



Maud Hart and Delos Wheeler  
Lovelace Family Papers.

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HEADQUARTERS, FORT SNELLING, MINN.

Public Relations Office

Fort Snelling, Minn.,

April 25, 1929.

Dear Maud:

I have read your book. I think it is wonderful. It seems to me to have every good quality that *The Black Angels* has and in addition an even more interesting story.

I have been able to find scarcely a point on which to make corrections or offer suggestions. I am sorry for I wanted you to know that I had done my job thoroughly and so I really wanted to find something wrong.

I made a dozen notes as I read along of things which, offhand, struck me as questionable. But after more thought and such investigation as I could make in a hurry I've come to agree with you on practically of them. You are probably right on all points but I'll mention the two or three which I haven't been able to satisfy myself on just in case you are not sure of them either.

"Red and white clover-" Page 95. Are both varieties native to Minnesota? I had an idea these were introduced but I haven't had time to dig up the facts. Anyway I expect they could have been introduced before the time of your story.

"Such disgrace before upon no one but Pigs Eye Parrant-" Unimportant at best and perhaps true. But I seem to recall reading that Taliaferro revoked the license of Alexis Bailey. It was his quarrel with Bailey, at any rate, which brought Sibley to Minnesota. (Page 206)

"Up river it was government land-" Page 257. Did you happen to mean "military" land rather than government? Weren't the squatters looking for government land they could settle on but outside of the military reserve?

"Folding table and folding chairs" Page 291. You probably have evidence that they used them this early. I confess it brought me up with a little start. I have always considered such things a modern development and characteristic of our age of ease rather than of life on the frontier. Probably I'm wrong.

On Page 23, speaking of Taliaferro, you use the phrase "his brother officers". Of course you know he was not an army officer at the time of your story, but that he had been in the War of 1812 and afterward. He resigned in 1819 to accept the appointment as Indian Agent. Resigned from the 3rd Infantry, by the way. His rank at the time was lieutenant. "Major" was,

HEADQUARTERS, FORT SNELLING, MINN.

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as you doubtless are well aware, the courtesy title which was, and still is, commonly given to Indian Agents. I mention all this just to be sure that you were not confused on the real status of Taliaferro due to his courtesy title of major. This was the only place in the book, that I found, where there could be any question.

Now, I'm extremely doubtful of the value to you of any of the points I've mentioned. I'm hopeful the next is a real find, although you have probably corrected it already or your proof reader would have found it anyway. On Page 130 M'sieu Page starts his ride on "Telegraph" and on Page 141 he's putting spurs to "Boston". Or have I overlooked some perfectly obvious point? Page refers to "Boston" again on Page 201 but there it can easily be a different horse.

When Helen brought the manuscript out she said that Mr. Hart had questioned the reference to double barreled guns on Page 5; and I noted the reference to "percussion and flint lock" a little later. In both cases I think you are on solid ground. I find that Major Townsend Whelen, one of the best of the gun experts, says that the percussion cap was in common use in 1842 and as it was invented many years previously it could undoubtedly have been a subject of discussion any time in the '30s. And as to double barreled guns there seem to have been double barreled fowling peices as early as 1800 although rifles, I think, were first experimented with in the '50s '50s.

There now. I've used a lot of your time and to little purpose, I'm afraid. Aside from the Major Taliaferro point the queries I raise can hardly be considered in my province- the military side. But that is because I didn't find anything in your military references to be questioned. Furthermore I don't feel that you have given the army such a bad place in the story. On the contrary I think that you have made it very real. And since reading your story my own mental picture of old Fort Snelling has taken on an entirely new and lifelike quality. How the movies ought to use your story to make those old days live again!

After reading the book I'm doubtful of the need for any apology for departure from chronological history. The departure is so slight no one- outside of Mr. Babcock and I'll prime him- will ever notice it.

Minnesota ought to take a whole edition. I'm going to urge Dunlap at the Dispatch to send in now for serial rights so as to get in first bid.

With all good wishes to both the Lovelaces from all the Townsends-

*Lew*

P.S. - Manuscript by separate, insured mail. GRT.



HEADQUARTERS THIRD INFANTRY  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

September 6, 1929.

Mrs. Maud Hart Lovelace,  
317 Seventeenth Street, East,  
New York City, New York.

