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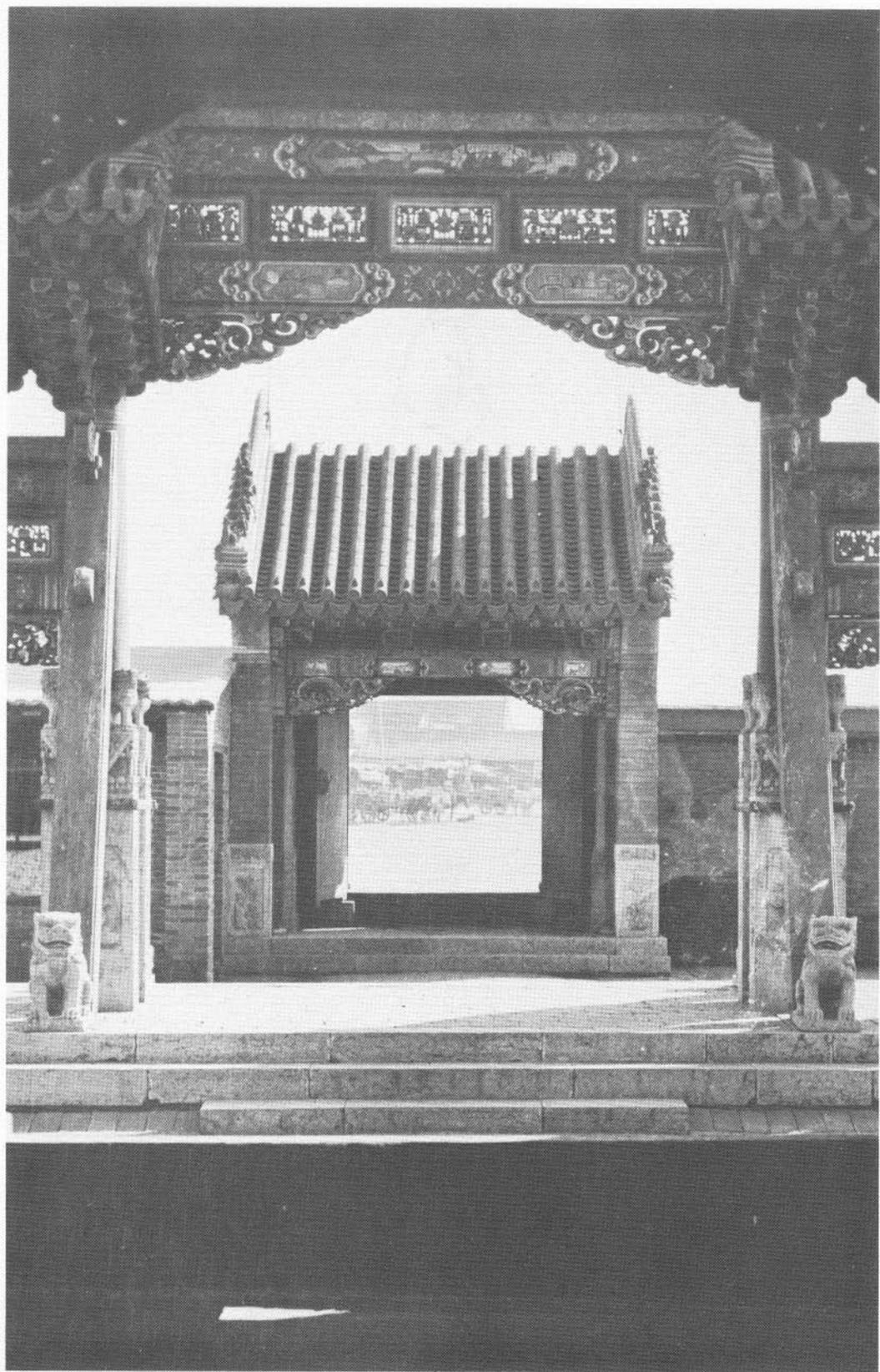
*The
Willard
Straight
Papers*

AT CORNELL
UNIVERSITY

GUIDE TO A
MICROFILM
EDITION

THE WILLARD STRAIGHT PAPERS
AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY





The
*Willard Straight
Papers*
at Cornell University

1857-1925

Guide to a Microfilm Edition

Patricia H. Gaffney, *Editor*

Department of Manuscripts and University Archives

John M. Olin Library

Ithaca, New York

1974

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Cover: *Willard Straight's Chinese visiting card.*

Frontispiece: *The American consulate general in Mukden.*

Drawings on the half title page and on page 31 are from Willard Straight's Chinese sketchbooks.

