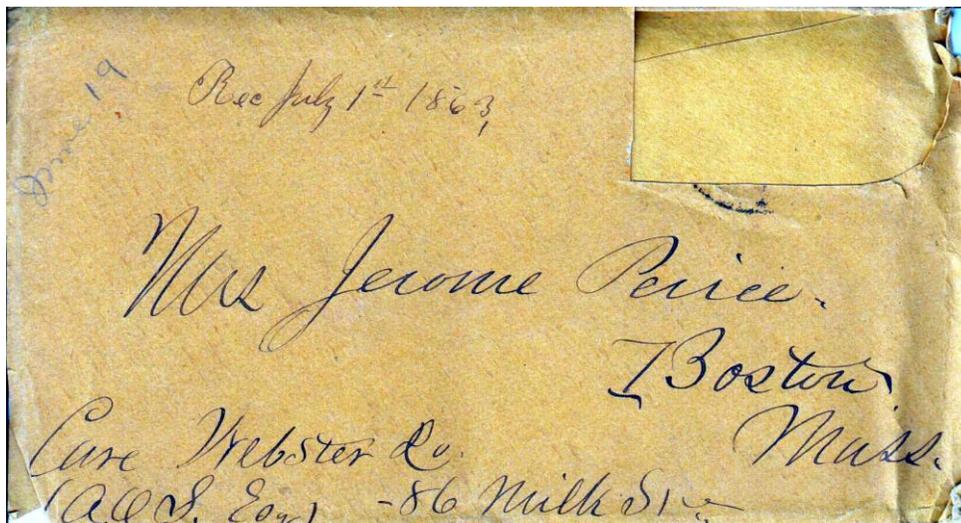


THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
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ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Camp four miles from "Synders Landing" Miss.
17th June 1863

My dearest Wife,

Once more in camp, in the "old Mississippi State!" Mail arrangements being completed. I sit me down for a chat with you, with a "right smart chance" of being interrupted.

My last was mailed at Lake Providence (Tues eve. 16th) and I can do no better to begin with you, than to give a few notes from my diary.

After mailing your last Tues 16th, low flat country, ruins of plantations continually. Wedns 17th. 88th Anniversary of "Bunker Hill", off before daylight, cool and cloudy. 9 A.M. Passed "Milliken's Bend", "My Wife's Island." Cannonading at Vicksburg heard distinctly P.M. A short stop at "Young's Point" (at the mouth of the Yazoo [River]), where a large number of troops are assembled up the "Dark Yazoo," true to the way the shore being thickly wooded to the water's edge. To "Snyder's Landing," (or "Bluff") we landed and marched some four miles to the present camp. Vast number of troops, and formidable

earthworks, and rifle pits for miles, it being one of the roads where Johnston is expected to attempt a reinforcement. Very bluff and great position to defend.

Rough scenery but wild and of tropical luxuriance, the "gum tree" magnolia, fig, and oaks, and host of others with "oceans" of blackberries forming still another changing scene.

Our camp rests on a ridge, just room for a single row of tents each side of the path, while there are deep ravines, each side. Some magnificent, gigantic trees completely covered with running vines, while the magnolia seems, with its deep rich green and reddish tints, the monarch of the forest

Thurs 18th

Pitched tent over again, alone, high and airy, A.M. Blk [Black] berrying with Corpl. Ben E. [Edmands], warm but obtained a goodly mess for dinner with sugar, fried pork and toasted "Hard Tack," and nice coffee, made a fine treat. Returned to camp a little past noon, when found them packing for a change of camp. Eve. No move yet, berrying again, a new place, and such a feast!! Dark as we came in, Picket caught us, no serious result, pronounced dangerous to wander far from camp, but such temptation! after a week's journey on a close steamer, with bad stomachs and as bad rations!!

Had a nice "sit down" with B. E. [Ben Edmands] at coffee. Retired quite late, to recall the scenery of the day. Very warm, but health improving rapidly, appetite excellent, while the birds charm anyone to health. No firing heard, of consequence.

Fri 19th Noon

Still in Camp. Nice breakfast with berries. B.E. woke me early, and we went for water and to wash. A.M. busy "fixing", sewing, washing a little, and getting things snug in my knapsack. Gathered some of the "hanging moss," which adorns the trees, and forms one of the most beautiful features of the woods. Also gathered a magnolia leaf or two to send home. Received a little call and a word from the Adjt. yesterday and today. No mail yet. Div. P.M. [Post Master] expected sometime. J.E. Hills of our Co. appointed P.M. [Post Master] to the Brigade, and a mail promised every day.

