

Introduction

There have been a handful of annotated editions of letters by Archibald Lampman (1861-99) since interest in his work burgeoned after the Second World War. In 1956 Arthur S. Bourinot led the way with *Archibald Lampman's Letters to Edward William Thomson (1890-1898)* (1956), which, together with its companion volume *The Letters of Edward William Thomson (1891-1897)* (1957), were superseded in 1980 by Helen Lynn's *An Annotated Edition of the Correspondence Between Archibald Lampman and Edward William Thomson (1890-1898)*. In the intervening years Carol Marie Sommers edited "The Letters of Archibald Lampman in the Simon Fraser University Library" (1968), a very substantial MA thesis submitted to Simon Fraser that remains unpublished, but is now available in digitized form. In a similar vein is Peter E. Greig's "A Check List of Lampman Manuscript Material in the Douglas Library Archives," which was published in two parts in *Douglas Library Notes* in 1967 and 1968. Because for many years they were housed in the library of Trinity College, Toronto, and for some years later all but disappeared from view, Lampman's letters to May Blackstock McKeggie have not been published, let alone annotated. They are printed here for the light they shed on the months following his move in January 1883 from Orangeville, Ontario, where he worked briefly and unhappily as a schoolmaster, to Ottawa to take up a position in the Savings Bank branch of the Post Office Department (and see Letter 4), a division of the federal government in which he would work until his death in 1899.

Mary (May) Elizabeth Blackstock (1863-1925) was the daughter of the Rev. Dr. William Schenk Blackstock, a prominent Methodist minister who held a pastorate in Toronto in the early 1880s, and Mary Hodge Blackstock (née Gibb). In 1888, she married James Herbert McKeggie (1848-1900), the wealthy founder and owner of a private bank (McKeggie and Company) in Barrie, Ontario, where the couple lived (and see Appendix). They had a daughter who was born on 15 December 1892 and died four days later. A keen and accomplished photographer, Mary was admitted to the Toronto Camera Club in 1902. She died at home in Toronto on 2 September 1925 and was buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

Lampman probably met May while he was a student at Trinity College from 1879 to 1882, possibly through his mother¹ or his sister Annie,² whose musical interests she shared,³ or at a college *Conversazione* — an annual gathering of town and gown for the discussion and enjoyment of literature and the arts, especially music (see Lampman, *Scribe* 62). In any event, she was interested enough in his literary achievements and ambitions for him to share his poems and his writing difficulties with her, and she became a close friend not only of Lampman himself, but also of Annie and his wife Maud(e) Playter Lampman.⁴ The majority of Lampman's surviving letters to May date from the period between his arrival in Ottawa and his marriage to Maud on 3 September 1887; however, there is no indication in his letters that his relationship with May was other than a warm friendship based on mutual interests and sympathy. To judge by Lampman's correspondence, their friendship continued until his death.

The Present Texts

The present texts of Lampman's letters to May are based on the microfilm copies in the Trinity College Archives at the University of Toronto. Quotations from Annie Lampman's letters and the letters of Susanna Lampman below and in the annotations are from the same microfilm.

According to Sylvia Lassam, the Rolph-Bell Archivist at Trinity College, who very kindly sent me copies taken from the microfilm, the original letters were on deposit in the Archives for a time, but in 1962 a member of the Blackstock family took them back to re-unite them with others in an effort to keep the family correspondence together, and later presented the Archives with the microfilm. After a search the original letters and, thanks to John Shoesmith, some related letters were located in the Gibbs Babcock Family Papers (Ms Coll 88) in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. My thanks to Sylvia Latham and John Shoesmith for their very valuable assistance.

Although the letters are for the most part clearly written, they contain a few words that are wholly or partly missing. In such cases the lacuna is indicated by "[missing]". When a word or part of a word has been added for the purpose of grammar or logic it has been set off in square brackets. In the realm of punctuation, Lampman's often idiosyncratic use of periods and dashes has been retained except in a few instances in which the need for greater clarity has dictated a revision.

The letters have been numbered for ease of reference, and the poems to which they refer are dated in accordance with L.R. Early's invaluable "Chronology," the one exception being "Arnulph," which is absent from the "Chronology" because it was only recently published.

¹ Lampman's mother had a "gift for music" (Connor 16) and probably taught piano as well as "music history" (letter of 26 September 1884 to May).

² In the estimation of Helmut Kallman, Annie Margaret Lampman Jenkins was "Canada's first outstanding woman pianist." Born on 14 May 1866 in Morpeth, Ontario (like her brother), Annie studied music in Toronto under, according to Kallman, J.D. Kerrison, W. Waugh Lauder, and Edgar Doward. After moving to Ottawa in 1885, she and her mother travelled to Leipzig, Germany, where from 1887 to 1889 she studied at the famous Leipzig Conservatory under (again according to Kallman) Martin Krause (however, see Letter 9 n5). After her return, she married Frank Maurice Stinson Jenkins on 10 August 1892 in Ottawa, and in the ensuing decade they had five children.. Marriage and motherhood did not prevent her from continuing her career as a musician and music teacher, first at the Martin Krause School of Pianoforte Playing and Singing and then at the Canadian Conservatory of Music (both in Ottawa). In February 1900, the "Music in Canada" column in the *Musical Courier* included an assessment of her talents: "[o]ne of the most versatile musicians in Ottawa is Mrs. F.M.S. Jenkins, a Krause pupil, who at one time was known as Annie Lampman, the Leipsic [sic] correspondent of this paper. Mrs. Jenkins is a fine pianist and progressive piano instructor. Of music she has a broad theoretical knowledge, which serve[s] to make her, among other things, an indispensable member of the Ottawa Amateur Orchestral Society [which was founded by her husband in 1894]." As Kallman observes, Annie served as president of the Morning Music Club from 1920 to 28, organized the Palestrina Choir in 1921, and continued to be active as an accompanist and teacher until almost the end of her life. She died in Ottawa on 12 July 1952.

³ In her letter of 26 September 1884, Lampman's mother refers to May's "favourable" "prospects for study in New York," where her "talents have proper opportunities for development." As to be expected, Annie's letters to May are full of references to recitals, concerts, and other musical subjects, but see also Letter 1 n2.

⁴ The second of four daughters of Edward Playter (c.1834-99), a physician and proponent of public health, and Charlotte Arnold Playter, Emma Maud(e) was born on 5 January 1867 in Toronto and died on 22 November 1910 in Ottawa. She was thus twenty years old when she married Lampman. They would have three children: Natalie (1892-1973), Arnold (1894-1894), and Otto [Archie] (1898-1938). On 14 January 1903, some four years after Lampman's death, Maud entered the federal civil service as a clerk in the Library of Parliament, where she worked until her death. She is buried in Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa, as is Lampman.