

Dissertations Subject Explorer

PART D – HISTORIANS AND THE POLITICS OF HISTORY The Stenton Letters

This collection of correspondence to the historians Frank Merry Stenton and Doris Stenton contain letters from 1898 to 1944 pertaining to professional, personal, literary, family, historical and official matters.

The letters provide scope for a wide variety of subjects including:

- Historians and War
- University of Reading History
- Intellectual Politics
- History of Tourism
- Local History
- History of Place Names
- Histories of various Historical Societies (Particularly the Pipe Roll Society)
- England & Wales during WW2
- The effect of War on Universities
- Soldiers in WW2
- Aspects of Anglo-Saxon History

Sir Frank Merry Stenton (1880-1967) was Professor of Modern History at Reading from 1912 to 1946 and Vice Chancellor from 1946 to 1950. His major works were *The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066–1166* (1932) and *Anglo-Saxon England* (1943). He also contributed to the *Victoria county histories* and studied English place names and coins.

Lady Doris Stenton (1894–1971) was Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Reader in History at the University of Reading from 1920 to 1959. Her major works were *English Society in the Early Middle Ages (1066–1307)* (1951) and later editions) and *The English Woman in History* (1957). She made important contributions to the study of medieval charters and was instrumental in reviving the Pipe Roll Society.

The letters are contained within the call number: MS 1148-8, folders 1-27 ranging from the years 1898-1944. The following is a brief overview of some of the contents of each folder.

MS1148-8/1-Undated

Letters regarding Frank giving a lecture at Cambridge, personal letters between Canon Foster and Doris and Frank, one letter from him of particular interest regarding a friends visit to Germany, Pipe Roll Society, church appointments in Lincolnshire, personal letters from V.H Galbraith, congratulations on Doris' recent work.

MS1148-8/2-1898-1902

Includes personal letters from W.M Childs, one imploring Frank to stop calling him sir, regards his recent attaining of a first class degree and talks of possible scholarships.

MS1148-8/3-1903-1908

Letters about Oxford fellowship, regarding Frank's potential as a lecturer, a loan made by him to Robert W Stewart, letter from R.V.H Burke thanking him for his tuition and aid in getting him a first, letters pertaining to his acceptance into Wantage Hall, letter enclosing £50 cheque for his successful publishing of work 'William the Conqueror'.

MS1148-8/4-1909-1913

Letters from C.H Firth regarding Frank's lecture at All Saints College, from W.M Childs confirming appointment as professor of Modern History at Reading, personal letters to Frank's sister, letters regarding place names in Berkshire and other areas, request from Cambridge for a work on military architecture, thanks from James Tait for help on place names, Historical Association letters regarding meeting, letters regarding Danelaw place names, request to work on Cambridge Medieval History, personal letters from F.M Powicke, letters regarding Ure, request for review of 'Canute the Great' work by L.M Larson, letters regarding pronunciation of place names.

MS1148-8/5-1914-1919

Letters regarding the Vortigern legend and its relevance to London, personal and professional letters from R.L Poole, letters from J.Tait concerning the war and its effects on Manchester University, Canon Foster regarding work on Charters, letters of sympathy over mother's death and regarding her estate and execution of will, letters concerning rising student numbers at Reading, especially women due to men being needed for war, Dorothy Banecroft thanking for help in getting her a position, W.M Childs regarding pay rise.

MS1148-8/6-1920-1923

Letters from Joan Wake regarding editing of Plea Roll, Canon Foster about the moving of the index of counties to the Bodleian, postcard from Sweden concerning interesting find on Aethelred II, L.V.D Owen and Nottingham interview, E.R Dodds thanking for holiday photos and regarding his love life, E. Noble concerning his state of mind, Historical Society matters, invitation to dinner to meet delegates to the Anglo-U.s conference of professors of history, Pipe Roll Society, letter stating enjoyment of 'William the Conqueror' and enclosing facts Frank might find useful.

MS1148-8/7-1924

A great deal on the Pipe Roll Society affairs and membership, J.Wake to Doris regarding charters and knight's fees, pamphlet and letter asking for donation to Earl Haig's fund, printing matters.

MS1148-8/8-1925

Invitation to Frank to give lecture on Danelaw society at University of Lund, Pipe Roll Society matters, place name queries, request to act as a supervisor to H.P Jacobs' research, personal letters from E. Ekwall, newspaper cutting regarding Canon Foster's work on Lincolnshire doomsday with Frank's introduction, J.Tait regarding his Manuscript studies, queries regarding Ethelred the Unready.

