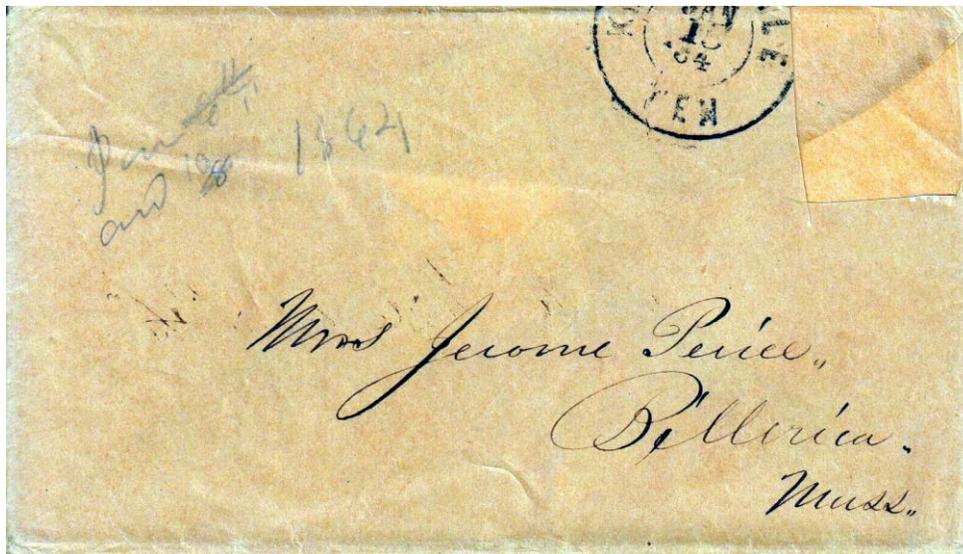


THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	190
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WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
WRITTEN AT	Near Blaine Cross Roads, Tenn.
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ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Near Blaine Cross Roads, Tenn.
Sunday Morn 10 Jan 1864

My dearest Wife,

A bitter cold morning and still quietly in camp. Have just finished inspection as usual, that is of arms and equipments, expecting every moment a visit from the Major and Dr. Prince to look at our quarters and I improve the moments in again addressing you. It seems quite like Sabbath morn. once more. All quiet and so like a New England morning - cold, and we keep close to the fire.

Have no news to write you since last week, the last [Insert "letter"] with Ellens. Are you still in Boston and preparing or at church?

Life is now busy but monotonous. Our time being taken up in cooking and getting fuel and stealing a few moments for reading and writing. No mail as we expected last eve. Some delay and we shall not probably receive any till next Tuesday.

Nothing from Alonzo as yet by letter or person and I imagine he has turned back somewhere. Am sorry now that I ordered you to direct [Possibly insert "your letter"] to Lieut. Cross but [Possibly insert "it"] shall get there after awhile.

Last eve. we had a 'sit down' in our little tent. Ben E. came in and we chatted over 'Burns', his life and work and he repeated "The Cotters Saturday Night", a beautiful sweet thing, a picture of lowly life in Scotland. Just think of it! Here among the Clinch Mountains of East Tenn., so long after his death, two soldiers at such a theme! He has much of the gems of verse, sacred and secular on his "tongue's end" and so we pass some of the hours in the wilds.

In looking over your letters, I see you was quite particular to know who accompanied me on the journey here, my companions on the train etc. I was not aware that I was more full of particulars to others than to you, and soldiers are so common and differ so little out here that I did not probably mention much of individuals. Suffice it so say, that these various "squads" of "Comradesants" mostly whom they send off their Regts. as opportunity offers. Some of them are rough and diseased[???], while a few are very good men and always press on to their Regts. A Sergt. Perry of the 112th Ills. [Illinois] Mounted Infantry and a Major of 115th Ind. [Indiana], an educated man, a lawyer were the two for whom I shall entertain peculiar regard, good men and companionable. The first is with his Regt. and latter at the Commissary Dept., a six month man. Promised to renew the acquaintance when he got home and furnish me items of western news and movements etc., etc.