Acknowledgments

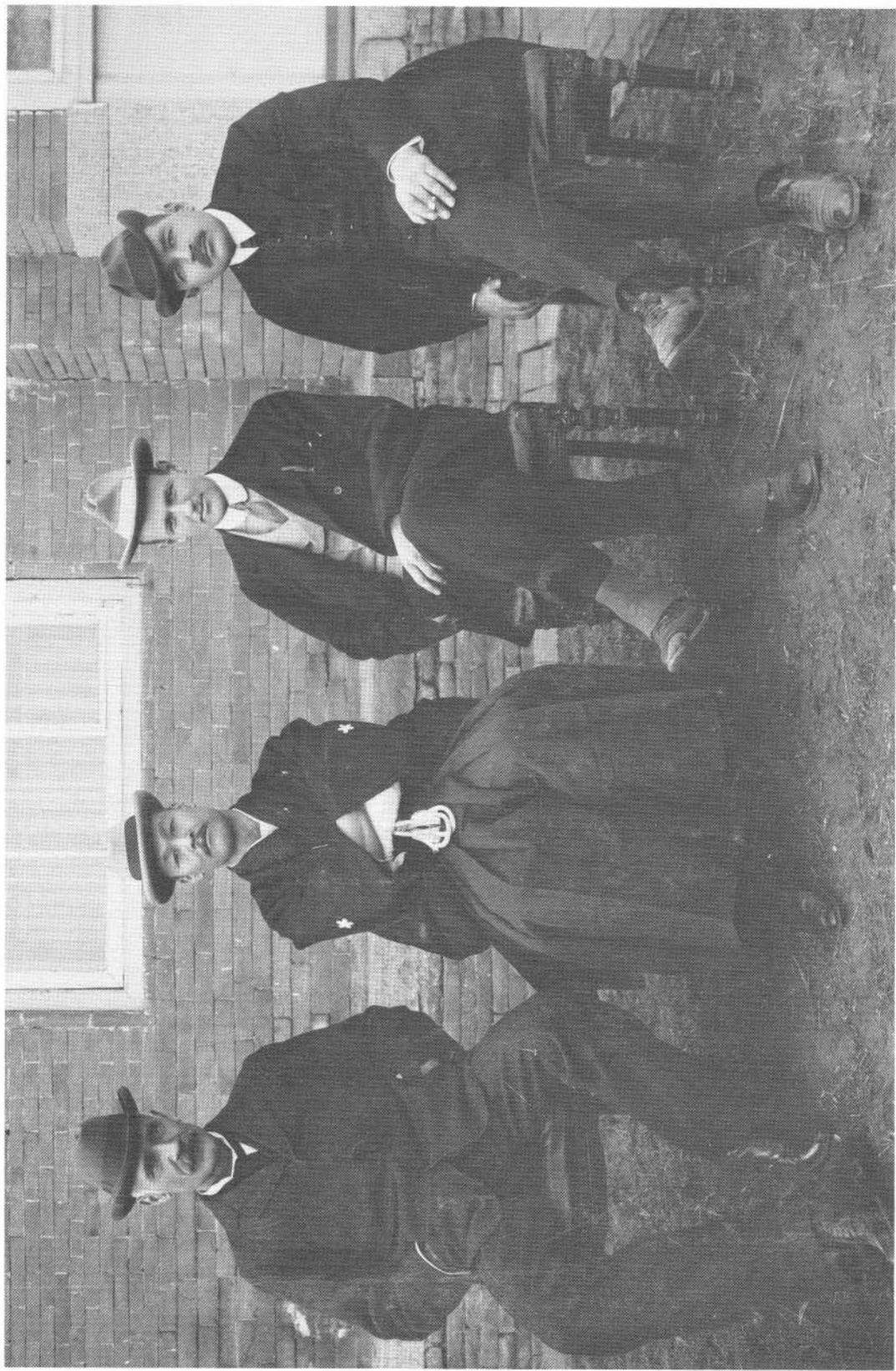
The reorganizing and microfilming of the Willard Straight Papers was made possible by the support of the William C. Whitney Foundation and the National Historical Publications Commission. The Cornell University Libraries sought this support because they believed that this much-used collection should be available to the larger scholarly community through a medium that would also conduce to the preservation of the original documents.

Dr. Herbert Finch, Assistant Director of the Cornell University Libraries, has directed the project with his usual blend of tact and thoroughness, and Fred Shelley, the ubiquitous Deputy Executive Director of the N.H.P.C., has been unstinting in encouragement and cooperation.

Recognition is due Archivist Kathleen Jacklin of Cornell, who has long administered the papers and assisted researchers in their use, and to Professor Harry N. Scheiber, of the University of California, San Diego, who helped describe the papers in 1958. Gould P. Colman, Curator and University Archivist at Cornell, deserves thanks for the enthusiastic support and practical help he has given the project.

I should like to acknowledge the valuable technical assistance of Mr. Morris L. Brock of the Photo Science Studio of the University and the careful and continuing help given the project by Mrs. Jane K. Gustafson, secretary in the Cornell Archives. Mrs. Karolyn R. Gould, who is currently at work on a biography of Dorothy Payne Whitney, has been most helpful in effecting a loan of supplementary Willard Straight correspondence. Graphic designer David May was consulted in planning the layout of text and illustrations in the guide.

Patricia Harland Gaffney



Willard D. Straight

1880-1918

Willard Straight's obituary filled more than two columns in the *New York Times* of December 2, 1918. "MAJ. W. D. STRAIGHT IS DEAD IN PARIS: FINANCIER & DIPLOMAT VICTIM OF PNEUMONIA WHILE ON WAR MISSION WITH COL. HOUSE: BEGAN LIFE AS A POOR BOY: SON OF MISSIONARY TO JAPAN & CHINA, HE WON INTERNATIONAL FAME—TRIBUTES HERE." Despite inaccuracies, these headlines sketch the career of the Oswego, New York, orphan who became a well-known figure in the world of international trade and finance. Straight's career in China made him famous before he was thirty. He married an heiress, kept a string of polo ponies on Long Island, and built a splendid house on upper Fifth Avenue, where he lived with the wife he adored and their three small children until he joined the army in 1917. When he died in Paris the list of men who followed his coffin from the Hotel Crillon to the American Church included Herbert Hoover, Walter Lippmann, Charles Merz, several generals of the army, and members of some of America's leading families. Even more striking was the affection Willard Straight inspired in literally hundreds of men who had known him in the Far East, in business, or in the army. He *was* a hero to his valet, and after the war not only was an American Legion post named for him, but a group of officers and men formed the Willard Straight Association and met annually for more than thirty years to renew friendships and keep alive the memory of the man they idolized.

Straight's parents were not missionaries but successful normal-school teachers. Henry Harrison Straight did pioneer work in applying the theories of Pestalozzi to the teaching of science; Emma

Opposite: *The British, Japanese, American, and German consuls in Mukden.*

Dickerman Straight taught art and literature in schools in Missouri, Illinois, and New York. When Willard Dickerman Straight was born in Oswego on the last day of January in 1880, both his parents devoted themselves to his training. Emma Straight kept a detailed account of his development through his first five years, recording both Willard's behavior and her methods of dealing with it.

Professor Straight died of tuberculosis in November of 1886, and in 1887 his widow, who had taken over his science classes during his illness, accepted a teaching offer from Japan. A former pupil of the Straights at Oswego Normal School had become superintendent of the Tokyo schools, and he invited Mrs. Straight to teach English in the girls' normal school. Emma Straight took her two young children with her to Tokyo and entered eagerly into her new life, but in less than two years the disease she had contracted from her husband forced her to seek a drier climate in the American Southwest. Early in 1890 she died, leaving Willard and his sister Hazel in the care of two spinster friends in Oswego, Dr. Elvire Ranier and Miss Laura Newkirk.

