



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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St. Louis, Oct^r 30th 1863.

My Dear Brother J^s Charles,

I received the welcome letters from home last Tuesday, at Guard mounting, and was happy indeed to hear from you. I was pleased to hear of you all being in such good health since I left, and that you received my letters.

Thank God my own health continues very good, although sickness is quite prevalent in the Regt. From 100 to 150 report sick daily from our regiment. This they have to do to shun duty, although they may not be very sick. The boys have been on guard every alternate day for some time. Corpses Wildes, Samren & Jurretin have been sick for some time. This brings me on duty every third day. A number of the boys also are on the sick list with coughs, colds

all nearly always full
they can all the time night & day &
they are drawn by 2 horses, and here about 20
One line of street cars is 5 or 6 miles long
The weather being much more moist
than in Minn. the men are more liable
to catch colds &c; then again the boys have
to stand night & day in the rain, when
it does rain, and going from a heated
guard house into the cold & moist air
makes a person take cold quite readily.
Although being a corporal is a very slight
honor, yet I have enjoyed their privileges
many a time to my comfort, in not stand-
ing guard in the cold & rain. (quite an item)

I feel thankful to have got into winter quarters
here so soon, for camping out in this weather is
not very agreeable, We have plenty of duty to do
here in guarding the several prisons, warehouses,
in Great St. Prison there are over 800 Rebel prisoners,
and in Mingo St about 150. There are also hundreds
of invalids ^{Union} in the city,
dressed in a peculiar uniform, and
numbers arrive & depart almost daily. Several
hundred arrived yesterday from Vicksburg

about 3-6 7 miles long & 3 or 4 wide
long on the River but the main part is
in the city. The city is about 10 miles
there is over 100 miles of streets & alleys
These prisoners have been here some of them all
the summer & others longer awaiting their turn for
trial. which is continually going on at the Prov.
Gen Marshall's offices. I have escorted many a rebel up
to trial & back while on guard. A great proportion
are penitent & wish to be good Union men, while
others are still real rebels. Several have been
executed, but for the most part, these citizen prisoners
are sentenced to some penitentiary for a certain period,
and the prisoner's friends are not allowed to speak or
even scarcely see them. Their mothers & sisters & wives
are often seen at the prison entrances, pleading
& crying to see their friends but it is of no avail
unless they are passed by the Prov. Marsh. General. They
however supply them with clothes, money &c —
they have to be watched closely to prevent their
escape, although the prisons are strong & well guarded
yet a number sometimes get out. The deserters are
in many cases, confined with the rebels, the
worst cases, of either kind, having the ball & chain
attached to their pedal extremities

Since I last wrote, I have pierced the city
from end to end, I visited several iron works,
I saw them building Monitors, They are building
a number here, I also saw the large furnaces &c
where they work iron beams, shafts &c with triphammers,
also where they made nails from the rough iron
I also visited the arsenal, where is repaired Munitions
of war, &c, the Marine Hospital, different Manufactories
Public Buildings, Churches &c, besides Book stores
& other stores innumerable, Galleries of art;
Picture Galleries, Hotels, Markets, ^{Fire} Engine Houses,
Steamboat Railroads, Forts, Barracks, Parks, Schools,
Before we came here, there were very few soldiers
here, except scattered squads & the militia,
The militia were disbanded when we came
and now the 7th & 10th are the only main bodies
of troops here, Col Baker of the 10th is in command
of the post, The 9th Minn are still in the interior,
The earth forts around the city are garrisoned by
detachments of Colored troops & others, There is in
addition to the soldiers a ~~police force~~ ^{police} patrolling the
street night & day, The Secesh make many an
attempt at disturbance but generally are foiled,
The whole military force will be called out now,
for a few days, till the election, of next Tuesday is
over in order to preserve peace in the city,