Thomas L. Evans letter to his parents from battlefield in front of Jackson, Mississippi, July 14, 1863

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Dear Family

Though I know not what I shall write, I will try. My plan for this summer is to go to Rock Island. I have to go there for some business. I will be there for a few weeks. I will stay at the hotel, and then I will go to the beach. I will write to you as soon as I arrive.

Wish you all the best.

Love,

[Signature]
I only knew I must be with him. Oh! that could have remained a few minutes and could not.

I leaned afterward of the man I left with him. That he lived but a few minutes, & said nothing more only he asked him again if he would have some water & the said no. He was recently buried that afternoon. We had one other man slightly wounded that day.

We have thrown up breastworks here & believing them as we did at Vicksburg. There is a good deal of firing between the skirmishers but seldom any one hurt.

We have a lot of sick among our hire and many are complaining and some are quite sick. But I am still blessed with good health.

I have much to write but I left everything at Vicksburg & write this on the fly leaf of a confiscated book.

The slippers & handkerchiefs & letter and things yesterday I hope you will send me a letter. Handkerchief may be all right. I will write to you sooner soon as I can but it may be sometime first as there is no paper up here.

We may take this place in a day or two & may be an 8 month or more.

This made me a letter for you all the
Dear Parents:

I must write a few lines though I know not when I can send it. We left Vicksburg July 5 and came here by easy marches driving the rebels before us for the last 20 miles into their fortifications at this place. We came near here on the 10th and formed line of battle and move up to position. We had not marched half a mile when we lost one of the best boys we had and as good and brave a soldier as ever lived. Oh! how can I tell you the name. It was our old dear friend Asberry. He fell with a shriek. His left hip and leg shot off with a cannon ball and bowels gushing out. I ran to him and lifted up his head and said "It is Asberry Turner, is it?" In his usual quiet way and firm tone, he answered "Yes, Lieutenant, I am gone." I knew it was true and told him so. I asked him if he wanted anything. He said No, so I layed his head in the lap of an attendant and ran after the Reg. which had by this time advanced on through the bushes. I knew not in how hot a place, I only knew I must be with them. Oh! that I could have remained a few minutes but could not. I learned afterwards of the man I left with him, that he lived but a few minutes and said nothing more only he asked him again if he would have some water and he said No. He was decently buried that afternoon. We had on other man slightly wounded that day.

We have thrown up breastworks here and besieging them as we did at Vicksburg. There is a good deal of fighting between the skirmishers but seldom anyone hurt.

We have a vast army here and many are complaining and some are quite sick but I am still blessed with good health. I have much to write but I'll left everything at Vicksburg and write this on the fly-leaf of a confiscated book. I received the slippers and handkerchiefs and letter day before yesterday. I hope you will send me a better handkerchief when you can get it.
slippers are all right. I will write to Mr. Turner soon as I can but it may be some time first as there is no paper up here. We may take this place in a day or two and may be in a month or two. This must be a letter to you all.

Thomas.