

THE SGT. JEROME PEIRCE STORY

**“ONCE LOST, NOW FOUND,
NEVER FORGOTTEN”**

**Josef W. Rokus
[Date to be added]**

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DEDICATION

This “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story” is dedicated to one-time Fredericksburg National Cemetery Superintendent Andrew J. Birdsall and to the several generations of his descendants who have faithfully carried on the tradition started by him in the early 1880s of decorating Sgt. Jerome Peirce’s grave in the National Cemetery each Memorial Day. They have, thereby, honored Sgt. Peirce for the ultimate sacrifice he made on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield on May 12, 1864, for the cause he strongly believed in, namely the preservation of the Union.

and to

Michael Stevens, who has been the volunteer “interpreter” at Sgt. Peirce’s grave at the Luminaria organized in recent years by the U.S. National Park Service at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery each Memorial Day. He has not only retold the role this Union soldier played in the Civil War and how he is still being remembered today but has also reminded the visitors about the meaning and importance of Memorial Day. He has been the driving force behind this “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story.”

CONTENTS

[Page numbers to be added]

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Chapter 1

The Peirce and Jaquith Families Prior to Jerome Peirce's Death in 1864

Chapter 2

Sgt. Jerome Peirce with the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment
(August 4, 1862 – May 11, 1864)

Chapter 3

The 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment at Spotsylvania Court House
on May 12, 1864, the Day Sgt. Peirce was Killed

Chapter 4

The 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment after the Battle
of Spotsylvania Court House (May 1864 – June 1865)

Chapter 5

Conditions on the Local Battlefields after the War and
Sgt. Peirce's Re-interment

Chapter 6

The Peirce Family after Jerome Peirce's Death on May 12, 1864

Chapter 7

"Once Lost, Now Found, Never Forgotten"
Remembering Sgt. Jerome Peirce

Chapter 8

Summary of the May 1994 *Reader's Digest* Article "Home of the Brave"

Chapter 9

Transcriptions of some of the Letters Written by Jerome Peirce and Others

Chapter 10

The Final Resting Place of Sgt. Jerome Peirce: The Fredericksburg National Cemetery

Chapter 11

The Effort to Erect a Second Gravestone at Sgt. Jerome Peirce's Grave

Conclusion

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Corporal vs. Sergeant and “Peirce” vs. “Pierce”

Appendix B

Sgt. Jerome Peirce’s Service File

Appendix C

Sgt. Jerome Peirce’s Pension file

Appendix D

“History of the Thirty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. 1862 – 1865”

Appendix E

Men of the Thirty-sixth Massachusetts Regiment who were Killed or Died of Wounds at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House

Appendix F

Excerpts from the Sermon Given at the Funeral Service for Sgt. Jerome Peirce by Rev. Levi Ballou on June 19, 1864, at the First Congregational Parish and Society Church in Orange, Massachusetts

Appendix G

Additional Information about the Letters Written by Jerome Peirce and Others

NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It started with a seemingly simply request from Mike Stevens to “find out everything you can about Sgt. Jerome Peirce and the decoration of his grave each Memorial Day.” It ended up as biographical sketches of not only Jerome but also of his wife, and later, widow, Albinia and their daughter Lucy, a history of the Massachusetts infantry regiment Jerome served with, the probable sequence of events that followed his untimely death in May of 1864 that resulted in him finally being laid to rest in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, and, of course, the chronology of the annual decoration of his grave in the Cemetery over the last 130 or so years. In the process, a number of unexpected discoveries were made that have provided important details to the “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story.”

These “pleasant surprises” included the discovery of many letters that Jerome had written while serving with the Union army, finding pictures of Jerome, Albinia and Lucy, locating the author of the May 1994 *Reader's Digest* article that brought this unique story to national attention, determining with a high degree of certainty where exactly Sgt. Peirce was killed on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield, finding the obituaries for Jerome, Albinia and Lucy, locating the text of the Commemorative Funeral Service given by the minister of the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome had been the Sunday School Superintendent before he enlisted, finding the Civil War monument in Orange where his name is inscribed, locating the Peirce family gravestone in Billerica, Massachusetts, and finding and contacting two distant relatives of Albinia Peirce.

Many of these “discoveries” along with many of the more mundane facts in this “story” can be credited to the many individuals who became as fascinated by (maybe “addicted” to) the uniqueness of this story as the author was and, therefore, went out of their way to find obscure information, often in archives that have probably never been accessed, that thereby helped to add invaluable details. The following is the list of those extremely helpful individuals to whom the author is deeply indebted.

As always, the historians and staff of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, which administers the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, were most helpful. They included John Hennessy, the Chief Historian/Chief of Interpretation of the Park, historians Eric Mink, Peter Maugle, and Greg Mertz, and the Park's Museum Curator, Luisa Dispenzirie, who found positive proof that one-time Fredericksburg National Cemetery Superintendent Andrew J. Birdsall decorated Peirce's grave on Memorial Days in one of Birdsall's diaries. Donald Pfanz, who recently retired from the position of staff historian at the Park, deserves special mention. He is, without a doubt, the most knowledgeable person about the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, having written a book about the Cemetery that will soon be published. He graciously shared details about the National Cemetery that will appear in his book, based on his extensive research and intimate knowledge of the Civil War battles in the Fredericksburg area. In addition, he provided many very helpful suggestions for improvements and corrections resulting from his review of many sections of the draft manuscript.

Several librarians at the indicated institutions went beyond the call of duty to fill in many details of the story. Four of them deserve special recognition. First, Nancy Moore, in the Virginiana Room of the Central Rappahannock Regional Library in Fredericksburg, Virginia, diligently searched back issues of the Fredericksburg newspapers going back into the 1800s for articles pertaining to all aspects of the Jerome Pierce story, including information about Superintendent Andrew J. Birdsall and his descendants, the “re-discovery” of the grave decoration tradition in the early 1990s, etc. Her help was invaluable. Second, Kathy Meagher, at the Billerica, Massachusetts, Public Library became intimately involved in this project by spending many hours looking for (and finding!) details pertaining to the Peirce and Jaquith families during the many years that members of both families resided in Billerica. She also furnished the

excellent photograph of the Peirce family gravestone included herein. Third, Charlene Deam at the Orange, Massachusetts, Public Library supplied invaluable information about the church in North Orange that the Peirce family attended prior to Jerome's enlistment, and she also supplied the pictures of the Civil War monument in Orange on which Jerome Peirce's name is inscribed. Fourth, Ellen M. Shea at the Schlesinger Library of the Radcliffe Institute for Advance Study at Harvard University went out of her way to find and send copies of valuable records pertaining to Lucy Peirce when Lucy was associated with what at that time was Radcliffe College.

Other librarians and members of historical societies who made valuable contributions, such as finding obituaries and particularly details about Lucy Peirce's education and career, included the following: Henry Scanell at the Boston Public Library, Susan Edwards at the Salem State University Library in Salem, Massachusetts, George Rugg and James Cachey at the Rare Books and Special Collections Library at the University of Notre Dame, David Miller, Head of Technical Services at the Levin Library of Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts, Linda Temple, historian with the Orange, Massachusetts Historical Society, and Maria Seminatore, President of the Billerica, Massachusetts, Historical Society.

Early in this study, the author became aware of the fact that the Sgt. Jerome Peirce story had received national attention in a feature article in the May 1994 issue of *Reader's Digest*, written by Henry Hurt, editor-at-large of the magazine. After locating a copy of this article, it became apparent that Hurt would probably have unique detailed information about several aspects of this story, particularly since he had discovered many letters that Jerome Peirce had written home during his time of service with the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment and had been in touch with Patricia Mason, who had (and still has) the letters. Fortunately, after some effort, Hurt was located, and he turned out to be an indispensable resource. In addition to notes he had compiled when he authored the article, he still had copies of some of the letters that Jerome had written to Albinia, which he graciously shared with the author and which were transcribed and reproduced herein.

Hurt also put the author in contact with David Allen Lambert, Chief Genealogist for the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston, Massachusetts, who had assisted him in compiling genealogical information about the Peirce and Jaquith families. In turn, Lambert was located, and he supplied an article he had written about his research, along with pictures of Jerome, Albinia, and Lucy. Finding pictures of the three key individuals in this story was certainly way beyond the author's expectations.

Again, with some effort since it had been over twenty years since anybody had been in touch with Patricia Mason, she was located. She, along with her daughter, Lynn Mason Menke, were also most helpful in adding details about the letters and old family pictures that had been passed down to the Mason family through several generations. Although the transcription of all of the letters is a future project, the contents of just a few of them provide unique information about Jerome Peirce while he was fighting for the Union. In addition to Ms. Mason, who is the great-grandniece of Albinia Jaquith Peirce, another distant relative of Albinia, Peter Jaquith Casey, was located. He can take credit for finding the Peirce family gravestone in a Billerica cemetery, with the guidance of Henry Hurt. Unfortunately, efforts by the Town of Billerica Cemeteries Department to find more information about that gravestone, such as when it was installed and by whom, were unsuccessful.

As alluded to above, finding the text of the sermon given by Rev. Levi Ballou at his church in Orange, Massachusetts, at a Commemorative Funeral Service a few weeks after Jerome Peirce was killed was totally unexpected. The key person in that effort was Rev. Don Erickson, the current minister at what is now The Community Church of North Orange and Tully. Rev. Erickson not only supplied information

about Rev. Ballou, but, even, more importantly, he also directed the author to the location of the text of that sermon in the Rare Books and Special Collections Library at the University of Notre Dame.

The history of decorating Sgt. Peirce's grave each Memorial Day was compiled largely based on a number of articles in the Fredericksburg *Free-Lance Star*, which were located either in the Central Rappahannock Regional Library or in the newspaper's archives by Nancy Moore, as already indicated above. The paper needs to be commended for its efforts to track down and follow this story repeatedly over several years – usually around each Memorial Day. More recently, the Ingalls family of Fredericksburg, specifically, J. Gary Ingalls and his son, Kent Ingalls, has been faithfully carrying on the grave decorating tradition for the last few years. Gary's inputs about his family's involvement were invaluable in bringing the history of the grave decorating tradition down to the present day. Their inputs were augmented by Mike Stevens and information from the U.S. National Park Service about the annual Luminaria referred to above.

To document Jerome's Peirce's service with the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment until he was killed, the Unit History written by a group of veterans of that regiment in 1884 and edited by Henry S. Burrage titled "History of the Thirty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. 1862 – 1865" was invaluable. That group and Google Books for making the entire book available on-line deserve special notes of thanks. Along the same line, the U.S. National Archives deserve special credit for the outstanding job of preserving Civil War-related records. Specifically for this study, Peirce's detailed Service File and his Pension File located in the National Archives were extremely important in documenting his military service and Albinia Peirce's pension that she received until her death.

Other contributors to this project who made valuable contributions included John Cummings, Chairman of the Friends of the Fredericksburg Area Battlefields, who supplied information about a sign with a stanza of the poem "Bivouac of the Dead" originally installed at the site of Peirce's first burial on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield. Finally, several contributors of Public Family Trees on ancestry.com were helpful in filling in details of the Jaquith, Peirce and Birdsall family trees.

Again, without the significant contributions from the above individuals this "Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story" would not be as complete as it hopefully is.

INTRODUCTION

The Fredericksburg National Cemetery in Fredericksburg, Virginia, one of the largest Civil War-era national cemeteries in the country, is the final resting place for over 15,300 men who were killed or who died from diseases in and around Fredericksburg during the Civil War. The cemetery also includes the graves of a few soldiers who fought in the Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II, along with the graves of a handful of spouses. It is a quiet, somber place with row upon row of gravestones of different types. Small stones mark the graves of the approximately 12,770 men who are listed as unknown, while larger stones designate the plots of those 2,600 soldiers whose names were known when their remains were interred. Lastly, different stones yet can be seen for the burials that took place after the Civil War.

For most of the “known” soldiers, little information has been recorded in the files of the National Cemetery. Usually the inscription on such a stone consists only of a first and last name and possibly the soldier’s home state. The rank was added if he was a non-commissioned or a commissioned officer. These stones replaced the wooden markers that had been used initially after the remains were collected from the area battlefields and sites of field hospitals starting in 1866. The following depicts one of the “known” gravestones.



Josef W. Rokus

**THE GRAVESTONE OF SGT. JEROME PEIRCE,
AN EXAMPLE OF A “KNOWN” GRAVESTONE
(His rank should be “Sgt.” and his surname should be “Peirce.”)**

This stone is similar to the other “known” headstones in that wide expanse of grass, trees and headstones on Marye’s Heights, which was the scene of bitter fighting during the Battle of Fredericksburg in December of 1862. This particular stone marks the grave of a soldier who enlisted in the 36th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers on August 4, 1862, and who was killed at the Bloody Angle at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House on May 12, 1864. He is the subject of this study.

Who was Sgt. Jerome Peirce and why is there an interest in “reconstructing” his life and the lives of his widow and daughter? After all,

- he was not a high-ranking officer whose name has been recorded in the Civil War history books,
- he did not lead any troops, waving his sword over his head, during a critical moment in a key battle,

- he did not distinguish himself on the battlefields by, for example, capturing an enemy flag or saving his regiment's flag from being captured,
- he was not awarded the Medal of Honor, and
- his name is not recorded in *The Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, the 70-volume documentation of the Civil War published between 1881 and 1901.

However, as shown below, his name is inscribed on a monument in the small town of Orange, Massachusetts, where he was a chair maker when he volunteered, as having served in the Civil War. In addition, his name is listed in the Unit History of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment as having been killed at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House.



CIVIL WAR MONUMENT IN ORANGE, MASSACHUSETTS
(Courtesy of Charlene Deam, Orange, Massachusetts, Public Library)

His grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery had hardly been noticed by anybody until 1993, when it became known that fresh-cut flowers mysteriously appeared on his grave on Memorial Day. The questions were, “Who had decorated the grave that year, as well as on previous Memorial Days?” and “Why?” It was shortly thereafter that the mystery was not only solved but that Sgt. Peirce and his grave received national attention when an article in the May 1994 issue of *Reader's Digest* revealed parts of the “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story.” Now, his grave receives special attention each year on the weekend of Memorial Day, when, decorated with flowers, it is featured on the tour of the cemetery as part of the U.S. National Park Service's Luminaria commemoration of those who are buried in the cemetery.

The purpose of this study has been to fill in the missing details of the following aspects of the Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story:

- The families of Jerome Peirce and Albinia Jaquith Peirce prior to Jerome's enlistment.
- The history of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment and Jerome Peirce's service with the regiment.
- The Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield on May 12, 1864, the day that Sgt. Peirce was killed.
- The initial burial and subsequent re-interment of Jerome Peirce's body.
- The lives of Albinia, his widow, and Lucy, his daughter, after Jerome Peirce was killed.
- The tradition of decorating Jerome Peirce's grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery.
- The *Reader's Digest* article that brought the grave-decorating tradition to national attention.
- The letters Jerome Peirce sent to his family and other letters that his family preserved.

It is the story of an “ordinary” Northerner who felt committed enough to preserve the Union to enlist in a Massachusetts infantry regiment after President Lincoln’s call for volunteers, despite the fact that he had a young wife and a two-year-old daughter at home, and who gave his life for that commitment in one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. Equally important, it is also the unique story of why and how members of a family of Southerners from Fredericksburg, Virginia, have faithfully decorated the grave of a Yankee soldier from Massachusetts every Memorial Day for several generations.

CHAPTER 1

THE PEIRCE AND JAQUITH FAMILIES PRIOR TO JEROME'S DEATH IN 1864

THE PEIRCE FAMILY

As background for this biographical sketch, the following is a summary of Jerome Peirce's and Albinia Jaquith's families. This information is based on several public family trees posted on ancestry.com and on primary sources including U.S. and State of Massachusetts censuses, the database titled "Massachusetts Town and Vital Records 1620 – 1988" which is also found on ancestry.com, and other sources, as indicated. In many of these records, the surname is spelled "Peirce" but sometimes also "Pierce" and occasionally "Pearce." It should be noted that the ancestry.com family trees are not guaranteed to be accurate, of course, but, based on experience, they tend to be relatively reliable. As indicated in the "Sources" sections of these trees, they rely heavily on publicly available sources, such as those found on ancestry.com, but also on private family records.

To identify Jerome Peirce's ancestors, a detailed, well documented 283-page history of the family written and published in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1880 by Frederick Clifton Peirce was used. It is titled *Peirce Genealogy, Being the Record of the Posterity of John Pers, an Early Inhabitant of Watertown, in New England*, which is now available on Google Books. It traces the Peirce family history back to John Pers in England, who was born in about 1588 and died in 1661.

This family history indicates that Jerome Peirce's father was Joseph Peirce, born on August 23, 1782, and that he married Martha "Patty" Sherwin on March 18, 1801. She was born on May 9, 1783, and she died on June 27, 1847. According to the *Peirce Genealogy*, Joseph Peirce died at the age of about 36 in 1808. However, his year of death must be incorrect based on the number of children the couple had and when the children were born. The following is a summary of Joseph's and Martha's children. It should be noted that many of the dates of death below are missing because some of the children were probably still living when this family history was published in 1880.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Louisa | Born Aug. 25, 1802 | | |
| 2. Hannah | Born Apr. 10, 1804 | | |
| 3. Silas | Born May 16, 1806 | Died Dec. 15, 1809 | |
| 4. Gad | Born Apr. 24, 1808 | | |
| 5. Sarah | Born June 1, 1810 | | |
| 6. Foster | Born July 29, 1812 | Married Catherine Beaman (See below) | |
| 7. Martha | Born Nov. 3, 1814 | | |
| 8. Lucy | Born Aug. 31, 1817 | | |
| 9. Joseph | Born Feb. 1820 | | |
| 10. Ebenezer | Born Oct. 16, 1822 | | |
| 11. William | Born June 27, 1826 | Died January 15, 1827 | |
| 12. Jerome | Born Nov. 11, 1831 | Married Albinia Jaquith Sep. 10, 1857 | Died May 12, 1864 |

Jerome's brother, Foster, is of special interest because in the 1850 U.S. census for Charlestown, Massachusetts, Jerome is living in the Foster and Catherine Peirce household as shown below.

Foster Peirce	Age: 38	Born: About 1812	Occupation: Furniture
Catherine Peirce	Age: 35	Born: About 1815	
Kate B. Peirce	Age: 9	Born: About 1841	
Ellen B. Peirce	Age: 8	Born: About 1842	
Edward F. Peirce	Age: 5	Born: About 1845	
Henry S. Peirce	Age: 1	Born: About 1849	
Mary Scamlin	Age: 22	Born: About 1828	[Likely a domestic servant]
Jerome Peirce	Age: 19	Born: About 1831	Occupation: Gilder

Regarding the occupation of "gilder," the term usually refers to someone who "covers something with a thin layer of gold." However, a broader definition is "someone who adorns something (unnecessarily) that is already beautiful." Therefore, his occupation could be interpreted as someone who decorates furniture. Furthermore, in the *Peirce Genealogy* referenced above, Foster Peirce is described as follows: "Foster Peirce was born on July 29, 1812, and he married Catherine A. Beaman on April 27, 1837. She was born on October 22, 1816. They had seven children, born between 1839 and 1858. At an early age, he engaged in the chair manufacturing business in Orange, Massachusetts. Here he remained but a short time and moved to Boston/Charlestown in 1838, and he continued in active business until 1878, when he retired."

THE JAQUITH FAMILY

The family of Jerome's wife, and later widow, Albinia Jaquith, has been traced back to 1535 according to several family trees posted on ancestry.com. The following is a summary of the generation prior to hers.

Albinia's father was Franklin Jaquith, who was born on January 20, 1800, and he died on December 1, 1876, both in Billerica, Massachusetts. On June 26, 1831, he married Albinia's mother, Lucy Walker. Lucy was born on April 21, 1807, in Billerica, Massachusetts, and she died on March 12, 1897, also in Billerica. Franklin Jaquith is listed in various U.S. and State of Massachusetts censuses as being a farmer in Billerica. Jerome and Albinia's daughter was apparently named after Lucy Walker Jaquith.

The family trees posted on ancestry.com show that Franklin and Lucy Jaquith had the following children:

- Ellen Jaquith (1832-)
- **Albinia Jaquith (1834-1920)**
- Abigail Jaquith (1836-1915)
- Lucy Walker Jaquith (1838-1841)
- Franklin Jaquith, Jr. (1839-1922)
- Mary Frances Jaquith (1841-)
- Joseph Jaquith (1842-)
- Harriet Walker Jaquith (1845-1930?)

THE JEROME AND ALBINIA PEIRCE FAMILY

All of the records that were found agree that Jerome Peirce (or Pierce) was born on November 11, 1830. However, they do not totally agree on where he was born. The 1850 U.S. census indicates that he was born in Massachusetts, while the 1860 U.S. census shows New York State as his place of birth. The census records contain many errors, particularly when it comes to details as to where the children of a household were born when the parents were not born in the state where the census was being taken. In addition, the 1900 U.S. census provides more evidence that Jerome was born in New York State instead of in Massachusetts. That particular census recorded, among many other details, the birthplaces of the parents of the person being counted. In 1900, Lucy Peirce, who was 40 years old then and still single was living with her mother, then 66, in Billerica, Massachusetts. The census indicates that Lucy and her mother were both born in Massachusetts but that her father was born in New York State.

A presumably reliable document related to Jerome's place of birth is the Certification of his death on May 12, 1864, by his company commander in the 35th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, Lt. P. G. Woodward, dated July 18, 1864. That document, which is included in his Service File, states that he was born in Niagara, New York.

Therefore, the probability is extremely high that Jerome was born in Niagara, New York. (Niagara, New York, is a small town independent from its better-known neighboring city of Niagara Falls, New York, although the residents of Niagara use the Niagara Falls, New York, as their mailing address. The population of the town as of the 2010 U.S. census was 8,378.) It is highly likely that the Peirce family moved from western New York State to Massachusetts sometime after Jerome's birth. However, no concrete evidence of this move could readily be found. As further evidence that the Peirce family lived in Niagara, New York, before relocating to Massachusetts, the 1830 U.S. census shows that Gad Peirce, Jerome's grandfather, and his family were living in Niagara (not Niagara Falls), New York.

Albinia Jaquith was born on June 4, 1834, in Billerica, Massachusetts. The 1850 U.S. census is an important one to get a snapshot of the Franklin Jaquith family because the previous censuses only required the tabulation of family members by age, without indicating their names, while by the following census in 1860, Albinia was no longer living at home but was married to Jerome. Franklin Jaquith is listed in the 1850 census for Billerica, Massachusetts, as 50 years old, and as a farmer. The value of the real estate he owned was given as \$2,000. His wife, Lucy, is shown as being 53 years old then.

It looks like the 1850 census enumerator, whose attention to detail and penmanship were not the greatest, entered Albinia's name as "Albenia" on the census form. Then, to make it virtually impossible to find her directly in the census, the ancestry.com indexer decided that her name was "Alberia," which is as good a guess as any. (Albinia was found by searching for her father's name in this census.) In any case, she is listed (correctly) as being 16 years old. The other children are shown as follows: Ellen, 18; Abigail, 14; Franklin, 10; Joseph, 8; Mary F., 7; and Harriett W., 5.

In order to qualify for her \$8.00 per month widow's pension, Albinia had to prove three basic facts to the U.S. Pension Bureau: 1) That her husband had died in the line of duty, 2) That she was his widow, and 3) That (if applicable) she had children aged 16 and under – the latter to be able to collect the additional \$2.00 per month pension for such children as allowed under the pension law at the time. The first requirement was satisfied by the Certification by Jerome's commanding officer that he was killed at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House on May 12, 1864, already referenced above. See the Service File summary in Appendix B for details of that document.

The second requirement, proof of her marriage to Jerome, was met by a document in the Pension File, namely a Certification from the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which is dated

February 17, 1865. It states, “The marriage of Jerome Peirce of Charlestown, aged 26 years, and Albinia Jaquith of Billerica, aged 28, was solemnized at Billerica on September 10, 1857, by Rev. J. G. D. Stearnes.” It provides highly reliable proof about their marriage, as well as additional interesting information. Specifically, based on *History of Billerica, Massachusetts, with Genealogical Register* by the Rev. Henry A. Hazen, published in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1883, (available on Google Books), the Rev. Jesse G. D. Stearns was the minister at the Congregational Church on Andover Street in Billerica, Massachusetts, from 1843 until 1867. Although the spelling of the minister’s name (Stearns) in this source differs slightly from the spelling of the name (Stearnes) in the Pension File, it is extremely likely that the marriage took place in the Congregational Church in Billerica since the initials of the minister agree in both sources, the minister served at the Congregational Church in 1857, and no other minister by the name of Stearnes or Stearns was found in this source. Consequently, it is very likely that either Albinia or Jerome, or probably both, were members of the Billerica Congregational Church when they were married in 1857.

Another document, namely “Records of Admissions to the Harvard Church, Charlestown, 1840 - 1889,” indicates that Jerome Peirce was admitted to that church on June 1, 1856. That is interesting because he and Albinia were probably married in the Congregational Church in Billerica in 1857. (It is possible that the name of the church changed.) That source is included in the “Massachusetts Town and Vital Records, 1620 – 1988” on ancestry.com. The family may have been still members of that church when Jerome was killed in May of 1864 because there is a notation under the heading “Time of Decease” that indicates that “He served with the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, killed at age 33 years, 6 months, 1 day at the Battle of the Wilderness at Spotsylvania, Virginia.” Apparently, at the time, there was, understandably, no fine line drawn between the Battle of the Wilderness and the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, as there is now.

The records of the Harvard Church also include the following entry for Mrs. Albinia J. Peirce: That she was admitted to that church on December 6, 1857, (approximately six months after Jerome was admitted), that she was the widow of Jerome Peirce, that she transferred from the First Church in Billerica, that she was the daughter of Franklin and Lucy (Walker) Jaquith, and that she was born on June 4, 1834.

As discussed in a subsequent section, a commemorative service for Jerome was held in a church in Orange, Massachusetts, on June 19, 1864. Almost certainly, Albinia had moved to Billerica, Massachusetts, by then, but presumably she attended that service.

In order to collect a pension on behalf of her daughter, Lucy, Albinia obtained another certification, summarized in Appendix C, from the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which proves her date of birth. This document was dated February 20, 1867, and it states, “Lucy S. Peirce, daughter of Jerome and Albinia, was born at Charlestown (Mass.) on December 26, 1859.”

Jerome and Albinia had one other child, a son, as shown on the Peirce family gravestone in the South Cemetery in Billerica, Massachusetts. (A picture of the gravestone is included in a later chapter.) He was named Charles Jerome Peirce, and he was born on July 10, 1858. Sadly, he died on July 10, 1858, the same day he was born.

We get a good glimpse of the Peirce family in the 1860 U.S. census, which was the last one in which Jerome was counted. The enumerator for that census, taken as of June 1, 1860, visited the Peirce household on June 19, 1860. Fortunately, his penmanship was relatively good, so that it is readily apparent that he (incorrectly) spelled the surname as “Pierce.” The following is the information he recorded.

Jerome Pierce, Age: 29, Occupation: Engineer, Value of real estate: (left blank. i.e., \$0), Value of personal estate: \$75, Born in: New York State
Albinia Pierce, Age 25, Born in: Massachusetts
Lucy S. Pierce, Age 6/12, Born in: Massachusetts

It should be noted that the occupations of “Mechanic” and “Gilder” also appear in various records including the description of him and his grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery files and in the “Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors and Marines in the Civil War” database on ancestry.com, which was originally published by the Massachusetts Adjutant General in 1931 – 1935. Furthermore, in *The Legacy of Jerome Peirce* by David Allen Lambert (New England Historical and Genealogical Society’s *Nexus* Vol. XI, Nos. 3 & 4, June – Sept. 1994), Jerome is described as having been born in Niagara Falls, New York, and as being a “chair painter” and “gilder” based on the birth records of his children.

When Jerome left their home in Orange in August 1862 to go to the “Front” to fight the Rebels for three years or the duration of the war, whichever would come first, he and Albinia, of course, did not know when, or even if, he would return. Based on information in his Service File, however, it is possible that they were reunited, maybe briefly, in the fall of 1863 because the Company Muster Roll for Company H of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment for September and October 1863 lists him as “Absent. Sent to Massachusetts for conscription Sept. 15, 1863.”

As the ranks of the Union army were getting depleted by casualties on the battlefields, and even more so by diseases, the regiments often sent commissioned and non-commissioned officers back to their home states to encourage young men to enlist in order to fill the vacancies. The shortage of men that the 36th Massachusetts Regiment experienced in the fall of 1863, largely due to diseases when it was deployed in Tennessee and Kentucky, is highlighted in the Unit History. Recruiting leaves were probably also intended as a way for deserving men to get some home leave, although they were still officially on duty. They would invariably go back to their hometown or area where they were from because of the personal rapport they could develop with potential enlistees there. The military records do not indicate where exactly in Massachusetts Jerome performed his recruiting duties or how long he was away from the regiment. However, the next Company Muster Roll, the one for November and December 1863, shows that he was “Present” again with the 36th Massachusetts by then.

The below letter from Jerome to Albinia tells her the exciting news that he would be coming to Massachusetts on recruiting duty. See Appendix G for more information about this and other letters.

Nicholasville, Kentucky Monday, Aug. 24, 1863

My dear Allie.

I wrote you yesterday and now I have something to tell.

Was called to the Commander’s tent and informed that I was selected as the “Non Com” (Non-commissioned) officer to accompany others to go to Mass. to bring in Conscripts! You can imagine my feeling. It is a great favor and compliment too and my years’ service has not been for nothing, as it is a work requiring the right sort of stuff. Alonzo was the means of it in a great measure.

Expect to leave tomorrow, Tuesday or the next day with Lieut. Davis, Co. K, and six men. I send you this that you may be prepared to meet me either at home B (Billerica) or some point near or at Boston as the Camp is at Long Island you know. Talked with Alonzo. He didn’t think we shall have leave to go home, that is to visit round. I go out of my way so you will hear from me by Telegraph or letter as we are not quite certain what day we shall leave. This will reach you ahead.

My expenses, you see, will be all paid and I hope to see you soon.

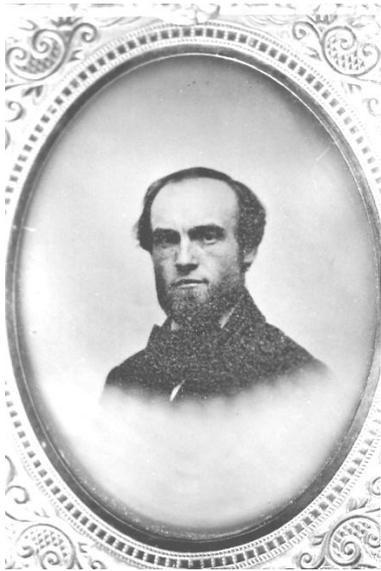
You will please inform the friends so I can meet as many as possible.

Shall write to Orange today with this. J.H. has a fine thing: Orderly for Gen. Ferrero. Left for his post today.

In haste with love to all.

I am yours,
Jerome

The following photographs of Jerome, Albinia and Lucy were found among the letters that were passed down through several generations and are now in the possession of Patricia Mason, the great-grandniece of Albinia Jaquith Peirce. Although they are not dated, based on Jerome's enlistment date of August 4, 1862, his date of death of May 12, 1864, and Lucy's date of birth of December 26, 1859, they were very likely taken in the very early 1860s.



JEROME PEIRCE



ALBINIA PEIRCE

(Courtesy of the Patricia Mason Family)



LUCY PEIRCE

CHAPTER 2

SGT. JEROME PEIRCE WITH THE 36th MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY REGIMENT (AUGUST 4, 1862 – MAY 11, 1864)

The following chronology of the role of the 36th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, also known as the 36th Regiment, Massachusetts Infantry, in the Civil War during the time that Jerome Peirce served with that regiment is based primarily on the history of the regiment written by a committee of its veterans and edited by Henry S. Burrage, which was published in 1884 (herein referred to as the “Unit History”) and, to a lesser degree, on the U.S. National Park Service’s database of regiments that fought in the Civil War. The Unit History is titled *History of the Thirty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*.

Based on his Service File obtained from the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C., Jerome Peirce was almost certainly present at all of the places indicated and fought in the battles that are listed below until he was killed on May 12, 1864, at Spotsylvania (spelled Spottsylvania at the time) Court House, Virginia, except that he was assigned to conscription/recruiting duties in Massachusetts on September 15, 1863, for a while. The length of this temporary assignment was probably several weeks, although exactly how long he was back in the Bay State cannot be determined from his records. However, the Company Muster Roll for November – December 1863 shows that he was then again “Present” for duty with his regiment. His service file does not show that he was “Absent” for any other reason, such as sickness, personal leave, etc.

On July 2, 1862, with little hope that the “Rebellion” would be short-lived, President Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 volunteers to fight for the Union cause for three years, with the quota for Massachusetts being set at 15,000 men. On July 7, Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew announced the number of men which every city and town in the Commonwealth would be required to furnish. The new regiments were designated as the 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, and 37th Volunteers. To complete these regiments to the maximum standard, the 32nd Regiment required 300 men; the 33rd, 650 men; the 34th, 800 men; and the 35th, 850 men. Recruiting for the 36th Regiment, the one to which Jerome Peirce would be assigned, and for the 37th Regiment did not commence until the first four regiments had been filled.

On July 16, 1862, Camp John E. Wool in Worcester, Massachusetts, was designated as the rendezvous point for the men from the counties in central Massachusetts. Colonel George H. Ward, of the 15th Massachusetts Volunteers, who had lost a leg at the Battle of Ball's Bluff and who was still recovering from his wound, was placed in command of the camp.

Although Corporal (later Sergeant) Jerome Peirce is not mentioned by name in the Unit History (except that he is listed as having been killed on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield), this chronology presents a good overview of what he experienced and endured until the day he was killed.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REGIMENT

- August 4, 1862. According to his Service File, Jerome Peirce enlisted with the rank of corporal for a period of three years, and he received a bounty of \$25. (Congress authorized a \$100 bounty in July 1861 for men enlisting for three years. These bounties were paid in several monthly installments. For reference, a corporal in the Union army was paid \$13 per month.) As shown

below, fourteen men from Orange also signed up on that same date, with seven more over the next four days. Since the population of the Town of Orange as of the 1860 census was only 1,622, Peirce probably knew most, if not all, of the young men who volunteered with him. Their ages ranged from 18 to 39. Peirce was 31 years old at the time and was the third oldest of this group of 22. Why Peirce entered the service as a corporal, instead of as a private, could not be determined from the records. The fate of these 22 volunteers as of the end of the war is given in a later chapter.

**ENLISTMENTS IN COMPANY H FROM ORANGE, MASSACHUSETTS,
IN EARLY AUGUST 1862
(From the “Roster of Enlisted Men, Co. H” in the Unit History)**

Name	Age	Enlistment Date	Rank
Atherton, Amos B.	21	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Bliss, Augustus E.	18	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Boyden, Henry	26	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Foskett, Albert	22	Aug. 6, 1862	Pvt.
Goddard, Artemas W.	23	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Goddard, William H.	21	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Harris, Caleb C.	18	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Hills, James E.	20	Aug. 7, 1862	Pvt.
Howard, Marcus M.	22	Aug. 6, 1862	Corp.
Mayo, Henry H.	21	Aug. 4, 1862	Corp.
Mellen, Jonathan M.	37	Aug. 8, 1862	Pvt.
Moore, Sumner	28	Aug. 6, 1862	Pvt.
Peirce, Jerome	31	Aug. 4, 1862	Corp.
Peirce, Joseph H.	18	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Rich, Osgood	25	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Smith, William N.	20	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Stevens, Edwin	39	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Underwood, Samuel L.	20	Aug. 5, 1862	Pvt.
Ward, Edmund S.	25	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Ward, Nathan W.	19	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.
Woodward, Philip G.	25	Aug. 6, 1862	Sgt.
Woodward, Warner C.	27	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.

- August 22, 1862. Christopher Sawyer, originally first sergeant of Company D, was commissioned captain and commanding officer of Company H. As volunteers enlisted from various towns in Massachusetts, the companies of the 36th were quickly filled. Company H was formed by adding the unassigned recruits then in camp to the quotas of the Town of Gardner and the Town of Orange, Peirce’s residence at the time.
- August 27, 1862. The ten companies of the 36th Massachusetts Volunteers were mustered into the United States Army for three years, unless sooner discharged. Major Henry Bowman, previously assigned to the 34th Massachusetts Regiment, was promoted to colonel and became the commanding officer of the 36th Massachusetts. Corporal Jerome Peirce was among the men who were mustered into the 36th on August 27, and he was assigned to Company H.

Most of the men had hurried into camp with the promise of a few days furlough before leaving for the front, and many had left their affairs unsettled and their families unprovided for. But all applications for furloughs were denied by an Army officer in Boston. Colonel Bowman,

however, stated his unwillingness to leave the State until the pledge that had been given to the men had been redeemed. On August 30, he received orders to have his regiment ready to leave for Washington, D.C., by September 2, but he was given permission to grant his men furloughs for 24 hours, one-half of the regiment only to be absent from camp at the same time. Accordingly, furloughs were granted first to those men whose homes were at the greatest distance from the camp. These were to return by the morning of September 1, when the rest of the men would receive their furloughs.

The Unit History states that the regiment became very small “by some mysterious process” during the two days that the furloughs were granted. Although there exists no direct evidence, it is very likely that Jerome Peirce went back to Orange (a distance of only 40 miles from Worcester) to see his wife, Albinia, and their young daughter, Lucy, who had been born on December 26, 1859. It might have been the last time the family spent time together, except that they may have seen each other again, probably briefly, in the fall of 1863 when Peirce was on temporary recruiting duty in Massachusetts, as indicated.

- September 2, 1862. With all the companies back in camp, the company commanders drew arms (Enfield rifles) and equipment for their men, and the weapons and supplies were immediately distributed. According to the Unit History, “All was bustle and confusion throughout the camp. Few of the men had had any experience as soldiers, and the selection and adjustment of their arms and equipment, as well as the brief space of time allotted for these and other preparations for moving, made it look still more difficult and annoying.” Just before noon, the regimental line was formed, and a national flag was presented to the regiment by P. Emory Aldrich, the mayor of Worcester, who made an appropriate farewell speech. The band then played the Star-Spangled Banner, and Colonel Bowman responded to the mayor’s speech “in patriotic terms.” The men then filled their haversacks and packed their knapsacks, boarded a train, along with their horses and supplies, and headed for Boston. There they boarded the new, large ocean-going steamer, the “Merrimac.”

TO THE FRONT

- September 3, 1862. The “Merrimac” steamed down the harbor into Boston Bay, and the men learned that their destination would be Alexandria, Virginia. Having passed the capes of the Chesapeake, Fortress Monroe, and Mt. Vernon, the “Merrimac” docked at the wharf in Alexandria on September 6. The next morning, the men were transferred to the steamer “City of Norwich,” which proceeded up the Potomac River to Washington, D.C., where it docked at the Navy Yard.
- September 9, 1862. Having been encamped near the U.S. Capitol for a few days and being assigned to General Burnside's Ninth Corps, the regiment left Washington and marched to Leesborough, Maryland, probably a location near Silver Spring, Maryland. But the Ninth Corps was no longer there, and several days were lost in obtaining further orders.
- September 12, 1862. The regiment marched to Brookville, Maryland. On September 15, Colonel Bowman received a note from a mounted orderly written in pencil, which purported to be an order from General McClellan directing all troops to hurry forward as rapidly as possible. Colonel Bowman doubted the genuineness of this hasty scrawl, the more so because of the appearance of suspicious persons around the camp the night before. Afraid that an attempt might be made to capture the regiment in its isolated position, Colonel Bowman decided not to move the regiment until he received further instructions or had better information concerning the state of affairs at the front. This delay prevented the participation of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment in the Battle of Antietam, which was fought on September 17, 1862. Since this battle was the bloodiest single-day battle in American history, with a combined tally of dead, wounded, and

missing at 22,717 men, Colonel Bowman's decision (whether right or wrong in retrospect) undoubtedly ensured that many more "boys" from the 36th Massachusetts returned home to their families alive.

- September 17, 1862. Having learned that the road was open, the regiment left Brookville and encamped that night near Damascus, Maryland. On the following day, the men marched through Unity, Monrovia, and New Market, and they pitched camp about a mile from Frederick, Maryland.
- September 19, 1862. The regiment crossed the Catoctin Mountains to Middletown, Maryland, and encamped where Generals McClellan and Burnside had established their headquarters during the Battle of South Mountain. On the following day, the 36th crossed South Mountain, and it was here that the new recruits from Massachusetts, including Corporal Peirce, first personally encountered the grim results of war. As summarized in the Unit History, "Here and there by the roadside were newly-made graves (in one place we counted 26), and the trees and fences bore marks of the recent fight. We also passed long trains of ambulance wagons, loaded with wounded men from the battlefield at Antietam. In addition, there were many wounded on foot who were on their way to the hospitals in Frederick. We passed through Boonsborough, where we saw a hospital full of wounded Rebels, and we encamped at Keedysville, Maryland, about two miles east of the Antietam battlefield. Everywhere around us were the sad memories of the terrible conflict that was waged on that hard-fought field. Houses, barns, sheds, and places of shelter of all kinds were filled with the wounded, and on the field where the battle was fought, hundreds of the dead still lay unburied, although a large force had been steadily engaged in this service for days. Looking upon these scenes we were brought face to face with the dread realities of war. Among the wounded we found many friends and acquaintances who belonged to other Massachusetts regiments and whose sad condition enlisted our warmest sympathies."
- September 21, 1862. The regiment left Keedysville and encamped a short distance from General Burnside's headquarters. Here the Thirty-sixth was assigned to the Third Brigade of the First Division of Burnside's Ninth Corps.
- September 26, 1862. Orders were received to be ready to march at 1:00 PM. To quote the Unit History, "We were in line at that time, but as the whole corps was in motion and we were in the rear, there was some delay for us. It was a beautiful sight as the brigades and divisions of the corps, with its long train of baggage wagons, moved over the hills. We crossed Antietam Creek at Isabella Furnace, and at sundown, we encamped near the Antietam Iron Works, about five miles above Harper's Ferry. The tents of the men were soon up, and the camp-fires lighted. A more brilliant scene can hardly be imagined than that presented by these fields around us, illuminated by innumerable campfires."
- October 3, 1862. The Ninth Corps was reviewed by President Lincoln and General McClellan. According to the Unit History, "We formed our regimental line at seven o'clock, the President arrived shortly after nine o'clock, and he passed us in review at about ten. This visit gave many in the regiment their first opportunity to see Mr. Lincoln, and the day was one of great interest."
- October 7 – October 26, 1862. The regiment moved to several locations in the Weverton and Point of Rocks, Maryland, area, and it was camped for several days in Frederick, Maryland, to protect government supplies that were stored there from a possible attack by Jeb Stuart's cavalry.

IN VIRGINIA

- October 26 – November 19, 1862. The regiment marched south into Virginia for several days, finally encamping in Falmouth, opposite the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg, Virginia. In the Company Muster Roll dated October 31, 1862, Corporal Peirce was recorded as “Present.”
- December 11, 1862. After a delay of procuring the required pontoon bridges by the Union army, the 36th Massachusetts, along with many other regiments, prepared to cross the river to attack the Confederate forces in Fredericksburg. That crossing was finally made on December 12, 1862. Two men of the regiment were slightly wounded when shells fell short.
- December 13 – December 14, 1862. The regiment was assigned to a position below Fredericksburg, across Hazel Run, and in the area of the lower pontoon bridge, being held primarily in reserve. After several movements, the regiment did not participate in any of the major engagements in the Battle of Fredericksburg.
- December 15, 1862 – January 15, 1863. The 36th moved into Fredericksburg and camped near the Phillips House on December 16. As of then, according to the Unit History, “The Thirty-sixth mustered about six hundred and fifty guns. Of the remaining three hundred and fifty of our comrades who left Massachusetts with us, quite a large number were detailed on special duty, many were on the sick list, and ten had died.” In the Company Muster Roll for November – December 1862, Peirce was again recorded as “Present.”
- January 20 – January 24, 1863. Following the Union Army’s defeat at Fredericksburg, the regiment participated in the infamous and disastrous “Mud March” before being forced to return to its encampment in Falmouth. On January 26, General Ambrose Burnside was replaced by General Joseph Hooker as commander of the Army of the Potomac.
- February 10, 1863. The 36th Massachusetts moved to Newport News, Virginia, where it remained in camp until March 22, 1863. In the Company Muster Roll for January – February 1863, Corporal Jerome Peirce was still recorded as “Present.”

THE KENTUCKY CAMPAIGN

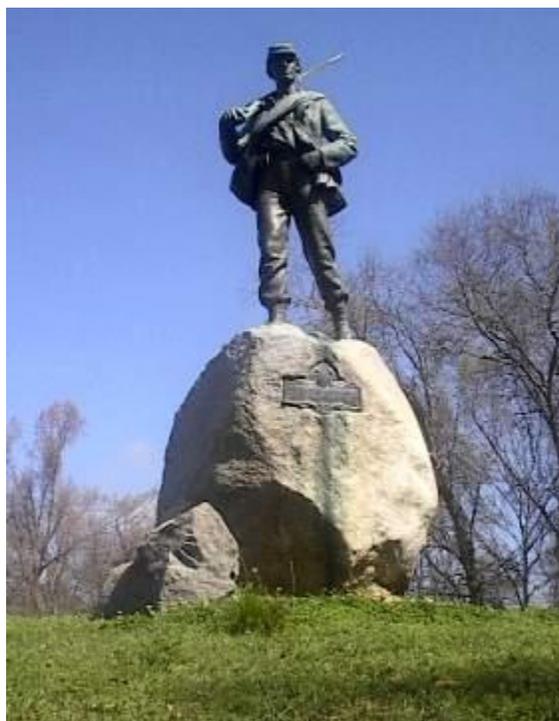
- March 23 – March 29, 1863. The men of the 36th went by steamer to Baltimore and then by train freight cars, outfitted with rough board seats, to Parkersburg, West Virginia, and then again by steamer to Cincinnati, Ohio, and on to Lexington, Kentucky. They remained there, except for a short assignment back to Cincinnati to deal with possible riots during an election. Those riots never materialized.
- April 8 – May 26, 1863. The regiment moved to Camp Dick Robinson, near Bryantsville, Kentucky, south of Lexington, and then to Middleburg, Kentucky. It remained there until May 26, when it moved again to Columbia, Kentucky. During that time, on May 13, it was alerted to be on the look-out for Morgan’s Raiders, but no contact was made. In the Company Muster Roll for March – April 1863, Peirce was recorded as “Present.” In a Special Muster Roll dated April 11, 1863, Peirce was also listed as “Present.”
- May 27 – June 9, 1863. The 36th marched to Jamestown, Kentucky, where it remained until June 4. On that day, it was ordered to proceed by rail to Vicksburg, Mississippi, where Gen. Grant needed reinforcements, reaching Cairo, Illinois, on June 9.

IN THE REAR OF VICKSBURG AND MOVEMENT TO JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

- June 10 – July 4, 1863. The steamer “Meteor” carried the 36th Massachusetts Regiment from Cairo by way of Columbus, Kentucky; Memphis, Tennessee; Helena, Arkansas; and Columbus,

Arkansas, to Snyder's Bluff, where it disembarked. On June 20, it went into camp near Vicksburg, Mississippi, as part of the Union's siege of that city. The regiment consisted of approximately 760 officers and men at that time. The Confederates surrendered the city on July 4, 1863, marking an important turning point in the Civil War. In the Company Muster Roll for May – June 1863, Peirce was again recorded as "Present."

Below is pictured the only Civil War monument that could be found that honors the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. Known as the Massachusetts State Memorial, it is located on Grant Avenue at Grant Circle on the Vicksburg Battlefield and was the first state memorial erected within the Vicksburg National Military Park. The monument cost \$4,500 and was dedicated on November 14, 1903. The statue of a Union soldier, sculpted by Theo Alice Ruggles Kitson, is mounted on a 15-ton boulder from Massachusetts.



<http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks>

**MASSACHUSETTS STATE MEMORIAL
VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI, BATTLEFIELD**

The inscription on the bronze plaque on the base, shown below, reads

**MASSACHUSETTS TRIBUTE TO THE
29th, 35th AND 36th REGIMENTS
VOLUNTEER INFANTRY
9th ARMY CORPS**



- July 5 – August 3, 1863. The regiment moved towards Jackson, Mississippi, pursuing the retreating Confederates, with relatively few losses on both sides. After an eight-day siege of the city, it was abandoned by the Confederates on July 18. The regiment moved on until it reached Milldale, Mississippi, on July 23. It rested there until August 5. By this time, sickness had taken a serious toll on the men. According to the Unit History, “The condition of the regiment at this time was miserable indeed. Many cases of smallpox, mumps, chills and fever were under treatment, and the regimental hospital was filled with sick men. The adjutant's morning report of July 24 was as follows: 6 officers and 98 men present and sick, 63 men absent in hospitals, 25 officers and 343 men present for duty. It was a season of general depression among all, and the only thing to relieve the gloom was the prospect of a speedy departure for the North, an event most anxiously awaited and desired.”

THE RETURN TO KENTUCKY AND ON TO EAST TENNESSEE

- August 4 – August 26, 1863. Early on August 4, orders were received to break camp and proceed to the landing. The regiment boarded riverboats there, and, after some delays, it finally arrived at Covington, Kentucky, on August 12, where it went into quarters. Sickness was still severely affecting the regiment. As summarized in the Unit History, “Every day the effect of the southern campaign was shown in the increasing number of the sick. Many were sent to hospitals, and the regiment rapidly decreased. Chills and fever were most prevalent, and disease similar to scurvy broke out, and caused the death of several, whose flesh actually fell from their limbs before death relieved them from their sufferings. All complained of feeling of exhaustion, and officers and men dragged themselves painfully and slowly about the camp. The regimental musicians, from the ravages of small-pox and other diseases, were now all gone, and for a time it became necessary to obtain the services of musicians of the Forty-fifth Pennsylvania to sound the calls for the Thirty-sixth.”
- August 27 – October 3, 1863. On August 27, the regiment was on the move again. When it stopped that day for a rest, it stacked 98 muskets. Exactly one year ago, when the regiment was mustered into the United States service, it was 1,040 strong. “Very many men were gone, but enough still remained to guard the colors, to escort them on the many long and weary marches, and carry them in the front of many battles yet to come. However, with the cooler weather of autumn, better rations, and rest from fatiguing marches, the men rapidly improved in health and spirits.” The 36th Massachusetts continued its almost daily marches and occasional train rides until it reached Knoxville, Tennessee, on September 26, where it encamped until October 3. In the Company Muster Roll for July – August 1863, Corporal Peirce was recorded as “Present.”
- October 10, 1863. The regiment participated in the Battle of Blue Springs in Tennessee, a decisive Union victory. Although it was held in reserve for part of the battle, it incurred some minor casualties, including the wounding of one man in Company H. It became part of the Union

force that pursued the retreating Confederates until ordered to return to Knoxville. After a few days rest there, the regiment moved to Loudon, Tennessee, 30 miles southwest of Knoxville.

