

Camp 108th NY Vol¹
July 21st 1864

Dear Mattie

Last evening I received a nice large mail and among others a letter from you which I will reply to at once. Your news with regard to Delia took me entirely by surprise, and until I hear something further in confirmation I shall rather doubt its reliability. With Farleys success I am very much pleased, as I have taken pains to assure him by letter.

I am very glad the Bazaar has proved such a success and hope that they will realize a considerable sum of money for the relief of the wounded soldier. Until within two days the weather here has been hotter than any thing I ever experienced and owing to the accumulation of dust our Camp has been dirty and disagreeable in the extreme. Now, the aspect of things has been materially altered. A refreshing rain has completely laid the dirt and lowered the thermometer that in our short sleeves we are quite comfortable.

Our Corps is, I think I have already mentioned, held in reserve and principally engaged in fatigue duty of various kinds.²

Grant evidently intends to take Petersburg as he did Vicksburg by regular approaches and has already inaugurated a system of parallels and breastworks which must eventually result in something decisive. We are at present engaged in digging a sunken road right in presence of the Rebels but in such a manner that the men are pretty safe, and at its terminus will probably erect a large fort or at least some works for planting cannon. The 140th is camped very near us and I paid the boys a short visit the other day. Tell Port that they all enquired after him and were very anxious to learn whether he intended to rejoin the Regiment or no. With the rest of my mail I received last night letters from Farley and Mary both of which I shall answer soon.³

It is supertime and I must close

Your affectionate bro
Sam Porter

Endnotes:

¹The 108th NY was in front of Petersburg near the Southall House – see letter of July 13, 1864 for more detail.

²Delia Augusta Farley was his younger cousin and sister to Porter Farley. The ‘news’ was probably her forthcoming marriage, mentioned in his mother’s letter of August 3, 1864. Martha T. Porter (‘Mattie’) and Farley Porter were his younger siblings. The Bazaar was probably held by the Ladies Hospital Relief Association – see note to letter of March 1, 1864.

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

³ Ulysses Simpson Grant, after moving from Cold Harbor in June 1864, surprised Lee by crossing the James River and moving on Petersburg. After the fiasco of the initial attempts to overwhelm Petersburg failed, Grant realized a siege was his only recourse.

The work mentioned by Porter began on July 21 “when they were set to work making a covered way in rear of the 5th Corps entrenchments (*O.R.* 41,1, p.382).

Porter Farley, Sam’s cousin in the 140th NY would not return to the regiment since he was discharged for disability on August 14, 1864.

Mary was Sam’s older sister.