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Nov. 21, 1958

Dear Mrs. Elliott:

Thank you for your very good letter which the post office, through no fault of your's, transported first to "Arlington." Glad you liked the apples and hope they have helped you cure the sore throat.

There are some 15,000 carloads of apples in the Yakima Valley, besides Indians, apple knockers, taverns and a couple of "eager beavers."

I am sure Miss Shore concurs with your opinions. She's smart that way, or she wouldn't be my collaborator. And we don't give up easily. So if you can patiently answer a few questions, and without fear on your part of influencing us along any channels that we would ever say chased us up dead end roads, I am sure things can be worked out.

1-About the Lonely Road. The other material became "interwoven", as I wrote originally, because we were heading for the paper back original mkt. Then, although I got fine help from the collaborator, it seemed I was getting into something too deep, and it was a "way out."

Originally The Lonely Road started out as a series of stories with the same "sordid" theme.

What would be your reaction to virtually eliminating the professor and Teri Ann, completely eliminating them. Keep the first chapter--the introduction--in the same vein and then treat the characters distinctly chapter by chapter so they would virtually stand on their own. Only one character would run through the entire book, Steve, the bartender, plus necessary references to others. The timing would be the same, by the hour or half hour. The thing that bothers me, would it be strong enough to stand on the writing without a general plot. Could it stand on its theme, or do we have to have a final chapter with a "smash" ~~xxxxxx~~ ending. It's not a plotted story running to a set formula. It is a study of people and their thoughts and emotions.

In my mind as has been, a bell, that has been around in many forms in many years and many places. It's pretty deep writing, but in the final chapter the bell would find itself "looking down" on people of a different age with no different problems in their minds and hearts than those of the past.

Should The Lonesome Road, in the ultimate, be a series of short stories with a beginning and closing chapter?

If it works out that way, I would be agreeable to submitting my name on the title page and I am sure that would be agreeable with Miss Shore. She would use her name, or Jo Curtis on her production.



I have encouraged her to use Jo Ann Shore, and I think that would be better even than Jo?

It was her reticence to being linked with candid expressions of "sex" that led to complications. She just isn't "trained" in those matters and doesn't intend to undergo "training." That's where I have had to help out and please don't think I'm a professional but I try to be observant etc.

Question No. 2--Should her production of college life, which needs little expansion, be more definitive of college life? More descriptive of characters, campuses, persons. I think she has a good start on Teri Ann, and a good character in Letty, but she needs other more living and genuine characters. Teri Ann's ambition would still be her plot, as far as I know, though a bit trite.

Question 3--What about the matter of timing? It doesn't seem there should be too much difficulty in "separating" the writings and making them stand alone. The typing would be on a heavier weight paper.

Question 4--There's still the matter of the Civil War. I have researched in that field too long and have too much material, and so has Miss Shore. Our characters are beginning to become "real" persons---Jori the girl etc.. We know them so well. I'm not one to brag but I rather suspect from the incidental scaming of historical novels based on Civil War backgrounds I can find inaccuracies all through most of them. The research has honestly been as thorough as what Catton and Kanter have had to do.

Between the two of us we have SOUND material that would be sufficient for many productions. Life isn't long enough. And I'm depending upon Miss Shore to come up with plots.

Besides these 400 pages of Archer Letters--1847 to 1864--we have the tremendous background of the Pacific States, a field hardly touched by the Civil War writers, yet so important to America.

Now I've no time for TV, otherwise I wouldn't get in all my research, but just recently I discovered that Archer's friend, and undoubtedly the man who helped him get his unbroken chain of letters from the South to California and his family during the hostilities, was one Col. Mosby. I understand from some of my friends there is quite a program "The Gray Ghost" concerning Col. Mosby on TV. He was to have been an incidental character. My documented file on Mosby is nearly two inches thick. I've had most of it for five years!

And so it goes. We are really loaded. I honestly believe I could "wander" around through the "battlegrounds" and know where certain troops etc. were located, how long, etc. etc. which kind of material wouldn't be more than the authenticity in that little part of the book. I have more information than the historians at Sandusky, Ohio, location of the Union Prison for officers where Archer was confined for nearly a year. The paper's publisher there in the '80's published now rare booklets and made the matter of preserving the cemetery on Johnson's Island a project (206 Confederate graves there, now marked.) But even they do not know now, and did not know then, that Johnson's Island was the object of a raid, only very incidentally. These same forces, the Knights of the Golden Circle operating on the Coast, 100,000 strong, attempted a raid out of Canada. And confinement and treatment of officers on Johnson's Island was influenced



was influenced by Andersonville, Libby, and Belle Isle, through treatment of the Confederate Prisoners on Johnson's Islands, in an attempt to "reform" the Confederate prisons. (I haven't read Andersonville yet, nor do I intend to, more than scan a few chapters.)

So the question: Should we shelve the Civil War novel and turn our complete attentions to The Lonesome Road and Leti Ann or "shelve" the Lonesome Road and concentrate on the Civil War?

It is difficult to get back into characters, when we have plunged so deeply into the Civil War atmosphere, but it can be done. It is, as you no doubt know, merely a matter of discipline.

If you think that writing style, etc. of the incomplete and mixed up production entitles it to a fair chance in the highly competitive market, we are ready to unravel ourselves. Besides, within a short time I will be spending a few days with friends, a man who is a professor and writer and a fraternity advisor, and a woman, his wife, who is a Sorority adviser and a national officer (Barnard) and can perhaps gain from them a little more stable view for an over-all college life, enough to be a guiding hand and help give Miss Shore some help on soundness. We both want to make the writings SOUND.

I see no need in returning the mspt. It may come in handy in some consultation with someone. Let them know what's cooking, whet their appetites. We are both understanding about this and build up no false hopes. There are no needs for apologies. Your help and advice is appreciated, and I hope it pays off. If not, perhaps in time we can repay you some other way. Miss Shore is in this writing business to make a go of it. I still have time, I hope, before the sculpturing closes in on me. Drummers and D wasn't an easy book, although mixed up too. But there was no plot there. And it has been accepted all over in the highest fields. The Civil War deal will take what is left in me out of me.

I'm rather hoping you'll say "store the Civil War" away. Neither of us are cowards in this dull research. We do that and get in our writing while others spend their time chasing around etc. Maybe we're foolish but that's the way we were built.

Hope this letter hasn't worn you out. I believe it covers everything we will need to know for some time to come. And your questions will be most helpful, so hope you have the opportunity to drop a note before long, as we are ready to get going.

The best of regards from both of us.

sincerely