

FRED LAPE

By

Kenneth and Agnes DeKay

DEDICATION

To Maynard LOUX, a friend to all of us.

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PREFACE

In his later years Fred Lape wrote a sort of autobiography. A Farm And Village Boyhood which was published in 1980 covers his early years. A second volume which had a number of tentative titles (the last being The Year Everything Changed) and which was never published dealt with his middle and later years.

In a large part this brief life of Fred Lape is based on his autobiography as well as on conversations with him over the last thirty years of his life. In addition, efforts have been made to check various dates and facts because Fred's autobiographical writing was done wholly from memory and long after the event.

During the early 1970's, the authors contacted their friend, Dr. Gene M. Gressley, who heads the Archive of Contemporary History at the University of Wyoming, about the inclusion of the correspondence, papers and writings of Fred Lape in his archival collection of Americana. In a short time Dr. Gressley, Fred Lape, and the authors made the necessary arrangements, and Fred Lape began to send materials to the University of Wyoming for its archives. After his death his remaining materials, correspondence, and unpublished writings were sent to Wyoming where an extensive file on Fred Lape has now been established and is available to anyone who wishes to do research on Fred Lape or on his literary works.

One of Fred Lape's major literary endeavors was the publishing of : Trails, A Literary Magazine Of The Outdoors over a twenty year span from 1932 to 1951. A complete set of Trails is in the Wyoming file, but more or less complete sets can also be found in many area libraries. A partial list of the writings of Fred Lape can be found in the appendix to this volume, but this listing covers only those works which were published, or which he had printed, in book or pamphlet form. A complete list of all of the individual poems which Fred Lape wrote, some of which appeared in magazines or newspapers but many of which were never published, and of his unpublished plays, short stories, and other writings would be far too long for inclusion in this volume. Hopefully, most of his writings are in the Wyoming collection, but there is no way to be certain that he kept a copy of each and every poem or piece of writing that he sold and which was published during his lifetime.

The authors hope that in time the literary views of Fred Lape, particularly his opinions on the trends in poetry during his lifetime, about which he held such strong opinions, will be scrutinized. But for their part, the authors of this volume rest content with this brief summary of the life of their friend.

Esperance, New York Kenneth DeKay
May 1986 Agnes DeKay

INTRODUCTION

When Fred Lape died on March 1, 1985. at his winter home in Jocotepec, Mexico, life ended for a man who had proven himself talented in a remarkable number of ways: as a writer, novelist, poet, teacher, farmer, and naturalist. And what is more, he was able, as few of us are, to leave behind him a tangible memorial in the form of the George Landis Arboretum which he founded, developed, nurtured, and, hopefully, helped to perpetuate in the years to come through a substantial trust fund.

His was a long journey for he was but a few months short of his 85th birthday when he passed away,

"George Landis Arboretum"



Fred Lape

Fred Lape, 1980
Founder of the George Landis Arboretum

Another Lape from the Claverack area was Henry Lape, born about 1833, in Taghkanic, Columbia, NY. Henry was the son of Thomas J. Lape and Ann Maria Holsapel. Thomas J. Lape was probably the son of Thomas T. Lape who was the son of Thomas Lape and the grandson of Andries Lape. Taghkanic was taken from Livingston and called Granger in 1803 - it became Taghkanic in 1814 and the eastern part became Copake in 1824. Feit Miller, father of Helena who married Thomas T. Lape, was an early settler of that which became Taghkanic. The witness at Thomas T. and Helena's daughter, Catharine in 1807 was JONAS F. and ELISABETH MULLER (Thomas J. and Anna Maria's first child was named JONAS and the first female was named ELISABETH). Thomas T. Lape was born in 1781 - he would have been 22 years old in 1803 when Thomas J. Lape was born - therefore, it is possible that Magdelana was wife #2 and that his first wife, possibly another Miller, died after his birth and the maternal grand-parents raised him.

Henry Lape shows up in the 1850 Census of Copake with his parents and in the 1860 Census of Taghkanic, Columbia, NY, with mother Anna M. Lape, 53; Elizabeth A. Lape, 29; Henry Lape, 27; Margaret J. Lape, 11; and William H. Lape, 11. Henry married Rachel Spade on January 3, 1865, at Copake Methodist Church, Copake, Columbia, NY. They had a son, Herman Franklin Lape, born in 1866, and a daughter, Hannah Lape, born in 1869. Henry appears in the 1870 Census of Taghkanic, Columbia, NY: Henry Lape, 38, farmer; Rachel 38; Herman 4; Hannah 2. Rachel Spade Lape died on April 09, 1872, in West Copake, Columbia, NY, and in 1880 Henry Lape moved to a farm in Esperance, Schoharie, NY. Henry Lape married Mahala Silvernale, a neighbor, while living in Schoharie County.

Herman Franklin Lape married Emma Happe in 1890, at Esperance, NY. Herman and Emma Lape

lived in Holland Patent, Oneida, NY, for a short time where he was a watch repairman. They were the parents of Josie Lape, born in 1894 (died young), and Frederick Lape, born August 20, 1900, both born in Holland Patent. Herman Lape was also a farmer and a watch repairman in Esperance, Schoharie, NY. He kept a diary.

Spokane ID
 Janssen, Julia
 10/20/00
 December 20, 1891

Dear Jeff

Your letter was forwarded to me from Esperance. I have been spending my winters in Berlin for the past 18 years. In 1881 I transferred my farm at Esperance into the George Landis Arboretum, of which I am still Director, but since we are to have some property, we are closed from December 1 to April 1. I enclose our program.

I can't add much to your genealogy for either my father nor I ever got much attention as family history. I am the end of his line, and I can only trace it back to a Henry Lape, who probably was born there in Dutchess Co. NY about 1800, for he died in Esperance about 1850, at about seventy. He married for his first wife a Miss I know not exactly, he married for his second wife a Miss I know not only by her name as Grandmother, and she had two children, a daughter Emma, who died unmarried, and my father, Herman Lape, Grandmother's name, and for the second wife Henry married Emma Silverwell, of Esperance, by whom he had no children. My father about 1850 married Emma Kapp of Esperance. They had one child, a girl Emma, who died young, just before I was born, and myself, who was born August 20, 1900. My father died in 1909, from a tropical epidemic he had in Esperance, and my mother in 1917, of old age. I do not have had the years of the birth of either, but I can send it to you from Esperance, where I will return April 1.

By mistake
 Mabel, not Emma

My father kept several any also with his family. There was a cousin Emma (I can't remember her real name) whom we used to visit occasionally in Berlin. I think she was a Lape, maybe, not her husband, though she might have been from the Spate family.

The story that I always heard was that there were originally ten brothers in Dutchess, but which group of those you have on your list, this subject is, I can't know. I think you would be able to get some information however by a search of the graveyards in Dutchess and in Dutchess.

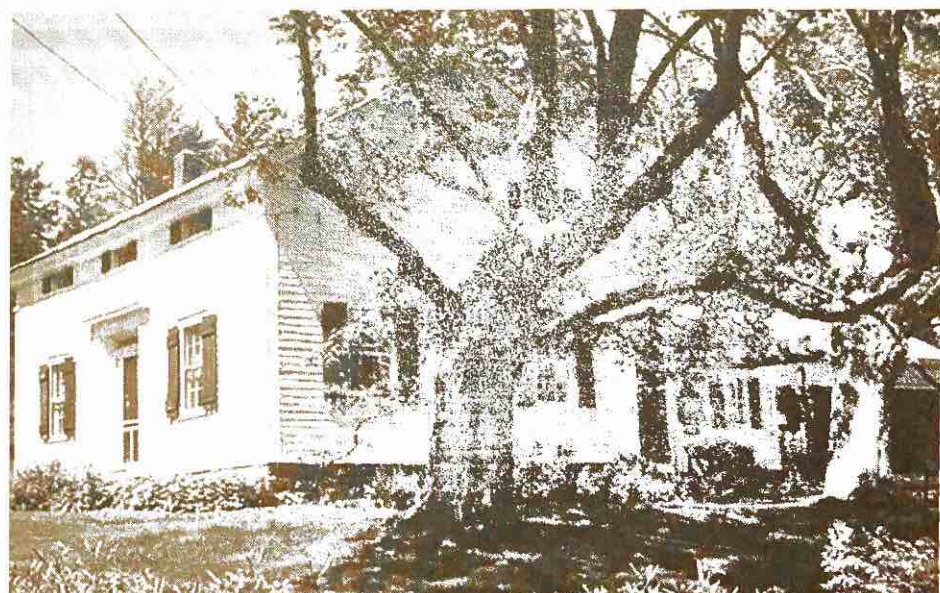
In my childhood we knew of only those other Lape families in our area, WPA, and in Dutchess, and one in Erie. The most famous representative was an Uncle Lape, who was Secretary of Erie in the earlier part of the century, I guess, maybe I think the first name number of a 10 children.

About a year ago I received a letter from a woman named Lape in Kentucky, who was probably a genealogist and wished me to subscribe to a paper, but I didn't, and she advised I contacted her when I will about when I get back to Esperance.

You will find pictures of Uncle Lape and his wife Emma, and of Herman Lape and his wife Emma in 17 books a PACE AND VILLAGE BOYHOOD, published by the Syracuse University Press a year or more ago, and still available.

Very truly
 Fred Lape

Fred Lape transformed the Esperance farm and became the director of the "George Landis Arboretum". Fred Lape was also the author of a couple of books, including "A Garden of Trees and Shrubs..." and "A Farm and Village Boyhood."



