

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	215
DATE OF LETTER	May 1, 1864
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie and Lulu
WRITTEN AT	Picket Post, near "Catletts Station", Va.
NUMBER OF PAGES	4
TRANSCRIBER	Josef Rokus
TRANSCRIPTION DATE	June 28, 2018

ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Picket Post. Near "Catletts Station", Va.
Sunday PM May 1st, 1864

My [own ???] dear Wife and Lulu.

This beautiful Sabbath afternoon, may it be as pleasant with you – from this novel situation as Sergt. of the Picket, I send you a word of greeting. How little did I think one week ago that we should be so snugly fixed in this situation! Expected to have been on the Rapidan with Gen. Meade ere this, but we [fairly???] find ourselves living in log houses with cloth roofs and taking life easy guarding R Road [Railroad] from guerrillas which have infested the neighborhood.

Mailed letters from near Alexandria and by our Sutler yesterday written from Bristoe's [also spelled Bristow's] Station where we camped for one night. Friday morning struck tents again and marched down the R Road some five miles when two Co's H and G came down here, or a mile from here, where we relieved two Co's. of the 14th Regulars and it seems the [???] for the present we scattered along this R Road as guard.

The country reminds me some of the ground between town (at B [Billerica???) and where Judkins' [???) lived, rather skirted with woods. Where we are was a thick growth of oaks now much thinned out, the R Road ten rods perhaps on front with slight embankments. And some six or eight workmen are repairing while the sentinel paces his beat with fixed bayonet and ball cartridges. Trains pass frequently otherwise tis very quiet especially after such a long time at the front or with the hum of Camp life all about us. Have guard and Picket duty quite often of course but we shall rest up. The Regiment is nearby toward A. [probably Auburn, Virginia] while our quarters are towards Catlett's opposite.

Just breeze enough to be agreeable and reminds me so much of the dear old days at Pleasant Valley! If we could take a stroll together and hear a good sermon from [???) I do hope you are well and having some refreshment body and soul! Is it so? We soon expect to send and receive mail daily and then what chats we can have. Can you realize that your wandering boy is leading such a quiet life as near home? Let us make the most of it? A whole Brigade of heavy Artillery as Infantry passed us this A.M. for the front right from N.Y. harbor and many others are constantly going forward so it looks like something. A fearful future for some. Shall we be spared the last conflict? How these questions come up and we hope everything will be for the best. Are you all well?

Can tell you nothing particularly interesting but I know a word will be acceptable [sic]. J. Henry is with the Co. [???) and is quartered with us eight in a house so far. Don't know what the reason is that he came to the Co. All the boys from the Regt. are reported back. Will have a chance again soon perhaps. Is quite happy and boyish in his jollity.

Another little incident. A playmate of Eddie Peirce's is in our Co. belongs to the 29th Mass. (those who didn't enlist are in our Regt.) and by chance I found him out. Geo. Woodbury I remember his name. Had a long chat last Eve. about old times in C [Charlestown?]. Younger of course than I am but as a mate of E's [Eddie's?] I was interested. A pleasant fellow and good soldier. How strange we meet folks in this world.

Where's my darling Lulu today? Found some flowers which I send her. Keep them and think of Papie. Time flies and I hope to see you one of these days. And then I will answer all her questions. What would she ask me first. Think? Am very well indeed. Read a Psalm and a chapter from Ep [Epistle] St. John after got ready on duty – perhaps I ought to before. Mustered again this morning as accounted for for Pay.

Shall return to quarters about 10 o'clock tomorrow morning and hope you will get this promptly. Love to all and Ever yours

Entirely

Jerome

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

NOTE 1: This letter was almost certainly the last letter that Jerome Peirce sent to his wife and daughter. A note added by someone on the first page of the letter indicates affirmatively that it was. It reads "last letter form (should be "from") J.S.P".

NOTE 2: Rev. Levi Ballou in the funeral service sermon for Jerome Peirce that he gave on June 19, 1864, in the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome Peirce had been the "Sabbath School Superintendent" made reference to several letters that Albinia had shared with him. The following is an excerpt from this letter that he used in that sermon.

"Again, he writes his companion [his wife, Albinia or Allie], only 12 days before he fell, and after describing the place where he then was, as reminding him much of certain localities where they had in

former days conversed and strolled together. He adds that by the movements of the army, "It looks like a fearful future for some." He asks, "Shall we be spared the last fearful conflict?" "We hope all will be for the best." He then speaks of his darling child to whom he sends some flowers which he had culled for her to keep to remember Papa and in closing says, 'I hope to see you again soon.'"

NOTE 3: The article titled "Hopeful Words Written in a Brutal Spring" in the *Boston Globe* edition of May 29, 1994, also includes the following excerpt from this letter.

"Where is my darling Lulu today? Found some flowers which I send her. Keep them and think of Papie. Time flies and I hope to see you one of these days and then I will answer all your questions. What would she ask me first, I think?...Read a Psalm, a chapter from the Epistle of St. John after I got ready on duty."

This article mentions that this letter is dated May 1, 1864, and that it may have been the last letter he wrote. This letter is also referenced in the May 1994 issue of *Reader's Digest* as being "cheerful and upbeat." Likewise, the fact that he sent flowers with this letter is also mentioned in the *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star* article of May 29, 2001.

NOTE 4: The following is a summary from the Unit History that describes the activities of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment around May 1, 1864.

"On the 30th [of April, 1864] it became necessary to make another change, and our "Regulation Camp" was abandoned to others. We marched at half-past five o'clock in the morning, crossed Kettle Run at noon, and relieved the Seventeenth Regular Infantry, of the Fifth Corps, taking possession of the splendid camp near Catlett's Station, which they had occupied during the winter. Captain Morse, with Co. C, was sent forward to Catlett's, to guard the station and water tanks, while the remainder of the regiment went into camp. The larger portion of the regiment was accommodated in the barracks of the Seventeenth Regulars, but the three left companies were obliged to occupy their shelter-tents.

Upon reaching this place, it being the last day of the month, the regular monthly return of the regiment was made up and forwarded to headquarters. As being the inventory of the effective strength with which we entered the campaign it may be interesting to include a synopsis of the report. At that date we had present for duty fourteen commissioned officers, and four hundred and twenty-six enlisted men, belonging to the regiment, including ninety-one men transferred from the Twenty-ninth Massachusetts Volunteers, or four hundred and forty in all.