Fill in the Archives

(Noun, Plural)

PLEASE ENJOY THESE MAD LIBS-INSPIRED, FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS ACTIVITY SHEETS BASED ON PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS HELD AT THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY.

WE'VE SELECTED THREE HISTORIC MANUSCRIPTS AND OMITTED KEY WORDS. YOU FILL IN THE BLANKS AND THEN READ THE RESULTS!

THE NEWBERRY

Source: Letter from Willa Cather to Mary Miner Creighton [December 6, 1936]

Fill in the blanks and view the completed text on the following page.

_____ (person's name)

_____ (place name)

_____ (noun)

_____ (verb, past tense)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (event)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (person's name)

_____ (noun)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (noun)

_____ (noun)

_____ (place name)

_____ (famous woman's name)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (verb, past tense)

_____ (adjective + er)

Source: Letter from Willa Cather to Mary Miner Creighton [December 6, 1936]
Your version

My dear _____

Such a long while I have wanted to write you, but life hurries me along so fast. I have just come back from _____ where I went because of the illness of an old and dear _____ — whom I left much better when I _____ away. But my going put me ten days behind with all my _____ here.

I did not know of Margie's _____ until sometime after it occurred, but I feared it was coming and all the autumn you _____ sisters who have meant so much in my life have been in my mind every day and often at night. I write now to ask a favor of you. Dear _____ , do please write me a _____ about Irene. Is she _____? Have I in some way hurt her _____? Or is it that the pressure of life from all sides keeps her from writing to me? She never replies to my letters. It's unkind to keep an old _____ in anxiety , and I have felt anxious about her _____ for a year now. I know you will take the trouble to tell me.

The _____ paper comes occasionally, (was stopped during summer and au-tumn), and from it I learn that you had _____ with you for a few days. That must have been a pleasure, even though the cause of her homecoming was so _____ . You will all miss Lonie; such a _____ fellow, and such a _____ heart. Like Peter Pan he never quite _____ . Maybe he was the happier for that. I often feel that the world used to be a great deal _____ for everyone, young and old, than it is now.

Source: Letter from Willa Cather to Mary Miner Creighton [December 6, 1936]
Transcription of the original letter

