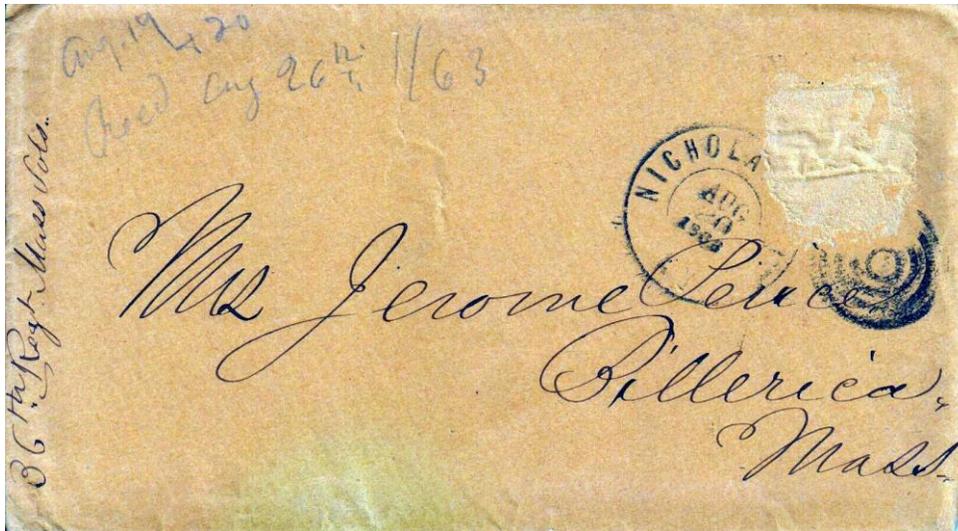


THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	151
DATE OF LETTER	Aug. 19, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
WRITTEN AT	Camp near Nicholasville, Ky.
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ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Camp Near Nicholasville, Ky. Aug. 19th, 1863

Ever dear Wife,

Once more from a quiet, clean and, I trust, permanent camp, I send another "greeting" and, I trust, will from the enclosed [check] assure you that you are not forgotten. Would I could send you more but such must help a little and I hope will prove so to you and little Lulu's clothes will come a little easier for it. You must endorse the check "Mrs. Jerome Peirce" as it is on the face of it.

Have been very busy since my last (on Sat[urday]). Went from Covington by rail on Monday riding all night and marching to this place yesterday where we have fixed this camp and I hope will be allowed to "rest up" for a month at least. 'Tis very pleasant, tall trees and green much like Lexington only some three miles from any town which is no objection.

J.H. as usual is with me and we have a nice tent raised about a foot from the ground with rack for gun and equipments, little bits of furniture for tables and desk on which I am resting now. Drew soft bread and all looks cheerful and pleasant.

Expect to be put on drill to some extent for exercise. Weather is warm tho not like Missi[ssippi] weather. Have to go some more than half a mile for water but it is of excellent quality and affords a pleasant walk.

Paying off this morning and a good bit of confusion and I cannot write you much of a letter. Hope to have a mail today before I send this. Received your last dated the 13 and 14th just as I was going aboard the [railroad] cars at C. [Cairo.] Am sorry you got the impression I was to be left behind, tho I came near it and I hope my letters have relieved your mind ere this and I hope your health too is improved. I can go on very well if all is well at home and I hope you will take all possible caution and measures to keep well [in] body and mind.

Cannot depend upon a furlough, I fear, just now. They are granting them and I drew a "lot furlough" but some others case[s] seemed more important than mine so I must wait. If I could rely on it, should prefer to come home in the fall and shall try to do so. The whole matter of furloughs is wrong and a humbug. One of the "abuses" that needs correction. We've got to have some "important business", somebody sick or something of the kind. I was assured a good while ago that I could have a chance when we got back here and I hope to accomplish it sometime. Faithful men should have and are entitled to a furlough, and no questions asked, once a year at least.

Ben E's wife is here somewhere. I expect she will board at a home near the camp awhile and so visit. She came to Covington. Have not seen Ben for a day or two. Shall tell you all about it. He is a happy man, no doubt.

Capt. Sawyer, I am told, is improving and will, or has, gone home and I don't think will return here again.

The fact is "patriotism" among the officers is "oozing" out and they get away if they can. You will not trouble yourself so much in regard to the Capt. One is as much of a friend as another. I could explain some things if I could see you. I shall do my best to work my[self] through and get a furlough as soon as possible. The expense is a serious thing and I hardly feel justified in incurring it as long as you are well and hoping, as I do, for a close of the war at least so we can leave for a longer leave of absence. We're only allowed twenty days. Have just heard a report that furloughs are stopped but more of this some future time. Keep up good spirits as possible and all will be well by and by.

Am still in good health and I have seen so much that I [fail] to say little if I can be spared in good health. Our co[mpany] numbers [are] but a little over twenty men for duty and the Regt. is "cut up" accordingly so you see what I have escaped.

I feel anxious to know whether you received the letters I wrote while on the Jackson, [Mississippi] trip. The "diary" will tell you when and where I wrote. As "pictures" of that eventful affair, I wished you might get them all. There was one time on the way back that I couldn't mail a letter for more than a week. I wrote mother and the rest from J[ackson] too when the shells were flying into the city from batteries nearby. 'Twas a hard time for everything and body and perhaps the letter shared the fate of the men and "fell out".

I forgot to mention a pleasant service last Sabbath at Cov[ington]. A Mr. Hunting, formerly of Brookfield, Mass., gave us a fine sermon. Near one quarter from the text in the last chap. of "Ephesians" using the "emblems" of the "shield", "helmet" and "breastplate" most beautifully and it seemed more like home than anything for a long time.

