

SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE
HORTON FOOTE COLLECTION, 1912-1991

by

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Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

August 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Horton Foote for his generosity in granting me permission to include transcriptions of his family members' correspondence in my dissertation. I would also like to thank his daughter Hallie for her kind assistance.

I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Dr. Laurin Porter, my supervising professor, an extraordinary teacher, a remarkable scholar, and a generous and thoughtful person. During my graduate studies, her wisdom has inspired me and her encouragement has sustained me. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the members of my graduate committee, Dr. Desirée Henderson and Dr. Neill Matheson, and also to Dr. Wendy Faris and Dr. Thomas Porter, for their kindness and their work on my behalf.

I am grateful to Dr. Russell Martin III, the director of the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University, and his staff, who assisted me during the many months I spent conducting archival research.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my husband Robert for his unwavering support and love.

July 16, 2008

ABSTRACT

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This dissertation includes a discussion of archival research and editorial procedures employed in the study, introductory essays on the private correspondence of the family of Horton Foote, and transcriptions of one hundred letters selected from the personal correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection repositied in the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, with extensive annotations and ancillary materials.

In the first chapter, I explain the archival research procedures and editorial methods employed in the study. I also provide physical descriptions of the archived correspondence and present an overview of the contents of the letters, examining many of the varied topics discussed in the Foote family correspondence. The chapters that follow include annotated transcriptions of correspondence selected from the Foote papers with introductory essays, in eight sections, each covering a period of time during Horton Foote's parents' lives and

Foote's own life and career: his parents' courtship, Horton Foote as a young actor and playwright, Foote's engagement to Lillian, their early marriage, Foote as a young artist with a growing family, and Horton Foote as an artist, son, husband, and father. The eighth chapter includes letters Foote wrote to actors, directors, and writers in response to their letters to him. In the final chapter, concluding statements include suggestions for further research related to the Foote family correspondence and Foote's dramatic works.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As Horton Foote and his family treasured antiques, they saved thousands of their letters as cherished remembrances. The Foote family correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection in the DeGolyer archive at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, reflects epistolary traditions in our culture during most of the twentieth century, and the stories told and sentiments expressed in the letters suggest the emotional fulfillment that writing and receiving letters from family members can bring. Letter writing appears to have been a passion and a lifelong habit for the many members of the Foote family.

For a literary scholar the personal correspondence of an author can provide unique insights. Because they are often written quickly in single drafts and untouched by editors, typesetters, and publishers, personal letters can reveal an author's personality more readily than a published work. An author's comments about literary influences and tastes, current works in progress, and contemporary political events can provide biographical and historical contexts for the analysis of texts. Furthermore, personal correspondence often reflects beliefs and feelings manifested in a writer's poetry, drama, or fiction.

Much of the correspondence that would interest scholars of Horton Foote's work is located at the DeGolyer Library in Dallas, Texas. The papers in the Horton Foote Collection at the DeGolyer archive include about two hundred linear feet of personal and professional correspondence, essays, lectures, manuscripts, photographs, and other items. At present, the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University is the sole archival repository of the Foote family's personal correspondence. The dates of the letters written by Foote's family that have been placed in the DeGolyer archive extend from 1878 through the end of the twentieth century. During the course of this study, all of the personal correspondence placed in the DeGolyer Library before January 2008 was examined, and letters have been selected and annotated for this dissertation with the goal of providing insights into Foote's autobiographical dramatic works.

1.1 Significance of the Study

Horton Foote's career as an actor, director, dramatist, and writer for television and film has extended over seven decades. During this period, Foote has written more than 150 published and unpublished plays, scripts for television and film, a novel, and two memoirs. Among the many honors and awards he has received are the Pulitzer Prize in 1995 for his play *The Young Man from Atlanta* and Academy Awards for his original screenplay *Tender Mercies* and screen adaptation of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Foote received an Emmy award in 1997 for his television script of the Hallmark Hall of Fame adaptation of

William Faulkner's "Old Man" (Dawidziak 171). When Horton Foote wrote the script of the film adaptation of William Faulkner's short story "Tomorrow," Faulkner offered to share the copyright for the screenplay with Foote (Castleberry, *Genesis* 10). In 2000, President Bill Clinton presented Horton Foote with a National Medal of Arts award (Castleberry, *Genesis* 1).

In a recent review of books by three scholars of Horton Foote's work, Laurence Avery, who has edited and published selected letters of Maxwell Anderson and Paul Green, states that in

the 1980s, when plays in *The Orphans' Home Cycle* began appearing . . . it was clear that Foote would make a significant contribution to the American theater. Since then, attention to his work has come along in a reasonable way. Of course plenty of opportunities for work remain. The big need now is for a well-annotated edition of his letters. That could be the best biography of all. (395)

The autobiographical nature of much of Foote's drama makes the personal correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection especially significant in the study of his work. Since many of his plays are set in Harrison, a place modeled upon his hometown, where most of the thousands of letters repositied in the DeGolyer archive were written, reading selections of the correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection will be especially useful to scholars. In addition, since these letters are, for the most part, in holograph form (that is, handwritten on the original paper) and many of the manuscripts are becoming fragile with age, transcribing the correspondence in the DeGolyer archive would serve a practical

purpose. Furthermore, much of Foote's oeuvre, including many lectures, essays, and drama and film scripts, and all of his correspondence, remains unpublished, and the letters in this volume will provide scholars access to a relatively unknown portion of Foote's work.

This dissertation includes a detailed discussion of archival research and editorial procedures employed in the study, introductory essays on the nature of Horton Foote's correspondence and how it relates to his life and work, transcriptions of a substantial number of letters selected from Horton Foote's personal correspondence with extensive annotations, and ancillary materials.

1.2 Research Methods Employed

The research for this dissertation focused primarily on the personal correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection with restricted access reposted in the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. My goal in conducting the research was to engage in the study of the creative works and personal letters of a literary figure and the correspondence of three of his closest family members. During the course of the project, I examined correspondence dating from 1878 to 1991. A selection of these letters was transcribed and annotated and appears in this dissertation; however, the thousands of letters examined during this study provide background information for the essays and annotations, and many more letters are discussed in this dissertation than merely the letters that have been transcribed. The material as yet unprocessed in the Horton Foote Collection at the DeGolyer Library and the items received by the

DeGolyer Library from the Foote family in early 2008 were not included in this study, primarily due to time constraints and to the large sampling of letters that had already been examined and transcribed by the end of 2007.

The methodology I chose to implement in my archival research is largely informed by the following sources: *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (Kline), *Editing Historical Documents* (Stevens), and *Editing Documents and Texts* (Luey). I found the journal articles “Editing Private Correspondence” (Lewis) and “On the Editing of Collected Editions of Letters” (Cline) to be especially useful. I also consulted the bibliography and information in the online resources of the Association of Documentary Editors, an association primarily for scholars in fields of history and literature. Several well-edited volumes of correspondence, including the selected letters of Katherine Anne Porter (Bailey, ed.), William Faulkner (Blotner, ed.), Marcel Proust (Curtiss, ed.), Paul Green (Avery, ed.), Olive Schreiner (Draznin, ed.), and Emily Dickinson (Hart, ed.), have served as models for my approach. Further information on methods of selection, organization, transcription, and redaction of correspondence most acceptable to literary scholars was obtained from books about archival research projects, journal articles about the editing of letters, published volumes of the letters of American authors, reviews of published volumes of selected letters, dissertations on the subject of personal correspondence, and books and articles about the art, practice, and purpose of letter writing.

For my study and transcription of the correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection, I chose to implement one of the methods found in the first volume of the *Harvard Guide to American History* recommended for historians who edit documentary manuscripts from archives. The three methods delineated in the *Harvard Guide* are the “Literal Method,” the “Expanded Method,” and the “Modernized Method” (29-32). I chose to follow the guidelines of the “Modernized Method,” since it emphasizes readability in typed transcription without eliminating or altering any of the words or passages in the original, but with the goal of achieving as “clean” a typed version of the holograph manuscript as possible. Such a style is referred to as a “clear text edition” in *Editing Historical Documents* by Stevens and Burg, who describe the goal of the method in this way: “Clear text editions use silent emendation and limited editorial apparatus to produce clean typescript transcriptions of documents. Clear text editions offer a page of text that is free of editorial apparatus” (79). Thus, the correspondence transcribed in this dissertation appears in typed form without any specialized editorial symbols inserted into the text of the letters. All commentary on the correspondence is placed in the annotations following each letter.

The dates of the letters examined during the course of this study extend through more than a century, ranging from 1878 to 1991. One of the first and perhaps the largest task undertaken during the study involved creating a chronology for all of the personal and business letters. In the DeGolyer archive, the correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection is ordered first by the

individual authors of the letters, then by the recipients of the correspondence, and finally, by the date the letters were written. Because the Foote papers were arranged in this order, responses to individual letters were most often placed hundreds of letters apart in the boxes in the collection. For this reason, it is difficult to pair together correspondents and reconstruct epistolary exchanges in the sequence in which they took place.

The large number of undated letters in the Foote Collection further complicates the process of establishing an overall chronology and of reconstructing ongoing discussions between specific correspondents. Thousands of letters of Foote's mother written throughout four decades, for example, are placed together in the Foote Collection, with more than one thousand handwritten, mostly undated pages, filling Box 4 completely. Fewer letters by Hallie Brooks Foote can also be found in Boxes 1 and 3.

Establishing a chronology is necessary not only to make clear individual strands of conversation running through the letters, but to bring out the multiple retellings of individual stories, and reveal the topics and themes treated in the correspondence over time. A complete list of the chronological ordering that I worked out for each of the letters can be viewed in Appendix A of this dissertation, which contains listings of all of the letters examined during this study, including letters examined but not transcribed, categorized by date, correspondents, and location in the Horton Foote Collection at the DeGolyer Library.

1.2.1 Selection and Organization

Included in this dissertation is a discussion of the nature of the correspondence in the Foote Collection in the DeGolyer Library, along with annotated transcriptions of letters by Foote, his wife Lillian, and his parents. The selection of the archived letters in this dissertation is intended to be representative, not all-inclusive. Of the thousands of archived letters examined during the course of this study, only a small percentage of these letters appear in the transcriptions in this dissertation. The primary goal of my selection is to give readers a more profound understanding of Foote's work and its sources and to examine the nature of his aesthetics and his relationship to family.

Many of the letters in the DeGolyer archive that are not among the transcriptions selected for this dissertation are nonetheless discussed in the essays and annotations; therefore, many more letters are treated in the dissertation than the number of the letters transcribed. In selecting the letters to be included in this dissertation, my goal was to achieve a sense of continuity in the correspondence and to make certain that the representative letters were selected and arranged so that the meaning of the epistolary exchanges is maintained. Although studies of this type usually involve the examination of letters spanning five decades at most, I was fortunate, during the course of this project, to be able to review letters dating from 1878 to 1991. To reveal changes over time in Foote's thought, influences, and professional and personal relationships, I included transcriptions of as wide a range of letters as possible written by Foote, his wife, and his parents,

spanning the greatest number of years. Correspondence placed in the Horton Foote Collection after January 2008 was not included in this study. Also excluded were messages sent by email and letters dated after 1991.

All of the transcriptions of correspondence appearing in this dissertation represent entire documents from the Horton Foote Collection, without any omitted material. The selection criteria of transcriptions of letters to include in this dissertation changed during the course of my archival research. I had originally planned that, while many of the letters would appear in their entirety as in the original documents, in other texts for pragmatic reasons it would be beneficial to exclude insignificant personal or quotidian details and passages that do not shed light on Foote's work. Since many of the letters in the Horton Foote collection are quite lengthy and replete with long discussions of ordinary daily matters, it appeared, at first, to be advantageous to omit passages with an inordinate amount of detail that would be time-consuming to disentangle and insignificant to most scholars. I was pleased to find, however, that because there are thousands of letters in the archive from which I could choose, and since multiple letters containing similar threads of conversation treat topics relevant to this study, I was able to locate and select more letters to transcribe in their entirety than I had originally expected. This was indeed fortunate, since in this type of research it is always preferable to include transcriptions of complete letters whenever possible. Thus, all of the transcriptions in this dissertation consist of entire letters, without any omitted text.

Deciding how to organize selected correspondence makes it necessary to answer questions such as whether the letters should be organized chronologically, by locations in which the letters were written, by correspondents, or by themes or subject matter of the letters. In organizing the letters, it is almost always best to avoid the *omnium-gatherum* and to have a logical strategy for the selection and organization of the correspondence that can be faithfully executed. While in most editions, selected letters are organized in a strict chronology (Kline 84), for the letters selected from the Horton Foote Collection I chose to employ a modification of this organizational strategy. As I examined and catalogued the personal correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection, I determined that the most appropriate method for organizing the correspondence would involve observing what I call a “hybrid organization.” With such an organization of the selected letters, instead of a strict chronological ordering of the correspondence, the letters can be grouped together by correspondent pair within a general chronological period.

In my opinion, with the correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection, maintaining chronological categories within which certain letters may be grouped together best ensures the continuity of important conversations between correspondents. In the correspondence, many family stories are retold in multiple letters, much like the weaving together of stories in the dialogue of Foote’s plays, in which several characters relate the same events but in different ways and with differing interpretations of what happened. An attempt has been made to select

and organize the transcriptions in this dissertation so that the conversations in the correspondence unfold in a manner similar to that of the dialogue in Foote's drama. Thus, the correspondence selected for inclusion comprises a representative sampling of letters revealing in epistolary sequences how the Foote family stories were told and retold and passed along from one family member to another.

The inevitable gaps in the dates of letters selected for this dissertation correspond approximately to intervals in the dates of the archived letters in the Foote papers. The largest interval in the dates of the letters I have selected, 1914 to 1935, approximates the time period marking the end of the courtship of Foote's parents to the time Foote moved to New York and worked there as a young actor and playwright. The second largest interval in which letters are absent in this volume dates from 1978 to 1986, from just after Foote's parents passed away to the earliest of Foote's responses to young artists requesting his advice that can be found in the archive.

1.2.2 Transcription, Redaction, and Annotation

I created transcriptions of the correspondence from original manuscripts or from photocopies of letters. For ease of reading, minor spelling and typographical errors were unobtrusively corrected, with care taken to ensure that in all instances the content of the messages remained unchanged. Although inadvertent misspellings and punctuation errors have been quietly corrected, every attempt was made to provide literal transcriptions with minimal, if any, emendations.

In the transcriptions and annotations, the corrections of nonstandard spelling and punctuation usage are treated as either “global” or “local” changes. Local corrections are noted in footnotes every time they occur. Global changes are identified in a footnote the first time they appear, and then silently changed throughout the rest of the letters. In all, relatively few changes were made to the letters and only to correct typographical and spelling errors; at no time was text left out or the content of the letters changed.

The formatting of the transcriptions in this dissertation has been “regularized” to correspond with the available functions of the Microsoft Word software program and in compliance with the Ph.D. dissertation guidelines of the University of Texas at Arlington Graduate Studies. Handwritten text in the holograph manuscripts and typed and word-processed documents have been transcribed onto eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch pages with double-spaced twelve-point Times Roman font and without corresponding page, line, or word breaks found in the original documents.

In the transcriptions, the paragraph breaks remain identical to the handwritten and typed manuscript letters. Paragraphs of the letter transcriptions are indented with a single tabbed space, even in the transcriptions of the letters of Foote’s mother, Hallie Brooks Foote, whose use of the traditional nineteenth-century practice of beginning every paragraph with very large indentations gave her letters a distinct appearance in holograph form. Correspondingly, in the one typed letter by Foote’s mother that I found in the archive, the paragraphs are

indented with a double tab, giving her typed letters a look similar to her handwritten correspondence.

Few letters repositied in the Horton Foote Collection were handwritten in all capital letters; in the case of these letters, lower case letters were substituted, changing the letters to standard sentence case in the transcriptions. In Foote's and his mother's handwriting, majuscules are often difficult to differentiate from minuscule letters. In cases of ambiguity, I chose to employ in my transcriptions the standard usage of capital and lowercase type.

In all letters, abbreviations are transcribed exactly as originally written, and when necessary for the reader's understanding, typed out in full and explained in the annotations. In most of the Foote family letters, explanations of abbreviations are unnecessary, except in the letters of Foote's wife Lillian, who frequently devised her own abbreviations for persons, plays, films, and books. She referred, for example, to Tennessee Williams as "Tenn." During the mid-1940s, when Lillian was a student at Radcliffe before she and Horton were married, she wrote to him about taking a class in American literature taught by "Mathi" at Harvard. After reading several of Lillian's letters, I determined that "Mathi" was F. O. Mathiessen, who was a professor at Harvard from 1929 to 1950. In a letter dated December 6, 1944, Lillian wrote to Horton, "Mathi's class was fun today – the lecture was on metaphysical poets and their influence on Emily Dickinson." Lillian's abbreviation of "GWTW" represented Foote's musical stage adaptation of *Gone with the Wind*, and "BTRMF" was her

“shorthand” for the name of Foote’s film *Baby the Rain Must Fall*. After Lillian cut her hair short, she mentioned in one of her letters dated October 26, 1944, “Now I look like Maria in F.W.T.B.T” (Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls*).

Crossed-out words are not included in the transcriptions of holograph letters or indicated in the annotations unless they represented major changes to the text of the original documents. All four of the correspondents whose letters appear in this dissertation (Horton and Lillian Foote and Foote’s parents) wrote fluidly, quickly, and seldom crossed-out words—in every case the words were crossed out with the same writing instrument with which the letter had been written. Words were always crossed out with a single or double strike, so the original words in the letters were never completely obscured. Interlinear words added with carets have been included in the typed transcription without explanation in the annotations, unless the additional words or passages changed the original meaning of the text or was substantial; in these instances, explanatory notes are included in the endnotes following the letters.

In the typed letters, obvious typographical errors are corrected in the transcriptions without comment in the annotations. Almost all of the personal letters composed on typewriters manufactured in the mid-twentieth century contained at least one of the distorted markings created by typed-over text (instances in which the correspondents used the backspace key and typed the correct letters over the original unintended keystrokes). In the case of typed-over

text, the transcriptions reflect the correct spelling, without indicating that the original keystrokes had been covered over.

Most of the correspondents in the Foote family used dashes that substituted for terminal punctuation. In the transcribed correspondence, dashes of different lengths have been “regularized” to fit standard sizes of dashes in the Microsoft Word program. The dashes in the holograph letters are of various lengths; however, although I retained the dashes in my transcriptions, most often using the medium-sized dash available in the Microsoft Word program, because of the current technological constraints of conventional word processing, the fluidity of the length of pauses implied by the varying lengths of the original handwritten dashes is diminished. This is especially evident in the early letters dated 1912 to 1914 of young Hallie Brooks before she married Foote’s father, and can be seen and “heard” in the letters written throughout her life. With the dashes in place, the language in her letters retains its musical quality, demonstrating, in a subtle way, the musical training she received at Kidd Key College, where she was a student of piano.

Horton Foote also makes use of the dash in his letters, rendering a poetic quality that is lost when the dashes are replaced by commas and periods. In view of this, the dashes in the handwritten letters have been transcribed with the word processing program in a way that appears as close to the original holograph manuscripts as possible. Therefore, the dashes in the holographs have not been changed to commas or periods in my transcriptions, because I believe that the

dashes more clearly demonstrate how the letter-writers expressed themselves, thereby giving the language of the letters a rhythm that could otherwise have been lost had other punctuation been substituted.¹

Rather than using the ampersand symbol (“&”) in the transcribed correspondence, the word “and” has been substituted when the meaning of the text remains the same as when the word “and” replaces the handwritten symbol in the holograph manuscript. Since Foote and his family members used ampersands liberally in their handwritten correspondence, for ease of reading and to minimize visual distractions in the typed version of the text, I decided to replace the handwritten symbols with the word “and” rather than insert symbols such as “&” or “+” into the text of the word-processed transcriptions. The practice of expanded symbols is consistent with the editorial aims of preparing a readable “clear text edition” as outlined in *Editing Historical Documents* by Stevens and Burg (78-80).

Annotations, which appear at the end of each letter, supplement the transcribed letters with details about Horton Foote’s works, historical events referred to in the letters, biographical information about Foote’s correspondents and colleagues, and other facts that enhance understanding of the content of the letters and elucidate the text, providing details about the people, places, and events mentioned by the correspondents. Physical descriptions of the letters transcribed, the envelopes and other material enclosed, and the location (i.e., the

box and folder numbers) of the letter in the archive, are listed in the first endnote following each of the letter transcriptions.

Horton Foote's published works, including plays, film scripts, teleplays, memoirs, interviews, and unpublished manuscripts, provided background material for the annotations of the selected letters, as did books and articles by Foote scholars. In addition, the contents of all of the letters examined during this study, including letters not transcribed for the dissertation, furnished information for the annotations as well. When Foote's works (published or unpublished) are mentioned in the letters, the annotations refer to the latest version of the script created or published before the letter was written. In writing my annotations, while at times I cite information in biographers' accounts of Foote's life and the lives of his family members, I have relied most heavily on Foote's own descriptions of his life and work in lectures, essays, interviews, and his published memoirs *Farewell* (1999) and *Beginnings* (2001).

1.2.3 Dating Letters and Correspondence Remaining Undated

To the editor of documentary correspondence, undated materials present significant challenges. Unless dates appeared on the letters themselves, the dates that I used to catalogue the letters were determined by postmark. For undated letters without envelopes, internal and external clues assisted in determining the letters' places in the chronology. Many of the letters had been separated from their envelopes, which would have been postmarked, and are otherwise undated. To determine approximate dates, I used internal clues, including the subject

matter of the letters, such as topics of conversation, or names, locations, special dates, or holidays mentioned in the letters (such as birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays like Christmas, Valentine's Day, or Father's Day), and external evidence consisting of, among other things, type of paper, ink, typewriting, computer printing (dot matrix or laser), addresses on hotel stationery, and the writing materials habitually used by each of the correspondents during various time periods.

The dates on the postmarks of the envelopes are reliable sources for establishing approximate dates when letters were written. Postmarks often indicate the date a letter was written within a day or two, as all of the members of the Foote family habitually mailed letters almost immediately after they were written. For this reason, if the letters themselves are undated, as is the case with most of the correspondence in the Foote papers, I used the postmarks on the attached envelopes to provide dates for the otherwise undated letters. Often in the closing lines of letters by Foote's mother and wife Lillian, there would be phrases indicating that the letters were to be mailed immediately. Only in the correspondence mailed to the members of the family serving overseas in the military do the dates in the postmarks appear to have been stamped on the envelopes much later than the letters had been written.

Of the members of the Foote family, only Foote's father, Albert Horton Foote, Sr., wrote in full the month, day, and year in the top margin of all but one of his letters. Since the day of the week was almost always placed above the text

of the letters by Foote's mother and his wife Lillian, I checked calendars of the years during which the letters had been written to ascertain the exact date if the day of the week written above the letter did not correspond with the date of the postmark.

In the boxes of personal correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection, I found several hundred undated letters that had been separated from their envelopes, including 113 undated letters by Foote's wife Lillian in Box 1, folder 16, and 296 undated letters by Foote's mother in Box 4, folders 1 through 6. I was able to assist the staff of the DeGolyer Library by grouping the separate pages of the undated letters by Hallie Brooks Foote by placing individual pages together to form complete letters.

In determining which pages of Foote's mother's undated letters should be grouped together, I examined the color of ink, the look of the paper, the handwriting (which appeared at times to have been more hurried than at other times), and internal clues such as the subject matter of the text if the page breaks occurred between paragraphs and sentences or, in the case of a break in a sentence, if the words from one page to the next provided a continuity of meaning within the sentence. Also, Foote's mother often numbered the pages of her letters in the upper right-hand corners of the front of the additional pages, and these numbers provided further clues as to the ordering of pages within letters. For decades, almost all of her letters were handwritten in blue ink on white, unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper, and the slant and style of her

handwritten script did not show evident change throughout her life. The appearance of the paper of the older letters had changed, as the paper of letters written during the 1930s through the 1950s showed signs of darkening with age. At first glance, for example, I posited that the letters in Box 4, folder 5, had been written during a period between 1935 and 1944, before Foote was married; an empty envelope postmarked 1944 was found in the folder behind the loose pages of the undated letters, which helped to confirm this determination.

Occasionally, I was fortunate to make serendipitous discoveries. For example, in Box 1, folder 39, a folder originally dated “1978,” the single letter inside the folder was headed “Golian March 6th/78” and signed by Eliza Horton; however, after examining the letter, I determined that it must have been written in 1878 instead of 1978. I was able to find evidence to support my belief that the letter was written a century earlier in Foote’s memoir. Horton Foote begins chapter 4 of his memoir, *Farewell*: “I was the fourth generation of Hortons to be born in Wharton. My great-great-grandfather Albert Clinton Horton had come to Texas from Alabama with his wife, Eliza Holliday, in 1834, settling on the Gulf Coast in Matagorda County” (35). The letter in Box 1, folder 39, of the Horton Foote papers is signed “Eliza Horton” and addressed to “My Dear Lida.” The Lida to whom the letter was addressed could possibly have been the younger of two of Eliza Horton’s granddaughters who were both named Lida (Foote, *Farewell* 36-37).

Handwritten dates by various individuals (often, judging by the handwriting, by either Foote's wife Lillian or their daughter Hallie Foote, or perhaps by others who processed the letters), both in pencil and in ink, were often added to the top margins of the first pages of many of the letters. In this dissertation, dated letters or letters with postmarked envelopes are referred to in the essays and annotations by these dates or by approximate dates determined by me or by others who helped organize and process the collected letters. Approximate dates are preceded by the term "c." All of the personal letters that are dated or have been assigned dates are catalogued in Appendix A of this dissertation. Appendix B includes a list of the correspondence in the Foote Collection that remains undated at present.

1.3 Physical Properties of Letters, Envelopes, and Enclosures

Most of the letters examined during this study were handwritten; far fewer of the personal letters in the Horton Foote Collection were typed or composed on a word processor. Thus, most of the letters are in the form of holograph manuscripts. Also, many of the letters were composed on a manual or electric typewriter. Very few of the personal letters in the collection were written on a computer and then printed. Foote's wife Lillian was the member of the family who most often typed her personal letters. It appears that whenever typewriters were available to her, Lillian made frequent use of them. By the look of her letters, Lillian appears to have been an excellent typist. In addition, the interesting conversational flow and the well-organized content of her typewritten letters

demonstrate an ability to compose lengthy, creative, and lively letters in a single sitting, often before, during, or at the end of busy days caring for her young, active family.

Horton Foote wrote most of his letters longhand in pencil or pen with quick strokes in what appears to have been single drafts, without hesitation, and with virtually no crossed-out or revised passages. Judging from the free-flowing handwriting and the informal, conversational nature of the language of all of the family letters, it appears that all of the other members of the Foote family composed their handwritten letters with a similar degree of spontaneity. Many of the letters in the Horton Foote papers, including most of the letters by Foote himself and all of the letters by his parents, are handwritten.² Before she married, Lillian wrote most of her letters by hand; when Foote went away on business trips after they were married, Lillian made use of a typewriter, sending him lengthy, single-spaced typed letters, often on both front and back of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper or, at times, on legal-sized paper.

When Foote traveled, he often wrote his letters on hotel stationery, as did his brother John, who for years wrote weekly letters home to his parents on his frequent business trips. Often, with undated letters separated from their envelopes, knowing the names and locations of hotels where Foote stayed while working on specific projects helped me to determine approximate dates of the letters and to better understand the contents of the correspondence.

Foote's father almost always handwrote his letters in ink on the printed letterhead stationery of his business in Wharton, while Foote's mother wrote almost all of her many letters on plain, white unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper with blue ink. Early in the twentieth century, it appears that she used a fountain pen, and then changed to blue ballpoint pen during the 1960's.

It appears that all of the members of the Foote family habitually wrote their letters on informal paper that was readily on hand; in the voluminous family correspondence of the Horton Foote papers, there are very few letters written on formal stationery purchased specifically for correspondence. Often the correspondents wrote more in their letters than the allotted space on standardized papers would allow. In many cases (especially in Foote's mother's and his wife Lillian's letters) postscripts have been written in top margins of the first page of the letters after the available space on the pages was filled. Quite a few times, I found on the flaps of envelopes messages that had been composed with writing instruments identical to those in which the letters had been written.

Most of the personal correspondence in the archive, if typed, consists of hand-signed documents. Of the professional correspondence, before the 1980's, most letters were generally saved as unsigned carbon copies, which were placed in the DeGolyer Library. During the 1990's, when word processing on computers became the standard for office correspondence, unsigned duplicate printouts replaced the unsigned carbon copies in the professional correspondence files. During these years, Foote often worked with a secretary who transcribed his

handwritten letters, and several of his handwritten letters preserved and filed with the computer printouts can be found in the DeGolyer archive in Box 2. The unsigned computer printouts reflect changes in technology introduced in the 1990's; during the 1980's, the majority of the business letters in the files were either typed or printed with dot matrix printing; beginning in the 1990's, the letters composed on computers began to be printed predominantly with laser printers.

Frequently, there was evidence of the letters having been stored unopened for many decades in their original envelopes—often for more than a half-century. A few of the early letters from Hallie Brooks Foote to her son sent during the 1930's and early 1940's had been unopened for so long that the glue on the flap of the envelope had “resealed” the letter; these envelopes had to be opened as gently as possible with a small instrument borrowed from the conservation area. A few times it was found in the archive that individual pages of letters were fastened together with straight pins. The fastening of individual pages in this way was probably done by members of Foote's parents' generation (most likely by Foote's mother Hallie Brooks Foote or by her sister Laura), as it was more common for persons in the early to mid-twentieth century to use straight pins for this purpose than it is now.

Letters from several family members were often enclosed in one envelope and sent to others in the family. In this way, family news was circulated. Long before the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries, when

members of families began routinely to forward electronic messages to additional recipients and attach digital photos, links to news items, and other documents, the Foote family enclosed with their own letters other family members' cards, letters, photos, and news clippings. In the Foote Collection, many of the envelopes dated as early as the 1930's still contain contemporary news clippings. The topics of these news articles often were local, national, and international politics, high school and college sports (Foote's son Walter played on basketball teams in high school and college), and contemporary reviews of Foote's plays and films.

It appears, judging from the number of letters of other family members that are still enclosed in envelopes postmarked Wharton, Texas, that Foote's mother, Hallie Brooks Foote, was the one who most often took on the responsibility of passing along letters from other family members to Foote and his family. Most often, enclosed with Foote's mother's letters were letters written by her mother, her sister Laura Brooks Ray, her brother Billy (often spelled "Billie") Brooks, and Horton Foote's brother John. Many envelopes sent to Foote and his family by his mother still contain up to six letters from other family members. Many of the almost three hundred letters by Foote's mother that have been separated from their envelopes mention letters by other family members that had accompanied her letters.

This dissertation does not include transcriptions of letters by Foote's children; however, the boxes in the Horton Foote Collection with restricted access contain many of their letters. From the time they were very young, the Foote

children wrote letters to their parents and also to each other. The correspondence from the children when they were small frequently includes their colored drawings and handmade greeting cards with poems and other messages in the children's own handwriting. Lillian also sent her young children's drawings, poems, stories, and classroom assignments, many of which are still enclosed with her letters in the archive. In one of her letters to Horton and Lillian, Foote's mother thanked them for sending the arithmetic assignment of one of their children, and she playfully wrote that she planned to save it to show it to her grandchild when he is grown.

In the thousands of letters placed in the DeGolyer archive, most of the conversational threads can be traced by pairing the letters of the various correspondents. In only one instance was the absence of a correspondent on the opposite side of a conversation clearly evident. I was unable to locate the 1912-to-1914 correspondence of Foote's father, Albert Horton Foote, Sr., in any of the boxes of personal correspondence in the archive. Regrettably, I found only the letters written by Hallie Brooks to her future husband during the early twentieth-century among the archived papers, and not his responses to her, even though in the text of her letters it is evident that she had received correspondence from him at that time.

1.4 The Contents of the Correspondence

In the previous section, the physical characteristics of the correspondence in the Foote Papers were described. The following section will present a brief overview of the subjects discussed in the letters.

In their many letters, the members of the Foote family discuss abundant and varied topics, which are also addressed in the many works of Horton Foote. All stages of life, including courtship, marriage, parenthood, illness, and aging are discussed in the correspondence. Aspects of home life, such as hiring housekeepers, home buying and remodeling and gardening are mentioned frequently in the letters through the years. Other diverse subjects including food, traveling, work, reading, and politics are also discussed.

1.4.1 The “Dailiness” of the Foote Family Correspondence

Horton Foote left home during the Depression in September 1934 when he was only sixteen years old (Foote, *Beginnings* 18). Letters from his family helped him to maintain a sense of connection with home. In a lecture presented in 1989 entitled “Pasadena and Beyond,” published in *Genesis of an American Playwright*, Foote speaks about how comforting it was for him to receive letters from home:

For all the excitement of New York, Wharton, Texas, was never far from my mind. My mother was an inexhaustible and excellent letter writer, every day writing long chronicles of my family and friends and their activities. She wrote as if I had just left the day before, never, however, punishing me or making me feel guilty about obviously enjoying my

new life. I have kept many of these letters. They are all witty, compassionate, and insightful. In my lonely times, and there were many—even in busy, bustling New York—I would read them over and over. (41-42)

The letters by Horton Foote's mother that have been placed in the DeGolyer archive span more than sixty years, beginning with her letters written to Foote's father on June 30, 1912, three years before they were married in 1915, on Valentine's Day (Foote, *Farewell* 57).

Foote's mother wrote her letters in a lighthearted, loving manner, reflecting the strength of Foote's female characters and the intimacy described in *Horton Foote and the Theater of Intimacy* by Gerald Wood. Even the opening salutations of her letters demonstrate her affectionate way of communicating. When writing to Foote before he married Lillian, his mother addressed her letters to "My darling Boy"; after his marriage, she addressed the correspondence to "My darling Children." Foote's father also addressed his letters to his son, "My darling Boy." After their marriage, Horton and Lillian each would write separate letters to Foote's parents and enclose both letters in the same envelope. After Horton and Lillian had children, Foote's mother most often began her letters with the greeting "Dearest Folks" and customarily closed her letters to her son's growing family with "Hugs and kisses to all – Devotedly – M."

In general, the salutation used by all of the Foote family members in their letters was "Dearest Folks." Other salutations often commonly used by members

of the Foote family were “Dear Sister,” “Dear Brother,” and “Dear Son,” traditional salutations by correspondents in the American South.

After Lillian and Horton Foote became parents, they both corresponded with each of their four children after they left home, often writing to and receiving letters from the children several times a week. Much of this correspondence has been placed in the DeGolyer archive, and all of the letters are as supportive and affectionate as Foote’s mother’s had been to him. In a letter dated September 27, 1974, Foote wrote to his son Walter, who was away at college in Springfield, Massachusetts, “You have accomplished much, don’t let anything make you dwell on lack. Be (silently, perhaps) but actively grateful. Be consciously loving – teachers, students, everyone. We never know another person’s burdens.” Much of the correspondence by Horton and Lillian Foote to their children includes advice, and the letters are also replete with news of everyday happenings in Wharton and the various places they lived. At times, Foote described his writing and his theater and film projects in his correspondence to his children.

In her letters, Foote’s mother discussed many of the quotidian details of life in Wharton that inform Foote’s plays. In an interview published in 1997, Foote indicated that the letters he received from his mother several times a week—and often daily—for many decades had a profound effect on him as an emerging playwright. In an interview, he was asked, “When you were in California as a young man—then in New York and Washington—what effect did

her letters have on you, coming so frequently, as a developing writer?" Foote responded,

I think they had a great effect on me because I was able to keep in touch with people and things that I wouldn't have known about ordinarily. Without any strain, they just kept me in touch with the dailiness of their lives and the lives of that town; and it was that dailiness that always interested me. She didn't necessarily write me a sensational, gossipy letter, although once in a while, she'd tell me something out of the ordinary, but mostly, it was a kind of record of their day-by-day living and the living of people around them—we had a large, extended family. (Cincotti 119)

This sense of "dailiness" and awareness of place permeates Foote's works. In "The *Orphans' Home Cycle* Lecture" delivered in 1993 at Texas A&M University and printed in *Genesis of an American Playwright*, Foote states that it was after his parents' death when he went through the letters and photographs that they collected during their lives that he began to work on his nine-play *Orphans' Home Cycle* in the winter of the same year (117-18). Gerald Wood, in *Horton Foote and the Theater of Intimacy*, writes of the genesis of the *Orphans' Home* plays:

The Orphans' Home began under the most personal of circumstances. The death of Horton Foote's parents inspired him to write his most ambitious study of memory, loss, and change. He began with a social and moral history of Wharton, Texas, in the first three decades of the twentieth century, a story dedicated to the memory of Albert Horton and Hallie Brooks Foote. As much as the requirements of his form and imagination would allow, he was true to that story, but the cycle that grew from

Foote's personal experience is about change in all places and times. (85)

Thus, for Horton Foote, family mementos and missives inspire art.

In a way, personal letters functioned for many members of the Foote family as diaries or journals (or, perhaps, with modern computer technology, family web pages or "blogs"). While personal diaries are not included among the Horton Foote papers, most of the correspondents in the Foote family wrote letters several times a week or even daily.³ These letters are lengthy and provide news of family happenings and reflections on many topics.

Over the years, from the time Foote first left home in 1934 until just before she died, Foote's mother, Hallie Brooks Foote, wrote him long letters full of detail about life in Wharton, Texas. While Foote was away on extended trips for his work in television, film, and theater for months at a time, his wife Lillian composed lengthy letters to him, often single-spaced typed letters several pages long. These letters discuss in intricate detail all aspects of the daily life of their young, active, growing family. Horton Foote's letters to Lillian during his business travels are full of thoughts of home and family, as well as discussions related to all aspects of his work and professional collaborations. Also repositied in the DeGolyer Library are many letters from Horton Foote's brother John to his parents (to whom he wrote weekly during most of his life) in which John describes his life in the military during the Second World War and excitement about his upcoming marriage, his subsequent life with his wife Betty and their

children, his frequent travels related to his work, and later, settling in Houston to start his own business. Thus, John Foote's correspondence and the letters of many other members of the large, extended Foote family provide valuable background information for this study.

1.4.2 The Foote Family Letters and the Sense of Place

The letters by Foote's mother that have been repositied in the DeGolyer Library provide a unique view of more than a half-century of everyday events in Wharton, Texas. In addition, the many letters by Foote's grandmother, his aunt Laura Brooks Ray, and his cousin Nan Outlar in the Horton Foote Collection are replete with details of daily life in Wharton. For decades, Nan Outlar wrote a column in the local newspaper about the residents of Wharton entitled "Nan About Town." Included with the letters in the DeGolyer archive are several clippings of this column. In New Hampshire in the early 1970's, Foote's wife Lillian wrote letters to him that often related lengthy, detailed, and humorous stories about the everyday people in Wharton told to her by their live-in housekeeper, Gladys, who had come from Wharton to stay with the family in New Hampshire during the many months that Foote was in London working on his musical adaptation of *Gone with the Wind*.

Even though Foote left home at an early age and lived and worked in many different places, the largest part of his oeuvre includes dramas set in his hometown of Wharton, renamed Harrison, Texas. Other plays, such as *The Young Man from Atlanta*, are set in Houston, with characters from Wharton who have

moved from the small Texas town to the metropolis. Foote's works root his characters in a single place, with displaced characters having an air of being "uprooted." Foote creates works with an awareness of place in a manner similar to that found in Faulkner's works set in Mississippi, William Carlos Williams's epic poem about Paterson, New Jersey, Walt Whitman's revelations about New York in *Leaves of Grass*, and Charles Ives's many musical compositions inspired by his life in New England.

Many of his parents' letters to their son describe the excitement of the citizens of Wharton at his success and their enthusiastic reception of his work, especially in television and film. Much of the correspondence written to him by his parents through the years illustrates the sentiment expressed by Walt Whitman in the final sentence of the preface to his 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*: "The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it" (24). It is evident in Foote's parents' correspondence that Foote celebrates the people of Wharton in his art, and they, in return, acknowledge his artistry and genius.

1.4.3 The Family Letters and Traditional Southern Foods

Awareness of place is linked closely with the traditional foods customarily associated with particular places. Detailed descriptions of different types of food, especially Southern cuisine, appear repeatedly through the whole of the Foote correspondence, with numerous discussions of home-cooked food, meals at restaurants, and at times, vegetarianism and dieting. For instance, Foote's mother

wrote lengthy descriptions of sumptuous Southern meals in so much detail that by fitting together a list of food partaken in one of these meals, I was able to piece together loose sheets of an undated letter that had been separated, with part of the letter located in folder 1 of Box 4 in the DeGolyer archive and the other portion of the letter found in folder 3 of Box 4, almost one hundred sheets apart. The separate pages presented external clues that indicated a matched set of pages forming an entire letter, including the coloring, weight, and size of paper, the type of ink used, and the handwriting in the letter (which, at that point in my research, I recognized as Foote's mother's hand, even though she signed many of her letters to Foote and his family, including this one, "Devotedly, M."); however, it was the internal evidence in the text itself that enabled me to determine finally that the single sheets formed one letter: a long list of food was separated by a page break, with the separation between the words "fresh" and "cornbread."

