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Fred Winslow Rust Correspondence

Fred Winslow Rust 1876-

Maine State Library

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RUST, Fred Winslow

Belfast, March 26, 1876-

--Who's Who in New England
vol. 3, 1938
Belfast Man
Brings Out New Book of Verse

Belfast claims as a native son, Fred W. Rust, who has just published his third book of verse. His poetry is described as "pleasing but not pretentious, with an engaging swing and often witty." It is illustrated with drawings by Stephen York, and Bruce Humphries is the publisher.

Mr. Rust's background is interesting, for his grandfather, William M. Rust, edited the one-time Progressive Age in Belfast. He, himself, went West as a boy, grew up in Kansas City, taught school for a while, and then went into textbook publication.

For the last 36 years he has been president of the Rust Craft Publishers in Boston, for which concern he has written much of the verse that has appeared on these attractive cards.

Still Likes Maine

When Mr. Rust was asked about his Maine connections, he expressed his regret that necessity has kept him close to Boston since his return from the West in 1913. Besides the increasing demands of his business, which require constant change in design and sentiment every year, he says there is another reason why he has not paid to Maine "the deserved compliment of frequent and recent visits, and that is that there are no longer any members of his family who live here. Most of them have passed on. Of his cherished memories, Mr. Rust said:

"My family moved from Belfast to Kansas City when I was five years old. But as often as the ex-chequer would permit, at two or three year intervals, the family would trek East and visit the grandparents, the aunts, the uncles, and the cousins. How we boys looked forward to these visits, and I can assure you that our realizations fully lived up to our anticipations!"

Boyhood at Kenduskeag

"My mother's home was in the little town of Kenduskeag, near Bangor, and our trips on the Bangor boat to and from Boston are especially pleasant memories. In fact, my father and mother met at the old East Maine Conference Seminary at Bucksport on the Penobscot—father going up the river from Belfast and mother coming down from Bangor."

"Later, when I came East to Williams College, Belfast, Bangor, and Kenduskeag were my mid-session vacation landings during each of the four years. I remember so well my grandmother's tiny home in Kenduskeag, banked with evergreens to keep out the cold and heated by a stove or two; and my getting into bed in an unheated, upstairs bedroom with only a soapstone to keep partially warm."

"I also remember a visit I paid to an uncle in Jefferson, at New Year's time, with the temperature below zero. I rode across country in an open stage from Waldoboro wearing a derby hat, and without woolen gloves, or scarf, or even overshoes! I'll say it was cold! But a warm welcome was mine, and how good the blazing wood fire seemed!"

How He Started Life Work

"In the early days of Rust Craft in Kansas City, when I wrote all the verses, planned all the cards and traveled East to try my fortune as a salesman, I remember particularly the welcome that greeted me and my products in Portland. When I crossed the State line into Maine, at once I felt at home. It seems so good when one of the buyers said to me in looking at a card that especially surprised and pleased her, 'I want to know!'"

"During recent years, when I made occasional motor trips to Maine, following the trails of my childhood and youth and relieving the old days, when I came round some lovely bend in the road and there opened before me an especially lovely vista of sea or woods, I have said with the lady from Portland, 'I want to know,' in expressing my delight."

"I certainly would like to know Maine better than it has been possible for me to know her, for I love her," he concluded.

More Family History

It should be added that Mr. Rust's mother's father was Captain Isaac Case of Kenduskeag, a graduate of Bowdoin College, who lost his life near Vicksburg in the war between the States. His mother's uncle, Captain John Gilman, also served in that conflict, and was a respected citizen of Bangor throughout his life. Another uncle, on his father's side, was John B. Rust, one of Rockport's leading citizens.

The title of Mr. Rust's last volume of poetry is "The Road Ahead," which carries on the jacket a very New England sketch through a countryside, with hills and a church steeple in the distance. It is dedicated to his son. Most of them are nature themes, with a few thrown in relating to Nassau.

His two other books of poems were "A Song of Nassau" and "Into the Hills and Other Verses."
March 16, 1945

Mr. Fred Winslow Rust
30 Winchester Street
Boston 16, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Rust:

Reading about your volumes of poetry recently, we discovered with a pleasant surprise that we are entitled to claim you as a Maine author. We wish we had known sooner; but it is never too late to welcome another name to Maine's literary roster.

