

The SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Man Ray

SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY TO SPONSOR SAUK CENTRE CONFERENCE JULY 1997

The Sinclair Lewis Society will sponsor a conference in Sauk Centre, Minnesota Thursday and Friday, July 17 and 18, 1997 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the publication of *Babbitt* and the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Kingsblood Royal*. These two novels represent writings from two different periods of Lewis's career. *Babbitt* is now synonymous with the American businessman and *Kingsblood Royal* deals with race relations and reverse passing.

Abstracts and papers are encouraged on these two novels in particular, but are welcomed on any topic related to Lewis. The deadline for submission of a paper or abstract for consideration for the conference is March 1, 1997. Please send abstracts, proposals, suggestions to Sally Parry, Sinclair Lewis Society, Dept. of English, Box 4240, Illinois State University 61790-4240; Fax 309/438-5414; e-mail separry@rs6000.cmp.ilstu.edu.

In addition to presentations on *Babbitt* and *Kingsblood Royal*, we plan to have sessions on teaching Lewis, collecting books and other material related to Lewis, visits to Lewis's home, his grave, and the interpretive center, and a showing of a 1930s film version of *Babbitt* with Guy Kibbee. Fliers on the conference should be available before the end of the year. Arrangements are being made with the Palmer House for accommodations. The nearest airport is Minneapolis/St. Paul where rental cars and limousine service are available.

MAJOR NEW STUDY OF THE 1920s NOVELS

REVIEW OF *THE RISE OF SINCLAIR LEWIS, 1920-1930*, BY JAMES M. HUTCHISSON.

UNIVERSITY PARK, PENNSYLVANIA: PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1996. \$29.50.

George Killough
The College of St. Scholastica

The rich inheritance of unpublished Lewis papers is bearing new fruit. The harvester is James Hutchisson. His *The Rise of Sinclair Lewis, 1920-1930*, published in June, is the first book since Mark Schorer's 1961 biography to give substantial attention to archival records. Zeroing in on just one key decade, Hutchisson gives even more concentration to the documents than did Schorer. The objective is to reveal the artist at work, to understand the genesis of Lewis's novels of the 1920s by examining the surviving notes, plans, and drafts systematically. In doing this, Hutchisson has produced a major book, based on methodical new scholarship, that will influence Lewis studies for a long time.

Hutchisson traces the development of each novel of the 1920s from the first gleam in Lewis's eye, to the early plans, through the draft and revisions, all the way to the published book. He pictures Lewis working with the childlike delight of an adult model railroad enthusiast, mapping out communities in fine detail, peopling them with representative characters, hoping to capture in the model something important about America. During the development of these plans into novels, Hutchisson discovers each book's primary concept undergoing enormous change, as Lewis struggled to appeal to the main middle-class readership, satisfy the close friends who perused the plans and drafts, appease the critics, and keep his one great talent for satirical mimicry in check.

The Pennsylvania State University Press deserves congratulations for treating this study with appropriate elegance. As part of the Penn State Series in the History of the Book, this volume has room for thirty-two illustrations, most of them occupying a full page. They are reproductions of sample leaves from the unpublished documents under discussion, some from the Yale collection of Lewis papers, others from the collection at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition, there are six appendices, including a deleted chapter from the draft typescript of

Main Street, which shows Carol Kennicott experiencing new bitterness as Guy Pollock capitulates further to village inertia and marries a twenty-year-old blank-minded girl. This deletion and others like it show Lewis diminishing the pessimism in his draft and making it possible for Carol to return in the end to Gopher Prairie with hope. An appended excerpt like this from a typescript is a rich source that complements the volume's overall effort to bring the reader as close as possible to the archival records.

Hutchisson's chronicle of adjustments in the evolving texts will fascinate anyone who has ever wondered about the peculiar mix of satire and sympathy in Lewis's novels. In the draft typescript of *Main Street*, for example, Lewis cut significant quantities of satiric material both on general American subjects—the YMCA, advertising, the Republican Party—and on the specific focus of the novel, small-town life. He also softened the portrayal of Carol Kennicott, made her feel warmer toward other people, allowed her more optimism and room for growth. In other words, he dulled the satirical edges on all sides, striving for a sympathetic protagonist and an America and prairie village where the mature individual has grounds for hope.

Through these changes, Lewis was seeking to attract a wide audience in 1920, especially middle-class women. For this purpose he made additional cuts of material having sexual overtones. He deleted all suggestions of sexual impropriety on Carol's part and deliberately rejected James Branch Cabell's recommendation to make Carol and Erik Valborg into lovers.

The emerging picture of Lewis is of a writer with one great talent for satirical mimicry who by virtue of extraordinary hard work and some attention to marketing could enjoy wild success in the 1920s. In book after book, he struggled to diminish the satire during the revising stage in order to achieve something greater or something more appealing to readers. Sometimes, as in *Main Street*, he achieved a workable balance. Other times, as in *Dodsworth*, Hutchisson thinks he fell short.

Hutchisson's portrayal of the designing-and-shaping work suggests the organized effort of a late twentieth-century marketing or political campaign. He does not use these metaphors himself, but the evidence he finds in the construction of *Main Street*, for example, fits the picture. He thinks Lewis started with an extraordinary sense of the American middle class, who were both the subject matter and the target audience. Like a successful politician or advertiser, Lewis knew what they wanted, who they were, their failings, their aspirations, their values. He even enjoyed their company. In constructing his product, he shaved and adjusted and consulted with his advisers until he had the closest thing he could get to a winning mix. The sales records show fabulous success.

At various stages in the 1920s, Lewis's method involved near-heroic levels of discipline. Part of this discipline was in finding and fastening on human sources and entering into their force fields so as to be able to exercise his mimetic talent on a world or a perspective beyond his own experience. We have long known Lewis relied on human sources to some extent—for example, on first wife Gracie to understand Carol Kennicott's perspective on the prairie village, on Paul de Kruif to understand the world of medical research, on William Stidger and Leon

Birkhead to understand the world of American Protestant preachers—but Hutchisson shows this reliance as a matter of unusual concentration, a total immersion in the subject. In preparation for *Main Street*, *Arrowsmith*, and *Elmer Gantry*, Lewis threw himself into the subject world, traveling to the sites, questioning and debating with the sources for weeks, sensing the spirit and atmosphere. This disciplined immersion was so necessary to his success that when he could not fully achieve it, as with the long-projected labor novel, he simply could not produce.

Another feature of authorial discipline was Lewis's method of submitting first drafts to friends and sources and then revising according to their recommendations—not slavishly accepting all advice but carefully following through. After a long planning period, he normally generated a first full draft on the typewriter with lightening speed, allowing his satirical wit a free rein. Then he consulted and revised heavily by hand. Gracie's published memoir (*With Love from Gracie*, 1955) described the way he had her go over his material, sometimes even aloud. Editorial markings from Gracie appear on the draft typescripts of both *Babbitt* and *Arrowsmith*, and markings by de Kruif appear on the *Arrowsmith* typescript as well. Lewis even penciled questions to de Kruif on that draft. At various times, Lewis also relied on advice from his publisher Alfred Harcourt, from James Branch Cabell, and from second wife Dorothy Thompson.

In detailing the evidence of concentration in Lewis's method, Hutchisson has taken a scholarly stance characterized by friendly interest and a simple desire to understand. He does not overlook Lewis's shortcomings as a writer, nor does he seek to showcase

Teaching Sinclair Lewis

Anyone who has successfully taught a Sinclair Lewis novel or short story is invited to submit a short essay for consideration for publication. Please use MLA style. Send to the Sinclair Lewis Society, Dept. of English, 4240 Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4240 or e-mail separry@rs6000.cmp.ilstu.edu.

THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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these shortcomings. His goal is to find reasons for everything. Some Lewis fans may think he emphasizes reasons for failure a little more than reasons for success, especially toward the end of the book, but I find all the reasoning and connecting of causes and consequences useful. He explains, for example, the unique qualities of *Elmer Gantry* as the result of several factors. For one thing, there was H. L. Mencken, friend and trusted critic, forever encouraging Lewis to unleash that brilliant satiric talent and let it roam unchecked. This influence, coupled with the fact that Lewis's immersion in the world of Kansas City preachers exposed him to real frauds and boosters, explains the unrelenting satire against the clergy. There was also the death of Lewis's father, from which Lewis never completely recovered, occurring when the draft was only half done. At the same time, the marriage with Gracie was falling to pieces. Add to this the fact that Lewis had already exhausted himself in Kansas City while gathering material and engaging in antics to stir publicity. In Hutchisson's eminently reasonable picture, these factors all make Lewis's intensified bouts of drinking, the weakness of the ending in *Elmer Gantry*, and Lewis's subsequent collapse seem expectable and understandable.

The whole book, in fact, makes Lewis's fiction and personal behavior understandable. He is not a mystery, but a subject that systematic scholarship can explain. Present-day students of Lewis, remembering the complex and unaffectionate portrait in Schorer's massive biography, have yearned for a new view like the one the present volume provides. Because this feeling has been universal among us, the new book is very welcome.

One wonders, however, whether the new approach may, by contrast, illumine attractions in Schorer that have been overlooked. Schorer's Lewis, for example, was a bundle of contradictions—generous in large things, stingy in small; open-minded and friendly but quick to take offense; liberal but conservative; romantically imaginative but entrenched in the reductive world of fact. This contradictory Lewis was a mystery, with a certain glaring power as a character. Hutchisson's more understandable Lewis, though more likely to have been the real person, lacks this power. Of course, one would not fault Hutchisson's book for failing to capture the total Lewis, for the book does not purport to be a character analysis, much less a birth-to-death biography. Still, the book does show that an explainable Lewis is possible, and explainability strangely diminishes that old glaring presence we find in Schorer.

Perhaps one way to capture more of Lewis's power as a character is to explore further the surviving evidence of his internal life. Maybe the new biography being assembled by Richard Lingeman will do this. The scope of the present volume being what it is, Hutchisson does not do this at length but instead assumes the familiar view that there were limits in Lewis's inner life and in his self-knowledge. These limits are offered as partial explanations for the weakness in Lewis's portrait of himself as Sam Dodsworth. Hutchisson suggests that the private journals also show a meager talent for self-exploration. This view was shared by Schorer, but I think further study, possible when the journals are in print, will reveal a deeper, more self-aware Lewis than has so far been recognized.

Granted, the private Lewis is usually hiding. As the present

study demonstrates so well, the Lewis of the novels has always been a public voice, crafting his products for the marketplace, not allowing the audience an inside view. The Lewis of the 1940s journal (the diary I know best) is a private voice that allows us more of a view. Because this voice comes from a rural culture that discourages verbalized navel-gazing, it is not surprising that visitors to the Yale collection have had trouble finding the private self-aware person. Nevertheless, the clues are there, and sensitive analysis will eventually discover the man behind them.

If you are living in Minnesota when reading the new book, you will blink two or three times at the line on page 18 about Lewis and Gracie settling temporarily in fall 1917 in the "Minneapolis suburb of Fergus Falls." Fergus Falls is actually 170 miles to the northwest. If Schorer is correct, the town intended must be Marine on St. Croix, where the couple spent two weeks before renting a fine house on St. Paul's elegant Summit Avenue at the end of October.

Except for the need for a Minnesotan to catch an isolated error like this, the new book is a triumph of scholarship. It will become an essential tool for subsequent studies of individual novels insofar as it reveals the designing-and-shaping work behind so many of them. The new reasonable view it provides of Lewis's craft and character is welcome for its own sake and for the stimulus it will give to further thinking. The book is also very readable—a real virtue, for a scholarly book, that Lewis himself would appreciate.

JEOPARDY TIME

Here are more Sinclair Lewis answers and questions from the syndicated game show *Jeopardy*.

From July 9, 1996: "He became the first American to win the literature prize after his 'Dodsworth' appeared." The \$400 question in Nobel Prize Winners was answered correctly.

From June 14, 1996: "This Sinclair Lewis real estate broker is a man of 'zip and zowie.'" This \$400 question in Literary Characters was answered correctly.

From May 1, 1996: "This Sinclair Lewis title character becomes involved with fellow religious hypocrite Sharon Falconer." This Satire question for \$600 was answered correctly.

LEWIS ON THE WEB

Visit the Sinclair Lewis page on the web: <http://www.ilstu.edu/~separry/lewis.html>. The society's website is: <http://ilstu.edu/~separry/society.html>.

NEW MEMBERS

The Sinclair Lewis Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Stephen Adrian
507 Hall Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55107

Bob Belmont
5812 Michael Ct.
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Esther Fleming
(who joins husband
Robert Fleming as a
joint member)

Erin Hollis
301 Robert Dr.
Normal, IL 61761

Catherine Jurca
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Stephen R. Pastore
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The editor of the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue by writing articles or sending notes. These people include Roger Forseth, Sally and Don Hoople, James Hutchisson, George Killough, Jacqueline Koenig, William G. Kraemer, William Linneman, Joyce Lyng, Robert McLaughlin, Rosemary McLaughlin, Stephen Pastore, Rodger Tarr, Ray Lewis White, and Patricia Willis.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* welcomes short contributions about Lewis's work, life, and times. We also welcome essays about teaching Lewis's novels and short stories. Send books for review, notices of upcoming conferences, reports on presentations and publications relating to Lewis, discoveries of materials (correspondence, manuscripts, etc.) in and descriptions of collections in libraries, and all other items to Sally Parry, Editor, the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*, Department of English, 4240 Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4240, or E-mail: separry@rs6000.cmp.ilstu.edu.

A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT OVER *TENNIS AS I PLAY IT*

Stephen A. Pastore

For some years now a California book dealer has espoused that a little known book about tennis entitled *Tennis as I Play It* was written, not by Maurice E. McLoughlin, as the cover so clearly proclaims, but by a youthful Sinclair Lewis. This espousal is so energetic that he encloses several letters and a "Memorandum" from an attorney setting forth the issue as established fact. There is, of course, no attempt at critical analysis of the work. Rather, with the emphasis on book-as-artifact, the proof is in the "he said so" genre of evidence. On the other hand, people who not only collect Sinclair Lewis artifacts but read them generally differ with this all too facile conclusion. Lewis was quite familiar with the dichotomy that exists between these two camps, collector vs. scholar, and had very few nice things to say about the former. The book dealer's "evidence," however, at least opens the door to the courtroom of inquiry.

Undeniably, this kind of controversy adds chili peppers to the marinara of bibliographical research. I have been studying Sinclair Lewis on and off for over 30 years and only recently has it been claimed he may have written, or more appropriately, "ghost written" the 1915 Doran & Co. book titled *Tennis as I Play It*, ostensibly by a world class tennis player named Maurice McLoughlin. The facts (all of which are technically hearsay in that they are in letter form and, therefore, cannot be subjected to cross-examination) are as follows: a West Coast book dealer had a friend who knew a lawyer who had a passing relationship with McLoughlin in 1948 when both worked for the federal government. The lawyer told the dealer that in the course of conversation it was revealed that not only had McLoughlin been a Davis Cup team member, but that he was contacted by Doran and asked to write a book about tennis. When McLoughlin replied that he couldn't write very well, Doran suggested a "tall thin red-haired young man" who happened to be in the office at the time. He was introduced as Sinclair Lewis. Lewis was employed by Doran in the summer of 1914 as a book promoter and assistant editor. While in Doran's employ, Lewis sold story plots to Jack London, dreamed up ad campaigns and promotional hoopla for other authors, and ghost wrote three chapters of *Dad* by Albert Payson Terhune. In short, all the temporal-factual ingredients are there for the verification of the Lewis-Tennis connection. However, in Mark Schorer's huge Lewis biography (so often subliminally hostile to Lewis), no mention is made of *Tennis*. It is almost impossible to believe that this tidbit, so ripe for Schorer to cynicize (if I may coin a word) about, was ignored. The biography was published in 1961, ample time for the story to have unfolded to Schorer, who left no stone unturned. The omission is too large to be ignored. Nonetheless, he may have missed it. After all, no other critic ever discovered it either; maybe there was nothing to discover. Maybe this type of transaction could only be discovered by McLoughlin coming forth publicly, a very unlikely scenario. We know about the

Terhune connection, because Terhune, an author, subsequently wrote about it. McLoughlin, a retired athlete, would have no similar forum. What would the letter writing lawyer have to gain by fabricating this story? There must be easier ways to leave a mark on the globe of literary scholarship. Did the dealer and the lawyer purchase a "box lot" of *Tennis* disposed of at auction by the heirs of George H. Doran & Co.? Would this tenuous attribution enhance the profits on this serendipitous purchase?

