September 2015

Lois Lenski Correspondence

Lois Lenski 1893-1974

Hilda McLeod Jacob

Maine State Library

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LOIS LENSKI

SEE ETHEL CALVERT PHILLIPS.
Library B: Maine State Library
Augusta, Me.

Dear Sirs:

I have been informed by Miss Ethel
Calvert Phillips that your library has a
Collection of books about Maine, including
her "A Name for Obed." I happen to be
distributing the original drawings for this
book which I illustrated. Miss Phillips
suggested that I might find a home for
some of them in your library.

It is my wish that the drawings be
covered with glass and inexpensively
framed — they are, except for the end paper,
small in size and that they may be
hung where they may be enjoyed. I do
not care to contribute them to any
filing cabinet or picture collection where
They are kept packed or filed away. There are drawings which, in book form, have given a great deal of enjoyment to children. I should like to place the originals on walls where children, or adults, may continue to enjoy them.

If you should be interested, would you consult the book and make a choice of four or six of the illustrations, suitable for hanging in a group? Those on pages 7, 39, 49 and 115 have already been spoken for.

The endpaper, in which boy and dog appear in black outline on white background (no color) is the largest, measuring 15 x 22 inches. The center design of the jacket measures 8 x 9½ in — all others are correspondingly smaller. Even without color, the endpaper is attractive and would be enjoyed by children because of the varied activity shown.
It may be that the State Library is not the best place for a group of these drawings. Possibly in a Children's Room in one of the city libraries of Maine, they would have more opportunity to be seen by children. (I am offering some to the Ogunquit Library - the setting of the story.) In this case, perhaps you would be good enough to advise me - any suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lois Lenski
Miss Lois Lenski
Greenacres
R. F. D. 2
Torrington, Connecticut

Dear Miss Lenski:

It is not often that our library mail brings such a delightful surprise as it did today. Your letter, offering us some of the charming illustrations from A NAME FOR OBED, is unusual good fortune. To you, and to Miss Phillips, our thanks are due.

We can promise you that we will have the drawings framed, and that we will not file them away in a cabinet or picture collection, but will hang them where they may be enjoyed not only by children, but also by their elders.

Our work is not so directly with children as that of public libraries; that is, children do not frequent our rooms. Our traveling libraries reach people all over the state; and at various times we send out exhibit material, as, for instance, for the approaching Book Week. If it would meet with your approval, we could also, upon occasion and to libraries which we know would appreciate and feature such lovely pictures, send the drawings as part of an exhibit. At other times, they would hang in the State Library, in a group, bringing their lightness of spirit to some spot where patrons would be certain to see and enjoy them.

October 5, 1943
Candor compels us, however, to tell you that the Bangor Public Library numbers more young readers among its patrons than we do. It is possible that you know of the Bangor library. It is heavily endowed, very active, and in every way a splendid library. They would treasure such drawings as yours for Obed's book.

But we insist that no other library could possibly exceed us in appreciation of them! At present we do not have sufficiently suitable space for many items that would be a joy to exhibit, including pictures, maps, manuscripts, and other library treasures. Possibly a post-war plan will correct this condition. Meanwhile, however, although we are obliged to forego many pleasureable additions, we cannot let your generous offer go by without telling you that we would be delighted to accept it.

If you decide that we may be privileged to have four of the pictures, we will ask for those on pages 13, 31, 44 and 73. And if you think it desirable to include them as part of an exhibit for Book Week to a library which we know would take excellent care of them, we will hasten the framing and have the drawings ready for Book Week.

Please accept our thanks for the opportunity of having some of the original drawings. We should love having them, and we hope that you will continue to want to send us four. We also hope that you will continue to make children's books happy with your lively pictures for a long time.

Sincerely yours

hmj

Secretary
Oct. 9, 1943

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

It was a real pleasure to have your letter. I feel like the Housemother of an Orphanage, trying to find homes for my orphans, and when I do, it makes me happy! I had not thought of the possibility of your sending them out to smaller libraries for exhibition. That is splendid — for it keeps them working!

I am glad too, to know about the Bangor library. There are plenty to share with them — I shall write at once.

