Walker Winslow correspondence

Section 81, Pages 2401 - 2430

This collection of papers largely consists of handwritten and typed correspondence between Walker Winslow (also under the name Harold Maine) and his third wife, Edna Mansley Winslow, the bulk of which dates from 1948-1951. The letters can be chatty and newsy, providing details about each of their daily lives and activities, what they were reading or music they were listening to, their work (his writing and therapy, her writing and painting), and other related topics. The letters could also be very self-reflective and analytical regarding their relationship to each other, discussing their sexuality and concepts of fidelity, relationships with others, their health and various injuries and illnesses they each had, money, their mutual loneliness, Edna's drinking, and other topics. Some of the letters were written while Winslow was working at and writing in Topeka. They were also written while the Winslows lived separately in Santa Fe, New Mexico; various parts of California (especially Big Sur or Oakland); various parts of New York (especially Rochester and New York City); and in Kansas. The letters document the rise and fall of their brief and intense relationship.

Also in the materials are a few of Winslow's typed manuscripts and poems, many with copy-editing marks and annotations or corrections, including a copy of If a Man Be Mad, as well as two published versions of the book (one in French). There is also correspondence with friends and relatives of Winslow and/or Edna; Winslow family photographs; some sketches Edna drew, with her handwritten notes on the back, perhaps for letters to Winslow; a letter of recommendation from 1889 for Winslow's father; and extensive correspondence between Winslow and Dr. Karl Menninger. Some of this correspondence regards articles and the book Winslow wrote about the Menninger Clinic; there are also interview notes and transcripts from interviews Winslow conducted with Dr. C.F. Menninger. Topics of Winslow's writings include Henry Miller, psychiatry and life in asylums, and the Synanon Foundation.

Creator: Winslow, Walker, 1905-1969

Date: circa 1943 - 1969, undated (bulk 1948-1951)

Callnumber: Menninger Historic Psychiatry Coll., Winslow, Boxes 1-7

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 223249

Item Identifier: 223249

www.kansasmemory.org/item/223249

Several young women stayed with us -- a musician, Myrtle Radcliffe, used to practice eight hours a day, to my parents' great pleasure; and before her, Annie Marie Parry Bundy, and English piano teacher, who became quite well known in this vicinity. Then there were several others, but the most notable one was another cousin, Charles Menninger, who is now Treasurer of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, and lives here in Topeka. He was a great comfort to my parents, & we are proud of him today.

Now I have spoken of adoption, because these folks were all treated as if they were brothers and sisters of mine, although they may have been just roomers and boarders for all I know. Mother was always taking someone in. Once she took in 10 for breakfast!
As you know, and this should be stated delicately, it was just that way in which Pearl, who was so lost when her father died, came to say with mother and father. I don't know the year (1919); she will be writing you about this.

I know that mother and father mothered and fathered the whole flock, and they all had to say their Bible verse at the table, and in a general way comply with the household regime that mother set up. I took music lessons of Miss Bundy and then from Myrtle Radcliffe, and later from a locally celebrated Miss Whittlesey, another English music teacher. I could tell you pages and pages about her and her influence on me. I studied with her about seven years, as I recall it, and then I went back when I was about 40 years old and took some more lessons from her. Ed took violin lessons & HKM cello lessons

Now let me go back to your letter. Jean has written you, as you requested. She came to the Clinic originally to help me with my writing. The Household Magazine, and later the Ladies Home Journal, had made contracts with me to write a monthly article and to answer letters from readers. At first I used to dictate these, but soon it was apparent that Jean could write a better letter than I did without any help from me.

This family orchestra was fine experience. Mother played piano, father the flute, & I played (?) the violin for a few years.

Now I come to the question about my father's philosphy of retirement. I can tell you that simply. He didn't believe in retiring. He never spoke of retiring. He never had any intention of retiring. He didn't like it at all when we put him on a kind of pension or sustaining salary which involved no obligatory services. Almost to the last day of his life he was planning what we would do when he got back, and what we should do about the rock garden, and collecting seeds to plant in the new land to the north, and so on, and so forth. You know they got him in a wheel chair and brought him over to inspect the new hospital just a few weeks before he died. He thought people should always look ahead not back & keep interested in life.

I am going to skip this question about my important medical experiences -- or perhaps I will condense it this way. I was a sickly child up until about the middle of my highschool period. I had miserable colds, (sore throats) stiff necks, sore joints, and especially running ears. I have a horrible memory of ear aches. Father took me to ever so many doctors to get them to do something with my deflected septum, and I don't remember how many little nasal operations and tonsil operations I had. I finally learned that there was nothing to do but put up with my recurrent ear aches and sore throats. About 1928 I finally had a tonsilectomy by a friend, Dr. George Litsinger, who had skillfully operated upon my children and in whom I had great confidence. I nearly died in (was quite sick from) that operation, I believe. At any rate, he sat up all night with me in the hospital with threatened edema of the glottis and hemorrhage. I survived it, however, and I never had a sore throat again, or practically never. My ears quit troubling me seriously about the same time, though I still have a little trouble about once a year. Nothing like the old days, though. My ears have never been very good, but they were so much better than my poor father's that I rarely mentioned it.

I could tell you some rather dramatic things about my medical experiences. I remember one that the doctors still talk about, but you could really get a better account of it from one of them if you really need it.

I took violently sick in the office with acute abdominal pain. I had had it before, and I was pretty sure it was some hysterical affliction, but they thought it was heart disease, carried me out of here on a stretcher and took me to the hospital in an ambulance. They gave me a lot of morphine to control the pain. When I woke up from that about supper time I felt all right. They had a consultation with an internist from New York and several from around here. They went on shaking their heads and making obscure diagnoses. I told them they I had been through it before and I knew it was hysterical or something, and that I would be all right and that I had to go to New York. They were positively flabbergasted, because I got up about 9:00 o'clock and caught the train to New York.

I went up to the Mayo Clinic about 1943 for a very careful study; I believe it was shortly after the above attack. They could find nothing except for one peculiar physiological thing which doctors would be interested in, but nobody else. The normal white blood cell count is around 7,000 per cubic millimeter. For a long time mine has been from 15,000 to 20,000. I had this study both in Rochester, Minnesota, and in New York City. Ordinarily anybody with that much count would be in a high fever. They concluded that I was just an anomoly. I guess they were right, because I have known it to be the case for 15 years, and I am still alive, and no better and no worse. I don't think the X-Rays any usefulness for the Booth.

Now a few words about this period when I was in college trying to make a decision as to what I would do for a life work. It has always been my blessing -- or my curse -- to be interested in too many different things. The whole world is so interesting. I honestly believe I would thoroughly enjoy being a musician, a mathemetician, an archeologist, a mammologist, a lawyer, and engineer, a chemist, a clergyman, a writer -- well, just so many things I can't list them all. To this day I don't know which of these I think is the most interesting, but I have always been very, very, very glad I choose

what I did, and I think I wrote you how I came to do that, in the dentist chair.

