

The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society Newsletter



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www.emrsociety.com

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A Decade of Friends and Fellow Aficionados: Tenth Year Anniversary of the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society

Elizabeth Madox Roberts once wrote in her journals that when she returned to Kentucky after what seemed to her like years of a sojourn in Colorado, she felt as though she had been holding her breath underwater until reaching her Springfield home, when life-giving Kentucky air joyously filled her lungs. Getting back to Kentucky is one of those things that brings out the healing power of nature.

From the many conversations I have had with the members of our society—those who hail from Kentucky and those who do not—it has become clear that she describes a healing power that many of us also experience each year. No matter the origination point of our annual pilgrimage to Harrodsburg and Springfield each April, the greetings we give each other on the front porches of the quaint cabins at historic Beaumont Inn are inevitably descriptive ones: the beauty of the Kentucky landscape; the blossoming of redbuds and dogwoods—the greening of the Sugar Leaf Maple . . . and the Kentucky landscape also includes the “howdys” and the smiles from pure strangers who don’t look at us as a band of ragtag scholars who have been driving most of two days to reach the Kentucky air that Miss Roberts cherished so much.

For the tenth year, we are about to make this trip, where good friends and sharp minds celebrate the works and life of Elizabeth Madox Roberts. In ten years, a lot of good things have happened, and some very important and interesting scholarship has accumulated. In fact, two volumes of collected essays are going to press as I write this message, which include many of the salient papers that we’ve heard at our annual society gatherings over the years. Thanks to Honorary President H. R. Stoneback, and co-editors Steve Florczyk and Nicole Camastra, we can soon read essays in *Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Essays of Reassessment & Reclamation* (eds. Stoneback & Florczyk) and in *Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Essays of Discovery & Recovery* (eds. Stoneback, Camastra & Florczyk) which focus on a variety of topics that touch Miss Roberts’ works and life, and also include previously unpublished work by Roberts. The society is *very* appreciative of all the hard work that the editors—and the contributors—put in to accomplish this assembly of critical works.

Other accomplishments are noteworthy too: our membership rolls keep expanding, and we are represented at several national conferences each year, including the annual American Literature Association and the South Atlantic MLA (SAMLMA) conferences. The society’s website, EMRSociety.com, is

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A Tenth Anniversary Message from the Honorary President

That first meeting: having driven down separately from New York, I met, on a green-golden April morning in 1999, five of my graduate students at the prearranged rendezvous point on Brooklyn Bridge—the *other* Brooklyn Bridge, over the Kentucky River near Wilmore (a place sacred in my teenaged memories). I took them to lunch at the Beaumont Inn, where I had last dined, somewhat regularly, in 1959-1960. Over that lunch the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society was founded. After that lunch, I drove them in the back of my pickup truck across the river ford and into the fields, over rough and rocky places on my farm, a wild wet ride up the hollow in the creekbed, the creek high after spring rains, and into overgrown pioneer bottomlands by the ruined foundation of the frontier homestead in the back forty. Then we changed into our town-clothes by the Little South Rolling Fork River that flows through my farm and drove over to Saint Catharine College to hold our brief sessions of six papers. There we met for the first time our gracious host, Terry Ward, who has been from the beginning rock-solid and indispensable to the work of the Roberts Society. Afterwards, we drove out to Saint Rose, and on a dirt-road pull-off by the creek below the Dominican priory beloved by Roberts, we had a fine late lunch of French cheeses and olives and assorted hors d'oeuvres. The local farmer, whom we had watched working, silhouetted against the sky on his far mythical hillside pasture, drove his tractor down and talked to us. It was a scene from a Roberts novel. Toward dusk, we left the enchanted Roberts country, drove through Lebanon and down to Bowling Green for the Robert Penn Warren Conference where we all had to speak the next day.

In recent years we have come down from New York in convoys—sometimes as many as twenty of us—driving down through West Virginia, stopping overnight at Flatwoods, eating ritual meals of country fried steak with biscuits and gravy at the customary place, most of us talking and sing-

ing into the night on the motel balcony overlooking the fishermen's trailered boats and the logging trucks whining down the Interstate just far enough away and the hills beyond where there always seemed to be a good sunset. (But there was usually someone hiding out in a room, missing everything, trying to complete an unfinished paper.) The next morning, the numinous crossing of the Big Sandy and the entry into Kentucky, everything timed for the ritual stop for the best burgers in Appalachia, in Carter County; then on past Sparrow's birthplace farm, past the coal-seamed cut banks of the highway, the roadside redbuds and wild mustard in full bloom now, and up this holler and down that creekbed the dogwoods flowering by unpainted farmhouses and barns. Even an Interstate is beautiful when you are driving deeper into Spring.



H. R. Stoneback (center) and his graduate students (from left to right) Mark Bellomo, Steve Florczyk, Susan Piperato, Breida Gallagher Stutzman, and John Langan over the Kentucky River, 1999.

Then the long drive down through the Bluegrass and the Knobs, slanting southwest down to Bowling Green and Guthrie for the Robert Penn Warren Conferences, everything deep in late April green when we get there. Given the timetable of the Warren and the Roberts Conferences for most of the past decade, Warren—Kentucky's other great writer—comes first. We are all members of the Warren Circle too, and it is good to see old friends in Bowling Green and Guthrie. Roberts Society veterans are quietly pleased when we realize, after about five years of our existence, that we have grown larger than the Warren Circle, though it is much older than the Roberts Society.

We note, several years, that the Roberts Conference has more than twice as many papers presented as at the Warren Conference. We enjoy our time in Warren-country and we try to entice our Warren colleagues to come to Roberts-country and learn about Kentucky's *first* great writer; and some of us try to convince them in our papers and our discussions that Roberts is the earliest and deepest influence on Warren's fiction. But you can only say *Roberts* Penn Warren so many times. Then we must leave for the cross-state drive back to Springfield and Harrodsburg.

It is when we drive into Harrodsburg and up the hill and down the lane under the great ancient trees to the Beaumont Inn that we are truly home. There the convoy members meet up with Roberts colleagues who have flown in from New York, with colleagues who have flown or driven from Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee and other points farther West and South. And East—from France. We are home when we gather for the opening banquet at the Beaumont and the dinner speakers after the country ham, yellowleg fried chicken, and corn pudding. We are home when we talk and sing on the porch. We are home the next afternoon when we participate in the Kentucky Writers Day Celebration at historic Penn's Store, reading from the work of Roberts and other Kentucky writers, and reading our own poetry, singing our songs. (And just down the road is another old home, my farm, Roncevaux Farm, where I last lived in 1978 and wrote a novel that was profoundly influenced by Roberts and a few others you could probably name.) We are home when we go to Springfield and we are greeted by Nell Haydon who has organized another fine feast put on by the ladies of Springfield, and the mayor and local dignitaries salute us and proclaim Elizabeth Madox Roberts day or week or month. But every day is really Roberts-Day in Springfield. It is *her place*, we are in *her home where she made it* in her writing, and thus we have come from afar. And because we are critics and scholars, teachers and students, poets and writers, we are very much at home at Saint Catharine College when we hold our academic sessions.

What else should be said in a Tenth Anniversary message? Should I say, speaking as a veteran of many literary wars, as an officer in many literary societies that I have seen brought close to ruin and dissolution by internecine struggles, that I here affirm without reservation that the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society is not plagued with such difficulties, that our society is sound and vigorous—a true *society* (*societas*: fellowship, union, rooted in *socius*, a sharing). We were a family at the beginning, and ten years later we are still a family, an ever expanding family. Recently I found the only extant copy of my 2002 keynote address at the Roberts Conference; it was perhaps the very last essay I composed on the typewriter, before the wheelchair forced me to turn to the computer. And because in 2002—already six years ago now—I had good (or bad) medical reasons to believe it would be my last Roberts Society conference, that keynote was, in part, a kind of tentative farewell to the troops. Now, six years later, delighted but not at all surprised by joy, I want to thank all Roberts Society members for keeping everything moving (including me), so that we can all now say together on our Tenth Anniversary, along with Elizabeth Madox Roberts and Ellen Chesser: “We’re a-liven.”

H. R. Stoneback



Roberts Society members at the annual porch meeting, 2007.

2007 Conference Report

The 9th Annual Elizabeth Madox Roberts Conference featured scholars from across the United States and over the Atlantic Ocean when it was held Saturday, April 21, through Monday, April 23, 2007. Participants from New York, Georgia, Texas, Massachusetts, Maine, West Virginia, and France presented their research on Roberts at St. Catharine College and explored Roberts country in and around



Attendees of the 2007 conference.

