



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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(27)
St. Louis, Oct: 12th 1863.

Dear Parents & Brothers

It is now just-a week
since I left my quiet
home in Minnesota, and this morning
finds me amid all the din and bustle
of this mighty city of "St. Louis".
Since leaving home I have seen a
~~large~~ section of country. some large
cities & numerous thriving towns &
I am happy however to say that my
health has been very good, and I hope
this will find you all in like enjoyment.
I mailed a letter home at "La Crosse" but
perhaps you did not get it, so I will
recapitulate. I rode from Le Sueur to St.
Paul where I arrived Tuesday night. Pro-
next morning we prepared to leave and
were ready at 10 AM. marched down
to St Paul, passing down Third Street
to the Lower Level, and embarked on board
the Hudson for La Crosse

We left at 4 P.M. amid the cheer of the
multitude. Wednesday early we changed
over to the "Northern Belle" near the head
of Lake Pepin. We arrived at Menomonie at
4 P.M. and with the other 4 Co's of our Regt
proceeded to La Crosse arriving there at
11 P.M. We immediately got aboard the
cars & laid over till next day.
We left La Crosse at noon of ~~Thursday~~ Friday
for Chicago, passed through a level
Country & numerous little towns till dark.
A short time after dark we arrived at
Portage City Wis. where as usual we
were cheered as we flew past. But we
were not to pass here so easy for the
cries of Stop Stop &c. caused the train
to stop. and in rushed the Noble Ladies
of Portage City to every car laden with
baskets full of eatables of all kinds
Coffee &c. As we were getting hungry this
was a God Send, and we blessed & cheered
the Patriotic Ladies till we were tired.
The band played some tunes much to their delight.

At Minnesota Junction we stopped a short time had hot Coffee &c. and changed our course for Chicago. where we arrived at ~~Friday~~ Saturday Morning. Chicago is an immense city but it is on low ground. There is however an immense trade carried on, as we did not leave till 11 O'clock we had a chance to view part of the town. I took a hurried race all through it much to my satisfaction. It covers many a square mile of ground, and has some splendid buildings, but in general they are rather inferior. We left Chicago at 11.45 P.M. for St. Louis via Springfield, Alton &c. We were unlucky in having a poor engine, and having a long train of 20 Cars, loaded heavy, we made but slow progress, especially in the night. Our whole course was a perfect ovation especially yesterday Sunday. We passed some splendid towns on the route.

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Yesterday at the little town of Brighton
where we stopped a few minutes we had
some fun. As usual when the Ladies
we waved their handkerchief at us
the whole line of soldiers in the cars
would return the compliment.

So here we stopped and jumping off
as usual we went over for a drink.

The old Gentlemen brought out a box
of apples for us and Capt. Hall threw
them out on the ground to us, then
there was a rush from the cars &
a scrambling. Another barrel was
emptied and another rush emptied
out the cars, but the family had the
fun. The lady also cut up pie and gave
them to us as she had time. I got apples
& a piece of pie. The country in Illinois
was full of fine orchards. yet laden
down with apples. The trees were still
green also the grass and no evidence
of fall. Cane was still fresh & uncut
Also corn &c, corn looked well in Illinois

5. 12
At Joliet is located the State Prison
a fine structure throughout. We could
see many of the striped prisoners
working round here. At Alton on the
Miss. River is another Govt Prison. There
is now 1500 Rebel prisoners mostly
Guerillas, confined there. An Iowa
Regt is guarding them. There is also
over 7000 Rebel prisoners at Camp Douglas
near Chicago. I would like to have visited
the camp but had no time. I was talking
to some soldiers in Chicago, who guard
them. They say they shoot them down
quite often when they are saucy. I was
shot a day or two ago. A great many of
the prisoners are guerillas. Also several
hundred captured by "Rosencreans" were
brought there this week. We arrived at
Allou's Town opposite here yesterday at
10 P.M. and had a fine view of this city
but we were delayed till dark in crossing.
We crossed over in a steam ferry and
marched to our present barracks
through quite a heavy rain.

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I threw an oil cloth over me and
kept middling dry. We marched
through 2 miles of the City in this
drizzling rain. Sometimes, running
to keep up, (I being on guard today
was in the rear) Sometimes yelling
like Indians. Music playing &c &c
At any rate we made noise enough to
attract the attention of the citizens
as we passed. We intended going to
Benton Barracks, but darkness
& the rain prevented, so at 8 O'clock
we put in our present barracks, glad
to get under cover. We know not yet
how long we will stay. We are to be
ready every moment to march. Some
talk was of sending us to Jefferson City
the State Capital. Where it was feared
the guerrillas would attack. They were
quite numerous, have penetrated into
this State, taken some towns, destroyed
considerable property &c this week

Several Companies left here at midnight
 the night this week for the scene of
 action. We may go soon, and we may
 stay in the city - yet for some time
 Here, for the first-time I saw negro
 soldiers. They do guard duty here in the
 city. also a Regt of "National Guards."
 As I said before this is a mighty city
 It is well built - of brick & stone, and
 has splendid streets but too narrow
 Street Railroads run all over. It is several
 miles in length & breadth. Scores of Steam
 boats lie at the Levee. There is splendid
 public buildings &c &c. It would take
 a person many a day to explore every street
 It was well it was preserved to the Union
 It is impossible to describe all I saw now.
 the 9th & 10th Regts have arrived this
 morning and are now in town.
 Capt Carter also arrived with them
 A great many hundreds Rebel prisoners
 are confined here also.

Our trip throughout was a splendid
one. We enjoyed ourselves exceedingly
well. Although we generally went
slow, sometimes we fairly flew.
By timing we went as high as 40 to
60 miles an hour, for a short time.
Yesterday part of the time we had
two engines. The country generally
was fine and level. Now we are
right near the Rebell country. Any
movement we may be called upon to
fight them. But we are all in good
spirits and ready for any case.
I purpose if I have time to visit
Rev. C. Elliot, if I can find his out
I will write soon again if spared.
I want you to please and write
to me and direct for the present
J. Montgomery, Co. H. 7th Reg. Ill. V.
St. Louis, Missouri. Give my
respects to all the friends &c.
With love to all I remain your
Affectionate Son & Brother
J. Montgomery