

# “If you could send over your documents to the photostat department...”: Paris Peace Conference Documentation and the Advent of Microfilm

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## Abstract

In the years after 1919 the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles had enormous impact on world affairs, but historical research on the actual workings of the Conference was blocked, because the working documentation was in closed collections. A major opening came when David Hunter Miller self-published his 21-volume collection of Conference papers and allowed it to be distributed to research libraries by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in early 1929. The historian Robert C. Binkley schemed to use the Miller Diary to force the closed collections open. His first attempt was a collaboration with Parker Moon, based on sharing photostat copies of some rare documents as a supplement to Miller, in exchange for sharing of similar documents by the major collections. The idea seems to have fizzled, but the willingness of research libraries to participate committed them to more extensive sharing. Binkley then worked with James Shotwell on the *Paris Peace Conference: History and Documents* series, using microfilm instead of photostat. The microfilming campaign conducted by Robert and Frances Binkley at Yale and Columbia in January 1933 was sponsored by the Joint Committee on Materials for Research was an early trial and demonstration of the possibilities of large-scale microfilming in the American academic world.

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*This is a video talk given at [Open Ideas @ UAL 2021](#). This PDF is the script of the video, with footnotes.*

## Introduction

[Slide 1: “If you could send over your documents to the photostat department...”]

This paper is a sketch for a section of a biography of my grandfather Robert C. Binkley. Binkley was one of the drivers of the adoption of microfilm in American academia in the 1930s; but current scholarship tends to treat his documentation work in isolation from his other roles. I am trying to draw together the different threads of his work as a librarian, historian, teacher, experimenter and administrator, and turn it into a digestible narrative. Today I will try to lay out how his promotion of microfilm was shaped by a specific problem facing historians who wanted to write about the Paris Peace Conference. This talk is based on new archival research, mostly in the Library of Congress and in my family papers, and most of the story you'll hear is being shared here for the first time, as work in progress.

## Background

### [Slide 2: Hoover War Library]

Our story starts in the Hoover War Library at Stanford in the mid-1920s. Founded by Herbert Hoover in 1919 to document the history of the World War, it served American historians in their feverish pursuit of the “war guilt question”: who was responsible for the war? Mainstream historians still believed in a German plot; the revisionists spread the blame around.<sup>1</sup> The victors and the defeated powers published collections of carefully selected documents to support their case, and the Bolsheviks threw open the Czar’s secret archives.<sup>2</sup> The question commanded great public interest; newly released diplomatic documents found their way not only into the history journals but onto the front pages. But when it came to how the *peace* was made, the documentation available to scholars was restricted mostly to the memoirs of the participants in the Paris

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<sup>1</sup>Volker Berghahn and Charles Maier, “Modern Europe in American Historical Writing,” in *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, by Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (Princeton University Press, 1998), 396–97.

<sup>2</sup>John W. Langdon, *July 1914: The Long Debate, 1918-1990* (New York: Berg : Distributed exclusively in the U.S. and Canada by St. Martin’s Press, 1991), 18–21.

Peace Conference, and to the syntheses of the journalists, which, Binkley wrote, “are today the principal extant theories of the Conference”.<sup>3</sup> The Conference was a disputed territory between history and journalism, and the journalists were winning. The US State Department did not start publishing its records until 1942.<sup>4</sup> Some libraries received private collections of documents as donations, generally under donors’ restrictions (which in some cases did not even allow the library to acknowledge the existence of a collection).<sup>5</sup> Harvard purchased an interesting collection, which it later had to return when it proved to have been stolen from the French government.<sup>6</sup> Even basic questions about the procedure of the Conference could not be studied.

**[Slide 3: Robert C. Binkley (1897-1940)]**

One of the historians whose research was blocked was Robert C. Binkley, Reference Librarian at the Hoover War Library. He had been part of the Library from its beginning, for he had been hired as an assistant in Paris after being demobilized from the ambulance service, and collected materials such as

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<sup>3</sup>Robert C. Binkley, “Ten Years of Peace Conference History,” *Journal of Modern History* 1, no. 4 (1929, December): 607–29, <http://www.archive.org/stream/selectedpapersed00bink/page/62/mode/2up>, pp. 608-9: “The journalists displayed the greatest zeal in discovering colossal plots and treasons; they used the pattern of their war-time propaganda narratives in constructing their histories of the Peace Conference. Their syntheses, which are today the principal extant theories of the Conference, were used in politics with deadly effect.”