The abundance of good food is discussed in many of the family letters; however, in other letters such as those written by Lillian Vallish to Horton Foote during the Second World War before they married, Lillian mentions shortages of such foods as butter, cheese, candy, and chocolate.

Just as the Foote family letters feature many detailed descriptions of family meals enjoyed at home, many of the letters in the collection describe the food encountered while traveling. For example, in Foote's letters to his wife Lillian, postmarked Tupelo, Mississippi, where he stayed while the filming of *Tomorrow* took place in the city of Corinth, he describes the meals served in one

particular restaurant that he enjoyed very much. For many years, Foote's father and mother took weekend drives in the Texas countryside, and their letters contain descriptions of meals they had in the small eating establishments that they found along the way. When Foote's brother John traveled, he also described food that he had during his trips; however, it appears that John seemed, as in the case with all of the other Footes, to enjoy most his meals with his family.

1.4.4 The Foote Family Correspondence and Types of Travel

In addition to the recurrent discussions of meals in the correspondence, the thousands of personal letters spanning 1878 to 1991 in the Horton Foote Collection frequently mention traveling for work and while vacationing—by horse, train, boat, plane, bus, or automobile. The letters reveal how the advancements in available methods of transportation throughout the twentieth century changed how the family traveled. In a letter dated July 31, 1912, Foote's mother, Hallie Brooks wrote to her future husband Albert H. Foote in a letter addressed to him in Dallas, Texas, and postmarked Eagle Lake, about the excitement of riding in a very early model of a Cadillac automobile, "Gladys (at least, her father) has a beautiful Cadillac – just like the Hamilton's. Gladys drives it herself – I am crazy about riding – We are going again this morning." In the early twentieth century, before marrying Foote's mother, his father traveled as a salesman, most likely by train, and the frequency of this traveling is mentioned in Foote's mother's letters and is also evidenced by the changing addresses on the envelopes. From the end of June to the beginning of October 1912, for example,

the addresses of letters written only weeks apart indicate that Foote's father was in Crowley, Louisiana, in Little Rock and Fort Smith in Arkansas, in Dallas and Waco in Texas, in Shreveport, Louisiana, in Vicksburg and Meridian in Mississippi, in New Orleans, Louisiana, and finally at home in Wharton, Texas.

Foote's brother John, while working for a large company, traveled frequently (most likely by automobile); most of his letters are no longer with their envelopes, and his locations can be gleaned by internal clues such as cities that he mentions the text of his letters and the external evidence such as addresses on hotel stationery. While working away from home, the places where Horton Foote stayed and the type of project he was working on at the time his letters were written are often indicated by the printed names and addresses on the stationery of hotels, including those in Hollywood, New York, or Tupelo, Mississippi, or the printed stationery of broadcast and film companies, such as CBS and Warner Brothers.

Throughout the years of their marriage, Foote's parents' correspondence indicates that they enjoyed taking weekend automobile trips in the Texas countryside and through the towns and cities surrounding Wharton. For instance, Foote's mother wrote of a weekend automobile excursion with Foote's father in a playful opening to a letter headed Friday, August 6, without a postmarked envelope or the indication of the year in which the letter was composed, but which was most likely written just after the release of Foote's film *Baby the Rain Must Fall*: "From Victoria to Houston, from Houston to Wharton, from Wharton

to Rosenberg, from Rosenberg to Rice Drive-in in El Campo, Margaret Rose we sure do get around!”⁴

1.4.5 The Correspondence and the Foote Family Pets

The stories told in the letters are about a large cast of characters, including many members of a large family, friends, neighbors, the children’s teachers and coaches, business colleagues, antique dealers, the family’s domestic help and persons employed to refurbish the family houses and work on the farms in Texas. Even the Foote family’s many pets join the cast of characters in the anecdotes in the correspondence. Since their pets were often given names that could also be given to humans (such as Clarence, Tony, Willie, and Amy), I at first believed that Tony, Willie, Amy and some of the other pets were probably either friends or neighbors. In addition, much of the discussion about the pets could, at first glance, also apply to humans. Willie, for example, is described as having to be on a slenderizing program. In one letter, in a postscript, Lillian wrote to Foote, “Amy is very pregnant!” and it only became obvious that Amy was not a human friend or neighbor when Amy had a “litter.” While Foote’s son Walter was away at college, Foote wrote to him in a letter dated September 20, 1974: “We pay Willie a lot of attention – He seems happy and looks wonderful (weight is down.) He insists on sleeping at nights, though, in your room.” In the Foote family correspondence, their pet dogs and cats are mentioned frequently, as is Horton and Lillian Foote’s daughter Daisy’s horse “Dude” and Daisy’s many awards and accomplishments as a competitive rider.

1.4.6 The Correspondence and the Family Members' Reading

In addition to discussing topics such as meals, traveling, and family pets, the letters in the Horton Foote Collection often mention a variety of reading material, including newspapers, magazines, and books of poetry, drama, and fiction. Correspondents often mention what they are reading and plan to read, as well as plays and movies they have seen. Recommendations for reading are included in letters, and newspaper clippings, playbills and programs are often enclosed in the envelopes. Some of the material that can still be found in the envelopes, including contemporary advertisements, announcements, and reviews of the plays and films that Foote wrote and in which he acted, are especially interesting to read. The earliest enclosure of this sort that I found was in an envelope postmarked March 30, 1935, written while Foote was still a teenager. Inside the envelope is a letter from Foote to his parents, which opens with the following sentences: "Taking off time during rehearsal to write a few lines. I was afraid the moment was coming, but not so soon. I've got to wear a full dress suit in *Lady Windemere's Fan*." Along with the letter by Foote is a program from the Pasadena Community Playhouse that lists Horton Foote as playing the part of Lord Augustus Lorton in Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windemere's Fan*.

Before they were married, Horton and Lillian Foote often wrote about what they were reading. Horton wrote about his admiration for Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, among other authors. In a letter postmarked October 22, 1944, Horton wrote to Lillian, "Am rereading "Moby Dick" and

getting a real thrill out of it – plan to tackle Emerson next.” In Lillian’s reply, postmarked the following day, she writes, “Still can’t understand how you can work so many hours and then find time to squeeze in Moby-Dick.” She goes on to recommend to Horton that when he reads Emerson, “be sure to read his essay The Oversoul.” Lillian graduated in 1945 from Radcliffe College with a major in English. Her senior year, she studied at Harvard with F. O. Matthiessen, who was her advisor while she wrote her senior honor’s thesis on the work of Henry James. During the years that followed, even while raising a large family (they had four children), Lillian continued to be an avid and discriminating reader, as is indicated in her letters to Foote.

1.4.7 The Subject of Work

Much of the Foote family correspondence deals with questions about decisions regarding work and financial investments. As young men, Foote’s father worked in sales and his brother John worked for a large company, after which both men owned their own businesses. Much of the correspondence by Foote’s father to his son in the mid-twentieth century is written on the printed stationery of his father’s store, with the words “Established in 1913” and “Wharton, Texas,” below “Al H. Foote,” “Men’s Furnishings” in the letterhead in the top margin of the page. In addition to business in sales, farming of cotton and other crops, along with weather conditions in Texas affecting agriculture is discussed in the Foote family correspondence.

Horton Foote and his daughter Hallie wrote many letters in which they discuss the art of acting. Especially interesting are sets of letters by Hallie to her parents in which she relates her experiences as a young actress developing her talents in roles in works by such playwrights as Foote and Chekhov. In a letter dated March 26, 1975, Foote wrote to his son Horton about observing Hallie's acting classes while she was a young student in California: "I visited all of her classes, and saw her do a scene from "A Young Lady of Property," really 3 scenes from it and she was wonderful in it – She did the scene with Kathy Cronkite, Walter Cronkite's daughter – she is a very nice person besides being a very good actress."⁵ In much of his correspondence, particularly in letters to his wife Lillian, Foote discusses his writing and his artistic choices, including which types of projects and collaborations he finds most fulfilling.

1.4.8 The Family Letters and Discussions of Politics and War

Politics, including local, statewide, and national elections, and international events are frequently discussed in the Foote family letters, as is war. Thus, the letters of Foote's family would be of importance to scholars interested in learning about the daily lives of members of a multigenerational American family and their reactions to world events throughout most of the twentieth century. A letter written in 1944 by Foote's mother begins, "Our stores were closed for 3 hours today 11-2 for a War Bond Drive." Foote's two brothers, John and Tom, served in the military during World War II, and in the early 1970's, Foote's son Albert Horton Foote, III, also served in the military. The strength,

faith, and anguish of the Foote family are palpable in their letters regarding the loss of Foote's brother Tom, who died while serving overseas in 1944.

In summary, this chapter has examined many of the varied topics discussed in the Foote family correspondence, topics which can also be found in Foote's work. I have also discussed the significance of and explained the archival procedures and editorial methods employed in this study, provided a physical description of the archived correspondence, and presented an overview of the contents of the letters.

The chapters that follow include transcriptions of correspondence selected from the Horton Foote papers with introductory essays and annotations, organized into eight sections, each of which covers a distinct period of time during Horton Foote's parents' lives and Foote's own life and career: his parents' courtship, Horton Foote as a young actor and playwright, Foote's engagement to Lillian, their early marriage, Foote as a young artist with a growing family, and Horton Foote as an artist, son, husband, and father. The eighth chapter consists of letters Foote wrote to actors and writers in response to their letters to him. The final chapter presents a conclusion to my study of Foote's personal correspondence, with suggestions for future research in this area.

The following chapters are of different lengths, depending upon criteria such as the number of letters written by the correspondents and how many of these letters were saved during different periods of time. For instance, when Foote traveled, Lillian corresponded with him daily. In addition, few personal letters

have been repositied in the archive that were written after Foote's parents passed away and during the years he worked at home on projects such as the *Orphans' Home Cycle*. The chapter that follows this introduction, while one of the briefer sections of this dissertation, nevertheless is of great importance, as it includes letters by Foote's mother to his father during the years of their courtship from 1912 to 1914, correspondence that would be of special interest to scholars of Foote's autobiographical drama.

CHAPTER 2

THE COURTSHIP OF FOOTE'S PARENTS, 1912-1914

Horton Foote writes in his memoir *Farewell*: “As I grew older I became more and more intrigued with the story of my mother, defying her parents, clandestinely meeting my father and finally eloping with him” (64). These events, among others, provided inspiration from which Foote could draw when he wrote his nine-play dramatic cycle *Orphans' Home*, based on the lives of his parents.

It appears that before writing the plays in the *Orphans' Home Cycle*, and particularly the plays depicting his parents' courtship and elopement, Foote studied the letters written by his mother to his father before they married. Twenty-one letters with envelopes bearing postmarks dated 1912 to 1914, all of them written by Foote's mother to his father, have been preserved and reposited in the Horton Foote Collection at the DeGolyer Library.

Internal clues in the text of Foote's mother's letters indicate that during their courtship she frequently received correspondence from Foote's father. She wrote, for example, on May 16, 1913, “Your letter came this morning, and my! but I'm prompt – now that must show how much I appreciate it – doesn't it?” In 1914, while visiting Galveston, Foote's mother indicates in one of her letters that she has been receiving daily correspondence from Foote's father. She writes, “Your letter just read, you don't know how good it is to hear from you each day –

I always look for one and if they ever fail, I'll be disappointed, so don't let it happen – ” and “Be good and think of me lots. Write me every night.” Unfortunately, I was not able to find the letters written during 1912 to 1914 by Foote's father in the archive; therefore, all of the correspondence written during the time of Foote's parents' courtship that was available for study was written by Foote's mother, Hallie Brooks, to his father, Albert Horton Foote. Reading the side of their correspondence by Foote's mother during this period, however, presents a fascinating picture of her life as a young woman in the early twentieth century.

Much of the dialogue in *Courtship*, the fifth play of Foote's *Orphans' Home Cycle*, corresponds so closely with the language of the letters in the archive that the play appears to be, in large part, inspired by the correspondence. For example, trips to Virginia and to Galveston, Texas, that are discussed in the plays of the *Orphans' Home Cycle*, were actually taken by Foote's mother, as evidenced by the postmarks on eleven of the letters in the archive.

Two letters written by Hallie Brooks in May 1913 have postmarks indicating that they were sent from Hollins, Virginia, with the return address of Hollins College. Both of these letters mention Hallie's sister Laura. In addition, nine letters by Hallie Brooks to Albert Horton Foote are in the archive with envelopes postmarked Galveston, Texas, and dated August 7, 1914, to August 22, 1914. In the play, *Courtship*, Mr. Vaughn, a character modeled after Tom Brooks, Foote's maternal grandfather, mentions to Elizabeth (a character based on Foote's

mother) that he would like her to take trips to Virginia and to Galveston. In *Courtship*, Mr. Vaughn says to Elizabeth, “So for heaven’s sakes take your time about marrying, look around, visit Galveston. I want to send you to Virginia for a nice trip while Laura’s in school there” (24). In the next play of the *Orphans’ Home Cycle*, *Valentine’s Day*, Elizabeth mentions her trips to Virginia and Galveston as she reminisces about her elopement with Horace:

Papa by then was so determined I wasn’t to marry and was so unpleasant and in such a bad temper anytime Horace came near the house that I finally asked Horace not to come any more. They sent me away to Virginia to visit my sister, Laura, in school there. And they sent me to Galveston in the summer to visit my aunts. Mama and Papa kept hoping that if they could get me away long enough I would meet someone else and forget Horace. (6)

Thus, the locations in which the 1913 and 1914 letters were written and much of the subject matter in the letters correspond with many of the details in the plot and dialogue of the plays Foote wrote about his parents’ lives.

In *Courtship*, Horace, a character modeled upon Foote’s father, describes his sales route to Elizabeth: “I start out in East Texas. I work my way over to Arkansas” (15). The addresses and postmarks on the envelopes of Foote’s mother’s letters written from June to October 1912 indicate that Foote’s father was in various cities in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi during those months. Hallie Brooks seemed to have a schedule of her beau’s travels, as she addressed each envelope to him in care of different hotels in different cities as the months progressed. In the play *Courtship*, Elizabeth asks Horace, “How will I

know where to write you on the road?” Horace answers, “My company has given me a list of hotels I’ll be staying at. I’ll bring it tomorrow” (18). Later in the same scene of the play, Horace says, “I don’t always want to be a salesman. Someday I hope to be a merchant” (20). Indeed, in the Horton Foote papers the stationery on which Foote’s father wrote most of his letters to his son indicates in the letterhead that after traveling extensively as a salesman, Albert Horton Foote, Sr., became a merchant operating his own business in Wharton. Printed in the top margin of Foote’s father’s business stationery are the words “Al H. Foote, Men’s Furnishings, Established in Wharton, Texas, in 1913.”

While the archived letters mention particular occurrences in the lives of Foote’s parents that can be found in the plot and dialogue of the *Orphans’ Home* dramatic cycle, there are events in the play that, while based on biographical facts, incorporate fictional elements (such as the baby Jenny who dies in the play *1918*). Furthermore, while a great many of the events in the *Orphans’ Home Cycle* correspond with actual events in Foote’s parents’ lives, a strict ordering of events is not always adhered to in Foote’s dramatic cycle. The play *Courtship*, for example, set in 1915, does not correspond exactly with the time of Foote’s parents’ actual courtship from 1912 to 1914. The next play of the *Orphans’ Home Cycle*, *Valentine’s Day*, takes place on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day of 1917; the name of the play, however, reflects back on the marriage of the main characters, which took place on Valentine’s Day of 1916. Foote’s parents, Hallie Brooks and Albert Horton Foote, however, were married a year earlier, on

Valentine's Day of 1915. While Foote's drama does not document his parents' lives exactly, he draws heavily on biographical details as sources of inspiration for his art.

The nine letters from Hallie Brooks written in 1912 that have been preserved and placed in the Horton Foote papers date from June 30, 1912, to October 15, 1912. Two letters written by Foote's mother in May 1913 have also been placed in the archive, and the ten repositied letters written by Hallie Brooks during 1914 date from May 11, 1914, to August 22, 1914. Of the twenty-one archived letters dated 1912 to 1914, transcriptions of five have been selected for inclusion in this dissertation. The letters in this chapter were chosen, in part, to demonstrate the couple's increasing intimacy, as revealed in the language of Foote's mother's letters. Throughout their marriage, Foote's parents were devoted to each other, as is evident in their later correspondence. In 1933, Foote's mother wrote to his father, "Do you know you have never failed me one time, yet – in any way?" Their marriage lasted for almost sixty years until Foote's father passed away in 1974. His mother died the following year (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii). The letters selected for inclusion in this chapter also demonstrate the "dailiness" of Foote's mother's letters, as they are replete with the quotidian details of her life. Another criterion for selection of particular letters is to reveal how the correspondence selected relates to Foote's work.

September 26, 1912. Hallie Brooks to A. H. Foote.¹

Wharton –

Sept. the twenty-sixth –

My dear Horton –

This is really a sure enough fall day – early this morning, I nearly froze – It must be cold where you are; saw where it was snowing in Sherman and North Texas, yesterday. Seems like it is awfully early for that, doesn't it? Don't like to think of another winter like we had, last year.

Wharton has been besieged with “shows” this week. A tent “one” was here the first three days, and two Wednesday night. I went the first (Monday) night, and I'll vow it was beyond the limit – anyhow, that was enough for me –

Mr. Rust came back yesterday – and we had our first letter from Laura² at noon – She likes everything very much. So you still think you'll go to Virginia on this trip?

You will be gone longer than usual this time, won't you? I'm sure all of your friends will be glad to see you, again –

Again, there is nothing – positively nothing – to write about and I'm honestly ashamed of my letters –

The grand “fair” opens Wednesday – it will be just that much to create excitement – They are going to have a parade one day – a grand prize for the prettiest car – They are working on the race-track now – we “rode around” Tuesday afternoon, it needed lots more work on it, then –

I really like to get long letters, so don't be afraid of tiring me – I had such a big one from Gladys the other day, that postage was due, but believe me, I didn't mind one bit –

Hope you keep on having a good time –

As ever –

Hallie.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 25 in the Horton Foote Collection in the DeGolyer Library. The envelope was addressed originally in pencil to Mr. A. H. Foote, Meridian, Miss., address crossed out in pen and changed to New Orleans, La.; the letter is handwritten in pencil on all surfaces of two pages folded, thick ivory personalized stationery with large printed “gothic” type letter “B” in the left-hand corner of the front of the folded paper.

²“Laura” is Hallie Brooks's sister (Foote's aunt) Laura Brooks, who later married Oliver Ray.

October 5, 1912. Hallie Brooks to A. H. Foote.¹

Wharton – October the fifth –

My dear Horton –

Will you please excuse this paper, again? I can't find any more, and don't want to wait until this afternoon to write –

You don't know what you are missing, by not being here for the "Grand Fair"— Sure enough, we have had lots of fun going, and it is considered a great success, in every way (financial, included, I believe.) Every day they begin about three with horse races, and I think they are the most terribly exciting things in the world – They have all been good, too – Wednesday and yesterday they played football, after the races – of course, Wharton won both games, El Campo, first and Bay City, yesterday – I know I could be crazy about foot-ball, if I understood it, but it too deep for me! Then they have all kinds of other attractions and amusements, from balloon – ascensions, down to "hamburgers"!! Everything is wound up today.

I know you were glad to see Mr. Barsodin² – Is he still there? Tell him I'm waiting for another card – I imagine I would be crazy about New Orleans – I wanted to go to Mardi Gras so bad, last February — but couldn't.

You know, it doesn't seem possible that this is "in October" – does it? Xmas will be here, before we know it – Do you still think you'll be gone until December?³ That is a long time, after all, isn't it?

Uncle Pete has ordered a car, and Nancy is tickled to death, naturally. It won't be here for about a month as they are waiting for the new model.

Laura and Mr. Jones are here for the fair – They seem to be as happy as possible – make such a nice couple – They are staying at home, so I suppose everybody is happy, don't you?

I'm glad you are considerate about my full letters – I appreciate it – I'm
“cook” today, so must stop –

As ever – Hallie –

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 25. The envelope was addressed to Mr. A. H. Foote, New Orleans, La., but the address was crossed out and changed to Wharton, Texas; the letter is handwritten in blue ink on front of eight pages small lined paper, turned sideways.

²The name “Mr. Barsodin” is similar to the name of “Mr. Barsoty,” a character in Foote's plays. In *Courtship*, Horace asks Elizabeth, “Do you remember Barsoty?” (19). Mr. Barsoty is a character who appears onstage as a beau of Laura Lee in the late play *Night Seasons*, which was first produced by the Signature Theatre Company in New York and directed by Horton Foote in November 1994.

³In the play *Courtship*, the characters Horace and Elizabeth, modeled on Foote's parents, discuss a similar period of separation. Horace tells Elizabeth that he will travel for three months on business and will “be home at Christmas” (17). This letter by Hallie Brooks to Albert Horton Foote, written in October with the question, “Do you still think you'll be gone until December?” indicates that, as in the play based on his parents' courtship, in 1912 Foote's father was planning to be away from Wharton on business during the autumn months and to return to Wharton and to Hallie Brooks at Christmastime.

May 16, 1913. Hallie Brooks to A. H. Foote.¹

May the sixteenth –

My dear Horton –

Your letter came this morning, and my! but I'm prompt – now that must show how much I appreciate it – doesn't it? I did, sure enough and it was so "sweet" of you to do it – I know you don't appreciate being called that but you know what I might mean –

Yes, I have had a glorious trip, but was more than delighted to get here as three days and nights of traveling nearly kill a person, especially when it is so continuous – We got into St. Louis Wednesday morning early and I made the rest of the trip alone – leaving about nine on the day run from there to Cincinnati – and that was the stretch that almost dealt the death blow – Our train was over two hours late that night, didn't arrive until eight – sure enough night – Didn't have more than an hour's wait, and from there to Roanoke, was the ideal spot in the whole trip – the scenery is wonderful to me and I am already in love with Virginia and her people –

Hollins is a nice place too, right down among the mountains – very secluded, I can tell you, but I already have three trips planned to Roanoke – so you see, it wont hurry myself. However, am sure I'll enjoy the rest (?!) (huge joke, isn't it?)

Well, I wont tire you out completely, trying to read this, so, so long and surely am going to “grow stout” while I’m here – Laura² has gained 20 lbs. and she is just so much better-looking than I am! But, are you going to forsake me?

Sincerely –

Hallie –

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 26. The envelope is addressed to Mr. A. H. Foote in Wharton, Texas; return address Hollins College, Hollins, Virginia; postmarked Hollins, VA; the letter is handwritten in black ink on five pages small stationery with Hollins College, Hollins, Virginia printed in top margin.

²Laura Brooks is the sister of Foote’s mother. In the play *Courtship*, Mr. Vaughn, a character based on Foote’s maternal grandfather, mentions that he is sending his daughter Laura to college in Virginia, the location designated by the postmark on the envelope of this letter. Also in *Courtship*, Foote portrays a close relationship between Laura Vaughn and her sister Elizabeth, a character modeled on Foote’s mother. In her letters, Foote’s mother appears to have great affection for her sister Laura.

August 8, 1914. Hallie Brooks to A. H. Foote.¹

Galveston –

August the seventh –

My dearest Horton –

Your letter came this morning, and it was mighty good to hear from you – and I was glad you wrote when you said you would later if I didn't get mine off 'till this A.M.

Laura had a date with Dorian last night, and I gave her yours and Mama's letters to mail and they forgot them – It rained all aft. So was impossible to do better. I'm sorry tho' and I know you'll forgive me –

Supper is about ready now, so this will only be a note but you'll know I want to "talk to you" while I think of you all the time.

We're going uptown tonight and over to the fortunetellers² in the morning. I'll let you know what she tells me.

Supper is ready, so good-bye. Write often and be good –

Your Hal –

Can't you come down for a few days? Please –

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 27. The envelope is addressed to Mr. A. H. Foote, Wharton, Texas; postmarked Galveston, Texas; the letter is handwritten in pencil on the front side of four pages small ivory stationery.

²In a letter dated August 17, 1914, Hallie Brooks writes, “finally, went to the fortune-teller’s. She was absolutely a fake tho’ –”

Since before the Civil War, going to fortunetellers has been part of the Foote family oral history. For example, the story of a fortuneteller and the marriage of Harriet Gautier, Foote’s great-grandmother, after whom his mother Harriet (Hallie) Gautier Brooks was named, is a part of the oral history of the Foote family that has been passed down through the generations. In his memoir, *Farewell*, Foote writes,

Harriet Gautier, as a young girl, had gone to a fortune-teller and was told that she would be asked to marry a man who had come to Texas by boat, and that he would want to build a brick house for them, but she must refuse and insist on a frame house, else she would have an unhappy and tragic life. John had come to Texas by boat from Virginia, and when he proposed to Harriet he told her after they married he would build them a brick house, but remembering the warning of the fortune-teller, Harriet refused to marry him unless he built a frame house. He agreed and they were married in 1852. (62)

In addition to its appearance in his memoir, talk of going to fortunetellers also occurs in Foote’s work in theater and film, such as in the play *Cousins* and in the film *Alone*.

August 12, 1914. Hallie Brooks to A. H. Foote.¹

Galveston

Tuesday Morning

My dearest Horton –

We have been amusing ourselves with a victrola for the last 24 hours – Our Dr. Cousin bought one yesterday, and a bunch of wonderful records, and we have certainly enjoyed it.²

Your letter just read, you don't know how good it is to hear from you each day – I always look for one and if they ever fail, I'll be disappointed, so don't let it happen – I surely am missing you, but you know, you told me to stay as long as I had a good time, but you had better change your tune, for I don't believe this will cease soon –

Sunday, we got 3 boxes of candy, a (3 lb. among it, and you know, “we all fall” for that)

I want to stay in Houston a few days before I come home – Mama wrote me that they were missing me – I want to stay away until all of you will be good and glad to see me again and maybe you'll appreciate me more (? Joke!)

I never say what I want to in (all) my letters to you, but read between the lines and know how much I think of you and want to see you and be good for you.

your Hal.

P.S. Sounded good to hear you again. Was just thinking about you when you rang – Don't write that you're not coming down, 'cause you are now and I'm the boss.

It will be better for me not to come Sat. but gee! it would be good to – much love – I can't find an envelope on the place – will have to wait to get some up town this aft.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 27. The envelope is addressed to Mr. A. H. Foote in Wharton, Texas and postmarked Galveston, Texas; the letter is handwritten in pencil on front side of five pages small ivory stationery.

²Hallie Brooks wrote frequently about her delight in music—a lifelong enjoyment that she shared with Foote's father and the extended family. Her statements suggest that Foote's father sent sheet music along with his letters to her. She frequently responds, "Thank you for the songs." In a letter dated July 18, 1912, Foote's mother wrote,

All three of the songs you sent me are "cute" – Thank you for your thoughtfulness – I had rather try over new music than do most anything I know of. I received another "bunch" the same day I did yours from the "city" – so most of the day was "musically spent."

In another letter (dated June 30, 1912), Foote's mother wrote, "I did enjoy your letters, and am crazy about the songs. Wish I had someone to sing them." In his memoir *Farewell*, Foote writes about his father's singing while his mother accompanied him on the piano:

I remember my father collected sheet music for popular songs since he was a young man and he brought them all with him when he married my mother. Often in the evenings, she would play, and

he would sing, “Good Night, Mr. Elephant,” “My Sweetheart’s the Man in the Moon,” “After the Ball” and “Hello, Central, Give Me Heaven.” (112)

Foote also writes, “In the living room were a Victrola and a baby grand piano. I remember my aunt Laura singing to the family here, my mother accompanying her on the piano” (*Farewell* 24). The scene of Foote’s mother playing the piano while his aunt sings is dramatized in the play *Courtship*. Foote writes in *Farewell* that his mother and aunt played and sang pieces such as “Sweet Alice Ben Bolt” (24), a song featured prominently in *The Widow Claire* in the *Orphans’ Home Cycle* (Clinkscale 24-25) and in the play *Night Seasons*.

CHAPTER 3

FOOTE AS A YOUNG ACTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT, 1935-1944

Foote left home at the age of sixteen in September 1934 (*Beginnings* 18), and within a few years he traveled from Texas to California to New York. After studying acting at the Pasadena Playhouse in California, and then with Andrius Jilinsky, Vera Soloviova, Tamara Daykarhanova, and Maria Ouspenskaya in New York (Foote, *Beginnings* 170; Castleberry, *Genesis* xi), Foote joined the American Actors Company, as an actor and then as a young playwright. Also, during that time he collaborated with dancers Martha Graham and Valerie Bettis in creating productions combining dance and drama.

Many of Foote's creative projects are mentioned in the correspondence; however, these projects are often referred to only as "the new play," so in my annotations I sometimes rely on internal clues, dates on the postmarks, and Foote's interviews and autobiographical writings to determine the work to which the correspondents refer. Determining which of Foote's projects are referred to in the letters can further be complicated by the fact that he often worked on several acting and writing activities concurrently. In the letters he wrote to his parents and brother Tom from 1935 to 1944 that have been placed in the DeGolyer archive, Foote wrote about many of his creative projects, but most often about the following: *Texas Town* (first produced in 1941 by the American Actors

Company), *Only the Heart* (initially performed at the Provincetown Playhouse and then produced on Broadway), and *Daisy Lee* (the ballet drama, a collaborative project by Foote and Valerie Bettis, choreographed by Bettis, who first performed in the production in 1944).

The news and personal stories communicated in the correspondence of the period 1935 to 1944 repositied in the Foote Collection tell of Foote's rapidly developing career and also his family's responses to the turbulent events leading up to and during the Second World War. Both of Foote's brothers served in the military during the war—Tom in the Army and John in the Marines. Two letters written by Tom in January 1944 have been placed in Box 1, folder 24, in the archive. Also repositied in the archive are many letters from John, written to his brother Horton and to his parents on the stationery of the U.S. Marines, with much of the correspondence from John's training base in Louisiana and then from platoon commander school in Quantico, Virginia.

Foote writes in his memoir *Beginnings* that soon after his brother Tom was drafted, he and his friend Joe Anthony also received draft notices. Before receiving his notice, Foote gave away an unfinished manuscript to a friend for safekeeping. When he went with his friend Joe Anthony to the induction facility for his physical, Foote was not accepted into the armed services because he had an undiagnosed, asymptomatic hernia. Foote writes that he was dismayed, since for a month, he had prepared himself emotionally and "was looking forward to" serving (234-235). Joe Anthony was accepted into the Army. Foote remained

close friends with Joe, who later directed the film *Tomorrow*. Thirteen letters written by Joe Anthony to Foote from 1966 to 1982 are located in Box 2, folder 1.

On January 9, 1944, Tom Brooks Foote wrote to his brother Horton that he was based in Italy and had participated in two of fifty required missions flying in a B-17 Bomber. On February 22, 1944, Tom's plane was attacked and shot down; it was not until after the war was over that the family learned of his fate.

Foote writes in his memoir *Beginnings*:

Several months after the war in Europe was over I had a call from a man who said he had been the pilot of the plane my brother was on as radio operator. He said that their plane was shot down over Germany. He was unharmed, but as he left the plane he saw my brother slumped over his instruments and he could see he was bleeding. He knew he had been wounded but couldn't say he was dead. He felt there was a slight chance my brother had been taken prisoner by the Germans, as he had been. I called my parents and told them all of this. My father wrote me that he feared my brother was dead, but my mother still hoped he was a prisoner somewhere. A month after the war in Japan was over that hope was ended. My brother's body had been found buried in Germany. (254)

The correspondence written by the Foote family during 1944 and 1945 that has been placed in the DeGolyer archive demonstrates the abundant faith, strength, and emotional support that family members shared and were able to express in their letters.

I believe that there are perhaps about one hundred letters in the boxes of personal correspondence in the Foote Collection that were written during the late

1930s to the early 1940s; most of this correspondence is located in Boxes 1, 3, and 4. During the course of my research in the archive, I found 23 letters with postmarked envelopes with dates in this time period. About two-thirds of the letters in Box 4, however, were originally placed in folders in loose, ungrouped sheets without envelopes. By carefully examining internal and external evidence, I was able to assist the DeGolyer Library by grouping together the separate pages of 296 letters, most of which are still undated. Thus far, by examining external evidence (such as the type of ink and appearance of the paper) and internal clues (by reading the letters to find details that would indicate the time period in which the letters had been written), I have been able to assign approximate dates to 32 of the undated letters in Box 4. In the future, much more work remains to be performed regarding the assignment of approximate dates to these letters.

Of the letters that have been repositied in the DeGolyer archive that I am reasonably certain were written from 1935 to mid-1944, thirteen have been selected for inclusion in this dissertation. These letters have been chosen because they reveal the nature of Foote's early professional activities. They also demonstrate the strength of the Foote family members in the face of adversity and their supportiveness toward one another.

November 19, 1935. Foote to parents.¹

Dearest Folks:

I have just finished a matinee at the Theater, and will write before the evening performance.

It started getting cold in earnest. The last two days have been both cloudy and cold. We've had very mild weather up 'till now so can't complain.

I got some more work from the studio on Thursday. They liked my work so much in the picture they wanted a close up of me on my exit. I got to see the picture in the projection room and it's quite good and it was certainly a funny sensation to see myself on the screen, and to hear myself speak. Modestly, I must admit I was pleased with the result. The one close up took about forty-five minutes. I had to remember everything I had done on my exit and duplicate it. For that forty-five minutes I got ten dollars. Everyone says at the studio I should get something worthwhile from it. You never know, however. My name is to be on the cast of characters list, so they'll at least know who I am.²

I have been put in one of the skits at the Provincetown. I do an act in pantomime. The audience seems to think it funny. No extra raise in pay however. They barely are making a go of it and I'm afraid the show may close at any time. However it may pick up. I certainly hope so.

I went to an exhibition of Van Gogh's at the museum last week. They had four rooms filled with all of his canvases. It will take several trips before I really

get to see all of them. I enjoyed it very much. The collection is valued at over a million dollars. Yet in his lifetime he only sold an amount of twenty-five dollars.

I think John may still get to go to Philadelphia with “Fly Away Home.” I hope so. It would be a good break for him.

I know you think my letters are getting awfully short, but I’m tied down so at the Theatre – There’s not much happening.

I know you must have had a lovely time in Houston. I wish I could have been there. Rosa³ always has things so nice.

Did Dad get my papers?

All my love –

Horton –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 15. It is handwritten in ink on the front and back of two pages eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper. In the upper right-hand corner of the first page, in handwriting different from Foote’s, is written “11/19/35.”

²An undated letter in the folder of correspondence written by Foote in 1935 to his parents, which was probably written shortly after the letter above, states “Mother, I can’t tell you anything about the pictures release”; Foote only knows that she could write a person named Leo Lipp at Twentieth-Century Fox Studios for details. The same letter has a postscript about the show in

Provincetown: “The name of the show is ‘Provincetown Follies’ – and starring Beatrice Kay and Barry Oliver.”

³Rosa was the sister of Foote’s mother (*Farewell* 63).

c. June 1938 (c. Father’s Day). Foote to father Albert H. Foote.¹

Dear Daddy:

I’ve just finished pretty active work, for we’re now in rehearsal of both the first and second plays.² We open on the 23rd and run through Mon.

“Cradle Will Rock” (2nd show) is done entirely to music. A pianist is playing all the time and there is no scenery. I have to sing a couple of solos – Thank God they’re supposed to be funny. It’s a pro-labor musical, and ran most of last winter in New York.

I’m getting a rest the third week – or rather a semi-rest because we’ll be working on the fourth show. I’m pretty glad because they started us in the second day I was here and we’ve been rehearsing pretty steady every since.

Kingston is the nearest city. It’s about 30,000 people. The other night a girl in the company whose family lives in Kingston took us over (or rather about five of us) and we all had baths. You know we have no bathtubs up here. So we have to wait ’till it rains, or go into a nearby creek. We have to heat all of our water on an oil stove – but you don’t mind the inconveniences. At least I don’t, not nearly so much as I thought I would. We have to walk almost a mile every

morning to get breakfast, and do we eat when we get there. They keep pitchers of milk on the tables and we pour out all we want.

Our director is very nice, and I hear he likes me – which pleases me very much because there's nothing so inharmonious as working against a director.

To the best Dad in The World I want to wish – Happy Father's Day, and I'll be thinking of you – and wish I could spend the day at home. However I know you couldn't be better taken care of than you will be by those there –

My Dearest love to you –

Son

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 16. The envelope addressed to Mr. Al. H. Foote, Wharton, Tex., no return address; postmark unclear; postmarked NY; the letter is handwritten on front and back of two pages heavyweight unlined paper.

I assigned the date of 1938 to this letter because the details related in the letter correspond with Foote's account in *Beginnings* of his summer in Woodstock, New York (187-88). For example, Foote appeared in *The Cradle Will Rock* in the summer of 1938. In addition, the letter states, "Kingston is the nearest city." Woodstock is located eleven miles from Kingston, New York.

²When the American Actors Company disbanded during the summer of 1938, Foote acted in two plays in the Maverick Theater in Woodstock, New York (*Beginnings* 187-88). The first play of these was *Winterset*, by Maxwell

Anderson, in which Foote played the role of Mio. Foote writes about his part in

Winterset:

I had seen *Winterset* in 1936 when it played at the Martin Beck Theater with Burgess Meredith and Margo. The play, in verse, takes place in a time after the Sacco and Vanzetti trials and examines the effect the execution of Vanzetti has on his son. Mr. Meredith brought a kind of cocky bravado to the part of Mio, and made terrifying rage over the injustice done to his father. He was moving and heartbreaking in his grief over his father's death. Every young male actor I knew in New York coveted the part and wanted somehow to get a chance to play it. Not only was the part emotionally and physically demanding, but there were a great number of lines to learn, all in verse. Fortunately, in Woodstock we had a talented company that worked well together and I enjoyed the whole experience very much (*Beginnings* 188)

The second play performed at the Maverick Theater in the summer of 1938 was *The Cradle will Rock* by Marc Blitzstein, in which Foote played the role of Mister Mister (*Beginnings* 188). *The Cradle Will Rock* by Marc Blitzstein is “a play set to music,” which was first produced in 1937.

c. 1941. Foote to parents.¹

Dearest Folks:

I've just had a real night's sleep. It's the first I've had in quite a time. I really enjoyed it. I always enjoy sleeping and eating. I think I'd get ten hours everyday if I could.

After we closed "Texas Town" (incidentally we could have run and run. Closing nite we turned people away) I started right in on the rewriting. I have been in conference nearly every day with my lawyer. We have almost closed the deal several times with Shuberts. They have seen part of the changes and seem to like them very much. My lawyer also is quite enthusiastic. I have to admit I get a little nervous sometimes. Would so much like to get it settled and collect a little cash, but he is about the best in town and wants me to string along. He is asking for a lot, not so much in money but giving me the last say as to casting, changes, etc. It's opened up a whole new strange world to me. I'm dealing with very clever businessmen so I really have to keep my wits. You would be surprised I think because I am sure I never knew I had any business sense but am able to hold out for my own. To make it all more interesting Twentieth Century Fox has started bidding on it. We are asking ten thousand from them but of course if they buy it they will take it right to pictures. The way things work if you first get a Broadway production the picture rights always bring more. Usually as high as thirty thousand. So I'm taking a chance but believe it will all work out all right. We sent the last version of our contract to the Shuberts yesterday and we should hear something again today. Of course they will probably ask for some changes but that's the way you finally get together. It's the fourth contract we've drawn up. There hasn't been much other activity. The Shuberts had it put in the paper that they were buying the play. I suppose to scare others off. But my lawyer will

immediately get in touch with the other producers as soon as they make up their minds and if their decision is no.

I must tell you about closing night. As I said we had a packed house. We did a good show, but not our best. However the audience just seemed to love it. The Company got about seven curtain calls. After the lights were up they wouldn't go home and kept clapping and clapping. The kids pushed me out on stage all by myself and they left me there and I got three bows. It was all pretty exciting. It's very nice to have people like what you do.

I took an afternoon off on Friday, or rather three hours and met Tinker. I hadn't seen him in about two weeks. He's been working very hard. I never worry about his getting lonesome. He's found some wonderful friends and people all seem to have a lot of respect and love for him. We had lunch together and then went to his house and read the Spec. and the Journal. We got a big kick out of both. He was quite thrilled with Nan's write up. Babs had sent her letter to me to Tink's address. I read that at Aunt Loula's. I also got one from Aunt Lily and Aunt Lyda. People both here and at home have been so wonderful. I am going to catch up on my correspondence very soon. I got about fifty telegrams too which I haven't thanked people for yet. Also I collected my socks which I think are beautiful and very nice.

I've always forgotten to mention how nice the set looked.² It looks neither like Outlar's or Rugeley's but did look like a drugstore and very prominent on one wall was the Dance sign of Johnnies. People got a big kick out of that.

I believe the Company has decided to go to a summer theatre for the summer. They are supposed to sign the contract tomorrow. I will be with them all summer. At least they have asked me. It will be my nicest summer if things work out well. I have an understanding whereby I will only play in about four shows. The rest of the time I can give to writing. Under my agreement with Shuberts they will pay me a hundred a month until the first of Nov. when the play is produced, so if everything works out I should have quite an easy time of it. I hope it is all settled fast. I have been working on my changes just like the contract is signed, so when it is a lot of that work will be behind me. I hope I can come home for awhile and believe I might be able to. If Mary Hunter gets the job directing the play on Broadway she would like to come down for a visit too for awhile so as to bring real authenticity to it. Wouldn't that be nice?

