Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Butt, Archibald Willingham, 1866-1912.

**Title:** Archibald Willingham Butt letters 1908-1912

**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 84

**Extent:** 1 microfilm reel (MF)

**Abstract:** Letters of Georgia native and presidential military aide Archibald Willingham Butt. Butt died in the sinking of the ship *Titanic*.

**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

**Restrictions on Access**
Unrestricted access.

**Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**
All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

**Related Materials in Other Repositories**
Microfilm of Archibald Butt family scrapbooks and a large collection of Butt family photographs located at Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Source**

**Citation**
[after identification of item(s)], Archibald Willingham Butt letters, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

**Appraisal Note**
Acquired by the Director of the Rose Library, Linda Matthews, as part of the Rose Library's holdings in Georgia history.
Collection Description

Biographical Note
Archibald Willingham Butt, military aide to two United States presidents, was born 26 September 1866, in Augusta, Georgia, and died in the sinking of the ship Titanic on 15 April 1912. Butt was a graduate of the University of the South and never married. He served as a United States Army officer in the Philippines (1900-1903) and Cuba (1906-1908) and was appointed personal aide to United States presidents Theodore Roosevelt (1908-1909) and William H. Taft (1909-).

Publication Note

Scope and Content Note
The collection consists of a microfilm copy of the correspondence of Archibald Willingham Butt from 1908-1912. The letters were written primarily by Butt to his mother, Pamela R. B. Butt, to his sister, Julia Butt (Mrs. John M. Slaton), and to Clara Butt; a few letters are to Butt from others, including Julia Ward Howe, author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Topics discussed are Butt's service as a presidential aide; Presidents Roosevelt, Taft, and other officials; the personal relationship between Taft and Roosevelt; the Roosevelt and Taft families; social life in Washington, D.C.; life in the White House, including notes on its furnishings, portraits painted of Roosevelt and Taft, and visiting dignitaries; and the incident involving Secretary of the Interior Richard Ballinger and U.S. Forest Service chief Gifford Pinchot. Typed copies of most letters follow each original handwritten or typed letter. A few undated items and some 1956 letters about the collection appear at the end of the film.

Arrangement Note
Arranged in chronological order.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 2, 1956, To Miss North From Mrs. Bryan. Got personal papers from Mrs. Slaton No diary and no mention of visit to ranch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 pages of incomplete letters to a woman who appears to be his sweetheart.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cover of Archie Butt's Intimate Personal Correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>AAAA-2 thru AAAA-6, Incomplete letter to Clara. Relates some of Butt's experiences. Butt is asked to tell diplomat and a high official’s wife to end an affair. Incident over sofa being moved from White House.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>April 8, 1908, To mother from Archibald. Is not overly enthusiastic about being sent to White House. Believes in greatness of Roosevelt. Original handwritten letter and copy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>April 11, 1908, To mother. May keep diary of people met and things done. Describes introduction of President Roosevelt. Original handwritten letter and copy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>May 15, 1908, To mother. Overheard President tell Governor Johnson that he regretted leaving office.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>May 18, 1908, To mother. President's horse kicked. Explains President's reaction to stable keepers inefficiency.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(About end of May), To mother. Describes walk to Glover place with Mrs. Roosevelt.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>June 8, 1908, To mother. Relates Roosevelt's reaction to being thrown from horse.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>June 10, 1908, To mother. Tells of tennis game with President.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>June 11, 1908, To mother. Must get gun to take when on outings with President. Discusses Mrs. Roosevelt's personality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>June 15, 1908, To mother. Roosevelt wants &quot;Battle Hymn&quot; to be national anthem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>June 16, 1908, To mother. Tells of game of tennis with President.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>June 19, 1908, To mother. Roosevelt glad he had appointed Aleshire as Quartermaster General.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>June 20, 1908, To mother. Relates opinion of Mrs. Taft. Discusses plans to spend summer in Warm Springs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>June 22, 1908, To mother. Will be in Augusta on 30th. Roosevelt's two favorite short poems are &quot;Battle Hymn&quot; and &quot;Elspeth's Ballad.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>June 24, 1908, (Incomplete letter) Relates incident concerning polishing of a tomb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June 25, 1908, To mother. Tells of present manner of inviting guests in Washington.

June 30, 1908, To mother. Relates conversation with Taft concerning upcoming election. Miss Hagner has astonishing executive ability.


July 1, 1908, To mother. Discusses ways of military.

