

# SUSAN GLASPELL

Voice from the Heartland



by Marcia Noe



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To  
Florence  
with  
affection and  
gratitude

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# Preface

It has been difficult to write about so elusive a personality as Susan Glaspell's. A private person who rarely sought publicity, she was a Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatist who was apparently unaware that her manuscripts and letters might one day be of interest to scholars, for she made no provisions for their preservation. Much of what has survived of her papers is held by the New York Public Library; I am indebted to the staff of the Berg Collection for their assistance while I worked there.

Others who helped me with my research include Catherine Alexander and James Copas, Reference Librarians, Black Hawk College; Edmund Berkeley, Jr., Curator of Manuscripts, University of Virginia Library; Rebecca A. Boone, Assistant Reference Librarian, Princeton University Library; Rolene Britsen, Iowa State Historical Society; Rodney A. Dennis, Curator of Manuscripts, the Houghton Library, Harvard University; Peter Dzwonkoski, Assistant to the Curator, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Diana Haskell, Curator of Modern Manuscripts, the Newberry Library; Mary Herr, Reference Librarian, Davenport Public Library; Carol Hunt, Curator, Putnam Museum; Harriet C. Jameson, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Michigan Library; Dione Miles, Reference Archivist, Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University; Frank Paluka, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries; Robert C. Scheetz, Registrar, Drake University; Sandra Taylor, Curator of Manuscripts, the Lilly Library, Indiana University; and Elizabeth Walsh, Curator, Research Center for the Federal Theater Project, George Mason University.

I was fortunate to be able to interview many people who had known Susan Glaspell and were eager to share their memories with me. I am especially grateful to Nilla Cook, Susan's stepdaughter, who had contributed not only crucial information, but much enthusiasm and insight to this project. I am also greatly indebted to Sirius Cook, Susan's stepgrandson, for granting me an interview and for allowing me to quote from the papers of George Cram Cook and Susan Glaspell. Others who furnished me with information through personal interviews are Dorris Clarke, Celia Francis, Eben Given, Mary Hackett, David Hudson, Margaret Hudson, Catharine Huntington, Dorothy Meyer, Tibel Narefsky, Martha Robinson, and Athanasius Tsachalos. I am also grateful to the following people who corresponded with me: Gerald L. Bartell, Edmond Cook, Ann DeArmand, Miriam Hapgood DeWitt, Don Farran, Josephine Bray Hairston, John Houseman, Eva LeGallienne, Armina Marshall, Langston Moffett, Nick Parros, Norman H. Paul, Francis M. Rogers, Mark Schorer, and Arnold Sundgaard.

A number of scholars who have been interested in Susan Glaspell have generously provided me with much encouragement and information: Clarence Andrews, Gerhard Bach, Rita Mary Bradley, Robert Humphrey, June Sochen, and

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To Paul Noe, who helped me with the research for this project, assisted in proofreading the manuscript, and sustained me in many a bleak moment, I will always be grateful.

I am grateful to Black Hawk College for granting me a sabbatical leave to complete my research, and to the Western Illinois Monograph Series Editorial Board for their assistance in revising the manuscript. I would especially like to thank Donald W. Griffin for his painstaking efforts in editing it.

M. N.



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# 1

## Introduction

Susan Keating Glaspell (1876-1948) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, the author of fourteen plays, nine novels, and over fifty short stories. With her husband, George Cram Cook, and others she founded the Provincetown Players, the little theater group that gave impetus to the experimental efforts of serious American playwrights, most notably Eugene O'Neill.

Her one-act play, *Trifles* (1916), is often cited in playwrighting texts as a model of a well-crafted one-act play. In this work, as well as in her other plays, Susan Glaspell is primarily concerned with the psychological complexities of her characters. This concern is most evident in *The Verge*, an expressionistic drama produced in 1921, which explores the psychological limitations of a woman's individuality. Susan Glaspell also wrote comedies and farces that dealt satirically with such topical concerns as leftist journalism, Freudian theory, and campus radicalism. In 1931 her play, *Alison's House*, which was based on the life of Emily Dickinson, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Susan Glaspell's life is interesting in the way that it parallels the intellectual and cultural patterns that were developing in America from the end of the Civil War until the middle of the twentieth century. She was born in 1876, the descendant of New Englanders who came to Iowa and built a city of sawmills and steel works where an Indian village once stood. She was raised in the nineteenth century tradition that idealized hard work, competition, progress, success, patriotism, piety, wealth, prestige, and respectability. Like many young Americans who became adults as the new century began, she rebelled against these values and the conventions of midwestern culture with which they were associated, seeking the freedom to experiment with new ways of living and writing in Chicago, in Greenwich Village, and in Europe. During the twenties she enjoyed critical acclaim and popularity, both in her own country and abroad, but after the triumph of the Pulitzer Prize, her self confidence and prosperity waned with the coming of the Great Depression. She then began to rebuild her life and career through the collectivism of the New Deal and the fight to defeat fascism.

Yet the thesis that Susan Glaspell grew up with the country should not be pushed too far. To say that she was an expatriate in the sense that Hemingway, Dos Passos, and Cummings were expatriates is to ignore the facts of her life, for she lived in Greece for less than two years during the twenties, and she left America in a very different spirit than that which characterized the expatriate movement.

It would be just as much of a distortion to portray her as a socialist or even a liberal activist. Even through she urged Ludwig Lewisohn to "Vote for *Thomas*, because too many are hungry,"<sup>1</sup> her sympathy with liberal causes rarely moved

her to political action; her one sustained venture into left-wing politics was her work for the Federal Theater Project as Director of the Midwest Play Bureau, a position she held for less than two years. Those who would force Susan Glaspell into the mold that shaped other American writers do so by ignoring the paradoxes in her work and personality.

"The reason no one has discovered anything about her life is that she very much wanted it that way," said her stepdaughter, Nilla Cook. "She subordinated herself completely, always to the man of the moment, was *anything* but a feminist, and always sad when work of her own succeeded more than my father's—or after, Norman Matson's."<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to believe that this woman, whom friends and relatives describe as ladylike, charming, refined, and gentle, is the same woman who wrote *The Verge*, a psychological drama heralded by Greenwich Village feminists as an endorsement of the right of women to control their own destinies. The task of reconciling Susan Glaspell's faith in the redemptive power of romantic love with the ideas about male-female relations that she expresses in *Trifles* and in *Woman's Honor* also presents difficulties.

Susan Glaspell lived and wrote in Paris, London, Delphi, New York, and Provincetown, but her thoughts were never very far away from her Iowa birthplace. "The Middle Western scene was for her not something to be lived down or forgotten but one of her richest resources; and in every reference to the region of her birth there is affectionate understanding and sympathy," wrote fellow Iowan Bartholomew Crawford in *Palimpsest*.<sup>3</sup> Yet Susan Glaspell's love for the Midwest was tempered with an awareness of its limitations for the unusually talented or motivated individual. "Davenport as a Literary Center is too precious a thought to be marred by a comment of mine," she wrote to Floyd Dell, describing a local cultural event. "I pass it on to you in all its virgin beauty."<sup>4</sup> Though all of her novels and many of her short stories and plays are set, at least in part, in this region, she is as critical of its sterile and repressive atmosphere as she is enamored of the strengths of the pioneers who settled the prairies and harnessed the power of its great river. "She could not have lived with the people who were the only ones, apparently, who stirred her genius for entering the solitudes of others while yet devoutly preserving her own," explained Nilla Cook.<sup>5</sup>

Her comments point up the one consistent element in Susan Glaspell's life and writings, in light of which the paradoxes and irreconcilable elements seem less perplexing. First and foremost, Susan Glaspell was not a feminist, a bohemian, a socialist, an expatriate, an eulogist, or critic of the Midwest, but an idealist.

Her idealism is not a commitment to any one belief so much as it is a belief in belief, a faith in faith, with emphasis on the primacy of the spirit, the power of intuition and insight, the relation between seeing and becoming, and the unity of all experience. Susan Glaspell believes that it is important to see, to dream, to envision a better world because in the very act of seeing, dreaming and envisioning, one becomes a better person and, in doing so, contributes to the realization of that vision. "Be the most that you can be, so life will be more because you were," says Madeline in *Inheritors*.<sup>6</sup>

In her fiction and drama, Susan Glaspell emphasizes the importance of the spiritual and the intangible in our lives by using a unique device: the building of a play or story around a character who never appears onstage. In *Trifles*, *Bernice*, and *Alison's House*, all of the elements of the play converge to evoke the spiritual presence of the unseen woman in the midst of mundane reality, just as the Ideals that reside in the mind of God are evoked by their shadowy representations that we apprehend with our senses.

"I am nothing, I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me. I am part and parcel with God," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson in "Nature."<sup>7</sup> Susan Glaspell shares this concept of the universe with Platonists and Transcendentalists; for her the central fact of reality is the unity of all experience, the intermingling of the past and the present in the eternal stream of time. The structure of many of her works is cyclical; *Brook Evans*, *The Comic Artist*, *Alison's House*, *The Morning Is Near Us*, *Norma Ashe*, and *Judd Rankin's Daughter* show characters repeating the experiences of the past, becoming aware of the way that the past impinges upon the present and gives it meaning, of how an understanding of the past can make them wiser and enrich their lives.

Susan Glaspell's work enjoyed a measure of popularity in her lifetime: *Brook Evans*, her fourth novel, was the basis for the Paramount motion picture *The Right to Love*, and *The Morning Is Near Us*, a Literary Guild selection for 1940, was optioned by Columbia Pictures. Nevertheless, little is known about her life and work today. She was a woman of varied interests and broad experiences: journalist, novelist, actress, playwright, mentor to famous writers as well as to next-door neighbors and relatives. At times her talent may have proved unequal to the literary tasks she set for herself; still, her works are of interest to the contemporary reader, not only because they provide insight into the times during which she lived, but because several of them are well-made works of fiction and drama expressing the universal concerns that characterize literary classics.

But it is her fidelity to her own vision, the integrity of her determination to write only of what to her seemed important, that sets her apart from many other writers whose works were once read and are now forgotten. Perhaps John Chamberlain best expressed the value of Susan Glaspell's work in his review of her sixth novel, *Ambrose Holt and Family*: "If Henry Seidel Canby is still looking for the 'unknown man'—in this case the unknown woman—who consistently goes his own fruitful way through the wasteland of America that is to be beheld, let him turn and contemplate the career of Susan Glaspell."<sup>8</sup>



## 2

### Iowa Heritage

"I live by the sea, but the body of water I have the most feeling about is the Mississippi River, where I used to row and skate, ride on the ferry in childhood, watch the logs or just dream," wrote Susan Glaspell near the end of her life.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it is understandable that this woman, who kept her grandmother's spinning wheel in her Provincetown house and who used the Mississippi valley as the setting for many of her plays and novels, should feel strong ties with a region that has fascinated visitor and settler alike since pioneer days.

In 1839 Susan's great-grandfather James Glaspell brought his wife and eight children to Davenport, Iowa, a Mississippi River town of about 500 inhabitants. Soon to be named the county seat of Scott County, Iowa, Davenport was built on the site of Oshkosh, the former village of the Sauk and Fox Indians, that had been ceded to the United States as a result of the Black Hawk War of 1832. Three years later Colonel George Davenport, quartermaster and Indian trader, formed a company and platted the city of Davenport. There the Glaspells survived floods, cholera epidemics, currency riots, and border skirmishes with Missouri squatters, as well as a particularly harrowing incident occasioned by some Indians who wanted to buy Susan's great-aunt Ruth Glaspell, offering first some furs and an Indian pony and later some squaws and a papoose. As crises such as these subsided, the Glaspells began to prosper as farmers and merchants. In later years they would be active in the Pioneer Settlers Association, the Davenport Board of Trade, and the Christian Church.<sup>2</sup>

Although she frequently gave her birth date as 1 July 1882, Susan Glaspell's name does not appear in the records of babies born on that date in Scott County. However, the Scott County Census of 1880 lists a four-year-old Susie Glaspell, as well as a one-year-old Frank and a five-year-old Charles, as a member of Alice and Elmer Glaspell's household at 502 Cedar Street. Drake University records indicate that Susan gave her age as twenty-one when she matriculated in the fall of 1897; however, when she enrolled in a literature course at the University of Chicago during the summer of 1901 she gave her birthdate as 1 July 1877. The best evidence suggests that Susan Glaspell was born in 1876, the year of America's Centennial celebration.

The year 1876 was also a landmark for Davenport, which had grown from a trading post where pigs routed in the streets and Indians menaced the settlers into a booming city of plow works and sawmills. In part, Davenport's rapid development was a result of its strategic location on the Mississippi River and the completion of the railroad through the area, but the well-educated and prosperous Germans who left Europe during the revolutions of the 1840s helped transform

Davenport into a city of cultural as well as industrial importance. One of these men, Charles August Ficke, would later become mayor of Davenport. He described the city in the 1870s in his autobiography, *Memories of Fourscore Years*: "In 1878 the Academy of Science opened three ancient mounds at the edge of the bluff near East Davenport. Street cars drawn by mules began to run on Fourteenth Street. Residents of Brady Street protested against street cars being hauled up that street by a steam motor. The Iowa Rail Road Land Company, in Davenport papers, advertised a million acres of Iowa land for sale. People with means went to Saratoga Springs on their summer vacation. People without means spent their week ends at Linwood Sulphur Springs near Buffalo [Iowa]." <sup>3</sup>

Not much is known of Susan Glaspell's childhood during these years. A Davenport newspaper report of her 1932 visit to England notes that "Miss Glaspell's early connection with Davenport makes her literary achievement and herself the object of unusual interest to old friends in her home town, some of whom recall the precocious, pretty little girl with a penchant for bringing home the ragged and hungry and making such queer friends in odd places."<sup>4</sup> This comment foreshadows the Susan Glaspell who would later live in Greenwich Village and write plays about women's rights, Freudian psychology, and radical journalism. However, Susan Glaspell was also a girl who could take pride in her family's old-Davenport heritage and claim her rightful place in Davenport society, which meant lessons in china painting and French. The social life of popular Davenport girls included picnics at Schuetzen Park, balls at the Outing Club, and river carnivals featuring illuminated vessels transformed for the evening into Venetian gondolas gliding slowly down the Mississippi.

Susan Glaspell's fondest Davenport memories were of the river, and in the unpublished reminiscence cited above, she writes of sleigh rides across the ice to Rock Island, ferry rides, and steamboat rides: "Sometimes the whole crowd would go as far as Muscatine or again up the river to Clinton. There would be moonlight excursions—the river so beautiful you would wonder what was going to happen to you—All day picnics—going over in skiffs to the island just below Davenport: the fried chicken, and some of the men fishing and boys and girls rowing under the low-hanging willows. Sometimes getting stuck and having to push off with an oar, and once tipping over and all the girls screaming, though only up to the waist."<sup>5</sup>

Susan's schoolwork played as important a part in her life as did parties and excursions, however. The girl whom novelist Alice French described as "the brightest girl in the city" studied Latin, science, mathematics, rhetoric, literature, drawing, English, civics, and political economy at Davenport High School, graduating in 1894.<sup>6</sup> After graduation, she began work as a reporter on the *Davenport Morning Republican*, then edited by Charles Eugene Banks. *Trident*, a local magazine, described her at this time as "a rosy-checked girl with balky hair that insisted on falling between her vision and the copy on which she labored, but she wrote some pretty things through the tangles even in those days."<sup>7</sup> In July of 1896, Banks began to publish the *Weekly Outlook*, a society magazine "devoted to



Home and Outing Life. Literature, Art, Music and the Drama." The masthead of each issue from July of 1896 to July of 1897 lists "Susie K. Glaspell" as Society Editor.

Even in pioneer days, Davenport was known as a city of unusual cultural opportunity, boasting a Lyceum, a Young Man's Library Association, a liberal arts college, and several newspapers. The city was a frequent stopping point for show-boats, circuses, traveling theater troupes, and lecturers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley, and Wendell Phillips. The 1890s saw Paderewski performing at the Burtis Opera House and T. D. Mackey's Light Opera Company presenting "The Mikado," "The Pirates of Penzance," and "The H.M.S. Pinafore" at Black Hawk's Watch Tower. Several productions of Shakespeare's plays, including *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, were seen in the Turner Grand Opera House.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find "Social Life" in the *Weekly Outlook* often taking up the subject of the theater. The January 1897 issue contains an ironical guide to conduct for theater-goers. "It must be so gratifying to the players to see their audiences beating a hasty retreat through the door, leaving them to act for five minutes to empty seats," the author writes. "One would be led to think that the management of the house had offered a premium to the man, woman, or child who stepped on the sidewalk first."<sup>8</sup> Some of the "rules" of conduct for theater-goers indicate an empathy with theater people that foreshadows Susan's later involvement with the Provincetown Players as one of their leading playwrights and actresses.

Susan was not always able to be this irreverent in her column; much of the time she was obliged to report the comings and goings of prominent Davenport citizens; their dinner parties and outings, their travels abroad, and the visits of out-of-town guests.

Other columns tackle more serious topics such as women's education. Defending the right of women to a college education, she denies the allegation that female college graduates are "merely sexless exponents of higher education." Her reply, though it expresses a firm belief in education for women, is careful to note that femininity is not destroyed by learning. "If I believed this it would make me most unhappy and I would feel compelled to start tonight on a holy pilgrimage to burn all the women's colleges in the land. But fortunately, heaven made me an optimist, so I can laugh my own fears away and persuade myself that girls will be girls till the end of time."<sup>9</sup>

Shortly after she wrote this column on women and higher education, Susan Glaspell resigned her position on the *Weekly Outlook* and enrolled at Drake University. By Iowa standards, Susan's college enrollment was an audacious act for a young woman of the 1890s. Elizabeth McCollough Bray later reported in the *Davenport Democrat and Leader*, "It was in the mauve decade that an adventurous Davenport maiden had the temerity to go to college. Before that, young ladies had been educated at academies and institutes and the finishing school was coming into vogue. This girl brought home a bachelor's degree. She was regarded some-

what askance, people wondered if it wasn't possible she was a little queer. For a time her health was said to be wrecked from overstudy, but she led an active life for many long years."<sup>10</sup>

At Drake the society girl aspects of Susan's personality won her acceptance among the popular, fun-loving students who comprised the social elite at the university. "The picture of her that springs clearest in my mind is of a slender form enveloped in one of those ample white nightgowns of twenty-five years ago seated on a little antique rush-bottomed chair in my dressing room, long slim hands clasped about her knees, a soft cloud of dark hair framing her pale face, her great, gray eyes glowing with enthusiasm as she voiced enthralling theories of life and love," former classmate Dorothy Fowler Heald reminisced. "She was my first heroine in the flesh, a glamorous presence of poetry and romance who fired one's imagination and made all glorious things seem possible. Her personality was a flame in the light of the student body, or at any rate in the group that felt themselves the social and literary leaders."<sup>11</sup>

Susan's interests went beyond the social side of college life, however. She studied Greek, French, psychology, philosophy, history, and the literature of the Bible. Although she was often ill and at one point hospitalized during her college career, she accumulated a list of honors that included winning first prize in an oratorical contest in which she debated the subject of Bismarck and European politics. She also contributed frequently to the *Delphic*, the college literary magazine, served as Vice-President of the Debating Society, and participated in commencement exercises in June of 1899, giving a short talk at the alumni banquet and contributing a story at ceremonies held the previous day.

After graduating from Drake on 15 June 1899 with a bachelor of philosophy degree, Susan began work for the *Des Moines Daily News* as statehouse and legislative reporter. "I knew nothing at all about politics," she later confessed, "and I wouldn't have had the least idea of what was going on, except that some of the legislators took pity on me and told me enough news to keep me from being disgracefully scooped."<sup>12</sup> Later she supplemented her reporting with editorial commentary in a column called "The News Girl," in which she discussed such topics as the National Congress of Mothers, the state field meet, Iowa legislators, Des Moines lawyers, and rural living. Sometimes this column was a serious commentary on the issues of the day, as when she criticized the superficiality of a recent convention of the National Congress of Mothers in Des Moines.

More often, however, Glaspell attempts a tongue-in-cheek tone that falters for want of consistency, as when she mocks the blasé attitudes of the state legislators and the triviality of their daily concerns: ". . . the house is active, it is not characteristic of it to spend three days in grave discussion as to who shall cut weeds out on the public highways. The senate corrects what the house does, true it may not need correction, but nevertheless, it must be corrected. If there is nothing else to be done the words 'of Iowa' can be added after 'the state.' This is always in order, and serves the purpose of making the house take another vote and realize its youth and insufficiency."<sup>13</sup> This essay is diffuse and unfocused, varying in tone as Glas-

pell moves from a send-up of the pompous senate to a spirited defense of the house and of the worthwhile bills that have been defeated and concludes with a more serious discussion of the inordinate amount of power wielded by a few men in high positions in the legislature.

An even less successful essay depicts the narrator as a city-bred sophisticate who ventures into the country to initiate the unsuspecting residents into the ways of the world. Although the column is meant to be humorous, the tone is so badly managed that the reader ends up laughing at the hapless narrator rather than with her:

My intention was to impress Uncle Jerry with the extent of his inability. I would talk about elevators, department stores and street cars in a suave off-hand manner. I would casually mention the names and addresses of our famous and mighty men. That would occasion a fearful and impressive respect for me in the verdant mind of my bewildered uncle. Next I would assume the management of the farm according to my ideas and demonstrate the antiquity of the ordinary methods. I would supplant the ox with the automobile, and pave instead of plowing the fields. I have a theory that if a corn field were paved, leaving out a brick for each hill, it would increase the yield, do away entirely with the mud and give the farmer plenty of time to meditate on lofty subjects. That is only one theory. I have many others.<sup>14</sup>

Although her columns were popular and she enjoyed reporting, Susan Glaspell decided to try her luck as a free-lance fiction writer. "After less than two years of newspaper reporting, I boldly gave up my job and went home to Davenport to give all my time to my own writing. I say boldly because I had to earn my living," she wrote in an autobiographical essay for *Twentieth Century Authors*.<sup>15</sup> As a free-lance writer, she made good use of her political experience, drawing on this background for several stories about Iowa politics published between 1903 and 1912. Most of them were later collected in *Lifted Masks*, a 1912 edition of her short stories. It is appropriately titled, for the typical protagonist of her early fiction is a sort of "closet idealist" who eventually reveals an inner core of integrity under a cynical exterior. These stories are intriguing and unusual in that they delve into the cloakroom activities of state politics: the machine's iron grip on the party, the powerful railroad interests that control the state legislature, the growing influence of the Progressive Movement, and the continuous parade of political hopefuls and has-beens.

However interesting the stories are in matter—and Glaspell's dialogue and description make them more so—they are ploddingly conventional in method, most following a formula that presents a public figure faced with what is supposed to be an agonizing moral choice. At the beginning of the story, he is all set to embark upon the Wrong Way, because the Right Way would involve almost certain political disaster or personal sacrifice. He chooses the Right Way when he is brought to see himself in a radically different way, usually as a result of his coming to



*Susan Glaspell at about age 7.*



*Susan Glaspell at about age 18.*



*Susan Glaspell at her home, 317 East 12th Street, Davenport, Iowa. Courtesy of Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library.*

identify with the underdog in the story. A line from "The Man of Flesh and Blood" sums up this situation succinctly: "There is good and there is bad in every human heart and it is the struggle of life to conquer the bad with the good."<sup>16</sup>

In this story, Phillip Grayson, a candidate for governor, is waiting to speak at the dedication of a boys' reformatory. A typical Glaspell protagonist in a typical Glaspell situation, he is a public figure who will soon be faced with his Moment of Truth—he must decide whether to give the conventional admonition to be good citizens or to open his heart and reveal his own youthful follies. After putting himself in the boys' places and listening to the complacent hypocrisy of the speakers that precede him, he, of course, chooses the latter, even though it means risking his election as governor.

Also typical of these stories are the sentimental tone and the intrusion of the author into the narrative: "Oh for a man of flesh and blood to stand up and tell how he himself had sinned and suffered! For a man who could bridge that damning chasm with strong, broad human understanding and human sympathies—a man who could stand among them pulse-beat to pulse-beat and cry out, 'I know! I understand! I fought it, and I'll help you fight it too!'"<sup>17</sup>

Despite the faults of the political stories, they sold well, and in May of 1903, the *Des Moines Daily News* reported, "It is a great pleasure to many Iowans to know that Miss Susan Keating Glaspell is meeting with very flattering success as a writer of short stories."<sup>18</sup> The article recapitulated Susan's college honors and her work on the *Daily News* and concluded with a comment on the success of her short stories, "Several have appeared in the columns of the *Youth's Companion*. Recently the publishers of that journal wrote Miss Glaspell saying that they were about to use the last of the contributions she had submitted to them and urged her to write more. They said her stories were so well received by their readers that they wished at all times to have one or more on hand."<sup>19</sup>

The *Youth's Companion* stories show little development in Susan Glaspell's fictional techniques, but they do show her highly developed perception of the values and interests of a specific audience and her ability to write for that audience. Young women, rather than politicians, people these stories; Susan Glaspell places them in unfamiliar and difficult situations and demonstrates that the old-fashioned virtues and character traits they possess effect the resolutions of their problems. Two of these stories, "The Boycott on Caroline" and "The Girl from Downtown," are interesting in that they foreshadow Susan Glaspell's concern with the conflict between the individual and society that will appear in later novels and plays.

The big city background of "The Girl from Downtown" is a new element in Susan Glaspell's fiction and reflects her move to Chicago during the summer of 1902 to enroll at the University of Chicago for postgraduate work in literature. This Chicago background is used in several of her early short stories as well as in her first two novels and later in her eighth novel, *Norma Ashe*. For the most part, the stories bear the unmistakable signs of the inexperienced writer: plenty of adjectives and adverbs, a sentimental situation, too much dialogue and too little

action, and improbable endings. One of these stories, "At the Turn of the Road," opens with the unfortunate line, "The rain poured uncompromisingly down and down, and the State Street crowd swarmed unceasingly on."<sup>20</sup> It is the story of a young girl from Des Moines who is studying art in Chicago and is too poor to go home for Christmas. She meets a wealthy stranger, also from Des Moines, who has sacrificed personal relationships for private ambitions; he tells her that "the human heart was not made to feed upon gratified ambition."<sup>21</sup> Since there is no one in Des Moines he cares to visit, he gives her the money for a trip home, so that she will not have to sacrifice her friends to her career. This story is almost unbearably bad, yet the theme, the conflicting demands of art and society upon the artist, is one that Susan Glaspell will learn to treat more skillfully in later works.

Susan returned to Davenport after living in Chicago to find that she had become somewhat of a local celebrity. The 30 July 1904 issue of *Trident* featured a story on Susan's literary career, mentioning her publications in such magazines as the *Metropolitan*, the *National*, and *Black Cat*, which had recently awarded her a \$500 prize. The story reviewed Susan's journalism experience in Davenport and in Des Moines and brought the reader up-to-date on her more recent accomplishments. "Miss Glaspell has just recently returned from the Winona Lake meeting of literari over which Charles Eugene Banks presided and to the program of which he was a liberal and valued contributor. Miss Glaspell contributed one of her charming stories to the program."<sup>22</sup> Another *Trident* article, published in the 4 February 1905 issue, mentioned a story that Susan write for the *Chicago Daily Review* about Missouri's newly elected Governor Folk, in which she emphasized his sense of duty to the state and to the public as a reform candidate.

In addition to writing, Susan became involved in Davenport cultural activities. In 1905 she chaired the literary committee of the Davenport Amateur Musical Club, and in 1906 she was elected to the Tuesday Club, presenting a paper entitled "The Influence of the Press" to this group in 1907.

By the first decade of the twentieth century Susan Glaspell had become a successful writer of popular fiction and a respected member of the Davenport community. Her family background, if not her financial resources, was sufficient to secure her admittance to the most prestigious of Davenport social circles; she belonged to a respectable church, was a graduate of a good university, and wrote stories that taught sound moral lessons to her readers. Her future seemed predictable: she would succeed Alice French as Davenport's literary leading lady, selling short stories to the *Ladies' Home Journal*, living quietly at home with her parents, attending church services and meetings of the Tuesday Club.

Perhaps her life might not have taken the turn that it did had the midwestern community in question been any but Davenport, a city that was hardly typical of those that grew up in America's heartland during the 1900s. The rivermen, in the heyday of steamboats and rafts, were ready customers for the saloons and brothels that made up a red-light district along the riverfront. This "Bucktown" area be-



came so notorious as to provoke Bishop Henry Cosgrove's remark that Davenport was "the wickedest city for its size in America."<sup>23</sup> and to prompt the trustees of Iowa College to seek a new site for their college that was less threatening to the moral and intellectual development of their students. By 1908 there were 240 saloons in Scott County, and racketeer John Looney controlled an empire of taverns, gambling dens, bordellos, and theaters that gave Davenport the reputation of a wide-open western town where cock and bulldog fights, ratbaiting, and prize fights were good sport, and liquor, pornographic pictures, and high-yaller women could be had for the asking.

Davenport's free-wheeling reputation prevailed in intellectual and political matters as well. Socialist meetings were held in Turner Hall, the community center. The trade union movement flourished in Davenport; in 1894 thirty-two of the city's unions met with Mayor Vollmer to advise him of their demands. Atheists, free-thinkers, poets, union organizers, and socialists found Davenport to be a city where tolerance prevailed over narrow-mindedness. One of these groups, the Monist Society, would someday become influential in Davenport politics. The members of this group believed that "modern thought is forced to discard dualism. There are not two worlds, there is one. Modern thought believes, that is, in monism (one-ism). At first, when it was seen that there was only one world, men said, 'Then there is only the natural world and there is no spiritual world.' That was materialism—the practical, working faith of the world today, a faith that is woven into nearly every action of nearly every man. But a few have looked deeper and seen this: 'The natural world *is* the spiritual world, and the spiritual world *is* the natural world.'"<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps the Monist Society's philosophy appealed to Susan Glaspell's idealistic proclivities; perhaps she was merely eager for some stimulating intellectual companionship. At any rate, she joined the group and discovered that a delicious sense of impropriety could be derived from the association: "Declining to go to church with my parents in the morning, I would ostentatiously set out for the Monist Society in the afternoon, down an obscure street which it seemed a little improper to be walking on, as everything was closed for Sunday, upstairs through a sort of side entrance over a saloon."<sup>25</sup>

Susan's simultaneous association with the Tuesday Club and the Monist Society reflected the conflicting aspects of her personality. On Tuesday afternoons, Susan the society girl sipped tea with Davenport matrons; on Sundays, Susan the social reformer plotted with free-thinkers and socialists to win influence in the Davenport political scene.

Susan's involvement with the Monist Society brought her into contact with intellectuals such as the Pabbi Fineschreiber, socialist reporter Floyd Dell, librarian Marilla Freeman, the poet Arthur Davison Ficke, socialist mail carrier Fritz Feuchter, and George Cram Cook, called Jig by his friends, a graduate of Harvard, who had taught at Stanford and the University of Iowa.<sup>26</sup> Then in his mid-thirties, Jig was the son of Edward P. Cook, legal counsel for the Rock Island Railroad, grandson of Congressman and banker John P. Cook, great-grandson of pioneer

settler Ira Cook, and great-great grandson of Ebenezer Cook, minuteman at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and captain of the Revolutionary Army in Boston.

In apparent disregard of family tradition, Jig Cook had recently resigned his position at Stanford and retired to the family estate near Buffalo, Iowa, to raise vegetables and write. His romantic novel, *Roderick Taliafferro*, had been published by Macmillan; at this time he was at work on a more serious venture, a socialist novel entitled, *The Chasm*. His interest in Nietzschean individualism had been diverted to socialism by Floyd Dell, whom he met around 1903; in 1907 Dell came to live with him at the Buffalo estate to work as a hired man.

The Cook estate was popularly termed "the Cabin"; actually it was more of a southern plantation, complete with tennis courts, a stable for riding horses, and three kitchens that were ruled by old black Sarah. A butler and a footman in livery had once impressed the friends that Jig and his brother brought home from college; now the guests at the Cabin were likely to be Jig's socialist or literary friends.

Susan Glaspell became a frequent visitor to the Cabin, and she soon found the conversation of socialists more stimulating than the dreary literary papers read by her friends in the Tuesday Club. Her interest in the group that met at Jig Cook's family estate was not merely intellectual or political, and; for his part, Jig found it difficult to keep his relationship with Susan on a purely intellectual basis.

By 1907 Jig was separated from his first wife Sarah Herndon Swain and had become engaged to Mollie Price, a Chicago newswoman whom he had met in Moline at a meeting of the Chicago Press Club. At this time Mollie was working in New York with Emma Goldman on the anarchist journal *Mother Earth*. "Saw Susie Glaspell last night," Jig wrote to Mollie in November of 1907. "T'was grand to get such new mental pictures of you. Also, the girl herself is charming. I never realized it."<sup>27</sup> "Susie read Floyd and me part of her novel," he reported to Mollie three weeks later. "Tis great good stuff! Susie terrifies me with her overpowering ideal of life-long constancy to an early and vanished love. I couldn't help observing *apropos* of it that I myself was 'so fickle.' 'You *are* rather dreadful,' said she. I wasn't quite so much afraid of her just then, but golly! Sweet as she is, she inspires such an attitude that to think of my kissing her is as though a devout Catholic should picture himself flirting with the Virgin Mary. Not but what it would be nice."<sup>28</sup> In January of 1908, when Mollie arrived in Davenport to marry Jig, she could no longer ignore the hints in his letters: her fiancé had fallen in love with another woman.

Perhaps Susan realized the danger inherent in the situation and sought to avoid trouble, for she was often in New York and Chicago after this time, ostensibly seeing to the publication of the novel that Jig wrote of to Mollie. *The Glory of the Conquered* was published in March of 1909 while Susan and her friend Lucy Huffaker were traveling in Europe.

Susan Glaspell's first novel was a great success, inspiring brisk sales and good reviews. "There is a breadth of thought and depth of feeling in its conception as a whole that is remarkable in so young a writer," raved a hometown paper.<sup>29</sup> But the plaudits were not limited to chauvinistic small town newspapers. "Unless

Susan Glaspell is an assumed name . . . *The Glory of the Conquered* brings forward a new author of fine and notable gifts," praised the *New York Times*.<sup>30</sup>

Despite its excellent reviews, *The Glory of the Conquered* strikes the modern reader as a period piece, its pages suffused with sentimentality, improbabilities, melodramatic incidents, and the youthful idealism of a first novelist. This story of a research scientist whose artist wife gives up her own career to work as his lab assistant when he becomes blind suffers from structural flaws, clichés, sappy dialogue, and blatantly obvious symbolism. Its one redeeming feature is its thorough grounding in an idealism that recalls not only the Transcendentalism of Emerson, but the idealism of such German philosophers as Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. This aspect of Susan's work may have stemmed from her study of philosophy at Drake University; undoubtedly, the intellectual ambience of Davenport also was an influence.

*The Glory of the Conquered* was published while Susan and Lucy Huffaker were living in the Latin Quarter in Paris. Letters to friends, as well as an interview Susan gave to the *Davenport Democrat* upon her return in June of 1909, indicate that the trip was meant to give Susan a well-earned rest. Susan and Lucy first visited Holland and Belgium before settling in Paris, which Susan described as a place where "surroundings are in perfect harmony with the receptive mood and invite and stimulate inspiration."<sup>31</sup> In the Latin Quarter Lucy wrote some articles for American magazines and sent stories to the New York papers while Susan worked on some short stories and sketches and worked out the plan for a second novel. They also went to concerts and operas, and visited with other writers and artists in the Quarter, among them the Russian painter Mazzanovich, who gave Susan one of his paintings.

The trip may also have been a way of escaping a difficult situation at home. A letter from Susan's mother, upon her receipt of her copy of *The Glory of the Conquered*, indicates this: "I so often have worried dear about you away from home so much and a bright attractive girl like you exposed to so many temptations, but you know dear I believe a girl with such high thoughts as those portrayed in this book could never come to harm. Surely her Maker would protect and guard her and give her strength to resist all such."<sup>32</sup> Susan's family, although never as wealthy or socially prominent as Jig's, had always been highly respected in Davenport, and the Glaspell men had been elders in the Christian Church ever since its founding. A letter from Susan's father while she was away at college requested her to write her brother Ray "a letter of good religious tone and high moral bearing as well also as a kind and sisterly letter. Bear in mind that he is among many strangers and undoubtedly is exposed to temptations that you have no idea of. Don't forget this. Consider it both your duty and privilege."<sup>33</sup>

During her college years Susan may have had no idea of the temptations Ray would have been exposed to, but now temptation was definitely a problem for her as well. For a time, her desire for respectability and social approval defeated her more rebellious inclinations. After she returned from Paris in 1909, Susan avoided

Davenport, spending four months in Monte Vista, Colorado, with Mabel Brown, a Davenport friend who had taken a job with the Forest Service there. She returned to Davenport in January of 1910 and continued to work on her second novel. In June she addressed the Tuesday Club on "The Literary Legacy of the Victorian Age."

But temptation proved irresistible, and soon Susan resumed seeing her old friends from the Monist Society. In February of 1910, while attending a meeting at the Labor Lyceum, Susan sparked a controversy that would embroil hundreds of Davenport residents in a censorship question that would ultimately affect the outcome of the spring mayoral election.

Years later, in a short story called "'Finality' in Freeport," Susan suggested that the controversy was little more than an excuse for truculent Davenporters to wage war.<sup>34</sup> In actuality, the Davenport papers featured the story prominently for several weeks. It began with a question from Susan to the Rabbi Fineschreiber, who had just spoken on religion, regarding a book called *The Finality of the Christian Religion*. Her point was that since the book committee had recommended its purchase, the failure of the full library board to buy it was tantamount to censorship.

For weeks the controversy raged under the auspices of the *Davenport Democrat and Leader*, which printed letters from both supporters and opponents of the board's action. A group called the Ethical Society censured the library board and invited the book's author to lecture on March 17. Petitions began to circulate in support of the book, and a Unitarian clergyman reviewed it before a packed audience on March 6 at the Labor Lyceum. Still, the library board, unmoved even by its author's appearance at a well-attended meeting, refused to purchase the book.

The protesters then moved the question into the political arena. Recalling the situation in her biography of Jig, *The Road to the Temple*, Susan writes, "We even became powerful and changed the city election. The Library Board refusing to buy a book called *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, we wrote the papers such stinging letters, both Monistically and individually, that the short-sighted candidate for mayor who had first defended the Board was quite snowed under by enlightenment."<sup>35</sup>

Since Susan's involvement with the censorship controversy brought her in contact with Jig and Mollie, she again became a frequent visitor at the Cabin, this time on the pretext of collaborating with Jig on a novel. It was not long before Floyd Dell, now in Chicago working as editor of the *Friday Literary Review* of the *Chicago Evening Post*, began to hear of Susan's frequent visits to the Cook estate in his letters from Jig.

Susan and I had a day of creative energy here about a girl going to the city to seek her social salvation—a *questess*—you will recognize the model. We telephoned the model to come down and tell the story of her life—we wanted to put her in a book. She did—and somehow the real-

ity—graver, weightier than our incipient dream, overwhelmed us. Before that, Susan wanted to play with a socialist-individualist contrast between the girl and the man, and I suggested having them each convert the other and wind up on the other side. We rejoiced in that until our model arrived and then—her socialism is such a deep slow growth having so many roots far back in her experience that we felt how shallow and unreal it was to try to uproot such a thing.<sup>36</sup>

Jig concluded with the comment that he had not seen Susan since that day and requested Floyd to write him about some new ideas for their book, ending the letter with the suggestion that if Floyd would do this, Susan might come out to visit him again: "The writing will of course be its own reward, but Susan is on the verge of writing to you, and, if you wrote a valuably suggestive letter to me about *this*—do you see? she'd fall off the verge. I prophesy."<sup>37</sup>

Whether or not Floyd wrote to Jig about this literary project is uncertain, but Susan did, indeed, fall off the verge. When Floyd and his wife Margery Currey arrived to spend their vacation with the Cooks at the Cabin that summer, Jig took Floyd aside and explained that it was Susan and not Mollie that he really loved. That summer, Mollie, expecting a child in August, endured evenings during which Jig and Susan would disappear from the house for hours while she clung to the window screen awaiting his return.

Davenport society soon began to buzz with rumors about Jig Cook's newest infatuation, and even free-thinking Davenporters were not pleased with this state of affairs. Floyd Dell, who had been sympathetic when Jig was divorcing his first wife, now believed that this father of two took his marriage vows too lightly. "How many times are you going to ask me to believe in your eternal love for some girl?" he asked Jig.<sup>38</sup> The Rabbi Fineschreiber was equally distressed by the affair. "I have come to the mature conclusion that The Third Party is an amateur vampire," he wrote to Floyd Dell, adding that Jig was "a child who tires of his toys too easily."<sup>39</sup> A letter to Floyd from Jig dated 12 September 1910 notes, "Can't see S. at all here. Lovely situation. Mollie seems to have sloughed all bitterness."<sup>40</sup>

In the spring of 1911, Jig separated from Mollie and moved to Chicago, where for a short time he worked on a dictionary and then became Floyd Dell's assistant on the *Friday Literary Review*. Susan traveled to New York to arrange for the publication of her second novel in March of that year.<sup>41</sup> She then returned to Davenport to cope with the aftermath of her affair with Jig and await the publication of her second novel, *The Visioning*, set on the Rock Island Arsenal in the Mississippi River.

The main plot of this novel concerns the education of Katie Wainwright Jones, daughter and sister of Army officers, who becomes interested in socialism, evolution, pacifism, and feminism, and whose subsequently altered view of life conflicts sharply with the values of the military society of which she has always been a part. *The Visioning* was not well received by some of its more conservative read-

ers. In *Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens*, editor Johnson Brigham offered the following critique:

*The Visioning* does not compare with her strong novel, *The Glory of the Conquered*. One seems straight out of the heart; the other, in spite of some admirable scenes, seems labored and not absolutely sincere. And the heroine, or the semi-heroine, Ann, is a neurotic young person who is no better than she should be and whom the average chilly-hearted reader wishes heartily at the bottom of the Mississippi, where she tried to fling herself in the first—and best—chapter. But in Miss Glaspell's short stories the blight which socialism seems to cast upon her artistic sense is not visible . . . .<sup>42</sup>

Johnson Brigham's assessment of the literary merits of *The Visioning* may have been shortsighted, but his comments indicate a change in Susan Glaspell's personality that was reflected in her second novel. The respectable society girl had become a rebellious free-thinker, and the title of the novel seems prophetic in this regard, evoking a visioning of more mature work, in which the ideas that Katie, as well as Susan Glaspell, is just beginning to explore will be more fully developed.

### 3

## Provincetown Years

In February of 1913 New Yorkers who attended the art show at the 69th Regiment Armory were shocked by Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, mainly because they were unable to find either a nude or a staircase in the painting. In June of the same year, hundreds of silk workers from Paterson, New Jersey, marched into Madison Square Garden to reenact the events of their ongoing strike. Also in 1913, a nurse named Margaret Sanger, appalled by the teeming families of the New York slums, began her campaign to win for women the right to control their own reproductive lives, and on 14 April 1913, Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook were married by the mayor of Weehawken, New Jersey.

The latter event may seem less of a cultural milestone than the three previously mentioned, but Susan and Jig's union, in time, proved as significant for the development of the American theater as the Armory show was for art and the birth control movement was for feminism. Inspired by the authentic American drama in such contemporary events as the Paterson pageant, Susan and Jig, founded in the summer of 1915 the Provincetown Players, a little theater group dedicated to the production of uniquely American plays that dramatized contemporary issues such as the struggles of trade union organizers, the revolution in art, and changing sexual mores.

At this time, one of the most provocative new topics was Freudian psychology, popularized to such an extent that dreams and neuroses became common subjects of conversation at cocktail parties. "You could not go out to buy a bun without hearing of someone's complex," Susan recalled.<sup>1</sup> Others found the new psychology unbearably offensive. At one of Mabel Dodge Luhan's Wednesday Evenings, a presentation by a Freudian analyst prompted some of the more staid guests to walk out on their hostess. But Susan and Jig, amused rather than incensed by the current Freudian frenzy, wrote *Suppressed Desires*, satirizing the would-be bohemian who becomes obsessed with psychoanalysis, only to find its ramifications incompatible with middle class mores. The protagonist of this one-act play, Henrietta Brewster, is convinced that psychoanalysis is the key to personal fulfillment. Her sister Mabel, visiting from the Midwest, is less certain that suppressed desires are the root of everyone's unhappiness. "I don't believe they have them in Chicago," she surmises.<sup>2</sup> Henrietta's husband Stephen, fed up with her amateur attempts to interpret his dreams, finally capitulates to his wife's demands that he be psychoanalyzed, and even Mabel is persuaded to try analysis. When it develops that Stephen's dreams reveal a suppressed desire to be free of marriage, and that Mabel's indicate a suppressed desire for Stephen, Henrietta is revealed to be less the sophisticated disciple of Freud than the ordinary jealous wife.

*Suppressed Desires* has been frequently criticized as a superficial treatment of an extremely complicated subject, and even the Washington Square Players found the play "too special" for their theater.<sup>3</sup> Undaunted, Susan and Jig produced their play privately during the summer of 1915 at the home of Neith Boyce and Hutchins Hapgood in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Neith had also written a play, *Constancy*, spoofing the love affair of Mabel Dodge Luhan and John Reed. The stage for Neith's play was her broad verandah overlooking the sea; when it was over, the audience turned their chairs around and faced the Hapgoods' living room, where a young designer, Robert Edmond Jones, had created a set for *Suppressed Desires* using the living room furniture.

The people involved in these productions were the artists and writers who summered in Provincetown each year: the Cooks, the Hapgoods, Lucy Huffaker, Mary Heaton Vorse and Joe O'Brien, Wilbur and Margaret Steele. As more and more people became interested in the amateur theatricals, Mary Heaton Vorse was persuaded to offer the fish house on her wharf as a theater. Later that summer, the Provincetown Players' first official bill included not only *Suppressed Desires* and *Constancy* but also *Change Your Style*, Jig Cook's new satire on warring Provincetown schools of art, and Wilbur Daniel Steele's *Contemporaries*, based on the experiences of anarchist Frank Tannenbaum.

The year 1915 was an important one not only for the American theater, but for American fiction and poetry as well; a shift in attitude toward America's heartland was evident in several works published that year and in the years immediately following. In 1915, Edgar Lee Masters published his *Spoon River Anthology*, a collection of poetic dramatic monologues spoken by the inhabitants of a rural Illinois village, among them a housewife, a cynical newspaper editor, an alcoholic, a corrupt politician, a fallen soldier, and a fallen woman. Together the poems weave a tapestry of small minds, petty jealousies, warped values, and lost opportunities. Because the characters describe life in Spoon River from the vantage point of the town cemetery, the poems suggest Masters's concern with the death-in-life and life-in-death paradox that is the central theme of T. S. Eliot's *Waste-land*.

