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Laura Barr Lougee Correspondence

Laura Barr Lougee 1911-1997

Arthur Lougee

Hilda McLeod Jacob

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LOUGEE, Laura Barr



LAURA BARR LOUGEE discusses manuscript and illustrations for her book, "The Web of the Spider", with her art director husband, Arthur Lougee, who designed the book.

Thursday, February 27, 1964

Parsonsfield Resident Author Of Unique And Beautiful Book

A very talented resident of North Parsonsfield, Laura Barr Lougee, is the author of a fascinating and beautiful little book, "The Web of the Spider", which will be published by the Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., March 1.

The book was designed by the author's equally talented husband, Arthur T. Lougee.

Mrs. Lougee briefly describes the anatomy of the spider, but most of the book is devoted to the beautiful and intricate webs they create. She also did the handsome illustrations.

Book Based On Long Research

The book is based on research which was started some years ago by Mrs. Lougee when she was in charge of exhibits preparation at the Cranbrook Institute. She continued her study after she and Mr. Lougee came to Maine three years ago to make their home on land settled by Mr. Lougee's ancestors. They had been spending summers there with their three children for many years.

Many of the spider-made webs and the specimen spiders which illustrate the book were photographed directly by the printer from webs and spiders prepared by the author.

Her exhibits of preserved webs are now displayed at the Cranbrook Institute and later will have special showings at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh and the Boston Museum of Science. The job of packing the fragile webs was a difficult one, but they arrived safely.

Revelation Of Nature's Beauties

In this remarkable Maine-made book, there is a revelation

of the beauties and gifts which nature lavishes, sometimes in unexpected places.

Not only are spiders the most tireless interior and exterior decorators; they also serve as one of man's most valuable insecticides. Though the book is based on original investigation, it is directed at the non-scientific audience ranging from school children to nature-aware adults who are interested in the world of nature.

Remarkable Illustrations

Her pen and ink drawings show better than most previous texts on the subject the anatomy of the spider and the external organs which produce silk for webs, egg sacs and other uses. Even more intriguing are the illustrations reproduced from actual webs.

The book should be popular with all nature lovers, and should have special value for teachers, scientists and persons interested in design.

Mrs. Lougee studied at Antioch College, graduated from the Boston Museum School and taught design at Pine Manor and Dana Hall before joining the staff of the Cranbrook Institute.

Mr. Lougee was formerly executive editor and art director for Ford publications and is now a consultant in visual communications. His work on the Ford Times won him, in addition to many other awards, an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Colby College in 1959. In 1953, he was named Art Director of the Year by the National Society of Art Directors. From 1959 to 1963 he served as president of the 4,000-member National Society.

March 12, 1964

Mrs. Laura Barr Lougee
Parsonsfield
Maine

Dear Mrs. Lougee:

Your book on spiders will doubtless dispel unreasoning fear and revulsion as you acquaint readers with their industry and the fragile beauty that they spin. No publication date was mentioned in the newspaper article, but we shall watch for the book, and hope to see it soon.

Although we understand that we cannot claim you as a native State-of-Mainer, perhaps you will not be averse to becoming one of our "adopted" authors. We are of course very much interested in all writing done in the state, whether by those born here or those living here. In this connection, the Maine Author Collection was established some years ago.

It now contains over three thousand volumes, most of them inscribed presentation copies. We also gather biographical and critical material so that our information on Maine writers may be as complete as possible. The collection is an impressive and varied array, a heartening testimony to the vigor of Maine's literary climate.

We hope that you may want to inscribe and present a copy of your new book for inclusion in the Maine Author Collection. You have our warm good wishes for its success.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

LAURA BARR LOUGEE
PARSONSFIELD, MAINE
P.O. KEZAR FALLS, MAINE

March 14, 1964

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

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

I am honored and very pleased to be represented in your Maine Author Collection, and to send you an inscribed copy of *The Web of the Spider* for that purpose. I had no idea the collection is now so large, and I anticipate an opportunity to visit the collection itself when I am next in Augusta.

You mention that your collection includes biographical and critical material. Whether the enclosed clippings would be appropriate or useful I do not know, if so, please keep them; otherwise, please return them in the enclosed envelope.

I do not know whether you are interested in Maine illustrators as well as Maine authors. Perhaps you are, and if so you should know that the illustrations in my book are largely from actual webs collected in this state. Consequently it can be said that these illustrations are by Maine spiders.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Lougee

Laura Barr Lougee
(Mrs. Arthur T.)