Ed Roberts came to see the play. He was very enthusiastic about it. Tell Nan he looked quite well. He is always so thoughtful and called me up the following Monday and we had dinner together. We talked about Nan of course and both wished she could have been here.

Perry has gone to Ann Arbor for the stock Company for three weeks. She has very good parts in plays with Ruth Gordon, Madge Evans and Ilka Chase. She was quite happy about it. I saw her the night before she left. They had me out to the house and played a dirty trick on me. I had asked to be awakened by twelve but they felt I needed sleep and kept me sleeping 'till one thirty!

Mary and I are going to the country one day this week. We both feel like we have it coming to us. I am sending one more write up of the play to you (please note he liked my acting).

“American Legend”³ opened last Sunday and gave three performances. It got some very good notices, but wasn’t received as well as “Tex. Town.” I’m sending the Monitor’s review. I had to give up my parts in it as I felt I should spend all my energies on “Tex. Town.” I’m sure I’m leaving out lots. So much has happened and is happening. May I commend you on your letter writing? I’m sure I wouldn’t have written so long or so often if my son had been as bad as I have been. However I think of you all every day.

I forgot to tell you the N.Y. World-Telegram is doing a special article on me. I’m having my interview on Wed. It should be fun. I’ll send it to you.

Love and kisses.

Horton.

Did I ever thank you for your telegram?

Did you get our Mother’s Day message?

Send back – please –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 32. It is undated and has no envelope with it in the archive. The letter is typed on the front of two thin pages of eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch unlined paper. “Send back – please – ”is written in pencil under the typed letter.

I assigned the date of 1941 to this undated letter based on internal evidence. The first performance of Foote's play *Texas Town* by the American Actors Company took place in April 1941 (Foote, *Beginnings* 221; Castleberry, *Genesis* xi). Set in a small town modeled on Wharton, Texas, during the late 1930s, the play includes a cast of twenty-two characters. About a week after the play opened, the Shuberts acquired an option for *Texas Town* to be performed on Broadway. Because he was uncomfortable with the changes to the play insisted upon by the Shuberts, Foote did not continue working with them, even though at that time he needed the income (*Beginnings* 221-22, 226, 231).

²In *Beginnings*, Foote describes the set of *Texas Town* as follows:

Texas Town is set in a small-town drugstore in the late 1930s. These drugstores were often the center of the town's social life. They opened early in the morning, seven or seven thirty, and stayed open until eleven at night. Doctors had their offices over the drugstores. In between patients, the doctor would come downstairs to visit with the idlers that invariably sat in the chairs in front, or inside on the counter stools. The drugstore in my play was modeled on three I knew in Wharton, and the characters were composites of people I had so often observed growing up. (221)

³*American Legend*, originated by Mary Hunter, was a "folk revue" with singing, dancing, and sketches. In creating the revue, Hunter collaborated with Agnes de Mille, who choreographed the dancing (Foote, *Beginnings* 226-27).

November 4, 1943. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton.¹

Thursday a.m.

My darling Boy –

Just a note this a.m. to let you know we've heard from Tom B.² again – The letter was here when I got down and written Tuesday – they had rec'd their orders to be packed and ready to leave there in 2 hrs. Said they were told they'd better take a bath as it might be some days before they'd have another. He had no idea where they would leave from and said of course he couldn't say if he knew but they thought they were joining the others of their outfit and going over by boat, He wrote a sweet letter – said he'd cable as soon as he landed, if possible, and for us to remember we had absolutely nothing to worry about. I read a wonderful article in a late periodical in regard to family, using the scripture when Jesus was told his mother wanted to speak to him and he inquired “who is my mother, etc” – It was suggested that we are entitled and expected to do definite work for members of our family, however – remembering we are all children with One Father – brothers and sisters and work for one is for all. That helped me a lot.

Nora³ is at home today so I came down earlier hoping that Dad could start on the show windows but he is so busy with trade, looks like we'll have to work tonight.

Am getting letters to the others too about T. Brooks so this will be all. I am making inquiries about a box to him in time for Xmas. You inquire in N.Y.

right away so you can send him something and he won't have to be without a Xmas box from home – The deadline for regular pkgs was Nov. 15, you know –

All our love and let us hear –

Devotedly, Mother.

S/Sgt. Tom B. Foote 12145183

Swah. Prov. Group

Write him

A.P.O. 121516

right away –

% Postmaster – New York – N.Y.

¹This letter is located in Box 4, folder 7. It is handwritten on the front and back of one page of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²In this letter, Foote's mother refers to his brother Tom as "Tom B." and later as "T. Brooks."

³Nora was, at times, an employee of Foote's parents in Wharton; in other letters Foote's mother mentions that Nora ironed shirts and helped clean the Foote's home.

February 19, 1944. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton.¹

Saturday aft.

My darling Boy – Will try and get a letter written to you before Dad reminds me again to go to the P.O. He has an important letter for me to mail and doesn't forget it! Have just written to Tom B. Nannie May called this a.m. and

told me she'd gotten a letter from Tom B. written Feb. 1. Our last one was written Jan 26. you know – so feel sure we will probably have one tomorrow. His letter to her was just fine – so cheerful – said he was in the thick of things now and having a “whole of a lot of fun” – Typical of him, isn't it? He said it was very cold but surprising how much green in places and beautiful scenery – We had a letter from Johnny² today – he had had two of his exams and the dreaded ones – so am glad that much is over – One had slipped up sooner than scheduled and that is probably better, too. He will be home next weekend.

I spent yesterday aft. with Aunt Loula³ and I think she was awfully glad to see me, as she was lonesome – Mary had gone to Palacios⁴ for the week-end with Rachel (Gensberg). Uncle Doc had gotten a delicious caramel cake from Belle and asked Aunt L. to make us some coffee so we three had a party in the “lunch room” – I stayed 'till 5 – came by the grocery store for some greens, stopped here and then home to get supper – Thought I made pretty good time as it was ready soon after 7 – Dad planted some Eng. peas when he got home – If we could get enough clear weather, he'd have plenty of time to work every aft.

Rae Walker came by for a short visit after lunch – Bernice is going along with us tomorrow to the Lecture in Bay City – I think I wrote you that we wrote for reservations for dinner at the Bay-Tex – Dad's treat. Reservations are required and altho' we hit it O.K. last time, since we know it now – we didn't want to run any risk – We are looking forward to the Lecture.

I have heard again from Baboo⁵ and she seems to be feeling strong again – She has been doing plenty of going to town, etc. She called me Thursday night to tell me she had spotted a suit she thought I'd like and wanted me to come down Friday – Dad said it was just a trick of hers to get me there but I couldn't wrestle with the bus traffic. Rose M. said she got to the Bus Station at 4 the day she came there for the 5 o'clock Bus and all busses were full up and she didn't get out 'till 11:30 P.M. I did find a spring hat here at Schwartz's yesterday – black straw –

Matthews worked today and did several necessary and extra jobs – cleaned and oiled the vacuum cleaner, cleaned the grease trap (pleasant job!) etc. Nora worked all day yesterday and another aft. so got caught up with her work – – Dad is expecting Isaac here at the store before closing time to finish up his work on the Income taxes – He will be glad to be thru and has taken advantage of this lull to do the work on them –

Jeanette says Bolton has arrived in San Franc. and called the other night (2:30 a.m.) so Nan⁶ made good connection again –

Think I'll eat a piece of pie and maybe some coffee – I haven't eaten in town in over a month, so have gotten entirely out of the habit – I'm getting hungry as I've eaten "light" today – Don't wait too much longer to write – we get hungry for a letter – but know you are busy –

Hugs and kisses and all our love –

Devotedly –

Mother.

¹This letter, located in Box 4, folder 10, is handwritten on the front and back of two pages of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²In her letters, Foote's mother refers to his youngest brother as "Johnny" or "J." In early 1944, John was a U.S. Marine studying at the Southwestern Institute in Lafayette, Louisiana.

³"Aunt Loula" was the family's name for Foote's paternal great-aunt, Louisiana Texas Patience, who was the sister of Foote's grandmother, Corrella. Louisiana Texas Patience ("Loula") married Dr. John Irving, whom she called "Doc." Loula and Doc had one daughter, Mary. Loula's sister Corrella Horton married Foote's grandfather, Albert Harrison Foote, in Wharton in 1889. After Foote's grandfather's death, Corrella married Pete Cleveland (*Farewell* 37, 48-49).

⁴Palacios is a small city in Texas, fifty miles south of Wharton, near the Gulf of Mexico.

⁵"Baboo" was Foote's name for his maternal grandmother, Mary Phelps Speed Brooks, also called "Daisy." Foote writes about his giving the name "Baboo" to his grandmother: "My grandmother I called Baboo. I gave her that name myself, as a child, and presume that my name for her grew out of my trying to say grandmother; in any case that is all I ever called her, and the name was later adopted by the other grandchildren" (*Farewell* 91). Foote's maternal grandmother was the model for the character Mrs. Vaughn in the plays of the *Orphans' Home Cycle*.

⁶Nan and Bolton Outlar, longtime Wharton residents, are mentioned in much of the correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection. Foote's cousin Nan Outlar corresponded frequently with Foote, and many of her letters are among the papers repositied in the archive. Nan, active in community affairs in Wharton, for decades wrote the social column "Nan About Town" in the *Wharton Journal-Spectator*; her husband, Bolton Outlar, was a physician.

March 6, 1944. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton.¹

Tuesday one o'clock.

My darling Boy –

Have just finished my lunch – a slice of warm Apple Pie and 2 glasses of milk. The pie was left from supper – I preheated the oven and ran it in for a few minutes as I like it warm – I cooked a good supper for Johnny last night and he surely enjoyed it – fried chicken, rice, asparagus on toast, beet salad, hot biscuit, apple pie and coffee – He was so fortunate in getting a good ride into Houston with Abe. He has gotten up, had a bath, a good and unhurried breakfast, when Dad phoned to ask if he could be ready in 10 minutes – Of course he made it and expect he got to Houston about 11:30 – He plans to spend tonight in Pt. Arthur and reports between 2 and 3 at school tomorrow – He looks fine and is getting along so well in his work – and likes every thing – That is really the best part of it.

We paid Aunt Loula a very short visit yesterday and got to say hello and goodbye to Uncle John – Yesterday morning, I washed out 2 shirts, underwear,

sox for J. and we were hurrying home to get it ironed – I had asked Nora to come if possible but never know just what she will be able to do – but when we got home she was here and about thru with the ironing – She had picked out some more pecans and had time to vacuum and clean the back room and the bath-room.

Sunday we went to a show – not so much but a diversion – and last night Johnny went with the 3 Sandlin girls – They are great friends of Betty's² and J. is crazy about all of them –

We stayed at the store until almost 11 Saturday night and of course was late by the time supper was cooked and things cleared away – J. enjoyed his sleeping and eating a lot but think he was ready to go back –

I think I wrote that we'd heard from Billy and he's in India – Has been overseas 2 years next month – I have a date with Cousin D. at 1:30 – we will read our Lesson and then are going over to see Mrs. Harmanson – Dad plans to work in the yard 'till late, so I won't have to hurry supper – A stiff norther has blown up in the night and it makes the weather more promising – we would like it dry for quite some while – I'll write again soon – as I have to stop and dress now – so I won't be late –

Let us hear and Dad and I send worlds of love and hugs and k's –

Mother.

¹This letter, located in Box 4, folder 10, is handwritten on the front and back of one page of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²Betty Mcteer was the fiancée of Foote's brother John. Betty and John were married a few months before Horton and Lillian married.

March 15, 1944. Albert H. Foote to son Horton.¹

Mar 15 1944

My darling boy:

This morning I am sorry to say the first link in our little chain of five has been strained badly, but I will not yet say broken, for I have too much faith in God to give up that easy. We received a wire at 8³⁰ A.M. from the War department that Toots was missing in action since Feb 23rd in a raid over Germany. I still hope he is a prisoner.² If not, and he has passed on, of course the link in our little family chain of five has been broken, and we can only face the future with chins up, as we of course know he will meet what ever is beyond this life with clean hands, for I don't believe he ever did anything that hurt any one here –

It has been much harder on mother here this morning than myself. You know how friends in a small town are, and we have lots of them. They have been pouring in home all morning to see her and offer sympathy. Son you would be proud of her if you were here and could see what a real sport she has shown through it all. To her and myself Christian Science has never before been such a help as it is at this trying moment.

I thank my all-knowing father many times for the blessing of you three boys, and your clean upright lives. You have all three been a pride and joy to me always, and I am also thankful I was bold enough to let each one of you take up your life work just as you wanted to –

Mother, and I so much enjoyed your last letter with clippings, and we have our fingers crossed and are praying for your opening success, which I know it will be, for dear boy you deserve it all –

I know you are very busy at this time but am going to ask you to take a little time off and write mother at once, for she seems to get something out of your letters that nothing else can take the place of, and at this hour her heart is very heavy I assure you –

I love you my darling boy with all my heart –

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 14. The envelope is addressed in blue ink to Horton Foote, c/o Hotel Albert in New York; postmarked Wharton, Tex; printed return address Al H. Foote, The Store for Men, Wharton Texas; under the printed return address is written in pencil (in handwriting that I did not recognize) “about Tom Brooks news.” It is handwritten in blue ink on the front side of four pages eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch business stationery of Al H. Foote, Men’s Furnishings, Wharton, Texas, with printed heading on all pages.

²In the book *Behind Barbed Wire* published in 1946, Lt. Morris J. Roy has printed an account of the attack on the B-17 plane in which Tom Foote was flying on February 22, 1944, as related by Lt. Eugene L. Senfield, the plane's co-pilot who survived the attack and was captured and imprisoned in Stalag Luft 1. The plane was to fly from Italy to Regensburg, Germany. During the mission, fifteen Messerschmitt fighters pursued and shot down the B-17 bomber. Ten American soldiers, including Tom Foote, had boarded the B-17; six of those men survived. One of the survivors, Sgt. George T. Waters, who had been captured and held in Stalag Luft 4 and two other prisons until the end of the war in Europe (U.S. National Archives), later wrote to Horton Foote and his family and visited Foote's parents in Wharton, Texas. A letter dated May 8, 1966, by George Waters that had been sent to Foote by his mother with her letter in an envelope postmarked June 9, 1966, has been placed in Box 4, folder 6.

Foote's memoir *Beginnings*, the statement of the co-pilot of the B-17 published in *Behind Barbed Wire*, and the letter above by Foote's father, all maintain that the B-17 in which Tom was a radio operator was flying over Germany when it was attacked in February 1944. Foote also wrote in his memoir that Tom was buried in Germany. (At least two accounts by biographers state that Tom's plane was shot down over Belgium and his body was buried there; however, according to the three sources mentioned above, Tom died and was buried in Germany.)

March 16, 1944. Horton to brother Tom.¹

Dear Tom:

Just a note to let you know rehearsals have begun² and to ask you to keep your fingers crossed – and to tell you I haven't forgotten our pact, and that this my brother is part yours –

We have been in rehearsal for three days now and I'm very happy with June Walker – as you know she's a splendid name to have –

The Theater will be needing you more than ever when your present job is finished and hope together we can do some really fine things –

My best,

Horton –

¹This undated letter, with enclosed news clipping dated March 16, 1944, is located in Box 1, folder 23. The envelope is addressed to S/Sgt. Tom B. Foote, with no stamp. Foote probably prepared this letter with the newspaper enclosure but had not sent it before receiving the letter his father wrote only the day before (March 15, 1944) with news of Tom (see the letter that precedes this one). Foote's unsent letter to Tom was handwritten in black ink on one page unlined eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch paper.

²Enclosed with the letter is a *New York Herald Tribune* notice dated Friday, March 16, of *Only the Heart* in a column entitled "News of the Theater":

“Only the Heart” has been booked by Louis A. Lotito as the next attraction at the Bijou Theater April 4. This is the play which Horton Foote wrote for the American Actors’ Company and which created much favorable comment when it was first tried out at the Provincetown Playhouse two years ago. Rehearsals will begin soon under the direction of Mary Hunter, who staged the original production.

March 20, 1944. Albert H. Foote to son Horton.¹

Monday 20, 1944

My darling boy:

You will never know how much your phone call meant to us, it made the day so much brighter for the three of us. You always do just the right thing pal, gee, but I am proud of you.

I am working double hard trying not to think of Toots too much, I know he is coming home to us again, yet I realize also he’s in a bad spot and needs our thoughts and prayers as never before, it is also a great satisfaction to know that we all think alike in our thoughts to God.

I want to tell you we have some wonderful friends here. I never knew before just what they meant –

Pal I know your play is going to be a grand success.² I have been thinking of you so much the past two months, and in my small way pulling all I know how, I read everything I can get my hands on in connection with your work. I take

Time magazine, and look there first thing every week, hoping to see your name, know I will one day find it with your picture, then will I strut –

I am afraid son we are going to have a hard fight this time to keep our beloved President in the White house, and I also want to tell you, I am seeing things from a political point that you do more or less, and when we get together I believe we will have lots in common to talk about from this point –

I must stop now and go home as it's almost six, and I know Mother is watching the clock –

Again thanking you for the phone call, and telling you, I love you oh so much son, and think of you most every day –

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 14. The envelope is addressed in blue ink to Horton Foote, Jr., Hotel Albert in New York; postmarked Wharton, Tex; printed return address Al H. Foote, The Store for Men, Wharton Texas. Foote's father's letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front side of three pages business stationery of Al H. Foote, Men's Furnishings, Wharton, Texas, with printed heading on all pages.

²Foote's play referred to in this sentence is *Only the Heart*, which opened on April 4, 1944.

March 25, 1944. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton.¹

Saturday a.m.

My darling Boy –

Dad called me when he got down that we had a letter here from you² and he said “it’s a peach”! I have enjoyed it so much too darling and we appreciate and value the good things you have passed on – We are so sure of Tom Brooks’ safety and will be sure and try not to outlive our opinion of safety, for he can be safe and free no matter where he may be located. It is fine to have been able to contact Rex Stout – We would like so much to have the addresses of the crew members – I think I wrote you that we had the Texas boy’s address and have written and heard from his mother – She had all the names too, but no address, at all, so was grateful to hear from me –

Son, you have wonderful friends – I know you appreciate them – Our have been grand, too – Practically every day several of our Scientist group have read with me and every day one or more have contacted us – I have spent several afternoons at the others’ homes as we have had so much company – It will be wonderful for you to come home – The news about the play is so gratifying – Know it will just be a perfect opening and run.

Yesterday morning, we came to town for Babs to have a dress fitted – She had had several sent out from Rose’s and had decided on one – Cousin D. brought us to town – it was almost noon, so Babs invited us to have oysters at Gus’. We enjoyed them a lot. Got home about one. I had to finish up the cleaning and make

preparations for supper – Was due at Mrs. Rush's at 3:30, but before I could get off – Fannie M. came – and as she left Belle. I went back twice to phone Mrs. R. but Belle didn't leave 'till 6, so of course I couldn't go.

Nora has been helping out at her sister's for 2 wks – so I have been doing the ironing this week – in a piecemeal fashion – but have Dad supplied now 'till next week!

Babs plans to go to Houston Monday. Rosa called last night – She had understood that she would be home yesterday and was checking up on her – She is looking forward so to seeing you – You know it's been a long time as they were in Calif. when you were home 2 years ago –

I have to write a few lines to J. and get home as near noon as possible – Will be back here by 5 – so have a full day – Our weather is wonderful – we have had 3 whole days of sunshine –

Mrs. H. has gone to Austin to see Eloise – caught a ride –

Will do better next time but am really pressed for time now –

Hugs and kisses and all our love –

Keep us posted –

Devotedly –

Mother.

¹This letter, located in Box 4, folder 10, is handwritten on the front and back of two pages of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²A letter from Foote to his parents dated the day before, March 24, 1944, is in Box 3, folder 17. It is a warm letter with news of Foote's play *Only the Heart*: "We are now in the theater and it is beautiful – Has just been renovated – Opening night is absolutely sold out and though in comparison to most shows we are getting seemingly little time for rehearsal – Still I think everything is working out wonderfully." Enclosed is an announcement of opening night on April 4, 1944, and also a photocopy of a *New York World-Telegram* review of *Only the Heart* titled, "Only the Heart Is Fine Domineering Mother Study." In the article, the theater critic, Burton Rascoe, writes, "I can recommend no play of the season more earnestly." Foote's letter to his parents also thanks them for keeping him informed of any news about his brother Tom; Foote writes, "Thank you Dad for being so thoughtful and keeping me posted – I keep thinking of both of you during the day and your courage and faith bring a real flush of pride to my heart."

March 28, 1944. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton.¹

Tuesday a.m.

My darling Boy –

So very glad to get the announcement of your opening – most attractive – Of course enjoyed the letter inside – and delighted that everything is just right. We know the Theatre looks beautiful all fresh and nice – that's grand – A week off and the opening night will be here – Isn't it wonderful that the opening is sold

out – We will be thinking of you this week and on, you know – Then begin counting the days 'till you start for home –

Ollie N. just called to tell me that John Arch called Allie from N.Y. Saturday night. Isn't that wonderful? He will be home in about 10 days, having to report first to El Paso – Imagine he will make it by Easter –

In Sunday's Chronicle there was an acc't from Center Texas³ of a boy who had been reported missing since Dec. 30 – His mother had rec'd a cable March 25 from the boy saying: "Dear Mom, Having a good time. Write old A.P.O." That was the first she had heard since the cable from the gov. Jan 1 – His plane had been seen losing altitude over France, so the underground probably got him out. All report they are wonderful – Mrs. Rush told me a week ago that she had done work when she heard about T.B. she plainly heard: "they will hear with a letter from him when they hear." She told me this – Last Sat. we were over there reading and she said she worried later and wondered if she could have mistaken mortal mind for what she had heard and said this came at once to her: "Let not your heart be troubled" – Her scriptural reading Sunday was 121st Psalm – and the Psalm I wrote from in Tom B's Bible when he went overseas – I told her after the service and she said she was thinking of him when she selected.

Babs left on the 2:15 train – She will be back when you come – think that was the main reason she wanted to move on and back to Dallas, now – N. May took us to the train.

I am going to the Red Cross this afternoon – and am due there at 1:30 –
Have to eat lunch, dress and go by the store and it's after 12 – So will say bye for
today –

Hugs and kisses and all our love –

Devotedly

Mother.

¹Located in Box 4, folder 10, this letters is handwritten on the front and
back of one page of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²Center is a small city in Texas near the Louisiana border.

Before April 4, 1944. Horton to brother Tom.¹

Dear Brother:

As you see the big day is drawing near – My deepest wish is that you
could be here to share it with me – Well, we'll have many, many more to share
together Yours as well as mine –

Love,

Horton –

¹This note from Horton to Tom is handwritten in pencil inside a folded
formal printed announcement of the opening of the play *Only the Heart*, located

in Box 1, folder 23. The envelope is addressed to S/Sgt. Tom B. Foote, with no stamp. It appears that Foote prepared to mail this to his brother but did not send it.

²”The big day” to which Foote referred was April 4, 1944. In the envelope of Foote’s letter is the printed announcement with the words:

The American Actors Theatre Cordially invites you to attend the opening night performance of ‘Only the Heart’ by Horton Foote with June Walker and Mildred Dunnock, Eleanor Anton, Maurice Wells, Will Hare. Directed by Mary Hunter. Setting and Costumes by Frederick Fox. Tuesday Evening, April 4th, at the Bijou Theatre, West 45th Street. Curtain at 8:30.

May 8, 1944. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton.¹

Sunday night

9:30

My darling Boy –

We’ve been home two hours from town – it hardly seems possible but the clock says so – Mrs. Howard ate supper with us in town – At church this a.m. She told Dad she wanted to come over this afternoon for a visit after we rested (?)² so he asked her then to go with us – She had had a good and large meal at Jane’s at one o’clock so could only eat a sandwich – We walked thru town, by the P.O. and then home for another session before she felt she had to go back with Bunny – Mr. H. was fishing today with Col. Ingram. They make an all day session of it –

We were delighted to have your good letter today and the news that your play is to be published is wonderful – I'm sure that gave you a good lifted feeling. Now the play will hold out this week and on and on – We know that is right and believe you are going to realize your right substantial harvest – I did some good quilt work for several hrs. this aft. and am sending you 2 articles that are helpful – After all, this is God's work we know and an unlimited supply of good only can come from him – This lurking doubt and fear must leave us all – and we must be grateful all thru – Feel sure Dad's money order came the day after you wrote – he's thinking maybe it didn't get there so you will let him know, right away – I know – We both think it is grand that you are dedicating the play to your brothers – can't think of anything sweeter and know they will both be so thrilled – I'll write J. tomorrow and can just see him beam.

The encouraging news from Rex Stout's friend about the underground workings is heartening – We feel so confident that God is seeing to Tom B. and will be so happy to hear from him – We had a letter from Johnny yesterday, written Thursday so delayed – He was thinking he'd have to cut out his week-end again in Pt. Arthur as they are holding down on the 25 radius mile week-end leave – and he thinks it's wise (?) to conform!

About 4 this aft. I decided to take a nap and had just dozed when the phone rang and it was Baboo, in Dallas – she said she got me immediately and I could hear her so well – She didn't get my letter yesterday that she should have rec'd and as I had missed several days writing, think she just wanted to hear from

us. She is coming to Houston a week from tomorrow. She wrote earlier in the week that she had sent me something by freight – so we judged furniture – At the breakfast table this a.m. I guessed a chair and she told me this aft. that was for me to sit in till she came, when she would take over – She said all the Rays³ were fine. We have had beautiful weather again today and hope yours is keeping up – I want to do some more reading so will say goodnight.

Don't keep us in suspense this week and let us know right away about the play. We must know that all the news there always is, is good news, regardless –

Hugs and kisses and worlds of love darling –

Devotedly –

Mother.

P.S. So glad you contacted Tom B's friends –

¹This letter, located in Box 4, folder 9, is handwritten on three sides slightly smaller than eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²The question marks in parentheses are in the holograph manuscript, and were written by Foote's mother for dramatic emphasis.

³“The Rays” are the family of Oliver and Laura Brooks Ray, Foote's mother's sister.

CHAPTER 4

MEETING LILLIAN, 1944-1945

In the middle of the summer of 1944, when Foote was working as the night manager of a Doubleday bookstore in New York City, a Radcliffe student named Lillian Vallish applied for a job. Six weeks later, Horton and Lillian were engaged to be married (*Beginnings* 255-56).

The letters that Horton and Lillian wrote to each other during their courtship (and also later during their marriage) are full of breezy conversation, wit, and affection. In November 1944, Lillian wrote,

Have been talking to Marnie about yesterday and she says you sound wonderful. I told her besides being handsome, you were sweet and kind and the most genuine person I ever met. Told her once again how smart you are and that you're the playwright of the 20th century. If you have a picture around, I wish you'd send it on and then I can show you off.

Among the topics discussed in their correspondence are politics and international affairs. They frequently mentioned the world war and the presidential election of November 1944, in which Franklin Roosevelt and Thomas Dewey were candidates.

In their correspondence, both Horton and Lillian expressed their appreciation for the works of various authors, especially nineteenth-century

American writers. They mention reading works by Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, and Henry James. Many of the texts mentioned in the letters were required reading for Lillian's college coursework. An honors English student at Radcliffe, Lillian describes in her letters studying with Harvard professor F. O. Matthiessen (whom she referred to as "Mathi"). Matthiessen was Lillian's advisor when she wrote her senior honors thesis on the work of Henry James. On November 11, 1944, Lillian wrote about her work with Matthiessen: "I had a conference with Mathi yesterday and he both liked and approved of my thesis subject. He's a wonderful man – I like him more every time I see him. He warned me about the short time left to do research and writing so from here on it's full steam ahead." Many of Lillian's letters from mid-November until her graduation with honors in February 1945 mention her advisor "Mathi" and the challenges of writing her thesis and studying for her oral examinations in literature and history.

Horton and Lillian also wrote about their admiration of certain twentieth-century writers of fiction and poetry. In a letter dated October 26, 1944, for example, Lillian wrote about the work of Katherine Anne Porter: "Took a stab at a short story I always wanted to write but after an hour or two gave it up as a hopeless job. . . . I also finished the K. A. Porter book and decided any of my efforts would be futile."

Foote's creative projects are discussed in his and Lillian's letters. Mentioned most often are *Only the Heart*, *People in the Show*, and *Marcus*

Strahan. Lillian's letters demonstrate that she read Horton's works with great interest and expressed her opinions about his artistic works with passion and certitude. In a letter dated September 28, 1944, Lillian wrote about *Only the Heart*:

I'm going to finish Only the Heart tonight, no matter what, so you'll hear all about it tomorrow – my “straightforward, honest, candid opinion.” I've liked what I've read so far very much – perhaps because it's so significant for me. It's also why I tacitly disagreed with Tennessee when he said Only the Heart must be shown in the South to get full recognition and understanding. It's almost like saying you'd have to be a sea man to read Moby Dick – Any good artist must deal with the fundamental problems of the world – going back to the conversation in the diner and Eugene O'Neill. A geographical locale is for setting purposes only – a stage from which an idea is projected.

At times, Horton and Lillian mention in their letters his collaboration with dancers Martha Graham and Valerie Bettis. In two of her letters, Lillian makes an unusual and imaginative suggestion that Horton consider writing a ballet with an all-male cast based on Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*. In her letters written during their engagement and after they married, Lillian expressed her appreciation of great literature and encouraged Horton to be open to creative innovation.

Perhaps because his parents' courtship and first year of marriage had been made so difficult by the disapproval of his mother's parents, Foote's own parents treated their sons' fiancées with acceptance and great affection, emotions evident in the archived correspondence. As was the case with Foote's father's future in-

laws, Lillian's parents did not at first accept Horton as Lillian's prospective husband. In his play, *Valentine's Day*, Foote gives Horace, a character modeled on his father, a monologue that Foote has said that he wrote for his own wife Lillian, which ends with the words "you did marry me, and I tell you I've begun to know happiness for the first time in my life. I adore you. I worship you . . . and I thank you for marrying me" (27). Letters written after Horton and Lillian married indicate that, as with his own father and his grandfather Tom Brooks, the relationship improved between Horton and Lillian's family, especially her mother.

Of the letters in the Horton Foote Collection dated from August 24, 1944, when Foote wrote to his parents that he had met his future wife Lillian, to June 4, 1945, the date of their wedding, nine letters have been selected for inclusion in this dissertation. To organize these letters in chronological order it was necessary to select letters in six different folders from Boxes 1, 3, and 4. The criteria for selecting these letters are to show the development of the courtship of Horton and Lillian and to reveal the nature of his creative work and her studies, and also Lillian's adoption, early in their relationship, of the role of Horton's confidante and collaborator in his creative work. In addition, these letters demonstrate the affection and warm acceptance of Foote's parents during the months before his marriage to Lillian.

August 24, 1944. Foote to parents.¹

Wed. night, Radcliffe,

Dearest Folks:

I guess you've thought I've forgotten how to write, but really feel I have some news to make up for the delay. I think I've at last found the girl for me and for the first time I am officially engaged and would be married tomorrow if I had my way about it.

Her name is Lillian Vallish – She is the girl whose sister and brother in law I visited last weekend – We met about two months ago when she came to work at Doubleday's, and it was, on my part, love at first sight.

The reason we are waiting awhile is that she doesn't finish college until Feb. and I want her to finish very badly.

I think you will be crazy about her and I know she will fall in love with you. She is a sensible, wholesome girl and I know will make a wonderful wife and we will have a happy, happy life together.

We are planning on a trip home (to Texas) at Christmas, her family want to give her that and she will spend her vacation there, and I will stay on until she finishes school. That is, at least, if our planning works. Of course I'm counting on the fellowship and Doubleday giving me a leave of absence. She has a job with a publishing company when she leaves college.

Will you please call Nan first thing, as I promised her a "scoop,"² and I'm much too busy working and seeing my girl to write anyone –

Have seen Nannie Brooks and her husband twice. They are both so very nice. I'm taking Lillian to meet them tomorrow.

I am getting a picture of Lillian to send you – as soon as she gets one from home.

Love and kisses –

Horton

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 18. The envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Al. H. Foote in Wharton, Tex; no return address; postmarked New York, NY; the letter is handwritten in pencil on front and back of two pages unlined eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch paper that has darkened with age.

²Foote's cousin Nan Outlar, who for decades wrote a social column called "Nan About Town" in the *Wharton Journal-Spectator*, wrote in her letter to Foote (dated September 3, 1944, in Box 1, folder 38 of the Foote papers): "And thanks for the 'scoop,' and I really did write it up in the column, so now you are 'formally' engaged in Wharton."

August 25, 1944. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton.¹

Saturday a.m.

My darling Boy –

Dad called me about ten to say I'd better hurry down as there was some real news waiting here for me – from N.Y. I was about ready to start, hurried it up

and en route ran the “what’s” – almost here – I thought “could it be”? and that was it. We are so happy for you and know that Lillian is all you think and write about her. Hurry that picture and send me her address as Dad said at once “I want you to write her right away – today” – We always knew when the right girl came along you would know. You deserve all the happiness that is in store for you. We will be thrilled to have you both Xmas and the longer visit from you will be “awful fine” – It sounds like the program outlined is just perfect. Write us again real soon and tell us everything you know we are interested in – about Lillian. Dad is stepping high about it – as he wants you to get married to round out your full life. I will get in touch with Nan today and can let the Houston folks and Johnny hear tomorrow² – They all want you to be happy – and we know you will be.

So glad you’ve seen N. Brooks and hope you all got together as planned Thursday. I have been hoping I’d hear so I could call cousin Julia.

Last night Fannie M. brought Pat’s Pattye Anne by and she was sweet and friendly. Always before she has cried so much always had to leave with her. Her head is a mass of ringlets – how lucky for any little lady.

I have taken time off to vote – the voting here is light and it is expected that way over the state – but we have had our say just the same.

Today begin Saturday and customers in and out I won’t have time for more, but we wanted you to hear at once from us and let you know you have the “parental” blessing –

Dearest love and usual hugs and kisses

Devotedly –

Mother.

¹This letter is located in Box 4, folder 12. The letter is handwritten in ink on front and back of two pages unlined eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch paper.

²Foote's brother John was at that time a U. S. Marine in his final semester at Southwestern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette.

September 5, 1944. Hallie Brooks Foote to Lillian.¹

Wharton

Sept. fifth –

Dearest Lillian,

We were so delighted when we had Horton's letter telling us about you and we are looking forward to the promised visit at Xmas time. Of course we wanted to know a lot about you and did ask some questions – He has replied that he cannot do justice to you on paper – so we will wait. We do want a picture if you have an extra one.

Horton is so happy about your engagement and we think this was needed to round out a complete life for him – We know he loves you dearly – his letters tell us that and “that ring” to them has never been there before – So you see what

you've done! We know that you are all that we have wished for, for him – He's a cautious picker!

When I wrote Horton yesterday, I forgot to put in the clipping from Nan's column,² so will ask you to give it to him. You can tell him that by now the news is well circulated and everybody is so glad for him. If you've never lived in a small town you have a lot to look forward to when you come to see us.

We had Labor Day off yesterday. Had a good day at home – and came to town for the evening meal. Horton (Sr) adores working in his garden and altho' he said he was thru with gardening (after a very dismal Spring one) he couldn't resist after we had a good rain last week. In Texas, a fall garden usually is more successful than one in the Spring, as we have warm weather soon. Our cold weather doesn't come 'till the winter months.

Horton has written us of the delightful weekends spent with your sister and the friends. I'm sure it is pleasant to leave the city for a few hours and hope you could go somewhere over this weekend. The extra day helped.

Will be so glad for you to meet Horton's old N.Y. friends. He has a number of true ones and we feel like we know them too. We have met quite a number of them and several of them have visited us. Tell him not to leave a one out.

I have talked to Nannie Brooks. She was over from Houston Sunday. They had a wonderful trip and she was so glad to have met you. She thought Horton

looked so well. You see, it's been over two years since he was home – I almost forget how my children look they stay away such long periods!

Horton joins me in sending lots of love to you and he is very thrilled with the idea of a daughter.

Would love so much to hear from you.

Sincerely

Mrs. Foote.

¹This letter is located in Box 4, folder 12. The letter is handwritten in ink on front and back of two pages unlined eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch paper.

²The notice of the engagement of Horton and Lillian in Nan Outlar's column in the Wharton newspaper is not included with this letter in the Horton Foote Collection in the DeGolyer archive.

September 7, 1944. Lillian to Foote's mother Hallie Brooks Foote.¹

Thursday

Dear Mrs. Foote,

Just got your letter in the morning mail and am answering it before the news has a chance to cool. Horton has always told me such lovely things about you that I'm quite anxious for Christmas to be here so that I can meet you and Mr. Foote and all the Texas "cousins." Besides that, I'm looking forward to the

Southern cooking Horton constantly talks about with a gleam in his eye. I almost think I'm in competition with Southern fried chicken and Mexican chili.

I suppose Horton has already told you of his many raises in salary at Doubleday's. I like to kid him about it and tell him if he's not careful, he'll be voting for Dewey this fall. It makes me very happy to see him pleased with the way things have been going. I know he likes his work very much and then too, he's finished his new play which is an achievement in itself. His plans for production are indefinite; however, even if it isn't produced, it's a good piece of writing and he has every right to be satisfied with it.

Last night we went out with Jacques Tierry. Jacques, as you probably know, worked with Horton in Hollywood and is now in New York trying to get money to produce two new plays. In the afternoon we had lunch with Mary Hunter,² whom I met for the first time. I liked her very much and am looking forward to seeing her again. This weekend we're going to visit Arnold Sundgaard³ and his wife on Long Island. You can see that my social life has been made full and pleasant by Horton's many friends. I know very few people in N.Y. but am already beginning to feel like a native.

My rounds of activities will soon come to a close because I leave for home in a week. School doesn't start until late October but my parents have seen so little of me the past few years, I feel that I should spend a few weeks with them before going back to Cambridge. Mother wants to come into N.Y. later on in the fall and I'd like her to meet Horton then. I want him to come home with me at

Thanksgiving time and am hoping he can take all the members of my family in his stride. Having four sisters and four brothers-in-law, I always pity the poor unsuspecting friend who has to meet them all.

Have to close now and get ready for work.

Love,

Lillian

P.S. Please excuse the stationery---it's all I have at the moment.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 33. On a small, plain white envelope is a typed address to Mrs. A. H. Foote in Wharton, Texas; return address N.Y.; postmarked N.Y.; the letter is typed on the front of one page eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch unlined paper with three holes punched in the left-hand side.

²In 1944, Mary Hunter (1905-2000) was associated with the American Actors Company in New York. She directed five of Foote's plays, including *Only the Heart* (*Variety*).

³Arnold Sundgaard (1910-2006), who wrote plays and librettos, worked with Kurt Weill and was mentored by playwright Susan Glaspell (*New York Times*).

c. November 1944. Lillian to Horton.¹

Wed. morning

Dearest,

Rita called last night and told me about Ben McCartney being killed in action – I mentioned him to you once before – the co-author of a play that's to be produced this year. She seemed very upset because she and George knew him well and liked him a lot.²

I'm very happy about Roosevelt's re-election and felt even more so when I read the predictions about a Democratic Congress. Now, at least, there's the chance of negotiating a decent peace.

It's cold and brisk out today but the sun's shining and everything looks beautiful. I meet Mathi for tutorial Friday and am hoping he approves my thesis subject – I'm tired of this floundering around and would like to get things definitely settled.

The Brattle Hall theatre³ is producing plays here this winter for the first time – they're now doing The Corn is Green⁴ but don't know what's next. Why don't you come up here and start a riot with People in the Show.⁵ Things are pretty dull and an explosion is all we need.

I see where Trio⁶ is having a tough time of it – the Bakers' retort to the mounting criticism certainly showed both fire and eloquence. I think it was an intelligent, good, concise defense or do you disagree.

What about J. Robbins' appearing in the Robin Hood revival. He must have a terrific lot of energy but still, I thought On the Town could be taking most of his time the next few weeks.

Must close now, Sweet, and hope there's a letter waiting for me in the afternoon mail.

Love,

L.

¹This undated letter without an envelope has been placed in a Box 1, folder 17, with correspondence written by Lillian to Foote in 1944. The letter is handwritten in black ink on front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half-by-eleven inch paper with three holes punched in the left-hand margin.

I determined that both internal and external clues in this undated letter indicate that it was written during the month of November. For instance, several other letters of Lillian's dated 1944 were written on the same type of paper used for this letter. Furthermore, in this letter Lillian mentions Roosevelt's recent re-election, which would have occurred in November 1944. In addition, Lillian states that "Mathi" (F. O. Mathiessen) has not yet approved her thesis subject; in her letters written in December 1944, Lillian often mentions that she is writing her thesis on Henry James.

²Rita and George Mayberry were Lillian's sister and brother-in-law.

³Built in 1890, Brattle Hall is an historic site located in Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

⁴The drama by Emlyn Williams, *The Corn Is Green*, was first produced on Broadway in 1940.

⁵*People in the Show* is an early play by Horton Foote.

⁶*Trio* was a project in which dancer Valerie Bettis was involved.

November 20, 1944. Foote to parents.¹

Sunday

Dearest Folks:

It is gray and rainy out. Here it is getting near the end of November, and it is still not cold. It can stay this way all winter and get no complaints out of me.

