

## May Calvert: Dreiser's Lifelong Teacher

Jack Dvorak  
Indiana University

While Theodore Dreiser accomplished much in the literary world, and in several different genres, his formal education was haphazard. He completed only one year of high school and one year of college. During his first six years of schooling in Catholic schools in three Indiana towns, he faced rigid, discipline-oriented religious and lay teachers—causing him to hate school and reject many of the tenets of the Catholic Church. When a small branch of his family moved from Chicago to Warsaw, Indiana, in 1884, Dreiser's outlook on formal schooling would change. He was assigned to the seventh-grade class of (Ida) May Calvert.<sup>1</sup>

For the next 58 years, Dreiser and his teacher continued their relationship, which started when she as a young instructor nurtured him through seventh grade. During their middle-aged years, her correspondence with him became increasingly coercive in terms of possible romantic involvement, and during their later years she became more religiously evangelistic toward him. In many ways, she remained his lifelong teacher—or at least attempted to be. Dreiser seemed to maintain a high degree of respect for his former teacher, consistently remembering the stark positive contrast she provided with his earlier Catholic grade-school experiences. Like so many other women in Dreiser's life, May saw in him great intelligence and talent—and was enamored of his fame and role in it. For his part, Dreiser in many instances humored her with letters and occasional visits but didn't seem to return romantic overtures or respond to her conservative religious promptings.

### The Move to Warsaw, Indiana

As a young boy, Dreiser and a small element of his large family moved several times within Indiana—and all the while he attended Catholic

schools, which the poor family could ill afford. His early schooling was in Terre Haute, Sullivan, and then Evansville. For a short time in the summer of 1884, the family lived in Chicago.

By the fall of 1884, the nomadic Dreiser family picked up once again and moved to Warsaw, Indiana, in the northern part of the state. Dreiser's mother, Sarah, had inherited five acres of land in nearby Benton, Indiana, so she and the three youngest children once again set out in hopes of a better life. Their furniture from Chicago was repossessed, so they arrived in Warsaw with almost nothing (Swanberg 19).

For Dreiser, the move proved to be a turning point in his life. He recalled that Warsaw provided him with "some of my most helpful as well as most pleasing hours—hours of schooling, of play, of romance, of dreams under the shade of great trees or in swimming holes, lakes, the Tippecanoe River, on ice ponds and snow-covered farms and woodlands that made this region a kind of paradise" (*Dawn* 180-81).

In late October 1884, Sarah Dreiser, despite the protestations of her "hidebound religionist" husband, decided to send Tillie, Theodore, and Ed to the public schools in Warsaw (*Hoosier* 284). Theodore, who had just turned 13, was assigned to the split sixth- and seventh-grade classroom of Miss May Calvert, who was 22 years old at the time. His first day in the class was October 28, according to school records.

Dreiser had a complete turnaround in his attitude toward school in the public school environment, especially because of the influence of his new teacher:

The public school was to me like a paradise after the stern religiosity of this other school. Education began to mean something to me. I wanted to read and to know. There was a lovely simplicity about the whole public school world which had nothing binding or driving about it. The children were urged, coaxed, pleaded with—not driven. Force was a last resort, and rarely indulged in. Can't you see how it was that I soon fell half in love with my first teacher, a big, soft, pink-cheeked, buxom blonde, and with our home and our life here? (*Hoosier* 294)

Dreiser enjoyed the free, intellectual atmosphere of the Warsaw West Ward School and later Central High School, which he attended in eighth and ninth grades. He found the curriculum, in general, to be uplifting and logical, especially compared with the Catholic school experience: "they had no objection to the sane conception of history, botany, sociology, zoology, a hundred fields and avenues of information—which was much more than could



Fig. 1. A young May Calvert, taken at about the time she taught Dreiser in seventh grade, West Ward School in Warsaw, Indiana. (Photo courtesy of Robert Craig)

be said for the Catholics. It was, all in all, a rather free intellectual world in which they lived" (*Dawn* 191).

Upon entering school a bit late that fall, Dreiser found his new teacher to

be a refreshing change from his earlier teachers. He described Miss Calvert as a “chestnut-haired girl . . . whose incorrigible ringlets made a halo about her head and whose laughing brown eyes spoke only of good nature and love of life” (*Dawn* 191). She assigned him the fifth seat from the front in the second row from the west windows (*Hoosier* 317). From that vantage point, he followed her movements carefully and was enthralled by the fact that she taught him in the best sense of the word and that she “spelled opportunity instead of repression.” For schoolwork, she asked that he get copies of Harvey’s *Grammar*, Swinton’s *Geography*, someone else’s arithmetic, and so on (*Dawn* 192).

Dreiser liked the atmosphere of his seventh-grade room in Warsaw, with its “warm, bright space; clean, varnished desks; wide and bright windows, framing what lovely views!” And he appreciated the way Miss Calvert took an interest in him, asking if he liked his new home, his new town, his new school. “And May Calvert, the teacher, with her sunny smile, seated on the platform at the front. Her soft, kind eyes. And her friendly voice. At once, and for some reason, she seemed to take an interest in me” (*Dawn* 192).

For the first time in his elementary school education, 13-year-old Theodore felt comfortable in the classroom. He remembered feeling “more at ease here than anywhere else I had ever been, I think. Her [Miss Calvert’s] eyes, always bent on me so quietly and even appealingly, as it seemed to me” (*Dawn* 192).

Miss Calvert discovered Dreiser’s lack of grammar skills and worked with him during noon hours and after school until he found slight glimmers of understanding, though even in his adult years he disavowed much comprehension of grammar. All the while, however, his teacher encouraged his writing and speaking ability. Dreiser remembered that while she recognized his inability to understand formal grammar, she also thought his writing was excellent: “But, Theodore dear, you write good English. Your longest sentences and paragraphs are correct and orderly. I don’t understand [why your grammar skills are so lacking]” (*Dawn* 193). Such encouragement and writing practice during seventh-grade classes no doubt influenced his writing style as he matured (Hakutani 58).

