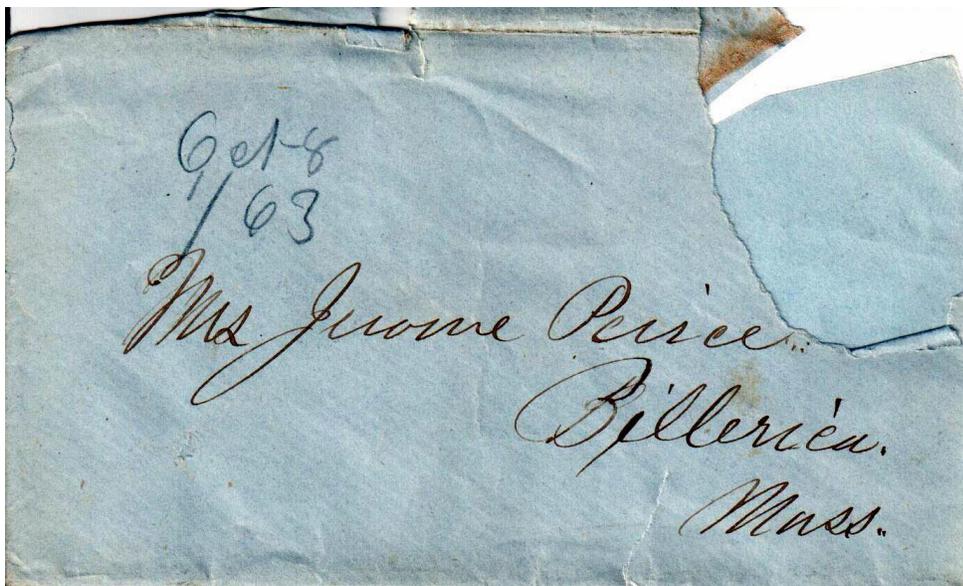


THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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| LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER | 165 |
| DATE OF LETTER | Oct. 8, 1863 |
| WRITTEN BY | Jerome |
| WRITTEN TO | Allie |
| WRITTEN AT | Long Island, Boston, Mass., Harbor |
| NUMBER OF PAGES | 4 |
| TRANSCRIBER | Ben Raterman |
| TRANSCRIPTION DATE | Nov. 5, 2018 |
| | |
| | Written while he was temporarily assigned to recruiting duty in Massachusetts. |

ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

1st Provisional Guard, Co. 'B'

Long Island, Boston Harbor
Thurs P.M. 8th Oct/63

My ever dear Allie,

Yours of Tues. eve was recd. yesterday P.M. and but that I was on guard and very much undecided what to do. Should have answered before and then the storm today and add to this the fact that I don't know what is to come, I could not write before.

Thought about getting a 'pass' but so recently from home Capt. H[olmes] could do nothing now and he has gone away as indeed all our officers have till next Monday and I can only wonder whether you have gone home as I suppose you have.

Lieut. Davis made a little talk yesterday and said he would like me to remain here with him if he did, and I think he will. If we do, I shall get a three day leave of absence as soon as I can and so see you in Billerica.

It is blowing almost a gale and wet. Find something to keep me busy as ever and have just finished some sewing and cleaning up my gun etc. and it is dull and lonesome today and I need not tell you how much I would like, love, to be with you and hope to ere long.

Lieut. D[avis] said if we had to return to the Regt. I should have time to see you again. So you must make the best of the present and as soon as I can continue to meet you I will.

I wrote Foster and mentioned the 'Pic Nic' to the veterans by Gen. Devens. I suppose they will have one perhaps. A good time but I thought as you would return to B[illerica] I would not attempt much but trust to a leave of absence. As the weather looks, it is as well.

No letter this morning but I hope to hear something this eve and from Lulu but as Joe left no word, I conclude she is all right.

The regulations here are very strict and I don't feel much at home yet. All so uncertain and a good deal like banishment.

