

Some Early Recollections of an Itinerant Historian

BY WALDO GIFFORD LELAND

WHEN my college contemporary and nearly life-long friend, Dr. Clarence Brigham, the Director of this ancient Society, suggested that in view of my advancing years it would be prudent to put in form for posterity some account of my varied experiences, I felt both alarmed and flattered. My alarm was increased by his further suggestion that it would be more satisfactory if such an account should be compiled by myself, being of sound mind and body, instead of being extracted at a later date through the medium of a ouija board. Naturally I postponed this performance, like making a will, as long as possible and would have been happy to postpone it indefinitely but the insistence of Messrs. Brigham and Shipton made that difficult. I throw upon them full responsibility for the obligation under which you now find yourselves to listen to this recital.

I shall not inflict upon you the story of my life which, in itself, would be of slight interest, but I will try to report on a few of the activities in which I have been involved together with comments on some of the persons I have encountered, not a few of whom were or happily still are members of this Society.

In the time available this morning, even with generous leave to extend my remarks in print, I cannot cover more

than the earliest of my experiences, which derive such significance as they may have from having been a part of the early history of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

When I graduated from Brown University in 1900 I had settled upon college teaching as a desirable career. All the members of my family were school teachers and I had been brought up to regard teaching as one of the sacred vocations, along with the ministry and medicine. Teaching at the college level seemed likely to be less confining, more lucrative and to have more prestige than at the level of the schools. I had a strong inclination towards the social sciences, thanks to Henry B. Gardner and James Q. Dealey, and particularly towards sociology, but I felt that work in those fields should be solidly grounded in history, of which I had had too little in college except for part of a course under J. Franklin Jameson. The latter strongly endorsed my plan to undertake graduate study in history at Harvard before taking off into sociology. Doubtless he foresaw the inevitable result, that I would never take off. In fact at Harvard in those years there was no sociology to take off into. My only dip into that field was a single attendance upon Professor Giddings' class in the principles of sociology during a brief visit to New York, and that experience satisfied me that I had better stick to history as being more intelligible.

So in the first days of 1903 I was half way through my third year of graduate study in Harvard University and a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in history. Among my fellow students were Hiram Bingham, Charles McIlwain, and Frederic Paxson; Sidney Fay and "Frisky" Merriman had recently returned from European fellowships and were among the youngest of the instructors. Charles Haskins had just come from Wisconsin; Channing and

Hart, Macvane and Emerton, Gross and Ashley, and Archie Coolidge were the back-bone of the history department. For a year and a half I had been an assistant in Coolidge's History I.

It was on one of these first days of the year that Albert Bushnell Hart, returning from the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, summoned me to his den in the Appian Way and enquired if I would like to go to Washington for six months. He explained that the newly created Carnegie Institution of Washington had made a grant to Worthington C. Ford, chief of the Division of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress, for the preparation of a report on the archives of the Federal Government, that Claude H. Van Tyne, then a teaching fellow in the University of Pennsylvania, had been engaged to take charge of the project, and that Jameson had suggested that I might be available as an assistant. A brief calculation convinced me that out of the generous remuneration of one hundred dollars a month which was offered I could save enough to finance another year at Harvard without the necessity of spending most of my time as assistant in History I, and I accepted the proposal. Thus in the space of something less than five minutes I set the future course of my life, for I was destined to divide it almost equally between two jobs, neither of which had previously existed and for which I had had no thought of preparing myself. Within forty-eight hours I was on the Federal Express en route to Washington, which I was now to see for the first time, and which has been my permanent base of operations ever since.

It was not hard to find the new building of the Library of Congress where I was interviewed by Worthington Ford and Van Tyne, and where I had my first meal in the national capital at the already famous Round Table of the Librarian

Herbert Putnam. I was impressed to the point of being awed. From the great windows of the Round Table room, high at the top of the building, I looked across to the Capitol of the United States with the Washington Monument showing its tip over the House wing. Around me were persons of national distinction. Herbert Putnam, whom I still regard as the most perfect host in the United States, or for that matter in Europe, skillfully and imperceptibly guided the conversation to include at one time or another all those at the table, even including myself. Nearly forty years later when I had the honor of presiding at that same table over the farewell luncheon to Dr. Putnam, and of reading to him messages from all over the world on his completion of forty years of service as Librarian of Congress, my thoughts went back to the bright January noon of 1903.

Perhaps this is the appropriate place in which to recall that during those years the Round Table was the most spontaneously gracious institution of the Capital's intellectual life. Around it sat the chief members of the library staff, among whom Jameson, who in his last years took his place as co-host. Here came James Bryce, Jusserand, Trevelyan, the Garfields, the Willoughbys, senators and congressmen, scientists, scholars, authors, musicians, including many who are listening to these words. The Dean of Ely whom I encountered in his garden on one of my English visits recalled with emotion his passage at the Round Table. We have mourned the passing of this institution but without Herbert Putnam it would be merely another place for luncheon. Perhaps it is as well that it did not survive his retirement. Meanwhile, in his ninety-first year he holds court at the long table at the south end of the dining room of the Cosmos Club. I think that no one person in Washing-

ton made a greater impression on me, during all these years, than Herbert Putnam. When he asked me, in October, 1937, the day after Jameson's funeral, to succeed him as chief of the Division of Manuscripts and occupant of the Chair of American History, to refuse was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. I have made public my estimate of Putnam's services to scholarship in the address which the Council of Learned Societies presented to him at the time of his retirement, a copy of which is in our library here, a beautiful example of the work of the Merrymount Press, designed by our late fellow-member, Daniel Updike.

