



[Solon J. Buck Papers.](#)

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OCT 9 1930

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THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

October 7, 1930

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

Dear Friend Buck:

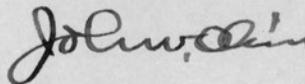
I enclose herewith a copy of the announcement recently made by the Buhl Foundation to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

I might say that after a few years of missionary work, I believe we are now ready here in Western Pennsylvania to launch one of the most ambitious programs in local history that has ever been undertaken anywhere in the country. Our friend, Harlow Lindley, was over to see me a few days ago, and he tells me that he has never known an occasion where a staff of six trained research historians has been organized and turned loose on such an intensive survey. Whatever the outcome, we are determined to make a start.

What I would like you to help me do now is to find a Curator. We want the very best man in the country that is available. Who do you have in mind?

Thanking you for helping us get started right,
I am

Very sincerely,



John W. Oliver
Head

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P.S. We hope to be able to start the work by June 1, 1931.

PROPOSED PLAN FOR PROGRAM OF RESEARCH AND WRITING IN THE
HISTORY OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The proposed program in the history of Western Pennsylvania shall be under the supervision of a board of control of nine members, of whom five shall be designated by the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, and of whom four shall be designated by the Board of Trustees of the University of Pittsburgh. All of the Society's representatives shall be members of the Society, and one shall be the President of the Society. One of the University's representatives shall be the Chancellor of the University.

The board of control shall designate a curator who shall administer the proposed program in the Historical Society and who shall be appointed to a professorship of history in the University. The nomination of a curator by the board of control shall be subject to the acceptance of the Historical Society in so far as relates to the administration of the Society's program and shall be subject to the acceptance and approval of the University in so far as relates to his teaching responsibilities there. It is understood that the teaching responsibilities of the curator at the University shall be limited to one course, to be mutually agreed upon by the man and the head of the history department.

The staff of research assistants shall be nominated by the curator, subject to the approval of the board of control. Any staff assistants who are to have teaching responsibilities in the University shall be nominated to the University by agreement of the curator and the head of the history department and as teachers shall be subject to the supervision of the history department. Such members of the staff of research assistants as wish to submit their work for degrees at the University of Pittsburgh must meet the academic requirements of the department of history.

The plan calls for a vigorous program of research and writing of the history of the Pittsburgh district at three levels:

- (1) the research level;
- (2) the public or popular level;
- (3) the public school level.

It is proposed that at each level the work shall be carried on with scientific exactitude, but with an earnest effort to catch the full inspirational value of the enterprise as a substantial contribution to a spirit of effective citizenship.

Distribution of Financing

	<u>The Buhl Foundation</u>	<u>Historical Society</u>	<u>University of Pittsburgh</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
First Year	\$16,000	...	\$ 5,000	\$ 21,000
Second Year	16,000	...	5,000	21,000
Third Year	13,500	\$ 2,500	5,000	21,000
Fourth Year	13,500	2,500	5,000	21,000
Fifth Year	11,000	5,000	5,000	21,000
	<hr/> \$70,000	<hr/> \$10,000	<hr/> \$25,000	<hr/> \$105,000

Annual Budget

A curator who shall be a man who has achieved a reputation not only as a research worker, but also as an effective writer of history and who shall have direction of the proposed project \$ 8,000.00

Two assistants, who shall be men approximately 1/2 of the rank of university instructors 5,000.00

Three fellowships 3,000.00

Clerical assistants, traveling, and office expenses, etc. 5,000.00

TOTAL

\$21,000.00

P. S. No provision has been made for publication. This will be taken care of by a later grant.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

October 20, 1930

Mr. Solon J. Buck
67 Barton Ave. S. E.
Minneapolis, Minn.

Dear Friend Buck:

Thank you for your letter of October 14th.

no carbon.

I want to have a talk with you before our final appointment is made. Are you planning to attend the meeting in Boston during the Christmas holidays?

As I stated in my former letter, I am sure we are not going to make our final appointment before late winter or early spring.

With best wishes, I am,

Very sincerely,

John W. Oliver
John W. Oliver
Head

F

8

67 Barton Avenue, S. E.
October 24, 1930

Prof. John W. Oliver
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Oliver:

It is my present plan to attend
the AHA meeting in Boston and I shall be glad
to have a talk with you at that time.

Sincerely yours

SJB/GH

FEB 14 1931

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THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

February 12, 1931

Dr. Solon J. Buck
Sup't, Minnesota Historical Society
St. Paul, Minnesota

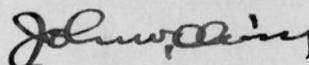
Dear Buck:

The Board of Control has officially authorized me to write you and invite you to come to Pittsburgh as our guest. I want the members of the Board of Control to meet you, and I want you to meet them. Could you arrange to be with us on Saturday, March 21st? If so, then I am going to ask you to be the speaker at our annual History Conference. We can pay you an honorarium of a hundred dollars for this job, and will expect in return at least two talks. I know you have several on reserve, and you could dress up one of your best and most popular ones for the evening dinner session.

You understand that the Board of Control will take care of your traveling expenses, and we, the department of history, will pay you the honorarium above mentioned in addition. For your benefit I am enclosing a copy of our last year's Conference.

