

September 2015

# Harry Lyman Koopman Correspondence

Harry Lyman Koopman 1860-1937

H.L. Koopman 1860-1937

Anna Buxton Merrill

Henry Ernest Dunnack 1867-1938

*Maine State Library*

Marion Cobb Fuller

*Maine State Library*

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KOOPMAN, HARRY LYMAN

BORN AT FREEPORT, July 1, 1860.

DIED AT PROVIDENCE, R. I., December 28, 1937

April 24, 1930

Dr. Harry Lyman Koopman,  
Brown University Library,  
Providence, Rhode Island,

My dear Dr. Koopman;-

I am assembling here an exhibition collection of autographed books written by authors born in Maine or resident here during their creative years. I find that through some oversight on our part you are not at present represented in our collection. I enclose a clipping from a recent issue of our Library Bulletin which will explain the nature and purpose of the Maine Author Collection. I hope that you will be interested in this effort to assemble in one place the work of our Maine writers and that you will send us autographed copies of the books which you consider representative of your best work. I do not ask for the books as a gift--the state is very willing to pay for them- but I do ask that you autograph them, and if you will add inscriptions to them it will greatly increase their interest as collection items.

Since the Maine Author Collection will undoubtedly have a distinct value for future students of Maine's literary development and Maine's place in literature we are collecting besides the books biographical and critical data about our authors. Will you send us information about yourself (The longer and more personal the account the better for our purpose) a photograph, and, if possible, a picture of your Freeport birthplace. Such data, together with all correspondence with you, will be placed in special files, for future reference use.

We shall be especially grateful to you if you can send us very soon a photograph of yourself and at least one volume of your verse as we are planning a special exhibit of Maine poets next month.

Please make your bill in duplicate to the Maine State Library.

Very truly yours

D/F

H. L. KOOPMAN  
LIBRARIAN

THE LIBRARY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

25 June 1930

Mr. Henry E. Dunnack, Librarian  
Maine State Library  
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mr. Dunnack:

I am sending you all my volumes of poetry and one of prose. The other volumes of prose, "The Mastery of Books"--which I believe is out of print--and "The Book Lover and his Books"--which is in print--had better be obtained through the trade.

I am making a charge of twenty-five dollars for what I am sending you. Several of **these** are entirely out of print, and "Morrow Songs" has sold as high as ten dollars.

I am just about to go down to Southwest Harbor for the summer.

With cordial regards, I am,

Faithfully yours,



H. L. Koopman  
Librarian

H. L. KOOPMAN  
LIBRARIAN

THE LIBRARY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

26 April 1930

Mr. Henry E. Dunnack, Librarian  
Maine State Library  
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mr. Dunnack:

I thought I had sent some of my books to your library, but it appears that I haven't.

I think you will have to do for biography with what you find in Who's Who in America. There was an account of me written by Elizabeth Converse Durgin, published in the Portland Sunday Times for June 24, 1906. *That may give something.*

I have somewhere a picture of my Freeport birthplace. When I find it, I will send you a copy. I will try to see what I can get together and will send it to you sometime next month.

Did I thank you for the wonderful address of yours that was published in the Colby Alumnus? If not, let me do so now. I greatly enjoyed it.

Cordially yours,

*H. L. Koopman*

H. L. Koopman  
Librarian

C O P Y

July 8, 1930

Mr. Harry Lyman Koopman,  
The Library of Brown University,  
Providence, Rhode Island.

My dear Mr. Koopman;\*

The very interesting collection of books and pamphlets which you have assembled for us has arrived and we are delighted to have them for our Maine Author Collection. Mr. Dunnack is out of town at present but I know that he will write to you as soon as he returns. He will be very appreciative of the trouble which you have taken to assemble for us this collection of your works and the interest which you have shown in the Maine Author Collection. Thank you very much, also, for the autographed portrait of yourself.

Very truly yours,

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

By MCB

Copy

April 14, 1932

Providence Journal  
Providence, Rhode Island  
Gentlemen:

Early in January your paper published an editorial(?) on Elizabeth Akers which was reprinted in the Portland Press Herald of January 26th. I am preparing an article on Mrs. Allen for the July issue of our Library Bulletin and I should like to get in touch with the writer of the very interesting item in your paper, who, I think, must know more about her than is readily available in print. I have tried at other times to obtain information about her marriage to Mr. Akers. What was Mr. Allen's full name and where did she meet him. The article refers to him as "the esteemed friend of John Burroughs", an interesting statement about which I should like to know more.

I shall be very appreciative of any information which the writer of the Akers article can send me.

Very truly yours,

Research Librarian

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

SIGNED

M.C.F.

