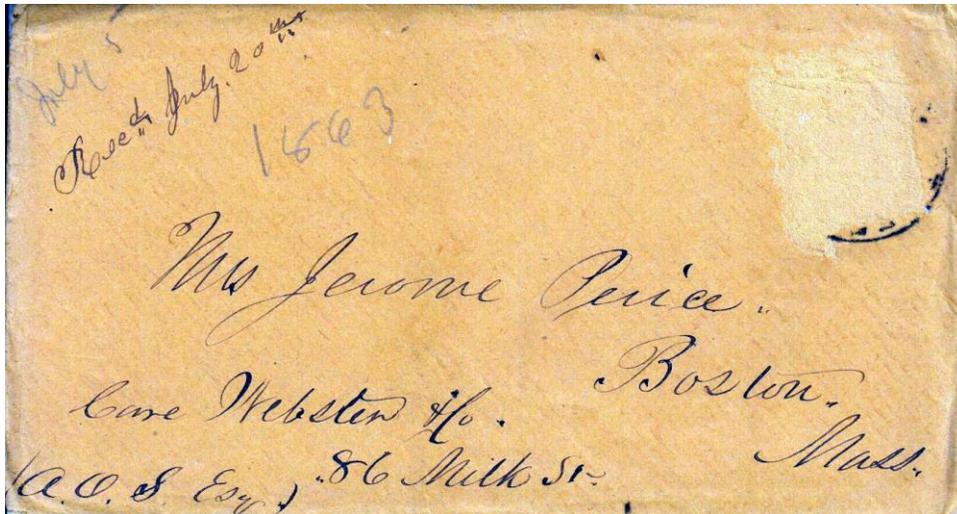


## THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

LETTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	137
DATE OF LETTER	July 5, 1863
WRITTEN BY	Jerome
WRITTEN TO	Allie
WRITTEN AT	Rear of Vicksburg
NUMBER OF PAGES	6
TRANSCRIBER	Ben Raterman
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### ENVELOPE



### LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Rear of Vicksburg, 5<sup>th</sup> July 1863

Dearest Allie mine,

The heat, dust and numberless trials of "active movements" under a scorching sky will prevent me from sending such a missive as you merit and is my duty to send but I will commence something.

But yesterday will forever be a day in our country's calendar. The ever remembered Fourth: Vicksburg is fallen! and I have imagined with what tremblings of hope and caution our friends [in] the North will receive the tidings. But such is the fact, and some twenty thousand traitors marched out and stacked arms and I have talked with those who witnessed the scene. What a thrill of gratitude should fill every heart! I assure you campaigning out in the 'So. West' is not in Virginia! and our troops are now acting their part in a movement to destroy Johnston and his army.

We moved yesterday from our camp "near Milldale" and we are now some twelve miles on the Jackson road and in a dense forest. Two divisions are here and it seems quite like old times in Va. last year. We seem to be placed to head off Johnston if he attempts to escape this way. A portion of Grant's army made for him yesterday as soon as V. [Vicksburg] fell and as usual we are full of stories of camp.

We expect to go back to Ky. [Kentucky] soon as the western troops are quite able to fix them here, [if] only we could perhaps "give them a lift."

Another mail, our long expected one, came yesterday and such a time! I rec'd eleven letters and papers, three of yours: 30<sup>th</sup> May, June 6<sup>th</sup>, (I believe) and one the 21<sup>st</sup> with Ellen's of the same date. Also from Abbie, Frank, Jamestown, N.Y., Nelson Moore of Orange and Mary (sister M of O [Orange]). Alonzo had a large mail.

The mail was distributed at night while in camp and candles were burning till towards morning reading them for we were so tired and dirty that we couldn't sleep till we had some waking rest. I cannot say all I would like to in reply to yours but I am so glad you are well and cheerful and so pleasant prospect ahead for the summer. I can still go on [to] endure and suffer if need be a great deal for the sky is brightening indeed!

We have "news" from the North whispering about camp today. A great victory in Penn[sylvania] and hosts of prisoners taken etc. etc. But we receive [news] with caution. May it all be true. Perhaps this vile wickedness is to end as soon or suddenly as it commenced.