I am getting your ready and they will be mailed within a day or two. Please don't be shocked by the soiled margins. Printers have a proverbial weakness for soiling pictures, and it's always a shock to see the finger prints, stains, tobacco juice(?) etc.
Lois Lenski
GREENACRES
Torrington, Conn.
R. F. D. NO. 2

Decorating once, spottedly clean margins. For this reason, I always leave wide ones; then the spots do not harm the pictures themselves. I have cleaned these up as well as I can. They will be covered, of course, by being matted, and a 2½ x 3 in. mat always improves even the smallest picture considerably, by centering the interest. Only a narrow molding is needed for a frame, but once under glass, they are permanently protected against damage or accident.

I am putting in a few extra small ones (like the man who when he sold his farm, threw in an extra hundred acres when the buyer wasn't looking!) just to show my appreciation of the good home my "children" will have with you. Many thanks for taking them.

With best wishes,

Lois Lenski
Miss Lois Lenski  
Greenacres  
R. F. D. 2  
Torrington, Connecticut  

dear miss lenski:  

your friendly letter brings us delightful news, and we shall watch for the drawings. how kind of you to include extra ones! we shall write again to acknowledge them when they arrive.

sincerely

hmj  
secretary
October 13, 1943

Miss Lois Lenski
Greenacres
R. F. D. 2
Torrington, Connecticut

Dear Miss Lenski:

The mail this morning dispels any tendency to superstition about the thirteenth, for it brings us the enchanting drawings from A NAME FOR OBED. Thank you so much for sending the extra ones. They are delightful, and we are very happy to have them all. At once we shall have them framed, so that they will be available for Book Week.

We are not at all concerned about the margins. An expert and interested photographer in town does excellent framing; in fact, he has just finished a beautiful piece of work on a 1755 map for us. He will be especially enthusiastic, we know, about framing the Obed illustrations.

If you are still seeking homes for your charming "orphans" we have another suggestion. Miss Stuart has just returned from Yarmouth, where the town is re-organizing, refurnishing and in general renewing the life of a very nice little library. A new librarian will soon be in charge, but at present, the "Moving Spirit" is Miss Helen Small. The children's room is receiving quite a bit of attention, and Miss Small spoke with Miss Stuart about getting some lively colorful pictures. If you would care to present one or two of the drawings to the Merrill Memorial Library, Yarmouth, Maine, Miss Stuart says that she knows they would be genuinely appreciative.
Miss Lois Lenski  
October 13, 1943  
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Miss Stuart did not mention the Obed pictures to Miss Small, so it will be a real surprise if she should hear from you. Miss Stuart also says that she herself will have any drawings you present to the library framed as her contribution to the Yarmouth children's room.

It is a generous thought to place these drawings in libraries, and to have their merry captivating figures permanently framed for safe enjoyment. We are grateful that our library is included with other fortunate ones, and we send you our thanks and also a very cordial invitation to call when you may be in this vicinity.

Sincerely yours  

hmj  
Secretary  
Encl—8¢ postal refund
Oct. 20, 1943

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

I had intended answering your good letter of the 13th as soon, but have been waiting to hear from Ogunquit before sending the remainder of the Obed drawings.

I was so pleased to hear about the library at Yarmouth, and their particular needs. So I have selected a group of four, two larger (one being the colored jacket, which is very gay) and two of the smaller drawings. These go to Miss Small today, and I hope will be in time to be matted and framed before Book Week.

Mrs. Haganelli, Children's Editor of Houghton Mufflin Co., who published "Obed," has suggested the Portland, Waterville, and Westbook, Maine libraries. So I am writing to see whether they would be interested. I will then divide up the remainder among them. I think I told you I sent a group to Bangor, where they were pleasantly welcomed.

Thank you so much for your help—and I am so happy you are pleased with the drawings.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
October 22, 1945

Miss Lois Lenski
Greenacres.
R. F. D. 2
Torrington, Connecticut

Dear Miss Lenski:

How nice to hear from you again, and to know that the drawings are finding such warm and friendly homes! And what a happy thought to include your picture in (we think it must be) your studio! Little by little it is possible to pick out more details, such as the pottery animals over the fireplace. It seems a bright, comfortable and yet efficient studio, and we are very glad to have your picture.

Please accept our thanks for your continuing kindness, and our good wishes for your work.

Sincerely yours

hmj
Secretary