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Ruth Moore Correspondence

Ruth Moore 1903-1989

Hilda McLeod Jacob

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MOORE, RUTH

born Gott's Island, Maine
February 27, 1943

Miss Ruth Moore  
c/o William Morrow & Co.  
386 Fourth Avenue  
New York, New York

Dear Miss Moore:

It is with pleasure that we notice THE WEIR is now published. The first review that we have seen increases our eagerness to savor the novel, and our order will be placed with our regular bookseller very shortly. Please accept our congratulations and good wishes for the success of this first book.

It is possible that you do not know of the Maine Author Collection, and also that its scope and purpose would interest you. Some years ago we began to collect books written by people born in Maine, resident here, or writing about the state. The books (now over a thousand) are inscribed by the authors and presented for this exhibit.

We have been delighted at the enthusiasm shown by our authors, in their fine spirit of helpfulness in providing us with biographical sketches, and in the inscriptions. Sometimes these inscriptions are amusing or inspiring, they range from bits of original poetry to pen-and-ink sketches, from some interesting incident connected with the writing of the book to a tribute to Maine; but always they are original and add immeasurably to the value of the book.

The Maine Author Collection is for exhibit purposes only, and although we have many visitors who see the books here, they may not be taken from the library. They form a valuable array of books representing Maine's contribution to literature, from Madame Wood and Henry W. Longfellow to Kenneth Roberts and Mary Ellen Chase.
Miss Ruth Moore  
February 27, 1943  

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It is because we understand that you were born in Maine, as well as because the setting and characters of THE WEIR are Maine, that we write to you regarding this collection. We shall hope that the privilege of including an inscribed presentation copy of your first novel may be ours.

We welcome you to the state's great literary company, and send you our best wishes for a large number of people as eager to read the book as we!

Very truly yours  

MAINE STATE LIBRARY  

BY  

hmj  

Encl--1  

SECRETARY
April 7, 1945

Miss Ruth Moore
181 Bedford Road
Pleasantville, New York

Dear Miss Moore:

It is not often that we have the pleasure of reading a first novel with the integrity and distinction that THE WEIR carries, and we congratulate you upon the skill and accuracy with which you have drawn your characters and scenes. Your forthright manner in avoiding any suggestion of "quaintness" in these people should win many friends. And it is an excellent story, too!

We are delighted to claim the author of THE WEIR as a Maine writer, and we thank you for your generous gift to the Maine Author Collection.

The biographical material which we have is indeed scarce. We read that you were "born and brought up on Gott's Island," but beyond the jacket of your novel, we have no information. In trying to gather as complete data as possible on all our Maine authors, we are not at all shy about asking questions; we hope you won't mind our enclosing an envelope and inquiring if you would be willing, at your convenience, to send us a biographical sketch. We shall greatly appreciate your kindness.

You have our best wishes for the success of THE WEIR, which seems to be assured by the book itself; and also a cordial invitation to visit the library and see the Maine Author Collection when you are again in Maine.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj
Secretary

Encs.
Southwest Harbor, Feb. 1.— Miss Ruth Moore, author of the best-seller Spoonhandle and of The Weir, has sold the movie rights of her popular book to 20th Century Fox and is now in Hollywood to look after the filming of it. She is accompanied by her friend, Eleanor Mayo of Southwest Harbor and New York, also a writer and author of Turn Home and Loom Of The Land.

Miss Moore was born at Gott's Island, lived there through childhood and attended school there until high school age, when she went to Ellsworth to attend school there. She is the daughter of Philip and Vina Moore and her ancestors were among the first to settle in this vicinity.

Her forebears have followed the sea, some in the clippers of the past; others in coasting vessels and Grand Bankers. Her forebears have followed the sea, some in the clippers of the past; others in coasting vessels and Grand Bankers.

After the Ellsworth high school days, Miss Moore attended the New York State College for Teachers at Albany and taught school for a short time. She then took up secretarial work and was employed by John Haynes Holmes, Mrs. Alice Tisdale Hobart, author and several other persons of distinction.

She was in California for five years while employed by Mrs. Hobart, then came to New York where she worked on the Readers Digest and last year she was appointed one of the associate editors of that magazine. A condensation of Spoonhandle appeared in one of the recent copies of the Digest.

She has spent her summers for some time at her childhood home on Gott Island, where she gardens and goes fishing in company with her friend and companion, Miss Mayo.
May 13, 1946

Miss Ruth Moore
181 Bedford Road
Pleasantville, New York

Dear Miss Moore:

At last our hope of three years' standing is to become a reality: we are anticipating eagerly June 12, and SPOONHANDLE, which we are delighted to see has a Maine background. We hope that the Maine Author Collection, which proudly includes THE WEIR, may be enriched by an inscribed presentation copy of SPOONHANDLE.

