

SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S
WINESBURG, OHIO

WITH VARIANT READINGS AND ANNOTATIONS

EDITED BY

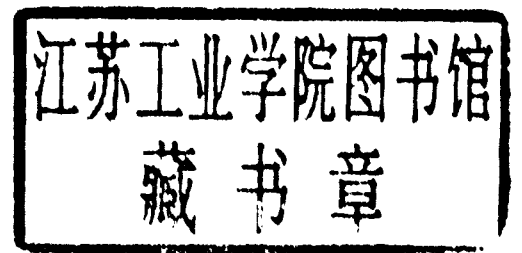
RAY LEWIS WHITE

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SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S WINESBURG, OHIO

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

frontispiece

Winesburg, Ohio in 1919.

Wrapper of the First Edition, First Printing.

Courtesy of the Sherwood Anderson Papers, the Newberry Library.

Winesburg, Ohio. Page from the Manuscript.

“The Book of the Grotesque.”

Courtesy of the Sherwood Anderson Papers, the Newberry Library.

Winesburg, Ohio. Page from the Manuscript.

“Loneliness.”

Courtesy of the Sherwood Anderson Papers, the Newberry Library.

Winesburg, Ohio. Page from the Manuscript.

“The Strength of God.”

Courtesy of the Sherwood Anderson Papers, the Newberry Library.

Winesburg, Ohio. Page from the Manuscript.

“Departure.”

Courtesy of the Sherwood Anderson Papers, the Newberry Library.

Clyde, Ohio. Waterworks Pond.

Courtesy of John D. Maines.

List of Illustrations

Clyde, Ohio. Railroad Station.

Courtesy of John D. Maines.

Sherwood Anderson. Author of *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Courtesy of the Illinois State Historical Society.

Sherwood Anderson. Youth in Clyde, Ohio.

Courtesy of the Sherwood Anderson Papers, the Newberry Library.

Clyde, Ohio. Presbyterian Church.

Courtesy of John D. Maines.

Clyde, Ohio. Empire House Hotel.

Courtesy of John D. Maines.

Clyde, Ohio. Drawn as Winesburg by Thad Hurd.

Courtesy of John D. Maines.

Winesburg, Ohio. First-edition Endpaper.

Map Drawn by Harald Toksvig.

Clyde, Ohio. Main Street in Winter.

Courtesy of John D. Maines.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WINESBURG, OHIO entered my life in 1963 when I sought a research topic for a seminar in American literary naturalism. My professor encouraged me to consider writing about Sherwood Anderson, as all of the more “major authors” had been claimed by seminar students less dilatory than I. With no great enthusiasm I looked into Sherwood Anderson and into *Winesburg, Ohio*; but within a few weeks and with very great enthusiasm I decided that Anderson’s life and writings should become the subject of my dissertation and the subject of some of the books that I intended to publish . . . and one of these books that I called into dreaming existence would be surely, someday, my own edition of Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Given the unlikelihood of fulfilling these graduate-school dreams of scholarly achievement, I am yet amazed that I did manage to publish several Sherwood Anderson volumes—selected essays on the author’s career, a collection of his writings for small-town newspapers, the text of an early novel, his correspondence with Gertrude Stein, editions of his three memoirs, etc.

Then, in the 1970s, having deciphered Anderson’s *Winesburg* manuscripts, having collected and collated all relevant editions and printings of the work, and having readied for publication by a university press a nearly inscrutable “genetic text” edition of *Winesburg, Ohio*, I encountered for the first time the intransigence of copyright law in the form of the then-recent non-expiration of copyrighted works as dictated by the United States government: *Winesburg* would not enter public domain in 1976, as earlier law had determined, but would remain for many more years the exclusive property of its commercial

Preface and Acknowledgments

publisher. And so I shelved (forever, I decided) the typescript of my finished genetic edition of *Winesburg, Ohio* but not my hope to publish someday my own non-genetic, "definitive," and clearly readable edition of that work.

