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relations entitle me to make, and you must pay just as much attention to them as in your judgment they may merit. With my respects to Mr^s Henry I remain

Truly & Sincerely Yours
Amos Dean

FROM SAMUEL F. B. MORSE

*Henry Papers, Smithsonian Archives*¹

Washington Oct^r 17th 1846—

My dear Sir,

Some months ago I learned with much surprize and regret that some dissatisfaction rested in your mind in regard to me. The person who first intimated it to me was D^r Gale, and more recently our mutual friend Prof. Ellet. He informed me in substance that you felt aggrieved, considering that I had not done you justice in my accounts of the Magnetic Telegraph. I could not but express my astonishment, and I searched my memory to know how, or where, or when, I could have done you the alleged injustice, conscious as I was and am that no man in the country held a higher place in my respect and affection than yourself. D^r Gale suggested that it might be in the work of M^r Vail my Assistant, Prof. Ellet also stated that you considered me responsible for the statements and conduct of that work. I immediately took up the work and eagerly turned over its pages in search of the injustice on my part, which, if anywhere, must be found in the Congressional Reports and Documents and also to ascertain if injustice had anywhere been done you by M^r Vail. I could only conjecture, and I presumed that it would possibly be found in the account which M^r Vail has given of Magneto-Electricity page 135 and onward.² If here there has been an omission of your name and discoveries, I am confident that a plain statement of the position I hold to M^r Vail's work will at least exonerate me from blame, and I am also sure from the high consideration in which I know that you and your labors are held by M^r Vail, no intentional omission was made on his part.

In regard, then, to my relation to the work in question, I will state that I had long desired to have the History of Electric Telegraphs collected & published that justice might be done to foreign savans who had conceived

¹ A draft, dated October 15, 1846, is in the Morse Papers, Library of Congress. The outgoing letter was published by Morse in *Shaff-*

ner's Telegraph Companion, 1855, 2:77-79.

² See above, Alfred Vail to Henry, July 17, 1846.

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plans of Telegraphs as well as to myself. I had collected accounts of several of the various projects devised in Europe, and hoped to have the leisure to put them in form for publication myself; but my other absorbing duties prevented, and M^r Vail being desirous of preparing such a work I gave him, my materials, (which consisted *solely* of the plans of different European Electric Telegraphs,) to which materials he made many additions from his own researches, and to him I consigned all the labor, and all the responsibility of their preparation, and the credit and profit which might arise from the work.

Just before I left for Europe in the autumn of last year (1845) I read over at M^r Vail's request for correction and comparison with the plates, a small portion of the manuscript of this work, consisting only of the plans and descriptions of my own Telegraph. The work was completed and published by M^r Vail while I was absent, and for his own benefit. You will see, my dear Sir, by this statement what share I could have had in any omissions of M^r Vail.

So soon as I returned to Washington in July last, I apprized M^r Vail of what I had heard in regard to your feelings, and he also expressed his astonishment and regret that any thing should even by accident, have occurred which should have given you pain, and I immediately suggested the propriety of his writing to you to disabuse you of any unfavorable impressions his omissions may have occasioned in your mind. At his request I prepared for him a letter to you dated (about) July 22^d which he informs me he copied and sent you.³ To this letter he tells me you have not replied. (It may possibly have miscarried.) I supposed if you received it that it would exonerate him, (and certainly myself,) from any blame, which a misapprehension, on your part, of my Agency in the work may have produced. On Tuesday last, however, the day before I left New York, I accidentally fell in with M^r George Prosch who had recently, (he told me,) enjoyed your kind hospitalities. M^r Prosch gave me to understand that you had spoken of me, (how lately I don't know,) in terms which implied that you still felt much hurt at something I had done, or had not done, but I could not learn what it was, nor have I now any clue to the cause of your aggrieved feelings towards me.

Now, my dear Sir, I cannot believe you capable of doing any one the injustice to entertain suspicions of him without giving him some opportunity to exculpate himself. If I have, indeed, given you any cause to feel aggrieved, I beg you to tell me of it in all frankness, and then if I do not satisfy you that you have had groundless suspicions, you will have a right to feel aggrieved.

³ Morse is referring to the date he gave to his draft of Vail's letter to Henry of July 17,

1846. See note 1 of that letter, above.

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If I have done you any wrong inadvertently, I will make you the most ample amends. I certainly am unconscious of ever doing you the slightest injustice, in thought, word, or deed. On the contrary, I am sure of entertaining only the most exalted opinion of your genius, and your labors, and on all occasions whenever, your name was mentioned, or when I spoke of you, I have always thus expressed my feelings of respect, and *affection*, and, therefore, in view of this matter, I confess to feelings of deep regret and mortification. I can truly say that if I had heard that my own brother was thus entertaining, such unfounded suspicions of me I could not feel more surprize or more unfeigned regret.

I trust, I need not say more, and that you will let me know directly from yourself, and not through others, the nature and extent of my supposed offending, so that, if I have, indeed, unwittingly offended, I may make proper amends, and if I have not, that you may be satisfied that your suspicions are groundless.

With Sincere respect
Y^r Ob. Serv^t
Sam^l F: B: Morse. . .

P.S. My address for a few weeks will be, New York city.⁴

⁴ On October 23, 1846, Henry acknowledged receipt of Morse's letter and promised a fuller response in a week. Morse Papers, Library of Congress. No such response was sent.

Henry's private opinion is spelled out in his annotations. Just below Morse's postscript he wrote:

This is a very good letter and I think it probable that Prof M. intended to do me full justice but when he came to learn the precise state of the case he had not the magnimity to do that which was right (See my evidence on the telegraph case) J. H.

In the left-hand margin next to the penultimate paragraph of the body of the letter, he commented that "the satisfaction never came. It could not be given without injury to the patent of Mr Morse."

In making these ex post facto remarks, Henry demonstrated how far his relationship with Morse had deteriorated during the late 1840s and 1850s. Some of the events are summarized above in *Vail to Henry*, July 17, 1846, note 6. Others will be documented in later volumes of *The Papers of Joseph Henry*.