LIBRARY OF CONGRESS: ARCHIBALD MacLEISH PSF

PSF: L. C. — Archibald MacLeish
Box [redacted]
Subject File 152

C
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P
Y

FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT

Sunday, May 28 [1939]

Dear Mr. President:

I must apologize for my delay in writing this letter. It is not, I assure you, a delay caused by carelessness or neglect. For four days - ever since I left your office last Tuesday - nothing else has been in my mind, waking or sleeping, but the question of the words which this letter ought to contain. The difficulty of answering that question has made me as miserable as the necessity of answering it has made me proud.

You will perhaps recall what the difficulty was when you first suggested to me that you had considered me for the post of Librarian of Congress. It was a difficulty of time. My trade is poety and poetry, though it is a non-continuous operation, is nevertheless a time-consuming operation. My fear, when you first spoke of a possible appointment, was the fear that a job of such responsibility and importance would leave no time for my own work. Later, because I believe so deeply in the possibilities of the job, I attempted to argue myself into a contrary opinion. I argued so successfully that I wrote you two letters, each of which I later destroyed. When it came down to it I could not believe that the job of Librarian of Congress was a job a man with an art to practice could fairly undertake. Either the art or the library would suffer, and either result would be disatrous to the man. I have been round and round the apple tree for four days but I end up every day at the same place.

I have therefore sadly and regretfully concluded that there is nothing to be gained by going round again. I can only thank you with all my heart for thinking of me and for the great honor you have done me and tell you with what regret I feel I must decline.

I should like also to add this, if you will permit me to do so. One reason why the job of librarian of Congress frightens me is the fact that the job is pretty much a permanent job. A man would hardly be much good at it for three or four years and it would be unfair of him to leave until he had passed his apprenticeship and served for many years thereafter. I should therefore feel, in taking it, that I have given up my own work pretty much for the rest of my life. I should not feel the same way about work which did not have this character. I should also be proud to be of service to you. If therefore the occasion should arise when you felt I could be of service to you I hope you will not think that my inability to accept the office you have now in mind implies that I intend to crawl into an ivory tower. I do intend to put in the next year writing a long poem, if the world doesn't blow up under us. And I am not, as I think you know, a job-hunter in any sense of the word. But I admire you and your work, as you may realize. And I should be proud indeed to be useful to you in any capacity which did not deprive me of the trade I follow.

Very respectfully yours,

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

To The President

Washington, D. C.

BF
MacLeish

FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT Box 156

Sunday May 27

Dear Mr. President:

I must apologize for my delay in writing this letter. It is not, I assure you, a delay caused by carelessness or neglect. For four days — ever since I left your office last Tuesday — what she has been in my mind, waking or sleeping, but the question of the words which this letter ought to contain. The difficulty of answering that question has made me a miserable as the necessity of answering it has made me proud.

You will perhaps recall what the difficulty was when you first suggested to me that you had considered me for the post of Librarian of Congress. It was a difficulty of time. My task is partly and partly, though it is a non-continuous operation, is nevertheless a time-consuming operation. My fear, when you first spoke

of a possible appointment, was the fear that a job of such responsibility & importance would leave me no time for my own work. Later, because I believe so deeply in the possibilities of the job, I attempted to argue myself into a contrary opinion. I argued so miserably that I wrote you two letters, each of which I later destroyed. When it came down to it I could not believing that the job of Librarian of Congress was a job a man with an art to practice could fairly undertake. Either the art or the library would suffer, and either result would be disastrous to the man. I have been round and round the offer for four days but I end up every day at the same place. I have thought sadly, and respectfully, concluded that there is nothing to be gained by going round it again. I can only thank you with all my heart for thinking of me and for the

great honor you have done me and tell you with what regret I feel I must decline.

I should like also to add this, if you will permit me to do so: One reason why the job of librarian to Congress troubles me is the fact that the job is pretty much a permanent job. A man would hardly be much good at it for three or four years and it would be unfair of him to learn until he had passed the apprenticeship and served for many years thereafter. I should therefore feel, in taking it, that I had given up my own work pretty much for the rest of my life. I should not feel the same way about work which did not have this character. I should also be proud to be of service to you. If therefore the occasion should arise when you felt I could be of service to you I hope you will not think that my inability to accept the office you have in your mind implies that I intend to withdraw into any ivory tower. I do intend to put in the next year writing a long poem, if the World doesn't blow up under me. But I am not, as I think you know, a job-hunter in any sense of the word. But I admire you and your work, as you may realize, and I should be proud, proud indeed, to be useful to you in any capacity which did not deprive me of the trade I follow.

Very respectfully yours

Archibald MacLeish

To The President
Washington D.C.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WASHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

NR. 76-70

folder PSF: MacLeish

Library of Congress

June 6, 1939.

Dear Archie MacLeish:-

It is one of those curious facts that when I got your first letter I took to my bed with a severe attack of indigestion — and that when your second letter came I found myself able to rise and resume my normal life.

You make me very happy and the nomination will go to the Senate in a few days. I will take care of the matter of approval by the Senators from your State.

It is perfectly all right about your taking office after the Summer is over — say the end of September or the first of October. And I am also very clear that you will be able to take "time off" for writing, especially if you like travel to distant parts where you could also improve your knowledge of ancient literature. For example, as Librarian of Congress, you should become thoroughly familiar with the inscriptions on the stone monuments of Easter Island — especially in their relationship to similar sign writing alleged to exist on ancient sheepskins in some of the remoter lamaseries of Tibet. If you go on such a trip I would like to go along as cabin boy and will guarantee that I will not interrupt the Muse when she is flirting with you!

As ever yours,

Archibald MacLeish, Esq.,
Farmington,

1939

PSF: MacLeish

THE BOSTON GLOBE—THURSDAY, JUNE 8

Notable Choice

The nomination of Archibald MacLeish to be head of the Library of Congress brings to one of the great cultural centers of the world a man of achievement and imagination. As poet, editor and director of the Niemann fellowships in journalism at Harvard, Mr. MacLeish is ranked in the forefront of American men of letters.

The magnificent library at Washington is far more than a collection of books. Among its possessions are priceless manuscripts, rare pictures and a steadily increasing number of films and records which will keep the personages and events of today and tomorrow alive and fresh for generations yet to come.

The broad foundations on which Dr. Herbert Putnam built for the past 40 years support an institution aptly described as a university without lecturers or laboratories. The services it renders to students who come to it from all countries of the earth are almost infinite in their variety.

With Mr. MacLeish as librarian, the work may be expected to extend in directions not yet guessed. The combination of man and opportunity is a great prospect for the future.

What About 1940?

By M. E. Henne

One Term Enou
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Boston Globe

LIBRARIAN MacLEISH

The enthusiasm in Washington when the President named Archibald MacLeish as librarian of Congress, to succeed Herbert Putnam, will be duplicated here, in New York, and wherever Mr. MacLeish is known. It was said of Herbert Hoover that he selected the ideal man when he named Justice Cardozo to the Supreme Court; and almost as much may be said of the honoring of Mr. MacLeish.

He was first man in his class at the Harvard Law School, and declined an appointment to the faculty. He was one of the most promising young lawyers in Boston when he left one of the leading law firms to give all his time to literature. As an editor of Fortune, a Pulitzer prize winner in poetry, a writer of excellent prose, a man of affairs, an administrator, and, as the President characterized him, "a gentleman and a scholar," he deserves immediate, unanimous, hearty confirmation.

The President will be criticized, perhaps, for his failure to pick a trained librarian. The obvious reply is that far more than technical ability is requisite for the supervision of one of the great libraries of the world. A skilled orthodox librarian could have been found easily enough, but none with the qualifications of Mr. Putnam. The purely professional features of the position can be learned easily by a man of Mr. MacLeish's endowments and experience.

A pleasing personality and a marked aptitude in speech, public and private, should be of great assistance to him in his relations with members of Congress. The entirely non-political nature of the appointment makes it all the more pleasing.

New York Times

A POET FOR LIBRARIAN

Archibald MacLeish, named by President Roosevelt to succeed the admired Dr. Herbert Putnam as Librarian of Congress, is not a professional librarian. He is a number of other things that should commend him to those who wish to see the great traditions of our national library carried forward. He is an eloquent and impassioned poet—certainly one of the two or three at the top of our American list. Unlike some poets, he has a brilliantly logical mind, which the Harvard Law School recognized twenty years ago by ranking him highest in its graduating class for "scholarship, conduct and character." He has been notably successful as a practicing lawyer and as an editor. There is every reason to believe that he has both the vision and the executive ability to give continued life to an institution which deals not only with books but with all the arts.

The charge has already been made that Mr. MacLeish is tainted with economic heresy. The truth seems to be that, like most poets, he is not entirely satisfied with the world as it is. His poems are alive with pity and indignation. In a necessarily more limping prose he has professed himself as believing "that democracy can be saved and that the American way is the best way out." So warm and generous a spirit, keenly sensitive to the finest cultural traditions, aflame with love of liberty, can hardly be a danger to the Library of Congress.

file
pressman

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folder

CRICKET HILL FARM
CONWAY, MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Mr. President:

Only once in my life have I been sorry that you held your great office. That once was yesterday. For if you had not been President of the Republic I could have written you that your letter was a literary delight as well as a spiritual comfort and that I should value it as long as I lived. Things being as they are I can only thank you for it from the bottom of my heart.

always most respectfully yours

Archie MacLeish

Friday, June 9,

[1939] PSF: L.C.-MacLeish folder

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN
WASHINGTON

October 2

Dear Mr. President:

Your librarian salutes you on his new stationery! He hopes you won't think better of it — or think worse of him.

Your note of today was a warm hand-shake which changed the look of everything. Thank you for it. Always

respectfully yours

Archie

Archibald MacLeish

To The President
The White House
Washington

PSF:L.C.-MacLeish folder
File personal
~~Home~~

Dear Kirby
F.F. (not cl)
thinks perhaps
the President
would glance
at this.
Amach

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

PRESS RELEASE

For release
Thursday, 3:45 P. M.
October 12, 1939

Remarks of Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress,
on the Occasion of the Dedication of The Hispanic Room
in The Library of Congress,
October 12, 1939.

This is an occasion without precedent in the history of the Library of Congress. But not perhaps for the reason of which you think. It is an occasion without precedent in the history of the Library of Congress because it is the first time in the Library's history when the Librarian has opened a new building or a new division with a speech.

The Library moved across from the Capitol to the building in which we stand to the accompaniment of an eloquent and admired silence. Forty years later it pushed its frontiers across the street to the Annex which can be seen from these windows without a single word. Today it opens its Hispanic Room with a speech by the Librarian.

Unkind critics or unkinder friends will suggest that the difference is a difference in librarians---that my predecessor being truly a librarian knew the golden value of that silence to which students in libraries are continually admonished whereas I, being a versifier, suffer from the itch for words which has always characterized my calling. It is a plausible explanation for it contains much truth. There is indeed a difference in Librarians and a difference, I fear, for the worse.

But the real explanation is not this. The real explanation is that the times change as well as the men. There are times when a great institution can let stone and mortar speak for it. And there are other times when it must attempt to speak, however haltingly, for itself.

This is such a time. Once the value of the things of the spirit could be taken for granted. Once it could be taken for granted anywhere in the civilized world that the free inquiry of the free spirit was essential to the dignified and noble life of man. Once it could be assumed as a matter of course that the work of artists, the work of poets, the work of scholars, was good and should be respected, and would be preserved. Now it is no longer possible to assume these things. Now---and it is still incredible to us that it should be true---now such an act of faith in the life of the human spirit as we perform here today, such an act of respect for the labor of poets and scholars and of love for that which they have made, cannot be taken for granted: cannot be left to speak for itself even in a room as beautiful, as eloquent as this. It is necessary for us to say what it is that we are doing and why it is that we are doing it.

I for one am not proud of this necessity. I am not glad that it is necessary to speak.

What we do is this: we dedicate here a room and a division of the Library of Congress which has been set apart for the preservation and the study and the honor of the literature and scholarship of those other republics which share with ours the word American; and which share with ours also the memories of human hope and human courage which that word evokes---evokes now as never before in the history of our hemisphere.

Why we do it is also obvious. We do it because this literature and this scholarship are worthy in themselves of the closest study and the most meticulous care and the greatest veneration; and because they, more than any other literature and more than any other scholarship, help us in this republic to understand the American past which is common to us all.

