

# LETTERS OF VACHEL LINDSAY IN THE LILLY LIBRARY AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY

By DORIS M. REED

THE LETTERS of Vachel Lindsay in the Lilly Library were written through the years and form to some extent an outline of certain phases of his career from 1911 on. The majority of them are printed here. Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization follow that of the originals, and there are no omissions except the closing phrases and signatures of letters without postscripts.

The largest group is composed of those addressed to Frederic Gershom Melcher. Melcher had first become interested in Vachel Lindsay in 1913 when he was living in Indianapolis as manager of W. K. Stewart Company, Book-sellers. At that time George Bicknell, a customer of the store, was writing a series of articles on "Labor and Literature" for *The Bridgemen's Magazine*, the official monthly journal of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, which was published in Indianapolis. His "Article VI" in the November, 1913, issue was entitled "Nicholas Vachel Lindsay" and included quotations from the writings as well as information about the man. Bicknell lent Melcher some of Lindsay's poems and suggested to Lindsay that he send Melcher some of his pamphlets. Lindsay replied in the following letter and forwarded copies of his *Rhymes to be Traded for Bread . . . and Proclamation of the Gospel of Beauty*.

F. G. Melcher  
1842 North Delaware St.  
Indianapolis

Springfield Ill.  
Nov. 29, 1913

My Dear Sir:

At the request of Mr. George Bicknell—I am sending you under separate cover—a bunch of my printed matter.

I understand you are especially interested in my work, and I thank you most heartily for your solicitude on my behalf.

Any one else who *really cares* for this bunch of goods—may have it.

On January 27, 1916, Melcher and Lindsay met for the first time. On that date John Masefield gave an address on Shakespeare before the Contemporary Club at the Propylaeum in Indianapolis and also read from his own poems. Lindsay and his aunt, Mrs. Lucius O. Hamilton, whom he was visiting, were invited by Melcher to be his guests. That meeting started a friendship which was to last as long as Lindsay lived.

Melcher left Indianapolis in May, 1918, to become co-editor of *The Publisher's Weekly* in New York. Through the years the two men were to see each other when Lindsay's lecture tours took him to New York and on Melcher's less frequent trips West. During Lindsay's first real national tour as a speaker, Melcher arranged for an appearance in Montclair, New Jersey, where he was living.

Vachel Lindsay  
603 South Fifth Street  
Springfield, Illinois

July 3, 1919

Mr. Frederick G. Melcher:

My Dear Friend: Be sure I remember what a torch of liberty and light you were in Indianapolis. Thank you indeed

for your invitation. I will be very glad indeed to come to Montclair New Jersey next February, and leave the arrangements entirely to you, knowing your type of preparation will be exactly in order. My terms for a day's visit are \$125. I will be at the Brevoort Hotel 5th Ave and 8th street most of February; if there are any eleventh hour arrangements, and since N. Y. C. is your place of business do not hesitate to wake me up and take 9' oclock breakfast with me or 1 P. M. lunch any time passing by. Please consider the appointment made, and consider yourself welcome whoever else I may be having for Breakfast. My Aunt still speaks of you and what you did for Indianapolis, and we have much to talk over about that town, as well as our enterprise.

I am sending you the broadside I send to woman's club committees, and you may take it with a sense of humor and a pinch of salt, and act upon as much of it as you feel inclined. I will add that you may subdivide the fee among as many High Schools and Colleges as there are in Montclair, and you can take me to, in a single day.

What is perhaps more to the point, I am hoping you can bring to my principal audience, some time this fall, some one of the people who are talking on my work, that they may be started toward getting my books out of the Library. People who are lecturing are Jessie Rittenhouse—417 West 114th N.Y.C. William Lyon Phelps, Yale University, New Haven Connecticut—Louis Untermeyer 310 West 100th st N. Y. C. There are others further off, but these are right at hand. They interest people much more conventional than I am.

I am hoping to leave the people in a creative mood after I leave, especially the young poets, moved toward their own type of work and this requires the kind of listeners that are provided by some such measure as is above indicated.

Be sure I will trust all arrangements to you, however, knowing you know me well. I am certainly delighted to deal



with an old friend. I wish I could spend all my time going back to people I have already met, who know the worst.

Very sincerely

(Nicholas) Vachel Lindsay

I suggest Saturday Feb. 7 as the date of my coming, or as near there as is convenient.

On the day of this visit, Lindsay made four appearances. He spoke at two high schools and at the elementary school which Melcher's children attended in addition to the main appearance in the evening at the Unity Church. This was the sort of a day he liked. The "broadside I send to woman's club committees," mentioned above, which is entitled *The Kind of a Visit I Like to Make . . .*, sets forth Lindsay's dislike of appearing just in time for a recital and leaving immediately after it was over. He wanted to spend the whole day in a town and stated that he charged by the visit not the recital and that he despised "giving only one programme. I enjoy giving three to seven a day and my last is generally my best." The audience he preferred above all others was a high school assembly.

The same tour took Lindsay later in the spring to Santa Fe from whence he wrote:

Easter Sunday

Santa Fe—

1920 [Apr. 4]

My Dear Melcher: I am giving William Penhallow Henderson, the most brilliant painter in Santa Fe and permanently located here, a letter of introduction to you, and one to Edward C. Marsh. I would greatly appreciate it if you take him out to lunch in my name, and the strategy of the occasion might well include Marsh, I have introduced him to Marsh so emphatically. Mrs. Alice Corbin Henderson



is as thoroughly identified with this city and soil as is her husband, and I am very earnest about your locating a bookshop here, to feed all New Mexico, and I hope you and Henderson can talk over the Santa Fe and New Mexico situation as well as get very thoroughly acquainted.

Within a year Henderson, who has been away from New York for four years, will dawn on New York with a really great series of paintings and pastels, worthy of the serious consideration of you and your whole literary world, though such matters are not generally pressed in Publishers magazines. But It seems to me the whole Santa Fe outlook will then be greatly augmented. I am hoping a book of Alice Corbin Henderson's New Mexico verses will come out at the same time, running parallell with it, and I am encouraging Alice to write you about this and I will be delighted if you can advise her in regard to the strategy of bringing out this book parallell to the show, and I hope she and William can also make the wonderful New Mexico situation quite plain to you. In some ways this town already illustrates what "The Golden Book prophecies for 100 years hence, and I cannot tell you how glad I am that these people are carrying out the policies of this book, without ever reading it, or knowing anything about it. I know you and Mrs. Melcher will be delighted to know the Hendersons if you ever come to Santa Fe and it is in no casual fashion, but very earnestly indeed I reccommend them to you both.

The Edward C. Marsh, whom Lindsay wanted Henderson to meet, was Lindsay's special sponsor in The Macmillan Company, Lindsay's publisher at the time.

Mrs. Henderson's New Mexico verses were published before the year was out by R. F. Seymour of Chicago under the title *Red earth; poems of New Mexico*.

The reference to "The Golden Book" is to Lindsay's *The Golden Book of Springfield . . . Being the review of the*

*year 2018, and an extended description of Springfield, Illinois, in that year*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1920, in which Lindsay depicts his native city one hundred years hence as a symbol of world federation, which it has become through the dreams of its citizens.

Almost a year elapsed before the next letter.

603 South Fifth, Springfield Illinois  
March 17, 1921

My Dear Melcher:—Thank you indeed for the review. As to quitting the platform, that letter in Poetry was, first, a refusal to go and be lionized again or petted in Chicago on the old formulas. I have not been there for a year and a half, though it is full of my dear friends. I am either spoiled or lonely a deal of the time, and I had rather be lonely here than ruined with honey, in Chicago.

