

Transcribed by Terry Crooks.

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

Virginia
June 13th [July 13]¹

Dear Mary

I intend to commence my summer campaign by being very frequent in my letters home, and hope that my good resolution will not be overcome. I wrote to Father day before yesterday and have now material for scarcely half a letter, but shall in accordance with my expressed intentions give you an account of all that has transpired in the Regt. since I rejoined it, and trust that you will be therewith content. Sunday and Monday were spent very quietly in camp I occupying most of my time in saying "how are you" to my numerous friends in the Brigade and Division. Col. Pierce, I found in command of the First Brigade. He is feeling rather better than usual but I doubt if he is ever a real healthy man again. Seward I have seen several times. He having been with us twice & I spending one evening with him at his quarters. He is looking well & is in excellent spirits. Kelly is quite unwell and has applied for a discharge on the ground of Physical Disability which he will no doubt receive.²

Thursday morning before daylight our whole corps was on the march nobody having any idea of our destination. At about 10 A.M. our Brigade was sent on picket, the rest of the Corps leaving us and marching perhaps one & perhaps twenty miles. Our Regiment was sent to connect with the 5th Corps pickets & although we were not detailed Howard³ & I spent considerable time on the line. The Rebel pickets although in plain sight and easy range were perfectly quiet and the shells which were thrown from a fort about half a mile in our front was the only cause of uneasiness. We had a nice rifle pit but the fire was very accurate and towards night one man was wounded and one of the men we relieved killed. The heat was intense and as there was no shade the men suffered. This morning we were relieved by the 5th Corps and are now in the woods about ½ mile in the rear of the picket line. There are many rumors as to the whereabouts of our Corps & as to destination, but they are all too unreliable to report.

Tell Father that my extension never reached the Regt but as they reported absent sick it is allright.

Love to all
Sam Porter.

Notes:

¹ For some reason, Sam misdated this letter. There are a number of internal clues that provide the correct date. The letter is included in folder three (1864) of the collection at the University of Rochester and such placement is correct but the date cannot be June 13, 1864. First of all, Sam states he has "rejoined" his regiment, however he did not receive his medical leave for the Wilderness wound until June 17, 1864 for 20 days convalescence which means he would not rejoin his regiment until early July. His letter indicates that he has been back for a number of days. He would not have been sent from a Fredericksburg hospital back to his regiment, then given medical leave three days later. This is also the extension mix-up he mentions towards the close. Secondly he says upon his return he found that Pierce was in temporary command of the 1st Brigade, 2nd Division, 2nd Corps which did not occur until June 27, 1864 and continued through July 1864 (O.R.40, 2,p.542; NARA file). Thirdly if the date were June 13, then the

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entire 2nd Corps would have been in the process of crossing the Chickahominy River to Charles City Court House – an event that Sam would surely mention (*O.R.* 40, 1, p. 178f). Thirdly he says the entire brigade “was sent on picket” which occurred on July 12-15 and it was relieved by the 5th Corps on the 15th (*O.R.* 40, 1, p.382). Lastly in his letter he says he wrote home to Sam Sr. “day before yesterday” which would be July 11th and he did write to his father on this date –see letter of July 11th – and he also makes it clear in the letter of July 11 that he was not present for the Cold Harbor fight and the subsequent movement to the Petersburg front. In his address of the present letter he labels his location as vaguely “Virginia” but actually he was on the left flank of the army on the Petersburg, located near the Southall House ,north of the Jerusalem Plank Road and east of Petersburg (*O.R. Atlas*, plate 120, #1). His references to the heat and the forts reinforce the location as the Petersburg front.

² Seward Gould was Captain of Co.K, 4th NYHA and his mentioned in earlier letters.

Kelly is Howard L.Kelly, 2nd Lt. Co.K 4th NYHA and he did receive his discharge for disability on July 12, 1864.

³ Howard is Simeon P. Howard, 1st Lt. Co. E, (June 23, 1864) 108th NY (Phisterer).