Dreiser was experiencing puberty during this time, and many of his feelings toward Miss Calvert carried overtones of a crush. His dreamy nature coupled with a love of women that would permeate his adult life showed signs of blossoming during his school year with her:

And somehow, with all this, a growing something that was very close or akin to affection—love even. Her eyes, her pretty mouth, her hair, her pink cheeks! Her face at all close to mine, I

trembled and felt what . . . actually that *she* would put her arm around me and hold me, rather than that I might put my arm around her and hold her. Had words come, they would have been "Love me; love me; love me, please!" And so often her soft eyes looked as though that were true. (*Dawn* 193)

Once, after his reading aloud a passage from "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Miss Calvert told him, in front of the class, that he read beautifully: "There is something so like outdoors in your voice. You read as you are. It is perfect." With that, Dreiser was embarrassed and thought for a moment that she was making fun of him. But he then realized that she was sincere—and he was quite proud: "I felt a warm, yearning kinship with her for all the while I was in her room thereafter. I wanted to get close to her and hold her. She was so warm and of such a generous mold" (*Dawn* 194).

Also, fairly early into his first term in Miss Calvert's room, she developed the habit of pinching his ear or patting his head as she went down the rows of students, something she presumably did to other students as well. After such incidents, and in marked contrast with his earlier experiences with teachers, Dreiser concluded that she was actually fond of him (*Hoosier* 318).

In substantive ways, Miss Calvert brought him out of his shyness by watching over him, and, according to Dreiser, "expending an affection which I scarcely knew how to take." And despite her noon-hour and after-school tutoring sessions with him in grammar, he never did connect to that discipline. She would simply pinch his cheek affectionately and say something like "well, don't you worry; you can get along without grammar for a while yet. You'll understand it later on" (*Hoosier* 318). Dreiser recalled one day toward the end of the school year when his attraction to Miss Calvert was particularly strong and she had asked him to stay after school for some extra help with grammar:

Leaning over her desk following the details of her advice, I felt her hair brush my cheek. Finally I felt her hand on my shoulder. I snuggled up to her, because I was magnetically drawn and because I thought she was lovely. I could scarcely think of what she was telling me. I wanted to put my arms about her, but I did not dare. I went home that night elated and yet disappointed. I felt that I was entitled to cling close and love her, and yet I had not the courage. This relationship between us existed without interruption until the end of the year. (*Dawn* 194-95)

Another of Miss Calvert's educational gifts to Dreiser was simply her

explaining how to get a library card. In those days, children needed sponsors, or guarantor adults, to vouch for them as library patrons. She signed his card, and he checked out dozens of books from the public library, which was housed in the basement of Warsaw's Central High School. Dreiser was awed by the privilege and marveled at the "shelves upon shelves of books; and all open to me for the asking!" (*Dawn* 198)

At the end of the most significant school year he had experienced thus far, Dreiser passed all of his examinations at the West Ward School and emerged full of self-confidence even as he felt a deep kinship with May Calvert. While he was cleaning out his desk of books and papers, she put her arms around him and kissed him goodbye. He later recalled of that fateful day in late May: "the warm, spring sunlit afternoon, the beauty and the haunting sense of the waning of things that possessed me at the time. I went home, to think and wonder about her" (*Hoosier* 318).

Of 18 students in this idyllic classroom, 10 were promoted to the eighth grade, among them Theodore Dreiser.<sup>2</sup> In those days, Indiana had yet to have a compulsory school-attendance law,<sup>3</sup> so seven of the other students withdrew before the school year was completed. One was passed conditionally. With all the extra tutoring from Miss Calvert, Dreiser earned a 79 (on a 100-point scale) in Grammar. Somewhat surprisingly, he earned only an 87 in Writing, the sixth highest in the class, and in Spelling he came up with a 78 for the year.<sup>4</sup> However, in Reading he earned 94.3, his highest grade, and in Geography (another favorite subject), he earned a 92. In his other subjects, he earned a 77 in Arithmetic and an 83.5 in Drawing. His composite Average Scholarship grade was 85, tied for 5th highest in the class of 18 students. One other area on the report card was Deportment, and his loving teacher gave him G grades (presumably standing for "Good") during all three terms and for the final assessment.

During the next school year, his eighth-grade teacher at Central High was Luella Reid, whom he found terrifying at first, especially in comparison with Miss Calvert, but whom he soon learned to admire and appreciate, "and at the end of the year parted from her with regret" (*Dawn* 243).

In his freshman year of high school (1886-1887, his only high school experience), he had two excellent teachers whom he remembers: Alvira Skarr and Mildred Fielding. The latter would prove to be influential a few years later, for, seeing his real academic potential, she looked him up while he was working odd jobs in Chicago in the summer of 1889 and urged him to attend Indiana University in Bloomington at her expense. A letter to IU president David Starr Jordan got Dreiser the waivers he needed to attend with such little high-school education.

During his high-school freshman year in Warsaw Dreiser again encountered May Calvert, who had married Henry Newton Baker in Warsaw on December 23, 1885, a few months after she taught Dreiser, and had the next year in Indianapolis given birth to her only child—Jessie Barbara Baker. The sight of May and her baby destroyed any lingering romantic notions he might have felt for her:

I saw her a year or so later, a much stouter person, married and with a baby, and I remember being very shocked. She didn't seem the same, but she remembered me and smiled on me. For my part, not having seen her for so long a time, I felt very strange and bashful—almost as though I were in the presence of one I had never known. (*Hoosier* 318-19)

### Intervening Years

Dreiser and May Calvert Baker would lose track of each other for the next 31 years. During the first 10 years, she was a housewife, but she divorced Henry Newton Baker in about 1895. In a letter written to Dreiser many years later, she described her marriage as loveless—one she had no business entering. She also referred to her former husband as “Mr. Haymaker,” indicating that he was, perhaps, physically abusive (29 March 1919).<sup>5</sup>

By 1900, she and her 14-year-old daughter were living with her parents, Jesse and Barbara Calvert, in Warsaw, where her father was a Dunkard minister in the Church of the Brethren.<sup>6</sup> Census data from that year show that she was again teaching school, though in years following, she moved to nearby Huntington, Indiana, where in 1918 she was a sixth-grade teacher at William Street School, at the corner of William and Hannah streets.<sup>7</sup>

When Dreiser published *A Hoosier Holiday* in 1916, a friend of May's from Indianapolis sent her a copy. Touched by Dreiser's accounts of his seventh-grade experiences in her class and surprised at his belief that she had died, she wrote him the following letter to re-establish their friendship:

My dear Theodore:

Ever since first seeing your name in print I have wondered if you were “my” Theodore Dreiser and now the *Hoosier Holiday* tells me that you are and I am so glad that you have made good. You see I am glad not to have misplaced my confidence in you. Always every bit of the mother-teacher in me is very glad when one of my hundreds of pupils distinguishes himself.

You see I am not dead but very much alive and still teaching the young to aspire, to strive and if possible to win.

Win what I wonder. It does not appear that you have won happiness with fame. Your book hurts me because of your evident disappointment. Yet we love life.

