

Camp 108th N.Y.Vols.¹
Jan 23 1864

Dear Father

Your letter of 19th came safely with enclosed draft. This I presented to the sutler who cashed it at once, and I am no longer "dead broke". The weather for the last week has been delightful, mild pleasant days, and beautiful moonlight nights. One of our bands plays every night and even I who has no particular musical taste cannot be but charmed.² Music here sounds so differently. Every thing with that one exception is perfectly quiet and I often sit alone in my tent thinking, and listening to the band for an hour at a time. Perhaps you will remember the case of the deserter from Co F who was afterwards caught in the 14th Conn where he had reenlisted as a substitute. A day or two ago I was summoned to appear at Division Head Qrs as a witness on his trial. I went of course but for some reason the court adjourned before the case was brought up. Division Head Qrs are about five miles from us, and most beautiful spot I ever saw in Virginia. The view from them is perfectly grand. To the south as far as the eye can reach is nothing but woods and mountains while looking northwards the view is entirely changed. The country in that direction spreads out into a broad plain apparently about ten miles wide, but which in reality is nearly double that. The spires and houses of Culpeper can be distinctly seen although the city is fifteen miles distant. This valley is entirely encircled by a lofty range of mountains whose sides indicate by the smoke and patches of white here & there, the presence of a large army. Cedar Slaughter & Pony mountains, are conspicuous and to us full of interest. The houses in this section of Virginia although not very pretending are much neater than any I have seen elsewhere in Virginia and seem built with some little regard to taste and beauty.

Joe Harris our old R QM came to camp last night for the purpose of straightening his affairs. He was obliged to resign about a month ago on account of his health. I rather hope that Locke will get his place so that I can get rid of him, but the rumor now is, that Parsons will have the position. He would make a much better Quarter Master but that would send Locke back to the company a thing I wish to avoid if possible. Even if I liked the latter, the little taste I have had of living alone would make me dislike the idea of his coming to tent with me.³ There is quite a mania in camp now on the subject of chess playing and I play two or three games every day. At home I did not think much of my chess, but out here I find that I play as well as any one.

My leg bothers me very little, and although it is not entirely well is much better than when I left home. You ask me why I did not see Jas McKeen in Washington. I was there very little while, and did not know where to find him. I received a few lines from Mrs Porter Farley last night, also a letter from Seward in reply to one from me. He seems to be getting on very well and to like his place.

Love to all the family
Your affectionate son
Sam Porter

P.S. Tell Farley that I have recd his last with pictures.⁴

Notes:

¹ Their camp was still located in the same area as the other letters of Jan/64. For a map of the area Porter describes see *O.R.Atlas* plate 45, map 1.

² The band was probably that of the 14th Connecticut which was lauded by the Brigade and Corps.

³ Joseph Harris, former Quartermaster of the 108th NY was discharged on Jan. 11, 1864.
Andrew J. Locke, 2nd Lt.Co F, 108th NY for some reason was not liked by Porter.
Theron Edwards Parsons was mustered as Quartermaster Sergeant on Aug. 16, 1862 and became 1st Lt. & Adjutant on Feb.12,1864. Since Psrsons did not become the QMr, the honor went to 1st Lt. Franklin B. Hutchinson on April 23, 1864.

⁴ Jas McKeen – no record found.

Mrs. Porter Farley, née Mary C.Bates who Porter Farley recently married in 1864, would die in 1866 at the age of 26.

Seward Fobes Gould was Captain, Co. K 4th NYHA. The Gould were family friends of the Porters.
Farley Porter was the younger brother of Sam.