

April 2016

Asa Wilgus Correspondence

Maine State Library

Asa Wilgus

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalmaine.com/maine_writers_correspondence

Recommended Citation

Maine State Library and Wilgus, Asa, "Asa Wilgus Correspondence" (2016). *Maine Writers Correspondence*. 807.
http://digitalmaine.com/maine_writers_correspondence/807

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Maine State Library Special Collections at Maine State Documents. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine Writers Correspondence by an authorized administrator of Maine State Documents. For more information, please contact statedocs@maine.gov.

WILGUS, Asa

January 23, 1953

Mr. Asa Wilgus
c/o A. A. Wyn Company
23 West 47th Street
New York 19, New York

Dear Mr. Wilgus:

JUST ONE CAT was noted in the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association as an unusual and appealing story, even to non-cat-lovers, so all Maine librarians were introduced to the book. Since then, we have tried to discover whether or not you were from Maine, but we have been unsuccessful.

Our special interest is because of the Maine Author Collection. You may know of this permanent exhibit of books written by Maine people, or having Maine as a setting. Most of the volumes are inscribed presentation copies, and the varying inscriptions lend a lively interest to a valuable collection which bears witness to the capability, versatility and creativeness of Maine writers. There are children's stories, histories, cook books, poems, novels, books on art, literature, biography, travel -- all kinds are represented. The inscriptions range from pen-and-ink sketches to autobiographical anecdotes, from tributes to Maine to bits of verse, adding their particular distinction to an outstanding exhibit which constantly attracts visitors and students. We are very proud of it.

We also gather available biographical and critical information on our authors, to help us answer the many requests which we receive on writing and writers in the state.

We hope that you may want to inscribe a copy of JUST ONE CAT for the collection. It would give us pleasure to include this delightful book among the other Maine work. You have our warm good wishes for its continued success.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

226 West 13th. Street,
New York 11, New York
January 28th, 1953

Mrs. F. W. Jacob,
Maine Author Collection,
State House,
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

I want to thank you very much and to express my deep appreciation for the interest you award my novel, JUST ONE CAT. I would like very much to have a copy of your Bulletin if you have one to spare.

As soon as the copy I am ordering today arrives I shall gladly write an inscription and mail it to you. Nothing could please me more than to have it in your Collection, for reasons of sentiment and memory as well as the future.

Perhaps you would care to have another work from my pen, the story of a homeless young man cast adrift in the New York Bowery who climbs into the back of a van and arrives on the Maine seacoast where he meets a salty old Yankee, and that Yankee The Good Ethan, plus their life in Maine, transforms the lad's future and makes a man of him. It is entitled GLEN GABLIN AND THE GOOD ETHAN. Nearly all of it is in Maine, along the sea. Though in America there appeared only a private edition of one hundred copies, oddly the book was caught up in Italy and made a real "hit," with every review a boost. It was translated by Bruna Magnani, and published by the old house of Arnoldo Mondadori Editore in Milano, (1951) in their Medusa Series, Vol. CCLXXI. The Italian title is GLEN GABLIN E IL BUON ETHAN, Romanzo. I have a few copies of the American edition and shall be glad to send one to your Collection. Part of the interest I have in its being requested by an Italian publisher and so well received is that my Great-Grandfather sailed to Italy in the old, old days, and there remained a long while, sending produce, especially art objects, to America.

As for an autobiographical sketch, please excuse my not sending it at the present time. My reason for this is: I am completing my autobiography, THE CORDIAL LITTLE ROAD, which closes in the year when my wife and I land on Long Island, Maine, and stand staring delighted across the way to our purchase, our future, "Cathedral Pines Island." JUST ONE CAT is fiction, also it is largely based on a true story, and Bill in it was real, more than that, our real best friend. Of course I may not be successful in finding a publisher for THE CORDIAL LITTLE ROAD, for I'm not a noisy nor a famous wielder of the pen. But if and when I do, I promise your Collection my first copy off the press, inscribed.