Like men on a journey, meeting by chance a few we shall remember with special regard and causing us to look with greater respect on men in general and as far as my experience goes. I can say men do not appear as bad as some think, a very encouraging fact to me, for if there be any place where to show up human nature, it is here.

Our own Regt. is now reduced to its fewest and best both moral "physique" and all goes on quietly and in order. Very little of the fret and worry of old and all indicating the maturest soldiers. If rations be short, we take it, and hope for more next time. Clothing is scarce and many are suffering much, but still it is accepted with little complaint. It is said clothing is on the way to us. Yesterday each company had (drew) a green hide just from the butchers to make moccasins of to wear over the feet. Expect to make ourselves. Don't know when I shall have some.

Many – everything is exceedingly scarce. Transportation is bad. Sutlers are scarce and only at Knoxville and at enormous high prices can anything be had. Diaries, stationery very high.

So we have to be careful. I have a fair supply now but an envelope and sheet of paper will come in play occasionally. I sent you in my last [Insert "letter"] (Wedns.) a dollar for stamps. I fear our pay day is far off.

The old Regts. who have reenlisted 21st Mass. [Infantry Regiment] and 8th Michn. [Michigan] are gone. What [Who] did not reenlist go into other regts. to serve their time out. Expect the 21st will have a grand reception in Worcester as it has seen some of the severest service.

We shall soon begin to count the months when we shall go back. "Flow swift around the wheels of Time", and I need not tell you how glad it seems to feel that there is one at home whose heart is constantly reaching out in response to those longings.

How I wish I was with you and Lulu in place of these scenes which with our best efforts fall so far short of the good Sabbaths at home.

I am much interested in all you speak of at home. Lulu's progress and development and how much her feelings remind me of my own earliest remembered days when I too wondered why we done so often what we knew to be bad. Does not this show how much of good there is in our nature? How much better the heart is at times than the performance, but we must do the best we can and hope for the influence of all good angels to direct the final end. I have often told you how constantly my mind reverts to you and more than ever the longer I am absent and between you and the anticipation of Spring singing birds, my poor hands go thru their accustomed task.

Received this morning my Sergeant's Warrant dated Jan. 9th by Major Draper etc. and Lieut. Hodgkins gave me a congratulatory nudge as he came along with the rest to inspect our quarters. I hope the future will look a little more promising.

If we could only get further North, where we could hear more regular and often, we could cheerfully undergo the cold and exposure for so desirable a change. But I forget for why should I complain?

But I must close. If my poor and sometimes fretful seconds do not always meet your fondest wishes, consider my situation and not feel that I am really cold and heartless.

I want much to hear from you since I came to the Regt. of my promotion etc.

How is the winter with you? Much snow? Little here but so chilly and bitter cold! Quite equal mornings to what we have at home.

Is Edw. Haynes still at home? Love to Ben. H's family. I do not write them quite as often but I think of them equally so and Lucy too.

Shall hope to hear from you again soon. Give love to all and tell Lulu that Papie loves her just the same, sends her a kiss always. She must be a good girl and love her Mama dearly as her best friend.

My fireplace met with an accident last night and I must do a little repairing. Shall read before sleep.

Jos. H. is well.

As ever your own
Jerome

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

NOTE 1: Per the Unit History: December 20, 1863 – April 6, 1864. The regiment moved numerous times in eastern Tennessee, including in the Knoxville area, before being ordered to move by train, by way of Baltimore, to Annapolis, Maryland, where it arrived on April 6, 1864. During this time, the lack of adequate rations, clothing and equipment presented more challenges to the men than did the Confederates. In the Company Muster Roll for November – December 1863, Jerome Peirce was recorded as "Present." In the following Company Muster Roll, i.e., for January – February 1864, Peirce was recorded as "Present" with the rank of "Sergt." A notation indicated "Promoted from Corpl. Jan. 1, 1864." That promotion increased his pay from \$13.00 per month to \$17.00 per month. It is interesting to note that the shortage of rations, clothing and equipment is mentioned in this letter.

