

MS. 2-202, Box 19, Folder 11
Item 11

NEW HAMPSHIRE JOURNEY, 1957

During the spring and summer of 1957 I wrote to various libraries, archives, historical societies and individuals, in the Canada, the United States, and Britain, seeking material on Sir John and Lady Frances Wentworth, and especially letters of the lady. Most of them had nothing, although I located a few of Frances' letters in English collections. The best source of material on the Wentworths' early life in New Hampshire was in Portsmouth, N.H. The secretary of the late American novelist Kenneth Roberts (who died this summer) assured me of this, and said that ~~his sister's~~ Miss Dorothy ~~VAUGHAN~~ Vaughan, who is in charge of the public library there, had often helped Roberts in his researches into the Revolutionary period in New Hampshire, on which she is an expert. I wrote to Miss Vaughan but got no reply. The hot summer season, when so many Americans take off for the coast or the mountains or Canada or Europe, is no time to bother librarians. I waited therefore until September, and then headed for New Hampshire. I planned to do most of my research in Portsmouth, a city of twenty or thirty thousand people, where I thought a car would only be a nuisance; so I decided to drive as far as Digby, store my car there (thus avoiding the stiff ferry charge across the Bay of Fundy and the much higher parking or storage charges in Portsmouth) and go on by ferry and train.

Monday, September 16/57 Left home at noon, arrived Digby 3.30 p.m. Stored car in Kingley's Garage near the steamer wharf. "Princess Helene" sailed at 5.30. I had a good meal in the ship's diningroom with Chet Legrow and two other teachers on their way to an educational conference in Fredericton. Saw Wally Barteaux also. Chatted with a pleasant woman who mistook me for a "Mr. Livingston". She is the wife of a minister in Middleton and turned out to be a reader of my books. The passage across Fundy was smooth but fog delayed the boat. Strong S.W. wind but only a moderate sea. Apparently the gale hadn't been blowing long enough to raise a swell. Reached St. John at 8.30. Railway station is only a block or two from the ferry wharf but I had a heavy bag packed with writing supplies as well as clothes, so I took a taxi. The railway ticket office, after some fumbling, discovered that no train went direct to Portsmouth N.H., so I got a sleeper berth on the Boston train as far as Portland, Maine. A U.S. immigration officer was aboard the train and busied himself in clearing the passengers as it went along; but we all had to sit up until about midnight for the inspection of our baggage by the U.S. Customs at the border. The sleeping car porter, a negro who seemed to be more than a little drunk by that hour, informed me positively that the train would reach Portland at 6.45 in the morning. Very hot weather and as usual the air conditioning in the sleeper wasn't working well. I slept badly.

Tuesday, Sep. 17/57 Got up at 5.45 a.m. Dressed and ~~packed~~ shaved and packed by 6.30. Then I discovered that the train wouldn't reach Portland until 7.45, due to the difference in the time zones. At Portland I emerged into a cool morning, checked my bag, and had breakfast in the station restaurant. ~~XXXX~~ At 9.30 I boarded a bus for Portsmouth, 54 miles away. Arrived there 10.30. A policeman on Congress Street near the bus stop told me that the Kearsage Hotel, nearby, was a comfortable place and only two minutes' walk from the public library. So I went to the Kearsage and engaged a room and bath. By this time the day was very hot again. After lunch I went to the public library, introduced myself to Miss Dorothy Vaughan, and spent most of the afternoon making notes from "The Wentworth Genealogy" and the "History of Wolfeborough". Miss Vaughan is a rather plump and pallid spinster, fiftyish, with mild blue eyes, ~~and~~ light brown hair, irregular chin and a receding chin. No beauty but a very capable librarian, a devoted antiquarian, and with a heart of gold. The library is a busy place, what with the main rooms given over to adults, and a wooden annex (the main building is an old brick structure) devoted to the young of all ages from kindergarten to high school. The annex is actually an old Portsmouth mansion, and Miss V. persuaded the city

to take it over and build a connecting wing. The annex is her pet project, just completed, and the kids pour in there every afternoon. It did my heart good to see the eagerness with which the kids are using it, and the politeness and good behaviour of the older boys and girls as they hunt up references and material for school composition assignments. Nearly all of the high school girls wore the so-called Bermuda shorts, this summer's craze in feminine America, and they looked much better in them than many of the women I saw at White Point during the summer. Miss V. and her three assistants work cheerfully and diligently to hunt up any book the kids want -- and they did the same for me.

At 5 p.m. my sleepless night began to have its effect, so I packed up my notes and went forth for a stroll down Bridge Street. I crossed over the North Mill Pond (a salt water creek) just as the tide was rushing under the bridge. Dinner at the Kearsage. No longer felt sleepy, so I went to a movie, returned to the hotel, took a Second capsule, and had a good long sleep.

Wednesday, Sep. 18/57 Another hot day. The Kearsage dining room has rather odd hours. It is open only from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. The food is good but it is expensive and the service is very slow. Hence I began to get, not only my breakfast, but most of my other meals ~~in~~ in a small but very busy and efficient place called the Coast Restaurant, just across the street, where the food was good, with much more variety, and surprisingly cheap.

The library is open from 10 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. After breakfast I strolled about the residential streets towards the South Mill Pond. Many 18th and early 19th century houses perfectly preserved, mostly clapboarded but some of brick. Some with a brick wall on the side towards the south-east -- the direction of the sea winds and rains. They are painted usually yellow or white, but the window shutters are always green. Well kept lawns and big shade trees -- chestnut, oak, maple, ash and elm. Worn brick sidewalks, humpy here and there from years of frost and thaw, and sometimes cobblestone gutters. I saw one or two patches of irregular flagstones, which Miss V. tells me are the only surviving bits of the original 18th century sidewalks.

