

New Manuscripts of the National Library



Mr. Galliard Hunt, in charge of Uncle Sam's manuscripts.

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WASHINGTON, D. C., Oct. 18.—Within the last five years some of the most important historical work ever done for this nation has been going on in the library of congress in Washington. This is the collection of the raw material of the history of the United States and that of the American colonies. It consists of gathering together from every available source the private papers and letters of our presidents and our greatest statesmen. It includes the transcribing from the archives of foreign countries every document that relates to the American colonies, as well as all the material in manuscript form that sheds light upon the true story of the making of the American nation.

Already the manuscript division of the library ranks among the three greatest manuscript collections of the world. Its papers and letters now surpass in extent and value those of any other library or government of Europe, excepting perhaps the British museum in London and the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. The work so far has been in active operation for only about five years, and the collections are increasing so rapidly that our division of manuscripts will have more of such material than any other similar collection in the world.

Numerous Letters. Indeed, I despair of giving you an adequate conception of the enormous amount of material and of the admirable way in which it is being made accessible to the student and author. The correspondence, private papers and other documents already in hand are actually numbered by millions. There are more than 100,000 letters of the Washington correspondence, there are 30,000 or 40,000 of the private papers and letters of Andrew Jackson, and there are other papers of almost every president from the time of George Washington down to the late civil war.

There are thousands of unpublished letters of American statesmen and politicians, including the complete papers of Alexander Hamilton, Duff Green, Salmon P. Chase and Edwin M. Stanton. The papers of John Sherman are here, as are those of Gideon Welles, as well as those of General Sherman and General McClellan. There are also naval papers, papers relating to our commercial history and upward of 100,000 folios of transcripts of documents relating to American colonial history. There is scientific correspondence, including letters of the two Brownings, Marion Crawford, Mark Twain and James Whitcomb Riley.

The greater part of the material is new, and as I shall show, further in my talk with Mr. Galliard Hunt, who is in charge of this collection, much of it will throw a new light upon history, and the most of it has never been published.

But first let me give you some idea of the manuscript division of the National Library. It is in the northwest pavilion on the second floor of the building. It consists of a circular reading room about 100 feet in diameter, book stacks running off from it containing hundreds of great volumes bound in red morocco, in which these priceless letters and papers are so carefully stored. The reading room is in the shape of a dome, with a circular mahogany desk in the center, about which those who handle the manuscripts must sit. The arrangement is such that the readers are never out of sight of the chief of the division or his assistant. The floor is flooded with light, and all handling of the papers is done under the Argus-eyes of the attendants. Even the private office of Mr. Galliard Hunt is surrounded by glass, and he has the whole of the workings constantly before him.

Around the reading room are cases which contain a card index catalogue to certain divisions of the collection. This index is a general one. The material is so vast that it would be impossible to index it in detail, and it is only by coming here in person that the historical student or writer can get the material for his work.

Letters Accessible. Nevertheless, these hundreds of thousands of letters and papers have been made wonderfully accessible, and they are being so cared for that from now on they will be practically indestructible. Come with me into the book stacks where the manuscripts are kept. We are in a great room 100 feet or more long, filled with steel cases which run back on each side from a central aisle. The cases are in stacks, three stories high. The whole is a skeleton of steel. The rooms are fireproof and the manuscripts are stored away in great volumes as big as the biggest family Bible, each having its own place in this steel construction. There are thousands of these volumes, each containing hundreds of pages, and each page holding a letter or paper, many of which are worth their weight in gold. The papers are classified according to the president or period to which they relate. Many of them are in collections, such as the Washington documents, the Madison documents and the John Sherman papers, but all are chronologically arranged, and every letter and paper has been so prepared and pasted that it can be easily got at to be photostated or copied cases, which run back on each side from a central aisle.



Where the transcribing is done

can appreciate the vast work that is going on. At present a force of three men and three women are engaged in mounting the documents. The papers as bought by the library are often in a deplorable condition, but they are taken and treated so that they will last forever. Each manuscript has its own treatment according to its needs, the work being an improvement on that originated by Father Ehrly of the Vatican library, who until the work began here was the past master in the art of preserving and renovating old manuscripts. One method used to keep the tattered and torn and crumbling worm-eaten papers together is by smoothing them out and covering them with a fine silk gauze known as crepe-line. This stuff is so delicate that it can hardly be detected, when it covers the writing, but it holds the papers for all time to come.

