

November 2, 29

Mr. C. Gardner Sullivan

Winnifred Reeve

Re: KNIGHT OF THE SEA. By: X. Martin Smith

You will recall that I spoke to you the other day about an old sea story which had been brought to my attention by a young lady in the Publicity department -- one of the writers there. She told me that Joseph Schildkraut was very much interested in it and that it was concerned with John Paul Jones and there was a background of the old sailing ships and the chantees of those times.

You asked me to get hold of the manuscript and yesterday Schildkraut's manager brought it to my office. He made the remark that Mr. Schildkraut liked it very much.

I read the story in part and I thought I would tell you that it is a very scholarly and thoughtful piece of work on which I can see Mr. Smith has put a great deal of time and probably enthusiasm.

I know that the first opinion of a reader would be that it is too involved, too historic, too episodic. Nevertheless if one cares to dig deeply enough into this work I think it is possible to discover a tremendous theme for a novelty super-picture. It is not written or constructed according to preconceived movie formula but the stuff is there none the less though it makes tedious reading in the first part and we would need to contrive a better romance so far as the love story is concerned. Also we would need to do away with all the biographical, rather woodenly told, data. I can comprehend the sincerity with which this author set out to tell his story.

John Paul Jones would make a great hero for a big picture. Every child in the United States and in every other country -- grown up children

too, know of the "Father of the American Navy" as he is called in history.

I forgot to mention that there is the greatest sea fight described in this story that I've ever read.

I believe the author has given us an authentic and vivid story of a great national hero. I don't see why a picture of the American Revolution would not prove tremendously successful at this time and if tied up with a story with a salty flavor of the sea it might be something totally new. For that reason I recommend that we do not dismiss this story without further serious consideration.

I've never met and do not know the writer of "KNIGHT OF THE SEA" but was told by the young lady whose name I don't recall that he is a navel officer so I dare say he knows his subject well.