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	MSB	III.E.5

Dec. 27, 1984

Dear Rona,

You are all involved with Nancy's coat.

You cannot imagine with what effort I ran up this summary partly typed up myself and partly dictated to Mrs. Riegen. It was immensely exhausting like squeezing an old tube of toothpaste.

Make Irving read this with the greatest attention. Let him weigh the balance of the book. I will not allow him in any way to quote me. I have the copyright of this.

BUT I want him to understand things from the inside. It may affect an adjective, an adverb in his own text.

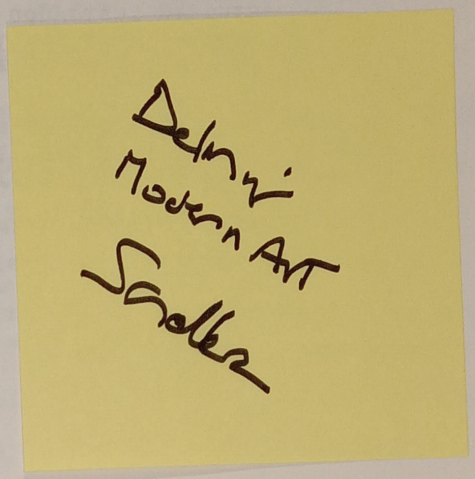
Princeton Museum. He said - "Look - you've got to look at it from the point of view of a museum director - I don't know - we are supposed to be scholars, money-raisers, charming and free for dinner parties, good at hanging, good at "cultivating "donors and trustees collectors and scholars and at the same time we are lackeys liable to be fired at any moment according to the caprice of the trustees." However He did NOT say - "we have no tenure - no assurance of permanence or safety". In other words he felt acutely in sympathy with AHB although he had the discretion and tact not to say "I want all this to come out in the open for us museum directors".

As you know I have been trying to write a chronology of AHB year by yr since his birth in 1902. I got STUCK seriously when I came to Oct. 15, 1943 - ~~this is~~ the date of Stephen Clark's letter requesting A's resignation. In my chronology the block of time Oct. 1943 to June or July 1944 is too hard to summarize - no matter how great the detachment of a historian may be.

There are some HISTORICAL letters: Stephen Clark's letter of dismissal and cut in salary, A's appeal for help to PJ Sachs, Abby Rockefeller's letter tellin A that this was the

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MHB

Dec 24, 1984

Dear Irving,

If I were the editor of an anthology of AHB's writings I wouldn't TOUCH the subject of his demotion or firing. There is hardly a trace of it in the writings you are planning to use and it will take you away from the line of your subject. There are many "panoramic" views of this event and one is that - if Alfred had not been deprived of the directorship he would not have written his books nor "formed" the collection. There are so many aspects of this that I'll take up the one mentioned today when I lunched with Allen Rosenbaum, Director of the Princeton Museum. He said - "Look - you've got to look at it from the point of view of a museum director - I don't know - we are supposed to be scholars, money-raisers, charming and free for dinner parties, good at hanging, good at "cultivating "donors and trustees collectors and scholars and at the same time we are lackeys liable to be fired at any moment according to the caprice of the trustees." However - He did NOT say - "we have no tenure - no assurance of permanence or safety". In other words he felt acutely in sympathy with AHB although he had the discretion and tact not to say "I want all this to come out in the open for us museum directors".

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the best thing for him. This was the unkindest cut of all and I don't know HOW Alfred survived it. He had loved Mrs. R. she was a much-loved mother-image - so courageous., so intent, so kindly toward him, a helpmate, an ally, against Goodyear, often joking with him about the obtuseness of Stephen Clark.

He could not believe - he could not accept her repudiation. It knocked him out when he was already so very far down, it cut him to the quick.

And this is why I was so amazed when Rona fished out the letter A. wrote John D. Rockefeller Jr. when Mrs R. died. It is a very grand letter in which amongst other things he praises her "statemanship". Alfred must have written this on the boat when we crossed back to Europe in 1948 for the first time after W.W. 2. I have read it over with attention and feel, somehow, that here in a magnanimoud way he forgives her for asserting that this demotion was "the best for him". I don't think I typed this letter on the boat or in Paris, although - from the moment we left the U.S. I was A's factotum. He must have hired a professional typist

****

Now to you , Irving, until I get to another aspect of this event. The letter must have arrived in the Saturday mail, it was addressed here to 49 E. 96th. As so often I tried to convince A. to go to the movies and he silently, unwillingly, consented and when we got home he told me.

I couldnot help him sleep. I could not make him eat. You've got to realize that we had ~~would got~~ this child of 6 right there in the next room. I walked through the dining rm in the morning to get breakfast thinking reality is much worse than a nightmare. It did choke me.

confidant

At this time I didn't have any family or best friend or confidant or helping person though in a somewhat removed way I was very much a friend of Panofsky and he eventually tried a bit to help.

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3

In this predicament I was absolutely alone. In catastrophe the phones go dead - nobody called us any more - only Dorothy Miller and her husband Holger Cahill - they preserved our sanity through the winter of 1943-44.

For a month A. stayed in the house, he just went out to make his goodbye speech to the staff and lunched with Dorothy Miller. For the rest he was at his desk all day writing in pencil on yellow his response to Stephen Clark's accusations. In truth he only produced one short letter in answer, he promised more but events piled up and he never did.

For tonight I am tired but I must explain that we as Barrs had never gone in for drinking. We were married in full Prohibition times and over the years it used to be that we had a little sherry for guests. I cannot readily remember the year of repeal but I know that we were surprised when Helen Appleton Read thought we should celebrate at Luchow's (on 23rd St). Celebrate what? it didn't mean a thing to either of us.

BUT- there I was cooking and producing dinners which A. was disinclined to eat - Tory ate in the kitchen while I ran up more adult stuff.

