

Hospital Near Getesville<sup>1</sup>  
Sept.20<sup>th</sup> 1862

Dear Seward<sup>2</sup>

I heard from the girls that you intended writing to me but have waited in vain for a letter, and suppose that I will have to take the will for the deed and write first. It is just two weeks to day since we left Camp Palmer and since that time we have been on a constant tramp, no time for anything but eating and sleeping – an not enough of that. For a day or two, the officers had a blanket carried for me by the baggage wagons but then we got word that anything we wanted to use, we must carry ourselves so after that I carried a winter overcoat and made that answer – I found it pretty cold at first but soon got used to it and could sleep as comfortably as though at home.

Since the battle, I have been without any covering except straw but it is plenty warm and I find every thing endurable except the dreadful stench from the dead and wounded – that is enough to make one sick and I shall try to get over to one of the neighboring towns, but hardly expect to succeed. You can form no idea of the horrors one sees here, the whole country seems filled with hospitals and every hospital crowded to over flowing. There are so many wounded here that the surgeons can not half take care of them and numbers die every day just from want of care. But such accounts are not very agreeable & I had better have said nothing about them.

You will hear of the battle before this letter reaches you and how well the 108<sup>th</sup> sustained the expectation of old Monroe.<sup>3</sup> My own feelings were so complex that it would be impossible to describe them but the thought of fear never entered my head. I had ~~several~~ two or three, pretty close calls but with the exception of a bullet hole through the fleshy part of my foot, received no particular damage. I was struck by a spent ball that hurt a good deal at the time but only just drew blood<sup>4</sup>. Since the fight I have had a pretty dull time and expect that it will be so for some time to come. However it may be all for the best though “I can’t see it”. I received quite a large mail the other day of letters – the only ones I have had for three weeks and I can assure you they were very acceptable. I have enclosed a note to Julia if you will hand it to her you will oblige me very much.

Please tell Anna and Minnie that I am much obliged to them for writing and will answer their letters at the earliest opportunity. Tell G. Royce that I was very sorry not to be able to do anything for him in the Eldridge but it was impossible, however, he made it hot for him and he has resigned. Rogers is elected in his place.<sup>5</sup> There are a great many rebel prisoners around here – tough looking customers.

How does the Alert Hose get along? I hope they meet with their accustomed success. Give my love to all the boys and also to all other friends.

The doctor thinks that my foot will be well enough to use in a couple of weeks –then I hope to have another turn with the rebels.

Yours in Delta Psi hands<sup>6</sup>

Saml Porter.

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Getesville?? No Union Hospital at Antietam was located near any place of this name. In fact the only 'ville' in the area was Keedysville where nearby a Union Second Corps hospital was located on the Hoffmann farm. Perhaps Porter just misheard/ misunderstood or misspelled the name of the village.

<sup>2</sup> Seward Gould – son of Sarah T. (nee Seward) and General Jacob Gould who will join the 4<sup>th</sup> New York Heavy Artillery. Porter mentions Seward throughout his civil war letters.

<sup>3</sup>For the experience of the 108<sup>th</sup> NY at Antietam see: *Rochester's Forgotten Regiment*, pp.17-34 and R.L. Murray's *Before the Appointed Time*.

<sup>4</sup>Just what part of the foot Porter considered 'fleshy' is not clear and for 'a spent ball' wound it kept him out for almost 8 weeks and he did not gain proper function until around Nov. 18, 1862 (see letter marked 'Nov, 1862'). He tended to assert his good health a bit too much.

<sup>5</sup>Julia could be Julia Hamilton who may have been related to Porter's friend Henry Hamilton currently in the 13<sup>th</sup> NY. For Anna, Minna, G. Royce, The Eldridge and Rogers no records have been found.

<sup>6</sup>The Alert Hose was Company No. 1 of the volunteer fire department to which Porter belonged. Delta Psi was his university fraternity, Iota chapter, founded on Oct.24,1851.