

W. Newcomb

Oakland Cal.

Nov. 25. 1867

Hon. E. Cornell

Dear Sir,

Our mutual friend  
Colo. E. Jewett has repeatedly written  
to me in relation to the disposition  
of my Collection in Conchology to the  
Cornell University. My chief inducement,  
in parting with the labor of over thirty  
years in collecting in Europe, or some  
20 of the West India Islands, in Smeram  
in Equador, New Grenada, Costa Rica  
Nicaragua, Mexico, California and the  
Sandwich Islands, and extensive exchanges  
with many Naturalists in <sup>various</sup> ~~many~~ Countries,  
is, that they may have a permanent and  
secure resting place not subject to the  
Casualty of fire or to being broken up at  
my death. You have probably been informed  
by Colo. Jewett of the extent of the Collection  
which is by no means complete, - although

P. S. My shells cover in the  
most compact form I can  
arrange them 1236 square  
feet, and in many Cases  
they are piled upon each  
other for want of space,  
No display them properly  
would require a surface of  
three times that number of  
feet

W. N.

he may have honestly conveyed such an idea to your mind. There is in fact no complete collection in existence. That of the British Museum, after the addition of the Cumingian Museum being the most perfect, and yet I have many species not contained in their joint collection.

New species are continually being discovered and described. In 2 drawers (of one of my cases of 50 drawers) I have of one Genus (*Achateuella*) over 100 species which I have collected and described myself as new in Zoological Proc. London, Nat. Hist. Society of Boston, Lyceum of Nat. Hist. Proceedings New York and Proc. Nat. Hist. Soc. San Francisco. — all within the past 15 years.

These have cost me an outlay of \$1500 in gold to collect, and do not constitute one three hundred & fiftieth part of my land shells alone.

My proposition is to dispose of the entire collection with some hundred thousands of duplicates to your Institution, to go to your place to mount them, carrying on my exchanges in the mean time for the benefit of the University, and taking such time as I may choose to carry on as heretofore my personal collecting, — Next month with my dredge I expect to spend at San Diego, San Pedro, and the Islands in their neighborhood to add to duplicates as well as to perfect my California fauna. —

It is to me of some considerable importance to have a decision made soon as to the disposal of the Collection for my future course will depend upon the result. —

Should you decide to take them they should be shipped by the 1<sup>st</sup> of next July and will require not less than two months <sup>time</sup> of careful packing to get them in readiness. As soon as started I propose to visit the Sandwich Islands to be absent two months perhaps three, to carefully examine 3 or 4 Collections there, and if any thing is found not in my Collection to purchase, and at the same time to engage in dredging and working up a portion of the Island of Kawai that I have not personally examined. Upon my return I propose to spend 10 days at Acapulco and as long a time at Panama en route home. By this means with but a moderate expense I should add very much to the duplicates (and something to the number of Species) which would serve for exchanges

I have due me from India 1500 Species of Persian Gulf & Indian Shells for payment ~~of~~ those forwarded. — From several European Correspondents and numerous Americans I have a Creditor a/c, all of which will of course be included in the sale. —

It is not my purpose to ever Commence another Collection, but to add in the future all I can obtain

to the one I now have) wherever that may be deposited —

The price named, is not in my estimation the value of the Collection as it now stands, but others may not agree with this opinion. At all events, in the final result, the offer covers more than double the sum of fifteen thousand Dols. the price which was named by Col. Jewett.

I am sure that for that amount in gold I could not in 20 years gather such a Collection again, for my facilities have been remarkably good and no money has been spared thus far in making the collection perfect in the Character of the Specimens and in adding to the number of species.

My Professional income that I should relinquish amounted last year to \$7000. and will equal that sum this year. But I am weary with practice and should be glad to retire from Professional pursuits to devote myself exclusively to Scientific Studies in my Specialty. We shall have a University in this place that would probably in a few years be glad of the Collection; but I would much prefer that it should go to my Native State of New York. — Please excuse my addressing you on the Subject, and at your convenience should be happy to hear from you I am Sir truly Yours W. Newcomb