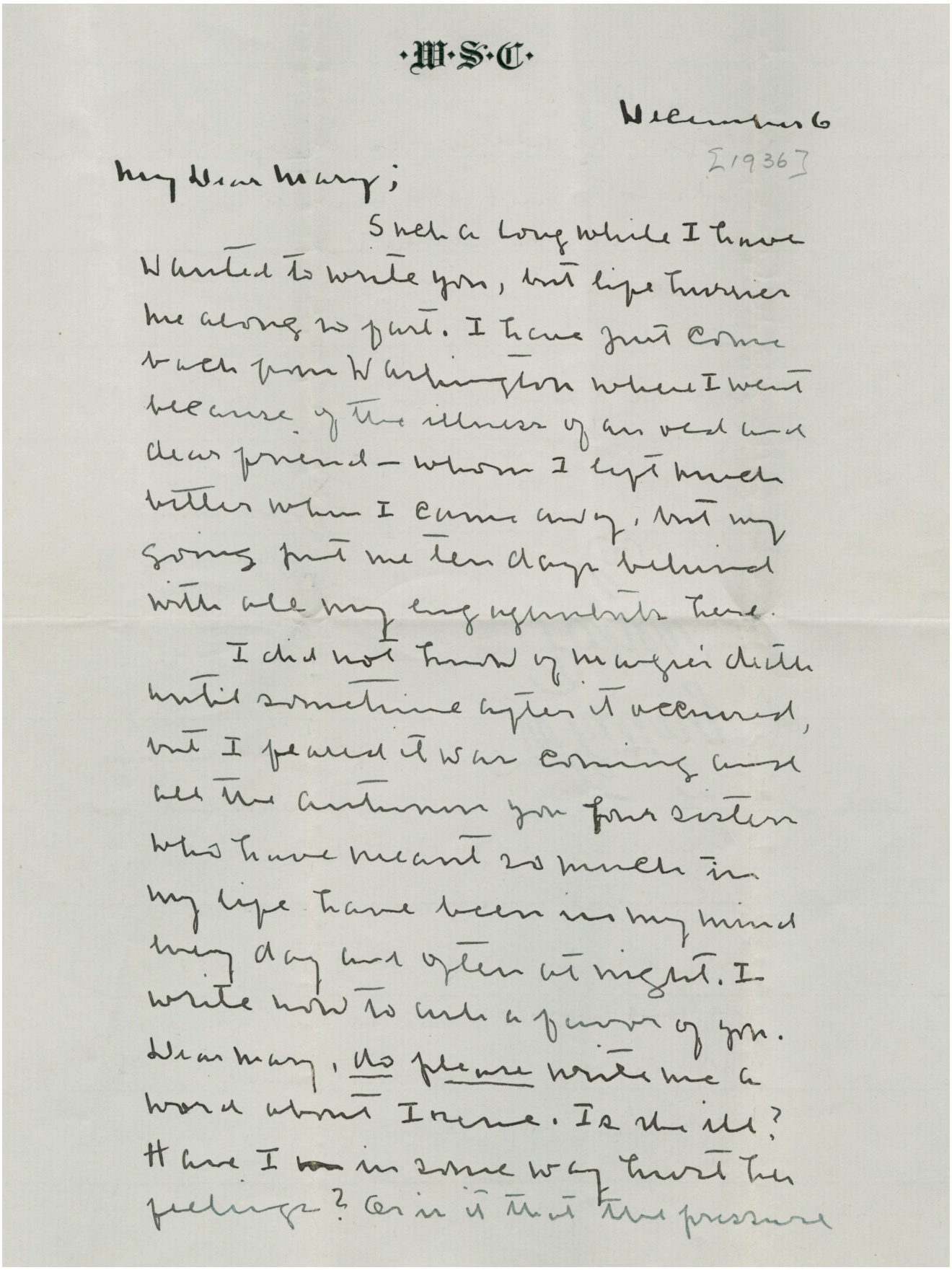
My dear Mary:

Such a long while I have wanted to write you, but life hurries me along so fast. I have just come back from Washington where I went because of the illness of an old and dear friend- whom I left much better when I came away. But my going put me ten days behind with all my engagements here.

I did not know of Margie's death until sometime after it occurred, but I feared it was coming and all the autumn you four sisters who have meant so much in my life have been in my mind every day and often at night. I write now to ask a favor of you. Dear Mary, do please write me a word about Irene. Is she ill? Have I in some way hurt her feelings? Or is it that the pressure of life form all sides keeps her from writing to me? She never replies to my letters. It's unkind to keep an old friend in anxiety, and I have felt anxious about her health for a year now. I know you will take the trouble to tell me.

The Red Cloud paper comes occasionally, (was stopped during summer and au-tumn), and from it I learn that you had Eveline Vertly with you for a few days. That must have been a pleasure, even though the cause of her homecoming was so sad. You will all miss Lonie; such a fine fellow, and such a kind heart. Like Peter Pan he never quite grew up. Maybe he was the happier for that. I often feel that the world used to be a great deal happier for everyone, young and old, than it is now.

Source: Letter from Willa Cather to Mary Miner Creighton [December 6, 1936]
Image of the original letter



·W·S·C·

Dec 6
[1936]

My Dear Mary;

Such a long while I have wanted to write you, but life hurries me along so fast. I have just come back from Washington where I went because of the illness of an old and dear friend — whom I left much better when I came away, but my going put me ten days behind with all my engagements here.

I did not know of Margie's death until sometime after it occurred, but I feared it was coming and all the tenderness for you for sisters who have meant so much in my life have been in my mind many day and often at night. I write now to ask a favor of you. Dear Mary, do please write me a word about Irene. Is she ill? Have I in some way hurt her feelings? Or is it that the pressure

Source: Diary entry by Daniel Haskell [September 10, 1849]

Fill in the blanks and view the completed text on the next page.

_____ (verb of movement, present tense)

_____ (adjective +est)

_____ (verb of movement, present tense)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (unit of distance, plural)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (geographic feature)

_____ (animal, plural)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (number)

_____ (unit of time)

_____ (verb, present tense)

_____ (type of food, plural)

Source: Diary entry by Daniel Haskell [September 10, 1849]
Your version

Monday, Sept 10th.