Anyway I came up with the idea of giving A. and OLD-FASHIONED cocktail to relax him and I still see myself coaxing him to accept this little drink while he lay - always lethargic and desperate on the couch in the living room.

Little by little he did begin to eat again and - to warm him up I made little soups that in the family we called "tummy-openers". It was a slow, loving uphill job while trying to preserve some calm and balance for our daughter who in her subterranean way apprehended that something was going on.

x art critic for the Brooklyn Eagle

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He never would go out for me. I had begun to teach at Spence and I had to meet Tory's bus from Fieldston every weekday at the N.W. corner of 96th and Madison.

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Stephen Clark

In the early days Alfred didn't mention him often. We knew that hatred for his brother was a dominant aspect of his life. The brother also went in for works of art and his collection is now the and Francine Clark Museum in Williamstown. Alfred and Mrs. R together seem to have repeatedly wondered whether he was obtuse; They joked about him and raised their eyebrows.

Clark was not one of the very first trustees, he was roped in. He probably consented to become one because it would add prestige to his name and his collection; he would become an "insider" and get a feeling about what to do and what to buy.

He had, about money, the feelings of a miser ; he seems to have praised some employee in the Museum for keeping an eye on pennies - this was a proof of his soundness. It is hard to know what his personal connection was with the other trustees of the thirties and forties. He was not an attractive man socially though his wife was most gentle, blue-eyed and smiling. There was some story about one or two sons that died ? or that went wrong, and one daughter who went to the same school as Mildred Lynes (wife of Russell:) He was of medium height, rather stocky and rigid. His expression was severe, in fact forbidding.

Socially he must have felt slightly inferior to the trustees "of the first hour". However His shortcomings went unnoticed because of his contribution of 5o.000 dollars a year, and, of course the trusting hope that he would bequeath his pictures. He was not a personal friend of any of the trustees.

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I only know that he liked to talk with Moe who was the head of the Guggenheim Foundation and was also a trustee of the Museum. Moe was a salaried man, not a capitalist. I suppose that Mr Clark saw Mrs. Rockefeller on Museum business but not socially.

So now in 1943 we see Nelson Rockefeller involved in South America, Jock Whitney and Bill Burden involved in the Air Force

~~We were~~ In the midst of the War ~~and~~ Clark was left holding the bag. I suppose that the Museum was short of funds because the "Williamsburg solution" consisted of cutting one member of the staff out of each department. ~~Admittedly~~ Clark could have increased his contribution and kept the Museum afloat, but it went against the grain (because after all the Museum was a rich man's hobby) and if he were to give it more money just to tide it over the war this might ~~have~~ set a ~~pred~~ precedent.

Monroe Phillips have looked at the budgets since 1929 just

He was in a position of power, only Abby Rockedfeller could have deflected his course. Goodwin and Lewisohn were indifferent.

We must keep remembering that Jim Soby said that Clark was "scared to death" of ~~feared~~ Alfred.

Some months before he had appointed Monroe Wheeler (already in Publications) as Director of Exhibitions, the idea being that if he couldn't do a show himself he would get a "guest conductor". ~~He~~ Clark made this appointment without consulting Alfred who was the Director of the Museum.

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We must remember the American business man's ideal of "getting things done" and also the notion that "any decision is better than no decision".

Way back in 1941 Mrs. R. and Clark must have put their heads together and decided that the right thing was to make Alfred write a book on modern art, so when this book did not appear they felt that he was not fulfilling his obligations. Clark hit upon the idea of diminishing Alfred's duties by appointing Jim Soby as ~~a~~ artistic director at $7,000 a year. He admonished Alfred to watch his step and on October 15, 1943 ~~he~~ he proposed to cut his salary to $6,000 a year. ~~$~~ So at the expense of just $1,000 he got rid of Alfred and appointed a man seemingly easy-going ~~and of his own class~~.

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The Museum of Modern Art

To Marga

From Rona

Date 12/28/84

Re page 8 paragraph 1 of your 1943 piece -
ALAN BLACKBURN departed MoMA with PJ December 1934.
JOHN E. ABBOTT began at MoMA on May 24, 1935 as "Vice President" of the Film Library. He became "Director" of the Film Library in July 1935; became "Executive Director" of MoMA when Maybry fired (see Lynes, pp. 224-5); Abbott left MoMA in 1948 (see Lynes, p. 257).
TOM MAYBRY was a) Assistant Treasurer 6/35-7/39; and b) Assistant to the Director 3/35-10/35; Executive Director 1/36-7/39 (when he was dismissed) - all this from Goodyear's MoMA: the first 10 yrs. - do you have a copy at home?? back matter very useful for pre-1942 dates.

unconditionally that there is no room.

Dick Abbott remained a dear friend of Stephen Clark's and there is a legend that Clark was a witness when Dick Abbott remarried. Eventually he was eased out of the Museum. In the year 1943 a very intelligent woman named Frances Hawkins worked in the managerial section of the Museum and according to Jim Soby she participated in the daily conversations between Clark and Dick Abbott. ~~with Dick Abbott and...Frances Hawkins~~

We must remember throughout what Jim Soby said in retrospect "Marga, it was all a put-up job". with Dick Abbott and ...Frances Hawkins."

* Alan Blackburn departed w. Philip Johnson 12/34.

Note: John E. Abbott began at MoMA on May 24, 1935 as "Vice President" of the Film Library. He became "Director" of the Film Library in July, 1935. Became "Executive Director" of MoMA when Maybry fired (See Lynes, pp. 224-5); Abbott left MoMA 1948 (See Lynes p. 257)

Tom Maybry was a) ASSISTANT TREASURER 6/35 – 7/39; and b) ASSISTANT To the Director 3/35 to 10/35 and EXEC. DIR. 1/36 – 7/39 (at whtime he was fired acc. to MSB)

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Dick Abbott

Dick Abbott was the Manager of the Museum. He had been a broker and he was hired, as a man that was good at managing money, to take the place of ~~Alan Blackburn~~ Tom Mabry* in 1935 1936? He had married the brilliant English film critic, Iris Barry, and with her he headed the Museum film library. Dick Abbott was a very convincing fellow. His eyes were blue and close together and he spoke with assurance and self-confidence.

