

March 16, 1949

Dr. George B. Zehmer, Director
Extension Division
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

Dear Dr. Zehmer:

Senator Fenwick and I had lunch today and discussed at some length the project for extending the work of your Department to the northern Virginia area. The more we explored the problem the more we became convinced that the Extension Division would probably have rough going in attempting to develop a broad interest in the general field of educational courses for adults in view of the many opportunities which exist for that type of thing in the Washington area.

It did seem to us that there were two outstandingly definite needs which would seem to assure a greater degree of success of the project from its inception. The first is the supplying of extension credit courses for those who would like to continue their education beyond the high school level, and, even more important, various institutes and public forums covering state and local governmental problems, procedures and background. We believe that early emphasis on this latter field would probably be better received and marshal the largest amount of public support.

A very definite problem is involved, however, in the conference and public forum type of service due to the nature of our population. Our most difficult community problem stems from a large number of newcomers, many of whom do not have any other than a temporary residential stake in the

community, who are desirous of creating a local Utopia without any relationship either to the state as a whole or to the financial capacity of the community to meet their desires. Many of these well meaning folks have grasped every opportunity to propagandize their contention that the entire state of Virginia is a most unholy place in which to live and its institutions are even worse. It was just this sort of folk that gave Governor Darden such a bad taste as to the Arlington population.

The problem, therefore, is this: Whoever is selected to advance the work in this area should be an individual who has both feet on the ground and who realizes that assimilation of our new citizenry, from the standpoint of a broad approach, is a very vital and much needed task. If the proper man is not selected, certain agitation groups with beautiful, high-sounding names will take over the program before the Extension Service realizes it for whatever ends that they might be promoting at the moment.

This whole subject is rather a difficult one to commit in writing, but I think I can sum it up by saying that many times I have fervently wished that these "eager beavers" could be distributed uniformly throughout the state and not concentrated practically 100 percent in our locality. In moderation they serve an excellent function, but there is such a thing as over-stimulation.

Mr. Fenwick has said that he would be most happy to do whatever is necessary to persuade Mr. Darden to look with favor upon the project, and I shall delay my visit to the University until after your meeting up here on the 29th. Incidentally, both Mrs. Mann and I would be happy to have you and whoever comes with you, at dinner with us that night.

Sincerely yours,

Harrison Mann

HM/kb