

July 8, 1955 ✓

Internal Memorandum

Papers of Frank A. Vanderlip

The papers of Frank A. Vanderlip are in a storeroom in the same building as the family garage at Scarborough, New York. They are piled on wooden shelving built against the wall of the storeroom, these shelves very wide apart, and the papers are piled in a heterogeneous fashion which makes it difficult to measure them. Finally, a method was arrived at by which we measured the square footage of the face of the shelves. Assuming that the ordinary library shelf is spaced 12 inches away from its neighbor, this would give approximately 132 linear feet for the size of the collection.

This figure must be taken as very rough. There are other papers in the possession of Mrs. Dudley Schoals, daughter of Mr. Vanderlip, who lives on the Scarborough estate, and it is probably that there are papers in the library of his wife who still occupies the big house on the estate. In addition, there were two shelves on which papers were piled in boxes of the size of big dress boxes.

However, the 132 linear foot estimate is at the worst one that can be worked with.

The papers are many of them very dirty. They seem to be in folders which were brought from the bank when Mr. Vanderlip died or perhaps brought when he retired as president of the National City Bank in 1919. He had many and varied interests, so that this material by no means is all devoted to banking. His daughter took out five folders which she had worked with at one time and which seemed to concern either the banking reform or the Federal Reserve System. These I went through in her library.

The collection as a whole would comprise first, a complete set of the many pamphlets which Mr. Vanderlip issued, second, a complete set of his periodical articles, third, a set of volumes of newspaper clippings on matters which interested him. (I saw 12 volumes of these, of which 3 were specifically devoted to banking

reform. They seemed to start in 1909 and to run to 1937, but this is not necessarily a complete count.) Fourth are the manilla folders of correspondence, memoranda, and so forth, all of which have titles and numbers, and fifth, Mr. Vanderlip's banking library.

This latter material I did not see, and the questions must still be asked as to how considerable it is and whether or not it could go with the collection if desired. The estimate of 132 linear feet does not include the books nor does it include a complete set of pamphlets and articles. It includes what I saw, which was the set of a dozen books of newspaper clippings and the great collection of papers in manilla folders.

A description of the folders which I went through is interesting solely because it indicates how rich this collection is.

One folder contained material showing how the National City Bank and the newly formed Currency Association met the problems posed by World War I.

Another folder showed the early effort of the National City agent in Washington to get a full set of circulars of the new Federal Reserve System for Mr. Vanderlip.

Another folder contained correspondence with Paul Warburg of a very interested and rather personal nature. One letter dated December 26, 1918 from Mr. Vanderlip to Mr. Warburg contained the following sentence, "I wish I could sit down with you and half a dozen others in the sort of conference that created the Federal Reserve Act." This may have referred to the Jekyll Island Conference which Mr. Vanderlip attended, or it may have had reference to something else as yet unnoted.

Another folder contained the National City Bank's private memoranda gathered from various officials as to whether or not to join the new Federal Reserve System.

Another contained the statement of Mr. Vanderlip to the Federal Reserve

Organizing Committee. There was also a copy of the confidential hearings on the nomination of John Skelton Williams, which hearings were held January 19, 1914.

Another folder contained material on the work of the Clearing House Committee in regard to the Owen-Glass bill and a copy of the report of the Clearing House Committee dated October 14, 1913.

These folders were chosen at random by Mrs. Schoals<sup>e</sup> because she noted that their titles seemed to indicate that they had to do with the Federal Reserve System. As Mr. Vanderlip was a man interested all his life in currency reform, it is probably that the sections as yet unseen contain other valuable material.

There is also in existence a black bound volume of typewritten copies of letters from Mr. James Stillman, president of the National City Bank until 1909, and then chairman of its board, to Mr. Vanderlip. Mr. Stillman was one of the famous New York bankers of his period. He has the reputation with Mr. Vanderlip's daughter of having been a very suspicious and secretive man. Testimony to this may be found in the letters themselves which are written partly in code. Mr. Stillman apparently did not believe in mentioning the name of any person in his letters in such fashion that it could be read by an outsider. He insisted that Mr. Vanderlip also write him in code, and Mrs. Schoals<sup>e</sup> records the annoyance of her father, who, when writing a letter to Mr. Stillman, had to do it in such a fashion that his secretary could substitute for real names the code names supplied by Mr. Stillman.

Not included in this material which I saw and measured is a collection of papers which have to do with the Harding regime and which Mrs. Schoals<sup>e</sup> herself is going through at the present time.

Mrs. Schoals<sup>e</sup> was very much interested in the proposal that her father's papers should go to Columbia University. She said that they were not hers to dispose of, but that she knew that her mother would also be interested, although she could make no commitment. After seeing the storeroom and going through the folders she had taken out, I therefore asked to see Mrs. Vanderlip and found her in the big

main house. She is a woman of 75 years of age, but extremely active and alert. She said that at one time they had offered the papers to the Library of the University of Chicago, but for some reason that institution had not felt itself equipped to handle papers of this kind. She was interested in my description of the proposed bankers' collection to be established at Columbia University but seemed a little uncertain as to whether they would be in good company. She was reassured by a statement that the A. Barton Hepburn papers were there.

Mrs. Vanderlip, like her daughter, made no final commitment, but asked that I let them know how the Columbia project goes along. I think it very probably that they will be willing to turn Mr. Vanderlip's papers over to the collection, and if any further convincing were necessary, I am sure it could be done. Both women are intelligent and subject to argument of this kind.

Mrs. Schoales said that she herself had tried to do some rearranging of the papers and had anticipated doing more, but I argued that this was a professional job which should be left to a professional, and she seemed eager to agree with that point of view. I suggested two possible courses of action, a) that an expert from Columbia come up to Scarborough and arrange the papers in boxes for shipping to the library, or b) that they be simply put into boxes as they are and sent down to the library. Mrs. Schoales showed a slight preference for the first course of action, but I think if the second course were determined on, there would be no particular argument. The reason for the first course would be the discovery of other papers in other parts of the Vanderlip property beside the storeroom itself.

It should be remembered in considering the Vanderlip papers that Mr. Vanderlip started his career as a newspaper man in Chicago in the nineties. He was financial editor of the Chicago Tribune and obviously had a sense of public education. He wrote a book called, "Tomorrow's Money," among others, and the story of his life is contained in a volume by Boyden Sparks called "From Farmboy to Financier." He seems to have written periodical articles all his life and in addition turned out a great

many pamphlets. His daughter said that he gave a course on money at Scarborough School, a day school conducted in a building on the estate. Stenographic notes of this were taken but have unfortunately disappeared. This bit of history makes him sound like one of the more articulate of the monetary reformers of his period, and he may for that reason be more than usually interesting, so far as papers are concerned.

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