For years Alfred trusted him and treated him as a friend and equal - I did too. When Clark's letter of October 15 arrived it never occurred to Alfred that Dick Abbott would not automatically side with him. We had no inkling of Dick Abbott's participation in the demotion. Actually the first symptom of this disloyalty occurs when Alfred asks for some room in the Museum in which to sit and write; ~~Abbott's reply~~ he replies unconditionally that there is no room.

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I want to make clear that for years we considered Dick Abbott and Iris Barry our friends. We saw them often socially. For years Dick Abbott tried to convince us to buy a house. We also trusted him to invest our savings more advantageously. As it turned out it was a bad idea.

****** You see, Irving Sandler, in the perspective of time all this was a tempest in a teacup. They carved out a corner of the library in the old Museum and Alfred worked in there and wrote his "Picasse Fifty" and his "Matisse". When René d'Harnoncourt became Director of the Museum he became Alfred's comrade and protector. Alfred ø continued to work seven days a week but essentially what he has to show for these later years is the Museum's collection.

With great effort I have written these pages of summation to convince you not to embark on ~~the~~ this ticklish subject in your introduction.

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Sunday 14 in aft. Dear R. Just to keep you abreast of the times. Had lunch with Bill. He is seeing Paul Gottlieb about other things. Will suggest to hi selecting for anthology material not in print, not easily available . This I think wd be desirable - he would put some stuff in "antecedents" wants a section "formation of MoMA - ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ or "toward a new museum". I think it is a good thing that someoneone at Abrams should have an idea of the skeleton of the book. If Gottlieb agrees it saves us hunting around in the books in print and allows space for rare and unavailable things making for a fresher book. Love - I think that Bill might ask ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ to see things. Much love

next Thursday

18 Mar.)

ch 14

ave you by chance thr note

book on Nadelman

that .I was stupid not to as

l this with the note to ⅓h.

sie Newhouse -

Last night though vacillating with fatigue I wrote this long note to Ph. Freeman. She shd never have started toplay around editorially with those yrs. How right Irene Gordon is to say that the aditor must see and have the whole thing in front of him or her before tackling the job. I pledge you not to give her any more of the chronology whatever. I told her that if she had time on her hands she shd give you a hand with 1902-30.

She objected for instance for my saying in 1942 that Eddie Warburg before marching off to the war wrote A[W] to say take care - let me know what I can do. This was a premonitory symptom but it made no sense to h r.

With Faythe I am trying to give shape to 1943-44 and with Mrs. Riegen I am pinning in the bibliography/ You remember of course that Ph Freeman sa rhat the chron cd co come by and by after she had read the book. In my letter of last night I&ve tried to give her ab idea that the mission involved all the arts.

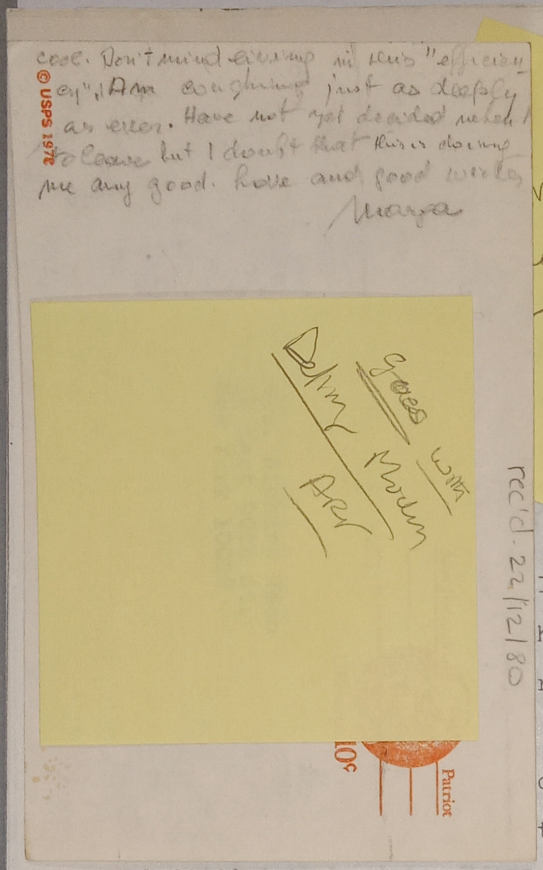
Pleasecall me in the a.m. when you get there - and not by and by. It helps me to understan d what I must do on that particular day.

Love

M

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18 Mar.)

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Delmar
Modern Art

(18 Mar.)

ch 14

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(rec'd 18 Mar.)

March 14

Dearest Rona,

Thank you for the Harper article, have you by chance thr note that A. wrote Lincoln when he receivedthe Huge book on Nadelman printed in Italy, we have Lincoln's response to that .I was stupid not to as you for it in the first place I want to send all thiswithanote to Ph. I know that you have told me many timesaboit Susie Newhouse - all right - never mind.

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March 20 , 1985

Dear Ph.,

I'm writimb this at night when v. tired. Yr remark about milan and Stutt RR Stations is justified. It means that I must write more about architecture and specifically about fascist architecture BEFORE Jan. 1933.

Please bear in mind globally that the issue is for MODERN, not only ptg and sculpture but architecture, design, typography. hpotography, filmand music. Little by little the museum gets departments for these headings but it is a general stand - a position. This means so far as 1933 is concerned is that Alfred and I had a opinion about architecture and that Milan station was awkward fascist baroque, Mussilini's experiments at the start and thet the architecture in Rome in 1955 was "stripped fascist, that the station in Suttgart seemed intelligent and harmonious. I know that you might be tempted to throw out all allusions to architecture and have done with it butarchitecture was one of the battlegrounds and it's a battle that the Museum won.