Thank you for the beautiful story of your first term in Warsaw. I am glad I was that teacher, but I think I am a much better one now. Please write and say you are glad I am not dead and I'll tell you more of the people of Warsaw of your time.

Your interested old teacher.

May Calvert Baker

R.R. 1

Huntington, Ind.

Less than a week later, Dreiser would respond to the unexpected and surprising letter that seemed to affirm her influence on him and his affection for her. The secondary salutation ("Dear Miss Calvert") would seem to indicate that he longed for their past relationship while disavowing her married state:

Feb. 15, 1917

Dear Mrs. Baker—

Or perhaps better—Dear Miss Calvert—

Nothing could be nicer than to have you write me as you did. It pleased me so much that I was happy all day long. You see you are and have always been an integral part of my most pleasing memories. . . . I haven't been as happy as I should have been, all things considered perhaps and all to a bad disposition I suppose. I am not as happy yet as I will be—who is. . . . And I'm so glad you're not dead and still able to write me that day I went into the school room and found my little desk—or one just like it—it was you I was thinking of. . . .

Yes I wish you would write me and tell me about yourself. Nearly all I can tell is in *Hoosier Holiday* and my earlier books. I have been working, working, working and still am. The teacher who came to me in Chicago was Miss Fielding—may the deep fates keep her whole. (What does not America owe to its teachers! I want to write several things about them some day collectively and singly—and that last means you and others.) I have thought of you for years, always with pink cheeks and a warm girlish smile and kind eyes—haloed by the affection and the



fancy of youth.

There must be many other boys and girls who have carried you onward in the same way.

All my best wishes and thoughts to you. If I had known where you were we would have motored over that summer. Would that I had.

Your

Theodore Dreiser

Do you recall that I couldn't learn grammar? I don't know a single thing about it yet.

In the 30 letters she wrote to Dreiser between 1917 and 1941, Calvert often referred to her relationship to him as teacher—both past and present—as well as to her hardships, her appreciation of nature, and her staunch religious beliefs (unlike Dreiser's attitude). On several occasions, she invited him to visit her in Indiana, and on one occasion Dreiser invited her to visit him in New York.

After receiving Dreiser's letter in February 1917, May responded to reaffirm the necessity of balancing youthful dreams and life's disappointments: "I do hope the next thirty years of our lives will be kinder to us and that we may see the fulfillment of some of the dreams of youth. I am sure the dreams are not sent in vain." She described her difficult life thus far, but she balanced the hardships (divorcing after 10 years of marriage, raising a daughter by herself, and farming to supplement her teacher's income of \$675 per year) by recounting her pleasant role as a teacher:

I love it. It is hard work and much of it unappreciated but one letter like yours repays much effort. Few of the hundreds of pupils have shown such thoughtfulness. But since you have written so beautifully about me others have added their appreciation until I begin to feel that I have really been of some use in the world—of use to others for so far as my young dreams are concerned I am a dismal failure.

Of her approach to teaching, she explained, "I have always tried to do it well and let conscience reward for there is neither money nor glory in teaching. When you write your book about teachers I hope you will make this great, rich country ashamed forevermore, of the salaries paid its teachers."

In the following summer, amid war-time rationing May was recuperating from a "strenuous summer's work at home . . . [tending to] a large garden and some little chicks, which I am trying to raise to do my bit toward increasing the food supply" (16 July 1917). She wrote the letter from her

hotel room at Culver, Indiana, on Lake Maxinkuckee, where she was enjoying a short vacation. She encouraged Dreiser to write again because she had “few greater pleasures in my life than your book [*A Hoosier Holiday*] and your letter.” In her role as lifelong teacher, she continued, “Your *Hoosier Holiday* will always be a joy to me, but the McConnells are terribly offended at the true picture you drew of their parents. Well it is too bad they are so misunderstanding and the others too of the Warsaw ‘elite’ are having horrors that you dared to tell the truth about some of their friends.” Her religious nature showed when she continued: “Wonder what they will do with the recording angel when he unrolls the record of their lives?” She concluded by issuing the first of many invitations for Dreiser to visit her in Indiana: “[M]aybe you will like the ugly old woman a little for the sake of the young school teacher you liked better. I shall enjoy talking to you.”

Her letter reached Dreiser as he was writing in the country near Westminster, Maryland. He replied that he was hard at work on *The Bulwark* and on *Newspaper Days*. His own love of nature, which he had in common with May, was apparent when he described the restorative effects of his wooded surroundings: “I feel as cheerful & youthful as ever I did—just now anyhow. Mentally I think. We never grow old or change much—some of us anyhow. But physically we don’t do so well do we?” He mentioned that he was 6 ft. 1½ inches tall and weighed 190 pounds. He ended the letter affectionately: “And don’t think I am forgetting you. If I have thought of you once I have done so 100 times” (23 July 1917).

Dreiser was a fastidious saver of correspondence and of mundane things like grocery and pharmacy lists. But for some reason, no correspondence is available between him and May Calvert Baker until several months following the July 1917 letter he wrote to her. At some point before she wrote him on March 29, 1918, Dreiser had sent her a letter and a story about the difficulties with married life, which she agreed with whole-heartedly following her own unpleasant 10-year marriage. Her teaching-mentoring was evident: “Perhaps people will sometime measure up to their highest ideals but it will take some time to train a generation of high thinkers and right livers. I think the time is coming but not in the way you could believe therefore it is not worth mentioning—my plan I mean.” But May also sought to steer Dreiser to sunnier topics: “That your books are true I never doubted but we have to see so much of tragedy in real life why not give us some nice idealistic things to read about. Is it not as ennobling to hold up lofty ideals and the sort of person one ought to be as to show us over and over our mean little selves which we know too well now?”

As one of the early naturalists in American literature, Dreiser was proba-

bly amused but not swayed by this idealistic bit of encouragement.

May invited Dreiser to visit northern Indiana during the end of May or June 1918, when she would “show you enough stories in real life to keep you busy for years. It is spring in your native land just the first delicate etching is to be seen. It is so very lovely. How I pity city people and how they would pity me!!”

### **A Reunion in New York**

Later that summer, May traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to attend the National Education Association convention before going to Englewood, N.J., to visit a friend. Because of Englewood's proximity to New York City, she suggested that she and Dreiser meet while she was in the east (21 June 1918). When they finally met, after a 32-year separation, on Sunday, July 21, 1918, they must have cruised or paddled on the Hudson or East River, for she referred to their delightful day on the river in a subsequent letter.