But I have come far this side of my chronological deadline and I must return to my starting point.

On January 23, 1903, I commenced work on the report which was to be published under the title *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the United States in Washington*, and on that date went on the pay-roll of the Carnegie Institution and remained there for twenty-four years.

The Carnegie Institution was in its earliest beginnings. The administrative staff consisted of Charles D. Walcott, secretary of the Board of Trustees, who gave supervisory attention in such time as he could spare from his duties as Director of the United States Geological Survey, and of Marcus Baker, assistant secretary in active charge. Daniel C. Gilman, recently retired from the presidency of The Johns Hopkins University, had been elected president of the Institution but had not at that time assumed active duty. Andrew Carnegie, in creating the Carnegie Institution of Washington, had declared his purpose to be "to found in the city of Washington an institution which shall, in the broadest and most liberal manner, encourage investigation, research and discovery and show the application of knowledge to the

improvement of mankind." To achieve this purpose the Trustees had appointed a large number of advisory committees to consider appropriate programs in the various fields of investigation. Not all these committees were for the natural and physical sciences; history, archaeology, economics, bibliography, literature and other areas of the humanities and the social sciences were included, and there was hope that the Institution might undertake a program of broad human interest. Its work was destined, however, to become predominantly scientific, although from the beginning attention and substantial funds have been devoted to other fields. Of these that of history, broadly interpreted to include archaeology, paleography and the history of science, has been most continuously and systematically cultivated. Indeed the first department to be formally organized within the Carnegie Institution was that of historical research and it still exists.

The advisory committee on history was composed of J. Franklin Jameson, then of the University of Chicago, Charles Francis Adams, and Andrew C. McLaughlin of the University of Michigan, and in their report of October 25, 1902, they recommended the creation of an "institute of historical research" (long a dream of Jameson, Frederick J. Turner and other members of the American Historical Association), which should undertake "a comprehensive and detailed examination of the Governmental Archives" and the editing of the most important of the historical documents preserved among the records of the Government. It should also serve as a clearing house for the historical scholars of the country and facilitate their research in Washington, and should provide guidance and instruction for advanced and competent graduate students. The committee further recommended that there be undertaken a series

of investigations of European archives for the location and description of materials bearing on American history, and finally that an annual subvention of \$2000 should be granted for the *American Historical Review*.

These recommendations were favorably received by the Trustees and in October, 1903, the Bureau (later Department and now Division) of Historical Research was created within the Institution and Andrew C. McLaughlin was named organizing director. He came to Washington for two years and brought the *American Historical Review*, of which he was managing editor, with him.

Meanwhile the exploration of the archives of the Government, the first recommendation of the Advisory Committee, was under way and Van Tyne and I were the explorers.

Washington in 1903 was a tranquil village-like city of some 300,000 inhabitants. The enlivening presence of Theodore Roosevelt provided daily news of human and political interest; government clerks filled the boarding houses and grumbled about their hard jobs and their mean bosses and walked to work with their paper bags of luncheon. Or they rode on the diminutive street cars, with their open trailers, winter as well as summer, and paid a quarter for six tickets.

I settled down in a typical boarding house behind the Library of Congress, where the Library Annex now stands, with a bachelor college friend and fraternity brother, William A. Slade, for a room-mate. He had a position in the Library of Congress, an extensive knowledge of bibliography and of governmental publications, and was of great assistance to our mission. The house was kept by five Virginia sisters, in order of seniority Miss Mary, Miss Annie, Miss Alverta, Miss Roberta and Miss Emily. Their boarders were mostly government clerks, many of them unhappy spinsters and widows. One of the latter wrote and even

published poems and I recall one, which seemed especially appropriate and which opened with the lines—

Oh, the birds up in the Senate,
How they sing!

How eternally true!

Van Tyne did not have a room in our boarding house but he took his meals there, as did also a young Mississippi planter, Alfred Holt Stone, whose partner ran his plantation while he carried on research in the history of the South and was becoming nationally known for his practical and liberal views respecting the position of the Negro as an important element of Southern population. We three became close friends and were much together. In the last days of May, 1903, we took a memorable bicycle trip to Harpers Ferry, Winchester, Hagerstown and Antietam. It was chiefly memorable for the endless mud through which we ploughed, the numerous rivers which we had to ford, carrying our vehicles on our backs, and a bad spill which Stone had when he lost control of his wheel on a steep descent, for he had previously ridden a bicycle only on the level stretches of the Yazoo Delta.

