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Thomas L. Evans letter to his parents from Milliken's Bend, March 14, 1863

Thomas L. Evans

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Philetus Reid Dr. March 14th 1865

Dear Father,

I received Uncle Billy's letter yesterday and was glad to hear that you are all well again. You see by the heading of my letter that we have moved since my last. We are now about twelve miles farther up the river and have a very snug camping ground. It is low but as the rainy season is over and the spring is fairly set in we need not fear being troubled with mud.

I don't understand the move for my part. Quite a heavy corps of the army has moved to this point. Rumor says our move was caused by the rising of the river & breaking of the levee above us quite likely that is the true reason but it is difficult to know. The object of army movement, the canal is about completed and near as I can learn will be a success. But we have got a little too far from it now too know much about it. We went aboard the boat day before yesterday and ran up to this point but arrived here a little too late to unload so we lay on the boat until yesterday then unloaded and came into camp. The weather nice as may. The woods are quite green and everything looks bright and cheerful. But these broad rich plantations here are not being broken up and planted as they bear evidence of being on former systems. We see no armies.
of slaves and instead of the drivers whip
we hear that of the teamsters, and the
cracking of boards as the soldiers are demolishing
the neighboring fences & houses to procure
plank to lay floors in their tents. If you can
plainly read in each ones countenance as he
comes up with a load of plank on his back
"slaves may build more houses but I won't
lie on the ground"
The health of our company I think is improving
and the boys generally are growing more cheerful
and better contented than they were a few weeks
ago. They surely had enough to discourage them.
When a forward movement will be made I can
make no guess I am ready any time. Let us pitch in
and finish off the job I say. Not that I want to fight
but I want this thing finished and believe that is the only
way to finish it. Tell the rebels up there that they had
better keep cool for they have no sympathy here.
as they would soon learn if they could but hear
the deep curses the patriot soldiers heap upon
them. They had better go slow as we say here
Warn them to "go slow!" And don't fear the
results for there is no end to this war only
to whip the rebels when that will be I don't
know but as George Draper says "it's got to be done"
The cowardly rebels north who talk so bold because
they think we are busy will be reminded.
The loyal soldiers will not forget the traitors
who vote to stop their supplies withold till 90
their time of need never. Pestilence will remember
as we remember the stories of 75 but enough on
the subject.
Dear Father:

I received Lib's letter yesterday and was glad to hear that you are all well again. You see by the heading of my letter that we have moved since my last. We are now about twelve miles farther up the river and have a very snug camping ground. It is low but as the rainy season is over and the Spring is fairly set in, we need not fear being troubled with mud.

I don't understand the move for my part. Quite a heavy Corps of the army has moved to this point. Rumor says our move was caused by the rising of the river and breaking of the levy above us. Quite likely that is the true reason but it is difficult to know the object of army movements. The canal is about completed and near as I can learn, will be a success but we have got a little too far from it now to know much about it. We went aboard the boat day before yesterday and ran up to this point but arrived here a little too late to unload so we lay on the boat until yesterday then unloaded and came into camp. The weather nice as May. The woods are quite green and everything looks bright and cheerful but these broad, rich plantations here are not being broken up and planted as they bear evidence of being on former spring. We see no gangs of slaves and instead of the drivers whip we hear that of the teamsters and the cracking of boards as the soldiers are demolishing the neighboring fences and houses to procure plank to lay floors in their tents and you can plainly read in each one's countenance as he comes up with a load of plank on his back "Planters may build more houses but I won't lie on the ground."

The health of our Company I think, is improving and the boys generally, are growing more cheerful and better
contented than they were a few weeks ago. They surely had enough to discourage them.

When a forward movement will be made, I can make no guess. I am ready any time. Let us pitch in and finish up the job I say. Not that I want to fight but I want this thing finished and believe that is the only way to finish it. Tell the rebels up there that they better keep cool for they have no sympathy here as they would soon learn if they could but hear the deep curses the patriot soldiers heap upon them. They had better "go slow" as we say here. Warn them to "go slow" and don't fear the results for there is no end to this war only to whip the rebels; when that will be, I don't know but as George Draper says "It's got to be did." The cowardly rebels North who talk so bold because they think we are busy, will be remembered. The loyal soldiers will not forget the traitors who vote to stop their supplies and withhold help in their time of need, Never. Posterity will remember them as we remember the Tories of 76 but enough on that subject.