And I am glad people think I have left the platform for the most part. Still letters come pouring in for me faster than I can answer them. And I enclose to inquirers the enclosed insult for the Private Ear, and as a consequence few people take me up. That is, they find the enclosed folder very baffling and exacting, and I suppose put me down for a nut or an outrageous egotist. Not one person in fifteen who writes to me to speak for their town, likes this folder well enough to follow up after they read it. I will be glad if you care to study it out and elucidate for your constituency what you read between the lines. I will tell you in confidence meanwhile that I went busted on that English trip, since it was purely social, and found I had to travel a little to pay my debts, and get the Golden Book going a little, and also to get the right grip on the home town. The enclosed folder is a result.

I will be glad to see the "Emperor Jones," with you, or anything else handy while I am in New York. I will be speaking for Elizabeth New Jersey Woman's Club, April 21, Princeton University April 22, (my third visit to

Princeton,) to St. Marks on the Bowrie Afternoon of April 24, Church of the Ascension evening of April 24, and any time you want for a chat the following week I will put down now, and be sure I prefer old friends to new ones.

Friends like you must really help me in working out my destiny. I cannot do it alone. So much of it is a question of strategy, attaining to what is real and avoiding what is fake in public life, since I am kicked into the limelight whether I will or no. I am delighted to see The London Times print something that helps counterblast my London newspaper reputation for Jazz. Certainly the rituals of the far future are not Jazz, and I am thinking of the rituals of the future.

Anything you can do to make Springfield Illinois known without dragging me into it is a favor to me. Anything you can do to make it, without pain, a city with an imagination about itself, is a favor to me. As soon as the city gets an imagination then it becomes plastic material, and in a sense a deep thinking audience. I would like to see the time when this city listened so well it would be my best and only audience, and it would be rebuilt while it sang. I think it can be done. All it needs is the kind of a pride that many a University now has. I am not asking the impossible. But untill a wall is built around the city, much depends upon outside arrows shot into the city from places like your office. If you merely store the idea away in your mind, I am sure the chance will come. The Times clipping is a great help. It will appear in the local paper next Sunday, and the 200 copies of the Golden Book now in homes in this town will be taken down from the shelf, and some of them re-read sometime next Sunday afternoon. There are seven copies in the City Library, and a long line of people waiting for them.

Lindsay had sailed for England with his Mother on August 14, 1920, where he had recited his poetry at Oxford and Cambridge and been entertained by John Masfield and other notables. He had returned to Springfield in



November and Harriet Monroe had asked him to write an article on his trip for *Poetry*.

Excerpts from his letter of refusal were printed in *Poetry*, XVII: 262-263, February, 1921. He wanted to "escape forever the reciting and chanting Vachel . . . . I dislike the very name of every poem I have recited except *The Chinese Nightingale*. . . ." He wanted to get away from "a certain public self . . . forced upon me by my friends—the Vachel I was to them many years ago." He was tired of making public appearances and had hoped to set January, 1921, as a quitting time, but the English trip had yielded no financial return for his appearances there, and it was not possible to stop at this time.

The "insult" enclosed with this letter was Lindsay's *A Letter for Your Wicked Private Ear Only*, which had been issued first as a broadside. It reiterated Lindsay's desire to stay in a locality long enough to appear before several audiences and insisted that those attending be familiar with his poems in advance.

The review referred to in this letter was entitled, "A Dream of the Future. The Golden Book of Springfield. By Vachel Lindsay. (New York: The Macmillan Co. 21s. net.)" It appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* (London) on February 24, 1921.

Lindsay set out on an extended lecture tour in October, 1922. The pace of travel and his particularly exhausting type of reading was telling on him. At Christmas time he caught the influenza but continued to meet his engagements. On January 29, 1923, he appeared at Gulf Park College at Gulfport, Mississippi, where Richard G. Cox, who had been a student at Hiram College with him, was president. By this time his illness was so apparent that

Dr. Cox insisted that the remaining lectures be canceled and that Lindsay remain at Gulf Park for a time. It was arranged that he would teach a class in poetry.

Gulf-Park  
A Junior College for Young Women  
Gulfport, Mississippi

Office of the  
President

June 8, 1923

My Dear Frederick G. Melcher:—Thank you with all my heart for your note. It was most welcome. I will have one class a day in reading Modern Poetry here, all next year. Thank Heaven I will be reading other men's poems, not my own. I will use all the standard modern anthologies, including those of Harriet Monroe and Marguerite Wilkin-son, as I have the past three months. All along I have had the idea of getting you here for a visit, among the first. Take in New Orleans and the Double-dealer bunch, and then come by here, next winter. Give both Gulf-Port and Gulf-Park advice and effectual dynamite in building up a real book-shop and library center. So far these are the weak spots of an exceedingly young and effective institution. I must bring friends like you, here, and you must encourage them to come. It seems to me one of the most unique cultural opportunities in America. Please put President Richard G. Cox, the man who saved my life, on your mailing list, and find excuses to write to him, and to his librarian—Mrs. Cotman. I have asked her to write to you, and I hope you overwhelm her with all sorts of advice.

I am completely well, and have begun to write again, all sorts of sea-songs and swimming songs. To have met my old friend Richard G. Cox, fellow Hiramite, at this time, has been most eminently a good fortune. Please remember in taking him over you are taking me over. His work and mine are the same for a year. I wish he could get to New York this summer. It seems to me he has a very great future as an educator.

Lindsay had expected to stay at Gulf Park only a few weeks, but he remained until school was out in June, 1923, and returned for the school year 1923-24.

When school closed in June, 1924, he went to Spokane. By this time he had become somewhat disillusioned with his teaching, feeling that he was isolated at Gulf Park and that there was a lack of interest there in his work, but he still expected to return in the fall. By that time, however, he had decided to stay on in Spokane, which he was to make his home until April, 1929. Here he began to write again and to appear in schools and colleges to lecture and to read his poems.

On May 19 of the following year he married Elizabeth Conner, who at that time was a teacher of English and Latin in the Lewis and Clark High School of Spokane. Lindsay had met her earlier at a dinner in his honor at Mills College, but he had forgotten that meeting. He wrote of her to Melcher:

Davenport Hotel  
Spokane, U.S.A.

Room 1129  
June 6, 1925

My Dear Melcher:—Thank you so much for your very beautiful letters to me and to Elizabeth. I am sure she will be writing to you on her own account soon. I married her for her youth and beauty and discovered later—I had married a young lady so learned and accomplished from Latin to Sanskrit she can correspond with a man of learning with ease, so I hope she writes you a letter. I hope to see you before the year is out. I feel a whole lot more like reciting now I have a beautiful lady to sit on the front seat and act like she liked it.

I am sending you some more of Stoddard King. I profoundly appreciate your interest in his work. I think he is a great genius, and once he gets the attention of the Ameri-



can people they will never forget him. The *BULK* of his work from day to day, is rich and suggestive.

Watch for Andrew Jackson in *The New Republic* Soon, by N. V. L.

My great good wishes to the entire Melcher family. Surely we all want to see you when we get to the Great City and I want to sing for my supper once more, now Mrs. Tommy Tucker is along.

I have always felt, dear Melcher, the steadiness and sincerity of your friendship, and now that life itself seems worth living all my friends shine again in their original glory. I feel the vigor and eagerness to claim them all, as of old.

My very good wishes to Mrs. Melcher.

Stoddard King, a columnist for the *Spokesman-Review* in Spokane and author with Zoe Elliott of the words of "There's a Long Long Trail," printed some of Lindsay's poems in his column.

Lindsay's "Old Old Old Andrew Jackson" appeared in *The New Republic*, XLIV: 67-68, September 9, 1915.

