



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Head Qrs. Provost Guard,
Fort Hudson La. May 10th 1864.

Dear Father and Mother,

With profound gratitude to my Heavenly Father for his many mercies to me, through life to the present, I once more seat myself to write you a few lines, I feel truly thankful to God that my health is so good, as that I can write my own letters myself, while many of my own fellow officers are denied this privilege.

Leut. Moore was taken sick Apr. 29th and has since been in the regimental hospital, and has suffered much. He was taken with a fit of ague, and that was followed by an inflammation of the bowels. He was so low that his recovery was considered extremely doubtful, but he is now in a fair way of recovery, but is yet very weak. He has told me and others, that he will lead a new life in the future. A marked change has come over his mind, which I hope will be lasting. Two other officers of the 17th, Capt. Bailey & Lt. Robinson, are sick in hospital with Lt. Moore, at present also. Our officers more than the men are over-worked, and such are the results. Those well, are on guard every other day, & are not allowed to shut their eyes till relieved.

I have scores of times congratulated myself, for my good luck, in being detached on my present duty, as it allows me an opportunity to sleep at least one half every night.

As I have informed you before Capt. Whitford, has not been well since he came here, so that Co. "B" was for a time without an officer in command.

I had to go down on muster day to take the Company out on inspection, & muster, and to the credit of the officers & non-com. officers of Co. B, be it said, that they, i.e. Co. "B", have been pronounced, the best company in the Reg. in every respect, at every inspection, since our original organization, both by the Reg. & Corps inspectors, and this without any partiality, Capt. Whitford, although now unwell and alone with his company, can sit in his tent and still have the Co. come out best every day. You may ask, how is that? It is all owing to discipline. He holds his non-com. officers responsible for every thing. By the way, I returned ^{on the same day} and promoted Co. "B", myself as per order. By the way, we can have white orderly sergeants, now if we choose, & I have a notion to call on some of my Co. "K", 7th Min. friends for the position. It would be a sure step to promotion. There is a talk of promotion going on in our Regt, the two 1st Lt's ranking me to be Captains, which will leave me the ranking 1st Lt. in the Reg. How soon it will come my turn I cannot yet say, but it is probable that I will soon take command of Co. "B", once more, as the Capt. is going home on a sick leave of two months. He is to turn over all property to me, which will give me 10 per month extra for responsibility of property. I am loth to give up my present situation, and I could hold it if I chose, but still I ought to return to Co. "B", if the Captain and Lt. move are both absent.

In this Connection I would say that the Colonel
has tried his best to get me back to the Regiment,
and has signally failed as the Provost Marshall
& Genl. have told him: that they saw a marked improvement
in affairs since I came, and that they were averse
to frequent changes, especially as our duties were well
performed. Now the Col. has handed in a written state-
ment of his condition, and I suppose will get me returned
to my duties of late very well. We have not only horses,
but a steamboat to do our bidding. I took a trip last
week in the "Cornie" all round here in search of skiffs
capturing over a dozen, saw alligators in bayous &c.
Some nights my patrolling is quite exciting & lively.
One night last week I made 27 arrests, & put 19 in the
Post Guard House, night before last. I was obliged
to fire on a man, which nearly produced a melee
between the patrol guard & the 6th Mich, but I was
ready revolver in hand to repel any attack.
One ball they said lodged in a bunk, but I was
fully sustained by the Prov. Marshal, & General, and
told to be prudent, but fearless, in the execution of my
duties, shooting down if necessary any that opposed me.
I took one pistol away from a man.
There is quite a hatred of the colored soldiers, among some
unprincipled white ones, also between the 24th & Mo. Col. troops.
The patrol guard is getting to be a terror in this post,
especially among undisciplined troops. I have searched
nearly every camp in the post for whiskey, and have
captured great quantities of it & other contraband goods.
I have been several times personally before Genl. Milman, & received my orders.

My force has been strengthened by a detachment from
the (1st Mo. ad) 62nd Wd. B. making me over 80 men for duty.
Sergt. Maj. W. J. Morden of old Co. K. was up from Bates Rouge
& called to see me. He expects a commission every day.
Received a letter from Mr Little Co. K 7th Min. who was well.
He said Manning had resigned, & that orderly Sergt. Surrattin
was recommended for 2nd Lt. without opposition. I heard
since that the 7th & 10th had vacated Schofield Barracks
St Louis, for somewhere in Dixie, that the regt. was full and the
field officers promoted. Would you like to know how we live here
I will tell you by saying that at supper last night we had
on our humble board, 16 kinds of food, viz. Bread, pancakes
potatoes, sweet & common, butter, eggs, ham, onions, greens, coffee, sugar,
molasses, milk, radish, codfish, beans, rice & cranberries.
We have plenty of vegetable now & then, our fare costs us about \$20^{per} ^{piece} ^{man} ^{month}.
This place is being rapidly beautified. Hundreds of men are at
work every day, cutting down grubbing stumps, leveling &c.
The weather has been very ~~much~~ ^{pleasant} lately. Sometimes a
little warm, the general health of the men is improved a little.
I have received no letter from home since I last wrote on the 18th ^{day}.
Occasionally see some St. Paul papers, which give me some news.
I suppose you are now engaged in putting in the spring corn.
I imagine sometimes I see you at work. Here we see them
on the large plantations cultivating corn & cotton.
If I send home any money, I would like to know how to forward
a check, so that you could draw it from the St. Peter Bank.
Please ascertain and give me all the information desired.
I send enclosed a circular, which may give you an idea of part of our
duties. We have also to guard 14 posts, & furnish guards to prisoners.
Our new Major Lacey & Lt. Kreps, dined with me 6 day. Lt. Butler
is still with me and in good health. Major Lacey is very kind, he
assists me to make out Capt. Whitfords master rolls. I sat up one
night with Lt. Moore, Chaplain Braduck visits him often and imparts
spiritual consolation to him. I have talked to him, also. Lt. Moore
thinks I am a Christian. O that I were a true Christian indeed in
whom there was no guile. I have nothing to complain of but my
own indifference & utter unworthiness. Would to God I
were more faithful, with a stronger reliance on the promises
of his word. Pray for me. I often think my turn may come ^{soon}
and I should prepare in health for a sick bed or sudden death.
I have no more of interest at present to communicate. Hope you are
all well, & doing well, want to hear from you often. Respects to friends.
With kindest love to all I remain as ever, Geo. Montgomery