

April 2016

Ben Ames Williams Correspondence

Maine State Library

Ben Ames Williams 1889-1953

Florence Williams

Oliver Leigh Hall 1870-1946

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WILLIAMS, Ben Ames

Born at Macon, Mississippi. 1889

Copy.

November 5, 1931.

Mr. Ben Ames Williams,
25 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts.
My dear Mr. Williams:-

When I reported to Mr. Dunnack that I had obtained for the Maine Author Collection an autographed copy of The Rational Hind he said "Why didn't you get some of the others", so I am writing to ask you if you will send us for the Maine Author Collection Immortal Longings, Evered, The Thrifty Stock. Please autograph them, and if you will inscribe them, also, it will add greatly to their interest. We do not ask you to give us the books; please make you bill in duplicate to the Maine State Library. I enclose postage and an address label. If it is not convenient for you to send the books from your office please let us know and we will arrange to have them sent to you from the publishers for autographing.

Since meeting you I have reread Letters from Fraternity; there are so few books which will bear rereading. You did a great service to Maine when you got the McCorrison letters into book form!

Another thing. The Marchbanks Press have just sent me an attractive reprint of your paragraph on the Charm of Old Books. I should like to quote this some time in our Library Bulletin. May I have your permission to do so? I shall of course write to the Saturday Evening Post for their permission, also.

Will you send us some biographical material about yourself-something more personal than a Who's Who item? We should like to have this for use in the Bulletin and, also, for our permanent files. I believe I mentioned to you that the Maine Author Collection, which is an exhibition collection of the work of Maine authors, or authors associated with the state during their creative years, includes also biographical and critical material about our writers.

It was a great pleasure to meet you and I was delighted to see Mrs. Williams again. Please remember me to her. I think her drawing of Hardscrabble is delightful!

(Signed MCF)

BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

November 6, 1931

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

I have your letter asking that further copies of my books be sent along to the library, and I am starting proceedings with a view to doing as you wish.

That is to say, I am writing the Old Corner Book store to get copies of these books. They may not be able to do so, as I suspect that the publishers' stocks have been exhausted, and the demand has not sufficiently justified them in printing a further edition; but I will let you know as soon as I know more definitely myself.

I am passing on your request for biographical dope to Floss. That is her particular province. Like the famous dean of Balliol College ~~Whatever~~ is knowledge, she knows it; and what she doesn't know isn't knowledge, so far as my biography is concerned.

You have, of course, my permission to reprint the Marchbanks Press excerpt from THE SHAPE OF FEAR, but my permission is of slight importance unless the Saturday Evening Post will also give you theirs. I assume they will be glad to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Ames Williams

Mrs. Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

November 12, 1931

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

The Old Corner Book Store sent me today copies of EVERED and THRIFTY STOCK, which I am forwarding to you under separate cover, in line with your recent request for copies of these books and of IMMORTAL LONGINGS.

They are trying to get IMMORTAL LONGINGS; and if it comes in, I will send it along.

I am enclosing their bill for these two volumes. I hope this is what you wanted.

Cordially yours,



Mrs. Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

Enc.

Copy.

November 16, 1931.

Mr. Ben Ames Williams,
124 Chestnut Hill Road,
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Williams;-

The two books, Thrifty Stock and Evered,
came today. Thank you for taking the trouble to autograph
them for us. I always feel so apologetic when I suggest
anything that means wrapping and mailing a package! Per-
haps Florence does in your family.

State bills are somewhat knotted with red tape
so you may not be paid for the books for a week or two.

Please give my regards to Florence.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed MCF)

BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

November 18, 1931

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

I'm glad the books reached you safely.
I am told IMMORTAL LONGINGS is no
longer available, unless perhaps through
the second-hand stores.

You can have the bill for these books
paid direct to the Old Corner Book Store,
if you like. The statement which I sent
you was the only one I received from them.

Cordially yours,



Mrs. Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

January 6, 1939

Dear Sir:

I am engaged on a novel dealing with the early history of the town of Union, before its incorporation, and I have been able to get hold of the regular histories---Sibley's Union and Eaton's Warren and Thomaston, together with other histories of some of the surrounding towns.

