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A Bibliography of Robert P. Tristram Coffin: Part 1

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For the bibliographer of a slim quarterly, the extraordinary profusion and variety of Coffin's publications pose problems not only of classification but also of sheer physical space. It is planned, therefore, to present a definitive checklist in three installments. The first, below, registers the books he wrote, books he contributed to, and anthologies in which his writings are represented, as well as biographical sketches and critical views of his work. Two other sections, to be published in subsequent issues of CLQ, will docket individual appearances of his poems, essays, and short stories in periodicals and newspapers.

No reviews of Coffin's books are listed, since it is felt that this would merely duplicate the data in Book Review Digest. Neither are his own book reviews evoked. These constitute a negligible phase of his activity and may be consulted in such sources as the American Oxonian, New York Herald Tribune Books, Saturday Review of Literature, Yale Review, and particularly in Yankee, where he conducted a book review department from June 1937 to October 1939.

Accounts of his life and literary productions in encyclopedias and biographical dictionaries are not cited here if they are perfunctory or contain only facts and opinions frequently repeated.

The roster of anthologies is necessarily inchoate, since Coffin's scope of acceptance encompassed so many areas of interest (birds, the family, New England, patriots, optimists, freedom, dogs, children, religion, war, fathers, holidays, cats, and college life). The standard indices record a pitifully small percentage of these inclusions; the others were garnered by poring through numerous volumes in the stacks of several libraries. This search will continue and the findings incorporated in a future addendum. I would appreciate information on any anthology not recorded here.

In the following categories the principle of arrangement is chronological.
BOOKS BY RPTC

Dedication: To my mother Alice and to my other mother Mary and to my daughter Mary-Alice, who wears their names and who, I hope, will wear their New England virtues.

Dedication: To Ruth, who was the dew and sun
On all the villages and downs,
Who loved me as I learned and loved
Her, the Cottages, and the Crowns.

Dedication: To Mary C. Ham, lover of poetry, artist in living, and my friend.

GOLDEN FALCON. New York: Macmillan Co., 1929. 70p. 21cm.
Dedication: To my sister, Alice, who is silver and jet and wind on the sea.

Dedication: To Henry Goddard Leach, a scholar who is also a thinker, an editor who is also a lover of human nature, master in the art of life and a good friend, the author dedicates these essays on life as he found it jovial and beautiful.
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Anthology textbook.

Dedication: To the students in the honors courses in English in Wells and Yale colleges.

LAUD: STORM CENTER OF STUART ENGLAND. New York: Brentano's, 1930. 331p. 21cm. Also, New York: Coward-McCann, 1930.

Biography.

Dedication: To the president and trustees of Wells College, who made this book possible.


Biography.

Dedication: To Miller Callahan, who has the sparkle of the two Dukes without the flaws.


Biography of his father.

Dedication: To the memory of my father, one of the comely, cosmic men, whose life furnished the inspiration for this book.


Dedication: To the memory of my sister Arline, whose beauty and promise were like high heads of thunder.


Dedication: To George Anderson, my friend and one of the square-toed American breed.

**LOST PARADISE, A Boyhood on a Maine Coast Farm.** New York: Macmillan Co., 1934. 284p. 20½cm.

Autobiography.

Dedication: To my mother, for the rods of johnnycake and the blue morning-glories.


Dedication: To Annie, my sister, who went to the country church with me and saw the strange holiness.


Novel.

Dedication: To Robert Archer Young, son of Maine by choice, good neighbor, and good friend.


Novel.

Dedication: To Frank Coffin, my brother all his life, And Andrew Pennell, my brother for a dozen years—because they both have boats in their blood and a lot of John Dawn.


Dedication: To Margaret, my poet daughter, who is equal parts Maine balsam, apple blossoms, and sparkle of the sea.


In The Rivers of America series.

Dedication: To Richard, my son, who has the pilgrim basket, the Merrymeeting farm, and who will grow up, I know, into a Merrymeeting kind of man.


The Turnbull Memorial Lectures, Johns Hopkins University.

Dedication: To Bayard and Margaret Turnbull, who made these lectures a lovely milestone in my life.


Dedication: To Ronald Bridges, an authority on Maine human nature, who is all Maine wool and a yard wide, and who is responsible for some of the ballads in this book.


Dedication: To Dorothy Hall Graham, a friend of mine and Maine who is one of the best listeners a poet could have; And Eleanor Beck-
man Martin, a student and friend of mine who has heard me read my poems oftener than any other person and who always delights me with her listening.


Biography.

Dedication: To Brooks Leavitt, a later son of Maine who has built as shining a life in the great world as Captain John Pennell built, who is one of the best readers of my books and one of my best friends.


Novel.

Dedication: To my son Robert and my sons in him.


1 essay; from *American Girl* under the title “Christmas on Paradise.”

**THERE WILL BE BREAD AND LOVE.** New York: Macmillan Co., 1942. 98p. 22cm.


Dedication: To Loyd Haberly, who grew up on an American farm as I did, went to the same kind of country school, to the same war, to the same college, Trinity, Oxford, who thinks of many of my poems before I can think of them, who puts his poems into books which are poems themselves, and who is as good a friend as I shall have.