Had to do some quick readjusting of plans this week, and am grateful that everything is working out satisfactorily, if not exactly as I would like. To begin with Lillian won't be able to come home for Xmas. Her school was late in starting and they have cut the Christmas vacations down to three or four days. She is very disappointed about it and so am I, but she is writing you to tell you about it in detail. Now, I was supposed to get my fellowship at the end of September. I don't know why in the Theater these delays occur over and over again, but mortal mind seems to outline it that way, and we just have to see it differently. About three weeks ago I got nervous and called Mr. Clark, and he gave me lots of excuses, and finally I told him that I wanted to get home for Christmas and would I hear in

time to do so. He said yes, I would. I gave last weekend as a deadline, as he knows all about the difficulties in making arrangements for tickets, etc. I didn't hear. Well, I knew how much the fare and all would be, so I began to figure how to get there other ways and am very grateful that it's all working out fine. Everything will be delayed about ten days, but that won't matter. I went to D.D.² and they are letting me work in the day at their Fifth Ave. store, so I can make enough money for the ticket and etc. Then they told me that if I worked through Xmas that they would save my job here at nights for me, until I returned. Which is a big load off my mind, because without the fellowship I would be returning with no job and no money. I hope you won't be too disappointed at the delay and be as grateful as I am over how it's worked out. Then honestly I have never felt too right about taking train space right during the holidays, as it is the time service men need it most. This all means my leaving here on the 2 of January. I will take the Streamline to N.O.³ and get there on the morning of the fourth and will get into Houston on the fifth. So kill the fatted calf.⁴

Things have been going very well here. I have been taking it easy in the day times, and only working hard at nights. There is of course plenty to do, with the Xmas rush starting full force. Our business has just about doubled since the fifteenth of the month. Everyone seems to want to give books. I am mailing some things home to you all, they may come early because of the plea to mail early, but they are meant for Xmas. About my presents, please keep them until I arrive as we can have a second Xmas then.

By the way, it skipped my mind completely, but I promised a copy of “O. the H.”⁵ to Margaret Ewing. I sent an extra copy home, but forgot to tell you what for. I suppose you found good use for it. In case she wasn’t on your list, let me know and I’ll bring one for her when she comes. In any case, I think I better get about ten more.

I wrote an article recently on dancers for a N.Y. magazine, and was very pleased to get a two and half page letter from James T. Farrell,⁶ the famous novelist, in response to it. Praising the article and my point of view. He’s considered one of the smartest novelists in America, so that really pleased me.

I hope the delay won’t cause too much disappointment. I do believe in the long run, knowing I have a job waiting for me here, will let me spend my time with a freer mind, so maybe the delay was for good purpose, and anyhow we know that Christmas is every day.

Have a nice Thanksgiving. We can’t get the turkeys here, but that doesn’t bother me, I’d trade them any time for a mess of good Gulf Coast Oysters fried right, but suppose they’ll still be there when I get home. Let’s hope so.

My love to you all,

Horton.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 17. It is typed on two pages eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²In their letters, Horton and Lillian used “D.D.” as an abbreviation for Doubleday’s Bookstore.

³“N.O.” is most likely an abbreviation for New Orleans.

⁴Horton playfully alluded to the parable of the prodigal son.

⁵Foote used the abbreviation “O. the H.” for his play *Only the Heart*, which was first performed in 1942 in the Provincetown Playhouse in New York, and then produced on Broadway in 1944 (Castleberry, *Genesis* xi).

⁶James T. Farrell (1904-1979), wrote novels, short stories, essays, and was a political theorist and literary critic. He published the *Studs Lonigan* trilogy in the mid-1930s (Pace 15).

December 2, 1944. Lillian to Horton.¹

Fri. night

Dearest,

I went upstairs to visit Marnie and Anne a while ago – between the two of them they’ve got quite a collection of Henry James, which is convenient for me because I needn’t go to the library. Finished The American and have now to read The Golden Bowl and The Ivory Tower. This will just about finish my reading for the thesis; I hope to begin writing it sometime next week.

Called Mother tonight and found out that Dorothy² is now in the hospital and may have her baby tonight. I’m sure everything will be all right so I’m not

really worried. This is two weeks earlier than she expected it but at least she'll be home for the holidays if everything goes all right.

Went to see Miss Stedman at the Radcliffe Appointment Bureau this morning. I told her about the Fischer job but also got some more leads in case it doesn't come through. She mentioned working for the Institute of Pacific Relations and the B.B.C. – both sound interesting so I think I'll look into them when I get to N.Y. I gather that typing is a definite essential for any work I may take on – if I haven't time to take a brush-up course here, I'll have to wait until I get to N.Y.

Goodnight, dearest – don't work too hard at selling D.D.'s.³

Love,

L.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 17. The envelope is addressed to A. Horton Foote in N.Y.C., postmarked Cambridge, Mass.; return address Briggs Hall at Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.; the letter is handwritten in black ink on the front and back of one page thin eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch typing paper.

²Dorothy is one of Lillian's four sisters.

³"D.D.'s" is Lillian's abbreviation for Doubleday's Bookstore in New York.

January 14, 1945. Horton to Lillian.¹

Dearest:

It's quite late (2 o'clock) – I have been reading Hawthorne's introduction to "Mosses from An Old Manse" – and must say I find it really wonderful – I have read, also, a couple of the stories, and can hardly wait to finish the whole.

I have been spending another lazy day talking to mother, wandering around the streets, keeping my father's store while he went for the mail (and no letter from you – again!), back home, visiting with friends –

The kids that I graduated from High School with are giving a party for me (that is the ones that are left) on Tuesday Evening. I look forward to it and yet dread it – There are such gaps between us – And our attempts to communicate are rather pitiful – I keep finding myself thinking of them as they were – I'm afraid I prefer them that way –

Mother, Daddy and I are having a wonderful time together and I'm really very happy I've made the trip –

Can you imagine the fig trees and my father has a garden in full bloom? There are thousands of birds in our yard – red birds, blue birds, mocking birds – I had forgotten they were here – I never tire of watching them –

The family are giving me a new overcoat – My father is ordering it for me tailor made and I hope it arrives before I leave – But if it doesn't, I'll have it soon after – Also I fell heir to two suits of my brother, they are in perfect condition. His

fiancée is coming in for the weekend. I've never met her and I'm looking forward to it.²

Goodnight – sweetheart, and love –

from

Horton

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 4. The envelope is addressed to Lillian at Radcliffe College; the return address reads: "H. Foote, Wharton, Tex."; postmarked Wharton, Texas; the letter is handwritten in pencil on one page of unlined eight-and-one-half-by-eleven-inch paper.

²Foote refers to his brother John and fiancée Betty Mcteer. John and Betty were married a few months before the marriage of Horton and Lillian.

May 6, 1945. Albert H. Foote to son Horton.¹

May 6 – 45

My Darling boy:

I guess you are married by this time,² at least I hope so, we have been almost sleeping with the phone hoping to hear from you since receiving your wire.

I know I am going to love my new daughter, and will be counting the days until I can see her, and hope this will be soon, she sure made a hit with John and Betty.

All my love to you both

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 14. There is no envelope with the letter; the letter is written in blue ink on one page of business stationery of Al H. Foote, Men's Furnishings in Wharton, Texas.

²A printed wedding announcement is located in the Foote Papers in Box 1, folder 1. The announcement indicates that the marriage of Horton and Lillian took place on Monday, June 4, 1945, in New York a month after his father wrote this letter.

CHAPTER 5

EARLY MARRIAGE, 1948-1959

The years 1948 to 1959 were periods of great activity and creative growth for Horton Foote and also for his wife and family. After they were married, Horton and Lillian moved to Washington, D.C., where they stayed for five years (Castleberry, *Genesis* xii). For a time, Horton and Lillian worked at the King-Smith School in the city of Washington; however, they left to establish a drama school, acting company, and theater in Washington, D.C., with Vincent Donehue (*Beginnings* 266-68), who remained a lifelong friend and who directed many of Foote's television and stage productions, including the Broadway production of *The Trip to Bountiful*, which opened November 3, 1953, and in which Lillian Gish portrayed the role of Carrie Watts (Foote, *Three Trips to Bountiful* 72).

In the theater that Horton and Lillian established in Washington with Vincent Donehue, Lillian administered the drama school and also managed the theater with Horton and Vincent. Regarding Lillian's involvement in the school and theater in Washington and his future projects, Foote writes:

She was twenty when we married, twenty-one when we moved to Washington. She'd had no experience in administering a school or theater, but she was from the first successful in doing both. I looked to her increasingly while in Washington, indeed during the forty-eight years of our marriage, for her

criticism during the writing of my plays and their productions. (*Beginnings* 268)

According to a note attached to one of the letters in the archive, after leaving Washington, D.C., the young couple spent three months in Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania, with Lillian's parents, before returning again to New York.

In 1956, Horton and Lillian, with their young children, Barbara Hallie, Albert Horton III, and Walter Vallish, moved to Upper Nyack, New York, thirty-two miles north of New York City. Their daughter Daisy Brooks was born three years after the family moved to Nyack.

Foote's works mentioned most often in his personal letters of this period are, among other projects, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Old Man* (Foote's adaptation of the Faulkner short story), *The Traveling Lady*, *The Chase*, *Celebration*, *The Indian Fighters*, *The Midnight Caller*, and the published collection entitled *Harrison, Texas: Eight Television Plays*. Gerald Wood writes that the period of 1952 to 1954 was "an extremely productive time for the young playwright. In those three years more than a dozen of Foote's plays appeared on the stage or on television; among them were three longer works—*The Chase*, *The Trip to Bountiful* and *The Traveling Lady*—which were eventually made into films" (Wood, *Selected One-Act Plays* xiv). During only one year—the year 1953—Foote's television plays included *The Trip to Bountiful*, *A Young Lady of Property*, *Expectant Relations*, *The Death of the Old Man*, *The Tears of My Sister*,

John Turner Davis, and *The Midnight Caller*, among others (Foote, *Harrison, Texas: Eight Television Plays* 1, 41, 75, 95, 115, 153, 217).

In 1956, Foote published his only novel *The Chase* (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii). The high regard that Foote's agent Lucy Kroll had for Foote's novel is apparent in her correspondence to him. In her letter to Foote dated April 12, 1954, Kroll wrote, "The work has a vitality, economy, a drive, a humanity, that is indeed exciting for me to experience." In the bottom margin of a routine business letter written on May 19, 1955, Kroll composed a handwritten message:

I stayed up all night reading "The Chase." I could not put it down. . . . how you gave so in essence the full depth of each and every person involved in this story, how your suspense drives not with plot or artifice but with the beating of the heart, the exterior and interior drive of each being, the subconscious, the unconscious, the mores, the culture, the climate of the town, its ancestry, its drives, its demanding and curbing influences. I will talk with you Friday – and want to tell you voice-to-voice how deeply moved and proud I am of your work."

From early in Foote's career to fifty years later in 1994, when she sold her agency to Barbara Hogenson, Kroll served as Foote's agent in New York. In addition to Foote, Kroll's many noteworthy clients included, among others, Carl Sandburg, James Earl Jones, Fritz Weaver, and Uta Hagen (Saxon 10).

During the early years of their marriage, the life of Foote's family life was as eventful and full of activity as his professional life. After moving to Nyack, when the children were still very small, Lillian found herself occupied with her active, growing family and also their rapidly increasing collection of pets.

Because Foote was frequently away on lengthy business trips during that period, Foote's mother made the suggestion late in 1958 that Gladys, who lived in Wharton at the time, come to Nyack and live with Lillian for several months to help with housework and cooking.

Bringing stories of the people in Wharton to Lillian, Gladys traveled by bus from Texas to where Horton and Lillian were living with their children in Nyack. From the time Gladys arrived, Lillian's letters to Horton were filled with stories that Gladys had told her. Lillian also wrote about Gladys's cooking, writing appreciative comments such as "I had Gladys roast us a turkey yesterday and it was so good – the cornbread stuffing was the best I ever ate." Mentioning Gladys's cooking and their friend Carson McCullers in a letter to Horton, Lillian wrote:

Am most anxious for you to come home though, not just because we love you so much and miss you but Gladys' cooking gets better every day and you will love her meals – she cooks wonderful greens and corn bread; however, it is shooting my diet to pieces. I'm only keeping my weight stable by eating lightly for breakfast and lunch – poached eggs, grapefruit, cottage cheese, etc. I told Carson when you came back Gladys was going to cook a big pot of vegetable soup and corn bread and we would have her over to help eat it up.

Lillian wrote about Gladys so often that in her letters she made declarations such as, "My goodness, my letters seem to be chronicles on the latest developments with Gladys," and "We are all fine and Gladys couldn't be better." Even after

Gladys ended her stay with the family, remembrances of her appeared in their correspondence.

In their letters, Lillian and Horton often wrote to each other about their children—often in little stories about daily events or in expressions of their feelings about each other and raising a family together. In one letter, Lillian wrote to Horton, “I believe our children are an expression of the trust and love we’ve shared together.” In an undated letter, to which I assigned 1959 when Lillian was expecting their fourth child, she wrote in the postscript of a letter to Horton: “I feel quite a bit of life now, especially in the evenings when I’m sitting quietly or reading in bed. It’s funny but it’s just as exciting now to experience these feelings as when I was pregnant the first time.”

During his business trips, Horton not only received daily letters from Lillian, but also wrote and received correspondence from their children. Even when the children were very small, Horton often wrote separate letters to each child and included all of their names above the address on the envelopes. In his letters, Horton frequently commented that during his business trips he placed photographs of his wife and children in his hotel rooms and his temporary offices, and often in his correspondence he made requests for more pictures of Lillian and the children to be sent to him.

This chapter includes transcriptions of twenty letters written during the period 1948 to 1959. They were selected to reveal the variety of Foote’s creative activities. They also shed light on some of the ways in which Horton and Lillian

provided emotional support in their letters to one another to help each other endure the long absences made necessary by his work.

April 1948. Lillian to Foote's parents.¹

Thurs. night

Dear Hallie and Horton –

My Sweetie's in New York on business and I'm alone here at home so will make use of my time and write you.

Our play – Hedda Gabler² – opened Tuesday and is going very well. Horton left yesterday for New York to watch the rehearsals for “Celebration” which the Experimental theatre is doing – it opens April 11th at the Maxine Elliott theatre. Perry Wilson is in it and Joe Anthony is directing.³ Talked to Horton long distance just now and everything seems to be going smoothly. He won't be back until Saturday so will get a more detailed report at that time.

My mother called me this evening and said she plans to come to see us next week with Mrs. Mayberry. I'm very happy they're coming to see us at this time because then they can see the play as well as visit.

Horton and I were thrilled to hear about the John Footes buying a house because we're looking around ourselves at the moment, we seem to do things in pairs – cars, etc. We found a very wonderful house which would be a good investment but I want Mother to see it before making a definite decision. It's quite

large so we would be able to rent part of it and have a nice income. Will let you know more about it if any developments ensue.

We're all very busy again planning the next play with the present one just having opened. It will be one of Horton's – a play he wrote last summer called "American Theme". Thank you so much for the lovely gift. It was very sweet of you to include me in Horton's birthday. Horton wore his shirt the very first day so I know how much he liked it.

Have to close.

Love and hugs and kisses –

L.

P.S. I am out of stamps and envelopes – reason for delay in mailing this. Things happening every minute –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 19. The envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Al. H. Foote in Wharton and postmarked April 21, 1948 (although the letters mentions the future opening of Foote's play *Celebration* in New York on April 11). The letter is written in pencil on the front and back of three pages of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch printed letterhead stationery of the King-Smith School of Creative Arts in Washington, DC.

²In 1948, Foote directed a production of Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* in Washington, D.C. (*Beginnings* 267).

³Perry Wilson, an actress, was married to Joe Anthony, an actor, writer, and director. Anthony directed productions in theater, television, and film, including Foote's film *Tomorrow* in 1972.

September 23, 1948. Lillian to Foote's parents.¹

Monday

Dear Hallie and Horton:

Just a note to let you hear from us. I'm in an office now so I'll slip this in between chores. I took a part-time job last Friday and this is my second and last day here as I'm starting permanent work tomorrow morning. This part-time work is straight typing, getting out a book report for an architectural firm but it pays 1.50 an hour and is within walking distance of our apartment. Tomorrow, I start work at the Afghanistan Embassy. It's very interesting -- I'm to assist the woman in charge of the embassy, helping out with foreign student problems, correspondence, etc. There are 50 Afghanistan students studying at colleges in America and part of my job will be to keep in touch with them to see that everything is going all right. Also, we will interview American teachers who are interested in going to Afghanistan to teach. The salary at the Embassy is not too great but the hours are good - 9:30 to 5 with an hour and a half off for lunch which means 6 hours of work in all. The job also has certain prestige value and it may mean my being able to get more embassy work in the future. It seems strange to be working again after a year off. However, both Horton and I think it wise for

me to work for a year, try to save some money so we can start having a family. Our finances were set back a little by the King-Smiths failing to pay last May's salary. It would have amounted to almost \$500 so that was quite a slash out of our budget.

We've had quite a time finding theatre space but things are looking up again. At the moment, we have decided to build a small theatre on a leased lot here in Washington. It's a very good deal but we won't know if we can build until the District Zoning Board passed approval on our project as the lot is located in a residential area. We'll know definitely about that at the end of this month. In the meantime, we won't be able to schedule any plays but do have some projects mapped out for the students to perform in high schools around the city. Also now, we have a wonderful business manager, a boy from A.N.T.A.² -- Ed Kaufman -- so many business details which had to be handled by Horton and Vinnie³ before he can take over. We feel it will be a saving in the long run as much of our money was lost last year simply through mismanagement and inexperience. Also, the Veterans Administration will pay for about 2/3 of his salary through their on-the-job training program so it will be a great saving to us.

Libby Holman is giving a Washington concert and has asked us to sponsor her. We're very happy about it as it will give us a chance to make some money for the theatre. Net profits will be split 50-50 so it's a very fair deal and will also mean a lot to our organization in terms of publicity.

We plan to start looking for an apartment again as Horton finds it impossible to work in our present one. We've lived in one room for 3½ years now and feel it's time we expanded our horizon. It's still very tough here but we've got our fingers crossed.

Let us hear from you. Have to close now and get back to my job. (I guess you wonder how I can be a typist with all these errors⁴ but I don't believe I've quite awakened yet.)

All our love to you and hugs and kisses ---

Lil

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 34. The envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Foote in Wharton and postmarked Washington, D.C. The letter is typed on two pages of thin eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²"A.N.T.A." or "ANTA" refer to the American National Theatre and Academy in New York (Castleberry, *Genesis* xii).

³In her letters, Lillian often referred to Vincent Donehue as "Vinnie."

⁴Lillian's "typing errors" in this letter were minor: two words in the text were crossed out with "x's" and corrected.

January 11, 1949. Lillian to Foote's parents.¹

Tuesday, Jan. 11

Dear Hallie and Horton --

Horton left for New York Sunday night and may be gone for a week and he asked me to drop you a note in the interim to tell you that he had written you at San Antonio and just wanted to make sure you got the letter as you didn't mention receiving it.

The reason for the New York trip is to see about the possibility of selling his new play, *The Chase*. We feel that it very possibly may be sold but are not counting on anything because we know how things in New York are. I talked to Horton last night on the phone - he's staying with George and Jane and evidently so far things are going well. His agent is crazy about the play and thinks she can do something with it commercially. If anything more develops, I'll write you about it. Another reason for the trip was to take the kids the puppy dog we had promised them. It was really a sight to see Horton get ready for that trip. He was so nervous about the dog (we put it in the wicker basket that Baboo sent us with the fruit) and had all sorts of visions of the dog crying on the train, etc. However, Horton said he behaved beautifully and the kids were just wild over it. I talked to Enid on the phone and she sounded so excited and happy.²

Another very good thing has happened for Horton - Gorham Munson has asked him to conduct a playwriting seminar at the University of Kansas City, Missouri during a Writer's Conference that is being held there for 10 days - from

June 7 to 17th. The time is perfect because it's in between semesters and won't interfere. They will pay him for it - \$300.00 - and although we won't save anything as I plan to go along as well, it will cover expenses and it will be nice to make the trip. Also yesterday, Horton had a letter from an amateur group to ask him for permission to do "Only the Heart"³ for two days in Phila. We're giving them a special rate of \$35 for the two nights as the group said it hasn't much money but this is the second check he will get from "Only the Heart," having got another one about 6 weeks ago for 50.

I want to tell you again how much we loved your Christmas gifts. Horton still hasn't had time to try the trousers but will when things settle down once more. We plan to exchange the Concordance for a less expensive edition (that is, if you won't mind) so that we can have both - the one for Miscel. Writings and S. and H. This once, you know, is only for M.W.⁴

I have been having trouble shaking off a bad cold and cough which has been hanging on for over 2 weeks but feel as though I'm beginning to make some improvement. It's so discouraging because I think I've licked it and a day later I slip right back.

Horton probably told you all about New York so won't repeat. We had a wonderful time and of course, got all the snow.

We'll be thinking about you and both of us send our deepest love,

Lil

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 35. The envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Foote in Wharton and postmarked Washington, D.C. The letter is typed on one page of thin eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²“The kids” referred to by Lillian are most likely her two nieces, Enid and Sharon, the children of Lillian’s sister Rita Vallish Mayberry. In her letter, Lillian mentions talking to Enid on the phone about the puppy. (Barbara Hallie, the oldest child of Lillian and Horton, was not born until a year after this letter was written.)

³Foote’s play *Only the Heart* was first produced by the American Actors Company in New York at the Provincetown Playhouse in 1942, and then was produced on Broadway in 1944 (Castleberry, *Genesis* xi).

⁴Lillian’s abbreviations “Miscel. Writings and S. and H.” refer to *Miscellaneous Writings* and *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Eddy.

c. 1949. Foote to parents.¹

Monday

Dearest Folks:

Well, we are settled in our new home in the country and are loving it. I wonder what you would think of the Fall here. It’s the first time I’ve been really in the country this time of year, and it’s very beautiful. The leaves are all vivid colors, and so varied. We have a big apple tree in the yard and Lil and I picked some this morning. We are going to get a box off to you.

We got our moving over in a very orderly fashion. It is amazing what you accumulate in four years. We left Washington in the right mood,² very grateful for all we had there, and looking forward to the future.

It is quiet here, very, and to our liking. We are in bed by nine, read awhile and usually asleep by ten. Up early in the morning. Lil has never looked better or more beautiful, I think, and everyone is commenting on it, so it isn't only my prejudice.

Mrs. Vallish is away most of the time in town, so there is only Mr. Vallish,³ Lil and myself. She cooks and takes care of the house, and she enjoys doing those things. The house is very large (five bedrooms) but compact so it isn't hard to take care of.

I have already begun my routine of work. I send in my application for the Guggenheim next week. I have a nice list of sponsors and feel my project is interesting. I would be very happy if I got it.

I am sorry Betty⁴ is having nausea again. It is too bad she is having such a time of it. Enjoyed Babs' letter and again nominate her for woman of the year.

I am so happy for Daisy Brooks that she likes S.W. I know she will have an exciting time of it. Wish I could slip in on her in the midst of it all.

What about the Irvins and what are they doing in P.a., or was it Beaumont? Are they thinking of getting a small house in Wharton?⁵

How did Charlie make out on his crop, Lil is always asking. They made quite an impression on her.

I got your letter, Dad, and thanks.

Love from us,

H.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 20. Without an envelope, the letter is typed on the front side of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch white paper. “Monday” is handwritten in ink in what appears to be Foote’s handwriting in the upper margin of the letter. The letter is otherwise undated, except for the date “1949” in pencil in the upper right-hand corner.

On a “post-it” note attached to the letter is written in pencil, “Living in Pa. with Lil’s parents. Stayed there about 3 months.”

²Horton and Lillian lived in Washington from 1945 to 1949 (Castleberry, *Genesis* xii). Foote writes in his memoir about his decision to leave Washington, D.C.:

I was working long hours teaching, directing, and trying to get some writing done, when one day it came to me: as grateful as I was for the opportunity I had been given to have my own theater and to experiment as much as I pleased, I wanted to go back to my earlier way of writing. I felt I was a storyteller, and that I wanted to write plays simply and directly. (*Beginnings* 268)

³Mr. and Mrs. Vallish were the parents of Foote’s wife Lillian.

⁴Betty was the wife of Foote’s brother John.

⁵“P.a.” is probably an abbreviation for Port Arthur, Texas, which is 18 miles from Beaumont. The “Irvins” to whom Foote referred may be his Aunt Loula and Uncle John Irving. Loula was Foote’s paternal great-aunt, the sister of his grandmother, Corrella (*Farewell* 37, 48-49).

October 1, 1951. Foote to parents.¹

Dearest Folks:

We are well and happy and busy. We just made final arrangements about “The Chase” today.² If all goes as expected it should be on by January. Will write full details later this week.

Our weather is getting much colder. I wore a topcoat yesterday. We are having dinner with Vincent tonight.

Love from all of us –

Horton –

¹This note, written on a postcard, is located in Box 3, folder 37.

²José Ferrer produced *The Chase* on April 15, 1952, in New York (Foote, *The Chase* 3).

November 13, 1952. Albert H. Foote to son Horton and Lillian.¹

Wharton Texas

Nov 13 – 1952

My dearest Son and Daughter,

I am enclosing a gift for my namesake, of whom I am very proud – This is something I have always wanted – Al. H. Foote III² – and I know he is going to do big things in the world when he grows up. How could he do otherwise with such a fine Mother and Father –

Well the election is over, I haven't read a paper since, as they are all full of hot air and false stories, however I have taken myself in hand and haven't let it get me down, as I know we were right, and I think some around here already realize it, as things this early have shown signs of tightening up in the way of business, and looks gloomy to them –

John, and Aunt Rosa³ have really taken it hard and still talk it day in and day out –

Mother, and I wrote Stevenson, and Harry the next day each a long letter, and yesterday received a letter from Mr. Stevenson in answer, and I am expecting one from Harry in the next few days, what a man, how I love him.

I guess Mother has written you about our pecans, we have a lovely crop. I got up Monday morning before daybreak, and picked the things by flashlight, almost a full wash tub, I had to stop at eight and go to the store and could hardly walk it's a job believe me, as soon as we catch up we are going to send you some.

Mother and I are going to Houston Sunday to spend the day with Baboo as it's her birthday, however between you and me I am not looking forward to it with any pleasure, as Aunt Laura and Oliver with the streets all on the other side of the fence I know this election is coming up, and try as I can I get mad when they start cussing Harry Truman. I know what he has done for the folks I love most here – and if he hasn't helped men like Oliver I will jump in the river –

Well better stop before I say too much, Uncle Will⁴ and I tied up over him two weeks ago –

I love you all so much

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 14. Without an envelope, the letter is handwritten in black ink on the front side of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch white paper.

²The eldest son of Horton and Lillian, Albert Horton Foote, III, was born on November 7, 1952 (Castleberry, *Genesis* xii).

³Foote's Aunt Rosa Vaughn was one of his mother's two sisters who lived to adulthood. The other sister was Laura Lee, who later married Oliver Ray. They had three brothers, Thomas Henry (called "Brother" by the family), John Speed (who signed his letters "Speed"), and William Smith (referred to as "Billy" or "Billie"). Two of their sisters, Jenny and Daisy, died in infancy (Foote, *Farewell* 63, 154).

⁴Married to Lily Dale, Foote's father's sister, Uncle Will is described in Foote's memoir *Farewell* as the prosperous, expensively dressed, boastful salesman and an owner of a Packard automobile. Foote states that on his visits to Wharton from his home in Houston, Uncle Will "would announce, as if we hadn't heard it many times, why he had left the Democratic party and become a Republican" (118-19). Foote's Uncle Will and Aunt Lily were models for two characters in the *Orphans' Home Cycle*, and their stories inspired elements of the plot of *The Young Man from Atlanta*. Foote writes in *Farewell*,

Uncle Will came to a sad end. His beloved wholesale grocery company fired him when he was in his early sixties, and he soon after suffered a heart attack. Two years earlier, their son, Bill, thirty-seven, who worked for an electronics company in Georgia, went to a lake in Florida one afternoon, and though he couldn't swim, walked into the deep water until he drowned. (119)

March 27, 1953. Albert H. Foote to son Horton.¹

Friday March 27 – 53

My Darling Boy: As you know I am no letter writer, but my sweetheart has been gone almost a week – this is the longest time I have ever been away from her in 38 years, and I have got to stand another week, (if I can) I was never so lonely in all my life and between, you and me I don't think it fair – Don't ever let yours get away and leave you alone it doesn't make sense, life's so short –

Mother asked that I tell you she is so tied up with classes will not be able to write you until she gets back –

Yesterday morning I was on my way to Post office after eating breakfast, and a very fine looking gentleman called me from his car, I waited until he came up didn't know him, we shook hands, and he said he wanted to tell me he had seen all three of your plays on T.V. and thought all good – but the last a masterpiece,² and could I tell him when your next would come on, of course I couldn't – says he and his wife watched each Sunday for the advertising of it – my chest by this time was way out, and it gave me a lift I needed badly for the day. I found out later he is a Mr. McAlexander and Assistant dean of the Wharton Junior College – just came here this year, now I wrote mother to tell this one to that one-horse Houston Post reporter.

Son, you don't know how proud I am of you. I always knew you would make it – You had just the right kind of wife. and I thank “God” every day for you having found her, in my eyes she is tops –

Oh how I have enjoyed going down the street, and having friends, strangers and all stop and tell me how wonderful your plays are, and damn it, you deserve every inch of it –

Just received a sweet letter from John he seems to think it's his duty to help keep my spirits up while Mother's away – but that's hard to do – however he is also a fine boy and I am proud of him, hear every day also nice things of him –

Remember me with all my love to Lil, and my two sweet grandchildren and keep loads of love for yourself –

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 14. Without an envelope, the letter is handwritten in black ink on the front and back of two pages eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch white business stationery with “Al. H. Foote, Men’s Furnishings, Hats – Clothing, Wharton, Texas” printed in the top margin.

²The “masterpiece” that Foote’s father referred to is most likely the Goodyear Television Playhouse production of *The Trip to Bountiful*, which aired on March 1, 1953. Produced by Fred Coe and directed by Vincent Donohue, the broadcast of the teleplay featured Lillian Gish as Mrs. Carrie Watts (Foote, *Harrison, Texas: Eight Television Plays* 217, 265).

July 1, 1953. Albert H. Foote to son Horton.¹

Wednesday July – 1 – 53

My darling boy:

I want to thank you, your sweet wife, and my lovely grandchildren for the book sent me on father’s day. I appreciate it more because it is something I had longed for. I know I would rather have books than anything else in the world – I am now reading for the second time “The Life of Jackson” that you, and Lil gave me in 1945, and expect to read it several times more, as I am crazy about it –

Well we miss not having you all here this summer, it has been a perfect season so far, even though Mother, Baboo, Aunt Rosa, and Daisy Brooks² think it very hot,³ I never get near a fan, sleep like a baby at night, and work hard all day, so what else should one want, also wear my coat to Church on Sunday as well as

to the store. I tell them it's in their thinking about it all the time, last Sunday the ladies were fanning and talking about the weather in light dresses, and I came out of church with my coat still on, and my shirt as dry as when I put it on in the morning.

Well I enjoyed your last play⁴ as much as the rest, and of course the big kick I got was on the streets the next morning having my friends, and some folks I didn't even know stopping me and saying they thought it wonderful. I will tell you now son: I think the thing that puts you over more than anything else, is your leaving out all smoking and drinking. I don't know how many have told me this. Lots of them do these things themselves, but the don't like to see girls and older ladies doing it –

I am bending every effort to fix things here so Mother, and I can get to New York in January, I have just got to see you all and God willing we will make it some way –

Kiss Lil and the babies for me and remember I love each one of you the same.

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 14. Without an envelope, the letter is handwritten in black ink on the front side of four pages unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch white paper.

²Daisy Brooks was the daughter of Foote's mother's sister Rosa.

³*The Farmer's Almanac* reports that on July 1, 1953, the temperature in Houston (which is about 60 miles from Wharton, Texas) was 93 degrees at its high point, with 74 percent humidity and very little wind.

⁴Foote's "last play" to which his father referred is most likely the Goodyear Television Playhouse production of *Expectant Relations*, which was broadcast on June 21, 1953. The television play was produced by Fred Coe and directed by Vincent Donohue (Foote, *Harrison, Texas: Eight Television Plays* 116).

July 7, 1954. Foote to family.¹

Dearest Mother, Barbara Hallie and Brother:

I got in last night at nine o'clock and the house seemed so lonesome without you all that I almost turned around and came back to Penn.

I hope it is as beautiful there as it has been here today.

Daddy went to lunch at the Playa with the editor of Rinehart² and then went back to the Publishing house and met all the officials. They seemed very pleased to have the book – I had dinner with Lucy and Nathan³ and now I'm back at home and going to do some work before going to bed.

I love you and miss you all three very much. You are very dear to me –

Horton –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 25, a brown-colored envelope with matching smaller stationery. The envelope is addressed in blue ink to Mrs. Horton Foote Jr., Miss Barbara Hallie Foote, and Mr. Albert Horton Foote III in Mt. Carmel, Pa. (where Lillian's family lived); return address of H. Foote in New York; postmarked New York. The letter was handwritten in blue ink on all sides of folded brown stationery; in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of the letter is written in lighter blue ink "7.7.54."

²Rinehart and Company published the novel *The Chase* in 1956 (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii).

³Lucy Kroll was Foote's literary agent for more than five decades. Nathan Kroll, Lucy's husband, studied the violin at Juillard. He conducted music for films, and then became a producer of film documentaries (Tommasini 14). In 1997, the Library of Congress hosted a Nathan Kroll film series.

c. 1954. Foote to father Albert H. Foote.¹

Thursday.

Dearest Daddy:

We all want to wish you a happy birthday and Father's day and wish we could have been in Texas to share the two events with you. We have a present on the way, Elmer Davis's book. I noticed when I was home you didn't have it, but in the meantime if it has been given you please send it back and I can exchange it.

I have been working very hard since I've been back and things seem to be progressing very nicely on all fronts. The Publishers called yesterday to say they would like to have my novel very much. Of course, I only have a third of it done, but we will sign contracts now and they will give me an advance to finish the rest of it. I rather thought it would work out this way from the lunch I had with one of the Editors on Monday. He and four other editors had read the part I have finished and seemed very enthusiastic about the work, the chief or head editor had it then and it was his decision they had to wait for final confirmation. Anyway, that is in now. I don't know when the contract will finally be negotiated as they are getting out their summer lists of books now and said it would be awhile before they could get back to work this out. Also Kazan's lawyer called to assure us the sale for "Bountiful" would go through,² but Kazan was on location with a picture in Selinas California and hard to reach by phone and that is why contracts have not been drawn up yet. I don't know how much Lillian has told you of this in her letter, but we received an offer from Kazan to buy "Bountiful" for motion pictures about two weeks ago. The price is not staggering and Lucy wanted to ask for much more, but this one time I asked to go ahead and sell as it seems to me he will make a fine picture of it and at the present time he has great importance in Hollywood and that other values will come from the sale greatly outweighing the smallness of price. I hope it will all be settled by next week. I have written another Television play since I have been back and have asked them not to do it,

though, until next Fall, but they may have to go ahead and produce it this summer as it is a comedy and they lack comedies.

The summer weather hasn't materialized yet. I am still wearing my tweed suit and that should give you some idea of how chilly it is here. The children always have to have sweaters on when they go out. They are both growing like weeds and are more and more company for each other. Last Saturday we took them to Central Park to the Carousel and brother had his first hobbyhorse ride. We took Linda Blad along for company for Barbara Hallie. Brother would be riding yet if we would let him. Tomorrow afternoon I am going to take Barbara Hallie to the Theater for the first time. We will see "Golden Apple" a musical that was written by friends of ours who gave me passes. I think she will get a real kick out of it.

Fred, Vincent and I are having a meeting on "Traveling Lady" this Monday. Fred tells me he will have his schedule worked out by the first of July, so we will have rehearsal dates by then I imagine.

We miss you all very much, the children talk about you all the time and tell everybody that New York can't compare with Texas.

Love,

Horton.

¹This undated letter is located in Box 3, folder 25. Without an envelope, it is typed in the front side of three pages eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

Two details in the text of this undated letter led me to assign the year of 1954 as the date it had probably been written. First, in this letter, Foote mentions “The Publishers” and “my novel.” Rinehart and Company, the publishers of his novel *The Chase* were mentioned in another letter dated July 7, 1954. Second, Foote mentions in this letter a meeting with Fred [Coe] and Vincent [Donehue] to discuss *The Traveling Lady*, which opened in a theater in New York City on October 27, 1954, with Donehue directing. It appears Fred Coe had planned to produce *The Traveling Lady* as a teleplay; however, in Box 6, folder 5, there is a copy of a letter written by Coe dated January 6, 1954, in which he states that the television production of *The Traveling Lady* had to be postponed.

²Horton and Lillian did not sell the film rights for *The Trip to Bountiful* to Elia Kazan in the mid-1950s. Instead, the Footes and Sterling VanWagenen produced the film in 1985. Peter Masterson directed the film, which featured actors Geraldine Page, John Heard, and Carlyn Glynn (Foote, *Three Trips* 146). Geraldine Page won an Academy Award for her portrayal of Carrie Watts, and Foote was nominated for an award for “Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium.” (I was not able find any reference to the offer that Kazan made to purchase the rights to *The Trip to Bountiful* in the boxes of correspondence by Foote’s agent Lucy Kroll. This would have enabled me to assign an exact date to Foote’s letter, which would have been written two weeks after Kazan’s offer.)

c. January 1958. Lillian to Foote's parents.¹

Tues

Dearest Hallie and Horton –

Just a note to say that I've ordered your pictures and will have them Saturday at which time I'll write you a long letter. I'm up to my ears in thank you notes now and am leaving them out tonight.

We just loved our visit with you and couldn't have asked for a nicer one. We were also blessed with the weather. It snowed once more the night you left and then we had rain and it's never stopped – not even today.

The children talk about you a great deal and miss you. Barbara Hallie is doing well with her music and Walter continues to keep us all hopping. Brother has been very good with him and I'm hoping he'll calm down.

Vincent's play opens Thurs., Jan. 30th² so keep your fingers crossed.

Love you –

Lillian

¹This letter, located in Box 3, folder 40, is written on a small, folded personalized card on heavyweight off-white paper with "Mrs. Horton Foote" printed on the front, blank inside, with matching envelope; the envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Foote in Wharton, Texas and postmarked Nyack. The date on the postmark is unclear, except for the year 1958. I assigned the date of January 1958 to the letter because, according a contemporary review in the

New York Times, Vincent Donehue directed *Sunrise at Campobello* which opened on January 30, 1958 (Atkinson 25), a date identical to that mentioned in the last line of Lillian's letter.

²In a letter dated February 18, 1958, Lillian writes to Foote's parents about the opening performance of the play directed by Donehue:

Guess you haven't heard from us since Vincent's opening. We had wonderful seats in the second row center. Sat next to Mary Martin and her husband. Elliott Roosevelt sat directly in front of Horton and there were many other celebrities there as well. Adlai Stevenson sat back a few rows and about two rows behind me sat Jack Kennedy and his wife. Mrs. Roosevelt got her seats way in the back on the right because she said she didn't want her presence to distract from the play.

It is especially interesting that Eleanor and Elliott Roosevelt attended the opening of the play, since they are two of the characters in it. *Sunrise at Campobello*, written by Dore Schary, which covers the three-year period beginning the day Franklin Roosevelt contracted infantile paralysis and ending 34 months later when he was able to stand for a short time to nominate Al Smith for the presidency of the United States (Atkinson 25).

Lillian wrote that the play appeared to be a success: "Evidently the play is doing wonderful business and will probably run for several years." A contemporary review by Brooks Atkinson that appeared in the *New York Times* on January 31, 1958, states, "If Mr. Schary's taste is impeccable, so is Vincent J. Donehue's as the director, Ralph Alwang's as designer and every member of the

cast. Mr. Bellamy's portrait of F.D.R. could not be improved on" (25). Two years later, Donehue directed the film version of *Sunrise at Campobello*, which was nominated for four Academy Awards.

March 19, 1958. Lillian to Foote's parents.¹

Sun.

Dearest Folks –

So sorry to be this late in writing you but with P.T.A., music lessons, etc. I thought I'd never get caught up.

First, to answer an earlier question – Barbara Hallie wears a size 3 D or E in a shoe. I hope her foot doesn't grow any larger – Horton is threatening to bind them. I think the play shoes are a wonderful idea and she'd love them. We bought her a new English style bike and traded her old bike in on a good used boy's bike for Brother. She's planning on inviting 15 girls to her party² so I can see that we'll have quite a day of it.

Bonnie had to leave because of an "auntie" who had a stroke – We think she just got the urge to go back home but were fortunate enough to get an immediate replacement from the same agency. The girl we have now – Flora – is 32 and came the same morning Bonnie left. Although only here 2 days, she seems fine and is actually a much better worker than Bonnie – faster and cleaner. I only hope she can be fairly permanent.

Horton said to tell you that Harrison, Tx.³ is being translated into Arabic. “A Trip to Bountiful” will be produced in a theatre in Holland because it went over so well in television there. “The Dancers”⁴ has been included in a new textbook anthology by Harcourt Brace. The plays off-Broadway⁵ haven’t started rehearsals yet although they expect to some time this month – It hasn’t worked out for Irene Selznick to produce Horton’s play but we know that the right producers will be found.

