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David V. Koch

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Alan M. Cohn

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Kenneth W. Duckett

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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ICarbs

VOL. III, NO. 2

SPRING-SUMMER, 1977

Hal Trovillion & the Powyses / *Kenneth Hopkins*

The Black Sun Press / *Edward B. Germain*

Sasha Newborn

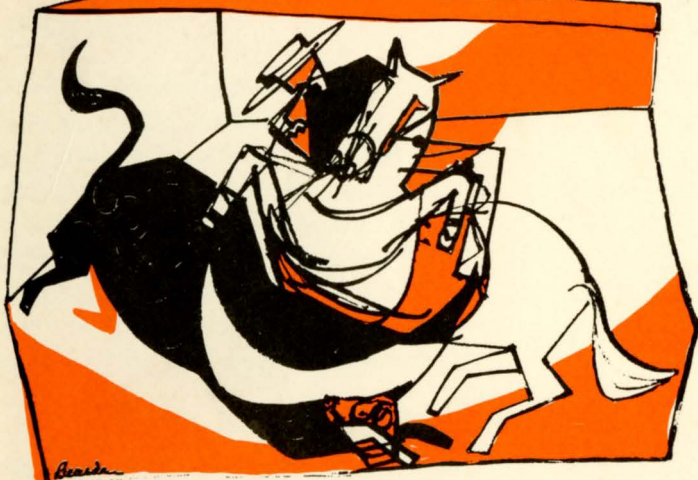
Kay Boyle

Harry T. Moore

Voltaire / *Henry Vyverberg*

Edgar Lee Masters / *Herb Russell*

The Library's First Century / *Kenneth G. Peterson*



Bones and Gladi

Portfolio III Omnipress

ICarbS*

VOL. III, NO. 2

SPRING-SUMMER, 1977

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*ICarbS is the National Union Catalog symbol for Morris Library, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

The cover for this issue of *ICarbS* is a reproduction of a print Romare Bearden did as a frontis for Caresse Crosby's *Portfolio III*. Caresse had planned a *Black Portfolio*, but it is one of the few things she didn't do.

The editors would like to thank particularly Kay Boyle and Harry T. Moore for their contributions to this issue. Both knew Caresse Crosby well, and Professor Moore is Caresse Crosby's literary executor. Caresse and Harry Crosby published Miss Boyle's first book, *Short Stories*, at their Black Sun Press. Miss Boyle adapted her article from a piece to be included in a forthcoming catalogue of the Black Sun Press to be published by the Southern Illinois University press.

We thank, also, Laurence Pollinger Ltd. and the estate of John Cowper Powys for permission to quote the Powys items in Kenneth Hopkins' article. We thank Kenneth for the unlikely feat of so ably tying the Powys brothers in to southern Illinois.

Finally, it is with regret that we report the recent death of John Howard Lawson who contributed so substantially to our last issue.

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A Note on Hal Trovillion and the Powys Brothers

Kenneth Hopkins

When Hal Trovillion left Indiana University in 1904, he already knew what he intended to do with his life. He made his way to Herrin, Illinois, where the local weekly newspaper was for sale, and bought it. Publishing and printing and politics were his main preoccupation thereafter, and he was in the thick of the lusty life of Herrin for the next sixty years or more—until his death in 1967. To the weekly *Egyptian Republican* (called *The Herrin News* when Trovillion bought it) he added *The Herrin Daily Journal*, two newspapers for which I have some affection, for they printed my writings when competition for these was not keen—a condition which persists to this day, unaccountably.

But Hal Trovillion found even the running of a busy printing office not enough for his tireless energies, and about 1908 he began the private press which he afterwards called "At the Sign of the Silver Horse," led into this by the interest he had found in printing small books and brochures—written by himself and others—at the printing works. So far as I know, there is not yet a complete printed bibliography of these, for Herman Schauinger's pioneer *Bibliography* of 1943 is of course now out of date, and I am not sure that he found all the early issues preceding 1908; but it demonstrates the enthusiasm which Hal and Violet Trovillion brought to their hobby in conducting what at last they were able proudly to call "America's Oldest Private Press"—the elderly Edwin B. Hill having obligingly passed on and relinquished the honor by ceasing to print.

Enthusiasm was the word for Hal's greatest personal characteristic. He brought it to all his activities: to his house, his garden, his personal relationships, and above all to his publishing. To him, books were as much alive as ever their writers had been, and he delighted especially in poring over old garden books, or old volumes

of philosophical aphorism and quaint lore: so we find him reissuing such works as Henry VIII's love letters to Anne Boleyn—the lady may afterwards have regretted ever receiving them—and Sir Hugh Plat's *Delightes for Ladies* of 1627 and Thomas Hyll's *First Garden Book* of 1563. These original works were supplemented by a number of anthologies compiled by the Trovillions which display an exceptionally wide reading among obscure and forgotten authors. For example, *The Tussie Mussies* (1941), a collection of "flower and garden sentiments," contains extracts from, among many others, William Fulke, Mary Howitt, Vicesimus Knox, Leonard Mascall, Alexander Smith, and William Walsh—writers who are not in everyone's hands, and probably never were. With interests such as these it is not surprising that contemporary authors do not figure frequently in the Trovillions' publishing lists. Occasionally they printed something by a local author—Mary Tracy Earle's *The Flag on the Hilltop* (1930) and Blanche René's *A Pony Cart of Verse* (1949) are examples.

Living authors of international standing figure hardly at all. In 1925 the Trovillions published *Vagaries* by Axel Munthe—before *The Story of San Michele* had made him famous—but I don't know how Hal Trovillion became acquainted with Munthe. His other widely known author was Llewelyn Powys, and we know a little more about the circumstances which led to Hal Trovillion's publishing him.

Half the fun of operating a private press for Trovillion lay in the contacts he made in the world of books, which is a world that does not normally impinge closely upon the city of Herrin. Hal carried on a correspondence with printers and artists and men of letters all over the world, and in his travels he made a point of visiting as many of these as he could. Perhaps he had visited the Swedish master of San Michele. My own first introduction to him was effected by James Guthrie of the Pear Tree Press—which had the distinction of being even older than the Sign of the Silver Horse, incidentally—and on one of our expeditions together Hal carried my wife and me to call on Daphne du Maurier: luckily for the young tongue-tied Englishman that celebrated lady authoress was not at home. I had not read her books then, and I haven't now, and she would have found me distinctly dull.

Among Hal's American friends was Lloyd Emerson Siberell, another enthusiast, who had drawn Trovillion's attention to my

poetry about the same time Guthrie introduced me. Siberell collected the Powys brothers and tirelessly promoted their fame from his various abodes. He was an official of the Norfolk and Western Railway, based when I first knew him in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and subsequently for many years at Cincinnati. He collected an impressive library, corresponded (it seemed) with half the authors of the world, and spent a great deal of time in fruitlessly trying to get Norman Forgue of the Black Cat Press in Chicago to print my poems. He and Hal Trovillion were among the first people to take my work seriously, something for which I am very grateful. Siberell did a little publishing on his own account, reviewed books, wrote pamphlets, and conducted at different times *The Book Collector's Packet* and *Imprimatur*, little bookish magazines of considerably greater merit as to production and content than the run of such hobby ventures.

Early in 1938 (I have not traced the exact date) Siberell suggested to Trovillion that he might publish something by Llewelyn Powys. It was a reasonable suggestion, for Llewelyn wrote essays which were of manageable length for the attentions of a small private press (whereas his brother John wrote prodigally, and how long it would have taken the Silver Horse to produce—say—*A Glastonbury Romance* on eleven hundred and seventy-four pages doesn't bear thinking about). Moreover, Llewelyn wrote on nature and natural philosophy and old customs and quaint authors. He knew the works of Tusser and Coryat and Culpeper and Walton and Woolman. Accordingly, on September 19, 1938, Hal Trovillion wrote to ask Llewelyn Powys if he had a group of poems that might make a book, to which Llewelyn answered on October 2 that "I have never written poetry so that is out of the question." "Never" is a rather inelastic word, and Llewelyn had in fact once or twice set down a few verses, but never with much success. Further exchanges produced the offer of a book of essays, and on October 30 Llewelyn reacted to the suggestion that Siberell might write an introduction: "It would be a pleasure to me to be sponsored by a man who has been a champion of mine for so many years . . ." Siberell now produced another in whom he took a generous interest, and it was agreed that Mathias Noheimer should provide engravings to illustrate the text. And so production of *A Baker's Dozen* was begun early in 1939.

This is in many respects the most considerable of the Trovillions'

books, both in content and format. It is printed (says the prospectus) on ash-white Arak paper in twelve point Kenntonian type; the small chapter-headings are printed in blue, and there are one or two touches of orange here and there on the colophon and title page. The page size is four and three-quarter by eight and three-quarter inches, which I suppose would be called a narrow demy octavo, and it is an attractive, rather uncommon size which looks well. Hal Trovillion was rather fond of narrow pages and often employed them. The book was designed by Trovillion—no doubt he designed most, perhaps all, of his books, but in this one the designer's name is printed. Overall the design is effective, but there are some marks of the amateur—which Hal Trovillion essentially was. The end papers—a photograph of the church and Abbey Farm at Montacute—are coarsely printed on a semi-glossy paper, not in keeping with the rest of the book, and carry those little tiny dots whose name escapes me which betray the fact that the picture is reproduced from a newspaper. So does the frontispiece portrait of Llewelyn Powys, which shows him sitting on a slope in the Swiss mountains—one of his last pictures—and this has no relevance to a book about his boyhood in Somerset. The cloth binding is of better quality than Trovillion usually provided, but the slip-case is fractionally too small, so that the book doesn't slip but has to be removed by brute strength. There were, says the certificate of limitation, 493 numbered copies signed by the author and illustrator, of which 298 were for America and 195 for Britain. There is some reason to suppose that Llewelyn in fact signed less than 493 sets of sheets; certainly copies exist in which his signature is not found, but these may represent extra copies out of series.

The thirteen autobiographical essays are all about the author's childhood and adolescence, except one which concerns his life in Africa during the 1914-18 war. These essays are characteristic of the work Llewelyn did best, for his formal didactic, philosophic, religious, and polemical writings, despite their eloquence and force, must in the end give place to his celebration of the countryside and of the people who lived there, among whom he himself lived for so long. His autobiographical essays are unique in English, and these in *A Baker's Dozen* are notable examples. For Hal Trovillion they must have seemed a special prize, for his own bent as a writer was to autobiography, and occasionally he catches something of Llewelyn

Powys's quality, but as it were by accident and fleetingly: the beginning of his essay "The Bells of Fressingfield" affords an example:

The quiet old English village of Fressingfield, in Suffolk, is unique in that it is the only place in the world bearing the name. The quaint little settlement is very old. It was settled in Anglo-Saxon times. The name is said to have come from the Friesian cattle that the early settlers brought with them when they landed on these shores. At that time the entire countryside was covered with oak forests and scrub thorn, such as one finds growing there today. It was a wild place, but a paradise for hunters.¹

This would not seem out of place at the beginning of an essay by Llewelyn Powys, even though the language is slightly less felicitous than he usually employs. How far the similarity may reflect an influence, I can't say, but the little essay first appeared in the *Sunshine Magazine* many years after the publication of *A Baker's Dozen*, and the style is noticeably smoother than that of Trovillion's *Neapolitan Vignettes*, published some forty years earlier. I think Hal had read Llewelyn with attention, even if the influence was not in his conscious mind as he wrote. And, like Llewelyn, he was always at his best when writing of matters which arose naturally from his own reaction to the places and people he knew. As for Fressingfield, doubtless he was brought to that remote village—as remote to a mid-westerner as Makanda, Illinois, would be to an Englishman—by the fact that it was the home of an English authority on old farming books, G. E. Fussell—who, incidentally, had edited an edition of Sir Hugh Plat's *Delightes for Ladies* several years after the Trovillions published theirs. Mr. Fussell was exactly the sort of person whom Hal Trovillion loved to seek out, and if my memory is not at fault, I have heard Hal speak of him. Indeed, my memory does not require much searching, for in *Sharing My Note-Book* Hal speaks of a visit to Fussell in the summer of 1950.

During the production of *A Baker's Dozen* Llewelyn Powys was in failing health, and indeed he died before the book was published—signing the sheets was one of the last things he did. Here, accordingly, Hal Trovillion's enthusiasm for new friendships was kept in check. Despite a proposed visit to Switzerland, the two men never met, and among the Trovillion papers at SIU-C I have found only five letters from Llewelyn. They are concerned principally with the proposed publication of his book—the agreement, incidentally, was

for a fifty/fifty sharing of profits, which nowadays would be unusual in a commercial publishing agreement, but not unnatural for an agreement with a small private press. Of these letters, I shall quote one in full, for Llewelyn Powys's letters, like all his writings, are a clear index to the man:

Cladadel
Davos Platz
Switzerland

October 21st, 1937 [i.e., 1939]

Dear Mr. Trovillion,

Your letter arrived last evening—It was belated for without instructions I had signed the pages certainly a fortnight ago and sent them back to you—I only hope they have arrived safely and that I did them properly. I eagerly await the little book.

We feel a little as if we were on a moorhen's nest in the middle of a maelstrom—I hope we will not be [washed?] away. The Swiss have been nervous, but now are better—Though much remains on their frontiers. *I was nervous* lest England should back down—I could not bear to have last year's experience repeated. I would rather she were ruined than that she allowed these ruffians to have their way. It is a terrible thing. I think you are right to keep out of it as long as things are as they are but I do not believe you will feel very happy sitting on your own golden eggs in safety if one after another you see us poor poultry eaten up and the liberty and way of life we love being gradually destroyed by these barking dogs. It is all very difficult. My brother John tells me he only listens to the King's speeches. When Napoleon crossed the Rhine Goethe did better and engaged himself upon "a serious study of the way of life in China." Of course we ought to give up the Colonies and break up the British Empire and prepare to revive the League of Nations notion and live merely in a Federated Europe—but these Jolly Rogers must be faced down first—that seems to me clear and indeed seems to be clear to everybody in England. It is difficult to foresee the future—"The fool saith who would have thought it."

It was good of you to send me those articles of your travels—I hope when you are off again in the spring you will let me see some more.

That looks to be a good book you found at the Museum.² You surely looked about you in England. I treasure the photographs you took of J.C.P.

With best wishes,

yours sincerely,

Llewelyn Powys

I have copied out a few quotations from reviews of *Love and Death* on the chance of these being of any help in publicity—in any case they would be of interest to Mr. Siberell I think if you would send them on to him when you have finished with them. I have not heard from him for a long time.

Would you ask your Lady Violet whether she would receive from me the Edelweis from the mountains—as "a delight for a lady" from one who sends her his duty.³

Llewelyn Powys never saw the "little book," for he died on December 2, 1939. Publication of *A Baker's Dozen* was hindered by a number of delays, and this occasioned several letters from Llewelyn's widow, Alyse Gregory, on one of which Hal Trovillion made the rueful comment, "This letter has a touch of asperity." He didn't add to Miss Gregory's contentment by addressing her as "Alice," and in his preface to *A Baker's Dozen* he spells the name "Alyce." He sometimes spells her surname "Grecory" in his letters, and all-in-all he seems not to have understood that Miss Alyse Gregory, former Managing Editor of *The Dial*, was a very formidable lady in her own right. On the other hand, Alyse probably didn't understand Hal at all, although she was herself an American. She was at once a very sophisticated, cosmopolitan person, and a withdrawn, introspective, and naive person; Hal, for all his wide travels, was unsophisticated and uncosmopolitan—but certainly naive, though in a different way. The result was that neither could speak the other's language. Alyse Gregory's perception of style could not embrace such sentences as these, which occur in Trovillion's preface to *A Baker's Dozen*:

Fortunate we feel ourselves, as should thousands of this author's admirers on both sides of the Atlantic, that this last collection of delightful essays is here made available in this autographed limited edition. The pages bearing the author's signature had crossed the war-bound sea in a perilous trip, were hurriedly signed with his own pen and voyaged safely back to us escaping everlasting imprisonment in Davie Jones' locker and arriving only a few days before he passed on.

I have no evidence of Miss Gregory's reaction to this, but she wrote a long letter pointing out the inaccuracies in Trovillion's prospectus for the book—it is the letter with the "touch of asperity," dated January 25, 1940, now with the Trovillion papers at SIU-C—and if she did not write about "Davie Jones" and the rest, it was probably because she could not trust herself. As for Hal, in a letter to a friend dated May 3, 1950 he says, "Alyce Grecory got a bit rough with us—but to h-l with what she thinks of us. She had a mighty fine and kind husband—probably all the devil was in her." No one who knew



Violet Trovillion with John Cowper Powys and his dog Black Peter, 1938.

Alyse Gregory would recognize her in this aside, which confirms that Hal Trovillion did not know her any more than she knew him, for he had sterling qualities not to be detected in his style.

With John Cowper Powys the ground was safer for Hal. J.C.P. always had got on famously with Americans, and he knew the middle-west better than ever Alyse Gregory had done, with her New England background and upbringing. Hal Trovillion had an essential and inherent kindness and friendliness and enthusiasm and honesty and naiveté which John Cowper responded to and himself had a certain kinship with. I am not yet certain when they first became acquainted, but I imagine it was at Lloyd Emerson Siberell's instigation that Hal first wrote to John Cowper, and that might well have been about 1938. I write at a point some four thousand miles from the Trovillion papers, and these have not yet yielded up all their secrets in any case. That, incidentally, is why I have subtitled this essay "A Note"; it is a preliminary inquiry rather than a final verdict. Much work has still to be done on many aspects of the Trovillion papers, including this one.

