

Dear Jeffrey,

Let me correct you in one thing: I'm a native of Junction City, Kansas. I moved from there to New York in 1926. North Carolina is the home state of the rest of my family, but I was born on West 4th Street. I think the cross street was Webster, but I'm not sure. I visit often in North Carolina, and often speak of Lenoir as one of my "home towns" but that is merely by inheritance and adoption.

I believe Thomas Wolfe was as near to an idol--if not an ideal--- that Stan had. The only time he ever showed the slightest impatience with me was once when I remarked that Wolfe had died of a brain tumor. Stan's information recognized only pneumonia as the malady which took Wolfe out of this life. Since at that moment I couldn't see why pneumonia was any more ---respectable, shall I say--- than a brain tumor, I simply let the matter drop. I did not revere Wolfe particularly. In fact, much as I love words, I felt sometimes that reading Wolfe was like being on a raft of words on restless breakers. That's a far-in-the-past impression. I haven't read anything of his for years, *except a few quotes.*

What Stan did in creating Wagnal, *to Wagnal of his character,* He did not know Mr. Bagnal but saw him at my home. *Bagnal* was neither brooding nor maniacal. Stan took his outward appearance, which was eccentric to say the least, and poured into it a creature of his own imagination. I think, had Stan's talent been for painting instead of writing, he would have been a *multi* caricaturist. He read into features and personality traits *such* strange meanings! I am the only member of our family whom he used in his books that he did not caricature. He had a strange impersonal feeling about his approach to *that*. *using family members* He had learned to tap his subconscious and draw characters directly from there. Putting them into outer form was sort of a reversal of psychological plastic surgery. Bagnal, actually, was a brilliant theologian whose mind had snapped momentarily when his lovely, very rich wife died. It was a strange break. It manifested itself as a sudden block when he was speaking. Delivering a sermon, for instance, he would be developing his theme smoothly, then abruptly go blank. If someone brought him back to his subject, he could pick up his train of thought and go on without the slightest difficulty, but a clergyman can't be dependent on a rescuing reminder. He had to give up. He had served as rector of the Episcopal Church in J C, and had made good friends there. That's why he returned to that place. He had a very small pension from the church. A hardfisted brother-in-law had bilked him out of his wife's estate. Two men, Grey Kennedy and Fred O'Donnell, augmented the pension, tactfully managing to have it added