



[Solon J. Buck Papers.](#)

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JAN 1 1930

1788 Bedford Ave. 4

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Jan. 8, 1930.

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

Dear Dr. Buck:

I happened to see Mr. Patritz today and he spoke of seeing you in North Carolina, and that you were asking about me. Perhaps it was only a casual inquiry on your part, but he seemed to think you had some further interest, so I'm letting you know ^{my} ~~your~~ whereabouts. I'll welcome a letter heartily, whatever the contents.

The Britannica work was finished some time ago. I am with the Columbia University Press, just now, but am not sure whether I'll stay long or not. I went through the city last August and meant to stop in at the society, as usual, but other matters intervened. While Mrs. Holmes vacationed with her parents in Montana I went with my parents to visit relatives in Saskatchewan, then over the Canadian Rockies to Vancouver, down to Seattle and Portland and back over the St. Northern. Father is 72 now and probably will not make many more trips like that, and I had never travelled with him before.

My writing for the Britannica amounted to nearly 200,000 words, besides nearly equal energy given to editing of all kinds. It was stimulating and educational, though compromises with one's best were necessary because

of the pressure under which we worked. Seen in its entirety the work is of course impressive, but there is much that should have been better.

It must have been a fine trip to Carolina. Patricia got started to-day and talked nearly half an hour about it. I don't know when I'll ever attend an annual meeting. Perhaps after I get my Ph.D., if ever. I feel like the champion procrastinator. My dissertation is about three-fourths finished, but it'll not be ready for this June. I certainly hope all qualifications are met a year from June, however. I worked quite a while at Madison on the western chapters when I returned. It was a nice place to be. Talked to Miss Kellogg several times. She was in error in her article in saying Roger's treasonable intentions couldn't be proved.

Are you still doing anything on the original sources of the British period in the Northwest?

Recently read Ernest Osgood's "The Day of the Cattleman," a remarkable piece of work.

I hope all goes well at the society, and that you, Mrs. Buck and the children are in good health.

Perhaps I shall hear from you soon,

Most sincerely,

Oliver W. Holmes.

Minnesota Historical Society
St. Paul, Minnesota
January 17, 1930

Mr. Oliver W. Holmes
1788 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Mr. Holmes:

Although there was no special purpose back of my inquiry of Paltsits, I was very glad to hear from you and to learn what you are doing. I take it that you might be open to an offer of an academic position should one turn up, and I shall keep you in mind in case I hear of anything. I regret to say that work on the British period is at a standstill here for the present. We are bending all our energies at the Historical Society now to getting out the next volume of Dr. Folwell's History, and also volume 2 of our World War history. After those are out of the way Miss Nute's missionaries will have the floor, together with a bibliography and inventory of Minnesota newspapers.

I am coming more and more to believe that the publication of documentary material for the French and British periods ought to be handled by organizations of larger geographic scope than the state historical agencies, and I hope that the Alvord Memorial Commission (see inside of this sheet) will believe the state editors to a considerable extent of the necessity of publishing material in these fields. I am using this stationery, not with any idea of soliciting a contribution from you, but rather because I thought you would be interested in knowing about the project. The fund is now approaching the half-way mark and work is under way on the first volume of publication, which is being edited by Professor Wayne Stevens of Dartmouth.

The Buck family are all well, and we hope that you will stop and see us the next time you go through the Twin Cities. We should like to have the opportunity of meeting Mrs. Holmes, also.

Sincerely yours

SJB/S

DEC 20 1930

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Dec. 17, 1930.

Dr. Solon J. Buch,
Minnesota Historical Society,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Dr. Buch:-

I am enclosing a money order for \$3.00 to catch up on my dues, and hope I will not be too late to receive the fourth Folwell volume.

I've owed you a letter for a long time, but have been reluctant to write without having more accomplishments to boast of. I am now working for the above Institute four days a week, receiving \$400 a month for conducting a survey for them, so for the first time for a long while I have time to spend on completing my dissertation, and financially am able to spend my spare time on it. By June perhaps I will be through. I will probably be going through St. Paul sometime in August and, if you are there, will see you.

Prof. Gros is publishing an article of mine in the Feb. Journal of Business and Economic History. I will send you an offprint. Also my paper read at the New York State Historical Association meeting this fall will be published sometime soon in the Journal. The Minnesota Magazine of H. makes me a bit homesick at times.

With sincere regards,

Oliver W. Holmes

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December 22, 1930

Mr. Oliver W. Holmes
230 Park Avenue
New York City

Dear Mr. Holmes:

I was very glad to hear from you and to learn of your activities and plans. I am not sure yet whether I will be here in August or not but if I am I shall be very glad to see you.

I am planning to attend the American Historical Association meeting in Boston, but as you make no mention of it I suppose I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you there.

