January 2016

Lilian Washburn Correspondence

Lilian Washburn 1870-1945

Maine State Library

Lillian Washbunr Vilenius 1870-1945

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WASHBURN, Lilian

Reading, Pennsylvania, September 27, 1870—
Resident of Livermore Falls
Breif autobiography of Lilian Washburn, daughter of Charles Ames Washburn, fifth son of Israel Washburn of Livermore.

Was born in the city of Reading Pennsylvania on September 27, 1870. Daughter of Charles Ames Washburn and Sallie C. Cleaveland.

In my earlier years we moved about a good deal so that my education had no special direction, or object. I was always fond of music and began my musical training in California with a Mexican guitarist, who taught me that instrument on my mother's old guitar, which I still have.

Later, being in or near New York City, I continued to study music first piano, then voice. My main study at that time was music. I belonged to the famous Rubenstein Club of woman's voices, conducted by the well-known H. Chapman, and continued to sing in the Maine choruses conducted by Mr. Chapman when I came to live in Maine.

After both my parents had passed away, I came to Maine to live and took our family mansion, The Norlands, as my temporary home, and also ran the farm for three years, 1915—1918.

When the Great War, as we called it, came I looked about for something to do that would help, and since the nursing service (which was where I belonged) would not take me I said, "Oh very well, if I can't do a woman's work, I'll do a man's," and since in my farming experiences I had taken my certificate as a tester of milk by the Babcock method at the University of Maine, I did that work for the whole summer of 1918, and I'm here to say that it is a man's work, but I made a good record none the less.

Meantime I managed to get in some study in nursing in New York City, and qualified as what was known as "Nurse's Aide" V.N.A. in the fall of 1918 there was a great outcry for women to nurse, anyone who could do anything in that line was welcomed then, and so I got to France.
I can't say that my work on France amounted to one thing, but, at least, I was there, and ready in case the armistice didn't last.

Returning home to Maine I had the misfortune in July 1919 to fall off a trolley car in Auburn and break my right hip, and it is really that accident that placed me in the literary field, for music, especially singing, was over, as one must stand to sing or sit on a hard stool to play and I could do neither.

So, gradually, I worked my way into a certain measure of success in writing articles for the Lewiston Journal, and the Boston Sunday Post, and did other writing that didn't sell, but was, I suppose, good practice.

Ever since I can remember I've thought that the story of the seven Washburn brothers was an amazing thing, and would make good reading, and give some inspiration to future generations.

Thus for years I have been making notes and planning the form of the book which has promptly found a publisher in our good state of Maine.

I live very quietly here in Livermore, continue writing things that I hope to sell, and friends are good enough to so I don't look my age. I'm sure I don't feel it.

So-- here I am

Lilian Washburn
August 7, 1939

Miss Lilian Washburn  
c/o Falmouth Book House  
12 Monument Square  
Portland, Maine

Dear Miss Washburn:

The notice of your forthcoming book, MY SEVEN SONS, has reached our attention, and of course it is a book which will fill an important niche in Maine annals. We will order a copy at once upon publication for the general lending section of the library.

At this time, however, we are writing to suggest that you may wish to present an inscribed copy for exhibit in the Maine Author Collection, which as you may know includes about a thousand books by Maine writers. Such a collection has a readily comprehensible value, not only for the present, but also for the future. Nowhere else is available such a complete representation of this state's contribution to literature, and the worth of these books steadily increases.

We trust that we may have the privilege of adding your volume to the shelves; and we take this opportunity to congratulate you upon bringing within the covers of a book, convenient to consult, the remarkable story of these noted sons of Maine.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

BY

hm

SECRETARY
Livermore Falls, Maine R.F.D.1.
Sep't 18th 1939

Maine State Library
Helen Michaud, Secretary

Dear Madam,

I find I did not answer yours of August 7th regarding my forthcoming book "My Seven Sons" for which I beg to apologize. It will probably be some weeks before it is actually on the market, but I will see that your copy is forwarded as soon as possible. This all takes time it seems.

Regarding a copy for exhibition purposes,-- I must re-imburse myself for initial expenses before I can give any away, but will consider the matter then.