In October, 1925, the Lindsays went east and the Melchers met Mrs. Lindsay.

Hotel Brevoort

New York, November 9,  
1925

My Dear Mr. & Mrs. Melcher:—

We want to thank you with all our hearts for our happy time Sunday. Elizabeth woke up this morning begging Vachel to set up a sylvan Eden just like yours. You have set us a beautiful example.

To this I must add my personal word that for my own very self I am happy indeed in a special way to find my little bride so much a natural part of all the life I have lived here before, and you may be very sure that my gratitude is profound, to you and all your friends who have opened every single door and every single heart just a little wider

than ever before, because I have brought with me this little lady of mine. It means great glory for me, for many good years, to be so well started.

We have much ahead of us that is beautiful, but nothing better than your friendship.

Lindsay's only New York appearance on his tour in the spring of 1926 was on March 23 and on the following day Melcher had written to Mrs. Lindsay about the success of Lindsay's reading "last night . . . . He read three new poems of which I particularly liked the one on Virginia."

September 20, 1926.  
514 1/2 West 15th  
Spokane Washington

My Dear F. G Melcher:—

I have many many things to thank you for. One is your steady courtesy to Elizabeth and myself, through our many kinds of weather. I still remember your great kindness in coming to my *last* New York recital and writing to Elizabeth that the people liked "Virginia."

We three Elizabeth Susan Doniphan and Vachel are very happy these days, very settled and very retired, behind a cliff a park, and a woods and a plugged telephone. I am reading hard on Jefferson, Lincoln and Emerson—all old subjects with me.

Our great good wishes to all your circle.

Nicholas Vachel Lindsay

"Each little booklet is Somebody's Child!"

Susan Doniphan, the Lindsay's first child, had been born on May 28, 1926.

On December 4, 1926, Melcher wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Lindsay:

I am sending along to you a little package of books that I thought might be pleasant additions to your winter reading. . . .

. . . I am going to have my first look at the Pacific Coast this year, I expect, on business, and, if I can get Spokane into the trip, I am certainly going to look you up.

Lindsay answered:

2318 West Pacific,  
Spokane, Washington,  
December 16, 1926.

Mr. Fred Melcher,  
The Publishers' Weekly,  
62 West 45th St.,  
New York, N. Y.

My dear Fred:

Elizabeth and I were surprised and delighted at the package of books, Walpole's letters, Tom Tom, and others, and we have started in reading them and establishing the Melchers more intimately in our esteem.

I am always pleased when Elizabeth is especially pleased, and she seems to have taken a special fancy to the book Tom Tom.

There are two book shops in the town, the one in the Davenport Hotel and Graham's, and we are in them about equally. You should plan to give them an equal amount of your thought and attention when passing through Spokane. My room is still 1129, Davenport Hotel. There I work and study and write all day and quite often Elizabeth and I have our little parties there. We meet there tonight and then go to the film, "the Four Horsemen" across the street. Elizabeth is also fixing me up a study at 2318 West Pacific and there is a lot of room both places. Please allow me to put you up in Room 1129 for the length of your stay in Spokane, where you may not only read my books, but meditate on my waste basket and enjoy the views.

Elizabeth is very urgent in cooperating with this invitation. She will take the greatest interest in your stay in the town and we will have many a little conclave, if you can give us your time.



Nothing has pleased me more than the friendship of the Melchers as a family for the Lindsays as a family. Our Holiday Greetings to you, and may you all live long and prosper.

The books referred to were apparently *A Selection of the Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by W. S. Lewis and John W. Vandercook's *Tom-Tom*, both published by Harper and Brothers in 1926. The latter describes the civilization of a colony of Bush negroes transplanted from Africa to the jungles of Dutch Guiana.

Room 1129 in the Davenport Hotel had been taken by Lindsay when he went to Spokane from Gulf Park in the summer of 1924. He had not yet given it up and now offered its use to Melcher.

For some years Lindsay had experimented with a method of presentation of his poems to which he gave the name, poem games, in which the chanting of his verses was accompanied by dancing. This form was a natural result of his manner of delivery of his poems and his desire to bring them closer to the primitive arts of folk dancing and folklore.

The games were tried first by the children of the Wellesley kindergarten, with Lindsay chanting his "The Potatoes' Dance" while the children improvised dances and Professor Hamilton C. Macdougall of the Wellesley music department played the piano.

In the summer of 1916, Lindsay presented poem games in the parlor of Mrs. William Vaughn Moody, widow of the poet, whose house near the University of Chicago was a gathering place for nationally and internationally known men of creative ability. On November 26 and 29 of that year, performances were given in the Little Theatre in

Mandel Hall at the University of Chicago. The dancer on these occasions was Eleanor Dougherty, younger sister of the actor, Walter Hampden. The program for the performance at the Little Theatre included the poems, "The King of Yellow Butterflies," "The Tree of Laughing Bells," "The Potatoes' Dance," "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba," and "Aladdin and the Jinn." The audience was asked to join in by making simple responses.

In Spokane, in the latter part of 1926, after the Lindsays had moved to 2318 West Pacific Avenue, Lindsay revived the poem games in his apartment, with Stoddard King and Lenore Frances Glen participating.

Typewritten copies of an "Announcement of A Programme of *Poem-Games and Dramas for Impromptu Actors* at the Little Theatre, To be given by Vachel Lindsay and Elenor Dougherty," in Chicago, in 1916, and of a "*Manifesto: The New Poem Games With a Word About The Spencerian Games*," which Lindsay sent to Melcher on January 6, 1927, are in the Melcher Manuscripts in the Lilly Library.

Lindsay wrote of the games to Melcher on December 30, 1926, and again on January 5, 1927.

Room 1129,  
Davenport Hotel,  
Spokane, Washington,  
December 30, 1926.

Dear Frederic Melcher;

We are eager to see you here in Spokane. I am not at all sure I have told you that we are starting new poem games. As a matter of fact, the title should be capitalized, The New Poem Games. We have a small flat but a very large parlor. There Stoddard King, the two little King girls, Lenore Frances Glen, my wife and myself have worked out all sorts of new games.

The difference between these and the old is, first, Stoddard is a corking good actor, quite realistic in detail, with lots of Little Theatre experience, having been really the hero of the Little Theatre here for years, and when he is in the game, there is something happens in the way of acting. Lenore Frances Glen is an excellent actress, very individual and beautiful dancer and has worked out in her own way such things as The Tree of Laughing Bells, the last page of Bob Taylor, How Dulcenia Dell Toboso Is Like the Left Wing of a Bird, a Doll's Arabian Nights, all of which, as you know, are new things to our old friends and she and Stoddard make a wonderful King Solomon and Queen of Sheba when they get going. Also we improvised one night, with the assistance of the children, The Blacksmith's Serenade, in the way that almost ruined the Methodists in the flat upstairs. We have drawn a circle and an astronomic ellipse upon the floor and we can have everything from solar systems to jigs. No one is allowed in the house that does not take part. We have gotten out a bulletin and we have sent a copy of it to Mrs. William Vaughn Moody and Eleanor Dougherty, the original helpers and projectors in the poem game. Those that will not march and act must sing, so come prepared to sing.

I guess that is about all, except that we will be glad to see you.

Room 1129,  
Davenport Hotel,  
Spokane, Washington,  
January 5, 1927

Mr. F. G. Melcher,  
The Publishers' Weekly,  
62 W. 45th St.,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Fred:

We are not only delighted that you are coming to Spokane and going to occupy room 1129 for us, and give it another memory, but we are, as it were, getting ready



new things for you. I have put up in the room a frieze of maps of the universe of all colors of the rainbow.

