

MEMORY-TRACES

**Being Memories of Binns, Fosdick, and Nelson Told
Through Letters of a Student**

"As we live our lives we
accumulate a fund of
memory-traces based on
our sensory experience."

Philip Rawson, Ceramics, 1984.

Melvin H. Bernstein

FOUR EPIGRAPHS

They said I was born at 8 on a rising sun
When my father was then on the run
Our paths never crossed and
My mother died of a broken heart
When I was aged fourteen.
For me , the road was clear
To carve out my own career.

Undated poem among the papers of
of Evelyn Tennyson

"The kiln & I are the best of friends."

Marion L. Fosdick, a letter,
July 31, 1923

"The hollyhocks which look in thru the
living room windows make inside
bouquets almost unnecessary."

Clara K. Nelson, a letter
July 4, 1921

"E Concrematio Confirmatio--out of the
fire comes firmness, through stress
we pass to strength."

Charles Fergus Binns, "Doctor's Oration,"
Alfred, June, 1925.

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Introduction

By 1920, when the following narrative in letters begins to write itself out, the School of Clayworking and Ceramics in Alfred under Charles Fergus Binns had proved itself as more than an educational innovation. The developments in silicate chemistry, technology and industry--only slightly deterred in the recent war--and the concurrent expansion of the American Ceramic Society reinforced its prospects. Under Presidents Harding and Coolidge the reaction to the closing down of the war economy embroiled the country in domestic quarrels over internationalism, strikes, depression, restrictive tariffs, diminished immigration quotas, ideological scapegoating (Sacco-Vanzetti, Alexander Barkman, Emma Goldman), scandalous corruption in high places (Teapot Dome), troublesome new social frontiers following the Volstead Act (18th Amendment), and the gender parity of woman suffrage (19th Amendment).

The country came slowly down from its Woodrow Wilson patriotic high, compensating by idolizing Jack Dempsey and Babe Ruth, falling in love with jazz, mastering the dial on the radio, lavishing adornments on automobiles, and relishing the promises in warplanes turned civilian transportation.

Loyal readers of the Alfred Sun and the Sabbath Recorder were not bombarded by the sloganeering that called the times the Roaring Twenties or the Jazz Age. Their news was more sedate and sedative. The YWCA had a national program in rethinking the world's problems after World War I; Mrs. Harry Emerson Fosdick and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller Jr. were on the executive committee. There were movies and vaudeville in the Majestic Theater in

Hornell and also movies in Firemen's Hall, Alfred, Saturday evenings, adults 20¢, children 10¢. There were musical programs by the Alfred University Glee Club and University Chorus under Prof. Ray Wingate. Prof. Charles F. Binns was the University chaplain. Anti-Bolshevik meetings on alternate Wednesday nights were held in Dr. Nelson Norwood's classroom. The Ceramic Guild had regular Easter, Christmas and Commencement sales. The June 1920 Commencement listed 35 graduates. In July, changing from sculpture, Marion Fosdick became a registered summer session pottery student. Clara Nelson taught painting and drawing that same summer session, a rehearsal for her regular appointment.

The Sun reported 75 in the September 1920 freshman class. The campus was awash in required green frosh caps. And there were seven new instructors including Prof. Nelson, Dr. Joseph Seidlin, Babcock Professor of Physics, and Mrs. Ada Seidlin, Adjunct in Music. (Mrs. Seidlin, a musical perfectionist, would be quoted a bit later in the newspaper as one hostile to the new music, wondering "if jazz may be considered music.") The announced program theme of the campus YWCA was "Service." And the newspaper reported with literary flair on October 13, 1920, Page One, that "the University boasts and [Isabelle] Emerson and an [Evelyn] Tennyson."

Between 1920 and 1924 Evelyn Tennyson (1902-92) was an art student and Professors Binns, Fosdick and Nelson were her major teachers of ceramic science, art, discernment and commitment. She enrolled using a middle name not on her birth certificate-- Alfreda. It may have derived from her family's long connection with Alfred "when it was a mudhole." Or it may have signaled a thinner tie with Alfred Tennyson, her paternal grandfather's

second cousin, and appropriate to a student who had shown in the Plainfield (N.J.) High School literary ambitions. Whatever the case, it was a mark of her strong impulse toward self-creation.

Evelyn lived in The Brick dormitory on the same floor as and in close proximity to Miss Fosdick, who was also Dean of Women, and to Miss Nelson. Since 1915 Miss Fosdick had fashioned a close friendship with the Binns family. Miss Nelson and Evelyn, then eighteen, soon were taken up in the camaraderie and intimacies of collegiate friendships in a campus life that included much visiting back and forth.

Evelyn came to Alfred an orphan, a sensitive candidate for the companionship of dormitory life and the enlivening stimulations in university surroundings. Her mother, Jessie Burdick Mattison, had married John J. Tennyson in 1891, and they had two children, Corinne (1892) and Evelyn. Soon after Evelyn's birth (1902), her father abandoned the family to hard times and sued for divorce (1907). Her mother died in 1917. In an undated poem Evelyn described her father as "on the run," their "paths never crossed/ My mother died of a broken heart." Mrs. Tennyson's unmarried sister, Harriet Ophelia Mattison, employed by the Plainfield Board of Health, fortunately, was able to sustain the family, in time becoming Evelyn's guardian and vigilant surrogate mother. In Alfred, Evelyn came under the watchful eyes of Miss Fosdick, Miss Nelson and, later, Mrs. Binns.

Evelyn dutifully wrote to Corinne and Aunt Harriet in Plainfield weekly, her letters cumulatively documenting a decisive event in her freshman year. A non-degree "special" ceramics student of Prof. Binns, a twenty-four year old man from an accomplished and comfortable family in New York City, George J. Openhym, had noticed her.

what followed was a four-year courtship on and off campus. . . Periodically troubled by onsets of depression, George was fortified by Evelyn's attention to him and their shared interests in ceramics, music and literature. Evelyn's church-going Baptist upbringing and her family--her aunt Harriet had wanted to be a medical missionary; her sister Corinne was secretary to a minister; and after her divorce, Evelyn's mother trained at Columbia University as a practical nurse--all had convinced the young Alfred art student that her life, too, was marked for service. George over the months became for her a test of and an opportunity for a woman's love and service. In the process she thrived as she grew into recognition as his fiancée.

All her life Evelyn kept her loyalty to Aunt Harriet, Corinne, the extended Openhym family, Miss Fosdick, Miss Nelson and the University. Later she said she owed much to Alfred, to what Alfred had made possible for her. In service and gifts she returned much. From her college letters home emerges a narrative gathered from memory--traces of a time that show Prof. Binns, Miss Fosdick and Miss Nelson in and out of school doing what teachers do--shaping a student's life and, of course, their own.

I. Academic Year 1920-21

Evelyn Tennyson's coming to college in Alfred was like coming home but with some new intensities. Relatives years before had studied at Alfred and others were in the village. The Brick had YWCA designated meeting rooms and times, and a Y reception greeted the incoming students. Evelyn signed on. She brought New Jersey regards for Mrs. Anna Merrill and the town dentist, Dr. W.W. Coon. Prof. Ray Wingate invited her to practise on his piano. The Alfred Guild scheduled picnics on Pine Hill or at the Ledges on the edge of Almond. Evelyn signed on. Dining hall etiquette was strict. Students paid board by the week. Teas were the basic ritual of socialization along with movies in Fireman's Hall run by the Athletic Association and compulsory attendance at football games. The "studio teas" of Miss Nelson and Miss Fosdick were a color festival: blue furniture, block print hangings, gleaming brass candlesticks, window seats with bright orange cushions--a background for cookies and Chinese tea served in green cups. Director Binns and his two daughters, Elsie and Norah, attended frequently.

The Brick with its ⁸⁵ residents was the women's student center in which they and the faculty entertained each other and had their recreation. Physical Training, two and a half hours per week required, allowed Evelyn her accredited long walks, accompanied or unaccompanied, and supplied silence away from "the greatest gossip factory" she'd ever ^{known}. The Brick had a new Victrola (to be paid off by proceeds from the many teas) that supplemented periodic music programs by Mrs. Seidlin and Miss Rose Becker, her sister, or by patrons and parents of the resident students.

Alfred's community theater group, The Wee Playhouse, that December put on plays by Yeats and Susan Glaspell. In her second semester she would be helping to make costumes for their plays in the renovated Academy (Alumni Hall).

There was much to do and she seemed to want to do all of it. The abundance of good food continually delighted her. She collected localisms--doughnuts were called "fried cakes," whipped cream was "spanked cream." The girls kept a "pantry" in their rooms. Though many girls in flapper style bobbed their hair making switches of the cutting, Evelyn held back. In January 1921 a scandal erupted in the Brick at a birthday party for one of the girls. It turned out to be a gathering at which girls smoked cigarettes.

