



[Solon J. Buck Papers.](#)

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FREDERIC L. PAXSON
PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

APR 7 1916

629, FRANCES STREET,
MADISON, WISCONSIN.

4.5.1916

Dear Buck:-

A note from Alvord suggests to me that there is a resolution (adopted last year) that prevents your nomination committee from bringing in the name of the existing first vice president (? Sioussat) as next president of the M.V.H.A.

If such is the case, I think you ought to ask to have the resolution repealed, and then bring in Sioussat.

It has seemed to me that the policy that some urged upon the A.H.A., and that the M.V.H.A. took up at New Orleans, is bad. There is no considerable rivalry for the presidency, and whoever may get it is received with congratulation and satisfaction. But I do not know of any member of the M.V.H.A. who could be made president over the head of Sioussat with propriety. I cannot imagine myself accepting an honorary degree of M.A. from anyone, with the implication that I might ultimately get an LL.D. if I grew enough. I should take all, or cheerfully go with none.

We have no need for a second vice president, and I think the

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Office might be abolished to advantage. But we must either treat the first vice president as an important honor leading to the presidency directly, or else as a minor honor leading nowhere and fit for rejection by most of our members. If it were a working job, like a committee chairmanship, the problem would not exist. It is an honor of some kind and ought not to be brought into disrepute by being branded.

I was one of the vice presidents last year and was passed over when the new rule was adopted. I feel that the rule admits of only two interpretations, both of which are bad, and, I think, unintended by the members who voted for it, - (1) that the vice president is not yet fit for the presidency, or (2) that a vice president who expects promotion is a pernicious political influence. Since I have not sought offices in the M. V. H. A., and do not expect any more, I think it is up to me to point out the disadvantages that the policy may present to others. If I were going to Nashville I should bring the matter up there.

Cordially yours,

Frederic L. Paxson

April 8, 1916

Professor Frederix L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.

Dear Paxson:-

I have your letter of the 5th and am glad to know your views about the resolution with reference to the vice-presidents of the M. V. H. A. I am inclined to agree with you that the resolution ought to be repealed, but I do not believe it would be feasible to nominate Sioussat for president this year. Even if it is repealed, the resolution will be in force until the business meeting and the committee, it seems to me, will be under obligations to abide by it.

Personally I feel that the purpose of the resolution was a good one, but that its workings are very unsatisfactory. I do not like the established precedent of the promotion of vice-presidents such as has developed in the A. H. A. As a result of this system the president is practically selected two years before he takes his seat, and no matter what changes in the procession the nominating committee or the association may desire to make, these can be effected only by violating precedent and probably by giving offense to the prospective presidents.

F. L. P. 4/8/16--2

I quite agree with you that the office of 2nd vice-president should be abolished; in fact I am inclined to go further and suggest as a solution of the whole problem the abolition of both vice-presidents. It would then be advisable to increase the number of elected members of the executive committee to nine, three to be elected each year. That would tend to stabilize the executive committee, as under the present system, a man would ordinarily serve on the executive committee by virtue of his vice-presidency for only one year. It would be a simple matter for the executive committee to designate each year some one of its members to perform the duty of president in case that should be necessary. To avoid any "vested interests" accruing, this might be one of the numerous ex-presidents.

I should be very glad, indeed, to have your views of this solution. I believe there would be a strong opposition to a return to the old system of regular succession of vice-presidents.

I regret very much to learn that you are not going to Nashville.

Cordially yours

APR 13 1916

FREDERIC L. PAXSON
PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

629, FRANCES STREET,
MADISON, WISCONSIN, April 11, 1916

Dear Buck:-

There is much to be said in favor of abolishing both of the vice-presidents; and if any considerable number of members fear the influence of the existing vice-president or dislike to have the office of president tied up for three years I think the best thing is to abolish both offices. I do not believe it will serve the best interests of the association to elect to the vice-presidency as to a minor post from which direct promotion to the presidency cannot take place; and it will certainly produce embarrassment to pass over vice-presidents in isolated cases.

Personally, I think the election, or rather the naming, of a prospective president two years in advance has something to be said for it. During the period of waiting he is no more than a sort of presidential-councillor, and is no more menacing than any other councillor with a three year term. Moreover it makes it difficult to give political significance to his election. Rowland would have been a highly acceptable president if advanced in the ordinary way; but his election last spring gave great offense to men like Van Tyne who saw in this an appearance of partisanship in the affairs of the other association. And so it was regarded by Rowland himself, who once wrote me alluding to his election as a tribute to his fearless reforming of the A.H.A. We at least lost

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629, FRANCES STREET,
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most of the traces of political significance or sentimental
timeliness by electing in the ~~same~~^{old} way.

