

Feb 2nd 1863

Dear Father

Yesterday I received your letter of the 26th ult stating that you had sent a box and note by Lieut. Amiet. Today the Lieut arrived bringing the note. The box he was obliged to leave at Acquia (*sic*) Creek and I will have to wait for it until our Quartermaster can go after it which will probably be day after tomorrow. When A left us he promised to go and see you & I wrote home to that effect. I am sorry that he did not give you longer notice of his departure, but think the list of articles mentioned in your note a very good one and have no doubt but that they will be all that I could ask for. I went to the 140th yesterday and though riding made me pretty sore I had a fine time. Port had just received some boxes by Sid Munn who has been at R[ochester], and he set a sumptuous repast. He has got an excellent thing in the way of a mess chest but it is too troublesome as well as expensive to suit my taste. The box that came to him by express had been opened and every thing including a nice pair of boots extracted. Pretty hard that.¹

The 140th has not been so fortunate with regard to pay as we have. They were only payed up to 1st November, and the officers drew pay from the date of muster into U.S. service, while our Regt was paid in full up to 1st Jany and we that is the officers drew pay from the date of commission making a difference of some \$40. Mr. Hanvey has been with us for several days trying to get his who is in our Co a furlough. I doubt if he succeeds, though he seems determined to do all that is possible, and by dint of perseverance may work the thing through.²

My baggage I have finally got as far as Falmouth and shall have in camp by to night. It is so long since I have seen my things that I hardly know what my valise contains. One thing I know however there is a boot in it and I shall no longer be obliged to wear a pair of 10's as I have for the last two weeks. I could have bought boots of the sutler for \$12 at any time but preferred waiting.

In going over to the 140th yesterday I had a chance to see a little mud, and really think the roads were worse than I ever saw them before. Light as I am the horse sank at times in thick mud above his knees and could with difficulty extricate himself. Henry Hamilton had just been over there and was looking and feeling well, as they all said. Democratic papers seem to be crazy on the subject of McClellan and can not even allow that one of his friends should be punished though clearly proved a traitor.³ The political wrangle is getting worse and worse and I believe that half the politicians care for nothing but party aggrandizement. I hope that the President will not allow himself to be driven inot any peace measures at present, but am afraid that that will have to be the final result of this strife. Not that the north is ~~not~~ unable to subjugate the south, but they seem unwilling to do it except by the efforts of their own party without the cooperation of the other.

Mary and Mother have each written me since I last wrote them and shall endeavor to write them soon, but shall hardly expect to ~~write to them~~ answer every letter I receive from home. Little Mats letter I shall answer immediately.

Give my love to all the folks⁴

Your affect son

Saml Porter

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

P.S. If you can find a gutta percha tooth brush that closes I wish you would send it to me by mail. I have of late been in receipt of *Democrat & Union*. The latter I believe comes from Howard Kelly if so I wish you would tell Far[ley] to thank him and oblige me. Any periodical that you can send I wish you would as we are poorly off for reading material.⁵

[*Crosshatched on opening page of letter above salutation*] You must excuse the looks of my letters as I nearly always have to write in the cold and I am one of those who poor at any time are good for nothing without the proper conveniences

Sam

Notes:

¹ Carl V. Amiet, 2nd Lt. Co.I, 108th NY

Porter Farley, Sam's cousin in the 140th NY

Sidney J.Munn, Quartermaster Sgt, 140th NY

Aquia Creek was a Union supply / storage depot on the west bank of the Potomac about 20 miles NE of Falmouth Va.

² James B. Hanvey was a private in Co. F, 108th NY. Whether or not his father Thomas was successful or not could not be determined.

³ The reference to McClellan's traitorous friend is probably the public hue and cry for the censure of Brig.Gen. Charles P. Stone. Stone would be the scapegoat for the bumbled fiasco at Ball's Bluff in Oct 1861. The hearings on the affair started in Feb. 1863 after Stone had already been arrested, discredited and released in Aug. of 1862. Stone was a close friend and admirer of G.B. McClellan. Once more Porter's reaction reveals that he was not one of the McClellan faithful.

⁴ Little Mats was Martha T. Porter, his younger sister.

Porter's closing remark about the north/south conflict shows that his support for the war was unabated, but somewhat frustrated. The comment about 'cooperation' is quite perceptive since at this time there was no guiding unified vision in the military. Grant, just over a year later, would provide that vision and have the strength to use it.

⁵ Howard L. Kelly would join the 4th New York Heavy Artillery in April of 1863.

Farley Porter was Sam's younger brother.

Democrat and *Union* were Rochester daily papers.