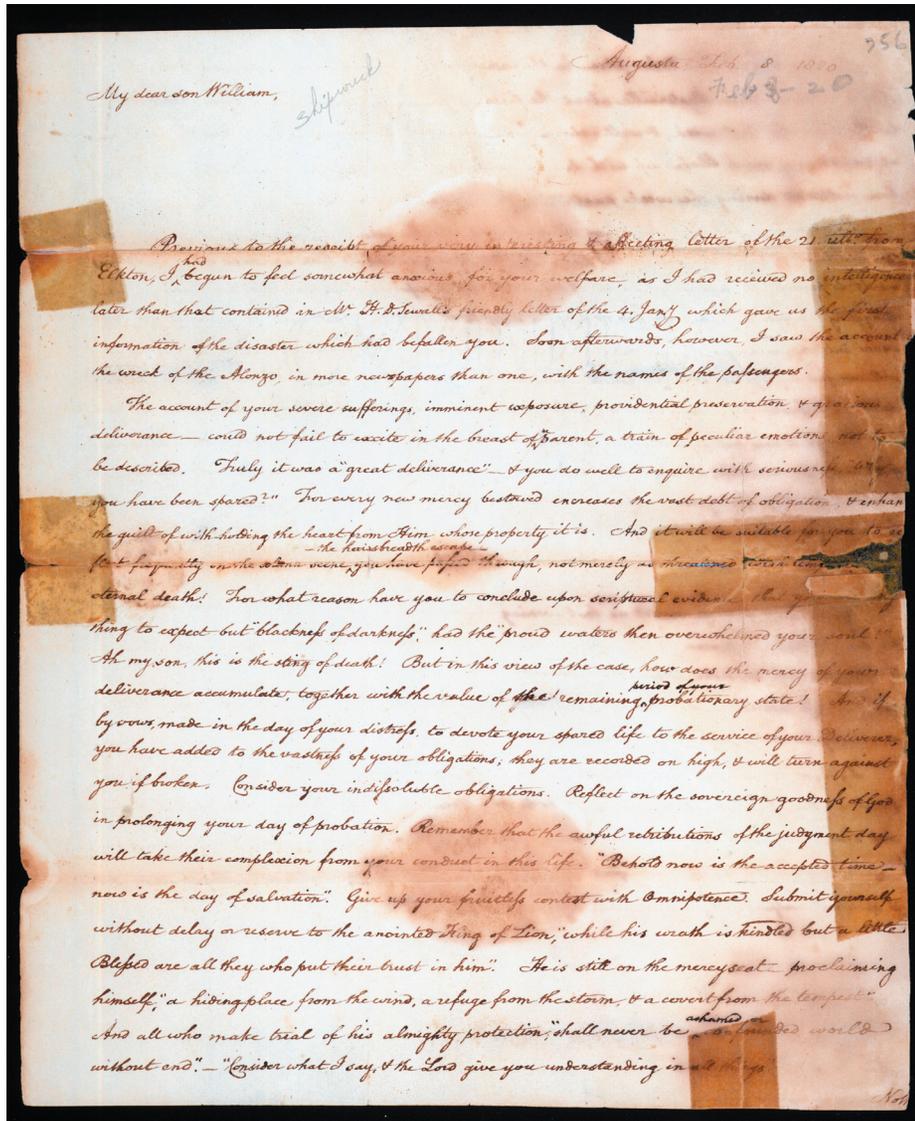


Augusta Feb. 8 1820

My dear son William



Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Maine Historical Society  
 (Coll. 2142, Box 1/3)  
 Date: Feb. 8, 1820  
 Description: Henry Sewall of Hallowell wrote to his son, William, about the Alonzo shipwreck.

Previous to the receipt of your very interesting & affecting letter of the 21 ult<sup>o</sup> from Elkton, I <sup>had</sup> begun to feel somewhat anxious for your welfare, as I had received no intelligence later than that contained in Mr. H. D. Sewall's friendly letter of the 4. Jan<sup>y</sup> which gave us the first information of the disaster which had befallen you. Soon afterwards, however, I saw the account [page torn] the wreck of the Alonzo, in more newspapers than one, with the names of the passengers.

