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7-21-1931

## Letter From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Tracy H. Lay, July 21, 1931

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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### Recommended Citation

Huntington-Wilson, Francis Mairs, "Letter From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Tracy H. Lay, July 21, 1931" (1931). *Documents, 1919-1938*. 28.

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COPY

Woodbury, Connecticut.

July 21, 1931.

Tracy H. Lay, Esq.,

care Prentice-Hall Inc.

70 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Lay,

Herewith I am enclosing copy of my letter of this date to Mr. Carr, of the Department of State, on the subject of your Book "Foreign Service of the United States". You will verylikely be as surprised by my statements as I have been by your own!

Yours very faithfully

signed F.M. Huntington Wilson.

July 20, 1931.

My dear Carr,

I want to thank you for the letter of introduction to diplomatic and consular officers for Mrs. Butler and also for kindly sending me a copy of "Foreign Service of the United States" by Tracy H. Lay.

From a perusal of the letter I can only assume that I have merely dreamed that I served in the Department of State from June 1906 to March 1913; that I had a very great deal to do with establishing the consular examinations; that I was chairman of the consular service board of examiners from their inception until I was promoted to what is now called undersecretary of state; that I had the chief part in establishing the diplomatic examinations and was chairman of the board that conducted them from their inception until I left the service about four years later; that I had the principal part in preparing the Lowden bill, which under one name or the other was the foundation for a decent foreign service; that I presented to Secretary Root a complete plan of reorganization of the Department of State; that when Mr. Root offered to try a Far Eastern Division and asked me to run it (as Third Assistant Secretary), it was at my request that you were made director of the Consular Service of which I was at the time the administrative head, ex officio; that in 1909 Mr. Knox allowed me to put into effect the complete reorganization of the Department which I had drawn up as the papers and administrative



chart on file show -- (a friend of mine wrote me after the war that you had told him the Department would have broken down under the strain but for my organization)--; that I wrote numerous articles and speeches in furtherance of the cause of the Department and the foreign service; that the assistant secretary of state was next in rank to the secretary of state until John Bassett Moore succeeded to those duties, he being the third "counselor" but the first to have the rank and duties of second-in-command; that Moore, Lansing and Polk continued the unbroken line, in rank and duties, from myself to the first official to be called undersecretary, a style that changed neither the rank nor the responsibilities ( a plain fact quite unjustly garbled and obscured by the Register of the Department of State); that for four years I was acting secretary of state probably more of the time than anyone else has been during a like period; and that I gave up the proffered opportunity to be Ambassador to Russia in order to continue work,-- in which I now learn I had no part!

Mr. Lay says (p.77), "Formerly, the Assistant Secretary succeeded to the office of Acting Secretary in the absence of the head of the department, but in 1909 provision was made for a Counselor, whose rank was established as next in importance to that of the Secretary". Curiously enough on page 260 he says, "Again, in 1912, when the second step towards stabilization was under consideration, Acting Secretary of State Wilson stated,....." Now this could have slipped in, even disguised by the use of half my name, I am absolutely at a loss to understand,-- since the whole idea that I was ever there or had

anything to do with any of the reforms is proved by this book to be the merest fantastic dream.

I remember your expressing to me years ago the opinion that I had a positive genius for getting no credit for my work. It seems the genius has not been altogether mine. Here is a book, dedicated to you, prepared by an officer attached to your office from material presumably supplied there, which absolutely conceals the part I had in the reform and improvements of the seven years I was in the Department,- a part that you know as well as I do was an exceedingly important one. In the name of truth and justice, to say nothing of friendship, how on earth, my dear Carr, could you have allowed this to happen?

With kind regards, I am

Very sincerely yours