THE RETREAT FROM LENOIR AND THE BATTLE OF CAMPBELL'S STATION

- October 22 – November 13, 1863. The 36th Massachusetts was encamped at Loudon, Tennessee, and it then marched to Lenoir, Tennessee, where it established its winter quarters. According to the Unit History, “The camp was laid out with unusual care. In order to secure uniformity throughout the regiment, the sizes of the log houses were to be ten feet by six feet. The logs were laid one above another, to the height of four feet, intersecting at the corners of the houses like the rails of a Virginia fence. The interstices were filled with mud. Shelter tents, buttoned together to the size required, formed the roof and afforded ample protection from the weather, except in very heavy rains. Each house had its fireplace, table, and bunk. On the 13th of November the houses were nearly completed throughout the camp, and as we sat by our cheerful fires that evening and looked forward to the leisure and rest of the winter before us, we considered ourselves the happiest of soldiers.” In the Company Muster Roll for September – October 1863, Peirce was recorded as “Absent. Sent to Massachusetts for Conscription September 15, 1863.”
- November 14 – November 17, 1863. The expected long rest at Lenoir was cut short on November 14, when the regiment was ordered to strip their just-completed camp and move to intercept Gen. Longstreet, who had orders “to drive Burnside out of East Tennessee or, better yet, to capture or destroy him.” After several moves, the regiment returned briefly to Lenoir and then back to Knoxville to protect that city from Longstreet. On the way, the regiment fought a number of skirmishes with Confederate infantry forces, particularly at Campbell’s Station. Here, the regiment lost one officer and three enlisted men killed, three officers and fourteen enlisted men wounded, and three enlisted men missing.

THE SIEGE OF KNOXVILLE AND SUBSEQUENT MOVEMENTS IN EAST TENNESSEE

- November 18 – December 4, 1863. The regiment supported the defense of Knoxville against the expected attempt of Longstreet to retake the city.
- December 5 – December 19, 1863. The 36th participated in the pursuit of Longstreet’s retreating Confederates.
- December 20, 1863 – April 6, 1864. The regiment moved numerous times in eastern Tennessee, including in the Knoxville area, before being ordered to move by train, by way of Baltimore, to Annapolis, Maryland, where it arrived on April 6, 1864. During this time, the lack of adequate rations, clothing and equipment presented more challenges to the men than did the Confederates. In the Company Muster Roll for November – December 1863, Peirce was recorded as “Present.” In the following Company Muster Roll, i.e., for January – February 1864, Peirce was recorded as “Present” with the rank of “Sergt.” A notation indicated “Promoted from Corpl. Jan. 1, 1864.” That promotion increased his pay from \$13.00 per month to \$17.00 per month.

ADVANCING TOWARD THE WILDERNESS

- April 23 – April 27, 1864. On April 23, the regiment left its camp in Annapolis and marched toward Washington, D.C., reaching the capital two days later. There, the Ninth Corps, including the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, was reviewed by President Lincoln and General Burnside from

the balcony of the Willard Hotel to the cheers and well wishes of a large crowd of citizens of Washington. It then went into camp at Alexandria, Virginia, until April 27, 1864.

- April 27 – May 2, 1864. Although they had expected to go on a coastal expedition, possibly to North Carolina, the men of the Ninth Corps were instead assigned to guard the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. They, therefore, started their march toward the Rappahannock River on April 27, passing through Fairfax Court House, Centerville, Bristow Station, and Manassas, Virginia. The 36th was assigned to a camp at Catlett's Station. The Ninth Corps was soon in position, scattered along the railroad line from Fairfax to the Rappahannock River, having relieved the troops of the Army of the Potomac, which were now concentrated near the Rapidan River. In the Company Muster Roll for March – April 1864, Sgt. Peirce was again recorded as "Present." The Company Muster Roll for April – May 1864, which was the last one in which Sgt. Peirce's name appears, shows the notation, "Killed at Spotsylvania Court House May 12, 1864."

IN THE WILDERNESS AND THE MOVE TO SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE

- May 4 – May 5, 1864. The men of the 36th Massachusetts struck their tents on the morning of May 4, having been ordered to move towards the Rapidan River, which they crossed at daylight on May 5 at Germanna Ford using the pontoon bridges that had been recently erected by the Army of the Potomac. The next day, the regiment proceeded along what is now Virginia State Route 3 (then the Germanna Plank Road) behind the main line of battle and came to rest at the Old Wilderness Tavern, where it was ordered to prepare for action in what was then, and still is today, known as The Wilderness.
- May 6, 1864. On the morning of May 6, the Union forces, including Gen. Hancock's Second Corps, attacked along the Plank Road, driving the Confederates, including Gen. Hill's Corps, back in confusion, but Longstreet's Corps arrived just in time to prevent the collapse of the Confederate right flank. At noon, a devastating Confederate flank attack sputtered out when Longstreet was wounded by his own men. Burnside's Ninth Corps, including the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, was delayed by several hours that day both by congestion on the Germanna Plank Road and by Burnside's apparent lack of a sense of urgency, including allowing his men to take time for a leisurely breakfast that morning as the fighting raged not far to their front.

By afternoon, the Ninth Corps finally entered the battle by moving against the Confederate center, but it was repulsed. By nightfall, heavy fighting came to a halt, and the Battle of the Wilderness ended in a tactical draw, with 85 fewer men of the 36th Massachusetts present for duty than when the battle started. The casualties just among Peirce's companions in Company H were as follows: Killed: one, Died of wounds: two, Captured: one, Wounded: four.

- May 7 – May 11, 1864. Gen. Grant did not retreat as had the other Union generals before him in similar situations. Instead, on May 7, the Federals started their advance by the left flank toward the crossroads of Spotsylvania Court House. The 36th Massachusetts first moved back to the Old Wilderness Tavern, where the rest of the Ninth Corps was massed, and it then marched toward Chancellorsville. According to the Unit History, "The march was very tedious and vexatious, owing to the darkness and the slow movement of the wagons. Every few rods we were obliged to halt, and the weary men threw themselves upon the ground for few moments of rest, only to be aroused to move a little distance and repeat the same experience."

On the morning of May 8, the regiment continued its move towards Chancellorsville, where it bivouacked and remained until about noon of May 9, when orders were received to move down the Plank Road in the direction of the conflict developing near Spotsylvania Court

House. The Ninth Corps continued its advance, reaching a position on May 11 on the eastern side of what would become the center of the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House the next day.

According to the Unit History, “We obtained a fine view of the enemy's position. We were about a quarter of a mile from the Court House, around which stood the enemy's earthworks, bristling with cannons, and surrounded by formidable abatis and slashing of timber. They seemed to be alive with troops, who, doubtless from our close advance, expected an immediate attack. The enemy evidently desired our approach, and they were ready to give us a hot reception... The hours dragged drearily. The men were under arms, and the pickets, though almost exhausted, were alert and vigilant. We were ignorant of the enemy's position, yet conscious that the morning light of May 12 would reveal it, and that it would be the signal for a determined assault.”

CHAPTER 3

THE 36th MASSACHSETTS INFANTRY REGIMENT AT SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE ON MAY 12, 1864, THE DAY SGT. PEIRCE WAS KILLED

OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE May 8 – 21, 1864

The Battle of Spotsylvania (also spelled “Spottsylvania”) Court House was the second major battle in Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's 1864 Overland Campaign. Following the bloody but inconclusive Battle of the Wilderness, Grant's army disengaged from Gen. Robert E. Lee's army and moved to the southeast, attempting to lure Lee into battle under more favorable conditions. Elements of Lee's army beat the Union army to the critical crossroads of Spotsylvania Court House and began entrenching. Fighting occurred on and off from May 8 through May 21, 1864, as Grant tried various schemes to break the Confederate line. In the end, the battle was tactically inconclusive, but with almost 32,000 casualties on both sides, it was the costliest battle of the campaign.

On May 8, Union Generals Gouverneur K. Warren and John Sedgwick unsuccessfully attempted to dislodge the Confederates under Gen. Richard H. Anderson from Laurel Hill, a position that was blocking them from Spotsylvania Court House. On May 10, Grant ordered attacks across the Confederate line of earthworks, which by now extended over four miles, including a prominent salient known as the Mule Shoe. Although the Union troops failed again at Laurel Hill, an assault attempt by Col. Emory Upton against the Mule Shoe showed promise.

At 4:30 AM on May 12, the day that Sgt. Peirce was killed, 15,000 men of the Union Second Corps under General Winfield Scott Hancock advanced with bayonets fixed across a fog-shrouded field on Edward Landrum's farm, just as the Confederates were returning their cannons to their former positions. About twenty guns were captured, some without firing a shot. A few Confederate infantrymen tried to fire their pieces, but damp powder from the mist prevented many guns from firing. In a short time, Hancock held a half mile of the Confederate trench line and took nearly 3,000 prisoners, including Generals Edward "Allegheny" Johnson and George H. Steuart, along with the remnants of the famed Stonewall Brigade.

While the Union reserve troops advanced right behind the attack column, it soon degenerated into a mob that did its best to proceed down the Confederate line and deal with the prisoners. Smaller, but better organized, Confederate units launched counterattacks, stalling the Union advance.

Realizing that he could not repulse the Union troops from the earthworks, Lee instead focused his efforts on completing the last line of earthworks at the base of the Mule Shoe and on retaking a hill where the earthworks made a slight bend. The latter place, where the fighting was horrific, became known, appropriately, as the “Bloody Angle.” A ravine directly in front of the poorly laid-out Confederate line offered protection for thousands of Union soldiers from Hancock's Second Corps and Wright's Sixth Corps, who repeatedly surged out of the swale to grapple with the Confederates. Supporting attacks by Gen. Warren and by Gen. Ambrose Burnside's Ninth Corps, including the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, were relatively unsuccessful. Union and Confederate forces battled from very early on the morning of May 12 until 3 AM on the morning of May 13, much of it hand to hand.

The fighting at the Bloody Angle is regarded as being the most intense of the war. In places, the dead piled up in the Confederate trenches five deep. "No man thought at all," a Mississippian remembered. "That function seemed to be suspended." A Vermont general recalled that "many were shot and stabbed through crevices and holes between the logs; men mounted the works, and with muskets rapidly handed them, kept up a continuous fire until they were shot down, when others would take their place and continue their deadly work." As night fell on May 12, 1864, some Confederates were even injured when an oak tree, 22 inches in diameter, was cut down by musket fire. That tree stump is now on display at the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

Grant repositioned his lines in another attempt to engage Lee under more favorable conditions and launched a final attack by Hancock on May 18, which made no progress. A reconnaissance in force by Confederate Gen. Richard S. Ewell at the Harris Farm on May 19 was also a costly and pointless failure. On May 21, Grant disengaged from the Confederate Army and started southeast on another maneuver to turn Lee's right flank, as the Overland Campaign continued toward the Battle of North Anna.

THE 36TH MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT IN THE FIGHTING ON MAY 12, 1864

The following description of the role that the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment played in the fighting on May 12, 1864, is based, almost verbatim, on the Unit History, with some minor editing. This account was written by William H. Hodgkins, who enlisted as a 22 year-old private from Charlestown, Massachusetts, 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.

"The morning of Thursday, May 12th, dawned cold and dismal. A curtain of gray mist enshrouded the earth as with a pall. The men shivered as they awoke from unrefreshing sleep, and the order to advance was promptly responded to. Without food, we moved forward, continuing the line of advance of the previous evening, and, after a short march, reached a large opening in the forest, where a portion of the corps was being massed in column by brigades in line of battle. During the night, the Second Corps had been massed on our right, and it was ordered to assault at daylight, with a portion of our corps to support the left. We were to advance by brigade front, formed *en echelon*. The Second Brigade was in front, the First Brigade had the second line, with the Thirty-sixth again on the extreme left. The Second Brigade was ordered to advance to the right, to uncover the front of our brigade, when we were to advance rapidly to the front, connect our right with the left of the Second Brigade, and push forward. While forming for the attack, we heard the loud cheers of the troops on our right, who were charging the enemy, followed by the thunder of artillery. This was the signal for our attack, and the division advanced rapidly toward the woods, the brigades deployed to the right and left, and a heavy skirmish line was thrown out. We drew the first fire from the rebel skirmishers at 4:30 AM.

The line of our advance to the woods lay over a steep knoll, which descended into a swampy thicket just in front of the woods, and while crossing this exposed ground, the regiment encountered very severe fire of musketry at short range from the enemy posted in the edge of the woods. But he retired rapidly before our advance, and, as we entered the woods, he attempted to swing around our left, with the evident intention of outflanking us. To prevent this movement, Companies C, B, and K were deployed to the left of the line of battle to cover the flank and to protect the rear. The division which had been expected to prolong the line of battle on the left had not come into position, and it seemed to us that the dire experience of the Wilderness was now to be repeated. But the enemy suddenly fell back and appeared to

abandon his attempt to double our left flank. By 5 AM, the engagement had become very hot, and as the division advanced, the cheering on the right was renewed, and the firing became terrific. The lurid flash of musketry lighted up the dim woods, and the din of battle resounded on every side.

Connection was established with Griffin's Brigade, which joined the left of the Second Corps near their point of attack at the famous "Death Angle" or "Bloody Angle," thereby securing our right, but the left was badly exposed, and the advance of the promised support in that direction was anxiously awaited. We were in a dense forest, and it was impossible to distinguish the position of the enemy or his approach should he attack, until the skirmishers should come in contact. The firing in our immediate front was very sharp and close, indicating the presence of a large force, and our skirmish line was reinforced preparatory to a charge which we had been ordered to make, and also to resist any attack of the enemy.

In a few minutes, intelligence was passed along the line that Hancock had just finished a successful charge on the right, carrying the enemy's line, near the McCool [McCoull] House, capturing 4,000 prisoners and 20 cannon. Soon after, a large force of the enemy was discovered moving from the right toward the left, in column, across our front. The skirmishers opened sharp fire, which was not returned, but instead we heard the cry, "For God's sake, don't fire!" At the same time, word came from the right of our division, "Cease firing. Hancock's prisoners are passing along your front." The firing ceased, when in a few minutes a horrible cry came from the left of the Thirty-sixth, "The rebels are on our flank!" The fatal impression seemed to prevail that this body of the enemy was the division just captured by General Hancock. A sergeant came in from the skirmish line and reported that a Union officer had ordered the line to cease firing, and that the rebels carried a white flag, and the impression was general that these were rebel prisoners moving toward the rear. They were formed squarely across our flank, and Captain Buffum, acting Major, who had command of the left wing, walked out on the narrow wagon-track which diagonally crossed our left, across which these rebels had formed, and waving his sword toward them, cried out, "Come in, Johnnies. We won't hurt you. Come in!" We could look into their very faces. We could almost see the whites of their eyes. They were the veterans of Lane's Brigade, of Heth's Division. As far as we could distinguish their weapons, they were standing at order arms.

Captain Buffum was but ten yards from them and going toward their line, when he was answered by a murderous volley, which will never be forgotten by any who survived it. And never shall we forget the splendid coolness and courage of Captain Buffum as he came back to the line, and amid the confusion which followed this terrible attack, calmly faced two or three companies to the left, and gave the order, "Let them have it!" Though suffering fearfully, the regiment behaved nobly. The attack was terrific. It was the most awful moment of our history. Yet the regiment was equal to the emergency, and its stand, it is believed, saved the division from panic or capture. The left was gradually drawn back from the colors, and soon the entire left wing presented a front to the enemy.

Lying upon the ground, loading and firing rapidly, pouring upon the enemy low fire which was most effective and deadly, they maintained the unequal contest until an order came down from the right for the whole line to charge. Then, rising to their feet in the midst of the awful fire, with an alacrity and courage beyond this feeble praise, the regiment was rushing toward the enemy, when loud cheers were heard upon our left, and in another moment we were joined by the gallant Twenty-first Massachusetts, the right regiment of the First Division line, which came up on the double quick to prolong the line of battle. Cheer answered cheer, and both regiments charged the enemy, who was driven back to his entrenchments with great loss, leaving his killed

and wounded in our possession. Two lines of detached rifle-pits were taken, with some prisoners, and the right brigade carried a portion of the enemy's main line and captured two pieces of artillery; but in a little while the enemy made a most furious attack, and the connection with the Second Corps on the right was broken; the right was turned and forced out of the works.

Soon after, a general attack along the whole line was ordered, and the regiment advanced, but the enemy's works at this point were too strong to be carried. The rebels made several attempts to regain the ground we had occupied, but they were driven back each time with severe losses. Several times orders were given from the right or left to attack, but the assaults were successful only at isolated points. Along the Third Division front, the fighting was unusually desperate and bloody. Charges and counter-charges were made and repulsed. In the "Bloody Angle" on the right of our division the fighting was the most sanguinary of the war. The enemy made the most desperate attempts to recover the works, but every attack was repulsed with great slaughter. About noon, we strengthened our skirmish line, which was very close to the enemy's position, and a temporary line of rifle-pits was thrown up, which afforded partial shelter. Slowly the terrible day of Spottsylvania dragged on. The mist of the morning was but the prelude to a heavy storm when, at times, the rain fell in torrents.

After the excitement of the attack had somewhat subsided, a spirit of deep sadness pervaded the regiment. Comrades and friends had been stricken in death. Those dismal woods had been the scene of their last conflict, and many companions of weary marches and lonely picket, many tried and trusted comrades, were sleeping in death. Of the commissioned officers, Captain Bailey, the beloved commander of Company G, had received a mortal wound. Corporal Hall, of his company, was one of the first to fall in our close conflict with the enemy, when we received the volley with which the battle for us opened, and some of his comrades carried him a few steps to the rear of our line of battle. Captain Bailey moved at once to the spot, and as he was bending over the dying corporal, a minie ball entered the captain's forehead, and he fell forward upon the corporal's body. Some of his men carried him to the field hospital, but nothing could be done for him. He breathed all day but consciousness did not return, and at nightfall he died. And so we were called to part with a faithful officer and noble-hearted companion. He had entered the service with a patriotic desire to serve his country, and his last words to those whom he loved, written after the Battle of the Wilderness, showed that he had counted the cost, and was willing, if need be, to lay down his life in the endeavor to secure the great objects for which on our part the war was waged.

Captain Morse, of Company C, and Orderly Sergeant White, commanding Company I, had both been badly wounded and taken to the rear. The loss of the regiment in its non-commissioned officers was especially severe. They were rising steadily from the ranks to fill the vacancies in the line to which their bravery and capacity entitled them. These men had conferred honor upon the regiment, and many of them had won the highest respect and affection of their commanding officers. Under any circumstances their loss to the regiment would have been deplorable; at such time it seemed to us irreparable.

The day had been to the regiment a literal baptism of fire and blood, but before its close we were destined to sustain another severe loss in the death of First Lieutenant Henry W. Daniels, commanding Company H [and Sgt. Peirce's company commander]. He had been in command of the skirmish line all day, and toward evening came in to report the condition of the line, get ammunition, and receive instructions for the night. He said he had fired considerably during the day and had attracted the attention of the enemy. He left us with the repeated caution from Captain Barker not to expose himself unnecessarily. He had been at his post but a little

while when Sergeant Woodward, who was standing in the main line, saw him fall, and cried out, "My God! The lieutenant is shot!" His head was pierced by a minie ball, and he, who but a few moments before had left us in the full strength and courage of early manhood, was brought back a corpse. Comrade Bartlett, who was on the skirmish line, thus relates the circumstances of his death: "I was on the line about two rods distant from him. He had just come out with ammunition for us. A rebel sharp-shooter in a tree on our right had troubled us exceedingly. Lieutenant Daniels took a musket to bring him down, as he could see the smoke when he fired about where he was. After discharging the piece without effect, he had reloaded and raised it to his shoulder to fire the second time when he was shot by the sharp-shooter, and he fell dead." This event was a sad ending of a terrible day, and cast a gloom upon all. We were pained at the recollection that the last days of his life were saddened by the death of his brother Myron in the Wilderness only six days before, and our hearts went out in sympathy toward the kindred of all our slain in northern homes and, as we thought of the many scenes of peril through which we must pass, and the certainty of death which awaited many, we cried, in the anguish and bitterness of heart, "How long, O Lord, how long?"

The loss in the regiment in this action, including the men from the Twenty-ninth Massachusetts, was the following: Killed, 27; Wounded, 70; Missing, 10; Total, 107. The list, as far as can be ascertained, is as follows:

Commissioned Officers

Killed: Captain S. Henry Bailey, Lieutenant Henry W. Daniels. Wounded: Captain Edwin A. Morse.

Enlisted Men

Company A. Killed: Privates James Alexander, Levi Chamberlain, Franklin Howe. Wounded: Corporal Barney Sheridan, Privates Frederick C. Battles, Andrew Coyle, John A. French, Francis A. Perkins.

Company B. Killed: Corporal James N. Doughty, Private Obed R. Davis. Wounded: First Sergeant Thomas H. Haskell, Sergeant Edwin F. Crosby, Corporal George W. Paine, Private John T. Priest.

Company C. Killed: First Sergeant A. Fernando Bailey, Sergeant George E. Freeman, Corporal Fanning T. Merritt, Private Michael Loughlin. Wounded: Corporal Stephen F. Logec, Privates Luke K. Davis, Edwin Searles.

Company D. Killed: Sergeant Stephen T. Brooks (commanding the Company), Corporal Alden J. Sawtell, Privates Samuel B. Hale, Peter Breen, Dennis Hare. Died of Wounds: Private Sanford Giles. Wounded: Corporal Courtland A. Allen, Privates John M. Demary, Edwin W. Lund, Augustus S. Whitney, William L. Renouf.

Company E. Wounded: Privates William F. Whitney, Joseph B. Wheelock.

Company F. Wounded: Corporals Ammiel Littlefield, Orrick H. Adams.

Company G. Killed: Corporal William H. Hall. Died of Wounds: Private John S. Emerson. Wounded: Private Andrew B. Fletcher.

Company H. Killed: **Sergeant Jerome Pierce** [instead of "Peirce"], Private Lewis D. Winslow. Died of Wounds: Private Eugene W. Hodgman. Wounded: Sergeant John A. Fisher, Private Augustus F. Colburn.

Company I. Died of Wounds: Private Franklin Farnsworth. Wounded: First Sergeant Alonzo A. White (commanding Company), Privates Savillion Arnold, Luke Lavin, Hazen D. Leighton, John A. Bosworth.

Company K. Died of Wounds: Private Samuel G. Vaughn (wounded in the Wilderness, but had returned to duty). Private Matthew Hudson (captured and died in a rebel prison at Florence, S.C.). Wounded: Sergeant Edward Chamberlain, Privates Silas Chamberlain, Henry Noi (wounded May 6, but had returned to duty).

Names of the killed and wounded of the Twenty-Ninth Massachusetts Volunteers, serving with the Thirty-Sixth Regiment on May 12th, 1864: Killed: Sergeants Hamer and Mosher, Privates Alexander, Fisher, Ward, Morton, Murphy, and Mansfield. Wounded: Privates Adams, Willcott, Feeney, Little, Guiney, Mitchell, Hamlin, Parsons, McAloney, Hoxie, Thresher, and Thompson.

The most severe loss was sustained by Company D, which lost seven killed and nine wounded, for a total of sixteen. The loss in the brigade in killed, wounded, and missing was 451. In the division, the loss was 1,193.

During the entire night of the 12th the men were hard at work felling trees and erecting breastworks, and by daylight on May 13th we had a strong defensive line."

The following excerpt from a letter written by Lt. Philip Woodward, who commanded the company which Sgt. Jerome Peirce served with, provides some details about Sgt. Jerome Peirce's death and burial on the battlefield. The letter, which is shown in its entirety in a previous chapter, is now in the possession of the Patricia Mason family in Dayton, Ohio. (See a subsequent chapter that describes this and other letters in more detail.) As indicated in this transcription, a few words were not readable. It is interesting to note that Woodward is mentioned in the above narrative prior to his promotion from sergeant to lieutenant.

Near Petersburg, Va., July 4, 1864

Mrs. Jerome Peirce

Respecting Sergeant's death, I am afraid I can tell you but little more than J.H. has already written. I can with truth say that Sergt. was an esteemed friend of mine. That Co. H. had no other such a man – purely patriotic – philanthropic, ever lending a helping hand in sickness and working for his Comrades as well as for himself. His morals to the Lord[??] as you must know were strictly pure. No Profanity or Obscenities ever crossed his lips. [??] and while a soldier [??] he bore while at home. No one can say too much in his Praise. His loss is felt not only in his family but in his Co. and Regt. and wherever he was known.

The two last nights that he lived Jerome and I slept together. On the morning of the 12th of May [we] went forth to meet the Enemy. Jerome knew our Danger yet faced it like a brave soldier and was first of our company to fall. I did not see him fall as we were falling back under a cover of a Fence, the enemy coming down on us and occupying the ground on which he fell. Consequently his body was in the Enemy's hands for about 15 minutes. When we charged forward and not only took the ground we lost but a great deal more. Jerome's body lay in a very exposed position [and] it was impossible to move it. But I went to him and took his Memorandum Book for I felt as though I ought to make an effort to secure some memento. The

Book I gave to J.H. His body had to remain until after dark when we buried it the best that circumstances would permit. He was killed at about 7 o.c. [o'clock] AM. His other effects I turned over to J.H. I also found the Bullet that killed him. I took it from his left Breast – no one [???] after he was hit, he must have died instantly. His grave is in a Pine Grove – well marked.

I sympathize with you in your affliction and shall be happy to serve you when opportunity arises. If it [???] would very much like a photograph of Jerome.

I am yours in sympathy

Philip G. Woodward

First (Lt.) Commanding Co. H 36th M. [Massachusetts] V. [Volunteers]

Unfortunately, Sgt. Peirce's Pension File provides no definitive information about Sgt. Peirce's exact fate that day. The following confirmation of his death was written by Captain J. B. Smith on July 3, 1864, while he was stationed near Petersburg, Virginia. Smith commanded the 36th Regiment at the time. He was originally assigned to the 25th Massachusetts Volunteers and assumed command of Company K of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment on August 22, 1862. During the war, he was slightly wounded twice (including one wound that required the amputation of a finger), and he was later promoted to a staff position in the Second Division, Ninth Corps. At the end of the war, he was awarded the rank of brevet colonel and was mustered out as a major with the regiment on June 8, 1865.

"This is to certify that Jerome Peirce, a Sergeant of Company H, Thirty-sixth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers Infantry, was killed on May 12, 1864, at Spottsylvania Court House, Virginia, during an engagement with the enemy and that he was in the performance of his duty at the time.

J. B. Smith

Captain, Commanding Regiment"

Some circumstantial evidence as to the location of Peirce's death is found in Volume 25 of the *Roll of Honor*, which is a detailed listing of "Names of soldiers who died in defense of the Union interred in National Cemeteries" and which was published in 1870 by the Office of the Quartermaster General of the United States in Washington D.C. In the list of interments for the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, Sgt. Peirce (spelled Pierce), identified as having served with Co. H of the 36th Massachusetts Volunteers, is listed as number 1757. It also gives the exact location of his grave in the National Cemetery, i.e., in the Terrace Division, Section Number 7, Grave Number 118. (The original numbering system for the graves was changed some time later, so that his grave number is now Number 540.) Of particular interest, however, is the column in the *Roll of Honor* headed "Whence Removed." The entry for Sgt. Peirce is "McCool's Farm, Spottsylvania County, Va." (The name of the family whose farm was in the center of the Muleshoe Salient is also spelled "McCoull" in some records, particularly today.) Since men who fell on the battlefields were almost always buried close to where they were killed and since the location of the McCoull Farm House, which was built in 1846 but burned to the ground in 1921, has been well marked by the National Park Service and is now identified by a historical marker, the *Roll of Honor* provides a good general location of where Sgt. Peirce was killed and was buried.



The U.S. National Park Service

THE McCOULL HOUSE

(This Picture was probably taken in the late 1800s after the house had been extensively repaired.)



The Library of Congress

THE BATTLE OF SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE

Regarding where Sgt. Peirce was probably killed, the below maps (Figures 1 – 6) show where the 36th Massachusetts fought on May 12, 1864, at different times of the day. Because the above letter states that Sgt. Peirce was killed at approximately 7 AM that morning, the map in Figure 3 probably gives the best indication of where he fell. These maps also show the location of the McCoull (McCool) house referred to and shown above. Sgt. Peirce was initially buried on the evening of May 12 according to the above letter in a pine grove on the McCoull farm.

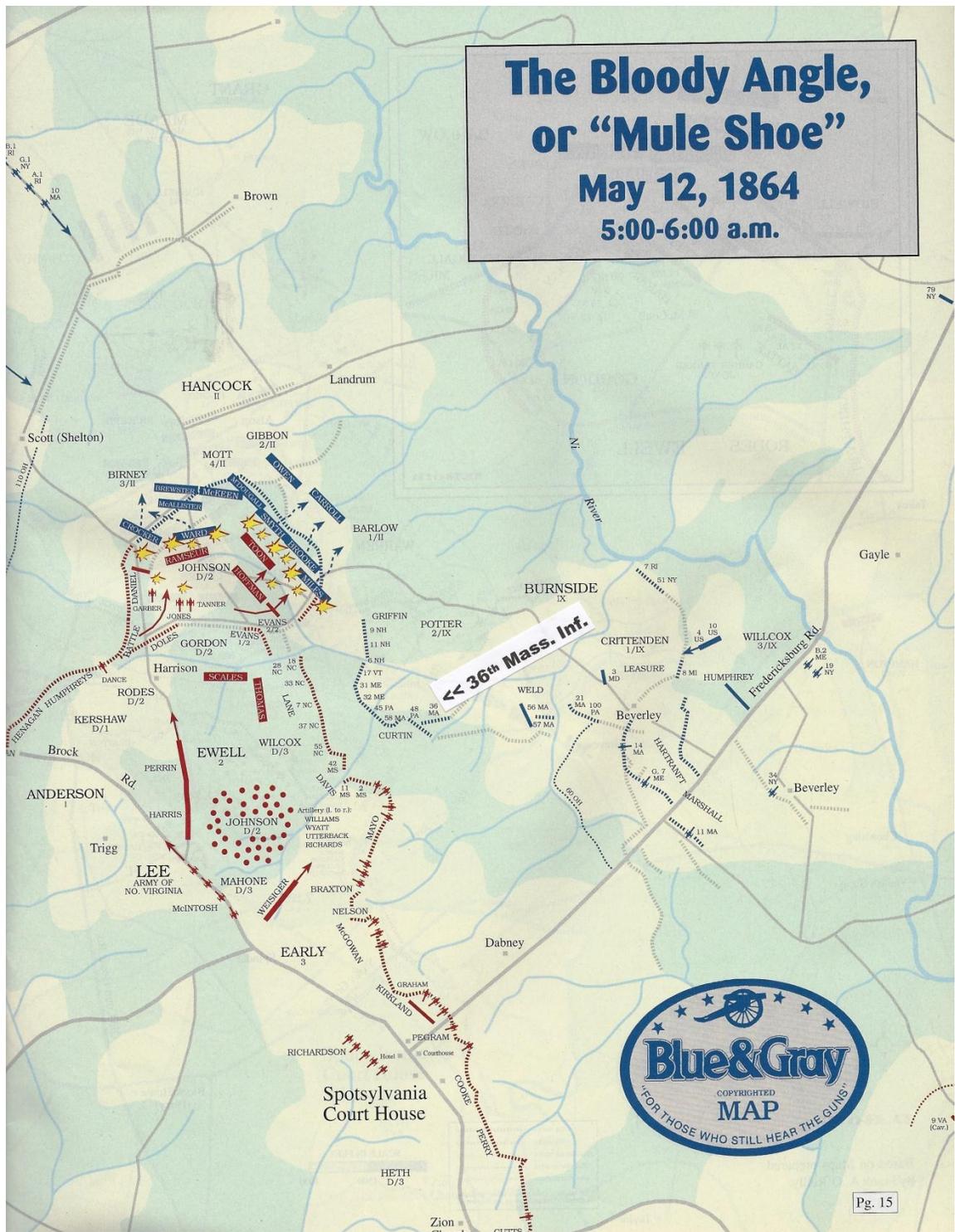
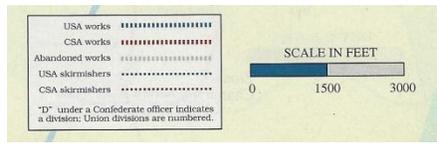


Figure 2



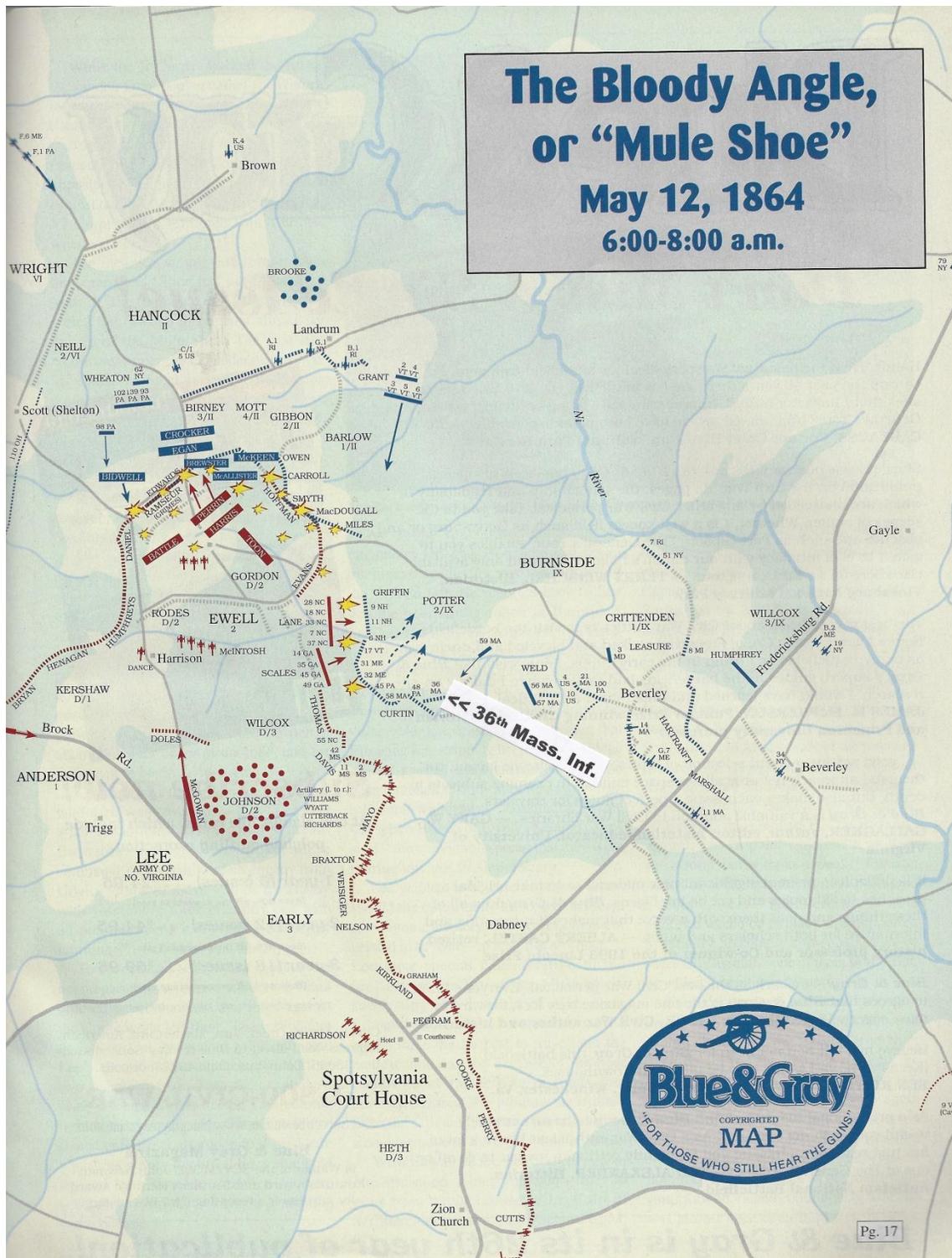


Figure 3

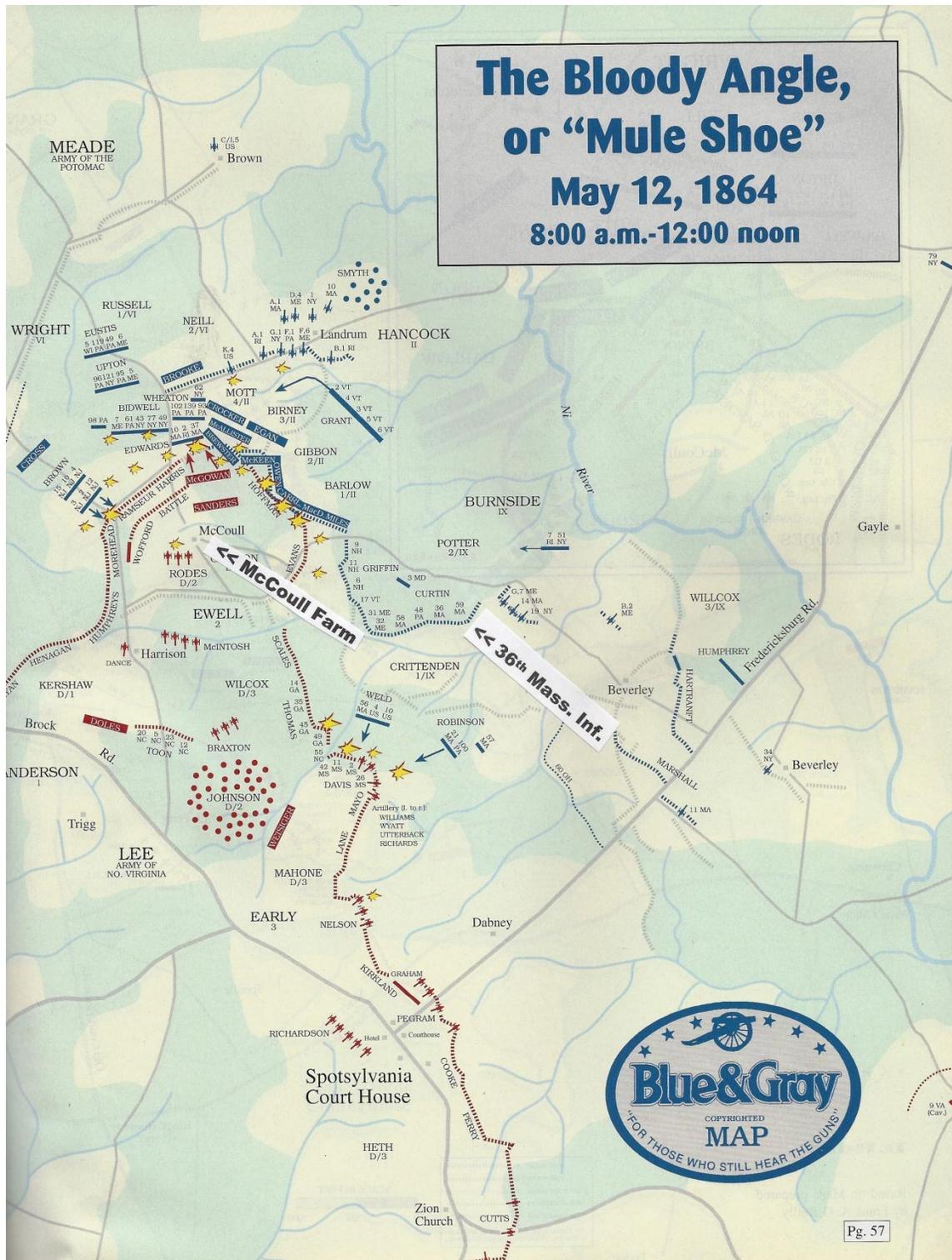


Figure 4

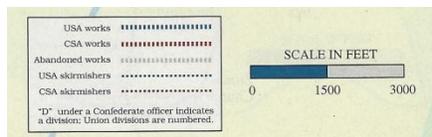




Figure 5

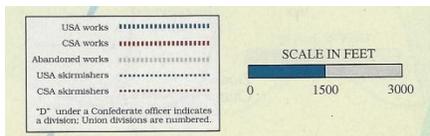
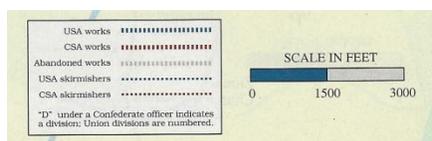




Figure 6



Finally, another good indication as to the spot where Sgt. Peirce was killed is found today on the battlefield. The National Park Service has erected a series of historical markers on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield to identify the locations where the most significant actions took place during the battle. One of those markers is titled “The Ninth Corps,” which is shown below. The 36th Massachusetts Regiment on May 12, 1864, was part of the First Brigade (commanded by Col. John I. Curtin), which was part of the Second Division (commanded by Brig. Gen. Robert B. Potter), which, in turn, was part of the Ninth Corps (commanded by Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside).



The Historical Marker Database

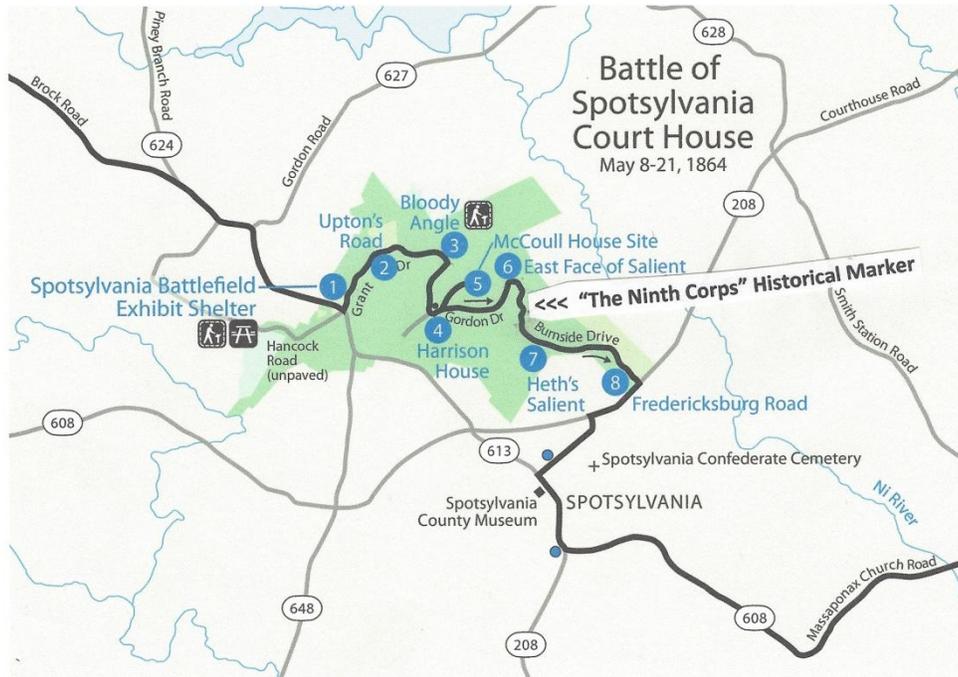
**“THE NINTH CORPS” HISTORICAL MARKER
ON THE SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE BATTLEFIELD**

The inscription on the marker reads, “To support Hancock’s May 12 assault at the East Angle, Grant ordered General Ambrose E. Burnside’s Ninth Corps to attack the Muleshoe Salient here along its eastern face. Shouldering their way through wet woods, Burnside’s men reached this spot shortly after dawn. Ahead, at the top of the hill, General James H. Lane’s North Carolina brigade waited to meet them behind substantial trenches made of earth and logs.

As the Federals approached, the Carolinians let loose with “prolonged cheers and death dealing volleys.” Some Union soldiers halted to return the fire; others pressed forward to the works, engaging the Confederates in a lethal hand-to-hand fight. It lasted just a few minutes. When Confederate reinforcements appeared, the Union soldiers retreated back down the slope and dug in here. For the rest of the day they remained pinned down, taking 2,500 casualties to no purpose.”

The text below General Ambrose Burnside’s photograph reads, “Formerly the leader of the Army of the Potomac, General Ambrose Burnside had resigned command after his defeat at Fredericksburg in December 1862. By May 1864, he commanded the Ninth Corps.” Also, the sketch of the battlefield is titled, “View toward Spotsylvania Court House from Burnside’s front along the Fredericksburg Road.”

Since Burnside’s troops reached the spot where this historical marker is erected, since Sgt. Peirce was killed early in the morning, and since he apparently was one of the first men in the Ninth Corps to fall in the early hours that day, this marker very likely stands close to where Sgt. Peirce was fatally shot. The below map locates this marker on a current map of the battlefield.



The U.S. National Park Service

**CURRENT MAP OF THE SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE BATTLEFIELD,
SHOWING THE LOCATION OF "THE NINTH CORPS" HISTORICAL MARKER**

CHAPTER 4

THE 36th MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY REGIMENT AFTER THE BATTLE OF SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE (May 1864 – June 1865)

MAY 13, 1864 – APRIL 9, 1865

The following is a chronology of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment following the death of Sgt. Peirce on May 12, 1864, until Gen. Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865.

- May 13 – May 21, 1864. Following days of virtually continuous rain and a final unsuccessful attack by Gen. Grant on the Confederate lines on May 18, Grant decided to shift his forces and move south again toward Richmond. The 36th Regiment left Spotsylvania Court House on May 21, 1864.
- May 22 – early June 1864. The regiment, as part of Burnside's Ninth Corps and Grant's Army of the Potomac, advanced in the direction of the Confederate capital and fought a number of skirmishes and several battles along the way, including at the North Anna River, Mount Carmel Church, the Pamunkey River, Hawe's Shop, and Bethesda Church.
- June 3 – June 12, 1864. The regiment was heavily involved in the Battle of Cold Harbor, Virginia, a battle generally considered to have resulted in a Confederate victory. According to the Unit History, "It was the most destructive battle in which the regiment ever engaged." It lost 8 men killed and 49 wounded at Cold Harbor, including 10 who were mortally wounded.
- June 1864. Gen. Grant continued his thrust toward Richmond. However, because the Confederate capital was at that time heavily defended, particularly in the direction from which he was approaching, he decided to by-pass the city temporarily and to attack the Confederates at Petersburg, south of Richmond, even though according to the Unit History, some units, like the 36th Massachusetts' were only 12 miles of Richmond. By this time, combat casualties and sickness had taken their toll on the regiment to the point that by mid-June the number of officers and enlisted men was down to about 100, compared to 495 on May 6.
- June 9, 1864 – March 25, 1865. The attack on Petersburg turned into a protracted siege that lasted more than nine months until the Confederates decided to abandon the city. The 36th Massachusetts played an important role in that siege, being in the trenches on and off almost the entire time. It also witnessed and became involved in the aftermath of the fiasco of the Mine Explosion, now known as the Battle of the Crater, on July 30, 1864. By July 31, 1864, the regiment reported that it had 12 officers and 179 enlisted men ready for duty. Like other units entrenched before Petersburg, the regiment's losses resulted primarily from Confederate sharpshooters who harassed the Union forces incessantly. During this time, the 36th participated in relatively small battles that developed during the siege, including the Battle of Pegram's (Peeble's) Farm, also known as the Battle of Poplar Spring Church. This action resulted in 4 killed, 16 wounded, and 16 missing. In November, the regiment settled into what would become its winter quarters at what was known as Fort Rice, although it was still actively participating in the siege. It did not play a major role in the engagements during or after the abandonment of Petersburg by the Confederates on March 25, 1865.
- April 3 – April 9, 1865. The men from the 36th Massachusetts Regiment left their Fort Rice quarters on April 3 and entered Petersburg, where they helped distribute food and other items from the U.S. Army supply wagons to the city's residents who had been suffering due to the

siege. After a short time there, they were ordered to move with Grant's Army of the Potomac to pursue the Confederates who were moving west – towards Appomattox Court House. By April 6, the 36th was at Nottoway Court House, Virginia, 52 miles east of Appomattox. When Gen. Lee signed the surrender terms for his army at 3:30 PM on April 9, 1865, the regiment was at Farmville, Virginia, only twenty-some miles from the historic spot where, for all practical purposes, the Civil War came to an end.

The Unit History sums up what happened that afternoon and evening as follows: "Intelligence of the surrender was quickly transmitted to headquarters, and no pen can portray the effect upon the men as the glorious news spread from camp to camp like a conflagration. Men who in the stern hour of battle had been unmoved and undaunted; in gloom and disaster cheerful and hopeful; in hunger, privation, weariness, and in sickness calm and unruffled, now shouted and wept in turns like children, and gave expression to their feelings in yells of delight. The goal had at length been won, and the trials and hardships and sufferings of weary years had culminated in victory. Some of the men of our regiment, on duty at the church, entered it for the purpose of ringing the bell, but could find no bell-rope. Not to be baffled in his purpose, Michael Sullivan, of Company F, climbed up through a scuttle-hole over the gallery, and found a ladder under the seats, by which he ascended into the belfry. There remained about six inches of rope attached to the tongue of the bell, which he seized and struck with all his force, his head meanwhile being inside the bell. He rang the bell as long as his strength would permit, and its joyful peal was heard with astonishment by the town's people and with great delight by the troops. At night, bonfires were blazing everywhere, and a long time elapsed before quiet was restored." Unfortunately, Sgt. Jerome Peirce was among the many men of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment who had left Worcester, Massachusetts, back on September 2, 1862, who were not there to participate in the celebration.

THE PITCHING OF TENTS FOR THE LAST TIME AND HEADING HOME

- April 10 – April 19, 1865. The regiment remained at Farmville, Virginia, for a few days, and it was there that the men learned that President Lincoln had been assassinated on April 15, 1865. All unnecessary work was suspended on April 19, the day of the President's funeral.
- April 21 – May 23, 1865. On April 21, the 36th Massachusetts left Farmville and went by train to Petersburg and then on to City Point, Virginia, which it reached in the afternoon of April 22. After encamping there, on April 26 it boarded the steamer "Vidette" which headed north to Alexandria, Virginia, reaching that city on April 28. For the next three weeks, the men waited anxiously for what would likely be their last orders. During that time, they were allowed to go sightseeing in Washington, D.C., and Mount Vernon. The long-awaited order was received on May 21, and it specified that all units whose three-year enlistment terms would expire before October 1 would be mustered out in a matter of days. It also announced that a two-day Grand Review would be held in Washington, D.C., on May 23 – May 24. On May 22, the men marched to Washington and camped on the grounds just east of the Capitol that evening. They proudly passed in review in front of President Johnson, numerous state governors, and many military and civilian dignitaries the next day.
- June 8 – June 19, 1865. On June 8, the regiment was officially mustered out of the service, pending the receipt of their last pay. They started home to the Bay State and reached Readville, Massachusetts, (now part of the Hyde Park neighborhood of Boston) on June 10. There they pitched their tents for the last time and waited for their mustering out pay to be processed. On June 13, the men visited Worcester, where they received an enthusiastic "Welcome Back!" Finally at 4:00 PM on June 19 they assembled one last time and were paid in full. They were then discharged, and they headed home.

