

January 31, 1855

taking too much notice of him, or if you should need it, at any time hereafter you know where to find it.

Your's J D Parker

It is as I expected a Disappointed Office Seeker—

Incoming Correspondence, Meteorological Project, RU 60, Smithsonian Archives.

The paper is torn on one side of the sheet.

1. Parker was a Maine surveyor and a long-time meteorological observer for the Smithsonian. *Henry Papers*, 8:411n.

2. Not found.

3. Henry Willis, a lawyer from Portland, Maine, was a Smithsonian meteorological observer from 1855 to 1860. Portland City Directory, 1856–1857; *Smithsonian Report for 1868*, p. 74.

4. James Green, a New York City instrument maker who made barometers and thermometers for Smithsonian meteorological observers. *Henry Papers*, 7:454n.

5. The fable illustrates the rewards of perseverance. After repeated defeats at the hands of

the English, Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, watched a spider fail six times to attach its web to a ceiling beam; the spider's success on the seventh try gave him hope. Scottish patriot William Wallace was also revered for his persistent struggles against great odds to win Scottish independence. E. Cobham Brewer, *The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (London, 1894), s.v. "Spider"; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 8th ed., s.v. "Wallace, Sir William."

6. Henry did not finalize plans to cooperate with the Patent Office until later in the year.

7. In the spring of 1857, Maine appropriated \$75 for each of its nine observers. Fleming, *Meteorology*, p. 122.

110. TO JAMES COCHRAN DOBBIN

Smithsonian Inst  
Jan'y 31<sup>st</sup> 1855

Dear Sir

I have learned by the papers that Congress has authorized you to send an expedition in search of Dr Kane<sup>1</sup> and I write to commend to your favourable consideration a suggestion which has been made to you namely to give Dr. Peters<sup>2</sup> a position in the expedition which will enable him to make astronomical meteorological and magnetic observations. He is distinguished for his attainments in mathematics and physics and also for his skill as a practical observer. He comes to this country warmly recommended by Humboldt and other savants of the old world and I am sure he would be able to do good service in the intended expedition.

While the immediate object of the expedition is the rescue of our gallant young countryman and his worthy associates it is not incompatible with this object to make all investigations of a scientific character which the occasion may offer and I beg to assure you that this Institution will



February 15, 1855

readily cooperate in any way in its power in giving instructions and in furnishing instruments &c.<sup>3</sup>

I have the honor to remain  
very truly your obt servt  
Joseph Henry

Hon. J. C. Dobbin  
Secretary of the Navy

Miscellaneous Letters Received, General Records, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, RG 45, National Archives.

Reply: February 6, 1855, Miscellaneous Letters Sent, in same location.

1. A second American expedition to search for missing British explorer Sir John Franklin had left New York City a year-and-a-half earlier but had not been heard from since its arrival in the Danish settlement of Upernavik on the west coast of Greenland in July 1853. The privately-funded expedition was under the command of Lieutenant Elisha Kent Kane (*Henry Papers*, 8:252n), who had served as surgeon on the first expedition in search of Franklin. Congress authorized a navy expedition under the command of Lieutenant Henry J. Hartstene to search for Kane and his party. By the time the relief expedition left New York on May 31, 1855, the Kane party had abandoned its ice-bound ship and begun an arduous journey of more than 500 miles over ice and water to return to Upernavik. The relief expedition found the

Kane party in September, after it had left Greenland on a Danish ship, and brought it back to New York in October. Vincent Ponko, Jr., *Ships, Seas, and Scientists: U.S. Naval Exploration and Discovery in the Nineteenth Century* (Annapolis, 1974), pp. 194-196.

2. C. H. F. Peters.

3. Henry and Bache had offered suggestions for scientific exploration of the Arctic to Dobbin's predecessor on the eve of the Kane expedition (*Henry Papers*, 8:408-410). In his reply, Dobbin wrote that Congress clearly directed him to limit the expedition to rescuing Kane: "I fear it will not be in my power to contribute much to science, unless it comes in as a part of the incidental duties of the officers of the navy specially assigned to the Expedition."

#### 111. FROM CHARLES W. UPHAM

(Copy)

House of Representatives  
Washington City  
Feby 15, 1855.

Prof: Henry,  
Dear Sir,

I have just received a letter, of which the following is a copy:

"House of Rep's

Feby 15, 1855

Hon. C W. Upham

Chairman of Select Com. on Smith: Instn.

Sir,

I ask that Prof: J. Henry present to your committee, at their next meeting, the paper of Prof. C. C. Jewett, which was presented to the Commit-