If you will recall, my father sent me to the University of Wisconsin after two years at Washburn, because he thought I ought to get down to education more seriously. I had a wonderful time in Washburn socially. And I learned a few things too, especially in chemistry. My father, as you know, was even more versatilely interested than I, and ~~just at the moment~~ at that time he seemed to feel that banking was something in which I would be interested. This was singularly bad judgment on my father's part. I am not in the least interested in hoarding, selling, or renting money. I think the game of making money is interesting, but there are so many ways of doing that, and any fool can do it. Nevertheless, I am glad my father insisted on my taking courses in economics, banking, accounting, and so forth. They have done me lots of good since then. However, it was obvious to me that that wasn't what I l liked best, and I kept playing along in chemistry, which I liked. I felt sure that given a little time and effort I could discover some new compounds (as plenty of people have since then). I was thinking a little bit of chemical engineering or research chemistry as a field. I was somewhat deterred from it by the type of man who seemed to be interested in it along with me. Don't quote me on this, because we don't want to throw any aspersions on the chemists, but frankly, they are a grubby lot; and frankly, ~~also, and confidentially,~~ I think it was healthy-minded of me to turn away from my preoccupation with it.

Why I didn't get more interested in English literature I don't know. I was interested, but there just wasn't any place in my schedule to take any of the courses, so I got a little advice from one of the English professors at Wisconsin and did some reading on my own. Then I took a course in business letter writing, which was probably the best single course I ever had in the school. I had a teacher who insisted that we learn to say precisely

what we intended to say in the clearest and most appealing way, with a moderate economy of words. Nobody had heard of semantics in those days, but he had something of that idea in his mind, and he insisted on our using words which were unambiguous. We wrote three or four (assigned) letters a day, and I loved it.

But about this time I was in the course of trying to pay part of my way at Wisconsin and put less of a drain on my parents. I learned that you could go out for preaching in these country churches, and I was told that it was a thrilling experience, as well as being an opportunity to earn $10 a Sunday, which was a lot of money in those days. I am not telling this right, and I am not going to make my poor secretary go back and rewrite it, but I should have prefaced this paragraph by saying that ~~the church in which~~ I had lost interest in the church because of the strong ~~anti-German~~, pro-war spirit in so many of the churches, especially in Topeka, Kansas. This interest had been revived somewhat by two of the ~~wonderful men~~ outstanding clergymen I had met in Madison -- Matthew Allison and George Hunt. Hunt was a wonderful preacher, definitely liberal in every respect; and Allison was a Bible scholar with a ~~wonderful~~ fine personality. To put it in an odd way, they were the first highly intelligent and highly educated people that I had ever met who were (also) religious people, except my mother and father. They had something intelligent to say about the Bible, which made sense to me. They explained, for example, why it couldn't possibly be literally true, why no one should expect it to be literally true, since it was written down by human beings from word of mouth communications based on long recollections, and then frequently recopied, and so on. Now no one had ever made this clear to me before. It is taught in all Biblical literature courses now, but in those days I don't think it was. You probably know that in those days to pay any attention to the so-called higher criticism that had arisen in Germany under Harnack and others was regarded as sinful, like listening to the very sensible but somewhat passionate diatribes of our Robert Ingersoll.

Well, anyway, these ministers got me about half convinced again that maybe the ~~old~~ whole business about religion was important. In the meantime, I had met some very fine college students who were student volunteers, and all in all, I got quite a bit interested in religion ~~at this time~~. If all that they said was true, anything but dedication to the religious life seemed to me to be like playing marbles. The real business at hand seemed to be ~~their~~ spreading ~~of~~ the gospel, and I thought the student volunteers were the only logical people. I enjoyed my association with them, but gradually I began to sense what I understand better today -- namely, a kind of withdrawal from the world of reality, a running off to distant lands, not because the challenge was greater, but because the ~~sense~~ feeling of rejection was less. (+ quiet assuagement, etc.)

I think I told you that this problem of rejection was a very important one for me, as I think it is in the life of every psychiatrist. My not being taken into that fraternity at Washburn, that I think I wrote you about, was certainly one of the greatest blows to my self-esteem that I ever received. It was also one of the most wonderful things that ever happened to me. I had been born with a silver spoon in my mouth (plated silver, at least) and things had always gone my way. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't be right at the top of the heap. To be voted on and rejected brought back the horrors of my early childhood when I had also felt rejected chiefly on physical grounds. My going away to Wisconsin was accepted by me chiefly, I think now, because of my ~~horror and misery from~~ heartache that experience. I realized then that I could later interpret as the way a Jew must feel ~~in this country,~~ or a Negro, or a psychiatric patient. What can be the matter with me that somebody doesn't want to associate with me? I really had no particular sense of sympathy or identification with them ~~sense of this then~~, however. I remember a nice fellow whose name was Mayer, or Menzes, who happened to sit next to me in a class at Wisconsin because of our last names. He was very articulate and sociable, and I liked him. We walked to and from classes frequently. I remember one of the students saying one day, "Don't you know that guy's a Jew?" "No," I said, "I hadn't noticed it. Is he?"

"Why certainly he is, can't you tell by his feet?" "No," I said. "I didn't know Jews had different feet." "Why certainly," he said, "different feet, different hands, different noses, and they smell funny." I said I hadn't smelled anything. "Well what's the matter with you, you damned Kansas farmer? Don't you know about Jews?" I said, "No, I don't know much about Jews." Abe Gordon was a fellow in my ~~class in~~ grade school, and we all liked him and they said he was a Jew and didn't go to Sunday school, but I hadn't given it much thought since then." "Well," said this fellow, "I don't see how you can bring yourself to associate with Jews, but everybody to his liking." It made quite an impression on me. I didn't know Jews were unpopular. I didn't given much thought to it, however, ~~and I had~~ joined up with the International Club, which was full of Chinese, South Americans, Germans, French, and so forth, because it was interesting. The war was going on about this time, and we had some excited discussions. My best friend was a Japanese boy, and he was quite religious too. He said Christianity had done more for Japan than anything. But some of the nicest fellows in the club were the Chinese. And I got to thinking quite a bit about going to China. But then I got to doing this preaching. (See above.) It wasn't very much of a task for me in the pulpit, although it was an exhausting ~~a terrific~~ experience getting to the towns and back. Once in the pulpit it was just like any other public speaking, and everybody was interested, appreciated it so much, that I had a grand time. It was then that Mr. Allison and Mr. Hunt urged me to consider going into the ministry. I think perhaps some people in this church said ~~something~~ nice things about me that they never related to me.

My mother was very practical, and I have big files of our correspondence back and forth at the time. I was somewhat surprised that she wasn't more enthusiastic about my going into the ministry. Her general position was, as I recall it, that the minister had to make too many compromises if he expects to make a living. This is a typical example of the way my mother was torn

between her idealism and her hard-earned sense of harsh economic realities. For a girl who had almost starved for two years of her life, and was now constantly trying to get the minister's salary raised $5 a month, and meeting with the stinginess and meanness of her fellow Christians in this regard, you can see why she felt that way. It wasn't that detail which deterred me, however, I saw a dozen ways in which I could make a living as a minister. I don't know all the things that deterred me. I think, furthermore, that I was not very much interested at that time in theology, or, strange as it may sound, in religion. I took religion for granted. I didn't examine very carefully all of its premises. I thought nearly everybody was religious. Then I got interested in scholarship, and realized with some surprise that religion didn't seem to be very necessary to most scholars and scientists, and for the next 30 years of my life I pretty much followed suit. (I mean, followed the scientists.)