In the Conclusion Chapter of the Unit History, the veterans of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment proudly point out that

- Not one officer or enlisted man was dismissed from the service or dishonorably discharged,
- Not one officer or enlisted man was court-martialed,
- All the vacancies among the officers were filled from the rank and file of the regiment,
- Only one commission was issued to an officer to a person outside of the regiment and that was to fill the position of the chaplain,
- No appointments to an officer's position were made to any civilian, and
- Several officers and enlisted men were commissioned as officers in other regiments.

The men from the regiment held regular reunions of the Regimental Association, which they designated as "The Burnside Association of the Thirty-sixth Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers." These were held in Worcester, Massachusetts, each September 2, the anniversary of their departure "To the Front" from that city.

The Unit History concludes with a detailed listing of all the men who served in the regiment, which included their age, the town from which they enlisted, their muster-in date and information about their termination of service along with remarks. For Jerome Peirce (spelled "Pierce" instead of "Peirce"), the entry reads as follows:

Pierce, Jerome

Age: 31

Residence: Orange, Mass.

Mustered into service: Aug. 4, 1862

Remarks/Termination of service: Promoted sergeant. Killed in action at Spottsylvania, Va. May 12, 1864

RECAPITULATION OF LOSSES

The Unit History gives the following summary of the losses the regiment incurred:

- Killed and died of wounds in battle: Officers: 5, Enlisted men: 102
- Died of disease: Officers: 3, Enlisted men: 115
- Died in captivity: Enlisted men: 25
- Discharged or transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps (Originally known as the "Invalid Corps"), which was organized in April 1863 for disabled soldiers to perform light duty, thereby freeing able-bodied men to serve on the front lines: Officers: 9, Enlisted men: 360
- Deserted: Enlisted men: 37 (The number of deserters included six who deserted at Worcester before the regiment left that city and six others before it reached the seat of war.)
- Transferred to the Regular Army or Navy: Enlisted men: 6
- Transferred to the 56th Massachusetts Volunteers Regiment, to the Band of the Second Division of the Ninth Corps, and by special order of the War Department to another unit: Enlisted men: 29
- Discharged for promotion: Officers: 2, Enlisted men: 35
- Resigned: Officers: 15
- Honorably discharged: Officers: 2
- Discharged on expiration of service: Officers: 41, Enlisted men: 322

In comparison, the U.S. National Park Service's Soldiers and Sailors System gives the following numbers for the regiment's losses. The totals cited in the Unit History are likely to be more correct.

- Killed or mortally wounded: Officers: 6, Enlisted men: 105
- Died of disease: Officers: 3, Enlisted men: 160

In a previous chapter, some details of the 22 men from Orange, Massachusetts, who enlisted between August 4 and August 8, 1862, are given. Below is the “Termination of Service” and “Remarks” information for these 22 men.

Name	Age In	Enlistment Date	Rank In	Termination of Service/Remarks
Atherton, Amos B.	21	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Discharged for disability May 15, 1865
Bliss, Augustus E.	18	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Died of disease July 24, 1863, at Milldale, Miss.
Boyden, Henry	26	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Died of disease Aug. 15, 1863, at Vicksburg, Miss.
Foskett, Albert	22	Aug. 6, 1862	Pvt.	Discharged for disability May 25, 1865
Goddard, Artemas W.	23	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Transferred to Veteran Reserve Corps (Originally Invalid Corps) Jan. 5, 1864
Goddard, William H.	21	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Died of disease Aug. 17, 1863, at Louisville, Ky.
Harris, Caleb C.	18	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Died Oct. 3, 1864, of wounds received in action at Pegram’s Farm, Va., Sept. 30, 1864
Hills, James E.	20	Aug. 7, 1862	Pvt.	Discharged June 8, 1865, Expiration of service
Howard, Marcus M.	22	Aug. 6, 1862	Corp.	Promoted to Sgt. Discharged June 8, 1865, Expiration of service
Mayo, Henry H.	21	Aug. 4, 1862	Corp.	Killed in action at Wilderness, Va., May 6, 1864
Mellen, Jonathan M.	37	Aug. 8, 1862	Pvt.	Discharged for disability Dec. 8, 1863
Moore, Sumner	28	Aug. 6, 1862	Pvt.	Discharged June 8, 1865, Expiration of service
Peirce, Jerome	31	Aug. 4, 1862	Corp.	Promoted to Sgt. Jan. 1, 1864. Killed in action at Spotsylvania Court House, Va., May 12, 1864
Peirce, Joseph H.	18	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Prisoner of war. Captured at Pegram’s Farm Sept. 30, 1864. Exchanged. Discharged June 21, 1865
Rich, Osgood	25	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Discharged for disability April 23, 1864
Smith, William N.	20	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Promoted to Corp. Discharged for disability Dec. 23, 1864
Stevens, Edwin	39	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Killed in action at Campbell’s Station, Tenn., Nov. 16, 1863
Underwood, Samuel L.	20	Aug. 5, 1862	Pvt.	Discharged for disability Dec. 30, 1862
Ward, Edmund S.	25	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Died June 18, 1864, of wounds received in action near Petersburg, Va., June 17, 1864
Ward, Nathan W.	19	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Died of disease Oct. 21, 1863, at Knoxville, Tenn.
Woodward, Philip G.	25	Aug. 6, 1862	Sgt.	Promoted to 2 nd Lt. Oct. 26, 1863. Promoted to 1 st Lt. May 15, 1864. Wounded in action at Cold Harbor, Va., June 3, 1864. Promoted to Capt. Oct. 11, 1864. Mustered out with the regiment June 8, 1865

Woodward, Warner C.	27	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Promoted to Corp. Discharged for disability Dec. 23, 1864
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The following is a summary of the “Termination of Service” reasons for these 22 men:

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Killed or died of wounds	5	23%
Died from disease	4	18%
Discharged for disability	7	32%
Transferred to Veteran Reserve Corps	1	4%
Discharged with the regiment	<u>5</u>	<u>23%</u>
Total	22	100%

For all of the 101 enlisted men who served with Company H, the percentages are as follows:

Killed or died of wounds	12%
Died from disease	17%
Discharged for disability	30%
Transferred to Veteran Reserve Corps	6%
Discharged with the regiment	30%
Discharged by reason of the death of both parents	1%
Died as prisoners of war	2%
Transferred to the 56 th Massachusetts Regiment	<u>2%</u>
Total	100%

Finally, the Unit History indicates that for the entire regiment, 20.5% of all of the officers and enlisted men enrolled in the regiment were killed in battle, died as the result of wounds, or died from disease.

Of the above 22 young men from Orange, Massachusetts, who were, no doubt, in high spirits and totally committed to do their part for the Union cause when they boarded that train in Worcester bound for Boston on September 2, 1862, the percentage of killed, wounded, or disabled of 77% is dramatically higher than that same percentage of 65% for all of the enlisted men in Company H. By the time the Civil War ended, the men from Orange who returned home in June of 1865 at all or were in the same physical condition as when they left was a much small number.

CHAPTER 5

CONDITIONS ON THE LOCAL BATTLEFIELDS AFTER THE WAR AND SGT. PEIRCE'S RE-INTERMENT

Unfortunately, the exact location of Sgt. Jerome Peirce's grave on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield has been lost to history. We do know that, according to *The Roll of Honor*, which lists all of the interments in all of the National Cemeteries and which was published in 1870, his original grave was located on the McCool (also spelled "McCoull") Farm. The following letter, written by Lt. Philip Woodward, who commanded the company that Sgt. Jerome Peirce had served with, provides some details about his death and his burial on the battlefield. The letter is now in the possession of the Patricia Mason family in Dayton, Ohio. (See a subsequent chapter that describes this and other letters in more detail.) As indicated, in transcribing this letter, a few words were not readable.

Near Petersburg, Va., July 4, 1864

Mrs. Jerome Peirce

Madam – Your note came duly to hand. Should have answered it before but it would have been useless so far as concerns a final Settlement with the U.S. Gov. as it is also useless now. You are of course anxious to know all about your Husband's affairs and I shall [??] time in notifying you when I can do so. You know we are in the field. Our Co. [Company] Books, Blanks and all Co. [Company] Papers which would be very necessary for me to have in order to send you final statements that you may settle his account are left behind on Boats on the James River and I don't expect to see them again during the present Campaign.

Respecting Sergeant's death, I am afraid I can tell you but little more than J.H. has already written. I can with truth say that Sergt. was an esteemed friend of mine. That Co. H. had no other such a man – purely patriotic – philanthropic, ever lending a helping hand in sickness and working for his Comrades as well as for himself. His morals to the Lord[??] as you must know were strictly pure. No Profanity or Obscenities ever crossed his lips. [??] and while a soldier [??] he bore while at home. No one can say too much in his Praise. His loss is felt not only in his family but in his Co. and Regt. and wherever he was known.

The two last nights that he lived Jerome and I slept together. On the morning of the 12th of May [we] went forth to meet the Enemy. Jerome knew our Danger yet faced it like a brave soldier and was first of our company to fall. I did not see him fall as we were falling back under a cover of a Fence, the enemy coming down on us and occupying the ground on which he fell. Consequently his body was in the Enemy's hands for about 15 minutes. When we charged forward and not only took the ground we lost but a great deal more. Jerome's body lay in a very exposed position it was impossible to move it. But I went to him and took his Memorandum Book for I felt as though I ought to make an effort to secure some memento. The Book I gave to J.H. His body had to remain until after dark when we buried it the best that circumstances would permit. He was killed at about 7 o.c. [o'clock] AM. His other effects I turned over to J.H. I also found the Bullet that killed him. I took it from his left Breast – no one [??] he was hit, he must have died instantly. His grave is in a Pine Grove - well marked.

I sympathize with you in your affliction and shall be happy to serve you when opportunity arises. If it [??] would very much like a photograph of Jerome.

I wish to be remembered to Joseph Pierce and family. Should be happy to hear from them.

I am yours in sympathy
Philip G. Woodward
First (Lt.) Commanding Co. H 36th M. [Massachusetts] V. [Volunteers]

P.S. Me and my Rifle Platoon's on Picket which accounts for this Paper being so much soiled and so small.

Exactly when and how his remains were transferred from there to his final resting place in Grave No. 540 on a slope in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery on Marye's Heights also is not known with certainty, although based on the below information, his remains were probably re-interred in 1866 or not long thereafter.

Based on the research by recently-retired Staff Historian Donald C. Pfanz at the National Park Service's Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, we can get a good snapshot of the conditions on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield and other area battlefields soon after the war and when the re-interment probably took place. The below summary is heavily based on Historian Pfanz's soon-to-be-published book titled *Where Valor Sleeps, A History of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery 1866-1933*, sections of which he has kindly shared with the author. Although the original manuscript is well footnoted, only the most important sources have been explicitly cited herein. Pfanz has done extensive research on the Civil War battles that took place in central Virginia during his career with the National Park Service, and he is considered to be THE authority on the Fredericksburg National Cemetery.

THE CONDITIONS ON THE SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE BATTLEFIELD AFTER THE GUNS FELL SILENT

If anything, conditions for burying the dead were worse in the Wilderness and at Spotsylvania Court House than they had been one year earlier at Chancellorsville. The proximity of the two armies, added to the incessant nature of the fighting, left soldiers with little time or energy to inter fallen comrades. In the Wilderness, brush fires consumed large tracts of forest, making the task of identifying and burying the dead all the more difficult. When, after three days, the armies departed the Wilderness and moved to Spotsylvania Court House, they left thousands of unburied soldiers in their wake.

At Spotsylvania Court House the armies soon met again in a savage struggle lasting two weeks. The fighting reached its apogee on May 12, 1864, at a turn in the Confederate lines known as the "Bloody Angle." That was the day that Sgt. Peirce was killed early in the morning. When the Confederates abandoned their positions, Union forces briefly occupied the contested ground, now thickly carpeted with blue and gray corpses. To make the position tolerable, the Union soldiers threw the bodies of the dead in the trenches formerly occupied by their foes and kicked dirt from the adjacent parapet down on them. One soldier remarked, "The unfortunate victims had unwittingly dug their own graves."

Not all graves were so large and impersonal. For example, at the conclusion of the fighting at the Bloody Angle, William McVey took it upon himself to bury several friends who had fought with the 126th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. "A. M. Pollock was laid in first," he explained to the father of one of the dead, "and your son, (T. Hervey) was laid on his (Pollock's) right, and Arnold on the right of your son...and on the right of Arnold were two of Company C, Wharten and Brushear." A man named Thompson marked their graves with headboards, inscribing the names with paint made from a concoction of ink and gunpowder. McVey wrote his account two years after the event, by which time he could no longer recall how many headboards Thompson had erected, "I can't say whether he put a board up at the head of each

one or just at the heads of those that belonged to Company H, and one at the heads of those that belonged to Company C, and then he hewed the side off a stump that stood near the grave, and wrote their names on it." Thompson must have written Hervey's, Pollock's, and Arnold's names on a single headboard, as they were later buried together in Grave No. 3039. Wharten and Brushear occupy unknown graves. Like so many others, their headboards probably vanished before burial parties transferred their remains to the Fredericksburg National Cemetery.

When the armies left Spotsylvania Court House on May 21, 1864, many of the dead remained unburied. A Confederate cavalryman wrote, "The dead Yankees are heaped up in piles half as high as a man, in front of our breastworks, and all around on the Battlefield the dead Yanks are lying just as thick as they can be, and none of them are buried," adding, "they will all rot on top of the ground." Another Confederate, an infantryman in Ramseur's Brigade, remembered the ghastly upturned faces of the decomposing dead who lay between the lines. "Both parties seemed to be exhausted," he thought, "so much so as to prevent them from interring the fallen braves." A month after the battle, the 1st Maine Cavalry passed through Spotsylvania Court House and found "Federal and Confederate dead...lying around in all directions." The regiment halted briefly to bury the dead, but it could not have interred many, for by nightfall it was at Guinea Station, fifteen miles away.

Major David E. Cronin of the 1st New York Mounted Rifles was stationed near Spotsylvania Court House after the war and visited the Bloody Angle one year to the day after the battle, a month before Government burial parties arrived. "It was a field impossible to describe adequately," he remembered, "having been precipitately abandoned by both combatants, after Lee's desperate but vain attempt to prevent the extension of Grant's left. It presented an awful picture of the magnitude and ferocity of the war. In some places the remains of the dead of both armies lay in mingled heaps, partly covered with mounds of brushwood, placed there by a few citizens remaining in the neighborhood after the battle, to prevent the ravages of wild hogs. In many other places the rain had washed bare the shallow burial-trenches, disclosing hundreds of uniformed skeletons; but many bodies lay unsheltered, just as they had fallen."

One of the burial trenches along General Edward Johnson's front extended nearly an eighth of a mile and had been filled with corpses five and six deep. "...the upper tier was exposed," wrote Cronin, "and skulls, skeletons, arms and legs were visible for hundreds of yards, or as far as a view could be obtained – to a distant wood." Many of the bodies on Johnson's front had not been buried at all and still lay where they fell. "Some had been shot as they raised their heads above our slight entrenchments; others as they mounted them," observed Cronin, "many bodies lay between the lines which at one end were not twenty yards apart, and still others had lived to reach the enemy's parapet and fell over into his lines." Walking into the nearby woods, Cronin came upon a group of five Union soldiers exhibiting charred flesh – victims of a spot fire. He turned away from the sight with horror and disgust. "No enlightened man could dwell upon such a scene without deploring again and again, the backwardness of a civilization which renders possible the agony and horror of such a combat," he declared, even if they "died in the cause of Universal Progress."

In his 1865 survey, Brevet Major Hiram Gerrish was able to identify 511 of 2,205 Union soldiers buried at Spotsylvania Court House, nearly twice the percentage compared to any other local battlefield. The higher rate, 23.2 percent, may have something to do with the Army of the Potomac's lengthy occupation of the ground. Gerrish's burial statistics for Spotsylvania Court House did not include some men who had died as a result of the May 19, 1864, fighting at the Harris Farm. After that engagement, ambulances carried 500 wounded Union soldiers back to hospitals in Fredericksburg. The ambulance train halted for the night just outside of town, at the foot of Marye's Heights. By the time it continued its torturous journey the next day, many of the wounded had died. Soldiers buried the dead in a six-foot wide, 200-yard-long trench that ran north from modern Lafayette Boulevard in Fredericksburg. Located

approximately 100 yards east of the Sunken Road, the site of this trench, like those of the other two major burial trenches in front of Marye's Heights, now is covered by houses.

Identifying the dead was a daunting task. Few Civil War soldiers wore identification or “dog tags,” and many had been buried in mass graves or had not been buried at all. Some soldiers were fortunate enough to have marked graves, but in many cases residents burned the wooden headboards for fuel before the bodies could be collected. Consequently, 84 percent of the Union soldiers buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery are unidentified. Information on the remaining 16 percent is, in many cases, incomplete or in error.

In 1874, granite headstones replaced the original wooden headboards. Before ordering the headstones, the superintendent of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery at the time, Charles Fitchett, attempted to identify soldiers about whom he had only incomplete information. He compiled lists of incomplete names and sent them to adjutant generals throughout the Northern states in the hope that by comparing the information on the list against information on their regimental rosters, the adjutant generals could identify some of the soldiers. In most cases, they could not. Rather than bury these soldiers in unknown graves, Fitchett placed what little information he had on the headstones and buried the soldiers in individual graves. As a result, many headstones today contain just a soldier's initials or portions of his first or last name.

THE TEMPORARY CEMETERIES ON THE WILDERNESS BATTLEFIELD

The first postwar effort by the United States Government to inter Union dead who remained unburied in the South took place in June 1865, just two months after Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. Twenty-seven-year-old Brevet Major James M. Moore led the Union burial effort. Early in the war, Moore had been a lieutenant in the 19th Pennsylvania Infantry, but he later resigned in order to take an appointment as a captain in the Quartermaster Department, and he spent the last two years of the war supervising the burial of Union soldiers who had died in and around Washington, D.C., including having founded Arlington National Cemetery. He was an experienced man who knew his job.

On June 7, 1865, Inspector General James A. Hardie set Moore on a new task, directing him “to take charge of the duty of the burial of the Union soldiers, portions of whose remains, it is reported, are lying exposed on the fields of the engagements at Wilderness and Spotsylvania and in that vicinity.” The two battlefields fell within the aegis of the army's Middle Military Division. Before leaving, Moore reported to the Division's commander, Maj. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock, and received further instructions.

Hancock assigned Col. Charles P. Bird's First United States Veteran Volunteers to support Moore in this assignment. Bird had been a captain in the Second Delaware Volunteers in 1864 and had served under Hancock at both the Wilderness and at Spotsylvania Court House. Now, as the newly minted commander of the First United States Veteran Volunteers, he commanded a hodgepodge of officers and men who had reenlisted in the army after having previously served in other regiments.

The First Regiment shuffled onto the transport *U.S.S. Hugh Jenkins* at Alexandria, Virginia, on June 8, 1865, which steamed down the Potomac River to Potomac Creek, arriving at the former Union supply depot at Belle Plains at 7:30 that night. Moore met the regiment there the next day and led it on a twelve-mile march to Fredericksburg. En route it passed through southern Stafford County, an area made desolate by the Army of the Potomac's lengthy winter encampment there two and one-half years earlier. An officer in Bird's regiment, Second Lieutenant William F. Landon, likened the barren, sparsely populated region to a “desert – a Virginia Sahara.”

Marching past White Oak Church, the First Regiment reached Fredericksburg late on the afternoon of June 9 and pitched its tents on the south side of the Rappahannock River, one half mile west of the town. Some wandered the streets of the shell-torn town; others hiked up Marye's Heights, where the Union army had suffered a devastating defeat on December 13, 1862. Private James Riley visited the tomb of Mary Washington, which he found "chipped up very badly by relic seekers and bullets." He and a friend then strolled through the town in search of "southern beauties," only to find that the women "looked upon us as if we were of an inferior race."

Everywhere Riley looked, destruction met his eyes. He found "more than half of the town is burned and what houses are not burned are riddled with cannonballs." Graves dotted each lot. Unlike the Union soldiers who had perished in the Wilderness and at Spotsylvania Court House, most of those who had died at Fredericksburg had been buried immediately after the battle. Landon had fought at Fredericksburg with the 14th Indiana Volunteers, and he took the opportunity to search the town for the graves of comrades who had fallen there. He found only one.

Landon and his comrades resumed their march at 4 o'clock the next morning, June 10, 1865. By noon, the First Regiment reached the Chancellorsville Battlefield. It halted there for two hours to allow the soldiers to rest and eat dinner. The charred remains of the Chancellor House and the scattered remnants of blankets, knapsacks, and other equipment bore silent witness to the fierce struggle that had been waged there. Passing on, the regiment reached the Wilderness Battlefield late that afternoon. The soldiers bivouacked on the northern end of the battlefield at an abandoned goldmine – possibly the Woodville Mine. No sooner had they arrived than "a crowd of half-starved women and children" and a few men in Confederate uniforms flooded into the camp, hoping to trade garden vegetables for food that the soldiers carried in their wagons. "All the rations we could spare were freely given them," wrote Landon, but the demand far exceeded the supply and many went away hungry. One item not in short supply was cherries. After downing their army rations, Riley and his friend gorged themselves freely on the wild fruit.

The First Regiment began collecting skeletons on June 12, 1865, on the Wilderness Battlefield. Starting at the northern end of the battlefield, the soldiers slowly worked their way south through "woods, thickets, fields, and swamps," searching for human remains. Skeletons that lay in marshy ground had not fully decomposed. Too offensive to handle, they had to be buried where they lay. "At Saunders Field," remembered Riley, "we had coffins and we emptied the bones out into a pile and some of us picked out bones enough of the various kinds to make eight men and put them into one coffin and buried them. We buried about 100 that day." Although required to bury only the Union dead, Moore and Bird took it upon themselves to also inter Confederates they found, a task that nearly doubled their workload. Soldiers whose graves could be identified received a simple headboard.

After just one day on the Wilderness Battlefield, the First Regiment had collected thousands of bones and "a huge pile of grinning, ghastly skulls." To hold the remains, the soldiers constructed a cemetery south of the Orange Turnpike (now Route 20), near the western edge of Saunders Field. The graveyard was 60 feet square and was enclosed by a whitewashed fence made of horizontal planking. On one of the fence posts they nailed a board identifying the graveyard as "Wilderness National Cemetery No. 1."

The First Regiment buried the dead in mass graves. Landon recalled placing ten skulls in each coffin and filling the rest of the container with bones. Once full, soldiers screwed lids onto the wooden boxes and a "Corporal's Guard" lowered them into the ground, its occupants "unknown, but not unhonored nor unsung." By Landon's count, his regiment buried 35 coffins in this fashion, totaling 350 interments. The men of the First Regiment arranged the graves in neat, orderly rows. Over each one they erected a white wooden tablet with black lettering. Like those they erected elsewhere on the battlefield,

the tablets were approximately ten inches wide and one and one-half inches thick. They extended three feet above the ground and had gently rounded tops, as evidenced by a photograph of this temporary cemetery that has survived to this day.

Having finished the job along the Orange Turnpike, on June 13, 1865, Colonel Bird shifted his camp four miles to the south. The men pitched their “dog tents” in a large field just east of where the Brock Road intersected the Orange Plank Road. The next day, the soldiers fanned out to look for additional graves. As before, the regiment erected neat tablets over the graves of every Union soldier whom it found, known or unknown, and collected in sacks the remains of Union soldiers who had not been buried. The burial party interred Confederate soldiers too, but it only marked the graves of Southerners whom it could identify.

The First Regiment buried the Union skeletons that it found in a cemetery situated south of the Orange Plank Road, less than one half mile west of the Brock Road intersection. A whitewashed sign nailed to a tree identified the site as Wilderness National Cemetery No. 2. It was 90 feet square or 50 percent larger than the graveyard constructed earlier along the Orange Turnpike. A mile west of the Brock Road intersection stood the Carpenter Farm, the Second Corps’ field hospital during the battle. Bird’s men found four cemeteries there, one for each for the corps’ four division hospitals. Soldiers who had died at the hospitals were “thickly planted” about the place, their graves marked by crude headboards fashioned from cracker boxes and other rough materials.

GATHERING UNION REMAINS AT SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

The First Regiment completed its work on the Orange Plank Road in five days, and on June 19, 1865, it headed for Spotsylvania Court House. It followed the Brock Road – the same route used by much of Grant’s army in 1864. On the way, it passed Todd’s Tavern, a ramshackle frame building that had been the site of some minor fighting in the campaign. The remains of eight soldiers lay within sight of the road there. Bird and his men hastily committed the skeletons to the soil and continued on their way.

The First Regiment established its Spotsylvania camp in the rear of the Confederate works, at a point on the battlefield where the carnage had been particularly severe. Landon remembered the site as the “Death Angle,” although it has come down in history as the “Bloody Angle.” (It is interesting to note that in the Unit History of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, that area is also identified as the “Death Angle.”) Either name is appropriate, for it had been a site of indescribable horror. For twenty-two hours Union and Confederate soldiers had struggled there, often in hand-to-hand combat, the torn and mangled bodies of the dead piling up two, three, even four deep around the works.

Major Moore and Colonel Bird found few men to bury at Spotsylvania. The Army of the Potomac had buried many of the dead at the time of the battle, and Joseph Sanford, a local resident, had taken care of the rest. Sanford owned the Spotsylvania Court House Hotel and was the village’s most prominent citizen. In May of 1865 he had made arrangements with General William T. Sherman, whose army was passing through the area en route to the Grand Review in Washington, D.C., to bury the remains of Union soldiers that still littered the ground. The innkeeper had tackled the job with energy. By the time Moore and his party reached the battlefield just one month later, they found but few unburied. Moore intended to create a cemetery for these skeletons, as he had done in the Wilderness, but the summer heat rendered the remains so putrid that Bird’s men could not bear to handle them. Bowing to necessity, Moore ordered the men to bury the skeletons where they lay, marking with headboards those who could be identified, so that friends and family members could later find them. According to Riley, the regiment “buried the bones of 500 and covered up 1000 more.”

Although the war was not officially over, some family members had already started their search for the remains of their loved ones. Upon reaching Spotsylvania, the First Regiment met a Northern woman who had been at the battlefield for three days searching for her dead son. On its final day at Spotsylvania, one of the men of the regiment found the young man's remains and consigned them to his mother's keeping.

Bird's men completed their task on June 24, 1865. They had been in the field for just over two weeks. Before leaving the Bloody Angle on June 25 on their way back to Washington, a soldier nailed to a tree a board containing a stanza from Theodore O'Hara's poem, "Bivouac of the Dead." In ornate script, it read

On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread
And glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.

In the course of the expedition, the First Regiment had buried nearly 1,500 skeletons, erected headboards over the graves of 785 known soldiers, and marked as unknown the graves of many more. "Our 'Skeleton Hunt' has ended," wrote Landon, "the heroes of the fierce and bloody battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, who offered up their lives in defense of their country's honor and her flag in those terrible conflicts, are now, at last, reposing in peace beneath the 'sacred soil' of the Old Dominion."

Despite Landon's rosy assessment, the expedition had not been a complete success. Moore himself admitted as much. "Hundreds of graves on these battlefields are without any marks whatever to distinguish them," he informed General Hancock, "and so covered with foliage, that the visitor will be unable to find the last resting places of those who have fallen, until the rains and snows of winter wash from the surface the light covering of earth, and expose their remains." Bird took a more positive view of the matter. "...It may be that a few were passed over," he admitted, "but from the extensive growth of weeds and underbrush, it was impossible to discover them."

A copy of the final report from Major Moore and Colonel Bird, dated July 3, 1865, the original of which is located in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., is available in the research library at Chatham Manor in Fredericksburg, Virginia, the headquarters of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. It is titled "Wilderness and Spotsylvania Dead" and is described by Major Moore as being "the list of officers and men found on those battlefields [Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House] to whose graves headstones have been erected." For Spotsylvania Court House only, the list comprises 789 names. It is not clear whether the men from the First Regiment did anything with the markers that were already in place when they arrived, such as, presumably, the marker on the grave of Sgt. Jerome Peirce which had been placed there by the men in the 36th Massachusetts Regiment on the evening of May 12, 1864, before Gen. Grant continued the Union army's push further south toward Richmond.

Three names of men who were Peirce's comrades in the 36th Massachusetts are on that list, namely Sgt. A. F. (Fernando) Bailey, Co. C, buried at the Harris Farm; Sgt. George E. Freeman, Co. C, killed May 12, 1864, buried at the Harris Farm in the same grave as A. F. Bailey; and Pvt. Sanford Giles, Co. D., wounded May 12, 1864, and died of his wounds May 16, 1864, buried at the Harris Farm. However, Sgt. Jerome Peirce is not listed in this document – again, possibly because his grave (which they presumably found) already had a marker on it. A check of the Unit History of the list of the casualties at Spotsylvania Court House confirms that these three men were killed on that battlefield. It should also

be noted that the Unit History provides a list, by name, of those men in the 36th Massachusetts regiment who were killed or died of wounds at Spotsylvania. That list totals 24 men – again, a much higher number than included in the list prepared by Moore and Bird and the First Regiment.

A reconciliation of the men of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment killed or who died as the result of wounds received at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House is presented in Appendix E. In summary, although there is some discrepancy regarding a few men as to whether they were killed on the Wilderness or Spotsylvania Court House Battlefields, it appears that 18 of the 24 men from the 36th Massachusetts Regiment who are in that tabulation were buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, or 75%. That is a remarkably high percentage because in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery as a whole, only approximately 16% of the 15,243 men who died in the Civil War who are buried there are identified by name. (The cemetery is also the final resting place of approximately 300 men and women who were buried there after the Civil War. The cemetery was closed for additional interments in 1945.)

In the coming months it became evident just how many skeletons the burial party had missed. Lt. Col. Theodore Lyman visited the Spotsylvania Battlefield in April 1866, while the trees were still in bud, and he was shocked at the number of bones he found still scattered across the ground. “Not only are the remains not collected in a common cemetery,” he noted critically, “but many marked graves have been overlooked. Only the scattered dead are marked and of those probably only a portion.” Writer John T. Trowbridge had found a similar state of affairs in the Wilderness when he visited there in September 1865. Stepping into the woods, Trowbridge had found the skeletons of two soldiers lying side by side – the first of many such discoveries that he would make. “It must have been that these bodies, and others we found afterwards, were overlooked by the party sent to construct the cemeteries,” he mused. “It was shameful negligence, to say the least.”

Moore and Bird submitted reports of their expedition to General Hancock upon their return to Washington, D.C. To his report, Moore appended a list of 722 names of soldiers whose graves he had marked. Curiously, the list included at least a dozen Confederate soldiers. The War Department later published portions of Moore’s list in prominent newspapers throughout the North in order to give family members an opportunity to retrieve the remains.

The work done by Moore, Bird, and the men of the First Regiment remained intact for just one year. Confronted with the task of interring more than 15,000 Union soldiers in the Fredericksburg area, the War Department in 1866 decided to consolidate the graves of Union soldiers into the Fredericksburg National Cemetery located on Marye’s Heights. Over the next two years burial parties scoured the Fredericksburg region, bringing in wagonload after wagonload of human remains, including those of Sgt. Jerome Peirce, of course. Among them were the skeletons of soldiers buried by the First Regiment on the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House Battlefields.

Today, all traces of Wilderness National Cemetery No. 1 are gone, as are the individual plots of those once buried on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield. Only at Wilderness National Cemetery No. 2 evidence of Moore’s expedition remains. There, among the decaying leaves, one can still see shallow depressions in the earth, whose regular alignment identifies them as former graves – haunting reminders of the great “Skeleton Hunt” of 1865.

By the end of 1866, substantial progress had been made toward the completion of the concentrations of burials in existing burial grounds and the development of new cemeteries. In Virginia, Moore created ten national cemeteries, including the one at Fredericksburg, which received 2,442 remains during that year and eventually contained more than 15,000 burials. They include the recoverable remains from Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, as well as those found on the

battlefield of Fredericksburg. It is likely, therefore, that Sgt. Peirce's remains were re-interred in their final resting place probably in 1866 or soon thereafter.

CHAPTER 6

THE PEIRCE FAMILY AFTER JEROME PEIRCE'S DEATH ON MAY 12, 1864

The lives of Albinia and Lucy Peirce would, of course, never be the same after Jerome was killed on the battlefield at Spotsylvania Court House on May 12, 1864. Both lived long, but certainly not complete, lives, and reconstructing them from May 1864 until Lucy's death in August 1946 was challenging because no personal documents such as letters, etc., were found to shed any information on their lives. Instead, public records had to be relied on to piece together how they fared, along with some logical assumptions based on circumstantial, and sometimes fragmentary, evidence.

THE PEIRCE FAMILY UNTIL 1870

It is not known when or how Albinia received word that her beloved husband had met an untimely death on a far-away battlefield.

First, at the time of the Civil War, soldiers did not wear "dog tags," and the personnel record keeping systems of both armies were inadequate to deal with the sudden number of casualties. Sometimes, hundreds or even thousands of bodies remained unidentified on a battlefield after major battles, leaving families with no knowledge of whether or not a loved one had died, or, if so, when or how or where he was buried – if at all. When officials did attempt identification, it was often unreliable, resulting in live soldiers sometimes being recorded as deceased. As the war progressed, if they went into a battle where it was likely that they might be killed, soldiers pinned pieces of paper into their uniforms with their names on them, just in case their bodies needed to be identified after the battle. Fortunately, some of Sgt. Peirce's comrades identified his grave on the battlefield at Spotsylvania Court House before the Union army moved south toward Richmond.

Second, there was no official, efficient system for notifying the next of kin. If a body was identified, a fellow soldier might take it upon himself to write to the family of the deceased explaining how their loved one died and offering words of condolence. It was also customary for a company commander or the regimental chaplain to write a personal letter to the family of the deceased, giving some details of the soldier's death. No such document for Sgt. Peirce could be found. To help rectify this situation, in the spring of 1865, Clara Barton established the Missing Soldiers Office in Washington, D.C. Her organization eventually helped provide information for about 22,000 soldiers who would have otherwise remained unknown.

The Pension File does, however, contain the below official "To Whom it May Concern" statement written by the acting commanding officer of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment. It certainly was not very timely, since it is dated July 3, 1864, (almost two months after Jerome Peirce's death) when the regiment was engaged in the siege of Petersburg, Virginia. It is unknown how or when Albinia received a copy of this document. Possibly the War Department sent her a copy.

To all whom it may concern.

This is to certify that Jerome Peirce, a Sergeant of Company H, Thirty Sixth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, was killed on the twelfth day of May A.D. 1864 at Spotsylvania Court House Virginia, during an engagement with the enemy, and that he was in the performance of his duty at the time.

Given under my hand
at Head-quarters 36th Mass Vols near Petersburg Virginia, this third day of July 1864.

By the Commanding Officer

Wm. H. Hodgkins
Adj't

W. Smith
Captain, Comdr Reg't

It is even conceivable that she read about the death of her husband in a local newspaper. During the Civil War, the Northern newspapers covered the Civil War battles very extensively, as would be expected, and often printed special editions to inform their readers of the results of crucial battles. For example, one newspaper that served the greater Boston area from 1830 until 1941 was the *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*. It was published six evenings a week, generally consisted of four pages at the time of the Civil War, and sold for \$.03 an issue, or \$7.00 for a yearly subscription. It relied on its own field correspondents and those of partnering newspapers to bring the latest developments from the battlefield to its readers as fast as the correspondents could file them via the telegraph system that existed at the time. Depending on how far the battle took place from a telegraph connection, that usually meant that the latest news would appear in black and white within two or three days from when the battle took place.

The newspapers would also, on occasion, print the names of those killed or wounded who were from the area served by the paper. These reports, which were sporadic at best and not at all complete, were obtained from lists periodically issued by the War Department or sometimes sent directly to the newspaper by an army surgeon at a field hospital who wanted to keep families back home informed about the "boys" he had, unfortunately, treated. For example, the issues of May 12 and May 13, 1864, carried short columns with headlines such as "The Casualties in Monday's Battle" and "Casualties in Mass. Regiments."

The issues of the *Boston Daily Evening Transcript* for mid-May 1864 were reviewed for the summaries of the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House as reported by the field correspondents to see if, by chance, Jerome Peirce's name was mentioned. (Fortunately, the complete copies of this newspaper – as well as those of hundreds of other newspapers – are available on-line at the website news.google.com/newspapers.) As expected, he is not among the relatively few men whose names were printed in the newspaper out of the many men who were killed or wounded in those tragic days in early May at Spotsylvania Court House.

It is, however, interesting to skim through the headlines of the reports of that battle in that they were extremely biased (in favor of the Union cause) and border on the sensational in proclaiming that the

North was so successful on the battlefield that Gen. Lee's army would surely be annihilated very soon and that the Confederacy would collapse within a matter of days. Included was a "report" that Gen. Robert E. Lee had been wounded, which was retracted a few days later. For example, in reporting the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, some of the headlines scream in large, bold print – usually in all caps: "Gen Sherman Beats the Rebels," "Rebel Gen. Roddy Beaten – His Wagon Trains Destroyed, Canon Captured," "Rebel Losses Tremendous," "Victory by Gen. Stoneman," "Our Cavalry Cutting off Lee's Supplies," "Mourning in Rebeldom," "Lee's Boastful Bulletins Silenced," "The Enemy Constantly Retreating," "12,000 Rebel Prisoners Captured Already," "Capture of a Rebel Battery and More Prisoners," "Our Army in Fine Spirits," "Lee's Great Defeat on Thursday," "Sudden and Full Retreat of the Rebel Army at Night, Our Forces in Pursuit, The Retreat Becomes a Rout," and "Lee Abandons his Position – Generals Hancock and Wright After Him."

In any case, it is likely that Albinia received the sad news about her husband's death sometime in mid or possibly late May of 1864 because according to the below obituary, published in the *Bunker Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror* on June 25, 1864, a "Commemorative Service" was held on June 19, 1864, in "the church" in Orange, Massachusetts, at which Rev. Mr. Ballou officiated. Although the obituary contains very little information about Jerome or his family, it does mention that he had been the "Superintendent" of the church's Sunday School before he went off to war.

With the help of the librarian at the Orange, Massachusetts, Library, Charlene Deam, and the current minister at the church where Jerome Peirce taught Sunday School, Rev. Don Erickson, the following is a brief history of the church, which still stands today, and a biographical sketch of Rev. Ballou.

The church was organized in 1781 as "The Church of Christ in South Warwick" before that area in central Massachusetts became Orange. In 1785, the church was renamed as "The First Congregational Parish Society of Orange." It fell onto hard times almost immediately after the first minister was released, and for about 30 years the church had no minister, having infrequent services – mostly on holidays. In 1811, the Universalists began their rise, holding worship services beginning then. The church slowly but surely became more Unitarian and Universalist. In 1822, the first regular minister, who was a Unitarian, in some 32 years was called. However, it was not until Rev. Levi Ballou was appointed minister in 1843 that the church maintained any semblance of stability and financial security. It was under Rev. Ballou's leadership that the church became "The North Orange Universalist Church" and then "The Second Universalist Society of Orange." In 1945, "The Second Universalist Society of Orange" and "The Orthodox Congregational Church" in North Orange, merged to become the present "The Community Church of North Orange and Tully," a Universalist Congregational church.

According to Rev. Erickson, Rev. Levi Ballou, who was born in 1806, established and settled the church due to "his 22 years of steady presence and good preaching, as well as his general kindness." Although he retired in 1862, he often filled the pulpit in local churches subsequently. In fact, he preached at The North Orange Universalist Church on the Sunday before he passed away in 1865. He was also a gentleman farmer, probably out of necessity. Rev. Ballou was renowned for his eulogies and his services for Civil War veterans from Orange. The house he lived in still stands just up the road from the church.



THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NORTH ORANGE AND TULLY
(Courtesy of the church's website at <http://www.ccnoot.org>)

Again, thanks to Rev. Erickson, the papers of Rev. Ballou were located in the University of Notre Dame's Hesburgh Library, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, in Notre Dame, Indiana. Folder 69 in that collection is described as "Funeral sermon on 1 Corinthians 13:12, June 19, 1864. A funeral sermon delivered in North Orange, Massachusetts, for Cpl. Jerome Pierce, Company H, 36th Massachusetts Infantry." The Hesburgh Library was kind enough to provide copies of the contents of the folder, and the sections of that sermon that specifically relate to Sgt. Peirce were transcribed and are included herein as Appendix F, along with a description of the papers and a short biography of Rev. Ballou. Below are portions of that transcription.

"We are assembled, Christian hearers, under emotions of no ordinary character, to speak of a departed friend and brother; and to offer words of hope and consolation to the living. Another of the honored soldiers of Orange has fallen. The lamented Jerome Pierce who lived in our midst, highly esteemed and respected, is now, no more, in the land of the living. He has fallen in the cause of God and humanity. He has sealed his devotion to his country with his own blood.

We were first startled by rumors that he had fallen, yet for a moment, uncertainty and doubt prevailed, and we indulged faint hopes that it might not be so, but, soon the unwelcome news is confirmed, and the reality is forced upon us.

But a few months ago, we saw our departed brother, as he lived in our midst, faithfully discharging his duties in the various relations of life as a valued and efficient member of society. By his moral and social qualities, his religious characteristics, and his stern and enduring virtues, he endeared himself to our community, and, I trust, his memory is written in enduring affection on the tablets of our hearts.

By frequent intercourse with him, I learned something of the struggle that was then going on in his mind in regard to the perilous condition of our beloved country. Long before he volunteered his services, he frequently spoke of the great wickedness of the present Rebellion as a crime utterly unjustifiable in the sight of God or men and of the duty of sustaining and upholding the government. In

addressing this Sab. [Sabbath] School, of which he was the faithful Superintendent, this subject was often the theme of his remarks.

In his view, there were evidently but two courses to pursue in the present crisis of our national affairs, either, nobly to defend and sustain the government at whatever cost it may be, or shrinking from duty, leave it to be dismembered and perish, and thus bring upon ourselves the reproach and scorn of the civilized world. There was no middle ground to be taken. And the sacred sense of duty told him which path to take.

The voice of our bleeding soldiers already in the field was heard pleading for help to come to aid in sustaining the government and in repelling the attacks of the enemy. The nation called for aid and at the call, he volunteered his services in defense of liberty to sustain those Republican institutions which our fathers purchased with their own blood.

In conversing with him before he left, we learned his views and feelings. And by letters received while in the army, we see him ever cheerful and hopeful, believing that victory shall ultimately crown our efforts in suppressing the rebellion. But, in the heat of battle, while faithfully performing his duty to his country, amidst the hail of iron and lead that is hurled upon him, he falls a martyr to his country's cause, and his mangled and lifeless form now rests in a far distant land, among the graves of strangers.

The home which he gladdened with his smile and gentle words of affection has thus been darkened. Kind, benevolent, social, and cheerful in all his relations with others, he won their esteem, and his untimely loss we all feel and lament.

He went to the scene of conflict and danger with that calmness which only a deep conviction of duty could inspire. In conversing on the subject, though perfectly conscious of the dangers he incurred, he expressed the hope that he should live to return to his family.

During his brief stay here, many were the attachments formed, but our hopes of again seeing him return again to our midst, have been cut short, and we mourn that one so good and true should have fallen so early.

This event speaks to us all, especially to the middle-aged and youth with whom he mingled and associated and more directly to the Sab. School, over which he was the Superintendent, who have come out here to pay the tribute of respect to his memory. He also labored for the interest of this Sab. School for years, whose daily thought was to increase its usefulness, is gone.

And the memory of his labors, of his many amiable virtues, social and his general nature and the interest he took in your welfare we trust will not soon be erased from the tablets of your hearts. Steady and trustworthy in the affairs of life, he pursued the path that leads to honor and respectability.

In his letters to his friends here, he frequently spoke of the Sab. School. Its interests were remembered. He wished to know of its doings. In one, written but a short time before he fell, he says, "I wish to be remembered to the Sab. School." A few weeks before his death, in writing to his companion, then in Billerica, just before the army advanced, he says, "But you will think of the future, as we are now approaching the enemy, it is natural, but we can only rely on the same Power who has thus far led me on. I feel no sad presentiments, but, on the contrary, am hopeful." As we look over his letters, we see them pervaded by the spirit of an elevated religious faith and trust.

Again, he writes his companion, only 12 days before he fell, and after describing the place where he then was, as reminding him much of certain localities where they had in former days conversed and

strolled together. He adds that by the movements of the army, "It looks like a fearful future for some." He asks, "Shall we be spared the last fearful conflict?" "We hope all will be for the best."

He then speaks of his darling child to whom he sends some flowers which he had culled for her to keep to remember Papa and in closing says, "I hope to see you again soon."

Had we time, I would like to read extracts from other letters from him and the testimony of soldiers who have accompanied him in all their toils and weary marches. They all speak in high praise of his noble deeds as a true soldier.

Of the soldiers of N. Orange, he is the 10th who has offered up his life upon the altar of his country. The lists of their names I need not repeat. May God in mercy spare the lives of the handful that remain!

The memory of the many virtues of our departed brother, which shone in his life which he sojourned with us, his untiring devotion to his interests of our Sab. School, and his faithful labors for its good while he was its Superintendent and his ardent desires for the interest of society, we trust will not be forgotten.

And now, mourning friends, what more shall I say to you than I have said? I know the deep grief of your hearts. I know how feeble are any words I can utter in imparting the needed consolation. The one who was near and dear to your hearts has fallen, and you mourn your loss, but you mourn not alone, for we all mourn with you. The ties that bound a husband and wife, father and child, brothers and sisters, have been severed and a change has come over your homes.

To the partner of the deceased, we would say, we are sensible of the deep affliction that has come upon you in the death of a kind husband, the companion of your earthly existence. He has left you, at the call of your H. Father, no more to aid and cheer you with his society on earth. In the loneliness of your earthly abode, you will look to God for wisdom and grace to direct you.

May God grant all these mourners strength to bear this affliction and by realizing that the departed has only exchanged this world of trial and suffering for one of joy. May you be resigned to the doings of Him who "lets not a sparrow fall without his notice" and who knows when it is best for our friends to depart.

May his truth prove to these deeply afflicted mourners, to the remaining partner of the deceased, to brothers and sisters, and to all relatives and friends as "an anchor to the soul, sure, and steadfast."

And may this hour of grief become radiant with hope and joy in believing that you shall meet again your departed in that world where no sickness or pain shall enter, where none die, and where friends meet to part no more, forever.

Amen."

As Rev. Erickson indicated, Rev. Ballou also officiated at Commemorative Services for other soldiers from Orange, Massachusetts, who were killed in the Civil War. It turns out that there were three, in addition to Sgt. Peirce. Their records in the collection of Rev. Ballou's papers are described on-line as follows:

- Funeral sermon on Psalms 68:20, January 24, 1864. A funeral sermon delivered in North Orange, Massachusetts, for Pvt. Edwin Stevens, Company H, 36th Massachusetts Infantry.

- Funeral sermon on 2 Corinthians 5:2, May 29, 1864. A funeral sermon delivered in North Orange, Massachusetts, for Cpl. Henry H. Mayo, Company H, 36th Massachusetts Infantry.

- Funeral sermon on Psalms 108:12, July 10, 1864. A funeral sermon delivered in North Orange, Massachusetts, for Pvt. Edmund S. Ward, Company H, 36th Massachusetts Infantry.

All three men were from North Orange, and all three enlisted in Company H, 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, on the same date, i.e., August 4, 1862, with Jerome Peirce. The following shows where and when each was killed.

Name	Age In	Enlistment Date	Rank In	Termination of Service
Mayo, Henry H.	21	Aug. 4, 1862	Corp.	Killed in action at Wilderness, Va., May 6, 1864
Pierce, Jerome	31	Aug. 4, 1862	Corp.	Promoted Sgt. on Jan. 1864, Killed in action at Spotsylvania Court House, Va., May 12, 1864
Stevens, Edwin	39	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Killed in action at Campbell's Station, Tenn., Nov. 16, 1863
Ward, Edmund S.	25	Aug. 4, 1862	Pvt.	Died June 18, 1864, of wounds received in action near Petersburg, Va., June 17, 1864

Albinia made several important decisions after she learned of the death of her husband that would affect her and daughter, Lucy, for the remainder of both of their lives. What these actions were can be well documented, but when they were taken is not as certain.

First, she started the process of obtaining her widow's pension (initially \$8.00 per month) and a pension for her young daughter, Lucy, under the provisions of an Act of Congress dated July 14, 1862. To do so, she needed to complete a form titled "Widow's Declaration for Pension" (See Appendix C for the completed form as included in the Pension File), and she needed to prove the following:

- That she was the widow of Sergeant Jerome Peirce
- That Jerome Peirce had been killed in "The War of 1861," including some information as to where and when he was killed, his unit, and the cause of death
- That she had remained a widow since the death of her husband
- That if she had any children under the age of sixteen at the time of her husband's death, who would each qualify for an additional pension (initially \$2.00 per month), what the dates of birth of such children were
- That she had "not in any manner been engaged in, or aided or abetted the rebellion in the United States"

She also indicated on the form that she had engaged an attorney who would "prosecute the claim and procure a (pension) certificate" on her behalf. Appointing attorneys in pension filing cases was very common at the time because, they had the required forms, knew what documentation the Federal government's Pension Office would accept and where to file the paperwork, could follow-up on the application, could ensure that future pension increases would be received promptly, etc. A 2003 study of Civil War pensions found that between 1862 and 1907 approximately 86% of pension applicants used an attorney.

Because of the rapidly increasing number of men in the Union army who were wounded or killed as the war accelerated, attorneys saw an opportunity for new business, and law firms were founded primarily, or even exclusively, to handle pension cases throughout the North. Because such legal work was apparently quite lucrative and most cases were very routine, these attorneys regularly placed advertisements in newspapers aggressively soliciting such business. They even made house calls. Albinia selected Attorney A. B. Coffin of Boston to assist her. Below is a copy of a newspaper advertisement placed in the *Cambridge Chronicle* by the law firm of Middlesex War-Claim Association, which listed Attorney A. B. Coffin on its staff. (Middlesex refers to a large county, both in terms of population and square miles, in the eastern part of the state incorporating the northern suburbs of Boston.)

MIDDLESEX WAR-CLAIM ASSOCIATION.
Office 4 Niles Block, 33 School St., Boston.