For Horton’s birthday, we went to see Bill Inge’s⁶ play and enjoyed it. He also gave us seats to his play “Two for the SeeSaw” which we saw last week.

Have to close now as it is very late.

Love to you both –

L.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 40. With a small envelope, the letter is written on a card with images of pansies on the front; the envelope is addressed in blue ink to Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Foote in Wharton, Texas; return address Foote in Upper Nyack, New York and postmarked Nyack, New York. Lillian unfolded the card and covered all blank surfaces, inside and outside, with writing in blue ink.

²The eighth birthday of Barbara Hallie, the oldest child of Horton and Lillian, was on March 31, 1958.

³*Harrison, Texas: Eight Television Plays by Horton Foote* is a published collection of the scripts of eight television productions originally broadcast on the Philco Playhouse, the Goodyear Television Playhouse, and the Gulf Playhouse between March 1, 1953, and March 7, 1954. The eight teleplays published in *Harrison, Texas* are *A Young Lady of Property*, *John Turner Davis*, *The Tears of My Sister*, *The Death of the Old Man*, *Expectant Relations*, *The Midnight Caller*, *The Dancers*, and *The Trip to Bountiful*.

⁴The teleplay *The Dancers* was first broadcast on March 7, 1954, and featured James Broderick and Joanne Woodward. Fred Coe was the producer, and the director was Vincent Donehue.

⁵The off-Broadway plays to which Lillian referred are most likely *The Midnight Caller* and *John Turner Davis*; both productions were originally produced as teleplays in 1953 (Foote, *Harrison, Texas* 41, 153) and, in 1958, opened in the Sheridan Square Playhouse in New York (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii).

⁶William (Bill) Inge won a Pulitzer Prize for the play *Picnic* in 1953 and an Academy Award for best screenplay for *Splendor in the Grass* in 1960 (William Inge Center for the Arts).

c. October 18, 1958. Horton to Lillian.¹

Sat –

Sweetheart:

Just a note to tell you I love you. We are all working hard here. They have cast Geraldine Page and Sterling Hayden in the leads.² I met Sterling Hayden today and I think he will be wonderful for the part. John Frankenheimer and I are working very well together and I like and respect him so much – I am working tomorrow with him. I tried to call you tonight. I picked a time when I could talk to the children too. I'll try again tomorrow – Thank you for the pictures arranged everywhere and everyone thinks the children are beautiful, and so do I.

love and kisses to you all –

Horton

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 5. It is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages of Foote's personalized stationery, with a matching personalized envelope with a printed return address in Upper Nyack, New York. The envelope is addressed to Mrs. Horton Foote in Upper Nyack, New York, and postmarked Los Angeles, California.

The date on the postmark of the attached envelope is unclear. I assigned the date of October 18, 1958, to this letter, since this is the date that falls on the Saturday the letter would most likely have been written.

²Geraldine Page played the Young Woman and Sterling Hayden played the Tall Convict in the Playhouse 90 televised production of *Old Man*, an adaptation of the short story by William Faulkner. Fred Coe was the producer and John Frankenheimer directed the television play, which was originally broadcast on November 20, 1958 (Foote, *Three Plays* 1, 143).

October 24, 1958. Foote to children Barbara Hallie, Horton, and Walter.¹

Dearest Barbara Hallie, Horton and Walter:

I wanted to buy you something here for Halloween but I was afraid it would not get to you in time, so I am enclosing a dollar for each of you and I want you to get what you like for yourselves –

I am enjoying California. Mother sent me some pictures of you and the dog² and I liked them so much –

Thank you Barbara Hallie for your letter – Write me again –

I love you and miss you –

Daddy

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 24. Foote wrote the letter on heavyweight, personalized stationery with a matching envelope with a printed return address in Nyack, New York. The envelope is postmarked Los Angeles, California.

The envelope is addressed in blue ink in Foote's handwriting, to: "Miss Barbara Hallie Foote, Mr. Albert Horton Foote, III, Mr. Walter Vallish Foote, Nyack, N. Y." In October 1958, Foote's daughter Barbara Hallie was eight years old, his son Horton was almost six years old, and Walter was two years old.

²Their one dog at this time was Dickie, who was Foote's son Horton's dog. They soon had another dog, Tony. In a letter originally undated to which I assigned the year 1958, Lillian wrote to Horton,

Barbara Hallie has been begging us for a small house dog ever since Brother got Dickie so we got her a small Dachshund a few weeks ago. His name is Tony and he's very cute. Being small, he eats very little so he's no expense to keep up. Walter just adores him and it is really more his dog because Barbara Hallie is away at school so much. He loves him up and romps with him – the dog is also a good baby sitter. I close the playroom door with him and Walter together and Walter stays there for a long time without complaining.

Although in her letters Lillian seemed always to maintain a surprising level of self-composure even in the most stressful of circumstances, as the family accumulated many more pets, Lillian's letters sometimes took on a slightly exasperated tone, as in this passage in a letter written about a year later:

Tony was just crying outside the study door so I let him in. He loves to nap on the sofa while I use the typewriter; he's a very lovable animal and even Gladys spoils him – but don't worry – Dickie also gets all the attention in the world and Brother especially is so loyal to him. I don't know if I told you but Freckles never did come back – has been

missing now for two months now and Blackie has been gone for about five weeks.

October 24, 1958. Horton to Lillian.¹

Friday morning –

Thank you so much for sending the manuscript of “Midnight Caller.”² I was thrilled with the pictures of the children – Now please get Barbara Hallie to take one of you for me – I am glad you called Col. Fitzgerald, and think he has behaved very nicely! I really can’t blame him for not going to all that expense – Maybe the ceiling will stay fresh for awhile and if they will coat the tile bathroom floor that might help.

I am very happy and pleased with my working conditions. Everyone is extremely nice and helpful, and all seem deeply committed to the script. Fred is just like a new person. Warm, responsive and giving. John Frankenheimer is extremely nice, too. Geraldine Page is playing the girl and Sterling Hayden the Convict. I am very pleased with the choice. I have just finished some rewriting and will have a further meeting today.

Rehearsals begin next Friday. I am living simply, but love my hotel room, and am able to get a lot of work done.

Don’t you work too hard, I know the house will be beautiful when you are through, but take your time –

I miss you and love you – kiss the children for me –

Horton

¹This letter, located in Box 1, folder 5, was handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages of Foote's personalized stationery with matching envelope with printed return address in Upper Nyack, New York. The envelope, postmarked Los Angeles, California, is addressed to Mrs. Horton Foote in Upper Nyack, New York.

²Lillian's sending the script of *The Midnight Caller* suggests that while working with the producer, director, and cast of the television production of his adaptation of Faulkner's *Old Man*, Foote was also preparing for the theatrical debut of *The Midnight Caller*, which had been originally broadcast as an episode of the Philco Television Playhouse series on December 13, 1953 (Foote, *Harrison, Texas: Eight Television Plays* 153). In 1958, *The Midnight Caller* and *John Turner Davis* were performed onstage in New York (Castleberry, *Genesis* xii-xiii).

October 28, 1958. Foote to parents.¹

Dearest Folks:

I am here now at C.B.S. I have just had lunch with Fred Coe. We ate at the Farmers Market, and had Mexican Food.

The decision to do the play here was very sudden. They called me, or Lucy on Monday and asked if I could be here that Wed. That couldn't be worked so I arrived out here the following Monday. The play, "The Old Man," takes place during the Mississippi Flood of 1927, and has many technical problems to solve in production. That is why I came out earlier than usual. John Frankenheimer is the director, and he is the one I wanted. Geraldine Page and Stewart Hayden will play the leads. I understand it is to be the biggest production ever done on Playhouse 90. I am staying at the Montecito and have a nice apartment. I have a kitchen and do most of my own cooking, as I want to be quiet and alone as much as possible. I begin reading on Dec. 1st and I am getting ready for that. The T.V. show is on Nov. 20th.²

I talked to Lillian and the children yesterday and they all sounded fine.

I am sorry that I didn't get to see Sally and Louie, but after I talked to them Monday I heard about California and I spent every minute getting ready to leave –

I know you've seen Nan³ by now and heard how our meeting came about. Friday night on the train it occurred to me that she might still be there. I was delighted to see her.

California is very warm this time of the year. The Fall was so vivid in Nyack. I can't believe it is Nov. almost out here –

love –

H.

P.S. I have just received the second of your letters. I was distressed to hear of Lucille Goodlett⁴ –

H –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 28. The envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Al. H. Foote in Wharton, Texas, and postmarked Los Angeles, California; the personalized envelope has a printed return address of Horton Foote in Upper Nyack, New York. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front side of three pages lined yellow paper removed from a legal-sized pad.

²November 20, 1958, was the date of the broadcast of Foote's adaptation of Faulkner's *Old Man*.

³"Nan" is most likely Foote's cousin Nan Outlar from Wharton, who visited and corresponded with Foote and often wrote about his successes in her column in the *Wharton Journal-Spectator*.

⁴In one of Lillian's 113 undated letters to Horton in Box 1, folder 16 (which I have assigned the date of October 1958), Lillian wrote about reading an obituary for Lucille Goodlett in the Wharton newspaper: "I just glanced at a copy of the Spectator now which came in the mail – it was shocking to read about Lucille Goodlett. She was only 38 and died of a cerebral hemorrhage. She was a rather handsome girl as I remembered her."

January 19, 1959. Foote to children Barbara Hallie, Horton, and Walter.¹

Dearest Barbara Hallie, Horton and Walter:

I thought you might enjoy hearing about the trip I took on Saturday with Joe Anthony.² He came for Daddy at ten thirty and we rode out into the country, twenty-five miles to be exact, and visited Knotts farm. This is an old California Fruit Farm that has been made over into a pioneer Western Mining town. They have brought in old buildings from Nevada and Colorado and placed them here. The buildings were once hotels, boarding houses and saloons in mining and frontier towns. They have an old fashioned railroad running through the town and you can ride on that, also ox carts, horses and etc. I saw two Indian squaws and two Indian braves, all dressed in their native costumes. It is here that I bought the presents I sent you. They also have all kinds of animals at the farm: horses, cows, pigs, chickens and many kinds of birds.

We had lunch here and then we drove to the Pacific Ocean to Marine land. They have two huge tanks here, each three stories high filled with water. In one tank they have porpoises and four whales and in the other every kind of conceivable fish. I counted over a hundred different varieties. Giant turtles, sharks, stingrays, squids, eels were among some of the species I recognized.

Outside in the open air they have a huge tank for seals. Here every hour the seals put on a show. They are trained to do stunts and it is astounding what all they can do. They race each other to get objects that are thrown in the water, pick them up as dogs do sticks and take them back to their trainers, jump through

hoops of fire, play baseball with each other, and basketball. I thought they were smart until I went inside to see the whales and the porpoises. They can do just as many tricks. Also the whales jump about five feet up in the air out of the water to get fish their trainers hold up for them to grab. I didn't realize that fish had this kind of intelligence. I saw a man get in the big tank with all the fish and feed them. He stood on the ground, he was covered with a round thing over his head, and a hose with oxygen went down to him so he could breathe, and the fish followed after him like the cats do Mother when it's feeding time.

Then in a cage all by himself, I saw an octopus. I wouldn't want to be alone at the bottom of the ocean with that fellow. After that we went back to Hollywood and ate at a Restaurant that serves Hawaiian food. Would you like to eat there some day? It is very good.

Mother tells me you are being very sweet and good children. I am sure you are. I love all three of you very much, and certainly miss you. I wish you would write me. I appreciated your letter very much, Barbara Hallie. Horton, what are you learning in school? Tell Mother so she can write me.

All of you give Mother a kiss for me. Walter I think you talk so well. Tell Gladys hello.

Love,

Daddy.

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 24. An airmail envelope with a printed return address of Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc., in Burbank, California (postmarked Burbank, California) is addressed in blue ink in Foote's handwriting to Miss Barbara Hallie Foote, Mr. Albert Horton Foote, III, and Mr. Walter Vallish Foote in Nyack, N. Y. Foote's letter is typed on the front side of three pages of thin eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch Warner Bros. letterhead stationery.

²Joe Anthony, a lifelong friend of Lillian and Horton and their family, was an actor, writer, and director. Anthony collaborated with Foote in the theater in the early years of their careers. In 1972, Anthony directed the film *Tomorrow*.

January 29, 1959. Horton to Lillian.¹

Thursday –

Dearest:

Your second Monday letter arrived this morning. I am so pleased with your reaction to "The Indian Fighters." And I thank you for sharing your feelings so sweetly with me. If you knew how much joy and inspiration comes from my marriage to you. I love you devotedly.

I went to Church last night and I enjoyed the service. I am going tonight with my secretary to do some shopping for the children for Valentine's. I want to get their gifts off in time for them to get by Valentine's.

I'm having dinner on Friday night with Lou Peterson.² Saturday Joe Anthony, Dan Petrie³ and myself will take a ride together. Probably go to the mountains.

I love you –

Horton.

P.S. You can't write to me too often.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 6. It is handwritten in pencil on the front side of two pages of Warner Bros. letterhead; the envelope has the printed return address of Warner Bros., Burbank, Calif., addressed in pencil to Mrs. Horton Foote in Upper Nyack, NY.

²Louis Peterson (1922-1998) was a playwright and screenwriter. He is known for writing plays such as *Take a Giant Step*, which explored race and identity (Gussow 19).

³For five decades, Daniel Petrie (1921-2004) was a television and film director. Among the films he directed was *A Raisin in the Sun* with Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, and Ruby Dee in 1961 (*New York Times*).

c. February 25, 1959. Lillian to Horton.¹

Friday – 5 P.M.

My darling,

Am sending this on to you Spec. Del. So you may have over the weekend – of the papers so far there are 3 good ones out of five. I don't know what this will mean in terms of the play running but I talked to Eva² and she said she felt they would get a pretty good run out of it. She said Stella Holt had called Lucy³ Thursday before the opening and said she had had theatre party people there Wed. night to preview the play and they all loved it so evidently she expects a lot of theatre parties. The Tribune was upsetting to read but suppose we must realize that we don't depend on these people – it's nice to have them like you but you can't eat your heart out if they don't.

It was difficult to talk to you last night, my sweetheart, because the phone was in the living room and everyone was around. This is my honest feeling about the performance. I felt the entire first act was done brilliantly – better than I've ever seen actors do it; in the 2nd and 3rd acts Marguerite Lenert did a switch from what she had been playing and kind of cried silently throughout the whole 2nd and 3rd acts. When she talked of Ray John Murray, she had tears through that whole scene, when she saw Bountiful, when she left, etc. I felt before, in the earlier performance that I saw, that when she related these events in her life, she was more matter of fact about it and was better for her character; in playing it softly, she tended to bring a self-pitying quality that I felt was out of character.

However, I only say this to you and everyone else loved her so it's just a matter of questioning her interpretation. As I told you on the phone Wed. after seeing the preview Tuesday, I was just bowled over by the 2nd and 3rd acts and although the writing was still as beautiful as ever, last night, they kind of settled down in terms of action. But oh, dearest, it is a beautiful, lovely play and as Vincent⁴ said to me after the first act, I had forgotten how brilliant Horton's writing was in this. He said O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* isn't one tenth of what this play is and I know he meant it very sincerely.

Darling, I have to pick up Brother at the Maidman's and mail this so I'll close now and write later. I do love you and hope you will not be too upset – I know you were disappointed at what I had to tell you this morning and just wish I could have talked to her later as there was a lot of confusion at the time.

I love you –

L.

¹This is the fifty-first undated letter of the 131 undated letters in Box 1, folder 16. Unaccompanied by an envelope, the letter is typed on one page of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

I assigned the date of February 27, 1959, to the letter because three of Horton's letters to Lillian written from February 23 to February 29, 1959, discuss Lillian's attending the opening performance of *The Trip to Bountiful* while Horton was away at Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank, California. Foote's letter of

February 23, states, “I am so happy you are going back to the opening of ‘The Trip to Bountiful.’” Lillian’s letter was written on a Friday; the day of the week of February 27, 1959. Horton’s letter dated February 26 (Thursday) states, “It was lovely talking to you yesterday. I am so pleased you liked the production of ‘The Trip to Bountiful’ and wish I could be with you tonight.” Lillian’s letter states that they spoke on the phone on Wednesday, which would correspond with the information about the phone call in Horton’s letter. In addition, in her letter, Lillian states that she attended the performance on a Tuesday, and in 1959, February 24, would have fallen on a Tuesday, which would also correspond with the information given in the dated letters regarding her plans to attend the performance after Monday, February 23, and her having seen the play before the phone call of Wednesday, February 25.

²“Eva” may have been Eva Marie Saint, who played the role of Thelma in the early performances of *The Trip to Bountiful*.

³Lucy Kroll was Foote’s agent in New York.

⁴The actor, writer, and award-winning director Vincent Donehue, who is mentioned in many of the letters in the Foote Collection, greatly admired Foote’s work and was a close friend for many years.

March 14, 1959. Foote to children Barbara Hallie, Horton, and Walter.¹

March 14, 1959

Dearest Barbara Hallie, Horton and Walter –

What a happy Birthday morning I had,² to wake up and get birthday cards from each of you, and a letter from Mom, with the beautiful snapshots of each of you.

I enjoyed talking to you so much on the telephone – last night. I was so lonesome for you, that I wanted to get right on the plane and fly home to you that night. But I feel my work is almost done and I will be home before you know it

love –

Daddy –

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 24. The envelope is addressed in blue ink in Foote's handwriting to Miss Barbara Hallie Foote, Mr. Horton and Walter Foote in Nyack, New York, and postmarked Los Angeles, California; the printed return address on the envelope is that of The Montecito in Hollywood, California. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of the stationery of The Montecito.

²Foote was born on March 14, 1916.

CHAPTER 6

THE YOUNG FAMILY, 1960-1968

The 1960's proved to be a prolific and creative decade for Horton Foote. During that time, he wrote a variety of works to be produced in different venues—the theater, television, and film. Foote's projects mentioned most often in the correspondence of this period were *The Shape of the River*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Traveling Lady*, *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, *The Chase*, *The Stalking Moon*, and *Tomorrow*.

The Shape of the River, a teleplay about the life of Mark Twain, was broadcast on Playhouse 90 on May 2, 1960 (Dawidziak 49). During the early 1960s, Foote wrote several other works for television, including *The Night of the Storm* and *The Gambling Heart* (Castleberry, *Genesis* xii).

The period of 1960 to 1968 was an especially productive one for Foote with regard to his work in film. Foote's letters of this period chronicle the development of his close working relationships with producer Alan Pakula, director Robert Mulligan, and actors Gregory Peck and Robert Duvall. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Foote's film adaptation of the novel by Harper Lee, was released in December 1962. Robert Mulligan, who also worked with Foote on several other film projects, directed this film. When Horton Foote won an Academy Award for "best screenplay based upon material from another medium," for his work in *To*

Kill a Mockingbird, producer Alan Pakula accepted the award on Foote's behalf. Gregory Peck won an award for best actor, and the set designers were also given an Academy Award for best art direction on a black-and-white film.

In 1965, Pakula and Mulligan worked again with Foote on the film version of his play *The Traveling Lady*, titled *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, after a song that Steve McQueen, who plays the role of Henry Thomas, sings in the film. A portion of the film *Baby the Rain Must Fall* was filmed in Foote's hometown of Wharton, and letters by Foote's mother described the excitement generated in the small Texas town during that period.

Lillian Hellman's screen adaptation of Foote's *The Chase* was released a few months after *Baby the Rain Must Fall*. In the correspondence by Foote's family, both movies are discussed—and compared. In a letter dated March 21, 1966, Foote's mother wrote, “Naturally, we all in our family like the other type (Baby the Rain Must Fall) of show.” Nan Outlar wrote in her “Nan About Town” column in the February 24, 1966, edition of the *Wharton Journal-Spectator*:

Been re-reading Horton Foote's “The Chase”—want to be able to realize the difference in his original story and the movie script written by Lillian Hellman based on his novel and play. “Based on” can mean a big difference, you know, and from advance movie publicity it seems to me that Miss Hellman has NOT captured the spirit of Horton's “town” (Harrison, Texas). Anything written by Horton throws a sympathetic light on small town life—true but sympathetic, whereas Miss Hellman just might have exaggerated and stressed the more lurid side of life.

Foote's mother and his cousin Nan's comments about Hellman's adaptation of *The Chase* reflect the general tenor of the comments in the correspondence regarding the film.

In 1967, Alan Pakula, Robert Mulligan, and Gregory Peck worked again with Foote on the screen adaptation of *The Stalking Moon* by Theodore Olsen. As they had done in the film projects of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, Pakula produced and Mulligan directed *The Stalking Moon*, which featured actors Gregory Peck and Eva Marie Saint.

On March 7, 1960, Foote's adaptation of William Faulkner's short story "Tomorrow" was broadcast live on a Playhouse 90 program on the CBS television network. Richard Boone played the role of Jackson Fentry, and Kim Stanley portrayed Sarah Eubanks (Foote, *Tomorrow* 55). In 1968, HB Playwrights Foundation produced a stage version of Foote's *Tomorrow*, featuring Robert Duvall as Jackson Fentry and Olga Bellin as Sarah Eubanks. Five years later, Foote's longtime friend and colleague Joseph Anthony directed the film production of *Tomorrow*, also with Robert Duvall and Olga Bellin playing the lead roles (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii).

Foote's family life changed significantly during the mid-1960s with their move from Nyack, New York, to New Boston, New Hampshire. Always an "honorary" citizen of Wharton, even during his years of living away from his hometown, Foote's move to New Hampshire was announced in the *Wharton Journal-Spectator*. In a news clipping dated September 29, 1966, that was

enclosed in a letter by Foote's mother (along with letters by three other family members) a paragraph in a column by Nan Outlar announces about "our Horton Foote":

Did you know that our Horton Foote and family have leased their home in Nyack, N.Y., packed up their best antiques and moved to their farm in New Hampshire? A little further from the bright lights of Broadway but the entire family adores the peace and quiet of the countryside, and they're not too far from Boston.

Foote's daughter Daisy, in a delightful personal essay published in 2005, writes about the family's move to New Hampshire as having benefited her father's career:

It was a curious time for my parents. They had been part of a fast-paced competitive life in New York. But my father and my mother knew that it was right to retreat from all of that. My dad desperately wanted to hold onto his own particular artistic voice, to maintain his integrity, his unique style. (9)

At this time Foote's quiet plays, with their rich subtext, were not as well received in New York as before, and during the years in New Hampshire in a type of self-imposed exile, he was better able to maintain his artistic independence and to write in his own distinctive way. In the years he lived in New Hampshire, Foote wrote many of the works for which he would later receive much critical acclaim.

Daisy writes that their eighteenth-century house in New Boston was "a glorious house complete with numerous fireplaces including the wide deep fireplace in the keeping room, wide textured floorboards, and an attic that would

become my father's study" (8). After moving in, the family restored the house, with careful attention to every detail, and filled it with antiques. During the family's years in New Hampshire, restoring their eighteenth-century house and collecting antiques became a passion for Lillian, as is evident in the letters she wrote to Horton.

During the 1960s, as Foote's children were growing up, he maintained a regular correspondence with each of them when he traveled. In 1967, when his son Horton was fourteen years old, Foote wrote in a letter, "I think one can often express things in letters you can't always say face to face – Anyway, I look forward to hearing from you and will try to answer, but will always manage one letter to you a week." On the same day, Foote wrote to his son Walter, "Your letter meant a very great deal to me, and I thank you deeply for it. I think you write a remarkable letter for an eleven-year-old boy." Many letters to his daughter Barbara Hallie, as well as his letters to Daisy have also been repositied in the archive. When Daisy was seven years old, Foote wrote a brief note to her: "Hello Sweet Daisy – I love you and miss you. It was nice talking to you on the phone, but how I would love to have a glimpse of you – Write me, as Mother says. Your handwriting is super now." Foote's letters to his children demonstrate his ability to relate to each of them as individuals. His correspondence also reveals his intense interest in his children's intellectual, moral, and spiritual development.

Of the correspondence dated 1960 to 1968 in the Horton Foote Collection, 29 letters were selected and transcribed for inclusion in this dissertation. These

letters were chosen to reveal the nature of Foote's work and professional collaborations during the 1960s, as well as his relationships with his family—his parents, his wife Lillian, and each of his children.

April 29, 1960. Foote to parents.¹

April 29, 1960

Dearest Folks:

Thanks so much for the letters. The play is all on tape now and I think we have a good show. I will see a rough of it tomorrow, and the next day we will put the score in, and that night I take a plane home and will see it Monday with Lillian and the children – I hope you enjoy it. It is called “The Shape of the River.”²

I am enclosing these letters from the children. I thought you might get a kick out of them – Please return them to me in Nyack – as I am still sentimental and will keep all of them. I just talked to Lillian. Barbara Hallie³ had just left for her dance and she said she looked lovely. I wish I could have been there –

I am delighted to hear about Billy.⁴ I was going to ask you to get him something from us as a gift and I would send you a check, but if he is out of the hospital now I'll wait, unless you know of something, or Rosa⁵ does –

love –

H –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 30. It was written on the printed stationery of the Del Capri Hotel and Apartment Suites in Los Angeles, California, with a matching envelope addressed in blue ink to Mr. and Mrs. Al. H. Foote in Wharton and postmarked Los Angeles. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages of the hotel stationery.

²*The Shape of the River* is Foote's teleplay about the life of Mark Twain, a Playhouse 90 production that was broadcast on May 2, 1960. For decades, this teleplay was thought to have been lost; however, it was recovered by Mark Dawidziak, who published a book in 2003 with the script of the teleplay and an account of his research. Dawidziak's book is entitled *Horton Foote's The Shape of the River: The Lost Teleplay about Mark Twain with History and Analysis*.

³In April 1960, Foote's eldest daughter, Barbara Hallie, was ten years old.

⁴Most likely, Foote referred in this paragraph to his mother's brother Billy Brooks.

⁵Rosa was Foote's mother's sister.

July 14, 1961. Albert H. Foote to son Horton.¹

Wharton, Texas

July 14 – 1961

My Dearest Horton,

I am going to stop all work, and try and write you a few lines, first I want to thank you for the two books you sent me for Father's day. You couldn't have selected two that would have pleased me more, I assure you –

Laura and Oliver came in Wednesday morning and stayed with us until Thursday noon. Laura and Mother stayed up until 12 P.M. putting up fig preserves. Our trees have been loaded this year. These were for Laura, and they got here just in time, as we had a heavy rain the next day and ruined most of them, they don't stand rain –

We will be looking forward to your play on Play House 90 next Tuesday, it's a repeat, but I like them just as much, Mother and I always bar all company on these nights –

It's been raining here for ten days now, and looks like we are going to lose our cotton crop again, however come Hell or high water we are coming to New York in January 1962. This will be three years in a row we have missed a crop – and my heart goes out to these farmers, a lot of them will have to give up if they miss this year –

I know Mother has written you all about our Seven hundred and fifty mile trip, to the West Texas hills on the fourth, and fifth of July. I never enjoyed anything more in my life, and she did all the driving² –

Kiss each one of my grandchildren for me, also a hug and kiss for your darling wife, and remember I love you more each day –

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 14. It is handwritten in ink on the front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²Foote's parents went on excursions by car in the Texas countryside and through small Texas towns frequently on holidays and weekends. Many of these trips were discussed in their letters.

April 29, 1963. Albert H. Foote to son Horton.¹

Wharton Texas

April 29 – 1963

My Dear Son: Enclosed you will find a complete picture of the weather here for 1960-1961-1962. I would have mailed sooner but the weatherman said it would take a few days to get it correct in full detail² – You will note the rainfall was very heavy in Sep 1961, however I don't count this, as that was the year and month, of our Gulf storm, and we don't have these very often –

I trust this will help you out, however, if there is anything else they want I assure you I will make every effort to get it for you –

I want you to know how proud I am of your success, and also John's success. God has given me all I could ask for in each of you – just as he has given me one of the world's dearest girls for a wife –

All my love as ever

Dad

P.S. I am enclosing two copies, as I thought you would like one for your files –

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 14. Without an accompanying envelope, this letter was handwritten in ink on the front of two pages eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch unlined paper.

²A page with figures compiled by George L. Scheel, Weather Observer, Wharton, Texas, with typed numbers for rainfall and temperature averages from September through November during the years 1960 to 1962 is attached to Foote's father's letter in the archive.

September 19, 1963. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Thursday P.M. –

Dearest folks,

Am enclosing clippings of others of “our famous family!” – A letter from Johnny received today written Monday night in Pt. Arthur – during our storm “Cindy” – Note the letter was mailed Wednesday and he was probably marooned there on acct. of the terrific rains in that section – He was at Mrs. Mcteer’s² where he wrote and said he had just beaten her 6 out of 7 games of dominoes – Am glad he was with Mrs. M. as the worst was centered around that section – This storm came up too fast – we were very fortunate – with some wind and squally looking and a slow drizzle of rain – which seems today to be clearing – Our pecan crop would have had a blow – also the late 2nd crop) rice but we were spared and very grateful, we are.

Everybody is discussing Travel – L³ – this week – Ralph Burgess has had word that Fisher, Pakula, Mulligan Anderson and a scene photographer will be here Tuesday – all kinds of reports fly around – a persistent one that a house has been rented for Steve M^cQueen and family – The reported owner – Arnold Luniker Co – had 25 calls of inquiry on one day – His secretary eats lunch at Lavania’s and brings in the news from there! We were surely thankful that the storm was this instead of next week – for October and November –

We are hearing often from the Rays and they are having a wonderful trip – They were in Utah and leaving for Salt Lake City when last we heard – The scenery is indescribable, I’m sure – They will have a lot to report.

Our Jewish merchants are closed today – the Orthodox will be closed for 2 days – about evenly divided here now – since some are becoming Reformed –

Johnny asked us to meet them Sunday after church in Freeport – rather in West Columbia – and we will have dinner in Freeport – Their Cuban refugee friend was a friend in W. Columbia who he wants to visit – We will later go the Varner-Hogg Plantation.⁴

We are waiting to hear more about your T.V. show – so will have to leave a letter soon from one of you or both!

Hugs and Kisses Around –

Devotedly

M.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 4. The envelope is addressed in blue ink to Mr. and Mrs. Horton Foote in Nyack, New York, with a return address in Wharton and postmarked Wharton, Texas. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper. In black ballpoint pen in upper right-hand corner is written “09.19.63.”

²In many of her letters, Foote's mother referred to her son John's mother-in-law (the mother of John's wife Betty) as "Mrs. Mcteer" and "Mrs. M." Before John and Betty married, she had lived in Port Arthur.

³Foote's mother referred to the movie version of the play *The Traveling Lady* as "Travel – L" in this letter. Later, the film was given the title *Baby the Rain Must Fall*. A portion of the movie was filmed in Foote's hometown of Wharton.

⁴The Varner-Hogg Plantation is located fifty miles south of Houston. Texas Governor James Hogg purchased the 66-acre plantation in 1902 (Texas Historical Commission).

April 20, 1964. Horton to Lillian and children.¹

April 20, 1964

Dearest Family:

I have just finished supper. I am sitting on the back porch – I spent a great deal of the day out here today working.² It was a beautiful day. Everything in the yard is so green and fresh looking. Mother's back fence is covered with sweet peas and Confederate Jessamine in full bloom – Also the roses are exquisite, but what means the most to me is to see the Chinaberry Trees with their blossoms – I hadn't seen them bloom since I was a boy, and they are even more beautiful than I remember – Sunday we're going to see the wild flowers. Even now around Wharton there are great fields of primroses (buttercups) and they are lovely –

I miss you all very much, but I am glad to be here – It is very meaningful to me to be here, and it will enrich the new project I know –

I went over to the graveyard to check on some graves, dates, etc.² – and then I drove Nana’s Buick out to the country to see her farm –

Do you remember that Nana has a wooden screen to shield her back porch in the summer time? She keeps it rolled up in the winter and this Spring before she got it unrolled, four sparrows built their nests there, and the eggs have hatched and we can hear the babies chirping away – Also I can see in the Fig Tree the nest of a dove – The mother dove is on the nest nearly all the time and the father dove brings food to her –

I miss you all very much and love you –

Write me – Daddy –

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 11. The envelope is addressed to “The Footes” in Nyack, New York. The letter is handwritten on the front and back of three pages.

²Many scenes in Foote’s plays and films take place in the graveyard in the fictional Harrison, Texas, which is modeled on Wharton. As Laurin Porter points out, a dominant theme of the *Orphan’s Home Cycle* is Horace’s desire to purchase a tombstone for his father’s grave (14). Porter writes, “References to the graveyard occur throughout the *Cycle*, becoming an important motif which serves

to unify and comment upon the action. Foote's fascination with cemeteries, a fact frequently mentioned in criticism and interviews, stems from his childhood" (51).

May 8, 1964. Foote to son Horton.¹

Friday –

Dearest Horton:

I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed your letters, and how much they have meant to me since I've been here. I think your handwriting is improving all the time. I am sure you have improved in your schoolwork, and I am very pleased at the maturity of your outlook, and I know you will be glad some day you worked so hard² –

I will be home on Tuesday and we can have a long talk then about what is wise to do about Baseball –

The boys have started little League practice here. I stopped the other afternoon and watched them and it made me very lonesome for my boys – Mother told me she let you get the boxing gloves and I'm very pleased that she did. She said you and Walter³ have a wonderful ring in the basement – Maybe when I get home you'll take me on – One at a time.

You are welcome to those shoes you found. Also the sport coats if you can wear them.

Mother says you have been almost always a good boy. I know and you know you can be good all the time. Let's prove it. How about it? You have no idea how proud I am of you and the progress you're making –

Love – Dad –

¹This letter, located in Box 2, folder 25, is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two smaller pages of white unlined paper. The envelope is addressed to Mr. Horton Foote, III, in Nyack, New York, with no return address and postmarked Wharton, Texas.

The date on the postmark on the envelope is May 12, 1964. Nevertheless, I assigned the date of May 8 to the letter because in the top margin Foote wrote, "Friday," and in 1964, May 8 fell on a Friday.

²In May 1964, Foote's son Horton was eleven years old.

³At the time Foote wrote this letter, his son Walter was eight years old.

c. May 8, 1964. Foote to daughter Barbara Hallie.¹

Friday –

Dearest Barbara Hallie:

Thank you so much for your two letters – I enjoyed the description of the flowers and trees in our yard. I am anxious to see them, for I love our yard, and particularly love it in the Spring.

A great rain storm has just come up here; it rained in torrents for a few minutes and then eased off – The weather has been beautiful while I've been here, all of Nana's flowers are so pretty.

I have been working very hard since I've been here getting "The Traveling Lady" ready for publication, making notes for future projects. I love my profession and feel very fortunate to have something I like to do. I'm sure you will decide on something that will give you joy too² –

The John Foote's, including Jo-Ellen,³ are coming over Sunday. I will get my first glimpse of them – Nana has also asked Daisy Brooks and her family –

I have shown everyone the pictures of you all – Everyone comments on what a pretty fourteen year old daughter I have – They all want me to bring you all to Texas –

I love you and kiss the others for me –

Dad –

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 25. Without an envelope, the letter was handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two smaller pages of white unlined paper. The year "1964" appears in pencil in top margin of the first page, and Barbara Hallie would indeed have been fourteen years old in 1964. I assigned the date May 8 to this letter because it appears to have been written on the same Friday (May 8, 1964) that Foote wrote his son Horton, as the ink and paper are identical.

²Foote's daughter Barbara Hallie, now known as Hallie Foote, became an accomplished actress and has collaborated with her father on numerous projects in both theater and film.

³The members of Horton's brother John's family were John's wife Betty and their children Jo Ellen and Tommy.

c. 1964. Hallie Brooks Foote to granddaughter Barbara Hallie.¹

Monday noon

Dearest Barbara Hallie,

I do want to congratulate you on your wonderful opportunity in studying piano with your new teacher. It is such an honor and we are both so proud of you and know you will do well. We send best wishes for reaching your goal in January – We are happy to hear that Walter has started his lessons and tell him if he does as well as “big brother” we will be proud of him – Bet he does too –

I wrote your folks that we saw the movie Hamlet last week – Well, last night we saw another group of English actors – the Beatles – and you should have been around to watch Pappap! He loved them and I do too – It was the first time we'd seen them, but of course, had heard their music – Going to 2 movies in a week is quite something for us – I've probably seen 2 shows this past year and Pappap saw To Kill A Mockingbird² as his last one, I believe –

We have our first norther of the season and it feels wonderful, guess it's in the 60's and I'd settle for winter in this temperature range –

We had your Dad's letter, also one from Uncle Johnny – Jo Ellen was babysitting in the neighborhood that night – They all like their new town and Tommy and Jo the school and students³ –

I don't see Paulette often these days – Am sure she is busy in school and the school band – She is a very good student and works hard – She is a pretty girl and has grown tall – She is always interested in hearing about you –

We are running late in our lunch – Pappap has been busy with customers and when he finishes taking this measure, hope he can go for lunch – It is about 1 P.M. I go last as I like to visit and not have to hurry back! Smart?

Give the family our love and kisses and the same for you from us.

Lovingly,

Nana.

Practice well!

¹This letter is in Box 3, folder 5. Without an envelope, the letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

This letter is included in a group of ten letters on which a yellow “post-it” note is attached upon which the following words are written in pencil: “Hallie Foote's letters not dated in '64 or '65 category.” I assigned the date 1964 because the two films mentioned in the letter (*Hamlet* and a Beatles film) were both introduced in theaters in that year. According the Internet Movie Database, A

Hard Days Night, featuring the Beatles, was released in August 1964, and *Hamlet*, starring Richard Burton, was also released in 1964. In addition, in May 1964, Foote's brother John and his family moved to Chicago; in her letter, Foote's mother mentions this relocation.

²Foote's adaptation of Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* was produced in 1962 (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii), two years before this letter was written.

³In 1964, the "new town" of John Foote's family was Chicago. According to a letter that John's wife Betty wrote to Lillian dated May 13, 1964, John had been promoted to Director of Sales Training in the drug and hospital division of his company, and their family would move to Chicago before June 1, 1964. Betty wrote to Lillian about the promotion: "He won't have to do much traveling – will be home 90% of the time. We are all glad of that. He had gotten very tired of traveling so much." John's letters to his parents indicate that for years he often traveled for his company.

October 3, 1964. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Saturday –

Dearest folks – Delighted to have your letter from Vermont and know your trip was a good one – The scenery must be magnificent – Can hardly wait to have a report on the movie and feel like they can get together on the right title – "Traveling Lady" still sounds good to us!²

I went over to the hospital and stayed an hour and a half before coming to the store this a.m. – Jeannette³ is desperately ill, the Drs. have given the diagnosis – leukemia of bone marrow – Nan is heartbroken – She doesn't leave her – at all – except to go home and change clothes – They don't have a special nurse – think that would frighten her even more – I stayed with her for now this a.m. and she told me she didn't think she would get well – I reminded her that we would have to get another chocolate sundae soon – She laughed – They are trying powerful drugs and she seems so weak and helpless – Nan will appreciate a note from you – Send to Caney Valley as she would get it more direct –

We feel that we have so much to be grateful for having missed the storm – but can surely sympathize with the others – We had a beautiful cloudless day, slightly cooler –

Will enclose letter received this a.m. Horton has a letter from Columbus, Texas, which we are forwarding –

Love and kisses to all –

Devotedly

M.

Will send letter on – Had just finished when Nan sent for me – Jeanette had passed on –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 5. The envelope is addressed in blue ink to Mr. and Mrs. Horton Foote in Nyack, New York, with the return address in

Wharton and postmarked Wharton, Texas. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of one page of paper. Also enclosed in the envelope were two other letters, one from Nan Outlar to Foote's mother, and the other from Laura Brooks Ray to the Foote family.

²The film version of *The Traveling Lady* was titled *Baby the Rain Must Fall*. Released in 1965, it featured Steve McQueen as Henry Thomas and Lee Remick as Georgette. Alan Pakula produced and Robert Mulligan directed the film. Three years earlier, Pakula and Mulligan also worked with Foote on his film adaptation of the novel by Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Pakula as producer and Mulligan as director.

³Jeanette was the mother of Foote's cousin and frequent correspondent Nan Outlar. Nan was quite distressed by her mother's death, which she expressed in her letters to Horton.

c. mid-November 1964. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Thursday –

Dearest folks,

Believe the weather in N.Y. (also in Chicago) this week is equaling our "Southern clime" – We are having real Summer weather – We use a light blanket on the bed at night and a few times have had the fires on at home – The gas is turned on (connected) at the store, but haven't needed it yet – I am writing at the desk – and the back windows are all open –

Barbara Hallie's nice letter was received yesterday – We are so proud of her studying at Julliard and delighted that she is enjoying it and doing her practicing so well – Can hardly wait to hear her play – She gave us the new name of the movie – is this a final title and how was it chosen? Let us hear – Could it be: “Into each life some rain will or which fall, some days be dark and dreary?”² Or do you believe that – We are so anxious to hear the reactions to the film and feel sure, fine ones – Someone write right away –

Our stores weren't closed for Veteran's Day – think most surrounding towns were – and our banks, courthouse, P.O. and other public buildings were and in spite of the regular Opportunity Day, there were few people in town – About 11:30 I suggested we close up and take a ride. We didn't! When Dad went for lunch, I sold a red sport coat to a youngster and we ended with a real good day at the store – Rose was complaining – She had her winter coats on reduction and did nothing, I fear.

