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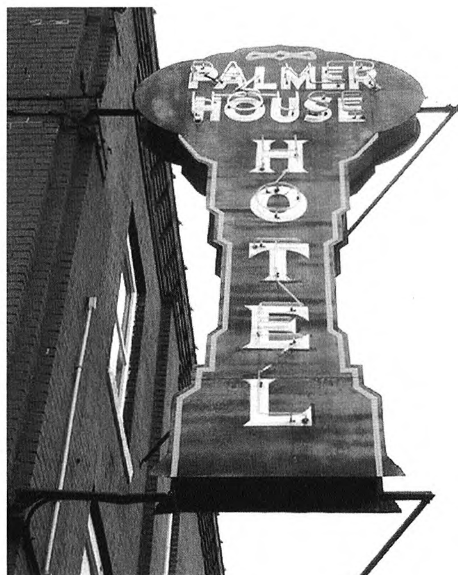
The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter

VOLUME SEVENTEEN, NUMBER TWO SPRING 2009



Sign at the Palmer House Hotel, Sauk Centre, Minnesota

Ghosts in the Palmer House?

Rebecca Webb

This article is reprinted by the permission of Senior Perspective, *Glenwood, Minnesota, Jim Palmer, editor. It was originally published in October 2006.*

Ghostly Guests Enjoy Stay at Historic, Haunted Hotel

You've had a delicious meal in the dining room, followed by genial conversation in the cozy, gracious lobby and a nightcap in the pub. As you climb the stairs to your room, you congratulate yourself on finding such charming accommodations; the Palmer House, with its tall windows, stained glass arches, and elegant, comfy furnishings, reminds you of

Ghosts in the Palmer House? *continued on page 6*

Bowling Alone and Sinclair Lewis: A Teaching Experiment in a First-Year Program

George Killough
College of St. Scholastica

The College of St. Scholastica, where I teach in Duluth, Minnesota, has a first-year program called Dignitas. The goal is to introduce beginning students to college life, to develop their thinking, and to connect them to the college community. The program spans the whole freshman year, occupying two credits each semester. Human dignity is the overarching theme. Individual sections of the course have a sub-theme devised by each instructor.

For school year 2007–08, my first year teaching the course, I hatched a plan that included Sinclair Lewis. My idea was to focus on contrasting visions of community in America, the idealistic view being represented by the widely admired book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, published in 2000 by Harvard social scientist Robert D. Putnam, and the more pessimistic view being represented by literary works such as the novels of Sinclair Lewis. I titled my section "What's Wrong with Bowling Alone?"

Although Putnam worries that Americans have shown less and less community involvement since about 1960, his vision of the benefits of community life is optimistic. He believes that American society is at its healthiest when citizens have high levels of community engagement—what he likes to call social capital. His statistical evidence shows that states with high social capital have high levels of education, public safety, health, and economic prosperity, and contrariwise, that states with lower levels of social capital have lower success rates in the same areas. As membership in groups such as the Elks Club, the PTA, and neighborhood bowling leagues declines, so does

Bowling Alone *continued on page 12*

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The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter

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Editor: Sally E. Parry
Publications Unit Director: Tara Reeser
Production Director: Sarah Haberstich
Assistants and Interns: Julia Drauden, Kenneth Earl, Meike Lenz

Please address all correspondence to: Sinclair Lewis Society, c/o Sally E. Parry, Department of English, Box 4240, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4240

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Habeas Corpus (Part II)

Sinclair Lewis

Part one of this short story by Sinclair Lewis was published in the fall 2008 issue (17.1) of the Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter. *In it we met Leo Gurazov, a Bulgarian who lives in the Middle-Western city of Vernon and owns a tobacco shop. He is a Marxist and firmly believes in the idea of revolution—especially if it means that he will be in charge. Because he wants to return to Bulgaria and has no money to do so, he schemes to become known as a fierce revolutionary so that he will be deported and sent back to Bulgaria for free. This story, originally published by the* Saturday Evening Post *on January 24, 1920, was transcribed by Todd Stanley. Thanks to him for his work in bringing this lesser-known Lewis story to light.*

"Habeas Corpus"

He addressed five envelopes slowly and with a good deal of loss of ink upon his knuckles and cuffs. He was disturbed in his labors by having to stop and admire his masterpiece. There it was, a real book, with the title, *Now Is the Time to Rise*, on the cover and his name right out in print. Radical editors might see it and offer him a job. It was a pity to leave America just now when the comrades were going to recognize his philosophical grasp. He laid down his pen. Should he give up being deported after all?

But no! What recognition in this fool country could equal a Sofia salon and Leo Gurazov, the famous authority on America, worshipped by beautiful girls with short black hair? He shook with excitement. He mailed the pamphlets to Nick Benorius, to the I.W.W., to the chief of police of Vernon, to the postmaster and to the Vernon immigration office. His fate would be automatic now. But that the immigration bureau might have more evidence he invested fifteen dollars in a collection of the most radical publications he could find at the socialist bookshop and displayed them on a cigar shelf. He hung a curtain so that he could draw it across them. For that curtain he would have a use at the proper time.

He looked forward to shocking his customers. The worst thing about shopkeeping had been the need of this vile bourgeois politeness. That he, Gurazov, who had read practically clear through all the three volumes of Marx, should have to say good morning to bankers merely because they bought cigars! He would show them where they got off now. If they protested against his book department he would hand them copies of his pamphlet and stand back shaking his sides while they writhed in fear of the rising proletariat as led by Leo Gurazov.

Only nobody protested.

The older customers bustled out and never saw his bookshelves, while the younger ones scoffed, "Where'd you get that junk?"

So it was without the pleasure of insulting anyone but merely with an inner joy that he waited—and waited and waited. He waited ten days. He waited two weeks. And still no authority came down on him. It was disgusting. He'd have to get out and be violent after all—and revolution was sweaty work. He groaned, took fifty copies of his pamphlet and went to the Wednesday meeting of his socialist local.

Habeas Corpus *continued on next page*

Contributors

The editor of the Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter *would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue by writing articles or sending in notes.*

Thanks to the following for contributing to the newsletter: Frederick Betz, Lisa Campbell, Ted Fleener, Roger Forseth, Mitchell Freedman, Ralph Goldstein, David Goodman, Rob Hardy, George Killough, Jacqueline Koenig, William Kraemer, Pat Lewis, Richard Lingeman, Joyce Lyng, Ron McCutchan, Robert McLaughlin, Roger K. Miller, Jim Palmer, Roberta Parry, Katherine Presley, Tom Raynor, Samuel Rogal, Solomon Rutzky, Dave Simpkins, Todd Stanley, *and* Rebecca Webb.

Habeas Corpus *continued from previous page*

IV

He announced to the socialist assembly that Benorius and the rest of the old-line Marxians were cowards. They were afraid of modern revolutionary communism. He appealed to the younger men. Direct action—that was it. Rise! He would give them his pamphlet. Let them read it and come to his store. He was going to lead a parade with inflammatory banners. He defied the mayor, the troops. Who would join him?

Nick Benorius put another question to the local. Who would join him in kicking out this four-flushing piker, Gurazov, who had kept his mouth shut through the war but now it was over wanted a lot of safe notoriety? There was a great deal of oratory and fist shaking, but as no one listened to anyone else the meeting was adjourned. A dozen of the youngsters swarmed about Gurazov, accepted his pamphlet.

For a week men were filtering into the private room of his store. On a Wednesday night an hour or so after midnight Gurazov and two other men sneaked out of his back door. They wore overcoats; their hats were pulled low. One of them had in his outer pocket a milk bottle apparently filled with milk. They slipped through alleys to a street, peeped out, saw no one. Gurazov yanked a sheet of paper two feet by three from beneath his overcoat; the man with the milk bottle shakily pulled it out and spattered flour paste on the back of the sheet; the third pasted it against a wall. They went on, talking about the movies. On the corner two blocks away was a policeman. They ostentatiously stopped near him to light cigarettes and one of the men yawned, "I'll say it was one darned good dance. Well, come on, boys—let's hustle home. I'm sleepy."

The policeman turned his back, plodded away. Instantly a sheet was out, the paste slopped on it and a poster was disfiguring the monolithic granite column of a national bank. Ten minutes later there were posters on department-store windows, on a billboard, on the front door of the main post office.

At three Gurazov slid into his room, dropped his overcoat in a corner, brushed tobacco leaves and cigar boxes from his couch and lay down, fatly chuckling. All over the business section were red-and-black bills which announced that on the coming Sunday there would be a parade to protest against Mooney's imprisonment and against intervention in Russia. The parade would wind up in Monument Square to be addressed by the famous Balkan revolutionist, Leo Gurazov. Furthermore:

"We'll show this wealth-ridden town what the real stick-it-to-the-limit left wing thinks. The lid is off. Comrade Gurazov is the real stuff and he will be there with bells on, and if the cops don't like his address let them sneak to the station house and hide!"

It was perhaps even more of a masterpiece than *Now Is the Time to Rise*, by the same author.

Gurazov was up early. He wriggled and clucked with joy to watch the vice president of the national bank furiously claw at the sheet on the granite column; to see a hose turned on the department-store windows; to hear old gentlemen with prim mustaches stamp their feet and pound their sticks. He returned to his shop. He sat cheerfully in the back room with four or five copies of his pamphlet beside him and a book on sabotage in his lap. He was happily waiting to be arrested. There was no danger that he'd have to lead any fool parade, he assured himself. At noon he was still waiting.

But the afternoon papers were delightful. They quoted the posters and said that Gurazov was a notorious Slav anarchist. They interviewed the chief of police. That was discouraging though. The chief declined to stop the parade. He said his men would be there and if Gurazov said anything seditious he would be taken in charge. This Gurazov, said he, was a notoriety-seeking fanatic with no organization behind him. The chief did not purpose to make him a martyr.

Gurazov raged, "And me the most dangerous fellow in town!"

Habeas Corpus *continued on page 19*

New Members

Welcome to the new members who have joined the Sinclair Lewis Society since the last issue.

John L. Harris
Ft. Worth, TX

Mitchell Taylor
Iola, WI

Mary Stroeing
Bainbridge, WA

Carol Zeno
Rutland, VT

"Just Suppose I Encouraged Some Boy and He Became a Great Artist": The Aspirations of Carol Kennicott and the Realizations of Lilian Steichen

Ron McCutchan
Illinois State University

In *Main Street,* Sinclair Lewis's heroine Carol Kennicott is introduced as a college senior, adrift on vaguely conceived notions of being "an inspiration" (5); she wants to "conquer the world—almost entirely for the world's own good" (3). Pondering her career decision, she ranges from wanting to "get my hands on one of these prairie towns and make it beautiful" (5) and hoping to "be an influence in library work. Just suppose I encouraged some boy and he became a great artist!" (9). She decides on library science, but after three years working in the St. Paul Library, Carol marries Dr. Will Kennicott, although not in a grand passion; Lewis demurely confines the bulk of Carol and Will's courtship to a scant few paragraphs. But, through Will, Carol finds her mission: "Come to Gopher Prairie. Show us. Make the town—well—make it artistic" (17). Gopher Prairie proves to be stubbornly resistant to Carol's efforts to reform it on any number of fronts—social, cultural, architectural.

The dissatisfaction Carol feels for the Midwestern small town marks a shift in attitude that Carl Van Doren noted as "the newest style in American fiction" in his 1921 review "The Revolt from the Village," one of a series in the *Nation* on contemporary American novelists (407). While earlier writers, among them Edgar Lee Masters and Sherwood Anderson, had challenged the myth of the American small town, making it "cynically clear...that villages which prided themselves upon their pioneer energy might in fact be stagnant backwaters or dusty centers of futility, where existence went round and round while elsewhere the broad current moved away from them" (407), *Main Street*, according to Van Doren, was: "a memorable episode in literary history" that brought "to hundreds of thousands the protest against the village" (410). Anthony Hilfer identifies two themes in the works that reflect the revolt from the village: the buried life, "hidden, misunderstood, inarticulate *feelings*," and the attack on conformity, "failures and suppressions of *thought*" (29, emphasis in the text). Both themes are

Just Suppose *continued on page 15*

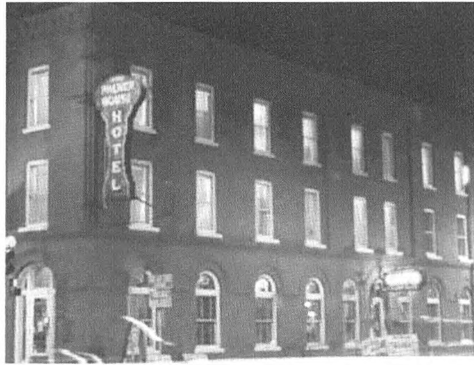
Call for Papers

Papers will be considered on a variety of topics related to Lewis. Proposals for panel discussions, abstracts of papers, and suggestions for activities will be due **May 1, 2010**, but are welcomed much earlier.

The Sinclair Lewis Society will hold a **CONFERENCE** in connection with Sinclair Lewis Days in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, in **July 2010**, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Lewis winning the Nobel Prize in Literature, the first American to be so honored. Planned events include academic panels on various aspects of Lewis's writing, a visit to the Boyhood Home, and the showing of some rare Lewis films including *Ann Vickers*.

Send queries of any kind to Sally Parry, Executive Director, Sinclair Lewis Society, Department of English, Box 4240, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4240 or e-mail her at separry@ilstu.edu.

Ghosts in the Palmer House? *continued from page 1*



Palmer House Hotel

the classic small hotels described in Depression-era novels. As you snuggle beneath the covers on your firm, comfy mattress, only one thing stands between you and a good night's sleep: the giggling and cavorting of children in the hallway. But don't fret. All you have to do is open the door and call firmly, "Hush!"

The ghosts will quiet right down.

