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William to James, 11 January 1962

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Kansas State University

Manhattan, Kansas

Department of History, Political Science, and Philosophy
Eisenhower Hall

January 11, 1962

Dear James:

From you, it is impossible to get a letter. May have to make an official request of the Chairman of your Department. But today, I break down and write you -- three letters came in today, reminding me of the existence of Mississippi: one, the NDEA announcement of fabulous grants at Ole Miss, with an interesting heading reminding me of someone's vocabulary; two, a letter from a Bette Baird Tilly, saying she would prefer to change thesis advisors -- from me to a man named Gibson; three, a letter requesting recommendation from one William Hamer. I do not plan to apply for an NDEA grant; therefore, shall ignore that communique. I wrote Bette saying how sorry I was that I couldn't direct her thesis, sighing over the fact that the opportunity to service Ole Miss and aid native-born students at that institution must be considered only a "privilege" and never a "right"; and my recommendation of Hamer to the Harvard Placement office consisted of identifying William as a "trouble-maker" because of his condemnation of library holdings, baton-twirling seminars, and other matters.

Life in Kansas is cold, but noted in the paper that life in Mississippi is too. Many days below zero, cold snow and icy sleet, and everyone runs around as though life were meant to go on as usual -- at least, Governor Barnett's one virtue is that he declares states of emergency and grants legal holidays. Otherwise, everything pretty good here. We're losing our Dean, whom I liked, because he is to become president of VPI (the week before he turned down the presidency of SC -- I mention this in case you're interested in the position). My famous Ford program goes on with little hitch -- we're introducing the idea into the program of guest scholars, and for 1962 have ~~get~~ lined up Sir Charles P. Snow (for the physical sciences); Mark Van Doren (for the humanities); Robert Enders of Swarthmore (for the biological sciences) and one Bell I Wiley (for the social sciences). If every you get sufficiently famous (become a president of the Southern Historical Assn or something comparable) might try to wrangle you an invitation at Ford expense.

Sorry you weren't at the American Hist Assn in Washington -- saw Charlie Hamilton there as he scurried around looking for a job (I don't know why such frenzied activity as he already has one at Ole Miss); talked to one Terrence Tarr for a few minutes (I believe he was looking too, but not willing to admit it); and across the corridor was informed that there went a new Ole Miss professor -- one Dr. Leon (sp?). Obviously, the faculty is in every way and on every day getting better and better. At least, this was the conclusion Harris Warren and I were driven to as we surveyed our replacements. Also, met the Aleffs at the convention, who are obviously great admirers of Carbone -- and who also serve as Oregon Chamber of Commerce representatives.

Nuff for now. Much love,

