

The SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME SIX, NUMBER TWO

SPRING 1998

CHICAGOLAND THEATRE PRESENTS MUSICAL OF LEWIS'S *ELMER GANTRY*

Review of *Elmer Gantry*

Book by John Bishop,

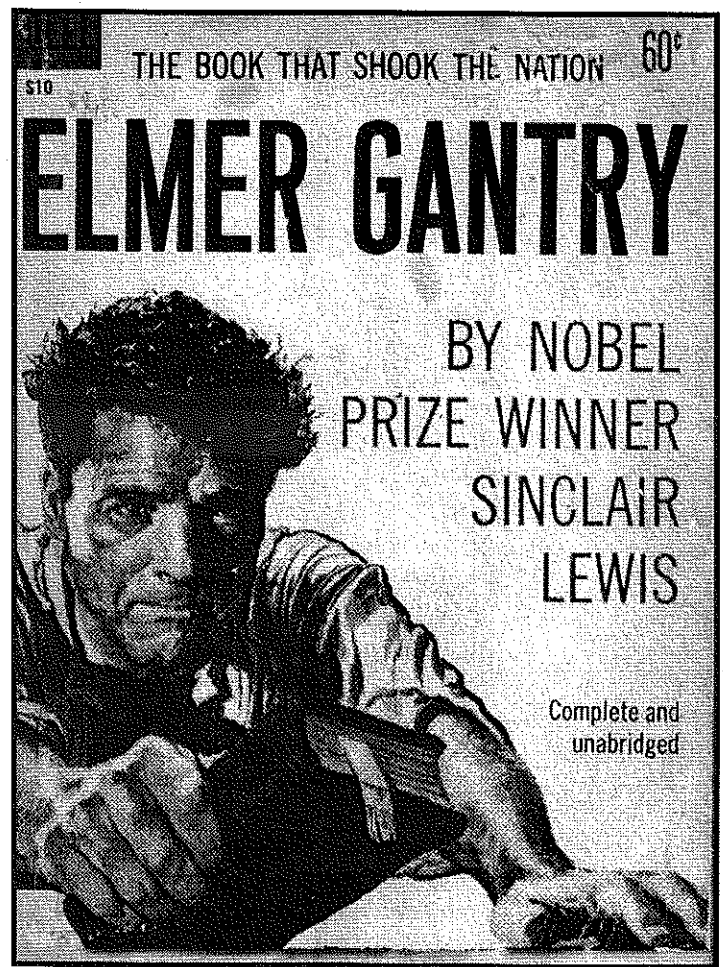
Music by Mel Marvin, and Lyrics by Bob Satuloff,
based on the novel by Sinclair Lewis

By Robert L. McLaughlin

Not long before the end of the first act of *Elmer Gantry*, the musical adaptation of Sinclair Lewis's 1927 novel recently presented at the Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre outside of Chicago, Sharon Falconer's choir boys and choir girls perform a rousing number designed to impress a contingent of football-loving Zenith businessmen: "Carry That Ball." They sing of scoring touchdowns for Jesus, the boys form a huddle and then line up in three-point stances, and the girls pull out pompoms and lead cheers for their holy team.

This hilarious, over-the-top song is the only moment in the play that approaches Lewis's satiric humor and his skepticism about the mixed motives behind many expressions of religious fervor. Much like Richard Brooks's 1961 film adaptation, this *Elmer Gantry* discards much of the novel to concentrate on the Elmer-Sharon relationship, changing Lewis's examination of religion in America to a character study. Understandably, that choice may disappoint some Lewis lovers, but, for me, the musical stands on its own as an

continued on page 4



Detail from cover of *Elmer Gantry* (Dell 1960 edition)

SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY PANEL AT ALA CONFERENCE

The Sinclair Lewis Society held a session at the 1998 American Literature Conference which was scheduled for May 28-31, 1998. The conference was again held at the Bahia Hotel in San Diego.

The Sinclair Lewis Society received numerous submissions for its panel. The papers which were chosen represent a focus on Lewis's novels about business, including *Dodsworth* and the

early business stories, many of which were recently reprinted in *If I Were Boss: The Early Business Stories of Sinclair Lewis*, edited by Anthony Di Renzo (Southern Illinois UP, 1997). The panel was chaired by Brooke Hessler, Texas Christian University. The following papers were presented at the Lewis session: "Rehabilitating the American Community in *Dodsworth*," Catherine Jurca, Cali-

fornia Institute of Technology; "The Roots of *Dodsworth*: Lewis and Nineteenth-Century American Literature," Robert E. Fleming, University of New Mexico; "Burkeian Piety at Work: Symbolic Labor in Sinclair Lewis's Early Business Stories," Brooke Hessler, Texas Christian University.

The newsletter will have abstracts of these papers in the fall 1998 issue.

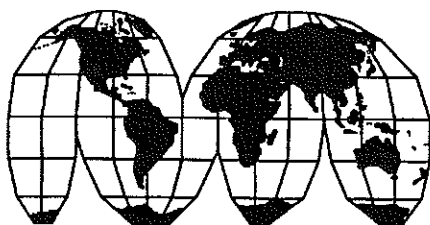
IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 1 Sinclair Lewis Society Panel at ALA Conference in San Diego
- 1 Review of *Elmer Gantry*
BY ROBERT L. McLAUGHLIN
- 2 The President's Report of 1997 Activities Sinclair Lewis Foundation
BY ROBERTA OLSON
- 3 DeVoto's *Mountain Time: Arrowsmith after Arrowsmith*
BY ROBERT E. FLEMING
- 6 Focus on *Elmer Gantry*
- 7 A Guide to Films Based on the Works of Sinclair Lewis
By Stephen R. Pastore
- 11 Early Lewis Satires Available Now for First Time in 80 Years
- 14 Lewis and the Web
- 21 The Price of *It Can't Happen Here*
BY STEPHEN R. PASTORE
- 22 Robert Bly Urges "Writing with Soul"
BY DAVID SIMPKINS

DEPARTMENTS

- 5 New Articles on Lewis
- 5 New Members
- 11 Sinclair Lewis Society News
- 12 Sinclair Lewis Notes
- 20 Collectors' Notes
- 20 Notes from Sauk Centre
- 21 Book Notes
- 21 Call for Papers
- 23 Collector's Corner



CONTACT THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB AT:
<http://www.ilstu.edu/~separry/lewis.html>

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT OF 1997 ACTIVITIES SINCLAIR LEWIS FOUNDATION

By Roberta Olson

Most of our energy in 1997 was taken up by the two conferences: The celebration of the 75th anniversary of Babbitt and the 50th anniversary of Kingsblood Royal on July 17-18, and the 8th annual Writers Conference held on Saturday, Oct. 11.

• **Babbitt/Kingsblood Conference** — This was held in conjunction with The Sinclair Lewis Society from Illinois State University, Dr. Sally Parry, coordinator. The Palmer House Hotel was the conference headquarters, with the academic sessions being held at Sauk Centre City Hall. Richard Lingeman, author of the upcoming new Lewis biography, was the keynote speaker for the conference. We hosted 17 Lewis scholars who presented papers on various subjects related to Lewis, *Babbitt* and *Kingsblood Royal*.

Speakers were Frederick Betz, Martin Bucco, Jane Lamm Carroll, M. Ellen DuPree, Brooke Hessler, James Hutchisson, Catherine Jurca, Robert McLaughlin, Sally Parry, Patricia Schenk, Todd Stanley, Jonathan Veitch, and Jean Mullin Yonke. Stephen Pastore, author of the new comprehensive bibliography, was scheduled to present, but suffered an accident and was unable to attend.

The conference attendees toured the Boyhood Home, visited the gravesite, and the Interpretive Center. We viewed the movie *Babbitt*, and also Lewis's children's cartoon, "Bongo."

This was Sauk Centre's first exposure to an academic conference, and it was a wonderful experience. Both the Foundation and the Society were very happy with the entire event. So much so, that Sally Parry is already talking about another conference in the year 2000.

The event was planned to coincide with the annual Sinclair Lewis Days. Our guest of honor, Lesley Lewis, Sinclair's granddaughter, came from New York as the guest of the Foundation for the conference and remained in Sauk Centre to be the Grand Marshal in the Lewis Days Parade. Her visit was hosted by Patricia Lewis.

Lesley was greeted by the Foundation Board for a private tour of the Sinclair Lewis Boyhood Home, at which time she was presented with a life membership plaque in the Foundation. Following the tour, Lesley was hosted at a dinner at Hennington's which was attended by board members and guests. Patricia Lewis, Foundation Board member, hosted Lesley to a trip to the Lewis Archives at St. Cloud State University, the Alumni House, and a trip to Duluth to see the house where Lewis had lived and researched *Kingsblood Royal*.

Total conference cost to the Foundation was \$1,285.49, including a \$1,000 grant to help finance Richard Lingeman's
continued on page 8

DEVOTO'S MOUNTAIN TIME : ARROWSMITH AFTER ARROWSMITH

By Robert E. Fleming
University of New Mexico

Bernard DeVoto had a love-hate relationship with Sinclair Lewis, particularly with Lewis's 1925 medical novel, *Arrowsmith*. When DeVoto wrote a medical novel of his own, twenty years after the publication of *Arrowsmith*, he was influenced by the strengths and the weaknesses he perceived in Lewis's novel. *Arrowsmith* ends with Martin seceding from the flawed world of modern medicine: in a Thoreauvian gesture he moves to a small cabin and supports himself by lab work while he continues his research, independent of the institutions that have refused to allow him to follow his scientific and humanitarian conscience. DeVoto's *Mountain Time* (1947) asks what happens to a similar idealistic and talented doctor after he "lights out for the Territory," withdrawing from medical practice and into the mountain West.

DeVoto reviewed *Arrowsmith* when it was published, praising it as one of the "permanent accomplishments of its generation." If the book was brash and naive, it redeemed itself with its vision of modern America. DeVoto termed *Arrowsmith* the "most American novel of the generation," one of the best novels of a watershed decade in American literature (qtd. in Schorer 416).

But DeVoto was not yet thirty when he reviewed *Arrowsmith*. By 1943, when he wrote *The Literary Fallacy*, he had arrived at another opinion. While he still felt that Lewis might be the best novelist of the decade, DeVoto had come to think that Lewis was flawed when he departed from pure satire to create a hero. DeVoto cites Martin Arrowsmith himself, a character he now views as "romantic, senti-

mental, . . . trivial . . . [and] adolescent" (100). DeVoto faults Lewis for failing to come to grips with the "realities of science" as they bear on modern medicine. Lewis interpreted the analysis in *The Literary Fallacy* as a personal attack and fired back with "Fools, Liars, and Mr. DeVoto," a vitriolic essay in *Saturday Review*. The two later made up, and Lewis seconded the nomination of DeVoto to the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

A few years later DeVoto addressed the topic of the doctor in America with his own medical novel. *Mountain Time* is, perhaps significantly, set in 1919 and 1920, as if DeVoto were returning to the era of Lewis's triumph to compete with him. Lest readers miss the competition, DeVoto includes a minor unsympathetic character, a novelist who writes a popular novel about life in a small town, a novelist whose chief asset (and greatest limitation) is his skill at mimicry.

Much as DeVoto himself had left Utah for Harvard and then enlisted in the U. S. Army, his protagonist Cyrus Kinsman leaves Custis, a university town in a Rocky Mountain state where his father had been a trusted physician. After Harvard Medical School, Kinsman joins the British Medical Corps, switches to the U. S. Army, then serves his former commanding officer as a surgical resident at New York's Mercy Hospital. Disgusted with medicine, he returns to Custis, works as a mechanic at the Ford garage until he sorts out his oedipal rivalry with his father, then marries a local woman. Unlike DeVoto himself, Kinsman settles down in the West: he teaches physiology at the local state university.

Like Martin Arrowsmith, Cy Kinsman is disillusioned by modern medi-

continued on page 9

The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter

The *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* is published twice a year with help from the Publications Unit of the English Department at Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4240.

Editor
Sally E. Parry

Production Director
Michele Steinbacher-Kemp

Layout Editors
Mark Hawks, William Kraemer

Please address all correspondence to:
Sally Parry, Editor, 4240 English
Dept., Illinois State University, Nor-
mal, IL 61790-4240.

OFFICERS OF THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY

President
James S. Hutchisson
The Citadel

Secretary-Treasurer
Robert L. McLaughlin
Illinois State University

Board of Directors

Daniel D. Chabris
Clare Eby
U. of Connecticut at Hartford

Roger Forseth
U. of Wisconsin-Superior

George Killough
College of St. Scholastica

Sally E. Parry
(Exec. Director)
Illinois State University

Caren J. Town
Georgia Southern University

CONTRIBUTORS

The editor of The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue by writing articles or sending in notes.

These people include David Anderson, Frederick Betz, Roger Forseth, Mark Hawks, James Hutchisson, Jacqueline Koenig, Joyce Lyng, Robert McLaughlin, Roberta Olson, Steve Pastore, Jan Susina, and Rodger Tarr.

interesting and intelligent variation of Lewis's story.

