

Letter from Antoine Zerega, 49 Front Street Brooklyn to his father Paul Zerega dated August 2, 1860, translated from the French by Antoni Vermylen (date unknown); English translation transcribed by Joanne Marren, February 16, 2004

My dear father,

I see with regret by your recent letter that instead of succeeding in what you have undertaken you only lose by it.

Also you say that you would travel to repair dies if you had the money to travel, which is to say that the money you would use would be quickly spent on your trip, because what you do not think of when you undertake something that comes into your head.

You say that you would come if you would be useful. As for me I would be careful before I would (“employ you” deleted) ask you to come here because you are getting along well in Europe and who would know how you would get along in America, it is almost sure you would not, and this I tell you from (“personal” deleted) experience, old people who come here find themselves badly off and those who go to Europe find themselves likewise. I know a Frenchman 10 or 15 years younger than you who had to go back to Bordeaux.

Another Frenchman his age told him to go to the country and eat grapes which will do you a lot of good.

Well you will catch diarrhea and die from it—he did just what he was told and in less than six months ? (maybe could not be translated)

You must take in account the rigor of the weather here in summer. Days of suffocating heat when we cannot sleep at night and in winter the cold. I can tell you that from the month of December till the month of April you would be next to the stove without being able to keep warm.

I have often seen someone who spits next to a red hot stove it freezes.

Also if I succeeded in selling I would return before being much older because I would do as well in business in France as others who are there and would have more satisfaction; here one is deprived of all kinds of distractions as one works all week and on Sundays everything is closed, if you do not buy your food on Saturday you must do without it on Sunday.

One can only go to Church on Sunday as that is the only place open, also be deprived of wine or pay 200 francs per bottle and it has often gone up to 300 francs. Also a major reason why I advise you not to come here is there is lots of Asthma here one sees continuously signs of doctors or fakirs who

announce their remedies to cure you of this sickness which signifies that (“they have” deleted) it remains to be seen whether they can cure them. I have already told you that the best for you is in the country, with one months rent in Marseilles you could live one year there and all else in proportion.

It appears that you find it necessary to sell your watch, as for me I don’t see anything wrong in (“that” deleted) your selling it. I look upon that not only as a useless possession but as a luxury.

I am sending you \$25 and I expect you to take measures to live in the country because as long as you stay in Marseilles you will spend what little money you have in foolish enterprises.

My wife and child are sometimes sick, as for myself I am well and trust that you find yourself the same.

Your devoted son,
A. Zerega