

Wednesday  
March 17, 1954

Internal Memorandum

Benjamin Strong Collection

At the Firestone Library, Princeton University

The Benjamin Strong Collection is best described in the booklet written by Miss Laura S. Turnbull, who was curator of that collection until 1952. The booklet is one of her last works. She is retired but she came to the library to show me through. The collection is only in small part consists of material which Mr. Strong himself gave to the University. There is a great collection of clippings of World War I, consisting of 196 volumes of clips well mounted and well preserved from various newspapers of the time. It constitutes a newspaper record of the war which is valuable and unique.

There is also a collection of Foreign Currency. However, the most important aspect of the collection is the continuing lists of Government Reports on Finance, Foreign Trades, Statistics, Central Banks, etc. for both the United States and foreign countries. This collection gives the University excellent working tools for studies in international finance.

Strictly speaking, the collection is so called more out of courtesy to Mr. Strong because he himself left great quantities of material. What he left was a miscellaneous collection of material, not overly large, an expanding idea, considerable funds, and the affection of friends who continued supplying the University with funds for projects which he himself had started. The expanding idea which he provided has been carried on by the International Finance Section of the University, which to a certain extent can be considered almost a memorial to Mr. Strong.

For our purposes, and putting aside the importance of the collection for anyone who is studying the life of Mr. Strong, perhaps the important group is a small folder of correspondence between Benjamin Strong and Professor Kemmerer.

The two men were great friends. This folder is dated January 1916 to March 1919. It contains a comment on the memorandum by Professor Bogart, which is very interesting. It also contains a letter from Mr. Strong, outlining to Professor Kemmerer a lecture which the former expected to give at the Princeton Graduate School. This lecture given so early, would, had it been taken down, have constituted an excellent reflection of Mr. Strong's thinking on Federal Reserve Bank policy and operation at that time. There is no record in the library that the lecture was ever written. The presumption is that it was given from notes to a small group. It is possible that the material in this folder is echoed in the bank papers and that Mr. Strong's letters are there in carbon, whereas Professor Kemmerer's letters are there in the original. This should be checked.

The letter lists as possible topics (these should be taken down as indicating the thinking of the time) the Deposits of Member Banks, Open Market Operations (that is the purchase of bills and warrants), Government Bond Purchases, Foreign Exchange, the Gold Settlement Fund, Note Issue.

Mr. Strong also recommends for students, the reading of Dunbar's Theory and History of Banking, and of Horace White's Money and Banking. These two references are important for their influence on him as of that time.

In the library the so called Benjamin Strong Collection is not isolated in any way. The material which Strong money and the money of Mr. Strong's friends has provided is dispersed throughout the entire library, in accordance with the organization of the library. The card index is also dispersed. Therefore, anyone going to look at the collection is presented with scrapbooks and with the folder on the correspondence between Mr. Kemmerer and Mr. Strong.

One scrapbook (outside the World War series of 196 huge volumes) seems to be devoted to clippings concerning Mr. Strong's appointment as First Governor of the New York Federal Reserve Bank. These are in bad shape. They are important in any biography of Mr. Strong and Miss Turnbull suggested that it might be wise

to have them photostated. If this were done, care would have to be taken to separate and mount them properly as they are rapidly going to pieces. It is probable that this is echoed in some clipping collection in the New York Bank.

Properly speaking the collection is now under the control of Dr. Julian P. Boyd, who became librarian of Princeton University in 1914. Professor Gardner Patterson, head of the International Finance Section, is the one whose classes use this material most frequently.

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