After graduating from Bordentown Military Institute in 1897, Straight enrolled in the College of Architecture at Cornell University. In the winter following his graduation from Cornell in 1901, Straight returned to the Orient to join the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs. Conducted for the Chinese government by an international organization headed by Sir Robert Hart, the service afforded Straight the opportunity to acquire a working knowledge of the Chinese language and of Far Eastern commerce. When he had been studying in Nanking for only six months, Sir Robert called him to Peking to be his secretary. As the protege of the leader of Peking's international society, Straight quickly learned the social usage of a diplomatic community.

Drawing had been Straight's hobby throughout his childhood, and he put his skill to use at Cornell and in working for architects in Rochester and Buffalo during vacations. In his first months in China he filled notebooks with sketches of the faces and scenes that caught his artist's eye, and he wrote many articles about incidents he had witnessed and the customs and festivities he had observed. In 1902 he illustrated a book, *Verse and Worse* by J. O. P. Bland, that was published in Shanghai. A few of his articles were published in *Harpers' Weekly*, the *Nation*, and *Putnam's Magazine*.

When the Russo-Japanese war broke out in 1904, Straight left the customs service and set out for the front as a correspondent for Reuter, and later the Associated Press. While many reporters were bottled up in Tokyo, Straight managed to get to Korea in March and began to ferret out information that would be useful to the news services. In late June he joined the party of guests of the Japanese that were touring the Korean coast on the *Manshu Maru*, a ship seized from the Russians. Later Straight managed to get to Manchuria, where he followed the retreating Russians in the company of John J. Pershing, who was attached to the Japanese army as an observer. Straight's diaries and letters for the period contain vivid reporting, and some of his sketches of Japanese military and naval figures appeared in the *London Graphic*.

In the summer of 1905 Straight went to Seoul as private secretary of American Minister Edwin V. Morgan, and he was appointed to his first State Department post when Morgan had him named vice-consul for the United States in the Korean capital. In the five months before the Korean administration capitulated to the Japanese, a number of prominent persons passed through Seoul and were guests of the American Legation, including the Edward H. Harriman family and Alice Roosevelt and her traveling party. Both visits served to advance Straight's career, for he found use in Seoul for his many social talents. Not only was he an amateur performer who could write a skit, sing, play a guitar, and dance creditably, but he had unusual skill in interior decorating that Morgan put to use, and was adept in entertaining groups, preparing schedules and attending to details of travel and accommodations.

Straight was a tall, personable young man whose ability and enterprise won for him the friendship and confidence of older associates. He was avowedly ambitious, but he learned very early in life that advancement depended on performance. However genial a host he appeared to be, his close associates knew that he regularly worked on official reports far into the night. His direct manner, his loyalty, and his chivalrous attitude toward women, balanced by his tolerance toward the standards of others, impressed both men and women.

For a time Straight served as Morgan's secretary in his new post as American Minister to Cuba, but he was eager to return to China and spent several weeks in Washington job hunting. In June of 1906 Theodore Roosevelt signed his appointment as consul general



for the United States in Mukden, and in August he set off across Siberia to establish the first American consulate in that region. Straight was only twenty-six years old, and the responsibility was a great one. The temple compound he leased and adapted for the purpose of assisting American businessmen through China's Open Door became a favorite stop-over for Americans passing through Manchuria. Straight believed in Manchuria's potential for agricultural and commercial development, and sought to strengthen the Manchurian administration that was succumbing to Japanese control as had the Korean in 1905. He worked closely with Manchurian leaders who hoped to construct railroads and reform the monetary system with the help of American capital.

In 1909 Straight left the consular service to become Peking representative of a group of American companies: J. P. Morgan and Co., the First National Bank of New York, the National City Bank, and Kuhn, Loeb and Co. The venture was undertaken with the full knowledge of the U. S. State Department under the policy later referred to as Dollar Diplomacy. The American Group represented U. S. interests in a consortium with groups of bankers in England, France and Germany.

At the age of thirty Straight was believed to be earning as much as the President, and had become one of the most powerful men in the Far East. In September of 1911 Dorothy Payne Whitney, a pretty and highly intelligent heiress, became his wife after a courtship that Straight conducted with all the persistence and persuasiveness at his command. The first months of this remarkably happy and productive marriage were spent in Peking. When the Chinese Revolution hobbled the administration with which he had been negotiating, Straight returned to France and England, where agreements were signed admitting Russia and Japan to full partnership in the consortium, which was then considering a large reorganization loan to the Chinese Republic.

After he returned to the United States in August of 1912, Straight continued his association with the J. P. Morgan Company, and though the American Group abandoned its Chinese operation, Straight continued to encourage American investment in China through the American Asiatic Association and the Foreign Trade

Opposite: *Dollar Diplomacy in Peking, 1911.*

Council. In 1914 Straight was instrumental in developing a foreign trade club in a historic mansion on Hanover Square in New York. India House, which echoed the style and character of the old East India Company in Salem, is still in operation sixty years after its founding.

Before her marriage Dorothy Straight had taken an active interest in social reform, supporting the Working Women's Trade Union League and the campaign for women's suffrage. In 1914 she joined her husband in publishing the *New Republic*, a magazine of comment edited by Herbert Croly. Croly's *The Promise of American Life*, published by The Macmillan Company in 1909, had so impressed Straight that he sought out its author and asked him to prepare a report on the kind of social education needed in a democracy. The Straights sat on the editorial board of the magazine, but in matters of policy and content they deferred to the judgment of the board as a whole. The Straights also financed the publication of *Asia*, a large-format magazine with photographs as well as articles on the Far East. *Asia* replaced an earlier journal as the organ of the American Asiatic Association.

