

My dear Son William,

350 Augusta, Me. Nov. 10. 1826.

750

*See just
Sacred Music*

Your letter of the 30. Sept. has been duly & gratefully received. Your being prevented from removing to a greater distance, especially to the south, I consider providential, & would hope, not an unfavorable event. The bounds of our habitation are appointed by the great Proprietor of heaven & earth, as well as the number of our months, which we cannot pass. — The subject of slavery is full of importance, whether we consider its nature or its consequences; & seems to portend incalculable evils, especially in the region where it prevails. For if a diminution of the numbers of the coloured population is not soon effected, they may, become so formidable as to endanger the tranquility of the whites. The plan of a gradual emancipation as common in every region is the only, & practicable one to produce a desirable result.

I have no doubt it will be attended with the divine blessing & eventual success. As to your course of duty, it must be left to your serious & conscientious determination, in view of all circumstances, & I hope you will be divinely directed in this, as well as all other measures of questionable expediency.

On the subject of Sacred Music, which you mention as having some hand in promoting by instruction, I do not fully understand what you intend by the 'new method'. Whether it is merely the adoption of the Italian syllables in the room of the English, & adapting to every change of key; or, whether it is using those syllables in correspondence with the seven musical letters without changing them with the variation of the key by flats & sharps; that is to say, C is always do, D is always re, E is always mi, F is always fa, & so of the rest, let the key be what it may. This latter method was practised by Mr. Holland who taught music here in 1823. This method, however, I believe is not generally received or practised in this country, & it is liable to several objections, the principal of which is, that it gives no practical aid in designating or expressing the semitones. For although it teaches theoretically where they lay in every octave, viz. between the 3. & 4. and 7. & 8. ascending from the tonic, in the major key; and between the 2. & 3. and 5. & 6. in the minor key; yet as the names by which these semitones are called in the scale, are continually varying with every transposition of key, it is very difficult to make the learner understand the difference between the semitones & whole tones, & especially to express & modulate them correctly in practical singing. The other method differs from the old in which we have been taught, merely in the names of the seven notes; & it has the preference perhaps, in this respect, that it has a distinct name for every note, whereas the English have to repeat three of them to complete the seven. In the Italian scheme Si is the master note, answering exactly to our Mi, & mi, fa, & fa, do are the names of the semitones thus, {Fa sol la fa sol la Mi} The Do re mi syllables I observe in the recent edition of the Boston Collection of Church Music, are recognized, & carried through all the transpositions of keys particular subject of the

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Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Maine Historical Society

(Coll. 2142, Box 1/3)

Date: Nov. 10, 1826

Description: Letter from Henry Sewall to his son, William

With love to Eliza & the children, in which I represent all the rest of the family, I remain, with
affectionate regards, strengthened by divine grace, your faithful friend

With love to Eliza & the children, in which I represent all the rest of the family. I remain with
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*These were taken at about the age of 50. the survivor is now 74.

Parabryozoa of Grand Pa. Grand ma were taken
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 smart years before Lobelia died

P.S. I have recently understood, that Mr. Abraham Davenport of Hallowell possesses a small demand against you, for some money & 3 doz. Music Books furnished you by his son Calvin, late of Boston, deceased, in the year 1820. You can inform me in your next, whether that money has been paid, & whether you received the books.

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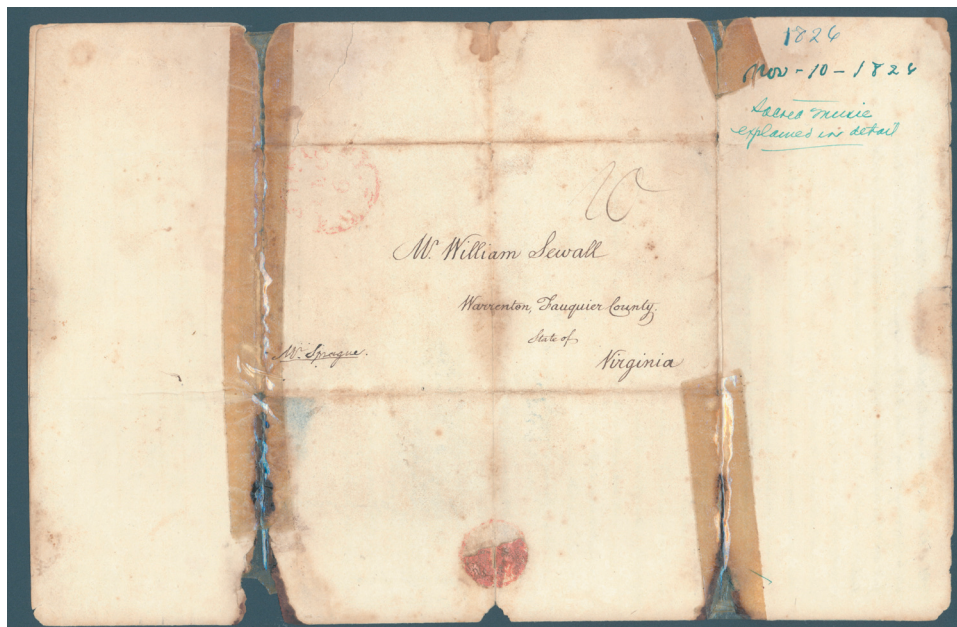
Gen Henry Sewall

November 10th 1826

Gen. Henry Sewall

November 10th 1826

about the portrait
sent by Mr. Davenport
to Congress & the
of General D.
more taken



Mr. William Sewall
Warrenton, Fauquier County.
State of
Virginia

Mr. Sprague.