

October 2015

# Ida Sedgwick Proper Correspondence

Ida Sedgwick Proper

Mr. Taylor  
*New York Public Library*

Marion Cobb Fuller  
*Maine State Library*

Hilda McLeod Jacob  
*Maine State Library*

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PROPER, Ida S

PROPER IDA S

Monhegan , the Cradle of New England 1930

MONHEGAN ART SCHOOL  
MONHEGAN  
MAINE

June 18 - 1930

My dear Mrs. Fuller:

The book by Spencer is the best one I've seen on Maine. The only real fault I can find is in the Index. It should have been complete.

Monhegan figures on almost every page, but it is hard to find because it does not appear in the index. Some of his facts are not according to my finding, but he has had such a wide field to cover that I presume that accounts for it.

My effort will be out about July 1 - a little late, due to delay by the printers.

I think Spencer should have  
a word of thanks from all  
Maine people.

Am so busy, I don't  
know which way to turn.

Thanks a lot for sending  
me the "Pioneers of Maine  
Rivers," You can tell about the  
"Munkogan, the Cradle of New England"  
Cordially if you like. news  
has leaked out.

Ida Propper.

P. S. Would you give the  
enclosed postage and fine  
to the Circulation clerk.

Yours

J. S. P.

P.S. I don't know what the price of the book  
will be so will send the review material  
a few days later.

MONHEGAN ART SCHOOL  
MONHEGAN  
MAINE

Monday -

My dear Mrs Fuller:

For ten days I was knocked out,  
unable to write anything, so failed  
to get the information you wanted to  
you. I think I was once worked and so  
went down like a shot. My book  
reins me when it arrived as it  
is so nice in appearance and  
everything else. Southworth's Press  
and Mr. Anthoensen are wonderful.

I've been getting up a short resume'  
of it to send out with the press  
copies and I will send you one as  
perhaps you can use some of the  
material in it.

My personal history sounds like  
that of a Jack of all trades.

Born in Iowa many odd years ago - of poor but honest parents, my father being a Baptist clergyman whose history is easy to find in any old who's who in America - He died about ten years ago. His name was D. P. Proper.

As all ministers roam over the earth - so my father dragged his family hither and yon over the United States.

Starting out to be an artist, when I was ten years old, I continued with this avocation ever after. For bread and butter, I worked in libraries - and did considerable night art study. Finally I was able to go abroad, first to Munich and later to Paris - where I became a fairly creditable painter. Then as usual the funds gave out so I had to come back.

On arrival in America I began

MONHEGAN ART SCHOOL  
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MAINE

my artistic work, exhibiting and painting, and was getting along famously, when the world's war put a stop to all matters of that kind. Suffrage then became my theme. When we entered the war I put my library training to use in making a "List of Ordnance Materiel" for the Design Division of the Ordnance Department at Washington.

In the late summer of 1918, with fifty women, I was sent to France and stationed at Tours. The Armistice coming a few months later they requisitioned me for the section preparing the Ordnance History of the A. E. F. After this was



finished, I indexed the huge affair.  
Returning to the U. S. in 1919 and  
being stationed in Washington, I  
found I could not face a cold  
winter. Had suffered so from  
cold in France. So I obtained  
the position of teacher of free-hand  
and mechanical drawing in the  
Agricultural and Mechanic Arts  
College of the University of Porto  
Rico ~~and~~ at Mayaguez.

After several years in this  
wonderful place I returned to  
the United States, where shortly  
after my arrival, I was offered  
the position of news editor of  
"Power", a Mc Graw-Hill publication,  
by Major Blake, ~~the~~ under whose  
direction I had made the List  
of Ordnance material.