Straight left the Morgan company in September of 1915 after he had helped to arrange for the company to purchase strategic materials for the French and British governments. Later in the year he joined the American International Corporation, which invested largely in foreign engineering and transportation projects. This work took him to Europe again in 1916 and won him to the Allied cause before the United States entered the war. Straight himself invested in a number of small businesses; one of the companies of which he was director was the Pacific Development Company.

In the summers of 1915 and 1916 Straight attended U.S. Army training camps, and he enthusiastically supported the Preparedness Movement, giving funds to provide summer training for the cadet corps of Cornell University and serving as chairman of the Mayor's Committee for Defense in New York. A month after the United States declared war on Germany he entered active service with the rank of major, and early in December he sailed for France, in command of a contingent of uniformed accountants and lawyers, to conduct the U.S. War Risk Insurance operation. (This was his seventh wartime crossing of the North Atlantic, made perilous by mines and enemy torpedoes. He had been a passenger on the

Lusitania a few weeks before she was sunk in May of 1915.) His group was credited with assisting American servicemen to sign up for eight million dollars worth of insurance in six weeks.

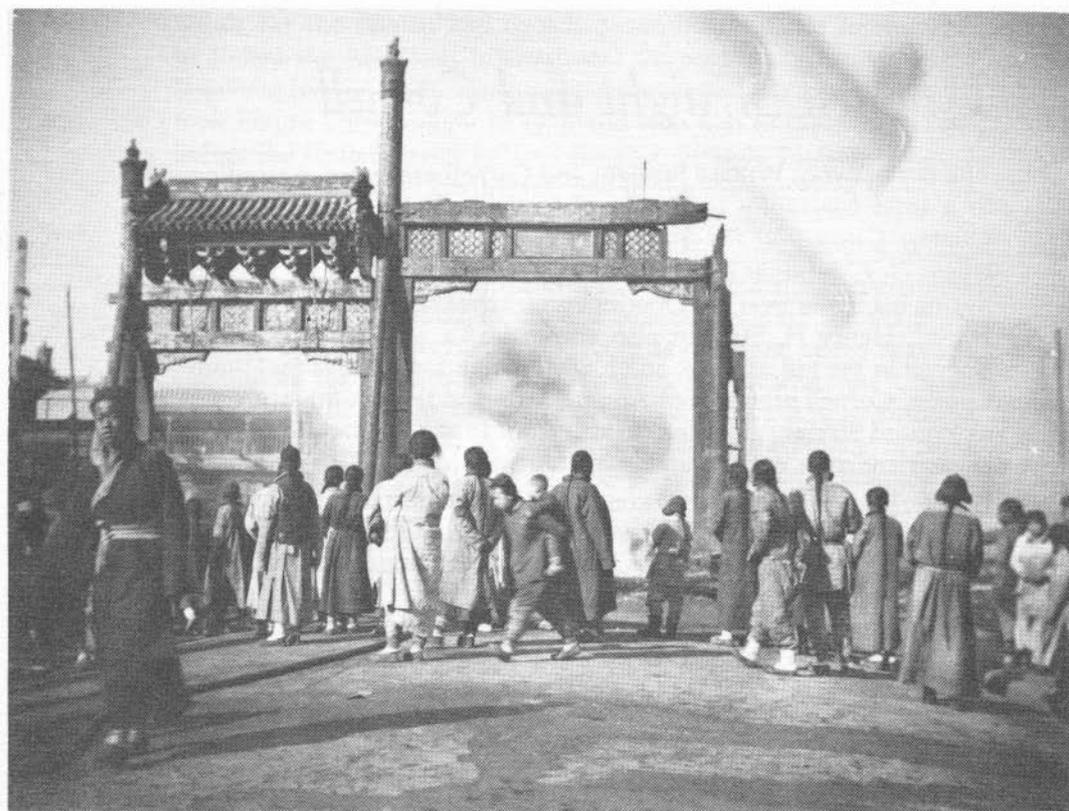
When the insurance project was nearing completion, Straight enrolled in the U. S. Army staff school in Langres to prepare for the command of infantry troops. To his great chagrin he was kept at a desk job, but his revision of the army liaison manual was adopted in mid-summer and widely used. In October of 1918 he was assigned to duty with the Chief of the American Military Mission to the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies. He was stationed at Marshal Foch's headquarters through the Armistice negotiations, sleeping on the library floor the night of November tenth in order to be able to telephone the American headquarters as soon as the peace terms were announced.

Straight thoroughly hated the war, and as it drew to a close he feared that the peace negotiators would betray the sacrifice of a generation of young men. His last cable to Croly urged him to support Wilson and the League of Nations. He was engaged in arranging for the arrival of the American Peace Mission in Paris when he was stricken with influenza in mid-November. Two weeks later he was dead.

Willard Straight and Cornell

The ties between Willard Straight and Cornell are many. According to a brief biography in *Historical Sketches Relating to the First Quarter Century of the State Normal and Training School at Oswego, N. Y.* Straight's father undertook "special study at Cornell during his senior year [at Oberlin] under the lamented Charles Fred Hartt." Henry H. Straight also enrolled as a graduate student at Cornell in the fall of 1875, and his wife attended lectures by Hiram Corson, Cornell professor of Anglo-Saxon and English literature.

Willard Straight attended Cornell from 1897 to 1901, and formed close friendships with a number of students and professors. His skill in drawing continued to develop in his course work in the College of Architecture and in his contributions to student publications. When he graduated in June of 1901 he was hoping to go to China,



but in the meantime he accepted an appointment as instructor in industrial drawing and art at the university.

A close friendship with Professor Henry Morse Stephens is believed to have influenced Straight's decision to seek a career in China. During his years in the Orient Straight kept in touch with Stephens and other Cornell associates, and when he returned to live in New York State he became active in Cornell affairs, contributing an athletic field house as a memorial to a close friend in 1913 and serving as a trustee of the university from 1916 on.

In his will Straight expressed the wish that his wife do something to make Cornell "a more human place," and this led to the construction of a large, handsome student union building. Willard Straight Hall, with its cafeterias, library, great hall, theater, box office, music and exhibition rooms, its facilities for crafts and games and offices for student organizations, is still the center of student life on the Cornell campus.