The musical begins in the Lincoln, Nebraska, train station, where Elmer (Tom Zemon), broke, defeated salesman, argues with some of his fellows about the value of the American Dream. It becomes clear in the song "Riders on the Road" and in the following musical mediation that this is a post-modern Elmer Gantry: he recognizes the systems of lies that make up American life and cynically realizes that there is no fundamental truth beneath these lies; but, strangely, he still seems to believe in God and is, in fact, on pretty comfortable terms with Him. As the salesmen pull out, Sister Sharon Falconer (Kerry O'Malley) and her revival-meeting troupe pull in. Sensing a chance to get back on his feet—and finding himself attracted to a beautiful woman—Elmer approaches Sister Sharon at the station, after her meeting that night ("Shine"), and on the train the next day, only to be rebuffed each time. But that night, at Sharon's meeting in Sioux City, Elmer runs to the platform, declares himself a sinner, and mixing autobiography and hokum, sells the crowd on his redemption in the song "Saved."

Sister Sharon, still wary, but swayed by the emotional and monetary success of his routine, agrees to take Elmer on for a percent of the collection. Sharon is in many ways Elmer's opposite: she believes in the absolute truth of faith and the rightness of her mission, but she is also ambitious. She is willing to compromise and make use of Madison Avenue and show business techniques—the systems of lies Elmer dismissed in scene 1—if she can justify them in terms of her mission. These compromises are brilliantly dramatized in the most successful number in the play, "I've Got an Appointment," in which a montage effect lets us follow the troupe over several weeks and through several cities as Elmer revises Sharon's opening number, buying jazzy new costumes, adding lively, hand-clapping choreography, and importing a trio of black gospel singers. He sells Sharon's message the way the salesmen sell America, with zip, with smoke and mirrors, and with little interest in the degree of truth in the message.

As the weeks go by and the revival becomes more and more successful, the sexual tension increases. Despite herself, Sharon is attracted to Elmer, as she explains in the song "Dangerous." Elmer, meanwhile, in a Wichita hotel room, sings of his frustrations and desire for Sharon in "Night Heat," after which he makes love to one of the choir girls, Paula (Julie Ann Emery), with whom he has been flirting and who comes to his room.

Finally, Sharon gets the break she's been waiting for: a group of businessmen from Zenith, led by Merton Blanchard (Joel Hatch), for mysterious reasons of their own, come to Fort Smith to invite the troupe to the big city. Sharon and Elmer bowl them over with "Carry That Ball" and "No Greater Love," a more serious number; Blanchard and friends are impressed, and Elmer is reunited with an old friend from seminary, Frank Shallard (David Studwell). The impending success breaks down all inhibitions in Sharon, and the act ends as she and Elmer eagerly undress each other while

reciting verses from The Song of Songs.

Act 2 begins a few weeks later as Sharon and company arrive in Zenith ("He's Coming Back"). Sharon and Elmer are now deeply and sensuously in love, barely able to drag themselves away from their bed for the first revival meeting ("With You"). But they make it, and it is a huge success ("Crown Him with Glory"), topped off when Elmer hires an actor to play a paraplegic child whom Sharon heals. This puts Sharon over in Zenith, but it also marks a change in her and Elmer's relationship: Sharon refuses to believe that the healing was fake, she thinks she's become the vehicle for heavenly powers, and she no longer feels she can be impure with Elmer. Elmer, meanwhile, is confronted by Paula, who, rejected, is leaving the troupe ("Burning with Shame").

At this point, Blanchard and friends spring their surprise: they make a gift to Sharon of a tract of land on a river outside of the city and offer to build her a temple as her permanent home ("Wellspring"). Interestingly, Sharon accepts, no questions asked. But Elmer is puzzled: Why would these bankers and businessmen be making such a gift? Why build a church on good farming soil? Why are the blueprints dated over a year ago? It's almost as if the two have changed intellectual positions: Sharon no longer recognizes or cares about the distinction between bunk and truth; Elmer thinks the truth behind the illusion of reality makes a difference.

Elmer visits his old friend Frank Shallard, who has used his Zenith pulpit to speak against the corrupt government and the out-of-control criminal element (one imagines this Zenith as something like Chicago in the roaring twenties). The two reminisce and wonder about the different paths their lives have taken in "Lulu Baines," the only mention of Lulu in the play. The two decide to find out what's behind the temple scheme and over several days discover that Sharon is being used as a dupe in a crooked land deal ("Gonna Get You Back"). Elmer tries to tell Sarah what he has learned, but she doesn't disbelieve him: she just doesn't care. Instead, she tenderly ends their relationship ("With This Ring"). Blanchard arrives and announces that Frank Shallard has been shot dead outside his house, implying that this is a lesson for troublemakers.

Angry and defeated, Elmer resolves to leave Zenith, but at the train station he sees glowing in the sky. Sharon's revival tent is on fire. In a slow motion effect we see Sharon urging others to safety while perishing herself. As Elmer explains the next morning, having lost the distinction between reality and bunk, she thought she would be safe from the flames. But the fire marks the re-creation of Elmer Gantry: in the "Finale" he vows to stay in Zenith and take up Frank Shallard's crusade. He has learned that not everything is a lie and that some ideas are worth fighting and dying for.

This *Elmer Gantry* is a work-in-progress. It was first produced in 1988 in Washington. It has since had another major Washington production in 1995 and has been workshopped in New York. The Lincolnshire version, directed by Signature Theatre founder Eric D. Schaeffer, under-

continued on page 5

McLaughlin continued from page 4.

went some significant changes over the course of its run: when I saw it during its last weekend, there were songs and scenes in the play that weren't listed in the program and vice versa. The collaborators hope eventually to get the show ready for Broadway.

They were certainly given a high-quality production here. The scenic design by Thomas M. Ryan consisted of platforms that rose from the stage to become pews, benches, pulpits, or beds, as needed, and signs, lamps, and canopies that lowered from above to establish location. This, combined with Schaeffer's direction, resulted in a fast-paced and smoothly flowing show.

The performances were all strong. Zemon brought a big voice and personality to Elmer but also a subtle energy that suggested the depths of the character. O'Malley's Sharon was simultaneously holy and sexy; O'Malley was able to show the power of the character and also the slow second-act mental breakdown. The supporting actors and chorus were uniformly good. Studwell stood out for the quiet dignity he brought to Frank Shallard. Especially versatile was Brian Herriott as Sharon's less-than-holy orchestra leader and singing-and dancing choir boy.

The show itself is, as I indicated above, an interesting adaptation of Lewis's novel. The narrative is strong and the characters' transformations are compelling. The score has brilliant moments, but I wonder if too much of the music is given to the revival meetings and not enough to revealing the characters. And with the exceptions mentioned before, the revival numbers are straightforward, appropriate for the moment but not commenting on the moment. It also took me a while to get used to contemporary country-western, gospel, and blues as the musical idiom here, and I'm still not sure about the wisdom of that choice.

At any rate, the material is strong enough that I hope the collaborators can solve their remaining problems. This play deserves a future. How long has it been since Sinclair Lewis was on Broadway?

NEW ARTICLES ON LEWIS

This update will be provided at intervals to complement the annotated bibliography in *Sinclair Lewis: New Essays in Criticism*.

"THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE OF THE MINNESOTA SMALL TOWN: GOPHER PRAIRIE, STAGGERFORD, AND LAKE WOBEGON."

By Elmer Suderman

Midwestern Miscellany XXV (1997): 9-18.

Suderman writes that the characters in *Main Street*, *Staggerford*, and *Lake Wobegon Days* all write the landscapes in which they live and are in turn written by them. There are many Gopher Prairies presented in the novel, and for each character, including Carol and Will Kennicott, and Bea Sorrenson, the meaning of the town is somewhat different. "For Will and others in the town, Gopher Prairie embodies their values of neighborliness, acquisitiveness, comfort, a place in society, the opportunity to get ahead, hard work, conservatism. Carol, of course, does not share these values; she wants beauty, books, plays, elegant dining, smart parties, stimulating conversation" (13). Lewis, Hassler, and Keillor "domesticate that landscape so that it can become a place in which we can live, or perhaps a place to which we can return in order to be reminded that here there are values, not always the values we value, but the source of values rooted in a community in which we have common experiences, engage in a common effort on a common ground to which we willingly belong, to quote Wendell Berry's definition of a community. All three are convinced that such a community could exist, and they regret that too often it falls short" (18).

NEW MEMBERS

The Sinclair Lewis Society welcomes the following new members who have joined since January 1998.

Paul Abela
6301 S. Roseburg #3W
Clayton, MA 63105

Susan G. Cone
495 Broadway, #1
South Boston, MA 02127

Frederic Blatt
P.O. Box 206
Fly Creek, NY 13337

Robert L. Coyle, Jr.
P.O. Box 87156
Houston, TX 87156

Steve Bowersox
501 Lakes Court
Wistmenster, MD 21158

Valerio C. Ferme
1005 Bayview Farm Rd., #202
Pinole, CA 94564

Beverly B. Kluger
2223 Caminito Preciosa Sur
La Jolla, CA 92037

Phyllis Lopez Magaña
(our one hundredth member)
642 Mt. Olivet Ct.
Clayton, CA 94517

Bonnie McDonnell
Hawley Antique Center, Inc.
318 Main Ave.
Hawley, PA 18428

Glenn Rabac
2901 W. Bloomfield Oaks Ct.
West Bloomfield, MI 48324

Richard Reinis
288 N. Saltair Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Elizabeth Streitz
255 W. 108th St., Apt. 9A
New York, NY 10025

Anthony J. Valentine
1931 Eastbrook SE
Grand Rapids, MI 9508

FOCUS: *ELMER GANTRY*

With the opening of Robert Duvall's *The Apostle* and the midwestern premiere of the musical of *Elmer Gantry*, Sinclair Lewis's *Elmer Gantry* has received a lot of attention in the last several months.

The musical version of Sinclair Lewis's *Elmer Gantry* was produced at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. in 1988 and 1995, and at the La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego in 1991. Marriott's Lincolnshire Theatre in Chicago gave the show another chance and its Midwest premiere from February 4 through March 22. It starred Tom Zemon (who appeared in *Les Miserables* on Broadway) and Kerry O'Malley (seen in Broadway's *Cyrano: The Musical*). The show was written by John Bishop (book), Mel Marvin (music) and Robert Satuloff (lyrics). [See the review by Robert L. McLaughlin on page one of this issue].

* * *

A review of this production of *Elmer Gantry* appeared in *In Theater* on February 27, 1998 (32). Critic Jeanne Rattenbury writes, "Sinclair Lewis's 1927 novel about a slick-talking salesman who transforms a two-bit salvation show into a regional sensation is a perfect vehicle for musical adaptation. The setting—Missouri during Prohibition—captures a distinctive slice of American history and culture, and what's a spiritual revival without music? Better still, the main characters are strong and complex, charismatic but flawed. When Gantry opportunistically gets religion, he is driven less by his love of money than his lust for the itinerant evangelist Sharon Falconer. Though she initially resists Gantry's advances, Sharon has a weakness greater than his: ambition. When her ministry starts to take off, she starts to turn on, and soon the two can't keep their hands off each other."

Sinclair Lewis's 1927 novel about a slick-talking salesman who transforms a two-bit salvation show into a regional sensation is a perfect vehicle for musical adaptation.

Rattenbury notes that the book by John Bishop tells Lewis's story "efficiently, but I suspect its treatment of hypocrisy is less scathing than that of the original. Though he's redeemed in the end (a fate Sharon doesn't share), the charming Gantry is essentially a snake, but here he's too much the romantic hero. . . . Our own attraction to Gantry makes us glad when Sharon succumbs to him, but if this slightly dulls Lewis's edge, Kerry O'Malley . . . hones it again. No damsel in distress she, the luminous O'Malley makes it clear that it's glory Sharon wants, not Gantry."

Also praised in this production were Thomas Ryan's sets, the opening number recalling "a bleak *Music Man*" and Nancy Missimi's Depression-era costumes. The numbers, Rattenbury writes, "range from edgy Southern rock to sultry

ballads and rousing gospel numbers. In fact there's nothing really weak about the show. . . . Still, it lacks a certain transcendent quality that wouldn't matter if it were a piece of feel-good fluff, but that it will need to secure its place in the annals of American musical theater."

* * *

Richard Christiansen, a cultural critic for the *Chicago Tribune*, reviewed the musical (Feb. 6, 1998) less favorably, praising primarily the "several foot-stomping, hand-clapping choir numbers" such as "Carry That Ball," a "combination hymn and football pep rally that offers one of the show's few signs of theatrical wit." He enjoyed the staging of the show in the round, especially for the tent-meeting atmosphere. "Once you get away from those glory-glory church meetings, however, you're stuck with a moribund script that has barely a flicker of the hellfire and brimstone of the Lewis novel."

