



SINCLAIR LEWIS

Rebel from Main Street

Richard Lingeman

BOOKNOTES
BRIAN P. LAMB
C-SPAN AIR DATE

____/____/____

Ham
Red
Hal

he was "the odd man out"
Perkins - he was always an
outsider
1910 - "Feinman, manager reform
socialism - his course
"loneliest man I've ever
met"
Just about anything Lewis
said was newsworthy.

657. Richard Lingeman
Sinclair Lewis: Rebel From Mainstreet
Taped: 1/31/02
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WHE | S.L. 1885-1951
SENIOR EDITOR AT The Nation
Lifes Theodore Dreiser
born in Crawfordville
Haverford College
within small town America

MAIN STREET 1920
BABBITT
ELMER GANTRY
Arrowsmith
Dodsworth
Kingsblood Royal 1947

National Endowment (Grant) Humanities
as a child - a voracious reader
a flaky tempo
helped his father perform computations
wanted Howard sent to Yale

Harry Sinclair Lewis
b. 1891 he was
new mother Isabel Warner
a year later
2 brothers Fred and Claude
Orestin
Yale - dropped out 1906

Grace - wedding April 15, 1914 (p65)
Marriage to Dorothy described
Jan 2, 1942
Wells grad. from Harvard 1939

Worked as janitor for
Upton Sinclair
Worked in NYC then to
Panama then back to
Yale for his senior year.
Class of 1907 voted him
"most eccentric" 1908
first job Waterloo Courier
to which he was fired
Redbook story - 1st National
Carnel then to S.F. - fired
by S.F. Bulletin - The
A.P. until 1910 - resigned
before fired - to WASH.
Jack London gave \$5 each
for 14 plots - Dad refused
\$300 loan then moved to NYC
join Socialist Party 1911
included Leppmann

Hal's view of left
P212 "Arrowsmith"

Pettit for Arrowsmith - (1926)
judges chose Wain S. in 1921
Columbus trustees oversold them

Lewis a socialist
Divorced from Grace Apr. 16, 1928
Wedding engaged to Dorothy May 14, 1928

The Dreiser affair - plagiarism
Charge that he stole Thompson's
material on Russia for his books.

Main Street Judy 1920 finished S.L. 35 yrs. old

1st printing 10,000 copies written near Mayflower

Oct 1920 official pub. date top floor of Boardinghouse

name S.L. didn't appear in Saturday E. Post - for another days
he broke serials

By Jan - 100,000 sold - a year after 295,000 eventually 449,000 sold
full price

Total - 2 million

Main Street meshed with post war mood of cynicism p158

pro farmer - populist novel - married women make up
bulk of readers.

Will

Lowell

Prophet Prairie

In 1920 half of US lived in towns
of 2500 or less.

p492 - 1945

Novel Kingsblood Royal -
most inflammatory
of all books

Wrote 2 novels - bought a house - Marcella Powers mother
worked for him then
wrote 2 novels

fell off wagon then

Began his confrontative and discussion of Race

lonely beyond belief - didn't have many friends

moved to Williamstown, MA. - buys large house - his 5th
and last

Mencken - soured on Grouse after one of her
tirades walking all over Lewis -

said Lewis had "an inferiority complex"

ALSO BY RICHARD LINGEMAN

Theodore Dreiser: An American Journey

Small Town America: A Narrative History, 1620-the Present

Don't You Know There's a War On? The American Home Front, 1941-1945

P 312

Dorothy Thompson - meets her in Berlin - she was 34
getting divorce from Joseph Brand who said she was too
dominating and lesbian
he ask her to marry him on first night party at 3 a.m.

Eugene Hebb - eventually was completely
a novel possibility disillusioned
about labor

most labor people
were plain boobies
or Babbits in overalls

The Lanatanna -

The Lindbahr regimen

Grain's letters to Stella Wood
The Nation reflected Lewis' left liberal views

SINCLAIR LEWIS

Babbitt - centered in Zenith p166 - sold 240,000
George F. Babbitt - description p172 no. 10 in 1922
studied Cincinnati

Elmer Gantry March 10, 1927 - p298
Lewis in the pulpit in Kansas City
Sharon Falconer

Monkey Trial got him interested
seriously but fatally flawed - author
Congregational Church in Bank Centre
his real target was fundamentalism
permeated by misogyny

p309 Ludwig Lewisohn - In Paris at a party Lewis is drunk
says to Elmer Gant's: "Go back to the ghetto where you belong"
He throws him out

Wells named after H.G. Wells born in NYC
The Lewis lived on top of Manhattan
Had gone to Billy Sunday revival - he walked down
aisle of conversion to see what it was like
In 1917 - a pacifist - he earned about 10,000 a year
(150,000 today)
joined non-partisan league
lived in St. Paul

BOOKNOTES
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Twin Farms, Vermont
WASHINGTON
LONDON
New York
Carmel

Seneca Centre
Hartford
Paris -
French country villa

U. of Wisconsin

Deluth

Williamstown

Chatham, Cape Cod - during WWI

St. Paul

Kansas City - Elm St.

Wells killed in France Oct 29, 1944

Skin cancer

He was associated with America First (not in Hoover's Archive)
2 yrs. of sobriety 1940-42
Marcella - allowance / allowed to date other men

Incl. Lewis dies 1951
Dorothy Thompson 1961
Their son Michael - 1985 - Alcoholism - actor
his son John Paul - felt up to S.L. legacy
his brother Gregory lives in N.O.

Grace Hegge Lewis Casanova -
pub. memoirs in 1955 - died in 1981

Marcella Powers - News 56 - she is
she conceived -

Dorothy - filed for divorce Nov, 1941

American interests: Mallon
Boosterism

Prohibition
endless talk of Prohibition
public speaking
press agency
statistics
standardization

pep
baseball
Republican Party

Big Themes - Thomas Mallon
(Main Street)
Conformity
Religious Fundamentalism
Knowledge vs. Commerce

Last voyage Sept 7, 1949 with Claude
Palsied hands
shuffling splay footed walls caused
by polyneuritis

Maudie Parker Child p 289 - Choas is created around
her coming home from Europe
infatuated and the completion of Elmer Gantry

"I love America but I don't like it" p 541

1914 - Published On Mr. Wrenn dedicated to p 62
Grace Livingston Heggar. - announced
engagement

22. Novels about America

Main Street 1920
Sophia Pranic (South Center)

Babbalanza 1922
set in 2 South (Linn.)

Elmer Gantry

The God-Sicker 1949
wid 30,000

Arrowsmith 1925
(Sam) Martin

Our Mr. Wrenn - debut novel 1914

The Trail of the Hawk
1915

Free Air 1919

The Job 1917

Dodsworth 1929
(Bob) Sam 160,000

World So Wide 1951

Cass Timberlane 1946

Gideon Planish - 1943

The Prodigal Parents 1938

Work of art

It can't happen here 1935

Bethel Merriam 1940
sold 30,000 fewer than
any

The Quiet Mind

The Innocents 1917

The Man Who Knew Coolidge 1928

Ann Vickers 1933

Knightsblood Royal 1947

Selected Short Stories 1935

Alfred Harcourt
Wells Doubleday
Random House