Springfield, Kentucky. Honorary President of the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society **H. R. Stoneback** kicked off events at the conference banquet with the keynote address, "In a Station of the Modern: Roberts and Pound – Post-Symbolism, Imagism, Melopoeia, Phanopoeia, Logopoeia, and Mo(o)re." On Sunday, attendees relished the beautiful weather at historic Penn's Store in Gravel Switch while participating in Kentucky Writers Day festivities, which featured poetry and prose readings and musical performances. Mayor **John W. Cecconi**, the **City Council** of Springfield, and **Nell R. Haydon** of Main Street / Renaissance welcomed the group to Sutton Place for a delicious homemade

dinner, which participants enjoyed thoroughly. On Monday, academic sessions featuring twenty-three papers took place. That evening, the conference concluded with the annual Graveside Roberts Memorial Reading at Springfield Cemetery and the Business Meeting back at the Beaumont Inn, at which new officers were sworn in, including **Gregg Neikirk** as president and **William Boyle** and **Nicole Camastra** as vice presidents.

Terry Ward of Saint Catherine College started Monday's academic events by welcoming everyone, and four sessions followed. The first featured: "*He Sent Forth a Raven: The Pastoral Ground*," by **William Slavick** (University of Southern Maine); "First Comes [Safety], Then Comes Marriage: Family Choices for Diony on the Kentucky Frontier," by **Gregg Neikirk** (Westfield State College); "Blood Ties Exposed: Revelatory Letters in *My Heart and My Flesh*," by **Gérald Préher** (Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines); "The Blue Hammer: Teaching Roberts to a Bunch of Punks," by **William Boyle** (SUNY-New Paltz); and "'It was a good book, a learned book. I read it a heap here and yon': Experiences with Teaching *The Time of Man* in a University Writing About Literature Course," by **John C. Baker** (Concord University). The second session continued with: "The Sacrifice of the Married: Views of Marriage and the Sacrament in Roberts," **James Stamant** (SUNY-New Paltz); "'Distressed Phrases of Prayer': Seeking Our Lady's Help," by **Goretti Vianney-Benca** (SUNY-New Paltz); "Language and Style of Elizabeth Madox Roberts' *The Time of Man*," by **Nicole Myers** (SUNY-New Paltz); "The Rain Bat and Black Sheep: *Jingling in the Wind* and Its Failed Artistic Vision," by **Damian Carpenter** (SUNY-New Paltz); "Self, Identity, and Knowledge: Merging the Familiar and the Strange in *The Haunted Mirror*," by **Michael Beilfuss** (Texas A&M); and "'In spite of their simplicity': The Tall Men in Elizabeth Madox Roberts' 'Record at Oak Hill,'" by **Matthew Nickel** (SUNY-New Paltz). After lunch, session three included "'It Came Into Being in Her Mind': Spectral Existence in Elizabeth Madox Roberts' 'The Scarecrow,'" by **Nicole Camastra** (University of Georgia); "*In the Great Steep's Garden*: Roberts' Journey West and Early Growth as a Writer," by **Steven J. Florczyk** (University of Georgia); "Evaluating 'the beauty of the distant vale': The Reality of Escape in 'Love by the Highway,'" by **Emily Kane** (University of Georgia); "You

Can't Go Home Again: The Rhetoric of Place in Elizabeth Madox Roberts' 'On the Mountainside,'" by **Erin Presley** (University of Georgia); "'Formless Levels' and 'Changing Curves': Geometry of the Unsignifiable in 'The Haunted Palace,'" by **Katy Shores** (University of Georgia); and "Here I Am: Sense of Place in *The Time of Man*," by **Paula Sirc** (SUNY-New Paltz). Session four concluded with: "A Vision of One's World, Organic and Lasting: Solitude, Cerebral Space, and Epiphanic Understanding of the Soil in Elizabeth Madox Roberts and William Faulkner," by **Landon Gross** (SUNY-New Paltz); "Finding *A Room of One's Own* in *The Time of Man*," **Natalie M. Khoury** (University of Georgia); "The Touch Made its Horror Drunk: Resisting Womanhood in 'The Scarecrow,'" by **Angela Green** (University of Georgia); "'There Will Your Heart Be Also': Treasures—Damned & Divined—In William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* and Elizabeth Madox Roberts' *A Buried Treasure*," by **Brad McDuffie** (Nyack College); "Buttons, Bubbles, and She-Books: The Sensory Formation of the Psychological in 'I Love My Bonny Bride,'" by **John Weatherford** (University of Georgia); and, finally, with Gérald Préher reading selections from "Berkeleyian Impressionism in the Works of Elizabeth Madox Roberts," by **Gisele Sigal** (Université de Pau/IUT de Bayonne).