It would really be better to place this first edition on the exhibition shelves, as the second one will be cheaper, and will not have my signature.

I wonder if you can give me, or tell me where I can get, a list of all Maine libraries, or is there some central organization that distributes such books to libraries or schools?

I enclose stamped envelope for reply.

This is a worth while book. It's very brevity, in this hurried period, being an advantage. My slogan is that you can read it in an hour and think of it all the rest of your life.

Yours very truly,

[Signature]

[Handwritten Signature]
Miss Lilian Washburn  
Livermore Falls, RFD 1  
Maine

Dear Miss Washburn:

Thank you for your letter of September 18.

We realize that bringing out a book is an enterprise involving no small detailed labor. We did not mean to imply that we were ordering through you the copy which we will use for lending purposes. That volume will be ordered through the Bureau of Purchases, which handles all state orders.

The copy about which we wrote to you is that which we hope to exhibit in the Maine Author Collection. We believe our first letter mentioned the scope and value of this collection. Naturally, the most interesting and valuable edition for such a collection would be the first, and we hope that you will find it possible to present a copy of this.

There is no central distributing agent, as far as books for libraries are concerned; and we are, in response to your request, enclosing lists of the Maine libraries. Stipend libraries are supported by taxes; that is, town and state money. Non-stipend libraries are supported by other means: privately, or by some organization.

Please accept our sincere wishes for the success of MY SEVEN SONS, to which we are looking forward with pleasure.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY  
BY

hm
Encls--2
May 24, 1940

Miss Lilian Washburn  
Livermore Falls, RFD 1  
Maine

Dear Miss Washburn:

Recent notices of MY SEVEN SONS have not come to our attention, and we therefore wonder whether or not publication has been delayed. We hoped to see the book sometime before now, and we do trust that such a valuable and important Maine book will not be indefinitely postponed.

Please accept our good wishes for the successful completion of the work.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

SECRETARY

hmj
Livermore Falls, Maine R.F.D.1. May 27/40

Regarding my book "MY Seven Sons, by Israel Washburn" --- it has been printed and is being bound at once.

If you have remitted to the publishers please let me know, if not will you kindy send amount to me. We have to make it a cash-and-carry matter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Lilian Washburn
May 28, 1940

Miss Lilian Washburn
RFD 1
Livermore Falls, Maine

Dear Miss Washburn:

Thank you for the recent information regarding your new book, MY SEVEN SONS, to which we look forward with eagerness.

We always order non-fiction books by Maine authors, for the purpose of general circulation and reading. These orders must be placed through the State Bureau of Purchases, according to regulations, and one of the requirements is that no advance payments shall be made. The exceptions to this rule are: United States publications, and a case in which we can secure a more favorable price by advance payment. There is a great deal more red tape connected with this procedure, and it is therefore not looked upon kindly.

If, by placing an advance order and paying for the book before it is sent to us, we can secure a lower price, please let us know. Otherwise, the order will have to be sent out on competitive bids to several booksellers, in which case we cannot of course tell from whom you will receive our final order.

The copy of MY SEVEN SONS about which we have been corresponding with you is that for the Maine Author Collection, which as we believe we mentioned is an exhibit. Many persons come to the State Library to see this remarkable array of books written by Maine authors, and about Maine subjects.
It is of course especially appropriate that such a volume as that which you have prepared should be included in this collection.

Unfortunately, our appropriation does not permit us as many purchases as we would wish; for that reason, we have been mainly reliant upon the kindness and interest of our authors. Most of them are happy to present an inscribed copy of their books to this collection, knowing that the books are not lent, and are carefully preserved for the future historians, and are always on display for those who come to see the books.

We do hope that you will want to join this company, including Kenneth Roberts, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert P. Tristram Coffin, and many other celebrated writers. Your book is certainly a distinctive contribution to Maine literature and history, as well as biography; we anticipate with keen pleasure the reading of it, and trust it will not be long before that pleasure becomes a fact.

At your convenience, would you be so kind as to supply us with biographical information? We find that our files are lacking in important, specific details, such as birthplace, birthdate, education, and so forth.

We realize that this long letter may seem to you a bit imposing; and we assure you that we would not possess the temerity to suggest this amount of generosity on your part, were it not for the fact that we are building for the future, and are endeavoring to make this Maine Author Collection as complete, for the benefit of future history and generations, as possible.