<sup>4</sup>Joseph V. Fuller, ed., *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, 13 vols., 1942–1947.

<sup>5</sup>Robert C. Binkley, “The Hoover War Library,” *New York Herald Tribune*, November 11, 1928, e.g.: “Some of the restrictions are curious indeed, and there is often an element of comedy in their enforcement. A certain Central European nobleman had deposited under seal some documents which recorded his activities during the war. His wife, the Countess X, visiting the Hoover War Library, inquired whether there was any material there relating to her husband. Under the donor’s restrictions it was necessary for the librarian not only to deny the wife access to her husband’s material, but to withhold the information that it was there.”

<sup>6</sup>Robert C. Binkley, “Letter to James T. Shotwell” (April 3, 1937), Misc., folder 66, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton: “May I add that Randolph Adams of the Clements Library told me that Harvard did actually photostat that important collection of the Peace Conference which was obtained originally by theft and later returned to the French Government. The list of these documents has been copied and is in our hands, but we understood that Harvard made the great mistake of returning them without making photostat copies. If Adams is correct, the existence of these photostats is an inner secret of the rare book room of Harvard. Of course, it is possible that Adams may have meant only the list of documents rather than the documents themselves.”

the propaganda published by the various Peace Conference delegations.<sup>7</sup> Now, convinced that the war guilt question had been done to death, he chose the Peace Conference as the topic on which to build his career. His first contribution was a 1926 article offering a new interpretation of the war guilt clause in the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>8</sup> Without access to the documents, however, he had to work from the final text of the clause, and could not investigate how it was drafted.

## The Moon Project

### [Slide 4: Miller Diary]

The locks broke when an American delegate, David Hunter Miller, published his personal collection of Peace Conference documents. Miller had kept a large collection of the documents that he drafted, or that otherwise crossed his desk. He now released *My Diary at the Conference of Paris*, comprising 21 large volumes, 19 of them devoted to documents.<sup>9</sup> It was printed privately in the mid-1920s by a commercial press in just 40 copies. Miller kept it secret for a few years (perhaps out of concern about the rights),<sup>10</sup> and it was finally distributed by

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<sup>7</sup>Ephraim Douglass Adams, *The Hoover War Collection at Stanford University, California; a report and an analysis* ([Stanford University : Stanford University Press], 1921), 16–19, <http://archive.org/details/hooverwarcollec00adam>.

<sup>8</sup>Robert C. Binkley and August C. Mahr, “A New Interpretation of the ‘Responsibility’ Clause in the Versailles Treaty,” *Current History* 24, no. 3 (June 1926): 398–400, [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url\\_ver=Z39.88-2004&res\\_dat=xri:pao-us:&rft\\_dat=xri:pao:article:8730-1926-024-03-000016](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:pao-us:&rft_dat=xri:pao:article:8730-1926-024-03-000016). Mahr was a professor of German at Stanford; he wrote up their argument in German for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (Robert C. Binkley and August C. Mahr, “Eine studie zur Kriegsschuldfrage,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 28, 1926).

<sup>9</sup>David Hunter Miller, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris*, 22 vols. (New York: Printed for the author by the Appeal Printing Company, 1924–1926), <http://ddsnext.crl.edu/titles/16234>.