"I don't want them to go away," says Kelley Freese, current owner of the Sauk Centre hotel immortalized in Nobel Prize-winning author Sinclair Lewis's novel *Main Street*. "I don't think anything's broken here." As far as she's concerned, the haunts people have been discussing for decades are as welcome at the Palmer House as anyone else. "I just want my guests to be comfortable. All of them."

Little Boy Blue

"Come away from there! You know better than to play back there!"

Dutiful parents will scold their child for scurrying behind the lobby front desk to explore. But as the wayward youngster returns to his or her parents, he or she will often pout. "How come that little boy gets to play back there and I can't?" the child demands, pointing to a figure no one else can see.

"Some of the ghosts are very corporeal," Freese nods, explaining why children don't realize they're seeing a ghost until Mom's or Dad's eyes open wide. "People describe the little boy, our most famous haunt, in three-dimensional, full-color terms. He has green eyes, dirty blond hair, and carries a little blue ball he can be heard bouncing in the hallways at night."

The child reportedly died of the flu in the early 1900s, perhaps during the 1918 pandemic, in a nearby hospital that has since been converted to a Victorian home. His parents were staying at the Palmer House at the time. "Visiting psychics and spiritualists say there's an intense sadness in Room 11, in the vicinity of the pedestal sink," Freese notes. "That could be his mother or father. But the child himself is happy. He's laughing, he's giggling, he's having a great time! Maybe he never had a healthy day in his life and now he gets to play."

Not everyone appreciates his hijinks. A teenaged clerk, discomfited by spectral phenomena, sat as far across the lobby as possible during a recent night shift, watching and listening as someone unseen cranked the front desk lamp on and off, on and off. Two members of the MidNite Walkers, a paranormal research group that visited in June, reported being pushed at the back of the knees, stumbling down the last few lobby steps where the little boy is often seen sitting. One lone guest even stormed out the front door, too angry to wait for a response to his complaint about "those kids running around all night long."

Yes, the little boy seems to have playmates. Freese and a former employee have both seen the spirit of an expressionless young mother, extending arms out at her sides as if she were supposed to be holding the hands of young children. A psychically gifted visitor, whose photo of a second story decorative fireplace captured an unexplained image reflected in a window, heard a baby crying in the basement and perceived a row of short boxes beneath the cement floor where the MidNite Walkers had recorded their highest energy readings.

"The basement walls contain gorgeous fieldstone work and some of them are covered with soot," notes Freese. She theorizes that, when the Sauk Centre House burned down, the Palmer House might have been built on top of the basement of the brothel. Infant and child mortality, already high, were probably worse in the unfortunate conditions of a house of ill-repute.

The casualties had to be interred somewhere.

Speaker of the House

For nearly twenty years, in the 1970s and 1980s, the Palmer House was owned and operated by Al Tingley and his partner, Richard Schwartz. Tingley documented their experiences in *Corner on Main Street: True Story of the Innkeepers on Sinclair Lewis Avenue*. In his book, he describes a conversation in which Schwartz reveals his suspicions that the hotel might be haunted. "I'm not one to believe in ghosts," he insists after hearing unexplained noises at night, "but did you know someone committed suicide upstairs years ago?"

He'd heard that from the Quinns, Abe and Gertrude, who owned the hotel in the 1950s and 1960s. They also told him about a man who hanged himself by jumping off a pool table. This might be the scary entity, the angry one, whom Tingley and friends speculated could be a damned soul wandering the

Ghosts in the Palmer House? *continued on page 8*

Three-Volume Collection of Lewis Characters Published

Sally E. Parry
Illinois State University

Samuel J. Rogal, emeritus Chair of the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts at Illinois Valley Community College, has created a three-volume collection of all of Sinclair Lewis's characters in his fiction. *A Guide to the Characters in the Novels, Short Stories, and Plays of Sinclair Lewis*, published by the Edwin Mellen Press in 2006, is a fascinating compilation of every character that Lewis created. The collection lists the characters alphabetically, mentions the text that they appear in, and notes any striking characteristics including descriptions and how they contribute to the plot. If a character appears in more than one text, there is a separate entry for each appearance.

Rogal's introduction discusses Lewis's use of names, "conceived out of union between his imagination and his more than occasional sardonic view of the workings of times in which he lived" (1–2). He compares Lewis's naming to that of writers Lewis admired, such as Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy where the names often reveal something about the character. Sometimes, in describing how Lewis created character names, Rogal gets a bit critical. "Essentially, Lewis poked his satiric, sarcastic, and morally righteous pens at people's names to increase their pain (and perhaps his pleasure) as he satirized and attempted to humiliate their characters and underscore their triumphs and tragedies—all on behalf of conscience, art, and a number of hearty laughs" (6).

One of the unusual aspects of these volumes is that there are a lot of generic names listed as well. Lawyers, doctors, actresses, etc. are included. And if these generic types appear more than once, they all receive separate entries. Part of this is because of Rogal's desire to be as inclusive as possible, defining a fictional character as "any person, group of persons, or animal, named or unnamed, who lives, has lived, breathes, no longer has breath, or simply appears imprinted on the page" (8–9). A second reason is that "within the routines of necessary human activities, those seemingly bland identities do, on more than one occasion, reflect a point of view—either of a character or of his or her creator" (8).

I checked this guide against some of the lesser-known and hard-to-find titles such as *Hike and the Aeroplane* and it seems to be quite inclusive. Everyone from Mary Abbott, a major general in the short story "Captains of Peace," to Zylophonists, who appear in the story "Loki the Red," playing at Eisenwein's Vaudeville House, appear here. Even Poodle Darby, Hike's chum in the aforementioned boys' adventure story receives an entry. In addition to the list of characters there are occasional footnotes that provide other information, often of a historical or geographical nature.

As might be expected, the entries for major characters are much more detailed both in terms of the lives of the characters and the plots of the novels in which they play a significant part. The entry for Samuel Dodsworth, for example, gives a description of him, his schooling, his business successes, as well as his marital troubles. There are other mentions of him in "Be Brisk with Babbitt" and *World So Wide*. Other Dodsworths referred to include his first wife Fran, his son Brent, and his second wife Edith (in *World So Wide* as well). Lewis thought that Dodsworth sounded like the name of a successful family so there are two Miss Dodsworths in *Ann Vickers*, a Mona Dodsworth in *Babbitt*, and the Dodsworths are referred to as a "high and mighty" family of Zenith in both *Arrowsmith* and *Babbitt*.

In volume 3, there is also a list of the real people who appear in Lewis's various fictional writings, everyone from George Abbott in *Bethel Merriday* and "Is This a Dagger—So What?" to Stefan Zweig in *Dodsworth*. There is also a summary of all the stories, novels, and plays and the most complete checklist I've seen of Lewis's fiction writing with full bibliographic information. He mentions that he has consulted Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961); James Lundquist's *Checklist of Sinclair Lewis* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1970); and Stephen R. Pastore's *Sinclair Lewis: A Descriptive Bibliography. A Collector's and Scholar's Guide to Identification* (New Haven: Yalebooks, 1997). However, Schorer did not include page numbers, Lundquist was more concerned with secondary sources, and Pastore "merely appropriates Schorer's list" (vol. 3, 455). So, for the Sinclair Lewis scholar, this alone would make this collection a highly valuable service to have undertaken.

A Guide to the Characters in the Novels, Short Stories, and Plays of Sinclair Lewis is a fascinating book for any lover of Sinclair Lewis's writing, reminding us of how fertile an imagination he had, and the breadth of his knowledge about the people and places of his day. It's well worth having on hand not only to check on character names, but also to dip into and enjoy for the witty creations of Sinclair Lewis. ✍

Ghosts in the Palmer House? *continued from page 6*

hotel for eternity.

Before the Quinns, a family named Amos ran the hotel. Their boys had a schoolmate over to spend the night in Room 15. When a thumping noise was heard in the hallway, the Amos boys told their guest the hotel was haunted and a misty ghost had chased one of the boys down the hallway. "At first I thought they were pulling my leg," the guest eventually told Schwartz. But when he needed to make a trip to the communal bathroom, he insisted on being escorted.

The boys peeked into the hall before heading back to their room and sure enough, there in the corridor, between Rooms 12 and 13, hovered a mist of heavy fog. "Come on," prodded the Amos boy. "It won't hurt you. I've lived here a couple of years now, and I've seen it several times." As the boys inched toward their room, the fog drifted toward them and eventually soared right over their heads. The visitor never spent the night again.

In 1963, Lorne Greene, star of *Bonanza*, [and his wife] came to town to promote an aspiring plastics company. For him, Room 2 was totally redecorated, complete with matching twin beds. After a nice visit, including Greene's participation in the Sinclair Lewis Days festivities, the Greenes departed. The beds remained.

One night, a couple attending an all-school reunion checked into Room 2. In the middle of the night, the husband's bed rose into the air and shook. Twice he tried to rouse his wife; both times, the bed settled before she awoke. But the third time it happened, she saw it. The couple bolted from the hotel, returning in the light of day to retrieve their luggage.

On other occasions, a bed and a visitor's luggage have been soaked with moisture in Room 2. Still another visitor stormed into the lobby one morning demanding to know if the hotel was haunted. Her room had gone deathly cold in the night, she claimed, and a presence had swept over her in her bed, brushing against her face.

Staff have also experienced the cold spells. In the lobby, usually between 3 and 4 AM, a presence will surround the night clerk, encasing him or her in bone-chilling, breath-freezing cold. Employees have learned to keep blankets and warm clothing on hand; the spell usually lasts about twenty minutes.

All this, Freese has endured with equanimity. But on August 30, the entity pushed her too far. The sole staff person on duty that night after the bartender went home, she settled her two guests in their room on the third floor and informed them she would be catching up with some fall housekeeping if they needed anything in the night. She attended to the unoccupied rooms on the third floor and then descended to the second. As she approached Room 11, she was overwhelmed with a sudden conviction that she must not enter.

"There I stood, with my maid's cart and my bucket of pine cleaner. I just couldn't go in. Then, behind me, someone called my name."

The voice was low and expressionless, dropping eerily while intoning the second syllable of her name. "I let go of the cart," Freese reports, "put the bucket down, went downstairs, turned off the lamps, climbed in the car and drove home." Her father, a permanent resident of the hotel, was available if the guests needed assistance, she knew. She can't say why the incident disturbed her so. "For some reason, they really wanted my attention."

It was a new experience, but not the first of its kind. She shared her story with staff member Brian Bellefeuille only to discover the same thing had happened to him while he was in the dining room that evening, resetting the tables for breakfast.

Could this be the same entity who breaks glasses? The stemware doesn't just fall to the floor; it shoots through the air as if hurtled in fury. Could it be Sinclair Lewis, supposedly fired from his night clerk job at the Palmer House for spending too much time writing, taking his revenge? Tingley rather hoped so, but Freese doubts it. "He wasn't known for his tact, but his books and personal history don't lead me to believe he'd behave this way."

The Gentleman Caller

In the summer of 2002, Jeannie Bellefeuille, a Catholic school teacher and wife of Brian, took a summer job as night clerk at the Palmer House. In mid-July, she had a very strange experience. After the bartender left for the night, she checked to be sure all external doors were locked and then entered the pub to vacuum. She was shocked to find a young man standing at the bar. The doors were locked and the rooms were all vacant. How could he have gotten in?

An awkward but playful exchange followed as the clerk struggled to serve the stranger a glass of beer and accept payment despite her unfamiliarity with the bar. Sighing with relief, she watched him cross the lobby and head upstairs with his glass. He must be a guest after all! That's how he'd gotten in!

But when she described the incident to Freese the next day, Kelley informed her there'd been no guests registered the night before, none of the beds had been slept in, and no beer glass could be found.

A couple of months later, he appeared to Freese. "I was upstairs on a Wednesday afternoon, doing the housekeeping,"

Ghosts in the Palmer House? *continued on page 10*

WHERE *MAIN STREET* COMES TO A DEAD END

Roger K. Miller

Published September 3, 2008, in the blog "The View from Graustark," graustark.blogspot.com. This essay, copyright Roger K. Miller, originally appeared in a number of daily newspapers.

Zona Gale

In 1920 two novels laying bare the monotonous sterility of American small-town life were published and climbed the best-seller lists together. Only one, Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*, became lastingly famous. But just as stark in depicting the wretchedness of unfulfilled lives was Zona Gale's *Miss Lulu Bett*.

Both authors based their portrayals of provincial sordidness—part of what Carl Van Doren called "the revolt from the village"—on their experiences in their Midwestern hometowns. Lewis was born in 1885 in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, Gale eleven years earlier in Portage in neighboring Wisconsin.

Continuing the parallels, both novels were radical departures from what the two authors had produced before. Lewis had published a handful of relatively innocuous, albeit increasingly satirical, novels. Gale had made a good living for a dozen years writing sentimental short stories about life in Friendship Village (the very name gives away their tone) that were the exact opposite of what she began telling in *Miss Lulu Bett* and, shortly before that, in *Birth*, novels that, like *Main Street*, were in the realism mode.

Though *Main Street* is, overall, a more rounded and definitely a more entertaining story, *Miss Lulu Bett*, etched in acid, is in many ways the more searing indictment of village existence, particularly in capturing the hopelessness of frustrated, unemancipated women. Carol Kennicott of *Main Street* is virtually a women's liberationist compared to Lulu Bett, the "family beast of burden" in the home of her brother-in-law, Dwight Deacon, a man who if it were not for platitudes would have no conversation at all.

Lulu, 34, lives as unpaid cook and all-around drudge—"Nobody cares what becomes of me after they're fed"—with Dwight, a dentist and town magistrate, and his simpering, clueless wife Ina, Lulu's sister. There are two daughters, Monona, about 11–12 years old, and Di, 18, the child of Dwight's previous marriage. Completing the household is Ina and Lulu's mother, a cackling, senile crone whose image calls up the crazy old ladies in George Booth cartoons.

The satire in its spareness cuts right to the bone. The numbing boredom of the Deacons' dinner is told in the clipped, brief sentences and dialogue that make up the entire novel, barely longer than a novella.

