

bott Lawrence (1792-1855), Phillips's Whig colleague from Massachusetts in the House of Representatives. Lawrence enjoyed a varied career as an industrialist, an active politician, and a generous patron of science. With his brother Amos, he helped to launch the New England textile industry during the War of 1812. In 1831 he was elected a member of the Boston City Council and served in the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-sixth Congresses. In 1842 he was appointed one of the commissioners to settle the northeastern boundary dispute be-

tween the United States and Canada. His interest in scientific research led him in 1847 to grant a \$50,000 bequest to establish the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard University. *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, p. 1442; DAB; Howard S. Miller, *Dollars for Research: Science and its Patrons in Nineteenth-Century America* (Seattle, 1970), pp. 77-81. As with Phillips, we can find no documents indicating that Henry met Lawrence at this time.

TO HARRIET HENRY

*Mary Henry Copy,¹ Family Correspondence,
Henry Papers, Smithsonian Archives*

Washington Dec. 28. 1836

My dear Wife. I commenced a letter to you last evening but was too late for the mail and since have had no opportunity for writing, since we did not reach this place until yesterday Tuesday afternoon. The Delaware River and also the Bay were obstructed by ice so that the boat did not reach Baltimore until eight o'clock on Monday. We were accompanied from Phil. by R. Horne² and Mr. Rogers the geologist.³ Our arrival in Baltimore was at too late an hour to permit me to visit any of my acquaintances in that city. We therefore passed the remainder of the evening until ten o'clock in visiting the museum.⁴ We were in time to see the last part of the performance of the celebrated french juggler M. Adrien: which consisted in making disappear in a very mysterious manner his little plump french wife.⁵ Some sage remarks were offered by DeWitt on the importance of the secret

¹ There are two Mary Henry Copies of this letter, one handwritten and one typed. This text is from the handwritten copy, which is more complete.

² Or Home. Not identified. The copyist may have misread the name.

³ Either Henry Darwin Rogers or William Barton Rogers.

⁴ The Baltimore Museum and Gallery of the Fine Arts, which had been at the corner of Calvert and Baltimore since 1830, was originally a Peale family enterprise; they lost control in 1833. Its immediate predecessor was Peale's Museum on Holliday Street, which

opened in 1814 and was run by Rembrandt Peale. Prior to this the Peales had made several attempts to establish a museum in Baltimore. John Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County* (Philadelphia, 1881), pp. 691-694.

⁵ Mrs. Adrien's disappearance was the highlight of the show, which included "a great variety of Physical, Mechanical, Magical and Incomprehensible Experiments!" Adrien was billed as "the most accomplished Magician of the present day." *Baltimore Patriot & Commercial Gazette*, December 28, 1836.

to married men &c &c. The museum contains besides a good collection of minerals and other objects of natural history a group of casts among these the Apollo Belvedere. I looked on this with much pleasure also on the cast of the wounded gladiator. These casts give I presume an excellent idea of the effect produced by these [works] of the arts or at least they would do so could we divest ourselves of the fact that they are only plaster and not marble. . . .

We left Baltimore about nine o'clock and reached Washington some time after twelve by the Washington and Baltimore rail road. The car was large and pleasantly heated by a small stove in the middle. We have taken up our lodgings at the principal house Gadsby's Hotel⁶ but do not find accommodations as good as in houses of the same class in Philadelphia or New York. We yesterday afternoon visited the Capitol, saw the two houses in session, were introduced to the Library and Rotunda in which the large pictures of Trumbull are exhibited.⁷ The effect produced by the Capitol at first sight and from a distance is not good. The pillars of the Corinthian or Composite order are too slender to appear well at a distance. When however the eye is brought sufficiently near to take in the details of the structure the effect is very imposing. The style of architecture is that called the Italo-Romanesque which was much in vogue before the study of Grecian remains introduced a better taste. As far as the architecture is concerned it would scarcely be a loss were the British again to burn the Capitol. In that case I am sure a more imposing and at the same time more simple building would be erected in its stead.⁸

The principal street of the city is that called Pennsylvania Avenue. It is about a mile long and terminated at each extremity by a hill. On one of these the Capitol is placed on the other the "White House." The rear of the Capitol faces this street.