The Lape Homestead, Esperance, Schoharie, NY.

By the time Fred Lape inherited his family's 97-acre farm 25 miles west of Albany (near Esperance in Schoharie County), he had distinguished himself as a writer, poet, and teacher. He had grown up close to the land and knew what he wanted to do with it: plant an arboretum that would be open to the public. He named his arboretum in honor of George Landis, a friend who died suddenly in 1951 and bequeathed Lape the funds he needed to begin.

Aided by knowledgeable horticulturists and friends, Fred Lape labored on his project until his death in 1985. He chronicled his prodigious efforts to collect and study plants from nurseries, roadsides, forests, and fields in a book published by Cornell University in 1965. We are pleased to make this long out-of-print and very scarce book available again in a new paperback edition with a foreword by Richard W. Lighty, director of the Mount Cuba Center for the Study of Piedmont Flora, and an up-to-date appendix by the staff of the Landis Arboretum.

Amateur and professional gardeners, who want to start a small arboretum or botanical garden, will welcome this new edition with its expert advice on what to do, what not to do, and why; but as the original foreword notes: "the book's widest audience will be among landowners who wish to improve their property and to increase and enhance the quality of their plantings."

The George Landis Arboretum, named after Fred Lape's best friend and an Associate Professor of economics at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, located on the western slope of the Schoharie Valley at an elevation of 1000 feet, comprises 50 acres of unusual trees and shrubs native to the United States and Canada, to Europe, Asia Minor, Central Asia, Siberia, China and Japan. The Van Loveland Gardens were created by the late Van Loveland, an officer of the Chase Manhattan Bank, and for many years Treasurer of the Arboretum. They include a spring bulb garden, a woodland plant garden, a fern garden, and annual and perennial gardens.

More on the Fred Lape family can be found in "**A Farm and Village Boyhood**," by Fred Lape, Syracuse University Press, 1980.

His close friends were Kenneth and Agnes DeKay, who wrote a beautiful description of Fred Lape's life.

A GARDEN OF TREES AND SHRUBS: PRACTICAL HINTS FOR PLANNING AND PLANTING AN ARBORETUM

by Fred Lape



From "First Steps":

"For this upper unprotected field I also planned a shelter belt of evergreens along the north and west sides. This plan has been successful. A varied planting, mainly of fast-growing pines, makes now after thirteen years an interesting background to the section, and already provides much shelter from wind and drifting snow. In any arboretum to be started on hilly windswept land, the immediate planting of such shelter belts is of great importance.

Certain other allocations were easy, and have been successful: a well-drained and slightly protected knoll for variants of the European beech; an area under a grove of reforestation pines, and near a spring, for Ericaceae; a section of rich damp muck land for the magnolias; a slope facing northeast for some of the Asiatic and western conifers.

Much else of my planning has turned out to be a long catalog of what not to do. My most disastrous mistake was not to consider sufficiently the drifting of snow. . ."



Another view of the Arboretum.

Rachel Spade
wife of
Henry Lape
Died April 9, 1872
age 35 years

(West Copake Reformed Church cemetery)



Hannah M.
daughter of
Henry & Rachel Lape
(West Copake Reformed Church cemetery)

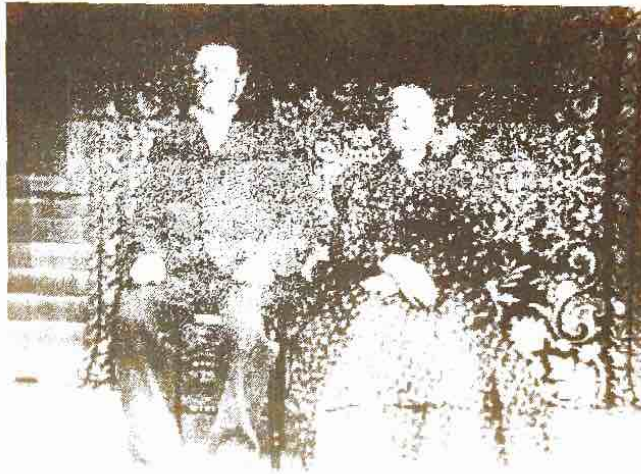




Herman, 1890, father of Fred Lape.



Emma Happe Lape, mother of Fred Lape.



Henry and Mahala Silvernail Lape, grandparents of Fred Lape.



Fred Lape, age 18.



and for Fred Lape and those who knew him, his had been a fruitful journey. True, his very last years had been marred by ill health and failing sight and hearing, but for well over 80 years Fred Lape had enjoyed remarkable health and vitality. As a result, he was able to continue writing and to control the development of his Arboretum because every spring, summer, and fall he was there all day, every day, not only seeing that things got done by doing many of them himself.

His friendship was easily gained for he was an outwardly gregarious person who met people very easily, never hesitated to invite complete strangers into his home, and trusted his fellow men almost without qualm. As a result, he achieved numerous friendships, but he was also disappointed and hurt by others whom he mistakenly took into his confidence and trusted, as it was his nature to do.

In the last half of his life two friendships were paramount. There was George Landis who died relatively young and quits accidentally — a blow from which, in many ways, Fred Lape never recovered. However, it was his legacy from George Landis which enabled Fred Lape to alter his way of life from that of a writer, poet and farmer of sorts struggling to make ends meet as best he could to that of a modestly financially independent man of 50 who was suddenly free, if he managed his money carefully, to write as he wished, to give up his substance farming, and to do as he wanted with the land he owned and the years remaining to him.

Few of us have had such a change thrust upon us, and perhaps even fewer of us would have decided, as Fred Lape did, to use his land and his years and his legacy from his friend to found in memory of that friend a living memorial in the form of the George Landis Arboretum.

The second of the friendships of his later years was that with Le Van Loveland who was always known as “Van” because he hated his full given name. Van eventually retired to the farm which had become an arboretum, and over the years he worked like a demented Trojan and gave of his income in substantial amounts to help develop the George Landis Arboretum into a public attraction. While those interested in rare trees and shrubs can be numbered by the tens, those inter flowers and flower gardens can be numbered in the hundreds, an Loveland’s interest was in his flowers and his flower gardens. Untold times, Van would end a minor squabble with the words, all too “Lape, you may have created an arboretum, but it is my flower the public comes to see!”

Van Loveland, though slightly younger than Fred Lape, die 1977 suddenly and unexpectedly. In point of fact, Fred Lape was alone in the world from then until his own death. He had friends, some true and some untrue, but for all that he had others to confide in, could fill the niche left vacant when Van Loveland died. Van’s death and the physical infirmities of advancing age hit Fred Lape hard, and it can be said that from 1977 on, he was a man alone in a world he pretended to understand but did not, in fact, wholly comprehend.

THE EARLY YEARS

The journey of Fred Lape began on August 20, 1900, in Holland New York, a small village in Oneida County not far from the of Rome and Utica. Fred was the second and last of the children an Lape and his wife, Emma Happe Lape. The older child was a Josie, who died a little over a month after Fred was born. The death of his sister was a major factor in the life of Fred Lape for her death led Herman and Emma Lape to leave Holland Patent with its memories and return to Esperance, and it also meant that Fred Lape was raised as an only child.

Herman Lape was a watchmaker by trade, a trade he hated with some passion for Herman Lape was at heart a man of the land, and in his time there was only one way a man of the land could earn a living and that was to farm. But his wife was a woman for whom there had to be community life, not for her the solitude and the drudgery of a farmer's wife. It was this dichotomy which created a long but not overly happy marriage. Herman Lape had a good mind, but it was untrained, and he himself rather thin as he thought and wrote, for he always wrote extensively in an effort to crystallize his views. Although Herman Lape's views were hardly typical of his times, he was a vary well-liked man for there remains a petition signed by a large number of the residents of Holland Patent asking him to reconsider his proposed departure from that community.

Back in Esperance, Herman Lape first taught school, then finally decided to become a farmer. So, Herman Lape bought the farm, which he called Oak Nose Farm and which a half—century later became the George Landis Arboretum.

Emma Lape never reconciled herself to life on the farm, and as the years went by, she became ever more dissatisfied. At the same time, her love for her only surviving child became rather inordinate, so much so that even when Fred Lape, then well into his twenties, had gone to teach at Stanford University in California, her letters were still addressed to "My dearest darling boy".

Fred Lape has written of his early years in his A Farm and Village Boyhood, but it is in some of his poetry that he deals in a more personal vein with the man and the woman who were his father and mother.

Both Herman and Emma were savers and collectors, a trait that Fred Lape inherited because he, too, saved virtually everything. But unlike his father, the sometime watchmaker, and his mother, the housekeeper, Fred Lape took little care of all that he saved so that many of the family and personal mementos he saved were neglected or mistreated over the years — and badly so.

Herman Lape was not one to neglect the education of his son, and, of course, Emma wanted the best for her boy so Fred Lape, unlike so many children of his time, completed grade school, was exposed to books at home, learned the rudiments of music, and was enrolled in high school to pursue his further education. In addition, like so many other youngsters of his time, Fred Lape learned about life on a farm by being a part of the farm operation, doing chores, and learning about nature from his father.

As Fred has written in the story of his early years, he had other teachers: Fred Brown, the hired hand, who taught him of the planets and stars and the phenomena of the universe; Abbie McCarthy, the postal clerk and early telephone operator, who taught him how to identify flowers and how to grow many of them; Nellie Gordon, one of his schoolteachers, who boarded with the Lapes and taught him the fundamentals of music on the family melodeon; and above all, his paternal grandfather, Henry Lape, who took the very young Fred Lape as his pal.