Copy

April 16, 1932

Mrs. Anna Buxton Merrill  
The Providence Journal  
Providence, Rhode Island  
My dear Mrs. Merrill:

I am much interested by the information that the item about Mrs. Akers is by Dr. Koopman. I did not know until I received your letter that Dr. Koopman is a member of your editorial staff or I might have guessed that he wrote the editorial in question; I was sure that it was by a person with a special interest in Maine.

Several years ago when I was at work on an article on Paul Akers I tried to find out something about the Akers-Chase marriage but the Maine Historical Society had little to offer. Portland has a number of Elizabeth Akers books in the public library but no biographical material of especial interest.

Thank you for the suggestions; some of the references which you mention I have not yet consulted as they are not in this library.

I am in touch with several connections of Elizabeth Akers and hope soon to interview one or two of them who live at Norway, Maine. I have a fine portrait of Elizabeth Akers, obtained through Mr. Vivien Akers of Norway.

We are supposed to have two of Elizabeth Akers' books in this library but I have not seen them since I have been here. I enclose a list of the books by her which are owned in the Bowdoin College Library and the Portland Public Library.

Very truly yours,

Signed M.C.F.

Research Librarian

MAINE STATE LIBRARY



The Providence Journal  
The Evening Bulletin

ALLISON STONE, General Manager \*  
WILLIAM C. ELLIS, Treasurer  
SEVELLON BROWN, Managing Editor

The Journal Building  
Providence, Rhode Island

April 28, 1932

Miss Marion Cobb Fuller,  
Research Librarian, Maine State Library,  
Augusta, Maine.

Dear Miss Fuller:

Mrs. Merrill has handed me your letter to her in regard to Mrs. Akers. I am very much interested in what you told her. I am writing this at the office of the Providence Journal but I will consult the catalogue in Brown University library before I mail this letter and give you any extra titles that I find. I am afraid there is one of them, QUEEN ELEANOR'S MANTLE, which Mrs. Akers told me was published in Dublin, of which there is no copy in this country. You say that you have a fine portrait of Mrs. Akers. I NEVER could get her to give me a picture of herself and I should very much like to get a copy of this to put into the collection of American poetry at Brown. Her volume, Forest Buds, she later tried to destroy and did destroy as many volumes as she could lay her hands on. From her point of view she was correct in doing so because it had nothing to add to her fame but I am afraid we librarians have to keep it in spite of her. I shall be glad to have anything that you put into print regarding Mrs. Akers.

Cordially yours,

Harry Lyman Koopman  
by A. B. M.

M

Dr. Koopman dictated the above but has not since given me the list of titles about which he speaks above so I am taking the liberty of mailing this to you. If, and when, he brings in anything further on this subject, I will forward it to you.

Anna Buxton Merrill

Editorial from the Providence Journal,  
Jan. 23, 1932

Written By Harry Lyman Koopman, Litt.D.

#### ELIZABETH AKERS

Into every newspaper office come innumerable inquiries from the most various sources as to the most various subjects.

Thus one day this week a Journal reader telephoned to ask who wrote the familiar poem beginning: "Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight."

Such a question shows how thoroughly the public has forgotten a controversy that convulsed our American literary world seventy years ago. It raged about this poem, whose title is "Rock Me to Sleep," and which, first, published in 1859, became such a favorite that it suffered the penalty of having more than one rival claimant for the honor of its authorship. Important people took sides for and against the cause of Mrs. Elizabeth Akers, and it was not until that literary paladin, William Douglas O'Connor, the champion of Walt Whitman, took the field in her defence that her opponents were routed.

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Akers wrote many poems which she regarded more highly than the poem in question. The reader may judge her higher powers from the two following extracts. During our Civil War she lived in Washington, and she described the city at night, surrounded by its camps, as

"Sleeping, like Saturn, in its ring of fire."

It would be hard to find anywhere a finer picture or one of profounder meaning than this one of a cathedral:

"Where through the windows melts the unwilling light,

And in its passage learns their gorgeous stain,

Then bars the gloom with hues all rain-bow-bright,

As human souls grow beautiful through pain."

She was born in Strong, Maine, one hundred years ago. Her maiden name was Chase. She was married three times, her married names being Taylor, Akers and Allen. Her second husband was Paul Akers, the sculptor, who made the majestic bust of Milton so highly praised by Hawthorne. Her third husband was E. M. Allen of New York, the esteemed friend of John Burroughs. Mrs. Akers's last volume was "The Sunset Song," issued beautifully printed in 1902. She was for many years the literary editor of the Portland Advertiser. It is to be hoped that her centennial year will be accepted as an occasion for reviving the memory of one of the ablest of America's woman poets, and one of our most striking literary personalities.