"Gantry, a real hell-raiser in Lewis's savagely satirical (and not very good) novel of religious hypocrisy, in this version comes across rather like an introspective MBA candidate, testing out his publicity and marketing theories in the field. Sister Sharon, the Aimee Semple McPherson-type preacher whose flesh he inflames, meanwhile acts like a candidate for a nunnery." Christiansen enjoyed the voices of the cast, including the leads, but not so much their acting, partly because "they're stuck with lifeless characterizations in librettist John Bishop's schematic, diluted condensation of Lewis's story." He especially disliked the "long, deadly dull Act Two of plot convolutions and capitalist villains." Because the plot was trimmed and the characters softened, "this *Elmer Gantry* has dampened the fire that gave the story its distinction."

* * *

Mr. Christiansen wrote a column later that month called "A Discouraging Lesson in American Lit" (Feb. 22) in connection with the musical. He noted to a friend, a teacher at a Chicago-area university, that he was rereading *Elmer Gantry* in preparation for reviewing it. He asked his friend if Lewis "was still taught and read in American literature classes in colleges and universities." This friend (who remained nameless) said, "It's very rare to find anybody reading, or teaching, any of the American realists today. Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, James T. Farrell—none of them is read by students, or teachers. Even Farrell, a Chicago author if there ever was one, isn't taught here." "You may find a few students or professors, my colleagues included, who have read some of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway or William Faulkner. But more likely, they will have heard of them, not read them, unless they're using them as a reference in a paper on the movies."

The column went on in this way for several more paragraphs, decrying "Ideology, not literature [as] the spur" for studies in English. Although Christiansen notes his friend may have been exaggerating a little, "even if there is only a smidgen of truth in what they say, it's unsettling, especially

for one who earns his living by the printed word, to see any decline in a passion for literature, especially in places where literature is supposed to be taught."

The Sinclair Lewis Society has sent Mr. Christiansen a copy of *The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* to demonstrate to him that the study of Sinclair Lewis is certainly still very much alive.

In response to his editorial, several people wrote in to the *Tribune* to contend that great authors such as Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner are still taught. David E. Anderson (not the Sinclair Lewis Society member) wrote "Reading Sinclair Lewis's works is hardly requisite for a well-educated college graduate. *Elmer Gantry* is very uneven, much of it written while Lewis was on a drinking binge" (Mar 1).

* * *

Christiansen also wrote a feature story, "Repair Man: Eric Schaeffer has earned a reputation as the Mr. Fix-It of American musicals," about the director of *Elmer Gantry*. Schaeffer is a 35-year-old director at the Signature Theatre in Washington who has staged well-received productions of Stephen Sondheim's *Passion* and *Assassins* there as well as doing a shortened version of Studs Terkel's *Working* and reworking the musical *Big* for a successful national tour.

* * *

Critic Dan Craft of *The Pantagraph* [Bloomington, IL] mentions *Elmer Gantry* in connection with the new Robert Duvall film *The Apostle* in which Duvall plays a Pentecostal preacher on the run from the law. "Rogue and murderer though Sonny [Duvall] may be, he's no bush league Elmer Gantry, swaggering his way through the American hinterland, seducing congregation members and passing the plate to line his own coffers" [Feb. 27, 1998: D3].

* * *

Although not related to either of the above two cultural events, the magazine *Family Circle* quoted Lewis in its February feature, "Family Answer Book: Words to Live By: Love Always." Ironically, the quote, "What is love? It is the morning and the evening star," which I'm sure *Family Circle* meant to use because of the implied sincerity, is used by Gantry to seduce women and whole congregations to the force of his personality. The phrase reappears throughout the novel, but only emphasizes the superficiality of Gantry's faith and the paucity of his thought.

* * *

Critics' Choice Video has the movie of *Elmer Gantry* available for \$19.95. Starring Burt Lancaster and Jean Simmons, it is described in the catalogue as a "portrayal of an ex-football player who becomes a popular evangelist in the 1920s rural Midwest" (1960, 146 minutes). Critics' Choice can be reached at 1-800-367-7765.

A GUIDE TO FILMS BASED ON THE WORKS OF SINCLAIR LEWIS

By Stephen R. Pastore

So much has been attempted at an accurate listing of films whose origins lie in the novels, plays, short stories and plot outlines of Sinclair Lewis that it might be wondered that no one list contained them all despite some very serious efforts. I add my name to the list of attempts and throw down the gauntlet to the world to find a title that meets these criteria that is omitted [If any readers can think of titles that could be added, please send them to *The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*]:

1. *Free Air*. 1922. U.S. b/w; silent. Dir: E. H. Griffith.
2. *Free Air*. 1923. U.K. b/w; silent. Dir: E. Haley.
3. *Main Street*. 1923. U.S. b/w; silent. Dir: H. Beaumont.
4. *The Ghost Patrol*. 1923. U.S. b/w; silent. Dir: N. Ross.
5. *The Abysmal Brute*. [plot sold to Jack London]. 1923. b/w; silent. Dir: H. Henly.
6. *Babbitt*. 1924. U.S. b/w; silent. Dir: H. Beaumont.
7. *Mantrap*. 1926. U.S. b/w; silent. Dir: V. Fleming.
8. *Arrowsmith*. 1931. U.S. b/w; sound. Dir: J. Ford.
9. *Newly Rich*. ["Let's Play King"]. 1931. U.S. b/w; sound. Dir: N. Taurog.
10. *Ann Vickers*. 1933. U.S. b/w; sound. Dir: J. Cromwell.
11. *Babbitt*. 1934. U.S. b/w; sound. Dir: W. Keighly.
12. *Dodsworth*. 1936. U.S. b/w; sound. Dir: W. Wyler.
13. *Conflict*. [plot sold to Jack London for *The Abysmal Brute*]. 1936. U.S. b/w/sound. Dir: D. Howard.
14. *I Married a Doctor*. [*Main Street*]. 1936. U.S. b/w; sound. Dir: A. Mayo.
15. *Untamed*. [*Mantrap*]. 1940. US. color/sound. Dir: G. Archainbaud.
16. *This Is the Life*. [*Angela Is Twenty-Two*]. 1944. U.S. b/w; sound. Dir: F. Feist.
17. *Bongo*. 1946. U.S. color animation; sound. Dir: J. Kinney (Disney).
18. *Fun and Fancy Free*. [*Bongo*]. 1947. U.S. color animation; sound. Dir: J. Kinney, et al. (Disney).
19. *Cass Timberlane*. 1947. U.S. color; sound. Dir: G. Sidney.
20. *Elmer Gantry*. 1960. U.S. color; sound. Dir: R. Brooks.
21. *The Assassination Bureau*. [plot sold to Jack London for posthumously completed novel of the same name]. 1969. U.K. color; sound. Dir: B. Dearden.

Lewis Foundation President's Report continued from page 2

keynote speech, and some napkins, coffee, etc. costs, and about \$500 to help pay for Lesley's expenses. Charles Compton sent a \$1,200 donation in support of the conference.

• **8th Annual Sinclair Lewis Writer's Conference** — Robert Bly was our keynote speaker, thanks to the perseverance of chairman Jim Umhoefer. "Listening to the Birds of the Soul: Culture and the Writer," was Bly's topic. Writers need to contact their souls he said, to farm them. To go into the depths of their souls to listen to what the soul has to say is where all the serious writing is done. His address was well received by about 120 people who attended.

Other presenters were Alexs Pate, "Fiction, The Stories of Families and Their Struggles," Edith Rylander, "Writing without Winning the Nobel Prize," and John Koblas, "Writing History and Biography." The format was changed to accommodate Bly's attendance at a friend's wedding, with the Keynote Speech at 9:30, followed by the Panel Discussion. The day ended with a social hour at the Palmer House Hotel, with drawings for door prizes.

Total attendance at the conference was about 120. Registrations were \$3,346. Grants received included \$750 from the Stearns County Historical Society, \$1,000 from the Minnesota Humanities Commission; \$1,600 from the Central Minnesota Arts Board, and \$800 from The Loft. Expenses were \$6,137.24, for a net income of \$1,358.76. Souvenir sales at the conference totaled \$405.25.

• **Boyhood Home Report** — The Boyhood Home had 1,330 visitors in 1997. Admissions brought in \$3,284.65. Souvenir sales were \$2,438.97, for a total income of \$5,723.62. There were 10 groups and bus tours during 1997. Visitors came from 40 states, Washington, D.C., and 24 nations and provinces. Income during 1996 was \$6,437.80, when 1,430 visited and shopped at the Boyhood Home. We again had two employees during the tourist season, Joyce Lyng and Alyce Olson. The Boyhood Home was air conditioned this year, at a cost of \$676.88. Some painting was done in July, including the Carriage House, and touchup on the Boyhood Home exterior to spruce up for the conference.

• **Birth Home Report** — We have new renters as of November, Emma Rae Garcia and her sons, ages 16 and 14. Rent was raised to \$389 per month. After Benusas moved out Oct. 1, 1997, the Foundation did some repairs to the house. The roof on the back was resingled and rotting boards replaced at a cost of \$2,719.03. Then the snow/ice damage to the small bedroom and the back porch were repaired and new carpeting was installed in the small bedroom after the walls were fixed. The kitchen linoleum and the broken front window were replaced. A whole list of miscellaneous jobs was done. We received a check for \$2,169 from the insurance company for the water damage repair. A new \$1,600 gas furnace was installed by Trisko Heating and Plumbing. Duane Trisko donated \$500 to the Foundation, and we will receive

a \$200 rebate. Taxes for the Birth Home for 1997 were \$1,062.10. Rent received in 1997 was \$3,773.

• **Interpretive Center Report** — There were 5,120 visitors to the Interpretive Center Museum in 1997, which is up from 3,559 in 1996. Door count at the Interpretive Center was 11,411 for 1997, up from 10,426 in 1996. This was the first complete calendar year that we have sold souvenirs at the Interpretive Center. Total 1997 sales were \$1,783.54. Total 1996 sales for part of the year were \$789.45. Donations at the Interpretive Center were \$356.32, compared to 1996 donations of \$468.77.

• **Essay Contest** — The 1997 Sinclair Lewis Days festival has discontinued the Miss Sauk Centre Pageant. In its place an essay contest was held to name the Sauk Centre junior ambassador. The essay question was: "Why does Sinclair Lewis continue to be a writer people are still interested in?" There were only three entries. Winner Rebecca Ann Stepan received a \$600 scholarship for her effort, "Lewis Continues to Be Remembered." Sabrina Marthaler was the first runner-up with her essay, "Main Street Has Not Changed in 80 Years." She received a \$300 scholarship for her efforts.

• **New Publications** —

Several publishing projects were completed in 1997:

* *Sinclair Lewis: A Descriptive Bibliography*, by Stephen Pastore, Lakewood, Penn. published by YALEbooks at New Haven, Conn. The first definitive, pictorial bibliography of Sinclair Lewis was published in early spring. The Foundation has them on sale. Pastore has donated a portrait photograph of Sinclair Lewis taken in September 1922, in celebration of the publication of *Babbitt*.

* *Sinclair Lewis: The Journey*, the second, revised edition of Roberta Olson's book.

* *If I Were Boss: The Early Business Stories of Sinclair Lewis*. Edited by Anthony Di Renzo, this collection was published July 20, 1997 by Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL.

* *Sinclair Lewis: New Essays in Criticism*. Edited by James M. Hutchisson and published July 1, 1997 by The Whitson Publishing Co., Troy, New York.

* *Sinclair Lewis Remembered*. This is Isabel Lewis Agrell's book about her famous uncle. They are on sale at the Interpretive Center.

** Still coming, Richard Lingeman's new biography of Sinclair Lewis. "It is a huge book," he said in a phone call Jan. 24. "It's turning into a bigger thing than I thought." He guesses it will be 300,000 words. "I'm trying to make it a readable book," he said. He took a leave from his job to work full-time, but now has jury duty. He hopes the book will be completed in the spring.

continued on page 9

Lewis Foundation President's Report
continued from page 8

• **Promotion and Tourism**—The Sauk Centre Creamery continues to use Sinclair Lewis information on its two percent disposable milk cartons. We have advertised in the *Minnesota Explorer* this past year, and participated in the Chamber Coupon Promotion, the City Map, and advertised in area newspapers during the tourist season. We offered AAA Senior Discounts to 217 tourists at the Boyhood Home in 1997. We hosted 10 bus/group tours in 1997. The Foundation went into a new venture, the sale of Sinclair Lewis Boyhood Home collectibles. They are very nicely done by Hometowne Collectibles in Bowmansville, Pa. This could be the start of a Sauk Centre series, depending upon how the first year goes.

The Legend Lives

Sinclair Lewis, the anniversaries of *Babbitt*, *Kingsblood Royal*, *Elmer Gantry* and the visit of Lesley Lewis to Sauk Centre received a large amount of news coverage in the statewide and local media. 1997 continued to be a year when references to Sinclair Lewis and/or his writings popped up around the country in newspapers, books, magazines, and on television shows. Colleges are still teaching Lewis's writing, as evidenced by the St. John's University English class tour to Sauk Centre this fall.

