

Wheeling Va. Jan'y 13. 1829

My dear Parents, according to the arraignment I stated in my last, I left Washington on the 8. We first went to Montgomery - then to Fredrick town - then to Cumberland, where we met the great national road. It stormed most of the first two days of my journey, and the roads were so bad that we seldom travelled faster than at the rate of four miles per hour. This roughness of the road, our slow pace, the cold & stormy weather joined to travelling both day and night, made the journey extremely fatiguing. Here I am waiting for a boat to carry me to Cincinnati. Perhaps I may be detained three or four days, but have a prospect of leaving to morrow. I congratulate myself on so safe a passage thus far. One rarely has the good fortune, as I am told, at this season of the year, to travel the route without some serious accident either to his baggage or person. Indeed we met with some great difficulties. In instance the driver had more than once to redirect the leaders, to make them cross streams swollen by the late floods, once we broke our carriage and frequently were obliged to leave it. There are two gentlemen waiting here for a boat, who came on one day before me, and I am informed they exhibit a fairer specimen of the effects of crossing the Alleghanies in the winter than any who belonged to our company. One of them has his face all beat up by the overturning of the carriage, and the other has a broken collar bone. I thank providence that no similar misfortune has fallen to my lot, but thro its goodness, that I am in all aspects well and safe, and prepared to prosecute my journey at any moment when the boat shall arrive.

In my journey from Washington to this place I traveled almost the whole length of Maryland, a few miles in Pennsylvania, and a short distance in Virginia. The season of the year was - ve is very

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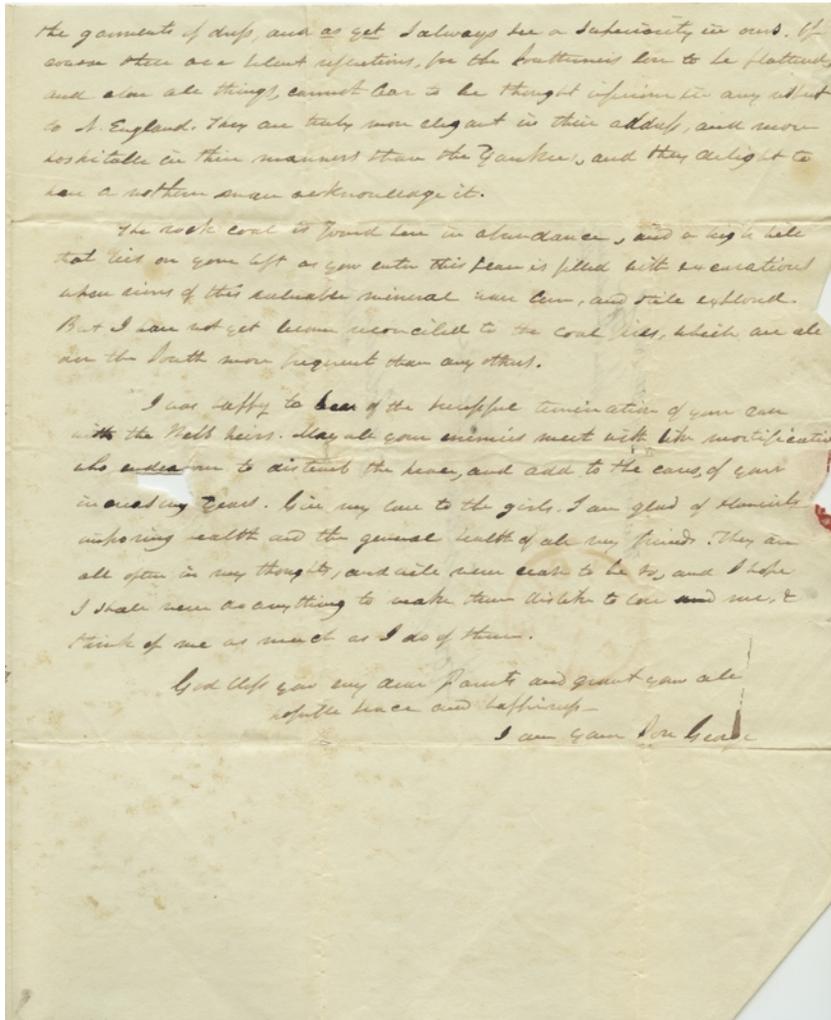
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Date: Jan. 13, 1829
Description: G.W. Pierce letter from Wheeling, Virginia

unfavourable for making accurate observations upon the face of the country, beside the motion of a Stage coach on a rough road is not very well calculated to produce that equanimity of temper necessary to correct reflection. But under all disadvantages I thought Maryland a very poor state. The fences, which are among us in N. E. consider as [?]-tensions of the fertility of the soil and the industry of the occupants, are here universally miserable. I did not see a single stone wall on the whole rout, the stone of the best kind is frequently plenty, they seem to have thought of no other fence than the frail and clumsy kind of fence which we call Virginia fence. Here and there at wide intervals you see a flourishing plantation and beautiful country house, but both spectacles are rare. By far the greater part of the common houses in the country are built of hewn timber, tho' now and then there is one of rough stone. I must however do the country justice in respect to its woodlands and mountains. The ordinary growth is composed of chesnut, wild poplar, and oak, all growing to a great size, and standing at such distances from each other, as often to give to a primitive forest the delightful openness of an artificial park. Then the Alleghanies, which are traversed by the Cumberland Road, looked so like my own native mountains, that I longed to leave the coach and climb their topmost summits, thinking that if but seated on their noble elevations I should see our own old house, and our own beautiful farm spread out at my feet, as I have often seen it from the tops of the hills that surround you. I know not how it is, but I do not see a mountain, a glen, or a river, but my memory starts up and says, why do you wander, why are you delighted, are there not far more beautiful rivers, and glens, and mountains in New England? These feelings, I know by their frequency, are the dictates of nature, and I love to indulge them to their full extent. I love to form little comparisons between this country and my own even in the smallest implements of labour and

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the garments of dress, and as yet I always see a superiority in ours. Of course these are silent reflections, for the Southerners love to be flattered, and above all things cannot bear to be thought inferior in any respect to N. England. They are truly more elegant in their address, and more hospitable in their manners than the Yankees, and they delight to have a northern man acknowledge it.

The rock coal is found here in abundance, and a high hill that lies on your left as you enter this place is filled with excavations where veins of this valuable mineral have been, and still explored. But I have not yet become reconciled to the coal hills which are all over the South more frequent than any others.

I was happy to hear of the successful termination of your case with the Webbheirs. May all your enemies meet with like mortification who endeavour to disturb the peace, and add to the cares, of your increasing years. Give my love to the girls. I am glad of Harriots improving health and the general health of all my friends. They are all often in my thoughts, and will never cease to be so, and I hope I shall never do anything to make them dislike to love ~~and~~ me, & think of me as much as I do of them.

God bless you my dear Parents and grant you all possible peace and happiness—

I am your Son George