

As we have seen, the
; they are fundamental
st complete, even though
ion in this matter. We
l by the partisan insur-
epted by state officials,
They are romantic nar-
it when the ideological
e their worth.
ave faith!" that one day
k people to whom it is
ression will be able to
fairly and validly, and
terature.

JOHN F. BERKO

THOMAS BELL (1903-1961)
Slovak-American Novelist

Thomas Bell (originally Belejčák) was born on March 7, 1903 in Braddock, Pennsylvania. His father Michael Belejčák was from Tvarožec, a community in the Šariš County in Eastern Slovakia. He came to America at the age of 15. Bell's mother Mária Kračún was born in Whitehaven, Pennsylvania, the daughter of an immigrant Slovak steel worker. Bell's father was also a steel worker and bartender. Thomas was the oldest of four children. He had a brother, Anthony, and two sisters, Pauline and Evelyn.

When Thomas was eleven, exactly on his birthday, his father died of tuberculosis at the age of 39. Thomas thus became the man of the family, taking over some of the responsibilities of his deceased father. At fourteen or fifteen he started working in a glass company in Glassport, Pennsylvania. At sixteen, he was working as an apprentice electrician in the electrical department of the American Steel and Wire Company in Donora, Pennsylvania. At that time Bell's mother died of tuberculosis in a sanitarium.

After his mother's death Bell made his home with his aunt, his mother's sister, the wife of John J. Shedlock, in Donora, Pa. He stayed there with his brother and sisters for a time.

Two years later, he is working on the furnaces in a steel mill in Braddock, Pa. He is also writing a column for the local *News-Herald* which he signs first with his initials, later uses the pseudonym Thomas Bell. According to his relatives, Thomas started not only working, but also writing very young. However, the fiction he wrote as a young boy he kept for himself. It was never published.

Bell's formal education ended at 14 or 15, but his real education ended only with his death. He wrote in his journal, a few months before his death, that everything he knew he learned from books. And from life experiences, of course. From early childhood he was a voracious reader. Library was to him what water is to fish. Even at the end of his life he remembered the little boy — himself — who peered up over the rim of the librarian's desk waiting for his first library card.

Bell described himself as "little more than an appetite let loose in a library." And his self-education is quite apparent in his books. He quotes or refers to authors like Seneca, Montaigne, Keats, Dumas, Proust, Thoreau, Ambrose Bierce, Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, James Branch Cabell and others. He also learned to appreciate and love serious, classical music. He mentions the names and works of several composers. Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Berlioz, Bruckner, Haydn were his musical diet. Their works were in his record collection. And we know from his journal, that Bell was a discriminating music lover. He did not rate Bruckner very high among top composers.

Metaphysics was indigestible for Bell. In his opinion, it was the most fatuous intellectual pursuit known to man. Works by Meister Eckhart, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Kafka, Camus, Sartre, and other philosophers of metaphysical turn of mind were incomprehensible and repellent to him. He found such writing fuzzy, muddled, painful in its lack of feeling for words and without much relevance to the life and the world he knew. As to religion, it would appear that Bell rejected it early in his life.

In 1922, at the age of 19, Bell went to New York with \$15.00 in his pocket. He slept in subways until he found a job. His first job was that of a mechanic in a Long Island Railroad shop. Then he shipped out to sea twice as a merchant seaman on a freighter. Between the journeys he worked in a shelving place. When he was through with his merchant seaman's "career," he went to live with a family, the Gildays, in Manhattan at 803 E. 156th Street. Finally he got a job as a buyer, cataloguer, and salesman in Schulte's Bookstore (old and rare books) in New York City on 12th Street and 4th Avenue. When he felt secure on his new job he got his own apartment at 1261 Merriam Avenue in the Bronx and sent for his brother and two sisters to live with him in the apartment.

The varied work experiences amassed since he was 14 enabled Thomas to learn first-hand about workingmen's lot, the details of their work as well as about their working and living conditions. A sensitive and perceptive young man with insatiable curiosity, he listened to the related experiences of older workers, but also actively sought information from various people on the details of their specific work in factories, especially in the steel mills. One such example is Mr. Frank P. Shedlock, Bell's aunt's brother-in-law in Donora, Pa., as he informed me in his letter of May 25, 1974. It appears clear that Thomas already at 16 or 17 was determined to be a writer. He was gathering information, first-hand and from various other sources, apparently planning to utilize it in his future books. And utilize it he did, as his works amply testify. For example, his descriptions of work in the steel mills have a ring of patent authenticity.

