

The U.S. Bureau of Information File

On Wilfrid Voynich

(From [Voynichiana](#): documents, images, and research illuminating the lives of Wilfrid and Ethel Voynich and of Anne M. Nill, Wilfrid Voynich's assistant and Ethel's life-long companion after Voynich's death.)

The U.S. Bureau of Information File

On Wilfrid Voynich¹

During World War I Voynich came to the attention of the U.S. Bureau of Investigation, the forerunner of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as a possible enemy agent. The records in the BOI's declassified file on Voynich suggest at least two informants mentioned him to the agency. One, W.S. Booth, was a minor writer-scholar of British origin living in Boston with whom Voynich had early on been friendly and to whom he wrote in 1917 (p. 1) hoping to renew their acquaintance. To judge from Voynich's letter, he had previously given Booth photostats of his "Bacon cypher" and Booth had expressed willingness to try decrypting them. Voynich asks Booth if anything ever came of his efforts. He tells Booth the War Department in Washington "is working on the subject" and expresses hope they will succeed in "transliterating" the manuscript.² Voynich's letter aroused Booth's suspicions and he forwarded it to the Department of Justice in Washington³ with a cover letter (p. 3). The BOI file also contains a hand-written, unaddressed, and undated note by Booth (p. 4; a transcription follows on p. 5) arguing both for and against Voynich's trustworthiness. The Department of Justice acknowledged receipt of Booth's letter (p. 6) and there the matter seems to have ended.

Of more consequence was the rumor, which somehow got started in Chicago, that Voynich was in possession of the U.S. War Department cipher. A BOI report of November 22, 1917 (p. 7) states that Voynich had had dinner sometime the previous year with Walter Lichtenstein, a naturalized American citizen of German birth. Lichtenstein was Head Librarian of Northwestern University Library and because of his position a likely customer for Voynich's wares.⁴ Two other persons, unnamed in the BOI document, are reported to

¹ Voynich's declassified BOI file is held at the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland as part of "Investigative Records Relating to German Aliens ('Old German Files'), 1915-20." His file belongs to Record Group 65.2.2. According to NARA these files pertain to "German enemy aliens, German sympathizers, and other individuals suspected of disloyalty, mainly during World War I." Voynich's case number is 33354.

² Voynich had apparently sent off photostats of his Cipher Manuscript to the War Department, possibly to his friend Prof. John M. Manly (see below), hoping to get military codebreakers to work on them - this while war was raging in Europe.

³ Someone at the Department of Justice marked up Voynich's letter with notes and queries about Voynich and his manuscript, including claims that he was anti-British, pro-German, and, evidently to his further discredit, a Jew. See p. 2 for a transcription.

⁴ In addition to buying books and manuscripts for Northwestern, Lichtenstein made purchases on trips to Europe for Harvard University, the University of Chicago, and the Newberry Library of Chicago (see letter of John M. Manly, pp. 17-18). In 1918, in the anti-

have attended the dinner. It is likely that Voynich, as he frequently did, got to talking of his Bacon Cipher and, as he did in his letter to Booth, claimed the War Department in Washington was at work on it. Someone, probably one of Lichtenstein's other guests, misunderstood Voynich's table talk and thought he was claiming to be in possession of the American War Department cipher (as if there were only one). The conversation was reported to the BOI, which ultimately opened a file on Voynich.⁵

The BOI documents contain descriptions of Voynich's sales methods as well as impressions others had of the man, not all of them favorable. One document is a letter (pp. 17-18) from Prof. John M. Manly⁶ of the University of Chicago to a Lieut. Straus (apparently of the War Department) in which Manly strongly defends Voynich against rumors of disloyalty. Manly is under the impression that it was Lichtenstein who reported Voynich to the BOI.

Voynich also came to the attention of the American Protective League, a gang of volunteer snoops who specialized in harassing their fellow citizens, particularly those of German descent, and questioning their loyalty.⁷ Included in the BOI files are reports from the APL, one of which (p. 26) implies that its agents clandestinely entered and searched Voynich's offices in the Aeolian Building, 33 w 42nd Street, possibly with the connivance of the building management.

From BOI reporting we learn that Voynich opened his offices on the 16th floor of the Aeolian Building on January 1, 1917, had been living in the Waldorf Astoria, then moved to the Manhattan Hotel (p. 10); that he paid \$100 a month rent for his offices (p. 45).

Others of Voynich's acquaintance mentioned in these documents are Anne M. Nill (pp. 40, 44) and John Manly's fellow scholar, Edith Rickert (misspelled "Richert," p. 42). Ethel Voynich makes appearances on pp. 7, 20, 40, and 41.

German climate of the times, Lichtenstein was hounded from his post at Northwestern and took a job with the First National Bank of Chicago. He eventually rose to the level of vice president. None of the allegations against him ever came to anything.

⁵ The documents in the file date from late 1917 to late 1920.

⁶ Prof. John M. Manly (1865-1940) had joined the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department in 1915 with the rank of captain in the U.S. Navy. He taught cryptology at the War College in Washington until 1919, when he returned to teaching at Chicago.

⁷ An early exemplar of intelligence outsourcing, the APL was formed in 1917 by a Chicago advertising man named A.M. Briggs. Its main branch disbanded after the Armistice, though local franchises lived on for years thereafter. How the APL heard of Voynich is not known.

WILFRID M. VOYNICH
AEOLIAN HALL
33 WEST 42ND STREET

NEW YORK June 25, 1917.

Mr. W.S. Booth,
Botolph Club,
120 Tremont St.,
Boston, Mass.

(putative)
Roger Bacon

Why?

My dear Mr. Booth:

It is ages since I had correspondence with you. I have no idea even whether or not you are in Boston. Do you remember that you took great interest in my Bacon cypher MS. I wonder what the result was of your attempting to decipher it. Now your War Department is working on the subject and I hope they will be able to transliterate it, with the help of their expert readers. Professor Manly of the University of Chicago is also working on the subject.

I have opened a regular office at the above address to which I am gradually removing my collections of illuminated MSS. and rare books. The first portion, which you have seen, now belongs, with the exception of a few items, to different public institutions in the United States.

If you are in New York while I am here I should be glad to see you again.

Yours sincerely

Wilfrid Voynich

? An Austrian or
a Russian Pole (few)
+ a Prussian or a Sautic British
Naturalized British subject
+ a pretty slick article

Transcription of Notes on Wilfrid Voynich's Letter

To W.S. Booth of June 25, 1917

(Putative)

Roger Bacon

Why? [connected by a line to a phrase circled in Voynich's letter, thence to Voynich's signature, which is underlined numerous times]

An Austrian or

a Russian Pole (Jew)

& and pro-German & an anti-British

naturalized British subject

& a pretty slick article

W. S. BOOTH
ROOM 214
TELEPHONE, MAIN 2089-M
CABLE, "GRAVECORN," BOSTON

emo

120 TREMONT STREET
BOSTON, MASS.
MAY 10
Bureau of Investigation, 7. 1917.
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Department of Justice,

Washington, D. C.