Description of the Collection

The Willard Straight Papers consist of personal and official correspondence, reports, diaries, manuscript articles—published and unpublished, and memoranda and agreements concerning loan negotiations with China. The unusual value of the papers is that they chronicle the development of United States foreign policy in the Far East at a critical period in the history of modern China and that this development is revealed through an unusually articulate participant.

The character of the collection suggests that much of it was gathered for the use of Straight's widow in preparing a memorial volume. Many original Willard Straight letters were sent to her, and a number of personal memoirs were written by persons who had known Straight's parents or had been closely associated with Straight at college, in the Far East, or in France. There are many original letters from Straight's personal files, but most of Straight's own letters are represented by copies transcribed from letterbooks he kept in Mukden and Peking. There are also typed copies of some of his private

Opposite: *Peking in Flames, March 1912.*

letters from 1912 to 1917, and Straight's letters to his wife from December 1917 to June of 1918 exist in the collection only in typed copies. His letters to Edwin V. Morgan were copied for Mrs. Straight, but sections were cut from them at Morgan's direction. A portion of the letters in the collection were addressed to Mrs. Straight, but they concern him or the projects she undertook to preserve his memory.

A quantity of material not included on the microfilm is available for research in the Department of Manuscripts and University Archives at Cornell University. This includes items related to Straight and his family—scrapbooks, photographs, a genealogical sketch, portfolios of drawings—and some manuscripts and proofs of published biographies of Straight. There are also some documents in Chinese characters, Chinese paintings and art objects, photographs of Straight's associates in the Far East, snapshots of persons and places, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, maps, pamphlets, and books.

The papers of George Collingwood Bennett constitute a sub-series in the collection. Bennett, an Australian, was Straight's valet from 1912 until 1917, when he joined the U.S. Army and accompanied Major Straight to France. Though some family documents date from 1882, the correspondence extends from 1903 to 1952 and includes letters from other servants, from relatives in Australia, from World War I comrades, and from World War II servicemen he had entertained in England. Bennett had accompanied the Straight-Elmhirst family to Devonshire, where they acquired Dartington Hall and founded the schools and the arts and rural industries programs that still operate under the Dartington Hall Trust. There are many letters from persons who were on the Dartington Hall staff, and drafts of Bennett's letters, along with pamphlets and photographs, contain information about the early years of the experimental community.

Provenance

In 1925 Mrs. Straight remarried. Her second husband, Leonard Knight Elmhirst, was an Englishman who had taken a Cornell degree, and the family returned with him to England and made their home in Devonshire. The papers and artifacts associated with Wil-

lard Straight's career were stored in the family's house on Long Island.

At the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of Willard Straight Hall, George Bennett, Straight's former valet who had remained with the family, helped select material from the collection for an exhibit at Cornell University. Foster M. Coffin, the director of Willard Straight Hall, along with Cornell Archivist Edith M. Fox and Stephen A. McCarthy, Director of the Cornell University Libraries, were instrumental in effecting the deposit of the Straight Papers at Cornell. Bennett brought the collection to Ithaca and assisted Giles F. Shepherd, Jr., now Acting Director of the C. U. Libraries, in listing and identifying the books and papers in the spring of 1952. Formal donation was made in March of 1953 by a son and daughter of Willard D. Straight.

Other Primary and Secondary Sources

The official reports Straight made during the time he was attached to the State Department, from 1905 to 1909, will be found in record group 59 of the General Records of the Department of State in the National Archives. Related correspondence may be found in the papers of several individuals in the Division of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress, including those of Presidents Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson and their Secretaries of State and of Straight's close friend Henry Prather Fletcher.

Related correspondence may also be found printed in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* for the years 1906 to 1912.

Louis Graves wrote a series of nine articles about Straight that appeared in *Asia* magazine each month from September 1920 to May 1921, and were published in book form by the magazine in 1922 as *Willard Straight in the Orient*. The task of integrating various memoirs with excerpts from Straight's diaries and letters was offered several writers. It was finally undertaken by Herbert David Croly, the editor of the *New Republic*, who worked closely with



Mrs. Straight in writing *Willard Straight*, published by The Macmillan Company in April of 1924. Both the Graves and Croly books contain photographs and Straight drawings.

The United States and China, 1906-1913: A Study of Finance and Diplomacy, published by the Rutgers University Press in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1955, was written by Charles Vevier, who had access to the Straight Papers before they came to Cornell.

A Cornell thesis, copyrighted by Helen Dodson Kahn in 1968, is titled "The Great Game of Empire: Willard D. Straight and American Far Eastern Policy." Much of Mrs. Kahn's research was conducted in the Straight Papers, and her bibliography, beginning on page 583, contains a useful list of sources.

Another recommended work is Harry N. Scheiber's "World War I as Entrepreneurial Opportunity: Willard Straight and the American International Corporation," published in the *Political Science Quarterly* LXXXIV (September 1969), pp. 487-511, and based largely on research in the Straight Papers at Cornell.

Editorial Procedures

In arranging the Straight Papers for filming, an earlier order, which attempted to separate the material by subject matter, has been permanently replaced by a single chronological series of correspondence. This will not seriously affect earlier citations, for, although box numbers will not correspond, the date of a document will serve as sufficient identification. The reorganization should eliminate duplication and improve the coherence of the collection as a whole.

Enclosures have been placed following the enclosing letter; undated correspondence has been marked with a date, enclosed in brackets, wherever the proper date was obtainable; and undated material appears at the end of the month or year in which more exact assignment was impossible. Letters from Willard Straight to the J. P. Morgan Company from 1909 to 1912 are numbered, but the series is incomplete. Copies of letters pasted in Straight's diary have been interfiled in the correspondence.

Opposite: *Pre-war polo on Long Island.*

Letters from Straight to Dorothy Whitney are represented by copies, which, along with a number of original letters from individuals, are still in private hands. These and other borrowed letters are identified on the microfilm by a line in large type. There is correspondence with Dr. Paul S. Reinsch from the Wisconsin Historical Society, a few letters exchanged with Herbert Croly from the archives of the *New Republic*, and a note from Straight from the Rutherford B. Hayes Library.