In an effort to solve the mystery, I had a computer-whiz friend of mine in New York City scan 18 pages of non-fiction Lewis had written in 1914-15. He then fed in 30 pages of *Tennis*. The computer program is designed to pick out unusual vocabulary words and syntactical word arrangements common to both sets of writing. Obviously, the more common vocabulary and idiomatic usage between the two, the more likely that they came from the same hand. There were, in this scant, not-for-profit analysis, twelve points of conjunction, far beyond the expected random connection between works by different authors. For example, the phrase "in this department," a colloquialism for "in this area" or "on this topic," appears twice in both samples. Interestingly, the word *center* is spelled throughout *Tennis* as "centre," an apparently European affectation (Lewis, of course, was from Sauk Centre, Minnesota and frequently, in his later life, railed against reporters and the like who spelled his hometown "Sauk Center"). The computer analysis strongly favors Lewis's authorship.

Several respected and respectable die-hard Lewis collectors feel that *Tennis* was not written by Lewis. Lewis did not have so distinctive a style as to be easily recognizable (like James or Faulkner, for instance), and, so, this opinion is based on "feel," much like the feel that art experts use to judge the authenticity of a particular painting. This feel should not be underrated. It has often saved many a famous institution from the guiles of would-be forgers. But, I believe, logic dictates that Lewis is the author. McLoughlin and Lewis are both dead; they're not talking. I could find nothing in Lewis documents themselves that even hint of *Tennis*. There is scant profit to be had by those who espouse that *Tennis* was written by Lewis. In fact, the book would most likely have the same value as a sport and tennis book collectible without the Lewis attribution. The dealer, I feel, genuinely desired to contribute to the lexicon of Lewis scholarship and the world of book collecting as well and in this regard Lewis scholars owe him a debt of gratitude for bringing this not only to light, but widely so. If this is some minor Clifford Irvingesque hoax (and I strongly feel that it is not), then we have all been given an opportunity to laugh at ourselves in the future. I, for one, can take it. How can you spend a large part of your life studying, admiring, collecting, and analyzing Sinclair Lewis and not be prepared for some sort of ridicule? Therefore, I include *Tennis* in the bibliography of Lewis that I am finishing (to be published in January 1997) because it belongs in any collection of Sinclair Lewis as an icon of the man himself, so apparently accessible, so simultaneously elusive.

BOOK NEWS

In 1979 Folcroft Library published a facsimile edition of the 1912 Stokes edition of *Hike and the Aeroplane*. It was a limited run of 150 copies.

In 1963 Pocket Books published a paperback edition of *The Man from Main Street*. It was retitled as *A Sinclair Lewis Reader* and published as A Giant Cardinal Edition. Lucky member Roger Forseth writes that he acquired a mint copy for \$2.50.

The publishing firms Prometheus and Carrol & Graf have just published editions of *Main Street*, both of them seemingly offset from the original. Both editions are available in book stores. The Prometheus edition is \$8.95 and 451 pages and is also available through College Textbook Marketing, CTM Website: <http://www.spiretech.com/~ctm>.

THEATER NEWS

Theater Week for September 16 reports that the Stephen Cole-Jeffrey Saver musical version of *Dodsworth* was chosen by the National Alliance for Musical Theater's annual New York Festival of New Musicals series of staged readings which was held at the end of September. *Dodsworth* was one of eight musicals chosen and had originally premiered at the Casa Mañana in Forth Worth. See the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*, volume 4, number 2 for a discussion of that production. If anyone is interested in licensing or production information, please contact Mitch Douglas, International Creative Management, 212-556-5600 or Casa Mañana Musicals, Inc., Van Kaplan, 3101 West Lancaster, Fort Worth, Texas, 76107, 817-332-2272. A recent ad in *Theater Week* quotes from several reviews. *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram*: "Dodsworth has polished premiere...Composer Saver's score pays homage to Stephen Sondheim, while lyricist Cole celebrates Sondheim, Cole Porter and Ogden Nash." *Theater Week* wrote "Casa Mañana lives up to its name. The Fort Worth theatre has produced a musical for which there may be many a tomorrow." *Variety*, the trade newspaper, said, "Dodsworth is a consoling, middle-brow social satire and as such, it has the soul of a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. It's mainstream American, earnest though mildly comic, as it sets a romantic tale against social issues."

NEWS FROM THE BEINECKE

Patricia Willis, Curator of the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, reports that the library has received from Fay Wray (of *King Kong* and 71 other films) her letters from Lewis and a typescript of *Angela Is Twenty-Two*. Wray and Lewis collaborated on the script although Wray has said that most of her contributions were in helping with dialogue and talking it through. She and Lewis also acted in summer stock productions of the play.

ELMER GANTRY TYPESCRIPT TO BE AUCTIONED

The William Doyle Galleries is auctioning off a carbon typescript of Lewis's *Elmer Gantry* which is signed and inscribed. The auction is taking place November 13 in New York. The following description is from the internet catalogue.

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LEWIS, SINCLAIR
"Elmer Gantry A Novel"

Typescript (carbon copy), six hundred and twenty pages, 4to, cloth, inscribed on title page, "This is the carbon copy of the original MS of Elmer Gantry & I want to give it with affection to Ed Wallace, who copied it all—& copied all the changes in pen & blue pencil—& probably cussed all the time. Sinclair Lewis." Name of Dorothy Wallace on title. Inserted full-length photograph of Lewis, 8 1/2 x 6 1/2 inches, inscribed, "To Ed Wallace Sinclair Lewis." Binding soiled, photograph chipped and crudely inserted with tape.

The typescript contains numerous corrections and revisions in ink and blue pencil, with typed insertions, made by Ed Wallace under Lewis's direction. Ed Wallace worked for Harcourt, Brace and Co. The manuscript differs significantly from the final published version. Chapter XXVIII contains the most noticeable revisions, with approximately two hundred lines canceled. In this chapter, Dr. Philip McGarry and Frank Shallard debate theological issues; it appears that Lewis wanted to excise much of the theological material from this section. According to Mark Schorer's afterward to the Signet edition of the novel, "The composition of *Elmer Gantry* differs from that of the other novels chiefly in that the evidence suggests that there was no real second draft, and that most of his revisions and cuttings were made on the printer's galley proof." This typescript, however, shows the process of revision while the book was still in typescript.

C \$10,000—\$15,000

SAUK CENTRE NEWS

Linda Frumkin has sold the Palmer House to Jim and June Ruten. Under Ms. Frumkin's management, the Palmer House improved dramatically in terms of the decoration of the rooms, the general decor, and the food. Society members look forward to continued fine lodging and dining under the new management.

The *Sauk Centre Herald* has gone on-line at www.saukherald.com. For those who want to keep up with what's going on in Lewis's hometown via the World Wide Web, here's your chance to do so.

Sinclair Lewis Days took place in Sauk Centre this past July 17-21. Events included a Kiddie Parade, a concert and other musical programs in Sinclair Lewis Park, a polka Mass, a Business Volleyball Tournament, the Minnesota Governor's Cut Artgo 100 race at the I-94 Speedway, a PTA musical production of *Beauty and the Beast*, races, carnival games, a Grand Parade, and one of the largest craft shows in the city's history. Next year's Sinclair Lewis Society conference is set to coincide with the beginning of this event which has entertainment to meet everyone's interest.