Let me say that you or "other friends" must be patient in regard to my writing for you have no idea of the wearing life we have now. 'Tis terribly hot, so much so that today as I let my gun rest in the sand while halting, the brass on the butt was uncomfortably hot to my hand! We move slow and so manage to keep along but 'tis a "tough one" for northern troops but they all bear it like heroes. Oh, I wish our friends could see "face to face" our brave boys as they struggle on. And then we suffer from little things, flies, and then we have to go from half mile to [a] mile and a half for water. This is universal as the season is dry and water can be got only in the deep ravines and wells on the plantations. And then the dust. Ankle deep and like flour, fine and choking and frequently so thick you cannot see ten feet ahead and then we sweat, our clothes woolen and all wringing wet, and you have an idea of what this campaigning is and then (once more) the water and heat causes a breaking out which itches fearfully, keeping us worried more or less. Now, I tell this not to tell tales but that you may know what we have to contend with, for we can live thru everything now for we see "the beginning of the end".

I am quite well, only some foot sore[s] as I am if I rest in camp long.

Had a dear letter from mother, Mary, Hattie (a few words) and little Lulu darling! Hope you will receive mine enclosed to her from Memphis. How happy I feel that the child remembers me and sings "Marching Along". She must be a true soldier's daughter. How much I desire to see you all!

Have seen little of the boys today. Have to "rest" all I can. Alonzo is well and happy with his letters. Ellen is a dear, good, brave-hearted girl and God grant we may all meet to live in another way, all this over again when peace once more smiles on our glorious country made doubly dear by these present afflictions. Express my regard to all the friends for their kind regard and care of your dear self. I should be a poor soldier indeed did I not try to "bear right onward" to defend such friends and I trust to endure to the end.

I don't think we shall meet the foe. It's barely possible, but more likely we shall soon be on our way to "Kentuck" soon.

'Tis almost dark and much I must leave for another time. I forgot to say I had letters from Eddie Haynes and his mother with the rest.

Once more I must say adieu but with the entire love of your own

Jerome

Please mention the letters you receive from me.

It has been a strange Sabbath!

Mond[ay] morning.

Dear Allie. Had a good rest last night. No alarm. I am sitting here under the canopy of trees on my blankets, quite early and the numerous bugles and drums are sounding the morning calls. Am looking over my mail etc. Recd the "Ploughman" from B. with the lozenges. Also, I had needles and thread and stamps. I cannot think of all these items always but I think I got everything. The Adj. [Adjutant] has just been waking us up. No reveille. So we may move early. Also rec'd some Gazettes (S. [Sabbath] School) from C with Mr. Gerry's poetry and shall think a great deal of reading them.

Must pack up, so adieu.

Jos. H. called last eve. Well but tired.

Jerome

### **TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES (Josef Rokus)**

NOTE 1: The Siege of Vicksburg (May 18 – July 4, 1863) was the final major military action in the Vicksburg Campaign of the Civil War. In a series of maneuvers, Union Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and his Army of the Tennessee crossed the Mississippi River and drove the Confederate Army of Mississippi, led by Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton, into the defensive lines surrounding the fortress city of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Vicksburg was the last major Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River; therefore, capturing it completed the second part of the Northern strategy, the Anaconda Plan. When two major assaults (May 19 and 22, 1863) against the Confederate fortifications were repulsed with heavy casualties, Grant decided to besiege the city beginning on May 25. After holding out for more than forty days, with their reinforcement and supplies nearly gone, the garrison finally surrendered on July 4.

NOTE 2: Abbie (Abigail) Jaquith was Allie's younger sister. Abbie was born in 1836, and she died in 1915. Allie (Albinia) was born in 1834, and she died in 1920.

NOTE 3: Hattie was Allie's younger sister. Her complete name was Harriet Walker Jaquith, and she was born in 1845. The information about her on ancestry.com indicates that she probably died in 1930.

NOTE 4: Frank (Franklin) was one of Abbie's brothers. He was born in 1839 and died in 1922. Franklin Jaquith also served in the Union Army.

NOTE 5: 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 6: 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, Jerome's nephew.

NOTE 7: The "Massachusetts Ploughman" was a newspaper that he received fairly regularly in his mail according to his letters. It was published weekly from 1841 until 1866 by the New England Agricultural Society.

NOTE 8: In mentioning the "great victory in Pennsylvania," he was undoubtedly referring to Lee's defeat at Gettysburg.