I went in to inspect the "John Paul Jones House" -- so called because he rented a room there when his famous ship "Ranger" was being built on an island in the nearby Piscataqua River. The house contains typical colonial furniture and relics. Nothing of Jones except a portrait and a bust. Noted a framed eulogy of George Washington, printed on the occasion of his death, with quotations from Daniel~~X~~ Webster's speech to the Senate -- "First in Peace, First in the Hearts of Americans, First in the Eyes of the World " -- and so on.

At the bottom, in extra large type, was this:-

BUT ALL IS NOT LOST, FOR PROVIDENCE SURVIVES.

I worked in the library from 10 till noon. I found pencil notes awkward and slow (and cramping to my unaccustomed fingers), and Miss V. kindly provided me with a desk and typewriter in the long room leading to the annex. She keeps the desk piled high with books and documents fetched from the library shelves and from her own collection at home, and I work away furiously at the machine.

At noon she suggested a walk to see some of the more noteworthy colonial houses in the town. We went to Gates Street and followed it to the harbor -- which is the estuary of the Piscataqua River (pronounced "pis-KAT-a-kwa"), a broad tidal stream studded with islands large and small. The Portsmouth Navy Yard (where they build submarines and escort craft for the U.S.N.) is on one of these islands near the Kittery side of the river. Its dominating feature is a tall and grim naval prison, with accommodation for over 2,500 men. Most of the larger islands are well populated and are connected with both shores and with each other by bridges and causeways, so that motor traffic moves as freely there as on the mainland. Some of the smaller ones are still in a natural state,

covered with trees and shrubs and patches of greensward. Looking out on the river and directly opposite one of these small islands was the so-called Wentworth-Gardner house, a fine big mansion, square, yellow with white trim, elegant window cornices and portico and door. A large pineapple, carved from wood, and gilded, stands between the ornamental rosettes over the door -- believed to have been put there about the year 1900. (Portsmouth had no trade with the Pacific when this house was built in 1760.)

Hereabouts you can walk along whole streets and lanes of colonial houses, some in good shape, some in bad. Some have been sheathed in recent years with hideous asbestos shingles in various colors, but the frames and lines of the houses have been preserved. We walked across what had been Puddle Dock in the 18th century, a narrow tidal creek (filled in about 1900) which once extended from the harbor into the heart of the town. The house of Theodore Atkinson Jr. and his wife Frances stood beside Puddle Dock, and from its windows Frances could see Governor John Wentworth's mansion on the top of the rise beyond the creek. According to well authenticated Portsmouth memories, handed down through the generations, Frances carried on her love affair with John at the very time when her husband was slowly dying of tuberculosis. She attended every party and ball, saying that Theodore was merely "indisposed" -- no one knew how ill he really was. She made assignations with John by leaving uncurtained a lamp-lit window in her husband's house. John could see this easily from his mansion.

Less than two weeks after Theodore's death she married John, and the same mourner who had attended her first husband's funeral service in Queens Chapel went up Chapel Hill to attend her wedding to the second. Poor old Parson Arthur Brown, with his fat round face and small tight features, was so perturbed over the hasty wedding that he fell down the church steps afterwards and broke his arm.

The original Queens Chapel, a wooden structure, was burned in 1800 and replaced by the larger one of brick which now stands on the site. After the Revolution the name was changed from Queen's Chapel to Saint John's. The original landing place of the pioneers, Strawberry Bank (so named from the wild strawberries that grew there), slopes down from the church to the river. Part of it is the old churchyard, containing many colonial graves. A small street curves about the churchyard at a lower level, with iron-doored vaults let into the sides of the hill. In these vaults lie the bones of many of the old Wentworths, Peirces, Marshes and others. Parson Brown came to Queen's Chapel in 1736 and stayed until his death in 1773. In 1779 Colonel Theodore Atkinson (Frances' father-in-law) bequeathed a sum to the church to be used to provide bread to the poor of the town. The bequest is still in effect, and once a year a token loaf of bread is placed in the church entry -- with no takers.

Walking over towards South Mill Pond, Miss V. and I then inspected the mansion of Governor John Wentworth at the time of the Revolution. It was a big house, built by ~~former Governor~~ ^{John Wentworth} for one of his daughters on her marriage, and the thrifty legislature of New Hampshire decided to rent it for Governor John's use rather than build a mansion for him. It is now (1957) used as a home for aged ladies and has a brick extension, but the main features of the lower rooms, the hall and staircase have been carefully preserved and are shown with much pride by the lady superintendent. The grounds still extend down a long slope to the shore of South Mill Pond, where John, Frances and their child escaped the mob in a boat. A roomy and handsome house (though John, in one of his letters, called it a "small hut", perhaps facetiously, perhaps in contempt). The parlor, left of the hall still has the original flock paper, in a maroon pattern, which was there in John's day, said to have been chosen by Frances herself. She would not permit the servants to use the main staircase; they had to ascend and descend by a narrow winding back staircase leading to the kitchen, and lit by an oval window in the side wall of the house. When the revolutionary mob broke into the house and looted it, they damaged the carved dolphins over the fireplace in the left-hand parlor. According to tradition they also fetched horses into the hall -- supposedly from

John's stables across the street -- and the hoofmarks could be traced in the floor boards for many years afterward. Our guide thought the idea was to take the horses through the house from front to back in order to pursue John down to the pond; but that seems absurd; it was only a short distance, all down hill, and a running man could cover it in two minutes. I think myself the mob brought in the horses to show their contempt -- making a stable of the great man's house. It was a favorite stunt on both sides during the Revolutionary War.

