

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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DATE OF LETTER	Jan. 18, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Lucy [Friend] [Almost certainly Lucy M. Ellis. See Letter No. 81, also written from Walpole, Mass.]
WRITTEN TO	Jerome
WRITTEN AT	Walpole, [Mass.]
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ENVELOPE

This letter has no envelope associated with it.

LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Walpole Jan 18th/63

My dear friend,

I have been wishing to write you, but have not known how to direct a letter. Thinking Mr. Murray may know your address, I shall send it to him. I often search the paper for some account of the 36th Regiment, and within a day or two have seen it mentioned where it is located.

How do you like military life? I trust you are well and bearing patiently the trials of the camp. Your friend will often think of you doing your duty to your country. Knowing your patriotism, I was not surprised to hear of your determination to "fight for the flag", yet I knew it would cost you a pang to leave home and friends. I hope you hear often from your wife and little Lucy and that they are well.

We are going on as usual. Mother has been quite well during the winter, but is now suffering from a cold. We have had very little snow, consequently not much sleighing, of which I am very fond. You are probably enjoying mild, pleasant weather, quite in contrast with our New England winter.

I saw your wife's sister at C [Likely Charlestown] made a call, introduced myself so that I might hear from you. It was soon after your Regiment left home. I have not been at C to make a visit this winter, my domestic cares keeping me at home.

I think I wrote you that the teacher of our Private School was a member of our family. He still remains with us, and the school is in a prosperous condition. It adds to care, but it is pleasant to have him with us, for he is a good, pleasant person in a family.

We had the usual Christmas Festival in the Church. The trimming was tastefully put up, the tree lighted by Chinese Lanterns, with an abundance of useful, pretty gifts. There were quite persons enough present to make it comfortable, but I wish you could have heard the singing by the Scholars. It was the first time they have sung with the organ, and it had a fine effect.

My cousins Louisa and Sarah are well and at home. My uncle Mory is in London. He and Aunt went there in the autumn for his health but he has been very ill since. It is hardly to be expected that he will return.

Our minister at C is well, and working as usual.

I must tell you that we are soon to have a wedding in our family. Mr. Ellis' bachelor brother is to be married to a young lady at Newton, a second cousin of mine. Some people may say that we helped along the affair if we did so. I hope it will result well. Old bachelors need a little jogging to set them in the right way. They will live in the old mansion house at N. [Newton] and it will be very pleasant to go there.

I wish I could think of some great event to write you but there is no topic of public interest but the war, and you probably know more of that than I do. I thought of you on Communion Sunday, the first in the year, so far from home and knew your thoughts would be with kindred and friends.

The Company which contains the most of those who went from Walpole is Co K, 44th Regiment at Newbern. [Should probably be New Bern, North Carolina.]

Cannot you write sometime? We shall be so glad to hear from you. I can read pencil marks yet. I cannot report any great amount of books read this winter. The last was Ida Pfeiffer's (I think I have not spelled it right) Travels in Madagascar.

The days are so short that domestic duties consume most of the time. We have recently had a photograph of Father taken, and it is excellent. Did you have any before you left home? I wish I had one.

You will think there is no end to my writing, so hoping for a speedy return of peace to this distracted country and a safe return to home and friends, I must say good night.

Yours truly,
Lucy

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)

NOTE 1: The Battle of New Berne was fought on March 14, 1862, near the city of New Bern, North Carolina, as part of the Burnside Expedition. The US Army's Coast Division, led by Brigadier General Ambrose Burnside and accompanied by armed vessels from the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, were opposed by an undermanned and badly trained Confederate force of North Carolina soldiers and militia led by Brigadier General Lawrence O'B. Branch. Although the defenders fought behind breastworks that had been set up before the battle, their line had a weak spot in its center that was exploited by the attacking Federal soldiers. When the center of the line was penetrated, many of the militia broke, forcing a general retreat of the entire Confederate force. General Branch was unable to regain control of his troops until they had retreated to Kinston, more than 30 miles away. New Bern came under Federal control, and remained so for the rest of the war.

NOTE 2: Ida Laura Pfeiffer (1797 – 1858) was an Austrian traveler and travel book author. She was one of the first female explorers, whose popular books were translated into seven languages. In May 1857 she set out to explore Madagascar, where at first she was cordially received by the queen Ranavalona I. She unwittingly allowed herself to be involved in a plot to overthrow the government together with a few other Europeans in apparent collaboration with crown prince Rakoto (the future king Radama II). Upon learning of the attempted coup, the queen executed the Malagasy involved but spared the Europeans, whom she expelled from the country in July 1857. On the way back, Pfeiffer contracted a disease (likely malaria) and never fully recovered. She died in Vienna a year later in 1858, likely from malaria complications. A travelogue describing her final voyage, *Reise nach Madagaskar* ("Trip to Madagascar"), was published in Vienna in 1861 in two volumes and included a biography written by her son Oskar Pfeiffer.