Chief of Division. But let me continue the story of this collection by giving you a talk that I had with Mr. Galliard Hunt, who has been chief of the division of manuscripts of the library for the last five years. Mr. Hunt has long been well known as an historical writer. He has for years been an authority upon all manuscripts and facts relating to American history. He is the author of the well known biographies of James Madison and John C. Calhoun, and he was the editor of the great edition of the writings of Madison in eight volumes, of the "First Forty Years of Washington Society" and of a large part of the journals of the continental congress. He knows as much, if not more, than any other man in the United States about manuscripts, and especially about those relating to our history. He had a long experience connected with the manuscripts of the State department before he came here, and his work is known in all the great libraries of the world.

In response to my question Mr. Hunt said: "The manuscript division began when the library came into this building, which was approximately ten years ago. It has been increasing in size very rapidly within the last five years, and it has now taken its place among the first three manuscript collections of the world. The credit of this is due first to the power of organization of Mr. Putnam, secondly to the work of Worthington C. Ford, who was the first chief of this division, and thirdly to my persistency in following up the policy laid down by Mr. Ford. Mr. Ford is the greatest authority on manuscripts in this country." He is now employed in the library at Boston, and I have taken his place.

"What manuscripts had you in the library at the start?" "Very few. When Mr. Ford took hold there were several collections of documents that had been acquired in one way or another in the course of his long history. The origin of some of them is not known. Others had been bought or given. These few, however, were valuable. They contained, for example, the papers of Rochambeau, which the government had bought from his family, and the Jamestown court book, which came with the Jefferson library, which was bought by congress during the latter part of Jefferson's life. And then there were the private papers of John Paul Jones and others, which were of great value."

"The Jamestown court book gives the proceedings of the court at Jamestown from A. D. 1622 to 1626. It is the oldest English-American document in existence. This book was in bad condition when it arrived here. It had been lying in a cellar and had got wet through and through. We have in a measure embalmed it and it is now as well preserved as if it were in a metal casket. The writing is in the court hand of the seventeenth century."

ords of the Continental congress and the papers of Benjamin Franklin." "Yes, the autographic interest of the papers is the least important. This collection might be called the raw material of American history, and as to just how valuable it is I can give you no adequate conception. I would say that there is not a single important period of American history that has been truly written, and that there is not a single incident of importance of which the manuscripts here in the library do not furnish the accepted version of it. Even such a story as that of the making of the Declaration of Independence is wrong. The library has information in these manuscripts as to who actually wrote it and as to the circumstances under which it was sent out. The story is different from any published and it is yet to be told. Another thing is the framing of the Constitution of the United States. We have manuscripts in the Madison papers and in other records

"The payments had no reference to the value of the manuscripts, and they were mostly made in order to assist the descendants of the several statesmen and presidents. This was especially so with the money paid for the Madison papers. It was to relieve the wants of Dolly Madison, and the money was so appropriated that it was paid to her in installments. This was mostly on account of her wayward son, Payne Todd, who had spent the greater part of his mother's fortune and who would have probably spent this if he could have gotten it. It was due to this provision that Dolly Madison had sufficient to maintain her in her old age. She died in comfort here at her house on Lafayette park."

"Has congress recently bought any important collection of manuscripts?" "No, congress has bought no collections by direct appropriations for a great many years. The library itself has bought a large number, but a great part of our manuscripts are given to us. Three different ways. Some of them are given, others are sold to the library for a sum entirely out of proportion to their value. Many people would not sell their papers to any other institution or person, but being poor, they are willing to take what the government thinks it can give, which is always much less than the same manuscript would bring at a private sale."

Price of Manuscripts. "Can you give me any idea of the prices of manuscripts?" "There is no such thing as a market price," said Mr. Hunt. "The price depends upon the temper of the buyer. There may be four or five rich men in the market buying certain kinds of autographs, and if you should have an autograph document that is along the line they want it is worth as much as they are willing to give for it. If only one of them wants it, it is not worth much. If they all want it the price is fabulous. The library does not pay a high price and it could not do so under any circumstances. If it did a person having family letters that were really worth little might get an idea that they were of fabulous value."

address. At the same sale a manuscript of Washington sold for \$500, and a letter of his sold for \$50. You can get no idea of prices by the publications concerning the sales. The newspapers mention only the highest prices paid, and nothing is said of the letters which go for little. At the same sale, where the Washington address brought \$1,000 a letter of Henry Clay may have sold for \$2.50."

Does Not Buy Autographs. "I would say, also," Mr. Hunt continued, "that the library does not buy autographs. It does not care for signatures, pure and simple, nor does it want single letters without their own historical value. We buy only collections. It would be rather absurd for us to pay for single letters of Washington, when our collection of Washington letters already numbers over 100,000."