Van Tyne has long since left us but the memory of his generous, courageous, spirit remains. A product of the Michigan forests, adventuresome student in Europe (he and his wife pulled their way down the Danube in a small boat), he had a sense of humor which he enjoyed turning on himself. We often competed in friendly abuse of each other, each thinking himself the winner. He had engaged to write the volume on the American Revolution in Hart's *American Nation* and devoted about half his time during his Washington residence to that work.

Our searches in the archives began with visits to those in authority and possessed of pertinent information. We called

on John Hay, Secretary of State, on Elihu Root, Secretary of War, and on the other members of the Cabinet as well as on Senator Hoar of Massachusetts, and on countless bureau chiefs. Orders were given to facilitate our investigation; file clerks, happy to have sympathetic outsiders to talk to were for the most part kind and helpful. At first our task seemed well-nigh impossible of accomplishment. The records were everywhere, in basements, damp and mouldy, in attics, scorched and brittle, in storage warehouses, covered with dust and dirt, in old car-barns, in blocked-up doorways and in corridors where scant room for foot passage was left. They were exposed to every sort of risk and had suffered from fire and dampness, autograph hunters, general decay, and from being thrown around. Missing records prior to 1814 were invariably charged against the British capture of Washington. As officers and custodians became accustomed to us we circulated with great freedom, opening bundles and boxes, exploring file cases, and climbing ladders to high cupboards and in general doing as we pleased.

A notable exception to this tolerant attitude was furnished by the redoubtable Adjutant-General Ainsworth, to whom our late fellow member, Professor William MacDonald, once paid his respects in blistering language for his obstructive policies. Ainsworth had made himself solid with Congress by card-indexing the records on which military pensions were based to such good effect that the customary delays of months or even years were reduced to days. Most of the historical records of the Department of War, including the captured Confederate records, had been brought within his custody and control and we were allowed only a rapid tour on foot, accompanied by a clerk, through a score or more of rooms where the records were stored. Our guide, however, gave us a small printed volume of 1890 which bore

the title *List of the Records and Files of the War Department*, but this act of generosity was disapproved by the General who ordered the immediate return of the book. Thereupon we went to Brentano's and purchased a copy for something like eighty cents. After the publication of our *Guide* we were told that General Ainsworth had been greatly disturbed and annoyed by the abundance of our information about the records of the War Department.

Although six months had been allotted to the preparation of the *Guide* it naturally was not completed within that period. So it was agreed that I should return in the autumn to finish the work. I was to be assistant to Andrew C. McLaughlin who was to come to Washington to organize the new Bureau of Historical Research, and Van Tyne was to substitute for McLaughlin at Michigan, which was his alma mater. Looking at the *Guide* today, in the light of the present archival situation and our knowledge of government records, I think that its present value is that of a historical document, which presents a reasonably faithful picture of a situation that has long ceased to exist. Also it furnished a new starting point for the campaign on behalf of a national archives building which was to become one of the major efforts of the Carnegie Institution, especially after Jameson succeeded McLaughlin as director of the Department of Historical Research. The story of that campaign is a long one; it has been told briefly by the late Charles O. Paullin, a fellow member of the Department's staff, but it should receive more extended treatment for it deals with the most important step the Federal Government has ever taken in the interest of history and the related social sciences. Jameson was the life and mainspring of the campaign; he called upon senators and members of Congress and on high officers of the Government and gave them little opportunity to forget

the matter; he enlisted the support of influential organizations, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the same, the Colonial Dames, and later the American Legion, while historical societies adopted numberless stirring resolutions. Nobody appeared to be opposed to the better preservation and administration of the national archives; everybody agreed that the situation was intolerable and disgraceful, but there was almost complete inertia at the critical points.

In 1912, at Jameson's request, I wrote an article for publication in the *American Historical Review*, entitled "The National Archives: a Program," which had the honor of being reprinted as a Senate document. I began the article with a quotation from a Russian report to the effect that the care which a nation devotes to preserving the monuments of its history is an index of the state of its civilization. Thus far this use, with implicit approval, of a Russian sentiment has escaped the notice of Senators who might not recall that in 1912 Nicholas II, rather than Stalin, was the ruler of Russia.

My colleague, Dr. Leo F. Stock, and I put on a show on behalf of the National Archives building which was repeated by request in various places. Stock opened the show with an illustrated lecture on the present state of the archives of the government, showing pictures which still look terrible, even after we have become accustomed to the results of intensive bombing. I followed with a talk on what might and should be, showing pictures of attractive and imposing structures in London, Paris, The Hague, Berlin, Vienna, and Ottawa. It was a sort of E.C.A. or Point IV in reverse, an effort to apply European know-how in the United States.

Now at last we have a National Archives Building and an effective archives administration with modern record man-

agement. The building is a visible monument to Jameson, though not dedicated to him. We also have a very active Society of American Archivists, which I had the honor of serving as president some years ago, and we have an excellent journal devoted to archival matters and interests. In short a new profession has come into being among us.

