

Letter from Professor Arthur and Mrs Mazie Wilson

1 Brookside, Norwich, Vermont

March 13, 1979

Dear Richard:

When I wrote previously, I imagined that you would conveniently have at hand a copy of the *American Historical Review* - so I did not enclose a xerox of the review of your book. Sorry to tantalize and frustrate you. Here it is. You will see that after he huffs and puffs in the first two paragraphs, his last paragraph could scarcely be more full of encomiums.

Mazie and I greatly enjoyed the photograph of the family. Thank you very much for sending it. May we soon be seeing you face to face.

The review by (Jean-François) Bayart is splendid. I was pleased to read it. I also enjoyed reading your excellent article on "Affluence and Underdevelopment [in Nigeria]" and learned a great deal from it.

(Thomas) Hodgkin told me when he was here that you would be an ideal don at Oxford. I could well believe it.

Here we are emerging from another hard winter, though it has been worse in the Middle West. We are well – but elderly. I am working on two papers, one of which I shall read at Pisa this coming early September (Fifth International Congress on the Enlightenment). I hope our stop in Italy will not interfere with our seeing you in September.

Good luck. Best wishes. Our love to Jennifer and the boys.

Mazie and Arthur

Note

Arthur M. Wilson was Professor of Biography and Government of Dartmouth College. His most celebrated publication is the two-volume study, *Diderot*, issued by Oxford University Press - and for which he received the National Book Award in 1973. The book to which he refers is my *Radical Nationalism in Cameroun* (OUP, 1977). The death of Prof. Wilson on June 12, 1979 prevented us from reuniting when I joined the Government Department in September 1979. His wife Mary Tolford Wilson (known as Mazie) was a great companion in life and work. J.F. Bayart, to whom he refers, was the leading French scholar of African politics (and my close associate). The article on Nigeria he mentions marked a turning-point in my understanding of post-colonial Africa. Prof. Wilson's sharing of his conversation with Thomas Hodgkin - both academic titans and my mentors - is noteworthy. He had studied at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, 1923-25. His hand-written letter will be included in the repository of my archival papers. Only about 200 words in length, it is a time-capsule of significant events.