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Marion Whitney Smith Correspondence

Marion Whitney Smith
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Ronald L. Gower

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SMITH, Marion Whitney (Mrs. Kingman Smith)
b. Waltham, Massachusetts
Born in Waltham, Mass. Parents moved to Boston when I was six. Attended both private and public schools in Boston, Mass. After graduation from the Prince School (Boston) was a student at Miss Kellogg’s Private School. Graduated from Miss Sherman’s Secretarial School (a private school) and served there one year as a Junior Instructor.

Studied violin and cello under the direction of Miss Mosher at the Mosher Studio of Music.

Attended Miss Raccroft’s private art appreciation classes for two years - held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.

Had private instruction in elocution at the Koch School of Acting and Pantomime.

Studied ballet dancing under the direction of Prof. Charles Ball. First public appearance was in Symphony Hall Boston, Mass. This was a May Day Dance under the auspices of the New England Conservatory Alumni Association. Dance arrangements were by Prof. Ball. Participants were students from the Prince School, and students from Frost Hall, Dana Hall and Gardiner Hall, at the New England Conservatory of Music.

After graduation from Miss Sherman’s, later worked as a private secretary. Was married to Kingsman Smith in 1929. Kingsman is a Chemical Engineer. Also studied law three years. He prepared for, and was accepted as an applicant to take the State of Maine bar examinations. He also studied accountancy for three years, and is at present working in this capacity.

I have studied the mechanics of short story writing with the Palmer Institute of Authorship and also the Writer’s Digest Course in short-short story writing.

First novel - Mechises - an historical novel.

Second * - Cups of Cold Water - fiction.

Third booklet - Katahdin Fantasies.
August 10, 1956

Miss Marion W. Smith  
Millinocket  
Maine

Dear Miss Smith:

After several false attempts, we have finally succeeded in locating your KATAHDIN FANTASIES, and we have bought a copy for the library. Naturally chagrined that this Maine material escaped and eluded our attention for so long, we nevertheless are writing to inquire about the author.

Maine authors and Maine books are our particular interest, and we try to know all about them. We shall have to have another copy of KATAHDIN FANTASIES, and we think the Maine Author Collection ought to include it. Do you know about this collection? It is a permanent exhibit of books written by Maine people or about Maine subjects. Most of the books are inscribed presentation copies, and form an outstanding exhibit which is a source of constant attraction to students and visitors. We hope that you may want to inscribe a copy of KATAHDIN FANTASIES for the collection.

Meanwhile, won't you let us have a brief auto-biographical sketch?

Sincerely yours

In Charge of

hmj

Maine Author Collection
I do not have copies of all the reviews and articles that were written when the booklet first came out in 1953. Am enclosing a few.

The top three newspaper articles were published in less than two months by three different newspapers, after the map, for which I drew up the plans was published. (1955) 

Girl Scout camps and Boy Scout leaders have been using the booklet as part of their programs, and last year, as you will see by one enclosed article, Natarswi, and its staff and campers made a totem pole based on KATAHDIN FANTASIES.

[Signature: Marion B. Smith]

COPY

"Book Reviews" section of the December 15, 1953 issue of APPALACHIA, by Ronald L. Gower.

KATAHDIN FANTASIES... "This is a slender, paper-covered booklet, a collection of seven delightfully written fantasies based on old Indian stories. Fantasies being what they are, who can pick errors in persons, places or dates? The magical powers of the characters render all accomplishments and situations possible. The test is in the response these legends evoke in the reader. This reviewer feels that anyone with the slightest acquaintance with the Katahdin region will find the stories interesting. As Ex-Governor Baxter states, "You have made Katahdin a living Spirit."

(signed) Ronald L. Gower
MILLINOCKET, Aug. 5—Mrs. Marion W. Smith, who wrote the book, "Katahdin Fantasies," has completed a map of the trails and roads of the Katahdin area.

COLLECTS LEGENDS
She has been collecting legends for years, since she was a small girl in Boston, when her grandmother, Mrs. Louisa Parkman Hoar, would read or tell her stories, many of them had to do with Maine and the Katahdin area.

Her book of legends tells the story of the coming of Katahdin—how the Indians found their way from below the earth's surface where they lived, and began dwelling in the outdoors. The spirits, who had hitherto made their home on earth, no longer had a place for council meetings, and the Big Chief sent them the mountain. No red man was ever to climb beyond where the trees and bushes grew.

