



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.

(57)
Head Qrs Co, "B," 67th U.S.C.,
Morganzia La, June 25th 1864.

My Dear Mother,

Through the providence of God I am once more permitted to write to you, to let you know that my health is good, and that I am enjoying myself as well as circumstances will allow. As I wrote you before, our Brigade consisting of the 62nd, 65th & 67th U.S.C., formerly 1st, 2^d & 3^d Mo. A.D., with a portion of the 83rd U.S.C., left Port Hudson on last Sunday morning, en route for this place. The day was very warm, the forenoon was occupied in crossing the river, the boat crossed us to Waterloo a village a few miles north of Port Hudson, I went across in a magnificent boat, had an airy sail, a splendid dinner, & a good time, as I was officer of the day, & had not much to do, I was wishing we were going up the stream a few thousand miles, it would have suited all of us very well. We disembarked safely at Waterloo, on the west side of the River, rested a short time, in the shade of the delicious groves & shade trees of the French or Creole inhabitants, formed line & took of our line of march, through a very pretty country, along the bank of the River. The River Banks here as in all parts of the South where they are low are elevated by strong extensive levees, they are from ten to fifteen feet elevated above the level of the ground, and prevent the water in high floods from inundating the country. If it were not for these barriers, the whole country might have been submerged every year.

It looks strange to see from where I now write, the pipes
& Cabin of the steamer at the landing, clearly visible over
the levees, the water is now nearly as high as the level
of the country. These gigantic works must have cost an
immense labor and expenditure of money. They were
mostly built by the blacks. Sunday was very warm
and after marching a few miles, you could see the ground
strewn with articles of clothing, overcoats, Blankets,
pants, drawers, & sometimes the knapsack with all its
contents. As our Reg. was fortunately lightly loaded, they
threw away very little. Towards evening a tremendous
storm arose with heavy rain, which wet us a little.
That night we halted about 11 O'clock & slept by the River.
Monday witnessed a hard march for the poor men.
Before we stopped for the night, nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ the men
had given out. Several were sunstruck, one died among
the number. That night we slept under our shelter tents,
near Morganza. The next morning Tuesday we marched
to our present camp in rear of this place. I had to
watch with an eagle's eye my own & Cos property, if I had
not been very watchful I would have lost nearly all.
Our object in coming here was to relieve another colored
Brigade, who were to take our place at Fort Hudson. We have
no guard duty to perform except around our Regt. but all
the men are at work daily building a fort at this place.
There is a great many troops at this place say 20,000
There are Rebels all around us now. We captured some here a
short time since. The pickets are only a few rods from our Camp.

We passed on our march as fine a country as I ever saw.
The houses were fine & situated in the centres of magnificent
shades. The South is the greatest place for shade trees.
There are none like them in the north. I have seen a single
tree cover with its shade a space of 50 yds in diameter,
^{that is the tree branched out that wide}
Along the route we helped other slaves to chickens, pigs, milk
and any thing else we wanted. We also took with us
a great many colored people from their former Masters.
To day I am Officer of the day again. Gen. Canby is here
and reviews all the troops. I do not go out and am glad
to get rid of the bore Gen. Emory commands this post.
I received a letter this morning from Mrs. More, authorizing
me to sell St. More's effects, except his bath, which she wants.
This morning four appointments & promotions came for members
of our Regt 2 to Captain 1, to 1st Lt. & one to 2^d Lt. My name
was sent in about 3 weeks after these, and in that time
I may expect mine if I ever get it at all. At present
I am doing very well in command of Co. B., Cap. Whitford
has not written to me yet. 2^d Lt. Sheeran is with me. Lt. Harrison
had stayed at Port Hudson. Where our camp is used to be a
sugar Manufactory. The brick work still remains.
My tent floor is paved with brick & open at the sides.
The weather now is moderate, not too warm, but I
suppose we will see warmer weather next month.
A Gun Boat lies opposite here nearly all the time.
Our latest news from the east is encouraging. We have
news as late as the 16th inst. I think Grant will accomplish
what the people so devoutly wish for, the fall of Richmond.

I have little more of interest to write. I have not heard from the old 7th Minn. since it left St Louis. I have had no letters of any kind for a long time. Perhaps it is because I write so little myself. I don't have the same desire to write now that I used to. I have a great amount of company writing to do. It is now the end of the month & quarter, & I will have busy times writing for a week or two, making out my returns, reports &c.

I don't know how long we will stay here, perhaps not long. Direct my letters to Fort Hudson as before, as there is not P.O. here. Remember me to all my friends, relations and acquaintances. I suppose you are busy now with the crops. Work with me is "played out" now. I do very little. I can afford to lay back on my dignity on \$4 per day, & to get others to do my work for me. My 2nd & I map alone now, as I did not like to have strangers around so much. My boy Andrew Jones & Elizabeth Estell do my cooking & washing. One convenience we have here is a Christian Commission which gives me plenty of reading matter. We also have letters allowed in this post. My letter is getting long and of little account. I started it two days ago. I will now draw it to a close, hoping it will reach you & find you all in the enjoyment of good health. Sometimes wish to be led into the field, and meet the enemy in battle. I am getting tired of laying round in camp, although of course it is necessary. I fear the colored soldiers will not often have the privilege of meeting the enemy in battle, but I do believe they would fight desperately if they had a chance. They have made up their minds never to surrender. Victory or death is their motto. It is the same feeling among the officers. I will try and write regular after this and hope you will comfort me with writing often also. I would also like to hear often from all my friends father Brothers &c. I now close asking an interest in your many prayers and in the prayers of my friend that I may flee from sin & temptation and live closer to my saviour who died that I might live. I am your affectionate son
Thos. Montgomery