"You are a case," Ina adoringly says to Dwight after he delivers himself of a lame comical bit. "He beamed upon her. It was his intention to be a case."

Lulu's inchoate romantic longings are objectified in the amorous carryings-on of Di and her boyfriend, Bobby. The longings are answered by the arrival in town of Dwight's long-lost brother, Ninian, and he and Lulu elope.

Within a month Lulu is back. Ninian had neglected to tell her that he already had a wife, whom he has not seen for years but who may still be alive. Dwight, worried about the scandal this might cause, tells her it's not true, merely an excuse Ninian concocted to get rid of her.

Lulu is determined to prove Dwight wrong. In finally verbalizing what a total void her existence has been in the Deacons' house, she says that when Ninian came along, "then I got a little something, same as other folks."

Dwight's insufferable condescension is paid back when, in a mirror of Lulu/Ninian, Di and Bobby run off together. They do not get far either. Lulu—actually the most competent person of them all—goes after the adolescent pair and, in deterring their flight, discovers that Di has been suffering under the Deacon regime the same as she had. She feels that she and Di share "some unsuspected sisterhood."

There is further payback to Dwight in the book's happy, but not inappropriate, ending. Lulu, asserting her independence, marries Neil Cornish, owner of an unsuccessful music store—a diffident, ineffectual man, but with enough wit to recognize what a trap the Deacon household was, and not just for Lulu.

Encouraged by a Broadway producer, Gale quickly adapted *Miss Lulu Bett* into a play that went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama. Some have found the novel's style too clipped and compressed, depriving her story of texture and inflection and making it bloodless.

I think otherwise. The comparison may seem odious, but the effect of the style is rather like Jim Thompson's pulp fiction, in which the brutal, unpolished language is part and parcel of the violence it describes. The medium becomes one with the message. ✍

Ghosts in the Palmer House? *continued from page 8*

she remembers. "I always tell the staff where I'm going so they can shout down the hall if they need me. I was in the laundry room when I heard footsteps coming up the stairs, so I stopped to listen, to see if anyone would call."

No one did. Instead, heavy, manly footfalls continued to the top of the steps, then set off briskly down the hall. "I was standing with the maid's cart just inside the open door," Freese recounts, "staring into the hallway, wondering who could be coming."

No guests were scheduled to check in. As Freese watched, a man walked past the door, turning his head sharply to look straight at her. "It was like he knew I'd be in there!" she marvels now.

The man continued south down the third floor corridor; Freese hurried to the door but by the time she looked into the hall, he was gone. She searched all the rooms but found no sign of him. As she made her way back to the laundry room, the hair stood up on the back of her neck as it occurred to her whom she'd just seen. "I stopped dead in my tracks as it hit me: the sound of his footsteps had stopped the moment he passed the laundry room door!"

Schwartz frequently heard footsteps at night, coming down the corridor between Rooms 12 and 13 when the hotel was unoccupied. And Freese's father, who lives beneath Rooms 18 and 19, hears them, too. "It drives him crazy," Freese admits. "He knows there are no guests up there. So he feels compelled to check things out."

The ghost is apparently very consistent. He walks into the room, sits down on the edge of the bed, takes off his shoes, drops them to the floor, walks around a bit more, then climbs into bed and settles in for the night. But when Freese's father checks the room, no one is there. "There's not even a butt mark on the bed!"

Gotcha!

"I often have guests come and they want so badly for something to happen...and nothing does," Freese admits. "Things seem to happen to the most unsuspecting guests and the nonbelievers."

Among those are staff member Brian, a skeptic who works in the dining room where silverware frequently rearranges itself. "At the end of the day," Freese explains, "we'll clear the tables and strip the linens for the laundry. Then the tables are reset with paper placemats and rolled silverware [silverware bundled in a napkin] for breakfast." The wrapped silverware often moves around the table; during her summer as a night clerk, Brian's wife, Jeannie, had to reset the tables over and over. Finally she learned to ignore the phenomenon until just before the end of her shift. That way, she only had to tidy up the silverware once before it became someone else's problem.

"It has happened to Brian's father-in-law, too," Freese notes. "Sometimes it happens while we're in the process of setting. We'll finish one table, move to the next one, and the one we just finished will get messed up."

Freese speculates that this playful, prankstering haunt may be a former employee, perhaps a waitress. This may be the ghost who is forever turning things on and off—lamps, television sets, air conditioners, guests' sound machines. She flushes toilets and taps employees on the shoulder while they make beds. In June, a mother and daughter checked into Rooms 18 and 19 for a family get-together. While they were at dinner, the ghost moved the furniture in Room 19, an oddly-shaped space requiring an extension cord for the television set to reach the outlet. "The TV wouldn't work," Freese explains, "because the ghost had moved it so far that the cord had come unplugged."

Only one guest has been frightened away by these shenanigans during Freese's tenure, and even he wants to come back, albeit with his wife by his side for moral support.

All Are Welcome

Freese welcomes all investigators, be they the literature buffs and book club members who arrive in droves, the middle-class forty-somethings indulging their spiritual curiosity, or the high school teenagers who've discovered an exciting new way to mark special occasions. "They like to camp out, five or six in a room, and stay up all night exploring the place," Freese grins. "I'm fine with that, as long as they respect the other guests, get their parents' permission, and give me enough notice so I can arrange to be the night clerk that night."

Her one rule: no Ouija boards, séances, or other disruptive nonsense. She is fiercely protective of the happy atmosphere that draws people—the living and the dead—back to the Palmer House again and again, and she takes great pride in caring for something that's been such an asset for the community...and herself. "You have to dedicate yourself to it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," she admits. "But it's worth it. The place is creating such incredibly good memories for me! I've never been as passionate and protective about something."

[Note: The editor of the *Sinclair Lewis Newsletter* has been in and stayed in the Palmer House numerous times since 1985 and has never seen any ghosts. However, there will be another chance when the Sinclair Lewis Society has its next conference in 2010.]

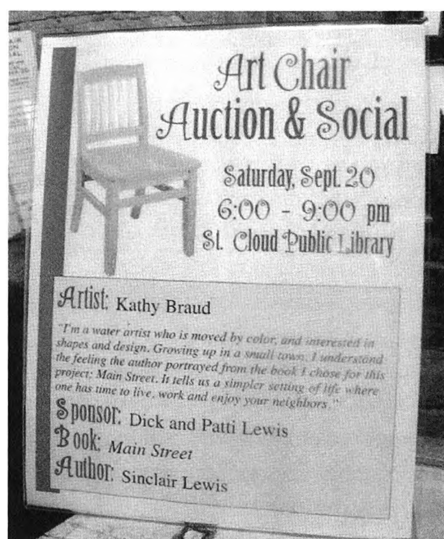
A Letter from Barnaby Conrad

Barnaby Conrad, who served as Sinclair Lewis's secretary in 1947 and was a keynote speaker and guest at the 2000 Sinclair Lewis Conference in Sauk Centre, wrote in to praise the article "*Strangers*: Sinclair Lewis on Broadway" by Robert L. McLaughlin in the Fall 2006 (15.1) edition of the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*.

> I especially enjoyed the account of the play about SL, *Strangers*, which was on Broadway for a very brief run in 1979.
>
> I have forgotten the details, but I was asked by someone connected with the play to help Bruce Dern achieve his impersonation of SL since I had been SL's secretary for several months in 1947. I've forgotten what I told Mr. Dern during dress rehearsals, but when he finally walked out on the stage on opening night—I choked up.
>
> There, re-incarnated, was Sinclair Lewis—green eyeshade, which he always wore when working, garters on his sleeves, the shambling walk, the high-pitched voice. It was truly frightening. And the make-up—Dern looked, spoke, and *was* Sinclair Lewis. The play itself was excellent, and why it didn't last I'll never know.
>
> Why my 1963 play about SL didn't last more than one night on Broadway—I know very well—it was terrible!
>
> Based on my novel, *Dangerfield*, it told about the last days of a famous novelist and his young mistress. It starred Franchot Tone, in his last performance. It had almost nothing to do with my book. I wish Bruce Dern had played the lead, but it still wouldn't have saved what they did to my book.
>
> Oh, I forget to say why they changed the title: I had called the lead character "Dangerfield,"—a writer named Dangerfield threatened to sue—so "they" changed the title to "A Bicycle Ride to Nevada." There was no bicycle, no ride, no Nevada—no hope!
>
> Best wishes, Barnaby Conrad [he also signed it "Sinclair Lewis 'an *almost* genuine signature'" since he used to sign correspondence for Lewis when he worked for him] ✍

A *Main Street* Chair

More than fifty local central-Minnesota artists banded together to create chairs inspired by books to help raise money for the new thirty-two million dollar St. Cloud Public Library. Since city funds can only go toward the building, an auction of these creative chairs was held in order to buy computers and books for the new library. Each chair was sponsored by a business or individual who paid one hundred and fifty dollars, half to the artist for supplies and half to the fund. The chairs themselves were found at garage sales and estate sales, with some being donated by Hennen's Furniture of St. Cloud. Dick and Pat Lewis, Sinclair Lewis Society members, sponsored a *Main Street* chair painted by Kathy Braid. The chair sold for two hundred and seventy-five dollars. ✍



Bowling Alone *continued from page 1*

our overall quality of life. We would be better off, he thinks, if we could rebuild our community connections.

In contrast to Putnam, Sinclair Lewis found American community life disappointing. In *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, he portrayed people engaged in community activity that led to societal dysfunction. Civic activism among residents of Gopher Prairie is just as likely to destroy a school teacher's career unfairly—witness Fern Mullins—as it is likely to produce a new school building. In *Babbitt*, the vigorous community involvement of the protagonist and his friends, whether in church, business organization, or social club, has for the most part an unhealthy purpose and effect.

The goal in setting Lewis against Putnam was not to demolish Putnam's main idea but to showcase opposite positions of equal weight. Together, the two authors give rise to interesting questions, which are challenging enough to make definitive answers unlikely. Does community activism contribute to human dignity and well-being? Do special conditions need to be met for community activism to have healthy effects? Does the success of American democracy depend on strong community life?

The bias I had at the outset, which I sought to control, was the bias of many literary intellectuals who distrust communities. After all, in literary portrayals of the conflict between the individual and society, the individual often faces the risk of being crushed. Consider, for example, what happens to key individuals in *Madame Bovary*, or *The Grapes of Wrath*, or *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. And literary satire, almost by definition, raises suspicion about human beings acting in concert. It is certainly hard to be a Sinclair Lewis fan without feeling at least a little skeptical about the way communities function in American society.

On the other side of the issue is a strong feeling, common in the world outside literature, that we should all establish community connections as if our lives depended on them. Students hear this message almost every day. They have been telling each other for decades to "get involved." Teenage athletes believe deeply in the power of teamwork, and they describe team experiences as among the most meaningful of their lives. Educators try to connect students with extracurricular activities as a method for insuring academic success. Religious communities, such as the Benedictines who founded the College of St. Scholastica, testify to the goodness of living and working together. Even the Dignitas program itself has community-building as one of its goals.

So the subject, I thought, should provide abundant material to talk about. More than half the class periods each term were available for discussions of this nature, thus allowing room for the students to read *Main Street* in the fall and *Babbitt* in the spring. We had guest speakers representing the positive side of community life—including our successful baseball coach whose team is tightly knit, a nun from our Benedictine community who described monastic life, and a member of a local Rotary Club. In addition, the collegewide course plan mandated several experiences having to do with human dignity, some of them even related to the community theme. The common text for all sections in 2007–08 was *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell. The common film was *Crash*. There were a couple of all-section assemblies on themes such as racism and abusive relationships. We participated in a service-learning event called Thanksgiving in the Spring, which served a free meal for hungry people in Duluth put on by students and the college food service. And we went on a pilgrimage, most sections to a memorial site in downtown Duluth commemorating three African American men who were lynched there in 1920. The idea was to have a variety of experiences in and out of the classroom.

When the Dignitas program started here in 2006–07, it met with resistance from students. Recently there has been more acceptance. My section responded well to community-building activities, less well to intellectual ones. The majority of American college-bound eighteen-year-olds are not intellectuals, and intellectual activity does not have the community-building force for them that professors might like it to have.

Nevertheless, my students had enough mind power to be able to formulate interesting responses to the juxtaposition of Putnam and Lewis. In the first semester, these responses showed up best in in-class essays about the extent to which Putnam's recommendations might help to solve the problems of small-town life in *Main Street*, and the extent to which the problems revealed in *Main Street* might expose flaws in Putnam's recommendations.

For background here, you need to know that at the end of his book Putnam offers a substantial list of things to work for, including more local civic engagement, more participation in local cultural activities, a religious awakening accompanied by tolerance, less television watching, and less urban sprawl so as to reduce excessive commutes that rob people of community time.

The expected position for students to take was that these recommendations would not help Gopher Prairie. Several essays took this position and found good reasons to support

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WELLS LEWIS ON *YOUTUBE*

George Killough
College of St. Scholastica

YouTube has a ten-minute video documentary on Sinclair Lewis's first son Wells, titled *Wells Lewis: Lost Heir to a Minnesota Son*. It was prepared in 2007 as a film contest entry for Minnesota's Greatest Generation Project, a three-year initiative of the Minnesota Historical Society to encourage people to record memories of the World War II era. The initiative has sponsored three annual film festival competitions (2006, 2007, and 2008), to which people have submitted short videos, some of them simply of aging veterans telling their stories.

In line with the theme of the contest, the Wells Lewis documentary emphasizes his role as a war hero, giving about four of the ten minutes to his military career. There are photos of him in the army and of his comrades in arms. We learn that he enlisted a year before Pearl Harbor, that he saw action in North Africa, Italy, and France, and that he won a silver star for helping to unload a burning ammunition truck while under fire from heavy artillery. We learn as well that he won a bronze star for capturing five German soldiers. The capture took place when, in his role as first lieutenant, he was coordinating an assault on a French village, using American soldiers and French irregulars. He had been assigned this secret mission because of his fluency in French, gained during childhood when his ever-traveling parents had him enrolled in boarding schools in Europe.

