

Farm

Altus, Okl
R. 2

Dec 16 34

Dear Warner
Baylor University
Waco, Tex.

Very much interested in your late letter. No doubt that you and Dick will make fine showing this debate season. Do credit to Baylor and honor yourselves.

Your teaching will be good for yourself and learning to pay your way will be the best lesson of your life.

Though I should like if could make it easier for you. Have fought my own way since I was a boy. Though am under obligation for encouragement & help, little cash but chance to work & opportunity to earn. I always found work to do, roads opened.

Boys who never watch the clock nor complain of overtime are in demand.

When in 1873, the greatest panic year of my 85 years, broken & in debt, and I must have been a green young man, with a good deal of western experience but little education or of culture that is supposed to recommend one to the city.

I applied in St. Louis for a place as a traveling man in Texas.

I was offered a salary all too small (of course, a trial test.) I said, "Give me the percent attached to pay, travel and salary, and credit me when goods are sold."

For near 8 years I represented that house in Texas until I quit the road of my own accord. And objecting to an adjuster in my territory, dealing with my customers. They were my friends.

I was made adjuster for Texas at additional pay. In any large territory there will be delayed payments and mercantile failures.

A new partner as Financial Manager, coming into the firm, instructed me to attend a creditors meeting at Palestine, Texas, "But to accept no settlement until after reporting to the firm & having it approved."

I replied that I would go to Palestine but should not report for approval, and that my settlements must be final & unquestioned, or the house should send someone else to represent them. The reply was, "You are hereby appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary to represent us in this and all other settlements."

These may give you insight into the struggles and character of your grandfather, as a young man. He did not shrink from work or from responsibility.

Nor submitted to humiliating conditions. Neither rewards (large ones have been offered him) nor threats have influenced him. He has suffered severe financial punishment & has at times carried his life in his hand & never wavered from his convictions. I could go over life again and give less provocation, nor live with greater probity.

At your request there is somewhere among my belongings a genealogical record of my family from the date when King James knighted an ancestor and bestowed on him a glorious coat of arms. It comes down to our colonial history. when two brothers came to America, one of which became treasurer of Colonial Virginia, our people were in Colonial Indian Wars.

Letter, J. F. Evans to Warner Evans, Dec 18 34 (cont'd)

Belan(?) whom I think married Pocahontas & Coln. Fleming whose name remains(?) in our family of whom I am a direct descendant on a maternal side, was in Colonial Indian Wars; as captain in Washington's army, was wounded fighting the British at battle of Brandywine (Creek) & carried to Valley Forge, recuperated there that terrible winter. Was promoted to Lieutenant Coln. & in the first considerable battle in the spring was wounded and left in the field when American troops retreated. Was carried to a farm house, where he died from his wounds. The Fleming in my name is after him. The name has been retained in the family. My grandfather came from Virginia to East Tennessee & had but one son, William L. Evans (several daughters; they married. One, Collie of Knoxville, Tenn & raised quite a family and a daughter who died at Commerce, Texas left children.)

My mother was a Veal. Her people were Holland Dutch from some seaport, I think, Amsterdam. To Philadelphia thence to Virginia & with the drift of settlement out to the southwest following the valleys between the Blue Ridge Mountains & Cumberland Mountains, through the Cumberland Gap to the rich valleys of the head waters of the Tennessee River, which drained the country west of the mountains into the Mississippi.

That territory was then a part of the Colony of North Carolina, which extended west over the unknown to the setting sun, but was unapproachable from the East over mountain barriers.

My mother's ancestors were of Sevier's(?) Colony years before the American Revolution. Of the first colony I have no exact date, but of 360 odd more than 2/3 were killed by Indians. Their wars were waged for years with the Cherokee and Creeks, and most powerful Southern Indian tribes. The ranks of settlers were constantly recruited by hardy settlers from Virginia.

Cut off from the World, Kentucky & Tennessee fought their own Indian Wars without government aid.

Kentucky finally organized their state government, and but few know that there was for two years a State of Franklin.

Sevier's(?) Colony had no aid and from necessity organized the State of Franklin, that part of the Colony west of the mountains, and administered a state government.

My mother's family were of these people and from Colonial they have been a part in all wars of this country.

But I did not start to write history.

I will try to find my copy of family geneology. I think that Alma has a copy, and think the geneology of the Peytons of Kentucky. Your Grandmother Evans' mother was a Peyton, a proud family.

I hve paid little attention to geneologies, but I believe in blood. When you marry be sure beyond a question that your wife is of good blood. No strain of poor blood in her veins to curse progeny.

Your Grandpa

I expect to spend Christmas with the family of your Uncle John at Breckenridge.

Your Grandpa

J. F. Evans

Letter, J. F. Evans to Warner Evans, Dec 18 34 (cont'd)

A Peyton, a cousin of your Grandmother Evans, and one of Morgan's Men, than whom no more gallant commander led Souther troops. The boy, Peyton, fell resisting a Federal charge, with his emptied six-shooter in his hand (a pearl-handled gun presented by admiring friends).

Helpless, he placed his gun beneath his body while vandals turned his pockets out and left upon the field. He was taken to a farm house to die, from which he returned the empty gun to those who gave it. He had not betrayed their trust. Her people and mine bled on many a Southern battlefield.

NOTE: In this letter, Grandfather refers to "my 85 years". Perhaps this might be the last letter he ever wrote. It is dated December 16, 1934; the envelope is postmarked December 18, 1934. He was struck by a car and killed instantly on January 11, 1935, less than four weeks after this letter was written.