

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	157
DATE OF LETTER	Sept. 7, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
WRITTEN AT	Crab Orchard, Ky.
NUMBER OF PAGES	6
TRANSCRIBER	Barb Davidson
TRANSCRIPTION DATE	Oct. 30, 2018

ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

"Crab Orchard", Kentucky 7 Sept 1863

Ever dear Wife

Three days and no letters for me, but as I have been writing my various friends since being in camp, I shall have a large mail to look over one of the nights after a hard day's march for the "shadows of coming events" again flit about us and we expect soon to be again on the move for what I trust will be the closing up of the end. In short, we expect in a few days to be on our way to east Tennessee, probably Knoxville or vicinity. Every man is expected to have an extra pair of shoes and no one [is] to go who can't march ten miles a day comfortably.

Our sick have been coming up for a day or two and nearly all that will be with us for the present and up. It is a consolation that the end seems approaching for with the fall of Charleston and success in or at Chattanooga, the thing must close before long.

Saw Alonzo and spoke of my chances of going home, thought it would be all right yet and I see by the "Charleston Advertiser" that Capt. Holmes and Lieut. Hodgkins are to wait "for the present" and go back with conscripts, so I have not lost hope yet, but distance will make it tedious work and if we move, furloughs will be out of the question.

We do have to exercise large patience and hope but I trust I am not quite destitute of those qualities yet, for the future looks brighter. We are having lovely weather and quite warm daytimes. Have got nicely rested up and I believe I can go through it.

It is quite amusing to hear our course mapped out. We are going, they say, to Knoxville and then to Atlanta, Georgia, and so on to Charleston, S.C., and then home, of course. A big thing isn't it? Well we've done just as big a thing as that. This is all the speculation or novelty for the present.

Took a long stroll with Ben up and beyond town to the 29th Regt. and saw some Charlestown boys tho I was not acquainted with any before the war. All the troops show the effects of Mississippi life and our Company H has lost still another, Perley (of Gardner) musician.

Coming back, stopped and ate a pie at the poor lonely widow's, whose husband died in Alabama after a terrible march to reach our forces at Shiloh. She showed us the letter from his officers and a piece of poetry on his death. As I read them aloud she wept like a broken hearted woman that she is. The people have helped her some and she sells pies to the soldiers. The children were playing about, one infant in her arms. And this is only one of the thousand cases. We comforted her as best we could and left.

Was interrupted, Allie, in this letter by Ben's calling and proposing a stroll. Went out and found some mineral water. Sulphur, magnesia and iron are the chief properties. [I] have a canteen full of the former and it is strong of the sulphur, but we become used to all kinds, anything but Miss. [Mississippi]. Found some fruit and we seated ourselves in the shade of some trees and ate, chatted, etc., and Ben read a pretty story of the "Lowly Lady" in the "Bunker Hill" and finally got back to camp just past dinner time and now what do you think I am doing besides writing to you? Cooking to be sure! Expect to have a little dish of stewed shelled beans for supper and Ben I think [will] share them. So you see I can provide something for the inner animal wants and send a message to your dear self. Do you object to such an act? Our loved ones at home and our meals and the world of heart and body you know.

Battalion drill again this P.M. and that before long but this to you by today's mail and may tomorrow's bring me something. I wrote Mr. Nelson Moore of O. [Orange] day before yesterday and Sister Kate yesterday.

How's Lulu? Does she love beans and how would she like some of Papie's cooking? Darling, give her two or three kisses for me daily and I will write her again by and by. Did she get the little letter I sent in one of yours?

Some folks from Worcester were here the other day, father and mother of one of Company C's. Mr. Bradford is here from Charlestown. His son is or has been ill. The Orange boys are still scattered. Henry Mayo is at Brigade Headquarters close by [and] is Corporal of the fatigue squad, which they always have. Some are back and Nelson (Corporal) Smith is here, a "little limping" from Mississippi sores. [Agree] Don't know where Henry Boyden is. Sumner Moore is getting better. Oh, it is sickening to think of what we've come to. Captain Sawyer is sick at home. Expect him soon with his company again. Was going to Orange to see the friends of the boys when able.

'Twill soon be Drill, when it will be "By Companies, Right wheel! Forward, Column to the Left!" Ask Frank if that sounds natural?

Much love ever to all. And as ever your loving husband
Jerome P.

Our chaplain is returned, quite well and they say [he] preached a fine sermon yesterday. [I] was away and did not hear him.

Please send a stamp occasionally as we can't get them now even if we have money.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: 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.

NOTE 2: Otis W. Holmes, from Milford, Massachusetts, enlisted as a Sergeant at age 27 on September 8, 1861, in the 25th Massachusetts Regiment. He was transferred as a First Lieutenant to Co. F of the 36th Massachusetts on August 12, 1862, and then to Company B of the 36th on May 2, 1863. Holmes died in Harewood General Hospital, Washington, D.C. on June 23, 1864, of wounds received in action near Petersburg, Virginia, on June 17, 1864.

NOTE 3: William H. Hodgkins, from Charlestown, Mass., enlisted as a 22-year-old private in July 1862. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in October of that year, received steady promotions, and was mustered out with the 36th Massachusetts Regiment as a brevet major. He was the principal author of the Unit History of the regiment titled *History of the Thirty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. 1862-1865* which is now available on-line on Google Books.

NOTE 4: The "Ben" 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 5: L. Alonzo Perley enlisted as a musician at age 21 from Gardner, Massachusetts. He died of disease on August 19, 1863 at Mound City, Illinois.

NOTE 6: Corp. Henry H. Mayo enlisted at the age of 21 as a corporal in Orange, Massachusetts, on August 4, 1862. Jerome enlisted on the same date. He was killed at the Battle of the Wilderness on May 6, 1864, just a few days before Jerome was killed at Spotsylvania Court House.

NOTE 7: William Nelson Smith enlisted at age 20 from Orange, Massachusetts, on August 4, 1862, the same date that Jerome enlisted, and he attained the rank of Corporal. He was discharged for disability on December 23, 1864.

NOTE 8: Henry Boyden enlisted on August 4, 1862, from Orange, Massachusetts, at age 26. He died of disease on August 15, 1863, at Vicksburg, Mississippi.

NOTE 9: Sumner Moore enlisted on August 6, 1862, as a Private, at age 28, from Orange, Massachusetts. He was discharged on June 8, 1865, on the expiration of his service.

NOTE 10: 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. Sawyer was discharged on account of disability on February 19, 1864.