Later that month, May read Dreiser's “The Country Doctor,” published in the July 1918 *Harper's*. Once again she assumed the role of teacher when she wrote, “Dear Dr. Woolley he was our family physician so long. It is such a dear story and I like that side of you so much—that is your real self. You were as kind to him as you were to me a week ago today. Such a good day it was. . . . Thanking you for pleasures enjoyed” (28 July 1918).

In a short letter written to May on August 29, 1918, Dreiser apologized for not writing recently but said that he would go to the Twin Cities of Minnesota soon for a paddlewheel trip down the Mississippi River to New Orleans—and that he would stop to see her in Huntington on his way to Minnesota.

May responded on September 4, 1918, that she was delighted he might be coming to visit her: “I can hardly believe it and I suppose it will turn out to be a dream as so many of my plans have.” She suggested that he come on a Thursday or Friday and then stay the weekend, for she would be going back to her teaching job soon and wouldn't have much time to visit on weekdays. She also she wished she had room in her home for his secretary but felt she could “not make more than one guest comfortable.” At that time, four people were living with her: her daughter Jessie, Jessie's husband, Samuel Craig, and their two children, Calvert and Virginia.

The trip Dreiser was scheduled to make on the Mississippi River was canceled, so he didn't see May and her family that fall. She didn't know about the change of plan when she wrote him from Huntington on October 13, 1918, noting that his absence diminished her enjoyment of the foliage:

Don't you know you are missing the loveliest autumnal coloring and the balmiest days and bluest skies that ever settled down on dear Indiana in any wonderful October.

Your letter of Aug. 29 says coming soon and six weeks is not "soon," and I have had to see a thousand beautiful things fade away without your appreciation to make me enjoy them more. Although I have loved them till it hurt my heart, they have been so exquisite. Such a riot of color and still not enough frost to kill the flowers so we have had autumn and summer at the same time and my front porch looks out on endless vistas of all that is lovely. And I get more and more fearful that you are not coming at all. Do you think you are?

Soon thereafter she learned that he had canceled his Mississippi trip to attend to details of a proposed production of *The Hand of the Potter* (that eventually fell through), with rehearsals starting in November. Dreiser wrote, "Since I have to help on those [rehearsals] I have stuck here wishing all the time I could come and live in your little house a week and rest. Your description of fall there makes it all the worse." He then asked her if she was happy and ended by writing, "I think of you often and our day on the river. It was charming" (19 Oct. 1918).

A curious romantic undercurrent is present in May's letters to Dreiser during the next year or so, while Dreiser continues to see her only as his beloved former teacher. At this time (October 1918), she was 56 and he was 47, so the age difference wasn't that great. But Dreiser always had a penchant, both in his private life and in his novels, for younger women, so it is unlikely that he returned the romantic longing.

In her letter to him of October 24, 1918, she wrote that she was disappointed he was not coming for a visit that fall but was happy *The Hand of the Potter* was going forward. Then she issued a rather surprising invitation:

I have a plan for you to come here and rest for a month or six weeks next spring. I believe it would do you as much good as my rest of last summer did me. If my daughter moves away and I can find someone to help with the work maybe we can arrange it. I should love it and I believe if you came here to live away from that hard, merciless New York life would not seem quite so tragic to you and I do so want to restore your faith in the ultimate good of everything. It is the only way to make life bearable.

Am I happy? If I am busy I am at least content and that is the next door to happiness. But you must never remind me that I said

this—I think that pure happiness in this world is attained only when one has met and loved the complement soul of his own. I feel that I have missed that but have many compensations in my life instead of it. So I am happy and glad most of the time save for one great big sorrow that will always shadow my life. I'll tell you about that if I ever have opportunity. When you come here to live for a month or two maybe.

She referred to the upcoming Thanksgiving—and how she would count her blessings: “I wonder if you know that I count you as one of my blessings? You seem such a real part of my life and interest me more than most people do. Then you have so much more intellect than most of them that you are a stimulant as well as a pleasure.” She went on to chastise him for being so stingy with his own feelings in letters and for writing such short ones:

Do be a bit charitable and write me more of yourself and write often. . . . I relive our day on the river very often; it is a red-letter day in my life. I did enjoy it so much. Come out for a little visit whenever you can. I will be glad to have you. If you hurry we might have a campfire under the trees some evening. We had a delightful one last week.

Dreiser responded, “I'm glad I'm one of your blessings. An elusive blessing—What?” He mentioned that his commitments in New York would probably keep him from visiting Indiana until the spring or summer of the following year. He also wrote that New York didn't make him “any sadder or more cynical than any other place in America or elsewhere. Life makes me sad—not cynical.” He later referred to his many projects being developed or having been recently published, complaining that “as usual the critics discuss me most savagely, but I can stand it. I'm used to it. And besides they become more ridiculous every year” (13 Nov. 1918).

In her reply after Thanksgiving that year, she addressed him as “Dear Boy: I am your mother today hence the address. Your good letter came to cheer my Thanksgiving Day and eve. I need cheer sometimes and I have worked to the point of mental exhaustion every day, trying to make up for the time we lost while the schools were closed on account of the influenza.” May explained that her family usually got together with her mother's side—the Anglemyers—for Thanksgiving, and she wished Theo could have joined them because she had been so lonesome for him. She also drew upon her religious faith to encourage Dreiser to do the same and to view his critics as part of his education:

I do not think you cynical and I feel the same throbbing, beating pity for humanity that you do. That sympathy is Christ like—and in that you are your best and greatest self. Do not call it dullness that is youth . . . we believed everything to be as it ought. Everything is as it must be until we—the whole race shall come under and into harmony with God—his children—all the same before Him and all with equal rights. But the strong have taken unto themselves the rights of the weak and things are in an awful muddle and I do not know how to straighten it out and neither does any other mere human. All we can do is to let law take its course while we alleviate and help as much as we can.

As to our own lives they seem to matter to no one on earth but ourselves and if we should have exactly what we planned in that “dull” (natural) youth, would you change that ideal of yourself for what you know you are now? Every blow you have had, every disappointment withstood has added to your strength and to your bigness.

Why should you care for critics? You do all the better work because they hammer at you so industriously. So you are being developed at their expense. “Sweet are the uses of adversity” says somebody.

She again invited Dreiser to come for a visit—as early as Christmas when she had a little vacation time, “[b]ut we will have other family guests at that time and we should have very little time together. The spring will be a beautiful time to come but you will be welcome any time you can get away.” May was interested in hearing about the play’s production and hoped Dreiser would send reviews: “Always you are to remember that I am interested in *everything* you do and think and say” (29 Nov. 1918).

