January 2016

Nancy Dingham Watson Correspondence

Nancy Dingham Watson

Maine State Library

Aldren A. Watson 1917-

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WATSON, Nancy Dingham  (Mrs. Aldren A.)
April 4, 1956

Mrs. Nancy Dingman Watson
C/O Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
501 Madison Avenue
New York City 22

Dear Mrs. Watson:

When your book, WHEN IS TOMORROW?, was published, we ordered copies for our traveling libraries and bookmobiles, where it has, by all reports, delighted young readers and their parents for some time.

Discovering that the Maine coast entered into the book, we think you might be interested in the Maine Author Collection. This is a permanent exhibit of Maine books -- those written by people born here, or living in the state, or written about Maine subjects, or using the state as a setting. Most of the volumes are inscribed presentation copies. The inscriptions are varied and interesting, and lend a particular distinction to an outstanding collection.

We also gather any available information, literary, critical and biographical, on our authors, so that we may have as complete information as possible. We are proud of the collection, and happy that it attracts visitors and students throughout the year.

It occurs to us that WHEN IS TOMORROW? would be a delightful addition to the collection, and we hope that you may agree. You have our good wishes for its continuing success.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

PW July 16, 1955 said "Mr. Watson's drawings of scenes along the Maine coast are superb."
Hilda McLeod Jacob
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 4. I'm so glad your Maine readers are enjoying our book. This only in part repays the wonderful people of the State of Maine for some happy times we have spent there.

Will you let me know just what it is want besides an inscribed presentation copy? I shall be glad to comply.

We hope to return to Maine this summer, if we can find a place to stay from mid-August through September. I have to leave the farm then because of an allergy to ragweed, and we have found Vinalhaven and other coast areas relatively free of this weed. Vinalhaven is our most favorite spot in Maine thus far.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Dingman Watson

(Mrs. Aldren Watson)

P.S. Interesting aside—my father's name is Norman McLeod Dingman....
April 23, 1956

Mrs. Aldren Watson
Putney
Vermont

Dear Mrs. Watson:

The delay in acknowledging your friendly letter was caused by a few days away from the office, not by a lack of appreciation for the delightful anticipation it engendered.

As for the inscription, we wouldn't dream of making suggestions. Some of those we have admired are the pen-and-ink sketches, simple but artistic, which Robert P. Tristram Coffin used to place in his books; a few authors given to verse have written a rhyme, sometimes serious, sometimes frivolous; there are a few who have incorporated autobiographical details; we have a charming watercolor in one book; there are several tributes to the state itself; occasionally we find only the simplest of autographs. Whatever the inscription is, it is original, and we cherish it for that. Please do what you wish; we shall be grateful.

How nice of Vinalhaven to behave so well about the ragweed. We certainly hope that you will find your way there this year, and that this discouraging wintry weather will relax and smile upon you.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

I'm not up on fine genealogical points, but your father and I may have had a common Scot ancestor -- a skirl of the bagpipe to him!
August 25, 1956

Mrs Frieda McLeod Jacob
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

We haven't yet tracked down the genealogy of the clan, but in a recent book of Mrs. Watson's which I illustrated, and which was dedicated to her father, I did misspell his middle name! Through his tears of happiness he missed the first time, but the error was corrected subsequently.

Here, at long too long last, is the book. Mrs. Watson is in Greenville and may produce another Maine item. Meanwhile we recommend WHAT DOES A BEGIN WITH? which will be out in the fall. Published by Knopf. A down to earth farm alphabet book.

Sincerely,

Aldren A. Watson
September 5, 1956

Mr. Aldren A. Watson
Putney
Vermont

Dear Mr. Watson:

It is kind of you to remember the Maine Author Collection, and we acknowledge with appreciation the safe arrival of the delightful WHEN IS TOMORROW?, which is being added to the other Maine books.

We have our eye out for WHAT DOES A BEGIN WITH?, and you have started real excitement and speculation over the possibility of another Maine book emanating from Greenville. It is one of our favorite regions. Will the book be about mountains or lakes or deer or fishing or what?

Please express our thanks to Mrs. Watson for her generous interest in the Maine Author Collection. We hope she had a ragweed-free vacation, and we shall be watching for the new books.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection