

12-23-1863

Thomas L. Evans letter to his brother from Point of Matagorda Peninsula, Texas, December 23, 1863

Thomas L. Evans

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Point of Matagorda Peninsula
On Matagorda Bay Texas
Dec. 25, 1865

Dear Brother,

We landed here day before yesterday and have gone into camp along the gulf. The Peninsula on which we are camped is 40 or 50 miles long and from one to three miles wide. It is low and sandy and overgrown with tufts of coarse grass & there is not a tree or shrub in sight and but one building within six miles.

That is rather a fine building and is occupied by a sheep merchant who was engaged in grazing sheep. He owned some 12,000 but the forces here have been feasting on them for some time & I guess they are about "played out" now. There are several thousand troops here some of which have been here for near a month and all are remarkable healthy and say they have been having as fine times as ever they had soldiering. And why should they not for though the camp is on low ground it is so sandy that it does not get muddy and the weather is like May. I sit here in my tent this morning and write as comfortable as you please, without need of fire. It is moonlight nights now too and almost light as day. Last night was so nice that I could not remain

over my shoulders and went out for a walk on the beach. The beach consist of a narrow strip of sand soft as velvet and almost white as snow stretched along the waters edge as if it were a strip of carpet placed there on purpose for one to promenade upon. On one side was the gulf with the slight waves rippling over the shallows as the tide came rolling in, the waves sparkling in the bright moonlight and on occasional night-bird would go flapping along and utter a cry of exultation as it darted down to the waters and bore away some unlucky fish over which to hold its night carnival. On the other side of me was the broad sandy prairie on one end of which was the collection of tents stretched out like a city and here and there was a signal station with its revolving torch. & above the encampment.

Each regimental band was beating tattoo not with the least harmony at all, for each band was beating its own tune in its own time and the commingling sounds produced a confused din rather than music. Soon the drums ceased beating and for a little while all was ^{still}. Directly a chorus of voices struck up an old familiar hymn tune and the music rang out on the still air of the evening and in memory bore me back to by gone days.

I sat down on a hillock and looked up at the moon and the stars of the

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them with me and thought how they were ~~so~~ scattered and how many of them have fallen and wondered ^{where} you are all at present. how you were getting and if you enjoyed yourselves well at home as I do but here in Texas, and fancied I could see you collected around the fire chatting as usual all talking at once and wondering where I was how I was ~~getting~~ getting ^{along} and I thought with how much lighter hearts you would go to rest if I could but whisper in your ears and tell all about it, but I could not so I told the moon to bid you all good night for me. & I went back to my tent and was soon sound a sleep.

I was in the Gulf swimming and would have had a nice time if it had not been quite so cool. Pleasant as it is the water is not quite as warm as on a sultry July day.

Are you tending school this winter I have not heard I ward about it I hope

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will tend school, and spend a profitable winter.

I get very few letters from home lately, some how or other. Perhaps they are mis-carried. The last one I received was written a month ago. The first one after you heard of our fight Nov. 9,

There was a rebel fort here but they ~~exact~~ evacuated when our forces came here and we can hear of no rebels now. I still can give no guess what the object of our coming here is whether it is to go into a winter campaign or wait here until spring then move on. I saw Sgt. Wood of the N. O. V. I. since we came. He tells me that John Pickover, ^{died of fever} died on the Steamer Nashville Aug. 15th and that he had written to his folks twice, once within the last few weeks.

Day after tomorrow is Christmas and a dry time I fear we will have. I hope not so hard a march though as we had last Christmas. Give my love to you Sweetheart.

Write often to your

Brother

J. P. Evans

Thomas,

Point of Matagorda Peninsula,

On Matagorda Bay, Texas.

Dec. 23rd, 1863.

Dear Brother:

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