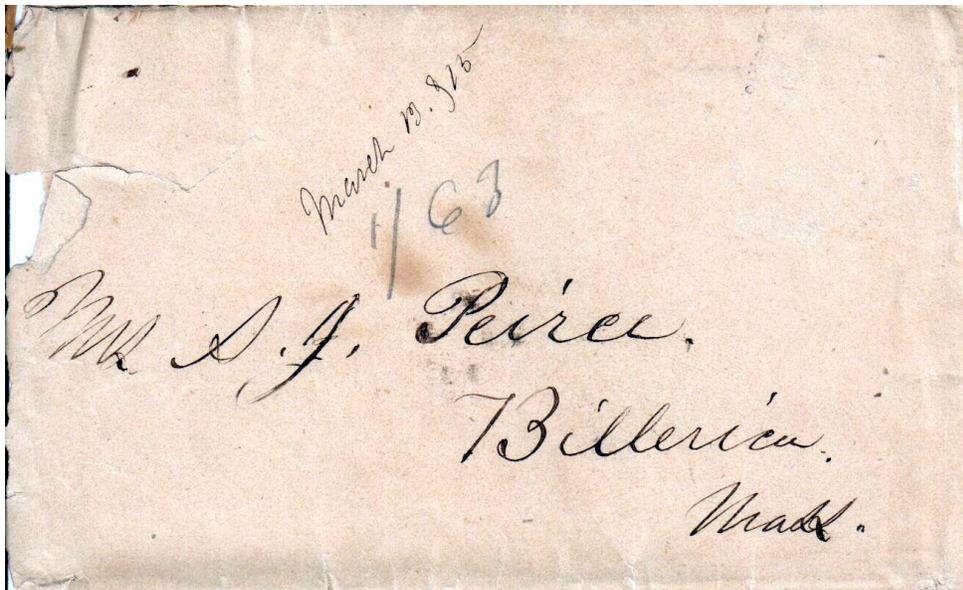


THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	85
DATE OF LETTER	March 15, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
WRITTEN AT	Newport News, Va.
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ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Sabbath day 15th Mch 1863

My dearest wife

Have written something to mother and you must have a word. Your last came Friday eve. Was disappointed, happily so, for I usually get them Sat., so much for "Newport News" instead of Washington.

Well, what shall I tell you? In the first place don't be alarmed and imagine bad things because I told mother I have been indulging in a severe cold. Am feeling nicely today and passed most of the A.M. with Ben Edmonds. I have, of course, no objection to you sending notes to any of our friends. He is a good friend who appreciates confidence, and I read him your messages to him. I would not make additional postage tho'. I know you won't pardon that request.

Our chaplain is at home on a furlough and we have had no regular services, but in some tents the boys are singing "All Hail the Great Emmanuel's Name", and it is generally quiet in camp. Of course, I

fall back on my own resources, and look over past letters, papers, Bible and so enjoy as good a Sabbath as I can.

There is only a "morning inspection" Sundays so we are quite favored for one day.

Allie mine, your last letter done me a world of good. It seemed so resigned and cheerful. Oh yes, we must be patient. I feel every day more satisfied that I came when I did, for conscription and the draft would have hardly spared me, and then I glory in being a Volunteer! and if anything occurs that I feel I cannot go through, I shall stand a good chance of getting home, especially after a year's service for I find those who are true grit, when they do give out there is some chance before it is too late, for usefulness at home and there'll be many a one that never can endure the three years of service, be they ever so favored, and I begin to see why it needs so many troops. Folks at home can little appreciate how many ways there are to use men up here for they not only have the regular military duties, but "lumping" on hard jobs of all sorts.

Last night a large detail was made from each Co. to go to the landing and unload hay from the hold of a vessel and they did not get back 'till 10 o'clock. This extra work is what discourages many good men and as many "Contrabands" as there are it is all wrong, for our regular duties pertaining to the soldier are for the most part cheerfully done.

You will get a letter by Mrs. Hall. It was such a "godsend" to see her, but poor woman, she has much to try her, I think. She hardly got a glimpse of Dick. She said she would write you will her, and I think she will testify that I was "looking well" and in good spirits.

Had a nice letter from Mary (at Orange) the other day. Speaks of receiving a long letter from you and in very sisterly terms and of Lulu. I think I shall write them today for J.H. is not well, has a severe cold and don't seem to rally. Don't think it's anything serious, but he is weak and a bad tongue. Has been down some days. Taken as I was but he don't rally so quick. Mch. [March] winds and telling on a good many and if we can escape with a simple cold 'twill be a good thing.

Have had nice letters from Abbie, Mrs. Ellis. Will send the latter. They are true friends. How much we would enjoy a visit there after these "cloudy days" are passed.

Allie, I hope you've had a good day at church and been refreshed in spirit by words from your good pastor. I feel a deep interest in him and hope to [be] remembered in his office. Papers came all right.

I must close for I must send him [a letter] to Orange. Kiss little Lulu and always accept a token yourself, and think me as never forgetting you anywhere and in full faith that we shall yet be "united" and so I am ever yours,

Jerome

Love to sisters

Mail came, a letter from Ellen Peirce and Lottie Emerson. Alonzo still gaining.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: The hymn "All Hail the Great Emmanuel's Name" was written by Edward Perronet, who was the son of Rev. Vincent Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham, Kent, England. For some time, he was an intimate associate of the Wesleys at Canterbury and Norwich. He afterwards became pastor of a dissenting congregation. Perronet died in 1792.

NOTE 2: 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 3: "Contraband" was a term commonly used in the United States military during the Civil War to describe a new status for certain escaped or freed slaves who affiliated with the Union forces. The Army (and the United States Congress) determined that the U.S. would not return escaped slaves who went to Union lines and classified them as contraband. They used many as laborers to support Union efforts and soon began to pay them wages. The former slaves set up camps near Union forces, and the Army helped support and educate both adults and children among the refugees. Thousands of men from these camps enlisted in the United States Colored Troops when recruitment started in 1863. At war's end, more than 100 contraband camps existed in the South, including the Freedmen's Colony of Roanoke Island, where 3,500 former slaves worked to develop a self-sufficient community.