Bounded by Alfred's compact campus life, from the beginning Evelyn's art teachers penetrated in substance and from her class and dormitory routines day and night, early bonding the three women. And over their friendship hovered the presence of Prof. Binns:

Miss Fosdick wants us to get the spiritual meaning of the pottery, that is putting our very soul into it through our fingers. She says that Prof. Binns seems to speak thru his fingers, and handles the clay as if it were some spiritual being.

Evelyn designed^a/marmalade jar and a vase (pronounce "vahs," she pointedly transliterated for her aunt) for Miss Fosdick's class, and started charcoal work with Miss Nelson. For Physical Education she walked and skipped and ran with Miss Fosdick to

Five Corners on the Belmont Road. Miss Fosdick soon became "a splendid chum." Before her sophomore year Evelyn began to work on the wheel and helped Miss Fosdick mix glazes. She began attending Prof. Binns's Episcopal service in the Gothic. "The Archdeacon from Montreal, Mrs. Binns' brother-in-law, was there, and he gave us a most beautiful address...I like the Episcopal form so much."

She soon built sand castles about her place in Miss Fosdick's sun. She imagined, without any evidence, that Miss Fosdick's aim was "to work me up as her assistant so that sometime I will be capable of holding her position, perhaps." The "perhaps" gives the daydream away. But Miss Fosdick did admit to "mothering" her and calling her "Lady Bird." And she had found favor in Miss Nelson's eyes. After posing for her class the two had tea and talked. "It seems we are truly 'made for each other.' There seems to be so much of one another in both of us. And it is true that we look alike, work alike, and dress alike." Evelyn had upon occasion been mistaken for her. As confidences deepened, a few months later Miss Fosdick said Evelyn was like a sister to her. In token, Evelyn was free to use the Fosdick-Nelson rooms for study when the Brick became too noisy. They spent quiet evenings together doing domestic chores. Sensing that they were a particular threesome who kissed each other when leaving each other's company for the night, Evelyn in some emotional confusion later wrote home: "Not that we're Old Maids or Man Haters."

No, none of them was, certainly not Evelyn. George in January of 1921 called upon her in the Brick. They went walking. At an informal dance George's attention impressed her. "George is so good to me." George escorted her to a Wee Playhouse production in February, brought her photographs of St. Huberts, Keene Valley, in the Adirondacks, where family and friends had been summering for a quarter of a century. He told her about his talented family and gave her a book by Rockwell Kent. In March he took her to an Ag School play, ^{subsequently to} the movies, to a picnic, to Wellsville and to the Junior Prom. Overwhelmed and ambivalent, Evelyn told her folks he seemed to be always at her elbow, "the darndest egoist I ever came across...He has quite a case on me." Her petulance did not last long nor was it ever again committed to her letters. Thereafter allusions to George in her letters to Aunty are wondrous, positive and defensive.

She had to learn to balance school work, the possessive attentions of her two women teachers and the "case" George had on her. There were walks with Miss Nelson who sketched her in colored chalks, and watched her. Miss Fosdick watched her. Aunty watched her but from a distance, concerned for her inexperienced niece away at college, concentrating on an art education that had difficult chemistry and mathematics in it.

II. Academic Year 1921-22

Before her sophomore year began in 1921, Evelyn visited Miss Nelson in her home at the foot of Cobble Hill Road, Pawtucket, R.I., "quite the most charming place" she'd ever visited. The morning was taken up going to Gladding Dry Goods Company, established 1766, "the store of Providence," accompanying Miss Nelson to the dentist, then luncheon at "The Lighted Taper." After, they were to go to the Rhode Island School of Design. "where they have much pottery and which we are going to sketch to 'steal' ideas for ourselves." On the way back to Alfred she attended as a school delegate a regional YWCA meeting near Silver Lake, Wyoming County, N.Y., to establish the year's agenda.

On campus Evelyn enrolled in two liberal arts classes, English and French, and though she might have registered for a third decided instead to double her course work with Miss Fosdick. She was glad to recover a fruit bowl done in her freshman year and learn that three of her pieces were to be included in a traveling exhibition. Willingly she volunteered as a hostess for her teachers' regular teas.

Evelyn discovered over and over what she was to experience almost all her life--that the whole world was related at first to Plainfield and family, later connected to Alfred, and still later known to George and the Goldmark family. She was particularly taken by any connections with distinction and fame: "Miss Fosdick's name is Marion Lawrence Fosdick, she being so named because she is cousin to the Marion Lawrence [in Plainfield] and to Harry Emerson Fosdick [a well-known liberal minister in the 1920s in New York City]. She just told me--what do you think of that?"

The improptu gatherings in Evelyn's room with Miss Nelson and Miss Fosdick just dropping in made her exclaim, "We are just like one happy family." Miss Nelson, who was also Dean of Women in 1921, "is tremendously liked by all." They exchanged little gifts with each other (and would do so all their lives). Evelyn was knitting a scarf with wool the two women had given her. Whenever possible she helped them in their school tasks. "I don't mind however, as long as I am well, for my aim in life is service and if life is worthy of being at all, it is worthy of being used for others." Her comment about feeling well reflected not only her physical fatigue but also the drain from defending her interest in George, whose history of emotional troubles was a question to her family.

She took refuge in busyness. She had a full daily class schedule from 8 to 3:30 and somedays to 4:30. Among other things she was designing linoleum blocks, spending whole days at times blockprinting Christmas card to be sold by the Guild. "Thursday I have with Miss Fosdick all day except for one hour with Prof. Binns. I accomplished quite a lot,--finishing a two-section wheel piece for one thing and getting along quite far on my mold...." Recreation was every so often going horseback riding with Miss Fosdick and Miss Nelson. They talked about going to Niagara Falls over Thanksgiving recess.

The art students regularly held weekly studio teas to which George contributed extras that made for a very good time--ice cream, chocolates, olives. In the Greenwich Village spirit, Evelyn called her Brick corridor "MacDougal Alley" (a blind lane of old mews, formerly stables, converted to studios, lit by gas street lamps, north of Washington Square in New York City). Looking forward, she

might not return home for the summer: "I think I have several opportunities for teaching crafts in different schools and camps next summer." Always in love with flowers, she would go to the Ag School to gather bouquets (free for the picking) appropriate to the pottery in her room. The Guild parties were costume occasions to design and sew creations that Miss Nelson would check for style and color, and even sketch.

Dormitory deportment and talk came to have a deeper meaning for her. She saw campus friendships turn serious, becoming engagements. Evelyn disclosed to her aunt that she was "really getting to like George." When talk brought up summer jobs, she planned to take classes at the Ag School in basket weaving. College life with its high-jinks lifted her spirit. To a going away party for Beatrice Streeter, a graduate ceramic art student back on campus for a short course in weaving, the women brought their

mending and sewed happily the evening...In the course of the evening as we were just sitting and talking, we heard a loud knock on the door, and in burst Norah Binns dressed up in her father's clothes and impersonating Amy Lowell [a newsworthy publicist of poetic Imagism]. It was so ludicrous that we could do nothing but stand and laugh.

Ceremonies of friendship included Miss Fosdick, Miss Nelson and Evelyn taking turns washing each other's hair.

Nineteen , with unbobbed hair, a good figure and above average height, energetic, always volunteering, absorbing and remembering everything she heard and saw and read and touched, Evelyn rejoiced that to her MacDougal Alley neighbors she was a delight:

Miss Nelson says that every time she looks into my room, even tho' the day be dreary, she feels as though it were filled with sun-

shine, for it just seemed to glow. I am glad she feels that way about it, for such an atmosphere I have tried to create.

Jointly her two teachers gave Evelyn a gift book, The Art Treasures of France. Evelyn cooked supper with Miss Fosdick at the school because Miss Fosdick was staying up with her kiln.

The trip to Niagara Falls did not materialize. Miss Nelson went to Pittsburgh; Miss Fosdick had Thanksgiving dinner with the Binns family. The next morning Evelyn made breakfast for Miss Fosdick in her room and the two read poetry aloud as they ate. "My heart is glad," Evelyn wrote to her aunt. She assured her family that despite all the attentions of "Mr. Openhym" she had attended the Assembly Dance with Sandford Cole, Class of 1923, and did not care just yet to have a "steady." With school resuming she was busy making a 10-inch cookie jar, a bowl, a three-section piece, a two-section piece and a lamp base--all on the wheel. And she was experimenting with decorative tiles. She continued to find the chemistry and mathematics troublesome.

Early in December Evelyn was busy in another matter. She was making an evening dress for a Christmas recess dance to which George had invited her, and she properly asked Aunt Harriet's permission to attend. She mentioned ^{that} Miss Fosdick and Miss Nelson liked him, that he wanted her to meet his family at a Christmas dance in the Riverside drive, New York City, family home. "Did I tell you," Evelyn asked her folks, "that Dr. [Felix] Adler, the head of the Ethical Culture School, is George's uncle?"

There are no letters about the festivities on Riverside Drive. They happened. They confirmed the mutual affectionate interest of Evelyn and George.

