Title: Pierce Family Letters to William Pierce
Date (inclusive): 1853-1855
Collection Identifier: SFH 218
Creator: Pierce family
Physical Description: 1.0 folder
Contributing Institution: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 557-4567
info@sfpl.org
Abstract: Letters to a San Francisco tinsmith from his family in Greenfield, Massachusetts.
Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.
Access
The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center hours, with photographs available during Photo Desk hours. Collections that are stored offsite should be requested 48 hours in advance.
Publication Rights
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the City Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San Francisco Public Library as the owner of the physical items.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Pierce family letters to William Pierce, 1853-1855 (SFH 218), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.
Related Materials
Researchers are encouraged also to see: Pierce family papers, Henry N. Flynt Library, Historic Deerfield, Deerfield, Massachusetts, 01342.
Biography
The recipient of the letters, William Pierce, was born in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1828, the son of George and Olive Pierce. George had three siblings: John, Phebe, and Samuel. George would later marry Luryan Long, and Phebe Anne was one of two children born to them. John’s daughter, Anna Feron, married Theodore Dehone Judah. Phebe never married, nor did Samuel. The Pierce family was known for their pewter, tin and other metalwork. William went to California during the Gold Rush, and worked as a tinsmith while living in San Francisco 1852-1855. Returning to Greenfield, he married Ellen Coates in 1856 and moved to Iowa in the 1860s. He returned to Greenfield, and died there in 1868.
Scope and Contents
Letters to William Pierce, tinsmith, while he lived in San Francisco. The letters relate news of Greenfield, Massachusetts and surrounding areas and discuss family matters and finances. William's stepmother, Luryan, is mistrusted by other family members for her opportunistic ways. There are scattered references to William's work and income in San Francisco, as well as to the possibility that others from Greenfield will join him. The trial of Merrick Billings of Greenfield for forgery is mentioned in two letters. Some letters mention Judah and Ann (Theodore Dehone Judah and his wife): at the time, Judah was employed by the Sacramento Valley Railroad.
Arrangement
Letters are arranged chronologically within folder.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Judah, Theodore D.(Theodore Dehone), 1826-1863
Pierce, William, (William E. R.), 1828-1868 -- Correspondence
Pierce, Luryan, 1812-1871
Pierce, Phebe, (Phebe Anne), 1844-1897
Pierce, Phebe, 1796-1858
Pierce, Samuel, b. 1812
Greenfield (Mass.)--History--19th century.
Greenfield (Mass.)--Social life and customs--19th century.
Phebe Pierce, Greenfield [Mass.], to William, ca. July 1853
Physical Description: 1.0 leaf
Scope and Contents
Discusses Pierce family finances, Luryan's extravagance, George's roofing work, and the activities of various acquaintances in Greenfield. Mentions the impending trial of Merrick Billings of Greenfield.

Luryan Pierce, Greenfield [Mass.], to son William, August 24, 1853
Physical Description: 1.0 leaf
Scope and Contents
Discusses family news; family drinking habits; a new barn being built; family property and debts. Luryan has received $200 from William. There is "hard talk about Judah being trickish." Merrick Billings has been sent to prison.

Phebe Pierce, Greenfield [Mass.], to William, ca. November 1853
Physical Description: 1.0 leaf
Scope and Contents
Discusses her thoughts on acquiring wealth and hopes that William can earn enough money through gold mining to live comfortably. Warns him to be careful doing construction work; he seems to be working on three- and four-storey buildings in San Francisco, perhaps installing tin ceilings or roofs, and not paid well for it. William's sister-in-law Kate has given birth to a son. Phebe reports about local building projects, politics, and the activities of various family members and Greenfield residents.

Phebe Pierce, Greenfield [Mass.], to William, May 9, 1854
Physical Description: 1.0 leaf
Scope and Contents
Describes a late snowfall and flooding in Greenfield and environs, the Old Folks concert, and discusses family financial matters. Phebe warns William of his step-mother's manipulative nature. There is a reference to (Theodore) Judah and his wife Ann in San Juan, Nevada County.

Phebe Anne Pierce, Greenfield [Mass.], to Brother, July 18, 1854?
Physical Description: 1.0 leaf
Scope and Contents
Ten-year-old Phebe Anne reports that she is going to Brattleboro, Vermont; discusses family matters and how much she misses brothers William and Elnathan. A fire damaged a house in Greenfield.

Samuel Pierce, Greenfield [Mass.], to William E. R. Pierce, March 5, 1855
Physical Description: 1.0 leaf
Scope and Contents
Samuel writes of William's loss of his inheritance, and of his step-mother's schemes regarding George Pierce's property, as well as James Pierce's debts, and William and Samuel's financial situations. Samuel writes of the possibility of selling his farm. A short note from Aunt Phe is appended, in which she mentions receiving the Governor's message in a letter from Ann (Mrs. Theodore Dehone Judah).