I hope you can accommodate us, and will be awaiting your reply. I am,

Very sincerely,



John W. Oliver
H e a d

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FIRST ANNUAL HISTORY CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

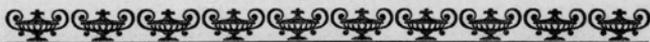
SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 1930



The History Department of the University of Pittsburgh, in co-operation with the Extension Division of the University, will hold an all-day conference for teachers of History in the Colleges, Universities, High Schools, and Academies in Western Pennsylvania and for others interested in History.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING AUDITORIUM

(Opposite State Hall, University Campus)



Program

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION: 10 O'CLOCK

L. P. SIEG, *Dean of the Graduate School, University of Pittsburgh, presiding*

GENERAL THEME - TEACHING OF HISTORY AND HISTORICAL METHODS

The Introductory History Course in Grove City College

L. A. BEELER, *Professor of History, Grove City College*

The Introductory History Course in Washington-Jefferson College

A. H. SWEET, *Professor of History, Washington-Jefferson College*

A New Approach to High School History Teaching
C. A. BUCKNER, *Professor of Secondary Education, University of Pittsburgh*

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Display by Book Companies and Publishing Houses of maps, texts, and "teaching helps" in History.

Program

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: 2 O'CLOCK

W. H. STEVENSON, *President, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, presiding*

GENERAL THEME - LOCAL HISTORY

Program of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission
MISS FRANCES DORRANCE, *Secretary of the Commission*

Program of the Federation of Historical Societies of Pennsylvania

DR. H. H. SHENK, *Secretary of the Federation*

Address: FREDERIC L. PAXSON, *Professor of American History, University of Wisconsin*

EVENING SESSION: 6:30 O'CLOCK

Subscription Dinner, Faculty Club, Oak Manor
Address: FREDERIC L. PAXSON, *University of Wisconsin*

Subject: "The Perils of the Historian"

*Address all communications to
John W. Oliver, History Department
University of Pittsburgh*

8

February 16, 1931

Professor John W. Cliver
Head, Department of History
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Oliver:-

My engagements are such that I can be with you on March 31, and I am very glad to accept your invitation to be the speaker at your annual History Conference. I take it that you will give me further information later on as to the plans for this Conference so that I can fit in my talk with the program.

Sincerely yours

B/P

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FEB 21 1931
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THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

February 19, 1931

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

Dear Buck:

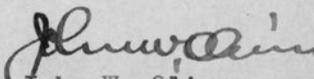
I am delighted to learn that you can be with us for our Annual History Conference. Also, I am looking forward with pleasure to having you meet the members of our Board of Control, and the opportunity they will have of meeting you. I suggest that you plan to be here for the entire day, Friday, the 20th. We will arrange a special meeting of the Board of Control, and it will be my pleasure to pilot you around from place to person, and give you a general outlook of the situation.

As to the History Conference, let me say that we would like to have you join in the discussion for the afternoon session. The general theme for the afternoon program will be "The Lure of Research Projects." Sounds luring, doesn't it? We are asking some of the colleges in Western Pennsylvania to give us a brief report on some of the immediate projects that they are now interested in. The Conference will be glad to have you say a few words by way of summary, along toward the end of the afternoon session.

Your principal address is to come at the dinner meeting in the evening. Here you are to choose your own subject. You will be the whole program for that meeting. Your audience will consist of the faculty and students who are majoring in history here in the University, together with the teachers of history in the various colleges and normal schools of Western Pennsylvania, - plus several dozen high school teachers. Also, there will be several members of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania present. With this information, you can make your plans accordingly. I will send you a copy of the printed program as soon as it is available.

Looking forward to your coming with pleasure, I am

Very sincerely,


John W. Oliver

February 24, 1931

Professor John W. Oliver
Department of History
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Oliver:-

I shall arrange to arrive in Pittsburgh not later than Friday morning, March 20, and shall be glad to fall in with any arrangements that you may make.

I wonder if a talk on "Materials for Research" would fit in with your afternoon program. I could tell something of the work of the Joint Committee on Materials for Research of the ACLS and the SSRC, and perhaps make some suggestions of local application.

For the evening address, I am thinking of using some such title as "The Interpretation of American History." In it, among other things, I might include a reconsideration of the frontier theory in the light of recent attacks upon it.

Sincerely yours

B/P

FEB 28 1931

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

February 26, 1931

Professor Solon J. Buck
Minnesota Historical Society
Saint Paul, Minnesota

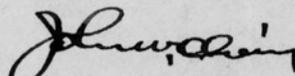
Dear Buck:

I like both of your titles. I shall put you down just as you have indicated in your letter. I am especially anxious to hear your views on the Interpretation of American History, as seen in the light of new developments in Frontier History.

I have not looked into the train schedule as yet, but if you arrive at an unearthly hour, then I suggest that you take a taxi out to the University Club where I will leave a guest card for you. If however, you are arriving at a decent hour, say around eight or nine o'clock, I will be glad to come by the station and pick you up. You can let me know about your schedule later.

I am

Very sincerely,


John W. Oliver

H e a d

F

March 16, 1931

Professor John W. Oliver
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Oliver:-

Mr. Buck has asked me to let you know that he is leaving here Wednesday night and will arrive in Pittsburgh over the Baltimore and Ohio at 8:45 A. M. Friday morning.