Masters's poems shocked those Americans whose vision of rural life was formed by the McGuffey Reader, the Turner thesis, and the paintings of George Caleb Bingham. Yet the myth of the country town as an idyllic haven for simple people of unassailable virtue had already been attacked in the late nineteenth century by E. W. Howe and Hamlin Garland, whose novels portrayed midwestern communities as stifling, arid, and inimical to intellectual and moral growth. They began "the revolt from the village," a literary phenomenon to which Sherwood Anderson, Carl Van Vechten, Willa Cather, Glenway Wescott, Edith Wharton, Zona Gale, and Sinclair Lewis would contribute during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Susan Glaspell cherished her Iowa heritage, yet, like Masters, Howe, and Garland, she perceived that the virtues of her pioneer ancestors had become atrophied; the strong had become tyrannical and the hard-working materialistic, their perse-



verance hardening into rigidity and their traditions into conventions. In her 1921 drama, *Inheritors*, one of the characters, Ira Morton, is described as "the dwarfed pioneer child."<sup>4</sup> The son of one of Iowa's first settlers, he lacks the vision, strength, and courage of his father. Taciturn and withdrawn, he lives apart from the rest of the community, concentrating all of his energies on the production of a perfect breed of corn.

Susan Glaspell's third novel, *Fidelity*, published the same year as Masters's *Spoon River Anthology*, exposes the limitations of life in a midwestern town as experienced by Ruth Holland, a young woman from Freeport, Iowa, who falls in love with a married man, elopes with him to Colorado, and returns after eleven years to face the death of her father, the break-up of her family, and the contempt of the people she loves. Thus, in *Fidelity* Susan Glaspell joins "the revolt from the village" by linking midwestern conventionality with the oppression of women.

*Fidelity* is Susan Glaspell's best novel. No turgid passages mar its tone; no contrivances of plot tax the reader's credulity. Glaspell's idealism, overwhelming in *The Glory of the Conquered*, is muted in this novel; the view that love is the ultimate good is balanced with the view that the social order must be preserved at all costs. Because Glaspell has created a conflict between two equally defensible points of view, Ruth Holland's dilemma evokes genuine emotion; the reader keenly feels both her love for Stuart Williams and her longing to be a part of the larger community of family and friends.

The novel is constructed so that no extraneous incidents or superfluous characters intrude upon its design. It opens with a view of Freeport society before Ruth arrives which effectively builds suspense about her past and then flashes back to the years of her girlhood before turning to Ruth's return to Freeport, which can then be examined in light of her past. The novel then moves to a brief view of Freeport after Ruth returns to Colorado and closes with a glimpse of her life there with Stuart, her realization that their love is dead, and her decision to leave Stuart and begin a new life, alone, in New York City. The emphasis in the novel falls upon the middle section, when, after providing the necessary background, Glaspell brings together the nonconformist and the society that demands conformity as the price of acceptance. During the days that precede and follow her father's death, Ruth attempts to reach out to the people she loves—to her brother Ted, her sister Harriett, an old friend, a young neighbor, a spinster cousin. Glaspell parallels these efforts with similar attempts to seek acceptance for Ruth by Deane Franklin, Ruth's former beau, who stood by her during the trouble over Stuart. More often than not, their attempts at reconciliation are rebuffed by those who believe that Ruth Holland has irrevocably outraged society.

The omniscient point of view adopted by Glaspell enables her to depict the situation not only through Ruth's eyes, but from the perspectives of everyone involved. The differing viewpoints form a spectrum of opinion ranging from the contention of Ruth and Deane that it is more important to love than to judge, to the conviction that social responsibility is primary, the view held by Stuart's es-

tranged wife Marion, Ruth's relatives and former friends, and Deane's wife Amy. Other characters are ambivalent: Ruth's sister, Harriett, longs to forgive Ruth yet dares not offend her minister husband; her brother Ted sympathizes with Ruth but realizes how much pain her elopement brought their parents; Ruth's girlhood friend, Edith Lawrence Blair, wants very much to see Ruth but is afraid her visit might be interpreted as condoning Ruth's actions.

Ruth's struggle to be faithful to her love for Stuart and at the same time restore relations with her alienated family and friends is never completely resolved. After her father's death, only her younger brother Ted remains loyal to her; her older brother and sister will forgive her only if she renounces Stuart and comes back to live with them. The townspeople are similarly divided. Deane Franklin tries to convince Edith that her view of society is too parochial. "What is it? A collection of individuals for mutual benefit and self-protection, I gather. Protection against what? Their own warmest selves? The most real things in them?"<sup>5</sup> The most adamant adherent of the opposing view is Edith's mother, who tells Deane, "If you can't see that society must close in against a woman like that then all I can say, my dear Deane, is that you don't see very straight. You jeer about society, but society is nothing more than life as we have arranged it. It is an institution. One living within it must keep the rules of that institution. One who defies it—deceives it—must be shut out from it."<sup>6</sup> Even a sympathetic observer such as Ruth's old friend Cora Albright admits, "It isn't just one's self, or even just one's family—though it broke them pretty completely, you know; but a thing like that reaches out into so many places—hurts so many lives."<sup>7</sup>

Ironically, Ruth's staunchest defender is a person who has been reached and hurt by her elopement. Deane Franklin is blamed by Ruth's family and their friends for countenancing and abetting the elopement, and, when he encourages Ruth's old friends to visit her, the hostility he engenders is so great that it eventually affects his medical practice and destroys his marriage to a socially prominent woman who resents his past involvement with an adulteress. Ruth and Stuart's love, to them an intensely private and special relationship, has nearly ruined her brother Cyrus's chances of marriage to one of Stuart's relatives, as well as Ruth's father's business and her mother's social life. Stuart, too, feels torn; his love for Ruth has forced him to relinquish wealth and social position, two things he greatly values, and Marion Williams's refusal to divorce Stuart has made her a cold, bitter person, enchained by her own rigidity.

*Fidelity* is an especially strong novel because Glaspell is able to dramatize a moral issue without presenting it as a clear-cut struggle between good and evil, as she does in her early stories. After suffering the censure of Davenport citizens for her involvement with Jig Cook, Glaspell's sympathy for her protagonist is evident, yet her personal experiences do not blind her to other points of view. Throughout the novel she emphasizes the complexity of the situation, the ambivalent feelings it engenders, the ambiguities it brings to light.

Unlike Susan Glaspell's first two novels, *Fidelity* was not well received. Some reviewers questioned the author's own probity, apparently unable to make the dis-

inction between writing about a fallen woman and being one. "One regrets the vanished charm of this young writer's earliest work. Miss Glaspell's sympathies are too strictly limited to the underdog to allow her to give a justly proportioned picture of human life," wrote the *Atlantic* reviewer.<sup>8</sup> The *Dial* called *Fidelity* "a very unwholesome story and . . . an amazingly dull one, made so by its interminable passages of analysis and introspection."<sup>9</sup> The *Masses* was one of the few journals to print a sympathetic review.

*Fidelity* was the only novel published during Susan's marriage to Jig Cook, for a new kind of literary venture had diverted her attention. By the summer of 1916, interest in the Provincetown Players was high, and Susan and Jig were urging all their friends to write plays and become subscribers to the group. Left-wing journalist John Reed contributed *The Eternal Quadrangle* and *Freedom*, and his wife Louise Bryant offered *The Game*, for which William and Marguerite Zorach designed unusual Egyptian sets. Wilbur Steele and Neith Boyce wrote new plays, and their successes of the past season, along with *Suppressed Desires* and *Change Your Style*, were revived. Jig and Susan were reluctant to rely on past successes, however, and were always on the lookout for new plays.

One day Susan asked Terry Carlin, an Irish vagabond who had just moved in up the street, if he had a play to contribute. "'No,'" said Terry, "'I don't write, I just think and sometimes talk. But Mr. O'Neill has got a whole trunk full of plays.'"<sup>10</sup> Susan was not particularly impressed by this information; nevertheless, she sent word for Eugene O'Neill to bring some of his plays to their home at eight o'clock that night. O'Neill arrived on schedule but was too shy to read his play for the group. He sat alone at the dining room table while actor Frederick Burt read *Bound East for Cardiff*, a sea play that dramatized the reflections of a dying sailor. It was performed in the wharf theater that summer, with Jig Cook in the role of the dying Yank.

Another big hit for the Provincetown Players that season was Susan Glaspell's one-act play, *Trifles*. As Susan, who had always considered herself a writer of fiction, recalled in later years, "I began writing plays because my husband forced me to."<sup>11</sup> Told to sit in the theater and write a play for the next bill, Susan stared at the stage. Soon she began to see a kitchen where O'Neill had envisioned the forecabin of a ship. Drawing on her experiences as an Iowa reporter covering a downstate murder trail, Susan Glaspell wrote her most famous play.

Today *Trifles* is still a popular choice among little theater groups throughout America, has been translated into many foreign languages for overseas production, and is frequently cited in playwriting texts as the classic example of a well-made one-act play. *Trifles* is an important play for these reasons and for its emphasis on the difference between the way men and women experience reality. Written from a feminist point of view, *Trifles* demonstrates that the female mode of perception has a validity of its own and serves as a bond to unite women in sisterhood when they are threatened by male oppression.

*Trifles* is a murder mystery, the story of a farmer's wife who strangles her husband as he lies sleeping in their bed. This alone would be enough to grab and hold

the attention of any audience, but Glaspell at her best never settles for cheap shots or sensational tricks. The murderer, Minnie Wright, never appears onstage; the story of the murder unfolds after the fact, during the course of two simultaneous investigations. The official investigation conducted by county authorities at the scene of the crime proves fruitless, but their wives, sitting in the kitchen below, are able to puzzle out the truth.

"You're convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive," the county attorney asks the sheriff as he leaves the kitchen, and the sheriff replies, "Nothing here but kitchen things."<sup>12</sup> The women find Minnie Wright's dirty towels, unbaked bread, and unfinished sewing to be evidence of more than slovenly housekeeping. Their own experiences as farm wives give them insight into the situation; they reproach themselves for not visiting Minnie and giving her support. Mrs. Hale says, "I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing."<sup>13</sup> They reflect on what life with a frugal and taciturn farmer must have been like for Minnie, once a small town belle who sang in the church choir. Finding a mangled bird cage and the bird with its neck wrung in Minnie's sewing box, they begin to realize what had happened. The men return, having failed in their investigation; the women have found almost conclusive evidence of murder, as well as of Minnie Wright's frustration and loneliness. Rejecting the county attorney's suggestion that she is "married to the law,"<sup>14</sup> the sheriff's wife hides the evidence and the men leave, disappointed at not being able to discover a motive that would convince a jury of Minnie's guilt.

At first reading, *Trifles* seems to be a simple play, engaging because it is suspenseful and realistic. Upon reflection, the reader becomes aware that *Trifles* is not just a play about murder; it is a play about sisterhood and sexual politics, and about the effect of the midwestern environment upon those individuals who attempt to settle and tame the Iowa prairie. While Minnie's neighbors get her belongings ready to take to her in jail, they discuss her plight and conclude that the loneliness of her Iowa farm home contributed to her desperation and near madness. "I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then," the sheriff's wife's remarks.<sup>15</sup> Her comment suggests that Minnie's act was not the act of an evil or crazy woman, but the act of a woman abandoned to a grim life with an Iowa farmer who refused her a telephone or even a canary for company. The setting of the play, an austere Iowa farmhouse isolated on the prairie, functions as a metaphor for the psychological isolation and alienation that Minnie Wright has experienced.

Susan remembered the summer that *Trifles* was produced as an idyllic interlude that separated the rather aimless summers of earlier years from the frantic period when the Provincetown Players fought for survival in New York. "It was a great summer; we swam from the wharf as well as rehearsed there; we would lie on the beach and talk about plays—everyone writing, or acting, or producing,

Life was all of a piece, work not separated from play, and we did together what none of us could have done alone."<sup>16</sup>

Susan and Lucy Huffaker had begun summering in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in 1912, along with the Hapgoods, who had arrived the summer before, and Sinclair Lewis, then twenty-five years old and the author of *Hike and the Aeroplane*, a book for boys that he wrote in three weeks. At that time he was working on his first novel, *Our Mr. Wrenn*, which was to be published by the Frederick A. Stokes Company. It is said that Mary Heaton Vorse would lock him up every day until he produced the requisite number of pages, while Susan, also an author for Stokes, provided emotional and literary support. Her copy of *Our Mr. Wrenn*, is inscribed, "To Susan Glaspell, but for whose encouragement and understanding this book would never have been finished, and to George Cram Cook—prince—from the author."<sup>17</sup>

After she married Jig Cook, Susan continued to spend her summers in Provincetown and her winters in Greenwich Village. During the summer of 1913 they rented a house in Provincetown while renovating an older one they had purchased; Jig knocked out an enclosed staircase and built an open one out of the old lumber. The Cooks' remodelled home made good copy for journalists bent on regaling middle class readers with wild tales of bohemianism in Provincetown. One newspaper article, ostensibly a notice of *Fidelity's* publication, went on to say that Susan and Jig "have a post-Impressionist room in their house. The floors are purple, the walls are yellow, the ceiling is rose, the woodwork is black and one of the doors of the room is painted blue and the other red. It may be a fine room to exercise one's fancy in, but for some of us it would be a little too stimulating."<sup>18</sup> Another point of interest was the dining room table, which Jig had built out of North Carolina pine. Because the grain of the wood formed a musical staff, Jig carved a socialist hymn on the table top. They transformed the living room floor of the house they later purchased in Truro into a multi-colored checkerboard that Jig and Hutch Hapgood used for their chess games, with molasses pitcher, pickle dish, toothpick holder, and cake plate as playing pieces.

"We were supposed to be a sort of 'special group'—radical, wild," reflected Susan. "Bohemians, we have even been called. But it seems to me we were a particularly simple people, who sought to arrange life for the thing we wanted to do, needing each other as protection against complexities, yet living as we did because of an instinct for the old, old things, to have a garden, and neighbors, to keep up the fire and let the cat in at night."<sup>19</sup> That the cat's name was Carnal Copulation was more evidence of that animal's promiscuous inclinations than of Jig and Susan's. Their bohemianism was, for the most part, limited to the pages of their novels and plays, and Susan, whose fictional heroines invariably risked social disgrace for love, was less than sympathetic to the youthful romances of Jig's beautiful, headstrong daughter, Nilla. One evening, Susan, after initial misgivings and much hesitation, permitted Nilla to attend a dance at nearby Highland Light sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution on the condition that she be home by eleven o'clock. When Nilla returned at one in the morning,

she found two distraught bohemians pacing the porch.

The Cooks enjoyed a quiet, family-oriented social life: chess games, swims, picnics, walks, conversation, and dinners with other couples such as Agnes and Eugene O'Neill, John Reed and Louise Bryant, Mary Heaton Vorse and Joe O'Brien, Wilbur and Margaret Steele. "A particularly pleasant place for their group to gather was the home of Neith Boyce and Hutchins Hapgood, where coffee, food and conversation were always in full flavor," remembered Nilla.<sup>20</sup> Neith was an excellent cook, and holiday celebrations were often held at the Hapgoods' home. Susan, whose culinary repertoire was limited to Spanish risotta and grape jelly, was often grateful for Neith's hospitality.

The Cooks' marriage, like the Hapgoods', was in some ways quite a traditional one. Like many other married couples, they wanted children, but a miscarriage in 1914 and a subsequent fibroid tumor put an end to their hopes. Though disappointed at not being able to bear children, Susan found joy in caring for Nilla and Harl, Jig's children from his marriage to Mollie Price. They came to Provincetown each summer and Susan enjoyed creating a family atmosphere for them.

But the Cooks' marriage presented unusual difficulties, and it survived because Susan and Jig were able to cope with these problems and compensate for each other's weaknesses. Jig babied Susan, who had a heart lesion, back trouble, and various other real and imaginary illnesses. She loved to write in an upstairs room with an ocean view. When she was warned by the doctor that climbing stairs would be bad for her heart, Jig built an elevator to lift her from the kitchen to her favorite upstairs room. He also served her breakfast in bed and tended to other domestic chores while Susan, a disciplined and skilled writer, adhered to a strict schedule, writing each morning for several hours, and was successful in selling her short stories to popular, well-paying magazines.

Writing on a schedule was something that Jig could rarely do; he needed the stimulus of inspiration to get started, and when it did not come, he settled for the stimulus of wine or liquor. Jig drank while he wrote, drank when he could not write, drank when he was ill, happy, in love, or out of luck. Provincetowners like to talk of the time when Jig and Harry Kemp set out to steal Plymouth Rock and bestow it upon Provincetown Harbor, the authentic first landing place of the Pilgrims. Taking two Portuguese fishermen along, they set out with a boat and crane, but indulged in too many ritual libations along the way. Kemp and one of the fishermen passed out, followed shortly by Jig and the other Portuguese. The next morning found them drifting back into Provincetown Harbor with the tide, while Plymouth Rock remained unmenaced.<sup>21</sup> Susan was tolerant and understanding of these episodes. "A woman who has never lived with a man who sometimes 'drinks to excess' has missed one of the satisfactions that is like a gift-taking care of the man she loves when he has this sweetness as of a newborn soul," she later reflected.<sup>22</sup> She was also tolerant of Jig's amorous adventures with Eunice Tietjens, Marjorie Jones, Edna Millay, Ida Rauh, and other writers and actresses who were associated with the Provincetown Players.

Hutchins Hapgood remembered a Susan who was occasionally possessive and



*Susan Glaspell and her husband George Cram Cook featured in a newspaper article about famous writing couples c.a. 1913. Courtesy of Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library.*

jealous. "I remember one night Jig and I were playing [chess] at our house and Neith had gone to bed. Jig and I played on till the early morning hours. Suddenly, Susan darted in, with blood in her eye, and hauled off the recalcitrant player in the midst of the game."<sup>23</sup> But Floyd Dell had another opinion. "For Susan Glaspell my respect and admiration grew immensely; it is a difficult position to be the wife of a man who is driven by a daemon, a position from which any mortal woman might, however great her love, shrink in dismay or turn away in weariness; but it was a position which she maintained with serene and radiant dignity."<sup>24</sup>

By the end of that idyllic summer of 1916, the Provincetown Players had become more than an amateur theater group. Their two major talents, Susan Glaspell and Eugene O'Neill, drew the attention of critics who came, unbidden, to see a kind of theater they had never seen before. The Broadway stage featured little serious drama; people would pay only to see frothy musical revues, historical romances, and melodramas. The Washington Square Players countered with Ibsen and Strindberg, but until the Provincetown Players came along, no one was willing to give an opportunity to the unproduced American playwright who dared to be different.

Buoyed up by the critical interest in the group, Jig Cook set out for New York with \$320 in his pocket to find himself a theater. He rented a brownstone at 139 MacDougal Street, next door to the Liberal Club, for \$100 a month and set about remodeling it for the Provincetown Players. Susan was reluctant to try a New York season and feared that they were still too much the amateurs to succeed in the city. But when she arrived in New York in the fall of 1916 after a visit to Davenport, she had a one-act play ready for production at the new theater.

Jig had not only found a building for the theater, but a home for himself and Susan at 1 Milligan Place, in Greenwich Village. Susan had enjoyed the year she spent in Paris living in the Latin Quarter and found the atmosphere of the Village similarly exhilarating. "I like in memory the flavor of those days when one could turn down Greenwich Avenue to the offices of the *Masses*, argue with Max or Floyd or Jack Reed; then after an encounter with some fanatic at the Liberal Club, or (better luck) tea with Henrietta Rodman, on to the Working Girls' home (it's a saloon, not a charitable organization) or, if the check had come, to the Brevoort," she later remembered.<sup>25</sup> But she found bohemianism in itself superficial if unmotivated by idealism or philosophical commitment, and the bohemianism of World War I vintage was more often than not mere radical chic, embraced by uptown swells who flaunted their liberalism by hanging out with thieves and prostitutes and gambling, barely clad, as nymphs and fauns at the *Maxxes* balls. It was in criticism of such misdirected rebelliousness that Bobby Edwards wrote:

They draw nude women for the *Masses*  
Thick, fat, ungainly lasses  
How does that help the working classes?<sup>26</sup>

Susan's comment on the limitations of radical journalism can be found in her



one-act comedy, *The People*, given by the Provincetown Players in March of 1917. Set in the staffroom of *The People*, a radical publication bearing an undeniable resemblance to the *Masses*, the play reveals the foibles of *The People* and its staff by contrasting their petty concerns with the idealism of three of its readers.

As they became more involved with the New York theater, the Provincetown Players no longer put on plays at the wharf during the summer, preferring to concentrate the funds they could raise on the MacDougal Street project. Provincetown summers then became leisurely periods for the rejuvenation of creative energies. Susan and Jig would often walk over the dunes to visit Agnes and Eugene O'Neill, who were living in an abandoned Coast Guard station, away from the main part of town. Jig and Gene swore and fought and plotted plays together; Susan and Gene also found each other stimulating company, much to the dismay of Agnes, who felt she suffered by comparison to this talented writer of plays, short stories, and novels.

Another reason Susan liked to visit the O'Neills was that she was intrigued by the area beyond the dunes that Provincetown people called "the Outside." This region was the inspiration for her one-act play of the same name and for one of the most successful symbols in her work. Susan saw in the struggle between the sand and woods the struggle of living things against the forces of annihilation. "The Outside" suggests the ambiguity inherent in this struggle, for just as there is no clear line of demarcation between woods and sand in the struggle to dominate, the struggle between the forces of life and the forces of death is a battle that is never won. As in *Trifles*, Susan Glaspell uses region in this play as a metaphor to suggest the loneliness and alienation experienced by the play's main characters, Allie Mayo and Mrs. Patrick, who retreat to the Outside to isolate and protect themselves from the pain of loss and rejection.

In addition to *The Outside*, the 1917-1918 season featured two new Glaspell one-act plays: *Close the Book*, a comedy, and *Woman's Honor*, a feminist attack on the double standard. *Close the Book*, like *The People*, pokes fun at the brand of radicalism that is little more than egotism in disguise. *Woman's Honor* is a flawed play, too much aware of its own importance and plagued by a tone that shifts from incisive humor to preachiness.

The 1918-1919 season began with the move from 139 MacDougal Street to an old stable four doors down the block. Here the Players were able to have a larger stage as well as a clubhouse on the second floor of the building where the kind of communal spirit that Jig believed must be the foundation for authentic drama was engendered. As Jimmy Light recalled:

We were a real commune. We lived at the Provincetown. I don't mean we really did—we all had our separate places—but the Provincetown was our spiritual home, our headquarters, our club. There was always something going on, and we had opening night parties, real saturnalias in the classic sense, where we would burlesque and satirize what we'd

been doing in the theater. It was a way of working off steam; things got pretty tense, you know, backstage, and this was our outlet. One time Edna Millay and Ida Rauh were in different plays on the same bill, and several of us approached Edna on the q.t. and suggested that she burlesque Ida's character, then we did the same with Ida. I can still see Edna sitting at a table that night making up, putting on a heavy mouth to give herself a sexy look.<sup>27</sup>

Another reason for the feeling of community among the Players was Jig's insistence that authors involve themselves as completely as possible in the production of their plays. Thus, Susan produced, directed, and acted in many of her own plays. "Susan Glaspell, the writer, was a marvelous actress," recalled William Zorach, who designed the sets for several of the early plays. "Acting played a minor part in her life, but she had that rare power and quality inherent in great actresses. She had only to be on the stage and the play and the audience came alive."<sup>28</sup>

The French director, Jacques Copeau, found this to be true when, during a visit to New York in 1917, he attended a performance of *The People* at the Provincetown Playhouse. In a speech to the Washington Square Players on 20 April 1917, he referred to Susan Glaspell's portrayal of the woman from Idaho:

Recently I attended a performance of one of your little theatres and I observed on the stage a young woman of modest appearance, with a sensitive face, a tender and veiled voice. She was absolutely lacking in technique. She did not have the slightest notion of it. For example, she did not know how to walk on stage, nor how to enter or exit. She did not know either how to accompany her words with the gestures appropriate to the action of the dialogue, and she kept constantly her two arms a little feverishly against her body. And only at the end of her speech, she reached out her two arms simply, and she became suddenly silent, looking out straight ahead as if she was continuing to live her thoughts in the silence. Well, that gesture was admirable, and there was in that look a human emotion that brought tears to my eyes. I had a real woman before me, and the tears which she made me shed were not those involuntary tears brought on sometimes by the nervous excitement of the theater. They were real tears, natural tears, natural, human as she was.<sup>29</sup>

The 1918-1919 season included two plays by Susan Glaspell, a one-act comedy, *Tickless Time*, written in collaboration with Jig, and Susan's first full-length play, *Bernice*. Like *Suppressed Desires*, *Tickless Time* is a spoof of bohemianism at its most absurd. *Bernice* involves a dramatic device that Glaspell used successfully in *Trifles*, the building of the play around a character who never appears onstage.