If I were to be at Nashville I should endeavor to induce the
M. V. H. A. to rescind its resolution before electing a new president,
and to elect Sioussat as entirely suitable for the place; failing
that I should cooperate with you in abolishing both vice-presidencies;
and failing that I should probably vote "no" ~~on~~ upon the ticket
as a matter of protest.

Did you know that our W. H. S. Weller papers are a complement to
those of Ignatius Donnelly? Weller was a member of more forlorn
reforming parties than I ever supposed had existed.

Cordially yours,

Frederic L. Paxson

We are sending a good man - John Hicks
to Hamline

April 15, 1916

Professor Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.

Dear Paxson:-

I think that an amendment will be proposed at the M. V. H. A. meeting to abolish both vice-presidencies. Paine is in favor of it and has offered to submit the amendment to the executive committee. If that should not be done I would be in favor of abolishing the second vice-presidency and using the first as a stepping stone to the presidency, thus doing away with the rule adopted at the last meeting. I do not believe that the objection to promotion of vice-presidents was based on any fear of political intrigue on their part, but merely on a desire to leave the society and its nominating committee unhampered in the choice of a president.

I have not had an opportunity to examine the Weller papers as yet, but have supposed that they would be of a similar character to our Donnelly papers. Some graduate student ought to use these two collections and other similar material in preparing a thesis on political radicalism since the Civil War. Besides the manuscript

F. I. P. 4/15/16--2

material we have extensive files of Donnelly's newspapers. One of my graduate students in the University is preparing a Master's thesis this year on the early political career of Ignatius Donnelly.

Sincerely yours

May 3, 1916

Professor Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.

My dear Paxson:-

As Paine is sick it may be some time before you receive official notice of the action taken at the Nashville meeting.

The proposed amendment relating to officers was adopted and the resolution relative to vice-presidents was rescinded. The officers nominated and elected were Paxson, president; Paine, secretary-treasurer; executive committee, Sioussat (one year), Harlan (two years), Violette, Alvord, and Hulbert (three years).

There seemed to be a general feeling on the part of the members, with which I was in entire accord, that to elect you instead of Sioussat president would, in no sense, be a reflection upon him as you had preceded him in the vice-presidential progression. I think that Sioussat should be elected president next year and that is the reason why I nominated him for the one year position on the executive committee. I might add that while the action of the committee was intended to be so far as possible a reflection of the sentiment of the members, it represented also my own personal choice, and I was very glad, indeed, that things turned out as they did.

Sincerely yours

MAY 8 1916

FREDERIC L. PAXSON
PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

629, FRANCES STREET,
MADISON, WISCONSIN. May 4. 1916

Dear Buck:-

Thanks for your letter of yesterday. There is a good deal of satisfaction in the action at Nashville, though I should have been better pleased personally had Sioussat been chosen as next in immediate line. Since the whole set of vice-presidents has been discarded such action would have cleaned up the connection between the two policies, and would have left the future entirely open and without prejudice.

I shall be grateful to you for any advice as to the share of work that falls to the ~~vice-president~~ president. Do you know what I am supposed to do respecting the formation of committees and the actions of the councils? Who constitute the whole council? Who are the new editors of the Review?

I presume that the arrangements for our session at Cincinnati is the first pressing duty, and I should be glad for any suggestions.

Cordially yours,

Frederic L. Paxson

May 5, 1916

Professor Frederic I. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Paxson:-

Your letter of May 4 has just arrived. I will, of course, be glad to assist you in any way that I can.

With reference to committees, it will be necessary to consult with Paine who has all of the information. Action which was taken at the Nashville meeting made the board of editors of the Review the board of editors of the Association in charge of all of its publication work, so that there will be no further occasion for a publication committee. It is expected that the important papers read at the meeting will be used in the Review and the Proceedings will appear hereafter as a supplement to one of the issues of the Review.

The executive committee of the Association now consists of Shambaugh, McLaughlin, James, Cox, and Rowland, ex-presidents, Quaife, William E. Connelly, secretary Kansas Historical Society, Melvin J. White, Tulane University, James F. Willard, Sioussat, Edgar R. Harlan, E. M. Violette, Kirksville Normal, Missouri, Hulbert, and

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Alvord, elected members; also yourself and Paine ex officio.

The new editors of the Review are Cox, Bioussat, Burpee, and myself. Cox was elected chairman of the executive committee. I should think that he would be the best man to consult with in connection with the program for the Cincinnati session. Alvord told me that he had had some discussion with Greene and that an agreement had been reached to the effect that the American Historical Association would not schedule any section meeting touching American history at the time of the joint session.

Did you attend the dinner given in Chicago the evening before the opening of the session of the American Historical Association a year ago last Christmas? I number of people have spoken to me about that dinner which was a very successful affair and have suggested that something of the sort ought to be attempted whenever possible in connection with the Christmas meeting. I mentioned the subject to Cox and he said that there might be some difficulties about it this time because the regular meetings are to begin, I believe, in the afternoon. Possibly we might get the W. V. U. A. people together for lunch that day and have time for a few reports of committees.