UHF 16 channel in Minnesota broadcast the hometown story of Sauk Centre and Sinclair Lewis in July. Much of it was based on an interview with two of the tour guides at the Lewis home, Joyce Lyng and Alyce Olson (see following feature on Joyce Lyng). Ms. Lyng reports that the downstairs of the Lewis home will soon be accessible to the handicapped, with a picture board displaying the rooms upstairs.

The Sinclair Lewis Foundation presented the 1996 Sinclair Lewis Writers Conference on Saturday, October 12 at the Sauk Centre Junior High School. Speakers included Douglas Wood on "The Writer's Journey: A Personal and Literary Path," Jim Northrup on "The Writer's Life and Other War Stories," Jeffrey R. McGuinness on "When Art Meets Commerce," and Susan Devore Williams on "The Basics of Inspirational Writing."

The following articles were provided by Joyce Lyng.

JOYCE LYNQ TENDS THE SINCLAIR LEWIS MEMORY

by Jeanne Olson (From Senior Perspective May 1996)

When Joyce Lyng puts on her petticoats, her vintage dress and cap, and assumes the role of Isabel Warner Lewis, the stepmother of Sauk Centre's famous son, she settles cozily into playing a character she knows and likes. Each summer during Sinclair Lewis Days, she takes on the persona while she sits on the front porch of the Sinclair Lewis Boyhood Home to watch

the parade go by, enjoying and enhancing the civic celebration.

"Some of my friends in Sauk Centre call me 'Mrs. Lewis' because of my close association and my work at the Boyhood Home—which is just fine with me," Lyng said. "I choose to be Isabel, the *second* wife of Dr. Lewis, who encouraged Sinclair in what he was doing, in his love for books and writing."

Lyng has been a guide at the Lewis home for ten years, and has learned and come to appreciate much about the writer who, in 1930, was the first American to win the Nobel Prize for literature. Like many people who take for granted the history in their midst, Lyng never paid much attention to the local pride and interest in Sinclair Lewis.

"I never had much time for reading many books on the farm, or time to even think about Sinclair Lewis, because of the many responsibilities and all the things that needed to be attended to on our farm," she said. With pigs, sheep, beef cattle, 1000 chickens, a vegetable garden and various crops to tend to in addition to her four children, Lyng was kept more than occupied. That changed after her husband, Herman, died in 1981. She was strongly encouraged by her children, due to her arthritis, to move to town.

"I needed something to keep me busy and a way to make a living, to provide me with an occupation of some sort," she said. I've always enjoyed being with people, so I began working at the chamber of commerce office where the Lewis Museum is located. This is when my interest began in Sinclair Lewis. It was after this that I read the novel, *Main Street*."

She enjoyed the book, and began to make her way through his other important works: *Babbitt*, *Arrowsmith*, *Elmer Gantry* and *Dodsworth*. In all, Lewis wrote 23 novels.

Lyng collects books by and about Sinclair Lewis, and has found a couple of books that have taught her intriguing obscure facts about the man and his family. She's learned of some of the events which helped form his character, and she mentions anecdotally about how Sinclair was disparaged by his father and picked on by his brother, the apple of their father's eye.

"Claude, the brother, was mean to Sinclair Lewis," she said. "He became a doctor, following in his father's footsteps. He never acknowledged the Nobel Prize. Their father called Sinclair a 'pencil pusher,' and considered Claude the good son. Sinclair, when he was a little boy, just wanted to be accepted by his brother and his friends. And they were so mean to him! They told him to go out in the grass and find the raisins—you know what *that* was!"

Lyng says that Carol Kennicott, the main character of *Main Street*, was based on Lewis's stepmother, Isabel. Carol's character was an enthusiastic and frequently frustrated promoter of culture and art in Gopher Prairie; in encouraging Lewis's writing, Isabel also nurtured creativity and artistic expression.

"Isabel Warner Lewis: that's who I am when I dress up in period clothing and sit on the front porch of the Boyhood Home on Sun., July 21 at 12:30 p.m.," Lyng said.

The books from which she has gleaned such anecdotes are Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life*; and Roberta Olson's *Sinclair Lewis, The Journey*. Olson is an Osakis woman with an interest in Sinclair Lewis that Lyng shares. "Her book is so interesting to read, and it has pictures and information about

what all his novels are about. We only have about five of her books left, so she's got to hurry up and print some more! She's very much a Sinclair Lewis enthusiast, and we're lucky to have her."

One of Lyng's best and busiest years was in 1985, the centennial anniversary of Lewis's birth. At the time she was working at the Sinclair Lewis Interpretive Center and for the chamber of commerce. She—and most of Sauk Centre—participated in a variety of commemorative events that were highlighted by national and international media.

She still recalls having her picture appear in the *New York Times* wearing her centennial tee shirt and being interviewed for a program broadcast by Radio Free Europe. Since she went to work as a docent during the home's summer hours she has given tours to hundreds of visitors, including Rudy and Lola Perpich and the ambassador of Qatar. Visiting students are a special treat, and she says they are generally quite interested and respectful.

Hiking up the steep stairs of an old home is not easy for Lyng, who has had 26 orthopaedic surgeries, all related to arthritis. There's another on the horizon; standing and walking are painful. "I was very persistent with the physical therapy in all of them," she notes, "so I could achieve normal commitments, even though certain limitations will always persist. My philosophy is to keep on going even when the pain is present. I have a lot of...persistence, you might call it. Stubborn."

As a member of the board of directors of the Sauk Centre Area Historical Society, Lyng has taken her turns as president and secretary. Her activities at present include working on increasing membership in the historical society and on getting an addition built onto the interpretive center.

"That land is prime land, and it's such a perfect place for an attractive gateway to the city," she said. She's proud of the museum which was visited by close to 5,000 people last year, including visitors from Russia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Holland, Canada, the South Pacific and every state in the union. The Boyhood Home of Sinclair Lewis was toured by 1,550 people.

In *Main Street*, some of Lewis's characters appear provincial and narrow-minded. "Some of the local people held resentment, some still do. And some think he's a great writer. But even though he didn't name names, he pointed out things about people that were not universally appreciated by the early residents of Sauk Centre.

"He was a different kind of person," Lyng added. "He wanted to get people to meet their potential. In my interpretation, he wrote about the early people of Sauk Centre that they didn't meet their potential. He used the people in his home town as his models for this wish."

She feels a thrill when she thinks about how famous the author became, how respected and honored. "And to think, he was born right here, in little Sauk Centre! That's something unique we have that no place else in the world can claim!"

There is a picture in Roberta Olson's book of Sinclair Lewis speaking to a group of people which includes Lyng's father—and the preoccupied-looking little nine-year-old girl who accompanied him to the lecture that night so long ago. If only she

had known back then what direction her life would take, Joyce Lyng has often thought.

"I'm pretty proud of Sinclair Lewis. I wish I could have met him."

RECIPES FROM HERE AND THERE

Joyce Lyng's Fanny Farmer Fudge

- 1 8-oz pkg chocolate chips (not milk chocolate)
- 1/4 lb. butter or margarine
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 6-oz evaporated milk
- 2 cups sugar
- 10 cut up marshmallows or 100 miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts, or to taste (optional)

Place chocolate chips, butter and vanilla in a bowl; set aside.

In a saucepan, combine evaporated milk, sugar and marshmallows. Heat to boiling and boil 6 minutes, stirring constantly. Pour boiling mixture in bowl and stir until chips are melted; beat by hand until smooth and creamy. Stir in nuts, if desired. Pour into a buttered 8 x 8 pan. Let cool, and cut into pieces. Note: if sweeter candy is desired, add more chocolate chips.

Joyce Lyng's Chocolate Water Cake

- 1-1/2 cups white sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 squares melted baking chocolate
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup chopped nuts (optional)

Cream sugar and shortening. Add eggs and melted chocolate; beat well. Add remaining ingredients and beat with electric mixer. Stir in nuts. Pour into a greased and floured 9 x 13 pan and bake a 350° for 50 to 60 minutes. Cool; top with your favorite chocolate frosting.

