

May 31, 1848

letter from Titian Ramsay Peale to John F. Frazer, May 21, 1848, Frazer Papers, American Philosophical Society.

9. Bache had written a letter of recommendation for Peale to Edmund Burke, the commissioner of patents, which he transmitted to Peale through Henry. In his letter to Frazer, Peale complained that the job of assistant examiner was "a mere clerkship,— without promotion, includes the hardest work and clerks pay." He wrote also that the letter from Bache "fell on me like an icy hand."

In a letter to Frazer of June 2, 1848 (Frazer Papers), Peale related that Bache sent him a second letter, to be transmitted to Burke, re-

questing that Burke ignore the word assistant in the first letter as "an unintentional error."

10. In the spring of 1848, Congress passed legislation establishing two additional patent examiner and two assistant patent examiner positions. It also raised the pay of the examiners to \$2,500. The two new examiners were Henry B. Renwick (1817–1895, *DAB*), the elder brother of the architect of the Smithsonian Building, and Leonard Gale. Peale received one of the assistant examiner positions. The other went to J. H. Lane. Robert C. Post, *Physics, Patents, and Politics: A Biography of Charles Grafton Page* (New York, 1976), pp. 113–118.

182. TO SAMUEL STEMAN HALDEMAN¹

Washington May 31st 1848

My dear Sir

I would gladly assist Mr Baird in his researches by means of the funds of the Smithsonian Institution provided I can do so with a certainty of good results and in such a way as not to establish an improper precedent. I will appoint Dr Morton and yourself a commission to examine the researches of Mr Baird and if you will make me a formal report on the subject stating the character and importance of the researches I will advance the money required out of some funds at my disposal. In your report it may be well to mention that the researches cannot be properly prosecuted unless with the aid required from the Smithsonian Institution.²

I remain truly yours &c
Joseph Henry

Dr S. S. Haldeman

P.S. Accompanying this letter I send your official appointment as a commission.³ If you think it advisable to appoint a third person as one of the commission please suggest the proper man. Business of this kind must be conducted cautiously and in accordance with established rules.

J.H.

Haldeman Papers, Library, The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

Reply: Not found; undated draft reply in Box 25, Baird Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

1. Active in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, Haldeman (1812–1880) had published extensively on mollusks and insects. Elliott, *Dictionary*.

May 31, 1848

2. In the draft reply, Haldeman and Morton characterized Baird's research as an attempt to clear up the confusion surrounding amphibia. Baird was attempting to clarify the distinctions between species and the variations within species. However, he lacked the services of an artist "to delineate and fix in colors the various peculiarities of structure & phases of development as they arise." The reviewers, responding to Henry's suggestion, stated that without Smithsonian support, the drawings "are not likely to be executed."

On July 6, 1848, Henry informed the executive committee of

his intention to advance sums of fifty dollars, from time to time, as might be necessary, to

Professor Spencer F. Baird, to enable him to have drawings made of researches in embryology of reptiles and fishes. [Rhees, *Journals*, p. 463.]

Two days later, Henry wrote Baird that he was prepared "to advance a small sum," and asked how much Baird needed. Baird Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

There is no evidence that Henry ever provided any funds for Baird.

3. Henry to Samuel G. Morton and S. S. Haldeman, May 31, 1848, Box 25, Baird Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

183. TO THOMAS T. KINNEY¹

Washington May 31st 1848

My dear Sir,

I see by the Newark Daily² that the house No. 180 was struck on Friday last³ with lightening and that the discharge made a hole in the leader which I suppose is the tin gutter leading the water from the roof to the ground. A hole pierced in a plate of metal by electricity involves some interesting theoretical considerations and if it be not too much trouble you will oblige me by examining the hole and giving me an account of your observations. Note if there be a burr on one side or both and if but one on which side— Also the path of the discharge before and after it reached the hole with any other facts or appearances unmingled with any conceptions as to the course or the mode of operations of the electricity.— I should be very glad to get possession of the part of the gutter which contains the hole, and would cheerfully pay any expenses which might attend the cutting of it out and the replacement of the part by a new piece of tin. If this can be done please send the article to me at Washington by the express line and I will pay all charges.

I do not hesitate to make this call upon your time & kind services knowing the interest you take in science and your feelings towards me.

I remain as ever truly yours
Joseph Henry.

Thomas Kinney Esq

P.S. Give my kind regards to your father⁴ and please inform him that all things at present relative to the Smithsonian are going on smoothly⁵