
The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society Newsletter



Newsletter No. 5
February, 2004

President's Message

2003 was a productive year for the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society. At the conference last April, we saw familiar faces along with many new members, and the level of scholarship and participation in society events continues to grow. The society was especially pleased and honored to welcome Becki Owens (the niece of Elizabeth Madox Roberts) as a participant in last year's events. As a new member of the society, Becki has already helped us achieve one of our major goals: to establish a website. Thanks to her hard work, along with the work of Brad McDuffie and Bill Boyle, we are officially online. Check out the new website at: www.newpaltz.edu/emrs/. Last year's conference also allowed us to finally view the long sought after 1931 film version of *The Great Meadow*. Professor Wade Hall's presentation of that film was much appreciated and many questions about the production were finally laid to rest.

In addition to the annual conference, society members participated once again at the annual meeting of the American Literature Association, which was held May 22-25 in Cambridge, MA. Papers were presented by Tina Green, Jane Keller, and myself. Gregg Neikirk chaired the session, which allowed for an intimate group of Roberts enthusiasts to share their appreciation for her work. The ALA meeting continues to be a promising meeting place to promote the spread of discussion regarding Roberts' legacy.

Plans have also been under way for the next Roberts conference to be held in Kentucky on April 24-26, which promises once again to offer an opportunity for Roberts scholars and aficionados to discuss and celebrate the work of this great author. As we look ahead to the coming events, I am reminded of Bill Slavick's comments at the end of last year's program. "I can honestly say," he told me, "that each year the level of scholarship evident in these papers never fails to impress me." If Bill's observations are any indication, we can be sure that this year's conference will offer an engaging program and a lively gathering for all who attend.

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Society members attend the Opening Banquet at the Beaumont Inn.

Mission Statement

The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society seeks to promote scholarship in the work of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, to encourage its teaching, and to pursue the goal of returning such classic novels as *The Great Meadow* and *The Time of Man* to print and keeping them there. Membership is open to all who love Roberts. We are a national organization, but are particularly interested in encouraging Kentucky membership and establishing a liaison with members in the Springfield area. Anyone interested in membership, serving on the Advisory Counsel, or acting as a Kentucky/Springfield liaison, please contact Steven Florczyk at sflorczyk@msn.com or 123 Bath St. A4, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

Notes & Queries

Submit Your Papers for the EMRS Archives

Ed Butler is working to collect the papers we have presented at our past conferences as a resource for future Roberts scholars. If you have presented a paper, please send a copy to Ed by email attachment as soon as possible (janemdionne@hvaccess.com).

Steven Florczyk

EMRS Bibliography Project

The members of the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society are interested in assembling an up-to-date, annotated bibliography of her work and criticism of it. Anyone interested in this project should contact either John Langan at langanj@newpaltz.edu or Steven Florczyk at sflorczyk@msn.com.

Steven Florczyk

EMRS Website

The Website is up and running! Thanks to the efforts of Becki Owens, Brad McDuffie, and Bill Boyle, the Roberts Society is now online at: www.newpaltz.edu/emrs/.

Steven Florczyk

Kentucky Literary Newsletter

For current news and events regarding Kentucky literati, check out the Kentucky Literary Newsletter online at: <http://windpub.com/news.htm>.

Steven Florczyk

EMR Neglected

For an article on literary neglect or slights of Elizabeth Madox Roberts' work, I would appreciate being apprised of books, anthologies, collections, articles, or lists where omission of reference to her or her work or inclusion of her work appears unwarranted. I am particularly interested in publications since the Campbell-Foster, McDowell, and Rovit books appeared in the 60's. There is likely a dimension to this situation in French, German, and Spanish scholarship and collections, but my interest is primarily in American and English publications. Bill Slavick, 242 Ludlow Street, Portland, ME 04102. william.slavick@maine.edu.