I have already told you that while I was trying to decide either to be a chemist or a minister, my dentist asked me why I didn't study medicine and make my father happy and take advantage of his help. Why it had never occurred to me ~~so vividly~~ I don't know, but I decided it in five minutes and I have never wavered once, and I am very, very, very glad I did it. In recent years I have become extremely interested in psychiatry and religion, as a phenomenon and ~~as~~ an experience. But I am also interested in archeology and in history as I never used to be. So you see how ~~you~~ one changes.

Well, now, that is all of your letter. We will turn to the next letter, dated June 16, and addressed to Mr. Sheffel. He wants me to answer it. I don't know what he wrote you, but I don't really see what business it is of anyone exactly what salary my brother and I are paid. My honest opinion is that my brother and I ought to get about $50,000 a year, judging by what salaries are paid other administrators in our position. I mean that if I was going to buy my brother Will's services, I would offer him $50,000 and think

I was getting him at a bargain. Why not? He brings in ten times that much to the Foundation -- 15 times that much. But on the other hand, I think that if my brother and I drew salaries like that, even if it were not known, it would do something to us. It would hurt our spirits some way. It would make us feel uncomfortable working with fellow doctors and fellow employees for whom that much would look like a fortune. We have a lot of $25,000 doctors around here who are actually getting $15,000 and less. True, they have their wholelives before them and they can capitalize on the experience here and make a year in $100,000 private practice. But the point is that they aren't doing that now. And besides, what would I do with the damned money? I've got everything I want. I travel all I want to -- in fact, somewhat more. I am not being silly or eccentric, but honest to goodness, I don't know what I would do if I had more, except give it away. I probably give away what you would think is too much money now. It doesn't amount to much, but I like to give $10 or $15 or $25 to a lot of different things and feel that I am in on something somewhere in. I even give a little to the old Foundation. Now don't list this in the book. I don't want your to list my benevolences. But on the other hand, I don't want your to list my salary for what it is, because people won't know how it is spent and it looks wrong. The girls around here who check my accounts know what I do with it, and know I am broke most of the time, and it is not because I am a bad handler of money, either. I have an ex-wife to support, for example, and I have had a son to put through medical school -- but so have a lot of other people, for heaven sake. So let's not get into my personal income, if you can possibly stay out of the subject.

Now this next question, about all the stockholders of the original Sanitarium, whom father and I spent painful hours persuading to invest in our stock company. Most of them turned their stock in as a contribution, but some held out for every penny. I can't remember these names either, but I don't

believe I would try to list them if I were you.

Itthink you have the figure wrong about our net holdings. My impression has always been that Will and I had about $125,000 each of equity which we turned over. I thought we had about a half a million between us. Father's share in this was relatively small. Actually, my brother's was considerably less than mine, too, because you see I was earning more than either one of them, and was in a better position to turn money back in for stock purchase. I think the less you say about this the better, because the three of us all understood that what we were doing we were doing together. We tried to arrange our salaries so that each of us had what he needed for his family. We never drew very large sums. As I remember vaguely, my father got about $8,000 a year, my brother $10,000 and me $12,000. If anything, that over-states it as it was for quite a few years. John Stone got about $6,000 and Mildred Law, I think, even a little less. Of course that was more in those days than it sounds like today, too.

I hope you will go awfully easy on this financial business.

There is a lot of biographical data about me in some of these books on biography of Western men of letters, and biography of Western medicine, and so forth. You can find them in any library, and then of course we have vast quantities of historical material of all of us here in our historical department operated by Mrs. Morrison. You have seen some of it, but not all of it.

Well, now we come to your letter of July 1, addressed to me In regard to your friend Mills, have him get in touch with us, and if he happens to come be sure to write to me, and if we can work it in we will have him lecture here. I am very glad to know that the first 200 pages about father are particularly vivid. How well I can remember him getting out early in the morning with his horse and buggy and driving off.

We would see him next at noon, or in the evening, tieing up at the hitching post in front of the house and coming in with his wonderful cheerriness. You are quite right that father and mother made a wonderful team. He could be certain that dinner was ready and that it would be good. She cooked what he liked, but for that matter, he liked, everything. My mother was a very extraordinary woman. She had enormous energy, and worked terrifically hard, and she never let any task or responsibility go undone. What she said he would do or what she was expected to do, she did. In addition, she would do some things she hadn't promised to do. She was always giving us little surprises and pleasures, and it was after she got everything else done that she would sit herself down to her Bible study and work at it until two or three in the morning. My father had prodigious admiration for her, and well he should, for without her careful savings he would never have had the cash available to send us to medical school. He took many a beating from her tongue -- well, not so many from her tongue as from her anxiety and her depression. But he provoked some of it, No doubt, because he always assumed that everything was going to be all right, and my mother knew damned well from experience that things weren't so certain to be absolutely all right. They were both idealistic, and they respected and admired each other for this and shared most idealism My mother was a sensitive person and she could perceive how people felt Curiously enough, my father wasn't very sensitive He didn't easily get his feelings hurt, and he didn't assume that other people did. And they usually didn't, with him. My mother was always hurting somebody's feelings unintentionally by her candor, sincerity, and directness, and sometime her bad taste. Then she would go into a terrific depression at the results of her blunder. She knew exactly how it had seemed to the other person. She could sense how they were feeling, and she was a darned good Menschenkenner. ~~Quick, my father was but~~ He thought everybody was fine at first. He would give them the benefit of the doubt. My mother would look them over

with a critical eye. In the last analysis they generally agreed about people. My mother's first impressions were sometimes wrong, and of course my father's first impressions were sometimes right. I'll give you an example that often comes to my mind. I wanted so much for my father to like me as much as he did Edwin, I guess. He didn't intend to show partiality, but Edwin was just a lot more charming, that's all there was to it. I remember one day mother had sent me to the corner grocery store 2½ blocks away to get some bread for lunch. As I was walking back with the bread under my arm I saw father in his buggy driving down the street going home. He was snapping the lines on the horses'tbahurry it along, and he was no doubt preoccupied with some medical problem. Well, I wanted to ride with him. Not that I couldn't walk, but it was so much fun to ride with papa. So I called ~~his name,~~ to him and ran toward the buggy. Poor fellow, with his deaf ears and the noise of the horse trotting, he couldn't hear me. Of course Nevertheless, I ran after him, screaming his name and trying to catch up. Well, I didn't. He got into the house just a few minutes before I arrived there, and I remember how I burst into the house, sweating, crying, angry and frustrated about I didn't know what, which I choose to interpret as his unwillingness to pick me up in the buggy, which was the last thing in the world that he would not have done I didn't give him a chance. I said, "You are a mean, cruel, hateful father and I don't like you," and so forth. I don't remember what all I said. Now if my father had been at all intuitive he would have tried to find out what was really the matter. But I had been offensive, and that called for a certain penalty, and I can still remember him heaving a sigh of regret and going to get a hairbrush and paddling me with no pleasure to anybody out of it. Poor fellow, he didn't understand the situation at all. Similarly, I don't think he really ever understood fully my mother's internal tensions. He used to ascribe them to her Mennonite bringing up, to her childhood fear of poverty, etc. There was a whole lot more to it than that.