Sincerely yours

B/H

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February 20, 1931

Mr. Oliver W. Holmes
1788 Bedford Ave.,
New York City

Dear Mr. Holmes:-

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of your "The Father of New England State-Coaching." I am taking it home with me and shall read it at the first opportunity.

I am very glad to see you breaking into print in this way, and trust that more and more of your work will appear as time goes on.

Sincerely yours

B/P

APR 6 1931

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At
GLW
AJL
Return to
5703.

OLIVER W. HOLMES
1788 BEDFORD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Apr. 1, 1931.

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

Dear Dr. Buck:

I intended to accompany the reprint I sent you with a letter, but didn't get around to it at the time. The article was not very important, yet it indicates something of the sort of material that I am using for my dissertation. It was also my first magazine article of any importance, and I hope it will be a forerunner of many others. A paper on "Stagecoach Days in the Hudson Valley" which I read at the New York State Historical Association's meeting at Newburgh last autumn will appear soon in the State Quarterly. It is in many ways more suggestive than the Levi Pease article, and if I get a few reprints I will forward one to you. Neither article represents a portion of my book. ~~etc~~ The material is thrown together about a particular person in the one article and about a particular region in the other. Both articles have material which I shall not be able to use in the dissertation.

Larsen seems to have done very well in the article

OLIVER W. HOLMES
1788 BEDFORD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

"Roads and Trails in the Minnesota Triangle" in the December issue of ~~the~~ Minnesota History, and I hope he or someone will go on with a study of the stage routes of the entire state, or even the Upper Mississippi Region. Wisconsin, Northern Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and the eastern Dakotas would make an ideal unit - in other words routes from Chicago west and north. I have much Wisconsin and Illinois material, but will not be able to use it adequately, ~~for~~ ^{because} but one chapter will be given in my book to the Old Northwest region in any detail. I would have saved myself much grief had I limited myself to some regional unit, but on the other hand I am able to do some very valuable things in this general survey that would not have been possible had I limited myself. Local historians will have to fill out the local details for their states in special articles if they want it done. My book may stimulate this. Anyway it's a hope. It will probably be a good year yet before it is done.

Just read your report in the March number of Minnesota History, and it sounds fine. Congratulations on getting the meeting of the Am. Hist. Association for Minneapolis next year. I know it will mean a lot of work for you, however. I should like very much to attend, but have never yet gotten away for a meeting, never getting a vacation like you folks.

OLIVER W. HOLMES
1788 BEDFORD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Last year I spent with the Columbia University Press, writing biographical and historical material for a reference work they intend to publish "sometime." I don't care very much whether it gets published or not. I got fairly well disgusted with the ^{slipshod} way it was carried on, and jumped at an offer last November to go with the Institute of Social and Religious Research at \$400 a month for four days work each week. I am directing the Home Base portion of the Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry. The subject of course is ridiculously out of my line, unless I can persuade myself it is a portion of contemporary social history. But I have managed to get very much interested in the work. We have a fine bunch of men at the Institute, too, and I have enjoyed the stimulation of new surroundings and of things actually being done. The Social Science Research Council is in the same building, and the relations between the two are very close. The Institute is carrying out two projects of Pres. Hoover's Social Trends Investigation, namely those on religious life and rural life. My Home Base study will probably find publication in some form eventually too.

I also wrote twelve articles last year for the Dictionary of American Biography. I have refused a few lately for lack of time to work on them. So much for my annual report.

Each year I seem to get more firmly entrenched here

OLIVER W. HOLMES
1788 BEDFORD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

in New York and ^{not} ~~far~~ away from my original intention of teaching somewhere in the west and working on western history. Mrs. Holmes and I both hope to get Ph.D. degrees in 1932 if we are lucky. I've sort of slowed up waiting for her and worked to finance both of us. If we are going west we ought to make the break ~~at~~ the year we are finished I suppose. Yet I imagine I would have to accept a reduction in income, and I'm not sure I would care as much about teaching as I do about research. Maybe this institute work will determine my future if I make a success of it.

I cannot easily give up my dreams of working in Trans-Mississippi history though, having planned projects in it even before the summer I studied under you. What do you know about Hulbert's Western Historical Commission and his plans? We plan to drive west this summer in August & early September and to go to both Montana & Colorado. I had thought of stopping to see Hulbert and talking with him though I never met him. It might seem presumptuous.

Please excuse this long letter mostly about myself. Teachers must have many former students to keep in touch with. I have always felt that I belonged to Minnesota, however, and my six weeks work with you gave me standards which have persisted over and above influences here at Columbia. Greetings and good wishes, Oliver W. Holmes.

P

May 25, 1931

Mr. Oliver W. Holmes
1788 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Mr. Holmes:

Your letter of April 1 was very interesting to me and I assure you I am always glad to hear about your activities and plans. I should have answered it before but for the fact that I have been very much tied up with some plans of my own.

