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TOYS *by* CARL RUGGLES



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It Started in Winona: The Personal and Professional Relationship between Carl Ruggles and Rockwell Kent

Winona, Minnesota, in the late spring of 1913. This is hardly the setting in which one would imagine two pioneers of modern American art and music to meet. But it was in the grand rotunda of Winona's impressive Beaux Arts public library that the artist Rockwell Kent and the composer Carl Ruggles first encountered one another. Although their initial meeting was brief, the relationship that continued spanned many decades and had considerable influence upon each man's personal life and professional career. This article will trace that relationship and consider the consequences that a chance meeting in Winona—a city most Easterners considered, at best, a cultural outpost—would have for each man's life and artistic development.

The history of Winona can be traced back to the early 1850s. In 1851, Orrin Smith, a steamboat captain from Galena, Illinois, deposited three men on a Mississippi River valley sandbar with orders to claim the land upon which the city of Winona would later be built.¹ Bordered by the Mississippi on the north, and dramatic, tree-covered bluffs on the south, Winona enjoyed a strategic position along the river. It served as a point of assembly for harvested lumber that was floated down the St. Croix and upper Mississippi rivers as well as the Chippewa River, the Mississippi's Wisconsin tributary. It was also adjacent to rich lands that were opened to settlement and farming after the Sioux relinquished their claims.² It was not long before both the lumber industry and Winona flourished. According to the historian Henry A. Castle, "Everything was of wood and nearly every stick had to be

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imported. It is difficult to imagine the amount of wood necessary to settle and develop the Midwest, but not hard at all to see why Mississippi River towns thrived with the growth of the Midwestern plains."³

Winona quickly grew into one of the largest and most prosperous cities in Minnesota. From a population of 2,464 in 1860 (a year when only eleven Minnesota towns boasted a population of over one hundred), it expanded to 19,714 residents in 1900; by 1910, the city's population had established itself at a relatively steady 18,583 persons.⁴ It had become the fourth largest city in Minnesota, behind only Minneapolis with 301,408 residents, St. Paul with 214,744, and Duluth with 78,466.⁵ By comparison, New York and her boroughs boasted 4,766,883 residents in 1910, and Chicago and Boston had populations of 2,185,283 and 670,585 respectively.⁶

In order to support the thriving lumber trade, "massive immigrations"⁷ of laborers came to Winona to work for meager wages in the lumber industry. In 1900, Winona County employed 1,504 skilled and common laborers, compared with 79 "professional men" and 106 "capitalists and retired" persons.⁸ The two largest immigrant groups in Winona were Germans and Poles; the Germans comprised 29 percent of the population in 1880 and the Poles 11 percent.⁹ The owners of the lumber companies quickly became millionaires, while the wages of their laborers remained low.¹⁰ Winona witnessed a rapidly growing division between the rich and the poor—a division that would inevitably influence Rockwell Kent during his stay in Minnesota.

Although small in comparison to Chicago and cities on the East Coast, Winona soon developed an important cultural and artistic life; it was frequently noted that the city's earliest settlers included not only riverboatmen but also "educated Easterners."¹¹ Winona's *Argus* became one of the state's first newspapers, beginning publication in 1854. The Winona Normal School, which opened in 1860, was the first teacher's college west of the Mississippi River, and Winona had a telephone exchange in operation in 1880, just four years after the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell.¹² In spring 1882, "five prosperous Winona businessmen got their heads together and decided to get this city enrolled in a movement that was rapidly sweeping the nation—the building of good theaters to attract bigger 'name' stars."¹³ The charismatic O. F. Burlingame became manager of the soon-realized Winona Opera House in 1899: "From the moment Burlingame stepped within the wide double doors beneath the marquee of the Winona Opera House, the Chicago-Minneapolis circuit was broken and a Winona stop became a 'must' with the shining lights of the theater world."¹⁴ Sara Bernhardt appeared on the Winona stage in 1910, John Philip Sousa in 1911, and Fiske O'Hara and Ernestine Schumann-Heink in 1914; other performers included Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Ethel Bar-

rymore, and Lillian Russell. Although the artistic diversions of Winona hardly competed with the entertainment available in New York, Winonans were clearly proud of the cultural offerings their community had to offer.

It was to this milieu that Ruggles, and, later, Kent were briefly drawn—two men with remarkably similar backgrounds yet very different needs for affirmation.

Both Ruggles and Kent had lived and been educated on the East Coast. Both were descendants of English ancestors who had settled near Boston long before the Revolutionary War: Carl Ruggles's family had come to the Boston area from Staffordshire, England, in 1637,¹⁵ and Thomas Kent brought his family "to Gloucester in the colony of Massachusetts sometime before 1643."¹⁶ Greatly influenced by women who held dominant positions in their family structures,¹⁷ Ruggles and Kent both grew to be opinionated and outspoken as adults. The two even shared many physical characteristics. Most significantly, both had considerable talent, and they shared an appreciation for all of the arts as universal and interdependent forms of expression.

Yet the two men were markedly different. Ruggles craved intimacy and depended upon Kent for inspiration, confidence-building, and support. Though Kent benefited from his association with Ruggles, he did not need it to succeed or be artistically productive. Throughout his life, Kent often avoided the lasting intimacy Ruggles so needed.¹⁸ Although outwardly gregarious, Kent was at ease in solitary environments, and he moved quickly from one intense relationship to another. He almost always demanded a leadership capacity in his personal, professional, and political associations.

Rockwell Kent, born in 1882, grew up in an upper-class but impoverished family in Tarrytown, New York. He enjoyed drawing even as a young boy: "From as early as I can remember, I drew pictures."¹⁹ His first "professional" work, executed while in his early teens, consisted of painting china and drawing coats of arms for the residents of Tarrytown.²⁰ Although the willful Kent failed to graduate from private school, he passed the requisite entrance exams for Columbia University and, in 1900, enrolled there to study architecture.²¹ Kent spent his summers studying at the seasonal art program established by William Chase on Long Island. It was not long before the opportunity to study fine art on a full-time basis lured him away from architecture; Kent was awarded a scholarship at the New York School of Art, or the Chase School, where he enrolled in 1901. There he studied with Robert Henri, who conceived of the American artist as "one who discovers beauty in the American scene; interprets that beauty from an American point of view, and then communicates that interpretation through a technique developed from American roots."²²

Henri exerted tremendous influence upon Kent as he shared philosophies that went well beyond art. He introduced Kent to the writings of Darwin and Tolstoy, to summers on Monhegan Island, Maine, and to the tremendous underworld of poverty in New York City. The barriers of Kent's privileged and sheltered upbringing were suddenly removed; he began to develop a socialistic view that would affect everything he encountered, including Winona. On Monhegan Island, Kent learned to appreciate manual labor by observing and "envying" the strength of the local fishermen. He later wrote: "With these thoughts, this envy, agitating me, those social and political convictions which had hitherto existed as figments of my mind and heart began to acquire substance. Not just from Whitehead, but from empyrian [*sic*] heights had I *looked down* on life, *down* at the masses, and not with them, *up*. Was I as a painter to constitute myself as *onlooker* at the doing of the fundamental jobs of life, or be one doing them? What would I do, I thought, should working men not work for me? The answer shamed me."²³

Kent learned skills as a carpenter and soon built his own home on Monhegan. Between summers on the island Kent earned money by doing architectural drawing for the New York architectural firm of Ewing and Chappell. He also continued to paint at every chance. In 1911 he exhibited fifteen paintings and twenty-four drawings of Monhegan Island and the Berkshire Hills in *An Independent Exhibition of the Paintings and Drawings of Twelve Men*;²⁴ the show also included work by the artists Glenn O. Coleman, Homer Boss, Julius Golz, George Luks, John Marin, Guy Pène du Bois, Alfred Maurer, John McPherson, Maurice Prendergast, Arthur B. Davies, and Marsden Hartley.²⁵ It was the combination of drafting and carpentry ability, and not his work as an artist, however, that brought Kent to Winona in 1912. He had been hired to supervise the building of two large homes.

