

LOIS PHILLIPS HUDSON  
NDSU ARCHIVES.



(Forum Photos)

"THIS MAN told his audience that the small family farm was on the way out, and half his audience was made up of small farmers."

"I HAD QUITE a correspondence with the editor of 'The Reporter' about the spelling of 'ante-i-over.' They never heard of the game in the East."

"THIS TRIP will be the first time in 28 years and the first time that I use a flush toilet in North Dakota."

"THE ONLY characters in 'The Bones of Plenty' that aren't fictional are the little girl and Will Shepard. Will is my grandfather."

probably NDSU  
Newspaper 1965

In Stories of Dust Bowl Years

File Hudson

# N.D. Native 'Rehabilitates'

By DOROTHY COLLINS

Staff Writer

She approached the coffee shop at Hector Airport, a small, vivid brunette in a bright red coat.

She smiled widely as Dr. John Hove, chairman of English at NDSU, and Mrs. Mart Vogel of Fargo jumped up from their table, apologizing for missing her arrival.

She is Lois Phillips Hudson of Boulder, Colo., and you sensed her delight at stepping on her native North Dakota soil for the first time in 28 years.

She had left it at the age of nine, during dreary depression years. She was returning to accept an honorary doctor of letters degree from NDSU for having written about those years with warmth and truth.

Although she's lived East and West, the roots of the wide prairie are strong within her, and she lets you know it.

She's as articulate in her talk as she is in her writing and as unpretentious and real as the people she puts in her stories.

Her first novel, "The Bones of Plenty," published in 1962, chronicles the struggles of the North Dakota tenant farmer in bleak 1933-34. It was the Literary Guild Book Club selection and won the Friends of American Writers Award in 1963.

"Reapers of the Dust: A Prairie Chronicle" was published this year. It is a collection of short stories and articles.

She has written other articles for national magazines which deal with North Dakota as well as Colorado, and Washington where she moved with her family from North Dakota.

Says writer Katherine Anne Porter of "Reapers of the Dust:"

"... She is within her scene, a living part of it, and not a tourist with a notebook. The freshness of her eye, the living abundance of her memory, the depths of her love of life and

her complete frankness and lack of illusion about it, without bitterness: these traits and qualities are rare; add to it her jolly sense of comedy."

"The Bones of Plenty," is laid in the fictional town of Eureka near Jamestown, where Mrs. Hudson was born, but it is actually Cleveland, N.D., the author says.

Her aunt, Mrs. Clarence Thornton, still lives on the farm three miles south of Cleveland, where Mrs. Hudson lived as a child. Her cousins, Mrs. Reuben Schlacht and Floyd Thornton, also live in that area.

She plans to visit them after leaving Fargo. Then she'll go on to visit her father, Carl Phillips, at Kirkland, Wash., where the family farmed after leaving North Dakota. She'll also visit a sister in the Seattle area. Her mother died last year.

\* \* \*

Nothing in her novel is fictional except the characters, Mrs. Hudson says. Says she in an author's footnote:

her as a writer. She taught at Ithaca High School four years.

Then she and her husband, Randolph, moved to California, where he received his Ph.D. degree from Stanford University. She had lived a good many years on the West Coast, and then on the East Coast. Her husband was a native Easterner, and there was the feeling that she may have adopted the East's ways and culture.

On the way to California, they stopped in Nebraska. Says she:

"When I saw those Midwestern faces, my years in the East dropped away, and I knew I was and would always be a Midwesterner."

Her husband is a professor of English at the University of Colorado. They have two daughters, Laura, 9 and Lucy, 8.

\* \* \*

Mrs. Hudson now is working on a novel set in the California Redwoods, and recently spent six weeks there. She talks of the desolation and destruction left in the wake of highway con-

## Midwest Image

Fargo Forum  
1965?

"If I say that the price of spring wheat went from \$2.76 in 1930 to 26 cents in 1932, that is exactly what it did. If I say that in 1925 a farmer got 30 cents a dozen for eggs and in 1933, he got 12, these are exactly the prices he and millions of other farmers were paid."