When high school for Fred became a fact of life, the battles between father and mother over farm or village came to an end of sorts. There was no high school in Esperance, but there was train service (Esperance was served by the Delaware and Hudson at Esperance Station which was located a good mile and a half from the Village), and there was a choice of two high schools, at Altamont or Cobleskill, both on the D & H. Fred's mother wanted to move to the village — she had always wanted to move to the village — and it would be easier for him to commute to high school from the village for it was a good

3 miles from their farm to the railroad station. Father gave in, the farm was rented out, and they moved to the village where Fred's father, refusing to go back to matchmaking, worked in the local mill during Fred's high school years.

ESPERANCE AND BEYOND — AND BACK HOME AGAIN

While Fred started high school in Altamont in 1913, he transferred to Cobleskill in 1915, and it was from the Cobleskill High School that he graduated in 1917. He then went to Cornell University at Ithaca, N. Y. After a try at chemistry and then physics, Fred eventually ended as an English major. And it was at Cornell that he began his first efforts at writing poetry.

Three scholarships, odd jobs, and money from home saw him through his undergraduate years at Cornell. Fred's father, after working as a mill hand in the village while Fred went through high school, had gone back to farming, not at "Oak Nose" where Fred had been raised but rather at the Silvernail farm just down the road, for a small inheritance had enabled Herman Lape to buy this second farm while he still rented out his beloved "Oak Nose."

After graduation in 1921, Fred stayed on at Cornell to pursue graduate study. He was appointed a Graduate Assistant in English for 1921-22 and then an Instructor in English in 1922-23.

It was during this period that Herman Lape became seriously ill, and though he recovered, it then became clear to him that his days as a farmer were over. His wife had had enough of farm life; his son had agreed to go to Stanford University at Palo Alto, California in the fall of 1923 to continue his teaching career; and the man's physique was no longer up to the toils of farming. So, he and his wife moved back to the village where he set up shop as a watchmaker, and it was here that he spent the rest of his life.

Fred loved the west as it was then. He made friends easily and saw much of the area though he came back to Esperance each summer. But his desire to write grew even as his dissatisfaction with teaching as a career started to mount. Finally, after four years at Stanford he decided to strike out on his own. To do so, he decided to come back to Esperance to live with his father and mother.

Soon thereafter, he sold a short story to Colliers for three hundred dollars so he was quickly convinced that he could earn a living as a writer. After all, there was at that time a huge public market for magazines of all kinds, and this created a virtually unending demand for stories to fill those magazines. Although Fred Lape really wanted to write poetry, he realized that he could not earn a living from selling poetry for very few poets could do so even after they had become well known. So he accepted the fact that he would have to divide his time between writing stories, and perhaps novels, which he could sell to support himself and writing poetry, as he really wanted to do.

His plan had two flaws: first, after the sale to Collier's, he found that his writings were not selling as he had hoped, and second, he became homesick for California. So, Fred took advantage of an offer to help someone drive west, and off he went. But California was not the answer after all. After a period of seeing old friends, he had to go to work which was not easy. At length, in exchange for a cabin of his own and his board, he ended up teaching at a Ranch School, which catered to the youngsters of wealthy eastern families. His work included riding horses with these youngsters and teaching algebra to those of high school age. By the time summer came and classes ended, Fred was glad to shepherd the

children east by train and get back to Esperance. It was then that he asked his father if he could go to live at Oak Nose Farm which was no longer Occupied and stood empty and neglected. And so Fred Lape returned to the farm of his childhood which was to be his home for the last half century of his life.

Taking stock of the man as he started out on the next phase of his long journey, we find that he was a child of the country yet with a certain degree of sophistication gained during his years at Cornell and Stanford. Thus, he was able to care for himself as cook and house— keeper, to re-do a badly dilapidated house, to fix up the old barn and even turn part of it into a kind of studio, and to do the outdoor work around the place. He played the piano not only for his own interest but with a local dance bend group; he painted after a fashion; he was writing poetry; and he had the ability to write well enough to do salable short stories and hopefully to do even more.

THE CIRCLE OF THE THIRTIES

Fred Lape was by nature outwardly gregarious yet he was always withdrawn as to his very private self. He met people easily and readily and had a knack for making even complete strangers feel at home. Yet, while he was a man with friends by the score, only a mere handful of his friends could be said to really know him if, in fact, any of them ever did. He was a ready talker but not about himself. To all but a very few there was no hint of the man underneath. This is apparent in his poetry where he could write with feeling about animals and capture the qualities of persons as diverse as his father and John Quincy Adams (whose diary fascinated him) but could never deal with himself or his feelings without becoming chilly, if not cold, and holding his reader at arms length. How different and how much warmer are his poems about Adam coons: a set, as yet unpublished, of poems Fred wrote after buying a box of books which happened to contain the diary of a local stone cutter about whom Fred wrote with real feeling because the man was not Fred Lape.

Who really knew Fred Lape? In his later years probably only George Landis and Van Loveland, yet one could list those who were friends or even close friends in some number. It was not as though Fred Lape were two different persons, one public and the other private; rather, it was simply that he revealed himself only on the surface and kept the man underneath hidden from almost everyone. Certainly, the rich girl from the west to whom Fred proposed during his teaching days at Cornell knew him well enough to refuse the offer (a disappointment from which Fred soon recovered), but it is apparent from their correspondence that neither really understood the other.

He made many friends in California in the twenties and some of those friendships lasted almost all of his remaining years. but personal contacts were few and far between and correspondence fitful at best.

But during the 1930's Fred's circle flourished. There were one or two women with whom he was quite close but under circumstances that dictated friendships rather than marriage. There were the people he met in the course of his literary endeavors and those who came to the farm in answer to his ads for part—time farm help, and there were, of course, the friends of these friends as the circle widened.

Locally, he made it a point to get acquainted with Will Christman the area farmer-poet whose works won him considerable local and regional fame and a literary prize or two. This led to friendship with Will's family which included Henry Christman, whose Tim Horns And Calico was also a prizewinning work about the New York State rent wars of the 1830's, and Lansing Christman who was a local author but, more importantly, Fred's partner in the publication of Trails, a nature poetry magazine with a

smattering of prose which gave both Fred and Lansing some renown in poetry circles. Through the Christmans, Fred met their neighbors Clement and Gloria Wood, Clement then an author of some note who is probably best remembered today as the author of the words to that old Nelson Eddy favorite Short 'nin' Bread but whose many books had a wide reputation and substantial sale at one time, Gloria the author of a series of romances under the name of Gloria Goddard, both of them friends of Freds till their deaths.

To the farm for one reason or another came Daniel Smythe, the poet who became best known for his works dealing with Robert Frost, and Raymond Holden, a novelist, poet, and writer of middling fame who is best known today because one of his wives was Louise Bogan, a poet of repute whose career is now being reconsidered and restudied.

A number of painters came to the farm to work in answer to Fred's ads. Ralph Nelson was probably Fred's favorite, but as yet Nelsons works have not achieved any degree of fame whatsoever, and in fact Fred's collection of paintings by Nelson and others was refused when Fred offered to leave them to the Munson—Williams-Proctor Museum in Utica (there was only one work of his dozens which was of any interest to the Utica Museum much to Freds annoyance). A much later visitor was the Dutch painter, Cock van Gent, whose works had a fad in the 1950's when the curator for one large museum took an interest in her work, but while Fred purchased a number of her works, the real benefits came from her husband, Arie Kruik, who was a talented horticulturist and helped Fred with his plantings in the early years of the Arboretum.

And there was a young Jewish painter from Brooklyn who had considerable talent but was killed in a brutal mugging not too many years after he left Fred's farm. A vegetarian with a young wife who liked both meat and sweets, his stay at the farm was the source of much amusement to Fred Lape as he recalled the wife's efforts to eat in spite of her husband's strict regimen.

These were a few of the people who came to the farm, but the list is almost endless of people who were talented to some greater or lesser degree or were friends of these more or less talented persons. Today, they are for the most part merely names from Fred's past except to those who knew them then or came to know them later on.

Locally, Fred's circle also expanded rapidly. He played piano in a local dance band group which played here and there for dances of all sorts and was not unknown in the speakeasies and roadhouses which abounded during the prohibition era. Fred also became a part of an amateur theatrical group centered on the Gloversville—Johnstown area as a result of which Fred came to have a wide circle of friends and acquaintances in that area.

When, in 1937, Fred began to teach once again, this time at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, times were already changing not only for him but for many of those who had come to the farm at one time or another to visit or to stay or to work. The circle which had expanded so rapidly had begun to slowly contract, and even the smaller circle was not to survive the displacements of World War II. During and after that war Fred's life became quite another thing, and the circle of the thirties never reformed, nor did, a new circle ever establish itself around the farm.

In his later years, Fred's life was more self—centered and his friendships, even though still numerous, were far less close, while his early days at the farm became something to be remembered but neither

relived nor renewed. The friends of the thirties faded for the most part into irregular visitors or spasmodic correspondents at best except for some of the Christmans and Clement and Gloria Wood who were still near enough to be readily accessible.

THE UNCERTAIN YEARS

After his unrewarding year at the ranch school in California, Fred Lape came back to Esperance, took over Oak Nose Farm, and began to live the life of a writer once again. Now, his short stories began to sell, and they were his economic base. With that to lean on, he wrote poetry some of which also added to his income in a snail way because there were many newspapers, as well as magazines, which used poetry as fillers.