For the microfilm edition letters have been copied from other Cornell collections, including those of Eugene Plumb Andrews, George Lincoln Burr, Charles Henry Hull, Jacob Gould Schurman, Goldwin Smith, and Henry Morse Stephens.

Reel Notes

Reel 1

1857 - June 1907

Scattered letters and documents from 1857 to 1894 concern Straight's parents. The correspondence in 1901 relates to his appointment to the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service and his departure for the Far East. A letter from Peking dated 30 April 1901 was written by William Alexander Parsons Martin. Straight's letters from 1902 to early 1904 describe his experiences in Nanking and Peking and his impressions of the countryside, the commercial potential, and the varied people he encountered. In 1904 and 1905 the letters indicate his presence in Tokyo, Seoul, and a number of cities and towns in Manchuria, where he went in search of news for Reuter and the Associated Press, and where he made sketches for the *London Graphic*. The first letters from John Otway Percy Bland, for whom Straight illustrated two books, appear in 1904. Straight's own letters through the fall of 1905 detail the visit to Korea of Alice Roosevelt and her party and later the Japanese take-over of the administration of Korea. The Tokyo riots that followed publication of the terms of the Portsmouth Treaty were described by Frederick Palmer in late September. Other correspondents through 1905 were John Gardner Coolidge, Martin Egan, and Sir Robert Hart.

The few letters in early 1906 relate to Straight's months in Cuba as secretary to the United States minister to Cuba, Edwin Vernon Morgan, under whom he had also served at Seoul. Straight spent several weeks in Washington in the spring in the hope of securing an appointment in the United States foreign service, and in late June was named consul general for Mukden in Manchuria. On 15 October

1906 Straight send back a lengthy report to President Roosevelt summarizing his observations during the journey through Siberia and Northern Manchuria. On the thirty-first he addressed the first of several letters to Edward Henry Harriman about railways in the Eastern Provinces.

E. V. Morgan was a frequent correspondent through Straight's two years in Mukden, and his letters comment informally on U.S. policy in Cuba. There are a few letters from William Woodville Rockhill, U.S. minister to Peking, in the first months of 1907.

Reel 2

July 1907 – March 1909

From Mukden on 9 August 1907 Straight wrote a note of commendation to John Foord of the American Asiatic Association, and on 3 December he wrote at length to Edwin Denby, who was planning to publish a monthly on Asiatic affairs. In mid-November Straight prepared a memorandum on Manchuria that he later handed to William Howard Taft when they conferred in Vladivostok. Copies of some State Department trade reports incorporating Straight's dispatches are filmed at the end of 1907. Some letters in late 1907 and early 1908 concern a news service George Marvin was conducting for the Chinese government. A Marvin letter of 13 January urged that American college men establish friendly relations with Chinese students, as Straight had done with Alfred Sze at Cornell. There are letters from a number of consuls in other commercial centers in Korea and Manchuria. An attack on the gateman of the American consulate in Mukden by a Japanese postman, and the fracas that ensued, led Straight to complain to the Japanese consul. The injudicious release to the press of Straight's colorful account of the incident, referred to as the "Mukden affair" in the Japanese papers, led to the termination of Marvin's news venture.

Some other correspondents in the Mukden period are Henry Prather Fletcher, Frederick McCormick, William Phillips, Henry Schoellkopf, and Francis Mairs Huntington Wilson. On 24 May 1908 Straight and an associate began a three-month journey into Northern Manchuria, studying the transportation, agriculture, and

trade in outlying areas, and observing and recording the extent of Russian and Japanese control and colonization. In September Straight returned to the United States to help Special Ambassador T'ang Shao-yi place his Manchurian Bank proposal before American financiers. Straight exchanged a number of notes with Harriman and Jacob Henry Schiff. A letter from Elihu Root on 11 December 1908 defines the State Department's attitude toward the undertaking. T'ang's recall in January left Straight in Washington, where he prepared a number of reports for the Division of Far Eastern Affairs.

Reel 3

April 1909 – October 1910

In April Straight completed a memorandum on the navigation of the rivers of China, Korea, and the Russian Far East. Filed under the date of its signing, 11 May 1909, is a copy of an agreement between China and Russia concerning the organization of municipalities on the lands of the Chinese Eastern Railway. A State Department letter on May first refers to "oral directions by the Secretary of State to continue the study of the possibility of an advantageous introduction of American capital into China."

An agreement between Straight and J. P. Morgan and Co., Kuhn, Loeb and Co., the First National Bank of New York, and National City Bank of New York is dated 14 June 1909. Copies of telegrams through June chronicle the effort to have the United States admitted to an international consortium of bankers. In the weeks preceding Harriman's death in early September, Straight sent him a number of letters and cables. On October second he signed the preliminary agreement for the construction of the Chinchou-Aigun Railway. Through the next twelve months Straight wrote more than fifty letters to the J. P. Morgan Company and Henry Pomeroy Davison.

Dorothy Payne Whitney became a regular correspondent in 1910, and, though her letters do not appear, copies of Straight's letters to her contain much detail about his work. Copies of a number of documents relating to the Chinchou-Aigun loan appear under the date of 30 April 1910. Memoranda concerning the Hukuang railway loans appear in late May. Straight's contract with the American Group

dated 10 June 1910 doubled his salary of the previous year. Summaries of interviews Straight conducted in St. Petersburg with the Russian ministers of war, finance, and foreign affairs and with M. Stolypin, minister of the interior and Premier, appear among the papers of late June. A letter addressed to Frank H. McKnight by E. T. Williams concerning the State Department's view of the railway project is dated 9 August 1910, and a letter from newsman Joseph Ohl on September seventeenth sought to keep Straight abreast of developments in Peking. Many notes to Miss Whitney appear in the later months on the reel.

Reel 4

November 1910 – November 1911

The Chinchou-Aigun railway loan was the subject of many letters in the late fall of 1910; discussions in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg were reported in letters to the Group and to Dorothy Whitney.