I find that Mrs. Lindsey not only reads the Publishers' Weekly with increased concentration, but sets a lot of store by the future possibilities of your visit. She thinks you might come more than once.

Last evening at our flat, 2318 West Pacific, we had a grand work-out of the New Poem Games. They include some new verses and such new actors that the whole idea is transformed. We began last night with King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Stoddard King for King Solomon, and he is a superb actor and dancer, Lenore Frances Glen for the Queen of Sheba, and she is a superb actor and dancer. Meanwhile the audience chanted Ten Thousand Years for all it was worth. The audience was composed strictly of the chorus, according to the new rules, so you have to holler to get in.

We did also the Blacksmith's Serenade, Stoddard for the blacksmith, Lenore for Polly Ann, and the chorus coming in with a big refrain, "Do You Like Me, Do You Love Me, Polly Ann?" "Do You Hear Me, Polly Ann, Polly Ann?" "This Merry, Merry, Quite Contrary, Tricky, Trixy, Polly Ann." Next we did "A Doll's Arabian Nights," with refrain much repeated, "Oh Quivering Lights, Arabian Nights, Bagdad, Bagdad."

We did also "How Dulcenia Dell Toboso is Like the Left Wing of a Bird." Then we did the last page of Bob Taylor, which, taken separately, you will find is not a bore. Then we did the two poems on the Deer and the Fawns in The Candle in The Cabin. We did several others which I forget. We did the Two Old Crows, then we did The Tree of Laughing Bells, that is, Lenore did it. It is her specialty, at present, in Poem Games, and since a big picture of the tree hangs in our parlor, she had something to act up to and around.

We want you to stay in Spokane as long as you can. I will do everything I can for you, and especially if you are

willing to take time and make a desultory and meditative job out of it I think we can have some real walks and adventures. Elizabeth knows every really wonderful walk in this region. She has taken them with hiking clubs galore, besides with me.

Because you put through Stoddard King's book and are considerably more in sympathy with the Spokane combination, *as* a Spokane combination than many other eminent friends of ours, it means a deal to us to have you here in this town rather than in Chicago or Cincinnati, let us say, though I suppose you would just as soon meet us in those two places.

You are in a position to look down the little alley-ways of our minds and get the Spokane idea if there is one, in connection with letters, art and dancing. Please do not hurry through.

Elizabeth joins me in this and in all previous letters and you may be peppered with letters before you get here, how do I know? I am quite excited over the idea of really doing something which connects Spokane with the outside world, and Elizabeth is hot-foot on the same trail.

Stoddard King's book, *What the Queen Said and Further Facetious Fragments* was published in 1926 by the George H. Doran Company of New York.

Melcher arrived in Spokane on Friday, January 21, 1927, and left for Seattle on January 23. An article by him on Spokane's and Seattle's bookshops and libraries, his visit to the Lindsays and his impressions of their poem-games appeared in *The Publishers' Weekly*, CXI: 598-602, February 12, 1927, in a series he was writing entitled "The Corner Office Afield."

In the early years of the twentieth century Lindsay had been a student at the Art Institute in Chicago and at the New York School of Art on West 57th Street. In 1920,

he had begun to draw again, and he was confident that he could produce pictures as effective as "The Congo" was in verse, once he got the hang of it. He now sought Melcher's aid in finding a publisher for a book of his drawings.

Spokane Washington—June 6, 1927  
2318 West Pacific

My Dear Fred Melcher:—Great good wishes to you.

Elizabeth and Vachel both wish you well, as does Susan Doniphan. She has grown so masterful of late we call her Doniphan-Susan.

I rise to a question of personal privilege. I want a publisher of pen-and-ink drawings to whom I may submit the effort of my life, who will bring out the book with all the care that abbey's pen-and-ink illustrations for Shakespear were brought out. I want nothing less than the chance for a complete exhibit, and a complete showing of my new pen-and-ink styles.

The book to be issued in a first edition of no less than five hundred copies, signed and numbered, and a little flower added to the signature.

The picture to be at the top and middle of this paper, with the five hieroglyphics below at the bottom of the sheet. The pages to be this shape and size with the drawing strong and black enough to balance the signature below. The book to be called "The Circus in the American Sky"—with most of the action at the top of the page—a kind of Village Improvement Parade in the air 500 pages long. The plates to be all copper (not zinc) though in the style that is generally called "zinc etching." Every picture to have as lively and colloquial a title as possible, but no verses.

I do not want the book to be reviewed as a book of bad poems, no matter how hard I try to play up the drawings, or how zealously I winnow the drawings and perfect the drawings, five hundred in all—I say. I am glad and



flattered and honored to solicit you as the publisher or agent of this work. You are the only friend I know in the east zealous enough in just such matters, to keep the publisher from reducing the plates or jamming them out of shape. I will submit the 500 drawings as soon as the contract is signed. I have tried in vain to get at the great John Lane Publishing house.

I want the kind of a publisher that will get "Art" reviews from the top art critics of the civilized world, not "literary" reviews from the few shepherds of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

With great good wishes from  
us both—yea from all three—  
Vachel

I keep a copy of this letter as a basis of the possible contract, and will be glad to compare it with the contract submitted.

This letter, as well as those of August 8 and 24, 1927, to Melcher is written on paper 8 3/8 inches wide and 19 3/8 inches long with a row of five hieroglyphics as a border across the bottom.

The "abbey's pen-and-ink illustrations for Shakespear" were those of Edwin Austin Abbey, American artist and illustrator. He had started to draw illustrations for Shakespear's comedies in 1886 and they were published ten years later in the four volumes of *The Comedies of William Shakespeare, with Many Drawings by Edwin A. Abbey* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1896). He continued to draw illustrations for the tragedies and historical plays until his death, many of these appearing in *Harper's Magazine*.

On June 16, 1927, Lindsay wrote again of his book of drawings to Melcher.

Permanent      2318 West Pacific  
address—      Spokane Washington  
June 16, 1927

My Dear Melcher:—

Great good wishes to you. I have just pulled through a sort of programme for the Pacific Coast Librarians at Gerhart, and I was only so so, but their cordiality and attention was superb. All this I know I owe to your tour as much as any one thing and I thank you.

Please do not forget my idea about the picture-book of 500 pen-and inks. An Ideal American publisher might be the Lipincott firm, now they are lifting their heads again. They published Henri's "The Art Spirit," which has gone into two editions. I am sure that Henri would back the book if it is any good at all—at least accept a dedication and advise its printing. Please interview Henri if you are still a wild an unreasonable partizan of mine. I want an unreasonable fanatical partizan! I mentioned the book most briefly to Alfred Harcourt in a letter last week, and if you are on chatting terms with him you might go over my last letter, and this one, with him—that is—such of this letter as is discreet.

Be sure if you are disposed to take the matter over with energy, with real faith in my pen-and-ink future, as an experimental designer, I will leave it all to you. Harcourt's letter was so friendly I answered the next mail.

(Later)

The boys from The Macmillan San Francisco office were at the Gerhart recital—also your friend Levinson. They were all consideration and courtesy itself, which I owe to you.

But I cannot sing very well, except at my own camp-fire, with Elizabeth and Susan Doniphan right at my side. I am clear through being cute for anybody.

Please dear friend, stop the folks who are trying to make me into the "Red Grange" and "Casey At-the-Bat" of American poetry, and who eternally spat me on the wrist

when I try to be my real self. You knew Aunt Fannie. That's a real start.

My general ideas, as the series appearing in the Dear-born Independent will show are the exact opposite of "The American Mercury" in all respects. A man who is even a half-way publicist who has this conviction *should* have a real chance to say so, by cartoon, squib, picture, decorative design, whim, fantasy and song, and poem-game revel. That Brewery-on-Wheels, "The American-Austrian German-Jew steerage passenger Mercury" is given the whole road. Meanwhile people nearly crack themselves trying to force me to do stale stunts—their way, not my way, and lay funeral wreaths on me.