**THE SUBSTANCE THAT IS POETRY.** New York: Macmillan Co., 1942. 167p. 21cm.

The Patten Lectures, Indiana University.

Dedication: To Joelle C. Hiebert, one of the finest friends my poems have made me.
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16 essays.
Dedication: To Edgar Curtis Taylor, doctor of humane letters and doctor of human nature, fine friend and fine fellow in Bowdoin, in Trinity, Oxford, and the Taylor School, who helped create these uncles by listening so creatively to them when they were still oral.

135 poems; collected from Extension, Free World, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal.
Dedication: To Mary-Alice, daughter of the first-water, born in England but American to the tips of her fingers and toes, who will be an artist and fine citizen in the coming United States of the World.

19 essays; collected from American Cookery, Gourmet, National Parent-Teacher, Think.
Dedication: To Edward Larocque Tinker, master of the art of Creole cookery and of most of the other cookery in the world, connoisseur of the American character, believer in the American way of life, who kindled the fire under me to do these essays.

Dedication: To my winged son, Robert Junior.

PEOPLE BEHAVE LIKE BALLADS. New York: Macmillan Co., 1946. 100p. 22cm.
Dedication: To Philip O. Coffin, a superlative cousin who knew Mr. Burns and other ballads here before they got into the book.

Anthology textbook. A revision and expansion of Book of Seventeenth-Century Prose (see above).


25 essays; collected from Gourmet, and the introduction to Alfred C. Shelton's Down to the Sea in Maine.

Dedication: To my three coast brothers, John, Ben, Frank, who have lived the poems I have only written.


Dedication: [To the 1939 Edition is added] . . . And to the memory of Ruth, my wife.


The Samuel Harris Lectures, Bangor Theological Seminary; the Speech Club Lecture, Texas State College for Women.

Dedication: To my friend Louis H. Hubbard and to his institution, the Texas State College for Women, to be preserved and transmitted by him and his college to the larger public that may some day take an interest in them.


12 essays; collected from Gourmet.

Dedication: To Ledlie and Priscilla, who follow the calendar through on a Maine farm, and who have followed my books and me through many golden Maine years; And to all the little Berrys, my goddaughter Diana, David, Bruce.

Grateful acknowledgment . . . to Arthur L. Guptill, another down-Maine man, who helped to design this book about the state.
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Dedication: To Normena, who is to me mayflowers, fir-balsam, and the sea; who keeps a farm that is too small for even a horse, the smallest of all but wide enough for poems, honey-bees, and friends, and on my own green island, loveliest to the wide world's ends.

21 essays; collected from American Mercury, Christian Science Monitor, Gourmet, Reader's Digest.
Dedication: To Juniper, my sparkling State-of-Maine God-daughter, And all the other sparkling Berkeleys, Jim, Nell, Mercy.

Dedication: To the Grahams, David and Elinor, fellow writers, good neighbors, and good friends who knew many of these poems in the act.

The George Elliston Lectures, University of Cincinnati.
Dedication: To Miriam Small, true-blue colleague and friend in Wells, in Maine, in literature and life.

History and geography of the region, with numerous photographic illustrations, for younger readers.

32 poems. 
Dedication: To George and Clara St. John, two of the best friends my poems have, at whose sea-haunted home on the Maine coast my daughter Peggy, my Choate son Richard, and I have spent some of the happiest hours of our lives.


105 poems. 
Dedication: To Eleanor Beckman Martin, lovely friend of my poems and me.


BROCHURES AND PAMPHLETS

Golden Falcon. [n.p.]: Privately printed, 1927. With a note by the author and a facsimile of the manuscript copy of the poem from the library of John S. Mayfield. (1 poem; 3p. From Saturday Review of Literature.)

In Memoriam, Easter, 1933; Thomas S. Jones, Junior. Portland, Maine: Mosher Press, [1933]. (1 poem; 1p. From Carillon.)

“Maine, A State of Grace,” Maine Bulletin, XL (December 1937), 10p. (Commencement address delivered at the University of Maine, June 14, 1937.)

Epithalamion for a Western World. Brunswick, Maine: Privately printed, 1944. (1 poem; 3 p.)


The Poems That Write the Poet. Haverford, Penn.: [n.p.], 1953. (Class of 1898 Lecture at Haverford College.)
CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOOKS


“The Matter of Poetry,” “Ballads for Beginners,” “The Regional - Biographical - Historical Book,” in Herschel Brickell (editor), *Writers on Writing* by the Staff of the University of New Hampshire Writers Conference (Gar-
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Introduction to Alice E. Vail, The Big Thicket (San Antonio, Texas: Naylor Co., 1952).