At all events, the Trovillions usually made John Cowper Powys's house a port of call when they visited Europe, and in *Faces and Places Remembered* there is an account of one such visit, together with photographs and a facsimile letter from Powys to Trovillion. There are occasional references to John Cowper elsewhere in Trovillion's personal essays, but little to suggest that Hal read John Cowper's books. And of course it is perfectly possible to enjoy a man's friendship without reading his books—and a good thing, too, one might reflect, remembering some authors one has known. And certainly Hal delighted in this friendship. He and Violet were generous folk, and during the war especially they were active in mailing parcels to their friends in Europe; I received a good many myself, and among other things they introduced me to the pleasures of American pipe tobacco. Many of the eighty or so letters from John Cowper Powys to Hal Trovillion now in Morris Library refer to the receipt of parcels with a sort of awed wonder that the world can contain in the midst of chaos such a marvel as Fels-Naptha soap. "My dear old friend," he writes in July 1957, "how *very good* of you to send me this amazing lot of *Blotting Pads*! These will last me till I am *Ninety* & then if I don't ask for more you and your dear Violet will know I am gone! . . . There was no duty to pay," he adds a little

later, and says he has given a few to John Redwood Anderson. He welcomes certain packets of candy because the village children are so happy to receive them when he goes out for a walk.

These letters are full of John Cowper's amazing parentheses, of afterthoughts and ejaculations and huge underlinings and tags of Latin and pell-mell judgments on people, events, and books—an outrageous largess of wisdom and speculation and knockabout fun from one of the greatest of English letter writers. A short essay cannot hope to do them justice, and it is to be hoped that means will be found to publish them complete. Meanwhile, let me offer at least a taste of the treat in store:

1 Waterloo, Blaenau-ffestiniog
Merionethshire
North Wales
Great Britain
Tuesday February 16th 1960

My dear Hal and Violet Trovillion

Your letter to my American Phyllis was such a very nice one that I thought the best thing I could do would be to try and answer myself as well as I could, so here I go! Phyllis and I are O so happy together, and for a long time we have had our Government's special permission to live & work and write together while she keeps her American Citizenship. We are so fond of our present Publisher the Boss of Macdonalds Ltd 16 Maddox Street Mayfair London W.I. that I shall not attempt to let any other Publisher have any book of mine—the next one to be published by Macdonalds is entitled "All or Nothing" and our Boss says it will be published shortly. Then I've got four or five others that he may prefer to publish singly year by year or to bind two pairs of them in the same covers. I leave all that to him: but to interest you and Violet I'll tell you the titles of a few more. You see from my childhood then my favourite of all books was Grimm's Fairy Tales I have had an obsession or mania for inventing wild exciting impossible stories, the sort of stories that nowadays are called *Space-Travel-Fiction*. I have inherited money enough to live up [upon?] as Phyllis and I live quite happily & comfortably in this little house. We lived twenty years in Corwen and by next year May 2nd we shall have lived *five years* here in Blaenau. Both these little towns are in Merionethshire. We left Corwen because so many Cars came by at night past our house flashing light into the room where we slept. Here we are a bit more out of the way. At the moment however roofs roads gardens hedges ditches are covered with deep snow, thicker snow than we've had since we came here five years ago. I hope that the titles of some of my unpublished books may have a little interest for your friend Mildred Seydell. Tell her that I've got a couple of friends called Mr and Mrs Sullivan of *Dahlonaga Georgia* with whom I have corresponded for a long long time & they are both School-Teachers and are not far from

Athens Georgia. Well! Here are some of the titles of my books that are awaiting publication by Macdonald & Co Ltd—Maddox Street—London—for I would not wish any other publisher to bring them out. "Four Wraiths" These are really *ghosts*; but I did not wish to copy Ibsen so I called them *Wraiths*! Then a book called "You and Me." Then a book called "Two and Two" which deals with the inherent nature of quarrels between different types of minds and different systems of philosophy. And now I am *half way through* a book called *Cataclysm* which is of absorbing and thrilling interest to me for its about two lads and girl [sic] flying far far far far into empty space and discovering different worlds, absolutely different from this world of ours, with inhabitants whose bodies, arms and legs, heads etcetcetcetc are different from ours. You see what I enjoy is *inventing*. I have done this since as the eldest of eleven brothers and sisters five brothers and five sisters, myself the eldest making the eleventh I used [to] invent games for us all to play. The first book I ever read to myself was *Alice Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carrol. I have a bad memory for the last 20 years but a very good memory for my boyhood when at School at Sherborne a Large Public School in Dorset I learnt Latin and Greek—the Latin Poet Horace is still my favourite of all Poets and I can now recite his Odes with intense delight just as well as I can recite Shakespeare or Milton.

I have an old lady cousin whom I used to know as a boy as Cousin Katy Donne who is descended from Donne's great-grandfather. She celebrated her 97th birthday last April 29th. She lives in Norwich Norfolk where all my mother's relatives come from and though ten years older than I am she writes or rather *dictates*, for she is *blind*, the most witty and amusing letters I get from anybody.

Our family is distantly related to two famous poets John Donne Dean of St Pauls and the Poet Cowper who wrote John Gilpin. I was 87 years old last October 8th, the very day of our Election by which our present Prime Minister came into power.

Well, my dear Hal and Violet I must stop—no more margins!

Yours ever and always,

John Cowper Powys.⁴

Even if one leaves a letter like this as written, without breaking it into paragraphs, or adding the occasional comma or spelling Carroll properly, it is impossible to convey in print the unique flavor of the original. What appear to be paragraphs are the extra bits for which, finally, there were "no more margins!"

Here is an interesting passage from the answers to a questionnaire Trovillion sent him about his books and opinions:

Q. What is your opinion of the poetic writings of T.S. Elliot [sic], now a British subject, and Ezra Pound? They seem to be far more rated in England than in the states [sic], where both were born.

- A. I have always admired Eliot's, "*Wasteland*" and have always particularly enjoyed *reading it aloud!* and I was delighted when I heard him read it himself over the BBC to find I read it *almost precisely as he did!* Of Pound I have not so greatly been thrilled by his poems as stirred to admiration by the disinterested unselfish crusading ardour with which and piercing prophetic insight with which he *spread the Gospel of all the Best New Movements* in Art and Letters of our Time. I've been more nearly linked with *his* early associations than with Eliot's, in fact I met his parents in Philadelphia.⁵

In a letter of December 15, 1953, John Cowper says, "I think Dylan Thomas was *more original than I am* and much braver and more eloquent than my dead brother Theodore was. His voice absolutely fascinated me."

Hal Trovillion tried several times to persuade John Cowper Powys to write something for the Silver Horse. Writing in July, 1940, Hal offers £4 for 300-500 words on Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, and a month later he authorizes me to offer £5 for the same purpose, but John Cowper replies that he can't, he's writing "a war book."⁶ I recall that Hal had some difficulty over his edition of Wilde's story. He asked me to approach Lord Alfred Douglas, which I did to no avail, and Louis Wilkinson, who also turned the offer down. It would have been a different story if Hal had asked me, for I was ready and eager at that time to write on anything so long as I appeared in print; but he didn't ask me, and I had to be content with a sonnet in the *Herrin Daily Journal*, or perhaps it was the *Egyptian Republican*.

Hal Trovillion was not so dedicated a collector as Siberell, but he carried off one small prize—a single page of the original holograph manuscript of John Cowper Powys's *Porius*. A number of scholars now think this his greatest novel. The Trovillion fragment is described as "p 474" of the book, and I can tell those scholars that the text differs from the passage printed as part of that page in the published book.

For a "note" this paper is now quite long enough, and in any case the John Cowper Powys letters require much fuller discussion than I could afford them here, even if I carried on. Their intrinsic import in the canon of his correspondence is considerable, but locally they are of even greater importance as furnishing evidence that the greatest English writer of the twentieth century (so far! as he would have interjected in a half-page parenthesis) had an intimate link with Little Egypt, a link which is maintained intact by the

presence of these letters in the Special Collections at SIU-C.

NOTES

1. Hal W. Trovillion, *Faces and Places Remembered* (Herrin, Ill.: At the Sign of the Silver Horse, 1956), p. 31.
2. The British Museum. The book probably was *Delights for Ladies*.
3. I have not interfered with Llewelyn Powys's punctuation or spelling. His handwriting always was difficult to decipher, and it is possible that one or two words have been misinterpreted (or mis-translated); but apart from one which defeats me completely, I think my version is accurate. The correctness of his interpretation of post-war political changes is remarkable. I do not blame him for not knowing how to spell edelweiss, for I do not myself, and have had to have expert help with this footnote.
4. The author is indebted to the Estate of the late John Cowper Powys, and Laurence Pollinger Ltd., for permission to publish this letter and the excerpt that follows.
5. At one time, John Cowper saw a good deal of Pound, he was in love with Frances Gregg, who married Louis Wilkinson, and Pound had encouraged her in writing poetry.
6. *Mortal Strife* (1942).



Harry Crosby in military dress, 1923 (pastel by Bradford Johnson).

Harry Crosby His Death His Diaries

Edward B. Germain

Ezra Pound thought otherwise, but it is nearly impossible not to read Harry Crosby's diaries as a poet's eight-year romance with death that ended on 10 December 1929. They are not a preamble to Crosby's bizarre suicide but seen retrospectively become unavoidably relevant—especially as Harry first wrote them, rather than in the version Pound saw, three volumes published at the end of the 1920s.¹ The 1977 Black Sparrow Press edition restores many of the passages that Harry or his wife Cresse had cut from the original holographs. These passages often change the tone of the surrounding entries—especially in 1928 and 1929.² The 1977 edition reveals more clearly, for example, that Harry was an alcoholic, that he was using other drugs heavily—passiflorine, cocaine, hashish and opium—even though he knew he should stop. How these drugs exacerbated his personality, already strained by the tensions of high-living, the diaries make clear, or rather record; what we make of that is up to us. They record that in 1929 Harry split apart psychically. For a moment he was even proud of it:

The inward nerves of my vision are beyond the sentiments of my heart and have no communication with the operations of my intellect. I boast of having affected this . . .³

Nowhere in his diaries or in his letters or in his poetry is there convincing evidence that Harry understood the significance or consequences of this split, one stepping stone towards death.

In an introduction to a volume of Harry's poetry, D. H. Lawrence, commenting on insight, describes an extraordinary umbrella:

Man fixes some wonderful erection of his own between himself and the wild chaos, and gradually goes bleached and stifled under his parasol. Then

comes a poet, enemy of convention, and makes a slit in the umbrella; and lo! the glimpse of chaos is a vision, a window to the sun. But after a while, getting used to the vision, and not liking the genuine draught from the chaos, commonplace man daubs a simulacrum of the window that opens onto chaos, and patches the umbrella with the painted patch of the simulacrum. That is, he has got used to the vision, it is part of his house-decoration.⁴

No commonplace man, Harry was a poet, an umbrella-slitter, most keen when he was most nearly a seer. Recognizing this, Ezra Pound agrees with Lawrence that Harry's poetry was an "act of faith." "There is more theology in this book of Crosby's," Pound wrote about *Torchbearer*, "than in all the official ecclesiastical utterance of our generation."⁵ Of "The Mad Queen" Pound concludes:

Anybody but a blighted pedagogue subsidized to collect washlists and obstruct the onrush of letters will feel an ass in trying to concoct a preface to the magnificent finale:

"PREHENDERE TO CATCH HOLD OF YOUR SOUL AS A TALENT OF PURE FIRE ENTER INTO ABSOLUTE POSSESSION OF THIS FIRE MAKE A CHAIN TO PRESERVE THIS FIRE ATTACK TO DEFEND THIS FIRE."⁶

These words could be called Harry's creed.

But observe the difference between the kinds of insight that Harry Crosby and D. H. Lawrence had. Lawrence caught "a glimpse of . . . the chaos *alive* . . . of the living, untamed chaos" and recognized that "chaos has a core which is itself quintessentially chaotic and fierce with incongruities."⁷ But when Harry made a slit to peer through, he saw only sun-fire ("Sun Sun Sun I am an arrow thrusting into sun"⁸). Or to put it more accurately, Harry observed the chaos of incongruities of which Lawrence writes, but fixedly attended only to the imagery of the sun.

Both Lawrence and T. S. Eliot objected to his sun-obsession because they knew it stood in the way of his personal artistic growth.⁹ Yet Harry, partially in imitation of Eliot's technique in *The Wasteland*, patiently tried to arrange his sun imagery into a comprehensive myth-system. He failed because the image itself was insufficient, and because his infatuation with it blinded him to the significance of the other images in his mind's eye. As a result, Harry achieved little self-knowledge. And when he split apart, he lost any further chance. The inward nerves of his visions lost connection with



Caresse Crosby, shortly after her marriage to Harry Crosby, 1923 (pastel by Bradford Johnson).

his intellect, leaving his obsessive, immature drive towards self-destruction to proceed unhindered whenever normal rationality was set aside—by drugs, for example.

Malcolm Cowley, for one, thinks that Harry's experiences as an ambulance driver during World War I were the primary cause of that self-destructive fire. From a tiny pocket notebook that Harry kept during the war come fragments of that story:

Friday, September 21, 1917. Decided definitely to go to Paris and sign up for the duration of the war. Over the Top with the Best of Luck and give them Hell!!!!!!! Left for Paris. Hectic night on the train. Typical French trains . . . Went to bank. . . . Took my physical exam. I signed up for the duration of the War!!!!!!!¹⁰

Harry saved a photograph of the American recruiters who roamed Paris signing up volunteers for the American Ambulance Corps. On the back of it he scrawled, "They Got Me!!!"

Two months later, Private 1st Class Henry Grew Crosby, American Expeditionary Force in France, drove through fire:

Thursday, November 22, 1917. . . Most exciting day ever. This P.M. in going up to Haudremont went through hell. The Boches were shelling the road—tremendous ones right near me came in. "For whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Shell hit 10 yards away in "abri." Eclat . . . Mashed 741 to pieces. Thank God with all my heart for saving me. Spud Spaulding wounded. Barrage . . .¹¹

"741" was Harry's Ford ambulance. The shell blew it apart around him, leaving him miraculously untouched.

One entry sums up Harry's experiences at war:

Saturday, March 1, 1919. Won Oh Boy!!!!!!! THE CROIX DE GUERRE. Thank God.¹²

For Harry, Verdun signified "the ride through red explosions and the violent metamorphose from boy into man."¹³ For Malcolm Cowley, analyzing the event in *Exile's Return*, "There was indeed a violent metamorphosis, but not from boy into man; rather, it was from life into death."¹⁴ Cowley didn't meet Harry until 1929. But he studied *Shadows of the Sun* before writing *Exile's Return* in 1934. He decided that the trauma had grown like a cancer until it killed him, twelve years after the event.

Harry's father, Stephen Van Rensselaer Crosby, wanted to agree

that Harry died from what was then commonly called "shell shock." Harry's mother wrote Caresse that

A doctor who is a specialist on diseases of the nerves sent for Steve and told him all about shell shock . . . and that the sex complex is very over-developed in these cases. And he assured Steve that it was bound to get worse as time went on so that comforted Steve for no one could want any one we loved to go to pieces and I felt that was happening . . .¹⁵

New evidence in the 1977 edition of *Shadows of the Sun* supports Cowley's thesis. The coded messages that end the first two sections of the diary have been deciphered by Sasha Newborn. The keys to the codes turn out to be a code themselves. One, as Sasha confirms, is most likely this single sentence: "The Sun is the death of the soldier." Had Cowley discovered this, he would surely have used it in support of his theory.

But this theory taken as a whole is shallow. The war did not wring Harry slowly to death on a twelve-year rack. Nor is penetrating the code an equivalent to penetrating Harry's inner motives for suicide. Making the code, Harry was aggrandizing his obsession, one that had begun long before the war, but that the war amplified. As a young boy Harry had liked best to swim when the beaches were closed, the surf high, and the undertow strong. As a young man before the war he had constructed naive but powerful connections between religion and sex and death and salvation. After the war, when he first slept all night with Caresse, who was married to another man, he told her that death and pure love were inseparable. And the last words he ever wrote confirm that Harry hadn't changed his mind:

One is not in love unless one desires to die with
one's beloved

There is only one happiness
it is to love and be loved.¹⁶

That day was 10 December 1929. Harry met his mistress, Josephine Rotch Bigelow—the Fire Princess he called her—went to a borrowed hotel room and lay fully clothed with her on a bed. She was found with a bullet hole in her head. So was Harry. The coroner's report testified that he killed himself an hour or two after she died.

Harry was from Boston, so was his wife Caresse, his Fire Princess,

and most of his other mistresses. He hated the "City of Dreadful Night" for its prurient puritanism, and he fled it. "Christ what a narrow escape, far narrower than escaping the shells at Verdun," Harry wrote in his diary from Paris.¹⁷ Yet he never truly escaped it; he seemed to hold it to him in order to rebel against it.

