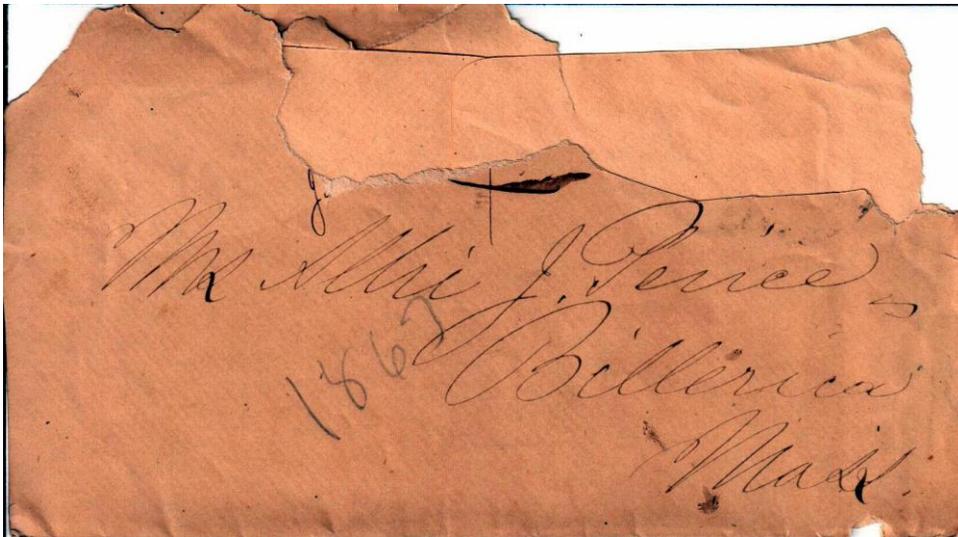


## THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	56
DATE OF LETTER	Jan. 2, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
WRITTEN AT	Near Fredericksburg, Va.
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### ENVELOPE



### LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Near Fredericksburg Va 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 1863

My dear Allie,

What can I do but wish you a "Happy New Year"? Will it seem a mockery? From some unaccountable reason the mail for the 36<sup>th</sup> did not come to hand since last Sunday till last eve when we had a generous one, bundles and letters from a pair of boots to small letters. I had two letters from you (24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Dec) from Abbie and Miss Susan Waldo together and three "Journals" so I am supplied for now.

And now before I forget it I will say that the stamps all came safely to hand but I have written quite a number of letters to Foster, Jamestown (Sarah), Geo. Pratt, Dr. Bickford and which took up the stamps, hence I send enclosed by the chaplain's. I forgot the undershirt came last eve just the thing and as the weather is quite mild (with a snap once in a while) I am comfortably clothed (or shall be with the downs.)

Well, what shall I talk about? It is P.M. This A.M. was only getting and eating breakfast and getting wood, reading the papers and now shall I say something of the War? I must refer to your letters.

I think you seem in better spirits and am glad indeed of it but you refer to something as though I was homesick etc. I will tell you "honestly" that I am not, but since the battle having seen at a near view all the horrors of war. It gave me a heart sickening feeling that we should be compelled to engage against our own countrymen and I have not mentioned to you the ghastly sight in the garden (where I found the book) there were four corpses, terribly mangled too horrible for description and a few feet off soldiers of the N.H. Regt. were cooking their coffee and were unconcerned as could be, one a mere boy of fine countenance and features and what must have been the scene on the battlefield?

Do you wonder I expressed some distaste at such things? No. I am in excellent health and spirits and as for ambition, what can I do but do my duty faithfully and fill my position with credit and honor till something better comes? This I do and you must know that promotion, better pay etc. are of slow growth here.

Alonzo's was an uncommon case. His penmanship, an item with an orderly sergeant which comes under the eye of the Col. every day, was the cause of his success and he is the style to suit the Col., who has just about such a style of men in his "field staff". Alonzo has just left our tent, where he stopped for a few moments. We here with the rest are much "exercised" on the War. He says he has "stopped thinking" and pushes on about his duties.

Let me tell you it is one thing to be in Mass. imagining the movements and quite another to be here an eyewitness. You have no conception of the thing, the immense work and what trifling causes will ruin a campaign. A [Alonzo] tells me they have given up moving from here now, which was contem[plated] as late as three days ago. A grand cavalry expedition has gone to hunt out and destroy Stuart's Cavalry, whose "raids" have become so famous, with a determination to fix him.

The feeling is now that we shall keep our position to block the Rebs for they will not venture to attack us, wish they would! And now see what the Emancipation "Proclamation" will do. It seems the black man to be made instrumental in carrying it out and I verily believe that it will do more to close the war, with the stir of feeling up North than any more bloody fights.

I understand that Foster's feeling very badly about the war. Alonzo expects to go to Washington on leave of absence for four days tomorrow. Trust his father and Foster will return here with him. I hope so, but it has been mentioned once so I don't make acct. of it much. I am first to confess that things look dark, the wrangling at Washington, Investigative Committees etc. etc. all tend to embarrass affairs but I can't believe we are all going to "eternal smash", tho I also feel that mere fighting will not settle affairs for the Rebs as our equals in everything of that kind.

The Army are deeply interested in the movements of public feeling at the North and wondering how we shall emerge from all this. But enough of this, the papers or the 'Journal' reports things concerning affairs about here, very correctly, so you can form your own judgments and I see you study the

**Transcriber's Note:** The word "the" is the last word at the bottom of Page 4. Therefore, it must be assumed that the rest of the letter, including its usual closing, is missing.

## TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

NOTE 1: The "Alonzo" Jerome referred to in his letters was Seth Alonzo Ranlett. Ranlett enlisted in Co. B of the 36<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry Regiment as a Private on July 24, 1862, at age 22, and he was from Charlestown, Massachusetts. He was promoted to First Sergeant on August 27, 1862, and was commissioned as a First Lieutenant on December 1, 1862. On December 17, 1862, he was appointed Adjutant of the Regiment. He was mustered out "on account of physical disability from disease incurred in the service" on February 20, 1864.

Ranlett was born on March 18, 1840, in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and he died May 21, 1905, in Newton, Massachusetts. Ranlett's wife was Ellen Peirce Ranlett, with a date of birth of March 22, 1842, and a date of death of January 12, 1914. They were married on January 21, 1864. Ellen Peirce was one of the children of Foster Peirce and his wife Catherine Abby Beaman. Also, Foster Peirce was a brother of Jerome. Therefore, the Ellen that Jerome mentions in his letters was one of Jerome's nieces, and starting on January 21, 1864, Alonzo was the husband of one of his nieces.

NOTE 2: 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."