THIS Association collects **Pensions, Bounties, Back Pay, and Prize Money,** and all other **Military and Naval Claims** against the Government, at reasonable charges and without cost until the claim is settled. Aid and advice rendered without charge.

PRESIDENT,
 Hon. JOEL PARKER.

VICE PRESIDENTS,
 Hon D. W. GOOCH, Hon. GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

A. B. COFFIN, Attorney, No. 33 School St., Boston.

—

WILLIAM W. BURRAGE, Attorney and Counsellor at Law, 4 Niles Block, Boston, will receive applications from families of Cambridge Soldiers — calling at their residences when requested. 37-tf

**CAMBRIDGE CHRONICLE,
 VOL. XVIII, NO. 39, SEPTEMBER 26, 1863**

Albinia Peirce and her attorney collected the various required documents, and her pension application was approved on September 6, 1865, retroactive to May 12, 1864, the date that Jerome was killed, although some of the required proof was not submitted until substantially later. For example, the document from the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts certifying that Lucy S. Peirce was born in Charlestown (Mass.) on December 26, 1859, was dated February 20, 1867. See Appendix C for a summary of the applicable documentation included in the Pension File.

Second, Albinia decided to move with Lucy from Orange, Massachusetts, back to the Boston area to live with her parents. However, when exactly she made that move could not be determined. In the above referenced Widow's Declaration for Pension, which is dated November 1, 1864, she stated that she lived in Billerica, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, indicating that she probably moved soon after she received the news about Jerome's death. In the next U.S. census, i.e., in 1870, she and Lucy were living with Albinia's parents in Billerica as shown below.

**1870 U.S. Census for Billerica, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of June 1, 1870
(Enumerated on July 20, 1870)**

Name	Age	Approx. Year of Birth Based on Age	Occupation	Value of Real Estate	Value of Personal Estate	Place of Birth
Franklin Jaquith	70	1800	Farmer	\$6,000	\$800	Massachusetts
Lucy Jaquith	63	1807	Keeps home			Massachusetts
Franklin Jaquith, Jr.	29	1841	Works in machine shop		\$1,000	Massachusetts
Abbie Jaquith	34	1836	None			Massachusetts
Mary Jaquith	28	1842	At home			Massachusetts
Joseph Jaquith	26	1844	Glue manufacturer		\$1,000	Massachusetts
Albinia Peirce	36	1834	None			Massachusetts
Lucy S. Peirce	10	1860	At home			Massachusetts

The State of Massachusetts conducted its own censuses at ten-year intervals from 1855 until 1945, but only the ones from 1855 and 1865 have survived, the others having been lost or destroyed. Somewhat unexpectedly, Albinia and Lucy Peirce were not listed in the 1865 census living with Albinia's parents as shown below.

**1865 Massachusetts Census for Billerica, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of May 1, 1865
(Enumerated on June 24, 1865)**

Name	Age	Approx. Year of Birth Based on Age	Occupation	Married or Single	Place of Birth
Franklin Jaquith	65	1800	Farmer	Married	Massachusetts
Lucy Jaquith	58	1807	Housekeeper	Married	Massachusetts
Abigail Jaquith	29	1836	Seamstress	Single	Massachusetts
Mary Jaquith	23	1842	Teacher	Single	Massachusetts
Joseph Jaquith	22	1843	Farmer	Single	Massachusetts

As an aside, Franklin Jaquith, Jr., was shown in that census as also living in Billerica but not with his parents.

A line-by-line search for Albinia and Lucy Peirce in both Orange and Billerica, Massachusetts, and a general search in the entire state of this 1865 State of Massachusetts census, using all logical surname spelling variations, was conducted, and neither Albinia nor Lucy was found.

Third, Albinia Peirce tried to determine where Jerome was buried after he was killed on May 12, 1864, during the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. Again, there is no doubt that the family tried, and finally succeeded, in locating Jerome's final resting place. What is not clear is when that effort was made, by whom, and how.

The best evidence of Albinia trying to find Jerome's grave is in the obituary in a Massachusetts newspaper for the Fredericksburg National Cemetery Superintendent Andrew Birdsall that was published shortly after Birdsall's death on February 20, 1897. It reads, in part, as follows:

“It will be remembered that for long weary months after Mr. Jerome Peirce was slain in battle that no knowledge of his place of burial could be obtained by his bereaved widow and child. After casting about in many ways without success and her brother Franklin Jaquith, quietly resorting to correspondence with superintendents of different National cemeteries, a most definite and satisfactory response was received from Major Birdsall of Fredericksburg, stating reliable facts of his burial there.”

This obituary strongly implies that the search for Sgt. Peirce’s grave was undertaken shortly after he was killed on May 12, 1864, and that after “long weary months” Superintendent Birdsall confirmed that Sgt. Peirce was buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. This chain of events presents a timing problem because Superintendent Birdsall was not appointed superintendent of the cemetery until November 1883. There is no logical, easy explanation for this apparent discrepancy. Furthermore, the family knew that fairly soon after Sgt. Peirce was killed that he had fallen at the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield as evidenced by documents in the Pension File. Therefore, they knew, or should have known, that he was very likely buried there. Likewise, they knew, or could have readily determined, that the remains of the men who had initially been buried at Spotsylvania Court House were re-interred in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery starting roughly in July of 1866, when the cemetery was established. In summary, when the search for Sgt. Peirce’s grave was initiated and when its location was confirmed could not accurately be determined.

THE PEIRCE FAMILY AFTER 1870

Unfortunately, Albinia Peirce disappeared for a while from the public records after the 1870 U.S. census. By the 1880 U.S. census, Albinia’s father, Franklin, had died (in 1876), but her mother, Lucy, was still living, being 73 years old then. The Lucy Jaquith household that year included Albinia’s sister, Abigail (age 44) and her brother, Franklin, Jr., (age 41), but it did not include Albinia or Lucy Peirce. In case she might have been living with another relative that year, the census for Billerica was searched line by line, but she was not found, with the same negative result for the entire state of Massachusetts. All logical surname spelling variations, such as Pierce, were tried. Although someone not being enumerated in a census is not very common, it appears that she was not counted in that census.

Again, unfortunately, she could not be located in the 1890 census because in 1921, 99% of the records for that census were destroyed in a major fire, and by the subsequent water damage, in the basement of the U.S. Department of Commerce Building in Washington, D.C. The fire occurred before any of the records could be microfilmed, and none of the records for Massachusetts survived. Albinia does, however, surface again in the 1900 census as shown below.

We are more fortunate to be able to learn considerable details about Lucy after 1870, when she was 10 years old. (She observed her eleventh birthday on December 26, 1870.) The Howe School, also known for a time as the Howe High School, was an important part in her life, as well as in the lives of several Jaquith children. The librarian at the Billerica Public Library, Kathy Meagher, was extremely helpful in finding information about this school and its role in the Jaquith and Peirce families. As a matter of fact, in researching the detailed and well-preserved records of this school, it was discovered that Albinia Jaquith (later Peirce) was admitted in 1852, the first year the school was in operation, as listed below. There is no record, however, that she graduated from the Howe School.

The Howe School is a three-story historic school building at 390 Boston Rd. in Billerica, Massachusetts. It was built in 1852 with funding from a bequest of Dr. Zadok Howe, and it was at first a prestigious private academy. Dr. Howe died before construction of the building was completed, and his estate ran the school, free of charge to Billerica residents. It took in students from all over New England and some from as far away as Illinois. In the early years, the total enrollment was typically 46 boys and

42 girls. In 1897, it was designated the town's high school, and it later served as a grade school and as school administration offices. It operated continuously until about 1916 when the new Howe High School was opened across the street from the original Howe School. The building remained an asset of the Billerica School Department until the 1980s. The building is now operated by the Billerica Historical Society as a museum.



THE HOWE SCHOOL

(Courtesy of the Billerica Historical Society website
<http://www.billericahistory.org/howeschoolmuseum.html>)

The *Catalogue of Howe School, Incorporated Feb. 27, 1852, Billerica, Mass.*, published in August 1880 and a subsequent edition published in June 1897 provide the following information. It is interesting to note that the surname is spelled both “Peirce” and “Pierce.”

Admitted 1852: **Albinia Jaquith** (Mrs. Peirce, Married in 1857, Husband deceased)

Franklin Jaquith (Served in the U.S. Army) [Note: This was Albinia’s brother.]

Admitted 1853: Abigail Jaquith [Note: This was Albinia’s sister.]

Admitted 1855: Mary F. Jaquith (Mrs. Foster, Married in 1870) [Note: This was Albinia’s sister.]

Admitted 1856: Joseph Jaquith (Married Miss A.M. Baldwin in 1872) [Note: This was Albinia’s brother.]

Admitted 1857: Thaddeus Jaquith (From North Andover, Mass., Married Miss Berricume in 1866)

Harriette W. Jaquith (Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Drew) [Note: This was Albinia’s sister.]

Admitted 1872: **Lucy S. Pierce** (Graduated from Salem State Normal School in 1880)

Graduated 1876: **Lucy S. Peirce**

Born in Charlestown, Mass. Dec. 26, 1859.

Completed four years course at Salem Normal School in 1880.

Has taught as Assistant and Principal in high schools.

At present [1897] Instructor in History and Literature at Howard Seminary, West Bridgewater, Mass.

It should be noted that none of the other Jaquiths are shown on the lists of the school’s graduates. That may not have been very unusual since the lists of graduates are much shorter than the lists of admitted students for all of the years the school was in operation.

The following photographs of Lucy Peirce as a young lady were found among the letters that have been passed down through several generations and are now in the possession of Patricia Mason, the great-grandniece of Lucy’s mother, Albinia Jaquith Peirce. Unfortunately, they are not dated. (See Appendix G for a description of the letters and transcriptions of some of them.)



LUCY SHERWIN PEIRCE
(Courtesy of the Patricia Mason Family)

Thanks to the research of Susan Edwards at Salem State University, Salem, Massachusetts, the following is information about Lucy’s career after she graduated from Salem Normal School (now Salem State University), as shown in that school’s *Alumni Record*.

LUCY PEIRCE’S HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAREER

1872	Admitted to the Howe School, Billerica, Mass.
1876	Graduated from the Howe School, Billerica, Mass. Entered Salem Normal School, Salem, Mass.
1878	Graduated from the two-year course at Salem Normal School, Salem, Mass.
1880	Returned to Salem Normal School to attend the Advanced Course, a “more classical education” that prepared graduates to teach in high schools
1881 – 1892	Assistant teacher at Princeton, Mass., High School
1893 – 1896	Assistant teacher in an unnamed private school
1897 – 1898	Teaching history and literature at Howard Seminary, West Bridgewater, Mass.
1899 – 1900	Attended Radcliffe College as a “special” student, taking English and History courses
1899 – 1904	Teacher at Sanborn Seminary, Kingston, N.H. (See the 1900 U.S. census below)
1905 – 1916	Teacher at the Allen Boys’ School, West Newton, Mass.
1916 – 1935	On the staff of the World Peace Foundation, Boston, Mass. (See below)

The World Peace Foundation was established in 1910 by Edwin Ginn, a Boston-based publisher of educational texts and an advocate for international peace. Its mission was (and still is) “Educating the people of all nations to a full knowledge of the waste and destructiveness of war and of preparation for war, its evil effects on present social conditions and on the wellbeing of future generations, and to promote international justice and the brotherhood of man, and generally by every practical means to

promote peace and goodwill among all mankind.” It is now a foundation affiliated with The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Tufts University is a private research university located in Medford/Somerville, near Boston, Massachusetts.

The length of time that Lucy worked for The World Peace Foundation is confirmed by her obituary, which states that she “was employed for 19 years in the office of The World Peace Foundation on Beacon Hill (in Boston).” Efforts by the staff of The World Peace Foundation to determine what exactly her responsibilities were at the Foundation were unsuccessful. Curiously, in the 1920 U.S. census, Lucy’s occupation was recorded as “None.” In the next U.S. census, in 1930, she reported her occupation as “Clerk in a statistical office.”

The next snapshot of Albinia and Lucy Peirce is found in the 1900 U.S. census as shown below. Both of Albinia’s parents had died by then, and she was living with her younger brother, Franklin Jaquith, Jr., in Billerica, Massachusetts. Because of the amount of data collected for this census, the information for this household is shown in two sections. Information for two unrelated individuals in the household, one servant and one boarder who was employed as a day laborer, is not shown. Except for misspelling Albinia’s first and the last names of Albinia and Lucy, the information in this census is consistent with that found in other sources. This census also confirms that Lucy’s father, Jerome, was born in New York State.

**1900 U.S. Census for Billerica, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of June 1, 1900
(Enumerated on June 12, 1900)**

Name	Relation-ship	Age	Month of Birth	Year of Birth	Marital Status	No. of Years Married	No. of Children	No. of Children Living
Franklin Jaquith	Head	60	Dec.	1839	Married	2		
Susan H. Jaquith	Wife	61	Sept.	1838	Married	2	0	0
Abigail Jaquith	Sister	64	July	1836	Single			
Albinia Pierce	Sister	66	June	1833	Widowed		2	1
Lucy Pierce	Niece	40	Dec.	1859	Single			

**1900 U.S. Census for Billerica, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of June 1, 1900
(Continued)**

Name	Place of Birth of Person	Place of Birth of Father	Place of Birth of Mother	Occupation	Home Owned	Home Mortgaged
Franklin Jaquith	Mass.	Mass.	Mass.	Glue manufacturing	Yes	No
Susan H. Jaquith	Mass.	Mass.	Mass.			
Abigail Jaquith	Mass.	Mass.	Mass.			
Albinia Pierce	Mass.	Mass.	Mass.			
Lucy Pierce	Mass.	New York	Mass.	Teacher		

Albinia’s younger brother, Franklin Jaquith (known as Franklin Jaquith, Jr., when his father was still alive), who is the head of the household in the above census, also served in the Civil War. He is one of the relatively few men who fought in the Civil War who enlisted both in the Union army and in the Union navy. For his first term of service, he enlisted in Company K of the 6th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment as a private on August 30, 1862. This was a “Nine Months Regiment” which was organized in Lowell, Massachusetts, on August 31, 1862. The men were mustered out on June 3, 1863, having

completed their nine months of service. Franklin Jaquith (spelled in some records as “Jacquith”) enlisted the second time on August 4, 1864, this time in the U.S. Navy for one year. He was stationed on the *U.S.S. Circassian* and the *U.S.S. Ohio* until he was discharged on July 10, 1865. His rank in the navy was “Landsman.” This was a rank used by the U.S. Navy from 1838 until 1921 for new recruits with little or no experience at sea.

Despite extensive efforts to find Lucy Peirce in the 1910 U.S. census, including line-by-line searches in places she might have lived, she could not be located. However, Albinia was found living with her brother, Franklin, and his family on Bedford Road, in Billerica, Massachusetts, as shown below. It is interesting to note that the number of children Albinia had is shown (incorrectly) as one.

**1910 U.S. Census for Billerica, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of April 15, 1910
(Enumerated on April 19, 1910)**

Name	Age	Relationship	Marital Status	No. of Children	No. of Children Living	Occupation	Place of Birth
Franklin Jaquith	70	Head	Married	0	0	Farmer	Mass.
Susan Jaquith	71	Wife	Married	0	0		Mass.
Abigail Jaquith	74	Daughter	Single				Mass.
Albinia Peirce	75	Sister	Widowed	1	1	Seamstress at home	Mass.

As shown below, between 1910 and 1920, Albinia and Lucy lived in various locations per city directories on ancestry.com. It is interesting to note that Lucy’s occupation is given as “Bookkeeper.” This conflicts with her occupation shown above in the Salem Normal School’s *Alumni Record*. Per Google Maps and Google Street View, the address of 17 Claflin Place is still a valid address, and the “Street View” shows that it is a modest, multi-family house that may not have changed much since Albinia and Lucy lived there. Newtonville is an area of the Town of Newton, Massachusetts.

Year	Information from City Directories
1911	Albinia J. Pierce Widow of Jerome Pierce, Boards at 15 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Mass. Lucy S. Pierce, Bookkeeper in Boston, Boards at 15 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Mass.
1913 (Same as in 1911)	Albinia J. Pierce Widow of Jerome Pierce, Boards at 15 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Mass. Lucy S. Pierce, Bookkeeper, Boards at 15 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Mass.
1915 (Same as in 1911)	Albinia J. Pierce Widow of Jerome Pierce, Boards at 15 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Mass. Lucy S. Pierce, Bookkeeper, Boards at 15 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Mass.
1916	Albinia J. Peirce, widow of Jerome, Boards with F. [Franklin] Jaquith, Concord Rd., Billerica, Mass. (See the 1920 census below) (Lucy Pierce was not found in any City Directories in 1916. However, the 1917 Directory (below) still shows her living at 15 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Mass.
1917	Albinia J. Pierce Widow of Jerome, Removed (Moved) to Billerica, Mass. Lucy S. Pierce Boards at 15 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Mass.

The Pension File includes the following three documents during the 1910 – 1920 time period that pertain to Albinia’s pension.

1. A letter dated October 11, 1913, to the Pension Office for information regarding Albinia Peirce’s pension from Massachusetts Senator John W. Weeks. The letter requested 1) the amount of the pension then being received by Albina (instead of Albinia) Peirce, 2) if there was any application for an increase then pending, and 3) if she might be entitled to an increase in her pension. (John Wingate Weeks (1860 – 1926) was the mayor of Newton, Massachusetts, from 1902 to 1903, a U.S. Representative for Massachusetts from 1905 to 1913, a U.S. Senator from 1913 to 1919 from Massachusetts, and the U.S. Secretary of War from 1921 to 1925.)

2. A letter from the Pension Office dated October 14, 1913, in response to Senator Weeks’ above letter. It indicated 1) that Albinia Peirce was then receiving a pension of \$12 per month under the Pension Act of March 19, 1886, 2) that there was no increase of the pension amount pending, and 3) that there was no provision under the law under which an increase could be granted.

3. A notice (presumably from the Pension Office dated August 7, 1914) that Albinia Peirce’s pension was increased to \$20 per month as the result of a newly enacted pension law.

Also, on August 9, 1918, Julia A Birdsall, wife of Fredericksburg National Cemetery Superintendent Andrew Birdsall died. (Andrew Birdsall had died on February 19, 1897.) That meant that the Birdsall daughters would “inherit” the responsibility of decorating Jerome Peirce’s grave on future Memorial Days.

The last U.S. census in which Albinia was counted was the one in 1920. It was taken very shortly before she died. The following is the excerpt from that census that lists her and her daughter Lucy. It is interesting to note that the enumerator listed her surname as Jaquith, although it clearly should be Peirce, based on the fact that Albinia is shown as Franklin Jaquith’s sister, and Lucy is listed directly below Albinia as his niece. Per that census, both Albinia and Lucy were living with Franklin Jaquith on his farm on Concord Road in Billerica, Massachusetts, that year. This census again confirms that Jerome Peirce was born in New York State.

**1920 U.S. Census for Billerica, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of January 1, 1920
(Concord Road)
(Enumerated on January 29, 1920)**

Name	Age	Relation-ship	Marital Status	Place of Birth of Person	Place of Birth of Father	Place of Birth of Mother	Occupation
Franklin Jaquith	80	Head	Married	Mass.	Mass.	Mass.	Farmer
Susie Jaquith	81	Wife	Married	N.H.	N.H.	Mass.	None
Albinia Jaquith (Should be Peirce)	85	Sister	Widowed	Mass.	Mass.	Mass.	None
Lucy Peirce	60	Niece	Single	Mass.	N.Y.	Mass.	None

Almost certainly, Lucy Peirce was counted twice in the 1920 census, an uncommon, but certainly not an unheard-of occurrence. Above she is listed living in Billerica, Massachusetts, with her mother and her uncle, which confirms that she is the “correct” Lucy Peirce. In the below listing, she is a single boarder living at 17 Claffin Place in Newton, Massachusetts. This was her address for years prior to 1920, as shown in the City Directories above, and it was still her address in 1946 when she died according to her obituary that is shown below – again confirming that she is the “correct” Lucy Peirce. In addition to

Lucy Peirce and Marion D. Richardson, who is shown as the “Head of the household” since she operated the boarding house, four other women are listed in that “household,” all of them teachers. They are not included in the below excerpt.

**1920 U.S. Census for Newton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of January 1, 1920
(17 Claflin Place)
(Enumerated on January 10, 1920)**

Name	Age	Relation-ship	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Occupation
Marion D. Richardson	47	Head	Widowed	Vermont	None
Lucy S. Peirce	60	Lodger	Single	Massachusetts	None

The following photograph of Albinia Peirce was found among the letters that were passed down through several generations and are now in the possession of Patricia Mason, the great-grandniece of Albinia Jaquith Peirce. Although it is not dated, it was obviously taken late in her life. (See Appendix G for a description of the letters and transcriptions of some of them.)



ALBINIA J. PEIRCE
(Courtesy of the Patricia Mason Family)

Albinia Peirce died on February 29, 1920, that date being confirmed by the inscription on the family gravestone in the Billerica, Massachusetts, cemetery and by the following very short death notice in the March 18, 1920, issue of *The Christian Register*. No detailed obituary for her could be located. “PEIRCE – In Billerica, Mass., February 29, 1920, Mrs. Albinia J. Peirce, widow of Jerome Peirce, in her eighty-sixth year.”

At the time of her death, Albinia was still a member of the Unitarian Church because *The Christian Register* was a weekly publication of the American Unitarian Association that was published in Boston from 1821 until 1957. Its name was changed in 1957 to *The Unitarian Register*, and in 1961 it merged with the *Universalist Leader*. It is still published today as *UU World*.

Lucy Peirce stayed in touch with Orange, Massachusetts, where she spent her first few years, according to an article in the weekly *Orange Enterprise and Journal* of August 12, 1921, forwarded by Linda Temple, a historian at the Orange, Massachusetts, Historical Society. The lengthy article, headlined “Happy Times at North Orange,” describes in detail the festivities at the twenty-second annual reunion of “North Orange former residents and friends.” (North Orange is a district within the Town of Orange, Massachusetts.) One of the “events” was the reading of letters from residents who were no longer living in North Orange and could not attend. One of those letters was from “Mrs. Lucy Peirce of Newtonville.” (Of course, “Mrs.” should have been “Miss.”) Although, unfortunately, the article does not give any specifics about the contents of Lucy’s letter, it states, “Mrs. Peirce was remembered by many residents as the daughter of Jerome Peirce who enlisted in the Civil War while living in North Orange and was killed in battle. He was superintendent of the Universalist Church Sunday School at the time.”

In the 1920s, Lucy Peirce continued to live at 15 Claflin Place in Newtonville (Newton), Massachusetts, as evidenced by the City Directories published in 1921, 1923, 1925, 1927, and 1929. In the 1930 U.S. census, she was listed as shown below. As in the 1920 U.S. census, Marion D. Richardson, was still the “Head of the household,” since she still operated the boarding house, and four other women were again listed in that “household,” all of them teachers. They are not included in the below excerpt.

**1930 U.S. Census for Newton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of April 1, 1930
(17 Claflin Place)
(Enumerated on April 10, 1930)**

Name	Age	Relation-ship	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Occupation
Marion D. Richardson	57	Head	Widowed	Vermont	Lodging house keeper
Lucy S. Peirce	71	Lodger	Single	Massachusetts	Filing clerk in a statistical office

Since the *Alumni Record* of the Salem Normal School and Lucy’s obituary both show that she was employed by The World Peace Foundation in 1930, this census provides more information as to what her duties were at the Foundation.

During the entire 1930s decade, Lucy lived at 15 Claflin Place in Newtonville (Newton), Massachusetts, as shown in the City Directories of 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1936, and 1938. (Directories were typically not published every year, and more than one company sometimes published directories for different parts of large metropolitan areas (sometimes overlapping), such as greater Boston.)

Lucy Peirce was counted for the last time in a U.S. census in 1940, as shown below. She still boarded at the same address where she had lived for many years (17 Claflin Place, Newtonville, Massachusetts), but the housekeeper of the boarding house had changed. Again, four other women were living at that same address. As an aside, finding Lucy in that census turned out to be a significant challenge. Because of the poor penmanship of the enumerator and the lack of attention to detail by the indexer, she was indexed in the ancestry.com database as “Luay B. Beirce” instead of “Lucy S. Peirce.”) Subsequent to that census, Lucy was listed as living at this same address in the 1940, 1943, and 1945 City Directories.

1940 U.S. Census for Newton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts as of April 1, 1940
(17 Claflin Place)
(Enumerated on April 16, 1940)

Name	Age	Relation-ship	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Occupation
Cora W. Rogers	66	Head	Widowed	Vermont	Teacher, public school
Lucy S. Peirce	80	Roomer	Single	Massachusetts	None

Lucy Peirce died on August 8, 1946, at age 86. Below is a copy of her obituary that was published in *The Newton Graphic* newspaper on August 15, 1946. This newspaper was published weekly from 1882 until 1997 in Newton, Massachusetts. The “Sunday” referred to in the obituary was August 11, 1946, while the “Thursday” was August 8, 1946. The highlights of her life as mentioned in the obituary agree well with the information found in this study.



OBITUARY OF LUCY S. PEIRCE
Published in *The Newton Graphic* on August 15, 1946

Her teaching at the Curry School of Expression (now Curry College) was not discovered until this obituary was found. Likewise, her position as an assistant at the Widener Library at Harvard College did not surface prior to this obituary being found.

A search of the archives of the Levin Library at Curry College shows that Lucy Sherwin Pierce (instead of Peirce) was on the faculty of the Curry School of Expression from 1906 until 1907. A notation accompanying her name reads “Radcliffe College.” The above information from the Salem Normal

School *Alumni Record* indicates that she was teaching at the Allen Boys' School, West Newton, Mass., from 1905 until 1916. Therefore, unless there is an error in one of the sources, it is possible that she held part-time teaching positions at both The Curry School of Expression and/or at the Allen Boys' School.

What is now Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts, was founded in 1879 in Boston as the School of Elocution and Expression by Samuel Silas Curry. It became the School of Expression in 1885 and then Curry College in 1943. Today, it is a private liberal arts institution with an enrollment of about 4,250 students.

To determine Lucy's connection with Radcliffe College mentioned in the Curry School of Expression records, the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University was contacted. As background, Radcliffe College was founded as a liberal arts college in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1879 and was a "female coordinate institution" for, at the time, all-male Harvard College. In 1999, Radcliffe was merged into Harvard University and ceased to exist as a separate institution. It is now the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

With the assistance of a very helpful librarian at the Schlesinger Library, Ellen M. Shea, considerable information about Lucy was found in the library's archives. In summary, Lucy attended Radcliffe College for one year in 1899 – 1900, but she worked with the school's placement office, known as the Radcliffe Bureau of Occupations, for several years as she was looking for different teaching or other employment opportunities. Consequently, she completed several pages of questions regarding her education, work experience and personal background on February 19, 1900, and updated that information in May 1904. She also corresponded with the Radcliffe Bureau of Occupations periodically as shown by several of her letters in 1908, 1913, and 1915.

In her letter to the Bureau dated February 9, 1913, she wrote, "I find I shall be obliged to leave my position soon. Of course, my deafness, which drove me out of the classroom, is a handicap in other places, but I am very anxious to return to some line of work more in accordance with my taste and training than that in mercantile offices. I am looking up libraries (I passed the Boston Public Library examination several years ago.), correspondence schools, research work, etc... People can talk with me easily by means of my [??]phone if I am deaf." Her deafness was apparently the reason that she left the teaching profession and eventually worked at the Widener Library at Harvard College and at the World Peace Foundation. In the correspondence of 1915, she again specifically expressed an interest in "library work," and the Bureau sent several requests for information about her to individuals Lucy had supplied as references.

The information in her Radcliffe College file indicates that Lucy

- Was born on December 26, 1859, in Charlestown, Massachusetts.
- Attended high school in Billerica, Massachusetts, for four years and Salem Normal School in Salem, Massachusetts, also for four years, and Radcliffe College for one year. She registered at Radcliffe in September 1899. She was enrolled as a "Special" student vs. a "Regular" or "Graduate" student. She took several English and History courses at Radcliffe and received primarily grades of "B."
- Could read French and Latin (and some German) and could speak French.
- Was initially looking for a teaching position, with a primary interest in teaching English and/or History in the Cambridge/Boston, Massachusetts, area. Her "expected" salary was \$800 per year.
- Was a member of the Unitarian Church.
- Considered herself to be in "Good" physical condition.
- Was (as of 1904) teaching at the Sanborn Seminary in Kingston, New Hampshire, and was the head of the History and English departments at that school, being paid \$700 per year.
- Had published "An Exercise on Grant, Sherman and Sheridan" in the "Journal of Education."

Sometime after Lucy Peirce's death, the below gravestone was placed in the family plot in the Old South Cemetery in Billerica, Massachusetts. The Town of Billerica, Massachusetts, Cemeteries Department was contacted to determine what information their records contain about the Peirce family and, specifically, about this gravestone, such as who placed the stone at this grave and when. Unfortunately, no information could be found in their files.



**THE PEIRCE FAMILY GRAVESTONE IN THE OLD SOUTH CEMETERY,
BILLERICA, MASSACHUSETTS**
(Courtesy of the Billerica Public Library)

With the death of Lucy Peirce, the remarkable story of Sgt. Jerome Peirce and his family comes to an abrupt end, since there were no direct descendants. However, the tradition of remembering him for several generations after he was killed on that rainy, fateful day of May 12, 1864, far from home on the battlefield of Spotsylvania Court House continues.

CHAPTER 7

“ONCE LOST, NOW FOUND, NEVER FORGOTTEN” REMEMBERING SGT. JEROME PEIRCE



J. W. Rokus

**GRAVESTONE OF
CORP'L (SGT.) JEROME PIERCE (PEIRCE)
MASS.**



The U.S. National Park Service

FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

THE START OF THE TRADITION THE FIRST \$100: “WHO?” AND “WHEN?”

For at least 130 years members of six generations of a Fredericksburg, Virginia, family have faithfully carried on the tradition of decorating Sgt. Jerome Peirce’s grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery with flowers each Memorial Day. At some point in time during those many years, a home-made sign started to accompany the flowers. As of the Memorial Day in 2015, it still reads, “ONCE LOST, NOW FOUND, NEVER FORGOTTEN.” As passed on by word-of-mouth in the family and substantiated by several documents, that tradition started when someone in Sgt. Peirce’s family in Massachusetts sent \$100 to one-time Fredericksburg National Cemetery Superintendent Andrew J. Birdsall. As discussed below, the decorating of Sgt. Peirce’s grave has not only been the focus of several articles in local newspapers, but it has even received national attention in an article in the May 1994 issue of *Reader’s Digest* as well as in *Yankee Magazine* in November 1993. Because of the local connection, Peirce’s grave has probably been the most popular stop for the last few years during tours at the “Luminaria” that has been organized by the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park since 1995, where an interpreter (for many years now, Fredericksburg resident and the current president if the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Mike Stevens) has shared the “Sgt. Peirce Story.” At this unique and very impressive annual event, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts light a candle for each of the 15,300 Union soldiers buried in the National Cemetery to honor those who have given their lives for their country. The evening is punctuated every 30 minutes by the playing of “Taps.”



The U.S. National Park Service

FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY ANNUAL LUMINARIA

Several sources, which are summarized below, were used to shed some light on how this tradition started and how, and by whom, it has been carried on to this day.

First, a number of newspaper articles, usually published around Memorial Day, have included interviews of descendants of Andrew Birdsall who have unselfishly carried on the responsibility of placing flowers on the grave of a Yankee soldier none of them ever knew, who was not related to any of them, who had enlisted in the Union army many, many years ago in a small town in Massachusetts over 450 miles away, and who found his final resting place on the side of a hill in Fredericksburg, Virginia, known as Marye’s Heights.

Second, Andrew Birdsall kept diaries periodically during his life. These, along with a few family photos and some other memorabilia, were donated in August 2005 by three of Andrew Birdsall's great-granddaughters, namely Shirley Harrison, Patricia Heflin and Lucille Ingalls, to the U.S. National Park Service. One of these dairies contains one entry pertinent to this tradition. Third, a valuable artifact is an obituary published shortly after Birdsall's death in 1897 in a Massachusetts newspaper, probably in the town where Peirce's widow settled. Finally, one of the 2005 donations is a bank book that contains information on an account administered by the Birdsall family for the perpetual decoration of Sgt. Peirce's grave starting with entries in 1919 and ending in 1956. Details from these three documents are given below.

The donation of the Birdsall documents in 2005 is described in a lengthy article in the Fredericksburg *Free Lance-Star* edition of April 22, 2006, titled "Donated diaries reveal postwar era." It included a photograph of Superintendent Birdsall at a young age and of three of Birdsall's daughters. The following are excerpts from that article.

"Superintendent Andrew Birdsall's journals were recently donated to the National Park Service by three of Birdsall's great-granddaughters, Shirley Harrison, Patricia Heflin, and Lucille Ingalls, all of Fredericksburg. A handful of antique photos of Birdsall's family was donated along with the writings. The journals outline Birdsall's daily activities of maintaining the cemetery, including overseeing the groundskeepers and janitorial and landscaping efforts. Some entries reflect on his service to the Union army during the Civil War and describe how veterans from opposing sides of the war visited the cemetery. Local history will likely benefit from the journals, which have been passed down among Birdsall's family members.

'His diaries give us a good look at the day-to-day operations of the cemetery,' said Donald Pfanz, staff historian with the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Pfanz said the whole collection extends beyond Birdsall's years in Fredericksburg and ranges from 1862 to the late 1890s. Pfanz has worked to transcribe the diaries, and while there are no current plans to put the journals or photos on display, Pfanz said pieces could be put out in the future. Before coming to Fredericksburg for nine years in November 1883, he was the superintendent of two national cemeteries in Louisiana. He died in Hampton, Virginia, in 1897; his body was returned to Fredericksburg National Cemetery for burial.

During Birdsall's tenure, Sgt. Pierce's widow sent a \$100 check to him so flowers could be placed on her husband's grave each year. As children, the three women would decorate the soldier's grave along with many others. 'On Memorial Day, we'd all get flowers and we'd take laundry baskets of flowers and decorate graves,' Harrison said. 'It was a big deal back then,'

A \$500 donation to the Park Service by Shirley Harrison, Patricia Heflin and Lucille Ingalls is an offshoot of the tradition from Birdsall's lifetime. The donation will be used by the Park Service to buy flowers for the soldier's grave each Memorial Day. Heflin said the family thought the monetary donation would be an excellent idea and believes it's what her great-grandfather would have wanted. Heflin sees the yearly decorating as a 'part of heritage you just don't want to overlook.' Ingalls agreed. She said, 'We wanted to make sure it would be continued.'

Although there is little doubt that this tradition started when "someone" sent \$100 "sometime" after Sgt. Peirce was killed on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield on May 12, 1864, there is still some uncertainty as to "who" exactly that someone was and, even more so, "when" this tradition started, i.e., when Superintendent Birdsall received the \$100.

The following table summarizes the information regarding these two questions.

THE \$100: WHO? AND WHEN?

Publication	WHO donated the \$100?	WHEN was the \$100 donated?
Fredericksburg <i>Free Lance-Star</i> May 31, 1993	“The family”	“In the 1870s”
<i>Yankee Magazine</i> November 1993	“His daughter”	“A few years after the war ended – in 1873”
Fredericksburg <i>Free Lance-Star</i> December 27, 1993	“The family”	“Shortly after Birdsall became superintendent”
<i>Richmond Times-Dispatch</i> January 2, 1994	“The family”	“At least 120 years ago” Therefore, prior to 1874.
Fredericksburg <i>Free Lance-Star</i> May 30, 1994	“The family”	“130 years ago” Therefore, about 1864.
<i>Reader’s Digest</i> May 1994	“The family”	“Some years after the battle” (See the Note below)
Fredericksburg <i>Free Lance-Star</i> May 24, 2001	“The family”	“Some years later”
Fredericksburg <i>Free Lance-Star</i> April 22, 2006	“The widow”	“During Birdsall’s tenure”

Note: The *Reader’s Digest* article states that the family asked Superintendent Birdsall to locate Sgt. Peirce’s field grave and to re-bury his remains in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery and that Birdsall did, in fact, honor that request by re-interring him on Marye’s Heights. That information is completely erroneous, based on the historical evidence, because Peirce had been buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery several years before Birdsall was appointed as the cemetery’s superintendent.

Regarding the “who” question, it is logical to assume that it was his widow who sent the \$100, but there is no way of knowing for certain. To help answer the “when” question, the following biographical sketch of Andrew J. Birdsall is helpful.

SNAPSHOT OF ANDREW J. BIRDSALL’S LIFE

Andrew J. Birdsall was born in Butternuts, Otsego County, New York, on July 10, 1837, and became a stonemason. On October 2, 1861, at the age of 24, he enlisted as a corporal in Company E of the Second New York Heavy Artillery Regiment at Staten Island, New York. That regiment was engaged at many major battles during the Civil War, including Bull Run, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna River, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Jerusalem Plank Road, Deep Bottom, Sailor’s Creek, Farmville, and Appomattox Court House, as well as in many smaller engagements.

He was wounded on August 14, 1864, during fighting at Second Deep Bottom, near Richmond, Virginia, just a few weeks before his regiment’s three-year term of service expired. It is not clear how serious his wound was, but he apparently continued to serve with his regiment, and it was not serious enough that he could not later perform his duties as the superintendent of several national cemeteries, which probably involved considerable manual labor. He was mustered out of the service on October 1, 1864, in New York City, when his enlistment term expired.

On July 18, 1876, Andrew Birdsall was appointed to be a national cemetery superintendent, and he first served at the Baton Rouge, Louisiana, National Cemetery and then at the Chalmette, Louisiana, National Cemetery. It is interesting to note why he qualified for this position.

First, and foremost, he was a wounded veteran in the Union Army. On February 22, 1867, the Thirty-ninth Congress passed “An Act to Establish and Protect National Cemeteries.” It stated, “The Secretary of War is hereby directed to appoint a meritorious and trustworthy superintendent [for each National Cemetery] who shall be selected *from enlisted men of the army, disabled in service*, and who shall have the pay and allowances of an ordnance sergeant, to reside therein, for the purpose of guarding and protecting the cemetery and giving information to parties visiting the same...” The pay of a sergeant at that time was \$17 per month.

On May 18, 1872, the Forty-second Congress amended the 1867 law to read, “The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to select the superintendents of the national cemeteries from meritorious and trustworthy soldiers, *either commissioned officers or enlisted men of the volunteer or regular army*, who have been honorably mustered out or discharged from the service of the United States, and who *may* have been disabled from active field service in the line of duty.” It also raised the compensation of superintendents of national cemeteries to “\$60 to \$75 per month, according to the extent and importance of the cemeteries to which they may be respectively assigned, to be determined by the Secretary of War; and they shall also be furnished with quarters and fuel, as now provided at the several cemeteries.”

Second, Andrew Birdsall’s occupation as a stonemason probably helped him get the position of cemetery superintendent, since cemeteries are, almost by definition, grass, trees, and stone grave markers.

In late November of 1883 Birdsall was transferred to the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. In an article in the *Fredericksburg Star* of November 24, 1883, titled “Transfer of Superintendents,” the newspaper reported the following. “Superintendent A. J. Birdsall, upon being relieved from the duty at the Chalmette National Cemetery will proceed to Fredericksburg, Va., and assume charge of the cemetery at this place, relieving Superintendent Charles Fitchett, who will proceed to the National Cemetery at Natchez, Miss... Charlie Fitchett has been in charge of the cemetery at this place for the past fourteen years, and we are glad to note the fact that not a single complaint against his administration has been reported at headquarters. We, in common with a host of our fellow-citizens, regret to give him up...”

In his report for 1888, an inspector from the War Department, which administered the national cemeteries at the time, reported, “Birdsall has kept Fredericksburg National Cemetery in excellent order. Mr. Birdsall appears to be a good Superintendent – careful, painstaking and conscientious. The Birdsalls appear to enjoy fairly good health and are contented.” Living with Birdsall in the “cottage,” which today still stands in the cemetery at the bottom of Marye’s Heights, were his wife, Julia, and their four daughters who ranged in ages from eight to eighteen years. During his years in Fredericksburg, Birdsall made many friends, some of them through his membership in the local Masonic Lodge, where he held the office of Junior Warden. He also held memberships in the Grand Army of the Republic, the Union Veterans Legion, and the Royal Arcanum.



THE DAUGHTERS OF ANDREW AND JULIA BIRDSALL
(Courtesy of The U.S. National Park Service, Fredericksburg, Virginia)

Birdsall remained at Fredericksburg for nine years, and was transferred to Hampton National Cemetery, Virginia, in 1892 to become the superintendent there. The Fredericksburg *Free Lance*, in its July 26, 1892, edition reported, “Major A. J. Birdsall, who has been Superintendent of the National Cemetery at this place for the past nine years, has, by the order of the War Department, been transferred to the National Cemetery at Hampton, Va. Major Birdsall will be succeeded by Major J. McAlpine, at present in charge of the Cemetery at Hampton. The retiring officer made many friends during his residence here, and a general regret is felt because of the change. Fredericksburg has so far been fortunate in the selection of the Superintendents of the beautiful Cemetery. They have been gentlemen who have easily assimilated with the people, and between them quickly grew a feeling of kindness and attachment. Major B. is no exception.” It should be noted that Birdsall never held the rank of major while on active duty in the Civil War. Instead, “Major” was an honorary title given to him by the local residents, as was often the case in situations like this at the time.



ANDREW J. BIRDSALL

The hand-written inscription on the back of the original picture on the right reads
“8/24/83 Major Birdsall. My mother’s father. Buried in National Cemetery, Fredericksburg.
Julian B. Smith”

(Source: Myers/Cook Family Tree (ancestry.com))

Andrew Birdsall died in Hampton, Virginia, on February 20, 1897, after a long illness. His body was brought back to Fredericksburg, where two of his daughters resided at the time, and he was buried in Grave No. 6629 at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery with Masonic honors. His obituary, published in the Fredericksburg *Free Lance* on February 23, 1897, mentions that he was the father of Mrs. C. G. Heflin and Mrs. Emmett Smith, both living in Fredericksburg at the time. Curiously, neither his widow nor his other two daughters were listed as survivors in the obituary.

Birdsall’s wife, Julia A. Birdsall, followed him to the grave on August 9, 1918, after an illness of several weeks, and she was buried beside him in Grave No. 6668 in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. In her obituary, published that same day in the Fredericksburg *Free Lance*, all four daughters, namely, Mrs. R. E. Smith, Mrs. C. G. Heflin, Mrs. V. M. Moon, and Mrs. John F. Gouldman, Jr., were listed as survivors. Significantly, for the purpose of this study, all four daughters lived in Fredericksburg then because they could, and would, continue the tradition started by their father of decorating Sgt. Peirce’s grave each Memorial Day.



J. W. Rokus



J. W. Rokus

THE GRAVESTONES OF ANDREW AND JULIA BIRDSALL IN THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

An interesting, lengthy obituary for Andrew Birdsall was published in a Massachusetts newspaper soon after his death. A copy of that obituary was apparently sent to one of his daughters who saved it, and it became part of the Birdsall documents and artifacts that were donated by his great-granddaughters to the U.S. National Park Service in 2005. The name of the newspaper and the date the obituary was published are, unfortunately, not shown on the clipping; however, since the town of Billerica is mentioned, it is possible that it appeared in *The Boston Globe*. The U.S. National Park Service's description of the clipping in its archives records reads, "Obituary of Andrew J. Birdsall, taken from a newspaper printed in Jerome Peirce's hometown. On the bottom of the clipping, the handwritten signature reads 'Abby Jaquith.' Catalog No. FRSP 13536." Almost certainly, the person who sent it, and whose signature appears on the clipping, was Abigail (Abby) Jaquith (1835-1920), one of Albinia's younger sisters. The following excerpts provide details about the relationship between the Peirce and Birdsall families and reveal the fact that Albinia and Lucy Peirce visited Jerome's grave at one time – information that was not found elsewhere.

"On the 20th of February, 1897, after a long illness he [Andrew J. Birdsall] passed away leaving a grief-stricken family to mourn for their irreparable loss. The lifeless form was conveyed to the home of his daughter, Mrs. Charles G. Heflin, of Fredericksburg, where on the 23rd of February the last sad rites for an honored soldier were performed, and then the sacred dust was committed to the beautiful National Cemetery in Fredericksburg, among the countless graves over which he had so tenderly, and so faithfully watched in former days. It is to some of the Billerica friends that the loss of this good man comes like a keen sorrow.

It will be remembered that for long weary months after Mr. Jerome Peirce was slain in battle that no knowledge of his place of burial could be obtained by his bereaved widow and child. After casting

about in many ways without success and her brother, Franklin Jaquith, quietly resorting to correspondence with superintendents of different National Cemeteries, a most definite and satisfactory response was received from Major Birdsall of Fredericksburg, stating reliable facts of his burial there.

His kindness was unlimited, his statements minute, photographic views were sent by him, and every Memorial Day he carefully accepted commissions for the floral decoration of the grave. And later, when Mrs. Peirce and her daughter visited the cemetery, Maj. Birdsall and family united in their hospitable attentions. After the government removed his services to Hampton, his daughter has continued a kind interest in the soldier's grave."

To further substantiate where Andrew Birdsall resided when he was younger and that he was not the superintendent in Fredericksburg prior to late 1883, the 1870 U.S. census shows him living with his parents, William and Harriet Birdsall, in Butternuts, Otsego County, New York, while according to the 1880 U.S. Census, he was residing that year in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The census enumerator recorded his occupation in that census as "Super. Nat. Cemetery." The census also indicates that two of the three daughters the Birdsalls had been born in New York State, while the third was born in Louisiana. (Their fourth daughter was born in 1881.)

Based on the above evidence, it becomes obvious, assuming that Superintendent Birdsall (instead of one of his predecessors) was, in fact, the recipient of the \$100 sent by Sgt. Peirce's family and that the assertion that placing of flowers on his grave started in the 1860s or 1870s cannot be correct. Consequently, this very long tradition could not have been started until late 1883, at the earliest. That raises the question of why the family waited almost 20 years before they sent their \$100. The answer is lost in history. It should be noted that in the second half of the nineteenth century, \$100 was a significant amount of money. For example, Albinia's widow's pension for many years amounted to \$8 per month (plus an additional \$2 per month for daughter Lucy until she reached age 16). Consequently, \$100 would have been equivalent to the amount of the pension she received in roughly an entire year. Also, per the above obituary for Superintendent Birdsall published in a Massachusetts newspaper, the family did not know, at least for a while, where Sgt. Peirce was buried.

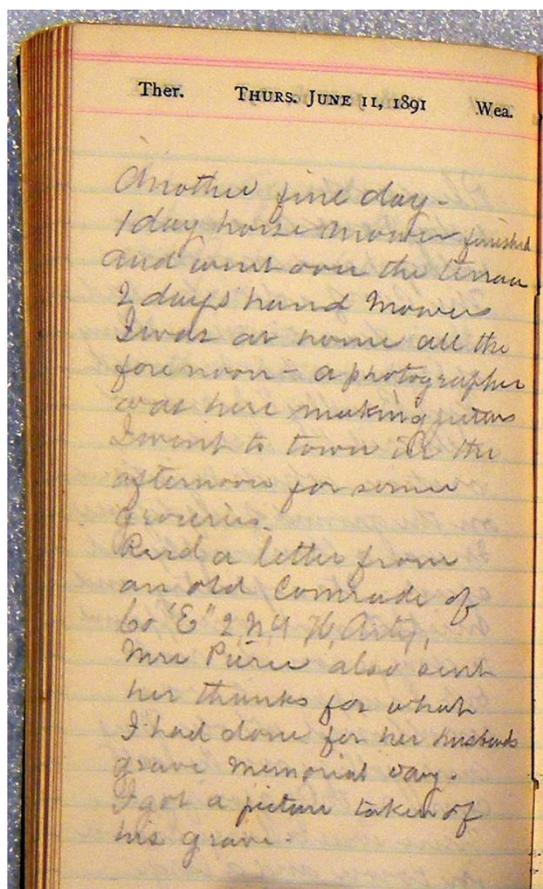
MENTION OF SGT. PEIRCE'S GRAVE IN SUPERINTENDENT BIRDSALL'S DIARY

As already mentioned, three great-granddaughters of Superintendent Birdsall, Shirley Harrison, Patricia Heflin and Lucille Ingalls, donated a number of Birdsall's documents and artifacts to the U.S. National Park Service in 2005. These are cataloged and now stored in the archives of the Park Service's Chancellorsville Visitor Center. The vast majority of these documents are diaries that Andrew Birdsall kept periodically prior to, during, and after his tenure as the superintendent of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. Unfortunately, he only kept a diary for fewer than two years during his nine-year term as superintendent of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, namely, from January 1, 1890, until December 14, 1891. Possibly he kept additional diaries while in Fredericksburg, but if he did, they have apparently not survived.

The vast majority of the 1890 and 1891 entries in his diary are very mundane, dealing with his routine duties as superintendent such as mowing the grass, trimming the bushes, etc. A few, such as the following, are more interesting. "Took old soldier of the 121st New York to Salem Church." "On Decoration Day [May 30, 1890] 500 people were present for the ceremony. The colored people had their services at night and they did quite well." "The Confederates held their Memorial Service [at the Confederate Cemetery]. It didn't amount to much." "Filled a number of sunken graves." "Killed 21 rats under the oat bin." "Confederates observed Decoration Day on June 1, 1890, [at the Confederate Cemetery]. Bad speech by Gen. Bradley T. Johnson. Can't justify their cause. Large amount of whiskey.

Some of the leaders drunk.” “Hauled dirt for filling [sunken] graves.” “Read a letter from an old comrade of Co. G, Second New York Heavy Artillery.” “Remains of either a Union or Confederate soldier found on the MacDougal lot. Nearly all concluded it must be a Union soldier so I gave the doubt the advantage and buried the remains in the cemetery.”

However, there is one important entry that directly pertains to his self-appointed duty of placing flowers on Sgt. Peirce’s grave each Memorial Day. On June 11, 1891, a few days after Memorial Day that year, he wrote in his diary, “Mrs. Pierce also sent her thanks for what I had done for her husband’s grave on Memorial Day. I got a picture taken of his grave.” See the original entry below. It is probably the best evidence that Superintendent Birdsall personally looked after that “special” grave in “his” cemetery.



**ORIGINAL ENTRY IN SUPERINTENDENT BIRDSALL’S DIARY
REGARDING SGT. JEROME PEIRCE’S GRAVE**
(Courtesy of The U.S. National Park Service)

THE FARMERS AND MERCHANTS STATE BANK BANKBOOK

A valuable piece of evidence in the reconstruction of the “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story” is a small bankbook donated by Superintendent Birdsall’s great-grand daughters in 2005 to the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. It is identified in the U.S. National Park Service’s archives as “Bankbook from The Farmers and Merchants State Bank of Fredericksburg, Virginia, containing

information on an account administered by the Birdsall family for the perpetual decoration of Jerome Pierce's grave in the National Cemetery. Red front cover only. Back is missing. 8 pages. Accession No. FRSP-00728. Catalog No. FRSP 13526." The front cover carries the following hand-written note: "Pierce Birdsall Memorial Fund."