From the time in 1964 when Eleanor Copenhaver Anderson, Sherwood's widow and executor, gave me my first "yellow *Winesburg*"—the B. W. Huebsch first edition of the work from 1919—I wondered how such impressive and influential words as Anderson's could have been so carelessly and unattractively presented in published form. As I came to write and publish my own books I retracted my arrogant criticism of the B. W. Huebsch staff, realizing that even this masterpiece of literature first arrived in a commercial publishing house as mere typed pages assigned to a busy editor for quick copy editing and then to a busy and perhaps untalented designer for cost-effective printing and binding, all with slight hope of modest notice and significant sales. Anderson was fortunate—given his seeming lack of promise as a middle-aged Chicago advertising writer—to publish his *Winesburg* stories at all . . . and we have shared that good fortune ever since, however imperfect the text that Ben Huebsch and his staff left to us.

I am not the first Anderson devotee to try to present *Winesburg, Ohio* in an attractive and dependable form and format, for in the late 1950s the literary enthusiast Malcolm Cowley, employed by the Viking Press, assigned members of the Viking staff to study the Huebsch/Viking text of the book in relation to the author's manuscripts, with the purpose of publishing in the Viking Compass series a new edition of the book. The new edition, which corrected several of the misprints and confusing points in the 1919 text, did appear in 1960, capably introduced by Cowley, and remained into the 1990s (under the Penguin imprint that superseded Viking) the best available version of Anderson's stories.

Then, *Winesburg, Ohio* having at last lost copyrighted status, I prepared for publication in 1996 from the W. W. Norton Company a text of the work edited according to the standards of that publisher's Critical Editions series—a text that corrected the most obvious typographical and editorial errors in the seven printings of the first edition of the book and that annotated adequately but not obtrusively several historical and cultural references made by the author. Nevertheless, *Winesburg, Ohio* was still not published in the "expert edition" that it deserved. Hence this Ohio University Press edition.

Preface and Acknowledgments

Here I present *Winesburg, Ohio* as the book should, I believe, have appeared in 1919, a text based on my study of Anderson's manuscripts, on the periodical versions of ten of the stories thus published, on the first edition in its seven printings through 1931, and on the knowledge gained from and the emotional involvement of my (soon thirty-five) years of living professionally in "Anderson Country." Here, alongside the lines of my text of *Winesburg*, are explanations of the several hundred alterations that I have made to Huebsch's first edition. Whenever cultural and historical references occur in Anderson's stories, explanations of these phenomena are to be found alongside them. Because Anderson based his created town of Winesburg, Ohio, on the very real town of his youth—Clyde, in North Central Ohio—I have provided alongside the author's fictional characters, occasions, and places my identifications of the corresponding characters, occasions, and places in Clyde and its surrounding area. Unique photographs of Clyde, Ohio, from the 1870s through the 1890s when Anderson lived among its citizens are provided.

To some experienced readers this book might not be a virtually new *Winesburg, Ohio*; but the text will be welcomed and considered, I hope, as would a centuries-old, well-loved, and newly restored painting: as a work of literary art long admired in its imperfect state and now, at last, restored and preserved for fresh and clear viewing.

Among individuals who have aided me in completing this new edition of *Winesburg, Ohio* and whom I thank for their help are David D. Anderson, Hilbert H. Campbell, Elaine Dion, Miriam Fankhauser, Jack Harrell, Diana Haskell, Kevin Jones, John D. Maines, Charles E. Modlin, Lucy Morrison, Patricia Powell, Walter B. Rideout, Carol Ruyle, William A. Sutton, Susan Swartwout, Welford D. Taylor, Timothy Twohill, Joan Winters, and William C. Woodson.

I regret that their deaths have prevented me from sharing this new edition of *Winesburg, Ohio* with several individuals, all of whom cared about my project and forwarded my progress: Eleanor Copenhaver Anderson, Michael Kaplan, Ivan Von Auw Jr., John Sherwood Anderson, and Marion Anderson Spear.

I am especially grateful to Charles E. Modlin and Hilbert H. Campbell, trustees of the Sherwood Anderson Literary Estate Trust, for recognizing my text of *Winesburg, Ohio* as officially authorized.