The documentary ends with his death in the war. He was working as an aide to Major General John Dahlquist, who was directing the rescue of an American battalion surrounded by Germans somewhere south of Paris. The two officers were moving from position to position in a Jeep, with Wells at the wheel. At one stop a German sniper got him, and he fell dead into Dahlquist's arms.

As the documentary notes, this was the death of a talented young writer, who had already published his first novel. He had had the advantages of a famous father and a Harvard education and the disadvantage of having been once a lonely little rich boy living with his parents in hotels, with no permanent home. As with thousands of other soldiers, his final achievement was that he furthered the great cause he died for. So says the documentary in a moving way.

Producer-writer-director Jonathan Quijano and his assistants are to be applauded for putting together this tribute to Wells, whose short, heroic life deserves such attention. The filmmakers found a rich trove of archival material for illustration, including several photos most of us have not seen before, some drawings Wells made as a child, and some of his letters. The sequence of photographic images, from little boy in knight's armor to grown man in combat, deepens the elegiac quality of the film and gives it visual appeal.

Lewis fans will be glad to see such positive attention being given to Wells. They will not be as glad, however, to see the two-dimensional portrayal of Wells's father. At one point, the narrator describes Sinclair Lewis as "a blunt, aggressive man who was single-minded in his desire for fame." To be sure, Lewis fell short as a father. Both his wives left testimony to this effect, but it seems unfair and unperceptive to reduce his motivation to fame alone.

The documentary has other rough qualities. It says Sinclair Lewis graduated from Princeton, instead of Yale. The narrator regularly refers to him by the single name Sinclair, instead of calling him Hal, Harry, or Red—the names people actually used. One voice-over sentence overstates Wells's early connection to Minnesota, saying he "spent his first years in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Mankato." Readers of Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life* (1961) or of Richard Lingeman's *Sinclair Lewis: Rebel from Main Street* (2002) know that Wells spent about sixteen months collectively of his first three years in these places, but he spent considerable time as well in New York, Cape Cod, and Washington, DC.

I wish I had been called in as a last-minute fact-checker or editor. Actually, my name is listed in the credits as a consultant. This role consisted of one 45-minute phone call, received in summer 2007. The caller was, if I remember correctly, the producer-writer-director Jonathan Quijano. He explained his project and wondered whether he might involve me as an expert talking head. My response was not very encouraging. I was reluctant to assume the role of scholarly analyst on film, for I could not immediately see how to sum up Lewis in a sound bite, and I had not yet read Wells's novel *They Still Say No*, nor did I have easy access to it. Still, my summer plans included a week in a university town where the library had a copy, so I said I would try to read the book. We clarified some

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it. Gopher Prairie is not likely to benefit from more civic engagement because the residents are already very involved. Note the Thanatopsis, the Jolly Seventeen, the Ancient and Affiliated Order of Spartans, the Commercial Club, the library board, the school board, and the evening social events of the merchant class. Gopher Prairie does not have television or urban sprawl, and although there is a shortage of tolerance, there is no shortage of religion. Civic activist Carol Kennicott tries to inspire more cultural activity, and her efforts meet with resistance. So this line of reasoning concludes that dysfunctions in Gopher Prairie would not be solved by Putnam's recommendations, which, when put to the *Main Street* test, seem idealistic and not well grounded.

Several students took a middle-of-the-road approach, arguing that some of Putnam's recommendations would help Gopher Prairie and some would not. Among those that would not are the obvious ones about less television and less urban sprawl, features that Gopher Prairie did not have. Among the recommendations that would help are more civic engagement across class boundaries, more cultural activity, and a religious awakening involving tolerance. The students had a defensible position here, for Putnam's idea of healthy community life involves tolerance and connections among diverse people. The social connections he encourages are supposed to inspire reciprocity, trust, and mutual obligation. He believes that societies with deep social networks having these features function more smoothly and efficiently than societies that lack them. Therefore one may well argue that Gopher Prairie, which lacks deep connections across class boundaries, could benefit from Putnam's suggestions.

Perhaps the most interesting approach in the student essays was the idea that when Putnam's recommendations are put to the *Main Street* test, they hold up well. Gopher Prairie may be seriously flawed, but it does not isolate people in private cocoons as does modern urban and suburban life. Despite the gossip, the intolerance, and the stagnation, people in Gopher Prairie are warmer and friendlier and better connected with each other than Americans in general are today. Community spirit, such as it was, had not yet died. Just as Carol Kennicott in the end preferred Gopher Prairie to Washington, DC, so Putnam rightly prefers well-knit communities to urban or suburban isolation, and the rest of us, according to this line of thinking, should follow his lead.

It was heartening to see this much variety in the student responses. A comparable variety of views continued throughout the course, as well as a persistent majority optimism about community life. In *Babbitt*, the bleaker picture of civic engagement may have weakened students' enthusiasm for community a little more than *Main Street* did, but my sense of their feeling at the end was that most sided with Putnam more than Lewis. Most students still wanted connections, still wanted to belong to something, and still believed it possible to live meaningful lives in warm, coherent communities. Of course Lewis and his fans have usually yearned for these things too. We just doubt the promise will be fulfilled.

Was the course a success? I think the idea was good, but students were not as happy as I wanted them to be. They were not avid talkers, and they tired of reading so much Lewis—a disappointment to a fan like me. Still, substitutions can be made. In 2008–09 I am doing the course again, with *Main Street* as the only Lewis text. The concept of juxtaposing Putnam with literary realizations of community life has proven to inspire at least some good critical thinking. The experiment seems worth trying again. ✍

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER IS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON SINCLAIR LEWIS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, PLEASE SEND IT TO **THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY, C/O SALLY PARRY, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, BOX 4240, ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, NORMAL, IL 61790-4240 OR E-MAIL SEPARRY@ILSTU.EDU**.

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FOR INFORMATION OR REFERENCES TO SINCLAIR LEWIS IN THE POPULAR PRESS. IF YOU SEE A MENTION OF LEWIS, PLEASE SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE. MANY THANKS.

Just Suppose *continued from page 5*

expressed in Carol. In the first instance, her restless, ambivalent relationship with Will and her hesitating considerations of love-affairs with Guy Pollock and Erik Valborg point to her own frustrations and confusion in terms of her heart's desires. In the second instance, Carol realizes that the truth about small town life is that "[i]t is an unimaginatively standardized background, a sluggishness of speech and manners, a rigid ruling of the spirit by the desire to appear respectable" (Lewis 265). It is this mediocrity and dullness—"dullness made God" (265)—that she is fighting throughout the novel. It is also against this conformity that Carol connects with Miles Bjornstam, the "red Swede" of Gopher Prairie, the one resident truly independent of the small-town mindset that pervades the community.

The popularity of *Main Street* at its publication indicates that it struck a chord in the American public: "that thousands and hundreds of thousands read it as proof enough that complacency was not absolutely victorious and that the war was on" (Van Doren 410). Other Carol Kennicotts—or at least women who shared her impatience with small-town provincialism, if not her lack of agency—existed in real life. One example may be seen in the courtship correspondence between Lilian Steichen and Carl Sandburg. Collected by their daughter Margaret Sandburg, the letters span just six months, January to June 1908. Lilian was teaching literature and expression in the high school in Princeton, Illinois, when she met Charles Sandburg, as he then called himself, at the Socialist-Democrat Party headquarters in Milwaukee, by introduction of a mutual friend. The letters are passionate and focused, a celebration of soul-matedness in sharp contrast to Carol and Will's often strained union. Amid the joy and ecstasy, Steichen gives glimpses of small-town life that seem very near to Lewis's fictional rendition.

Both Steichen and Carol are newcomers to their respective towns. Steichen joined the Princeton High School faculty in 1906. The fact that their perspectives are not from within the charmed circle of town society is notable. Hilfer points out that "[t]he village, in order to be appreciated, had to be seen from the outside. After all, one of its chief virtues was its supposed lack of self-consciousness" (21). Whereas Carol is bound to Gopher Prairie by her marriage and her aspirations, Steichen remains a transient outsider in Princeton, soon to leave its straitened society by dint of her engagement to the political activist and soon-to-be-poet Sandburg.

Another similarity that also provides Carol and Steichen with a lens on their situations is the fact that they are familiar with the sociological work of Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929): "[I]t is hard to believe Lewis's later claim that he had never read Veblen.... At any rate, Lewis's characters read Veblen: Carol Kennicott and Miles Bjornstam are Veblen readers" (Hilfer 162; Lewis 117, 263). Margaret Sandburg's introduction to her parents' correspondence notes that "[i]t must have interested my father to learn that when she was at the University of Chicago, my mother had had...a year of philosophy under Thorstein, whose book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, he had read and admired" (x–xi). Veblen, it must be said, also read Lewis, specifically referencing Gopher Prairie in his 1923 essay "The Country Town" (250).

Veblen gives a chapter of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* to "Conspicuous Leisure": "Under a mandatory code of decency, the time and effort of the members of such a [well-to-do] household are required to be ostensibly all spent in a performance of conspicuous leisure, in the way of calls, drives, clubs, sewing-circles, sports, charity organizations, and other like social functions. Those persons whose time and energy are employed in these matters privately avow that all these observances, as well as the incidental attention to dress and other conspicuous consumption, are very irksome but altogether unavoidable" (38). Lewis reflects this aspect in the many parties and coffees put together by the Jolly Seventeen, using an exchange between Carol and Miles Bjornstam to specifically make the connection:

> "You say that the Jolly Seventeen is stupid. What makes you think so?"
>
> "Oh, trust us borers into the foundation to know about your leisure class. Fact, Mrs. Kennicott, I'll say that as far as I can make out, the only people in this man's town that do have any brains—I don't mean ledger-keeping brains or duck-hunting brains or baby-spanking brains, but real imaginative brains—are you and me and Guy Pollock and the foreman at the flour-mill. He's a socialist, the foreman." (Lewis 115–16)

Lewis also makes an ironic nod to Veblen's "conspicuous leisure" in a litany of "Carol's own twenty-four hours a day," full of humdrum, but nonessential activities ("talked to Oscarina about the day's shopping, put the baby on the porch to play, went to the butcher's to choose between steak and pork chops"), culminating in "tried to read a page of Thorstein Veblen—and the day was gone" (Lewis 262–63). The rotation of unfulfilling activity leaves Carol "always enfeebled by loneliness. She no longer felt superior about that misfortune.

Just Suppose *continued on next page*

Just Suppose *continued from previous page*

She would gladly have been converted to Vida's satisfaction in Gopher Prairie and mopping the floor" (263). Steichen looks at Princeton society through Veblen and shares a similar alienation: "I don't know whether it's grades or the weather or what—but I've felt more than usually oppressed by a sense of loneliness here. Paula [Sandburg's pet-name for Steichen] so alone among these Philistines who can *understand Nothing! feel nothing!!* All they know is parties and luncheons and receptions and clothes. Ugh!" (179, emphasis in original).

Steichen's Socialist-Democrat beliefs align with Carol's observation of the relationship between the town merchants and the farmers, whom Carol views as upholding the noble pioneer ethic that the country town has lost. "Lewis makes it clear that Gopher Prairie lives off the farmers whom the town despises, overcharges, and cheats" (Hilfer 162). Of this same phenomenon (and, as noted above, perhaps with *Main Street* in mind), Veblen writes:

> To an understanding of the country town and its place in the economy of American farming it should be noted that in the great farming regions any given town has a virtual monopoly of the trade within the territory tributary to it.... And the townsmen are vigilant in taking due precaution that this virtual monopoly shall not be broken in upon.... Under such a (virtual) monopoly the charge collected on the traffic adjusts itself, quite as a matter of course, to what the traffic will bear.... Indeed, there is reason to believe that the townsmen are habitually driven by a conscientious cupidity and a sense of equity to push the level of charges somewhat over the maximum; that is to say, over the rate which would yield them the largest net return. ("Country" 252–53)

At the party to welcome Carol to Gopher Prairie, Carol tweaks the local banker, Ezra Stowbody, by asking if the town has experienced any labor trouble.

> "No, ma'am, thank God, we've been free from that, except maybe with hired girls and farm-hands. Trouble enough with these foreign farmers; if you don't watch these Swedes they turn socialist or populist or some fool thing on you in a minute.... I don't mind their being democrats, so much, but I won't stand having socialists around." (Lewis 49)

Steichen also operates in stealthily open politicizing, enabled by her outsider status and by the complacency of the townsfolk:

> And Princeton doesn't mind—they accept me as I am. Put me down as "peculiar" of course but don't molest me. I walk the streets hatless most of the time—a thing I couldn't do in Milwaukee without attracting attention. Here it's hardly noticed. I don't go to church Sundays—that isn't noticed either. I talk socialism, and radicalism generally, whenever I get a chance—that doesn't disturb Princeton either.—Of course there's a reason why Princeton is imperturbable respecting my "eccentricities." Princeton is sure that it is in the right. I am regarded as harmless—they do not see my non-conformity is part and parcel of a large, really formidable movement—a movement that threatens to overturn their institutions. If they scented the danger, they would cease to be tolerant.—Meantime I enjoy toleration here as I would not in a place where there is a labor movement that has made itself felt. (Steichen 30)

Carol Kennicott skates much closer to the line of tolerance, perhaps because her standing as doctor's wife puts her firmly, if begrudgingly, in the ranks of the privileged, whereas Steichen is merely a teacher, hence a public servant, tolerated by, but not of, the privileged set. It is notable that in *Main Street,* it is Vida Sherwin, also a teacher, who apprises Carol of her transgressions to Gopher Prairie society (93–97).