There, my dear wife, what can I add to this, for I have improved the record a little, and I believe anticipated any questions you will ask.

We know not where or when we may move to but not far till V. [Vicksburg] falls. They "pound away" every day a little, but take their time, as they feel confident of success and do not choose to sacrifice lives by assaults. We form a portion of the troops to look out for Joe Johnston who is in the neighborhood of the "Big Black" with 35,000 or so, so report says today. It is said there are nearly 200,000 troops about here, and the rescue of Vicksburg is impossible by anything the rebs can bring, that Grant is determined Western troops shall have the honor of its capture etc. Banks is near Port Hudson and we may yet join him etc., etc.

We are So. East of V. [Vicksburg] about 10 miles by road, 4 from the Yazoo River. I hope you have maps that you can follow us.

My health improves daily and the little march here from the boat done me good. I forgot to mention some big guns I saw at the landing, left by the Rebels. The carriages were burned by our men, for fear they might be retaken. They were at work repairing them for further use. The country, as I have mentioned, is hilly, or short, sharp, steep declivities, and at one point near the river was a grand view thru the valley of the "Yazoo", which is clear and winding. Saw two beautiful red birds, and a number of lizards this morning, which reminds us of the tropical region. Peaches and apples next month. The Bk [Black] Berries have done us much good and you may be sure we shall live "within the limits of becoming prudence" for awhile.

I must speak again of the moss I send. They use it for stuffing mattresses, letting it rot there as a fine black hair, which you can hardly tell from curled horsehair. You will see what a silvery look it has. I wish you could see it hanging from these great trees! Beautiful.

I send one matured magnolia leaf such as surrounds the blossom which is white and resembles the (I don't know the spelling) Chaponica. I will try and sketch it.

The thing is a poor imitation. The small leaves are young and not from the flower but the tree. I will send more of the large ones sometime, for I think they [are] elegant, and I hope you will be able to keep them green by putting them in water and someway. I wish you could see the tree, so rich. The moss lives on air. Am sorry to bend the leaf, but hope you can press it out, so as to hide the marks.

No news from the North since we were at Memphis and it seems as tho' we are out of the world. A few wood colored hamlets only denoting living beings about here, and those black mostly.

Once more, tell the friends my writing must be limited. So hot. It takes us all the time to take care of ourselves, washing, meals, and resting. I spoke in a former letter of looking up the Wymans. Don't know as I shall ever get any nearer Yazoo City, but I may possibly run upon some reb prisoners who may know of them. Saw some on my way to camp but could not stop to speak with them. Deserters are coming in constantly. Some think we shall return to Ky. [Kentucky] as soon as V. [Vicksburg] falls, others that we shall push on to the Gulf eventually.

Am quite happy at the return of my strength and usual health again, and again I am thankful. No more signs of battle or danger than before as we can see.

Let me again hope dear ones that tho' distant, you are in health as I know you are in the same good keeping. Trust you will get all my letters from Cairo, Memphis, Lake P. [Providence]. Direct still to Cincinnati as the destination of the Corps is still uncertain. Boys all well. Shall tent with the Woodward of O. [Orange].

Love to each and all friends, and hoping soon to hear from the same. Accept the entire love of your husband,

Jerome

Boys all well.

Leaves of the Canebrake [tree] which is a feature here. [These are] the top leaves which tips the peaks.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: Snyder's Landing is not a name of a town today in the Vicksburg, Mississippi, area and probably wasn't at the time of the Civil War either. Most likely, the 36th Massachusetts was camped on land owned by a Mr. Snyder which had a landing on the Mississippi River.

NOTE 2: The "chaponia" he referred to is the *Camellia Japonica* shrub. It is known as common camellia, Japanese camellia, or Tsubaki in Japanese, and is one of the best known species of the genus *Camellia*. Sometimes called La Peppermint or the Rose of Winter. It is the official state flower of Alabama.

NOTE 3: Ben (Benjamin) B. Edmands 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 4: James E. Hills enlisted at age 20 from Orange, Massachusetts, on August 7, 1862, three days after Jerome enlisted. He was discharged on June 8, 1865. upon his expiration of service.

NOTE 5: Philip G. Woodward enlisted as a sergeant in Company H at age 25 from Orange, Massachusetts. He was promoted to Second Lieutenant on October 26, 1863, and to First Lieutenant on May 15, 1864. Shortly thereafter, he was wounded in action at Cold Harbor, Virginia, on June 3, 1864. His last promotion was to Captain on October 11, 1864. Woodward was mustered out with the Regiment on June 8, 1864.