MURDER IN SAUK CENTRE

Sauk Centre made front page headlines in late June for perhaps the first time since Sinclair Lewis's death because of a shocking murder of four people by their next door neighbor. William G. Kraemer, a doctoral candidate at Illinois State University, sent in the following report.

"When I was in Minnesota over the weekend, the big news story on television was a shooting in Sauk Centre. An elderly man was irate because, he said, some kids next door to him were using his dock. Twice the man had his property surveyed to

show the kids where the property line was. After the most recent survey, the man claimed the kids moved the surveyors' flags and called the police. Shortly after the police left, the man went to the neighbors' [house] and shot four people to death. The father, mother, and two children died. Then the man shot himself. The man even went inside the house to kill some of the people. One member of the family, [a 16-year-old girl,] who was not home, survived. All the neighbors and the man's family were stunned. No one ever thought the man would do this."

Paul Crawford, 74, who lived on Big Sauk Lake, shot Warren and Marcella Schloegl and their children, Eric, 11, and Jodi, 12, before killing himself.

INTERPRETIVE CENTER MAPS LIFE OF LEWIS, BIRTH OF NOVEL

MUSEUM INCLUDES PERSONAL

MEMORABILIA, INFORMATIONAL VIDEO

From *Sauk Centre Herald*, Tuesday, July 16, 1996

By Anne Robinson
Herald Intern

Sauk Centre is similar to other small towns.

Children go to the lake on summer afternoons. Retired men have coffee uptown and roll dice. Families run small businesses. People greet each other by name on the street.

Yet the world flocks to Sauk Centre.

The guest register at the Sinclair Lewis Interpretive Center indicates people from all over the world stop each summer to glimpse into the life of the writer. The greatest concentration of visitors are from the United States, Canada and Europe.

In June 1996, 741 people visited the museum, said Tina Nathe, summer staff at the Interpretive Center.

The purpose of the center is "to inform the public about any information they want to know," Nathe said.

A prominent display is titled "Birth of a Novel" and gives insight into Lewis, the writer.

Lewis collected names for characters, which was an ongoing project, from telephone directories and tombstones. The first part of the display includes a notebook page marked "Vermont names—real."

Lewis developed biographies for each character as well as a map and description of the fictional city.

Then he developed scenes in three stages. The first was handwritten and skeletal. The second included more detail and was typewritten. The final was a detailed description of the room and scene.

The final section of the display includes the various stages of editing and a copy of the Oct. 8, 1945 edition of *Time* magazine, featuring Lewis on the front cover and a review of *Cass Timberlane*.

Other items in the museum include: old photos and brief

history of Sauk Centre, writing desk of Sinclair Lewis, Lewis's diplomas from Sauk Centre High School and Yale, copy of a magazine featuring a story by Lewis titled, "Green Eyes: A Handbook of Jealousy," personal items belonging to Lewis such as a classical music list, a yellow blanket, letter from Ida Compton and wastebasket made from an old hat box, death certificate from Rome where he died, another from the American Embassy in Rome, metal urn in which his remains were sent to Sauk Centre, Nobel Prize.

The Interpretive Center, located at the conjunction of I-94 and Hwy. 71, is open Memorial Day to Labor Day, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.

MINNEAPOLIS BOOKSELLER, COLLECTOR SPENT AFTER- NOON WITH LEWIS

From *Sauk Centre Herald*, Tuesday, July 16, 1996

by Anne Robinson
Herald Intern

J. Harold Kittleson, Minneapolis, describes Sinclair Lewis as a warm, friendly, restless man.

Kittleson, age 91, managed book stores and worked as a salesperson for Random House, Lewis's last publisher, for 45 years. He spent an afternoon at the Lewis home in Duluth shortly after World War II.

"He was a wonderful man and one of this century's greatest writers," Kittleson said.

Kittleson remembers sitting in the living room of the Lewis home. He and Lewis discussed the book column Lewis was writing for *Esquire* magazine at the time. Lewis expressed disappointment in an ungracious reception when he spoke at the University of Minnesota—Duluth.

"The most important thing to say about Lewis is he wasn't a very happy man," Kittleson said.

Kittleson said professors and students today read the work of Lewis with pleasure and understanding, indicating his vision and relevance.

"He was a really important, significant writer who could be called a genius," Kittleson said. "Most creative people have vision. That is why they are good."

Kittleson is glad Sauk Centre recognizes Lewis and his writing as part of the city's heritage.

Kittleson said Lewis would be honored Sauk Centre named the annual community celebration after him.

"There is some vanity in everybody that you have made a contribution," Kittleson said.

Kittleson has been to Sauk Centre. He spoke at the opening of the Boyhood Home. He is also responsible for establishing the Sinclair Lewis book collection at Macalester College, St. Paul.

"Lewis was a very special event in my life," Kittleson said.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
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TOPIC: MELVILLE: "THE LEE SHORE"

Chapter XXIII ("The Lee Shore") of *Moby Dick* refers to "that mortally intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea."

Respond to that chapter in whatever way it resonates with your Melvillean explorations. Possibilities might include a textual study, biographical research, such themes as Melville and imagination or Melville and the writing process, or reception of his works.

Please submit 20-minute papers by December 15, 1996. While complete papers will receive preference, detailed proposals will also be considered.

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SINCLAIR LEWIS NOTES

The Literary Guild published a small magazine for members in the 1920s and 30s called *Wings*. In the August 1933 edition (vol. 7, no. 8) there is a note on the inside front cover on Sinclair Lewis's current publishing activities. "Sinclair Lewis is at work on another novel which he expects to complete for publication next season. He says it is too early yet to talk about the subject, but it is a phase of American life which he has never before examined." Our thanks to Rodger Tarr for donating this piece.

The Library for the Performing Arts in New York City featured a display of the work of theater illustrators and cartoonists during this past summer. Among the material displayed was a magazine with an article by Hallie Flanagan on the Federal Theatre Project called "It Can Happen Here." The article was timed to appear with the premiering of Lewis's play *It Can't Happen Here* in 15 productions in different parts of the country on the same night. The article features a picture of Lewis with his arms crossed behind his head and looking very casual.

George Vecsey, writing in the sports section of the *New York Times* for Sunday, August 4, 1996, warns New York City against bidding for an upcoming summer Olympics. "New York should be mature enough to renounce those Babbitt-dream expenditures as totally frivolous, particularly in the wake of Congress and the President collaborating on a bill that cuts back the delivery of social services to the poor, the young, the ill and the immigrant" (23).

The short story, "Way Down Deep in the Jungle," by Thom Jones, which appeared in the March 14, 1994 issue of *The New Yorker* (60-69), featured a baboon named George Babbitt who lived at the Global Aid Mission in Africa. The baboon is part of Dr. Koestler's research: "George Babbitt is a long-term experiment. He's come from the heart of darkness to the sunshine of Main Street. My goal is to turn him into a full Cleveland. . . . A full Cleveland is a polyester leisure suit, white-on-white tie, white belt, white patent leather shoes, razor burn on all three chins, and membership in the Rotary Club and the Episcopal Church." Dismayed, perhaps, by Koestler's plans, George gets drunk on Canadian Mist and goes back to the jungle where Koestler unsuccessfully searches for him.

In a review of *Racing to the Beginning of the Road: The Search for the Origin of Cancer* by Robert A. Weinberg in the *New York Times* (September 1, 1996), Sherwin B. Nuland writes, "Time was when young people considering a career in medicine or biology were likely to be voracious readers. Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith* (1925) and Paul de Kruif's unforgettable histories of disease, *Microbe Hunters* (1926) and *Hunger Fighters* (1928), attracted students in droves to the study of medicine and continued to do so for decades" (13).

The Tempe Public Library in Tempe, Arizona sponsored a book discussion series on "Strong Women" this summer. Among

the novels they were discussing was *Ann Vickers*.