Coming in 1998

• We will write a grant to repair the roof and interior water damage at the Boyhood Home. The yard will be re-landscaped this spring.

• My goal for 1998 is to design and complete a new display for the Interpretive Center on the 1985 Sinclair Lewis Postage Stamp.

• We have been putting new displays on hold for several years to await the decision on whether or not the City of Sauk Centre is going to add on to the Interpretive Center to house a museum for the Historical Society. While the project to expand the Bryant Library has proceeded, the Historical Society Museum fate is still not decided.

1998 marks the 70th anniversary of the publication of *The Man Who Knew Coolidge*, and the 60th anniversary of *The Prodigal Parents*. It is also the 45th anniversary of *Ann Vickers*, and the 55th anniversary of *Gideon Planish*. Maybe you can make these your Sinclair Lewis re-reading for the year.

Thank you to all the members of the Sinclair Lewis Foundation Board, who volunteered so many hours this past year to accomplish all the above listed events, and for their month by month volunteering at the routine business that must be done each year.

Fleming continued from page 3

cine, especially when he contrasts it with his father's practice. Doc Kinsman was a small-town general practitioner whose skills were forged in the Civil War. Whereas some men might have become desensitized by this experience, Doc Kinsman wondered how modern medicine might save maimed bodies. The experience made him an empathetic, caring physician and surgeon. Unlike Doc Kinsman, Cy's World War I mentor Alexander McAllister is a cold man who allows his fame as a leading surgeon to distract him from the welfare of his patients. Nevertheless, he does serve Cy as a father figure, and much of the normal rivalry that Cy might have felt toward his own father, had he been alive, is displaced onto McAllister.

McAllister and Kinsman argue about the art and the science of medicine. Cy stands up for the superiority of science, maintaining that no surgeon can tell which tumors are malignant and which are benign without a pathologist's report. McAllister contends that "educated fingers" can intuitively sense a malignancy. Paradoxically, however, the man of science Kinsman feels empathy for patients, while the intuitive Doctor McAllister coolly accepts the death of patients and seems unconcerned with seeking out new medical procedures. Kinsman and McAllister finally part when Cy resigns after seeing his chief needlessly render a young woman sterile while removing an ovarian cyst which he has misdiagnosed as cancer.

Cy's discontent with medicine takes up nearly the first half of *Mountain Time*. The final half treats his efforts to find himself after moving back to Custis. In spite of the natural beauty of the Enchanted Mesa area, Cy's life is not idyllic. He distances himself from his profession by working at the Ford garage, where the same manual dexterity that made him a promising young surgeon makes him a master mechanic. But the expectations of the townspeople and the medical problems of friends keep pushing him to return to his practice.

Among his informal patients is Josephine Caneday Willard, whom he has known since they were children. After an unhappy marriage to a minor novelist, Josephine has brought her daughter Deborah back to Custis. Cy, who has kept in touch with Josephine during her troubled marriage, keeps files on the physical and emotional health of mother and daughter. He notes with pleasure the growth and strength of the daughter and works to prevent the emotional breakdown of her mother; he and Josephine share long walks and automobile rides during which he provides informal therapy. Their love for each other remains unconsummated because they have known each other so long as friends that they hesitate to change their footing until the very end of the novel, when Josephine has returned to emotional health and Cy has rid himself of the demons that haunt him.

Other events call Cy back to his role as a surgeon. When Hattie Caneday, Josephine's mother, finds a lump in her breast, Josephine prevails upon Cy to examine her. He reassures the woman that the lump is non-malignant and refers her to a licensed doctor in town for treatment, yet when an elderly

continued on page 10

friend of the Caneday family has a similar problem, he refuses to see her. The old lady dies after a mastectomy, the possible victim of an error by a surgeon less skilled than Cy. Josephine presses Cy to return to his profession and her father even arranges for him to be hired as a physiology professor by the university, but Cy remains a healer of machines.

Soon Cy is pressed into breaking the law. He is approached by friends of Art Ricco, a fellow mechanic, to treat a gunshot wound Art incurred while running a roadblock with a truckload of illegal liquor. If Art is treated by a licensed physician, the doctor will be obliged to report the wound and Art will be jailed. Having hauled liquor himself while working at the garage, Cy is sympathetic. He does an expert job of cleaning and stitching the bullet wound—and he keeps his mouth shut.

Next Cy is drawn into the plight of Lloyd Tanser, his employer at the garage, and Myrt Hill, a waitress whom Cy likes and respects. Myrt has become pregnant during an affair with Lloyd, and Cy feels that he has no choice but to perform an abortion. Circumstances are closing in on Cy Kinsman, forcing him to choose between returning to his profession or continuing to accommodate friends illegally. Cy attempts to escape the decision by giving notice at the Ford garage and going on a wild drunk, during which he is arrested and jailed.

In jail, Cy at last confronts himself. As he tells Jo Caneday later, "It was my father I was afraid of. . . . I was afraid of old Doc Kinsman. I didn't dare to be a better man. I don't dare now. Surgery is finished" (304). Facing his professional crisis enables Cy to break out of the emotional paralysis. He and Jo take a camping trip in the nearby mountains and consummate the love that has been smoldering beneath the surface even before the breakup of Jo's marriage. Cy accepts the job offered by the state university, vowing to learn enough about physiology to teach the subject before the fall term begins. One critic has summed up the meaning of *Mountain Time* in rather stark terms:

DeVoto in essence says that the simple old days—those of Old Doc Kinsman, the frontier doctor . . . were better. The forces of evil reside in the effete East. Sanity is found in the West and in Western life, where existence is still influenced by the frontier and is infinitely less complicated. (Sawey 32)

But conflicts between past and present, East and West, are not so simple. Modern times have brought negative developments such as World War I, in which Cy Kinsman participated—but the old times had their own evils: Doc Kinsman's experience in the Civil War may have been as traumatic to him as were his son's experiences on the Western Front. On the other hand, modern diagnostic techniques have made it possible to avoid some of the radical surgery practiced during Doc Kinsman's days, and Cy Kinsman is in favor of modern techniques—lab tests rather than "educated fingers." Furthermore, the new West to which Cy and Jo return after their defeats in the East is not the sane, uncomplicated West they remember from their childhood: bootleggers ply their trade even in Custis, and Jo's younger brother, with his twenties

slang and flexible morals, resembles Lewis's Ted Babbitt.

What remains is the land, and significantly it is in natural settings that Cy and Jo experience the healing that Custis has to offer. Cy's long drives and walks with Jo take advantage of the natural beauty of the mountains; the juxtaposition of nature's power to heal the mind with modern medicine's power to heal the body suggests that science is not the only answer to human ills. It is during this final camping trip that Cy makes his decision to make a new life for himself. The mountains are the scene of Cy and Jo's real marriage, even though they are planning a civil ceremony when the novel ends.

If DeVoto's novel can be faulted, it is not for oversimplifying either the conflict between old and new medicine or that between East and West. Rather, one might judge the novel on DeVoto's own terms by measuring him against the standard to which he had held Lewis four years before he published *Mountain Time*. If *Arrowsmith* is flawed because he is too romantic, sentimental, trivial, and adolescent and if his creator fails to address the "realities of science" in the practice of medicine, does DeVoto do a better job?

He does not. Cy Kinsman's oedipal conflict with his father's memory and, by displacement, with his chief of surgery retraces the rebellious pattern found in male adolescents, and his flaunting of the law after moving back to Custis suggests that much of his nature remains romantic and sentimental in spite of his exposure to the World War. Although DeVoto had the advantage of hindsight, writing about the twenties while living in the 1940s, his treatment of scientific medicine is no more astute than Lewis's. The earlier author, after all, had consulted medical expert Paul de Kruif to insure authenticity. Whether or not he consciously intended his novel as a response to *Arrowsmith*, DeVoto fails to beat Lewis at his own game.

But if *Mountain Time* is not a better novel than *Arrowsmith*, lessons that DeVoto learned from Lewis helped to make it the most popular of DeVoto's novels. In combining its medical theme, its treatment of the emerging modern West, and the eternal theme of a young man's finding his true calling in the world, the novel makes a solid contribution to the canon of the new West.

WORKS CITED

- DeVoto, Bernard. *The Literary Fallacy*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1944.
- . *Mountain Time*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1947.
- Lewis, Sinclair. "Fools, Liars, and Mr. DeVoto." *Saturday Review* 27 (15 April 1944): 9-12.
- Sawey, Orlan. *Bernard DeVoto*. New York: Twayne, 1969.
- Schorer, Mark. *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1961.

SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWS

Information about the Sinclair Lewis Conference was published in *The Jack London Foundation Newsletter*, October 1997 (vol. 9, no. 4). Jackie Koenig, a member of the Jack London Foundation, as well as a member of the Sinclair Lewis Society, attended the July Lewis conference and reported on connections between London studies and Lewis studies. In particular, she mentioned a paper by Valerio

Ferne who wrote that in Italy during the Fascist years, Lewis was often ignored in favor of Jack London "whose depiction of the 'wild' American spirit best mimicked the portrayal of America presented at the movies and on the radio." She also mentioned papers by Todd Stanley and Sally Parry who both spoke on Lewis's novel *Mantrap* and his portrayal of urban men caught in the wilderness.

EARLY SINCLAIR LEWIS SATIRES AVAILABLE NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 80 YEARS

The Sinclair Lewis revival has gained momentum over the past decade, spurred most recently by the seventy-fifth anniversary this September of the publication of *Babbitt*. In a slightly belated celebration of that landmark date in American culture, Southern Illinois University Press published *If I Were Boss: The Early Business Stories of Sinclair Lewis*.

Edited by Anthony Di Renzo, *If I Were Boss* rescues fifteen of Lewis's funniest and most poignant early business stories from obscurity, making them available for the first time since their original publication some eighty years ago. The stories in this anthology also introduce characters, themes, and techniques that clearly foreshadow *Babbitt*. Because some things have not changed in the American workplace since Lewis's day, these highly entertaining and unflinchingly accurate office satires will appeal to the fans of *Dilbert* and *The Drew Carey Show*. (See below for brief synopsis of each story.)

In his witty and comprehensive introduction, Di Renzo, an academic with a background in both business and advertising, describes Lewis's apprenticeship in advertising and publishing, analyzes the business milieu in Lewis's time, and provides an overview of the early fiction.

[Anthony Di Renzo is a fugitive from advertising. He has worked as a copywriter, press agent, commercial artist, and announcer. Currently he teaches professional writing and American business history at Ithaca College.]

SYNOPSIS OF THE STORIES IN *IF I WERE BOSS: THE EARLY BUSINESS STORIES OF SINCLAIR LEWIS*

COMMUNICATION: \$9.15—Office tyrant Whittier J. Small nurtures delusions of grandeur, but he discovers the limits of social climbing (and the secret to true office management) when he leads a quixotic revolt against the Long Island Railroad.

NATURE, INC.—Crooked realtor Bill Packard helps a charlatan create a New Thought colony on Cape Cod but outfoxes himself by falling in love with one of his gulls.

I WERE BOSS—Salesman Charley McClure vows to bring humane management to his novelty company, but once he becomes sales manager, his idealism is sorely tested. A

perceptive meditation on office politics and white-collar double-think and anxiety.

HONESTY—IF POSSIBLE—Copywriter Terry Ames struggles to maintain his integrity and court his office sweetheart even while writing ads for phony Florida real estate.

A STORY WITH A HAPPY ENDING—Leonard Price, an executive on the skids, must swallow his pride when he goes to work for his former secretary. This study of gender reversals parodies Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*.

THE WHISPERER—Machiavellian quack Dr. Chester Doremus takes over a struggling pharmaceutical company only to realize he has been the dupe of outside interests.

SNAPPY DISPLAY—First of four stories about ad man Lancelot Todd, direct forebear of *Babbitt*. Here Lancelot tries to use his PR work for a suffragist organization to worm his way into high society. He is foiled at a posh fund raiser.

SLIP IT TO 'EM—Lancelot tries to sell a fake Italian sports car while wooing a wealthy dowager. Both courtship and car run out of gas.

GETTING HIS BIT—In WWI Lancelot sells the Khaki Khomfort Trench Beach on the black market and gives lectures on his fictitious war adventures. The Army teaches him a lesson.

JAZZ—Lancelot exploits alcoholic freelancer William John Buckingham, who ghostwrites a successful house organ for a national grocery chain. But the little man exposes his boss at an Atlantic City convention.

BRONZE BARS—Romance between bank clerk and poor socialite burlesques O. Henry.

THE WAY I SEE IT—*Rashomon*, Lewis style.

THE GOOD SPORT—Itinerant car salesman counsels his wife to be a good sport, but sportsmanship fails him when she takes a job as a dental hygienist.

