



Maud Hart and Delos Wheeler
Lovelace Family Papers.

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from Maud Hart Lovelace
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for Jan. 16

for Miss Genevieve Brown
2223 Bussell Ave., N.
Wright, Minn.

Had ~~time~~ give Miss Page
his come-uppance.

Perhaps the simplest way to give you an idea of the process of writing an historical novel is to tell you how I wrote "Early Candlelight." You realize, of course, that no two novelists work just alike. My method is a method I have devised for myself, and it might not work at all for another writer. Each one must find for himself the difficult, circuitous and often fog-bound road which will lead him to his story. I use my simile advisedly for ~~that~~ place where stories lie waiting to be told seems to me an actual country into which I must somehow, with each new novel, find a route. In the case of an historical novel I know that this country is the past, but that does not make it any easier to find.

The idea for "Early Candlelight" came to me when I was doing the research ~~xxxxxxx~~ for my first novel, "The Black Angels." In reading the history of Minnesota, I ran across a description of life at early Fort Snelling, and the situation there... ~~was~~ a civilized social life superimposed upon the wilderness... fascinated me. I resolved then to make it the background for a future novel.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

When I was ready to begin work on the novel, my husband and I left our home at Lake Minnetonka and moved into a hotel in St Paul for the winter. During that winter I worked every day at the Historical Society, reading all the material I could find relating to Minnesota ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ in the early part of the nineteenth century. I read ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ the historical society collections, the diaries and letters of missionaries and fur traders, of army men and Indian agents and travellers. I studied the Minnesota Indians and ~~xxx~~ documents pertaining to the furtrade. While I was engaged in this work the story began to come clear, the characters sprang to life and I ~~xxxx~~ wrote the opening chapter of the ~~xxxxx~~ novel ~~and had a rough outline of the story.~~

When spring came we moved back to Minnetonka but I continued to visit the Historical Society. That summer I turned my rough outline of the novel into a rough draft...not so rough in some spots, for ~~some~~ ^{other} chapters ~~were~~ ^{came} clear enough ~~in my mind~~ so that they could be written in finished form. My husband and I, sometimes with my father and mother, drove around Southern Minnesota visiting the places mentioned in the novel. It would take too long to tell you about all the adventures we had finding the sites of the early trading posts and settlements. I went often to Fort Snelling and although I had long been familiar with this spot I ~~found new beauties~~ ~~about~~

now saw it with ~~his~~ new eyes. Mendota took on a charm impossible to describe.

The following winter we moved to New York and while I was writing the ~~final~~ final draft of the book I continued my research in New York City. I found Minnesota material in the wonderful New York Public Library. I found costumes and furniture of my period in the museums. Of special help was the American wing of the Metropolitan Museum. ~~My husband~~ My husband used to go there with me and there, together, we furnished M'sieu Page's house. We ~~found~~ ~~the~~ ~~wall~~ ~~paper~~ ~~with~~ ~~hunting~~ ~~scenes~~ ~~on~~ ~~it~~ ~~which~~ ~~went~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~dining~~ ~~room~~ ~~of~~ ~~M'sieu~~ ~~Page's~~ ~~house.~~ ~~My~~ ~~husband~~ ~~and~~ ~~I~~ ~~have~~ ~~often~~ ~~said~~ ~~that~~ ~~no~~ ~~bride~~ ~~and~~ ~~groom~~ ~~ever~~ ~~had~~ ~~more~~ ~~fun~~ ~~furnishing~~ ~~their~~ ~~home~~ ~~than~~ ~~we~~ ~~did~~ ~~furnishing~~ ~~M'sieu~~ ~~Page's~~ ~~house~~ ~~out~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~American~~ ~~Wing~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~Metropol~~ ~~itan~~ ~~Museum.~~ ~~When~~ ~~you~~ ~~go~~ ~~there~~ ~~you~~ ~~can~~ ~~find,~~ ~~if~~ ~~you~~ ~~hunt,~~ ~~the~~ ~~wall~~ ~~paper~~ ~~with~~ ~~hunting~~ ~~scenes~~ ~~on~~ ~~it~~ ~~which~~ ~~went~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~dining~~ ~~room~~ ~~of~~ ~~M'sieu~~ ~~Page's~~ ~~house.~~ ~~You~~ ~~can~~ ~~find~~ ~~the~~ ~~wing~~ ~~chair~~ ~~where~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~sitting~~ ~~when~~ ~~he~~ ~~fell~~ ~~in~~ ~~love~~ ~~with~~ ~~Dec~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~statues~~ ~~of~~ ~~Washington~~ ~~and~~ ~~Lafayette~~ ~~which~~ ~~stood~~ ~~on~~ ~~his~~ ~~mantle~~ ~~piece,~~ ~~the~~ ~~piano,~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~wing~~ ~~chair~~ ~~where~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~sitting~~ ~~when~~ ~~he~~ ~~fell~~ ~~in~~ ~~love~~ ~~with~~ ~~Dec.~~ ~~As~~ ~~the~~ ~~book~~ ~~neared~~ ~~the~~ ~~end,~~ ~~I~~ ~~stopped~~ ~~going~~ ~~to~~ ~~museums.~~ ~~Instead~~ ~~of~~ ~~writing~~ ~~four~~ ~~or~~ ~~five~~ ~~hours~~ ~~a~~ ~~day~~ ~~as~~ ~~is~~ ~~my~~ ~~habit,~~ ~~I~~ ~~wrote~~ ~~from~~ ~~morning~~ ~~until~~ ~~night.~~ ~~For~~ ~~by~~ ~~that~~ ~~time~~ ~~I~~ ~~had~~ ~~found~~ ~~my~~ ~~way~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~heart~~ ~~of~~ ~~that~~ ~~sunny~~ ~~country~~ ~~where~~ ~~stories~~ ~~lie~~ ~~waiting~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~told.~~