

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	191
DATE OF LETTER	January 17, 1864
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
WRITTEN AT	Based on postmark and location for letters dated before and after this letter, this letter was written in the Knoxville, Tenn. area.
NUMBER OF PAGES	6
TRANSCRIBER	Josef Rokus
TRANSCRIPTION DATE	August 10, 2018

ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Transcriber's Note: See the below Transcriber's Note 1 regarding a possible missing page of this letter, the probable location where it was written, and the missing salutation.

Jan 17, 1864

...text was "In my Father's House are many mansions." J [Probably refers to John, the Apostle] The value of the human soul, of Heaven, hard to keep the former pure and win the latter. After the sermon he had a familiar "talk" with the men and it would do you good to see the men and officers draw near to him and listen. He spoke [of] trying to explain and reconcile these to the short fame and the general hardships of war. I cannot do justice to it. Spoke of the lovely country, that it was our mission to preserve from the pest of slavery to a higher order of civilization and gave all honor, as did Genl. Burnside the other day, to the "rank and file", the common soldiers, the "ranks" for they are the heroes

of the times, and I am more proud than ever to be [one] of them! And the country can never repay them.

Now, Allie, for the first time since I have been out today I could see no mortal means to a dinner. Was speaking of it and one [of the men of] Co. B offered to give me some "sick wheat" as we call it, for it makes most all the men sick who eat it but does not affect me much and so I had four little flitters and a small stup of tough meat and a little coffee and so again I was "all right".

Was on duty this forenoon with a squad of men policing headquarters and with the little I had to do for myself got terribly hungry. But we hope soon to improve as good fare is promised.

Reah[???] Fox, a messenger from Gov. Andrew, gave us a good word the other day. So we gave the Gov. three good cheers. Clothing has come and the boys are supplied partly and things look a little better.

Weather is lovely and we are in a fine district of country, camped on high land with the beautiful plain between us and the Holstone River, about 13 miles from Knoxville. There is a blue outline of mountains far away and in the summer it must be one of the loveliest spots in all the land. As usual, axes are going and quarters [are] in progress. Don't know as we should be here long, perhaps not a week.

Had two kind letters from Orange same date as yours with four stamps. Do you receive the one with the money, \$1.00, for some? Letter from Will spoke of going to B [Billerica?] soon and should see you, as you speak that he has, and took Lulu home etc. Am glad to know that some are coming up to the work. My particular respects to Ed Brown, and I wish him all success!

We hear of some who have enlisted and it puts new life into the boys to know it. Let them come on and soon this cruel war will indeed be ended.

Everything looks cheering now. The enemy are known to be well nigh used up in this Dept. and the boys are hoping and bearing everything patiently.

Have looked once again [at] yours [your letter] of the 27th. What a happy scene with the little ones! I am sure little Lulu is not forgotten or considered all unworthy. Can you expect her to be without faults? Do not worry about her but feel that our best efforts will not go unpaid sometime. A short time more and we can hope to be again at home.

Time flies rapidly and surely we can wait and hope on for awhile longer and I shall feel that my whole duty is done and you will be better satisfied with me and yourself for it. So don't repine, for I am well and cheerful, notwithstanding all the little deprivations of the present. Am very glad you went to Finny's. I think very much of them indeed and should have been glad to meet his brother again for I like him much. Glad my letter was read and shall be glad of the answer. Will answer Charles S's soon. Tell them I am so fixed that I have constant interruptions or I could be more prompt in reply for their letters are fully appreciated.

Paper and ink are almost impossible now and at a high price. Envelopes I need or shall soon very much.

You speak of deaths. Mr. Whitford, E. Walker's child and Mr. Draper of C [Charlestown?], Edwd. D, the brother of the Dr.'s girls? A great loss to them each and all. Mr. W must have been a great sufferer. My regards to Mary.

Our friend Ben E is the same as ever, good and well. Saw him today. Of the others, remember me always joyful times in view may they be more in realization. Alonzo at home as I expected. My regards to him. Will write as soon as possible. Hodgkins is to be the Adjt [Adjutant] I believe. He's acting at least already. Col. [Colonel] B has gone on to Genl. Foster's staff "as they say" and rumor has it that Genl. Burnside's coming back soon, etc., etc.

Well, Dear Allie, I must close as the mail goes soon.

I have tried to write something, but could you see how I am surrounded, noise, cooking, talking all around, you would forgive much. Have got to go clear to the river half a mile to get supper water. The Orange boys are well.

Did you ever get a letter with some green leaves in it from "Cumberland Ford"? And have you got the glove band for Lulu? You did not tell me whether "Outward Bound" was pretty. You see, I catch you once in a while.

My love to the friends one and all. I want to have the girls write occasionally. I miss Abbie's letters much.

As ever your
Loving husband
Jerome

Love to Lucy. Will write her soon.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

NOTE 1: This letter apparently has one page, or possibly more pages, missing. The first page shows the notation "Jan. 17, 1864" written sideways on the margin on the top right section of the page. It is not clear whether or not Jerome wrote that date. The envelope includes the notation "Jan. 17, etc. 1864". The postmark reads "KNOXVILLE TEN Jan 22 '64". Based on the postmark and his locations for the letters written just before and just after this letter, he was in the Knoxville, Tennessee, area when this letter was written.

Further information as to his exact location is obtained from the following excerpt of the Unit History (p. 125). It also mentions that the men had received new clothing and that they were building "houses."