A MATTER OF BUSINESS—Jim Candee fakes a crisis of conscience: should he continue stocking hand-crafted folk dolls? or should he mass produce and make money? His decision surprises everyone, including himself.

NUMBER SEVEN TO SAGAPOOSE—Taking personal stock, John Rabbit, a dying shoe drummer, concludes he has been a failure. Actually his kindness and decency have helped literally thousands of people. A touching elegy to end the collection.

SINCLAIR LEWIS NOTES

American Heritage in September 1997 had a two column article on the 75th anniversary of *Babbitt*. Some of the many wonderful reviews were quoted, "A bigger and better book than *Main Street*" said the *New York Times*. "By itself the plot is unremarkable: A middle-aged blowhard undergoes what today would be called a midlife crisis, then reverts to being a middle-aged blowhard. The reason for all the fuss was Lewis's scathing portrayal of Babbitt's empty life and vapid pursuits. With sledgehammer irony and perfect-pitch reproduction of boosterish speech and thought, Lewis neatly dissected the Philistine materialism of America's Harding era business culture. So accurate was his rendering that newspapers in Cincinnati, Duluth, Kansas City, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis all claimed that *Zenith* had been modeled on their city. *Babbitt* sold well, but not as well as its predecessor, critics' assessments notwithstanding." The rest of the feature talks about Lewis's other novels of the 1920s and ends, "When the stock market crashed later that year, so did Lewis's career. Except for *It Can't Happen Here* (1935), a lurid fantasy of fascist takeover in America, none of his later novels are remembered today. Lewis was never much for plot or characterization; he made his living as a novelist with mimicry, sarcasm, and caricature. His appeal required an audience prosperous enough to be a target for mockery and secure enough to take it. When the Depression hit, Lewis's brand of satire somehow wasn't funny anymore."

An editorial in *The London Times* in late December 1997 talks about the oppressive nature of early fame for a young writer, entangling him in "the mantle of 'great writer' that is cast about his shoulders and, despite the success he will have in later life, its weight begins to drag him down." The editorial was commenting on the early fame of Norman Mailer, whose great novel of World War II, *The Naked and the Dead*, was published 50 years ago. Sinclair Lewis praised Mailer's early writing and called him "merely the greatest writer of this generation." Although Mailer has continued to write on a variety of subjects over the last 50 years, on everything from Marilyn Monroe to Jesus Christ, "much of his work has caused critics to question Sinclair Lewis's judgment. Mailer once wrote that 'literary form in general is the record of war . . . whatever is alive, or intent, or obsessed, must wage an actual war.'"

In *Some Modern Poets* by Edward Davidson (Harper 1928), Vachel Lindsay is quoted as saying the following about his collected works. "This whole book is a weapon in a strenuous battlefield. Each time I broke loose and went on the road in the Spring . . . it was definitely an act of protest against the type of life set forth in *Babbitt* and *Main Street*" (239).

In a fascinating article, "Where Have You Gone, Louis Sullivan?: Will America Recover from Its Fifty-Year Bout of Europhilia?," in the February issue of *Harper's Magazine*, critic Michael Lind contends that in twentieth-century American culture and thought the study of literature, architecture, art, and political science was heavily influenced by Europeans. He asserts that especially in material taught to students after World War II, cultural creations that were not influenced by Europeans were dismissed as provincial or not discussed at all. "Whatever its purpose, the story told by my art history professors (America provincial, Europe sophisticated; modernism good, traditionalism bad) corroborated the testimony presented by my professors of literature. Together with the rest of my generation, I was informed that the pedigree of twentieth-century American literature ran from three expatriates—Henry James, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot—to the free-verse poets and art novelists of the 1950s and '60s. Wallace Stevens was considered a sort of honorary expatriate; Robert Frost, Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos, and H. L. Mencken were hardly mentioned at all" (54). Much like Ralph Waldo Emerson's writings of over a hundred years ago, Lind calls for a "declaration of cultural independence, in which independence is defined not as autarky but as self confidence."

Margo Jefferson, an arts critic for the *New York Times*, wrote "Seven Unsung Novels Crying to Be Filmed" (Jan. 18, 1998: Arts and Entertainment section: 1, 26), and included among them *The Damantion of Theron Ware* by Harold Frederic. This novel was one of the inspirations for *Elemer Gantry* and focuses on an ambitious minister who is unsettled but thrilled by a first meeting with Irish Catholics and becomes fascinated by a young woman who "proclaims herself more pagan than Christian."

The new book *Pulp Culture: The Art of Fiction Magazines* by Frank M. Robinson and Lawrence Davidson, mentions Sinclair Lewis's association with pulp fiction. When Arthur Sullivant Hoffman took over as editor of *Adventure* in 1912, he had Lewis as his assistant. The magazine was even partially responsible for the formation of the American Legion. *Adventure* created identity cards for its members and many of them struck friendships, resulting in the creation of the Adventurers Club of New York. In 1915, when the war in Europe was raging, the club became intensely patriotic and threw out several members who made what the Adventurers considered "disloyal" speeches. "Reports were that one of the excommunicated members was Sinclair Lewis." The Legion, another club created by the magazine, became an organization of veterans, the American Legion, after World War I.

MORE NOTES

In "The Long Count," an article on boxing great Jack Dempsey by William Nack in the September 22, 1997 *Sports Illustrated*, Richard Davies, a professor of sports history at the University of Nevada at Reno is quoted as contrasting Dempsey's individualism to the conformist society represented in *Babbitt*. "In the 1920s, American society was increasingly becoming the society of Sinclair Lewis's *George Babbitt*, . . . a society of business and industry, of technology and organization, increasingly bureaucratized, urbanized and regimented. Tunney represented this kind of life in which Americans were being captured. Dempsey represented those values and that way of life that Americans once had and lost, the rugged, self-made individualist. It is one of the reasons that he was popular."

In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* (Jan. 30, 1998), Stewart M. Robinson, a professor emeritus at Cleveland State University notes that American authors as well as French authors have contributed to political discussion. "In the early decades of the century, Upton Sinclair, Jack London and Sinclair Lewis contributed mightily to public debate. You need only recall Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, on the working conditions in Chicago's meat-packing plants, and Jack London's *Iron Heel*, a prescient warning of incipient fascism" (A18).

In the article, "\$8 Million Literary Trove Given to Morgan Library," arts editor Mel Gussow of the *New York Times* discusses the Carter Burden collection of American Literature which was recently donated to the Pierpont Morgan Library by the family of Carter Burden. The collection focuses on American Literature from 1870 on and includes letters from Thomas Pynchon to his agent, a journal written in the 1950s by Tennessee Williams, and a manuscript of a Henry James essay on Robert Browning. "At one auction, he [Burden] bought a copy of an obscure novel by Sinclair Lewis for an inflated price and then discovered that he had been bidding against Michael Jackson" (Feb. 23, 1998: B1, 8). [The novel was *Hike and the Aeroplane*, written under Lewis's pseudonym, Tom Graham.]

Rose Macaulay, a British novelist whose writing career lasted from 1911 to 1940, gained wide recognition with *Potterism*, a sort of British analogy to *Babbitt*. It was published in 1920 and gained her a reputation as a satirist, even though her later writing focused on serious topics, including the Spanish Civil War and religion in English Literature. [If any Lewis Society members have read *Potterism*, the editor of *The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* would like to hear from you.]

Robert Ingersoll, the orator and philosopher whom Miles Bjornstam reads in *Main Street*, has had his birthplace in Dresden, New York turned into a historical site. He was born there in 1833 and later became the foremost orator and political speechmaker of the late nineteenth century. He had a distinguished legal career, served as the first Attorney General of Illinois, and served in the Northern forces in the Civil War, attaining the rank of colonel.

The *Chicago Tribune* reports that St. Petersburg's Salvador Dali Museum hosted a show from December through January 18 on photographer Man Ray. The show focused on his Paris portraits of the 1920s and 1930s and featured pictures of Salvador Dali, Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, James Joyce, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Marcel Proust, Sinclair Lewis, and Aldous Huxley.

In a review of *Proud to Be: My Life, the Air Force, the Controversy*, by Kelly Flinn, reviewer Florence King in *National Review* compares Flinn's description of arriving at the Air Force Academy to Carol Kennicott's arriving in Gopher Prairie. Flinn writes, "The city still had the feeling of something half-finished. Despite all the wide-open spaces around it, it felt very claustrophobic." King then notes, "This is Carol Kennicott of *Main Street* arriving in Gopher Prairie, determined to change hearts and minds and anything else that gets in her way to realize her dream of bringing culture and refinement to Midwestern boosters. That Carol was destined to get into a great deal of trouble was obvious to everyone but Carol, and so it was with the equally obtuse Kelly Flinn. If only she had been able to appreciate her resemblance to her literary predecessor she might have done things differently, but her own DNA is missing an irony gene and she doesn't seem to have read anything except manuals" (Feb. 9, 1998: 48).

Lewis H. Lapham, in "Notebook: New Wine in Old Bottles," in the February 1998 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, writes that "we lose track of too many writers absent from the bestseller lists and unknown to Larry King." He is concerned that new technologies contribute to the decline in reading older texts. "I come across fewer and fewer people who know the names of Seneca and Rabelais, or even those of John O'Hara and Sinclair Lewis" (10). He hopes that *Harper's Magazine* "might encourage a publisher to restore one or more of their books to the general conversation. . . I don't know if the project would make financial sense, but I do know that over the last thirty years I've given away my only copies of fifty or sixty books, which, because I remember them with a good deal of affection, I'd like to see again."

LEWIS AND THE WEB

The updated Sinclair Lewis website has been up and running since the end of summer 1997 and averages over half a dozen questions a week directed to the Lewis Society webmaster. Some are inquiries about membership, some are questions about a specific aspect of Lewis's life and work, some want to know about the value of a certain Lewis book, but about half are from students, both high school and college, who are researching papers and either need guidance or hope that surfing the web will substitute for fully researching a topic. With few exceptions all of these questions were answered or the person was directed to an appropriate source.

Here are some of the requests received over the past year.

Information Requests

Hi! As part of an ongoing project, I am searching for copies of Lewis's plays and his connection with the Federal Theater Project. Does an anthology of his scripts exist or are copies of individual plays available? Has anything been written about his involvement with the Federal Theater Project? Was "It Can't Happen Here" the only play of his that the FTP produced? Do you happen to know what archives are storing the materials from the Federal Theater Project?

◆◆◆◆◆

I would appreciate any feedback on these inquiries. Please tell me more about the Sinclair Lewis Society? Do you hold annual meetings in Sauk Centre or have anything to do with his hometown? I appreciate your help.

◆◆◆◆◆

Why did Lewis turn down the Pulitzer for Arrowsmith?

◆◆◆◆◆

Dear Sinclair Lewis Fans,
Please let me know what you can about why SL did not accept the Pulitzer Prize for ARROWSMITH. I am reading this book in my Book Club and would like to share any information that I can with the members. Thanks for your time.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am trying to track down permission to quote from the works of Sinclair Lewis. Have you any idea who has the rights? Are they held by a publisher or his estate? Have you any idea how one would contact his estate? I have tried Random House but they don't seem responsive. I'm trying to do the right thing, but have hit a brick wall. Can you help, or at least give me some leads? I'd much appreciate it.

◆◆◆◆◆

I wonder if you have a photograph of Sinclair Lewis that has been scanned and is in the public domain. This is for an education website. You can see the page where I might use such a photograph at <http://www.gene.com:80/ae/AB/IE/>

Gen395.html. I would use it next to the fourth paragraph. (I am assisting Dr. Zinnen in making his web pages more graphical.)

◆◆◆◆◆

Hi, I am a lover of his novels and I would like more info about the society.

◆◆◆◆◆

Today at lunch, an attorney in my firm volunteered that he had been trying to find a particular short story written by Lewis, in response to my advice that everyone at the table who hadn't yet read ELMER GANTRY find time to do so. That short story has a character named Bongo (is it an animal?), but he wasn't sure whether "Bongo" had been part of the title. If that strikes a bell with you, I'd appreciate being told the title, so that I can relay that information to my co-worker.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am "writing" from near Ft. Worth, TX. I am helping my daughter work on a project on Sinclair Lewis. We are using the recipe for Christmas Cookies found on the Sinclair Lewis Homepage. We are trying to find out how this recipe fits into Sinclair Lewis's life and its significance to him. We have attempted to find the book by John Koblas in which the recipe appears. The book is not available at the local library and is out of print.

◆◆◆◆◆

Thanks for the note. We have already made the cookies for my daughter's project. We made two varieties—an alcoholic version and non-alcoholic version. So far, I think we prefer the non-alcoholic version.

What were Sinclair Lewis's views on Christmas? From his writing, specifically *Main Street*, he seems to have a mixed impression. Is that accurate or am I reading into his writings? I was an English major as an undergrad. However, most of my time was spent reading early literature—Beowulf, Chaucer, and crew. Helping my daughter has been my first real introduction to Sinclair Lewis. I will have to read more of his work.