I wonder if you have any early map of the town of Union, showing the location of the farms of the first settlers? Some of them are located in Mr. Sibley's history, but I should like to be as precise as possible. I have a large-scale map of Waldo County made about 1860, on which the farms are marked, with the owners of some of them, but that of course does not include Union. I thought there might be a similar map of the town of Union, or of the county which would include the town.

Also, I should be grateful for any other Union material you have available. Mr. Sibley in his history refers to source books of various kinds, especially a Day Book kept by Hawes, one of the earlier settlers, which was at that time---i.e. about 1850---in the possession of Mr. Noyes Hawes of California. I wonder if any of the Hawes papers have been turned over to the Augusta library?

Any suggestions you can make will be appreciated.

Cordially yours,



State Librarian,
Augusta,
Maine.

January 11 1939

Mr. Ben Ames Williams,
124 Chestnut Hill Road,
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

My dear Mr. Williams:-

I regret that we have no large scale map of Knox County similar to the map of Waldo County which is in your possession. We have a manuscript map of Knox County (wall size) made in 1858. It shows the boundaries of the "proposed new county of Knox" and the boundaries of the towns but has no other detail.

In the Forestry Department, which includes what was formerly the Land Agent's Office, I find an old map of Union (1795) copied from the original in the Massachusetts archives. I enclose a copy of the map-title. No farms are indicated on it but the topographic detail is very carefully done; the forests are indicated, also. It is a lovely map, in color, and I am sure that it would interest you. It would be possible to have a photostat made of it, by making application to the Department of Forestry.

If you have Sibley's Union, and the two Eaton's histories you have the best available material on that section. In fact I know of no other early town history which goes so much into detail about surroundings, natural history, folkways, etc. as Sibley does. I regret that we have none of the source

books referred to by Mr. Sibley. The library has none of the Hawes papers; the only manuscript item we have about Union is a one page tax list and valuation of property in Union---1849.

"Includes appraisement of the following: boats, money at interest, bank stock, livestock, polls, real estate, grist mills, saw mills, blacksmith shops, etc." 1849 is so much later than the period of incorporation that probably you would not wish to have a photostat of this item. We can arrange to have one made, if you want it.

I have made a special note of your inquiry and I will continue to look for Union material which might be of interest to you.

It is very interesting to learn that you are writing a novel dealing with the early history of Union. I shall look forward to reading it.

Please give my regards to Florence.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

MCF.
ENC.

BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

January 13, 1939

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

Thank you for your letter about Union material.

I am writing to the Department of Forestry to see if they will have a photostat made of the map of which you speak, and sent to me.

Florence often speaks of you! Will you pass my best wishes on to Mr. Hall?

Cordially yours,



Mrs. Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

January 27, 1939

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Hill Road
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you heartily for the kind regards sent me through your letter to Mrs. Fuller.

I am awaiting with interest the publication of ~~your~~ forthcoming book, which I understand is located in whole or in part in the town of Union. As I was born and passed my early years in Rockland, and a part of one summer at least of my childhood at the old Buxton house, Union seems like familiar country to me.

I am not certain as to the exact scope of your book, but could imagine that rather vivid color, if such be desired, could be obtained from a brief chat with Franz U. Burkett, who has a most delightful personality, and is very original and entertaining. I presume you know Mr. Burkett, who has been Speaker of the Maine House, and is at present Attorney General, and understood to have some leanings toward the candidacy for Republican nomination for governor. (this is unofficial, simply the chat in political circles). Mr. Burkett of course passed his younger years in Union, where his father, State Senator Burkett, now resides. If you do not know the Attorney General, it would give me much pleasure to arrange for a meeting with him, which I know would be very pleasing for him, and I think very profitable for you.

Sincerely yours

OLH:m

State Librarian

BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

March 6, 1939

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

I have a map of Waldo County, Maine, published in 1859 by J. Chace Jr. & Co., located in Portland, Maine and at 23 N. 6th Street, Philadelphia, on which the farms are all marked and the names of the owners are given.