Doubtless you will be much surprised to learn that I have resigned my position in Minnesota effective September 1 and have accepted the directorship of a western Pennsylvania historical survey, which is financed mainly by the Buhl Foundation of Pittsburgh and is to be under the auspices of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and the University of Pittsburgh. I shall also have the title of professor of history in the university, teaching not more than one course, and shall have general supervision over all the activities of the Historical Society. I expect, however, that my main work will be research and the direction of research. The plan provides for five research assistants, including two who will rank as instructors in the university and receive salaries of about twenty-five hundred dollars. I wish I might interest you in one of them, but I realize that it is out of the question in view of what you write me.

I am afraid that it will be very difficult for you to break away from your profitable activities in New York City and make the transition to teaching or research in the field of history, for you would almost certainly have to work for a number of years at a considerably smaller salary than you are now getting. Of course if you kept up your interest in historical work and published a number of books, as Allan Nevins did, you might ultimately find in a good academic berth.

Hulbert's Western Historical Commission looks good on paper but does not seem to make very rapid progress. It would probably be worth while to get in touch with him, however. Are you planning to go through the Twin Cities on your trip this summer? We shall be away part of August but we might be able to get together if you do go through here.

Sincerely yours

B/H

JUN 5 1931

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OLIVER W. HOLMES
1788 BEDFORD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

June 3, 1931.

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

Dear Dr. Buck:

Your letter certainly brought interesting news. I read sometime ago about the western Pennsylvania historical survey plans and am glad someone had the wisdom to get you to head the job. Minnesota can ill afford to lose you, yet you have given that society a place in the sun and have trained an able staff, and I can see why you should want to pass on to new undertakings. The western Pennsylvania job has more challenge and possesses more interest, I think. I hope you have more time for research, pure and simple, and find the place completely congenial.

I am by no means turning up my nose at your talk of an instructorship, even if I don't feel I can accept it. I am interested in Western Pennsylvania history — it has color and dramatic value, interesting personalities, and national as well as local significance — and ~~would~~ would like to spend several years helping you on the project. I realize that I would have to make some financial sacrifice for a place like that. I would consider it pretty seriously if \$1,000 could be added to the salary and if I could find an opportunity for Mrs. Holmes too earn a little taking lab. or quiz classes or an

instructorship in biology. She has finished her Ph. D. course work now too, and would not be content without keeping her hand in a little while she studies for exams. On the other hand unless I got my stage-coach book finished before I went to Pittsburgh, it looks as if I never would get it out. Scribner's has offered to take it on the basis of several chapters I've submitted. They also want a good scholarly book on the Erie Canal. I wish I could write about five times as fast as I do. In the first place I can never stop accumulating material, and ⁱⁿ the second place I rewrite and rewrite and rewrite. No use trying to encourage me by talking of Allan Nevins. He has a bit of genius. I sat in on his seminar course last year for the period 1865-90 just for the fun of it and was richly rewarded.

I don't think we shall be going through the Twin Cities this summer, but rather straight west from Rushford via the Black Hills to Billings, where Mrs. Holmes' folks now live. However, if I let Dorothy and another friend go on alone by car from Rushford to Billings, I may stay at home a week longer, and then go out by train via St. Paul, in which case I could see you. Or maybe I could see you in Pittsburgh coming back about Sept. 12. I shall write you again later if there is a chance of seeing you on the way west.

Thanks for telling me about Hulbert's project.

How are Dr. Balegen and Miss Nute? Greet them for me.

Are they standing by Minnesota after you go?

Am I indebted to you for the catalogue of the U. of Minn. Press. They are certainly getting an excellent list. Your Folwell book and Stephenson's Religious Backgrounds of Swedish Immigration will interest me.

Cordially yours,
Oliver W. Holmes.

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June 8, 1931

Mr. Oliver W. Holmes
1788 Bedford Ave.,
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Mr. Holmes:-

I am very glad to know that there is a possibility that you might be interested in a position at Pittsburgh. It seems to me that the best arrangement would be for you to stay in New York next year, finish up your thesis, and get your degree. I shall have one or more vacancies to fill on my staff a year from now, presumably, and I shall then be in a better position to make adjustments that might provide something acceptable to you.

I am glad to know that you have a publisher for your book. That ought to encourage you to keep the work going. By the way, Arthur Larsen tells me that he is thinking of taking Stagecoaching in the Region Northwest of Chicago as the subject of his doctor's thesis.

So far as there are any indications at present, Mr. Blegen and Miss Nute will remain here.

No, I am not responsible for your receiving the catalogue of the University of Minnesota Press.

Be sure to keep me informed of your plans, so that we can get together and talk things over at the first opportunity. I shall be in Pittsburgh by September 1 and shall probably go to New York some time in September for a committee meeting.

