



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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We then started at 10 P.M. to return to camp. The Indians not reaching us until sun rise we thought we would reach camp by midnight; but our ideas of distances were rather mixed for once, for it took us till sunrise next morning to get back to camp, and then we came straggling in one after another, for we lost our way among the hills and after firing cannon & throwing up rockets we heard no answer and laid over till morning light should guide us on our weary way. Never was men better pleased than us at sight of Camp. True, toto's hunger were we, but well pleased with our adventures, being they were over. I would not have missed being among that number for Consideration had been that particular in noticing the events of that day, because it was not a particular our battle, for none but the 7th had any hand in it till the Indians were driven from their own chosen position & it was a choice one for them to fight in, but poorly they met it.

The battle is called The Battle of the Big Mound, and the Camp Sibley after the General will be more brig now. I will keep closer to my diary. There was killed on our side Dr. Weiser, Lt. Freeman & Private Stark all of the M.R. and all imprudently. Another of the Cavalry boys was killed by lightning from a thunder shower which occurred during the fight.

Mt. Brackell from St. Paul, Cattle Contractor was missing and supposed killed till to day when the mail from Camp St. Croix told us he was still alive. He soon had time

July 25th At noon struck tents & marched 6 miles to Camp Mervin. The two boys returned to S. Sunday. Starred out at 5 A.M. Marched for our old battle ground through

the Indian camps & where we were before night of 24th.

After we marched 10 miles, the Scouts reported Indians meeting us. We halted and after a little, camped by a lake called Buffalo Lake. Camp'd first & then the 6th deployed in advance. The artillery shelling them, immediately Indians were seen all around and we were found in line. Just then a squad of mounted Indians swept down the hill from the west among the trees & bullet were met by Cavalry who swiftly pursued them killing 4 Indians. Captured one White Bear. Took his scalp & body and other scalps. Skirmishing continued up all afternoon killing in all 16 Indians, only one M.R. wounded. Captured a Squaw. 127th The 7th again in advance, Cos. D & H deployed in front, next to the Scouts. Indians seen in forenoon but they retreated.

Marched over an extensive level prairie 25 miles and camped on a small lake called Stone Lake, Camp Shunaman, Corp of Cavalry guard to night and to morrow 28th. The train had scarcely started when Cannonading was heard in advance and a brisk skirmish ensued for an hour. The Indians suddenly appeared on all sides horse & foot, several hundred. Our forces were deployed to meet them fire. The train formed the Cannon firing away at them.

They made them retreat & the train moved on West over a flat prairie country 25 miles and camped on edge of a river a small stream. Camp Site. Lived on number of teams gave out. A wounded soldier died & buried. 5 Indians were killed this morning and one captured during the march, who report 62 killed in all. Three Indians were killed and scalped since coming into camp. I was in position this morning to see the whole affair, to see the Conflagration & smoke among the banks the rushing to & fro of Companies, the Cavalry deployment, the running & stamping of horses, the barking & barking of our scouts, the yelling & whooping of the savages, the rapid volley of muskets, the rapid discharge of artillery, the scurrying of the rebels, the shooting of the bullets, and the galling from side to side on both sides, made a grand sight. Generally

29th Cavalry at 11 A.M. Occupied 3 hours crossing stream. Marched to Pine river which came in sight at 4 P.M. 12 miles & saw hundreds of Indians on the opposite bank. The Cavalry & battery went ahead early & was shells the dense woods above the river bottom 3 hours before we came. It lay in the hot sun for some time while the 6th kept skirmish through the dense bottom 1 mile wide down to the river.