We have no pecan crop on our trees but a blanket of leaves in the yard – it doesn't help to rake as Ben did last week as they constantly fall – I don't mind them and a cold rain and wind will bring lots of the leaves down from trees, so far, you hardly miss them, having been so many – It is 1 P.M. and I must stop for lunch – Love and kisses for all

Devotedly

M –

¹This letter is in Box 3, folder 5. Without an envelope, the letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

This letter is included in a group of ten letters on which a note in pencil is attached, with the words: "Hallie Foote's letters not dated in '64 or '65 category." I decided that this letter was probably written during November, because Horton's mother mentions Veterans Day, November 11. I determined that the year the letter had been written was 1964, because the decision regarding the naming of the film version of *The Traveling Lady* had not been made in November 1964; by the following November, the film had already been released.

²The title chosen for the film version of *The Traveling Lady* was *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, which is also the title of a song sung by Steve McQueen in the film. The line referred to by Foote's mother in her letter is the last line of the poem "The Rainy Day" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: "Into each life some rain must fall, / Some days must be dark and dreary" (16). In a previous letter dated September 12, 1964, Foote's mother expressed concern because she had heard a rumor that the name of the film was to be "Highway"; she expressed her dismay by saying, "hope it isn't true." Her later letters indicate that she was pleased with the title that was ultimately selected for the film.

c. late November 1964. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Monday a.m –

Dearest folks –

Am writing short notes to wish you a happy Thanksgiving and to let you know we will be with Oliver and Laura² – I am so glad we can go as we haven't been to see them since Oliver has been "in" – He's doing alright now – Also, Laura has been anxious to show us her new organ – So many of our group were planning to be out of town, that we decided not to have Thanksgiving services – We plan to close up and leave about 4 P.M. Wednesday and should get there in 3 hrs – six o'clock is "good dark" here but from Pt. Lavaca on there shouldn't be much traffic.

We have received Clyde's letter to you, and then we've had a lovely one, too from her – They make us more impatient than before to see Baby The Rain Must Fall! It must surely be a lovely film – and I know we will be very proud of you – It's wonderful too to have the adaptation of Hurry Sundown³ – a young friend of mine who eats with me at Lavania's subscribes to the Literary Guild and said she had expected to let her subscription expire this year, but wouldn't think of it now – That's a sample of your loyal fans in Wharton! You will be very busy I'm sure –

We ate dinner in Victoria yesterday – then drove on, on 59, to Bellville – where we looked over the nice town, a larger one than we thought, about 13,000 the city limit's sign said. We located a good motel there and plan someday when

we have a 2 day vacation to go from there down to the Valley – where we have never been –

I've had a 3 hour visitor (Erin) so will close and get off a letter to the John Foote's –

Love and Kisses

Devotedly

M –

¹This letter is in Box 3, folder 5. Without an envelope, the letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

This letter is included with a group of ten letters with an attached note that says, “Hallie Foote’s letters not dated in ’64 or ’65 category.” I assigned the date 1964 to the letter, which was probably written in late November, because it contained Thanksgiving greetings, indicating that the holiday had just passed. Furthermore, Foote’s mother mentioned that the title of the film version of *The Traveling Lady, Baby the Rain Must Fall*, had been selected, but her letter suggested that the film, which was released in 1965, had not yet come to Wharton.

²In her correspondence, Foote’s mother frequently mentioned her sister and brother-in-law, Laura and Oliver Ray. In addition, in envelopes with her own letters, Foote’s mother also enclosed many of Laura’s letters to the family.

³ Foote wrote the screen adaptation of the novel *Hurry Sundown* by K B. Glidden. Otto Preminger directed the film (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii).

c. 1965. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Monday –

Dearest folks –

Am enclosing this latest review received yesterday – Keep them coming and we will get them back in fact – This one was very good we thought –

Everybody is delighted that you are coming and everybody has said “Is Lillian coming?” How about it, Lill? You will get C. of C.² invitation in a few days – When the word got around that the Rio³ was running the first ads, Lavania, her daughter and son-in-law went to the show – I’m just from lunch and she is enthusiastic over the showing – she has started her daily radio program (by request!) At the end of it today, they played Baby The Rain Must Fall – The radio man said “Steve’s” number hasn’t come in yet, but this was sung by someone else⁴ – It is darling, we all thought – I enjoyed it more than at pre-view showing, as then, I was so tense and felt responsible for everything!! I can relax when we see it Wednesday in Houston – can hardly wait for Dad to see the show –

Kenneth Hudgins has accepted an invitation to be here opening night – I called Nan, then Mrs. Jensen after our conversation and she called Mr. Preston – Eldon had told me he was going to a dance Saturday night so I didn’t call him –

He knows it now – It would be hard for me to express to you the enthusiasm and pride that is being shown –

Our Thursday's Monitor didn't come until yesterday and the Lecture wasn't in it, so we checked again and was in Tuesday's paper – It is surely a wonderful Lecture – I've read it through and will work on it – John W. Pickett (the Lecturer we had) has a fine article in the February Journal – So many good ones in this Journal – I also read the one you mentioned and recalled – as I had the page turned down and had studied.

Love and Kisses – Devotedly – H –

¹This letter is in Box 3, folder 5. Without an envelope, the letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

The letter is included in a group of ten letters with a note written in pencil on an attached yellow “post-it” note, which says, “Hallie Foote's letters not dated in '64 or '65 category.” Since the letter was written after the release of the film *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, I assigned the date 1965 to the letter.

²Foote's mother used the abbreviation “C. of C.” to refer to the Wharton County Chamber of Commerce.

³The Rio Theatre, near downtown Wharton, was an 803-seat movie theater originally built in 1935 and then refurbished. A popular theater during the 1950s

through the early 1970s, it has since been closed (*Cinema Treasures*). Foote's mother mentioned the Rio Theatre in many of her letters.

⁴Glenn Yarbrough and Steve McQueen, who played the role of Henry Thomas in Foote's film, both recorded the song "Baby the Rain Must Fall."

December 14, 1965. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Tuesday –

Dearest folks –

Just a note to let you have the enclosed letters – Laura's made the day for us – they had been watching so long for your movie² –

Lill, the pecans are compliments of the Foote's – check enclosed too –

We're getting off 2 more boxes today – just one more to Lily in Houston³ and will mail that tomorrow –

Our weather is balmy and things outside are looking green – Want to get pkgs – on the way and a trip to the bank before closing so must close –

Thought of Walter and his love for animals when we read clipping from Today's Post.

Love and Kisses

M

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 6. The envelope is addressed in red ink to Mr. and Mrs. Horton Foote in Nyack, New York, with a return address in Wharton and postmarked Wharton, Texas.

The letter is handwritten in red ink on the front side of one page unlined eight-and-one-half inch paper. (It was unusual for Foote's mother to use a red pen in her correspondence; using blue ink was her preference.) Enclosed with the letter by Horton's mother are three other letters: two by her sister Laura and a letter to Hallie Brooks Foote from a Houston television station in response to a letter by her about their programming.

²The movie Foote's mother referred to was *Baby the Rain Must Fall*. One of the letters enclosed by Foote's aunt Laura began "I'm so excited! Have just seen 'Baby the Rain Must Fall.' We enjoyed every minute of it."

³"Lily in Houston" is most likely Foote's paternal aunt Lily Dale, who was the model for a character of the same name in Foote's *Orphans' Home Cycle* and Pulitzer prizewinning play, *The Young Man from Atlanta*.

April 12, 1967. Foote to son Horton.¹

Wednesday –

Dear Horton:

I enjoyed your letter very much. I think writing to each other will prove a good thing, because I think one can often express things in letters you can't

always say face to face – Anyway, I look forward to hearing from you and will try to answer, but will always manage one letter to you a week.

By the way when Mother types up your English project of Sandburg poems please remember to have her type a carbon to send me as I would be so interested in seeing it. Also, let me know how the state French test came out –

I think Mother's solution for the pool table an excellent one, and feel she has now found the best place for it –

Let me know when you all decide about the basketball court, and where you will place it.

I have a very pleasant room at the Beverly Hills now, the first hotel was nice, but I like this much better –

Kevin Mulligan² is 5'5" now and has grown a lot, but not nearly so much as you have.

love,

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 26. The thin airmail envelope, with the printed return address of The Beverly Hills Hotel on the flap, is addressed in blue ink to Mr. Horton Foote, III in New Boston, New Hampshire, and postmarked Beverly Hills, California. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages of printed stationery of The Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows.

The date postmarked on the envelope is April 13, 1967. Nevertheless, I assigned the date of April 12 to this letter, since in the top margin, Foote designated that he wrote the letter on “Wednesday”; in 1967, April 12 fell on a Wednesday.

²In April 1967, Foote was working with Robert Mulligan, who directed the Foote’s film adaptation of *The Stalking Moon* by Theodore Olsen. Kevin Mulligan was probably the young son of the director.

c. April 12, 1967. Foote to son Walter.¹

Wednesday

Dear Walter:

Your letter meant a very great deal to me, and I thank you deeply for it. I think you write a remarkable letter for an eleven-year-old boy –

I was so very sorry the Celtics lost the game. I had so hoped they would keep the series going. Robert Mulligan was very disappointed too, but Kevin Mulligan was for the 76ers –

Alan Pakula’s son, Chris, has just had a basketball ring put upon their garage, and is very interested in the game – I hope you and Horton will decide soon on where you want your court to be, and will let me know so I can tell Mother to go ahead –

The Pakulas have almost as many animals as we do. They have two dogs, and three cats. The Mulligans have two dogs and one cat –

We had a rainstorm here yesterday, but it didn't last. Actually it is very arid here, and all this land was desert or near desert at one time.

Send your report card to me, or copy your grades out so I can see them, as I will be interested – Also tell me about any basketball games you play² –

love –

Dad

¹This undated letter is located in Box 2, folder 27. This letter was not accompanied with an envelope in the archive, and is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages of printed stationery of The Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows.

I assigned the date of April 12, 1967, to this formerly undated letter after considering internal and external clues. First, the letter was written on the same day of the week (Wednesday) and on the printed stationery of the same hotel as the above letter to Foote's son Horton, and Foote often wrote to more than one of his children on the same day. In addition, Foote stated in the letter that Walter was eleven years old, and in April 1967, Walter was indeed that age. Furthermore, Foote mentioned producer Alan Pakula and director Robert Mulligan; in 1967, Foote was working with Pakula and Mulligan on the film *The Stalking Moon*, released in 1968 (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii). Finally, the official web site of the National Basketball Association indicates that on the day before the letter was written, April 11, 1967, the Boston Celtics lost in the Eastern Divisional Finals to

the Philadelphia 76ers, an event mentioned in the second paragraph of Foote's letter.

²Walter's enthusiasm for basketball grew. An accomplished athlete, he played competitive basketball in high school and college teams.

April 17, 1967. Lillian to Horton.¹

Monday morning

My darling,

I'm sorry I missed your first call last night but know that Barbara Hallie enjoyed talking to you. I was reluctant to have them come home ahead of me – I asked them to stay on but Horton was exhausted and it's just as well they came ahead as I didn't get into the house until almost 11:30. I let Daisy and Walter sleep later this morning. Walter's just had his breakfast and I hear him now talking upstairs so Daisy must have awakened.²

It was so cute to watch Daisy's reactions during the film³ – she'd hide her head in my lap during the scary sequences – she just couldn't bear to watch Boo Radley⁴ during the final scene – even when he sat on the porch with Scout – in spite of all my assurances. It was nice to see the movie again. It's a lovely film and I felt it seemed more significant seeing it in this area – the people just howled when little Walter Cunningham poured syrup over his food – the school sequences also seemed right at home in New Boston. During the question period

after, everyone was friendly and warm and it wasn't difficult for me. Walter and Daisy stayed on and played around until I was ready to leave.

Barbara Hallie was not able to go to Sunday School because she had to leave Goffstown⁵ at 11:45. The rest of us got there and I enjoyed the service as usual. Several people asked about you so I told them you would be in California awhile on an assignment. We came home and had lunch – Horton went to Levesques while Walter watched the 76ers on t.v. There was a knock at the door around 3 and when I opened the door, there stood Jeff. I called Horton back from the L's and later they all went over there to shoot baskets. They came back after five and we had an early supper. Jeff sat and watched us eat because altho had invited him, his family wanted him to have supper with them as he had to leave for school around 6:30. Walter and Daisy are crazy about him and I know Horton likes him too. Peter Berry gave him a ride out and his father picked him up.

I told Walter he could use the typewriter to write you so I'll close now and write you again tomorrow.

I love you very, very much----

L.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 21. The accompanying envelope is addressed to Mr. Horton Foote at the Beverly Hills Hotel in California, with a return address in New Boston, New Hampshire, and postmarked New Boston.

The letter is typed on one page of white eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper, with three holes punched in the left-hand side.

²In April 1967, when Lillian wrote this letter to Horton, their children were the following ages: Barbara Hallie was seventeen years old; Horton, fourteen years; Walter, eleven years, and Daisy was five years old.

³In this paragraph, Lillian described going with the children to see the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

⁴Robert Duvall played the role of Boo Radley in the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Over the years, Duvall has collaborated with Foote on other creative projects, both on stage and film; notable examples are the films *Tomorrow* (1972), *Tender Mercies* (1983), and *Convicts* (1990).

⁵After the family moved to New Boston, New Hampshire, their letters often mention going to Goffstown, New Hampshire, which is seven miles from New Boston.

May 1, 1967. Lillian to Horton.¹

Monday

Darling –

Just a quick note before Mr. Todd arrives.

Felt terrible to have missed your call – Daisy and Walter begged me to go for a walk thru woods – we went to trout pond and kept waking to sand pit. Evidently, I just missed you by a few minutes.

Isn't it wonderful about your movie – B. T. R. M. F.² We bought a T. V. Guide and sure enough, there it was. I called 1st thing this morning and had an outside antenna put up (on side of house) – now we need a new tube for the set and we're all ready for Friday.

Am enclosing a picture of Walter from latest paper.³

Love you – L.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 21. The envelope is addressed to Mr. Horton Foote at the Beverly Hills Hotel in California, with a return address in New Boston, New Hampshire and postmarked New Boston. The letter is handwritten in black ink on the front of one page of unlined, now yellowing, eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper with three holes punched in the left-hand margin.

²Lillian used the abbreviation “B.T.R.M.F.” to refer to the film *Baby the Rain Must Fall*.

³The photo of Walter Foote is not with this letter in the archive; however, many news articles and photos of Walter were placed with other letters. Most of these clippings were in the sports sections of the local newspapers and were related to his performance on competitive basketball teams.

June 9, 1967. Lillian to Horton.¹

Thurs. morning

My darling,

It's a bit after twelve and I'm hurrying to get this written before Mr. Todd comes.

I've had a very fruitful time working out the plans - finalizing the sketch on graph paper with every thing to scale so when Ray comes tonight or tomorrow all will be in good order. I just talked to him on the phone - he had to postpone coming last night because he's been having some trouble with his teeth. I had a man come to give an estimate on a chimney to get some idea of cost - just in case Ray's men couldn't handle it. However, Ray said they could do it if it were not brick all the way and in checking with Roger have learned that the only part that has to be brick is what shows above the roof line which means that it shouldn't come to more than 150 or so. The whole idea being worked out is exciting - am so glad you thought of going ahead to use the space above the garage - else the roof would have been executed differently and it would have meant very expensive construction in the future to break through. For the future, it can also make lovely guest quarters or a study for you.

Mr. Burnham came over yesterday and we went over the plans for sketching in plumbing and electricity. Everything appears fine - we've gone into all the heating possibilities and bathroom plumbing. Much of this work can be

planned for to eliminate tearing out later but needn't be executed until some future date.

Friday morning

My dearest,

As you see I didn't make it yesterday. Just as I was writing you, Mr. Clegg, the chimney man came from Manchester so I missed Mr. Todd. Incidentally, Mrs. Clegg's first estimate for a chimney was 318 which would have been all brick - however after checking with the Bacons, I called him back last night and the price for a cement block chimney with the brick only showing above the roof line is 196. Ray's estimate for his men doing it was 200 and he prefers the other man doing it because he has so much work ahead of him. The other man's company does nothing but chimney work so they are prepared to do the most efficient work plus guaranteeing it will work correctly.

Ray came over last night and we went over the plans completely. The mason who's working with him on another house now is Mr. McEntee who did our plastering for the Gass's. He's very busy now so I've put a call into him to reserve us some time in late August to complete our plastering under the eaves and do the room above the garage. Ray said Mr. Foster the real estate man

[In top margin of reverse side of page is written in pencil:]

Sold the Cape Cod down the road – Gilbert house!² Ray hasn't sold his yet.

[Typed:]

from Francetown told Ray he can't get enough old houses to sell. Ray said he's sold either 16 or 18 houses this spring - isn't that fantastic. Evidently, a lot of people are coming from all over and retiring here or buying summerhouses. Ray is presently working on a Francetown house for a Dr. Saunders from New Orleans - she is a spinster of 58 and he is crazy about her. She must like him a lot because I gather he goes over some evenings just to talk to her. Ray said when he wasn't feeling well she called his wife to check on him - said she has been after him to lose weight but it is harder for him to do it than anyone realizes. She is always giving him free medical advice and I only hope he steers away from that - medical people always feel the need to do this and in many cases it just produces a lot of fear and harmful effects. Anyhow, she bought a big center chimney house and Mr. McEntee is rebuilding the whole chimney in addition to 3 fireplaces - Ray has been working for her for months now, I think, and he told her he just had to get to us by the 2nd week of June - she agreed if he'd just make one room liveable she'd wait for him until he finished here - so he's fixed up her kitchen and she'd living in the kitchen. She told him she's leaving New Orleans for good - she told him she hates the city - that it's one of the most corrupt places she's ever been in so I told him my impressions of it when I visited years ago. I did tell him, however, how much I loved the rural areas of that section - Miss., Louisiana, etc.

I have to close now, my dearest, because I told the Bacons I would come over there early today to look at Reggie's house and see the table.³ I just saw

Edna Fletcher's hutch again in B.H.'s⁴ room and I'm not about to give that up in a hurry - it's really very old and primitive and most handsome. I think it will look terrific in Hortie's new room - I'll get Reg Maisey to peg it better so the table leaf can be turned back and forth easily without falling off - that way it can be a seat as well as a writing table.

In my next letter, I'll specifically list the expected costs of the new addition - the room above the garage will naturally add on a considerable sum but I feel it is well worth it - for the future, it will make beautiful and separate guest quarters. Also, if we ever found someone after the children are grown to live on the place in case we had to make trips, it would be an ideal place for that.

I love you - will write you more tonight or tomorrow -

Will phone you Sunday after church - about 10 your time.

L.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 8. The envelope has a typed address to Mr. Horton Foote in the Beverly Hills Hotel in California; it is stamped "Special Delivery" and postmarked New Boston, New Hampshire, with a printed return address label of Mrs. Horton Foote in New Boston. The letter is typed on the front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper with three holes punched in left-hand side.

²After moving to New Hampshire, Lillian became a real estate agent.

³In a personal essay published in August 2005, Foote's daughter Daisy wrote about Roger, Ruth, and Reggie Bacon and their involvement in the family's restoration of their eighteenth-century house in New Boston and also how the Bacons shared an interest with the Footes in collecting antiques. Daisy writes,

I was trying to remember exactly how my parents met Roger, his wife Ruth, and subsequently his brother Reggie. I called Dad and he couldn't remember the exact details, but he does remember the very first thing he and my mother bought from Roger, a table. Roger said to them, "If you like that, you've got good taste." I also remember that it was Roger and Reggie that helped my parents find a restoration expert for their house. (8)

As in the above letter, Lillian often mentioned going to look at antiques while Foote was out of town in her letters to him.

⁴Lillian and other members of the family used the abbreviation "B.H." to refer to Barbara Hallie.

June 13, 1967. Lillian to Horton.¹

Tuesday

12 Noon

My darling,

Just a note to tell you the exciting news that the work started today. Ray arrived at about 10 with the young man who works the bulldozer. They've made wonderful progress this past hour or so and have moved the rocks from the stone wall except for the very large one on the bottom. Leon Daniels is supposed to

come tomorrow to blast that so they can proceed with the foundation. The carpenters won't come until a few days later I suppose – they'll continue working in Francestown until Ray is ready for them. I phoned Jim McEntee this morning – he did the plastering for Bill Gass in our house – He is very busy now so I told him to reserve time in August when Ray will be finished or possibly late July so he can do the plastering. If he can give us good estimate on a larger chimney, we will reserve space for that and it can always be built later. Roger feels that a fireplace chimney may only cost a bit more and then we won't be so limited as to what we want to use whether a Franklin frame or a small fireplace and hearth. (It will also look better)

Well, I went to the Bacons yesterday as they wanted to take me by to see Reggie's house² – Ruth had made a potato salad and took some cold cuts and after talking for a while with them and buying a few more things, we all got into Roger's car and went over to Reggie's. I was really taken by surprise. His place is simply fantastic – if you think Lillian Cogan or Virginia Wood have fixed up their place you should see his. First of all, he is a fanatic housekeeper and keeps his grounds the same way. He has taken this tiny gambrel roofed cottage – only 12 feet wide and had to completely rebuild it as it was a shambles – I saw a picture of it before and it was all caved in and just a shell. His taste inside is exquisite, but more than that he has some of the finest furnishings, bric a brac, etc. I have ever seen. Am so glad I went because I got ideas for our kitchen, windows, etc. He has a darling screened in porch and we had lunch out there. He gave me a gift of an

enormous melon basket for cutting flowers in and set of six small measuring tins for the kitchen. I took pictures of the house and grounds and can't wait now until you come back to see it. They're planning a gala return for you – Roger said they'll have a smorgasbord supper for you at Reggie's house so you can have a tour as well. You'll just love it. Actually, because it had to be completely restored, it's like a Deerfield house – nothing really original but he's used all old wood, floor boards, etc. in restoring it – oh, you'll just love it.

I believe I hear Mr. Todd down the road so will get him on the return trip. Wanted you to hear. I love you, my sweet.

L.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 21. The envelope has a typed address to Mr. Horton Foote in the Beverly Hills Hotel in California; it is postmarked New Boston, New Hampshire, with a printed return address label of Mrs. Horton Foote in New Boston. Lillian's letter to Foote is typed on one page unlined, now yellowing, eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper with three holes punched in left-hand side.

²In her personal essay on the Horton Foote antique collection, Daisy writes about the brothers Roger and Reggie Bacon and their taste for fine and antiques and buildings. Daisy writes, "listening to Roger talk about each and every piece of furniture, painting and decorative object" in his and his wife Ruth's eighteenth-

century house “was like listening to a master storyteller” (9). Daisy says of the brothers, Roger and Reggie,

You can't talk about Roger without mentioning Reggie. They were brothers, their connection deep and vivid. Yet they were different. Both had been actors, performers of everything from vaudeville to Shakespeare. But while Roger had a passion for objects, Reggie had a passion for buildings. My mother had a special affinity for Reggie as she had a love and a gift for design.” (9)

The enthusiasm that Lillian had for Reggie's exquisite taste that Daisy described in her essay is evident in many of Lillian's letters.

June 27, 1967. Albert Horton Foote, Sr., to son Horton.¹

June 27 – 1967

My Darling Boy: Received your Father's Day Tie and aftershave, am highly pleased, as this is something I can use and enjoy all the year – and each time I put on the tie it will make me think of you, however I do that most every day anyway –

John's son and daughter² spent a day and night with us this week, and we enjoyed the visit so much. Took John out to the country one evening to a farmer friend of mine, and put him on a horse alone, and I had a time getting him off, I have never seen a boy that loved horses as much as he does. That is all he talks about.

John Speed has a fine boy and daughter however, and he is very proud of them, just like I was of you, Tom Brooks, and John.

I thank my father in heaven over and over again for you three. I will say your mother gave me a day's worth to talk about –

Well Darling I am in the store, alone, and had better say goodbye before a customer comes in.

Just remember old Dad loves you with everything he has.

Give my love to Lil, and all the children.

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 8. The envelope is addressed in blue ink to Mr. Horton Foote at The Beverly Hills Hotel in California, with the return address of Al. H. Foote in Wharton, Texas. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch business stationery with printed heading “Al H. Foote, Men’s Furnishings, Hats – Clothing, Established 1913, Wharton, Texas.”

²Foote’s brother John Speed and his wife Betty had two children, Jo Ellen and Tommy (later called Tom).

October 19, 1967. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Thursday –

Dearest folks –

I am at the store, have been to the Garden Club Coffee in Mrs. Harrison's garden– a beautiful day and the garden was a pretty setting – Outlined with pyracanthas in full berries – real red in October – Ruth Patton and Mrs. Crowley were my guests – Everybody seemed so glad to see Mrs. Crowley – Ruth and I are around so much, they are used to us –

We have patronized the new Mexican Restaurant twice and we enjoy having one in town – I don't like night driving, even from Bay City² –

Our second meal there Sunday wasn't planned – We had quite an experience that turned out alright – About 4 miles from El Campo – Near Hillje we came into a terrific rain-storm (6 inches reported later in El Campo) – I finally decided to pull off the highway and wait – we couldn't see the dividing lines, in fact, couldn't see – Between traffic signals, after quite some time, I decided to try to move along, in backing I went to far to the left and when I could see we were across the highway in the wrong lane, I stopped – Then, on starting again, knew something was wrong with the battery. There was one phone (we learned) in Hillje – quite some distance and after finding a man who knew the shop owner and “phone” owner – he offered to go to his home – He kindly came and let me in to phone Bud Weaver at our Texaco station – pouring down all this time –

Learned that only one attendant at our station, a young Latin was on duty – who was wonderful in finally locating Mr. Weaver –

[In bottom margin:]

We were 2 hours on highway!

[Next page:]

who came to our rescue – Found a clogged cable to battery, but fixed us to get home on our own – he followed closely! He told me when I went by the next day that as soon as he heard of our predicament, he went to the sheriff's office to check with a highway patrol (radioed) and found we had been seen but were far enough off the highway, not to block traffic! That part really touched us – The car has been back for a complete check and is fine again – That's a long story, I see as I check these pages –

We will go to the Rays³ this weekend – as the weather predictions are favorable– Billie⁴ had called last Friday night to say he'd heard too from Laura of the Dallas visit and had rather wait to come when we could see them too – so I've written him to come Saturday –

A letter from Johnny yesterday in N.Y.C., where he was spending from Monday-Wednesday. Today is his birthday –

We are fine and busy every day – Dad's last shipment of hats has come in – and he's relieved now – shipping was delayed, but in time after all –

Love and kisses around – and write when you can –

Did you see testimony in this week's Sentinel from Bay City?

M –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 8. The envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Horton Foote in New Boston, New Hampshire; a return address label is affixed to the flap of the envelope with the printed address of Mrs. A. H. Foote in Wharton, Texas. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch unlined paper. Included in the envelope is a postcard by Foote's aunt Laura Brooks Ray from Hallettsville, Texas, which is about 65 miles west of Wharton.

²Bay City, Texas, is 26 miles south of Wharton.

³“The Rays” were Foote's mother's sister Laura and her husband Oliver Ray.

⁴Billie Brooks and his sister Laura Brooks Ray appear to have been very close and corresponded frequently with each other. Much of Billie's and Laura's correspondence to each other is included in the Foote papers in envelopes with letters by Foote's mother.

1967. Foote to son Horton.¹

Friday –

Dear Horton:

I was delighted to get your letter this morning and I miss you very much too, but getting a letter and hearing about you makes it seem all a lot easier –

I am enjoying the work very much which of course is a great help – I had another meeting late yesterday afternoon with Bob and Alan and we were joined by Gregory Peck² – Gregory likes Texas chili very much and knows that I do, so he told me he was inviting me over for some next week – I had dinner with Bob and Jane last night. I am fond of them and the children, we visited for awhile and then I left and was at the hotel by 9:30.

I am delighted by the two English grades – Have you read “The Stalking Moon?” yet – Once you are in it, I think you will find it interesting.

I was interested in your reaction to the “International” – what model was it? I wish I could have seen it, and tried it, although I will have to learn the standard shift too –

It has been cold for California; the nights have been as low as the 40’s – The days warm up considerably though –

I am working in my room again today and will be here working all weekend – I have been invited out several places, but want to keep at it, as I am enjoying this phase of the work so very much –

Just a note even means a lot to “lonesome George,” so keep writing –
love,
Dad –

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 26. Without an accompanying envelope, the letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages of printed stationery of The Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows; handwritten in black ink in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of the letter is “1967.”

²Foote collaborated with Alan Pakula and Robert (Bob) Mulligan on several film projects. Pakula produced and Mulligan directed *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *Baby the Rain Must Fall* (1965), and *The Stalking Moon* (1968). Mulligan also directed the television episodes of *The Traveling Lady* (1957) and *Tomorrow* (1960). Gregory Peck played the role of Atticus Finch in Foote’s film adaptation of Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Gregory Peck also starred in Foote’s film adaptation of Theodore Olsen’s *The Stalking Moon* (Internet Movie Database).

1967. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Thursday –

Dearest folks –

We are now having a fine rain – it has been raining all morning – and now this temperature has dropped – a light fire would feel comfortable – This weather

is welcome, all of Texas has been dry – However, the crops are all “up” and cotton and corn growing – ahead of last year –

The Rays were so surprised when we drove in to their place about 4:30 last Sunday and seemed so glad to see us – Jim has put railings on all steps and a good idea it is – Oliver looks well – is gaining some of the lost weight and gets around well without mechanical aid – the hospital offered loan of a cane – but he told them he didn’t want to depend on anything – Laura had a ham cooking when we got there – for supper – At noon they had barbecued chickens on the patio – I took them shelled pecans, brownies and cinnamon rolls that I had gotten Lavania² to bake – She makes delicious ones – Wrapped in foil and re-heated in oven they are just like fresh-baked – We got home at 10 Monday a.m. Oliver says the nurses at the hospital spoiled him with 6 a.m. coffee, so he gets up early now – after a 9 o’clock bed-time, he is ready to get up – They are enjoying Jim’s visit (and help) – He is taking his full week’s vacation at this time –

We had a shock this week when Jean Worthing called to say Sallie was in surgery – extended after tests showed a malignancy – I went over and was with Louie and Jean during the operation. She is doing fine – in good spirits – and the Dr. feels all is well – She is home – so many things have gone wrong with her sisters and brothers physically, recently – She said Mrs. Starves (Baptist Minister’s wife) advised her to read the book of Job – If one of you can squeeze in a time– write a card to Oliver and Laura – Laura asked me if I’d let Daisy B.

hear about Oliver – I had but she’s terrible about writing (that is, not,) so you do it soon –

The rain is slackened and Dad is ready to go to P.O. Billie called last night to ask why he hadn’t heard from me, so I’ll get a letter off later today to him.

We are having regular business meeting of church tonight –

Won’t take time to read this over – hope you can make out –

Love and kisses around –

Devotedly

M

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 8. Unaccompanied by an envelope, the letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper; written in pencil in upper right-hand corner is “ – 1967.”

²Foote’s mother mentioned her close friend Lavania Rector in many letters. In one letter, Foote’s mother points out the unusual spelling “Lavania” and notes that the name is pronounced “LaVinia.” Lavania’s family owned Rector’s Café, where Foote’s parents often ate. It also appears that Lavania delivered meals to Wharton residents. For a time, in the early 1970s, according to Foote’s mother’s correspondence, Lavania worked with a radio station, broadcasting a women’s program from her café.

c. April 1967. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Wednesday –

Dearest folks –

Eldon Frazier is a T.V. Guide “checker” for our neighborhood and reported that Baby the Rain Must Fall will be shown May 5 – 8 o’clock – The difficulty with us we can’t get channel 39 (U.H.F.) It is listed also on another – I believe a San Antonio channel. Think Nannie’s new T.V. can get 39, so we will see it there unless we can have ours adjusted – something attached – so if you didn’t know it, tune in – Will enclose Laura’s letter – note what she says about The Chase, in Nicaragua² –

Will send this to “home address” so if you’re not both in New Boston, you can forward. Hope the work is coming along fine –

We didn’t get evening news Friday nor Saturday a.m. until Dad saw the paper in town – He phoned me at once and told me to call the family in Naperville. I’ll have to say it was a relief to get an intermediate answer – and to hear all were home – We’ve had a letter since from Johnny – He got home about an hour after the rains and high winds had started – trees and signs were blowing down – they are about 20 and 30 miles from the hardest hit suburbs –

We went to Alvin for dinner Sunday and on over to Freeport – the town was in bloom with beautiful oleanders – in all shades of rose, pink and a great many white ones – all very large – Laura’s were beautiful when we were there

last. Mrs. Wright has 2 light pink single oleanders in her yard – in full bloom now, but generally, they don't do well here –

I am going out to look at the new hospital this afternoon – Nannie is “on duty” today and will give me a guided tour – The patients have been transferred but formal opening is in May – Senator Tower will give the address at the opening ceremonies – on Sunday P.M. so we won't be there – (good excuse)

We have moved quarters to the back porch this week – so feel that summer is here again for us – Catherine is at the house today, also the yard man – so can expect a clean place when I get home – Our Easter lilies are blooming, also the yellow Ratama (tree) and figs on fig trees – roses and daylilies – And the pecan trees are now out in full leaf in the front yard.

Want to get this in mail, so must close –

Love and kisses to all –

Devotedly

M.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 8. Without an envelope, the letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper; written in pencil in upper right-hand corner is “ – 1967.” The letter was probably written at the end of April or very early May, since a date mentioned in the letter indicates that it would have been written before May 5, 1967.

²Unfortunately, I did not find the letter by Laura mentioning *The Chase* in Nicaragua in the archive.

August 15, 1967. Lillian to Horton.¹

Tues. afternoon

My darling,

Just a fast note – don't know if my letters do any good in cheering up but I'm like W.C.W.² – every time I get lonesome – I sit down and write a letter. And now that I have my typewriter back from the job, I'll be more prone than ever to write. You remember, they said they'd completely service the typewriter if we bought it so I took it in and they really cleaned it up and put on a new ribbon to boot. They also fixed the adding machine for 9.50 and next week or so I'll have to take the electric typewriter in for repairs. They seem to be an awfully good outfit.

Mr. Pepin called Horton to work tonight starting at seven – I made him an early supper around 3 and then drove him into Goffstown around 3:30 or 4 as he wanted to visit around before going to work. I dropped him off at Yank's and saw that he ran into his old girl friend Cathy and Anna Karanikas. Want to tell you something interesting – Horton was visiting in one of the Karanikas homes – (there are 10 children most of whom are married with lots of children so Goffstown is full of them) anyhow, this was an aunt of Anna's – named Karanikas – so she must be unmarried. She told Horton she knew all of your work and evidently had a long talk with Horton and it tickled him to no end – he said it

felt so good to talk to someone who knew your work so well. She told him about seeing *Traveling Lady* in New York – said she loved the play and thought Kim was our finest actress.³ Also said she had seen all of your plays on television and read *The Chase*. Wasn't that nice? Horton was really quite thrilled. She used to be an actress but gave it up.

I told Horton I planned to stay around here tomorrow until early afternoon – we can't get the *Mercury* until then anyhow. I also felt we'd know whether Mr. Pepin wanted him tomorrow again as it would give him at least two days work this week and we could leave Thurs. morning. Mr. Pepin doesn't tend to call on weekends anyhow.

I'll say good-bye now, my sweet. With Horton working and B.H.⁴ going out I can't stand being here by myself the whole evening long so am going into Manchester to see *Barefoot in the Park* – don't think it's going to be too good but I'll get to see Millie Natwick anyhow.

Kisses and hugs and all my love –

L.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 21. The envelope was addressed to Mr. Horton Foote at the Westwood Sovereign in Los Angeles, California, with a printed return address label of Mrs. Horton Foote in New Boston, New Hampshire, and postmarked Manchester, New Hampshire. The letter was typed with a sentence added in black ink.

²Lillian used the abbreviation “W.C.W.” to refer to William Carlos Williams in several of her letters.

³The person named “Kim” that Lillian referred to in this letter was probably Kim Stanley, who acted in many of Foote’s plays on stage and in the early television productions.

⁴“B.H.” was the abbreviation Lillian and other family members used to refer to her daughter, Barbara Hallie.

⁵In 1967, Mildred Natwick was nominated for an Academy Award for best supporting actress for her work in *Barefoot in the Park* (Flint 13).

c. March 27, 1968. Hallie Brooks Foote to granddaughter Barbara Hallie.¹

Wharton – Friday –

Dearest Barbara Hallie –

We were just thrilled to have the lovely picture of you, which was received yesterday – you are a beautiful girl and we are very proud of the things we hear about you –

I am enclosing a picture from the today’s Houston Post – I hadn’t read the paper when Nannie called to tell me to look on the page and see if I recognized anybody? We all think it could have been a picture of your Dad – What do you all think? When I showed it to Catharine² she said “Mr. Horton.” Also Pappap popped open his eyes real wide when I handed it to him – and agreed with us –

Will also send a picture of Paulette. She is an attractive, popular girl – Is in first year at Wharton Jr. College –

Know you are very busy at this time with school and other activities – The senior year is a special time in life – Have fun –

We are having freezing weather and don't like it – a bright sunny day today – snow reported yesterday in Houston, Angleton and Bay City! We had hail here – but no snow.

Give the family our love and a kiss around – Keep sweet –

Love

Nana

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 10. The envelope is addressed to Mr. Walter V. Foote (but letter inside is to Barbara Hallie) in New Boston, New Hampshire with a return address of Wharton and postmarked Wharton, Texas. The letter is handwritten on front and back of two pages unlined paper smaller than the standard eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch size.

²For many years, Catherine Davis was Foote's parents' housekeeper and cook (Freedman 18). Foote mentions Catherine's cooking in his memoir *Beginnings*: "My mother had Catherine, our cook, prepare a meal for me that included all of my favorite dishes—fried chicken, rice, gravy, mustard greens, biscuits, small, light, and crisp, the way I liked them, fried corn, salad, and pecan pie for dessert" (213).

May 15, 1968. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Wednesday

Dearest folks –

I'm on the front porch writing this, while waiting for Catharine to finish up – The pecan trees in front are thickening in leaves now and the breeze is delightful out here – like the coast! We are enjoying the dry weather again – Sunday we rode in Ft. Bend Co. to Needville and home on 59 – We saw lots of water in the fields – Yesterday, we went to Eagle Lake after closing-time – via the old route – Glen Flora, Egypt, Bonus and home from E. Lake² on Highway 90 to Rosenberg, Hungerford, home – The rice crops between E. L. and East Bernard are so pretty – The rains locally haven't damaged the cotton crops – especially where the cotton wasn't covered with it – The Colorado and Bernard Rivers have been high, but Catharine says “the river” is going down now –

So happy to have your call Mother's Day and sorry Lill it didn't come through earlier for you to talk too – Also the lovely candy was received today and will be enjoyed and we'll be thinking about you as we eat it – Thanks so much – Your phone bill check wasn't in my bank statement – Will expect it next month's – You will never know what your help meant to me – Mr. White's check came through and it was certainly a reasonable bill – Every week's lesson has something helpful for the day – There are some lapses at times with “us” – and all of these must be denied–

Bessie Davis told Dad this a.m. that we could go by and speak to Abe today – It won't be a visit – Dad especially has wanted to go – am sure he misses him – The Drs. are pleased with the progress he is making –

We had planned to go to the Rays and I wrote Billie last week – but have written him today that we will postpone for another week – The rivers between us are so high – and out in low places, so that's no fun –

So happy that Tomorrow was a big success and it would be wonderful for a follow-up to work out. Keep us posted –

Erin came by yesterday P.M. and found me at Lavania's and had a drink with me – she said the Garrett's are selling the drug store – she didn't want me to repeat here – as the word didn't come from them – (from Mrs. Selcer I imagine). It is a sad story –

Barbara Hallie wrote such a lovely letter

Bye

Love and K –

M.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 10. The envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Horton Foote in New Boston, New Hampshire, with a return address in Wharton and postmarked Wharton, Texas. The letter by Foote's mother is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of two pages small, unlined paper.

²Foote's mother used the abbreviation "E. Lake" and "E.L." to refer to Eagle Lake in Texas.

June 6, 1968. Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton and family.¹

Thursday –

Dearest folks –

Am "back" on "front" porch writing and waiting to take Catharine home –
Later, at 4, will go to La Verna Vinyard's funeral – she has had a long, hard pull –

We are all stunned over the latest tragedy – and feel deeply for the Kennedy family, and our country² – It just seems unbelievable that this could happen – We must wake up –

Your little girl will soon now be walking down that path for her High Sc. Diploma³ – Wish we could have been there –

This will just let you hear from me and must hurry on – C. is ready –

Love and kisses to all –

Devotedly

M.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 9. The envelope is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Horton Foote in New Boston, New Hampshire, with the return address in Wharton, Texas. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front side of one

page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper. Enclosed is a letter by Foote's uncle Billie Brooks to the family.

²Robert Kennedy died on June 6, 1968, the day this letter was written.

³Barbara Hallie Foote, who was 18 years old when this letter was written, would have been graduating from high school at that time.