Pleasant. We left camp at 7 AM and were obliged to _____ over the _____ country I have ever seen. Had a mountain to _____ this AM where I thought it almost impossible for _____ , or horses, to get along. We were obliged to travel along the side of these mountains where we were hundreds and hundreds of _____ from the bottom , and so _____, too. We expected to see some of our an-imals going headlong, every moment. It was the more difficult, as there were so many rolling _____ in our path, as we came along. However! am pleased to say we all arrived safe and sound in the _____ below, and thankful were we to get here, as no doubt were our _____ , too. As we were coming down the mountain, we saw some fellows with _____ , making their way down. They had taken their _____ off and were lowering their _____ down, with ropes made fast around the trees. They would take some three or four turns around a tree, then hold on, and let them down in this way. We saw several trees that were nearly cut off in this way. After having gone the length of their ropes, they would chain their _____ to a tree, and fleet up and take a turn around another tree further down, then start again, and in this way would work their way down. After we had arranged our packs, after coming down the mountain, we went on a _____ distance and camped at 11 AM for the day. We hear it is _____ miles before we come to grass again. Finding a little here, we have thought it best to camp for the _____ , although we almost doubt the report. However! we would prepare as well as possible for it, should it be true, by giving our animals the benefit of what we can _____ here, and resting. We are again short of _____— just enough left for a taste, all round, and that is all. Where our next is to come from, the Lord only Knows, and in him we shall trust.

Source: Diary entry by Daniel Haskell [September 10, 1849]
Transcription of the original diary entry

Monday Sept 10th.

Pleasant. We left camp at 7 AM and were obliged to travel over the worst country I have ever seen. Had a mountain to descend this AM where I thought it almost impos-sible for mules, or horses, to get along. We were obliged to travel along the side of these mountains where we were hundreds and hundreds of feet from the bottom, and so steep, too. We expected to see some of our animals going headlong, every mo-ment. It was the more difficult, as there were so many rolling stones in our path, as we came along. However! am pleased to say we all arrived safe and sound in the val-ley below, and thankful were we to get here, as no doubt were our animals, too. As we were coming down the mountain, we saw some fellows with wagons, making their way down. They had taken their mules off, and were lowering their wagons down, with ropes made fast around the trees. They would take some three or four turns around a tree, then hold on, and let them down in this way. We saw several trees that were nearly cut off in this way. After having gone the length of their ropes, they would chain their wagons to a tree, and fleet up and take a turn around another tree further down, then start again, and in this way would work their way down. After we had arranged our packs, after coming down the mountain, we went on a short dis-tance and camped at 11 AM for the day. We hear it is 60 miles before we come to grass again. Finding a little here, we have thought it best to camp for the day, alt-hough we almost doubt the report. However! We would prepare as well as possible for it, should it be true, by giving our animals the benefit of what we can find here, and resting. We are again short of provisions—just enough left for a taste, all round, and that is all. Where our next is to come from, the Lord only Knows, and in him we shall trust.

Source: Diary entry by Daniel Haskell [September 10, 1849]

Image of the original diary entry

Monday, Sept. 10th,

Pleasant. We left camp at 7 AM. and were obliged to travel over the worst country I have ever seen. Had a mountain to descend this AM. where I thought it almost impossible for Mules, or Horses, to get along.

We were obliged to travel along on the Side of these mountains where we were hundreads, and hundreads, of feet to the bottom, and so steep too. We expected to see some of our animals going headlong, ever moment — it was the more difficult, as there were so many rolling stones in our path, as we came along.

However I am pleased to say we all, arrived safe, and sound, in the Valley below, and thankful were we, to get here, as no doubt were our animals too.

As we were coming down the mountain saw some fellows with wagons, working their way down. Had taken their Mules off, and were lowering their wagons down, with ropes made fast around the trees. would take some three, or four, turns round a tree. then hold on, and let them down in this way.