Bill Slavick

An Excerpt from the EMR V Keynote Address

H. R. Stoneback's Keynote Address at the V National Elizabeth Madox Roberts Conference was entitled "'Just Do It': Headaches, He(art)breaks and the Making of *The Time of Man*—Roberts in Stockbridge." The presentation summarized historical research conducted on-site in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, including a close examination and reassessment of Roberts' sojourn there, at the Riggs Foundation from December 1923—May 1924. Although more research needs to be done on the matter—and such research should include access to the closed Roberts file at the Riggs Foundation—the provisional conclusion of Stoneback's address was that her treatment at the Riggs enabled Roberts to finish *The Time of Man*—"and that is the best evidence of Roberts' 'Cure', suffusing both the writer and reader with the healing and redemptive grace of art, the triumph of the human spirit." Here follows Stoneback's conclusion:

"To conclude this Composition of Place, this meditation on Roberts writing Kentucky in Massachusetts, I ask you to envision Roberts in Stockbridge, one of her typical days there: after a "life-history" session with Dr. Riggs, she follows her daily regimen, her writing exercises that may be part of *The Time of Man*; then, after lunch, two hours of handweaving at the craft shop (maybe she is thinking of Ellen as she weaves); then the prescribed one-hour walk around Stockbridge, down Main Street and its shops, the configuration much like Springfield; then down past the Red Lion Inn, and maybe she walks a piece out a country lane that reminds her of Kentucky knob-country; maybe she chants to herself, like Ellen, that she is here, a-liven . . . Then as she walks back to her room at the Riggs, she pauses at the old stone watering-trough on Main Street, she studies again the words carved there in stone: "Merciful man is merciful unto his beasts"—and on the other side of the trough: "Utility is preferable to grandeur." She laughs aloud, thinking this sounds like the Riggs Rules, but it doesn't matter now for she *is* Ellen. I see her there now, her fingers outstretched to the spring-water flowing from the lionhead spout, her eyes fixed with blazing intensity beyond all pain and suffering as she composes Kentucky in Massachusetts."

H.R. Stoneback (SUNY-New Paltz)

The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society

Conference Registration and Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email address _____

Telephone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____

**Please Detach this form and mail with check
(payable to Tina Green, Treasurer, EMR Society) to:
Tina Green
401 W. Kerley Corners Rd.
Tivoli, NY 12583**

1) Enclosed please find \$ _____ for _____ registration (s) for the Sixth National Roberts Conference.

2) Enclosed please find \$ _____ for _____ annual membership (s) in the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society.

Note:

- A) All Conference participants must pay annual dues of \$10.00 per person.
- B) The Conference registration fee is \$35.00. It includes the Sunday night banquet at the Beaumont Inn and all conference sessions and activities.

Conference Lodging Information:

Reserve your conference lodging at the Beaumont Inn (1-800-352-3992). Ask for the Roberts Conference room rate, which is guaranteed for April 24, 25, and 26. Questions about lodging, as well as other non-academic program events such as Kentucky Writer's Day, should be addressed to: Professor H. R. Stoneback (Stoney_Sparrow@webtv.net) or Matt Nickel (mnickel@optonline.net).

Important Reminder: This will be the last Newsletter sent to those who have not paid EMRS annual dues. Even if you cannot attend this year's conference, please continue to support your society by sending in this form with your dues payment.

Fifth Annual EMR Conference Successful

The fifth annual Elizabeth Madox Roberts Conference for 2003 was held at the Beaumont Inn in Harrodsburg, KY, and at Saint Catharine College in Springfield, KY on April 27-28, 2003. The conference was well-attended, and many important and interesting assessments and presentations of Roberts' work and biography were delivered by scholars and enthusiasts from around the country, including the traditional Opening Banquet at Beaumont Inn, where guests were treated to cooking in the Kentucky style before finishing up with another solid discussion from Dr. H. R. Stoneback (SUNY New Paltz), Honorary President of the Society, who delivered the conference-opening Keynote Address.