Beginning with my 500 new pen-and-inks, in a separate cleanly-printed, well considered new volume, I want as good a place with my publisher as Mencken has with Knopf—.

As it is I cannot put out a single unexpected blossom or bloom, branch or leaf without having it lopped off in letters (Later) that read like the mimeographed orders of The Standard Oil Company to a branch filling station, in the uttermost backwoods.

If you think this a grievance, *it is not*. My happy life with Susan and Elizabeth in Spokane is *my life*. But it is a *new life*, putting out new branches, thoughts dreams, whimsies every morning, in complete contrast to everything done before.

Surely if I am to be a public person at all, it is to be in terms of this *new life*. The person dear Elizabeth has raised from the dead is not much older than Susan Doniphan, and knows perfectly well it may take 44 more years to win a real place for himself. If you love my home, love me.

I am just 47 years old, Fred. And taking it by and large, only the artists have built up toward the cumulative old age I desire to achieve. Repeating myself is the abomination of desolation to me, and *always has been*, and only old men like Corot, Titian, Michaelangelo and lesser fry among the artists, have been cumulative, and painted their best the day before death. The literati are generally



through at 47 and go on repeating themselves and writing dilutions of themselves for 40 years more. This is so much taken for granted, this law of averages—by New York City, that it is utterly inconceivable to them I should have a roaring Susan Doniphan one year old and all sorts of magnificent prospects. Naturally being married to the Lady California herself in all her glory, I want to vindicate and proclaim these splendors. I do *not* want to dig up the year 1913 from the grave and re-embalm it in sight of all. I want to sing and draw and rejoice in the very splendor of this very hour. Susan already sticks her head out of the window and shouts to the red-headed kid a block away, who shouts back in the utmost abandon of fraternity. And that's my real life. Living amid splendid epic Athenian scenes like this—why should I be spatted on the wrist by the great city every time I want to do and be things as young as my lovely daughter and my lovely wife and the magnificent children she is bringing me as fast as she can?

Why should the Morticians and Undertakers Parlors of New York be perpetually writing me "Ambulance service free, hearse service reasonable?" Find the man who will set them right.

Since the day Marsh left the Macmillan Co. they have turned me over to second-raters, third raters, discreet embalmers, dark suspects, and Gawd knows what. It is only now I realize what I owed to the protecting arm of that man Marsh I considered merely a courteous and gallant stranger. I need a *real backer* to the utmost limit, dear Fred. I am bursting with new thoughts, fancies, plans, hopes, stunts, ideas. *Please think it over.* Suspicious and sour faces *ruin* my *public* energy. I want a young publisher as willing to go broke as I am for beauty's sake—*American Beautys* sake, not *Austrian Beautys* sake. I want when I get a new idea to have it presented as crisply, beautifully, gorgeously as the Roses of the State of Washington in the morning dew. I do *not* want any of it dried up and put away in the same *old* cracked decrepit dusty rose jar. When I make a special and unusual drawing I *want it issued separately* with

*a separate advertisement*, with some *surprise* and the glitter of dawn in the announcement, as there was in the original experience of producing it.

I do *not* want to be jammed into a pigeonhole and told to stay there. I do *not* want to receive letters written by the head of the house and signed by a subordinate. I do *not* want to be punished like pacifist were punished at the height of the war, by silly rumors, *started by my own publisher's* blurbs, to keep me in line and keep me humble. I am exactly the Vachel you met under my Aunt's arm in Indianapolis ages ago. Please give that bold young American jackass a chance!

In this letter Lindsay refers to *The Art Spirit . . .* by a former teacher of his at the New York School of Art, Robert Henri. Its first edition was published by J. B. Lippincott Company in 1923.

On June 20 and again on July 21, 1927, Melcher wrote to Lindsay in regard to the book of drawings emphasizing the high cost of making so many plates and the unlikelihood of any considerable sale for such a book. In the latter letter he reminded Lindsay of an earlier suggestion of the possibility of having Macmillan publish a collection of Lindsay's children's poems. Lindsay answered on August 8.

2318 West Pacific. Spokane Washington.  
August 8, 1927

My Dear Fred Melcher:—Thank you indeed for your recent letter. Elizabeth and Vachel and Susan Doniphan were much pleased over it. I never cease to be grateful to Aunt Fannie for you.

Your suggestion is certainly in order about a book of selections of my Child-poems already printed, which you yourself found readable to child-audiences.

After your letter there came from Macmillans one from Miss Seaman, suggesting such a book of selections and I accepted their offer as stated and told them to forward the contract and check at once. And I suggested that you write the preface. I hope indeed that they will take the suggestion and I will be very grateful for the honor. Put Aunt Fannie and Uncle Lucius in the Preface *if you possibly can*.

As for marketing the drawings, Burton Rascoe has just accepted an article for The New Bookman about the New Spencerian Poem—Games—in which I draw a pen and ink fantasy for the crowd write a couplet and we dance and charade it the same evening. Also Rascoe promises to talk over with you some preliminary Bookman appearances for the most Bookmanlike of my proposed drawing portfolio of 500 drawings without verses which you think maybe an Art-Publisher may bring out yet. Rascoe can certainly help us greatly with a new untrammelled magazine. So take as much counsel both with Miss Seaman and Rascoe as you think my poor fortunes warrant and be sure I am ever so grateful to you for long faithfulness.

Watch the September and later numbers of Vanity Fair for articles on (1.) Gene Tunney, also on (2) Harriet Monroe and Carl Sandburg. Watch the Christmas Mc Calls for a Christmas poem by your servant. Watch the English Journal (University of Chicago Press) probably September, for a prose Fantasy about the Middle West. Then there is an article about *the Book of Revelation* in the Theatre for August and a poem "The Parable of Deepness" in the July London Mercury. There are several other matters in the offing that represent energy if not art. There is a note in very fine print in the back of Harriet Monroe's Poetry for August that nevertheless contains not a little thunder.

Elizabeth and your humble servant and the baby are roaring and singing, shouting and gay, happy and well. We have just bought 20 copies of Ralph Adams Cram's Walled Towns and are hand-illumining and decorating the same for the neighbors.



I disagree with that book somewhat, but where it coincides and parallels "The Golden Book of Springfield" it is a much handier and clearer statement of the same Gospel for Spokane, which city we are now rebuilding—

Burton Rascoe became editor of *The Bookman* with the September, 1927, issue.

Of the articles mentioned by Lindsay as about to appear, "The Fighting Marine: an American Poet Runs a Race with Gene Tunney, the American Pugilist, and Wins" was published in *Vanity Fair*, XXIX: 81, 106, 108, September, 1927; "A Vision, Called: 'Lincoln in India'" appeared in *The English Journal*, XVI: 495-509, September, 1927; and "The Parable of Deepness" was published in *The London Mercury*, XVI: 231-232, July, 1927.

The note in "News Notes" in *Poetry*, XXX: 295-296, August, 1927, was concerned with Lindsay's complaint of the liberties which musicians had taken with his poems.

Melcher had agreed to write the preface to the book of selections from Lindsay's child poems, and Lindsay wrote to him of it.

2318 West Pacific, Spokane Washington  
August 29, 1927

My Dear Fred Melcher:—Thank you with all my heart and soul for your letter of August 24. It will be the greatest favor if you can name my dear Uncle and Aunt Mr. & Mrs. L. O. HAMILTON in your preface.