We saw several trees that were nearly cut off by these ropes in this way. after having gone the length of their ropes, would chain their wagon to a tree, and start up. and take a turn around another tree further down, then start again, and in this

Source: Letter from Henry Perry to his parents [February 25, 1849]

Fill in the blanks and view the completed text on the next page.

_____ (famous person's name)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (noun)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (person's name)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (animal, plural)

_____ (amount of money)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (animal, plural)

_____ (animal, plural)

_____ (adverb)

_____ (verb, past tense)

_____ (exclamation)

_____ (proper noun, location)

_____ (proper noun, location)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (adjective)

_____ (verb, present tense)

_____ (plural noun)

_____ (animal, plural)

Source: Letter from Henry Perry to his parents [February 25, 1849]

Your version

[Feb 25,1849]

Sunday Afternoon

Dear _____ ,

In the letter that I wrote and sent yesterday, it was almost impossible to give you any description of what was going on, so that now I will commence and see if I cannot do better. The day was splendid, as _____ as could be. At about 9 o'clock, we handled our vessel out of the pier alongside of a _____ when the steamboat came alongside of us. All this time, I was busy up town getting a few little _____ and bidding _____ goodbye. I went and saw Em and the girls about the last thing and got on board just in time to answer to my name. Everything was Hurly Burly. A _____ crowd of _____ had assembled to see us off. The boys were crying out the Sun Herald & Tribune three for _____, California apples & _____ 1 cent apiece; men were bidding their _____ good bye, and wives crying to part with their _____ . As I _____ expected father, I kept a good look out to find him in case he _____ . Thus the time passed away until 1/4 of twelve o'clock, when the steamboat tolled his bell, the Captain sang out " _____ ," the line cast off, and we made the first move towards _____. The view of _____ and its _____ was a most _____ sight, and I continued to feast my eyes on it until about 1 o'clock, when I took a long last look and went below to _____ some _____, which I then supposed would be the last for some time. When I had got through and came on deck again, the steamboat was preparing to leave us in a few minutes. _____ that had accompanied us down the bay took a Farewell shake, stepped on board the boat, the line cast off, and we were left alone to pursue our journey.

Source: Letter from Henry Perry to his parents [February 25, 1849]
Transcription of the original letter

[Feb 25,1849]

