

Wed. Mar. 8, 1939

RE: MARIAN ANDERSON

Today, we have sent the following acknowledgment to inquirers from chapters in the following states:

Calif -- 1
Illinois -- 1
Iowa -- 1
Michigan -- 1
Minnesota -- 1
New Hampshire -- 1
New Jersey -- 2
New York -- 3
Pennsylvania -- 5
Rhode Island -- 1
West Virginia -- 1
Wisconsin - 2

totalling 20 - in addition to those herewith attached

This represents only a portion of what is here.

Remaining unanswered, to date, are 18 more letters from chapters, which we will ack. tomorrow, as per those written to today.

This will mean that this will apply to the State Regents for information. They may, of course, think this is too much trouble, and let the matter drop, which we hope they will.

I expect the State Regents will respond, altho ~~you~~ some of them are inquiring, as you see.

You will remember, this ack. was your first instruction, and we have carried this out only in cases where the letters were from chapters or members.

I am trying to sum this situation up - "in a couple of nutshells", as it were, so you can get the picture!!

Please do not overlook Mrs. Sisson's letter, which I am attaching.

MS



MRS. VINTON EARL SISSON
LIBRARIAN GENERAL N. S. D. A. R.
MEMORIAL CONTINENTAL HALL
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Mrs Robert-

Please note:

attach-
ment.

March 6, 1939.

Dear Mrs. Schouder:

I am terribly sorry that you, too, have been ill and do hope you are quite well by now - but I'm afraid that is too much to expect of the after effects of that dreaded bug! One remains weak for so long.

Mr. Sisson is improving rapidly now, and we are getting along with only one nurse who comes at 7 p.m. and leaves at 7 a.m. He has had such miserable nights and still needs medicine in the night, altho that is at greater intervals. I think this has cured us of going to a warm climate for only two or three weeks in the winter. It's gotta be all winter or nothin', hereafter!

Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. Walker have written
me such nice letters in your absence.
I am glad to be assured that the Anderson
situation is easing up - but just this
morning I read Boake Carter's vicious
attack - and Times of last week! I
am enclosing copy of a letter I have
written five Chicago papers: - not a
single word of the P.G.'s release has
appeared in any, to my knowledge (give
this information to Mr. Wiegley.)

If the P.G. does not object I am going to
write similar letters to Boake Carter,
Waltham Pegler (see his comments!) and
Times - it may color their news in the
future. Please let Mr. Hand read this
carbon - would like his reaction. You
see, Chicago papers are hard boiled & they
will not tolerate a ^{circuitous} ~~circular~~ path - they
want the straight and narrow, so I gave it
to them! Love to all of you, Aveline Lison

Winnetka, Illinois.
March 4, 1939.

Editor,
Chicago Herald & Examiner,
Chicago, Illinois.

Dear Sir:

A great deal of publicity has been given the refusal of the Daughters of the American Revolution to allow Marion Anderson the use of their hall in Washington, D.C., but I have not seen in your paper the press release given out by Mrs. Henry M. Robert, Jr., President General of the society. You may be interested in having a few facts from a national officer who attended the national board meeting when this matter was discussed.

Howard University asked for Constitution Hall for a concert by Miss Anderson on Easter Sunday, April 9th. The manager informed the applicants that a symphony concert was scheduled for that date, and when asked for a future booking, informed them of the policy put into effect seven years ago, prohibiting the leasing of the hall to other than white artists. Previous to this time each application was considered on its merit, with the result that many difficulties and misunderstandings arose. This ruling has never barred colored persons from the audience.

The sponsors of the Anderson concert apparently tried, without success, to engage one of the several large halls in Washington, including the auditorium of the white high school. The Board of Education of the District has separated negro and white students, and Congress governs the affairs of the District, including the educational system. Many commercial halls and theatres have

followed this example in catering to the public. Constitution Hall is privately owned and was paid for by contributions of members from all over the country. The rentals received from concerts and lectures are used to defray the expense of maintaining the building in for the annual meetings of the membership. It cannot be classed with halls that are purely commercial and maintained for profit, although it does pay a considerable tax to the government because of these rental receipts.

It is an astounding fact that immediately following the interview between the concert sponsors and the manager of Constitution Hall, a publicity campaign of criticism started by way of letters to the local press, and letters and telegrams to headquarters. The manager had suggested the right of appeal to the national board of management for a reversal of policy, but no such appeal was received until after public opinion began to take sides on a question of which it had heard only one side!

In voting to maintain the policy that was forced upon them by circumstances seven years ago (and waived on several occasions since then), the national board made no attempt to set itself up as a critic of art, nor to pass judgment upon the prevailing sentiment and custom of the capital city. In view of this condition, for which the D.A.R. is in no way responsible, one wonders why the critics have not gone to the root of the matter instead of singling out this one group for attack.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Vinton E. Sisson
Telephone Winn. 3511

Librarian General, W.S.D.A.R.