MONHEGAN ART SCHOOL  
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MAINE

This nerve racking job, I held for several years. Finally my hunger for paint and the sea getting a grip on me - when talk was begun of vacations, I stated that I wanted to go where the sea ran mountain high. ; it was a weekly,

"Monhegan, Me., is your place," said Philip Drain, one of the editors, who was a regular visitor to Southport each summer.

with bags, paint boxes etc. I finally dragged my weary way onto the boat running between New York and Portland. It was a restful trip. At Portland we took a smaller boat to Boothbay Harbor. Then at Boothbay Harbor we changed boats again - and this time the boat was seemingly very tiny. It was

~~With~~ the old Governor Douglas. Mr. finally reached Monhegan during

Lon at first sight was my experience - for I had not been on the island two weeks before I had purchased a little home with flower gardens.

Naturally the peace of Monhegan was ever with me during the next winter, when struggles with kiltorratto, kiltorratt hours, horse-porn, type and em's were the order of the day. I resigned the following spring - spent the next winter in Europe and then became interested in reading about

Monhegan. I found such controversy surrounding every important item that I decided to make a thorough investigation. The next winter I spent every minute of night and day, when the library was open, in research in the

MONHEGAN ART SCHOOL  
MONHEGAN  
MAINE

New York Public Library - then  
I made a stop-off in Boston and  
also in Portland to consult the  
Maine Historical Library material.  
The past winter I fitted my pieces  
of evidence together and strung  
them on a thread of world history  
of the time.

This is the true story of my  
life, kind lights left out, and the  
beginning of my residence in Maine  
and the tale of how "Monhegan,  
the Cradle of New England" was  
born.

There! you can pick and choose.  
It's been a terribly exciting life and  
I've had a good time even if I have  
worked like a drag-horse.

If you can mention the book  
anywhere, perhaps, it will help  
with the sales. I'm going home  
on the thing, but I feel that it  
was worth it. Darn the stock  
market.

Thanks a lot.

Cordially

Lee S. Propper

YE PICKET FENCE  
MONHEGAN  
MAINE

Tuesday -

My dear Mrs. Fuller:

It was so nice to get your letter and to know that you are helping to give my book a hand. It is going fairly well and as you has had rather kind reception. I'm not agreed with all the reviews also - but I'm not had the time to take on an argument.

So glad you like it yourself.

It does not make any difference to me in regard to buying your books at Loing, Short & Harmon's or from me. The fact of the matter is that Loing, Short and Harmon do not evidently keep it stocked up as I and several of my friends found none on the shelves. They say, however, that it sells well. Perhaps

an order from you may stir them  
up. In any case I shall be  
glad to autograph the copies  
for you.

I'm terribly busy getting out  
some material to send booksellers.  
I've had to wait until I had some  
opinions from the press to quote.

Mr. Spence wrote me and  
offered me a mention on the  
page he is having ~~in~~ in some  
book catalogue.

Mr Bolton, (of Boston Athenaeum)  
has been kind enough to recommend  
it - Col. Banks has written several  
fine letters in appreciation of it -  
So the modern historians of this  
section evidently approve of it.

Cordially and hastily yours  
Eda S. Propper.

" Monhegan, the Cradle of New England," by Ida Sedgwick Proper  
printed by Fred Anthonsen at the Southworth Press, Portland,  
Me. \$4.00

Because Monhegan's history had always appeared vague and unsatisfactory, and its many historians had always made the statement that its history began in mists and legends, the author made an extensive search through the old legends, chronicles, records and maps for a deep-sea island in the vicinity of the uncertain outlines of the Gulf of Maine. Monhegan was easily located at sea midway between the two remarkable rivers, the Kennebec and the Penobscot.

The results of this research were surprising. The findings are printed in this volume, but treated in an unusual way. The author states that every known controversy in early American history, seemingly, was encountered and for this reason adopted the plan of quoting the exact words of the ancient authors. If anyone is discontented with the conclusions arrived at they will be obliged to take up the issue, not with the author of "Monhegan, the Cradle of New England," but with the old chroniclers, relators and cartographers.

