

Author of Best Seller Joins Local Teaching Staff

Name it and he's done it. At least in the so-called "creative arts" world John Henry (Jack) Hudson, who will teach at Torrance High School next fall, has done literally everything.

Most successful in the writing line thus far, the 25-year-old bachelor, who has one published novel to his credit, came here to spend the summer with his sister and brother-in-law, Mary Lee and Bill Boswell, at 2842 Onrado St.

He wanted a quiet place to work so he could complete another novel and some short stories before returning to Kansas City, Mo., in September.

Decided To Stay

Impressed with the rate of growth of Torrance, and believing he could best further his creative talent on the West Coast rather than in the Mid-west, he decided to stay. So freshman boys and girls at THS will learn English and social studies from him next fall.

It is perhaps fitting that he has chosen to settle here, for although he has had the writing "bug" since he was 12 years old, his first serious writing was done in this city.

It happened this way.

Each year the University of Kansas City, which he was then attending, sponsors a Hearts of America Writers' Conference. Student-written manuscripts are submitted to the successful authors for review and criticism, and three are selected for marketing through a recognized agent.

"I was editor of the annual that year," Jack said, "and with the deadline for the 325-pager

one he sold. "Saturday's Harvest," written here the following summer under the pseudonym Paul Shelley made the grade, and 350,000 copies were purchased during the first two weeks of publication. An additional order for 200,000 copies came through, but since then sales have slackened.

"Both 'Saturday's Harvest' and 'Have Wine at Thy Wedding' have a Mid-west setting," Jack said. "Then when I returned to Kansas City I wrote 'To Soon Awake,' which is set around Redondo and Hermosa Beach. It didn't sell. Oddly enough, I seem to write better in retrospect."

About Small Town

The published novel is about "Starved Rock," an imaginary community patterned after Hudson's home town, Rockport, Mo. A newspaper critic said of the book, "The action pictures the varying strata of small-town society in conflict. A pre-occupation with the scandalous goings-on assure this 25-cent, 171-page considerable popularity."

It isn't too popular with the author, however. "It sells," he said, "but actually it doesn't have much literary value. In many ways it is trite, and I certainly don't believe it is the best I can do."

He's taking the advice of one of his instructors to heart. She said, "Write a million words, then you may write something worthwhile. If while writing those million words you sell something," he said, "but don't think of it seriously."

Hudson believes "Saturday's

"and besides, you learn to take criticism and be more objective about your own writing."

Hudson does not consciously pattern himself after any famed author, but among his favorites are Sinclair Lewis, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, Edith Wharton, and William Faulkner.

"If I have a theme at all," he said, "it is to stress the individual as opposed to regimentation by prejudice, tradition, or personal fear. All of these tend to wreck the personality."

Interested in Drama

Success is beckoning in the literary field, but Hudson aspires to an ultimate career in the theater. If Freud's theory that childhood experiences provide the foundation for adult life is correct, he said, "my interest in drama may be explained by an incident that occurred when I was just a few months old."

"I was the Baby Jesus and my mother was Mary in a church pageant!"

Jack always "thought up" plays during his boyhood and invigiled the neighborhood kids in to being his cast. He played leads

in high school and college and took his master's degree in theater through a fellowship granted by the University of Kansas City which included both tuition and a salary.

He spearheaded a community theater movement in the city, "but after we had worked two weeks whipping things into shape, we didn't have enough money to raise the curtain," he said.

Later he helped establish the Accent Theater, devoted to quality drama. "I directed, produced, and swept up," he said, "and a few days before the opening of our first show one of the principals got sick, so I stepped into the role of a Sicilian truck driver."

"I really enjoyed it, because it was the first opportunity I had to play a part with some 'meat' to it. In college plays I was always cast as the male ingenue!"

Will Do Anything

In his efforts to "get into" the theater, Hudson says "I'll do anything, even usher!" Movies on the stage, it makes no dif-

ference, he said, because "I haven't had any professional experience in either and don't know which I'd prefer."

He does have one crystallized goal, though, which is to play Iago in Shakespeare's "Othello."

"Iago is an enigma which intrigues me," he said. "He had no clear motive for ruining other people's lives, but he loved to exert power over people's personalities. He's an evil character and one that I'd like to try my hand at recreating."

Hudson had an opportunity recently to travel with a tent show, "but at the last minute I got cold feet," he said. "I didn't think it would pay enough for me to keep my head above water."