We will be sincerely grateful for whatever interest you may manifest in the project, and whatever generosity you may feel is fitting.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj

SECRETARY
Livermore Falls, Maine R.F.D. 1

June 2nd 1940

Helen Michaud
Maine State Library

Dear Madam,

I have your very kind and interesting letter of recent date, and will assure you that I will see that you have a free copy of my book "My Seven Sons, by Israel Washburn." as soon as it comes from the bindery, which should be in about two weeks.

This is not one of those dry statistical books that everyone but students passes by, but a conversational story as told by Israel Washburn, who was my 3-grandfather, and very easy reading.

You speak of getting data etc. If you will tell me just what you want in that line I will try to get something.

My slogan is going to be "A book that you can read in an hour, and think about as long as you live."

Thanking you again for your letter

[Signed]

Israel Washburn
Miss Lilian Washburn  
R F D 1  
Livermore Falls, Maine  

Dear Miss Washburn:

Some time ago we received from the publishers, with a bill, a copy of MY SEVEN SONS. We immediately devoted ourselves to perusing its deeply interesting accounts, and were promptly thankful that such a book on the famous Washburn family was at last available. It is a fine piece of work, and many Maine people will be grateful to you for accumulating the data so painstakingly.

We delayed writing to you, believing that every day would bring the inscribed gift copy which you had written us we might expect for the Maine Author Collection. Meanwhile, we of course put the copy we had received into the lending section of the library and approved the bill for payment.

Please accept our very best wishes for the wide-spread acclaim of your book; and be assured that when it is convenient for you to inscribe and send the exhibit copy for the collection, we will be most happy to accept it.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj
Encls--label and postage
Livermore Falls, Maine R.F.D. I. 9/19/40

Replying to your recent letter, about "My Seven Sons" I will at once advise you that I had supposed the book was sent you from the office long since.

I am getting a few copies for myself to distribute, and will inscribe and forward one within a few days.

 Truly yours,

[Signature]
October 19, 1940

Miss Lilian Washburn
R.F.D. 1
Livermore Falls, Maine

Dear Miss Washburn:

The inscribed copy of MY SEVEN SONS for the Maine Author Collection has reached us, and we are of course delighted and most grateful for your kindness and generosity.

This splendid and attractive book has been for some weeks in the lending section of our library, where we are glad to notice it is in demand. It is especially fine to have this biographical material about such famous Maine sons in convenient printed form, and Maine and her citizens should be proud of your accomplishment.

Enclosed you will find three cents to refund the amount of postage necessary to send the book to us. At your convenience, would you be so kind as to supply us with some biographical information concerning yourself? We like to have the files on our Maine authors as complete as possible.

Please accept our very sincere and deep thanks, not only for the gift copy of your book MY SEVEN SONS, but also for the service which you have rendered history by writing these life stories of the notable Washburn brothers.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj
Encl—3¢
Livermore Falls, Maine R.F.D. I.

Jan. 7th 1941

My Dear Mrs. Jacobs,

In my annual sorting out of old letters I found one from you asking me for some notes of my own life, and it seems to me that there is very little to tell, especially in a biographical way, but I'll wrap up a few items and two photos and enclose them with this.

The book has received lots of praise, for, as with you, many people are glad to get it and seem to find it good reading, as I meant it to be, for biographies are usually dry as dust, and I think that, whatever the faults of my book dryness is not one of them.

The items about me are on separate page, photos enclosed.

The cane is the same my Grandfather Israel holds, and, as I am lame I now use it myself. My father brought it from Cala, to his father.

Yours very sincerely,

[Signature]
Miss Lilian Washburn
R. F. D. 1
Livermore Falls, Maine

Dear Miss Washburn:

Your kindness in sending us the biographical sketch of yourself and two photographs is indeed deeply appreciated.

The Maine Author Collection is honored with the inclusion of your distinctive MY SEVEN SONS, and we continue to be grateful for its creation.

Please accept our thanks for the generous expenditure of your time in sending us the sketch of your life, and our cordial good wishes for the New Year.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj

SECRETARY