Miss V. says that Frances Wentworth did not like this house because in those days it was not in the fashionable part of the town. This may explain John's crack about the "hut".

When we reached Congress Street again Miss V. unlocked the door of the Athenaeum and took me in to see it. This is an exclusive reading club, founded in ~~1817~~ 1817. It has one hundred members only. A share costs \$100 and cannot be sold without the consent of the other members. The building is a narrow brick structure of two tall stories, with books in shelves on both floors, joined by a winding staircase. The old leather fire-buckets of Athenaeum members still hang in the stair well. Many busts and portraits of great men of the past -- all the way from Shakespeare to Washington. Outside, flanking the entrance, are two carronades standing on their muzzles and set in concrete bases. Each bears a bronze plate saying that it was captured from the British on Lake Erie by Captain Perry in 1813. The guns were afterwards used to arm a new warship built in the Portsmouth yard, and when this ship was finally dismantled the Athenaeum members secured this pair for souvenirs.

By this time it was 2.30 p.m. -- we'd been walking exactly 2½ hours and discovered ourselves to be hungry -- although I think Miss V. could have gone on happily all afternoon, she knows every nook and corner of the town and is tireless in going over them. We lunched in the Coast Restaurant. The day was again very hot. I returned to the hotel for a bath and a clean shirt. Rejoined Miss V. at the library at 4 p.m. and worked away until 6.30. Dined alone at the hotel. Then a movie in Congress Street, a dull double feature of Grade C pictures, with a small and scattered audience composed almost entirely of teen-age lads, all munching popcorn. Back to the Kearsage at 11 p.m. Had a good sleep.

Thursday, Sep. 19/57 The flat roof of the building adjoining my hotel is about 20 feet below my window. It has a small hollow filled by the last rain (Monday night), and here a number of pigeons bathe and preen themselves. They also flutter up to my window sill and make an ungodly row in the morning. At that range a coo sounds more like the moan of someone dying of indigestion. Apart from these feathered noise-makers there is an almost constant whizzing and roaring of planes (both jet and prop) from the U.S. Air Force base outside Portsmouth.

Today was bright and cooler, more like Fall. Went to Hoyt's stationery store on Market Street, bought tracing paper and a new green pencil cartridge; also ordered (and paid for) two map sections of the official U.S. Survey, covering Portsmouth and the Piscataqua River as far as it is tidal -- these were not in stock but Hoyt's are getting in a new batch for the hunting season and they promised to forward mine to Nova Scotia. Enjoyed my usual morning stroll about the residential streets until the library opened. Worked there from 10 to 1. Lunched at the Coast Restaurant. Back to the hotel, washed and had a nap. Worked at the library from 2.30 to 6 p.m. Walked down to the docks and had an excellent boiled lobster dinner with French fried potatoes, rolls and coffee, at Newdick's little place, a mere shack on a wharf, very clean, with half a dozen tables covered with plain oilcloth. They keep quantities of live lobsters swimming about in a shallow tank, with a pump circulating sea water through it. They switch on the electric light, you pick out the lobster or lobsters you want, and they whisk them out and cook them right away. I had a 1½ lb. lobster, and the price of the whole dinner was \$1.50. I realise now why American tourists complain of the price and quality of meals they get at the average restaurant in Nova Scotia.

After this repast I strolled up to the Colonial Theatre and saw a good British movie comedy. Back at the hotel at 11 p.m. For no particular reasons (unless ~~unless~~ to prove that I can live without it) I've had nothing alcoholic since I left home. Tonight I dropped into the Kearsage "lounge" (U.S. for "bar"), a small dimly lit room with about ten tables, a tiny bar, a bar-tender, and one bored blonde waitress. About a dozen people sat sipping drinks and watching a dull drama on the TV set. Mostly men. One was a huge young sailor in the U.S. Navy uniform who apparently had suffered an accident to his right foot; he got bored with the picture, swallowed his drink, arose, fitted to his brawny forearm a steel crutch, and limped out. The rest of the customers sipped on, rarely taking their eyes off the TV screen, and looked sad and bored. I ordered a double Scotch and soda, drank it quickly, and went up to my room and to bed. I got no kick out of the drink (which cost \$1.30) so it was wasted.

Friday, Sep. 20/57 The usual day's routine. The breakfast across the street from my hotel, a walk of about a block to get a morning paper and a shoeshine, then a stroll until the library opens. Worked there from 10 to 1, and from 2.30 to 6.30, a long day and tiring, bent over maps, books and documents and then over the typewriter. Miss V. asked me to attend a "writers' group" to which she belongs. They meet once a week in the new parish hall of Saint John's church, and they have persuaded a professional writer, a Mrs. Ella Shannon Bowles, to give them a series of lectures this Fall, beginning tonight. So I went. About a dozen men and women, very serious people, listening avidly to Mrs. Bowles, a wizened wisp of a woman, about 65, with hands like bony claws and an animated monkey face. There was no nonsense about her. She teaches the art of writing in a high school or college in Alexandria, Virginia, during the winters, and spends her summers and early autumns up in New Hampshire, her native state. Twenty-odd years ago she wrote one or two travel books (Miss V. showed me one at the library, printed in 1930 and entitled "Let Me Show You New Hampshire", with a foreword by Kenneth Roberts.) Since then she has confined her own writing to the production of articles for small magazines -- on antique furniture, on ditto rugs, and so on.

She told this to the present group quite candidly, pointing out that the main idea was to earn money, and that only a few very fortunate people could hope to write successful novels or to sell articles to the rich "slick" magazines. She exhibited half a dozen magazines to which she had sold articles recently -- most of them appeared to be house organs published by manufacturing companies, and she confessed that none of them could be found on sale at the average magazine stand.