Writers do not write every waking moment, and they have lives to lead. In Fred's case there was the house to make habitable, the barn to save and refurbish, the land to restore, and being Fred Lape there had to be some flowers and a vegetable garden. Being naturally gregarious and with lots of work to be done around his place, Fred began to seek out cheap help during the summer season, offering free room and board in return for some part-time labor. This effort was a rousing success (with a few failures or disappointments along the way, needless to say) as his ads in some of the New York city magazines and newspapers attracted various people who were without work and for whom free room and board in the country for the summer in exchange for doing some work was a cheap way to escape summer in the City.

Before too long Fred's farm became quite a gathering place for his growing circle of friends and acquaintances. The house was redone. Talk of 'restoration' after Fred's death was unreal because the house after Fred redid it in the 1930's bore no resemblance to the house as he had known it in his childhood. The house had been built, probably in the 1820's or 1830's, perhaps a bit later, for stove heat (fireplace heat had dictated the nature of farmhouse construction before 1820). Stove heat required a number of small rooms easily heated by small stoves or easily closed off. Fred wanted large spacious rooms, which were easily achieved, but ever after he never solved the problem of how to heat these spacious rooms properly with stove heat.

The barn was restored to serve in part as a barn and in part as a studio. This latter part took up over a quarter of the barn and had two and a half floors the central features of which were a spacious second floor room and a balcony—type porch which opened onto the farm's spectacular view of the Schoharie Valley to the east.

To go back to farming the land was not Fred's intent so he began to set out evergreens under New York State reforestation program in an effort to save the land without having to work it.

In 1935, Fred decided to go back to California for the winter. He renewed old acquaintances, worked on an intended novel about the California gold rush days, and visited the places he had liked best, but the old appeal was no longer there. As spring approached, so did the urge to go home to his farm. Although he kept in touch with some California friends for years to come, Fred never again went back. California had changed, but so had Fred Lape.

For some people the depression of the 1930's started with the stock market crash of 1929. For others, the depression closed in on them in 1930 or 1931 or 1932, its effects being felt as they spread like

ripples throughout the economy. But for many writers the depression came later in the thirties when the magazine market for their work began to dry up and publishing houses cut back, merged or went under.

Back home, Fred found that the depression which was ever so slowly passing for others had finally arrived for him. His markets were drying up, if not completely, enough so that his income had become both insufficient and uncertain.

During his first years as a writer Fred had written a novel which was well thought of by several publishers but was not accepted by any of them for publication. His next novel "Roll On, Pioneers" had some merit and was published, but it never sold well, and the royalties from it were never very much. A third novel which was rather trashy and quite sexy for its time had virtually no literary merit but sold well, and even though it was written under a pseudonym, it was the one novel from which Fred made any money to speak of.

However, the sales of this novel soon fell off. The poetry market was drying up as newspapers merged and magazines folded, and the demise of so many of the magazines which had formed the writer's market for short stories, essays, and the like made the sale of such material chancy at best.

But if he were not to continue as a free-lance writer, there was only teaching to turn to, and Fred realized that to have a future in teaching at the college level, he would need to get at least a Master's degree and probably study for a Doctorate which had no attraction for him at his age and with a writing career, at least of sorts, behind him.

Faced with this obvious dilemma, the solution appeared for Fred quite by chance. Granville Hicks who was then a reasonably well-known writer and critic and literary figure had been teaching part-time at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy to make ends meet in circumstances not unlike Fred's. Just as Fred faced his crisis, R.P.I. decided that Hicks' communist leanings were rather too strong and let him go. For Fred R.P.I.'s immediate need for a part-time instructor in English was the answer. He was hired in 1937 to teach three days a week for one semester a year, and the stipend he earned, small as it was, was enough to enable him to continue to live at the farm and free-lance the rest of the year. This small but sufficient income which Fred remembered as being \$900 a year gave Fred the security he needed so that his urge to write as he pleased could be fulfilled. He decided to concentrate on writing poetry and on writing poetry as he wanted to write it. With that shift Fred's literary career started almost wholly anew. His new and highly personal style of poetry found some admirers and a few advocates in influential places so that his poems gained some acceptance here and there and were purchased for publication in various newspapers and magazines. It was in this period, too, that Fred wrote the poems about his boyhood and his parents which many years later he collected into a volume entitled Hill Farm, perhaps his best volume of poetry.

At the same time Fred's life began to change. He made new friends at R.P.I. His group of summer visitors to the farm began to disperse. His stage activities ended. He began to settle down to teaching and writing. For times change, and they had, not only for Fred Lape but for so many of those he had come to know.

TRAILS: A LITERARY MAGAZINE OF THE OUTDOORS

Fred Lape had two novels, many individual poems, and short stories without number published in his

earlier years. Later, he had many more individual poems and a single volume of poetry published. Then, still later, there were his book on trees and shrubs, his volume on apples, and the story of his childhood years all of which were published, and a number of his articles on horticulture, which appeared in several magazines. And finally, there were the several volumes of his poetry which he had printed himself. Yet, if the literary endeavors of Fred Lape should endure, it may well turn out that the publication of Trails will be deemed the most vital part of his literary life.

It all started with an old hand printing press which Fred's father had once used to print ads for his watch repair business. Fred and two of the Christmans, Lansing and Henry, got to discussing this old press and the flood of poetry magazines which then abounded and offered places for budding poets to be published and read. In due course the idea for a magazine concentrating on poetry and prose dealing with the outdoors came to fruition. The magazine was born in 1932 yet it survived the depression of the thirties, the Second World War, and much else and did not succumb until 1951 and then only because Fred Lape had lost his interest and enthusiasm for the project.

In his later years Fred Lape felt that Trails was a modified success with some good poetry but with very little good prose yet he recognized that it started too late — too late to catch the wave of the 1920's; too late to influence the trends of poetry in the 1930's, trends that Fred abhorred and fought for the rest of his days; and too late to avoid clashing in a losing battle with the poets of the 30's and 40's who established the main trends in the poetry of that period.

One of the main contributors to Trails, and probably the best known of its early contributors, was Will Christman whose love of nature may even have been greater than his love for women. But there were others almost without number whose poetry flashed, no matter how briefly, through the pages of Trails which remained throughout its lifetime a small (usually sixteen pages) paperbound, pamphlet type, quarterly magazine originally costing ten cents a copy, later fifteen cents a copy or fifty cents a year, and finally twenty—five cents a copy or a dollar a year. From its original hand—set printing it eventually evolved into a commercially printed magazine as its editors, at first Fred Lape and Henry and Lansing Christman but later just Fred and Lansing, found the burden of doing their own printing too time consuming.

Through Trails Fred Lape expanded his literary friendships. Danny Smythe not only wrote for Trails but came to the farm for several summers, putting down in his journals all that was said and done day by day throughout each summer. Mary Weeden Stiver lived in the area, contributed to Trails, visited Fred often, still writes her poetry after moves to the Carolinas, Hawaii, and California, and corresponded with Fred until his death. And one could go on and on with the names of those who became Fred's friends through Trails John Hall Wheelock of Scribner's; Emily Snyder with whom Fred collaborated on an unpublished novel under another of Fred's pseudonyms; David Morton whose sonnets had considerable popularity at one time; Jo Byrne whose husband, Will, was a U. S. Congressman from the Albany area; Raymond Fuller who wrote nature articles for the Saturday Evening Post Bob and Marie Quinn who did the covers for Trails, a feature of the publication in which Fred Lape always took great pride; Donald Hall whose current work, both poetry and prose, has become well—known; and August Derleth who is probably the most widely-known of all the contributors to Trails not only for his writings but for his multitude of literary endeavors. In fact, Derleth tried, without success, to continue the tradition of Trails with his short-lived Hawk And Whippoorwill.

The November 1951 issue of Trails carried a short note by Fred Lape, which began, "This will be the last issue of Trails. Its ending signifies nothing more than the weariness of its editor." And on that note Fred summarized the whole of the endeavor as follows:

I have tried in these twenty years to publish both poetry and prose that seemed to me to show some vitality against the future. I have met in the process many good friends, both by letter and in person. This has been one of the joys of publishing. I hope I have offered some poets a stepping stone to better publications. I hope that Trails itself may have published a few poems that will outlast its memory.

Trails may, indeed, have been born too late as Fred thought. It may have lost the fight against the poetic trends Fred so abhorred, whether rightly or wrongly. But those who love the outdoors would do well to read those now seemingly ancient copies of Trails in which so many wrote of nature, not as it was but as it will always be.

THE FARM

The coming of World War II had all the makings of a catastrophe for Fred Lape. In the end his wartime experiences did not break him though they left him a sort of subsistence farmer living an extremely frugal life from which he was rescued only by the formation of a wholly new friendship.

During World War I, Fred was at Cornell, and he enlisted in the Student Army Training Corps. As Fred remembered, it was during bayonet training he became revolted with the idea of war and became a convinced and confirmed pacifist. With the approach of World War II his pacifism became outspoken rather than merely latent. He wrote, spoke, and broadcast in opposition to the entry of the United States into the war, but unlike so many who had opposed our entry into the war, Fred's opposition to war did not cease after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war by Congress and the President.

When the draft age was raised to 45 in December 1941, Fred was eligible. Because it was then extremely difficult for anyone who was a pacifist by inclination rather than by religious conviction to gain exemption from the draft, Fred had several options: he could go to work in a war plant; he could enlist in the Army or some other branch of the service where his age and education might give him an assignment involving no combat duty; or he could seek exemption as a Conscientious objector on other than religious grounds while indicating a willingness to work in a conscientious objector camp. His opposition to war was so great that he chose the last option. His position was rejected by the local draft board, and he was faced with the choice of jail or induction when he was called up.

