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Lieutenant Ernest Perceval Papers

Collection Summary

Title:	Lieutenant Ernest Perceval Papers
Call Number:	MS 90-10
Size:	0.25 linear feet
Acquisition:	Purchased from Christie, Manson & Woods, Ltd, London, 1986
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Notes:	None

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Content Note

The Lieutenant Ernest Perceval Papers contain 46 autographed letters from Perceval, 88th Regiment of Foot, to members of his family from Balaklava Bay in the Crimea between 1855 and 1856. His letters describe the English campaigns in the Crimea culminating in descriptions of fraternization with Russian troops at the time of the 1856 armistice and of considerable ill-feeling between British and French troops. Included in the collection is a long illustrated poem from Perceval to his cousin, and his illustrations of scenes of fighting in the Crimea.

Series Listing

Series 1	Box 1 FF 1-16	Letters by Ernest Perceval
Series 2	Box 1 FF 17	Letter Related to Perceval
Series 3	Box 1 FF 18	Materials By or Related to Perceval

Box and Folder Listing

Series 1 – Letters by Ernest Perceval

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|-------|------|---|
| Box 1 | FF 1 | <p>(1) February 1855 - This letter is addressed to Lady Heathcote. It is an unfinished letter, not signed, that describes the arrival of the soldiers at Portsmouth. Much confusion, but warm clothing and boots were distributed. Writes about a slight scrimmage with some prisoners taken. (2) February 11, 1855 - In Balaklava Bay. Ernest Perceval gives an account of what he saw at Malta till he arrived here. Entered Malta by moonlight. Describes the striking of the church clock and hearing music wafting over the water. Soon after they anchored, barges came alongside and were busy giving them coal all night. Describes what he saw on a tour of the harbor and surrounding area. Made sketches. Continues to February 15 - Left Balaklava for the Bay Kosalchuiu (?). Can just see Sevastopol (Sebastopol). (3) February 22, 1855 - Camp near Balaklava. Disembarked last Sunday waiting to join our regiments. The Turks defeated the Russians at Eupatoria. Expected on Balaklava. Describes the situation and scenes around including the many nationalities. Describes another attack by Russians which was repulsed.</p> |
| Box 1 | FF 2 | <p>(1) No date - Easter Monday (April 8, 1855). This letter reports an attack this morning at about 8:00. Casualties were small. The Russians returned fire with their usual. Continues to Easter Tuesday - Fire will continue. New batteries at Inkerman. Describes a ride on the plains where the cavalry charge was made. Continued to Wednesday - Reports casualties. Describes battles. Thinks Raglan has not made up his mind. (Two copies of this letter in file.) (2) April 14, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Mr. Perceval writes his cousin Anna. He begins on Monday describing his activities. Heavy wind and rain as they began their assault. Tuesday - The Russians fired more. The fleet drew up and attracted their attention which helped us. Describes and gives number of casualties. Had his pocketbook stolen. Had ten pounds and two letters. One has the introduction to Lord Roheby (?) and a seal. Continues to Monday night, April 16 - a magazine blew up today, one man killed and 12 wounded. Writes about wild flowers and vegetables. Wild geese and quail are all about. The telegraph is now laid all along the Black Sea and nearly completed to Vienna. The railroad is also completed within a mile and a half of our camp. (3) April 22, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Mr. Perceval writes Milware (?) that they have ceased firing and have gone back to the old thing, having lost officers. Describes the flowers, birds and lizards.</p> |

- Box 1 FF 3 (1) May 21, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Mr. Perceval writes his Papa the Major Norton (?) died this morning of cholera. He is not surprised because of the heat and smell caused by the drainage. The quarter master is at fault. Have had several cases. Describes the war situation and casualties. Continues to June 3, 1855 - Just learned that the Russians attacked Ketsch (?) in great force. There is a report that we have been beaten at Anapa (?) and have taken Arabat(?). (2 copies of letter in file.)
- Box 1 FF 4 (1) June 7, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Mr. Perceval writes his cousin that they attacked Sevastopol, the intention was for their men to take the quarries and advanced works and for the French to take the Mamelon and in the morning to take Redan. Describes the fighting of French with the Russian. (2) June 8, 1855 - The French are happy to say they still hold Mamelon. Names four officers who were killed: Major Bayley, Captain Corbet, Captain Wray and Lt. Webb, and Lt. Keusey (?) wounded. Captain Maynard wounded. June 8, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Mr. Perceval writes his mama that the French had taken Mamelon. Describes the battles just fought and the men who were killed. (3) June 15, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Letter to his papa, describing the situation with a drawing showing how they advanced. Deserters come in daily saying they have given up hopes of keeping the place. They send 5000 men to the Redan every night, but we are gradually gaining the Redan. June 18 - More about personal activities. (4) June 22, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Letter to Papa. Reports Bradley money received. Feels they will have to spend the winter here as the attack failed because the Russians made an unexpected attack. (5) June 29, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Dear Mama, got your letter this morning. Lord Raglan (?) died last night from dysentery. Leui Simpson is now chief in command, but not movements. Will make another attack upon the Malakoff. General Brown is away for his health and General Codnington (?) is away aboard ship for his health. Lord Bohaly (?) is suffering dysentery. Describes battle.