In his spare time, while working in Schulte's Bookstore, Bell wrote his first novel *The Breed of Basil*, dedicated to his sisters and brother, Pauline, Evelyn, and Anthony. It was published in 1930. In England it appeared under the title *Equestrian Portrait*, much more suitable than the American title, according to Mrs. Marie Bell. It was neither a great novel, nor a financial success. Bell himself wrote later that it was written under the influence of James Branch Cabell's novel *Jurgen*. It was a romantic adventure story set in a world Bell had no first-hand knowledge about. It did not sound convincing, lacked authenticity. Yet even in this first attempt one can feel the talent of a future realistic writer. His attention to and description of details, his sensitivity, his feel for language promised better works to come.

In 1931 Bell wrote an introduction to Boccaccio's *Questions of Love*. The book was privately printed by J.J. Little and Ives Co. for The Three Sirens Press. It was a limited edition of 1500 copies.

In April of the same year Bell met his future wife for the first time. His sister Evelyn who worked for Norcross Greeting Co. invited two girls, her fellow employes, for dinner in her apartment shared with Tom and Pauline. One of the girls was Marie Benedetti. Less than a year later, on January 2, 1932 Bell married Marie, the daughter of Italian immigrants Francesco and Giovanna Benedetti, in St. Rosalie's Church in Brooklyn. Marie herself was born in Italy, near Rimini on the Adriatic side of Italy. The family came to America when Marie was two years old. She hasn't been there since though she has cousins who live in Rome.

The newlyweds lived in Tom's apartment for a little over a year. However, those were depression times, rents were high, and on top of it all Thomas contracted pneumonia. Consequently, they moved to less expensive place on 68th Street in Brooklyn. Bell was seriously ill for a whole year out of their first two years of marriage. When later things began to look up, they moved to a nicer apartment on Nelson Avenue in the Bronx, just a few blocks from the 175th Street and the Yankee Stadium.

After his bout with pneumonia and a long illness, Thomas was given a choice by his doctor: either work on the job or write, but definitely not both. After consultation with his wife Marie, Bell chose to write. His wife consented to be the regular breadwinner of the family. From then on they lived on her earnings at Norcross. When Bell was writing, he worked alone from 9 AM to 5 PM. When Marie got home from work, dinner was ready. According to Mrs. Bell, Tom was a better cook than she.

In 1935 Bell's second novel appeared, in America under the title *The Second Prince*, in England as *Striker Godown* (after the main



of Literature
to You" was

character). It was dedicated to his wife Marie. The heroine of the novel was of Italian descent.

Beginning with *The Second Prince* Bell writes on the basis of his life experiences, about milieu, things and people he is familiar with. He chooses the realist mode of writing.

During the writing of this novel Bell was struggling to discover his identity as a man, searching for a set of values with which he would comfortable as a man and as a writer, searching for the purpose of his life, reviewing his past life, and reflecting on the life of his Slovak people in America. All this is reflected in this novel.

Striker Godown, the main protagonist of the novel, is a partial reflection of Thomas Bell as a writer searching for his identity and purpose. His life experiences parallel many of Bell's experiences. Striker Godown ends his inner search with a decision to become a serious writer, to write about people's lives and society as he experienced them, as he saw and felt them, to be a witness to his period of history. Moreover, if possible, to leave a mark on his period and to leave the world in a better shape than he found it when he was born. As we know from his partial autobiography, that was actually Thomas Bell's own decision as a writer.

Mike Stroyenik, the other protagonist of the novel, the son of a Slovak laborer in Pennsylvania, reminds us of Thomas Bell as a man, in his childhood and young adulthood.

Mike Stroyenik reminisces about the life of Slovak children in Pennsylvania towns: "Though we had been born here we were foreigners, hunkies, polacks. We lived in the First Ward, we could jabber in a language other than English, our names were funny and impossible to spell and pronounce. You can have no idea what it meant. A sensitive child lived in hell. He couldn't protect himself, he had no defense against the contempt and ridicule which was directed against him, his foreignness. As if born a cripple one was constantly taunted with it, made fun of."

