

Camp of the 108th
March 16, '63

Dear Farley

I received a letter from you two or three days ago and although I have written to you since its date I will occupy the few leisure moments that I have before dinner in answering it. As I said in my letter to Father I am very glad that you did not purchase the straps, but am obliged to you for the trouble you took. Every thing indicates that the Spring Campaign is to one of the fiercest and roughest ever carried on in this country. Joe Hooker is thoroughly remodeling the army and intends to have no useless men in it. All men detached from their regiments to wait on Genls etc are being returned to duty, and the army of the Potomac was never so effective as to day.¹ Even our Regt which scarcely numbers half of what it did when we left R[ochester] I believe could be used to more purpose than ever before. When we move I suppose all transportation will be denied us and what we want we will be obliged to carry. H Frost of the 8th Cavalry was over here yesterday and spent the night. The Brigade Sutler got in two barrels of ale the other day and since then we have had a nice drink or two. Nichols and Lt. Bloss left today. Before their departure there were more officers present with the Regt than at any time since we left Camp Palmer on the 7th Sept 62. Powers has not returned and I fear the worst.² There is to be a grand hurdle race tomorrow St Patricks day near our camp and if possible I shall go and see it. It is a long while since I have seen Port but I understand that he is well. It still continues cold down here and snows occasionally. My health is fine and I am getting quite fat. Give my love to all the folks. When you write me next let me know if Ad Hatch ever had any trouble about those published letters of hers. Your paper containing an account of Barton's capture was duly received & is a big thing on him.³

Write and tell me all the news

Your affect Bro
Sam Porter
A.Adjt 108 N.Y. Vols.

Notes:

¹ Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, despite widespread expectations, had a very positive effect when he took over command of the Army of the Potomac. He improved all aspects of soldier life and comfort which Burnside had let slide and overall improved the morale of the men with the introduction of furlough incentives and corps badges (first initiated by Philip Kearny) which created unit pride and identity. The spring campaign would be Chancellorsville.

² For Powers problems see the letter of March 11, 1863.

³Farley Porter was his younger brother.

Henry C. Frost was 1st Lt of Co M, 8th NY Cav.

James Nichol was the Chaplain of the 108th NY and was discharged on March 14th 1863.

William W. Bloss, 1st Lt. Co. A 108th NY was discharged (disability) on March 14th 1863. He suffered a severe facial wound at Antietam and tried to return to service but could not sustain it.

Transcribed by Terry Crooks.

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

Ad Hatch could be a reference to Adelaide Hatch the daughter of Jesse W. Hatch, a Rochester shoemaker who pioneered the use of sewing machines in shoemaking. The comment about 'her letters' must for now remain a mystery.

The Barton reference is also a mystery. There was a Capt. Charles C. Barton mustered in as an Aide De Camp under General Orders No. 15. He was not associated with any regiment but was appointed on April 26th, 1862. There was also a Charles C. Barton, class of 1860, University of Rochester, who Porter may have known as a fellow collegian. If these two are the same, then it might explain Porter's interest in him. Whether Barton was captured or captured someone or something could not be discovered. The only significant capture in March 1863 was the spectacular capture of Brig. Gen. Edwin Henry Stoughton and members of his staff by John Singleton Mosby on March 9th 1863. There was a Capt. Augustus Barker of the 5th NY Cav. among the captured.