



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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St. Louis. Jan 7. 4. 1864.
The day is clear and much warmer
than the day before. I have been waiting for the
post to take the news to the friends in the West.
from the West. I have been waiting for the
post to take the news to the friends in the West.

Dear Bro. James Charles.

I sat myself this

evening, to address you a few lines, to
inform you that I am still alive and
in good health, thanks to my Heavenly Father.
Sickness is quite prevalent in the regiment
just now, owing no doubt to the changes
in the weather. The regiment has lost
three or four men, by death, and I am sorry
to say, our company has also lost a good
soldier in the person of James H. Hoyt,
who died of the small pox, on the 20th ult.
on Bloody Island, in the River. He was one
of those, who were up in Illinois, and it is
known that he shot the old Secessionist
on the night I spoke of some time since.

Manning with four men surrounded
the house and demanded admittance, which
was refused, so he broke open the door, when
the inmates fired on him the powder burning
his (Mannings) face, Manning gave orders to fire
and 10 or 8 rounds were fired on both sides resulting in the
death of the old man, by a ball from Hoyt's gun,

On hearing the old man fall, Manning commanded
those inside to produce a light, in one minute
or he would burn the house, he also ceased firing,
the light was produced by females, (the others having
fired) and revealed a horrid spectacle. The old man
lay on the floor pierced by three balls, his daughter
around him in their night clothes, shrieking &
crying, Manning got the man on a bed, but the
old man would not let him come near, or speak
to him; so after searching the premises, they left.
One of our side was shot through the arm.
The old man died next morning. Hoyt returned
in excellent spirits, having had a good time,
but shortly after returning he was taken sick
resulting in his death in a few days as above.
Charles Chapman, is now over in the island with
the same disease, but I hope he will recover.
From six to ten report sick daily in Co's. Other Cos.
have a greater percentage. Mr. Lancaster took sick
yesterday & is yet unwell. He had a fit of ague.
There being so many sick, brings those in health
on duty very often. Some being on guard every day.
For my own part I have no reason whatever
to complain. My duties are not irksome but
rather pleasing. I generally am in luck in getting
easy positions, this with my good health, and not
having to stand guard (quite an item) makes me quite contented.

The weather now is exceedingly cold, colder than has been known here for a number of years.

The storm commenced on the 31st with snowing, blowing and freezing, till several inches of snow fell.

Yesterday was clear, but very cold. Snow on guard. The river is entirely frozen across, as far south as Cairo, and is crossed here by teams &c. Mercury 30° below zero.

Yesterday I went to Union M. E. Church Dr Cox preached text Eph^s 5th 16th, after which I went to chapel meeting.

At 3 P.M. I with some others, went to the African Church and were well pleased. It being a sacramental occasion.

3 or 4 preachers were present. One of them in exhorting got the whole congregation to shouting. It was a great time. Their love feast is beyond description.

Their preachers are eloquent and well educated. Heard Dr Cox preach at night. A New Year's discourse.

The storm has prevented us from receiving any mail for several days, but the war news we do hear is encouraging.

There is talk in Congress of raising soldiers wages, and I think it will be done before its adjournment.

Some want to raise it 50 p. cent. and the lowest I have seen is - private 16. Corp^s 17.

Sergeants 20. & Orderly 30. Having finished my last year's diary, I propose sending it home.

and if it reaches you. I hope you will preserve it for me, keep it from being torn or lost.

We were mustered for pay last week, and expect to be paid some time this month.

Gov. Chapp has not yet returned to the Company
probably owing to the storm, as he was due on the 12th.
I have given up the idea of going to Burlington
for the present at least. It would cost me \$20 now.
I would like to go up the river in the spring.
New Year day was celebrated here by the Colored people
as the Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation
also by the citizens as the Centenary of the city.
I almost forgot to state that I received a letter
from home on the 29th ult., and was glad to receive it.
I also received a paper & mailed two since.
On the 30th a great fire occurred near where I was on
guard & next a good warehouse, destroying a large tobacco
establishment. Seven steam fire engines were promptly
on the spot and prevented the fire from spreading.
Coolidge has returned from Vicksburg and is well.
It is amusing to see the crowds of both sexes
on the river skating. Saloons &c are built on the
ice. There are besides regular skating parks. The
streets are full of cutters &c. The street cars still run.
I give not much more of interest to write.
I hope you will continue to write regularly
to me and give me all the interesting news.
I hope you have enjoyed yourselves during the
holiday. I go to school, as I hope you do regularly.
I hope you will advance in your studies.
A good education gives a high position in society
and is the best recommendation for an active public life.
I would not miss knowing what I do know
for hundreds of dollars, and I yet see my utter
ignorance. In contrast with what I can yet
acquire. I strive to be a good writer, reader &
speller, also study Arithmetic & Geography, History &c.
I you will never be sorry for it and above all learn to
the wise God fearing, obedient to parents, dutiable, mild