



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Camp 6th U.S. C. Inf.
Bayou Sara La. May 9th 1865.

Dear Agents and Brothers,

Time can not efface the fond
recollections of home. So as I cannot converse with
you face to face, I seat myself once more to let
you know where I am and how I am situated.

Soldiering at best is an unsettled life; but for the
last year I have seen little of it being confined
to one or two places. I remained in Morganza La.
since the 21st of last June, and would be there
yet I suppose, had not the mighty River broke
over its boundary, and swept Morganza out
of view. Fortunately we were not surprized, and
consequently lost nothing or met with no accident.

Three or four men of other Regts. were drowned
I believe the night of the break, in the Levee.

It was fearful to behold the rushing waters
plunging through the crevasse, overflowing the
Country around for miles. These crevasses are
numerous along the River and only affect the
Country in their immediate vicinity as the water
flows back, meeting the back water of the Atchafalaya
a bayou, which flows into the Gulf parallel with the
Miss. rising near the mouth of Red River.

Bear in mind the land along the Miss. is much
higher, than it is a short distance back, so that
plantations along the River are dry, while those in rear a few
miles are completely inundated.

Done to all
you & all the
cousins for the day
been but is now with
the agents this
to let you
I hope she is doing well
I received a letter last week from Mother & the boys. You officers to much can't be away from home about in
I think, I do not let it for any message from you. I would give you the usual trouble & cause
much as any expense. I do not think I can do it. I am well. I hope you are well. I hope you are well. I hope you are well.

As I wrote before, we left Morganzia and went into Camp at McCullums point a few miles below. It was a pretty place and we had a nice camp, but it was only a temporary one. We enjoyed ourselves however as the men were allowed the privilege of going after berries which they brought into Camp by the pail full. The first evening I paid 75 ct. for a pail full, which were soon devoured. They were indeed a choice treat. After that I did not want. I told the boys when I gave them permission to go out to not forget the Captain when they returned, and neither they did, for I surely got my tithe.

They brought me about a pail full every day and I assure you I ate my full share of them as they agreed well with me. They were the Sour berries & Mulberries. We finally received orders to move to this place and establish a camp with a view to permanence, & comfort. We came here last Saturday the 6th, and are now established in camp high and dry, on a beautiful ridge with a deep ravine in front and rear. The camp is shaded with beautiful trees and is adorned with shrubbery & flowers.

It is a striking contrast with the stinking and barren fields around Morganzia.

Bayou Sara is about 12 miles below Morganzia and on the East side of the River. It is only about 12 miles to Port Hudson.

This is an important naval point. One or more Gun-Boats lie here all the time. It was here the Rebels fired on the Gunboat Essex and sunk her.

In consequence our Gunboats fired on the town and completely destroyed it burning all the principal houses. Our camp is not in Bayou Sara (which is now under water) but in St Francisville, which is built on the hills & high ground about a mile back from the River.

So you see we are about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles back from the River. Camped on high ground in a town irregularly built among hills and ravines, and backed by a fine rich country thickly settled (especially by women) and still in a fair state of cultivation. The people of course are principally Rebels, nearly every family having friends in the Rebel Army. Some of the most prominent Rebs have resided here. This is the place from which Banks started to lay siege to Port Hudson. It is not much raided however, and we can get all the vegetables, milk, butter chickens &c we want. There are some fine houses, public & private nice gardens, a splendid Catholic Church, Court House &c. Many of the houses are perforated & riddled with shells from our Gun Boat.

We took the people here completely by surprise. It was amusing to see the consternation which our entrance produced. The mass of the people are evidently Rebels. As I passed one house, a little child said, "Go away you Yankee". The mother said "Hush up! Hush up!" Of course we are not afraid, but must necessarily be cautious.

We had a nice sail down here, passing many rich and beautiful Plantations. The exertion of moving up my company property from the River (all of which had to be carried by the men) gave me a fever which made me unwell for a day or two. I bought two chickens today for \$1.00, & two lbs. butter \$1.00. Had a good dinner & supper and feel well again. I have a good tent, but will soon have a good house as I have made arrangements with the Provost Marshall to move a house over to my camp. The command is composed of three colored Regiments, a Regt of Cavalry & a battery. The health of all is very good. The war news is most favorable. April has been an eventful month, full of joy & full of sorrow. Lee & Johnson have surrendered their vast armies. Mobile has fallen into the hands of Canby. Sick Taylor has surrendered his army, and Jeff Davis himself is fleeing for his life. The war in the east is at an end, as we have no forces to fight, and our only enemy west of the Miss. is Kirby Smith, who is determined to fight it out, but he will succumb to our superior forces like all the rest, and that before long I trust. I trust Davis will be taken before he crosses the River. Report says to day that he crossed above Morganza a few days ago. but I doubt it, for our gunboats are very active, in patrolling the River. I suppose you have heard of the awful disaster to the Sultana & her passengers. It was a heart rending affair. The Paymaster has been here, and has returned to New Orleans for more money to pay us off. I think we will soon be paid. There is due me about \$1100, now. My pay is now \$164.00 per month or there about. It was raised by last Congress \$36.00 per month, from last March. We were mustered last of April. I have been kept quite busy writing. I have time enough however to read. I read much of the papers of the Chris. Comm. They keep us well supplied. So far thank God I have no reason to complain. Do not give yourselves any uneasiness about my fare &c. I assure I do well, and do not or did not look for any favors from you. That I will receive no doubt if spared to reach home once more. I love the service, and do not care to resign, if I can get a leave of absence this fall. I now close. Remaining as ever Yours affectionately
Thomas Montgomery.