The first page consists of the names of the bank's Board of Directors, which is followed by two pages of "Rules and Regulations." A hand-written note on the inside cover reads, "New No. 1090379521." This possibly means that this bankbook was a continuation of one which might have been full of entries or a replacement of a previous bankbook for some reason. The account is titled "IN ACCOUNT WITH Pierce-Birdsall Memorial Fund. Interest to use May 30th each year for flowers for graves." It should be noted that May 30th was established as Memorial Day in 1868, three years after the Civil War ended, by the head of the organization of Union veterans, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), with the date of May 30th apparently being chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country by that date. The observation of Memorial Day was officially changed to the last Monday in May by an Act of Congress in 1971. Also, it should be noted that the account name reads "...graves" instead of "...grave." There is some reference in one of the newspaper articles that not only was Sgt. Peirce's grave decorated but also those of Andrew and Julia Birdsall. Placing flowers on the graves of the Birdsalls apparently fell by the way sometime over the years.

The first entry in the bankbook is dated October 8, 1919, and it is a deposit of \$100.00. This is followed by 104 additional entries over eight pages, with the last one being on September 29, 1956, that being an interest deposit of \$.79. This is followed by the notation "Bal. transferred to new book 11/11/57." Over the almost 37 years that this bankbook was in use, there are usually 16 entries per page, except the last page which contains nine entries. Almost all the entries are interest additions – ranging from \$.50 to \$2.25. There are also several withdrawals, usually less than \$6.00. Many, but not all, of the withdrawals were made just prior to or around May 30th. However, there is not a withdrawal every year, probably indicating that the Birdsall descendants used flowers from their own gardens (as mentioned in one newspaper article) instead of purchasing them. For the entire time this bankbook was used to track the Pierce-Birdsall Memorial Fund, the balance stayed close to \$100, fluctuating from a low of \$97.52 to a high of \$110.65. The balance as of the last entry on September 29, 1956, was \$102.84.

The Farmers & Merchants State Bank FREDERICKSBURG, VA.							
SUBJECT TO THE RULES AND							
Date	Withdrawals	Deposits	Balance	Date	Withdrawals	Deposits	Balance
1919							
10 8		100	100	7 1	Int	2	
June 14 20	Int	258	107.58	11 1 26		2	
5 24	258	100		7 1		2	
Jan 21	Int	150	101.50	1 1 27		2.06	105.58
July 1	"	151	103.01	7 1		2.10	
Jan 27	"	155	104.56	1 1 28		2.14	109.87
July 1	"	156	106.12	5 31	9	2	100.87
12	612	100		7 1	Int	2.61	
May 28	Int	12	102	1 1 29	"	2.29	104.87
6 1	4		98	7 1	"	2.03	106.90
7 1	Int	152		1 1 30	"	1.59	103.49
1 1 24		2	101.52	7 1	"	2.16	110.65
6 3	4		97.52	7 1	6		104.65
7 1	Int	2		1 1 31	Int	2.08	
1 1 25	"	2	101.52	7 1	"	1.59	103.37
6 1	4		97.52	11 5	6		102.32

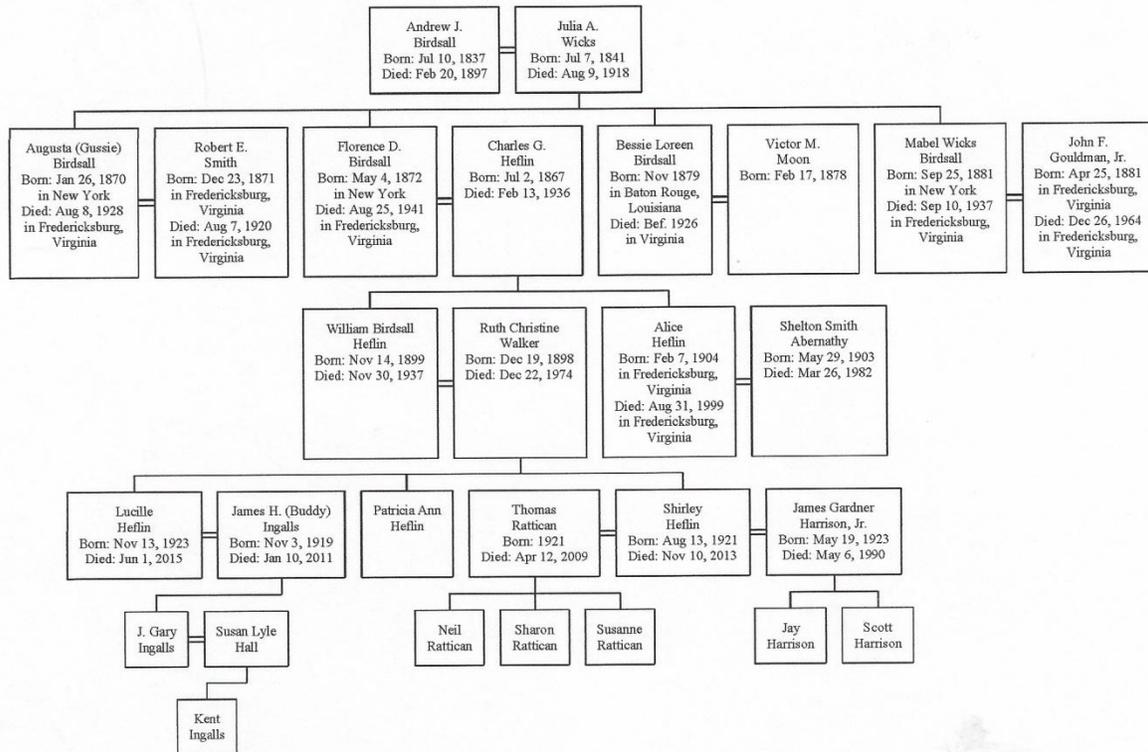
Date	Withdrawals	Deposits	Balance
6-30-54		Int 1.03	
12-31-54		" 1.04	
6-30-55		" 1.05	
12-31-55		" 1.06	
6-30-56		" 1.07	
12-31-56		" 1.04	
6-30-57		7 1.01	100.84
Sept 29-56	8.79		102.05
Sept 29-56		.79	102.84
Bal. transferred to new Book			
			11/11/57

FIRST AND LAST PAGE OF THE PIERCE-BIRDSALL MEMORIAL FUND BANKBOOK
(Courtesy of The U.S. National Park Service)

DECORATING SGT. PEIRCE'S GRAVE: THE EARLY GENERATIONS

Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine specifically which members of the Birdsall family took it upon themselves to be the driving force behind keeping the promise that Superintendent Birdsall had made to Albinia Peirce and the Peirce family to place flowers at her husband's grave. However, there are some clues as to who participated and when. The below partial Descendants Family Tree for Andrew Birdsall helps identify them.

Descendants of Andrew J. Birdsall



There is no question that Andrew Birdsall personally placed flowers on Sgt. Peirce's grave, based on his diary entry. It is not known whether or not his wife, Julia, or their four daughters also made the pilgrimage up Marye's Heights hill, but one can logically assume that they did. As shown in Julia's Birdsall above obituary after her death on August 9, 1918, all four of the daughters were married by then, and they all lived in Fredericksburg.

As shown above, the dates of death of the four Birdsall daughters are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Augusta (Birdsall) Smith | August 8, 1928 |
| Florence (Birdsall) Heflin | August 25, 1941 |
| Bessie Loreen (Birdsall) Moon | Before 1926 (Exact DOD could not be determined.) |
| Mabel Wicks (Birdsall) Gouldman | December 26, 1964 |

Which of these four (or maybe all of them) were involved in this project? The answer is that we simply don't know. However, one can assume that it was a family effort amongst them throughout the first half of the twentieth century when they were alive, and we have good proof that *somebody* used the interest from the Pierce-Birdsall Memorial Fund periodically to decorate Sgt. Peirce's grave during this time.

DECORATING SGT. PEIRCE'S GRAVE GOES PUBLIC IN 1993

Thanks to an extensive search of the Fredericksburg newspapers by librarian Nancy Moore in the Virginiana Room of the Central Rappahannock Regional Library in Fredericksburg, the decoration of Sgt. Peirce's grave seems to have remained a family "secret" for many years, although the family undoubtedly never intended it to be that or thought of it that way. It was probably just one of those little-noticed events in life that few people paid attention to – although the caretakers at the National Cemetery, and almost certainly others at the U.S. National Park Service, must have noticed that flowers mysteriously appeared on Sgt. Peirce's grave year after year every Memorial Day. It was not until May of 1993 that this tradition became widely known in the Fredericksburg, Virginia, area. Soon thereafter it received national attention.

On May 31, 1993, the date that Memorial Day was observed that year, the Fredericksburg *Free Lance-Star* published an article titled "A lasting promise Fallen Civil War soldier hasn't been forgotten." It included a picture of Mrs. Lucille Ingalls (a great-granddaughter of Andrew Birdsall) and Kent Ingalls (Mrs. Ingalls' grandson and a great-great-great-grandson of Andrew Birdsall) placing flowers on the grave on the Friday before Memorial Day in 1993. The following are excerpts from that article.

"The graveyard mystery had remained a mystery through the years. The tale begins among the thousands of silenced veterans in Fredericksburg National Cemetery, and it unfolded last week when an 11-year-old boy told what he knew...The modest stone marker where Jerome Pierce lies looks no different from the rest. But every year around Memorial Day, a potted plant or fresh flower arrangement has appeared by his marker...Lucille Ingalls figures that Friday must have been about the 120th time that the Pierces' wish was fulfilled. This year the task fell to Mrs. Ingalls' grandson, Kent Ingalls, who is Birdsall's great-great-great-grandson. Kent is a fifth-grader at Montfort Academy, next door to the National Cemetery. Like the rest of his classmates, he was looking forward to the traditional fifth-grade honor of placing small American flags on all the graves before Memorial Day. His teacher, Mary Ann Martin, was getting her class pepped up for the mammoth job last week. She told them the old, romantic tale of Jerome Pierce's grave and its mysterious flowers. She had no idea the story had a more personal meaning for one of her students.

Kent realized she was talking about something his family had always taken for granted...Through the years, the original \$100 sent by the Pierce family to Superintendent Birdsall has stayed in the bank. Birdsall's descendants, headed recently by Alice Heflin Abernathy of Fredericksburg, a granddaughter of Andrew Birdsall, have been using the interest it earns to buy decorations for Pierce's grave. Mrs. Abernathy and her niece, Mrs. Ingalls, usually go to the grave alone. It felt funny, Mrs. Ingalls said, to be accompanied this year by Kent's entire class, a reporter and a photographer. 'It's strange, but it's nice' she said. 'I'm so pleased people will be aware of this; it's always been just a family thing.' About 10 years ago, Mrs. Abernathy tried to put together the final piece of the puzzle. She made some inquiries about Jerome Pierce's relatives in Massachusetts, but to no avail. The Birdsall side of the story would dearly love to meet the Pierce side, at least to let them know that their young corporal is remembered every Memorial Day."

Based on the above account, it appears that Superintendent Birdsall's daughter, Florence Birdsall Heflin (who passed away in 1941), might have taken prime responsibility of keeping the Birdsall family's

promise to Jerome Peirce's widow and family, although, as Mrs. Ingalls mentioned in the article, it had become a project that the whole family participated in. Florence then apparently passed the Peirce grave decoration "torch" on to her daughter, Alice Heflin, who was born in 1904 and who later married Shelton Smith Abernathy. Based on subsequent stories in newspapers and other publication, as elaborated below, it was Alice Heflin Abernathy who was the driving force in this project for many years.

The "Jerome Peirce story" spread beyond Fredericksburg during the summer of 1993 when several newspapers, particularly in New England and including *The Boston Globe*, picked up the *Free Lance-Star* piece after being distributed by the Associated Press. One publication that also carried an abbreviated version along with a request for information about the Peirce family was a half-page article in the November 1993 issue of *Yankee Magazine* in its "Genie of the Month" column of its genealogy section. (*Yankee Magazine*, founded in 1935, is a bi-monthly magazine devoted to "New England travel, home, food and feature." It is published in Dublin, New Hampshire, and has a readership of nearly two million. It also publishes the *Old Farmer's Almanac*.) That article, which included the same picture of Mrs. Ingalls and Kent Ingalls placing flowers on the grave of Sgt. ("Corpl." on his gravestone) Peirce ("Pierce" on his gravestone) on the previous Memorial Day that was run in the above *Free Lance-Star* story. The "Genie of the Month" column was a feature by that magazine for its readers who were seeking genealogical information. The article, in part, reads as follows.

"...Jerome Pierce's distraught family sent my grandfather a letter begging him to find their son's grave for them. When he did, they sent him \$100 and asked him to decorate it once a year on their behalf. Next May marks the 130th anniversary of the death of Jerome Pierce and the 121st time that my family has placed a wreath at his grave. We still have the \$100 in a bank account, the interest from which pays for his flowers each spring. All I know about Jerome Pierce is that he was a 31-year-old mechanic who left Orange, Massachusetts, to join the 36th [Massachusetts] Infantry of the Union Army in 1862. My family long ago lost contact with his family. For the past ten years I have been trying to find his descendants to tell them the story of my great-grandfather's promise and to learn more about the man whose grave I've decorated all my life. Alice Heflin Abernathy, 1000 Littlepage St., Fredericksburg, VA 22401"

During the summer of 1993, and again following the publication of the *Yankee Magazine* article, Mrs. Abernathy received a flurry of letters regarding the decoration of Sgt. Peirce's grave. Unfortunately, none of them were from anyone in Jerome Peirce's family or from the family of his widow, the Jaquiths, a well-established New England family. These letters, in turn, led to a lengthy, front-page article in the December 27, 1993, edition of the *Free Lance-Star*, which included a picture of one of the letters (from a Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War chapter in Salem, New Hampshire) and of the *Yankee Magazine* article itself. It was titled "Thanks for a promise kept: A Memorial Day tradition draws strangers' praise," and it also featured an interview with Mrs. Abernathy as well as a picture of her. Shortly thereafter, on January 2, 1994, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* carried a virtually identical story under an Associated Press byline. The following are excerpts from the *Free Lance-Star* article.

"The thought of a Southern lady solemnly decorating one Union soldier's grave every year must be powerfully poignant, because Fredericksburg's Alice Heflin Abernathy hasn't gotten this much mail since she closed her dress shop 20 years ago. Mrs. Abernathy, who will be 90 in February [1994] believes she's just doing her duty by keeping a promise her grandfather made to a Massachusetts family at least 120 years ago. She can't understand why people get so emotional about it, but she has certainly enjoyed getting letters from all over the country since her Memorial Day ritual was published in 1993.

A Florida man wrote, 'My wife, Lois, was washing dishes one night after supper and I said, 'Listen to this.' I read her your story and her eyes filled up with tears and my throat became tight.' And another writer figures Mrs. Abernathy must be guided by angels. 'What a grand family you have! Remember, your grandfather has his hand on your shoulder. Doesn't it feel warm sometimes?'

The duty of decorating the grave has passed from Superintendent Birdsall down to Mrs. Abernathy, who fully expects her descendants to keep it up. I told myself, well Alice, you're the one who will do this. I was glad to do it. 'I even got so I'd call him Jerome,' she said. 'It didn't bother me a bit that he was a Yankee. I never thought about that.'

People began to wonder about the wreaths on Pierce's grave, but it remained a mystery until this Memorial Day [1993], when Mrs. Abernathy's great-great-nephew, 12-year-old Kent Ingalls, told his classmates about his family's tradition. The Free Lance-Star article that followed was sent out on a national news wire and used by several newspapers, including those in Pierce's home state of Massachusetts. The story was then picked up by Yankee, a feature magazine about the New England states.

Letters began arriving at Mrs. Abernathy's house this summer [1993]. She is still getting them. Though they have tapered off to about one a week, most writers simply express admiration, such as the one from Ohio that said, "I have seldom been so moved by what someone does." Others provide clues about where Pierce's modern relatives might be. A letter that arrived the week of Thanksgiving had a short Pierce family tree and expressed sorrow that no living descendants could be found.

Lucille Ingalls, who is Mrs. Abernathy's niece, said the correspondence has been exciting for her aunt. Often, Ingalls will come over to read aloud the latest letter, since Mrs. Abernathy's eyes aren't what they used to be."

When Alice Heflin Abernathy, the widow of Shelton Smith Abernathy, passed away at age 95 on August 31, 1999, in Fredericksburg, her obituary the next day in the Fredericksburg *Free Lance-Star* included the following paragraph. "In 1993, she received national attention as the third generation caretaker of a Civil War soldier's grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. Her family had decorated the grave of a Massachusetts soldier for more than a century." She had operated a popular dress shop, Alice Heflin Exclusive Fashions, in Fredericksburg for 29 years. The only survivors listed in the obituary were three nieces, Lucille Heflin Ingalls, Shirley Heflin Harrison, and Patricia Heflin, all of Fredericksburg, which explains why no direct descendants of the Heflin-Abernathy family assumed the "duty" of decorating Sgt. Peirce's grave.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT JEROME PEIRCE'S FAMILY IS UNEARTHED
BY READER'S DIGEST IN 1994
(See a more detailed description of this article in a subsequent chapter)**

When *Reader's Digest* became aware of the Peirce-Birdsall-Abernathy-Ingalls story, it took another dramatic twist – the locating of a Peirce-Jaquith family member and letters that Jerome had sent home during the Civil War. A five-page article in the May 1994 issue was not a "digest" of an article in another publication but was written by the magazine's editor-at-large Henry Hunt, and it was titled "Home of the Brave." Most of the article consists of facts about Jerome Peirce and the annual tradition of decorating his grave that were published in the previous newspaper articles, but it includes the following significant bits of new information that help to round out the story. It should be noted that this well-researched article uses Jerome's correct rank (Sergeant) and uses the correct spelling of his surname (Peirce).

"Jerome Peirce's body was shoveled into a hastily dug grave that was then crudely marked, his name scratched on a scrap of wood – probably the lid of an ammunition box. Soon enough, in far-off Massachusetts, death's dark sadness reached Allie and little Lucy.

In the last of Jerome's letters home, written shortly before he died, he was cheerful and upbeat. He included a special gift: a tiny bouquet of spring flowers picked from the fields and tied with a thread.

The Jaquith family of Billerica, Mass., has sent men to virtually every American conflict, including the Revolutionary War. Today, the family lives in ancient houses on the same land it occupied in 1654. One current resident, Lt. Col. Peter Jaquith Casey, a direct descendant, fought as a company commander in Vietnam.

It was to this family, her own, that Albinia Jaquith Peirce retreated with daughter Lucy. Widowed at 29, Allie, as Jerome called her, did not marry again. She lived out her years in the family house and died there in 1920 at the age of 85.

Lucy grew up in the old house and became a teacher and librarian. Never marrying, she kept up a warm relationship with her Peirce and Jaquith cousins until she died in 1946 at the age of 87. Although this ended Jerome Peirce's direct family line, his name was kept alive by the birth of a son to Allie's sister in 1865. She named him William Jerome Clark in honor of his fallen uncle.

While the sacrifice of Jerome Peirce is clear, that of Allie and Lucy is more subtle. Allie's half century of loneliness – of wondering what her life might have been if Jerome had lived – is hard to fathom. And Lucy? Would her life have been different if her father had lived to love her and guide her and nurture her confidence?

She no doubt found sustenance in the treasured letters from her father, who wrote home from major battles all over the South, often sending her flowers from the fields. These lines may have stood out: 'How much Papa wants to lead you by the hand in some of your pretty summer walks, but he cannot yet. But there is a Good Being who takes care of Papa, Mama and little Lulu and all people.'

Last May [1993], an 89-year-old Virginian, Alice Heflin Abernathy, fretted about whether she would be able to get out to the Fredericksburg National Cemetery to put flowers on Jerome Peirce's grave. 'He was always just Jerome to us,' says Mrs. Abernathy, a diminutive and dignified woman with a firm voice and dark, perceptive eyes. 'We never really knew anything about him except that his family sent my grandfather \$100 and asked us to take care of his grave. It was our duty, so that's what we have done.'

When she was little, Alice Heflin went to the cemetery with her parents to decorate the grave of this Union soldier. Later, she went with her husband – then, still later, either with her nieces or alone. 'It never made any difference to us that he was a Yankee – never even thought about it,' Mrs. Abernathy says.

The original \$100 account is still in a local bank, showing small withdrawals of the interest over the years. The balance now stands at \$173. 'We didn't really use the money much,' Mrs. Abernathy says. 'Pretty flowers in the garden or from the fields were just as nice for Jerome.' Over the years, the cemetery caretakers often wondered about the special decorations that would appear on the single grave.

Then last Memorial Day [1993], Alice Abernathy decided she was not able to climb the steep hill to decorate Jerome's grave. Instead, her great-grandnephew, Kent Ingalls, then 11, the great-great-great-grandson of Andrew Birdsall, accepted the charge. Kent was thrilled with his mission and told his school class about it. Soon it was reported in the newspaper.

Meanwhile in Billerica, Mass., the news of a kinsman's grave in Virginia that was regularly decorated by a Southern family surprised Colonel Peter Jaquith Casey and sent him to the attic of the Jaquith house. There he discovered photographs and letters that reflected Allie's and Lucy's quiet presence in the family. These set him to wondering whether even more answers might come from the old graveyard a few hundred yards from the Jaquith house.

On a Sunday morning last January [1994], Casey and his son, Seth, trudged through the snow to take a look. Soon they spotted the name Peirce on one of the grave markers. The marker is large – more than three feet across – and prominently inscribed upon it is the name of Jerome Peirce along with his military affiliation, where he was killed and where he is buried. There also are the names and dates of Allie and Lucy – as well as the name of Charles Jerome Peirce, a son born before Lucy who died the day he was born.

'It was very moving to stand there and think about it all,' Casey says. 'It's like the whole family is there together.' Then a patch of red caught the colonel's eye. He reached down and pulled from the snow an American flag. 'Someone must have put it there on Memorial Day,' he thought.

Jerome Peirce is honored in yet another way. Fifty miles to the north of Fredericksburg lies the body of an Air Force major – a pilot killed in Vietnam in 1967. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Across the Potomac on the wall honoring the Vietnam dead is inscribed his name: William Jerome Clark, III. He is the grandson of the baby named in honor of Jerome Peirce back in 1865.

'We must never forget Jerome,' Alice Abernathy says. And this month [May 1994] 130 years after Sergeant Peirce fell dead, his grave will be honored as usual with the same spirit of respect and reconciliation that has healed the country. He has no direct descendants to honor him as he lies on this peaceful hillside – the eternal home for so many of the brave. Instead, Jerome Peirce left something else because of his sacrifice, and the sacrifice of so many others, countless millions the world over live today in freedom."

Below is a picture of the Peirce family gravestone in the Old South Cemetery in Billerica, Massachusetts, referred to in the *Reader's Digest* article.



THE PEIRCE FAMILY GRAVESTONE
(Courtesy of the Billerica, Massachusetts, Public Library)

RECENT PRESS COVERAGE OF THE PEIRCE/BIRDSALL TRADITION

On May 31, 1994, Memorial Day, shortly after the above *Reader's Digest* story appeared, an article in the Fredericksburg *Free Lance-Star* titled "Devotion to tradition touches family" provided an update on the "Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story." Although it contained no new information, it summarized the developments since Memorial Day in 1993. The following are excerpts from that article.

"A Massachusetts man whose relative died in Spotsylvania County during the Civil War said he was 'touched and overwhelmed' to learn through news stories that the soldier's grave is dutifully decorated here each Memorial Day. Honoring the grave of Sgt. Jerome Pierce with a garland of flower is a promise that Alice Heflin Abernathy's grandfather made to Pierce's family about 130 years ago.

This year, Mrs. Abernathy, 90, of Fredericksburg, was helped up the steep bank of the cemetery by her niece, Lucille Ingalls, and Mrs. Ingalls' sixth grade grandson, Kent. They were photographed by The Boston Globe, the latest of several publications to feature the two families since The Free Lance-Star ran the story last Memorial Day.

Lt. Col. Peter Jaquith Casey of Billerica, Massachusetts, started reading about the solemn tradition in a recent Yankee Magazine article and realized that the story was about his family. Pierce's wife, Allie, was a Jaquith before she married. 'It's amazing, really,' Casey said. 'I had never thought about history or my family before.' Casey started poking around attics and basements, where he found letters about Allie Pierce's life. He visited a cemetery nearby and found a large marker for the Pierce family. It lists, among others, Allie, Jerome, and their daughter, Lucy, and mentions that Jerome is buried in Fredericksburg.

Reader's Digest tracked Casey down, and he was recently interviewed for a long piece in the May [1994] issue."

The next time the "Peirce Grave Decoration" story appeared in print was in the Fredericksburg *Free Lance-Star* edition of May 24, 2001, in an article titled "Lest We Forget." It publicized the annual "Luminaria" event at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery described above. It was held on May 28, 2001, the date that Memorial Day was observed that year. That article included the following.

"Don Pfanz, a historian with the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, has compiled program notes for the Luminaria display. Among the poignant tales is the story of Jerome Pierce, buried at Grave No. 540. Pierce, a cabinetmaker from Orange, Massachusetts, left his wife, Allie, and two-year-old daughter, Lucy, for battle. In the last of his letters home, he sent a tiny bouquet of spring flowers tied with a thread. On May 12, 1864, he was killed at Spotsylvania Court House, one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. A bullet pierced his heart. He was 33.

Andrew Birdsall, the caretaker of the cemetery, recorded his promise to decorate Pierce's grave each Memorial Day in his diary, and through all these years he and his family have decorated the grave of the man they never met. Birdsall passed the tradition on to his granddaughter, Alice Heflin Abernathy, who put flowers on the grave until she was in her 90s. She died in 1999 at the age of 95, and now her descendants place the flowers.

Her niece, Lucille Ingalls, wouldn't think of letting Memorial Day pass unnoticed. She recalls Fredericksburg's Memorial Day parades of her childhood. 'The iris was always blooming, and we always picked flowers to put on the soldier's grave,' she said. 'It's been ingrained in us from the start.'

Flowers are also placed on the graves of Birdsall and his wife, Julia, who are also buried in the National Cemetery. Others in the family often accompany Ingalls as well. She supposes the tradition will continue 'at least for another generation.'

The words on the card accompanying the flowers have inspired those who pay their respects each Memorial Day: 'Once lost, now found, never forgotten.'

STATUS OF THE \$500 DONATION BY SUPERINTENDENT BIRDSALL'S GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTERS IN 2005 AND OF THE ORIGINAL \$100 DONATION

The following are some details of the \$500 donation by Superintendent Birdsall's great-granddaughters made in August 2005, based on information received from John Hennessy, the Chief Historian and Chief of Interpretation at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

It was intended for decorating Sgt. Peirce's grave in perpetuity, but it is not clear if they also wanted the money to be used for decorating the graves of Andrew Birdsall and his wife, Julia. The donation was received by the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, and it was initially deposited into a separate account. But it was later discovered that the account was too small to earn any interest.

Therefore, it was transferred into a larger, interest-bearing account that holds funds that have been donated for the perpetual care of other local memorials under the jurisdiction of the U.S. National Park Service, such as the Chancellor Cemetery. The account is being administered by Eastern National, a non-profit organization that partners with the U.S. National Park Service and is probably best known for the bookstores it operates at over 150 National Parks.

The Birdsall family descendants agreed to that change, as long as the tradition of placing flowers on Sgt. Peirce's grave every Memorial Day would be continued. In practice, the flowers in recent years have been procured and placed on the grave by J. Gary Ingalls and his family of Fredericksburg, as detailed below, without withdrawing funds from that account. Ingalls is a great-great-grandson of Andrew and Julia Birdsall.

Regarding the original \$100 that was donated by the Peirce family in the 1880s, the bankbook from the Farmers and Merchants State Bank of Fredericksburg that was included in the 2005 donations shows that the balance of the account that was set up as the Pierce-Birdsall Memorial Fund as of September 29, 1956, was \$102.84. Based on Federal banking records, that bank has been inactive since June 6, 1983, when it was merged into and operated as a part of First Virginia Bank of Falls Church, Virginia. In turn, that bank was merged into and has been subsequently operated as part of Branch Banking and Trust Company, commonly known as BB&T Bank, on October 10, 2003.

An inquiry to the U.S. National Park Service as to the current status of the original \$100 did not yield an answer. It may have been rolled into the same account that now holds the \$500 donation that was made in 2005.

DECORATING SGT. PEIRCE'S GRAVE: THE CURRENT GENERATIONS AND THE FUTURE

As already pointed out, for many years the identity of who was decorating Sgt. Peirce's grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery was a mystery. That changed abruptly on Memorial Day in 1993

when Kent Ingalls with his fifth grade classmates honored the grave of the Union sergeant who had been killed almost exactly 129 years earlier on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield.

For some reason, the identity of the person, persons or family who somewhat mysteriously placed flowers on the grave became a puzzle after the flurry of publicity in the early 1990s. When this study was undertaken just before Memorial Day in 2015, John Hennessey, Chief Historian and Chief of Interpretation at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park responded to the author about who had placed the flowers on the grave that Memorial Day as follows: “I know that this year [2015], the flowers on the grave simply appeared. We do not know who put them there. Two years ago, a young man placed them there, but he disappeared before anyone found out who he was. Last year, Peter Maugle [a U.S. National Park Service historian] placed the flowers.”

However, upon checking with Peter Maugle, he reported, “I must make it clear that I *discovered* someone had placed flowers at the Peirce grave last year, but it was *not* me. Two years ago, Don Pfanz [another U.S. National Park Service historian] and I witnessed a man place the flowers who, I believe, was a son of one of Mrs. Abernathy’s nieces? [Note the question mark in Maugel’s response.] Last year, as like this year, the flowers were *anonymously* placed sometime on Friday morning.”

Following up on Peter Maugel’s hunch and the picture and story about Kent Ingalls with his grandmother decorating Sgt. Peirce’s grave in the *Free Lance-Star* now so many years ago that the story had to be retrieved in the archives of the newspaper’s office, the author “found” Kent. He confirmed that J. Gary Ingalls, Kent’s father, had in recent years taken over the long-standing “obligation” now passed down for several generations.

Gary Ingalls confirmed that his mother, Lucille Ingalls, had helped his grandaunt, Alice Heflin Abernathy, carry on the tradition for many years and that she (Lucille Ingalls) had spearheaded the project after Mrs. Abernathy’s death in 1999, although other family members have always helped. Gary said, “I can only address the last 50 years or so. My mother said as a child it was a big deal, they would take their wagons and fill them with flowers and the whole family would walk up and place them on the graves. This was Florence [Florence Birdsall Heflin, one of Andrew Birdsall’s daughters, 1872-1941]. They lived on Willis St., so it was a short walk. I have the impression that not just the Peirce grave was decorated. My aunt Alice [Heflin Abernathy] was ‘in charge’ for many years, and my mother took over from her, but most of the family participated from time to time.”

Regarding his own involvement, Gary Ingalls went on to say, “At various times all three sisters and all cousins have participated. I went a few times as a child, but I became more involved in the 1990s when it became difficult for my mother to make the trip. That was about the time that the *Reader’s Digest* article came out in 1994. By then it had become a real family tradition, and it was our family’s way of honoring someone who died for the cause he deeply believed in, although my family knew very little about Jerome. For many years we would pick flowers out of our garden and take them to the cemetery. After a while, the bouquet of fresh flowers was replaced by silk flowers, so that they could be used for more than one year. This last Memorial Day, we bought a nice new bouquet because the one we placed at Jerome’s grave last year had mysteriously disappeared. To the best of my knowledge, we have just paid for the grave decorations ourselves, and I really don’t know the status of the account set up by my great-great-grandfather, Superintendent Andrew Birdsall, that the U.S. National Park Service may still have. I do know that before my mother passed away on June 1, 2015, she specifically and emphatically told me not to forget to decorate Jerome Peirce’s grave every Memorial Day! But I know that if for some reason I could not do it, my son, Kent, and one of my cousins would carry on the tradition.”

Because Gary’s mother, Lucille H. Ingalls, passed away just as this study was getting underway, the author was not able to obtain her inputs and thank her. She also would not have been aware of this

effort to document the Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story and to recognize and honor all of her efforts, and those of the other family members, to remember Sgt. Jerome Peirce.

A portion of the “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story” has even made an appearance on social media. On August 10, 2015, Luisa Dispenzirie, Museum Curator for the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, posted a summary on a U.S. National Park Service Facebook blog pertaining to the Birdsall account book described above. She mentioned that “a private researcher who is assembling a biography of Sgt. Jerome Peirce” had recently reviewed all the Birdsall family related items that are being preserved in the Park’s archives. Very appropriately, the title of the Facebook posting is

“ONCE LOST, NOW FOUND, NEVER FORGOTTEN”

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF THE MAY 1994 *READER'S DIGEST* ARTICLE "HOME OF THE BRAVE"

The article titled "Home of the Brave" in the May 1994 issue of *Readers Digest* by editor-at-large Henry Hurt was a significant contribution in this effort to reconstruct the lives of the Jerome Peirce family and to document the tradition of decorating Peirce's grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery each Memorial Day that has been carried on for well over 130 years. A copy of this article was found in the files of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and, until now, has been the basis of most of what has been known about Jerome Peirce and the annual placing of flowers on his grave.

Fortunately, not only Henry Hurt but also the genealogist from the New England Historic Genealogical Society, David Lambert, who worked with Mr. Hurt to find much of the information in the article, were located, despite the fact that it had been over 21 years since the "Jerome Peirce Story" attracted national attention. Consequently, they both were able to provide some unique background information for this study.

The following is the key information included in that article with some comments and clarifying/supplemental information that was found in this study in 2015.

From the article:

When Jerome Peirce was killed on May 12, 1864, he was 33 years old, his wife, Albinia ("Allie") was 29 years old, and their daughter, Lucy, was 4 years old.

Comments:

All of their ages are correct. Jerome Peirce was born on November 11, 1830, Albinia J. (Jaquith) Peirce was born on June 4, 1834, and Lucy Sherwin Peirce was born on December 26, 1859. They also had a son, Charles Jerome Peirce, who was born on July 10, 1858. He died on the same day he was born.

From the article:

Jerome Peirce and the 36th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers (Infantry) were involved in one of the longest and deadliest battles of the Civil War at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia. Jerome was killed at what became known as The Bloody Angle when "a bullet ripped through his heart." The battle on May 12 started early in the morning and "after 23 hours, silence settled over the bloody field." "Clubbed muskets and bayonets were used freely, as the rain poured down in sheets and the trenches ran red with blood. The wounded and dying of both sides were trampled into the mud to drown or suffocate." According to Col. Horace Porter of Gen. Grant's staff, "It was probably the most desperate engagement in the history of modern warfare." "The dead were piled upon each other in some places four layers deep."

Comments:

The battle of Spotsylvania Court House, now considered to have been a stalemate, was fought between May 8, 1864, and May 21, 1864, and pitted roughly 100,000 Union soldiers against 52,000 Confederates. The casualties (killed, wounded, missing and captured) amounted to approximately 18,000 men on the Union side and 12,000 men on the Confederate side before Gen. Grant disengaged to continue his push toward Richmond. Early on May 12, the brutal fighting started early in the morning and continued uninterrupted until the morning of May 13.

It is almost certain that Sgt. Jerome Peirce died either instantaneously or shortly after he was shot since there is no record of him being hospitalized. His obituary, which was published in *The Bunker Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror* on June 25, 1864, also states that he was killed instantaneously. However, there is no conclusive evidence in his military records or in the Unit History of the 36th Massachusetts

Regiment that indicates exactly how he was killed. However, in a letter addressed to “Mrs. Jerome Peirce” written by First Lieutenant Philip G. Woodward, commanding officer of Company H, 36th Massachusetts Volunteers, on July 4, 1864, Lt. Woodward stated “I did not see him fall as we were falling back under a cover of a fence, the enemy coming down on us and occupying the ground on which he fell... Consequently his body was in the enemy’s hands for about 15 minutes. When we charged forward and not only took the ground we lost but a great deal more. Jerome’s body lay in a very exposed position [and] it was impossible to move it. But I went to him and took his Memorandum Book for I felt as though I ought to make an effort to secure some memento. The Book I gave to J.H. His body had to remain until after dark when we buried it the best that circumstances would permit. He was killed at about 7 o.c. [o’clock] AM... I also found the bullet that killed him. I took it from his left breast... He must have died instantly. His grave is in a Pine Grove - well marked.”

Article information:

Jerome Peirce was a chair maker by trade.

Comments:

The U.S. census information confirms that he was in the furniture manufacturing business when he enlisted in Orange, Mass., on August 4, 1862, in Company H of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers, along with a group of 21 other men from Orange. They were mustered into the service on August 27, 1862, and left Worcester, Mass., on September 2, 1862, for “the front.”

Article information:

Jerome Peirce’s body was shoveled into a hastily dug grave that was then crudely marked, his name scratched on a scrap of wood – probably the lid of an ammunition box.

Comments:

The details of Sgt. Jerome Peirce’s initial burial on the battlefield are lost in history other than what is included in the above letter written by Lt. Philip Woodward, but the records indicate that he was buried on the McCoull Farm, located in the center of the battlefield, near The Bloody Angle. Fortunately, one of his comrades took the time to mark his grave with his name, no doubt using a piece of wood found on the battlefield. That marker survived until, along with markers for the graves of other Union soldiers who were killed at Spotsylvania Court House, Peirce was re-interred in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery sometime shortly after that cemetery was established in 1866.

Article information:

In the last of Jerome’s letters home, written shortly before he died, he was cheerful and upbeat. He included a special gift: a tiny bouquet of spring flowers picked from the fields and tied with a thread.

Comments:

Fortunately, his letters were saved by his wife, later widow, and they have been passed down through several generations and have been preserved to this day. They are now in the possession of the Patricia Mason family of Dayton, Ohio. Ms. Mason is the great-grandniece of Albinia Peirce. The flowers with his last letter are even still with that letter.

Article information:

After Jerome Peirce was killed, Albinia and Lucy moved from Orange, Mass., to Billerica, Mass., to live with her family, the Jaquiths. “Allie” did not remarry, and she died in 1920 at the age of 85.

Comments:

According to the U.S. census records, Albinia and Lucy first lived with her parents, Franklin and Lucy Jaquith, for several years. After her parents died, Albinia and Lucy moved in with the family of her younger brother, Franklin, Jr., and his wife Susan Jaquith. Later, Lucy, after she went to school and pursued her teaching career, established her own residences in the greater Boston, Mass., area.

The fact that Albinia died as a widow is confirmed by the U.S. census records and by her death notice published in the March 18, 1920, issue of *The Christian Register*. She died on February 29, 1920, in Billerica, Mass.

Article information:

Lucy never married and became a teacher and librarian. She died in 1946 at the age of 87.

Comments:

Lucy's died on August 8, 1946, and her obituary was published in *The Newton Graphic* newspaper on August 15, 1946. The fact that she never married is also confirmed by her obituary.

Lucy graduated from the Howe School in Billerica, Mass., in 1876 and then from the Salem Normal School in Salem, Mass., in 1880. She taught at a number of schools, including those in Princeton, Mass.; West Bridgewater, Mass.; Kingston, N.H.; and West Newton, Mass. For a time, she was an assistant at the Widener Library at Harvard, and she also taught at the Curry School of Expression (now Curry College) for a short time. From 1916 until 1935, Lucy was on the staff of the World Peace Foundation in Boston, Mass. That foundation is now affiliated with The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Her position with that organization could not be determined from the records at Tufts University.

Article information:

Although the direct family line ended with Jerome's death, his name was kept alive by the birth of a son to Allie's sister in 1865. She named him William Jerome Clark in honor of his fallen uncle.

Comments:

The sister who named her son after Jerome was Harriet Walker "Hattie" Jaquith (1845-1917). She married William E. Clark. William Jerome Clark was born in 1865, and he died in 1957. According to Lucy's will, he was the recipient of "all of my father's journals and war letters." The Jerome name would be carried on for two additional generations because William Jerome Clark named one of his sons William Jerome Clark, Jr., who, in turn, named one of his sons William Jerome Clark, III. (See below for additional information about William Jerome Clark, III.)

Article information:

Several years after the Battle of the Bloody Angle, Andrew Birdsall, superintendent of the National Cemetery at Fredericksburg and a Union veteran, received a letter from a Massachusetts family he did not know. They asked him to try to locate the field grave of one Jerome Peirce and re-inter his remains at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery.

Comments:

Andrew Birdsall was appointed the superintendent at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery in November 1883, having served as superintendent at two national cemeteries in Louisiana previously. Birdsall remained at Fredericksburg for nine years, and he was transferred to the Hampton National Cemetery in Hampton, Virginia, in 1892 to become the superintendent there. Andrew Birdsall died in Hampton, Virginia, on February 20, 1897, and he was buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery since he had served in the Union army and since two of his daughters still lived in Fredericksburg at the time. Birdsall's wife, Julia A. Birdsall, died on August 9, 1918, and she was buried next to her husband.

It is somewhat of a mystery as to why it took the family from 1864 until after November 1883 to find Jerome's final resting place, since the logical place would have been the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. However, they might have known the location of his grave but did not send the \$100 referred to below until then, since \$100 was a significant amount of money at the time.

Article information:

The family also enclosed \$100 and asked that Jerome Peirce's grave be decorated regularly so that he would not be forgotten. Superintendent Birdsall opened an account in the Farmers and Merchants Bank of Fredericksburg. He then located Jerome Peirce's grave and moved it to Marye's Heights, a

Confederate stronghold converted into the National Cemetery. Birdsall enlisted his own family – including his four daughters, who would all marry Southerners – to see that the Peirce grave got special decorations at appropriate times.

Comments:

It must not have taken Superintendent Birdsall long to locate Peirce's grave since his remains had been re-interred in the late 1860s after the Fredericksburg National Cemetery was established. Therefore, a re-interment during Birdsall's tenure as cemetery superintendent was not necessary and did not take place.

The fact that Birdsall deposited the \$100 is substantiated by a bankbook from The Farmers and Merchants State Bank of Fredericksburg, Virginia, for an account titled "Peirce Birdsall Memorial Fund." The bankbook was donated to the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in 2005 by three great-granddaughters of Andrew Birdsall.

That donation also included the diaries that Andrew Birdsall had kept at various times. There is one diary entry that directly pertains to his self-appointed duty of placing flowers on Sgt. Peirce's grave each Memorial Day. On June 11, 1891, a few days after Memorial Day that year, he wrote in his diary, "Mrs. Pierce [instead of Peirce] also sent her thanks for what I had done for her husband's grave on Memorial Day. I got a picture taken of his grave." It should be noted that Jerome's surname is incorrectly spelled "Pierce" instead of "Peirce" on his gravestone.

Article information:

As of Memorial Day 1993, Alice Heflin Abernathy, an 89-year-old Virginian, had been decorating Jerome Peirce's grave for many years. "We never really knew anything about him except that his family sent my grandfather \$100 and asked us to take care of the grave." When she was little, Alice Heflin went to the cemetery with her parents to decorate the grave of this Union soldier. Later, she went with her husband – then, still later, either with her nieces or alone.

On Memorial Day in 1993, Alice Abernathy decided she was not able to climb the steep hill [at the National Cemetery] to decorate Jerome's grave. Instead, her great-grandnephew, Kent Ingalls, then 11, the great-great-great-grandson of Andrew Birdsall, accepted the charge. Kent was thrilled with his mission and told his school class about it. Soon it was reported in the newspaper.

Comments:

One of Andrew Birdsall's daughters, Florence Birdsall (1872-1941) married Charles G. Heflin (1867-1936), and Alice was a daughter of Florence and Charles. She died in 1999 at the age of 95.

Upon her death, the tradition of decorating Jerome Peirce's grave was passed down to one of her nieces, Lucille Ingalls, who had also participated in placing flowers on the grave for many years. She, along with her son, J. Gary Ingalls, and her grandson, Kent Ingalls, have faithfully carried on the tradition for many years. Lucille Ingalls passed away in June 2015. The author has been in contact with Gary and Kent Ingalls, both of whom still live in Fredericksburg.

The *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star* subsequently carried several articles about the grave-decorating tradition, with pictures of Alice Abernathy and Kent Ingalls, some of which were picked up by the Associated Press and reprinted in several newspapers throughout the country as well as in *Yankee Magazine* in its November 1993 edition.

Article information:

Peter Jaquith Casey of Billerica, Mass., was surprised to learn that a kinsman's grave in Virginia was regularly decorated by a Southern family. He went to the attic of the Jaquith house, where he discovered photographs and letters that reflected Allie's and Lucy's quiet presence in the family. These set him to wondering whether even more answers might come from the old graveyard a few hundred yards from the Jaquith House.

On a Saturday morning last January [1994], Casey and his son, Seth, trudged through the snow to take a look. Soon they spotted the name Peirce on one of the grave markers. The marker is large – more than three feet across – and prominently inscribed upon it is the name of Jerome Peirce along with his

military affiliation, where he was killed and where he is buried. There also are the names and dates of Allie and Lucy, as well as the name of Charles Jerome Peirce, a son born before Lucy who died the day of his birth.

Comments:

As shown below, the gravestone is still in excellent condition as evidenced by the picture of it taken by a librarian at the Billerica, Mass., Public Library recently and forwarded to the author.



**THE PEIRCE FAMILY GRAVESTONE
IN THE OLD SOUTH CEMETERY, BILLERICA, MASSACHUSETTS**
(Courtesy of the Billerica, Massachusetts, Public Library)

Article information:

Jerome Peirce is honored in yet another way. Fifty miles to the north of Fredericksburg lies the body of an Air Force major – a pilot killed in Vietnam in 1967. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Across the Potomac on the wall honoring the Vietnam dead is inscribed his name: William Jerome Clark, III. He is the grandson of the baby named in honor of Jerome Peirce back in 1865.

Comments:

William Jerome Clark, III, was born on January 1, 1932, and he had inherited Jerome Peirce's letters from his father, William Jerome Clark, Jr. He arrived in Vietnam on October 28, 1967, having completed 14 years of service with the U.S. Air Force by then. It was his second tour of duty in Vietnam. Just a little over a month later, on November 30, 1967, he was killed in what the records describe as a non-hostile, fixed-wing airplane crash in Binh Dinh Province in South Vietnam. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on January 8, 1968, in Grave No. 6337, Section 8. He had been awarded the Air Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal. His name is now inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at Panel 31E, Line 10. The records for the Vietnam Memorial Wall indicate that he was from La Grange, Illinois, that he belonged to the Anglican/Episcopal Church, and that he was married. Before he left for Vietnam, he gave the letters, along with some family pictures, to his sister, Patricia Mason, of Dayton, Ohio.

By coincidence, Major Clark was killed in South Vietnam during the author's one-year tour of duty with the U.S. Army in Vietnam – not very far from where Maj. Clark was killed.

CHAPTER 9

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF SOME OF THE LETTERS WRITTEN BY JEROME PEIRCE AND OTHERS

During the course of this research it was discovered that Sgt. Jerome Peirce had written many letters to his wife while he served with the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment and that they had been reported by *Reader's Digest* in 1994 to millions of readers around the world. The following is a chronology of how those letters were found and transcriptions of some of the letters as well as their current status.

The process began when the decoration of Sgt. Peirce's grave, which started sometime in the 1880s when Andrew Birdsall was the superintendent of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, was "rediscovered" and an article appeared in the Fredericksburg *Free Lance-Star* on May 31, 1993. This article, which has been referenced in this study, was picked up by the Associated Press and re-published by a number of other newspapers throughout the country. One of them was the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, which ran a story very similar to the one that had run in the *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*, on January 2, 1994. The same story was also published in the Danville, Virginia, *Register and Bee* on January 1, 1994. Henry Hurt, the editor-at-large for *Reader's Digest* at the time who then lived (and today still lives) in Chatham, Virginia, saw the article in the Danville newspaper and became intrigued with Jerome Peirce and the tradition that Andrew Birdsall had started. He recalls, "I immediately knew that it was a wonderful story that I had to write." He then began researching who Jerome Peirce was, where he came from, which unit he fought with, where and when he was killed, etc. He soon turned to professional genealogical research help by contacting the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston to track down Peirce's descendants. Genealogist David Lambert got the "assignment."

David Lambert describes the detective work he did in an article in the *Patriot Ledger* of August 12, 1994, writing, "I've never had a story engross me so much." Slowly, his painstaking weeks of genealogical work started to pay off. He initiated his search by looking for Jerome's wife, Albinia, by consulting the Index to Massachusetts Vital Records, which provides dates of Massachusetts residents' births, marriages and deaths since 1841. From there, he went to the Department of Public Health where he looked up Albinia's death record and found that Jerome and Albinia Peirce had a daughter named Lucy. Lambert then determined from Albinia's will that Lucy was Albinia's sole heir, and he subsequently located Lucy's 1946 obituary in a Boston newspaper.

After determining that Lucy had never married and that the Peirce family line had stopped with her, David Lambert started a search for Lucy's will in the Middlesex County Courthouse, a search which turned out to be highly successful. In that will, Lucy Peirce left "all my father's journals and war letters" to her first cousin, William Jerome Clark (1865-1957), who was the son of William E. Clark and Albinia's sister, Harriet Walker "Hattie" Jaquith (1845-1917?). William Jerome Clark had been given his middle name in memory of Albinia's husband, Jerome. That was the first indication that the letters Jerome had written home existed and that they had survived – at least until 1946.

After following more leads, David Lambert found the name and telephone number of one of Clark's descendants who was then living in Florida and who had the address of Patricia Mason in Dayton, Ohio, on a recent Christmas card. Mason, it turned out, had over 100 letters and documents of Jerome Peirce as well as some pictures, but she had no idea who Peirce was or how the letters and documents might be related to her family. They had been given to her in 1967 by her brother, William Jerome Clark, III, a major in the U.S. Air Force, just prior to him having received orders for a tour of duty in Vietnam.

William Jerome Clark, III, was a son of William Jerome Clark, Jr., (born Nov. 11, 1893, died April 26, 1975) and the grandson of the “original” William Jerome Clark who had inherited the letters. William Jerome Clark, III, was born on January 1, 1932, and he had received the letters from his father. He arrived in Vietnam on October 28, 1967, having completed 14 years of service with the U.S. Air Force by then. It was his second tour of duty in Vietnam. Just a little over a month later, on November 30, 1967, he was killed in what the records describe as a non-hostile, fixed-wing airplane crash in Binh Dinh Providence in South Vietnam. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on January 8, 1968, in Grave No. 6337, Section 8. He had been awarded the Air Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal. His name is now inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at Panel 31E, Line 10. The records for the Wall indicate that he was from La Grange, Illinois, that he belonged to the Anglican/Episcopal Church, and that he was married.

