

Camp of the 108th N.Y.V.
Bristenburg Va.¹
August 16, [1863]

Dear Mother

Yesterday I wrote a short note to Father enclosing a draft for three hundred and fifty dollars. I promised at the same time to write, at length, upon reaching the Regiment, and will now endeavor to fulfill the promise. You will perhaps remember that on leaving R[ochester] I expected to meet Lt. William² of the 108th and go with him as far as NY city. I could not find him at our depot so I took a sleeping car and had a very comfortable night of it. At Albany I met the Lt and as he had purchased a through ticket I concluded to go with him in the cars, though I had previously proposed stopping at Albany for breakfast and going down the river on the boat. Arriving at NY I went directly to Aunt Delias where I remained during my stay in the vicinity. I had a very pleasant time both with the family and on my own hook. We all went to Coney Island one afternoon and had a delightful time. The next day we went up to the park which is really magnificent far surpassing my expectations. Minnie and I went and called on Mr & Mrs Cooper. They received us very kindly & sent an quantity of love to you and father.

I went also to see Seward and was very much pleased with the looks of things. They are in a beautiful place and will in time have a good regiment.³ The folks were very polite to me during my entire visit and as they gave me a perfect run of the house I enjoyed myself extremely. You have probably read about the ghost a play at Wallacks,⁴ I went to see it and think the illusion perfectly wonderful. The weather was very hot all that I stayed in Brooklyn and the girls made themselves so agreeable that I found it very difficult to tear myself away. Thursday however I got under weigh and arrived in Washington early Friday morning. Was unable to find the Pay master on Friday but Saturday was paid up to the first of July. I had just time after that to write a few lines to Father and then take the boat from Alexandria. At Alexandria I met Mrs Barten who was on her way to Warrenton to rejoin her husband. I went with her as far as Warrenton Junction where I left the railroad for this place which is four or five miles back in the country. She went directly to Warrenton some ten miles further. She invited me to call upon her and requested me to inform you of the fact of my seeing her in order that her mother might hear of her safety and success in reaching home. Our Brigade wagons were at the station de[pot?] so that I reached camp without much trouble. The Regt is nicely situated and is doing well. I can learn nothing of the 140th and am afraid that I shall not be able to get H. Hamilton's things to him. If I could find out the value of the things I could dispose of them without difficulty. I wish you would see if the Hamiltons would object to my doing this, & if not please find out the full value they attach to everything. I may be able to find H & if so will give him the things, but I think that the other course would be better as they could then send by somebody going directly to the Regiment and not run the risk of his being without his jacket and things. The jacket I think at any rate ought to be sold as he may not want it when I am able to get it to him. There is some little talk of a move but I think that it will amount to nothing. Everything seems as natural as can be and I am having a very pleasant day off⁵

Your affect son

Sam

Transcribed by Terry Crooks.

The original letter is in the *Porter Family Papers*, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Libraries.

Notes:

¹ Bristerburg Va. was located about 3 miles north east of the 3rd Division camp at Elk Run or Elkton. At the time it consisted of a store, some houses and a church which served as the Brigade Hospital.

² Lt. Marvin Williams, 1st Lt & Adjutant was discharged on July 17, 1863 which explains why he went to NYC and did not return with Porter to the regiment.

³ Delia Farley was Susan Porter's sister.

Coney Island was on the southernmost end of Brooklyn on Lower Bay.

The park could be Central Park in Manhattan or Prospect Park in Brooklyn.

Minnie – daughter to Delia??

The Coopers – no record

Seward Fobes Gould was now in the 4th NYHA and stationed in New York City at Fort Richmond on Staten Island after the Pennsylvania Campaign.

⁴ Wallack's Theatre was the famous playhouse on Broadway at 13th Street at Union Square which opened in 1861 and was managed by Lester Wallack. Porter may have attended the performance of *True to the Last* on Aug 6, 1863 and reviewed in the NY Times on Aug. 7th. The *Ghost* of which he writes was an 'extraordinary illusion' 'a grand spectral illusion', the creation of Professor Pepper that mimicked life, was semi-transparent and could dissipate into thin air (NY Times).

⁵ Mrs. Barton has no clear identification. Could she be the wife of the Barton mentioned in March 16/63 letter to Farley?

Warrenton Junction on the Orange & Alexandria RR and on the Warrenton Branch RR was in the area of the camps of the 5th and 2nd Corps.

Henry G. Hamilton, Porter's friend in the 140th NY who had recently transferred from the 13th NY on June 24th as a 1st Sgt and was promoted to 1st Lt. Co. I, 140th NY on July 29, 1863.