Gregg Neikirk speaks at the 2007 banquet.

Emily Kane

Publication News

H. R. Stoneback's essay "'Strange Caterwauling': Singing in the Wilderness with Boone & Audubon, Elizabeth Madox Roberts & Robert Penn Warren," appeared in *The South Carolina Review* Fall 2007 issue.

Two volumes of essays are scheduled for release in April: *Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Essays of Reassessment and Reclamation*, H. R. Stoneback and Steven Florczyk, eds., Wind Publications, and *Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Essays of Discovery and Recovery*, H. R. Stoneback, Nicole Camastra, and Steven Florczyk, eds., Quincy & Harrod Press.

Matthew Nickel has edited a festschrift in honor of this year's 10th Annual Conference. The book is titled *Illumination & Praise: Poems for Elizabeth Madox Roberts and Kentucky* (Des Hymnagistes Press) and will be available at the Roberts conference in April.

Past issues of *The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society Newsletter* are now available online. Please go to www.emrsociety.com to browse the archives.

10th Annual Conference Registration

Please return your registration form to participate in this year's conference. The form is available online at www.emrsociety.com.

EMRS Members: News & Notes 2007-2008

—EMRS members at SAMLA November 2007, the Convention of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association in Atlanta: This marked the first time that the Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society appeared in the SAMLA program as an “Affiliated Group.” EMRS veterans Mike Beilfuss, Nicole Camastra, and Matthew Nickel presented papers on Roberts in the session chaired by Emily Kane. In the Hemingway Society’s Regular Session I, William Boyle, Brad McDuffie, and H. R. Stoneback presented papers. Stoneback also gave a poetry reading in the SAMLA Poets session; and in the evening Plenary Session—“The Music of Poetry/The Poetry of Music”—Stoneback was one of three featured speakers together with Jim Clark and Claudia Emerson. In his presentation—which like others by the session’s poet-songwriter-critics involved singing, guitar, poetry reading and CD-playing—Stoneback cited Roberts as a poet-novelist who made good use of song in her work. Other EMRS members in attendance at SAMLA included Steven Florczyk, Angela Green, and James Stamant. (An EMRS reunion was held at the Spotted Dog.)

—EMR at SAMLA 2008: the 80th Annual Convention of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association will take place at the Hyatt Regency in Louisville, November 7-9, 2008. Roberts Society members will figure prominently in the program. H. R. Stoneback will be the Convention Keynote Speaker in Literary Criticism (and, given the location, he plans to mention Roberts as well as other Kentucky writers—James Still and Robert Penn Warren—in his address). Many sessions will be chaired by EMRS members. As part of the EMR Society’s Tenth Anniversary celebrations in Louisville, we will have *two* sessions of papers on Roberts—session I chaired by Steven Florczyk and session II chaired by Goretta Vianney-Benca (contact them with your paper proposals); other EMRS events are in the planning stages (stay tuned)—a Roberts Society Banquet and/or a special program at the Filson Club (of

which Roberts was a member). Also at the Louisville SAMLA meeting William Boyle will chair a session on Hard-Boiled Southern Fiction, Brad McDuffie will chair a session on Cormac McCarthy, Gregg Neikirk will chair a session on Non-fiction Prose, and Matt Nickel will chair a session on Place, Regionalism, and Ecological Concerns—contact them with paper proposals.

—EMR at ALA San Francisco May 22-25, 2008: Michael Beilfuss is chair of the Roberts Society session.

—In December 2007, James Stamant received the Hemingway Research Award from the John F. Kennedy Library, a grant to support research in the Hemingway Archive.

