



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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1 Indian Expedition (18)
Camp Atchison July 19th 1863.

Dear Brothers. —

I again take up my pen to give you a short account of our journeying across these extensive western prairies. I wrote you last I believe from Camp Hayes, on the Shayenne River; since then my health and strength has been remarkably good, and fully equal to all demands. We have marched since 90 miles. Saturday July 11th we marched to Camp Wharton 12 miles. It was a fine cool day and we camped at 1 P.M. on the Shayenne. The River valley was beautiful. There we staid over Sunday. Monday we marched 12 miles to Camp Weiser between two beautiful lakes. Our Regt. line extended from lake to lake. We also passed a pretty lake at 8 A.M. Tuesday, the 7th in advance, marched to Camp Sheard near Shayenne 18 miles. Was on guard that night and with Co. next day as rear guard. Marched 8 miles to Camp Smith, on a high peninsula, almost surrounded by a salt water lake, like a horse shoe. Some buffalo killed, and some men arrested for sitting down on guard. 3 of Co. K.

16th In line early. Marched to Camp Croning
16 miles. Entered hilly country, the Black Hills.
Killed some elk and the Cavalry captured one
alive. We crossed the Shyenne River at noon
and are now on the west of it. We camped 4
miles from river on a lake. 17th The 7th in
advance again. Cool breezy day. Marched over
Capt. Fisk's old route to day and tomorrow.
Camped better. Douglass Pope camped at 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ P.M.
After camping I half breeds from Red river
came in and reported being round Devils Lake
and gave information as to their whereabouts.
Somewhere on James River S.W. of Devils Lake.
18th Marched to Camp Atchison 10 miles at noon
through a heavy rain, the first we had on the
march. After camping a serious affair occurred
by a Cavalry Lieut. of C. G. shooting a half breed
a member of C. L. of the Cavalry, apparently
unprovoked. I saw the poor fellow shortly after
he was shot, lying on the ground in his blood.
He was shot through the body, but will probably
live if taken well care of. He was the first man
I saw shot, but it may not be the last.
He was subject to fits and upon drawing his sabre on the Lieut
who after trial was acquitted, but his life is not safe

He was on his horse at the time ³ The Lieut is in
arrest. Last week was nice and cool for ¹⁸
Marching. Revellie beat every morning at 1-2½
then we had to turn out in the dark to roll call
fix up, eat our breakfast, and always were
in line of march at 4 o'clock. The Country we
traversed was not so barren as before, but
was destitute of wood, and we had to use
Buffalo chips, as the old droppings of buffaloes called
and bones for fuel. These were as numerous as
in an old pasture ground, and the boys on camping
would go round and gather hundreds of bushels
of it and they made a good fire. This camp is well
situated on a beautiful lake, called Lake Emily,
only a short distance from Lake Jessie a very large
lake, near the Chayenne and only 3 or 4 days march
from Devils Lake. This being Sunday we laid over
To day a number of Scouts who were out about
a week, returned, and acting on their information
and that of the 2 Red river Scouts, Gen Sibley has
adopted a new policy, which is this. He is going
to start out to morrow on a new Expedition
with the most effective men and 25 days rations
for 2300 men

He is going to leave behind 2 Companies in each Regiment. (Co. C & D of the 7th) also, all that think themselves not able to march from 20 to 25 & 30 miles per day right along. 4 The number in Co. K that are left are eleven. We also reduce our baggage nearly one half. The Indians are reported from 40 to 60 & 80 miles from here S.W. of Devil Lake. The train will be as short as possible consisting of only the very best mules, and we will make forced marches, and no doubt see tough times but we will be recompensed for all if we can but see our enemies, and get a chance to fight them for we have travelled too far to meet the foe, to now return, without having even seen him. I stand the march very well, so do all the boys. We sleep on the ground all night and rise up as refreshed as we can ask for. Our limbs are inured to the march, so we don't think any thing of it. That is if the weather keeps cool as it has been so far. There are very few sick men in the brigade. A messenger came in to day from Lt. Athercrombie reported Dicksburg taken with 24,000 prisoners and other Federal triumphs which cheered us very much. He also brought intelligence to Gen. Sibley of the death of one of his sons aged 10 years. Also told us the mail will be in to morrow, when I expect a letter. We pay a tariff of 10 cents on all letters from Lt. Athercrombie, citizens 50 cts, soldiers & officers 25 cts. Buffalo are quite numerous west of this. This whole prairie is cut up with their trails and looks like one grand pasture field as it has been in the past. I must now stop writing to go on dress parade. I also must fix up my things for to morrow. I have to unite and put their effects in one knapsack, leaving the rest. I will finish this letter when I get next mail.