By the time that *Bernice* was produced, the Provincetown Players were already recognized as historic innovators, and those who gathered with the actors

above the theater to enjoy Christine Ell's cherry cobbler and Boston brown bread included Isadora Duncan, Mary Pickford, Walt Disney, Irving Berlin, and George Gershwin. It is said that Charlie Chaplin once arrived, incognito, to audition for a walk-on role, explaining that he believed the Provincetown Players were the closest approximation to the Moscow Art Theater that America would ever know. The group was especially appreciative of the support of Otto Kahn, who not only rendered much-needed financial assistance but helped Jig upholster the seats in the theater.

Despite support from outside the group, internal problems became more worrisome as the amateur spirit waned. As early as 1916 the quarreling had become serious, as Louise Bryant reported in a letter to Jack Reed:

There is a terrible struggle over the MacDougals. Jig came over and told me this morning . . . . Anyway it seems that Nord has always hated MacDougal ever since he first saw him and Teddy has a great contempt for him and Ida doesn't like him and they won't have him in the group but more than that they want to kick him out altogether. Jig was awfully worried and said that Nord was perfectly childish about it. When some one asked what MacDougal had done Teddy said sarcastically, "Oh, played in country towns in Scotland!" You see Floyd gave his play "A Long Time Ago" to MacDougal *unconditionally* to produce and he insists on having a chance to do it his way *not* Ida's way or Teddy's way. Jig says that even Susan wants to put him out. She has loathed Floyd and everyone connected with him ever since he put her out of his play.<sup>30</sup>

When this kind of bickering grew worse, Jig and Susan decided to take a year off. For the 1919-1920 season, the Provincetown Players were governed by an executive committee headed by Ida Rauh and James Light. After a visit to Davenport, Susan and Jig spent a quiet year writing in Provincetown. When they returned in the fall of 1920, Susan had two new plays ready for production, *Inheritors* and *The Verge*, and Jig had written *The Spring*.

The trip back to Iowa evidently reawakened Susan and Jig's interest in the Midwest, for both *The Spring* and *Inheritors* are based on Iowa materials. *The Spring* is a mystical drama that combines psychic phenomena with Iowa Indian lore; the premise upon which *Inheritors* is based can be found in a comment made by another Iowa writer, Ruth Suckow:

Whatever real value the culture and art of Iowa can have is founded upon this bedrock [the working farmers, the folk element]. Other elements may influence and vary it, but this is at the bottom of them all. Our varying nationalities meeting in this rich soil which has still some of the old pioneer virtue of sturdy freshness—perhaps the only virtue, genuine and clearly distinguishable from all others, which the native culture of this young country has to offer. . . . What we call culture

in Iowa [is] held together and strengthened by the simplicity and severity of its hard-working farmer people.<sup>31</sup>

*Inheritors* takes place in the Iowa of Susan Glaspell's birth, in a town on the Mississippi River where New England settler and Hungarian immigrant live side by side on the prairie that once was the hunting ground for Black Hawk. The first act of the play takes place in 1879, on the Fourth of July. The conflict in this act concerns a piece of property, a hill owned by Silas Morton. "I've seen my husband and Black Hawk climb that hill together," recalls Grandmother Morton, who came to Iowa in a prairie schooner and threw dishwater on the Indians during the Black Hawk War.<sup>32</sup> Developers want to buy his hill, but Silas has other plans. Regretting that homesteading left little time for his education, Silas is determined to provide for the education of future generations. "It makes something of men-learning. A house that's full of books makes a different kind of people," he tells Count Fejevary, a Hungarian refugee whose property adjoins his own.<sup>33</sup> Silas believes that education can give people a broader and more humanitarian perspective on life. To assuage his guilt about taking land away from the Indians, Silas plans to build a college on his hill as a gift to those who will come after him. Admiring his neighbor's sacrifice of his lands in Hungary to fight for freedom there, Silas sees the founding of a college on his hill as a way of emulating the Hungarian. "There will one day be a college in these cornfields by the Mississippi because long ago a great dream was fought for in Hungary," Silas pledges.<sup>34</sup>

In the second act we see that part of Silas's dream has been fulfilled. A college does stand on the hill in 1920, and Silas's grandchildren and the children of other Iowans are students there. But the coming of a new generation has brought about changes in thinking. Silas's idealism has given way to the shrewd pragmatism of the boosters and the parochial views of the super-patriots. "Oh, our pioneers! If they could only see us now and know what they did," exclaims Senator Lewis, upon whom all hopes rest for state money for Morton College.<sup>35</sup> His exclamation is ironic in light of his efforts to persuade a trustee of the college, Count Fejevary's son Felix, to fire Professor Holden for speaking out for conscientious objectors and prison reform. All the money in the Midwest might not have persuaded Silas to sell his hill, but Felix Fejevary is all too ready to barter the freedoms the college was founded to preserve for state funds. An unexpected problem is the radicalism of his niece Madeline, granddaughter of Silas Morton and Count Fejevary. Madeline has become involved in the plight of three Hindu students who are trying to avoid deportation. They have been speaking out against British colonial policy in India, and Felix Fejevary is determined that the college will not become involved in international politics. The fighting spirit of Count Fejevary and Silas Morton has skipped a generation; it is Madeline who attacks a policeman trying to break up the Hindus' demonstration and is hauled off to jail.

The third act takes place at the Morton farm, in the same room where Silas Morton revealed his dream to Count Fejevary, and where Madeline is now waiting to go to town for her trial. She well knows that her uncle can obtain clemency

for her if she promises to take no further part in the Hindu controversy, and this is what her Aunt Isabel begs her to do. Professor Holden is brought in to dissuade her from sacrificing her future for a principle; her father, Ira Morton, pleads with her to accept her uncle's guidance. Ira is a farmer who shows no sign of his father Silas's humanitarianism; he is concerned solely with producing a more perfect breed of corn than his neighbors can grow. "What good has ever come to this house through carin' about the world?" he asks.<sup>36</sup> It is his isolationist response, and the disclosure that her mother died nursing a neighboring Swedish family through diphtheria, that spurs Madeline to defiance. She decides to stand trial and risk a lengthy jail sentence, to carry on the fighting spirit of her pioneer ancestors, to fight for the freedom of others and in so doing preserve her own freedom.

A second Glaspell play produced in 1921, *The Verge*, would seem at first reading to be extremely different from *Inheritors*. The latter spans three generations and forty years; the action of *The Verge* takes place in three days. The heroine of *Inheritors* sacrifices her personal happiness in the cause of social reform; the heroine of *The Verge* is concerned with little except herself. Even the modes of production differ radically; *Inheritors* was done realistically and *The Verge* expressionistically. Yet this comment in the *New York Evening Post's* review of *Inheritors* could just as easily have been said of *The Verge*: "Susan Glaspell is fascinated with the problem of the human pattern, the deadly retrogression which sets in when any species contents itself with complacent reproduction of its kind. To her, life's greatest adventurers are those who act to break away from the repetitious design, who heed the individual impulse to create new forms, to vary, to mark new paths for revolutionary progress. . . ." <sup>37</sup>

*The Verge*, like other Provincetown productions, is an experiment; moreover, it is an experiment about an experimenter. Like Ira Morton, Claire Archer's obsession in life is her experimentation with plant forms, with creating new mutations, new forms of life. We see her in the play surrounded by three men: her husband; her former lover, who is an artist; and a good friend, a drifter. Claire cares nothing for friends or family; she cares only for the Breath of Life, a new bloom into which she is trying to breed an exotic fragrance, and for the Edge Vine, a new form that unfortunately seems to be reverting to type. As the play progresses, Claire's alienation from everyone and everything intensifies until even her own mind becomes too constraining for her rebellious spirit. Claire strangles her former lover, who, like other characters in the play, has attempted to bring her back into normal relationships with her loved ones. As the play ends, Claire sings "Nearer My God to Thee," a frightening indication of the goal she has set for herself in her struggle to realize her individuality.

When *The Verge* was produced in London in 1925, critics were quick to comment on its feminism. "Reason . . . finds something repellent and dubious about her fanatical feminism, her lack of restraint and repose," said the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*.<sup>38</sup> But the reviewer for the *Illustrated London News* thought differently: "What Charlotte Brontë did for the novel, Susan Glaspell is doing for the play. She is making it effeminate. I do not use the word in any derogatory

sense. In a word, she has broken away from the masculine tradition." This critic went on to note that Glaspell had succeeded in inbuing her play with the feminine qualities of passion, instinct, rebellion, intuition, and spirituality. While women dramatists of the past had written in the masculine tradition, Glaspell was not an imitator but an innovator. "This is Susan Glaspell's distinction. She has carried these feminine distinctions into the drama."<sup>39</sup>

When asked about her connection with the feminist movement, Susan told a reporter for the *New York Morning Telegraph*, "Of course I am interested in all progressive movements, whether feminist, social or economic, but I can take no very active part other than through my writing."<sup>40</sup> The comment suggests detachment, or even a polite lack of interest in the specific concerns of the women's movement: suffrage, equal employment opportunities, and discriminatory state laws. Susan was not unaware of these issues, but she was more concerned with psychological oppression, with the way the societal limitations placed on women damage their psyches and prevent them from fully developing their human potential. Nevertheless, she knew from personal experience that discrimination affects all women, even those considered to be "liberated." Her comment to a British reporter concerning her work habits echoes the central thesis of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*: "The shack, in fact, is something that's for work, and work alone. That kind of thing is good, especially for women. If you're at the house, something always happens; a car honks, or someone says the dog is in the middle of the road, or the clothesline has broken down. And a maid will feel she can interrupt a woman where she wouldn't dream of interrupting a man."<sup>41</sup>

Regionalism as well as feminism is an important theme in Susan Glaspell's 1922 comedy "Chains of Dew." The protagonist is a wealthy, socially prominent midwestern businessman with a wife and two children. He is also a poet, but assumes this identity in only two places: the workshop in his home, and Greenwich Village, where his literary friends are concerned that his art is suffering because of his dissociated life. Seymour Standish does nothing to dispel this impression. "I'm going away from here now, away from this life I care about—back to that world I don't belong in. Back to bondage. . . ."<sup>42</sup>

The two worlds converge when Nora Powers, a birth control crusader from New York, visits the midwestern town where Seymour lives. Ostensibly she has come to organize a birth control group in the area, but her real mission is to save Seymour from the tedium of middle class respectability. She is joined there by Leon Whittaker, the editor of a liberal magazine and his Irish friend, James O'Brien, who want to see for themselves what Seymour's midwestern prison is like.

The New Yorkers find the Midwest to be a very different world from that which Seymour has described. They find his friends amusing, his mother amiable and broad-minded, and his wife eager to bob her hair and become the first president of the Mississippi Valley Birth Control League. Clearly, life in the Midwest is not the tiresome ordeal that Seymour has described.

Leon Whittaker cannot understand why Seymour believes his life to be oppres-

sive, but he is certain Seymour would be a better poet if he were free to live in New York. He appeals to Seymour's mother to set Seymour free; she replies that his feeling of bondage is the source of inspiration for his poems about freedom. "His soul must be soul to an alien," she tells Nora. "It's made that way. Here with us—longing for you, whom he cannot have. There with you—the pull of us, to whom he must return. Don't you see what a fix we put him in when we get together?"<sup>43</sup>

Seymour does, indeed, seem to be terribly disconcerted by the collision of his two worlds. He fears Nora's birth control talk will upset his mother and that his Bluff City friends will bore the New Yorkers. These fears are groundless, but underneath them lies a fear that he may see himself as he really is—as someone who depends upon pretense for survival. Seymour actually likes his chains, but he has to pretend that he stoically endures the golf games and the business lunches in order to preserve the fictive world he has created in which to write his poetry.

"Dolls! Dolls! Yes I say *dolls*. Nothing but dolls!" Seymour shouts at the three women who threaten to expose his game.<sup>44</sup> His invective brings to mind another play that is concerned with the relation of man to woman, Henrich Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. The parallels between the two plays go beyond the coincidental fact that one character in each play is named Nora. Both Nora Helmer and Dottie Standish are treated as children by their husbands, who refuse to see that their wives are capable of assuming adult responsibilities. When Dottie tries to understand Seymour's poetry and make time for his writing by keeping his friends away, Seymour becomes angry. Her taking the initiative in these respects threatens his self-image as the head of the household who sacrifices his own desires to give his family the good life. Similarly, when Nora Helmer surreptitiously borrows money to take her husband to Italy for his health, he is astounded at her "immorality." Both men need frivolous society dolls in order to bolster their own egos. But while Nora insists on remaining the independent adult woman she's become and leaves her husband because he refuses to see her this way, Dottie decides to sacrifice the new interests she's found and return to her submissive role in order that Seymour may continue to see himself as the martyr-poet. The play ends with Seymour replacing Nora's birth control pictures with the Sistine Madonna as Dottie sobs for the person she had almost become.

A theme that was of special interest to Susan Glaspell was the relation of the artist to the community. Can one participate fully in life and write about it, too? Or is perhaps the separation between one's life and one's art a stimulus for creativity? The artist who leads a double life, with business and family carefully relegated to one sphere and art to another, fascinated Susan Glaspell. Did this arrangement make for better writing, or was this kind of writer something less for his refusal to integrate his life with his art?

Apparently Susan Glaspell intended to leave this question unresolved by drawing the character of Seymour in such a way that it is not possible to determine whether or not he is a poet worthy of our respect. However, when the play opened in April of 1922, a common complaint was that Seymour came off as a caricature

rather than a believable character, thus destroying any ambiguity that might have been suggested by the script. "It is impossible to make the audience believe that such a benighted ass can possibly be important as a poet or anything else. . . ." wrote Heywood Brown in the *New York World*.<sup>45</sup> This review would have confirmed Susan's suspicions that Edward Reese was miscast in the part of Seymour. "I know a Seymour equal to an impression of reserve and complexity would have helped the part a lot, one who could keep you guessing as to whether there was something there," she wrote to Edna Kenton.<sup>46</sup> But she made this comment without having seen the play for herself. She and Jig had left the Provincetown Players before "Chains of Dew" opened. In March of 1922 they sailed for Greece.



## 4

# Horizons Expand

In the early years of the seventeenth century, Susan Glaspell's ancestors set sail for a land reputedly menaced by two-headed snakes, man-eating bears, lions that swam with the grace of dolphins, and savages who could make water burn and trees dance. But if the new world offered unusual challenges, it also offered the opportunity to shape an entirely new kind of social order from the inchoate wilderness.

Perhaps some of their descendants found this society disappointingly tame, for they left the eastern seaboard 200 years later, traveling westward over the prairies, crossing a wide river that few before them had ever attempted. When the midwestern towns that they founded grew dull and repressive, their children reversed the process and wandered eastward, stopping briefly in Chicago until lively tales of free expression lured them to Greenwich Village. After World War I they gravitated toward Paris, where living was cheap, liquor was legal, and writers such as Joyce, Stein, and Pound were shocking the traditionalists with their experiments in poetry and fiction.

This journey was often tedious and futile, as Edmund Wilson suggests in his play *Beppo and Beth*:

When you're in Galesburg, Illinois you want to get to Chicago, then, when you get to Chicago, you want to make good in New York. Then when you do put it over in New York, what in God's name have you got? The depressing companionship of a lot of other poor small-town-ers like yourself who don't know what the hell to do with themselves either! . . . You think it would be better in Paris, but then when you get to Paris, you find the same fizzed-out people and you decide that they're worse than the ones at home because they haven't got even their small-town background to make fools of themselves against.<sup>1</sup>

But for Susan Glaspell the life of an expatriate was not the dreary business that some others found it to be. Other Americans flocked to the rue de l'Odéon to see and be seen in Sylvia Beach's bookshop; Susan Glaspell quietly found a new home in the mountain village of Delphi, Greece.

Jig Cook had been taught from childhood that Greece was his spiritual homeland. His trip there in 1922 was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream; however, it was precipitated less by idealism than by disputes within the Provincetown Players that threatened to destroy the organization. In its eight-year history, the group had triumphed over building inspectors, bad acoustics, skeptical critics, cramped quarters, police harassment, and financial crises, only to discover that they were

their own worst enemy. Their problems were not immediately apparent when Jig and Susan returned from Provincetown in the fall of 1920. They were enthusiastic about producing Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, and Jig went to New York that fall determined to find a black actor to play the part of Brutus Jones and to build an enormous white plaster dome for him to play against.

The dome was built, effectively lighted, and Charles Gilpin's blackness against the brilliant blue background was as electrifying as Jig had imagined. But the importance of the dome was an indication of the direction the Provincetown Players had taken during its eight-year existence. In 1916 their most expensive set had cost \$13; to build the dome, Jig spent almost all of the \$530 in the Players' treasury.

Jig Cook had founded a playwrights' theater, a community theater, an amateur theater in the true sense of the word. He envisioned a kind of drama that would spontaneously arise from those lovers of drama that he had gathered about him, a religious ecstasy similar to that experienced in the Dionysian revels which gave birth to drama in Greece. For Jig Cook the theater was a place of unity and harmony where the playwright was also director, producer, and actor.

But by 1920, production had become the focal point. New playwrights with wild ideas were not welcomed as warmly as before, for professionalism had replaced the community spirit of former years. The Provincetown was becoming a showcase for the plays of O'Neill and a tryout stage for playwrights with Broadway ambitions.

The situation came to a head when Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* opened in November of 1920. The play was an enormous success, bringing in over 1,000 new subscribers to the Provincetown Players and moving uptown to the Princess Theater after its scheduled run in the Village. By contrast, Jig Cook's new play *The Spring*, although only moderately successful during its run in January of 1921, was moved uptown to the Princess the following fall, where only four tickets were sold for the third performance.

The rift that developed in the organization during the 1920-1921 season eventually deepened into a conflict between two factions. The founding members of the group felt committed to preserve the old ideals of communal drama and experimental theater; the newer members wanted to concentrate on polished productions of plays with Broadway potential. "The secret of their success was that they gave no thought to success. The secret of their failure—or rather their fulfillment—was again their success," wrote Kenneth Macgowan in *The Provincetown*. "When *The Emperor Jones* brought Broadway to MacDougal Street, the peculiar creative spirit of the Provincetown was over."<sup>2</sup>

Since this conflict could not be resolved to the satisfaction of either group, the Provincetown Players decided to incorporate and suspend activities for one year. Jig and Susan left for Greece in March of 1922 after endorsing their proxies to Edna Kenton, one of the charter members, and arranging with manager M. Eleanor "Fitzie" Fitzgerald to handle their finances and forward their royalties to the Bank of Athens.

Once in Greece, Jig Cook found that "the Parthenon in full moonlight is the only thing left that can give that twenty-year-old sensation of falling hopelessly in love," but Athens was too French and modern for the Iowa boy raised on Plato and Plotinus.<sup>3</sup> He chose, instead, to live in Delphi, Apollo's city, which the ancients had believed to be the center of the universe.

Delphi lies high on the slopes of Parnassos, cleft by deep gorges of grey rock, shaded by spruce trees, and edged with olive groves. "Form had its ultimate triumph here, and it is as if the light were grateful and does what light has never done before." Susan wrote to Edna Kenton.<sup>4</sup> The temple of Apollo, the gymnasium and stadium, the theater and the grove once sacred to an earth goddess and later dedicated to Athena lay down the road from modern Delphi. There Susan and Jig first stayed at the Pythian Apollo Hotel and made friends with the waiter, Athanasius Tsachalos, who helped them get acquainted in Delphi. "Thanasie" later found them a place to live and left his job at the hotel to be their man-of-all-work.

Although Susan wrote to her mother of eating rice and lamb in the temple at sunset and watching the moon come up, climbing the slopes of Parnassos to read beside the Castalian Spring, watching the women of Delphi spin white wool into thread while Jig studied modern Greek with the schoolteacher, these romantic letters did not tell the whole story of her first days in Delphi. Jig may have been writing poetry and studying Greek, but he was, much of the time, engaged in his favorite pastime, drinking and talking with the men of Delphi in Andreas Korlss's wineshop. Soon Jig was spending almost as much time there as he did at home, where Susan sat in her room crying, lonely and ill from a bladder infection, refusing to eat until Jig returned. Adding to the difficulties of adjusting to a foreign culture were problems that Jig and Susan thought they had left behind. Edna Kenton wrote frequently, recounting the gossip and infighting among the Provincetown Players, hinting darkly that the more production-minded members of the group were plotting to take over the organization. Moreover, the royalties that Jig and Susan were to have received from *Suppressed Desires* and *The Emperor Jones* were slow in arriving; Jig and Susan were annoyed at Fitzie for this delay.

In July, when Delphi grew hot, the villagers moved up the mountain with their flocks to camp at Kalania, and Thanasie was soon occupied with the nearly impossible task of finding a place for Jig and Susan to work that was both easily accessible and quiet. There they spent a leisurely summer living in huts of spruce boughs and working in a nearby tent. Susan was becoming better adjusted to the ways of Delphi; a visit from her archaeologist friend Miss Eldridge and the arrival of a copy of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in time for her birthday that year made life in Kalania even more pleasant. "The theater has always made it hard for me to write and now I will have a better chance for my own writing," she confided to her mother.<sup>5</sup>

But sometimes the peace of the little village was threatened by those who lived

higher up the mountain. Bandits demanded tribute from the friends of the wealthy Americans and shot Jig's friend Demetrius Klombls to prove they meant business. After Jig made a litter and helped carry his friend back to Delphi, Thanasic guided the frightened Cooks to Agorgiani, on the other side of the mountain, evading the outlaws.

September of 1922 found Susan and Jig in Salonika. Refugees were swarming into the city, driven out of Smyrna by the Turks, and Susan was soon involved in relief work. "It was really a heartbreaking experience," she wrote her mother. "They were crowded around the shed where we were working, many of them women with babies and little children, all holding up their slips, anxious to be taken at once, for fear the things would run out. And they did soon begin to run out, and you can imagine how hard it was to be making up a bundle that called for blanket and socks, after the blanket and socks were gone."<sup>6</sup>

In October of 1922, Susan's father died, and in November she returned to Davenport to be with her mother, who was ill. While waiting for her ship to sail, Susan and Jig toured the Peloponessos, visiting Arcady, Sparta, Olympia, and Mycenae. After Susan sailed, Jig spent a lonely winter in Athens, awaiting her return and translating his play, *The Athenian Women*, into Greek. "You couldn't bring Harl and Nilla with you, could you?" he wrote Susan as she was preparing to return to Greece.<sup>7</sup>

Susan was able to grant a part of this wish; when she sailed for Italy on the S.S. *Provincetown* in February, she was accompanied by Jig's daughter, Nilla's appearance at this time again forced Susan into the role of stepmother, a role that had taxed her capabilities several years earlier in Provincetown. Susan had loved caring for Jig's children, but now she found herself the reluctant *duenna* of a precocious fourteen-year-old who wanted to wear a long evening gown, lipstick, and dangling earrings, and dance with the foreign dignitaries aboard ship. Later, in Greece, Susan would find Nilla arranging to meet her beaux in the mountains or on the beach. When she forbade these activities, Nilla pointed out that in Susan's novels, love excuses everything. "But you are not in love, and so there is no excuse," was Susan's stern reply.<sup>8</sup>

Jig met Nilla and Susan in Palermo, Italy, and they took a steamer to Corinth, Jig pointing out the sights to Nilla and Susan reading the *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*. When they arrived in Corinth, Jig and Susan found Theodora, a refugee of the Turkish persecutions, and offered her a job as housemaid with them in Delphi.