For the rest I did not want you to "work" on the sample Rona sent editiorialy just as none of us waht to be seen naked if unprepared. This was the working canvas and the precise dates taken out of the shoebox was to pin down or memory- all these things were to be smoothed out editorially by me or by me and Rona. I know as well as you do that seeing Henry moore and burra is irrelevant but it is there as a memorandum and we only know it now that the whole ob is completed - it might have been a useful point. Anyway - whether ypu get to see ny more of these "roughs" and I hope you don't bear in mind that they are not only for this book they are for the future and all these stitches in the quilting may turn out useful in the end. It was never intended to have these silly items recorded date by date. There must be a note at the start of the chron. that says

A. and M. worked togethr in Europe as a team, M. was interpreter typist , ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ and general helper in Europe - than when teh "campaign was over A. wd sail for the U.S. and ~~xxxxxx~~ after a stop in NY wd go to Greensbor Vermont - a remote p;ace - to see his parents while M. went to Rome to see hermother anf sometimes take her to the country. Then M. wd sail back and more ofetn than not go for a short while to Gr. and then bpth wd return to NY. In the early days we had a cook who came in p- did the c;eaning and got dinner 5 days a week. they were not too hard to get because these were the yrs of the depression (A's salary had wit hin a few nonths b en cut from 10.000 to 9.000. The rhythm becomes constant M. to Italy - A. to GR. until 1939 when the war begins. Let me remark that all of us in the rhirtees knew that there wd be a war. I mean all of us both American and European.

When war sets in there's no more Europe nomore great unexpected extradinary exhibtions and things settle to a jog.trot. As a family with a daughter born Sept 1937 we live in NY or in Gr. Things getdull in the Museum. Important Younger trustees leave NY. - all thoughts are conventrated on the "war effort".

Let's change the subject. The Museum won the battle for modern architecture gradually but visibly in the thirties. It also wanted to redesign cars g t the chromium and the frills o f them- it had an automobile show but it did bot have half as much effect on the design of cars. In the early yhirties we were all madly invilved in the design of cars and you were supposed to admire the British M.G.

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while I was working on the chron. I never thought of these concepts , I went along year by year tabulating the dates try to reconstruct the "feel" of that year but now because of yr remark aboit the RR stations I see that these aims and goals that were Alfred 's from the start are not sufficiently documented.

I have no idea - I don't know whether any pf ~~xxxx~~ thes hopes of Alfred's that little by little came true are brought out on Iriving Sandler's work.

I think that probably Rona and I musr detach ourselves from from pit year by year work and at least document how each department get to be founded, little by little, one after the other.

I have forgotten - another great thing in ~~xxxx~~ those years of the thirties was a deep love for the primitive * Alfred was still standingxyup for the c cause of primtive art in the sixties when he was Harvard overseer. This gr. admiration for the primitive was reenforced by Rene d'Harnoncourt who inspired Nelson Rocke to acquire such objects - and this lead to the death of Machael Rocke and the creation of the promtive section of the Met.

Yrs in total exhaustion - cannot corre t am sending copy to Rona

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(Re the or Defining Modern Art. Clive had nothing to do with it. RR)

August 27, 1981

Dear Clive,

This long letter may reach you at the wrong moment but I am writing it while I have time to think without interruptions. Put it away till you have leisure to read it. On August 25 I spoke to Christine Ivusich of Princeton University Press. She is going away till mid-september and later she'll come to NY to see you. It may be that she'll want a xerox of all Rona's material.

She will ask you, I think, to do a sample of what you would write as an introductory piece to a gathering of your choice. So far as I can see she must present a sort of package to her Board - they want to have a pretty good idea of the contents of the book before they endorse the project.

Long ago - when we were still dealing with Harry Abrams I made these three pages of rough indexes and suggestions - they give a rough idea of what there is to choose from.

One of the most interesting things you could do fairly early in the game would be to invite to lunch my lifelong friend Mrs. Denver Lindley (Frances) - her phone number is 593-7240 , her office is less than a block away, she is a senior editor at Harper and Row, long ago she used to be the head of Publications in the Museum. She has a theory that I find interesting. She believes that Presbyterian Princeton produces certain luminaries such as Woodrow Wilson, George Kennan Adlai Stevenson etc. She classifies Alfred with such persons distinguished by their active intellect and their uprightness (virtue in the Latin sense). It is something to think about though not necessarily to put in print.

(to see him as descendants of Henry Adams)

I continue with suggestions - I hope you won't object, please accept me as a colleague. All through last winter I read Rona's material and I constantly put myself in the place of the anthologizers I don't know whether there is enough "body" in the stuff and also whether in criticism it does not seem old-fashioned. Is there enough? or should we dig nuggets out of the "classics" (the books still available in print). With this in mind I have read here and there in the "Masterpieces" book which is out of print and cannot be republished - but - I hit countless passages in critic so which Alfred quoted the artist or some other critic that I grew impatient. Someone should look through it with attention, to see what to excerpt.

In my index pages I point out some difficult decisions: if you decide to include the Pollaiuolo article as a sort of prelude - to show other interests.. I don't know whether it would "hold up" in current

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scholarship - whether to include the Russian Icons also for reasons of scholarship though I am sure that from the point of view of clarity it is still useful.

The Russian Diary chronologically comes before the Russian Icons which are a consequence of the trip to Russia. In reading the Diary you must decide whether to cut or reproduce in toto and with the footnotes? Some persons have wondered how Alfred knew whom to see in Moscow. I think he picked up a lot by word of mouth once there and some from his recent visit to the Bauhaus. His best sources in the US on all that was contemporary were the Dial, The Arts and Vanity Fair whose editor, Frank Crowninshield, became a trustee when the Museum was founded.