On 7 January 1911 Straight wrote a memoir of E. H. Harriman for his widow, and he addressed letters to Lord ffrench, Frank McKnight, and E. V. Morgan in the first months of the year. Obstacles to a currency loan agreement—rumors of Japanese involvement, provincial unrest, an attractive loan offer from a competitor, and an outbreak of plague—are detailed in the correspondence. An account of the signing of the Currency Loan appears in letter number 175 to the J. P. Morgan Co. on 17 April. The final agreement for the Hukuang Railways Loan was signed in Peking on 20 May.

More loan documents appear in the summer of 1911, along with congratulations on Straight's engagement to Miss Whitney. Letters from Peking following the Straights' marriage and their return to Peking in October describe the political climate in the northern capital, as rumor and fear put many Manchus to flight before the approach of revolutionary forces. Edward C. Grenfell wrote on 17 November of meeting Dr. Sun Yat-sen and one of his generals in London.

*Reel 5**December 1911 - August 1917*

The first part of the reel is made up of correspondence during Straight's last months in China. On 22 December Straight confided to McKnight that he would prefer to deal with the most reactionary Manchu than with the rebel leader WuTing-fang.

Telegrams sent the Straights at the holidays provide an index to their closest friends. On 12 January 1912 Straight wrote a memorandum of a conversation with Prince Pu Lun, and on the twentieth he wrote another about the objections of Russia and Japan to the Chinese Currency Loan Agreement.

On February first Straight wrote William James Calhoun, U.S. minister to Peking, about talks he had in Shanghai with Dr. Chen Chin-tao, Thomas F. Millard, Sze, T'ang, and others. On the fourth he wrote the J. P. Morgan Co. an analysis of attempts by the Chinese to establish a stable government. On 24 February he summarized for Bland the loan negotiations with China, and praised American policy in the Philippines. A letter to Grenfell on 3 March describes the burning and looting of Peking that sent the Straights and other foreigners to the American Legation for safety. The passport issued for their journey through Siberia is dated 20 March 1912. A printed summary of negotiations for a Chinese reorganization loan is dated 23 June. Letters to Bland, Maurice Casenave, Fletcher, McKnight, Dr. Paul S. Reinsch, James Augustus Thomas and Charles T. Whigham attest to Straight's continued interest in Chinese investment, and on 14 November 1912 he spoke about the Chinese loan negotiations before an audience at Clark University. On 7 March 1913 Straight sent Paul M. Warburg a memorandum on American diplomacy, and on 9 December he wrote Daniel A. de Menocal that the American Group felt the Chinese should offer them any contemplated railroad loans, since their Chinchou-Aigun agreement had been disregarded.

The few Straight letters in 1914 concern the National Foreign Trade Council, the development of India House as a club for men associated with foreign trade, and the plan to start publishing the *New Republic* in the fall. The first letter from editor Herbert Croly is dated 29 November 1914. Copies of Straight's letters through the

next months indicate his continuing interest in the development of the magazine. Letters in the fall of 1915 explain his resignation from the J. P. Morgan Company and his move to the American International Corporation.

Among letters written on shipboard on 17 March 1916 is Straight's note to George Kennan enclosing a nine-page article on E. H. Harri-man's interest in the Far East. A Croly letter the next day mentions Vincent Massey and Lionel Curtis and their association with groups in Canada and England studying foreign policy. In March Straight and Thomas Nelson Perkins reported from London to Charles A. Stone about numerous foreign investment projects. After returning to the United States, Straight wrote letters to James Bryce and Gilbert Parker about the American attitude toward Britain. On 23 October 1916 he wrote a letter to appear in the *New Republic* dis-associating himself from the magazine's endorsement of President Wilson.

Notes in January 1917 refer to a report on the mobilization of the National Guard. On February fifth Straight wrote Dr. Reinsch of his hopes for American-Japanese cooperation in a Chinese canal project, and on the first of August he wrote Croly, "I'm about the only person still interested in fostering this idea of internationalizing Chinese finance—which is, I believe, the only safeguard for China's future."

Reel 6

September 1917—December 2, 1918

Most of the correspondence in late 1917 relates to the War Risk Insurance project Straight was assigned to administer in France. Letters document a controversy with Washington officials over details of his plan of operation. A letter from Shanghai on November eighth concerns Straight's business interest in China and refers to his proposal to buy back his old Peking house.

Croly and A. W. Fiedler, Straight's secretary, reported on home-front matters in 1918, and Straight wrote frequent and detailed letters to his wife. In early February he wrote recommendations for members of his insurance staff, as he prepared to leave the project

and enroll in the army staff college at Langres. On 13 February he complained to James A. Logan that the army was "controlled by men too long a part of the regular army peacetime machinery, not flexible enough . . . to solve wartime problems of transport and communication." On the same day he wrote his wife that he had come to believe in universal service and "a changing, not a permanent, personnel."

A memorandum from General William Mason Wright of the Fifth Army Corps on 29 July 1918 enclosed several officers' comments on the liaison pamphlet Straight prepared. The last word from Straight is a long cable to Croly on November seventh urging support for Wilson and the League of Nations.

Straight died of pneumonia in Paris on December first, a victim of the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic. The remainder of the correspondence is addressed to Mrs. Straight, though most of it concerns him. First are a group of letters addressed to her before his death, 1910-1918. These are followed by a list of callers at the Hotel Crillon at the time of Straight's death and funeral. The last items on the reel are a group of cables and telegrams sent in December and the first of some 800 letters of condolence.

Reel 7

December 2 - 31, 1918

Letters of condolence are in chronological order, with correspondents on the same day arranged alphabetically. Writers include Straight's army and business associates, his college friends, and many persons who had known him in the Far East. On the third Harold J. Laski wrote, "Willard seemed to me one of the half a dozen men of distinction in America who really found himself in the sheer joy of service," and on December fourth Emory Roy Buckner wrote, ". . . the sorrow is not confined to a few, but is shared by almost an army of people who knew and admired and loved him . . ." Daniel A. de Menocal, a Peking associate, wrote on the eleventh, "There is no man with whom I have ever come in contact for whose qualities of character I have such admiration. I feel that we have all lost from amongst us the best personal example that we had to follow." Some

tributes from organizations are included among the letters. Some prominent persons represented on the reel are Norman Angell, William Cameron Forbes, Felix Frankfurter, Learned Hand, Florence Jaffray Harriman, Walter Lippmann, Charles Merz, Ernest Peixotto, Frances Perkins, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Henry L. Stimson.