July 6, 1968. Albert Horton Foote to son Horton.¹

July 5 – 1968

Dear Horton: you will never know how much I have enjoyed your gift on my birthday, just what I wanted –

I wish you could be here in the store, some days, and hear the white and colored men come in and ask me when is your son going to have another picture, everyone he's had here I have seen, some said they went to see them three times, he knows how to write a picture out this world –

I understand B Hallie is going to pay us a visit in August, tell her we will see that she has a grand time – I guess you know that John is moving back to dear old Texas,² now if I can get you back here some way I won't ask for anything else.

I am going to try and get up to see you one of these days, but it hard to get away when you have a store –

Kiss my daughter in law for me and each one of my grandchildren, and remember I love you more than you will ever know.

All my love to you all

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 9. The envelope is addressed in ink to Mr Horton Foote in New Boston, New Hampshire, with the return address of Al. H. Foote in Wharton and postmarked Wharton, Texas. The letter is written in ink on the front and back of one page of the printed stationery of Foote's father's business.

²The family of Foote's brother John had been living in Naperville, Illinois, 32 miles from Chicago. They moved from Naperville to Houston, Texas, where John and Betty Foote operated their own business.

CHAPTER 7

SON, HUSBAND, AND FATHER, 1970-1978

The Foote family correspondence during the 1970s reflects many changes in the lives of individual family members; however, the intimacy expressed in the family's letters was at no time diminished, but rather increased as the years progressed. When the children of Horton and Lillian Foote left home, their letters to and from their parents reveal a warmth and affection similar to that demonstrated in the letters by Foote that he sent to and received from his parents in Wharton after he had left home in the 1930s.

After graduating from college, Foote's daughter Barbara Hallie moved to California and immersed herself in her acting classes taught by Peggy Feury. Barbara Hallie's letters home are replete with thoughts of how to perform various roles in works by playwrights including her father and Chekhov. Foote's son Horton, after serving three years in the armed forces, also moved to California and became an actor. Walter continued to play competitive basketball during his college years and then attended law school. Daisy's correspondence while completing her university studies and after college indicate that she was preparing for a career as a writer, immersing herself in reading the classics and training herself to write.

Lillian's letters during this period describe her active life in New Hampshire. For a time, she sold real estate. She continued to restore their eighteenth-century house. Her passion for collecting antiques grew, and she became an astute assessor of their value. The friends of the Footes' who shared their interests in eighteenth-century buildings and antiques, Roger and Ruth Bacon, and Roger's brother Reggie, continued to play a significant role in Lillian's correspondence.

After living together for almost sixty years, Foote's parents passed away within a year of one another—his father in 1974, and his mother in 1975 (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiii). It appears that the flow of the Foote family correspondence slowed to a trickle after the death of Foote's parents and during the period in which he sequestered himself in his study as he wrote the nine plays of the *Orphans' Home Cycle*.

Foote's creative projects mentioned most often in the family's correspondence during this period were the filming in Corinth, Mississippi, of Foote's adaptation of Faulkner's short story "Tomorrow," the musical adaptation of *Gone with the Wind*, which opened in London in the Drury Theatre in 1972, and later, Foote's work with the HB Playwrights Foundation in New York City.

During the filming of the adaptation of Faulkner's story "Tomorrow," Foote and the other persons who worked on the film stayed in Tupelo, Mississippi, while many of the scenes from the movie were filmed in nearby Corinth. The letters Foote wrote to his family during this time provide insight into

how one of the first “independent” films was made in America. Foote’s description of finding the courthouse that was used in the film in a letter to Lillian is an interesting lesson in Texas history:

It (the courthouse) was last used in 1870. It is named Jacinto and was so named because it was built after the Battle of San Jacinto. Actually, I realize in terms of the South what an old town Wharton is. So many of the towns around here were founded in 1840 or ’50. Tupelo was founded in 1870, making Wharton forty years older.

While in 1970 Foote wrote a letters describing the courthouse used in the film *Tomorrow* as having been built in the 1800s, in 1972 Foote worked on a musical production with a large cast and full orchestra staged in the Drury Theatre in London, which has a history dating back to the 1600s, although the building in which Foote’s play was produced was completed in 1812. In 1972, Foote stayed in London for several months while working on his musical adaptation of *Gone with the Wind*. The letters he wrote during this period are replete with descriptions of the sights and sounds of London in springtime.

In 1978 and 1979, Foote taught acting classes at the HB Studio in New York. During 1977 to 1981, Foote directed six of his own plays that were produced by the HB Playwrights Foundation: *Night Seasons*, *Courtship, 1918*, *Valentine’s Day*, *In a Coffin in Egypt*, and *Arrival and Departure* (Wood, *Selected One-Act Plays* xxvi).

In 1977, Foote began his work on film adaptations of short stories for the American Short Story Collection, an educational program that received support

from the National Endowment for the Humanities (Skaggs 9) and aired on PBS television stations. For this series, Foote wrote two screenplays adapting the short stories “The Displaced Person” by Flannery O’Connor and “Barn Burning” by William Faulkner.

Seventeen letters are have been transcribed and selected for inclusion in this chapter. They reflect the variety and the progression of Foote’s creative work and the emotional connections that he shared with family, friends, and colleagues.

c. February 22, 1970. Foote to son Walter.¹

Sunday –

Dear Walter:

I do thank you for your letter. And I wish I did have such magical powers as securing your teams winning. But I’m even more glad you were able to win without me, and that you won your last game, too, although it must have been frustrating not to have been able to play it. What was your final scoring average? And how many games did your team win and how many lose? Riding out in the country yesterday I saw three negro boys playing basketball, and I thought of you and got very homesick for you.

I am still enjoying my work here. The weather has been beautiful all week, although today we have had a gentle rain. I had a lot of personal chores to get done in my room, so I didn’t mind staying in.

Last night I drove over to Oxford, Mississippi, which is where Univ. of Miss. is located. I had dinner with the head of the English Department, who is collecting Stark Young's letters for publication.² It is a lovely town and a lovely section of the State. There are many rolling hills in that section. I left at about ten last night to drive back home. There was a full moon out and the ride home was lovely.

Robert Duvall just came into town. He drove here from his home in New York. Remember you saw him play "Tomorrow" in New York. I think he will be even better in the film.

No one mentions the dogs in their letters. Mad as I used to get at them I do miss the three rascals. Please write me about them, and maybe get Mom to send me a picture. I wonder if Willie is as sassy as ever? Or has he grown more sedate and dignified?

We start filming on the third of March, which gives us eight more days to get ready. Everyone is running around now as there is a lot to do. We are shooting everything out in the country, and we have found a wonderful old sawmill and houses. Today we got a goat for Fentry to milk, and a mule for him to ride.³

When you write me next tell me what's happening in school as I'm very interested in what you have been studying. What are you doing now in English?

I got a letter from Barbara Hallie today. She seems to be very happy in school. I can't believe next year you'll be going into High School. I know you

will enjoy it a lot! What do you hear about the new regime at the Blue Goose?
How is it going down there? Try and get a report for Dad.

Write me soon. I miss you.

Love

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 27. It is attached to a large airmail envelope with an address handwritten in blue ink to Mr. Walter Foote in New Boston, New Hampshire and postmarked Tupelo, Mississippi. Handwritten in blue ink is the return address of “Foote – Bedford Road – New Boston, N.H.” The letter is typed on the front of one page of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper, with “Sunday – ” in the top margin and “Dad” in bottom margin handwritten in blue ink.

²In 1970, John Pilkington, who had been a member of the department of English of the University of Mississippi since 1950, became the associate dean of the Graduate School (U of Miss. website). In 1975, Pilkington published *Stark Young, A Life in the Arts: Letters, 1900 to 1962*.

³In the published script of the film *Tomorrow*, the sawmill is described as located “across a wooded yard” from “a rough-looking log house” where “Half-finished timber lying on the ground shows evidence that the place is a sawmill” (114-15). During the film, Robert Duvall, as Jackson Fentry, is shown riding a

mule (133). Later, Fentry is shown milking a goat and then feeding Sarah's baby milk from a bottle (149).

February 24, 1970. Foote to son Horton.¹

Monday

Dear Horton:

When I went over to the Univ. of Miss. to have dinner with the head of the English Department and his wife, we were talking and he began to discuss some of the things I had written, and I asked him how he know so much about my work, and he said he had looked me up in Who's Who and had found all about me there. I then told him the story of looking in my files and seeing the unreturned copy, six years after I had received it, and that we had decided they hadn't put me in, because I didn't return it, especially after you had checked at high school and not found me there. So check again now.

It was nice talking to you the other day. I hope you had a good time at the Condon's. I thought about you this weekend, and wish I could have been in on some of the conversation. I wonder if Rick got to spend the night there or did go to a motel. Knowing the Condons I bet they found a place for him to stay.

Robert Duvall arrived last night, and he rehearsed this morning with Joe² and Olga Bellin. He went to lunch with Joe and me, and after lunch I took him out to the county to see the locations for the film. I think he was very pleased with everything.

Tonight Joe and I spent two hours at the Community Center to let some local people read for us. We found some very good types for smaller parts.

Tell Mom that all around now the Jonquils are in bloom, and some of the flowering bushes have buds that are about ready to burst open.

I know you're busy, but if you get a chance drop me a line. Letters mean a lot.

Love,

Dad.

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 26. It is in a large airmail envelope, addressed in blue ink to Mr. Horton Foote, III, in New Boston, New Hampshire with no return address. The letter is typed on the front side of one page of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch white, unlined paper.

²Joseph Anthony directed the film *Tomorrow*.

March 5, 1972. Hallie Brooks Foote to family.¹

Sunday night –

Dearest folks –

When I wrote Daisy last night, we had air-conditioning on to cool off the house! Later, turned off but opened window on porch, and told her we might have heat on in the a.m. and we did. However, it's not too cold and have had a beautiful day –

Johnny called tonight – By the way, he asked if you'd said you'd gotten your watch – Feel that you have – he had it insured and said he got it off the next day – Let us know –

Glad to have your letters and received the Journal² – Monitors are coming, but nothing else – when then notice (bill) for subscription came (you forwarded) I mailed chk. at once, and attached note reminding that I'd sent forwarding address some while back – I did note explanation about transfer to computers and know it has been a large job – If my quarterly comes there (April etc.) send on – if not, I can get one from church here –

Sallie and I made the visit to see Fannie Mae – she was in good spirits and came through fine – Did I write that Leon was here at the time? –

Plan to watch your election returns Tuesday night – You all have put in some good work for M^cCloskey – Hope he has a substantial vote –

Our Speaker of the House is being tried in Abilene³ – undoubtedly he is all tied up in the Sharpstown Bank affair – We have a woman candidate for governor – a very smart person – we will vote for her –

The Rays were expecting company Thurs. for the weekend – a friend who had worked in P.O. with Oliver for many years⁴ –

Think your idea of trying the pattern for Daisy a wise one and hope you are pleased with the work –

Am enclosing check for the phone bills –

Love and kisses to all –

H.

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 12. Without an accompanying envelope, it is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

In the upper margin of the first page of the letter is written “March 6, 1972” in black ink (a different color ink than Foote’s mother had used). I assigned the date March 5, 1972, to the letter, because “Sunday night” appears above the letter, and March 5 fell on a Sunday in 1972. (The envelope, no longer with the letter, had probably been postmarked March 6, since the letter was written—but would not have been postmarked—on a Sunday.)

²In this sentence, Foote’s mother probably referred to the Wharton newspaper, the *Wharton Journal-Spectator*, as the “Journal.” According their correspondence, Lillian and Horton subscribed to the *Wharton Journal-Spectator* even when they lived in the eastern part of the United States. The “Monitors” mentioned in this letter are most likely issues of the *Christian Science Monitor*.

³During the Sharpstown Bank scandal, the Texas Speaker of the House Gus Mutscher, his aide Rush McGinty, and state representative Tommy Shannon (known as the “Abilene Three”) were tried and convicted of accepting a bribe from Frank Sharp, a Houston businessman seeking to influence the passage of certain pieces of legislation. The bribes were in loans from the Sharpstown Bank,

which were then used to purchase stock—quickly and at a substantial profit—in a firm Sharp also controlled (Texas State Historical Assn.).

⁴Oliver Ray, who was married to Foote's mother's sister Laura, worked for years as a night clerk in a post office in Dallas. In his memoir *Farewell*, Foote describes a scene similar to one that appears in *The Trip to Bountiful*. In his memoir, Foote writes that during the year he lived in Dallas in the early 1930s, before leaving to study acting at the Pasadena Playhouse,

I went into Aunt Laura and Uncle Oliver's bedroom for something or other, and saw on the table beside their bed a book called *How to Become an Executive*. Uncle Oliver had been reading it. I'm sure, looking for a way out of the night shift of the post office. He never managed to leave, staying on until after my grandmother Brooks died and left Aunt Laura a share of her estate. He retired soon after that and they left Dallas for Aransas Pass on the gulf. They lived there for a number of years, until he became ill. They moved back to Wharton then, living in an apartment where he died. (155-56)

c. March 1972. Horton to Lillian.¹

Saturday –

Dearest:

Well, I got here! You all would have been proud of me, I believe – I take it all in my stride – English money and all –

The flight over was not as pleasant as I had hoped – The plane (Tourist Section) was jammed. It was a semi-chartered flight. Fifty students from a Boston

art school and I was in the midst of them – They served dinner (after many drinks) until eleven – and then kept the bar open all night, bringing drinks to anyone that ordered – The students wandered about, talking and laughing – so there was no sleeping – If you come over I would definitely recommend a day flight – I'm going home that way –

The hotel is O.K. – Unpretentious, but very clean and simple. It is side by side with third church; the lobby next to the church entrance. I didn't like the first room they showed me, but took the next one, because I was so tired – They evidently have some much nicer (at the same rate) and will move me in one of those tomorrow –

I slept soundly for about four hours and then went for a walk – It has changed very little – I kept looking for you and the children to come towards me down the street – The flowers are blooming here and it's very mild. I had dinner at an Italian Res – across the street for \$2.50 (including tip) (1 pound that is) – I saw where the Pinter play was closing tonight so I went to see it. I'll write in detail about a most interesting production that they did of it. I had the best seat in the house for 2 pounds – This part of London life is like N.Y – ten years ago – I'm sure you can spend money ridiculously, but I feel I will be able to live simply with no effort in a way you can't in America –

I called Joe Layton² after I came back from the theater at ten tonight – I will meet with Joe, Harold, and Evelyn tomorrow so we can go over everything that needs doing –

I wish we were all here together, but I know that cant be so will think of
you all together in New Boston –

I love you very, very much my Sweetheart –

H –

¹This undated letter is in Box 1, folder 15, in a folder with correspondence dated 1972. The letter is handwritten on the front and back of two pages.

Only the day of the week “Saturday,” is designated on the letter; the postmark on the envelope is illegible. I assigned the date of March 1972 to this letter, since Foote’s letters from London date from this time, and he would very likely have flown to England during March to begin his work on the musical *Gone with the Wind*.

²Joe Layton co-produced, directed, and choreographed Foote’s musical adaptation of *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell. Harold Rome wrote the music and lyrics (Calta 68). Layton’s wife Evelyn also worked on the production. Foote appears to have had an excellent working relationship with Harold Rome and the Laytons. Evelyn’s notes to Foote, located in Box 2, folder 12 of the Foote papers, close with warm sentiments such as, “thank you for your very fine script, and thank you for being the wonderful person you are.”

c. March or April 1972. Foote to daughter Daisy.¹

Thursday

Dearest Daisy:

Your letter brought a great deal of cheer to an otherwise very gray, rainy morning – The weather has been extremely damp and cold of late – Not like my first four days which were warm (very) and sunny – We are working very hard. I don't get home from rehearsals until after ten at night. We rehearse in various halls and theaters around the city, ending up at night always on the stage of Drury Lane² – The Drury Lane is over a hundred years old and was dedicated at its opening performance by Lord Byron – It is built over the old Drury Lane which is 300 years old –

London is a very beautiful city. In spite of the cold daffodils are everywhere, and there are many other flowers too – Did you read this from the Monitor? I get a copy every day as my hotel is right next to a reading room, – and the Church you attended Sunday School – I am riding the subway now (in England they say underground) and am really enjoying my stay –

I love you –

Dad –

¹This undated letter is located in Box 2, folder 28. Without an envelope, it is handwritten in ink on one page of the stationery of the Washington Hotel in London.

I assigned the date of March or April 1972 to this letter, as it is written on the stationery of the hotel that Foote stayed in during his work in London in 1972, and the text of the letter provides details of the rehearsals of the musical *Gone with the Wind*, and other letters in March and April 1972, Foote wrote about rehearsals of the production.

²The Drury Lane Theatre of London, where Foote's musical production *Gone with the Wind* was to be performed had, according to a volume entitled *Old and New London*, "experienced many changes and vicissitudes" (218). "Old Drury," which opened in 1663 and in 1672 was destroyed by fire, and was replaced by a new building designed by Sir Christopher Wren. This theater also was destroyed and then was rebuilt in 1791. In 1809, when another fire destroyed the theater, the building was replaced by a larger and more elaborate edifice, which opened in 1812 with a prologue by Lord Byron (Thornbury 218-227). It was the fourth of the Drury Lane Theatres in which Foote's production of the musical *Gone with the Wind*, with a full orchestra and a large cast including a live horse, was to perform.

March 31, 1972. Foote to son Walter.¹

Thursday Evening –

Dear Walter:

I had another walk over to the Aldford House the other night and it brought back old times of us all here in London together. I wish you all were here

with me now, and I hope someday we can all come here together again. I stay in a very constricted radius of the city, as I have all my time taken up by work – We have been holding some of our rehearsals at a Ballroom in Piccadilly Circus, which is only a ten minute walk from my hotel. I have found a nice Restaurant – local– called Swiss Inn – It is run by the Swiss Gov – and is really four separate Restaurants – representing the four different cultures to be found in Switzerland – French, German, Italian, Swiss – the food is reasonable and always something different – after I have my dinner there I usually walk to the Drury Lane Theater (another ten minutes) where we rehearse at night – It is a very large, old and quite beautiful Theater – After rehearsals at night I take a bus back to the hotel –

The English make a great deal of the Easter holiday – Everything will be closed up through next Monday – Many people are going away on a Holiday – We will rehearse Easter, but I am hoping to get a few hours off at dinner time as Ruth and Roger Bacon² will be in town then and I would like very much to get a glimpse of them and hear about their stay in Portugal –

I hear your basketball is progressing – Keep up to good work –

love –

Dad –

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 27. The letter is in an envelope with matching hotel stationery. On the envelope, the return address of the Washington Hotel is printed, and the envelope is addressed in ink to Mr. Walter Foote in New

Boston, New Hampshire, and postmarked London. The letter is handwritten in black ink on the front and back of two pages of the printed stationery of the Washington Hotel on Curzon Street in London.

²Roger and Ruth Bacon, close friends of the Footes in New Hampshire, shared with Horton and Lillian an interest in eighteenth-century American homes and antiques (Foote, "Horton Foote Collection," 8-9).

April 4, 1972. Horton to Lillian.¹

Tuesday –

Sweetheart:

We had a full day of sunshine yesterday, but today it's rainy again, although warm. Roger and Ruth met me at the Drury Lane at 1:30 yesterday and I gave them a tour of the theater – It has great historic importance just as a building and they loved it – They saw my name on the billboards and I thought Roger would have a spasm, he began to jump up and down and yell so – They only stayed about 40 minutes as rehearsals began again at 2:30 –

I got your letter just now (it is now 9:30 in the morning here) about Virginia² – I called the hotel again immediately, but again was told she wasn't there – Perhaps they are registered under daughter's name and I can't remember that –

Plans for the kitchen sound wonderful – I am so proud of you and love you and the children so much – I wish they were all babies again (wrong I know)

and we were all here together – I don't really mean that, of course, as I wouldn't have anything change really, because I am so grateful for the wonderful way each of them is developing and growing as individuals – I just meant now that we are all so grown up, it's difficult to ever think of us all together again for any length of time – However, I don't complain and gratefully count my blessings every day. The rain clouds are breaking outside and we will have some sunshine today after all –

I enjoy your letters so much – even a note helps –

love –

H –

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 15. It is handwritten on two pages.

²In an undated letter included in the folder with Foote's correspondence to Lillian in 1972, Foote mentions that he has been trying to call actress Virginia Wood at her hotel.

April 11, 1972. Foote to Barbara Hallie.¹

Tuesday 11th

Dearest Barbara Hallie;

Our letters must have crossed – Yours arrived today – I am glad your birthday party was so enjoyable – Also, delighted that Horton was in good spirits, and that he could be with you for your birthday. Mom writes that he plays

basketball with Walter every day after school at the high school – I know that pleases Walter, and I'm glad he can have some of Horton's attention –

I have the morning and afternoon off from rehearsal and won't go to the theater until 6:30 – We are still all working very hard and hope to have our first dress rehearsal, costume, lights and everything (orchestra, too) by next Wednesday.

Harold Rome² is a camera buff and has promised to take pictures of the cast and rehearsals for me to send on to you – I will see that he doesn't forget – I haven't been able to find Maggie Cole in the phone book and don't see how I would find the time to see her anyway, as much as I would like to – However, if I could locate her I'm sure I would find the time –

I don't think the Boston Monitor carries reviews of N.Y. movies as the London Monitor does so I thought you'd like this –

Love,

Dad

I just discovered I put the wrong zip code on your last letter –

Hope you got it –

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 25. The letter and envelope have the printed address of the Washington Hotel on Curzon Street in London. The envelope is addressed in black ink to Miss Barbara Hallie Foote in Durham, New

Hampshire, and postmarked London. The letter is handwritten on the front and back of one page of the stationery of the Washington Hotel in London.

²Harold Rome wrote the music and lyrics for Foote's musical adaptation of *Gone with the Wind* (Calta 68).

April 17, 1972. Horton to Lillian.¹

Sunday

Dearest:

I wrote Horton so I'll just make this a short note to tell you I love you and miss you – I'm beginning my fifth week now. We worked very, very hard on Saturday and got a lot accomplished so Joe² gave us Sunday off – Our first one since rehearsals began – I spent the day alone – It was lonely most of the day and I went for walks had an early dinner (6 o'clock) and went to the service at 7 – I have been using the Reading Room a great deal and enjoy it – It is a very active Reading Room and has a wonderful atmosphere – We won't have any more days off, as we will be having dress rehearsals on Wed – and Thursday –

love –

H –

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 15. It is handwritten on one page.

²Joe Layton was the director and choreographer of the London production of *Gone with the Wind* (Calta 68).

April 18, 1972. Horton to Lillian.¹

Monday –

Dearest:

The theater was taken over tonight by the technical people getting us ready for our dress rehearsals – Everyone is working very hard and all the technical people are very, very expert – It's a good thing for technically the show is very, very difficult – I must say Joe Layton is a worker, dedicated and all business. He is very well organized and Evelyn, his wife, is a big help to him –

I've had a severe case of homesickness today – my first real problems with it. I have to remember that over half my stay is done, even if you can't get here – If you don't come, I have made reservations to return on the sixth – I have to supervise the script before I leave, or I would leave on the fourth – That's how badly I want to get back to you all –

I keep getting notes from Lucy² sending reviews and etc. – She says she will leave here on the 30th or 29th – I keep hoping every letter will give me some news of unexpected income so I can cable you to pack your suitcase, but no such news as yet –

Barbara Hallie has been very sweet about writing me – I got a letter from her again today – They are always appreciated –

I love you very much my darling and I miss you ever so much – I don't want ever to be separated again –

H –

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 15. It is handwritten on two pages.

²Lucy Kroll, Foote's agent, went to London for the opening of *Gone with the Wind*.

c. April 1972. Lillian to Horton.¹

Friday

Dearest,

I am using your typewriter on the 3rd floor so here goes.

We have had a very poor spring – yesterday it snowed again all day – a miserable wet snow and today it is sunny but quite chilly. I'm so glad the Lorden man was able to come when he did.

Roger Bacon called the other night – said they'd been home a couple of days so guess they stayed about four weeks in all. He still had a cold and said Ruth had sprained her ankle in Portugal – I don't think they had too good a time – he had a hard time working up enthusiasm even for Portugal. However, it was good to hear his voice again – he is a very thoughtful, sweet man.

Mr. Porter made it yesterday morning in the raging snow and I just hope he got thru the mud all right going back. I'm really crazy about him and he has been very decent – I appreciate him all the more because I wrote a number of letters which I won't take the time to tell about now but never got any response or else negative. I feel it was a real demonstration to have made this contact. Anyhow, he bought the Chris Schmidt table for 700 – you recall, we paid 275 for

it. I know that was a good price for him though and I could have gotten more from a private sale but you have to do better with dealers because of their markup. He loved the Martha Washington chair and said the next time I came thru to bring it and he thought he could sell it for me in a few weeks time but didn't know if he could buy it outright. Then as he was leaving, he said, oh, bring it, and I'll pay you for it – I know my wife will want it. He brought the little chest and it is a beauty. I examined the back carefully and all thru drawers and it is a wonderful little primitive chest. I told him I loved it but I said I'd have to be honest with him – the reason why I was selling these pieces was because of an unexpected tax bill and if I could pay him later – anyhow, he said that because I had been so nice to him I could pay him anytime and he only wanted 300 for it – and then he said, don't pay me for it when I buy the chair you can pay me then – I know I could sell the chest tomorrow to Roger B.² or Alexa for at least 385 or 425 but it is so attractive I think we can hang on to it for awhile.

I'll go ahead now and pay the tax bill and I owe Dr. Tonney a hundred dollars. If you feel, you don't want to sell the Martha Washington chair – I would get 1700 for it – I told him I couldn't get down until a week from tomorrow so you write me would you. However, I tried the Queen Anne armchair in its place and it looks lovely and I personally would rather sell the M. Washington rather than any of our wing chairs.

I must go. I love you. Will pick this up later today but will mail what is written so far.

I love you. You'll be home in less than 2 weeks!

Love you, love you,

L.

¹This undated letter is located in Box 1, folder 22, with correspondence dated 1972. The letter is typed on the front and back of one page of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch thin typing paper. I assigned the date of April 1972 to this letter since Lillian mentions Horton's departure from London in less than two weeks, which was on May 6 according to other correspondence of this period.

²In her letters, Lillian often refers to Roger Bacon as "Roger B."

c. April 26, 1972. Horton to Lillian.¹

Wednesday –

Dearest Sweetheart:

I've been thinking of Horton all day today – I wasn't sure if he reported yesterday or today, but my heart has been with him every moment of both days² –

We had our preview for Princess Anne tonight and it went very well – Everyone was dressed to the nines – Thank Heavens I had a job to do up in the Sound System – Part of it went out and I had to read some names so I had an excuse not to go home and get dressed – Actually, of course, I don't even have a dark suit – I don't know what excuse I'll give opening night as they're all dressing again – "I'll think of that tomorrow" – Princess Anne came backstage

and I was presented to her along with Harold Rome, Scarlett, Rhett, etc. She was lovely, very gracious and very easy to be with –

The Mayor of Atlanta was also there and he was very enthusiastic with the show³ –

It's after one and I'm very tired have been going since ten this morning when I had an interview with B.B.C. – We had a run through in the afternoon, then the performance tonight –

Please write me about Horton and where I can write him –

love –

H –

¹This undated letter is in a folder in Box 1, folder 15, with other correspondence dated 1972. The letter is handwritten on the front and back of two pages.

Except for “Wednesday,” there is no date is designated on the letter; also, the postmark on the envelope is illegible. I assigned the date of April 26, 1972, since Lillian's letter of April 11 states that their son Horton's date of enlistment was April 26, 1972, a detail mentioned in the first sentence of Foote's letter, which also fell on a Wednesday.

²Foote's son Horton, who served in the Army for three years, was sent overseas while Foote was still in London.

³Enclosed with a letter dated May 2, 1972, from Horton to Lillian is a clipping with a brief description of the first performance of “Gone with the Wind” by Harold Hobson, a London critic. The title of Hobson’s article is “‘Wind’ musical makes friends as Atlanta goes to London.” The beginning paragraphs of the article read as follows:

The first performance of the big new British musical “Gone With the Wind” at Drury Lane – a charity gala in the presence of Princess Anne, to which no professional critics were admitted – quickly and cheerfully developed into a demonstration of friendship between London and Atlanta, Ga.

Sam Massell, the Mayor of Atlanta, where some of the most vivid action of the musical is set, flew over to England for a single night in order to be at this performance, which was in aid of the World Wildlife Fund.

April 30, 1972. Horton to Lillian.¹

Dearest:

Your letter about Horton’s leaving arrived as I as left the hotel to meet Alan Pakula² for breakfast. I began to read it as he came driving up in a taxi and I took one look at him after just having read your description of having said farewell to Horton, and I started to bawl like a baby. Fortunately we were already in a taxi and he is such a sympathetic fellow, he began to cry too. It was quite a scene. I was glad really to have been with him at that time, and I am glad that Horton’s leaving was so harmonious. He’s a wonderful lad and I know he’s on his

way to a marvelous life. I love each of you so much and would like to preserve each precious moment of our lives together.

Alan was in fine spirits and took up just where we'd left off. He still talks great deal about Hope and I guess it was very difficult for him. He's giving a party for me on Friday evening after the performance, and will invite Lee Remick³ and Boaty Boatright,⁴ all who have been wanting to see me. Then I leave on Saturday (a week from today). Can you believe it? Audrey Wood and Kay Brown are here.⁵ They came to the benefit. Kay Brown couldn't have been nicer to me. She is much different than I had expected. She came again last night, this time with Lars Schmidt (Ingrid Bergman's husband) I think he is interested in acquiring the European rights.

We are working around the clock.

Love

H.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 15. This letter is typed on one page.

²As a producer, Alan Pakula worked with Foote on various film projects. During the 1960s, Pakula produced *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, and *The Stalking Moon*, three films for which Foote wrote the screenplays.

³Lee Remick played the role of Georgette Thomas in Foote's film *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, which was released in 1965.

⁴Alice Lee (Boaty) Boatwright, an agent, was involved in the casting of the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, produced in 1962. In the audio commentary of the film, producer Alan Pakula and director Robert Mulligan discuss Boaty Boatwright's search for the children who played Jem and Scout.

⁵Audrey Wood and Kay Brown were leading theatrical agents, who had adjacent offices in New York at International Creative Management. Among the many notable clients whom Audrey Wood represented were Tennessee Williams, William Inge, Carson McCullers, and Brian Friel (Mitgang 11).

October 10, 1972. Hallie Brooks Foote to family.¹

Tuesday night –

Dearest folks –

I talked to both Jo and Betty² over the weekend (believe I've written this) and haven't heard since – Hope to get a letter tomorrow and will hold this up – until after morning mail – I wrote Laura that Baker had lunch with us and remember that I told you via phone – or did I?

Yesterday – the night sitter came at 4 and stayed until 7 this a.m. I went on the ride with them and did the driving, as I don't want to get too out of practice – came "quite natural" – We too are having fine weather – our Octobers are usually our real lovely month – We have the wall heater in good order now – but haven't used it – but air conditioner still on the job –

I sent Nan's write up of Jo Ellen's wedding (and the picture) to Journal yesterday a.m. and they thought they'd have room in this week's issue, so look out for it³ – Will send Barbara Hallie a copy –

Did you read Roscoe Drummond's review of the book on Stevenson – His papers edited – (1st volume) – It was excellent – Am wondering if he supported him (instead of Eisenhower?) – This was in Monitor – Oct. 4 – look it up if you missed it –

I have had a letter from Mr. Rockhold – My letter regarding work was waiting when they returned from the wonderful trip – He and his wife had a 2200 mile trip by car thru Scotland, Wales and Southern England – You may have talked to him –

Dad was in bed by 7, and asleep soon afterwards – He has been up only once (10:30), and right back to sleep – Eddy Mae said he was up and down last night – 7 times – I could hear them, but she didn't need me and I've decided it's wiser for me to stay out – Feel sure he will have a restful night –

Glad to report that Albert is now doing alright – The fourth upset was reported – I called good old Nannie – who thought it sounded not good – She got in touch with Dr. Witt (Sat. night) and he said tho' unfortunate, he would be alright – Nannie and Bolton left Sunday as I wrote you, for Colorado until this Saturday –

Love to all –

M –

¹This letter is located in Box 3, folder 12. Without an envelope, it is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of one page unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

In the upper margin of the first page of the letter is written in black ink "Oct. 11, 1972." I assigned the date of October 10, 1972, to the letter, since October 10 fell on a Tuesday in 1972, and Foote's mother began her letter with "Tuesday night." The envelope, which is no longer with the letter, was almost certainly postmarked the day after the letter was written.

²Betty and Jo Ellen, Foote's sister-in-law and niece, were the wife and daughter of his brother John.

³Nan Outlar wrote about the wedding of Jo Ellen Foote for the newspaper *Wharton Journal-Spectator*.

November 20, 1974. Foote to son Walter.¹

Wednesday

Dear Walter:

We have a warm, rainy day. It doesn't seem possible that we are past the middle of November, and that the weather can be this mild.

Daisy's play² is not being done until after Thanksgiving so you will miss it.

I have been taking a lot of long walks in the woods lately – Riley Brothers have been doing some selective cutting and I walk around inspecting their handiwork –

Sunday was the last day of deer season, so the woods are quiet now –

Leo came to do some work yesterday – He didn't get a deer, and it make him feel no better to learn that a buck was shot on our land across from Flansburys –

I haven't seen Marvin since the barn was completed, nor have I seen anyone else from Goffstown – Dana and Peggy are still considering the Carter house – They will come to a decision by Friday –

Last night before going to bed we couldn't find Clarence – Earlier I had heard him barking and had gone to the door, but couldn't see him – Again we heard barking, but it sounded out in the woods, so we figured he had an animal cornered – I woke up two or three times in the night, hearing the barking, as did Mother – We would both go to the door and call and call, but he wouldn't come – When Mother got us this morning she was very concerned – She heard him bark again (still thought he was in the woods) and was about to get me to go with her to look for him, when Daisy came running in to report that he had been locked in the station wagon all night. He had gone with me to pick her up after rehearsal, and we had forgotten to let him out –

Willy has lost weight and is very lively – He goes with me often on walks and is very active each day – The men working on the barn made a great deal over him – and, of course, he loved the attention –

We'll be down to get you a week from today – We are all anxious to see you –

Dad

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 27. It is attached to a large white envelope with the address handwritten in blue ink of Walter V. Foote at Springfield College in Massachusetts with a return address in New Boston, New Hampshire, and postmarked New Boston. The letter is handwritten in blue ink on the front and back of four of pages lined paper with the writing double-spaced on every other line.

²In early December, Foote sent Walter two news clippings with notices of Daisy's plays that appeared in the *Goffstown Banner* in issues dated December 3 and 5, 1974. Daisy played the role of Constance in the play *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, a stage adaptation of a novel by Shirley Jackson, at Goffstown High School on December 7 and 8, 1974.

c. January 20, 1977. From Lillian to family.¹

Jan – 20

Dear Family in Calif. and Texas –

I've been watching some of the Inaugural and just now the farewell to Pres. Ford—very moving and I felt a great outpouring of love towards him. In retrospect I admire his kind of presidency – he was a quiet leader in that he selected people to do the important work and stayed in the background a great deal. Hugh Sidney – the Time man who covers the Presidency, said he was never given full credit by the American people. He also said he felt he was absolutely right in granting Nixon's pardon as we had to leave Watergate behind us to keep him from having the country destroyed – I thought Carter's tribute to him at the beginning of his speech was very nice altho his speech generally was most simple – perhaps, better than a lot of stirring rhetoric. Hope someday we can do away with inaugurations as we're doing away with funerals.

I talked to Cal Skaggs² on the phone and he said Displaced Person³ will be on the air April 12. We chatted a little about the College in Madison, N.J. where he teaches – Drew College – said it's similar to Dickinson in size. Anyhow, he will send us a catalogue – the description in “Barron's” sounds very good.

Bank of N.H. wouldn't loan any money on the Hampton house so I'm advertising it. Have a lot of appointments to show it this weekend so we'll see. I got paid my commission for the sale of the land and the fellow who bought the McInnis land is doing his test today or tomorrow! How they'll get through all that

snow and ice I don't know. The weather is much warmer today and the new outside thermometer registers 32° – a regular heat wave.

I had a letter from Joe Anthony – 2 pages – both sides – single space. I don't dare send it on to you all until I have it Xeroxed – will send you a copy, too, Walter.

I'll close now – write and let us hear all the news.

Love you —

L.

John Foote called – wanted you to know he and Betty would be on a cruise the week of March 12 in case you were going to visit Texas.

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 24. Without an accompanying envelope, it is handwritten in black ink on the front and back of white, unlined eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper. In pencil “77?” is written in the right-hand corner of the first page of the letter. Lillian's postscript below her signature is in pencil.

²Calvin Skaggs produced Foote's film *On Valentine's Day*. A Professor of English at Drew University and the Literary Advisor of the American Short Story Series, Skaggs also produced five of the films in the American Short Story Collection, including Foote's adaptation of William Faulkner's “Barn Burning” (PBS website, Internet Movie Database, and Skaggs, *American Short Story* 11).

³In addition to his adaptation of Faulkner's "Barn Burning," Foote wrote a film adaptation of Flannery O'Connor's "The Displaced Person." Foote's screenplays of "Barn Burning" and "The Displaced Person" were both productions in the American Short Stories Collection, which received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (Skaggs 9).

February 15, 1978. Lillian to Horton.¹

Wed. Feb. 15

My darling –

I'm here in the kitchen making plans for what to do before coming into New York tomorrow.²

After our talk last night, I realized once more how deeply I do love you. You have been always so good to me, so understanding and appreciative – I only have a keener awareness of that as the years go by. My life with you has been a full and satisfying one – I believe our children are an expression of the trust and love we've shared together these years.

I'll arrive before this letter but just wanted you to know this –

L.

¹This letter is located in Box 1, folder 16, and is the only letter in the folder with an envelope attached, which is addressed to Horton Foote in Hotel

Olcott in New York. The letter is handwritten in black ink on one page of blue stationery.

²In 1978, Foote was working in New York with Herbert Berghof at HB Playwrights Foundation.

CHAPTER 8

LETTERS TO ACTORS AND WRITERS, 1986-1991

The 1980s were productive and creative years for Foote. It was also a decade in which, with a growing and appreciative audience, he continued to receive acclaim for his many artistic achievements. In 1983, his film *Tender Mercies* won an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. Robert Duvall, who played the role of Mac Sledge, received the Academy Award for Best Actor. In 1985, Geraldine Page won an Academy Award for her performance as Carrie Watts in *The Trip to Bountiful*, and Foote was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Screenplay (Castleberry, *Genesis* xiv-xv). Later in the decade, films of four of the plays in the *Orphans' Home Cycle*, *Convicts*, *Courtship*, *On Valentine's Day*, and *1918* were produced. The PBS presentation in 1987 of *The Story of a Marriage*, which consisted of the films *Courtship*, *Valentine's Day*, and *1918* (Castleberry, *Genesis* xv), appears to have had a profound effect on many viewers, whose responses are expressed in the mail to Foote in the DeGolyer archive.

During this time, Foote's children began to work with him. His daughter Hallie and son Horton appeared in his plays and films. Many letters placed in the archive praise their acting skills and their interpretations of Foote's characters. In August 1982, actress Perry Anthony wrote, "Son Horton is remarkably home on

the stage – relaxed and concentrated. To me, he struck a note that was more right for the play.”

The correspondence in the DeGolyer archive that Foote received during the 1980s came from a wide variety of persons, including Foote’s family members, directors, actors, writers, scholars, teachers, and members of his theater and film audiences who wished to share their feelings about his work with him. Letters from Foote’s colleagues include playwright Romulus Linney, stage director Mary Hunter Wolf, film director Ken Harrison, actress Eva Marie Saint, and Joe Anthony, an actor, writer, and director and longtime friend of Foote’s family.

Foote’s correspondents during this period were numerous, coming from many places and with a surprising variety of backgrounds. Four letters to Foote by Marguerite Barzun are in the archive. Marguerite Barzun is a scholar of American literature and the wife of Jacques Barzun, who at one hundred years of age (born November 30, 1907) lives in San Antonio, Texas (Safire 36). About the preview screening of *1918*, Marguerite Barzun wrote on January 12, 1985,

Jacques and I thank you immensely for including us in the preview showing of ‘1918.’ Now J. is no moviegoer, but he adored that film. Our impressions of it were that it is lyric, by which I mean almost a poetic song of a kind of life that should be remembered. You avoided sentimentality without loss of whatever spirit it is that causes one to recognize the past as part of ourselves.

Timothy Forbes, the son of Malcolm Forbes, wrote a letter to Foote on January 31, 1985, thanking Foote for allowing Anthology Film Archives to screen *1918*. Forbes, the Barzuns, and many other correspondents praised Foote's daughter Hallie's performance in the role of Elizabeth in *1918*.

Letters by scholars engaged in the study of Foote's life and work appear in the archive. Among the scholars whose correspondence has been placed in the Foote Papers in the DeGolyer Library are Gerald Wood, Marion Castleberry, Crystal Brian, and Terry Barr. The letters of Scott Dixon McDowell, who has been working on a documentary about Foote, are also present in the archive.

Much of the correspondence of this period includes touching and eloquent tributes to Foote's works. The play and film *1918* seemed to inspire a great response from viewers. Not only did Foote receive letters praising the work, but he also received correspondence from persons for whom the events in *1918* triggered the emotional responses that accompany memories of occurrences in their own lives. One woman wrote to Foote about the tragic loss of both of her parents during the influenza epidemic of 1918, for example, and another woman wrote quite movingly about the death of her own infant daughter.

