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William Rose Benet

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Dearest Lollie:

What an awful picture!
Did we thought you'd like to see it.
The weather is fine. All serene.
We went to the christening of the
2 younger Robbins children last
Sunday in Rockport Episcopal Church.
Quite moving. Bill Stude is a
nice man. Having happy at
camp. We hope you are enjoying
life and the ocean. We went
over to Juliet Bartlett's for
supper. Lovely evening!

Devoted love from us both,

Bill

Writingest Family On Cape Ann Are William R. Benets

BY JACQUELINE DARCY

No doubt about it: the Benets are the writingest family on Cape Ann. Both William Rose Benet and his wife, Marjory Flack, have turned out a handsome number of well-known, well-read books.

Mrs. Benet Writes

Mrs. Benet, a brown-haired woman who would look at ease in a bridge club or church group, writes just the sort of story children like. Her grandson, Timmy, is one source of ideas. An observant seven year old, he made some terse comments on New York boats; the result was "Boats on the River," a classic in its own right. Timmy's father illustrated the book, and Timmy recommends it to everyone he knows.

Marjory Flack was first an illustrator, but illustrators who are not known are sometimes sadly neglected. "One editor," she recalls, "told me to write my own books and illustrate them. She said it was the only way to break into the field. Why, I'd never considered writing before!"

Noting the number of her books on recommended reading lists, one may assume she took to the idea like a chick to grain. One of her stories is being used in Germany's

re-education plan; all of her books are published in England; in Australia, they reach the children via broadcasts. The books appear in German, Spanish, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Portuguese.

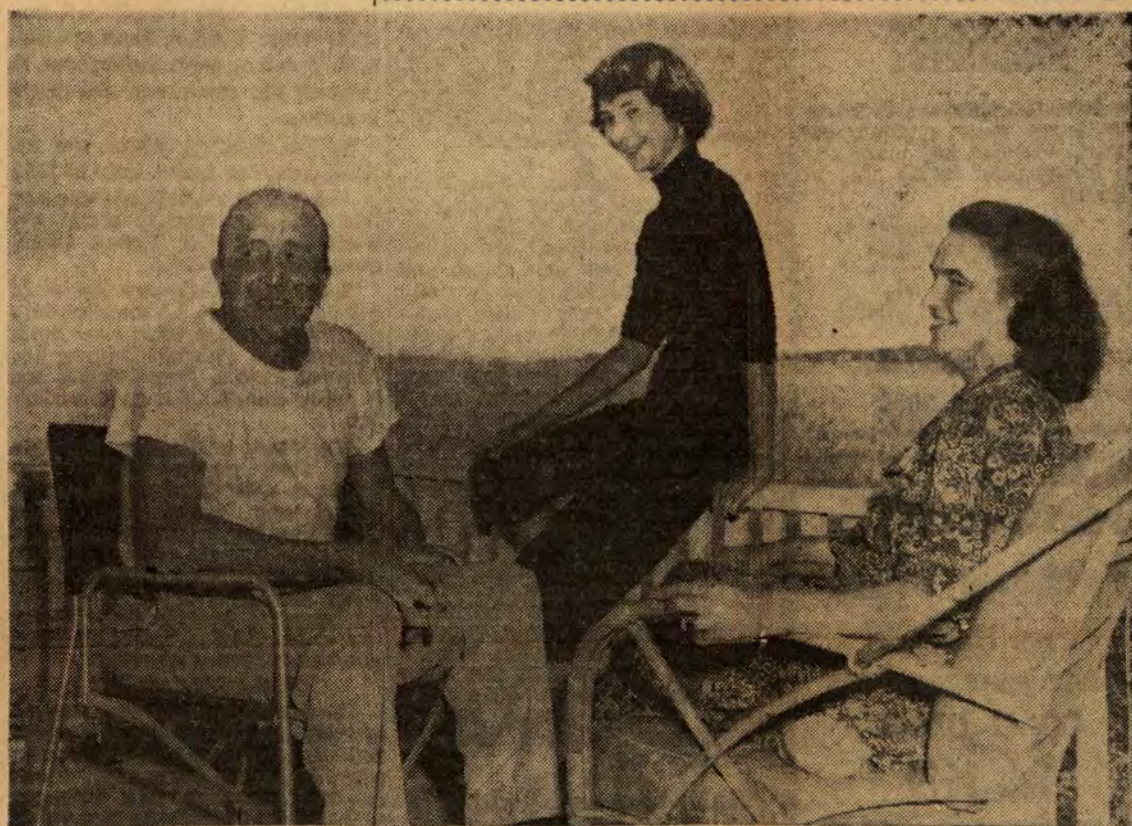
Grandson Likes Them

Yet Mrs. Benet seems most pleased because Timmy likes them. These two are real friends. "We agree that Cape Ann is a wonderful place to live the year 'round. Timmy likes trees and boats, and he would like to go sliding. You can't use a sled in New York."

The Benets own the house where Edwin Chapin, the popular parson, lived many years ago. The picture windows look out across the twisted pines on Pulpit Rock, out to the sea. A path leads from the house past the Jamaican gardens (herbs, flowers and strawberries in pleasant confusion) to the studio. Once the parson's stable, it is now the workshop of William Rose Benet.

Staying with them is their niece Rachel, daughter of the late Stephen Vincent Benet. Rachel recently won the national essay contest of the Atlantic Monthly for an essay which she wrote as a class assignment in high school.

Author, Wife And Niece



At their Pigeon Cove residence are Mr. and Mrs. William Rose Benet and their niece Rachel Benet, daughter of the late Stephen Vincent Benet, recently won the Atlantic Monthly national essay contest. (Photo by Robert F. Sherman)

What's Doing

She plans to enter Radcliffe College in the fall.

Windows on every side catch the breezes. On one wall, there are shelves filled with well-worn books. Across from the mammoth desk, high on the plywood wall, hangs a

horseshoe from the parson's day.

"It's upside down," Mr. Benet points out. "But we've had such good luck that we've never changed it."

Full Working Day

Mr. Benet puts in a full-time working day at his studio. As he's the man in "The Phoenix's Nest," he must turn out his column, answer his correspondence and keep up on all his other work.

"It isn't that I write poetry on schedule. Sometimes I jot down ideas to work on later. Sketches, in a way. Or I may do research for poems. 'Mass for the Dead' called for a good deal of reading on Mozart, for example. And for 'Fire in the Crystal,' I not only read, but made a visit to the Isle of Shoals. Poetry results from both inspiration—that is, an idea—and work."

This plan produces results. In 1942, it brought a Pulitzer award for "The Dust which is God," a semi-autobiographical work. Many of his poems, he admits, are either colored by or inspired by Cape Ann.

Prefer Cape Ann

Both of the Benets prefer the Cape to even the mountains. Timmy, who agrees, is spending his summer at a boys' camp in Annisquam. When Mrs. Benet took Timmy to 'Squam, she was impressed by the happy family atmosphere of the group. And being impressed, she invited the entire camp to a picnic. She has spent the week planning how many hamburgs and hot dogs thirty to fifty boys can consume.

Mr. Benet is a family man himself. Last spring, he and his wife took a freighter cruise through the Panama Canal (as duly reported in the Saturday Review of Literature) to California. The purpose of the trip was to visit the many Benet grandchildren. Talking about them, Mr. Benet breaks into broad smiles. A distinguished appearing man, he has kindly eyes and an easy-going manner.

What does he think of the picnic for the camp? "It's wonderful. And it will give Timmy a chance to look at the apple tree we planted for him."

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