—The EMRS was well-represented at the ALA Conference in Boston (May 2007). Although there was no Roberts Session, EMRS members McDuffie, Nickel, and Stamant presented papers on Robert Penn Warren, and Stoneback gave a paper on Hemingway. Other EMRS members who made a presence at the conference were Gregg Neikirk and Goretta Vianney-Benca. In addition, Stoneback’s *Reading Hemingway’s The Sun Also Rises* (the inaugural volume in the extensive *Reading Hemingway* series from Kent State University Press), was officially released and fêted at the publisher’s champagne reception for the book at the Westin Copley Place Hotel. One observer noted: “Stoney was so busy signing books that he didn’t get any food from the vast pyramidal tower of hors d’oeuvres that was provided at the reception.” (“But I did get some of the champagne,” Stoneback added.)

—Also in Boston, in conjunction with the ALA Conference, The Nick Adams Society held its XVth Hemingway Convocation. Gathering at the elite St. Botolph Club (Boston’s leading arts and letters club since the 1800s), the Nick Adams Society held its awards banquet and EMRS members Boyle, McDuffie, Nickel, Stamant, and Vianney-Benca received “Outstanding Younger Hemingway Scholar” honors, presented by the pantheon of senior Hemingway scholars present

(Richard Davison, Allen Josephs, Donald Junkins, Robert Lewis, Linda Miller, and H. R. Stoneback). Joanna Hildebrand Craig, editor-in chief of Kent State University Press, was honored as outstanding publisher, and Stoneback's *Reading Hemingway* volume received the "NAS Triennial Award for the Outstanding Volume of Literary Criticism 2005-2007." (The book has also been nominated for the prestigious SAMLA Studies Award for the outstanding critical study of 2007, and other awards.) Stoneback's most recent volume of poetry, *Homage: A Letter to Robert Penn Warren* (which contains numerous allusions to Roberts) was also honored with the NAS "Triennial Award for the Outstanding Book Length poem 2005-2007."

—Papers on Roberts and Hemingway are especially welcome at the Nick Adams Society's XVIth Conference to be held October 8-11, 2008, at SUNY-Plattsburgh and Lake Placid, NY. Send your proposal (before May 15) to the conference co-directors Donald Junkins and H. R. Stoneback. (For more on Roberts and Hemingway, see "Roberts and Hemingway and Lewis in Oak Park" on page 9 of this issue of the EMRS Newsletter.)

—At the 22nd Ezra Pound International Conference in Venice, Italy (June 2007), EMRS members McDuffie, Nickel, and Stoneback presented papers on Pound. After the Venice conference, EMRS members Boyle (Bill & Katie), McDuffie, and Nickel traveled to Brunnenburg Castle in the Tyrolean Alps for the Imagism Conference directed by H. R. Stoneback, where Boyle and Stoneback, together with the world's leading Imagism scholars, presented papers. In a special ceremony at Brunnenburg, home of Pound's daughter Mary, Countess de Rachewiltz, Stoneback presented her with the book he edited *What Thou Lovest Well Remains: Poems c/o Brunnenburg Castle*, a volume of poems dedicated to Mary and her father. Poems from this volume were read by Boyle, McDuffie, Nickel, Stoneback, and other contributors in the great hall of the castle looking out across the deep green valley toward the Alps in the near foreground. Stone-

back also read at the "Hidden Nest," Pound's home in Venice. Given Stoneback's current research and writing on Pound-Roberts connections, he mentioned EMR at every opportunity during discussions at both of these conferences. None of the Pound scholars—with the exception of William Pratt—had ever heard of EMR. Pratt (like Stoneback) did his doctoral work at Vanderbilt, that long-time center of Roberts admirers.

—The Fifth Biennial International Richard Aldington Conference will be held in les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, France: July 8-10, 2008. EMRS members are invited to participate—late submissions will be considered (contact H. R. Stoneback, conference co-director). Papers on Aldington and Roberts would be of particular interest; Roberts mentions Aldington in her correspondence and via her interest in Pound and Imagism, and her regular reading of Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*, she was certainly well aware of Aldington's poetry and his central role in Imagism. Essays from the Fourth Biennial Aldington Conference were recently published in *Locations and Dislocations*, a collection edited by Daniel Kempton and H. R. Stoneback. Essays by EMRS members Boyle, Camastra, Carpenter, Florczyk, Green, McDuffie, Nickel, Stamant, and Stoneback are published in that volume.

—At the International Hemingway Conference in Kansas City (June 9-15, 2008), many EMRS members will present papers, including Beilfuss, Boyle, Camastra, Carpenter, Florczyk, McDuffie, Neikirk, Nickel, Shakespeare, Stamant, and Stoneback. (Stoneback plans to cite Roberts in his plenary address "The American Background of *The Sun Also Rises*.")

