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4. Abel Storrs had been an adjunct professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1832. *Henry Papers*, 1:442.

5. The reply to this letter was one of a number of letters (Docs. 192, 196, 236) solicited by Henry in anticipation of defending himself against Morse's attacks in "The Electro-Magnetic Telegraph: A Defence against the Injurious Deductions Drawn from the Deposition of Prof. Joseph Henry, (in the Several Telegraph Suits)," *Shaffner's Telegraph Companion, Devoted to the Science and Art of the Morse American Telegraph*, 1855, 2:6-122.

At the March 16, 1857, meeting of the Board of Regents, Henry officially brought Morse's accusations to the notice of the regents and asked for "an investigation into the justice of the charges alleged against me," specifically that he had lied under oath. At that time he submitted "the documents necessary to establish the veracity of my testimony, so falsely impeached, and the integrity of my motives, so wantonly assailed." Among those documents was this letter and the others cited above. In response to a

resolution introduced by James M. Mason, the regents ordered that a committee consisting of Mason, James A. Pearce, C. C. Felton, and Stephen A. Douglas inquire into Morse's accusations. The committee reported on May 19, 1858. *Smithsonian Report for 1857*, pp. 74-75, 85-117 (quotations on p. 86).

6. Henry is referring to Edward Hitchcock, *Illustrations of Surface Geology*, 1857, SI Contributions, vol. 9 (Washington, 1857). In the *Smithsonian Report for 1855*, p. 22, Henry reported that the colored maps (some of which used as many as thirteen different colors) that accompanied this collection of three papers were very expensive and that he was considering deferring the publication. He announced in the *Smithsonian Report for 1856*, p. 30, that by reducing the size of the maps and rearranging the plates, the cost was much reduced.

We are unable to gauge Hall's response to Hitchcock's work. Instead of the usual statement naming the referees, there is a statement that the paper was referred to a "competent commission" (Hitchcock, p. [ii]).

165. TO JOHN F. FRAZER

Unofficial

Smithsonian Institution  
Oct 27<sup>th</sup> 1855

My Dear Professor

Your communications<sup>1</sup> relative to the remarks in the last no. of the Journal were duly received but a press of business has prevented an answer before to day. They were read with mingled emotions of pleasure and pain. Their frank and friendly tone brought a gush of warm feeling to my heart while at the same time I was grieved to reflect that I had been obliged to address you on so unpleasant a subject and that we still disagreed so widely in our estimate of the value of the memoir.<sup>2</sup>

As to what ought to be said in the next no. of the Journal I leave that to your own good judgement after you have given the subject a more critical examination; for I am still of the opinion that your remarks were made without a full knowledge of all the facts.<sup>3</sup>

The subject of ethnology as you well know is not one of my specialities though I know the papers we have published in regard it it have been the most popular of any which we have given to the world. Ethnology is a kind of middle ground between literature<sup>A</sup> and science; on which men of



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letters and the investigators of nature may meet with mutual interest. It has been and is the design of the Institution to publish all the authentic information relative to the antiquities of this country which can be obtained; to procure in all cases accurate surveys instead of mere pen sketches; and thus to preserve exact delineations of objects which in the course of a few years will be entirely obliterated.<sup>4</sup>

The memoir on the Antiquities of Wisconsin is one of the most interesting communications on this subject which has yet been published; it gives exact drawings from actual surveys of a series of earth works of a peculiar character and which are not to be found in any other part of the United States. But few of these have ever before been correctly delineated or described. The survey was made by a man who has considerable reputation in the west as a geologist and engineer. The paper was prepared for the press by Mr Haven the secretary and librarian of the antiquarian society and was reported upon by a committee appointed for its examination. The authority in favour of its publication by the Smithsonian Institution is therefore of much more weight than the opinion of an individual who could not have had the same means of judging of its merits.

The fact that you are alone responsible for the expression in the journal disarms the criticism of much of its force; for however the world may give you credit for knowledge in the line of physical science you are of no authority in the line of ethnology. Still the public do not know that you are the sole editor and that the remarks were your own. I am sure if the article is noticed by the editor of the Boston Advertiser he will copy the remarks and give them as the opinion of the committee, at least, if not that of the society.

I wish for the sake of the Institution the Antiquarian Society and myself that you would reconsider the matter and though you may in some degree hold the same opinion you will express it in another form.

I may perhaps be too sensitive in such matters but during the last few years so many attacks have been made upon the Institution that I consider it my duty to notice all criticisms which come from a respectable source whatever may be my personal relations with their authors.

With you I desire to be on terms of the most friendly character for though you do frequently speak out what others may silently think, and criticise severely, though perhaps justly, your warmest friends, yet I am confident that you are, what those who know you best declare you to be,—a truly honest and generous man.

I am rejoiced to learn that you have returned with renewed health and I most sincerely hope that you will long be spared to your family and the world. You have talents and influence and though you may some times



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give a blow in the wrong direction I know you desire to advance the truth and promote the best interests of humanity.

If I can get away from this city I intend to visit Philadelphia some time during next month and if I do so I shall not fail to spend the greater portion of my time with you.

With kind regards to your wife<sup>5</sup>

I remain very truly  
your friend & serv't  
Joseph Henry

Prof. Frazer  
Philadelphia

Frazer Papers, Library, American Philosophical Society.

1. Not found.

2. Frazer's unsigned notice of volume 7 of Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge appeared in the July issue of the *Journal of the Franklin Institute*, 1855, 30:286-287. Frazer, editor of the journal, began by expressing his pleasure that the Smithsonian survived "the recent attempt to diminish or destroy [its] usefulness," and gave the volume a generally positive review, especially praising the quality of the plates as "equal to any executed abroad." But he was unsparing in his criticism of the longest article, *The Antiquities of Wisconsin, as Surveyed and Described*, by I. A. Lapham. Frazer compared it to an account of someone's suffering from a toothache or rheumatism. Lapham's article, wrote Frazer, "appears to contain nothing in any way more interesting to the mass of mankind or to any particular class of it, and if Professor Henry will accept for publication all the lucubrations of equal value, which are sent for publication to our various societies, there will certainly be no quarreling about surplus funds." Frazer asserted that specialists in the field of American antiquities were nearly unanimous in thinking that

the article possesses no novelty or intrinsic value sufficient to re-pay the cost of publication or the labor of reading it, and we should come to the same conclusion from a mere inspection of the wood cuts of articles which are common in the most juvenile collections of Indian antiquities.

3. We have not located a retraction by Frazer.

4. Among the research areas Henry had specifically identified as appropriate for Smithsonian support in his 1847 "Programme of Organization" were

ethnological researches, particularly with reference to the different races of men in North America; also explorations, and accurate surveys, of the mounds and other remains of the ancient people of our country.

The impact of the Smithsonian on anthropology is discussed in Curtis M. Hinsley, Jr., *The Smithsonian Institution and the American Indian: Making a Moral Anthropology in Victorian America* (Washington, 1994), pp. 29-79.

5. Charlotte Jeffers Cave Frazer. *DAB*, s.v. "Frazer, John Fries."

166. TO CHARLES HENRY DAVIS

Washington  
Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> 1855

My Dear Capt

After an absence from Washington of about a week I found on my return a number of copies of your address.<sup>1</sup> One of these I read with