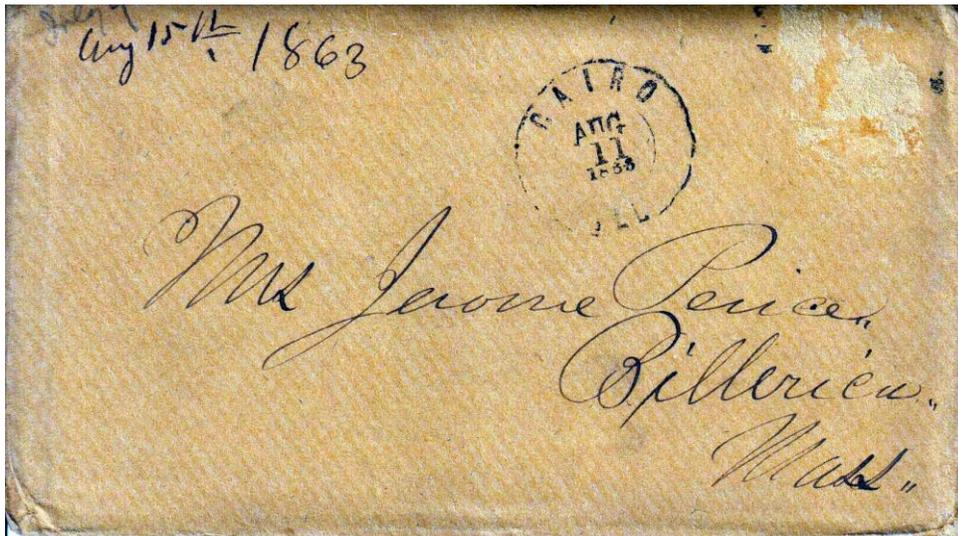


THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	138
DATE OF LETTER	July 9, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	"Brother" Franklin Jaquith (Actually Jerome's brother-in-law)
WRITTEN AT	On-board the steamer "Hiawatha" on the Mississippi River above Fort Pillow
NUMBER OF PAGES	4
TRANSCRIBER	Ben Raterman
TRANSCRIPTION DATE	Oct. 15, 2018

ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Missi[ssippi] River above Fort Pillow
Onboard steamer "Hiawatha", Sunday Morning, 9th July 1863

My Dear Bro. Frank[lin],

If we could only meet "face to face" what a talk we would have! As I have looked over the letters I have lately received from different ones, yours called up a soldier's "fellow feeling." What memories of campaigning would arise! and I thought Frank shall have a little memento of the Miss. River! You [are] now, I trust, safely and cozily fixed at home with a vocation to your taste but alas for Joe I feel deeply that he must go (as I expect he'll have to) for he was so much to those [at] home, his taste and inclination both making him such a help. But as mother says, he must try and feel that all's for the best and I wish I could share a tent with him in "ours".

Well brother mine, of late, you know we've had a hard time, hurry and fatigue have rendered it impossible for me to write to the friends as I would like to and now we are packed like herring on a river

boat but like all times we make the best of it knowing we're getting a little nearer home. It has been the severest trial we've ever had and the Corps will not be worth much for two months and we expect to go into camp somewhere in Ky. [Kentucky] and recruit both in health and numbers.

Miss. [Mississippi] is a terribly hot dusty country and now that we begin to feel the northern breeze we realize fully what an oven we've been in and strength and cheerfulness are returning somewhat.

The most outrageous conduct attended the whole Jackson Campaign from the 4th [of] July the morning after the fall of Vicksburg. We started to cut off Johnston and altho the fight at J. [Jackson] was not of the Virginia kind, we had to endure quarter rations, constant stir and fatigue and alarm. We're under fire some twenty-four hours with no battery to protect us and but for the fact that the enemy could not find out our exact position we should have fared hard for we were right under a battery. But "Benjamin's" and "Edward's" got a position at last and pelted away savagely one morning (see my "diary" if it ever gets home. Directed to B. with a letter) and the Rebels who got the idea that we were short of artillery, soon found who was around and the battery was silent "right soon" and we marched to the rear under a fearful fire of shell from "B. and E."

