



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Indian Expedition ¹⁷
1863.

Camp Hayes, on Cheyenne River July
Dear Parents & Brothers:-

With pleasure I eat myself
this evening, to answer your long looked
for letters, which I received night before last.
I was pleased to hear from you once more,
that your health is good, and that the
crops and stock were doing so well &c.
Indeed I was rather surprised, that the
crops stood the drouth so well, but they must
surely suffer on the rolling lands & prairies.
My health thank God, never was better
than at present. After our long rest we feel
refreshed, and ready for another march. We will
probably leave here tomorrow, ^{or Monday} but I fear it
will not be to accomplish much, for there is
an opinion prevalent that we will not see
any hostile Indians this summer; but it may
be a mistaken one. Some think we may meet the
Indians in force, within a few days march
but I rather think we will not; if what the
papers says is true. I rather think Sibley is perpetrating
himself, of what course to pursue,

Part of the train from Fort. Abercrombie. Came here yesterday, also Co. D. of the 7th which makes the 7th complete. Co. H. 9th Regt. is attached to 10th Regt. About 50 wagons more, are expected in to night. with Commissary stores escorted by Cap^t. Petits. Co. of the 8th. the Co. Pence is in. but they will return with mail. Lieut. Boren returned to the Company, also Dr. Mester Cutter, by command of Col. Miller, their resignations not being accepted, This of course took us all by surprise, and none more so than Cap^t. Carter and Lieut. Manning, who thought they had got rid of him, as they do not like him at all, you know the reasons why. When the fact was known generally, there was many an eye watching, its effects on me, not only in our Co. but throughout the Regiment, but I stood it all with as good grace possible. of course it was a disappointment to me for the time being, but there is a good time coming, in fact I did not build up any certain hopes. I was keeping still as possible, until I would be sure of Borens resignation being accepted.

I had a view to the future, and I am glad I
 had, for I have the less to be sorry for now.
 The Cap^t was anxious to have me appointed
 acting 2nd Lieut., by an order from the Lt Col,
 until I would get my commission. but I
 told ^{him} I was not anxious. I wanted nothing
 done premature, or hurried, so he dropped the notion.
 I would feel ten times worse, to have acted Lt
 to have worn the sword on dress parade &c, and
 now be displaced, but I did not assume any
 authority, tried to keep them from calling me Lt
 at which however was useless, for they would do it,
 and still do. I am compelled to say that the boys
 without exception, treated me in every respect
 gentlemanly, just as if I had my commission
 and they in like manner treat me now. I have
 heard many say, as well out in other Companies
 for as in our own, that they hoped to see me in
 the line of Com^d Officers, on dress parade, but such
 is human affairs. There is many a slip between the Cap^t
 and the lip. but to me it was not a great disappoint^{ment}
 as to some others, for my hopes were ^{not} ^{nor} elated today.

I thought at the time, the examination was a little too much hurried, perhaps to please some parties, but now I am not sorry that it occurred when it did, for it shows who was worthy, and prevents a great deal of blowing in the future. I feel proud to have stood so creditable an examination as to win me over seven others, all but one of which ranked higher than I do the office of 2nd Lieut. by every vote of the board, as I afterwards learned, and the congratulations of so many that were before strangers to me, in the different regiments, as well as the very best wishes, of my own Co. comrades. This was more than I expected in this war, but strange events will transpire, both ways. However, though temporarily disappointed, I am not grieved about it, as many would suppose, for I have the consciousness of having, by my own exertions, gained the honor &c. of Lieut. and am repaid all its responsibilities, which I can assure you are not few. The Adjutant told me to day, that, he thought, the decision of the Board would entitle me to a commission, if a vacancy occurred, soon, but that is all in the future. But there is one thing certain, I have the approbation of the whole company, as to the course I pursued, all declaring that I won the position and acted honorably throughout. Felix told me, he heard of the examination and who was elected down in St. Paul, from some Captains of the 6th who went straight down and met him. So such things will spread. But there are others in the regt. similarly situated. The 1st Sergt. of Co. B, was elected 2nd Lieut. down at Camp Pope and was acting, when the mail, informed us that his Cap^t. had not resigned at all, but merely went home. So his calculations are spoiled, and he will not get either commission or pay, although acting Manning's commission and mine, were sent for to the Governor, but we will not get them now of course, I suppose. And there are others the same way situated, so I am not alone. But Manning feels bitter on account of it, for he is disgusted with Bress's actions, as are also all sensible men in the company. When this long roll beat one night in Camp Pope, he was so drunk, he could not move out of his tent, and he still indulges. Because Carter and Manning will not do the same, and become whiskey sots, they are looked on with a degree of disdain by the other officers, who do indulge. But they maintain a true course, independent of what others think or say, and they are right. I send enclosed a copy of the order read on dress parade to the regt. about the examination.