Dear Sirs,

I have no reason to suppose that Mr W.M.Voynich is not solely occupied with his bookselling, but the enclosed letter from him to me may be worth a moment's consideration in view of your reported difficulties with spies.

All I know of Voynich is that he is a well known dealer; that he told me he brought "practically" his whole fortune over here from London in the shape of books and manuscripts; that he appeared here, as I remember, some six months after the war had opened in Europe.

I have understood that he is a British Subject, married to an English-woman; that he is of Austrian birth; a Hebrew; that he is not loyal in his conversation about the land which has adopted him. He professed great distrust of Russia, and admiration of German ability to make good. He may have changed his views by this time.

As there is a possibility that the supposedly Roger Bacon M.S. is being used as a means of communication with some of the departments, I send Mr Voynich's letter to you for your files. Voynich told me that there were few places in Europe with which he was not conversant. He said he had relations with statesmen in his business. He was distinctly a boaster, and a good salesman, and he told fascinatingly mysterious stories of his adventures in search of hidden or lost libraries.

* "close upon
\$1000.000.
So he said."

all this
soon after
his arrival

Yours very truly
W. S. Booth

I have no reason to
suppose that this man is
not what he is, has been
known to be - a bootlicker.
But if he has the run of
the War Dept cipher or other
rooms he will bear a
close watch.

W. S. Smith

Transcription of undated note written by W. S. Booth

I have no reason to
suppose that this man is
not what he is & has been
known to be – a book seller.
But if he has the run of
the War Dept. cipher or signals
rooms he will bear a
close watch.

ACJELP

July 11, 1917.

W. S. Booth, Esq.,

Room 314 - 4120 Tremont Street,

Boston, Mass.

Dear Sir:

The Department is in receipt of your letter of the 7th instant, in which you enclose a letter written you by W. H. Veynich, of New York City, relative to his Babes case.

I thank you for this information.

Yours very truly,

Chief.

LS

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REPORT MADE AT: Charles Daniel Frey.	PLACE WHERE MADE: Chicago, Ill.	DATE WHEN MADE: November 22, 1917.	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: Nov. 22d.
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TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION

In Re: Wilfred Voynich - 33 W. 42d Street, New York City.

Possesses American War Department Cipher

16607

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, ETC.

AT CHICAGO

RECEIVED
DEC 19 1917
Bureau of Investigation
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. Ralph Clarkson, 410 S. Michigan Avenue, reports:

July 12, 1915, there appeared on the front page of the "Tribune" an article about a man named Lichtenstein. He was, and still is the librarian of the Northwestern University. Mr. Lichtenstein was returning from South America, and landed in Genoa or Naples, and was stopped by the authorities. He had in his possession some letters written in German which he was to have passed on to others, and two pass-ports, one German and one American. The American Consul asked for the American pass-port but had to take it by force. He returned to America and the university authorities investigated the case and exonerated him. However, the government refused to issue him another pass-port.

During the past year we have had in Chicago a man by the name of Wilfred N. Voynich, whose present address is 33 W. 42d Street, New York City. He is ostensibly a dealer in fine old manuscripts. He has put it over most of the wealthy Chicagoans. One of our own authorities says that he goes now as a Galician Jew, but that he has not an honest hair on his head. When he was here last year, he was entertained by the Librarian at his house in Evanston, where there were present two other people, a man and a woman. During the dinner he made the statement that he had in his possession the cipher of the American War Department. This Voynich is the husband of a well-known English author Ethel Lillian Voynich, who wrote the "Gadfly". He was better known as the husband of Ethel Lillian Voynich than because of his own merits. He travels a great deal. He brought over a great many supposedly fine manuscripts. He is possibly a German or Austrian.

COPY OF THIS REPORT FURNISHED TO

Chicago Office

Copy New York Office.

Nov. 24th.

It was to one of the people he met at the dinner at the home of Dr. Lichtenstein that he afterwards said that he had in his possession the war code and showed some of its peculiarities.

3335-4



DEC 4 1917
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

CIP-200

34

November 26, 1917.

F. H. Otley, Esq.
P. O. Box 241,
New York, N. Y.

in re: Wilfred Voynich
Neutrality.

Dear Sir:

For your information and such action as you may deem advisable, I am enclosing report of Special Agent Frey on Wilfred Voynich, 20 E. 42d Street, New York City.

Very truly yours,

Division Superintendent.

CIP-6

ISC

33354

REPORT MADE BY:	PLACE WHERE MADE:	DATE WHEN MADE:	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE:
A.W. Willett	New York City	Dec. 10, 1917	Dec. 7th

TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION.

IN RE: WILFRED M. DE VOYNICH
In Possession of American War Department Cipher

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

Pursuant to instructions from Assistant Division Superintendent Baker, based on report of Charles Daniel Frey of Chicago of Nov. 22, 1917, I inquired of renting agents Ellen and G.

Jefferey of 35 W. 42nd St, which is the office building in which de Voynich is located, and they informed me that he has occupied offices there since Jan. 1, 1917. He is a man quite intellectual and evidently very wealthy. From there Mr. Ellen referred me to the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. They informed me that he has lived there for over a year and occupies a very expensive suite. They consider him a valued guest, speak of him as a gentleman and know nothing wrong about him.

This investigation will be continued.

130

REPORT MADE BY: A. W. Willett	PLACE WHERE MADE: New York City	DATE WHEN MADE: Dec. 11, 1917	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: Dec. 9th
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TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION:

IN RE: WILFRED M. DE VOYNICH
In possession of American War Department Cipher.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

Continuing on the above, I called upon the Bank of British North America, located at 52 Wall St., and consulted Mr. W. T. Oliver and Mr. P. C. Harrison, who are the agents of the bank. They informed me that de Voynich was introduced to them in 1914 by Levetas and Company of 194 Bishops Gate, London in which they spoke of him as a valued client. All of his transactions at the bank have been records and remittances to L. ovetus and Company, supposedly from the sale of manuscripts. They consider him financially strong, but could tell me nothing further about his habits and activities in other matters.

REPORT MADE BY: A. W. Willett	PLACE WHERE MADE: New York City	DATE WHEN MADE: Dec. 18, 1917	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: Dec. 11th
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TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION:

IN RE: WILFRID M. DE VOYNICH
In possession of War Department Cypher

RECEIVED
DEC 21 1917
Bureau of Investigation
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.:

~~113524~~ 33357

Continuing on the above, I called on Mr. de Voynich at his office in the Aeolian Hall Building. I find him to be a man of great intellect and of very suave manner. He told me that he was born in Telshchi, Kovno, Russia. He is about sixty-four years of age. His British passport, No. 137797, shows that he left Falmouth, England, Sept. 22, 1916, which was the last time he was on the other side. He further showed me his ^{British} naturalization papers dated April 25, 1904.

