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R.E. Ausmus, Jr. to Professor Silver, 31 December 1962

R. E. Ausmus Jr.

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December 31, 1962

Professor James Silver
Department of History
University of Mississippi
University, Mississippi

Dear Professor Silver,

Former golfing partners, opponents on the links, or cow-pasture pool patsys (whichever is applicable), like bad pennies, have a way of turning up when least expected. As I browsed through my correspondence files the other day, I came across our letters of a year or so ago, and I re-read them with interest. One lengthy epistle I wrote, and which you never answered, sounded very bitter. This is probably why you did not reply. Nevertheless, I thought I would write you again and fill you in on happenings up to this point. For, as I mentioned, pennies and patsys have a way of cropping up unexpectedly, and with any luck at all, both may yet happen, as will be revealed subsequently.

You may recall that when we parted company in Columbia in August, 1960, I had just been told by Professor Doherty that I could not get an assistantship at Mississippi. I moved to California and took a job, rose to the position of purchasing agent, made fairly good money, had a rather promising future, and hated every moment of it. I wanted, as you know, to pursue my Ph.D and teach, although not necessarily in that order. Being the persistent soul that I am, I fanally resigned my job, moved to San Jose and took courses leading to a teaching credential, but succeeded in landing a job teaching history and government in a private boy's prep school in Los Angeles before I had become completely brainwashed. Since last June, therefore, I have cast pearls before the elite of L.A. society; the scions of the famous movie stars, wealthy producers, candy makers, commercial and industrial titans.

But, although the pay is good, the academic load light and the class size around 10, I cannot consider it as Nirvana gained. Two reasons prevent this.

The first reason is that like the carrot and the donkey the dream of getting a Ph.D still dangles tantalizingly before me, and the hopes of teaching on the college level still goad me. To further my quest of these ultimate goals, I have again written Professor Doherty, in quiring about departmental assistantships.

The second reason is somewhat more abstract, but just as vital with me. California is just too damned big, too crowded, too swollen with elbow jostling humanity to suit a country boy like

Prof. James Silver, 12-31-62, page 2

me. Within a fifty mile radius of Los Angeles live over 7 million people, existing from day to day merely to have a chance, once the sun comes up again, to get on the freeway and race madly downtown in their automobiles. The pace of life is unbelievably quick; everyone lives as though this day, this hour, this minute, was the very last moment of existence left to humanity.

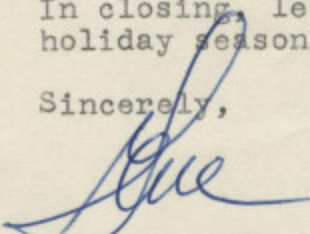
Because I like to savor life as I do good wine and beautiful women, slowly and in depth; because life, as I wish to live it, ~~XXXXXX~~ consists of an occasional round of golf, a stroll through the autumn woods along a meandering creek, a big, rambling frame house and spacious yard and neighbors beyond arm's length, I also asked Professor Doherty, in case he had no openings, to give me any information he could about teaching possibilities in Mississippi.

And what of you? You did, I trust, survive the Second Civil War. My wife and I watched in amazement and horror, but always avidly, as the television cameras brought the action to our living room. Once, during the height of the crisis, I almost picked up the telephone and called you. I wanted to ask you questions about the events on campus, tape your answers and present them to my government classes. One time I read where Meredith was taking a course in Colonial history and I wondered whether you ~~XXXX~~ taught this.

Please take a moment and let me hear from you. How does your golf game fare? How is your family? How did you react to the events of this past fall? Of the many professorial contacts I made while at Missouri, I value my association with you among the highest.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to wish you a happy holiday season and a prosperous and successful New Year.

Sincerely,



R.E. Ausmus, Jr.
4555 Matilija St.
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