

Albany May 5<sup>th</sup> 1862

My dear Sir

I have this P.M. received by mail the Canadian Naturalist and Geologist for April 19<sup>th</sup>. At page 156 there is an article on the date of the Geological Report of Wisconsin.

I have endeavored to avoid controversy by remaining silent under the numerous and persistent attacks of Mr. Billings, who himself well knows the original cause of the animus he has exhibited.

In the matter of the Wisconsin Report there is little to be said - I made the communication to Gov. Randall according to its date, the requirements of the Law being that the Report be in the Governor's hand, by the first of January of each year. The title page and date are supplied from the Governor's Office without data from me.

I know that the Report was in prep early in March 1861, for I then read a proof ~~of~~ in Madison, that it was not printed and published earlier than it was, is not my fault. In regard to date of communication and of publication

the same objections lies against all geological reports and particularly those of Canada, but the man has not been found who is base enough to make this the cause of insinuation against the authors.

The remarks upon Lingula polita are natural and unavoidable after knowing that it is the same as that referred by Owen to Obolus, and this is doubtless the origin of the suggestion to Mr Billings, who knew the Wisconsin species to be the one referred by Owen to the Genus Obolus.

I collected the specimens examined, in October 1860, and soon after my return to Albany made the comparisons and observations.

I sent you during the summer a proof of the first form, which you wrote me you did not receive, and subsequently I sent another. Sometime afterwards, in December, I sent a copy of the pamphlet which you, in replying, told me you turned over to Billings, as he was investigating similar subjects. Billings carefully avoids allusion to having seen a copy before

those received in March.

Mr Billing, does not hesitate to infer that my note to Silliman's Journal must have been in the hands of the Editors a month earlier than the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, notwithstanding the date of the 19<sup>th</sup> December. This note was prompted by the receipt of Mr Billing's paper, and it is not to be supposed that the editors of the Am. Journal would allow a communication of first of December to go in with date of 19<sup>th</sup> Dec. At all events it was not written till after the middle of December.

I have been strenuously advised by my friends to take no notice of the vituperations of Billing, and when Prof. Agassiz was at my house in December last he exacted a promise from me that I would not reply to these attacks,

one point further in reference to date if you have no means of satisfying yourself. Vol. I Geol. Report of Wisconsin was finished in 1861, but owing to some little delay in the publication, I insisted on changing the date 1861 to January 1862, in opposition to the printer's views.

In this volume, which has been distributed by the Wisconsin Legislature, you will see Lingula polita under fossils of the Potsdam sandstone, and again on page\* of Catalogue of Fossils where the page of Annual Report is referred to. This Catalogue was completed and printed in December 1861, — and I could scarcely have received Billings' paper <sup>of November</sup> and afterwards have sent to Wisconsin the ill. of page 24, have received the pamphlet and made and printed the Catalogue, all before the first of January.

I can no longer remain silent and yet I cannot defend myself from a ruffian, whom indeed I would not condescend to notice except that his meretricious position brings him among honorable men with a sort of authority for what he says —

Very truly yours —

James Hall

\* I have not a copy of the Volume now, but some extra copies which I had printed at my own expense will be ready next week and I will send you one.

May 12<sup>th</sup>

P.S. Since my letter was written I have enquired of Mr Whitfield my Assistant and Draughtsman if he recollects the time at which I was engaged on these collections; and, though he cannot verify the date, he has a memorandum of a box of Specimens sent to Captain Anderson on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1861 in which were some specimens of this little shell under the name of Lingula polita. I enclose you a copy of his statement, which can be verified at any time.

I have been compelled to make a second journey to Wisconsin, and since my return, a month since, I have been too ill to do any thing. These causes together had quite put out of my mind the Lycopodites, which were ready to send you last winter. Shall I still send them? - If you say yes I will not allow of an hour's delay after I receive your directions - I regret to say that the best specimens are very unsatisfactory, being little more than impressions in the stone.

JA

(copy)

Albany May 12<sup>th</sup> 1862

I certify that on the ninth day of February, 1861, I sent to Captain James Anderson, at that time of the Cunard Steam Ship "Canada" a box of fossils, among which were some specimens of Potsdam Sandstone from Trempealeau, Wisconsin, containing small Linguloid shells, given to me by Prof. James Hall under the name Lingula polita; which name was written upon the labels sent with the specimens.

Without being able to designate the precise time, I know of my own knowledge that at a time previous to the date specified above (9<sup>th</sup> of February 1861) Prof. Hall had made comparisons of his small fossil with the figures and descriptions of Dr. D. D. Owen; who had designated it as Obolus apolinus? and that its relation to Obolus and its differences therefrom, as exhibited in figures given by Davidson were fully discussed by Prof. Hall and myself.

(signed) R. P. Whitfield

Pup. Wall  
May 162

Spring  
Fall