

## THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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WRITTEN BY	Jerome
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### ENVELOPE



### LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Lexington, Ky Mch [March] 30<sup>th</sup>/63

My dear Abbie

What do you think of this? If you have a good war map just follow with your finger from Newport News across the Chesapeake to Baltimore, then across the country through Harpers Ferry, Cumberland, Grafton, Piedmont to Parkersburg, Va at the mouth of the "Little Kanawha", down the Ohio River to Cincinnati, Ohio where we arrived on Friday eve at 7 o'clock and Saturday morn. or A.M. to Covington, Kentucky and by rail to this place where we arrived on Sunday (yesterday) at little before daylight, and then imagine a place very much like old Cambridge and our camp in a place like the College grounds without the buildings and not so artistic but equally pleasant, and you have our moves for the last week!

Did you think your brother would ever wander so far from home? Well such are the demands of these times. General Burnside and his fine 9<sup>th</sup> Corps defending old Kentucky!

And then you must know that we are but a few rods from the cemetery and Henry Clay's monument, 152 feet high, and looks down upon our camp, a fine statue of him dismounting it. I am

ignorant of terms to describe it, but it is the most elegant monument I ever saw of native stone of yellowish hue. A square like a building containing a marble sarcophagus of white marble, then a square base with a round shaft, Corinthian capital, above that a sort of a June apple with four scrolls and then the figure, altogether forming a graceful and beautiful tribute to the "Sage of Ashland."

The city is a mile away but in full view, a delightful and tastefully laid out place they tell me for I have not been "downtown" yet. Two churches remind me of old Cambridge by their spires. A college and large lunatic asylum nearby besides other fine buildings, denoting fine taste and pride of the best sort. Around us are fine old estates and plantations, spacious fields and excellent roads and, in short, one of the most delightful spots I ever saw.

There is much Secesh element but it is diminishing and with a just and firm administration the union will prevail. Have seen some of the union people and we are welcomed by them with true Kentucky hospitality and we hope to be worthy of the same.

We are probably fixed here for the present and ready to strike at any point that may be threatened for the 'rebs' are desperate and this is the last resort for Army supplies. Fortifications are in progress about the city and we will be ready. The Corps are divided, some at Louisville and in other places, so as to cooperate and thus enable General Rosecrans to keep his force unbroken.

Of the journey, I enjoyed it hugely, passing through some of the grandest scenery in our glorious union and I feel still more inspired to defend it to the best of my powers.

How much I wished I could have shared in comfortable passenger cars the fine scenes thru which we passed! Lost much in night riding but one great wish was fulfilled and that was a view of "Harpers Ferry." It is a magnificent scene. We reached it early Wedns. morning and we passed through the ruins of the Armory building to receive our rations which were prepared on our arrival, at several places, on the route, hot coffee, etc. The rivers were both high and the effect with the grand mountain scenery was next to Niagara certainly.

Along up the Patapsco [River] too from Baltimore, the "Relay House", Ilchester, Ellicotts Mills and other factory villages were viewed by daylight and furnished fine "pictures" for memory.

Cumberland is a pleasant enterprising place situated amid the loveliest mountain scenery on the whole route. Numberless canal boats, several large churches, a Catholic college and many nice buildings, but built mostly of brick.

I forgot to mention Martinsburg, the great depot of railroad work and where the Rebels made a raid and destroyed a splendid bridge built upon fine granite towers and iron trestle work and the vast machine shops too, all in ruins. I assure you I was full of ire and could have punished them with a will, but all was a part of war I suppose.

Piedmont is the great coal depot where the cars come from the mountains. (Dress Parade and I must prepare). A few moments later. Order countermanded, so I will try and finish. We passed through twenty three tunnels of various lengths on our route. We followed the Potomac River for most of the way, as you will see by the map, and it is a large stream the whole distance. From Grafton to the Little Kanawha is a rough and wild country of new settlements and a small snow storm made it dreary somewhat.

Parkersburg is a large place with strong Secesh proclivities. The vote for the new state of "Western Virginia" came off the day of our arrival and I suppose it was carried for the new state as they felt confident of success.

The trip down the Ohio was fine of course fair weather but somewhat chilly, but kept on deck most of the time during daylight. Cheers, salutes and various patriotic demonstrations all along, especially from the Ohio side.

