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W.B. Goodman to Mr. Silver, 4 March 1963

William B. Goodman

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Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.



750 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK 17, N.Y. OXFORD 7-8400 CABLE: HARBRACE

March 4, 1963

Professor James W. Silver
Department of History
University of Mississippi
Oxford, Mississippi

Dear Mr. Silver:

Your good letter of February 17 on the problem posed by the possible reissuance of D. R. Hundley's Social Relations in Our Southern States as a Harbinger Book was most appreciated. I have waited to respond until we had taken a decision here. That decision has been taken and, I'm afraid, it's a negative one. The book, as you intimate, is not a bona fide historical classic. It's one of those documents which anyone immersed in ante-bellum history would naturally prize but it is not like some few other ante-bellum books -- e.g., Olmsted or even Fitzhugh -- which can sustain themselves in the educated layman's eyes. It's a pity, really; the book has wonders of its own. I might add that our opinion is shared by several other historians of the South and the intellectual history of America, to whom we also turned for advice.

I am grateful for the dittoed copy of your Economist piece. I see the Economist regularly and was struck by the accuracy of the piece when it appeared. I now see why it was so much to the point. It has the same healing candor with which you addressed your audience at the November 1962 SHA meeting in Miami. That session was one I shall not soon forget.

If your book on Southern leadership in the ante-bellum period is not committed to a publisher, we would appreciate a chance to consider it for publication at Harcourt, Brace & World. I look forward to meeting you, if not at the upcoming MVHA meeting in Omaha, then surely at the next AHA meeting. I need hardly add that we would appreciate any suggestions you might have for titles to add to the Harbinger list.

Cordially,

William B. Goodman
Senior Editor

WBG/rrc