NOTE 2: The Dr. Prince mentioned in this letter was James P. Prince, from Lynn, Massachusetts, who enlisted at age 24 in the 22nd Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers in October 1861. He was transferred to the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment on August 13, 1862. He subsequently served as Surgeon in various units of the 9th Army Corps, and in 1865 he was promoted to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Volunteers.

NOTE 3: The Lieut. Cross that Jerome refers to was First Lieutenant Robert M. Cross from Palmer, Massachusetts.

NOTE 4: The Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759 - 1796) wrote the poem "The Cotter's Saturday Night." A "Cotter" in Burns' time was a poor peasant who was given the use of a Cot or Cottage by the property owner in exchange for labor as opposed to paying rent. This poem relates how the Cotter and his family take time to relax on a Saturday evening after their week's labor, knowing that Sunday is a day of rest.

The eldest daughter, Jenny, who has by now left home, calls with her new boyfriend, and the family eat their peasant meal and join around the fireside to hear the father read from the Bible.

NOTE 5: Cinch Mountain is a mountain ridge in Tennessee and Virginia, lying in the ridge-and-valley section of the Appalachian Mountains. From its southern terminus at Kitts Point, which lies at the intersection of Knox, Union and Grainger counties near Blaine, Tennessee, it runs in a generally east-northeasterly direction to Garden Mountain near Burke's Garden, Virginia. Jerome gives his location when this letter was written as "Blaine Cross Roads, Tennessee".

NOTE 6: The 21st Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment was organized in Worcester, Massachusetts, and mustered into service on August 23, 1861. It participated in the Battle of Roanoke Island, the Battle of New Bern, the Second Battle of Bull Run, the Battle of Antietam, the Battle of Fredericksburg, the Battle of Chantilly, in the Overland Campaign, and in the Siege of Petersburg. By the end of its three years of service, the 21st Massachusetts had been reduced from 1,000 men to fewer than 100. Of these losses, 152 were killed in action or died from wounds received in action, approximately 400 were discharged due to wounds, 69 were taken prisoner, and approximately 300 were discharged due to disease, resignation, or desertion.

NOTE 7: William F. Draper, from Milford, Massachusetts, enlisted at age 21 as a Private in September 1861. He was promoted to Second Lieutenant on October 12, 1861, and was promoted steadily thereafter, becoming a Major on July 31, 1863. He commanded the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment from October 10, 1863, until August 10, 1864, except during a time when he was recovering from a severe wound he sustained in the Battle of the Wilderness in May of 1864. He was mustered out of the service on October 12, 1864, upon the expiration of his three years of service. He was subsequently promoted to Brevet Colonel and then Brevet Brigadier General, U.S. Volunteers, for "gallant and meritorious services in the field during the war."

NOTE 8: William H. Hodgkins, from Charlestown, Massachusetts, enlisted as a Private on July 23, 1862, at age 22. He was promoted to Second Lieutenant on October 17, 1862, to First Lieutenant on October 17, 1863, and to Captain on May 6, 1864. He was mustered out with the regiment on June 8, 1865. He was subsequently promoted to Brevet Major for "valuable and distinguished services at Fort Stedman, Virginia, on March 25, 1865."

NOTE 9: The "Jos. H." that Jerome referred to in this letter was almost certainly 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, and he was later exchanged. He was discharged on June 21, 1865. Joseph H. Peirce was a nephew of Jerome.

NOTE 10: The fact that the men were very short of clothing and rations and made were forced to make moccasins for themselves because of the shortage of footwear is documented in the Unit History (Page 124). It reads, "Very few of our men had overcoats; indeed, they were poorly clothed in every respect. For the lack of shoes many were obliged to protect their feet with moccasins made of raw hides. Rations too were short. A few spoonfulls of flour were served out as the daily allowance, and, had it not been for the corn picked up here and there, sometimes where the mules were corralled, the men would have suffered severely."