Carl Ruggles was born in 1876, six years before Rockwell Kent, in the small coastal town of East Marion, Massachusetts. Just as Kent had developed an interest in art at an early age, Ruggles, similarly, began to make music when he was just six years old: "When I was about six, I made a cigar-box violin—I think it made some kind of a tone. The lighthouse keeper from Bird Island saw me sawing away, and gave me a little violin. Then Mother would sing me songs over and over again—I remember her singing *Old Dog Tray*—and I'd try around till I got the notes. I didn't know how to hold a bow, I just grabbed it. I began to play hornpipes and jigs by ear—I couldn't read a note—people would come for miles to hear me play those hornpipes."²⁶

Ruggles continued to play his violin and even performed duets with President Grover Cleveland's young wife when she vacationed in Marion during the summer of 1887. The Ruggles family moved closer to Boston when Carl was thirteen years old, and he immediately began

to soak up the musical life around him there. He reveled in the music performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He studied violin with Walter Spaulding and Felix Winternitz, received instruction in counterpoint from Josef Claus,²⁷ and studied individually with John Knowles Paine; he also enrolled in an English course taught by Barrett Wendell at Harvard. Although Ruggles's education was heavily influenced by Germans (with whom he credited the inspiration for calling himself Carl rather than Charles Sprague, his given name),²⁸ his studies nevertheless reflected the beginnings of a uniquely American tradition in music education—an education that contrasted sharply with the trend of the many expatriated American composers of his era who chose to study in Europe. It was during this time that Ruggles met and developed a rich friendship with the illustrator Boardman Robinson; their relationship would continue for decades and eventually intersect with his friendship with the artist Rockwell Kent.

At the same time that Ruggles was pursuing his education, he served as an engraver for the Boston publisher F. H. Gilson and wrote as a music critic for the *Belmont Tribune* and the *Watertown Tribune*, two local papers from the greater Boston area.²⁹ Ruggles carried his ability to write about music to Winona, where he often wrote his own program notes and articles for local newspapers. He also remembered himself as an excellent musical engraver, much to the vexation of his publishers in later years.³⁰

In January 1907, Carl Ruggles left the East to accept a position as a violin teacher at the Mar d'Mar school of music in Winona. The local newspaper heralded his arrival with the headline: "Violin Instructor: One of Splendid Ability Secured by Mar d'Mar."³¹ Ruggles and his musical abilities were greeted with enthusiasm. He would have more than five years to get acquainted with the city of Winona and life in the Midwest before Rockwell Kent arrived during the spring of 1912.

Ruggles was connected with the Mar d'Mar school through friends of his fiancée, Charlotte Snell, a contralto. The chance to earn a living teaching music on a full-time basis must have been welcome to the young musician, and Ruggles seemed to embrace his new environment with enthusiasm. On January 31, 1907, he wrote to Charlotte, who had remained in Boston, describing not only his newly acquired skill at dancing the two-step and the four-step, but also the flavor of a local cheese, a "product of the West": "I enclose a fragment of cheese which will, if given time, banish most anything, but it is great dearie, a product of the West. I don't remember having eaten anything like it before."³² (A stain on the stationery assures the modern-day reader that the cheese was indeed enclosed in his letter.) On April 19, 1907, drawn to Winona by the lure of local delicacies or, more likely, by her year-old relationship

with Carl Ruggles, Charlotte Snell was instated as head of the vocal department at the Mar d'Mar school.

After spending the summer of 1907 in the East, Carl and Charlotte returned to Winona in the fall to find that their jobs had been unexpectedly eliminated. While the eventual demise of the Mar d'Mar school remains a mystery, newspaper accounts published that autumn mentioned that the violin and vocal departments had been dropped because they were not profitable.³³ The two young musicians nevertheless chose to stay in Winona. Charlotte became involved as a music leader in various church and community organizations, and she developed a large studio of vocal students. In October, Ruggles was hired to conduct the YMCA Orchestra and Glee Club for fourteen dollars a month.³⁴ In late January, the Musical-Literary Society approached him about the possibility of establishing an orchestra, and, under their auspices, the Winona Symphony Orchestra was born.³⁵ Carl and Charlotte were married on April 27, 1908, just two days before Carl conducted the Winona Symphony Orchestra's first concert.

The Ruggleses appeared to settle into life in the Midwest. Despite the fact that "the cultural prospects in this midwestern town must have seemed as bleak as the cold weather,"³⁶ the two musicians fostered a growing enthusiasm for music in the community. Charlotte Ruggles was an active soloist, teacher, church musician, and civic leader. The Winona Symphony Orchestra increased in size and improved in quality. Ruggles often featured visiting artists as guest soloists with the group, and the St. Paul Orchestra performed on the Winona Symphony Orchestra's spring festivals in 1911 and 1912. During the 1912 musical season the Winona Opera House, which seated 1,200 people, was sold out for every performance by the orchestra.³⁷ Even Ruggles, often his own (and the orchestra's) worst critic, commented that the group was "getting magnificent" in 1912.³⁸ An editorial in the *Winona Republican-Herald* declared that the community was "frankly and enthusiastically proud" of the ensemble: "It is one of our rare privileges as citizens of Winona to hear great music greatly interpreted by an orchestra all our own."³⁹

Despite their local successes, Carl and Charlotte undoubtedly felt out of the mainstream of the musical establishment when they returned to the East each summer. During the summer of 1912, they spent two weeks at the home of the author Inez Haynes Gillmore at Scituate, near Boston; the painter-illustrator Boardman Robinson was also there. Albert Christ-Janer, another artist, described an encounter between Ruggles and a Boston reporter that provides insight into eastern attitudes about the Midwest, to which Ruggles was no doubt sensitive. The speaker was Inez Gillmore, Ruggles's long-time friend: "Tell her [i.e., the reporter], Carl, about the symphony orchestra you founded



Figure 1. "Carl Ruggles, Conductor," ca. 1910. This photograph appeared in the Winona Symphony Orchestra Programs during the 1912 season. Courtesy of the Winona County Historical Society, Inc.

in Winona, Wisconsin—or was it Minnesota—which was, Miss Cartwaith, the biggest musical organization west of Milwaukee, or someplace in the vast west. Carl did a beautiful job, single handed, all alone, and he sold vegetables. Didn't you, Carl? Before Ruggles could arouse himself to this challenge, Mrs. Gillmore forgot about him and called gaily to a guest who had come from the house."⁴⁰

In addition to spending time with his friends the Gillmores and Boardman Robinson, Ruggles met the artists George Bellows and John Sloan that summer. Like Kent, the artists were students of Robert Henri, and they were two important members of the famous "Ash Can School."⁴¹ That summer Ruggles also met Charles Henry Meltzer, a drama and music critic, who had translated Gerhart Hauptmann's play *Die versunkene Glocke* (*The Sunken Bell*) into English. Although memories of their initial meeting differ,⁴² Meltzer and Ruggles soon agreed to collaborate on an opera based upon the play. When Ruggles returned to Winona that fall, he did not resume his work as conductor of the orchestra but instead devoted his time to composing *The Sunken Bell*.⁴³

Rockwell Kent arrived in Winona in the spring of 1912, early enough to have heard the Winona Symphony Orchestra if he had chosen. Kent, who was turning thirty at the time, was ready for a change; the move to Minnesota gave him and his family "at least a geographical change. . . . They were going west."⁴⁴ He had been hired by the New York architectural firm of Lord, Hewlett and Tallent to supervise the

construction of two large Georgian Revival homes named Briarcombe Farm. The homes were being built just outside Winona for Samuel Prentiss, a banker, and Frederick Bell, a lumberman; the men's wives were sisters, and the identical houses were joined by a loggia. Kent arrived in Winona without the fanfare or publicity that had greeted Carl Ruggles, and he settled modestly in an abandoned schoolhouse near the building site with Kathleen, his wife, and their two young children.

Although they were both living full lives in the same community, Kent and Ruggles did not meet one another for over a year. The two men occupied very different places in Winona society. Though not affluent, Carl and Charlotte Ruggles were nevertheless close acquaintances with the families of Hannibal Choate and H. M. Lamberton, two of the community's most prominent and influential citizens.⁴⁵ Their professions as musicians, especially Charlotte's position as a private voice teacher and church musician, required them to interact with the wealthier members of the community. They lived in the heart of Winona, within close walking distance to numerous churches, parks, stores, and the Opera House. Kent, by contrast, socialized with German and Polish laborers who were on the underside of Winona's obvious class distinctions. He moved from the abandoned schoolhouse in the country to Winona's Polish neighborhood and, finally, lived with a German carpenter and his family during his last months in Minnesota.