In a letter of April 8, 1919, May scolded Dreiser for not writing since November of the previous year. She thought it might have been because her last letter was too “mothering,” and she pleaded with him to answer this one: “I hate to force your letters but I love to get them and surely you can do that much for the sake of old times.” May clearly was yearning a strong personal relationship—if not a romantic one. Dreiser’s slow responses are indicative of his busy lifestyle and his desire to keep her at a distance.

Because school would be out in seven weeks, she invited him to visit when she had some free time: “I have the maple syrup all ready for your flapjacks and ham and cream are on tap in this good country. . . . Are you coming to Huntington in June?”

Dreiser replied that he wasn’t offended by her mothering letter: “Your

letters are interesting and to me, charming. . . . If I come out in May can I stay three or four days. I'd really like to come for a short rest." He had just finished *Twelve Men*, which he urged her to read: "It's different and very American." He also mentioned that recently he had published a book of short stories, *Free and Other Stories*, and that even though his "*Genius*" case had been dismissed on a technicality, "I'll eventually win my point I think" (15 April 1919).<sup>8</sup>

May was elated to get his letter—and was "delighted that you are really coming to see me." But she begged him to stay longer than the three or four days that he had proposed: "[T]here is so much that I want to say to you and so many nooks and corners of the garden to show you that I do not think we can do it all in three days." Her school ended that year on May 28, and she asked Dreiser to come a few days after that so she could better prepare for his visit. She also wanted him to come when the roses were in bloom: "I want you to be here at the most beautiful time of the year for I realize that nature's are the only attractions." She suggested that she might go to Indianapolis with him at the end of his northern Indiana visit because she had friends there (24 April 1919).

Dreiser responded that she shouldn't have written so dolefully " 'since the roses are the only attraction.' You don't know" (2 May 1919).

May knew she was dealing with a sophisticated New Yorker who had given up his Indiana allegiance long ago. However, she kept appealing to his love of nature and the contrast between Easterners and Hoosiers in an attempt to entice him to visit:

So glad you can come when the roses bloom. I am hoping for some good weather now. We have been having all of Indiana's fifty-seven varieties this season. I do want every thing as lovely as possible when you come. For you know the ignorant New Yorkers' thinking there is nothing worth seeing in our Indiana. I want you to tell them how mistaken they are.

No wonder I think nature the only attraction here when they say we are "cowlike" "dull" "self satisfied" "uncultured." . . . You see I think they mean it and it makes me modest. (6 May 1919)

At the end of May, she once again wrote to remind him that school was now over—and that he should come for a visit any time during the week of June 10 because by that time the strawberries would be ripe. She also advised him to bring some country clothes for tramping around gardens, woods and countryside, "for this will be no swell society affair but just

country quiet. Think I will have one little dinner—did plan a reception but thought it would bore you. Anyway want you to myself most of the time” (29 May 1919).

### **Dreiser Visits Northern Indiana**

Dreiser delayed his trip because on May 11 a car knocked him down, with one wheel running over him, as he was crossing Columbus Circle in New York City. At Roosevelt Hospital, he was treated for shock, a gash in his scalp, a couple of broken ribs, and cuts and bruises on his left arm, right hand, and right side. However, he spent only one night in the hospital (Swanberg 285). He wrote to May in early June that he was healing quickly and looked forward to “drifting out your way & resting on your porch—around the 15th. Does that agree. Glad your work is over & I hope you can really rest & enjoy the summer. The war being over your nerves are—probably—in better shape” (2 June 1919).

May replied that she was sorry he was hurt and that she liked his plan for travel and arrival (5 June 1919). At 12:10 p.m. on June 16, Dreiser arrived by train in Huntington—where May Calvert Baker and a friend, Charles Arnold (who owned a car), met him at the station (*American Diaries* 259). His visit was anything but the quiet interlude May had been imagining. Indeed, Dreiser was busy visiting with Huntington luminaries like the superintendent of schools, country club elite, friends of May, and newspaper reporters from *The Indianapolis News* and *The Huntington Press* (*American Diaries* 260–61).

At some point during the drive to and from Warsaw, May discussed the possibility of helping Dreiser promote his books in Indiana. Dreiser had been upset that his books were not selling well in his native state, and May thought that his publisher, Boni & Liveright, should put together entire sets of his books. She could then visit various bookstores around Indiana, putting up posters and otherwise promoting sales (Swanberg 287).

The following day, June 19, May and Dreiser went west with her friends the Caswells to Lake Maxinkuckee at Culver, Indiana, where May had vacationed the previous summer and where she had attended several religious revivals through the years. On this day Dreiser took May rowing and fishing on the lake until 9 in the evening. On June 20, they visited Culver Military Academy, which seemed to impress Dreiser, and then he and May sat on the porch, went swimming, had dinner, went boating, and then talked on the large veranda of the Lake View Hotel from 9 to 11 p.m. On Saturday, June 21, because the Caswells were driving to Chicago from Culver, Dreiser and



May decided to take the train back to Huntington. They arrived at 10:30 p.m.—and sat on her stone balcony for a while before retiring (*American Diaries* 262).

After two days of visiting May's Glenn Elm (Huntington) home, Dreiser left for Indianapolis, thoroughly worn out by his visit. As he confided to his diary on June 24, "Horribly tired. Breakfast at 9. May C is greatly grieved at my going. Her offers of a home" (*American Diaries* 263). It's hard to tell what May actually meant by "offers of a home." But in a letter to Dreiser while he was still in Indianapolis, she once again invited him to Huntington—this time for the Fourth of July celebrations: "Please say you are coming for the 'Fourth,' and I'll love you forever and a day" (26 June 1919). In response to a thank-you letter he had written her from Indianapolis, she chided him for evidently addressing her as "Daisy." "If there is a name on the face of the earth that I abominate it's *Daisy* and you know it does not fit. I am anything but a daisy. Don't caricature me any more than you have to."

In the same letter, which has decidedly romantic overtones, May revealed her desire for deeper attachment:

Now for the truth—I miss you dreadfully and to think of you going back to New York without another glimpse of you gives me the horrors. Won't you please come back this way and go by the Erie [Railroad]. I won't tell a soul you are here and you can spend the night and stay next day till three and go on and no one need know. Come for the glorious 'Fourth.' The Craigs are sure to picnic all that day and we can have one more good talk.