She went into much detail on the subject of earning money in this way, and the group took notes. It seemed to me a frightful waste of time for them as much as for me. Why aim so low? They were young people, mostly men and housewives in the late twenties and thirties, ambitious to express themselves in writing, as their talk showed. This spry old lady had lost all her illusions long ago, was content to pick up fifty dollars here and twenty-five dollars there, and by dashing off enough of it she adds considerably to her husband's income. Her attitude towards these hopeful younger folk was that they might as well drop their own illusions now and get on with grinding out her kind of stuff.

She was crisply businesslike, to the point of taking a small alarm clock out of her handbag and setting it on the table before her. At the end of an hour and a half she ended her lectures, stowed the clock away in the bag, and arose to go. Miss V. introduced me to the lady and to the group, and she embarrassed me by flourishing copies of two of my books, which she had brought from the library. This seemed like a deliberate effort to steal Mrs. Bowles' thunder, for the group immediately became excited and showered me with questions. I answered some, made some polite excuses, and fled.

Saturday, Sep. 21/57 The weather has turned overcast, breathless, sticky and hot. My room (No.10) at the Kearsage is on the third floor -- no elevator -- huge stair well -- a staircase on which five men could march abreast -- seventeen steps up to the second floor, and another twenty-one up to the third, all very steep. The building is a huge old brick mansion with a long extension at the back, a warren of rooms and a fire-trap of the worst sort. My room is square and measures roughly 24 feet each side (I paced it off), and the ceiling is about 12 feet high. A door leads off to a large old-fashioned bathroom (the bath is an ancient thing standing on ball-and-claw feet). Another door opens into a huge clothes closet, with no light inside, as black as a bear's den. In the chamber itself there is a closed-up marble fireplace; an antique iron bed with a brand new spring mattress; two big easy chairs, two smaller chairs, an oval writing table before the fireplace, a vast dressing table of mahogany with a large square mirror, the wooden top carved in sunray and fern designs. In one corner is a modern wash-stand with hot and cold taps and a towel rack. Two big windows look out across the aforementioned flat roof (and pigeon bath) to a blank brick wall, with just a corner glimpse of Congress Street.

I worked all day at the library, but I begin to feel tired and jittery -- driving myself too hard all this week. Must take a day outdoors tomorrow, when the library will be closed. After dinner, at Miss V's. invitation I called at her home (202 Summer Street) a typical old mansion, and met her father and mother, remarkably spry old people -- her father is in the nineties. The livingroom furniture was covered with books and papers, and Miss V. brought forth a real treasure -- about a hundred large photographs of existing portraits of New Hampshire notables, painted in the 18th and 19th centuries. She has been hunting down these portraits for years and getting the photographs made. I'd like to have them at my elbow while I'm writing my book, but of course that's too much to ask and I said nothing. I studied the pictures carefully, tucking away details of the features into my mind where the portrait showed a character in the period of my book. Back to the hotel at midnight.

Sunday, Sep. 22/57 Very hot and humid weather, with one or two thunder showers. I determined to spend the day exploring the vicinity of Wolfeborough, ^{WOLFEBOROUGH} when John Wentworth created a big estate in his days as Governor of N.H. Caught a bus from ~~XXX~~ Haymarket Square at 9.30 a.m., taking along a raincoat in case of need. (The coat turned out to be needless, for at Wolfeborough the sky was clear and hot.) The bus rolled swiftly through about fifty miles of low undulating countryside, partly farmed, partly forested, and dotted with clean and well built villages and towns. Neat white colonial farmhouses and barns. Saw much land, once cleared, now given over to a scrub growth of forest -- just what we see in so many parts of Nova Scotia. The chief softwood is white pine. Much cedar, a fair amount of spruce, fir, hemlock and hackmatack -- and they call it hackmatack, not "tamarack" as I'd expected. Maple is the chief hardwood; but there is plenty of ash, elm, chestnut, some yellow and white birch. White and red oak -- the red oak still plentiful. Hickory, once fairly plentiful, is now comparatively scarce. Sumacs are plentiful in the open spaces; their leaves are now turning a handsome scarlet; so are the leaves of the red maples and the wild cherry trees.

As the bus drew near Lake Winnepesaukee the landscape began to change rapidly from the low, gently rolling fields and woods to steep ridges and hills covered with forest. Here, too, for the first time I saw the celebrated granite of N.H. ("the granite state") in large quantities, outcropping everywhere, and built into stone walls around the fields. In fact Winnepesaukee lies in the foothills of the White Mountains, and in this higher altitude the autumn colors are much further advanced. The hardwood ridges are magnificent.

The bus halted at Alton Bay, at the south end of Lake Winnepesaukee, and then went on up ~~to~~ the east side to Wolfeborough. The road wound through steep woods,

emerging now and then upon a magnificent view of the lake, which is twenty miles long and varies from one to eight miles wide. You don't get the full sweep anywhere, however, because there are so many islands (exactly 274) to break the view. On this day, too, there was a strong warm wind, of gale force, (what Nova Scotiamen call a "smoky sou'wester") ~~xx~~ and the hills about the lake loomed in a blue haze, although the sky overhead was cloudless.

The bus reached Wolfeborough about noon, and I wandered about in the heat looking for a place to eat lunch. This town has a big tourist business during July and August, when about 10,000 visitors come to spend the hot weather at Lake Winnepesaukee. Now it is practically dead, and most of the ~~hoketix~~ summer hotels and restaurants are closed -- even the steamer "Mount Washington", which makes four-hour cruises of the lake throughout the season, has gone into hibernation.