Concerning the cipher which he is accused of possessing, he has shown me a book which he himself entitled "A Great Cypher Codex of Roger Bacon of the XIIIth Century." This book is quite antiquated in appearance and entirely in cipher. He values it at more than \$100,000. He further informs me that he has had three pages of this book photostated and sent to Professor Manley, who is now Captain in the United States Army, located at the War College in Washington and is training American officers for service in France in cipher work. It seems to be his purpose, if possible, to have this manuscript translated so that it may be of use to our Government. In this connection, he further refers us to Dr. Garrison, librarian in the Surgeon General's office at Washington. He denies absolutely ever having made the statement that he possesses the American War Department cipher, but does say, however, that he has worked hard thinking that this manuscript would be of some service to the United States Government for cipher purposes.

As to Professor Walter Lichtenstein, librarian of the Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, de Voynich says

COPY OF THIS REPORT FURNISHED TO:

Chicago office.

A. W. Willett - New York City - For Dec. 11, 1917.

In re: WILFRED M. DE VOYNICH
 (In possession of War Department Cypher)

that he has met him on several occasions upon visits to the Northwestern University for purposes of exhibiting manuscripts. He further says that he has lunched and dined with Professor Lichtenstein, but never made any statements such as he has been charged with. He further showed me a registration card indicating that he was registered for military service in England from 88 Queens Road, Richmond. Further than this, he has registered for the military census of the State of New York, in which E. P. Goodrich of New York City is director.

His naturalization paper spelled his name Wilfred Michael Habdank Woynicz.

He informs me that he has lived in England twenty-five years, and as above stated was naturalized ^{there} in 1904.

It occurs to the writer that by reason of the fact that he is a very intelligent man, it seems strange that his accent is that of a man who has not been speaking the English language long. His appearance is more that of an Austrian than of a Jew. He opened all of his papers to me very gladly, and his story so far as it went was plausible.

De Voynich informs me that he has five nephews in the British Army.

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

December 19, 1917.

Recd Dec 22, 1917

Mr. A. Bruce Bielaski,
Chief, Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Bielaski:

Please refer to Agent A. W. Willett's report from New York City for Dec. 8, 1917, subject - Wilfred M. De Voynich - in possession of American War Department Cipher.

The report above referred to, and one by the same agent for Dec. 7, are the only reports received by this office on this matter. Will you be so kind as to let me know what information there is at hand on this subject. I would appreciate your letting me have this information as soon as you possibly can.

Very sincerely yours,

R. Van Daman

Colonel, General Staff,
Chief, Military Intelligence Section.

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*Letm and case file
to Van Daman*

BB:ALW

December 22, 1917.

33357

Colonel R. H. Van Deman,
General Staff,
War Department.

Dear Colonel Van Deman:

Referring to your letter of December 19, 1917,
10516-354, I hand you herewith case file on Wilfred M.
De Vognich, in regard to whom you requested further
information.

As this is a part of the files of this depart-
ment, will you please return it at your earliest convenience?

Very truly yours,

Chief.

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

33354

December 28, 1917.

7-11-18 RDR

RECEIVED
DEC 30 1917
Bureau of Investigation
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. A. B. Bielaski,
Chief, Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Bielaski:

Please refer to Charles Daniel Frey's report from Chicago for November 22, subject Wilfred Voynich of 33 W. 42d Street, New York City, who is said to have possession of the American War Department cipher. I attach herewith copy of report from Captain Manly who knows Mr. Voynich. From this report you will note that the report against this man would seem to be a matter of personal malice.

Very sincerely,

R. A. D. Quinn

Colonel, General Staff,
Chief, Military Intelligence Section.

Encl.
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33354

December 27, 1917.

From: Capt. Manly.

To: Lieut. Straus.

Subject: W. M. Voynich.

1. There is no ground for suspicion in regard to Mr. Voynich's cipher manuscript. It was written in England over six hundred years ago, and neither has, nor can have, the slightest bearing on the present situation.

Mr. Voynich obtained the manuscript some ten years ago when he purchased the library of one of the medietized royal families of Europe for the lump sum --- as is reported --- of five million dollars. The manuscript itself he values at about \$150,000. He is very anxious to have it read, and has given photostat copies of several pages of it to various cipher experts in England, France, and America. I received seven pages from him last winter and have worked at them a good deal, without success as yet.

2. I have seen a good deal of Mr. Voynich and have talked with him a good deal about the war. He is not pro-German but strongly and consistently pro-English.

3. Mr. Voynich is by birth a Pole. He settled in London more than twenty-five years ago, married an Englishwoman, and has, I think, become a British subject. - He has always been strongly against the treatment of Poland, and if I am not mistaken has supported various movements to secure Polish nationality. He has several nephews in the British army --- one of whom is one of the leading English authorities on aeroplanes. He told me that he himself would volunteer if it were not for his age.

4. That he ever made such a remark as Mr. Lichtenstein reports is incredible. If he had been in the way of saying such things, he would certainly have made such boasts in my presence last year and year before last, when I had no connection with the U. S. Army and when he was trying to interest me in the decipherment of his cipher manuscript. If Mr. Lichtenstein gave the impression that Voynich's cipher manuscript is a suspicious document, the only possible inference is that Mr. Lichtenstein lied and lied maliciously. Mr. Lichtenstein is by profession a librarian and purchaser of books for various libraries. He has made several trips to Europe to buy books for the libraries of Northwestern University, Harvard, the University of Chicago, the Newberry Library of Chicago, and other institutions. He knows perfectly

well --- as a part of his professional knowledge --- that Voynich's manuscript is an ancient document of the thirteenth century and that it has no bearing of any sort upon the present war. Furthermore he cannot have taken luncheon with Voynich at any time during the present war without hearing from him some expression of loyalty to England and horror at German atrocities. The only conclusion I can reach is that Mr. Lichtenstein has some personal grudge against Voynich which he is endeavoring to gratify or that he is himself pro-German.

Captain, U. S. A.

Attached to Cipher Bureau,
 Military Intelligence Section,
 War College Division.

10516-354 H.I. 4.

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file

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

33354

January 7, 1918.

JAN 10 1918
Bureau of
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. A. Bruce Bielaski,
Chief, Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Bielaski:

I return herewith the file you loaned me with your letter of December 22, 1917, regarding Wilfred M. De Voynich. In this connection the following information from an officer in this section who knows De Voynich personally may be of interest to you:

"As to Voynich's cipher manuscript, I am bringing copies of it to the War College, and Lt. Yardley and I are going to work on it. I do not think Mr. Voynich ever asserted that it was in the possession of the War Department. If he thought it could be of any service to the Department, it was only because it appears to be an excellent cipher, inasmuch as it has for several years defied the effort of experts to decipher it, and he thought it might be, as it undoubtedly would, of value to the War Department to possess so valuable a system, but obviously it can not be placed at the disposal of the Government until we succeed in ascertaining what the system is.