I have really got to go, because it is way past supper time. I will just add two minor points. Do you really think you could get some more valuable material here? Why don't you make an estimate of your expense in the matter and see if we can't get a loan which you could charge against the cost of the book and pay back from the royalties later.

Secondly, I wish you would give me a little more information about this Weimart Historical and Genealogical Pocketbook concerning orignal Jewish ancestry. I certainly don't want it mentioned in the book. I am not ashamed of it, but it would lead to a lot of misunderstanding, and it might cause a lot of trouble to our present German relatives.

I am making the following memorandum, to write to you about Ft. Lyons and my naval career, something about Southard School and sending you the Gay book, and a lot about John Stone.

Sincerely,

KM:s

Karl Menninger, M.D.

P.S. The questions; you ask relating to these experiences of mine, I hope you will get the corresponding data about Will's decision to study medicine, and so forth, from him. I went away to Wisconsin in 1912 when he was just 13 years old. I can remember he had a great admiration for me at that time, and especially for my first wife. My brother Edwin had just been injured, and my memory of this period is a mixture of reactions to his accident and my own change in schools. I don't remember much about Will in the next ten years.

I remember telling my father once that he shouldn't let my brother Will suffer with the indecision I had about what profession to go into, but to urge upon him the desirability of studying medicine. I remember that I urged it. Will has always been a great fellow to make up his own mind, but

I know that our confidence in the satisfactions of studying medicine had some influence with him.

When he came back to Topeka he was very interested in and proficient in internal medicine, and I thought for a time he was going in that direction; but he became more and more interested in our psychiatric material, and as you know, for many years was the mainstay of our hospital, organizing the programs of nursing education, clinical practices, and so forth. As you have often heard, he was a great asset to the Clinic even in the early days, because he was not only an excellent doctor, but he was always so charming, and people liked him so much and had so much confidence in him that they began to have some confidence in psychiatry. I used to startle people, and even shock them, with the dramatic aspects of psychiatry; Will has always been a calmer person, less apt to make himself conspicuous, less given to the sensational. He inspires confidence in people, which I often don't. So with his backing in the early days we made a little progress as a team.

Now I think it is very appropriate and fortunate that he is our top man. His great success in the army was due not only to his good ideas and his gift for organization, but to the personal confidence that he was able to get from so many important people, whom I would have antagonized or frightened. He continues to be completely respected by many people as a really level-headed minded psychiatrist.

July 8, 1954

Walker Winslow
Huntington Hartford Foundation
2000 Rustic Canyon Road
Pacific Palisades, California

Dear Harold:

Under separate cover is a booklet that I did about John Stone, and a copy of the biographical sheet from the old professional roster of the Foundation. Lillabelle Stahl -- now Dr. Karl's secretary at The Menninger Foundation -- tells me that Dr. Karl is making notes to write to you about John within a very few days. This will be Dr. Karl's personal memories of John Stone.

Pearl says that she will write to you right away. She apparently did not realize that you wanted a reply from her so promptly. She proposes to write her information, not put it on a recorder. Incidentally, she provided the originals for the pictures we had copied and sent to you. She just didn't know you are in a hurry, and we have been having some terrifically hot weather here.

Miss Law will sit with me tomorrow, and see what we can get on a recorder. We propose to put this interview on recorders, using a Soundscriber. These records are little disks that can be sent through the mail and played on the 33⅓ speed on any three speed record player. Will this be satisfactory?

I went to Topeka High School, and to Washburn University, same time, same crowd, with John Stone. We both were in classes taught by Dr. Karl. My memories of John Stone go back that far, but have a large gap--some 20 years--which were the years in which John Stone became the important person he was at the Foundation.

I have learned more about one of the pictures sent on to you without identification. Do you have the photograph of many bouquets of flowers? This was a showing of peonies from the C. F. Menninger Peony Farm, shown in the Buick Agency in Topeka about 1930. I believe that Flo Menninger mentions the family interest in peonies in DAYS OF MY LIFE.

Let me know whether or not you can use the Soundscriber recordings. If not, I suspect we could have them transcribed for you, but that would necessarily take time.

Best wishes,

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Helen Morrison

sw

July 9, 1954

This is Mildred Law speaking, I am trying to recall some of the happenings at the Menninger Clinic, beginning with the time I joined the group in July of 1921. The Clinic at that time consisted of Dr. Karl Menninger and his father, Dr. C. F. Menninger. The offices were located in the Mulvane Building at the corner of 6th and Kansas Avenue. We were on the top floor in four rooms there. There was a medical secretary, Mary Sholand and a colored woman named Johnson who Dr. C. F. had taught to do certain laboratory procedures. Dr. C. F. had given Mamie medical attention for which she could not pay and she insisted upon working in the office to pay off the bill. Mamie was not a graduate technician and Dr. Karl and his father had felt that their clinic needed someone who had had formal training in medical laboratory work. However, they did not feel that Mamie's long and loyal association with Dr. C. F. could be terminated and it was a difficult period of adjustment for quite a while for Mamie to accept someone coming in who was supposed to know more than she did about the work she had been carrying on so faithfully for Dr. C. F.

Dr. C. F. had been in general practice of course in Topeka but had had special interest in the endocrine disorders, particularly diabetes. Shortly before 1921, the chemical determination of blood sugar for the detection and control of diabetes had been introduced somewhat generally and Dr. C. F. had a large volume of patients, diabetic patients, that we worked with. I can remember having 4 or 5 small children in the hospital with diabetes at one time and it was my job to take blood sugars from all the diabetics as frequently as necessary, often daily, until Dr. C. F. was able to prescribe a diet that would control their diabetic condition.

I remember in the early days of hearing that Dr. C. F. was the first doctor in Topeka to have a microscope in his office and attempt to do any actual laboratory investigation of his patients' difficulties. That of course

was some years before I joined the group. I also recall that the discovery of insulin occurred in the early 1920's, I think about 1922 or 1923, and Dr. C. F. was the first doctor in Kansas to be permitted the use of insulin for his diabetic patients, prior to the time it was on the general market for use of any doctors who wished to prescribe it.

The laboratory at the time I went there was a fairly large sized closet, actually, with many shelves on which were rows upon rows of bottles of various stains in the powdered form which Dr. C. F. had imported from Germany and so forth. Many of these had been on the shelves for many years and were not in actual use because of newer stains and developments in this country, which had replaced these. Dr. Karl, I am sure, recognized that there were many items on the shelves in the laboratory that were not presently in use and would urge me to "clean up the place." So, every few months I would try rearranging the things on the shelves and eliminate some of the bottles of stains, being careful not to destroy them immediately because, after each clean up period within a few weeks, I would find Dr. C. F. in the laboratory, whistling a low tune of some sort and I knew very well then that he was looking for some of his special imported stains which, even though they were not in use still carried great importance to him. Then I would frequently have to bring back to life some particular stain and put it back on the shelf until the next clean up period. This indicated to me, Dr. C. F.'s long scientific interest and wide investigation of what others were doing in far lands, even and efforts to identify germs or various kinds of blood stains, etc., that would shed some light on the illnesses of his patients. As I recall, we were constantly buying new pieces of laboratory and investigatory equipment. We did basal metabolisms and for the investigation of thyroid function and as new pieces of equipment came out for testing BMR's we were generally in the market for a new one every few years. Within a year or so after I joined the clinic we purchased an X-ray so

that we could more quickly have pictures and reports on the X-rays for the doctor.