I am informed that the same publishers brought out at the same time a map of Lincoln County which would show the town of Union. If you have a copy of that map, on which the names of the owners of the farms along Seven Tree Pond and around Round Pond are marked, I would appreciate it very much if you would have the town of Union photostated at my expense and send me a copy.

Cordially yours,



Mrs. Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

March 15, 1939

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Road
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

My dear Mr. Ames:

I have located here a map of Lincoln County of about the same period as the Waldo County map you mentioned, although it is not by the same publishers. It shows the town of Union, and the names of the owners of the farms around Seven Tree Pond are indicated. Among the inserts on the margin of the map is a small map of Union Center. There is also a picture of a carriage factory at Union.

Would you care to have a photostat of these also? As soon as I hear from you again, I shall be glad to arrange with the Highway Department to have photostating done for you, if you wish.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

MCF:h

Marion Cobb Fuller
Research Librarian

April 1, 1939

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Hill Road,
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

My dear Mr. Williams:-

I very much regret that there
has been a delay in getting the Lincoln County map
photostated for you. I hope that it will be sent to you
Monday. I thought that the matter had been attended to.
Please pardon my negligence.

Very truly yours

MCF

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

April 5, 1939

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

The photostat of the map of Union reached me safely today, for which many thanks. I haven't yet received the bill, but I will send along a check as soon as it arrives.

Sorry to have troubled you a second time!

Cordially yours,
Ben Ames Williams
K.P.

Mrs. Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

March 26, 1940

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Hill Road
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Williams:

Please add our congratulations to those of the rest of the reading public on COME SPRING. It's an unusual book, fascinating and accurate; and we are delighted with it, and with the opportunity of having such a book to include in our traveling libraries.

We wonder if perhaps you do not agree with us that the Maine Author Collection would be an exceptionally worthy and fitting place for an inscribed copy to be preserved. If you do, we assure you that it would give us great pleasure to add COME SPRING to the shelves.

You doubtless recall that this is an exhibit collection of books about Maine and by Maine writers, most of them inscribed presentation copies. The collection now numbers about a thousand volumes, and presents a really impressive array of this state's contribution to literature.

We hope it will be possible for COME SPRING to be included; and we send you our very best wishes for the success of the book, which certainly seems to be assured.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj

SECRETARY

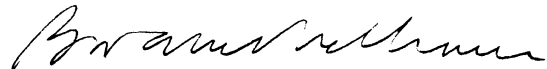
BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

March 28, 1940

Dear Mrs. Jacob:

Thank you for your letter about
COME SPRING. I am glad you've
enjoyed reading it, and I take
pleasure in forwarding an inscribed
copy for the Maine Author Collection,
as you suggest.

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely reading "Ben Ames Williams".

Mrs. Francis W. Jacob,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

April 1, 1940

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Hill Road
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Williams:

To our congratulations must now be added our hearty thanks for your kindness and generosity in sending an inscribed copy of COME SPRING for the Maine Author Collection.

It is a distinctive addition, and we are proud to include it.

We are also proud and delighted to hear the increasing number of inquiries: "Have you read COME SPRING?", or "You must read COME SPRING!" It is certainly an exceptionally fine novel, and of course especially pleasing to us of Maine.

Again, our thanks and continued best wishes.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj

SECRETARY

September 4, 1940

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Hill Road
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Williams:

For a prize at a contest to be held at the annual convention of the Maine Library Association in Waterville next week, Mr. Hall desires to offer a copy of your delightful and popular novel, COME SPRING. He also wishes it to bear the distinction of your autograph.

We realize that this is not an early request! We do, however, fervently hope that you will find it possible to send one, so that we may have it not later than Monday, September 9, autographed, together with an invoice. (Mr. Hall instructs me to add that if you are short of copies, we'll gladly see that another reaches you, if you prefer it that way.)