I have been somewhat embarrassed to find myself described as an archivist, a title to which I have no claim. I have never had charge of records, public or private, and I have never been able to establish any kind of control even over my personal papers. But I explored archives, here and abroad, and wrote about them, and organized in the meetings of the American Historical Association an annual conference of archivists and thus I became an archivist by association. My part in all this, however was minor as compared with that of our fellow member, Victor Hugo Paltsits, whom I am happy to see here this morning. He was not only a real archivist but he was a directing spirit throughout all these developments.

I realize that the course of this narrative is anything but chronological and I fear that it is beginning to be confusing, for I have jumped many intervening years since the initial exploration of the Washington archives in 1903 almost to the present. Now I must turn back.

As I have already said, McLaughlin came to Washington in October, 1903. He was the son-in-law of President Angell of the University of Michigan, head of the Department of History there, and managing editor of the *American Historical Review*. He invited me to remain as his chief and, for the time, his only assistant, and I accepted, postponing indefinitely my plans for further graduate study. (I may resume them yet, if I can find the necessary leisure.) Part

of my work was to help edit the *American Historical Review*, especially by compiling the quarterly grist of American "Notes and News." This task I enjoyed and felt quite important in its performance. I conducted a continuous survey of historical periodicals, literary magazines and *Publishers Weekly*, and followed the activities of all the State and local historical societies and of the departments of history in universities and colleges. I learned how to say the same thing in a dozen different ways, and I also learned the style sheet of the *Review*, as established by Jameson, its first managing editor, and now I find that I cannot depart from it, although the *Review* itself has.

McLaughlin was an ideal director from my point of view. He consulted me on what I felt sure were problems of prime importance, and he worried out loud, which always gratifies a subordinate. In a letter to me he wrote: "I have so much to do that I sit and look out of the window and wonder why I sit and look out of the window." He was working on his volume in Hart's *American Nation*, on *The Confederation and the Constitution*, and I remember with excitement his modest elation over the discovery of a manuscript which made possible an approximate and authoritative reconstruction of the Pinckney "plan."

It was McLaughlin who sent me to my first meeting of the American Historical Association at Chicago, in December, 1904, where I was instructed to get acquainted with persons having knowledge of collections of historical manuscripts, and in general to begin to learn my way around. There I attended the first conference of State and local historical societies, which was held as a session of that meeting, and met Thwaites and other stars of the firmament of mid-western historians. I felt that I was indeed getting into fast company. It was the beginning of my apprenticeship to the

trade of general handy man, but by reason of my fresh and comprehensive knowledge of the Federal archives I was treated with special consideration.

Immediately after the Chicago meeting I set out on a series of travels which were to cover most of the country east of the Mississippi. My mission had specific and general objects; of the former I was to locate and list letters from delegates in the Continental Congress and transcripts of documents in foreign archives and other depositories relating to the history of the United States. The search for delegates' letters was in preparation for the monumental edition of those documents which the Carnegie Institution proposed to publish and which was edited in masterly fashion by the late Dr. Edmund C. Burnett. The search for transcripts of foreign documents was auxiliary to the exploration of foreign archives for American materials, which was just getting under way. The general objective was to learn something about historical manuscripts in public or private possession with a view to maintaining in the Washington offices a body of useful information.

So, accompanied by my bride of a few months, I crossed the Potomac in January, 1905, and occupied Richmond as my first base of operations. North and South Carolina were included in this first voyage of discovery; in the summer of 1905 I made a few forays into New England, one of which was to this institution, for Mr. Shipton informs me that I signed a newly opened Visitors' Book on October 6, 1905, and that my name is fifth in that book. In 1906, this time alone, I pushed farther south into Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Kentucky and in the summer again visited northern states. Since my family home was, as it still is, in Newton, Massachusetts, I found it convenient to extend and prolong my searches in the Boston area,

especially in the libraries of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Historical Society where Sparks and Parkman had stored quantities of materials of interest to my mission.

With this general view of travels of these two years, but without attempting any systematic account of my itinerary I will content myself, and I hope you, with a few recollections and impressions.

Richmond in 1905 was a small city, with a prevailing odor of tobacco and soft-coal smoke, and its nearby outskirts were deep in mud. There were few hotels and many boarding houses and in one of these latter Mrs. Leland and I spent several interesting weeks well nourished with hot breads and chicken. Among our fellow boarders were a few ex-Confederate ladies who relived the Civil War for our benefit and told us stories of the fall of Richmond. We rarely encountered bitterness, although the Civil War was almost as near to them as the First World War now is to us, and its memories were still vivid. My wife's Canadian birth raised one of us, at least, in general esteem.

My principal centers of work were the Virginia Historical Society and the new State Library. The former was presided over by William G. Stanard, editor of the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, whose knowledge of Virginia family history and genealogy was encyclopedic, and who with much kindness gave me many introductions and much useful information. The State Library was directed by John P. Kennedy, recently of the Library of Congress, whom I had known well while working on the *Guide to the Archives*. Here I found much material of interest to me and settled down to long days of work. Besides many letters from delegates in the Continental Congress I found, among other documents, a bundle of letters addressed to John

Brown and Governor Wise while the former was awaiting execution. An extensive collection of transcripts and summaries of documents in the British Public Record Office received a large share of my attention, and Mrs. Leland, with great patience and persistence, made a list of them which was printed by the State Library in an impressive volume of five hundred pages or more.

