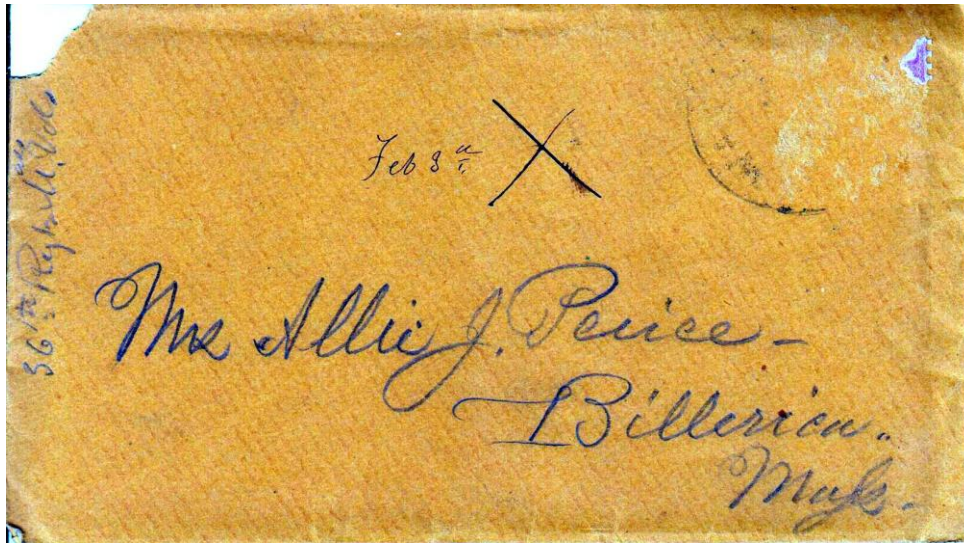


## THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	67
DATE OF LETTER	Feb. 3, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie and Lulu
WRITTEN AT	Camp at Falmouth, Va.
NUMBER OF PAGES	6
TRANSCRIBER	Josef Rokus
TRANSCRIPTION DATE	Sept. 9, 2018

### ENVELOPE



### LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1863

My ever dear Allie and Lulu,

Here we are writing once more, J.H. to O [Orange], and your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup> is before me and I have read it over and over and it done me a great deal of good and many things came right home to the heart. The subject and interesting matter and the spirit too was in it, forgive me the expression, and if I even insinuate a difference in your letters for I know they all come from loving faithful wife but we all feel in different moods at times but sense here you seemed more like the maiden days of old in it and did not admit quite so much of care and trouble into it, perhaps, besides you had much that was particularly interesting to communicate. And now I propose, if not interrupted, to write you a long letter in return and how shall I begin?

Well, I'll take yours for a guide and I do indeed reciprocate your wish that the present separation may turn our hearts to the days of [??] when we spoke in most tender and loving words and how much we should cherish them! And for my own part, the life here so far from searing over the heart only causes me to recall and cling to the sweet and tender memories of the past and however poorly I

may express myself, it is nevertheless true that I feel more like myself as I was at C [Charlestown] since I came here then when I was at O [Orange]! This may sound too strange to believe and I might not seem to you so, but I feel so. There is much to call out the quiet meditative tendencies than you would think and as Sister A [probably Abbie] says "If I live to see home and peace again this experience will not be in vain" etc.

You spoke of the contrast in my pictures and of shedding tears. I do not chide you nor wonder at it. I used to feel myself that I have changed and felt it too more than I could express, however I might have seemed to belie it in my conduct but you know time makes its changes in outward appearances but if we can keep the heart young, pure and loving, all is well and since I have been deprived of the quiet home joys, they come back upon me with tenfold hallowdness and I live as it were, upon them.

I was glad to hear that they knew my book had come so that they might not be at trouble about it and that you viewed it as you did too for I have enjoyed so much already! And all such things tend to keep grosser things out of mind. Jos. H. and some friends in a neighboring tent have become much interested in Shakespeare. You would have been amused to see us reading "What you will" ("Twelfth Night") the other day. I read it mostly aloud to J.H. yesterday P.M. Some of it is very funny and some very poetical and beautiful, a great favorite of mine and we read more or less every day so you see a soldier's life is not all dire and bloody, but here in this camp I assure you I have lived some of my best moments and trust to many more if we remain.

Was on guard duty last night about half a mile from here with three men in a pine woods, somewhat trimmed out. I walked a beat of an hour at midnight, clear beautiful moonlight, the wind gently sighing thru the trees and need I tell you how my thoughts turned to all that is dearest to me? I thought of the past, how you looked and Lulu tried to hear her prattle and your voice too as of old and I asked shall I even embrace them again in this world? Oh Allie dear, this was one of my best hours and the pine wood near F g [Fredericksburg] will not soon be forgotten, although surrounded as I was by all the uncouth trumpery of forage stores (for it was the supply headquarters for the forage trains) but "I looked up" and the clear calm starlight with moon and sky was shining on you and me alike and all grosser things were for the time forgotten.

But of the ordination, it must have been exceedingly interesting and if honored names and impressive services will serve to seal and hallow a pastoral connection. I do trust that the people of B [Billerica] will fully appreciate the time and occasion and may it prove a harbinger of good works in the future and I trust the new pastor will find a home and hearty support such as one should have coming as he does enclosed by the grand pillars: Peabody, Hale, Ellis etc. How much would I liked to have been there. Surely it must have been an "occasion" in old B [Billerica] and I shall think of it and of you all with a deeper regard, if possible, than ever. It does seem as if there was material there, and to feel that you have a minister! Tell me all you can about it from time to time and above all take part and keep interested for so you will keep the darker and more anxious hours illuminated by social intercourse and nothing gives me more comfort than to know that as far as you can dutifully you are enjoying yourself socially.

