

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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	Written while he was temporarily assigned to recruiting duty in Massachusetts.

ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Long Island, Boston Harbor 14 Oct 1863

My dear Wife

Here I am this fine morning on the outpost guard south end of the Island, so you see I am at work. Had plenty of time yesterday and reported at noon, so everything was "all right."

Saw Lieut. Hodgkins again. They will not leave before tomorrow. The boys are away on furlough, report this P.M. It seemed still and lonesome somewhat after I got to my quarters, but soon chatted it away with Martindale, the one who remains with me. I read the Waverly Mag[azine] till the call for Batt[allion] Drill and of course had enough to do till supper time with Dress Parade, buttoned and

secured my tent cloth together and made a nice bed tick and we had plenty [of] straw come at night so you see Uncle Sam still has an eye for the "Islanders" and 'twas pretty cold last night but I am warm enough.

Have just got through Grand Mounting and fixed here in a tent, etc., six men and two Corpls. and where we shall remain for twenty-four hours, and I shall read, write, etc.

Had a chat with Foster before I came away and let him know I appreciated his kindness and gave a very kindly response, "welcome to anything he could do, etc., etc."

And how did you get home and how [did you] find Lulu and all? It seems pleasant to know we are not so far separated and I hope now that our minds are made up for a stay that I can for a while, though we know not what an hour will bring forth.

There is a breeze stirring and the drummers are practicing the old sound of camp life and we can hear the calls at Fort Independence and Warren, at the former yesterday as we were coming down, they were firing at a target about half a mile away and towards night it disappeared, so I suppose they hit it.

Have not seen Lieut. D. [Davis] yet but he got the ration money \$3.50 so I shall receive it sometime.

P. M. Thought I [would] finish after dinner. Made me a nice cup of coffee and had stewed beans, bread and enjoyed finely.

The other Corpl. is writing his wife, lately married and quite communicative, has been a wild boy I expect but is naturally smart and writes a good hand.

Suppose you are busy by this time. Should like to "pop in" and take a look. Of course, it is still and monotonous here. Walked down the beat each side of the Island and watched the waves a few moments and [it] reminded me of Newport News. You will find this a dull affair I fear, but you will know that I think of you and may it find you well. Shall expect to hear from you soon and that our little Lulu too is better.

Let this answer for all this time and write me accordingly.

Officer of the Day has just been along and had to rally out and "Present."

I know you don't care for much that I have written, but it's "Long Island" life just now and when this "cruel war is over" will hope for something better. Shall try and improve the time as much as possible. Shall send this in the morning.

Love to all and as ever, your loving
Jerome

Thurs[day] Noon

Got off guard this A. M. and have been "napping", just finished dinner. Heard yesterday P. M. that our division and regiment had been in a fight with General Burnside. Colonel Goodell wounded and other officers. Nothing in the Journal of this morning. Have you seen anything? Boys not gone yet. Quiet and dull, warm. How do you today? A kiss for Lulu and yourself. Am very anxious to hear from the regiment.

As ever your own
Jerome

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: William H. Hodgkins, from Charlestown, Mass., enlisted as a 22-year-old private in July 1862. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in October of that year, received steady promotions, and was mustered out with the 36th Massachusetts Regiment as a brevet major. He was the principal author of the Unit History of the regiment titled *History of the Thirty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. 1862-1865* which is now available on-line on Google Books.

NOTE 3: A bed tick is a cloth case for a bed mattress or pillow. It can also be a light mattress.

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: 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 6: Arthur A. Goodell enlisted at age 23 from Worcester, Massachusetts, as a Sergeant-Major on April 18, 1861. He was transferred as a Captain of Company C of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment on August 16, 1862, and was promoted to Major on January 29, 1863. Subsequent to the date this letter was written, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on July 31, 1863, and he commanded the Regiment from that date until October 10, 1863, when he was severely wounded at Blue Springs, Tennessee. Goodell returned to the Regiment on April 1, 1864, but resigned on May 5, 1864, because of disability resulting from wounds. He was subsequently promoted to Brevet Brigadier General, U.S. Volunteers, for "gallant and meritorious conduct in the field." Goodell died at Worcester, Massachusetts, on June 30, 1882, on his 43rd birthday.