July 16, 1908, To Clara. Relates his mother's health. Hopes he will not be aide after Roosevelt.

July 18, 1908, To mother. Relates bad state of affairs in War Dept.

July, 1908, To Butt From Edith Kermit Roosevelt. Tells Butt which train to catch for his visit to Oyster Bay.

July 24, 1908, To mother. Tells of first day of visit with Roosevelts at Oyster Bay.

July 26, 1908, To mother. Mr. William Phillips arrived at Oyster Bay. Relates happenings of day.

July 27, 1908, To mother. Describes Mrs. Roosevelt's behavior at Sagamore Hill. Describes Sunday morning church services with Roosevelts. Discusses President's plans for hunting trip in jungle.

July 28, 1908, To mother. Believes Taft will win election. Will leave Washington next day.

July 29, 1908, To mother. Predicts Kermit Roosevelt will be the child to win honors. Roosevelt predicts war with Japan.

August 8, 1908, To Butt From Julie Ward Howe. Discusses words she wrote to "Battle Hymn"

AA-2 & 21/2, Memo from Mrs. Julia Ward Howe. How she was inspired to write her version of the "Battle Hymn"

September 23, 1908 - To mother. Roosevelt favored Taft over Bryan and worked to get him elected.

September 25, 1908 - To mother. Last days of service to Roosevelt. Roosevelt campaigns for Taft.

September 30, 1908 - Roosevelt has meeting with Japanese Ambassador.

October 6, 1908, Attends luncheon in White House. Roosevelt meets with Dr. Koch.

October 7, 1908, To mother. Luncheon with Jewish author, Mr. Zangwill.

October 10, 1908, To mother. President and family to dine with Butt.

October 14, 1908, Describes luncheon given for President.

October 20, 1908, Roosevelt's reaction to having portrait painted. Opinion of a Mr. Morgan.

October 21, 1908, Discussion with President about his jungle hunt.

October 21, 1908, To mother. Relates story of a widow, Baroness Speck Steroeborg of Germany.
October, 1908, Copies of sympathy notes to Butt when his mother died. From Theodore Roosevelt, Edith Kermit Roosevelt, and Ethel Carow Roosevelt.

November 2, 1908, To Clara. Relates Roosevelt family's kindness to him when returning to Washington after death of mother.

November 5, 1908, To Clara. Relates happenings in White House NIGHT OF ELECTION.

November 6, 1908, to Archie. From Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. Expresses sorrow in death of mother. His father pleased with outcome of election.

November 8, -1908, To Clara. Relates happenings at diplomatic tea.

November 12, 1908, Letter concerning Roosevelt's religious beliefs.

November 16, 1908, Indifferent to staying in White House during Taft administration.

November 17, 1908, President introduces Butt to big figures in magazine world. General Wood discussed.

November 18, 1908, Magazines, "Outlook" and "Scribner" chosen to do articles on President in future. Discusses Ethel Roosevelt's personality and appearance.

November 19, 1908, Discusses a German Emperor.

November 24, 1908, Portrait of Washington in White House repaired. Corbins gave $10,000 for Taft campaign.

November 25, 1908, Unveiling of Sheridan statue.

November 26, 1908, President gave speech to Young Colored Men's Christian Association.

November 30, 1908, Taft wants Butt to remain as aide to White House.

December 2, 1908, Attended High mass celebration at St. Patrick's church.

December 4, 1908, Relations between Tafts and Roosevelts discussed. Expenses of White House discussed.

December 4, 1908, Describes several personalities in Washington.

December 7, 1908, Preparations for dinner at White House.

December 8, 1908, Discussion with Mrs. Taft about arrangements in White House. Had meeting with Mr. And Mrs. Taft.

December 11, 1908, What to do with old White House china decided.

December 12, 1908, Tafts at White House for luncheon. Tafts decide to give up horses at White House and use cars.

December 15, 1908, Details of planning for state dinner given.

December 18, 1908, Description of guests at state dinner given.

December 25, 1908, Christmas dinner at White House.

December 28, 1908, Plans for Ethel's debut ball. Description of ball.

December 31, 1908, Discussion with Mrs. Roosevelt about new aides. Kaiser gave President a book.

January 5, 1909, Met J. P Morgan's daughter. President asks Butt of plans for future.
January 6, 1909, Ambassador of China has dinner at White House.

January 8, 1909, Description of diplomatic reception.