Very truly yours

Secretary to Mr. Buck

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

March 23, 1931

Professor Solon J. Buck
The Cosmos Club
Washington, D. C.

Dear Buck:

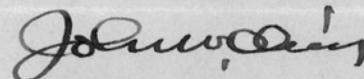
Here's your check; also a letter that
should have been handed you last week.

I am back on the job this morning, but
have not yet had a chance to talk with any of the members
of the Board of Control. I will try to get in touch with
some of them within the next day or two, and see when
Judge Ewing plans to call a meeting.

I have heard many favorable comments
this morning, around the campus, regarding your paper.
You know we all enjoyed it, but I am just telling you
this again.

I am

Very sincerely,



John W. Oliver
H e a d

L

8.

March 27, 1931

Dr. John W. Oliver
History Department
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

My dear Mr. Oliver:-

In accordance with Mr. Buck's request received from Washington, I am sending you herewith two copies of his address, and hope they will reach you in good time.

Very truly yours

Secretary to Mr. Buck

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

April 6/31

Dear Buck -

Your statement of expenses just arrived. This is Monday, Easter Holiday, - so I have no stenographer - How you suffer. I'll forward your statement on to Mr. Potter, Treas. & he will issue you your check.

The Board is having hard time to hold a meeting. Judge Ewing called one last time - but found only 4 members in town. I was there, but Chancellor Bowman was in Phila. & Dean Sieg had left for his Easter vacation. However both had given me their proxies to vote to extend your invitation to positions of Curator. But when only three showed up - Judge Ewing, Judge Reid, & Mr. Dahlinger, they decided ~~to~~ not to take definite action until they made another effort to get out more members. Judge Ewing said two of absentees would be back from Southern resorts within next 10 days. So you'll hear from us soon -

Here's one point that is worrying some of the Hist. Socy group - viz. your views on not wanting to run the Society's business. They seem to think, and I agree in part, that the Curator should be the "Big Chief" of the Five Year Program and also the Boss of the Society. See?

I tried to tell them that I felt sure you could ~~do~~ ^{interfering} ~~both~~ ^{do} both. As I'm sure you can, without ~~too~~ ^{too} too much with your ideas of research & publication.

Another point that arose was this, - Mr. Dahlinger bless his soul, raised it - should the Board take a man purely on my recommendations? He thinks he

would like to visit with the man we have under consideration.
See him in action at home base, - interview some of
his colleagues, et cetera, et cetera - So, since
he has to be in Clieep soon, he thought maybe he
would run on up to Drismafokis & see you. Well,
I suppose there's nothing to prevent it, - but it
seems ~~so~~ unnecessary to me. However I'm
just passing this on -

Pardon this scribble - but just some
ideas that have come up since you were
here. Everybody is still talking about
the good impression you made

Draw later.

Oleary

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THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

April 9/31

Dear Buck -

Well, you are elected. The Board of Control had another meeting yesterday, & voted to invite you to command take charge of the work. Of course, you will get an official letter from Judge Ewing in a day or two, - but I thought I'd let you know that they decided, after due deliberation, that they would take a chance on you, without further investigation.

The Board feels, and I concur, that you should, along with your research & writing, take over the management of the Historical Society. You can do this by delegating the details to one of your assistants, but you should be the "Big Chief", see -?

Will you'll be hearing from Judge Ewing soon -

I am looking forward to seeing you in Lexington, - and again saying that I am damn glad to have you come & join us.

I am, as ever

Oliver

Ewing's letter
will go to your
home address.

J. E. Potter
ROBERT M. EWING
PRESIDENT

THOMAS S. BROWN
SECRETARY

JOHN E. POTTER
TREASURER

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Bigelow Boulevard and Parkman Avenue

TELEPHONE:—SCHENLEY 9012
MISS EMMA D. POOLE, LIBRARIAN

Pittsburgh, Pa., April 11, 1931.

Dr. Solon J. Buck,
67 Barton Ave., S.E.,
Minneapolis, Minn.

Dear Dr. Buck:-

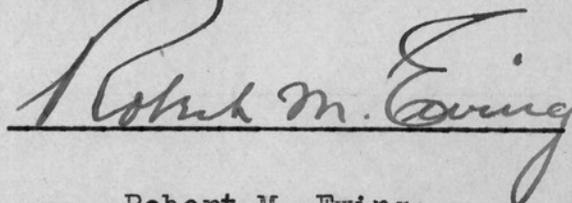
At a meeting of the Board of Control, held yesterday afternoon, the Board voted to extend you an invitation to accept the position as Curator of the local historical program sponsored by the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and the Department of History of the University of Pittsburgh, at a salary of \$8,000.00 per year.

In extending you this invitation, the Board of Control understands that you will take over the general supervision, organization, and direction of the work of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, and also direct the research and writing of the History of Western Pennsylvania, along the lines as set forth in the Announcement of the Buhl Foundation (copy of which you have in your possession).

Let me add here that the Board was unanimous in its decision to extend you this invitation, and we express the hope that you will find it possible to accept the offer.

Looking forward to having you with us in the near future, I am,

Very sincerely,



Robert M. Ewing,
President, Board of Control.