Getting across the Gulf of Corinth was a problem to which Jig and Susan found different solutions. When Jig announced that he would sail across with his friend, the Captain of the Drunkards, Susan discovered that she had shopping to do in Patras and decided to proceed to Delphi by train. This she did, and Jig, Nilla, and Theodora soon followed suit, after an abortive voyage on the Gulf with the notorious Captain at the helm.

In June of 1923 the Cooks were settled in Agorgiani, where Thanasic had taken them the previous September to elude the bandits. But when they went up

to Kalania that summer. Susan, while alone, entertained a Greek gentleman who, unbeknownst to her, was Argyrokastritis, King of the Bandits, the perpetrator of eight murders and several kidnappings. He nonchalantly called on Susan, who offered him a cigarette and a glass of wine. Jig was annoyed when he learned the identity of Susan's caller and became even more angry when he learned that Thanasia had been supplying the bandits with the Cooks' cigarettes and wine all summer. But from Argyrokastritis's point of view, the Cooks were enjoying his hospitality while they lived on the mountain, so it was only right that they reciprocate occasionally.<sup>9</sup>

When she returned to Delphi that autumn, Susan began to feel more a part of the little community and came to love and understand the Greek people. She was tolerant of the scatterbrained maid Theodora who let the food burn while she was gossiping with the neighbors, and always remembered the children of their friends in Delphi with school supplies and chocolates when she returned from a trip to Athens. She and Jig helped with the harvesting of the wheat and watched Nilla tread the grapes that would one day be wine. When Halloween arrived Nilla gave an American-style Halloween party complete with jack-o'-lanterns and fancy hats.

This was the year that Jig was enthusiastically planning a Cain and Abel play for Delphi, with the shepherds and farmers of the village improvising parts. But he was growing thin, absentminded, ill-tempered. One day, in a quarrel over some minor matter, he stood up, turned over the table and announced to Susan that the only woman who had ever understood him was Ida Rauh. After Nilla led Susan away, Jig wrote to Ida of what happened. "It seems to me that you, more than any other friend or lover of me, believed in my prophetic gift, knowing that I knew—in flashes—what must be."<sup>10</sup>

In her letters to her mother, Susan continued to reassure her that all was well on Parnassos. "Nilla is really a very unusual girl and we have become the best of friends and I am very fond of her . . . I often find myself talking to her as if she were much older. It is wonderful how she gets along with her Greek, she can now talk well and read it a little and write."<sup>11</sup> In these letters Susan never revealed the strain of living in a foreign country with a poet and his unpredictable daughter. However, Hutchins Hapgood reported that he had received a letter from Susan that autumn, explaining that the situation had gotten too difficult for her in Delphi and asking if she could stay with them in Paris. Hutch replied that she was welcome to come, but that he was certain she would soon change her mind.<sup>12</sup>

Before she could make this decision, circumstances intervened. Jig and Susan decided that Nilla should have a formal education, and in December Susan took her to Athens to enroll in the American College for Girls. When Susan returned, Jig was in poor health and worried about their dog, TòPuppy, which they had acquired in Agorgiani the previous spring. TòPuppy soon became hopelessly ill and had to be shot by Thanasia. The next day Jig stayed in bed with what Susan thought was a cold and the village doctor diagnosed as the grippé. When he began to develop some alarming symptoms, Susan telegraphed to Athens for an American doc-

tor.

The doctor arrived too late to help Jig. According to the physician, Jig had contracted glanders, a disease of horses and dogs. This disease had also caused the death of TõPuppy, who must have bitten or scratched Jig. Jig Cook was buried in January of 1924 in the old graveyard of Delphi. The people of Delphi washed his body in wine and buried him according to Greek tradition, in the *rouka* he wore as a symbol of his love for them. Later the government ordered the placement of one of the old stones from the temple of Apollo upon the grave of this man who had so loved the Greeks that he had come to live and die with them.

Susan and Nilla returned to the United States in February of 1924. After seeing that Nilla got safely back to her mother, Susan returned to Davenport, her grief tempered by the thought of writing a book that would keep Jig's memory alive. "I am going home to be with my mother a while," she wrote the Hapgoods. "She is feeble and both my brothers, at a sacrifice to their own affairs, have been much with her. It seems I am the one to do something for her now, and I grasp at all the reasons there are for going ahead. But I cannot live in that place—Davenport. I must be near these friends who understood Jig."<sup>13</sup>

Susan conceived of the book as a tribute to Jig, as a way of "making Jig realized by more people." But overwhelmed by grief and depression, she was unable to make much progress during the spring of 1924. Hutch Hapgood described her during this period: ". . . lonely and unhappy after the death of Jig, [she] drank in a different spirit from that of the old days, and, a worker all her life, still worked, to be sure, but more chaotically and with frequent interruptions."<sup>14</sup>

Another source of worry to her was the Provincetown Players, now a very different group than it was in the days when she was one of its leading playwrights. Eugene O'Neill, Robert Edmond Jones, and Kenneth Macgowan, known as the Triumvirate, were now the directors of the group, and Susan, spurred on by Edna Kenton, was determined that they cease to use the name "Provincetown Players."

The issue of the name had come up during the two years that Jig and Susan were in Greece, where they received periodic bulletins from Edna Kenton on the matter. From Delphi Susan had written to Edna: "Our own feeling remains what it was—that the Provincetown Players was a unique group, with a very definite reason for existing, and that a quite other thing should have a quite other name."<sup>15</sup> Now the Triumvirate proposed that they change the name of the company to The Experimental Theater and retain the name "Provincetown Playhouse" for the theater itself. O'Neill believed this was a way of showing respect for Jig's memory; Susan saw it as a subterfuge and said so in a letter to Fizzie. "There was a man named Jig Cook. He gave some eight years of his life to creating the Provincetown Playhouse. If it had not been for him, there would not be that place in which you now put on your plays. He worked until he had worked himself out, and then he went away, and he died. You are profiting by what he did, and you have forgotten him"<sup>16</sup>

The issue was finally resolved in May of 1924, when a new theater company, The Experimental Theater, was formed. Edna Kenton was edged out of the new

group and Susan resigned in disgust, sending a scathing letter that concluded, "Fitzie, and all of you, for this letter is for all of you, from very deep down, I am through."<sup>17</sup> To smooth things over, O'Neill arranged for a bronze plaque honoring Jig Cook to be placed in the Provincetown Playhouse, and Susan, at his request, wrote a eulogy of Jig for one of the new company's programs.

Through all of these difficulties, Susan was occupied with two projects: putting together a collection of Jig's poems, *Greek Coins*, which was published in 1925, and writing his biography. This last she found a difficult task, involving many false starts, not only because of ill health, depression, drinking, and exasperation over the trouble with the Provincetown Players, but because she had assigned herself the task of writing not just a biography of Jig, but a book that would illuminate his soul.

"I want to begin at the beginning," she told Edna Kenton, "the Iowa background, Dad Cook and Ma-Mie. . . the boy at Iowa who dreamed of Greece—Harvard and Heidelberg, university teacher, gardener; and always the creative artist with life itself; hence the Provincetown Players; then knowing it was time to go to Greece—the American in Delphi. The story of an extraordinary American romance such as perhaps no other in the history of this country has achieved. And a weight, an influence impossible to calculate. Something much bigger than—well, I won't go into that, but I did it wrong the first time."<sup>18</sup>

In its final form *The Road to the Temple* shapes up much the way Susan outlined above. She tells Jig's story in the first person, supplementing the narrative with much personal observation and with excerpts from Jig's stories, novels, poems, letters, diaries, even with ideas he had jotted down on scraps of paper or in margins of books. Her problem was to write a spiritual biography of a man who had dreamed much but achieved relatively little; the result might be compared to a description of one of the foothills of the Alps written by someone who had mistaken it for Mont Blanc.

Susan, in time, came to realize that her passionate involvement with her subject had distorted her perspective. "I once tried writing about Greece. . . but perhaps was too emotional at that time—Jig just having died there, and seeing too much the blue of eternity and not enough of the color of well-cooked liver and gray lichens," she admitted to Edmund Wilson.<sup>19</sup> Yet Susan was to make further use of the Greek material she had collected in notebooks and committed to memory. In January of 1923, the *New Republic* published her sketch, "Dwellers on Parnassos"; her short story, "The Faithless Shepherd," appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1926; and Susan gave *Fugitive's Return*, a novel published in 1929, a Greek setting.

In 1924 Susan Glaspell met and fell in love with Norman Matson, a young writer staying in Provincetown with Mary Heaton Vorse. Norman shared Susan's interest in literature, gardening, and animals. They planted bulbs together at Susan's Truro home, Norman adding silver poplars, willows, and Norway maples. They acquired a cat, Gamelost, and two wire-haired terriers, Samuel But-

ler and Tucker. For their first Christmas together Norman gave Susan a tiny diary, filled with reminiscences of their courtship. "I thought—I can see because I love Susan," read one entry.<sup>20</sup>

The years with Norman were productive ones for Susan, who published an edition of Jig's poems as well as his biography, three novels, several short stories, and two plays. During this time Norman published three novels: *Flecker's Magic* (1926), *Day of Fortune* (1927), and *Doctor Fogg* (1929). Together Susan and Norman collaborated on *The Comic Artist*, a play in three acts that was produced on Broadway in 1933.

Susan's relationship with Norman followed the pattern she had established in her marriage to Jig Cook: she, the more successful and probably the more talented of the two, tried to play down her own abilities and promote her mate's literary efforts. In 1928 she wrote to her literary acquaintances, including Sherwood Anderson and Theodore Dreiser, asking them to read Norman's latest novel, *Day of Fortune*. Despite her efforts to advance his career, Norman remained relatively obscure while Susan's reputation flourished, ultimately straining the relationship beyond repair. Several months after she won the Pulitzer Prize, Susan and Norman ended their relationship; that ultimate triumph may have cost her the man she loved and prompted Norman to become involved with the younger, less threatening woman he may have needed to feel secure in his masculinity.

Some of Susan's Provincetown friends viewed Norman as an upstart, and she was criticized for living with him while she was writing *The Road to the Temple*. Hutchins Hapgood believed that the book was "greatly changed in spirit by the advent of Norman Matson." "With great vividness I remember the moment when Susan met Matson," he recalled. "I knew from her eager expression that something had happened, that by instinct Susan felt that here was a thread leading her back to life, a plank that would save her from the depths."<sup>21</sup> But Eben Given remembered that "Susan and Norman made a great team. They were witty and *au courant*, able to talk about any subject in the world."<sup>22</sup> Norman's analysis of the problem was concise. "The trouble with the Provincetown people and me is simply this: they are all respectable. I'm not."<sup>23</sup>

During the summer and fall of 1925 Susan and Norman toured Europe. Susan believed that a visit to Norway would be inspiring to Norman, who was of Norwegian extraction; afterward they traveled in France, where Susan wrote her mother, "I haven't done as much work as I hoped I would since I left Norway. Now I am going to the south of France where the Steeles and other people I know are." She mentioned an unexpected check from Stokes she had just received, commenting that "it will make a Christmas present for you all, including Ray and Flossie. Soon I think I can do more, and next year we will all be together."<sup>24</sup>

During her years with Norman, Susan made annual visits back to Davenport. Her mother was seriously ill, and Susan's brother Frank and his wife Hazel had reluctantly assumed the burden of nursing her. "Things here are worse than I had known," she wrote in October of 1926. "I am doing what I can to make them a little better. Hazel had to go away the day before I arrived, her mother is sick,



so mother and Frank and I are alone. Frank does not want to stay here this winter, and feels I must stay and 'keep the home' for mother. I tell him I cannot, but to my reasons, he answers he did not want to stay either and stayed for years."<sup>25</sup>

Susan was tired, ill, and terribly worried about how the publication of *The Road to the Temple* would affect Davenport friends and relatives, especially her mother. "She's so afraid and nervous I hate to have her read the things I say about myself. It will really be very hard on her. All the family will blame me for having done it. Davenport will buzz, I fancy. I am glad I will be away then."<sup>26</sup> Later, Susan wrote Norman, asking him to send a copy of the book to Mr. and Mrs. William Jordan Rapp in New York. "Pray for me," she asked Norman, for Mrs. Rapp was Jig's second wife Mollie. "I am sending the book I received from you today on to the Cooks in Davenport. Again, pray for me—melancholia, and drinking and irregular love affairs, they may make a fuss. As I read it, I don't know how I had the nerve to do it, without their seeing."<sup>27</sup>

Back in Provincetown, Norman was working on his second novel, *Day of Fortune*, revising *The Comic Artist*, and trying to find a producer for it. His letters to Susan in Davenport frequently consisted of comments on Provincetown parties: "'Bla,' said Eben. Frank grunted. 'Bla,' said Mrs. Kaesclau, delighted. 'Galumph,' said Charlie in his Swedish manner. 'Blah,' said Brownie. And pretty soon it was my turn, so I said, 'Bla,' too."<sup>28</sup>

Susan went to Chicago just before Thanksgiving to try a new doctor and dentist, writing Norman of what she was reading. "I admire Virginia Woolf so much that I wonder why I don't like her more," she wrote to Norman. "She makes the inner things real, she does illumine, and she makes relationships realities as well as people. But I remember the intensity, the thrill with which I read *Passage to India*. How I would have hated anyone who took the book away from me. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, you can about as well read in one part of the book as in another. If one could have what she has, or something of it, and have also story, that simple downright human interest."<sup>29</sup>

Susan Glaspell's fourth novel, *Brook Evans*, shows the influence of her playwrighting experience. It is what Percy Lubbock would call a scenic novel, reminiscent of a play in three acts. *Brook Evans* shows how three generations of a family deal with the conflicting demands of society and self, with each section of the novel focusing on a person of divided mind who must choose the principle that will guide her life.

During the summer of 1928, an article in a Davenport newspaper announcing the publication of *Brook Evans* stated that "Miss Glaspell is now married to Norman Matson, himself a novelist and playwright. She and her husband are moving to a secluded old farmhouse at Truro, on Cape Cod, where they will be removed from the demands of Prophetstown [sic], which has grown too popular."<sup>30</sup> Alice Glaspell's health was deteriorating, and since free-thinking daughter and church-going mother did not agree on many topics, Susan, wishing to spare her mother additional pain, had let it be known about Davenport that she and Norman were married. Despite Susan's efforts to eliminate this kind of conflict, her mother



*Susan Glaspell c. a. 1930. Courtesy of Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library.*



Susan Glaspell and her husband George Cran Cook in Delphi, Greece c.a. 1922. Courtesy of Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

found Susan's candor in her fiction difficult to accept; that her daughter was a person who would share her most intimate thoughts with thousands of readers was something that continually troubled her.

Earlier in the summer Alice Glaspell had written Susan a letter that was critical of *Brook Evans*, and then tried to smooth things over in the next letter. "Susie, dear, when I thot [sic] I had hurt you after all your hard work, I was hurt myself but I did not realize the story and after I read the different reviews I thot differently. I am old and my thots are slow and weak but I think you will understand. I am so thankful the book is so well-received, and I think the reviews from London are very remarkable, from so far."<sup>31</sup>

Susan returned to Davenport late in 1928. "If Norman will be home try and have him come with you. Tell him I want to know my new son," her mother wrote Susan in anticipation of this visit,<sup>32</sup> but Susan, anxious that her mother not learn the truth about her relationship with Norman, always came back to Davenport alone and instructed Norman to address her letters there to "Susan Matson."

The 1928 visit was especially trying because Susan's mother was growing senile and continually mistook her daughter for the nurse. Alice Glaspell constantly complained that she had a neglectful daughter named Susie who never came to see her or wrote her a letter. Susan's sister-in-law wanted her to write her mother a letter and read it to her, but Susan refused, feeling that it would destroy any possibility of her mother ever recognizing her.

In Provincetown, Norman was working on a novel and making the rounds of Provincetown parties. "Everybody gets drunk; glasses are smashed; a lamp or a vase knocked over; Hertha does a solo dance; Eben starts to wrestle with somebody; Some woman begins to cry; discordant singing; Frank, plied with specially strong drinks, coughs until you'd think his head would fall off, he gets up and falls down. Everybody is silent for a moment, then it all goes on. It's a psuedo-orgy."<sup>33</sup>

In Davenport, Susan was alone, burdened with the care of an invalid and a large house, smoking too much and writing infrequently. Somehow another novel got written, one that explores an idea that had been growing in her mind for some time. A notebook entry reads, "The man (or men) who make the women personify custom—holding them from their fullest selves. She lets them think so."<sup>34</sup> In "Chains of Dew" this is exactly what happens: Dottie Standish lets Seymour believe she is a shallow, silly woman because his ego demands that he feel he is her superior. But what if the woman refuses to let the man think her a ninny? What if she rebels? What would happen then? Susan answers these questions in her sixth novel, *Ambrose Holt and Family*, published in 1931.

All of the elements of "Chains of Dew" are present in this novel: the midwestern businessman-poet, his New York friends, his wife and children, his quiet, tolerant mother. But the focus is not the poet himself, as in "Chains of Dew"; it is Harriett "Blossom" Holt's mind through which the story is rendered. This shift in point-of-view indicates that a corresponding shift in emphasis has occurred; the events of the plot are important not so much for what they reveal about the poet

as for the way they contribute to the development of the poet's wife, as she becomes a strong, self-sufficient woman.

Alice Glaspell died in February of 1929, but Susan did not return to Davenport for the funeral. "We think that you did right by not coming when you were not able to travel," wrote her brother Frank.<sup>35</sup> A new project, inspired by her reading of Genevieve Taggart's biography of Emily Dickinson, was forming in Susan's mind. Though her health was poor, she was tremendously enthusiastic about it. ". . . I remember when the idea of *Alison's House*, a story based on Emily Dickinson's life, first possessed her. Seeing Susan in those days when she was first plunging her mind into Emily Dickinson's story was seeing a creative force at work," remembered Mary Heaton Vorse.<sup>36</sup>

Despite her feeling for the subject, the writing of *Alison's House* proved difficult. The Dickinson family refused to allow Susan to use the family name or any of Emily Dickinson's poems in the play. Susan refused to give up her project; she merely changed the setting from Amherst to Iowa and created Alison Stanhope, a Dickinson-like spinster poet who was rumored to have once loved a married man. Although Eva LeGallienne was to produce and direct the play at the Civic Repertory Theater, Susan was still anxious about it. "*Alison's House* opens December first," she wrote Norman. "Don't believe it will get over—fear it won't be well played."<sup>37</sup>

After *Alison's House* got under way, Susan and Norman traveled for a short while in the Southwest and in Mexico, then returned to Provincetown to resume writing. In the spring of 1931, Susan went to get the mail and found an envelope from Columbia University. Thinking it was a request from a student group to produce one of her plays without paying a royalty, she set it aside, but an hour later, she decided that it must be dealt with and opened it reluctantly. Inside the envelope was a letter announcing that the Pulitzer committee had chosen *Alison's House* as "the American play, produced in New York, which shall best represent the educational value and power of the stage."

Susan was thrilled with the Pulitzer award, the highest honor she had ever received.<sup>38</sup> After celebrating her success with friends at a Provincetown restaurant, she went to New York to be interviewed and photographed with Eva LeGallienne. A quick decision had been made to move the play uptown for a limited engagement at the Ritz Theater.

The New York critics were as surprised as Susan when they learned of her honor. Ward Morehouse quoted a New Yorker who, when asked if he had seen this year's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, replied, "My God, I haven't been south of 14th Street in twenty years!"<sup>39</sup> Few people had seen the play in the Village, and its first uptown performance would, in effect, be an opening night.

Charles Towne confessed himself ". . . delighted with this year's winner in the realm of the theatre; for when we first saw *Alison's House*, we were deeply moved. . . ."<sup>40</sup> Brooks Atkinson said that "if the 1931 drama prize were for Miss Glaspell personally, everyone would purr with satisfaction. For nearly a quarter of a century she has been a force for the good in the literature of this country."<sup>41</sup>

He believed, however, that no New York play was of Pulitzer quality that year, and that there should have been no award for drama given.

It is difficult to quarrel with the objections that critics made to the play: it is insufficiently dramatic, with undistinguished dialogue and a sentimentalized treatment of the subject. The play brings to mind an entry in one of Edmund Wilson's notebooks about Susan Glaspell: "Dramatist friend who had formula: three points—condition at the beginning of the play 'which grows'—obstacle at end of second act, which is removed by surprise—ditto at end of third act.—"<sup>42</sup> This formula is readily apparent in *Alison's House*; in the first act the condition which grows is the mystery about Alison Stanhope's private life. The play takes place on New Year's Eve, 1899; a reporter has come down from Chicago to interview the Stanhopes, who are breaking up the family estate on the Mississippi River where Alison lived as a recluse for most of her life. Alison's nephew, Ted, who is writing a paper about his famous aunt for college, hints at the mystery. "Was Alison a virgin?" he asks, touching off a heated family discussion.<sup>43</sup> The first act ends with a mysterious fire in the house, which the family later learns had been set by Aunt Agatha, Alison's sister.

Agatha stands between the image of Alison as a virgin-poet and the discovery of her true personality; she is the obstacle who is removed at the end of the second act by surprise. She dies, after giving a small portfolio to her niece Elsa, who had disgraced the family years earlier by eloping with a married man, but has returned to the family home on the last day of the nineteenth century for sentimental reasons.

Act three takes place in Alison's room, undisturbed by the passage of time. The family discovers that the portfolio Agatha has been guarding for so many years contains Alison's poems, poems that no one ever knew she had written. They tell the story of her love affair with a Harvard professor and of her decision to break off the relationship and live quietly at home with her brother and sister. Alison's niece and nephews argue that the poems should be made known, that Alison is a public figure and the public has the right to know everything about her. But Alison's brother wants to burn them, fearing disgrace for the family and for Alison. His opposition is neutralized by a reconciliation with his daughter Elsa as the first strokes of the twentieth century are heard. "It isn't—what you said. Or even what Ann said. But her. It goes. It is going. It is gone. She loved to make her little gifts. If she can make one more, from her century to yours, then she isn't gone."<sup>44</sup>

Unlike *Trifles* or *The Verge*, *Alison's House* does not excite its audience with bold new ideas or a suspenseful plot. It is a *mélange* of themes, devices, and characters that Susan Glaspell has used time and time again. There is the unseen woman around whom the play is built, and the exile who has disgraced the family and returns for a reconciliation. Once again, Glaspell explores the relation of the past to the present, the conflict between individualism and conformity, and the question of the artist's responsibility to the world in which she lives. And, as always, love is the play's primary concern. A reviewer from the *Boston Evening*

*Globe* found the charm of the play to lie in the techniques that Glaspell uses to develop the character of Alison. "That method, briefly put, is the assemblage and coordination, in speech after speech, episode after episode, character upon character, background and foreground, of lines and colors that shall finally coalesce into a vivid, veracious portrait of the all-pervading Alison. In the reflections of that image the reactions of the other personages to her memory shall finally become clear."<sup>45</sup>

Only if the play is seen to be built around the idea of Alison by using the visible to reveal the invisible can Susan Glaspell's achievement be fully appreciated. The breaking up of the family estate necessitates sorting through old newspapers, books, and papers that evoke the ambience of Alison's past. The conversation about Alison precipitated by this project and by the questions asked by Ted and the reporter builds to an emotional peak that almost requires Alison's presence; when Elsa walks in, it is almost as though Alison had returned. The episode with the Hodges, who want to buy the estate and remodel it so they they can take in boarders, suggests a contrast with the genteel serenity with which Alison's presence suffused the house.