Dr. C. F. always had quite a number of patients in the hospital and of course made his hospital calls in the early morning, but office calls were scheduled during the entire afternoon. It soon became evident that more space was needed for our offices. I can never recall a time when actually we would seem to have enough space. In about 1922 or '23, it was arranged to partition off the part of the corridor of the building, between offices on both sides and the corridor then served as the waiting room. It was about in 1923 that Dr. Karl Menninger felt the need for a person to do psychological tests and it was along in there that John Stone joined the group as psychologist. At the time the Clinic had their offices down town, Dr. C. F.'s interest continued in the line of general medicine with emphasis on endocrine disorders but at the same time, was interested in the psychological effects of patients' illnesses, etc. Dr. Karl having joined his father in the specialty of neurology and psychiatry, was seeing a great many patients with neurological illnesses as well as psychiatric illnesses. During the period 1921 to 1925, the patients of the Menninger Clinic were taken care of in the Christ's Hospital, a general hospital, one wing of which was of 8, 10 or 14 beds, I don't remember exactly, was devoted to care of psychiatric patients. The Menninger Clinic then employed a hydrotherapist and a nurse, I believe, who they maintained at the hospital to handle and supervise the care of the psychiatric and neurological patients. Dr. C.F.'s many diabetic patients and patients with other types of illnesses were scattered throughout the hospital. Those several years ran along pretty much one year fairly similar to the other, as a very active, general medical man's practice usually is in a town where he has been long established and held in high esteem. As an example of the high esteem I might mention a little incident that occured in 1949. I happened to be in an antique

shop on Second Avenue in New York City endeavoring to dispose of a couple of French candlesticks. The young man in the shop said that he was not authorized to pay me what the candlesticks were worth, but if I could give him my home address, he would give me a receipt for the candlesticks and could then advise me what the owners would pay for them. I then identified myself as coming from Topeka, Kansas and may have given The Menninger Foundation as my Topeka address. Then this young men, I would judge in his early 30's, said in very warm tones that he had been born in Topeka and that Dr. C. F. Menninger was the doctor in attendance at his birth and had taken care of the family for many years and he was very interested in hearing more about Dr. C. F, and so forth. That struck me as an indication of the warm regard Dr. C. F.'s patients and their families had for him and could only have been due to his warm attitude with his patients, it seemed to me.

Going back now to the years 1921 to 1925, I might recall an incident or two that might be useful. Dr. and Mrs. C. F. Menninger were very staunch, loyal church members and one of the duties that--I don't know that you would call it a duty--one of the things I used to be called upon to do the day before Christmas was to drive Mrs. C. F. Menninger around town so that she could distribute many Christmas baskets to needy families. I think this was an individual undertaking and not associated with any organized charity, through the church, I am not quite clear about that, but that was my impression.

At the time I joined the clinic, Dr. C. F. was well established in his hobby of peony and iris growing and I recall how astounded I was to learn that he had as many as 200 varities of peonies. He then maintained a garden plot at 17th and Plass of about 4 lots and I am sure spent quite a little time there though I am not clear about how much. As I recall it was on part of this land that Dr. Karl built his home in Topeka. That was after Dr. C. F. had purchased some 7 acres, I believe, of property north of Topeka, where he could expand his

peony and iris and other flowers. This was the home known as Oakwood. I don't remember exactly when he moved out to Oakwood but I do remember visiting there very often. It was indeed a glorious sight to see acres of peonies inbloom, all of them specimen flowers.

These following comments may not be appropriate for use or inclusion in a book, but I often observed that when I would drop in to see the flowers that Dr. C. F. would laden me down with armloads of flowers if Mrs. C. F. Menninger was not about to see him do so. After reading Mrs. C. F. Menninger's book "Days of My Life" and understanding her early childhood of deprivation and the necessityof making every undertaking a paying one, I then understood that the reason why it pained Mrs. C. F. to see flowers given away, because part of the project of raising the peonies was that the many hundred of dozens of peonies were cut at the proper moment of development and put in cold storage so that they could be sold through the local department stores and various places for Memorial Day flowers. These usually sold at 50¢ a dozen as I recall and certainly the labor of cutting them, wrapping them, storing them was considerable. I have no way of knowing whether sales of hundreds of dozens of these flowers helped pay for the care of them, because of course at Oakwood they had a man employed full time, maintained a horse or two to pull the plows and what not, to do the work on the 7 acres. But I feel certain that Mrs. C. F. had to feel that this undertaking was a economically self-sustaining if not profitable one. However, she, too enjoyed the beauty of the flowers and Doctor C. F. of course revelled in the beauty that he himself and his friends got from his gardens and he was most generous in giving slips of plants to friends and encouraging others to do gardening.

In 1925 I left the office on a three months leave, having been diagnosed to have TB, but instead of being gone 3 months I was gone 5 years. It was during this period that Dr. Will Menninger joined the group. I might mention

that in1923, Dr. Will was still in medical school and I wanted to take a 3 months leave of absence to make a trip to Europe and Dr. Will then came during the summer and took my job as laboratory technician while I took the leave of absence. I am not sure that Dr. Will had made up his mind that he was going to return to Topeka at that particular time and I think Dr. C. F. and Dr. Karl were pleased to have him have a few months experiencein the clinic during his years of medical school, though I can't say that I ever heard them voice this.

During those early years, staff conferences about patients were in their beginning stages;along with doing laboratory work, I frequently took the initial histories on patients, prior to the doctors seeing the patients. I don't know that that is important but it didsimpress me that both Dr. C. F. and Dr. Karl made use of ancillary help, that is, getting the impression of the patient from the nurse inthe office, myself or others who might have the initial contacts which might bring out some attitudes that the patient might not show in formal interview with the doctor.

On the day that I left Topeka to go to the TB sanatorium, Dr. Karl and Dr. C. F. took me to the train and carried with them the incorporation papers for the Menninger Sanitarium, which corporation then purchased the site on West 6th Street, where the Menninger Foundation is now located. The farmhouse that was on this site then became a residence for patients, with the offices still maintained downtown. Two years later, in 1927, the first lodge for patients was built on this site and patients then were taken out of the frame farm house and this became offices and the offices in the downtown location were abandoned and the doctors' offices came out here. That move was a fairly revolutionary one from the standpoint of the general notion in Topekathat all the doctors had their offices down town.

