On this and the opposite page is an unpublished letter written by Robert Frost to Ruth Suckow on December 24, 1931. By permission of Lesley Frost Ballantine.
Of life vividly restored, each unsatisfied
if it is true to its inward self. That is the
way tidy stories and should with my
own always be. Never mind when
you resemble and excel; you are a
full-fledged important uncomparably.
your first discoverer must be proud of
you. Eleanor and I, later discoverers,
care even gladder to know you than we
have been. Now you can write and
remember. Your story about the little
girl who sent her valentine makes my
want to tell one about a
little boy who went to a birthday
party he hadn't been invited to. Talk
about anything. — Best to you both
—Sincerely yours, Robert Frost
Ruth Suckow's novels and stories about her native state have placed her among the authentic regional writers of the Middle West. Her first stories about Iowa appeared in the early 1920's in *The Midland*, edited by John T. Frederick, and in *The Smart Set*, edited by George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken. By 1960, the year of her death, she had published twelve books, including *Country People, Iowa Interiors, The Bonney Family, Children and Older People, The Folks*, and *New Hope*.

Among the Suckow papers at Iowa, which include early notebooks, later manuscripts, and a holograph version of *The Bonney Family*, are more than two hundred letters. Arranged in historical sequence, this correspondence reveals not only details of Miss Suckow's environment and associates, but something also of the general outline of her career, and perhaps a hint or two of the relationships between her life and her writings.

The letters here catalogued span forty-two years. Part of their interest arises from the variety of viewpoints and concerns they express. H. L. Mencken writes encouragingly to the young author; fellow writers such as Floyd Dell and Dorothy Canfield Fisher offer opinions about books and writers; editors such as Blanche Knopf, John Farrar and Pascal Covici give constructive criticism; readers proffer their opinions and objections; and friends, some of them childhood companions, write about personal matters and current news. Having read Miss Suckow's *Children and Older People*, Robert Frost is pleased to find her collection of stories "... without guile or thesis. It is just stories of life vividly restored, each one satisfied if it is true to its inward self. That is the way I like stories and should wish my own always to be." (Robert Frost's letter is reproduced in full on pages 20 and 21.

The present list omits a quantity of publisher's correspondence relating mostly to reprint permissions and copyright assignments. For brevity, Ruth Suckow is referred to in the following descriptions by the initials R.S.
1918
H. S. Watson to R. S. New York, 14 October 1918. Concerning a story submitted to *Field and Stream*; though she shoots no game and catches no fish, the editor will accept the story if she shortens it. T. L. S. 1 p.

1920

1921
H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 26 July [1921]. Accepting three stories; remarks that they are the best stories a new author has submitted to *The Smart Set* in five years. T. L. S. 1 p.


H. L. Mencken to R. S. New York, 9 August 1921. Suggesting that her first book should be a novel rather than a collection of short stories; offers to advise her regarding the manuscript and asks about her ancestry and training. T. L. S. 2 pp.

R. S. to Franklin Spier. Earlville, Iowa, 15 August 1921. Agreeing to show him her novel as soon as the manuscript is completed. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 16 August [1921]. Remarking on Miss Suckow’s ancestry; advises her against living in New York and disparages Greenwich Village; suggests that she submit some stories to *McCall’s*. T. L. S. 2 pp.

John T. Frederick to R. S. Glennie, Michigan, 28 August 1921. Concerning stories submitted to *The Midland*; mentions her decision not to take work at Iowa City, refers to the encouragement she has received from Mencken, and in a postscript expresses his admiration for her story entitled “Wanderers”. A. L. S. 3 pp.

Burton Rascoe to R. S. New York, 22 September 1921. Returning some stories submitted to *McCall’s*; remarks that they are too devoid of glamour and plot for his magazine. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. New York, 22 September 1921. Asking to see more of her stories. A. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 30 September [1921]. Thanking her for submitting more stories. T. N. S. 1 p.

George Jean Nathan to R. S. 3 October 1921. Accepting the two stories “Just Him and Her” and “A Pilgrim and a Stranger”; delays decision on a third story and rejects a fourth; remarks that her work steadily improves. T. L. S. 1 p.


Hartley H. Hepler to the Editors of *The Smart Set*. Shriner, Texas, 14
November 1921. Expressing great admiration for the writings of Miss Suckow, especially her story “Mame”. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 18 November [1921]. Forwarding Mr. Hepler’s letter; asks for more stories. T. N. S. 1 p.


1922

George Jean Nathan to R. S. New York, 1 February 1922. Asking to have another reading of a story previously returned. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 6 February [1922]. Conveying congratulations from Sinclair Lewis, who praises the reality, high visibility, lucidity, and vision of Miss Suckow’s writing; inquires about the progress of her novel and asks for more stories. T. L. S. 1 p.

Alfred Harcourt to R. S. New York, 8 February 1922. Expressing interest in publishing a novel by Miss Suckow; says that Sinclair Lewis called his attention to her stories in The Smart Set. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, [14 February 1922]. Agreeing to read her manuscript [Country People]. A. Card S.


Alfred Harcourt to R. S. New York, 18 February 1922. Acknowledging a letter and hoping to see some of her work. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 20 March [1922]. Regretting that Miss Suckow is ill and in the hospital. T. N. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 30 March [1922]. Concerning her illness; mentions that Knopf is eager to have her novel [Country People]. T. N. S. 1 p.