The old inscription on Manana, Monhegan's little companion isle, too, if inscription it is, has not greatly changed since 1855, or seventy-five years ago. This supposed inscription caused considerable stir in historical circles at that time and many thought it of Norse origin. It has never been satisfactorily examined nor explained. Several authorities, so-called, were misled by a set of cracks on a ledge behind the great boulder on which the chisel marks appear. These cracks were in the same general direction on the ledge as the inscription was described as occurring, and were mistaken for the real chisel marks.

The author of this book had a similar experience, but was later shown the set of marks supposed to have been made with a chisel of some sort. A drawing made from a plaster cast taken in 1855, published by Schoolcraft, is shown as a frontispiece. It can, therefore, be readily compared with the original, which has changed very little, says this author.



Starting with legends of possible voyagers who might have made the inscription, the author continues the thread down through the available data to the Elizabethan adventurers searching for the Northwest Passage to the Spice Islands of Cathay. The author assumes that these voyagers had the data of the Zeni brothers, the Cabot records and the statements of the "yeerly fishers;" to the new found land. From Dee's Diary are gleaned glimpses of this fact and ~~also~~ the close companionship of these adventurous men and the strict secrecy maintained about all their discoveries and movements is also shown.

Monhegan was the outpost for the wonderful, perhaps fabulous, region known to voyagers and cartographers, for one-hundred and fifty years, as Norumbega. As this country is always found on ancient maps near the Penobscot or Pentegöet River, no sailing vessel going to that much sought land could have failed to observe Monhegan as she was such a remarkable landmark. It is not strange that an island in 43<sup>1</sup> N.L. is so often mentioned in the old relations.

She bore many names. Weymouth named her St. George's Isle, while Champlain during the same month of 1605, called her Lanef, or ship isle. To the Ile St. George came the Popham Colony in 1607. It was their rendezvous. Under the cross standing on the island was held the first Protestant religious service of thanksgiving recorded as having taken place in the new world. The author of "Monhegan, the cradle of New England," backs up this statement by the Diary of J. Davis, master of the Mary and John, and by the portion of the Simoneas map of 1610 which shows Monhegan as the Isle St. George. This map was found tucked away in the Spanish archives by Alexander Brown when he was searching for material for the history of the First Colony of Virginia, "The Genesis of the United States." Monhegan, as the toe-hold of the Second Colony of Virginia is here established after so much confusion due to the secrecy of those times.

One wonders why Monhegan was chosen by Sir Ferdinando Gorges as the fishing haven for the ships of the Second Colony of Virginia until one

reads of the three years of instruction in the geography and current history of the unknown continent, received by him from the Indians captured by Weymouth but sheltered and taught English by Gorges in his home. These Indians were members of the tribes over which the great Bashaba of Ingram's tale ruled. The Bashaba of the English records, or the Bessabez of the French voyagers, extended his authority from the west bank of the Penobscot westerly and southerly to the Kennebec. The deadly enemies of the tribes of the Bashaba were located on the eastern bank of the Penobscot and as Mount Desert was the seat of some of these hostile tribes, the Matinicus Isles, while having a good harbor, were still too near the enemy for comfort.

Monhegan was ideally located and formed for the purposes of discovery, or "searching", as Sir Ferdinando Gorges called it. Under cover of his fishing vessels he sent explorers to examine the land. These fishing vessels were left to follow their business at Monhegan. The harbor of this great landmark is in deep water, free from dangerous rocks. Even to-day there are no marking buoys around this harbor, nor have they ever been needed or suggested. Thus the tide served at all hours for sailing vessels. Sandy beaches for landing fish-laden boats, fresh spring water, wood, berries, arable land for gardens and room for ~~fish~~ racks on which to dry the fish, a process known only to the English at that period. The island, small in size and protected on three sides by high heads and dangerous rocks, could be defended from the high land above the harbor. But most important of all the island belonged to, or was controlled by, the friendly Bashaba. Naturally these were advantages that Gorges and his associates appreciated.

