

❧ 1863 ❧

165. TO JAMES HALL

Washington Jany 2<sup>nd</sup> 1863

My Dear Professor

Your kind and consoling letter<sup>1</sup> relative to the death of my son was duly received and highly appreciated. To be remembered with affectionate sympathy at a time when we are enveloped in the darkest clouds which rest upon the path way of life is most grateful to the wounded spirit.

Our son was very dear to us and his sudden and unexpected departure has plunged our family into the deepest sorrow, which is the more profound as we realize the extent of our loss. He was devoted to his sisters, his mother, and myself; and we could not estimate how essential he was to our comfort and happiness except by the sad experience of his departure.

He was of much assistance to me in the conduct of the affairs of the Institution, for while he was scrupulously just and kind to all he was devoted to me.

His position in the Institution did not well suit his sensitive and retiring character: since from the fact that he was my son his acts were observed with a more critical spirit than they would have been had he not been thus related to me. Indeed I failed to do him justice in the way of salary and demands on his time simply because he was, as it were, a part of myself.<sup>2</sup> I had concluded however just before his death to separate him from the Institution and give him an opportunity to complete a course of medical studies, to which he had paid considerable attention, but this resolve came too late. It has pleased the All Wise Disposer of Events to take him off in the flower of his age before he had brought forth the fruit of which his talents and acquirements gave promise.

His death has lessened my desire to live and were it not that I am anxious as to the future condition of my family I would scarcely wish to continue longer to fight the battle of life particularly in the present unhappy condition of our country and the darkness which rests on the future. I am however earnestly and industriously pressing on the operations of the Institution.

Did you get the books for which [you]<sup>A</sup> wrote some weeks ago?<sup>3</sup> I directed that they should be sent to you. If they have not been received let me know the fact. With kind regards to Mrs Hall and your family

I remain as ever truly your friend  
Joseph Henry

Prof. James Hall.



January 28, 1863 (Doc. 166)

State Geologists' and Paleontologists' Correspondence File, Series Bo561, New York State Archives.

1. Of October 22, 1862, Bache Papers, Smithsonian Archives; draft in same location as this letter.

2. The October 1862 entry for William Henry in the Smithsonian's fiscal records shows him

being paid at the rate of \$50 per month as a library assistant. Smithsonian Daybooks, vol. 3, p. 428.

3. Letter not found.

166. TO ALEXANDER DALLAS BACHE

Smithsonian Inst<sup>on</sup>  
Jany 28<sup>th</sup> 1863

My Dear B.

I have seen General Totten with reference to the meeting on Thursday evening.<sup>1</sup> He advises that we be with him as early as seven o'clock.

I will call for you about half past six with a carriage.

I am shocked to hear of the death of Col. Abert<sup>2</sup> and will attend the funeral.

Do you know whether Alexander has received the appointment as an examiner of the assay?<sup>3</sup> "Uncle Abe." has appointed me.<sup>4</sup>

I received a message from the secretary of war yesterday informing me that he had directed a Library, taken at the Sout[h,]<sup>A</sup> to be sent to the Smithsonian Institution for safe keeping.<sup>5</sup> I called, at his request, at the Department and informed him that there was an unoccupied room at the Institu<sup>on</sup> which could be appropriated to the books provided he would pay the expense of fitting it up. This room is the one I formerly occupied and is above the one in which the Regents meet. The books are to be kept apart and carefully preserved until the end of the war—

The charge is a responsible but an important one for the good of humanity. The secretary was very polite but appeared some what perplexed and I thought down cast. My interview with him was very brief and to the point.

Truly yours  
Jos Henry

Professor A D Bache.  
Coast Survey

Bache Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

Reply not found but recommending a catalog of and receipt for the library, according to a file note.

1. A meeting of the regents' executive committee to review accounts. The members were

Bache and Totten (James A. Pearce, the third member, having died on December 20, 1862).