RME:LN

67 Barton Ave. S. E.
Minneapolis, April 14, 1931

Hon. Robert M. Ewing, President
The Historical Society of Western
Pennsylvania
Bigelow Boulevard & Parkman Ave.,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

My dear Judge Ewing:-

Your letter of April 11 reached me last night, and I want to assure you of my deep appreciation of the invitation from the Board of Control to take charge of the historical project at Pittsburgh. I am very much interested in the proposition, but I shall have to ask for a little time in which to consider it before making a decision. You will hear from me again in a few days.

Sincerely yours

B/P

67 Barton Ave. S. E.
Minneapolis, April 14, 1931

Dr. John W. Oliver
Department of History
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Oliver:-

Your letter of April 9 reached me Saturday night, and, without waiting for the formal letter from Judge Ewing, I informed Shippee, as chairman of the Department, and Ford, as president of the Historical Society, of the offer. I understand that they are trying to find ways and means of making my position here so attractive that I will be unwilling to accept the offer from Pittsburgh. Whether or not they will succeed remains to be seen.

Judge Ewing's letter reached me yesterday, and I have written him to express my appreciation and have asked for a few days in which to consider the proposition before making a decision.

Whatever the outcome may be, I assure you that I deeply appreciate the confidence in me that this offer implies, and I realize fully that you are primarily responsible for it.

Sincerely yours

B/P

ROBERT M. EWING
PRESIDENT

THOMAS S. BROWN
SECRETARY

JOHN E. POTTER
TREASURER

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Bigelow Boulevard and Parkman Avenue

TELEPHONE:—SCHENLEY 9012
MISS EMMA D. POOLE, LIBRARIAN

Pittsburgh, Pa., April 21, 1931.

Dr. Solon J. Buck,
65 Barton St., S.E.,
Minneapolis, Minn.

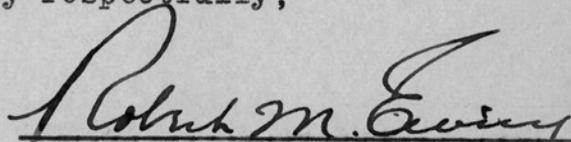
My dear Dr. Buck:-

I have your letter of the 14th inst., and am glad to know that you are giving our proposition consideration. We, of course, are anxious to have the matter determined at the earliest possible date for several reasons.

We trust we may receive your acceptance, and in that event we may desire you to come to Pittsburgh at an early date, inasmuch as we are withholding any action in connection with the equipment of our new building until such time as we can have the benefit of the advice of our Curator as to what is best. We feel our lack of experience and knowledge in matters of this kind and your advice would be very helpful to us.

A trip of this kind would, of course, necessarily be at the expense of the Buhl Foundation.

Very respectfully,


President.

RME:LN

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

April 21, 1931

Professor Solon J. Buck
Department of History
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Friend Buck:

I could not answer your letter of the 16th without first talking to Chancellor Bowman. He was out of town over the weekend, and I did not get to see him until about a half hour ago. Briefly, here are the results of our conversation.

(1) The Chancellor heartily believes in the Historical Survey, and says that he hopes it will become permanent. He states, however, that it is impossible for him to commit the University to a program five years hence. He will write you a letter within the next day or so, expressing his wish that the position will become permanent; and that the University of Pittsburgh and the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania will be in position to carry the work on indefinitely.

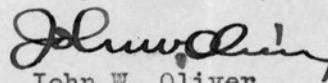
(2) The Chancellor tells me that the University has never paid the moving expenses of any member of the faculty to date. Consequently, he is a little doubtful about inaugurating this policy. Personally, I do not believe that the Historical Society has any money available for this special purpose, but it may not be out of place for you to raise the point with Judge Ewing, and ask him if it would be possible for you to draw upon that item in the budget relating to "travelling expenses" in order to cover your moving expenses. At least, you might raise the point, and see what happens.

(3) I have not discussed the matter of substituting the word "Director" for the word "Curator", but I have no doubt whatever but that this can be done very easily. I agree with you that such a change of title would be desirable.

I believe this answers all your points. Let me again express the hope that you can see your way clear to write us a definite acceptance at the earliest convenient date.

I am,

Very sincerely,


John W. Oliver
Head

APR 24 1931

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THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF
THE CHANCELLOR

April 22, 1931

Dear Dr. Buck:

Dr. Oliver and I have just had some talk about your coming to Pittsburgh. The question of the permanence of the position here, he tells me, is in your mind. About all that I can say is that I am most heartily in favor of the project which has been proposed to you. Further, speaking for the University, I should like to see the project become a permanent institution here. With even moderate success it seems to me that such will be the case. You will appreciate, I believe, that I can not "guarantee" a permanent program.

With kind wishes, I am

Faithfully yours,

John G. Burnham

Dr. Solon J. Buck

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS
MINNEAPOLIS

(April 29, 1921)

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

67 Barton Ave. S. E.

Hon. Robert M. Ewing
Pittsburgh, Pa.

My dear Judge Ewing:

I had hoped to be able to write you with some definiteness before this but unfortunately I cannot make a decision before the end of the week. In the meantime, I think I had better lay the situation before you and perhaps you can help me to ~~at~~^{make} a favorable decision when the situation clears up here.