We are beginning to perceive, as the peaceful dream of the Nineteenth Century fades away and the economic theories and scientific theories, which were to explain everything, fade away with it---we are beginning to perceive that man never was, and never can be, such a philosophic abstraction as the thinkers of that century supposed---that man is a creature living on this earth and that the earth he lives on qualifies his life. America has shaped and qualified and redirected the lives of men living on her continents for four hundred years. But we who are born in America and live our lives here, have not very well understood our relations to these continents, nor our debt to them, nor in what way they have altered us and changed our bodies and our minds.

We have not understood this because we have turned, for the most part, to the literature and the scholarship of Europe for instruction, and for the interpretation of our world. Those of us who were of Latin origin have turned to the literatures of latinized Europe, and those of us who were of English and Celtic and Scandinavian and Teutonic origin to the literatures of northern Europe. We have found there great treasures, great wisdom, high instruction---but only rarely an interpretation of our own lives in terms of the earth we know. Even the American child reading his European poems feels the strangeness: the seasons are wrong, the springs too early or too slow, the birds and animals different.

It is a curious condition but one which, by long habit, we have come to take as natural. We have looked at America with borrowed European eyes so long that we should hardly recognize the country if we saw it with our own. Doubtless we shall continue for many generations to look at America with these eyes. Our cultural inheritance is European by origin, and like other European legatees of other legacies we can enjoy it only in the original currency. Which means

inevitably that we employ that original currency to value our American lives. But though it is inevitable that the great richness of our European past should impose its values upon our American present, it is not inevitable, and it is surely not desirable, that the great richness of our European past should exclude us from the richness of our own.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century there has been accumulating on these continents a body of recorded American experience of the very greatest importance to anyone concerned to understand the American earth and the relation of that earth to the men who live upon it. Because this experience has been recorded in several languages and because it has been deposited in scattered places---places as far apart as Santiago de Chile and Bogotá and Buenos Aires and Mexico City and New Orleans and St. Louis and Quebec---because, furthermore, it has been overlaid with the continuing importation of European literature and European thought---for all these reasons the recorded American experience has not influenced the common life of the Americas as it should have influenced it. It has not been useful to an understanding of the Americas as it should have been useful.

Other men who know these continents better than I know them---other men who know these records of the American experience better than I shall ever know them---will think of many instances in their own lives when the words of men who lived in the Americas before them have made suddenly clear, and suddenly explicable, matters they had long wished to understand. But even in my shallow knowledge of these things there is one such indebtedness. Some twelve years ago in a Paris library I came upon a copy of Bernal Diaz' <u>True History of the Conquest of New Spain</u>. There in that still living, still human, still sharply breathing and believable story of Mexico it seemed to me that I understood for

the first time the central American experience---the experience which is American because it can be nothing else---the experience of all those who, of whatever tongue, are truly American---the experience of the journey westward from the sea into the unknown and dangerous country beyond which lies the rich and lovely city for which men hope.

I tried at that time to make a poem of this understanding. The argument of my poem began---

> Of that world's conquest and the fortunate wars:
> Of the great report and expectation of honor:
> How in their youth they stretched sail: how fared they
>
> Westward under the wind: by wave wandered:
> Shoaled ship at the last at the ends of ocean:
> How they were marching in the lands beyond:
>
> Of the difficult ways there were and the winter's snow:
> Of the city they found in the good lands: how they lay in it:
> How there was always the leaves and the days going...

Other men will say the same thing in other words and many of them better. Historians will tell us how their study of the documents and monuments of Mexico and Peru opened to their minds the true perspective of American civilization---a civilization of which the first European date is the year 1523 when a school for Indian boys was opened in Mexico City---of which the first American date lies deep under the limestone waters of Yucatan and the iron earth of Guatemala. Scholars will speak of the year 1539 when the first book to be printed in the Americas was printed in the city of Mexico. Lovers of human liberty will remember the name of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora who, in the year 1691, at a time when witches were being hung in Salem, successfully defended against the ecclesiastics of Mexico his opinion that the great eclipse of that year was a natural event. They will quote against all witch-burners in all centuries and

countries his noble words: "I stood with my quadrant and telescope viewing the [blackened] sun, extremely happy and repeatedly thanking God for having granted that I might behold what so rarely happens in a given place and about which there are so few observations in the books."

No man living in the United States can truly say he knows the Americas unless he has a knowledge of these things---a knowledge of this other American past, this older American past which shares with ours the unforgettable experience of the journey toward the West and the westward hope.

What we are doing in this room, then, is to dedicate to the uses of the citizens of the United States, and to the uses of learners and readers everywhere, these records of the American experience. In this Hispanic Room of the Library, students of the Americas may follow the great Iberian tradition which has populated with its ideas and its poetry by far the greater part of these two continents. Here they may read the rich and various works written in these continents in the Iberian tongues--the two great tongues which, with our own, have become the American language. Here, if our hopes are realized, Americans may some day find the greatest collection of Hispanic literature and scholarship ever gathered in one place.

There are men in the world today---and many rather than few---who say that the proper study of mankind is not man but a particular kind of man. There are those who teach that the only cultural study proper to a great people is its own culture. There are those also who say that the only real brotherhood is that blood brotherhood for which so many wars have been fought and by which so many deaths are still justified. The dedication of this room and of this collection of books is a demonstration of the fact that these opinions

are not valid in the Americas: that in the Americas, peopled by so many hopes, so many sufferings, so many races, the highest brotherhood is still the brotherhood of the human spirit and the true study is the study of the best.

This is the belief of the people of this Republic expressed by the action of their national Library in the dedication of this room.

tmb

PSF-L.C.: MacLeish

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

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Personal

...E OF THE LIBRARIAN

November 7, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

How you can find time in a day as long as yours to write a letter so delightful is beyond me. I am most grateful for the suggestion which I hereby adopt and claim as my own coinage. May I admit to you, however, that no such happy thought would ever have occurred to me? I am, after all, a professional Librarian - as you ought to know. Thank you with all my heart.

Faithfully yours,

Archie MacLeish

The President
The White House

HMB

File Personal

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN
WASHINGTON

PSF: Mac Leish Corr.

THE WHITE HOUSE
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November 10, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

I know we can hardly hope for the honor of your presence at the little ceremony which will accompany the deposit here of the Magna Carta, but I do want you to know that the spokesman for the barons wishes with all his heart it might be possible. In any event, his eight or nine sentences will be aimed at one public only.

Very respectfully,

Archibald MacLeish

Librarian

To the President
The White House

PSF: L.C. - MacLeish folder, Gen - 2

December 1, 1939.

Dear Archie:

Please thank Mr. Eaton for that fine examination and explanation of the parchment document. How it got into a miscellaneous lot of early Dutchess County deeds is beyond me as I can discover no possible connection.

As ever yours,

Honorable Archibald MacLeish,
Librarian of Congress,
Washington, D. C.

FDR/dj

The President has parchment.

HMB

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

E OF THE LIBRARIAN

File November 20, 1939

Sir:

The Librarian of Congress acknowledges receipt of the President's communication of November 14, 1939, in which the President acknowledges himself conversant with the Indo-Iranian, Coptic, Pictic, and Mayan tongues, but regrets his inability to read an ancient manuscript forwarded to the Librarian under the covering communication of November 14, 1939.

The Librarian of Congress further notes the suggestion of Colonel Watson that the handwriting may be the handwriting of his noble ancestress Pocahontas.

Careful and scientific inquiry by the scholars, antiquarians, archaeologists, mesmerists and handwriting experts of the Library of Congress produces the following information.

First, it is confidently held that the handwriting of the document in question cannot be the handwriting of Pocahontas, since the ink contains no sign of the hairs of Captain John Smith.

Second, it is judged that the document cannot be written by the President's great great grandfather, Jacobus Roosevelt, because of the circumstance that it is a record of hearings in the Court of Common Pleas at Westminster on the thirtieth day of May in the year 1636, a hearing at which, our experts are reasonably certain, Jacobus Roosevelt could not have been present.

Third, it is submitted that the contents of this remarkable document actually refer to an action brought by one Emanuel Bourne and one Richard Hodgkinson against John Jackson and Theodore Grene for recovery of "three messuages, one mill, a hundred and forty acres of land, ten acres of meadow, sixty acres of pasture" and other unspecified land.

All this, together with further breathtaking discoveries of a scholarly and scientific nature, is set forth in the enclosed document prepared by one of our more eminent geophysicists whose work is submitted in the humble hope that it may prove both enlightening and edifying. May I close by assuring the President that anytime he wants to learn the secret of the Great Pyramid, he has only to consult our Manuscript Division where we have all the secrets save (alas) his own.

Very respectfully,

(Enclosure)

Archibald MacLeish
Librarian

The President
The White House

WASHINGTON
THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

November 14, 1939.

Dear Archie:-

About ten days ago I purchased at auction a "lot" of old Dutchess and Columbia County deeds and among them was the enclosed document. Although, as you know, I am thoroughly conversant with the Indo-Iranian, Coptic, Pictic and Mayan tongues, I cannot read this amazing relic of the past. I hesitate to send it to the translation division of the Department of State, even though they admit knowing twenty-four languages. Colonel Watson thinks that it is in the handwriting of his noble ancestress Pocahontas. I myself believe it to have been written by my great-great-grandfather, Jacobus Roosevelt, because in the illuminated heading occur the undoubted words "Jacobus Dei Gratia".

I hear that under your auspices the Library of Congress has deciphered the mystery of the pyramids and I, therefore, humbly pray that you and your experts will tell me what in the name of Sam Hill this old document is about.

As ever yours,

Honorable Archibald MacLeish,
Library of Congress,
Washington, D. C.

file personal

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

Gen

OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN

November 22, 1939

THE WHITE HOUSE
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My dear Mr. President:

Even with the knowledge that I am adding to the burden of your mail, I must tell you how deeply grateful I am to you for your letter about my remarks at Hyde Park. You are kinder than you know.

I have replied in formal and scientific fashion to your inquiry about the mysterious parchment. I hope my voluminous report was not consigned to a file without your seeing it, for the document turns out to have considerable interest.

Very respectfully yours,

Archie

Archibald MacLeish

PSF: MacLeish

A. MacLeish
Gen. -

Dec 11, 1939.

At Felix Frankfurter's suggestion, the President sends Mr. Louis A. Simon a memorandum, asking him what he thinks of putting quotation from MacLeish's speech on Nov. 19th at bottom of bronze tablet which is to go into the hall of Hyde Pk Library.

See: Library folder-Drawer 2-1939

PSF: MacLeish

tmb

H. P. Library file

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

CE OF THE LIBRARIAN

January 31, 1940

Dear Mr. President:

My failure to make suggestions about the Librarian for Hyde Park is not due to forgetfulness but to my failure to turn up anyone in my thinking on the subject who excited me. On Friday night, however, at a Philadelphia meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies, I met Dr. T. C. Blagen, Director of the Minnesota Historical Society, in whom Dr. Leland is very much interested. For whatever it is worth, I want you to know my feeling that he is a grand person and a man from every point of view. My only question would be whether he shouldn't be allowed to go along with the work he is now doing in American History. His account of it stirred me up as have few things I have recently run into. I will keep on scratching the ground but it seems to be pretty stoney going. The man who takes that job will have one of the greatest opportunities of which I have any knowledge to lay out on the line the new conception of Democracy-in-action which the historians must produce and produce fast.

Faithfully yours,

Archibald MacLeish

The President
The White House

PSF: MacLeish

File Personal

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN
WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE
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Dear Mr. President:

The world always seems to make most sense when I see your name on a letter addressed to me — even if it's only a letter to say that Mrs. Eugene Meyer will continue to decorate the Library's Trust Fund Board! Just remember that there are a lot of us saying "God Keep You" these days.

Yours always

Archie

April 3

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

W
FFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN

PSF: Mac Leish

April 25, 1940

Dear Missy,

I hate to keep putting my troubles on your doorstep but it's the prettiest doorstep in Washington, and if you will keep it swept so clean and bright that is what will happen.

This is about Mac Ingersoll and P.M. When Mac left the President a few weeks ago the President said that if there was anything he could do he would like to know it. Mac, I take it, is more anxious that the President should use him than that he should find himself asking favors of the President. But this particular matter is of such a nature that he feels justified in asking me to pass it along.