◆◆◆◆◆

Is there a statement by Mr. Lewis as to the reasons for declining the 1926 Pulitzer for Arrowsmith?

◆◆◆◆◆

I just have a quick question: Why did Sinclair Lewis turn down the Pulitzer?

◆◆◆◆◆

I'm a librarian working for U.S. News & World Report magazine and am looking for assistance in verifying what one

Lewis and the Web continued from page 14

of our writers believes is a Sinclair Lewis quote.

The quotation is: "The trouble with this country is that there are too many people going about saying 'the trouble with this country is...'"

I've checked thru quote books, CD-ROMs, web sites, as well as calling the Sinclair Lewis Interpretive Centre and Macalester College. There are plenty of references attributing this quote to him but nothing tells me the source so I'm a bit skeptical. I think it may have come from a speech. If you have any other ideas, I would greatly appreciate hearing back from you. [Unfortunately the Society members I checked with could not locate the quote either, although it's a good one.]



We are reading Main Street for our book club this month, and I was wondering if you have a sort of "discussion guide" for Main Street. We have collected these for other books, and was wondering if you had something like this in your collections.



I am working on a full-length study of alcoholism and American literature, and I am interested in corresponding with anyone who knows about the subject, particularly with regard to the career and writing of Sinclair Lewis.



I was doing some research on Sinclair Lewis and I was having a problem obtaining info on his refusal of the 1925 Nobel prize. Can you give me some info on his refusal?



I read a story that I believe was written by Sinclair Lewis while I was still in high school 13 years ago. I have tried to remember the title, but I never can. It deals with a young man who keeps crossing paths with another male character, they both grow into their early 20's, and eventually they die next to one another in a hospital due to wounds suffered in WWI. If this is the work of Sinclair Lewis, could you be so kind as to tell me what the title is? Thank you in advance for any help that you may be able to provide! [If any members can identify this, please let the editor of the newsletter know.]

Comments

Sinclair Lewis seems to have been ahead of his time — what a wheeler/dealer. But more power to him, 'cause it's hard being an author.



How encouraging it was to discover this page. Upon my own admission I am a newcomer to the grandeur of Lewis, having only first discovered his writing this last summer. I found "Main Street" in a youth hostel in Switzerland and, having

nothing else to occupy my mind with during endless hours of train travel, decided to give it a shot. A fine decision that was. Like most people, my exposure to great American literature of the twentieth century had been confined to Hemingway, Faulkner, and Fitzgerald. Lewis was a breath of fresh air, a true observational genius. He accents his work with the most skillful sense of sarcasm. He veritably propounds upon themes of nihilism without coming off as self-absorbed or pretentious. Unlike the other greats of his day, Lewis is able to effectively convey his message without delving into such banal elements as insanity and alcoholism. I could elaborate incessantly, but I will end it here. I hope there will be opportunities to exchange ideas and opinions concerning Lewis. I am eager for exposure to other readers' impressions.



You have a lovely informative site. My congratulations. It is an excellent resource that you've made available for us book collectors. Thanks for your efforts.



You probably know that Lewis is collectable and desired by book collectors. I have placed a link on my web under the Collectable Authors and Illustrators section at <http://www.books-rare.com> that points to you.



I would like to thank you for putting this homepage on the net. It has helped me very much in my studies. Thank you again and I hope that you continue to do such good deeds in the future.

Book Values

What would a first edition from Random House signed by Sinclair Lewis be worth? I believe the book is Timberlane.



I have a book called Main Street published by Harcourt, Brace and Howe dated 1920. It is autographed on the first page "To My Friend Amy MacNamare" "Main Street" Lots of Luck. Signed by Sinclair Lewis. Could you please let me know what this book is worth?

Student Messages

Hello! Here's a quick story.....I finally found what I needed at your site after a seemingly endless search through the Information Superhighway. I was looking on the Internet for information on the author Sinclair Lewis. Your site on him was a God-send! You see, I'm a high school freshman who needs to prepare, memorize, and present a one-minute speech on a selected author. The teacher supplied numerous names of authors, old and new. I decided on Sinclair Lewis for two reasons. a) I've read a portion of "Elmer Gantry" and adore the film and b) I figured that I wouldn't chance any one else choosing the same guy and them having an information book

continued on page 16

Lewis and the Web continued from page 15

leaving me stranded. Well, there was not too much in the old World Book, so I went to Yahoo! search engine, and hence found you! So, in conclusion, thanks again for the wonderful site—it helped me immensely!

Forever indebted!

~Cathy

◆◆◆◆◆

Sally,

Oh, it certainly went well! I received a 100% for the assignment, and was even complimented by this teacher, which is quite odd, considering the teacher. Again, thank you immensely. Regards, ~Cathy

◆◆◆◆◆

I am trying to write a paper about Babbitt and relate it to events of time and how they affected Lewis. Do you have any info about this or know where I can find some info. Thanks Amy PS I am really enjoying reading Babbitt. It's the first thing I have read by Sinclair Lewis.

◆◆◆◆◆

Hello. I am currently working on my senior AP English project. The confines of the project guide us to read one well known novel of acclaim and then choose another work. Unfortunately I, in my infinite high school wisdom selected a little praised and not well documented *It Can't Happen Here* as my second author book. Although *Main Street* is loaded with literature I cannot find any info about the second novel. I would appreciate any literary critiques or published opinions about one of his final shining books. No rush, yet a bit urgent. A swift response would be of great use. Thank you.

◆◆◆◆◆

Do you know where I can get a book report or essay on Babbitt?

Thanks.....Cindy

◆◆◆◆◆

I am doing a project on Sinclair Lewis for my history class. I need to know how many times Babbitt has been in publication, dates it was published, weeks on the bestsellers list, and what impact Babbitt had on society since its release. Where could I find this information on the web?

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a 10th grade student in Phoenix, Arizona. I have finished reading the book "Main Street" and was wondering if you could e-mail/fax/or just send me the "Cliff Notes" for this book. I have a test on it October 10th and would like to be very prepared for the exam! Thank you for your time and effort.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a student at the Indianapolis campus of Indiana U. I have to do a paper on S. Lewis's work Babbitt. My Prof. wants

sales figures on Babbitt, and how many editions were made. I cannot find this in our library or Bloomington's. If you could e-mail me figures or where I can find this information I would be greatly appreciative. I kinda need the info asap as the due date is OCT. 1 so if you could get back w/me today it would be great.

◆◆◆◆◆

Hello from California!

I am a high school senior who has just read Babbitt, and I am wondering if I could gain some insight into why you all seem to think it is so wonderful. I am not another jaded teenager who is too stupid to realize the book's importance; rather, I would like some clarification about its themes: what makes old Georgie a sympathetic character, the nature of gender roles in Zenith, etc. I have vague ideas forming, but I cannot seem to articulate them. I found the book difficult to get through; its plotline was haphazard, the ending was anticlimactic. While I realize that Lewis probably did this to make us feel how tiresome and pathetic Babbitt's existence was, it did not make reading the book any easier. Perhaps a dialogue through e-mail could take place—I want to explore this book a bit more than I have been able to in class.

Thank you. Sincerely, R.F.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a student at Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis. I have a History class concerning the 1920's-1945. I am looking for information about the historical significance of *It Can't Happen Here*, both in the 30's and today. Could you help me find some information on this, or maybe provide me with some insight?

◆◆◆◆◆

I am working on a History project for school, I need to know Publication information on the book. (When/Where originally published, how long in print, sales figures [If available]. I would appreciate any information you can supply to me or where I can get the above referenced information.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a high school student researching the writing styles of Sinclair Lewis. Please send or e-mail me information on that topic. Thank you for your help.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a high school student doing a paper on Arrowsmith and I found your website. I was wondering if you could possibly send me some biographical information on Lewis and/or information on Arrowsmith or websites that you could recommend. Thanks a lot!

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a high school senior who is attempting to write a research paper over Sinclair Lewis. The University Interscholastic League (UIL) Literary book for 1997-1998 is *Main Street* and

Lewis and the Web continued from page 16

I will try to compete in this event in the spring. I would appreciate any help you are willing to give me about the author or Main Street.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a student at Northeastern Illinois University, working on a Sinclair Lewis Paper. The paper compares themes and dialog in "Main Street" to those in three of his short stories. Any recommendations for the short stories? The themes that I'm focusing on for the paper are the fear of outsiders and change, perceived role of wealth, and marriage.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am doing a research paper on Sinclair Lewis. My thesis statement is something relating to how Lewis used ridicule of middle class values, beliefs, way of life, and speech in many of his works. If you have any additional information on this topic I would greatly appreciate it if you could send it to me. Thank you

◆◆◆◆◆

Thank you for your help with my research project. I have found *The Art of Sinclair Lewis* and it has helped me very much.

◆◆◆◆◆

Hello :) I am looking for various information on the literary social critics during the 1920s and 30s. I am developing a comparative research paper involving Sinclair Lewis, however, I have not been able to find much information on such a topic. If you would be so generous to email me some other homepages/sites/or search engines which would prove more beneficial :) please do :)

◆◆◆◆◆

I have been an avid fan of Sinclair Lewis since discovering "Babbitt" in college. I work at a college now and am considering returning to graduate school to get a masters degree in literature. It has puzzled me that Sinclair Lewis is not studied nor lauded at this time in academia. I feel he is so important and relevant. The head of the English department at the college I work at suggests that I do my thesis and studying in this area. Nothing would please me more. Yours is the first site on the internet that I have come across about Sinclair Lewis and I have printed off the membership form and plan to join. I hope that this will be a fruitful relationship.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am doing a report on Sinclair Lewis for my English class and I have a question that I was wondering if you could answer. What was the main theme of Sinclair Lewis's writing? For example, some authors write mainly about people with family troubles, some authors write about life in the suburbs, etc. Any information would be helpful. Thanks!

◆◆◆◆◆

I'm doing a research project on Sinclair Lewis and will be

required to read one of his novels. I'm considering either *Babbitt* or *Main Street*. Do you have any information on either of these novels? Also a very brief summary about these books would be useful in helping me decide which novel I prefer to read.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a Junior in High school and need help concerning the life of Sinclair Lewis and any reviews about his work *Arrowsmith*. If you have any material that could be of help to me, I would be grateful. I have to write a short biography about his life and summarize some critic's ideas about *Arrowsmith*. Thank you very much!!!!

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a high school junior doing a National History Day project on expatriate writers of the 1920s. The theme of the competition is "Movement and Migration," and my partner and I are doing a ten-minute video on the expatriates. We are interested in any information you may be able to give us about the Lost Generation's time in Paris, and specifically Lewis's role in sparking this movement, through *Babbitt*. Information is hard to come by, especially video footage and usable interviews, so any assistance you could give us would be greatly appreciated. We want to advance to state and national competitions, as History Day honors are prestigious awards. Again, any help would be great. Please respond as soon as possible.

◆◆◆◆◆

My profession as to date can be summed up as a student. Sixteen years describe my age, and I dwell in the city of Plano, Texas. I attend Plano East Senior High and am a contributing member of the literary criticism team. Each year, the UIL (run by the state board of education) holds various academic competitions. Literary criticism happens to be one of them, and this year, of the three pieces of literature selected for competition, the state chose *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis (as I am sure that you know) as one of them. What I was wondering was if you happened to have anything that could aid the team in preparation for the competition involving the book such as quiz questions, previous criticisms of the novel, or any other contributions? The team would greatly appreciate any response or assistance from the society. We thank you emphatically for your time, as we are sure that you are very busy and probably have more pertinent things to spend your time with.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a grad student in English at NYU, and picked up a copy of *Work of Art* the other day; are there any major studies on this title?

◆◆◆◆◆

hello I am a senior at Avon central school in Avon NY near

continued on page 18

Albany. I find Sinclair Lewis to be one of the greatest writers of all time. I share a lot of his ideas about the small town society and the people in it. Any how I picked him to write my senior paper on. So I would greatly appreciate any and all information you could send me on him, as soon as possible.

◆◆◆◆◆

I was wondering if you would have any suggestions on a good topic to delve into when writing a twenty-page paper on Sinclair Lewis's novel *Main Street*. I am reading the book now, but I just don't know where to start. Carol's role as a strong woman or her relationship to her husband seem to be topics that can't be covered in only twenty pages, and I am at a loss for topics! Your sites have helped me a lot in my search for Sinclair Lewis material, and I thought maybe you would be able to help me now!

◆◆◆◆◆

Can you please help me?? I have to do a term paper for my English class on *Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis.... I have to apply Sociological criticism theory on the book... Can you send me any information (ex: websites or links) you might have on the book and any information that you might have on the theory relating to the book??

◆◆◆◆◆

I am at my wits end. I am searching for information on the Sinclair Lewis book *Main Street*. I was told that at one time Cliff's Notes had published a book over the novel, but it is no longer in print. I am desperate. Is there anyone there who can help me? I am willing to pay a reasonable price.