January 11, 1909, President told Butt he liked his management of White House better than that of any other aide. Dovalls and Sen. Bacon dined with Butt.

January 12, 1909, Plans for 90-mile naval test ride.

January 14, 1909, Details of 90-mile test ride.


January 20, 1909, (Incomplete letter). Accompanied President to Methodist Meeting at Metropolitan Church.

January 23, 1909, Relates meeting of a Mr. Stunn from Germany. Roosevelt's opinion of John Hay as Secretary of State.


January 27, 1909, Relates Roosevelt's opinions of his cabinet members.

January 28, 1909, President expressed dislike for New York.

January 30, 1909, Relates some personal feelings toward Taft.

February 1, 1909, Gave a poker party.

February 3, 1909, Most officers in Cuba returned to Washington. Do not think will be revolution in near future. Worried about Nevada legislature.

February 7, 1909, Old friends invited to White House before end of administration. Packing at White House begun.

February, 1909, Differences in personalities of Taft and Roosevelt shown. Butt gives his prediction of Mrs. Taft's abilities as First Lady.

February 14, 1909, Describes visit to Lincoln's cabin. Describes Roosevelt's last trip by rail as President.

February 15, 1909, Gives his opinion of Tafts. Discusses trouble in Liberia. Booker Washington will go to help settle the problem.

February 16, 1909, Had meeting with Tafts. President lunched with members of planned hunting party.

February 21, 1909, Attended Preston's farewell dinner. The Roosevelts were distributing souvenirs to old friends. Butt given pair of spurs.

February 24, 1909, President's nephew died.


March 1, 1909, Luncheon given for President's intimate friends. Destroyed chipped china. List of guests for luncheon on Mar. 1.

March 2, 1909, New Minister from Haiti presented. Diplomatic Corps came to say good-byes to Roosevelts. List of those who came to White House to say good-bye.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 1909</td>
<td>Last dinner in White House for Roosevelts. Tafts present at dinner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 5, 1909</td>
<td>Tafts inauguration. Butt's good-bye to Roosevelt. Butt's first day with Taft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2, 1910</td>
<td>Description of New Year's reception at White House. Alexander Graham Bell attended the reception. Recipe for eggnog given.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 3, 1910</td>
<td>Butt give President his opinion of Woodbury Blair. Description of jealousies among cabinet member's wives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 5, 1910</td>
<td>Reception for diplomats.</td>
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<td>January 7, 1910</td>
<td>Discusses Pinchot controversy.</td>
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<td>January 9, 1910</td>
<td>Pinchot dismissed. Preparations for reception of Supreme Court discussed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 12, 1910</td>
<td>Tells of seating problems at Diplomatic dinner. Problem of women smoking at White House.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 13, 1910</td>
<td>Went to opera.</td>
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<td>January 14, 1910</td>
<td>Went to opera.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 19, 1910</td>
<td>Opinion of Judge Alton Parker and Seth Low. Plans for governor's dinner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 20, 1910</td>
<td>President attended funeral of Senor Nabuco. Description of governor's dinner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 24, 1910</td>
<td>Disagreement between Mrs. Taft and Butt.</td>
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<td>January 27, 1910</td>
<td>Stock market loss. Butt to take third degree in Masonry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 29, 1910</td>
<td>President gave speech at Publisher's dinner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 30, 1910</td>
<td>Butt and Taft have discussion about Roosevelt.</td>
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<td>January 31, 1910</td>
<td>President addressed Press Club.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2, 1910</td>
<td>Went to Congressional Dinner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5, 1910</td>
<td>Went to Vanderbilt ball in New York.</td>
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<td>February 9, 1910</td>
<td>Army and Navy reception at White House.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10, 1910</td>
<td>Went to Lincoln Birthday dinner. Discussion on whether Taft should meet Roosevelt in New York when Roosevelt returns from his jungle trip.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 14, 1910</td>
<td>DePew getting too old to be senator. Discussion of feeling between Taft and Roosevelt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 16, 1910</td>
<td>Attended Ohio dinner at White House.</td>
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<td>February 21, 1910</td>
<td>Went to theater and Yale dinner. President had an Iowa dinner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 22, 1910</td>
<td>Mrs. Taft gave musical dinner in White House.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 24, 1910</td>
<td>Taft to have portrait painted for White House.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 26, 1910</td>
<td>Discussion of Senator Gordon's speech.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
February 27, 1910, Butt suggested General Tasker Bliss as Commander at West Point.