Introduction

ON SEPTEMBER 13, 1915, Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941) became thirty-nine years old. He was living in Chicago for the third time, writing advertising copy to support himself while trying to achieve his greatest ambition: to become a published novelist. Anderson had come to Chicago first in 1896, with only a basic grade-school education, after the death of his mother in the family hometown of Clyde, Ohio. Ambitious for great riches but able to find only dreary manual labor, probably in cold-storage warehouses, young Sherwood Anderson, a member of the Ohio National Guard, in 1898 had gladly left Chicago to serve in the United States military occupation of Cuba, and, after his military duty, to complete a high-school education at the academy of Wittenberg College, in Springfield, Ohio.¹ In 1900, armed with ambition and education and considerable new sophistication, Anderson had returned to Chicago to work prosperously in agricultural advertising, to marry the beautiful and well-educated daughter of a rich manufacturer, and to strive toward eventual ownership and control of his very own business. In 1906 he had achieved much of that very American dream: he had become president of the United Factories Company, an equipment/supplies-distribution firm in Cleveland, Ohio; and in 1907 he had headed the Anderson Manu-

1. A reliable recent biography of the writer is Kim Townsend, *Sherwood Anderson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

Introduction

facturing Company, another distribution organization, in Elyria, Ohio. However, in late November 1912, succumbing to the pressure of mounting business problems and personal disillusion and mumbling to his secretary incoherent words about walking on wet feet in the bed of a stream, Sherwood Anderson had walked, dazed, out of his company office in Elyria to wander across snow-packed northern Ohio for over three days, suffering from the mental collapse of amnesia or, more likely, "fugue" (unaware and unremembered physical and mental "flight") and had come to awareness slowly in a Cleveland hospital bed.² By early 1913, recovering from his amnesia or fugue and feeling enabled, as a publicly acknowledged recovering invalid, to cast off the troubling social and mental constraints and financial debts of his now-unsatisfactory conventional life, Anderson had lost interest in and responsibility for his business and his lovely wife and their three handsome children, along with his dreams of the satisfactions of wealth; and he had come for the third time to Chicago, alone, ready to write advertising copy for a living and, of more importance, to make into legend the grand gesture of his middle-aged rebellion against middle-class life and commercial endeavor that he secretly knew to have been an embarrassing mental breakdown: the rebellion that he would always claim to have been the considered rejection of a potentially great career in commerce for an uncertain but far more worthwhile career in the art of literature.

Perhaps as early as 1909 Sherwood Anderson had somehow decided that he preferred to write novels instead of promotional copy, that he wanted to live in the world of artistic creation instead of the world of accountancy and country-club golf. By the time of his nervous

2. Anderson's business career and breakdown are best covered in William A. Sutton, *The Road to Winesburg* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1972). Sutton provides fascinating documents from Anderson's breakdown, including notes that he wrote while in his fugue/flight state (pp. 552-560).

Introduction

collapse late in 1912, he had, writing at night in the attic of his home and relying on his business secretary to type his scribbled sentences, drafted parts of several novels, each with a theme of heroic worldly success and emotional despair, works then perhaps without conclusion and, if concluded, probably of no interest to publishers. Taking these manuscripts and typescripts to Chicago in 1913, Anderson had re-written them and tried to write other works of fiction, freely using much of his employers' time and probably their company secretaries whom he paid to type his manuscripts; but these unpublished literary efforts had appealed to Anderson's new "Chicago Renaissance" friends more, surely, as the surprising products of an ex-manufacturer than as the polished work of a new and gifted creative writer.


The lively artistic and intellectual atmosphere that Anderson found in Chicago in 1913 exactly suited the ex-entrepreneur, for, from around 1908 through World War I, Chicago claimed some of the most vital and innovative creative artists in America.³ After the genteel literary realism exemplified by the aging Chicago writers Robert Herrick, Henry Blake Fuller, and Hamlin Garland, the city had become favored with exciting and liberated iconoclasts such as Harriet Monroe, who in 1912 founded *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, destined to bring public recognition to Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, E. A. Robinson, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams; Maurice Browne, who in 1912 began the Chicago Little Theatre in order to perform drama by Ibsen, Strindberg, Yeats, Wilde, Shaw, and local playwrights; Francis Hackett, Floyd Dell, Fanny Butcher, and Lucian Cary, who brought sophisticated book-reviewing to Chicago newspapers; Margaret Anderson (no relation to Sherwood),

3. The most scholarly discussion of the Chicago literary awakening is Bernard Duffey, *The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1954); the broadest discussion of the arts in Chicago is Alson J. Smith, *Chicago's Left Bank* (Chicago: Regnery, 1953). Anderson's role in this Renaissance is well covered in Kenney J. Williams, *A Storyteller and a City: Sherwood Anderson's Chicago* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1988).

