



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

Copyright Notice:

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit www.mnhs.org/copyright.

Head Quarters, 3rd Mo. Vol. Inf.
Benton Barracks March 8th 1864

My Dear Parents and Brothers,

Preserve your paper from loss & burn

Having laid aside the work of the day: I sit down, at the hour of midnight to address you a few lines. You may think strange at me being up so late, but it is only my usual hour. I have not slept on an average more than six hours, in twentyfour since I came here. You cannot imagine the onerous duties devolving upon a Company Commander, in order to keep things straight, but luckily for me, I have got a Captain at last to relieve me, and to lighten the load I bore. His name is Mr. Whitford, formerly an orderly sergeant in Co. B. 9th Minn. and as fine a man as I could desire to associate with. But though virtually relieved from much responsibility, I have yet as the saying is, to "run the machine," that is as far as making out the papers &c is concerned. The Capt. is well posted, and has a good business talent but I can beat him writing. (this scribble is no specimen) and so he does the drilling &c &c I do all the writing and business part. I have not drilled any since I came here, except a little at first. The company however is pretty well drilled, both in company and battalion drill. I have been writing now for a week more or less steady both night and day. I have within the last two days signed my name to documents over 300 times.

Our intention is to have all things straight, before we leave here. We are now under marching orders, and we expect to leave here this week. Our destination is not definitely known but we will either stay at Port Hudson or go on to New Orleans. The 2nd is going soon too. The 1st is now at Port Hudson.

I like this place pretty well, but I won't be sorry at leaving, for sickness & death have been very prevalent. I have lost by death, already 13 men. There were 70 men of this Regt. died in the Post Hospital in Feb., and other regiments in proportion. Our Regt. is at present nearly full, including those in Hospital. Co. B, numbers now 94 men, 20 of which are in the Hospital, so that we won't start off with more than 70 men. I thank God that my own health is so very good, amid so much disease. On the 29th ult. all the troops in the Barracks, were paraded for review and muster, several thousands. The Colored Germans were reviewed by Brig Gen Pike in person, and afterwards were mustered. I received our pay yesterday. I received for $\frac{1}{2}$ month \$53. minus \$1.88 tax. more than I would get in 4 months as corporal. Quite a difference. I now have a full outfit. I have had money in plenty since I came here. My coat cost \$30, straps \$5, vest \$4.50, pants \$10.00, Calise \$5.00, Sword, sash & belt \$30, Hat \$6.00, Shirts \$344 a piece, Blouse \$10, Boots \$10, Gloves \$3. &c. I sold my old overcoat & drew a bright new one, good enough at present. In addition I have common clothes for every day wear. We also have a company desk \$12, & mess chest \$25.

I had over \$200, which I drew for men in Hospital &c
I paid out about \$100, and have still over \$350 in trust
for the boys. One man gave me \$100, & has since died,
but I intend sending it to his family, if I ever can find them.
I am sorry to say that C. A. Talbot was very sick last
week, I went down to see him, and stopped all night with
him in the hospital. His disease is diphtheria. He was
almost gone at one time before I came, being unable to
talk or swallow. I applied secretly a blister of lard &
fine cut tobacco, mixed & applied hot, and it revived him
very much and he appetized it again, & he is now improving.
Being so hard pushed I could not go down to see him lately,
but hear from him often. He is now nearly well,
He passed for a 1st Lieut, but is not yet assigned to duty.
To my knowledge, I am sorry he could not go with me.
The other boys in the Company were all well, I felt
like going home, to enter the quarters, and be surrounded
by familiar faces. They often come up to see me here.
I have several of their pictures. ~~One of~~ Col Marshall
was up to night & once before to see our dress parade.
We have battalion drill every day, also dress parade at 3 P.M.
I send you a paper with a little notice of our Regiment.
The Officers of this Regt are all fine ones. None of them
swear or drink liquor, & that is saying considerable.
I have had the honor and pleasure of appointing my now
commissioned Officers, and of giving them their stripes.
Still you they feel proud of it. They are learning
very fast to read & write. My orderly is said to be the best in
the Regiment.

We have elected Chaplain Schutter. The former has
to teach school every day to the Sergeants &c.
The greatest honor I have yet had in a military line
was to be Brigade Officer of the day one day last week.
I come on as Reg. Officer of the day every few days, and
I sometimes have acted as Adjutant on parade &c.
I have had some more pictures taken, photographs.
I will send enclosed one, (not very good) but will write
again if spared before I leave and send you some more.
I also intend writing tomorrow night to my Cousins
and will send some pictures to them also.
It is supposed that the 7th & 10th Min will stay in St Louis
all summer, this will be very pleasant, but I would
not choose to stay in so large a city, long. There is so much
temptation to vice, on all sides.
I received your kind letters of the 12th ult. and must thank
you for your Congratulation. They have been heaped upon
me, from many directions, since I came here.
I intend writing as often as I can to you, and I would
like you to write often to me. You can direct as before
and I think it will follow the Regt. Please give me all
the news, of that section of country. The weather here
is as fine as could be desired. Mild and clear.
I send my Compliments to all my friends and thank
them for their kind wishes. Remember & give my respect
to John Jones & the family, Flowers folks, Everett, Smith
Talbot, Kathly, Welch &c I have just been taking
a look at your pictures, which brings you vividly
to remembrance. You can do with them, what you
choose. I will endeavor to write again before I
leave, and give more particulars. Please excuse
this scribble. I find this paper is greasy, but have not
time to write it over again, as it is near 3 A. M.
I hope soon to hear from you, and with my best love to
all of you I close, remaining as ever, Yours Affectionately,
Thomas Montgomery