While Ruggles worked on his opera, Kent busily hunted for work to supplement his position as construction supervisor. He tried unsuccessfully to solicit additional business for the architectural firm and then resorted to selling fruits and vegetables before he signed on as a carpenter with the building project. Kent was infinitely more at ease with the construction workers on the site than with the management. When the carpenters threatened to strike, Kent was questioned about his dual position on the job, since he was both the supervisor and a carpenter. He later wrote: "That they should ask me, considering my dual position on the job, was not to be wondered at; yet my position was quite simple: as superintendent it was my duty to see that the buildings were erected in accordance with the specifications and the terms of the contract. . . . As a member of the union, the International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, I was technically and morally bound to support the men, my Brothers. And so I told them. Good."⁴⁶

When Kathleen Kent became pregnant in the spring of 1913, the Kents decided that, "not having got[ten] to like Winona well enough to stay there,"⁴⁷ she would return to the East and wait for Rockwell to join her when he had finished his job. Kent remembered his remaining months in Winona as his best.⁴⁸ He spent a great deal of time



Figure 2. Rockwell Kent, ca. 1920. Forbes Watson Papers. Photographs of Artists I, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Reproduced by permission.

with his German friend Alex Geckler and his family, and he freely and enthusiastically shared his maturing belief in socialism. On June 8, 1913, Kent organized a picnic to celebrate the "carpenters' show of solidarity,"⁴⁹ the near completion of Briarcombe Farm, and his imminent departure for the East. The event was advertised under the heading "Grand Intern, Workingmen's Anti-boss Convention," and it featured music, refreshments, speeches, as well as an athletic carnival and circus.⁵⁰

Although Kent's socialistic ideas hardly fostered an ideal relationship with either Samuel Prentiss or Frederick Bell, Prentiss helped the artist organize an exhibition of his work at the Winona Public Library during the first week of June 1913. That must have been small consolation for Kent, who undoubtedly knew about the momentous Armory Show that had opened in New York City the previous February. His position in Winona had prevented him from participating in what was arguably the most important art exhibition of the early twentieth century, a show that featured many fellow disciples of Robert Henri. A complete list of the works that Kent displayed at the library show was never recorded, but he later remembered that, with only a few exceptions, "all of the almost countless pictures I had painted were with me in Winona. So the exhibition that I staged in the library could well be, as it was, a fairly large one and, I may say without affecting modesty, a good one."⁵¹ A newspaper account mentioned that Kent's masterworks, *Toiling at Sea*, *The Clearing*, *An Inland Village*, and *Evening Stillness* were ex-

hibited.⁵² Rockwell sent Kathleen progress reports about his plans for the show throughout the month of May.⁵³ Although he was disappointed with the lighting ("the gallery is horribly lighted—very dark and full of shadows") and his inability to fit all of his paintings into the space, Kent thought that, overall, his paintings looked "pretty well."⁵⁴

Kent arranged for an interview with the editor of the *Winona Independent* and received an excellent review of the show.⁵⁵ Despite the paper's positive reaction to the exhibition, Kent remembered Winona's reception as lacking in enthusiasm. Although a few of his "comrades" from the building project complimented the exhibit,⁵⁶ Kent faced lukewarm reaction to his paintings. He remembered that Winonans "just thought [the show] funny,"⁵⁷ and he credited Carl Ruggles, whom he met for the first time at the exhibition, with offering "the only heartening words about my work that I received from anyone."⁵⁸ Kent provided a vivid description of their meeting in his autobiography: "A strange, intense little man, a bald, egg-headed little man, with eyes that were alight with fervor, and a protruding lower lip that could betoken such conceit and arrogance as might defy the world, or tremble with emotion close to tears. He was alone in the rotunda of the library when I entered. He walked straight over to me and reached out his hand. 'You,' he said, 'are a *great* painter.' For those words of recognition, there in the cultural no man's land of Winona, I have been ever grateful. This little man, this man so strange as to have thought me great, was a struggling music teacher and conductor of the Winona Symphony. . . . He was the Carl Ruggles so widely known in the music world today."⁵⁹

Ruggles and Kent felt an immediate rapport; Carl and Charlotte invited Rockwell to their home for dinner before the artist departed for the East in mid-June. Kent seemed to have found a kindred spirit in "the cultural no man's land of Winona," and he wrote to Kathleen with the following description of the Ruggleses and the evening: "[I] found them to be first rate people and genuine musicians. [Ruggles] makes no pretense as a performer but is a serious composer. He played many parts of his opera and they were splendid. The text is *The Sunken Bell* of Hauptmann. That must be a wonderful process. He played much from *Tristan* . . . but gave it the volume of an orchestra. And they so detest Minnesota . . . Phew! You never heard such an out-pouring!"⁶⁰

The chance meeting in the library and the subsequent dinner fostered the beginning of an enduring relationship between the artist and the composer. The two men saw each other the following September in New York City, where Kent had resumed work with the architectural firm of Ewing and Chappell. Kent wrote to Kathleen, describing an

evening with Ruggles in New York ("staying there till late")⁶¹ and a subsequent meeting with both Ruggles and Boardman Robinson the following day. Although Ruggles would later recall that the initial meeting between Kent and Robinson was somewhat contentious,⁶² Kent informed Kathleen that "[Robinson is] a splendid man and I shall see more of him."⁶³

Ruggles returned to Winona that autumn, but not without the hope of owning a painting by this artist he so admired. He corresponded with Kent in October and November, referring to the artist's seascapes and declaring that he was "hungry for a sight of the sea"; he poignantly signed several letters during this period, "Yours in exile."⁶⁴ In December, Ruggles wrote to Kent with a progress report about his own work. He felt confident that his opera would be ready for production by the following October, and he spoke of receiving words of encouragement from Meltzer. Ruggles wanted Kent's reaction to his latest work: "I am working on Act IV now, and smashing precedents. I wish you would read it Rockwell, I know you would love it. I am going to send you some of the motives, just as soon as I can spare the time to copy them off."⁶⁵ Ruggles also referred to the art of Arthur Davies, whose work he encouraged Kent to examine.⁶⁶ Thus began an important pattern in the correspondence between composer and painter: both men respected and relied upon each other's opinions in their own field of work. Kent later admitted: "Except during those days [in the thirties] I've had no association with artists. Not for any reason, but just because I've lived that way."⁶⁷ And, despite his association with other ultra-modern composers in organizations such as the International Composers' Guild and Pan American Association of Composers, Ruggles appears to have considered Kent's opinions about his music as valuable as those of fellow musicians.

Just before Christmas 1913, Carl and Charlotte Ruggles received Kent's painting *The Seiners*, a work that Ruggles had probably had seen at Kent's Winona Public Library exhibit (fig. 3). Ruggles's letter of acknowledgment for the painting included the composer's enthusiastic response to the New York reception of his own "very advanced" work and transcriptions of numerous motives from *The Sunken Bell*.⁶⁸ The correspondence also described Ruggles's reaction to Kent's painting, providing insight not only into the composer's reaction to the art but also to the freedom and newness he believed to be important in any form of art, including music: "The *Seiners* came Wednesday, and the magic of it has held us enthralled ever since. It is a glory. Every time we look at it we discover something new to marvel at. I see many new touches, in fact the whole picture has taken on a heightened eloquence. What I admire so intensely about all your work is its absolute freedom from conventions. You certainly sail uncharted seas. To hell with those



Figure 3. Rockwell Kent, *The Seiners*, 1910–13. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, 1966. Reproduced by permission.

who piddle around creeks say I. The word freedom, I think, expresses the basic quality of your work. I feel it surging through everything I have seen."⁶⁹

On January 10, Ruggles again wrote to Kent with a description of Charles Meltzer's and Arthur Farwell's reaction to his "very advanced" music; he also complimented Kent on the "mystery" of *The Seiners'* foreground, writing: "Indeed, there can be no art without an element of mystery, I think."⁷⁰ Ruggles had photographs of the painting reproduced, and he sent one to Boardman Robinson, who thought *The Seiners* was "the finest marine he had ever seen."⁷¹ Carl and Charlotte Ruggles were, unfortunately, unable to retain the painting. Though Kent later recalled that he had charged them only one hundred dollars for the painting,⁷² the musicians' precarious financial circumstances prevented them from making regular payments on it. Kent eventually reclaimed the painting, which was sold in 1918 by the M. Knoelder Gallery to Henry Clay Frick for \$1,500.⁷³

Ruggles continued sending Kent regular updates about the progress of his opera. It is unclear whether Kent and Ruggles had a formal agreement about the design of sets for *The Sunken Bell*, but their cor-

respondence indicates that the two had jointly at least considered the opera's visual setting. On November 11, 1914, Ruggles wrote to Kent, then in Newfoundland: "Regarding the scenery of the *Bell*, I quite agree with you. It will have to be done in an absolutely new way. What do you suggest?"⁷⁴ Almost a year later, Ruggles again brought up the subject of Kent doing designs for the opera: "I hope I can manage to have you design the scenes, provided you would dare to bother with it, but of course that is all up to Meltzer. Your ideas are wonderfully original, and would lend much to the success of the opera."⁷⁵ Ruggles believed that he and Kent had a common bond in their work that could easily transfer into a healthy collaboration on the opera.⁷⁶