◆◆◆◆◆

I am interested in Sinclair Lewis and his biographical background. I am having trouble finding information on him that is relevant to my research. I would especially appreciate some information on his novel *ARROWSMITH* and the themes found within it. If you can help me please e-mail me back ASAP! Thank you!!!
A desperate student in California

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a high school student who has read Sinclair Lewis's book, "*Elmer Gantry*," and I would like to do a report over it. I would appreciate any references and or articles that you could give me. These articles can range from the literary value of the piece, to the society's reaction of this novel (or anything in between).

◆◆◆◆◆

I am a student at UF, and I have a question that would really help a paper that I am working on. Do you have any commentaries about Doremus Jessup's heroism in "*It Can't Happen Here*"? Thank you very much.

◆◆◆◆◆

I go to Eddyville Blakesburg High School. If you would please mail me some more information about Sinclair Lewis. I really need information about why he went to Europe. Thank You.

◆◆◆◆◆

You recently asked about the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Literary Criticism (Lit Crit) competition. UIL is found only in Texas (I think) and is where high school students can compete in almost everything from football and basketball to headline writing, accounting, number sense, etc.

In the Literary Criticism competition students take a test similar to the advanced placement (AP) exams. They have literary and composition questions as well as analysis of poems and selected short stories, questions over the play, novel, and poet for the year, and one essay question.

The novel for this year is *Main Street*, Play is *Member of the Wedding*, the poet is Housman.

UIL academic meets are held in the spring. Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated.

◆◆◆◆◆

Hi, I am a sophomore in high school. I am doing a term paper on Sinclair Lewis, and I was hoping you could help me. I am supposed to write about one aspect of his life. If you have any suggestions I would be very grateful. Thank you so much for your time.

◆◆◆◆◆

Hello! I am a sophomore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am writing a paper about Sinclair Lewis and Arrowsmith. My main thesis is that Lewis believes true happiness and satisfaction in life comes from finding something that one loves to do and not allowing society's definition of Success limit that love. I am trying to incorporate information concerning Sinclair Lewis's life into the paper. If you have any ideas or information that might be helpful to me, I would really appreciate it. Thank you very much for your help.

◆◆◆◆◆

I came across your webpage because I'm doing an English paper for my honors English class on Sinclair Lewis. I'm a junior in high school in Indiana. I'm just wondering if you have any extra information, especially critical comments, that you could email me! There's not THAT much of a rush, the paper's not due for quite a while, but it's a research paper that has to be 20 pages long, so the more information the better! Thank you very much, and excellent work on your webpage.

Do you guys have a page on F. Scott Fitzgerald? I'm doing a report on him. I could use websites for him too. Thanks a lot for your help.

Web continued from page 18



[The following two messages were from students who seemed to want the website to write their papers for them.]

Hello, I am currently doing a research paper on Sinclair Lewis. I was hoping that you could help me with a few questions I have about him. Any answers to these questions would be extremely helpful.

1. What were the main influences on the life of Sinclair Lewis?
2. What influenced Sinclair Lewis as a writer?
3. What was the influence of Critics on the writing of Mr. Lewis?
4. How did satire play a role in books such as *It Can't Happen Here*?
5. How did he view the promises of American life? Any answers to these questions would be extremely helpful!!! I thank you in advance for your time and knowledge.



To whom it may concern it would be a pleasure for me if you could help me out here on these few questions. As follows:

1. What three phases divided Lewis's career?
2. At what time in Lewis's life did he decide to become a writer and how did he start out his writing career?
3. How did he term his own early short stories?
4. How many of Sinclair's best known novels presented a devastatingly critical view of life in the Middle West and which were they?
5. Which of Sinclair's books was the best of all chosen by critics and why?
6. And finally, in Sinclair's novel *Main Street* what was he saying about the small towns and its folks which was opposed what Americans thought of a small town and did this affect the purchase of his novel and why?

Well these questions should be fairly easy for you. PLEASE answer these questions if you can.



Sinclair Lewis. Jacket photo from *The Rise of Sinclair Lewis*.

THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS

The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter welcomes short contributions about Sinclair 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
 Dept. of English
 Box 4240
 Illinois State University
 Normal, IL 61790-4240

COLLECTORS' NOTES

The Minnesota Historical Society has purchased a copy of *Arrowsmith* bearing the inscription, "To F. Scott Fitzgerald; Better late than never, but not better than Gatsby—a masterpiece! Sinclair Lewis, Aug. 25, 1925." Also purchased was a letter typed on stationery from the DeWitt Clinton Hotel in Albany, New York dated June 2, 1925. It reads, "Dear F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thank you for your encouraging letter and your book 'The Great Gatsby.' I look forward to reading it now that my own book for this year is done (are they ever really done?). Sincerely yours, Sinclair Lewis."

Peg Meier, a staff writer at the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, wrote an article about the purchase, "Correspondence Proves Ties Between Lewis, Fitzgerald: Inscribed Book, Letter Come Home to Minnesota," (Aug. 15, 1997) and quoted the Fitzgerald biography, *Invented Lives: A Portrait of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*. In January 1921, Fitzgerald wrote to Lewis, "I want to tell you that *Main Street* has replaced 'Theron Ware' as my favorite American novel. The amount of sheer data in it is amazing. As a writer and a Minnesotan, let me swell the chorus—after a third reading." The next month Fitzgerald claimed the book was overpraised. In 1925 Fitzgerald wrote to the literary critic John Peale Bishop, "Is Lewis' book [*Arrowsmith*] any good? I imagine that mine [*The Great Gatsby*] is infinitely better."

Minnesota native Rose Johnstone sold the book and letter to the Historical Society for \$8,500 although she received offers well over \$16,000 for it. Harry Hanson writes that Pat Coleman, a keeper of rare books for the Historical Society said, "The inscription seemed to fill in the missing link between the two great authors. . . . There always seemed to be a vacuum there, not knowing whether they liked each other or ever corresponded with each other despite both living on Summit Ave. in St. Paul for a time" (*Sauk Center Herald*, April 29, 1997).

In *Biblio* (Dec. 1997) there is a report on the California Book Auctions in San Francisco from July. Two Sinclair Lewis first editions, a "better than average" *Elmer Gantry* of 1927 and a "slightly soiled and repaired but nowadays rarely seen dust jacket" *Babbitt* of 1922 sold for \$489 and \$978 respectively.

If you have items of interest to be listed in "Collector's Notes" please send them to: Sally Parry, Editor, *The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*, 4240 English Dept., Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4240.

NEWS FROM SAUK CENTRE

Historic Traveler, in a special edition devoted to America's 25 Essential Historical Sites, has a feature on Sauk Centre as an All-American town. It has a picture of Lewis and the Boyhood Home and mentions Sinclair Lewis Days, the Sinclair Lewis Writers' Conference, and the Interpretive Center. "In 1920, when Lewis published his novel *Main Street*, Sauk Centerites were furious with the man who had apparently renamed his home town Gopher Prairie and portrayed it as a place of tasteless dwellings inhabited by clods, rustics and a few clueless, would-be intellectuals. Some recognized themselves or their neighbors in paper-thin disguise and were not amused. The *Sauk Centre Herald* refused to acknowledge the book until six months after its publication, and the library banned it for a while."

Mention is also made of the restoration of the Boyhood Home done in the 1960s and how the home was considered quite up to date in its time, being the first home in Sauk Centre in 1900 to have modern heating. Jean Paschke, the author, also discusses the Palmer House, in its newly redecorated state, as a haven for traveling salesmen, as an inspiration for the Minniemashie House in *Main Street*, and as a place where Lewis sometimes worked, primarily on *Babbitt* and *The Job*. The article ends with quotes from Lesley Lewis and Richard Lingeman about the universality of Lewis's writing. It does repeat the false anecdote about Lewis's ashes being carried away in a gust of wind, but perhaps that is so she can conclude with "Perhaps Lewis is still stirring things up in Sauk Centre."

The Old Times, a Minnesota antique collectors' newspaper, had a feature on Sauk Centre and Sinclair Lewis as part of their August 1997 issue.

Lewis Society member Jackie Koenig met Minnesota author Garrison Keillor at a lecture in San Francisco in November 1997. When asked where Lake Wobegon was, he said "It's between Lindberg's home and Sauk Centre, Sinclair Lewis's home." He also said that he had stayed in the Palmer House.

Sauk Centre native Charlotte Hedin took Jeff Guin of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* to task last April for leaving Lewis and F. Scott Fitzgerald out of a list of "Literary Lions" of the twentieth century. "The literary world is justifiably proud of Lewis and Fitzgerald. Surely, as Minnesotans, we feel a uniquely special pride in Sinclair Lewis because he was born in Sauk Centre; and in F. Scott Fitzgerald, born in St. Paul. No list of distinguished American writers in complete without them."

A gazebo in Sinclair Lewis Park was destroyed by vandals one night during Sinclair Lewis Days 1997. The perpetrator was caught and the town rebuilt the gazebo this past fall.

THE PRICE OF IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

By Stephen R. Pastore

Of all of Lewis's novels to make it into the news, who would suspect *It Can't Happen Here*? In the March 9, 1998 edition of *Forbes Magazine*, columnist Peter Brimelow discusses the relative costs of books over time. Starting in 1776 with *The Wealth of Nations*, he concludes that the book, priced at \$7.99, was the equivalent of more than a month's wages, earning Adam Smith royalties of £500 or \$170,000 in today's money on sales of only 500 copies! The author made 350 (1997) dollars per book! Brimelow concludes that books were so valuable that Harvard was named Harvard because John Harvard donated 400 books to the college, a huge donation by anyone's standards in those days.

In 1935 *ICHH* cost \$2.50 which, in the midst of the Depression, was the equivalent of a full 1935 day's wages. In today's money the book would cost \$29.03. Brimelow concludes that in the 160 intervening years, the cost of a book dropped from 32 days' wages to 1 day's wages. Obviously a best-seller today goes for less than 2 hours average wages. Additionally, royalties have a commensurate drop in relative dollars leading Brimelow to say, "it suggests why no modern author quite matches the net worth of Bill Gates." Who knows, HSL, maybe it could happen here.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Sinclair Lewis Society is planning to hold a session at the 1999 American Literature Association conference that is tentatively scheduled at the Stouffer Harborplace Hotel in Baltimore in late May 1999, most probably Memorial Day weekend.

We welcome submissions on any aspect of Lewis's work. Please send an abstract by December 1, 1998 to:

Sally Parry, Department, of English, Illinois State University, Box 4240, Normal, IL 61790-4240 or by fax at (309) 438-5414 or by email at sparry@rs6000.cmp.ilstu.edu.

All submissions will be acknowledged. An announcement of session participants will be made by mid-January 1999. Papers should be suitable for a twenty-minute presentation (about ten typed, double-spaced pages). The normal format is an hour and twenty minutes with three speakers and a chair.

The hotel will be offering special conference rates. Pre-registration information will be mailed to program participants about two weeks before the general mailing to all ALA members.

BOOK NOTES

Isabel Lewis Agrell, a niece of Sinclair Lewis, and daughter of Dr. Claude Lewis, has written *Sinclair Lewis Remembered*, a wonderful family reminiscence which includes pictures, recipes, and stories about Lewis that have not been printed before. It is available for \$17 from the Sinclair Lewis Foundation in Sauk Center. Look for a review in an upcoming issue of *The Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*.

Penguin Putnam is issuing a collection entitled *American Satire: An Anthology of Writings from Colonial to Present Times* edited by Nick Bakalar. It provides an overview of American satirical writing, covering the best of American satire, from Benjamin Franklin's "On Sending Felons to America" to Molly Ivins's "New Heights of Piffle." Among the pieces included is Sinclair Lewis's "A Letter from the Queen." It is 468 pages and sells for \$16.95.

Transaction Publishers has published two books of interest to Lewis Scholars. *Babbitts and Bohemians: From the Great War to the Great Depression* by Elizabeth Stevenson, with a new introduction by the author, is a "fresh and informed account of the 1920s, . . . conveying the spirit and the history of the era: the people and the mood that shaped the times; the political, international, and economic apathy; the conformity and rebellion of a decade unlike any other before or since" (\$24.95, 305 pp., 1997). *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* by Gunnar Myrdal originally came out in 1944 and is helpful in understanding Lewis's *Kingsblood Royal*. This reprint features a volume of appendices on Valuation and Belief (each volume \$29.95, Vol. 1, 822 pp., Vol. 2, 963 pp., set \$49.95, 1995). Transaction Publishers can be reached at Department AS97B, Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey, 35 Berrue Circle, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8042, (3732) 445-2280.

The First Edition Library has included both *Main Street* and *Babbitt* in its collection, including reprinting the original dust jackets. The introductory subscription offer starts with Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* at \$9.95 with subsequent volumes at \$29.95 plus \$4.95 for shipping and handling. They can be reached at 88 Long Hill Cross Road, Shelton, CT 06484-9864.