Reel 8

1919–1923

A number of letters in 1919 suggest the form Mrs. Straight's announced gift to Cornell University might take. On January first an Ithacan proposed "a splendid building dedicated to the memory of Major Straight and thoroughly equipped for the enjoyable employment of the leisure time of all Cornell students." Jeremiah W. Jenks suggested founding a chair at the University in Far Eastern studies, Neil Gray and Jacob Gould Schurman discussed scholarships, and Olaf M. Brauner, on the last of October, suggested fellowships, an art gallery, or a college of fine arts.

Letters from Jo Davidson in the fall of 1919 discuss a plan to beautify the cemetery at Suresnes, but the project was later abandoned for lack of official approval.¹ An undated critique of an article written about Straight by J. O. P. Bland² is filmed at the end of 1919, along with another recollection by an Oswego friend. Many letters enclose contributions to a proposed memorial volume. An E. V. Morgan letter of 7 April 1920 encloses his memoir and another by Maurice Casenave, and he refers to copies of Straight's letters he had had typed, with certain deletions. A letter dated April thirteenth was written by a medium, and enclosed messages believed to have come from Willard Straight.³ A letter enclosed under the date of 14 May 1920 lists Straight's dispatches to the State Department that might

1. Photographs of models of Davidson's sculpture and cemetery plans are among the Willard Straight Papers.

2. Bland's article is filmed with other memoirs on a manuscript reel.

3. Copies of many of these messages are preserved in the Papers.

contain biographical material. Letters in early 1921 concern a showing of Straight's drawings and paintings in March, and there are a few notes from William Gibbs McAdoo and James E. Fraser in regard to a statue to Alexander Hamilton that Mrs. Straight had commissioned. The figure was placed outside the United States Treasury in Washington anonymously, though two letters from Arthur H. Vandenberg in July urged that Mrs. Straight be identified as the donor.

A letter from China on 22 November 1921 and another in January comment on changes in Peking since 1912. The Willard Straight Post of the American Legion issued a statement on 21 September 1921 opposing preferential treatment of veterans in the New York State Civil Service. Early in 1922 the Post sought essays on its members' war experiences as advice to young men in the future. Some of these essays are filed at the end of 1922. Many writers in 1922 respond to the announced plan to erect Willard Straight Hall, a student union building, at Cornell. Livingston Farrand, president of the university, wrote on 5 July 1922 to discuss plans for the use and management of the building.

Reel 9

1924 letters and other manuscript material

The letters of 1924 were written, for the most part, by persons who had received copies of Herbert David Croly's biography of Willard Straight, and many contain recollections of Straight's life. A few notes were originally addressed to Croly. The book was published in April in New York by The Macmillan Company, and the first edition was largely distributed among Straight's friends and acquaintances. Some names that appear on the reel are Corinne Robinson Alsop, Mabel Boardman, Fairman Rogers Dick, Louis Agassiz Fiertes, Herbert C. Hoover, Peter Augustus Jay, and Philip James McCook. The correspondence ends with two 1925 notes and a few undated items.

Next on the reel are a group of passports, appointments and other documents. These are followed by memoirs from forty persons. These vary in length from a paragraph quotation to a 41-page article,

and most are typed copies. Excerpts from George Marvin's Mukden diary from 14 August to 28 December 1907 are followed by excerpts from Mrs. Straight's letters to Beatrice Bend from 2 October 1911 to 25 June 1912. Most of these were written in Peking.

The last portion of the reel is made up of articles written by Straight.

Reel 10

Willard Straight manuscripts and printed matter

The reel begins with a continuation of Straight's personal manuscripts, translations and verse. The greater part of the reel is made up of copies of documents and printed memoranda and agreements relating to his work in Seoul, Mukden, and Peking, beginning with trade and customs in Korea and Manchuria and followed by various railway agreements and loan proposals for Chinese currency reform and reorganization. The reel ends with bound material, printed copies of Straight speeches about the loan negotiations and bound manuscript material relating to his study of the Chinese language.

Reel 11

Diaries, November 9, 1901 to August 15, 1908

The diaries vary in character and extent. The early books are not day-by-day records but occasional comments on his experiences, bits of self-analysis, and attempts at fiction based on his observations.

Later Straight often pasted in his diary carbon copies of detailed letters he wrote to friends. The diaries for the Russo-Japanese War period also contain a number of sketches.

In Mukden he kept a fairly systematic diary, recording his activities and naming his visitors and associates. There are occasional gaps, and some entries are very brief.

Reel 12

Diaries, 1908 to November 17, 1918

The first four books on the reel are an account of a journey Straight and a companion made in the summer of 1908. Traveling by train, by boat, and on horseback, they explored a portion of Northern Manchuria along the Korean and Siberian borders to assess the agricultural and commercial possibilities of the region. Straight recorded his observations in these diaries.

There is no diary for the late months of 1908 and early 1909. Entries in the Peking diaries, from August 1909 to March of 1912, vary greatly in length, but they contain detail about his work and persons with whom he was negotiating. The regular diary ceased when the Straights left Peking.

For a few weeks in 1915 and again in the spring of 1916 Straight kept diaries of business trips he took to Europe, the first for the J. P. Morgan Company and the second for the American International Corporation. These accounts were ostensibly prepared for his son Whitney.

The final diary was kept by Major Straight from 11 December 1917 until 17 November 1918. The reel ends with some miscellaneous bound material, a record of Straight's childhood, an account of a trip from Peking to the Great Wall in 1903, and the original illustrations Straight drew for J. O. P. Bland's *Houseboat Days in China*, published in London by Edward Arnold in 1909, and reissued in 1919 by William Heinemann in London and Doubleday, Page and Company in New York.

