10-31-2014

Henry Beston Correspondence

Henry Beston 1888-1968

Elizabeth Coatsworth 1893-1986

Hilda McLeod Jacob
Maine State Library

Marion B. Stubbs 1888-1967

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BESTON, Henry

Quincy, Mass., 1888 -

WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA, 1934-35
May 7, 1935

Mr. Henry Beston
Box 385
Hingham, Mass.

Dear Mr. Beston:

May we extend congratulations upon your latest book, HERBS AND THE EARTH. It is a splendid book, and exceptionally interesting to us because it is Maine.

Some years ago we started a Maine Author Collection, to include the works of contemporary Maine writers. Due to the cooperation and generosity of our authors, this collection has expanded rapidly, and now numbers several hundred inscribed volumes.

There have been several writers, not born in Maine, but who have lived here and who have written about Maine, whom we have included: Laura E. Richards, Gladys Hasty Carroll, Louise Lamprey, and others. We feel that you should be represented here, and we wonder if you would not like to inscribe a copy of HERBS AND THE EARTH for our Maine Author Collection.

We assure you we would very much appreciate this kindness, and we enclose a return label and postage for your convenience.

Very truly yours

Maine State Library

Secretary

Enc:
Return label
Postage 4¢
Nobleboro, Maine,
May 22nd 1935

Dear Miss McLeod — I am
inscribed ‘sending today the copy of "Herbs
and the Earth" requested by the
Library. There’s to be a review of
it, I hear, in the June Atlantic,
the first review of a "garden book"
they’ve ever printed. Pretty good
for old Damariscotta Lake! Should
you ever come our way (we are only
Three miles from Federal Route 1 where it meets our East Neck Rd. at (message unclear) do come and see us and the garden of their beautiful old plants.

With best wishes believe me,

Faithfully yours

Henry Biston

Miss Hilda McLeod.
Maine State Library.
Augusta
May 28, 1935

Mr. Henry Beston
Nobleboro
Maine

Dear Mr. Beston:

HERBS AND THE EARTH has arrived at the library, and to its author are due our most sincere thanks, not only for inscribing and presenting this book to the Maine Author Collection, but for writing such a valuable reference work which is at the same time such delightful reading.

This is truly an important addition to botanical literature and we have added it to the general library, where already it has proved its worth in answering reference questions, and its success with those who read for enjoyment.

The dedication is particularly significant; you are indeed fortunate in having two such careful young persons. Thank you for your kind invitation to visit your beautiful herb garden. If it is at all possible, it will be accomplished; meanwhile the anticipation of such a venture, and the fascinating HERBS AND THE EARTH will be pleasant.

Very truly yours

Maine State Library

Im

Secretary
Those who heard Henry Beston at the Garden Club meeting last month will be interested in the review appearing in New York Herald Tribune Books which reads: "One need not be an herb gardening enthusiast to find in this small volume a pleasure and a sense of peace too seldom discovered in books of horticultural intent. A few pages and one settles deeper in one's chair, shifts the light to a more convenient angle, for here is a rare blend of fact, philosophy and clear humaneness that cannot be escaped. Let one short quotation serve as the key; for the rest, you should be your own discoverer: 'A plant of Balm, lifted from the June earth with its beard of delicate roots, a bush of Thyme in flower in the hot sun. Angelica rising in Gothic reeds where the rich and level earth long stores its rain, each of these is still a use, a potency, and a name. A garden of herbs is a garden of things loved for themselves in their wholeness and integrity. It is not a garden of flowers, but a garden of plants which are sometimes very lovely flowers and are always more than flowers. It is a garden of color seen as a part of garden life and not as its climax and close, of the pleasures and refreshments of fragrance, of the fantasy and beauty of leaves, of the joy of symmetry and design in nature, of that neglected delight to be found in garden contrasts and harmonies of green.' " This charming little book, from the press of Double-day, Doran & Co., is on our library shelves—don't fail to read it.
June 25, 1948

Mr. Henry Beston
Chimney Farm
Nobleboro, Maine

Dear Mr. Beston:

One of the nicest things about publishers' fall catalogs is that we discovered that we may anticipate NORTHERN FARM. We always look forward with great pleasure to the magic of your writing upon any subject from herbs to rivers, but we can imagine no subject more worthy of your art, or with more appeal for your readers, than Chimney Farm.

May it enjoy instant success and enduring popularity.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj
Dear Mrs. Jacobs—Thank you most gratefully for the letter of June 25th. Such a letter makes an author’s life worth while, and warms the hands of life before a living fire. I think you will like the book. It is Nature as one sees it in the north, and the
book has the quality of
the North from the northern
forest to the northern
lights.