No sooner had he applied for exemption as a conscientious objector than it became public knowledge. His past was the subject of the same formal scrutiny as that given to all who then sought conscientious objector classification, but more importantly R.P.I. dismissed Fred from its faculty. Without a job Fred fell back on farming in order to support himself until called up, but in fact, the call never came because in December 1942, the maximum draft age was lowered to 38 before Fred's number had come up, and Fred was exempted because of his age.

So, the coming of World War II led Fred into farming in order to live, and it was to the raising of sheep that Fred turned his efforts, sheep being less demanding than cows, easier to pasture, and cheaper to

buy and keep although infinitely harder to fence in and protect from predators. However, to begin raising sheep in order to make a living is one thing, to eat is another, so Fred bought some pigs for meat and a few cows for milk and butter, some chickens for both food and eggs, and his vegetable garden became not only larger but even more essential as he took to peddling eggs and fresh vegetables house to house to raise a little extra money.

It was at this very low point in his life in terms of his finances that Fred's life took yet another turn. While still at R.P.I., Fred had met George Landis who had come to R.P.I. to teach economics. Music turned out to be their common ground initially. George Landis was collecting recordings of classical music, and Fred's knowledge of music led to a sort of joint effort.

George Landis had not only a regular position at R.P.I. but a little family money behind him. Thus, as their friendship grew, George Landis, who was in a position to buy records and go to concerts in Troy, Albany, and Schenectady and occasionally even to New York City, invited Fred to his apartment in Troy to hear lots of music and took Fred along to many concerts. Fred was not writing much at this time as he settled into farming so he began to play the piano more and to expand his musical horizons.

Another legacy from his years at R.P.I. came in the form of his enthusiasm for oriental rugs. Harriet Peck, the R.P.I. Librarian, had aroused Fred's interest in such rugs, and Fred got interested in weaving his own orientals and did, in fact, make several over the years.

With new friends and new and expanded interests Fred Lape began his life as a subsistence sheep farmer at Oak Nose Farm. During these farm years Fred increased his herd of cows to five as he found that homemade butter sold well and was an excellent source of additional income. To his pigs and chickens he added goats, ducks, and geese. In time, he got himself oriented as a farmer and into a routine. Then, he was in a mood to write again, and his poems, many of them about his animals and his farm life, found markets individually and in his published volume of poems, Barnyard Year.

A FRIEND AND HIS LEGACY

During the last war years and in the postwar years Fred Lape and George Landis became very close friends. Fred was able to find a local man who would take over his farm chores, especially milking the cows, so that Fred and George could go to concerts. George Landis became a frequent visitor to the farm, and he helped Fred financially so that Fred was able to make some repairs and renovations at the farm and could enjoy something more than what the meager income from his farm could provide.

By the time the Second World War ended and his old friends had adapted to peacetime living and work once again, the circle of the 1930's was gone for good. Fred was a spotty correspondent, and over the years that tendency when combined with new friends and new interests allowed old friendships to fade and in most cases to die out altogether. Gradually, and sometimes not so gradually, one after another of Fred's connections with those in his earlier circle at the farm dwindled, and he lost sight of first this one and then that one. Of course, the same thing was happening at the other end, too, as these individuals took new jobs, married or remarried, moved here and there, wrote less and less frequently, and never seemed to find the time to visit the farm.

By the late 1940's, even the Christman family was dissolving from death and mobility. The last of Fred's old circle came down pretty much to Clement and Gloria Wood. Danny Smythe came back from the

service and attended Union College, but the closeness of the old days had faded. And when Ralph Nelson, the artist, paid a return visit to the farm after the war, the presence of Fred's mother at the farm made his stay uncomfortable, and off he went.

Herman Lape had accepted, though how willingly we will never know, life in the village as watchmaker and thinker and philosopher, and Fred came to believe that in time his father found some satisfaction in his life in the village. But a local typhoid outbreak in 1938 cost several lives in Esperance, and Herman Lape's was one of those. It was this typhoid outbreak which formed the background for one of Fred's finest short stories, Morning In Gideon, but this work which was written almost forty years later, in the middle 1970's, found no market in the magazines of a later age. After the death of her husband, Emma Lape, who lived until 1957, resided here and there in the village and occasionally at the farm with Fred. Fred was always a dutiful son and looked after his mother through her remaining years, but life for both of them was easier when he was at the farm and she in the village.

George Landis had inherited a bit of money so that he was able to live well even in a time when college faculty were not overpaid by any means. After World War II, George wished to have a house of his own, and he considered buying one or two places in the Esperance area but finally decided to have a new house built just outside of Troy.

Though neither George Landis nor Fred Lape realized it at the time, it was the landscaping of George's new property which was the first step toward the creation of the George Landis Arboretum. George Landis wanted something different in the way of landscaping, and so he and Fred Lape began to search out unusual trees and shrubs. First, there were catalogs, and then there were visits to arboreta and botanical gardens and nurseries, and even a trip to a Maryland nursery to ponder new purchases. In due course, duplicates of the same items ordered for George's property were also planted at the farm. Much of the experience and knowledge gained in planting at George's and in experimenting with a rock garden on a rock outcrop behind the Landis house eventually found their way into the development of a small arboretum of sorts at the farm.

Then, one winter evening in 1950, George Landis died accidentally while tuning the engine of his car when the wind blew the door of his garage shut unbeknownst to him.

The fact that Fred Lape was the primary legatee of George Landis' estate did nothing to soften the blow of the sudden loss of such a close friend, certainly the closest and dearest friend Fred Lape had during his lifetime. However, as Fred found out in the course of time, the old saw that life must go on was no less true for him than for anybody else. And so, Fred had to pause once again, and, in his case, for the last time, to take stock of where he was, where he wanted to go, and what he wanted to do.

The first accounting had come when he left teaching to become a freelance writer and finally settled at Oak Nose Farm. A second accounting after his final trip to California when the depression in the writers market had made itself felt had been negated by the sudden opening at R.P.I. The third accounting was not an accounting in actuality because the war, the draft, the leaving of R.P.I., and the entry into farming all followed their course without form or thought until suddenly Fred Lape was farming not merely while he awaited the draft but for the foreseeable future once the threat of the draft had suddenly ended.

Now, at fifty, a bachelor with only an aged mother to see about, owner of a ninety-six acre farm, and a writer and poet with some success in being published, Fred Lape found himself with a competence

which would enable him, provided he was careful with his money which was really no problem for Fred after years of enforced frugality, to live as he pleased without the need to run a farm or have other gainful employment. Fred Lape might well have devoted himself to his writing and perhaps to travel for there were faraway places, such as Tibet, that he longed to see. But the care of his mother seemed to rule out extensive travel, and the love of his farm seemed to rule out a life wholly devoted to writing. Then, there was the matter of the future, not only his remaining years but thereafter, for he now had an estate to consider and his farm which he loved and needed, no longer in order to earn a living but because it had been an essential part of his childhood and of his most difficult adult years.

The answer came from the little arboretum he had started at the farm while helping George Landis with his landscaping. The farm was never a good, productive farm, but its hills and slopes offered beautiful views and might well be developed into a full—scale arboretum in time. And of course, it would be named the George Landis Arboretum in memory of his friend who had made it all possible both in life and death.

THE GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM — AND VAN

To start with, Fred had had some scientific training during his first two years at Cornell; he had taken an interest in native plants, flowers, and trees as a farm boy and during his later years at Oak Nose Farm; and he had learned a great deal when he and George Landis had worked together on landscaping George's property. To build on that foundation Fred read omnivorously, visited arboreta and botanical gardens in Boston, Rochester, and New York City, and laid out a general scheme for plantings based on the various micro—climates of the farm. Then, once again, chance or luck came along to give Fred a hand.

His advertisement for summer help brought him Arie Kruik and his wife, Cock Van Gent, both Dutch; she an artist and he a trained horticulturist. Fred came to find something in some of her paintings, and at one time her work had some acceptance in influential art circles. She saw people in terms of the Indians of Mexico and it is in that form that her painting of Fred at the piano took shape — it was purchased by Maynard Loux, and donated by him to the Arboretum. But in terms of the Arboretum, it was Arie Kruik who was the find, and during the two years they were at the farm, Arie helped Fred turn the farm into the George Landis Arboretum.

Fred realized that he could not afford to develop the whole of his ninety—six acres into one huge planting because he could not possibly cover the cost of upkeep. So he limited himself initially to about fifty acres which meant that he left his woodlot, his pasture fields, and two other large fields for possible future use. He found that his reforestation plantings from his first years back at the farm helped to divide the arboretum portion of the farm into belts and provided protective zones for some of his plantings. But in any such undertaking as this, mistakes are bound to occur, and they did, for as Fred recognized before too long, he had made a major miscalculation and had planted many things too close together to allow for proper future growth. This problem still plagues the Arboretum to this day.

Fred made two other decisions in those early days. He realized that he should keep the pasture fields and the other open fields cut in order to prevent their reversion to woods and brush. Since he no longer needed to raise sheep or keep cows, he let the pasture to others for grazing after he dispensed with his own flock of sheep and his few cows. This served to keep the pasture fields cropped while the two

large open fields were easily mowed each year.