I think the best way to present the proposal is in Mac's own words, and I have therefore asked him to put them down which he has done in the letter enclosed. Broadly speaking, Mac feels that there never was a time when it was more necessary to get the actual truth about a foreign war to the people of this country than now. He thinks the way to do this is not to send prima donnas abroad as foreign correspondents, but to tap the sources of accurate information here. His notion of the way to get at this is suggested in his letter. I have talked about it with Tommie and Tommie has encouraged me to sound out the possibilities. Indeed Tommie has gone somewhat further and has suggested that perhaps Blanton Winship would be a man who could talk to people in the War College and act as an intermediary between the experts and the representative of P.M. The arrangement would of course be informal and would not be publicized.

If you feel, after a glance at this, that any useful purpose would be served, Ingersoll would of course be delighted to go anywhere to make himself available for further discussion. And I am of course always at your service in any way and at any place.

Very best regards to you.

Faithfully yours,

Archie MacLeish

(1 enclosure)

Miss Marguerite A. Le Hand
Private Secretary to The President
Warm Springs
Georgia

Publications Research Inc., 27 Sixth Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. Sterling 3-2501

April 22, 1940

Dear Arch:

About the subject of our discussion in New York:

This is my idea:

That it's important to the people of the United States that they have one daily journal to read in which war news is handled -- may I say, scientifically. That there be one publication whose aim is not to misinform by exaggerating or distorting the news in the interest of selling extra editions. That there be one publication on which the American people can rely for hard headed, disinterested military analysis of the violence abroad -- so that the people of this country may have true facts upon which to base their democratic decisions.

That PM be this paper.

If I could employ on my staff a man who had had the honor of serving in the U. S. Army Intelligence and who had the confidence of the officers in the War College who are daily studying the military situation abroad, I feel that he would be able to give PM the daily analysis of the military situation on which any such treatment as I visualize must be based.

It is my thought that you might be able to recommend such a man -- or through your connections to obtain a recommendation for me.

As I told you at lunch, I feel we must all fact the fact that this is a period in history when the course of mankind may again be decided by military victory. Perhaps I am talking only of the problems of the next few months. I hope so. But during this span I think you will agree that the military situation is of daily importance to our troubled citizens. And I know of no better way to give them the knowledge they must have and which I have outlined to you -- not military information

written by a penny-a-line self appointed expert, but by a man of real knowledge and experience in a position to contact daily the best military brains in this country.

I feel those in a position of authority will recognize at once the difference between this approach and the approach commonly made by the journalist whose only interest is in raising the circulation he has to sell to advertisers -- or in electing himself to political office.

You know the pressure on my time. You will recognize the importance I place on this subject when I say that solving the problem of this connection comes before anything else on my calendar. So please feel free to call on me whenever you feel I may advance a solution.

Regards,

Ralph Ingersoll

Mr. Archibald MacLeish
The Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.

65

PSF: Macleish

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 12, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR

ARCHIE MacLEISH

Missy showed me your letter. Another case of Krock. That man (I cannot bring myself to call him a gentleman) is really to be pitied because, congenitally, he goes through life trying to make as much trouble for his fellow human beings as possible. It is, I suppose, a form of sadism.

F. D. R.

Conway, Mass. 76
Sunday, August Four

Dear Missey:

I don't know whether the President noticed, or, if he noticed, was interested in the piece in the NewYork Times on Friday which purported to describe conversations between Russell Davenport and myself. However, I'd like you to have the facts in case they have any importance.

Herbert Agar, Joseph Alsop, Ward Cheney and a number of other people deeply concerned about the British position and its relation to ourselves met in New York a week ago or more - I am not certain of the date -to discuss the matter. They decided apparently to do three things - to attempt to determine the attitude of the leading news commentators on the destroyer question - to attempt to determine Willkie's attitude - and to attempt to see the President. In order to elicit some statement from Willkie they prepared and handed Russell Davenport, who was about to leave for Colorado, a statement inquiring whether he would support an effort to make old destroyers available to the British. This must have been Monday of last week. Subsequently they came to Washington and saw me. Knowing that Davenport (with whom I worked for years at Fortune) is a very close friend of mine they asked me to call him to see what luck he had had. I did so and found that Davenport, whose own attitude strongly supports the destroyer proposal, was unable to say anything except that he'd be glad to try to get an answer from W. if the President would ask! Davenport realized, of course, that the inquiry came from Agar, Cheney, et al and that I was speaking on their behalf, and in my most personal capacity.

How the story leaked to the Times I don't know though I shrewdly suspect. Davenport told me over the phone that only W. and Himself knew I had called. I trust Davenport and believe him. However I suspect that one of the large group of journalists involved in the New York meeting let slip the fact that I had been asked by them to call Davenport and that was enough for Krock. He immediately did his best to insinuate that I had called on the President's behalf. You perhaps saw my very explicit statement on this in the Times the following day (Saturday)

It would be useless for me to try to say

how deeply I regret the publication. You can imagine without my boring you with the details how it has hag-ridden me, sleeping and waking. Knowing - or rather guessing - the difficulties in the President's way I would have done anything rather than increase them. I suppose the moral is that in a world with one Krock in it you must treat all men as though they were Krocks or run the risk of being betrayed at every occasion.

Forgive me for troubling you with all this. My affectionate regards to you

yours always

Archie MacLeish

PSF: L.C. - MacLeish

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

[1941]

Wednesday
January 22

Dear Henry:

Sometime when you can write you tell him that it was last Monday I really understood for the first time in my life what a great speech is: it is good words — and the words were good: they were true and simple and strong. It is good voice — and the voice was magnificent: better than I have ever heard. But most of all — more than either words or voice — it is a MAN. A great speech is a great man made suddenly, as in a flare of lurid light, visible and understandable. Monday was a great man plain and clear and unforgettable as a mountain against the sky. Please tell him.

Yours always,
Archie

PSF: MacLeish m

7

copy

Wednesday
January 22, 1941

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Dear Missy:

Sometime when you can will you tell him that it was last Monday I really understood for the first time in my life what a great speech is: It is good words - and the words were good: they were true and simple and strong. It is good voice - and the voice was magnificent: better than I have ever heard. But most of all - more than either words or voice - it is a MAN. A great speech is a great man made suddenly, as in a glare of level light, visible and understandable. Monday was a great man plain and clear and unforgettable as a mountain against the light. Please tell him.

Yours always,

Archie (MacLeish)

PSF: MacLeish File

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 26, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

I spoke to Archie MacLeish about Mayor LaGuardia's offer of a job which you hoped he would take. Archie asks that he be allowed to talk with you for a few minutes next week before he makes up his mind one way or the other about heading up this work.

He has an idea what it is they want him to do and he is anxious to have a word with you before making a decision.

G.G.T.

PSF: MacLeish

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Tel. to MacLeish
Fiorello will call on
him Friday —
I hope MacL. can
accede to request —

File personal

PSF: MacLeish Lib Congress 3-41

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. President:

Because I know something of the terrible and exhausting demands upon you this and because I value every fragment of your good opinion I want you to know that the reopening of the question of my service in the Office of Facts & Figures is not of my doing. Mrs. Roosevelt was kind enough to ask me, on behalf of the Knapp, if I would reconsider. I told her that I should be glad to, but that reconsideration simply confirmed my conviction that the job cannot be done except in direct responsibility to the President. It was then that she asked me to ask to see you. I did so with embarrassment. I am grateful for your generosity in giving me time tonight but I want you to know that I take your time with a

heavy sense of responsibility.

yours faithfully & always

Archie

To The President
The White House

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

Washington, D. C.

h

October 3, 1941

Dear Grace:

Attached is a letter to the President which I hope very much it may be possible for him to read before supper this evening. If you can do so without inconveniencing him, will you pass it along? Thank you for many things.

Always,

Cordially yours,

Attachment

Archibald MacLeish

Archibald MacLeish

The Librarian of Congress

Miss Grace Tully

Secretary to the President

The White House

file please

GRACE:

Tell Archie MacLeish everything all well. Sit tight. Keep at his job.

F.D.R.

PSF: MacLeish
3-41

1520 THIRTY-THIRD STREET
WASHINGTON, D.C.

[1941]

Sunday, Dec. 14

Dear Mr. President:

There is little enough any of us can do for you now - or indeed at any time. But one thing we can do - or so at least it seems to me - is not to add to your burdens.

I know enough about Washington after two brief years to know that the solution of many problems is made more difficult for you by the necessity of considering the personalities involved. I want you to know that no consideration of the personality of Archie MacLeish need ever complicate any problem of yours.

Specifically I want you to know that nothing you may do in the solution of the confused and difficult problem of the control of government information will in any way wound or trouble me. Steve has told me of your decision to have the Censor, when he is appointed, handle the questions of interdepartmental information policy which OFF has been trying to handle through its Interdepartmental Committee and its liaison service. That decision would of course entail the transfer to the Censor's office of the organization and staff of OFF. The staff of OFF is small but, I think, excellent and the Interdepartmental Committee is an active, functioning committee of great actual, and greater potential, usefulness. If such a transfer seems to you desirable I hope you will not hesitate on my account to make it. My resignation as director of OFF is at all times in your hands to use as you see fit.

I am sure you will believe that I write this letter in complete sincerety and with no overtones. I have another job to do at the Library if you feel you do not need me in OFF. And now and always I am at your absolute disposition. I have only one desire - to be of service to you in any way I can.

With my respect and my affection

Archie

PSF: L.C.-MacLeish

file personal

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 23, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Archie MacLeish telephoned and said frankly he is very much worried about the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. He has taken space at Fort Knox for things of this kind and has made up his mind that it is about time to ship them, as there is no building in Washington which is safe.

He is willing to take the responsibility for this action but thought if you saw any reason why this action should not be taken, would you let him know.

G.

Memo: The President asked me to telephone Archie MacLeish and suggest that he take this up with the Attorney General and if he approved it was all right to go ahead.

G.

file personal

PSF: Marc Leech Folder

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

Monday

THE WHITE HOUSE
AUG 18 10 24 AM '42
RECEIVED

Dear Mr. President:

Now I know what a tall ship is — the USS Shangri-La. She's tall indeed and a great delight to sail on in any kind of weather. Particularly with the Admiral of the Ocean Sea himself aboard and a couple of packs of gin-running teasers and a pleasant ship's company. I'm grateful to you from the heart for letting me come aboard.

Yours

Archie

PSF: Mac Leish folder
2-43

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. President:

I'd like to have this waiting for you somewhere down toward the bottom of the box when you come home to bring you my thanks for the book and particularly for the words you write across the fly leaf. I am proud to read them now and ponder still to think that others will read them many many years from now. I'd rather have that claim to memory than any other — that you put me down among your friends.

With my affection & my respect

Archie

Harry & Louis may be interested in the enclosed verses which seem to refer to a lady who publishes a newspaper somewhere — maybe here. A.

(over)

When lovely woman stoops to use
a printing press to fight her battle,
Revenging in the morning's news
Her woman's spites with woman's tattle,

When all the gilt & all the gold
That could not get her wits or graces,
She spends for hired men to hold
The dirty glass to her grimaces,

When lovely woman needs the press
To please or hurt, to scratch or flatter,
Then lovely woman does confess
That lovely woman's loveliness
Is gone
and lovely woman's fatter.

Author unknown
but probably NOT
Mr. A. Pope.

MacLeish folder
2-43

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 1, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. HARRY L. HOPKINS

To read and return for my files.

F. D. R.

Enclosure

Let to the P - undated - thanking for the book given him by the P. at Christmas time and appending poem

file

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 2, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS TULLY.

I HAVE READ THIS - AND THANKS.

HARRY L. HOPKINS

PSF: Library of Congress: MacLeish folder 2-43

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

[redacted]

February 4, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

I think your plan in regard to the famous document is excellent. May I suggest that it be exhibited, under careful twenty-four hour guard, in the Rotunda at the foot of the statue itself in the Jefferson Memorial, being removed each night to your strong room in the Library?

F. D. R.

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON

[redacted]

February 3, 1943

My dear Mr. President:

Knowing your keen and continuing interest in the travels of the Declaration of Independence, I think you would want me to report to you on my plans for that document. It is now, as you know, at Fort Knox, but since it is the greatest and most precious part of the inheritance of Mr. Jefferson, it has seemed to me that it should be brought back to Washington for the Bicentennial celebration. What we propose to do is to return it in the bronze sealed case in which it (together with the Constitution) was shipped out, bringing it back under guard, and exhibiting it under 24 hour guard for, perhaps, six or seven days, just before and just after the 13th of April. There is, of course, a certain risk in moving it, but the risk seems to me to be more than counter-balanced by the value of having it here on that day.