Other legends tell of Pamola, the storm god, and of his wife, another is the tale of Red Rose, the Indian wife of Katahdin, spirit of the mountain.

Mrs. Smith and her husband, Kingman Smith, who is employed in the office of the Great Northern Paper Company, came to Millinocket 25 years ago. Since then Mrs. Smith has made a study of the area and mountains.

EARLIEST MAPS
The earliest maps showing Katahdin appeared in 1760, according to Mrs. Smith. Colonel Montresor, an English engineer, started from Quebec in June 1760 and followed the old Indian route to Fort Halifax. At this time interest was being shown in the making of a road from Fort Halifax to Quebec. In Colonel Montresor's journal, Mt. Katahdin is referred to as "Panavanot Hill." His original map is in the British Museum, but a copy is in the Library of Congress.

In about 1784, Gov. Bernard sent Joseph Chadwick a surveyor to follow the route called the "Indian Trail". On two of the maps of the Chadwick Survey (1764) Katahdin appears as "Satinishunemoss Hill." Some called it "Satinhungermess Hill." Since these early days Katahdin has appeared on maps. The latest is Mrs. Smith's "Mt. Katahdin Trails" and Roads and the location of the ancient Abenaki Indian legends.

Professor H. Walter Leavitt of the University of Maine granted Mrs. Smith permission to use his "Map of Katahdin Trails and Roads" as a basis for this work. The map appeared in his "Katahdin Skyline," published by the Maine Technology Experiment Station.

After spending months locating the ancient Abenaki legends on Mt. Katahdin, Mrs. Smith drew up a sketch of the present plan of the map and the cartography was done by Robert P. Thaxter, a cousin of the Smiths.

Members of the Appalachian Trail Conference have written the map and the cartography was done by Robert P. Thaxter, a cousin of the Smiths.

INSCRIPTION — Mrs. Lorraine Tousignant, left, West Springfield, Mass., Assistant Director of Camp Natarswi, explains the symbols of the Totem Pole, to Joyce Daleseio, Bangor, and Alison Barker, Presque Isle. Each girl entering the Girl Scout camp must learn to live by the code set up by "The Spirit of Katahdin."
Final Banquet And Dedication Of Totem Pole Highlights Closing Of Camp Natarswi

Girl Scouts Close Camp Natarswi
With Gala Banquet And Program

“All good things must come to an end” is what the campers at Camp Natarswi in Millinocket are discovering, as they return to their homes after seventeen weeks of summer fun. Each girl, however, has many happy memories tucked away in her heart - memories of swimming, boating, and canoeing on lower Togue Pond, hiking up Mt. Katahdin, singing beside campfires, cooking delicious meals over open fires, and working in the craft shop.

Closest to the hearts of Natarswi campers right now are the memories of the exciting activities of the last 2 weeks, culminating in the final banquet of the season and all that goes with it. Every camper will remember the tall, straight pine pole which was turned by many hours of patient carving, sanding, and painting into a beautiful Totem Pole. Every girl in camp during the final two weeks of encampment had a chance to work on the pole in some way or another. The pole was secured at the beginning of the summer free of charge from the Great Northern Paper Co. of Millinocket. Each unit was responsible for carving one section of the pole, centered around the legends written by the campers of the previous encampment. All of the legends were based on "Katahdin Fantasies" by Marion Whitney Smith of Millinocket, whose kind permission was obtained.

In the evening following the banquet, each unit presented its section of the totem pole to the camp. Pixie Ridge presented the Spirit of Friendship; Pampla presented the Thunderbird, for which the unit is named; Kianda presented the Spirit of Love; the Knoll presented the Four Winds; and the Fire God; and the unattached staff members chose the protective spirit of the Eagle as their symbol.

A highlight of the dedication ceremony was the presentation to the camp, by Mrs. Marion W. Smith, of one of the two original maps on which her book "Katahdin Fantasies" is based. Each girl was given a mimeographed copy of the legends of the totem pole as a souvenir of their summer fun at Natarswi.

NATARSWI TOTEM POLE — An authentic totem pole was erected and carved as the summer project of campers at Natarswi Girl Scout Camp in Millinocket this summer. Each girl attending the camp the final two weeks of encampment had a part in the building of the pole, with each unit responsible for one design carved on its surface.

