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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letters from Spencer Baird to George Lawrence (Jul. - Sept. 1871)

**Date:** July - September 1871

**Location:** MC 2000.11, B1, F11

### Contact:

Archives & Special Collections  
Waidner-Spahr Library  
Dickinson College  
P.O. Box 1773  
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

[archives@dickinson.edu](mailto:archives@dickinson.edu)

24796.

July 18

Wood's Hole, Mass. July 7. 1871.

Dear Lawrence.

I was much concerned to hear of Mrs Lawrence's indisposition, & am glad to learn that she has improved so rapidly. I hope that before long you will be able to leave town & betake yourself to more comfortable summered quarters.

The Carbolic acid came all right, & the last lot is very satisfactory. It seems to be precisely the same kind as that which we had before, with glass stoppers, for which we paid 75 cts a bottle. I think you may as well send me another dozen, as we use it rapidly, & it will be well to have it on hand.

We are having good success & much enjoyment in the marine work of fishing & dredging, & would be glad if you could be down here to see part of the fun. Why can you not try the experiment of coming to Edgartown for a few weeks? You can get excellent accommodations there at from \$8 to \$12 per week, in so-called hotels, boarding houses & private families. I have sent several Philadelphia persons there, & they appear to enjoy themselves very much. There is excellent blue-fishing there, with enough being taken to spoil the rest of catching a half-dozen large ones in the course of a half day's sailing. You can go



readily from Edgartown to Nantucket, either by steamer  
direct, if one happens to be running, or back again  
by way of New Bedford. If you wish I will have  
quarters engaged for you at Edgartown, if you will  
let me know when you will come. The route is  
very simple, taking the Fall River Steamer or the  
Shore Line Railroad, so as to reach New Bedford  
any day at 2 o'clock P.M., & take the Steamer  
Monohansett at that hour, direct for Edgar-  
town, stopping at Wood's Hole.

We will, of course, take great pleasure in  
lending the hummingbirds in our collection to Mr  
Gould, but cannot part with any unique types on any  
consideration whatever. In view of the fact that we  
have nearly 300 species of Hummers, it is saying  
a good deal to say that we are not making a  
collection.

I do not think I can do any thing  
in the matter until I get back. Geladen  
might pick out the specimens, if there, but he  
will be absent probably till the end of this month. In writing  
you can mention these facts to Gould, & if you will remind  
me on my return of his wishes, I will act promptly & I am  
sure Prof. Henry will authorize the lending of the specimens.

Very truly yours.

Geo. N. Lawrence Esq.  
172 Pearl Street,  
N. Y.

J. V. Baird

Wood's Hole, Mass. July, 7. 1871.

Dear Lawrence.

I was much concerned to hear of Mrs Lawrence's indisposition; & am glad to learn that she has improved so rapidly. I hope that before long you will be able to leave town & betake yourself to more comfortable Summer quarters.

The Carbolic acid came all right, & the last lot is very satisfactory. It seems to be precisely the same kind as that which we had before, with glass stoppers, for which we paid 75 cts a bottle. I think you may as well send me another dozen, as we use it rapidly, & it will be well to have it on hand.

We are having good success & much enjoyment in the marine work of fishing & dredging, & would be glad if you could be down here to see part of the fun. Why can you not try the experiment of coming to Edgartown for a few weeks? You can get excellent accommodations there at from \$8 to \$12 per week, in so called hotels, boarding houses & private families. I have sent several Philadelphia persons there, & they appear to enjoy themselves very much. There is excellent blue-fishing there, not enough being taken to spoil the rest of catching a half-dozen large ones in the course of a half day's sailing. You can go

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If you wish I will have quarters engaged for you at Edgartown, if you will let me know when you will come. The route is very simple, taking the Fall River Steamer or the Shore Line Railroad, so as to reach New Bedford any day at 2 o'clock P.M., & take the Steamer Monohausett at that hour, direct for Edgartown, stopping at Wood's Hole.

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I do not think I can do any thing in the matter until I get back. Zeladon might pick out the specimens, if there, but he will be absent probably till the end of this month. In writing you can mention these facts to Gould, & if you will remind me on my return of his wishes, I will act promptly & I am sure Prof. Henry will authorize the lending of the specimens.

Very truly yours,  
S F Baird

Geo. N. Lawrence Esq.  
172 Pearl Street,  
N.Y.



24852.



Wood's Hole, Mass. July 20, 1871.

My dear Lawrence.

The carbolic acid came duly to hand, for which I am, as ever, much obliged to you. How people do who have not any Geo. N. Lawrence to help them out of all their difficulties I cannot imagine. I trust it will be a great many years before I cease to have a Geo. N. Lawrence to bother, & he is without an S. F. B. to keep him busy.

We have all just returned from a very pleasant excursion to Nantucket, having gone Tuesday in the revenue steamer, & returned last evening. I saw nothing of moment in the birds line, but otherwise there was much to interest us all.

I am sorry I did not receive your order before I started, as I could then have asked some of our friends at Edgartown <sup>about their table.</sup>

who were of the party. They say nothing specially about their food, but I have no doubt they get a sufficiency of fresh <sup>at the sea shore being</sup> meat, <sup>but</sup> ~~but~~ great difficulty generally, to get fish enough.

They are catching quantities of blue fish now about Edgartown, the regular market boats taking from 50 to 100 a day. They are also extremely fine.



