

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
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ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Camp "Dick Robinson" Ky. Sat Eve.
April 11th, 1863

My dearest Allie,

Events have multiplied today, and as my tent-mates are out, and all quiet, I will send a line. We received a generous mail today and I had some twelve letters, yours of Mch 25 - 27, a note in Henry's and another from Chelsea.

The wind blows and my candle burns out very fast, but I feel that every favorable moment must be improved. Ben E. is come in and I will stop awhile. Almost "Tattoo" (9 o'clock). All still again, a shower, but now starlight. Have been out this eve. getting some small bills, change etc.

And now about money matters. I enclose in this a "check" on Worcester Bank but it is good at any bank or store in Mass. and you can turn it into money and I thought it the safest way to send it, for it is good only to you and if lost can be replaced and being so far from home thought I would do [it] this way and it is creditable to the Regt. to see the amount which is large, very, that is sent home in this way. I enclose \$2.00 in bills also and trust it will reach you safely and be some help to you, and but that I am

so far from home, would gladly send you more. I shall have \$10.00, having sold the boots that were in a box that came up from Leesboro.

And now let me say that I mentioned that the money came safely and Lulu's picture, the little one of yourself also came today and the money, for which many thanks and a kiss. I am delighted with the picture and am glad you are looking so well and had a cheerful expression on purpose for me. Keep it my dear Allie and I fondly trust we shall meet and be happy yet. Ben E. said we should have to ask some explanation how it is our wives look so well in our absence! He and I enjoy much together, and we pass hours together daily.

I wrote you yesterday and cannot say all I would like to, but I wanted to acknowledge yours, for it has been such a jubilee in camp and now a violin is playing Money Musk in the next tent, and you would think we had merry times, but there is one that does not forget his home. It makes me full of courage if my friends will remember me and believe that I have acted from the highest motives, as Heaven knows I have and only ask to press forward and do the best to bring this wicked war to a close. There is much that is interesting and awakening in this country and things look more encouraging from the fact that people seem in earnest, and the officers of this Department are thorough-going. One word about my health. I was not aware that I write in sentiment any different than I do to you, altho' I may express myself differently. I have tried to be very truthful to you for I know full well that you would feel better to know the truth. Mrs. Hall said me and you know what she said. I am better than then.

Altho' this march, in the spring and first and on roads as hard as rock, it cut us up terribly as I wrote you yesterday, but I am doing nicely, am some stiff in the joints but feet are healing rapidly. Have a nice pair of army shoes so I shall do well enough now.

Why Allie, I make it a conscientious study to take care of myself and the moment I feel that I am broken or seriously disabled, I shall try and get home and not die here from overwork for then I consider my duty done. As I look over our grand country I feel like defending it to the last and so I shall with a good Providence to help and sustain. Ah, Allie, the true soldier is not uncompensated here! To hear the clear bugle notes ring out among these grand old forest trees night and morning as it rouses us to duty and then follows the sweet birds, I never appreciated them as much before! All these things help to keep up the Man!

Had a letter from Ellen. They don't say that Alonzo has given up the idea of returning to the Army, altho' I heard by one of Co. B's men that he had.

Was pleased that you had such a pleasant time at Chelsea etc. I think they all [are] doing well for the times, and trust much joy will come of the little things.

I received a letter from Bowen at Jamestown. They too have a boy! Born in March and he was quite funny about it. Will send you it sometime. Phipps too remembered me, also two from Abbie and Jos H. had eleven letters. What I meant by surprising the North, I imagined we were to be stationed at or near Baltimore and Washington to guard elections but we were at Cincinnati instead.

I fondly trust that if it must be, you will find some pleasant way [of] occupying yourself and where you will find surroundings that will help cheer you.

Received a letter from Mary and Mother, thank them ever so kindly for it and particularly for this sentence in Mother's letter, "The thought that you are performing your duty to your Country to the best of your ability must give you comfort and support".

Ah, Allie to think that there are those who would make you sad by saying I mistook my high duty in these fearful times, and when I never thought over a matter so deeply and solemnly before, the circumstances of the final enlistment are no sign of haste. No, I felt that far more than personal interest and family ties were at stake, and I have had more and more to convince me that I done right, and I trust and believe that we shall one day have a country worth living for. Allie, 'tis a fiery trial we are passing through.

It is getting late and I must close. There has been confusion in the tent some of the time and this is a poor Sat. night letter, but I feared we might march tomorrow and then comes uncertainty, dust and fatigue but I learn that we shall probably remain here for another day. Our Brigade are once more together. The 45th Penn came up today.

Tell Mary I take great comfort with the little daily text book she sent me and a precious little reminder of her it is. I wish her much pleasure in her old school, and how is Hattie and Joe? Had a letter from Will and Frank, March 30. All well.

Write immediately on receipt of this and I hope to get an answer to letters from Lexington soon.

And now my dearest wife, remember the same good being watches over us as we lay us down to sleep, I in my blankets in my tent with the stars peeping in, you to your softer couch. May your slumbers be comforting and sweet and little Lulu darling, a good night kiss from Papa and to you from your ever loving husband

Jerome

Co. Regt. Corps
Burnside's Dept.
Via Cincinnati Ohio

You understand this "Check" is good at any bank in Mass. or the same as a Bank Note anywhere.

We rec'd four month's pay to Mch 1st
Stamps rec'd all right

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: Camp Dick Robinson was a large Union Army organizational and training center located near Lancaster in rural Garrard County, Kentucky. The camp was established on August 6, 1861, despite the protests of Governor Beriah Magoffin, a strong secessionist and Southern sympathizer. It was located about halfway between Cincinnati and the Cumberland Gap, and was about 30 miles from Lexington, Kentucky. It was constructed on the farm of Captain Dick Robinson, a strong pro-Union supporter. The post served as a rallying point for local loyalists, as well as for Unionists who had left their homes in eastern Tennessee in order to enlist in the Union army. In 1862, the Confederate Army seized the camp and renamed it "Camp Breckinridge," in honor of Confederate general and former U.S. Vice President John C. Breckinridge, a native Kentuckian. The advance of the Union army into the region forced the Rebels to abandon the camp, and Federal troops regained its possession for the remainder of the war. After hostilities ceased in 1865, the camp was phased out of existence.

NOTE 2: The "Ben E." referred to in the 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: Money Musk is the name of a tune and a dance that has been popular for many years and is still heard and danced to today. The tune for Money Musk originated in Scotland in 1776 and the first dance instructions appeared in 1785. By 1792, the tune and dance had made it to North America, and both spread rapidly. Many of today's dancers first encountered the phrase Money Musk when they were

children, reading *Little House in the Big Woods*. It was a tune that Laura's Pa played on his fiddle. See YouTube for examples of the tune being played and dances being performed to it.

NOTE 4: 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 5: Abbie (Abigail) Jaquith was Allie's younger sister. Abbie was born in 1836, and she died in 1915. Allie (Albinia) was born in 1834, and she died in 1920.

NOTE 6: The "Jos. 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 7: The "Mary" referred to in this letter was almost certainly Allie's younger sister, Mary Frances Jaquith. She was born in 1841, while Allie (Albinia) was born in 1834.