While Dreiser was still in Indianapolis, May wrote another letter in which she described a lovely sunset: "I enjoyed it while I wished you might see it with me." Further, she told him that she was writing from "your room . . . enjoying the birds outside and the trees at the roadside. Wish that dead elm was out of the bunch. It spoils the effect. Please come and cut it out. So glad you are coming soon again—'Maybe.' Something to live for." And she finished: "Please think how lonely I am and write often and long" (1 July 1919).

Evidently Dreiser did not reciprocate May's romantic feelings, as his diary entry of June 26, written in Indianapolis, referred to a letter from "Mrs. Baker" (*American Diaries* 265). And thereafter, May's letters to him carried a more motherly, supportive educator's tone. As for his trip to Indiana, he left Indianapolis on the train bound east for Toledo, Ohio, in the early morning of July 1—without a return stop in Huntington.

Back in New York the following month, Dreiser wrote May that part of



Fig. 2. From left: Virginia Craig (May's granddaughter); Lida Craig [*sic*] (May's granddaughter-in-law); May Calvert Baker; and Jessie B. Craig (May's daughter). Picture taken in the early 1930s in Richmond, Indiana. (Photo courtesy of Robert Craig)

her plan for promoting his books was accepted by Boni & Liveright; that is, they would pull together his collected works and try to promote them with a flier. He asked her for an estimate of her expenses for traveling to bookstores around the state to promote the books (16 Aug. 1919). He wrote that he would be sending her more of his books and wanted her to read them all before she embarked upon a promotional tour.

Evidently as a result of her talks with Dreiser in Indiana, May had decided to sell her small farm home north of Huntington. She wrote, "I am trying my best to sell my place. I am so tired doing all that hard work. It is lovely I know but it is a man's job. Your visit helped me so much in many ways. You inspired me to go forward to the next thing rather than stay there" (21 Aug. 1919). She wrote the letter from Lake Maxinkuckee, where she and Dreiser had visited in June. She was leaving that same day for Warsaw and Lake Winona, where a Bible conference featuring the evangelist

Billy Sunday was taking place.

Dreiser's views, in marked contrast to those of the evangelist, were expressed in his book of essays, *Hey Rub-A-Dub-Dub* (1920), which he told May he would send to her if she would read it and meditate on it. "But I would like to know," he wrote, "if it gets to you—in an intellectual way" (13 Feb. 1920).

No further correspondence between them survives until more than 11 years later. By 1931, when *Dawn* was published, May had evidently given up her desire for romantic attachment, for she wrote, "Today I received a letter from a friend in Boston who has read your new book and thinks you paid me another compliment. I'll get the book and read it, and I thank you." She had apparently accepted her old role as lifelong, nurturing teacher: "I am glad you still think of me for I think of you so much and still love the little boy Theodore. That is what you will always be to me" (12 June 1931).

### **May's Retirement and a Final Visit**

May Calvert Baker retired from teaching in December 1926, though in all likelihood, Dreiser did not know of her retirement at that time. In her June 1931 letter, she informed him that she had moved to Indianapolis to live with her daughter, Jessie Craig, and her two grandchildren (by this time, Jessie had divorced her husband and was teaching in the Indianapolis public schools): "We have a very comfortable home and I and all the family want you to come and visit us again. Your other visit is one of the bright spots in my life so come and make another" (12 June 1931). Dreiser replied several weeks later that he was very busy with various projects and was sorry not to have responded sooner. "I'm glad indeed to know that you're so happily situated, and I hope it will be possible for me to visit you again sometime. I remember the last time with pleasure" (17 July 1931).

Sometime soon thereafter, when May was about 70 years old, she was diagnosed with diabetes. A close friend from the Warsaw area, Shirley L. Miller, wrote to Dreiser on May's behalf in October 1932, indicating that May had suffered all summer from diabetes and had moved to the Winona Lake area in the spring "to spend her final days." However, a specialist in Indianapolis treated May and she recovered a great deal during the late summer and early fall (30 Oct. 1932). Soon thereafter she returned to her daughter's home at 3830 Carrollton Avenue in Indianapolis.

Dreiser wrote her after getting the news: "I can't tell you how sorry I am to hear that you are ill. A trip to the West Coast . . . has kept me very busy, or I would have written before. I do hope it is nothing serious and that it

will soon be over. Won't you ask someone to keep me informed of your progress, if you can't send me a line yourself which, of course, would be best of all" (23 Nov. 1932).

May replied within a few days: "Your nice letter was a delightful surprise and helped to make a whole day happier. I am having such a tiresome convalescence. My hands are so numb I can't write and my feet so numb I can not walk much" (29 Nov. 1932).

Despite her weakening health, May was ever the teacher to Dreiser. In her declining years, religion came to preoccupy her, and she sought to instill the same religious fervor in Dreiser, whom she knew was leading a troubled life: "I wish I could make you happy. Come out and let me be your teacher for a few hours. I'll try to do a better job than that of long ago. Life has done a lot to me but I try to be happy and to feel that my destiny is in the hand of One who knows me and my needs. Always with love and sympathy. . . . Your *old* teacher" (15 Nov. 1933).

Three years passed before the next correspondence. May wrote that she had read a newspaper account about attempts to raise money to build a memorial in Terre Haute to Paul Dresser, Theo's deceased older brother, who was a famous songwriter and performer. She thought that Dreiser might come to Indiana for the opening of the memorial, and she once again invited him to stay with the family in Indianapolis for a few days "or as long as you care to stay in your old home state." She reported that she was feeling much better and that she yearned for contact: "[Y]ou know I never lose interest in my boys. I want to talk with you" (25 Feb. 1936).

Dreiser knew of the efforts to build a memorial in Terre Haute to his brother Paul. He wrote to her that in 1924 the Wabash River town in west central Indiana had secured a federal grant of \$35,000 to help build the memorial but that nothing had been done about it in the intervening years. He had helped with the initial fund-raising efforts and publicity but was miffed that he had not been invited to be more involved. In fact, he would attend the opening of the memorial only if extended a personal invitation—and if he were, he would certainly come to Indianapolis to visit her and her family once again. He concluded, "I never enjoyed a visit more than the one I paid to you back in 1917.<sup>9</sup> And I am delighted to know that you are in good health and spirits, and able to invite me again. You will always be May Calvert to me—the teacher that made the public school a sort of Paradise" (7 March 1936).