At last I walked down a short lane to the lake shore, where I found a place open, called "Brightwaters", and had an excellent lunch in a diningroom looking out on the lake. The wind was raising steep waves and whitecaps, but most of the local population seemed to be out on the lake in motor-boats of various kinds, enjoying the rough water. The diningroom was almost deserted, except for myself, a small fat boy avidly reading a comic book, and a trio of well-dressed, rather la-de-da old ladies who arrived in a Cadillac with a uniformed chauffeur.

When I'd finished my meal the proprietress came in, an animated woman of fifty or so, dark eyes, waved grey hair, sprightly figure. She introduced herself to me -- "Mrs. E.W. Carr ... my husband's off fishing somewhere." She added at once, " I like to know why certain people come to my place -- it helps in my advertising. Did you see an ad., or did someone recommend "Brightwaters?"

I said I'd come quite by accident, a very pleasant accident, and revealed the purpose in my visit to Wolfeborough. I added that I purposed hiring a car or a taxi to drive me to the site of Governor Wentworth's ~~xxxxxx~~ mansion at Lake Wentworth, three or four miles away. Mrs. Carr was all interest at once. "But you can't hire a car on Sunday now the season's over, and heaven knows where you'd find a taxi. I wish you could have written that you were coming. There are so many people who'd have been glad to take you anywhere. As it is, my husband's away with our own car, and most of the people who know the history and layout of the Wentworth place are off picknicking around the lake. This heat -- phew! "

She rushed to a telephone and began calling up people. Not one was at home. She was in despair. Then she brightened. "Oh! I've just thought of the Hams. Old Mrs. Hamm is an expert on local history and she knows all the old colonial roads and trails. She's a character. Writes bits for the local paper. I'll try her." She phoned, and this time got an answer. ~~XXXXX~~ She put me on the line and I explained my mission. A female voice drawled, "Well, as it happens my husband and I are just going over to Lake Wentworth. Lake's the lowest it's been in sixty-five years. Want to get some photos for the paper. Mind riding in a truck?"

"Not at all," I said.

"Be over in a few minutes."

In a few minutes a battered old Dodge pick-up truck came down the lane to "Brightwaters" and I walked out and got into the seat with the Hams. An odd pair. Lloyd Hamm is a little dry man in the sixties, who squints at you with cool grey eyes. In conversation he revealed that his only venture away from New Hampshire was during the First World War, when he served overseas with a U.S. forestry unit, logging in Scotland and France. Mrs. Hamm is heavy, shapeless in a light cotton dress. She suffers from asthma and wheezes whenever she moves, but she has a pair of glowing black eyes and a sense of humor.

"First," she said, "~~xxxx~~ we'll take you over parts of the old road cut by Governor Wentworth to get to his estate. When you see some o' the road you'll know why we take the truck. Then we'll take you over a bit of his "College Road" -- the road he cut around Lake Winnepesaukee to get over to Hanover, where Dartmouth College is. After that we'll show you what's left of the old mansion."

The State of N.H. has named one of its main motor highways the "Governor Wentworth Highway"; but this should not be confused with the Governor's Road, some part of which is used (indeed part is paved). We covered these parts and then Hamm drove on through the woods over a narrow road hardly better than a wagon track, climbing up and down the steep folds in the hills east of Lake Wentworth. In one rugged bit Mrs. Hamm uttered one of her deep chuckles and said, "You know, you don't have to be crazy to drive over roads like this, but it helps." We followed this bit to a point where the old lady stabbed a finger straight off into the bush -- "The old Governor's Road turned away here, and that part's all grown up in woods."

So we turned off along a dirt road, swooped down to the main highway over the ridge that Frances Wentworth called Mount Delight, travelled the main highway for a bit, and then had another rough ride over a bush track -- part of the old College Road.

Finally Hamm drove down towards the east end of Lake Wentworth. Tall woods of pine mixed with cedar and hardwood. A narrow dirt road winding through the bush brought us at last to a grassy clearing, and we got out of the truck. This was the site of Wentworth's country mansion. Nothing remains but the dry-stone walls of the foundation (composed of granite boulders), 104 feet long and 42 feet wide. The well and a tumbled in cellar of small dimensions stand in the edge of the woods -- the remains of a dairy or milk-cooling shed.

The main cellar now is filled with a flourishing growth of scrub willow, etc. Three big elms grew out of it some time after the fire that destroyed the house in 1820. One has vanished. One stands dead, and the other has very little life in it. There is a bronze memorial plaque on a boulder beside the main cellar, and a small marble plaque marks the well. Both have been pierced by bullets fired by vandals -- probably disappointed deer-hunters -- in recent years.

Mrs. Hamm pointed out the trace of an old bridle track where the Wentworths used to ride off for picnics with their visitors. The mansion site is now owned by the State. It stands on a small wooded (mostly pine) plain about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the east shore of Lake Wentworth. Hamm drove down the road to the shore, and I noticed that what had been the Governor's shore line is now taken up by summer cottages standing in the trees.

We returned towards Wolfeborough along the north shore of Lake Wentworth, and Mrs. Hamm got out in various places to take pictures. About fifty feet from the winter shore line, people were walking curiously on the exposed lake bottom, mostly fine white sand. The summer of 1957 has been one long drought all over New England and the Maritime Provinces.

Mrs. Hamm pointed out to me a brook meadow running back from the lake. "The Governor cultivated that meadow -- it's still called the Rye Field." She pointed to one of the many islands in the lake -- which is four miles long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide. "Governor's Rock -- they used to picnic there -- probably to get away from the flies. Over on Turtle Island, too." X

The outlet of Lake Wentworth is a small river that flows into Crescent Lake (hardly more than a pond) and then on through the town of Wolfeborough to Lake Winnepesaukee. At the upper hook of Crescent Lake is a wharf used by all the cottage owners on Lake Wentworth. The spot is called Mast Landing, because here the old-time loggers hauled down to the water many great pine spars for the ships at Portsmouth. The stream below Crescent Lake has been straightened and cleared of rocks, so that the masts could be floated down to Winnepesaukee. I picked up a small granite pebble and put it in my pocket for a souvenir of Governor Wentworth's happiest days.