The *Reader's Digest* editor-at-large, Henry Hurt, visited Patricia Mason in early 1994 and obtained copies of several of Jerome Peirce's letters, which Hurt then used in his article titled “Home of the Brave” in the May 1994 edition of *Reader's Digest*. As he read the letters, he concluded that “Jerome was an extraordinary human being, a marvelous writer, and an example of the best and brightest in the mid-19th century.” A story based on that article also appeared in the Northwest Weekly Edition of the *Boston Sunday Globe* on May 29, 1994. That was the last time in recent years that the outside world has been aware of the letters and their location.

Henry Hurt's research also led him to retired Army Lt. Col. Peter Jaquith Casey of Gilmanton Iron Works, New Hampshire, a distant relative of Albinia who was very interested in learning more about Albinia Jaquith Peirce and the other Jaquith ancestors who had lived in the Billerica, Massachusetts, homestead that he and his sister had inherited. It did not take long for Casey to locate the Peirce family gravestone in the South Burying Ground in Billerica that has been referred to and pictured above.

Subsequently, excerpts from several letters were found in the funeral service sermon for Jerome Peirce given by Rev. Levi Ballou on June 19, 1864, in Orange, Massachusetts.

In summary, the following illustrates how Jerome Peirce's letters were passed down from generation to generation.

Jerome Peirce (1830-1864) >> Albinia Peirce (1834-1920) >> Lucy Peirce (1859-1946) >>
William Jerome Clark (1865-1917) >> William Jerome Clark, Jr. (1893-1975) >>
William Jerome Clark, III (1932-1967) >> Patricia Clark Mason

The below sources contain direct-quotation excerpts from the letters that Jerome Peirce wrote to his wife.

First, Rev. Levi Ballou in the funeral service sermon for Jerome Peirce that he gave on June 19, 1864, in the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome Peirce had been the “Sabbath School Superintendent” made reference to several letters that Albinia had shared with him. The following are the excerpts from that sermon that mention his letters.

“And by letters received while in the army, we see him ever cheerful and hopeful, believing that victory shall ultimately crown our efforts in suppressing the rebellion.

In his letters to his friends here, he frequently spoke of the Sab. [Sabbath] School. Its interests were remembered. He wished to know of its doings. In one, written but a short time before he fell, he says, ‘I wish to be remembered to the Sab. School.’

A few weeks before his death, in writing to his companion [referring to his wife, Albinia], then in Billerica, just before the army advanced, he says, "But you will think of the future, as we are now approaching the enemy, it is natural, but we can only rely on the same Power who has thus far led me on. I feel no sad presentiments, but, on the contrary, am hopeful." As we look over his letters, we see them pervaded by the spirit of an elevated religious faith and trust.

Again, he writes his companion, only 12 days before he fell, and after describing the place where he then was, as reminding him much of certain localities where they had in former days conversed and strolled together. He adds that by the movements of the army, "It looks like a fearful future for some." He asks, "Shall we be spared the last fearful conflict?" "We hope all will be for the best." He then speaks of his darling child to whom he sends some flowers which he had culled for her to keep to remember Papa and in closing says, "I hope to see you again soon."

Second, the article titled "Hopeful Words Written in a Brutal Spring" in the *Boston Globe* edition of May 29, 1994, centered on the letters that were referred to in the May 1994 issue of *Reader's Digest* that had just been published. The *Boston Globe* article included a picture with the caption "Envelopes contain letters written by Cpl. Jerome Peirce of Billerica during the Civil War." Patricia Mason subsequently informed the author that Mr. Hurt had spent two days with her in early 1994 taking notes and making copies of some of the letters.

The following are excerpts that are included in this *Boston Globe* article.

"How much Papa wants to lead you by the hand in some of your pretty summer walks, but he cannot yet. But there is a Good Being who takes care of Papa, Mama and little Lulu and all good people alike."

The quotation from this letter first appeared in the *Reader's Digest* May 1994 issue.

"A great day yesterday. Thro Washington, where we were received very enthusiastically. Genl. B. [Burnside], President Lincoln on the balcony of the Willard Hotel to salute us as we passed...The boys got a "pass" and remained in W. [Washington] last night. Had a good sight of W. [Washington] City...The president looks pale and careworn – very."

This letter is dated April 26, 1864. The Unit History of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment describes the review by President Lincoln that Peirce wrote about as follows: "April 23, 1864 – April 27, 1864. On April 23, the regiment left its camp in Annapolis and marched toward Washington, D.C., reaching the capital two days later. There, the Ninth Corps, including the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, was reviewed by President Lincoln and General Burnside from the balcony of the Willard Hotel to the cheers and well wishes of a large crowd of citizens of Washington. It then went into camp at Alexandria, Virginia, until April 27, 1864."

"Where is my darling Lulu today? Found some flowers which I send her. Keep them and think of Papie. Time flies and I hope to see you one of these days and then I will answer all your questions. What would she ask me first, I think?...Read a Psalm, a chapter from the Epistle of St. John after I got ready on duty."

This letter is dated May 1, 1864, and it may have been the last letter that Jerome wrote to his wife. Enclosed was a small sign of affection: A tiny bouquet of spring flowers he had picked from a field somewhere in central Virginia, tied with a thread. This letter is also referenced in the May 1994 issue of *Reader's Digest* as being "cheerful and upbeat." Likewise, the fact that he sent flowers with this letter is also mentioned in the *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star* article of May 29, 2001.

Since the last time the whereabouts of the letters was known was in early 1994, the possibility of finding them in late 2015, i.e., over 21 years later, seemed extremely small, with the only clue being that a distant descendant named Patricia Mason who was living in Dayton, Ohio, in 1994 had them. Nevertheless, the importance of these letters, not only for this study but also for historical purposes, called for an all-out effort to find them.

There were the following five challenging questions:

1. Was Patricia Mason still alive? A search of various databases, such as Legacy.com, the Social Security Death Index, and Find A Grave.com, showed that she had probably not passed away in the last 21 years. Per the information on the Arlington National Cemetery and the picture of his gravestone on Find A Grave, William Jerome Clark, III, Patricia's brother, was born on January 1, 1932. Therefore, Patricia was probably born within a few years of 1932. The 1940 U.S. census lists the William Jerome Clark, Jr., family, including Patricia Clark and William Jerome Clark, III, and the enumerator was even conscientious enough to include Patricia's middle name of Marian, although he incorrectly recorded her middle name as "Marion."
2. Was Patricia Mason still living in Dayton, Ohio? With today's U.S. mobile society, the chances of that being the case was considered to be 50% at best. If she had moved since 1994, the chances of finding her were virtually zero.
3. If she could be found, would she respond to an inquiry about the letters, or would she assume that this was just another Internet scam attempt that everyone is subject to, and would she consider any effort to contact her as an invasion of her privacy?
4. If the answers to all of the above questions were favorable, would she still have the letters? In other words, would she and her family have cared enough about them to have saved them? After all, her relationship to Jerome Peirce was not really close, being the great-grandniece of his wife.
5. If, in fact, she would be interested in helping to reconstruct the "The Jerome Peirce Story" and assuming that she and her family would, understandably, want to keep these letters for future generations because of their significant historical and sentimental value, how could copies and/or scans of the letters be made available to the National Park Service's Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park?

The next step was to find Patricia Mason. Assuming, optimistically, that she was still living in Dayton, Ohio, letters were sent to the four Patricia Masons listed in several on-line telephone and other directories with Dayton addresses – and hope for the best! These letters basically asked if the recipient knew anything about letters sent by a Jerome Peirce between 1862 and 1864 to his family in Massachusetts. If the answer was "No," the recipient was asked to just ignore this piece of mail – with the author's apologies. If the answer was "Yes," the recipient was "begged" to respond via email, regular mail, telephone call or any other way that she preferred!

Fortunately, a few days later, the author received a telephone message from a Patricia Mason in Dayton, Ohio, asking for more information about the Civil War letters and specifically how her name and address had been found, and she left an email address to be used for a response. SUCCESS! Understandably, she was concerned that this project might be some kind of scam. The author responded with a lengthy email answering Ms. Mason's questions with extensive proof that all of this was "on the level." (As it turned out, one of Ms. Mason's daughters had by then already Googled the author's name, and the search results had included references to the author's Civil War research done for the National Park Service, and she had told her mother that the author was probably "legitimate.")

Next, a lengthy telephone conversation ensued that informed Ms. Mason about this project and which provided the author with a summary of what she knew about the letters. For example, the author learned that the letters were now stored with a daughter living in the Dayton area, that there were “bundles” of them, that there were also poems Jerome had written and family photographs, that there were letters from other individuals besides Jerome, that there was also an elegant 1857 Bible with Jerome Peirce’s name inscribed on the cover, and that the letters were “lovely and beautifully written.” Obviously, all of that information was beyond the author’s wildest expectations!

Patricia Mason subsequently sent the below picture which illustrates the extent of the letters and photographs owned by her family. Jerome’s Bible is not shown in the picture.



Patricia Mason

LETTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS OWNED BY THE PATRICIA MASON FAMILY

Next, several discussions and exchanges of emails ensued to decide what the next steps should be regarding the possible copying and transcribing of the letters and other documents. First of all, it was agreed that under no circumstances should the materials be sent from Dayton to Fredericksburg to avoid the risk of loss or damage. Given that ground rule, a family member in Dayton would first, at a minimum, have to make readable copies. This is a formidable task in itself, since the letters seem to be anywhere from one to eight (or possibly more) pages long. A document feeder on a copier cannot be used, and most letters would have to be copied multiple times consecutively at the darkest possible copier setting to yield readable copies. This process would not only be expensive but also very time consuming. The possibility of having someone from Fredericksburg travel to Dayton, such as the National Park Service’s museum curator, to make copies or scans of the letters and photographs was also explored. However, it was decided that for the time being, at least, this option was not feasible due to cost and time limitations.

Regardless of the option, the basic concern has been that the penmanship and the deterioration due to time of the letters are such that sections of the letters are not readable. In addition, there is no way of knowing if the letters contain any historically significant information, but the probability that they do is probably small. Finally, the cost of having the transcriptions published again raises cost concerns, and the chances that they could be published commercially are also small. Therefore, it was decided not to do anything for the time being but to stay in touch in case an opportunity arises to do “something” further with the letters or photographs at a later date.

In the meantime, Henry Hurt, the *Reader's Digest* editor-at-large, was kind enough to lend the author copies of the 19 letters he had made in early 1994. As it turned out, those copies included a few letters written by Albinia in May of 1864 to her husband which Jerome probably did not receive before he was killed and which were probably returned to her with his personal effects. In addition, there are letters from friends who knew Jerome before he enlisted that were read as tributes at the funeral service referred to above. Finally, there are some poems that Jerome wrote for/to Albinia, including one dated April 1856 when Jerome and Albinia became engaged. It is of special interest because at the bottom of the poem is the following notation: "Written by my Father when engaged to Mother. Lucy S. Peirce" (See below)

Several of these letters are very difficult to decipher, even after "best possible" copies are made, with many words or sections impossible to read. Nevertheless, a few of the copies furnished by Henry Hurt were transcribed, with relative few "impossible to read" words or sections. The following are the most interesting sections of these "readable" letters. The letters that have been transcribed are given in Appendix G.

Letters from Jerome to Albinia

Location: Nicholasville, Kentucky

Date: Monday, Aug. 24, 1863

My dear Allie.

I wrote you yesterday and now I have something to tell.

Was called to the Commander's tent and informed that I was selected as the "Non Com" [Non-commissioned] officer to accompany others to go to Mass. to bring in Conscripits! You can imagine my feeling. It is a great favor and compliment too and my years' service has not been for nothing, as it is a work requiring the right sort of stuff. Alonzo was the means of it in a great measure.

Expect to leave tomorrow, Tuesday or the next day with Lieut. Davis, Co. K, and six men. I send you this that you may be prepared to meet me either at home B [Billerica] or some point near or at Boston as the Camp is at Long Island you know. Talked with Alonzo. He didn't think we shall have leave to go home, that is to visit round. I go out of my way so you will hear from me by Telegraph or letter as we are not quite certain what day we shall leave. This will reach you ahead.

My expenses, you see, will be all paid and I hope to see you soon.

You will please inform the friends so I can meet as many as possible.

Shall write to Orange today with this. J.H. has a fine thing: Orderly for Gen. Ferrero. Left for his post today.

In haste with love to all.

I am yours,
Jerome

The following note was written on the top of page 1: "Please write Foster's folks. Don't know whether I can see them."

NOTE 1: The Company Muster Roll for September and October 1863 in Corporal Jerome Peirce's Service File gives the following information: "Absent. Sent to Massachusetts for conscription Sept. 15, 1863." The next Company Muster Roll, for November and December 1863, lists him as "Present."

NOTE 2: The Unit History mentions the conscription detail that included Jerome Peirce as follows: "Between sunrise and noon of the 15th [of September 1863] we marched fourteen miles, and encamped at Barbourville, on the Cumberland River. Before marching this morning, a detail of three officers (Captain

Holmes, Lieutenants Hodgkins and Davis), and six men left us, for the purpose of returning to Massachusetts, and bringing out the conscripts assigned to the Thirty-sixth Regiment, according to orders received at Nicholasville.”

NOTE 3: The “J. H.” Jerome referred to in this letter was probably Pvt. James E. Hills, one of the men from Orange, Massachusetts, who enlisted with him in early August 1862. Hills was not wounded or killed in the War and was discharged with the rest of the regiment on June 8, 1865.

Location: Camp near Alexandria, Va.
Date: Tuesday morning, April 26, 1864

Allie dear

Arrived from Annapolis last Eve some four miles from Washington in a little valley towards A. [Alexandria] near Fort Scott. Left Annapolis Sat. morning. A tedious little march but I am happy to tell you I am very well indeed in lameness. Feel like myself again.

A great day yesterday tho [??] Washington where we were received very enthusiastically [by] Genl. B. [Burnside] and Pres. Lincoln on the balcony of Willard Hotel to salute us as we passed, some forty thousand “Company front” and a splendid sight. Henry Mayo’s and Nelson Smith’s folks “there to see.” Came with Joseph H. who met me on the street at W. [Washington] and is writing by my side. He is well and feels repaid for all he has been thru with.

Cannot write you much now. Have no idea where and when we go from here and it seems to be a secret no one can ever guess. We [??] to the South side of the James [River], Suffolk perhaps.

Expect Mr. Mayo and Smith here today. The boys got a “Pass” and remained in W. [Washington] last night. Had a good sight of W. [Washington] City and the men, women and children treating us to everything, not the Washington of 1861. The president looks pale and careworn very.

J.A. is detailed to Genl. Parke’s HdQrts. [Headquarters] [as] Orderly same as with Gen. Ferrero who commands the Black Troops.

Hope to hear from you today. We’re in First Brigade Second Division now. Direct accordingly via Washington. D.C.

Weather getting warm and we are reducing Baggage fast.

Mr. Heath from C [very likely “Charlestown”] is here. Came from Annapolis, as attentive as ever. He may mail this to you.

Give love to all. Will write more first opportunity. Hope the money all reached you safely. Tell me all about.

As ever yours,
Jerome

J.H. sends love, disappointed not seeing you.

NOTE 1: The *Boston Globe* article of May 29, 1994, included the following excerpt from this letter: “A great day yesterday. Thro Washington, where we were received very enthusiastically. Genl. B., President Lincoln on the balcony of the Willard Hotel to salute us as we passed...The boys got a “pass” and remained in W. last night. Had a good sight of W. City...The president looks pale and careworn – very.”

NOTE 2: The Unit History of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment describes the review by General Burnside and President Lincoln that Peirce wrote about as follows: “On the evening of the 22d [April 1864] the command was ordered to be in readiness to march, and before daylight of the 23d the delightful camp was broken up, and the corps took up its line of march, not toward the harbor, but in the direction of

Washington, following the line of the Elk Ridge and Annapolis Railroad. After a march of thirteen miles the corps bivouacked in the fields for the night. Very early on the 24th the march was resumed. In about six hours we reached the Baltimore and Washington Turnpike, and at nightfall the corps went into camp near Bladensburg, distant about eight miles from the city of Washington. At four o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 25th, reveille was sounded but, owing to a severe shower, the regiment did not march until about eight o'clock. When the march was resumed the corps passed through Bladensburg and continued in the direction of the city. We reached the outskirts of the capital about noon, and halted on New York Avenue for the command to close up, as we were to pay marching salute to the President and General Burnside, who were to review us from balcony of Willard's Hotel. It soon became known that the corps was to pass through the city, and the streets along the line of march were densely packed. The column was greeted with cheers and applause. Many spirited descriptions of this imposing scene were published at the time in the journals of the day."

To illustrate the appearance of these letters, the following is a copy of the first page of the above letter. It is one of the most readable of the letters that were transcribed.

Camp near Alexandria Va
 This morning 26 April
 Allie dear -
 Arrived from
 Annapolis last eve. some four
 miles from Washington in a
 little valley towards A. near Fort
 Scott - Left Annapolis
 Sat. morning. A tedious little march
 but I am happy to tell you
 I am very well indeed. in some-
 what better shape again
 A great ^{day} yesterday. The Washington
 where we ^{were} received very enthusiastically
 Genl B & Pres Lincoln on the
 balcony of Willard's Hotel to salute
 us as we passed. some forty thousand
 Company front. & a splendid sight
 Henry Naggs & Villon Smith's
 folks "there to see" Came with

Location: Picket Post near Catlett's Station, Va.

Date: Sunday PM May 1st, 1864

My [??] dear Wife and Lulu.

This beautiful Sabbath afternoon, may it be as pleasant with you – from this novel situation as Sergt. of the Picket, I send you a word of greeting. How little did I think one week ago that we should be so [snugly?] fixed in this situation! Expected to have been on the Rapidan with Gen. Meade ere this, but we [??] find ourselves living in log houses with cloth roofs and taking life easy guarding R Road [Railroad] from guerrillas which have infested the neighborhood.

Mailed letters from near Alexandria and by our Sutler yesterday written from Bristoe's [also spelled Bristow's] Station where we camped for one night. Friday morning struck tents again and marched down the R Road some five miles when two Co's H and G came down here, or a mile from here, where we relieved two Co's. of the 14th Regulars and it seems the [??] for the present we scattered along this [R] Road as guard.

The country reminds me some of the ground between town (at B) [Billerica?] and where Judkins' [??] lived, rather skirted with woods. Where we are was a thick growth of oaks now much thinned out, the R Road ten rods perhaps on front with slight embankments. And some six or eight workmen are repairing while the sentinel paces his beat with fixed bayonet and ball cartridges. Trains pass frequently otherwise tis [it is] very quiet especially after such a long time at the front or with the hum of Camp life all about us. Have guard and Picket duty quite often of course but we shall rest up. The Regiment is nearby toward A. [probably Auburn, Virginia] while our quarters are towards Catlett's opposite.

Just breeze enough to be agreeable and reminds me so much of the dear old days at Pleasant Valley! If we could take a stroll together and hear a good sermon from [??]. I do hope you are well and having some refreshment body and soul! Is it so? We soon expect to send and receive mail daily and then what chats we can have. Can you realize that your wandering boy is leading such a quiet life as near home? Let us make the most of it? A whole Brigade of heavy Artillery as Infantry passed us this A.M. for the front right from N.Y. harbor and many others are constantly going forward so it looks like something. A fearful future for some. Shall we be spared the last conflict? How these questions come up and we hope everything will be for the best. Are you all well?

Can tell you nothing particularly interesting but I know a word will be [??]. J. Henry is with Co. [??] and is quartered with us eight in a house so far. Don't know what the reason is that he came to the Co. All the boys from the Regt. are reported back. Will have a chance again soon perhaps. Is quite happy and boyish in his jollity.

Another little incident. A playmate of Eddie Peirce's is in our Co. belongs to the 29th Mass. (those who didn't enlist are in our Regt.) and by chance I found him out. Geo. Woodbury I remember his name. Had a long chat last Eve. about old times in C [probably Charlestown]. Younger of course than I am but as a mate of E's [Eddie's?] I was interested. A pleasant fellow and good soldier. How strange we meet folks in this world.

Where's my darling Lulu today? Found some flowers which I send her. Keep them and think of Papie. Time flies and I hope to see you one of these days. And then I will answer all her questions. What would she ask me first. Think? Am very well indeed. Read a Psalm and a chapter from Ep [Epistle] St. John after got ready on duty – perhaps I ought to before. Mustered again this morning as accounted for for Pay.

Shall return to quarters about 10 o'clock tomorrow morning and hope you will get this promptly.
Love to all and Ever yours

Entirely

Jerome

NOTE 1: This letter might have been the last letter that Jerome Peirce sent to his wife and daughter.

NOTE 2: Rev. Levi Ballou in the funeral service sermon for Jerome Peirce that he gave on June 19, 1864, in the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome Peirce had been the “Sabbath School Superintendent” made reference to several letters that Albinia had shared with him, including this one.

NOTE 3: The article titled “Hopeful Words Written in a Brutal Spring” in the *Boston Globe* edition of May 29, 1994, also included an excerpt from this letter.

Jerome’s Poem to Albinia (Allie) on Their Engagement in April 1856

To “Allie”

Dearest of all my earthly friends
Again I fly to thee,
Whose blessed Image ever blends
In all that’s dear to me.

The toils of day and eve’s repose
Alike thy presence brings.
When sleep serene, my eyelids close
To thee my spirit wings.

How deeply thus doth love enshrine
Its object in the soul!
And guides the heart to things divine
And Heaven – its final goal.

Oh blessed thought! For those who love
An immortality remains.
And in a brighter world above
A balm for all our pains.

April ‘56

A notation at the bottom reads as follows: “Written by my Father when engaged to Mother.
Lucy S. Peirce”

NOTE: Jerome Peirce and Albinia Jaquith were married on September 10, 1857. More specifically, the Pension File obtained from the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C., contains a Certification from the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as proof of marriage to the U.S. Pension Office in order to approve the widow’s pension that Albinia applied for. That document reads, “The marriage of Jerome Peirce of Charlestown, aged 26 years, and Albinia Jaquith of Billerica, aged 28, was solemnized at Billerica on September 10, 1857, by Rev. J. G. D. Stearnes.” Further research shows that the Rev. Jesse G. D. Stearnes was the minister at the Congregational Church on Andover Street in Billerica, Massachusetts, from 1843 until 1867.

Other Letters

Letter to: Foster Peirce

From: C.F.S. [Charles F. Smith]

Location: Charlestown, Massachusetts

Date: June 1864 [Specific date not indicated]

Notation on the envelope: "Read at funeral Charles F. Smith"

The tidings that Jerome had fallen on the battle field have cast a deep gloom over his numerous friends in this city.

Associated with him from childhood, I feel it a privilege to bear testimony to his worth and to the esteem in which he was held by his comrades.

As a boy he was noted for his studious habits and eagerness for knowledge. As he grew to manhood his frank and generous nature, his conscious regard for the right and his genial disposition made him a great favorite with his companions.

In 1851 ten young men who had been schoolmates and intimate friends matured a plan for forming a society for mutual mental improvement. Into this scheme Jerome entered with all the zeal and earnestness so characteristic of him and we soon found our society increasing in numbers, in interest and usefulness.

Through the liberality of citizens pleased with the stand we had taken, a fund was raised for the purpose of providing us with a Library.

We knew Jerome to be a great student with a thorough knowledge of books and authors and to him mainly was entrusted the duty of selecting our Library and to it, with characteristic liberality, he made many additions of choice volumes from his own shelves. That Library composed as it is mainly of the more solid works of English literature, has always been a source of just pride to us and an enduring monument to Jerome's energy and literary taste.

In a society of young men of various temperaments and representing every shade of opinion and feeling, it could not be otherwise than that we should have warm and earnest debates upon the various topics which came before us.

Jerome, with a mind well stored by his extensive reading, took an active part in our debates. Always calm yet decided, always sincere, always earnest, always charitable to the faults and failings of others and ready to put the best possible construction upon their motives and actions, he exercised an influence over his associates which will not soon be forgotten.

That a man of his refined taste and quiet habits, appreciating so keenly the joys of home, so devoted to his wife and child, should have volunteered for the military service can be accounted for only on the ground that he had come to believe it to be his duty. He never jumped at conclusions. The conviction upon which he acted was reached by the slow process of thought and inquiry.

Once convince [??] him that duty pointed him in a certain direction and no ordinary influence could cause him to swerve from that path.

His sole aim in entering the army was to render to his country that service which he felt was due from him in this her hour of trial, and although well qualified to command, he had no aspirations to rise from his humble position in the ranks, contented to render any service that might assist in vindicating his country's honor.

That he would be spared to return to his family and to that quiet life which he enjoyed so much has been not only the sincere prayer but the assured belief of his numerous friends. But it has been ordered otherwise and we must submit.

He now fills a hero's grave. No praise which we can bestow can reach him. But the influence of his well spent life, his incorruptible integrity and noble sacrifice to the call of duty will long be felt by those who were so fortunate as to enjoy his companionship.

I cannot better close this brief and altogether unsatisfactory tribute to his memory than by adding the lines which he was wont to quote.

“How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country’s wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy’s feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there.”

C.F.S.

Charlestown June 1864

NOTE 1: Foster Peirce was Jerome Peirce’s older brother.

NOTE 2: Charles F. Smith kept in contact with Albinia Peirce for many years as evidenced by several letters from him to Albinia in the early 1900s. On the letterhead of a letter from him dated May 25, 1905, which was written on stationery of the Commonwealth Trust Company in Boston, Massachusetts, he is listed as the treasurer of that company.

NOTE 3: The funeral at which this letter was read, per the notation on the envelope, was conducted by Rev. Levi Ballou on June 19, 1864, in the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome Peirce had been the “Sabbath School Superintendent.”

NOTE 4: The poem in the letter is a verbatim quote of the poem titled “How Sleep the Brave,” written by William Collins (1721-1759).

Letter to: Rev. Ballou, North Orange [Massachusetts]
From: George E. Ellis
Location: Charlestown [Massachusetts]
Date: June 15, 1864
Notation on front of envelope: "Read at the funeral"

My Dear Sir,

I comply, with a sad sympathy, with the request made to me to furnish a few words of commemorative regard and respect to the tribute which is to be paid to our late cherished friend Jerome Peirce. I was unwilling to receive the first reports which came to me that his young and hopeful life had entered into costly sacrifice of the brave and the good, the patriotic and the useful which thousands of our happiest homes in city and country are now offering to what their death makes all the more precious and sacred a cause to us. It seems that information from a trustworthy source has removed all ground for hope that he may still be among the living. Let us yield him up as he yielded himself. Let us commemorate him in a way consistent with the modes and simplicity of the childlike sincerity of his character. The resources of our language, as well as our hearts, are now daily drawn upon to furnish fitting tributes of honor and love that shall have a special fitness to each case of sorrow, whether inflicted by the loss of one conspicuous in official rank or in soldierly or private virtues, or whether hidden in the humility of modest worth from the knowledge of the world to be the tenderly cherished by a narrow and endeared private circle.

Jerome Peirce will receive from those who knew him well, as hearty and tender a tribute as will be given in any form of homage from circles of men and women however elevated or wide their range, to any hero of our war. I am informed that your male population in the town where he lived for a short time after leaving this city, is now mourning nearly all of the little band of young men who went from their quiet homes to the dreadful battle field. I have given a thought to them, and to their mourning friends, while I write these lines with particular reference to only one among them whom I knew; and in all of them I feel an indirect interest as his companions – first in life and now in death.

It is eight years this month since Mr. Peirce became a member of the Church here of which I am the Pastor. I had many good opportunities for knowing the qualities of his character and the tenor of his life. His circumstances required of him industry and frugality. He joined with those virtues a most [??] and contented spirit, drawing delight from pure and very simple pleasures, refining his tastes, and informing his mind. He was a consistent Christian in the Sunday School and Church, in his home, and in the streets; and he must have been eminently such in his occupations, for he pursued them only to help him to the best ends of life.

He was actively interested here in all our religious and humane enterprises, ever ready to do his part in real work and always doing it beautifully by personal influence. I do not know that I ever met with a human pair more congenially mated for the household joys and cares and responsibilities of life than were he and the lonely stricken partner of his short tenure of existence as a husband and a father.

It was very difficult for me to conceive of him as a soldier; I said so to him very frankly when he came to see me on his visit here from his camp. His gentle spirit and peaceful ways as well as the mildness of his looks and tones seemed utterly out of harmony with the actual work of a military service; and especially so with the [??] and duties which require the infliction of vindictive or mortal blows upon fellow men. It was my own secret hope that the fortuitous arrangements of camp life and the incidents of his campaign might happily fit him in to a place and assign to him tasks in which he might have the consciousness of doing the full work of a patriot in arms with as little as possible of a ruthless activity. But I was weaker in this with than he was in the [??] and fibre of his own of his own full consecration of himself to all that his military profession should exact. A soldier must be a soldier in the completeness of its stern conditions. He was such a one.

Mr. Peirce's friends know very well that he regarded the rational purpose of this War as defensive against our utter ruin and disgrace and offensive only against a traitorous and malignant crime. In that full and firm belief he gave himself to the ranks, and his convictions deepened as he followed their lead. So

good a man commends to us the goodness of his cause. I therefore looked upon him as one of many loved and honored young men known to me who would do a double service in this dread strife. First their conscious principles would make them formidable foes of rebels; and second, their private virtues would qualify them to exert a restraining and elevating influence upon multitudes on our own side of a less noble and pure character. So while these our Christian soldiers with an indignant scorn of treachery and the prowess of a noble patriotism confronted the rebels in the field, they would also help to purify their own camp and to infuse a right spirit into their coarser associates. Mr. Peirce has proved his fidelity in both ways. All our country towns – even the most quiet and retired of men are hence forward to have Memorial Monuments standing amid grass and foliage to the honored young victims of our nation’s cause. Jerome Peirce will not be forgotten or placed low on the list, when its sad record is complete.

Respectfully Yours,
George E. Ellis

NOTE 1: The funeral at which this letter was read, per the notation on the envelope, was conducted by Rev. Levi Ballou on June 19, 1864, in the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome Peirce had been the “Sabbath School Superintendent.”

NOTE 2: As indicated in the letter, George E. Ellis was the pastor in the church in Charlestown, Massachusetts, that the Peirce family belonged to prior to moving to Orange, Massachusetts. An Internet search provided the following details about him. George Edward Ellis was born in 1814 in Boston, Massachusetts, and he died in 1894, also in Boston. He graduated from Harvard College in 1833 and from the Harvard Divinity School in 1836, and he was ordained in 1840 as the pastor of the Harvard Unitarian Church in Charlestown, Massachusetts. From 1857 until 1863, he was professor of systematic theology in the Harvard Divinity School. In addition to being the pastor at the church, he also wrote and lectured extensively. George Ellis resigned from the pastorate of the Harvard Unitarian Church in 1869. He was president of the Massachusetts Historical Society and also a member of the Board of Overseers of Harvard University in 1850 – 1854. Harvard awarded him the degree of D.D. in 1857 and that of L.L.D. in 1883. He is buried in the Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

NOTE 3: This letter provides some indication as to how long Jerome Peirce family lived in Orange, Massachusetts, prior to his enlistment on August 4, 1862, in Orange, namely “a short time after leaving this city [Charlestown, Massachusetts].”

Letter to: Mrs. Jerome Peirce
From: Philip G. Woodward, First Lt., Commanding Co. H. 36th M.[Massachusetts] V. [Volunteers]
Location: Near Petersburg [Virginia]
Date: July 4, 1864
Envelope postmark: Old Point Comfort, Va. July 6 [1864]

Mrs. Jerome Peirce

Madam – Your note came duly to hand. Should have answered it before but it would have been useless so far as concerns a final Settlement with the U.S. Gov. as it is also useless now. You are of course anxious to know all about your Husband’s affairs and I shall [??] time in notifying you when I can do so. You know we are in the field. Our Co. [Company] Books, Blanks and all Co. Papers which would be very necessary for me to have in order to send you final statements that you may settle his account are left behind on Boats on the James River and I don’t expect to see them again during the present Campaign.

Respecting Sergeant's death, I am afraid I can tell you but little more than J.H. has already written. I can with truth say that Sergt. was an esteemed friend of mine. That Co. H had no other such a man – purely patriotic – philanthropic, ever lending a helping hand in sickness and working for his Comrades as well as for himself. His morals to the Lord [??] as you must know were strictly pure. No Profanity or Obscenities ever crossed his lips. and while a soldier he bore while at home. No one can say too much in his Praise. His loss is felt not only in his family but in his Co. and Regt. and wherever he was known.

The two last nights that he lived Jerome and I slept together. On the morning of the 12th of May [we] went forth to meet the Enemy. Jerome knew our Danger yet faced it like a brave soldier and was first of our company to fall. I did not see him fall as we were falling back under a cover of a Fence, the enemy coming down on us and occupying the ground on which he fell. Consequently his body was in the Enemy's hands for about 15 minutes. When we charged forward and not only took the ground we lost but a great deal more. Jerome's body lay in a very exposed position it was impossible to move it. But I went to him and took his Memorandum Book for I felt as though I ought to make an effort to secure some memento. The Book I gave to J.H. His body had to remain until after dark when we buried it the best that circumstances would permit. He was killed at about 7 o.c. [o'clock] AM. His other effects I turned over to J.H. I also found the Bullet that killed him. I took it from his left Breast – no one [??] after he was hit, he must have died instantly. His grave is in a Pine Grove – well marked.

I sympathize with you in your affliction and shall be happy to serve you when opportunity arises. If it [??] would very much like a photograph of Jerome.

I wish to be remembered to Joseph Peirce and family. Should be happy to hear from them.

I am yours in sympathy

Philip G. Woodward

First Lt. Commanding Co. H 36th M. [Massachusetts] V. [Volunteers]

P.S. Me and my Rifle Platoons on Picket which accounts for this Paper being so much soiled and so small.

Woodward

A note written upside down at the top of the first page reads as follows: "Jerome was paid up [??] I don't know how his clothing account is as the Books are not available."

NOTE 1: Old Point Comfort is a point of land located in Hampton, Virginia, and lies at the extreme tip of the Virginia Peninsula at the mouth of Hampton Roads.

NOTE 2: The following is taken from the roster section of the Unit History of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers: Philip G. Woodward. 25. From Orange, Massachusetts. Enlisted as a Sergeant, in Co. H on Aug. 6, 1862; Promoted to Second Lieutenant on Oct. 26, 1863; Not mustered; Promoted to First Lieutenant on May 15, 1864; Wounded in action at Cold Harbor, Va., on June 3, 1864; Promoted to Captain on Oct. 11, 1864; Mustered out with the Regiment on June 8, 1865. (Jerome Peirce enlisted as a Corporal in Orange, Massachusetts, on Aug. 4, 1862.)

NOTE 3: The "J.H." referred to in the above letter might have been James E. Hills also from Orange, Massachusetts, who enlisted in Co. H, 36th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers, on August 7, 1862. He was discharged on June 8, 1865.

NOTE 4: On July 3, 1864, one day prior to the date of the above letter by Lt. Woodward, Capt. J. B. Smith, commanding officer of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, wrote the below "official" report regarding Sgt. Peirce's death. A copy of this document is found in Sgt. Jerome Peirce's Pension File, and

it was used by Albinia as part of her application for her widow's pension. Capt. Smith was Lt. Woodward's immediate superior in the chain of command.

To all whom it may concern.

This is to certify that Jerome Peirce, a Sergeant of Company F, Thirty Sixth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, was killed on the twelfth day of May A.D. 1864 at Spottsylvania Court House Virginia, during an engagement with the enemy, and that he was in the performance of his duty at the time.

Given under my hand
at Head-quarters 36th Mass Vols. near Petersburg Virginia, this third day of July 1864.

By the Commanding Officer

Wm. V. Hodgkins.
Adj't

J. B. Smith
Captain, Comd'g Reg't

Excerpt from a letter to: Mrs. Jerome Peirce
From: Charles F. Smith
Location: Boston, Massachusetts.
Date: Dec. 29, 1904

Dear Mrs. Peirce

Your letter called up some sad as well as pleasant memories of the old days. I was sorry to learn that some of the old friends left your letters unanswered as though they had forgotten you or had grown out of the old memories. I shall never forget what a snug and happy home you and Jerome had in the place leading from Elm Street in Charlestown (the name I have forgotten). It must be nearly 50 years ago. How time flies! How proud and contented Jerome was. He was a rare man and it seems a strange Providence that he should lay down his life as he did. Well, we little know what is before us. You certainly deserve great credit and the approval and sympathy of your friends in the fight you have made to sustain yourself and daughter.

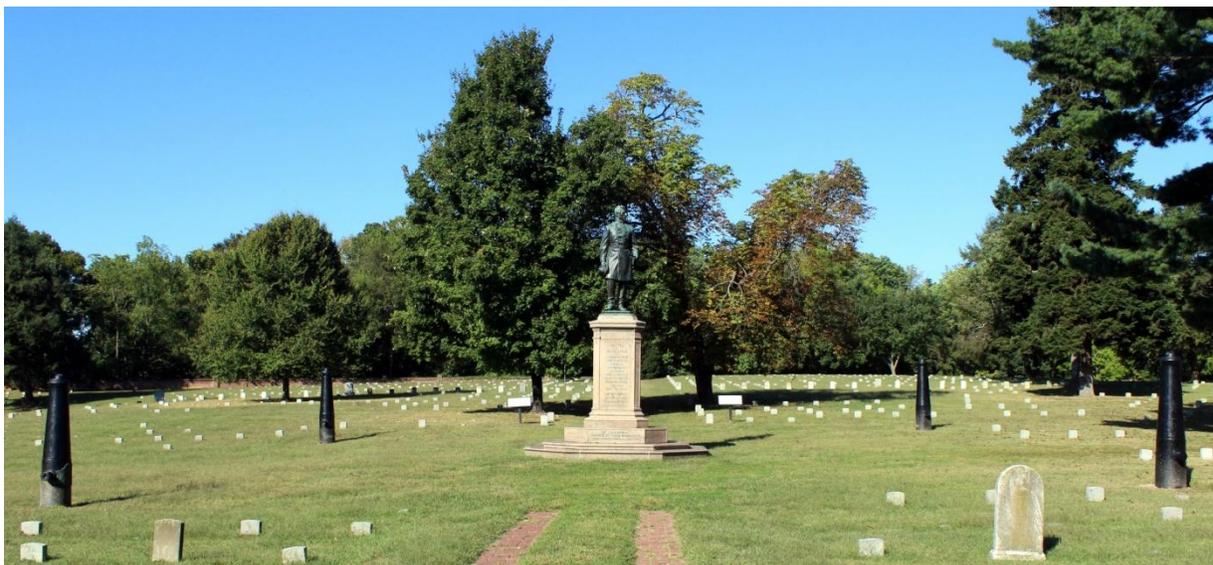
I wish you a happy New Year and hope to see you at the house before long.

Yours Truly
Chas. F. Smith

NOTE: Charles F. Smith was a long-time family friend who knew Jerome Peirce before Jerome enlisted on August 4, 1862, and several of his letters were saved by Albinia. Smith also sent a letter pertaining to the time Jerome and he were friends as youngsters that was read at the funeral service in Orange, Massachusetts, on June 19, 1864.

CHAPTER 10

THE FINAL RESTING PLACE OF SGT. JEROME PEIRCE: THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY



Josef W. Rokus

A SECTION OF THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY, WITH THE HUMPHREYS' DIVISION MONUMENT IN THE CENTER

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

Efforts were made within weeks after the Civil War ended in 1865 to properly re-inter the thousands of Union soldiers who had fallen in the numerous battles or who had died of diseases within a radius of roughly 30 miles of Fredericksburg, Virginia, wherever they had been hastily buried. However, it was an overwhelming task for the few troops who were assigned to this gruesome duty, and little progress was made. In 1866, the War Department decided to consolidate all of the Civil War-related burials and to establish several national cemeteries, including the Fredericksburg National Cemetery.

Despite the fact that the site of the cemetery had been a Confederate position in both the First Battle and the Second Battle of Fredericksburg, there were no Confederate soldiers intentionally buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, but it is quite possible that some Confederates who were misidentified as Union soldiers were re-interred in the cemetery. In short, the cemetery, like other national cemeteries across the country, was reserved for Union soldiers only. Confederate soldiers were buried in private graveyards throughout the South. There are two such Confederate cemeteries in the Fredericksburg area, namely, the Fredericksburg Confederate Cemetery in downtown Fredericksburg, adjacent to the City Cemetery, and the Confederate Cemetery at Spotsylvania Court House.

Originally, loyal citizens suggested the Fredericksburg City Fairgrounds as the site for the Fredericksburg National Cemetery because many of the Union dead from the two Battles of Fredericksburg were already buried there. The planners found, however, that the water table was only

three feet below the surface, making the area unsuitable for burials. Instead, Willis Hill, on the southern end of Marye's Heights, was selected as the site, and construction of the cemetery was begun in June 1866. The work of the burial corps to collect the remains from the large number of sites where bodies were found had actually begun a month earlier by U.S. soldiers stationed in Fredericksburg. However, the government was soon paying former slaves, Irish immigrants, and Confederate veterans \$15 a month plus lodging and rations to do the work. Their camp was at the foot of Willis Hill, just across from where the Fredericksburg Visitor Center is located today.

It took until the fall of 1868 to finish the work of dis-interring the dead from the battlefields and transferring them to the cemetery (which could be miles away, depending on the location of the burial), and re-interring them. The cemetery was not blocked out by state, unit, or battlefield; instead, bodies were buried as they were brought in to the cemetery.

Every soldier buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, which is one of the largest Civil War-era cemeteries in the United States, is a casualty of war, with most having fought in the four major battles at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House. However, not all of them were casualties of battle. Diseases took the lives of more men than did the ravages of combat, becoming the leading cause of death of soldiers on both sides during the conflict. The process of bringing thousands of men together into close contact, men who had been exposed to different diseases back home, resulted in sickness being spread quickly through the camps. Some of the first casualties of a regiment were often incurred before the men had even seen their first battle.

Known burials represent a small percentage of the graves in the cemetery; just 2,643 burials (16.5%) are known, and they are marked by the "Civil War type" headstones. These vertical headstones are approximately 10 inches by 11 inches in size with a rounded top on which the plot number is inscribed. On the front of the stone, in addition to his name, the soldier's home state was inscribed if known. His rank was added if he was a non-commissioned or a commissioned officer.



Josef W. Rokus



Josef W. Rokus

EXAMPLES OF "KNOWN" GRAVESTONES

Many of these men were buried hastily on the battlefield where they fell or in mass graves with no way to identify the bodies later. For some of them, their graves were originally marked or their bodies left with an identifier. These identifiers were often lost, or, since they were usually scraps of paper, they deteriorated before the men were buried. Consequently, they now lie under "unknown" markers in the

cemetery. To aggravate matters, many of the original wooden headstones were lost or were taken for firewood.

Fortunately, Sgt. Jerome Peirce's original grave on the McCoull Farm on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield was marked in some manner, most likely with a scrap of wood, such as from an ammunition box, and it was placed at Sgt. Peirce's grave by one of his comrades from the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, as indicated by a letter from his company commander referred to earlier. That marker apparently survived until Peirce's remains were re-interred in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. Here, the original markers were initially also made of wood until they were replaced by the current stone markers in the late 1870s.

The "unknown" markers are small stones, 6 inches square and raised approximately one to two inches above ground level. On them two numbers are usually inscribed, with the top number indicating the plot number while the bottom number represents the number of bodies that are buried in that plot. If there is no bottom number indicated, only one body is buried in that plot. There are anywhere between one to twelve bodies in each unknown grave. 12,770 burials, representing 83.5% of the total, are unknown.



Josef W. Rokus



Josef W. Rokus

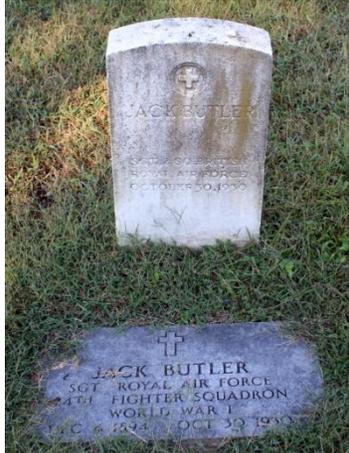


Josef W. Rokus

EXAMPLES OF "UNKNOWN" GRAVESTONES

With the large number of unknown burials, the burial corps decided to save time and space, which was a serious issue with the amount of land that had been purchased for the cemetery, by placing multiple bodies in a grave. Soldiers who are grouped together in these graves primarily came from the same location on a battlefield, and they may have served in the same regiment or been buried together originally. The burial corps also terraced the front slope of Willis Hill to prevent erosion and to provide for more flat space for graves.

Finally, there are a few gravestones that have a second stone placed flush with the ground just in front of the original, vertical stone. These stones have been installed to correct and/or add information about the soldier who is buried in that plot.



Josef W. Rokus

A PLOT WITH TWO GRAVESTONES

The majority of Civil War soldiers were buried in the cemetery by 1868, and although the last orderly interment was made that year, the discovery of bodies and burials continued for decades afterwards. Over time, new burials were placed in different locations of the cemetery.

Years later, after the bodies of the Civil War dead were buried and after Congress passed legislation allowing it, the National Cemetery was opened up to the burials of eligible veterans, their spouses, and dependent children. Consequently, in addition to Civil War soldiers, the cemetery has a few burials from the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II, as well as roughly twenty military spouses who are buried with their husbands. The date a soldier's remains were buried, rather than the war he fought in, usually determined the type of headstone on his grave. Those buried in the 1860s generally have "slab" style headstones. Those buried from 1870 up to around 1918 have headstones embossed with a shield, while those buried after 1918 have white "general" style headstones.

The last Civil War soldier buried in the National Cemetery was Private Evander Willis, who is buried with his wife, Lucy Sprague Willis. Evander Willis enlisted in December 1863 in the 8th Vermont Infantry Regiment and was mustered out in 1865. After the war, the Willis family owned Ellwood Manor, which is now part of the Wilderness Battlefield. When Evander Willis died in October 1935, he and his wife were buried under a Civil War-style gravestone.

The last soldier buried in a separate grave was Harry Bankard in 1945. However, Bankard was not the last soldier buried in the cemetery. That honor goes to Admol Jett who was buried four years later in the same plot as his father. The final burials in the cemetery would be the spouses of soldiers already buried in the cemetery. Today, if a soldier's remains are found within the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, they are not re-interred in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. Instead the grave is marked, and the remains are not disturbed. A few of these marked graves are found at Chatham Manor, which now serves as the headquarters of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, and also near the Chancellorsville Visitor Center.

The Fredericksburg National Cemetery is what might be called a "soldier's cemetery" because there are no generals and only very few field-grade officers (major, lieutenant colonel and colonel) buried there. This is not by design but because the remains of higher ranking officers who were killed in battle were almost always claimed by family members and transported home to be buried in their hometowns in family cemeteries.

THE FIVE MONUMENTS IN THE CEMETERY

The Fifth Corps Monument

At the entrance of the cemetery, stands the Fifth Corps Monument. The Union Fifth Corps lost more than 2,000 men attacking Marye's Heights during the First Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862. Many years later, the Corps' commander, Maj. Gen. Daniel Butterfield, sponsored the monument. Illness kept Butterfield from returning to Fredericksburg, however, and he never saw the monument constructed or dedicated.

In May 1900, the Society of the Army of the Potomac held its 31st annual reunion in Fredericksburg, an event attended by many dignitaries including President William McKinley. As part of the celebration, the cornerstone was laid for the Fifth Corps Monument. Lt. Col. Edward Hill, who served with the 16th Michigan, gave the dedication speech. Four months after the ceremony, Hill died, and he is buried near the spot where he delivered his speech. He is one of the highest ranking officers buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. Hill also has the distinction of being just one of two soldiers buried in the cemetery to have earned the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award.

The Moesch Monument

Colonel Joseph Moesch is honored by one of the first privately funded headstones in the cemetery. Moesch commanded the 83rd New York Regiment, and he was killed on May 6, 1864, in the Battle of the Wilderness. Moesch's body was originally buried in the cemetery at Ellwood Manor and re-interred in the National Cemetery after the war. Cemetery Superintendent Andrew Birdsall oversaw the interment of Moesch's remains into the Fredericksburg National Cemetery in 1887. Superintendent Birdsall played a key role in the Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story, as detailed in a previous chapter.

The Parker's Battery Monument

In the First Battle of Fredericksburg, fought in December of 1862, nine guns of the Washington Artillery of New Orleans fired down upon Union soldiers stretched out across what was then an open plain. Eight thousand Union soldiers were killed or wounded in multiple unsuccessful attempts to seize these heights. The following spring, during the Chancellorsville Campaign, Union forces again attacked Marye's Heights. The Confederates then had a small force defending the hill, and this time the Federals succeeded in taking it.

The artillery battery's involvement in the Second Battle of Fredericksburg went largely unnoticed until a descendent of Lieutenant J. Thompson, who had commanded the guns, visited the park. In negotiations with the U.S. National Park Service, agreement was reached to commemorate Parker's Battery with a small monument at their position in the cemetery. This monument was dedicated on May 3, 1973, the 110th anniversary of the Second Battle of Fredericksburg. The Parker's Battery Monument is the only Confederate monument in the National Cemetery, and it is the only one dedicated to Virginia troops in the Fredericksburg area, and it is the only monument in the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park connected with the Second Battle of Fredericksburg.

The Humphreys' Division Monument

The Humphreys' Division Monument, standing prominently in the center of the cemetery, commemorates the charge of Brigadier General Andrew Humphreys' Pennsylvania Division at the Battle of Fredericksburg. The bronze statue on the top of the pink granite pedestal depicts Humphreys, with his

hand on his sword, scanning the eastern horizon. When the Fredericksburg Battlefield Memorial Commission of Pennsylvania could not find a suitable place in Fredericksburg for the monument, they decided to place it in the National Cemetery. The ceremony on November 11, 1908, was attended by many veterans, and the Pennsylvania Assembly even subsidized the transportation costs of the veterans. After a long military and civilian career, Andrew Humphreys died in 1883 in Washington, D.C., and he is buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington.

The 127th Pennsylvania Monument

The 127th Pennsylvania Regiment was a “nine-month regiment,” organized in August 1862 and disbanded in May 1863. The unit participated in just two engagements, the First Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862 and the Second Battle of Fredericksburg in May 1863. Because Fredericksburg was the only field they fought on, the regiment placed its monument here. The Pennsylvania legislature appropriated \$3,000 for the monument, which was dedicated on June 26, 1906, with many veterans and dignitaries attending the ceremony.

“THE BIVOUAC OF THE DEAD” POEM BY THEODORE O’HARA AND SGT. JEROME PEIRCE’S GRAVESITES

Several informational panels in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery are inscribed with the following verses from the poem “The Bivouac of the Dead” by Theodore O’Hara (1820 – 1867).

