

Internal Memorandum

Files of Owen D. Young

August 1, 1955

(visit of July 28-29)

EC. # 2 Vol II ✓

The Young files are in a steel vault built into a small stone, steel and concrete building in the village of Van Hornesville, in which Mr. Young makes his home. The building which contains his office and two subsidiary offices, as well as the steel vault room, was erected for him by his ^{children and designed by his} son, Charles, on the site of the little red school house where Mr. Owen Young attended school in the 1880's. (EC)

(The school house burned)
All these files are set in manuscript boxes on steel shelves. A quick estimate indicates that there are at least 640 of them. Some contain clippings, but most of them are office files which have been brought from the various enterprises in which Mr. Young has been engaged.

Of these some 10 boxes are concerned with Federal Reserve matters and are so labelled. A very small sampling indicated that the secretary had put files concerned with System matters in chronological order. Each box seemed to contain 4 file folders with papers stapled into each folder. 2 of these were correspondence, the other 2 were labelled "Miscellaneous," and contained pamphlets, speeches, and illustrated documents to which the correspondence might bear reference.

Mr. Young's years in the New York Federal Reserve Bank as director and as chairman began in 1923 and ended in 1940. A sampling of boxes for the first few years showed very little of interest, outside of such routine matter as might have been handed to a director. With the years 1927 and 1928, the interest picked up.

The explanation of the small amount of material in earlier years may lie in the fact that from 1924 to 1932 Mr. Young was actively interested in the Dawes and the Young Plans. It is not impossible that boxes bearing labels which refer to work on those two plans might have correspondence with Mr. Strong, or Mr. Case, or other officials of the Federal Reserve Bank. Certainly, anyone working on these papers would want to make a search in boxes bearing other labels than those of the Federal Reserve System proper.

Mr. Young, who is now 80, apparently intends to leave his files in Van Hornesville in such shape that students wishing to deal with his own life or with enterprises in which he has been interested (the General Electric Company, the Radio Corporation of America, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and so forth) may come to Van Hornesville to work with them. He spoke of legal frays in which some of his files had contained essential material and said that he had told the lawyers they could come there and study them, but that they could not be taken out of Van Hornesville.

RCA
only
(EC)

When I told him that Ogden Mills' files had gone to the Library of Congress, he said, "That is a cheaper way of handling them than to build a special building for them here." It is, of course, possible that after his death his executors and heirs may make other disposition of the papers. Meanwhile, they form a remarkable personal record of years of work that date back to 1896 and that cover the development of electric power and communication in the United States, as well as diplomatic and financial achievements leading out of this.

Mr. Young's welcome was warm and generous. Now that the sampling of files has been done, and some sense of what they contain has been obtained, he suggested that I come back and spend a longer time working on them. Dr. Lester Chandler is to be there on Monday, August 1 (my visit was Thursday and Friday, July 28th and 29th).

It is probable that he thinks of these files as giving the material for a comprehensive biography which may be written of Owen D. Young and for any history of the General Electric, the Radio Corporation of America, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Dawes and the Young Plans, and any other considerable enterprise with which he had to do.

A few items indicate how valuable the material in the files might be. Letterbox number 273 includes a letter from Mr. Norris, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, to Mr. J. H. Case, at that time Deputy ^{Governor} Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, concerning the struggle which was apparently going

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* His G.E. papers were mostly sent to Schenectady, where only a scattered few have been preserved. (EC)

on between the banks and Mr. Crissinger, appointed by Harding (President Harding) to the Federal Reserve Board. Mr. Norris expressed politely his willingness "to do everything possible to meet the views of the Treasury Department" - - - "but this must not be construed as a willingness to surrender the powers expressly conferred by the Act, and naturally attaching to the degree of responsibility the directors of Reserve Banks ~~except~~ ^{accept} for the management of their several institutions." Mr. Crissinger had wanted the Open Market Committee to sell all government securities in the banks. Mr. Norris' protest was probably that of several banks and made by agreement.

Box number 264 contains a cablegram dated November 12, 1928 from Mr. Young to Parker Gilbert asking him whether he might be interested in the presidency of the New York Federal Reserve Bank. Mr. Gilbert declined, but the fact of the cable puts a large question mark on the present belief that Mr. Harrison was the universal choice to follow Mr. Strong on the latter's death.*

Box 266 contains a speech of Mr. John Foster Dulles dated June 1929 in regard to the Federal Reserve System, then under heavy attack. This speech, ^{when} ~~was~~ heard by contemporaries ^{was regarded} as being a very lucid account of what the Federal Reserve System was doing in regard to the rising prices on the Stock Exchange.

This same box 266 (2) contains the Federal Reserve Bank release to newspapers on Mr. Strong's death and indicates that it was the work of Owen Young. Mr. Young's assistant at that time was Mr. Everett Case, now president of Colgate, and it is not impossible that it was Mr. Case's draft which formed the basis of this release and which was so highly praised.

*NO -
the hand
as well as
the voice was
O'Dyb,
(EP)*

MA:IB *At a later visit Mr. Young, queried on this point, said that it was George Harrison's health which gave him concern, not any doubt of his ability. U.A.