

6/3/59

Prof. Francis L. Lowenheim
Rice University
Houston, Texas

Dear Mr. Lowenheim,

Enclosed is a copy of today's Washington Post story with Dr. Rhoads' response to the charge of secrecy. I did not see this in yesterday's Post, but I did catch the CBS morning TV new interview relating to it.

This type of general denial of obvious truth is one I have had much experience with in my own work, it is for this purpose that I write you. In my extensive experience in using the archive on the Warren Commission, I have caught to government in the most incredible lies, suppressions, distortions, misrepresentations and partiality. I have several cases of being refused what I asked for on the ground it was classified only to have the identical material provided writers not in a position to understand what they were reading. The predictable result is that an official view is presented in their writing, a view not consistent with the true nature of the documents or their contents. Some of these are quite shocking.

Recently, they have adopted a new device, very long delays in responding and then responding incompletely. I can produce requests for unclassified material now almost a year old and now filled, where all that was necessary was the xeroxing of a page, for which I pay in advance by maintaining a deposit account.

Should you and your colleagues want to make an issue of this, as I hope your dedication to the integrity of scholarship - indeed, of society - dictates, you may have access to my extensive files.

What you are concerned about is much more minor, in the importance of contents, that what is here involved. I can even prove government destruction of the most vital evidence. When I say "prove", I mean I found the receipts for it! We have a government that burns history, burns evidence. It is Orwell.

Sincerely,

Harold Feistberg

FDR Library Secrecy Is Denied by Archivist

Archivist of the United States James B. Rhoads said yesterday that charges that the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, N.Y., concealed presidential papers are untrue and the man who made the charges "should be well aware that such charges are not true."

Dr. Francis L. Loewenheim, a professor at Rice University, has charged that the Hyde Park staff had concealed and held back important presidential letters from him, and thus "sabotaged" his book.

Rhoads said in a statement that "this alleged episode happened three years ago and has

long since been fully investigated."

He said "documents open for research (and this is the vast bulk of those in the Roosevelt as well as other presidential libraries) are impartially open to all searchers."

Loewenheim has been waging a one-man campaign for the past six months for a congressional investigation of the Roosevelt Library. He was joined by 19 other historians on Monday.

In his statement yesterday, Archivist Rhoads said, "It was distressing to read that 19 other historians have signed Dr. Loewenheim's letter of protest. Upon looking over the Roosevelt Library records, I find that 12 of the men have never used the library facilities, four more have not used them for the past ten years, and only the other four have actually done research at Hyde Park during the last decade."

The historians had also complained that a three-volume compilation of President Roosevelt's diplomatic letters in the mid-1930s were published by the Harvard University Press, instead of the normal practice of having it done by the Government Printing Office.

Rhoads said that the U.S. Comptroller General has ruled that when none of the cost of printing is to be paid by the federal government, the work can be done by a private publisher.

And Rhoads added that "to impugn the motives of one of our finest educational institutions is utterly ridiculous."