And what about the lot of adult Slovak immigrants? Here are Mike Stroyenik's words: "They got my father, they got my mother, they got my wife. Poverty and over-work spell tuberculosis and death. What can it mean to you when I say my mother worked herself to death to keep her children alive? . . . I saw her on her knees scrubbing floors. I saw her bent over a sewing machine until dawn. I saw her trembling with weariness when she got out of bed in the morning to go wash some one's dirty clothes. I saw her need rest and milk and eggs and the stores full of them and her dying because she hadn't money to buy them. I saw it with these eyes, day after day."

In this book there are clear indications that Thomas Bell was becoming a fine realist novelist.

All Brid

locale is the
a half years
place during
gonists are P

It is a r
and women,
lovemaking,
hardships of
the first year
also the hap
married, are
needs and ye
come. All th
in such an e
ordinary peo
went into six

As a resu
with MGM an
Beverly Hills
life there was
tract with MC
job was to w
This repelled
responsible fo
books. So he

The novel
In 1946 RKO
Forward starr
De Camp, He
produced by
was done by H
screenplay wa
the motion p
film's title.

In 1940 B
of the findings
Consequently,
considerably r
his fourth nov

After his
father-in-law a
affection betw

e heroine of the
the basis of his
amiliar with. He

gling to discover
s with which he
g for the purpose
life of his Slovak

ovel, is a partial
his identity and
periences. Striker.
become a serious
experienced them,
period of history.
and to leave the
was born. As we
lly Thomas Bell's

vel, the son of a
as Bell as a man,

lovak children in
e were foreigners,
could jabber in a
and impossible to
eant. A sensitive
e had no defense
l against him, his
taunted with it,

grants? Here are
t my mother, they
ilosis and death.
d herself to death
s scrubbing floors.
saw her trembling
rning to go wash
nilk and eggs and
ln't money to buy

Thomas Bell was

All Brides Are Beautiful, Bell's third novel, appeared in 1936. The locale is the Bronx in New York where The Bells lived. Their two and a half years of marriage furnished the basic material. The story takes place during the Great Depression of the thirties. The main protagonists are Peter Cummings and Susan Allis, the newlyweds.

It is a realistic, mature, fine novel about lower middle-class men and women, about their everyday lives — eating, working, sleeping, lovemaking, going to the movies, seeing their relatives, etc. About the hardships of the period, unemployment, life near poverty. However, the first years of marriage give the author the opportunity to describe also the happy and gay moments, when two people in love, recently married, are discovering their true selves, adjusting to each other's needs and yearnings, building a solid relationship to last for years to come. All this is presented with such freshness and attention to detail, in such an easy and unassuming way and with such understanding of ordinary people, that the book appealed to vast masses of people. It went into six printings and became a big success.

As a result of the success of the book, Thomas Bell got a contract with MGM and went with his wife Marie to Hollywood. They lived in Beverly Hills and spent there almost a year (1936-1937). Although their life there was pleasant and full of fun, Thomas did not renew his contract with MGM. He did not like the whole set-up of work there. His job was to write dialogues for films. It was like conveyor-type work. This repelled Tom. He preferred to work in such a way that he was responsible for the whole work. And he was full of ideas for more books. So he decided to return to New York.

The novel *All Brides Are Beautiful* brought another success to Bell. In 1946 RKO made it into a motion picture entitled *From This Day Forward* starring Joan Fontaine and featuring Mark Stevens, Rosemary De Camp, Henry Morgan, Wally Brown and Arline Judge. It was produced by William Pereira, directed by John Berry, and screenplay was done by Hugo Butler. However, Mrs. Marie Bell contends that the screenplay was actually done by Garson Kanin. Simultaneously with the motion picture the novel appeared in a new edition under the film's title.

In 1940 Bell became ill again, underwent surgery, and as a result of the findings yielded by the operation he was placed on a strict diet. Consequently, from this moment on his freedom of movement was considerably restricted. While in the hospital, he read galley proofs of his fourth novel.