An actress who portrayed Carrie Watts in *The Trip to Bountiful* at the Alley Theater in 1989 wrote, "I wish audience comments could be kept like rose petals in a blue glass jar that I might share their perfume with you." She went on to describe a memorable audience response to one of the performances of *The Trip to Bountiful*:

Our audiences have generally stood to applaud your show, but one special performance offered a tribute that overwhelmed us. In the first two rows were several elderly ladies and gentlemen. They had been quite verbal throughout the performance. We knew they were involved. At the curtain call we noticed rustlings in those two rows. As we bowed we saw those gracious people, bodies slowed by collected calendars, helping each other up to join the standing ovation.

During the 1980s, Horton and Lillian continued to write and receive letters from their children, and Lillian's correspondence indicates that she remained an avid collector of antiques. Letters written during the 1980s by members of Foote's extended family, including Nan Outlar, have also been placed in the DeGolyer archive. A letter by Nan dated August 6, 1983, responded to questions by Foote about how Wharton, Texas, appeared in 1918. Nan's letter answers questions in great detail such as whether there were picket fences in Wharton in 1918. Nan opens her letter:

Dear Horton – (1) Yes – they had picket fences in Wharton in 1918 – many of them – The Taylor home (across from Aunt Daisy's and up a little – a Big two story home next to the Norrin home – The Howard Clapp, Pates and Taylors lived then. Also the old Gifford home on W. Caney had one as late as '22 – and longer Isabel Hutchins lived there when I used to visit here in the '20s.

Enclosed with her letter are six Polaroid snapshots of very old furniture in a simple style, with notes on the back of each picture; for example, behind the photograph of a dresser, Nan wrote, "The knobs are glass." In a letter written in September 1983, Nan wrote, "Dearest Horton – Yes – women could own property

in their own name in 1918. Yes they were called Liberty Bonds.” The filming of *1918* was completed in 1985; it appears from these letters written by Nan Outlar in 1983 that Foote paid close attention to detail to maintain authenticity in the plot, dialogue and setting, and he requested assistance of a longtime resident of Wharton.

Evident in Foote’s letters to actors, writers, directors, and others is his sensitivity, empathy, and appreciation of their artistic talents; such admiration is reflected in the first letter in this chapter from Foote to Peter Hillsman Taylor, who had just published a book that would win the Pulitzer Prize the following year. Eudora Welty describes a similar quality in Faulkner’s correspondence with other writers: “Faulkner’s marked sensitivity to others, to their pain, their needs of affection, encouragement, moral support, might have been taken for granted from the evidence of his work. What might not have been so easily guessed was that their gifts as artists brought about a profound response in him” (*Eye of the Story* 219). Many of Foote’s letters to young writers encourage them to “keep writing.” A letter from an aspiring writer dated November 13, 1984, states, “Your encouragement to ‘no matter what keep writing’ has rung in my mind time and again.”

I have selected and transcribed nine letters that are included in this chapter. All of these letters are located in Box 2 in the Horton Foote Collection in the DeGolyer Library. The transcriptions were created either from a computer printout attached to the letters sent to Foote to which he was responding or from

Foote's handwritten draft, which was then typed by a secretary. Almost always the typed versions were exactly the same as his handwritten first drafts and appear to have been sent as he wrote them, without any changes. Unfortunately, many more letters written to Foote have been placed in the archive than the playwright's responses. The nine letters in this chapter that were written by Foote have been selected to demonstrate how he communicated with colleagues and young actors and writers during the years 1986 to 1991 and to illustrate the advice he gave to younger artists.

November 26, 1986. Foote to Peter Taylor.¹

11/26/86

(Peter Taylor)

Dear Mr. Taylor:

Someone at Knopf was kind enough to send me a copy of your novel 'A Summons to Memphis.'²

My wife, my son and I have recently been reading and in my case re-reading your short stories with enormous pleasure. South East Texas, where I was born, seems (often) far away. I know the strict social codes of your Tennessee, but finally I am so drawn into your world, that it becomes my world. And so it is with your novel. It has been several weeks since I've finished it, but your characters and the life surrounding them haunts me still –

All good wishes –

Horton Foote

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 19. It is a handwritten draft in black ink on the front side of on page of small, unlined white paper.

²In 1987, *A Summons to Memphis* by Peter Hillsman Taylor was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

May 12, 1988. Foote to Fred Chappell.¹

Wharton, TX

Dear Mr. Chappell:

George Core wrote me that you and Shelby Foote nominated me for membership in the Fellowship of Southern Writers,² and I thank you for thinking of me.

All good wishes,

Horton Foote

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 3. Attached to the typed letter is Foote's handwritten draft in black ink on personalized stationery.

²Fred Chappell, George Core, and Shelby Foote were three of the charter members of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. The organization was formed to commemorate outstanding achievement, encourage promising writers, and

recognize distinctive contributions in the writing of Southern literature. In 2003, the Fellowship of Southern Writers presented Horton Foote with the Cleanth Brooks Medal for Lifetime Achievement (Fellowship of Southern Writers website).

1989. Foote to Reynolds Price.¹

Dear Reynolds:

I've been wanting to write to say how pleased I am that your Trilogy is to be done at the Cleveland Playhouse² and that it was given an award by Kennedy Center.³ Please let me know when it is to be performed and if my hectic schedule permits I would like so to see it.

I have been in Texas for a month – arrived just in time for a storm that finally, I believe, dumped a great deal of water over the rest of the South. Although we had some strong winds and lots and lots of rain there was little change here. Half of Houston, particularly around the Bayous, seemed under water — many houses with water up to the roofs – In a delayed copy of the New York Times I saw a picture of you in New York signing copies of “Clear Pictures” — and in an earlier (I believe) Sunday Book Section I saw quite a handsome and impressive full page ad.

All contracts have finally been signed for “Convicts,” and contracts for “Roots in a Parched Ground” are being finalized. We start the production for

“Convicts” outside of New Orleans in mid-September and shooting starts in early October –

I have been finishing my work on the “Madame Bovary” adaptation – they (H.B.O.) insist on calling it “Emma.” I keep telling them that there is a novel by Jane Austen with that name, but they look at me as if to say who in the world is Jane Austen and just repeat quietly, but firmly, that Tess of the D’Urbervilles did extremely well being called “Tess” –

I’m at work, too, on a new full-length play –

I happen to love the summers here, the sounds and smells of summer – the cotton crops are flourishing and I’ll be here long enough to see the blossoms turn into squares and the squares into balls — a sight I haven’t seen in a long time. The fig harvest has come and gone, but the pecan trees are loaded and we’ll have a wonderful crop this year – although I won’t be here to gather them –

Please keep me informed about – the plays – Do you know who will direct, and who is to be cast?

All good wishes –

Horton –

¹This undated letter is located in Box 2, folder 16. Foote’s draft of the letter is handwritten in black ink on the front and back of three pages lined notebook paper with three holes punched in the left-hand margin.

I assigned the letter the date of 1989 because the trilogy of plays by Reynolds Price, entitled *New Music*, was performed at the Cleveland Playhouse in November 1989 (Gussow 16). Also in 1989, Price received a grant from the Kennedy Center and published his memoir *Clear Pictures*. In his letter to Price, Foote mentioned the theatrical production of the trilogy, the Kennedy Center grant, and the publicity for the publication of *Clear Pictures*, all of which took place in 1989.

²Reynolds Price's trilogy, *New Music*, consists of three plays that portray a family, the Averys, at certain times during 38 years. The first play, *August Snow*, takes place in 1937; *Night Dance* is set in 1945, and *Better Days*, in 1975. The plays whose "principal themes are love and loss and the salving effects of time" were produced in a "true trilogy fashion," since "the plays work best when seen in sequence, as at one of the Cleveland Play House's regularly scheduled Sunday marathons" (Gussow 16).

³In 1989, Reynolds Price received a production grant from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays. The award was for the production of *New Music*, a trilogy including the plays *August Snow*, *Night Dance*, and *Better Days* to be performed at The Cleveland Play House.

Horton and Daisy Foote also received awards from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays. In 1999, Horton Foote received a production grant for the production of *The Last of the Thorntons* at the Signature Theatre Company in New York City. Four years earlier, in 1995, Foote's daughter Daisy received a

Roger L. Stevens Award from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays. Daisy Foote received the award for her play *Living with Mary* (Kennedy Center website).

October 30, 1990. Foote's reply to a university professor.¹

Wharton, Texas

October 30, 1990

Dear Dr. Yoken:

Thank you for your very, very kind letter.

We are in the process now of trying to raise money for the filming of "The Widow Claire," and also "Lily Dale."²

I do have two new plays: "Dividing the Estate,"³ and "Talking Pictures."

"Dividing the Estate" has just had a second production at the Great Lakes Theater Festival in Cleveland, and "Talking Pictures" will be directed by Peter Masterson in early summer at a theater in Houston.

My best to you and your wife,

Horton Foote

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 22. Without an envelope, Foote's response to Yoken's handwritten letter was filed as a printed unsigned copy from a laser printer on eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²The film, *Lily Dale*, was released in 1996. It was directed by Peter Masterson and featured actors Mary Stuart Masterson as Lily Dale, Tim Guinee as Horace Robedaux, Stockard Channing as Corella, Sam Shepard as Pete Davenport, and Jean Stapleton as Mrs. Coons.

³The play *Dividing the Estate* by Horton Foote was first produced in New Jersey in 1989. The second production of *Dividing the Estate* took place in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 11, 1990, just before Foote wrote the above letter.

October 30, 1990. Foote's reply to a young poet.¹

Wharton, TX

October 30, 1990

Dear Shelley:

Thank you for your letter. It was nice hearing from you again.

I'm so glad you have not given up on me as a correspondent, and thank you for understanding my every increasing busy schedule.²

When I'm in San Francisco to see "1918" perhaps we can meet.

I did not know that Vaclav Havel had read To Kill A Mockingbird in prison. Thank you for telling me. I too admire him very much.³

All good wishes,

Horton Foote

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 18. The letter by Foote that was placed in the archive is a duplicate copy printed with a laser printer on eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper. It is attached to the original typewritten letter sent to Foote, without its accompanying envelope.

²Foote's correspondent opened her letter dated October 18, 1990: "I won't keep you long, since I know from news reports how extraordinarily busy you have been. I seem to see your name everywhere: your play coming to San Francisco, your film to be released soon (I'll be first in line), and even your voice emerging from behind those sad pictures of the Civil War." Horton Foote portrayed the voice of Jefferson Davis in the nine-part PBS American Experience documentary *The Civil War*, directed by Ken Burns and produced in 1990.

³The October 18 letter to Foote remarks, "Meanwhile I have been reading the works of a colleague of yours in the world of theater, Vaclav Havel--a remarkable man. Did you know that in his letters from prison he mentions reading To Kill a Mockingbird? I wish he could see the film; perhaps, by now, he has."

December 12, 1990. Foote's reply to a young poet.¹

Wharton, TX

December 12, 1990

Dear Shelley:

Thank you for your letter. I'm sure I am related at least to Mary Hallock Foote's husband.² The original Foote settled in New England, but my particular

branch early went to Virginia and then on into the South. Shelby Foote and I are third cousins. Incidentally, if you ever see “The Civil War” on P.B.S., I am the voice of Jefferson Davis.

I was very, very moved by what you had to say about “1918.” I took the liberty of sharing your letter with my daughter, Hallie, who played Elizabeth. It meant a great deal to her too.

I look forward to seeing you and your husband in San Francisco. As soon as I know when I will be there I will let you know.

All good wishes,

Horton Foote

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 18. Foote’s letter in the archive is a duplicate laser printer copy on eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper, which is attached to the original typewritten correspondence to Foote, without an envelope.

²The letter by Foote’s correspondent of December 5, 1990, opened with the question: “By any chance do you have an ancestor by the name of Mary Hallock Foote (married Arthur DeWint Foote of Connecticut)?” The letter to Foote quotes “a statement she made of the American West” in her book *The Chosen Valley*, published in 1892.

June 11, 1991. Foote to Ken Harrison.¹

Dear Ken:

Thank you for your postcard. I'm sorry I missed you and Nancy when I was in Dallas.

I hope "Ninth Life" has a distributor by now. It is indeed a rough time for independent films.² And we don't give up, do we?

Lillian joins me in love to you both,

Horton Foote

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 8. Foote's response to Harrison's handwritten message on a postcard is drafted in black ink on a sheet of lined notebook paper with three holes punched in the left-hand margin and typed on a computer with the exact wording as on Foote's draft and printed on a page of eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper.

²Ken Harrison directed the film *Ninth Life* in 1989. Horton Foote, as a pioneer in the creation of independent films, wrote letters encouraging artists who also aspired to produce independent films. Several examples of this type of letter have been repositied in Box 2 of the Foote papers.

Ken Harrison worked with Foote on two of the *Orphans' Home Cycle* films. In 1985, Harrison directed *1918*, and in 1986, he directed *On Valentine's Day*. Harrison has also directed films for public television, including a

documentary about Katherine Anne Porter and an adaptation of one of her stories (Internet Movie Database).

June 11, 1991. Foote's reply to a young actress.¹

Dear Marcy:

Thank you for your kind and generous letter.

Please feel free to drop me a note whenever you hear of casting a play or a film of mine and I will be most happy to meet with you again.²

Auditions are certainly trying, and it's difficult making final decisions. They often relate to many intangible things.

Anyway, we'll surely meet again and I thank you for writing me.

Best Wishes,

Horton Foote

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 2. Foote's letter was composed in his handwriting on notebook paper and then typed on a computer and printed on eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper with a laser printer; in the archive, an unsigned copy is attached to the original letter to him.

²In this kind note, Foote responded to a gracious letter written by an actress who auditioned but ultimately was not chosen to play a role in *Talking Pictures*. In her letter, the actress told Foote what a "thrill" it was to meet him, and wrote, "Mr. Foote, your work has moved me. The truth, beauty of the human

soul, struggling against such odds, told so simply, always understated, but always there.”

June 11, 1991. Foote’s reply to a writer.¹

Dear Mr. Belleville:

Thank you for your kind and gracious letter. It’s always heartening to know that one’s work has a meaning for others.

It’s difficult, I know, to advise one’s children about career and work.² Two of my children are actors, another a writer and another a lawyer who is trying to find a way to produce films.

My son and daughter are in the film I’ve just completed shooting and I find working with them most satisfying.

Advice from a fellow writer is, I know, of little help. But there were times when it seemed I could get nothing done and like you I just kept writing. That is, I believe, our ultimate weapon.

All good wishes,

Horton Foote

¹This letter is located in Box 2, folder 2. Foote’s response was composed first by hand on notebook paper and then typed on a computer and printed on eight-and-one-half by eleven-inch paper with a laser printer; in the archive, Foote’s unsigned copy is placed with the original letter to him.

²Foote responds to a letter asking for advice from a writer who has completed and sold television scripts, a novel, and six screenplays. The writer's letter to Foote opens: "My elder son is at a critical station in his young life. Decisions must be made. 'Do I want to take drama or creative writing when I enter university?'"

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The one hundred letters that were transcribed and annotated for inclusion in this dissertation were selected to provide insights into Foote's life and works that could not be gleaned from other sources. Foote's private correspondence and the letters of his family members serve as a unique window into his intimate world, revealing his literary influences, aesthetics, and personal beliefs. The epistolary exchanges in the selected correspondence in this dissertation help to clarify for scholars the nature of the relationships between Foote and three of his closest family members. Furthermore, Foote's letters to his children and extended family members, friends, and colleagues reveal aspects of the playwright's personality that could lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of his autobiographical and other writings.

The letters from 1912 to 1914 written by Hallie Brooks to her beau Albert Horton Foote before their marriage provide insight into her daily life as a young woman in the early years of the twentieth century. The letters so clearly evoke the events, setting, and dialogue of Foote's play *Courtship*, the fifth of the *Orphans' Home Cycle* plays, that it is likely that the correspondence by Foote's mother during 1912 to 1914 provided Foote with ideas and inspiration as he wrote

Courtship and the dialogue in other plays of the *Cycle*, including *On Valentine's Day* and *1918*.

Although Foote's plays do not provide an exact history of his parents' courtship and marriage, he uses the events of their lives and the setting of Wharton, Texas, as a starting place in the creation of his art. The letters of Foote's mother written from 1912 to 1914, and also throughout the rest of her life, reveal her inner strength and affection for her family, as can be seen in Elizabeth Robedaux in the *Orphans' Home Cycle*, a character that Foote modeled upon his mother.

The correspondence of 1935 to 1944 that has been repositied in the DeGolyer archive, letters dating from just after Foote left Wharton at the age of sixteen to just before he met his future wife Lillian, reveal the nature of his activities as an actor and aspiring playwright. The letters of this time period reveal the sincerity of the patriotism of the Foote family during the Second World War and also their suffering with the loss of Tom Foote, who was serving in Europe. They serve as illustrations of the Foote family members' affection towards one another and their ability and willingness to support each other in times of hardship and adversity.

The letters written by Horton Foote and Lillian Vallish during their engagement in 1944 and early 1945 reflect the young couple's growing intimacy and reveal Lillian's intense interest in American literature and in Horton's creative work. It is evident in their earliest correspondence that the seeds of their

partnership in later artistic endeavors were planted at this time. Furthermore, the warmth and acceptance of Foote's parents are evident in their correspondence to their son and his fiancée, and letters from Foote's extended family in Wharton expressed the family's excitement at the news of his upcoming marriage.

The correspondence written by Foote and his family from 1948 to 1959 reflects the intensity of his creative work and chronicles the activities of his active young family. During this time, Horton and Lillian moved from Washington, D.C., where they established a theater and drama school with their friend Vincent Donehue, to New York City after a brief three-month stay with Lillian's parents in Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania. Later, in 1956, with their three small children, Horton and Lillian moved to Nyack, New York.

The period of 1948 to 1959 was a prolific one for Foote, writing scripts both for the stage and early television; it was also during this period that he wrote his novel *The Chase*. During Foote's frequent extended business trips, Lillian wrote lengthy letters to him daily, chronicling the events in the lives of the members of their active young family, including their many pets. The letters Horton and Lillian wrote to one another, and also the correspondence with Foote's parents in Wharton, demonstrate how family connections were maintained despite long separations of time and distance.

In the 1960s, Foote was writing for theater, television, and film, and his correspondence mentions his abundant and varied creative projects. Several of Foote's screenplays were produced in the 1960s, including *To Kill a Mockingbird*,

Baby the Rain Must Fall, and *Tomorrow*. During this period, Foote frequently wrote in his letters about his working relationships with colleagues Alan Pakula, Robert Mulligan, and Robert Duvall, with whom he collaborated on many projects. Foote developed such close relationships with his professional collaborators that frequently his colleagues addressed him in their letters as if he were family. In 1972, director Robert Mulligan wrote to Foote after not seeing him for some time, about “so many moments of shared work done and meals together, laughter and success, and personal pain, all that being friends attaches to our lives. Through the years of silence and separation – you and your family have remained a part of my life – and always will.”

During the 1960s, Foote’s personal life went through changes as significant as those in his professional life. In 1966, Horton and Lillian, now with four children, moved from Nyack, New York, to New Boston, New Hampshire. After the move to New Hampshire, Lillian wrote in her letters to Foote about their children’s activities, her work in restoring their eighteenth-century home, and her passion for collecting antiques. Foote found that at this time his plays, with their subtlety and resonant subtext, were not as well received in New York as they had been earlier and, in a sense, during these years he sequestered himself while continuing to write his own material in his own way. The move to New Hampshire allowed him to work creatively in quiet surroundings—and applying Wordsworth’s notion, enabling Foote to recollect emotion in a setting of tranquility. During the quiet years in New Hampshire, Foote wrote many of the

works for which he has received much acclaim from scholars, critics, and public audiences.

During the 1970s, the four Foote children left New Hampshire to attend college and to work. After her graduating from a university, their daughter Barbara Hallie moved to California and became an actress, studying with Peggy Feury. Their son Horton joined the armed services for three years, and then also became an actor. Walter, their younger son, played competitive basketball during high school and college and then attended law school. The youngest child, Daisy, attended college and became a writer. During these years, Lillian and Horton and their children continued their regular correspondence.

Foote's creative work during the 1970s brought him to London, where he worked on his musical adaptation of *Gone with the Wind*, and New York City, where he taught acting classes and directed six of his own plays for the HB Playwrights Foundation. During these years, Lillian added to their antique collection and sold real estate in New Hampshire.

Sadly, in Wharton, Texas, after being married for six decades, Foote's parents passed away, his father in 1974 and his mother one year later. Their lives became the inspiration for Foote's masterpiece, the *Orphans' Home Cycle*.

During the 1980s, Foote's films *Tender Mercies*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Convicts*, *Courtship*, *On Valentine's Day*, and *1918* were produced. Foote's children began to work with him on some of his films, especially his two oldest children, actors Barbara Hallie and Horton, who also interpreted a wide range of

roles in Foote's stage productions. During the 1980s, Foote had a wide-ranging correspondence with family members, actors, directors, scholars, teachers, writers, and audience members who responded to his works.

Considerable work remains to be done on the voluminous correspondence in the Horton Foote Collection in the DeGolyer archive. For instance, it would be of assistance to scholars of Foote's autobiographical drama, particularly in the study of the plays and films of the *Orphans' Home Cycle*, if the letters written from 1912 to 1914 by Albert Horton Foote to Hallie Brooks could be located. In addition, there is still much work to be done in the dating of the undated correspondence in the Foote papers, especially in regard to 113 undated letters by Lillian in Box 1, folder 16, and the 264 letters still undated by Foote's mother in Box 4, folders 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6. Finally, it is my understanding that the papers recently donated to the DeGolyer Library, but which are still unprocessed, may include additional personal and professional correspondence that would interest Foote scholars and shed further light on his life and works.

APPENDIX A

LETTERS IN THE COLLECTION LISTED BY DATE

The Appendices that follow contain a list of all of the personal correspondence in the Foote papers that had been processed by the DeGolyer archive and made available to researchers by the end of 2007. To assist scholars who want to locate the private correspondence in a chronological order, the list of letters is organized by date, correspondents, and location in the archive.

I have estimated that there are approximately 4,500 private letters by the Foote family that have been repositied in the DeGolyer Library, and an additional 3,500 business letters. The list below includes only the personal letters in the Foote papers, and not the business correspondence. At present, this is the only complete listing available of the entire collection of repositied personal letters in a chronological order with corresponding locations in the Horton Foote Collection.

At the end of the inventory of the dated letters below is a separate list in Appendix B arranged by correspondents and location of all of the undated personal letters in the Foote Collection. In the future, it is my hope that assigning probable dates of composition of these letters will be an ongoing activity for Foote scholars.

Each subsection of the Appendix includes the year that the letters were written, the correspondents, and the box and folder numbers in the Horton Foote Collection in the DeGolyer Library in which the personal letters can be located. Some letters are in envelopes with letters by other correspondents. The folder

listed in each line below may contain a single or multiple letters (up to 264 letters)
written during the year specified.

1878

Eliza Horton to Lida; Box 1, folder 39

1912

Hallie Brooks to A. H. Foote; Box 1, folder 25

1913

Hallie Brooks to A. H. Foote; Box 1, folder 25

1914

Hallie Brooks to A. H. Foote; Box 1, folder 27

1933

Hallie Brooks Foote to A. H. Foote; Box 1, folder 28

1935

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 15; Box 3, folder 15

1938

Foote to father Albert H. Foote; Box 3, folder 16

1941

Rosa (Foote's aunt) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 30

1943

Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton; Box 4, folder 7

Tom (Foote's brother) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 24

1944

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 17

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 2

Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton; Box 4, folders 5 and 9-12

Foote to parents; Box 3, folders 17 and 18

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 29

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to son Horton; Box 3, folder 14

Foote's mother to Lillian; Box 1, folder 2

Lillian to Foote's mother; Box 3, folder 33

Horton Foote to Tom (brother); Box 1, folder 23

Tom (Foote's brother) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 24

John (Foote's brother) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 35

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

1945

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 18

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 4

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote Box 3, folder 14

Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton; Box 1, folder 37; Box 4, folder 13

Wedding announcement, Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 1

John (Foote's brother) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 35

Betty Foote (Foote's brother John's wife) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 35

Mary (Daisy) Brooks (grandmother) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 4, folder 13

Lily (Foote's aunt) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 37

Lyda (Foote's aunt) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 37

Lucy Kroll to Foote; Box 1, folder 37; Box 6

Margo Jones to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 37

American Actors Theatre to Foote; Box 1, folder 37

1947

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 40

1948

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 19

Lillian to Foote's parents; Box 3, folders 19 and 34

Lillian and Horton to Foote's grandmother (Brooks); Box 3, folder 19

1949

Lillian to Foote's parents; Box 3, folders 20, 35 and 36

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 20

1950

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 21

Lillian to Foote's parents; Box 3, folders 35 and 36

A. H. Foote to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 29

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folders 40 and 41; Box 3, folder 21

1951

Foote to parents; Box 3, folders 22 and 37

Lillian to Foote's parents; Box 3, folder 37

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folders 40 and 41

1952

Lillian to Foote's parents; Box 3, folders 38 and 39

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 23

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton and Lillian; Box 3, folder 14

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 41

1953

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 14

Foote's mother to Horton and Lillian; Box 3, folder 1

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 24

1954

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 14

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 25

Foote to father Albert H. Foote, Sr.; Box 3, folder 25

1956

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 26

Foote to father Albert H. Foote, Sr.; Box 3, folder 26

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 14

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 40

1957

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 27

Lillian to Foote's parents; Box 3, folder 39

Foote to father Albert H. Foote, Sr.; Box 3, folder 32

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folders 40 and 41

1958

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 5

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 28

Lillian to Foote's parents; Box 3, folders 39 and 40

Foote to children Barbara Hallie, Horton, and Walter; Box 2, folder 24

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folders 40 and 41

1959

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folders 6 and 7

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 16

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 29

Lillian to Foote's parents; Box 3, folders 32 and 41

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 14

Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton; Box 3, folder 2

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 4, folder 1

Foote to children Barbara Hallie, Horton, and Walter; Box 2, folder 24

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 31

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 40

1960

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 30

Foote to father Albert H. Foote, Sr.; Box 3, folder 30

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 8

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 40

John Foote to father Albert H. Foote; Box 1, folder 40

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Foote; Box 2, folder 31

"Speed" Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 34

1961

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 19

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 9

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 14

Foote's mother to Lillian; Box 1, folder 19

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 31

Horton (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 33

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 41

Lily (aunt) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 31

Sharon Mayberry (Lillian's niece) to Lillian; Box 1, folder 19

1962

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 10

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folder 3

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 1, folder 36

"Speed" Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 32

"Speed" Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 34

1963

Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton Foote; Box 4, folders 1 and 2

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 1, folder 36; Box 3, folder 4

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 14

Horton (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 34

Daisy Brooks (daughter) to Horton and Lillian Foote; Box 1, folder 35

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 1, folder 36

Lily (aunt) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 31

"Speed" Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 32

"Speed" Brooks to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 34

"Speed" Brooks to Laura Brooks Ray; Box 1, folder 33

Betty Foote (Foote's brother John's wife) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 35

1964

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 11

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 20

Hallie Brooks Foote to Lillian; Box 4, folder 3

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folder 5

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 14

Foote to Barbara Hallie (daughter); Box 2, folder 25

Horton and Lillian to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 26

Foote to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 25

Horton (son) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 3, folder 5

Billie (Billy) Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 24

"Speed" Brooks to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 3, folder 5

Betty Foote (Foote's brother John's wife) to Lillian; Box 1, folder 35

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Nan Outlar to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 3, folder 5

Daisy Brooks (Aunt Rosa's daughter) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 3, folder 5

1965

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folders 5 and 6; Box 4, folder 4

Foote to parents; Box 3, folder 31

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 35

John Foote, announcement; Box 1, folder 41

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 3, folder 6

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 6

1966

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folder 7; Box 4, folder 2

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 3, folder 7; Box 4, folder 2

John Foote to father Albert H. Foote, Sr.; Box 1, folder 40

Billie (Billy) Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 4, folder 2

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

Joe Anthony to Foote; Box 2, folder 1

George Waters to Lillian; Box 4, folder 6

1967

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 12; Box 3, folder 8

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 21; Box 3, folder 8

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folder 8

Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 8

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 8

Horton Foote to Nan Outlar (cousin); Box 1, folder 38

Nan Outlar to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 21; Box 2, folder 31

Foote to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 26

Horton (son) to Foote; Box 2, folder 34

Walter (son) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 21; Box 2, folders 33 and 34

Daisy (daughter) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 34

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 1, folder 36; Box 3, folder 8

Billie (Billy) Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 3, folder 8

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 41

Joe Anthony to Foote; Box 2, folder 1

1968

Foote to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 26

Albert H. Foote, Sr., to Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 9

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folders 9 and 10

Hallie Brooks Foote to granddaughter Barbara Hallie; Box 3, folders 10

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 31

Laura Brooks Ray to family; Box 1, folder 36; Box 3, folders 9 and 10

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 3, folder 9

Billie Brooks to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 24; Box 3, folders 9 and 10

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Foote's parents; Box 3, folder 9

Perry Anthony to Horton and Lillian Foote and children; Box 3, folder 9

1969

Horton to Lillian, Box 1, folder 13

Billie (Billy) Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 24

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folder 11

1970

Horton to Lillian, Box 1, folder 14

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 31

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Foote; Box 2, folder 29

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 31

Foote to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 26

Foote to Walter (son); Box 2, folder 27

Foote to Daisy (daughter); Box 2, folder 28

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 35

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Jeffrey Hayden (director; husband of Eva Marie Saint); Box 2, folder 8

1971

Joe Anthony to Foote; Box 2, folder 1

1972

Horton to Lillian; Box 1, folder 15; Box 3, folder 12

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 22

Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 12

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folder 12

Foote to Barbara Hallie (daughter); Box 2, folder 25

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 31

Foote to Horton (son); Box 1, folder 15

Horton (son) to family; Box 2, folders 34 and 36

Horton (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 36

Foote to Walter (son); Box 2, folder 27

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 41

Betty Foote (Foote's brother John's wife) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 35

Jo Ellen Foote (Foote's niece) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 35

Alan Pakula (producer and director) to Foote; Box 2, folder 16

Robert (Bob) Mulligan (director) to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 13

Joe and Evelyn Layton to Foote (regarding *Gone with the Wind*); Box 2, folder 12

Jeffrey Hayden (director; husband of Eva Marie Saint); Box 2, folder 8

1973

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 3, folder 13; Box 4, folder 3

Hallie Brooks Foote to Lillian; Box 3, folder 13

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to family; Box 2, folders 30 and 31

Horton (son) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Horton (son) to Daisy (daughter); Box 2, folder 34

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 1, folder 36

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 41

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

Lucy Brightman (drama student of Foote's in Washington, D.C.); Box 2, folder 2

1974

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 30

Barbara Hallie to Daisy (daughter); Box 2, folder 30

Foote to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 26

Lillian to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 26

Horton (son) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Horton (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 34

Horton (son) to Daisy; Box 2, folder 34

Foote to Walter (son); Box 2, folder 27

Walter (son) to family; Box 2, folder 33

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 36

John Foote to brother Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 35

John (Foote's brother) to parents; Box 1, folder 35

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Joe Anthony to Foote; Box 2, folder 1

1975

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 26

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to family; Box 2, folders 29-31

Foote to Horton (son); Box 2, folders 26 and 27

Horton (son) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Lillian to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 26

Foote to Walter (son); Box 2, folder 27

Walter (son) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 32

Walter (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 32

Walter (son) to family; Box 2, folders 32 and 33

John Foote to brother Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 35

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 36

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

1976

Lillian to family; Box 2, folder 24

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 29

Walter (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 33

Walter (son) to family; Box 2, folder 33

John Foote to brother Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 41

Nan Outlar to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

1977

Lillian to family; Box 2, folder 24

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 29

Walter (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 32

Walter (son) to family; Box 2, folder 32

Daisy (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 1, folder 36

Nan Outlar to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

Joe Anthony to Lillian; Box 2, folder 1

1978

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 31

Walter (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folders 32 and 33

Walter (son) to family; Box 2, folder 32

Daisy (daughter) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 34

Daisy (daughter) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 34

Daisy (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Fred Coe (television producer and director) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 3

1979-1981

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Lillian; Box 2, folders 30 and 31

Walter (son) to family; Box 2, folder 33

Daisy (daughter) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 30

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to family; Box 1, folder 36

1982

Walter (son) to family; Box 2, folder 33

Daisy (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Joe Anthony to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 1

Perry Anthony to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 1

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

1983

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

Jeffrey Hayden (director; husband of Eva Marie Saint) to Foote; Box 2, folder 8

1984

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 31

Horton (son) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Lillian to Walter (son); Box 2, folder 27

Enid Mayberry (Lillian's niece) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 13

Sharon Mayberry (Lillian's niece) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 13

Marguerite Barzun (literature professor, wife of Jacques Barzun); Box 2, folder 2

Tad Mosel (writer) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 13

Devon Abner (actor) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 1

Jeffrey Hayden (director; husband of Eva Marie Saint) to Foote; Box 2, folder 8

1985

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to family; Box 1, folder 38

Mary Hunter Wolf to Foote; Box 2, folder 21

Terry Barr (Ph.D. student) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 2

Marguerite Barzun (literature professor, wife of Jacques Barzun); Box 2, folder 2

Jeffrey Hayden (director; husband of Eva Marie Saint) to Foote; Box 2, folder 8

Timothy Forbes (son of Malcolm Forbes) to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 6

1986

Daisy (daughter) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Enid Mayberry (Lillian's niece) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 13

Perry Anthony to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 1

Devon Abner (actor) to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 1

1987

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Enid Mayberry (Lillian's niece) to family; Box 2, folder 13

Devon Abner (actor) to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 1

Marguerite Barzun (literature professor, wife of Jacques Barzun); Box 2, folder 2

1988

Sharon Mayberry (Lillian's niece) to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 13

Lillian to Sharon Mayberry; Box 2, folder 13

Mary Hunter Wolf to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 21

Marion Castleberry (Foote scholar) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 3

Scott Dixon McDowell (documentary film maker) to Foote; Box 2, folder 13

Fred Chappell (writer) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 3

Richard Gere (actor) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 7

Marguerite Barzun (literature professor, wife of Jacques Barzun); Box 2, folder 2

1989

Walter (son) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 33

Foote to Reynolds Price; Box 2, folder 16

Eva Marie Saint (actress) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 18

1990

Mary Hunter Wolf to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 21

Jerry Wood (Foote scholar) to Mary Hunter Wolf; Box 2, folder 21

Crystal Brian (Foote scholar) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 2

Lady Bird Johnson to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 2

1991

Horton Foote to Ken Harrison (director); Box 2, folder 8

Ken Harrison (director) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 8

Horton Foote to Romulus Linney (writer); Box 2, folder 12

Romulus Linney (writer) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 12

APPENDIX B

UNDATED LETTERS IN THE COLLECTION

Undated Letters

Lillian to Horton; Box 1, folder 16

Horton Foote to parents; Box 3, folders 15, 22, 29 and 32

Horton Foote to father Albert H. Foote; Box 3, folder 25

Albert H. Foote to son Horton Foote; Box 3, folder 14

Horton Foote to mother Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 3, folder 32

Hallie Brooks Foote to son Horton Foote; Box 4, folders 1-4 and 6

Hallie Brooks Foote to Lillian; Box 4, folders 1, 3 and 6

Hallie Brooks Foote to family; Box 1, folder 36; Box 4, folders 1-4 and 6

Horton Foote to Barbara Hallie (daughter); Box 2, folder 25

Hallie Brooks Foote to granddaughter Barbara Hallie; Box 4, folders 2 and 3

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folders 30 and 31

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to Lillian; Box 2, folders 29-31

Barbara Hallie (daughter) to family; Box 2, folders 29-31

Lillian to Horton (son); Box 2, folder 26

Hallie Brooks Foote to grandson Horton; Box 4, folders 1-3 and 6

Horton (son) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 34

Horton (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 34

Horton (son) to family; Box 2, folder 34

Horton Foote to Walter (son); Box 2, folder 27

Walter (son) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 16; Box 2, folder 32

Hallie Brooks Foote to grandson Walter; Box 4, folder 4

Walter (son) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 32

Walter (son) to parents; Box 2, folder 32

Horton Foote to Daisy (daughter); Box 2, folder 28

Daisy (daughter) to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 34

Daisy (daughter) to Lillian; Box 2, folder 34

Daisy (daughter) to parents; Box 2, folder 34

John Foote (brother) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 35

John Foote to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 35

John Foote to father Albert Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 35

John Foote to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 41

John Foote to parents; Box 1, folders 35, 40 and 41

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 36

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 36

Laura Brooks Ray (Foote's aunt) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 4, folder 6

Laura Brooks Ray to family; Box 1, folders 36 and 40; Box 4, folders 3 and 4

Lily (Foote's aunt) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 31

"Speed" Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 32

"Speed" Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 34

Billie (Billy) Brooks (Foote's uncle) to Hallie Brooks Foote; Box 1, folder 24

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton Foote; Box 1, folder 38

Nan Outlar (Foote's cousin) to Horton and Lillian; Box 1, folder 38

Nan Outlar to Foote's parents; Box 1, folder 38

Joe Anthony to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 1

Joe Anthony to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 1

Joe Anthony to Lillian; Box 2, folder 1

Perry Anthony to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 1

Peggy Fuery to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 6

Alan Pakula to Horton and Lillian; Box 2, folder 16

Jerry Wood to Horton Foote; Box 2, folder 21

NOTES

Chapter 1

¹Interestingly, a question has arisen as to how to transcribe the dashes of varying lengths in Emily Dickinson's handwritten letters and poems (Hart xxiv, 71-84). Ellen Louise Hart addressed this problem in her dissertation, *New Approaches to Editing Emily Dickinson*, by transcribing the text of Dickinson's letters and inserting hand-drawn dashes that duplicate the lengths of the original dashes in the holograph manuscripts. Hart's dashes drawn by hand demonstrate not only the length, but also the degree of slant and curvature of Dickinson's original dashes (3).

²Deciphering the handwriting in many of the holograph letters in the Foote papers proved to be a challenge. Foote writes with humor about difficulties that others have had in transferring his distinctive chirography into type. In his memoir *Beginnings*, for example, Foote relates his experience as a young writer having his play *Texas Town* typed. In Wharton, when Foote announced that the script for *Texas Town* was complete but was still in his own handwriting, his father responded, "Merciful God, when are you going to have it typed up?" (214). After Foote returned to New York, the manager of a typing service on 42nd Street looked at his handwritten manuscript, "sighed," and said that because his

handwriting is so challenging to read, her typing service would have to charge him more than the usual fee (217).

³The writing of daily letters to family members, especially by women, was a common tradition in Southern families during the early twentieth century. For example, Eudora Welty writes, “I think when my mother came to Jackson she brought West Virginia with her . . . For as long as she lived, letters went back and forth every day between my grandmother and my mother” (*One Writer’s Beginnings* 55).

⁴Foote’s mother’s lighthearted sentence “From Victoria to Houston, from Houston to Wharton, from Wharton to Rosenberg, from Rosenberg to Rice Drive-in in El Campo, Margaret Rose we sure do get around!” alludes to a line spoken by Georgette Thomas at the end of Foote’s play *The Traveling Lady* and the movie *Baby the Rain Must Fall* and reveals Foote’s mother’s excitement regarding his work. *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, released in 1965, is the film version of Foote’s play *The Traveling Lady*. The original copyright date of Foote’s *The Traveling Lady* is 1955; in the version of the play published in 1996 in the volume *Horton Foote: Collected Plays*, the last line of the play, which is delivered by Georgette and is similar to the opening of Foote’s mother’s letter about her own travels, is “From Lovelady to Tyler, from Tyler to Harrison, from Harrison to the Valley, Margaret Rose, we sure do get around” (170). At the end of the film *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, the actress who plays Georgette, Lee Remick, delivers this line in a slightly different way, with “Columbus” substituted for “Harrison”:

“Lovely to Tyler, Tyler to Columbus, from Columbus to the Valley, oh, Margaret Rose, we sure do get around.” Titles of Foote’s play such as *The Traveling Lady* and *The Trip to Bountiful* suggest that the theme of traveling is as significant in Foote’s work as it is his family’s correspondence.

⁵Set in 1925 in Harrison, Texas, *A Young Lady of Property* by Horton Foote was first produced by Fred Coe and directed by Vincent Donehue in 1953 as a teleplay for the Philco Television Playhouse. *A Young Lady of Property* has also been performed on the stage as a one-act play.

Since the mid-1970s, Foote’s daughter Hallie has interpreted many roles created by her father on both the stage and screen. During the audio commentary of the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, while conversing with producer Alan Pakula about Horton Foote’s ability to discover talented actors, director Robert Mulligan remarks, “If you see his daughter Hallie Foote act, it’s the essence of all that Horton always admired in actors—that total sense of truth.” (Robert Mulligan directed Foote’s television play *The Traveling Lady* in 1957, and in 1960, Foote’s television adaptation of Faulkner’s story *Tomorrow*. In 1962, Mulligan directed the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for which Foote wrote the screenplay. In 1965, Mulligan directed *Baby the Rain Must Fall*, the film version of Foote’s play *The Traveling Lady*. Alan Pakula produced *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Baby the Rain Must Fall*.)

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