

2015

## Letter from Henry Beston, 1943

Henry Beston

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Dear Mrs. Eckstorm - How kind of you  
to let me know about Mrs. Fuller  
and the copies of the St. Lawrence.  
I have had the good fortune to  
meet her at the Library, and a  
very wise and charming person  
she is. And I like that about  
"craftsmanship," for good craftsman-  
ship is what I try to achieve,  
and is what I respect. It is  
part of intellectual integrity.

I did not see the article in the  
Essex Antiquarian but shall look it up

next time I'm in Boston at the  
Blessed Athenaeum; They have the  
Salem publications. Was there a  
Mildred (?) Wasson who wrote a  
novel about Bangor? Or I am  
wool-gathering.

And now about the Red Cedar  
for haddles. Entirely agree that Red Cedar  
is "small potatoes" as a wood, but  
account after account mentioned  
the voyagers haddles as being  
most often of that tree. (I bet  
there were many individual  
choices!) According to various  
Canadians with whom I talked,



The Voyager stroke was not quite  
ours. and on our side of the  
line Mr. Henry Richards says it  
was a "digging stroke". The  
phrase is excellent. for one sees  
that curious jab in Ontario  
to this day. its not our  
beautiful Penobscot stroke which  
is so sure, so strong. and so  
completely untheatric. a lovely  
physical rhythm! as for the  
canoe, I imagine that the Ontario  
trees were, as a race, larger than ours

in Maine; so many accounts speak of  
the truly giant birches still accessible  
to the Chippewa craftsmen. Anyhow,  
They made a regular liner of a  
canoe; I'd like to have seen one.  
Our Penobscots, of course, build a  
particularly beautiful craft. The  
real 'Indian canoe' of The American  
dream. Even the factory-produced  
'guide canoe' produced at Old Town  
is a humdinger. I have one  
and it's one of the prides of my  
life. As for the White-Throated  
sparrow, I shall certainly take out

that de t'ai vu Frédéric etc if I  
can (page 227) and replace it by  
On est tu, Nicolas, Nicolas, Nicolas  
which is worlds handsomer and  
worlds more interesting. My  
account of 'nature' on the river  
seems to have pleased the  
"Com ayens," and I'm getting all  
sorts of letters in French from  
all up and down the fleuve.

I'm back in Hingham after  
a sojourn in N.Y. The place is  
blacked out to a cellar. There are



all sorts of particularly unpleasant  
hold-ups. Once back in my hotel  
room, I stayed in my moated  
grange and read. New Yorkers  
tell me they will soon be going  
to the residuae Theatre in an  
armored car.

Thanks again for so  
interesting an open fire of ideas!  
Hoping you are feeling better, and  
so with warmest good wishes  
from us both.

Very faithfully  
Henry Beston

P.S. I received in this very  
morning's mail Mr.

27. I. 43.  
Hingham, Mass. Helton's Pulpwood etc