She dedicates the novel to her grandfather, who is one of the true-to-life characters in it. The other is she herself, cast as Lucy, age 7 in the book. The dedication inscription says:

"For my grandfather, the last man of his line to live and die on his own land—a man without successors, of a generation without successors."

\* \* \*

Mrs. Hudson graduated from the University of Puget Sound, in Tacoma, Wash., 1949, and taught school a year in Shelton, Wash. She earned a master's degree in Old and Middle English and Medieval Literature from Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., in 1951, choosing this major because she felt it useful to

struction in the Redwood country.

She says the facts on which she based "The Bones of Plenty" were not gleaned from stories told her by her parents, although she had her mother read the manuscript through twice before it was published.

Her sources included agricultural yearbooks and "books by the hundreds." This extensive research also led to many of the stories in "Reapers of the Dust."

Through her writing, she says she is "trying to correct the image that John Steinbeck made."

Author Katherine Anne Porter makes this comment: "For me (in 'Reapers of the Dust'), she seemed to be doing a solid rehabilitation job, an answer in pure human speech to the sub-human characters in 'Grapes of Wrath' or 'Tobacco Road' (by Steinbeck)."

While in Fargo, Mrs. Hudson was a house guest of Mrs. Vogel, who is also from Jamestown and has an aunt in Cleveland.



# NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## INFORMATION SERVICES • UNIVERSITY NEWS

FARGO • PHONE 701-237-8321

[1967]

### NORTH DAKOTA NOVELIST LOIS PHILLIPS HUDSON JOINS NDSU ENGLISH FACULTY

Fargo, N.D., Sept. 7 -- A North Dakota-born novelist, whose prize-winning book and many short stories have chronicled her home state during the depression years, has joined the faculty of the North Dakota State University English Department.

She is Mrs. Lois Phillips Hudson, author of the novel, "The Bones of Plenty," and "Reapers of the Dust," a collection of short stories.

According to Dr. John Hove, chairman of the department, Mrs. Hudson will teach courses in English literature, Victorian Prose Writers, and freshman English.

A native of Jamestown, Mrs. Hudson lived on a farm near Cleveland until she was nine years old when her family moved to the Pacific Northwest. Childhood memories of parched land and severe weather have served as the basis for much of her writing.

Mrs. Hudson is an honor graduate of the University of Puget Sound, where she edited, successively the student newspaper and yearbook. She later studied teacher education at the University of Washington, and earned a master's degree from Cornell University.

In 1965, NDSU recognized Mrs. Hudson's literary achievements by awarding her an honorary Doctor of Letters degree.

"The Bones of Plenty," published in 1962, was awarded a \$1,000 first prize from the Friends of American Writers, and was an alternate selection of the Literary Guild. The book of short stories was published in 1965. In addition to her two books, Mrs. Hudson has had some 20 short stories, articles and a poem published in such national magazines as "The Reporter," "New Yorker," "Atlantic Monthly," "The Nation," and various quarterlies. Two of the short stories, "The Cold Wave," and "Children of the Harvest," both written for "The Reporter" in 1958, have been widely anthologized in collections of short stories.

Mrs. Hudson has also been a popular speaker with professional groups. She spoke to the North Dakota Library Association in Fargo last September. This past summer, she conducted a workshop on writing fiction at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D. She is listed in "Who's Who of American Women and Women in Canada," and the "Dictionary of International Biography."

Mrs. Hudson is the wife of Randolph Hudson, a member of the English faculty at the University of Colorado. They have two daughters, Laura 12, and Lucy, 10.

Lois Phillips Hudson was born at Jamestown, N.D., on August 24, 1927. She moved with her family to Washington State when she was nine. She attended the University of Puget Sound at Tacoma, where she edited the student newspaper as a sophomore and the yearbook as a junior. She was graduated from UPS in 1949. After teaching for a year she went to Cornell University where she earned a master's degree and met her husband, Randolph Hudson.

