



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Camp McLaren June 28th 1863.

Dear Brothers. - J. A. C. & Candy.

On this beautiful Sabbath Afternoon, with a Camp Kettle turned up with a bag over it for a seat, and with a piece of board, from the Butties for to write on, across my knee, and in my tent, I sit down to inform you of our whereabouts, or to make my report. Since my last communication, My health is much improved. I never felt better in my life, and I trust this will find you all well also.

I shall in order, give you now a description of last weeks march. On Monday our Regt. led off, at 6 A.M. and at 10. reached Jutpa Creek, at the foot of Lac que parle. marched all day 18 miles, over a bare, and apparently boundless prairie and Camped at 2 P.M. on a lake, at Camp Ramsey. It was a nice cool day. Tuesday marched to Camp Averill, 15 miles. A very warm day. Some men fell down, exhausted on halting.

Our Co. went on guard that night. I sat up to midnight, which was all the guard duty I done since I left Camp Pope. That day we had our knapsacks carried for the first time, and now have a company team, and have our knapsacks carried all the while. The country over which we passed was a barren region. Scarce any vegetation. the grass shrivels up, and none whatever on the highest grounds all owing no doubt to the very dry weather. Wednesday in line of march at 6. Co. K. Rear Guard. Pleasant march. nice breeze. Marched 17 miles. Crossed a stream at 8. A. M. ~~and~~ the yellow earth, and the Whetstone River at 2 P. M. and Camped on its bank at Camp Marshall, which was in Dakota. Thursday. Our Regt. led, marched 12 miles and camped at 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ on the bank of a beautiful Lake. Camp Jennison. Big Stone Lake 2 miles to our N.E. very warm. The Cavalry killed a buffalo and we had some of him to eat. There were several seen.

Went over to Big Stone Lake, with some others
found two human skeletons. The lake is 30
miles long and $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 mile wide. Today we
left an apparently high beautiful country
to our left. the commencement of the
Coteau des Prairies. Friday Marched 12 miles
and camp here in the bottom at the head of
Big Stone Lake. Our general march has been
N. West. except the last day which was North.
Camped at 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ P.M. after which I done some
washing. was not at all tired. Lake Travers
is in sight of this on the north, and is the source
of the Bois des Sioux which flows north into the
Red River. This is the geographical centre of
North America and the highest land except
the Mountains. Several large Rivers rise in
this high country as you will see by reference
to a map. We are here about 120 miles from
Camp Pope, and 200 miles from home.
Fort Abercrombie is due north 60 miles, and
Devil's Lake in a straight line 150 miles
N.W. from the Fort. We are 2000 feet above the sea.

So far we have had very good luck, roads very good
though all dry. No signs of the enemy yet. We
have 60 scouts out all the time mostly half-breds.
To-morrow we start out again, and will lie over
Tuesday. A detachment is going to-morrow to
Fort Abercrombie consisting of 2 companies of infantry
3 of cavalry and a section of Artillery as an escort
to the mail there, and to a convoy of wagons
with supplies back to the expedition, which will
meet us opposite to the fort, which we leave
30 or 40 miles to our right. Men have been
busy since coming here in reloading the wagons
in fixing over the broken barrels of hard bread of
sugar &c of which there were hundreds broken in by
crossing rough places &c, and in fixing up generally
for another start. The boys like the march pretty
well, sometimes some of the weakest-tires out, but
no one is allowed to fall in the rear if possible.
We can stand marching very well, by having nice
cool weather, and good food to eat. I hoped to hear
from you before this. I want you to write weekly,
and direct to Fort Abercrombie. I think I will get them
and let me know all the news. I can not send any
particular news. The boys are all in good health and
so far quite well pleased. We catch plenty of fish
when we stop at night, and sometimes have other
extras also. We now have light loads to carry and
get along with all ease. When we halt we stack
arms and have our tents pitched, in ten minutes
rearing up a large city instantly. The wagons are all in
the centre and parked. We have fresh beef every day.
S. Talbot, W. Chambers, Lap Root, C. Fields, J. Davis &c are all
well. Please give my respects to neighbors &c
to Jones, Smiths &c. We still have very good
times in camp reading, going to meetings & singing
&c. I now must close as we are called to supper
and must hurry if we expect to get any.
Love to Father and Mother. Please write on receipt
With kindest regards I remain your Brother
to Death J. Montgomery, Co R 9th