

4-11-1862

Arthur McKinstry to Mother

Arthur McKinstry

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Steamer Elm City, off Fortress Monroe
Dear Mother, April 11th 1862

We arrived in port this morning and as there will probably be a mail sent ashore I will improve a leisure hour. We dropped anchor within a few rods of the Monitor and under the guns of Fortress Monroe. We didn't stay there long though for a signal gun announced suspicious sails toward Norfolk. Three large steamers were seen and the tail of a very large rat was seen in the shape of a cloud of steam and smoke whose origin could not be well made out. Taking all things into consideration we lay outside to be ready for a run and left an open field for the Monitor and the guns of the Fortress. The Monitor's steam is up but she lies quiet and seems to be trying to get the Merrimac within

range of the Fortress. All on board
the Elm City are on the line to
witness the anticipated combat. The Monitor
is a very unpretending little craft and no
one would suppose to look at her that
she was the best vessel of our navy.
I have but little idea where we
are going but should not wonder if
we should go up the York river.
I enclose you a rude drawing of the Monitor
which will give you as good an idea of its
exterior as if you were here. I could finish
it better if I had the proper drawing pencil
but this is a faithful sketch of its outline.
There is not a shot mark to be seen.
The Monitor is certainly the greatest
triumph of Naval architecture and I
should not fear to sail in her under
fire of the heaviest guns.

We have been on board the Elm City
ever since Saturday last - six days need
up when it might just as well have
been done in one. That's a fair sample
of the way U. S. transportation is done.
Sickles was decapitated in the greatest
style I ever saw. The brigade was mostly
embarked so that he couldn't even assemble
them to hear his "last dying speech and
confession." Col. Taylor is in command and
it is my firm belief that it will be
much exercised. We have had no mail
or papers for some time so that I don't
know at all what is going on in the outside
world. Write often and direct to Washington
and it will be sent on. I will write to you
and Frank as soon as we get to our
destination.

Your aff. son

Arthur.

*W. Allen
May 25 1877*

HINGWOOD
D.C.
MAY 25 1877

Due 3

*Mrs Austin Chapman
Forestville
Md*