Josephine Rotch Bigelow probably escaped whatever moral stultification Boston imposed when she rendezvoused with Harry in 1928 and 1929. They had first met in 1927 in Italy when Josephine was buying her trousseau for her impending marriage to a Harvard graduate student. Harry associated her with fire almost immediately. Like him, Josephine was vulnerable to suicide. She had threatened to kill herself in the lobby of a New York hotel the day before she died.¹⁸ She had been married for five months. Neither her husband nor family knew about her affair with Harry.

The War, Boston, the moral anemia of post-war American society ("Race Ruin" Harry called it) were all factors propelling Harry's suicide. He had an ideal of dying at the zenith of life and a horror of existing past his prime. Deeper clues lie in his childhood and in images that sometimes surface in *Shadows of the Sun*. These show severe traumas, unresolved Oedipal patterns, great inner violence, and a surprising narrowness of insight. Readers who would plunge further into Harry Crosby's personality might consult his letters to his mother in the Black Sun Press Archives in the Morris Library. There they will find the incongruities of which Lawrence wrote, incongruities Harry transcribed and then ignored in his fixation on the self-consuming sun.

"No one could or ever did understand him except you and a little bit me," wrote another of his mistresses to Caresse after Harry's death. "He was never of this world altogether you know . . . You could not judge him as you do ordinary people. He was Light & Honour & Beauty & a little boy who never grew up."¹⁹

It is not difficult for readers to look at Harry's life and fit it into some pattern. Malcolm Cowley turned him into a psyche for the "Lost Generation."²⁰ Someone may soon compare Harry with Hemingway's Jake Barnes—an article that should be interesting to read. Others can set him with Hart Crane, D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, and William Carlos Williams as men who after the War recognized the death of religion and set about to create viable myth-systems to replace it. Psychiatrists can see him as a case-study.

Social critics can appreciate him as a lucid observer of the frail, frenetic twenties. But however one evaluates his life, however one extolls *Shadows of the Sun* as a "record of behavior and a great source-document,"²¹ it is Harry Crosby's personality that attracts readers. He comes alive in his superbly vivid descriptions as he transcribes the images of peace and terror growing together in his mind amid the hedonism, the frantic dashes by car to Deauville, to Italy, to Spain, the sudden impulsive parties, gifts, liaisons.

He is a bizarre, often irresistible figure. "Without talking a great deal, he charmed everyone," wrote Malcolm Cowley.²² Yet he painted his nails black, had a large sun tattooed on his back, branded himself with hot coals, encouraged some of the most controversial writers of his time, used dope, drank incessantly, had one affair after another, and still could ask with naive incredulity, "Will Bostonians never accept things naturally?"²³

His active, curious mind took him through centuries of literature, the Bible, the fifty *Sacred Books of the East*. He was generous with his possessions and his money, loaning his house to writers, assisting Eugene Jolas' *transition*. As a step-father to Caresse's children, he could be a fairytale king—once driving Caresse's daughter through the streets of Paris so she could toss real gold coins out upon the people of the world. He had exquisite taste, no sympathy for intellectual or artistic dullness, and worked hard nearly every day on his own writing and on his Black Sun Press publications. "I like things that are Alive!"²⁴ he writes. Life pours from *Shadows of the Sun*.

His death, Ezra Pound wrote, turning the emphasis away from those few hours in the borrowed hotel room, "was . . . a death from excess vitality. A vote of confidence in the cosmos."²⁵

NOTES

1. *Shadows of the Sun*, Harry Crosby's diary from 1922 to 1929, was published in three volumes by the Crosby's Black Sun Press in 1928, 1929, and 1930. The colophons identify each volume as limited to 44 copies. Harry Crosby edited volumes one and two and part of three for publication. After his death Caresse Crosby edited volume three further, censoring certain references and omitting others. Some of Harry's original holographs and typescripts survive at SIU-C, however. The 1977 edition, edited by this writer and published by Black Sparrow Press (a vigorous publisher of contemporary poetry modeled partly after the Black Sun Press), restores all of Caresse's deletions and those Harry

made which are of unusual interest. It also identifies the characters in his diary. "When I like people immensely," Harry Crosby wrote in an unpublished notebook, "I never tell their names to anyone. It is like murdering a part of them." The Black Sun Press edition of *Shadows of the Sun* extends this protective anonymity to nearly everyone. Even chance acquaintances become "S" or "E" or at the most explicit, "Lady A." The 1977 edition contains an index and glossary that minimizes Harry's obfuscations.

2. See *Shadows of the Sun*, entries for 4 June 1928ff and 8 June 1929ff.
3. *Shadows of the Sun*, entry for 25 July 1929. This passage did not appear in the 1930 edition.
4. D. H. Lawrence, "Introduction" to *Chariot of the Sun* by Harry Crosby (Paris: Black Sun Press, 1931), pp. ii-iii.
5. Ezra Pound, "Notes" for *Torchbearer* by Harry Crosby (Paris: Black Sun Press, 1931), p. i.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. vi-vii.
7. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, pp. ix, xi.
8. *Shadows of the Sun*, entry for 1 July 1929.
9. See T. S. Eliot, "Preface" to *Transit of Venus* by Harry Crosby (Paris: Black Sun Press, 1931); also see the letter from D. H. Lawrence to Caresse Crosby dated 30 January 1930, Black Sun Press Archives, SIU-C.
10. Harry Crosby, unpublished notebook, Black Sun Press Archives.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Shadows of the Sun*, entry for 22 November 1927.
14. Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Narrative of Ideas* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1934), p. 246.
15. Letter from Henrietta Crosby to Caresse Crosby dated 14 January 1930, Black Sun Press Archives.
16. Caresse Crosby included part of this entry in her 1930 edition of volume three of *Shadows of the Sun*, but she omitted these lines as she also omitted other references that pertain to Harry's death or to Josephine Rotch Bigelow.
17. *Shadows of the Sun*, entry for 28 January 1924.
18. Interview by Geoffrey Wolfe with Gretchen Powell in *Black Sun* (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 295.
19. Letter from Constance Crowninshield Coolidge to Caresse Crosby dated 12 December 1929, Black Sun Press Archives.
20. See Malcolm Cowley, *op. cit.*
21. *Ibid.*, p. 248
22. Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return*, rev. ed. (New York: Viking, 1951), p. 246.
23. *Shadows of the Sun*, entry for 20 August 1929.
24. *Ibid.*, entry for 7 July 1928.
25. Extra Pound, *op. cit.*, p. ii.

Harry Crosby's Sun Code

Sasha Newborn

Harry Crosby ended both volume one and volume two of his published diaries (Black Sun Press, 1928, 1929) with a page of code and this word-cross:

C
A
HARRY
E
S
S
E

In Harry's personal symbolism, his wife Caresse was the essential other element on which his sun-mythology depended—the diaries began with her, and their lives were to have ended together on 31 October 1942 (perihelion of Earth, i.e., the closest approach of the Earth to the sun). He used the same word-cross linking their names on their tombstone, ordered when he was in his twenties, and on a three-inch high cross he used as a chance device, although even before he met Caresse he had used a similar device with a sun engraved on one side.

February 28 [1922] Tossed my sun-cross into the air to see whether to fight or to surrender. Fight on as it falls upon the floor sun upwards.¹

The Sun is Harry's all-embracing symbol, standing for God, the soul, death, the center. He related everything to the sun. He often copied a passage into his diary and then transposed it into sun-terms; he also put in cryptic non-sentences, such as the often-repeated "Paris, City of the Sun." Sunbathing was his pleasure and his worship, and when he bet on horses, he chose ones with "Sun" in

their names if possible. He read literature for references to the sun—and to suicide.

Harry's sun-myth began before the published diaries open in 1922. Perhaps, as his father wished to believe, the "craziness" came from shell shock during Harry's term as an ambulance driver during the Great War. An early entry in the first diary, when he visits "The Waste Land" where he had fought four years before, reads:

May 24 [1922] . . . Prayed into the Red Sun. For what? I do not know. At Soissons, in the Lion Rouge, in the enormous bed, suns within suns, and cataracts of gold.

"Cataracts of gold," "suns within suns," and similar phrases recur many times through the twenties. One thing is certain: Harry's visions were not momentary or ephemeral acts of imagination; they were his reality, more important to him than money, sex or fame. For the final words for his diaries, Harry distilled his essential philosophy, and put it into coded messages. To the best of my knowledge, these were not decoded until I worked on them while setting type for the Black Sparrow edition of the diaries.

Here is the volume one code, with its message:

sthhe fous on ssu eod
[harry poet of the sun]

ethueeu touud on ssu eod
[caresse queen of the sun]

htetouetdu tds foett
[jacqueline and polia]

fhdeueeue on ssu eod
[princesses of the sun]

ioes ehtnotee ihue sthe
[gold cramoisy grey dark]

oduduee noh usuhdtse
[oneness for eternity]

tdso ssu husioes
[into the redgold]

on Eod
[of Sun]

The simplest code is a substitution code; that is, for each letter another is substituted, so that when all letters are filled in, code-letters and message-letters form parallel alphabets. This code type is normally broken by following the distribution patterns of the code-letters, then matching them up with normal English frequency distribution: roughly, "etaion shrldu". I also started with the most frequent word, "eod," as "sun," and used those letters in other parts of the code. "Harry" and "Caresse" seemed to be good guesses for "sthhe" and "ethueeu," also. A number of other words began to emerge but also an oddity of the code: one code-letter might stand for more than one message-letter, as in "ssu," which must almost certainly be "the." More than once I gave up and went back to the beginning.

My conclusion at this point was that this was not a simple code. Why should it be? Harry was not a simple man—this was the man who would rather read the dictionary than work in a bank—and who knew French fluently. But French proved to be a false trail.

My answer appeared as more and more words interconnected, more letters fell into place. If I lay down the code-alphabet, the message-alphabet covered less than half of all letters, and it displayed the etaion shrldu distribution. This meant that another English sentence lay hidden inside the key. I had to turn it around to see what Harry saw when he encoded it, and the alphabets then looked like this:

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
t	—	e	s	u	n	i	s	t	h	e	e	n	d	o	f	t	h	e	s	o	—	—	—	e	—

Because Harry did not use certain letters in his message (b, v, w, x, z), no code letters were assigned for these—as one works the code backwards, the probability that "b" would have been represented by "h" is very high.

"V, w, x, z" present another problem to which I propose this tentative solution: Grammatically, "so——e—" should be either a noun or an adjective plus a noun. I chose to examine the noun-only case and to ignore the other possibility, leaving it for more patient wits than mine. For the noun-only, *Webster's Eighth New Collegiate Dictionary* yielded these possibilities: softies, soirees, soldier, solutes, soother, sounder, sources, and souther. Only "soldier" fits well, I believe. Harry was his own hero; the military metaphor is not his

most apt, however, and I would make this conclusion tentative.

However, the sentence, "The sun is the end of the soldier," could mean Harry's suicide, which had been planned for years and confirmed with Caresse. His last entry before the code page, the last entry for 1926, finishes with:

*If I die C dies
If C dies I die*

A SUN-DEATH INTO SUN.

The "princesses" deserve some explanation, too—Polia [Chentoff] was a painter friend, but Jacqueline, a name that Harry had tattooed on his chest, is imaginary, according to notes by Caresse. Jacqueline was apparently an alter ego or created personality—Harry found a painting that he said looked like her and also looked a lot like himself. But in the mythology of the sun, Jacqueline had a steady place.

The fifth line of the code is a series of colors, Harry's own color-coding for the people in his myth. In order, Harry is gold; Caresse, cramoisy (crimson—in the diaries she is the "cramoisy queen"); Jacqueline is represented by grey, and Polia dark. The general source for these color identifications is Rimbaud, who gave colors to the vowels, but the specific colors were in Harry's head—they changed slightly in the second code to rewrite the myth. Note that the "oneness for eternity," which would be Caresse and himself in double suicide, is "into the *redgold* of Sun"—Harry's gold and Caresse's cramoisy become one.

The volume two code page is solved in a similar manner. It reads

*rinnu nirln na orn xyz
[harry eagle of the sun]*

*minntn itnni na orn xyz
[caresse queen of the sun]*

*wntngroin mnitoiimn wimitnloin
[josephine constance jacqueline]*

*gnomntnt na orn xyz
[princesses of the sun]*

*anfrini onygin anu na orn xyz
[bokhara temple boy of the sun]*

*aonn mniyotu rnla toin rnnu ynni
[fire cramoisy gold star grey moon]*

*ninitt ann nonnioou
[oneness for eternity]*

*oion orn nna-rnla aonn na Xyz
[into the red-gold fire of Sun]*

The alphabet key reveals the same glorious sun-suicide:

*a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
i a m a n a r r o w f l y i n g i n t o t — — s u n*

But intentionally or not, Harry inverted the relationship of code-letters to message-letters for "xyz" and "sun," so that one more involution covers his tracks. This time, however, the infrequent x, y, and z are easily found, and the only clinkers are v and w ("t—" very likely is "the," of course).

The message format is similar. But Harry, after seeing Lindbergh land at Le Bourget and thinking it the greatest day of his life, started taking flying lessons—so the "poet" becomes the "eagle of the sun." He now pictured his suicide as jumping out of an airplane, so that his body would hurtle to earth while his soul flew to the sun.

Polia is out (he has hardly seen her), and Constance and Josephine are in—Josephine who will share his death in 1929 in place of Caresse. Bokhara is a temple boy in Palestine by the Dead Sea whom Harry took a fancy to and had fun with for a few days on a Mideastern trip.

Harry's color becomes fire, and Josephine is gold. Constance is star, Bokhara is moon. Caresse remains cramoisy, the imaginary Jacqueline is still grey. The sun is now "red-gold fire" so that the colors include both Caresse and Josephine with himself in the "oneness for eternity."

Nearly a year later, Harry, Caresse, and Josephine played out *menage à trois* in America; in the last week of his life it was news enough to put in the diary that he had been to bed with Caresse. The last month of diary entries are hurried, abrupt, scattered. When the end came, with Josephine's death and then his own, it came as a shock to those who knew Harry Crosby—but not as a surprise. Caresse, left out at the last, lived on to be seventy-seven, as a

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The alphabet key reveals the same glorious sun-suicide:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
i a m a n a r r o w f l y i n g i n t o t — — s u n

But intentionally or not, Harry inverted the relationship of code-letters to message-letters for "xyz" and "sun," so that one more involution covers his tracks. This time, however, the infrequent x, y, and z are easily found, and the only clinkers are v and w ("t—" very likely is "the," of course).

The message format is similar. But Harry, after seeing Lindbergh land at Le Bourget and thinking it the greatest day of his life, started taking flying lessons—so the "poet" becomes the "eagle of the sun." He now pictured his suicide as jumping out of an airplane, so that his body would hurtle to earth while his soul flew to the sun.

Polia is out (he has hardly seenher), and Constance and Josephine are in—Josephine who will share his death in 1929 in place of Caresse. Bokhara is a temple boy in Palestine by the Dead Sea whom Harry took a fancy to and had fun with for a few days on a Mideastern trip.

Harry's color becomes fire, and Josephine is gold. Constance is star, Bokhara is moon. Caresse remains cramoisy, the imaginary Jacqueline is still grey. The sun is now "red-gold fire" so that the colors include both Caresse and Josephine with himself in the "oneness for eternity."

Nearly a year later, Harry, Caresse, and Josephine played out *menage à trois* in America; in the last week of his life it was news enough to put in the diary that he had been to bed with Caresse. The last month of diary entries are hurried, abrupt, scattered. When the end came, with Josephine's death and then his own, it came as a shock to those who knew Harry Crosby—but not as a surprise. Caresse, left out at the last, lived on to be seventy-seven, as a

fortune-teller once had told her she would.

No code was found for volume three of the diaries; the last mystery is what really happened in that hotel room. The strongest clue we have is the last entry:

And again my Invulnerability is put to the test. [9 December 1929]

[One is not in love unless one desires to die with one's beloved]

*[There is only one happiness
it is to love and to be loved]²*

NOTES

1. Quotes are from *Shadows of the Sun*, edited by Edward Germain. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1977.

2. Omitted from The Black Sun Press edition, 1930, but restored in the Black Sparrow edition.

The Crosbys An Afterword

Kay Boyle

A thousand years have elapsed since that very early morning in Paris (two or three o'clock it must have been) when Eugene Jolas took me to the Bal Nègre to meet Caresse and Harry Crosby, whom I knew of by name as publishers of the Black Sun Press. Gene had described them to me as a fabulous young couple, in their mid-thirties then, far removed by wealth and social ambiance from the lives the rest of us lived. That early morning we eventually found them on the perilously high and crowded balcony of the nightclub which had become the current rage, it being the thing then to have two or three "negro" friends, provided they were in the jazz scene. Caresse and Harry were drinking champagne, talking, laughing, never for more than two minutes in one place, at times leaning on the railing, on which too many people already leaned, looking down on the chaos of the dance arena below.

(This is the accurate story of my first meeting with the Crosbys. The description of Harry Crosby walking into Raymond Duncan's shop on the Boulevard St. Germain to buy a scarf for Caresse has no basis in fact. After I met the Crosbys at the Bal Nègre, Harry did come frequently to see me at the Duncan shop, where I worked as a saleslady—the saleslady, acutally, for there were no others. Later, both Caresse and Harry came to the Duncan shop in the Rue St. Honoré on the days I worked there. Having no money, I was then living in the Raymond Duncan Colony in Neuilly, where my young child, Sharon, could be cared for with the other Colony children.)