Had a letter from Harry Peirce too, written at the mountains having a fine time etc. etc. (Will leave this awhile to see about the mail, news etc. etc.)

P.M. Have been moving about some since the above. No tidings of Ben E. His leave of absence expires tonight. Is going to bring his wife here to see us. If you too could only be here for a time!

More sad news since this A.M. Harrison Goddard and Hiram Woodward are dead. You know what a fine large fellow Goddard was. Seemed to be gaining when we left Milldale but lack of care no doubt brought him down. I know how anxious you will feel but I am well and shall still be more careful

than ever for I feel [and] I hope what I have to live for and it is what kept me up in the last campaign. So don't have undue anxiety for we are in so much better climate and Ky. seems more home like than ever Virginia did and I think the skies are brightening in the South and they are coming to their senses and are becoming more decidedly for the Union.

A small mail in but nothing for me. Another will be along soon.

Saw Capt. Davis of the 21st [Regt.] today. He was the one who played and "called" at the dances in Athol when you were there. The old Regt. officers are very free from "airs" and ours are growing more like them. Hardship is what levels men.

Jos. H. has written home about the deaths. Jon Mellen is among the sick left at Covington. Did not hear from him. Just think of the strongest men who sicken and die, while the seeming frail ones endure!

I hardly dare say I am well but it is so much in little care. I have had, thru all, healthy bowels and don't abuse them and keep almost entirely to army rations. Used pepper in water more or less in every change of climate and above all had not ruined my stomach by excess before I came out! And so I hope to be [one] of the few who will struggle through and, could you have read my thoughts, on two occasions on the road to Jackson you would have felt that the love and trust of my two loved ones at home saved one life at least. I whisper this for your comfort now that I am resting.

I am told you are called "the brave little wife" and so I trust you will continue to be and I shall do all I can to take [care] of my health and strength and let this comfort you. I shall never exert myself again on the march as I have done. I have proved my spirit here for a year and it is known and I shall not die on the road if I can help it. (This to you.) I don't hide the sad things you see so keep a brave heart and hope for the best.

Alonzo is well and busy with the "checks" today and you have his autograph.

How are all? And little Lu loves potatoes! Did she get my letters? Wish I had something to send her. No flowers as I can see. Will send some leaves from inside my tent when I am writing. I want very much to hear from you all and about Joe and his going away if so.

Thanks for the payment from Mary. Hope soon to have a line from all for I want so much to see a line from the girls and mother. They must not undervalue their words.

Love as ever, and as ever,

Your husband,
Jerome

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: The "J. H." that Jerome referred to in this letter was Joseph H. Peirce. He enlisted as a Private in Orange, Mass., on August 4, 1862, at age 18. Jerome also enlisted in Orange on the same date, but as a corporal. Jerome was 31 years old at the time. According to the Unit History, Joseph H. Peirce was taken Prisoner of War at Pegram Farm, Virginia, on September 30, 1864, (See Letter No. 227) and he was later exchanged. He was discharged on June 21, 1865. Joseph H. Peirce was the son of Joseph Peirce, one of Jerome's brothers, and was, therefore, Jerome's nephew.

NOTE 2: The "Ben E." referred to in this letter was Benjamin B. Edmands. He enlisted as a Private at age 27 from Brookline, Massachusetts, and he was subsequently promoted to Corporal. On January 20, 1864, he was discharged from the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment for promotion as a Lieutenant in the 54th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers.

NOTE 3: Captain Christopher Sawyer enlisted as a Captain at age 28 from Templeton, Massachusetts, on August 22, 1862, and he commanded Company H of the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, the company that Jerome was assigned to. He was discharged on account of disability on February 19, 1864.

NOTE 4: William H. Goodard enlisted from Orange at age 21 with Jerome on August 4, 1862. He died of disease on August 17, 1863, two days before this letter was written.

NOTE 5: Second Lieutenant Hiram C. Woodward enlisted at a relatively old age of 40 on July 31, 1862, from Orange, Massachusetts, and served in Co. H of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, as did Jerome. He died on August 10, 1863, at Camp Dennison, Ohio, a few days before Jerome wrote this letter. He had been assigned temporarily with Jerome to work in the small smallpox hospital at an earlier camp. The "hospital" consisted of a regular tent physically located some distance away from the main camp to help minimize the spread of infection.

NOTE 6: Jonathan (Jon) Mellen enlisted at age 37 from Orange, Massachusetts, on August 8, 1862, four days after Jerome enlisted. He was discharged on account of disability on December 8, 1863.

NOTE 7: The "Alonzo" Jerome referred to in his letters was Seth Alonzo Ranlett. Ranlett enlisted in Co. B of the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment as a Private on July 24, 1862, at age 22, and he was from Charlestown, Massachusetts. He was promoted to First Sergeant on August 27, 1862, and was commissioned as a First Lieutenant on December 1, 1862. On December 17, 1862, he was appointed Adjutant of the Regiment. He was mustered out "on account of physical disability from disease incurred in the service" on February 20, 1864.

Ranlett was born on March 18, 1840, in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and he died May 21, 1905, in Newton, Massachusetts. Ranlett's wife was Ellen Peirce Ranlett, with a date of birth of March 22, 1842, and a date of death of January 12, 1914. They were married on January 21, 1864. Ellen Peirce was one of the children of Foster Peirce and his wife Catherine Abby Beaman. Also, Foster Peirce was a brother of Jerome. Therefore, the Ellen that Jerome mentions in his letters was one of Jerome's nieces, and starting on January 21, 1864, Alonzo was the husband of one of his nieces.