ROBERT BLY URGES "WRITING WITH SOUL"

By David Simpkins
Sauk Centre Herald Editor/Publisher

Writers need to farm their soul. This was the message Minnesota writer and poet Robert Bly presented to the Eighth Annual Sinclair Lewis Writers' Conference recently.

Bly divided life into vertical and horizontal planes. The vertical runs from the spiritual above the horizontal plane and the soul being below it. The horizontal plane is the worldly plane. "A writer must be able to go into the depths of his or her soul, to listen to what it has to say. This is where all serious writing is done," said Bly who presented the keynote message to 160 registrants on where to find soul in their writing.

"This is not easy in our culture. America has become a spiritually flat society with a pop culture that is polluting the world. For centuries young people would gather around a storyteller in their villages to learn the history and traditions of their people. Now, they gather around a television and listen to *Dallas*," said Bly. "Today we have a culture that spends one hour in church a week and 42 hours watching television. We have a culture of children afraid to grow up and even more afraid to die," added Bly.

Bly stated television, computers, the Internet and malls are all enemies of the soul because they create an artificial reality with little to do with natural being.

"To have soul we must have nature. Throughout time, a child moves to adulthood by first connecting with nature. Now, young people move into adulthood through our media," said Bly.

Bly said American men lose their soul in their work and women lose their soul in relationships. "It is sad to see a man who loses his job and feels he has nothing. In the same way many women give themselves totally to their husbands, children and eventually discover they have nothing left inside. This is where we lose our true sense of who we are. And then we have to listen to talk shows to get an idea of who we should be. It's crazy."

Bly noted American spirituality came about through the

eighteenth century German philosophers. Since people had little political, economic or public freedom they expressed themselves internally or through the soul. "These Germans knew the soul didn't depend on the public, political situations, or their economic well being.

People like Emerson and Thoreau knew it was more important to have a love affair with the universe than to be married to the world," said Bly.

Bly said to learn how to listen to the soul. He said many times he has been writing and ideas and images will come from somewhere else. "Soul decides which of the last 4,000 details in your life you will use in your writing. Soul likes to shock us, to take us just one step farther than we are comfortable with.

"I encourage all writers to lower their standards. To write from the wild side until you have enough material to make a story or a poem and then go back and be critical. Ignore that little voice of your high school teacher or whatever and let the ideas flow without rules for a while," said Bly.

Bly noted writers must bring their own feelings into their work without getting too sentimental. "If you haven't wept in ten days, you're not listening to your soul. Weeping is better than prozac. If you don't grieve, don't feel the darker side, you'll end up depressed."

Bly said he does much of his soul writing in the morning when he can tap into the messages of his dreams.

Bly is originally from Madison, Minn., and has taught poetry at St. Cloud State University. He is described as a poet, storyteller, translator, and worldwide lecturer. His poetry has won many prizes including the National Book Award. His first book of prose, *Iron John*, was number one on the *New York Times* nonfiction list for ten weeks and became a guidebook of the men's movement. He has recently published *The Sibling Society*.

Other authors at the conference were: Alex Pate, author of *Finding Makeba* and *Losing Absalom*; John Koblas, author of four books on F. Scott Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis; and Edith Rylander, a columnist for the *St. Cloud Times*.

Subscribe Today!

Smart Features.

Writers Reviewing Writers.

\$24 one year \$30 institutional \$35 foreign

Name _____

Address _____

Mail this form and a check or money order to:

American Book Review, The Unit for Contemporary Literature,
Illinois State University, Box 4241, Normal, IL 61790-4241.

American
BOOK
Review

Founded in 1977

online at www.litline.org

Thomas A. Goldwasser Rare Books

49 Geary Street, Suite 244
 San Francisco, California 94108
 Phone (415) 981-4100
 Fax (415) 981-8935
 Email: goldwasr@slip.net

WINTER NINETEEN NINETY-SEVEN/NINETY EIGHT MODERN LITERATURE

142. Lewis, Sinclair. *Elmer Gantry*. New York: Harcourt Brace (1927). Blue cloth; a fine copy in defective, restored dust jacket. \$1,250

First edition, first issue binding. Inscribed by Lewis.



143. Lewis, Sinclair. *Address . . . Before the Swedish Academy [and] Why Sinclair Lewis Got the Nobel Prize* by Erik Axel Karlfeldt. New York: Harcourt, Brace (1930). Original orange printed wrappers, nice copy. \$325

First edition, first state, omitting *The Man Who Knew Coolidge* from the list of Lewis's works. Of 3,000 copies in the first printing at least 2,000 were destroyed at Lewis's request, because the text garbled his remarks, and quoted Karlsen as saying, among other things, that American midwest cities stank because they had no sewers. Lewis's anger at this hastily produced pamphlet contributed to his leaving Harcourt.



144. Lewis, Sinclair. *Launcelot*. [N.p.] Harvey Taylor (1932) Wrappers, stapled, fine. \$300

First separate edition of a poem published by Lewis in *The Yale Literary Magazine* in 1904, one of 100 numbered copies.



145. Lewis, Sinclair. *Gideon Planish*. New York: Random House (1943).

Tan cloth, fine in dust jacket missing a chip at the top of the spine. First edition, signed and dated (Oct. 17, 1943) by Lewis. \$350

Collector's Corner

—Collector's Corner features catalog listings from book dealers as a sampling of what publications by Lewis are selling for currently.

James Pepper Rare Books, Inc.

2026 Cliff Drive, 224
 Santa Barbara, CA 93109:
 Phone (805) 963-1025
 Fax (805) 966
 Email: pepbooks@aol.com

234. [PHOTOPLAY EDITIONS]. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Main Street*. Illustrated With Scenes from the Motion Picture. New York: Grosset & Dunlap (1923). \$300.00

Photoplay edition issued to coincide with the release of the silent film starring Florence Vidor, Monte Blue, Harry Myers, Alan Hale and Louise Fazenda. Very fine in a bright fresh dust jacket. 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). The finest copy of this photoplay we have encountered.



235. [PHOTOPLAY EDITIONS]. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Mantrap*. Illustrated with Scenes from the Motion Picture. New York: Grosset & Dunlap (1926). \$350.00

Photoplay edition issued to coincide with the release of the silent film directed by Victor Fleming starring Clara Bow, Ernest Torrence, Eugene Pallette and Percy Marmont in Lewis's tale of romance and adventure in the Canadian Northwest. Some foxing, very good in a dust jacket with some chipping mainly at bottom of spine. Front panel of the dust jacket is a color painting of Clara Bow and Percy Marmont in a woodland setting. Scarce in jacket.

Between The Covers Rare Books, Inc.

35 W. Maple Avenue
Merchantville, NJ 08109
Phone (609) 665-2284
Fax (609) 665-3639

Email: Mail@betweenthecovers.com
On-Line: <http://www.betweenthecovers.com>

Catalogue 58 Holiday Hodge-Podge

154. LEWIS, Sinclair. *Kingsblood Royal*. NY: Random House 1947. \$450

Trifle darkened at the inside gutters else fine in lightly worn, very good publisher's slipcase. One of 1050 numbered copies signed by the author. 157. LEWIS, Sinclair. *It Can't Happen Here*. NY: Doubleday Doran (1935). \$950

Slight soiling and wear to the boards else about fine in a near fine, silver foil-type dust wrapper that has a little nicking at the extremities, still an unusually nice copy of this increasingly uncommon title. A novel about America under a dictatorship, precipitated by the spate of demagogues of the Huey Long/Father Coughlin stripe. This copy **Inscribed** by the author: "To Roy Grimmer from his friend & sometime patient, Sinclair Lewis."

Catalogue 59

154. LEWIS, Sinclair. *John Dos Passos' "Manhattan Transfer"*. NY: Harper 1926. \$250

First and last few leaves a trifle foxed else fine without dustwrapper as issued. One of 975 numbered copies. Attractive little volume reprinting Lewis's tribute to *Manhattan Transfer* from the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Scarce.



List 17

210. LEWIS, Sinclair. *Dodsworth*. NY: Grosset & Dunlap 1929. \$375

Reprint edition. Modest wear to the spinal extremities, a sound, about very good copy lacking the dustwrapper. Inscribed by the author: "To Mrs. Rose Sinclair from Sinclair Lewis—Love! N.Y. March 30, 1934."

Peter L. Stern & Co. Inc, Antiquarian Booksellers

355 Boylston Street, Second Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
Phone (617) 421-1880
Fax (617) 536-7072
E-mail: psbook@aol.com

December 1997

139. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Hike and the Aeroplane* by Tom Graham. New York: Stokes (1912). Sinclair Lewis's Pseudonymous First Book. \$5,500.00

First Edition of Lewis's first book. Only 1000 copies were printed. Some cloth wear and soiling, a very good copy in a custom quarter-leather clamshell box.



140. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Elmer Gantry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace (1927). The Dedication Copy \$11,000.00

First Edition; first binding. On the endpaper is a printed presentation slip signed by Lewis, noting that he will be abroad when the book is published. This was the dedicatee, H.L. Mencken's own copy, inscribed by him to silent film star Aileen Pringle, "Dear Aileen: This will make you yell. H.L.M. 1927" Presumably, therefore, unless he received multiple signed copies, this is the dedication copy. No other copy belonging to Mencken has surfaced. Pringle was briefly married to James M. Cain. Hinges restored, some cloth spotting, overall very good in a first state dust jacket. In a custom full morocco slipcase.

141. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *The Man Who Knew Coolidge*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, (1928). \$250.00

First Edition. A very good copy in a jacket which is chipped at the top and bottom of the spine.



142. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Gideon Planish*. New York: Random House, (1943). \$50.00

First Edition. Some water staining, else very good in dust jacket.



143. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Kingsblood Royal*. New York: Random House, (1947). \$250.00

First Edition. One of 1050 numbered copies, signed by Lewis. A fine copy in a very good publisher's slipcase.

Robert Dagg Rare Books

49 Geary Street, Suite 225
San Francisco, California 94108
Phone (415) 989-6811
Fax (415) 989-7206

1997 Christmas Miscellany

107. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Main Street*. With A Special Introduction By The Author. And Illustrations By Grant Wood. Chicago: Printed For Members Of The Limited Editions Club At The Lakeside Press (1937). \$650

FIRST ILLUSTRATED EDITION. One of 1500 numbered copies signed by Wood. Fine clean copy in a very good original box (very minor wear, but *not* cracked as often). Original prospectus laid in. Easily one of the more attractive LEC books.



108. LEWIS, SINCLAIR *Kingsblood Royal*. New York: Random House, (1947). \$85

FIRST EDITION. Fine in dust jacket (couple tiny tears). Particularly light fresh copy.

PACIFIC BOOK AUCTION GALLERIES

133 Kearny Street, 4th Floor,
San Francisco, CA 94108
Phone (415) 989-2665
Fax (415) 989-1664
E-mail: pba@slip.net

**SALE 147
MODERN LITERATURE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1997**

236. LEWIS, SINCLAIR. *Babbitt*. Jacket. First Edition, First State. New York: Harcourt, Brace (1922). \$316.25

First state with "Purdy" for "Lyte" on p. 49, line 4. Pieces of jacket lacking from spine ends & corners, chipping to jacket extremities, some darkening to jacket, flaps clipped; name to front free endpaper, still very good. (100/150)

**In the Next Issue of
The SLSN**

**"Sinclair Lewis and
Duluth, Minnesota"
George Killough**

**"Collecting Sinclair Lewis"
Steve Pastore**

Plus:

**Clare Eby reviews
If I Were Boss
edited by
Anthony Di Renzo**

**George Killough reviews
Sinclair Lewis Remembered
by Isabel Lewis Agrell**

**and
Brook Hessler presents
a report on the
American Literation
Association
Conference**

JOIN TODAY...

WE INVITE YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY. MEMBERS RECEIVE A SUBSCRIPTION TO *THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER*. PLEASE CHOOSE A CATEGORY BELOW:

A. \$50⁰⁰ sustaining member

C. \$10⁰⁰ individual member

B. \$15⁰⁰ family/joint membership

D. \$5⁰⁰ student/retiree membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

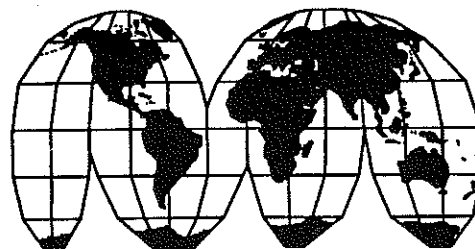
State _____ Zip Code _____ e-mail address _____

Send form, along with check, to: The Sinclair Lewis Society, Box 4240, English Dept.,
Illinois State University, Normal, IL, 61790-4240.

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, Box 4240, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4240 or e-mail separry@rs6000.cmp.ilstu.edu

THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY
4240/DEPT. OF ENGLISH
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
NORMAL, IL 61790-4240



**CONTACT THE SINCLAIR LEWIS
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ON THE
WORLD WIDE WEB AT:**

<http://www.ilstu.edu/~separry/lewis.html>