The second decision had to do with the future of the place for very early on Fred began to wonder whether his estate would be sufficient to maintain the Arboretum and the rest of the property after his death. The answer, Fred concluded, was to have the Arboretum connected with an institution so he turned to Union College in Schenectady, Union being Only seventeen miles away, a going and growing institution with a long history, and offering programs which might well benefit from its having a facility such as the Arboretum. R.P.I. did not enter into Fred's thinking because of the distance to Troy, and of course, there had been Fred's forced departure on purely non-academic grounds, which may have entered into Fred's thinking.

Dr. Carter Davidson was then President of Union, and he was very enthusiastic about the possibilities of the Arboretum as a part of Union. Fred Lape was given a non-salaried faculty appointment as a Research Associate in Biology, and the Arboretum was designated rather informally as An Affiliate of Union College. However, even as this affiliation was established, there were problems. While no money was made available for the support of the Arboretum by Union, the nominal affiliation with Union led many to think that the Arboretum was being financed by the College thus discouraging potential donors. In addition, Dr. Davidson and the College Board of Trustees were not in complete agreement as to the President's plans for the future of the College. There was not likely to be sufficient money in Fred's estate to make the Arboretum self-supporting, which caused the College Board of Trustees to be hesitant to take over the Arboretum in some formal fashion. But for the moment President Davidson's interest sufficed, and the Union affiliation seemed to give the Arboretum added prestige in certain circles.

In addition to the practical ability of Arie Kruik, Fred was able to get much help and advice from various professional botanists and taxonomists. With this help Fred felt that after about two years of study, he was able to serve with some ability as the Arboretum taxonomist. Fred also developed working relations with other arboreta, which gave him plants to add to his collection even as he bought other plants from various nurseries specializing in items he wanted. The winters were barely long enough for Fred to develop his maps, identification cards and labels, and to complete the rest of the file and paper work he had come to understand to be essential for the future development of the Arboretum.

One project which was a real winner was the development of a trail through the Arboretum woodlot along which all the trees, shrubs, and plants were identified. This was something that visitors, young and old, from the immediate area or from around the world could appreciate and from which they could learn. But other ideas or dreams floundered in the cold and snow of the Esperance winters while still others barely survived until the secrets of good protection against animal and rodent damage during the long, severe winters were duly learned and applied.

The failures were immediately apparent, but the successes took awhile to show themselves and then to prove themselves over the years. The major success, and the one for which the Arboretum is best known in horticultural circles, is the conifer collection.

As Fred was starting the Arboretum, at least partially in an effort to recover from the loss of his friend George Landis, another person came to the Arboretum for a weekend Visit. He was Van Loveland. And that weekend visit, not to meet Fred but rather to see a friend who was staying at the farm, was the beginning of a long and enduring friendship between Fred and Van, a friendship broken only some

twenty five years later with Van's death. This friendship played an important role in the development of the Arboretum for Van was not only a willing worker, but he knew and loved flowers.

Van had come to New York City from his native Winchester, Kentucky. In New York City he began his career as a banker which eventually led to his being the manager of one of the Chase Manhattan Banks mid-town New York City branches. He loved music, especially opera, and he loved the farm. It was not too long before he was a regular weekend visitor, arriving by train in Schenectady every Friday night almost always with a heavy suitcase which contained not clothes but a large roast of some sort for Saturday night dinner at which he and Fred liked to have guests. Just as regularly, he departed early on Sunday evening with his empty suitcase. The weekend visits were soon supplemented by his vacations. He worked like a slave while at the farm, mowing lawn and tending the flowers but, most importantly, creating new beds for his iris and his roses and a multitude of other flowers. The vegetable garden did not interest him except as a site for his dahlias and gladiolus. Being a bachelor with a decent salary and the certain prospects of an adequate pension upon retirement, Van spent his income on himself and, in due course, came to spend it on behalf of the Arboretum as well.

For Fred, Van's friendship was a real godsend. He needed someone to fill the niche left by George Landis' death, and Van did that to some degree. Fred also needed additional physical help and financial assistance in developing the Arboretum, and Van was willing to give of both his time and money. And when Fred, after his mother's death, was free to get away for the winter, Van's apartment in New York City gave Fred a place to stay while he spent the winter months going to concerts, operas, galleries, and museums after having concentrated intensely on the Arboretum.

Finally, once Van had retired, he lived at the farm with Fred, and they were then free to travel where they chose each winter. With Van resident at the farm, the flower gardens expanded, and though Fred was not always willing to admit it, there was little doubt in Van's mind that his flower gardens were a great attraction to the public and of more interest to most visitors than were the Arboretum plantings. For, as the Arboretum was being developed year by year, so it came ever so slowly to the attention of a larger public, and each year the number of visitors grew.

Van Loveland with his banking experience had a real understanding of the hard financial facts of life. He also had an appreciation of his own mortality. Fred Laps took his finances rather too casually or indifferently though they were never a real problem for him because he had been forced to live frugally for so many years that he never changed his ways. But Fred often seemed to refuse to accept the fact that he was mortal and getting older. Well into his seventies, Fred still talked of projects, literary and otherwise, which he was holding for his "old age". And he never bothered to apply for a permanent resident permit in Mexico (which it takes six years to get) apparently assuming that he would go on year after year traveling between Esperance and Jocotepec. In fact, Fred seemed to assume that because his mother had lived to be 90, he would also, and that his health would hold as long as he lived.

Fred did not often take Van's advice, but it was, at least in part, at Van's urging that the George Landis Arboretum was finally incorporated. Conditions were changing, and the Arboretum needed to meet them. State grants were becoming available through the New York State Council on the Arts, and Fred and Van were interested, but the Arboretum as a private operation faced problems in obtaining such grants in spite of its nominal affiliation with Union College. There was also the potential for real property tax exemption if the Arboretum were incorporated as a public body. So it was decided that the

Arboretum would seek incorporation as an educational non-profit corporation under a charter from the New York State Board of Regents.

Carter Davidson had resigned his position at Union and had been succeeded by Dr. Harold Martin who, like Davidson, was interested in the Arboretum although perhaps not to the same degree. When Fred Lape expressed interest in incorporating the Arboretum, Harold Martin took the lead and was the strongest force in actually bringing it about. The creation of the new corporation was clearly based on the Arboretum's affiliation with Union College for the first Board of Trustees of the new corporation consisted of seven persons from Union, including President Martin, along with Fred and Van and two friends of Fred's both of whom then happened to be connected with R.P.I.

In due course the new corporation received a preliminary charter from the Regents and eventually a permanent charter. For quite some time the Board of Trustees continued pretty much as first created because the few changes did not alter the predominance of Union College personnel. The Arboretum received a state grant in each of several years enabling the Arboretum to hire a resident botanist and start a series of Saturday programs open to the public, a series that has proven successful and long-lived. Arrangements were made with Fred as to the physical property and the operation of the Arboretum: in exchange for a life right of occupancy for both himself and Van, Fred deeded the entire Arboretum property to the corporation in 1966, and Fred was designated as Director of the Arboretum for life.

For good or bad, right from the beginning of the new corporation, Fred Lape continued to run the Arboretum as he had when it was his private holding. This led to one Board resignation when Fred and Van decided on their own to terminate seeking annual grants from the Council on the Arts because the two of them felt that the work involved in applying for the grants was no longer worthwhile as the annual grants were getting smaller and smaller. But, except for that one resignation over policy matters, the Board seemed willing to let Fred run the place since he and Van were putting up the money.

However, in time the Board of Trustees of Union made it clear that they were not interested in assuming control of the Arboretum after Fred Lape's death because there was no assurance that Fred's estate would be sufficient to run the Arboretum without the need for funds from the College. In fact, the College Trustees were not even interested in helping to support the operation of the Arboretum after Fred's death even though a second and larger estate was also offered to Union to support the Arboretum by two of Fred's friends, the College Trustees being uncertain as to how long a period might elapse between the death of Fred Lape and his two somewhat younger friends. In addition, it became clear even during this period when Union dominated the Board of the Arboretum that the Union faculty was not really much interested in using the Arboretum as a teaching or research tool.

When it became certain that a real affiliation with Union would never come about, Fred looked to the rapidly expanding State University of New York Agricultural and Technical College at Cobleskill. Interest in the Arboretum was not whole-hearted on the part of the Cobleskill College administration, but eventually the matter did reach the central administration of the State University of New York, which rejected the idea of the Cobleskill College taking over the Arboretum. Finance was the main reason given for the rejection, but in that mare's nest which is the State University of New York it is more than likely that was not the only reason for the rejection.

Schoharie county was also approached, but that idea never really got off the ground, the more so as the Arboretum had always been a bigger attraction to people outside of its immediate vicinity.

In time, it became apparent that if the Arboretum were to survive, it would have to be on its own. Meanwhile, the nominal Union affiliation was terminated, Harold Martin resigned as President of Union and left the Arboretum Board, several other persons from Union left the Board, and a new Board in both personnel and type gradually became a factor. While all of this was happening, Fred and Van continued to finance Arboretum operations helped by new grants from the Natural Heritage Foundation which had been established by New York State, and by the private donations received from patrons and visitors.

Outwardly, the Arboretum was in good shape though, in fact, there were many problems just underneath the surface. Fred Lape made the decision to cut back on the lawns when the so-called energy crisis arose in the 1970's, and this diminished the attractiveness of the Arboretum setting and particularly the background for the flower gardens. Fred and Van were getting older, and the amount of outdoor work Van could do was noticeably reduced. A year or two of having three hired employees proved too costly to be continued. As a result arboricultural maintenance barely held its own, and the backlog of arboricultural work which had piled up over the years could not be reduced and, in fact, worsened with each year of additional growth. There was also the fact that the flower gardens, while admittedly a great attraction, had been expanded without due consideration of the amount of work involved in their maintenance. As these gardens grew in number and variety, time and labor which should have gone into the maintenance of the Arboretum plantings went instead into the flower beds which, once established, had to be kept attractive. In fact, Van Loveland created a thing of beauty which has caused a constant, nagging problem ever since his death, a problem yet to be faced and dealt with.

