

GEORGE FABYAN
CHICAGO

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OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF
F. STANTON
AND THE STAFF

August 6, 1919.

P. O. BOX 435

Dear General Churchill:

I played hooky from business yesterday and went carefully over the events of the week end with the different individuals.

I was disgusted to ascertain that Major Yardley did not go into the decipherment of the A. T. & T. Cipher Machine to the extent which I had arranged and which I thought he had when he told me he understood it and could do it.

He seemed to think that we possessed more information than we should and with this information there was no reason why we should not decipher anything. I cannot agree with him on this. The time he spent with Friedman was evidently spent on personalities and giving Friedman the information on the correspondence between Riverbank and the M. I. D., including the fact that I had requested the M. I. D. to withdraw the offer they made to the Friedmans, etc.

If the Signal Corps has an Officer who is conversant with the machine and has a fundamental knowledge of deciphering, I would like to have him sent to Riverbank with instructions to investigate the work we have done and make a report on it, provided this meets with your approval. If this is done, I would like to transmit to you the leather folder which you looked at on my desk in Geneva for your files in which can be inserted the report of the Investigating Officer, making it complete.

At the risk of being considered verbose, I cannot resist the temptation of placing this matter before you, the same as I tried to put you into possession of some of the mysteries of other ciphers while you were at Riverbank. There is nothing of the occult can enter into this work because I do not understand the occult and I do not think you do.

The A. T. & T. Cipher Machine, to my mind, is constructed along the same principles as the automatic player which is operated by a role of perforated paper, perhaps on your own piano at home, with the exception that the piano player is operated by air and the A. T. & T. Machine by electricity. In one case the perforations permit the passage of air and the blanks prevent it. In the other case the perforations admit of electrical contact which the blanks prevent.

My understanding is that these machines are used by the A.T. & T. Company in all of the larger offices throughout the country in place of a telegraph ^{key} ~~cable~~ for the purpose of sending information in plain text in reference to setting up long distance calls and otherwise. Accident, by connecting up the wrong poles, gave a lot of random letters and when the local machine was connected by changing the poles, the lot of random letters were transcribed by the typewriter to represent plain text. From this phenomena, the present cipher method was developed and, in my opinion, any one interested, could get all the information concerning it.

The method of deciphering calls for a little different mechanical knowledge than the method for encipherment and I believe it will be of value to both the M. I. D. and the Signal Corps and will relieve me of the possession of papers I do not care to have. I suggested a Signal

Corps Officer merely because it is necessary to have someone who is conversant with the machine. You will, of course, understand that anyone you choose to send will be welcome. If it is deemed wise to do so, I should be happy to have a set of the machines expressed to Riverbank with the view of making their work more difficult of decipherment should the Department care to do this.

Another, heretofore indecipherable cipher, was broken yesterday. It doesn't happen every day, but it's a lot of satisfaction when it does happen.

With assurances of my personal esteem and regard,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be the initials 'AB' or similar, written in a cursive style.

To General M. Churchill,
Woodward Apartment,
2301 Connecticut Ave.,
Washington, D. C.