conducted in 1856 by Lieutenant O. H. Berryman of the Coast Survey. *Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States, on the Thirtieth September, 1853* (Washington, 1853), p. 238; Coates and Finn, p. 7; Williams, pp. 239–242.

27. In February Congress passed "An Act to Promote the Efficiency of the Navy," the purpose of which was to weed out unproductive personnel and increase promotions. The Naval Retiring Board, established to implement the new law, conducted a review of 700 officers during June and July and recommended action in 201 cases: 71 were put on leave of absence pay, 81 on furlough pay, and 49 were removed from the rolls. In September, Maury was informed by Secretary of the Navy James C. Dobbin that the board had decided to remove him from the active service list and place him on the reserved list. Although this reduced his salary from $3,000 to $1,200 a year, Maury remained head of the Naval Observatory. According to his biographer, the board's decision was colored by seafaring officers' resentment toward officers with land-based jobs; many veterans also disapproved of scientific initiatives undertaken by the navy. After a vigorous campaign, in 1858 Maury was restored to active service and promoted to commander. Gilliss was also placed on the reserved list in 1855 but was authorized by the secretary of the navy to continue working on the observations he had made in Chile. U.S. House, 34th Congress, 1st Session, *Report of the Secretary of the Navy,* House Executive Documents, No. 1 (1855), pp. 10–12; Williams, pp. 269–293; Elliott, *Dictionary,* s.v. "Gilliss, James Melville."

28. Maury was not elected president and in fact was not even on the program at the Providence meeting.

29. Benjamin Silliman, Jr., who had succeeded his father in 1853 as professor of chemistry at Yale. *Henry Papers, 4:*100n.

30. Although superintendent of the Naval Observatory, Maury was not an astronomer and has been judged "more a technologist than a scientist." Contemporary critics objected to the religious references in his scientific writings and found his physical explanations lacking. *DSB.*

Maury was also a vocal opponent of the "Washington-Cambridge clique" that dominated AAAS leadership positions in the 1850s. Kohlstedt, *AAAS,* pp. 154–189 (quotation on p. 188), especially p. 186.

154. TO INCREASE ALLEN LAPHAM

Smithsonian Institution
Washington. Aug. 3d. 1855.

Dear Sir,

We have seen the following statement in a Boston paper.

"We have received a letter from Waukesha Wis, which states that on the 8th July, a heavy storm accompanied by thunder & lightning passed over that place about dusk in the evening. A flash of lightning struck the rod upon a two storied house, melted the point & glancing off into a chamber in the second story, instantly killed a man named John Daniells, who was there. It then passed through the floor into the kitchen & thence into the ground, melting in its passage, a number of pewter spoons.[1] xxxxx."[A]

We write to request that you will examine into this statement and give us the true facts of the case.

1st. What is the evidence that the lightning having struck the rod afterwards left it?

2. Was not the individual killed by a separate part of the same flash?
3. What conducting materials were between the person killed and the ground which determined the course of the electricity in that direction?
4. Was the rod well connected with the ground & sunk sufficiently far into it to be in contact with moist earth.
5. Had the house one or two chimneys, & was fire burning in both or either at the time?
6. Was the lightning rod attached to one of the chimneys?
7. What was the size of the rod and the character of the point?
8. Was there water in the cellar of the house?

Please give us any other information which you may obtain, bearing on the question of the cause of the accident.[2]

Your letter of the 27th July[3] has just been received, and in answer we would state that the Institution will be very happy to receive copies of the geological map of Wisconsin which you offer to present to it.[4]

The map sent for "copyright" has not yet been received.[5]

Very Respectfully
Your obed't serv't
Joseph Henry
Secretary S.I.

I. A. Lapham, Esq.
Milwaukie, Wis.

Lapham Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

In William Jones Rhees's hand, with Henry's signature. Attached to the letter is a news clipping from an unidentified paper with information from the Berlin, Wisconsin, *Courant,* about a violent storm the previous week.

1. The *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* of July 12, 1855, reprinted an item about the storm from the *Waukesha Plaindealer.* The storm lasted all night and was notable for heavy wind and rain. The paper reported that a North Prairie house, which belonged to a man named Daniels, was struck and that one man was killed and several injured. The lightning reportedly entered the roof about two feet from the lightning rod.

2. Henry was evidently interested in discovering why the lightning rod failed to protect the house. His recommendations for lightning protection, based on those formulated by the French Académie des sciences in 1823, included continuous iron rods of at least three-quarters of an inch in diameter, termination in moist earth or a well (or an underground pipe in a city), and rods projecting above chimneys. Joseph Henry, "Meteorology in Its Connection with Agriculture: Part V. Atmospheric Electricity," *Report of the Commissioner of Patents for 1859: Agriculture* (Washington, 1860), pp. 522–524.

3. Not found.

4. I. A. Lapham, *A Geological Map of Wisconsin* (New York, 1855). Lapham is credited with some of the earliest and best maps of Wisconsin. *DAB.*

5. Perhaps a reference to the copy of the above work that Henry acknowledged receiving the following month. Henry to Lapham, September 16, 1855, Lapham Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.