January 2016

Christine Weston Correspondence

Christine Weston 1904-
Maine State Library
Marion Flood French
Bangor Daily News

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WESTON, CHRISTINE

Unao, India, 1904 (?) -

 Resident of Brewer.
Christine Weston was born in Unao, in the United Provinces of India in 1904. Her father's people were French indigo-planters, and he became a naturalized Englishman; her mother was the daughter of an English army officer. When the World War intervened between her and the usual English education—the S.S. Persia on which she was to sail from India was sunk by the Germans—her parents sent her to a convent in the hills from which she kept running away until she was withdrawn.

Except for brief visits to England when she was a child, she lived in India until 1923, when she met Robert Weston, a Harvard graduate. They were married and settled in Brewer three years later.

---Adapted from jacket of BE THOU THE BRIDE.
March 29, 1940

Mrs. Christine Weston

c/o Charles Scribner's Sons

597 Fifth Avenue

New York, New York.

Dear Mrs. Weston:

With interest we learned of the publication of BE THOU THE BRIDE; and with delight we have noticed the favorable reviews concerning it. Although we have not yet had opportunity to examine the book, it has been ordered (for inclusion in our traveling libraries), and we anticipate eagerly the reading of the story.

Since reading that you are now living in Maine, we wonder if it is possible that you were born in Maine. We have found no biographical information whatever.

Our interest is particularly great, on account of the Maine Author Collection: an exhibit of about a thousand volumes, written by Maine persons, about the state, or by those living in Maine. Certainly we can claim you for Maine's literary roster on two counts, and perhaps on the third: your birthplace. We do hope so, for it would be a fortunate distinction to include BE THOU THE BRIDE.

We trust that you will feel that this book should be in the Maine Author Collection, which is comprised mainly of inscribed presentation copies, and will want to place your novel on its shelves.

Please accept our best wishes for its success.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

BY

hmj

SECRETARY
Maine State Library,  
Augusta, Maine,  
HILDA MCLEOD JACOB:-

Dear Mrs Jacob,

Thank you for your letter of March 29th, forwarded to me by Scribner's. Today I sent you a copy of my novel, Be Thou the Bride, inscribed as you wished. I hope you'll like the book. It is not, perhaps, a very cheerful one, but all I claim for it is the recognition of its being an honest job of work.

The dust cover carries a certain amount of biographical data, so I won't burden you with more.

Yours sincerely,

[Handwritten signature]
April 4, 1940

Mrs. Robert Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

The inscribed copy of BE THOU THE BRIDE has been received, and we are grateful for your prompt generosity.

The book is remarkable, especially as a first novel, and well written, exhibiting unusual depictive powers, with strongly drawn characters and incidents. As you have suggested, it is not perhaps very cheerful, yet it is a commanding novel, and one which we feel destined for more than customary notice in its field.

Our one regret is that we cannot claim you completely! We are, however, fortunate in having you as a resident; and to our congratulations upon your literary debut, we add our most sincere thanks for your kindness in placing an inscribed copy of BE THOU THE BRIDE in the Maine Author Collection.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

by

hmj

SECRETARY
Author of “Be Thou the Bride”

Christine Weston (Mrs. Robert Weston) of Brewer, whose colorful and stirring novel of New England, “Be Thou the Bride,” has recently been published. The book is already receiving enthusiastic comment by New York critics.

Unkind Picture Of Maine Life

"BE THOU THE BRIDE," by Christine Weston (Scribner's $2.50).

In telling the story of what amounts to the New England strain of the Jukes family—two Jukes families, forsooth—Miss Weston has written a strangely fascinating, yet strangely repellant novel in "Be Thou the Bride." Her atmosphere of unrelied sordidness and passion and violence in a vague New England setting in which the characters move about with no connection whatever to the landscape and her unbearable cast of illegitimates, hunchbacks, frustrates and imbeciles make for an exciting, if pointless session.

The story is extremely complex. It deals with two neighboring families and concerns itself entirely with their major, minor and intermediate vices, their marriages and their matutities. To be sure, she has handled her subject with compassion and wild insight, but having failed to include a single normal character she has made it difficult for the reader to find perspective to the story. The exaggerated characteristics she describes may be found in varying quantities in all people, but lumping them all together in one book has overtones of the psychopathic. For all its tenderness of approach and its excellent prose, "Be Thou the Bride" remains little more than a New England "Mother India."

Brewer Woman Awarded Guggenheim Fellowship

BREWER-F—A study of life in a typical Maine village gained for Mrs. Christina Weston, 36-year-old housewife of this community, a fellowship awarded by the John Simon Guggenheim memorial foundation in New York.