Could you and your
husband motor over some
evening for a farm
supper? The afternoons
are long now, and you
wouldn't have much
night driving. Do let me
know. And thanks again.
Most faithfully yours
Henry Beston
27. VI. '48
June 29, 1948

Mr. Henry Beston
Chimney Farm
Nobleboro, Maine

Dear Mr. Beston:

What a delightful and generous invitation! It grieves me that I cannot accept it: my husband is at present in the hospital.

Thank you very much for your kindness. Please remember me to Mrs. Beston. We hope that you will make your annual summer visit to the library. Meanwhile, we shall resign ourselves to waiting, faithfully if not patiently, for the publication of NORTHERN FARM.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of Maine Author Collection
December 6, 1948

Mr. Henry Beston
Chimney Farm
Nobleboro, Maine

Dear Mr. Beston:

One of the afflictions of this season was that I had to be out of town the day you were in Augusta! Both Mrs. Stubbs and I very much wanted to call at the Corner Music and Book Store, but that pleasure was denied us. We hope that Augusta, which is probably as un-literary a community as Maine boasts, realized the privilege and took advantage of it.

NORTHERN FARM is all that we anticipated. It is charming and wise and delightful and honest: the sort of book we expect and always have from you.

The library orders were placed some time ago, and the books are now in active circulation. We hope that you may want to inscribe and present a copy to the Maine Author Collection. It would go proudly beside your other Maine book, HERBS AND THE EARTH.

Our very good wishes go to you and the new book, and also our profound regret that we could not see you when you were in Augusta.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj
Dear Mrs. Jacob - Has the State library a copy of the oration delivered at Gettysburg on Oct 3d 1889 by Col. (then General) Joshua Chamberlain. (The occasion was the erection of a monument to the XX th Maine) or a copy of the oration delivered at the same place on the same date by Capt. Howard L. Prince, described as "The historian of the XX th Maine"?

I imagine that these orations were printed in some memorial pamphlet for the "Johnny Reb" quote from them. Do let me know. With all good wishes. Yours, Henry Benton
March 24, 1949

Mr. Henry Beston
c/o 31 Ship Street
Hingham, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Beston:

A letter from you on the first day of spring was a delightful inauguration of the season, and we hope you will before long be back at Chimney Farm.

Miss Whalen, the Research Librarian, found General Chamberlain's address, and her letter is enclosed. We hope the information will be of help to you.

The sound of "living waters" which you so felicitously described in NORTHERN FARM began in Kennebec County yesterday; and it reminds us of the unhappy vacancy in the Maine Author Collection, which we are optimistically believing may one day be filled by an inscribed copy of this lovely book. Its popularity does not fade, and it is one which invites re-reading. How fortunate we are to have such a sympathetic interpreter of our land!

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

Encl.
Dear Mrs. Jacob,

What is the title and date and the publisher of Father Eugene Velez's book on The Alenaki Indians. It is a landmark in the writing about our redmen. Do rush one a reply, and many, many thanks.

Very faithfully,

Henry Benton

19 - VII - 49
July 20, 1949

Mr. Henry Beston
Chimney Farm.
Nobleboro
Maine

Dear Mr. Beston:

The half-title page says THE ABNAKIS / AND THEIR HISTORY/ by Rev. Eugene Vetromil./ IHS / New York, /
James B. Kirker / 599 Broadway.

The title page says THE ABNAKIS / AND / THEIR HISTORY/ OR / Historical Notices / on the / ABORIGINES
OF ACADIA. / by / Rev. Eugene Vetromile, / missionary
of the Etchemins, corresponding member of the Maine /
Historical Society, etc. / New York: / James B. Kirker,/
599 Broadway, up stairs. / Sold for the benefit of the
Indians. / 1866.

We are delighted to be asked to help, and hope that you will call on us frequently. I trust the new book is progressing satisfactorily. We certainly look forward to it with eagerness.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
hmj
Maine Author Collection
HENRY BESTON
Chimney Farm
NOBLEBORO MAINE

Dear Mrs. Jacob. Has the Library
a copy of "They Seldom Speak" by
Leland Hall (a Maine Novel)?
If it has, what is its date of
publication? (Harcourt Brace
Circa 1935 or '36)? Do let me
know if you can.

Hot again, and hot as
Massachusetts is hot. But
Thank Heaven for the pond!

Best wishes always. Yours,

"H.B."
July 28, 1949

Mr. Henry Beston
Chimney Farm
Nobleboro, Maine

Dear Mr. Beston:

The only compensation for this temperature is that it brought us a letter from you! No, we don't have THEY SELDOM SPEAK, because we don't have fiction, except for the classics. We looked it up in the Cumulative Book Index, however, which says that the novel was published in 1936 by Harcourt. This is entirely reliable. It sounds as though your book were entering the appendix-bibliography stage. Let us know whenever we can help.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
July 29th 1949

Dear Mrs. Jacob. Many Thanks for that "They Seldom Speak" information: it was exactly what I wanted.