At the Bal Nègre that time near dawn, the wildly stepping dancers danced, with no more than an inch or two between the coupled women and men, and they are as vividly alive to me at this moment as a Lautrec canvas; the saxophone wails louder and louder as the years pass, and the beat of the drums is almost deafening in



Kay Boyle and Harry Crosby at LeMoulin du Soleil, 1927.

my ears. In the white blaze of the nightclub's lights that have never dimmed, I can see the features of Caresse's face, her bronze hair cut in a bang across her forehead, and Harry's face already then committed to the look of the skull of the tall skeleton he paid daily and nightly homage to in the studio in the Rue de Lille. Eugene Jolas' smile is still here in the room with me, exactly as it was when he brought together, half a century ago, two people whom he considered madder than hatters and freer than the wind, but whom he loved, and a third person (myself at twenty-five) whom he never dared to love.

(Mad as a hatter I was, too, for I decided that year to put my baby in her carriage and set out on foot from Paris to walk to Moscow. Anything and everything seemed possible then, even human dignity and freedom in a totalitarian state, and Jolas, sane as any Alsatian, was going to take that journey with me. But we somehow didn't get beyond the Place de l'Alma, where Gene and I would meet before lunch almost every day and sit in the sunlight, or in the rain, on the café terrace of Chez Francis; or at times meet Joyce there for dinner, and drink, and eat, and sing German and Irish songs together.)

The specific facts and figures of all that Caresse and Harry accomplished as publishers and writers has at long last been set down, and set down accurately, in the pages of Hugh Ford's *Published in Paris*, and captured as well in this book is the obsessed spirit of their desperately dedicated search. No one who was not actually there in the twenties and thirties could have a better introduction to the hard work done by the Crosbys than Ford's scrupulously researched book. And many who were there, but who failed to understand what was in progress before their eyes, could read his book with profit. In my review of *Published in Paris*, I wrote:

. . . it might well be asked if there ever existed, outside of legend, a glamorous era now known as 'Paris in the twenties,' when material considerations were tossed to the winds and wildly unbridled emotions and talents were the order of the day.¹

The myth was in part created by American, self-styled authorities on the surrealist and related movements (who persist in adding an "s" to the magical name of Marcel Duchamp), I pointed out in this review, and by

. . . books by those who were briefly there and subsequently dubbed themselves exiles, thus conferring a sort of literary knighthood on their own reputations. And there were some who courted a wider audience for their accounts of the time by playing up, and even cruelly distorting, the dramas and tragedies in the private lives of the writers and small-press publishers in Paris during those active and arduous years.

In 1959, Nancy Cunard, one of the most glamorous figures of the Paris scene, and a remarkably disciplined poet, editor, and publisher, wrote of the barely two decades of that renaissance in writing, painting, photography, sculpture, and the composing of music: "To hell with those days! They weren't so super-magnificent after all!"

Henry Miller has written in his foreword to the yet-unpublished catalogue of the Crosbys' Black Sun Press that he walked the streets of Paris with Charles-Louis Philippe's *Bubu of Montparnasse* clutched to him, a book which Laurence Vail and I (after Harry's death in 1929) translated together for Caresse. "I remember," Henry Miller writes, ". . . reading snatches from bench to bench, the while I fastened my belt tighter and tighter. I remember weeping as I read it . . ." How desperately, desperately we read then, as if somewhere, on some page, the final answer would be given! And how desperately we cared! I can see myself at twenty-three sitting on a bench in the Jardin des Tuileries, reading hungrily a Tauchnitz edition of George Moore's *The Lake*, bought for a few centimes at a bookstall on the quays above the Seine, and weeping what Robert McAlmon would have later described as my "Irish-twilightly" tears. The few centimes were a fortune to me then, but what that second or third hand book brought me was a direction in which to turn, a difficult way to follow, and I bowed my head to that summons as if approaching an altar; for the final lines of *The Lake* ask for courage. "There is a lake in every man's heart," they go, ". . . and every man must ungird his loins for the crossing."

Also in your introduction, Henry, written in 1961, you ask me a question, and it has taken me sixteen years to answer it. "Do you remember, dear Kay Boyle," you ask, "the long letter I wrote you one rainy night from some bistro on the outskirts of Paris after finishing one of your novels?" Yes, I remember the letter, I answer you now, and the novel was *Year Before Last*; and in that long letter you said that my breasts must be made of diamonds and my womb of platinum. Being a moralist (I reject the more complimentary word

"puritan"), I judged you harshly because of that dazzling statement. And do you remember, Henry, when you and Caresse Crosby came in 1942 to the first writing class I ever attempted? You sat, unidentified, in the back of the classroom that evening in Nyack, fiercely intense among the highschool teachers of English. Your presence gave me the same kind of courage that George Moore had let me borrow from him twenty years before as I stammered through that hour and a half, trying to say, and not knowing how to say it, what writing is and what it is not. It was you who had told all of us that a long time before. "Writing is not a game played according to rules," you had once said. "Writing is a compulsive and delectable thing. Writing is its own reward." And this is perhaps the most difficult thing of all to make others believe.

In 1934, when I was living in Austria with my husband, Laurence Vail, and our children, you (whom I knew then only by name) sent me a manuscript of yours to read. It must have been *Black Spring*, and, reading it, I came to the conclusion that you, Henry Miller, were a very young man, and I wrote you that as you matured you would come beyond the adolescent need to write exclusively about your sexual experiences, and that in time you would no longer equate (and thus set limits on it) sexuality with vulgarity. That was the kind of puritanical, or twilightly romantic, hang-up I had then, and still have, but to a lesser degree. And you were generous enough not to admonish me as you were later to admonish others when defending yourself in court against charges of obscenity, generous beyond that to a point that breaks the heart: you responded to Laurence's and my request for short stories, each one not to exceed three hundred words in length, for an anthology we were putting together that year.

In court, your testimony went in part: "Yes, I am rather weary of explaining my position to censors, judges, and moralists of all kinds." That rebuke should have been addressed to me as well. You should have shouted it at me all the way from Paris to the Tirol, thundering it across the continent until the Austrian mountaintops shook with your outrage, saying to me (what you never said): "I am ten years older than you! I am no adolescent! I'm wise enough to know what you haven't even begun to learn, and that is that 'the test of a man's humanity lies in his acceptance of life, all aspects of life, not just those which correspond to his own limited viewpoint!'" It was only later that I was able to hear you saying from the untroubled place that you had

reached: "I have staked my whole career on my right as a human being to employ freedom of speech, and I have paid the price for it."

Sixteen years after Henry Miller wrote his "Three Decades" as a foreword to the history of the Black Sun Press, I write this in sheer amazement at the unpredictability of what has taken place. Henry wrote that with the emergence in recent years of the new language of mathematicians and scientists a widening gulf, far greater than ever before, had come to exist between poet and scientist. I know that during the lifetime of the Black Sun Press the gulf was indeed so wide and deep that no language of myth or of reality could halloo across it. But now, at this moment in 1977, scientists and poets share the same survival panels and speak a common tongue. Here in San Francisco, poets stand at the lecterns with scientists in museum halls, and each listens as the other reads his work aloud. And, listening, scientists resign their lucrative positions and turn with the poets to the salvaging of the only planet we know. The poet, Henry Miller wrote, has been "outstripped in daring" by the men who travel in space. But now in 1977, the daring poetry renaissance in America has given us a lingo of the streets, and the vocabulary of the astronauts has drifted into a cloudy, twilight zone. The unpredicted, and perhaps wholly unanticipated reality is that poets have now closed ranks and are no longer the outcasts, while those grotesque figures strapped to their metal seats who circle the reaches of outer space have become the disinherited. From a long way back in time, I hear Adrienne Monnier, Sylvia Beach's companion (and friend of James Joyce, as well as of Jules Romains and André Breton, among dozens of other distinguished women and men), the prophet of La Maison des Amis des Livres, whose attire was very like that of a nun, yet simple as a peasant's, saying quietly, "It is an error to believe that the world owes something to poets: what it owed them it has given them in bestowing inspiration upon them. It is for them to be satisfied forever after with the state of grace in which they live." The Black Sun Press, as did Eugene Jolas' *transition*, confirmed and gave sustenance to that state of grace.

Cresse and Harry Crosby, premature social dissidents, made themselves, with an energy most of us might envy, a part of the disintegrating process of a bankrupt system, seeking (as Henry Miller put it) to accept all aspects of life, not just those which they had

always known. Harry had been an ardent patriot, an ambulance driver in the First World War, a young man for whom the anguish of seeing beloved friends killed had never been assuaged. In the relatively brief time that I knew him, he was seeking desperately not only for personal solace, but for a new way for the world to distribute its rewards. It would have needed a man of iron, I once wrote in an introduction to Harry's diary, not to have been shaken by that fight for his own personality which he made step by step every inch of his short life. Black was his chosen color: black suits, a black cloth camellia in his lapel, black racing horses at Longchamp, wire-thin, black whippets; and yet he believed that the black of this undeviatingly practiced sacrament did not for a moment signify the absence of light. It was more a means for the blacking out of obstacles, imposing the black of oblivion on conventional standards, inherited wealth, on the straining of tender parental ties, so that he might be free to function unencumbered in his almost frenzied response to other writers, other poets, and to their work, as he cleared the way for the great blaze of achievement, his own and that of others, which he passionately and tragically believed was close at hand. Harry and his life are as complete and pitiless a metaphor for the conflict as any, the conflict that remains, in peace or war, the most deadly battle of them all.

Harry was generous with his time and his money (lavish might be a better word), as well as in his recognition of those who were lost and might still be saved. While on a wintertime trip to the United States a year before his death, Harry assigned to me his French chauffeur in livery and his handsome black town car, leaving orders that I should be driven from my shabby quarters to the Raymond Duncan shop every morning, and that man and limousine should be at my beck and call at any hour of the night or day. What a fine figure I was, sitting in my second-hand clothes in that gleaming black vehicle, my feet in worn sandals protruding from under the hem of the sable lap robe the chauffeur spread across my knees! One icy morning he asked me, his eyes averted, if I had heard that Monsieur Crosby was dead. It had happened on shipboard, he had been told, on the way to America, and it was even suspected that Monsieur had died by his own hand. It was a terrifying distortion of time, a nightmare recounted before it had been dreamed, this impossible transferring of the future into the immediate past. The word

“clairvoyance” could not be applied to it, so how to explain it except as the contemptible need of a lesser man to efface a tall, thin, absent foreigner whom he could not understand? “No, no!” I cried out, knowing it was not yet true. “It hasn’t taken place! It’s only 1928!” But my heart was as cold as the ice of winter against the glass as we drove through Paris to the Boulevard St. Germain, cold as stone in denial that this Frenchman’s evil fantasy could ever become the substance of an act that Harry would commit. That he was a man on the run, I knew, his narrow hand clasped fast in the hand of the skeleton that grinned in its corner in the Rue de Lille. But whatever it was I feared, I did not yet know there would be a night in December 1929 when he would cease to run.

Caresse had broken every tie with tradition and propriety when she became Harry’s wife. Once in a bar in Nice (that was in 1931), Laurence Vail introduced Caresse to two former Boston prep schoolmates of his as “the former Mrs. Peabody,” adding that she had divorced her husband ten years before. The two men put down their glasses in disbelief. “No one, but absolutely no one,” said one of them, “ever divorces a Peabody.” But Caresse had. She was once Polly Jacobs, a popular, vivacious debutante, then a charming young wife and mother in the setting of Boston’s socially elite. As Caresse Crosby she became as obsessed a seeker as Harry for a reality by which to live that would be worthy of the high-spirited homage they had to give. The Black Sun Press was the final substance of that frantic, elusive search. It signified discipline and direction fearlessly salvaged from the decorum that had restricted their early lives.

But far, far removed from the choices that Caresse and Harry had made as eager individuals, far from what Harry used to speak of with childish delight as “orgies,” far too from Eugene Jolas’ night wanderings and his Revolution of the Word, remains the quite simple truth, clear as a beam of light that reaches still across my life: that these three people formed the circle that enclosed and nurtured us as writers, as poets, in a foreign country in an alien time.

Two books of mine are dedicated to Caresse Crosby. She is the Fontana to whom I dedicated *My Next Bride*. The 1946 collection of my short stories is dedicated as well to that small woman with the fierce courage of a humming-bird, whose belief and fervor never failed. After Harry Crosby’s death, I wrote a long poem for him which ends:

Now is the year as lacy as a gown
Which curious winds blow up and down at will.
Hollowed for sound upon the heathen fields
The crocus quivers like a young goat’s ear.
And you, what month are you, what wind that lies
As sweet as squirrel skin underneath the chin?
What time of year that sows no seeds, or reaps none,
Gives the weeded ground, the barren branch, makes way for spring
By root, by sap; draws close the February rains
And bids them snuff the beacon of your life
To let you sleep and sleep with sleep and sleep a while
Until a fresher season swoon between your thighs?

A poem I wrote for Caresse in 1958, “A Poem of Gratitude,” ends with the lines:

In the clear dusk, I put my arm around the memory of all we were,
Of all we were not, and I am happy,
Watching the cove hold in its curve the deepening waters of the tide.

NOTES

1. “Published in Paris,” *New York Times Book Review*, 14 September 1975, 6.

The Later Caresse Crosby Her Answer Remained “Yes”

Harry T. Moore

At the end of her lively autobiography, *The Passionate Years*, Caresse Crosby tells of driving into Washington early in World War II. With the New York, Boston, and Paris phases of her life receding into the background and yet always present in her magnetic personality, she began a new career with the Crosby Gallery of Modern Art, which became the artistic-intellectual headquarters of wartime Washington.

At first associated with David Porter, she set up her gallery on “G” Street near Ninth, in downtown North West, eventually moving to the Dupont Circle area, a district much later to be dominated by hippies. Her gallery parties were attended by members of the government, the diplomatic corps, and the military set, all of them delighted to have a relaxed evening after intense work that often took up all the daylight hours, sometimes seven days a week.

Various notable figures who had never met before became acquainted at Caresse’s parties; for example, Henry J. Kaiser, the industrialist who was so prominent in the war effort, first encountered Vice President Henry Wallace at the Crosby Gallery: they were introduced, greeted each other cheerfully, and immediately staged a mock wrestling match. That’s the way it was at Caresse’s.

She had an exhibition opening every month. She served nothing but martinis, and they were always at hand. But other parties took place several nights each week, and usually Caresse and her friends would go out to eat afterward, to the Salle du Bois, to the Mayflower, to the Occidental, to the Balalaika, to O’Donnell’s, or to one of the seafood restaurants on the Potomac. Occasionally we went to my favorite little restaurant, the Trianon, on Seventeenth Street just above Pennsylvania Avenue. It was a small place, with



Caresse Crosby, 1928 (line drawing by Manuel Angeles Ortiz).

red-checked tablecloths and a little, old, jovial headwaiter from Luxembourg, Joseph, who always dressed formally, white tie and tailcoat. The cuisine was excellent, particularly the boeuf bourgogne. Once in a while some of my colleagues at the Pentagon ate there with me, and they usually found the place a bit too "native," hence dirty. But Caresse loved the place, and so did one visitor who often joined us there, Henry Miller, an old friend of hers who was on his way to the West Coast, spending some time in Washington with Lepska, the Polish girl he was to marry.

Another friend of Caresse's, the actor Canada Lee, often came to Washington but couldn't eat with us at the Trianon because he was black. Nor could he eat in any "white" restaurant, or attend any white theater, in that center of activity of the second large-scale attempt to save the world for democracy. When we went out to eat with Canada, we would go to an African restaurant, the Bengazi, whose proprietor had no prejudice against whites. Ironically, the largest theater in town, which never let a black onto its stage or into its auditorium, was called the National Theatre.

Caresse determined to break down this barrier. She began by staging *Othello* at her gallery, with Canada magnificently tragic in the title role (I was lucky enough to be cast as Iago, and Caresse was a luminous Desdemona). Canada, now alas too much forgotten, was a superb actor who had scored his greatest success in Richard Wright's *Native Son*. In 1944 Caresse decided to flout the segregation laws and customs by opening a theater in Washington which would have blacks on its stage and in its audience. Those of us who wore uniforms in the daytime were going to put on costumes at night to take part in the defiant project. The first play was to be the Restoration tragedy *Oroonoko* (1695), the drama which Thomas Southerne had adapted from Mrs. Aphra Behn's novel about African slaves revolting against their British masters in the West Indies. Caresse tried to purchase or rent a defunct movie house on Ninth Street, but regrettably was unable to do so. If she had, she might have caused some huge trouble; but it might have been good trouble.