Dear Mrs. Lovelace:-

I have read "Early Candlelight" and I wish to tell you how much I enjoyed the splendid story you have written about the life of old Fort Snelling. Sitting in the very room in the Commanding Officers' quarters where many of them took place it was easy to visualize the scenes of a hundred years ago which you described so vividly and so accurately. I congratulate you upon being the author of such an entertaining novel. It will awaken wide interest in the history of Fort Snelling which has played such a vital part in the history of the country for more than a century. ☺

I understand that you expect to be in the Twin Cities late this month. I wish to extend to you a cordial invitation to visit Fort Snelling and to be guest of honor at a review of the Third Infantry at 5 o'clock on the afternoon of September 27th, 1929. We of the present garrison would like in this manner to show our appreciation of the service you have done Fort Snelling and the officers and soldiers of the regular army who have preceded us here.

Yours sincerely,

*W.C. Sweeney*

W.C. Sweeney,  
Colonel, 3rd Infantry,  
Commanding.

Return nothing but this.  
Merian, - You can  
return this because  
possibly the Historical  
Society might like  
it. I grew up  
with Mrs. Robt. She  
worked for us so long  
and lived in the  
alley behind our  
house. See end of  
letter.

Wasn't this a nice letter?

241 LAWRENCE STREET  
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Feb. 23-1930.

Mrs. Maud Hart Lovelace -

Dear Mrs. Lovelace -

I have just finished your "Early Candlelight," and I want to try to express my appreciation of it. I was much interested to begin it, because I lived for six years in Maubrats, and I think your mother & I had a common grandmamma. Mrs. Robb used often to speak, with the greatest admiration, of Mrs. Hart and her daughters - Your mother was her ideal of lady hood, which was impressed upon me one time, when, for the sake of economy I asked Mrs. Robb not to put much time on the ironing of the sheets. She replied with great scorn "O, you're no lady at all".

The lark was called to my attention by a former Northfield girl Cornelia Southworth Peaves - whose husband is teaching Public

241 LAWRENCE STREET  
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Speaking at Yale. I am most grateful  
to her, and I hope you will not mind  
my intrusion to write personal congratulations  
to you.

I think you have done a marvellous  
amount of research. I think you  
have caught the spirit of those primal  
days and have woven your materials  
with the skill of an artist.

The book cannot be wholly "enjoyed" because  
parts are too true, and too bitter.  
Even the romance rings true, as the  
two natures are tempered by experience  
and suffering.

I think you have given a most valuable  
emphasis on the elements which caused  
and aggravated the Indian troubles.

When I first came to New Haven in 1919,  
I met a Madame Gray, whose father, a Mr. Clark,

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NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

in the early days of Fort Snelling, owned most of the present site of Mpls. As a young woman her only social life was centered about the fort.

After her marriage to an Episcopalian minister she went to Shakopee. She has told me that during one Indian outbreak, the terrified settlers flocked to the village for shelter, and the housewives baked bread three times a day, to feed them.

I have a great many of my mother's letters yearly Minnesota, but hers do not begin till 1867 - and the Indian days were all over. Another personal interest I have, is that my father, as a young millwright, helped build the Pillsbury A. Mill, only a few years following your story, I think about 1858.

It was a wonderful touch, to have one crisis come on the lovely bluffs by our own Maushato.

241 LAWRENCE STREET  
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Again, please receive my  
greetings and thanks.

Sincerely

Mrs. Edgar R. Keermance

Mrs. Robb lived in the alley  
behind our Centre Street house,  
and was invaluable when we  
didn't have a "hired girl." I  
remember her very well, and for  
years <sup>Tacy</sup> Bickie and I quoted one  
of her remarks which I have been  
searching my mind for:

New Richmond, Wis.  
Jan. 4, '31.

Dear Maud and Delos:

It does seem an interminable period since I saw or heard from either of you, and I've greatly missed you both. I've had it in mind to write you from time to time, but uncertainty as to where the letter should be sent has extinguished many an impulse. I definitely got tired of the newspaper racket two or three months ago, and quitted Minneapolis in favor of New Richmond. Here I plan to do some writing.

