

Camp of the 108<sup>th</sup>  
Near Falmouth  
Virginia  
June 6<sup>th</sup> [1863]

Dear Far

Your letter came safely to hand and in the excitement of our expected move was for a time overlooked, now however that we are a little more settled I will answer it at as much length as circumstances will permit. I am very glad to hear that your college studies are congenial to your taste and hope that you persevere earnestly to acquire such an education as may avail in time to come. You are old enough to see how much your whole future life must be influenced by your conduct and application while in college, and I earnestly pray that no love of pleasure and excitement will lead you to forsake that path which alone can make you [words crossed out] worthy of the position you are destined to fill.<sup>1</sup>

We have orders to keep three days cooked rations constantly on hand and be ready (for anything) on a moments notice. This looks like action but in the army nothing is so true as that "appearances are deceitful" and it may be that we will not move for a month.

Captain Fuller Co H has just left us for home he has resigned.<sup>2</sup> I see by the New York papers Fox won the first game in the billiard tournament.<sup>3</sup> I hope that equal success will attend him in his subsequent efforts. I heard with pleasure of Swards promotion to the Captaincy of his Co. I trust that he will like the service (if he ever sees any) and prove an honor to it.<sup>4</sup> We received notice of Capt Thrashers death several days ago. Resolutions were adopted by the officers and by Co F both sets will be published in the Rochester Papers. The Co will do something in the way of raising a fund for [a] monument. Nothing has as yet been said to me about the Captaincy but I expect and think that there is not a possibility of my being disappointed.<sup>5</sup> Our Co is still the largest in the Regt and is admitted on all hands to be the best in every respect. We have Brigade drills nearly every evening. They are very interesting as well as instructive. Our Brigade is getting to be very well drilled and I think will compare favorably with any in the service. Considerable stir has been made in our division owing to the report of Inspector General 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in which we were criticized as a division. In a special order however issued from same HdQrs the remarks relating to our division were revoked & admitted to be mistaken.

Your affect Bro  
Sam Porter  
Lieut Commdg Co F

June 7<sup>th</sup>

Since writing the above there has been some heavy cannonading at Fredericksburg & one division of our troops are now across the river. What is to be done remains a mystery and we are now in a very unpleasant state.

Sam

[On reverse] Mary says that you wish to know W Ely's politics. I cant say exactly but as he is pretty quick I judge he is Union as Democrat all seem to say by much noise to better a bad cause.<sup>6</sup>

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> It is not clear why Sam feels the necessity to give his young (2 yrs) brother a parental pep talk. The advice sounds somewhat like Laertes to Ophelia since Sam in the rush of war fever abandoned his studies.

<sup>2</sup> Eugene P. Fuller was Captain in the 13<sup>th</sup> NY (resigned) and then Captain Co. H, 108<sup>th</sup> NY and then was discharged on June 3, 1863.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Fox on June 3 beat Victor Estephe on the second day of the billiard tournament *Grand Match of the East against the West* held at Irving Hall in NY City.

<sup>4</sup> Porter's friend Seward Gould had joined the 11<sup>th</sup> NY Heavy Artillery on April 3, 1863. Only four companies of the 11<sup>th</sup> were formed. Seward (a year younger than Sam) was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt of Co. B then became Captain of the company on May 12, 1863 so already he had surpassed Porter in promotion. Perhaps Sam's comment about Gould seeing action is a bit of a cheap shot. Such a comment was not beyond him since his semi-hysterics about Thrasher's promotion over him earlier in the year indicated his over-sensitive concern with achievement. The 11<sup>th</sup> NYHA would participate in the Pennsylvania Campaign then be incorporated in to the 4<sup>th</sup> NYHA on Oct. 16, 1863. Seward Gould would become its Major in Dec, 1864.

<sup>5</sup> Captain Byron Thrasher of Co. F died of wounds received in the battle of Chancellorsville. Thrasher was the officer who overtook ("jumped") Porter in promotion at the start of 1863 (see letter of Dec 20, 1862). His grief for Thrasher seems perfunctory since his next comment is about getting the captaincy he deserved. The regimental history has no record of a monument for Thrasher.

<sup>6</sup> Re: his sister Mary's inquiry, the comment about Dr. William Smith Ely seems to imply that Ely might be a fence-sitter, not really pro Union nor pro Slavery. The comment could also be alluding to the two Rochester dailies of the same name who were opposites in their support of the Union cause.