It was Monhegan's harbor also that sheltered the fishing ships of Capt. John Smith in 1614, while he roamed the coast in a small boat buying furs and obtaining information for his famous map and his "Description of New England." On this little island he made his garden "that grew so well that it served them for callets." Dermer, too, had his rendezvous at "Monahiggon."

Although the location of this fishing island was guarded and held secret, yet enough records have come to light, according to the author of this volume, to establish the fact that Monhegan was the principal seat of English operations from the beginning of their activities until the Pilgrims landed.

That Samoset learned his English from the fishermen who came to Monhegan, and so was able to welcome the Pilgrims in their own tongue, is told in Governor Bradford's own words. That the hungry Pilgrims and other starving settlers sent to Monhegan for food is known to every serious student of American history.

Eighteen of Monhegan's pioneers were signers of the petition, sent in 1673, to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, pleading with that lusty young government to come and establish their rule over these older settlements. Monhegan was the foremost settlement at that time in the territory afterwards known as Maine.

During the French and Indian Wars, Monhegan was the last resort of the harried settlers on the mainland fleeing the fury of the Indians, and the tale is told in the words of the old historian, Hubbard.

This history is not a local history as might be inferred, but covers the early periods of discovery as well as the most interesting one when the English and French were wrangling for possession of the new world.

Many illustrations of unusual portraits of personages, maps, signatures and seals enliven the volume, while an index renders its available for ready reference.

Received from Miss Proper  
August 8, 1930

Monhegan, Maine Nov. 1- '32

My dear Mrs. Fuller:

Just my luck! I would  
lean out one note and  
that would be the one needed.

In making the note I left  
out the reprint note and so  
of course it did not get  
into the book.

David Ingraham's tale was  
printed in the first edition  
of Hakluyt but was left  
out of the following ones.

Some historians have  
assumed that it was too  
lewd to be retained, while  
others thought that Sir  
Humphrey Gilbert and his  
associates did not want  
further attention called to it.

Monhegan, Maine

Of course I'm hazy now  
as to where I did find my  
reference and quotation.  
It might have been from  
Owen's History or in the  
"Iconographic of Manhattan  
Island." I certainly secured  
it in the N. Y. Public  
Library American History  
Reference Room. Mr. Taylor  
is librarian there and he  
would be able to locate  
the reprint quickly I believe.  
His knowledge of American  
history sources is infinite  
and he is kindness itself,  
so if you would apply to  
him, telling him I asked  
you to do so, I feel sure  
that the reprint will  
quickly come to light.

Monhegan, Maine

at present I'm resting  
but I intend to do some  
painting very soon. Then  
perhaps I'll get off on  
another literary venture.

It's hard to work at  
history in such a remote  
place unless you have  
all your dates and  
notes perfect, I find.

The garden is a  
bit sad but still some  
rooms. It has been  
my very best garden -  
this summer's. Of course  
it should be better each  
year but I'm always  
afraid it won't be.

Sorry not to be able  
to help more directly,

Cordially  
Toda Propper.

Monhegan  
M.C.P.  
11/15

My dear Mrs Fuller:

Monhegan, Me.

Sutton's book is "The Culture of Vegetables and Flowers", by Sutton & Sons Reading, Eng. Thomson's "Rock Garden Primer", might prove useful but I've not found it particularly so in making mine.

Rock Pinks, Helianthemum, Cerastium, Garden Pinks and the various varieties of Anemone with Columbine have all grown splendidly for me here. Of course all the bulbs do well at the seashore. Aubrietia and candytuft grow like weeds. Wish you might come on again when I am less busy. Affectionately yours  
L. A. Prober.

October 30, 1951

Miss Ida S. Proper  
Monhegan  
Maine

Dear Miss Proper:

It is with great interest that we learn of the forthcoming book, ROYAL BASTARD. It will be noted in the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association, so that all Maine libraries may know of it; and we shall hope to see a copy soon after publication.