One thing I like about my new life is that for the first time in years I've had an opportunity to do a little reading. The other day I received a consignment of new books, outstanding among which were "Early Candelight" and "Petticoat Court." I haven't yet got to "Petticoat Court," but last night I completed "Early Candelight" in a single four-hour sitting. And I must say, Maud, old dear, that I was entranced with it. I suppose I was in the ideal state of mind to receive it, because last summer I had amused myself visiting all the spots which you used. I had hunted up Fountain Cave (with considerable difficulty); I had been on the site of the Pond cabin; I had, of course, been all over Mendota and Pilot Knob and Pike island; I had traced out Pig's Eye Parrant's movements on the ground, and had been around the site of the second migration to the territory near the Robert Street bridge; I had sought to get as close as possible to the probable spot where the two Ojibway shot Nika, Red Bird's nephew; I had even gone over to the ravine in Stillwater where the Kaposia Sioux slaughtered the St. Croix Chippewa, and up above Anoka to find where the Lake Calhoun Sioux, with their allies, had fallen upon the Mille Lacs Chippewa. All these spots had greatly appealed to my imagination, and I had many times sought to reconstruct the old happenings as I looked at them. Imagine, then, my delight at finding that you had picked out all my favorite spots, and vivified them with a treatment of rare delicacy, insight, and accuracy. The use of detail I thought superb; the sad part of it is that only someone who had spent several days reconstructing the history on the ground would ever know how really careful and exact it was. As nearly as I could detect, you left the historical mood only when you made Sibley a present of a little romance with the voyageur's daughter. My recollection is that Sibley married Franklin Steele's sister, and I assume that the romance with Dee is pure invention. Am I right in that, or did you get your lead from some possibly obscure biographic material on Sibley?

In any event what I mainly want to communicate is the joy I took in the novel. I was sorry you weren't

accessible this morning, for there are a hundred things that I should have enjoyed discussing with you. What impressed me very much was the air of authority with which you recreated the relations of the voyageurs and the Indians. It seemed to me (knowing nothing about them, of course) amazingly spontaneous and amazingly authentic. All the time I had the feeling: "Why, Maud must have lived among these people!" That was the way the narrative read to me. And then I would wake up and say: "Hell and damnation, she never saw one of them any more than I did." And after that: "But how is she getting away with it?" And that's what I yet don't comprehend. I had often wished, when on these various spots, that I could be transported back 95 or 90 years and witness with my own eyes exactly what was taking place. And when I read the novel I had the impression that that wish was being granted. Here it all was---what I had been craving---visualized. And that's exactly where it seems to me that "Early Candlelight" is extraordinarily and almost mystifyingly successful.

Well, enough for the time being of "Early Candlelight." I expect to get to "Petticoat Court" within the next few days, and when I finish that I'll give you a report on it. I warn you in advance that "Petticoat Court" is going to have a tough time competing in my affections with "Early Candlelight."

Do let me have a word from you. I had expected to go down to New York for two or three weeks this winter, but that looks a bit unlikely now. I rather think I shan't be going down until a year from now. Meanwhile I want to know what you both are doing. The Shafers, I suppose you know, have broken up: Polly is divorcing Harry. Too bad. A nice couple.

Are you coming out this summer? If so, we may have a chance of getting together then.

With all the good wishes in the world,

*William J. McNally*

P.S. Doesn't Red Lewis get all the breaks, the lucky devil?

Miss  
De Witt's  
letter filed with  
Charming Society

24 Second Avenue,  
Pelham, New York,  
October 14, 1932.

My dear Miss De Witt:-

I think it was charming of you to write to me, and I can't tell you how interesting it was to hear from descendants of my own Major Bliss. I count him as one of my personal friends.

Your great grandfather is mentioned in many of the contemporary ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ documents which I studied before writing Early Candlelight. He was commandant at ~~xxx~~ Fort Snelling when the Pond Brothers came and his name occurs often in their writings. Major Taliaferro, the Indian agent, refers to him in his autobiography or diary, and Featherstonehaugh, (so sour about most people) has a pleasant word for the Blisses in his invaluable tome.

Your grandfather, as you are probably aware, published his reminiscences in the Minnesota Historical Society quarterly. If you are familiar with them, you must know how much they helped me in recreating the life at old Fort Snelling. He told me details about housefurnishings, amusements, and so on which were exactly what I needed to know. I could go through my novel with you and point out bit after bit which was suggested by these memoirs.

I am awfully amused at your idea that Major and Mrs. Boles might be Major and Mrs. Bliss. Your mother has every right to be indignant, for every contemporary reference to the Blisses is pleasant, and if I had put them into my story I should certainly have made them so. I assure you that Mowrie and Eva are entirely imaginary.

