

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
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ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Camp "Dick Robinson", Ky Fri 24th Apr 1863

My dearest wife,

My last [letter] of Tues. eve. closed by informing you of our departure for an expedition, etc. We reached camp again last eve. about 8 o'clk, one day's return sooner than expected.

It rained all night Tues. and morning found our camp "all afloat". Called up at 3 a.m. and coffee served and started at 5, still raining. Took a cross road, a short distance from here, and such tedious marching. Stones, mud and all the wrenching inconveniences of bad highways but about 4 P.M. found us a Harrodsburg about 18 miles south east of this place. It is, or has been, a violent Sech place and we took a look through it, doing some splendor marching as we moved thru the streets and "I reckon" gave them a sight of "Yankee soldiering". Finally camped about a mile out of the village in a pleasant spot among the trees.

The "Color Guard" messed together and some merry times we have on such occasions around the campfire and taking our coffee, comparing ills such as lame and blistered feet, but always concluding

"we are good for more miles tomorrow". Well, about 9 o'clk Thurs. morn. left for camp via Danville 10 miles east. A beautiful country and a fine marching day, being cloudy and raining enough to keep the dust down. 'Tis a fine place with a large "Female Institute" before mentioned as we had a call from some of the ladies and their teachers. Stopped long enough for coffee and started for camp and arrived as mentioned somewhat lame as I marched in shoes for the first time this season but we are doing well and tonight we (the whole Regt.) "appear out" in white gloves on Dress Parade.

We are not aware as yet the character of our mission. Expect it was to let the 'Secesh' know how Yankees could appear and to initiate Burnside's order, which is to "silence" all demonstrations in favor of Rebels in his department. The Col. was very kind and considerate of our comfort on this trip and he has removed some unfavorable impressions and we gave him the hearty cheers which made the camp sing and I trust he will appreciate it for the Regt, gained many encomiums for fine appearance, drill, etc. for we found some Union men and the others were very respectful and quiet.

There are some magnificent scenes about here on 'Dix Run' which we crossed a narrow foot bridge twice. Such rocky scenes, hundreds of feet high and swelling out like the fronts of houses in the cities while the winding course of the river affords some fine views in these springtime budding and leafing out of the trees.

Jos. H. it seems after I left wrote you and I feared would alarm you so I send you this brief scrawl. He told about firing heard, wouldn't be back for a week, etc. but I felt you would know him well enough not to be much frightened. 'Twas a perfect secret and only two persons knew where we went and no one on the errand. We had a pleasant trip and never was farther from any danger.

In my last I sent you my picture in my fatigue camp dress also \$2.00 in money yours returned. I hope ere this you have received the check etc. Had a nice letter from Mr. Murray waiting me. Will reply soon. Hope this will bring one from you as I'm anxious to know if you receive my late letters for have written often quite.

I trust you are in good health, which Mr. Murray spoke of in particular.

Transcriber's Note: Several lines of text have been heavily crossed out with what appears to have been by black pencil, presumably by Jerome, making them totally illegible.

I believe in a happy union by and by.

I have written this past hastily that you might know of my health and safety. Have directed the last [letter] to Billerica.

'Tis warm and pleasant today.

Love to all friends and as ever your affectionate,
Jerome

Transcriber's Note: Two small pieces of stationery, approximately one-third the size of a regular piece of stationery, with the following partial texts were included with the above letter in the same envelope.

.....
...on the conduct of the war.... Day the account of the disgraceful sneak from Charleston and laying the blame on the poor Ironclads! Let commodore Farragut go there and see then what will take place! These things stirred my temper and I fear the sun went down on my wrath...
.....

.....
... our Regt. made ... appearance at Dress Parade this eve and we had many lookers on. I wish it could be justly done in "Harper's Weekly" for your benefit. The 'Color Guard' is full 12 in all the flower of the regt. and I address you as the stars and stripes float...
.....

Transcriber's Note: The text apparently continues on regular-sized stationery as follows.

over us and on the soil of "Kentuck" and makes me proud of the 'Old Bay State' and I feel "taller and stronger" to "do and dare" for our Union.

The boys of Co. B sing finely on our March and the new song "Rally around the flag Boys" rings out in telling tones and sends a thrill through the "Left" if not the whole Regt.

We are having an addition to the Drum Corps, fifes and a brass drum. Music is potent in the Army and the "Thirty Sixth" will not be behind. I mention these things for they interest us and will you for our sake.

Please see Abbie and Miss Waldo and tend my heart thanks for the letters. I feel very happy if my letters are such a satisfaction to my friends. They are certainly my experience and as long as health is so good I have no business to be anything but cheerful and brave.

Spring comes on and the country looks more lovely every day and the birds are delightful.

Please show this with your friend Charles. I mean should like to write him tonight but have been resting up all day and want to see Ben and show him his letter.

I hope in your next [letter] you will tell me of the safe arrival of the 'check' etc. and soon of my picture etc.

Good night and good angels
Keep you for your loving
Jerome

P.S. My congratulations to Albert and S. and tell Charles I have thought over old times. Age levied on them thru some strange scenes. Especially at Fredericksburg! My love to them all.

I may have miss dated this. It is Friday. Col. Norton looked nicely this eve.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

NOTE 1: Camp Dick Robinson was a large Union Army organizational and training center located near Lancaster in rural Garrard County, Kentucky. The camp was established on August 6, 1861, despite the protests of Governor Beriah Magoffin, a strong secessionist and Southern sympathizer. It was located about halfway between Cincinnati and the Cumberland Gap, and was about 30 miles from Lexington, Kentucky. It was constructed on the farm of Captain Dick Robinson, a strong pro-Union supporter. The post served as a rallying point for local loyalists, as well as for Unionists who had left their homes in eastern Tennessee in order to enlist in the Union army. In 1862, the Confederate Army seized the camp and renamed it "Camp Breckinridge," in honor of Confederate general and former U.S. Vice President John C. Breckinridge, a native Kentuckian. The advance of the Union army into the region forced the Rebels to abandon the camp, and Federal troops regained its possession for the remainder of the war. After hostilities ceased in 1865, the camp was phased out of existence.

NOTE 2: The term "Secesh" (a somewhat derogatory slang word for "secessionist" used by Northerners) was used at the time to designate a supporter of the Confederacy during the Civil War.

NOTE 3: The "Jos. 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 4: The "Battle Cry of Freedom", also known as "Rally 'Round the Flag", is a song written in 1862 by American composer George Frederick Root (1820–1895) during the Civil War. A patriotic song advocating the causes of Unionism and abolitionism, it became so popular that composer H. L. Schreiner and lyricist W. H. Barnes adapted it for the Confederacy. A modified Union version was used as the campaign song for the Lincoln-Johnson ticket in the 1864 presidential election, as well as in elections after the war, such as for Garfield in the 1880 U.S. presidential election. The song was so popular that the music publisher had 14 printing presses going at one time and still could not keep up with demand. It is estimated that over 700,000 copies of this song were put in circulation.

NOTE 5: Col. John B. Norton enlisted at age 39 from Charlestown, Massachusetts, as a First Lieutenant in the 5th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers. He was transferred as a Captain to the 36th Massachusetts Regiment on August 22, 1862. Norton was promoted to Lt. Col. on August 28, 1862, and he commanded the Regiment from June 1, 1863, until July 30, 1863. He resigned on July 30, 1863, the reason for his resignation not being specified in the Unit History.