Dr. H. R. Stoneback (SUNY New Paltz), in his keynote speech titled " 'Just Do It': Headaches, He(art)breaks, and the Making of *The Time of Man*—Roberts in Stockbridge," reported on research he has conducted concerning Elizabeth Madox Roberts' December 1923—May 1924 stay at the Stockbridge, Massachusetts Riggs Foundation. Stoneback's close examination and reassessment of Roberts' sojourn there debunks the usual theory that Roberts was there for severe headache treatment. Although the public record concerning her treatment under the direction of Dr. Austen Riggs is very sparse, Professor Stoneback told his audience, it seems clear that she received intensive treatment for what would now be called a "nervous breakdown." Stoneback's conclusion was that the famous "Riggs Rules," which included a regimen of writing exercises and handweaving, enabled Roberts to complete *The Time of Man*—and that, Stoneback pointed out, is the best evidence available of the Riggs "Cure." During the discussion that followed, conference participants were introduced to Becki Owens, our special guest and a new member of the Roberts Society. Owens (niece of Elizabeth Madox Roberts) shared family reminiscences with the conferees and praised the Society's efforts on behalf of Roberts' work.

Dr. Stoneback, who is Director of Graduate Studies at SUNY New Paltz, was introduced at the opening banquet by EMR Society President Steven Florczyk.

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The Colorado Years

Professor Stoneback has done fascinating research—scholarly sleuthing at its very best—on Elizabeth Madox Roberts' five-month stay at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Other periods in her life beg for similar detective work, including the time she spent in Colorado, from 1910 to 1916.

Woodridge Spears, in his 1953 dissertation, "Elizabeth Madox Roberts: A Biographical and Critical Study," gives more information than anyone else about this period, but that isn't saying much, even as he proposes that these years were the turning point in her life. In Colorado, he writes, Roberts found a restorative climate; congenial living arrangements, at least some of the time with her brother Charles in Larkspur, a few miles north of Colorado Springs; health and happiness she had never known before; *and* her voice. Certain it is that during this period, her poems first saw print in literary journals and that she published (Colorado Springs, 1915) *In the Great Steep's Garden*, with her poems and the photographs of one Kenneth Hartley.

Who was Kenneth Hartley? How did he and Roberts get together and dream up the idea for this little book? Could he have been more than a colleague or friend, possibly even a source of Roberts' happiness and energy? Much remains to be done, but here is a little of the little I've found so far.

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Scholars presenting papers or other productions at the Saint Catharine leg of the conference included:

Nicole Camastra (SUNY New Paltz, Session I chair); Presenters:
Michele Weiner (SUNY New Paltz), "Honey of Life: Ellen Chesser's Search for Meaning in *The Time of Man*";
William Boyle (SUNY New Paltz), "Imagination and Language in *The Time of Man*."

Steve Florczyk (Independent Scholar, Session II chair); Presenters:
Nicole Camastra (SUNY New Paltz) "A Mystery Stood in a Clear Pattern: Fertility and Fugue in 'The Sacrifice of the Maidens'";
Radmila Genyuk (SUNY New Paltz) "'Prayer for the Departen': Understanding Death and Religion at Bearwallow";
Brad McDuffie (SUNY New Paltz) "Waving Hello to Goodbye: Deterioration and Renewal in 'The Scarecrow'";
Gregg Neikirk (Westfield State College), "'A Wind Blowing in a Mirror'—The Life Within in the Short Stories of Elizabeth Madox Roberts."

Dennis Winter (Marist College, Session III chair); Presenters:
Wade Hall (Independent Scholar) "Miss Roberts Goes to Hollywood: *The Great Meadow* on the Silver Screen."

Gregg Neikirk (Westfield State College, Session IV chair)
Jane Dionne (SUNY New Paltz) "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Teaching Roberts' Clear Vision and Wisdom"
William Slavick (University of Maine) "For Elizabeth Madox Roberts with Love: Ellen Chesser and Dena Janes"
Matt Nickel (SUNY New Paltz) "Hunger, Memory and Place: Patterns in Roberts and Hemingway"
Dennis Winter (Marist College & Eastern NY Correctional Facility) Folk Music Performance

Call for Papers Deadline Extended

The Sixth Annual Elizabeth Madox Roberts Conference

The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society is currently accepting paper proposals for its 6th Annual Conference to be held April 24-26, 2004 in St. Catharine, Kentucky. Submissions on any topic relevant to Roberts are welcome. Possible subjects include Roberts' role in shaping and defining Southern Literature; Roberts as a Modernist; stylistic and literary comparisons and influences (i.e., Faulkner, Warren, Beethoven, etc.); and regional historical perspectives and interpretations—especially in regard to *The Great Meadow*.