The characters, too, function to bring out Alison's personality. Elsa's strong and deep love for the man she is living with suggests a younger Alison with the same feelings, while her father's sense of duty and control illustrates that aspect of Alison's personality. Eben's thwarted writing talent makes Alison's achievement in the same environment seem the work of genius; Aunt Agatha is a picture of what Alison might have become had that genius not been hers. Ann, falling in love with the Chicago reporter, walks with him where Alison walked; at the stroke of midnight she reads Alison's poem, "The House," to Mr. Stanhope. *Alison's House* may not be Susan Glaspell's best play, but it is certainly typical of her writing in both theme and technique.

In the winter of 1931, Susan and Norman traveled to England, where they settled near King's Cross in the home of writer Richard Hughes who was then abroad. Both planned to work on new novels there. Susan, whose plays and books had always been well received in England, was entertained by the wife of her British publisher, Victor Gollancz, and asked to perform in a January production of *Trifles* at the Duchess Theater. She deferred to the British Home Office's ban on foreign artists, even though special permission was later granted for her to perform; she later explained that it had never occurred to her that she might be taking work from an English actress. In an interview with Louise Morgan of *Everyman* she described her feelings for the country from which her ancestors came:

If England and America could rather more candidly be the friends which I think at heart they are it might go a long way in easing some of the present world complications. That we are friends—well, how could it very well be otherwise, with so much in common? Language is in itself a big thing to share, and on our side, almost as soon as we go to school we begin getting acquainted with our English background, less through the history, I should

say, than through the literature. And though the present America is certainly a mixture of races, the opinion-making element is Anglo-Saxon.<sup>46</sup>

Susan also discussed the difference between American and English writers:

I think English writers are better educated. Your best work is better than ours. Your best writers have an ease that ours haven't. We are more erratic and uncertain, we are crude sometimes, but sometimes surprisingly good. The level of your writing is higher, and yet I think that ours has something that gives a little more chance of the surprise, the unexpected thing that can come upon one, the thing coming out of nowhere that may build up a new literature. We are chaotic, a queer mixture of good and bad, but it's the result of the recklessness and carelessness that is natural in a new rich country.<sup>47</sup>

In the spring of 1932, Susan and Norman left England to visit Paris. There they met Susan's old friend Anna Strunsky Walling, who had written for the *Masques* in the days when Susan and Jig were living in Greenwich Village. With her was her nineteen-year-old daughter Anna. When Susan became ill with a uterine infection, she and Mrs. Walling left Paris to sail for the United States. Norman and Anna remained behind.

Susan returned to Provincetown in early May to find that her wirehaired terrier, Samuel Butler, had escaped from the people who were keeping him and had been gone for three weeks. Susan, distraught, wrote a nearly incoherent letter to Norman that concluded, "I want *Sam!*"<sup>48</sup> When Sam was found, dead, on the beach with one side torn out, Susan wrote to Norman, "I think there is a pattern in life, and that Sam in my loneliness and need was sent home to me, and couldn't quite make it. Now laugh, with your Anna and your hopes, have a good laugh, but I believe it. And he couldn't quite reach me. And nothing again, can quite reach me."<sup>49</sup>

Norman replied with a letter expressing his sympathy and, later, another letter that told Susan something she had been fearing throughout her ordeal over Sam. Susan answered:

I drove around by Philipps Street, hoping there might be a letter from you, so needing a word of love. There was a letter. It has struck me down.

You told me when we talked that this was just one of those casual affairs, that it happened so, meant little. I seemed to learn the truth very slowly. But it is better to know. It is hard to write. My hand shakes. My heart pounds. But I must try to write a little.

With her you are making your plans for the future. You say you can see her only once or twice a month for the two years she is in college. And your life will be a planning and a longing for those times, and you know it and I know it. And what, in that do you think you have to offer me, Norman?



Not love, for you haven't had that for me since you came home from Paris. Not even tenderness, concern, did you have when I was so hurt. Only irritation, harshness. Not companionship in the old way for you were thinking only of this excitement, of yourself, and through it all was that fakeness which puts a blight on all there was since you came home.

You say that it will go on, even though it may shipwreck her! You need have small fears, I think, of that. To me you say only that it need make no difference. I think you are not that shallow. If the time should come when you are on the other side of the situation and she, in taking a lover, should say, "It need make no difference between us," you would say, I think, "It makes all the difference." You would not sit contently watching her go to her meetings, and welcome her home as if it made no difference, not if you loved. You could not work that way, and I cannot work that way.

So let us not talk so foolishly.

You say life flows into you through her. Then you must have her. But do not, quite so facilely, ask me to do what I cannot do.<sup>50</sup>

Norman responded that Susan should deal with the situation as a realist. Anna was pregnant; her mother was pressuring her to have an abortion and return to college, but Norman wanted to marry her. His chief concern was whether or not he and Susan were legally married. "When we can afford it, we'll go get a divorce," he wrote her. "Of course, it all surprises me. What was the sense of our not marrying if we couldn't separate without the disgusting mess of a divorce?"<sup>51</sup> Susan offered to go to Reno to expedite matters, but Norman learned that in the state of Massachusetts, common law marriage did not exist. Still determined to marry Anna, he nevertheless remained firm in professing his love and admiration for Susan. "I loved you, God knows, and love you now. But it was strange; you supported me, you were successful and I wasn't; and then the age difference and—no children. It was beautiful, beautiful in a very special way—it grew, it began as temporary, it became permanent as of itself."<sup>52</sup> In October of 1932, Norman and Anna were married. Some months earlier, Susan had written the following letter to Mrs. Walling:

Norman tells me you know now, so I can write to you. And I write, in the first place to say I hope nothing can disturb the loving friendship that deepened between us as we crossed the ocean together. You remember those days, I am sure I shall never forget them.

Much water has flowed under both our bridges since we came up on deck and talked. What we know about each other—and isn't it beautiful that we do? As I grow older I think friendship between women is a thing to cherish.

And I want, Anna, and I try to imagine we are again sitting in deck chairs—I want to say, if you have any withholding because of me, please don't. Please just say to yourself, Susan understands, please

say, as I do, life is life. I know you must have fears and so let me say this, knowing how good Norman has been to me, I know he will be good to Anna. You may worry, because she is not going back to college. Life with Norman is more than college.

She has a chance for a deep sensitive feeling about life that will inform all her days. Because Norman is beautiful. I who have lost him, say that.

I had eight years with Norman. I know him. Trust him, Anna. If we could talk—it's hard to write, for I begin to cry, like a fool, and can't see the keys. But Norman was God's gift to me. When Jig died, and I came home from Greece, I thought of myself as the observer. I thought, I will try to be brave, and I will write. Then Norman came, and loved me and instead of seeing life from death, again I saw it from life. I was again in life. That I owe Norman. And I never will forget it.

Don't worry about the years, the gulf of years. Suppose it were a callow college boy. What would Anna have from that, to make her an understanding woman? She will have much more from Norman. And though it may not be forever, because of the years, take what the gods give, as I did and for which with my dying breath, I will give thanks.

The train left from Paris. You and I on the platform, your Anna and my Norman outside. And from there it went on. And can't we, my dear, from our maturity, say, life is life. I can, with all the hurt of these days, as you must. Let us accept.

I am lonely, as you must know, but I want you to know—I have no resentment against Anna. I too was once nineteen. So were you, dear Anna.

Let us go ahead and try and realize what it is in us. I say a little prayer—Dear God, call me home. But I know he won't until he is through with me. So perhaps there is something inner, still though hard to feel at the worst time.

Sometime, when this is adjusted, when hurts and fears have died down, we will meet again, perhaps again to travel together, because we are understanding friends.<sup>53</sup>

# 5

## Years Alone

In March of 1933 a new president of the United States was inaugurated. His remarks on this occasion were memorable because they advanced the theory that it was the responsibility of the federal government to find people jobs. "Our greatest task is to put people to work," declared Franklin Delano Roosevelt. "This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the Government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of a war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects."<sup>1</sup>

The homesteader and the inventor, the political boss, the prospector, the railroad magnate, and the robber baron of the previous century would have found this notion strange, but there were few opportunities for the rugged individualist in a nation of seventeen million unemployed. The optimism of the 1920s had plummeted with the price of blue chip stocks, and the increasing number of bank failures and mortgage foreclosures was reflected in the rising rates of suicide and insanity.

For Susan Glaspell, too, the confidence of the 1920s was gone. She had begun the new decade as a Pulitzer Prize-winning author who earned over \$20,000 a year and enjoyed acclaim in both America and England. Suddenly her fortunes were reversed. An irony more bizarre and melodramatic than she had ever created in her plays was at work in her life. Thirty years earlier, as a promising young writer, she had taken Jig Cook away from his wife and babies; now, middle-aged and in failing health, she had lost Norman Matson to a nineteen-year-old girl who could give him the one thing that she could not—a child.

"Love always, in one way or another, means pain as well as joy," Susan had written to her father many years earlier. After losing Norman, Susan was tempted to withdraw from life to ensure that she would not be hurt again. She did not do so, because she realized to do this would be to go against all she had believed and written about. "And yet not to do that very thing—to let our affections go out—is to shut ourselves off from life and lose what is best in it. And that very pain—the loss and grief that comes in the wake of love—has something to yield us if we have the courage to take it. It brings new thoughts, a new way of looking at things, a deepened understanding and freshened sympathies."<sup>2</sup>

This kind of advice is always easier to give than to take, but Norman made it especially difficult for Susan to make a new life for herself, for he continued to write her and ask to see her, insisting that he did not want to lose her friendship. There were also business matters to discuss: Arthur J. Beckhard was producing *The Comic Artist* in New York that spring and was so determined that the play

would be a hit that he was making radical changes in the script, changes that Norman believed were damaging to the play. "I have wished again and again that I had taken your advice and tried to suppress the play," he wrote her.<sup>3</sup> Norman was concerned about personal matters as well. He had heard that Susan was drinking rather hard; was this true? And his brother had told him that she was living on her savings. Was she all right?

Norman's fears that Susan was in trouble were not unfounded, but financial difficulties and excessive drinking were merely symptoms of the problem. Susan was not writing much; what she was writing was not much good, and the whole situation terrified her. "I am glad I worked on a newspaper because it made me know I had to write whether I felt like it or not," Susan wrote as she reflected on her life in later years.<sup>4</sup> Now Susan rarely felt like it, but disciplined writer that she was, she sat down at her typewriter every morning at nine o'clock and made an effort. "Ernie, I have a room full of paper balls, all false starts in writing, but I am going to stick to it," she told a friend.<sup>5</sup>

During her years with Norman writing had come more easily. In an interview with a British reporter in 1932, she outlined her work habits:

I work almost entirely in the country. Even there, I have quiet three times removed. We have a farm-house on Cape Cod, ten miles from Provincetown, away from everything. There I've built myself a little shack 10 by 12, among the pines, a good fifteen minutes' walk over the hill from the farmhouse. It's just pine boards—not even painted. There's nothing in it except a table and a chair—not even a sofa or a book. Nobody comes there with me but my dog, and if I don't work I just feel silly.

But I've never gone there without writing something. There's a magic about the place. I've sat down to write and said, "Well, I'm just as dead as a door nail." Then I write two sentences. They may be no good. But it's like tapping something. Later you can cut out those two sentences, and the rest may not be bad.<sup>6</sup>

Susan still went to the little shack in the woods, but now she would go reluctantly, sick with the knowledge that her morning's work was more likely to end up in the wastebasket than in the pages of a magazine. Wrestling with her writer's block, she told friends, "I have to decide whether I am not writing because I am drinking or whether I am drinking too much because I am not writing."<sup>7</sup>

Help came to Susan in the form of two job offers, one from Hollywood and one from Washington, D.C. The Hollywood offer was especially appealing, for Susan had always been eager to sell her novels and plays to the movies and was interested in the possibilities that this new medium offered the writer. A few years earlier, Paramount Pictures had purchased the rights to *Brook Evans*, and Zoë Atkins adapted it for the screen as *The Right to Love*. When a studio showed interest in *Trifles*, and Susan's agent wrote her that he had told them they could have the rights for \$5,000, Susan replied that he might accept a lower figure rather than

lose the contract. She also mentioned that *Suppressed Desires* and *Woman's Honor* might also make interesting films. But she accepted Hallie Flanagan's offer to move to Chicago and become the director of the Midwest Play Bureau for the Federal Theater Project. Although her salary would be only \$200 a month, she felt the government position would pay extra dividends. This job would take her back to the Midwest. "I feel if I can go back there, I can start writing again," she told her stepdaughter Nilla.<sup>8</sup>

In the fall of 1936 Susan Glaspell arrived in Chicago to participate in this unique venture. As a reporter dramatically phrased it, "She abandoned her Massachusetts farm home, dropped a half-finished novel, boarded a train for Chicago and started the task of combing the Midwest for new talents, new writers, new plays. . . ."<sup>9</sup> Susan's conception of the Federal Theater Project was typically idealistic: "In 1935 Uncle Sam went into the show business because people were hungry. He stayed in the business because it has been discovered that people were not only hungry for food—they were hungry for the theater, too."<sup>10</sup>

The situation in Chicago was somewhat grimmer than she had envisioned. When Susan arrived, she found that she had to cope with an inadequate staff, high turnover, lack of interest, hostile critics, lax financial management, a regional director who was more interested in auditioning plays with Broadway potential than putting people to work, and a Washington official who wanted her to dramatize *Gone With the Wind*.

In addition to these problems within the Play Bureau, there were 283 vaudevillians on the Chicago payroll doing very few performances, two theaters sitting empty at a cost of several thousand dollars per month, and a Negro company occupying the Princess Theater with no immediate plans for a production. "Kay Ewing, Ken Davis, Bob McKeague and Susan Glaspell all feel there is a complete lack of planning and McKeague and Davis are very much worried about the finances," wrote Deputy National Director John McKee to Hallie Flanagan in November of 1936.<sup>11</sup>

Another difficulty Susan faced was the ill health that had plagued her since college days. "Ms. Glaspell was both a delightful and a difficult personality," wrote Don Farran. "Her ill health while preceding me as Director of the Midwest Service (Play and P.R. Bureau) in Chicago kept her from advancing the playwriting there. Scripts flowing in from other sources kept her busy—there were 1400 play scripts in the files awaiting my reading when I arrived. . . ."<sup>12</sup>

In spite of these problems the Chicago Federal Theater went on to produce some of the most exciting plays seen during the existence of the Federal Theater Project, including the all-black *Swing Mikado*, Arnold Sundgaard's *Spirochete*, and black playwright Theodore Ward's *Big White Fog*. These accomplishments were made possible, in part, by Susan's insistence that her office was not a clearinghouse, and that her job was to find and read plays, make recommendations for production, and work on a one-to-one basis with the playwrights. A November 6 memo to Hallie Flanagan from Susan Glaspell, George Kondolf, and John McGee stated, "It is not the function of the Midwest Play Bureau to serve as a

registration headquarters for plays proposed by the several projects in the region nor to handle the matter of contracts for play rentals and other business details connected with the securing of rights for production."<sup>13</sup>

Once free of these tasks, Susan began with real enthusiasm to search for promising plays to produce. "I am on the search for plays of the Midwest, by the Midwest, and for the Midwest," she wrote to E. C. Mabie, accepting his invitation to attend the dedication of a new theater at the University of Iowa that fall.<sup>14</sup> By 1 June 1937, 600 plays had been submitted to the Midwest Play Bureau, and Susan Glaspell had read most of them. Of these plays she said, "If they are promising we try to work with the authors and help them get their plays ready for production. If they won't do we still try to offer criticisms and suggestions."<sup>15</sup> Some of the plays that she was most enthusiastic about were Ruth Morris's *The Lowells Talk Only to God*, Marcus Bach's *Within These Walls*, Harold Igo's *Ohio Doom*, Edwin Self's *The Great Spirit*, and Howard Koch's *The Lonely Man*. She was also looking for both a good farm play and a pageant that would show the development of the Midwest from frontier to farming community.

Perhaps Susan Glaspell was enthusiastic about the Federal Theater because through her work for it, she was able to feel the same excitement she had felt as one of the Provincetown Players, who had the same goal as the Federal Theater Project: to develop and encourage native American playwrights. At times the bureaucratic problems seemed overwhelming, but she was always ready to fight for the Federal Theater because she believed that only a people's theater rooted in the regions of the nation would be able to break the stranglehold that Broadway had on the American theater. She was especially resentful of critics' implications that actors and writers on relief were incapable of turning out a superior production. "'Considering who did it,' preceded almost every review of the early plays," she told a reporter. "Some of the critics have become careless and have forgotten to use it lately."<sup>16</sup> In September of 1937 she wrote Hallie Flanagan that she thought the reviews of several one-act plays performed in Chicago were most unfair. "None of the critics liked *Blocks* and not one of them had the decency to say it had a real ovation on opening night. . . . I do not know what to make of the Chicago critics, and I have a fear that they have a W.P.A. antagonism almost impossible to break down. Charles Collins, of the *Tribune*, did not stay for the O'Casey play, even though the bill was very short and he was a long way from his deadline. Who he thinks he is to walk out on Sean O'Casey, I do not know." She offered to write a magazine article that would rebut the criticisms if Hallie Flanagan thought this would be helpful. "Whether this would be the right tactics I do not know. As a playwright I rather hate to launch an attack on the critics, but if my country needs me, I am there."<sup>17</sup>

Another topic that Susan was quick to decry was the exploitation of directors and playwrights. When Garrett Leverton, her choice for a replacement director, was offered a salary that was considerably less than the other directors were receiving, Susan appealed to Hallie Flanagan:

I was sorry things went so badly because I am convinced he would bring real distinction to the Chicago project. It was a year ago now that you asked me to come out here, and at the beginning of my second year I am hesitating very seriously as to whether I should go on. I do not feel I can give another whole year at my present salary, which is \$200.00 a month. This feeling of my own perhaps made it easier to understand Mr. Leverton. Money talks—not only in terms of money, but of esteem. The difference between what I have on the Federal Theater and what I could make through my own work is considerable.<sup>18</sup>

Quite naturally, Susan's sympathy was with the director or playwright in such disputes, and she did not hesitate to make her position known to her superiors, not only on financial matters, but on questions of artistic freedom as well. When Theodore Ward's *Big White Fog* was criticized by a project administrator as having "outright sales appeal for Communism and offensively worded speeches about white people,"<sup>19</sup> Susan held firm and sent the script to Howard Miller, a Washington project official. "I am very anxious we get approval on this soon as the play is in rehearsal and we are very anxious to do it," she told him. "Are you coming to Chicago? I hope so and that I will have a chance to talk with you."<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, when Arnold Sundgaard was having difficulty securing the rights to *Spirochete*, Susan took the matter up with Hallie Flanagan:

I am writing you regarding Arnold Sundgaard's rights in his play, *Spirochete*.

. . . I am sure you can understand my interest and my feeling of responsibility. Mr. Sundgaard is in my Department and it was I who suggested he begin work on the script. I feel I must do everything in my power toward securing just action for him on this.

When Mr. Minturn went to New York I gave him a statement as to the fact regarding project and non-project time. Mr. Sundgaard did all his own research and you can imagine something of the hours this involved. It meant not only library work, but going to clinics, lectures, interviewing doctors, etc. Not all of this research work was done on project time and not all of the writing. I should estimate that about one-third of the research was done on project time. He was certified for five and sometimes only four hours and for five days a week. He worked night and day. He would work for more than twelve hours a day. I do not know how he was able to do it. During the month of December when he began research he continued his work as playreader. Throughout this time he did some reading of plays. He was all the while assigned as playreader and not as playwright. Up until almost the very last of this time he was assigned at \$94.00 a month. I will be glad to make affidavit to these facts.

In view of this situation, I have an idea you will agree with me that it would be most unfair for him not to have the rights to his play. He did a wonderful piece of work and it may go far. He is just beginning

his career and I am convinced he is going to become one of our leading playwrights. Surely we do not want to treat him unfairly.

I hope you know how strong is my feeling for the Federal Theater. I think I have shown it in remaining here more than a year and a half, giving up my own work from which I make a great deal more, and also weakening my own position, because if you pause too long in the writing world it is a disadvantage to your name.

But strong as is my feeling for the Federal Theater, I think it only right to tell you now that if this matter cannot be arranged with justice to Mr. Sundgaard within the theater, I shall feel compelled to take it to the immediate attention of the Dramatists' Guild.<sup>21</sup>

In May of 1938, Susan Glaspell resigned as Director of the Midwest Play Bureau. She returned to a Provincetown that was lively with writers who drank and talked shop together, drifting in and out of each other's homes as the members of the Provincetown Players did twenty years earlier. "There was no afternoon when this group did not meet in one house or another," wrote Mary Heaton Vorse. "All of us went away so often and had traveled so much that it had none of the ingrown quality of people who see too much of each other. There was almost no gossip, because everyone was interested in things outside—in writing, painting or in the affairs of the world. The occasional parties had a real gaiety."<sup>22</sup>

Susan loved Provincetown social life, partly because it stimulated her writing. Just as her novels and plays showed her awareness of the problem of the artist's relation to society, however, she recognized in her own life the conflict between living a full life and doing the best work that she could:

You want to see people, to talk, to be a little reckless. You can't cut all that out. You do get ideas from being with people. Anyway, you want to. If you always say you must leave at twelve you miss something. The party will go on for two hours more. People will drink a little more, will talk and express themselves more freely. You drink a little more yourself and come out of your shell. It helps you understand people better, and perhaps know yourself better. You just can't cut all that out. And yet it's nice to be back again in your own village, with friends who know you go to bed every night at eleven. You must somehow keep the balance. The glow will come from being a little reckless, but downright work must be done soberly.<sup>23</sup>

During the 1930s and 1940s Susan's Provincetown friends included Charles Jackson, Waldo Frank, Eben Given and his wife Phyllis Duganne, Edmund Wilson, and John and Katie Dos Passos, who lived across the street. She also enjoyed the company of a group of newspaper people who summered in Provincetown: Dorothy and Ernest Meyer, Ted and Martha Robinson, Chauncey and Mary Hackett and her brother Langston Moffett. Eben Given recalled her at this time as full of fun and especially adept at charades, and Langston Moffett noted her "ice box suppers." "Improvised on the spur of the moment, they consisted of throwing



all left-overs, no matter how mismatched, into a pot to heat."<sup>24</sup>

She also kept in touch with old friends. When the old Coast Guard station Eugene O'Neill had lived in slid into the sea, Susan cabled him in France and helped to salvage as many of his possessions as possible. Lawrence Langner, of the Theater Guild, had been friends with Susan ever since the Provincetown Players put on his play, *Pie*, and was a frequent guest at her parties.