"Be Thou the Bride," her story of Maine men and women, was published recently.

She is a native of India, where she met Robert Weston, a Harvard graduate, in 1923. They were married and settled in Brewer three years later. Mrs. Weston has been writing for five years.
April 16, 1942

Mrs. Robert Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

It gives us undeniable pleasure to notice that the first review which we have seen of THE DEVIL'S FOOT is most favorable, and calls the novel "brilliant." We join in the congratulations which you must be enjoying, and wish a gratifying success to the book.

You may recall that you were so kind as to present an inscribed copy of BE THOU THE BRIDE to the Maine Author Collection. We hope that you may want to continue your interest and make it possible for us to include a copy of THE DEVIL'S FOOT in this exhibit.

Perhaps there is an interesting incident connected with the background or writing of the book that might be included in your inscription; we always appreciate such individual touches, and the fascinating inscriptions in these display books contribute much to the present and future worth of such a collection.

Our best wishes for a cordial welcome by the public to THE DEVIL'S FOOT.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj

SECRETARY
Mrs. Robert Weston  
Salmon Pool Farm  
Brewer, Maine  

Dear Mrs. Weston:  

THE DEVIL'S FOOT is all that reviewers claim for it, and we are delighted to welcome the inscribed copy to the Maine Author Collection.

The background and atmosphere are familiar; but you bring to your work an unusually clear perception of human beings, their frailties and strengths, and a gifted pen in setting forth these things for your readers.

Certainly it is an outstanding novel, and one which anyone will be unable to leave until finished. We trust that the welcoming words of reviewers will presage a long and active life for THE DEVIL'S FOOT.

Thank you very much for your kindness in presenting and inscribing the gift copy for the exhibit.

Very truly yours  

MAINE STATE LIBRARY  
BY

hmj  
Encl--3¢ postal refund  

SECRETARY
April 7, 1943

Mrs. Robert Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

It is delightful news that we may once again look forward to another of your novels. The first installment of INDIGO is promising, and carries the air of authenticity, which is scarcely surprising. We shall be interested to see the complete book in the fall.

Of course we can't plead the cause of the Maine Author Collection so strongly, since the new novel is not about Maine; but should you wish to continue your generosity, we would be very pleased to count it in the exhibit.

Our best wishes for the success of INDIGO.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj
SECRETARY
December 13, 1943

Mrs. Robert Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

It has been pleasant to notice the favorable reviews that have attended the publication of INDIGO this fall; and we add our congratulations to those of your friends upon a truly fine novel.

We continue to hope that you will want to inscribe a copy for the Maine Author Collection, and that the demand for INDIGO by discriminating readers will increase.

Sincerely yours

hmj

Secretary
December 31, 1943

Mrs. Robert Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

Now that holiday activities are somewhat abated, it is perhaps time to write to you again about INDIGO. As more readers are discovering the beauty and power of your writing, and are making the acquaintance of your skilfully and authentically created characters, we hear only praise for the book.

We cannot be insistent about the Maine Author Collection, but we can be proud of you as an adopted daughter, and of the recognition which the literary world is according your talent. We do, of course, hope that the exhibit may boast an inscribed copy of INDIGO beside your earlier books.

Continued good fortune to it; our best wishes for the coming year, and the next book.

Sincerely yours

hmj
Secretary
January 5, 1944

Mrs. Robert Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

The inscribed copy of INDIGO reached us today, and we are greatly pleased by your generosity. The book is, of course, in our traveling libraries which are borrowed by people all over the state; but we are glad that it may also be included in the Maine Author Collection.

We hope that your knowledge of India and her people and problems will produce more books of the scene. One wonders what happened to Jacques, his inheritance, his mother, to Hardyal and his father. Was Madam's influence still sufficiently strong to force Jacques to pay the debt to Ramdatta? What of Giselle? There are so many unanswered questions!

Please accept our thanks for your interest in the collection, and for the gift copy of INDIGO. May its popularity increase.

Sincerely yours

hmj
Secretary

Encl--6¢
November 15, 1945

Mrs. Robert Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

For some time we have been eagerly awaiting the publication of your newest book, BHIMSA, THE DANCING BEAR; and a recent newspaper notice indicates that our wait is nearly finished. You have our very good wishes for the success of what promises to be a most charming book.

We have confidently claimed you as a Maine author, and we hope that you are willing to continue in this role. The Maine Author Collection, to which you have been delightfully generous, would be distinguished by an inscribed copy of your first juvenile story; and we hope that the addition may be possible.

