning. Got up and went to breakfast they did not put any guards on that day and we did not have to go to church or learn our bible lesson. This is the first time since I have been here we always have to go to church rain or shine. So I had time enough to sleep and I used it well. We have a great many more privileges now than we did before the excursion. We only drill 1 hour a day while before the excursion we drilled 3½ hours. We also are allowed to go to the city every other day from the hours of 4 till 6 in the afternoon if we do not have to many demerits or we do not have any extra study. Thus ends the long dreaded excursion and the Colonel says he is satisfied with our drilling. This is the first time he has said so and some of the boys told him so. We received the name of being the
best drilled company ever in that city that is we are the second best drilled to the west pointers and some of the best speakers said that they had seen the west pointers drill and said that we drilled better than they did.

What kind of weather is it at home now. I expect to be at home in two weeks or 13 days Ask father if I can buy a saddle. I was in hopes that I could have a new suit to come home in but it played them out wearing them on the excursion tell Eva to write and send all the papers What are they agoing to do on the Fourth. How is David getting along out west and what is Christopher C Crowell doing now how does our garden look now have we had any peas yet or cherries How is little Priney now and Mary and all the folks Never mind about telling father about the saddle. There are about 74 scholars here now Is Azariah agoing to be at home the fourth the school is agoing to close at one oclock in the afternoon can I start right off and stay in Boston all night How is Nelly and jerry now do they have much to do. I speak for one on the fourth has father got home from the west yet. What is Walter doing at home are we agoing to have many Pears this year tell Grandfather to save me some cherries. I had to pick up rocks 1 hour to day because my bureau was not in order. My room mate had to the same thing because the room was not in order. He was orderly and the orderly is responsible for the room and we take turns being it. It is beautiful weather here now. I should like to see Persis very much. do you think she will be at home the fourth. How are Thomas and Charles Hall getting along has Eva learned to ride horseback yet. I guess I shall come home in my citizen clothing I have got tired of the very sight of these those old boots came handy for I should have had to got another pair. I use them for riding he makes us wear boots and have our pants tucked inside and a pair of gloves to ride with.

Father got me a pair of buckskin gloves and they are the best things that I ever saw I wore them all winter and used them every morning to ride with and that wears gloves but quicker than any thing else and their is not a hole in them and I think that they will last me till next winter. Please send the catalogue that Mr. Metcalf sent you. For I want to look at it you know when I started away I told you that the boys would drink and smoke and you said that it would not be so I have never saw so many folks drink in my whole life as I have seen here in one day little fellows 12 years drink like pirates and smoke and boys my size are chewing all the time.

Excuse this short letter for I have got to get my lesson From you son E. D. Crowell

P.S. Tell father to send $50 dollars for I hav got to settle up E D Crowell

51 Edwin’s nephew, Prince Marshall Crowell, son of brother Prince F. and Mary.