"January 15th [1864] clothing arrived and was issued. Though the quantity was small, there was enough to be of much benefit to our shivering men. On the following day [January 16, 1864] the 45th Pennsylvania started home, its terms of service also having nearly expired. At ten o'clock we broke camp and marched to Strawberry Plains, about 16 miles north of Knoxville. It is at this place that the railroad crosses the Holston River. We went into camp and on the following day and built houses. But on the 17th there were rumors of an approach of the enemy, and we had orders to march the next morning at seven. When the morning came, these orders were countermanded, and we were then ordered to hold ourselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice. That night two or three inches of snow fell."

NOTE 2: The quotation in the first line of the letter is from John 14:2 of the Bible.

NOTE 3: "Flitters" is probably a word used at the time to describe what are now called "fritters." A fritter is a fried food, usually consisting of a portion of batter or breading, which has been filled with bits of meat, seafood, fruit, vegetables or other ingredients.

NOTE 4: The Holston River is a 136-mile river that flows from Kingsport, Tennessee, to Knoxville, Tennessee. Along with its three branches, it comprises a major river system that drains much of northeastern Tennessee, southwestern Virginia, and northwestern North Carolina. The Holston's confluence with the French Broad River at Knoxville marks the beginning of the Tennessee River.

NOTE 5: During the Civil War, a department was a geographical command within the Union's military organization, usually reporting directly to the War Department. Some of the Union's departments were named after rivers, such as the Department of the Potomac, Department of the Ohio, Department of the Susquehanna, and the Department of the Missouri. In this letter, he is most likely referring to the Department of the Tennessee. The geographical boundaries of such departments changed frequently, as

did their names. As the armies became larger, Departments began to be subordinated to Military Divisions, and the Departments were often sub-divided into Districts.

NOTE 6: In his advice to Allie "So don't repine..." the word "repine" means "to be discontented or low in spirits" or "to complain or fret."

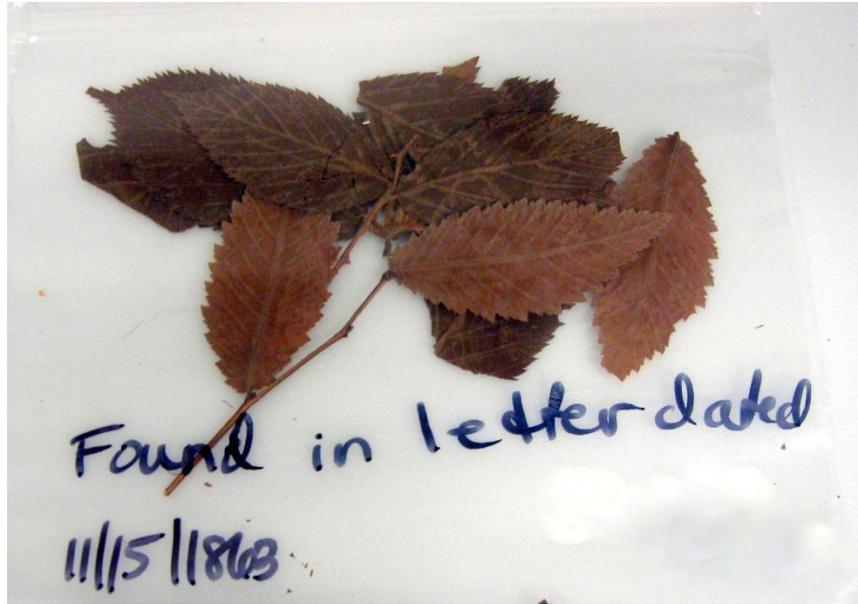
NOTE 7: William H. Hodgkins, from Charlestown, Massachusetts, enlisted as a Private on July 23, 1862, at age 22. He was promoted to Second Lieutenant on October 17, 1862, to First Lieutenant on October 17, 1863, and to Captain on May 6, 1864. He was mustered out with the regiment on June 8, 1865. He was subsequently promoted to Brevet Major for "valuable and distinguished services at Fort Stedman, Virginia, on March 25, 1865."

NOTE 8: A military adjutant is an officer who assists the commanding officer with the unit's administration.

NOTE 9: The "Col. [Colonel] B" he refers to was Henry Bowman, from Clinton, Massachusetts, who enlisted as a captain in the 15th Massachusetts Volunteers on August 1, 1861. He was captured at Ball's Bluff, Loudon County, Virginia, on October 21, 1861. He was a prisoner of war at Richmond and was a hostage for Confederates held in New York for trial as pirates. Bowman was exchanged in August 1862. On August 22, 1862, he was promoted to colonel, commanding the 36th Massachusetts. He resigned on July 27, 1863, but was recommissioned in October of 1863. He subsequently served in different units and served at Baltimore and Philadelphia until the close of the war.

NOTE 10: John Watson Foster (1836 – 1917) was an American diplomat and military officer, as well as a lawyer and journalist. His highest public office was U.S. Secretary of State under President Benjamin Harrison. In 1861, Foster was commissioned as a major in the Union Army, and he rose to the rank of colonel, serving with several units. Foster's troops became the first to enter Knoxville, Tennessee, after the successful campaign there by General Ambrose Burnside.

NOTE 11: Jerome sent flowers or leaves to Lulu on at least seven occasions, as evidenced by the dried remains of this foliage that were found in seven envelopes when they were received by the National Park Service. In this letter, he asks Allie about the leaves he sent while he was at Cumberland Ford in Kentucky. His letter Number 176 was written from Cumberland Gap, Kentucky, on November 15, 1863, and the envelope for that letter includes a notation that reads "Leaves from Cumberland Ford". The dried leaves that were found with this letter are shown below, and they are obviously the ones he referred to in the letter transcribed above. The November 15, 1863, letter has stains that match exactly the leaves shown below.



Found in letter dated
11/5/1863