F. L. P: 5/5/16--3

Have you seen Haynes' book on Third Parties? I have just received a copy from Jameson to review. He has used my own work so extensively that I feel a little embarrassed in the matter. If I say what I really think about the work I fear that the Iowa people will have no further use for me. I hope that you will review it for the Mississippi Valley Historical Review, for I would like to know what you think of it.

Cordially yours

MAY 8 1916

FREDERIC L. PAXSON
PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

629, FRANCES STREET,
MADISON, WISCONSIN, May 6. 1916

Dear Buck: -

There have been so many recent changes in the affairs of the MVHA that I shall have much to learn; even the action of 1915 has been new to me, but I had a look at the page proofs of the forthcoming transactions and am better informed than I was. I gather from your letter that the executive committee was increased to nine members at Nashville, and that Sioussat and Harlan were put in for the ~~8th~~ short terms, Alvord, Hultert, and Violette being the new full term team. Am I right in this? What is the position intended for the chairman of the executive committee? In the light of our recent correspondence I suppose he partakes of the nature of a vice president. I dont even know what has ordinarily been left to the wisdom of the executive committee and what the president has done.

The amalgamation of the review and publication committees seems good to me unless it should prove to put too much work upon the managing editor, who is already heavily loaded. Your arrival on the board of editors is gratifying in every way.

I shall get in touch with Cox at once, and am glad to know of Alvord's understanding with Paine. Who ought to be chairman of the program committee? Do you know of any new sources of papers that can be tapped?

Sincerely yours,

Frederic L. Paxson

May 11, 1916

Professor Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.

Dear Paxson:-

Your statement as to the terms of the members of the executive committee of the M. V. N. A. is correct.

With reference to the position of the chairman of the executive committee a change was made in the phraseology of the amendment at the suggestion of Mr. Paine. It now reads "At the first meeting of the executive committee after the annual election, one of its members shall be elected as chairman of the executive committee. It shall be his duty to preside at meetings of the committee and, in the absence of the president, at meetings of the association and he shall succeed to the office of president in case of a vacancy." Paine's idea was that the committee would probably elect the same man chairman for four or five years in succession and that he would have an active part in shaping the policy of the association and giving continuity to that policy.

I am even more in the dark than you as to the division of functions between the executive committee and the president, for I have never been a member of the exec-

F. L. P. 5/11/16--2

utive committee. My impression is, however, that Paine has really conducted most of the affairs of the association.

Cox will doubtless know what progress, if any, has been made toward arranging the program for the joint session in December. Either Hulbert or Hockett would, it seems to me, be suitable appointments as chairman of the program committee if such a committee is needed. Cox's work as chairman of the program committee for the meeting last month has doubtless left him in a position to make valuable suggestions with reference to future programs. If any ideas occur to me I will let you know.

Sincerely yours

January 16, 1917

Mr. Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.

My dear Paxson:-

I am in receipt of a letter from Violette, in which he sets forth the opinion that we ought to reprint in the M. V. A. Proceedings such of the papers read at the meetings as have been published by others.

He states that he is writing a similar letter to you, and suggests that I correspond with you about it. As Mr. Alvord has asked me to arrange the material in the Proceedings for the board of editors, I should be very glad to have your opinion on this matter.

I am enclosing a carbon of my reply to Mr. Violette. ✓

Sincerely yours

JAN 23 1917

FREDERIC L. PAXSON
PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

629, FRANCES STREET,
MADISON, WISCONSIN.

1/21/17

Dear Buck

Your letter to Violetta
says almost the same things that
I wrote him recently. I agree with
you that it would be a mistake
for us to spend money in duplicating
things already in print so long
as we are asking for a guarantee
fund in order to keep going or all

Cordially

Frederic L. Paxson

February 13, 1917

Professor Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

My dear Paxson:-

Have you appointed the nominating committee for the Mississippi Valley Historical Association? If not, wouldn't it be well to appoint it now and send the names to me at once so that I can include them with the list of committees for 1916-17 to be published in the Proceedings?

I now see the reason for Violette's concern about the omission from the Proceedings of the papers published elsewhere. His report on the place of the Normal School in the training of history teachers has been published in the History Teachers' Magazine. In view of the fact that it is a committee report and thus part of the official business of the association, I have decided to include it in the Proceedings.

Sincerely yours

FEB 17 1917

FREDERIC L. PAXSON
PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

629, FRANCES STREET,
MADISON, WISCONSIN.

2/12/1917

Dear Buch

I am quite ready to appoint
the nominating committee. How
do you think of the following Violette, C.,
D. D. L. Schmitt & Harlow Lindley?
I shall now notify them until I hear
from you.