The *Chicago Tribune Magazine* recently (June 16, 1996) published excerpts from *A Poet's Life* by Harriet Monroe, the founder of *Poetry* magazine. In one of these excerpts she speaks of an occasion at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago where Vachel Lindsay read his work before William Butler Yeats. In the accompanying illustration (created by Larry Day shortly after the reading) are a number of illustrious authors, not all of whom were at the reading, but who frequented the club. Sinclair Lewis (not a very good likeness) is pictured sitting next to Carl Sandburg. Schorer doesn't mention Lewis at this gathering.

Robert Wernick, in the article "Where You Went If You Really Had to Get Unhitched" in the June 1996 *Smithsonian* magazine (64-73) mentions Sinclair Lewis as one of the famous visitors who went to Reno in order to obtain a divorce. Other celebrities mentioned included Jack Dempsey, Barbara Hutton, Carole Lombard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Mrs. Eugene O'Neill, Mrs. Joe DiMaggio, and Mrs. Clark Gable. Grace Hegger Lewis actually established residency in Reno so that the Lewises could get divorced. The divorce was granted on April 16, 1928.

Harper's magazine, as part of its latest subscription drive, mentions that, "we continue to present original stories and essays from some of the leading writers of our time." William Gass, Bobbie Ann Mason, and E.L. Doctorow are listed as current contributors and they "join the distinguished *Harper's* tradition of Charles Dickens, Stephen Crane, Sinclair Lewis, Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, Edith Wharton, William Faulkner, and many others."

Jon Hassler's writing in *Rookery Blues* is considered by Bruce Allen in the *New York Times* to be like "Sinclair Lewis without an attitude problem" (32, October 1, 1995). Hassler has written about the northern Midwest in his previous seven novels, and in *Rookery Blues*, he writes "one of his finest and funniest novels" about members of an informal jazz group, the Icejam Quintet, who are also colleagues at Minnesota's Rookery State College.

In the introduction to the mystery *Puzzle for Players* by Patrick Quentin, editor Douglas G. Greene explains that Patrick Quentin was actually a pseudonym for Richard Webb and Hugh Wheeler. Wheeler, an Englishman, better known as the author of the librettos for the musicals *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, and revised version of *Candide*, said that he originally came to America because it seemed to him a "fascinating never-never land of Sinclair Lewis, Lizzie Borden, iced-water and Ruby Keeler."

Penguin/Primus has reissued Herbert Mitgang's *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America's Greatest Authors*, originally published in 1988. There is a section on Lewis because his novels "all portrayed a changing America that bore little resemblance to the roseate glow of *Saturday Evening Post* covers." Clarence Peterson, in a May 12, 1996

review in the *Chicago Tribune*, wrote that "in his novel *It Can't Happen Here*, Lewis warned against homegrown fascism, and he was courted by Hoover. But suddenly in 1940, reports of his 'subversive' activities began drifting in. Lewis, like many writers of the period, was suspected of communist sympathies by U.S. Red-hunting agencies because he opposed Franco's war against the elected Loyalist government of Spain. Never mind that Franco received support from Mussolini and Hitler. After 25 years of tracking Lewis at home and abroad, the Red hunters failed to catch their suspect doing anything illegal."

In a feature on the movie *Fargo*, "If the Shoe (Snowshoe?) Fits, Well . . .," in the *New York Times Arts and Leisure* section, May 5, 1996, author Neal Karlen writes about people other than the Coen brothers who have ribbed the state of Minnesota. "St. Paul, for example, finally honored its most famous literary son last year by renaming the theater from which *A Prairie Home Companion* is broadcast after F. Scott Fitzgerald. Thus, more than a half-century after his death, Fitzgerald was finally forgiven for mocking his hometown in *This Side of Paradise*. Likewise, Sinclair Lewis wasn't excused until decades after he died for lampooning the burghers of Sauk Centre in *Main Street*. Now visitors to the village Lewis called Gopher Prairie can walk along Sinclair Lewis Avenue, browse inside the Sinclair Lewis House or celebrate Sinclair Lewis Days every July."

New York City's Historic Landmarks Preservation Center is putting up 16 new markers on sites considered culturally significant. Among the places so identified are the homes of Brooks Atkinson, George and Ira Gershwin, e. e. cummings, and Dorothy Thompson, identified as "Journalist, author of *I Saw Hitler*, 237 East 48th Street, Lived here from 1941 to 1957."

In his introduction to an issue on Edmund White in the *Review of Contemporary Fiction* (Fall 1996), David Bergman writes about White's Midwest origins and the effect it had on his writing. "One of the trademarks of the bourgeois Midwesterner, as Sinclair Lewis repeatedly dramatizes, is that for all his rhetoric of pioneering independence, he is the most inveterate of social conformists, feeling at home at no place more than the Moose Lodge or Elks Hall or the country club where he must affect the manner of mild conviviality" (8).

In Josef Skvorecky's *The Engineer of Human Souls*, published by Knopf in 1984, the opening of the novel seems to pay homage to Lewis and *Main Street*. "Edenvale College stands in a wilderness. In a few years the nearby town of Mississauga is expected to swell and envelop the campus with more variety and colour, but for the time being the college stands in the wilderness, two and a half miles from the nearest housing development. The houses there are no longer all alike: people have learned something since George F. Babbitt's time. Perhaps it was literature that taught them" (3).

In the musical movie of *Mame* with Lucille Ball, the character of Mame Dennis is upset with her nephew for wanting to marry a snobbish country club type woman and calls her nephew both "beastly" and "Babbitty."

READER'S QUERY

There have been a number of surmises about how many copies actually exist of *Hike and the Aeroplane* and first editions of *Main Street* with a dust jacket. If any of our readers know of copies, please write the Sinclair Lewis Society and let us know.

WEB NEWS

For all of you who are on the Internet, here's some links related to Lewis.

MN Center for the Book: Lewis Bibliography #2 Books about Sinclair Lewis. The following bibliography is merely a captured and slightly edited version of a search of the Library of Congress book...

<http://www.metronet.lib.mn.us/cfb/lwsbib2.htm> - size 23K - 3 Jan 96

Sinclair Lewis Winner of the 1930 Nobel Prize in Literature Sinclair Lewis, a Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature, at the Nobel Prize Internet Archive.

<http://www.almaz.com/nobel/literature/1930a.html> - size 2K - 5 Sep 96

The following two pieces are from the above Nobel Link, "A Stroll Down Main Street in His Centennial Year, What Would Sinclair Lewis Say about His Old Hometown?" and "Sinclair Lewis, USA—Dropping by Main Street 60 Years Later." The Sinclair Lewis homepage and the Sinclair Lewis Society homepage are linked here.

Beinecke Library—Beinecke Guide (YCAL) Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The Collection of American Literature Patricia C. Willis. Modernism at Home and Abroad. The...

<http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/blgycal.htm> - size 36k - 19 Apr 96

Name that author, answers

1. Carol drove through an astonishing number of books from the public library and from city shops. Kennicott was at first uncomfortable over her...

<http://www.berkeleynetcentral.com/DrPseudocryptonym/nameauthorans.html> - size 3k - 19 Apr 96

Chapter III: Minnesota, Sinclair Lewis, and Jewish Bikers. Of Travels with Samantha by Philip Greenspun. "Duluth! the word fell upon my ear with a..."

<http://www-swiss.ai.mit.edu/samantha/samantha-III.html> - size 17K - 8 Nov 95

NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW CELEBRATES 100TH YEAR

The *New York Times Book Review* on October 6, 1996 celebrated its 100th year of publication by reprinting representative reviews of "authors who changed the world and authors the world forgot." Sinclair Lewis is mentioned twice (in the former category we trust), once for being the first American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, and once with a review of *Arrowsmith* by Henry Logan Stuart. The newsletter is reprinting the review below.

HOUSE CALL

MARCH 8, 1925: 'ARROWSMITH' BY SINCLAIR LEWIS

by Henry Logan Stuart

When an author with the overwhelming popularity and intelligent following of Sinclair Lewis breaks a three years' silence, we approach the result with lively expectancy tinted ever so little with apprehension. No one has ever made of the novel so potent an instrument for social satire or administered, through its medium, so many rough jolts to national complacency. In respect of sheer ground won his position is unprecedented. His first serious work (it is impossible to regard the early novels as anything save 'prentice-pieces—"brouillons," in French phrase) showed the surprising direction his attack had taken and was to take. The next proved that it had simple resources of conviction at its back and was likely to be pressed far. Incidentally it furnished the language with a new word and hard pressed intellectuals with a weapon of great range and efficacy. To say "Babbitt"—"Babbitry" today is to utter a phrase that has all the force of an incantation.