If, of course, you feel the project is unwise, I shall be very happy to accept your judgment. On the other hand, the decision to bring it, if it does come, will, of course, be my decision, and the responsibility will, therefore, be mine. In other words, I am reporting the plan to you not to escape any part of the responsibility involved, but merely because I think you would wish to know what I have in mind and to express your views if you care to do so.

Always,

Faithfully yours,

Archibald MacLeish
The Librarian of Congress

The President
The White House

2/18/43

MEMO FOR THE FILES

File personal confidential

The President directed me to telephone Mr. MacLeish to tell him that he entirely approved of Mr. MacLeish's request to Secretary Knox.

G. G. T.

PSF: Library of Congress: MacLeish folder 2-43

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON

[redacted]

February 12, 1943

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your note about the exhibition of the Declaration at the Jefferson Shrine.

I have written Stuart Gibboney, asking him for his ideas as to the kind of exhibition case which would harmonize with the Memorial while at the same time giving the security against air, cranks, and enthusiastics which we must have. I have also written the Secretary of the Navy, asking if a Marine guard can be supplied. I hope this last meets with your approval.

If a strong room can be found in the Memorial where the document can be left at night, it would relieve us of the necessity of transporting it twice a day from the Memorial to the Library and back. I am trying to secure information about this from Mr. Gibboney.

We plan to have at the Library a number of exhibits illustrating the various aspects of Jefferson's life, and we plan also to have a small central exhibit indicating the development of the Declaration itself. This last exhibit will be built around Jefferson's own draft which we have. We plan to exhibit this draft on the desk (which the National Museum has) on which Jefferson wrote it. The draft, which is almost as great a treasure as the engrossed copy itself, should also be exhibited, it seems to me, under guard, and I am asking the Secretary of the Navy for help in that regard also. I should dislike, under wartime conditions, to exhibit it without adequate respect as well as the most complete security. Again I hope you will not disapprove of my request to Colonel Knox.

Faithfully yours,

Archie

Archibald MacLeish
The Librarian of Congress

The President
The White House

PSF: MacLeish folder 2-43

copy

March 12, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

This is the project Harry talked to you about at Hyde Park. Is it all right to turn it over to him to handle with Archie MacLeish?

G.G.T.

OK

copy

March 8, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

MISS TULLY

Will you show this telephone memorandum from General Fleming to the President?

I think he knows what it is about.

MHM

COPY

March 4, 1943

REMINDER FOR MHM

To talk to the President about the "American Index of Art".

Archie MacLeish wants it for the Library of Congress - it is a WPA thing - a lot of furniture - General Fleming says it is OK with him.

It is now on exhibit in the Metropolitan Museum in New York and they would like to keep it until after the war - it is being sent around all over the country with no expense to WPA.

The matter first came up while the President was in Casablanca and General Fleming says you told him not to give it away until you had a chance to talk to the President about it.

TOI

PSF: MacLeish folder 2-43

June 9, 1943.

Dear Archie:

It must be a coincidence that about the time you decided not to be a librarian after I ceased to be President, I had made up my mind that on leaving Washington I would proceed to Hyde Park and become a librarian. But I have the advantage in that, in addition to fussing over books, letters and prints, I shall have plenty of time to plant and harvest Christmas trees and to write scurrilous articles about "SOME PEOPLE I KNOW" -- for publication, of necessity, after I am dead and gone.

I can well understand your feelings -- and both of us can in our own right pray that the war will end soon.

Of course, I do appreciate what you have written, for though I wish you could keep on as the head of the Library of Congress, I will occasionally bear it in mind to keep a weather eye open. It is going to be difficult and I honestly believe impossible to find anybody to occupy your chair.

As for war work, I do have a thought though it is very vague. Do you realize that there is no definitive (I hate the word) short history of any of our past wars -- a one volume or two volume history? There are dozens of short and biased histories written immediately after each war -- none of them in perspective. Later, there have come forth technical studies and a flood of biographies.

Sam Morrison is, as you know, visiting different theatres of the war and has written some excellent monographs on the basis of which a good naval history of this war will be possible in a few years. As far as I know, no one is doing the same kind of work for the Army, for the production processes, or the administrative end of things.

All of this is much needed. I wish you would think it over. Possibly, you could head up a small committee of not more than half a dozen people, who would sift the current material, put it in monograph form and trust to God that some Sam Morrison would come along after the war and put it together.

We are collecting and putting away in the files millions of feet of records. We ought to begin to sift them now. It is my general thought, too, that we ought not to stop there, but that we ought also to capture or recapture the public pulse as it throbs from day to day -- the effect on the lives of different types of citizens -- the processes of propaganda -- the parts played by the newspaper emperors, etc., etc.

Think it all over. It is war work of most decided value. It is not dry history or the cataloging of books and papers and reports. It is trying to capture a great dream before it dies.

As ever yours,

Honorable Archibald MacLeish,
Librarian of Congress,
Washington, D. C.

THE WHITE HOUSE

MAR 11 11 37 AM '43

RECEIVED

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. President:

This is not the moment in history I would choose to trouble you with my affairs except that they may have consequences you would like to know about.

Briefly, I have made up my mind to two things: one, that I am not going to continue to be a librarian after you cease to be President; two, that I'd like to get back to my own work, in any case, as soon as I can after the war ends.

Since the next Librarian of Congress ought to be chosen by you for the health of the country and the health of the library, I felt you should know that the place will be vacated in any event at the end

of your Administration. I'll vacate it as much before that time as your convenience in appointing my successor requires.

And may I add one word more by way of personal appeal. If there is anything you think I could do in more direct relation to the war won't you let me do it? I am fed to the teeth with running 1500 old ladies and two blocks full of books. I have tried the Army at all points only to be told I'm 51 — which I suppose I am. I quite understand why it was necessary to make a change in Information. I'm well out of it. But I know I could be more useful than I am here in some direct relation to the war itself. Forgive me. You must have hundreds of such appeals.

Yours always
Archie

May 11, 1943

PSF: MacLeish

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 15, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

I have read with interest the statement to you from Mr. Lawrence C. Wroth. As long as you are on the subject of rare books, may a very amateur collector suggest a subject that is horrid to the thoughts of most librarians.

It is increasingly clear that the problem of more space will become more acute as the years go by -- and, as you know, I have long advocated the distribution of collections of all manner of things to different parts of the country.

Let me give you one illustration in relation to Americana. I know, for example, that the Library of Congress is not very strong in its collection of American Juveniles. I myself happen to have forty or fifty editions which are not in the Library of Congress. What I am

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

thinking is that it might be possible to have the whole collection of American Juveniles owned by the Library of Congress moved to some other place -- for example, Indianapolis, the home of the Hoosier.

So also, how would it do to put all of the Library's collection of American periodicals from before the Revolution down to 1850 or 1860 in a separate place -- for example, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania? All of this would require a tremendous study of facilities but it would be a mental stimulant to go to some distant point to do research work in a special field of rare books. Incidentally, the problem of damage to a whole collection would at least be decentralized.

I feel the same way about paintings, engravings, and many other things which ought to be preserved for future generations.

Probably no expert will agree with me -- but ~~than~~ I never claim to be an expert. Then

F. D. R.

"FDR"

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON

June 23, 1943

EB

Dear Grace:

In connection with a suggestion in the President's letter to me of June 9, about keeping his weather eye open from time to time, you might like to have for your files the enclosed document. Briefly, it is a statement to me from Mr. Lawrence C. Wroth, the Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, and Consultant on the Collection of Rare Books in the Library of Congress. It states at some length his ideas about the development of the Rare Book Collection in the Library. It is, to my way of thinking, one of the most intelligent and imaginative documents I have seen in a long, long time. It will interest the President, if he ever has time to read so long a paper, for its contents. But it will also, perhaps, interest him acutely from the "weather eye" point of view.

Faithfully yours,

Archibald MacLeish

Enclosure

Miss Grace Tully
Secretary to the President
The White House

June 4, 1943

REPORT OF LAWRENCE C. WROTH, CONSULTANT, RARE BOOK COLLECTION, TO ARCHIBALD MACLEISH, LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

The question of a long-term acquisition policy for the Rare Book Collection cannot be determined until we have satisfied ourselves fully as to what the Collection is and what its potentialities are as indicated by its present services. I address myself at once to that end when I suggest that every category of knowledge in the entire Library is represented in the Rare Book Collection, theoretically by the earliest, most interesting, or finest editions of the books in each of those many fields of knowledge. This Collection, therefore, is not a thing set apart as is a segregation of merely "fine books" like the Spencer Collection in the New York Public Library, or books representing some single subject, as for example the history and technique of typography by the Wing Collection in the Newberry Library of Chicago. Its separate items are not exhibits or specimens, though many of them add that characteristic of display interest to the other interests they possess.

They are, on the contrary, integrated with every other book in the Library and integrated with the Library's deepest purpose of maintaining a vast source of materials for studies of every element and every phase of life. Because its volumes in so many instances are irreplaceable they are of a value beyond money, and require segregation and special protection; because of the nature of their contents or their special importance in the history of texts, that is, their bibliographical importance, they require a different kind of cataloguing and classification if they are to be used by students to the fullest advantage.

An examination of the call slips of the Collection for a period of three months revealed to me that demands had been made upon it for books representing a great many departments of knowledge. The most persistent demands seemed to be in these departments:

Americana and state history	Sociology and economics
Early science	Genealogy
Books illustrating the development of printing	Mexican and Mayan
Christian Science (for a special and temporary reason)	Confederate

English literature	Mormon
American literature	Magic
Religion and philosophy	Canada
Incunabula	Bibliography
Ancient history	

Consideration of this list leads to the conclusion that the work of the Rare Book Collection is simply an extension of the work of the several reference sections of the whole library. It is a selected general collection performing a special service in a great general library. But it is not merely a question of its having removed, through its creation, a certain kind of service from the main reading room to a special reading room, for because of this segregation and congregation of the finest in each field in the general library a new entity has come into being, a new scholarly library has been formed within a library. That library must be nurtured by additions if it is not to become simply a collection of books in special storage. This is an obligation the Rare Book Collection assumed the moment it was formed. With its close-up, single view of the Library's possessions in the field of books significant in the history of culture, it is better able to develop those possessions than if that duty were divided among many divisions. Its ability to do so becomes its obligation.

Several people have said to me that the Library of Congress will never be able to attain high rank among the great scholarly libraries. They say that in too many subjects it lacks completeness or even good representation and that it is too late to secure the important early books in these subjects. They suggest, moreover, that it is not the center of a scholarly community and that its function is not that of a great scholarly library. They suggest that it build to its strength in Americana and let the other subjects go by the board. I believe that all these conceptions, general and particular, are false. Those who say that it will never rank as a scholarly library with the British Museum, Harvard, and the New York Public Library, for example,

are ignorant of its contents, ignorant of the fact that it is already a great scholarly library with representation in most fields--superb in some, uneven in others--serving the whole country, and that Washington is the actual geographical center of a section that extends from Pennsylvania to the Gulf and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. The idea that it is too late to enlarge and integrate its collections is based upon ignorance of the history of book collecting. It ignores the fact that books are a fluid commodity, coming in and out of the market almost with regularity of the tides, that in the centuries of life before the Library of Congress innumerable opportunities for purchase and for acquisition by gift will occur, that, in brief, it is never too late to begin. Such a gift as that of the Rosenwald collection, following a few years after the purchase of the Vollbehr collection and the acquisition by legacy of the Thacher collection answers specifically that objection. Upon the broad representative base of the Vollbehr and Thacher collections has been placed through this gift a small number of books individually important which makes the Library of Congress incunabula a collection of high distinction.

Let us have the courage of our clichés--it is never too late to begin. If Mr. Huntington had felt that with the John Carter Brown and Lenox collections of Americana already in existence, with the Bodleian, British Museum, Harvard, and Yale English literature in existence, it was too late to collect Americana and English literature, this country would lack today a notable institution. If Mr. Folger had felt that all was lost because Mr. Huntington and Mr. Marsden Perry went in for Shakespeareana, another distinguished library would never have come into being. If we have conviction of the importance of what we are doing, faith, persistence, and patience, the Library of Congress collection will become one of the great ones. Our job at this time is to affirm this conviction so strongly, and to make our plans so definitely that the factor of persistence in collecting will be established. Pursued even one year this procedure will make a difference in the interest and value of the collection; pursued twenty-five years it will change the face of the collection. In the natural course

of things we can look forward to many centuries of vigorous life.