Among persons whom I met in Richmond at this time was young Douglas Freeman, now, of course, our fellow member, then just graduated from Richmond College, who was compiling a catalogue of the papers in the Confederate Museum. He was an engaging youth, full of enthusiasm and energy, giving sure promise of an extraordinary career. It was in Richmond that a friendship with William E. Dodd began which still endures as a bright memory, saddened by his premature death. At this time he was professor of American history in Randolph-Macon College at Ashland, a few miles to the north, where the main-line trains run down the middle of the main street. Dodd came to Richmond frequently for days of historical research and once or twice I went out to Ashland to spend the night with his family. He had invited McLaughlin to lecture at the college, and McLaughlin, who came to have a very high opinion of him, induced him a few years later to accept a professorship in the University of Chicago. I think that in Chicago this native of North Carolina felt himself somewhat *dépaysé*, and he repatriated himself, at least on part-time, by acquiring a farm in Virginia, on the road from Leesburg to Winchester, at the edge of the Blue Ridge, which he operated as a dairy farm along with his professorship at Chicago, and so he became one of the landed gentry of the Old Dominion. Dodd had an enquiring mind; his conversation abounded in queries which sank deep. Southern historians of the old

school thought him erratic, perhaps even a little dangerous, because he was inconveniently logical and realistic. He had many plans for future work, in one of which, for an edition of the letters of John Marshall, he asked me to share, to the extent at least of locating such letters during my travels and securing copies of them. The idea attracted me, but unfortunately it hardly got beyond the stage of an idea. In Charleston, South Carolina, a year later, I interviewed a gentleman who was reputed to have, and indeed did have, many letters of Marshall in his possession, but his conscience compelled him to refuse their use by anyone connected with the Carnegie Institution, since he disapproved of Mr. Carnegie's methods of making money and regarded his fortune as tainted and felt that this taint adhered to all beneficiaries. Dodd's career was crowned by his election to the presidency of the American Historical Association and it was ended by his appointment to the ambassadorship to Berlin. Here he was disappointed and unhappy but unbowed. The Germany of Hitler was a totally different country from the Germany of his student days. My last talk with Dodd was in a Washington hospital not many months before his death. We talked in reminiscent fashion of the things of which we had been a part, of our early plans, of persons we had known, of his personal friendship with Woodrow Wilson and his intimate conversations with him during the latter's last illness.

While in Richmond I visited Williamsburg. It was a dreary period in the history of the former capital of Virginia, long before its major operation of face-lifting. I found a dismal village, a broad avenue of mud, a hotel of wretched discomfort, a few historic edifices and private homes of unmistakable dignity although shabby and decayed, and a depressing college. With the president of the latter, Lyon

Gardiner Tyler, son of the tenth president of the United States, I had an interesting conversation on historical matters. He had a kindly and impressive personality; as editor of *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, which still exists, he had a vast store of information respecting tide-water families, but gave me no important leads on collections of historical papers in Williamsburg. I have visited Williamsburg twice since 1905; in 1921, when I was a representative of Brown University to the inauguration of President Chandler of William and Mary, I found a very different situation, a lively town and a growing college which promised to take the place to which its age and history entitled it. Nearly a quarter of a century later I saw the new Williamsburg, or rather the old Williamsburg restored. While I cannot believe that the old colonial capital bore a close resemblance to the highly-colored, spick and span, expurgated and picturesquely populated town that restored Williamsburg has become, I find that that does not spoil my pleasure in the latter. An idealized past has been recreated for us and I suspect that most of us like it better that way.

After Richmond, Raleigh was the next base of operations. Here I first met Josephus Daniels, in his editorial sanctum which opened directly on the sidewalk. He received me kindly, for I bore a letter from Dodd, but had little information of the sort I was seeking. However, Charles Johnston, a leading figure of Raleigh, whose daughter and Mrs. Leland had studied together in the New England Conservatory in Boston, gave me a cordial and hospitable welcome and took us into the family circle. He turned me loose among his voluminous family papers and I found many letters from Samuel Johnston, Joseph Hewes and James Iredell. The old State records were in large part in the "enrolling room"

of the State House and since the legislature had adjourned I was allowed to have the key to that room and Mrs. Leland and I hunted at will through hundreds of bundles of papers folded in document style and wrapped in yellow paper. Later, in the Department of State in Washington, I came across a bushel or so of similar bundles which I identified as belonging with their like in Raleigh. There was no obvious reason for these bundles being in Washington, but the favorite explanation in North Carolina, when the matter became known, was that they had been looted by Union soldiers. The episode was closed by a Congressional resolution which directed their return to their native depository.