*The muffled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last Tattoo;
No more on life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.*

*On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents to spread,
And glory guards, with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.*

*No rumor of the foe's advance
Now swells upon the wind;
Nor troubled thought at midnight haunts
Of loved ones left behind;*

*No vision of the morrow's strife
The warrior's dreams alarms;
No braying horn or screaming fife
At dawn shall call to arms.*

*Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead,
Dear as the blood ye gave,
No impious footstep here shall tread
The herbage of your grave.*

One might assume that O’Hara, a poet and an officer in the U.S. Army in the Mexican-American War and a Confederate colonel in the Civil War, wrote this poem after the Civil War, but, in fact, he wrote it about twenty years earlier in 1847 while walking in the Frankfort, Kentucky, Cemetery following his return from the Mexican-American War. It was first read there at the dedication of a monument in that cemetery in 1850. Portions of the poem appear on many military monuments in national and other cemeteries, including in Arlington National Cemetery. Two of the panels in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery with verses of the poem are shown below. Ironically, Peirce’s final grave is now located close to a marker inscribed with a portion of the “The Bivouac of the Dead” poem, and his first grave was also located near a crude marker on which a stanza of the poem was also inscribed, as shown below.



Wikipedia



Wikipedia

“THE BIVOUAC OF THE DEAD” POEM MARKERS IN THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

In early June of 1865, before the Fredericksburg National Cemetery had been established, Col. Charles P. Bird’s First United States Veteran Volunteers were dispatched from Washington, D.C., “to take charge of the duty of the burial of the Union soldiers, portions of whose remains, it is reported, are lying exposed on the fields of the engagements at Wilderness and Spotsylvania and in that vicinity.” As the commanding officer of the regiment, he was in charge of a hodgepodge of officers and men who had reenlisted in the army after having previously served in other regiments. Bird’s men completed their task at Spotsylvania Court House on June 24, 1865. They had been in the field for just over two weeks and had, in retrospect, only interred a fraction of the remains that had never been buried. Before leaving the Bloody Angle on June 25 on their way back to Washington, a soldier nailed to a bullet-scarred tree near the McCoull House a board containing a stanza from Theodore O’Hara’s poem, “Bivouac of the Dead.” In ornate script, it read

On fame’s eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread
And glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.

It is the same verse of O’Hara’s poem that is pictured above. Sgt. Jerome Peirce had been buried (for the first time) on the McCoull Farm just a little over a year earlier. Below is a picture of that tree and the hand-crafted sign. Sgt. Peirce’s grave was probably close by.



The U.S. National Park Service
(Original in the Library of Congress)

**VERSE FROM “BIVOUAC OF THE DEAD”
NAILED TO A TREE AT THE BLOODY ANGLE
AT SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE
(The McCoull House is barely visible in the left rear.)**

John Cummings, a resident of Spotsylvania Court House, has conducted extensive research on the origin of this photograph and others taken under the direction of Union surgeon Reed Brockway Bontecou. Cummings located documents in the National Archives and in the National Museum of Health and Medicine that indicate that the photograph was taken on or about April 13, 1866. Another photograph of the same tree and sign helped Cummings identify where the sign hung near the Bloody Angle. In the process of his research, he made an exact, full-scale replica of the sign. This reproduction, along with Cummings, is shown below. The picture was taken in 2014 at a spot close to where the original tree was located.

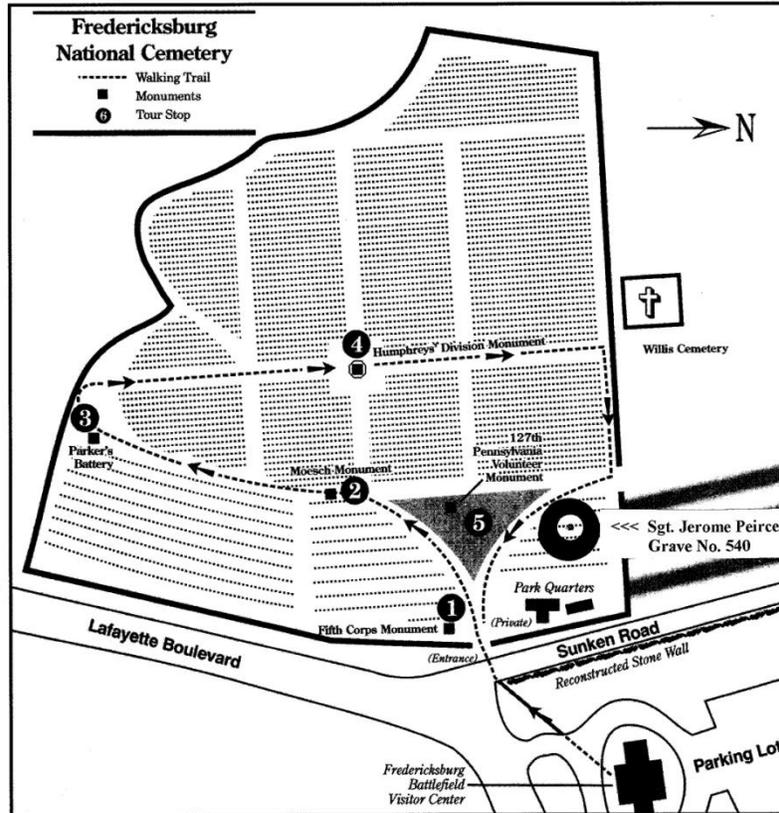
John Cummings is the current chairman of the Friends of the Fredericksburg Area Battlefields, a non-profit organization whose mission is to honor, support, preserve, enhance, and interpret the resources associated with the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. One of the organization’s projects is the fundraising for the annual Luminaria held at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery each Memorial Day weekend. This event is described in some detail below.



John Cummings

**JOHN CUMMINGS WITH A REPLICA OF THE ORIGINAL SIGN
ON THE SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE BATTLEFIELD
(Used with the permission of John Cummings)**

Below is a map showing the key features of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, including the five monuments that are described above. Sgt. Jerome Peirce is buried in grave No. 540 on the slope of the hill in the northeast section of the cemetery. His gravestone, which is pictured below, is the typical original "Civil War-style" gravestone, and it is inscribed with his rank, first name, surname, and his home state. Unfortunately, the information chiseled into his stone is incorrect. He was actually a sergeant (instead of a corporal) having been promoted on January 1, 1864, a few months before he was killed on May 12, 1864, at the Bloody Angle at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. In addition, his surname was actually spelled Peirce (instead of Pierce), as documented in this report.



The U.S. National Park Service

**THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY
SHOWING THE LOCATION OF SGT. JEROME PEIRCE'S GRAVE**



Josef W. Rokus

**THE GRAVESTONE FOR SGT. JEROME PEIRCE
(His rank should be "Sgt." and his surname should be "Peirce.")**

THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY LUMINARIA

In 1995, representatives of the Fredericksburg area Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts approached the U.S. National Park Service officials with the idea of starting an annual Luminaria program to honor the soldiers who had died in service to their country and who are buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. The National Park Service enthusiastically embraced the idea, and the Fredericksburg National Cemetery Luminaria, held on the Saturday of the Memorial Day weekend, was born.

Hundreds of Scouts start assembling the white paper bags, each filled with sand and a candle, months before that special weekend. On that Saturday afternoon, the more than 15,300 Luminaria are placed at the gravestones. Because many plots contain more than one body as indicated above, usually two Luminaria are placed at each gravestone. As darkness settles over the cemetery, the Scouts light the candles, illuminating the hillside. Every thirty minutes, “Taps” is sounded by a bugler, reminding the visitors of the sacrifices that those who are buried in the cemetery have made for their freedom. The Luminaria was attended by almost 7,000 visitors in 2015, requiring shuttle buses to accommodate the crowds. The event is a stirring and solemn tribute to America’s fallen heroes, with the twinkling lights, the nighttime quiet and the bugler’s notes casting a spell over the visitors until the candles burn themselves out.



The U.S. National Park Service

FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY LUMINARIA

At several graves, illuminated with lanterns in addition to the Luminaria, National Park Service rangers and volunteers are stationed to inform the visitors about the special significance of the soldier who is buried at that spot. One of those graves is that of Sgt. Jerome Peirce, which is, of course, decorated with fresh flowers. The visitors are given a brief overview of Sgt. Peirce's life, the lives of his widow and daughter, and the tradition of decorating his grave every Memorial Day that has been carried down to the present.



The U.S. National Park Service

**SGT. JEROME PEIRCE'S GRAVE
DECORATED IN PREPARATION FOR THE LUMINARIA
ON MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND**

Starting with the first Luminaria in 1995, Mike Stevens, a resident of Fredericksburg and a serious student of the Civil War as well as the current president of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, has consistently been the volunteer stationed at Sgt. Peirce's gravesite to tell the "Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story." Initially assigned arbitrarily to his "post," he has given his short narration about Peirce, including who Peirce was, where he was from, what he did, who his family was, his military experience, his death, burial, re-interment, etc. many times. His comments have always ended with "Once lost, now found, never forgotten," which has always been written on a note attached to the flowers that have decorated the grave for so many years.

Since "his" stop has usually been the last one on the visitors' tour, Stevens has concluded his narration with extemporaneous remarks about the meaning of Memorial Day such as that "freedom is not just a word; freedom isn't free; freedom comes with both blessings and costs, all of us enjoying the former and not all of us having paid the costs; why those who have, deserve to be honored and remembered; and how we can do that." Invariably, the visitors have responded with applause and with the parents encouraging their children to remember what Memorial Day is all about.

Because over the years Mike Stevens has become more and more intrigued about the subject of his talk and the grave-decorating tradition, he has been the driving force behind this study.

CHAPTER 11

THE EFFORT TO ERECT A SECOND GRAVESTONE AT SGT. JEROME PEIRCE'S GRAVE

Soon after this study was initiated, it became obvious that the inscription on the current gravestone for Sgt. Jerome Peirce in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, as shown below, contains two serious errors, as pointed out and documented above. Specifically, there is no question that his rank at the time of his death was Sergeant instead of Corporal and that the spelling of his surname should be "Peirce" instead of "Pierce."



Josef W. Rokus

SGT. JEROME PEIRCE'S GRAVESTONE IN THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

As this study progressed, Lucy Lawliss, Superintendent of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, was contacted in August 2015 about options for correcting these errors because it seems only logical that if a soldier dies in service for his country, the least that should be done by the government in return is to get the information chiseled into his gravestone correct. In addition, one can assume that the soldier and his descendants "would have wanted it that way." As pointed out also, unfortunately there are no direct descendants of Jerome and Albinia Peirce who can come forward to present the family's point of view.

Since such errors on gravestones have undoubtedly surfaced many times in the past at this and at other cemeteries, how they have been handled, particularly in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, was researched. Don Pfanz in his unpublished book *Where Valor Proudly Sleeps: A History of Fredericksburg National Cemetery 1866-1933* summarizes the history of corrections of gravestones as follows: "It is the park's policy to correct information in the cemetery register but to leave erroneous headstones in

place...In instances where descendants request the correction of a stone, the park leaves the original headstone in place but places a stone containing the proper information directly in front of it. This solution has worked well, satisfying the descendants while maintaining the cemetery's historical integrity." At the time this was written in 2007, Pfanz listed seven graves that have two gravestones, and he has included photographs of six of them in his book.

An example of such a second gravestone in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, placed flat with the ground and directly in front of the original stone, is shown below. As is the case with Sgt. Peirce, this example also involves the incorrect spelling of the soldier's surname. It should also be noted that the second gravestone includes brief supplemental information about Sgt. Foss that significantly adds to the information a visitor takes with him from his grave and that the second stone is only visible when directly at the grave and does not mar the overall appearance or the "historical integrity" of the cemetery.



FindAGrave.com

AN EXAMPLE OF TWO GRAVESTONES AT ONE GRAVE IN THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

In those contacts with Superintendent Lawliss it was also made clear that the proposed second gravestone at Sgt. Peirce's grave would be identical to other second gravestones previously installed in the cemetery and that the entire cost, including the professional installation, would be paid for with non-government funds. In addition, Carroll Memorials of Fredericksburg, Virginia, provided an estimate of approximately \$700 for a granite gravestone, such as shown above, plus \$175 for installation, with an expected delivery of ten weeks.

This cost estimate was based on the below preliminary design of this second gravestone, flush with the ground, which would not disturb the overall visual appearance of the National Cemetery and would significantly add to honoring a fallen hero of the Civil War. It was intended to not only correct the information on the existing gravestone but would also add a few important facts about Sgt. Peirce.

SGT. JEROME PEIRCE

(1830 – 1864)

Civil War

Co. H, 36th Mass. Reg. Vols. (Infantry)

Killed at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia

May 12, 1864

PROPOSED SECOND GRAVESTONE AT SGT. JEROME PEIRCE'S GRAVE

However, contrary to expectations, the U.S. National Park Service's policy about making any changes in a National Cemetery, including making corrections of information on a gravestone, has been revised over the last few years to the point where such changes are now apparently no longer permitted under any circumstances. Specifically, Superintendent Lawliss, in an email dated August 5, 2015, to Mike Stevens summarized the current policy as follows.

“The policies and guidelines that you are asking about as they apply to correcting errors on the historic headstones, monuments, etc., in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery is something specific to NPS national cemeteries. For us, these designed historic landscapes are historic artifacts to be cared for in perpetuity, which is unlike the approach taken by the Veterans Administration and others.

More than a decade ago, I was part of a conversation about how the NPS [National Park Service] national cemeteries would be managed so that management was consistent and historic preservation standards similarly applied. At the time, each park was doing things according to its own interpretation of the standards, so it is not surprising that you can find evidence that dispute our current approach. Over a number of years and with a number of Civil War park managers and NPS cultural resource professionals weighing in, it was agreed that our cemeteries, with the exception of Andersonville, are closed to future burials and that the historic buildings, circulation paths, vegetation, headstones, markers, etc. were historic fabric and could not be replaced until they no longer retained integrity, or were hazardous/died in the case of trees. Therefore, while NPS national cemeteries retain the original 19th century Civil War headstones and markers, they will be kept as they were installed and edits/corrections to information on the headstones will be recorded and made available to the public until such time the historic headstone requires replacement.

We had a conversation about Sgt. Peirce's headstone this morning at our weekly squad meeting and I encouraged John Hennessy and Eric Mink to pursue a Fredericksburg NC [National Cemetery] 150th anniversary project that takes the various databases of information we have gathered over the decades about the individuals' histories, corrections, etc. and create something user-friendly that researchers can use and we can add to as we learn new information. This website could become the

"living document" of the soldiers' stories and could be something like Ancestry.com for CW soldiers and civilian participants. Research that you have pursued and experiences you have had interpreting Sgt. Peirce's life at our memorial luminaria could become part of the record going forward.

I'm not sure my response will satisfy your desire to correct the stone, now. But you can imagine, and we already know, of many similar errors and that over time, more will be discovered--some for the same men. We believe it is better to keep in place, and undisturbed, the original markers with all of their associations collected over the last 150 years, and at the same time collect and make available "new" information in a separate place."

Since Superintendent Lawliss' retirement in late 2015, John Hennessy, Chief Historian/Chief of Interpretation of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, has been the Acting Superintendent of the Park. In an email to the author dated December 17, 2015, he also addressed the question of a second gravestone as follows, reiterating Superintendent Lawliss' position.

"As for your idea for a flat stone, I am virtually certain that the response from the new superintendent will be no different from the response from our last superintendent. The letter Lucy sent to Mike on August 5 reflects NPS policy with respect to the management of national cemeteries, and that hasn't changed. We get requests almost yearly to replace or supplement headstones. Beyond that we are aware of probably hundreds of examples of incomplete (most common) or erroneous information on the present stones. While we understand the desire to correct them in some form on the ground, the fact remains that the NPS views National Cemeteries as cultural landscapes to be preserved to the greatest extent possible in their original condition, with their existing markers, without additions. I honestly do not see that policy changing any time soon. And I do not see a new superintendent choosing to violate that policy."

The rationale behind the U.S. National Park Service's policy is certainly well-meaning and well-intended and does, in principle, have some logic associated with it. However, in a case such as this one, this seemingly inflexible policy clearly prevents the correction of important historical information pertaining to a young soldier who answered President Lincoln's call to come to the aid of his country during a period of severe crisis and gave his life for a cause he deeply believed in. It also does not appear that this National Park Service policy allows any room for exceptions or recourse.

It would seem that the least his country now owes Sgt. Peirce is that the only readily visible reminder of who he was and what he did, namely his gravestone on the side of the hill on Marye's Heights in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, correctly shows the basic and irrefutably correct information about him for future generations of visitors to the Cemetery. After all, it is a common assumption (not always correct, obviously) that the scant information inscribed on a deceased person's gravestone is correct. Also, the number of visitors who would consult the database of interments in the Cemetery that is maintained at the Visitor Center at the Cemetery must, almost certainly, be extremely small. An interesting question to pose to the National Park Service personnel who formulated this policy might be, "If you knew now that your gravestone to be erected after your death some day would be inscribed with your surname misspelled, would you not do everything within your power to absolutely prevent that from happening?" The answer would appear to be fairly self-evident.

Mike Stevens passionately stated the case for a second gravestone in his correspondence for Sgt. Jerome Peirce's grave with Superintendent Lawliss as follows.

"I understand (and entirely agree with) not messing with the original headstones. However, when the information on the stone is egregiously incorrect (like getting the person's name wrong; after all, a person's name has power, and meaning, and magic) and a conservative answer is to be found (flat stone in front of the original with the correct information carved thereupon), it appears (at least to me) that the

decision not to allow such an answer reflects more of a bureaucratic decision than one that has as its primary focus remembering and honoring the deceased soldier. Having the corrected information in a database is fine, but the casual visitor to the cemetery will never look at that database but will simply assume that the information on the original stone is true. Who really cares, you might say. Well, some of us *do* care, and we who do regret exceedingly that nothing apparently can be done about it.”

In summary, the issue of obtaining permission to place a second gravestone at Sgt. Jerome Peirce’s final resting place will be pursued one last time in early 2016 when the new superintendent is expected to be appointed, realizing that the chances of receiving a favorable decision are fairly low. If that is the case, an important objective, and in retrospect, probably the most important one of this study, which surfaced as all the facts about Sgt Peirce were documented, will sadly not be accomplished, and the “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story” will unfortunately not end the way it might or should have.

CONCLUSION

Although the number of men killed and wounded in the Civil War is not known precisely, most sources agree that between 620,000 and 700,000 men died during that conflict, although some recent estimates have raised that number to as high as 750,000. On the Union side, the combat deaths were at least 110,000, with more than 250,000 deaths from other causes, primarily diseases. The numbers for the Confederate side are equally staggering, namely over 95,000 deaths directly attributed to combat and over 165,000 to other causes.

As evidenced by the statistics for the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, where only approximately 16% of those who are buried there are identified by name, a very small percentage of the final resting places of Civil War soldiers are identified by a gravestone inscribed with the soldier's name. Consequently, and because 150 years have now passed since the guns fell silent, the number of identified Civil War casualties who are honored in some way still today on a regular basis by relatives or by others paying their respects at their gravesites is very small. Although some Americans know that one or more of their ancestors paid the ultimate sacrifice in the Civil War for the cause they believed in, few know where those fallen heroes are buried and even fewer have ever visited their gravesites.

Sgt. Jerome Peirce's grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery is a notable, and possibly unique, exception. Peirce's comrades marked his first, temporary grave on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield shortly after he was killed on the morning of May 12, 1864. Somewhat remarkably, that marker survived the estimated two years before his remains were re-interred in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, where a small stone headstone now marks his grave. His family, apparently after considerable effort, was able to locate that grave and after a number of years initiated a truly remarkable tradition, namely the decoration of his grave each Memorial Day by a Southern family who were not related to and had no connection to a Yankee soldier from far-away Massachusetts.

It is a heart-warming story that only surfaced in the early 1990s, although Cemetery Superintendent Andrew J. Birdsall and his descendants had been "doing their duty" since the early 1880s. It is a story that first became common knowledge in the Fredericksburg area through a series of newspaper articles but soon achieved national attention with the help of a *Reader's Digest* article. Equally remarkable is that the tradition is still going strong today more than fifteen years into the twenty-first century, with members of the Ingalls family committed as firmly as several generations of their ancestors were before them to ensure that Sgt. Jerome Peirce will NEVER be forgotten, unlike the thousands of Union soldiers who are also buried in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery. It is a story that can best be summarized by the ribbon attached to the flowers that have decorated Sgt. Jerome Peirce's grave every Memorial Day for so many years, namely,

ONCE LOST, NOW FOUND, NEVER FORGOTTEN.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CORPORAL VS. SERGEANT AND “PEIRCE” VS. “PIERCE”

As this “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story” was being developed, it became apparent that Corp./Sgt. Jerome Peirce/Pierce’s rank of “corporal” vs. “sergeant” and his surname of “Peirce” vs. “Pierce” were used more-or-less interchangeably in different sources. The below table summarizes which rank and surname have been used in which source in order to determine the “most correct” versions.

In the sources that would normally be considered “most reliable,” his rank was corporal from his enlistment date until he was promoted to sergeant on January 1, 1864. There is no question that that was his rank when he was killed on May 12, 1864. Regarding his surname, there is no doubt that it was always “Peirce.” Consequently, his correct rank and surname should be corrected by placing a second gravestone with the correct information at his grave in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery.

The “key” or “most reliable” sources are indicated in the first column of the below table with an “X.” For example, his military records are a very reliable source as to his rank. Similarly, many of the sources are highly reliable as to the correct spelling of his surname. For example, shown below are two muster rolls (one with the “Pierce” spelling and the other with “Peirce”), including the Jan. & Feb. 1864 one showing his promotion; Albinia Peirce’s “Widow’s Declaration for Pension” with her “Peirce” signature; the Civil War monument in his hometown of Orange, Massachusetts, on which his name is inscribed; and the family gravestone in the Old South Cemetery in Billerica, Massachusetts.

<p><i>P</i> 36 Mass.</p> <p><i>Jerome Peirce</i> Corpl., Co. H, 36 Reg't Mass. Infantry.</p> <p>Appears on</p> <p>Company Muster Roll for <i>Nov & Dec</i>, 1863 Present or absent <i>Present</i> Stoppage, \$.....100 for</p> <p>Due Gov't, \$.....100 for</p> <p>Remarks:</p> <p>Book mark:</p> <p><i>F Miller</i> (1858) Copyist.</p>	<p><i>P</i> 36 Mass.</p> <p><i>Jerome Peirce</i> Sergt., Co. H, 36 Reg't Mass. Infantry.</p> <p>Appears on</p> <p>Company Muster Roll for <i>Jan & Feb</i>, 1864 Present or absent <i>Present</i> Stoppage, \$.....100 for</p> <p>Due Gov't, \$.....100 for</p> <p>Remarks: <i>Promoted from Corpl. Jan. 1, 1864</i></p> <p>Book mark:</p> <p><i>F Miller</i> (1858) Copyist.</p>
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MUSTER ROLLS – ONE WITH “PEIRCE” AND ONE WITH “PIERCE”
(The Jan. & Feb. 1864 Muster Roll on the right shows Jerome Peirce’s promotion to sergeant.)

WIDOW'S DECLARATION FOR PENSION.

State of Massachusetts }
County of Suffolk } 55.

On this First day of November A.D. 1864 personally appeared before me, Asst. Clerk of the Police Court of the City of Boston, in and for the County and State aforesaid, Mrs. Albinia J. Peirce a resident of Billerica in the County of Middlesex and State of Massachusetts aged 30 years, who, being first duly sworn according to law, doth on her oath, make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the Act of Congress, approved July 14, 1862: That she is the widow of Sergt. Jerome Peirce who was a Sergeant in Company H. commanded by Lieut. P. G. Woodward in the Thirty-sixth Regiment of Mass Vols. in the war of 1861, who was killed at Spottsylvania Court House on or about the Twelfth day of May A.D. 1864 and the cause of his death was a gun shot wound which killed him instantly

received while in the service of the United States.

That she was married to the said Jerome Peirce on the Tenth day of September 1857 at Billerica Mass that her husband, the aforesaid Jerome Peirce died on the day above mentioned; and that she has remained a widow since the death of her said husband, as will more fully appear by reference to the proof hereunto annexed.

That the name and age of her child under sixteen years of age at her husband's decease, and the place of her residence is as follows:

Lucy S. Peirce Born December 26, 1859
and living with her mother

She also declares that she has not in any manner been engaged in, or aided or abetted the rebellion in the United States. And she hereby constitutes and appoints A. B. Coffin of Boston Mass. her Attorney to prosecute the claim and procure a certificate, and to do all other things necessary in the premises, with power of substitution, hereby ratifying all that he may do as aforesaid. My Post-Office address is as follows: "Billerica, Mass"

Witnesses.

Geo. H. Jacobs Albinia J. Peirce
P. Peirce

Also, personally appeared before me, George H. Jacobs of Charlestown Mass. and Foster Peirce residents of Boston Mass in the County of Suffolk and State of Mass. persons whom I certify to be respectable and entitled to credit, and who, being by me duly sworn, say that they were present and saw her the said applicant sign her name to the foregoing declaration; and they have every reason to believe, from the appearance of the applicant, and their acquaintance with her, that she is the identical person she represents herself to be, and that they have no interest in the prosecution of this claim, and that she still remains a widow

Geo. H. Jacobs
P. Peirce

ALBINIA PEIRCE'S "WIDOW'S DECLARATION FOR PENSION" WITH HER SIGNATURE



Charlene Deam, Orange, Mass., Public Library

THE CIVIL WAR MONUMENT IN ORANGE, MASSACHUSETTS



Kathy Meager, Billerica, Mass., Public Library

PEIRCE FAMILY GRAVESTONE IN BILLERICA, MASSACHUSETTS, CEMETERY

The inscription on the current gravestone in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery is shown below, and it reads “Corp’l Jerome Pierce Mass.” It was installed in the late 1870s, and it replaced a

wooden marker which had originally designated his final resting place on the McCoull Farm on the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield and then, in about 1866, another wooden marker in the then newly-created Fredericksburg National Cemetery. It is not known why his rank at the time of his enlistment instead of at the time of his death and the incorrect spelling of his surname were chiseled into his gravestone.



Josef W. Rokus

GRAVESTONE IN THE FREDERICKSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

“CORPORAL” VS. “SERGEANT”
AND
“PEIRCE” VS. “PIERCE”

Key Source	Source Description	Rank CORP.	Rank SGT. (Correct as of Jan. 1, 1864)	Surname PEIRCE (Has always been correct)	Surname PIERCE
	SERVICE FILE From Aug. 27, 1862 to Dec. 31, 1863				
X	Company Muster-In Roll Worcester, Mass. Aug. 27, 1862	X			X
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H Oct. 31, 1862	X		X	
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H Nov. & Dec. 1862	X		X	
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H Jan. & Feb. 1863	X			X
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H Mar. & Apr. 1863	X		X	
X	Special Muster Roll Co. H Apr. 11, 1863	X		X	
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H May & June 1863	X		X	
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H July & Aug. 1863	X		X	
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H Sep. & Oct. 1863	X			X
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H Nov. & Dec. 1863	X		X	
	SERVICE FILE From Jan. 1, 1864 to July 23, 1864				
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H Jan. & Feb. 1864 “Promoted from Corpl. Jan. 1, 1864” (Pictured above)		X		X
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H March & April 1864		X		X
X	Company Muster Roll Co. H May & June 1864		X	X	
X	Company Muster-out Roll Co. H Near Alexandria, Va. June 8, 1865		X		X

	List of enclosures Co. H		X		X
X	Adjutant General's Office Memorandum for Office Use Sep. 7, 1867		X		X
X	Certification of death by Company Commander of Company H Lieut. P. G. Woodward Near Petersburg, Va. July 18, 1864		X	X	
X	Final Statement by the Adjutant General's Office July 23, 1864		X	X (Both used)	X (Both used)
	PENSION FILE				
X	"Widow's Declaration for Pension" Filed Nov. 1, 1864, with the Assistant Clerk of the Police Court of Boston, Mass. (Pictured above)		X	X	
X	"Claim for Widow's Pension" under the Act of July 14, 1862, in the War of 1861. Submitted as part of the above "Widow's Declaration for Pension"		X		X
X	Certification of his death by J. B. Smith, Captain, 36 th Massachusetts Regiment Near Petersburg, Va. July 3, 1864,		X	X	
X	Memorandum from the Pension Office to the Adjutant General Received Feb. 23, 1865		X	X	
X	Memorandum from the Adjutant General's Office to the Commissioner of Pensions, Pension Office, Washington, D.C. July 10, 1865	X Muster- In Roll	X May-June 1864 Muster Roll	X	
X	Certification from the Secretary, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Feb. 17, 1867: Marriage	Rank not used	Rank not used	X	
X	Certification from the Secretary, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Feb. 20, 1867: Birth of Lucy	Rank not used	Rank not used	X	

X	Confirmation of awarding of the Widow's Pension (\$8.00 per month)	X			X
X	Widow's Claim for an Increase of Pension Sep. 24, 1866 <u>(Includes sworn and witnessed a statement legibly signed by "Albinia Peirce")</u>	X		X (Both used) (Signature)	X (Both used) (Body of form)
X	Confirmation of Widow's Pension Amount June 10, 1867	X			X
	Letter request to the Pension Office for information regarding Albinia Peirce's pension from Massachusetts Senator John W. Weeks Oct. 11, 1913	Rank not used	Rank not used	X	
	Letter from the Pension Office in response to Senator John W. Weeks' above letter Oct. 14, 1913	X			X
X	Notice regarding an increase in the pension amount Aug. 7, 1914 (\$20.00 per month)	Rank not used	Rank not used		X
	"Widow's Pension" Notice Aug. 7, 1914	X			X
X	Notice of returned pension check from the Disbursing Clerk (probably of the Bureau of Pensions) Mar. 18, 1920	Rank not used	Rank not used		X
X	"Pensioner Dropped" Notice Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions March 31, 1920	Rank not used	Rank not used		X
	OTHER DOCUMENTS AND SOURCES				
	<i>The Men of Orange (Mass.) in the American Civil War</i> by Linda J. Temple, Orange, Massachusetts, Historical Society (undated)	X			X
	Town of Orange (Mass.) Veterans Graves Registration (Prepared by the Works Progress Administration)	X			X

X	Name on the Civil War Monument in the cemetery in Orange, Mass. (Pictured above)	Rank not used	Rank not used		X	
	Numerous United States and Massachusetts censuses (1850-1940) (ancestry.com)	Rank not used	Rank not used		X (Both used)	X (Both used)
X	<i>History of the Thirty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers</i> by Henry S. Burrage, 1884 (Google Books)		X			X
	Massachusetts Town and Vital Records 1620 – 1998 (Billerica) (ancestry.com)	Rank not used	Rank not used		X	
	Numerous U.S. Cities Directories (ancestry.com)	Rank not used	Rank not used		X (Both used)	X (Both used)
	On-line family trees (Jaquith family) (ancestry.com)	Rank not used	Rank not used		X	
X	Harvard Church, Charlestown, Mass., Records of Admission 1840-1889 (ancestry.com)	Rank not used	Rank not used		X	
	Massachusetts Death Index 1901-1980 (Albinia and Lucy) (ancestry.com)	Rank not used	Rank not used			X
X	Fredericksburg National Cemetery records (Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park)	X				X
X	Gravestone in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery (Pictured above)	X				X
X	<i>Where Valor Proudly Sleeps</i> by Donald Pfanz, 2007 (Unpublished)	X				X
X	<i>Roll of Honor – Names of Soldiers Who Died in the Defense of the Union, Interred in the National Cemeteries</i> by the U.S. Quartermaster General, Vol. XXV, 1870		X			X
X	Family gravestone in the Old South Cemetery, Billerica, Mass. (Pictured above)		X		X	
	<i>Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star</i> , May 31, 1993, article	X				X

	<i>Yankee Magazine</i> , November 1993 article	Rank not used	Rank not used			X
	<i>Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star</i> , December 27, 1993, article	Rank not used	Rank not used			X
	<i>Richmond Times Dispatch</i> , January 2, 1994, article	X				X
	<i>Reader's Digest</i> , May 1994 article		X		X	
	<i>Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star</i> , May 30, 1994, article		X			X
	<i>Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star</i> , May 24, 2001, article	Rank not used	Rank not used			X
X	<i>The Legacy of Jerome Peirce</i> by David Allen Lambert, New England Historical and Genealogical Society, <i>Nexus</i> , Vol. XI, Nos. 3 & 4, June – Sept. 1994	X Both ranks used	X Both ranks used		X	

APPENDIX B

SGT. JEROME PEIRCE'S SERVICE FILE

The following is a summary of the information contained in the Service File of Sgt. Jerome Peirce, which was obtained from the U.S. National Archives in June 2015. Because different sources show the spelling of his surname as Peirce or Pierce, the last column indicates the spelling of his surname in the documents in his Service File.

Doc. No.	Document Description	Significant Information	Surname Spelling
1	Company Muster-In Roll Worcester, Mass. Aug. 27, 1862	Company commander of Company H, 36 th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers: Christopher Sawyer (Note 1) Jerome Peirce's Rank: Corporal; Age: 31 Joined for duty and enrolled on Aug. 4, 1862, in Orange, Massachusetts Length of duty: Three years Bounty paid: \$25.00	Pierce
2	Company Muster Roll Co. H Oct. 31, 1862	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Present	Peirce
3	Company Muster Roll Co. H Nov. & Dec. 1862	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Present	Peirce
4	Company Muster Roll Co. H Jan. & Feb. 1863	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Present	Pierce
5	Company Muster Roll Co. H Mar. & Apr. 1863	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Present	Peirce
6	Special Muster Roll Co. H Apr. 11, 1863	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Present	Peirce
7	Company Muster Roll Co. H May & June 1863	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Present	Peirce
8	Company Muster Roll Co. H July & Aug. 1863	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Present	Peirce
9	Company Muster Roll Co. H Sep. & Oct. 1863	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Absent. Sent to Massachusetts for conscription Sept. 15, 1863	Pierce
10	Company Muster Roll Co. H Nov. & Dec. 1863	Rank: Corporal Present or absent: Present	Peirce
11	Company Muster Roll Co. H Jan. & Feb. 1864	Rank: Sgt. Present or absent: Present Promoted from Corporal to Sergeant Jan. 1, 1864	Pierce
12	Company Muster Roll Co. H March & April 1864	Rank: Sergeant Present or absent: Present	Pierce
13	Company Muster Roll Co. H May & June 1864	Present or absent: [Blank] Killed at Spottsylvania Court House May 12, 1864	Peirce

14	Company Muster-out Roll Co. H Near Alexandria, Va. June 8, 1865	Rank: Corporal (Note 2) Age : 31 (Note 2) Killed May 12, 1864	Pierce
15	List of enclosures Co. H	Rank: Sergeant Two enclosures: 1. Final statements 2. Other papers relating to death or effects	Pierce
16	Adjutant General's Office Memorandum for Office Use Sep. 7, 1867	Summary of information from the rolls on file in the Office of the Adjutant General: Enrolled on Aug. 4, 1862, at Orange, Massachusetts, in Company H, 36 th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers to serve 3 years, or during the war. Mustered into service as a Corporal on Aug. 27, 1862, at Worcester, Mass. On the Muster Roll for Company H of that regiment for the months of May and June 1864 as Sergeant, killed at Spottsylvania Court House on May 12, 1864.	Pierce
17	Certification by Company Commander of Company H P. G. Woodward, Lieut. (Note 3) Near Petersburg, Va. July 18, 1864	Born in Niagara, New York (Note 4) Age 21 (Note 5) Physical characteristics: 5 feet 4½ inches tall, light complexion, black eyes, and light hair Occupation: Mechanic Mustered in at Worcester, Mass., on August 27, 1862, to serve for three years. Served honestly and faithfully with his regiment. Is discharged by reason of death – Killed in action at Spottsylvania, Va., May 12, 1864. Was last paid by the Paymaster to include February 29, 1864, and has pay due him from that time to May 12, 1864. He has received from the United States a clothing allowance amounting to \$35.75 since August 31, 1863, when his clothing account was last settled. He has received from the United States a \$25.00 advanced bounty. He is not indebted to any sutler or laundress. The certification includes a handwritten note at the bottom of the form that appears to read, "Approve J. B. Smith, Capt., Army"	Peirce
18	Final Statement, July 23, 1864, by the Adjutant General's Office	Died May 12, 1864	Pierce And Peirce

Note 1: Christopher Sawyer, age 28, from Templeton, Massachusetts. He was commissioned as a captain and commanding officer of Company H on August 22, 1862. He was reported as sick and in a hospital in late June 1863 near Vicksburg, Mississippi. He was discharged from the service on account of disability on February 19, 1864. The nature of his sickness or the disability resulting in his discharge could not be determined.

Note 2: The rank and age shown on the Muster-out Roll are those as of the muster-in date, not as of the date he was killed.

Note 3: Philip G. Woodward, age 25, from Orange, Massachusetts. He was mustered in as a Sergeant on August 6, 1862, was promoted to second lieutenant on October 26, 1862, and was promoted to first lieutenant on May 15, 1864. He was wounded in action at Cold Harbor, Virginia, on June 3, 1864, while commanding Company H, and was promoted to captain on October 11, 1864. On October 12, 1864, he was appointed commanding officer of Company C, 36th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers. He was mustered out of the service as a captain with the rest of the regiment on June 8, 1865.

Note 4: The 1860 U.S. census confirms that he was born in New York State. However, the 1850 U.S. census shows that he was born in Massachusetts.

Note 5: All other records, including the 1860 U.S. census (which shows that he was 30 years old when that census was taken), indicate that he was 31 years old when he enlisted. It must be assumed that the age of 21 given in this document is an error.

Note 6: The original document shows the surname as "Peirce." However, above that name "Pierce" has been added in a different handwriting style.

APPENDIX C

SGT. JEROME PEIRCE'S PENSION FILE

The following is a summary of the information contained in the Pension File of Sgt. Jerome Peirce, which was obtained from the U.S. National Archives in June 2015. Because different sources show the spelling of his surname as Peirce or Pierce, the last column indicates the spelling of his surname in the documents in his Pension File.

Doc. No.	Document Description	Significant Information	Surname Spelling
1	<p>“Widow’s Declaration for Pension” Filed Nov. 1, 1864, with the Assistant Clerk of the Police Court of Boston, Mass.</p>	<p>Mrs. Albinia J. Peirce, a resident of Billerica, Mass., age 30, made the following declarations in order to obtain a widow’s pension under the Act of Congress approved July 14, 1862:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That she is the widow of Jerome Peirce, who was a Sergeant in Company H commanded by Lieut. P. G. Woodward in the Thirty-sixth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers in the War of 1861, who was killed at Spottsylvania Court House, Va., on or about May 12, 1864. - That the cause of death was a gunshot wound which killed him instantly. - That she was married to Jerome Peirce on September 10, 1857, at Billerica, Mass., and that she has remained a widow since the death of her husband. - That the name and age of her child under sixteen years of age is Lucy S. Peirce, born December 26, 1859, and living with her mother. - That she has not in any manner been engaged in or aided or abetted the rebellion in the United States. - That she hereby appoints A. B. Coffin of Boston, Mass., as her attorney to prosecute the claim and procure a (pension) certificate. (Note 1) <p>This document was signed by Albinia J. Peirce with George H. Jacobs of Charlestown, Mass., and Foster Peirce of Boston, Mass., as witnesses. (Note 2)</p>	Peirce
		Documents 2 through 7 were submitted in support of the above pension application.	

2	<p>“Claim for Widow’s Pension” under the Act of July 14, 1862, in the War of 1861. Submitted as part of the above “Widow’s Declaration for Pension”</p>	<p>Filed as a brief by Mrs. Albinia J. Pierce, widow of Jerome Pierce, a sergeant in Co. H, 36th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, and a resident of Billerica, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Proofs: Service: The rolls show that Jerome Pierce was mustered into service as a Corporal Aug. 27, 1862, and is reported as follows: “A Sergeant – killed at Spottsylvania C.H., Va., May 12, 1864.” Death: By the certificate of Capt. J. B. Smith it is shown that the soldier was “killed during an engagement with the enemy.” (Note 3) Marriage: Proved by copy of Public Records. Names and dates of birth of children: One. Name and age given. Loyalty (to the United States): Shown. Agent: A. B. Coffin, Esq., Boston, Mass.</p> <p>Section of form completed by the Examining Clerk: Admitted (to the Pension Rolls) September 6, 1865, with a pension of \$8.00 per month, commencing May 12, 1864. Pension Certificate Number: 55,832. (Note 4)</p>	Pierce
3	<p>Certification by J. B. Smith, Captain July 3, 1864, near Petersburg, Va.</p>	<p>“This is to certify that Jerome Peirce, a Sergeant of Company H, Thirty-sixth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers Infantry, was killed on May 12, 1864, at Spottsylvania Court House, Virginia, during an engagement with the enemy and that he was in the performance of his duty at the time.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J. B. Smith Captain, Commanding Regiment</p>	Peirce
4	<p>Memorandum from the Pension Office to the Adjutant General Received Feb. 23, 1865</p>	<p>Request for official evidence of service and death of Jerome Peirce, Sgt., Co. H., 36th Massachusetts Volunteers, killed at Spottsylvania C.H., Va., May 12, 1864, in connection with the pension application of Albinia J. Peirce, Middlesex County, Mass., widow of Jerome Peirce.</p>	Peirce
5	<p>Memorandum from the Adjutant General’s Office to the Commissioner of Pensions, Pension Office, Washington, D.C. July 10, 1865</p>	<p>Response to the above request from the Pension Office for evidence of service and death of Jerome Peirce: The (Muster) Rolls show that Jerome Peirce was enrolled on August 4, 1862, at Orange in Company H, 36th Regiment, to serve 3 years or during the war and mustered into the service on August 27, 1862, at Worcester. On the Muster Roll of Co. H of that regiment for the months of May and June 1864 he is reported as Sergeant, Killed at Spottsylvania C.H. May 12, 1864.</p>	Peirce

6	Certification from the Secretary, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Feb. 17, 1865 (Note 5)	The marriage of Jerome Peirce of Charlestown (Mass.), aged 26 years, and Albinia Jacquith of Billerica, aged 28, was solemnized at Billerica on September 10, 1857, by Rev. J. G. D. Stearnes. (Note 6)	Peirce
7	Certification from the Secretary, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Feb. 20, 1867 (Note 7)	Lucy S. Peirce, daughter of Jerome and Albinia, was born at Charlestown (Mass.) on December 26, 1859.	Peirce
8	Confirmation of awarding of the Widow's Pension	Albinia J. Pierce, widow of Jerome Pierce, Sgt., Co. H, 36 th Massachusetts Volunteers, was awarded a pension of \$8.00 per month commencing May 12, 1864, by Certificate No. 55,832, dated September 13, 1865. The certificate was sent to A. B. Coffin, Boston, Mass., Albinia Pierce's attorney. (Note 8)	Pierce
9, 10	Widow's Claim for an Increase of Pension Sep. 24, 1866	Albinia J. Pierce, a resident of Billerica, Massachusetts, aged 31, widow of Jerome Pierce, who died in the military service of the United States on May 12, 1864, while a Sergeant with Co. H, 36 th Regiment Massachusetts, now the holder of Pension Certificate No. 55,382, and receiving a pension of \$8.00 per month, and the mother of Lucy S. Pierce, born December 26, 1859, who resides with her mother in Billerica, applied for an increase in pension authorized by an Act dated July 25, 1866, and appoints A. B. Coffin of Boston, Mass., as her attorney. (Note 10)	Peirce and Pierce (Note 9)
11	Confirmation of Widow's Pension Amount June 10, 1867	Confirmation that the widow's pension amount was \$8.00 per month. In addition, she was awarded \$2.00 per month for Lucy S. Pierce until Dec. 25, 1875.	Pierce
12	Letter request to the Pension Office for information regarding Albinia Peirce's pension from Senator John W. Weeks Oct. 11, 1913	The letter requested 1) the amount of the pension then being received by Albina Peirce, 2) if there was any application for an increase then pending, and 3) if she might be entitled to an increase in her pension. (Note 11)	Peirce
13	Letter from the Pension Office in response to Senator John W. Weeks' above letter Oct. 14, 1913	Mrs. Pierce was then receiving a pension of \$12 per month under the Pension Act of March 19, 1886, there was no increase of the pension amount pending, and there was no provision under the law under which an increase could be granted.	Pierce
14	Notice Aug. 7, 1914	Albinia Pierce's pension was increased to \$20.00 per month as the result of a newly enacted pension law. (Note 12)	Pierce

15	“Widow’s Pension” Notice Aug. 7, 1914	Albinia Pierce of Billerica, Mass., was granted a widow’s pension of \$20.00 per month as of Aug. 7, 1914, per a Special Act enacted August 7, 1914. List of important dates included in the document: Jerome Pierce enlisted Aug. 4, 1862 Jerome Pierce died in service May 12, 1864 Claimant’s marriage to soldier: Sept. 10, 1857 (Not remarried or divorced) Special Act approved Aug. 7, 1914	Pierce
16	Notice from the Disbursing Clerk (probably of the Bureau of Pensions) Mar. 18, 1920	Check Number 6085101-AA for \$75.00 dated March 4, 1920, in favor of Albinia J. Pierce, Civil War widow, Pension Certificate Number 55,382, living at Middlesex Turnpike & Concord (Rd.?), (Post office) Bedford, Mass., was returned by the Postmaster with the information that the pensioner died March 1, 1920, and this check was canceled March 4, 1920. (Note 13) She had been paid at the rate of \$25 per month to December 4, 1919.	Pierce
17	“Pensioner Dropped” Notice Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions March 31, 1920	Albinia J. Pierce, who was last paid at the rate of \$25.00 per month to Dec. 4, 1919, has been dropped as of March 31, 1920, from the pension roll because of her death March 1, 1920. (Note 14)	Pierce

Note 1: It was customary for applicants for Civil War pensions to use an attorney to collect the necessary evidence required for a pension application and to file the required documents, and the government pension forms included a section to be used to designate the attorney’s name and address. Attorney A. B. Coffin, a graduate of Dartmouth College in 1856, was with a law firm in Boston that called itself the Middlesex War-Claim Association. In advertisements in the Boston area newspapers the firm stated, “This Association collects Pensions, Bounties, Back Pay, and Prize Money and all other Military and Naval Claims against the Government at reasonable charges and without cost until the claim is settled. Aid and advice rendered without charge.” The ads also stated that their attorneys will “receive applications from families of Cambridge Soldiers – calling at their residences when requested.”

Note 2: Foster Peirce was Jerome Peirce’s brother. Per the 1850 U.S. census, Jerome lived with Foster Peirce and his family when that census was taken.

Note 3: See Document No. 17 in the Service File and Document No. 3 in this Pension file. The Certification pertaining to the death of Sgt. Peirce, was made by Lt. Philip G. Woodward on July 18, 1864, near Petersburg, Virginia, and was approved by Captain James B. Smith. Smith, originally with the 25th Massachusetts Volunteers, assumed command of Company K of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment on August 22, 1862. During the war, he was slightly wounded twice and was later promoted to a staff position in the Second Division, Ninth Corps. At the end of the war, he was awarded the rank of brevet colonel and was mustered out as a major with the regiment on June 8, 1865.

Note 4: A widow was automatically awarded an additional pension of \$2.00 per month for each child until that child reached the age of 16.

Note 5: Based on the date it was prepared, this certification was apparently submitted after the pension application had been approved.

Note 6: Based on *History of Billerica, Massachusetts, with Genealogical Register* by the Rev. Henry A. Hazen, published in Boston, Mass., by A. Williams & Co., in 1883, pp. 270-271 (Google Books), the Rev. Jesse G. D. Stearns was the minister at the Congregational Church on Andover Street in Billerica, Mass., from 1843 until 1867. Although the spelling of the minister's name (Stearns) in this source differs slightly from the spelling of the name (Stearnes) in this document, it is extremely likely that the marriage took place in the Congregational Church in Billerica since the initials of the minister agree, the minister served at the Congregational Church in 1857 (the year that Jerome and Albinia were married), and no other minister by the name of Stearnes or Stearns was found in this source. Consequently, it is very likely that either Albinia or Jerome, or probably both, were members of the Congregational Church.

Note 7: Like the certification of the marriage, based on the date it was prepared, this certification was apparently submitted after the pension application had been approved.

Note 8: J. B. Coffin was the attorney hired by Albinia Pierce to prepare and submit the pension application.

Note 9: In the body of the form (probably prepared by her attorney), the surname is spelled "Pierce" while Albinia signed her name as "Peirce."

Note 10: There is no indication in the Pension File that Albinia Pierce's pension was increased as the result of this request.

Note 11: In this document, Jerome Pierce's widow's given name is (incorrectly) spelled "Albina" instead of "Albinia." John Wingate Weeks (1860 – 1926) was the mayor of Newton, Massachusetts, from 1902 to 1903, a U.S. Representative for Massachusetts from 1905 to 1913, a U.S. Senator from 1913 to 1919 from Massachusetts, and the U.S. Secretary of War from 1921 to 1925.

Note 12: The origin of this notice cannot be determined because the stamp of the office is not readable, but it was likely sent by the Pension Office.

Note 13: In the 1920 U.S. census, which was taken in January of that year, just a few weeks before Albinia's death, Albinia (listed with her maiden name of Jaquith), age 85, and Lucy Pierce, Albinia's daughter, age 60, are shown as living with Albinia's younger brother, Franklin Jaquith, age 80, and his wife, Susie, age 81, on a family farm owned by Franklin on Concord Road in Billerica, Massachusetts. (Billerica and Bedford, Massachusetts, are adjacent towns, so that the physical address and the post office address were likely different in 1920.) The census enumerator almost certainly erred in recording Albinia's surname as "Jaquith" because the surname entries in the census just above her name were all "Jaquith" since there is no record that Albinia changed her married surname back to her maiden name.

Note 14: In this document, Jerome Pierce's widow's given name is spelled "Albina" instead of "Albinia."

APPENDIX D

“HISTORY OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH REGIMENT MASSACHUSETTS VOLUNTEERS. 1862 – 1865”

An invaluable resource in compiling this “Sgt. Jerome Pierce Story” was the book “History of the Thirty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. 1862 – 1865.” It was published in 1884 and was printed by Rockwell and Churchill in Boston. It is referred to many times throughout this text as simply the “Unit History.” The following is a brief description of this work.

The book consists of 405 pages and was authored by six officers who served with the regiment, each of whom wrote from one to fourteen chapters. The final draft was edited by Henry S. Burrage, who is sometimes credited as the only author, such as in the worldcat.org database. In the Preface, Burrage summarized the process by which the book came into being as follows.