With best wishes for the continued success of one of the season's outstanding books.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj
Encl --label, postage, envelope
Copy to Searsmont (returned with the following note)

SECRETARY

*Recd Mrs. Lusk -
I wanted the
book this - Saturday -
am - using the
original letters; so return
this to you.
Sincerely yours
B. Ames Williams*

September 4, 1940

OLIVER L. HALL
STATE LIBRARIAN
THERESA C. STUART
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN



PLEASE ADDRESS YOUR REPLY TO
MAINE STATE LIBRARY

Maine State Library
AUGUSTA

September 13, 1940

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
Hardscrabble Farm
Searsmont, Maine

Dear Mr. Williams:

The delay in acknowledging your impressively prompt cooperation is not so ungracious as it may appear. We have waited for the bill, so that we might tell you we were approving it for immediate payment -- but there is no bill.

If you will send one, we will be happy to pay it with as great dispatch as official red tape permits. If you do not intend to send one, the only course remaining to us is that of finding proper words to express to you our appreciation of such generosity. We enclose a return envelope for your convenience.

The librarian who won the contest and received COME SPRING as reward was completely delighted. She shares our enjoyment of the novel, and now is able to add a pride of ownership. It was a most happy choice as prize, and we thank you for your kindness in enabling us to carry out this last-minute plan.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

Kilda McLeod Jacob
SECRETARY

(Mrs. F. W. Jacob)

hmj
Encl--1

*has been sent -
I was glad to donate the book
yes*

September 18, 1940

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
Searsmont
Maine

Dear Mr. Williams:

For your courtesy and generosity in presenting an autographed copy of COME SPRING for use as a prize at the recent library convention, I am indebted. Its popularity and worth assured it a sincere welcome in the winner's library. Thank you very much indeed, and accept my good wishes for a long and happy life to the novel.

Very truly yours

OLE/HMJ

State Librarian

BEN AMES WILLIAMS
124 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

April 8, 1941

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

I wonder if you can tell me whether the name "Sager" appears nowadays in the Augusta Directory?

The villainess of my current novel was born "Jenny Sager". I chose the name because a man named Sager, who once lived in Augusta, had been convicted of killing his wife---so I thought the family could not object to its use. But I now learn there was at one time a "Sager's Tavern" at Gardiner; and of course, if the family still survives, I should hesitate to offend them.

Don't put yourself to too much trouble over this, as of course it isn't vital.

It now looks as though I would finish the novel within a week.

Cordially yours,



Mrs. Marion Cobb Fuller,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

April 10, 1941

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Hill Road
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Williams:

The name "Sager" does not appear in the current Augusta Directory but I find four Sagers listed in the Gardiner Directory, one of whom is named "Jennie", and there is also a Sager's Market in that town. There may be survivors of the Sager family in Augusta whose surnames are something else.

It is interesting to know that the new novel is so nearly completed. Do you have a vacation when it is off the stocks or do you immediately begin on the next one?

Very truly yours

MCF

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

September 19, 1941

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
Searsmont
Maine

Dear Mr. Williams:

Congratulations upon the publication of THE STRANGE WOMAN. We have watched the advance notices, and now that reviews are being printed, we are gratified to observe others agreeing with us in our high opinion of your ability in the historical fiction field.

We like what Francis Ludlow says in the Retail Bookseller -- especially the comparison with Vanity Fair. Above all do we like the fact that now the book is published, and we may really read what we have been anticipating for months.

Since the story is of Maine, we wonder if you may not want to distinguish the Maine Author Collection further with an inscribed copy. COME SPRING constantly attracts attention even now from visitors; and in this day of thousands of books, we consider such attention a mark of perception in readers, and also a just tribute to that most excellent novel.

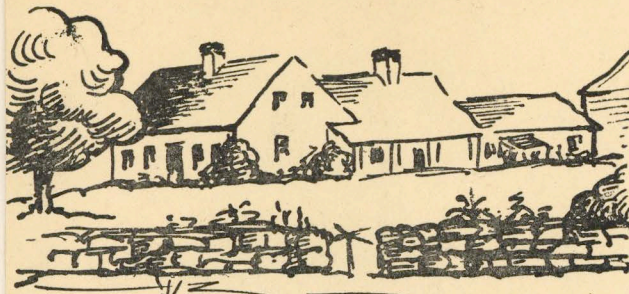
THE STRANGE WOMAN, from all accounts, is one to stand beside the earlier volume with pride; and we hope that we may be privileged to place it there in the Maine Author Collection. The best of luck to its career!

