

Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: Letter from Edwin Willoughby to Mrs. Spears

Date: July 13, 1922

Location: I-DawsonG-1981-1

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

936 N. Wells St.,

Chicago, Ill., July 13, 1922

My dear Mrs Spears,

I was very glad to receive your letter and am glad that you liked my poem.

As you can see, I also have come westward, but first let me tell you about the four years which have intervened.

First, there was the S. A. T. C. in which I did anything but make a

2 Startling success. "Willoughby,
get in step!" seemed to be
the watchword of that fight-
ing organization for every-
one above the rank of a
private - and some not seem-
ed to yell it.

After that came my
freshman year. I found my-
self in a dormitory half
of whose inhabitants were
religious fanatics, whose
Chief ^{trend of} talk was the end
of the world etc. and

³/₄ the other half rough-necks. I spent there a wretched year, as you may imagine, and left in June not expecting to return.

However, when I returned next year Mrs. Meredith was the Dean of the Women and the College had dismissed a goodly percentage of the last year's crowd, while some better ones returned from the Army. I proceeded, then, to go into politics and won several offices for myself and had the pleasure of seeing the non-fraternity men being made the political equals of the others. I also wrote for the Dickinsonian - our school paper - as you probably know as I sent you several copies. I also came in second in an oratorical contest.

The next two years were not so eventful. Mrs. Meredith, however,

4/ Changed the school wonder-
fully in those two years.
She is now perhaps the
third most influential person
there. I continued reading
much but studying little
as has been my wont; took
all the English I could, and
four years of Latin; and
enough education and psycho-
logy to teach. I was expecting
to teach English but said
that I would rather work

5/ in a library, if I could find the right one. The dean of the college told me to write to one of his friends out here. I did so, and I am now working in the Newberry Library, an almost ideal one for me.

The Newberry Library is a reference library, dealing almost entirely with the humanities, especially with history and literature.

6/ It has 430,000 volumes and a staff of 35. It has the best collection of books on the American Indian in the world, the best collection of rare Asiatic books in the Occident, the best collection on genealogy in the country and the famous Prince Louis Bonaparte's collection of languages and dialects. Besides this, there is the evergrowing John H. Wing Foundation collection of incunabula; i.e. books printed before 1500.

I am at present substituting for people who are on their vacations but after August 10, when the gentlemen who helped me obtain my position returns from Europe, I expect to work in the Wing collection. There will be three custodians of that collection, my friend

7/ mentioned above, with whom
I expect to room, a Ph. D.
a girl of twenty-three also
a Ph. D. and myself. I count
myself fortunate in being
able to associate with
such brilliant people.

I expect to take up
work in the University
of Chicago this fall and
if my ambition hold out
to take first my A. M. then
Ph. D. in either English

8
or general literature.

Undoubtedly, I owe
much of my love for literature
to the two years I spent under
your tutelage in Woodbury.

We certainly used to have
good times there didn't we?

I hope that I will
hear from you again.

Yours sincerely,

Edwin E. Willoughby

936 N. Wells St.
Chicago, Ill., July 13, 1922

My dear Mrs. Spears,

I was very glad to receive your letter and am glad that you liked my poem.

As you can see, I also have come westward, but first let me tell you about the four years which have intervened.

First, there was the S.A.T.C in which I did anything but make a

[page break]

startling success. "Willoughby, get in step!" seemed to be the watchword of that fighting organization for everyone above the rank of a private – and some not – seemed to yell it.

After that came my freshman year. I found myself in a dormitory half of whose inhabitants were religious fanatics, whose chief trend of talk was the end of the world etc. and

[page break]

the other half rough-necks. I spent there a wretched year, as you may imagine, and left in June not expecting to return.

However, when I returned next year Mrs. Meredith was the Dean of the Women and the College had dismissed a goodly percentage of the last year's crowd, while some better ones returned from the Army. I proceeded then to go into politics and won several offices for myself and had the pleasure of seeing the non-fraternity men being made the political equals of the others. I also wrote for the Dickinsonian – our school paper – as you probably know as I sent you several copies. I also came in second in an oratorical contest.

The next two years were not so eventful. Mrs. Meredith, however,

[page break]

changed the school wonderfully in those two years. She is now perhaps the third most influential person there. I continued reading much but studying little as has

been my wont; took all the English I could, and four years of Latin; and enough education and psychology to teach. I was expecting to teach English but said that I would rather work

[page break]

in a library, if I could find the right one. The dean of the college told me to write to one of his friends out here. I did so, and I am now working in the Newberry Library, an almost ideal one for me.

The Newberry Library is a reference library, dealing almost entirely with the humanities, especially with history and literature.

[page break]

It has 430,000 volumes and a staff of 35. It has the best collection of books on the American Indian in the world, the best collection of rare Asiatic books in the Occident, the best collection on genealogy in the country and the famous Prince Louis Bonaparte's collection of languages and dialects. Besides this, there is the evergrowing John H. Wing Foundation Collection of incunabula; i.e. books printed before 1500.

I am at present substituting for people who are on their vacations but after August 10, when the gentleman who helped me obtain my position returns from Europe, I expect to work in the Wing Collection. There will be three custodians of that collection, my friend

[page break]

mentioned above, with whom I expect to room, a Ph.D., a girl of twenty-three also a Ph.D. and myself. I count myself fortunate in being able to associate with such brilliant people.

I expect to take up the work in the University of Chicago this fall and if my ambition hold out to take first my A.M. then Ph.D. in either English

[page break]

or general literature.

Undoubtedly, I owe much of my love for literature to the two years I spent under your tutelage in Woodbury. We certainly used to have good times there didn't we?

I hope that I will hear from you again.

Yours Sincerely,
Edwin E. Willoughby