The Hamm's deposited me back at "Brightwaters" at 4 p.m. and I thanked them most sincerely. I couldn't have found a better pair of guides. Chatted on the lawn with Mrs. Carr, in the boisterous lake wind, until it was time to walk up the street to the bus stop. The bus left Wolfeborough at 5.30 and an hour later I walked into the Kearsage Hotel. Bathed, changed, and dined. Miss V. had suggested

that on my return from the Lake Wentworth trip I might wish to look over the old maps in the library, while the scene was still fresh in my mind. She lives only a few minutes from the place, so I phoned, and she said at once that she'd come down and unlock it. I got there about the same time she did, and we spent from 9 o'clock to 10.30 going over the maps.

Monday, Sep. 23/57 The weather last night remained hot and sticky, and in spite of a refreshing day outdoors I couldn't sleep. (I don't like taking the Seconal capsules more than two or three nights a week, as they give me a drugged feeling in the mornings.) A gang of noisy teen-age lads hung about the sidewalk outside the Kearsage until two or three o'clock in the morning, and their voices carried loudly in the still air. These sleepless nights are always horribly long. I was glad when morning came.

collapsed
Newcastle Island

The weather was still hot and overcast, with occasional light showers and sudden patches of sunshine. This morning Mrs. Rose Labrie, a plump, pink, friendly woman, fortyish and blonde, and wearing a blue silk coat that enveloped her like a sail, turned up at the library with her car. She is a friend of Miss V's., dabbles in play-writing, and was anxious to be of service to the visiting author. She took us out along the shore of Portsmouth harbor and over the bridges to the large island on which Fort Constitution stands. This is the former Fort William and Mary, or "The Castle" of John Wentworth's day. It is now a curious hodge-podge of defences added during various wars -- a crumbled brick martello tower from 1812 -- massive concrete casemates and gun emplacements built during the Civil War, and so on. The tall stone gateway to the oldest part of the fort is flanked by massive stone walls for some distance, with an added height of brickwork placed at some later time. Miss V. thought the stone work was part of old Fort William and Mary. I am dubious, for in the library I had seen an old print of that fort which showed its construction of earth and rocks faced with logs. However this stonework might have been done when Wentworth had the old fort repaired just before the Revolution.

This fort commanded the main channel leading up the Piscataqua River. From it we could see clearly the Isles of Shoals, about ten miles away, and even make out some of the buildings on the nearest. They are low and rocky, and nowadays have very few inhabitants. We walked along the beach a bit, getting the sea view. Then we drove around to Little Harbor, not far away, one of the innumerable creeks in the Portsmouth shore line, sheltered from the seaward by a pair of wooded islands.

Here stood one of the biggest and oddest houses I have ever seen, the home of Governor Benning Wentworth. It began as a plain frame-and-clapboard house of two stories, of the saltbox type. To this, from year to year as the mood struck, Governor Benning had added wooden annex after wooden annex, so that his home grew and sprawled towards the water. It is a mass of higgledy-piggledy walls, roofs and gables containing more than forty rooms. One of these, the Council Chamber, is a large and stately room with a finely carved mantelpiece. On each side of the fireplace there is a mantel panel with the carved head and shoulders of a woman in a low-cut gown, exposing much of her breasts. According to Miss V. this was supposed to be Charlotte, the wife of George the Third, in her early days as queen. The rest of the house was an arming warren of rooms and closets, with odd little steps up and steps down, with doors leading off in all sorts of directions. In one of these rooms (I stood in it, gazing over the water towards Sir William Pepperell's old home in Kittery) Francis Parkman wrote a good deal of "Half a Century of Conflict". In later years the house came into the possession of a wealthy man named . He loved it, and kept half a dozen servants to look after it; and to provide modern accommodation for the servants, (including ~~his~~ his chauffeur, his gardeners and others) he built a range of rooms -- about eight or ten, with bathrooms -- along the north-east side of the old monstrosity, making it more of an architect's nightmare than ever.

A widow named Mrs. Wight, who lives in a beautiful old house nearby, has some of the original furniture, paintings, & bric-a-brac of the Benning Wentworth family.

The whole property was stripped of furniture by his widow, some years after his death, and turned over to the State as an historic monument. The State keeps it open to the public in the summer months, but so far has made no attempt to re-furnish it. The lilac bushes outside the house are said to be the first imported into New England. Certainly they are very old. One of the trunks is twelve inches in diameter. The waterside, a few feet from the final sprawl of the house (the part containing the Council Chamber) is neatly walled with stone along the length of the property, and there is a deep jog where boats came in, and where there must have been a flight of wooden steps in the olden days. Thus the councillors and other visitors could avoid the winding and jolting road around the creeks, rowing or sailing down from Portsmouth by boat, enjoying charming views among the islands all the way, and landing almost at Benning's door.

On our return to town I invited the ladies to join me at lunch, and Miss V. suggested a sea-food restaurant near the docks, where we had big bowls of delicious lobster stew. In the afternoon I worked away at my notes in the library; but I found my nerves bad from lack of sleep, and for the first time the chatter of high school students at the desks nearby bothered me. I quit at five, bathed, dined, read over my notes until ten, when I took a Seconal pill and turned in.