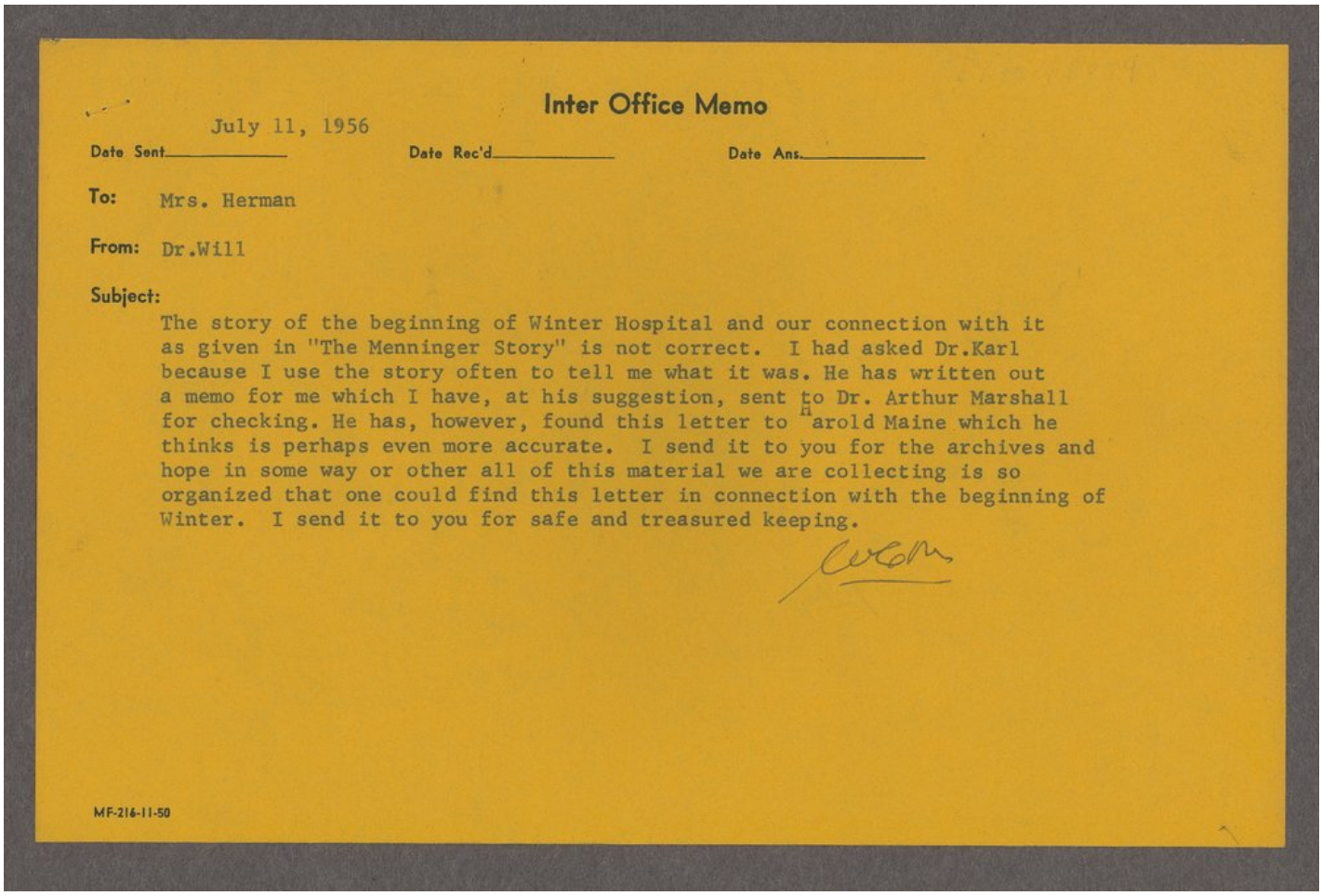
From the first inception of the clinic, with a few offices downtown, on through

the many years, the group has been expanding and scarcely has there been a time when there was not a pressing need for additional space or additional space for patients, etc. The barn that was on the original site that was bought was converted into a recreation center for the patients. The old garage has been through many transformations. At one time it was used for a cottage for disturbed patients, later it was used for hydrotherapy, again it was a storage area. It was used for occupational therapy, it was used to house resident physicians. As many as 8 to 13 doctors had headquarters in this small double garage, with many cubby hole partitions. It was merely a place to do their dictating and to take telephone calls. They had to interview the patients in the patients rooms or on the grounds or in offices reserved on a rotation basis in the old farmhouse which has so many years now been called the Menninger Clinic Building. Even though the overall name of the Menninger organizations has been The Menninger Foundation for some years for the strictly clinical aspects of adult psychiatry, the name Menninger Clinic is still used.

I don't know what more I can say of a personal nature about Dr. C. F. I might mention that he always dressed in a very up-to-date, meticulous, professional manner. He bought "the best" that the store had and I feel that he did not always divulge at home what he may have paid for his clothes. I recall being very astonished one time when a hat was delivered to the office with a bill on top of the package. It was a very up-to-date beaver hat, which Dr. C. F. wore at a somewhat tilted angle and looked very dapper indeed. I think this may somewhat indicate that Dr. C. F. felt that money was something to be used for the things that were of value to him. He like to present a good appearance, took pride in the way he looked, just as he liked to have up to date equipment in his office, regardless of expense, sometimes, I think. Dr. C. F. was active medically for a good many years after I returned to the

office in 1930. As a matter of organization in the early 30's, Dr. C. F. did most of the physical and neurological examinations on practically all patients. I can remember the time when ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ he was becoming more and more hard of hearing and his sons felt he should no longer drive a car for that reason, so that the man who helped about the place, would drive him to the office and pick him up. This being restricted in driving the car was depressing to him, I am sure, whereas some people might have felt they had come up in the world to have a chauffeur, but he did not take that attitude about it. During all the years of his association at Christ's hospital, he taught nurses' classes and continued to do so for many, many years after the offices were moved out on West 6th. In fact, as he became less active in actual carrying on house calls, etc., he continued his teaching and you doubtless know, he had detailed notes on all these matters. Just as he had very well organized courses of instruction in mineralogy and conchology that he taught to the patients here at the Sanitarium. I don't know exactly when that started, but quite a number of years ago and was a very interesting project for him until the very last year of his life.

That is about as much as I can think of off hand and I am not at all sure that any of this may be helpful to you. I suppose you have in your records the fact that he started the Arbor Day program of planting trees on the Foundation grounds and many of our beautiful tall trees now were those that Dr. C. F. planted each year there being a ceremony. This last year it was continued after his death, when the patients selected a black English Oak which was planted quite close to the entrance to the new Charles Frederick Menninger Memorial Hospital as a tribute of their fondness and affection for Dr. C. F. Patients were moved into the new Hospital on June 29, 1954. I guess this is 30, and hope it is helpful to you.



