PROSSER, William H

b. Indiana
Quits Big City For Maine  
Decision Pays Off For Indiana  
Native With Desire To Write  
Whistle Salvaged

By Staff Photographer Hennessy

MAINE'S NEWEST AUTHOR—William H. Bill Prosser, left, whose new novel, Nine To Five, will be published next week, is shown here at his own 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. job in an East Boothbay shipyard stockroom. He's chatting with J. Arthur Stevens, jr., of the shipyard firm of Hodgdon Brothers-Goudy & Stevens.

By Staff Correspondent  
Nobleboro, Feb. 21 — A 36-year-old Indiana native who pulled up big city stakes to live in Maine will have his first novel published next week. William H. Bill Prosser made the grade with Nine To Five, a 75,000-word novel about a day in the lives of the personnel of a large metropolitan office.

Since settling here last April, Prosser has achieved a fine balance between writing and working in an East Boothbay shipyard. He commutes 40 miles a day to and from his work as a stockroom clerk for Hodgdon Brothers-Goudy & Stevens who are fulfilling minesweeper contracts for the navy.

A Harvard graduate and World War Two commander of an LST in the Pacific, Prosser tried three novels before he sold Nine To Five to Little, Brown & Company, Boston. Prosser—a reluctant Prosser—will be on deck for the publication rites next week. He'll appear on TV and radio, take part in group discussions at Harvard. Fellow shipyard workers allow that the publishers will enjoy the goings-on more than the quiet, soft-spoken Prosser.

Prosser just as happy in his little stockroom at East Boothbay, playing a small role in Maine's traditionally great shipbuilding industry, as he is at his typewriter. He didn't come to Maine to play, dislikes the superficial. Of Welsh descent, Prosser likes to do things. Working to him is living. Especially working in Maine.

The new Maine author's shipyard day is from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Meanwhile, he works hard nights and week ends at his typewriter, has another novel in the making.

Whistle Salvaged

Jim and Tunk Stevens of Goudy & Stevens, second generation shipbuilders—and sentimentales—salvaged the Virginia's whistle, mounted it on a traveling crane that serves the shipyard. The crane runs on rails and they look as good to Prosser as the whistle sounds.

His father was a railroad accountant out in Indiana. It's a question if any number of novels could move Bill Prosser to voluntarily leave his little stockroom, the rails outside his window, the whistle overhead, and the low, wood-burning stove that defies Maine tall stove tradition in the corner.

Prosser is currently working on a novel about an LST crew in the first week after V-J Day. It's about one-quarter finished. A safe bet is that he'll eventually write about other State of Mainera. He's yearned for years to be one of them. Fed up with it all, Prosser left for New Harbor in 1949, Prosser took a leave of absence and came to New Harbor to work on a novel with a future. He didn't like it. He's trying again with a novel about a young man between wars, he practically had it sold when a change of editors put him over as a novelist in the making.

Prosser is a cousin of William L. Prosser, a distinguished California lawyer whose The Judicial Humorist was brought out recently by the same publishing house. Bill Prosser of Nobleboro left for Boston today rather cheery up with the thought that at Harvard he just might be mistaken for cousin William L., who entered that college at the age of 13 and won a degree in three years. Tunk Stevens says he'll be back fast enough. "If I tell you," says Tunk, "he's thinking of doing a murder mystery some day. He says that stockroom is full of things that would make wonderful lethal weapons!"
February 27, 1953

Mr. William H. Prosser
Nobleboro
Maine

Dear Mr. Prosser:

You are not the first author born in Indiana who has adopted Maine, nor are you the first Maine author with Nobleboro as an address. You are in excellent company on both scores, and it gives us great pleasure to welcome you to the ranks of Maine authors, and to wish your new novel success.

One of our chief pleasures is keeping up-to-date on Maine books and writers. In fact, the Maine Author Collection exists for this purpose. It is a permanent exhibit of books written by Maine people, or about the state, and numbers about two thousand volumes at present, although it is of course constantly growing. The books are almost all inscribed presentation copies, the individual inscriptions, ranging from the artistic to the humorous, and the poetic to the autobiographical, lending distinction to this valuable collection. Students and visitors are attracted by the books, and by the files in which we gather available information about our authors: biographical and critical.

We shall make a note of NINE TO FIVE for the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association, and we shall hope that the collection may be so fortunate as to include an inscribed copy of the novel. Meanwhile, you have our warm good wishes for its instant and enduring success.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
March 24, 1953

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Thank you for your very kind letter a propos of Nine To Five.

I've sent along an inscribed copy and am very happy to have a place in your Maine Author Collection.

Sincerely,

William H. Prosser

William H. Prosser
March 24, 1953

Mr. William H. Prosser
Nobleboro
Maine

Dear Mr. Prosser:

It is very kind of you to indicate your interest in the Maine Author Collection by sending a copy of your new novel, NINE TO FIVE, for inclusion. It has the ring of authenticity and is enlightening and entertaining. The complications and tensions of that world are unlike your present life, we should think. Perhaps the letter will provide material for your next novel.

Thank you for making it possible for us to add NINE TO FIVE to this exhibit. We hope some day you may be in Augusta, so that we can show you the collection, and thank you personally for your fine gift.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

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