You will no doubt recall correspondence some years past about the Maine Author Collection. This exhibit of books by Maine people, or about Maine, has increased steadily, and it is a really impressive collection of books. We have visitors and students constantly asking to browse, or to study the books of some particular author. One day this summer we had two students working on theses: one was studying the books of Hugh Pendexter, and the other was poring over Madam Wood's early novels!

We hope that you will want to inscribe a copy of ROYAL BASTARD for this collection. It would be a most welcome addition. May we wish it a warm and enduring success.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of  
Maine Author Collection

hmj



Ida Sedgwick Proper  
Monhegan, Maine

April 28, 1953

Librarian State Library,  
Augusta, Maine:

My dear Sir:

Would it be possible for you to send me a list of the Public Libraries of Maine? I am having a reprint of my history of Monhegan-Monhegan the Cradle of New England and would ~~ik~~ like to send them a notice of it, and the price etc.

Thanking you for this curtsy, I remain

Cordially yours,

*Ida S. Proper*  
Ida S. Proper.

*We want her price too.*

April 29, 1953

Miss Ida S. Proper  
Monhegan  
Maine

Dear Miss Proper:

Enclosed are lists of libraries in Maine. We also would like to know the price of the reprinted Monhegan history, and the available date.

Was ROYAL BASTARD ever published? We should be sorry to think that we missed it, but we have not noticed its publication date, or ads indicating that it was available. We want to include it in the Maine in Print list in the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association, and we also hope that the Maine Author Collection may be enriched by the inclusion of an inscribed copy.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of  
Maine Author Collection

hmj  
Encls.

Ida Sedgwick Proper

Monhegan, Maine

May 22, 1953.

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

My dear Mrs. Jacob:

Thank you so much for the list of Maine Libraries. I have sent each of them an announcement card of the reprint of Monhegan, as well as to some of the larger Libraries of the country. Let's hope they buy.

About the Royal Bastard!. That was the original title I had selected for my extensive study of the Shakespearian School of Elizabethan fame. Some of my friends objected to the word Bastard so I changed the title to "Our Elusive Whilly: A Slice of Concealed Elizabethan History." I have with much delay at last prodded the printer to say it will be out soon. Let's hope so! These printers!.,

The book is about 622 pages long and is full of thrills. It gives the name of William, his real name I mean, a sort of story of his birth and childhood His father was Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, who married Catherine Gray, the Protestant's candidate for the throne should Elizabeth die without an heir. Elizabeth had keep the two of them in the Tower for nearly ten years and although William was not born there, he was conceived there.

It is a long story with the love lives of both Spenser and Shakespeare, their deaths and the many aliases they used. Most of the text is quotes from the English State Papers and books of that era.

I will send you a notice when it is ready.

Thanks a lot for your interest.

Cordially yours,

Ida S. Proper/

April 9, 1954

Miss Ida Sedgwick Proper  
Monhegan  
Maine

Dear Miss Proper:

Is it true? We saw the Camden Herald yesterday, and it referred to a "six-hundred page volume." If the book is really published, we shall get busy with an order; and the Maine Author Collection will begin to hope for its inscribed copy. If it isn't published, we shall register regret again, and continue to await the very elusive Willy!

Sincerely yours

In Charge of  
Maine Author Collection

hcm

After twenty years of research . . .

The exhaustively documented story of

## THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES



*Born Seymour, a Royal Bastard, he lived as preacher Smith, as musicians Dowland, Morley and Ferrabosco, as poets Southerne and Constable, as dramatists Campion, Marlowe and*

## William Shakespeare

*Small wonder that the author-researcher, Ida Sedgwick Proper has titled her great work*

## OUR ELUSIVE WILLY

A Slice of Concealed Elizabethan History

*A wanted reference volume for students of the Elizabethan era; a must for private and public libraries.*

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### ORDER FORM

Ida Sedgwick Proper  
Monhegan, Maine  
U.S.A.