A new book by Mr. Lewis now invites consideration, and even before opening its covers and plunging into its ample expanse, the general lines of the judgment it will invite define themselves. Will "Arrowsmith," we ask, prove to be a logical sequence to "Main Street" and "Babbitt," a true third in a trilogy of novels for which the word "great" is justified?

One closes the novel with a feeling that, if eternal verities be the ultimate objective, no great progress has been made. Mr. Lewis has attacked spiritedly, but he has not advanced. At the most he has turned roughly on a salient that enfiladed his theses and has straightened out his front. It was "high ground" from which a great deal of very telling criticism has been directed against his conclusions—criticism which would hardly have taken the form it did had he not chosen a doctor as contrast and protagonist in the novel that created his vogue and reputation. Rough, hearty Dr. Kennicot [sic], speeding over dirt roads with his case of instruments under the back seat, had time and again been propounded as the best answer to the disgruntled esthetes of Gopher Prairie and Zenith. "Arrowsmith" in a sense, is a

rejoinder to those who used him overconfidently. Mr. Lewis, reared, like Flaubert, in the atmosphere of antiseptis, son and grandson of physicians, has written a novel that is all about doctors, and that is an unsparing onslaught upon the healing art, as practiced in America.

Those to whom there is a "quid divinum" in the Hippocratic oath, and who demand vocational virtues from the Faculty, believing that the demand creates the supply, are hereby advised that severe trials are in store for their faith. Using for his theme the losing fight made by two men with whom scientific truth is religion, an unworldly old German bacteriologist and his young American disciple, Mr. Lewis draws a picture for us that is disquieting in its disillusionment. Here and there, in the long gallery through which we are sped at the breakneck pace of failure, are portraits of good doctors. But they are good men rather in spite of than because of their profession. For the rest, mean competition, with slander at times as its weapon, rule-of-thumb methods and impatience with the research that outdates them; eagerness to exploit real scientific discoveries commercially before they can be verified and safe-guarded, social climbing and the inordinate chase for the dollar, quackery enthroned and genius seeking bread, these make the shadows in Mr. Lewis's acid-bitten picture. And incidentally, out of the maelstrom of spite, injustice and blatancy, like a violet lifting its head shyly in a heap of shattered test tubes and retorts, is born for us one of the sweetest characters in all fiction—Leora the incomparable. If Mr. Lewis has done nothing else, he has come near giving us the great story of married love for which the world has been waiting. It was at the Zenith General Hospital, in Babbitt's home city, that Martin Arrowsmith first ran across Leora Tozer.

Martin came out of the common people. A shabby, rangy lad with a limited vocabulary, but with a thirst for knowledge quite Saharan. At 14, "by sheer brass and obstinacy," he was unpaid assistant to drunken old Doc Vickerson, who certified the population of Elk Mills into and out of life. At 18 he was one of 12,000 students at the State University of Winnemac. At Winnemac Mr. Lewis's long academy of doctors, in practice and to be, makes its inauspicious start. There is Dr. Robertshaw who "chirped about fussy little...maiden aunt experiments." Dr. Oliver Stout, who can "repeat more facts about the left little toe than you would have thought any one would care to learn"; Dr. Lloyd Davidson who "would have been a very successful shopkeeper. From him you could learn...the proper drugs to give a patient, particularly when you cannot discover what is the matter with him." There is Dr. Roscoe Geake, who "was a peddler. He would have done well with oil stock. As an otolaryngologist he believed that tonsils have been placed in the human organism for the purpose of providing specialists with closed motors." And Martin's fellow-students are not even made interesting by the possibilities of youth and enthusiasm. "No matter what they all thought, they all ground at learning the list of names which enable a man to crawl through examinations and become an Educated Person with a market value of \$5 an hour."

From now on Leora does more than dominate the story. She makes it. When she dies, tragically, and many will think needlessly, it is over. The brief remainder is a rather dreary anticlimax, while the men of research whose deterioration under the stress of social ambition and money has been shown to us

turn to caricatures of themselves. She is a loving and fearless critic to her man.

"You're not a booster," she tells him, "you're a lie-hunter.... You belong in a laboratory, fishing things out, not advertising them.... Are you going on for the rest of your life, stumbling into respectability and having to be dug out again?"

If Leora lives and breathes throughout this splendid novel, Max Gottlieb, the old German chemist, haunts it like an avenging spectre, his voice uplifted from time to time with the cry of a prophet in Nineveh. He is the incarnation of the scientific conscience, to whose fanatical devotion the facile acceptors of nostrums, the commercial exploiters of laboratory formulae half worked out, are witch-doctors and spell-casters.

Intellectually, as has been said, "Arrowsmith" leaves Mr. Lewis about where he was. And that means it leaves him in a unique and unassailable position, with all his possibilities intact. Religious convictions, which are still the basis of so much human action, are not touched upon, or touched upon only in the person of one clownish hot-gospeller. It is a pagan novel for a pagan world.

Artistically, "Arrowsmith" is an authentic step forward. The novel is full of passages of a quite noble felicity and the old skill in presenting character through dialogue never fails. Babbitt is generic or he is nothing.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

From Deerfield Books, Ltd., RD 2, Box 2698,
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1-500-677-8700.

SINCLAIR LEWIS

All titles in the Sinclair Lewis collection
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1. Lewis, Sinclair. *Babbitt*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922. Original blue cloth boards, with orange imprint. First state. Signed. VG \$475.00.
2. Lewis, Sinclair. *Free Air*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, Inc., 1919. Original blue cloth boards with light blue pictorial design, warmly inscribed to "Luce," dated 1921. Luce, a literary hanger-on, is referred to in *A Novelist in the Making: Frank Norris*. VG. \$1500.00.
3. Lewis, Sinclair. *Our Mr. Wrenn*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1914. Original grey cloth boards with gilt decor and lettering, SL's first book under his own name. VG. \$575.00.
4. Lewis, Sinclair. *Kingsblood Royal*. New York: Random House, 1947. Signed limited edition, 951/1050, original mauve cloth boards with black and gilt lettering, fine in publishers vg slipcase. \$275.00.

5. Lewis, Sinclair. *Ann Vickers*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1933. Original blue cloth boards, gilt decor and lettering, good in vg cream d/w, limited to 2,350 copies on rag paper, inscribed to his physician and friend. \$750.00.
 6. Lewis, Sinclair. *The Prodigal Parents*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1938. Original red cloth boards, gilt lettering, Fine in Fine d/w. \$200.00.
 7. Lewis, Sinclair. *Bethel Merriday*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1940. Original red cloth boards with black and gilt lettering. Fine in original nr Fine d/w. \$200.00.
 8. Lewis, Sinclair. *Elmer Gantry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927. Original blue cloth boards with orange rectangle on front and spine; lengthy signed inscription to Len Lyons, a publisher and friend referring to the book humorously, VG, in the rare dust wrapper. \$1500.00.
 - 9a. Lewis, Sinclair. *Cass Timberlane*. New York: Random House, 1945. Original grey cloth boards, fine with fine green dust wrapper.
 - 9b. Same as 9a., with orange dust wrapper.
 - 9c. Same as 9b, with the very rare blue dust wrapper.
- No priority is yet known for these variant wrappers, most collectors not even aware of the variants. The book club edition is red and larger in all dimensions. All four of one of Sinclair Lewis's best known books. \$1000.00.
10. Lewis, Sinclair. *The Man Who Knew Coolidge*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1928. Original blue cloth boards with orange imprint, fine in dust wrapper. \$750.00.
 11. Lewis, Sinclair. *It Can't Happen Here*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1935. Original black cloth boards with impressed fascist emblem. Fine in original fine dust wrapper. Banned in Nazi Germany, but still available here. \$350.00.
 12. Lewis, Sinclair. *It Can't Happen Here*. The play version. Near Fine in wraps and a Broadway hit. \$400.00.
 14. Lewis, Sinclair. *Kingsblood Royal*. New York: Random House, 1947. First trade edition. Original beige cloth boards with gilt initials "SL," fine in fine dust wrapper. Rare late signature by Lewis, rare because he was out of the country most of the time and very ill. \$750.00.
 15. Lewis, Sinclair. *World So Wide*. New York: Random House, 1951. Original blue cloth boards with silver initials "SL," near fine in original VG + dust wrapper, paper label on front of d/w stating that this was completed shortly before