Back in Alfred in January 1922 , remembering talk of a possible trip to England as a guest of the Openhymys in the summer of 1923, Evelyn began reading English books. She started with W. H. Hudson. There were quiet evenings playing checkers with Miss Nelson, and walks and horse-drawn sleigh riding with George. And she was able to write to her family about Mrs. Ferguson, M.D., whose campus lectures were a useful coincidence: "By the way she is giving us for $\frac{1}{2}$ of our physical training an excellent and very informing lecture course on Sex Hygiene. The other hours we substitute any form of exercise we wish."

More than exercise Evelyn described herself as needing advice from her older sister Corinne on how to conduct herself with George.

23 January 1922

Dearest Sister:

... George is planning to go down to New York this weekend to talk over with his mother plans for his work next year.

While I am on this subject of George I might as well explain my main purpose in writing this letter. You will probably think my inquiry rather queer, but you know you asked me to ask you any information I might want, and here goes Appeal No I.

I know from having seen and having heard some and many girls say, that they allowed themselves to be kissed by the young man with whom they might be going and of whom they were particularly fond. But you know (all too well) how reticent I am in such matters, so naturally when George wanted to bestow the sign of affection upon your young sister I would not let him. I know from what he says and from the look in his eye that he is very fond of me,--and I am very fond of him in many ways, but no more than that just yet. That is, I don't allow myself to be yet, for I cannot help but be slow. It is best for both

of us,--for him the most, I think. I want him to be sure what he is doing. Now this I want to know: when and under what circumstances should you allow yourself to be kissed? It is when we say good-night that he wants to so show his affection,--at no other time does he show any outward signs of his desire. I would not mind his doing it, I don't think, if I were sure just what it meant. Every soul craves for affection, I know, but never would I want to do anything that wouldn't be right or anything that I would regret later on. I ask you this for I know you probably have had the same experience. Many of the girls take such things as a matter of course, and expect it, but then, they do and allow many liberties that my intuition tells me should not be.

In this case my intuition tells me nothing--but to wait. I do not mind having my hand held or having his arm about me in a comfortable friendly way, for a person cannot be too cold and unresponsive to a person who so evidently cares as much as George does for me. He told me that one of the things that he so admired in me was that I wasn't the least bit of a flirt. He felt that I wasn't wasting myself in foolishness that one sees so much in a co-ed college. So I am gratified that my keeping always of my dignity has met approval of the right source. He also told me that I inspired the very highest and not only in him by my ideals and steadfast beliefs and opinions on subjects. That too, was gratifying.

All this I am stating merely as facts in which you might be interested to enable you to get the more easily my point of view. I wish that I might talk with you in person, but as I can't, won't you write me and tell me just what you think? Altho I might ask the advice of some of my friends here, it would not be as satisfactory for the most of them do not know the real George and are prejudiced against him from last year--and the beginning of this year up to the time he has been going with me. With me he is quite, quite different, and with me he acts more as I saw him in his own home. He hasn't entirely yet learned how to act with younger people, but by degrees he is getting there and more and more people are finding out his merits.

I hope I'm not burdening you, but I turn to you because I feel the need of older advice.

Very very lovingly,
Your Sister

If Corinne answered, the letter was not saved.

Little details in her usual long Sunday letter home show the turmoil of maturing. She rearranges her room, making a study table into a dressing table. She tries to draw back from the close relations of dormitory life. Miss Nelson and Elsie Binns drop in for a visit, but she finds herself missing George who had gone home. She steeps herself "in English atmosphere," debates whether she should accept the invitation to a Fosdick-Nelson coffee hour for Elsie and Mrs. Binns whose husband was away for a week. "I do not think it best to be an 'ever-present guest'."

Privacy is a difficult refuge in campus quarters. Not Evelyn, nor Miss Fosdick nor Miss Nelson could escape George's escalating courtship. At the regular college Assembly formal dance for the second term Evelyn reserved most of the dances for George. "Miss Fosdick and Miss Nelson said that he was by far the most approving [sic] man on the floor. They each had a dance with him and both said that he was 'just the sweetest thing'." Evelyn plainly had the approval of her surrogate family.

A week later she became more resolute about confiding her feelings to Aunt Harriet: "Aunty,--what would you think of your niece if she told you that she might become engaged?" She had thought much about it and had come to the conclusion that it was "the inevitable thing." She signed the letter, "lovingly, O so lovingly your growing-up niece."

The turbulent several weeks of that February are visible in the ambivalence in her letters. A week before she had a

severe case of hives that needed the care of Dr. Ferguson. Aware of being observed by Miss Nelson, Miss Fosdick, and lately Mrs. Binns, she wanted acceptance of George from her guardian. "Aunty-Mother, " she wrote, "... you are everything that a mother or father could ever be to me."

She tossed in the ~~toiled~~ feelings of her election and electing:

Miss Fosdick one day told me that she just loved George's face when he spoke of me...I have said nothing to either her or Miss Nelson of my own personal feeling because they both are of an artistic nature and temperament to such an extent that they let themselves be married to their work. Anyway, I do not care for Miss Fosdick's idea of real love, for I consider it unfounded and not quite the real thing. Miss Nelson has the right ideas but is too independent to adjust her life to that of a man who might love her. She may change--however, and I think she will.

Evelyn did not elaborate either Miss Fosdick's idea of real love or Miss Nelson's right ideas.

Evelyn began to organize her life to merge with George's plans for recess times and campus activities though they tried with little success not to see each other too frequently. But would Aunty give permission for her to accept George's invitation to the Metropolitan Opera during Easter vacation? Would she on engraved stationery invite George to tea in Plainfield? Her letters referred to the distinction in the careers of his aunts, Pauline and Josephine Goldmark, ^{who were social welfare activists,} the family connection with Supreme Court Justice Brandeis, and the association with Aeolian Hall concert artists.

Her inner life was feverish. Her quiet times were sewing in the evenings with Miss Fosdick, Elsie Binns, her roommate Emma Schroeder, and in company with Debbie, the Binns's female beagle "who lives in my room almost as much as she does at home." During Easter Miss Nelson would go to Toledo, Ohio, and Miss Fosdick along with her ^{former student now in summer} assistant, Beatrice Streeter, would go to Cooperstown to prepare the pottery gift shop. Meanwhile, Miss Fosdick was giving Evelyn additional training in kiln management were she to take a summer camp art job. She recommended her to Porter Sargent's well-established employment office in Boston, one favored also by Prof. Binns. If the Lanier camp in Maine offered her a job, why, George knew the Sidney Laniers, and a teacher in her Plainfield High School was a niece of Sidney Lanier. To be ready, that spring semester she was studying basketry at the Ag School. The intermixing of school tasks and finishing school touches--assisting at teas-- kept her occupied. As T.S. Eliot observed, it was a grace to pour and talk of Michelangelo at teas:

It gives one more social ease and poise and I consider it part of a college education... We are of one opinion. In our line particularly it is not sufficient that we be able to do excellent work in our own particular art, but we must have a general fund of information about the drama, sculpture, painting, music and so forth.

The highs and lows of her self-improvement that would give her a reassuring place in George's world chipped away at Evelyn's good spirits. That April a secret burdened her, a secret known only to President Boothe C. Davis, Prof. Binns and Miss Fosdick:

Miss Nelson would not be returning next year. She had accepted a teaching position in the school affiliated with the Toledo Art Museum. There was more. George would not be returning to study at Alfred next year. Attending a concert with Mrs. Seidlin, Evelyn could empathize with her. "I think I have found quite a friend in her...She is very lonely here because she so misses her musical environment and friends." The jaundiced eyes sees jaundiced things.

The overload of her feelings induced in her a spell of loneliness and a week of melancholy and depression "causing something to snap. One night this week my mind stopped functioning completely, and a queer feeling it was...Sometimes I wish I were more given to crying so that I could find vent for my feeling."

A fortunate circumstance helped to lift her spirits. At 6 A.M. one morning Mrs. Binns saw Evelyn at her window in the Brick sewing. She invited her to breakfast, "and I was completely cured...I certainly do love the naturalness in which the Binns family live. They are so unpretentious and make you feel at home immediately." She went on to describe her English breakfast in Alfred:

The blessing was asked standing. Then they sat. Mrs. Binns served oatmeal cooked like a gruel, but very thick, a "porridge" served in a regular cereal dish. One held a cup of milk in the left hand and taking a bit of porridge on the spoon, dipped it into the milk and then ate it. Plus orange, toast, homemade marmalade and coffee. "Mrs. Binns apologized for the frugality of the meal by saying that since they were 'pore workin' folks' it must be so!"

Feelings of independence and self-sufficiency stirred in her. She wanted in her junior year to live outside the Brick. And she'd work a bit for her expenses especially since she was "bound and determined to study with Mrs. Seidlin for the year" at a cost of two dollars a lesson for fifty minutes. "She is," she added, "a pupil of Leopold Godowsky, you know."