Ruggles stayed in Winona to work on *The Sunken Bell* until 1917. He then moved to New York to continue work on its composition, leaving Charlotte and their young son Micah in Winona for the year. That year was difficult for Charlotte; she often felt isolated and ignored, and she needed to send a portion of her meager earnings to support Carl in New York. Carl wrote to her on November 17: "Five years on the *Bell*. Five years of sacrifice on your part. Let us pray to God that it will prove worth it all."⁷⁷ Despite Carl's hard work and Charlotte's sacrifice, *The Sunken Bell* was never completed. Kent seemed to recognize Ruggles's impasse with the music; he encouraged the composer to "get to work and make another great opera. Carl, for heaven's sake begin the new great work. I don't believe you'll hear your *Sunken Bell* for thirty years! You're one of the few great men I've ever met or seen."⁷⁸ On another occasion Kent again prompted his friend: "Do a thousand things—pile up those beautiful manuscripts of yours;—what if they don't get played yet. They will and then you'll laugh and think of the great pile of treasures that you have."⁷⁹

Carl and Charlotte Ruggles were reunited in New York City in 1918, and neither of them ever returned to Winona. Carl took a position as orchestral conductor for the "Worker's Symphony Orchestra" at the American Socialist Party's Rand School for Social Science.⁸⁰ He was delighted to meet other composers, like Henry Cowell and Charles Seeger, who shared his beliefs about modern music.⁸¹ With their support and Kent's prodding, Ruggles abandoned his singular focus on *The Sunken Bell* and began to work on smaller compositions. In 1919 he composed a song entitled "Toys" for Micah's fourth birthday. John Kirkpatrick observed that "'Toys' is a fair sample of what [Ruggles] was aiming for in the opera, both in its musical imagery. . . and its edging away from the frequent triadic sounds toward atonal dissonance."⁸² Ruggles corresponded with Kent throughout the process, asking Kent's advice on the title,⁸³ and, finally, requesting that he provide artwork for the cover.⁸⁴ Kent obliged, replying: "I'll do them [the title drawings] the first chance I get and be mighty proud to."⁸⁵ In 1920 the

H. W. Gray company published the score to Ruggles's "Toys," with the cover design by Rockwell Kent (fig. 4).

It was obviously important to Ruggles that the public know that Kent had designed the cover. He requested that Kent's signature, which was missing from the drawing, appear on the cover. In May 1920, Kent wrote back, stating: "What in the world do you think I care so much about a signature for. I'm being continually pestered by owners of my paintings who suddenly discover that the thing is *not signed!!!* What magic there is in the signature I don't know. Anybody that knows anything knows who did a thing—and what if they don't. If you think my name should be on that drawing put it in type or lettering (your own lettering will do)." Kent then printed, "Designed by Rockwell Kent," in small letters and noted, "That size," referring to the size in which he had written his name.⁸⁶ The cover was published, however, without a signature.

Ruggles also began work on a setting of Walt Whitman's poem, "A Clear Midnight," which he later recomposed as a movement in his 1923 composition, *Vox Clamans in Deserto*. Ruggles had been interested in Whitman's poetry for a number of years, an enthusiasm that he shared with Kent. Both men had an active interest in literature, and the titles of their works, in addition to the texts that Ruggles chose to set to music, reflect their admiration for a number of authors. Ruggles had earlier urged Kent to read Whitman: "When you are blue read Walt Whitman. Yes, read Whitman, he is superb. You have many things in common with Whitman."⁸⁷ Kent had undoubtedly been exposed to the poet long before Ruggles's suggestion, since Robert Henri often quoted from *Leaves of Grass* in order to inspire his students "with Whitman's example of independence and courage."⁸⁸ That Ruggles found common traits between Kent and Whitman indicated his belief that various forms of creative endeavors may share collective characteristics or inspiration—in this case, ideas that bound together an artist and an author who were uniquely American. Kent was unable to imagine how Whitman's words could possibly be set to music. He later responded: "I wish I could hear your music to Walt Whitman! But what a thing to undertake, how can it be done?"⁸⁹

In addition to their similar ideas about art, literature, and music and their link of having lived in Winona, Ruggles and Kent shared a common interest in Germans and German culture. Kent had lived with his good friend Alex Geckler during his last months in Winona, and he later compared that friendship as even "far more substantial and lasting" than his relationship with Ruggles.⁹⁰ He enjoyed speaking German while in their home, for it reminded him of his childhood and the language used by his beloved nanny. Kent also appreciated the fact that Geckler was a laborer on the job, and he respected Geckler's taste

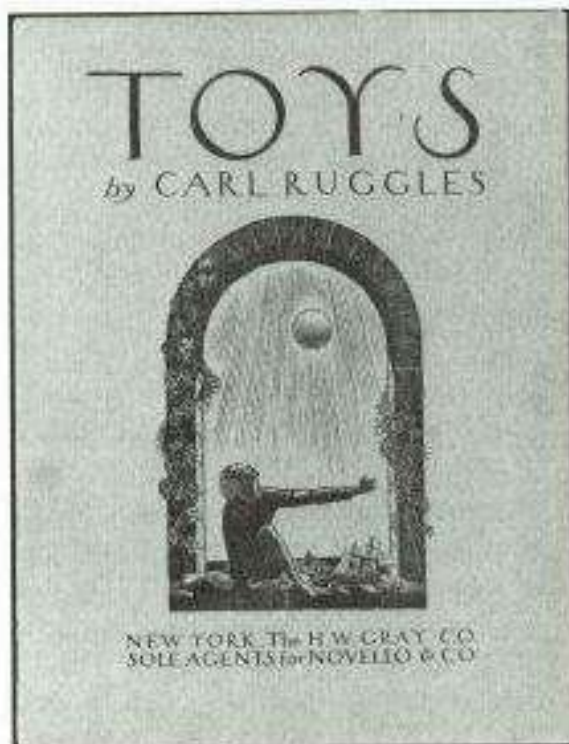


Figure 4. Cover design by Rockwell Kent for Carl Ruggles's "Toys" (New York: H. W. Gray Co., 1920). In public domain.

in the "greater works of German literature."⁹¹ Kent admired German music, a love he shared with Ruggles. Ruggles, in turn, programmed a great deal of German music during his tenure as the conductor of the Winona Symphony Orchestra, and his unfinished opera, *The Sunken Bell*, was based upon a German text with characters who bore German names. Though both men were affected by the anti-German sentiment that was prevalent in the United States during World War I,⁹² they continued to hold German music in the highest esteem.

Just as Ruggles kept Kent informed of his emerging compositions, Kent apprised Ruggles of his most recent efforts in painting. Ruggles also kept abreast of Kent's work by visiting art galleries in New York City where his friend's paintings were exhibited and by receiving copies of Kent's work, such as bookplates, photographs of paintings, and catalogs of his shows.⁹³ Kent's correspondence during this period reflected his passion for painting and the energy that it brought to him, while Ruggles's letters revealed a telling and much different reaction to the creative process; Ruggles found the act of composing music to be draining and exhausting, especially when pursued in isolation.⁹⁴

In 1919 Kent moved to a farm just outside Arlington, Vermont. He soon made friends there with the author Dorothy Canfield Fisher, also an Arlington resident, and they recruited Carl to arrange some songs in four-part harmony for a musical production that Fisher had organized in Manchester, Vermont. The following summer Kent frequently en-

couraged Carl and Charlotte Ruggles to visit him in Arlington, but they were unable to make the trip for more than a year. Carl and Charlotte were then living in Grantwood, New Jersey, and Carl had begun to compose his symphonic suite *Men and Angels*, with movements entitled, at Charlotte's suggestion, "Men," "Angels," and "Sun-Treader."

Finances were tight for the Ruggleses, and Kent's invitations were no doubt motivated in part by his concern that his friends have a place to live. He even tried to bring Ruggles to Vermont by arranging for him to give a lecture at the Arlington Poetry Club, but due to a misunderstanding about Ruggles's involvement with the socialist Rand School, the Poetry Club did not engage him as a speaker.⁹⁵

The Ruggleses spent the summer of 1921 at Charles Seeger's home in Patterson, New York. Carl began writing a setting of Whitman's "As if a Phantom Caress'd Me" at this time, but it was never finished. Ruggles asked Kent to visit them there,⁹⁶ and Kent, in turn, again encouraged Ruggles to visit him at Arlington—and this time to bring Seeger along. Kent was working on an issue of *Playboy*, an art and literary magazine produced in Greenwich Village by Egmont Arens. He wanted to include both a sample of Ruggles's musical manuscript and an article on modern music "with particular mention of [Ruggles],"⁹⁷ which he hoped Seeger would write. Although neither the article nor Seeger's visit materialized, Kent finally convinced Ruggles to share his Vermont house with him during fall 1921.⁹⁸ That visit marked an important moment in Ruggles's life, as Kent encouraged his friend to try his talent as a visual artist. Ruggles later recalled: "One time [Kent] had to go to New York and suggested that, while he was away, I try painting a picture and he would compose a piece of music. I made a drawing of Mt. Anthony, but when he came back he hadn't done any music. But he was impressed with my drawing."⁹⁹

Kent's influence upon Ruggles as a visual artist is inestimable. Although Ruggles had always been interested in the visual appearance of his music, both in manuscript and printed form,¹⁰⁰ and he had painted and drawn while in Winona, he had not yet seriously tried his hand as a visual artist. The drawing of Mt. Anthony launched an important second outlet for Ruggles's artistic talent—an outlet in which he was able to shed the inhibitions and constraints of perfectionism with which he constantly struggled as a composer. Ruggles was successful as a visual artist, mounting shows at the Arts Club of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Southern Vermont Art Center. His paintings are housed in the permanent collections of the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Whitney Museum of American Art.¹⁰¹ Ruggles's art also provided a vehicle for the performance of his music, since most exhibition openings also included a brief concert or recital.

