

High School Girl Has Read Several Hundred Books

Miss Leona McGill, High School Senior, Is Record Reader

Famed Authors Send Suggestions and Good Wishes

ALTHOUGH but a senior in high school, Leona McGill, 273 East Second street, has read several hundred volumes of fiction and has started a collection of autographed letters from many prominent authors of the day. A composition written at the Winona High school when she was a sophomore, was responsible for many communications from popular writers. Her collection is growing steadily and is a valuable one.

The first letter of appreciation Miss McGill wrote was to Harold Bell Wright. The last one was to Edgar A. Guest, telling him how much she appreciates the daily poem which appears in the Republican-Herald. Mr. Guest who is of the Detroit Free Press replied:

"I want to thank you for your kind letter of recent date and to tell you how much I appreciate it. I am glad to know that you have liked some of my work, and that you have honored me with a place in your scrap book. I am proud to be there even as the humblest of your favorites."

Sends Poems.

Harold Bell Wright not only wrote a second time but sent to Miss McGill at Christmas time a parchment copy of a beautiful poem which he composed.

Miss McGill's veracity for reading has had a bad effect on her eyes but she is still intent on reading more, following suggestions which were

AUTHORS' FRIEND



Miss Leona McGill

given to her by the authors from whom she received letters. The young lady is particularly clever at writing and it is possible that she may too some day write something which will meet with popular favor.

The high school girl has read every book which many popular authors have written. She is personally acquainted with virtually every book of recent fiction on the Winona library's shelves. To give an idea of the number of volumes she has read it might be said that she has read 24 books of B. M. Bower, 10 of Harold Bell Wright, 22 of Zane Grey, 10 of Ethel M. Dell, 21 of Hamlin Garland, 16 of Grace Livingston Hill Lutz, 11 of Mary Roberts Reinhardt, 13 of Myrtle Reed, 8 of Wm. McLeod Raine and 6 of Robert Chambers.

THEIR LETTERS

**What Well Known Writers
Have Written to Winona's
Faithful Little Reader.**

Booth, Tarkington, Kennebunkport Maine, I thank you for your letter and for your personal interest in my books.

Mary Roberts Rinehart, Sewickley, Pa. I am sorry that I have too many letters to answer today to be able to answer you in my own hand.

But I must thank you for your very nice letter and say to you that I understand very well the feeling you have about "service". After all, service is the greatest thing in the world. To be able to do things for others, to give for the sake of giving, and not that we may receive.

I am sorry that you are not tall enough to do nursing but there are many ways in which a girl can serve even in her own home.

Kate Lingsley Boshier, Richmond, Va. Thank you dear Leona McGill for your kind note telling me my books have given you pleasure. It is cheering to know some one cares for my pen and ink children and feels for their mother a friendly interest. Some day I hope you are to write a wonderful book and when it is published I wish you will let me know that I may be among the first to read it.

Robert W. Chambers, New York. It is very pleasant to believe that you like my stories and it is exceedingly kind of you to write and say so.

I wish you the best of luck with your autograph collection.

Grace Livingston Hill Lutz, Swathmore, Pa., I am afraid you will think I have been a long long time getting an answer to your lovely letter, but if you could see the pile of letters lying on my desk that I have waded thru before I got yours and could know how very busy I have been all this fall and winter I'm sure you would forgive me. I write very few letters by hand because I have not time and the typewriter is so much faster but because you have asked it I am writing this. Boys and girls are very near my heart and when they want something I know how much they want it.

"You ask about 'The Mystery of Mary'—yes—that is one of mine—one of what I call my "crazy" stories in distinction from the more serious ones.

I am sure I ought to be very proud to be put in the same list with such distinguished writers as have written you and I want to thank you for your pleasant words about my stories.

Zane Grey, Los Angeles, Your letter afforded me a great deal of pleasure. I get many letters, but few so inspiring as yours, and I can only say that so long as I continue to have readers like you I cannot fail to go on climbing toward the heights.

Harold Bell Wright, Riverside, Cal., I was pleased to receive your good letter. It is always a pleasure, indeed, to have people who read my books, write me about them. I assure you the old shepherd with his

white beard is not I. I am not at all like him—nor any other character in the story. It is quite funny how so many people think me an old man, when, really, I am not nearly so old as I will some day be—if I live long enough.

I am hard at work, just now, on another Ozark story—"The Re-Creation of Brian Kent"—and I hope you will like it. It will be published this coming August.

Albert Payson Terhune, Pompton Lakes, N. J., Thank you very much indeed, for liking my Lad stories. Thank you still more for wanting a "hand-written letter" from me. This is the first hand written letter I have sent in some years as my writing is horrible; owing to "writer's cramp". But I am more than glad to write this, and I only hope you may be able to read part of it.

Thank you again for liking my stories about my dear old chum, Laddie.

Honore Willelek, editor Delineator, I am glad that you like my stories and I am very proud to have my autograph take its place among those others that you have collected.

William MacLeod Raine, Long Beach, Cal., Your letter to me came just as I was leaving on a motor trip for San Diego—I am leaving tonight for Virginia City, Nevada, to look up some material and am therefore in a great hurry, having fifty things still to do. You will therefore, I hope, pardon a hurry-up note.

Like you, I love the West, tho I have not read many books about it.

You must be a very busy young woman.

Harold Bell Wright, Tucson, Ariz., I thank you very much for your kindly birthday remembrance. It is a pleasure indeed to have my friends remember that I am on earth at this particular time, even tho my birthdays do make me realize how the years are passing.

Hamlin Garland, New York, Your letter is worthy of a reply and I am writing to say that I hope there are many of your generation who will feel as you do about what I have written. I have a daughter of sixteen who likes "The Gray Horse".

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AUTHORS SEND LETTERS

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Troop" also. She has read it six or eight times so she says—and considers it and "A Son of the Middle Border" my best work. Sometimes I think she is right. I can only wish there were more who held your opinion and hers.

James Oliver Curwood, Owosso, Mich., No, I am not going to be that author to disappoint you by not writing a letter. I was very glad to receive your interesting letter on my return from an eastern trip. Such letters as yours, from the readers of my books, are among the chief things which inspire me to go on writing better and more enjoyable stories. Your little plan for collecting letters from your admired authors is as interesting as it is original.

I am very glad you liked "Back to God's Country," and hope you may see and like equally as well my next picture "Nomads of the North," which will be released sometime during the coming summer.

Thanking you for your interesting letter, and hoping you will never find an author who hasn't time to answer.

Walter Pritchard Eaton, Sheffield, Mass., I think any lady who has read 250 books in a year doesn't deserve a letter so much as a long vacation. But maybe if I didn't have to write books, I shouldn't find it so hard to read 'em. I can recall when I, too, read three or four a week. But now I like to get a good stiff, rich book, like Mr. Garland's "Son of the Middle Border," and read it slowly. That's a great book, by the way; a real historical picture of a vanished America.

I hope a lot of the 250 books you've read are poetry. I hope you know your Keats and Shelley and your "Golden Treasury." And don't forget to read at least one book that is not fiction—biography, history, travel, etc., to every two or three novels. Otherwise your reading will be not an education and a help to mental growth, but a kind of emotional "dope" like the movies.