And now a word for our doings here. We have been in the [??] since yesterday morn for a "Grand Inspection" or looking over by Gen. Sedgwick, our new Corps Commander and so had to keep near camp, part of the time with equipments on, ready to "fall in" not daring to set about anything in particular when away in the P.M. we were mustered to sign the payrolls which looks like being paid off till 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. 62. So the day ended and this morning "Inspection" again and that wound up by a Battalion Drill of more than an hour in a cold wind and over rough ground but we got warmed up and no pay yet.

Another item I hardly dare to mention, so you must not hope too much. The "Army of the Potomac" are being furloughed! One corporal leaves here from our Co[mpany] tomorrow if his papers get safely through. Every ten days first one goes, then two. I filed my application yesterday morn, stand somewhere about the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>. So possibly I may see home sometime in Mch. [March] or Apr. but the

following things may defeat it. A movement of the Army, drawing lots for chances as some of the Co's etc., which might put off my chances longer. There is considerable feeling in the Co. because the Capt. don't let the Co. draw lots but he told me he was acting according to instructions and I should be remembered. I am happy to state to you that I am on excellent terms with him as well as the Lieut. (J. Gird) from a consciousness of endeavoring to do right and my whole duty which I think they appreciate. And here I may add that my literary taste and the style of our visitors of late (Bros. [Brothers] F [Franklin] and J [Joseph]) have had their effect at headquarters (the Chaplain's tent I mean) and I feel that they have a respect and confidence in me which I shall endeavor to deserve and retain.

We confidently expect to be paid within a few days to Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> last. If so I shall retain enough to carry me home without delay, 10 days is the time allowed. I pay my own fare both ways but of this more in [the] future. Don't think too much of it now.

I gave Lulu's message to the Capt. and yours. He always returns the compliment to you in regards and kind wishes or the same of the boys from O [Orange]. By the way, they have had a levee at O[Orange] (North) and heard by a letter from them (J and Mary) they took [in] some over a hundred dollars for the benefit of the soldiers, quite a thing for old O [Orange]!

Had another letter from Henry Peirce this morn as I came in. I am delighted that the youngsters remember me and he is a fair little writer as you can see for I enclosed one of his [letters] in my last [letter].

Must get wood and mail this by 5 P.M., so must close. Recvd. two "Journals". Will you send me a toothbrush and a little more black linen thread. Am so glad you recvd. the paper. Hope Lulu will be choice of her little pictures and things from Papa, as one of these days she will have quite a collection, which case, for a playhouse or box. Little darling, does she know I want her to remember and love me or my memory if Heaven wills it!

Leaves etc. are much withered here but will send as I can.

Love to uncle, his folks, I mean a word to all always.

I will try and write all who write

As ever

Jerome

**Transcriber's Notes:** Note in margin at the top of Page 1 which indicates a serial number he assigned to his letters at times: No. 6<sup>th</sup>

The envelope contained two small pieces of paper with the following texts.

Piece of paper Number 1:

I tell you Allie, you can really know the good mission to me if such reading as Shakespeare, Cowpers, [???] Milton, Scott's "Lady of the Lake" and "Marmion" if I could get pocket editions. There is so much in the scenery and [???] to give a vividness and pleasure such as makes the cost mean in comparisons and all these small copies. I could manage to keep by me, for the present at least.

Tell me if you get the...

Piece of paper Number 2:

...few days [???]

Tell me if you can read this easily. My ink is poor. I have tried to write plain tho fine.

## TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

NOTE 1: The location from where the letter was written is not indicated. However, based on letters prior to and after this one and the history of the Army of the Potomac, it was written while the 36<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment was camped near Falmouth, Virginia, across the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg, Virginia, in Stafford County.

NOTE 2: The "Jos. H." that Jerome referred to in this letter was Joseph H. Peirce. He enlisted as a Private in Orange, Mass., on August 4, 1862, at age 18. Jerome also enlisted in Orange on the same date, but as a corporal. Jerome was 31 years old at the time. According to the Unit History, Joseph H. Peirce was taken Prisoner of War at Pegram Farm, Virginia, on September 30, 1864, (See Letter No. 227) and he was later exchanged. He was discharged on June 21, 1865. Joseph H. Peirce was the son of Joseph Peirce, one of Jerome's brothers, and was, therefore, his nephew.

NOTE 3: When Jerome mentions "the style of our visitors of late (Bros. [Brothers] F [Franklin] and J [Joseph]) have had their effect at headquarters" he is referring to a visit by his brothers Franklin and Joseph Peirce who visited him at his camp near Falmouth, Virginia, for about two days starting on January 4, 1863. According to his letters, they made an excellent impression on Jerome's superior officers. (See Letters No. 57 and No. 58.)

NOTE 4: William Shakespeare's only play with an alternate title is titled "Twelfth Night" or "What you Will."

NOTE 5: The "Lady of the Lake" is a narrative poem by Sir Walter Scott (1771 – 1832), first published in 1810. Set in the Trossachs region of Scotland, it is composed of six cantos, each of which concerns the action of a single day.

NOTE 6: Captain Christopher Sawyer enlisted as a Captain at age 28 from Templeton, Massachusetts, on August 22, 1862. He was discharged on account of disability on February 19, 1864.

NOTE 7: Lieut. Joseph W. Gird enlisted from Fitchburg, Massachusetts, at age 22 as a Private in Company F of the 25<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteers on October 4, 1861. On August 11, 1862, he was appointed First Lieutenant of the 36<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry Regiment but resigned on May 18, 1863. He was appointed Second Lieutenant in the 57<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteers on November 3, 1863, and was promoted in that regiment to Captain on December 31, 1863. Lieut. Gird was killed in action on May 6, 1864, at the Battle of the Wilderness, just a few days before Jerome was killed.