Tuesday, Sep. 24/57 I slept heavily till 2.30 a.m., when I wakened in agony -- a severe cramp in my left leg, the calf muscles drawn into a hard knot -- something I've never had before in my life. I had to massage the knot for two hours before it relaxed. Then I took another pill and slept till 7.30 a.m. When I got up my calf muscles were still extremely sore, and I limped most of the day.

This morning Mrs. Labrie again drove to the library, picked up Miss V. and myself, and this time made a tour of the biggest island, ^{NEWCASTLE} a charming colonial town in itself, the houses obviously owned by people of means and taste who have preserved them carefully. Beautiful trees and shrubs and lawns. Miss V. says that in summer these people have roses in bloom all over the place -- it is one big rose garden. We drove over a small causeway to Lady Isle, a beautiful estate now given over to a Roman Catholic order of nuns, who teach children there. Mrs. Labrie is a devout Catholic and Lady Isle is one of her pet charities. She does much work for it and has written a history of the island.

We drove on to Little Harbor, this time to call on a well-to-do widow, Mrs. Wight, who owns a beautifully furnished old house, not far from the Benning Wentworth mansion, and with a lovely view. Much of her furniture came out of the Benning Wentworth house (she is a Wentworth by descent, and inherited some of the contents when the house was sold). Amongst her interesting bric-a-brac was a (photo) copy of a miniature portrait of Arabella (or is it Annabella? -- the records give her name both ways) Wentworth at the age of fourteen or so. This was the girl who eventually married an English officer, Francis Gore, who became a governor of Upper Canada. She wrote novels of considerable popularity in England, where she spent most of her life. When old Governor John Wentworth died at Halifax he left her his paintings and his property at Prince's Lodge. She apparently took the paintings, but she let Prince's Lodge rot to the ground, having no interest in a residence of any sort on the wrong side of the Atlantic. The most curious possession of Mrs. Wight is a large portrait that came out of the Benning Wentworth house. It is of Queen Christina of Sweden, with the crown on a table beside her, and holding a small surveyor's compass in her hand. (Why the compass? And is it really Queen Christina -- and if so why did Benning have a portrait of her? Did he pick it up in his West Indian dealings with the island of Saint Bartholemew, then a Swedish possession?)

All afternoon I was slogging away in the library. Walked down the docks at six and dined on a pair of 1 lb boiled lobsters at Newick's. Then back to the library, taking final notes and going over Miss Vaughan's old map of Portsmouth until 10.30.

Wednesday, Sep. 25/57 Bought a couple of shirts, some socks and ties, and an outdoor thermometer to fasten on one of my storm windows this winter. Long stroll about the Portsmouth streets, taking a final look at Governor John's mansion, the garden, and his escape route through South Pond to the harbor. Entered the library and went over a few last points with Miss V. She was busy, but she found time to insist that I take with me a copy of her map (which she autographed for me) and her own copy of ~~Mayo~~ Mayo's biography of John Wentworth. I thanked her as best I could for these and all her other kindnesses, and left to get an early lunch -- my bus for Bar Harbor leaves at 12.20.

As I was paying my hotel bill Miss V. appeared in the little lobby with a map published by the Ford people, showing points of interest along my route from Portsmouth to Bar Harbor. She accompanied me to the bus stop outside North Church, and stood there chatting until the Greyhound left, a little off schedule, at 12.45. It was very nice of her, and typical, and when I said Goodbye she called out, " You must come back again. There's so much more to see. And do come when the roses are in bloom!"

It was a perfect day for the 300 mile drive along the Maine coast, and I got a seat on the right-hand side -- the sea side. And it was especially lovely towards sundown, coming up the Penobscot estuary from Rockland to Bucksport in the warm evening light -- the sea blue with a rose tint, autumn color on the maples and sumacs in the foreground, and bunches of red berries hanging on the mountain ashes, and the small white colonial villages, each in a perfect setting.

A half hour stop at Rockland enabled me to stretch my legs. Only 6 or 8 passengers on the bus -- the Greyhound people are discontinuing the Boston-Bar Harbor run in another two weeks. The approach to Bar Harbor was in darkness, a long drive through woods, with a garishly lit motel every mile or so. Got there about 7.30, and a fat taxi-man took me and two others up the road to the Rockhurst Hotel. This turned out to be a mansion built by an American millionaire in the best and worst Victorian taste about sixty years ago. Enormous hall, magnificent staircase, vast parlor stuffed with a mixture of modern furniture and Victorian bric-a-brac, including much travel bric-a-brac, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, and God knows what else.

My bedroom was at least 30' by 30', with a wash-stand and hot and cold taps, twin beds, writing table, bedside table, two small occasional tables, a dresser with a big mirror, a fireplace with wood laid for a fire, and four chairs -- in fact it was rather like my room in the Kearsage at Portsmouth, with everything much cleaner and of better quality. The cost was \$5 for bed and breakfast. The Rockhurst does not serve other meals. The proprietress told me that I could get an excellent dinner at a place called "Mary Jane's", three or four blocks away on Bar Harbor's main street.

But when I got to Mary Jane's I was informed coldly that the closing hour was eight o'clock -- it was now five minutes past -- although the restaurant was full of people evidently lingering over their evening meal. I went on another block or two and got a first-rate dinner at the French Restaurant, where you have a choice of red or white wines (I chose Burgundy) and the wine of your choice is placed on the table -- a decanter full -- so that you can drink as much as you like with your meal. I was very hungry and I enjoyed a broiled steak, with vegetables, pudding and coffee, the price \$3.50.

I strolled about the Bar Harbor streets, feeling stuffed. When the ~~season~~ season ends, this summer town is practically dead. Hence the early closing hour at Mary Jane's. The French-Canadian waitress at the French Restaurant (the chef is from France) told that their place will close for the season in another week. The staff spend their winters in New York. Back to the hotel at 10 p.m., and slept badly.