In North Carolina acquaintance was also made with our fellow member, John Spencer Bassett, then at Trinity College (Duke University) in Durham. He had recently achieved celebrity by comparing Booker T. Washington favorably with other figures in American history and he was shortly afterwards called to Smith College where he spent the remaining years of his life. In 1919 he succeeded me as secretary of the American Historical Association and his tragic death in Washington traffic in 1928 was a sad blow. We had become close friends and saw much of each other, for he was frequently in Washington and edited the *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* for the Carnegie Institution. His services to historical scholarship in the United States were important and varied. He was always friendly and helpful and his writing had true distinction.

Another friendship which commenced on this trip and which meant much to me was with our fellow member Robert Digges Wymberly Connor, son of a justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, and in 1905 holder of a position in the State department of education. I was to en-

counter him the following year in Lexington, Kentucky, when he was attending the annual Conference for Education in the South. Shortly after this Connor became the first secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission and a recognized leader in the movement which was gathering strength on a national scale for the better preservation and care of historical sources, especially public records. Still later he became professor of history and government in the University of North Carolina, but that academic interlude of a dozen years did not prevent him from being appointed the first Archivist of the United States by President Roosevelt in 1934, who was looking for "a good Democrat and the unanimous choice of the American Historical Association." At least that is what the President told Connor when he first discussed the appointment with him. It is hard to conceive of any unanimous action by the American Historical Association, but Connor was the unanimous choice of a special committee of that body, headed by Jameson, for the purpose of presenting suggestions to the President. Connor was an ideal first Archivist of the United States; he tackled a job of great difficulty and tremendous proportions; he knew how to secure and use competent advice and above all he knew how to please and convince committees and members of Congress. He devoted seven years to this task of creation and organization and then returned to Chapel Hill to spend the too brief remainder of his days as professor once more in the university.

Having mentioned Chapel Hill I must recall my first visit to that ideal university town, which took place during my stay in Raleigh. At that time Professor Kemp Battle, former president of the University of North Carolina and then professor of history, was the presiding genius of the place, and his hospitable welcome and kindly conversation are

among the happiest of my many happy memories of this university community.

One of the most striking experiences of this first trip in the South was that of observing and taking part in the Easter celebration of the Moravian community at Winston-Salem. This was before the automobile had brought crowds of the curious from far around to see a spectacle and the quiet dignity, religious atmosphere and sheer beauty of the services were unmarred. A choir of brass instruments wakened us in the dark morning and we hastened to the Female Seminary where we had breakfast with the faculty and students and joined the procession into the adjoining cemetery, where, above the rows of flat graves, freshly decorated with flowers, the Bishop proclaimed the resurrection just as the sun rose above the horizon. A professional reason for going to Winston-Salem had been to meet Miss Adelaide Fries, acknowledged authority on Moravian history, and to see, though not to study, the famous Moravian archives preserved in one of the community houses.

The trip of 1905 ended at Columbia, South Carolina, where the redoubtable Alexander S. Salley, Jr., secretary of the South Carolina State Historical Commission, was my mentor. Here I first saw Confederate flags publicly displayed as civic decorations, for I arrived just as the Conference for Education in the South, presided over by Robert C. Ogden, was convening. Columbia was then a small city of a main street which boasted a skyscraper of ten stories, and of attractive side streets. On one of these we saw a boarding house of hospitable aspect which we thought would afford comfortable relief from the hotel. Boarders of obvious distinction graced the armchairs and huge rockers on its broad veranda and we believed that we would find congenial company as well as roomy comfort if we could secure

admission. To our disappointment, however, we discovered, just in time to avoid public embarrassment, that this luxurious establishment was a Keely Institute for alcoholics. Weather of blistering heat descended upon us; wagons of watermelons wandered through the town leaving behind a trail of rinds; even the State capitol where I worked failed to provide relief and we were glad to return to the relatively northern latitude of the District of Columbia. The trip had netted a considerable quantity of notes about collections of historical manuscripts, some of which I had examined personally but most of which I knew only at second hand; I had also substantial lists of letters of Delegates to the Continental Congress and long lists of transcripts of documents in British archives.

More important to me, personally, were the acquaintances I had made and the beginnings of life-long friendships. I also began to have at first hand a general idea of the state and conditions of historical study and research in the area which I had visited.

During the latter part of 1905 I became involved in an interesting episode, reports of which are to be found in the *American Historical Review* of April, 1906, namely the exposure of a painstaking forgery of the issue of the *Cape Fear Mercury* which reputedly, for no extant copies are known, contained the full text of the "Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence" of 1775. A facsimile of a fragment of the alleged issue, containing the text of the document, was published in *Collier's*, together with a detailed story by one S. Millington Miller of how he discovered the long lost newspaper. If his story were true he had at last established beyond doubt the authenticity of the "Declaration." Now Millington Miller had preceded me in my recent travels in North Carolina and I had heard rumors of his visits which