(Patriot Staff Photo)
Here's a cheerful note to counteract the daily headlines: PUBLISHERS WEEKLY notes that in Sweden Kenneth Roberts' novels are runaway best-sellers. NORTHWEST PASSAGE has sold 40,000 copies, CAPTAIN CAUTION 68,000, and in the fall 52,000 copies of RABBLE IN ARMS will be printed. That's enough for every fourth or fifth person in Sweden to own a copy of one of the three books.

Ever since a gentleman named Thoreau wrote a book called THE MAINE WOODS, Mt. Katahdin (or Ktaadn, as he called it; I'll go along with him) has for many people stood with the lobster and the pine cone as a symbol of Maine. And I take it that the Indians used to consider it a symbol, too. At least it was holy ground, just as many symbols are holy. If the Indians had known of the flag with the motto, "Don't Tread on Me," they might have called it Katahdin's flag. I don't know Ktaadn, except from reading a bit about it, but I do know fairly well Mt. Washington, and have watched it turn from a magnificently handsome tower to a snarling, vengeful fury in almost a matter of minutes. And I have seen fool-hardy tourists climb it clad only in shorts and T-shirts, just as I am sure occurs each summer on Ktaadn.

The Indians, quite naturally, looked on Ktaadn as a person, and created many legends around it. Seven of them are told in a booklet by Marion Whitney Smith, "Katahdin Fantasies," (Millinocket Press) with an accompanying map (cartography by Robert P. Thaxter). The combination, by the way, is available from Betts Bookstore in Bangor at $1.50. For anyone planning to go to Ktaadn, reading and studying the booklet and map should be part of the preparation. Certainly when we get around to keeping our promise of two-years' standing to the kids, to climb Ktaadn, we'll renew acquaintance with the booklet and map. It will be fun to say to the girls, "Now here's where one of Pamola's silly tantrums caused an avalanche slide," and, later on, if we cross the mountain, "This is the spot where Pamola went to get away from Lucivee, his nagging wife. See what happens if you nag? Your husband will just stay away from home and leave you alone, so after a while you'll start talking to yourself, and people will think you're crazy." Oh, there are all kinds of possibilities.

"Katahdin Fantasies" has been used already by one group, Camp Natarsin, as the basis for their entire program one year. The program was culminated by a dramatization of scenes from the booklet. Wouldn't this be a good lead for other similar groups?

Incidentally, the cover painting, by Maurice Day, of Pamola talking to Roy Dudley, is most attractive.
Mrs. F. W. Jacob
In Charge of Maine Author Collection
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine

August 14, 1956

Mrs. F. W. Jacob
In Charge of Maine Author Collection
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

In answer to your request of August 10th, I am enclosing two copies of KATAHDIN FANTASIES. Also a copy of a brief auto-biographical sketch I had in my files.

My maternal grandmother, Louisa Parkman Hoar is probably responsible for my interest in history and Indian lore. She was one of Francis Parkman's cousins; the noted historian. Attached is a copy of a letter I received from E. J. Brehaut, from The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. When I was a little girl, I remember going to the Boston Common, and the Public Gardens many times with my grandmother, and hearing her tell stories she'd heard from Francis Parkman, about Maine's Abenaki Indians...

Our common ancestor on the Parkman side was Sarah Averill Parkman, who sang in the choir in Westminster Abbey. It is not strange that I should have a deep interest in Maine's history. For one thing, when Henry David Thoreau made his last venture up in the Katahdin area, in 1857, "His friend Edward Hoar of Concord was his companion." Edward Hoar was related to my maternal grandfather, who was John Hoar. Then again, my paternal ancestors were pioneers in the Maine lumber industry.

My husband's ancestors were among the pioneer settlers in Machias, Maine. There is a plaque in Burnham Tavern in Machias which tells about his Hanscom and Seavey ancestry. His grandmother was Amelia Nancy Longfellow, descended from the same branch as the poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. My first novel, MECHIES is a collection of historical events about the part my husband's ancestors played in the settling of Maine. This is unpublished, but was read by Flora Holly, Edna Ferber's first agent. Miss Holly wrote to me saying, "This is a very valuable contribution to the history of our country."

I am enclosing a few clippings of articles and reviews which have been written about my interest in Maine lore. Also a copy of the February-March 1956 issue of DOWN EAST magazine. Last November, Mr. Doolittle, editor of the magazine wrote to me asking if I would write the lead article for that particular issue. Credit for the source material was omitted by error, but appeared in the next issue. I used Williamson's History of Maine, Speck's Penobscot Shamanism, and some of Fannie Hardy Eckstorm's works for verification of my facts.