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj

SECRETARY



• HARDCRABBLE •
• SEARSMONT • MAINE •

Has two facts -

I'll try

to send you when we
return to Boston. No
copies available here;
but I'll look them
up in a week or two.

Yours truly

B. W. Merrill

SEP 27

October 11, 1941

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Hill Road
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Williams:

How generous and prompt you are! The inscribed
Maine Author Collection copy of THE STRANGE WOMAN
has been received, and we are deeply grateful.

Jenny is one of the most compelling characters
that has appeared in a novel in several years.
Your craftsmanship and solid foundation of history
are increasingly apparent in your novels. We look
forward to each one, and are not disappointed.

THE STRANGE WOMAN is no exception. It is an
outstanding portrayal, a really powerful book,
with its wealth of character and history, and your
knowledge of and skill in setting forth the inmost
incentives for the courses which these characters
followed.

We recognize your superb ability, and
congratulate you upon the fresh evidence of it in
THE STRANGE WOMAN, to which we wish all sorts of
success. Thank you very much indeed for the
gift copy for the exhibit.

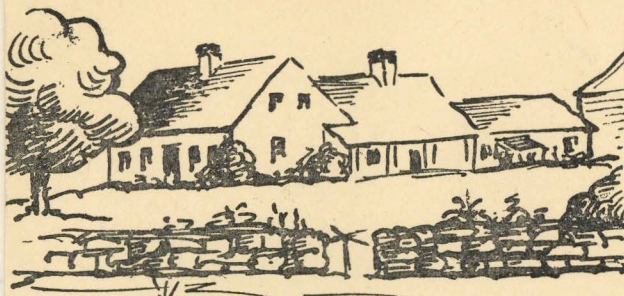
Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj
Encl--5¢,
refunding postage

SECRETARY

October 11, 1941



• HARDSCRABBLE •
• SEARSMONT • MAINE •

Dear Mrs Jacob - Thank you

For your appreciation letter
re the Strange woman. The
letter was worth the look!

Cordially Yours
Ben and Milbain

10-16-41

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

SECRETARY

Refunding postage
Encl--5¢
pmj

October 12, 1944

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
Hardscrabble
Searsmont, Maine

Dear Mr. Williams:

The gift copy of LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN, for the Maine Author Collection, has arrived; and we are delighted to place in it your inscription--delighted, also, to place the book in the collection with your other novels.

Please accept our thanks for your generous interest; and please continue to give us your perceptive novels, abundant with scene, analytical of character, and of absorbing interest to readers.

Sincerely yours

hmj

Secretary

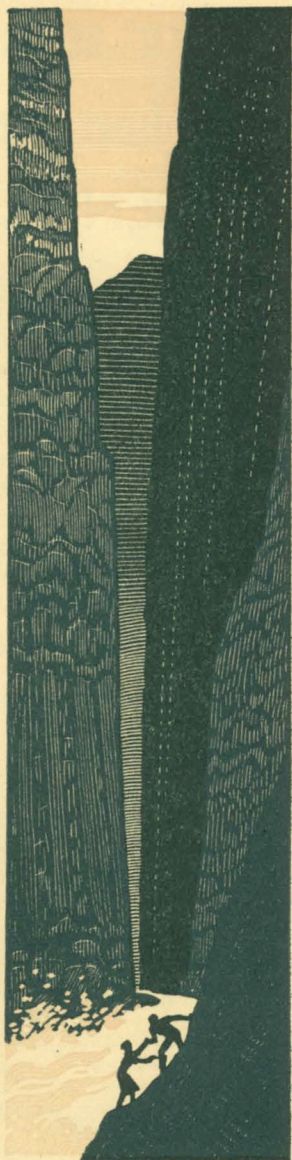
and terrible, he was to realize later.

