Guide to the John Cary Letter, 1862
MS0334

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners’ Museum Library
Title: John Cary Letter, 1862
Catalog number: MS0334
Physical Characteristics: One item
Language(s): English
Creator(s): John Cary

SCOPE AND CONTENT
John Cary gave his sister an eyewitness account of the Battle of Hampton Roads on March 9th and 10th, 1862, writing just two days after the ironclads Virginia and Monitor fought. He did not try to duplicate the details of the battle as given by the newspapers but offered instead what he saw and experienced and his opinions.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
Accession number
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Accession date
unknown

Restrictions
Open to all researchers.

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Note to Users
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BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL SKETCH
With just one letter from John Cary, there is too little information to identify him with accuracy. The Battle of Hampton Roads is well-documented.
March 12, 1862: Norfolk

John Cary to his sister Eliza Cary in Richmond. Handwritten copy, 2-pages. Writes about the Battle of Hampton Roads which he witnessed from about 200 yards above the Sewells Point battery at the water’s edge. He was one amongst “the thousands of troops that lined the shore,” and whose “excitement when the Cumberland went down can better be imagined than described. Everyone yelled at the top their voices, some jumped, some threw their hats in the air, and one old fellow rolled over and over in the sand.” He wrote “I saw [the Virginia] fire her first shot and then saw her pour broadside after broadside in the U.S. vessels and the land battery…” “I saw the Cumberland fall on her side then sink. I saw the Congress burning by moon light.” He offers a brief description of the Monitor, referring to it as the Ericsson: “The Ericsson is small, carries only two guns, she stood up to the Virginia manfully and I don’t think was hurt.” He believed, however, that the Virginia was damaged more than the papers admitted.

MATERIALS REMOVED
No materials were removed from this collection

SOURCES CONSULTED

SUBJECTS
Hampton Roads, Battle of, Va., 1862
Virginia (Ironclad : 1862)
Monitor (Ironclad : 1862)
United States-History-Civil War, 1861-1865-Personal narratives