When last winter I read all the things that Rona had xeroxed I clipped on a note or a comment to help in making categories. In late spring I began to read everything over again in a more orderly spirit now that I had a panoramic view of the whole but did not finish before leaving at the end of June. For the editor at Harry Abrams I made the enclosed categories and suggestions; they may help you make up folders to classify what you read.

Many xeroxes I labeled polemic -Alfred was pugnacious, he stood up for ideas or principles against all comers. I think the early trustees found him difficult - in fact I imagine that they were astonished that an employee should stand up to them as he did. When Stephen Clark demoted him and deprived him of power, he did not understand that he was demolishing an idea, a creation, he thought he was getting rid of a trouble-maker. Returning to the instinct to fight: In his later childhood or early adolescence Alfred staged battles with lead soldiers on the floor of the living room (in the "manse" in Baltimore) and - failing soldiers, with collar buttons. Rubber bands made slings and projectiles numerous to the enemy. He fought Gettisburg and Waterloo with the help of his brothers and schoolmates. In school he played football and in adult life chess.. In the Munich crisis he was indignant. He used to say that all diplomats, all statesmen and military men should be trained to play chess. In the Second War, when the news came over the radio at decisive moments, he'd go through agonies of impatience and frustration because so often the leaders did not foresee the consequences of their words or actions.

Alfred always wanted to be understood. In the case of What is Modern Painting he made farmers. adolescents, old ones

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persons read this or that fragment and - if they did not understand, he re-wrote. It takes humility to under-write for a writer as good as he. When working on the Picasso or Matisse books he wrote all day and often produced less than a typewritten page; every word was weighed.

Since the shift from Harry Abrams, Bill Lieberman has been spoken to again and wants v. much to be used by you in consultative ways (he is much too busy to put pen to paper himself). When we conversed about the project last fall he wanted to present a large group of writings at the beginning under the heading of "Toward a New Museum" and put in the Pollaiuolo, the Wellesley Questionnaire and all such, as a huge prelude. Rona says that the title "Toward a New Museum" has already been used. The importance of Bill is to give you a sense of those distant times, circumstances and life being very different then. You may remember that he came as a volunteer just out of Swarthmore - after that he went to Harvard grad. school for a while - he was right on the ramparts when St. Clark demoted Alfred. Of his own accord and on his own time he put together the first Barr bibliography with the clear intent of helping A. to get another job.(in 1943 A. did not have a PhD.)

Christine Ivusick is much interested in having a chronology and said emphatically - a FULL chronology. Rona (and I) will work on this and it might be useful to you too during yr work.

I am desperately trying to get this off to you from Greensboro because when I get back I'll be so busy and so will you. I want you to have it on hand when you begin to read.

See you as soon as we both can, love

Marga

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THIS IS A SORT OF INDEX OF WHAT'S AVAILABLE

suggested title: An AHB Reader; Documents of Modern Art

INTRODUCTION by .....

TOWARD A NEW MUSEUM: (we cannot use this heading because it has been used before. It was suggested by Bill Lieberman) This section concerns the Wellesley period.

Questionnaire the students had to answer before being admitted to the coursepn Modern Art

Understanding Modern Art includes bibliography of what was available in 1928.

Boston Art Pauper

LAUNCHING THE MUSEUM:

First brochure for the Museum (1929)

Excerpts from "AN EFFORT" derived from "The Public as Artist"

Private letter to A. Conger Goodyear outlines multi-departmental plan and contains the remark that AHB had not foreseen (1934) that the Museum would have such a wide influence and effect

most important →

ART MOVEMENTS:

Brief Guide to the Fantastic Art Dada and Surrealism Exhibition (This is interesting because in the actual catalog of the show the text is not by Alfred, only some remarks here and there) (Jan.1937)

Early Futurism in Catalogue of Italian Exhibition 1949

De Stijl 1961

TEXTS ON SINGLE ARTISTS:

John Marin
Boccioni
Gauguin
Malevich
Kupka
Ensor
Paul Klee
Mondrian
George Grosz
Feininger
Seurat (comments on the Museum's Port en Bessin (in a pamphlet on The Nation's Greatest Paintings)
Gogh (on Starry Night)
sion(on the Minotauromachie)

from Katherine Dreier Catalogue of the Société Anonyme (with installation shots)

other material of this kind one can pick and choose
isters of Modern Art , out of print, cannot be reproduced.

will look for Wall labels for later artists.

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There are a couple of poetic writings that one might want to place on the category of "Single Artists" or elsewhere:

Galaxy (on a work by F. Kiesler)

Roszak

ARCHITECTURE:

Introduction to Hitchcock and Johnson The International Style (1932)
for architecture see also the above-mentioned Goodyear letter

Modern and Modern in MoMA Bulletin 1932

PHOTOGRAPHY:

The New Department of Photography in MoMa Bulletin December 1949-1941

DESIGN:

The Modern Chair (a typescript, unpublished written for Fashion of the Time (Marshall Field)

MOVIES:

Russia

Germany

The Miracle with Anna Magnani (on censorship)

LONGER PIECES:

Russian Journal

Art in the Third Reich

Preface to the Sydney Janis Collection

Preface to the Nelson Rockefeller Collection (as yet unpublished)

Bibliography with an Introduction by Rona Roob

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THIS WAS A FIRST RUN-THROUGH

Blocks of work to be accepted or rejected:

Pollaiuolo
Russian icons
Hitler and the Nine Muses on Art in the Third Reich
Russian Diary (Hound and Horn and Magazine of Art)

Items to be included in all circumstances:

Wellesley questionnaire
Kiesler and 2 or 3 other poems

Blocks of material in stray publications could be put in these categories:

Freedom of the Arts
The New York School of Painting or - the American School of Painting.
Launching the new Museum
Writings on single artists
Writings on single works of art.
In a chapter on AHB as teacher there is the incredibly small bibliography of what could be recommended to students on modern art in 1927
There are recommendations of what modern architecture to see in Paris in those years
There is much on modern architecture in fact one could make a section on the fight for modern architecture

Quickly separable out of MoMA publications:

Klee
Futurism chapter in modern Italian catalogue

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SIDE 1

Transcription of interview, Mrs. Alfred H. Barr/Irving Sandler, taped 9 May 1983

Irving Sandler (IS)
Margaret S. Barr (MSB)
Rona Roob (RR)
Amy Newman (AN)

IS We can either begin at the beginning or wherever you'd like to begin.

