

reach Alexandria between 5  
& 6 this afternoon. We shall  
have to go to the dock to coal  
up tomorrow, & after that  
we may be sent down to  
Old Point again. There is  
no telling. We passed four  
guntboats in the bay last  
night, & they were waving  
lights & signaling from  
one to another all the time  
that they were in sight.

I don't know what was the  
matter, but if anything im-  
portant, we may find out  
in Alexandria to night.

The boat is shaking so  
that I can hardly write so  
that it can be read. The  
room is just back of the engine  
so we have the full jar. I  
more than half expect to hear from  
you when I get to Washington - if  
you have not written, do Yrs. affec.

On board Steam "Achilles"  
Potomac River  
March 28<sup>th</sup> 1862.

Dear Ed.

We are on our way to  
Alexandria again. This time we  
have two brig & three schooners  
in tow, and have them all in a  
single line behind us. I wrote  
to Father on Wednesday, while  
going down the river, and  
mailed his letter at Old Point  
yesterday. After I had done  
so, I heard some officers talking  
about the mails having been stopped,  
so if he does not hear from me  
he will know the reason. I am  
almost sure however that they were  
wrong, & that the mails do run regularly.

When we got to Fort Monroe,  
on Wednesday night, we found about  
two hundred vessels anchored in

the Roads, and more in back of the Fort. I saw the Monitor, half a dozen frigates, the Atlantic, Vanderbilt, & a dozen or two smaller steamers. We lay at anchor below the fort all night, with steam up, and springs on our cable, ready to start in case the Merrimack should come down.

All of the steamers had made the same preparations as ourselves, & we more than half expected to hear the signal gun before morning.

The night was very dark, & the sky looked as if a storm was at hand, - it was just the night for the Merrimack, but she didn't come.

The next morning we took the boat & I went on shore with the Capt. He had to report to the Dr. Master & I wanted to go to the P. O.

We did not have time to go inside

of the Fort for the Dr. M. gave us our tow, & we had to start as soon as we could. I took a little walk along the beach, & went up & looked at the Union Gun. It, & the Lincoln gun, are beside one another, & are pointed up towards Norfolk. The guns at Staten Island are playthings beside them. I believe I could get inside of them, without very much trouble. Next time we go down, I hope we shall have more time, for I want to see the inside of the fort, & walk around the town a little.

We left Hampton Roads at 12½ P.M. yesterday & at 12 midnight were up abreast of Pt. Lookout.

This morning we are running up over the Ketch bottoms, & if everything goes right, shall