Although Kent composed no music to counter Ruggles's artwork,



Figure 5. Rockwell Kent, cover design for Carl Ruggles's *Men and Angels* (Carl Ruggles Archives, Yale University). Reproduced by permission.

Charlotte, Carl, and Rockwell shared some musical moments together in Vermont. Kent, a "fine flute player,"¹⁰² later recalled: "The three of us—Carl at the piano, Charlotte as a contralto, and I on my flute—had many pleasant musical evenings together, Carl composing flute obligatos for the German lieder that we performed."¹⁰³ Ruggles continued to work on his *Men and Angels* during the autumn months, and Kent made a cover design for the intended composition (fig. 5). His woodcut captured the "transcendental essence" implicit in the work;¹⁰⁴ and this time he signed the cover design, "Rockwell Kent, 1921."

Carl and Charlotte moved back to New York City in early 1922, and Carl became increasingly involved with the local contemporary musical scene. He met Edgard Varèse there and soon became a member of the International Composers' Guild—an organization that not only gave him an outlet for the performance of his music but also demanded a certain pace of composition that resulted in Ruggles's most productive years as a composer.

That spring Ruggles delivered a series of three lectures at the Whitney Studio Club, an artists' association founded in 1914 by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney to "support the cause of non-academic art."¹⁰⁵ Although members of the International Composers' Guild were familiar with Gertrude Whitney and the Whitney Studio Club, it was Rockwell Kent who introduced Ruggles to the benefactress. Whitney had asked Kent to lunch, and the artist mentioned that his "dear friend" Carl Ruggles

was visiting him.¹⁰⁶ Whitney then also invited Ruggles to join them, and the lectures as well as a generous monthly stipend were arranged. The three lectures—entitled “The Present Situation in American Music,” “The Historical Background of Music,” and “Technique and Phantasy in the Study of Composition,” allowed Ruggles to put forth his own crusty opinions about his contemporary composers, including Edward MacDowell, Leo Ornstein, and John Alden Carpenter. The fragments from his lecture notes that have survived are testimony to the fact that Ruggles used these occasions to “[blast] the musical establishment.”¹⁰⁷ He remembered that “all the artists were there,”¹⁰⁸ and he undoubtedly reveled in this chance to put forth his views about music and artistic creation to a group of people in whom he had great interest and respect. The lectures fostered Ruggles’s budding and important relationships with numerous artists in New York City.

The Ruggles family spent the summer of 1923 in Arlington with Kent’s friend Dorothy Canfield Fisher. They liked the area well enough to decide to settle there permanently. In a decision that mirrored Kent’s first choice of residence in Winona, Carl and Charlotte bought an old schoolhouse in Arlington in June 1924, and they moved into it the following autumn. Ironically, even though Ruggles had moved to the area where Kent had settled, the two men saw each other less after this time.¹⁰⁹ Kent, whose marriage had been on rocky ground during the months that the Ruggleses had spent with him in 1921, divorced Kathleen in 1925 and married Frances Lee in 1926. He traveled extensively during this time, visiting Tierra del Fuego, Ireland, and France. In 1927 Kent bought land and settled permanently near Au Sable Forks, New York.

Ruggles, meanwhile, continued to enjoy one of his most productive periods of composition as he broke free from a series of uncompleted works. He finally and completely abandoned *The Sunken Bell* in 1923, and in 1924 he also rejected *Men and Angels* in its original form. He instead retained “Angels” (which had been performed in 1922 by the International Composers’ Guild) as a separate composition, and he transformed its third movement, “Sun-Treader,” into the middle section of his great three-movement symphonic suite, *Men and Mountains*.

Kent was influential in providing a title for *Men and Mountains*, which took its inspiration from an epigram by Blake: “Great things are done when men and mountains meet. This is not done by jostling in the street.” Kent had used this title in 1909 for his painting of nude men wrestling at the base of some mountains;¹¹⁰ and, in what must have been a significant compliment to Kent, several reviewers had likened Kent to both Blake and Whitman in their review of the artist’s book, *Wilderness: A Journal of Quiet Adventure in Alaska* (New York: Putnam’s, 1920).¹¹¹ The combination of Blake and Whitman was also reflected in

Ruggles's *Men and Mountains*; Ruggles entitled the second movement of the work "Lilacs," after Whitman's poem, "When Lilacs Last in the Doorway Bloomed."

Throughout their relationship, both Kent and Ruggles survived on shaky financial footing. They often tried to help each other find some element of economic security. Ruggles frequently wrote to Kent that he had encouraged someone to look at his paintings. In one instance, Ruggles urged Mrs. Joseph Grace (of the Grace Line family), his most prominent pupil in New York, to consider purchasing his friend's paintings. In December 1920 Ruggles wrote Kent: "Has the *North Wind* been sold? I ask, because yesterday I gave Mrs. Grace her first lesson and during the session I illustrated some point with 'Toys.' She immediately was struck by the title page, thought it 'extremely beautiful.' All of which gave me a fine opportunity to launch forth on your behalf. I told her about the *North Wind*, and I'm sure I can manage to take her to see it, perhaps after her lesson. How about *Bear Glacier*? Is that still at Knoelder's?"¹¹² Kent responded with gratitude and hopefulness: "I need to sell a picture. Sell it for us!"¹¹³

Less than a year later Kent interceded with Mrs. Grace on Ruggles's behalf and made arrangements for the wealthy New Yorker to resume lessons with his friend. Kent later recalled: "Either due to his coming to Arlington to stay with me, or for other reasons, she had terminated these lessons, and they were the only support that Carl was earning at that time. Though I didn't know Mrs. Grace, I volunteered to try to see her and urge her to continue the lessons. I recall talking with her, urgently, in her rose garden."¹¹⁴ He relayed the conversation and its results to Carl:

Heres [*sic*] what's settled with Mrs. Grace. . . . I called her up immediately on my arrival in the city and was asked out for dinner on the night of the next day. I had a talk with Dr. Bartlett before I went and, fully armed, launched an overwhelming gas attack. But, by God, it had to be overwhelming to get by with her! She is HARD. However, you get \$100. —a month for six months. You're to live with me in Arlington and Charlotte to settle where she can get pupils—*students*—I mean. You're to give Mrs. G. 2 lessons a month and are to be paid your round trip fare each time from Arlington. If things go well this is likely to be continued. You are to give Mrs. G. a lesson next Wednesday, leaving New York on the 9.11 train for Great Neck. But I must see you first.¹¹⁵

Kent was also influential in providing Ruggles with necessary introductions to two other patrons who supported him with vital stipends. He introduced Carl to both Gertrude Whitney, as previously mentioned, and to Mrs. Harriette Bingham (later Harriette Miller).¹¹⁶ Without their

support, it is doubtful that Ruggles would have been able to compose without the distractions of finding other work to support himself.¹¹⁷

Between his many travels, Kent also worked as an illustrator in order to earn money. He illustrated numerous pages for the socialist periodical *The Masses*, but more steady income was provided from his occasional work for *Vanity Fair*¹¹⁸ and numerous book illustrations, including those for *Moby Dick*,¹¹⁹ *Candide*,¹²⁰ and *The Canterbury Tales*.¹²¹ Kent used his "bald, egg-headed" friend with "eyes alight with fervor and a protruding lower lip" as a model for at least one illustration in *Vanity Fair*.¹²² The sketch was one of four caricatures on a page entitled "Tragedies of the Self and the Anti-Self: Hogarth Jr. Shows the Conflict Between What the Neighbors See and What Dr. Freud Would Guess."¹²³ Kent provided insight into his perception of Ruggles as an artist in his title and caption; he presented Ruggles as "The Great-of-Soul," and characterized him as a "great genius encased in narrow physical accommodations. . . . As if to symbolize his ambitions, his clothes, hat, cigar, etc. are all too big for him. So are his ideas. Perhaps he will grow up to them some day" (fig. 6). Ruggles maintained that Kent had used him as the inspiration for his masterful illustration of Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*, but Kent later refuted that claim.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, Ruggles was able to inspire Kent's work through his physical attributes as well as his music and his aesthetic philosophies. Other artists were fascinated by Ruggles's appearance as well; he was the subject of artworks by such individuals as Thomas Hart Benton, Boardman and Sally Robinson, and Harriette Bingham.¹²⁵

During the 1930s the correspondence between Ruggles and Kent dwindled. Kent, by now married for a third time, traveled frequently in a "quest for beauty and adventure [that] would take . . . [him] almost literally to the ends of the earth."¹²⁶ He worked in a variety of creative mediums, including writing, illustration, and painting. In addition, Kent's socialistic beliefs brought him ever closer to the political limelight after the mid-1930s and soon linked him to the Communist Party in the public's eye. Those activities culminated with Kent's testimony in 1953 before Joseph McCarthy, the chairman of the powerful U.S. Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Un-American Activities, followed in 1958 by a Supreme Court case involving the U.S. State Department's refusal to issue him a passport.