day I turned in the evening without accomplishing much only making observations. They found that the Indians had crossed the River in a fleet, hasty, but w^t, on this side all their transportation consisting of 150 wagons with their families of horses etc and large quantities of ammunition in the order of the battalions were to shell the river bottom only if they had been permitted to shell the Indians on the high bluffs before them, the Council have their numbers of them. It is supposed vast numbers of squaws & papooses were drowned in crossing this mighty River, which is here from 1/2 to 3 miles wide, as they had no means of crossing except by attacking their poles to wagon boxes. We then marched down the river 5 miles and camped on Apple River, Camp Sloughster. The Indians fired on this skirmish, as they reached the river to get water, but the balls fell short in the reedy, & at night it was found that 3 were missing. One Lt Beaver, A volunteer aid on Sibley's Staff. An Englishman of fortune & high respectability, and a graduate of Oxford University, the two others privates of Co K. 6th Regt. Signal guns were fired, and rockets thrown up during the night, but they did not come in. They were supposed killed. Lt Beaver was leading despatches from Gen Sibley to Col. Crook & when last seen was on his moccasin. July 30th Indians fired the prairie last night, in order to burn us out, but it done us no harm. Black Bull was left in theicket. The regiments turned out under arms and remained out some time. Will stay here a day or two. Fired signal guns after dinner a force of 4 companies from each Regt. went out under Crook to attack Lt Beaver & to destroy all the Indian prospect on this side of the river. Our Co went out to guard a forage train &c. At dark the boys returned. They found the body of Lt Lt. Beaver and the others & killed 2 Indians. Lord Beaver in his return took the wrong trail, and was shot by 2 arrows, and his horse shot & killed & he killed 2 Indians, as the pools of blood were over him & his hair being shot, he was not scalped, but a piece was taken out of his chin with hair on. He was master of everything by far, but his shirt & drawers & cap of Co K 6th was also found scalped, the other was sun struck & returned to camp. For destruction about 120 wagons horses etc and brought some up to camp. After this threw up some fire rockets & fired signal guns to notify Gen Sibley if he was in the country, of our presence. Lt Beaver buried at 10 A.M. with Masonic honors. We got out to guard forage train, after which I with others went up on a high hill one mile south, and across the Apple River and had a fine view of the Missouri River & Country 15 miles each way. It was a grand sight. Lt. J. had dress parade, Complimentary orders were read from Gen Sibley announcing that 44 Indian bodies were found & from 120 to 150 known to be killed. Only 3 of our men killed & 3 wounded, that the objects of the expedition were fully accomplished, the enemy routed and that we would start homeward in the morning. Our Lt Col in another complimented his men also for their valor. Could see Indians in squads crossing to this side of Missouri, an attack expected. At 10 P.M. nearly the whole Brigade turned out, and deployed round camp, dug some extra rifle pits, and lay on arms all night. Indians fired into camp, but fire returned. Stampede among cattle, but it was stopped. No damage done. Indians supposed to be secreted in the timber on the bottom close to camp. But it would be a needless exposure of life to try & pursue them, so further to wait but not cross the Missouri. We got 5 pontoon boats along out of 21 which was not enough to cross the train. A council of war was held. Some were for pursuing the Indians with a select force, and by crossing on a ferry others were opposed to it, so it was decided to return which perhaps was best as we had only enough rations to get back in, and did not know what might happen.

August 1st Bid good bye to the Missouri and start forward
the 1st in advance. Co's K & F deployed in front. Indians fire on our
recon. party, number were in camp shortly after we left. Came near
our old trail Camped by water's plant grass. Corp. of Reg't heard a night
game of Camp, Braden, Signal guns, rockets and fire balls fired to
signal safety if he was in the country.

2nd Marched 20 miles East to Camp Banks, saw a herd of buffalo. Drove
3rd Marched 14 miles E. to Camp Kennedy, over quite a flat country and
approaching the big hills. Windy day. Saw 3 buffaloes near as far as mile
camped by Spring water plenty grass. Scout Sieg this morning. At night
we had the heaviest rains than the storm of the season rained hard all night.
At the 1st in advance Marched 14 miles to Camp McRoston our present
Camp. At 11 A.M. reached Camp Vibly where we had the first fight.
The big hills are round in sight all day. Went on our old trail & camped on
Twins Lakes. 5th Day over here 6 day because the mules were giving out.
Early in forenoon, the scouts reported Indians all over the prairies before us so we
were ordered to march and were all ready but it proved to be the mail
and half breed escort which we were all rejoiced to see and put a stop to
our marching to day. All was excitement to hear from our other camp and
to get our mail. I was happy to receive a letter as stated before.
The news from the other camp was that they were all well. Part of them
had been to Devils Lake after some Indians but they were gone a few days.
They capture however one Indian Little Crow's son he is now a prisoner.
Little Crow himself is also killed. We were also glad to hear of Breckinridge's
Safety although he had a hard time of it for a few days.