I am glad indeed it is to be a book for all ages. I suggest for a title "YOUNG NIGHTINGALES"

The book appeared under the title *Johnny Appleseed and Other Poems* instead of "Young Nightingales," and mention of Lindsay's Indianapolis uncle and aunt was omitted from the preface.

2318 West Pacific,  
Spokane, Washington,  
June 20, 1928.

My dear Fred Melcher:

Miss Seaman writes me you are to be consulted as to the Table of Contents of my new Children's Book, *Johnny Appleseed*, and other poems. This gives me the greatest pleasure. Your good will and your cooperation in this means a very great deal to me. It would mean a lot to me if you could get George Mather Richards, the illustrator, who began to study art with me twenty years and more ago, a little more into the literary field in my eastern circle. Richards went straight thro Williams with Stuart P. Sherman and was a better man at every point. He simply lacks your humble servant's obscene passion for the godless limelight. This particular trait of his must be considered, if you are to make the kind of a friend of him that I would desire. He has enormous possibilities, both as an illustrator and a poet, not yet brought out. He has quaintness and fantasy beyond any conception of any of those people who have employed him so far. He could have a career like Rackham and Dulac with just a few more openings and a clear warrant to turn his fancy loose. He has certainly done yeoman service for many years.

You are in a most strategic position at this juncture! If you care to proclaim to the world that there really was a Johnny Appleseed, that the Dry Documents are all gathered by the Ohio Historical Society, that there is a vast mass of material only awaiting the new school of biographers to raise it from the dead! Certainly he is as worthy of special scrutiny as Barnum and Beecher. I get a little tired of the highly superior school teacher who comes to me at the end of my recital and tells me that Johnny Appleseed is a character in fiction, an invention, a legend, or a special trick of my own. There really was a Johnny Appleseed, you know. You remember his place in the Indiana Pageant.

We send you our very good will, our great good wishes and one and all think well of you and yours. The poem

games are going forward by leaps and bounds, literally. There are two gangs now making cat eyes at each other and the well known female snoot. This you know means progress. Hurrah for Bryan!

In October, 1928, Lindsay set out on a tour of the Middle West and the East. On February 3, 1929, he wrote to Melcher

Permanent Eastern Address.  
Feakins Lecture Beureau—Times Building  
Times Square New York City  
February 3, 1929

My Dear Fred Melcher:—

I am slowly wending my way back toward New York City. I thank you indeed for your good letters, and am thrilled to know you will soon pass through Spokane. Call on Darling Elizabeth Susan and Nicksey instantly and often and make them think they own the earth.

I have not yet thanked you for your preface to Johnny Appleseed and my one regret is, it was not signed. Thank you and thank you. We will have lunch soon in New York—and if we have time we might call on James Wilkinson. That is a hard duty I do not want to undertake alone.

Nicksey, the Lindsays' son, Nicholas Cave Lindsay, had been born on September 16, 1927.

In March, 1929, Lindsay returned to Spokane and in the following month moved his family to Springfield which was to be his home for the remainder of his life. Spokane had not turned out to be the Utopia he had hoped for.

Friends in Chicago arranged a welcoming dinner for the Lindsays. The sponsors had difficulty in raising the necessary money for expenses, but in the end 300 came to the dinner, and it proved to be a great success.



603 South 5th  
Springfield Illinois—  
May 27, 1929.

My Dear Fred Melcher:—

Everybody told me sub-rosa you had a lot to do with our welcome at the Hotel Sherman—May 10, 1929. Thank you indeed for your kindly hand. The whole Lindsay family feel themselves completely welcomed to Illinois, *as a Lindsay Family, an institution, as a firm*—I hope you can come to the Illinois Bookseller's convention here next year *and be our guest*. I have promised to speak.

A few weeks later Lindsay was writing to Melcher:

LINDSAY  
603 SOUTH FIFTH STREET  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS  
U.S.A.

July 2, 1930.

My Dear Fred Melcher:—

Great good wishes to you and yours. Please come to see us, whenever you pass this way.

Enclosed find the evidence that I am actually an acknowledged Citizen of Springfield, and *maybe* helped carry an election!

On June 24, 1930, the citizens of Springfield had voted on the construction of a lake to provide the city with an adequate water supply, the means for industrial and commercial growth, and recreational facilities. Lindsay had written a piece supporting the issue which appeared in a circular entitled "Vote for Lake Springfield June 24, 1930." A copy of this circular must have been enclosed with the July 2 letter to Melcher. The supporters of the lake won the election.

On July 13, 1930, Melcher wrote to Lindsay saying that he would be in Chicago on August 2 and hoped to visit the Lindsays on Saturday the 3rd. Following the visit Lindsay wrote:

LINDSAY  
603 SOUTH FIFTH STREET  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS  
U.S.A.

August 5, 1930

My Dear Fred:—

Your visit meant so much to me, in an unusual way, I have wanted to write ever since.

What is it I want to say? I am very anxious to say it clearly and briefly, yet I may wander on.

Never in my life have I had such an army of well-wishers, and I have no enemies. Yet the intimates who know what the game is all about are few indeed, men to whom I can turn and talk about things I really take seriously.

And the mere impact of the multitude of well-wishers sometimes makes a man so dull he finds he has allowed a rare friendship to grow dull. In the old days it was so much easier to keep up with those I really cared for, because they were all I had.

There are only about ten men like you scattered over the map who can keep my life from getting second-rate. I expect to look you up oftener, bear you in mind oftener, and be more grateful to God for you. For further words, read Emerson's Essay on Friendship. I feel quite inclined to write a poor imitation, but will close right here.

If I am to grow at all, I must not be so much separated in thought from my real friends. So please drink my health, ever and anon.

And again a week later:

LINDSAY  
603 SOUTH FIFTH STREET  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

August 12, 1930

My Dear Fred Melcher:—

Your beautiful letter of August 9 is at hand. I am not pitching into a long correspondence to burden you. This is merely a note to say what I said before, that I am trying to renew my vows of good-will with my friends of longest standing, and to insure for the next year a few of those meaty conversations which I now desire more than ever in my life. I will try to call at the office more than once next winter.

This is the last letter from Lindsay to Melcher in the collection. Lindsay died by his own hand on December 5, 1931.

During the years that Lindsay was corresponding with Melcher he was also writing to Upton Sinclair and exchanging books with him. The earliest of these letters in the Sinclair Manuscripts in the Lilly Library predates his first letter to Melcher.

Springfield Ill.  
March 9, 1911.

My Dear Mr. Sinclair:

It is an honor to hear from you. I have forwarded the Village Mag. under separate cover. If the print is too fine, read the Heroes of Time. You will find the same idea there in the verses on Phidias, Michaelangelo and Titian, and the *last* stanza in the piece.

I hope you can send me something of yours in Return. I would appreciate an autographed copy of the Journal of Arthur Sterling. When I was in New York I went through most of that, except I didn't go down myself and get fished out—a demnition damp unpleasant corpse as Mr. Mantillini might say.



I hope the enclosed newspaper clipping will not be crowding your attention too much. It shows our common ground, not indicated by the Village Mag.

Lindsay had published the first *The Village Magazine* in the summer of 1910, and it had been noticed in an unsigned editorial entitled "An Illinois Art Revivalist" in the March, 1911, issue of *Current Literature* which had aroused Sinclair's interest enough for him to ask his secretary to obtain a copy of *The Village Magazine* for him.

Sinclair's *The Journal of Arthur Sterling* ("The Valley of the Shadow") had been published by D. Appleton and Company in 1903. Its theme was the failure of a young author to find a publisher and his discouragement which led in the end to suicide.

When *The Journal of Arthur Sterling* came, Lindsay wrote to Sinclair who was in Edge Moor, Delaware, at the time.

