

September 2015

Mary C. Jane Correspondence

Mary Childs Jane 1909-1991

Hilda McLeod Jacob
Maine State Library

Maine State Library

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JANE, Mary C (Mrs. William S)

b. Mass.

November 8, 1954

Mrs. William S. Jane
Box 45
Newcastle, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

It is good news that we may expect a book from you this season; and as soon as we have more information about IN OLD QUEBEC, we shall add it to our order list.

We wonder whether or not you are a Maine person? We are always interested in writers living in this state, writing about it, or born in it; and we try to keep as complete a file as possible on Maine authors, with biographical facts, news clippings, reviews, and such information.

Then there is also the Maine Author Collection. Do you know of this? It is a permanent exhibit of books written by Maine natives or those living in the state, and also includes books of which the setting is this state. We hope that we are going to be able to claim you as a Maine author, and that your new book will before long be added to the exhibit, which is made up of about two thousand volumes, most of which are inscribed as presentation copies. The inscriptions are original and as varied as the books themselves, lending a distinction to an outstanding collection that attracts visitors and students the year round.

We look forward to seeing IN OLD QUEBEC, and send you our warm good wishes for its success.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

Newcastle, Maine

December 29, 1954

Mrs. F. W. Jacob
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine

DEC 30

DEC 30

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

I appreciated your nice letter about my forthcoming book, Mystery in Old Tucee. As it is my first book, and I'm not yet accustomed even to thinking of myself as a bona fide author, the letter was quite a thrill. My book, however, won't be published until summer of or fall of 1955. Lippincott is the publisher, and the book is a juvenile mystery for ages 8-12.

Yes, I am a Maine person, the fifth generation of my family to live in this very same little neighborhood in the town of Newcastle, though I myself was born and educated in Massachusetts. When my book is finally out, I'll be happy to send the Maine State Library an autographed copy for the Maine Author Collection and will be highly complimented to be eligible for the honor.

Thank you for your letter.

Sincerely yours,

Mary C. Jane

(Mrs. William S. Jane)

December 30, 1954

Mrs. William S. Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

Your friendly letter compensates us for the disappointment of having to wait a few months to see your book. Meanwhile, we are very glad to have some information about it. We will note it in the Maine in Print column, which appears in the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association, when the publication date nears.

It is good to know that we may look forward to including a copy in the Maine Author Collection. When it arrives, we shall, of course, write to you again.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hcm

August 31, 1955

Mrs. William S. Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

Lippincott's catalog says that your book is soon to be published. We're glad to know we shan't have to wait much longer!

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

Saturday, September 3

Dear Mrs. Jacobs,

I forgot the library
would be closed today,
and as I brought the
book with me today I'm
leaving it for you
here.

I hope to come
over and visit the
library sometime later
this month.

Sincerely yours,
Mary C. Jane

September 13, 1955

Mrs. William S. Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

It was a great pleasure to find MYSTERY IN OLD QUEBEC, and we send you our warm appreciation for the gift to the Maine Author Collection, and your friendly interest. How unfortunate that your call was on Saturday, when no one was here to greet you or thank you in person!

It is just as exciting a story as we anticipated, and children are going to love it. Our traveling libraries and bookmobiles will have MYSTERY IN OLD QUEBEC available for our young readers, and we are confident that it will enjoy a long and active life. Congratulations to you, and good wishes for many more. We'll be watching for them.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

Newcastle Writer

She Lures The Kids Away From The Comics

A FAIR question:

Is Mrs. Mary Jane, Newcastle, a successful writer of children's books because she is (a) a mother, (b) a school teacher, or (c) an avid reader of mystery novels?

Believe it or not, it's as much because she has read whodunnits for as long as she can remember.

"I read Mary Roberts Rinehart's 'Staircase' when I was 12," recalled the smiling, easy going newcomer to Maine's growing list of writers for major league publishers. She just broke in with *Mystery in Old Quebec*.

IT'S SOMETHING like the old fashioned trick of making castor oil no trouble at all by taking it in orange juice, the way Mrs. Jane has made children like to read something better than comic books by blending her stories with palatable mystery. The concoction tastes good. At least children go for it.

That children should read books is more important to the school teacher in Mrs. Jane than that she should write them and profit thereby.

"**THREE YEARS** ago," explained the Newcastle writer, "I went back to teaching school at Newcastle. I found children who had never read a book out of school. It was a fight to get them to read something besides comic books.

"I used to go to the library with my two boys and used mysteries to arouse their interest and lure them into reading books. In school I turned to the same technique. What a triumph it was when one of the boys in my class not only finally read a book — a mystery — but liked it and wanted more!"

MRS. JANE'S boys are growing up — Stephen is 13, Tommy, 10 — but even so, it was only a few years ago that to stimulate their reading interest she not only read from the available but made up stories for them.

"I'd always liked children's books as well as mysteries, I felt that nothing was more important for children than to make readers of them, and out of all this came, finally, *Mystery in Old Quebec*, published by Lippincott."

KNOWING AS a mother and a teacher what is good for children, Mrs. Jane knew, too, that for a good book you can't beat facts. To get her's she went to Quebec on a vacation trip, went over ground once walked by Wolfe and Montcalm. They make history live in her first published work and its palatable history, thanks to mystery.

"It was my object that children should get to know Quebec and history," explained Mrs. Jane.