—SUNY New Paltz MAs in Ph.D. programs: In 2007 Damian Carpenter and James Stamant received Fellowships to begin their doctoral studies at Texas A & M University; they joined Michael Beilfuss, now in the second year of his Ph.D. program at Texas A&M; Matthew Nickel is now a Teaching Assistant in the Ph.D. program at University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Tina Iraca, at

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the University of Connecticut, and Nicole Camastra and Steven Florczyk, at the University of Georgia, continue their doctoral studies—congratulations to Steve and Tina who passed their Comprehensive and Orals in Fall 2007. Brad McDuffie will begin his Ph.D. program at Indiana University-Pennsylvania in 2008. William Boyle and Alex Shakespeare (BA New Paltz 2007), as we go to press, are waiting to hear on the status of their Ph.D. program applications.

—The Roberts Society welcomes to the Time of Man and to this earth future EMRS members: Simon Peter Benca and Micah McDuffie, born in the Fall of 2007. Congratulations to the proud parents, Goretti and Greg Benca, and Rachel and Brad McDuffie.

—The Roberts Society congratulates veteran member Matt Nickel and new member Laura

Nickel, who were married during Christmastide 2007.

—A new CD by Stoney & Sparrow, *Overcoming: Live in Alabama, China, and the Hudson Valley* (released Fall 2007), includes original songs by Stoney & Sparrow as well as some of the folksongs that Roberts alludes to in her work. The album is dedicated to the cancer patients at Hope Lodge in Nashville, where Sparrow was in residence during the autumn of 2007 while being treated for lung cancer at Vanderbilt Medical Center. Contact William Boyle if you are interested in getting a copy of this CD (or the 2006 release *“Stoney & Sparrow Live at the Oasis: Songs of Place—1962-2006”*).

—Reminder to all EMRS members: send “News & Notes” items to the Newsletter editor.

—Damian Carpenter has been awarded a Woody Guthrie Fellowship for study at the Guthrie Archive in the summer of 2008.

Roberts, Still, and Warren

H. R. Stoneback’s essay “‘Strange Caterwauling’: Singing in the Wilderness with Boone & Audubon, Elizabeth Madox Roberts & Robert Penn Warren” appeared in *The South Carolina Review* 40:1 (Fall 2007): 141-52. The essay, a conflation of Stoneback’s 2005 EMRS Conference keynote address and a paper given at the 2005 Robert Penn Warren Circle Conference, covers a great deal of terrain, but is primarily concerned with the pervasive influence of Roberts on Warren—who might now be rechristened *Roberts Penn Warren*. (It is also available online from the Clemson University Digital Press). EMRS members may wish to submit essays on Roberts to *The South Carolina Review*; before submitting your essay to the journal’s general editors contact Contributing Editor Mark Royden Winchell (ixtlan@clemson.edu) with a brief description of your proposed essay and mention that H. R. Stoneback suggested the submission. Another Stoneback publication in 2007, at least tangentially concerned with Roberts, is the reprint of his “Rivers of Earth and Troublesome Creeks: The Agrarianism of James Still,” selected as the lead essay in the volume *James Still: Critical Essays on the Dean of Appalachian Literature* (eds. Ted and Kathy Olson, McFarland, 2007: 7-20). Unlike most volumes on Southern and Appalachian literature, this book reflects an awareness of the legacy of Roberts (note the number of references to EMR in the index). Stoneback, who was a friend of James Still and knew first-hand the intensity of Still’s acknowledgment of Roberts as Master and the depth of the Roberts-Still literary friendship, has been urging Robertsonians for a decade to study comparatively the work of Roberts and Still. This proselytizing has, in ten years of conference papers, yielded precisely one presentation. Consider this yet another proselytization toward that end.

