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Edited by Marc Rothenberg; Kathleen W. Dorman,
Associate Editor; Frank R. Millikan, Assistant
Editor; Deborah Y. Jeffries and Sarah Shoenfeld,
Research Assistants.

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The Papers of Joseph Henry, Volume 11: January 1866–May 1878: The Smithsonian Years. Edited by Marc Rothenberg; Kathleen W. Dorman, Associate Editor; Frank R. Millikan, Assistant Editor; Deborah Y. Jeffries and Sarah Shoenfeld, Research Assistants. Sagamore Beach, Mass: Smithsonian Institution in association with Science History Publications, 2007. Includes notes on style, illustrations, editorial notes, appendix, text notes, and index. 726 pp. ISBN 0-88135-390-6; EAN 978-0-88135-390-7, \$110.00.

Julie R. Newell

This volume brings to an end a forty-year project that is both a tremendous contribution to the content and practice of the history of American science and a monument to the talents, commitment, and perseverance of its editors. The list of sponsoring institutions provides some indication of the perceived value of this project across a range of academic disciplines: the Smithsonian Institution, the American Philosophical Society, and the National Academy of Sciences.

Twelve volumes in all including the index, the series traces the life of Joseph Henry (1797–1878) from his education and early academic employment in Albany, New York, through his years on the faculty at Princeton, and then to his efforts, as the first Secretary of the Smithsonian, to shape the nature and future of that institution when many did not share his vision. Henry struggled throughout his career to continue to conduct scientific research and to influence the nature and practice of science in the United States. In both his own research and his ideals for American scientific practice and institutions, Henry sought to build a scientific reputation that would be recognized and respected far beyond the boundaries of the United States.

When Nathan Reingold was appointed editor of the Henry Papers Project in 1966, he was one of a small group within the discipline of the history of science interested primarily in American science and scientists. In an essay in the *British Journal of the History of Science* in 1987, Reingold made the philosophy behind his editorial approach explicit:

The Papers of Joseph Henry is designed to be a critical, documentary epic of the origins of the professional scientific community in this country. Although centered around a key figure, our volumes are definitely not a memorial to him. My intentions influence both the selection of documents and their treatment.¹

¹ Nathan Reingold, "On Not Doing the Papers of Great Scientists," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 20 (January 1987): 32.

In an earlier article in *The Public Historian*, Reingold had detailed his editorial process. He also argued quite strongly that all editing requires interpretation, and that such interpretation is an act of professional historical writing.² While Reingold's approach to documentary editing, and his insistence that his work should be considered professional historical writing, were controversial among both academic editors and academic historians, the results of his approach make these volumes valuable on three levels.

Across the first eleven volumes of this series, one can trace three stories. The first is the story of Joseph Henry's life. The documents relevant to the life of perhaps the most important scientific figure of nineteenth-century American science could have been presented with far less editorial content, but it would have been far less rich and accessible. The second is the story of the development of American science in the nineteenth century—its practice, its supporting institutions, and its place in the broader culture and politics of the nation. The third is the development of the discipline of the history of American science itself. These second and third stories are contained not only in the documents but in the volume introductions and in the explanatory and interpretive notes that accompany the documents. This content is extremely valuable and makes a strong case for Reingold's approach and for the status of the editors' work as professional historical scholarship.

The series, originally conceived as fifteen volumes in three series, ultimately appeared in twelve volumes over 36 years.³ There were many changes over the four decades between Reingold's initial appointment and the appearance of volume 12. Among these were changes in personnel, changes in disciplinary knowledge and practice, and very dramatic changes in technology. For instance, from the very beginning, the project was expected to exist in two forms: a very selective and extensively annotated published version; and an extensive (even exhaustive) microfilm collection of Joseph Henry's papers gathered from institutions around the world.⁴ By the time editor Marc Rothenberg wrote the "Introduction" to the eleventh volume, the projected microfilm edition (long since abandoned to rapid technological change) had morphed into a database of over 135,000 items including documents, transcriptions, newspaper articles, essays, and various other supporting materials.⁵ The first six volumes followed the original editorial practices

² Nathan Reingold, "A Historical Editor," *The Public Historian* 2 (Summer 1980): 91.