MSB I'm very much surprised you want to do it with me, I thought you would like me to do it with Amy to spare you this wear and tear.

IS No, no; I'm curious.

MSB Well, then, I really think that to describe the beginning of Alfred it is terribly useful to me to have Rona as I forget everything; and I can tell you as fast as possible if you like, but haven't biographies of Alfred been written, about how he was born in Detroit and transferred to Baltimore when he was nine--hasn't that been all written down?

RR There's an excellent profile of Alfred, written by Dwight McDonald, in the New Yorker--two parts, 1953.

MSB Should we give him my copy?

RR There are also excellent notes of Alfred ~~collecting and~~ corresponding with McDonald in the Barr Archive.

IS Excellent.

RR Dwight McDonald said he had never done a profile for anybody ~~with~~ so many corrections which he then adapted into ~~his~~ article.

IS That's the New Yorker...

RR New Yorker, two parts.

MSB Alfred hated it.

IS Why?

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MSB I'll tell you immediately. This is the thing that you have to guard against. Everybody thinks that he was a workaholic, a word that I don't like; that he was a monomaniac, that the Museum was everything. They make him turn into some sort of preacher and then they constantly harp back to the fact that his father was a Presbyterian minister--except that Presbyterians say 'preacher.' And then they turn him into a sort of preacher-teacher, whereas he was first of all extraoirdinarily amusing, very humorous, extremely charming--ladies adored him, gentlemen somewhat less. Gentlemen liked him less because of a terrible friction--which is true, that in work situations, or even in the discussions of politics and all that--he was terribly interested in politics--he was unfortunately, shall we say, always right, or three-quarters of the time, especially in the work situations. This was infuriating, so much so that quite recently--because I prefer pulling the past into the present--Agnes Mongam, whom I very rarely see, she is so tremendously busy, had to do a speech, right now, in Northampton, less than a week ago, in honor of Jerry Abbott, who had been the director of the Smith College museum. And so she started looking through the archives in the Fogg. And I said, now you are the person that I can ask, because I have never understood why Jerry left the Museum.

Alfred, you see, made it a condition that Jerry Abbot should be his Associate Director right at the beginning, which he was, and then he petered out in less than two years. Well, of course you see when we are in New York I don't work, I never have worked for one day in the Museum, so I only hear everything secondhand; so I never really understood why Jerry left. So I said to Agnes, tell me whyhe left; do you think that it got on his nerves to work under Alfred, because Alfred would always boss him. Did this get on his nerves? Not at all! It was because of Sacks M_____. Sacks wrote a very intelligent and considerate letter to Jerry saying, first, there was a vacancy at Smith; and then he said, I think for the gain of your career and all that you'd do very well to take it. And so Jerry left. And then Alfred was never given another assistant. He wanted another assistant. He never got one.

IS Now he met Jerry in the [?]

MSB Don't you remember that Jerry wrote Alfred and said, Dear Mr. Barr, do you think that we could share a room in the graduate school--what was it? I think Jerry was about four years older than Alfred.

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RR I thought they met...

AN At Princeton.

RR ...the year Alfred was doing graduate work at Princeton.

IS Yes.

RR I thought their paths crossed...perhaps when Alfred was teaching at Princeton. He did two years at Princeton. But I figured this out very carefully about a year ago, by taking notes from the Russian diary; I have this written down on a card.

MSB It doesn't matter, Rona.

RR But that I can tell you easily enough.

IS Marga, when did you meet Alfred?

MSB I'll tell you that, but I'm sorry, I'd like to finish with Jerry. I have a one-track mind. The important thing that is not written in the Russian diary is that Jerry, besides being four, three years older than Alfred, had money, and Alfred was totally penniless--but totally. In fact, he got himself through Princeton practically on scholarships; the family had no money whatsoever. And Alfred always felt a tremendous gratitude towards Jerry because Jerry consented to travel 'hard'. I trust you know what it is to travel 'hard' in Russia; that is, seated on wood. [He] consented to absolutely abysmal hotels, riddled with bugs, and never, never complained. And he did it simply because of wanting to be with Alfred. It was perfectly natural, but Alfred always felt this extraordinary gratitude for him, and he never, ever did that kind of thing--'oh, let me pay for this, let me pay for that.' They were just pals, and that's how it went. And I think I liked that very much in Jerry, too, who was an extraordinarily generous man. Now, you were asking me something.

IS Yes. When did you meet Alfred?

MSB I met him... Rona says that I was there at the opening of the Museum. I don't remember it. Things I don't remember, such as having worked with your charming wife. Instead, this is what I remember. That there was a Thanksgiving vacation. I was living in new York. I had a Carnegie scholarship for the history of art, having most miserably taught Italian at Vassar for four years. Horrifying. And so I was living right here on 91st and Madison. And Agnes Ringe, who taught up at Vassar, and who got

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her Ph.d at Harvard, where I should have gone for my Ph.d, too, that would have been my career. But there was no money. Anyhow, she telephoned and said, why don't we go to the Museum of Modern Art, and it was still the first show, of Gauguin, van Gogh, etc. And so--I don't think you saw the Hecksher Building or that installation; I think you're much too young. But there was only one large gallery, like this; all the other galleries were around it. These were square and smaller, but this was the large gallery. In the middle of this large gallery there was a couch on which three people could have sat on one side and three on the other--just a flat couch. When we entered this gallery we first sat down on this couch. And then she said, 'Oh, there is Mr. Barr.' So she stood up and went to speak to him, and I remained on the couch. I never muscle in on people, you know, never. I never interrupt people at cocktail parties, I don't do that. So, I sat there and by and by she turned toward me and said to him, 'Do you know Daisy Scolari?' And he said no, but he had heard about me from Russell Hitchcock. And that's how that happened. Now, if you want to know why he heard about me from Russell Hitchcock....

