

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	86
DATE OF LETTER	March 15, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Mother and Father [Actually Allie's (not Jerome's) parents. See Transcriber's Note.]
WRITTEN AT	Newport News, Va.
NUMBER OF PAGES	4
TRANSCRIBER	Ben Raterman
TRANSCRIPTION DATE	Sept. 13, 2018

ENVELOPE

This letter has no envelope associated with it.

LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Newport News 15th Mar 1863

My dear Mother,

And Father too. What, do you think that your 'other boy' don't address you as personal particular? Not I assure you from indifference.

Well, for two days I've been "kinder" ailing with a severe cold and have had to keep close for the same. Shall, I think, be all right by tomorrow.

We are having severe weather here, cutting Mch. [March] winds and so near the sea that it seems much like old Boston altho we have no snow. We think you must have some big snow banks up north by the air hereabouts and very many are down with colds and coughs. Am taking medicine that looks like honey and tastes strongly of camphor and it loosened my cough very soon. And I have just finished dinner of a cup of nice tea and bread and I am feeling quite sound again.

I have no news to write but I just wanted to tell you that I am not forgetful of the "old folks at home" and how much I wish I could set the time when we might meet again but I expect we have got to be patient still longer and see many more of our 'sons' in the field, yet I feel sanguine that all will end well and, in a way, to confer more peaceful and prosperous times for those to come after us when the true principles will govern and security will compensate for present trials.

I look eagerly when the mail arrives for news from home and I cannot express how thankful I am that you are all spared in health and to feel that those dearest to me are cared for. Shall I ever repay it?

My little Lulu, what do you all think of her? I often try and picture to my mind how she looks. It is one of the direful phases of this wicked war that so many men are so long denied the sight of the faces of innocent children and refined women, etc. And as I shook the hand of Mrs. Hall the other day it seemed like a dream. She left here on Fri. and I sent a hasty letter to be mailed when most convenient for Allie.

A portion of the army have left for Suffolk, 3rd division, and I feel quite anxious for news from that quarter. The report being here that Rebel Gen. Hill was moving with a large force to attack that position but I expect that they are well fortified and we need not fear the general result altho for our

personal friends we always feel anxious. I don't know that we are likely to be called away tho we're always ready.

'Tis quite pleasant today, considering a little wind, sun out, but not so warm as some days.

It seems Aunt Wyman is failing. Am not much surprised for she is into years somewhat and has seen much to try her I suppose. Should like to hear all about her from time to time as I have passed many pleasant hours with her and used to think her an excellent example of "growing old".

I suppose I must send a word to that daughter of yours so I must close for the present. As opportunity offers, send a line for they are still very welcome.

How are father and Joe this winter?

Remember me to the elderly friends who may inquire and believe me,

your affectionate son,

Jerome P

Will send E's letter next time. Envelope so small can't fold them to take three sheets.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE (Josef Rokus)

Although this letter is addressed to "Mother" and "Father" and is signed "your affectionate son," Jerome wrote the letter to Allie's parents (i.e., to his parents-in-law) instead of to his parents beyond a shadow of a doubt based on the following:

1. A Peirce family genealogy indicates that Jerome's mother, Martha "Patty" Sherwin Peirce, died on June 27, 1847. That genealogy shows that Jerome's father may have died in 1808, but that year cannot be correct because several children, i.e., Jerome's siblings, and Jerome himself were born after 1808. Therefore, it is extremely likely that Jerome's parents had died before he enlisted in 1862. (No information about Jerome's parents could be found on the findagrave.com website.) As an aside, that family history correctly shows Jerome's dates of birth and death and indicates that he was killed at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House.

This 283-page family history was written and published in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1880 by Frederick Clifton Peirce. It is titled *Peirce Genealogy, Being the Record of the Posterity of John Pers, an Early Inhabitant of Watertown, in New England*, and it is now available on ancestry.com and Google Books. It traces the Peirce family history back to John Pers in England. He was born in about 1588 and died in 1661.

2. The letters collection does not contain any letters to or from Jerome's parents. Nor do any letters reviewed to-date ever mention anything about Jerome's parents.

3. In this letter he refers to himself as "your other boy."

4. He signed this letter as "Jerome P". It is very unlikely that he would have signed it with the initial of his last name if he was addressing the letter to his parents.

5. Most significantly, he used the phrase "I suppose I must send a word to that daughter of yours". It almost certainly means that he was planning to write a letter to Abbie after he wrote this letter.