



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Camp Phe May 2nd 1863.
Dear Mother

I take this opportunity of informing you that we arrived at this place to day all safe and sound after 5 days of marching from South Bend a distance of between 70 and 80 miles. As you are aware, we left Tuesday last at 8 O'clock in company with Co's H. & I all under command of Major Bradley and marched that day about 15 miles and camped that night in a fine spot on the bank of a creek. We had 5 mule teams heavily loaded along with us, and as the roads were soft that day, we would halt every half hour or so, to help them out of the mud. This we done by hitching a long rope to the tongue and each company in turn unshling knapsacks & draw out the waggons. This is the way we done whenever they mire all along the trip. Wednesday we were in line of march at 5th O'clock each company leading in succession and marched 16 miles & camped 3 miles West of New Ulm which we passed through at 3 P.M.

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Here the devastation occasioned by the Indians last August became visible dozens of houses burnt to the ground and the bones & carcasses of animals lying strewn around. The town is on a nice prairie the main part protected by breastworks of prairie sods looking very nice. Capt Cox's Cavalry are stationed there.

Thursday we marched 20 miles & camped at Lone Tree Lake the former camp ground of the expedition. That day we left the pale of civilisation and entered into the Indian Country & one place had to build a bridge we passed on the march that day over the boundless prairie over 50 cattle that had been shot down by the Indians along the road. There were also pieces of dress, of furniture of glass & china &c along the road. We found in one place 2 cups & 2 saucers together on the roadside.

Friday, Revelli at 3 & in line of march at 5. Marched to Lower Agency before 9 o'clock AM 10 miles & camped for the night. Here was commenced the Indian Murders last fall.

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and there was visible evidence of such
even yet. The whole place was burned to
the ground, after it was plundered, and
the residents killed. I walked around among
the ruins of the stores & seen where several
were killed. seen several human skeletons
A brother of one of our Co. was shot in the
act of bringing a horse out of a stable.
His body or rather bones, were covered up
by manure. They were taken up and placed
in a box by his brother & buried. Seen where
Dr Humphrey lived & Myrick & Myricks bones
were buried in a trunk, but since taken away.
Amans bones were buried beside him, whom I
saw, he had a hole through his skull. A bible
was in the trunk with him. Myricks Store
was plundered & then burned. His ^{iron} safe remains,
cut open by hatchets. A great many valuable
things have been found lying round. Money &c.
We found last evening a double barreled rifle
a case of scalping knives, a package of fells. ^(buried under ground)
It is only 3 or 4 miles across the river to Rich Cooke
It was at the ferry here that Capt Marsh &
30 of his men were shot, in attempting to cross
to relieve the whites

The Indians were stationed in a good position
 in the willows all around, and at a given
 signal rushed up and surrounded them.
 I seen their graves, but they all have since been
 removed. The Govt. has a new ferry boat - here
 & also run a saw mill which was left.
 I saw an Indians grave here, he was dug up and
 I saw his bones, blanket &c. - This is where the
 expedition camped 5 weeks last fall, in
 charge of the Indians, until they were tried.
 The whole place presents a scene of great desolation
 but no worse than elsewhere where war reigns.
 The country around is covered with Indian houses
 and fields which were cultivated by Indians
 and half breeds. Some of the houses and
 fields are as good as those of whites.
 Some brick houses and frame houses built by Govt.
 We left there this morning at 5 and reached
 this place at 9 o'clock. This is a beautiful
 location for a camp. It is situated between
 the Minnesota & Red Wood rivers near
 their junction. We had to cross the Red Wood
 16 miles from here. We were received by the
 3 companies of the 6th present with music
 and returned the compliment. We pitched
 our tents and are now comfortably fixed up
 considering surrounding circumstances.
 I have just been out with the Battalion to
 discharge our guns preparatory to inspection
 to morrow. While out 2 more companies
 of the 6th arrived. Lafayette Root was in
 one of them, they were 8 days on the march
 from Kingston & Forest City &c. There are
 now at this point 5 companies of the 6th
 and 3 of the 7th. We have plenty of provisions
 here. A couple of boats were up this week
 loaded with provisions for the soldiers.

There are at the landing between
Six & seven hundred barrels of pork
there is also in the long warehouse
over 2000 barrels of hard bread besides
sides of pork smoked beans, rice, sugar &c.
It is probable (unless something turns up,
that we will stay here 3 or 4 weeks
or until the various companies have
arrived. This will probably be Head
Quarters the coming season and
the base of supplies. It is 22 miles
from Fort Tidyly, which we left to
our right - coming up, as we did not
cross the Minnesota at all but we saw
the Fort at a distance. In our way
up we passed over the richest and most
beautiful prairie in the world, we passed
along the Butternut Valley, a fine country
both of the 9th are stationed there in two
detachments. We got a thorough
drenching to day coming up. I think
the first chance I will send home my
overcoat - and purchase a rubber blanket,
as the coat is heavy to carry in winter.

I carried my knapsack all the way.
It weighed 20 pounds & the whole load 35 pounds.
Some had less but few more. We stood
the march in general very well, and
feel now as fresh as ever. Capt. Williams
& Talbot & myself tent together. The others
have generally 5 or 6, in a tent, but we have
plenty room. We have confidence in
the Major that he will not be surprised.
He uses great caution in our march, was
always on the watch. He saw 3 Indian
signals Thursday night, which were
arrows shot up with fire on their end.
The Indians killed off quite a settlement
on the other side of the river from here
simultaneous with the massacre at
Lower Agency. I only come on guard ^{two}
every eighth night. There are 70 of our
Company up here. As Lawson Hill goes
down tomorrow I send this to Mankato with
him. I will expect an answer in
a few days. Give my regards to the
friends there. I would like to hear how you
all are getting along. I will write again
when I get an answer. I will write to this
Although we have some hardships yet we have
some bright spots also. We have prayer
meetings sometimes. I must stop
as I cannot see to write further
and with love to all I remain,
J. Montgomery