I heard a debate in the house yesterday in which Mr. Adams took part.⁹

⁶ Also known as the National Hotel, Gadsby's was at the corner of 6th and Pennsylvania Avenue. It was a large, first-class hotel frequented by politicians. In 1856 its popularity suffered when several guests succumbed to the mysterious "National Hotel Disease." W. B. Bryan, *A History of the National Capital* . . . , 2 vols. (New York, 1914-1916), 2:61, 445. Mar-ian Gouverneur, *As I Remember* . . . (New York, 1911), pp. 176-177.

⁷ John Trumbull's four panels of scenes from the Revolution for the Rotunda were far from his best works. The *DAB* terms them "heavy-handed, chalky, oversized reworkings of his earlier masterful paintings." Henry had seen

Trumbull's work a year earlier at the Trumbull Art Gallery in New Haven (*Henry Papers*, 2:469).

⁸ Throughout his life, Henry consistently argued for simple, functional architecture. In 1836, the Capitol was less "imposing" than it is today. Yet to come were the extension of the House and Senate wings, the large dome by T. U. Walter, and the landscaping by Frederick Law Olmsted.

⁹ The debate concerned the repeal of laws authorizing protection of American seamen. Adams opposed repeal. *Congressional Globe*, 24th Congress, 2d Session, 1837, 4:55.

December 28, 1836

He is to my eye totally unlike the portraits of him. He has very little hair and this is not white but sprinkled with black. I am to have an interview with him this evening.¹⁰ I passed last evening with Mr. Calhoun.¹¹ I was much pleased with his manner his intelligence and the interest he expressed in the cause of science. I called this morning on Mr. Van Buren found him alone with his two sons.¹² He received me with much cordiality and had preparation made to furnish me with all I requested in the way of letters &c. I am to call again tomorrow morning. I also visited the Secretary of the Navy and had a long conversation relative to the Southern expedition. . . .¹³ I called on Mr. Butler¹⁴ but did not find him in. I almost forgot to tell you I visited the President's House. The old gentleman cannot be seen but the "White House" is the property of the sovereign people and therefore is open to all comers.

I hope you will be pleased with the bonnet I have bought you. It is not of the colour you mentioned. I chose another which I hope will please you equally. Believe me my dear Harriet as ever your own J.H.

¹⁰ We have not located letters introducing Henry to John Quincy Adams or John C. Calhoun. Before leaving for Washington, Henry had solicited letters of introduction. S. H. Porter gave Henry a letter to Senator James Buchanan (December 24, 1836, Henry Papers, Smithsonian Archives) and W. R. Johnson gave him one to Representative S. C. Phillips (printed immediately above).

John Quincy Adams was sixty-nine when Henry met him. His diary does not mention the interview. Adams was heavily involved in the early debates on the use of the Smithsonian bequest. When Henry became Secretary of the Smithsonian, he consulted Adams concerning the program of the new organization.

¹¹ John C. Calhoun was a Senator at this time. During Henry's early years in Washing-

ton, he and Calhoun were friends although Calhoun was not fond of the Smithsonian and had opposed acceptance of the Smithsonian bequest as beneath the dignity of the United States.

¹² Henry had a letter of introduction from John Van Buren to his father, then the President-elect. Martin Van Buren had three other sons, Abraham, Martin, Jr., and Smith Thompson. *DAB*.

¹³ The material omitted here by the copyist may have described Henry's conversation with Mahlon Dickerson. We have not located any record of their talk.

¹⁴ Henry knew Benjamin Franklin Butler from Albany. At this time Butler was Attorney General and Acting Secretary of War. *Henry Papers*, 1:412.