The newer Board of Trustees sought to assert itself bit by bit only to find that Fred still stuck to his position that it was his Arboretum and it was his money which was supporting it. This became even clearer after Vans death when Fred became the major donor. The Board found itself in the position of wanting to have some say in Arboretum policy while not wanting to antagonize Fred Lape who was not only putting up money annually but was proposing to leave his estate for the support of the Arboretum. A not atypical problem arose over Fred Lapes determination to have a library, a determination based on an idea of his that the Arboretum would not be one of real stature until it had a library available for research as was the case at major arboreta. The trustees in large measure opposed the idea but failed to act since it was Fred's Arboretum and his money. The result was a wholly inadequate building built smack in the middle of one of the most magnificent views in the Arboretum to house a book collection which had never even been valued as to its real worth, and one built at a cost to both Fred and the Arboretum since a fund drive was necessary to help Fred finance the actual construction.

Hard on the heels of this bit of costly whimsy on the part of Fred Lape, the Board of Trustees tried to assert itself by adopting a score of proposals, all in Fred's absence, aimed at making Fred a sort of honorary director and appointing a new director who would have actual control over the Arboretum. Some trustees apparently thought this would ease the burden on Fred Lape who was then about eighty years old, while others certainly intended it for what it was, i.e. an attempt to move Fred Out of the way without antagonizing him into taking his money out of the Arboretum, but no one ever thought to discuss the matter with Fred beforehand as prudence should have dictated. And then the trustees seemingly lost their nerve and failed to inform Fred of what they had done until somehow Fred got wind of their

actions. Thereafter, relations between Fred Lape and the Arboretum Trustees developed into a sort of cold war, and the newly appointed Director discreetly did not seek to assert any authority and eventually resigned his extremely tenuous and dubious appointment.

Dealing with older persons can be difficult, but the Trustees rarely approached Fred Lape with this difficulty in mind. At the same time Fred used the threat of withdrawing his money too many times until it became clear that it was no real threat at all. So, for about four years things went from bad to worse and only occasionally to a little better. Fred had his library, and in time the Trustees got a state grant for a conference center which Fred Lape did not want but decided not to oppose. However, it should be recognized that Fred's opposition to one proposed site for the conference center in the middle of a peony garden which had been established and maintained with private donations for that specific purpose led to the construction of the center on a far better site in the final analysis.

Fred's death leaves the Arboretum with the income from a trust fund he established in its behalf. The Arboretum can survive if it spends that income wisely, but that income, unless supplemented substantially, cannot possibly restore the halcyon days of the late 1960's and early 1970's when Fred Lape's Arboretum plantings and Van Loveland's flower gardens were at a peak not sustained thereafter.

THE LAST YEARS

In 1957, Fred's mother died. After the death of her husband in 1938 Emma Lape had lived mostly in the village, but from time to time she had lived for short periods at the farm. Fred had been her always dutiful son and had arranged for her care over the years. With her death, Fred felt that he could, for the first time, leave Esperance for the winter.

By the time Fred's mother died, Van Loveland was a fixture at the farm. He was there every weekend and every vacation, but of course, he was not free to travel in the winter because of his position. So, Fred decided to spend his winters in New York City though he and Van often drove to the farm for a weekend when the weather was good and the roads clear. Once started, this winter routine never ceased for Fred Lape: first, it was New York City until Van's retirement; then the two of them tried St. Simons Island in Georgia; Brownsville, Texas; and finally Mexico, first for several winters in San Miguel and finally in Jocotepec where Fred felt satisfied enough to buy a house.

The first number of winters Fred sought people to occupy the farmhouse while he was away, but in time Fred found it more and more difficult to get someone to live at the farm each winter. After all, a wood stove, several uncertain kerosene stoves, a dubious water supply all too likely to expire in late autumn and early winter, and a dirt road which was susceptible to both plugging from drifting snows and flooding and freezing after a mid-winter thaw were not everyone's cup of tea in spite of the beauty of the place in winter. So, Fred finally decided to leave the place unoccupied.

In time, it became known that the farm was empty and that there were items of value left there unprotected. Even watchful and helpful neighbors could not check on everyone using the road, and summer visitors were free to wander into the house as well as the barn. After the first break-in, if entering a wide-open barn could be so termed, some of Fred's friends on the Board of the Arboretum had a warning system installed which proved useless when a major break-in into the house showed how easily the system could be rendered inoperable. Fortunately, this major theft was foiled because the police had been tipped off and were waiting in the house for the thieves. After that, it was mainly minor

pilfering that plagued the place, especially when summer visitors left cash donations in a none-too-strong strong box. But as a result of the two break-ins, Fred began to dispose of his more valuable antiques rather than leave them unguarded temptations winter after winter.

Fred settled into a year-round routine, which began in 1957 and continued till his death in 1985 with relatively little change. Summers at the farm began with his return in late March for he insisted on coming back too early in terms of the end of winter in order to catch the flowering of the earliest spring bulbs. From then until the last week in October, Fred could be found at his desk early in the morning and outside working the rest of the day although as the years went by he seemed to write less and less during the summer months. A poor sleeper, he retired early to read, rose early, and always napped after an early lunch. He traveled little during the summer, an horticultural conference now and then, or a trip to a nursery occasionally, but all in all his routine was his life. He read voraciously, listened to music in great amounts, and played the piano frequently. But above all he seemed to enjoy the visits of his friends who were, in fact, decreasing in number all too quickly, even as Fred grew older but retained his remarkable health and vitality.

His winters, once he became acclimated to a place, were the times when he did the great bulk of his writing. His horticultural articles were accepted readily, but his poetry and his short stories found little market. Once established in Mexico, he had several volumes of his poetry printed, and these he sold himself. As with many authors, failure to sell, especially where the author does not need to sell to live, did not deter Fred from his own type of poetry, nor did it diminish his output. In the winters he also traveled around a bit for his winters offered him an opportunity to collect seeds for the Arboretum so he was always in and out of the car looking at this and that, even to the extent of encountering a rattlesnake in one Florida roadside exploration, much to Van Loveland's consternation, he having been bitten by a copperhead in his younger days in his native Kentucky.

Van Loveland did not like Mexico very much — in fact, he could be said to have hated it with some passion. San Miguel he could tolerate because it had a substantial American colony, but the presence of so many Americans was not to Fred Lape's liking so when the altitude at San Miguel began to take its toll on Van, they finally settled in Jocotepec, or rather Fred did because the very absence of all but a mere handful of non—Mexicans attracted Fred while it drove Van to distraction.

Fight they might, but each October the two friends loaded their station wagon and set off for Jocotepec which is in the Mexican State of Jalisco, about 40 miles from Guadalajara and somewhat nearer to Lake Chapala which was once widely known because of D. H. Lawrence's years there. A relatively small city, typically Mexican, almost wholly Mexican in population, and well off the beaten track for most non-Mexicans, Jocotepec became Fred's other home, so much so that his Will dictated he was to be buried there if he died there.

In 1977, Van Loveland died very suddenly. Because of the relatively remote location of Jocotepec and the Mexican climate, Van had recognized that if he died in Mexico, he would have to be buried there — he did, and he was. But it was one of life's little tragedies that this man who was perpetually dissatisfied with Mexico in general and with Jocotepec in particular was interred in the Jocotepec cemetery for eternity.

Outwardly, Vans death made little difference in Fred's life, but in fact there were any number of

important changes which were unseen or unknown to almost all of those who knew Fred Lape. Except for the initial shock, Fred managed to cope reasonably well with Van's passing though this loss was a severe blow to a man who was no longer as young and resilient as when George Landis died.

Financially, Fred was better off in terms of assets and income since he was the primary legatee of Van's estate although that estate was not sizable since Van's major asset had been his pension from the Chase Bank which pension stopped with his death. But, in fact, Fred was faced with a most difficult financial situation. For years Fred and Van had been both the prime laborers at the Arboretum and the major donors of funds to the Arboretum. With Van's death the man who had labored over the Arboretum's flower gardens was gone, and there was no way to really replace Van for his had been a labor of love — the kind of labor which not only knew no regular hours but always included evening strolls to pick a weed here or a dead blossom there, in short the kind of endless personal attention which cannot be hired. Van's death not only reduced the Arboretum staff by one exceptional person, but his death terminated his pension from which substantial sums had gone annually to support the care and maintenance of the Arboretum, and there was no way in which the additional income to Fred from Van's other assets could make up for the loss of Van's pension as a source of funds. So, while Fred's net worth was increased, he, alone, could not put into the Arboretum as much money as he and Van together had been able to put up, and there was the added expense of hired help to replace Van if the flower gardens were to be maintained.

In point of fact, these problems created by Van's death were never solved during Fred Lape's lifetime even though Fred liked to think that they had been. The decline in the physical plant of the Arboretum had started even before Van's death. After Van's death the flower gardens began a long and non—too—slow decline while Arboretum maintenance was carried out only on the barest minimal basis. In his last years Fred contended each year that the Arboretum never looked better, but this was only wishful thinking at best and can be put down to the decline in Fred's health which led him to see only what he wanted to see and to ignore reality where it intruded too obviously.

