Willard Dickerman Straight Papers SC2012.02

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Title: Willard Dickerman Straight Papers
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Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet 1 Container
Date (inclusive): 1857-1925
Abstract: The papers consist of personal and official correspondence, reports, diaries, writings, memoranda, and family papers of Willard D. Straight, American diplomat and financier, relating chiefly to his activities in the Far East and to his service during World War I. There are also many papers of Dorothy Payne Whitney Straight following the death of her husband. (Source: Cornell University Library Collection Summery www.cornell.worldcat.org/title/willard-straight-papers-at-cornell-university-1857-1925-inclusive/oclc/122501465)

Biography of Willard Dickerman Straight
The Papers of Willard Dickerman Straight are now available in digital form at California State Polytechnic University Pomona's library. The original papers are housed at Cornell University’s research library in Ithaca, NY. By linking into this site, one may find the online guide to the papers, edited for Cornell's manuscripts archives in 1974 by Patricia H. Gaffney. The availability of these papers in the west coast should prove beneficial to students and scholars interested in the history of early twentieth century American foreign policy (including policy toward Latin America), Progressivism in the United States, the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson, the US involvement in World War I, and the development of opinion journalism in the United States.

Straight’s extraordinarily full life (1880-1918) took him to various parts of the world. As a young man, he served as secretary to the US Consulate in Havana, Cuba, later was appointed by Wilson’s Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo to serve as an adviser on Pan-American affairs, and wrote and spoke extensively on the role of American diplomacy, finance, and trade in Latin America and elsewhere throughout the world. Straight kept a diary which, along with correspondence, drawings (Straight was an accomplished artist and portraitist), published articles, and other papers, highlights the incisive observations he accumulated during his experiences.

Straight is best known for his activities in China during the first two decades of the twentieth century, but his involvement in world affairs extended well beyond China. After graduating from Cornell in 1901 he took a position with the Chinese Maritime Customs Service in Beijing (then called Peking in the West), was a correspondent for Reuters during the Russo-Japanese War, and assumed the position of personal secretary to Edwin V. Morgan, Consul General to Korea and later to Cuba. In 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt (a personal friend) appointed Straight Consul General in Mukden, Manchuria. In 1909, as the new William Howard Taft administration entered office, he became chief of the State Department’s Far Eastern Division. He was only 29 years of age.

Later in 1909, Straight went to work for J. P. Morgan Company and for a consortium of American bankers seeking to engage in international financial investments in China. In 1911 he married Dorothy Payne Whitney with whom he founded The New Republic in 1914 and Asia Magazine in 1917. Although an active Republican, Straight impressed high officials in the incoming Wilson Administration. Treasury Secretary McAdoo appointed him as a senior adviser for his Pan American initiative and, when the US entered World War I in 1917, appointed him to direct the government insurance program for doughboys fighting in Europe. As the war drew to a close, Edward M. House, President Wilson’s closest adviser, chose Straight to be a senior member of the group planning the American peace commission’s involvement in the peace conference that ended World War I. On December 1, 1918, Straight died in Paris from pneumonia, a complication of the historic flu epidemic of the time.

A full catalogue of the Straight Papers is available at the library and on the library’s web site.
— John A. Moore, Jr. Professor Emeritus, Department of History
(Source: Cal Poly Pomona University Library Website www.csupomona.edu/~library/specialcollections/willardStraight/willardStraight.html)

Scope and Content
The entire collection is comprised of digital scans from the microfiche rolls located at Cornell University Library. The materials range from correspondence, reports, diaries, writings, drawings, memoranda, and family papers from 1857-1925. The collection is stored in one external hard drive. Use of the materials is by appointment only. Please contact Dr. John A. Moore for information and appointments.
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Subjects and Indexing Terms
BOX 1 SC2012.02

Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.0 BoxOne external hard drive with USB cord and power cord