Introduction

who in 1914 founded the *Little Review* in order to publish any new writing that might excite her; and the startling new authors Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, and Vachel Lindsay, and—soon—Sherwood Anderson, who found easy entry into the groups of Chicago artists, bartering his story of escape from business into literature to gain admiration for his burning desire to publish great fiction. Anderson, by day cynically writing advertising copy to sustain his simple life in rooming houses and by night fervidly discussing freedom and creativity and beauty to sustain his newfound emotional life, made for himself a fresh existence as one of the Chicago seekers of art, writers ready in the Second City, the rough metropolis of the Midwest, to challenge the older and more sedate accomplishments of Boston and New York City. Thus free in early middle age from ordinary responsibilities of family, society, and commerce, Sherwood Anderson continued to devote himself to learning to write fiction. By the fall of 1915 he was living alone in a rooming house on Chicago's Near North Side; and, on some night in the winter of 1915–1916, he created his first piece of true literature.

The writing of *Winesburg, Ohio* became for Sherwood Anderson the professional turning point of his life, the miracle that confirmed this man's dedication to the creative act. Although Anderson always recognized the importance to his career of *Winesburg, Ohio*, he published relatively little about the actual composition of the work until later in his life. Beginning in 1933, Anderson worked on his memoirs intermittently until his death in 1941.



Introduction

Perhaps the introspection and retrospection required in writing the never-finished memoirs caused Sherwood Anderson to glorify the composition of *Winesburg, Ohio* that began in 1915; or perhaps a long-promised visit, with his fourth wife, to the Chicago room where he first knew the joy of successful storytelling inspired in Anderson the many glorifications of the writing of *Winesburg, Ohio* that he thereafter made.

Soon after their marriage in 1933, Sherwood and Eleanor Copenhaver Anderson visited 735 North Cass Street (now Wabash Avenue) in Chicago, where Sherwood had lived alone in a furnished room in the winter of 1915–1916. Sherwood had, he wrote, often recalled for his Eleanor the place and “the Little Children of the Arts”—the youthful would-be artists who had then shared the rooming house with the older would-be writer:

There were many little rooms separated by thin partitions and they were all occupied.

The occupants were all young. They were young musicians, painters, young women who aspired to be actresses. I have always wanted to write of the people of that house. They were, for the time, so close to me.

I was no longer young. I was the oldest in that house. At the time the room in which I lived seemed large and later, in my thought, it kept growing larger.

I often described it to my wife.

“There was a great desk,” I said, “as long as this room in which we now stand.” I described for her my bed, the shelves built into the wall. I have always, when at work, loved to walk up and down. I am sure I gave her the impression of myself striding up and down a

Introduction

long room, grown in my imagination into something like a great hall. The council room of a king. Something of that sort.⁴

4. *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs: A Critical Edition*, edited by Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 350.

The building in 1933 "still a cheap rooming house," the room having become (or perhaps always in reality been) "a shabby little hole," Anderson quickly abandoned his romantic lover's plan to sit nostalgically with Eleanor in the room and to re-create for her the creation of *Winesburg, Ohio*:

I had dreamed of sitting with her at the window that looked down toward the Chicago Loop in the evening, as the day faded, as the lights flashed on in the great buildings of the Loop.

People passing along the street below the window, passing under the street light at a nearby corner, shabbily dressed old men, smartly dressed young women.

...

What dreams, hopes, ambitions. Sometimes it has seemed to me, when, as a young man, I sat at the window of that room, that each person who passed along the street below, under the light, shouted his secret up to me.

I was myself and still I fled out of myself. It seemed to me that I went into the others.