I am sorry to hear that Sclater & Salvin have been misbehaving in regard to specimens, but hope it was an inadvertence on their part. I can hardly think that they would wilfully endeavor to Chouse you out of a species, & can easily imagine that in the great number of birds they have to overhaul, they may become a little Confused, as to meum & tuum. At any rate, as they are very serviceable to you in making indentifications, you can perhaps consider this transaction in the light of a payment on your part, by giving them a species. You have described so many new birds, & are likely to have so many more, that it is not a matter of much consequence whether you lose a species or not, especially as there seems to be still a chance that your own name will hold good. Upon the whole, therefore, I would not make any disturbance, but console yourself with the fact that you make good use of them in having them compare your doubtful specimens with their types; & that, after all, the advantage is on your side.

Very truly Yours.

Spencer V. Baird

Geo. N. Lawrence.

172, Pearl Street,

New York.

Wood's Hole, Mass. July 20, 1871.

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Very truly yours,  
Spencer F Baird

Geo. N. Lawrence.  
172 Pearl Street,  
New York.



Wood's Hole, Mass. Aug. 29. 1871.  
 Dear Laurence.

With your letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> just before me I really think that you could spend a few weeks quite pleasantly at Edgartown, the crowd of visitors having gone away so that there are plenty of good accommodations to be had. The boarding is quite satisfactory for a country place, & the blue fishing is capital, some parties having lately caught over a hundred large fish in the course of a day.

I wish I could ask you to come to Wood's Hole, but there is no chance here, nor likely to be for some weeks to come. The only available house in the place has parties at Edgartown waiting to occupy it wherever the present occupants leave.

Cotuit Port I have never visited, though I have often seen it from the Dory. It is, I believe, quite a pleasant place, but I doubt if it is better than Edgartown.

The Ocean House at Nantucket is a first class establishment, however, if you prefer going there I think you would be well pleased. Still, if you were at Edgartown

- your



we could manage to all something of you, while you would be too far off at the other places.

It is very well for Middleton to speak of fish being so extremely abundant - this season.

It is as if a farmer who has been in the habit of killing one pair of Chickens a month, should conclude for some reason to use up his stock of poultry & kill a pair every day.

The temporary abundance might be much greater, but the stock would run out in a short time, leaving none to keep up the breed.

In this section there are certainly three pounds to one, last year; & there were more last year than the year before; so that all hammering away simultaneously they would bring on a glut of fish in markets, to be followed by a great scarcity.

Our time of leaving here is not yet decided upon, but it will probably be sometime before the end of September. We expect to reach New York near the end of the month or early in October, so as to be in Washington by the middle of that month.

Very truly yours,

Spencer Baird

Geo. N. Lawrence Esq.

172 Pearl Street  
N.Y.

Wood's Hole, Mass. Aug. 29. 1871.

Dear Lawrence,

With your letter of the 26th inst. before me I really think that you could spend a few weeks quite pleasantly at Edgartown. The crowd of visitors having gone away so that there are plenty of good accommodations to be had. The boarding is quite satisfactory for a country place, & the blue fishing is capital, some parties having lately caught over a hundred large fish in the course of a day.

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Very truly yours,  
Spencer F Baird

Geo. N. Lawrence Esq.  
172 Pearl Street  
N.Y.



#  
25032.

Woods Hole, Mass. Sept: 13, 1871.

Dear Lawrence.

I have yours of the 10<sup>th</sup>, and hasten to say that as soon as I received Dr Van Patten's letter, which was considerably delayed on the route, I answered it, & wrote at the same time to Mr. Hillier. I find that I neglected to return to him the letter of Ribon & ~~Starr~~ Munoz.

I did the best in my power as regards these specimens, asking Mr Hillier to give him every latitude, though they really are not entitled to preference. If the whole invoice had been for the Smithsonian, or the whole had come addressed to the Institution, & he administered entirely by it we could have claimed the remission of duty; but as the collection was intended for sale, it was clearly not legitimately entitled to this remission, although the Custom House authorities could use their discrimination in the matter.



I should be glad to meet the doctor, & hope he will  
be in New York when I arrive there. My move-  
ments are still uncertain, but it is quite probable  
that we shall reach New York from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the  
10<sup>th</sup> of October, when I hope to have the pleasure  
of seeing you & discussing our several ad-  
ventures during the season.

Very truly yours,  
Spencer Ward

Geo. N. Lawrence,  
172, Pearl Street,  
New York.



Woods Hole, Mass. Sept. 13, 1871.

Dear Lawrence,

I have yours of the 10th, and hasten to say that as soon as I received Dr Van Patten's letter, which was considerably delayed on the route, I answered it, & wrote at the same time to Mr. Hillier. I find that I neglected to return to him the letter of Ribon & ~~Munas~~ Muniz

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Very truly yours,  
Spencer F Baird

Geo. N. Lawrence,  
172 Pearl Street,  
New York.

Wood's Hole, Sept. 30, 1871.

My dear Lawrence.

Yours of the 27<sup>th</sup> is at hand, & I write to say that I am now packing up, expecting to leave this place about Tuesday or Wednesday of next week, & proceed to Boston; & shall probably be in N. York the beginning of the week following, when I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you.

Do you know of any good boarding place in the upper part of the city, where we could find accommodations for the three or four days of our stay?

I shall have to remain to attend to some matters of business about that length of time, & do not quite like to contemplate the big hotel prices. I do not suppose there is such a thing as a comfortable hotel in a good part of the city, where the cost of board is not over three or three & a half dollars; if there is I would like to hear of it.

I did the best I could for Van Patten,



I am sorry he has not succeeded in carrying  
through his collection. We could not, however,  
with any propriety, claim them as ours, when  
the contrary was actually the case.

Very truly yours.

Spencer W. Baird

Geo. N. Lawrence Esq.  
172, Pearl Street,  
New York.



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Very Truly yours,  
Spencer F Baird

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172 Pearl Street,  
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