It occurs again to us that our biographical material about you is very inadequate. Beyond the fact that, as the jacket of THE WEIR reported, you were born and brought up on Gott's Island, we have no information. At your convenience, could you note a few dates and facts for us? We would be most appreciative, for we like to have as much information as possible on our Maine authors.

The very best of wishes to the new book!

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
June 19, 1946

Mrs. Ruth Moore
181 Bedford Road
Pleasantville, New York

Dear Mrs. Moore:

Congratulations on the publication of SPOONHANDLE, which we are delighted to notice is receiving favorable attention from critics. A very successful career is indicated for the new novel, and we take renewed pride in the knowledge that its creator is a Maine writer.

We hope that the Maine Author Collection may be privileged to include an inscribed copy of SPOONHANDLE. Only this week a visitor inquired about the book, and also about your background. As you may recall, the only information we have is that gleaned from the jacket of your distinctive first novel, THE WEIR. If you would be willing to send us biographical information, we would be most grateful.

Our good wishes for SPOONHANDLE continue.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
January 15, 1947

Mrs. Ruth Moore
181 Bedford Road
Pleasantville, New York

Dear Mrs. Moore:

Although some months have passed since the very successful debut of SPOONHANDLE, we are delighted to observe its continuing popularity, for it is a fine novel of authentic background and character.

Our only regret about it is that the niche in the Maine Author Collection which should be occupied by your second book is completely vacant, for it has not yet been our happy privilege to add SPOONHANDLE to this Maine exhibit.

We shall, however, continue to hope that you may be as generously inclined as you were with THE WEIR, and that SPOONHANDLE may yet grace the Maine Author Collection.

Sincerely yours

hmj
In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
March 25, 1947

Miss Ruth Moore
181 Bedford Street
Pleasantville, New York

Dear Miss Moore:

Having addressed you in two previous letters as Mrs. Ruth Moore, on the authority of a printed page, we are now reverting to Miss Ruth Moore, on like authority. It is a matter which should be of no concern to us, except insofar as we should like to address you correctly. Perhaps you will be so kind as to let us know which is the proper title.

We are hopeful that an inscribed copy of SPOONHANDLE may yet be included in the Maine Author Collection, which is grievously inadequate without this exceptionally fine Maine novel. It is interesting to know that a motion picture is to be filmed of the story, and we are glad that you are at hand to keep a knowing and restraining eye upon those less familiar with Maine coast and character.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
Bernard, Maine
April 20, 1947

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

I am so sorry you have not heard from me before. I have been traveling, my mail has been trying to follow me, and the Bedford Road address in Pleasantville is one I have not used since 1943. In any case, as soon as I light on a limb and my books are unpacked so that I can get at a copy of Spoonhandle, I shall of course be honored to send it to the Maine Author Collection. The handle, incidentally, is Miss; the above is my permanent address.

With sincere regard and thanks for your thought of me,

I am,

Yours very truly

Ruth Moore

Mrs. P. W. Jacob
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine
Dear Miss Moore:

How nice to hear from you! We have made proper note of your address and title, and appreciate your straightening the matter for us.

We hope you have arrived in Maine for at least the summer, and can relax from your travels. We shall be patient in anticipation of the inscribed copy of SPOONHANDLE for the Maine Author Collection. It is good to know that the collection is to be distinguished by this fine novel.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
August 28, 1947

Miss Ruth Moore
Bernard
Maine

Dear Miss Moore:

Will you think us very insistent if we write again about SPOONHANDLE? The Maine Author Collection still lacks an inscribed copy, and we feel that any collection pretending to be representative of Maine literature is sadly inadequate without your novel.

We hope the summer has been a pleasant and restful one for you, and that perhaps another book will make its appearance before long.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
September 27, 1948

Miss Ruth Moore
Bernard
Maine

Dear Miss Moore:

Congratulations on the new novel, THE FIRE BALLOON, which we see announced for November. The Publishers' Weekly advertisement tells us not half what we want to know, but it is certainly a joy to anticipate.

We continue to hope that your lovely SPOONHANDLE may grace the Maine Author Collection. We feel very keenly that it is an important and deplorable omission. Only yesterday we were trying to meet a request for suggestions for background reading to capture the Maine flavor. We immediately thought of SPOONHANDLE, and although we could of course recommend it, it is always satisfying to be able to show such inquirers the Maine Author Collection, and point out individual books.

When THE FIRE BALLOON is published, it will go into our traveling libraries with pride. We hope that it may also be placed in the Maine Author Collection; and is it too much to hope that SPOONHANDLE may yet be numbered among these exhibit volumes?