H. R. Stoneback

Elizabeth Madox Roberts Featured on Kentucky Educational Television

In the past year, a quiet momentum has been building around the work of Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Appropriately enough, the catalyst for this push has been generated in her own backyard. Last year, while members of the Roberts Society were heading home following the 9th Annual EMR Conference, Dr. H. R. Stoneback was being interviewed by Bill Goodman on Kentucky Educational Television. The show, which is called “One to One,” featured a discussion about why Roberts’ work has been neglected and the importance of her influence on other writers. Dr. Stoneback shared with Goodman the importance of Roberts’ use of “idiomatic folk speech” and the “dialect of Kentucky,” as well as her influence on the writing of William Faulkner. In addition, Goodman had Stoneback take time to read some responses to *The Time of Man* written by members of the Roberts’ society. Stoneback concluded by stressing that Roberts’ work transcends Kentucky regionalism, adding that there is a “deep sense that the local is the universal” in her writing.

The interview with Stoneback was followed by a round-table discussion by KET’s book club about *The Time of Man*. The discussion was candid, honest, and insightful. One of the panel members, Art Wrobel, associated *The Time of Man* with the writing of Ernest Hemingway and the Imagist movement spearheaded by Ezra Pound. The program included a short biography of Ms. Roberts’ life and an anecdote from Stoneback, (about when he discovered *The Time of Man* in the stacks of the Vanderbilt Library), that was excerpted from his interview with Goodman. Finally, Wrobel offered an insightful glimpse into Roberts’ poetry when he read from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and surmised that he thought it might have influenced the title *The Time of Man*. Of course, Wrobel was only cementing the relationship of Roberts to Hemingway with this insight and confirming that in Roberts, to borrow Stoneback’s phrase, “the local is the universal.”



Both broadcasts are currently being streamed at KET’s web page:
http://www.ket.org/publicaffairs/onetoone_229_stoneback.htm

Brad McDuffie

Roberts and Hemingway and Lewis in Oak Park

EMR’s close friend Janet Lewis was Hemingway’s Oak Park neighbor and went to high school with him. Roberts was often in Oak Park from 1917-1923 and for a while at least she listed her home address as Janet Lewis’ home address in Oak Park—not far from Hemingway’s home. When I spoke with Janet Lewis at the EMR Centenary Conference in 1981, I was not aware of this and thus, alas, did not ask her about Hemingway. First question—where are the surviving Janet Lewis papers and what do they contain pertaining to EMR and the Chicago-Oak Park years?

H. R. Stoneback

Flying Over Washington with EMR

One of the most fascinating brief pieces to be found among the Roberts papers at the Library of Congress is her account of a tourist flight she took over the nation's capital. It is an undated typescript on stationery of the Burlington Hotel (Washington, D. C.). Roberts' exhilaration is evident even in her understated Hemingwayesque opening sentence: "This morning I flew an air voyage over the city, Washington." She speaks of the strong wind, of the difficulty of keeping her coat together, her hat and scarf on. It is a plane with an open-roofed passenger cabin. "I was not really frightened at any time," she writes, and the reader believes her, compelled by her joy in flight. The plane banks over the city and she looks to her right where "the map of Washington . . . rolled off, no longer down. It was off, rather. I realized a new up and a new down . . . I was entirely free of the earth." After a smooth landing, she writes, "I was half mad with joy to know I had got off the earth for a moment." Like other unpublished notes and fragments, this piece helps us to visualize a Roberts we might never have imagined—in this case, Roberts the adventurous traveler.

For the general reader it may be enough to know that Roberts flew in an open plane. This image stayed with me for several years after I read and copied this piece at the Library of Congress. Then the scholarly impulse kicked in—*when* exactly and with whom did she make this flight? Existing Roberts scholarship had no answers, had not even noted her flight. I ransacked the four fat file boxes of her papers that I had hurriedly copied at the Library of Congress and my daily notes on the eight-hour stints of manuscript reading. I saw my note to myself: "Wasn't there an airplane ticket? Go back through the files tomorrow, find it, *copy* it!" And I *had* done so, for I finally found my dark copy of the small ticket that Roberts had carefully preserved and kept with her typescript.

That ticket reads: "Potomac Flying Service, Inc. Certifies That _____ has made an air voyage over the City of Washington . . . Hoover Field, South Washington, Va. [Ticket #21782]." Roberts did not write her name in the blank space provided, but she did save the ticket from her exhilarating flight, which can thus be dated within a two-year range. Hoover Field, Washington's first commercial airport, opened in 1926; from 1926 to 1928 the Potomac Flying Service took over 25,000 passengers for sightseeing flights over Washington in small open planes, before the service ceased in 1928. A magazine advertisement in the April 23, 1928 issue of *Aviation* reads: "Fly Over Washington! \$3.00 a flight Longer flights at proportional rates Aerial Photography Aerial Advertising Instruction Potomac Flying Service, Inc. Hoover Field." Roberts' ticket number, her apparel, and her mention of cherry blossoms suggest that the flight was made in the early Spring of 1928.

