

February 17, 1991

Roger Feinman
Apr. 404
142-10 Hoover Ave
Jamaica, NY 11435

Dear Roger:

I received your memorandum on the Disposition of Sylvia Meagher's Working Papers and Literary Estate of February 10 read it through, set it aside for a couple of days, and then re-read it. It was a clear statement that enlightened me on issues that I had only inferred, or guessed at over the years.

If you would permit me I would make some observations on your reflections.

First, on a theme not related to the immediate address of the memorandum. The memorandum focused on an element that has always struck me as supremely important, the scholarly biography of Sylvia Meagher. To me sitting out here in the woods and sand of the central plains of Wisconsin I marveled at her ability to move into one of the most complex and controversial issues I have ever known or read about and seemingly effortlessly reached not only rational but also clear sense. As I teach youth and attempt to impart ideals and provide character models for aspiring scholars I deeply wish there was a profile, even a short one, that could be used. From the memorandum I receive an understanding of an underlying theme.

Your comment on what Greg Stone sought to do with any possible monies he might receive from Oliver Stone et alia differs from what he told me on the phone a few days before he died. He explicitly mentioned Sylvia Meagher projects as such, without a reference to his Foundation. ~~He gave me~~ several illustrations of uses, a scholarly paper award, a lecture series, a conference, and the like. In fact this was so vivid in my mind that to realize what he was actually going to do with it strikes me as dissembling on his part.

In terms of your suggestions on where the collection ought possibly end up I observe your consideration for the scholarly use of it and for visiting scholars and students to be accommodated. In all my many conversations with Greg Stone over the years and most recently his references to the

location and types of users were muted if not absent when he mentioned archival holdings. Your concerns are well taken. However, to my mind I feel the scholarly use must take into consideration a wider sphere of elements essential to the accomplishment of the purpose.

The central holdings on the assassination are in the Washington, D. C., area--Archives, etc. The Hood site attracts me for reasons connected with the practical aspects of research. You, of course, know better than I do that the concern in the murder of JFK is nationwide and a realistic disposition ought consider that important factor.

Student housing and scholarly housing is a sine qua non in this business. I think you misjudge, perhaps, the costing of New York City scholarly residences. Here in Wisconsin the UW pegs NYC at its highest per diem rate and my experiences are similar. In Frederick the Hood system provides cheap housing and lower expenses, dramatically so. I believe you ought to recast your thinking in this area.

In terms of access to the Hood collections I would observe that first of all when I fly into Dulles International it takes me only 35 minutes to travel here. Second, it is typical of small colleges and even larger ones to meet the demands of incoming researchers and scholars for a week end or vacation period. I really do not see this as a stumbling block to Hood. Here at UWSP the librarian or staff opens up a building or collection and provides ample servicing for a visiting professor or scholar. Admittedly this must be by pre-arrangement, but this in itself poses no great problem. Many major research libraries here and in Europe operate on a truncated schedule that boggles the mind. At Hood I am certain they would open it up at night and one could work til dawn killed the dark.

Your point about the massiveness of Harold Weisberg's collection overwhelming Sylvia Meagher's is a point worthy of serious consideration and in the event of any possible disposition that would place the collection at Hood it must be carefully defined. In the major research collections in history I have studied in I have found a number of devices utilized by the archivists and libraries to define collections superbly. Also, with the Weisberg material present I see it only enhancing the possible use of Sylvia Meagher's material. I realize this doesn't sound right perhaps, but I do believe it. A researcher must have access to all that is important. This point takes me back to an earlier observation.

How important it will be for a profile of Sylvia Meagher to be available for researchers to have in order to understand what they are dealing with in the investigation as well as clarifying principles of investigation.

Your reflection on the importance of a strong faculty as implementors of research raises an important issue in my mind that I would like to impart to you in my awkward manner. In the years I have been here at UWSP scores of students and scholars have come through here in several forms doing

David Wrone to Roger Feinman, Feb. 17, 1991. re Memorandum Feb. 10/91

academic research on the assassinations, honors papers, master's theses, doctoral theses, books, articles, and the like. Almost all of them were sadly confused, requiring great labor in most cases to set them straight, clarifying the principles, etc., as you can well imagine. In almost all cases again their professors had screwed them up, to use the current phrase. To assume the rightly depicted fine city colleges would in fact generate academic scholars who would be sound is not far fetched of course, but it seems to my experience that serendipity or luck would be more in order unfortunately.

In this connection I would draw your attention to the number of scholarly works Harold Weisberg has generated from his command post in Frederick. These include doctoral dissertations--McKinley's comes to mind; books--my bibliography, Roffman's; Skip Shelby's documentary; etc., plus scads of articles and reviews. It is impressive; it addresses the heart of the future--the scholarly underpinning of this crisis and of all future similar crises.

Another component of having a major depository is the work and money given over to building the ancilliary materials necessary for the continual growth of the collections would be more efficient. For example, books, microfilm, user equipment, staffing, etc. At the same time grantsmanship would be enhanced ~~at~~ with a larger collection where the funding obtained for a conference would bring scholars to use all collections in the archive, pay for microfilm or staff all the collections, and similarly benefit the race not the person. I look at this as becoming a major benefit and urge you to consider this in your thinking.

Finally I would comment that I share your concern for the lack of documentation on Greg Stone's will or other activities connected with the papers. My gut reaction and brief experience is he was sloppy in documentation and personal records and probably in this realm too. Even if he left a "will" I wonder how much attention he might have given to the legal requirements for such a document to be valid?

I have a daughter in medical school in NYC (Mt. Sinai) perhaps some day in the next year I shall be in the city and can invite you out to a meal?

Sincerely

David R. Wrone
1518 Blackberry Lane
Stevens Point, WI
54481