After his release from hospital Bell went to recuperate with his father-in-law and mother-in-law in Jersey. There was a strong tie of affection between Bell and his in-laws. They loved him as their son.

Thomas thus received love which he failed to get in his youth from his family. This affectionate relationship lasted until the end.

Out of This Furnace, Bell's fourth novel, is his masterpiece. It is the saga of three generations of Slovak immigrant workers in the steel mill towns of Pennsylvania from ca. 1880 until almost the beginning of World War II. Onto this larger canvas Bell painted the story of his family. George Kracha is his grandfather. Mike Dobrejčak is his father, Mary his mother. Dobie to some extent is Bell himself.

The story takes place in the period of rapid industrialization in America. Bell describes lives and conditions of that period as Slovak immigrants experienced them and as he himself witnessed them. It was a life of hard work, long working hours, low wages, grinding poverty, violent and bloody strikes, firings, evictions from company houses, shooting, jailing, discrimination, contempt, humiliation. A fierce struggle for a better and fuller life against the most overwhelming of odds. The novel was written in a realistic mode, it has depth and vibrancy. Many scenes are portrayed with a stark, impressionistic vividness, as if written for a film. The protagonists of each generation set themselves certain goals which prove to be unattainable. And yet they make a slow movement forward. There is some progress. Bell believed in progress. He was convinced that the Slovaks in America will live to see brighter days.

In an interview published in *L'udový denník* (Pittsburgh, October 12, 1946) Bell explained why he wrote *Out of This Furnace* thusly. "My conscience dictated me to write it. I saw a people brought here by steel magnates from the old country and then exploited, ridiculed and oppressed. None of my books contains such a hunk of my life as this book about my people. The life of a Slovak boy in Braddock 30-40 years ago was a bitter one. As a small boy I could not understand why I should be ashamed of the fact that I was Slovak. While Irish and German kids could boast of the history of their ancestors, I as a Slovak boy did not know anything about the history of my people. I made up my mind to write a history of the Braddock Slovaks in order to tell the world that the Slovaks with their blood and lives helped to build America, that the steel they produced changed the United States into the most industrialized nation in the world. My book *Out of This Furnace* is an answer to all those unthinking people who look down on the Slovaks. It was also my aim to strengthen in the Slovaks their pride of their origin. Finally, I wanted to make sure that the hardships my grandfather, my father, my mother and my brother, sisters and other relatives lived through would never be forgotten. I am very proud of Czechoslovakia and one of my aims is to visit that country, to see the Šariš County from where my ancestors came some 70 years ago."

In 1942 Bell was

In 1943 Bell's four
The Saturday Review
of the book by Ben R
cover. Understandab
Bell's talents admirab

Till I Come Back
of Miley Brooks and
On the surface, it is
sations on such occa
was dramatized and
Jed Harris under the
It was a bad adaptati
of the book was quit
and by Bell himself.

The substance of
weekend stay in Bro
tries to find out wha
the purpose of their
which he finds wantin
countryside to New
respond with his ide
that such a world mu
and Sally. However
He knows it won't b
take the easy way o

"Because the fac
don't want to. You
Bridges. Or you can
like Dave. Or you c
your way, like Eddi
going on, like Nick.
you don't take an o
of guy you are ... y
that something make

Bell's fifth novel
work, skillfully draw
portrayal of conditio
Panek, of Slovak de
in a large bank in N
of firm convictions a
to organize the empl
during which Joel lea
his neighborhood, b

In 1942 Bell was very seriously ill again. He almost didn't make it.

In 1943 Bell's fourth novel *Till I Come Back to You* was published. *The Saturday Review of Literature* (June 26, 1943) published a review of the book by Ben Ray Redman and a photograph of Bell on its front cover. Understandably, Bell was very pleased. The reviewer found Bell's talents admirable, his lapses few.

Till I Come Back to You is a slender volume. It describes a weekend of Miley Brooks and his girlfriend Sally with a family in Brooklyn. On the surface, it is a love story and usual happenings and conversations on such occasions. Based on this surface aspect, the novel was dramatized and produced on Broadway by Nunnally Johnson and Jed Harris under the title *The World's Full of Girls* in December 1943. It was a bad adaptation. They played it for laughs, while the substance of the book was quite serious. The play was badly received by critics and by Bell himself. It had only 9 performances.

