

April 14, 1853

264. TO SAMUEL FOSTER HAVEN

Smithsonian Inst  
April 14<sup>th</sup> 1853

My Dear Sir

Accompanying this letter I send you the Report of the committee appointed by the antiquarian Society to examine the memoir of Mr. Lapham.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Jewett informed me about a month ago that you had written to him for it but this information was given to me a few minutes before a meeting of the Board of Regents<sup>2</sup> and amidst the multiplicity of engagements with which my time is occupied it passed out of my mind and I did not think of it again until yesterday when I saw a letter from you to Dr Foreman in regard to it. I make this statement to explain my seeming neglect of your request.

I have examined the memoir of Mr. Lapham and think it will be received by the ethnologists as<sup>A</sup> an interesting and important addition to their science.

We intended to put the plates of the memoir in the hands of the engraver immediately but in examining the condition of our appropriation for the present year I find that it will be best to defer the work until November. We shall however be able to publish it early next spring.

I find in the development of the plan of our operations that the programme is too broad for our income that we shall in order to produce the best effects be obliged to restrict some of our expenditures; and these must be with regard to collections. Abundant experience has now shown that the Institution is capable of doing an immense amount of good in the line of active operations and particularly in that of publishing original memoirs which could not see the light without our aid and in encouraging original researches by occasional<sup>B</sup> small appropriations.

The museum the Library and the gallery of art though interesting in themselves are in a great degree local and ought not to encumber the more important operations. Congress is making provisions for one of the largest Libraries in this country. Seven five thousand dollars was appropriated last year for the purchase of books and this Institution was requested to furnish lists. An appropriation has also been annually made for the support of the museum of the patent office and it is my intention to endeavour to enlarge this collection in order to obviate the necessity of expending the Smithsonian income on objects of this kind. Accompanying this letter I send you a copy of my Report for

April 15, 1853

1851 in which at page 19<sup>3</sup> you will find an exposition of my views on these points.

It is now just about six years since I had the pleasure of meeting you in New-York<sup>4</sup> and these have been the most unpleasant and laborious years of my life. Had I known the difficulties I was about to contend with no inducement would have been sufficient to make me accept the position I now hold but having embarked in the enterprise I am compelled to go on.

My whole aim has been to prevent the funds from being squandered on unworthy objects and to apply it to the legitimate objects of the bequest.

I remain very truly your  
friend & servant  
Joseph Henry

S. F. Haven Esq

Haven Papers, American Antiquarian Society.

1. Manuscript not found, but the committee report was published in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, October 23, 1852, pp. 16-33. Submitted by Haven on behalf of the committee, the report praised Lapham for accomplishing "his task with great thoroughness and artistic skill" (p. 32).

2. The last meeting of the regents had been March 12. Rhees, *Journals*, p. 91.

3. A slip of the pen. Henry is referring to the section on "Libraries and Collections." *Smithsonian Report for 1851*, pp. 21-26. See Doc. 255.

Henry repeated this theme in his succeeding

annual report, noting that "nothing has since occurred to change the opinions" expressed the previous year "relative to the library and museum." He claimed that

it will be impossible to continue with the present income some of the most important operations, and rigidly adhere to the resolution of the Regents of 1847, to devote one half of the whole income to the library and museum.

*Smithsonian Report for 1852*, p. 29.

4. The two men probably first met in July 1847. *Henry Papers*, 7:145, 211.

265. TO EBEN N. HORSFORD

Light House Board  
April 15<sup>th</sup> 1853

My Dear Sir

While I am attending a meeting of this board I have taken up a newspaper in which I find the fact stated that Bunker Hill Monument has been struck by Lightning and that a gentleman near the top who was passing down and holding on the lightning rod received a shock from which he did not recover for a couple of hours.<sup>1</sup>

This case if truly reported has an important bearing on the application of protectors to ships and I think it would be well if you could