Her talks with George sketched the future, with George insisting he could never repay her for what she had done for him, that she was for him an influence for the good. There was even more to his praise. "George has generously asked me to call upon him for anything he can possibly do for me." Her perplexities about her involvement with George deepened. "Sometimes I feel so alone, so overcome with the weight of my own thoughts that I become weary and distressed." She signed her letter, "your troubled Evelyn."

Opportunely, George lifted her spirits. He offered her his family's invitation come summer to visit the Openhymns--all expenses paid--in St. Huberts. She accepted. They saw each other almost every day for a few minutes at least. At his own expense and with his own labor George built tennis courts on campus and taught Evelyn to play. Miss Fosdick returned from the Cooperstown pottery-and-coffee house, and with Miss Nelson due to be on leave next year, she asked Evelyn to live with her. Evelyn's art work is not mentioned. Commencement came and went.

Back in Plainfield in the July-August interval before her visit to the Adirondacks, Evelyn--now "Lynn"-- wrote to George letters that show her merging into George's world of travel, relatives, and friends. There was music to listen to, concerts, a lecture to hear on religion that was broadminded and modern, a relative who'd been to Europe, Plainfield friends who'd been to St. Huberts and knew many of George's relatives and friends, new acquaintances from Columbia University and Teachers College, and people she'd met who knew Alfred's Prof. Binns and the Wee Playhouse activities there. She was glad she hadn't gone to work at Camp Lanier. She'd have missed meeting some wonderful people and broadening her outlook, though, she added, it did prevent her from making herself more financially independent.

III. Academic Year 1922-23

Back in Alfred the first week of September, she wrote home, "There is no doubt about anything now with George and me." She felt "anchored" in Alfred, and "anchored" in St. Huberts. She assured Aunty: "You need have no fears...I've looked at the situation from nearly every angle." She had taken control of her life.

She did not move in with Miss Fosdick but remained in the Brick rooming with two students. She agreed to work with the Brick housemother, Mrs. Middaugh, for room and board. Miss Erna Sonne, Miss Nelson's replacement, roomed next to her. However young and vivacious Miss Sonne was, she could not erase Miss Fosdick's lonesomeness for Miss Nelson. Elsie Binns, whose studio was behind the Baggs's family house not far away on Main Street, helped to make up for Miss Nelson's absence. From her, Evelyn learned about some of George's friends, known to Elsie from her Ethical Culture School days. Evelyn counseled George who was away from Alfred not to worry about any school work he was missing; a classmate, Frobisher Lyttle, would help him in technical matters.

Looking about her, Evelyn noticed that the college had a look of prosperity. One fraternity, she counted, had eight cars among its 21 members, and several girls had their own cars.

Without elaboration she mentioned to Aunty that George was in White Plains, N.Y., living with a Dr. Harrington, a specialist. In his absence and since her return she had taken to attending every weekly worship service in the Gothic. Doing so helped to focus her feelings. In an 18-page letter to her "dear, dear folks," she could enjoy the reflective Sabbath calm of a Sunday in October and assess her becalming residence. The steady glow of Prof. Binns's inner light, the subdued joy of her own sexuality, the literary pleasure that came with being a student assistant to Dean Paul Titsworth, who was her discerning English teacher, her little jobs that paid meagerly, but paid, her piano lessons, her extracurricular reading that told her details about cosmopolitan things, her consolidating awareness that her life was gathering to a promising maturity--these described her new confidence. She was, she concluded her long letter, like the "Ulysses" of Tennyson's dramatic monologue,

...strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield!
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Her euphoria continued, marred somewhat by music lessons in the first floor apartment and studio of Mrs. Seidlin on Reynolds Street. "I don't blame her one bit for being so cranky and losing her temper at me...Nevertheless I feel quite like a rag when I've had a lesson from her. Here's hoping that someday I'll really be accomplishing something to please her." Evelyn's rising expectations included an escalation of her taste and accommodation with George, older and more

conservative. She became critical of vapid conversation, heavily rouged girls with short skirts, the casual morality of flirting girls and the popular musical culture of a generation staking out its own less traditional non-Carnegie Hall music. She knew that George had among his antecedents the Hungarian-born composer of operas and symphonies Karl Goldmark (1832-1915), his grandfather's half-brother.

She had a rare treat in her art history course when Elsie Binns gave a guest lecture on Greek art. "It is so very near her own heart that a dozen words of her sincere appreciation of the subject are worth more than a whole lecture of Miss Sonne's." Miss Binns had recently been making portrait sculpture. It became the occasion of a friendly gesture by Prof. Binns. Wrote Evelyn:

This afternoon while I was very much absorbed in doing some ceramic laboratory work and not thinking of anything but very technical things, Professor Binns came up to me and said, "Have you seen the heads?" My face must have registered blankness when I asked, "Pardon me?" and he repeated, "Did you see the heads?" Suddenly it dawned upon me that maybe he meant the last heads of a mother and her three boys that Elsie Binns sculptured,--so I said, "Oh--you mean Miss Binns' heads?" And he said, "Yes,--come along with me to my office." So I trotted along like a puppy adoringly following his master and when I saw them I exclaimed with delight, for really, they are quite the finest she has yet done. Upon the expression of my delight, Prof. Binns said, "Yes, they are quite admirable. She has done very well with them." Altho' I was quite tickled that he should ask my opinion about them, I half dismissed the incident from my mind until I saw Elsie Binns here at the Brick tonight when she came to have dinner with us,--and I related the occasion. Much to my surprise, her eyes became teary with pleasure when I spoke of her father praising her work, for he had said nothing in particular to her about it, and she was quite overwhelmed with his

approval. He is such a connoisseur, such a discriminating man, such a conservatist that any word of praise from him is worth heaps. About then Elsie turned around and made the occasion pleasurable for me by saying, "Well, you don't know how honored you should be in having him ask you to see them, for he never asks a person to look at something unless he thinks him capable of appreciating it."

Towards the end of our lab period I sat down at the big long table where we so often sit around in Prof. Binns' office to look up some material. Pretty soon after, Prof. Binns came in and sat down and began showing me some new old books on ceramics that he had just received from England. One of them, a secondhand copy, was a translation from the Chinese into French on the history of Chinese Porcelains, and of which there is no English translation. Right out of a clear sky Professor Binns said, "How would you like to translate this into English for your Senior Thesis next year?" I was thrilled with the idea and if, upon looking further into the matter, it seems feasible to both of us, maybe I will. Wouldn't that be interesting? Incidentally, as he turned to the flyleaf he found there the signature and handwriting of the Curator of the British Museum, a dear old friend of his, and to whom the book had belonged. When Prof. Binns was photographing pieces of ceramic work there in the British Museum for lantern slides for illustrations of his lectures on ceramic history that he now uses here and in the Metropolitan, this man, who is now Sir, worked with him, and it struck him as quite a coincidence after 25 years or more to suddenly come into possession of this book which he had selected at random from a bulletin of the British Museum.

Another interesting thing,-- the other day I picked up a copy of a book on Maiolica ware in Prof. Binns' office and upon noting it, I turned to him and said, "It strikes me that this is the book I saw listed in a recent bulletin I had sent for from the South Kensington Museum" (Victoria & Albert, you know, in London) and the one to which the Curator had referred me in his letter written in answer to my inquiry about material on the old Maiolica ware. Sure enough,--it was the same thing which Professor Binns had just received, and which he had ordered en-

tirely independent to my correspondence. I do have the funniest experiences in the way of coincidences all the time.

That Thanksgiving in 1922 Evelyn's "cup was quite full... People have been nice to me. Professor Binns beamed upon me in his adorable way this morning." George was due in Alfred for Thanksgiving. Miss Fosdick gave a little supper in her room for George and Dr. Charles Adamec. (Classics), and Elsie Binns came for coffee. They all played "Concentration," a card game Evelyn had learned in St. Huberts. They sang German lieder. Dr. Adamec sang Bohemian and Czechoslovakian folksongs. Evelyn was gliding into the society of cultivated people and the social life of her elders.

There was dinner with Professor and Mrs. Binns in Miss Fosdick's room. (Evelyn had given a holiday gift of English biscuits, Huntly and Palmer biscuits, to them.) She sat in on meetings about the start of a new sorority, Pi Alpha Pi. She needed a new dress for the first annual Brick prom in February, to which she had invited George; he would come after attending the American Ceramic Society meeting in Pittsburgh. There was the Kanakadea banquet in March. She was learning to ski. The English Club had a motion picture machine. She had seen "Lorna Doone" and "Ramona." In Prof. Pittsworth's class she discovered Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw": "We have just been studying Henry James in English and he certainly is the most involved man I ever struck. My mind feels as tho' it had gone thru a strenuous course in gymnastics."