Portsmouth, Ohio and Maysville, Kentucky are the principal places on the river. Did not go ashore at Cincinnati as 'twas not "according to orders" and then I remember my rambles there years

before. It looked quite natural. A new Catholic church on Mt. Adams and the "Spencer House" and the principal new features.

Covington is a fine city of some ten thousand inhabitants and I saw something of it as we laid "in waiting" at the depot all day Sat.

Many things I must omit for the present, as I desire you may hear a "little something" from me. I am glad to say I am in excellent health and have much to thank a kind father above for in these my wanderings and I trust I may [be] permitted sometime to meet my dear ones again and enjoy the recollections of this experience in its purest form.

The Union people take a very cheerful view of affairs and predict an early close of the war and for such we all hope and pray.

I need not tell you how fondly and constantly my thoughts have wandered homeward and how eagerly I await tidings from Home! No word since a week ago last Sat. at Newport News. Expect a mail hourly and you can imagine the scene as we feel far far from home.

Well, how are all the good and dear friends? I trust well. Wrote Allie and Bro F's folks yesterday as soon as we pitched our tents. The weather is very chilly, but 'twill soon be warm. The grass is very green and farming work is begun.

Remember me as ever to each and all friends whom distance only endears. Write me as ever and believe me ever your loving

Brother

Jerome P

I hardly know how you should direct letters. Have ordered them to Washington. Am just informed that it is "Lexington, Ky. via Cincinnati, Ohio." Reg., Corps, etc. as before. Please communicate this.

#### **TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES** (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: Although the letter indicates that Jerome was Abbie's brother, Abbie was actually his sister-in-law, i.e., Allie's sister. Abbie (Abigail) Jaquith was born in 1836, and she died in 1915. Allie (Albinia) Jaquith was born in 1834, and she died in 1920.

NOTE 2: The term "Secesh" was used at the time to designate a supporter of the Confederacy during the Civil War.

NOTE 3: William S. Rosecrans (1819 - 1898) was an American inventor, coal-oil company executive, diplomat, politician, and U.S. Army officer. He gained fame for his role as a Union general during the Civil War. He was the victor at prominent Western Theater battles, but his military career was effectively ended following his disastrous defeat at the Battle of Chickamauga on September 19 -29, 1863. He was subsequently reassigned to command the Department of Missouri. Rosecrans was briefly considered as a vice presidential running mate for Abraham Lincoln in 1864. After the war, he served in diplomatic and appointed political positions and in 1880 was elected to Congress, representing California.

NOTE 4: The "Soldier's Letter, etc." notation on the envelope was written on the upper right-hand corner of the envelope, where a stamp would normally be affixed. Charles T. Canfield, who was 38 years old and from Worcester, Massachusetts, was the chaplain of the 36<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry Regiment from August 28, 1862, until October 20, 1863, when he resigned. The rubber-stamped note "Due 3" was apparently stamped over Canfield's hand-written note by a post office official. An

identical note written by Canfield (and also the “Due 3” note) appears on several of Jerome’s letters. Canfield (and Jerome) apparently believed that this notation would make it unnecessary to affix the three-cent stamp required for a letter at that time. However, it appears that they were mistaken. Whether or not the three cents postage due was actually collected from Allie could not be determined. It is interesting to note that in more recent times, U.S. service personnel in war zones have been allowed free franking privileges by writing “Free” or “Soldier’s Mail” in the area of the envelope where a stamp would normally be affixed.

There is also a faint notation on the envelope that reads “No Stamps”.

NOTE 5: Henry Clay (1777 – 1852) was an American lawyer, planter, and statesman who represented Kentucky in both the United States Senate and House of Representatives. Clay helped elect John Quincy Adams as president, and Adams subsequently appointed Clay as Secretary of State. Clay served four separate terms in the Senate, and he ran for the presidency in 1824, 1832 and 1844, and unsuccessfully sought his party's nomination in 1840 and 1848. In addition, he created the Whig Party.

Clay died on June 29, 1852, in Washington, D.C., at the age of 75. He was the first person to be lain in state in the United States Capitol rotunda. He was buried in the Lexington, Kentucky, Cemetery. The Henry Clay Monument, shown below, was erected at the cemetery in 1857 and consists of a 120-foot tall Corinthian column surmounted by a statue of Clay. The remains of Clay and his wife Lucretia rest in two marble sarcophagi on the floor of a vaulted chamber at the base of the monument. Clay’s estate, known as Ashland, is also located in Lexington and is now open to the public.

