



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Schofield Barracks, Saint Louis.

December 12th 1863.

My Dear Brothers, Jas. Charles & Alex.

Since I mailed my last letter on the 1st inst. I have waited anxiously to receive a letter from you, but as yet have received none. The last I received was two weeks ago. The last one I sent contained a twenty dollar check. If you have received it, let me know in your next letter.

I have heard from them via Cleveland correspondence on the 8th inst. and of the progress of events in that vicinity. I understood in a letter from Miss Salbot of that date, that you had received no letter from me for three weeks. That is strange; for I have not omitted writing regular every two days or two weeks. I was glad you received our Company Record.

I hope you will manage some way to get it framed. I want it for reference, when I return from the war. My own health thank God, still continues firstrate. Arduous guard duty don't seem to wear much on me, for I now weigh about as much as I ever did. The general health of the company and regiment is also good. Only one of our men (Fitch) is confined to bed in the hospital. There are a few convalescent, and they are nearly well. Douglass and Westlake are still connected with the hospital, and are as fat as usual. Manley Grover as you will see in the record, is now Regimental Commissary Sergeant.

Since I last wrote the Illinois detachment has returned. They returned in good spirits, and very well pleased with their trip. They scoured the country in the neighborhood of Springfield & Manchester visiting recess houses, and reconnoitering generally. Some of our boys had narrow escapes, among them Lieut Manning, but they succeeded in killing the Copperhead, out of whose house the shots were fired. While there the soldiers lived on the bounty of the inhabitants, which was lavished on them profusely. They boarded from house to house, and the people would bring in wagonloads of apples and barrels of cider and give them to the boys for nothing. They were well pleased with the behaviour of the Minnesota boys & were very loth to part with them. I would like to have went, but I have missed many a trip by being a Corporal. Edward Salbot and Holcomb, returned today from Louisville, whether they went with others as an escort to some deserters. Wes Chambers and others have also returned from Vicksburg, and there are still others away at different points. Capt. Carter went a few days ago in command of a detachment to Nashville Tenn. It seems that Solon Cheadle was in Louisville at the same time Ed Salbot was, but he did not know it till after he had left. He staid the night before with a St. Peter man, whom Ed knew and who told him all about it. Solon was on his way to his regiment. It was a pity Ed could not see him, being in the City the same time.

George Simpson of our Co. received a furlough for twelve days to visit his wife in Indiana. Corp. Bluff starts to day on a twenty days furlough to visit his family in Ohio. I think sometimes of applying for one, to visit Cousin Lockard, as he invites me up at Christmas. I go on guard to day at the Gratiot Street Prison, where are confined several hundred Rebel prisoners. Officers &c. Since the rebel government is treating our prisoners so inhumanly, our government sees fit to retaliate, and has issued orders to that effect to every prison. Now these prisoners who before were allowed many liberties, are shut down on everything. They are denied the privilege of buying nic-nacs of all kinds, neither are they allowed pen ink or paper. It requires daily sixty guards at this prison. I was down yesterday, with three of our boys, guarding the gunboat at the Levee. Two others are now on the stocks close by, and will probably be completed before Spring. It is a sight to see all through them. They cost \$300,000. to \$500,000. The weather now is very fine, & like a Minn. Indian Summer. Col. Marshall left for St. Paul last week. I hear that Lieut Bour is getting some new recruits. I hope it is so. Our new Corporals have not yet been appointed. Sergeant Major Patch. has established a writing school in the barracks, for the benefit of the boys. He has a fair attendance of those who are learning to write. He charges three dollars for 24 nights. He has also started a school for Book Keeping, and wishes me to attend, but I don't know yet that I will. See \$3 more.

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I often feel sorry on passing various institutions of learning in this city, that I can't attend. I feel my ignorance more, by these observations, and often pur-
pose if I live safely through this war, I will yet go to school. Meanwhile I devote every spare moment to intellectual improvement, not neglecting however my religious duties. Sergeant Williams has not yet arrived. Sergeant Lancaster is in charge of the ships all this winter.

I must now soon close, as I go on guard in a few minutes. Remember me to all the friends. I have not written to Flower's folks yet as I promised, but will pretty soon. I hope you will continue to write quite regular, and I will do the same. I was glad to hear that you were so well pleased with my pictures. I may get some more, when next paid off, but now I am about strapped. I have not heard yet from Ireland. If you have let me know the news.

Ed Talbot & Mrs Chambers send their respects to you. I am glad you are getting along so well with your fall work. You must surely make money by selling produce at such prices. Hope this letter will find you all in good health. Give my love to Pa & Ma, and accept the same yourselves.
From your loving Brother
V. Montgomery