One day we believe you should bring up-to-date the story of Hardyal, Jacques, and all the other INDIGO characters. Perhaps after your projected Indian journey, we may have that pleasure to anticipate.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
December 7, 1945

Mrs. Robert Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

The delightful BHIMSA is acknowledged with warm appreciation of your interest, and will be added to the Maine Author Collection with pleasure. It is a most enchanting tale, throughout which your knowledge of the country and its ways is evident. Certainly the story will appeal to many young readers. You have our very best wishes for its success, as well as our thanks for the gift copy for the collection.

Sincerely yours

hmj

Encl--4% postal refund

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
September 17, 1946

Mrs. Christine Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

Congratulations on THE DARK WOOD, and on its selection as a Literary Guild book. It is a fine perceptive novel, and justifies the critics' estimation of your talent. We are delighted that it is receiving such warm praise and enthusiastic attention of readers.

We realize that this letter may not reach you for some time, but we shall be patient, and hope that an inscribed copy of THE DARK WOOD may be included with your earlier novels in the Maine Author Collection. We look forward to each of your books with increasing appreciation of your skill with characters and words; and, although we know that time is required to perfect such a work, the months between your novels seem too many to eager admirers.

Good luck to THE DARK WOOD.

Sincerely yours,

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
October 22, 1946

Mrs. Christine Weston
Salmon Pool Farm
Brewer, Maine

Dear Mrs. Weston:

Almost simultaneously this morning, THE DARK WOOD arrived, and we read that you are not sailing for India until late November; so we hasten to acknowledge with warm appreciation your gift to the Maine Author Collection.

We have already told you how fine we think this novel is, and we enjoy noticing the continuing favorable reports of readers, and the happy position the book occupies on the best seller lists.

We are very glad indeed to know that you are planning another novel with an Indian background. Since INDIGO, we have hoped for this, and we trust that the work will progress pleasantly and satisfactorily.

Thank you for your interest in the Maine Author Collection, and for the presentation of the inscribed copy of THE DARK WOOD, which is being added with much pleasure.

Sincerely yours,

hmj

Encl.--7¢ postal refund

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
CHRISTINE WESTON — An author who has lived in Bangor and Brewer, but first, in India.

The Hoopoe by Christine Weston
8.95 (August 14)
Published by Harper & Row

The novelistic field is very tenuous these days either leading to fictionalized non-fiction or capitalizing on current trends and-or celebrities. The straight "people" story, well done, has been practically non-existent. The advent of a new Christine Weston novel is, therefore, cause for rejoicing. "The Hoopoe," indeed, is cause for an out and out gala; for this is her most illustrious, in a long list of books, none of which has lacked lustre.

Before further bewilderment concerning the title, a hoopoe is a small bird indigenous to India (which was first home to Miss Weston) and in a sense, literary, seems to have some of the symbolical and poetic qualities of the unicorn. "The Hoopoe" is essentially the story of Patrice Verrier, born in India, shortly before World War I and follows her adventures from that era of innocence through post-World War II. It has not a trace of soap opera sentiment so often found in this type of theme but is a sensitive, solid tale, rich in compassion and acute understanding of all the participants. (They're far too lively and rounded to be called characters.) There's the melange of her childhood: father Doey, mother Alice and brother Clem and the Boston Brahmin family into which she marries: husband Andrew Bannister, in-laws Barto and Caroline, lover Damon, family friend Daisy, and the usual hangers-on in the Beacon Hill-Bar Harbor set. There are also, in the bridges which this author so skillfully uses to encompass such a span of time, some marvelous shipboard prototypes which round out the viewpoints of a changing world. And there are Patrice's Maine neighbors, for here is where she and Adam settle, which are the first we have seen which catch the essence of the dignity, pride and philosophy of Downeasters. That she accompanies this is spare words and fleeting glimpses, is the more remarkable.

It is a favorite ploy of publishers, critics and friends of authors to hint that a novel such as this might be autobiographical. Indeed Christine Weston was born in India, she did have remarkable parents and a colorful brother and she did live in Bangor and Brewer for many of her young years. But in her own words in a 1957 interview she said that all writing of any depth must of a sense be autobiographical in mood and spirit for the good novelist writes of what she knows and what she senses; and now she could add 'of what she hears the hoopoe sing.'

This book is full of that singing and if at times the meter changes from joy to dirge, to hymn and to paean, it is only because that is what life is all about. "The Hoopoe" is a rich one.

Marion Flood French