# The Providence Journal

## The Evening Bulletin

ALLISON STONE, General Manager  
WILLIAM C. ELLIS, Treasurer  
SEVELLON BROWN, Managing Editor

The Journal Building  
Providence, Rhode Island April 18, 1932

Miss Marion Cobb Fuller,  
Research Librarian, Maine State Library,  
Maine State Library, Augusta, Maine.

Dear Miss Fuller:

Harry Lyman Koopman, Litt.D, now a member of our editorial staff, is a Maine man who had known Elizabeth Akers and had corresponded with her. He believes her ~~full name was Elizabeth Ann Chase Taylor Akers~~ Allen. He would suggest that you look in Lamb's Biographical Dictionary under Allen to learn more about the relationship to John Burroughs; also in the last book written by Dallas Lore Sharpe on John Burroughs; a fine tribute to Mrs. Akers appears in Underwood's American Literature in which some selections appear. Dr. Koopman believes that the Maine Historical Society in Portland ought to be able to give you more than anyone else. Dr. Koopman would like to know what works by Mrs. Akers you have in the State Library.

Very truly yours,

*(Mrs) Anna Buxton Merrill*  
Office of the Managing Editor.

Enclosure

Copy

May 14, 1932

Dr. Harry Lyman Koopman,  
The Journal Building,  
Providence, Rhode Island.

My dear Mr. Koopman;-

Your latest letter came to the house instead of the office and I do not recall whether or not I have acknowledged it. All that you write about Mrs. Allen is most interesting. I trust that you will not object to my referring to your correspondence in my Bulletin notes. I hesitate to ask you to write us again and yet I feel that I must not neglect an opportunity to obtain information about Mrs. Allen from such an unusually interesting source - a Maine poet and scholar who knew Mrs. Allen personally! I shall be extremely grateful to you if your interest in Mrs. Allen will induce you to send a description of her, as you knew her, to be included in the Bulletin article. It would add so much to its value as well as its interest!

We are planning to have Mrs. Allen's picture on the Bulletin cover. If you wish a better print I think that you can obtain one from Mr. Vivian Akers, Norway, to whom we are indebted for the photograph which we have. Mr. Akers is rather well known as a photographer and so will doubtless have no objection to making a reproduction of the photograph.

I have not yet been to Norway; I think that the Elizabeth Akers Allen relatives must be away. I hope they will make an appointment with me soon as the manuscript has to be ready within a few weeks.

Thank you for the list of books by Mrs. Allen. I enclose a clipping from our Library Bulletin which may interest you.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) M.C.F.

RESEARCH LIBRARIAN  
MAINE STATE LIBRARY

The Providence Journal  
The Evening Bulletin

ALLISON STONE, General Manager  
WILLIAM C. ELLIS, Treasurer

The Journal Building  
Providence, Rhode Island 16 May 1932.

Dear Miss Fuller,

I have no objection to your referring to my correspondence in your notes. No! I did not know Mrs. Allen personally, except that I had a glimpse of her once, but did not meet her. I had quite a long correspondence with her, but I shall not publish this. I shall deposit <sup>her letters</sup> in the Brown University library in its great collection of American poetry. These letters come from her later years, when she was inclined to be critical of the world & the people in it.

I shall be on the lookout for the picture of Mrs. Atkerson your Bulletin cover, and, if it does not satisfy me, I shall write to Mr. Vivian Atkerson. I thank you for your clippings.

The enclosed page from yesterday's Providence Journal will show you how you inspired us with your Covered Bridges. Did you know David Barker's poem? The bridge shown is in Newfane, Vt. One of our artists, Milton R. Halladay, made the pen-and-ink sketch from a painting of his own. A number of us had a good deal of pleasure in getting up these contributions.

My address from the end of June to early September will be Southwest Harbor, Maine. I am easy to find if you should be down there this summer, & I should be glad to see you.

Faithfully yours,

H. I. Koopman.

C O P Y

May 17, 1932

Dr. Harry Eymann Koopman  
Providence Journal,  
Providence , Rhode Island.

My dear Dr. Koopman;-

Thank you for your letter and the page from the Providence Journal. It is gratifying to know that my notes on the covered bridges of Maine interested you. Much that I wished to add to the article, including several references to poems, had to be omitted but I think that it was a mistake not to at least mention the Barker poem, one of his best, I think. Whittier wrote about a "wishing bridge", but Barker's poem is better, isn't it?

I do not wish to bore you with the Library Bulletin but I am sending you another issue of it which contains a Who's Who of Maine poets. There are a number of names which should be added to it; I hope to do a supplement to it sometime this year.

If I come to Southwest Harbor this summer I shall certainly give myself the pleasure of calling on you.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) MCF



A Portrait by

Bachrach






*"It is given to few to create—to copy should  
be the inalienable birthright of all."*



Bachrach

  
Harry Lyman Kosherman.