

Oct. 15, 1970

Dear Marge:

Did you think me dead? No, I'm off on another tack, and I suppose that has something to do with my failure to write those great people who count themselves my friends. I use this paper, then, to give you an idea of the direction of the tack.

It's not a wal k-in store type of thing, although next summer that might be indicated. What I've done is begin to collect books around the local countryside and sell them by mail through the trade magazines, etc. At first I tackled the business on a general basis, thinking I would probably specialize in such modern first editions as Hem and Faulkner, Fitzgerald, etc., but this isn't that kind of country and so I have found myself being led into Americans. I never dreamt I'd be interested, but strangely enough I am. Fascinating.

Now I found nothing nobler than locating a dull town or country history. Would you believe it, books like this begin at \$10 and work themselves quickly up to \$100 if their age and girth is substantial enough. Oddly enough, the books are practically unreadable but that doesn't seem to matter. I conclude that these are the grass roots basis for all history, for one thing, and that they are a kind of pleasant certainty of the seemingly pleasant past and that people strive in that direction as a way of getting away from these naughty times.

I already have \$1200 tied up in books of one kind or another, including some fictional junk that I will probably gradually dispose of for very little. Eventually I would hope to have a collection wholly historical or largely historical, the rest being factual books of a zany nature, such as steam generation, America's leading Masons, or eulogies on ~~Richard B. Sewall~~ a New Hampshire congressman upon the occasion of his death in North Overshoe in 1886. Stuff like that there. Don't know where it will get me, but I find myself interested. Of course I like the finding and buying and wonder whether I will ever succeed at the selling. Incidentally I bought 50 bound Harpers for \$100 and find included a reference to Mark Twain's first published story in which the publishers got his name wrong. Printed it Mark Swain. Very funny. When Hem was first published his name came out Hemengway, as you may know.....Thanks for the card, etc. and will keep in touch. We not going anywhere far this winter I guess.

Love, Marge,