

310 Second Street, S.E.
Washington 3, D.C.

10 August 1955

Professor George E. McCracken
977 Twenty-fifth Street
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear George:

Yesterday I had a telephone call from John Coddington, which I understood was generated by your fear that all is not well with me since you've had no answer to your letter of 26 June. However, I hasten to assure you that I am getting along quite well and have made lots of progress. It would be more rapid, of course, if we had some better weather so that I could do more walking about out-doors, but I hardly need to tell you that we have been having a pretty bad time of it this summer just as no doubt you have. Your letter has gone unanswered for a long time and I extend my apologies; you will understand that the weather was perhaps the biggest factor in the delay.

The news of interest to you will, of course, be that it was deemed best that I retire from active Civil Service and this became effective on 1 August. However, this does not mean a complete or sudden break in my long-standing official relationship with my Agency; I am going to continue on a contractual basis which will enable me to work at home at my own pace and on things which will interest me very much.

I note what you have written with regard to the Italian archives and, frankly, the paleographic difficulties are what have loomed large in Mrs. Friedman horizon and this long before you wrote. But I did not and still do not worry about this too much; and, moreover, at the moment we have to bear in mind that it will be sometime yet before I will be able to travel abroad again. In the meantime, perhaps, I can do a bit of studying along necessary lines to prepare myself to become an amateur paleographer.

Your very courteous offer to write suitable letters of introduction is very much appreciated and I hope to take you up on that, say in about a year from now.

Your request for a copy of the citation in connection with Mrs. Friedman's honorary degree can not be met for the simple reason that she never received a copy of the actual citation as it was presented before the audience at the graduation exercises of Hillsdale College in 1938. I imagine that she would hesitate to write for it now but there is no reason why, if you wish to do so, you could not write and ask, although it is doubtful whether they have it in their files now.

Of course, there was no security problem at all in her case because, in the first place, she worked in the Treasury Department at that time and, in the second place, there were no national security aspects involved. Your statement that you were "not being curious" makes me curious with respect to what sort of institutions you have in mind that might be interested in my case. I think my alma mater would have found me worthy -- but Cornell does not and never has conferred any honorary degrees.

In closing I want to tell you how much I appreciated the last paragraph of your letter in which you have some very nice words to say about my scientific attainments. I, too, reciprocate by saying to you now, that I have great admiration for your scholarship and literary ability.

The latter statement reminds me to tell you that a week from now we are to have a conference at our home with the New York representative of the Cambridge University Press. We have considerable condensation to do and I think they will publish our manuscript when we have completed that sort of revising.

With regard to the private bill -- it passed the House, as you remember, but it got stuck in the Senate because Mr. O'Mahoney, Chairman of the Committee having the House bill to consider, just couldn't seem to find the time to call a meeting of his Committee. So now all we can do is wait until January, when Congress reassembles for the second session. However, no new bill has to be introduced, nor does the present one have to be reintroduced. And it may well be that the Committee will hold meetings during this recess; if so, and if it should report favorably, I think the Senate would pass it early in February. Let's hope so!

I am returning herewith a nice clipping which I'm sure your family will want to retain, even if you don't.

Please write me soon about yourself and how your literary projects are coming along.

With very best regards to you, I am

Sincerely,

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN

Incl:
a/s