The idea that the Library of Congress should confine itself, or largely confine itself, to American history and literature has been influenced somewhat by the assumption that because it lacks a Columbus letter its Americana is inconsiderable. But its collections are not inconsiderable. It has, to begin with, the Everett Codex of the Columbus Book of Privileges, the Trevisano manuscript, and a printed copy of the Bull of Demarcation and a Vespucci narrative. It should have the Columbus letter and many other early books of the Harrisse B. A. V. group, and I haven't the slightest doubt that one day it will have them. In the past few weeks, for example, it has acquired the Vespucci narrative, the Varthema Itinerario of 1520, and a beautiful Agnese portolan atlas. Meantime in eighteenth-century Americana it is right in the class with the New York Public Library and the John Carter Brown. In order to maintain this position it must continue to add books of American interest, but that does not mean it must maintain so great a degree of concentration in this field that it will become a special Americana library rather than the general library demanded by its clientele of varied interests. Those who work in the reference departments of the Library know the breadth of the interests of that clientele. And I repeat, the Rare Book Collection is but an extension of the interests of these other departments of the Library.

This brings me to the point of saying in elaboration of what I have just written, that I think the Rare Book Collection should "major", if I may borrow that academic term, in Americana. Subject to correction, I would say that fifty per cent of its acquisitions should be in that field directed by the deliberate effort to build up the post- and ante-eighteenth-century collections. Nobody has yet concentrated upon the whole American field of the period 1800-1860, a period marked by several wars, by the rise of parties, by enormous acquisition of territory, by the rise of higher education, the industrial revolution, the labor movement, abolition, states rights, and the many movements and events that form the basis of our present condition and underlie our

problems.

In "majoring" in Americana, we should be thinking of the history of America as an element of the highest importance in the history of ideas, and of the national library of the United States as the natural custodian of the sources relating to that particular section of the history of ideas. Ultimately the Rare Book Collection is a repository of sources for the history of ideas, the ideas of all lands and periods, which have created the structure we call modern civilization and which are still in process of development.

If we should determine the Rare Book Collection policy to be, broadly, the devoting of fifty per cent of its ~~acquisitions~~ funds to Americana down to 1860, the question arises as to the disposition of the remainder. My answer is to employ again the term "history of ideas", to translate this into the collecting of books of significance (frequently they will be cheap books), in the development of literature and the fine arts, science, economics, politics, and industry.

In an address I made at the Pierpont Morgan Library at the opening of its celebration in honor of the 500th anniversary of printing, I emphasized the importance of the subject matter of the books of the fifteenth century. The new invention gave the opportunity for putting upon permanent record the four great cultural streams which were running side by side at that time and which converged through the activities of the press to form the foundation of our modern culture. These streams were the antique, newly revived, the Christian, the scientific, and the new popular literature in the vernacular. It is this fact and not the type faces employed, fascinating though the subject of types and printing history may be, that makes incunabula an important class of books for a great library to collect. The Library of Congress through the Thacher, Vollbehr, and Rosenwald collections has now a distinguished collection of books that form the foundation of modern culture, books of the highest significance in the history of those ideas by which we live. But what is a good foundation without an appropriate superstructure? I should like to see the scientific

gronings of the pre-fifteenth century scholars embodied in the incunabula already in the Library of Congress carried through by the later publications of Arian, Copernicus, Gemma Frisius, Harvey, and all those eager lesser writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I should like to see the progression of books through which alchemy became chemistry and astrology took on the respectability of astronomy. In other fields, in constitutional history, for example, I should like to see the line of descent by which our Congressional district system, to name a single instance, comes from the defiance of Pope John XXII by Marsiglio of Padua. I should like to be able to trace the elements which give us those two admirable but diverse types of mind, the Protestant and the Catholic. This is elementary. It speaks for itself. And yet I have been reproached for saying in exposition of this program that I wanted to see the Library of Congress go in for books of sixteenth-century science. It is inconceivable, I said in reply to that reproach, that the national library of the United States should go to the end of time without a Copernicus, De Revolutionibus, in its first edition of 1543, the book that changed man's conception of himself in relation to God and the universe. And if the Copernicus book, why naturally with it should be supporting books of the period, and books in which is found the later development of its subject. But when I got this far in my suggestion of a Library of Congress policy, I was taken sharply to task by representatives of one great library who said that our intrusion into a field in which they were interested would bring up the price of books in that field and hamper their collecting. There is something in this, but how much? And if we stayed out of that field, how many more would we be asked to stay out of? Why shouldn't the John Carter Brown, the Clements, and the Huntington object to the Library of Congress specializing in Americana? Why shouldn't Brown University object to the Library of Congress buying books of American poetry? Or Yale to books of eighteenth-century English literature, or Texas to Latin-American books and so on until the Library of Congress had effectually been excluded from most of the important fields?

When I was last here some officials of the Library of Congress expressed indignation at Princeton for purchasing a collection of papers that seemed appropriate to the Library of Congress. When I was last at Harvard, some officials there were indignant at another American library for purchasing an early romance which was lacking from the Harvard collection. What is the answer? It seems to me to lie somewhere between the strict allocation of fields, which we have agreed upon for modern books, and thoughtless competition in the auction room for specific items known to be wanted by another institution. It should be a flexible policy, animated by good will and good manners. Competition in itself is good. It has made the great libraries what they are. Is it not proper that the Rare Book Collection of the Library of Congress should announce its interests as universal with special emphasis upon the sources of American civilization?

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There must be considered lines of development within the Collection apart from its acquisition policy.

The search of the stacks for books that should be given the special protection of the Rare Book Collection has been carried out very well indeed, but it was a preliminary search only, and confined to books of a certain type or an obvious money value, and once done it has not been maintained. It should be continuous and should begin at once before further wear and tear take place. The basis of selection should be significance rather than arbitrary date, class, or money value. Vitality is obtained only through the maintenance of significance as the criterion. Esteem for subject matter or for the place of the particular book in the history of thought or action is what underlies bibliomania in its more important manifestations. An admirable collection of early editions of Grotius was left in the stacks. Two copies of one of the works of John Fiske are in the stacks but none in the Rare Book Collection. The John Fiske book is probably not worth more than five dollars, but it is a book significant in the history of American ideas and future generations will expect to

find a copy of its first edition carefully preserved. There should be made also a specific search of the stacks for American history and literature of the period 1800 to 1860, withdrawing from them the fundamental source materials relating to the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, the development of the Northwest Territory and the Territory South of the Ohio, the land development Companies, the rise of the steamboat and railroad, the Mexican War, and the Anti-slavery movement. Many of these topics have not yet attracted special collectors, and the literature on them is not thought of as rich in "rare book", but their importance for the future historian hardly admits of argument. No curator of the collection can be expected to know the significant books of every field, but the Library of Congress Fellows in various subjects should know what is important in the early history of their subjects. I have already suggested that one of their duties should be the combing of the stacks for significant items to be considered by the Rare Book Collection curator for transfer to his shelves. Another procedure would be the checking of the Indexes to the English and American Book Prices Current, paying not too much attention to the prices, but assuming that the presence of a book in one of those Indexes automatically would cause it to be considered, at least, as material for the Rare Book Collection. I feel sure that many books would be rescued from the stacks through this procedure.

There will arise the question of space in the stacks of the Rare Book Collection. There are two answers to that. One is the removal of certain books already there through a careful reconsideration of their pertinency. Most de luxe editions in sets could be removed and either returned to the stacks or placed in some purgatorial state under terms of restricted use. The second procedure is to adopt an admirable suggestion made by Mr. Houghton in a report to the Librarian--the erection of locked and ventilated wall cases in the reading room of the Collection--one set of them to hold the rare reference books now in its stacks, another to hold a permanent collection of books of unusual distinction in several classes, preferably books

familiar by title to the average visitor. This device would relieve congestion in the Rare Book stacks, would make quickly available certain reference books, would keep in place a sort of permanent exhibition, and would give atmosphere to the room itself. Some day, doubtless, some other space will be found for the microfilm readers.

Mr. Houghton also suggested the adoption of measures which would result in making the Collection a clearing house for collectors' information. In this connection the Collection might have a special catalogue of bibliographies. One of the personal frustrations in my life of the past twenty years has been my inability to interest any organization in the formation of a union bibliography of American bibliographies. The John Carter Brown went so far as to make a duplicate set of all its American bibliography cards, hoping it would be used as the basis of a union bibliography by author and subject. But no support has been found for that project. The creation of such a catalogue by the Rare Book Collection would be a service frequently in demand once its usefulness was known to scholars.

Another tool for its own use that soon would become useful to others is the creation of what at the John Carter Brown we call, for lack of another name, the Bibliographical File. Every time we write a letter conveying bibliographical information about a given book, or receive a letter transmitting such information to us we enter on a card devoted to that book a reference to the letter and its whereabouts in our correspondence file. Or, if we find an illuminating discussion of that book in an article or in a special bibliography we make an appropriate notation on that card. This saves us from going over the same ground again and again. It is surprising how often we have letters of inquiry about a book which we have studied and provided information about years ago,or how often we take down a book for our own purposes and find ourselves haunted by a vague recollection of having solved some of the problems connected with it at some time in the past. The advantage of this

file is obvious and its formation, proceeding as part of the daily routine, would not be laborious.

An occasional publication by the Collection is recommended as an indication to bookmen of its vitality. Such a publication could be in the form of a brief bibliography, a tool, a reprint, with introduction, of one of its rarities, or an article on a specific book or collection, or simply news of the Rare Book Collection. This need not necessarily be written by one of the staff, but it should be passed upon, approved, and edited, in the larger sense, by the staff, and appear as its publication.

The staff of the Rare Book Collection should be encouraged to prepare papers for the Bibliographical Society of America, the Bibliographical Society, and other learned societies. I was greatly impressed by Mr. Houghton's suggestion that the Rare Book Collection should become the frequent host of meetings of bookmen's organizations, offering the hospitality of its rooms to meetings of the Club of Odd Volumes, the Grolier, the Philobiblon, and other clubs in other cities, as well as to the Bibliographical Society of America and similar learned societies. Perhaps the difficulties of travel in wartime compel postponement of that idea for the present, but in normal times such meetings under Library of Congress auspices could be made memorable to those attending them and valuable to the Rare Book Collection.

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The problem of the "frontiers" would be most simply solved by the transfer to the ~~[illegible]~~ Rare Book Collection of all books regarded as of sufficient significance and value to justify it, but there is a consideration which seems to make that procedure inadvisable. That consideration is the incentive the possession and availability of books of this character gives the divisions to procure and ~~make~~ several use ~~of~~ in their work the best in their respective fields. In other words here enters the human element of pride of possession and the intellectual satisfaction

that comes from enlarging and integrating materials which are the basis of collecting. This incentive certainly has proved itself of the utmost value in the case, let us say, of the Library of Congress Map Division.

There is an alternative that may be effective in the case of an institution designed, as the Library of Congress is, to last forever. It is to allow the divisions concerned to retain their books but to ask them to supply for the Rare Book Collection catalogue and shelf-list cards representing the books of which it is a question, and to mark all books so designated as demanding special care within their divisions--special care in cataloguing, in use and circulation, in binding maintenance, and in periodical binding renovation. The divisions should be made aware and frequently reminded of the hospitable nature of the Rare Book Collection, its willingness to accept from time to time books and groups of books which the other divisions wish voluntarily to place in its safeguard, retaining title through their own catalogues and shelf-lists. The advantages of such segregation will become more and more apparent to the other divisions as with the years they become crowded for space and less able to give rarities the sort of shelving and care they deserve.