Thank you ever so much,
Sincerely,

Asa Wilgus
Asa Wilgus

January 30, 1953

Mr. Asa Wilgus
226 West 13th Street
New York 11, New York

Dear Mr. Wilgus:

Your friendly letter delights us, and piques our curiosity. Of course we would like to have your earlier book, GLEN GABLIN AND THE GOOD ETHAN, together with JUST ONE CAT, for the Maine Author Collection; and we appreciate your telling us about it. We shall watch for the arrival of these books, and let you know when they come.

Our curiosity is because we still don't know whether you are a native of this state or not. Will you tell us sometime, whether or not we get the Who's Who item? We know, from your reference to the islands, that your connection with Maine is more than the use of it as a setting for JUST ONE CAT.

We don't have an extra copy of the Bulletin to which we referred, but we can tell you about it. It is not a publication of the State Library, but of the Maine Library Association. We supply for its quarterly numbers a column called "Maine in Print," in which we note briefly books having to do with Maine, or written by Maine people. The note about JUST ONE CAT said, "Bill was a spirited kitten who attached himself to a childless Maine couple living on a coastal island, and his story makes good reading for animal lovers and the general reader in search of a 'good book.' The story is captivating and warming, even to non-cat-lovers."

We certainly hope that THE CORDIAL LITTLE ROAD finds a publisher, and we shall remember your generous promise of a copy for the Maine Author Collection.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

February 9, 1953

Mr. Asa Wilgus
226 West 13th Street
New York 11, New York

Dear Mr. Wilgus:

The copy of JUST ONE CAT, enriched by the pictures of Bill, has arrived safely, and is being added to the Maine Author Collection. We have a persistent feeling that Bill has come home. It is we who are honored to have him among these Maine books. Thank you for the warm and perceptive inscription, and for the gift to the collection of Bill's story.

Now we'll cross our fingers for THE CORDIAL LITTLE ROAD, and meanwhile hope to have GLEN GABLIN, too. You are very generous, and we are most appreciative.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

226 West 13th. Street,
New York 11, New York
Feb. 18th. 1953

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

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

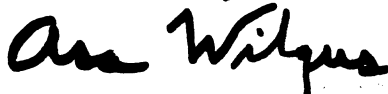
I thank you very much for your good letter of the 9th. I wish indeed that Bill had come home to Maine, but as he is dead, only his memory can return to Maine, or I should say, the memory of him. Quite a few people in a remote part of your State will remember him.

I managed to get a copy in Italian of GLEN GABLIN E IL BUON ETHAN at an international book store, S. F. Vanni. It is selling in Italy, but alas, the original work in English, privately printed, of which there were only a hundred copies, is hard to obtain. Our own few copies we save for a practical reason, which is we continue hoping that eventually some American publisher will bring it out in what is known as a trade edition. That so happened in the case of JUST ONE CAT. But I will sooner or later pick up a copy and gladly send it to you.

The cabin built by two men was located far south of the site of the island in the other book, down where there are sand dunes. The cabin was constructed from parts of an old pier and abandoned cottages. Old Ethan Coffee was a rough, crude man, but yet a man of character and kind heart. I took him from real life, but the lad and the girl, I invented. I do not know why it went so well and still goes well in Italy, but perhaps there is in the story a suggestion of the many homeless boys and girls over there, who would like to know such a man as Ethan, and such a freedom as Maine's oceanside.

I thank you very much for including my books in your Collection.

Sincerely,



Asa Wilgus

February 19, 1953

Mr. Asa Wilgus
226 West 13th Street
New York 11, New York

Dear Mr. Wilgus:

Thank you for the copy of GLEN GABLIN E IL
BUON ETHAN. The fact that we cannot read it readily
in no way diminishes our pleasure in being able to
include it here. Offhand, I don't recall any other
books in the collection which are in a foreign
tongue. If it is ever possible to find a copy of
the original English edition, it will be most happily
added to your other books.

Meanwhile, our thanks go to you for this book,
and for your interesting inscription. It is a
rather unusual situation, isn't it?, but we're glad
the story found a welcome in Italy, and this copy
finds a warm welcome in the collection.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection