



MRS. CUMMING PRESENTS ANDRE NORTON'S NEWEST BOOK TO LIBRARIAN MRS. MORRIS

## LOCAL TEACHER'S INTERVIEW OF WELL-KNOWN WRITER BRINGS AUTOGRAPHED BOOK TO LOCAL LIBRARY

When Mulberry Elementary School teacher Mrs. Troy Cumming began a special assignment in her library course at University of South Florida this summer, little did she realize it would lead to such an unusual and fascinating experience as a personal visit with Florida's most prolific science writer. As a memento of her summer's work toward a Master's Degree in library science, Mrs. Cumming has an autographed copy of Andre Norton's latest book "Forerunner Foray", which she presented this week to the Dr. C. C. Pearce Municipal Library.

While working toward her master's at U.S.F. in Tampa, the Mulberrian was instructed as a major assignment in a bibliography and book selection course to do a bibliography on the works of some famous author. She decided to select a contemporary author who writes for young adults, and then chose Andre Norton, whose home is in Central Florida, and whose science fiction books are so popular today that they are now coming out in paperbacks and have been pirated by more than eight foreign countries and printed in their languages. The local librarian Mrs. R. A. Morris reports that the Norton books are quite popular with the young people of Mulberry, and there are nine here which stay in almost constant circulation.

Since the assignment specified that the bibliography must not

duplicate any previous work, Mrs. Cumming first went to Lakeland Public Library to begin the necessary research on Andre Norton. Library personnel were quite helpful with research materials, and there she learned that Ernestine Donaldy, who heads the English department at Lakeland High School had recently collaborated with Norton on a collection of science fiction stories called "Gates to Tomorrow" which will be used in starting a creative writing course at Lakeland High. Mrs. Donaldy suggested the Mulberry teacher contact Andre Norton whose home is at Maitland near Orlando, and after some deliberation a short note was on its way telling the author that she had been selected as the subject for a bibliography.

Next came a surprise phone call from Andre Norton inviting Mrs. Cumming to her home for a personal visit and interview. The writer was quite pleased at the interest shown in her works, but Mrs. Cumming was admittedly "excited beyond words" at the prospect of meeting Andre Norton and gaining first-hand information from her. The writer's home, situated on Lake Howell, was designed and built by her nephew as an inducement to get her to come to Florida, and she lives there alone, with six cats which she loves dearly, for company. In a small room furnished with only a typewriter and books

lining the walls from ceiling to floor, Andre Norton writes her stories, but before she begins the first line, she researches a minimum of 11 books, ranging from archeology to medieval religion.

Because of the complexity of Norton's science fiction stories, Mrs. Cumming has noted, they do require "an attentive reader." And, since they have started coming out in paperbacks, they are considered adult reading. Her newest book "Forerunner Foray" which she autographed for Mrs. Cumming, is an absorbing story in which the past and future mingle, and it deals with the theory of mind touch. The author told the Mulberry teacher that she had not been a firm believer in the occult, but she decided to research it before writing this book. She had a sensitive come to her home and conduct certain tests, which she said proved to her the theory of mind touch.

Because two master theses had already been written on Norton's works up to 1971, she suggested that Mrs. Cumming carry on from where the second one had left off, updating her American works from 1971-73, and also doing all of her foreign publications, dating back to the early 1960's, which had never been done. Thus, the Mulberry school teacher began her ambitious undertaking and gratefully accepted Andre Norton's offer of her

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personal writer's log to use for research, as well as copies of the two master theses, to avoid any duplication. With quite a heavy sense of responsibility, Mrs. Cumming returned home with these papers back in July, and began to work "almost every minute" night and day until she completed the assignment and turned in the bibliography this month. All of the information included had to be carefully documented.

From the university Mrs. Cumming received an "A" for her assignment, but even more meaningful, from Andre Norton there was a note calling her work "very impressive" and requesting a copy for future reference. On a return trip to Maitland, as a token of appreciation for the writer's cooperation and assistance, Mrs. Cumming took some of her own homemade blackberry jelly and pickles, and the writer seemed to particularly appreciate this friendly gesture.

One night each week for the next year Mrs. Cumming, who teaches third grade, will continue her studies at South Florida until she completes four more courses, and then in August she expects to receive her Master's Degree. But, at this point she feels sure none of her future assignments will prove quite as exciting and enjoyable or involve her as completely as this summer's work has done.

ANDRE NORTON, 1971-1973

with

Foreign Publications

Jean Cumming

EDL 601

Dr. Smith

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Miss Andre Norton, who so graciously invited me into her home and made this paper a reality, I express my heartfelt thanks.

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## INTRODUCTION

An interest in Andre Norton began with a desire to know more about a contemporary author who devotes much time to writing for young adults.