Springfield Ill.  
March 30, 1911

My Dear Mr. Sinclair:

Thank you indeed for the Journal of Arthur Sterling. It works for our better acquaintance. I understand a good many people in Edge Moor have read the Village Magazine, so don't you bother about it. Just let them tell you. When you have time for anything of mine read the Boats of the Prophets—in the last part of War Bulletin Number Three.

I wrote that story in New York just about the time you were writing Arthur Sterling—ages before the bulletin was published in Springfield. I think it will show you something of our common past—if not our common present.

Here's hoping for our still better acquaintance.

Lindsay's *War Bulletin Number Three* had been published in Springfield on August 30, 1909. The last piece in the number is "The Boats of the Prophets" which

bears a resemblance to Sinclair's *The Journal of Arthur Sterling* in that it deals with a composer, who came near suicide when an oratorio of his was rejected. In the end, however, he found new hope and determined to live and continue to compose music.

Three years later, Sinclair was writing to Lindsay requesting permission to include some of his writings in *The Cry for Justice: an Anthology of the Literature of Social Protest* . . . which was published in 1915.

Springfield Ill.

August 25, 1914

My Dear Sinclair:

I am glad you think it worth while to put my goods in your collection. My new book of Poems by Macmillan—The Congo and Other Poems—is not particularly what you want—being just poetry. But my “Adventures While Preaching” that Kennerley brings out the 19th of Sept. has just what you want in some parts—and just what will make you sore in others. I think you will particularly like the Kallyope Yell in the midst of the book—and the five proclamations with which it closes—you will view with mixed emotions.

I am sure Kennerley will send you an advance copy for review if you insist. But he would be more likely to send it on your insistence than mine—I fancy. Be sure to ask him. And I will write today also.

Very Sincerely

Vachel Lindsay

Between now and Sept. 23 the Independent may bring out a set of anti-militarist war-poems. Watch.

Sinclair chose to include in *The Cry for Justice* Lindsay's “The Eagle that is Forgotten,” “To the United States Senate,” “The Leaden-Eyed,” “What the Moon Saw,” and “Why I Voted the Socialist Ticket.” No selections from *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of*

*Beauty*, an account of a tramp in the summer of 1912 from Springfield across Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, and up and down Colorado and into New Mexico, were included.

The only poem by Lindsay appearing in *The Independent* at this time was "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight" in the September 21 issue.

About this time Sinclair had sent a copy of his newly published *Sylvia's Marriage* to Lindsay, and he wrote of it:

Springfield Illinois.

Jan. 15, 1915.

My Dear Sinclair:—I am sorry to be so long acknowledging *Sylvia's Marriage*. I read it with great interest, and knowing you a little, was interested in discovering as much of you in it as I could, and I am glad to be so much better acquainted. You can say if you want to in your advertisements, that I do not see how a story with a purpose could be more effective. It takes a generous and self immolating soul to go upon such a thankless crusade as you have here undertaken. It is a chivalrous book all through. And I thank you for the *Soap-Box idea*. I have blocked it in, and I consider myself very much indebted to you for it. I will be in New York at the Poetry Society Banquet and make one of the speeches. I will be mighty glad to see you there, and your friends the Cosgraves, if the thing looks good to them. Tuesday, January 26, National Art's Club, Gramercy Park. Tickets to be had of Miles M. Dawson. 141, Broadway. \$1.50

Two years elapsed before the next letter:

Vachel Lindsay  
603 South Fifth Street  
Springfield, Illinois

Jan. 31, 1917

My Dear Sinclair:

Yes—Miss Frazee is my cousin. Be very good to her for my sake. I hear every good thing of her.



Yes—I will write the Soap-Box—someday. I have enough notes, now.

I am glad to hear of your new novel.

I wish you well. If you meet any movie-people—snare them into reading my movie-book!

Lindsay's mother's maiden name was Frazee.

Sinclair's new novel would appear to be *King Coal* . . . published by The Macmillan Company in 1917.

Since the early days of the motion pictures, Lindsay had been interested in their possibilities as an art form, and in 1915 Macmillan published his book, *The Art of the Moving Picture*. He intended it primarily for movie audiences, but he wished also to influence those concerned with the making of films.

In 1919, Lindsay wrote again:

Springfield Ill.

January 9, 1919—

My Dear Upton Sinclair: My greeting and good wishes. Enclosed find my T. R. Memorial. I wish you would look up the scripture and elaborate the metaphor, including the Cave of Adullam. And Quentin Roosevelt could well be compared to Johnathan, as could all the Sons of Roosevelt, who are much to his credit, I think.

Lindsay wrote several poems on Theodore Roosevelt. Probably the one referred to here is "Hail to the Sons of Roosevelt" which mentions Jonathan but not the Cave of Adullam.

In his letters of January 15, 1915, and January 31, 1917, Lindsay had referred to the "Soap-Box" and thanked Sinclair for the idea. The poem, dated August, 1917, appeared in Lindsay's *The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems* . . . New York, The Macmillan Company, 1917,

but the verse in Lindsay's February 9, 1920, letter does not appear in that version.

Vachel Lindsay  
603 South Fifth Street  
Springfield, Illinois

I have no objection  
to your cutting out any  
section of the Soap Box poem you  
please, giving it a new title and  
using it anywhere you please.

Feb. 9, 1920

My Dear Sinclair:

Heres to the Soap-box  
The Soap Box, the Soap Box—  
Battleship of thought  
The Round world over—  
Feared by the chicken-hearted  
Loved by the lion-hearted  
Fair young amazon  
And proud red rover—  
Loved by the Lion  
Feared by the fox—etc.

and so on, for about six pages. It was first printed in The Chicago Tribune, and then in "The Chinese Nightingale" and was entitled "This my Song is Made for Kerensky" and was printed at the height of Kerensky's power.

So do not say I am a breaker of promises!

I wish you well, I give you and your wife my most fraternal greeting, and if your paper starts I will be proud to contribute as soon as I have something new—with or without compensation.

Thank you indeed for "The Brass Check. I will read it as soon as I am home again. I am now on the road. The stand patters still fail to love me sir!

Upton Sinclair had started a monthly magazine entitled *Upton Sinclair's: A Monthly Magazine, for a Clean*

*Peace and the Internation* in April, 1918. It ran for only ten issues, the last appearing in February, 1919, before it merged with *New Appeal*, later called the *American Freeman*. It appears that Sinclair started no other paper until his *Epic News*, the first number of which is dated December 26, 1933.

Sinclair's *The Brass Check: a Study of American Journalism* was published in Pasadena in 1920.

Ten years elapsed before the next letter from Lindsay to Sinclair in the collection. It relates to Sinclair's *Mental Radio* (Pasadena, 1930), which is an account of experiments in telepathy performed by Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair in which Mrs. Sinclair showed marked telepathic powers.

Lindsay  
603 South Fifth Street  
Springfield, Illinois  
U.S.A.

July 5, 1930.

My Dear Upton:—We have much enjoyed your book on mental wireless, and have tried it ourselves, somewhat uncertainly, but joyfully.

The enclosed items may or may not edify. Your opinion is solicited.

Among other letters from Lindsay in the Lilly Library are three written in 1917 to Mrs. Benjamin C. Bachrach of Chicago in regard to a lecture engagement.

Vachel Lindsay  
603 South Fifth Street  
Springfield, Ill.

Jan. 4, 1917

Mrs. B. C. Bachrach:  
Chicago Illinois

My Dear Friend: Under separate cover I am sending you my letter about my four programmes. I suggest Pro-



gramme four, as suitable to your purpose, especially the Chinese Nightingale. The other numbers of programme four might be changed as you wish, but the Nightingale is especially a parlor recitation, and I never give it for large assemblies. It requires a group who have read it, and who listen exceedingly well, and forgive a deal!