"And then," Mr. Hunt continued, "take the extravagant ideas some people have concerning such papers. Not long ago a man offered us a set of revolutionary roll books. He considered them very valuable and he asked \$5,000 for the dozen in his collection. I calculated the value of the number of such books we had on hand, and at the price he asked our collection would have been worth \$75,000 for those books alone."

"Then your collection is historical rather than autographic?" "Yes, the autographic interest of the papers is the least important. This collection might be called the raw material of American history, and as to just how valuable it is I can give you no adequate conception. I would say that there is not a single important period of American history that has been truly written, and that there is not a single incident of importance of which the manuscripts here in the library do not furnish the accepted version of it. Even such a story as that of the making of the Declaration of Independence is wrong. The library has information in these manuscripts as to who actually wrote it and as to the circumstances under which it was sent out. The story is different from any published and it is yet to be told. Another thing is the framing of the Constitution of the United States. We have manuscripts in the Madison papers and in other records

which throw new light upon that subject. About two years ago a monumental work entitled "The Records of the Constitutional Convention," was printed in three large volumes by congress, and it was supposed to contain all the new matter. Within a week after that publication was issued the library received, by way of Philadelphia, four or five other very valuable records relating to the framing of the Constitution. This makes the congressional work incomplete, and so I might say we have no history which is a complete history as yet. George Washington has been more written about by any other man in our history, and yet not one-tenth of his papers have ever been printed."

Colonial Days. "Have you many documents relating to our colonial days?" "We have the papers of the revolution, and those of the continental congress. The latter begins with the first congress in 1774, and they extend to March 2, 1873, when congress died. After that we have the congress as under the constitution of the United States. None of those papers have ever been printed. Indeed, it is out of the question for any man to write about matters relating to American history without coming here. The information is not accessible elsewhere, and we have our manuscripts now so arranged that we can tell students where to go without waste of time."

"The documents cannot be taken away from the library. Indeed, a great many have been given only on the specific agreement that they would never go outside our hands. They can, however, be examined here and copied or photographed. This is, of course, for historic purposes. It is not for sensational writing, and not as to the publication of letters relating to persons now living. Many of the papers have been given to the library on the condition that they should not be put to any sensational use. The later papers, such as those of John Sherman and other men of recent date, might, if published, involve many men still in public life. We have to restrict that. Indeed, of all the papers after the time of James K. Polk we have to adopt more or less restrictions."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

PRATTLE OF THE KIDDIES Uncle-Hobby, if you're a nice, quiet

boy this afternoon I'll give you a cent. Bobby—No, I want a nickel. Uncle—Why, you young rascal, you were quite satisfied to be good for a penny yesterday. Bobby—I know; but that was a bargain day.

A little girl wanted to go to church

and besought her grandmother to take her. "I'm afraid I don't feel able to go this morning, dear," said grandma. "It's so warm, and I'm not well." The child was silent for a moment before returning to the charge. "Oh, grandma," was the manner in which she expressed her persistent longing, "be a sport and come to church!"

All Clogged Up? Here's Quick Relief

A Simple Remedy To Correct Constipation Before It Becomes Chronic

Very few people go through life without some time or other being troubled with constipation. Thousands injure themselves by the use of strong cathartics, salts, mineral waters, pills and similar things. They have temporary relief in some cases. It is true, but the good effect is soon lost, and the more one takes of them the less effective they become.

A physic of purgative is seldom necessary, and much better and more permanent results can be obtained by using a scientific remedy like Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin. It does not hide behind a high sounding name, but is what it is represented to be, a mild laxative medicine. It is so mild that thousands of mothers give it to tiny infants, and yet it is so compounded, and contains such definite ingredients that it will have equally good effect when used by a person suffering from the worst chronic constipation. In fact, among the greatest endorsees of Syrup Pepsin are elderly people who have suffered for years and found nothing to benefit them until they took Syrup Pepsin.

It is a fact that millions of families have Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin constantly in the house, homes like those of Mr. H. W. Fenstermaker, Siegfried, Pa. He says he has had wonderful results from the use of Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, that, in fact, he has never found a remedy so good, and he is glad to recommend it. The special value of



MR. H. W. FENSTERMAKER this grand laxative tonic is that it is suited to the needs of every member of the family. It is pleasant-tasting, mild and non-gripping. Unlike harsh purgatives, it works gradually and in a very brief time the stomach and bowel muscles are trained to do their work naturally again, when all medicines can be dispensed with. You can obtain a bottle at any drug store for fifty cents or one dollar. The latter size is usually bought by families who already know its value. Results are always guaranteed or money will be refunded. Families wishing to try a free sample bottle can obtain it postpaid by addressing Dr. W. B. Caldwell, 419 Washington St., Monticello, Ill. A postal card with your name and address on it will do.

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