

2-15-1962

Mary Elizabeth to Jim, 15 February 1962

Mary Elizabeth Massey

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Recommended Citation

Massey, Mary Elizabeth, "Mary Elizabeth to Jim, 15 February 1962" (1962). *Correspondence*. 408.
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WINTHROP COLLEGE
THE SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

February 15, 1962

Professor James Silver
History Department
University of Mississippi
Oxford, Mississippi

Dear Jim:

I wanted to congratulate you in Chattanooga on your election to the SHA vice-presidency but you were among the dozens of friends whom I couldn't find at that "Marx Brother's" affair! I don't know about you, but I spent my time dashing from one hotel to another and running from one "event" to another, always late and at times not sure where I was headed or why. As I recall, we have had better organized, less hectic meetings. So, belated though they are, let me offer my congratulations to you now. Not only do you merit the honor, but I feel that the SHA is in able hands.

You probably know that I've been appointed to do the same job for Rembert Patrick which you performed so magnificently for Bell. I don't aspire to having a program as outstanding as yours, for no one has yet matched that. At this point I am trying to piece together the sessions from the hundreds of suggestions I've received. As you understand, the offer of a single paper can start the chairman thinking about a session theme even when she has no other paper or papers to combine with it. Such a paper is one centered around the Browning-Crump "battle" in Tennessee politics, and I thought it might be possible to arrange a session on intra-state political feuds or struggles. Do you know of anyone who could present a paper on the Harrison-Bilbo troubles? Or do you have other suggestions relating to this theme? We could include the late 19th or early 20th century, just so we follow the theme.

I was very interested to learn that Joe Baylen is in your department. We had hoped to persuade him to head the department at Winthrop, and I was very impressed with him when he visited us. I did not want the chairmanship (and still don't), but after holding out for a year, I was saddled with it anyway. This year I feel as though I'm expected to be "all things to all people," but what I really am is "nothing to anyone" and everything I do seems to be half-done. This is some "rat-race" we're in, or have you noticed?

Again,---congratulations on being elected SHA vice-president. It seems that we are assured at least two fine administrations in a row!

Cordially,

Mary Elizabeth

Mary Elizabeth Massey