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## Kenneth Roberts: The Man and His Works

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useful insights into the origins and development of the American theater. The author's sensitivity to his subject is strengthened by his own acting background. A graduate of the University of South Carolina, he has worked for over twenty-five years in the professional theater, appearing on Broadway, off-Broadway, and on national television.

The second Poe association with Maine came in the mid-nineteenth century following the poet's death in 1849. Poe's literary executor was Rufus Wilmont Griswold (1815-1857), a prominent critic, who obtained Poe's manuscripts, letters, and copies of his writings. In 1853 Griswold met Harriet McCrillis of Bangor. After a whirlwind courtship, they were married; only then did Harriet learn that her husband already had an estranged wife. She sued for divorce, but Griswold died suddenly in 1857.

After her husband's death, Harriet inherited the Poe manuscripts and took them to Bangor, where she resided with her wealthy brother, William McCrillis, a lawyer and extensive timberland holder. In 1902, Mrs. Griswold presented a portion of Poe's manuscripts to the Boston Public Library; others were retained by her son, William McCrillis Griswold. Who would suspect that at one time the bulk of Poe's manuscripts would be found in Bangor?

James B. Vickery  
Bangor

*Kenneth Roberts: The Man and His Works.* By Jack Bales.  
(Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1989. Pp. xxi + 312.  
\$37.50.)

This is not a biography of Kenneth Roberts, as one might suppose from the subtitle, but 85th of the reputable Scarecrow Author Bibliographies. Others in that series this reviewer is familiar with have sub-titles immune from misinterpretation: for No. 20 on Norman Mailer, *A Comprehensive Bibliography*; and for No. 37, on E. B. White, simply *A Bibliography*. The

presence of a short biography might seem to justify *The Man and His Works*, however, while the biographic intrusion itself might seem valid in the absence to date of any substantial biography of Kennebunk's famous native son.

Following an affectionate Foreword by John Tebbel, an author's Preface, and a brief Roberts chronology, the text proper begins with "Part I. Letters and Documents: A Biographical Essay." With seventy-one pages, it has seven chapters, all lacking titles or any other clues to their contents. Even casual readers must soon be aware of numerous elevated numerals, one or more in each paragraph, referring to notes at the chapter ends. Of the six pages in Chapter 2, text needs only four pages and notes occupy the other two. The ratio for Chapter 3 is five to four. Of the twenty-nine notes that Bales provides for Chapter 1, a good many could be combined and, as studious readers may notice, some repeat details already given in other notes or even in the text itself. Such heaping up of documentation hardly seems necessary. There is also occasional unfortunate compression. A sentence on page 4 tells us that "Jane Tibbets [K. R.'s grandmother] was born in Kennebunk, Maine, and the Tibbets family was an old and established one in the area." The note for this gives two sources: first a doctoral dissertation and then "marriage records." Which source for which fact? The "Portland Red" telephone directory, one is tempted to observe, could have assured Bales that Tibbetses are well established virtually everywhere in coastal Maine.

With 988 entries on 166 pages, "Part II. An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism" far exceeds the other parts in extent, and attests to the time and energy Jack Bales devoted to this project. It is somewhat puzzling that Part II alone is indexed, in the three related indexes comprising Part IV, and that sandwiched between Parts II and IV is "Part III. Appendixes." Here we discover a miscellany including K. R.'s "Autobiography" penned in 1919 (pages 247-250), three family trees, and, of special interest for students contemplating essays on Roberts, and for a conjectural future biographer, Appendix F, describing collections of Roberts material and locating them state by

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state. Nine institutions in Maine have collections, varying widely in extent, with Colby having the largest. Nationally, Dartmouth (the first college to give Roberts an honorary degree) stands easily first, with papers enough to need 89 linear feet of library shelving. In second place is the Library of Congress, with holdings augmented in 1986 when Doubleday & Co., publisher of K. R.'s major novels, donated all its papers relating to them. What students and others considering work on Roberts should know about the fabulous Dartmouth collection, Bales does not mention: that until A.D. 2006 K. R.'s diaries from 1912 to 1935 cannot be copied or directly cited, while those from 1936 to 1957 cannot even be looked at. For the fifteen years between now and 2006 those restrictions are a handicap, but not too serious a one when we contemplate the vast resources Bales has located for us in this volume.

The "bio" part of this biobibliography merits further attention. Among the sources often cited is a doctoral dissertation by John Ira Kitch, Jr. It surfaces again in entry 911 of the *Annotated Bibliography of Criticism*, wherein Kitch is quoted as saying this about Roberts as a historical novelist: "He was not an accomplished creator of character nor a good stylist. His narrators are usually types, his women insipid, and his historical figures one dimensional." This has the ring of authentic biography, the readiness to offer personal evaluations that we expect of scholars. It is missing here. Just a small infusion of such judgmental elements would do much to increase the interest, and the credibility, of this — or any other — biographical essay.

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*A Tempestuous Voyage: The Diary of Annah Maud Gould's Trip Aboard the Ship Berlin.* Edited by Laura Penny. (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1987. Pp. 96).

Seldom does a volume come along appealing to several interest groups and succeeding in adding to the knowledge of all. An opportunity such as this is Laura Penny's editing of