The lesson for scholars working with unpublished papers is clear: notice everything, and copy anything that documents time and place, situation and location—eventually you will know why it is important.

The entire record of Roberts' flight over Washington is included in the section of the new volume *Elizabeth Madox Roberts: Essays of Reassessment & Reclamation* (eds. Stoneback and Florczyk) which publishes for the first time ten short pieces by Roberts. (See note on this book on page 5 in this Newsletter.)

H. R. Stoneback

EMR Panel at May 2008 ALA Meeting in San Francisco

The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society is sponsoring a panel at the 19th Annual ALA conference in San Francisco, May 22-25, 2008. This marks the second consecutive year the Society is hosting a panel at ALA. The panel will be chaired by former president Steve Florczyk, and will feature the following papers:

1. “‘All the Sounds of the Earth are Like Music’: Roberts, Romanticism, and the Music of Nature,” Victoria L. Barker, Carson-Newman College.
2. “‘Honey of Life in Her Heart:’ Ecological Immersion in Elizabeth Madox Roberts’ *The Time of Man*,” Michael Beilfuss, Texas A&M University.
3. “Synge in Roberts’ Kentucky,” William H. Slavick, University of Southern Maine.

Michael Beilfuss

EMRS Blog

Just a reminder: The EMRS blog is up and running. It’s an excellent place to post announcements, deadlines, links, abstracts, poems, pictures, videos, and other things. You can find the blog at: <http://emrsociety.blogspot.com>.

If you're interested in doing work on the blog (and please aim to contribute something—even if only photos from past conferences), go to: www2.blogger.com/home.

Our sign-in info is:

Username: emrsociety@yahoo.com

Password: roberts07

Or you can just e-mail stuff to me (at emrsociety@yahoo.com), and I’ll post it.

On that note, I’ve also started an EMRS e-mail account: emrsociety@yahoo.com. To access this, go to Yahoo. Our sign-in info is:

Username: emrsociety

Password: roberts

William Boyle

Get Your EMR Society 10th Anniversary Gear

Special EMR Society 10th Anniversary Commemorative T-Shirts, Coffee Mugs, and other merchandise will be available to purchase prior to this years conference. Go to

http://www.cafepress.com/m_a_s_t to get your gear today!

Brad McDuffie

(Continued from page 1)

full of important information and is being visited more often every year; Bill Boyle recently launched a Blog on the EMR Society (see page 11 to learn more), so aficionados can now take advantage of this online meeting place as well. At the Kentucky Writer's Day celebration each year, the EMR Society is well-represented by writers, readers, and singers when we gather at the old historic store owned by descendants of Robert Penn Warren, one of the original EMR aficionados.

But what stands out the most to me is the ever-increasing quality and relevance of the scholarly papers we hear at St. Catharine's College each year. With Humanities Professor Terry Ward's kind assistance, we have all been treated to excellent scholarship—and certainly we have all been treated like old friends by the people at the college, and by the good cooks of the Springfield Women's Club.

If over the next decade we can continue the pattern that we've established over our first ten years, it is clear that we will fulfill our stated mission: to “promote scholarship in the work of Elizabeth Madox Roberts and to encourage the teaching of her literature.”

Gregg Neikirk

The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society

Honorary President: H. R. Stoneback, SUNY-New Paltz

President: Gregg Neikirk, Westfield State College

Vice President: Bill Boyle, SUNY-Maritime

Vice President: Nicole Camastra, University of Georgia

Secretary/Treasurer: Tina Iraca, University of Connecticut

EMRS Newsletter Editors: Steven Florczyk/Tina Iraca

Mission Statement

The Elizabeth Madox Roberts Society seeks to promote scholarship in the work of Elizabeth Madox Roberts and to encourage the teaching of her literature. Membership is open to all who love Roberts. We are a national organization, but we are always interested in encouraging Kentucky membership and establishing a liaison with members in the Springfield area in particular. Anyone interested in membership can contact President Gregg Neikirk by email at gneikirk@wsc.ma.edu.

Visit us on the web: www.emrsociety.com