



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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(47)
Head Quarters
Fort Hudson, La. April 18th 1864.

My Dear Mother.

Yesterday I was made the happy recipient of three letters from Cleveland, two of them being from home. I was very glad to hear from you once more. They were dated respectively the 15th and 25th of March. I was pleased to hear of you all being in such good health, and also of the neighbors being so well. I thank God that I can report - my own health, as good as ever it was. It sounded queer to hear of snow falling there, and of such cold weather, while here at the same time it was as warm as summer, and garden vegetables were growing rapidly above ground. Residents here say that only $\frac{1}{2}$ inches of snow fell last winter and that this is a very cool and backward spring. I think it will be warm enough before summer is over. I am still in charge of the Provost Guard, at this Post, & have occasionally some exciting times. For instance night before last, some wild boys took a number of unburst shells, and put them in a hollow stump & set fire to the stump, which caused them to explode with a tremendous noise. The General being anxious to arrest the guilty parties. I took out a patrol of six and was watching, when a large shell burst, whereupon I double-quickened & led my guards over the parapet - into the ditch & up, deployed; and were soon up to the stump. We then made a minute search through the brush & ravines in the vicinity and succeeded in capturing some of the rascals. This shell firing was becoming frequent - causing false alarms in camp, much to our annoyance.

2
Last night when patrolling, I arrested eight, but one escaped, giving us an exciting chase through a camp of Cavalry. As ~~he~~ was afraid to fire in the camp, he escaped. He also have the pleasure of escorting to the Guard House. Rebel Prisoners &c. We are comfortably situated now, are fixed up nicely, have two wall tents for ourselves, one for kitchen & dining room. Our duties are not half as hard as if we were with the Regt. & we are also in a more public place, & near the landing, in constant intercourse with the Prov. Marshall & General, & Brig. Genl. Thomas. Adj. Genl. U.S. A. paid us a short visit last week. He reviewed nearly all the troops here, and left for up the River the same day. Genl. Andrews has been very sick. Yesterday an ocean steam vessel, came up & takes to the Pensacola two Regiments of colored troops. They marched to the landing yesterday with flying colors, and to the spirit-stirring strains of music from the Post Band. Thousands of all colors & sexes - a motley crowd, came down to witness their departure. Just then a boat was hauled coming down the River which proved to be the "Starlight," loaded with Rebel Prisoners from up the Red River. The shouts of our boys was deafening. Saturday last about 40 refugees (white) were brought here being either deserters, or persons tired of the Confederacy. The same day about 700. contrabands came here on a gunboat from up the Washita River. They were a pretty ^{good} specimen of the genus Africanus. The stout men were put in the army, the feeble men & women & the crowds of young ones, were sent to the Contraband Camp.

A respectable white family has been staying with the Provost Guard for a day or two. There are several young Louisiana ladies with them. In conversation with them I found them truly loyal, although living and acting with the rebels since the war commenced, this being their first chance for escape. They came down in a gunboat. One said her two brothers enlisted on the gunboats. They were afraid of being robbed soon, so they left. They were quite ignorant of the important events transpiring in this State viz. the election of a Union Governor, and the Convention now being held for to amend the constitution of Louisiana and to abolish Slavery from the Statutes. I suppose you are aware that Gen. Banks is now up the Red River, with a large force. He met the Rebels in great force under Gen. Kirby Smith and has had some severe fighting, on the 7th, 8th & 9th insts. At one discharge on the 7th day it is said over a thousand were killed or wounded. I trust he will succeed in clearing West Louisiana. From some intercepted Correspondence I learn that the general feeling in West Louisiana is for peace at any price. A great many have fled to Texas, and deplore being away from their once happy homes. Desertions from the Rebels are of daily occurrence. Chaplain Bradrick and Sutter Hubbell both arrived last week. Two new officers also arrived, here for our Regiment, bringing over 70 of our sick left behind. This day week I had a nice job. An anonymous letter was written to Gen. Andrews, stating where whiskey was stored under tent floors. Accordingly the Prov. Marsh notified me to take a patrol to said Company and ascertain

Apr 18.

After showing my search warrant, I proceeded to search the tents & under the tents & first stationing a guard around them. I finished my search, I found I had one full keg of whiskey, 2 demijohns full, and a dozen bottles of Schiedam Schnapps in all over 15 gallons which I confiscated. You wanted to know where the families of Capt. Whitford, & Lieut. Moore are. They are now in some part of Wisconsin. I was glad you heard from Ireland and that all were so well. You will have to keep up all such correspondence now yourself as I may not do it. I am glad you are getting my school money at last. You may keep all you get of it as a present from me. I was glad to hear that you were out visiting at Mr. Talbot's, visiting occasionally would do you great good. I enjoy myself exceedingly well. I have all the comforts allowable under the circumstances. So day in attending to the recent arrival of contrabands, I had occasion to ride down to Dr. Hoyer's Government farm, where nearly 2000 acres are being cultivated by colored people, and I had dinner with Mrs. Hoyer which looked something like civilization. She had new strawberries, & cream, cream for tea & other luxuries. We buy our milk condensed in little 1/2 pint cans for 60 cts, which is not a bad substitute for new milk. A U.S. Christian Commission has just been established here by an eastern preacher which furnishes us with excellent religious reading. I am glad he came, for I brought very little reading matter along. Thinking we were going to New Orleans. Capt. Whitford & Lt. Moore have both been sick, but both are recovering. The Capt. is yet quite unwell. I enclose a photograph of Lieut. Butler my present associate. He was in a way worth sending you an album. You ought to have one. We hear here by Memphis papers that Fort Pillow has been taken by the Rebs. and all the troops massacred. If so, it will hinder boats from passing, for a few days but it will be only a few days. I trust our Govt. will retaliate for such atrocious conduct. The place was bravely defended by 700 colored troops, but few escaped to tell the tale. You say you heard that E. Talbot refused a majorship. Good reason why, a 1st Lieut. was the highest he was recommended for although he knows as much as some majors but is lacking in experience. He done well however. I now command a company a more responsible position than that of Major. I expect him, with this Regt. down here shortly. Newspapers here cost us 10 cts for New Orleans and 25 cts for Eastern. I would send some but I suppose you hear the news about as fast in the St. Paul papers. I was glad you got my Cairo letter and the pictures. The pictures I sent to Ireland were for general distribution among Congress.