

Camp near Falmouth
Dec 10, 1862.¹

Dear Mother

I have just finished a letter to Aunt Delia² and as it is rather late shall not have time to write a long answer to your letter, but as we expect marching orders in the morning I must write now and try to try to repay you for your long letter some other time. For the past few days we have been encamped in the woods and the men have been very busy building log huts and making themselves comfortable. Now however it seems as though their work was for nothing and that we are more likely to winter in Richmond than here³. The troops on all sides of us are on the advance and before this reaches you we will probably have had some severe fighting. I took a long tramp yesterday to visit the 140th. They are about six miles from us and after walking half a day I found them encamped in the center of Hookers Division. I saw Porter and stayed with him all night. He was well and seemed to enjoy himself. I had a very nice time, went to see the Colonel and his groom Anthony, the latter seemed very glad to see me, especially after I gave him the gloves I brought for him. All the time I had I spent in going through the Regt and speaking to the men I knew. I found a great many privates and officers that I had known at home. Before coming to our present camping grounds we were kept very busy building roads but since we have come to our present camp there has been nothing to do but make ourselves agreeable, this has not been a very easy job however for the first two days we were without a tent and the next without wood, so that we were anything but comfortable but the roughing agrees with me and I am heavier by 5 pds. than ever in my life. The boys all want to go to bed and as they can't very well do it while I am writing I will have to close as I expected long before I am done. Give my love to Father and all the children. Saw H. Hamilton today, looked well⁴

Your affect. son, Sam P.

[Written on the blank side of the last folded page]

Thursday Morning [Dec.11]

There is a heavy fight about five miles off we are ordered off⁵

S. Porter

Notes:

¹ The regiment returned from Belle Plain on Dec. 7.

² Aunt Delia was Mrs. John N. Wilder of Albany, sister of Susan [Farley] Porter, Sam's mother.

³ The comment about being in Richmond for the winter was either a joke or wishful thinking. If a joke then a rather one with what was about to occur in the next few days.

Transcribed by Terry Crooks.

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

⁴ Hooker's Division – When Ambrose E. Burnside took over command of the Army of the Potomac, he reorganized the army into three Grand Divisions of two army corps each. Maj. Gen. Joseph (Fightin' Joe) Hooker commanded the Centre Grand Division made up of the 3rd and 5th Corps. The 140th NY belonged to the latter.

Porter was Porter Farley, is cousin in the 140th NY.

The Colonel of the 140th NY was Colonel Patrick Henry O'Rorke, an Irishman from Rochester. As to Anthony the groom, no record has been found although a groom did accompany O'Rorke's rider less horse in his funeral procession in Rochester after the Colonel was killed at Gettysburg.

H. Hamilton was Henry G. Hamilton at the time of the letter a 1st Sgt., Co.H,13th NY. Later, after Gettysburg, Hamilton transferred to the 140th NY.

⁵ This was the beginning of the cannonade and bombardment of Fredericksburg which started due to the frustration of trying to build the upper pontoon bridge at the Lacy House.