

Federal Hill
July 26th

Dear Mother.

I received your letter this morning and was sorry to hear that Frank was sick, especially with the lung fever. I hope he will soon be well. You say you have not received any letters from me for some time. I write about every four days and never put it off longer than a week. I have been very well since I have been here and we have plenty to eat and plenty of good boys to go with.

To day St. Forgy Ed Best and I went out to a long bridge where some of our boys are stationed. Andy Nixon Sam Steele Bill Gebhart and four others. We saw the celebrated Cigar Steamer of Winans. Winans is a rebel and made this to run the blockade. It was confiscated by the U.S. We were all over it. And it was a queer looking craft. It was this shape [drawing] It is ronded [rounded] and made from iron. It proved a failure and is laying up in the harbor near the long bridge, the bridge is 7/8 of a mile long. We fished for crabs the rest of the day and caught about 50. The way we caught them was by tyeing a piece of fresh meat upon a string and throwing it into the water.

They catch hold of it and then we pull up slow untill we get them to the top of the water. We then take a net and lift them out. We are going to have them for supper to night. They are very large and taste something like a crawfish. But a great deal better. they are nearly round and have a hard shell. And large pichers. [pinchers] There is another rumor now afloat that the Rebs are at Martinsburg near Harpers Ferry. And as it is confirmed it must be so. They are reported very strong. I know if they tried to take this place they will have to lose a good many men before they succeed. The people are moving from Frederick and all the Gov. stores are being sent away from there. And Sigels wagon train which left here last sunday is returning to this place. We cannot tell whether we will see them or not but will write to you if we leave this place. Uria Chambers was sick with the lung fever at ft Marshall. a few days ago, I have not heard from him within the last three days. I think it was the lung fever I am not sure. Well I will write tomorrow. John