³ Full publication information and a brief summary of each volume are available on The Joseph Henry Papers Project Web site at <http://siarchives.si.edu/history/jhp/papers01.htm> (accessed 13 April 2009).

⁴ Reingold gave the figures as 250 institutions in 14 countries (Reingold 1980, p. 90). The final figure was 300 institutions in 17 countries. <http://siarchives.si.edu/history/jhp/projec01.htm> (accessed 13 April 2009).

⁵ Rothenberg, p. lv. The database is available at the Smithsonian Institution archives; see <http://siarchives.si.edu/history/jhp/resour01.htm> (accessed 13 April 2009).

set out by Reingold, but editorial policy and practice shifted with volume 7 and the start of the third series to reflect the thirty years of change in the discipline since the beginning of the project. Another major transition came with volume 9, when publication shifted from the Smithsonian Institution Press to Science History Publications. One change that might seem trivial but indicates the tremendous change in context between the first and eleventh volumes: volume 1 had a publisher's listed price of \$15, volume 11 of \$110.

The editorial practices used in producing volume 11 are spelled out in the "Notes on Style" (pp. lix–lxii). This volume, like all the others, is arranged chronologically, rather than thematically or by type of document. Thus the various aspects of Henry's life—his personal life, his scientific life, his institutional life—are integrated rather than compartmentalized. The period covered in volume 11 falls entirely after the disastrous Smithsonian fire of January 1865. The 85,000 pages of correspondence lost in that fire would have been a treasure trove for volumes 7 through 10. On the other hand, the wealth of resources available for the post-fire period had to be winnowed ruthlessly. The volume ultimately contains, according to the editor, "only 0.3 percent of the nearly one-hundred thousand documents datable to the years 1866–1878 written by, to, or about Henry that we have located." In selecting documents for publication, preference was given to those "that throw the most light on Henry's private life and his professional career," and highest priority is given to materials authored by Henry himself.⁶

Many of the documents presented here (as in previous volumes) are followed by editorial notes that may be as long as, or many times longer than, the document itself. While some of these notes refer back to notes in previous volumes, creating a rich cross-indexing of tremendous value to anyone with access to all the volumes, the notes of volume 11 are also fully functional without recourse to the earlier volumes. For any scholar not thoroughly versed in the practice, practitioners, and context of nineteenth-century American science, the editorial notes are critical to understanding the documents and provide rich references to the secondary literature in the field. Even those who are specialists will find a wealth of information and insight in the editorial notes. Anyone who approaches the volumes primarily as a *reader* will find that the editorial notes carry most of the very interesting "story" of the volume, while the documents provide a grounding in reality and at the same time give a flavor of the times and of Henry himself. This volume, like its predecessors, is very enjoyable purely as historical reading, beyond its value to the researcher.

Henry's vision of the Smithsonian Institution as a sponsor of scientific re-

⁶ Rothenberg, p. lix.

search, with minimal demands on its resources for upkeep of buildings or other functions, is very clear. This volume chronicles Henry's efforts to improve the funding of the Institution (successful), remove the library and art collections from Institution responsibility and expense (also successful), and remove the expense and labor involved in responsibility for the National Museum from the charge of the Institution (unsuccessful, but never abandoned).

In addition, Henry served critical leadership roles with both the Light-House Board and the National Academy of Sciences during these years. He struggled to continue his own original research, and, as a man whose opinion on scientific matters was often sought, advocated the support of original scientific ("basic") research in any available setting. Henry continued in all these roles until his death at 80 in May 1878.

Joseph Henry was at the heart of critical institutions that controlled resources both tangible and intangible which were critical to the promotion and support of scientific activity in the United States. These volumes provide unique access to the primary documents and to the contextual analysis that tell the story of the rise of science to a place of political influence and cultural importance in a nation that (now) thinks of itself as a scientific world power.