Our good wishes for the success of the new book.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
Ruth Moore, who was born on Gott's Island, goes to endless trouble to secure authentic material for her Maine novels. But her research isn't done in libraries. In speaking of the background for her latest novel, "Candlemas Bay," which is to be published by William Morrow & Co. on March 21, she said:

"Being brought up in these parts and having always been a tomboy going fishing with my father, I know a good deal about the technical side of the coast fisheries. But I was away in the cities for 20 years during which time machinery had to develop. I had to go on a good many fishing trips to learn about the new gear and how it worked, otter trawls, and seines, and winches, and fathometers. Also I picked my brother's brains."

Among other details she consults fishermen regarding the height of tides and has found they give her more accurate and picturesque information than can any almanac.

"Candlemas Bay" is the Literary Guild selection for the month of April.

Miss Ruth Moore
Bernard
Maine

October 11, 1950

Dear Miss Moore:

Congratulations on your new novel, CANDLEMAS BAY.

We have had advance reports that it is as good as the publishers say; and the name of the author is sufficient recommendation for us. We look forward to its availability with unusual interest.

Perhaps our earlier letters about SPOONHANDLE and THE FIRE BALLOON ran counter to your policy regarding presentation of your books. We feel, however, that the Maine Author Collection is not truly representative, since it lacks these outstanding Maine novels. With your permission, we will ask Campbell's Book Store in Portland to send you copies. Would you be willing to inscribe them for us and send them on to be placed with your first book, THE WEIR?

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
April 3, 1951

Miss Ruth Moore
Bernard
Maine

Dear Miss Moore:

CANDLEMAS BAY, we are delighted to see, is having good and wide reviews; and we hope that its first success brings you pleasure and satisfaction which will continue with a continuing demand from readers.

You may remember some correspondence a few years ago about SPOONHANDLE and THE FIRE BALLOON. Not wanting the Maine Author Collection to bear these omissions, we were at last able to remedy the deficiency. Some day we hope that these distinguished novels may have your inscription.

Meanwhile, is it possible that you will want to have your most recent book, CANDLEMAS BAY, on these shelves also? Such outstanding Maine novels should certainly not be absent from a collection which boasts Maine writing.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
SO IT'S STUFFY to speak of Integrity in an age when man's horizons are so broadened he will soon zoom out of his natural habitat and land on the moon? Is a sense of personal responsibility a mutable value, changing with time and circumstance?

No, says Maine's Ruth Moore, who in her newest novel, The Gold and Silver Hooks, probes the conflict between personal principles and corruption, finding a constant through changing eras.

Like her other books, this too is set in Maine and is regional in the sense that it utilizes a particular cultural pattern as the vehicle for the story. Unlike most of her work, however, it is thematic, using the particular to demonstrate a universal.

The title is derived from a quote out of Italy's Renaissance poet Ariosto: "Atalante found on his visit to the moon that bribes were hung on gold and silver hooks; princes' favors were kept in bellows; wasted talent was kept in vases, each marked with the proper name."

The story, spanning the years of Prohibition through the great depression, relates the struggle of Abigail Randall Plummer to transmit her own sense of integrity to her children in the face of influences which deprave, corrupt and waste. Her failures result in some pretty grim moments, but the book as a whole is saved from pessimism by the author's lusty sense of humor and recognition of the vitality in good as well as in evil.

The novel starts a little more slowly than most of Miss Moore's books but she soon hits her usual quick pace, stepping from the burning of a dairy barn full of cattle through the running during Prohibition to the fears engendered by the depression years and into the more diffuse influences of a recent period.

The conflict begins with Abby's struggle to save her husband and a son from the influence of Jos, her piratical brother-in-law.

The father and the son are the chief victims of the bribes and the princes' favors — the one because of weakness, the other before he had a chance to develop any strength of his own.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy, or at least the saddest, is the story of Julie, the daughter who represents the wasted talent.

The story is brought into a complete circle by Abby's death, caused prematurely by an extension of the early threads of conflict. But it is an open circle, given a suggestion of hope through Julie's child.

MISS MOORE was born and reared on Cotta Island in Blue Hill Bay where her father was store-keeper and postmaster for many years. After college and work experience in California and New York she returned to Bass Harbor where she now lives close, as the gull flies, to the smaller island where she spent her girlhood.

All but her first novel have gone into paperback editions and most have been book club selections. The 13 include The Sea Flower, Second Growth, The Walk Down Main Street, Speak to the Winds and The Fire Balloon.

Spoonhandle was made into a movie in the 1940's and still gets a TV run now and then. Some of the photography was done at Vinalhaven. The picture starred Dana Andrews, Susan Hayward and a 12 year old Rod McDowell.

"I really scrunched down in my seat when they showed it at the local theatre," Miss Moore recalls. "They had the boats anchored by the bow when the lobstermen were hauling their traps and the audience moaned."