All non-fiction by Maine authors is purchased by the State Library for individual loan (fiction is handled through our traveling libraries), and such orders are placed with a regular book dealer. We write at present, however, about the Maine Author Collection, an exhibit of inscribed presentation books written by Maine people. The inscriptions, artistic, poetic, amusing, anecdotal, but always original, are a distinctive mark of the collection; our preservation of biographical information, pictorial and critical material, book reviews and correspondence makes a total display that is fascinating to present visitors, and will be invaluable to future students.

We hope that you may want to inscribe and present copies of your books for inclusion in this collection. It would give us pleasure to place them on the shelves.

Please accept our good wishes for the latest volume, and a cordial invitation to call at the library when you are in Maine, and see the Maine Author Collection.

Sincerely yours

hmj
Secretary

Encl--1
March 22, 1945

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

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

I feel very honored to receive your letter and shall gladly send you autographed copies of my three books entitled, "A Song of Nassau and Other Verses", "Unto The Hills and Other Verses", "The Road Ahead and Bypaths".

With this letter, I'm enclosing a booklet I made about Nantucket, a little circular that has to do with two of the books, and some lines that I wrote about Maine. If you think the latter is suitable to use possibly pasted into one of the books, I shall gladly send you a fresh copy.

There is biographical material on the jackets of the books, and you possibly have a clipping of your local paper that gave a picture and a write-up last Fall.

I'm sorry that I do not have extra copies of book reviews as those I have are pasted in my scrapbook. What form, shape, and size would you make the display? I have always been proud of the State of my birth.

As soon as I hear from you, I will try to autograph the books in some unique way, as per your suggestion. Perhaps I'll write a verse for one of them, appropriate to appearing in your "Maine Author Collection".

Would you like a small photograph?

Fred W. Rust

Enclosure: 3
March 26, 1945

Mr. Fred W. Rust, President
Rust Craft Publishers
1000 Washington Street
Boston 16, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Rust:

Such a friendly letter from you! The little blue Nantucket booklet is charming, conveying the blend of the town's serenity and the air's vigor with admirable simplicity. Your suggestion about using the Maine poem as an inscription for one of your books is a fine one. We like that "state of mind"!

Yes, we have a newspaper article, including a picture, but if you do have a small photograph which you might be willing to let us have for the Maine Author Collection, we should be most appreciative. We did not mean to ask you for book reviews—that is the sort of thing which we gather from the various newspapers and periodicals which come to our attention.

You inquire about the nature of the collection. At present the books are in a tall, glass-doored, Spanish cedar bookcase which extends along one wall of the State Librarian's office. There is not room for all the books here, and we are obliged to house some in our safe. These are, however, not current authors, but those of another day, who, though still read and admired, are not of such immediate interest to visitors. These books may, of course, be seen at any time.

Biographical and critical material we find can be suitably and conveniently preserved by means of vertical files; correspondence is kept in large, loose-leaf notebooks in the State Librarian's office, near the books.
Postwar plans for construction now include a library wing, and our own plans for this wing include a Maine room, in which there will be sufficient room to have all the collection books together, and in addition such items of Maine interest as certain old and rare maps and manuscripts. We intend also to have a display case in which visitors may find exhibits of varying kinds, determined by, for instance, the receiving of a prize by a Maine author, the death of an outstanding writer, or the date which might mark the anniversary of a famous historical occurrence.

Postwar plans in libraries, as everywhere else, are subject to modification or elaboration by subsequent events; but even now the Maine Author Collection is of tremendous interest to callers and students; and it is of vital importance because it is the only place where all the works of all Maine writers are being gathered and preserved.

We are very happy indeed that you will present inscribed copies of A SONG OF NASSAU AND OTHER VERSES, UNTO THE HILLS AND OTHER VERSES and THE ROAD AHEAD AND BYPATHS. We look forward to welcoming these books into the collection.

Sincerely yours

hmj
Secretary
March 29, 1945

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

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Under another cover, I'm sending you my three books properly inscribed for the State Library. I am including one copy of "The Road Ahead and Bypaths" for you personally. For two of the books I have written special messages, and in the case of the third, I have tucked in at the title page, my lines entitled, "The State of Maine", which perhaps might be pasted into the book.

With this letter, I'm sending a small picture of myself, and also a document about our first Christmas card that I think will be of interest.