In the first place I can say definitely that I want to go to Pittsburgh. The project there appeals to me very strongly and I believe it offers an opportunity to do something unique and very much worth while. I have a large family, however, - my parents, who live with me and are dependent on me, my wife and three children - and I have to give careful consideration to the financial aspect of the situation and to the question of permanence of position.

I am convinced that it would cost us

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS
MINNEAPOLIS

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

at least \$1500 a year more to live in
Pittsburgh than it does in Minneapolis. Deducting
that sum from the salary offered leaves a
differential of only \$700 over my present
salary. Both the historical society and the
department of history here are very anxious
to have me remain and the society has
offered to increase my salary \$500. The
department has also recommended a
similar increase but the university
administration was unwilling to take any
action until it knew what the appropriations
were going to be from the legislature.
Those were settled yesterday and the university
got a small increase, but very much less
than it asked for. Now the dean of the
arts college and the president are both out
of town and will not be back until
Saturday, so it will probably be impossible
to get action before then. The financial
situation is such that I think it very
doubtful that the university will make
the increase. If it should do so, however,
I do not see how I could afford to accept

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS
MINNEAPOLIS

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

the offer from Pittsburgh.

Assuming, however, that the university does not make the increase, I shall still find it very difficult to make a decision. With the salary differential almost wiped out by the increase from the historical society, with the probability of a considerable loss on the sale of my home in a period of depression, and with the certainty of a heavy expense in moving to Pittsburgh, it is clear that I would be worse off financially for a year or two if I accepted the offer than if I remained here. It has occurred to me, however, that it might be possible for your Board of Control to make me an allowance for the expense of moving. It will not be feasible, I am sure, to set up the complete organization of the project the first year, and perhaps some of the money that will thus be saved could be drawn upon.

In the matter of permanency of position, it is my understanding that, while the project is at present financed for five

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS
MINNEAPOLIS

4

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

years only, it is the intention and expectation of all concerned that it shall be a permanent enterprise. Naturally I could not accept the offer if I felt that there was any danger that, at the end of five years, I would be out of a job. I realize of course that there can be no definite obligation beyond the five year period, but I should like to feel that, if my work is satisfactory and if the activity can be permanently financed, my position would be a permanent one.

There is one other point that bothers me a little and that is the question of title. I should be quite willing to take over the direction of the work of the society as well as that of the research project, but I feel that in both cases the title of "director" would be much more appropriate than that of "curator." The use of the latter term is confined as a rule to subordinate positions under the head of the institution.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS
MINNEAPOLIS

5

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Thus in the Minnesota Historical Society,
we have curators of the museum and of
manuscripts under the superintendent. The
heads of some independent museums are
known as curators I believe, but even in
that field the tendency is to call them
directors and to use the term "curator"
for those who have charge of special
collections. I gathered that there would
be no objection to this change, and I
would suggest that it be made at the
outset so that the first announcements
might carry the new title.

If I am to go to Pittsburgh in
the near future ^{to work out equipment,} as suggested in your
letter of April 21, the best time for
me would be right after the meeting
of the Mississippi Valley Historical Assn.
at Lexington, Ky., which ends on May 2.
It will not be possible for me to begin to
assume the position before September 1
as I have agreed to teach in summer
school at the Univ. of Minn. and the
term does not close until the end of

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS
MINNEAPOLIS

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

July. I would need the month of August
in which to prepare for moving and to
get a little vacation. I should probably
go to Pittsburgh for a few days in
June, ^{to select a house,} however, [^] as my wife will be in
the East at that time and could meet
me there. ~~to~~

If you can send me an air mail letter
or a night letter to reach here by next Tuesday, I
will get it before I leave for Lexington. Other
wise you can address me there, at the LaFayette
Hotel, which will be my address from April 30
to May 2. I understand that Dr. Clinch expects to
go to the Lexington meeting.

I sincerely yours,

67 Barton Ave. S. E.
April 24, 1931

Professor John W. Oliver
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Oliver:-

Thank you for your letter of April 21. The attitude of the University as to permanency is about what I had ^d expected, but I am not so sure about the society. Last night I sent an air mail letter to Judge Ewing in which I explained the situation fully. Briefly, it is as follows: The Historical Society has offered me an increase of five hundred dollars, and the Department of History at the University has recommended a similar increase there. No action could be obtained, however, until the legislature had passed on the appropriation. That was done Wednesday, and the University got a small increase, ^{but} ~~so~~ much less than it had asked for. We then discovered that the Dean of the ~~Art~~ College and the President were out of town. The Dean will be back tomorrow and possibly the President, and I expect the matter to be settled by Monday or Tuesday.

If the University makes the increase, I do not see how I can afford to go to Pittsburgh. I doubt very much, however, if it will do so in view of its financial stringency; and, if it does not, I will then have a very difficult decision to make. The increase from the Historical Society wipes out about all of the differential in salaries after deduction is made for the increased cost of living in Pittsburgh; and, as I wrote you, for the first year at least, I should be worse off financially if I went there than if I remained here.

In writing to Judge Ewing, I put up to him the same three points that I raised with you; (1) the question of intention as to permanency, (2) moving expenses, and (3) the question of title. As soon as I hear from him and from the University of Minnesota, I shall come to a decision, and I hope it will be before Tuesday night, when I leave for the MVHA meeting.

