

## THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	202
DATE OF LETTER	Mar. 19, 1864
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
WRITTEN AT	Knoxville, Tenn.
NUMBER OF PAGES	4
TRANSCRIBER	Tom Neubig
TRANSCRIPTION DATE	Aug. 7, 2018

### ENVELOPE



### LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Knoxville Tennessee  
Sat PM Mar 19 /64

My ever dear wife,

What will you say as you see the heading of this letter? Knoxville again! Orders came last Wedns [Wednesday] eve as we were laying on the "backside" and among the "Knobbs" of Morristown some 44 miles from here, and at 6 a.m. Thurs [Thursday] morn we came on the march with the full understanding that we are really bound North!

Reached here this morn and are camped near Fort Sanders, of bloody memory. Had some steady and severe marching but I am happy to tell you that I am doing well. Some lame in the right knee and another boil on my neck. But my general health is mostly improved. When we came in we expected to go via Chattanooga [to] go home. (to Annapolis Md rumor says) but now we hear that we are going to march over the mountains and are ordering shoes.

Since we came in we've had full rations of bread issued and expect the meat, coffee and sugar, etc., something new you know.

Have not heard from you for two weeks about. Expect a mail this eve. One has just come and brought a nice letter from Rev. Ballou (of Orange). The 'boys' are reading it. It seems good to be remembered thus. Hope I shall hear from home this eve.

Had a letter from Nellie Ranlett a day or two since and replied immediately. It seems the friends are looking up a Commission for 'Poor Me.' Well, for their and your sakes, I hope sometime to be so fortunate, financially I mean, thus to you for there is much in an officers' situation[s] that is not enviable. Have applied to the Company Commander Lieut[enant] Daniels for a 'recommend' to the Maj(or) merely as a help. But as I can not [Missing word where a word was crossed out] Sergt. (Orderly) and as I know not who or how many are looking and working that way I don't know what success I shall meet with regimentally. But time will tell.

I am writing in haste as Jos H. is here. Has just written home and will mail this. George Edmunds is again with the Regt. Came a day or two since. Has been kind and carried my gun occasionally on the late march. Wished to be remembered.

Think we shall remain here tomorrow. Paymaster is here and the Maj[or] informed us we should probably be paid here. If so, you will hear from me substantially, I trust, before I get North. But there many uncertainties you know. Let us hope for the best, and that ere long I shall be within three days (by mail) from you with a bare possibility of getting home. If ever men deserve furloughs 'tis the army of E. Tenn[essee]. But as I have been home, should have to give way to others. But if there is a possible chance I shall do all I can to do so, but don't build hopes on what I say.

Weather here is chilly, good roads and fine marching. Always expecting the 'common lot' fatigues, etc.

If we do go over the mountains of course should write but little and to you.

As ever my thoughts are ever of you and the dear one at P.V. [Based on other letters, possibly "Pleasant Valley"]. What of good or ill is in the future, the Good Father only knows, but hope all for the best. The boys are wild almost with joy at leaving this Dept. with 'fear and trembling' that the rebs may yet create a necessity for our remaining yet awhile longer. But officers and men alike are anxious to see the other side of the mountains and our own Atlantic Shore.

Love to all, and regards to friends. We have a full band attached to our Brigade which keeps us up 'muchly.'

As ever your own, Jerome

(A kiss for Lu[lu])

#### **TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES** (Tom Neubig and Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: Envelope dated March 19, 1864. Postmarked March 21, 1864. To Mrs. Jerome Peirce, Billerica, Massachusetts. Front of envelope has additional notation: Mr. Ballou letter in this. That letter is #200.

NOTE 2: The 36<sup>th</sup> Regiment was in Knoxville during the siege from Nov. 14 to December 7, 1863. Fort Sanders was the location of the heaviest fighting involving Longstreet's forces on November 29, 1863. According to the Unit History, although not actively engaged that day, the 36<sup>th</sup> Brigade was within view of the Fort, and had a "bloody memory" of that day.

NOTE 3: Knobbs, typically knobs, are hills in this region of Tennessee and Kentucky. Morristown is north-east of Knoxville.

NOTE 4: Nellie Ranlett's husband, Seth Alonzo Ranlett, enlisted as a private from Charlestown, at age 22, on July 24, 1862. He was promoted several times and became a first lieutenant on December 1, 1862. He mustered out of the service on February 20, 1864, due to physical disability from disease.

NOTE 5: First Lieutenant Henry W. Daniels commanded Company H for a time. He was also killed at Spotsylvania Court House. (Unit History p. 169-170)

NOTE 6: The "Jos. H." he refers to almost certainly was Joseph H. Peirce. He enlisted as a private in Orange, Massachusetts, on August 4, 1862, at age 18. Jerome also enlisted in Orange, but as a corporal, on the same date, and he was 31 years old then. According to the Unit History, Joseph H. Peirce was taken Prisoner of War at Pegram Farm, Virginia, on September 30, 1864 and was later exchanged. He was discharged on June 21, 1865. Jos. H Peirce was a nephew of Jerome.

NOTE 7: As he also mentioned in another letter, Jerome had applied for an officer's (Second Lieutenant's) commission. Of course, he never received that promotion. However, it is interesting to speculate how his fate might have been different at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House if he had.

NOTE 8: As it has in other letters, his strong religious feelings come out again in this letter.

NOTE 9: Jerome mentions that he had "been home" in this letter. Per his Service Record, he was assigned to recruiting duty in Massachusetts starting on September 15, 1863. He was "Present" again for duty by November 1, 1863. It is not clear whether by "home" in this letter he means "Massachusetts" in general or Jerome and Allie's actual home in the Boston area. It is possible that as other letters are transcribed, this question will be answered.