<sup>10</sup>At a planning meeting of former delegates, chaired by Shotwell, the question whether permission to publish would be needed from the State Department was discussed. It was agreed that Miller had published without permission, and that it would be best for their group to do the same. Parker Moon suggested that the State Department “would like to have its hand forced in the matter”; to ask permission would only serve to make them a party to the publication. (“Documentary History of the Peace Conference January 15, 1932” (January 15, 1932), 8, Box 330, folder 6, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Papers, Columbia University). This may have been Miller’s calculation as well, but I have not found direct evidence of it.

the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to selected research libraries. Binkley learned of it in January 1929; he was now teaching in New York, and had access to Columbia's copy. He used the *Miller Diary* to write an update of his 1926 article, dissecting the drafting of the war guilt clause in detail.<sup>11</sup> He then made a pitch to the new *Journal of Modern History* to write a survey of the current state of access to Peace Conference documents.<sup>12</sup> He wrote, "it is my hope that this article will be something of a starter's gun for Peace Conference study".<sup>13</sup> For he saw the *Miller Diary* as more than an incremental step in the opening of the archives: his view was that "one of the most profitable ways of utilizing the Miller Diary will be to use it as a lever to bring about further revelations".<sup>14</sup>

**[Slide 5: Parker Thomas Moon (1892-1936)]**

His co-conspirator was Parker Moon, a Columbia professor of Political Science and like Miller a former member of the American delegation. Moon had his own small collection of Peace Conference documents, which were not in Miller's set. The scheme that Binkley and Moon concocted was slightly underhanded, but Binkley defended it with scripture: "we follow the biblical injunction to be wise as serpents."<sup>15</sup> The plan was this: without identifying Moon as the source, they would offer photostat copies of Moon's unique documents to the libraries with major collections, on condition that the big players shared copies of their own unique items with each other, to fill the gaps in Miller's collection.<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>11</sup>Robert C. Binkley, "The 'Guilt' Clause in the Versailles Treaty," *Current History* 30, no. 2 (May 1929): 294-300, <http://www.archive.org/stream/selectedpapersed00bink#page/48/mode/2up>.

<sup>12</sup>Binkley, "Ten Years of Peace Conference History."

<sup>13</sup>Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to Bernadotte Schmitt" (August 18, 1929), Corr. 1927-29, folder S, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.

<sup>14</sup>Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to William Allan Neilson" (October 3, 1929), Corr. 1927-29, folder N, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.

<sup>15</sup>Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to James Brown Scott" (April 17, 1933), Misc., folder 65, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.

<sup>16</sup>Binkley was put in touch with Moon by Payson Treat, professor of Political Science at Stanford, to whom Moon had spoken about his wish to get an article on the Peace Conference documentation after Miller for *Political Science Quarterly*. Binkley contacted Moon to discuss

major libraries were of course reluctant to share their treasures, but framing the project as supplementary to Miller limited the potential distribution to the repositories of the 40 copies. Binkley wanted to make Moon's photostats the sugared pill that would start a general lifting of restrictions.

They approached Columbia, New York Public Library, Yale, and the Hoover War Library, who all held relevant collections. Binkley got them on board one by one. But then the project stalled: for several months Moon ghosted him. Binkley's letters asking Moon to take his papers to New York Public Library to be photostatted went unanswered, and when contact was re-established it is not clear to me whether any photostats ever actually changed hands (I have more digging to do). Certainly this was not the opening Binkley had hoped for, but it was an important step. When the library director at Yale signed up for a set of Moon's photostats, Binkley wrote to Moon: "This of course commits him to the idea of a general pool".<sup>17</sup>

## The Shotwell Project

### [Slide 6: Photostat and Microfilm Cameras]

To follow the idea of a "general pool" we need to pick up another thread, and consider the technology of document reproduction. The Moon project had been based on the photostat, which was already an antiquated medium. It produced a single negative copy on photographic paper, usually at reduced scale. Binkley was now promoting a new and still untested alternative: microfilm (or, as he

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using the Miller *Diary* to press governments to open or publish their documents; it was only after meeting Moon for lunch that he switched his target to libraries. The idea did not go into action until the following summer, when Binkley was teaching at Stanford and working on the *PSQ* article Moon had requested. Binkley had received encouragement from Ralph Lutz at the Hoover War Library and hoped Moon could send photostats by August. Unfortunately, Moon was out of town and could not fetch the papers from his office at Columbia. Binkley continued to add libraries, and by October had signed Yale up. He then made arrangements with New York Public Library to make the photostats, and asked Moon to take the papers there. He did not get a reply until the following March.