Sincerely yours

B/P

WILLIAM H. STEVENSON
PRESIDENT

ROBERT M. EWING
SECRETARY

JOHN E. POTTER
TREASURER

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Bigelow Boulevard and Parkman Avenue

TELEPHONE:--SCHENLEY 9012

MISS EMMA D. POOLE, LIBRARIAN

Pittsburgh, Pa., April 27, 1931.

Dr. Solon J. Buck,
Hotel Lafayette,
Lexington,
Kentucky.

My dear Dr. Buck:-

Your letter was duly received and the contents laid before the Joint Board of Control at a meeting held this afternoon.

We are in entire accord with your suggestion as to the use of the word "Director" instead of "Curator", and as to the expenses of moving from Minneapolis to Pittsburg, I am enclosing a Resolution adopted at the meeting today, which is self-explanatory.

As to the matter of the permanence of the position, I do not hesitate to say that it is my opinion, and I am sure that it is concurred in by others of the Board of Control, that we would be very loathe to have undertaken the work that is contemplated during the five-year period, if we thought that it would terminate at the end of that time. If the project succeeds, as we feel sure that it will, I feel very strongly that there will be no question but that it will be carried on as a permanent project.

Upon receipt of the information contained in the Resolution and in this letter, we would be very pleased to have your acceptance by wire; also indicating when you can be here to confer on the matter of equipment, so that we may arrange for a meeting of the Joint Board of Control during your stay in Pittsburgh. The expense of the trip, as I have already indicated to you, will be borne by the Board of Control. I think that I express the thought of the Board when I say that it is desired that when you come to consider the matter of equipment, etc., you plan for sufficient time to give the matter the necessary study and consideration.

WILLIAM H. STEVENSON
PRESIDENT

ROBERT M. EWING
SECRETARY

JOHN E. POTTER
TREASURER

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Bigelow Boulevard and Parkman Avenue

TELEPHONE:—SCHENLEY 9012

MISS EMMA D. POOLE, LIBRARIAN

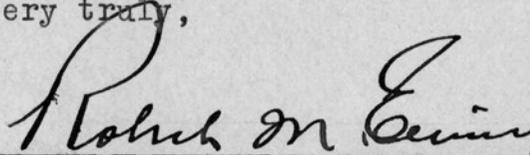
Pittsburgh, Pa., April 27, 1931.

Page #2 - Letter to Dr. Buck.

Dr. Oliver will see you in Lexington and will go over the entire matter with you, as we feel that he knows the sense of the Board in the matters hereinabove referred to.

Kindly address communications to Berger Building, Pittsburgh.

Yours very truly,


President.

RME:LN

At a meeting of the Joint Board of Control, having in charge the administration of the Buhl Foundation grant to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, held on April 27th, 1931, the following Resolution was adopted:-

"RESOLVED, That the President be authorized to notify Dr. Buck that in connection with the proposition already submitted, the Board of Control would bear the necessary expenses incurred by him in connection with the moving of himself, his family and his household effects from Minneapolis to Pittsburgh, at a cost not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1000.00).



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LEN. SHOUSE, JR.
MANAGER.

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

LAFAYETTE HOTEL
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Will be in Pittsburgh Monday
and Tuesday, ~~and~~ also Wednesday
if necessary and will make
decision probably favorable
while there stop at any rate
will be glad to help with
equipment if desired

To
Telegram
Judge C...
May 1, 1991

"IN THE HEART OF THE BLUE GRASS"

*W. letter July 9, 1931
to substitute for
lost original*

May 6, 1931

Hon. Robert M. Ewing
President of the Historical
Society of Western Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

My dear Judge Ewing:-

It gives me much pleasure to accept the appointment as director of the research project in Western Pennsylvania history in accordance with the terms of your letters of April 11 and 27. The project appeals to me as one of very great interest and importance, and I assure you that I shall do everything in my power to make it a success.

Sincerely yours

B/P

June 3, 1931

Dr. John W. Oliver
Department of History
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Oliver:-

Thank you for your letter of June 1 with the list of counties. It will be useful to me.

I believe that I can secure the services of Franklin F. Holbrook as curator of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania at \$2,500, and his experience with a wide variety of historical society work would make him a very valuable man. As the head of our War Records Division, he received a salary of \$3,000, but since that was discontinued by the legislature four years ago he has been without a permanent position. I feel that the salary for such a position, or at least a part of it, should be paid by the society rather than out of the research fund, but I am without information as to whether or not that would be possible. It is clear to me that, unless I have some competent person to run the society (under my direction) I shall have only a limited amount of time available for the research work. I should be very glad to have your opinion informally and unofficially on this matter. I have not spoken to Holbrook about it as yet.

I shall probably be in Pittsburgh for two or three days during the week following the Fourth of July. Do you think that it would be well to have a meeting of the Board at that time and endeavor to get action on some appointments? I trust that you are on the lookout for a competent secretary for me. She need not be a stenographer, as I expect to use a dictaphone, but she should have had experience in office work and the handling of correspondence, and, above all, she should be intelligent.

I am in receipt this morning of an application from Walter R. Hoberg. Do you suppose he would consider one of the thousand dollar positions?