What dreams. What egotism. I had thought then, on such evenings, that I could tell all of the stories of all the people of America. I would get them all, understand them, get their stories told.

And then came the night it happened.⁵

5. *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs: A Critical Edition*, edited by Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 351-352.

What happened was that in 1933 Anderson looked into the shabby old room that he had found and re-

Introduction

membered the finding there of his vocation as a writer in 1915:

And then, on a day, late in the afternoon of a day, I had come home to that room. I sat at a desk in a corner of the room. I wrote.

There was a story of another human, quite outside myself, truly told.

The story was one called "Hands." It was about a poor little man beaten, pounded, frightened by the world in which he lived into something oddly beautiful.

The story was written that night in one sitting. No word of it ever changed. I wrote the story and got up. I walked up and down in that little narrow room. Tears flowed from my eyes.

"It is solid," I said to myself. "It is like a rock. It is there. It is put down. . . ."

I am quite sure that on that night, when it happened in that room, when for the first time I dared whisper to myself, perhaps sobbing, that I had found it, my vocation, I knelt in the darkness and muttered words of gratitude to God.⁶

Sherwood Anderson told this story of the writing of the first *Winesburg, Ohio* tale in not only his memoirs but also in letters to correspondents in the 1930s. In April 1935, he advised an aspiring young author:

. . . if you are ever to be a real writer, your moment comes. I remember mine. I walked along a city street in the snow. I was working at work I hated. . . . I was ill, discouraged, broke. I was living in a cheap rooming house. I remember that I went upstairs and into

6. *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs: A Critical Edition*, edited by Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 352-353.

Introduction

the room. It was very shabby. I had no relatives in the city and few enough friends. I remember how cold the room was. On that afternoon I had heard that I was to lose my job.

I grew desperate, went and threw up a window. I sat by the open window. It began to snow. "I'll catch cold sitting here."

"What do I care?" There was some paper on a small kitchen table I had bought and had brought up into the room. I turned on a light and began to write. I wrote, without looking up—I never changed a word of it afterwards—a story called "Hands." It was and is a very beautiful story.

I wrote the story and then got up from the table at which I had been sitting, I do not know how long, and went down into the city street. I thought that the snow had suddenly made the city very beautiful. There were people in the street, all sorts of people, shabby ones, brisk young ones, old discouraged ones. I went along wanting to hug people, to shout.

"I've done it. At last, after all these years I've done something." How did I know I had? I did know. I was drunk with a new drunkenness. I cannot remember all of the absurd, foolish things I did that evening. I had a little money in my pocket and went into saloons. I called men up to the bar. "Drink. Drink to me, men." I remember that a prostitute accosted me and that I threw some money toward her and ran away laughing. It must have been several hours before I got the courage to return to my room and read my own story.

It was all right. It was sound. It was real. I went to sit by my desk. A great many others have had such

Introduction

moments. I wonder what they did. I sat there and cried. For the moment I thought the world very wonderful, and I thought also that there was a great deal of wonder in me.⁷

And in late May 1935, Anderson in a letter to a very close friend re-told the composition of the first *Winesburg, Ohio* story:

7. *Letters of Sherwood Anderson*, edited by Howard Mumford Jones in association with Walter B. Rideout (Boston: Little Brown, 1953), pp. 314–315.

... on this day I had come home from the place where I was employed very tired. My room was small and cheerless enough. I was discouraged and blue, hating the work by which I made a living.

I sat there at my desk and suddenly picked up my pen. I think every man must be filled with a thousand impressions, feelings, impulses that never get expressed.

Suddenly I began to write as I had never written. It did not seem to be me sitting there holding the pen. There was no me. It was as though some mysterious force outside myself had taken possession of me.

There were people everywhere, thousands, millions of people wanting their stories told. They didn't want it glossed over, made glamorous. That, in the end, only hurt and made life more difficult.

"If you knew my story, you might like, even love me a little."

That seemed to be the cry.

It was as though one of these began to speak through me. The pen began to run over the paper. I did not seek for words. They were there. They seemed to leap out from my hand to the paper.

Now there was no such thing as time, no little