PSF: A MacLeish folder 2-43

File

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE

JUL 24 8 43 AM '43

RECEIVED

July 23, 1943

Dear Mr. President:

You may not be an expert on rare books - though I should hate to argue the affirmative of that proposition in public debate- but your suggestion about regional depositories for specific collections of important material is more interesting than any the professional librarians (God bless them!) have yet produced. You don't need to have prophetic vision to see that the Library of Congress Annex will be filled to overflowing within a very few years, and that the question will then arise whether we want to build another white barn on top of Capitol Hill, or whether we will try to solve the problem otherwise. No one, so far as I know, had ever before thought of solving it along the lines you suggest. I can see that the administrative difficulties might be considerable, but there would certainly be advantages, and the advantages might well outweigh the difficulties. One advantage would be to make particular regions of the country conscious of the importance of their particular contributions to American letters. Another might be an increasing interest in the Library among Congressmen. Of course, this last is merely incidental!

Whatever the ultimate fate of your suggestion, your memorandum has already done one thing of inestimable value. It has filled the hearts of a number of your most devoted troopers in the Library of Congress with awe and admiration. That the President of the United States should take time in the middle of a war to read a learned memorandum on the rare book collection and to develop a proposal for the future of that collection, has given them a sense of the importance of their own work which nothing else on earth could have provided. For that, you have the renewed thanks of

Yours always faithfully,

Archibald

Archibald MacLeish

The President
The White House

PSF: MacLeish folder 2-43

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 9, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

GENERAL WATSON:

I want to see McCloy about the 24th or 25th. Also have MacLeish in at the same time.

F.D.R.

6. In early August you told me you wished to see Assistant Secretary of War, McCloy, and Archibald MacLeish, re correspondence from both of them on the subject of MacLeish taking over an historical project in connection with what the War and Navy Departments were doing in relation to history of the war.

PSF: MacLeish 1943

8-9-43

Respectfully referred to
the President.

E. M. W.

Aug 24 or 25
PSF: MacLeish

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

July 30, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WATSON:

At the beginning of the month Archie MacLeish sent a letter to the President in which he spelled out his thoughts on his taking over a historical project, as well as giving a sort of general report on what the War and Navy Departments were doing in relation to the history of the war.

Some time ago under the authority of the Secretary of War I appointed an advisory committee composed of Baxter of Williams, Commager of Columbia, and Herring of Harvard, and one or two others to look over the War Department's Historical Section and to make general recommendations as to what should be done to improve our historical coverage. I told the committee that we wanted to cover several things: first, to erect a good system for the preservation of records; second, to get up-to-date monographs that would be primarily useful as current information for the Army and the Staff Schools, and perhaps useful for publication; third, a good popular history of the war to be published as quickly after the close of the hostilities as possible; and fourth, to prepare material for the so-called authoritative history of the war which would be a detailed account of all the operations and activities of the War Department in relation to the war.

The committee made a report, which is a very good one, and I enclose a copy in the event that the President might want to glance through it. As a result of the recommendations of the committee and our own thinking, we are setting up a subdivision of the Staff, under a young Army officer named Kemper who has had a historical background, and in which we will also have a civilian adviser. The details of its organization I need not go into here, but we expect to draw on some very good historians and writers. Several names have been suggested for the head of the division and the committee recommended Harry Pringle. There has been some question as to his suitability, and the matter has not been finally determined.

Archie MacLeish would like to go out to one of the sectors and write up one of our operations, and I think we would be very glad to have him do this. I gather from what he tells me

that he would not want to undertake the major job.

There has been a tremendous amount of interest in the project and already much work has been done.

The President, in a memorandum to me which enclosed Archie MacLeish's correspondence with him, directed me to read it and to speak to him about it. I am prepared at any time of course to come over at the President's convenience.

JOHN J. McCLOY
Assistant Secretary of War

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

July 14, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

JACK McCLOY

TO READ AND SPEAK TO ME

ABOUT.

F. D. R.

WAR DEPT.
JUL 14 1943
ASST. SEC.

JM

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON

July 3, 1943

Dear Mr. President:

The attached is a report, which starts out to be brief but ends up in the other direction, on the history-of-the-war problem. If you find time to read it, you will note that I seem to be arguing myself out of a job. Actually, however, that is not the case, because I think I see a job in this field I could do. Why not let me give myself leave-of-absence for six months, or nine months, to go out and do one of the campaign histories the Army (as you will note from my report) is now planning. The Army, I think, would like to have me tackle one of those jobs and - although no Sam Morison - I think I could handle it. Would you think I was running out on my duties here - any duties you might want me to do for you - if I got myself shipped to a point where I could really do something about a part, at least, of this war?

I feel guilty about troubling you with my private heartaches - God knows you have to hear enough of that sort of thing - but I would be grateful if you would let me know how you feel about it when you can.

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON

July 3, 1943

Dear Mr. President:

In your letter of June 9, you asked me to consider the question of preparations for the writing of a history of the war. You suggested that perhaps I might head up a small committee of perhaps a half dozen people to sift the current material, put it in monograph form, and trust the Lord to send us another Sam Morison.

I have made a few discreet inquiries to try to get at the present situation as regards a history of the war and historians of the war. Briefly, what it comes down to is this:

The two Services seem to be fairly well on the ball. You refer in your letter to Navy preparations. In addition to Sam's history of various Naval operations, which the Navy plans to keep secret until a year or two after the end of the war, ONI prepares secret monographs on various Naval actions covering more detailed and more speculative material than Sam finds useful. In addition, the Navy has appointed Dr. Robert B. Albion to arrange for recording its administrative experience. Furthermore, the libraries of the various bureaus are engaged in accumulating and arranging documents which will show the history of each bureau in the war. It is apparently the Navy's plan simply to turn this record material over to the Archives after the war, though the Bureau of Ordnance has appointed an officer to assimilate these records and write a history of the Bureau based on them.

The Army is behind the Navy in point of time, but is, perhaps, ahead in the comprehensiveness of its plans. Jack McCloy set up an Advisory Committee on the History of World War II on May 28, with Jim Baxter, President of Williams, as Chairman. There are three Service and three civilian members. At that time the Army had extensive plans for administrative histories of the Army Air Forces, the Army Ground Forces, and the Army Service Forces,

but no plan for a history of the General Staff, for histories of the theatres, or for operational monographs like the combat narratives put out by Lieutenant Commander Simon's boys in ONI.

The Advisory Committee has now filed a preliminary report recommending the establishment of an historical branch under the jurisdiction of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, which will go after the operational monographs and fuller treatments of the theatres and campaigns. In addition, they are shooting at a good, brief history, like the one they understand Sam to be working on for the Navy (I gather from Sam that he is not working on a single history but the history of separate actions). Also, they would like to see a fuller comprehensive history, something like those turned out by the British, Germans, and French after World War I. And, finally, they would like to select documents for possible publication in a documentary series. So far, the plan is purely a plan, though General MacArthur already has an historical officer, and General Eisenhower cabled last week to ask for one with two assistants. General Spaatz is also in the market.

I would sum up the Service situation, so far as I know about it, in this way: if the Army can get out from under the dead hand of Secretary Baker's no-history policy and carry out the plans of its Advisory Committee, and if Sam will undertake a general history immediately after the war, based on his special accounts and on the action monographs, we ought to get absolutely what you want.

So far as the civil departments and agencies are concerned, the picture is spotty. As you know, Harold Smith has a Committee on Records of War Administration under Pendleton Herring of Harvard. This Committee has been very tactful in its approach to the departments and has, thus far, avoided any such synthetic uproar as the unspeakable Cissy would put on, if she thought this Administration or its agencies were preparing to tell their story over her head to the people of the United States. The Committee has merely asked the major war agencies to cooperate in maintaining adequate records concerning administrative problems and developments. Something better than twenty of these agencies have now appointed historical officers, and in two cases, Lend-Lease and Agriculture, a great deal has been done. Other agencies, like WPB, have made

plans but have taken no action, and other agencies have done nothing. There are, of course, risks in issuing specific orders to the departments and agencies to take certain steps, but since the other method has been in operation since March 1942, it would look as though the risks had to be taken.

My notion, for whatever it may be worth, would be this: Harold Smith, acting under your authority, should instruct each of the agencies to take steps at once to do the following things: (1) make a selection of the principal documents establishing the agency, or defining its war-time work, together with all other documents, the study of which would be necessary to an understanding of its purposes, functions, growth, changes, accomplishments, failures, interdepartmental relations, relations outside the government, etc. etc; (2) prepare a bibliography of all additional records of the agency, the study of which might amplify the understanding gained by recourse to the essential documents of the first group; (3) collect, and index so far as possible, all newspaper and magazine clippings, etc. whether favorable or unfavorable, honest or dishonest, relating to the activities of the agency; (4) prepare its own account, based on the documents, records, etc., of its life and doings.

I should like to say a word about two of these proposals: (1) The index of all records, is, I am quite aware, impossible of achievement in a large agency. My experience here at the Library has taught me that it is quite literally impossible, with any foreseeable amount of manpower, to subject the huge mass of records turned out by modern agencies to index or catalog control. At the same time, something can be done, and <u>something</u> is almost a thousand percent better than <u>nothing</u> in this field. Also, you can do more as you go along than you can when the mountain of paper has been accumulated. (2) The running account, proposed as No. 4, ought to be, as I see it, a pretty formal, factual, and objective document which would make no attempt to provide a full-bodied history. Autogiographies are always suspect, and the autobiography of an institution is no exception. The accounts I have in mind would simply be additional records - an additional form of record keeping. One way to put records together is to index them, another way is to select out the most important, and a third way is to provide a running account of their content and meaning,

as seen by those whom they most immediately effected.

All this has to do, however, with the keeping and organization of the records of the civil government during the war. It doesn't give us the honest, readable history you want. Somehow and someway we will have to translate these selected documents, bibliographies, newspaper clippings, and running accounts into living, organic, understandable history. And right there I think we run into our principal difficulty. The Armed Services can provide their own historians without much of a squawk from anyone - at least while the war is going on. But let the civil administration attempt to tell its story to the people, particularly with an election in the offing, and there will be a yell which may drown out the still small voice of history. I am inclined to think that we can't hire a Sam Morison for the civil job, even if we could find one. I am inclined to think that all we can do on the civil end is to try to arrange to have the record material, as it takes shape, made available to an honest and disinterested historian - such, say, as Arthur Schlesinger - who believes that the people have a right to know the true history of their government's activities on their behalf.

I am not sure that I see how to do it, though I think one of the learned Foundations might be willing to give a hand and perhaps to serve as a ~~general go~~ channel between public records and private scholarly enterprise. The whole problem is, however, exceptionally difficult and fraught, as they say in the commencement addresses, with dangers. I think it is something to handle as we come up to it rather than to attempt to plan in advance.

This account is already far too long, and I won't extend it, except to say that I am inclined to doubt whether a small committee, with myself as chairman, such as you suggest, is really necessary. I think the Army and Navy will run their own shows quite satisfactorily, and I doubt that they would look with favor on civilian oversight. As for the civil end, I think the Bureau of the Budget is the ideal fulcrum by which to hoist the civil departments and agencies. Needless to say, I am absolutely and always at your disposition, should you want me to do anything about it.

Faithfully yours,

Archie

Archibald MacLeish

The President
The White House

WAR DEPARTMENT
WAR DEPARTMENT GENERAL STAFF
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION G-2
WASHINGTON

26 June 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR:
(Thru: The A. C. of S., G-2)

Subject: Military History of Second World War.

I. Discussion.

The advisory committee appointed on May 28 has held six meetings, during which it had opportunities to question General Willoughby about historical records of the Southwest Pacific Theater, Colonel North about materials for history in the files of OPD, Colonel Lober and Major Williams about the historical program of the AAF, Major Greenfield about that of the AGF, and Major Millett about that of the ASF. The committee visited the Historical Section of the Army War College, and the ONI whose first three combat narratives seemed to us admirable documents for their purpose. Individual members of the committee have interviewed the following, for suggestions as to objectives, organization, and personnel: Colonel Metcalf, the Historian of the Marine Corps; Mr. Hilary St. George Saunders, British Author of the Battle of Britain, Bomber Command, Coastal Command, and Combined Operations; Dr. Archibald MacLeish, the Librarian of Congress; Professor Arthur Schlesinger of Harvard, President of the American Historical Association; Dr. Guy Stanton Ford, the present Executive Secretary of that Association; Dr. Conyers Read, his predecessor in that office; Dr. Edward Meade Earle, of the Institute of Advanced Study; and Professor Allan Nevins of Columbia University.

II. Conclusions.

1. That there are certain objectives which can and should be undertaken at once in addition to certain projects now under way. There are still other objectives which have been considered by the committee and upon which recommendations will be made at a later date.