MS1148-8/9-1926

Matters concerning R.L Poole's book on chronicles and Bede, K.Sisam regarding publishing, Franks election to fellowship of British Academy and numerous letters of congratulations, request for opinion of H.V.D Dyson for chair of English at Southampton, thanks for help on Essex articles, writs of Edward the Confessor, request from university of London asking for lecture on works of Maitland, Clarendon Press asking Frank to look over the late Professor Vinogradoff's work, Cheshire local history, personal and professional letters from F.M Powicke, T.F Tout and A.Mawer, British Academy affairs, Domesday book.

MS1148-8/10-1927

Poem sent by F.M Powicke regarding Reading, offers of appointment from Oxford, personal letters from G.C Coulton, place name queries, letter from Frank to Powicke regarding the abilities of some of his students, T.F Tout regarding his work and the character of a Ms Neilson and personal matters, J.Tait thanking Frank for help on Huntingdonshire, E.Ekwall personal letters to Frank and Doris, and regarding professional matters such as work on the free peasantry.

MS1148-8/11-1928

K.Sisam asking Frank to read a thesis as they don't publish them, V.H.Galbraith on possibility of incorporating Atkinson into the series being written on English History and on personal matters, concerning 'Ms Neilson', queries about Danes in England, publishing matters, Personal and professional letters from Ekwall, Powicke, Tout and Tait.

MS1148-8/12-1929

Concerning Frank's lecture for the Historical Association at Peterborough, Tait's review of a German work on London in 1066, concerning Frank's acceptance of directorship of British Academy publications, Tait on York Charters, W.M Childs regarding his impending resignation.

MS1148-8/13-1930

Pipe Roll Society affairs, letters regarding the publication of the General History of England, draft report on Mr Brookes catalogue of Anglo-Norman coins, Personal and professional letters from Ekwall, Powicke, Tout and Tait, Galbraith on examination of work on Stephen Langton and regarding Frank's student who has visited him, notes on Henry II, external examiner issues, L.V.D Owen regarding dates for Historical Association lecture.

MS1148-8/14-1931-1932

Canon Foster regarding possibility of Stenton's joining his family on a trip, Roman London, Galbraith on visiting Stenton's, the Chronica Sancti Albani, British Academy affairs, letters from F.M Powicke on proposal to gather scholars for a new work on 'Concilia'.

MS1148-8/15-1932

Letters regarding the publication of a volume in honour of Tait, Powicke on the medieval history movement, Ekwall on personal matters and Olof Andersson who is studying place names in England, Pipe Roll Society, personal letters from Canon Foster, personal and professional letters from G.C Coulton, Tait regarding his wish to be relieved of Presidency of Historical Society as he is old and far from the centre of affairs.

MS1148-8/16-1933

Letters from Canon Foster to Doris mentioning the publication of Tait's new work, the pipe roll society, and Doris' health. Letters from Tait regarding problems in 'English Feudalism', Letters personal and professional from Powicke and Galbraith, information pertaining to the executors of Canon Foster's will, early borough history queries, Pipe Roll Society matters, letters regarding a chair position at Birmingham University, the honorary degree bestowed upon Canon Foster by Oxford, the formation of a history club at the University of Reading.

MS1148-8/17-1934

G.N Clarke regarding the completion of the Oxford History of England, personal letters from Canon Foster to Doris, Pipe Roll Society affairs, letters concerning Doris' "Rolls of the justices in eyre", V.H.Galbraith asking Frank to check his work and other personal matters, external marking issues, analysis of the work of Joliffe, letters from S.Painter, F.M Powicke asking Frank to read paper at an historical congress in Zurich, British Academy politics, requests for candidate opinions from Kings College, letters from Charles Clay.

MS1148-8/18-1935

K.Sisam and invitation to place name society council, death of Canon Foster, condolences and the execution of his will, invitation for Frank to chair Anglo-American conference in next year, criticisms of Joliffe's work, Letters from F.M Powicke, V.H Galbraith on professional matters, request for Frank to talk to a local boys school, W.M Childs thanking Frank for his words in local paper about him, letters from Germany regarding place names, A.Mawer describing his holiday and other personal matters, letter asking for assistance in selecting a candidate for a post in Singapore.

MS1148-8/19-1936

Letter regarding the dates requested by the French for the Anglo-French historical conference in this year, regarding Creighton Lectures, letter from K.Sisam concerning E.Ekwall and the unpopularity of Scandinavian studies, W.M Childs to Frank on their friendship which has lasted forty years, V.H.Galbraith and F.M Powicke on the death of Powicke's son, complaints to Frank about lack of acknowledgement of work used by E.Ekwall, Franks nomination as delegate to Anglo-American conference.