Thursday, Sep. 26/57 Again a fine warm day. I was up at 6 a.m. Breakfast at 7.30. The only other guests were a retired professor of Washington University and his wife -- Mrs. & Mrs. Nelson Rice -- both former Nova Scotians, and now on a trip to visit their old home town, Weymouth, N.S. Our waitress was a smiling and bustling Dutch woman with frizzy grey hair, who told us she had been in this country five years. After breakfast she took us to see the Gold Room or Bridal Chamber, the prize exhibit of the house, a big chamber done in pink and white and gold -- the woodwork of the huge twin beds (each had a canopy) and of the other furniture was enamelled in these colors and looked like chinaware. I suggested that any normal bride would feel overwhelmed in a place like that and asked if anybody ever slept in it. The Dutchwoman laughed and said, "No brides -- ever. But now and again there is a married lady says she wants to be queen for a night and she is willing to pay the price." I presume she meant the hotel price, which is probably steep. The room and furniture didn't look as if they'd been used, ever.

A taxi took us to the boat; a well polished but somewhat elderly limousine driven by a plump old chap wearing a chauffeur's cap. He drove about the town a little before going on to the steamer pier -- which is almost a mile up the highway. He pointed out one of the many large houses with beautiful grounds. "That's where my lady lived. I was sorry when she died. She was a Vanderbilt girl, and I went with her when she married, as the coachman. Then when she got her first car I had to learn to drive it. I was with her forty years. After she died the house was unused for several years, and I was kept on to look after the garden. Then I was let out at last, and since then I've been a taxi-driver here. I'm seventy-three -- would you think it?" He didn't look much over sixty, as a matter of fact.

He dropped us at the fenced approach to the steamer pier. The Rices and I bought steamer tickets and a ~~XXXXXX~~ small bus took us and our baggage down the pier to the ship. I hadn't realized that the boat sails only three times a week in the off-season; but I happened to strike it right.

Bar harbor very lovely as we steamed out to sea past the wooden headlands and islands. The tall bulk of Mount Cadillac, like a recumbent giant, looms over the town and harbor. It was burned over by a bad fire forest fire a few years ago and looks very brown and barren now. We left at 9 a.m. The sea was like glass, but Mrs. Rice became seasick almost at once, and Rice had to scurry about and arrange ~~XXXXXXXX~~ for a cabin so that she could lie down during the passage. There were about one hundred passengers, nearly all of them obviously Nova Scotians like myself returning from trips to the States. The ship's public-address system played very loudly a phonograph record of bagpipe music as we pulled away from the wharf.

I had a good lunch, cafeteria style. About half way across Fundy I noticed a flock of wild geese heading west. Then a pair of goldfinches came darting about the ship for a time. And while ~~walking~~ ^{looking} the deck I came upon a male Maryland yellow-throat, resting under one of the chairs. The distance from Bar Harbor to Yarmouth is about 120 miles, so these birds were at least fifty miles at sea. The yellow-throat looked very small and frail to be flying that far from land.

The steamer "Bluenose" became notorious for her uncomfortable vibration when she went on this run, a new ship, two or three years ago. The propellers were changed, and so on. She is not a big ship and with engines driving her at 20 knots she was bound to shudder, it seems to me. During June, July and August -- the tourist season -- she makes the trip in six hours. Now, in the off-season, the speed is reduced a bit for fuel economy, and she takes 6½ hours even in a calm sea like this. The vibration is noticeable but not uncomfortable. The only excessive vibration I saw was in a section of the teak rail amidships, which for some reason shuddered violently at intervals.

Arrived Yarmouth 3.30 p.m. -- 4.30 p.m. local daylight time, and I found that there was no bus connection to Digby (where I'd left my car), and no train up the Valley until after 9 p.m. This would put me in Digby towards midnight, when the

garage would be closed and the proprietor God knows where. ~~So~~ The Canadian immigration and customs men at Yarmouth were quick and courteous. I decided to put up at the Grand Hotel for the night. It is a shabby Victorian ark, a fire trap of the worst sort, but the diningroom is quite good. The hot water system works by fits and starts, depending apparently on how many of the guests are running baths; it took about three quarters of an hour to get a tub full of hot water. At dinner Fran's Reside came in with some people and stopped for a brief chat. Jim has set up a business as a consulting engineer in Yarmouth; and I gathered from Fran's anxious smile and her casual "sometimes he's busy, sometimes not," that the business wasn't doing any too well.

~~Then~~ Watched TV. for a time in the hotel solarium and went to bed.

Friday, Sep. 27/57

Took a bus to Digby this morning, arrived there about 11 a.m., got my car out of storage and headed for home. Stopped at a restaurant in Annapolis for lunch, then took the cross-country road for Liverpool. The first 8 miles out of Annapolis have been widened and straightened and given a heavy bed of loose gravel, ready for paving next year. Amongst other things the roadmakers have eliminated the old hairpin turn on the shoulder of Mickey's Hill, where you descend ~~the~~ the South Mountain on the Liverpool side. This steep bend was always narrow and rough -- every rain washed gullies in the gravel -- with a narrow wooden bridge over the stream at the bottom. It had not been improved (except with temporary coatings of new gravel) since the early 1920's, when my wife's brother Ralph used to drive over to Annapolis in a Model T Ford --and the ascent of Mickey's Hill was just barely possible in a Model T. Now, with this new roadway, wide and straight, I didn't know Mickey's Hill until I saw the stream in the hollow.

Home about 3 p.m., feeling much better for the change of scene and work, these past two weeks, after the worries and frustrations of the summer.