"If Mr. Voynich said that he was acquainted with the army cipher, he said nothing more than any non-military man could have said who had read the published statements to the effect that the army was using the cipher disc. This has been a matter of common knowledge for many years."

Very sincerely yours,

R. H. Van Deman

Colonel, General Staff,
Chief, Military Intelligence Section.

By

Herbert Rison

Major, U. S. A.

Lye Green House,
Withyham, Sussex.

40 Murrey Road,
Wimbledon,

27 Jan. 1918.

My dear Manly.

Your letter has been forwarded to me here. I will make some enquiries when I get home and talk to Herbert, if I can get hold of him. He also has taken a commission, but I write at once to say that I have known Voynich for many years, and have the highest opinion of him as a man of honor and integrity. His reasons for working in America are mainly business reasons, but he is also immensely pleased with the opportunities offered him for lecturing. The state of his wife's health amply explains any break down in a plan for her joining him. I think the idea that he is an enemy spy quite absurd.

Faithfully yours,

A. W. Pollard.

February 27, 1918.

Mr. A. Bruce Bielaski,
Chief, Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Bielaski:

Please refer to your letter of December 22nd, initialed "S.B." concerning Wilfred E. Vornich. I find that the file you so kindly sent me on that date was not returned to you with my letter of January 7th and I enclose it herewith, also memorandum to Capt. Manly of this Section from Mr. Pollard, of Sussex, England.

Please pardon the oversight in not returning your file to you with my letter of January 7th.

Very sincerely yours,

R. H. Van Dusen,
Colonel, General Staff,
Chief, Military Intelligence Division,
Executive Division,

By:

Henry T. Hunt,
Capt. Inf. U. S. A.

cc

encl.

4131-124
M-I-4.12WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

February 27, 1918.

RECEIVED
FEB 28 1918
BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICEMr. A. Bruce Bielaski,
Chief, Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Bielaski:

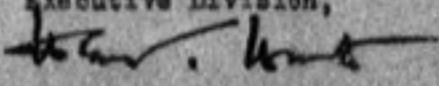
Please refer to your letter of December 22nd, initialed "B.B." concerning Wilfred M. Voynich. I find that the file you so kindly sent me on that date was not returned to you with my letter of January 7th and I enclose it herewith, also memorandum to Capt. Manly of this Section from Mr. Pellard, of Sussex, England.

Please pardon the oversight in not returning your file to you with my letter of January 7th.

Very sincerely yours,

R. H. Van Deman,
Colonel, General Staff,
Chief, Military Intelligence Branch.,
Executive Division,

By:


Henry T. Hunt,
Capt. Inf. U. S. N. A.

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33354

REPORT MADE AT: AMER. PROTECTIVE LEAG.	PLACE WHERE MADE: NEW YORK CITY.	DATE WHEN MADE: JULY 29 1918.	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: 7-17-18.
TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION: IN RE: WILFRED DE VOYNICH. (Alleged pro-German Activities)			
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.: A.P.L. NO. 8883			

(Investigation by Mr. Lloyd A. Wimpfheimer, A.P.L.)

This office is in receipt of the following letter dated July 11th, 1918 from Mr. Edward M. Salomon of 174 William Street:

"Wilfred De Voynich, Aeblian Bldg. 43rd Street suspected of pro-German activities, by Kenneth F. Jeffery, the agent of the building.

< Wilfred De Voynich is reported to have stated to be in possession of the code of the United States War Department.

This man was a friend of one Dr. Strauss, also a tenant of this building and who was recently interned. He banks through the British Bank of North America and is extremely well supplied with money."

The matter was assigned to Mr. Lloyd A. Wimpfheimer of this League for investigation and he reports as follows:

"From interview with Mr. K. F. Jeffery agent of the building, it brings forth the information that some time ago an agent, representing himself to come from Attorney General Gregory of Washington, called and investigated this subject. Mr. Jeffery was informed, that it was reported that the subject had a War Department Code Book, but the Washington agent called on De Voynich, and said "he was convinced that this book was an old code book which De Voynich had in his possession, and which he had, as he is a dealer in old books".

This is the explanation that De Voynich gave. At that time De Voynich's office was thoroughly gone through and examined, but he has two or three safes which could not be gotten into. Nothing suspicious was found in his office. It is natural to suppose that anything of a suspicious character could be locked in the safe.

When Dr. Isaac Strauss's office was examined later on De

July 29, 1918.

Voynich's card was found on Strauss's desk, and Strauss seemingly knew nothing of De Voynich.

De Voynich is reported to be a Pole. His wife is an English woman and is well known as the authoress of a book known as "The Gadfly". He is known to have big transactions in books, as he is a dealer in old manuscripts and old books, in fact one of the largest dealers in the world. He is reported to have been sent to Siberia by the CZAR, previous to this last one, for publishing letters which professed to show Russian connection with Germany in the war of 1870. He was afterwards pardoned. He is reported to be an ardent student of the Russian Revolution, and is well versed in Russian affairs. He has given many lectures in this country, and is highly intellectual. He has offices in San Francisco, New York, London, Rome and also Petrograd.

The only references given when he took his office in New York was the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, British Bank of North America, which reference will be investigated.

Went through the files at 13 Park Row and found a report on file under date of December 10th, 1917 written by A. E. Willett based on report from Charles B. Frey of Chicago of November 22nd, 1917. The only investigation that the report showed was a call on Mr. Jeffery which gave nothing, and a call at the Waldorf Astoria in reference to the subject, from which place he reports: "he (the subject), has lived there over a year, occupies a very expensive suite, and they consider him a valued guest, speak of him as a gentleman, and know nothing wrong about him." The investigation by Mr. Willett was instigated by the report that De Voynich was in possession of a code of the U. S. War Department. Willet says that investigation is to be continued but

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no further report has been made.

Also went through very carefully the file of Dr. Isaac Strasse who is now interned, but could find no mention or any clue, or connection with De Voynich.