Camp Vibly Aug 6th Had to cease writing last night to go
on guard Marched to old 18 miles to this place and now by Cay de light
rested to close as the mail leaves in the morning. Our Lieut Colvill
Marshall starts tomorrow morning also, for St Paul, well despatched
and probably to know what disposition will be made of the troops.
We hope to reach our other camp Saturday or Sunday. The boys no doubt
will be glad to see us. We probably will reach Fort Abercrombie in
about 2 weeks. It is 280 miles from St Paul, which we may reach by
the middle of Sept if all be well and we go that way. But it is hard
to tell yet which will be done with us. I have now given you a synopsis of our doings etc and will reserve the
details till I get home. I have written longer than I intended but
I hope it will be interesting. If not I will try & do better next time.
Would like to write to some of my other friends, but lack in time. You will
let those round home read the foregoing if they wish to. It is accurate in every
particular as near as I can fit out. This us I wrote before is all a part-protein
couple without any timber, bush middling well water with little lakes.
The water in some are salt in others alkaline and others fresh. We have dug wells at
every camp to get good drinking water. We always camp by a lake river or marsh.
The grass is much better now than it used to be, but the high lands are still
barren and very often stony, and out here quite hilly. The mules although
much lightened in their loads cannot stand so long a march as the soldiers
can. We could march much faster but for them. A great many give out.
We had to burn some wagons we could not take along. We all stand the march
immensely well. No one in the Brigade so died on account of weariness.

Camp Ball. August 3rd. The men did not leave this morning because the General's despatches were not ready. Marched over the Missouri to town, Wauke at 10 A.M. for 2 hours. to ride the miles a short time to rest and eat intending to reach James River to night but after marching a few miles farther concluded to camp which we did by a lake about a few miles west of James River. where I last wrote from Camp 16 miles to day Rained this afternoon & to my surprise now the Scouts returned to camp. Having taken prisoners 13 Indian & one woman the rest Squaws & papooses. They were taken by surprise and surrendered. It creates quite an excitement in camp. These Scout have never been less & without thus far in every instance by all conflicting stories of various things which cannot be depended on. I was glad to hear of you having so good a camp meeting in the old camp ground. I would like to have been there to enjoy it but have more camp meetings to attend to now than you have thoughts of an opposite nature, but like it very well. Now I will soon civilization again and won't give you more suppose before this reaches you, you will be happy. The same characteristics, was glad to hear of the Cro. is being so good. I would like to see the hand you make of Indians but I suppose you will not be at Rochester Sat. It looks as old as ever nothing growing out about. Please scarce a chance to see who is in town judge by the path there must be quite an Indian camp around Clew and on account of these Indians being here I am afraid that they will be more numerous & when we hear them succeeded in killing an Indian or two. Heard on the date letter, that the people of Cleveland, were making vigorous efforts for their safety. also heard officially from Col. Mullin that you were building a stockade. Again I hear that Mr. Davis was raising a company. Now, But I hope the Indians will do you no harm there, in regard to your Indians. I would like very much to have them but I guess you had better wait till I get home. However, I was astonished that you did not receive any later letter from me, but you surely must shortly after you started they took me & wrote several. I was glad to hear of the folks round there being so well. Please give my best respects to Mrs. Smith, & others another whom ask for me. Please continue writing as before, and don't be forgetful of the Negt. Min. Col. Indian Expedition & Post. Fort Abercrombie for we will be past there then. I am pleased to have received at least one letter by express mail so far, now I hope you will not be so anxious about me in the future. I am endeavouring to live with a conscience void of offence. Both toward God & man. I have started to read the Testament through on our return trip. Public religious exercises have been suspended during this trip but will again be taken up in a day or two unless we arrive the other camp. I am thankful for your kind advice sent from time to time. The boys are all well except Herman Boen, who has been ever since a week ago laid low with a fever & does not look like a man now I must return to a doctor & think this will reach you & find you able to write me a postscript. After that I will come to my friends, with your brother and accept the love of your son. This letter will be a little longer to my friends, with your brother and accept the love of your son.