MEMORANDUM FOR: Editor, ASA Review

From: AFSA-14

23 June 1950

The accompanying extract from Nicholas Breton's *Court and Country*, which was published in 1618, describes certain phases of cryptanalysis in a manner so quaint as to warrant reproduction in your estimable journal. He terms cryptanalysis a *wily bergily!* I therefore submit it to your kind consideration for such purpose.

Also, it would appear that even in those early days of cryptanalytic endeavors, the budgetary officials had difficulties similar to those in our time, for in Thomas Nashe's book published in 1599, *Nashe's Lenten Stuffe: The trayse of the Red Herring* (I wonder if it's the same fish that's talked about these days) there appears the following:

"O, for a Legion of mice-eyed decipherers and calculators upon characters!"

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN

Encl.
Dialogue between a courtier and a countryman

Courtier: Oh Cousin, advancement and contentment are the fruites of Court service, and the steps of hope to the state of honour: furthermore, for knowledge, we have the due consideration of occurrents, the disciphering of Characters, enditing of letters, hearing of orations, deliuering of messages, congratulating of Princes, and the forme of ambassages, all which are such delights of the Spirit, as makes a shadow of that man that hath not a mind from the multitude to looke into the nature of the Spirits honour.

Countryman: Now for your Occurrents, what are they? but newes, sometime true and sometime false, which when they come to vs are commonly more costly than comfortable, and therefore wee desire not to trouble our selues. Now for disciphering of Characters, I haue heard my father say in the old time, that they were account-ed little better than conjurations, in which were written the names of Diuels that the Colledge of Hel vsed to conjure vp in the world, and belong'd onely to the study of Sorcerers, Witches, Wizards, and such wicked wretches, as not caring for the plaine word of God, goe with scratches of the Diuels clawes into hell: but how true it is God knoweth:... But what is the end of all wily beguily? seeking to deceiue other, decei'd himselfe most of all: Now letters of darkenes devised by the Diuell for the followers of his designes in the courses of his deceipt: honest men in the Country loue to meddle with no such matters, but so far as may be to Gods glory and the good of a State, to find out the plots, and to prevent
the mischief of a villain, being done in God's holy name
and by his grace, I hold it a fine quality to decipher a character,
and lay open a knave: But for us in the Country, we love no such
brain-labours as may bring our wits into such a wood that we know
not how to get out of it.

Sigs. C4v and D1r7

Nicholas Breton, Court and Country. 1618