

well as in speaking and writing. The job had a large social component, and Carter and his wife greatly enjoyed this period of their lives. (In her entertaining and perceptive 1974 autobiography, *With Tongue in Chic*, she says, “The Washington years were golden years.”) The flavor of their Washington life is suggested by a thank-you note from T. S. Eliot written on 22 May 1955, after a luncheon party at the Carters’ Georgetown house (quoted from R. M. Smythe auction catalogue 157, 13 November 1996, lot 412, with one correction):

Dear Ernestine

I can’t leave Washington without writing to thank you & John for your hospitality - for a delicious lunch beautifully served in perfect surroundings and in a company at once distinguished and sympathetic. And if you were leaving Washington in the autumn for any other destination than London, I should say how sorry I was not to be able to look forward to a similar occasion next year.

Yours gratefully
Tom Eliot

The glamorous life implied here (or “glittering,” as Ernestine called it) was not an unaccustomed one for the Carters: given the connections Carter had made through the international world of collecting and the fact that Ernestine had been, before the move to Washington, an influential fashion journalist with the English *Harper’s Bazaar* (becoming Women’s Editor of *The Sunday Times* on their return to London, and later Associate Editor), their combined circle of celebrity acquaintances was impressive, as was their entertaining. I have remarked in the past on the interdependence of all parts of a person’s life and on how the scholarly (or bibliographical) and the social nourish each other. One illustration of this point that I have used is the life of Mary Hyde, and it happens that the Hydes were New York friends of Carter. When Carter was setting up a New York office for Sotheby’s, Donald Hyde provided space and secretarial help in his law firm’s financial-district premises at 61 Broadway. Carter’s writings, no less than his bookselling activities, benefited from the knowledge and contacts furnished by his full social life.

Eighteen months before Carter began at the embassy in Washington, he delivered one of the Windsor Lectures at the University of Illinois and produced for that occasion a landmark essay, “Some Bibliographical Agenda”—agenda, that is, for the study of nineteenth-century English books, which was the subject of this lecture series in October 1951. (The essay was published the next year in a volume that included the essays by the other two lecturers that year, Gordon N. Ray and Carl J. Weber; Carter also selected it for his 1956 collection, *Books and Book-Collectors*.) In his essay, Carter set the stage for future work: after summarizing the revolutionary changes in book production in the nineteenth century that