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## Proposal for Research in the Francis Lieber Collection

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803 W. Morse St.  
Plant City, FL 33566  
December 9, 1994

Robert C. Ritchie  
Chairman, Committee on Awards  
The Huntington  
San Marino, CA 91108

Dear Dr. Ritchie:

I wish to apply for a stipend to continue my research in the Francis Lieber papers next summer. My purpose in seeking the grant is to pursue research for a series of related projects on Francis Lieber, which I have outlined in the accompanying research proposal.

I hold the Ph.D. in political science from the University of Oregon (1984) and teach both political science and history. My doctoral dissertation, "Crossed Swords: Entanglements Between Church and State in America," incorporates citations from Lieber's work. Two years ago, a foundation provided seed money for research on "The Interaction of Religion and Law in Nineteenth Century American Political Thought and Literature," out of which my study of Lieber has grown.

Last year I did preliminary research during a four day visit (November 30 through December 3) and was able to identify the parts of the Huntington collection that will be most relevant to my research. Since then, I have done exploratory research at the South Caroliniana Library and the Library of Congress.

Last March I presented my initial paper on the subject, "Francis Lieber's Theory of Institutional Liberty," at the 1994 Southwestern Political Science Association meeting in San Antonio. The editor of Southeastern Political Review has given it conditional approval for publication. I am scheduled to present a paper on "Francis Lieber on Religion and the Liberal State" at the 1995 American Political Science Association meeting in Chicago. I have also discussed a study of "The Political Thought of Francis Lieber" with two publishers, one of which is interested in reprinting some of Lieber's work.

Judging from the greater prominence given to Lieber in recent histories of the Civil War era, histories of political science, and a handful of journal articles, the time appears ripe for a careful reconsideration of Lieber's role in American intellectual life.

I wish to thank the directors and the staff for the research privileges I have enjoyed in the past. I look forward to another visit soon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours,

Steven A. Samson, Ph.D.

## PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH IN THE FRANCIS LIEBER COLLECTION

Steven Alan Samson

### Background

Francis Lieber, a German-American polymath, was a seminal figure in the emergence of political science out of academic moral philosophy. Combining a background in medicine, theology, and mathematics with a varied career as a physical education teacher, journalist, encyclopedist, college professor, and publicist, Lieber brought considerable erudition and physical energy to a scientific, systematic study of politics, economics, history, and law.

Lieber, who was Kantian in philosophy, Episcopalian in religion, and Whig in politics, attributed the development of civil liberty and self-government to the influence of Christianity and the rise of representative institutions. He believed this tradition reached its highest flowering in Anglo-American political institutions, which limited the reach of government while sanctioning a just interplay of individual and social interests that he called "institutional liberty." I have presented a paper on "Francis Lieber's Theory of Institutional Liberty," which has been accepted for publication.

Throughout his career Lieber extolled the beneficent effects of Christianity upon morality, education, and the liberal state while lamenting the corrupting effects of what he considered false religion. Both as a scholar and as a public figure, Lieber expressed views about religion and politics that largely harmonized with the prevailing Protestant view of church-state cooperation. I am in the process of preparing a paper, "Francis Lieber on Religion and the Liberal State," to present at the 1995 meeting of the American Political Science Association in Chicago.

### Description of the Project

I wish to apply a summer stipend to an intensive review of several aspects of Lieber's life and scholarship.

First, I wish to review Lieber's correspondence, notes, and clippings to further illustrate and refine a study of his observations on the influence of religion in the development of the modern state and what he called "Anglican liberty" and "American liberty."

Second, I wish to continue developing a detailed study of the political thought of Francis Lieber. This will require a careful study of Lieber's correspondence and other manuscripts that are not available elsewhere. I have discussed the project with the editors of one academic press which is publishing a series on American Political Thought. Another publisher has expressed interest in having some of Lieber's work reprinted, either a major work or a collection of representative selections, and wants me to submit a specific proposal.

Third, I am exploring the possibility of a study of Lieber's place among contemporary literary and political figures with whom he corresponded. This may shed considerable light on the early relationship between ideology, scholarship, and political activity in the emergence of political science as a profession. A recent review article [American Political Science Review, 88 (September 1994): 735-36] raised the question whether Lieber's association with the "public figures of his time" had much effect. In another recent work, Lieber has been described as "a Hegelian by training and a Jacobin by political instinct," who was "the center of a group of New York intellectuals and the guiding influence on the Nation. My plan has been to single out Lieber as a bridge or cultural emissary between Europe and America, as well as North and South, then focus on the character of the personal relationships that made this Prussian émigré such a prominent scholar, publicist, and literary figure in his own right.

I would begin with the emergence of modern German universities and some of the Americans, like Edward Everett and George Bancroft, who attended them. Next, I would also examine the conditions in Germany that led a number of scholars, like Charles Follen and Francis Lieber, to emigrate. Then I would write a lengthy introductory essay, perhaps a series of separate but interrelated essays, about Lieber and selected correspondents, among whom I might include John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, Dorothea Dix, Edward Everett, Simon Greenleaf, Samuel Gridley and Julia Ward Howe, James Kent, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, William H. Prescott, Joseph Story, Charles Sumner, and Alexis de Tocqueville. Each essay would focus on a distinct area of Lieber's life, activity, or thought. These essays might be supplemented by a selection from Lieber's correspondence, assuming that the documents may be reproduced.

### **Significance of the Huntington Collection in Lieber Scholarship**

The Huntington Library holds the greatest single collection of Lieber's personal papers, including correspondence, notes, clippings, and lecture material, and consequently holds the central place in Lieber scholarship. Following the receipt of the papers from the Lieber family, interest in Lieber was stimulated through a series of articles by Charles B. Robson (beginning with his description of the collection in the Huntington Library Bulletin, 1933), culminating in the publication of Frank Freidel's definitive biography (1947) and a study by Bernard Brown, American Conservatives (1951).