At the agency of the Bank of British North America (where De Voynich has his account), I interviewed Mr. Harrison, one of the managers, and he told me "he had been interviewed in reference to the subject some six months ago", "that De Voynich was introduced to them by their London office, either shortly before the European war began, or shortly afterwards. Mr. Harrison could not remember exactly when, and was spoken of by them (the London office), as a loyal British subject. The monies deposited by the subject seemed to come from colleges and professors. Mr. Harrison thought they were the proceeds of lectures and sales of manuscripts. Money drawn out is sent to a concern by the name of Levetus & Co., registered as shippers with offices at 194 Bishopsgate, London. These people are classified as exporters and shippers to the Far East. Mr. Harrison said that for his own protection and for information, he was going to write to London to get more definite information on De Voynich, this being the second inquiry which he had had. Further states, that he has naturally watched the account very carefully, and has been unable to find anything wrong or suspicious with it. He describes De Voynich as a man of about 5 ft. 11 in., fairly heavy mustache, thin cheeked. Wears gold glasses. Somewhere between 50 and 60 years of age. About 175 lbs. in weight. His offices are as follows: 68 Shaftsbury Avenue, London, England via Ghibellina 110, Florence, Italy, 211 Rue St. Honore, Paris France, Centners²ever, 1 aka Marozalkowska, Warsaw, Russia. There is no record of an office in San Francisco as reported yesterday. People approached say "the

IN RE: WILFRED DE VOYNICH.

-4-

July 29, 1918.

main office is in London, and he claims British citizenship. Is known to have office in London approximately 25 years. His specialty seems to be manuscripts of the 15th and 16th century which are valuable, and for which he asks tremendous prices, yet he seems to be able to get them. He formerly came over here once a year with a trunk load of manuscripts, and sold them in this country.

It seems impossible in the investigation to get anything definite, or anything which would show any pro-Germanism, or any-

thing against De Voynich, yet it seems to the writer, that the possibilities of either propaganda or pro-German activities could very easily and possibly be arranged for with the connections and facilities which De Voynich evidently has.

As stated in previous report, his room has been thoroughly searched and with the exception of the safes, and De Voynich has also been questioned, and naturally would be suspicious, and it will be impossible for anybody, without absolute authority to get anything out of him. However, it might be assumed that a search of the safes might reveal something.

The only lecture that the writer found that he has delivered, was some months ago at the University of Chicago. Perhaps it might be wise to find out through Chicago what the lecture was, the nature of it, etc.

Interviewed several people in his line of business, who are among the largest in the business. First one interviewed was George E. Smith, #8 East 45th Street says "he has known him for a long while, and did not want to do business with him. He said " he could not give any definite reason, but did not trust him, and did not think him straight." Smith also said, that quite a long while ago, prior to the war, De Voynich said that he was able to get manuscripts out of some of the old

IN RE: WILFRED DE VOYNICH.

-5-

July 29, 1918.

castles in Germany, and was always boasting that he could get manuscripts better than anyone else." Second man interviewed said "he had a feeling of distrust for De Voynich, not through reason of thinking him pro-German, or anything of this sort, but simply that he did not believe the man". In this respect people interviewed seem to be of the same opinion and mind as those previously interviewed, viz; De Voynich is a man who had no hesitancy in tampering with the truth, consequently is a man who does not seem to be very well liked nor trusted. All say he claims to be British citizen. From what I could learn, he does considerable business with Charles Sessler, #1314 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa. who is a handler of rare books, and also with Dr. Rosenbach, #1320 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Of the latter I am told he is believed to be a personal friend. It is quite possible that quite some information might be gotten from these two sources just mentioned. It was impossible for the writer to get any more information than already gotten. From information gathered, as given in yesterday's report, De Voynich is a specialist in 15th and 16th century manuscripts, and in first printings. He has handled some American books, but can find no trace of any published later than date of 1800, and he is not known to have any in his possession published later than that date, therefore, unless the War Department Code Book is an exceedingly old one, there is no reason why he should have it in his possession. In speaking to various people in his line of business, they could find no reason for his having an office in Warsaw, although the office at Florence and London is understandable for use in his line of business.

The firm of Lovetus Co. seems to be unknown to anybody in

July 29, 1918.

the book world.

Inquiry made at the Waldorf Astoria from the Assistant Manager gave no further result than previously reported as having been gotten by Mr. Willet. De Voynich moved a couple of months ago to the Hotel Manhatta, but no further information of value could be gotten there. The Waldorf Astoria reported that he had few visitors, and while there is nothing against him, he impressed them as being a queer sort of man.

As previously reported, the only possible source of information which suggests itself to the writer which might reveal something is going through the safes, which the writer could not do without the proper authority. An interview with the subject also would seem to be useless unless properly followed up with further action."

MG

PLAIN

London,

Dated September 13th, 1919.,

. Rec'd 3:28 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

33754

~~Thirteenth~~

Wladimir Michael Voynich naturalized British subject of Russian Polish origin, recently residing in United States several years desires returning to lecture on medieval art and history Universities Michigan, Western Reserve, Cleveland Art Institute and other places and to look after business at Aeolian Hall, New York. References Reverend Frank W. Gunsaulus, President Armour Institute Technology, Chicago and Professor Manly, recently at War College, Washington, possibly now care Chicago University. Desires if possible to sail from Havre September twenty seventh. Please expedite instructions regarding visa. Stacostrep.

FMM

Chas - 9/27/19
HOLLIS.

Clive

Wash - 9/25/19

33354

Ch

ADDRESS REPLY TO
CHIEF, BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
AND REFER TO INITIALS.

Department of Justice, JTS:LMR.

Bureau of Investigation,

Washington, September 23, 1919.

J.P.D.

M 2570 - Har Dept - Pr 3050
M 1794 - Har College

MEMORANDUM FOR Mr. Ahern:

The Department of State has referred to us for investigation the visa application of Wilfrid Michael Voynich, a British subject coming from London, who gives as reference Professor Manly, recently at the War College, Washington, D.C. but possibly now on his way to Chicago.

Pr 3050

23

Manly of George
M J =

Will you please see if Professor Manly can be located. Chicago has been advised also.

Frank B. ...

333 54

Wilfrid

C O P Y .

Chicago, Ill. Sept. 24, 1919.

Dep't of Justice

Armour Institute and University of Chicago
know Wilfrid Voynich to be all right and earnestly request
permission for him to sail to the United States.

F.W. Ganssulus,
President.

33354

JTS:LR.

September 22, 1919.

Brennan,
Federal Building,
Chicago, Ill.

Vice Alfred Michael Veysich, reference Reverend Frank
W. Conzulus, president Armour Institute Technology,
Chicago, and Professor Healy, case Chicago University.

Barks,
Chief.

JTS:LMR.

September 23, 1919.

Morton,
Federal Building,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Via Wilfrid Michael Vorys, reference Cleveland
Art Institute.

Burke,
Chief.

JTS:JMR.

September 25, 1919.

MEMORANDUM FOR Mr. ALEXR:

The Department of State has referred to us for investigation the visa application of Wilfrid Michael Voynich, a British subject coming from London, who gives as reference Professor Manly, recently at the War College, Washington, D.C. but possibly now on his way to Chicago.

Will you please see if Professor Manly can be located. Chicago has been advised also.