Mrs. Hudson is the author of "The Bones of Plenty," a novel of the depression period in the Dakotas, published in 1962. The book was chosen as an alternate selection of the Literary Guild Book Club that year and as winner of the Friends of American Writers \$1000 award in May, 1963. It has since also been published in England.

A new book, "Reapers of the Dust," a collection of episodes, was published last winter. A number of the stories in Mrs. Hudson's latest book were previously published in The Reporter magazine. Two of her stories, "The Cold Wave," and "Children of the Harvest," have been included in a number of creative writing textbooks. She has also had stories published in the New Yorker, Atlantic Monthly, The Texas Quarterly and the Nation, articles in the English Review, The Reported and the Nation, and a poem in the Colorado Quarterly.

Mrs. Hudson's husband, Randolph Hoyt Hudson, is an associate professor of English at the University of Colorado. They have two daughters, Laura, nine, and Lucy, eight.

# Novelist Hudson condemns rivalry between NDSU and UND

by Nikki Welch

Though it was only Friday, the calendar on Lois Hudson's desk was already set ahead to the following Monday. Indicative also of her progressive, slightly restless nature were the psychedelic posters behind the desk, contrasting sharply with the clutter of medieval English literature.

Amidst Franciscan Poets and Bright's Anglo-Saxon Reader was a worn copy of *The Bones of Plenty*, the novel for which Mrs.



Lois Hudson

Hudson was awarded a \$1000 first prize by the Friends of American Writers in 1963, and which is probably the best known of her numerous original works.

Also the author of another novel entitled *Reapers of the Dust* as well as some 20 poems, articles and stories published in national magazines, Mrs. Hudson is now assistant professor of English at S.U. She holds an honorary Doctor of Letters degree given her by the university in 1965 in recognition of her literary achievements.

It was in this capacity that she was recently invited to UND

where she spoke to turn-away crowds of students. Just returned from the speaking engagement after "talking 14 hours a day for three days" and sporting a button which read Book Power, she was full of enthusiasm for cementing relations between the two colleges.

"All this competitiveness is foolish," she said. "And neither school can afford it. We have few enough intellectual resources between us as it is." Here she interrupted herself to discuss with another English teacher the possibility of a joint U.N.D. - NDSU "teach-in" sometime in the future. When she resumed, it was to compare the student bodies of the two universities.

"On the whole, I would say UND has the livelier campus. The students are more actively involved. There is a certain indefinable atmosphere in practically every pore of every building. I guess you could call it a kind of intellectual sophistication. But anyway, it is difficult to develop in a university that was once an agricultural college."

She was quick to correct any mistaken impressions arising from such a remark. "I don't mean that NDSU hasn't done truly great things as an agriculture school. And personally, I am very happy here.

The students are of a respectable caliber too, as far as their native endowment. I am continually depressed however by their poor high school backgrounds, especially in English. Still, I guess it's not their faults that they have never been asked to read a book until they're college freshmen.

"It's really quite amazing," she confided, "that such a large percentage of students are actually interested in getting an education. Most of their parents didn't send them here for that purpose."

Mrs. Hudson was perfectly willing to expound upon a few things that she considered important in education, but lacking at NDSU.

"I hate the quarter system," she exclaimed. "Particularly in an English class, it takes time for students to get ideas, write and correct a paper. It seems that we're running the college at the convenience of the registrar. So let him correct the papers.

"We could also get along without grading. An intermediate step would be the pass-fail system, but eventually we should try to get by without any grading system at all," Mrs. Hudson said. "Sure, it would cause problems, but so does the present system. That's education for you.

"And I don't think we can afford to neglect faculty morale.

There must be a place where instructors can get together and educate one another the same way students get most of their education . . . through dynamic conversation. And every other self-respecting university provides funds for its instructors to travel and attend workshops and seminars. That's what keeps a faculty alive.

The author was definite about the need for students to be allowed to experiment intellectually and discover where their talents lie. "It's criminal to smother young people in required courses until whatever intellectual curiosity they may have is extinguished forever," she said.