



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

Copyright Notice:

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit www.mnhs.org/copyright.

Indian Expedition
In the Field.

16

Camp Hayes, July 4th 1863.

Dear Parents & Brothers. —

As there is a mail leaves here
to morrow morning, for Ft. Abercrombie, I avail
myself of the chance, to write you a few
lines to inform you that my health & strength
thank God, are as good as ever, and I
sincerely trust this will find you all well
also. The weather the past week has been very
warm and dry, in consequence of which, the
country has suffered greatly from drouth. If it
is as dry in the settlements, as it has been up
here, the crops must surely suffer, especially
on the prairie. The ground which we travelled over
was as barren of vegetation, except in the sloughs,
as a desert. it was considerably rolling, and the
high ground was cracked some places two inches
and was very parched and crisp. There were
however numerous little lakes along our route
which furnished us with drink, of rather inferior
quality, but when halted for the night, we went
dig numerous little wells, ^{round the edge of the lakes} and thus have good water
to cook with and to fill our canteens in the morning.

4. I was examined in School of Soldier, & Company
the duties of line officers, the evolutions of a
Company, Skirmish Drill, & Army Regulations
&c. Also examined in writing spelling &c. as
also were all the others. There was quite
an excitement, as to who would be elected, as
some of the Candidates were quite unpopular
but that was not known till next morning.
I for one had no idea of running, but being
urged by Lt Manning and several others I
consented. I was in hopes the orderly would
get the office without opposition but as
there were those who would run against him,
the orderly himself urged me to run, also E. Tally.
Next morning at roll call, Lt Manning announced
that he knew the Lieut Elect, and then
announced that Corp^e & Montgomery was
the lucky man. This announcement was
received by the boys with 3 hearty cheers and
congratulations innumerable, but it took
me by surprise, and for a short time had not
a word to say, but so was decided, and I
had to abide the consequences.

So there were 6 others disappointed. 3 or 4 of which
were almost sure of getting it, but the boys
were glad they did not. So you see that I
am now elected by an impartial board
of Commissioned Officers of the U. S. Army,
and give up my gun and cartridge box for the
sword, and my stripes for shoulder straps.
My commission has been sent for also. Lt Manning
for 1st Lieut. The boys are all without exception
satisfied, even the non comm^d officers, and treat
me as respectfully as I could ask for.

Instead of marching last Monday as I wrote
 before, we lay over and left Camp McLaren on
 Tuesday, marching every day since. Tuesday 30th
 Marched to Camp Bradley 12 miles. After dress
 parade we were mustered for pay by the proper
 officers, up to July 1st. Wednesday. In line of
 march at 5½ A.M. Marched to Camp Cook, our
 Reg^t leading, and marched in a Northern directⁿ.
 July 2nd Marched to Camp Parker on Shunk
 Lake 13 miles. It was a nice lake full of
 fish and backed by a beautiful landscape.
 Our Co. went on Guard at night, and was
 part of rear guard next day. July 3rd
 We marched 18 miles. Very warm day
 Oppressive march: poor water; passed
 some nice lakes. Looked like rain.
 July 4th Marched to this place 10 miles.
 This Camp is on the Cheyenne River
 40 or 50 miles West of Athercrombie.
 There was a little rain to day. So that is the
 way we kept the fourth, but as I now write
 the Cannon booms ^{peal} after to the number
 of 24, in honor of the day.

I shall now write you on another topic
 You remember. I wrote to you, that several in
 this Company were studying hard for an exam-
 -ination for the 2nd Lieut^y. Well that event
 so portentous to so many, has transpired at last
 and the Candidate elected. The examination
 occurred last Monday afternoon. There were
 9 Candidates viz. Serg^t. Lancaster, Carter
 Turretten Worden. Corp^s Clapp. Sammen &
 Montgomery and Privates Talbot & John Hep.
 Happening to be out asleep under some wagons
 in the forenoon. I was hunted up and found out,
 and informed of the examination coming off.
 That afternoon, and requested to hand in my name,
 which after some deliberation I did. I
 immediately took my Tactics and reviewed
 them allover, also the Army Regulations.
 I thus spent the afternoon, while the others
 were being examined. Two Candidates with-
 -drew, viz Corp^s Sammen & Jⁿ Hep. My
 turn came last and at candle light. The
 examining Board Consists of the Field Officers
 of the 7th and the Capt^s of the various Companies

I was told that I received the unanimous votes of the Board, and that what greatly helped me, was my coolness, and ready answers. (not missing a question) and my writing which I done in a speedy, business like manner, by dictation from the Lt. Col. Marshall, signing my name Officially at the end. An order was read two consecutive evenings on dress Parade, complimenting the Candidates whose names were read to the Regt. by the Adjutant, and also Col. generally, for their general proficiency in Military Knowledge. When I next write I will perhaps send you a copy of the various orders. Some of the other Candidates who fully expected the office, looked crest fallen for 2 or 3 days, but are now reconciled to their fate, and all the Companies are glad that it is over with.

6

I have not yet assumed the duties of Lieut^t but expect an order read on drep parade, some day soon appointing Manning Acting 1st Lieut^t and Acting 2nd Lieut^t until we get our commissions. The pay of a 1st Lieut^t is \$110.30 per month, the 2nd Lieut^t \$105.30, but out of that we have to pay every expense, our board, clothing &c. The Captain bought Briers sword & sash. The sword with cost me \$25 or 30 and the sash \$16. The other uniform I will dispense with mainly, till God willing we return to Civilization again.

I shall write you more definitely in my next. We will stay here for several days, or until the trail from Ft. Abercrombie rejoins us thus letting the mules &c recruit their strength, which was failing badly.

27
We have seen nor heard nothing
reliable from the Indians. There are
numerous rumors afloat all the
time which I have no faith in.
There is some buffalo and elk
seen since we came into camp.
I have received no mail since I
started, but I expect a mail when
the train comes from the fort.
The health of the Brigade is very good
despite the water and heat. No one
has died yet. The Bully Company
are all well. Ned Talbot was second
best on the examination. So is ~~Sam~~
As a whole it was the best examination
of any before, and I must say it was
conducted honorably and impartially
by all parties. Cap. Carter taking no
part one way nor another. The brass
bands are now playing, and we are
celebrating the Fourth as best we

It is now raining nicely, with a
prospect of it continuing all night.
We are all excited to see it, for the
sake of the animals. It is said we
have ~~lost~~ ^{lost} 40 mules already.
I must ~~stop~~ ^{come} to a close as it
is late and I am sleepy, but kind
are waiting ~~to~~ ^{at} night as well as me.
~~No doubt~~ ^{there} will be quite a sensation
around Cleveland, and you may hear
many a story, because all will write
of this promotion to their friends there, but
what I have stated is substantially correct
and all agree in saying I have acquired
it honorably. It will place me in rather
an awkward position for some time but
I have more confidence in myself than
I used to have, and I guess can get along.
Pray for me that I may do my duty in
every respect. Please write often. My
respects to the friends &c. From Your
affectionate son &c. B. J. Montgomery