As the war in Europe drew near its end, Caresse wanted to return there, particularly after the Allied troops took over Paris. But the leading figure in the passport bureau of our State Department, a woman known as Ma Shipley, wouldn't let Caresse go to Europe then. One evening when she was grieving over this at one of her

cocktail parties, I suggested that she start a new cultural magazine with international overtones—she blazed up at once and began organizing the project. Since paper was difficult to obtain in bulk, she cleverly bought papers of different sizes and colors which would be put into cardboard folders; and she called the magazine *Portfolio*. This was issued for several years under the imprint of the Black Sun Press, taking over the name of the avant-garde publishing house Caresse and Harry Crosby had started in Paris in the 1920s. Soon after the first appearance of *Portfolio*, Ma Shipley had granted the passport, and Caresse brought out editions featuring European writers: one number was devoted to the new French authors, another to Italians, still another to Greeks, introducing to America many of the authors who were to become famous in their own lands and throughout the world in the postwar years. Caresse edited all their work brilliantly and also included that of notable artists. She invited several of us to become associate editors, in some issues calling us assistant editors: Henry Miller, Samuel Rosenberg, and Selden Rodman. I was fortunately able to serve as literary editor, which meant that new books poured in for several years.

The first number of *Portfolio* was ready in the summer of 1945, and Caresse set up a party to celebrate it; the day before the party, V-J Day broke upon us, and there was dancing in the sedate streets of Washington. In a wild crowd at the Balalaika I saw an old friend, Thornton Wilder, in the uniform of a lieutenant colonel. I asked him whether I could bring the girl I was with over to meet him, but with his eager politeness he said he would come over to our table. I took the liberty of inviting him to the *Portfolio* party at Caresse's gallery the next night, where he would for the first time meet David Daiches, who had come to teach at the University of Chicago just after Wilder had left. Wilder appeared at Caresse's, met David Daiches, and even suggested a book to him—which David then proceeded to write. Such episodes were typical of Caresse's gatherings, at which the air was electric with potential creative activity.

A year after the war I married, while still in the Air Force, and my wife and I invited Caresse to visit us for Christmas at Craig Air Force Base, Alabama. She accepted and, at military parties, was as brilliantly successful as ever in conveying her magnetic geniality. In the daytime we virtually closed her in her room, telling her that she

must write her autobiography; I even gave her a title, *The Passionate Years*. She wrote a good many of the opening passages of the book there, finishing it not too long afterward, to the benefit of us all. (Eventually the Southern Illinois University Press brought out a paperback edition.) It concluded, Molly Bloomwise, "The answer to the challenge is always 'Yes.'"

Until her death in 1970, Caresse lived in different parts of the world, untiringly active in furthering her Citizens of the World movement. For a few years she operated out of Greece, from Delphi, the classical-mythical navel of the world. But the Greek government, becoming increasingly reactionary, finally expelled her from that country.

My wife and I sometimes stayed with her in Washington, where she kept her residence, and she came to see us in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, and in Carterville, Illinois, where we moved after I had joined the SIU-C faculty; and one or both of us would see her in London, Paris, or Rome. On one of Caresse's several visits to Southern Illinois, she addressed my Fitzgerald-Hemingway class, a special treat for the students. On an earlier occasion she had agreed to talk with the students of my James Joyce course about her old Paris acquaintance, Joyce. But just before we left for Carbondale, a neighbor telephoned and said, "Turn on the TV—quick." We did so, and discovered that President Kennedy had been assassinated. Caresse said, "I won't be able to talk to your class," and I assured her that I would certainly cancel the session on such a day. We went over to Carbondale, and on the way to the classroom I stopped to collect my mail at the English department, where the departmental secretary, Betty Mitchell, said that all classes had been called off for the day.

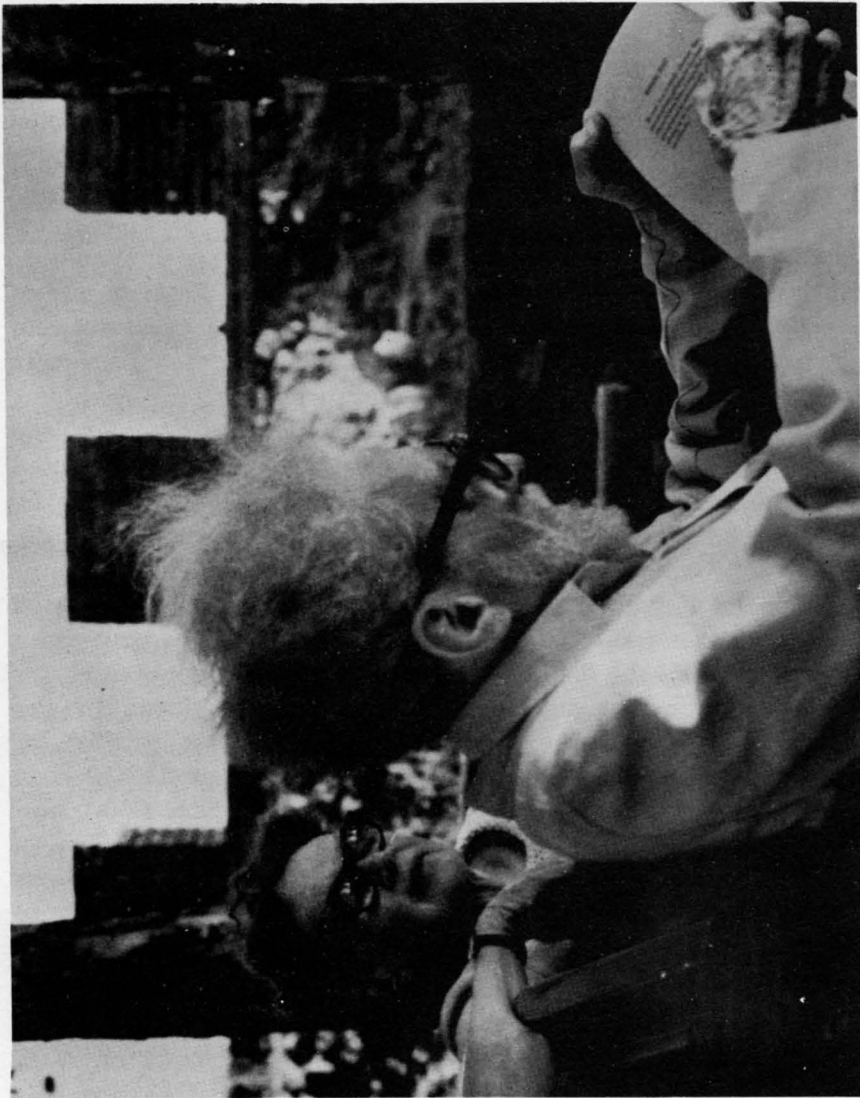
So Caresse, my wife, and I were left in Carbondale on a terrible day: what could we do? Caresse said, "Why don't we go to see Bucky Fuller?" It was a marvelous idea, and we drove to Bucky's dymaxion house which stands out oddly among the Grant-Wood-Midwest-Gothic houses of Carbondale. We were going to see old friends (for, like Caresse, I had known Bucky before either of us came to SIU-C), and it was the best possible thing anyone could have done on that day, for we sat talking quietly with Bucky and Anne Fuller. We had scheduled a party for Caresse in Carterville the next night, and that morning every one of the guests telephoned to ask whether we were going to have the party, and we said we would. And

everyone came, except one couple who soon afterward were divorced, and everyone said it was a wonderful gathering, because it was a dreadful time and people needed to be together. Caresse was grand as always, becoming an unforgettable part of the SIU-C community.

Her connection with the university was made permanent when the Morris Library acquired her papers, for the most part connected with the Black Sun Press. The library in those days had money to spend, and Ralph McCoy, then the Librarian (and later Dean of Libraries), decided to try to obtain as much twentieth-century material as he could for Special Collections—why pay thousands of dollars for a one-page letter by a Restoration or Regency author when more recent material was considerably less expensive and would grow in value? I suggested various authors I knew personally or by correspondence, including Lawrence Durrell, Kay Boyle, Richard Aldington, and Francis Stuart. Caresse's papers would make a very fine acquisition, what with all the Black Sun Press's limited editions, original manuscripts, and letters from Hemingway, Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Hart Crane, Pound, and others, as well as the portraits of Caresse by noted painters. But Caresse was cagey.

I can recall that Ralph McCoy and I once telephoned her from his office to the castle she had bought in Italy. Later she wrote me a letter saying that she didn't want her papers to be deposited at any library where black students couldn't have access to them. This was in the early 1960s, when civil-rights advocates were battling for desegregation—much of their work has recently (late 1970s) been undone by Nixon and Ford appointees to the Supreme Court—and perhaps Caresse felt that the term "Southern" in Southern Illinois was suspicious; she hadn't met any black faculty members at our parties (I don't think there were any then), and when we had gone to Carbondale restaurants she hadn't seen any black students eating in them. I wrote a letter telling her that there was no segregation on the SIU-C campus, that black students were allowed access everywhere. Caresse finally sold the papers to SIU-C, and various scholars have come here to consult them, crediting SIU-C in their books for whatever use of them they made.

When Caresse wanted to sell her castle, Roccasinabalda, she suggested that SIU-C might wish to buy it. President Delyte Morris heard that I was about to leave for Europe and invited me to



Ezra Pound and Caresse Crosby, the 1960s.

breakfast to discuss the castle; he asked me to make a report on it. I said I knew nothing technically about buildings, particularly castles, but he assured me that that didn't matter: he wanted to know what kind of summer school it might make. So, from Rome, I went with Caresse in her chauffeur-driven car to Roccasinabalda, about an hour's drive northeast. The castle, set wonderfully on mountainside cliffs, has towers and battlemented walls that provide a massive view of the valleys of the Sabine Mountains. When we arrived at the castle gate, members of Caresse's household staff came down to the car and carried her up the sloping entranceway to the castle itself. This might seem a revival of the tradition of welcoming the grand lady, but the ceremony was performed only because the condition of Caresse's heart made it impossible for her to walk uphill.

The castle was full of young people staying there, painting and writing; Caresse had even put in a swimming pool. My report to President Morris was non-technical, merely a subjective appreciation of the place, but the next time he went to Europe, he and Mrs. Morris went to see it, along with several other people, including John Rendleman, then Vice President at the SIU-C campus. Caresse liked the Morrises and Rendlemans, but she mischievously and considerably raised her originally-quoted price, so the party left politely, but without further discussion of the matter. Years later, Bucky Fuller's daughter told me why Caresse had virtually doubled the price, but let it not be mentioned here.

Caresse died in Rome on 24 January 1970, at the age of seventy-seven. I learned of her death almost at once by telephone, and wrote the obituary for the *Times* (London). On 18 February, a group of us met for a memorial gathering at the Gotham Book Mart, with Bucky Fuller (who had been active with Caresse in her Citizens of the World movement) as master of ceremonies. Frances Steloff of the Gotham said that Caresse always represented the joy of life, and her gaiety and charm should always be remembered, among her positive achievements. Many of her other friends spoke of her reminiscently, always mentioning her brightness; Sam Rosenberg pointed out that she was never malicious. Three friends who couldn't attend sent tape recordings from California: Kay Boyle, Henry Miller, and Anais Nin. Bucky Fuller's son-in-law, Rob Snyder, showed his evocative film of Caresse at Roccasinabalda, with Ezra Pound and others, and with flashbacks showing Caresse at other

places, with companions ranging all the way from Salvador Dali to Bob Hope.

When I returned to SIU-C a few days later, Ed Brown invited me to appear with him on the university's television station, and we talked about Caresse and showed a film made of her on one of her visits to Carbondale, in which Ralph Bushee (former Rare Books Librarian) and I discuss adventurous publishing with her. We are fortunate in having these films of her, and the title of Rob Snyder's provides a perfect epitaph for its subject: *Always Yes, Caresse*.

A Letter from Voltaire

Henry Vyverberg

François Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1694-1778) was a most extraordinary man. In France of the Old Regime, and in all Europe of his day, he was best known for his variegated roles as poet, playwright, and historian. In his later years his fame grew also as a critic of society, of organized religion, and of governmental institutions and abuses. He was a pamphleteer, a capitalist, a humanitarian, and something of a philosopher. By the age of sixty, with a voluminously productive quarter-century still ahead of him, Voltaire was already assuming for his liberal sympathizers the mantle of seer, and for his conservative opponents the leering mask of demon. In short, he was becoming the outstanding spokesman, idolized and feared in opposing camps, for the French Enlightenment—that secular, broadly humanist movement which gave shape to much of the reformist zeal whose most violent outlet would be the great French Revolution of 1789, and whose heritage has been a major motivating force within modern Western liberalism.¹

Supplementing his public roles, Voltaire was one of the most prolific letter writers of all time. Most of this correspondence during his earlier decades was undoubtedly private in nature. Later much of it was either fully intended to be publicized or was leaked to the public by himself or by his correspondents and their allies; in fact the letter considered here deals in part with such a leak. The scope of Voltaire's letter writing is revealed in Theodore Besterman's scholarly and monumental edition of Voltaire's *Correspondence*:² 107 volumes and 20,054 regularly catalogued letters, most of the latter by Voltaire himself, but some written to or simply about him. In this catalogue, the letter in the Morris Library collection is item 5122. It is addressed to Father Joseph de Menoux, Jesuit, and is undated;

internal evidence places it on or near 14 April 1754.³

The body of the SIU-C letter is in the careful handwriting of a secretary, but Voltaire signed the letter and added a substantial postscript in his own more relaxed hand. (Voltaire's official secretary between 1752 and 1756 was perhaps the most remarkable in a long line—the Italian historian Collini, who later published and commented on his master's correspondence with his niece and lover, Madame Denis.) Though of course many of Voltaire's letters are routine in nature, the Morris Library item is of unusual interest, touching as it does upon such significant matters as Voltaire's contemporary position, the publicizing of his correspondence, his relations with the Jesuits, his literary activities and literary classicism, and his characteristic health problems.

The year 1754 was an unsettled one for Voltaire. In the previous year he had left the court of his friend and enemy, Frederick the Great of Prussia, and had paused in his westward journey at the Alsatian town of Colmar. His residence there, with a number of excursions and brief sojourns nearby, lengthened to over a year (October 1753–November 1754), though he once satirized the nondescript little city as barbaric—a town “half German, half French, and wholly Iroquois.”⁴

Distressed by recent Voltairean writings and not wishing to offend the Prussian king with whom Voltaire had quarreled, King Louis XV found Voltaire *persona non grata*, and forbade him to return to Paris. In 1755 the wandering scholar would settle for a time in Geneva, but in the meantime Colmar was a way-station offering relative peace and quiet during a period when Voltaire was in especially poor health. It also afforded him the opportunity to see one of his historical works through a convenient local press.⁵ As an additional, not very demanding activity, Voltaire was making his first contributions to the writing of Denis Diderot's great project, the *Encyclopédie*, an immense compendium of knowledge and the Enlightenment's most celebrated war-machine against the established order in Europe. Forty-three articles by Voltaire would eventually appear in that work, and such articles as “Elegance” and “Eloquence” must have been written very near the time of the SIU-C letter to Menoux.⁶

Meanwhile Voltaire had to contend with a typical by-product of his liberal polemics: his old enemies the Jesuits were apparently

launching an effort to chase him from Alsace. The climax of this small campaign is reflected in the 14 April letter to Menoux, whose guiding hand Voltaire detected, possibly with good reason, in the affair. At stake was the undisturbed comfort of a genuinely ill man, not to mention the challenge of a transparent attempt to turn Versailles against Voltaire's continued presence on French soil, even so far from Paris as Colmar.

Voltaire had met the Jesuit priest Menoux in 1748 at Lunéville, the capital of nearby Lorraine. By treaty a decade earlier, the duchy of Lorraine had been granted for life to Stanislas Leszczynski, erstwhile king of Poland and father-in-law of Louis XV; Stanislas would retain his royal title, and his duchy would pass to France upon his death—as indeed it finally did in 1766. The royal status of Stanislas, as well as his successful efforts to transform the sleepy towns of Lunéville and Nancy into cultural centers of sorts, inevitably aroused Voltaire's admiration and his natural predilection for prestigious friends and allies. It is not surprising that he sought to remain on polite terms with the Alsatian ruler's closest French confidant, his preacher and confessor Father Menoux.

Joseph de Menoux (1695–1766) is today remembered, if at all, only for his connections with Voltaire and with Stanislas. The last significant published review of his life and work is found in a monumental biographical dictionary of more than a century ago.⁷ He was a minor author, producing several apologies for the Roman Catholic faith in general and the Jesuit order in particular, not to mention the *Discourse* on history referred to by Voltaire in the SIU-C letter of 1754. Several years later Voltaire would write to the celebrated hostess and patroness of the Enlightenment, the Marquise Du Deffand: “The Jesuit Menoux is not at all an idiot as you suspect, but quite the contrary.” By manipulation and misrepresentation, Menoux had received, said Voltaire, great sums from King Stanislas and a handsome ecclesiastical benefice from Pope Benedict XIII (actually XIV). Voltaire concluded that “he is a great plotter and intriguer, shrewd and obliging, a dangerous enemy and a great converter of souls.”⁸ Since Voltaire's correspondence contains no important revelations concerning Menoux between 1754 and 1759, it is likely that his opinion of the Jesuit had changed little in those years. It is virtually certain that Voltaire's elaborate professions of friendship and affection for Menoux in 1754 were far less sincere

than they might have been.

