



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Gov. will please excuse me, for not writing sooner, but it was impossible for the last three days. I had a letter one half written when I received my orders last Thursday, but was compelled to quit. The weather has been mild for a few days back, and the mud around the barracks is almost intolerable.

My Company (as is all the Cos.) are composed entirely of Slaves. They come here almost destitute of clothing, and look pretty hard. But Uncle Sam is a transformer just now and they are not here long till they get clothed. My Company have already got their blankets and I intend if well, to clothe them on Sunday. There is only one Captain yet in the 3rd Regt and only two 1st Lieut's. I being one of them. The first 1st Lieut who reported was of course assigned to Co. A, and I to Co. B, which makes me the Senior 1st Lieut but one in the Regt. There are 13 officers in the 3rd already nearly all being Minnesotians. The Adj. was formerly Sergt Major of the 9th Min. There are already 6 of the 7th Minn on duty here. Our 2nd Master and 1st Lieut was orderly Co. I. 7th Minn

Very few Captains pass the Board, nearly
all being 2nd Lieutenants. More than
half who are examined are rejected.
Colonel Edjertan told me that as I had
passed for a 1st Class 1st Lieut. I might
have a good chance to get a Captaincy,
However that is all in the future.
I am very thankful for the position I
got, ~~feeling~~ more than I anticipated.
I hope before long to have some more of
Co. "K" after me. I think Sergt. Lancaster &
Clapp and Ed. Talbot will soon try their
luck I hope they will succeed and get into
the same Regiment. A great many persons
talk and blow a great deal about going in
a "Nigger Regt." but it is only those who
don't get in themselves the thinking portion
of the people, look upon the officers of these
Colored Regiments as the only proper officers
having received their positions by merit
alone, based on their qualifications.
No man can be a nigger officer unless thoroughly
qualified and educated in the necessary branches.
This is a great change for an ambitious soldier
(as they are preferred to citizens) and the Board
cannot pass them near as fast as wanted,

Thank I have accomplished an object of
laudable ambition in doing as I done, and
I hope, if spared, that I will be well satisfied.
I expect to receive my appointment from Washington
in a few days, when I will then be master in as
an officer, in fact. Adj. Genl. Thomas is expected
soon from Washington and will hurry the thing a little.
I had a notion to send to you for some money, but
I guess I can get along till next pay day, when
I expect to draw more than \$26. I have enough
on hand to pay contingent expenses. An outfit will
cost me a great sum. Suit of clothes \$50. sword
sash & pistol \$50. I could write you a long letter
about these negroes. Some of them have had hard treat-
ment from their masters, & they feel proud to get away, and
get dressed in the U.S. uniform. Of course they are
dull and few can read or write but I think they
on they would easily learn and I know they will fight.
They have all names like white folks. In my Company
there are 2 John Wealers, a Stephen Somers and a
George Washington Smith. I'll
Benjamin Franklin. They learn to drill very easy.
Nearly 3000 Col. Vols. have already reported at these
Barracks, all raised in Missouri, & still they come
I will now drop this subject to some other time and
tell you something about the Camp I have left.
Capt. Clapp was promoted Sergeant and the best
Corporals are Caprina Kendall, John Diller and S. Moore.

When I left Serg^t Lancaster & Ostwald had returned
from the small pox hospital and reported the other boys
over there as doing well, but since they left one
of them died named Canfield. That makes 3
from Co K who died with small pox. It is too bad
Lawson Hill was taken down with it and went over
before I left. That makes six of our men there then.
The other boys are all well and enjoy themselves further.
I think the small pox disease is over in Co K.
I was vaccinated at first and it worked well in me.
More than a dozen were vaccinated from me since.
I received a letter from Cous. Wm Henry on the 16th
in answer to one I sent him. Containing his likeness.
He is well and writes in his usual, open wild way
but he gave me some excellent advice in regard to
city temptations &c. He sends his love to you all.
He says he would like to go round a month with me
and we would have a gay old time. He wants to have
it to say that he has one cousin at least that is
a self made man, and has worked his way up
to promotion by merit. Last Sunday I saw the General
Dr. E. Elliot at church. He sat before & one side of the
preachers stand in the Union M.E. Church. He reminds
me of old Mr. Keen, whom he resembles very much.
He talks quite coarse and with the Irish accent.
He has on an old overcoat and a great woollen muffler.
I have received no letters from you since one dated
the 29th Dec. I have not heard since that great
storm. I hope you will not neglect to write regular.
I heard of Mrs Jones death which made me
very very sorry. Give the family my sympathy & respect.
Received your last letter with pleasure and hope
soon to hear from you all. Respect to the neighbors.
It is now eight o'clock & I must close. I will write again soon.
Accepting love and believe me Yours &c
Thomas Montgomery