



THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540-4680

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

March 27, 1996

Dear Mr. Reber:

Thank you for your quick response to my letter. Yours took only about a week to get to me.

I am writing you again to assure myself that you understand fully the broad range and types of materials that the Library of Congress collects. In my letter, I defined "papers" widely to mean much more than finished articles or speeches, since these are often available in published form. What usually is of greater significance to the researcher are drafts, notes, or the research that went into those papers.

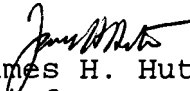
For individuals like yourself who actually created or invented something, the Library of Congress does not seek the item itself, since we leave the collection of objects or "three-dimensionals" to others like the Smithsonian Institution, who are better suited to their care and display. Rather, we and the scholars who regularly use our collections, are more interested in acquiring the paperwork pertinent to the invention. So, while the Smithsonian has the first Wright Flyer, we have the Wright Brothers diary. The same for Bell's telephone. We have his sketches and laboratory notebooks, not any of his telephones.

Finally, we also are interested in having the fullness of a person's life represented here. Biographers regularly seek personal as well as professional correspondence, and letters often comprise a major part of many an individual collection.

My point in writing back is to encourage you to view from this archival perspective any materials that you may still possess, and to see them as unique and historically valuable items which, while you may modestly take them for granted, would both set the record straight and provide insight to future researchers of your life, work, and the field you founded.

If I can help you in any way on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me. I hope you plan to visit NRAO soon, so we can meet.

Sincerely,

  
James H. Hutson  
Chief

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