“Not long after the close of the war, a plan was proposed by some of the officers of the regiment for the preparation of a history of the Thirty-sixth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, but the plan was not carried into execution. At the regimental reunions in subsequent years, parts of such a history were read by Comrades White, Raulett, and Hodgkins, and the desire for a complete history of the regiment, which found expression on these occasions, was so strong that at the reunion of the regiment at Worcester in September 1876, a committee, consisting of Comrades White, Raulett, Burrage, and Hodgkins, was appointed to procure materials for a history of the regiment. Some progress was made by the committee in the performance of the work thus assigned to them, but it was not so great as they or their comrades of the Thirty-sixth desired. At the reunion on September 2, 1879, the matter was again considered, and it was finally voted, "That Comrades White, Raulett, Hodgkins, Burrage, and Noyes be chosen as a committee to have charge of the compiling, revising, and printing the history of the regiment, to be ready for delivery at our next reunion and that the committee have power to procure any help they may need." Many difficulties were encountered in the progress of the work, and it was found that it would be impossible to prepare, within the limit of time prescribed, such a history as would be worthy of the regiment. The different members of the committee, amid the activities of busy lives, could give to the work only such intervals of leisure as they could find amid their daily tasks. At the annual reunions of 1880, 1881, and 1882, testing the patience of their comrades who had entrusted to them this important task, they were compelled to report progress only. At the September 1883 reunion, however, they were able to say that the work was already in press and would be ready for delivery in the course of a few weeks.”

The book consists of 28 chapters with titles that include “Organization of the Regiment,” “To the Front,” “In Virginia,” “The Kentucky Campaign,” “In the Rear of Vicksburg,” “In East Tennessee,” “The Siege of Knoxville,” “In the Wilderness,” “At Spottsylvania,” “On the North Anna and the Pamunkey,” “At Cold Harbor,” “The Movement on Petersburg,” “In the Trenches,” “The Mine Affair,” and “Closing Scenes.”

After the main body of the text, a detailed roster and record of the men who served in the 36th Massachusetts Regiment along with a recapitulation of the regiment’s losses is given as well as a list of members of the regiment who died in Confederate prisons. These sections by themselves comprise 71 pages. Finally, a comprehensive index is included.

The details about how a few members of the regiment were killed or wounded are included. Unfortunately, the only information about Sgt. Peirce (spelled "Pierce") that is included is in the list of casualties incurred at Spotsylvania Court House (page 171) and in the roster (page 369) as shown below.

Page 171

Company H. Killed: Sergeant Jerome Pierce, Private Lewis D. Winslow. Died of Wounds: Private Eugene W. Hodgman. Wounded: Sergeant John A. Fisher, Private Augustus F. Colburn.

Page 369

Name and rank (at time of enlistment): Corporal Jerome Pierce

Age at time of enlistment: 31

Residence: Orange

Enlistment date: Aug. 4, 1862

Remarks and Termination of Service: Promoted Sgt. Killed in action at Spotsylvania, Va., May 12, 1864.

Fortunately, the book has been digitized as a Google Book and is available on-line at https://books.google.com/books/about/History_of_the_Thirty_sixth_regiment_Mas.html?id=GIWMy8ZC8tQC. The PDF version makes it possible to search the text, such as for names, dates, events, and places, and the COPY and PASTE functions allow for the transfer of sections of the text to another document.

APPENDIX E

MEN OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT WHO WERE KILLED OR DIED OF WOUNDS AT THE BATTLE OF SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE

The following is a summary of the men of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment who were killed or died of wounds they incurred in the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House in May of 1864. In addition, 33 men were wounded according to the Unit History.

Rank & Name	Company	Listed in the Unit History (1884)	Listed by the First Regiment (June 1865) (See Chapt. 5)	In the Records of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery	Remarks
Capt. S. Henry Bailey		X			
Lt. Henry W. Daniels		X			
Pvt. James Alexander	A	X		X	
Corp. Albert H. Carter	A	Note 1		X	
Pvt. Levi Chamberlain	A	X		X	
Pvt. Franklin Howe	A	X			
Corp. James N. Doughty	B	X		X	
Pvt. Obed R. Davis	B	X			
1st. Sgt. A. Fernando Bailey	C	X	X	X	
Sgt. George E. Freeman	C	X	X	X	
Corp. Fanning T. Merritt	C	X		X	
Pvt. Michael Loughlin	C	X			
Sgt. Stephen T. Brooks	D	X			
Corp. Alden J. Sawtell	D	X			
Pvt. Samuel B. Hale	D	X		X	
Pvt. Peter Breen	D	X			
Pvt. Dennis Hare	D	X			
Pvt. Sanford Giles	D	X	X	X	Died of wounds
Pvt. Andrew J. Morgan	E	Note 1		X	
Corp. William H. Hall	G	X		X	
Pvt. John S. Emerson	G	X			Died of wounds
Corp. Edward W. Stacy	G	Note 1		X	
Sgt. Jerome Peirce	H	X		X	
Pvt. Lewis Winslow	H	X		X	
Pvt. Eugene W. Hodgman	H	X			Died of wounds
Pvt. Franklin Farnsworth	I	X		X	Died of wounds

Pvt. Josiah Houghton	I	Note 1		X	Died of wounds
Pvt. Samuel G. Vaughn	K	X			
		-----	-----	-----	
TOTAL		22	3	16	

Note 1: According to the Unit History, killed at the Battle of the Wilderness.

APPENDIX F

EXCERPTS FROM THE SERMON GIVEN AT THE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR SGT. JEROME PEIRCE BY REV. LEVI BALLOU ON JUNE 19, 1864, AT THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL PARISH AND SOCIETY CHURCH IN ORANGE, MASSACHUSETTS

The following background information about Rev. Levi Ballou and his papers from which the funeral service sermon is excerpted is based on information on the website of the Rare Books and Special Collections Department of the Hesburgh Libraries of the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Levi Ballou was born on May 10, 1806, in Halifax County, Vermont. The Ballou family, of Huguenot descent, was central to the history of denominational Universalism in America. Theologically, the Universalists rejected the predestinarianism of Puritan Calvinism and held to the distinguishing principle of the ultimate salvation of all humanity. Organizationally, they were committed to what at times became an extreme form of congregational autonomy. In terms of denominational strength, the movement probably peaked in the late 1840s. Levi Ballou's great-uncle was Rev. Hosea Ballou (1771-1852), the most important American Universalist theologian of the early nineteenth century. An older brother, Rev. Hosea Ballou II (1796-1861), was the first president of Tufts College, established by the Universalists in 1853.

Levi Ballou was a teacher and singing instructor before embarking on the study of theology. He began preaching in about 1836, itinerating mostly in the Connecticut Valley in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. In 1843, he settled at the first Congregational Parish and Society of Orange, Massachusetts, later known as the Second Universalist Society, in the north-central part of the state. The parish had long been supportive of Universalist doctrine. Ballou would remain there as pastor for the rest of his life. Besides preaching at Orange and in surrounding parishes, Ballou served on the Orange Public School Board and had an active interest in the establishment of Tufts College. He died of pneumonia on October 27, 1865, ten days after his last sermon at Orange.

Rev. Ballou's sermons and papers include around 70 manuscript sermons written on sheets sewn into octavo-sized booklets, which average approximately 30 pages in length and appear to date from throughout Ballou's career. More than half are funeral sermons, including four written for members of the 36th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment who were killed in the Civil War. The papers also include a 224-page manuscript log kept by Ballou from 1836 until his death, in which he recorded the date, place, and scriptural premise of every sermon or lecture he delivered, often accompanied by the payment he received.

The Ballou Papers were purchased by the Hesburgh Libraries of the University of Notre Dame in 2003 from Dan Casavant Rare Books of Waterville, Maine. They have been arranged and described by George Rugg, curator of the Rare Books and Special Collections Department of the Hesburgh Libraries. The sermon Rev. Ballou delivered at Sgt. Peirce's funeral service is cataloged as "Folder 69 (MSN/EA 0502-69). Rev. Levi Ballou. Funeral sermon on 1 Corinthians 13:12. June 19, 1864. A funeral service delivered in North Orange, Massachusetts for Cpl. Jerome Pierce, Company H, 36th Massachusetts Infantry."

Nothing Rev. Ballou wrote seems to have appeared in print. As a matter of fact, a "Will and decree" dated 1857 stipulates that "no sermon I have [given], or written communication of mine, shall

ever be published.” The including of this excerpt of his sermon in the “Sgt. Jerome Peirce Story” is partially justified by the fact that only a relatively small portion of his lengthy sermon has been transcribed and is included herein. Any copyright ownership expired many years ago. Furthermore, the inclusion of the below excerpt can be justified under the “Fair Use Doctrine” that applies to intellectual property, especially since no financial gain will result for anyone from its inclusion herein. Also, the personal information about Jerome Peirce that Rev. Ballou included, such as Peirce’s role in the “Sabbath School” of the church, Peirce’s motivation to volunteer for service in the Civil War, and the excerpts from his letters, are pieces of information about Peirce that are extremely valuable and which were not found in any other source.

1 Cor. 13:12 “But, then shall I know, even, as also I am known.”

We are assembled, Christian hearers, under emotions of no ordinary character, to speak of a departed friend and brother; and to offer words of hope and consolation to the living.

Another of the honored soldiers of Orange has fallen.

The lamented Jerome Pierce [instead of “Peirce”] who lived in our midst, highly esteemed and respected, is now, no more, in the land of the living.

He has fallen in the cause of God and humanity.

He has sealed his devotion to his country with his own blood.

We were first startled by rumors that he had fallen, yet for a moment, uncertainty and doubt prevailed, and we indulged faint hopes that it might not be so, but, soon the unwelcome news is confirmed, and the reality is forced upon us.

And here, in this Sanctuary of the Most High, where we have of late so frequently been called to mingle our sympathies with other afflicted families whose husbands and sons have fallen on the field of battle, we have again come on the same mission of consolation to those now more recently bereft.

But a few months ago, we saw our departed brother, as he lived in our midst, faithfully discharging his duties in the various relations of life as a valued and efficient member of society. By his moral and social qualities, his religious characteristics, and his stern and enduring virtues, he endeared himself to our community, and, I trust, his memory is written in enduring affection on the tablets of our hearts.

By frequent intercourse with him, I learned something of the struggle that was then going on in his mind in regard to the perilous condition of our beloved country.

Long before he volunteered his services, he frequently spoke of the great wickedness of the present Rebellion as a crime utterly unjustifiable in the sight of God or men and of the duty of sustaining and upholding the government.

In addressing this Sab. [Sabbath] School, of which he was the faithful Superintendent, this subject was often the theme of his remarks.

In his view, there were evidently but two courses to pursue in the present crisis of our national affairs, either, nobly to defend and sustain the government at whatever cost it may be, or shrinking from duty, leave it to be dismembered and perish, and thus bring upon ourselves the reproach and scorn of the civilized world. There was no middle ground to be taken.

And the sacred sense of duty told him which path to take.

The voice of our bleeding soldiers already in the field was heard pleading for help to come to aid in sustaining the government and in repelling the attacks of the enemy.

The nation called for aid and at the call, he volunteered his services in defense of liberty to sustain those Republican institutions which our fathers purchased with their own blood.

And what more noble than that spirit of lofty Patriotism which causes one to scorn self-interest, ease, and danger, and go forth bearing his bosom to the shafts of death, for freedom and his country’s welfare!

By this spirit, many a mother has offered upon the altar of her endangered country her beloved son in the bloom and pride of youth.

By it, the wife yields up the husband of her love and hope.

And by it, thousands of young men have left their homes, hallowed by tender associations and memories of parents, brothers, sisters, wives and friends, to follow the Flag of the country to the battlefield and there to bear soldiers' burdens and to fill, if need be, soldiers' graves.

It was from this high sense of duty to his country that the departed, bidding adieu to the endearments of home, the partner of his existence and loved friends, volunteered his services to his country.

In conversing with him before he left, we learned his views and feelings.

And by letters received while in the army, we see him ever cheerful and hopeful, believing that victory shall ultimately crown our efforts in suppressing the rebellion.

But, in the heat of battle, while faithfully performing his duty to his country, amidst the hail of iron and lead that is hurled upon him, he falls a martyr to his country's cause, and his mangled and lifeless form now rests in a far distant land, among the graves of strangers.

The home which he gladdened with his smile and gentle words of affection has thus been darkened.

And, O, how unlooked for is this event!

In one short hour, how changed are the scenes and prospects of life.

But, though he has fallen, he has fallen in a noble and worthy cause, and we trust that the sacrifice is not in vain.

Every worthy effort which man puts forth for truth and right, every blow which is struck for God and humanity will not be permitted to be lost to the world.

An influence will go out there from that will be felt, sooner or later, pervading the hearts of the noble and true and bear their fruits to the world.

In some sense, everyone is called upon to war against evil in the thousand forms it may assume and to stand up for truth and right.

This life has, not inappropriately, been denominated a scene of warfare.

Right and wrong, good and evil, are ever in conflict on the arena of life.

In every sphere of duty, man is summoned to struggle for what is right, to contend for that which is good.

And dark and dreary as seems the present, it is no small source of consolation to know that he fell honorably while faithful at the post of duty.

The death of him whose obsequies we this day perform is what comes peculiarly near to us all.

By the various relations he sustained to those around him, as a kind husband, a tender father, a highly esteemed brother, relatives and friends, his loss has caused a deep void in our hearts.

Kind, benevolent, social, and cheerful in all his relations with others, he won their esteem, and his untimely loss we all feel and lament.

He went to the scene of conflict and danger with that calmness which only a deep conviction of duty could inspire.

In conversing on the subject, though perfectly conscious of the dangers he incurred, he expressed the hope that he should live to return to his family.

During his brief stay here, many were the attachments formed, but our hopes of again seeing him return again to our midst, have been cut short, and we mourn that one so good and true should have fallen so early.

This event speaks to us all, especially to the middle-aged and youth with whom he mingled and associated and more directly to the Sab. School, over which he was the Superintendent, who have come out here to pay the tribute of respect to his memory. He also

labored for the interest of this Sab. School for years, whose daily thought was to increase its usefulness, is gone.

And the memory of his labors, of his many amiable virtues, social and his general nature and the interest he took in your welfare we trust will not soon be erased from the tablets of your hearts.

Steady and trustworthy in the affairs of life, he pursued the path that leads to honor and respectability.

And this, my young friends, is a path open to all. A life of honor, usefulness and respectability, you can all obtain, if you resolve to shun the allurements of evil and walk in wisdom's paths.

In his letters to his friends here, he frequently spoke of the Sab. School. Its interests were remembered. He wished to know of its doings.

In one, written but a short time before he fell, he says, "I wish to be remembered to the Sab. School."

Although his presence we shall no more see on earth, yet the memory of his life is with us, and may it so pervade our hearts, as to influence us for good.

A few weeks before his death, in writing to his companion [his wife, Albinia], then in Billerica, just before the army advanced, he says, "But you will think of the future, as we are now approaching the enemy, it is natural, but we can only rely on the same Power who has thus far led me on. I feel no sad presentiments, but, on the contrary, am hopeful." As we look over his letters, we see them pervaded by the spirit of an elevated religious faith and trust.

Again, he writes his companion, only 12 days before he fell, and after describing the place where he then was, as reminding him much of certain localities where they had in former days conversed and strolled together. He adds that by the movements of the army, "It looks like a fearful future for some." He asks, "Shall we be spared the last fearful conflict?" "We hope all will be for the best."

He then speaks of his darling child to whom he sends some flowers which he had culled for her to keep to remember Papa and in closing says, "I hope to see you again soon."

Had we time, I would like to read extracts from other letters from him and the testimony of soldiers who have accompanied him in all their toils and weary marches. They all speak in high praise of his noble deeds as a true soldier.

But I forbear.

Of the soldiers of N. [North] Orange, he is the 10th who has offered up his life upon the altar of his country. The lists of their names I need not repeat.

How fearful has been the harvest of death in the ranks of our honored soldiers of late? How many households have been made vacant and hearts [filled] with anguish!

May God in mercy spare the lives of the handful that remain!

The memory of the many virtues of our departed brother, which shone in his life which he sojourned with us, his untiring devotion to his interests of our Sab. School, and his faithful labors for its good while he was its Superintendent and his ardent desires for the interest of society, we trust will not be forgotten.

But he is gone, and it is our duty to bow our wills in submission to those inscrutable providences which are permitted to come upon us.

And now, mourning friends, what more shall I say to you than I have said?

I know the deep grief of your hearts.

I know how feeble are any words I can utter in imparting the needed consolation.

The one who was near and dear to your hearts has fallen, and you mourn your loss, but you mourn not alone, for we all mourn with you.

The ties that bound a husband and wife, father and child, brothers and sisters, have been severed and a change has come over your homes.

But, God be praised, for the assurances that He forgets not to be merciful, even in the midst of affliction.

We cannot now see how the wisdom of God is dealing with us, thru the spirit and principles of greatness, or what ends He has purposed to attain for us.

I hardly need remind you that you have rich consolation in the memories of the past, the happy relations you have sustained to him, who is now exalted.

And since it has been so ordered by Him who watches over us for good, that the esteemed and worthy husband, the kind father, and brother should leave you, may you not mourn with immoderate grief.

I assure you of my most sincere sympathies, and I can only commend you to "God who is a very present help in time of trouble."

To the partner of the deceased, we would say, we are sensible of the deep affliction that has come upon you in the death of a kind husband, the companion of your earthly existence.

He has left you, at the call of your H. Father, no more to aid and cheer you with his society on earth.

In the loneliness of your earthly abode, you will look to God for wisdom and grace to direct you.

He has promised to be the widow's God and the Sustainer of the affliction.

Brothers and sisters are now called to part with one who occupied a large place in your affections. He was in every way worthy of that affection, and your loss is great, but we trust what is your loss is his gain.

May God grant all these mourners strength to bear this affliction and by realizing that the departed has only exchanged this world of trial and suffering for one of joy. May you be resigned to the doings of Him who "lets not a sparrow fall without his notice" and who knows when it is best for our friends to depart.

May his truth prove to these deeply afflicted mourners, to the remaining partner of the deceased, to brothers and sisters, and to all relatives and friends as "an anchor to the soul, sure, and steadfast."

And may this hour of grief become radiant with hope and joy in believing that you shall meet again your departed in that world where no sickness or pain shall enter, where none die, and where friends meet to part no more, forever.

Amen.

APPENDIX G

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE LETTERS WRITTEN BY JEROME PEIRCE AND OTHERS

The following are transcriptions of some of the letters and other documents written by Jerome Peirce and others that are now in the possession of the Patricia Mason family in Dayton, Ohio, based on the copies of these letters that *Reader's Digest* editor-at-large Henry Hurt made in early 1994 in preparation for his article in the May 1994 issue of that magazine. They are arranged in chronological order.

Poem: Written by Jerome Peirce on the occasion of his engagement to Albinia Jaquith in April 1856

To "Allie"

Dearest of all my earthly friends
Again I fly to thee,
Whose blessed Image ever blends
In all that's dear to me.

The toils of day and eve's repose
Alike thy presence brings.
When sleep serene, my eyelids close
To thee my spirit wings.

How deeply thus doth love enshrine
Its object in the soul!
And guides the heart to things divine
And Heaven – its final goal.

Oh blessed thought! For those who love
An immortality remains.
And in a brighter world above
A balm for all our pains.

April '56

A notation at the bottom reads as follows: "Written by my Father when engaged to Mother.
Lucy S. Peirce"

NOTE: Jerome Peirce and Albinia Jaquith were married on September 10, 1857. More specifically, the Pension File obtained from the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C., contains a Certification from the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as required as proof of marriage by the U.S. Pension Office in order to approve the widow's pension that Albinia applied for. That document reads, "The marriage of Jerome Peirce of Charlestown, aged 26 years, and Albinia Jaquith of Billerica, aged 28,

was solemnized at Billerica on September 10, 1857, by Rev. J. G. D. Stearnes.” Further research shows that the Rev. Jesse G. D. Stearnes was the minister at the Congregational Church on Andover Street in Billerica, Massachusetts, from 1843 until 1867.

Letter to: Mrs. Jerome Peirce

From: Jerome Peirce

Location: Nicholasville, Kentucky (Based on the postmark and reference to the conscription duty in the Unit History per NOTE 2 below.)

Date: Monday, Aug. 24, 1863

Envelope: Addressed to: Mrs. Jerome Peirce
Billerica, Mass.

“Please forward”

Postmark: Nicholasville, Kentucky. Date not readable.

My dear Allie.

I wrote you yesterday and now I have something to tell.

Was called to the Commander’s tent and informed that I was selected as the “Non Com” [Non-commissioned] officer to accompany others to go to Mass. to bring in Conscripts! You can imagine my feeling. It is a great favor and compliment too and my years’ service has not been for nothing, as it is a work requiring the right sort of stuff. Alonzo was the means of it in a great measure.

Expect to leave tomorrow, Tuesday or the next day with Lieut. Davis, Co. K, and six men. I send you this that you may be prepared to meet me either at home B [Billerica] or some point near or at Boston as the Camp is at Long Island you know. Talked with Alonzo. He didn’t think we shall have leave to go home, that is to visit round. I go out of my way so you will hear from me by Telegraph or letter as we are not quite certain what day we shall leave. This will reach you ahead.

My expenses, you see, will be all paid and I hope to see you soon.

You will please inform the friends so I can meet as many as possible.

Shall write to Orange today with this. J.H. has a fine thing: Orderly for Gen. Ferrero. Left for his post today.

In haste with love to all.

I am yours,
Jerome

The following note was written on the top of page 1: “Please write Foster’s folks. Don’t know whether I can see them.”

NOTE 1: The Company Muster Roll for September and October 1863 in Corporal Jerome Peirce’s Service File gives the following information: “Absent. Sent to Massachusetts for conscription Sept. 15, 1863.” The next Company Muster Roll, for November and December 1863, lists him as “Present.”

NOTE 2: The Unit History mentions the conscription detail that included Jerome Peirce on page 80 as follows: “Between sunrise and noon of the 15th (of September 1863) we marched fourteen miles, and encamped at Barbourville, on the Cumberland River. Before marching this morning, a detail of three officers (Captain Holmes, Lieutenants Hodgkins and Davis), and six men left us, for the purpose of returning to Massachusetts, and bringing out the conscripts assigned to the Thirty-sixth Regiment, according to orders received at Nicholasville.”

NOTE 3: It is not clear who the Alonzo was that Jerome referred to in this letter. None of the men from Orange, Massachusetts, that he enlisted with in early August of 1862 was named Alonzo, and the Unit History Roster lists several men named Alonzo.

NOTE 4: The “J. H.” Jerome referred to in this letter was probably Pvt. James E. Hills, one of the men from Orange, Massachusetts, who enlisted with him in early August 1862. Hills was not wounded or killed in the War and was discharged with the rest of the regiment on June 8, 1865.

NOTE 5: Gen. Edward Ferrero (1831 – 1899) was one of the leading dance instructors, [choreographers](#), and ballroom operators in the [United States](#) prior to his service in the Civil War from 1861 until 1865. He served admirably in a number of major battles and was assigned to the corps that included the 36th Massachusetts Regiment. However, he is most remembered for his dishonorable conduct in the [Battle of the Crater](#) (July 1864), for drinking with another general behind the lines, while both their units were virtually destroyed. A court of inquiry cited Ferrero for "being in a bomb-proof shelter habitually, where he could not see the operation of his troops nor know the position of two brigades of his division or whether they had taken Cemetery Hill or not." Nevertheless, Ferrero was [brevetted](#) as a [major general](#) on December 2, 1864, for "bravery and meritorious services." He subsequently served throughout the [Appomattox Campaign](#) in early 1865.

Letter to: Brother Joseph [Peirce]
From: Jerome Peirce
Location: Unknown
Date: Monday, Sept. 28, 1863
Envelope: No envelope available.

Brother Joseph

I send you a line this morning which I thought you might communicate to some of the boys friends if they would like to see me, I should be in this vicinity till Friday next – no Thursday. Shall have to report again next Monday P.M.

We don't expect to have any conscripts and shall return to the Regt. next week.

My time will be much taken up, of course, but would like to see any of the friends who would like to meet me.

News favorable this morning and all will turn out well by and by at the West.

Must send a line to Capt Sawyer and am in great haste. Letters from Alonzo [??] all right.

As ever,
Jerome

NOTE 1: The Company Muster Roll for September and October 1863 in Corporal Jerome Peirce's Service File gives the following information: "Absent. Sent to Massachusetts for conscription Sept. 15, 1863." The following Company Muster Roll, for November and December 1863, lists him as "Present."

NOTE 2: Jerome's older brother, Joseph, was born in 1820. He might have been involved in the woodworking/furniture business in Orange, Massachusetts.

Give love to all. Will write more first opportunity. Hope the money all reached you safely. Tell me all about.

As ever yours,
Jerome

J.H. sends love, disappointed not seeing you.

NOTE 1: The *Boston Globe* article of May 29, 1994, included the following excerpt from this letter: “A great day yesterday. Thro Washington, where we were received very enthusiastically. Genl. B., President Lincoln on the balcony of the Willard Hotel to salute us as we passed...The boys got a “pass” and remained in W. last night. Had a good sight of W. City...The president looks pale and careworn – very.”

NOTE 2: The Unit History of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment describes the review by General Burnside and President Lincoln that Peirce wrote about as follows: “On the evening of the 22d [April 1864] the command was ordered to be in readiness to march, and before daylight of the 23d the delightful camp was broken up, and the corps took up its line of march, not toward the harbor, but in the direction of Washington, following the line of the Elk Ridge and Annapolis Railroad. After a march of thirteen miles the corps bivouacked in the fields for the night. Very early on the 24th the march was resumed. In about six hours we reached the Baltimore and Washington Turnpike, and at nightfall the corps went into camp near Bladensburg, distant about eight miles from the city of Washington. At four o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 25th, reveille was sounded but, owing to a severe shower, the regiment did not march until about eight o'clock. When the march was resumed the corps passed through Bladensburg and continued in the direction of the city. We reached the outskirts of the capital about noon, and halted on New York Avenue for the command to close up, as we were to pay marching salute to the President and General Burnside, who were to review us from balcony of Willard's Hotel. It soon became known that the corps was to pass through the city, and the streets along the line of march were densely packed. The column was greeted with cheers and applause. Many spirited descriptions of this imposing scene were published at the time in the journals of the day.”

NOTE 3: The following information about President Lincoln at the Willard Hotel was found on the website <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/sites/willards.htm>: “Located only a few blocks from the White House (at 1401 Pennsylvania Avenue), the Willard Hotel has welcomed many U.S. presidents, including Abraham Lincoln. The present building, completed in 1904, stands on the site of the original building which Lincoln knew. The first known visit of Lincoln to Willard's came at the end of his single term in Congress on January 27, 1849. Lincoln became a hotel guest shortly before his first inauguration as president in 1861. He arrived abruptly on February 23 after an assassination plot in Baltimore changed his travel plans. He was joined soon after by his wife and sons, remaining until his inauguration on March 4. Because Willard's was a social and political hub, Lincoln probably stopped by a number of times while president. However, only a few can be verified: A visit with Mrs. Lincoln on July 6, 1861, to attend a concert and his review of troops with General Burnside on April 25, 1864.



**THE WILLARD HOTEL
(DATE UNKNOWN)**



**THE WILLARD HOTEL
AT PRESIDENT PIERCE'S
INAUGURATION IN 1853**

The present 12-story structure opened in 1901, but it suffered a major fire in 1922. The Willard family sold its share of the hotel in 1946, and due to mismanagement and the severe decline of the area, the hotel closed in 1968. The building sat vacant for several years, and numerous plans were floated for its demolition. However, the Willard was subsequently restored to its turn-of-the-century elegance and an office-building contingent was added. The hotel was re-opened on August 20, 1986, and it is now part of the InterContinental Hotels Group.

Letter to: "Wife and Lulu"
From: Jerome Peirce
Location: Picket Post near Catlett's Station, Va.
Date: Sunday PM May 1st, 1864
Envelope: No envelope available.

My [??] dear Wife and Lulu.

This beautiful Sabbath afternoon, may it be as pleasant with you – from this novel situation as Sergt. of the Picket, I send you a word of greeting. How little did I think one week ago that we should be so [snugly?] fixed in this situation! Expected to have been on the Rapidan with Gen. Meade ere this, but we [??] find ourselves living in log houses with cloth roofs and taking life easy guarding R Road [Railroad] from guerrillas which have infested the neighborhood.

Mailed letters from near Alexandria and by our Sutler yesterday written from Bristoe's [also spelled Bristow's] Station where we camped for one night. Friday morning struck tents again and marched down the R Road some five miles when two Co's H and G came down here, or a mile from here, where we relieved two Co's. of the 14th Regulars and it seems the [??] for the present we scattered along this R Road as guard.

The country reminds me some of the ground between town (at B [Billerica?]) and where Judkins' [??] lived, rather skirted with woods. Where we are was a thick growth of oaks now much thinned out, the R Road ten rods perhaps on front with slight embankments. And some six or eight workmen are repairing while the sentinel paces his beat with fixed bayonet and ball cartridges. Trains pass frequently otherwise tis [it is] very quiet especially after such a long time at the front or with the hum of Camp life all about us. Have guard and Picket duty quite often of course but we shall rest up. The Regiment is nearby toward A. [probably Auburn, Virginia] while our quarters are towards Catlett's opposite.

Just breeze enough to be agreeable and reminds me so much of the dear old days at Pleasant Valley! If we could take a stroll together and hear a good sermon from [??] I do hope you are well and having some refreshment body and soul! Is it so? We soon expect to send and receive mail daily and then what chats we can have. Can you realize that your wandering boy is leading such a quiet life as near home? Let us make the most of it? A whole Brigade of heavy Artillery as Infantry passed us this A.M. for the front right from N.Y. harbor and many others are constantly going forward so it looks like something. A fearful future for some. Shall we be spared the last conflict? How these questions come up and we hope everything will be for the best. Are you all well?

Can tell you nothing particularly interesting but I know a word will be [???]. J. Henry is with Co. [??] and is quartered with us eight in a house so far. Don't know what the reason is that he came to the Co. All the boys from the Regt. are reported back. Will have a chance again soon perhaps. Is quite happy and boyish in his jollity.

Another little incident. A playmate of Eddie Peirce's is in our Co. belongs to the 29th Mass. (those who didn't enlist are in our Regt.) and by chance I found him out. Geo. Woodbury I remember his name. Had a long chat last Eve. about old times in C [Charlestown?]. Younger of course than I am but as a mate of E's [Eddie's?] I was interested. A pleasant fellow and good soldier. How strange we meet folks in this world.

Where's my darling Lulu today? Found some flowers which I send her. Keep them and think of Papie. Time flies and I hope to see you one of these days. And then I will answer all her questions. What would she ask me first. Think? Am very well indeed. Read a Psalm and a chapter from Ep [Epistle] St. John after got ready on duty – perhaps I ought to before. Mustered again this morning as accounted for for Pay.

Shall return to quarters about 10 o'clock tomorrow morning and hope you will get this promptly.
Love to all and Ever yours

Entirely
Jerome

NOTE 1: This letter might have been the last letter that Jerome Peirce sent to his wife and daughter.

NOTE 2: Rev. Levi Ballou in the funeral service sermon for Jerome Peirce that he gave on June 19, 1864, in the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome Peirce had been the "Sabbath School Superintendent" made reference to several letters that Albinia had shared with him. The following is an excerpt from this letter that he used in that sermon.

"Again, he writes his companion [his wife, Albinia or Allie], only 12 days before he fell, and after describing the place where he then was, as reminding him much of certain localities where they had in former days conversed and strolled together. He adds that by the movements of the army, "It looks like a fearful future for some." He asks, "Shall we be spared the last fearful conflict?" "We hope all will be for the best." He then speaks of his darling child to whom he sends some flowers which he had culled for her to keep to remember Papa and in closing says, "I hope to see you again soon.""

NOTE 3: The article titled "Hopeful Words Written in a Brutal Spring" in the *Boston Globe* edition of May 29, 1994, also includes the following excerpt from this letter.

"Where is my darling Lulu today? Found some flowers which I send her. Keep them and think of Papie. Time flies and I hope to see you one of these days and then I will answer all your questions. What would she ask me first, I think?...Read a Psalm, a chapter from the Epistle of St. John after I got ready on duty."

This article mentions that this letter is dated May 1, 1864, and that it may have been the last letter he wrote. This letter is also referenced in the May 1994 issue of *Reader's Digest* as being "cheerful and upbeat." Likewise, the fact that he sent flowers with this letter is also mentioned in the *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star* article of May 29, 2001.

NOTE 4: The following is a summary from the Unit History that describes the activities of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment around May 1, 1864.

“On the 30th [of April, 1864] it became necessary to make another change, and our "Regulation Camp" was abandoned to others. We marched at half-past five o'clock in the morning, crossed Kettle Run at noon, and relieved the Seventeenth Regular Infantry, of the Fifth Corps, taking possession of the splendid camp near Catlett's Station, which they had occupied during the winter. Captain Morse, with Co. C, was sent forward to Catlett's, to guard the station and water tanks, while the remainder of the regiment went into camp. The larger portion of the regiment was accommodated in the barracks of the Seventeenth Regulars, but the three left companies were obliged to occupy their shelter-tents.

Upon reaching this place, it being the last day of the month, the regular monthly return of the regiment was made up and forwarded to headquarters. As being the inventory of the effective strength with which we entered the campaign it may be interesting to include a synopsis of the report. At that date we had present for duty fourteen commissioned officers, and four hundred and twenty-six enlisted men, belonging to the regiment, including ninety-one men transferred from the Twenty-ninth Massachusetts Volunteers, or four hundred and forty in all.”

Letter to: Foster Peirce

From: C.F.S. [Charles F. Smith]

Location: Charlestown, Massachusetts

Date: June 1864 [Specific date not indicated]

Envelope: Addressed to: Foster Peirce, Esq.
Boston, Mass.

Notation on the envelope: “Read at funeral Charles F. Smith”

Postmark: Boston, Mass. [Date unreadable]

The tidings that Jerome had fallen on the battle field have cast a deep gloom over his numerous friends in this city.

Associated with him from childhood, I feel it a privilege to bear testimony to his worth and to the esteem in which he was held by his comrades.

As a boy he was noted for his studious habits and eagerness for knowledge. As he grew to manhood his frank and generous nature, his conscious regard for the right and his genial disposition made him a great favorite with his companions.

In 1851 ten young men who had been schoolmates and intimate friends matured a plan for forming a society for mutual mental improvement. Into this scheme Jerome entered with all the zeal and earnestness so characteristic of him and we soon found our society increasing in numbers, in interest and usefulness.

Through the liberality of citizens pleased with the stand we had taken, a fund was raised for the purpose of providing us with a Library.

We knew Jerome to be a great student with a thorough knowledge of books and authors and to him mainly was entrusted the duty of selecting our Library and to it, with characteristic liberality, he made many additions of choice volumes from his own shelves. That Library composed as it is mainly of the more solid works of English literature, has always been a source of just pride to us and an enduring monument to Jerome's energy and literary taste.

In a society of young men of various temperaments and representing every shade of opinion and feeling, it could not be otherwise than that we should have warm and earnest debates upon the various topics which came before us.

Jerome, with a mind well stored by his extensive reading, took an active part in our debates. Always calm yet decided, always sincere, always earnest, always charitable to the faults and failings of others and ready to put the best possible construction upon their motives and actions, he exercised an influence over his associates which will not soon be forgotten.

That a man of his refined taste and quiet habits, appreciating so keenly the joys of home, so devoted to his wife and child, should have volunteered for the military service can be accounted for only on the ground that he had come to believe it to be his duty. He never jumped at conclusions. The conviction upon which he acted was reached by the slow process of thought and inquiry.

Once convince [??] him that duty pointed him in a certain direction and no ordinary influence could cause him to swerve from that path.

His sole aim in entering the army was to render to his country that service which he felt was due from him in this her hour of trial, and although well qualified to command, he had no aspirations to rise from his humble position in the ranks, contented to render any service that might assist in vindicating his country's honor.

That he would be spared to return to his family and to that quiet life which he enjoyed so much has been not only the sincere prayer but the assured belief of his numerous friends. But it has been ordered otherwise and we must submit.

He now fills a hero's grave. No praise which we can bestow can reach him. But the influence of his well spent life, his incorruptible integrity and noble sacrifice to the call of duty will long be felt by those who were so fortunate as to enjoy his companionship.

I cannot better close this brief and altogether unsatisfactory tribute to his memory than by adding the lines which he was want to quote.

“How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there.”

C.F.S.

Charlestown June 1864

NOTE 1: Foster Peirce was Jerome Peirce's older brother.

NOTE 2: Charles F. Smith kept in contact with Albinia Peirce for many years as evidenced by letters from him to Albinia in the early 1900s. On the letterhead of a letter from him dated May 25, 1905, which was written on stationery of the Commonwealth Trust Company in Boston, Massachusetts, he is listed as the treasurer of that company.

NOTE 3: The funeral at which this letter was read, per the notation on the envelope, was conducted by Rev. Levi Ballou on June 19, 1864, in the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome Peirce had been the “Sabbath School Superintendent.”

NOTE 4: The poem in the letter is a verbatim quote of the poem titled “How Sleep the Brave,” written by William Collins (1721-1759).

Letter to: Rev. Ballou, North Orange [Massachusetts]
From: George E. Ellis
Location: Charlestown [Massachusetts]
Date: June 15, 1864
Envelope: Addressed to: Rev. Mr. Ballou
North Orange [Massachusetts]

Postmark: None. This letter was apparently hand-delivered.
Notation on front of envelope: “Read at the funeral”

My Dear Sir,

I comply, with a sad sympathy, with the request made to me to furnish a few words of commemorative regard and respect to the tribute which is to be paid to our late cherished friend Jerome Peirce. I was unwilling to receive the first reports which came to me that his young and hopeful life had entered into costly sacrifice of the brave and the good, the patriotic and the useful which thousands of our happiest homes in city and country are now offering to what their death makes all the more precious and sacred a cause to us. It seems that information from a trustworthy source has removed all ground for hope that he may still be among the living. Let us yield him up as he yielded himself. Let us commemorate him in a way consistent with the modes and simplicity of the childlike sincerity of his character. The resources of our language, as well as our hearts, are now daily drawn upon to furnish fitting tributes of honor and love that shall have a special fitness to each case of sorrow, whether inflicted by the loss of one conspicuous in official rank or in soldierly or private virtues, or whether hidden in the humility of modest worth from the knowledge of the world to be the tenderly cherished by a narrow and endeared private circle.

Jerome Peirce will receive from those who knew him well, as hearty and tender a tribute as will be given in any form of homage from circles of men and women however elevated or wide their range, to any hero of our war. I am informed that your male population in the town where he lived for a short time after leaving this city, is now mourning nearly all of the little band of young men who went from their quiet homes to the dreadful battle field. I have given a thought to them, and to their mourning friends, while I write these lines with particular reference to only one among them whom I knew; and in all of them I feel an indirect interest as his companions – first in life and now in death.

It is eight years this month since Mr. Peirce became a member of the Church here of which I am the Pastor. I had many good opportunities for knowing the qualities of his character and the tenor of his life. His circumstances required of him industry and frugality. He joined with those virtues a most [??] and contented spirit, drawing delight from pure and very simple pleasures, refining his tastes, and informing his mind. He was a consistent Christian in the Sunday School and Church, in his home, and in the streets; and he must have been eminently such in his occupations, for he pursued them only to help him to the best ends of life.

He was actively interested here in all our religious and humane enterprises, ever ready to do his part in real work and always doing it beautifully by personal influence. I do not know that I ever met with

a human pair more congenially mated for the household joys and cares and responsibilities of life than were he and the lonely stricken partner of his short tenure of existence as a husband and a father.

It was very difficult for me to conceive of him as a soldier; I said so to him very frankly when he came to see me on his visit here from his camp. His gentle spirit and peaceful ways as well as the mildness of his looks and tones seemed utterly out of harmony with the actual work of a military service; and especially so with the [??] and duties which require the infliction of vindictive or mortal blows upon fellow men. It was my own secret hope that the fortuitous arrangements of camp life and the incidents of his campaign might happily fit him in to a place and assign to him tasks in which he might have the consciousness of doing the full work of a patriot in arms with as little as possible of a ruthless activity. But I was weaker in this with than he was in the [??] and fibre of his own of his own full consecration of himself to all that his military profession should exact. A soldier must be a soldier in the completeness of its stern conditions. He was such a one.

Mr. Peirce's friends know very well that he regarded the rational purpose of this War as defensive against our utter ruin and disgrace and offensive only against a traitorous and malignant crime. In that full and firm belief he gave himself to the ranks, and his convictions deepened as he followed their lead. So good a man commends to us the goodness of his cause. I therefore looked upon him as one of many loved and honored young men known to me who would do a double service in this dread strive. First their conscious principles would make them formidable foes of rebels; and second, their private virtues would qualify them to exert a restraining and elevating influence upon multitudes on our own side of a less noble and pure character. So while these our Christian soldiers with an indignant scorn of treachery and the prowess of a noble patriotism confronted the rebels in the field, they would also help to purify their own camp and to infuse a right spirit into their coarser associates. Mr. Peirce has proved his fidelity in both ways. All our country towns – even the most quiet and retired of men are hence forward to have Memorial Monuments standing amid grass and foliage to the honored young victims of our nation's cause. Jerome Peirce will not be forgotten or placed low on the list, when its sad record is complete.

Respectfully Yours,
George E. Ellis

NOTE 1: The funeral at which this letter was read, per the notation on the envelope, was conducted by Rev. Levi Ballou on June 19, 1864, in the church in Orange, Massachusetts, where Jerome Peirce had been the "Sabbath School Superintendent."

NOTE 2: As indicated in the letter, George E. Ellis was the pastor in the church in Charlestown, Massachusetts, that the Peirce family belonged to prior to moving to Orange, Massachusetts. An Internet search provided the following details about him. George Edward Ellis was born in 1814 in Boston, Massachusetts, and he died in 1894, also in Boston. He graduated from Harvard College in 1833 and from the Harvard Divinity School in 1836, and he was ordained in 1840 as the pastor of the Harvard Unitarian Church in Charlestown, Massachusetts. From 1857 until 1863, he was professor of systematic theology in the Harvard Divinity School. In addition to being the pastor at the church, he also wrote and lectured extensively. George Ellis resigned from the pastorate of the Harvard Unitarian Church in 1869. He was president of the Massachusetts Historical Society and also a member of the Board of Overseers of Harvard University in 1850-1854. Harvard awarded him the degree of D.D. in 1857 and that of L.L.D. in 1883. He is buried in the Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

NOTE 3: This letter provides some indication as to how long Jerome Peirce family lived in Orange, Massachusetts, prior to his enlistment on August 4, 1862, in Orange, namely "a short time after leaving this city [Charlestown, Massachusetts]."

Letter to: Mrs. Jerome Peirce

From: Philip G. Woodward, First [Lt.], Commanding Co. H. 36th M. [Massachusetts] V. [Volunteers]

Location: Near Petersburg [Virginia]

Date: July 4, 1864

Envelope: Addressed to: Mrs. Jerome Peirce

Athol Depot, Mass.

“leave Joseph Peirce”

Postmark: Old Point Comfort, Va. July 6 [1864]

Mrs. Jerome Peirce

Madam – Your note came duly to hand. Should have answered it before but it would have been useless so far as concerns a final Settlement with the U.S. Gov. as it is also useless now. You are of course anxious to know all about your Husband’s affairs and I shall [??] time in notifying you when I can do so. You know we are in the field. Our Co. [Company] Books, Blanks and all Co. Papers which would be very necessary for me to have in order to send you final statements that you may settle his account are left behind on Boats on the James River and I don’t expect to see them again during the present Campaign.

Respecting Sergeant’s death, I am afraid I can tell you but little more than J.H. has already written. I can with truth say that Sergt. was an esteemed friend of mine. That Co. H. had no other such a man – purely patriotic – philanthropic, ever lending a helping hand in sickness and working for his Comrades as well as for himself. His morals to the Lord [??] as you must know were strictly pure. No Profanity or Obscenities ever crossed his lips. [??] and while a soldier [??] he bore while at home. No one can say too much in his Praise. His loss is felt not only in his family but in his Co. and Regt. and wherever he was known.

The two last nights that he lived Jerome and I slept together. On the morning of the 12th of May [we] went forth to meet the Enemy. Jerome knew our Danger yet faced it like a brave soldier and was first of our company to fall. I did not see him fall as we were falling back under a cover of a Fence, the enemy coming down on us and occupying the ground on which he fell. Consequently his body was in the Enemy’s hands for about 15 minutes. When we charged forward and not only took the ground we lost but a great deal more. Jerome’s body lay in a very exposed position it was impossible to move it. But I went to him and took his Memorandum Book for I felt as though I ought to make an effort to secure some memento. The Book I gave to J.H. His body had to remain until after dark when we buried it the best that circumstances would permit. He was killed at about 7 o.c. [o’clock] AM. His other effects I turned over to J.H. I also found the Bullet that killed him. I took it from his left Breast – no one [??] after he was hit, he must have died instantly. His grave is in a Pine Grove - well marked.

I sympathize with you in your affliction and shall be happy to serve you when opportunity arises.

If it [??] would very much like a photograph of Jerome.

I wish to be remembered to Joseph Pierce and family. Should be happy to hear from them.

I am yours in sympathy

Philip G. Woodward

First [Lt.] Commanding Co. H 36th M. [Massachusetts] V. [Volunteers]

P.S. Me and my Rifle Platoons on Picket which accounts for this Paper being so much soiled and so small.

Woodward

A note written upside down at the top of the first page reads as follows: “Jerome was paid up [??] I don’t know how his clothing account is as the Books are not available.”

NOTE 1: Old Point Comfort is a [point](#) of land located in Hampton, Virginia, and lies at the extreme tip of the Virginia Peninsula at the mouth of Hampton Roads.

NOTE 2: The following is taken from the roster section of the Unit History of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers: Philip G. Woodward. 25. From Orange, Massachusetts. Enlisted as a Sergeant, in Co. H on Aug. 6, 1862; Promoted to Second Lieutenant on Oct. 26, 1863; Not mustered; Promoted to First Lieutenant on May 15, 1864; Wounded in action at Cold Harbor, Va., on June 3, 1864; Promoted to Captain on Oct. 11, 1864; Mustered out with the Regiment on June 8, 1865. (Jerome Peirce enlisted as a Corporal in Orange, Massachusetts, on Aug. 4, 1862.)

NOTE 3: The "J.H." referred to in the above letter might have been James E. Hills also from Orange, Massachusetts, who enlisted in Co. H, 36th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers, on August 7, 1862. He was discharged on June 8, 1865.

NOTE 4: On July 3, 1864, one day prior to the date of the above letter by Lt. Woodward, Capt. J. B. Smith, commanding officer of the 36th Massachusetts Regiment, wrote the below "official" report regarding Sgt. Peirce's death. A copy of this document is found in Sgt. Jerome Peirce's Pension File, and it was used by Albinia as part of her application for her widow's pension. Capt. Smith was Lt. Woodward's immediate superior in the chain of command.

To all whom it may concern.

This is to certify that Jerome Peirce, a Ser-
geant of Company H, Thirty Sixth Regiment of
Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, was killed on
the twelfth day of May A.D. 1864 at Spottsylvania
Court House Virginia, during an engagement with
the enemy, and that he was in the performance of
his duty at the time.

Given under my hand
at Head-quarters 36th Mass Vols. near Petersburg Vir-
ginia, this third day of July 1864.

By the Commanding Officer

Wm. H. Hodgkins
Adj't

J. B. Smith
Captain, Comd'g Reg't

NOTE: Only one paragraph of the following letter has been transcribed. The portions of the letter that have not been transcribed pertain to family members of Charles F. Smith and/or to mutual friends of the Smiths and Albinia Peirce.

Letter to: Mrs. Jerome Peirce

From: Charles F. Smith

Location: Boston, Massachusetts.

Date: Dec. 29, 1904

Envelope: Addressed to: Mrs. Albenia [instead of Albinia] J. Peirce
Billerica, Mass.

Postmark: Boston, Mass., Dec. 29, 1904, 5:30 PM

Letter was forwarded on Dec. 30, 1904, 11:00 AM, from Billerica, Mass., to 54 Albion St.,
Somerville, Mass.

Return address information: "Return to P.O. Box 361, Boston P.O. if not delivered in 5 days"

Dear Mrs. Peirce

Your letter called up some sad as well as pleasant memories of the old days. I was sorry to learn that some of the old friends left your letters unanswered as though they had forgotten you or had grown out of the old memories. I shall never forget what a snug and happy home you and Jerome had in the place leading from Elm Street in Charlestown (the name I have forgotten). It must be nearly 50 years ago. How time flies! How proud and contented Jerome was. He was a rare man and it seems a strange Providence that he should lay down his life as he did. Well, we little know what is before us. You certainly deserve great credit and the approval and sympathy of your friends in the fight you have made to sustain yourself and daughter.

I wish you a happy New Year and hope to see you at the house before long.

Yours Truly
Chas. F. Smith

NOTE: Charles F. Smith was a long-time family friend who knew Jerome Peirce before Jerome enlisted on August 4, 1862, and several of his letters were saved by Albinia. Smith also sent a letter pertaining to the time Jerome and he were friends as youngsters that was read at the funeral service in Orange, Massachusetts, on June 19, 1864. (See the transcription of that letter dated June 1864.)

Letter to: Mrs. Jerome Peirce

From: Charles F. Smith

Location: Brookline, Massachusetts

Date: Feb. 6, 1908

Envelope: No envelope available

Dear Mrs. Peirce

We were delighted to hear from you and Lucy and Mrs. Foster Peirce.

For the first time within my remembrance I have been laid up sick and am still a semi invalid and am reminded that I am an old man which I never realized before. How the years have flown and what changes have come about!

There are very few of our friends living who were active in Charlestown fifty years ago. I often think of Jerome who was by nature one of God's Noblemen, how proud he was of his home on Payson Place surrounded by his books and his friends.

You have had a hard Experience and have borne yourself nobly, and I have sometimes thought and have told Albert so, that we did not realize it and sympathize with you as we ought.

Albert is badly handicapped by his lameness and suffers a good deal of pain.

You have been blessed with Lucy and I hope she will long be able to comfort her mother who did so much for her and I know she will.

I get out every day when pleasant and am getting my strength and nervous energy back slowly but I had a pretty severe shaking up.

My wife is pretty well and she sends her love to you and Lucy and says she will be glad to see you both at any time.

Yours Truly,
Chas. F. Smith

NOTE: Charles F. Smith was a long-time family friend who knew Jerome Peirce before Jerome enlisted on August 4, 1862, and several of his letters were saved by Albinia. Smith also sent a letter pertaining to the time Jerome and he were friends as youngsters that was read at the funeral service in Orange, Massachusetts, on June 19, 1864. (See the transcription of that letter dated June 1864.)

NOTES