Inter Office Memo

July 11, 1956

Date Sent_____ Date Rec'd_____ Date Ans._____

To: Mrs. Herman

From: Dr.Will

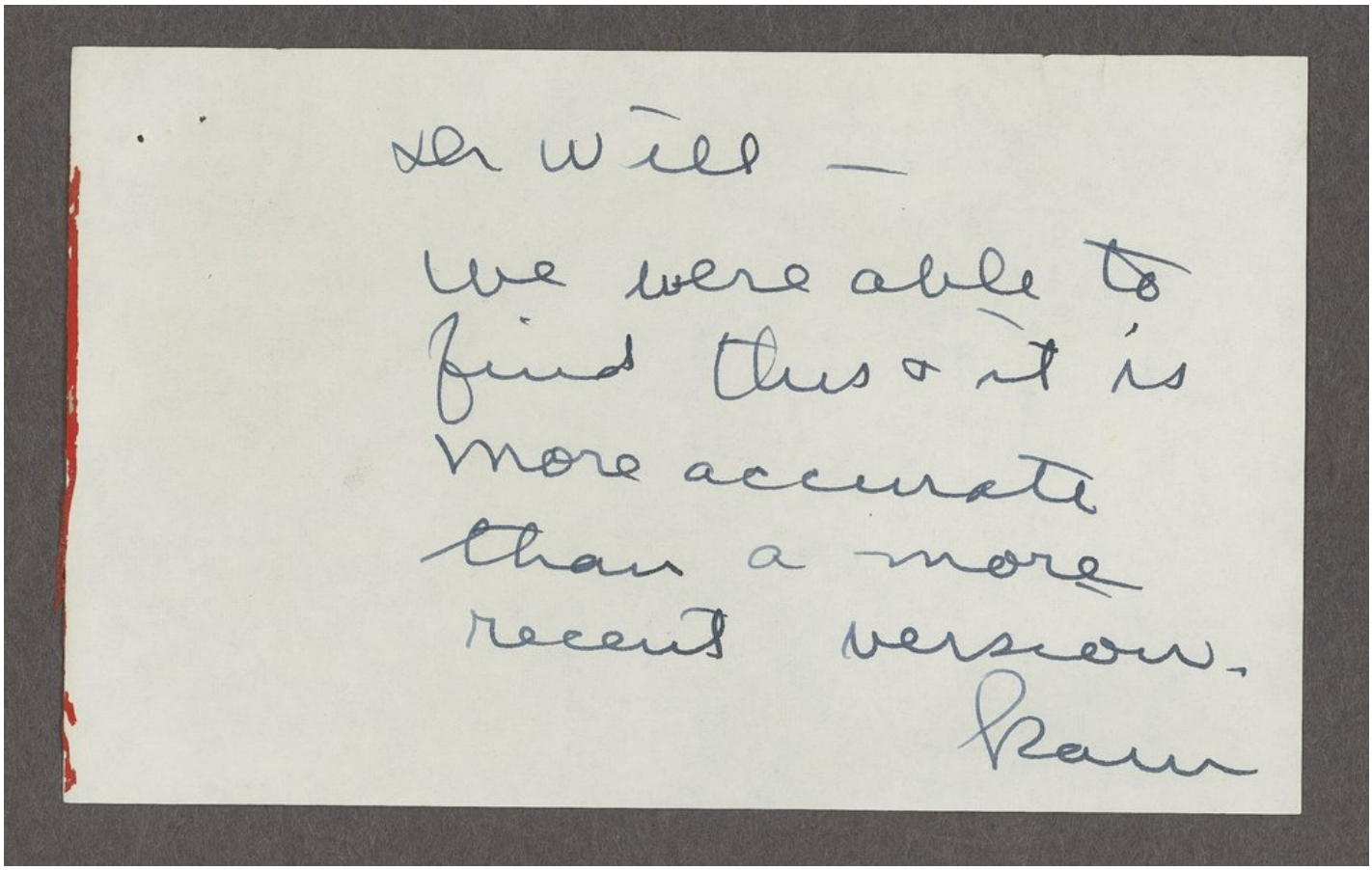
Subject:

The story of the beginning of Winter Hospital and our connection with it as given in "The Menninger Story" is not correct. I had asked Dr.Karl because I use the story often to tell me what it was. He has written out a memo for me which I have, at his suggestion, sent to Dr. Arthur Marshall for checking. He has, however, found this letter to Harold Maine which he thinks is perhaps even more accurate. I send it to you for the archives and hope in some way or other all of this material we are collecting is so organized that one could find this letter in connection with the beginning of Winter. I send it to you for safe and treasured keeping.

WWM

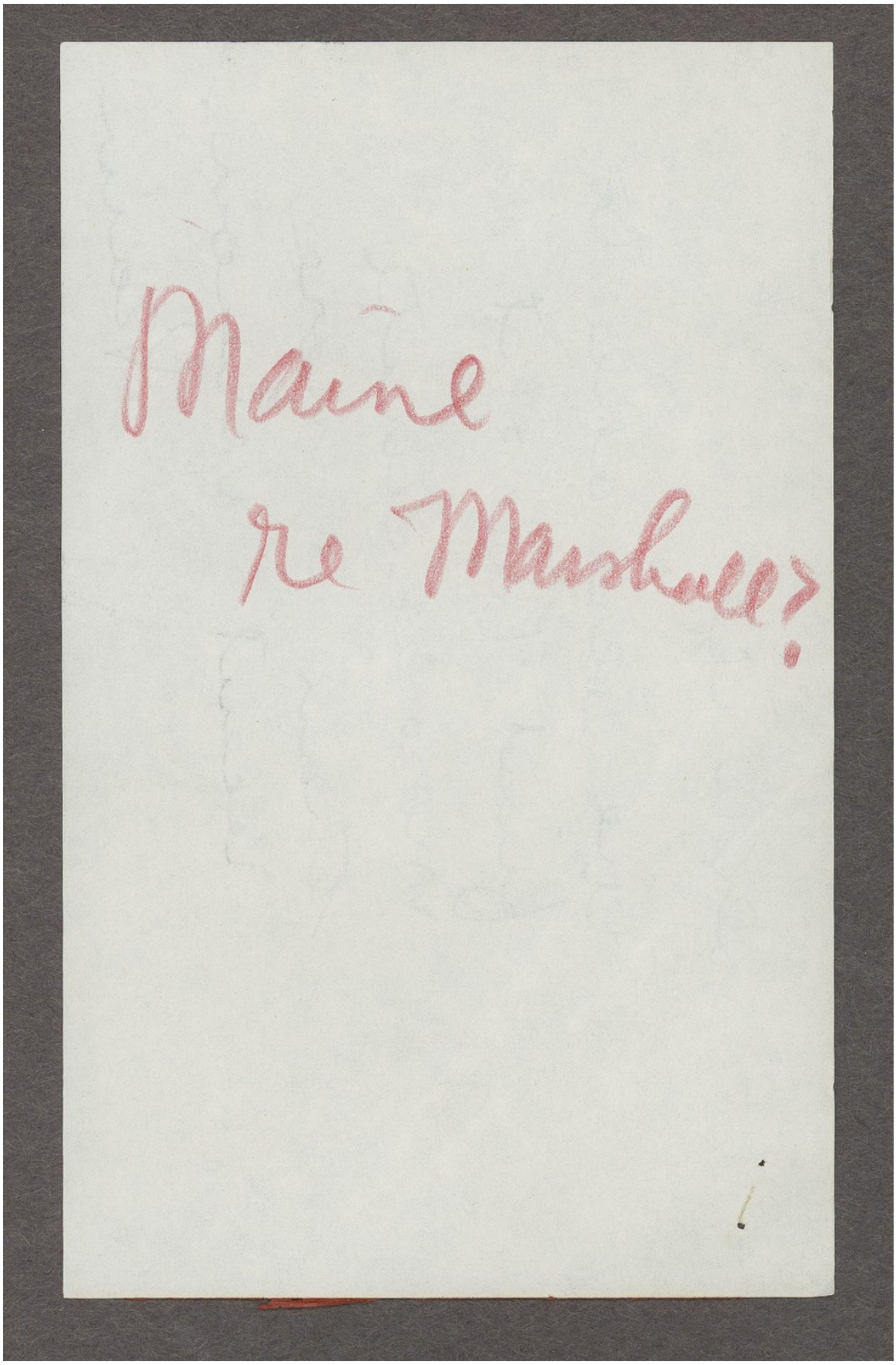
MF-216-11-50

Walker Winslow correspondence


Dear Will —

We were able to find this & it is more accurate than a more recent version.