- Lewis's death. \$250.00.
16. Lewis, Sinclair. *Free Air*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1919. Original blue cloth boards with blue pictorial design, near fine. \$500.00.
 17. Lewis, Sinclair. *Dodsworth*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929. Original blue cloth boards with orange imprint. Fine in VG dustwrapper. \$1000.00.
 18. Lewis, Sinclair. *Dodsworth*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929. Very rare advance review copy bound in the "reverse format," orange boards with black imprint. Nr Fine. \$1250.00.
 19. Lewis, Sinclair. *Dodsworth*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929. Fine copy in very good dust wrapper. Signed and dated just prior to publication. \$2000.00.
 20. Lewis, Sinclair. *Babbitt*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922. Original blue cloth boards with orange imprint, near fine. 1st in 1st dust wrapper. \$1500.00.
 21. Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1920. Original blue cloth boards with orange imprint, 1st edition, later state with imperfect numeral on page 54, signed by Lewis on ffep. Near Fine. \$750.00.
 22. Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1920. Same as item 21 above, except boards are lighter blue, no precedence identified. \$750.00.
 23. Lewis, Sinclair. *Arrowsmith*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925. First edition, seventh printing (August 1925), VG+ with the signature of the author on the ffep. \$750.00.
 24. Lewis, Sinclair. *Elmer Gantry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927. Original blue cloth boards with orange imprint. Fourth printing of the first edition. Presentation copy with signature followed by "DD," his sarcastic inside joke concerning organized religion. Rare and near fine. \$2000.00.
 25. Lewis, Sinclair. *Elmer Gantry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927. 1st state, signed by the author, in Fine condition. \$950.00.
 26. Lewis, Sinclair. *Elmer Gantry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927. 1st state except with original green, red and black dustwrapper moderately chipped, torn (repaired) but presentable, collectible rarity. \$950.00.
 27. Lewis, Sinclair. *The God-Seeker*. New York: Random House, 1949. Original ultra-marine cloth boards with gold "SL" imprint. Fine in near fine pictorial dust wrapper. Rare late signature. \$950.00.
 29. Lewis, Sinclair. *Work of Art*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1933. Bright blue original cloth boards with gold imprint, near fine in like pictorial dust wrapper. \$200.00.
 30. Lewis, Sinclair. *Work of Art*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1933. Humorously inscribed to a family friend and physician, spine sunned, but rarely found inscribed. \$750.00.
 31. Lewis, Sinclair. *Gideon Planish*. New York: Random House, 1943. Original natural linen boards with gold initial imprint. Fine in fine dust wrapper.
 32. Lewis, Sinclair. *Hike and the Aeroplane*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes & Co., 1912. Lewis's first book written under the name "Tom Graham" (an alias he also used now and again as a newspaper man). Believed to be fewer than 80 currently extant, this one is VG with all cover lettering and illustration intact, a tight copy. \$7500.00.
 33. Lewis, Sinclair. *Arrowsmith*. First edition, which was issued as a limited 500 copy run, all signed and numbered. fine sky-blue boards with cream spine in original slipcase. \$2000.00.
 34. Lewis, Sinclair. *The Job*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1917. One of the increasingly rare pre-1920 novels, this one is VG, with the gilt lettering nicely intact. \$650.00.
 35. Lewis, Sinclair. *The Trail of the Hawk*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1915. A very scarce copy in a scarcer dust wrapper, both VG. \$7,500.00.
 36. Lewis Sinclair. *The Jungle*. Did I get you? Upton, this is Sinclair; Sinclair, Upton; Which one of you is Louis? Whatever.

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- 251 [LEWIS, SINCLAIR]. FORSTER, E.M. *Sinclair Lewis Interprets America*. N.p.: Harvard Press for Private distribution by Harvey Taylor, 1932. First Edition. Limited to hundred copies. With a presentation inscription from Taylor. Very good copy of a rare pamphlet. \$125.00.
- 295 [PHOTOPLAY EDITIONS]. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Main Street*. Illustrated With Scenes from the Motion Picture. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1923. Photoplay edition issued to coincide with the release of the silent film starring Florence Vidor, Monte Blue, Harry Myers, Alan Hale and Louise Fazenda. Ownership inscription. Very good in a slightly chipped dust jacket with rubbing and tears. The front panel of the jacket reproduces the striking artwork of the first edition (which is almost impossible to obtain in a first issue dust jacket). \$75.00.

JULY 1996 LIST

- 215 LEWIS, SINCLAIR. Original Portrait Photograph Inscribed by Lewis. Measuring approximately 6" x 8," mounted on a mat, overall approximately 10" x 15," framed and glazed, signed by the photographer under the image and inscribed by Lewis "To Frere and Tess with the love of Sinclair Lewis, New York, Jan. 10, 1930 [date corrected by Lewis from 1929]." The edge of the image is oxidized, but a superb formal pose of the author in an overcoat with an upturned collar. An excellent association; A.S. Frere was Lewis's English publisher (as well as Thomas Wolfe's) at Heinemann. As such Frere influenced his decision to move to Doubleday, Doran after he broke with Harcourt. Mark Schorer (*Sinclair Lewis: An American Life*, New York, 1961) describes a fairly hilarious thirty-six hour drinking binge that Lewis dragged Frere to, traveling to Washington, where Lewis gave a lecture in which he occasionally attacked Frere, and then they went to Baltimore where they roused Mencken at dawn, moving on to Annapolis where Lewis introduced Frere as a general of the Royal Flying Corps and commandeered a full cadet review. \$1,750.00.

AUGUST 1996 LIST

- 188 LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Tennis as I Play It* by Maurice E. McLoughlin. New York: Doran, 1915. First Edition, in the remainder binding. A book ghostwritten by Sinclair Lewis. Accompanying the book is documentation about Lewis's authorship. Very Good. Illustrated with photographs. \$300.00.
- 189 LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Babbitt*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922. First Editon, first state. Near fine in a dust jacket with moderate chipping at the extremities. \$850.00.
- 190 [LEWIS, SINCLAIR]. BLOOMGARDEN, HENRY S. *Dorothy and Red*. A play. Reston, Virginia: (1977). 105 page photomechanically reproduced script brad bound in stiff wrappers. An unpublished play about the stormy relationship between Sinclair Lewis and his wife Dorothy Thompson. 85.00.
- 260 [Photoplay Editions]. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Arrowsmith*. Illustrated With Scenes from the Motion Picture. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1931. Photoplay edition issued to coincide with the release of the early sound film directed by the great John Ford and starring Ronald Colman, Helen Hayes, and Myrna Loy. Round ownership blindstamp, else fine in dust jacket with one small tear. The front panel of the jacket shows a striking color painting of pensive Colman staring at his laboratory equipment and seeing the face of Hayes in a beaker. \$75.00.
- 287 [RECIPES BY FAMOUS PEOPLE]. CERWIN, HERBERT, ED. *Famous Recipes by Famous People*, Illustrated by Sinclair Ross. San Francisco: Sunset Magazine & The Hotel Del Monte, 1940. First Edition. Contains recipes contributed by Walt Disney, Ben Hecht, Jascha Heifetz, Robinson Jeffers, Sinclair Lewis, H.L. Mencken, Christopher Morley, Upton Sinclair, Gertrude Stein, John Steinbeck, Thornton Wilder, and many others. Fine in very good price-clipped dust jacket. \$85.00.

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