(1) July 6, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Dear Mama, thanks for letters. Mentions food served. Dear Papa on back page. Tells his papa that they are going to move up within 100 yards of the Redan. Will send an account of the attack. Lord Raglan's body was taken aboard ship Tuesday. Continues to July 9 - (on back of letter) mentions casualties, describes a new gun batter. We open fire tomorrow to punish the Russians for the number of casualties. Found the new gun batter was of no use. Mentions a spy who gave information to the Russians. Pellissier is liked by the working portion of his officers, but not of the idle ones. He is abusive and swears. Heavy rains have torn up part of the railway. General Simpson is Leui, commanding in chief out here at present. (2) July 20, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Dear Father, thanks for your letter. Mentions some of their ships have been taking guns to Quapa (?) for the French. Kirkor is the name of a town inhabited by the Karaite Jews when they lived 110 years ago. The place selected by their ancestors from its resemblances to Jerusalem bears the date A. D. 640. Writes about a man who has invented a boat he can guide under water. (3) July 23, 1855 - The Russians made a sortie upon the French last night but have not heard the results. A week ago they made a sortie but the French returned and took many prisoners and guns. A rifle was taken and I bought it from a Frenchman. Mentions the man who made the boat which can be propelled under water. Related the narrow escapes he had.

Box 1 FF 6

(1) August 4, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Dear Mama, thanks for your letters. Went to the Dickerman (?) Theatre where the Zouane (?) act. Mentions food which he has. (2) August 12, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Dear Jane. Thanks for your letter. The French talk about taking the Malakoff in about a fortnight. A sortie by the Russians some nights ago. Asks for useful books to read, also some drawing paper. A boat full of Russians deserted to out fleet, having thrown their officers overboard. (3) August 16, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Dear Cousin, the Russians in number of 60,000 made an attack upon the bridge over the Tchernida (?). Our usual force is about 30,000. Reinforcements were sent down by the French. The battle still rages. Describes the battle and casualties. (4) August 16, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Dear Father, the Russians tried to force the passage of the Tcherndia (?). We are to be ready at a moments notice. Describes the action. (5) August 31, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. A magazine of the French blew up Wednesday night and killed 25 men, wounding 130. A sortie occurred last night, driving the Russians back. We lost one officer and some men. (6) August 31, 1855 - Dear Cousin, there was a sortie last night in which an officer of 97th was killed, and another wounded. The Russians succeeded in destroying part of our 6th parallel, which is being advanced from the old line of Russian works. Writes that the newspaper reporters told the Russians about the trapper (?). Captain Keppel of the naval brigade was in a great range when he found it in the papers. Mentions relationship between the French and them.

Box 1 FF 7

(1) September 7, 1855 - Camp before Sevastopol. Dear Uncle, tomorrow the French attack Malakoff with 40,000 men, and a reserve of 20,000. The 2nd Brigade of the 2nd division attack the Redan. Discusses the plans and results, lists casualties. (2) September 11, 1855 - Sevastopol. Dear Mother, reports he is safe. Lockhart was killed. (3) September 13, 1855 - Sevastopol. Dear Cousin, you are anxious to know about the 8th. Relates the plan and results of the attack by the French. (4) September 14, 1855 - Sevastopol. Dear Father, sends a rough plan about the coming battle. Describes the taking of the Russians by surprise. There are no ships or steamers left in the harbor.