Inserted into her letters that were calendars of her activities were reassurances both to herself and to her Plainfield family that she knew where her heart was leading her, but that she knew her prospective happiness had--in George's health--a serious qualification. She quoted to Aunty a self-help sentiment from Episcopal Bishop Phillips Brooks: "'To work, to help and to be helped, to learn sympathy thru suffering, and to learn faith by perplexity, to reach truth through wonder, behold! this is what it is to prosper, this is what it is to live'--so says Phillips Brooks and it is what I am experiencing."

Her aunt had been to Trenton, N.J. visiting Lenox Inc., a manufacturer of fine china, and becoming acquainted with Belleek, an Irish porcelain. She sent Evelyn company pamphlets. It was another "coincidence" for Evelyn.

Just a week ago Professor Binns gave me a type-written paper written by the assistant instructor of ceramics at Rutgers which was a report in the form of a letter of his experiments with Belleek. In giving it to me he asked that I get what I could from it and go ahead for myself on the investigations of this man. He also gave me a formula with which to start. So Thursday last, I began work on it. Isn't it strange that just now you should write me of the Lenox Company? ²

The next night she had dinner with the Binns family. It struck a note that echoed the words of the Boston Bishop, a note that Prof. Binns could have sounded in his services in the Gothic.

Last night Miss Fosdick and I were asked to the Binns' for Sunday night supper. It was so nice to be with them for they are a dear hearty couple. After supper the Professor read aloud his latest play called "The Hawthorne Vase." It is a tale of an old Chinese Porcelain and very beautiful in theme. It is to the effect that a jar or vase made of clay is merely of the earth and can be crumbled to dust again, but as soon as it has gone thru the fire it is made an everlasting piece as long as it remains unbroken. So are we as human beings made but of perishable clay until we have been tried by the fire of affliction and made impregnable against the crumbling forces within us.

His interpretation of the play, later to be performed by the Wee Playhouse, is as close as can be approached to the ~~title~~ title that Prof. Binns would give to his doctoral speech in Alumni Hall when he would be awarded, in 1925, his honorary doctorate by Alfred University. "E Concrematione Confirmatio" was the late Latin title, a coinage of Prof. Binns himself, and explained by him as "the fire attests." It was a maxim entirely comfortable to Binns's metaphoric ability to spiritualize facts, moralize matter, invest everyday things with transcendental meaning, and to value porcelain as a symbol for being and doing, of understanding and wisdom.

Binns with his ability to be at home in the two cultures could also keep Evelyn attentive to the technical elements in her education.

Prof. Binns says that [Belleek] of the Lenox Pottery is not at all like the Irish Belleek... as the latter is very thin, translucent, delicate like a fragile shell. He says that altho' the Lenox ware is exquisite in workmanship,--the whole quality of the ware is not as excellent as that of the Onondaga Potteries, whose ware

is called Syracuse China. This he says is the finest in the United States.

It was spring Evelyn was thinking of in February, time to arrange for a summer job. Again, it would be coincidentally fortunate where and with whom Evelyn would work. Miss Fosdick was the intermediary. The place was Cooperstown, N.Y., an easy distance from St. Huberts and George. Evelyn knew about Cooperstown not only from Miss Fosdick but also from Beatrice Streeter, not long before a visitor in the Brick. Miss Fosdick had recommended Evelyn as her assistant, and the Cooperstown owners had agreed.

It has not been sufficiently noticed that two ends of the social spectrum, certainly in New York State--the settlement house early and the tearoom later--contributed to the rising general interest in art pottery. In the 1920s and 1930s it was the tearoom that flourished until the economies of WW II intervened. Miss Fosdick, two of her students and an art entrepreneur in Natty Bumppo country were part of this short-lived activity.

Marguerite Standish Cockett (1879-1954) was born in Copperstown to parents who died early in her life. An aunt took her to Paris where she studied painting under Adolph William Bouguereau. Returning to the United States she was a nurse in the Spanish-American War, worked in a settlement house on Avenue B in New York City, began formal nurse's training in Philadelphia, transferred to the Woman's Medical College there, graduated with an M.D. in ophthalmology in 1905, practiced in Boston, took post-graduate studies in France and England, and reestablished

herself in Boston as an eye specialist. In 1916 she volunteered an ambulance to France, worked for the YMCA, acted as its official artist, opened a rest and recreation area for soldiers in the valley of Chamonix, France, in the shadow of Mt. Blanc, Europe's highest mountain. After the armistice she returned to Cooperstown and resumed her study of painting. Her teachers at various times were Charles Chapman in New Jersey, Allen Tucker in New York City, and Charles Grafly in Gloucester, Mass., and in Philadelphia.

Among them, Charles Grafly was also one of Elsie Binns's known teachers, and it may have been Elsie who recommended Alfred potter Marion Fosdick for Dr. Cockett's art enterprise on Lake Street in Cooperstown. Named after the memory of the doctor's wartime leave center, Au Petit Chamonix was a genteel tearoom for summer vacationers and used two converted houses as a modish place of refreshment with an associated "Grey Goose Pottery" as a showcase for original pottery, with Miss Fosdick and her assistants in charge of the kiln, ~~and~~ clay designs and production. The clay came from an old Indian clay bed near Lake Otsego. Under the influence of the Harvard-inspired little theater movement (like the Wee Playhouse), a summer theater was added with the season opening on July 14, Bastille Day. Miss Fosdick acted in some plays and Evelyn became a stage prompter. In this way pottery made a transition in the ¹⁹20s from a local craft-accented studio to a sophisticated salesplace in elitist surroundings that deemphasized commercialization. Restaurant

management magazines publicized the possibilities of art-with-business opportunities for women who had begun as an aftermath of World War I to leave homemaking for business careers.

Were she to get the job at Au Petit Chamonix she would be an assistant, an apprentice, for which she would pay \$12 a week. "It is quite probable that Miss Fosdick will go there permanently year after next,--that is the year I graduate. This is not to be breathed to anyone yet, though."

Summer was months away. More on her mind in her letters home was her deepening affection for George. "Can I ever be thankful enough for having become acquainted with George?" She conceded that although George was older by seven years both of them needed spiritual and mental growth. She was grateful that a Mrs. Laura B. Garrett had given a series of sex hygiene lectures that "were simply corking...delightful...frank." And at Mary Irish's family poultry business she "had never seen a chick come out of its shell before." The force of nature astounded her.

She interpreted George's history of emotional turbulence and his residence with Dr. Harrington as transient, improving, encouraging, "coming into his own," that things would work out, and that she was "blest to have the glorious experience" so young--they'd have more years to enjoy it. "We feel ourselves as good as engaged" with marriage in the not-too-distant future but dependent upon Dr. Harrington's advice.

Aunty and Corinne read Evelyn's letters with great care and concern. Her ceramic work--a Persian-shaped jar and some "stocky" candlesticks --had been given scant notice. Her "incentive to seek higher planes" was inflated language. Her drift toward Cooperstown and St. Huberts that coming summer spelled to Aunty and Corinne no Easter visit home. Instead, Corinne visited Alfred in April and was able to report her impressions to their aunt. Evelyn became defensive:

[Corinne] disliked the place...She is right in many ways about the unpleasant phases of the college life here...I have been too occupied in trying to overlook them...it has been a constant struggle to keep truly content. This will explain the reason I am thinking of changing to go to Carnegie Institute next year.

Evelyn was not as secure in her mind as she had asserted. People around her in Alfred, perhaps out of concern for the imponderables of the intensifying Evelyn-George relationship, seemed to intrude on her privacy. (The Brick housemother, "Mrs. Middaugh pussy foots around.") Her aunt had not yet invited George to visit in Plainfield. George and his brother Wilfred were going together to Europe that coming summer. But Dr. Harrington had written Evelyn as early as the summer of 1922 that if George continued to improve "marriage would be the finest thing." And if Aunty desired confirmation she could see Dr. Harrington at his office on East 70th Street in New York City. As for changing schools, other students were also seriously considering a change. "Alfred has done much for me

ceramically, and personally speaking, but I truly feel the need of something more that this place never can give." The "something" she added, "was broadening cultural lines... progressive movements." Not only George beckoned Evelyn. It was also the inviting glimpses of greener grass, other places, and the abundant life of George's ^ffamily and social set.

Miss Nelson could have suggested Pittsburgh, and Miss Fosdick Boston. Having inquired, Evelyn received a scholarship from Boston University and classes at the Boston School of Fine Arts and Crafts with no obligations about social activities, " a glimpse of heaven." George agreed. After their marriage they'd be working together in their ceramic studio. That didn't need a degree, he argued. Miss Fosdick seconded Evelyn's preference for Boston, suggesting possible financial help from a wealthy aunt near Boston. Evelyn herself figured that her academic work would be finished by June of that year and fourth year ceramic research opportunities would be more abundant in Boston.

In the background was an incident of the night before her April 15th letter. Evelyn had told Miss Fosdick that after two and a half years' friendship she and George planned to marry:

She was perfectly beautiful about it. She has intimately lived with me during my ripening years, and has seen George unfold under my friendship with him...It surely was heart-warming. Before I left she folded me in her

arms and held me tight for a long time, then kissed me tenderly and said that she wanted me to always remember how completely she understood the whole situation...I'll never forget her.

