



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Head Quarters Co. 56th Reg. U.S. C. I.
Morganza La. August 1st 1864.

My Dear Mother,

Your kind letter of the 12th ult. was received by me last night, and I was very glad to hear from you and brothers once more. I agree with you where you say, you wish the news would travel quicker, but still we have reason to be thankful, that it is no worse.

It takes five weeks for me to receive an answer to my letters. Your letter is an answer to one I wrote at Port Hudson on leaving for this place, you accept my offer of sending Elizabeth up home; this pleases me, as it will be much better for her, and will be an immense help to you.

Being a great help to me I am loth to let her go, but I guess I can get along without her better than you can. I will send her up as soon as a favorable opportunity presents itself. I would like to go up myself this fall and take her along, but that is doubtful. If she could read or write I would not fear sending her alone, but somehow I fear she may get lost, or get into difficulty being alone. I can send her safely to St Louis & from there she would have to make her own way but she thinks she can go, & is very willing. I will find out more about it in a few days.

My health thank God is very good at present. One day last week I was taken sick with fever, but soon recovered, under medical treatment, that was the only instance of me taking quinine or calomel, since I entered the army.

Stood cold from taking a wash all over after night
and remaining out too long, hence the fever next morning.
Two of my men died this morning, which leaves now 62 men.
There is talk of some officers going up to Mo. to recruit
for this Reg. in a few days. The mail last night brought
news of a painful character from my old Reg. 10 killed
and 56 wounded makes me feel sad, 3 officers killed
Surgeon Smith, Lt Hardee & G. Borer, too bad! I did
not hear the particulars from Co "K" but hope to soon.
It might have been my lot if I had been there, to have
fallen, but I am here alive and well, thank God
but our turn may soon come; and if ready all will
be well. One good thing our boys did not disgrace their
State, they fought gallantly, charged gallantly as Col.
Marshall can well do, and were victorious, inflicting
a severe punishment on Forrest for once.
The 9th Reg as you are aware lost their Colonel, Melkins.
The scare we had when I last wrote to you on the 25th
has almost subsided as we are better prepared for
an attack, Genl. Ulmann, took out a force 12 miles
one day last week, discovered some rebels, routed them
killed 12, and took several prisoners. Our loss 2 killed.
There has come to this place since, a force of several
thousand white troops, and there is talk of forming an
expedition to operate against the enemy again.
If so, I guess we will be left to protect the place.
The works are beginning to look formidable, with
the heavy iron & brass pieces, peeping over the top.

Our mess of five still continues. The chaplain is getting up
a shade to teach school in. St Krep & Roberts are well.
So are most all the officers. The Col is back. He brought a
large quantity of books & Reading Matter from the rooms
of the Christian Commission in St. Louis. The wife of our
Lt. Col is here & assists the Chaplain in instructing the men.
Your fears as to my losing Govt. property are groundless. as any
such loss except through my carelessness, can be accounted for
satisfactorily by an affidavit. So far I am square with Govt.
both as regards Ordnance, & clothing, camp & Garrison Equipage.
I have just finished making out my returns for the past month.
I was pleased to hear that the crops are looking so fine. hope they
may be good all over the country, as it will materially assist our
Govt. in crushing the Rebellion. The digest of the latest news
from Ga. is that Atlanta is in our possession. Soon it will
be Petersburg I trust. Our armies are doing nobly but we have a
determined foe to overcome, but overcome them we must & will.
Thousands will yet fall & there will be many weary months
of soldiering for our boys yet, but the country will reap the
benefits eventually. I am glad to see hundreds of thousands brought
into the army. for men is what we want, & must have.
The Chaplain & Lieut Roberts are both well acquainted with Dr Chas.
Hayling ^{who went to the Iowa Wesleyan University where he was there} Elliott, and it would make you laugh to hear them tell of
his uncouth manner & gestures, and peculiarities. He dresses very
rough, wears old shoes, sticks his fingers up his very large nose
tutche up his breeches &c. When I saw him I thought he was a
common old Irish man, as he looks & accents his words much
like one. But Contra he is straight, portly & venerable, has a massive
forehead, with intellect, visible in every feature.

August 5th

Our men only have to work 3 hours daily after this, this will be quite a relief, and will give us more time to drill. I thank God, that my health this morning is better than I have had for a month. I feel quite active, & energetic. My bowels are more regular & I hope my health will continue good after this. Name the little heifer ^{if not already named Barker} Lizzie if you choose. The weather now is quite pleasant and dry. The nights are cool, and I sleep regularly every night, as I would do at home. I am much obliged to you for the Caraway you sent me. We have not been paid off yet, and may not be for some time. Still I have some money left, having had some from the boys. I would like to have my money put to such use pretty soon, as that it will be increasing, instead of depreciating in value, & so that it can be convertible into currency when I might need it. I am obliged to you for writing so regularly to me. It is a great satisfaction to me indeed. I hope you will continue thus to do, and I will try and do the same. I mentioned in my last that I expressed home a box of clothes, which I hope you will get. I am abundantly supplied with clothes, shirts, collars, &c. I sell him to all. It is more left keeping for my own use, of course all I want, & sending Mrs. More the money value; and selling the rest for her benefit. I must now draw to a close. I hope and trust this will find you all in the enjoyment of good health and strength. I have not heard from the 7th nor Lt. Talbot since I last wrote. Give my best respects to all my friends who enquire after my welfare. I suppose the Cradle will be laid up for another winter when you get this, if it is not broken to pieces. My duties here are very light. I act as officer of the day, and in command of the battalion at the trenches. I am happy to say that I am well contented, and pleased with my present position, in the Army & mean by the help of God to fill it with credit to myself, and for the good of all concerned. I ask the blessing of God on all my doings, continually, and ask your prayers, as I know I shall then. Remember me to Mrs. Garrison, Belongs, Amittis Talbot & some of them may forget me, but I can never forget the ties which make me think continually of home & friends. With kindest love to your father & brothers, it close remains as ever your affectionate son J. Montgomery