Ruggles, by contrast, settled into a quietly domestic life in Vermont. His musical output diminished significantly after the productive period he had enjoyed in the 1920s. His falling out with the International Composers Guild and the demise of other forums for the performance of modern music removed the motivation Ruggles so needed for a regular production of his music. Although he failed to produce the



THE GREAT-OF-SOUL

How often we see great genius encased in narrow physical accommodations. The sample below is one of those. The field of his art is that of the universal. He, according to his story is Man dominating the Cosmic All. As if to symbolize his ambitions, his clothes, hat, cigar, etc., are all too big for him. So are his ideas. Perhaps he will grow up to them some day

Figure 6. Rockwell Kent, "The Great-of-Soul," *Vanity Fair* (May 1921). Reproduced by permission of the Rockwell Kent Legacies (Au Sable Forks, New York).

"thousand things" that Kent had encouraged, the music he composed had an integrity that Kent must have appreciated. Ruggles also continued to create visual art with a sense of passion and freedom.

Kent remained interested in Ruggles's music despite the fact that he was not in regular contact with the composer. He attended a New York performance of *Men and Mountains* and, although not present, received a detailed description from his daughter of *Sun-Treader* when that work was performed at the Ruggles Festival in Bennington, Vermont, in 1968.¹²⁷ The two men remembered each other fondly to the ends of their lives. Somewhat coincidentally, each man was honored by Bowdoin College in the late 1960s.¹²⁸

That Rockwell Kent had an influence upon Carl Ruggles and his creative process is without question. Kent provided Ruggles with the notion of a kindred, equally outspoken spirit at a time when the composer perhaps needed it most, during his last years in Winona, Minnesota. Kent exposed Ruggles to his opinions about political injustice and served as an example of an artist whose creative spirit exuded energy—a model that Ruggles was able to follow much more easily in the creation of his paintings and drawings than in his musical compositions. Whereas Ruggles's music was the product of ponderous

and meticulous working and reworking, his artwork reflects a fresh spontaneity, with freedom of line and movement, as well as an ability to "let go" of the finished work.¹²⁹ Kent also provided Ruggles with an important boost of self-esteem, so necessary for this outwardly boastful composer who inwardly lacked self-confidence.

Ruggles's influence upon Kent is more difficult to trace. Kent did not appear to need to rely upon Ruggles for personal support and confidence-building. In contrast to Ruggles's obvious struggle with the act of composing music, Kent experienced the act of creating art as an exhilarating experience. It reflected the energy and the need for change that permeated all areas of his life. At the same time, he valued Ruggles's friendship and regarded him as an artist of the highest caliber. Writing from Ireland in 1926, Kent confessed to Ruggles "that among all the men that I have ever known you're the only one who has contributed to me anything of value in Art. Yours is the only intelligence or spirit that has impressed me."¹³⁰ Ruggles's friendship provided Kent with much-needed support, and his unflinching belief in Kent as an artist of "mystery" and integrity must have been a special solace to the artist. Ruggles always commented specifically and complimentarily about Kent's artistic style and individual works, whereas Kent's critiques of his friend's music were always given in the form of general encouragement and compliments. In addition, Ruggles provided Kent with a new perspective on the music, art, and literature for which they shared a common admiration and from which they both found inspiration.

Throughout their friendship, the two men held each other in the highest esteem. Ruggles once compared Kent to Beethoven,¹³¹ whereas Kent was reminded of Ruggles while reading Wagner's autobiography.¹³² The admiration they both felt for these two German masters shaped their belief in what was good and true in their respective art forms.

If Ruggles and Kent had first met each other in New York City following Ruggles's return to the East, their relationship would have taken on a much different character and perhaps had less impact upon each man's life than did the friendship that began with a chance meeting in Winona. That these two pioneers of American art and music shared the experience of "exile" in the "cultural no man's land" of Winona provided a bond of experience that would link their lives forever. Their life in Minnesota also made a lasting impact upon Winona. Although one of the homes at Briarcombe Farm has been torn down, and the Winona Opera House was recently razed to make room for parking, the legends of Rockwell Kent and Carl Ruggles live on in this Minnesota city. And the legacy of this chance meeting in Winona

lives on for all of us in the multiplicity of creative works that it most certainly engendered.

Minstrels latent on the prairies!
(Shrouded bard of other lands! you may sleep—you have done your
work;)
Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us,
Pioneers! O Pioneer!¹³³

—Walt Whitman

NOTES

The author wishes to thank Ken Crilly and Helen Bartlett of the John Herrick Jackson Music Library at Yale University and Kathleen Henning for their assistance with this article.

1. *River Town Winona: Its History and Architecture* (Winona: Winona County Historical Society, 1979), 1.
2. Henry A. Castle, *Minnesota: Its Story and Biography* (Chicago: Lewis, 1915), 679; and Theodore Christian Blegen, *Minnesota: A History of the State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), 321.
3. *River Town Winona*, 10.
4. *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 2: 959.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 58–59.
7. *Ibid.*, 11.
8. *Fifth Decennial Census of the State of Minnesota by Major and Minor Civil Divisions* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner, 1905), 232.
9. *River Town Winona*, 15.
10. It is commonly believed, although apparently undocumented, that Winona had more millionaires per capita than any other city in the United States at the turn of the century (interview with Marie Worsch, Winona County Historical Society, Feb. 15, 1994).
11. *River Town Winona*, 11.
12. "Winona County Historical Notes," typescript in the Winona County Historical Society, 6–7.
13. "Burlingame Left Mark on City," *Winona Daily News*, Nov. 19, 1955, p. 17, col. 1.
14. *Ibid.*
15. John Kirkpatrick, "The Evolution of Carl Ruggles: A Chronicle Largely in His Own Words," *Perspectives in New Music* 6 (Spring-Summer 1968): 146.
16. David Stephens Traxel, "Rockwell Kent: The Early Years" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Santa Cruz, 1974), 2.
17. Rockwell Kent's father died when the artist was only five years old, and he was raised by his mother and nanny. After Ruggles's mother died (when the composer was

thirteen years old), his father began to drink; Ruggles remembered his grandmother as "the mainstay of the family—a great person" (Kirkpatrick, "Evolution of Carl Ruggles," 147).

18. Ruggles shared his life with one loving and devoted wife, while Kent had three wives and numerous lovers.

19. Rockwell Kent, *It's Me, O Lord* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1955), 51.

20. *Ibid.*, 51–52.

21. Traxel, "Rockwell Kent," 10.

22. *Ibid.*, 22.

23. Kent, *It's Me, O Lord*, 122.

24. Traxel, "Rockwell Kent," 96.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Kirkpatrick, "Evolution of Carl Ruggles," 147.

27. *Ibid.*, 147–48. Kirkpatrick writes that Ruggles remembers Claus as someone to whom both Chadwick and Sousa would take their compositions.

28. *Ibid.*, 148.

29. For a complete account of Ruggles's time as a newspaper critic, see Marilyn J. Ziffrin, "Carl Ruggles, Music Critic," *American Music Teacher* (Feb.–Mar. 1983): 42–46.

30. Beth Christensen, "Sun-treader's Reluctant Dawn: Bringing Carl Ruggles's Masterpiece to America," *American Music* 9 (Fall 1993): 287–88.

31. *Winona Republican-Herald*, Jan. 26, 1907, p. 6, cols. 5–6.

32. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Charlotte Snell, Jan. 31 (?), 1907 (Carl Ruggles Archives, Yale University, hereafter cited as the Ruggles Papers).

33. *Winona Republican-Herald*, Sept. 10, 1907, p. 4, col. 4.