Hope I've been able to answer your questions, and many thanks for your interest in my work.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Maria N. Smith
(Two copies of sheet)
August 15, 1956

Mrs. Kingman Smith  
22 Oxford Street  
Millinocket, Maine  

Dear Mrs. Smith:

You are very gracious to send us all this fine material, and to overlook our having missed KATAHDIN FANTASIES. The articles and clippings and autobiographical information which you have sent are of great interest, and we very much appreciate your care in assembling the items for our files.

We do hope MECHISES will come to publication some day, as well as CUPS OF COLD WATER. Is this also a Maine book? With your tremendous interest in and knowledge of the Katahdin region, you should be able to give us more than one book of the country. Do keep on writing!

KATAHDIN FANTASIES came at a most opportune time personally, for two days hence I expect to be looking at Pamola (from Baxter Peak). There will be three young people in the party, and a refreshing of the memory of Pamola and some of his legends is useful!

Thank you very much for your friendly letter, and for presenting this material to the Maine Author Collection and library files.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of  
Maine Author Collection
(Reply to a letter I wrote asking if they could tell me anything about the Parkman bandstand in Boston. I told Mr. Brehaut I had a personal interest due to our Parkman connection and he wrote the following letter which is most interesting and which I will add to my collection of family history.)

From The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce April 26, 1954

Dear Mrs. Smith:

We are pleased to answer your inquiry of April 1st.

In 1877 Mr. George Francis Parkman, a wealthy Bostonian, made a will which gave the residue of his estate to the City of Boston. An 1887 codicil stated: "I devise said residue to the City of Boston to constitute a fund, the income of which is to be applied to the maintenance and improvement of the Common and the Parks now existing and is not to be used for the purchase of additional land for park purposes. Any portion of said income which may not be required for the above purpose in any year is to be added to and invested as a part of said fund."

Mr. Parkman died in 1908. The Mayor and City Council of Boston accepted the gift in the following year. The City, through its Park Department and other appropriate officials, have ever since administered the fund as the Parkman Trust or Parkman Fund.

The gift amounted to about $5 million. Since its acceptance, the income has amounted to over $8 million.

To honor the memory of Mr. Parkman, the city erected a magnificent bandstand, known as the Parkman Bandstand, in Boston Common. It is surrounded by concrete-wooden settees of a permanent character. Many civic functions of all types are held here.

Sincerely,

(signed) E. J. Brehaut, Manager
Civic Department
May 16, 1962

Mrs. Marion Whitney Smith
22 Oxford Street
Millinocket, Maine

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Thank you very much for remembering the Maine Author Collection with a copy of your new booklet, ALGONQUIAN AND ABENAKI INDIAN MYTHS AND LEGENDS. We are delighted to have this evidence of your continuing interest in the Indian stories.

We shall want to note its publication in the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association, and the library will want to buy a copy -- perhaps more than one. Will you therefore be so kind as to let us know the price of the booklet, and from whom it should be ordered.

We hope it will have a large circle of readers, and that you will continue to gather and make available these fascinating Indian legends.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Am enclosing a copy of my latest booklet for the Maine Author Collection.

On August 10, 1956 you requested a copy of my booklet KATAHDIN FANTASIES.

Hope you enjoy the new collection.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Encl.
ALGONQUIAN AND ABENAKI INDIAN Myths and Legends
Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Many thanks for your letter of May 16th. We sent cards out to check and am happy to learn that the copy of ALGONQUIAN AND ABENAKI INDIAN Myths and Legends reached the Maine State Library. You mention making note of its publication in the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association... Date of Publication was May 2, 1962. The price of the booklets is $1.25 each (including tax and postage.) The books can be bought from me directly. Again, many thanks for your good wishes,

Mrs. Jacob.

Sincerely,

22 Oxford Street
Millinocket, Maine

Marion W. Smith
Mrs. F. W. Jacob
(In Charge of Maine Author Collection)
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine
Mrs. E. W. Jacob  
In Charge of Maine Author Collection  
Maine State Library  
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

In regard to your letter of May 16, 1962, please forgive the oversight in not sending the booklet, *ALGONQUIAN AND ABEANKI INDIAN MYTHS AND LEGENDS* that you requested to buy... (For the library.)

Somehow, your letter, after I had answered your question as to price and publication date etc. became mislaid. (The price is $1.25 a copy.)