When Danny was drowned in a lake in the Maine woods, Harland was forced to acknowledge what he had long known but refused to admit, that Ellen was the sort of woman who destroyed those she loved and all who threatened her. Then Harland knew he had to escape from her. Desperately Ellen struggled to win Harland back and when she realized she could never do that, she laid plans that would ruin the happiness she thought he would seek once he was freed from her. And she might have succeeded had it not been for the deeper nature of that happiness, the character of Harland himself, and the fact that Ruth's love, unlike that of her foster sister, was founded on faith and understanding.

Though *The Strange Woman*, an earlier Ben Ames Williams book, has now sold over a half million copies, though *Time of Peace* was a best seller over a year ago, *Leave Her To Heaven* is a book that surpasses both those recent successes.

The canyon walls were high, and rimrock barred their escape to the heights above. Sometimes they slipped on muddy footing, sometimes on wet rocks; and where the way was steep they clung like cats.

Leave Her To Heaven will be on sale to non-Guild members in the publisher's edition at \$2.50. The Guild edition will be available June 1st at the members' exclusive price of \$2.00.



LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN

is the best fate for a jealous woman

says **BEN AMES WILLIAMS**

THIRTY YEARS OR SO AGO in casual reading I encountered a reference to the Seven Deadly Sins. The phrase was not new to me, but I had never stopped to ask what the Seven were. The information, once acquired, stayed in my mind; and during the next fifteen years I wrote at one time or another five stories or novels which might, I thought, grow into a Septology—I'm aware that there is no such word, but why not?—each dealing with one of the Seven. Five were done; but Gluttony and Sloth never came to be written, for there was, it seemed to me, another sin more universal, and more deadly. Jealousy was a common trait; not the jealousy which a lover feels, but the jealousy of a mother who resents her child's affection for its father, of a wife who resents her husband's masculine friends, of a husband who resents his wife's interests outside the home. Jealousy which seeks exclusive possession, that is the original sin, manifested equally by the child with its toy, by the old man demanding attention from the young.

Leave Her To Heaven is a book about a jealous woman, about a woman who was jealous in the sense of demanding exclusive possession of the beloved individual, resenting his every other interest, his every other bond. As a story, it is the chronicle of the actions to which this woman's jealousy drove her. In its earliest form it was an extended psychological study; for I wrote at great length not only what each character did, but what each character thought. The original draft of what is now the first half of the book was as long

as is the whole book now. Much of this material was written as what might be called essays, or biography, or something of the sort. Out of these fragments, by a process of selection, some five hundred pages of manuscript were produced. To do this involved throwing away or condensing two or three hundred pages of preliminary material; and having done it, I subsequently cut out another twenty-five percent of what I had written.

In my mind the central episode was always the death of Danny, the central question: "How would a man react if he discovered that his dearly beloved wife had deliberately destroyed the thing which, next to her, he held dearest in the world?" As a younger man I had thought that stark drama rarely touched normal lives; as I grew older I discovered my mistake. So in this novel, basically a psychological study of jealousy as one of the Deadly Sins, the most extreme dramatic situation found a place.

Ellen had never seemed to drink so fully and completely the beauty of sea and shore and distant hills and radiant sky . . . They would picnic by the shore, on the turf above the rocky beach. Ruth had brought salad and sandwiches, and when the lobsters were done she began to pour the coffee into paper cups.



Vol. 18, No. 6

WINGS

June 1944

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF The LITERARY GUILD of AMERICA, INC.

Editor, JOHN BEECROFT

Garden City, New York

The book required of me more thinking than writing. I thought—sometimes making notes—for months before I attempted even a first draft of the first chapter. After a few chapters had been written, I interrupted the work to catch up with my thinking; and just as a woman likes to clean house before putting in new furniture, I turned to other tasks to clear my mind before coming back to complete—in seven months of concentrated attention—this book.

The original title—for reasons which appear in the book itself—was “Burnt Land.” It seemed necessary to change that title because during the two years while I was becoming better acquainted with Harland, he changed. The man I thought him to be when first we met, on coming out of nowhere into the imaginary world which I proposed to people, would have been destroyed by Ellen; but as I learned to know him better, and to know the people he knew, I found that—as is so often the case with new acquaintances—there was more to him than I had suspected. His weaknesses were the result of a too easy success; but he had an inner strength which would be toughened and tempered by disaster, and he had the great good fortune to find, when he needed her most, a woman already tempered by life to stand beside him. So Harland changed; he learned and grew. He still has much to learn, still has room to grow. But there’s good stuff in him and a future waiting.