Got relieved from guard about ten o'clock this morn. If it were not for being near you and escaping marching perhaps for a time, I would like to return to the Regt. Besides, I hope something may possibly turn up to better myself. At any rate some good thing has come of all the changes so far and I hope the same in the future.

It is not very cold as yet and the views about the harbor are very fine. I can look out of my tent directly towards the city and it does not look so far as in Ky [Kentucky]!

You must not expect a letter for I am not 'at home' but you will know I am well and have a thought for you. Hope tonight's boat will bring some message from you and the Regt.

We have very good fare and I continue to keep comfortable and by and by I hope to feel at home and do whatever is for the best.

If you or any of the friends wish to come to the Island you must set a day and I have to furnish the 'passes' and send you tickets.

Will enclose a word to Foster and close.

Write me often and be patient till I see you one way or another.

Love as ever to all.

Yours ever,
Jerome

A kiss for Lulu. What does she say about Papie?

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: Long Island, not to be confused with Long Island, New York, is situated in the middle of Boston Harbor, Massachusetts. The island is part of the City of Boston, and is now also part of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. In 1860, a plan to develop this island was thwarted by the rumors of war and plans for military installations on Long Island Head and other parts of the island. Camp Wightman was established on Long Island and in 1863 it had over 1,000 recruits in addition to several full batteries of heavy artillery under the command of General Charles Devens, Jr. Many deserters drowned in the waters around Long Island as U.S. Army recruits tried to get to the mainland.

At the time, it was the custom to induct and train recruits on islands to minimize desertions. A major scam at the time was for a man to sign up for the Army and collect an enlistment bonus. Then, after going AWOL, he would sign up again in another town, collecting an additional bonus. Islands, especially, during the winter months, contained the recruits with the surrounding frigid seawater.

NOTE 2: Otis W. Holmes, from Milford, Massachusetts, enlisted as a Sergeant at age 27 on September 8, 1861, in the 25th Massachusetts Regiment. He was transferred as a First Lieutenant to Co. F of the 36th Massachusetts on August 12, 1862, and then to Company B of the 36th on May 2, 1863. Holmes died in Harewood General Hospital, Washington, D.C. on June 23, 1864, of wounds received in action near Petersburg, Virginia, on June 17, 1864.

NOTE 3: Jonas R. Davis enlisted as a Corporal at age 20 from Templeton, Massachusetts, in the 21st Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers. After several promotions, he was transferred to the 36th Massachusetts and promoted to First Lieutenant on June 6, 1863. He was mustered out with the 36th Massachusetts on June 8, 1865, upon expiration of service.

NOTE 4: Foster Peirce was one of Jerome's older brothers. The 1850 U.S. Census listed him as being born in 1812, living in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and being in the furniture business. It is interesting to note that when that census was taken, Jerome, then 19 years old, was living with the Foster Peirce family, with his occupation being recorded as a "gilder."

NOTE 5: Charles Devens, Jr. (1820 - 1891) was an American lawyer, jurist and statesman who also served as a general in the Union Army during the Civil War. He was appointed as colonel of the 15th Massachusetts Infantry in July 1861 and wounded at the Battle of Ball's Bluff in Virginia in October. Although still recovering, Devens was promoted to brigadier general in April 1862 and assigned command of the 1st Brigade/1st Division. He was wounded a second time at the Battle of Seven Pines and spent most of the summer recovering. His brigade was not heavily involved in the Maryland Campaign. Shortly afterwards, it was reassigned to the VI Corps. Devens commanded the 2nd Brigade/3rd Division/VI Corps during the Battle of Fredericksburg.

In January 1863, Devens was given command of the 1st Brigade, 3rd Division, VI Corps. After Maj. Gen Oliver O. Howard took command of the XI Corps, he appointed Devens as a division commander, and at Chancellorsville he was wounded a third time. Devens distinguished himself at the Battle of Cold Harbor, while commanding the 3rd Division/XVIII Corps in Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign. During the final stages of the Siege of Petersburg, he commanded the 3rd Division of the XXIV Corps.

Devens's troops were the first to occupy Richmond after its fall in April 1865.