Please send me ..... copies of "OUR ELUSIVE WILLY" @ \$10.00 a copy. I enclose \$..... or bill me ( ). Library Discount 10%.

Name .....

Street Address .....

City ..... State .....

## Our Elusive Willy

*A Slice of Concealed Elizabethan History*

by  
IDA SEDGWICK PROPER

This is a controversial book, but it is also a new approach—both biographical and historical—to the whole concept of the Elizabethan Period.

Edmund Spenser was not the humble poet critics have described him as being, but actually he was the great organizer of the Elizabethan school of literature which remains unparalleled for form and beauty.

The thesis of this book is that the name "Spenser" was a pseudonym for Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, an enormously wealthy noble, whom Elizabeth I imprisoned for ten years because he secretly married Catherine Grey. Of this union was born three sons known to us as Robert Greene, Thomas Nash and *bastardized William Shakespeare*. The relationship of these writers to the Earl of Southampton is fully established.

In the pages of this engrossing book the reader will find detailed fascinating new theories about Shakespeare's birth his innumerable literary and musical pen names, his sonnets begging a young man to marry, and his scarcely known spy activities discovered in the *Calendar of State Papers*.

The deep love of Arbell Stuart for Shakespeare is revealed in Arbell's letters to her notorious grandmother, Bess of Hardwick. When Arbell died in the Tower in 1615, supposedly poisoned by command of King James I, Shakespeare lived for only a few months longer overcome with grief.

To paraphrase Hertford's advice to the reader of the First Folio, "Read" this, "therefore, again and again!"

## *About The Author*

Ida Sedgwick Proper, author of OUR ELUSIVE WILLY, as a little girl of ten began preparation for her career as an artist and writer. These two arts have been the main pursuits of her diversified and productive life.

In the early days she worked in libraries for her livelihood while attending art school at night. This combination—libraries and art school—was occasionally varied with newspaper jobs. Soon, however, Miss Proper received a scholarship in painting which meant she could travel abroad and spend a winter in Munich. Afterwards there was a long stay in Paris, made possible by a generous father, and Miss Proper exhibited her work in all of the art salons.

After her return to America her flourishing career was cut short by the advent of World War I. Suffrage and war work took her to Washington. The Ordnance Department soon sent her to France, and there Miss Proper worked on the *History of the Ordnance, A. E. F.*

A chance vacation while working as News Editor of a technical weekly took her to Monhegan, Maine. This storm-beaten island so charmed her that a house was speedily acquired and made her permanent home. Curiosity and a love for history led Miss Proper to study Monhegan's past, and her first book was the result—*Monhegan, The Cradle of New England*. Further research produced the fascinating clues which have resulted in this book, which Miss Proper calls "her most audacious volume."

Price \$10.00

April 21, 1954

Miss Ida Sedgwick Proper  
Monhegan  
Maine

Dear Miss Proper:

It is wonderful news, and we read the advertising with greatest interest and anticipation.

Here is our order for a copy for the lending section of the library. May we hope for an inscribed gift copy, too, to be placed in the Maine Author Collection?

Good luck to it, and may the book start lots of arguments!

Sincerely yours

In Charge of  
Maine Author Collection

hmj  
Encl.

May 11, 1954

Miss Ida Sedgwick Proper  
Monhegan  
Maine

Dear Miss Proper:

OUR ELUSIVE WILLY has been received, and we are cataloging a copy for lending immediately. It should start a lot of conversation, which is, no doubt, exactly what you want it to do.

It certainly represents a vast amount of work, and must be a tremendous satisfaction to you now that it is finally in print.

We shall note it in the next issue of the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association, and hope that it enjoys a constant demand.

Thank you very much for the Maine Author Collection copy and for inscribing it for us.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of  
Maine Author Collection

hmj