<sup>17</sup>Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to Parker T. Moon" (October 15, 1930), Corr. 1930-32, folder M, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.

called it, “filmslides”).<sup>18</sup>

**[Slide 7: Joint Committee on Materials for Research]**

Binkley had institutional backing from the newly-created Joint Committee on Materials for Research. He joined the Committee in March 1930, and took the chair two years later. In the Committee’s first report he expressed its premise: “Innovations in applying technology to scholarship were not concluded when the typewriter and filing system invaded the professor’s study and the photostat installed itself in the library basement.”<sup>19</sup> As one of his first tasks for the committee he compiled a manual on the current state of the technology, published in 1931 as “Methods of Reproducing Research Materials”. While there were others in American libraries who had been developing the techniques of microfilm since the ’20s, Binkley’s contribution here was to build institutional support for using it at the collection level.

**[Slide 8: Carol Riegelman (1909-2005)]**

Binkley also gained access to the resources of a major foundation: the

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<sup>18</sup>Binkley outlined the advantages of microfilm for the project in a letter to James Brown Scott:

The editor’s file of documents is made from these filmslides. They are enlarged on photostat paper, producing a black on white copy. The advantage of this over the photostat method is, first that the documents can be copied on the spot, and as selected by the person who is examining them. This simplifies the problem when we are dealing with people who are loath to part with the originals in their possession even for a short time. Second: The cost of making the black on white copy (necessary for editorial use) is very much less. Finally, in certain cases where two documents are being collated, one of them need not be printed on the photostat paper, but may be read from projection on a screen – thus reducing the cost of copying. This is the method which Professor Lake uses here in collating film slide copies of Greek patristic writings. (Robert C. Binkley, “Letter to James Brown Scott” (October 13, 1932), Misc., folder 65, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.)

It is interesting that he acknowledges the possibility of working from a projected image, without the need to make a print, but it is a secondary possibility compared to making prints.

Kirsopp Lake was a New Testament scholar and microfilm pioneer at Harvard, who photographed manuscripts during research trips and published collations and collections of facsimiles. Kirsopp Lake and Silva Lake, eds., *Dated Greek Minuscule Manuscripts to the Year 1200*, 11 vols., Monumenta Palaeographica Vetera. First Series (Boston, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1934–1945).

<sup>19</sup>Solon J. Buck and Robert C. Binkley, “Report of the Joint Committee of the SSRC and the ACLS on Materials for Research,” *American Council of Learned Societies, Bulletin*, no. 15 (May 1931): 77.

Carnegie Endowment. This happened through the initiative of one of his students. In 1930 Carol Riegelman finished her undergraduate thesis under Binkley's direction, on the establishment of the International Labor Organization at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>20</sup> Independently of Binkley she had made contact with yet another former American delegate and document collector: James Shotwell, now a professor at Columbia and administrator in the Carnegie Endowment. Prompted by Riegelman's research, Shotwell conceived a project for a documentary history of the founding of the ILO, and Riegelman put Shotwell and Binkley in touch.<sup>21</sup> Binkley joined the editorial board for what Shotwell soon designated as the first of a series: *The Paris Peace Conference: History and Documents*. Five volumes were eventually published.<sup>22</sup> Binkley's role was to share his comprehensive knowledge of the Peace Conference document collections, but he used the opportunity to promote his ideas on document reproduction on behalf of the Joint Committee.<sup>23</sup>

**[Slide 9: Frances Binkley (1899-1962)]**

By this time Binkley was busy with experiments in microfilming at home. In 1932-33 he taught at Harvard, where he copied library materials for his own research. His wife Frances collaborated on the photographic work; later in the 1930s she trained as a professional portrait photographer.<sup>24</sup> Based on

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<sup>20</sup>Carol Riegelman, "The History of the Procedure for International Labor Legislation as Evolved from the World War and the Treaty of Versailles, 1914-1929" (B.A., Smith College, 1930), Schlesinger Library, Carol Riegelman Lubin Papers (Folders 5.5-5.7).

