

11-16-1861

Arthur McKinstry to Aunt Eliza

Arthur McKinstry

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Arthur

Camp Wool Nov 16th 1861.

Dear Aunt,

I have received two letters from you which I have not been able to answer until to night

since I received your first we have moved twice the last time I managed to carry my knapsacks can and all my things for a march of seven or eight miles.

We have been busy for several days in fixing our tents for winter. We have two bunkies in our tent which have each room for four men and in which two sleep on a lower shelf and two on the upper. We have a floor of furs which we split in halves and laid down with the flat side up. We have a good fire place which warms us well and while there is a stick of wood in Secessia we mean to keep warm.

The boots I presume are at Washington unless already taken from the office.

There has been no express stuff brought down here as yet but I fixed it with the sutler to bring the box and I expect it within two or three days. As regard the price I don't care what a thing costs if it is worth the money. Such a pair as I sent for are worth seven or eight dollars here and as Mass. boots are better than N.Y. the latter price would not buy them of me. So far as my experience goes it is all humbug about having boots very

large to march in. I want plenty of room for the toes but a perfect fit is what a man needs. The best thing a soldier can have is a fine made boot of stout but soft calf skin. Broad soles will wear best but are not nearly so convenient for military exercises. Broad heels are very bad to fall upon as a man does it by turning upon the heel as upon a pivot and it does not turn by stepping. The things in the box are just what I stood in need of. Gloves are in great demand just now and as we don't get enough to eat some times, all that goes to appease hunger is very acceptable. Reading of all sorts is in great demand and when your papers come to hand there is no danger but that they will be hoarded by a great many. I don't try to describe our life here in this letter as I shall do it for the Censor where you of course can read it. I don't know that I can pay the postage upon this for the want of stamps. I have twenty dollars in my pocket but can't get a stamp I shall write to Mother and send for a lot as well as remit a little something for her private purse.

As soon as I can get a chance I will send that money by express. As large amounts will be sent North we shall send a trustworthy agent to the city and probably in a day or two. As there is a good deal of stealing at the Post Office I dare not trust it to mail