Pam


Maine
re Marshall?

June 29, 1953

Mr. Harold Maine
c/o James Mott, M. D.
124 South Lasky Drive
Beverly Hills, California

Dear Harold:

I was very glad indeed to have your letter of June 24. I have been wondering what had become of you. I have been inquiring around to some extent, because my father has been failing rather rapidly of late and I was saddened to think that he might leave us without seeing what both you and he have spent so much time and effort in preparing. So I am glad to hear that you are still at it, and that there is some prospect of its appearing within the not too distant future. I earnestly hope that it will be done before next December.

Now let me comment on your idea of introducing the book through your own impressions at the time you first visited. I think your paragraph about institutional psychiatry in America having reached a low ebb and this perhaps being a feature of the turning point, is a good one. I think it is a good opening because it starts very personally with the impressions you had and serves to give the reader an idea of why you were concerned with writing the book. In fact, it was this conviction of yours to present a national problem and to rejoice at the beginning of its solution that made me think you might be the one to do the writing, just because you had that perspective. (I think I have too many becauses in that sentence, but it is all right -- you get the idea).

Next, let me commend you for your selection of Doctor Mott and your resolution to do some work with him. I know he can help you.

Now, I move on to the next paragraph asking me to tell you a little more about Doctor Marshall's visit. I remember it very well. Lt. Col. Marshall was introduced and told me of General Hawleys having come into the V. A. planning to establish a nationwide training program in the V. A. hospitals. He said he had investigated various places around this part of the country and that Dr. Hawley, who had known me in Europe, wanted him to drop in to see me to learn if we would help by giving a course in a nearby hospital. I got to telling him of my volunteer work at the Army's Winter General Hospital and how much I would like to see that institution used for teaching, and I told him a little of how I had been teaching out there each afternoon, of what I was doing out there. Just between you and me, I think he came to sell me on the idea of doing

a little work for the V. A. in an advisory capacity, and I quickly sold him on the idea of our doing a lot of teaching for the V. A. I painted a picture to him of how we could have a big training program in psychiatry right in that hospital if the V. A. would let us do it right and give us the funds. He caught on very quickly, I must say that. It seems to me there had already been a little talk of the V. A. using the hospital, but it was very vague, and both he and I developed the idea right here in my office that the V. A. would save money to tak over this hospital just as it was and could then make use of our staff as teachers. It wasn't long after that that Hawley sent for me to come to Washington, and after waiting more or less all day I got about five minutes with him. He seemed to take it for granted that everything was settled. "Go ahead and develop us a fine training program," he said. "Make us a real hospital." I got sick about that time and was sick when Dan Blain came out here to look over the situation and talked to our Governors about it, but I remember afterward that I phoned him we had talked it over and would try to do it and would take fifty residents, and he pleaded with me on the telephone and said "Stick out your neck for us, Karl, and take a hundred." I said, "All right, if you will back us up" and he said "I will." He can tell you some more details about it, but I think he gets a little confused because I was in this thing before he was. They were going to appoint a different psychiatric director and several of us protested, and then they got Dan Blain.

This didn't happen too fast, you know. You asked me what others thought of it. I don't think Will was here at that time. He was still in Washington with the Army. I talked to Father about it and he was for it of course. He thought it was grand. But Bob Knight, who was the Chief of Staff and had been carrying on while I was in Europe, Dave Rapaport, who was one of the moving spirits around here and was strong for education, both thought it was much too big a job. They warned me it was a mistake to get into it. It is true that we were very hard pressed at the time even for enough doctors to do our clinical work and these men simply couldn't visualize our doing all the teaching required by a hundred residents. They were right of course, and it meant an enormous sacrifice for the Clinic for me to move out there lock, stock and barrel for fourteen hours a day and spend no time at the Clinic.

You say you want a rough sketch of what had happened during the war years that prepared us for it. I think the most important thing that happened was the realization I got from my trip to Europe of how much demand there was for training in psychiatry, and the realization my brother got from his experience in the Army of how much need there was for trained psychiatrists. We both realized that we didn't have enough faculty, but we had more than any other place and I was convinced from the beginning that we would attract faculty and train faculty.

Those early months at Winter Hospital were some of the most exciting days of my life. I couldn't go to sleep at night I was so busy thinking of plans to carry out the next day. As you know, I gave up my lovely little home in the country and moved into town to be near the hospital. I thought about it day and night. I just loved to go to work

in the mornings because there were so many interesting things to do. I can remember this period very well, and I can tell you more about it if you want me to. Right now perhaps I have given you enough for the present to get you started. Oh, yes, an incident occurs to me in those early days as manager. One of the first things I did was to order $90,000 worth of Dictaphones. I think it was one of the biggest orders the company had ever had from a single office, and it certainly startled the V. A. people. The Edison company was pretty mad and wanted me to try out their machine. Les Roach was in the V. A. at the time and he can tell you a little of the furor. They were perfectly astonished at the request but they granted it and I got them. I said there had to be good clinical records in all parts of the hospital and if they didn't want to waste money on private secretaries for all of the doctors they would have to get us some dictaphones.

I can remember lots of other amusing things which I can tell you about if you want me to. I telephoned Washington almost daily, which was an unheard of thing in the Veterans Administration. As I recall it, I put in 15 or 20 long distance calls a day to all parts of the country asking doctors and friends of mine if they didn't want to come and help with the program.

There was one rather remarkable woman in the Adjunctive Therapy Department, Miss Edna Vehlow. I think you know what soldiers in the Army call a "scrounger". She was just a wonderful scrounger. What she would do would be to have me send her to various Army hospitals that were breaking up and earmark some of the supplies to be transferred to our hospital. This was a mere paper transaction for the Army, providing the Veterans Administration would accept the material, and she went down as my representative and accepted the material. I am sure she got over a million dollars worth of supplies in this way. I remember once she got a whole carload of teak wood which we wanted for our craft shops. I don't know what we ever did with it. The only thing the V. A. ever stopped me on was once when I was offered an old steam locomotive and about half a mile of track. It had been used as a switch engine at one of the Army posts, and I wanted to use it as a training engine to teach engineers and firemen for the railroads. I said we could put down a line of track and run the engine back and forth on it. Well, this was a little too much for the Central Office of the Veterans Administration, although I still think I was right and they were wrong, but I didn't get my engine. To tell the truth, I wanted to ride in the cab myself, and always have wanted to do that.

I am running on too long. I leave in a couple of weeks for Europe to be gone six weeks, so if there is anything you have to know right away, let me know.

Sincerely yours,

KM/dfs

Karl Menninger, M. D.