It is also possible that Steichen is a bit nearsighted to the community's perception of her. An incident that looms large in the correspondence pertains to Steichen's attempts to have Sandburg come to Princeton to lecture on Walt Whitman. Her initial pitch to Sandburg contains a number of Carol Kennicott-like resonances:

> I think I could get the Board to engage you for a lecture at the school—if they could make money out of it themselves *for the library of course!* There must always be some *benefit* else Princeton will not turn out—nor even open its halls I do believe! Princeton does not care for *lectures intrinsically*—it's the "*benefit*" that draws!... As for Walt—he wouldn't be a drawing card! I don't believe a person in Princeton besides myself reads Whitman! There isn't a complete volume of Leaves of Grass in the Pub. Lib.—just Triggs's *Selections*—and they are unread. (76)

Veblen makes a similar observation about small-town charity:

Just Suppose *continued on next page*

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> [I]t is likewise notorious that the country-town community of businessmen and substantial households will endorse and contribute to virtually any enterprise of the sort [i.e. charitable], and ask few questions. The effectual interest which prompts to endorsement of and visible contribution to these enterprises is a salesmanlike interest in the "prestige value" that comes to those persons who endorse and visibly contribute; and perhaps even more insistently there is the loss of "prestige value" that would come to anyone who should dare to omit due endorsement and contribution to any ostensibly public-spirited enterprise of this kind that has caught the vogue and does not violate the system of prescriptive holdovers. (Veblen, "Country" 260)

But Steichen's efforts, like Carol's efforts to obtain sponsors for a new school building and various improvements to benefit the farm families, run up against a wall. The high school principal, Mr. Magill, expresses concerns about "the levity there may be in connection with the idea of my future half's giving a speech here!" (173), eliciting a rant from Steichen:

> I told you what sort of a town it is. Conventional on the surface—underneath debauched, a social sink (insanity, feeble-mindedness, etc. etc.—) rotten. The only decency they know is Conventionality. The Chaperon!—They know that they themselves cannot be trusted to be decent unless they are watched! That's their morality. (174)

Steichen's being pulled up short by small-town conventionality has resonances with Carol's witnessing the expulsion of Fern Mullins, the Gopher Prairie teacher, "new to town who displays an even larger dose of innocence than Carol" (McGuire 67). Fern is forced to resign because of her perceived relationship with town bad boy Cy Bogart. Her ignominy forces Carol to realize "the extent of the town's united front; she also realizes that the issue is not as much a matter of right and wrong as it is a matter of who can uphold the appearance of being right and righteous" (McGuire 67).

A final link between Carol Kennicott and Lilian Steichen is in their love affairs, or at least in those with whom the two women find a spiritual and intellectual bond. For Carol, Guy Pollock and Erik Valborg become attractive because they are artistic, Guy as a surreptitious poet and reader and Erik as an aspirer to the artistic life. Carol discovers, to her chagrin, that Guy doesn't share her reforming spirit. A victim of "the Village Virus" of inertia and complacency, he is "not a romantic messenger from the World Outside on whom she could count for escape. He belonged to Gopher Prairie, absolutely" (Lewis 202). In Erik, Carol thinks she has found the boy she had long before fantasized about inspiring "to become a great artist." Carol immediately links Erik to great poets:

> "I wonder if Whitman didn't use Brooklyn back-street slang, as a boy.
>
> "No. Not Whitman. He's Keats—sensitive to silken things.... Keats, here! A bewildered spirit fallen on Main Street." (Lewis 339)

Unfortunately, Erik remains a bewildered spirit and the form, but not the content, of an artiste. Carol succeeds in inspiring him to leave Gopher Prairie for brighter horizons, but it turns out that the art form he achieves is as an actor in motion pictures (still form without content). David McGuire points out that it is Miles Bjornstam who is Carol's true ally in Gopher Prairie. As has already been shown, the two characters share a sociopolitical viewpoint in Veblen. But where Miles represents true independence and the true pioneer spirit, Carol is not looking for independence. "Carol's dream requires other people to conform to her way of thinking" (McGuire 69), and so, while Miles is able to escape from Gopher Prairie, albeit only after the deaths of his wife and son, Carol's own escape to Washington, DC, is only temporary. She ultimately returns. She realizes that she has been "making the town a myth" (Lewis 443), but she accepts that while she "may not have fought the good fight" (451), she has kept the faith in not giving in entirely to the pressures of the small-town mentality.

Steichen, more happily, manages to find both a true poet and a committed and active reformer in the person of Carl Sandburg. Steichen is impressed by Sandburg's crusading spirit, a pioneering aspect in bringing the message of the Socialist-Democrats to the small communities of Wisconsin that is somehow reminiscent of Miles Bjornstam's peripatetic independence:

> And the word from Swing anent the "lumberyacks" gave me a vivid realization of how keenly alive you were to the Challenge of the work you were going to do that evening—the talk to those lumberyacks! I can imagine how you met that Challenge! They "sat up"—now didn't they?" (Steichen 28)

Just Suppose *continued on next page*

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She is equally impressed with his poetry: "In your poems somehow (I dare *hope—believe* it!) the sweet still hush of my heart has become blended with the clear strong proud Music of yours and so is heard!" (35). But more importantly and in strong contrast to Carol Kennicott, Steichen also has agency with Sandburg. It is she who prompts Sandburg to return to his baptismal name Carl. Margaret Sandburg notes: "he had always Anglicized the name from early days, thinking that 'Charles' seemed more American. My mother thought Carl a strong name that fitted his strong personality. She could not understand at first why he had changed it" (53). But Steichen's most profound influence is to encourage Sandburg as poet: "Have you really turned from poetry for good? Shaw is our dramatist—why shouldn't you be our Poet? The American movement doesn't seem to be in pressing need of a poet, at the present moment—*perhaps. Perhaps!* But surely the time isn't far off when it will need its Poet" (16). Sandburg's initial response to poems he had sent for publication had been discouraging. Were it not for Steichen and her enthusiasm (enthusiasm being a very light word for the ecstatic delight in the letters and, one assumes, in the couple's continued relationship), Sandburg might have been noted merely as a prose writer and strong supporter of the Socialist-Democratic Party.

It is a rare instance when real life ends more happily than fiction, but Lilian Steichen's happy ending points to the legitimacy of Sinclair Lewis's aims with *Main Street,* what he was trying to accomplish with the more equivocal history of Carol Kennicott. Although the Revolt from the Village was not an organized movement (unlike the Socialist-Democratic Party), the sociological and economical changes occurring in America (as noted by Veblen) were giving rise to feelings in the general public that resonated with the works of the writers whom Van Doren identified in his 1921 essay. Steichen, writing before the world wars, perhaps reflects an optimism that Lewis, writing after the first war, could not muster. But the effect of the myth of the American Main Street is undeniable on both Steichen and Lewis.

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Wells Lewis *continued from page 13*

points about Lewis and Wells, and I recommended things to read. Mr. Quijano was going to get in touch with me at the end of August.

I succeeded in reading *They Still Say No*—pleasant popular fiction about a Harvard student whose determination to lose his virginity causes him to lose his chance for love. However, Mr. Quijano never called back. The project must have fallen through, I thought, and it passed from my mind. Not until July 2008 did I learn that the film existed and could be found on *YouTube*.

On the plus side, the documentary shows a richer knowledge of the Lewises than the producer-writer-director had at first. He certainly embraced a worthy subject, and the result is a moving tribute to Wells. I just wish I could have smoothed over the rough spots in the final draft. The lesson for me may be that, if young documentary makers ever approach again with a Lewis project in mind, I should take a more active interest and offer more encouragement.

To access the film, just go to *YouTube* and search for Wells Lewis. ✍

Habeas Corpus *continued from page 4*

He hurdled into his overcoat, stamped to police headquarters, gave to the door man an envelope for the chief. It contained a copy of his pamphlet.

"Please lay it right on the chief's desk. I want he should be sure and see it," he begged.

"All right, sonny. I'll shoot it in," patronized the door man, an elderly patrolman with a drool. He was touched by the anxiety of this respectable citizen in black.

"Thanks," glowed Gurazov. But as he plumped away he grumbled: "That's a fine police force—where you almost got to arrest yourself. The Merchants' Association ought to look into that."

Next morning the police were still holding out on him. He was disgustingly free. To make it the more insulting he read on the front page of the morning paper that a Russian had been arrested in Gary for distributing Bolshevik tracts. But the third page of the paper gave him a start of joy. The governor had announced that he would not permit the advertised parade and speech by Gurazov. If the Vernon mayor and police would not act he would. He had detailed the Second Regiment of the National Guard to take charge under Col. Tracy Tribby.

Gurazov shouted. He had won!

He had seen Colonel Tribby at parades. This commanding officer of the regiment of militia from Vernon and the surrounding country was a round, potty, pink, anxious little man, particular about the shine of his riding boots and the flare of his breeches—a cherub with a dinky sword and a book of tactics for secret reference.

"I'll get that tin soldier's goat! He is a kid-glove fellow from the Boulevard. I can make him arrest me. He is better as a policeman—it won't hurt so much when he hits me," Gurazov rejoiced. "That Nick Benorius—so proud with himself—he never gets pinched by anything except a common cop. He has never been arrested by a colonel—the low life!"

V

The corner of Mississippi and Langton Streets is one of the focal points of Vernon. A big granite-and-brick insurance building with scowling lintels and a hulking cornice is on one corner; the drug store with the best ice-cream sodas in town on another; and next to it the huge Byzantine Motion Picture Palace, where the orchestra plays special numbers between pictures under the leadership of H. Harry Sinderberry, the celebrated Vernon violinist, painter, author, actor and real-estate speculator. All Vernon couples meet at the drug store and go to the Byzantine.

This Sunday afternoon they lined Mississippi Street; they stood five deep in the doorway under the gilded foot which advertised a chiropodist. They stared at eddies and whispering groups of men of a sort rarely seen on Mississippi Street—men of rough coats and hard hands, with coal dust or grease in the cracks of their necks.

The crowd stiffened, the Sunday lovers gloated and the red-necked men glared as the rustle of many feet moving in rhythm came from up the street and a steel-fanged line of militiamen headed toward the corner. Behind them in a gray motor driven by the son of the chief miller of the city was plump little Colonel Tribby. The guards ignored the throng. Colonel Tribby's face was blank.

"That guy don't look very husky to me. Toy solider," observed Ed the shoe clerk to Horace the soda jerker.

"Well I don't know now. He's sawed off, but he's got a good jaw on him. He might throw a big surprise into some of these husky rough-necks," speculated Horace.

The two girls with them, Clara and Bessie, squealed with delighted fear.

"Oh, my, do you really think there'll be a rough-house? I'm scared! Let's sneak into the Byzantine. Those fellows in the blue flannel shirts look like terrible scrappers."

"Don't you worry, girlie. You trust your Uncle Horace to kick any I.W.W. that gets fresh in the face," Horace boomed. "We'll show 'em, won't we, Ed?"

"I'll say! I should fret a hundred over a bum little riot. D'ever tell you girls about the time Horry and me waded into the two fresh guys that were annoying coupla ladies?" Ed panted.

But his subsequent spirited narrative was confused and he tacitly moved back with Horry and the girls as he saw the guards halt, heard Colonel Tribby's piping voice in a command, beheld the guards line the pavement with rifles which somehow looked frightfully loaded and the crowd of flannel shirts push toward them, scowling, grumbling, beginning to shout: "Tin soldiers! Sneaks! Rush 'em, boys!"

The militia ranks broke. They began to patrol the street. To everyone regardless of who he was each guard suggested, "Move on, please. Orders not to loiter."

A little Swedish tailor, respectable in white cravat and black broadcloth, wailed at a twenty-year-old militiaman, "You are the soldiers of capitalism! You dare not touch me!"

"Sure; that's right. Come on now—keep moving—keep your feet warm."

A pretty manicure girl, pink and blue and maize, gurgled

Habeas Corpus *continued on next page*

Habeas Corpus *continued from previous page*

at the guard who thrust his rifle between her and the friends with whom she was standing.

"Hello, kid! You wouldn't chase us girls away, would you? Be nice now, cutie."

"That's the idea. But move on, lady. Orders. Keep moving."

An overseas man with three gold chevrons laughed at the anaemic guard who was working toward him.

"You're one fierce sojer! How about me taking your popgun away from you and spanking you, sonny?"

"Yuh, that's right, buddy. Come on now—keep moving—keep your feet warm."

Stolid in face of derision, cheers, laughter, friendliness, curses, the guardsmen plowed through the people, never arguing, never changing their monotonous command. Only when a man refused to move did they stop, and then only to prod him with a muzzle till he moved.

Lines of militiamen above and below the crowd stopped traffic on Mississippi Street, turned it off. The only motor in two blocks was Colonel Tribby's touring car. The engine was running. The driver's hand was on the ball of the gear lever.

The Colonel was bustling through the crowd, echoing the universal colorless "Keep moving." Somehow in his rigid olive-drab overcoat, with his leather visor over his mild eyes and his face expressionless, he lost his butterball insignificance. He was a soldier.

With the harassing buzz flies of guards moving steadily, dispassionately, there were no gatherings. The moment a dozen furious men stood should to shoulder and started protesting they were separated and their defiance not so much crushed as lost in the confusion. The whole two blocks, sidewalks and pavement and steps up to offices, turned into a boiling of humanity—heads bobbing, planless and jerky and confused. The crowd increased. To the radicals and the idlers who had read of the coming trouble was added every chance passer. The midafternoon audience filing out of the Byzantine Motion Picture Palace oozed into the throng. They were good-natured but wondering.

Everyone asked everyone else, "What's doing? What's the idea? Going to be a parade sure enough?"

And everyone answered everyone else, "Yuh, sure—going to be something doing all right."

Down the dark steps from a nest of offices of advertising dentists, imitation physicians and sample-shoe shops poked six men with banners shakily lettered, "Workmen, lay down your tools," and "We defy the Government to deport us." They bunched in the lower hall, looked out. In front of the building passed a sergeant and four guards. When they were gone the six protesters shrugged, looked grim, marched out.