34. Jan Saecker, "Carl Ruggles in Winona" (M.A. Thesis, Winona State College, 1967).

13. Jan Saecker provides a thorough and well-documented account of Ruggles's time in Winona.

35. Winona therefore supported two symphony orchestras, both conducted by Ruggles, between January and June 1908.

36. Saecker, "Carl Ruggles in Winona," 2.

37. *Ibid.*, 120.

38. *Ibid.*, 181.

39. *Winona Republican-Herald*, Feb. 1, 1912, p. 4, cols. 2–3.

40. Albert Christ-Janer, *Boardman Robinson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 21. It was, ironically, Kent, and not Ruggles, who sold vegetables during his stay in Winona.

41. The Ash Can School, "an American school of realistic painting that flourished in the first decade of the twentieth century," was inspired by Robert Henri and a group of painters known as "The Eight." In addition to George Bellows and John Sloan, William Glackens, George Luks, and Everett Shinn were core members of the group. The artists broke away from the traditions of the Academy and depicted "scenes and details from everyday life and commonplace objects which were significant for the day-to-day life of ordinary people" in urban New York City (*The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Art* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981], 28).

42. Each man undoubtedly remembered this first encounter differently. Marilyn Ziffrin recounted that Meltzer was "convinced that *The Sunken Bell* would make a fine opera, if only he could find the right composer . . . and that night [in 1912] Meltzer found his composer [Ruggles]" (*Carl Ruggles: Composer, Painter, and Storyteller* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994], 39). By contrast, Robert Young McMahan quoted from Meltzer's memoirs, which state that Ruggles pleaded with the playwright to consider setting *The Sunken Bell* as an opera (see McMahan's "A Brief History of *The Sunken Bell*, Carl Ruggles's Unfinished Opera," *American Music* 11 [Summer 1993]: 133).

43. Ziffrin, *Carl Ruggles*, 40; and Kirkpatrick, "Evolution of Carl Ruggles," 151. For detailed information about *The Sunken Bell* consult McMahan, "Brief History of *The Sunken Bell*," pp. 131-57, and Robert Young McMahan, "*The Sunken Bell* by Carl Ruggles," (Ph.D. diss, Peabody Conservatory of Music, 1990).

44. Traxel, "Rockwell Kent," 102.

45. Hannibal Choate owned the largest store in town, and H. M. Lamberton was a prominent attorney.

46. Kent, *It's Me, O Lord*, 266.

47. *Ibid.*, 267.

48. *Ibid.*, 270.

49. *Ibid.*, 271.

50. Snapshot photographs of the event are housed with the Kent Papers at the American Archives of Art (hereafter cited as the Kent Papers). Several are also reproduced in Thomas O'Sullivan, "Rockwell Kent in Minnesota," *The Kent Collector* 18 (Fall 1991): 7, 14.

51. Kent, *It's Me, O Lord*, 269.

52. "Painter of Fame Works as Carpenter," *Winona Independent*, June 1, 1913, p. 6, col. 4; p. 8, col. 5.

53. Their correspondence is housed in the Kent Papers.

54. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Kathleen Kent, May 31, 1913 (Kent Papers).

55. "Painter of Fame Works as Carpenter." Kent was pleased with the review and he sent a clipping of it to his wife. Winona's other daily paper, the *Winona Republican-Herald*, mentioned the exhibition only briefly: "Mr. Kent has for a number of years ranked well among the younger artists of the country, and his exhibition will undoubtedly be viewed by many" (p. 3, col. 1).

56. Kent, *It's Me, O Lord*, 269.

57. *Ibid.*, 270.

58. Letter, Rockwell Kent to John Kirkpatrick, Aug. 15, 1966 (John Kirkpatrick Papers, Yale University, hereafter cited as the Kirkpatrick Papers).

59. Kent, *It's Me, O Lord*, 269-70. Kent's physical description of Ruggles bears a striking resemblance to David Traxel's portrayal of Kent: "In spite of the premature thinning of his blond hair, a mien of naïveté combined with his size made him seem even younger than his age [then 23]. Of moderate height, five feet nine inches, and slender, weighing only 145 pounds, he was of average appearance, with a rather large mouth and a niggardly chin; it was his eyes, brown and intense, that commanded attention" (*An American Saga: The Life and Times of Rockwell Kent* [New York: Harper & Row, 1980], 30).

60. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Kathleen Kent, June 10, 1913 (Kent Papers). Kent wrote to Kathleen in a second letter on June 10: "the music I heard the other night [at the Ruggles home] has made me wild for more."

61. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Kathleen Kent, Sept. 4, 1913 (Kent Papers).

62. In notes from a conversation with Ruggles on Dec. 15, 1963, Kirkpatrick wrote: "I took Boardman Robinson to Rockwell Kent's studio. (They'd never met.) They didn't get on at all. On the easel was a painting of a girl sitting, hair down her back. Boardman Robinson said, 'she's sitting on nothing—she's got to sit on something.' He took a brush and made something for her to sit on. Rockwell Kent never spoke to him again" (Kirkpatrick Papers). Boardman's disdain for Kent's work is mentioned in several letters to Ruggles. On May 18, 1925, Robinson described Kent's work as having "an astonishing resemblance to an automobile shop. Polished, finished—Standardized. Rotten" (Letter, Boardman Robinson to Carl Ruggles, May 18, 1925 [Ruggles Papers]).

63. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Kathleen Kent, Sept. 4, 1913 (Kent Papers).

64. Letters, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Oct. 4, 1913; Nov. 12-13, 1913; Dec. 20, 1913 (Ruggles Papers).

65. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Dec. 1, 1913 (Ruggles Papers).

66. Kent knew of Davies's work, since Davies was another artist in Henri's circle and Kent had exhibited with him. Ruggles wrote to Kent about Davies's paintings on at least three occasions. On Dec. 1, 1913, he wrote: "I want you to know that I believe that you and Davies are the best in the whole country. And speaking of Davies, did you ever see his *Birth of Tragedy*? I think it superb." On Nov. 11, 1914: "This summer . . . we also saw many of Davies' works, among which was his marvelous *Sleep*." In September of 1915, Davies's work had lost some of its appeal for Ruggles: "I am sending you a magazine with some of Arthur Davies' work. It is lovely but not true, I think" (all letters are in the Ruggles Papers).

67. "An Interview with Rockwell Kent, Conducted by Paul Cummings at Au Sable Forks, New York, Feb. 26-27, 1969," *Archives of American Art Journal* 12, no. 1 (1972): 18. Garnet McCoy noted that Kent's correspondence with other artists (such as Marsden Hartley, Arthur Davies, Maurice Prendergast, and Henri) fell off dramatically after about 1915 (see "An Artist's Choice: Ten of the Best," *Archives of American Art Journal* 19, no. 2 [1979]: 17).

68. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Dec. 20, 1913 (Ruggles Papers).

69. *Ibid.* Ruggles's reaction to the painting's "many new touches" must refer to changes that Kent made before sending the painting to Winona. Although now covered by a new lining, the work is inscribed "To Carl Ruggles, 1913"; the painting is signed and dated 1910-13 by Kent (information from the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden).

70. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Jan. 10, 1914 (Ruggles Papers).

71. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Dec. 20, 1913 (Ruggles Papers).

72. Notes from John Kirkpatrick's conversation with Rockwell Kent, Oct. 7, 1966 (Kirkpatrick Papers).

73. Letter, Melissa De Medeiros (M. Knoelder) to the author, Feb. 12, 1994. The painting was subsequently returned to Knoelder by Helen Clay Frick in 1940, returned to Frick in 1941, and finally purchased by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in 1966.

74. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Nov. 11, 1914 (Ruggles Papers).

75. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Oct. 21, 1915 (Kent Papers). Unfortunately, Kent's correspondence (and "ideas") are not available.

76. Ruggles had written to Kent an enthusiastic account of his meeting with Meltzer in July 1914. After relaying that Meltzer "was even kind enough to say that I was the only composer in this country fit to take MacDowell's place," Ruggles asked about Kent's work. He concluded: "I believe in you from the bottom of my heart. You have the true feeling. We are both doing the same thing, I think" (letter, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, July (?) [Kent Papers]).

77. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Charlotte Ruggles, Nov. 17, 1917 (Ruggles Papers). Also cited in Kirkpatrick, "Evolution of Carl Ruggles," 155; Saecker, "Carl Ruggles in Winona," 205; and McMahan, "Brief History of *The Sunken Bell*," 134-35.

78. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Jan. 1, 1920 (Ruggles Papers); also cited in McMahan, "Brief History of *The Sunken Bell*," 144.

79. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Apr. 8, 1920 (Ruggles Papers).

80. Although not a socialist, Ruggles was often on the periphery of socialist activities; he conducted this orchestra, and in 1917 he had applied for a position as concert reviewer for *The Call*, a socialist newspaper. Kent's friendship with Ruggles undoubtedly added to the suspicions that he may have been associated with the socialist movement in America.