<sup>21</sup>Shotwell wrote to several friends in mid-July 1930, attributing the idea for the ILO documentary history to Riegelman's project. To one he mentioned that Riegelman came to him two or three months earlier and asked to see the documents, which he had not looked at since those days in Paris: James T. Shotwell, "Letter to Preston Slosson" (July 16, 1930), Box 5, folder 10, Carol Riegelman Lubin Papers, Radcliffe College.

<sup>22</sup>James Shotwell, ed., *The Origins of the International Labor Organization*, 2 vols., The Paris Peace Conference: History and Documents (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934).

<sup>23</sup>Binkley wrote to Shotwell in August 1932, when he began to press the idea to use microfilm: "I am anxious to kill two birds with one stone by using this project to test the cost levels and the efficiency of the film slide and its relatives in copying and preserving research materials." Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to James T. Shotwell" (undated), Misc., folder 65, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.

<sup>24</sup>She studied with the New York photographer Rabinovitch, and some of her work appears

the domestic experiments Frances wrote a brief manual of microfilm technique, which she later turned into a how-to article in *American Photography* and a chapter in the Leica manual.<sup>25</sup>

In the summer of 1932 Binkley got Shotwell's agreement to use microfilm copying in the Documentary History project. He arranged access to the Peace Conference papers of Col. House at Yale, and to John Foster Dulles' personal papers, which Binkley picked up at Dulles' law office on Wall Street and deposited at Columbia.<sup>26</sup> **[Slide 10: Microfilming at Yale, January 1933]** In January 1933, supported by a grant of \$5000 from the Carnegie Endowment, the Binkleys embarked on a large-scale microfilm experiment. Together they copied some 10,000 pages of the House papers at Yale. Frances then went on to New York alone to copy 3,000 pages of what Binkley described as the "rare and beautiful" Dulles papers.<sup>27</sup> I believe this was the first grant-supported mass

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in the prospectus for his school: Rabinovitch, *Rabinovitch School and Workshop of Art Photography* (1938; repr., New York: Rabinovitch School and Workshop of Art Photography, 1938), <https://archive.org/details/RabinovitchProspectus1938>, p.8. In the microfilm work in 1933 she collaborated with her father William Irvin Williams, who was living with the Binkleys.

<sup>25</sup>Frances W. Binkley, "The Camera as an Office Appliance," *American Photography* 30 (January 1936): 370, 372, 374, 376, 378; Frances W. Binkley, "Copying Books and Manuscripts," in *The Leica Manual: A Manual for the Amateur and Professional Covering the Entire Field of Leica Photography*, ed. Willard D. Morgan and Henry M. Lester (New York: Morgan and Lester, 1937), 301–8, <https://archive.org/details/leicamanualamanu028253mbp/page/n309/mode/2up?q=binkley>.

<sup>26</sup>On his way from Cleveland Binkley visited Shotwell at his summer place in Woodstock, NY, and drove to the city with him and Riegelman on Labor Day. The next day he picked up "9 volumes of rare and beautiful Dulles Papers" and took them to Columbia, where he was provided with a room in Special Collections to consult them, along with the full set of the Miller Diary Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to Frances Binkley" (September 7, 1932), Corr. 1931-33, folder B, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton. Dulles seems to have been drawn into the project by Shotwell. Binkley arranged access to the House papers directly with Seymour at Yale. They had been out of reach not so much because of restrictions, but because of the construction of the new Sterling Memorial Library, where they were allocated their own room, such a showpiece were they.

<sup>27</sup>In September 1932, Binkley had created an item-level list of the Dulles papers, making two slips for each item (original and carbon), to be marked up to indicate which were to be copied: Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to Carol Riegelman" (October 1, 1932), Doc. 2546, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton. Shotwell had arranged with James Brown Scott, secretary of the Carnegie Endowment (and, inevitably, another former delegate) to fund the experiment. It appears that the Binkleys had permission to mark the documents they copied, for in Binkley's proposal on how Yale could censor the microfilm, he includes the detail: "erasure or change of the red dots marked on the papers to indicate that the letters have been copied." Robert C. Binkley, "Proposal for Use of the Film Slide Copies of the House Correspondence" (January 26, 1933), Misc., folder 65, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.

microfilming project by a researcher in American academia; certainly one of the first.