You may be interested to know that spirea, which was in full bloom in Pittsburgh the day I left there, was not in blossom here until two or three days ago. From this I infer that spring is about a month earlier in Pittsburgh than it is here.

Sincerely yours

B/P

JUN 11 1931

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

June 9, 1931

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

Dear Buck:

I hardly know what to say about Holbrook. I think I have met him only once, or possibly twice, but was quite favorably impressed with him on both occasions. However, I do not pretend to know enough about him to make a commitment one way or the other. The thing that worries me a little bit, however, is the matter of salary. If Holbrook has a family, I do not see how he is going to live very comfortably in Pittsburgh on \$2500. You probably, however, have talked this over with him, and he probably is coming, conscious of the fact that living conditions here are higher than they are elsewhere. So if he comes, he will come with his eyes open, but there should be no misunderstanding. I think in this case, however, that you had better make the decision, and not count very much on my judgment, one way or the other.

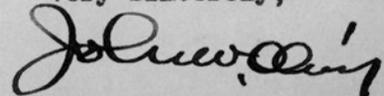
Yes, I think it might be well to call a meeting of the Board while you are in Pittsburgh during the first week in July. While you will probably not want to make all of your appointments at that time, yet there are two or three that ought to receive attention. Do you want me to ask Judge Ewing to call a meeting, or will you write him direct?

Two or three quite capable young women have spoken to me about a position on your staff, in the capacity of secretary. I have told them that you will probably be through here during the month of July, and have two or three lined up who want to have an interview with you. After talking with them, you can make your own selection.

Walter Hoberg, who wrote you, I believe would accept one of the \$1000 positions. Hoberg writes quite well, is a good research man, has had some newspaper experience, and might fit in very acceptably. I will want you to see him, however, before making any appointment.

I wish I could keep the copy of the Editorial which you sent me. Don't you have an extra copy, which I might circulate among the members of the Board? Let me hear from you if I can be of any assistance. I am

Very sincerely,



John W. Oliver

June 12, 1931

Dr. John W. Oliver
Department of History
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Oliver:-

Since sending the editorial to you, I have obtained another copy so I am returning the one that you had, and you are at liberty to use it in any way you see fit. I enclose herewith also a copy of a resolution adopted by the Executive Council of the Minnesota Historical Society at its special meeting last Tuesday, at which my resignation was accepted and Elegen was elected as my successor.

With reference to Holbrook some explanations are in order. He is a grass widower, and would not, therefore, have a family with him in Pittsburgh, though he is under obligations to make payments to his former wife for the support of the children. His domestic relations were most unfortunate for a number of years, and had a good deal to do with the breakdown that I think I referred to in a previous letter. There was no question of moral delinquency on his part. His former wife lives in Minneapolis where she has a position, and he is very anxious to get away from this community. I have not talked this proposition over with him, but I learned the last time I was in Pittsburgh that Judge Ewing had received a letter from him applying for a position, and I feel confident that he would accept. I shall have a talk with him about it before leaving for Pittsburgh, but without making any commitments, of course.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Potter in which he expresses the opinion that no appointments should be made until I am on the ground in the fall. A copy of my reply to him is enclosed herewith. I am sending a copy of it also to Judge Ewing.

I am planning to be in Pittsburgh on July 6, 7, and 8, and I shall have to rely upon you to make the necessary arrangements for me to meet the various people that want to interview me. There are Slick and Field and Hoberg, and I suppose James will want to talk with me in addition to the candidates for the secretarial job. You may know of others. I shall want also to have a chance to talk over all these people with you. Somewhat to my surprise, I have received no reply from James to my letter to him, a copy of which was sent to you.

J.W.O. 6/12/31 -- 2

You and Mrs. Oliver very kindly invited Mrs. Buck and me to stay with you. It looks now, however, as if Mrs. Buck's mother will be with us. Elizabeth will be visiting her in Brooklyn just before our visit to Pittsburgh, and Mrs. Hawthorn has offered to drive her out to Pittsburgh. If she does so, we will have a car available for running about to look at houses. Under the circumstances, perhaps we had all better stay at Webster Hall.

Sincerely yours

B/P

Encl.
Editorial
reso.
let. to JEP

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

THE COLLEGE

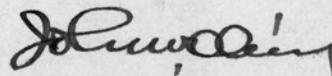
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

-2-

with us, and we decided that the first thing to do would be to get bids from various companies, both on book stacks and newspaper stacks, and also tables and chairs for those two ~~reading~~^{stack} rooms. No final contract will be let, however, until you have been here and have gone over the list with us.

Looking forward to seeing you in the near future, I am

Very sincerely,



John W. Oliver

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7 read

July 31, 1931

Mr. John E. Potter
Potter Tile & Trust Co.,
Fourth Ave. & Grant St.,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Potter:-

Your airmail letter of yesterday reached me this morning before I left home, and I will reply to it at once. The budget as arranged is satisfactory to me except in one particular. The salary that I recommended for Miss Mason was \$1,800. In the budget you list it at \$1,620, but in the paragraph below you speak of reducing it \$120. The difference, however, between my recommendation and the amount allotted is \$180. The salary proposed amounts to only \$135 a month, and that is what Miss Mason is receiving in her present position. She gave as her reason for seeking a change the desire for a larger salary and stated that she had received as high as \$150 a month. It is obvious, therefore, that we cannot obtain her services at \$135. Possibly we could get them at \$140 a month with the promise of an increase to \$145 at the end of six months and to \$150 at the end of the year.