2. That there should be established immediately in the MID, WDGS, the necessary branch to achieve these objectives. While this

FOR VICTORY BUY UNITED STATES WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

organization should be headed by a senior officer, there should be also within it a chief historian, who should be a civilian.

3. That, initially, the duties of the G-2 Historical Branch, the Chief Historian, and the Advisory Committee should be as recommended below.

4. That the recommendations submitted at this time should be limited to matters general in nature or of immediate importance. Additional recommendations and amplification of those submitted herein should be postponed pending the establishment of the Historical Branch in G-2, so that the views of the Branch Chief and Chief Historian may be obtained.

III. Recommendations:

1. That the following objectives be undertaken or continued in order of priority as listed:

a. Operational Monographs: These are to be narrative accounts of individual military operations against the enemy. They should cover operations - or parts of larger operations - lasting a short period of time. While they should be as complete as practicable, covering joint and combined participation where applicable, they should be ready for publication within six to eight months after the operation. They would be written primarily for the officers of the Army to give them the benefit of experience gained in combat as a guide for training and future planning. Initially, they would probably have to be classified. Until the need for security disappeared, they could not be released to the public.

b. Theater or Campaign Histories: These are to be narratives of larger operations such as the North African or the New Guinea campaigns. They should embrace not only the material covered in the operational monograph, but all pertinent army activities and the activity of all cooperating forces. They should be addressed not only to military students, but to the general public as well.

c. Administrative Histories: These should be continued for the present as now planned, though the committee believes that further consideration should be given to their scope and nature. After further study, specific recommendations will be submitted.

d. A General Popular History: The Committee believes that a short (2 or 3 volumes), well-written history for popular consumption should be undertaken. The details of its preparation remain

to be worked out, but its desirability is apparent. To give to the general public an understanding of the Army's part in this War, the story must be presented in such a way as to be widely read.

e. An Official History: Plans must be laid now so that an authoritative and definitive military history of the War may be written. Such a work can only be completed after the War, but planning for it and systematizing the collection and preservation of the records must be undertaken energetically without delay.

f. Publication of Documents: This project should follow the official history sometime in the future, but the same considerations in regard to records hold, as outlined in e above.

2. That a Historical Branch be established in the MID, WDGS.

a. That the Branch Chief be a senior officer, and that an additional vacancy in the grade of Brigadier General be set up for the position.

b. That under the Branch Chief there be established the position of Chief Historian to be occupied by a civilian, and that an additional vacancy in the grade of P-8 be set up for the position.

c. That the A. C. of S., G-2, be authorized the additional personnel, commissioned and civilian, which in the judgment of the A. C. of S., G-2, and of the Advisory Committee, are necessary to perform the functions set forth in recommendation 4 below.

3. That the functions of the Historical Branch, G-2, be to plan and supervise the compilation of the military history of the Second World War to include:

a. Responsibility for the preparation and publication of the objectives set forth in recommendation 1 above, and such other objectives as may be recommended and approved at later dates.

b. The determination of methods, and responsibility for their execution, to be used for the accumulation of such documentary evidence as will be needed in the compilation of an official history of the war.

c. The establishment in the various theaters of the necessary personnel and organization to accomplish the collection and forwarding of the necessary historical data and the prescription of the methods, procedures, and levels at which the compilation of historical data will take place.

d. The coordination and supervision of the various agencies who are writing administrative and technical histories of the Second World War activities of the various War Department agencies and commands, including the War Department General Staff.

e. The determination of functions, duties, and responsibilities of the Historical Section, Army War College.

f. Consultation with the Advisory Committee on matters as enumerated in recommendation 5 below and such other matters as may be desirable.

g. Final editing and approval of all historical manuscripts prepared for publication by all agencies of the War Department.

4. That, under the supervision of the Chief, Historical Branch, the functions of the Chief Historian (see Tab A) shall be:

a. To supervise and edit all the historical work performed in the Historical Branch.

b. In association with the Chief of the Historical Branch and the Advisory Committee to suggest and initiate appropriate historical activities, advise on personnel, assign particular duties, and keep in touch with all historical activities both in the theaters of operation and at Washington.

c. To undertake such historical writing as is in harmony with his other duties.

d. To exercise general supervision over the preservation and processing of the source material connected with World War II.

5. That the advisory committee, appointed by the Assistant Secretary of War, advise the Chief, Historical Branch, G-2, and the Chief Historian with regard to historical personnel, records, administration, the selection and scale of projects to be undertaken, the coordination of the activities of the Historical Branch with the historical branches of any other agencies concerned and any other problems concerning objectives, organization or production where their services may be appropriate.

6. That, where the above recommendations conflict with the directive of the Deputy Chief of Staff of April 30, 1943, to the A. C. of S., G-2, subject: Establishment of a Historical Section, Military

Intelligence Division, that directive be amended.

For the Committee:

John M. Kemper
JOHN M. KEMPER,
Lt. Col., G.S.C.,
Secretary.

2 Incls:
Incl. 1 - Tab A "Recommendation that Henry F. Pringle be Apptd. Ch. Historian."
Incl. 2 - Tab B - Rept. of Gen. Spaulding dtd. 24 June 43 w/1 incl.

8 JUL 1943

APPROVED As amended. See accompanying memorandum JTM

By order of the Secretary of War
JOSEPH T. McNARNEY
Deputy Chief of Staff

O L Nelson
By O. L. NELSON
Col. G.S.C., Asst. to the Deputy Chief of Staff

NOTED-DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF OLN
Asst.

Shown to Secretary of War McCloy

Fleetwood Lawton
35 NBO Commerce
Br. Subject N. Hollywood
to be drafted

RECOMMENDATION THAT HENRY F. PRINGLE
BE APPOINTED CHIEF HISTORIAN

It is the opinion of the Committee that the Chief Historian should be not only a distinguished scholar and writer, who can command the confidence of the historical fraternity, but also a man of administrative and editorial experience. He should have good judgment of men, and the ability to work with them and to get them to work effectively and speedily.

For this position the Committee recommends Mr. Henry F. Pringle, Professor of Journalism at Columbia University, and at present consultant with General Somervell. Mr. Pringle, who is 45 years old, graduated from Cornell University, served on the editorial staffs of the N.Y. Sun, the N.Y. Globe, and the N.Y. World, and was, for a time associate editor of the Outlook. He has written voluminously for such magazines as Harpers, Colliers, the New Yorker, and others. He has published biographies of Alfred E. Smith (1927), Theodore Roosevelt (Pulitzer Prize biography 1931), and William H. Taft, 2 v. (1939) as well as some shorter studies.

Mr. Pringle was an active supporter of our present foreign policy even before our entry into the war and was associated with the work of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. When war came Mr. Pringle obtained leave of absence from Columbia University to join the O.F.F., and served later as head of the publications division of the OWI, where he revealed a marked capacity to lead successfully a team of writers.

Mr. Pringle has wide contacts with scholars, editors, and men of affairs in the public life of the United States and Great Britain. It was the unanimous opinion of the members of the executive committee of the Society of American Historians that he was the ideal man to edit the projected popular magazine of American history. Those qualities which recommended him to fellow-historians--amateur and professional--learning, literary distinction, a critical and judicious mind, hard-headed realism, executive and administrative ability--appear to the committee precisely those qualities required for the position of Chief Historian.

ARMY WAR COLLEGE OLS:vm
WASHINGTON, D. C.

24 June 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT, COMMITTEE ON HISTORICAL WORK IN THE WAR DEPARTMENT:

1. The Committee has now progressed far enough in its studies to agree upon a preliminary report upon its activities to this date. I find myself unable to concur in the conclusions, and therefore file herewith, as a minority report, a memorandum submitted by me on May 22d as a suggestion for the Committee. The principal points upon which I disagree are as follows:

(a) The Committee report proposes to set up an entirely new agency for writing the history of the current war, disregarding the possibilities of economy and efficiency to be found by the use of the Historical Section, Army War College---an agency which has had continuous existence since World War I, and possesses highly trained personnel. This agency could be utilized for the new task, without interfering with its current functions.

(b) The Committee suggests as the chief civilian historical officer a man whose record shows him to be a prolific and apparently competent biographer, historian, and literary man; but it shows no trace of activity or interest in military history or military affairs in general.

Oliver L. Spaulding

OLIVER L. SPAULDING,
Brig. Gen., U.S.A., Ret.

1 Incl.

VICTORY BUY UNITED STATES WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

Historical Section

May 22, 1943

Memorandum for the Assistant Secretary of War:

Subject: Historical work in the War Department.

The agenda of the Assistant Secretary's conference of May 19th dealt chiefly with the proposed planning committee. The military members have met and consulted as to the civilian membership, and recommendations have been submitted. When the committee shall have been formed, the next question will doubtless be its mission. If suggestions are in order, I request that consideration be given to the following notes.

OLIVER L. SPAULDING,
Brig. Gen., U.S.A., Ret.,
Chief, Historical Section, A.W.C.

HISTORICAL SECTION, ARMY WAR COLLEGE

May 22, 1943.

Proposed Outline for Mission of Historical Planning Committee

This outline follows the general form of Colonel Kemper's memorandum for Colonel Nelson of May 19, 1943.

1. Coordination of the preparation of administrative histories. This function was assigned by circular letter of July 15, A. G. O., to the Historical Section, Army War College. In the absence of specific instructions, that Section has established relations with the historical officers of the three War Department commands, issued suggestions as to method, and designated one of its own officers for liaison duty, with a view to keeping informed as to what is being done and making occasional reports. The Section may well continue to exercise this function, especially if, as recommended below, it

is transferred to the jurisdiction of an authoritative War Department agency. (See par. 5.)

2. Historical technical training aids in the nature of G-2 campaign studies. These are of course based upon historical material, but are not primarily historical in their nature. They occupy a place something like that of the "Notes in recent Operations" issued at G. H. Q. in 1917-1918, and hence seem to be properly placed in some training agency of the General Staff.

3. Historical outlines as prepared by the Special Services Division, A. S. F. It is understood that these are to be popular in style, intended for early and wide distribution. They fill an important place, and should be continued under the same direction.

4. Unit and theater histories. This category presumably includes narratives of operations written strictly from the point of view of the troop unit concerned---avoiding, of course, distortion of facts, but intended to stimulate pride in the unit. Such narratives always contain details of personal experiences not to be found elsewhere, and should be encouraged.

5. Activities of the Historical Section, Army War College. The present activities of this Section are stated in Inclosure A.* They should continue, plus the additional duties relating to the current war enumerated below. The Section should be transferred from the jurisdiction of the War College to that of an authoritative agency of the War Department, such as the office of the Secretary or Assistant Secretary, or an appropriate section of the General Staff.

6. System for procuring, reproducing, and cataloguing of documents. Procurement should be fully decentralized. The commanding general in each theater of operations, or major troop unit designated by the War Department, should appoint a historical officer with the necessary assistants, to examine operations papers, classify them roughly in order of immediate importance, and prepare card indexes. For this work, the Historical Section has developed a system which works satisfactorily. The papers themselves should remain in the files of the normal custodian; but the index cards, and especially important documents, should be reproduced in microfilm and the film shipped to the Historical Section; the storage space required would be very small. Thus the personnel required will be almost entirely in the field, and the Historical Section files will provide a single repository for information from all sources.

Historical officers will take every opportunity to secure personal narratives from participants in operations. Officers who show exceptional aptitude in preparing such narratives, who may be invalided home, should be ordered to temporary duty with the Historical Section for a suitable period, to bring the atmosphere of the front to the Section.

7. Program for writing. Only one form seems appropriate at this time--the operations monograph. Special papers partaking of the historical nature have been touched upon in pars. 1, 2, 3, and 4, above. Sometime, after the war, an authoritative official history, in several volumes, should be written, but evidently material is not yet available. Still later, compilation of the documents should be undertaken. But for the present, attention should be concentrated upon a series of operations monographs. This series should include two or three on military background of the war and the raising and training of the new armies; then should follow papers more or less as suggested in the inclosed outline (Inclosure B).*

These monographs should be in readable style, but at the same time they should be adequately documented to command respect. They should not contain so much detail as to burden the text, but enough to attract the military student. They should be in the form of narratives of operations, but supply and transport should be amply treated. They should be written by military men with experience in historical work, or by civilian historians with military experience or distinct interest.