- Box 1 FF 8 (1) October 5, 1855 - Sevastopol. Dear Cousin, reports the French have won and you may expect to hear we have sent away 3,000 men. Believe they have gone to Kinburn at the mouth of the Snewster (?), a low spit of land. We are to occupy that but don't know when. (2) October 8, 1855 - Camp Sevastopol. Dear Mama, our division is not likely to move. Gives report on what will be expected soon. Relates a mix up on signals. (3) October 15, 1855 - Sevastopol. Dear Cousin, thanks for paper, stamps. Reports he was among the number at the Redan. We have just had news from Berlin to say that we are to be attacked again at Inkerman. Gives more detailed information about the signal mistake. (4) October 19, 1855 - Sevastopol. Dear Father, writes about a man from London selling things. Bought some things and gave him a check. Asks him to pay for it. Gives little information about the Russians. (5) October 31, 1855 - Dear Mama, thanks for last letter. Mail has been irregular. Plans to sketch in Baidar Valley. (6) October 31, 1855 - This letter concerns indignation over the insinuation that he was a coward. Gives descriptions of his part in dangerous situations. He has been busy making panoramas of the country. Includes envelope addressed to Jane Perceval.
- Box 1 FF 9 (1) November 9, 1855 - Sevastopol. Dear Aunt, thanks for the letters. Reports that the Russians intend to keep the North side. Explains the situation that the Russians now occupy and what the French will do. There have been several skirmishes. (2) November 16, 1855 - Dear Anna, tells about the fearful explosion. Gives details and action of those around, and the situation for coming attack.
- Box 1 FF 10 (1) December 12, 1855 - Dear Cousin, the telegraph told you of the success at Kars inspired by Pasha. Fine weather has helped, also helped the Russians. Mentions some entertainments for the men. (2) December 15, 1855 - Dear Father, this letter contains personal and family concerns.
- Box 1 FF 11 (1) January 13, 1856 - Dear Mama, asks for some things which he left in boxes. (2) January 28, 1856 - Dear Cousin, reports that peace is now being talked about. Mentions a row between the officers of our cavalry and some French officers.
- Box 1 FF 12 (1) February 9, 1856 - Dear Anna, writes about peace and that he does not want it because he thinks they have lost their prestige. France is satisfied, we are not. Russia would interrupt any preparations for the next campaign and also create a difference between us and the French. Discusses the situation and prospect for peace. (2) February 17, 1856- Dear Mama, we were to have a review of the whole army this morning but snow prevented it. The Russians were to attack.

- Box 1 FF 13 (1) March 20, 1856 - Dear Anna, reports that since the 3rd of March there has been a cessation of hostilities, but they would not agree to our terms. (2) March 29, 1856 - Dear Anna, reports the French are very badly off. Have lost many men. Describes some regimental races, had fun. Writes about the first Spring meeting of some 70,000 men of different nations. (3) March 30, 1856 - Dear Mama, writes about food sent and sharing with others. Mentions the meeting of the 70,000 men again. Also that armistice was signed a few days later.
- Box 1 FF 14 (1) April 20 (?), 1856 - Dear Mama, reports that the Russians will come into our camp and we will go into theirs, but no word when we go home. (2) April 20 (?), 1856 - Dear Anna, describes a meeting of some of our men who were hunting near a French Battery when they were attacked by the French. A fight resulted in men being wounded and killed.
- Box 1 FF 15 (1) May 26, 1856 - Dear "Bella," reports the present situation very quiet. No news yet as to when they will leave. (Two copies of letter in file.)
- Box 1 FF 16 Not dated. (1) Wednesday, - Dear Anna, most of this letter is family or personal. Unable to read much. The letter is divided. The first directed to Anna. The second part is to his father. (2) This letter consists of two and a half pages with no beginning and no ending. The first page concerns a Monsieur Francaise, his dogs, comforts, guns, and servants, etc. (3) This letter is about taking an immense quantity of guns and food. There is no doubt that we took the Russians by surprise. (4) No date - Dear Anna, this is an 18 page letter describing very poetically the scenes around him. Also sketches of the water, sailing ships, birds and other scenes. (5) No date - A very detailed account of the attack of the Redan. Very difficult to read. (6) No date - Dear Mama, reports a sortie on the French last night and some personal comments. (7) No date - Dear Anna, mentions having read about charcoal and its economical application, he had conversation with Dr. Southerland (?) about its utility. Reports and expedition consisting of French, English and Turks under General Brown (?). Landing at Kertch (?) obtaining grain and guns. Many wounded Russians. (8) No date - This last letter seems to repeat the above letter. It is also overwritten by Perceval.

Series 2 – Letter Relating to Perceval

- Box 1 FF 17 (1) Trinity Sunday (May 18) 1856 - Letter from Col. Moorsom to his son at Radley. My dear boy, writes that he has written your mother about his different excursions. Reports that he met two of our officers, Stephenson and Scarlett. Tells about being greeted by Perceval (of Radley?).

Series 3 – Materials By or Related to Perceval

Box 1 FF 18 (1) No date - Two copies of the announcement of the publication by M. & N. Hanhart of the panorama of the town and north side of Sevastopol (Sebastopol) from a sketch by Perceval. One copy lists the subscribers. (2) No date - A list of the dates of Perceval's letters from Sevastopol. (3) 1855 - Sketch of the French line, opposite Inkerman. (4) 1855 - Sketch map showing trenches, rifle pits and position of English troops near Redan, 1855.

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