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Wilma D.S. to Dr. Silver, 18 July 1963

Wilma Dykeman

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WILMA DYKEMAN STOKELY
405 CLIFTON HEIGHTS
NEWPORT, TENNESSEE

July 18, 1963

Dr. James W. Silver
University of Mississippi
Oxford, Miss.

Dear Dr. Silver:

Jim and I wish to express our appreciation to you for the perceptive and warm-hearted review of our SEEDS OF SOUTHERN CHANGE: THE LIFE OF WILL ALEXANDER, which the University of Chicago Press has just sent to us. However, they failed to include the name and date of the publication in which it appeared. Could you please enlighten us? We do know it was not in The Journal of Southern History, since we subscribe to it and no review of our book has appeared in it. We wish The Journal would give someone like George Tindall (who told us in a private note he considered it a most important book which should be widely distributed) or VanN Woodward, or Dewey Grantham or yourself, the opportunity to bring it to the attention of Southern historians (*and editors and politicians!*)

Brooks Hays, one of the President's assistants in the White House, wrote us only yesterday that he considered the book extremely pertinent and valuable to the continuing crisis in race relations and was recommending the chapter on how Southern women organized to prevent lynching to Dr. Mildred Horton, who is heading a new women's group on human rights.

WILMA DYKEMAN STOKELY
405 CLIFTON HEIGHTS
NEWPORT, TENNESSEE

The critical reception which the book has had in the North has disappointed us immensely. Northern publications are always urging the South to "do something" about the race problem, and yet here was the biography of a man who dedicated his life to doing something about it and they completely ignore him and the book. Not a single Northern newspaper or magazine reviewed the book - not the NY TIMES, the NY POST, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, NEW REPUBLIC, TIME, NATION, REPORTER, SATURDAY REVIEW, HARPER'S, etc. Perhaps they considered Alexander an Uncle Tom who had no relevance to today's frightening situation. Or perhaps they want blood-and-thunder instead of constructive action.

Greensboro Daily News,
Two mid-west publications, PROGRESSIVE and CHRISTIAN CENTURY, did carry enthusiastic reviews, as did a handful of Southern papers, Atlanta CONSTITUTION, Raleigh NEWS & OBSERVER, Asheville CITIZEN, Knoxville NEWS-SENTINEL, Chattanooga TIMES and Nashville TENNESSEAN. So you can see why the book has sold only a few hundred copies. We wish Dr. Roger Shugg, director of the Chicago Press, could be stimulated to advertise the book or issue a paperback reprint.

I'm looking forward to being on the program in Asheville in November and to seeing you and Mrs. Silver again. What of P.D. East? Bill Faulkner? As Tom Wolfe would say, "O lost, and by the wind grieved, ghest, come back again."

Sincerely,

Wilma S. S.