The substance of the book lies on a deeper level. Miley during his weekend stay in Brooklyn engages everyone present in conversation, tries to find out what makes them tick, what are their views, what is the purpose of their lives. He confronts his value-system with theirs which he finds wanting, shallow, superficial. He himself came from the countryside to New York looking a better world which would correspond with his ideas. He didn't find it. He came to the conclusion that such a world must be first built, by "common people" like himself and Sally. However, first they must fight for their right to build it. He knows it won't be easy. People tire of fighting, become apathetic, take the easy way out.

"Because the fact is, you don't have to do any fighting at all if you don't want to. You can let it lick you, the way it's licked Old Man Bridges. Or you can get enough of what you want to keep you satisfied, like Dave. Or you can sell out for any favors that might get thrown your way, like Eddie. Or you can never even realize there's a fight going on, like Nick. You have a choice. And I guess the only reason you don't take an out like that is because you happen to be the kind of guy you are... you can't live with your eyes closed, or pretending that something makes sense when it doesn't."

Bell's fifth novel, *There Comes a Time*, appeared in 1946. A mature work, skillfully drawn characters, entertaining conversation, realistic portrayal of conditions. The main protagonists are Joel Pane (originally Panek, of Slovak descent) and his wife Nancy. Joel is a bank teller in a large bank in New York. The gist of the story is that Joel, a man of firm convictions and principles, prodded by his wife Nancy, decides to organize the employes of the bank in a union. A big struggle ensues during which Joel learns a lot about human nature, his fellow employes, his neighborhood, but also about the socio-economic structure of his

country. He learns to care about the conditions in the whole country and decides to take part in shaping its future.

During World War II Bell started publishing short stories, almost all of them in women's magazines, here and in England (*McCall's*, *Colliers*, *Woman's Day*, etc.). His most serious and best short story "The Man Who Made Good in America" appeared in the literary quarterly *Mainstream* in 1947.

Approximately in 1946 Bell suffered a mental block which prevented him from doing any serious writing. From now on he publishes only one or two short stories a year. He underwent psychoanalysis for about three years, but his understanding and loving wife Marie probably was of more help to him.

In November 1955 Bell and his wife moved to Santa Cruz in California where they opened a small stationery, gift and office supply store. Bell liked this work. He liked people, he liked to please them, satisfy them. His store gave him the opportunity to do that, in a way.

In 1958 Bell was told by his doctor that he had cancer of liver and pancreas and that he had only several months to live. Doctors tried everything known to science at the time to save his life. But his tumor was inoperable and drugs and other types of treatment did not seem to help. Bell's wife Marie did not give up hope until the very end. Bell himself, however, after a while became resigned to the inevitability of the approaching death. And he decided to write a journal of his last months alive. Eventually it was published under the title *In the Midst of Life* by Atheneum in New York in 1961.

This journal or partial autobiography is an extraordinary document. Bell describes in it the gradual worsening of his illness, his feelings and attitude towards the approaching death, reminiscences of various periods of his life, of his life with Marie, his worries about Marie's future when he is gone, his resolution to face death courageously as a man and to die with dignity and integrity, etc.

An important part of the book are his views on various subject matters which could be called his intellectual legacy. Here's a sample.

Bell ascribes great importance to artists and intellectuals in society. Without them, he says, there would be but a mindless chaos, a blind and purposeless energy. The things of the mind are superior to the things of the body, intrinsically and forever superior.

Bell defines an intellectual as a man who is, so to speak, three parts mind and one part body. About the exact reverse of ordinary people. It isn't his education that makes a man an intellectual. It is the fact that he lives largely by and through his mind.

According to Bell, the following is the iron law of survival as an artist: You must never hire out as an artist, or permit anyone to tell you what to make with the tools of your trade. Never.

He also felt that white men were digging their own graves, and that he would have to dig his own ditch, to live off his own sweat and blood. He was a self-reliant, hard-working, hired writer, writing to order.

Bell strongly condemned the conformity of the intellectuals.