My stay in Chicago will not be long, so I would like to appear within a day or so of the Fortnightly engagement, that I understand will be March 22 or 25, the same programme with Granville Barker. Please inquire of the proper authorities.

I am employed by two lecture bureaux at times and when I deal with you directly, I cannot in fairness cut their fee standard. My terms therefore are one hundred dollars, to be given at the close of the recital. I find that my letter about my four programmes is a bit dull to some, but I hope you can read it. The letter about the four programmes is as much a classification of my work as a series of programmes, and the point in it for a private hostess is simply that I prefer to appear before those who have read my books—so without insisting, I can at least say I will be glad if you can buy my five books and see that as many of your audience as are disposed to read, shall have read at least one of them. One set, properly scattered and loaned about should suffice. I hope this is not asking too much. Miss Harriet Monroe can furnish copies of the Chinese Nightingale.

Vachel Lindsay  
603 South Fifth Street  
Springfield, Illinois

Jan. 7, 1917

Mrs. Benjamin C. Bachrach:  
Chicago.

My Dear Lady: Certainly. Your proposal is quite reasonable and if you find the date of my Fortnightly appearance—I will be with your group the day before or after.

Vachel Lindsay  
603 South Fifth Street  
Springfield, Illinois

Wellesley—Mass.  
Feb. 26, 1917.

My Dear Mrs. Bachrach:

I will arrive at your house 6:15 or thereabouts and you may have your dinner on time I hope—on Wednesday March 21. No you need not send for me. I would appreciate it if you see that I get home all right. I will probably go to Mrs. Moodys—but on the other hand I may be on the North Side. After reciting I get so fired up the night-wind gets me.

I will recite anything you care to hear for the evening, as long as you care to listen. Meanwhile my address will be The Bellvue, Boston.

Lindsay's *A Letter about my Four Programmes for Committees in Correspondence* was a 65-page pamphlet printed by the Jefferson Printing Company in Springfield, probably in 1916. The first seven pages set forth the four programs as I, The Gospel of Beauty, adapted to art schools and art departments; II, The Art of the Moving Picture, for good citizenship leagues, civic committees, etc.; III, An Evening of Higher Vaudeville and Orthodox Verse as Well, for tired business men and the like; and IV, The Chinese Nightingale and Dramas for Impromptu Actors, a fireside or parlor program. Each program was an hour or an hour and a quarter in length. The remainder of the pamphlet contains selections from Lindsay's poems and prose illustrated with hieroglyphics drawn by him.

Another Lindsay letter in the Lilly Library is addressed to William Stanley Beaumont Braithwaite who edited an *Anthology of Magazine Verse and Year Book of American*

*Poetry* for the years 1913-1929. It was published in New York by G. Sully and Company.

Vachel Lindsay  
603 South Fifth Street  
Springfield, Illinois

January 5, 1919

My Dear Braithwaite:

Please accept my New Year's Greetings. I am sending you my most successful recitation of the year, a very light piece, Old Andrew Jackson. I doubt if it looks like much on paper. It should appear in the *Independent*, being bought and paid for last summer, and all my friends are asking for it. I wish you would ask them permission to reprint it, for I want it circulating while I am in the East in February. Get them to name a date on which you may release it, and then go ahead. This seems a small matter, but I like to tell my audiences where a "poem" may be found.

I also enclose a late revision of "Sew the Flags Together." It is being so much quoted and garbled as it goes the rounds, I would appreciate your reprinting this as the latest version, official and authorized.

I have made slight changes where the lead pencil mark goes.

Believe me, your friend and admirer  
Nicholas Vachel Lindsay

Woodrow Wilson may be said to be riding Andrew Jackson's hobby horse all this year till the League of Nations is a going concern, a success.

The *Hobby Horse* picture of Old Andrew Jackson appears with humorous comment in Taft's History of American Sculpture. You could make a lively page of it, with a Wilson twist.

"Old Andrew Jackson" appeared in *The Independent*, XCVII: 122, January 25, 1919, but neither that poem nor "Sew the Flags Together" were printed in Braithwaite's



1919 *Anthology*. The only one of Lindsay's poems included in that volume was "The Empire of China is Crumbling Down. Dedicated to William Rose Benét."

"The *Hobby Horse* picture of Old Andrew Jackson" found on page 125 of Lorado Taft's *The History of American Sculpture* . . . new edition, revised . . . New York, The Macmillan Company, 1924, is a picture of the Jackson Monument which stands in the public square in front of the White House. It was commissioned by Congress and dedicated on January 8, 1853. The sculptor was Clark Mills, a man with no art education, who undertook this first equestrian statue in the United States without ever having seen either Andrew Jackson or an equestrian statue. It is his horse that attracts attention rather than the rider, since the design is that of a horse rearing up on its hind legs with these legs coming exactly under the center of the body of the horse, which produces a perfect balance. Congress was so delighted with the statue that it gave Mills \$20,000 in addition to the \$12,000 called for by the contract.

A complete list of the Lindsay letters in the Lilly Library is as follows:

Lindsay, Vachel

To Mrs. Benjamin C. Bachrach:

1917, Jan. 4, A.L.S., 2 p.

1917, Jan. 7, A.L.S., 1 p.

1917, Feb. 26, A.L.S., 2 p.

To Miss Barrows:

1911, Mar. 20, A.L.S., 1 p.

To William Stanley Beaumont Braithwaite:

1919, Jan. 5, T.L.S., with A. postscript. 1 p.

To Frederic Gershom Melcher:

- 1913, Nov. 29, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1919, July 3, A.L.S., 3 p.  
1919, Aug. 8, A.L.S., 2 p.  
1920, Jan. 23, T.L.S., 1 p.  
1920, Jan. 28, A.L.S., 2 p.  
1920, Apr. 4, A.L.S., 4 p.  
1920, Apr. 4, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1921, Mar. 17, T.L.S., 2 p.  
1921, Apr. 6, A.L.S., 2 p.  
1923, June 8, A.L.S., 2 p.  
1925, June 6, A.L.S., 3 p.  
1926, Sept. 20, A.L.S., 2 p.  
1926, Dec. 16, T.L.S., 1 p.  
1926, Dec. 30, T.L.S., 1 p.  
1927, Jan. 5, T.L.S., 2 p.  
1927, June 6, A.L.S., 2 folio p.  
1927, June 16, A.L.S., 20 p.  
1927, Aug. 8, A.L.S., 2 folio p.  
1927, Aug. 24, A.L.S., 1 folio p.  
1927, Aug. 29, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1928, Mar. 20, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1928, June 20, T.L.S., 1 p.  
1929, Feb. 3, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1929, May 27, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1930, July 2, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1930, Aug. 5, A.L.S., 4 p.  
1930, Aug. 12, A.L.S., 1 p.

To Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Gershom Melcher:

- 1925, Nov. 9, A.L.S., 3 p.

To the Poetry Editor, *Century Magazine*:

- 1918, Mar. 27, T.L.S., 1 p.

To Upton Beall Sinclair:

- 1911, Mar. 9, A.L.S., 2 p.  
1911, Mar. 30, A.L.S., 2 p.

1914, Aug. 25, A.L.S., 3 p.  
1915, Jan. 10, Printed form filled out and signed. 1 p.  
1915, Jan. 15, T.L.S., 1 p.  
1917, Jan. 31, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1919, Jan. 9, A.L.S., 1 p.  
1920, Feb. 9, A.L.S., 3 p.  
1930, July 5, A.L.S., 1 p.

DORIS M. REED is Curator of Manuscripts at the Lilly Library,  
Indiana University.