

THOMAS MERTON & ALFRED B. HAILPARN:

Two Recently Discovered Letters Concerning the 1937 *COLUMBIAN*

In the process of editing *The Road to Joy*, efforts were made to discover and locate many letters which were thought to exist, especially ones Merton may have written to Columbia classmates and friends. Two letters — which would have been included in the volume — came to light when *The Road to Joy* was in final proofs, too late unfortunately for inclusion in the book. Merton was Editor-in-Chief of the Columbia yearbook, *The Columbian*, and wrote two letters in 1936 to the Managing Editor, Alfred B. Hailparn, who was spending the summer at his parents' home in Yonkers. They are among the earliest Merton letters yet discovered. Hailparn lived in his post-Columbia years in Beverly Hills, California, where he died 14 October 1985. His widow, Muriel P. Hailparn, found the Merton letters among his papers and offered them for sale through a California dealer. Notice was received at the Merton Center after the letters had already been purchased by the James S. Copley Library in La Jolla, California. The Copley Library has graciously provided copies of the letters to the Center and Mrs. Hailparn has kindly filled in some details. She writes: "I recall very well Alfred's telling me, at the time that T. M. took religious orders, that he was a jolly fellow, full of life and good humor. And, an optimist!" Hailparn's father was a liquor distributor and Merton's well-known fondness for beer crops up even in these early letters.

Douglaston, L. I., N. Y.

June 18th [1936]

Dear Al.

Many thanks for the letter. I had been trying to think up some way of getting in touch but didn't have your address & couldn't get hold of the Noonan [secretary in the King's Crown office at Columbia] to get it.

First & most important: tell Anne Donohue to go to hell. It is too late now as we have signed with White. I'm sorry you didn't get a free picture or something.

We signed Garamond Press as printers again and I'd like to know where the hell they are with that stationary: if for instance they sent it to Columbia or what.

I was up on the campus yesterday. I took White's man along & got a number of swell shots around about the place. Just wait until you see them! Furthermore I am going to make another trip up there with him, & get a lot more:

I want plenty of pictures of campus in the book, & there are lots of swell old cuts too.

Thanks for taking the trouble to write out all the names of the people. I shall get to work on the motley crew with an encouraging letter in July or August. Meanwhile as soon as stationary & stuff arrives I'll try to rally [Robert] Veitch & [Frederick] Mackenthun around the banner for some concentrated selling.

I am working 8 hours a day up at Radio City these days so I have not had much time to scout around myself. However — the time will come.

As to engravers — they can wait. I have my eye on a bunch called Hammersmith Kutmeyer now signed for Yale & M. I. T. They are nice people.

More later. Meanwhile, take it easy.

Sincerely,
Tom Merton

Douglaston, L. I., N. Y.

August 20 [1936]

Dear Al.

Fred Mackenthun & Bob Veitch came down to see me on the job today, & we had a little talk about advertising. They will probably write to you for some blanks, although we are more earnest in getting prospects lined up than hopeful of getting any signatures on the dotted line as yet.

At any rate we got together & talked things over, and we are each going to work independently on a bunch of prospects that appear good to us individually, taking care not to overlap on each other's preserves. This is all more or less independent & informal but it is a step in the right direction. I thought you would like to hear about how things are progressing so as to know what is what up until the time comes when you can join in.

By the way, I was wondering if you might not have some likely connections through your father's business — do you think there are any possibilities through such channels? Far from being a question of advertising out of charity it would show certain advantages — college men drink a lot of beer!

Well, let's hear from you Al. Meanwhile so long & good luck.

Yours
Tom



ALFRED B. HAILPARN

Photo Courtesy Muriel P. Hailparn