Gratefully

H.B.
July 14, 1950

Mr. Henry Beston
Chimney Farm
Nobleboro, Maine

Dear Mr. Beston:

The library copies of WHITE PINE AND BLUE WATER came recently, and it was a joyous day! It's a wonderful book, just as we knew it would be. All your work on it has produced a volume on which you merit warm congratulations.

We should like to think that the Maine Author Collection, which still lacks the beautiful NORTHERN FARM, may include WHITE PINE AND BLUE WATER. They are truly Maine in spirit, and we deplore their absence.

Good wishes for the success of WHITE PINE AND BLUE WATER.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
Dear Mrs. Jacob — Many thanks for the kind letter about White Pine. The State seems to have taken the book right to heart, so did you ever see such good, friendly, grassland reviews!

Next time A go to Augusta, I'll take with me author's copies for the Author's Collection.

Best wishes, now
Yours

17-VII-50
Henry Beston
February 24, 1971

Mrs. Henry Beston
Chimney Farm
Nobelboro, Maine 04555

Dear Elizabeth Coatsworth:

Surely the warm welcome extended to ESPECIALLY MAINE must bring a glow of satisfaction. Such a really lovely book, one to give and to keep — as many of us have done. It was, for instance, the parting gift to two of our employees who left the library last fall, and any number of persons must have been gladdened to find it under the Christmas tree.

This brings us to the Maine Author Collection, which does not yet boast a copy. We hope that perhaps it is not too late? It is the very best kind of Maine book.

We trust the winter has been a comfortable one for you, and that you are looking forward to spring.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge Of
Maine Author Collection
Dear Mrs. Jacob,

I have mailed an "Especially Maine" copy of "Maine Author's Collection" to the Maine Collection, I fear I called it the "Maine Shelf," but by what ever name it should reach you and I hope you will enjoy having it.

With all good wishes,

Elizabeth Coatsworth
(mrs. harry Boston)

March 31, 1971
March 2, 1971

Mrs. Henry Beston
Chimney Farm
Noblesboro, Maine 04555

Dear Elizabeth Coatsworth:

You are very kind, and we are very pleased. Thank you for the inscribed copy of ESPECIALLY MAINE, which goes with pride into the Maine Author Collection.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection
Perhaps his greatest gift was to call attention to things that had always been there, but whose significance had gone largely unnoticed until he spoke or wrote about them [Elizabeth Coatsworth says of Henry Beston in her Foreword]. He was a great opener of windows.

The accumulated impact of Henry Beston's view of man in relation to nature, and his unique farsightedness, are demonstrated in these observations of earth, sea, and sky from Cape Cod to the St. Lawrence, most of them written a long generation before ecology became a public concern.

The first section of the book is from his classic The Outermost House, the chronicle of his year alone on the great outer beach of Cape Cod, considered so valuable a contribution to American thought that the house itself has been made a National Literary Monument. Then the locale moves to Maine, with pieces from White Pine and Blue Water, Northern Farm, Herbs and the Earth, and American Memory—the latter regarded as the first study of our nation's history to give proper perspective to the role of the American Indian. The last section, North of Maine, contains portions of The St. Lawrence, one of the most memorable volumes in the Rivers of America Series. Included throughout to illumine or amplify Henry Beston's meticulous and often lyric observations are unpublished letters to family and friends, some of his poems, and notes from his journals.
HENRY BESTON was born in 1888 in Quincy, Massachusetts, and spent what he called “a New England boyhood of sea and shore, enriched with a good deal of the French spirit, from a French mother.” He was graduated from Harvard in 1909, received his M.A. from there in 1911, and taught a year in France at the university of Lyon. In the first World War he served on land and later in the Navy, in submarines, and wrote several books about the war which he considered “journalism.”

He was editor of Living Age magazine before he dedicated himself to being a writer-naturalist and began work on The Outermost House, published in 1928. In 1929 he married Elizabeth Coatsworth, and three years later moved his family to Chimney Farm in Nobleboro, Maine, where he lived until his death in 1968.

ELIZABETH COATSWORTH, born in Buffalo, New York, 1893, was graduated from Vassar College, received her M.A. from Columbia University, and has been awarded doctoral degrees from the University of Maine and New England College for her contribution to American letters. She has written many books, including books for children, novels, essays, short stories, and poetry—always her favorite form. She lives in Maine, in the Nobleboro farmhouse she and her husband bought four years after publication of The Outermost House, and which has been the focus of her books of New England sketches, including the recent Maine Memories.