IS Yes.

MSB It was the last year that I was teaching at Vassar, and Russell was teaching there, too. Russell was very deaf. Russell was very bored, and I was enormously bored, and we tried to comfort each other. Sometimes we went to the movies and we would make so much noise that all our students would all run away, because Russell talked so loud on account of being deaf. Inversely, of course, most of the time we had to work in Taylor Hall--that was where one, that was the art building there--and he had a true office in Taylor Hall, and I was working in the library, the art library. And then he would say... I don't know; I suppose he called me Daisy... 'I have just received a letter from...,' and I would come in and he would give a reading. So he read letters from Alfred, and from Jerry, but he also read letters from other friends, especially a certain man called Smith who died in the middle of the school year. And so these letters were read to me, so I knew these two lunatics were in Russia and of course Alfred, having taught at Vassar, his name was still echoing because he had become a friend of two extremely amusing and sexy girls, students. I couldn't understand the faculty at all, but they were two wonderfully amusing students, who used to mouth over the names of these people--'Alfred Baaarr,' like that. And so I remembered these names, you see.

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And then I was made to take courses at the nonexistent art department of NYU, and things were rather sad there. There was no Institute, of course, and courses took place down at the Square or else in the basement of the Metropolitan Museum among the Egyptian stuff. ~~Barry~~ Goldwater [?] was in the class, and Helen Franc--don't you touch Helen Franc without consulting me and Rona.

IS No.

MSB Okay. We took courses with Schakney [?], McMahon, Morey, Cook--Cook especially--Walter Williams, of course. We students, and there were so few of us, not more than seven, were looking forward enormously to the fact that Alfred Barr would be coming next fall, because he was a known name, a desirable person, and the group was so dull, so very dull, and we were looking forward [to his coming] when all of a sudden we heard that he had become director of the Museum.

IS Now, he would have been coming to the Institute to teach?

MSB No, no, no, no! He had this invented program in which he wanted to do something totally different and be in a different place every year. After the saga of Russia and of being professor at Wellesley and all that, he got another scholarship and entered into communication with A. Philip McMahon, who was teaching in the graduate school of New York University. He was going to do a thesis on Cubism and Abstract Art under McMahon. That's why he had the scholarship, so that we were all expecting [him], whereas instead he headed the Museum. That was in the fall of 1929. He was headed for McMahon.

RR Alfred refers to Philip McMahon, I think, in the introductory note of the Machine Art book.

IS Then it would have been very shortly after he came to the Modern that you met him. At that first show, actually.

MSB Well, then she introduced me and we said I don't know what. I don't know what else happenbed except that he took me to tea. The Hecksher Building is 730 Fifth Avenue, and where Tiffany is now there was the most wonderful [M.B.?]

~~RR~~ [.....?]

~~MSB~~ No, it wasn't [.....]; where one could have tea in a civilized way. So we went and had tea, and all this was before Christmas. Now I don't remember at all what happened at Christmas. He, I suppose, went to see his mother;

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I don't know. But the truth of it is, we both had fallen indecently in love. When I contemplate the lives of my other friends, I've never heard of anyone--I mean among my immediate acquaintances; yes, in books--that had this horribly intense mutual... And what Alfred liked in me was that I was fun and that I had a label in a beastly old...what's it called? Russian lamb? The fur, what is it called?

RR Persian lamb.

MSB Persian. No, not beastly old. I had my aunt's Persian lamb coat, and it had a Moscow label, in Russian. You can imagine what this meant to a romantic like Alfred.

RR I have to tell the other side of the story. You think it's the fur coat, but Dorothy Miller tells me that you were absolutely the most hilariously funny, charming lady who did ~~the most~~ marvelous imitations of all the trustees and artists and friends, whatever, from the Museum.

MSB I was so intimidated by Alfred; I wasn't imitating him, I was just horrified, awed...awed. Absolutely. You've got to remember that I was rather unassimilated. I admit that you assimilate very much more easily if you know English currently, and I'd spoken English before Italian so there was no question of that; but it can't be said that I really wasn't patronized in any way, because...

RR You have to tell these people the wonderful story of when Alfred's mother asked him who he was going to marry, and he said, open up to page such-and-such of Frank Mather's book The Art of Italian Painting and look at the Andrea del Sarto on page...

MSB Yes, he was one of the nine [everyone speaking at once; unintelligible]... the Scolaris [laughter; unintelligible] ...on page 85 and you will find this. And the poor woman said she must be Catholic, and she jumped on the next train.

IS Were you?

MSB No! I was Church of England, but that was not much better.

RR ~~She's Presbyterian.~~

IS Now... A little bit more about the early days, because you would then shortly have gotten to know Sachs. Did he maintain contact with Alfred?

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MSB Intensely, intensely. But I didn't really meet Sacks instantly.

IS When did you get married?

MSB We got married twice. We first got married in New York, and Rona knows where. I saved our cork.

RR They were married at City Hall, May 1930.

IS Then it was a very fast courtship.