I very much hope that some arrangement can be made to get Miss Mason's services, as she impressed me as a very high type of person. I believe, therefore, that it would be advisable to reduce the amount for traveling expenses, etc., by whatever sum is necessary to add to the salary proposed for her in order to get her to accept. I do not know Miss Mason's address, but Dr. Oliver knows how to get in touch with her, and I would suggest that he be authorized to enter upon negotiations with her and find out the lowest sum for which her services can be obtained. It is quite desirable, of course, that the secretary-stenographer be on hand September 1 to help me get things started, purchase supplies and equipment, etc.

I appreciate the consideration that has been shown me by you and the Board in the handling of this rather difficult situation. I shall notify the various people with the exception of Miss Mason of their appointments immediately.

B/P

Sincerely yours

August 5, 1931

Dr. John W. Oliver, Head
Department of History
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dear Oliver:

I am in receipt this morning of a letter from Slick declining the appointment and stating that he has accepted another position. I know of a very competent young woman who has had two years of experience of graduate work at the University of Minnesota and who might be available for a fellowship at \$1,000. If she is available I may recommend her. At any rate we will have an ample balance and I hope that the compensations of James and Holbrook can be restored to \$2,500. Also that the Board will approve of paying Miss Mason as much as may be necessary to obtain her services up to \$1,800.

This whole affair certainly illustrates the difficulty of doing business at a distance, and especially without full knowledge of all the factors involved. I certainly appreciate the assistance that you have given me in the matter and I know that it has taken up a good deal of your time.

I trust that you and Mrs. Oliver will have a very enjoyable vacation. We are hoping to get away in about a week for the Lake Superior country.

Sincerely yours

B/H

P.S. Will a fellowship in the Survey carry exemption from tuition fees in the Univ.? If not how much will such a fellow have to pay?

P.S. 2. I am writing to Judge Craig also. 8.9.31

AUG 10 1931

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

August 7, 1931

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

Dear Buck:

Things have been happening so fast and furious around here for the past few days that I have hardly known when to write you. Every time I thought I was ready to give you a definite answer, something would pop up, change the whole situation, and cause me to wait a few hours. But since this is Friday morning, the last day of the Summer Session, and since I am planning to get away tomorrow or Sunday, this letter is final.

First, let me say that I would appreciate very much having you bring along those files of the History Teachers' Magazine and the Historical Outlook. I will find room for them here in my departmental library, and they will come into use oft-times. I do not believe that I could find room for your files of Art and Archaeology, hence you need not burden yourself with bringing these.

Now as to the Historical Survey matters. Yes, Slick came in some days ago and told me of his offer in one of the local high schools. I let him make the decision entirely; did not influence him one way or the other. After thinking it over for two or three days, he decided that he would accept it. As you probably know, he was a little bit disappointed when he did not receive the full \$2500. Then when his salary was cut to \$1900, he felt that he was being reduced to a sum below which he could conveniently live. By accepting this high school position, he can still have his summers free to do graduate work, and will probably be further along three or four years from now, especially if he takes off a year after he has taught two or three, than he would be by accepting the Research Assistantship. As to his successor, I have no definite recommendation to make at this time. I have two or three men in mind, but none of them rank as high as Slick or Field. If the young woman you have in mind there in Minnesota measures up, I see no reason why you should not bring her along. Do you suppose that Miss Kane, the girl who wrote you some time ago, would accept one of these \$1000 Fellowships? Due to the fact that you will be here now within three weeks, where you can meet and interview all prospective applicants, it seems best to me to withhold urging any appointments upon you.

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
THE COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

-2-

Judge Ewing and Mr. Potter had another meeting about the salary schedules, and yesterday afternoon the Judge called and said that he had arranged with Miss Mason, - fixing her salary at the original amount stated, namely \$1800. The Judge seemed to want to attend to this himself, so let him go ahead and do it. Consequently, when you arrive on the scene, you will find your secretary available, also Professor James and Mr. Field, and you will be able to start your work with this staff. It may take two or three weeks to find the other persons you are looking for, but I am sure that not very much time will be lost.

Oh, yes, I overlooked your comment on the possibility of restoring James and Holbrook to the original \$2500 as planned. I see no reason why this cannot be done after you arrive on the scene. You will find the Board quite willing to go along with you on any recommendations you have. While it has been quite difficult to carry on matters with you a thousand or fifteen hundred miles from the scene of action, yet I think this handicap will all be overcome, once you are here.

I believe this is all for the present. Mrs. Oliver and I hope to get away tomorrow or Sunday, and will be gone for three or four weeks. We plan to be back in Pittsburgh sometime during the middle of the week of September 7. I, of course, will get in touch with you as soon as I arrive. I might add that Mr. Dice has been making progress, and I think you will find everything in readiness when you arrive.

Regretting that I cannot be here to greet you personally, but assuring you that everything has been done that it was possible to do, and with best wishes, I am

Very sincerely,

John W. Oliver
John W. Oliver

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One other item: Have just called Dean Sieg, Grad School, & he says "yes"; - the fellowships will carry free tuition, to the extent of 4 hrs per semester. J.W.O.