Members of the committee, both civil and military, will be on the watch for suitable writers and will recommend such persons for consideration by the entire committee to write specific monographs. In case of a military writer, he should be ordered to duty for the purpose; for a civilian, such arrangement will be made as is recommended by the committee. The writing will be done habitually in the offices and with the facilities of the Historical Section, where ready access can be had to the important sources; these will include the printed material in the Library of Congress and in the War College Library; the documents currently sent in from the field to the General Staff, the Air Forces, and other War Department agencies; and the microfilms and index cards sent in from all theaters of operations to the Historical Section as stated in par. 6. The proper division of the General Staff will make such arrangements as may be necessary and proper for access to documents, and facilities for working with them. Consultation among writers who may be working on different subjects but at the same time, is strongly to be encouraged.

8. The Chief, Historical Section, under the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, will exercise administrative control, and supervise writing, subject to such rules as the committee may from time to time formulate.

*Inclosures A and B not attached.

PSF: MacLeish folder 2-43

FILE MEMO:

Nov. 11, 1943

The President directed me to telephone Mr. MacLeish in answer to his letter, and to suggest to him that before anything is done on the matter he consult with Harry Hopkins and Sam Rosenman.

GGT

THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE
NOV 9 11 18 AM '43
RECEIVED

November 8, 1943

Dear Mr. President:

I have wanted to ask if I could see you about a suggestion made to me last week by Congressman Clinton Anderson of New Mexico. Perhaps, however, I can save your time by telling you, briefly, what the proposal is. If you would like me to fill in the gaps personally, it would, of course, give me the very greatest pleasure. But I long ago made up my mind never to ask to see you, if I could spare your time.

Anderson's suggestion is that an attempt should be made to put together in the Library of Congress a collection of materials bearing upon your Administration which would not in ordinary course go to Hyde Park. Specifically, his suggestion is that there should be a Committee with Congressional representation, and, perhaps, if he would consent, with Mr. Baruch as Chairman, to secure from Members of Congress, and others who may have materials bearing upon the period of your Administration, anything they would be willing to turn over. He would also like to go somewhat afield and collect materials held by private citizens. He spoke specifically of Mr. Valentine and Mr. Frederick Adams. There are undoubtedly others.

My first reaction was, as you would suspect, that the Library of Congress would not wish to do anything which would seem to put it in competition with the Library at Hyde Park. Mr. Anderson thoroughly understood my suggestion and said he had in mind materials which would not go to Hyde Park in any case. He cited several obvious examples. Second, I raised the question whether there might not be political repercussions at this particular moment in history, if such a Committee as he had in mind were set up, and if Members of the various Congresses during your Administration were approached. Anderson felt there would be no such repercussions, but I am not certain that his judgment on this can be accepted as final.

I'd appreciate any guidance you may care to give me. Always,

Faithfully yours,

Archie

Archibald MacLeish

The President
The White House

PSF MacLeish folder 2-44

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN

Personal

October 27, 1944

file

Dear Grace:

I wonder if I could trouble you to set me straight on a White House staff matter, which I don't quite understand.

Mr. Dewey Long, and particularly his associate, Mr. Cook, have been very kind in the past in helping me on travel arrangements. Recently Mr. Cook was good enough to say that he would give us a hand in trying to work out a Red Cross trip Ada had to take as National Chairman of the Camp and Hospital Service. The Red Cross, which is not exactly efficient in these matters, balled the whole thing up, with the result that Mr. Cook felt a very natural and understandable annoyance. Reservations made through his office were not used, and he may well have felt some embarrassment as regards the railroads.

What I am not quite certain about, however, is whether Mr. Cook and his office would now like to be relieved of requests for assistance from me. If they would be, naturally I will bother them no further. What they did in the past was done purely as a courtesy to me. On the other hand, if I can still call on them, I would like to do so, since they have been extremely helpful, and since I have a good deal of running around to do.

Should I still call on them from time to time when I am stuck otherwise, or should I send them suitable floral tributes by way of gratitude and appreciation, and call it a day?

Always, with my best,

Faithfully yours,

Miss Grace Tully

PSF

MacLeish folder 2-46

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN

November 10, 1944

Dear Grace:

As you will recall, the President agreed, when we last talked about Library matters, that I might send my resignation along after November 7. I am therefore enclosing it, together with a personal letter to the President. I'd appreciate it very much if you would send them both in when you think a convenient time presents itself. I am sure he will recall our conversation.

With many thanks for many kindnesses over many years, always,

Faithfully yours,

Archie

Archibald MacLeish

Enclosures

Miss Grace Tully
Secretary to the President
The White House

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN

November 8, 1944

Dear Mr. President:

I submit herewith my resignation as Librarian of Congress.

When you did me the honor to appoint me to this position five years ago, I left work of my own unfinished to which I should now like to return.

The reorganization of the Library of Congress which I undertook shortly after my appointment is now completed.

The war-time measures planned for the security of the Library's collections have been carried out: its evacuated materials are now restored, with the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the Library's shelves.

I feel deeply the honor you did me in entrusting the administration of the Library to my care. I have tried to administer it as I think you would have wished - as a Library for the people as well as for the people's Government in Washington.

Very respectfully yours,

Archibald MacLeish

The President
The White House

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN

Personal

November 8, 1944

Dear Mr. President:

You were kind enough to tell me when we last talked that I might resign as Librarian of Congress as soon as I pleased after a certain day in November - glorious day as it turns out. I am acting accordingly. My formal resignation is enclosed.

I'd like to tell you, though in less stilted language than such a document can carry, that I am proud to have served under you and that you have my entire devotion now and always. But you know that.

There is one problem of timing. I'd like to tell my people here in the Library before they read of my resignation in the papers. At the same time, I don't want to tell them until I actually leave. Nothing is worse for an agency than to have a resigned man hanging on in his office like a living corpse.

Would you, therefore, let me know two or three days in advance of the date when you plan to announce to the astounded world that Archie doesn't live here any more?

I hope it can be soon.

With my respect and affection,

Enclosure

Archie

The President
The White House

Library of Cong. Golden
2-45
MacLeish

Andrew.
Please pick up & forward previous memo about candidates for Librarian of Congress.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

April 6, 1945

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Dear Mr. President:

About that awful position of Librarian of Congress which nobody wants. I do feel badly about my inability to turn up names, but the truth is that the list I sent you on February 13 just about sums up the picture so far as the people I saw during my term as Librarian are concerned. Granted that Van Bush can't be persuaded to drop his $25,000 job and take a $10,000 job, the best bet in that list is Ted Blegen who would really handle the job very well.

I take it from the message you sent me, however, that you would like to look outside the world I inhabited as a librarian. I have therefore done some thinking about writers and people of that kind. None of the really good writers who are now around forty to fifty would seem to me to fill the bill. Either they are people who wouldn't take an office job, or they are people who shouldn't. The only exceptions (and I assume Bob isn't interested, or you would have mentioned it) are Thornton Wilder, whom we have just appointed Cultural Attaché at Paris, and who might very well take the job - though I am not sure - and Carl Van Doren, who is probably too old.

Another possible field would be the lawyers and professional people. I am a great admirer of Lloyd Garrison, and I think he would do a superb job in the Library, if he could be persuaded to leave Wisconsin. He has energy and learning and viscera, and he is, in addition, a believing man.

It would help me a lot in the job of sifting through names if you would get Grace to tell me if any of these come within gunshot of what you had in mind. Meantime, you will be amused - or maybe you won't be amused - to know that I keep on receiving letters from librarians, including some of the stodgiest in the business, asking me to do something about their ambitions to become Librarian of Congress. Life is really very wonderful, if you can watch it go by long enough.

Always with my affection, my admiration, and my profound respect,

Faithfully yours,

Archie
Archibald MacLeish

The President
The White House

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

file

March 6, 1945.

The President directed me to telephone Archie MacLeish and tell him that he is not very happy about his suggestions. There is no one on his list who is up to Archie and the President wants Archie to keep on looking.

G. G. T.

March 12/45
Message delivered today
G.G.T.

160 Endorsements.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

February 13, 1945

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Dear Mr. President:

Grace asked me, just before you left, to give some more thought to the Library of Congress situation in view of Julian Boyd's inability to accept. I can't imagine why Julian acted as he did. He would have been a grand appointment.

My first name would be Van Bush (V. Vannevar Bush), whom we discussed before. I gather there is little chance of getting Van, since his salary as head of the Carnegie Institute is $25,000, and since he has no independent income, so far as I know. I therefore mention his name only because he would be the best man, in my opinion, we could get.

My next suggestion would be Ted Blegen (Dean Theodore Christian Blegen) of the University of Minnesota. You know all about Ted, and I won't bother you with details. As I recall it, you shared Bob Connor's feeling and mine that he would have been a superb Librarian for Hyde Park. I gather there is good reason to believe that he would be interested in the job as Librarian of Congress. One of my friends who knows Blegen well told me recently that he is "a man of great intellectual and moral stature". I am told that he sympathizes whole-heartedly with my conception of the function of the Library and would carry on the work we began there. He gets along well with people - would certainly get along well with Congress - and would have the enthusiastic support of scholars and educators, and even - if we gave them time - of librarians. I think his would be a distinguished appointment and one which would reflect great credit on the appointer, the appointee, and the Library.

Another possibility - a man very like Blegen in many ways, and a distinguished and able scholar - is John Gauss of Wisconsin. Gauss has been asked to accept a whole batch of jobs as President or Dean of important colleges and universities and has turned them all down. He is one of the most attractive people I know and one of the ablest. If you would like more information about him, I will get you

the full dossier.

Then, there is Kenneth Murdock who was Lowell's choice for President of Harvard when Jim Conant was elected. Murdock turned in a good job as Dean. He was an efficient and successful administrator at Leverett House, and he is a full Professor of English at Harvard. Although Kenneth is a good friend of mine, I rather doubt whether he would do as good a job as Librarian as Ted Blegen. Here again, I won't bother you with details, unless you want them.

I would also include as a possibility, Wilmarth Lewis of Farmington, who, as a member of the Yale Corporation, is the man principally responsible for the recent growth of the Yale University Library. Lefty Lewis is a charming and cultivated man, who would bring many admirable qualities to the Library. His one experience as an administrator, however, was not happy, and his health, though good at present, has been rocky from time to time. I don't believe he would take the job, and I shouldn't rank him with Blegen or Gauss or Murdock, but he has certain qualities which none of the rest have.

x160 Finally, I think I should mention the Chief Assistant Librarian, Luther Evans, who has developed well as an administrative officer and has proved himself a good all-around executive. He is not a man of intellectual distinction and is more useful, in my opinion, in his present position than he would be in the position of Librarian. Indeed, I could only recommend him for the position of Librarian as a last resort, since I believe the position requires qualities Evans does not possess and cannot acquire. However, his years of loyal service certainly entitle him to be named in any inclusive list.

If you want me to try again, I should be delighted to do so. Also, if Grace will give me a ring, I will amplify any of the statements in this letter.

Always yours,

Archie

+20

The President
The White House

From. Archie MacLeish

The armies of the period were small professional armies. "Royal" regiments were raised in the name of the sovereign, without intermediary, but others were raised by the "indenture" system. Under this plan, the king or his ministers entered into an agreement with some competent and responsible mobleman or gentleman, to raise and command a regiment for the king's service. This he did usually by a system of sub-contracts, men of military experience and reputation raising companies. The contracts specified all details as to term of service, pay and equipment, and the allowances to be drawn by the contractors for recruiting and maintenance.

This system evidently offered opportunities for fraud. Only too often did the captains "beguile the service with lesse numbers than they are payed for."

The answer to this was adquate inspection and check; and a system of musters grew up, providing for personal verification of numbers by royal "mustermasters." The procedure was simple but effective, and nothing better was found down to the abolition of musters, within the present generation - "At every musteringe or assemblinge, the captaines bill shall be called by the clarke, every man answearing to his own name, marching foorth as he is called, that noe man unto twoe names make answere." *

* Spaulding, Oliver Lyman: The United State Army in War and Peace. pp. 1-2.

Muster. A review of troops under arms, fully equipped, in order to take an account of their numbers, inspect their arms and accoutrements, and examine their condition. In the U. S. service troops are mustered bi-monthly. During the civil war, the mustering in and mustering out of troops (into or out of the U. S. service) were performed by staff-officers, called commissaries of musters.**

**Wilhelm, Thomas: A Military Dictionary and Gazetteer. 1881. p. 343.