This exchange of erotic intensity, of sentiment deeper than sentimentality, was a ceremony of mutual feeling, respect and dependence that had developed in their two years of intimacy in the Brick, in the classroom, in their sentinel watching of kilns, and in the more carefree, companionable hours of recreation. The orphan had in Miss Fosdick another surrogate mother--young, educated, articulate, understanding, permissive and encouraging. The teacher had a pupil whose youth, sensibility, character and need made her eligible and apt for the social rite of passage, marriage. What "the whole situation" Miss Fosdick "understood" is nowhere spelled out. It is a fact attested to by years of letters kept that Evelyn never forgot her.

Evelyn's unburdening of her heart to Miss Fosdick seems to have fortified her. Her confidence in her studies at Alfred resumed; she wouldn't transfer to Boston or Pittsburgh. She'd continue to live in the Brick, sharing a room with three girls, and look for on-campus jobs that paid some of her expenses.

Her "jolly companion," Miss Fosdick, shared Evelyn's decisions. Aunty and Corinne were disappointed by Evelyn's decision to remain at Alfred. For the extra money, the honor and the accent on literary matters, Evelyn accepted Dean Titsworth's offer to her to be his student assistant. She accepted for her senior year the presidency of the Brick. Other things fell into place. George and his mother would visit Cooperstown, where Evelyn would be June 15 before his leaving for Europe for the summer. Norah Binns was back in Alfred from Columbus, Ohio; with Miss Sonne's resignation, Miss Nelson

would be back from Toledo in September, if not before. And Prof. Binns? "This weekend Professor Binns becomes a real minister for he is to be ordained at St. Paul's in Buffalo as a priest. He will then be able to administer communion, marry and confirm people. He is so happy about it."

Evelyn was caught up in Commencement activities. There was trustee John Jake Merrill's address and honorary degree, a Wee Playhouse performance in the afternoon, a play by Elsie Binns performed around the fountain near Carnegie Hall and the annual exhibition of pottery that contained some of George's wares. Among the letters in this busy time was evidence that showed Evelyn worried about George's emotional health: "Dearest, may our love be guided only by the highest motives, the most sane impulses, and the most wholesome attitudes," and she concluded by wishing "years of loving service, the one to the other."

Graduation over, Evelyn had time to have supper with the Binns family and play "Hearts" all evening. She nursed a wisdom tooth coming in and waited for Miss Fosdick to prepare things for Cooperstown. Happily, Miss Nelson was back for a few days and Elsie Binns, Miss Fosdick and Evelyn used the Ag School's sewing room all day. Evelyn reported she was fixing an old dress. It was "quite the cat's cuff-links," her contemporary slang reflecting her subdued, neglected youthful ebullience. And Miss Nelson was helping Norah Binns repaint and decorate the Box of Books.

The end of June and all of July found Evelyn learning

practical ceramic studio matters with Miss Fosdick in Cooperstown. To Evelyn, Au Petit Chamonix was "quaintly elegant." The Cooperstown railroad station seemed "like the lodge room of a gentleman's estate." Camp Fenimore on Otsego Lake, which enrolled boys and girls ages seven to twelve, was "a small exclusive camp for children from cultured Christian homes." After the Brick, breakfasts were "elegant" and served by Augustine, a French maid. Meals soon became "too good for my simple soul."

There were mitigations to the stress of new surroundings, people, tasks and trying to be "the perfect jewel" Miss Fosdick appreciatively called her. The two women had built or thrown 30 pieces that waited for the kiln. There were movies--Jackie Coogan in "My Boy." There was Norma Talmadge of movie fame but in a stage play, "The Eternal Flame," to open on Bastille Day. Evelyn did become a prompter; the French flag, secured from Paris, flew over the theater; and the Marseillaise was sung before the curtains parted on the season's first performance. There was horseback riding. For the first time she had her hair shampooed downtown--"I guess it won't bankrupt me," she wrote to Corinne. The nearby Clarke estate, originally a grant from England, was "maintained in true English style...The wooden bridges are unlike anything I have ever seen in America." Her Anglophilia was accumulating. And only 175 miles away from Cooperstown was St. Huberts.

Meanwhile, George's wistful letters from his European tour with his brother Wilfred fueled her daydreams. "How," he wrote, "would you like to spend your honeymoon in Europe?" Evelyn wrote him every day, but with George on a tourist's schedule, her letters were, no doubt, difficult to keep and are not in the Herrick Library archives. Some of Evelyn's questions were answered: yes, George preferred a simple outdoors wedding, perhaps at St. Huberts. He declared that he would give her an engagement ring that fall. And in another coincidence in Evelyn's string of coincidences, George visited Chamonix and Mt. Blanc that August.

Mrs. Openhym had invited Evelyn to the Adirondacks for the middle of August, and so it happened. Three August letters from St Huberts record the visit, the welcome, almost a homecoming, indeed, the perceptible transformation of Evelyn Tennyson. Even her handwriting changes, the script becoming firmer, the phrasing surer. Her first letter of August 11 was addressed to "Folks." By August 18, "Aunty" became "Tante," and by August 25, "Tante dearest." The Europeanization of Evelyn Tennyson had set in.

And well it might. Dr. Adler greeted her with a kiss. For his birthday gift she brought to the family dinner one of her candlesticks. Conversation showed that she had friends in common with the family. The family "accepted her as a regular St. Huberter...I am one of the family--not a guest." Mrs. Openhym took her on a four-days' motor trip to Greensboro, Vermont, to visit the Leuba family. Professor Leuba was head of the Education Department at Bryn Mawr in Pennsylvania, the college of Josephine and Pauline Goldmark, George's aunts. And there were private musicals in the homes of friends of the Openhym.

Evelyn seemed immersed in a midsummer prenuptial atmosphere that echoed her own poised position in her new family. At home, Corinne was interested in a man, but his good health was in the balance. (They did break off.) Aunty was seeing a widower, James Mershon, a retired Plainfield businessman from an old Lawrenceville, New Jersey, family. Evelyn urged her aunt to act upon the possibility of marrying him, adding

her hopes that Corinne would also marry. Such advice launched her into the possibility that she would marry George next summer, and quoted Miss Fosdick's advice and idealized, high-minded picture of what their married life would be:

You and George together can join the crusade to spread loveliness in this world (because you both are sensitive to it) instead of growing apathetic as so many wealthy do. I think your life is going to be very beautiful, Evelyn dear, if you continue as you are going now.

She must have appeared to all around her to be walking on paths of strewn rose petals. Even Park, the Openhym chauffeur, spoke to her of George, urging marriage, for George needed a home of his own "where his mother can't nag at him eternally... [for] when he is with her she drives him to distraction." With her doubt in abeyance, Evelyn could give herself up to the joys of mountain climbing by day and card playing at night. Near the end of her Adirondack holiday she wrote home, "These are happy happy days too joyous at times to seem real."

Instead of returning to Alfred, she extended her joyous times into September, even beyond the opening day of her senior year at Alfred, a day that "never amounts to much anyway." In its place she added playing mahjong and poker to her accomplishments. There was time for high jinks. She helped make a dummy "of the old philosopher Schleiermacher" to put in an Openhym relative's cottage. (Not identified, the relative was no doubt Dr. Adler, whose explorative, non-parochial Judaism followed a trajectory similar to Friedrich Schleiermacher's revaluation of

empirical, ethical Protestantism.) There was a six-mile walking tour with Margaret, one of Dr. Adler's three daughters, and a visit with Dr. Adler himself in his study located on a cliff in back of his cottage.

The visit to the internationally recognized educator occupied her imagination. His study had no desk, no litter of papers. It was like an observatory with many windows. It had a comfortable lounge chair, a few books, and a monstrous American stuffed eagle measuring four feet in outstretched wings. "There is a stairway leading to the top of his study that commanded an even more sweeping view of the surrounding country. In this respect his frequent ascents to this higher place for inspiration reminds me of Tennyson's custom of nightly viewing the heavens from the top of Farringford." As inaccessible as Dr. Adler may have seemed, there was time that evening to catch a display of northern lights and play poker, which the family euphemistically called "Irish Bank."

Returned from Europe, George on September 14 brought her an engagement ring. In still another coincidence, a week before, her guardian Aunt Harriet had become engaged to James Mershon.

IV. Academic Year 1923- 24

Back in Alfred for her senior year, her dormitory bed decorated with a gift from Mrs. Openhym, a homespun blanket-- "I'm simply thrilled with it."--Evelyn was less the prospective college graduate than she was the preoccupied bride-to-be. In one week she had received three letters from Mrs. Openhym reiterating her happiness at the prospect of her engagement to George, the consummation of her longed-for dream, "a loving mate for George." Evelyn was busy with things for her trousseau and for their home--a lunch set, a block^oprinted bedspread, and dyeing the wool for a hooked rug. She was experiencing mature parity with her aunt, who had just married "Uncle Jim." Looking ahead ^{Evelyn} "had thought of June 17th as the day " for her marriage. "But it's too early to make definite plans." Not really. June 17, 1924 would be the day.