In any case, the outstanding issue between Voltaire and Menoux was not one of personalities, but the fact that Menoux was a Jesuit, and Voltaire a vigorous proponent of the secular, often belligerently anti-clerical, Enlightenment. To be sure, Voltaire had been educated, as had such other Enlightened philosophers as Diderot and Helvétius, at the Jesuit school of Louis-le-Grand in Paris; there he had been imbued with an indelible taste for the literature of classical antiquity, and had been subjected to an indoctrination, thereafter promptly cast off, in Catholic theology.⁹ The Jesuit order became a favorite target of the Enlightenment in its warfare against supernaturalism and book-burning, against religious fanaticism and obscurantism. By 1760, with the apparently definitive ruin of the French Jesuits in sight (a royal edict of 1764 would suppress the order totally within France), Voltaire could write exultantly to Helvétius: "This century begins to be that of the triumph of reason. The Jesuits . . . [here Voltaire adds several other objects of his wrath] will cry out in vain: they will find among respectable people only horror and scorn. It is to the king's interest that the number of philosophers grow, and that of fanatics diminish." In the same letter, as one example of the doomed, last gasps of the Jesuit endeavor, Voltaire cited "brother Menoux," pathetically managing still to direct the conscience of some "idiot woman in Nancy."¹⁰

Such recriminations and scorn, of course, barely surface in the Voltaire-Menoux correspondence of 1754, though the true feelings of both parties are not always wholly disguised. Before turning to the translation and annotation of the Morris Library letter, one should look more closely at the series of five extant letters which preceded it. The 14 April letter is arguably the most important of the six, not only because it is the culmination of the series, but because the originals of the seminal first two letters have been lost, and are replaced by contemporary copies with slightly divergent texts.

In the first letter, of 17 February 1754, Voltaire urgently asks a favor of Menoux: that he suppress the activities of one Father Mérat, a Jesuit whom Menoux has sent to Colmar, reputedly to stir up trouble for the ailing philosopher. Voltaire's disregard for truth reaches heights here that were seldom surpassed in a career not always notable for truthfulness when self-preservation was at stake.

"You know," he writes quite shamelessly, "how much I have always been attached to your [Jesuit] society and to your person . . . I am persuaded that your prudence and your spirit of conciliation will forestall the disagreeable consequences of this little affair. Father Mérat will easily understand that a mouth charged with announcing the word of God should not be the trumpet of calumny, that he should bring peace and not disturbance, and that immoderate proceedings here can only inspire aversion for a respectable society that is dear to me, and which should have no enemies at all. I beg you to write him; you can even send him my letter."¹¹

For the 23 February reply by Menoux, like the 17 February letter of Voltaire, we can refer only to a leaked copy; Voltaire would later insist, though he admitted he could not prove, that all of these publicized copies were inaccurate. In the 23 February letter Menoux maintains that Mérat is a "wise and moderate man," and promises that, though Menoux has no authority over him, he will indeed write him and forward Voltaire's letter. Perhaps Mérat is in fact prejudiced against Voltaire, and in truth, Menoux continues, "how can you expect that those devoted as we are to religion—by conviction, condition, duty, and zeal—should always remain silent when they hear unceasing attacks on what they see as the most sacred and salutary thing in the world? But that is what one often sees in those writings spread abroad under your name . . ."¹²

There are several witnesses to the fact that the two letters, apparently leaked by Menoux or a friend of his, were promptly disseminated through much of Europe, and that they were in fact sometimes considered damaging to Voltaire, presumably because of the fawning, transparently false devotion to Jesuitism that Voltaire had assumed, and what some would consider the well-deserved little lecture that he received in return. Madame Du Deffand wrote Baron Scheffer in April that the letters were well known in Paris, and added, of Voltaire, that "it really is a shame that such a fine genius should be such a big fool."¹³ A 17 May letter from Scheffer, in Stockholm, to Madame Du Deffand noted how pleased Frederick's court in Berlin was with the publicized correspondence, as it was bad publicity for Voltaire.¹⁴

The third extant letter of the Voltaire-Menoux correspondence, dated 26 March, shows Voltaire aware of the dissemination of the first two, and highly indignant.¹⁵ Both letters, he says, have even

been printed, including words in Menoux's reply which are incompatible with his character and his earlier friendship with Voltaire. Menoux, writes Voltaire, should make amends for the "falsified and poisoned" letter by penning a friendly missive disavowing the publicized version; Voltaire will then show the disavowal to the local authorities, who have gotten an unfortunate impression from the correspondence. Mérat himself has recently visited Voltaire, and will give him a copy of Menoux's *Discourse* on history as soon as it can be sent from Strasbourg.¹⁶ In the meantime Voltaire is sending to Menoux a recent historical study of his own. After further chatting, Voltaire affirms "the true attachment that I have for your person," includes flattering phrases to be transmitted to King Stanislas, and finally notes that Mérat has in fact just delivered the copy of Menoux's *Discourse*.¹⁷

In March and early April Voltaire was writing to his friends that Menoux had disavowed the circulated letters.¹⁸ However, the fourth letter in the Voltaire-Menoux series, dated 5 April, was still a plea from Voltaire to send a written disavowal.¹⁹ Both Louis XV and his friend Madame de Pompadour, he said, had seen the letters.

Apparently it was on 10 April that Voltaire received the long awaited letter of disavowal from Menoux—a letter (which now is lost) of reconciliation and friendship. A letter from Voltaire to his niece on that date²⁰ refers to this and to another lost letter. Menoux had consented even to publication of the disavowal in the famous *Mercur*e (it never did appear in that journal, as it turned out), and Voltaire urged that Madame Denis, back in Paris, make sure that Madame de Pompadour see the letter. He noted happily that Mérat was leaving Colmar, and that Menoux, of all things, was proposing to accompany Voltaire on a visit to the therapeutic baths at Plombières.

The fifth item in the extant Voltaire-Menoux correspondence is dated 12 April, and is from Menoux in Nancy.²¹ Its first point of interest is Menoux's attempt to explain, probably not very truthfully, how the two letters came to be altered and publicized: it must have been, he says, the fault of the copyist when Menoux communicated the letters to his provincial superior as a matter of record.²² The second matter of interest is a little sermon to Voltaire in which Menoux discerns special plans for Voltaire in God's providential scheme and solemnly asserts that Voltaire may yet attain Christian salvation. But surely, adds Menoux, Voltaire must

already be seeking the consolations of faith during his long illness.²³ Voltaire's reaction to all this is unrecorded, but may be imagined.

On or near the 14th of April, Voltaire wrote the sixth and final letter of the series—the letter now in the Special Collections of Morris Library.

THE ANNOTATED LETTER

(Voltaire to Menoux, c. 14 April 1754)²⁴

"My dear and Reverend Father, by no means have I felt like mingling the pleasure of talking to you about literature with the grief caused me by the publication and alteration of our letters. This betrayal, which is as painful to me as it is widely condemned, occupied my thoughts quite enough.

"Today I am yielding to the simple satisfaction of speaking to you concerning your eloquent discourse on history.²⁵ Hardly any academic discourse has given me as much pleasure. Most such discourses are only pointless verbal eloquence. 'Utile dulci'²⁶ is your motto. You have presented excellent precepts eloquently, and I myself would like to have followed them all. But *non semper feriet quodcumque minabitur arcus*,²⁷ and the bad health which has always been my lot²⁸ has frequently done harm to my feeble talents. It is sad indeed to have great desires and little strength. Unfortunately my passion for work increases, and my strength diminishes.²⁹

"Since you are so kind as to speak to me concerning the editions of my works,³⁰ I can assure you that there is not one which comes at all near to satisfying me. With all the care of which I am capable I have corrected the pieces which people have insisted on collecting. But as my taste has become more exacting with age, so am I more discontented with myself. I have the means of producing an edition much superior to the others, but still very far from satisfying me. I would be honored to show you some fragments if I could flatter myself that I would see you at the waters,³¹ and if my confiding to you could at least contribute to your amusement in your leisure moments—but what point is served by all these vain labors? *Faciendi plures libros nullus est finis. Frequensque meditatio, carnis afflictio est.*³² It is true that all is sufficiently 'afflictio et vanitas.'³³ Consolation is to be found only in philosophy and in friendship. I

Je n'ai point voulu mêler mon cher et révérend père
la douceur de vous parler de littérature à l'amertume
que me causait la publication et l'altération de nos
lettres. cette trahison aussi sensible pour moi, qu'elle
est généralement condamnée, m'occupait assez.

Je me livre aujourd'hui à la satisfaction pure de mes
parler de votre éloquent discours sur l'histoire. il n'y a
qu'iers de discours académiques qui m'aient fait autant
de plaisir. la plupart n'ont qu'une vaine éloquence de
paroles. utile dulci est la devise de votre. vous donnez
éloquemment d'excellens préceptes et je voudrais les avoir
tous suivis. mais, non semper feriet quodcumque miserabiliter
arcus, et la mauvaise santé qui a toujours été mon
partage a souvent nuï à mes faibles talents. il est bien
triste d'avoir de grands desirs et peu de force. mal-
heureusement ma passion pour le travail augmente,

et mes forces diminuent.

Puisque vous avez la bonté de me parler des
éditions de mes ouvrages je peux vous assurer qu'il
n'y en a aucune dont je sois content, il s'en faut
beaucoup. j'ai corrigé avec tout le soin dont je suis
capable toutes les pièces qu'on s'est obstinée à recueillir.
mais plus mon goût est devenu sévère avec l'âge, et
plus je suis mécontent de moi-même. j'ai de quoi faire
une édition bien supérieure aux autres, mais fort
éloignée encor de me contenter. j'aurais l'honneur
de vous en montrer des morceaux si je pouvais me
flatter de vous voir aux caux, et si ma confiance
en vous pouvait au moins contribuer à votre
amusement dans vos moments de loisir, mais à quoi
servent tous ces vains travaux? Faciendi plures libros
nullus est finis. frequensque meditatio carnis afflictio est.
Il est vrai qu'il est avec afflictio et vanitas il n'y a
de consolation que dans la philosophie et dans l'amitié. je
trouverais l'une et l'autre dans vous. mille tendres
respects au père Lesley. ne doutez pas des sentiments
inaltérables avec lesquels j'erois toujours, mon cher et

would like to find both in you. Give my tender respects to Father Lesley.³⁴ Do not doubt, my dear and Reverend Father, those unchangeable sentiments with which I shall always be

“Your very humble and very obedient servant,
Voltaire

“As I was about to seal my letter I have received the one with which you honor me dated the 12th. They still assure me that the letters are printed but that there are few copies; the Intendant³⁵ at Strasbourg informs me that he has seen manuscript copies each different from the others. He is as indignant about this as you are. I am also informed that they have been printed at Utrecht. They will certainly be in all the printed public journals, as they are already in the handwritten gazettes.³⁶ It's sad. Permit me to send your disavowal to Utrecht and to Cologne. It is a misfortune. But life is full of them. The bad weather is another misfortune: the season for taking the waters must be postponed. The snow seeping into the ground spoils all the mineral waters. I try to be patient. I suffer, and I love you.”³⁷

THE BACKGROUND: NOTES

1. Among handy recent guides to the Enlightenment are the following: Robert Anchor, *The Enlightenment Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Frederick B. Artz, *The Enlightenment in France* (Kent: Kent State Univ. Press, 1968); and Norman Hampson, *A Cultural History of the Enlightenment* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968). The best detailed, scholarly study is Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966, 1969).

2. Theodore Besterman, ed., *Voltaire's Correspondence*, 107 vols. (Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, Les Délices, 1953-1965). A revised edition, also by Besterman, of Voltaire's letters appeared (in smaller type) in 45 volumes, plus lists and calendars, as part of Voltaire's *Complete Works*, vol. LXXXI ff. (Genève, Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1968-1977). Here 21,221 letters are regularly catalogued, again with some of them written to or about Voltaire. In this edition the SIU-C letter is item 5772.

3. *Correspondence*, XXIV, 192-193.

4. *Ibid.*, (Voltaire to the Marquis d'Argens, 3 March 1754), XXIV, 112. All English translations in this article are those of the author.

5. For Voltaire's months in and around Colmar, 1753-1754, see these substantial biographical studies: Theodore Besterman, *Voltaire* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), pp. 335-38; Alfred Noyes, *Voltaire* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1936), pp. 411-41; and Jean Orieux, *Voltaire, ou la royauté de l'esprit* (Paris: Flammarion, 1966), pp. 457-64.

6. John Lough, *The "Encyclopedie"* (New York: David McKay, 1971), p.

reuerend pere

Votre très-humble et très
obéissant Serviteur.

Voltaire

comme j'allais fermer ma lettre je reçois celle
Donc vous m'honorez en datte du 12. on m'affure
toujours que les lettres sont imprimées, mais qu'il
y en a peu d'exemplaires, m' l'intendant de
Strasbourg me mande qu'il en a vu des copies
manuscrites toutes différentes les unes des autres.
il en est aussi indigne que vous. on me mande
aussi qu'elles sont imprimées a utrecht. elles
seront certainement dans tous les papiers
publies ou imprimés, comme elles sont déjà dans
les gazettes a la main. cela est triste. permettez
moy d'envoyer votre desaveu a utrecht et
a cologne. c'est un malheur. mais l'air en est
plein. le mauvais temps est un autre malheur,
il faut attendre la saison d'eaue. les neiges filées
dans la terre gâtent toutes les eaues minerales.
je vous prie de patience. je souffre, et je vous aime

48; Raymond Naves, *Voltaire et l'encyclopédie* (Paris: Les Éditions des Presses Modernes, 1938), pp. 13-15.

7. *Nouvelle biographie générale* . . . (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1857-1866), XXXIV, 1003-04.

8. *Correspondence* (Voltaire to Mme. Du Deffand, 3 December 1759), XXXVIII, 7.

9. Besterman, *Voltaire*, pp. 31-43.

10. *Correspondence* (Voltaire to Helvétius, 27 October 1760), XLIV, 94-95.

11. *Ibid.* (Voltaire to Menoux, 17 February 1754), XXIV, 85-86.

12. *Ibid.* (Menoux to Voltaire, 23 February 1754), XXIV, 93-94.

13. Gunnar von Proschwitz, ed., "Lettres inédites de mme Du Deffand . . ." (Marquise Du Deffand to Baron Scheffer, 25 April 1754), in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Geneve: Institut et Musée Voltaire, Les Délices, 1959), X, 365.

14. *Correspondence* (Baron Scheffer to Mme Du Deffand, 17 May 1754), XXIV, 257.

15. *Ibid.* (Voltaire to Menoux, 26 March 1754), XXIV, 159-61.

16. *Ibid.*, XXIV, 160-61 (referring to *Discours prononcé, le 20 octobre 1753, à la séance publique de la Société royale et littéraire de Nancy*).

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.* (Voltaire to the Comtesse de Lutzelbourg, 26 March 1754), XXIV, 158; (Voltaire to Mme Denis, 9 April 1754), XXIV, 179.

19. *Ibid.* (Voltaire to Menoux, 5 April 1754), XXIV, 175-76.

20. *Ibid.* (Voltaire to Mme Denis, 10 April 1754), XXIV, 181.

21. *Ibid.* (Menoux to Voltaire, 12 April 1754), XXIV, 189-90.

22. Several days later, in a letter to his good friend the Comte d'Argental (*ibid.*, 16 April 1754, XXIV, 201), Voltaire intimates his suspicions of Menoux's collusion in the publicizing of the letters. Surely he had suspected as much, all along. Presumably the truth of the matter will never be definitively established.

23. *Ibid.* (Menoux to Voltaire, 12 April 1754), XXIV, 190.

THE LETTER: NOTES

24. Translation by the author of this article.

25. *Discours prononcé, le 20 octobre 1753, à la séance publique de la Société royale et littéraire de Nancy* (Nancy, 1754). Menoux was an early member of this official literary academy of Lorraine, founded by King Stanislas. Publication of addresses given before learned societies was not uncommon in the eighteenth century and not unknown in our own day. Menoux's *Discourse* included some derogatory references to Voltaire's historical writing. Voltaire had received his copy on 26 March, and the text of the 14 April letter acknowledges that his writing has not always followed Menoux's guidelines. He is still careful, however, not to react angrily, as he is presumably anxious to avoid another confrontation with the Jesuits, with whom a truce has just been negotiated. As it turns out, of course, Voltaire's promised "simple" chat concerning the *Discourse* is quickly exhausted in rhetoric, and he turns to other matters.

26. "Pleasant things are instructive." (Horace, *Ars poetica*, 343.) This is the first of four uses of Latin in this letter. Educated Europeans (the males at least)

of the eighteenth century were expected to know Latin, and generally did know it. Admiration for the literature of classical antiquity—especially of Rome, since Greek scholarship was much rarer—was virtually unchallenged and was part of the "Classical" norm in literature and art which preceded the early nineteenth century triumph of "Romanticism." Early-modern classicism admired not only the works of the ancients but stressed modern adherence to a supposedly antique ideal of literary and artistic discipline, restraint, and conformity to rules. Voltaire himself attempted to follow the classical ideal in his most strictly literary production (in poetry and drama), as well as being, like most of his educated contemporaries, an informal and informed phrase-dropper in Latin. His greater than usual use of Latin in the present letter is probably related to his correspondent's Jesuit affiliation, since the many educational facilities controlled by the society strongly stressed Latinity. In this amicable 14 April letter the frequent use of Latin was perhaps a deliberate reminder of Voltaire's Jesuit upbringing and a subtle suggestion of the cultural ties joining him to Menoux.

27. "The bow will not always strike what it threatens." (Horace, *Ars poetica*, 350.)