The Ninth Corps done the principal business at 'Jackson' [Mississippi] and the 35th Mass. was the first to enter the city. There's a "history" to be written of this whole affair! The western boys got the idea that the eastern troops couldn't fight! but when we left that notion was pretty fully dispelled and Gen. Grant gave us great praise, as well as the 'boys', and they said it must be in officers, not the men, "for better soldiers are nowhere to be found." The simple fact is the southern armies have not the standup to them that the armies of Va. possess and had we met any of the Genl's of Lee's army we should have had hard work. The fight and game is well knocked out of [the] 'Secesh' down here and altho there may be some jobs, the heavy work is done and Richmond, Charleston and Chattanooga remain.

I was awful sorry that Lee got the "inside track" but Morgan and the rioters are quelled. Couldn't I have given the latter "some"! Boston got great praise for the treatment of mobs. The boys here are fierce I tell you and would [have] liked the privilege of treating with them.

Had a letter from Allie (July 30) and a paper from Will yesterday. Shall mail this at Cairo [Illinois] where we hope to be tomorrow. Shall soon pass Columbus and "Island No. 10".

I must add a word for Allie so will give you my best wishes and hope to hear from you as often as possible. Are Frank Whilford and Jimmy Hills going to the army? I saw their names among the draftees.

As ever

Bro. Jerome

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: Per the Unit History for July 5 – July 23, 1863, the regiment moved towards Jackson, Mississippi, pursuing the retreating Confederates, with relatively few losses on both sides. After an eight-day siege of the city, it was abandoned by the Confederates on July 18. The regiment moved on until it reached Milldale, Mississippi, on July 23.

NOTE 2: Although Franklin is identified in the letter as a brother of Jerome, he was actually his brother-in-law and that Jerome used the word "brother" as a form of endearment since the Jaquith and Peirce families were very close.

To identify Jerome Peirce's ancestors, a detailed, well documented 283-page history of the Peirce family written and published in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1880 by Frederick Clifton Peirce was

used. It is titled *Peirce Genealogy, Being the Record of the Posterity of John Pers, an Early Inhabitant of Watertown, in New England*, which is now available on Google Books. It traces the Peirce family history back to John Pers in England, who was born in about 1588 and died in 1661. In that account, the entire Peirce family that Jerome was a part of is listed, and there is no Franklin shown among Jerome's siblings.

However, the genealogy information found for the Jaquith family on ancestry.com shows that Allie (Albinia) had a brother by the name of Franklin, who also went by "Frank." He was born in 1839 and died in 1922. Furthermore, in an 1864 letter Allie wrote, "I will be coming to Orange with my brother Frank."

As indicated in this letter and as alluded to in other letters, Franklin Jaquith also served in the Union Army. There are several men named Franklin Jaquith listed in the National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Database, so that it is not possible to determine which unit he belonged to.

NOTE 3: The Battle of Jackson, fought on May 14, 1863, in Jackson, Mississippi, was part of the Vicksburg Campaign. Union commander Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and the Army of the Tennessee defeated elements of the Confederate Department of the West, commanded by General Joseph E. Johnston, seizing the city, cutting supply lines, and opening the path to the west and the Siege of Vicksburg.

This battle was fought prior to the date when this letter was written. After Vicksburg fell on July 4, 1863, the 36th Massachusetts moved to Jackson, Mississippi, a distance of approximately 46 miles.

NOTE 4: The "Benjamin's and Edward's" (Or "B and D") almost certainly refers to two artillery batteries commanded by two union officers (probably lieutenants) by those surnames who commanded those batteries. It was common to refer to units by the name of the commanding officer instead of by their official numerical and state/federal designations.

Lt. Samuel N. Benjamin was in charge of Battery E, 2nd U.S. Artillery, 2nd Div., IX Army Corps. His name is mentioned once in the Unit History. Edwards's name does not appear in the Unit History, which is not surprising because the artillery batteries were not part of the 36th Massachusetts. However, there are several men named "Edwards" in the National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Database who served in artillery positions. Presumably the "Edwards" that Jerome referred to was one of them.