In answer to the last paragraph, I'm enclosing an item which might interest you... "It is having a large circle of readers"--the new collection of legends, that is. Had a lot of mail after appearing on "Bud" Leavitt's T.V. show. And, more mail after "Bill" Geagan wrote a fine "recommendation in the Penobscot Times." He said in closing, "You'll read this one again and again."

Letters and orders have come from many sources... One, a request from Washington D.C from the "Korean Research & Information Office." An order for two copies was received and the letter said in part, "for presentation to my superiors in Seoul." The two booklets were forwarded to "The International Cultural Association of Korea."

*KATAHDIN FANTASIES* went all over the world, and, through Marion Whooley, Maine Development Commission, reprints were printed in Portugal... The owner of the newspaper came to Maine, and one of her requests was information on the legends of Maine...

Again, please forgive me, and if you should wish to order further copies, the matter will be given immediate attention. All best wishes.

Sincerely,

Marion W. Smith
LOCAL PEOPLE APPEARED ON "BUD" LEAVITT SHOW

Kingman and Marion W. Smith were invited to join "Bud" Leavitt on the night of May 26, for a T.V. appearance. "Bud" Leavitt introduced Marion's new book, ALGONQUIAN AND ABENAKI INDIAN MYTHS AND LEGENDS, held a "question and answer session," then "Bud" read some of the "Indian Names and Their Meanings" from Marion Smith's first collection of Indian legends, KATAHDIN FANTASIES.

Copies of an excellent review by John Gould were sent to Marion Smith which read as follows: "Comes a copy of a booklet "Algonquian and Abenaki Indian Myths and Legends" by Marion Whitney Smith of Millinocket, just off the press. We commend it to eagle-eyed schoolma'am's who may be looking for a little Maine spice for the history periods, and if they don't find it easily, drop a card to Marion—that's Mrs. Kingman Smith, 22 Oxford Street, Millinocket, Maine. We liked it. (This is our new book review for this week.)"
Mrs. Kingman Smith  
22 Oxford Street  
Millinocket, Maine

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Thank you for sending the copy of ALGONQUIAN AND ABENAKI INDIAN MYTHS AND LEGENDS which we requested.

And thank you for sharing with us the good reports about its career so far. There is an abiding interest in Indian legends, and you do us all a service by gathering and preserving them.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Many thanks for your letter of July 25th.

You are most kind to say such encouraging things about my collection of Indian legends... It's a lot of work, but the response is most enthusiastic, and best of all, the work seems to appeal to all age groups, (from eight to eighty.)

Again, thank you for your very nice letter, and from time to time, if you are interested, will send along clippings from the Millinocket Journal. They like to publish the letters that I receive that give an idea where the books are going, and the reaction of readers.

Most Sincerely,

[Signature]

(Mrs. Kingman Smith)
July 30, 1962

Mrs. Kingman Smith
22 Oxford Street
Millinocket, Maine

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Thank you for your letter and offer to send newspaper clippings. We are always interested in any reviews of Maine items, and any clippings pertaining to Maine authors and their writing. We appreciate your thought of us.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
January 28, 1964

Mrs. Marion W. Smith
22 Oxford Street
Millinocket, Maine

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Thank you so much for remembering that we would want your new STRANGE TALES OF ABENAKI SHAMANISM. This is an extremely interesting addition to our Maine section -- rather, it will be, when the copies which we are ordering are received. This copy, of course, goes into the Maine Author Collection.

We shall note its publication in the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association (it will be too late to make the February issue, but the May number should carry the news), and we hope that you will have orders from a good many Maine libraries. Good luck to the new collection.

Sincerely yours,

In Charge of Maine Author Collection

hmj
22 Oxford Street  
Millinocket, Maine  
January 30, 1964

Mrs. F. W. Jacob  
In Charge of Maine Author Collection  
MAINE STATE LIBRARY  
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Many thanks for your letter of January 28th.

I am enclosing the five copies of STRANGE TALES OF ABE MAKI SHAMANISM as ordered.

By the way, due to popular demand, from so many dealers, a second edition of KATAHDIN FANTASIES will be published this spring.

This has been out of print for a good many months.

If you would like a copy of the second edition, please let me know.

You may want to include this information in the bulletin of the Maine Library Association, along with notice of the third booklet in the "KATAHDIN SERIES."

This will again make the "Series" complete.

Again, many thanks,

Sincerely,

[Signature]