For the rest, Fred continued to trek between Esperance and Jocotepec though he no longer drove back and forth each year as he had while Van lived. His bus trips were but a continuation of his frugal style of living and were done twice a year in spite of motion sickness and the lengthy recuperative periods necessary after the journey each way. His writing continued and even increased as he did more articles on horticultural matters, and his book-length efforts were rewarded with some success as he had two books published, one on apples and one on his childhood.

But here, too, Fred missed Van for Van had given Fred considerable financial advice, most of it good, though Fred did not always take it — to his loss as in the case of certain Mexican investments made over Van's objections. Perhaps, but only perhaps, Van might have convinced Fred to negotiate a better contract on one of his books instead of signing the contract without even reading it let alone consulting anyone on it — the result being the sale of a book for which he never received a penny in royalties. Perhaps, too, Van might have helped Fred with the financial difficulties engendered by Fred's eye problems, Fred being unwilling to take the time to understand the finances of his eye operations because he was convinced that Medicare and Medicaid would automatically cover all his costs.

Deafness had started to set in long before Van's death, but Fred refused to recognize it to the consternation of those who knew him well and to the befuddlement of those who did not realize his

problem. Then, a lens implant operation for a cataract failed leaving Fred with sight in only one eye. Fortunately, the cataract removal operation on the other eye was a success, but by then the decline in Fred's overall health had become precipitous and it was not difficult to see when Fred left for Mexico in the fall of 1984, that his return to Esperance the next spring was highly unlikely if, indeed, he managed to survive the winter.

The small colony of non—Mexicans in Jocotepec and Fred's many Mexican friends cared for him during his last days, but the end was clear and came on March 1, 1985. By a twist of fate which Fred would have appreciated, his lawyer, while on a vacation tour in Mexico, slipped away from Guadalajara to Jocotepec for a day to see Fred and arrived just as the funeral cortege was leaving Fred's house for the cemetery.

HIS FINAL RESTING PLACE

In this day and age of family mobility and geographical separation the matter of burial is no longer as simple as it once was. Not so very long ago families lived closer together and had firm roots in a community or area so that burial in the family plot was taken for granted. And even those family members who died while away from home were, almost as a matter of course and expectation, returned "home" for burial in the family plot. Even the growing acceptance of cremation did nothing to change this seemingly fundamental fact of life and death for all it did was exchange the urn for the casket which certainly made the return home of ones remains a much easier task.

However, over the years, and especially since World War II, things have changed. As families spread out over the entire country, "home" became a relative term, and burials became more localized, in a way a return to a century or more ago when the gold rush and the opening of the west found people from all over the eastern states buried near their new western homes.

George Landis was buried, not in his native Allentown, Pennsylvania area, but in the plot in the Esperance Cemetery where Fred's sister, father, grandfather, and step-grandmother had been buried and where Fred's mother was later buried. That is where George wished to be buried, and Fred Lape had the plot marked with a huge granite boulder engraved "Lape-Landis" (a natural marker not easily moved from Oak Nose Farm to the cemetery and not easily swallowed by the cemetery trustees, though both difficulties were eventually overcome).

In 1950, when all, this occurred, Fred Lape expected to be buried in the Lape-Landis plot and a stone was put there awaiting only the engraving of the year of his death. But life goes on, and many things change. Fred began to travel, and then he took up residence each winter in Jocotepec.

Death in Mexico is dealt with quickly because of the climate. Van Loveland had no wish to be buried in Jocotepec if he died there, but even cremation involved great difficulty because of the paucity of crematoriums in Mexico. So, Van accepted the fact that should he die while in Mexico, his burial would have to be there. In time, that is what occurred, and Van lies in the Jocotepec Cemetery while a stone to his memory was erected by his sister in the family plot in Winchester, Kentucky.

Fred recognized the possibility of his dying in Mexico and provided in his Will for burial there if he died there and for burial in Esperance if he died there. But there was objection to this from his long-time friend, Maynard Loux, who represented one of the last links to George Landis since George and

Maynard had taught economics together at R.P.I. for several years until George's death. Maynard insisted that Fred make arrangements for his body or his ashes to be returned to Esperance for burial, contending that those who came to Fred's last resting place should know that Fred Lape was really buried there. This Fred refused to take seriously, and he rather enjoyed the prospect of his stone in the Esperance Cemetery marking an empty grave should it time to that. We will not know what Maynard might have done had he outlived Fred, but he did not — and strangely, Maynard Loux, who wished to be cremated, had made no provision for the disposal of his own ashes.

When Fred Lape died in Mexico, his immediate neighbors, the Lopez family, took over all arrangements for his funeral and burial. The relationship was a close one. Fred's house and lot had once been a part of the Lopez property, and before his death Fred had sold his property back to the Lopez family while retaining a life right to live there. The Lopez family had cared for Fred not only in his last illness but all during his years in Jocotepec so that no one of the non-Mexican residents felt that any opposition should be made to the funeral arrangements dictated by the Lopez family.

While Fred had expected to be buried next to Van Loveland, the Lopez family determined that he would be buried in the Lopez family crypt, and he was. When inquiry was made about a stone for Fred's grave, it was learned that Fred's body, which was buried the day after his death by Mexican custom, had been sealed in the Lopez crypt and that no stone would be erected or engraving done until all the spaces in the crypt were filled, this, too, according to Mexican custom. When this will happen is uncertain, but it will be well in the future since Fred's is the first burial in the crypt which was constructed for eight burials.

And so, his stone in Esperance marks an empty grave, he is buried with the Lopez family in Jocotepec, and Fred is, without a doubt, finding it greatly amusing and having a great laugh over it all.

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APPENDIX I: FRED LAPE - RESUME OF PUBLISHED WRITINGS

PROSE

ROLL ON, PIONEERS (Godwin, 1935) Out of Print

SATURDAY NIGHT by Guy Berne (pseud.) (Godwin, 1936) Out of Print

A GARDEN OF TREES AND SHRUBS (Cornell University Press, 1965)

Now in reprint by Theophrastus.

APPLES AND MAN (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979) Out of Print

A FARM AND VILLAGE BOYHOOD (Syracuse University Press, 1980) In Print

POETRY

BARNYARD YEAR (Harper, 1950) Out of Print

The following published by Fred Lape:

A BUNCH OF FLOWERS (Argus, Albany, 1954) Out of Print

AT THE ZOO (Imprenta San Miguel, Mexico, 1966) Out of Print

ALONG THE SCHOHARIE (Imprenta San Miguel, Mexico, 1968) Out of Print

JOHN ADAMS (Mimeographed by Author) 1965 Out of Print
MY WORD TO YOU, JQA (Mimeographed by Author) 1965 Out of Print
HILL FARM (Kerigma, Guadalajara, Mexico, 1976)
POEMS FROM THE BLUE BEACH (Kerigma, Guadalajara, 1976)

RED RAG ON THE HOGPEN DOOR

MARIA, MAHALA, AND JANE, THE SILVERNAIL SISTERS,
ALL OVER SEVENTY, LIVED ON THE NEAREST FARM,
THEY WERE AS INDIVIDUAL AS OAK AND ELM AND HEMLOCK,
EACH IN THEIR WAY, EACH TO THEIR OWN FOOD,
AND HAD IT; THEY KEPT THEIR SEPARATE CUPBOARDS,
SET THEIR SEPARATE TABLES, AND LIVED AT PEACE TOGETHER.
THE SISTERS HAD A SIGNAL WHEN THEY WERE IN TROUBLE,
THEY'D HANG A RED RAG ON THE HOGPEN DOOR
TO CALL FOR HELP. OFTEN THE BOY WHEN YOUNG
SAW THE RED FLAG GO UP, AND SAW HIS FATHER AND MOTHER
HURRY DOWN THE ROAD TO PUT OUT A CHIMNEY FIRE,
OR DRIVE THE SILVERNAIL'S COWS OUT OF THEIR CORN,
HE CAME TO SEE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER IN A NEW LIGHT;
THEY WERE THE ROCK THAT THE THREE OLD WOMAN LEANED AGAINST,
THE THING THEY REACHED FOR WHEN THEIR NEED WAS PRESSING.
ONE DAY HE SAW THE RED FLAG GO UP ON THE HOGPEN DOOR,
AND FOR MARIA THERE WAS NOTHING ANYONE COULD DO
EXCEPT THE PREACHER AND THE UNDERTAKER, AND THAT
NO HELP. AND LATER IN THEIR TIMES JANE AND MAHALA
WENT BY THE SAME SIGNAL.
WHEN HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO LOOK BACK
ON THE PAST, THE BOY SAW WITH NEW EYES HOW MUCH
HE TOO HAD LEANED UPON THAT SAME STRONG ROCK
THE FATHER AND THE MOTHER THERE IN TIME OF NEED,
ANSWERING SUCH SIGNALS AS RED RAGS ON A HOGPEN DOOR.
BUT NOW THAT ROCK IS GONE, IT STOOD NO MORE;
NOW HE IN TURN BECAME A STRENGTH, AND PEOPLE PUT
THEIR SIGNALS OUT FOR HIM, BUT FOR HIMSELF
(SOMETIMES A SAD THOUGHT IN THE DARK NIGHT HOURS)
NO LONGER A PLACE TO LEAN.

FRED LAPE

PRINTED DECEMBER 5, 1941
THE COMMONWEAL

FROM MY COLLECTION OF THE SILVERNAIL FAMILY RECORDS
DORRIS SMITH
965 N. 827
ANGOLA, IN. 46703