Her letters to "Tante dearest and Uncle Jim" turned now to the social scene. Prof. Binns had missed two Sunday services, for he had had a leg operation to relieve some varicose veins. While earlier recognizing "the Arrow collar type" of male collegian, now she expressed admiration for the real college type of girl, "perfectly corking," energetic, intellectual background, travelled in Europe, interested in etching and music, and "wholly worth knowing." Considering what the Openhymys were planning for her, she thought she needed a social secretary for the coming holiday season. Mrs. Openhym had sent her a hat on approval from

a Madison Avenue shop--"the most elegant hat I ever had."
 George had bought a Hupmobile coupe for a wedding gift and was looking at houses in Hartsdale, White Plains, New York. In fact, he had found a stone house with surrounding four acres. Mrs. Openhym liked it, too. All this and more she shared at dinner with Miss Nelson. Miss Fosdick, seriously fatigued and overworked as Dean of Women in addition to her teaching, was relieved for a month with Elsie Binns replacing her.

Evelyn's senior year was as hard pressed for money as her freshman year, perhaps even ^{more}/consciously so considering the social vistas opening up all around her. Having made an advantageous marriage, Aunty had become "quite a society person," evident in the programs of New York City musical events she was sending to Evelyn. Evelyn could match and exceed her aunt's social calendar, which needed the proper clothes and travel expenses beyond her penny-wise budget. Her three-day Thanksgiving weekend in New York City was celebrated at 325 Riverside Drive, the Openhym address, a lunch with another of Dr. Adler's daughters, Mrs. Ruth Friess, married to a Columbia University philosophy teacher, dinner at the home of one ~~one~~ of George's aunts, and a theater date to see "Queen Victoria." Next she was to visit George's choice of a house in the country on Hartsdale Road, one and a half miles from the Hartsdale railroad station. "If I wrote you of it," she told her aunt, "you would think it a Fairy Tale."

Yes, she'd see her aunt in Plainfield that Sunday (an hour by train from the city) but only for about five hours because she had a dinner appointment with Dr. and Mrs. Adler after which she had to catch the train back to Alfred. She signed her hasty letter, "Au revoir on Sunday, very affectionately, Evelyn."

Alfred was a needed change of pace, a place and a time in which to test an exclamation she wrote to her aunt: "It all still seems like a dream." There was the reality of some ceramic bad luck with a kiln that choked and impaired her pottery slated for the annual Christmas^M campus fair. But the Christmas recess had brighter lights, too. She had been invited to attend the Newark, New Jersey, Paderewski recital on the 21st for which she needed a coat "suitable to wear over a silk dress."

There is a gap in Evelyn's letters between December 1923 and March 1924. Her aunt and sister had saved her letters and Evelyn later recovered them, put them in chronological order with pencilled dates and kept them among her papers. (Collecting and saving were traits she shared with her aunt and sister.) Apparently, George was not the methodical saver of Evelyn's letters. Off campus and thinking through his ceramic work, he had asked Evelyn to query Prof. Binns on some glaze problems. Evelyn sent him the gist of their teacher's advice.

Monday evening
Feb. 25, 1924

Dearest George,

Today I had quite a talk with Professor Binns about the red glazes and kilns. We tried to locate the red glaze & fritt you mentioned but it must have been in a book of which he has lost track. Anyway, he says that there are to his knowledge only three types of red glazes, the chrome-tin-pink, the copper red, and the selenium. The first is very common and has often been used, - the second is difficult to get because of the reducing fire necessary and the third a colour unsuited to really good pottery for it has been badly mistreated and used in cheap jewelry and inferior grades of ceramic ware. There is a selenium glass which is red which is ground like a fritt and added to the glaze. Because selenium in itself is so difficult to use, it must be used with some medium. Cheap red beads of the 5¢ & 10¢ store variety are selenium glass. The vermilion shade is obtained by the use of cadmium sulphide (cadmium yellow is obtained from it) and because both selenium and cadmium sulphide have very low melting points it is natural that a glaze of it then would be low fire. The addition of ingredients to make it a harder glaze destroy the colour, it has been found.

The colour really worth trying for is the

deep, mellow sang de boeuf. Professor says he will try to give me the formula on which we may work, but he will first have to think it out. I agree with him that it is useless to work on just an ordinary red for it is a colour not well suited to pottery unless it has real depth of tone. In one German recipe book that we looked thru, we found several reds, but they were almost entirely the chrome-tin-pink. If you want a red just for the sake of adding a red glaze to your others, I can get you the batch or formula for it, for it has often been used and is perfected as far as it can be--the chrome-tin-pink I mean. Probably Froby has it among his recipes.

Kiln builder. Professor Binns knows this Lawton man very well. He says that a muffle kiln is the easiest to manage and would recommend that we use it if possible. He suggested that we try out his brick with the patent fluethat it makes. I think it might be worthwhile to have Frobie come up here and make some of them as a test and if they prove satisfactory you could have the Valentine Co. make them up for you in a clay which will stand Cone 12 fire. What did Lawton suggest for the type of kiln? And where did he plan to get his brick ?

Professor Binns says that the big kiln here will have to be fitted for crude oil burning before long, for the gas is giving out & will not be sufficient.

To go back to the selenium red used by Mr. Baggs,-- Prof. suggests that you get some cheap red glass beads and grind them as for a fritt, first in the crucible & then on the mill, using it without the cadmium sulphide as did Mr. Baggs. First make a test of it purely as it is, and then try adding other ingredients with it to test results--white lead, feldspar, flint, whiting etc--in reasonable amounts.

I mustn't take time for more now....

Her half dozen letters between March-May 1924 sparsely record the intense preparations for the marriage and house-keeping and the anticlimatic end of her Alfred schooling. She kept close watch over her expenses. George noticed her economizing and reminded her of his offer of help. Not to let

him do so, Evelyn wrote home, would injure his "manhood" and deprive "him of an infinite amount of pleasure...I am sure that both of you will let him do it." There was no letter of objection.

Meanwhile Mrs. Openhym, now "Mother Openhym," continued to send Evelyn tasteful gifts including a Jersey dress from Abercrombie and Fitch, the New York society department store, that would be useful for a shipboard honeymoon. It was understandable that she wanted to finish the college year early in May, return to Plainfield, and pack her belongings in readiness to move to Hartsdale. "I think," she wrote Aunty, "that there will be no doubt in your mind that [our house in Hartsdale] is the ideal place for the wedding." She had picked the spot for the ceremony "...by the sundial near spruce." As for other matters, Aunty should know that Aunty would be directing the wedding, the service would not be inside the house, and that Mrs. Openhym would not be in charge of anything. There'd be about 50 guests, ample parking for cars, the time would be late afternoon, the refreshments light, and time reserved for guests to catch trains back to the city. Three hundred announcements had been ordered.

A wedding invitation, included at George's insistence, went

to Alvin Johnson who had recently become the director of the New School for Social Research in New York City. Mrs. Openhym or George helped Evelyn with other tasks: to select silver at Reed and Barton's on Maiden Lane in the city; to choose a wedding ring; to decide upon dishes at Plummer's; to find trunks for their honeymoon trip to England; to secure a good caterer. There was a postscript to a letter to George: "We must also get our marriage license form."

Before her letters stopped because she was swept up in the twin excitements of her graduation and arrangements for her wedding, she had written a long letter to George in March. George was planning for the Hartsdale property a ceramic studio in which the passionate professional standards of Professor Binns would be honored by two of his students. Evelyn took careful notes on what Binns just returned from New York City had told Miss Fosdick, Miss Nelson and the other members of the Ceramic Guild at their regular Wednesday tea:

March 18, 1924

My Dearest Love,

Professor Binns just returned today from N.Y.C. and at the Ceramic Tea gave us a report of the Ceramic Exhibit...Ceramically speaking, there was a lack of real ceramic knowledge exhibited in the ware shown. He felt that it was artistically good rather than ceramically good.

He had praise for a large turquoise plate by Carl Walters. The work of Paul St. Gaudens and his mother he thought crude peasant pottery and "objected to the human form being used as a handle to a jug."

In general the school's work lacked "a compelling quality...lacking distinction." A Volkmar large jar was attractive but not well glazed. The Fulper pieces he thought "mediocre as usual." As for the derivative Japanese and Chinese pieces, he felt they "were inexcusable, for he saw no need for so minutely copying from another."

George's classmates' work had been included as was a jar by Evelyn which she had not wanted to be exhibited, but Miss Fosdick had overruled her and included it.

Binns also said: Because pottery seems to be a more lowly art than the fine arts, people accept the blemishes as a hallmark of the profession (wheel marks, thumb marks, poor glazing). These may be the mark of spontaneity or clumsy imitations of a masterwork.

