

Book Reviews

Herbert Putnam: A 1903 Trip to Europe.

Ed. John D. Knowlton. Introduction by Ari Hoogenboom. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2005. 115p. alk. paper, \$25 (ISBN 0810851725). LC 2005-11477.

An initial reaction to this book based on Herbert Putnam's (1861–1955) correspondence during his July to October 1903 European trip would be to wonder who would be interested in mere travel memoirs? Then, on further consideration and reflection, the year 1903 was, in many ways, a pivotal point in American history when Horatio Nelson Jackson became the first man to make a coast-to-coast automobile trip from San Francisco to New York and the Wright Brothers made their historic first flight at Kitty Hawk. Furthermore, Herbert Putnam, a scion of the G. P. Putnam's Sons publishing family, twice president of the American Library Association (1898 and 1904), librarian of the Minneapolis Public Library (1887–1891) and the Boston Public Library (1895–1898), general director of ALA's War Service (1917–1919), and eighth librarian of Congress (1899–1939), was not your ordinary traveler.

In this collection of the transcribed and edited manuscripts of Putnam's travel letters, John D. Knowlton, a retired archivist and librarian for the Library of Congress, reveals Putnam's sense of humor, love of family as husband, father, and brother, and professional concern for keeping in touch with the Library of Congress even while on his European tour. Putnam's letters are housed in two separate collections in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. His letters, to his secretary Allen Boyd when absent from the Library of Congress during the period 1899 to 1911, are located in the library's archives, Putnam-MacLeish portion of the central file, and filed under Putnam's correspondence. Putnam's letters to his family are in the Herbert Putnam

Papers, filed under his family correspondence. Putnam traveled with an older brother, John Bishop Putnam (1847–1915), to England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Russia. In addition to insights into Putnam's private life, his letters represent, according to Knowlton, "a portrait of period travel—involving steamships, railroads, ferries, river craft, horse-drawn carts, rowboats, and hiking—that would be nearly impossible to duplicate today."

The book includes an introductory essay by Ari Hoogenboom, Emeritus Professor of History at Brooklyn College, City University of New York, which places Putnam's travels in Europe in context with other "travelers [who] wished to widen their intellectual horizons and to experience natural wonders," including such notables as scholars and men of letters George William Curtis and Charles Eliot Norton, artists Mary Cassatt and James Abbott McNeill Whistler, writers Stephen Crane, Edith Wharton, and Mark Twain, and composer Edward MacDowell, to name just a few. The text is meticulously edited and thoroughly documented and indexed. Nine black-and-white photos, the majority not previously published, illustrate the text.

Putnam's correspondence during his 1903 Grand Tour of Europe fills in many gaps for library history enthusiasts fascinated by turn-of-the-twentieth-century librarianship. By allowing a rare glimpse into Putnam's personal life, these letters reward the reader with a word portrait showing the human side of the library superman. Academic and research libraries will find this book a valuable addition to their collections and a welcome addition for library historians.—*Plummer Alston Jones Jr., East Carolina University.*