Many Jobs

Problem of earning a living has been solved by the dark-haired man in many ways. One of the most interesting jobs was teaching modeling and ballroom dancing at a girls' school while he was a sophomore at college.

"I was about 19 at the time and the girls were around 17," he said, "so I was really Big

Man on Campus to a lot of my fellow students. Actually, I was only one lesson ahead of the girls; I'd get material through a correspondence school one day and teach it in class the next."

Hudson also has worked in settlement houses, was supervisor of the first interracial playground in Kansas City, taught adult education classes, did Latin American dances with a girl partner professionally, sang with a dance band, made a couple of records, "and I even vocalized a commercial for American Royal, famed Kansas City horse show," he said.

"It's fine to freelance creatively," he said, "but in the meantime you have to eat, so must have a thorough and rich academic training since he will in his journeys be competing with those who do. Furthermore, I think the only route to happiness lies in the appreciation and love of beauty."

Must Learn World

"Boys and girls must learn what they will encounter, they must know that the world can cloak itself with a tissue of superficialities which simple good-

you have helped contribute to their success."

One of the warmest glows of pride he ever felt was for two of his journalism students back in Kansas City who won scholarships. His teaching criteria are:

"I could easily toss around all modern phrases about progressive education because I believe them. But in order to be simple and lucid let me say that I am interested in educating all phases of the individual in order to help him meet any situation that arises in his contacts with other peoples and the vicissitudes of existence."

"I believe that first of all one must have a thorough and rich academic training since he will in his journeys be competing with those who do. Furthermore, I think the only route to happiness lies in the appreciation and love of beauty."

learn that society is set up according to protocol.

"We cannot make incontrovertible choices for students. We can only point directions, persuade, use subterfuge, inveigle, maneuver, and keep in close touch with the world of the adolescent."

"I am the last person to want to mold minds, tongues, or footsteps into regimental patterns. I am never sure that what is right for Pierre is right for Ivan. Yet I shall wholeheartedly devote my teaching years to trying to help people to become able to meet situations, to create an awareness of the demands on them from society, and to help them follow the rules when to follow them is their only alternative."

As for marriage, the hand some bachelor has this to say: "It takes a rare kind of woman to understand when a man wants to shut himself off behind closed doors to write eight hours a day. Writing or the theater is bigger than marriage to me—so I probably remain a bachelor."



HARD AT WORK . . . John Henry (Jack) Hudson searches for inspiration as he works on his next novel. Author of the successful "Saturday's Harvest," he will teach English and social studies at Torrance High School next fall.

staring me in the face, plus cramming for finals, I knocked out four chapters of a novel and submitted it. Surprisingly enough, mine was one of the chosen manuscripts, and the agent gave me until Labor Day to complete it.

Write Book Here

"Mary Lee was visiting me at that time and invited me to come out here to work. I did, and 'Have Wine at Thy Wedding' was finished two weeks before deadline time."

However, this novel wasn't the

Harvest" also illustrates graphically what one publisher wrote to him. Said the publisher, "You have been told that you have unusual talent. You also have unusual facility. In the end your facility may destroy your talent."

Despite that dark prognosis, Jack intends to go on with his writing. His field of endeavor isn't restricted to novels; he wants to do short stories, plays, and "some day a musical comedy."

"I can still remember the first story I wrote, 'The Carriage to Adrian,'" he recalled with laughter. "It was about a mythical county in Europe and I patterned the hero after Clark Gable. With the supreme optimism of the 12-year-old, I had selected him to play the role when they made it into a movie."

Another of his youthful efforts was "The Story of a Redhead," a Western written when he was 15. Through coincidence or subconscious, a redhead also is the heroine of "Saturday's Harvest."

Night Owl

Hudson writes chronologically, first picking a character, then a title, and works straight through from first to last chapter. He prefers to write at night—"it's uncivilized to get up early," he laughed—and punctuates his paragraphs with coffee and numerous cigarettes.

"I usually have only a vague idea of the ending while I'm writing," he said. "I have the characters and a general plot outline—written up in my head—and let the people in the story take it from there."

Work on the college newspaper, editing the annual, and reporting campus news for the Kansas City Star prepared Jack for his literary career. Actual courses in creative writing were few, but very valuable, Hudson claims.

Class Helps

"A professor can tell you whether you have talent or are wasting your time," he said,

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