



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Head Quarter B. F. 67th U. S. I.
Morganza La. Feb 21st 1865.

My Dear Brother James Charles,

Another fortnight has passed and I am still alive and well and privileged to write to you once more. The art of penmanship and the facility of mail communication tend greatly to lessen the horrors of war. and I am truly thankful that I can at least hear so regularly from my dear friends, being denied the privilege of seeing them. I hope this will find you all enjoying good health.

I received a letter last week from Mother and Father dated on the 24th ult. and read the enclosed note to Mr. Estill. I was glad to hear that Ma. & Lizzy enjoyed themselves so well. Sleigh riding &c. That is right.

I have not seen as much as the first particle of snow here yet. and of course won't now as the grass is springing up green in all directions.

Our Camp I think is the only redeeming feature of Morganza. It is somewhat elevated is always dry and clean, and strongly contrasts with the mud all around.

It being on the River Bank, we see every boat passing. Major General A. J. Smith's whole Army Corps passed down by here last night on a large fleet of boats. Nearly all the Minnesota Regiments are with him.

As they made arrangements to pass without being hailed, we had no chance to see our former comrades. We were all very much disappointed. 62 Boats passed in all, with Gen. Thomas, whole command.

As soon as Gen. Smith arrived with his army at Vicksburg, he was detained and proceeded down the River himself arriving here one day last week where he stayed all day awaiting further orders. Co. "A" 7th Minns. was with him forming part of his body guard. I went down to see the boys, many of whom I knew and had a long talk with the officers about the old 7th, and found out more news, than I heard since I left. They went down to Baton Rouge but returned next day. I was Brigade Field Officer of the Day, and when the "Brilliant" Gen Smith's boat came up, as I was returning from a tour of the Guard line, I rode up to see them again. I alighted at Gen Ullmann's Hd. Qrs. where they landed, and went down. You may be sure they stared at me, as I was then in full uniform. Some of them came up with me to Camp. I saw Gen Smith, wife & family. He is a short grey headed & whitebearded man, but is full of life, fire and fight. He is pretty enough too. I felt sorry that they passed in the night, as otherwise I might have seen some of old Co. "K" which would be almost as good as a visit home. They will proceed to New Orleans, and I suppose from there to Mobile. They are all in good health, and in excellent spirits. We may have the privilege of seeing them one of these days ourselves, as we receive orders which look like marching.

We have heard nothing of Consolidation lately.

The order has not returned from Washington. It may be effected but it is doubtful, as we have had a new supply of Recruits. Furthermore our whole Organization as a Corps is broken up. Genl Andrews who Commanded the Colored troops in this Dept. has been relieved, and many are very thankful, as he tried to exceed the Regular Army in matters of Discipline &c. We had an examining Board, which only passed for promotion, 4 out of 47 able officers of different Regts. They required as much for a Capt to know, as 75 percent of all the Colonels in the U.S. Army, being no less than a complete knowledge of Battalion & Brigade Drill, also the evolutions of a Corps d'Armee, with other knowledge in proportion. Our Division & Brigade is broken up, and we are at present simply the 67th U.S. I. That will be done with us I don't know. Sometimes I think we will remain at this Post this next summer, but I hope not, for this situation is unhealthy in many ways. We have Regular Company and Battalion Drills now every day, & I do not full share of them. Capt. Nickerson & St. Parvin. have returned from the North the former expressed my money home. There is now two Captains present with the Regiment, I am 7th. The health of Officers and men is very good and we are very well provided for generally and present a very neat and clean appearance, and are always favorably reported by Inspectors.

Feb'y 21 / 65

I would send my Diary home. but I need it so much for reference that I cannot spare it.

There is nothing interesting transpiring here at present. and so I will draw to a close.

I enjoy myself very well, have plenty to do, and keep hearty. I have also plenty time to read & study. We attend school in factis & every week there is a Branch of the Christian Commission here from which I get plenty of good religious papers.

Mr. Estlin was much pleased to hear from Lizzie, but I cannot wait to write for him this time. I will perhaps in my next. He is now a Corporal, with a hope of soon being Sergeant, all this for good behavior & attention to duty.

He is well, so are Lizzie's friends. all send Love & tell her that Mary left here last week for St. Louis.

I hope all my old friends who are left, are well. Give them my best respects, and tell them I am enjoying Soldiering with all its necessary privations, as well as I could wish to.

I may send up some papers, perhaps, in a few days.

Please write soon and often, and I will try and do likewise. I hope you are trying to improve your mind, so that as you grow up in years, you may in knowledge of all that is good, useful, virtuous & happy. I trust you do not neglect the interests of your soul. May God bless you and all my dear friends is the sincere prayer of your Affectionate Brother Thos. Montgomery.