The crowd separated for them, half cheering, half roaring, "Kill 'em!"

The spectators too far away to read the banners tried to elbow near. Instantly the tiny procession was lost in the pushing, jerking, staring crowd. The banners above the wavering heads resembled six fragments of driftwood on a choppy sea.

Through the swarm—straight, swift, shoving people ruthlessly aside—hurled a line of militiamen, Colonel Tribby at the head, his revolver in his hand.

"What's happening? What they doing to 'em?" shouted everyone.

No one could see clearly except twenty or thirty bystanders near the parade. In a confused inexact way they beheld the guards snatch the banners, tear them, seize the bearded fattish man at the head of the parade and two men behind him.

The prisoners were borne off so swiftly, so well concealed between elbowing armed soldiers, that no one could make them out. The two lesser captives must have been released. There was a glimpse of the heads of militiamen and one civilian prisoner above the mass as they climbed into the big gray car. There was a prolonged harsh hooting of the car's horn. The motor was jamming its way out through the agitated crowd, people falling back before it, haphazardly noting that in the tonneau was the bearded man between the colonel and a captain, each holding him by a wrist.

The car was gone. Instantly the guardsmen fell in, marched away; and the throng, disappointed and confused, thinned like vapor, still asking, "Just what did happen, anyway?" ✍

"Habeas Corpus" will be continued in the fall 2009 issue

DEPARTMENTS

Sinclair Lewis Notes

St. Cloud State University Archives and Special Collections have acquired nineteen letters written by Sinclair Lewis to Joan McQuary from December 1942 to July 1945. McQuary was one of Lewis's creative writing students at the University of Minnesota in fall 1942. She later became an editor at Columbia University Press. A friend of hers, Mignon Sauber, donated the letters to St. Cloud State University Archives in May 2008. The materials were immediately processed, and a list of the items was posted in the online special collections guide in June 2008. According to this guide, the letters convey a sense of Lewis's life in New York, a description of his apartment at 300 Central Park West, his longing for Minnesota, and his reaction to negative reviews of *Gideon Planish*.

The *New Yorker* ran a number of letters written by Norman Mailer (and chosen by him) in the October 6, 2008, issue (50–63). The compilation, "In the Ring: Grappling with the Twentieth Century," includes a letter written to Philip Allan Friedman, who was an associate editor for *The Man from Main Street*. The letter, dated April 24, 1953, and obviously in response to work Friedman was doing for that volume, reads as follows:

> Dear Mr. Friedman,
>
> I'm afraid I won't be able to be of much help to you. I met [Sinclair] Lewis only once in the fall of 1948 at his house in Williamstown, Mass, and although I remember him very warmly, and he was in fine form that day, I doubt whether I could tell you anything which would be new.
>
> One thing of course was his extraordinary vitality, and his child-like sense of discovering everything for himself, so that no matter what he said—be it banal or original—he delivered with great enthusiasm, and a kind of delight in the workings of his mind. For an example: at the time I was sympathetic to Stalinism, and he started scolding me with great good humor, his manner something of a cross between a kid brother and a doting uncle. "I can understand it of course," he said, "it's like religion. Uncle Joe Stalin is the pope for all you people. Why that's what he is, a pope, and all those Hollywood writers, very nice people some of them by the way, who are all giving their money, giving their donations to the party, it's like buying a mass to be said by Pope Uncle Joe," and he laughed with enormous pleasure in the idea, as if never before had any parallel been drawn between the Church and the Communist Party....
>
> I hope this will be of some small use to you.
>
> Yours,
>
> Norman Mailer (53)

A Great Idea at the Time: The Rise, Fall, and Curious Afterlife of the Great Books by Alex Beam (PublicAffairs, 2008) focuses on the Great Books concept developed by Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer Adler of the University of Chicago in the early 1950s. James Campbell, in his review for the *New York Times Book Review* (Nov. 16, 2008: 18), notes that the book is breezier than need be, but that it is "a good guide to the rise and fall of the project." Beam focuses on the way that the idea was sold to ordinary people who were encouraged to buy the "54 black leatherette volumes, with the overall designation Great Books of the Western World." The sales pitch sometimes degenerated to the level of selling toothpaste, as Beam writes, "Soon enough the Great Books were synonymous with boosterism, Babbittry, and H. L. Mencken's benighted boobocracy. They were everything that was wrong, unchic and middlebrow about middle America."

Herbert Gold's memoir *Still Alive! A Temporary Condition: A Memoir* (Arcade, 2008) chronicles Gold's life as a writer, in such far-flung places as New York, Paris, and Haiti. Joseph Berger's review of it for the *New York Times Book Review*, "Nothing Ever Finished" (Aug. 31, 2008: 17), notes that it's "discursive and eclectic, a gumbo not easily classifiable." Gold remembers some of the writers he has known such as Saul Bellow. "When Gold derided Sinclair Lewis's last undistinguished works, Bellow cautioned, 'Don't count any writer out while he's still alive.'"

Among the volumes published by Random House in the Modern Library of the World's Best Books was one entitled *Famous Ghost Stories* (1944). Many of the stories are familiar ones, such as "The Damned Thing" by Ambrose Bierce, "The Monkey's Paw" by W. W. Jacobs, "The Phantom Rickshaw" by Rudyard Kipling, and "The Open Window" by "Saki." Among the fifteen in the collection is "The Return of Andrew Bentley" by August W. Derleth and Lewis biographer Mark Schorer. Although Bennett Cerf, the editor, does not mention this story in his introduction, it stands as an example of a tale of black magic, complete with familiars and things that walk by night. Of especial interest is that the tale is set in an old house in Wisconsin, not some far off land, and concerns the narrator's uncle who dabbled in black magic before his death.

The distinguished actor Pat Hingle died on January 3, 2009, at the age of 84. He studied at the Actors Studio and became well known when he originated the role of Gooper in Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 1952. He made his debut on film in *On the Waterfront* (1954) and starred or played character parts on stage, screen, and television for many years. A new generation was introduced to his work when he played Commissioner Gordon in four Batman movies between 1989 and 1997. Some Lewis scholars know that he delivered Babbitt's real estate speech to a men's club in Minnesota to great acclaim. A less well-known Lewis reference is that, according to *Classic Images*, he "was cast in the title role as the evangelist in the 1960 film *Elmer Gantry* when a freak accident cost him the role and nearly his life. Hingle had become trapped in a stalled elevator in his apartment building and he fell over 50 feet down the shaft when attempting to crawl out. He had numerous injuries, including a fractured skull, hip, wrist, and leg, and lost the little finger of his left hand. He lost *Gantry* to Burt Lancaster, and it took over a year for him to recover enough to resume his career" (Feb. 2009: 52).

The *Washington Post* essay by George F. Will, "A Vote against Rashness" (Oct. 1, 2008: A17), cites *Babbitt*, using him as an example of the average American who spends beyond his means, "inspired" by the government's way of spending:

> His name was George F. Babbitt. He was 46 years old now, in April 1920, and he made nothing in particular, neither butter nor shoes nor poetry, but he was nimble in the calling of selling houses for more than people could afford to pay.

Will continues,

> We are waist deep in evasions because one cannot talk sense about the cultural roots of the financial crisis without transgressing this cardinal principle of politics: Never shall be heard a discouraging word about the public.
>
> Concerning which, a timeless political trope is: Government should budget the way households supposedly do, conforming outlays to income. But the crisis came partly because so many households decided that it would be jolly fun to budget the way government does, hitching outlays to appetites....
>
> Populism flatters the people, contrasting their virtue with the alleged vices of some minority—in other times, Jews or railroad owners or hard-money advocates; today, the villain is "Wall Street greed," which is contrasted with the supposed sobriety of "Main Street." When people on Main Street misbehave by, say, buying houses for more than they can afford to pay, they blame the wily knaves who made them do it, such as the "nimble" Babbitt.

A writer for the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* felt stung by a charge from the Nobel committee that American literature is too insular, seeing it as an insult not only against a number of productive and creative American writers such as Joyce Carol Oates, Don DeLillo, and Philip Roth, but also a slam at the writing program at the University of Iowa. Here are some excerpts from the essay, "Who Is the Nobel Academy Calling Insular!?" (Oct. 4, 2008):

"When American author Sinclair Lewis won the Nobel Prize for Literature back in 1930, many critics suggested that he didn't win because of the quality of his prose (he was anything but a pristine stylist), but because his novels so closely matched how the Nobel committee viewed the intellectual and cultural life of the United States: insular, parochial, self-centered, petty and a danger to anyone interested in developing the life of the mind.

"With *Main Street* (1920), *Babbitt* (1922), *Arrowsmith* (1925), *Elmer Gantry* (1927), and *Dodsworth* (1929) exposing the underside of U.S. small towns, mid-sized cities, the medical profession, and religious communities, the Nobel committee was making a political statement about what it thought of America while at the same time honoring an American author for the first time.

"It seems the Nobel committee's view of American culture hasn't changed very much over the past eight decades—despite having awarded the world's top literary prize to American authors Eugene O'Neill (1936), Pearl S. Buck (1938), William

Faulkner (1949), Ernest Hemingway (1954), John Steinbeck (1962), Saul Bellow (1976), Isaac Bashevis Singer (1978), Czeslaw Milosz (1980), and Toni Morrison (1993).

"As the Swedish Academy enters final deliberations for this year's award, permanent secretary Horace Engdahl told the Associated Press Tuesday that the United States is simply 'too isolated, too insular' to compete with Europe when it comes to great writing.

"'Of course there is powerful literature in all big cultures,' Engdahl said, 'but you can't get away from the fact that Europe still is the center of the literary world...not the United States.'

"And if that wasn't enough, Engdahl went on to say that even the most towering of U.S. writers drag down their work because they are 'too sensitive to trends in their own mass culture. They don't translate enough and don't really participate in the big dialogue of literature,' he continued. 'That ignorance is restraining.'"

The essay mentions that America's literary establishment has responded by criticizing the Academy for ignoring some major writers of the twentieth century, speaking up for contemporary American writers, and noting that the U.S. has a long history of immigration and thus has a sort of inherited world culture.

In conclusion, the essay notes (not at all ironically) that: "We would offer the literary history of Iowa City as further evidence of how off the mark Engdahl's comments are.

"Not only does the University of Iowa boast the No. 1 graduate creative writing program in the nation, but the International Writing Program puts these fledgling writers and poets in close proximity to established writers from throughout the globe. That's meant generations of some of the best writers in the world coming to learn from each other in the middle of the American heartland—in a town sized somewhere between Sinclair Lewis's Gopher Prairie (*Main Street*) and Zenith (*Babbitt*).

"In his 1930 acceptance speech, titled 'The American Fear of Literature,' Lewis said, 'I have, for the future of American literature, every hope and every eager belief. We are coming out, I believe, of the stuffiness of safe, sane, and incredibly dull provincialism. There are young Americans today who are doing such passionate and authentic work that it makes me sick to see that I am a little too old to be one of them.'

"America's writers and poets have more than lived up to Lewis's hopes. It's too bad that for the past 15 years the Nobel committee hasn't been paying any attention to what they've accomplished."

Dorothy Thompson Notes

Dorothy Thompson is credited, in the publication *World War II*, with coming up with the idea for educating Nazi prisoners of war in the United States about the meaning of freedom. The article, "Lessons in Democracy" by Ronald H. Bailey (23.3 [Aug/Sept 2008]: 52–59), notes how Thompson suggested to Eleanor Roosevelt that this reeducation would be important for the postwar world.

> By early 1944, the reign of terror and intimidation by hard-core Nazis interned in American prisoner-of-war camps had become so widespread that an intrepid woman journalist decided to do something about it. Dorothy Thompson was a widely syndicated newspaper columnist who, in 1934, had been the first American journalist to be kicked out of Nazi Germany. She came home so incensed that she reportedly hauled off and socked a woman who made pro-Nazi remarks in her presence.
>
> Now, hearing reports that Nazis in American camps were beating, murdering, and forcing the suicides of fellow German POWs, Thompson went to the White House to see her good friend Eleanor Roosevelt. She talked to the First Lady about the Nazi terror campaign in the camps and suggested that the United States should be taking the opportunity to reeducate German POWs by teaching them lessons in democracy. (52)

Mrs. Roosevelt spoke to Major Maxwell McKnight, chief of the administrative section of Prisoner of War Camp Operations, as well as her husband about the idea. President Roosevelt, after conferring with the secretaries of war and state, agreed, and a plan to influence the almost 380,000 German POWs was put into action. Although there was some concern that this was counter to the Geneva Convention and fear that the Germans would retaliate by trying to indoctrinate American POWs, the plan, called the "Intellectual Diversion Program," was put into operation in late 1944. The military worked to collect books, set up camp newspapers, distribute movies, and hold English classes, in which the American way of life was the focus. From this program, over 23,000 German POWs were chosen and trained to help staff the American zone of occupation in Germany after the war.

William Safire, in his column *On Language*, which appears every Sunday in the *New York Times Magazine*, often explores

the entomology of various words and phrases that appear in popular publications. On August 31, 2008, his column focused on a number of political words and phrases including "free world." Apparently the phrase started life as a publication, *Free World*, founded by Mordecai J.B. Ezekiel, an economics adviser to the Department of Agriculture during Franklin Roosevelt's third administration, in October 1941. *Free World* was an anti-Nazi monthly featuring "well-known liberal internationalist byliners like Robert Nathan, former Vice President Henry Wallace, the columnist Dorothy Thompson and perhaps Freda Kirchwey, editor of the *Nation*. Its slogan was 'For Victory and for World Organization,' and in 1942 *Free World* merged with the magazine *United Nations World*" (13).