81. Nina Marchetti Archabal, "Carl Ruggles: An Ultramodern Composer as Painter" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1979), 88.
82. Kirkpatrick, "Evolution of Carl Ruggles," 152.
83. According to letters from Nov. (?), 1919 and Dec. 7, 1919, Kent considered the titles that Ruggles had "submitted" to him, including "A Birthday Song," "Toys," and, possibly, "Bubbles." Kent wrote: "A title is a handle, and a handle is something to get hold of."
84. See letters, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Nov. 1919 through May 1920 (Ruggles Papers).
85. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Nov. (?), 1919 (Ruggles Papers).
86. Postcard, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, May 18, 1920 (Ruggles Papers).
87. Postcard, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Feb. 9, 1915 (Ruggles Papers).
88. Barbara Rose, *American Art since 1900*, rev. and exp. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1975), 21.
89. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Aug. 3, 1919 (Ruggles Papers).
90. Kent, *It's Me, O Lord*, 270.
91. *Ibid.*
92. In 1918 Ruggles considered Anglicizing the names of the characters in *The Sunken Bell* (see McMahan, "The Sunken Bell," 143, and Ziffrin, *Carl Ruggles*, 47).
93. An example of this is the postcard of Feb. 9, 1915, on which Ruggles writes that he had received a catalog from the Daniel Gallery, showing Kent's *Portrait of a Child* (Ruggles Papers).
94. For example, Kent's letter of Oct. 15, 1919: "Today I began again to paint! So it's a great day in my life"; and Ruggles's letter of Apr. 7, 1914: "The opera is coming in fine although at times I feel almost all in. The labor of composition is most fatiguing" (Ruggles Papers).
95. For a more complete account, see Ziffrin, *Carl Ruggles*, 65-66.
96. Postcard, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, July 25, 1921 (Kent Papers).
97. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Aug. 4, 1921 (Ruggles Papers).
98. Kirkpatrick, "Evolution of Carl Ruggles," 133. One cannot help but wonder whether the idea that Kent suggested later appeared as Charles Seeger's article on Carl Ruggles in the *Musical Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (Oct. 1932): 578-92.
99. Kirkpatrick, "Evolution of Carl Ruggles," 153-54.
100. See Archabal, "Carl Ruggles," for a complete account of Ruggles's visual approach to musical composition.
101. Ruggles's art was exhibited at the Arts Club of Chicago in 1937, the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1941, and the Southern Vermont Art Center in 1952 and 1966.
102. *Current Biography* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1942), 449.
103. Letter, Rockwell Kent to John Kirkpatrick, Aug. [15], 1966 (Kirkpatrick Papers).
104. Archabal, "Carl Ruggles," 91.
105. *Ibid.*, 92.
106. Notes from conversations between John Kirkpatrick and Carl Ruggles, Nov. 28, 1964, and John Kirkpatrick and Rockwell Kent, Oct. 7, 1966 (Kirkpatrick Papers). Amusingly, Ruggles also remembered that Gertrude Whitney asked him what he had done with her pajamas last night.
107. Archabal, "Carl Ruggles," 93. The remaining portions of Ruggles's lecture notes are housed in the Ruggles Papers.
108. Kirkpatrick, "Evolution of Carl Ruggles," 154.
109. John Kirkpatrick's notes reveal that there was some personal tension between Rockwell Kent, Micah, and Charlotte Ruggles during the period when they lived together at Kent's residence in Arlington (Kirkpatrick Papers).
110. Kent's *Men and Mountains* became the center of a controversy when it was

exhibited in 1910 in Columbus, Ohio; the painting was hung during the exhibition in a separate room marked for "Men Only" because its subject matter was deemed scandalous (Traxel, "Rockwell Kent," 97). Kent appropriated this title once again for his *Of Men and Mountains* (Au Sable Forks, N.Y.: Asgaard Press, 1959), which was the published account of his European travels following his highly publicized denial of a passport.

111. The reviewer for the *New York Times* wrote: "If Blake had never lived, the art of Rockwell Kent would not have been what it is" (May 30, 1920, p. 25); and a review published in the *Athenaeum* claimed that *Wilderness* was "easily the most remarkable book to come out of America since *Leaves of Grass* was published" (Aug. 6, 1920, p. 172). Both remarks are noted in Traxel, "Rockwell Kent," 152.

112. Letter, Carl Ruggles to Rockwell Kent, Dec. 1920 (Ruggles Papers).

113. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Dec. 26, 1920 (Ruggles Papers). There is no record of either painting being sold by Knoelder's, although both were included in an exhibition entitled, "Alaska Paintings of Rockwell Kent," which opened Mar. 16, 1920 (Melissa De Medeiros, Knoelder Gallery, telephone conversation with the author, Mar. 16, 1994).

114. Letter, Rockwell Kent to John Kirkpatrick, Aug. 15, 1966 (Kirkpatrick Papers).

115. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Fall (?) 1921 (Ruggles Papers). Also cited in Ziffrin, *Carl Ruggles*, 73. Interestingly, the conversation and meeting with Mrs. Grace also led Kent to ask for and be granted passage to the Strait of Magellan aboard a Grace Line freighter as an assistant freight clerk, "with no duties and a titular salary of 25¢ a month" (letter, Rockwell Kent to John Kirkpatrick, Aug. 15, 1966 [Kirkpatrick Papers]).

116. See Ziffrin, *Carl Ruggles*, 97, 102, and 109, for a description of Ruggles's relationship with Harriette Bingham.

117. Kent continued to exhibit almost fatherly concern for Ruggles's financial situation. In 1926, he wrote to him from Ireland: "I'm worried somewhat about that subsidy of yours. If we could only continue somehow to get your destiny into the hands of some rich person of character and intelligence—like crazy Ludwig or the Duke of Weimar!" (letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Aug. 13, 1926 [Ruggles Papers]).

118. Wanting to be known as a painter and not an illustrator, Kent used the pseudonym "Hogarth, Jr.," for his illustrations that appeared in *Vanity Fair*.

119. The 1930 Random House edition.

120. The 1928 Random House edition.

121. The 1934 Garden City Publishing Company's edition.

122. Kent, *It's Me, O Lord*, 269.

123. *Vanity Fair* (May 1922), 70. In 1969 Kent sent this image to John Kirkpatrick, writing: "Since you were here, I have by chance run across a reproduction of a tiny drawing of Carl that appeared in *Vanity Fair* countless many years ago. It being, as I assure you it is, the 'spittin' image' of Carl at that time, it should dismiss from your mind any thought that my Captain Ahab was to any degree whatever inspired by Carl" (letter, Rockwell Kent to John Kirkpatrick, Mar. 6, 1966 [Kirkpatrick Papers]). A character in another of Kent's *Vanity Fair* illustrations, which appeared in "Entertaining Freaks—the New Social Pastime" (Feb. 1922, p. 37), bears a close resemblance to "The Great-of-Soul."

124. Letter, Rockwell Kent to John Kirkpatrick, Mar. 6, 1969 (Kirkpatrick Papers).

125. Thomas Hart Benton used Ruggles as the subject for his famous painting, *The Sun-Treader*, following a visit with Ruggles in Arlington in 1933; Boardman Robinson executed an early portrait and several sketches of Ruggles; and both sculptress Sally Robinson (Boardman Robinson's wife) and Harriette Bingham produced busts of the composer.

126. Traxel, "Rockwell Kent," ii.

127. Letter, Rockwell Kent to John Kirkpatrick, Apr. 3, 1969 (Kirkpatrick Papers).

128. Bowdoin College devoted a two-day festival to Ruggles in 1966; on that occasion, all of Ruggles's compositions were performed, with *Sun-Treader* receiving its American premiere performance, and his artwork was exhibited. An exhibition entitled, "Rockwell Kent: The Early Years," was mounted at Bowdoin College in 1969.

129. Kent's artwork embodied a methodology somewhere between these two extremes. His meticulous woodcuts and illustrations were counterbalanced by paintings with broad, bold brushstrokes.

130. Letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Apr. 13, 1926 (Ruggles Papers).

131. "The more I work, and the more I see other people's work, convinces me that you are true and noble like Beethoven" (postcard, Sept. 1915 [Ruggles Papers]).

132. "I'm reading Wagner's 'Autobiography,' a thrilling book—especially, I should imagine, to one of our calling to whom the vicissitudes of another artist's life can be so sympathetically understood. I think very much of you as I read this book and rejoice that the time for seeing you is so close at hand" (letter, Rockwell Kent to Carl Ruggles, Feb. 11, 1920 [Ruggles Papers]).

133. Walt Whitman, "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" from *Leaves of Grass* (1871; repr. New York: Viking Press, 1965), 265.