MS1148-8/20-1937

L.C.Lloyd regarding visit to Stenton's, V.H.Galbraith resignation of membership of Royal Historical Society post, letters from F.M. Powicke, Sir Geoffrey Ellis wishing to make Frank's acquaintance having read his work, W.M Childs regarding enthusiasm for local history, request form Jewish historical Society of England to chair their next meeting, E.Ekwall on personal matters and election as corresponding fellow of the British Academy.

MS1148-8/21-1938

Letters of congratulations regarding Frank's honorary doctorate from Leeds University, many requests to give lectures and recommend candidates for posts, F.M Powicke regarding possibility of honorary degree for E.Ekwall, troubles pertaining to publication, request from Board of Deputies of British Jews asking for Frank's support at demonstration, Sibly regarding paid leave for Doris, invitation to Viking Society for Northern Research dinner.

MS1148-8/22-1939

K.Sisam on the potential troubles to be experienced by outbreak of war and talking of the war, Cambridge University Press stating the need to insure books under 'War Risks Insurance Act', memo from F.Sibly regarding national service in war time sent to him by the ministry of labour, D.Douglas regarding war and publishing, A.L Poole regarding possible visit to fathers library at Reading, A.R Magnus on Reading and admission criteria changes due to the war, D.Fisher and

being called up by the war office to render service, D.Douglas regarding effects of war and 'refugee influx' to his house, the inferior nature of students being admitted to university due to the war, the adaptations Reading has had to make due to the war, describing the depredations of war and the lifestyle to which they are subjected, letters regarding Royal Historical Society elections, death and obituary of W.M Childs, E.Ekwall on personal matters, letter from a student as to whether Reading University remains open due to the war, and the issues arising from the Lord Kitchener fund which has so far supported his study but now requires military service to gain funding.

MS1148-8/23-1940

Letters regarding Churchill's speech, air raid shelters, the need to publish things as quickly as possible before paper becomes scarce, K.Sisam regarding the fall in quality of published work, Pipe Roll Society and British Academy affairs, D.Fisher talking of his training programme in army, E.Ekwall about student numbers in Sweden, effect of air raids in Liverpool, the national books councils exhibition contrasting British freedom of the press with Nazi oppression, travel difficulties due to war.

MS1148-8/24-1941

Letters regarding Kantorowicz's work on Bracton, travel difficulties, students and the war, the destruction of records due to the need for paper, holidays and rationing, damage taken in Liverpool by raids, D.J.V Fisher letters about his life and experiences as a soldier, F.M Powicke enquiring as to the state of Reading University, London air raids, the suspension of studies to help in war work.

MS1148-8/25-1942

K.Sisam regarding Anglo-Saxon history, C.R Cheney on Doris' "fruit-bottling prowess" and her presentation to the Queen, Place Name Society, Pipe Roll Society and Royal Historical Society affairs, Kantorowicz and Bracton, F.M Powicke on Bede and St.Albans, Ekwall and the rise in English Studies in Sweden, death of A.Mawer and condolences, D.Ekwall on the trouble of getting English papers in Sweden at this time.

MS1148-8/26-1943

D.Douglas on visit to Reading, K.Sisam on government interventions in publishing, letters on the war outside the big cities particularly in respects to Wales, D.Ekwall and campaign to send baby clothes to Norway, E.Ekwall's retirement and rationing in Sweden, staff difficulties at Bristol University, V.H Galbraith requesting feedback on work, D.Douglas on life at Leeds University, F.L Wainwright and the difficulties attached to war-time scholarship, Jewish

Historical Society of England and the fate of the Jewish libraries, archives and museums on the continent, anti-Semitism in Munich University of Reading politics, letters of admiration for Frank's "Anglo-Saxon England", letters concerning the American unwillingness to go to war and the likely extended length of hostilities due to this, troubles concerning student numbers, D.J.V Fisher on his experiences with army in Tunis, including an account of the behaviour of the American Soldiers with local women.

MS1148-8/27-1944

L.C Lloyd on story of Cockney wit in reply to an American soldier in London, F.M Powicke resigning presidency of Royal Historical Society, account of British soldier's death in operations in the south of France, E.Ekwall trip to Finland, postcard from R.A.F pilot in Italy in which is detailed a request for only three books including Stenton's "Anglo-Saxon England", D.J.V Fisher on army experiences, reviews of work of Joliffe, F.M Powicke to F.Sibly recommending a successor at Royal Historical Society, V.H.Galbraith on the difficulty concentrating during air raids, letter requesting help from a Polish historical novelist, queries regarding the complete peerage, V.H.Galbraith on meeting for lunch and other personal affairs.