So “Burnt Land” ceased to be a fitting title, for the book which had at first seemed likely to turn out a tragedy acquired at least the

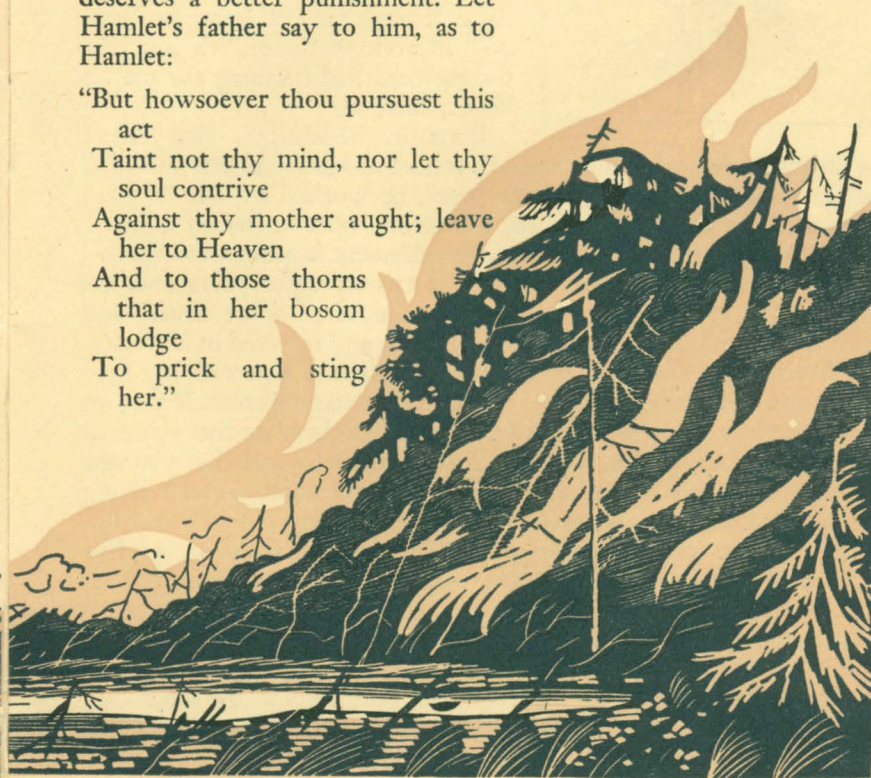
Smoke was everywhere, and far ahead of them the fire had crossed the river. On the other side, the trees along the water were ablaze. Once when the swirling, scorching wind for a moment swept the wall aside, Ruth saw that the whole face of the hill on the south bank was a towering wall of flames up which swept serpent torches roaring to the sky.



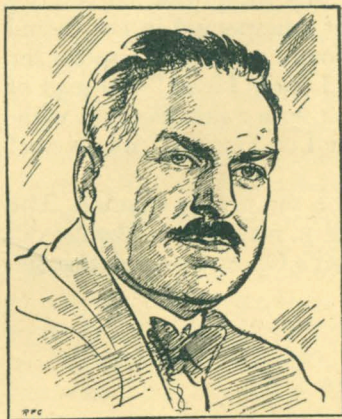
promise of an eventual happy ending. But then—what should it be called? For a while a phrase served. “I Will Never Let You Go.” Doubts were silenced by the reminder that the phrase did express the book’s central idea. Then one day at a newsstand in the Grand Central station I asked for a book and found myself, as I spoke the title, suddenly blushing. “None But the Lonely Heart.” No man of my general dimensions can ask for a book with a title like that without blushing; but clearly “I Will Never Let You Go” was worse! So again a change was necessary.

