

TO: KARL ADAMS

[Written around 1991]

As per your request, I will endeavor to outline where I located, or have knowledge concerning the location of, important Watch Tower historical material.

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

It was an interesting and exciting experience to find a great deal of archival material in file cabinets in a large room named the Branch File Room, located on the floor that houses all the Executive Offices. Miscellaneous photos were found in at least four completely packed drawers and half of another. Many are loose, thrown in carelessly. Others are in envelopes, such as wonderful, old convention pictures. One drawer has professional and personal photos of Brother Knorr and Rutherford. Congratulatory wedding and other type of greeting cards sent to Knorr were also found in this drawer. In addition, I ran across the finest set of sixteen photos of the Bible House ever seen around here. And, professional, like-new photos of Russell were thrown in this file cabinet too, and it is thought they have never been reproduced in the publications.

The majority of the file cabinets in the Branch File Room are just filled with illuminating correspondence, documents and photos, old and new, from foreign branches all around the world. Surprisingly, however, within one file cabinet I found material not connected with foreign branches, such as two packages that contained the original transcripts of Rutherford's 1918 trial. This was after money was spent by an outside researcher to obtain the material from the government. Another package was wrapped in an old, very brittle, brown paper bag. It contained letters sent in 1919, which came to about a foot high, from Bible Students to the Watch Tower Society in answer to Brother Rutherford's request for experiences of persecution during 1918-19. Within the pile of letters were other kind of important letters, documents, and newspaper clippings relevant to the events of those days. I boxed all the material up and threw away the bag which fell apart. It appeared not to have been opened in fifty or more years. In addition, in that same cabinet I found a package that contained the transcript of the Ross – Russell court hearings in Canada.

BROTHER SCHROEDER'S OFFICE

Judah Schroeder was kind enough to show me the contents of personal archival material which Brother Schroeder uses in his Gilead class talks. I found some interesting photos and useful information.

BETHEL OFFICE

Brother Couch is a collector of Witness historical material in the form of wonderful photos, personal effects of Russell and Rutherford, documents, and a collection of wonderful history in the form of correspondence between Russell and Bethel family members and between Rutherford and Bethel family members. In addition, Brother Couch has dozens upon dozens of letters pertaining to the running of the Bethel home written by Rutherford. Most of the photos have been combed through by the Image

Library and many of them copied, but Bro. Couch receives old photos and other historical material from time to time because he has let it be known during his travels that he would like to have Watch Tower memorabilia for his collection. As of now, he's expecting more material to arrive which has been promised to him from someone's collection. I found bound in leather, another set of transcripts of Rutherford's trial on a shelf in Bro. Couch's office. He is very particular who he lets handle the memorabilia as over the years, he said, things have a way of disappearing.

TREASURER'S OFFICE

This office contains a walk-in vault which contains some extremely important historical material in file cabinet drawers such as letters of Russell and Rutherford found in two very old and frayed file folders. There is also a file folder which contains Bro. Russell's first account book where he recorded the amount of money the first Watch Tower president, Wm Conley, donated to start up the Watch Tower Corporation; the amount of money the first vice-president, Russell's father, Joseph Russell, donated, and the amount of money the secretary-treasurer, C. T. Russell, donated. If that wasn't an extraordinary discovery, within the book, glued to the inside cover, I found a very important document—the original 1884 Corporation Charter of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Inc., of Pennsylvania, handwritten by Mrs. Maria Russell.

There were other important papers found in files in that cabinet such as C. T. and Maria Russell's divorce and appeal transcripts, Pastor Russell's will, and important legal papers of Rutherford. Above the cabinet, on a shelf, were stored a number of small books filled with meeting minutes from annual Watch Tower Corporation meetings starting in 1884, including the minutes from the contentious meetings when Rutherford was taking over the organization as president.

FACTORY ARCHIVES

It has been brought to my attention that the Factory Bindery has pictures from the early days of the organization which I never asked to see. I also didn't go to Brother Larson's office and look at files filled with old documents, etc., dealing with early factory operations.

MISCELLANEOUS

Many of the older friends in the Bethel family have historical material which they rescued from the garbage years ago. Bro. Hatzeld has an envelope that contains shorthand notes of Arthur Goux who was once Bro. Russell's secretary and self-appointed Bethel historian of years gone by. He is willing to allow someone to transcribe Goux's notes to see if they contain valuable historical information.

I have heard that Russell Mock and Russell Kurzen also possess Watch Tower memorabilia, but I didn't have time to follow through and talk with them.

WRITING ARCHIVES

This area is off-limits to researchers and writers within the Writing Department. If one of the staff requests something from the archives, Sarah Hall fills the request. The only problem is there isn't a catalog to look at to see what is in the archive to determine if something will be useful for a particular project. Sarah is very busy with other things; hence, she can not spend much time trying to explain what she has in the archival area. Like a detective, a researcher has to personally go through material looking for a clue or detail that might shed some light on some event that happened many years ago, and if the researcher doesn't know what's in the archives, how can proper research be conducted?

For what it's worth, because there isn't a list of what is in the archives, Ciro never thought to ask Sarah if she had a copy of Rutherford's trial transcripts. When he found out she did, it was long after the transcripts were purchased from the government.

BROTHER KOMMER'S PERSONAL ARCHIVES

Brother Kommer's has un-cataloged Watch Tower historical material stored all around the 30 Columbia Heights building which he has oversight of. He showed me many items from the Russell and Rutherford eras. For example, on display in Kommer's office, I saw a little Bible owned by Russell which is about 2" x 2". He has many Cross and Crown lapel pins, etc. He's an avid collector of Watch Tower memorabilia which he finds through his job from all over the U.S.

OUTSIDE OF BETHEL

I have been told there are fourteen (14) file boxes full of letters in the National Archives in Washington, DC sent from the Bible Students and their supporters throughout the United States to the U. S. Government demanding Rutherford and the other IBSA Directors be freed from prison.

Today I found out that the Minnesota Historical Society has eight micro-film rolls of all the religious papers that Wm. Abbott, publisher and editor of the St. Paul Enterprise, from 1910-1926, has published. The rolls can be purchased for \$120.00. (Talk to Allen in Library of Congress in Washington about this if interested.) In 1919, the name of paper was changed to New Era Enterprise. This is the publication that the U.S. Government referred to as a Russellite paper and reproduced the cover of the January 19, 1918 paper in one of its documents. This particular paper is the one that states that the government is being run by Satan. In one of the letters from the U.S. Attorney's office in Scranton, PA, mention is made of a U.S. agent asking Woodworth about this statement. Should we be interested in obtaining these micro-films for our archives and when we get them, where will they, and the other material about the Rutherford trial that has come in from the outside, be stored?

In conclusion, I hope I have answered your question satisfactorily.

Your sister,

Barbara Anderson