With this last bit of praise, May was thrilled, just as she had been when she read his accounts of her teaching in *A Hoosier Holiday* and *Dawn*: "You made the happiest day for me when you wrote that letter. Nothing gives me

so much pleasure as to think I have done some little good in the world.” She mentioned that they could attend the Paul Dresser Memorial dedication together, that she had some good friends with a “comfy car” who would drive them to Terre Haute, and that he would be a welcome guest in the simple home “we love to share.” “Be a good boy as of old and *come*,” she wrote, closing with “We will turn back 54 years<sup>10</sup> and again I’ll be—as ever your teacher” (12 March 1936).

Dreiser did make a quick trip to Indiana in May 1936, not for the Paul Dresser Memorial dedication, but for a talk at Purdue University in West Lafayette. He wasn’t able to visit May at that time.

The following year, May wrote to tell Dreiser that she had spent nine weeks of the summer at Lake Winona in Warsaw: “It is so lovely. Lovelier than I ever saw it for this is such an unusually lovely summer. I wished for you and told Jack Shoup.<sup>11</sup> I wanted to have a reunion of our old-time friends he said very few were left. But you are left and I think its time you redeemed your promise to visit me here in my home.” She had once again shared their mutual appreciation of nature, she wrote, when in preparing to speak to a book club recently she had reread several portions of *A Hoosier Holiday*. “I could fully feel your thoughts for I feel the same way when I go to the lake region of our loved state.” Her evangelism as well as her role as his lifelong teacher are apparent as she urged him to recover his lost faith: “And now I am saying something to you that takes a lot of courage and please understand that it’s my regard for my dear pupil that make[s] me say it. The wonderful happy spirit of your early boyhood was the spirit of God. You were born with it and you were happy. You let misfortunes stifle it and I am praying God to revive it in you. Then you’ll be happy forever. Come and let me talk to you.” She signed the letter, “Lovingly and prayerfully” (10 Sept. 1937).

The following summer, May’s religious fervor was once again demonstrated when she wrote, “I am at Winona Lake and the lovely lake and landscape around it and the great Bible teachers make me long for you. Suppose you fly over so as to be here the last of [the month] when Harry Rimmer and Herbert Beiber and Louis Bauman (some of the best) will speak. I am at the Square Deal a cottage near the administration building. Come register and enjoy your boyhood home.” She closed the letter, “Please don’t think I am bold and brazen. I am only your interested and affectionate—Old teacher” (22 Aug. 1938).

Her religious leanings continued to be evident in her next letter: “A friend brought me your story “The Tithing of the Lord” and I am so happy over it. That is the kind of story I have always wanted you to write. You can

be one of the mightiest instruments for good in the world if you go on in this path” (9 Oct. 1938).

Because of his father’s religious dogmatism, Dreiser had developed a cynical attitude toward formal religion as a young child. Despite May’s continual pleadings, Dreiser would not be persuaded to take up regular religious practice, let alone come to the fundamentalist revivals of which she was so enamored. But in a very real sense, Dreiser was a deep thinker about spiritual matters, and through the study of nature and science he discovered what he called illustrations “of the supreme genius of this Creative Force that so over-awes me” (*Notes on Life* 332). He was a believer, but he despised the rigors of formal practice.

Dreiser, consistently worried about income, embarked on a lecture tour in the fall of 1938. On November 12, he was scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the National Scholastic Press Association’s annual convention in Indianapolis. He wrote to May that his train would be coming to Indianapolis the morning of the speech, so he would go directly to the lecture hall from the station—and then visit with her in the afternoon and stay the night at the Craig home before leaving for Detroit, and another lecture, the next day (25 Oct. 1938).

May replied, “I returned from Winona Lake yesterday P.M. and found your letter. Imagine my joy. Out of one happiness into another! Winona and the weather were perfect and I saw many old friends and now the crowning happiness—I am to see *you*” (26 Oct. 1938). She suggested that she put together a reception for him following the talk to NSPA in Indianapolis; she asked whom he wanted to attend but confessed that she wanted to occupy most of his time.

Before he came to Indianapolis for the talk, Dreiser had his secretary, Harriet Bissell, write to Paul B. Nelson, editor and publisher of *The Scholastic Editor*, to find out the nature of the audience—and to see if he could change his topic from “What Makes Good Writing” to “To Barcelona and Back” (3 Nov. 1938).<sup>12</sup> Nelson checked with NSPA executive director Fred L. Kildow, and they agreed that the change of topics would be fine. Nelson also explained that “Mr. Dreiser’s address will be the final and climaxing feature of the NSPA convention, and the attendance will be nearly two thousand high school students and faculty advisers, who are interested in journalism and undergraduate publishing work” (8 Nov. 1938).

May, not knowing the subject of Dreiser’s lecture, wrote him on October 26, 1938, with some suggestions for topics. She thought he should talk about God (upset paganism), Home (talk God and his love, majesty and power) and America (obedience to this). And because he was talking to a

group of (young) journalists, she wrote,

Tell them to try psychology and write on high and good ideals and try to redeem us from the awful pact they made in Paris at the close of the war. To tell the bad, nasty sex stuff they could find about poor weak mortals. Look what it has done! It will take another generation to restore decency to America and I blame the journalists more than the war or any one else except the Devil who is very glad to use them.

Now laugh!

In a letter of November 2, 1938, May complained to Dreiser that his stay in Indianapolis would be too short and urged him to come at least one day earlier than November 12 for the NSPA talk. However, Dreiser's plans did not change. He arrived the morning of November 12, gave his talk, stayed with May and the Craigs at 3830 Carrollton in Indianapolis, and took the train the next afternoon for Detroit, where he had a talk scheduled for the evening of November 13.

Following the short visit, Dreiser wrote to thank May and her family. In response, she invited him to come back for Thanksgiving on November 24. She promised him days of rest, good food, and good times: "We are not telling anyone and you'll just be at home with us—the family. If this wonderful weather continues we could drive to Warsaw on Saturday because Calvert [May's grandson] doesn't work Saturdays." She assumed her motherly role when she wrote that they were just simple folks "but we like you and I need you. I am so opinionated you must take me down." And she wanted to tell him how to be happy and hopeful: "Your life has been so hard my heart aches for you. I want to help you." She closed with "More love than ever. May" (17 Nov. 1938).

However, the November 12–13 visit of 1938 would be the third and final time in their adult lives that Dreiser and his former teacher would meet.

### **May's Failing Health**

On April 23, 1939, May wrote to ask Dreiser if he could stand another of her "blind" letters. At this time, her diabetes was taking a stronger hold: her handwriting was shaky, and she was nearly blind. She thanked him for an article he had sent about America's involvement in World War II: "I think you are just right in what you say about England. But you are wrong on Russia." (Dreiser wanted the U.S. to remain neutral in Britain's affairs—and was at the same time a sympathizer with Russian communism.)