were sometimes followed by the mysterious disappearance of historical manuscripts and rare books or, more often, of the title pages of old volumes. Miller's purpose in publishing his "facsimile" was to dispose of the original to the citizens of Charlotte, in Mecklenburg County, at a fabulous price. But in 1905 the citizens of Charlotte were mostly of Scottish descent and they were cautious and prudent. A deputation of historically minded persons, one or two of whom I had met earlier in the year, was charged to negotiate the matter with Miller. They insisted, however, upon having expert opinion as to the genuineness of the document and finally, after much haggling, Miller was persuaded to bring it to Baltimore at the time of the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in December and to show it to Worthington C. Ford, chief of the Division of Manuscripts of the Library of Congress. Ford's report was anything but reassuring but seemed to leave the matter in doubt. Meanwhile Alexander S. Salley, Jr., of whom I have already spoken as my guide and mentor in Columbia, South Carolina, and who was the last person in the world to let North Carolina get away with the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, pointed out that the day of the week and the day of the month, as set forth in the heading of the alleged issue of the *Mercury* did not coincide, in 1775, according to the accepted calendars of that year. He pointed out typographical anachronisms and other slips made by the painstaking Miller and completely dispelled all doubts respecting the forgery. Disappointment in Charlotte was keen, and was not unmixed with resentment, and the friendly relations which I had enjoyed with the deputation became somewhat strained, greatly to my regret. My own part in the detection of the fraud had been very minor—Worthington Ford kindly referred to my intelligent assistance—but

I had the excitement of being on the inner periphery of a major crime. I may say now that I still regard the matter of the Mecklenburg Declaration as an unsolved problem and Miller's performance leaves it where it was. However, I refer the curious to Salley's review of the subject in the *American Historical Review* of October, 1907.

Of my second southern trip, undertaken in the spring of 1906, a few recollections seem worth reporting. I was accompanied to Charleston, South Carolina and introduced there by Salley, who joined me en route at Columbia. In the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society Miss Webber showed me some three hundred letters of Henry Laurens as well as numerous letters from other delegates in the Continental Congress. Burnett's volumes reveal the richness of the harvest from this area. Salley introduced me to G. M. Pinckney who had a vast number of Pinckney letters, and he in turn introduced me to John Marshall, great-grandson of the Chief Justice, who told me that all the letters he owned had been destroyed when his house in Fauquier County, Virginia, was burned. He thought that his cousin, Mrs. Hardy of Louisville might have some letters of John Marshall, but when I met her a few weeks later she told me that she had none. After all it is not reasonable to assume that the great-grandchildren of historic personages must possess their ancestors' papers; I recall that I have nothing of the sort emanating from my four great-grandfathers, who, however, were not historic personages.

I found Charleston a beautiful and fascinating city in spite of dirty and ugly and disgusting spots. It was the Charleston of Owen Wister and *Lady Baltimore*, and I retain memories of fine old mansions, turned into boarding houses, in one of which I stayed, along the Battery; of streets leading to the water front which had grass growing up

between their cobble-stones, of soft warm air faintly perfumed, of strolling Negro musicians, and of hospitable and kindly people whose courteous reserve seemed to a Bostonian to be eminently proper. It has been my dream to return to Charleston for an early spring, but I hardly dare to now, lest I should find the charm of 1906 dissipated by the fumes of gasoline and the noise and rush of automobiles.

A side trip to Beaufort, to spend a night with a college friend, made me acquainted with groves hung heavy with moss, and gave me opportunity to inspect the coquina remains of vague fortifications on the water's edge, which were locally described as the "French fort," but which I believe, though I have never explored the matter, to be of Spanish origin.

A long, dirty hot train ride on a Sunday across central Georgia gave me impressions similar to those of Frederick Law Olmsted of fifty years earlier. The train proved to be a mobile social center and the waits at the way stations were enlivened by visitors and chatter. My destination was Montgomery, Alabama, where I was to visit the recently organized State Department of Archives and History, whose creator was Thomas M. Owen, whom we may be proud to claim as a fellow member of this Society. Let me add that I hope he will find a deserved, though delayed place in some forthcoming supplement of the *Dictionary of American Biography*. Owen was a pioneer in the South in securing State recognition of public responsibility not only for the preservation of public records but also for the collection of historical materials of all sorts and their organization and publication. His survey of the sources of Alabama history set an example which was quickly followed in Mississippi by Dunbar Rowland, and which spread to other States. Doubtless the earlier example of Wisconsin had

had due influence with Owen. Certainly the exploring tours through the southern States of our indefatigable fellow-member, Lyman C. Draper of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, together with the collecting activities he had carried on at the same time, had awakened historically minded persons not only to the value of historical papers but to the danger of losing them. Indeed Draper's explorations had been so rewarding, from his point of view, that the normal excuse for the absence of historical materials of any sort, which had survived the depredations of Yankee soldiers, was that Dr. Draper must have carried them off to Wisconsin. He furnished as good an alibi for these regions as the British occupation of Washington furnished to the Federal government.

While Owen's Department of Archives and History had few or none of the documents for which I was searching, my growing interest in the organization and administration of public records and historical manuscripts was greatly stimulated by my brief visit. I was not to be in Montgomery again until 1940 when, as president of the Society of American Archivists I had the privilege of joining in tribute to the memory of Thomas Owen and his work.