Other than an occasional article or book on some narrow aspect of Lieber's work, very little has been added until recently. Since 1990, Ross's Origins of American Social Science, Gunnell's Descent of Political Theory, Knupfer's The Union as It Is, and Farr and Seidelman's Discipline and History have given prominence to Lieber's place in mid-nineteenth century intellectual circles.

In addition to continuing my work in the Huntington, I am planning visits to other Lieber collections. These include the

South Caroliniana Library, the Library of Congress, Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University, Duke University, and the University of California at Berkeley. I intend to explore Lieber collections at Johns Hopkins University and Columbia University.

#### **Period of Residence and Financial Need**

I expect to be able to begin residence on June 1st and stay through the summer. My preferred departure date is some time between August 10th and September 1st, depending on my teaching schedule. I wish to apply for a \$5000 stipend for this entire period. I do not expect to have any other income during the summer months. I would plan to bring my family.

#### **References**

I have asked Marshall DeRosa of Florida Atlantic University, Daniel Dreisbach of American University, and Edmund Opitz of Foundation for Economic Education to write letters on my behalf. All of them have reviewed my work on Lieber. Rev. Opitz kindly gave me a couple of original volumes of Lieber after hearing my presentation on "Francis Lieber: Emigré Scholar" early this year.

## CURRENT RESEARCH ON FRANCIS LIEBER

Steven Alan Samson

**Background**

Francis Lieber (1798-1872), a German-American polymath, was a seminal figure in the emergence of political science out of academic moral philosophy. Combining a background in medicine, theology, and mathematics with a varied career as a physical education teacher, journalist, encyclopedist, college professor, and publicist, Lieber brought considerable erudition and physical energy to a scientific, systematic study of politics, economics, history, and law.

Lieber taught history and political science at South Carolina (1835-1856) and subsequently held the first political science chair at Columbia, where he taught from 1857 until his death in 1872. Lieber was also a keen observer of the American scene who corresponded with many of the leading public figures of his day. The major works he published during his lifetime include *The Encyclopedia Americana* (1829-1833), which he edited; *Letters to a Gentleman in Germany* (1834); the two-volume *Manual of Political Ethics* (1838); *Legal and Political Hermeneutics* (1839); *Essays on Property and Labour* (1841); and *On Civil Liberty and Self-Government* (1853). During the Civil War, he drafted a code of military conduct for the Union army that became the basis for the later Hague and Geneva conventions. After this, he devoted much of his attention to the study of nationalism and made pioneering efforts in the field of international law. Many of his shorter works were collected in two volumes of *Miscellaneous Writings* (1880).

Lieber, who was Kantian in philosophy, Episcopalian in religion, and Whig in politics, attributed the development of civil liberty and self-government to the influence of Christianity and the rise of representative institutions. He believed this tradition reached its highest flowering in Anglo-American political institutions, which limited the reach of government while sanctioning a just interplay of individual and social interests that he called "institutional liberty." I have presented a paper on "Francis Lieber's Theory of Institutional Liberty," which has been accepted for publication.

Throughout his career Lieber extolled the beneficent effects of Christianity upon morality, education, and the liberal state while lamenting the corrupting effects of what he considered false religion. His studies extended to eastern religious and cultural traditions.

Both as a scholar and as a public figure, Lieber expressed views about religion and politics that largely harmonized with then prevailing Protestant views on the subject of church-state cooperation. I am in the process of preparing a paper, "Francis Lieber on Religion and the Liberal State," to present at the 1995 meeting of the American Political Science Association in Chicago.

## Description of Current and Future Projects

I am undertaking an intensive review of several aspects of Lieber's life and scholarship. In addition, one publisher has expressed interest in reprinting some of Lieber's work and has invited me to submit an outline for a collection of his writings.

First, I plan to review Lieber's correspondence, notes, and clippings to further illustrate and refine a study of his observations on the influence of religion in the development of the modern state and what he called "Anglican liberty" and "American liberty."

Second, I plan to continue developing a detailed study of the political thought of Francis Lieber. This will require a careful study of Lieber's correspondence and other manuscripts that are not available elsewhere. I have discussed the project with the editors of one academic press which is publishing a series on American Political Thought. Another publisher has expressed interest in having some of Lieber's work reprinted, either a major work or a collection of representative selections, and wants me to submit a specific proposal.

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## Sources and the Current State of Scholarship on Lieber

Despite occasional reprints, Lieber's work has been sadly neglected for several decades. His inclusion in recent (1990s) academic histories suggests that interest in his work may be growing.

Some of Lieber's papers and letters have been collected, but not systematically. A fairly complete bibliography was assembled in the 1930s and 1940s by Charles Robson, a Huntington scholar. Robson has noted Burke's influence on Lieber's thinking, both direct and indirect. Lieber's contrast between Anglican and Gallican liberty, for example, appears to owe much to Burke. He also fits within the German liberal tradition represented by his patron, Barthold Niebuhr, and demonstrated by his active participation within a thoroughly international intellectual community.

The Huntington Library holds the greatest single collection of Lieber's personal papers, including correspondence, notes, clippings, and lecture material, and consequently holds the central place in Lieber scholarship. Following the receipt of the papers from the Lieber family, interest in Lieber was stimulated through a series of articles by Charles B. Robson (beginning with his description of the collection in the *Huntington Library Bulletin*, 1933), culminating in the publication of Frank Freidel's definitive biography (1947) and a study by Bernard Brown, *American Conservatives* (1951).

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