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REPORT MADE BY:	PLACE WHERE MADE:	DATE WHEN MADE:	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE:
George L. Wallace	Washington, D.C.	9/25/19	9/24/19
TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION:			
IN RE: PROF. (DR.) JOHN M. MANLY (Confidential Investigation) Reference given by Wilfrid Michael Voynich in visa' application			
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.:			
AT WASHINGTON -			
<p>Pursuant to instructions from Special Agent Ahern in Charge, and in furtherance of a memorandum from Assistant Director and Chief, Mr. Frank Burke, Agent learned from the Military Intelligence that <u>Prof. John M. Manly</u> is now located at the University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.</p>			
<p>This investigation is considered closed and referred to Special Agent Ahern for further consideration.</p>			
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REPORT MADE BY: George L. Wallace	PLACE WHERE MADE: Washington, D.C.	DATE WHEN MADE: 9/25/19	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: 9/24/19
TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGES OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION: IN RE: PROF. (DR.) JOHN M. MANLY (Confidential Investigation) Reference given by Wilfrid Michael Voynich in visé' Application			

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

AT WASHINGTON -

Pursuant to instructions from Special Agent Ahern in Charge, and in furtherance of a memorandum from Assistant Director and Chief, Mr. Frank Burks, Agent learned from the Military Intelligence that Prof. John M. Manly is now located at the University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

This investigation is considered closed and referred to Special Agent Ahern for further consideration.

B/C
9/25/19

333 54

REPORT MADE BY: H. N. ALLEN	PLACE WHERE MADE: CHICAGO, ILL.	DATE WHEN MADE: SEPT. 26, 1919.	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: SEPT. 25, 1919
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TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION

In re: Wilfrid Michael Voynich,
Alias Matter.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

AT CHICAGO

Continuing above investigation, Agent to-day got in touch with Rev. Frank W. Gunsaulus, 2919 Prairie Ave., who stated to Agent that he had known subject for twenty-five years as a dealer in old and rare manuscripts, and that informant and a Mr. Jones, owner of the Minneapolis Journal, the Anderson Art Galleries of New York City, the firm of J. P. Morgan & Co., and others are his customers. Dr. Gunsaulus stated that Jones had purchased over \$50,000 worth of manuscripts through subject. He also gave the name of Chas. L. Richerts, a wealthy man with offices in the 1st National Bank, Chicago, as having particular knowledge of subject.

Dr. Gunsaulus informed Agent that subject, who has often visited his home, is Polish by birth and a British citizen; that he is a man of very high standing and that his wife, who is an authoress of international reputation, for many years has stood at the head of various relief organizations, with particular reference to Belgium and Poland, and that he, Dr. Gunsaulus, and others have been sending large sums of money to European relief agencies for proper distribution through the efforts of subject's wife.

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Dr. Gunsaulus stated that subject was intensely loyal through the war period, and it was through his patriotic efforts that Lichtenstein, who was a direct representative of Count Von Bernstorff was apprehended, in connection with his efforts at the Northwestern University; also that subject

In re: Wilfrid Michael Voynich,
 Visa Matter.

assisted in disclosing the real identity of Hugo Munsterburg, another German spy, who, it will be recalled, traveled through Mexico during the war period in an endeavor to incite a revolution there.

Dr. Cunsulus informed Agent that he had often told subject that he would be a ruined man financially if his patriotic efforts became known spread, and that he realized this but still did everything in his power to show his loyalty to the United States. Dr. Cunsulus stated that his prediction had come true and that no doubt subject was endeavoring to return to this country with a large number of valuable manuscripts which he had recently collected and which he believed should be kept in this country.

He also stated that the Armour Institute of Technology was under lasting obligations to subject for services rendered. At the conclusion of the interview informant stated that he would be glad even to take the matter up with Washington personally if necessary to see that subject was allowed immediate entry to the United States, and that numerous Washington officials had knowledge of the facts as given by him to Agent.

Agent also wishes to state that he has carefully reviewed the files of the Department comprehending reports of Special Agent Chas. D. Fry for November 22, 1917 wherein an interview with Ralph Clarkson, who is one of the best known portrait painters of Chicago. Mr. Clarkson states having knowledge that Voynich's address was at that time 33 West 42nd Street, New York and his occupation a dealer in old manuscripts and that he had put it over many wealthy Chicagoians also that Government authorities claim he has not an honest hair on his head. Clarkson goes on to state that subject is the husband of the well

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In re Wilfrid Michael Voynich
Visa Matter.

known author Ethel Lillian Voynich who wrote the "GADFLY"
better
and is ~~XXX~~ known as her husband than because of his own
merits.

Again there is a report dated December 11, 1917 whereing
Special Agent Willets of New York claims a personal interview
with subject who had an office in the Aeolian Hall Building,
New York describing him as being a man of great intellect ual
ability, place of birth Telchi in the Province of Kovno,
Russia, sixty four years old, British passport number 137797
showing departure from Falsmouth, England September 22, 1916.
He also stated that subject carried British naturalization
papers dated April 25, 1904 which confirms statement made by
Dr. Gunsaulus to special Agent Allen. Subject showed Agent
Willets a book entitled "The Great Cypher Codex of Roger Bacon
of the XIIIth Century" and valued at \$100,000. He said he
was sending a copy to Professor Hanley of the University of
Chicago but at that time a Captain in the U. S. Army located
at the Washington Law College whose duties comprehended
training U. S. Army officers to cypher work in France.

Further report will be made.

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REPORT MADE BY: Bliss Morton	PLACE WHERE MADE: Cleveland, O.	DATE WHEN MADE: Sept. 25, 1919	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: Sept. 24/19
TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE: WILFRED MICHAEL VOYNEIGH Visa investigation.			

33354

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

At Cleveland:

The telegram from the Bureau requesting this investigation gave the Cleveland Art Institute as reference. Agent connected with the Cleveland Art Institute and talked with Mr. Henry T. Bailey, the Dean of that institution. Dean Bailey stated that Subject is a dealer in old lettering, fine old manuscripts, books, etc.; that he is well to do, with great resources; well-known in the art educational world. Witness knew Subject only a short time last winter when Subject was in Cleveland with an exhibit at the Cleveland Art Museum. Witness has, however, known of Subject for a considerable period of time. He knew nothing concerning Subject personally but referred Agent to Mr. Whiting of the Cleveland Art Museum.

Mr. F. A. Whiting, Director of the Cleveland Art Museum, states he has known Subject by reputation for a number of years; that Subject is a very important man in the field of fine books, old manuscripts, etc.; that Subject was for a larger portion of last year in America, and was in Cleveland last winter. He further states that Subject is now coming to help the Cleveland Art Museum arrange for an exhibition of manuscripts and books and is expected to sail from England about September 28th. Witness has met Subject a number of times but could not say that he is intimately acquainted with him. He believes Subject to be a Russian; ^{that} he has been in England a number of years; believes him to be a naturalised British subject. He states he believes Subject's wife to be English born and an authoress. One of her books attracting wide attention was "The Gaily." Witness states that Subject was present at a

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In re: WILFRED MICHAEL VOYNICH.

staff meeting of the Cleveland Art Museum one day and gave a talk and witness was impressed that Subject greatly sympathized with the Allies and was opposed to the Central Powers. Witness could not recall any expression of Subject concerning the various phases of Socialism or radicalism, or the Russian, or Bolshevist, question. He stated that Subject had an exhibit at the Hollenden Hotel in Cleveland a short time while here. He referred Agent to the librarians at the Cleveland Public Library, who were reported to have had ^{closer} ~~greater~~ association with Subject while in Cleveland. He stated he had Subject's letterhead before him giving an office number at 33 West 42d Street, New York, which letterhead also indicated that Subject's secretary and assistant was Miss A. M. Will.

