

1-20-1862

Arthur McKinstry to Jennie

Arthur McKinstry

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Camp Wood Jan 20th 1862

Dear Jennie,

I received your letter
some time since and you can
not doubt that it was warmly
welcomed. It is terribly nasty out of
doors now but what with General
correspondence, Lyceum lectures
and chess I do not find the time
to hang heavy upon my hands.
We have a young Lyceum in our
company and I can assure you
I have heard much poorer addresses
from men of celebrity. It is however
designed as a school of argument and
oratory and is governed by the strictest
parliamentary rules. Thus while ingenuity
in debate is fostered the ways of the
speakers platform become familiar also.
All frivolous subjects are avoided as are
all of those exciting topics which provoke

unbroken warmth. Forestville can furnish
no such debate - Eudonia hardly.

I am a member as you may suppose.
We meet this evening and determine
the title by which it will be known.
I have proposed that we call it The
Pioneer Logcabin. The question this
evening is resolved that the Pulpit
exercises more influence than the Press.
I am on the affirmative, and; though
against my own conviction; I mean to
prove the Pulpit in the ascendant.
As a pure school of logic you will
rarely meet its equal and all questions
are decided from the arguments and
not from personal opinion. I am about
as muscular now as I ever was and
am enjoying myself capitally. Every
now and then we get up at night
and make a batch of slapjacks and
eat them. All hands are getting very
expert at that business and a man
is just as likely to be up at one hour

of the twenty four as another. We get
sugar and flour at the Commissary
and plum pudding - slapsacks and
fried cakes are the order of the night.
We dont intend to go hungry but
the ration wont keep us clear of it.
I've got about two ounces of bread for
supper and thats all but "bress de sor"
I'll have slapsacks and as "Chub" Booth
said "thats all do" Flour is 5 cts and sugar
10 cts at the commissary. We hoped
when Burnside's Expedition set out
that they were coming here but
they didnt and we have as little business
as ever. The rebels have been firing to-
day and firing my table as I wrote to
mother but we dont pay much attention
to them lately. Well I guess what is
the news from home. So Hattie's
marriage is married. Well that is quite on edge
and to be expected. Cousin Osro I suppose
must be living at Northampton by
this time. If you had a visit from

Uncle Jim, I had a letter from Uncle Theodore a few days since. The poor old fellow is lonely I know, & he is married, having learned a trade at Buffa, and then with Elvira. He seems discouraged at the state of things. I hardly wonder at it, though I feel more hopeful myself. The greatest enemy we have yet met is that spirit of speculating upon our necessities.

The sutlers reap their millions and slobber at Congress their tens of millions and we soldier are kept in the field that they may do it. Well I must get the flour for those pancakes so with lots of love to John and Millie and John jr good bye. I wish I could see them microscopically. Tell Millie that she and I will sugar off yet in old Chautauque.

Your aff. Brother
 Arthur McKimber

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