IN ANTHOLOGIES

Poems


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“Crystal Moment,” in William Rose Benét (editor), Fifty Poets (New York: Duffield & Green, 1933), 105-107. Also, an account of how the poem was written.
“Golden Falcon,” in Designed For Reading by the editors of Saturday Review of Literature (New York: Macmillan Co., 1934), 392.
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“Strange Holiness,” in Roger S. Loomis & Donald L. Clark (editors), Modern English Readings (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1934), variant pagination in successive editions of this volume.


"Cat on the Table," in Lynn Hamilton (editor), *Sophisti-Cats* (Boston: Chapman & Grimes Co., 1952), 134.


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**Prose**


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ABOUT RPTC


"Bright Maine," *Portland Sunday Telegram* (June 14, 1936), D, 1. Autobiographical.


Alexandra Krastin, "Of the Nantucket Coffins," *Christian Science Monitor, Weekly Magazine Section* (December 27, 1941), 5.
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*Senior Scholastic*, XLV (November 13, 1944), 16.


“Square Toes,” *Senior Scholastic*, XLIX (November 18, 1946), 15.

Adelbert M. Jakeman, “Maine Poet,” *Pine Cone*, III (Summer 1947), 34.


Obituaries:


Newsweek, XLV (January 31, 1955), 66.

*Time*, LXV (January 31, 1955), 82.

Bowdoin *Alumnus*, XXIX (February 1955), 1, 2, 3.

*Publishers' Weekly*, CLXVII (February 19, 1955), 1172.


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Coffin on Poetry: “For poetry is forever the thin, sinewy tendon that defies time and runs out from all small things to articulate eternity. Poetry is the brevity that is the breath of life, the art of doing without most of the acts and words we live by, in order to gain the life more abundant... Poetry is subtraction, as a sketch in ink or color is. Poetry postulates leaving the mass out, for the sake of the life of the mass... [Poetry] represents reality, it does not present it.” [“The Matter of Poetry”]

Coffin to the Young Poet: “Call your home beauties by name. Begin as a local poet if you hope to become a universal one. Stay at home if you want the world as your range. This is one very practical way of achieving that fundamental design which is immediacy. Let no genus, no class, no philosophy get be-
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tween you and the light. The philosopher deals in trees, but the poet deals in maples and hackmatacks. An oak is a better tree than a mere tree, and better proves treehood. Set your bird’s song down as a chickadee’s or the cardinal’s. Put the daisy and the bird-on-the-wing in your meadow, not bare flowers. Avoid the over-arching and overwhelming abstracts. Stay close to cases, to home.” [“The Matter of Poetry”]

**Coffin on the Maine Coast:** “And there under the boom at their bow a shore was coming up out of the sea. It was all marble and dazzling pearl. It was quilted with snow, but it was fringed with trees cut out of green and gold lace, all powdered with the splinters of diamonds. Trees conical and even, every dazzling shade of green. Wall on wall of green trees till they faded into azure and gray and mauve. Green turned to azure, and the azure to silver again. Trees cut out of lace. Taller trees of a feathery green which turned to molten silver where the wind ran through their everlasting leaves, then to golden needles sunnier than the sun itself when the wind dropped. Tall trees like plumes, too lovely to be seen outside of sleep, etched on a lighter haze of forests beyond forests. High cliffs were lifting their shimmering heads as they drew in toward land. Where the snow left off, the rocks themselves shone white with granite. At their foot, in the tides’ way, dead salt grass spread like a golden frieze. Gulls were flying like pieces blown off from the snow. Light and dark, dark and light. The sky was like a transparent enamel too bright to look at long. And every last thing there, rock and sedge and tree and hill, seemed to throw out a nimbus and bathed itself from its own brightness in a glory like that of the pebbles at the bottom of a clear stream of water.” [John Dawn]

**Coffin on Maine’s Imperishable Heritage:**
When folks have moved away, the borers enter
And bore their dusty way into the center
Of Maine’s heart, and through a thousand pores
The unused sunlight seeps back home outdoors.

[“Maine Woodpile”]
The Whales Sang

The serpents of Anarchic night
Filled the sky with hissing light.
The bell of Erin closed apart the sea,
"I, too, have fire pent in me!"

The Northern lights came up like ghosts;
They lit the long night with their hands;
"I, too, have fire pent in me."

"I, too, have fire!" said the whales,
They glit the oceans with their tails,
"I, too, have fire!"

There will come birds, wide as across
Their wings then in the abounding;
And gods will drop from them with darts
And strike us to our thundering hearts.

"We will flee, but they will cling
And take a lovely ride about and sing,
We will comp to the stinking block,
But their thin lines will draw us back.

"The friends of God who wear their hats
Before Him will fly out our gates,
They will dip the scales of right
From our skulls for New World night.

Gods in a hantling with muscles set,
Will dip the good lamps in us out,
A lamp to light a girl's Spring and days,
To lamps to light an old man's dying.

Lamps for Tom Coffin in country churches,
Lamps for President Adams's speech,
Lamps for Bostonians getting the cord;
Lamps for the white pine house of God.

"I am the lamps of the American people!
"The sperm whale stood up high as a steeple,
Beyond his fuses and died to shine.