SHE KNOWS of one local girl, aged 10, who didn't get enough out of *Mystery in Old Quebec* — her father had to take her to Quebec to see for herself.

"Perhaps that proves something," smiled the Newcastle mother who speaks of her

band, William S. Jane, employed by the Bath Iron Works Corporation, and her sons as, "my three men." Mrs. Jane was Mary Childs, born in Needham, Mass., and graduated in 1931 from Bridgewater, Mass., Teachers College. A fine spot she picked for her first class — in the Kentucky mountains:

"**FOUR SHOOTINGS** while I was there."

She didn't say so, but maybe that Kentucky background will appear in a Mary Jane book some day.

A second book, accepted by her publishers, is about the border patrol up around Jackman. She finds that half way through one manuscript another starts taking form. That accounts for her being ready for the third, in which the locale will be "My favorite spot. The most beautiful in the world." That's Pemaquid Point.

SO THERE ARE more good things to be read and heard about this modest Maine housewife who writes in longhand at the kitchen table and believes that while there are "many wonderful writers of children's books," she is not one of them. Others, she says, have more depth and literary skill than she.

"**AS A MATTER** of fact," said Mrs. Jane merrily, "my boys were not at all impressed that their mother was an author. Then I was invited to appear on television — and what a difference! As just an author, no. But as an author on television. Oh, my! Then they and their playmates decided that I really was something!"



Mary Jane

clipping from the

March 30, 1956

Mrs. Mary Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

One of the nicest bits of news in this blizzardy spring is that we have a book by you to anticipate. We are eager to see THE GHOST ROCK MYSTERY, for we know from your MYSTERY IN OLD QUEBEC that we shall have a good story with believable characters and an authentic background.

Our good wishes for its successful debut, and our congratulations on the selection of MYSTERY IN OLD QUEBEC by the Children's Book Club.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

clipping from KJ 3.30.56 given to MAW 3.30.56

September 14, 1956

Mrs. Mary Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

Those of us who have read an advance copy of the new and exciting GHOST ROCK MYSTERY are busy singing its and your praises. It is a wonderful story, and we shall have copies in our bookmobiles and traveling libraries.

My own family is enthusiastic, for we know the region of which you write well, and our fall is never complete until we have climbed Coburn and Boundary Bald, so we fell upon the new book ravenously. It did not disappoint us!

The Bulletin of the Maine Library Association will carry an announcement of the publication in the next issue, and we send you our hearty congratulations and good wishes for the success of GHOST ROCK MYSTERY. We hope that an inscribed copy is going to join your MYSTERY IN OLD QUEBEC in the Maine Author Collection.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

Newcastle, Maine

September 24, 1956

Mrs. F. W. Jacobs
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacobs:

I was delighted to have your letter and to discover that someone who really knew and liked the Jackman region thought my book was "okay". I originally called it *Mystery at Boundary-Bald*, but the editors thought the other title would have more appeal to children. I love the lakes and mountains up there, though I've never climbed the mountains as you have. It must be incredibly beautiful from the top of Boundary-Bald.

I plan to come over to the library some day soon and will bring a copy of the book for the

Maine Authors Collection then. It is
thrilling to me to think I belong in
such a collection.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Jane

November 9, 1956

Mrs. Mary Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

Thank you very much for the inscribed copy of THE GHOST ROCK MYSTERY. It is being added to the Maine Author Collection with pleasure, and with a sense of anticipation for future books. We hear that the Pemaquid story is coming along now -- spring, maybe?

Yes, do try Boundary Bald sometime. Your boys would love it, too. It is, as you suggest, a marvelous view, encompassing what seems like the whole state. This fall when we climbed it, the previous night's rain had frozen to the north side of the trees and rocks; and the top of the mountain glittered and sparkled. One who knows the region as you do would appreciate especially the reward of that climb.

We hope you will come into the library one day. Perhaps the present period of moving and renovating is not calculated to show us at our best. Our welcome would be warm, however.

Again thank you for THE GHOST ROCK MYSTERY, and good wishes for the successful completion of the new book.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

September 11, 1957

Mrs. Mary C. Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

How very thoughtful and generous of you to send MYSTERY AT PEMAQUID POINT for the Maine Author Collection. We hoped, of course, that the collection would have its copy, and we are certainly delighted at the opportunity to include such a fine book as this.

It will be as popular as your earlier ones, and will appeal to the host of people who love Pemaquid. You have caught its atmosphere beautifully, but kept it a background for the story; and what an exciting story it is!

Congratulations, and do keep right on writing.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

May 22, 1958

Mrs. Mary C. Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

Congratulations on the new book, MYSTERY AT SHADOW POND. It will be hailed with delight by your devoted following, and by librarians who are always eager for good stories for young readers.

We shall use it, of course, for our bookmobiles and traveling libraries; and we hope that the Maine Author Collection will be privileged to include an inscribed copy to place with your other books.

Good luck to MYSTERY AT SHADOW POND.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

May 12, 1959

Mrs. Mary C. Jane
Newcastle
Maine

Dear Mrs. Jane:

The copy of MYSTERY AT SHADOW POND for the
Maine Author Collection has arrived safely, and
again we send you our warm appreciative thanks.

The book is of course in our traveling
libraries and bookmobiles, and we continue to
be grateful that we have such really good books
as yours to recommend to youngsters.

Thank you for remembering the collection,
and best wishes for a happy summer.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection