

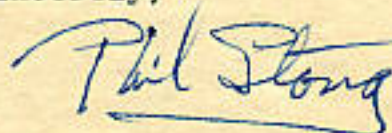
Washington, Connl,
Jan. 12, 1948.

Dear Miss Montgomery:

I think this is a very good little sketch. I have made two or three very minor corrections, "Biwabik, Minn." rather than Iowa. I must have slipped on the debate thing - I coached debate for four years in high school and college but not in this school.

Thanks very much for thinking of me and the best of luck for your book. It sounds like an excellent idea, especially for schools and libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Phil Strong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

There might be an amusing line in the fact that I started this story about a place where it often gets to be 40 below sitting in front of two open ~~post~~-holes with the electric fan going. When we reached New York there was a foot or so of snow on the ground.

P.S.

"Honk, the Moose"

Published by Dodd, Mead & Co. Year 1935

Real name Philip Duffield Stong Pen name Phil Stong

What do your family and friends call you? Phil, to my face.

A. YOUR BACKGROUND

Date of birth Jan. 27, 1899 Place of birth Keosauqua, Iowa

Father's occupation Merchant Number of Brothers 2 and sisters

Father's nationality American Mother's nationality Same - both families

~~came to this country before 1850~~ 1750.

Kind of home during childhood (farm, small town, city apt. etc.) Farm and

small town. Where Keosauqua, Iowa.

Amount of schooling (high school, college, etc.) A.B. (Litt. D., LL.D.)

Economic status during childhood (poor, middle class, wealthy) M.C.

Special interests as a child (sports, books, games, etc.) Reading, music,

varied athletics - football, wrestling, boxing, swimming.

Childhood ambitions Writing. (Lapses to radio, medicine, law, etc.)

When did you begin to write? As soon as I had enough penmanship.

Why? Born liar - writing was the only way to get away with it.

Who encouraged you? Various people - principally my English Professor in
College, Lewis Worthington Smith of Drake University.

What and when was your first success or recognition? State Fair - 1932.

How did you happen to write for children? The editors at Doubleday & Co.,

thought that a farm juvenile was indicated by State Fair. "Farm Boy" was

Junior Guild. Since then I've done about a dozen.
Anything else about your background which has a bearing on your writing.

Iowa was somewhat self-conscious in my childhood. Garland and Hough and

Hughes had had almost our first national recognition. My uncle, E.R. Harlan,

for many years Curator of the Iowa State Historical museum, knew all

three. A distant relative, Mrs. Julia Baldwin, of Keosauqua had had a

best-seller. My mother, also, thought that an author was a shade higher than
a President. No way out of the trap even if I had wanted out.

B. THE WRITING OF THIS BOOK

Where did you get the idea for the book? In 1920 in a Hotel in Ely, Minn., where I had gone to play football with the Biwabik town team. Before lunch some chap told me a fascinating story about a town moose, which lingered with me for fifteen years.

When? (Season as well as year) About November. It was cold enough, I know, to run even a moose into a stable. (Ely won, 23-13, or something like that).
Were the characters real people, or based on real people? Characteristics derived from various people, of course. I was teaching in Biwabik and it was easy to make alloys.

Where were you living at the time? Iron Range of Minnesota when I heard the story - boat in the Caribbean and apartment in NYC when I wrote it.
What was your major occupation? Writing. Previously I had been on the old New York World and many other publications as writer and editor.
Names (also nicknames) and identities of members of your household at

the time. (If children, give ages.) No children - wife frequently referred to as V-A. Name is Virginia.

Did you talk the book idea over with any of them? Told planned story to wife and editor at Dodd and had some helpful suggestions.
Did you discuss it with an editor? Covered above.

Where and how did you get the material? (library research, travel, personal experience, etc.) Covered above.

When did you begin to write the book? On a little holiday in the Caribbean that year.
Where? Covered above. The thing took about three weeks and I did a major part during a rough winter trip on the way back to NY, when our friends were ill.
How much had you had published when you began it? (Give names of books)

"State Fair", "Farm Boy", "Stranger's Return", "Village Tale" Week End, "Career". Worked on the movies of the novels.
What was your purpose in writing this book? Amuse some of the younger citizens and keep myself in business.

How do you write? (typewriter, long-hand, dictate) Type.

Where? (study, office, etc.) Study.