MSB Oh, it was very critical. He had to go to Princeton to ask some friends for advice. If you remember, there was a professor, a very charming professor, in Princeton...but you're too young...called George Rolly [?]. And he taught Chinese, Japanese, and Siamese, wonderful combination. He had married a woman in very different circumstances, but anyhow, Alfred was very frightened. And I deeply sympathize, I sympathize with all men, especially then; men that got married, I was so sorry for them, felt they were taking on such terrible responsibility; and I was constantly apologizing to Alfred and trying to tell him the things I could do, because I thought that the weight and the responsibility was so horrifying. So that we agreed that it was a very serious step. So he said, I'll go to Princeton and ask George and Ethel Rolly. Well, it was a very long weekend, and I had no idea what the result would be, because he knew I would sympathize completely if he said no. I mean, there was just no question of resentment, of being dropped or anything; it didn't fall that way. Well, he said yes. Then the funny thing is that he said let's get married in Paris and we don't have to worry about all these trustees and things because you see, according to convention I had no famiy to marry out of, my mother lived in Rome. So he wrote his mother--people used the long-distance telephone so little in those days, it's so strange. So he said to his mother that we were going to get married in Paris, and, I don't know, this was a godsend, one had to establish residency in any old arondissement at all for at least six weeks or more before you had the right to get married legally, and she knew that Alfred couldn't afford that kind of time, so she let him know. So then we hurriedly went down to City Hall and then I sailed on one boat and Alfred sailed on another boat, and then we had toi remarry in Paris, in the Church of the _____ d'Orsay because the clergyman was a colleague of Mr. Barr and Mr. Barr wanted this very much, and it would have been unthinkable. Well, the farce of it is that the church was being restored so that we were married in the _____ room and the secondary farce was that this peculiar clergyman,

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after marrying us, took us into a back room and gave us the most peculiar sermon in reverse, telling us how frightening it was to be married, and all the terrible things Alfred would have to face. We just looked at each other; we couldn't understand what this man was talking about. That's how it went.

IS What was life like in the early thirties in the Museum?

MSB In the Museum?

IS From your vantage point?

MSB Well, they had this limited space, which didn't give a feeling of crowding; I mean, the offices didn't give a feeling of crowding because it was a new place. There was Alfred's office, and there was Jerry's office, and there was an awfully nice woman called Mary Sands who was sort of a supergirl Friday, and then there was a worldly and flighty girl, tall and goodlooking, and very smiling, called Jeanne Carpenter, who was the daughter of a composer--Rona knows the name of the composer, it took us a long time to discover it--an unknown composer called Carpenter.,

RR Alvin Carpenter.

MSB She was sort of public relations. And then at the door there was an Irishman called Pat Codyre who in a way was useful because he had that sort of cheap graciousness of Irish people. But in the end he left under a sort of cloud, ~~because--not so much in the end--because~~ the first exhibition that Alfred assembled with his own hands, ~~--because~~ the big van Gogh-Gauguin show was chosen and seembled by our president, the Museum president, Mr. Goodyear; he may have discussed it with Alfred but Goodyear went to Paris and Goodyear assembled the show. So the first show ~~for~~ Alfred ~~to~~ assemble in Europe or anywhere was the Corrot-Daumier, which he began to work on, shall we say, twelve hours after having married me the second time, ~~because~~ there we were in the St. James in Albany and I started making these phone calls for him. I've often wondered if he had ever thought how convenient I would be; I've often wondered that, have you?

RR Of course he did; ~~he probably did.~~

MSB It was absolutely automatic that I would make the phone calls and do all that kind of thing--which of course I did. And of course the phones were infernal in those days. It was just terrible what you suffered on the phone in waiting and waiting. They'd keep you hanging, you

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know, and then they'd forget your call and do another. Unspeakable, unspeakable. We never had a moment's honeymoon, and he prepared, himself... This was an extraordinary lesson. I hadn't the vaguest notion what it consisted of to collect an exhibition. He arrived with the correct books on Daumier and on Corrot in his hands, in his arms, on the boat, you know, and his mind was all made up. He was not going to have this one, yes he would have that one; this one is conveniently located here but we're not going to do that. And then there was another one in Berlin; it meant going on purpose to Berlin, it was terribly important, collectors and all that. That's the way he chose the show.

IS You went with him...

MSB Not everywhere, no. I didn't go to Berlin that time. Oh perhaps I did, I can't remember. We have to look that up. up.

IS But you went to Europe with him?

MSB Oh yes.

RR ~~I have to~~ May I interrupt. Alfred did not speak fluent French or anything like that. Marga did all the talking and the writing and the typing of all letters--Alfred did not type. I'd like to just put that in.

MSB Alfred mumbled in German and he managed to use what one calls 'kitchen French'; he could take taxis and buy tickets and all that, but it was a tremendous convenience having me. He said that languages bored him, languages bored him. When we were once in _____ on holiday with time on our hands I tried to give him French lessons and it was impossible, it just wouldn't go in. It was just like--I can't make a good simile, it just didn't interest him.

IS I could get by by acting like a deaf mute in Paris, or in elsewhere in France. I do quite well. I have the same difficulty: I can't hear it. Why did Goodyear choose that show? What were Alfred's relations with his millionaire trustees? Was there resistance...

MSB I even wrote a philippic to Rona about this last night, or two nights ago. I think this is an extremely serious question, and I hope that Rona will contradict me, but I've thought an awful lot about it. I think that these very trustees were extremely proud of having the pictures that they had. They were sort of patting themselves on the back or on the shoulder, saying what taste, how avant-

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garde are we. I was rather surprised when I went to consult at the Crimson and then I asked Agnes about that French show in 1929 in the Fogg. Well, Sachs and others--she has the names of the people who were working in the Museum--were all perfectly conscious of the late 19th and early 20th century artists; but shall we say, D D_____(Fr.) much more than Picasso. More Rosewater... But they were way ahead of the crowd. So when it came into their heads, and according to Agnes Mongan, they got the idea of founding the Museum of Modern Art because such pictures were in no way visible in public collections; shall we say, Cezanne was not in the least as visible as all that. I thought that the famous three ladies had electrified themselves, or galvanized themselves, by seeing a show of this kind in Cambridge in 1929. It turns out that I'm completely wrong and that Sachs came to New York every week of his lie. That he taught on Friday.... END OF SIDE 1