The grouping of your books at the Library sounds extremely interesting and at the same time I hope, with you, that you will be able to have the Maine room in your postwar wing. I can easily see from your letter that the Maine State Library is certainly not static! They say about a business, that to keep it young, one should keep young with it, and the same doubtless applies to libraries. If I can help you further, do not fail to call upon me.

Cordially yours,

Fred W. Rust

FWR:MTC  
Enclosure
TO OUR RUST CRAFT FRIENDS:

As the years pass, anniversaries have a growing interest both for a person and for a business, particularly such anniversaries as the tenth, twenty-fifth and later milestones.

We, at Rust Craft, take great pride in our Quarter-of-a-Century Club, made up of employees who have been with us for 25 years or more, and in the many dealers who have been our loyal friends through these years. It is a special pleasure, also, to realize that this will be the fortieth year in which people have sent Rust Craft Christmas cards to their friends.

You will be interested, we feel sure, in the attached Christmas card, a reproduction of the first Christmas card we published and sold in the little book shop which became Rust Craft.

The original folder was printed on white, handmade, Italian deckle-edged paper, now unobtainable, but the type is the same, and it is interesting to note that the card was a French fold, anticipating by many years the format of the cards of today.

Before my brother and I started our little book shop, Louis Prang of Boston produced cards similar in style to those published in England by Rafael Tuck. These cards quoted selections from literature with "Best Wishes" added. They had gone out of style by the nineties and illustrated post cards were in common use.

Our idea was to make cards which, in prose or verse, conveyed a personal message, greetings in the spirit of a friendly letter.

Therefore, we believe this card, the first, enveloped, American greeting card of what might be called the "newer generation," was the beginning of the modern American Greeting Card Industry.

You will, we are confident, find our fortieth Christmas line by far the most beautiful Christmas cards we have ever produced. We only wish that we were permitted to supply all you could sell.

Assuring you of our best wishes, as always,

Sincerely,

Fred W. Rust, President
The Spirit of Christmas
RUST CRAFT started, as you may know, as FRED RUST'S BOOK SHOP, in September, 1906. In October we published our first card, printed on white deckle-edged Italian hand-made paper. We printed five-hundred, but before Christmas we had sold five thousand, at retail in our Book Shop on the third floor of an office building! This started Rust Craft on its way. A copy of this card recently came into my possession and (except for the paper) this is an exact reproduction.

F.W.R.
I AM THINKING of you today, because it is Christmas, and I wish you happiness.

And tomorrow, because it will be the day after Christmas, I shall still wish you happiness; and so on, dear, through the year.

I may not be able to tell you about it every day; because I may be far away; or because both of us may be very busy; or perhaps I cannot afford to pay the postage on so many letters, or find the time to write them.

But that makes no difference. The thought and the wish will be here just the same. Whatever joy or success comes to you will make me glad.

Without pretense and in plain words, good will to you is what I mean, in the spirit of Christmas.

Henry Van Dyke,
April 4, 1945

Mr. Fred W. Rust, President
Rust Craft Publishers
1000 Washington Street
Boston 18, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Rust:

Your books arrived, and we are delighted with this gift to the Maine Author Collection, and with the charming inscriptions. These verses, with their simplicity of spirit, quiet humor and wisdom, must have a wide appeal. We are happy to have them in the collection, and we hope one day you will call at the library, and see them there.

The second copy of THE ROAD AHEAD needs a special word. The surprise it brought is equalled only by the pleasure I shall take in adding it to my personal library. Please accept my thanks for a most kindly thought.

Indeed, the copy of your first Christmas card, and the accompanying letter are both unusually interesting. Your letter, with its complimentary words, is certainly an inspiration not to be static!

Please accept our thanks for so many things: for your generous gift to the collection, for the photograph which we are happy to have, for very friendly letters, for the lovely poems, for being a Maine man.

Sincerely yours

hmj
Encl--7¢ postal refund

Secretary
April 9, 1945

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

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Your letter, just received, is most appreciated, and on account of that it means very much to me. I'm delighted that you enjoyed my little inscriptions in the books, and I am pleased to know that you are glad to have a copy for yourself.

I can't tell how soon I shall be able to visit Augusta, but shall look forward to seeing my books located in their home.

Yours sincerely,

Fred W. Rust

FWR:MTC