What do you hear of Alessi's
condition?

Cordially

Frederic L. Paxson

February 17, 1917

Professor Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.

Dear Paxson:-

I think the names you propose for the nominating committee are excellent, but I would suggest that Lindley be made chairman instead of Violette for two reasons; first, Violette is on the executive committee while Lindley is not and never has been; secondly I think Lindley's acquaintance among the men is probably larger than that of Violette. I will not insert the names in the list of committees until I hear from you again.

I know nothing definite about Alvord's condition. He went home from Mudlavia about the first of January, and after a week or two, went to Florida. I understand he expects to remain there until April or May.

Have the dates been fixed definitely for the M. V. H. A. meeting, and if so, what are they?

Sincerely yours

FEB 23 1917

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
MADISON

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

February 20, 1917.

Professor Solon J. Buck,
Minnesota Historical Society,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Buck:

I have asked Mrs. Paine to notify the following members of their appointment to be a nominating committee: Harlow Lindley (chairman), E. M. Violette, and Dr. O. J. Schmidt.

I hope that it will be possible to get the preliminary programme for the meeting out to the members as early as possible. I trust that a full announcement of the meeting is being made in connection with the March Review.

Sincerely yours,

Frederic L. Paxson

February 23, 1917

Professor Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

My dear Paxson:-

I have your letter of the twentieth and am forwarding the names to Miss White for inclusion in the Proceedings.

I do not know what arrangements, if any, have been made for an announcement of the meeting in the March Review. I have suggested to Miss White that she get into touch with you about it at once unless it has been provided for.

Sincerely yours

March 12, 1917

Professor Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.

My dear Paxson:-

Mr. Theodore Blegen writes me that he is applying for a position as assistant in the history department at the University of Wisconsin.

Blegen took his master's degree at the University of Minnesota in 1915, and has since been teaching in a high school in Milwaukee. He did excellent work in my seminary in American history in 1914-15 and during the following summer and again in the summer of 1916, I gave him employment on the staff of the Minnesota Historical Society. He does his work thoroughly and accurately, and with a great deal of enthusiasm; I consider him distinctly a man of promise. If you do not have a place for him, it is quite likely that we will offer him something at the University of Minnesota, but I feel that it would be better for him to go to Wisconsin and get in touch with another group of men.

At Blegen's request I am sending you under separate cover, a copy of our Bulletin containing his paper on Consul James W. Taylor. You already have a copy, I believe, but you may want this to file with his application. You may know that he is preparing a paper for the coming meeting of the M. V. H. A.

Sincerely yours

MAR 1 4 1917

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
MADISON

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

March 15, 1917.

Professor Solon J. Buck,
Minnesota Historical Society,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Buck:

I have received Mr. Blegen's application for an assistantship, and am glad to have your letter so cordially endorsing him for the work. The Department will give it very careful consideration when the time comes to take these matters up, at the end of the month.

Yours very truly,

Judene L. Rexson

MAR 24 1917

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
MADISON

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

March 22, 1917.

Dr. Solon J. Buck,
Minnesota Historical Society,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dear Buck:

Are you holding up the March number of the Review? I think it is highly important that the Review should be mailed during this month, because it contains the announcements respecting the April meeting, without which we cannot hope to have a full, successful meeting. Please do everything in your power to let the Review appear promptly.

Sincerely yours,

Frederick R. Pearson

March 29, 1917

Professor Frederic L. Paxson
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis.-

My dear Paxson:-

You have doubtless received your copy of the March number of the Review some time ago, so that the query in your letter of March 22 ^{had} been answered. I was not responsible for the delay, although I had at one time suggested that it should be held up in order that the Proceedings might accompany it. Mr. Powers of the Torch Press pointed out to me, however, that the Proceedings could be issued as an extra number instead of a supplement and distributed separately at second class rates. The Proceedings are now in galley proof and I have hopes that they will be out before the meeting.

I trust that some further notice of the meeting, with the program in circular form, will be sent to all members, for many of them may not see the announcements in the Review.

I suppose the matter of the place of meeting in 1918 will come before the association or the council at the coming meeting. I expect to present an invitation for the meeting to be held in St. Paul. We will be fully installed in our new building by that time, and if the invitation is accepted, we will probably arrange to hold the exercises for the dedication of the building in connection with the meeting. For that purpose we hope to secure some speaker of prominence from the east, possibly Professor Turner.

Sincerely yours

FREDERIC L. PAXSON
PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

APR 1 1917

629, FRANCES STREET,
MADISON, WISCONSIN.

3/31/1917

Dear Buch

Your review
is out. There will be preliminary
program within a few days unless
plans necessary.

Cordially
Frederic L. Paxson