For the International Labor Organization volume Riegelman edited documents from published collections, photostats, or from copies she had typed or made by hand as Shotwell's research assistant.<sup>28</sup> For the subsequent volumes in the series, though, the House and Dulles microfilms made by the Binkleys formed a travelling archive for the use of the volume editors.<sup>29</sup> [Slide 11: Sources of Burnett's Documents] The largest entry in the series, on reparations, was edited by Phillip Burnett. Like the editors of the other volumes Burnett was a student of Shotwell's, and he spent a year in Cleveland working with Binkley. When his two-part collection finally came out in 1940, the Dulles papers provided the majority of the documents included; and the documents were typeset directly from photo prints.<sup>30</sup> Four years later, as the Second World War neared

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<sup>28</sup>Riegelman contributed an interpretive chapter: Carol Riegelman, "III. War-Time Trade-Union and Socialist Proposals," in *The Origins of the International Labor Organization*, ed. James Shotwell, vol. 1, *The Paris Peace Conference: History and Documents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 55–79; she was also responsible for collecting and arranging the documents and writing the introductory notes (vol. 2, p. vi). Her name did not appear on the title page of the volume. Subsequent editors, who were responsible for a monographic introduction as well as editing the documents (and who did not have chapters contributed by other scholars as in the ILO volume), did receive credit.

<sup>29</sup>Binkley proposed to Shotwell that they accept any restrictions on the immediate use of their microfilms, so long as they could build their collection for later use: "Let us in all cases hold on to all copies of everything that we get and organize our own confidential archive. We will not raise the question at this time of giving any use whatsoever to material given to us in confidence except to analyse them and let that analysis contribute indirectly to the advancement of our work. But when this confidential archive is an existing thing, we will be able to take up as a second stage in our enterprise some arrangement by which it can be made more useful." Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to James T. Shotwell" (December 15, 1933), Misc., folder 66, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton. This seems to contradict Binkley's intention to allow Yale to censor his films of the House Papers; I wonder which path he would have taken if he had had to choose. Perhaps it is telling that he thought it foolish of Harvard not to have photostatted the stolen French collection before returning it.

<sup>30</sup>Philip Mason Burnett, *Reparation at the Paris Peace Conference from the Standpoint of the American Delegation*, 2 vols., *The Paris Peace Conference: History and Documents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001153786>; contents: see slide 11. Typesetting from photoprints is implied in Burnett's acknowledgment: "The excellence of the many photographic reproductions of documents made by Mr. Walter E. Hering, also of the Columbia University Library, has been evident to the printer, even if not to the reader." (vol. 1, p. xix). It is not clear whether these are retakes of Dulles documents shot by Frances Binkley, or supplementary material from other collections (several are mentioned in Burnett's acknowledgements). Binkley had proposed the same idea: "This will avoid all danger of errors in copying, for the photographic copy can be sent direct to the printer." Robert

its end, Burnett's work was studied closely by American diplomats preparing policy on reparations in the new post-war situation.<sup>31</sup>

**[Slide 12: The Binkleys' Microfilm of the House Papers, 1933]**

The microfilms were not only used for the documentary history: Binkley also used them in his teaching. A couple of months after they were made, he wrote to a colleague about his plans for a graduate seminar on the Peace Conference: "I think it will be a step in advance if we work out a way of using filmstrips in teaching and research; it will give our students an edge on others and help us to make up for library disadvantages."<sup>32</sup> He continued this practice in his graduate teaching.

## Conclusion

Binkley probably overestimated the difficulty of accessing the closed collections, perhaps based on his experience in the Hoover War Library, whose administration was somewhat byzantine. In discussion with Yale he drafted a statement of permissions which would have allowed the library to cut sensitive documents out of his films if they wished; they waved it away, saying they trusted him to

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C. Binkley, "Letter to James Brown Scott" (October 13, 1932), Box 330, folder 7, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Collection, Columbia University. Burnett followed Miller's editorial practice, correcting inconsequential errors of spelling or punctuation but retaining "obvious slip[s] in the wording of the writer or transcriber" (vol. 1, p. 168). It was presumably not an excessive burden on the typesetters to work from a photograph of the original typed document, perhaps corrected by hand by Burnett.