George Jean Nathan to R. S. New York, 1 June 1922. Accepting her story “Wanderers” for The Smart Set. T. L. S. 1 p.


Father Jerome to R. S. Saint Leo, Florida, 3 August 1922. Expressing his pleasure with her story “A Rural Community”. T. N. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. SS George Washington, 19 October [1922]. Requesting permission to include one of her stories in his collection of American short stories to be published in German translation. T. L. S. 1 p.


George Jean Nathan to R. S. New York, 12 December 1922. Accepting the story “Other People’s Ambitions” for The Smart Set. T. L. S. 1 p.
1923

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 24 February [1923]. Asking for a brief biographical sketch to go with the German book. T.N.S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 3 March [1923]. Concerning his collection of American stories to be published in Germany; mentions the death of Miss Suckow's sister. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 15 [i. e. 14] March [1923]. Suggesting that Miss Suckow put together a book of her novelettes and short stories; names the authors to be represented in his German short story collection. T. L. S. 1 p.


H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 23 March [1923]. Asking to see her new novelette; recommends that she choose Knopf for her publisher. T. L. S. 1 p.

R. S. to Samuel Knopf. Forest City, Iowa, 4 April 1923. Replying to his inquiry about a volume of short stories she has nearly completed. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. New York, 11 April 1923. Commending her manuscript Country People; suggests that she allow Knopf to publish it as a book. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 23 April [1923]. Concerning the transfer of her manuscript to the Knopf office. T. N. S. 1 p.


H. L. Mencken to R. S. New York, 24 July 1923. Asking permission to hold her story "Four Generations" for use in the first number of a new magazine that he and Mr. Nathan are planning to issue. T. L. S. 1 p.

R. S. to Alfred A. Knopf. Earlville, Iowa, 10 September 1923. Offering to send the first half of a long novel for his consideration. T. L. S. 1 p. with carbon of reply.

Milton MacKaye to R. S. Washington, D. C., 17 September 1923. Ex-


H. L. Mencken to R. S. Baltimore, 8 November [1923]. Concerning her manuscript which Mrs. Knopf is sending him to read. T. L. S. 1 p.

H. L. Mencken to R. S. New York, 26 November [1923]. Praising the manuscript of her incomplete novel; says hers in the only short story in the first issue of The American Mercury. T. L. S. 1 p.

R. S. to Blanche W. Knopf. Des Moines, Iowa, 2 December 1923. Concerning the novel she expects to complete in February. A. L. S. 1 p. with reply.

Dorothy Dunbar Bromley to R. S. New York, 3 December 1923. Asking whether she would care to submit a long work for publication by Henry Holt and Co. T. L. S. 1 p.


Paul Green to R. S. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 4 December 1923. Offering his congratulations on her story “Renters” which he has just read in The Century Magazine. A. L. S. 2 pp.

1924


R. S. to R. S. Josephy. New York, 4 March 1924. Asking to omit sending page proofs of Country People so that copies of the book can be ready for presentation at an annual booksellers convention in May. T. L. S. 1 p.

Blanche W. Knopf to R. S. [New York] 22 April 1924. Suggesting that she cut the manuscript of her novel from 220,000 words to about 90,000. Carbon typescript. 2 pp.


Blanche W. Knopf to R. S. [New York] 30 April 1924. Concerning the manuscript of Miss Suckow’s novel; reaffirms her previous strictures and enthusiasms regarding it. Carbon typescript. 1 p.


1926


1929

Helen LeCron to R. S. San Diego, California, 13 March 1929. Sending wedding congratulations. Telegram.

R. S. to Caroline Woodhams. Santa Fe, New Mexico, 3 May [1929]. Concerning her move to Santa Fe for the summer; references to her living in California, Des Moines, and Algona, Iowa. A. L. S. 4 pp.

1930

Sigrid Undset to Mrs. Knopf. Lillehammer, 10 March 1930. Suggesting that The Bonney Family be translated into Norwegian; mentions her admiration for Miss Suckow’s work. Typescript copy. 1 p.

1931

Mildred Cook to R. S. Cincinnati, Ohio, 17 May 1931. Concerning her reactions to The Odyssey of a Nice Girl. A. L. S. 4 pp.


Otha D. Wearin to R. S. Hastings, Iowa, 8 August 1931. Criticizing a story about Grinnell; asks for a manuscript for his Iowa history collection. T. L. S. 1 p.


Robert Frost to R. S. South Shaftsbury, Vermont, 24 December 1931.
[Editor's note. The remainder of Mr. Paluka's article will appear in the March issue of Books At Iowa.]

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CLARENCE A. ANDREWS, Assistant Professor of English and Journalism, recently completed a doctoral dissertation on Baron Corvo.

JOHN C. GERBER, Chairman of the Department of English, is a past president of the National Council of Teachers of English. During part of the academic year 1964-1965 he will be in Washington, D.C. to serve as Program Director of Project English for the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

FRANK S. HANLIN, Head of the Acquisitions Department, described The Leigh Hunt Collection in an article for the Keats-Shelley Journal in 1959.

HARRY OSTER, Associate Professor of English, has traveled extensively in Europe and America collecting ballads and folksongs. His recordings of Iowa folksongs soon will be released.

FRANK PALUKA, Head of the Special Collections Department, is compiling a selective bibliography of Iowa authors.

STOW PERSONS, Professor of History, has edited Evolutionary Thought in America and American Minds: A History of Ideas.

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