Fig. 3. Four generations of the Calvert-Baker-Craig family taken July 1939. From left: Infant Robert Craig (May's great-grandson); Calvert Craig (May's grandson); May Calvert Baker; and Jessie B. Craig (May's daughter). (Photo courtesy of Robert Craig)

In summer 1939, May was once again visiting her beloved Warsaw/Winona Lake retreat. She wrote in response to a Dreiser letter that she was pleased his portrait was being painted and that she wished to “live to see your picture in the state library” (18 July 1939). She was referring to a portrait of Dreiser that had been commissioned by J. K. Lilly Jr., who had portraits made of authors of books he had collected.<sup>13</sup>

As a proud teacher ever supportive of her former students, May wrote Mr. Lilly on August 30, 1939: “I wish to thank you for having Theodore Dreiser's picture made. I think every Hoosier citizen should be grateful to you for what you are doing. . . . I was his first public school teacher at Warsaw.”<sup>14</sup>

On this same date, May wrote Dreiser that she had to come home early from Winona Lake because her diabetes had caused a foot infection and she was now too blind to write herself. (Her recent letters were typed for her.) But she was not so ill that she couldn't once again assume her role as teacher. In response to a Dreiser article in the *Rotarian* that she had had read to her three times, she wrote, “I want to say that you missed the greatest point in life—the faith that makes old age a happy time, the assurance



that we are going on to immortality to learn more of our great creator" (30 Aug. 1939).

May repeatedly asked Dreiser to write to her, especially as her infirmities worsened. Living then in California, near Hollywood, Dreiser was busy with screenplays and books. In a scratchy, handwritten note, May wrote, "In spite of blindness I want to write a few words to tell you I am very slowly getting better 7 weeks I have been laid up but unable to do or see and I want a word from you so much. I don't know whether you even read this or not but want to try to get a response from you. Fear you never read my typed letters" (14 Oct. 1939). In another handwritten note a few months later, May pleaded with Dreiser for a letter and offered an update on her health: "I wished for a word from you to me. I have been a shut-in for six months and am first beginning to go out a little. So you see how I need my friends. I am too blind to read and can't see to write decently" (13 March 1940). And more than a year later, she wrote again in her own large handwriting: "I wish to hear from you. Do you realize it is two years since your blind teacher had a personal word from you. Come and talk to me" (21 May 1941).

That was the last known correspondence between the two.

May Calvert Baker died at her daughter's home in Indianapolis on August 3, 1942, a few days after her 80th birthday. One funeral service was held in Indianapolis the morning of August 5, and then another service was held in Warsaw in mid-afternoon, with a minister from the Church of the Brethren conducting services.<sup>15</sup> Burial was at Oakwood Cemetery in the Calvert family plot on a hill overlooking the south shore of Pike Lake.

Upon getting the news of her death, Dreiser sent flowers and condolences to the family. A few weeks later, May's daughter, Jessie Craig, wrote him a thank-you note: "You must know . . . how much your lovely flowers and message meant at the time of my mother's passing. She always treasured each message from you so much, and I feel sure she knows and appreciates your last tribute" (16 Oct. 1942).

## Notes

1. The author is grateful for two grants from Indiana University that supported this research project: An Exploration Traveling Fellowship Grant from the New Frontiers in the Arts and Humanities Program and a Grant-in-Aid of Research sponsored by the School of Journalism.

2. The author is indebted to the helpful and cordial staff of the Kosciusko County (Indiana) Historical Society Jail Museum for access to the West Ward School records for the 1884–1885 school year.

3. Indiana did not have a compulsory education law for students aged 7 through 14 until 1897, and then students were required to attend school for only 12 weeks each year (Cotton 371).

4. Dreiser had lifelong problems with spelling. For example, in his 1916 book about his Indiana travels in the summer of 1915, *A Hoosier Holiday*, he spelled May Calvert's first name "Mae." In a later autobiography, *Dawn*, published in 1931—and long after he had much correspondence and two visits with her—he made the correction.

5. Unless otherwise noted, all correspondence between May Calvert Baker and Theodore Dreiser comes from the Theodore Dreiser Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania. The author wishes to thank the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania for permission to quote from correspondence and is grateful to Nancy M. Shawcross, John Pollock, and the staff of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library for their expert and cordial assistance.

6. Robert Craig (great-grandson of May Calvert Baker), telephone conversation with the author, 30 November 2005.

7. *Directory of the Huntington County Schools, 1918–1919*, Huntington, Indiana.

8. Dreiser's novel *The "Genius"* had been declared obscene by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, and the publisher, John Lane Co., agreed to pull the book from circulation pending a court decision. Fearing problems with postal regulations as well, the publisher recalled all copies from bookstores nationally (Swanberg 245).

9. The actual visit Dreiser made to northern Indiana was June 1919, not 1917.

10. They had known each other for 52 years at the time, not 54.

11. John (Jack) Shoup was a Dreiser seventh-grade classmate in 1884–1885 at the West Ward School in Warsaw.

12. Dreiser had recently addressed a peace conference in Paris, after which he visited Barcelona and observed first hand the devastation of the Spanish Civil War (Swanberg 546).

13. The portrait was painted in 1939 by Boris Chaliapin, a Russian immigrant who was well-known for this ability to work quickly and accurately. He subsequently painted several hundred *Time* magazine covers of various people between the early 1940s and the 1970s. Today, the Dreiser portrait hangs at the top of the stairs on the second floor of Indiana University's Lilly Library.

14. Letter from May Calvert Baker to J. K. Lilly Jr., August 30, 1939. Courtesy The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

15. "Mrs. May Calvert Baker Dies in Indianapolis; Funeral in Warsaw." *Warsaw (Indiana) Daily Union* 5 Aug. 1942: 2.

### Works Cited

- Cotton, Fassett A. *Education in Indiana (1793-1934)*. Bluffton, IN.: Progress Publishing, 1934.
- Dreiser, Theodore. *American Diaries 1902-1926*. Ed. Thomas P. Riggio. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1983.
- . *Dawn: An Autobiography of Early Youth*. 1931. Ed. T.D. Nostwich. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow, 1998.
- . *A Hoosier Holiday*. 1916. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998.
- . *Notes on Life*. Eds. Marguerite Tjader and John J. McAleer. University: U of Alabama P, 1974.
- Hakutani, Yoshinobu. *Young Dreiser: A Critical Study*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1980.
- Swanberg, W.A. *Dreiser*. New York: Bantam, 1967.