Mrs. Williams found what seems to be the proper solution. The reader, wishing that evil may come to Ellen, may feel, as Hamlet did when his mother’s crime was by his father’s Ghost revealed, that she deserves a better punishment. Let Hamlet’s father say to him, as to Hamlet:

“But howsoever thou pursuest this
act
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy
soul contrive
Against thy mother aught; leave
her to Heaven
And to those thorns
that in her bosom
lodge
To prick and sting
her.”



About BEN AMES WILLIAMS



"One foggy night years ago," Ben Ames Williams said in an interview with the *New York Times*, "I rowed a boat out to a bell buoy and sat alone, the bell clanging beside me—nothing but the sound, the water, the night, the fog—and smoked a pipe." Out of those few minutes more than a dozen stories came to Mr. Williams, though the bell buoy has been used in none of them. "It's just that the moment had meaning for me" is his explanation.

Born in Mississippi, Ben Ames Williams grew up in Ohio, went to school in Massachusetts and then to Dartmouth College. For four years, he worked by day as a reporter on the *Boston American*, and wrote short stories by night.

Ben Ames Williams' literary accomplishment is quite astonishing—he has been an established writer for twenty-eight years and has published thirty novels and about four hundred short stories and serials. Yet there is little repetition of theme and material in his work.

"When my stories were selling in top markets, I'd reverse my field and feel better when I'd turned out stuff that was different. If you go along playing up to the standard you've set just because that standard happens to be popular, you get into a formula—and for you the formula inevitably wears out," says one of the most popular living writers. Mr. Williams writes his novel with extreme care. He accumulated 100,000 words of biography before starting the story of *The Strange Woman*, and each year he writes about 250,000 more words than are preserved in print. One chapter of *Time of Peace* was re-written thirteen times before it satisfied him.

His last book, *Time of Peace*, was a 1942 Literary Guild selection. In *Leave Her To Heaven*, Mr. Williams goes back to the same kind of contemporary Maine setting that he used with such success in his stories of Bert-McAusland and the village of Fraternity.

September 26, 1944

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
Searsmont
Maine

Dear Mr. Williams:

When LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN was first published, our immediate thought was to write to you about it, and about the Maine Author Collection. Then we hesitated, not wishing to seem to presume upon your past kindness and generosity, and thinking that you might well want to present to the collection only those novels which are laid almost entirely in Maine. Be that as it may, we should of course be honored to include an inscribed copy if it seems possible and agreeable to you.

It has been interesting to see the comments upon your latest novel. The book itself is exciting, and perfectly portrays the type of woman Ellen was. In fact, we noticed that one reviewer regarded the characters as symbols. We are glad that the book has been successful, and we trust that its life will yet be a long and satisfactory one.

Sincerely yours

hmj

Secretary

**HARDSCRABBLE
SEARSMONT, MAINE**

Sept 29-1944

Dear Mrs Jacob -

I'm sorry, but I have no
copy of Issue 1 for to Heeren here; so your
request will have to wait a while. I am
asking H.W. to send you a copy at my
expense - and I enclose an inscribed postal
card which you can paste in the book in
an appropriate place. I trust this
is all right.

Cordially yours

Brown Miller

May 25, 1949

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
124 Chestnut Hill Road
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Williams:

It is good to know that we may look forward to FRATERNITY VILLAGE this summer. It seems a long time since we have had a Maine book from you, and it is welcome news.

We have noted the information so that it will appear in the next issue of the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association, which reaches all librarians in the state; and we hope that the Maine Author Collection, which has previously been distinguished by your generous interest, may include an inscribed copy of FRATERNITY VILLAGE when the book is published.

Our very good wishes for its success, and for a pleasant summer, which we trust may chiefly be spent at Searsmont.

Sincerely yours

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection

hmj

July 20, 1949

Mr. Ben Ames Williams
Searsmont
Maine

Dear Mr. Williams:

The inscribed copy of FRATERNITY VILLAGE has been received and will be placed in the Maine Author Collection with much pleasure and satisfaction.

It is good to have these stories in book form; and, while they make delightful and rewarding reading at any season, we think they are really perfect summer fare.

Thank you very much for presenting the book to the collection. Surely its popularity will wax with successive seasons.

Sincerely yours

hmj

In Charge of
Maine Author Collection