Another old friend from the Provincetown Players was Harry Kemp, self-styled "tramp poet," who was chronically unemployed. "Susan was always looking for some way for Harry to earn a little money," remembered Dorothy Meyer, "and she was a very good gardener herself. She started a liberty garden during the war but she wasn't quite up to it so she hired Harry to work for her in the garden. One day she came to me—we had a house about a block away from her—and said, 'I am trying to figure out a way to pay Harry *not* to work in my garden.'"<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly Harry was aware of Susan's concern for him, for when she gave him a rather large sum of money, actually from Charles Jackson, and told him it was from an anonymous benefactor, he simply refused to believe her. "That is just Susan," he told a friend. "I'm sure she gave me that money."<sup>26</sup>

Susan's generosity with both her money and her time was recalled by many people. After she returned from Chicago, she was earning only slightly over \$5,000 a year; yet she supported her physically disabled brother Ray and thought nothing of offering one of her royalty checks to a friend for a down payment on a house. When her old friend Sinclair Lewis was appearing in *Ah, Wilderness!* in Provincetown, Susan planned a party for him and arranged for Ernie Meyer and Ted Robinson to meet him there so that they could publicize his acting venture in their columns. He arrived at the party drunk, entering through a window, with a young ingenue; when he appeared to be more interested in Susan's liquor than her friends, the columnists decided to write about something else. Susan was left to cope with a surly Sinclair Lewis who would not go home until he had consumed all of her liquor.<sup>27</sup>

Susan was usually sympathetic to people who had problems with alcohol, perhaps because she herself did. Harry Kemp would sometimes turn up at her house after he had been imbibing heavily, and Susan would attempt to persuade him not to try to get home in his condition; only his affinity for books would convince him that he should spend the night in her library instead of on the beach.<sup>28</sup> Martha Robinson remembered the summer that she and Ted were renting Susan's Provincetown house. One night they heard a prowler downstairs, but when Ted went to investigate, he was too late to catch anything but a glimpse of the intruder escaping through the bathroom window. When they reported the incident to Susan, she laughed and said, "Oh, that was just Harry Kemp. He knows where I keep my liquor and I always leave the bathroom window unlocked so he can get in to get it."<sup>29</sup>

Susan soon became known as the woman who would be generous with liquor and cigarettes to those who were supposed to be on the wagon. Of one of these people she said, "You know, he would come sneaking over for a cigarette and



*The cast of the Los Angeles' Federal Theater Project's production of Susan Glaspell's Pulitzer Prize-winning play Alison's House (19 April 1938). Courtesy of Research Center for the Federal Theater Project, George Mason University.*



*Susan Glaspell near the end of her life. Courtesy of Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library.*

if anyone wants a cigarette that badly, I am not going to deny it."<sup>30</sup> Because she tried to abstain from liquor when she was writing, Susan would drink with her friends, but she would get a small glass of whiskey and water, adding water with each sip so that eventually she would be drinking pure water while her companion was drinking liquor.<sup>31</sup>

A favorite drinking companion of Susan's was her stepson, Harl Cook, who would roar into Provincetown on his motorcycle, often accompanied by his current girlfriend, and make the rounds of the Provincetown bars, occasionally on roller skates. Susan was tolerant of the womanizing, the drinking, and even the roller-skating, but she was terrified that Harl would kill himself on the motorcycle and tried to persuade Ted and Martha Robinson to steal it and hide it in their shed. Nevertheless, she loved Harl and would indulge him in almost any other whim. When he was put on a diet for medical reasons, Susan went on the same diet to be sure that Harl would get the right kind of food. At one point, Harl had a job with a milk company writing a promotional pamphlet that featured stories about a character called Billy White. Less than enthusiastic about the job, Harl one day told Susan that he was all out of Billy White stories and could not care less. Susan, knowing that her young friend Karl Meyer loved the stories, tried to help Harl with his work, and soon the Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatist was writing the little stories herself.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps the Billy White stories gave Susan the idea to try a book for a younger audience. She had always been disappointed at not having a child of her own and was deeply touched when Dorothy Meyer asked her to be the godmother of her newborn daughter. Earlier Dorothy had realized how much motherhood would have meant to Susan when she found Susan hanging out baby clothes on the line. "I am overcoming something very sentimental that I should have overcome years ago," Susan told Dorothy. The baby clothes were things that Susan had gotten ready for the baby she and Jig were expecting in 1914. After the miscarriage, Susan had not been able to give them away. Now her maid Francelina was pregnant out of wedlock and the town was talking. "Everybody is down on her," said Susan, "and I have this drawer of baby clothes which I have never used but I could never part with them and so I have decided to bring them out in the sun and air and be the first one to give to Francelina."<sup>34</sup>

Susan had second thoughts about being a godmother, however. "I'm not sure I would be a good godmother," she demurred. "I have read about it and I found that the godmother's position is to take care of the morals of the child. I don't know how good I would be at that."<sup>35</sup> Despite her doubts about her probity, Susan became a godmother and her Christmas gift to her namesake in 1940 was a tiny children's book, *Cherished and Shared of Old*.

Shortly before *Cherished and Shared of Old* was published, Susan Glaspell's seventh novel, *The Morning Is Near Us*, was chosen to be a Literary Guild selection for 1940, and J. B. Lippincott and Company honored Susan with a cocktail party in New York. A *New York Herald* account of this party indicates that even though her friends included Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos, and Edmund Wil-

son, she was still somewhat naïve and uncomfortable in New York literary circles: "And she said, unexpectedly and amusingly, when Frank Case was introduced to her that she had always wanted to attend a literary party at the Algonquin, but this was her first opportunity. . . . Then she said to Mr. Case, 'I liked *your* book,' (*Tales of a Wayward Inn*) before he had a chance to say it to her of her new novel, *The Morning Is Near Us*. Altogether she reversed all rules of procedure. . . ." <sup>36</sup>

When *The Morning Is Near Us* was published, the Second World War had begun, and in a speech delivered at the Boston Book Fair Susan Glaspell affirmed her belief in literature as a means of bringing about a better world. It is an optimistic speech entitled "The Huntsmen Are Up in America." "The huntsmen are the huntsmen for the truth, the writers whose vision can enlighten a world menaced by the unthinking and the power mad. "The vision and fight for a better world could not have had so long a life on earth were not they of the very stuff of life itself. This is *our* great moment. Dare to dream! Be unabashed in the dream. The dreamers who will fight will win! Light against darkness—more light—less dark. Increasingly—unflinching. Stun the powers of darkness with the affirmation—The huntsmen are up in America!" <sup>37</sup>

In December of 1942, Susan Glaspell reiterated her belief that literature offers the vision of a better world in an article in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*. She described an evening when writers gathered at her home to talk of literature and the war. Her own memories of France, heightened by Katie Dos Passos's reading of Walt Whitman's "O Star of France," brought her to the thought that books can hearten and guide us in a time of world crisis. <sup>38</sup>

It is only in light of these occasions that her reaction to J. B. Lippincott and Company's request that she turn over her book plates to the war effort can be understood. In September of 1942 her publisher informed her that the United States government had requested them to turn over all book plates for which they had no immediate use. Her response was a strongly worded protest that admitted the need for metal and released the plates for *The Glory of the Conquered* but pleaded for a reconsideration of *Brook Evans*, *Fugitive's Return*, and *Ambrose Holt and Family*. "If a writer won't fight for her own books, who will? The publisher? I hope so," she concluded. <sup>39</sup>

Susan's resistance to Lippincott's plans to turn over her book plates to the scrap metal drive can hardly be construed as unpatriotic or egotistical, for she donated the bronze plaque that Eugene O'Neill ordered placed in the Provincetown Playhouse to commemorate Jig Cook. When the organization became defunct and the building changed hands, Mrs. Jenny Belardi, the landlady who remembered Susan and Jig from the days of the old Provincetown Players, gave the plaque to Susan. "I have thought a long time and been very troubled as to what it was right I do about this bronze memorial plaque to my husband, George Cram Cook," she told the *Provincetown Advocate*. "But here is twelve pounds of bronze resting in this house as a memorial when the America he loved, as we all love it, has desperate need of the metal in winning the war and shaping the better world of his old dream." <sup>40</sup>

"Chicago is many things to many people and to me it is a place where you can write." Although this comment seems to contradict other remarks Susan made to Hallie Flanagan and the news media about being unable to do her own work while serving as Director of the Midwest Play Bureau, Susan indicated to her publisher that both *The Morning Is Near Us* and *Norma Ashe* were written in Chicago. "I would take a small apartment in my brother's building, work undisturbed all day, then take the dog for a walk in the park or the Number One bus to the library, enjoying being a stranger in the crowds, listening to the people and speculating about them—and sometimes getting blown off the sidewalk."<sup>41</sup> In 1941 an article in the *Davenport Times* indicated that Susan had met her stepson Harl and his wife there, before leaving for Chicago, where Susan had been staying with her brother Ray since February. "A new edition of *The Road to the Temple*, Miss Glaspell's biography of her husband, the late George Cram Cook, will be released in June by Stokes. In the meantime, Miss Glaspell has been at work on a new novel which is yet untitled."<sup>42</sup>

This novel, *Norma Ashe*, was published in 1942. Very much a contemporary novel, it does not deal directly with World War II, but rather with what Susan Glaspell believed to have brought about this tragedy. *Norma Ashe* details the failure of idealism, the slow, steady process by which youthful ideas are destroyed, perverted, buried by the tedium of daily life. It is the story of six students influenced by a philosophy teacher at a small midwestern college they attended at the turn of the century. They had graduated aflame with the zeal to spread his vision throughout the world, but after twenty years they all in their own ways have betrayed the vision with which he has entrusted them. Susan Glaspell focuses on one of these students, Norma Ashe, who has become Mrs. Max Utterbach when the novel opens in 1927, and traces the process through which she reaffirms her commitment to the ideals of her youth.

A more convincing expression of Susan Glaspell's idealism is found in *Judd Rankin's Daughter*, published in 1945, three years before her death. It is a better novel than *Norma Ashe* because it is more carefully structured and clearly focused on specific contemporary issues. The point of view is limited to that of Frances Rankin Mitchell and her father, Judd Rankin, who represent eastern liberalism and midwestern isolationism respectively. The novel is set in New York City, Davenport, and Provincetown; in her treatment of these settings, Susan Glaspell is attentive to detail, and these regions come to life in the novel, enhancing the thematic development.

"The Middle West must have taken strong hold of me in my early years for I've never ceased trying to figure out why it is as it is," Susan wrote to Edmund Wilson about *Judd Rankin's Daughter*. "And [I] think maybe, through Judd Rankin, I got at a bit of the truth."<sup>43</sup> Her supposition is correct, for in the character of Judd, she has captured the "Iowa stubborn" attitude so typical of the midwestern character. Judd Rankin is a farmer-writer who began editing a periodical, *Out Here*, to refute people who claimed that "a man with ideas would starve to death out here."<sup>44</sup> In later years this chauvinistic stance has troubled him, and he ceases

publication when he realizes that human values and concerns transcend geography. He asks himself, "'Was the Mississippi Valley opened up to save Poland?'"<sup>45</sup> Surprised that his answer is affirmative, he begins to question everything he has believed for the past twenty years.

All the same, Judd Rankin is of the mind that the farm boys fighting in France and in the Pacific would serve their country better by staying home and farming the land. "Mind your own business and be prepared to give food to the starving" is Judd Rankin's brand of isolationism. "Hell of a commentary on life when it took a mass killing to bring out the best in a man."<sup>46</sup> Judd Rankin's pride in his native region is seen in his creation of the Swamp Neck Jenkses, fictional representatives of the Iowa pioneer spirit.

He would see them coming slowly in their covered wagons, stopping beneath the oak, just as he did. They were a little dazed by the long trip they were wondering—wondering what their life was going to be. They'd taken—an enormous chance. One thing they were sure of—they'd have to work; they wanted to work—make a go of it, but did they know they'd work from dawn till dark, meet death and failure—and next day go at it again? Some of them were cantankerous and some were funny and others had in their eyes a patient look that might seem dumb. Patience can go over into dumbness—at the same time, don't fool yourself; they *had* something—these quiet ones who were going to work their hands raw. That look always gave him a feeling of wanting to protect them against a world they maybe weren't ornery enough to deal with, from encroachments they couldn't see in time—and couldn't stop anyway. He loved them—the whole kit and caboodle of Jenkses, though he cussed them too.<sup>47</sup>

Judd's daughter Frances is of a different mind. She has moved east and married a writer who takes a broader view of world affairs than his father-in-law. Widely known as a liberal intellectual, Len Mitchell had been active in the fight to save Sacco and Vanzetti and the Scottsboro defendants; at present, he is a vocal opponent of fascism. He finds his father-in-law's narrower viewpoint disturbing and is concerned about his friend Steve Halsey's flirtation with right-wing politics.

Another conflict involves Frances's friend Julia, a Jewish woman from New York who wants to buy a summer home in Provincetown. Knowing that her friend Marianna has such a house for sale, Frances takes Julia to see it, only to find that Marianna does not want to sell to Jews.

Frances is shocked by her friend's anti-Semitism and disturbed that Steve Halsey has interpreted her father's new book, *The Jenkses*, as supportive of his fascist point of view. Anti-Semitism, fascism, and midwestern isolationism are linked in Frances's mind, along with socialism and communism, as ways of thinking that are too narrow to accommodate the truth.

This truth is represented for Frances by Cousin Adah, an eighty-year-old woman who is dying as the novel begins, but who will live forever in Frances's

memory. Cousin Adah was beautiful and wealthy, yet fun loving and friendly to everyone. She was equally capable of dazzling Davenport society at an Outing Club ball and sitting up with an alcoholic friend at the risk of her reputation. She was intelligent without being intellectual, worldly without being materialistic. Although married to a Davenport businessman, Adah managed to make frequent trips to Chicago to attend the opera and visit a special newspaperman friend. She was very much a part of the Midwest, yet she transcended its narrow conventions. Cousin Adah represents the paradoxical elements in life, and the past that lives in the present, very real proof to Frances that there is more to life than any one philosophy can cover.

The problem of most immediate concern to Frances is her son Judson who has suffered a mental breakdown while fighting in the Pacific. When he returns to Provincetown, Len and Frances learn that he blames their liberal politics for the carnage he has witnessed in combat. Judson's reaction against the point of view that urges intervention in the world's problems, coupled with her father's America-Firstism and Steve Halsey's conversion to fascism cause Frances to doubt her own attitude toward life. Like her father, Judson seems paralyzed, his mental anguish mirroring his grandfather's inability to see further than the immediate needs of his region. But while Judd Rankin cherishes the old oak that is the living presence of his pioneer past, Judson takes a special pleasure in disposing of the willow tree that has grown up with his family. To Frances the tree evokes lovely memories, and she is crushed when a hurricane uproots it; to Judson it is simply rubbish to be disposed of. "This was not Judson. She felt desolated. More than the tree had gone."<sup>48</sup>

In time, Frances's faith in liberalism is restored. Marianna decides to offer the house to Julia; Judd Rankin publishes a piece of work that proves he is capable of a more universal vision; and Judson is reconciled with his parents. The old ideals of humanitarianism, democracy, freedom, and brotherhood are vindicated as the Mitchells are once again in harmony with each other. Susan Glaspell has managed to pull off another happy ending, but this one seems less contrived than those of *Ambrose Holt and Family*, *Norma Ashe*, or *The Morning Is Near Us*. The forces in conflict in this novel appear equally matched, and the structure of the book is achronological, shifting the reader back and forth in time and developing several levels of action simultaneously. Thus the reader is prevented from sensing that either side will win an easy victory. Also, the fact that Judson and his father come to be friends again just as Frances leaves to comfort a neighbor who has just learned that her own son has been killed in the war dispels the impression of a facilely happy ending.

In 1945 Susan Glaspell wrote Lawrence Langner, "I've written a play—a comedy, and I wonder if you'd care to read it; and if you think they might be interested—pass it on to the rest of the [Theater] Guild?"<sup>49</sup> The casual tone of the letter belied her concern that after a fourteen-year absence from the New York stage, she could not create a producible play.



Her fears were justified. Lawrence Langner's reply was one of gentle and regretful rejection.

I have hesitated a long time before writing you about "Springs Eternal" because it is awfully difficult to put in words my feelings about the play. If I were to try to say it in a letter, I know I would only have you hopelessly confused. I do not have so much a clear-cut intellectual conviction about the play as a feeling that most of us have gone through what these characters went through two or three years ago and arrived at the conclusion two or three years ago. This isn't a good reason for not doing a play. Perhaps the other reason is that it is—until the middle of the second act—so much of a conversation piece.

Again, I hesitate to write you about the play. You know, Susan, I think that you have one of the finest talents in America and it is an impertinence on my part to criticize anything you write. Perhaps I am too much immersed in the practical theater and you are closer to the truth than I am. I would much rather talk to you about it than write you.<sup>50</sup>

"Springs Eternal" is supposed to be a World War II comedy, but tired jokes about the Red Cross, gasoline rationing, and extramarital affairs do little to relieve its tedium. Langner's letter indicates that there is a lot of talk in this play, but he was too tactful to add that the talk is neither witty nor profound.

Susan Glaspell's disappointment at the Theater Guild's rejection of "Springs Eternal" was balanced by her joy at the arrival of her stepgrandson, Sirius Cook. "I don't know if I'm ready for the next generation," Susan had told Nilla when she proposed sending her son to Susan.<sup>51</sup> But Sirius came, and Susan welcomed him as she had welcomed her stepchildren, Harl and Nilla, thirty years earlier. "My Greek grandson is here with me now," she wrote to Langston Moffett at Christmastime in 1946. "And it's as if Jig's dream of Greece had taken form in our world of today. Here is the future—because there was that past."<sup>52</sup>

Nilla's son Sirius had arrived the previous August to stay with his step-grandmother while preparing for college entrance exams. His childhood memories of Susan were of a vivacious woman who loved wirehaired terriers and entertained the liveliest and wittiest people in Provincetown. He returned to find an elderly semi-invalid, who was often depressed and worried about money, but whose sense of humor was still intact. Always an avid reader, Susan was so tortured by eye trouble during the last few years of her life that radio soap operas had become for her what books had once been. She was suffering from anemia and heart trouble, but she still adhered to a regimen that included writing every morning for several hours, despite her failing powers of concentration.

Susan took a keen interest in her grandson, helping him choose tutors, discussing his problems and political ideas, and taking him to a town meeting to see American democracy in action. When Sirius voiced his objections to an anti-Greek remark made by one speaker, Susan indulgently apologized for the seven-

teen-year-old veteran of the Greek army, and the chairman ruled him out of order.<sup>53</sup>

Susan's social life had diminished during the last few years of her life, but she was still willing to meet with aspiring writers and criticize their work. When a summer theater group put on a production of *Alison's House* in Provincetown in 1946, she attended almost all of the rehearsals and helped to make changes in the play. On opening night, when presented with roses after the curtain calls, she stood up and said, "I think the real theater has come again to Provincetown."<sup>54</sup>

That summer a rival theater group had come to Provincetown, calling themselves the Provincetown Players. Susan was no slower to object to what she believed was exploitation that she had been twenty years earlier when the Triumvirate tried the same ploy. "The name Provincetown Players still stands for an amazing burst of creative energy. Now comes a group of people from New York and without so much as a by-your-leave to us, these Broadway actors fill the town with posters declaring they are the Provincetown Players." Susan's strongly worded letter to the *Provincetown Advocate*, which was picked up by the Associated Press and given nationwide coverage, concluded with the thought, "If haddock began calling themselves mackerel, would the fish-minded be fooled?"<sup>55</sup>

Susan had never been politically active. In the 1920s she had signed petitions for the pardon of Sacco and Vanzetti and against censorship of the lesbian novel, *Well of Loneliness*, but she had never been active in labor or suffrage movements. Nevertheless, she did not hesitate to voice her opinion on important civic and political issues and was respected by the people of Provincetown for her integrity. When she opposed the widening of Rider Street because it would involve the loss of some trees, the Provincetown Civic Association had them moved to the lawn of the town hall, and planted a Chinese elm there in her honor.<sup>56</sup>

She abhorred censorship and spoke out against the banning of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* from the Provincetown Library, just as she had opposed the Davenport Library Board's banning of *The Finality of the Christian Religion* forty years earlier. "Censorship by a small group violates a right that is very precious to us, and one that should be guarded at all costs. This right is the freedom of speech," she told a meeting of a local women's group. "We are naturally not in favor of obscene literature nor of a book that would tend to corrupt morals, but we should be very careful in our judgment in regard to these issues."<sup>57</sup>

Susan's last years were difficult ones; her health was poor, her income was low, and she seemed unable to sustain a short story. One evening she and Eben Given walked down Commercial Street on a cold winter night, bright with moon and stars. "I suppose I'll die here, won't I, Eben," she said quietly.<sup>58</sup> The following July Susan became ill with what seemed to be a cold but developed into viral pneumonia and ended in pulmonary embolism. "She lay on a divan in the front room, speaking to no one, very much aware of the imminence of her death," recalled Eben Given.<sup>59</sup> Her friend Alice Palmer and stepson Harl Cook, as well as Mr. Given, helped to nurse her through her last illness.

Susan Glaspell died on 27 July 1948. She was seventy-two years old. The little house on Commercial Street was filled with people, for well-known writers and artists as well as the ordinary people of Provincetown came to pay their respects. "Her mind was as broad in her friendships as in her opinions," eulogized the *Provincetown Advocate*.<sup>60</sup> And some who were there recalled her response to Alice Meynell's assertion that life is a series of rejections. Susan disagreed, and the belief that she offered in its place is one that captures the essence of both her life and her work: "I would put it, life is a series of acceptances."<sup>61</sup>



## 6

### Conclusion

On 26 August 1976 Susan Glaspell was named to the Iowa Woman's Hall of Fame, an honor that she would have appreciated but not overvalued. "We all want to make money and be successful," she told a reporter for the *New York Morning Telegraph* in 1921. "It would be wonderful to be successful and expressive of one's belief, too. Some have realized this. But as to actual happiness I do not think it lies in the achievement of popular success alone. It would not bring happiness to me."<sup>1</sup>

Although she professed not to aim at the commercial market, Susan Glaspell became well known during her lifetime as a writer of popular fiction. The pages of her novels are filled with situations that seem designed to evoke stock emotional responses: suicide attempts, seductions, illegitimate childbirths, mental breakdowns, extramarital affairs. Yet hers is not a morbid or nihilistic point of view; love and truth are always victorious in her fiction, redeeming the desperate and vindicating the idealistic. Her plots sometimes seem improbable and contrived; often the language is effusive or stilted. Her worst novels, *Norma Ashe* and *Fugitive's Return*, are flawed in construction and uneven in tone; in her best novels, *Fidelity* and *Judd Rankin's Daughter*, she transcends sentimentality and sensationalism, writing skillfully and convincingly of topical issues as well as more universal themes. The deficiencies in her fiction appear in some of her later novels as well as in her earlier works; consequently, it is difficult to determine whether they are an effect of the limitations of her talent or of a deliberate attempt to achieve easy success.

Although her novels have often been criticized as melodramatic, Susan Glaspell earned high praise as a psychological dramatist whose sensibility was finely attuned to the most subtle nuances of human interaction. "If the surface of life changes by a hair's breadth, she not only knows it, but can convey it in words," said Ruth Hale in her review of *The Verge*. "She is a painter of those wisps of shadow that cross the soul in the dead of night."<sup>2</sup> Plays such as *The Verge*, *Bernice*, and *Trifles* are characterized by a relentless exploration of the characters' psyches; Susan Glaspell elucidates complicated motives and states of mind by dramatizing the outer manifestations of internal conflicts. That her protagonists are invariably women suggests her belief that the right to personhood and the development of one's individual potential should be denied to no one because of gender, as Isaac Goldberg recognized in his discussion of Susan Glaspell's work in *The Drama of Transition*:

As O'Neill inclines toward the masterful man, so she leans toward the

rebellious woman. . . . Glaspell then as a serious dramatist—one of the few Americans whose progress is worth watching with the same eyes that follow notable European effort—is largely the playwright of woman's selfhood. That acute consciousness of self which begins with a mere sense of sexual differentiation (exemplified in varied fashion in *Trifles*, *Woman's Honor*, *The Outside*) ranges through a heightening social sense (*The People*, *Close the Book*, *Inheritors*) to the highest aspirations of the complete personality, the individual (*Bernice*, *The Verge*). I would not be understood as implying that these plays exhibit solely the phases to which they are here related; all of Miss Glaspell's labors are an admixture of these phases, as is the life of the thinking and feeling woman of today. And there is more than rebellious womanhood in these dramas; there is consciousness of valid self, or of a passion for freedom, of dynamic personality; there is craving for life in its innermost meaning.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the contrast between her reputation as a popular novelist and as an innovative dramatist is a reflection of the conflict in Susan Glaspell's mind between her desire for commercial success and her commitment to experiment with new forms and convey her personal beliefs through her writing. "When I work I never think of anything else but what I want to express," she maintained. "I believe that is true of all writers of integrity. One can't be thinking of making a popular hit or of landing a commercial success if expressing the thing one believes and wishes to give form to. That is merely a natural law—one can't have one's ideas on anything else but the subject in hand. Yet I do have a sense of other people when I am writing my plays. Popular success—of course if one does succeed—well and good. No one scorns 'getting over.' But that is not the main thing."<sup>4</sup>

Susan Glaspell's weaknesses as a writer are easy to point out; her strengths are less readily perceived. Her penchant for the bizarre, the sensational, the sentimental often mars what would otherwise be a well-crafted work of fiction, yet many critics have maintained that her plays are insufficiently dramatic, suggesting that the novel would be a more suitable medium for her talents. Whatever the faults of her writing, Susan Glaspell's works are well worth reading today. When read in order of composition, her works become a microcosm of the literary history of America, reflecting such literary movements as transcendentalism, the revolt from the village, the revolution in American drama, the proletarian novel. Works such as *The Verge*, *Inheritors*, *Trifles*, and *Woman's Honor* are of interest to the modern reader because they deal with such topical issues as feminism and the right of freedom of expression, but the themes that recur in her fiction and drama are those that are timeless in their appeal: the relation of the artist to society, the conflict between idealism and pragmatism, the relation of the individual to native region, the conflict between the non-conformist and the society that demands conformity, the impingement of the past upon the present. Her treatment of these themes is often flawed in a way that is characteristic of less talented writers, yet in other works she has created unique devices that function well in convey-

ing the subtleties of her thought. The difficulty of assessing her place in American literature is compounded by these paradoxes; perhaps Ludwig Lewisohn has pointed out her most important contribution in his review of *The Verge*: "Other American dramatists may have more obvious virtues; they may reach larger audiences and enjoy a less wavering repute. Susan Glaspell has a touch of that vision without which we perish."<sup>5</sup>





# Notes

## 1. Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Inscription from Susan Glaspell to Ludwig Lewisohn, Ludwig Lewisohn Papers, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Nila Cook, Mönich Kirchen, Austria, 10 February 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Bartholomew Crawford, "Susan Glaspell," *Palimpsest* 11 (December 1930): 517-21.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Glaspell to Floyd Dell, 17 September 1910, Floyd Dell Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Nila Cook, 10 February 1976.