28. Since his twenties Voltaire had been complaining of his health, and at least sometimes with reason. As early as 1722 he described himself as "always on the go and always ill" (Besterman, *Voltaire*, p. 81); "I am accustomed," he wrote in that same year, "to the disorders of the body" (*ibid.*, p. 93). Frequently in his nearly sixty years thereafter, this energetic hypochondriac would spread the word that he was moribund, and probably half-believed his own reports.

29. Twenty-four years of vigorous work remained to Voltaire after the writing of this letter, including about three-quarters of his extant correspondence and a voluminous list of publications, among which is the delightful little novel by which he is best known in our century, *Candide*. "Work," wrote Voltaire to Menoux on 26 March 1754, "is the true consolation of life" (*Correspondence*, XXIV, 160).

30. Menoux's reference to the editions of Voltaire's works is in one of the letters now lost. Voltaire's contemporary reputation is suggested by the fact that by this date, in addition to countless individual titles, at least fifteen editions of his works, or eighty-eight volumes all together, had already been published (Jean Malcolm, ed., *Table de la Bibliographie de Voltaire par Bengesco* [Geneve: Institut et Musée Voltaire, Les Délices, 1953], pp. 82-83).

31. The reference is to the little town of Plombières, not far from Colmar—a watering spot celebrated as early as Roman times for the therapeutic qualities of its mineral water. As noted above, Menoux had suggested accompanying Voltaire there. Eventually in the summer of 1754 Voltaire did pass several weeks at Plombières, not with Menoux but with more congenial old friends.

32. "Of the making of many books there is no end, and in much study there is weariness for the flesh." (*The Holy Bible* [New American Catholic Edition]: *Ecclesiastes* XII, 12. The citation in *Correspondence*, XXIV, 193, n. 3, is incorrect.)

33. "Affliction (weariness) and vanity"

34. Father Ernest Leslie (1713-1779) was a French man of letters, Scottish by birth, and a Jesuit. He headed the seminary at Nancy, and like Menoux he

was a member of the Academy there. He too had known Voltaire in 1748 at Lunéville. (*Nouvelle biographie générale* . . . , XXX, 951. His birth date is given incorrectly there as 1743; see *Correspondence*, XXIV, 161, n. 6.)

35. In mid-eighteenth century continental France there were thirty-one Intendants (*Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des arts et des sciences*, VIII (1765), 807). The Intendant was the chief agent of the central French government sent into each "Generality" as the king's representative to supervise administration, legal affairs, and taxation.

36. "Gazettes à la main" were handwritten news-letters which still in the eighteenth century had not been rendered completely obsolete by printed journals.

37. "Je vous aime" may seem an incongruous close for this letter from Voltaire to a Jesuit priest. One should, however, keep three points in mind: first, that "aimer," to love, has less force in French than in English, and refers frequently only to friendship or affection; secondly, that the epistolary style of the eighteenth century was often more florid, more obviously exaggerated, than that of the twentieth; and thirdly, that Voltaire's letters to Menoux all were designed to soften his Jesuitical zeal and ire. They illustrate well the effectiveness of Voltaire's friendly wiles. There seem to have been no follow-up letters to this one, now that Voltaire had achieved his goal.

Masters Works on Toward the Gulf

Herb Russell

In 1914, Edgar Lee Masters, then an eminently successful Chicago lawyer, published in the now-defunct journal *Reedy's Mirror* some two-hundred poems about talkative ghosts in a midwestern cemetery. In the following year, when the poems were collected in book form as the *Spoon River Anthology*, the volume became an international popular and critical success and introduced with a flourish what has since come to be known as the Chicago Renaissance. In its first year of publication alone, Masters' book reportedly sold 80,000 copies,¹ and it became, according to one critic, "the most read and most talked-of volume of poetry that had ever been written in America."²

Unfortunately, *Spoon River* was also to be Masters' only lasting title, for, although he published forty more books between 1915 and his death in 1950, he was never able to duplicate his one-time, phenomenal achievement. As Louis Untermeyer said of the writer's dramatic rise and subsequent decline, "With *Spoon River Anthology* Masters arrived—and left."³

Such was Masters' prominence that his decline itself might constitute an important chapter in the literary history of the Midwest, but today, a quarter of a century after his death, there is but one sustained discussion of his post-*Spoon River* literary activities.⁴ Especially lacking are biographical facts, beyond those provided by the poet in his autobiography, including accurate information about his post-*Spoon River* habits of composition.

Fortunately, documents in Special Collections of Morris Library at Southern Illinois University shed at least some light on both these matters. In letters exchanged in 1916-17 with Dr. Paul Carus, the editor of the Open Court Press and the philosophical journal *The Monist*, Masters commented on his progress with the manuscript of

Toward the Gulf (1918), the third volume to come after *Spoon River*, and the first book he published after he became wealthy enough to give up law and devote himself to literature.⁵ In addition, Masters also wrote of his move to the resort area of Spring Lake, Michigan, and his activities at his writing retreat there.

Masters moved his family from Chicago to the Spring Lake area in 1917 after an especially lucrative law case.⁶ There, on the small farm he called a "haven," he was free to spend virtually as much time as he wished in preparing the manuscript of *Toward the Gulf*.⁷ Just how little attention he did devote to this book can be determined by combining information in his autobiography with information in the letters he exchanged with his fellow midwestern intellectual, Dr. Carus.

Carus began the significant part of the correspondence on 2 August 1917 with an invitation to Masters and his family to meet him at his Michigan summer place in Benton Harbor. Masters declined the invitation on 7 August, saying that he had recently purchased his country estate and that, since his arrival on 25 May, he had found himself occupied with maintenance and repair. Because of these labors he had only recently begun to write and therefore felt that he should postpone his visit to Benton Harbor for a month.

Carus took literally Masters' request for a thirty-day delay and proposed on 23 August that they meet at Benton Harbor on 7 September. But Masters had to defer this invitation also. He wrote Carus on 26 August to say that he had spent almost the entire summer working around the house, and because he had also had numerous guests, he was only now—in the fourth week of August—getting around to his writing. For these reasons Masters again suggested a later meeting.

Unfortunately, during the next month, on 13 September 1917, Masters stormed out of his writing "haven" following lengthy feuds with both his wife and his neighbors.⁸ He wrote in his autobiography that he took with him "the script of *Toward the Gulf*" and that "there were 46 poems in the book, nearly all written that summer."⁹ He also left the impression that he was finished with the volume: "My book was written."¹⁰

While it is already clear that *Toward the Gulf* was put together under stress, Masters' letters to Carus show that the book also suffered from haste and inattention. Thus, while Masters wrote in his

autobiography (published nineteen years after these events) that he had begun *Toward the Gulf* "by July" of 1917,¹¹ his personal letters to Carus suggest instead that he wrote, revised, or approved for publication the forty-six poems in the volume in only five weeks (from about 7 August to 13 September). Indeed, if his letter of 26 August is taken at face value, he may have put in only about two and one-half weeks on the book before he left the estate at Spring Lake. In fact, during the summer of 1917 Masters seems to have set aside so little time for serious composition that the information deducible from these letters adds to the popular assumption that he padded his post-*Spoon River* books with early verse.¹²

The letters in Morris Library thus offer useful background information which helps to explain the indifferent collection of verses which form *Toward the Gulf*: when Masters did finally achieve the economic independence he needed to devote himself full-time to his writing, he found too many other matters to divert him. The result was a mediocre volume instead of the literary equal to *Spoon River* that he was seeking.

NOTES

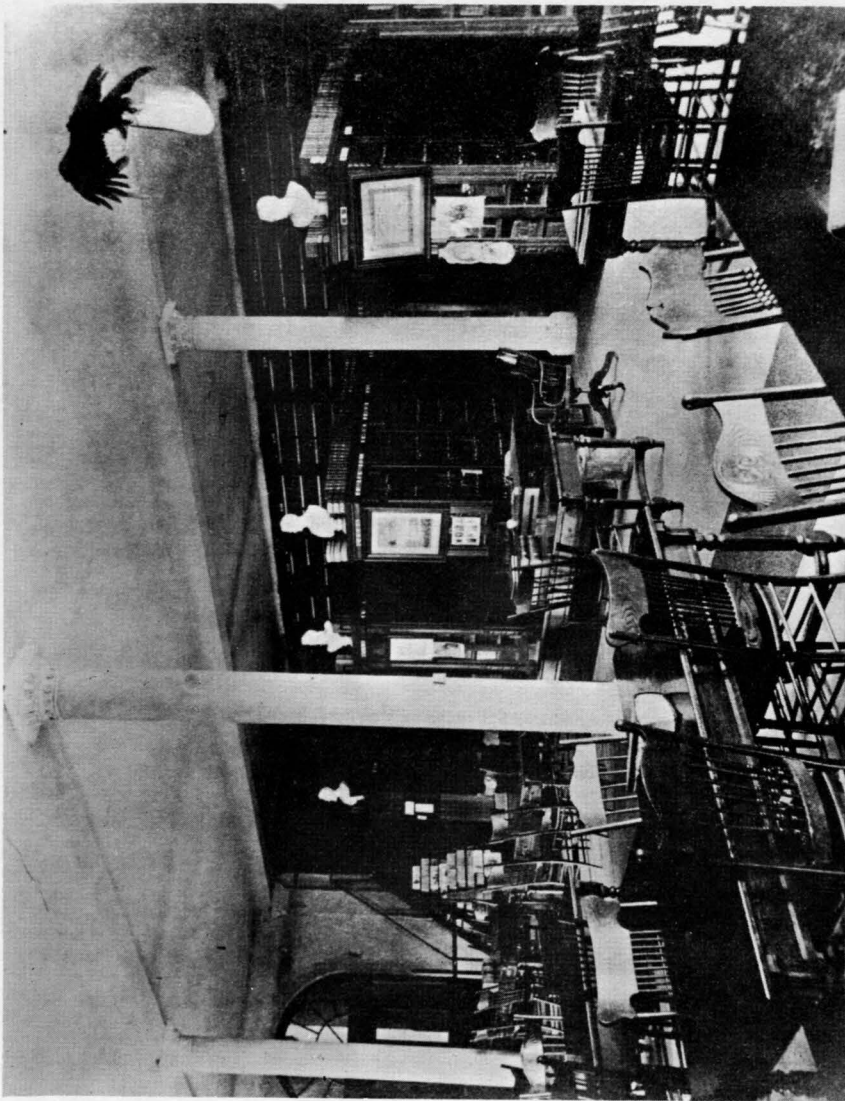
1. "Bitter Poet on Sad Poet," *Time*, 26 (7 October 1935), 67.
2. Percy Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1925), p. 52.
3. *American Poetry Since 1900* (New York: Holt, 1923), p. 123.
4. See my dissertation, "Edgar Lee Masters' Literary Decline: from *Spoon River* to *The New Spoon River* (1915-1924)," Southern Illinois Univ., 1977.
5. See the Open Court Papers, Accession II, Special Collections. For a discussion of these materials see Claudia McKenzie Foster's "The Open Court Papers," *ICarbS*, 2 (Fall 1975), 146-51.
6. Edgar Lee Masters, *Across Spoon River* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1936), pp. 383-88.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 394-95.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 395.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 389.
12. John T. Flanagan, *The Spoon River Poet and His Critics* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1974), p. 66.

Southern Illinois University Library A Century of Growth and Service

Kenneth G. Peterson

Southern Illinois University's first one hundred years as an institution of higher education coincide roughly with the American Library Association's first century. In celebrating the centennial of ALA's founding at Philadelphia in 1876, numerous journal articles and several books have been published that review its history and examine the development of libraries in the life of the nation. Although the academic library that grew from modest beginnings in Carbondale is but a small part of this development, it is interesting and appropriate in light of planning for the future to view the course of events that has resulted in a major research library to serve this university.¹

Considering that there are now over 2,000 four-year colleges and universities in the United States with faculties in the hundreds of thousands, student enrollments in the millions, and book resources in the hundreds of millions, it is difficult to envision the situation a century ago. In 1876, according to the *Annual Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education*, there were 356 colleges and universities (excluding professional schools and institutions described as providing "Superior Education for Women"), 3,352 faculty members, 25,647 undergraduate, and 597 graduate students, and under two million total library volumes. The major academic libraries were located at Harvard (212,050 volumes), Yale (95,200 volumes), Brown (45,000 volumes), Virginia (40,000 volumes), and Cornell (39,000 volumes). By today's standards these collections would be considered inadequate for most colleges. Although separate library buildings had been provided at both Harvard and Yale, and new libraries were under construction at Princeton (then known as the College of New Jersey), Rochester, and Brown, the collections were more typically housed in rooms within a classroom or all-purpose



The reading room of Wheeler Library, 1904.

building. Access usually was limited to a few hours per week when the library was staffed by a faculty member who served only part time as librarian, and when the collection was consulted but few books were removed from the premises. Southern Illinois Normal University and its library began operations in 1874 amid this overall setting.

THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS

A separate library building was not provided at Southern Illinois until Wheeler Library was opened in 1904. During its first thirty years the library had four successive locations, all in buildings which also contained classrooms and other facilities. When the university opened, a room was set aside for the library in the fourth floor northeast corner of the "first building," later referred to as "Old Normal." Funds were lacking to provide adequate furniture and shelving, and within two years the librarian reported that "fully one-half the books now lie on the floor, and must so lie until an appropriation sufficient to make suitable provision for them shall have been made."² Fortunately, funds were appropriated the following year that enabled the library to acquire additional equipment. In 1883, fire destroyed "Old Normal" but many of the books were saved by students who, under the personal direction of President Robert Allyn, carried or tossed them from the burning structure.

When a temporary frame building for the university was erected in 1884, the library was re-established there until the next permanent building was completed in 1887. The library was moved again to a room in the second floor northwest corner of the new structure, which came to be known over the years as "Old Main." Although satisfactory for the first few years, this space became inadequate as the collection grew even though additional shelving was provided. Thus, in 1896 the library was transferred again to the next newly constructed permanent building, known as the "Gymnasium, Library, and Science Building." (This structure was officially named Altgeld Hall in 1952.) The library quarters comprised one room measuring fifty by sixty feet in the first floor northeast corner, but was outgrown by 1903 when the collections reached 17,000 volumes.

The library's first "friend" was the university's first president,

Dr. Allyn. Recognizing that an adequate library was essential for the university's development, he donated books from his own collection, selected many of the first volumes purchased with state funds, and often returned from out-of-town trips with books for the library that he had bought personally. In 1877, it was reported that the library consisted of about 1,900 books and 1,850 magazines, plus reports and related materials. The following year, according to the university catalog, there were 5,000 volumes in the library. By 1883, the collection had grown to 8,000 volumes. In his report to the trustees that year, President Allyn described the collection as strongest in "history, biography, and science, especially in books on the theory and art of teaching, of pedagogics and the kindred branches of mind and morals."³ Although \$4,500 had been appropriated and spent for library materials up to that time, Allyn indicated this amount was inadequate and he appealed to the governor for an annual sum of at least \$1,000. As a result of the fire that destroyed the first building, however, the library went for five years without appropriations as available university resources were largely used for constructing the new main building. This fact, coupled with losses of books in the fire, resulted in little net growth in the collection. Between 1887 and 1904, however, as the results of purchases and gifts, close to 10,000 volumes were added. Appropriations for books averaged about \$1,500 annually from 1896 to 1900.

Typical of most academic institutions then, the library at Southern Illinois was served by part-time librarians during its early years. In September 1875, Granville F. Foster was chosen by the faculty to serve as the university's first librarian. In addition to the responsibilities of this position, Foster also served as director of the meteorological department and taught classes in history, geography, and physiology. With the assistance of other faculty members, Foster began to catalog the collection by providing separate card files of entries by authors, titles, and subject. An improvised alphabetical system was devised to classify books for arrangement on the shelves. By 1881, the librarian's work had increased to the extent that Foster recommended the position be made a full time assignment. More than a decade was to pass, however, before this change was made.

Foster resigned from the university in 1883, and Esther C. Finley succeeded him as librarian and teacher of history. In 1889, the librarian's position passed to John Galbraith, who also served as

editor of *The Normal Gazette*, an educational journal issued by the university. When the position again became vacant in 1892, Minnie J. Fryar was appointed the university's first full-time librarian. At that time the decision was also made to adopt the Dewey Decimal System, and during the next two years the collection was reclassified. Except for the period from 1899 until 1901, when she taught in the English department, Miss Fryar served as librarian until 1905. During her later years of service, planning and construction work were completed, and the collection was moved in 1904 to the university's first separate library building.

The library's early rules and regulations were largely determined by the faculty and were very restrictive by today's standards. For instance, students were required to obtain permits to read in the library and were denied access to certain kinds of books. In 1887, most books could be charged out for one week, but works of fiction and magazines were not to be taken from the building. At that time the library was open during the fourth and sixth periods on Mondays and Thursdays, and after classes on Wednesdays. By 1894, the library was open from 9 a.m. until noon on school days and Saturdays, but students had to sign upon entering and were required to remain in the building until the closing hour unless excused by the librarian. Contrasted with the close regulations on student use, it was noted in 1900 that some faculty members were not returning books to the library. Thereupon, consideration was given to applying library rules to students and faculty members alike.

During its first thirty years the library bore more resemblance to that of a preparatory school than a college or university. The circumstances of that early period changed, however, and a second stage of development began when the library moved to its new building.