In Mobile I met with another fellow member, Judge Peter J. Hamilton, author of *Colonial Mobile*, whom I had known through correspondence and whose copies of documents, especially of maps, from French archives were of interest, for by that time the Carnegie Institution's mission to Paris was being planned, although I did not dream then that I was to head it. Judge Hamilton was a courteous and hospitable gentleman, of fine sensibilities and most helpful in giving me free access to the materials he had collected.

In New Orleans William M. Beer, another of our fellow members and librarian of the Howard Memorial Library,

was my chief guide and adviser. He gave generously of his time, put me in the way of seeing the collections of the Louisiana Historical Society, showed me what remained in New Orleans of original French and Spanish records, such as those of notaries and of local government, and accompanied me on excursions to historic sites and buildings, and introduced me to restaurants of renown. I was invited to address the Louisiana Historical Society and told the members what there was to tell about the work and plans of the Department of Historical Research in the Carnegie Institution. Of course I met another of our fellow members, Alcée Fortier, historian of French Louisiana, and innocently but without damage came into full range of the Beer-Fortier rivalry. The life of William Beer deserves more than the half-page allotted to it in the *Dictionary of American Biography* but our fellow member, Edward L. Tinker, present today and participant in this program, who has again demonstrated his authority in all matters pertaining to New Orleans, has happily treated him more adequately in the *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* for January, 1928.

I also met Professor John R. Ficklen of Tulane University, where in the library I found a good deal of interesting material. I recall that one day while I was at work in the university library I looked through the window across an expanse of meadow and was startled to see a great ocean steamer sliding through the grass like a giant amphibian. I discovered that the Mississippi flowed across the middle ground of my view but that it was concealed from sight by its levee which rose imperceptibly above the level of the foreground.

My visit to Louisville, Kentucky, was notable for the friendly reception I had from a fellow Brown University alumnus of the class of 1849, Colonel Reuben T. Durett.

Inexplicably he appears never to have been a member of this Society, a grievous omission! Colonel Durett was the founder of the Filson Club, in fact he was the Filson Club, and the active patron of research and publication in the history of the Old Southwest. His library, located in his home, was freely open to students and was an important research center; it is now in the University of Chicago. Of chief interest for my purposes were the volumes of transcripts from the Spanish archives which had been made for Colonel Durett and which constituted an important body of diplomatic correspondence including the despatches from Diego de Gardoqui. I set about making a check list of these documents which is incorporated in James A. Robertson's *List of Documents in Spanish Archives . . . of which Transcripts are present in American Libraries* (Carnegie Institution Publication, 124).

This was the first occasion on which I had been obliged to use Spanish, which I had never studied, notwithstanding its vogue after the War with Spain. So, in the hard way, I managed to acquire a fair reading knowledge of that not-difficult language as used in diplomatic correspondence, by means of a dictionary and a good command of French vocabulary combined with the remains of a one-year college course in Italian.

Colonel Durett was born in 1824, as was my father, and was now in his eighty-third year. In spite of his patriarchal appearance he had the vigor and activity of middle age and he was to live seven years longer. In any assemblage he was a person of distinction and was accorded respect and deference without in any way demanding them; his conversations and discussions were on the basis of friendly and natural equality. He showed sincere interest in my work and a desire to be helpful in all ways and extended the hospitality

of his home. He was a courteous gentleman of an old school who was completely at home in the time in which he lived and his personality and kindness remain among my most treasured memories.

I will mention only one other stop on this second southern trip, which was at Atlanta where I visited former Governor Allen D. Candler in his office as editor of the *Georgia State Records*. This important historical undertaking had been part of his program when he was Governor of Georgia and he was now energetically and with much ability carrying it out. An old Confederate soldier, who had lost an eye in the Civil War, I recall him as bluffly downright but friendly and as possessed of astonishing skill in expectoration which he practiced at frequent intervals and at long range during our short conversation. I do not recall however that my Atlanta visit netted any important results pertinent to my mission, other than a first hand, though superficial acquaintance with one of the major projects of historical publication in the South.

These early recollections may appropriately end at this point. I have revived them without the benefit of documentary records, which makes them somewhat suspect at certain points, and I reserve the right to revise and correct them, though not, let me reassure you, before this audience. But if I had resorted to such records as I might be able to lay hands upon this recital would have been interminable.

I realize that my frequent references to "fellow members" gives the impression that these two journeys were devoted in large part to calls upon the members of this Society. Of course I was not then a member nor were most of those whom I have claimed as fellow members in this account, but it is interesting to note that in a Society such as this with its limited membership a wisely guided policy of selection has

brought into it so many key figures in the field of American historical studies.

Of one of the chief of these I hope sometime to write with appropriate fullness and I refer of course to John Franklin Jameson who, having been my professor at Brown, became in 1905 my director in the Carnegie Institution of Washington and who until his death was a beloved friend. On going through his diary recently I came upon this entry for October 23, 1890. "It seems that yesterday, on Senator Hoar's nomination, I was elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society, which is quite an honor."

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