Paper length is limited to no more than seven to eight pages. Please send one page abstracts to:

Nicole Camastra
English Dept.
SUNY New Paltz,
New Paltz, NY 12561

Or by e-mail to: camastrn@newpaltz.edu

Please direct all program and paper inquiries to Nicole Camastra and J.A. Stoneback, Co-Program Directors.

Colorado Years continued

Kenneth Hartley was a photographer and a teacher in Colorado Springs. The 1913 City Directory lists him, for the first time, as follows: "Hartley, Kenneth, Photographer. Artistic Home Portraiture Exclusively." The 1914 edition of the same directory lists him as a teacher at the Broadmoor School. He is not listed in 1915 but reappears in 1916 and 1917, again as a photographer.

Could the Broadmoor School be the link between Roberts and Hartley? Also known as the Colorado Academy for Girls, the school offered classes from kindergarten through high school on the grounds of the legendary Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, but only for about two years, 1912/13 to 1915, when the resort was being rebuilt after a fire.

Many years later, in her memoir for the special 1984 Roberts issue of *The Southern Review*, Janet Lewis mentioned that her friend "may have taught also in Colorado" (805). If she did, might not a place like the Boardmoor School be a likely spot?

I have found no further trace of Kenneth Hartley. Nor do I know if Roberts ever lived in Colorado Springs. Her youngest brother, Ivor, did, though. He arrived in 1915 to spend his junior and senior years at Colorado College, graduating in 1917. By then, Elizabeth was in Chicago, fortified with Rocky Mountain strength and new confidence.

I can't help feeling that a closer study of the Colorado years will be revealing. If anyone knows anything, please come forward!

Jane Eblen Keller



EMRS Panel at the ALA Meeting in Cambridge, MA.

President's Message continued

I continue to encourage society members to teach, study, and discuss the work of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, whether through the events of our yearly conferences or otherwise. While we have accomplished much in the past five years, we need to look toward the future as well to ensure that the efforts of this society continue to find fruition. To that end, I am reminding those that receive this publication about the \$10.00 annual dues fee required to maintain current membership status. Since this newsletter will only be sent to current members in the future, please remember to complete the attached membership form and enclose your check with the mailing.

--Steven Florczyk

2003 EMR Conference continued

The 2003 Conference Director, Dr. Gregg Neikirk of Westfield State College (MA), indicated that many members of the EMR Society assisted in making the conference a success. Program Director Dennis Winter (Marist College) helped to bring papers and presentations of high quality to the ensemble, and Springfield Coordinator Terry Ward (St. Catharine College) ensured that rooms for presentations and other accommodations were available. Professor Ward gave the welcoming address at the beginning of the scholarly presentations at St. Catharine beginning Monday morning. The conference activities were well-publicized this year. Several newspapers, including *The Harrodsburg Herald* and *The Danville Advocate*, ran full-page articles on Roberts and the conference in Harrodsburg and Springfield.

Following the presentation of scholarly papers, a film screening of *The Great Meadow* conducted by Wade Hall (Independent Scholar), and a lunch at the college, the annual Graveside Poetry Reading at Springfield Cemetery was celebrated, with several of the participants reading from Roberts' or their own works. The conference ended up as usual with the annual Business Meeting at the Beaumont Inn, where particulars concerning the next conference (see separate article) were decided upon or discussed.

Gregg Neikirk



EMRS Graveside Poetry Reading

The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society

Honorary President: H.R. Stoneback SUNY New Paltz

President: Steven Florczyk, Independent Scholar

Vice President: Gregg Neikirk, Westfield State College

Vice President: Jane Keller, University of Baltimore

Secretary/Treasurer: Tina Iraca Green, University of Connecticut

EMRS Newsletter Editors: Steven Florczyk and Tina Iraca Green

The EMRS Newsletter welcomes contributions including Roberts-related notes and queries and brief excerpts from papers presented at EMRS conferences. Please send submissions to Steven Florczyk (sflorczyk@msn.com) or Tina Green (tinair@hotmail.com).