Agent called at the City Public Library and talked to Mr. C. P. Vitz, assistant librarian. Mr. Vitz stated that he met Subject on several occasions last year while Subject was in Cleveland. He states that this was Subject's first visit to Cleveland although he had been in the U. S. many times before. Subject is a collector and a salesman of rare old books, manuscripts, etc. None of his books are newer than the seventeenth century and many of his manuscripts go back to the 13th, 12th, and 11th centuries, and earlier. Informant met Subject repeatedly last winter and states that what information he could give Agent concerning Subject's history would be only what Subject had given him; that is, that Subject comes from Polish or Gipsy parents, though he believes he is a naturalized British subject. Either Subject's wife or mother is a well-known English authoress, one of her books being "The Gadfly." Informant does not believe Subject is ~~very~~ close to the Poles and quotes Subject as saying last winter that if the Poles were given all the territory they claimed they would take almost all Europe. He states that Subject had a display for 2 or 3 weeks at the Hollenden Hotel last winter and interested several

In re: WILFRED MICHAEL VOYNICH.

local people in purchasing some of his books. He also had an exhibit at the Cleveland Art Museum. Informant thinks Subject will be at the Library Association meeting at Youngstown, O., next month. Subject's plan is to take a considerable collection of books and manuscript to one of the larger cities, locate himself in a prominent place and where he can advantageously display his goods, and invite interest and customers. He states that Subject's collection of books and mss. in Cleveland last year might have been valued at perhaps half a million dollars. He states Subject's headquarters are in London, with branch offices in New York, Paris, and either Rome or Florence, Italy. Subject's purpose in coming to the U.S. is purely on business connected with his mss. and books, Subject has made perhaps 9 trips across the ocean since war was declared and this will be the second trip since the armistice was signed. He has never heard Subject express himself on the subject of Socialism or the allied "isms" except to regret that many rare libraries in Russia were destroyed since the revolutionists came into power.

Agent got in connection with Mr. Paul Feiss of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, who stated he had known Subject many years; that Subject is a big bookman in London; that he came to Mr. Feiss last year with letters of introduction and Mr. Feiss bought several books from him and even had him at his home in a social way. He states Subject is unusually intelligent. He believes Subject to be a citizen of Great Britain but believes he was born in Poland. He states Subject is very much opposed to the present Russian government. He knew of nothing in Subject's conduct or utterances that would indicate that Subject was friendly with radicals, or that Subject was opposed to the present form of government of the U.S. He said Subject appeared to be proud of his British citizenship. In view of the fact that Subject's office in the U.S. is in New York City, it might be possible to obtain more information concerning his history by investigation in New York.

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REPORT MADE BY: E. J. Allen	PLACE WHERE MADE: Chicago, Ill.	DATE WHEN MADE: Sept. 26, 1919	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: Sept. 24, 1919
TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE (CHANGE IN NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION) In re <u>Wilfrid Michael Voynich</u> Visa Matter.			

33354

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

AT CHICAGO

On receipt of the following telegram from the Chief:

"Visa Wilfrid Michael Voynich reference Reverend Frank W Gonsaulus President Armour Institute Technology Chicago and Professor Manly care Chicago University."

Agent proceeded to the University of Chicago for the purpose of locating Prof. John M. Manly, who is given as one of the references, where he was informed that Professor Manly was probably at Lake Zurich, but that definite information might be obtained by going to the English Department, which is conducted by Professor Manly.

Agent proceeded to the English Department, which was locked up. At the office of the registrar of the college, Agent was given the professor's Chicago address, northwest corner of 58th St. and Woodlawn Ave., where he went and interviewed Mrs. Patrick, sister of Professor Manly, who stated that Professor Manly would return home in the evening. Agent then interrogated her concerning subject, and she said that she knew her brother had on various occasions purchased rare old manuscripts of subject which he brought from Europe at various times and sold to connoisseurs in America. She stated that she also knew that subject's wife was an authoress of international reputation, but she did not know the titles of any of the books which she had written. She also gave Agent the name of Edith Richert, who, she stated, is a very wealthy Chicago woman, also a customer of subject's.

Agent ascertained that this Professor

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In re: Wilfrid Michael Voynich,
Visa Matter.

employed by the United States government during the war period to decipher codes, and was at that time connected with the military intelligence of the government.

Agent will use every effort to get in touch with Professor Manly and secure further information. His telephone number is Hyde Park 6912; address, 5760 Woodlawn Ave.

Further report will be made.

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REPORT MADE BY John A. Connolly	PLACE WHERE MADE New York City	DATE WHEN MADE Oct. 2, 1919	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE Sept. 30
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TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION

IN RE: DR. WILFRED MICHAEL VOYNICH.
VISA MATTER.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

Report also from Cleveland on this party.

Acting under instructions from Special Agent McGee I called at 33 West 42nd Street, this city, which is the large Aeolian building and interviewed subject's secretary, Miss A. N. Hill. She tells me he has been in London since June 8th and wants to engage passage from Havre, France, to the United States. They have tenanted the building for two and a half years. That he is a British citizen.

I interviewed a letter carrier on the same floor namely the 16th and he tells me that there is very little mail comes there at present on account of Mr. Voynich's absence but this day he received three or four foreign newspapers. I then went and interviewed the agent of the building, a Mr. Jeffery on the 10th floor. Mr. Jeffery is a very intelligent young man and is extremely suspicious of Mr. Voynich. The rent of the suite has been paid ever since they occupied it by checks direct by the British bank of North America and last month August the rent being \$100 a check was sent to the agent for \$100,000. He thinks there is nothing significant about this except a mistake of the bank but he is sure there is something mysterious about this alleged British citizen. When taking the suite two and a half years ago he did not say "I will take it" His words were "I am taking it." Mr. Jeffery informs me that he is an extremely marked man and has all the appearances of untold wealth, wearing one of the most expensive fur coats he has laid his eyes on in many a day. He says that he will continue to observe him and his advice to me is to keep him under surveillance. Mr. Jeffery is a member of the American

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Protective League and during the war he states he did very effective work with some of his tenants, who were suspicious in the extreme and received a letter from the War Department commending him for his activities.