Do you keep regular office hours? If so, what are they? No. Work most days, at least a little. Because of A.M. nws. background work most late at night.
Do you revise much? Very little Write easily or laboriously? Which day? Sometimes it runs easily; sometimes not. I've done 3900nin a day and 500 in a week.
Do you let your family or friends read your work, or try it out on

children? My wife. She's a parsimonious but careful novelist ("The Dollar Gold-Piece", "The Hollow Skin", etc.) and also a first-rate English and Latin scholar. (Taught Latin in a West Point coaching school). In general I would consider it a poor idea, but with her special trainings she is very helpful.

Who makes your final copies? (yourself, private secretary, public typist, etc.) My agent's typing bureau.

Did you make an outline before writing the book? No. Why would one on a simple tale? On some novels I schedule general movements on a leaf of note paper. Did you decide on the title first or last? After the story was planned but before writing.
How long did it take you to write the book? 3-4 weeks.

Did you work on it steadily? Interrupted between the tour and resettlement in America. Ordinarily I would have worked steadily. Stories nag at one. Did it go fairly smoothly or did you hit rough spots? (Details of any

particular difficulty and its solution would be appreciated.) In as short a story as this one is not likely to hit difficulties. In the adult novels I have often had trouble because the characters would not act for the best interests of the plot. Once they establish themselves they may or may not try to fit in to the narrative structure. This calls for arbitration, of course.

Was your book accepted immediately by a publisher? "State Fair" accepted third time out. Since then, all books contracted in advance. Was it immediately popular on publication? Very good advance.

Anything else about your writing that might be of interest, especially

anything that concerns this book. As you can see, though this was only my second juvenile, I had a fairly good background of general writing - a few novels, a good deal of periodical material, long experience with newspapers, magazines, syndicates - even advertising and movies. This predicates a certain fluency - given a good story, such as the one I heard up on the Iron Range, one is fairly certain to get a mildly successful book.

C. ILLUSTRATIONS

How much did you have to do with the illustrations of your book? Kurt Wiese, the illustrator, and I are collaborators, rather than author and artist. I "x'ed" passages in this that seemed good picture stuff. I've never done so since - Kurt and I understand each other completely. Kurt needs no X-ing. Kurt is completely confident that he will get situations for his styles and I am blissfully certain that he will find them without any bother from me.
If you did them yourself, which came first, the pictures or the text?

What medium did you work in? _____

How much experience had you had in illustrating? _____

D. WHAT SORT OF PERSON YOU ARE

What did you look like when you wrote this book? Dark or fair? Toward fair.

Tall or short? 6'1" That was tall. Thin or plump? 182-5 - medium.

Color of eyes? Hazel to gray Wore glasses? Not then, by ten years.

Color of hair? Mouse brown Kind of hair--long or short? Ordinary

Curly or straight? Two waves How did you wear it? Left side part.

Any special features of your appearance (square jaw, dimples, stoop, etc.) Nose not quite pug; broad, not quite roundish face, full at chin.

Are you quiet or talkative? Yes and no Friendly or reserved? F. when possible

Do you laugh a great deal or are you usually grave? Amused, ordinarily.

Are you quick-tempered or calm and placid? Medium.

What sort of clothes do you wear most when writing? (sports, suits, slacks, etc.) Pajamas, slacks. Writing is hard work.

Favorite occupations and hobbies? Writing, reading, music, small dogs - not too small - phonograph (about 2500 records) - microscope, almost anything.

What is your normal speech like? (Meticulously correct, colloquial, slangy, abrupt, rambling, etc.) Midwest - correctly colloquial, if possible.

What are some of your pet expressions and exclamations? Do you want the

Postal Department to intercept this? I had a rugged youth. But I don't go in much for exclamations except in great stress.

If strongly religious, give denomination. Aghostic.

Any other details about yourself, no matter how trivial, which might

help me to picture you in my own mind. Disorderly gent - unutterably lazy and impolite about everything that doesn't interest me - not directly impolite but engaged elsewhere - so sorry. Pathologically curious about things in abstract but only occasionally in person; i.e.; I know a bit about hieroglyphics but today, after three days, I learned that a neighbor had gone crazy. Selfish, per se, but not about people and things that engage me.

Can you direct me to any articles or books which have been written

about you? Chiefly small periodical bits, or brief references. Homer Croy mentions me in "Corn Country". There have been a few things but they're of no particular importance.

If you have a photograph or snapshot of yourself of about the vintage of your book, I would appreciate it. Of course I would return it promptly.

I don't have a thing. Georges Schreiber did a caricature of me about then but I don't have a copy of it. Perhaps one of the local newspaper morgues -