John Houseman, in the second volume of his memoirs, *Front and Center, 1942–1955* (Touchstone/Simon and Schuster, 1979), mentions how critical Dorothy Thompson was of the Voice of America as it was being developed at the beginning of WWII. Joseph Barnes, chief of the New York office, believed that "we must tell the true story that will best serve our interests.... Diplomatic and military considerations must help determine how stories should be slanted for maximum effect. All stories have a purpose in time of war" (34). The first broadcast was in German and was primarily news and commentary. Houseman writes that the first show was considered a success. "One dissenting voice was that of Dorothy Thompson, who regarded herself as an expert on European and particularly on German affairs. She felt it was 'soft' and that 'any hard-boiled American editor, even if he didn't know German, could turn out a better script'" (38). She must have changed her mind to some extent because she later appeared on some of the shows as a guest. She "had relented and decided that our broadcasts were not without value after all. She now did a weekly show, written and spoken by herself, in which she appealed to a high-ranking officer of the Wehrmacht by the name of Hans. He was thought to exist and, later, to have taken part in the bomb plot against Hitler" (57). [The broadcasts were later published as *Listen, Hans!* (1942)]

Dorothy Thompson is one of the honorees of the Museum of Television and Radio in their three-year initiative (2006–2009) "to build a unique collection of radio and television programming that celebrates the achievements of great women writers, directors, producers, sportscasters, journalists, and executives." A screening/listening series, "She Made It: Women Creating Television and Radio," which was held in late 2005 and early 2006 in both New York and Los Angeles, featured such important women in the media as Diane English, Ida Lupino, Mary Tyler Moore, Marlo Thomas, Sarah Jessica Parker, Gertrude Berg, Fanny Brice, and Dorothy Thompson. Thompson was part of the Radio Superstars exhibit and described in a brochure as "one of the most influential journalists in American history. From 1936 to 1945, as the world first balanced on the edge of war, then plunged full-bore into armed conflict, Thompson's eloquent and well-informed views were regularly broadcast to millions over NBC (both the Red and Blue Networks) and, later, the Mutual Network." Two broadcasts were made available, one made in 1937 reporting on FDR's controversial plans to reorganize the judicial system, the other on the 1937 Nobel Prize winners and awards ceremony.

Web Notes

The Sinclair Lewis website is heading towards a milestone. Since 2003, about 99,000 folks have visited the website for a variety of purposes. Some want to do research on Lewis, some enjoy his writing, some have found a book or other object that Lewis was associated with, and some are just curious. You can see from the queries below that the questions that arise come from a variety of perspectives. Work on the repurposed website is going well. The new main page is going to be more colorful and contain images from some of the paperback editions of Lewis from the 1950s. Hopefully it will be completed by the summer.

I have found a signed copy of *Main Street* dated November 18, 1920 inscribed to a Professor William Lyons Phelps of Yale University. There is also a letter dated August 5th to him from Sinclair Lewis.

Is any of this valuable? [What a great find. Professor Phelps was one of the faculty members that Lewis thought most highly of when he was a student at Yale. This is definitely valuable. You might want to contact the Beinecke Library at Yale University to see if they would be interested in purchasing it from you. Lewis left his papers to Yale—and with the connection with one of their faculty, they might find it of great interest.]

Here's the letter:

> 227th & Independence Ave
> New York City
> August 5th
>
> Dear Professor Phelps:
> While not comparable to "The Job" in dash & melodrama, I wish to observe that the latest production of the Lewises—namely the 10 pound, red headed son named Wells, is of interest & possibly even of value as a work of reference!
> Grace is fine & all goes well.
>
> As ever,
> Sinclair Lewis

I'm sorry to bother you. A friend of mine has asked me to find a book written by Sinclair Lewis on the co-operative movement called, he claims, *Co-op*. I wonder if you might know if such a book was written? I have done a web search and turned up nothing. [Thank you for writing. *Co-op: A Novel of Living Together* was written by Upton Sinclair (often confused with Sinclair Lewis) in 1936. It's a fascinating novel and holds up well.]

I belong to a writing group here in Asheville, NC. Every week we read and discuss a short story. Could someone offer me their opinion—and I realize it will be their opinion—of which of Sinclair Lewis's short stories was his best. [Many thanks for writing. Three stories spring to mind as really good ones. The first is "Young Man Axelbrod," about an elderly farmer who has always wanted to go to college, and once he retires he studies enough that he is eligible to attend Yale. Higher education is not quite what he imagined. The second is "He Loved His Country," about a German immigrant who fought in the Civil War and has lived in the United States for over 50 years. When the first world war breaks out, his loyalties are torn. The third is "Things," about a middle class family that comes into a lot of money and how the things that they accumulate end up smothering their lives. I'd highly recommend any of them.]

I would like to know if anyone could tell me how to acquire a copy of *I Married a Doctor*, the 1936 film version, I believe, of *Main Street*. From my Internet search it seems the film has been seen, but I can't find it for sale. [Thanks to some friendly Lewis Society members, the writer was able to locate and purchase a copy.]

I am doing research on Sinclair Lewis. Do you have any articles on naturalism in his works or can you tell me any other site regarding the same? I shall be very thankful to you. [In general, I don't know of any articles connecting Sinclair Lewis with naturalism. Usually he's considered a realist and a satirist. Although a novel like *The Job* is certainly inspired by the writings of Theodore Dreiser, Lewis is usually not written about in that way.]

Will Kraemer writes, "Recently, I discovered that the Main Street Drug Store in Sauk Centre has closed. It was located below Dr. Lewis's office for years, maybe two generations. The Main Street Drug owner also owns a twin drug store in Belgrade, MN, about 22 miles south of Sauk Centre on Hwy. 71. This guy is trying to sell the Belgrade drug store and we all hope that he does. The store, a combined drug and hardware store, is on a corner and as such is an anchor for that block and an important asset to the community.

"I do not know why the guy closed the Main Street Drug Store nor why no one bought it. I can only speculate that the Wal-Mart store, which opened at the same time the last Lewis conference was held in Sauk, has driven the local drug store out of business. Typically, when Wal-Mart opens a store, its pharmacy undersells the local drug store. Sometimes, Wal-Mart has sold all but some drugs at cost and then other drugs below cost. I thought of Sinclair Lewis and wondered what he would have said about a big chain store driving under the local merchants."

Sauk Centre News

Many thanks to Joyce Lyng, our Sauk Centre correspondent.

David Corbin, a student at Yale University, spent a month in Sauk Centre this past summer to study Sinclair Lewis and

small town life. He received a grant from Yale for his travels and hopes to use his research as part of his further study of Americana. His interest in *Main Street* is what first drew him to visiting Sauk Centre. He stayed at the Palmer House and has read all of Lewis's major novels of the 1920s except *Dodsworth*, which is on the top of his must-read list. In an interview with the *Sauk Centre Herald*, David said, "I no longer take his portrayal of small town life in *Main Street* as seriously. I can see the satire more clearly. I think if he came back to Sauk Centre today it would be quite different, although the material status in society hasn't really changed since then." He also wrote two articles for the *Gopher Prairie Gazette*, the edition of the *Sauk Centre Herald* published during Sinclair Lewis Days (July 13, 2008). The articles, "Sinclair Lewis and Hollywood" and "Sinclair Lewis at Yale," highlighted two aspects of Lewis's life for visitors to and residents of Sauk Centre.

The Sinclair Lewis 2008 Writers' Conference was held on October 11 at the Sauk Centre High School Fine Arts Auditorium. The keynote speaker was Bill Holm, humorist and prose writer, whose last book, *The Windows of Brimnes* (Milkweed, 2007), was a meditation on the last forty years of the United States and his own life, when viewed through the windows of his house, just south of the Arctic Circle. He was named the 2008 McKnight Distinguished Artist of the Year in recognition of his artistic excellence for over thirty years of writing poetry and prose. Holm's talk, "Making Yourself at Home with Language," touched on being mindful as a writer no matter where you are. He quoted Robert Frost, "Earth's the right place for love or wisdom, anger, humor; anything but greed, whining and theories. They go better elsewhere."

The three other speakers were Freya Manfred, who has presented at the Writers' Conference twice before; Thomas Pope, a professional screenwriter; and Elaine Davis, a specialist on oral histories. Manfred, the author of six volumes of poetry and the memoir *Manfred: A Daughter Remembers*, spoke on "Poetry Writing—The Wisdom of Feeling," the notion of permitting oneself to feel emotion while writing. Pope, author of *Good Scripts, Bad Scripts* and screenwriter for directors as diverse as Penny Marshall, Ridley Scott, and Wim Winders, discussed the basics of writing movie screenplays. During his last appearance at the Writers' Conference he spoke on how Sinclair Lewis's films translated to screen. Davis, a professor at St. Cloud State University, has written *Minnesota 13*, about the "wet" Prohibition days in Stearns County. Her experiences in gathering oral histories, some from rather reluctant participants, formed the basis for her presentation, "Oral Histories—Getting the Tough Stories." [Bill Holm, the keynote speaker, died recently at the age of 65.]

Last summer's Sinclair Lewis Days (2008) continued their tradition of fun and entertainment for people of all ages. Concerts in the park, street dances, pie and ice cream socials, and basketball and softball tournaments, as well as a big craft show and the Sinclair Lewis Days Parade were among the highlights. It rained heavily on the last day, holding up the start of the Hope Run for Childhood Cancer, but the participants bravely carried on in the rain, as did the softball players in a tournament held at Civic Arena Fields. The Miss Sauk Centre Pageant was an event which everyone always enjoys. This year Kayle Beilke was crowned not only Miss Sauk Centre, but Miss Congeniality and won the talent competition as well. The two princesses were Kayla Tabatt and Jordan Welle. The participants were Kayla Beilke, who performed a combination dance/gymnastics routine; Mayra Esparza, the first Mexican-American to participate in the pageant, who scratched on her turntables; Heather Holmquist, who performed a dance routine while swinging glow sticks; Melissa Holmquist, who danced to Samantha Jade's "Step Up"; Amber Johnson, who sang; Stephanie Cullman, who demonstrated how to make a round flower arrangement; Andrea Miller, who did a lemonade demonstration (she and her sister co-own a lemonade business); Libby Swedenburg, who played the guitar and sang "Landslide"; Kayla Tabatt, who demonstrated So Bah Do, a form of martial arts; and Jordan Welle, who danced. The *Gopher Prairie Gazette*, the edition of the *Sauk Centre Herald* published during Sinclair Lewis Days, contained several nice mentions of the Sinclair Lewis Society and its website.

The Sinclair Lewis Foundation held its annual meeting on February 9, 2009. President Colleen Steffes reported on the Sinclair Lewis Writers Conference, the visitors to the Sinclair Lewis Boyhood Home and Interpretive Center, and also the participation of Ken Lewis, great-nephew of Sinclair Lewis, in the Sinclair Lewis Days Parade, along with other members of his family. Over 300 people visited the Boyhood Home in 2008, including Lewis admirers from as far away as China, Sweden, Norway, Japan, and a group of 22 students from Germany.

The annual report reprinted a two-page tribute to *Kingsblood Royal* by *New York Times* columnist Brent Staples, originally written in 2002, to celebrate the election of Barack Obama as president. Staples writes, "Lewis did it to expose the theory of racial differences that dominated American life as an arbitrary fiction. Much of the country could not hear the sage of Main Street in 1947, but it can certainly hear him today."

—*Collector's Corner features catalog listings from book dealers as a sampling of what publications by Lewis are selling for currently. [Thanks to Jacqueline Koenig for her contributions to this section.]*

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Joseph the Provider

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 90
Santa Barbara, CA 93102
Phone: (805) 683-2603
Email: joepro@silcom.com

158. Lewis, Sinclair. *The Job*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1917. $950.

First edition, first issue, of the author's fourth book.

This copy is signed by Lewis on the front free endpaper. Fine (lacking the rare dust jacket).

159. —. *Main Street: The Story of Carol Kennicott*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1921. $450.

First edition, seventeenth printing.

This copy is inscribed by the author on the front free endpaper: "To V.P. Newmark from the striking face portrayed opposite—Sinclair Lewis." The "striking face portrayed opposite" is a photograph of Lewis that is mounted to the front pastedown. With the recipient's ownership signature ("Valentine P. Newmark") on the back endpaper and some penciled notations to text. A very good copy.

160. —. *The Man Who Knew Coolidge*. London: Cape, 1928. $175.

First English edition. This copy is in a variant binding of red cloth instead of the more usual blue. A fine, tight copy in a fine, bright dust jacket (price-clipped) with some internal tape strengthening at the edges.

161. —. *Mantrap*. Berlin: Rowohlt, 1928. $375.

First German edition. Printed wrappers.

This copy is inscribed (in German!) by Lewis in the year of publication to the father of his friend, Ferdinand Reyher, who had been a guest at Lewis's wedding just the week before to Dorothy Thompson. Near fine.

162. —. *A Letter to Critics*. Brattleboro: American Booksellers Association, 1931. $1,000.

Three-column broadside. Elephant folio. One of a total edition of 375 copies printed by the Stephen Daye Press. Designed by Vrest Orton. These broadsides were given away and few seem to have survived.

Included is a letter from Lewis (TLS dated October 5, 1931) in which he grants the Stanford University Press permission to reprint the broadside. It is unlikely that such an edition came to pass because Lewis bibliographer Harvey Taylor was unable to locate a copy and Lewis asks specifically in his letter that five copies be sent to Taylor. A fine copy (with only the very slightest of creasing) in a specially designed cloth portfolio. Rare.

163. —. *Gideon Planish*. New York: Random House, 1943. $150.

First edition. A fine copy in a fine dust jacket.

164. —. *Cass Timberlane*. New York: Random House, 1945. $150.

First edition. This copy is in the green dust jacket (one of several color variants, no priority). A fine copy in a fine dust jacket (two tiny, closed tears).

165. —. *The God-Seeker*. New York: Random House, 1949. $150.

First edition. An unusually fine, fresh copy in an equally fine, bright dust jacket.