February 27, 1910, Taft tells of his great admiration for the late Chief Justice Marshall.

March 4, 1910, Taft is in White House one year.

March 4, 1910, Spent first year anniversary at White House with Tafts.

March 5, 1910, Taft upset with Bourne because he did not vote in favor of the Postal Savings Bank.

March 6, 1910, To John C. Davis from Archibald. Sends part of family history to Mr. Davis to Cincinnati.

March 7, 1910, Taft's plan to defeat the Cummins and Dolliver faction in next election in Iowa.

March 9, 1910, Taft tells Speaker he wants two new battle ships added to American fleet.

March 12, 1910, President attends brother-in-law's funeral.

March 12, 1910, President notified that his brother in law committed suicide.

March 14, 1910, More discussion of brother-in-law's death.

March 15, 1910, aft received information that France and Canada are discriminating against U.S. in regard to tariffs.

March 18, 1910, President spoke to Irish Fellowship Society.

March 19, 1910, Taft received word of fight on Speaker Cannon.

March 21, 1910, Discussion of Gen. O. O. Howard. Charley Hughes has dinner at White House. President wants Hughes to run for governor again.

March 22, 1910, President addressed Silversmiths of New York. Discussed Roosevelt's return.

March 24, 1910, To Ed from Butt. Tells of President's popularity.

March 25, 1910, General Bell in auto accident. Butt bought a lot in Arlington Cemetery.

Easter 1910, Discussion of Taft's attitude toward Roosevelt's return.

March 29, 1910, To Arrington from Uncle Archibald. Sent a check. President's car was hit in New York.

March 31, 1910, Went to see Justice Brewer. Discussion of Post Master General Hitchcock.

April 4, 1910, Roosevelt refused to meet Pope in Rome if any conditions attached to the visit.

April 5, 1910, To John from Archie. Tells what a good president Butt thinks Taft is.

April 6, 1910, Cardinal misquoted President regarding Roosevelt's conflict with Pope, and Taft makes public denial of the mistake.

April 8, 1910, President considering appointing Gov. Hughes of New York to vacancy in Supreme Court.
April 9, 1910, Dinner given for Admiral Percy Scott. Butt admits his love for Matilde Townsend.

April 10, 1910, Went with President to dinner for League of Republican Clubs.

April 12, 1910, Discussion about Roosevelt.

April 14, 1910, President against woman's suffrage. Butt is for right of women to vote.

April 15, 1910, Mr. and Mrs. Taft have discussion about woman's suffrage.

April 15, 1910, To Ethel from Archibald, Letter of sympathy in death of her mother.

April 17, 1910, To Captain S. A. Cloman from Archie. Relates his opinion of Taft's administration.

April 17, 1910, To Clara. Accompanied President to four speeches.

April 19, 1910, President and William Jennings Bryan discussed matters pertaining to Puerto Rico.

April 22, 1910, Frank Kellogg gives Roosevelt's reason for not seeking third term. Taft feels Democrat will not win next election and that Roosevelt will not be elected for third term.

April 25, 1910, Gov. Hughes appointed to Supreme Court. Taft sent Roosevelt an invitation to visit him at White House. Reception for Imperial Highness Prince Tsai Tao.

April 28, 1910, President and Mrs. Taft received Colonial Dames and Daughters of 1812.

April 29, 1910, Attended dinner at White House for Lord Li.

April 30, 1910, Went to Niagara Falls.

May 1, 1910, To Colonel Treadwell from Butt. Asks Treadwell to congratulate Governor Hughes on his appointment to Supreme Court Bench.

May 2, 1910, Spent day with Laughlins in Buffalo.

May 3, 1910, Accompanied President to his home in Cincinnati.

May 4, 1910, Accompanied President to St. Louis.

May 5, 1910, Discussion of Roosevelt's personality.

May 7, 1910, Accompanied President to British Ambassador's home.

May 8, 1910, President asked wives of cabinet members not to attend Pinchot Ballenger investigation.

May 10, 1910, Congress in ill humor over Taft's large travel expense.

May 13, 1910, President named Roosevelt to represent U.S. at King Edward's funeral.

May 13, 1910, To Paul from Archibald. Butt assures Paul that he is not engaged.

May 15, 1910, President having trouble in Congress with Pinchot and Garfield.