The account of your sufferings, imminent exposure, providential preservation & gracious deliverance — could not fail to excite in the breast of <sup>a</sup> parent, a train of peculiar emotions not to be described. Truly it was a "great deliverance" — & you do well to inquire with seriousness "why you have been spared?" For every new mercy bestowed increases the vast debt of obligation. Perhaps the guilt of with-holding the heart from Him whose property it is. And it will be suitable for you to re-

— the hairbreadth escape —  
 flect frequently on the solemn scene <sup>^</sup> you have passed through, not merely as threatened with [page torn] eternal death! For what reason have you to conclude upon scriptural evidence that you had any-thing to expect but "blackness of darkness" had the "proud waters then overwhelmed your soul!" Ah my son this is the sting of death! But in this view of the case, how does the mercy of your period of your

deliverance accumulate, together with the value of the remaining <sup>period of your</sup> probationary state! And if by vows, made in the day of your distress to devote your spared life to the service of your Deliverer, you have added to the vastness of your obligations; they are recorded on high, & will turn against you if broken. Consider your indissoluble obligations. Reflect on the sovereign goodness of God in prolonging your day of probation. Remember that the awful retributions of the judgment day will take their complexion from your conduct in this life. "Behold now is the accepted time — now is the day of salvation." Give up your fruitless contest with Omnipotence. Submit yourself without delay or reserve to the anointed King of Zion," while his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they who put their trust in him." He is still on the mercyseat — proclaiming himself, "a hiding place from the wind, a refuge from the storm, & a covert from the tempest." ashamed or

And all who make trial of his almighty protection, "shall never be <sup>^</sup> confounded world without end."-- "Consider what I say, & the Lord give you understanding in all things."

Nothing special has taken place in the family or neighbourhood, since you left us. Mary returned from Chesterville about the first of January. Susan came from Kennebunk to Portland the last week, & will return home probably the next week. But the roads are at present very much blocked up with driving snows, so that the regular course of the mail has been obstructed during the week past. — Cousin William B. lost his wife in December last.

We received, a few days since from Bath the bag of coffee which you sent by Capt. West. Altho' this article was acceptable to us, yet I have regretted that you should have increased your embarrassments to procure it, especially in view of the extraordinary expenses which you must have incurred in struggling through the impediments <sup>providentially</sup> cast on your way to Washington. And here, the saving of your baggage comes into the catalogue of your mercies. For I had anticipated the worst concerning it. — I hope you will soon find employment to enable you to remunerate those friends, to whose benevolence you may be indebted for assistance — especially as my ability is not now commensurate with my disposition, to help you.

Though it does not explicitly appear from your letter — yet I am led to conclude, from a comparison of the newspaper accounts, Mr. Sewall's letter from New York, & the general course of the wind, after failing to reach Blackrock harbour, that you must have been driven to Longisland, & not to the Connecticut shore. And that Smithtown, where you were relieved from your distress, is a village on that island, from whence you were once into New York. I was once into Blackrock harbour, which I think is in Fairfield.

Your uncle Jotham visited us last evening on his way to Bangor, to carry some supplies to his son Jotham — & prosecuted his journey this morning. Cousin Timothy Crosby with his sister Harriet, & Ebenezer with his sister Rachel, have severally visited us this winter. — All your christian friends take a deep interest in the account of <sup>your</sup> sufferings & deliverance — & they unitedly hope & pray that the scene may be made profitable to your soul.

I forgot to mention, that Mr. Liba Pettingill has lost his daughter Thankful sometime since, & that another of his daughters is supposed to be in a decline. Mr. Thering, & the wife of Mr. Doyen are also dangerously sick. Otherwise it appears to be a time of general health among us.

Love from the family, & all your acquaintances — With the most tender solicitude for your temporal & spiritual welfare, I remain your affectionate father.

H. Sewall  
Feb 3, 1820

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Love to D. S. [unreadable]