Robert Dagg Rare Books

3288 21st Street, #176, San Francisco, CA 94110

105. Lewis, Sinclair. *Our Mr. Wrenn*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1914. $1,850.

First edition. Superb presentation copy with a full-page inscription on front flyleaf: "To H.V. Kormen who has been one of the best friends this book has had & to whom it will owe a tremendous amount of its success if it is ever heard of by that mysterious, intangible, quite possibly non-existent genus 'people who buy books.' from the author, Sinclair Lewis, N.Y. June 4, 1914." A clean, near fine copy, lacking the rare dust jacket. An important copy of the author's first book for adults.

106. —. *Ann Vickers*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1933. $250.

First edition. A near fine copy in dust jacket, faintly tanned at spine panel with a tiny tear to top of rear panel.

Bauman Rare Books

535 Madison Avenue
Between 54th and 55th Streets
New York, NY 10022
Phone: (800) 97-Bauman
www.baumanrarebooks.com/nyt

Lewis, Sinclair. *Elmer Gantry*. 1927. $6,000.

First edition, first issue.

An advance review copy with publisher's slip and printed presentation slip signed by the author. Burt Lancaster won an Oscar for Best Actor for his role as the corrupt evangelical preacher profiled in Lewis's best-selling novel.

Books End

2443 James Street, Syracuse, NY 13206
Phone: (315) 437-2312
Email: booksend@twcny.rr.com
www.thebooksend.com

This is part two of the collection from the library of Dorothy Thompson. Although some of these entries may have been sold by the time the Newsletter *is published, this list gives a good sense of her reading and interests. See* Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*, vol. 17, number 1, for part one.*

BOOKS INSCRIBED
TO DOROTHY THOMPSON.

12. Lorant, Stefan, ed. *The New World: The First Pictures of America*. New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1946. $65.

First edition, oversize. Inscribed and signed to Dorothy Thompson by the author.

13. Sforza, Count Carlo. *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans: Pashich and the Union of the Yugoslavs*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1940. $175.

First edition, Sforza was an Italian diplomat and Anti-Fascist politician. Signed and inscribed: "To Dorothy Thompson, the most valiant American fighter, most sincerely, Sforza, Jan. 1941."

14. Hahn, L. Albert. *Wirtschaftswissenschaft Des Gesunden Menschenverstandes*. Frankfurt: Fritz Knapp Verlag, 1955. $75.

Translated into English as *Common Sense Economics*. With dust jacket. Hahn was a well-known German banker and economist who emigrated to the U.S. in 1940. Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson by the author.

15. Sister Benediction. *Selected Poems*. New York: Exposition Press, 1940. $75.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

16. Ilyin, Olga. *Dawn of the Eighth Day*. New York: Henry Holt, 1951. $80.

First edition. Fiction, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

17. Sheen, Fulton J. *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*. New York: Macmillan, 1938. $250.

First edition, signed and inscribed: "To Dorothy Thompson, in memory of an agreement in charity though a disagreement in opinion. The author, Fulton J. Sheen." Sheen's signature is very scarce.

18. Williams, Margaret, translated and arranged by. *Word Hoard: Passages from Old English Literature from the Sixth to the Eleventh Centuries*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1940. $100.

First edition, signed with a long inscription to Dorothy Thompson from Michael Williams, father of the author. Also has Miss Thompson's bookplate inside.

19. Maritain, Raissa. *Adventures in Grace*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1945. $100.

First edition, signed and inscribed (in French) to Dorothy Thompson.

20. Maritain, Jacques. *Ransoming the Time*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941. $275.

First edition, signed and inscribed by the noted philosopher to Dorothy Thompson.

21. Oyved, Moysheh. *Visions & Jewels: An Autobiography*. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1925. $60.

First edition, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Lewis (Thompson).

22. Webb, Norman James. *Meat and Sauce: Volume Two. Poems*. New York: Exposition Press, 1957. $30.

First edition, in dust jacket. Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

23. Berg, Ruben G. *Moderna Amerikaner*. Stockholm: Hugo Gebers Förlag, 1925. $35.

Softcover, signed and inscribed to Mrs. Sinclair Lewis.

24. Goldsmith, Margaret. *Ein Fremder in Paris*. Leipzig: Paul List Verlag, 1930. $40.

Signed and inscribed: "Dorothy from Margaret, Berlin, Feb. 16. 31."

25. Snell, DeWitt S. *Unheeded Warnings, or, The History of a Futile Effort to Avert National Disaster*. Gazette Press, 1940. $50.

Signed and inscribed: "To Dorothy Thompson, in grateful appreciation of her example and encouragement, without which this book would doubtless never have been written. DeWitt S. Snell."

26. Bok, Edward W. *A Man from Maine*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923. $75.

Limited edition, No. 253 of 260 copies signed by the author. This is a biography of Cyrus H. K. Curtis, publisher of the *Ladies Home Journal* and the author's father-in-law. This copy is signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson by Curtis.

27. Montogomery, John Flournoy. *Hungary: The Unwilling Satellite*. New York: Devin Adair Co., 1947. $50.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

28. Powys, Llewelyn. *Black Laughter*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1924. $50.

Signed and inscribed by the author to Mrs. Sinclair Lewis.

29. Thorek, Max. *Camera Art as a Means of Self-Expression*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1947. $125.

First edition, in dust jacket, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

30. Kolb, Annette. *Franz Schubert: Sein Leben*. Stockholm: Bermann, Fischer Verlag, 1940. $75.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson. Also, Miss Thompson's bookplate is present, on front endpaper.

31. Kolb, Annette. *Glückliche Reise*. Stockholm: Bermann, Fischer Verlag, 1940. $75.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

32. Zuckmayer, Carl. *Barbara Blomberg*. S. Fischer Verlag, 1949.

Signed and inscribed: "To Dorothy."

33. Zuckmayer, Carl. *Kakadu Kakada*. Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1929. $95.

In dust jacket, signed and inscribed: "To Dorothy Lewis Thompson with many mirth friendship and shakehands."

34. Zuckmayer, Carl. *Gedichte, Erzählungen*. S. Fischer Verlag, 1960. $75.

Signed and inscribed by the author to Dorothy Thompson.

35. Alexandrov, Victor. *Khrushchev of the Ukraine: A Biography*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1957. $20.

In dust jacket. Inscription reads: "To Dorothy, affectionately, Lisa, Christmas 1958."

36. Keller, James. *A Day at a Time*. Garden City: Hanover House, 1957. $30.

In badly torn dust jacket, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

37. Warren, Dale, ed. *What is a Book? Thoughts About Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935. $60.

First edition, signed and inscribed: "To Dorothy and Red, who don't ask this question, but are continually answering it, Dale Warren, Christmas, 1935." This copy also has Miss Thompson's bookplate attached to front endpaper.

38. Drucker, Peter F. *The New Society*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950. $50.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

39. Sorokin, Pitirim. *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. Boston: Extending Horizon Books/Peter Sargent Publisher, 1957. $45.

Revised and abridged in one volume by the author. Sorokin was a Russian-American sociologist, and the founder of the Department of Sociology at Harvard University. Signed and inscribed: "To Dorothy Thompson, from her neighbor in Vermont, one of her readers and admirers, P.A. Sorokin."

40. Fremanle, Anne. *By Grace of Love*. New York: Macmillan, 1957. $45.

First printing, in dust jacket, fiction, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

41. Borchardt, Hermann. *The Conspiracy of the Carpenters: Historical Accounting of a Ruling Class*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943. $50.

First edition, fiction, signed and inscribed (in German) to Dorothy Thompson. Miss Thompson's bookplate is also present, at the front endpaper.

42. Wilson, Martha. *Testament: Sonnets*. London: Richards, 1938. $30.

First edition, signed and inscribed: "To Dorothy from Martha."

43. Kemler, Edgar. *The Deflation of American Ideals: An Ethical Guide for New Dealers*. Washington, DC: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941. $50.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

44. Peters, Richard. *Von Der Alten Und Neuen Türkei (Of the Old and New Turkey)*. Ankara: Verlag Berkalp Kitabevi, 1944. $100.

Signed and inscribed (in German) to Dorothy Thompson.

45. Williams, Wythe. *The Tiger of France: Conversations with Clemenceau*. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1949. $35.

First edition, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

46. Maritain, Raissa. *We Have Been Friends Together*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1942. $150.

First edition, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

47. Dupuy, R. Ernest, and George Fielding Eliot. *If War Comes*. New York: Macmillan, 1940. $100.

First edition, signed by both authors, and inscribed by Eliot to Dorothy Thompson: "To Miss Dorothy Thompson, with the sincere compliments of the authors to our most distinguished commentator on foreign affairs. And their hope that she may find something of interest and value in their work."

48. Mockegerg, Vilma. *Blankanese*. Verlag Hamburgische Bücherei, 1949. $40.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

49. Seversky, Alexander P. De. *Air Power: Key to Survival*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950. $75.

First edition, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

50. Retinger, J.H. *Conrad and His Contemporaries*. New York: Roy, 1943. $100.

First edition, unsure who inscribed this book; the inscription reads: "To Dorothy, my best friend, Rudolf." Miss Thompson's bookplate is present, attached to the front endpaper.

51. Wilson, Mary. *God's Hand in History. Book One: Pioneers*. London: Blandford Press, 1960. $30.

First printing, in dust jacket, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

52. Berger, Elmer. *Judaism or Jewish Nationalists: The Alternative to Zionism*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1957. $30.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

53. Maritain, Jacques. *Scholasticism and Politics*. New York: Macmillan, 1940. $150.

Signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson: "To Dorothy Thompson, with my admiration and friendly devotion, and because she likes metaphysics and theology. Jacques Maritain." Miss Thompson's bookplate is also present on the front endpaper.

54. Weiss, Louise. *L'or, Le Camion et la Croix: Un Voyage Du Mexique en Alaska*. Paris: Rene Julliard, 1949. $50.

Softcover, signed and inscribed (in French) to Dorothy Thompson.

55. Williams, Albert Rhys. *The Russian Land*. New York: New Republic, 1927. $60.

First printing, softcover, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

56. Alexandrakis, Maria, and Clio Mantzoufa. *Athens from the Acropolis*. Alexman Editions, 1957. $30.

Softcover, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

57. Walter, Julia M. *Inherited Barriers*. New York, Vantage Press, 1958. $25.

First edition, in dust jacket, fiction, signed and inscribed to Dorothy Thompson.

BOOKS WITH THE OWNERSHIP SIGNATURE,
OR GIFT INSCRIPTION, OF DOROTHY THOMPSON.

58. *The Suez Canal: Notes and Statistics*, Published in England by The Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez, 1952. $50.

Oversize HC with Dorothy's ownership signature.

59. Ross, Edward Alsworth. *The Soviet Republic*. New York: The Century Company, 1923. $40.

With Dorothy's ownership signature.

60. Gerhardi, William. *Futility*. London: Richard Cobden, Sanderson, 1922. $75.

Second printing, a novel on Russian themes, with Dorothy's ownership signature.

61. Belloc, H. *The Path to Rome*. Thomas Nelson & Sons, no date. $20.

Reprint, front hinge cracked, with Dorothy's ownership signature.

62. Hearn, Lafadio. *A Japanese Miscellany*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Company, 1905. $60.

Reprint, with Dorothy's ownership signature.

63. Earle, Edward Mead. *Turkey, The Great Powers, and*

the Bagdad Railway: A Study in Imperialism. New York: Mcmillan, 1924. $60.

Second printing, with Dorothy's ownership signature.

64. Rauschning, Hermann. *Masken und Metamorphosen Des Nihilismus*. Frankfurt: Humboldt Verlag, 1954. $35.

With Dorothy's ownership signature, and significant underlining.

66. Mornand, Pierre, intro. *Christ's Image*, Paris: French Library of Fine Arts, 1939. $150.

Oversize, with 128 plates, some tipped-in, some in color—gift inscription by Dorothy Thompson: "For Maxim, belatedly to celebrate our anniversary, June 15, 1945, Dorothy."

67. Malraux, Andre. *The Voices of Silence*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1953. $50.

Gift inscription by Dorothy Thompson: "With Christmas love to Maxim from Dorothy, his wife, 1953."

A Few Other Books of Interest

68. Thompson, Dorothy. *In Support of the President: November 6, 1944*. Stanford: Overbrook Press, 1945. $35.

1 of 1,500 copies.

69. Lewis, Wells. *They Still Say No*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1939. $100.

First edition, Lewis was the son of Sinclair Lewis and stepson of Dorothy Thompson, the front endpaper is missing. This book is signed and inscribed, to himself (!), by Lewis: "To Wells Lewis, from his old and sympathetic, if somewhat annoying friend, Wells Lewis, April 8th, 1939."

Books That Have Dorothy Thompson's Bookplate Inside

70. Zuckmayer, Carl. *Second Wind*, New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1949. $35.

First edition.

71. Schuschnigg, Kurt. *My Austria*. New York: Knopf, 1938. $25.

Second printing.

72. Bergstraesser, Arnold. *Goethe's Image of Man and Society*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1949. $10.

First printing.

73. Parker, Dorothy. *After Such Pleasures*. New York: The Viking Press, 1933, $15.

74. Arnold, Matthew. *Essays, Literary and Critical*. Everyman's Library, 1933, $6.

75. Millay, Edna St. Vincent. *Huntsman, What Quarry?* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939.

Second edition with some dampstaining inside.

76. Millay, Edna St. Vincent. *The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928. $25.

First edition.

77. Lawrence, D.H. *Aaron's Rod*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1922. $25.

Second printing.

78. Thompson, Charles Minor. *Independent Vermont*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942. $15.

First edition, boards quite worn.

79. Teeling, William. *Crisis for Christianity*. London: John Gifford Limited, 1939. $10.

First edition.

80. Schnitzler, Arthur. *Hands Around: A Cycle of Ten Dialogues*. New York: Privately Printed for Subscribers, 1920. $60.

Number 407 of 1475 copies, front hinge cracked.

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