May 16, 1910, Tells of dislike which has developed between Tafts and Roosevelts.
May 21, 1910, Taft believes Catholic Church will back him and not Roosevelt in next election.

May 23, 1910, Discussion of playing bridge on Sunday.

May 24, 1910, Watched Hayley's Comet.

May 26, 1910, President feels it best to replace Fred Carpenter because of the many complaints. Is going to appoint Norton.

May 29, 1910, Norton and Butt have discussion about President.

May 31, 1910, Attended memorial services with President.

June 2, 1910, President unveiled monument of Gen. Custer. Discussion of Mr. Roosevelt's lack of courtesy toward Tafts.

June 5, 1910, Butt accompanied President on political tour.

June 6, 1910, Discussion of relationship between Taft and Roosevelt.

June 8, 1910, President displeased with Wilson's behavior.

June 9, 1910, Attended dinner at White House for Imperial party of Japanese.

June 10, 1910, President refused to receive John A. Martin of Colorado, Burton Harrison of New York, and Henry Rainy of Illinois in the White House.

June 12, 1910, Butt to meet Roosevelt's ship when he returns to the states.

June 14, 1910, Discussion about Dickerson.

June 16, 1910, Butt makes a few suggestions for the President's letter to Roosevelt.

June 19, 1910, Butt described his meeting with Roosevelt on his return to the states.

June 20, 1910, Butt and Taft discuss Roosevelt.

June 22, 1910, Discussion of Ballenger

June 23, 1910, Postal Savings Bank Bill passed.

June 24, 1910, President received letter from Roosevelt.

June 26, 1910, Congress adjourned. Butt making preparations to accompany President to Beverly.

June 27, 1910, Taft admits his growing dislike for Roosevelt.

June 27, 1910, President upset because of news that his son, Bob, had run over a man and seriously injured him.

June 30, 1910, Roosevelt visited Taft at Beverly.

July 3, 1910, Butt staying with Woodbury's while in Beverly with President. Butt gives incident which shows Taft has a touch of snobbery.

July 5, 1910, Butt lets President of Harvard know that he does not feel southern boys should go to school there because of the intellectual snobbishness of the school. Chief Justice Fuller died.

July 6, 1910, Roosevelt pledged his support to Poindexter. Think Roosevelt might be thinking of forming third party.

July 8, 1910, President visited Moody. Moody plans to retire from Supreme Court bench after December because of his health.
July 11, 1910, Discussion about filling of vacancy of Chief Justice.

July 13, 1910, Tells some of hindrances of being a presidential aide.

July 17, 1910, Taft wants Judge Kincaid to be governor of Ohio.

July 18, 1910, Butt afraid that Roosevelt will not endorse Kincaid for governor which would look bad for Taft. Butt does not think Norton is proving to be a good presidential secretary.

July 18, 1910, Butt accompanies President on ten day cruise on Mayflower.

July 19-28, 1910, Tells of happenings each day while on Mayflower.

July 29, 1910, President Hadley of Yale decided to head Commission on Railroads and bonds.

Additional correspondence

November 7, 1895, To Archie from M. W. Ransom. Personal letter giving Butt instructions for improving himself and his future.


July 5, 1900, To Cptn. from Wm. H. Taft. Letter of thanks for help given in reception for General MacArthur

January 7, 1901, To Elihu Root From William Taft. Suggests that Archibald Butt be appointed as Capt and Assistant Quartermaster in U. S. Regular Army.

October 22, 1901, To Butt from Pershing. Thanks for thought in connection with Cavalcade. Come to Iligua for rest.

October 31, 1906, To Archie from John J. Pershing. Personal letter. Thanks for letter of September. Glad you were sent to Cuba.

January 21, 1907, To Butt from J. F. Bell. Great satisfaction of services performed in Cuba. Advises to seek field duty which will be useful experience.

October, 1908, To Captain Butt from Edith Kermit Roosevelt. Sympathy note for death of mother.

January, 1912, To Archie from Edith Kermit Roosevelt. Thanks for rose. Visit soon.

April 12, 1956, To Mrs. Ewing from Miss Gene North. Requests information concerning Butt's personal diary. Wants information to do Master's Thesis on Taft Ranch.

April 18, 1956, To Miss Gene North from Mrs. Mary Bryan. Mrs. John M. Slaton Jr. has Archibald Butt collection. His personal diary may be included.

May 25, 1956, To Mrs. Bryan from Miss Gene North. Has she located Butt's diary?