It might interest you, however, to know that in rereading my notes taken from Major Bliss's memoirs (after receiving your letter) I find plumb in the midst of them this query put to myself. "Why not a child at the Fort?" Undoubtedly that was the inception of little Mowrie.

I wonder if you would mind if I mailed your note on ~~to~~ the Minnesota Historical Society? The research workers there would be delighted to know of the additional Bliss material and might want to put some questions to you. Of course I shall wait for your permission before putting them in touch with you.

If I should ever be in Erie, I'll not fail to

avail myself of your permission to call and see your treasures. I am going to be in Philadelphia on November ninth, speaking at the New Century Club there, but a glance at the map shows me that that does not take me near Erie. Some day, however, I will be in your neighborhood, I feel sure.

With friendliest wishes to all the descendants of the good Major Bliss, I am

Sincerely yours,

MISS ELLEN DE WITT  
510 WEST TENTH STREET  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

Sunday.

Oct. 9-1932

Mrs. Maud Hart Lovelace  
The John Day Co.  
New York.

Dear Mrs. Lovelace:-

Ever since I read "Early Candle Light" I have been promising myself the pleasure of writing to you, now I am tearing myself away from "The Charming Sally" to do so.

Let me plunge without preface into my reasons for taking this liberty. My great grandfather, on Mother's side was Major John Bliss,

stationed at Fort Snelling in 1835.  
His wife was Letitia Matilda Ellicott,  
daughter of Andrew Ellicott. We  
have their portraits.

But, specifically, we have the  
diary of Major Bliss's son - John  
Horace Bliss my grandfather. The  
diary was begun on his twelfth  
birthday - Oct. 4 - 1835. It records  
about two weeks or more of life  
at the Fort before the boy started  
down the river with the explorer  
Featherstonhaugh, on his return  
voyage. Grandfather tells of this  
journey and the subsequent  
stages to Meadville Pa where he  
lived with relatives.

you see the reason for our interest in Fort Snelling and your book, in which we found officers mentioned in the diary.

If it is not asking too much we would so like to hear from you, to know what you found about the Bliss family in your research for the book. Privately I will confess that my brother and my cousin, John Horace Bliss, and myself think Major and Mrs. Poles may have been our ancestors! we were quite entertained with the idea. Mother was a bit indignant

Beside the portraits we have a lovely bookcase that was Great Grand Mother Bliss's. a sketch of Fort Snelling made there in 1833, and several other things - including of course the diary.

Should you be motoring thru Erie at any time I would feel it a great privilege to show you these relics if they are of interest.

Trusting you will pardon the length of this letter and hoping we may hear from you, if ever so briefly I ~~now~~ return aboard the Charming

Sally. Very truly yours Ellen deWitt.

MISS ELLEN DE WITT  
510 WEST TENTH STREET  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

Tuesday.

Oct. 25. 1932

My dear Mrs. Lovelace:-

Mother and I thoroughly enjoyed your nice letter, it was good of you to write so soon. forgive my delay in not answering at once. Now I shall do it paragraph by paragraph.

I did know about Grandfather's publishing his memoirs in the Minnesota Historical Society paper, but am not sure I read them for Mother never liked them, they utterly lacked the charm of the boyish diary, which we all loved.

Naturally they did have more details, invaluable ones but they were a man's remembrance of a boy's days. I want <sup>you</sup> to see the original diary some day.

I will be delighted to have you send my note to the Historical Society - quite thrilled, but I am afraid they will find I do not know a great deal.

One treasure I forgot to mention, and next to the diary I like it best. It is the top of Great Grand mother's work box and has a pen and ink colored drawing of Fort Snelling - dated Dec. 29 - 1833 and signed Storey (Storey).

We have had a good laugh over  
the "Boles" again - and thank you  
for the assurance that we are not  
descendants of villain and villainess. I am  
re-reading the book, I wrote in such a  
hurry two weeks ago, determined the  
letter to you should be sent, that I had  
not started the book, now I am in it  
and reading with somewhat more care  
and in reference to Featherstonhaugh's book  
and the diary.

Eric is just about as far from  
Philadelphia as it could be and did  
be in Pennsylvania but we are on the  
main line, just half way between  
Buffalo and Cleveland so I am very  
much in hopes it will not be long  
before events bring you on this road.

When we can have "a get-together"  
on the old days at Fort Snelling.

Sincerely yours.

Ellen de Witt