This writer finds Miss Norton to be quite prolific in providing the young reader, as well as adults with action packed stories whether it be in the genre of historical fiction, fantasy, or science fiction.

Master's thesis have been presented by two graduate students at Kent State University on Miss Norton's books. Miss Norton's books published before 1960 are discussed in Robert D. Lofland's "Andre Norton, a Contemporary Author of Books for Young People." Becky Peters' "Andre Norton, 1960-1971" continues where Mr. Lofland left off until 1971.

This writer's paper is an attempt to continue Miss Norton's books from 1971 to 1973 and to present the foreign publications not included in the Master's thesis.

Miss Norton's books have been pirated and published in many countries. Foreign editions examined by this writer in Miss Norton's home included the Spanish, English, Italian, Russian, German, Dutch, and Arabic. The French publication was not available for examination.

Miss Norton had the Russian publication translated by a friend and learned that a new introduction had been written which painted a very black picture of her. The introduction stated that Miss Norton was against all political systems, which of course is very much out of focus.

Among the most interesting of the publications was the Arabic edition of a historical fiction in which actual photographs were added and the book was used as a classroom textbook.

No full length biography has been written about Miss Norton. This writer consulted Biography Index, Webster's Biographical Dictionary, and the New York Times Index with no results. Short biographical sketches appear in Contemporary Authors, 1963, Current Biography, 1956-1957, More Junior Authors, 1963, Authors of Books for Young People, and Who's Who in American Women, 1958-59. The most recent is an article by John Rowe Townsend in A Sense of Story: Essays on Contemporary Writers for Children, 1972.

Reviews of Miss Norton's books were traced through Book Review Digest.

Other sources consulted were the Cumulative Book Index, National Union Catalog, Authors' List, Books in Print, and several foreign bibliographies.

This writer also consulted the unpublished Master's thesis and relied heavily upon Andre Norton's "personal log". (which was kept on refrigeration).

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON ANDRE NORTON

The daughter of Adalbert and Daisy Bertha (Stemm) Norton was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1912.<sup>1</sup> She belongs to the Presbyterian Church and the Republican Party. Miss Norton is five feet seven inches tall, with graying hair and green eyes.

Miss Norton shares a house, which was designed by her nephew, with six cats. She has resided on Lake Howell Drive in Maitland, Florida, since 1966.

Andre Norton's indifferent health has forced her into a quieter life, although she continues to research and write extensively.

Miss Norton worked for a number of years in the Cleveland Public Library as a children's librarian. During World War II, she worked as a special librarian for a citizenship project in Washington, D.C., and at the Library of Congress. In addition, she was at one time manager of a bookstore.

Miss Norton believes that all books should be stepping stones to other books. She reads in Celtic and early English lore for her sword and sorcery books, and does extensive research in archaeology, anthropology, natural history, folklore, magic, native religions, travel and medieval history for her science fiction stories. Miss Norton uses a minimum of 11 sources for each novel.

An inner ear problem, which causes Vertigo, prevents Miss Norton from traveling. This summer, she was invited to lecture in England but was unable to travel by plane, and had to decline the invitation.

<sup>1</sup> Although Miss Norton's birthdate has remained a secret for years, this writer found the date in Cumulative Book Index, 1971.



Andre Norton has received awards for many of her books. She was cited by the Dutch Government for Sword is Drawn. Her books are often the selection for the Science Fiction Book Club, the latest being, Forerunner Foray, 1973.

Miss Norton is a collector of Minatures and has on display many of the characters from her books, done in brass by an author-artist friend.

Andre Norton is a "reader" as well as "writer". Miss Norton's home is furnished with "wall to wall" books and in her study a visitor will find much evidence of NORTON and NORTON.

## SUMMARY

Miss Norton has written books in several genres, but her science fiction overshadows the other books.

Andre Norton's books provide young people and adults pleasure reading and excitement because of her flare for intricate plotting. However, she is an exacting author whose works demand attentive reading.

Miss Norton was asked by this writer if an underlying theme existed in some of her books, i.e. ecology. The reply was, "no intention was made for the reader to parallel an issue." An exception to this will be contained in her forthcoming book where animals are using people for laboratory experiments and mis-treatment. Miss Norton has had the unpleasant experience of finding injured animals being released from automobiles in the vicinity of her home.

Another avenue of Andre Norton's talents has recently been performed as editor of a collection of science fiction short stories to be used as a text for science fiction creative writing classes in high schools.

After visiting Miss Norton and reading much of her material, this writer is confident that Andre Norton has much to offer the reader of a "changing world."

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The following list of Andre Norton's books will be arranged in two sections: a chronological listing of Norton books from 1971-1973, in America; foreign publications alphabetically by title. This list will be presented under her real name, Alice Mary Norton.

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