<sup>31</sup>Patricia Clavin, "Reparations in the Long Run," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 16, no. 3 (September 2005): 518–19, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290500207974>.

<sup>32</sup>Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to Arthur C. Cole" (March 20, 1933), Corr. 1931-33, folder C, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton. In 1934 Binkley was working with Herbert Hirshberg, head of the university library and library school at Western Reserve University, to equip the library with a microfilm projector for the use of his students. He mentions wanting to use it with a chapter he had copied from a book borrowed from Harvard, as well as the Peace Conference microfilms. Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to Herbert S. Hirshberg" (October 6, 1934), Corr.1933-40, folder H, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton. He also began to think about teaching photographic skills to grad students as early as the end of January 1933: "Frances and Mr. Williams are becoming the photographic technicians and learning a whole bag of tricks which I begin to think seriously we must teach to the Graduate students." Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to Arthur C. Cole" (January 28, 1933), Corr. 1931-33, folder C, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.

keep irresponsible persons away from them; their real concern was about journalists, “who are always trying to get into the files to extract some personal dynamite”.<sup>33</sup> Before the Binkleys started shooting in January 1933, the only large-scale microfilm project in progress was the Library of Congress’s Project A, which copied foreign archival holdings starting in 1927. Its impact on the perception of microfilm in American libraries was limited, I think, partly because Americans could not see it happen: the work was done mostly in Europe, using French cameras. Binkley’s Joint Committee projects were the first to attempt to develop microfilm’s potential in a way that could be replicated for the benefit of the research community as a whole, rather than as a one-off project to build a specific collection. Binkley did not draw attention to the Peace Conference project in the reports of the Joint Committee, though, perhaps for fear of embarrassing the libraries who had been drawn into the Moon project.<sup>34</sup> Or perhaps not wishing to draw attention to his use of Joint Committee resources to support his own research. It was a year later that the Joint Committee made a splash in the library world when it microfilmed the records of two New Deal agencies for distribution to libraries on a subscription basis.<sup>35</sup> [Slide 12: WPA and Microfilm as a Library Tool] This represents a shift of the centre of gravity for the Joint Committee’s work, away from the traditional funding sources in foundations like the Carnegie Endowment, and toward the New Deal state. When the Binkleys microfilmed the House and Dulles papers in January 1933,

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<sup>33</sup>Charles Seymour, “Letter to Robert C. Binkley” (February 3, 1933), Misc., folder 65, Robert C. Binkley Papers, Edmonton.

<sup>34</sup>Binkley’s report of the Joint Committee’s activities in 1933 mentions microfilm as a useful new technology but says nothing of the Peace Conference papers. Robert C. Binkley, “Joint Committee on Materials for Research, Report of Activities, 1933,” *American Council of Learned Societies Bulletin* 22 (October 1934): 60–68.

<sup>35</sup>In 1934-35 the Joint Committee microfilmed the records of the hearings of the National Recovery Administration and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, totalling 315,000 pages, for distribution to subscribing libraries. The subscriptions at 12c per 100 pages covered the costs incurred by the Joint Committee (not including the Committee’s staff time). Robert C. Binkley, “The Joint Committee on Materials for Research, Report of Activities, 1935,” *American Council of Learned Societies Bulletin* 25 (1936, July): 64–69, p.64.

it was the midpoint between Franklin Roosevelt's election and inauguration. By 1936 Binkley was proposing to microfilm 2.5 million pages of local newspapers using federal money made available by Roosevelt's relief programs. He wrote: "I believe that a wise strategy at this moment would take into account the fact that there is more money in WPA this year than there will be in the Foundations for the next twenty..."<sup>36</sup> This transition will be the subject of my next section.

## Bibliography

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<sup>36</sup>Robert C. Binkley, "Letter to M. Llewellyn Raney" (April 23, 1936), Box 23, "Micro-Copying of Newspaper Titles," Joint Committee on Materials for Research Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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