March 20, 1964

Mrs. Arthur T. Lougee
Parsonsfield
Kezar Falls, Maine

Dear Mrs. Lougee:

The book is, of course, simply fascinating, and may even induce a degree of tolerance in arachnophobes. We're delighted with the thought that of course the book is Maine-illustrated! And what opportunities you present in the suggestion of how to collect such beautiful illustrations. You have inspired a new hobby.

Thank you so much for your friendly and generous response, and for the most interesting material about your work which you sent. We do want to keep it, and we appreciate your kindness.

Are spiders affected by music, and do you play the old organ for them?

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

'Web Of The Spider' Man's Best Friend

A fascinating book about spiders—one of man's best friends in the control of insect pests—written by Laura Barr Lougee of Parsonsfield and designed by her husband, Arthur Lougee, is scheduled for publication March 1. One of its purposes is to encourage conservation of creatures which are beneficial to mankind.

A "first" for the Offset Department of KJ Printing was established in the process of photographing and printing this volume: The book's title is *The Web of the Spider*—and spider webs were photographed by KJ offset cameramen at the printing plant for transfer to aluminum plates for the offset press.

Greater faithfulness in reproducing the delicate beauty of the subject matter is made possible by this process, since it skips one entire photographic step—and every intermediate step involves a certain loss.

IN THIS book the camera negatives were shot directly from the webs and spiders, stripped into "flats" in position for the pages, then exposed to photo-sensitive plates to be used on the offset press. Very little of the web's original delicacy of design and construction is lost in this process.

The spider webs from Mrs. Lougee's collection were brought to Augusta from Parsonsfield by her husband, who worked with the camera and directing men here day after day, directing the book's production.

Arthur Lougee has had some experience at this sort of thing: A graduate of the Boston Museum Art School, he spent three war years with the Navy on Recognition and Publications duty, emerging as a lieutenant in the Naval Reserve. In 1946 he joined the Ford Motor Co. as art director and assistant director of Ford's publications office, later was also named executive editor of Ford Times.

In 1953 he was named Art Director of the Year by the National Society of Art Directors, and he was president of that organization—a 40-city society with 4,000 members—from 1959 to 1963. His work on Ford Times earned him an honorary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts from Colby college in 1959.

A Maine native, he moved his family in 1961 from Michigan to the Parsonsfield hillside to which his ancestors had moved during the Revolution. There they live in a home built by an ancestor over 100 years ago.

Mrs. Lougee was graduated from Antioch College before going to the Boston Museum School, where she and Mr.

Lougee met. Both worked as designers and taught art in Boston area schools until World War II. In 1957 Mrs. Lougee was appointed director of design at the Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., where she was responsible for design of displays and exhibit areas.

IT WAS AT Cranbrook that Mrs. Lougee ran into her "entanglement with spiders and their webs" when she was assigned the project of collecting webs for exhibit purposes. Cranbrook Institute is one of the finest small museums of natural history and science in the United States. The Institute will soon open an exhibit of spiders and their silk by Mrs. Lougee; Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh will open another exhibit by Mrs. Lougee to coincide with the publication of her book, and still another of her spider and web exhibits will open at the Boston Museum of Science in July.

What's good about spiders? Humanity would probably be eaten out of house and home—literally—without them; that's principally what's good about them. "They kill and eat the pests of man," says Lougee. He adds that, of all the insects there are, only about one per cent are harmful to man—and one of the worst enemies of those pests is the spider.

Old-time Maine farmers knew the value of spiders in protecting their cattle against flies and assorted other pests. That's why old farm barns were festooned with spider webs—which were never intentionally destroyed; they were the old-timers' natural insecticides.

Arthur Lougee believes books should use actual materials on their subject matter whenever possible. This book, *The Web of the Spider*, is a first fruit of that ambition. The actual spider webs, as already noted, were photographed here for the KJ offset presses.

Some of the photographs in this 44-page volume show spiders in their webs together with web-trapped insects—to get across the value of the spider as a pest-killer.

It's almost entirely a State of Maine product, this book: Written by a Maine author, designed by her Maine-native husband, the volume was photographed and printed at the KJ on Warren Westbrook, Me.) paper, and bound by Dillingham's Bindery, Bangor. Even the webs and spiders illustrated in the book were collected in Maine.

THE BOOK will be on sale in book stores, through museums and by direct mail.