<sup>6</sup> Susan Glaspell, *Inheritors* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1921), p. 154.

<sup>7</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in *Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1944), p. 338.

<sup>8</sup> John Chamberlain, "A TragiComedy of Idealism in Miss Glaspell's Novel," *New York Times Books Review*, 12 April 1931, p. 4.

## 2. Iowa Heritage

<sup>1</sup> Susan Glaspell, "Here is the piece. . .," Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Margaret Hudson, Davenport, Iowa, 22 March 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Charles August Ficke, *Memories of Fourscore Years* (Davenport, Iowa: Graphic Services, 1930), p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> "London Bars Her Acting in Own Play," *Davenport Democrat*, 22 January 1932, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Glaspell, unpublished essay, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>6</sup> Alice Glaspell to Susan Glaspell, 24 February 1909, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>7</sup> *Trident*, 30 July 1904, p. 17, Putnam Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

<sup>8</sup> "Social Life," *Weekly Outlook* 2, No. 5 (1897): 3-4, Putnam Museum, Davenport, Iowa. Although these columns did not carry Susan Glaspell's by-line, three pieces of evidence suggest that she may have written them: (1) She held the position of society editor at the time they were written; (2) There are similarities in style between these columns and the columns she did two years later for the *Des Moines Daily News*; (3) The columns cited in this chapter deal with the topic of woman's role in society, a topic she later developed more fully in her novels and plays.

<sup>9</sup> "Social Life," *Weekly Outlook* 3, No. 1 (1897): 3, Putnam Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth McCullough Bray, "Panorama of Cultural Development Here in Last Half a Century," *Davenport Democrat*, 31 March 1929, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>12</sup> Gladys Denny Schultz, "Susan Glaspell," in *A Book of Iowa Authors by Iowa Authors*, ed. Johnson Brigham (Des Moines: Iowa State Teachers Association, 1930), p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> "The News Girl," *Des Moines Daily News*, 4 April 1900, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> "The News Girl," *Des Moines Daily News*, 16 June 1900, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Twentieth Century Authors*, ed. Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycroft (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1942), p. 541.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Glaspell, "The Man of Flesh and Blood," *Harper's Magazine* 108 (May 1904): 960.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 957.

<sup>18</sup> *Des Moines Daily News*, 3 May 1903, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Susan Glaspell, "At the Turn of the Road," *The Speaker* 2 (1906): 359.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>22</sup> *Trident*, 30 July 1904, p. 17, Putnam Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

<sup>23</sup> Julie Jensen, "Davenport-Rich, Robust History," *Quad City Times*, 4 July 1976, p. 3E.

<sup>24</sup> Diary of George Cram Cook, 10 November 1909, George Cram Cook Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>25</sup> Susan Glaspell, *The Road to the Temple* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1927), p. 191.

<sup>26</sup> Dell came to Davenport from Quincy, Illinois, around 1903. He dropped out of high school, got a job in a candy factory, and joined the staff of the *Davenport Times* and the *Tri-City Worker*. He was encouraged to develop his writing talent by Davenport librarian Marilla Freeman, poet-journalist Charles Eugene Banks, and George Cram Cook. Soon he became the nucleus of a political-literary group that met at the Cook estate. Later Dell, Cook, and Susan Glaspell, along with Arthur Davison Ficke and Alice French, a writer of an older generation who wrote under the name of Octave Thanet, came to be known as the "Golden Group." Sometimes other Davenport writers such as the biographer Charles Edward Russell and the poet Marjorie Allan Seiffert are included in discussions of the Davenport literary coterie, although their connection with the other five writers is tenuous.

<sup>27</sup> George Cram Cook to Mollie Price, 26 November 1907, George Cram Cook Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>28</sup> George Cram Cook to Mollie Price, 17 December 1907, George Cram Cook Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>29</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping, Susan Glaspell file, Putnam Museum, Davenport.

Iowa.

<sup>30</sup> *New York Times*, 13 March 1909, p. 145.

<sup>31</sup> "Miss Glaspell Back From Paris," *Davenport Democrat*, 8 June 1909, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> Alice Glaspell to Susan Glaspell, 24 February 1909. Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>33</sup> Elmer Glaspell to Susan Glaspell, 23 October 1897. Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>34</sup> Susan Glaspell took a tongue-in-cheek attitude toward the situation in "'Finality' in Freeport," which was published by the *Pictorial Review* in July of 1916. Other "Freeport" stories are "Poor Ed," "Miss Jessie's Trip Abroad," "The Escape," "Beloved Husband," "The Manager of Crystal Sulphur Springs." Although the use of a Davenport setting suggests the influence of Alice French, the latter's "Fairport" stories are much better-drawn pictures of Davenport than are Susan Glaspell's stories, which give only a generalized sense of locale.

<sup>35</sup> Glaspell, *Road to the Temple*, p. 193.

<sup>36</sup> George Cram Cook to Floyd Dell, n.d., Floyd Dell Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Floyd Dell, *Homecoming: An Autobiography* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1933), p. 205.

<sup>39</sup> The Rabbi Fineschreiber to Floyd Dell, 11 October 1910, Floyd Dell Papers, Newberry Library.

<sup>40</sup> George Cram Cook to Floyd Dell, 12 September 1910, Floyd Dell Papers, Newberry Library.

<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to determine Susan Glaspell's whereabouts from the spring of 1911 until her marriage to Jig Cook in April of 1913. Floyd Dell and Margaret Anderson report that she was in Chicago during this time but are vague as to actual dates. In an undated letter to Sherwood Anderson, a key figure in the Chicago Renaissance, Susan Glaspell refers to their talks in Chicago but does not give a date. Other sources report that she and Lucy Huffaker took a flat in Milligan Place, Greenwich Village during the period that she and Jig were separated. Susan Glaspell's obituary in the *Provincetown Advocate* states that she had resided in Provincetown since 1912.

<sup>42</sup> Johnson Brigham, *Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915), p. 700.

### 3. Provincetown Years

<sup>1</sup> Susan Glaspell, *The Road to the Temple* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1927), p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Glaspell, *Plays* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1920), p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> The Washington Square Players, which later became the Theater Guild, was formed in 1914 in the Washington Square Bookshop by members of the adjacent Liberal Club. The members of this theater group planned to compete with the Broadway stage by produc-

ing drama classics by Ibsen, Strindberg, Shakespeare, and other renowned dramatists. By contrast, the Provincetown Players were interested in plays that were experimental and unusual. When Lawrence Langner, one of the founders of the Washington Square Players, wanted to put on one of his own plays, he went to the Provincetown Players rather than to the Washington Square Players.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Glaspell, *Inheritors* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1921), p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Glaspell, *Fidelity* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1915), p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>8</sup> "Recent Reflections of a Novel Reader," *Atlantic Monthly* 116 (October 1915): 505.

<sup>9</sup> *Dial*, 15 July 1915, p. 66.

<sup>10</sup> Glaspell, *Road to the Temple*, p. 253.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Glaspell, "Here is the piece. . .," Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>12</sup> Glaspell, *Plays*, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> Glaspell, *Road to the Temple*, p. 256.

<sup>17</sup> Sinclair Lewis, *Our Mr. Wrenn* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1914), inscription in Susan Glaspell's copy, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>18</sup> Unidentified clipping, Susan Glaspell file, Putnam Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

<sup>19</sup> Glaspell, *Road to the Temple*, p. 235.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Nilla Cook, Mönich Kirchen, Austria, 3 March 1976.

<sup>21</sup> Arthur Waterman, "A Critical Study of Susan Glaspell's Works and Her Contributions to Modern American Drama" (Ph.D. diss. University of Wisconsin, 1956), p. 93. Mr. Waterman's dissertation, while invaluable to Glaspell scholars, is somewhat incomplete because it was published six years before the bulk of Susan Glaspell's papers were acquired by the New York Public Library.

<sup>22</sup> Glaspell, *Road to the Temple*, p. 324.

<sup>23</sup> Hutchins Hapgood, *A Victorian in the Modern World* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), p. 376.

<sup>24</sup> Floyd Dell, *Homecoming: An Autobiography* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1933), p. 268.

<sup>25</sup> Glaspell, *Road to the Temple*, p. 247.

<sup>26</sup> As quoted in Albert Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders—A History of Bohemianism in America* (New York: C. Ovi-Friede, 1933), p. 281.

<sup>27</sup> As quoted in Sheaffer, *O'Neill, Son and Playwright*, (Boston: Little, Brown and

Company), p. 401.

<sup>28</sup> William Zorach, *Art Is My Life* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1957), p. 47.

<sup>29</sup> Jacques Copeau, Speech to the Washington Square Players, "The Spirit in the Little Theater," 20 April 1917, private collection of Mme. Marie-Helene Daste. In their book *The Provincetown*, Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanau report that Copeau saw a performance of *Inheritors* in which Susan Glaspell played Madeline and praised her performance in a lecture he gave the next day. However, Norman H. Paul reports that the performance that Copeau saw was of *The People*. In a journal entry of 4 April 1917 (four years before *Inheritors* was produced for the first time), Copeau referred to Susan Glaspell's performance and referred to it again in a speech he gave three weeks later. At this time Susan Glaspell was playing the woman from Idaho in *The People*.

<sup>30</sup> As quoted in Robert Humphrey, "Children of Fantasy: The Rebels of Greenwich Village, 1910-1920" (Ph.D. diss. University of Iowa, 1975), p. 166. Several members of the Provincetown Players not previously mentioned are referred to in this letter. "The MacDougals" are Allan and Alice MacDougal, "Nord" is Bror Nordfeld, and "Teddy" is E. J. Ballatine. All of these people had acted in productions of the Provincetown Players, some serving in other capacities as well. See Appendix B in Deutsch and Hanau's *The Provincetown*.

<sup>31</sup> As quoted in Clarence Andrews, *A Literary History of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1972), p. 95.

<sup>32</sup> Glaspell, *Inheritors*, p. 6. Susan Glaspell used the surnames of two historic Davenport families in this play. The Mortons, like the Cooks and the Glaspells, were Scott County pioneer settlers, and Nicholas Fejevary, a wealthy Hungarian nobleman, had fled to Davenport during the 1840s after supporting the revolution in his homeland.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>37</sup> As quoted in Gerhard Bach, "Susan Glaspell (1882-1948): A Bibliography of Dramatic Criticism," *Great Lakes Review*, p. 10, W. H. S., "Another Play," *New York Evening Post*, 8 March 1927, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, 18 September 1925, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>39</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 11 April 1925, p. 644, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>40</sup> Alice Rohe, "The Story of Susan Glaspell," *New York Morning Telegraph*, 18 December 1921, Susan Glaspell Papers, Barrett Library, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

<sup>41</sup> Louise Morgan, "Susan Glaspell of New England," *Everyman*, 7 January 1932, p. 784, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Glaspell, "Chains of Dew," [unpublished typescript], The Library of Con-

gress, Washington, D.C., Act I, p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Act III, p. 29.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Act III, p. 18.

<sup>45</sup> As quoted in Bach, "Susan Glaspell (1882-1948)," p. 15. Heywood Brown, "Drama," *New York World*, 28 April 1922, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Susan Glaspell to Edna Kenton, 29 May [1922], Susan Glaspell Papers, Barrett Library, University of Virginia Library.

#### 4. Horizons Expand

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Wilson, "Beppo and Beth," in *This Room and This Gin and These Sandwiches* (New York: New Republic, 1937), p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanau, *The Provincetown: A Story of the Theater* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1931), p. x.

<sup>3</sup> George Cram Cook to Edna Kenton, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Barrett Library, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Glaspell to Edna Kenton, 11 May [1922], Susan Glaspell Papers, Barrett Library, University of Virginia Library.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Glaspell to Alice Glaspell, 12 June 1922, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>6</sup> Susan Glaspell to Alice Glaspell, 28 September 1922, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>7</sup> George Cram Cook to Susan Glaspell, 13 February 1923, George Cram Cook Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>8</sup> Nilla Cook, *My Road to India* (New York: Lee Furman, 1939), p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> George Cram Cook to Ida Rauh, n.d., George Cram Cook Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library. A note that accompanies this letter indicates that it was never mailed.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Glaspell to Alice Glaspell, 15 July 1923, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>12</sup> Hutchins Hapgood, *A Victorian in the Modern World* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), p. 486.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 491.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 499.

<sup>15</sup> Susan Glaspell to Edna Kenton, 23 October 1923, by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Glaspell to M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, 25 May 1924, by permission of the Houghton Library.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Glaspell to M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, 31 May 1924, by permission of the Houghton Library.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Glaspell to Edna Kenton, 12 January [1925], Susan Glaspell Papers, Barrett Library, University of Virginia Library.

<sup>19</sup> Susan Glaspell to Edmund Wilson, 3 October 1945, Edmund Wilson Papers, Collection of American Literature, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

<sup>20</sup> Diary of Norman Matson, 22 November-23 December 1924, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>21</sup> Hapgood, *Victorian in the Modern World*, p. 499.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Eben Given, Truro, Massachusetts, 22 June 1976.

<sup>23</sup> Norman Matson to Susan Glaspell, 25 October 1926, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>24</sup> Susan Glaspell to Alice Glaspell, 24 November 1925, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>25</sup> Susan Glaspell to Norman Matson, October 1926, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>26</sup> Susan Glaspell to Norman Matson, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Glaspell to Norman Matson, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>28</sup> Norman Matson to Susan Glaspell, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>29</sup> Susan Glaspell to Norman Matson, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>30</sup> Unidentified clipping, Susan Glaspell file, Putnam Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

<sup>31</sup> Alice Glaspell to Susan Glaspell, 16 July 1928, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>32</sup> Alice Glaspell to Susan Glaspell, 19 November 1928, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>33</sup> Norman Matson to Susan Glaspell, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>34</sup> Susan Glaspell, [holograph notebook], Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>35</sup> Ray Glaspell to Susan Glaspell, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>36</sup> Mary Heaton Vorse, *Time and the Town: A Provincetown Chronicle* (New York: Dial Press, 1942), p. 124.

<sup>37</sup> Susan Glaspell to Norman Matson, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>38</sup> Susan had won prizes for oratory and fiction while in college and during the years she was engaged in free-lance writing in Davenport. In 1914 the Iowa Press and Authors

Association had invited her to be an honored guest at a "Homecoming of Iowa Authors," which she did not attend. In 1922 she served as a judge of a playwriting contest for the University of California, along with Eugene O'Neill and George Jean Nathan, and served in a similar capacity in judging the University of Michigan's Hopwood Contest in 1937. Aside from her frequent appearance on best seller lists, however, the Pulitzer Prize was the first incidence of national recognition of Susan Glaspell's talent.

<sup>39</sup> Ward Morehouse, "Broadway After Dark," *New York Sun*, 9 May 1931, p. 30, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Hanson Towne, "A Number of Things," *New York American*, 18 May 1931, p. 31, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>41</sup> J. Brooks Atkinson, "Pulitzer Laurels," *New York Times*, 10 May 1931, sec. 8, p. 1, Susan Glaspell file, Putnam Museum.

<sup>42</sup> Edmund Wilson, *The Twenties* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), p. 385.

<sup>43</sup> Susan Glaspell, *Alison's House* (New York: Samuel French, 1930), p. 37.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>45</sup> *Boston Evening Globe*, 27 October 1931, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>46</sup> Louise Morgan, "Susan Glaspell of New England," *Everyman* 7 January 1932, p. 783, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Susan Glaspell to Norman Matson, 7 May 1932, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>49</sup> Susan Glaspell to Norman Matson, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>50</sup> Susan Glaspell to Norman Matson, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>51</sup> Norman Matson to Susan Glaspell, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>52</sup> Norman Matson to Susan Glaspell, 8 September 1932, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>53</sup> Susan Glaspell to Anna Walling, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

## 5. Years Alone

<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards, *Backgrounds of American Literary Thought* (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1967), p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Glaspell to Elmer Glaspell, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>3</sup> Norman Matson to Susan Glaspell, n.d., Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.



<sup>4</sup> Susan Glaspell, "Here is the piece. . . ." Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Dorothy Meyer, New York City, 29 February 1976.

<sup>6</sup> Louise Morgan, "Susan Glaspell of New England," *Everyman*, 7 January 1932, p. 784, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Dorothy Meyer, New York City, 29 February 1976.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Nila Cook, 10 February 1976, Mönich Kirchen, Austria.

<sup>9</sup> A. D. Crews, "Susan Glaspell and the Federal Theater," *Northwestern University Information*, 15 April 1937, : p. 3, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> John McGee to Hallie Flanagan, 10 November 1936, National Office Subject File of the Federal Theater Project, letters of Susan Glaspell, director of Midwest Play Bureau, Record Group 69, National Archives Building.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Don Farran, 26 July 1977, Rowan, Iowa.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Glaspell, George Kondolf, and John McGee, 6 November 1936, National Office Subject File of the Federal Theater Project, letters of Susan Glaspell, director of Midwest Play Bureau, Record Group 69, National Archives Building.

<sup>14</sup> Susan Glaspell to E. C. Mabie, 29 October 1936, E. C. Mabie Papers, Special Collections, University of Iowa, Iowa City.

<sup>15</sup> Crews, "Susan Glaspell and the Federal Theater," p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Susan Glaspell to Hallie Flanagan, 7 September 1937, National Office Subject File of the Federal Theater Project, letters of Susan Glaspell, director of the Midwest Play Bureau, Record Group 69, National Archives Building.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Glaspell to Hallie Flanagan, 17 September 1937, National Office Subject File of the Federal Theater Project, letters of Susan Glaspell, director of the Midwest Play Bureau, Record Group 69, National Archives Building.

<sup>19</sup> Emmet Lavery to Howard Miller, 8 November 1937, National Office Subject File of the Federal Theater Project, letters of Susan Glaspell, director of the Midwest Play Bureau, Record Group 69, National Archives Building.

<sup>20</sup> Susan Glaspell to Howard Miller, 5 November 1937, National Office Subject File of the Federal Theater Project, letters of Susan Glaspell, director of the Midwest Play Bureau, Record Group 69, National Archives Building.

<sup>21</sup> Susan Glaspell to Hallie Flanagan, 18 April 1938, National Office Subject File of the Federal Theater Project, letters of Susan Glaspell, director of the Midwest Play Bureau, Record Group 69, National Archives Building.

<sup>22</sup> Mary Heaton Vorse, *Time and the Town: A Provincetown Chronicle* (New York: Dial Press, 1942), p. 262.

<sup>23</sup> Morgan, "Susan Glaspell of New England," p. 784.

- <sup>24</sup> Letter from Langston Moffett, 14 July 1976, St. Augustine, Florida.
- <sup>25</sup> Interview with Dorothy Meyer, New York City, 29 February 1976.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> Interview with Eben Given, Truro, Massachusetts, 22 June 1976.
- <sup>29</sup> Interview with Martha Robinson, Provincetown, Massachusetts, 23 June 1976.
- <sup>30</sup> Interview with Dorothy Meyer, New York City, 29 February 1976.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> Interview with Martha Robinson, Provincetown, Massachusetts, 23 June 1976.
- <sup>33</sup> Interview with Dorothy Meyer, New York City, 29 February 1976.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> "Books," *New York Herald Tribune*, 31 March 1940, p. 22.
- <sup>37</sup> Susan Glaspell, "The Huntsmen Are Up in America," Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.
- <sup>38</sup> "Susan Glaspell Says We Need Books Today As Never Before," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 6 December 1942, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.
- <sup>39</sup> Susan Glaspell to George Sievers, 7 September 1942, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.
- <sup>40</sup> Unidentified clipping, Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.
- <sup>41</sup> Susan Glaspell, "Here is the piece. . .," Susan Glaspell Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.
- <sup>42</sup> *Davenport Times*, 8 April 1941, p. 5.
- <sup>43</sup> Susan Glaspell to Edmund Wilson, 3 October 1945, Edmund Wilson Papers, Collection of American Literature, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.
- <sup>44</sup> Susan Glaspell, *Judd Rankin's Daughter* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1945), p. 84.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.
- <sup>49</sup> Susan Glaspell to Lawrence Langner, n.d., Theater Guild Papers, Collection of American Literature, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- <sup>50</sup> Theater Guild to Susan Glaspell, 19 May 1944 (carbon copy), Theater Guild Papers, Collection of American Literature, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale

University.

- <sup>51</sup> Interview with Nilla Cook, Mönich Kirchen, Austria, 3 March 1976.
- <sup>52</sup> Letter from Langston Moffett, 14 July 1976, St. Augustine, Florida.
- <sup>53</sup> Interview with Sirius Cook, New York City, 28 February 1976.
- <sup>54</sup> Interview with Catharine Huntington, Boston, Massachusetts, 24 June 1976.
- <sup>55</sup> *Provincetown Advocate*, 11 July 1946, p. 5.
- <sup>56</sup> *Provincetown Advocate*, 29 July 1948, p. 1.
- <sup>57</sup> *Provincetown Advocate*, 28 March 1946, p. 1.
- <sup>58</sup> Interview with Eben Given, 22 June 1976.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>60</sup> *Provincetown Advocate*, 29 July 1948, p. 1.
- <sup>61</sup> Letter from Langston Moffett, 14 July 1976.

## 6. Conclusion

<sup>1</sup> Alice Rohe, "The Story of Susan Glaspell," *New York Morning Telegraph*, 18 December 1921, Susan Glaspell Papers, Barrett Library, University of Virginia Library.

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in Gerhard Bach, "Susan Glaspell (1882-1948): A Bibliography of Dramatic Criticism," *Great Lakes Review*, forthcoming, p. 11 (mimeographed), Ruth Hale, "Concerning the Verge," *New York Times*, 20 November 1921, sec. vi, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Isaac Goldberg, *The Drama of Transition* (Cincinnati: Stuart Kidd Company, 1922), p. 474.

<sup>4</sup> Rohe, "Story of Susan Glaspell."

<sup>5</sup> Ludwig Lewisohn, "Drama—*The Verge*," *Nation* 113 (14 December 1921): 708-09.









