

Camp of the 108th N.Y.V.
Near the Rapidan, Jan 7th '64¹

Dear Mother

After a weeks roving I have arrived at camp, and although I have no tent of my own am very comfortable. Locke² is in the Quartermasters Department, and at present I lodge with him. My own quarters will soon be built and then I shall have every thing quiet and comfortable. I have not a great time at my own disposal and therefore shall at this writing say nothing with regard to my journey. Until I left Washington, you can imaginne (*sic*) the manner in which I spent my time. When I left that place my soldiering in a manner commenced and I will give you an account of my performances. At 10 Oclock Tuesday I left Alexandria and reached Brandy Station at 3 P.M. the same day. I then learned that our Brigade was camping by itself, about 8 miles from the railroad and in the extreme front. No body could direct me as the exact whereabouts of our Regiment, and as I was not very anxious to be out overnight away from all civilization, I determined to find the handiest place and stay there over night. The 40th N.Y.V is within a mile of the station and I knew that C. Rogers the sutler would take me in for a night at least. After a good deal of wandering I found the Regiment and spent the night with Rogers³. He treated me to two excellent meals, and in the morning I found wagons coming directly here. I put my valise into one, and followed them myself on foot. The first half of the way, we met plenty of soldiers and every thing indicated the presence of quite a large force. The last three miles however we did not meet a man and saw scarcely an indication of civilization. We reached camp at dusk and if we were sure to remain here unmolested I would not ask for a better place. The rebels are very near us, the rest of the Army is at quite a distance, and on the whole we are very much exposed. I find every thing in Camp much as I expected. Col Powers commands the Brigade, Col Pierce the Regt. The latter is quite ill but keeps on duty. I saw Powers this morning, and had from him a very good offer. He informed me that up to the present time, there had been no opportunity of making any more captains our quota (5) being full. Capt Fellman has made an application to be transferred to the Invalid Corps and when his resignation is accepted I can be recommended for Captain. We have no Adjutant, and he offered to make me one immediately if I would prefer. I declined the last offer and shall wait for Fellmans resignation. Please say nothing with regard to this outside of our branch of the family. Tell Farley that I received his letter shall answer soon.⁴ I failed to get my pay in Washington and shall want Father to send me about \$25. I and my leg both well.

Love to all

Your affect son

Saml Porter

Notes:

¹ Smyth's Brigade (2nd) of Hays' Division (3rd) was the most southerly posted unit of the 2nd Corps – about 4 miles north of Morton's Ford on the Rapidan River – see letter for Jan 10 /64 for greater detail.

²Andrew J. Locke was 2nd Lt Co. F. He commanded Co. F during Porter's recuperation.

Transcribed by Terry Crooks.

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

³C.Rogers: Porter in another letter calls this man Clinton Rogers but the regimental history of the 40th NY (The Mozart Regiment) simply refers to him as Sutler Rogers and no one in the regiment “can think of Sutler Rogers with any feelings except those of indignation and contempt.” He was an opportunistic robber who actually settled in Rochester after the war. So. Perhaps the sutler’s first name was Clinton or perhaps Porter was being sarcastic since the real Clinton Rogers was thirty something successful carpet dealer / manufacturer in Rochester who never seemed to entertain the idea of enlisting. Whatever the case, the Sutler Rogers of the 40th NY was quite despised by the men he served. However from Porter’s account Rogers displayed magnanimity and treated him to two meals.

⁴If Smyth were absent then Powers as senior colonel would move into brigade command and similarly Pierce would move up to regimental command.

The quota system for officers came into effect as the regiments were near decimated so the number of officers depended on overall strength.

John R. Fellman was Captain of Co. I and was discharged on April 22, 1864, to accept appointment in the Veteran Reserve Corps.

Farley was Porter’s younger brother.