Professor Binns quite harshly criticizes the work of the School for its lack of compelling distinctiveness. He feels that we have gone far enough in stressing the technique and that we should strive for pieces which cry out "Look at me! See! I am more interesting than anything you have ever seen before!" He feels that there is little use in making piece after piece that anyone could make without the least amount of previous thought put into it. Every piece should have some distinct reason for existing...

So we see now--what we must work for in the future.

On her twenty-first birthday, June 17, 1924, as she had planned as early as a year before, Evelyn and George were married by George's uncle, Dr. Felix Adler, in an Ethical Culture service in the garden close to the sundial and near the spruces.

Although in the photographs of the wedding day there is no evidence of Miss Fosdick, Miss Nelson, or any of the Binns family attending, it is likely they were there. Indeed, in spirit they had to be there. They were real people who had moved about in Evelyn's actualized dream. Thereafter the women were Marion, Katherine, and Evelyn to each other all the days of their life.

Notes

All letters cited herein are housed in the Evelyn Tennyson Openhym Special Collection, Herrick Memorial Library, Alfred University. Mrs. Open^hym died in 1992. The collection is curated by Alan Littell. I extend to him thanks for his discerning editorial suggestions.

Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Evelyn's letters home, followed by their dates, were addressed to Aunty, Corinne, or Dear Folks.

I.

P.3: Some dates may be pertinent. John J. Tennyson(1869-1961); Jessie B. Tennyson (1870-1917). Harriet O. Mattison (1879-1959) would marry in 1923; Corinne would marry in 1930. George J. Openhym (1895-1953) was one of two sons of Adolph Open^hym (1853-1903) and Christine Goldmark Openhym (1860-1933). As a boy, George had been a student in the Ethical Culture School in New York City where between 1905-1910 Prof. Binns's daughter Elsie had taught art.

P.4: At 14, Evelyn was received into the Baptist Church, Plainfield, the Rev. Dr. Phillip Strong presiding. Corinne was secretary to the Rev. Strong.

P.6: The American little theater movement of 1912-1924 touched Professors Binns, Fosdick, Nelson and Seidlin precisely in 1920 with the founding of The Wee Playhouse. It is still active.

"Bobbed hair is a great rage here, especially the Buster Brown style." October 30, 1920.

"the spiritual meaning of pottery," October 20, 1920.

- P.7: "A splendid chum," January 23, 1921.
 "I like the Episcopal form," January 18, 1921.
 "we look alike," January 29, 1921.
 like a sister, March--, 1921.
 "Not that we're Old Maids," April 10, April 19, 1921.
- P.8: "George is so good to me," January 6, 1921.
 Junior Prom, April 24, 1921.
 "quite a case on me," April 26, 1921.
 Miss Nelson sketched her, May 21, 1921.

II.

- P. 9: "to the Rhode Island School of Design," September 13, 1921.
 pottery and teas, September 23, October 2, 1921.
- P.10: "one happy family...liked by all," October 9, 1921.
 "being used for others," October 25, 1921.
 "quite far on my mold," October 17, 1921.
- P.11: "camps next summer," October 20, 1921.
 and even sketch, October 30, 1921.
 "getting to like George...stand and laugh," November 6,
 1921.
- P.12: "tried to create," November 13, 1921.
 with her kiln, November 20, 1921.
 a "steady," November 24, 1921.
 mathematics troublesome, December 1, 1921.
 "George's uncle," December 4, 1921. Evelyn was impressed
 with the renown of Felix Adler (1853-1933), his international liberal
 Society for Ethical Culture (1876 and still active) and Dr. Adler's
 brother-in-law, Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis (1856-1941).
- P.13: "any form of exercise," January 22, 1922.
- P.13A: "the need of older advice." January 23, 1922.
- P.14: "an ever-present guest," February 1, 1922.
 "just the sweetest thing," February 5, 1922.
 "your growing-up niece," February 12, 1922.
- P.15: "Dr. Ferguson," February 5, 1922.
 "ever be to me," February 17, 1922.
 "I think she will," February 18, 1922.
 Easter vacation, February 25, 1922.
- P.16: "at home," March 15, 1922.
 by Professor Binns, April 8, 1922. Camp Lanier in Maine
 was owned by the same-named son of the Civil War veteran, poet and
 musician, Sidney Lanier (1842-1881).
 "painting, music and so forth," April--, 1922. "We" refers
 to Miss Fosdick and Evelyn.

- P.17: "environment and friends," April 26, 1922.
 "vent for my feeling," "it must be so," May 1, 1922.
- P.18: "a pupil of Leopold Godowsky, you know," May 1, 1922.
 "Your troubled Evelyn," May 6, 1922.
 St. Huberts, May 10, 1922.
 taught Evelyn to play, May 24, 1922.
 she asked Evelyn to live with her, May 26, 1922.
- P.19: financially independent, letters to George, June 20,
 July 17, July 20, 1922.

III.

- P.20: "anchored" in St. Huberts, September 2, 1922.
 "nearly every angle," September 7, 1922.
 "loneliness for Miss Nelson, September 20, 1922.
 "technical matters," letter to George, September 14, 1922.
 Frobisher Lyttle, Class of 1921, would help George and Evelyn
 set up their pottery studio in Hartsdale, N.Y.
- P.21: "not to yield," October 7, 1922. Underlining was Evelyn's.
 "to please her," October 26, 1922.
- P.22: non-Carnegie Hall music. "I get so sick of hearing nothing
 but old ragtime on the piano and victrola." October 26, 1922.
 "lecture of Miss Sonne's," November 21, 1922.
- P.25: "what I am experiencing," January 25, 1925.
 "Lenox Company," January 27, 1923. An unremarked coincidence
 is that before accepting his Alfred Appointment, Prof. Binns
 had worked for Walter Scott Lenox's company in Trenton.
- P.26: "Forces within us," January 29, 1923.
- P.27: "in the United States," February 4, 1923. (See "Robineau
 Pottery," in Paul Evans, Art Pottery in the United States, N.Y.,
 1947.)
- P.29: for business careers. Thanks to Deb McCaffery, New
 York State Historical Association Library (NYSHAL), Cooperstown,
 for helping me to special collections in the library. See, especially,
 Melanie J. Solomon, "'Three Squares' A Day. Tea Rooms in New
 York State, 1920-1940," NYSHAL Thesis, Cooperstown, N.Y. Dr.
 Cockett was a founder of the Cooperstown Art Association. Her
 obituary can be found in The Freeman's Journal, April 28, 1954.
 "not to be breathed to anyone yet," February 10, 1923.
 There is no subsequent mention of this possibility.
 "acquainted with George," February 18, 1923.
 "out of its shell before," February 23, 1923.
 "years to enjoy it," March 5, 1923.
 Dr. Harrington's advice, March 23, 1923.

- P.30: inflated language, March 7, March 23, 1923.
 "Carnegie Institute next year," April 10, 1923.
 "pussy foots around, " March 27, 1923.
- P.31: "progressive movements," April 13, 1923.
 " a glimpse of heaven," April 15, 1923.
- P.32: "Ill never forget her," April 15, 1923.
 on-campus jobs that paid, April 22, April 27, April 28, 1923.
- P. 33: Toledo in September, May 7, May 14, May 16, May 20, 1923.
 "Happy about it," May 24, 1923.
 George's wares. June 2, June 5, June 6, 1923.
 "the one to the other," June 6, 1923.
 things for Cooperstown, June 13, 1923.
 Box of Books, June 15, 1923.
- P.34: "my simple soul," June 23, June 26, July 1, 1923.
 "ever seen in America," July 1, July 7, July 15, 1923.
- P.34A: "honeymoon in Europe," George's letter to Evelyn, July 5, 1923.
 engagement ring that fall, George's letter to Evelyn, July 18, 1923.
 Mt. Blanc in August, George's letter to Evelyn, August 14, 1923.
- P.35: "Tante dearest," August 11, August 18, August 25, 1923.
 one of the candlesticks, Evelyn's letter to George, August 14, 1923.
- P. 36: "continue as you are going now," August 25, 1923.
 "too joyous to seem real," August 25, 1923.
 "never amounts to much, anyway," September 7, 1923.
- P. 37: "from the top of Farringford," September 10, 1923. <
- IV.
- P.38: the preoccupied bride-to-be, September 10, 1923.
 "make definite plans," October 28, 1923.
 "to relieve some varicose veins," November 4, 1923.
- P. 39: "the most elegant hat I ever had," November 11, 1923.
 Mrs. Openhym liked it ,too, November 13, 1923. A December 4, 1923, letter quoted the price, \$42,500.
 Elsie Binns replacing her, November 15, 1923.
- P.40: "very affectionately, Evelyn, November 30, 1923.
 "seems like a dream," December 3, 1923.
 "to wear over a silk dress," December 10, 1923.
- P.41: "let him do it," March 9, 1924.
 move to Hartsdale, March--, 1924.
 "by the sundial near spruce," April 27, 1924.