Sincerely yours

B/P

JUL 24 1931

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OLIVER W. HOLMES
1788 BEDFORD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

July 20, 1931.

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

Dear Dr. Buck: -

I seem to have mislaid your letter for the time being, but I want to write and thank you for holding out hope that I may still be able to join you on the Western Pennsylvania Survey a year hence. I shall try to be ready for the opportunity if it opens up, and know that I could enjoy myself completely in the work.

We are leaving here a week from Thursday, heading direct for Denver. From there will go by Santa Fe and the Grand Canyon to Los Angeles, then up the coast by San Francisco to Portland and across by Walla Walla, Lewiston, the new Salmon River Highway, southern Idaho, Teton and Yellowstone Parks to Billings. From there I will go by train to Rushford to spend about two weeks with my parents. I may stop in St Paul, but it will be about Sept. 3d and you will likely be gone. We shall start for New York about Sept. 12th and come via Pittsburgh. If you are

OLIVER W. HOLMES
1788 BEDFORD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

there then I think that will be my best chance to see you. You can reach me ^{by mail} at Rushford until just before we start, and I will write you from there giving the exact date, unless I get in touch with you before.

I wanted to say regarding that dissertation on staging in the Northwest that your man must consult the contract office papers in the Federal Post Office files at Washington. I think Mereness calendared some of them for you, but I'm sure his calendar will not reveal their value for stagecoaching. They are the best source, absolutely, for the study. You might get in touch with Mereness and have him introduce the man. I was going to say that you might have photostatic copies made of some of the stuff, but the Postoffice Department, I remember, has no photostat facilities. And you couldn't begin to get it all anyway. There was some trouble when somebody from the west ordered photostats some time ago. The Department official who had given Mereness access got all excited and decided not to let anybody in to the files anymore if he was going to cause all that trouble. The last time I was there I had to undergo a whole new questioning as to what I wanted, and leave a written statement on file as to what I wanted the material for. I think your man will have no trouble if he

you at it right, although he may have to do the same. The worst of it is that the file clerk has the authority to destroy the contract office papers that remain whenever he needs the room. They may be gone now. But I hope they can eventually get transferred to the new archives building. I'd like to see out of it. Please, Oliver W. Holmes

July 25, 1931

Mr. Oliver W. Holmes
1788 Bedford Ave.,
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Mr. Holmes:-

I was glad to receive your letter of July 20 with information about your plans for the summer. As I shall leave Minnesota during the last week in August, it will not be possible for us to meet here. I shall probably be in Pittsburgh, however, when you go through, and you can doubtless get in touch with me by telephone. My office will be in the building of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, which is located at Bigelow Boulevard and Parkman Ave. The telephone there is Schenley 9012. My home address will be 5839 Darlington Road, and you can doubtless get the telephone number by calling Information.

I was much interested in what you had to say about the contract office papers, and I have passed the information on to Mr. Larsen, who is thinking of writing on Stagecoaching in the Northwest. I have also passed on to Dr. Jameson the information that the file clerk had authority to destroy these papers, with the thought that he might be able to do something to prevent such destruction.

Sincerely yours

B/P

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Rushford, Minn.

Sept. 5, 1931

Dr. Solon J. Buck,
Western Pennsylvania Historical Society,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Dr. Buck:

We have just finished planning our trip back to New York and are scheduled to be in Pittsburgh the entire morning of Sept. 16. I hope there will be an opportunity to visit you at the Society, or wherever your headquarters are, then. Should there be any change in schedule I shall let you know. We are planning to be in Ann Arbor the 14th & to drive from there to Pittsburgh the 15th. I should like to visit the Clements library while at Ann Arbor. Are they very cordial to visitors as yet? Or does one have to come well prepared with introductions to see their material.

We have had a very wonderful western trip, going as far as California. I called in at the Historical Society while passing through St Paul and talked with Blegen. He said to tell you he was still alive. His book looks like an excellent piece of work.

Cordially yours,

Oliver W. Holmes.

P.S. Shall be in Rushford until the 12th.

P
Ho

September 8th, 1931.

Mr. Oliver W. Holmes,
Rushford, Minnesota.

Dear Mr. Holmes:-

I am very glad to learn from your letter of September 5th that you are planning to stop in Pittsburgh on your way back to New York. I expect to be here on the 16th and shall be looking for you.

My office is as indicated by the above letter-head and I shall be there by nine o'clock in the morning. The telephone number is "Schenley 5021".

My home address is #5839 Darlington Road and the telephone there is number "Hazel 1142".

I do not think you will have any difficulty at the Clements Library but on a chance that it may be of some assistance to you, I am enclosing herewith a letter of introduction to the custodian.

Sincerely yours,

Solon J. Buck, Director.

SJB:AM