WHEELER LIBRARY, 1904-1955

Early in 1903, the Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$25,000 for a new library. Plans were drawn and construction begun in July that year on a site east of the university's north entrance and northeast of the main building. When it was dedicated on commencement day in June 1904, Southern Illinois could boast of having one of the first college library buildings in the state and one

of the few teacher training schools in the nation to have a separate library facility. Two years later the building was named to honor Judge Samuel P. Wheeler, who had served as president of the university's Board of Trustees.

Described as "modified Romanesque" in architectural style, the ninety-two by ninety-two foot structure contained a basement, two full stories, and an attic. As planned, the library was housed on the first floor, which included the main reading room, periodical room, stack area, cataloging room, librarian's office, and receiving room. Installation of steel stacking, considered innovative at that time, was one of the library's main features. The second story contained class and general meeting rooms. Within a few years, however, the need to provide more space for the growing collection necessitated using part of the upper floor to accommodate additional stacks, which were made possible by an appropriation during the 1910-12 biennium. By the late twenties, increased service demands again led to the remodeling of the second floor to provide a reserve book section and two additional reading rooms.

Funds for acquisitions ranged only between \$1,000 and \$1,500 for several years after Wheeler Library was occupied. These appropriations roughly averaged two percent of the university's total budget. During that period the library had between 110 and 120 magazine and about thirty newspaper subscriptions. Fortunately, however, it did not depend solely upon purchasing books, for many additions were acquired as gifts and by exchanges with other libraries. Materials also were received from many government agencies, largely through the efforts of representatives and senators from Illinois. In 1933, the library received a major source of valuable acquisitions when it was designated a depository for publications issued by the United States Superintendent of Documents. Valuable items were also received as gifts from some foreign governments as well as from business and industrial firms. Students proved to be major friends of the library during the years when appropriations were small. Performances were staged by the Socratic and Zetetic societies to raise funds, and in later years the Student Council also made appropriations for books and periodicals. Likewise, through the years many faculty members and interested citizens donated books from their personal collections. Especially notable was the 1,500-volume Lincoln collection received in 1944 from Clint Clay

Tilton, a retired Danville newspaper publisher.

The collection's rate of growth steadily increased during the half-century it was located in Wheeler Library. This growth can best be gauged by the fact that the collection of 17,000 volumes transferred to Wheeler in 1904 roughly doubled in size by the early thirties; doubled again by the mid-forties; and doubled a third time by the early fifties. To accommodate this growth both the basement and attic of Wheeler came to be used, the latter area to house the government documents collection. Although proposals for a new building were made in 1938 and again in 1942, the economic depression of the thirties and the outbreak of war in the early forties forecast little hope for their adoption.

For over thirty years after Miss Fryar's resignation in 1905, there was rapid and successive turnover in librarians and staff members. Despite the attractions of the new building in the earlier years, this situation suggests that salaries were low and working conditions less than satisfactory. During most of this period, for instance, the staff consisted only of the librarian and two assistants. Shortly after the appointment of Howard E. Bosley as library director in 1937, the staff increased to four. During the next ten years under Bosley's leadership the staff doubled in size and attained a degree of professionalism and stability that was not evidenced earlier. Appropriations for the library also increased. In 1941, total expenditures for books and periodicals, salaries, and other library operating costs were close to \$26,000. This amount was about four and one-half percent of the university's total operating budget. Five years later library expenditures exceeded \$41,000, more than six percent of the university's budget. In 1947, it was reported the library had added roughly 3,350 volumes annually during the preceding five years, and was subscribing to about 950 journals and over 100 newspapers. At that time the university's enrollment was close to 3,000 students.

Following Bosley's resignation in 1947, Elizabeth O. Stone served as acting director until Robert H. Muller took up duties as director in March 1949. Under a plan of reorganization, Miss Stone became the assistant director for public services and Harry Dewey was newly appointed assistant director for technical services. By 1950, the library staff included twelve professional and eight clerical members, plus part time graduate assistant and student workers. The

same year library expenditures reached \$150,000, roughly six percent of the total university budget.

Rules and regulations became less restrictive during the twenties and thirties as changing instructional methods required greater access to library materials. Books were allowed to circulate for two weeks and could be renewed for a second two week period. Magazines, however, were still not to be taken from the building. During the thirties fines were assessed at the rate of five cents per hour for overdue reserve books, and one cent per day for other books. If fines or fees for lost books were not paid within ten days, however, a student was subject to being expelled. Although a policy of closed stacks was maintained in keeping with the pattern of the day, under special conditions permission was granted for students to enter the stack area. In 1944, when graduate courses were first offered at the university, graduate students were given stack privileges. About that time, as an inducement for students to study and use the collections, the library was open from 7:45 a.m. until 10 p.m. daily during regular sessions, and from 7:15 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. during summer terms.

In the late forties and early fifties, the story of the library was one of progress mixed with frustrations. On the positive side, with the benefit of increased budgets, both staff and collections grew significantly. A separate reference department was organized in 1947 and housed in a large room fashioned from two barracks units that were set up along the east wall of Wheeler. Two years later, an education-psychology library was established. About that time the "Books for Living" collection also was created and located in the Student Center to provide some 500 volumes selected primarily for the literary and cultural needs of students. Following an evaluation of overall library resources, which showed greatest strengths in the fields of education, English and American literature, economics, and philosophy, the decision was made to use Harvard's Lamont Undergraduate Library printed catalog of books as the basis for checking Southern's collections and selecting appropriate titles for acquisition. The process of checking the Lamont list was continued for several years and helped significantly to add breadth and depth to the library's holdings. Also a collection of phonograph records was begun and made available for loans. With funds specially provided by the university administration, the Tilton-Lincoln collection was

finally cataloged. Steps were taken to modernize circulation control by adopting the McBee Keysort System and, about the same time, the amount of fines assessed for overdue books was increased from one to three cents.

The library's major problems during this period centered around the inadequacies of Wheeler Library. In 1948, the State Division of Architecture and Engineering declared that Wheeler was unable to accommodate the tremendous weight of collections that filled every available space from basement to attic. As a result, steps had to be taken to transfer over 60,000 volumes to a quonset hut set up nearby. With the need for a new library recognized as a major priority, an appropriation was voted by the Illinois legislature during the 1949-51 biennium for the first portion of a multi-stage construction program. Unfortunately, the amount provided was inadequate when bids were received and thus these funds were diverted to other building needs on the campus. This situation was actually a blessing in disguise, however, because it allowed more time for comprehensive planning to determine the kind of structure that would best meet the university's long range needs. Strongly influenced by Muller's recommendations, the new building was designed for expandable modular construction based upon an open-stack plan. The initial proposal called for shelving to accommodate 350,000 volumes, seating for 1,200 users, and facilities for audio-visual materials, a photographic laboratory, and an auditorium. Air conditioning, recessed fluorescent lighting, and acoustical ceiling materials for sound control were also to be included. Based upon a total area of 145,000 square feet, it was estimated that the first construction stage would cost about \$2,300,000. With the completion of the plans and an appropriation by the legislature in 1952, a contract for the new building was awarded and construction begun in 1953 for the basement and two stories, with additional floors to be added later.

In May 1954, about midway in the construction of the new library, Muller resigned as director and was succeeded in February 1955 by Ralph E. McCoy. Thus, as the days in Wheeler Library were coming to a close and a new director came upon the scene, Southern Illinois was about to embark upon a new and challenging course of developing a major library for research and scholarship.

MORRIS LIBRARY, 1956-PRESENT

On 9 January 1956, Morris Library was opened following transfer of the collections during the Christmas holiday recess. This was the sixth complete move for the library since the university began operating in 1874. In keeping with the plan for a divisional arrangement, four subject-related public service units in the areas of humanities, social studies, education-psychology, and science were organized the preceding fall. This plan was not original at Southern Illinois but had already been in use at the universities of Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, Oregon, Washington State, and Oklahoma A & M. In addition, the university's audio-visual collections and the Textbook Rental Service were transferred to the library.

During the next twenty years many innovative developments occurred under McCoy's energetic leadership. Space was provided in Morris Library to encourage formation of a regional library for southern Illinois as part of a state-wide network funded by the Illinois State Library. A program was also begun to collect materials about southern Illinois, thereby establishing a regional archive for the preservation of historical records. With the support of interested faculty and community leaders, the Friends of Morris Library group was organized to encourage interest in the library and its resources, and to provide financial support.

While both collections and student enrollments grew rapidly during the sixties, the library took advantage of modern technology to improve its service. In 1960, Xerox copying was established to make library materials more readily usable and to discourage mutilation of books by the removal of pages. In order to provide quicker and more efficient control of book circulation, a new IBM 357 circulation system was installed in 1964, which placed Southern in the forefront among academic libraries in using the computer for this phase of library operations. A few years later the entries of the library's card catalog were published in book form, thereby extending bibliographical access within Morris Library and to other libraries within the region. In 1967, the Learning Resources Service was established to offer consultation services for faculty members interested in improving their instructional techniques as well as to prepare graphic teaching aids, manage the newly opened instructional facilities in Lawson Hall, develop and operate a self-instruction

center where students could utilize audio and video aids in learning, and to maintain a motion picture film library.

During the sixties there was frequent shifting of departments and divisions as five more stories were added to the building to provide more adequate space for collections, faculty studies, student study areas, staff offices and work facilities, the university archives and special collections, the editorial offices for the Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, and many other services and activities. Recognition of the library's outstanding development came on 8 January 1967, when Southern Illinois University was elected to membership in the Association of Research Libraries, an organization comprised of the most notable academic and scholarly libraries of the United States. Within Illinois, Morris Library's outstanding resources were recognized when it was selected within the ILLINET system to be one of four Research and Reference Center libraries for the sharing of resources through interlibrary loans and bibliographical research services. The growth of collections and services by this time was taxing the space within Morris Library, and plans were proposed to construct a twenty-three story tower adjacent to the present building. Funds were not provided by the state, however, and thus the tower project was not realized.

As the library grew in size and complexity, the need to meet the demands of college-level students was recognized and, in 1970, an Undergraduate Library was established within Morris Library to provide a basic working collection along with reference and instructional assistance. Formation of this new unit allowed the four subject-related divisional libraries to focus more attention upon developing collections and responding to the service needs of graduate students and faculty members engaged in research activities. During the early seventies the library again turned its attention to the use of modern technology for library activities. Through the use of computer programming, a KWIC (key word in context) index was published for all SIU theses and dissertations from 1947 through 1973. As a direct aid to instruction, a PLATO IV (programmed logic for automatic teaching operations) was installed in the Self Instruction Center for use with many college-level courses. In 1974, Morris Library became one of four libraries within Illinois to join the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC), thereby having access by computer terminals to a growing data base of bibliographical

information from which catalog cards are produced.

While all the accomplishments in providing physical facilities, services, and special instructional programs were tremendously important, a view of the years during which McCoy served as director and later as dean shows that the greatest accomplishments were in the areas of developing the collections. Here, the interest and encouragement of President Delyte W. Morris were indispensable, because he was able to allocate the resources necessary for a major acquisitions program. Southern Illinois may have been late entering the field of collection development, but within two decades many of its holdings came to be recognized as outstanding for literary and historical research.

Although the library had a small collection of rare books, including some works from the presses of Aldus Manutius, Elzevir, Baskerville, and De Vinne, major impetus in this field came shortly after Morris Library was completed. In 1956, Charles E. Feinberg of Detroit gave a valuable collection of Walt Whitman items along with fine printed works from the Nonesuch, Merrymount, Kelmscott, Cresset, and Golden Cockerel presses, a copy of the Doves Bible, and books designed by Bruce Rogers. Thereafter, hardly a year passed without the library announcing the acquisition of major gifts or purchases of important books and manuscripts.

Notable *en bloc* acquisitions in the fields of contemporary American philosophy, radical or proletariat theater, the Irish renaissance, fine printing, and literary expatriatism have been described elsewhere in *ICarbS*.⁴ Yet, although the value of these collections, housed for the most part in Special Collections, cannot be overestimated, McCoy gave as much attention to developing the breadth and depth of the library's general collections.

Additional funds were obtained on numerous occasions to purchase backfiles of periodicals, serials, and newspapers. To make up for inadequate collection development in earlier years, an extensive retrospective acquisition program was undertaken to purchase monographs and standard sets in all graduate fields. Whereas the library's earlier selections were most frequently limited to works in English, determined efforts were made to acquire works in many foreign languages to support the more catholic interests of the university faculty. Realizing that it would be impossible to buy many works long out of print, the library began investing heavily in

microform materials which, in time, have become one of the major strengths of the collection. Looking ahead, too, to the time when the university hoped to have a school of law, the library began to assemble a comprehensive collection of legal materials. This collection was transferred from Morris Library when the new Law Library was established in 1973.

The library not only carried on a collecting program, but also engaged in publishing as a means of informing the academic community about its holdings and activities. Shortly after McCoy's appointment the library began publishing a newsletter, *Southern Exposure*, as a vehicle for exchanging ideas among staff members and with librarians at other institutions. Also beginning in 1955, *Library Progress* was issued as a semi-annual or annual report on new acquisitions and programs of interest to library users. In 1966, the library initiated a series entitled *Bibliographic Contributions* designed to share with other libraries the results of bibliographic efforts related to research. By 1973, eight titles had been published in this series. In connection with special exhibits, the library frequently published catalogs providing interesting and valuable descriptive information about some of its unique holdings. Examples of these include those related to James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, John Dewey, Ulysses S. Grant, Henry Miller, Erwin Piscator, Robert G. Ingersoll, the Irish Collection, the Presidents of the United States, the Private Presses, the Trovillion Private Press, the Open Court Publishing Company, and now the Black Sun Press. Finally, with financial support provided by the Friends of Morris Library, the library commenced publication in 1973 of this semi-annual journal *ICarbS*.

After twenty-one years, first as director and later as dean, Ralph E. McCoy retired on 29 February 1976. His accomplishments were many, and in them he was ably assisted by many capable and dedicated staff members. A recounting of the years when the library made the leap from an average college-level collection to a major resource for research would not be complete without also recalling the long-term and valuable services of Elizabeth O. Stone, who retired in 1964 after serving many years as assistant director for public services, and Ferris Randall, who retired in 1974 after having served first as assistant director for technical services and later as director of Morris Library. During the last year under McCoy's leadership, when the university's enrollment approached 22,000

students, the library contained close to 1,500,000 physical volumes and an equal number of microforms; staff included sixty-six professional and over one hundred civil service employees; circulation was approaching one-half million volumes a year; and overall library expenditures were just under four million dollars.

The library that developed at Southern Illinois from 1874 to 1976 has made outstanding and indispensable contributions not only to the university's growth and stature but also to the national resources for scholarship. The accomplishments of the past twenty years, however, have been the most notable. The momentum for amassing outstanding collections, together with provision for adequate building space, equipment, and staffing should be the university's highest priority as it moves forward into its second century of service.

NOTES

1. In addition to two important histories of Southern Illinois University (*Seventy Five Years in Retrospect*, by E. G. Lentz [1955] and *The Ordeal of Southern Illinois University*, by G. K. Plochmann [1959]), information on the university's libraries can be found in two master's theses, "A History of the Southern Illinois University Library, 1874-1950," by D. M. Manfredini (Carbondale, 1954) and "A History of the Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Library, 1950-1965," by V. McAteer (Bloomington, Ind., 1966).
2. "Librarian's Report," in *Biennial Reports of Southern Illinois Normal University, 1876-1910*, p. 32. In: Manfredini, p. 1.
3. "Report of Principal to Trustees, June 13, 1883," in *Biennial Reports*, p. 26. In: Manfredini, pp. 31-32.
4. See particularly "Manuscript Collection in Morris Library," by Ralph E. McCoy, *ICarbS I* (Summer 1974), 153-62.

Contributors

KAY BOYLE's writing career is in its sixth decade. Her latest publication is the Capra Press edition of *Four Visions of America*, with essays by Miss Boyle, Henry Miller, Thomas Sanchez, and Erica Jong.

EDWARD B. GERMAIN is the editor of *English and American Surrealist Poetry* to be published in January by Penguin Books, as well as the recent Black Sparrow Press edition of Harry Crosby's diaries, *Shadows of the Sun*. He is a poet and a professor and lives and teaches in New Hampshire.

KENNETH HOPKINS has been Poet-in-Residence at SIU-C and has retained a certain fondness for the environs. In addition to poetry, he is a writer of mysteries. He also has written a book on the Powys brothers, and edited several volumes on England's poet laureates.

HARRY T. MOORE teaches modern literature at SIU-C. He is author and editor of numerous books in that area—particularly D. H. Lawrence—and is Caresse Crosby's literary executor.

SASHA NEWBORN is co-publisher of Mudborn Press in Santa Barbara and also works as a compositor for Graham Mackintosh.

KENNETH G. PETERSON is Dean of Library Affairs at SIU-C. He has published a history of the library at the University of California at Berkeley.

HERB RUSSELL has his PhD from SIU-C, and has written several articles on Edgar Lee Masters. He and his wife Thyra are at work now on an annotated bibliography of the imaginative literature of the Illinois hill country.

HENRY VYVERBERG is an Associate Professor of History at SIU-C. His *The Living Tradition: Art, Music and Ideas in the Western World* will be published in January by Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

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