

120 East 19 St., New York City

August 28, 1921

Mrs. Jessie Palmer Webber,
Librarian, Illinois Historical Society,
Springfield, Ill.

My dear Mrs. Webber:

I have just learned through Messrs. Harper Brothers, the publishers, of New York, that you have bought, or are about to buy, the manuscript of Orville H. Browning's Diary, including all rights of publication.

If this is so, I am hoping that I can make some satisfactory arrangement with you for carrying out a piece of work on this manuscript which I agreed some time ago to do for Harper Brothers, if they could make a satisfactory arrangement with the owner.

It seems that the Diary was submitted to them months ago. They asked me to read it and give my judgment as to the possibility of getting from it a book for general readers. I think you would agree with me that as the Diary now stands, it is of no value to the general public, although of considerable value to the student of the period. I told Harper Bros. that by a combination of editing and writing, I thought that I might give them a book of 40 to 50 thousand words; and it was agreed that I should do this if arrangements could be made with the owner.

These arrangements are of course now, because of your purchase, transferred to you. Would there be any objection to my going ahead with the work? I suppose that the Harpers would want to make with you the same arrangement that they were proposing to Mrs. Miller. Even if you want to publish the Diary, I cannot see that the use that I should make of it would in any way interfere. Indeed, I should rather suppose that it would draw attention of students to the document. How would you feel about this? I shall hope to hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,