Matter continued.

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REPORT MADE BY: John A. Connelly	PLACE WHERE MADE: New York City.	DATE WHEN MADE: Oct. 8, 1919.	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: Oct. 1
TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE-CHARACTER OF VIOLATION OF WRITTEN ORDERS-REGISTRATION IN RE: D. WILFRED MICHAEL VOYNICH			
VISA INVESTIGATION.		35 W. 42 ST. AEOLIAN BLDG. N.Y.	
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.			

Upon further instructions from Agent McGee, had a long earnest talk with the agent of the Aeolian Bldg., Mr. Jeffery. I intimated to Mr. Jeffery about "If the Poles were given all the territory they claim they would take almost all Europe." He furnished me a map, now in this office which would prove his jealousy in this remark as an Austrian subject. He, Jeffery has him down as a Galician Jew. He also is suspicious of him of an incident that happened on Armistice day when Bolshevik ~~circ~~ circulars were thrown from windows of the Aeolian Bldg., above the 10th floor. Voynich's office is on the 16th floor.

Case to be continued further on information in Cleveland reports.

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REPORT MADE BY: R. N. ALLEN	PLACE WHERE MADE: CHICAGO, ILL.	DATE WHEN MADE: OCT. 9, 1919.	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: OCT. 1, 1919.
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TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION.

In re: Wilfrid Michale Voynich,
VISA Matter.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

AT CHICAGO

This afternoon Agent again proceeded to the home of Professor Manley, where he closed the matter of references in above case by interrogating Mrs. Patrick, sister of Professor Manly, who, since Agent's previous visit, had closely interrogated her brother.

She stated that subject during the war period had been accused of coming into this country carrying a secret code, which, however, upon investigation by her brother, was found to be a thousand years old. She stated that the man who reported subject was one Lichtenstein, connected with the Northwestern University, and that it was afterwards ascertained that Lichtenstein was intimately associated with the workings of the Secret Service Department of the German government, whereas subject, as the result of the investigation, was absolutely cleared. She stated that her brother had been in Washington during the war period and recently, and had communicated with the British government, and had established beyond a shadow of a doubt that subject was absolutely loyal to the cause of the Allies during the war period.

She stated that Professor Manley felt very deeply concerning this matter, and would vouch for subject in every way as being the proper kind of a man to be admitted to the United States at any time.

This closes the investigation.

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REPORT MADE BY: John A. Connolly.	PLACE WHERE MADE: New York City.	DATE WHEN MADE: 7 Oct. 16, 1919.	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: Oct. 11
TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGES OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION. IN RE: WILFRID M. DE VOYNICH. VISA MATTER.			

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

Continuing investigation, I called at the Bank of Montreal, 64 Wall Street, New York.

The Bank of British North America is now merged into same. Agents and accountants have been continued since 1914. Voynich's account was opened December 12, 1914 on the recommendation of Levetus & Co., London, Eng. The engraved card he presented at the time reads as follows:

----- Wilfrid M. De Voynich. -----

Hotel St. James Paris
Palazzo, Borghese. Florence
58 Shaftsbury Ave. W., London ----- Savage Club.

Mr. O. F. Alms the former assistant accountant of the bank of British North America now in the same relative position with the Bank of Montreal who is a naturalized citizen of this country, born in Cornwall, England, tells me Voynich engaged him in a conversation about the Cornish coast, where he had been on a walking trip and was apparently refreshing his memory, by getting additional details from Mr. Alms recollections of his boyhood days. His latest London address from the Bank records is #175 Piccadilly. Mr. Bog, 2nd agent of the Bank has always been suspicious of him as he talks too much and Mr. Oliver, the 3rd agent of the bank, stated he considers him an intellectual vagrant. Mr. Oliver also states that the time our department investigated him on the Code matter, he notified his main London bank, but for some reason, as far as he knows nothing came of it.

COPIES SENT TO
BUREAU OF CITIZENSHIP
OCT 22 1919

COPY OF THIS REPORT FURNISHED TO:

Cleveland, O.

It would seem that the British Government could clear up many things on this (their) subject.

In lieu of further instructions will keep this subject in mind from time to time when not engaged in more pressing duties.

Case continued.

COPY SENT TO
BUREAU OF CITIZENSHIP
OCT 22 1919

50236

LONDON, September 17, 1920.

No. 556.
CONFIDENTIAL.

Dear Bill:

With reference to the Department's telegram No. 6081 of September 29, 1919, 3 p.m. concerning Wilfred M. Voynich, I learn that this man proposes to visit the United States in the immediate future.

As the Department had no objection to Voynich traveling in September of 1919 I conclude that the visa may again be granted. I thought you would be interested to learn that the police are evidently keeping him more or less under surveillance, and the latest report is that Mr. Voynich appears to be strongly anti-Bolshevik.

As always,

L. LANIER WINSLOW.

WLF

W. L. Hurley, Esq.,
&c., &c., &c.,
Department of State,
Washington, D.C.

33354



DEPARTMENT OF STATE 19 1920
WASHINGTON

October 16, 1920.

J. E. Hoover, Esquire,
Special Assistant to the Attorney General,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

J

Dear Mr. Hoover:

I enclose herewith copy of confidential letter No. 556
dated September 17, which is concerned with Wilfred M. Voynich.
As you have, I believe, made an investigation of this man,
you may wish to get a line on him in an endeavor to keep him
under surveillance. I should be grateful for any information
you may have regarding Voynich.

Very truly yours,

W. H. Murray

*Letter to New York
10/26/20
W.H.M.*

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Enclosure.

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33354

GFR-FDD

October 26, 1920.

T. M. Reddy, Esq.,
P. O. Box 241,
New York City.

Dear Sir:-

Reference is made to previous investigation of
Wilfred M. Veynich.

From the inclosed report transmitted to this Bureau
from the State Department, you will note that Veynich
is contemplating a trip to this country. In view of
his past activities, it is desired that you ascertain
the nature of his activities upon his arrival in this
country.

Very truly yours,

WJR

Incl. 50236

Chief.

33354

GFH-PDD

October 26, 1920.

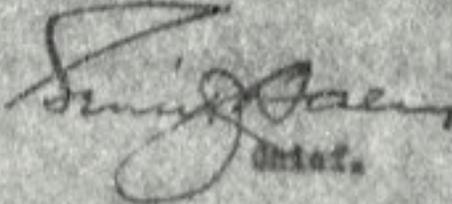
T. M. Reddy, Esq.,
P. O. Box 241,
New York City.

Dear Sir:-

Reference is made to previous investigation of
Silfred M. Veyniah.

From the inclosed report transmitted to this Bureau from the State Department, you will note that Veyniah is contemplating a trip to this country. In view of his past activities, it is desired that you ascertain the nature of his activities upon his arrival in this country.

Very truly yours,


Chief.

Incl. 50236