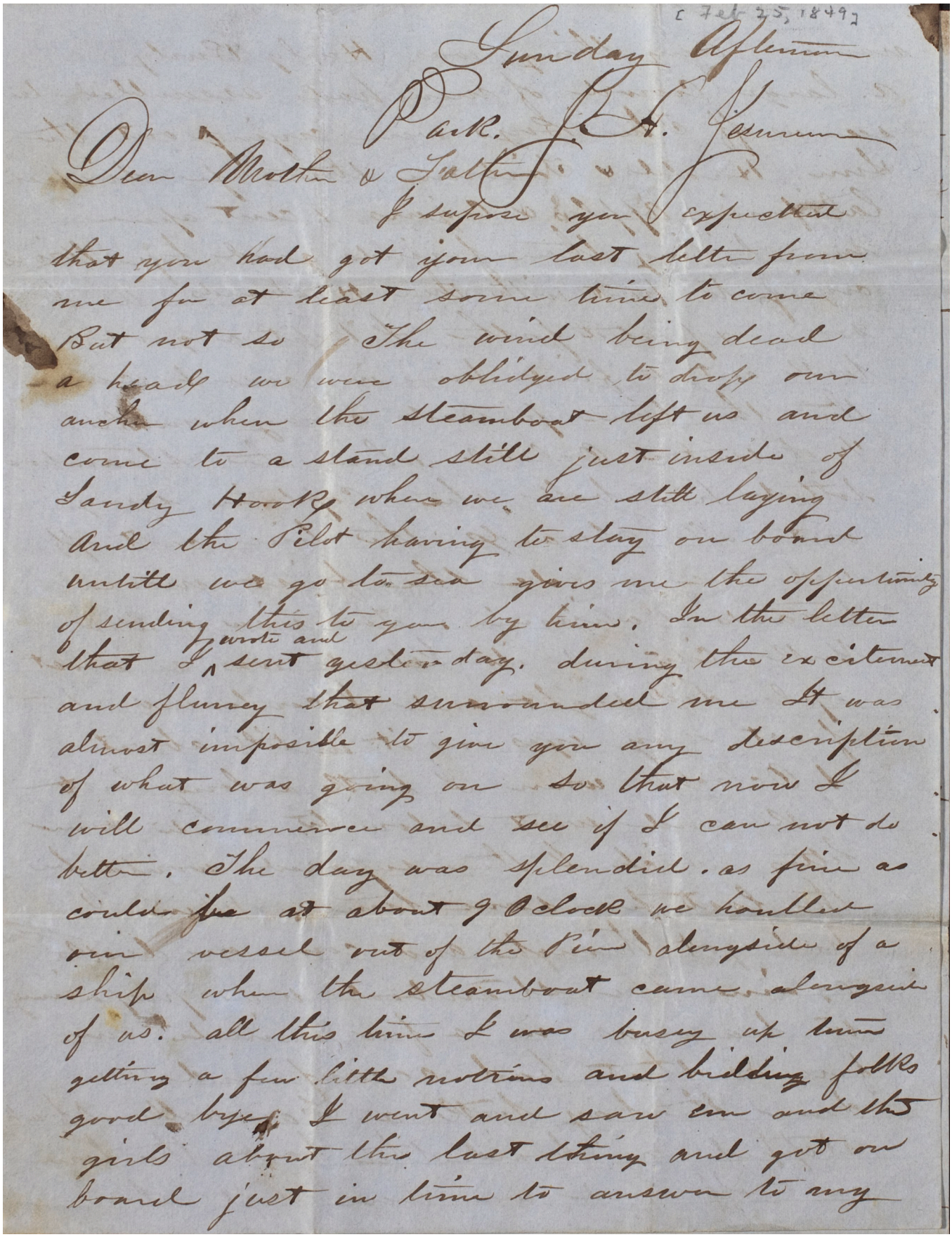
Sunday Afternoon

Dear Mother & Father,

In the letter that I wrote and sent yesterday...it was almost impossible to give you any description of what was going on, so that now I will commence and see if I can not do better. The day was splendid, as fine as could be. At about 9 o'clock, we han-dled our vessel out of the pier alongside of a ship when the steamboat came along-side of us. All this time I was busy up town getting a few little notions and bidding folks good bye. I went and saw Em and the girls about the last thing and got on board just in time to answer to my name. Everything was Hurly Burly. A large crowd of men had assembled to see us off. The boys were crying out the Sun Herald & Tribune three for sixpence, California apples & cigars 1 cent apiece; men bidding their friends good bye, and wives crying to part with their husbands. As I [unclear] expected fa-ther, I kept a good look out to find him in case he came. Thus the time passed away until 1/4 of twelve o'clock, when the steamboat tolled his bell, the Captain sang out "All Aboard," the line cast off, and we made the first move towards California. The view of New York City and its Islands was a most splendid sight, and I continued to feast my eyes on it until about 1 o'clock, when I took a long last look and went below to write some letters, which I then supposed would be the last for some time. When I had got through and came on deck again, the steamboat was preparing to leave us in a few minutes. Friends that had accompanied us down the bay took a Farewell shake, stepped on board the boat, the line cast off, and we were left alone to pursue our journey.

Source: Letter from Henry Perry to his parents [February 25, 1849]

Image of the original letter



[Feb 25, 1849]

Sunday Afternoon

Off N. Y.

Dear Mother & Father

I suppose you expected that you had got your last letter from me for at least some time to come But not so The wind being dead a head we were obliged to drop our anchor when the steamboat left us and come to a stand still just inside of Sandy Hook where we are still laying and the Pilot having to stay on board until we go to sea gives me the opportunity of sending this to you by him. In the letter that I sent yesterday, during the excitement and flurry that surrounded me It was almost impossible to give you any description of what was going on so that now I will commence and see if I can not do better. The day was splendid. as fine as could be at about 9 O'clock we hauled our vessel out of the pier alongside of a ship when the steamboat came alongside of us. all this time I was busy up town getting a few little notions and bidding folks good bye. I went and saw em and the girls about this last thing and got on board just in time to answer to my