Until comparatively recently, he was not well known among Slovak Americans. His book *Our Ancestry and his book *Our Slovaks in America in the Twentieth Century* — were afraid of this fact probably is "The Americans" — were afraid of them. They mistook conformism for patriotism. Two editions for our fighting front. *Come Back to You*, by Tom Bell, for re-publication.*

Thomas Bell was an American. He considered himself an American. He was of the "angry decade." He was a writer and views, called shots at the establishment. He considered the ills of the world. He favored means of finding solutions. One hand was the unionization of workers. Classified as "proletarian literature." *Decade* (1947) includes Tom Bell's political views of workers and anti-fascism.

It might surprise some people to know that he was known in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Slovaks in America. His book *There Comes a Time*, a story appeared in *Slovak Review*. Furthermore, Dušan Široký wrote novels for Slovak Television. He adapted and offered Bell would be pleased, that his work is being published also through the medium of television.

Thomas Bell died with integrity. He was a patriot and good man. His life was extraordinary. Same could be said as ideal a marriage as

He also felt that when a writer is poor it is better for him to dig ditches, to live off his wife, beg, steal or starve, rather than become a hired writer, writing to order.

Bell strongly condemns "commercialized artists" and "hired intellectuals."

Until comparatively recently, Thomas Bell's name was not widely known among Slovak Americans, although he did not hide his Slovak ancestry and his book *Out of This Furnace* was actually a history of the Slovaks in America in the form of fiction. The only valid explanation of this fact probably is that Slovaks in America — the "nouveau Americans" — were afraid to claim Bell as one of their own blood. They mistook conformism for loyalty to America. Thomas Bell was an American patriot. Two of his novels appeared in the Armed Services Editions for our fighting men during World War II and his novel *Till I Come Back to You*, by today's standards, is too patriotic to be considered for re-publication.

Thomas Bell was an individualist, a non-conformist, a gadfly. He considered himself an artist and an intellectual, a writer of the thirties, of the "angry decade." He thought for himself, formed his own opinions and views, called shots as he saw them. He sharply criticized what he considered the ills of the society and suggested remedies. His most favored means of finding and affecting solutions of the problems at hand was the unionization of manual and clerical workers. He was classified as "proletarian" writer. Leo Gurko in his book *The Angry Decade* (1947) includes Thomas Bell among such proletarian writers as Steinbeck, Di Donato, Dahlberg and Maltz. But he also states that political views of workers in Bell's novels end with trade-unionism and anti-fascism.

It might surprise some people that Bell is better and more widely known in Slovakia, the native land of Bell's ancestors, than by the Slovaks in America. His two best novels, *Out of This Furnace* and *There Comes a Time*, appeared there in Slovak translations. Bell's life story appeared in *Slovensko*, the periodical of Matica Slovenská. Furthermore, Dušan Široký is preparing an adaptation of one of Bell's novels for Slovak Television. They requested permission to do the adaptation and offered payment for each showing of the film. Thomas Bell would be pleased, if there were a way for him to know about it, that his work is being perpetuated not only through his books, but also through the medium of TV film in the land of his ancestors.

Thomas Bell died on January 17, 1961 with courage, dignity and integrity. He was a perceptive, sensitive, compassionate, considerate, and good man. His love for his wife Marie was nothing short of extraordinary. Same could be said about Marie's love for Tom. It was as ideal a marriage as could be. And also unconventional — the wife

being the regular breadwinner. Bell's attitude towards women is also worth mentioning. He was not a male chauvinist, women in his novels are not men's toys but normal human beings. In this area Bell was thus ahead of his time, though not a women's liberationist in today's sense of the word. In his books Bell portrayed life realistically, honestly, truthfully as he saw it. He pointed out the flaws and shortcomings in the fabric of American society in order to move people to work and fight for their elimination. He did believe that America can be a better place to live in for his Slovak people as well as for everyone else. He wrote that he wanted to make at least a small contribution towards that end. We do not doubt that he did.

Books:

- 1 - *The Breed of Love*
New York: Robert Appleton
Published in English
(London: Eyre)
- 2 - *The Second Priority*
New York: G. P. Putnam
Published in English
(London: Eyre)
- 3 - *All Brides Are Beautiful*
Boston: Little, Brown
New edition of the novel
the film's title *All Brides Are Beautiful*
(New York: Grosset
Published also in English
during World War II
- 4 - *Out of This Fur*
Boston: Little, Brown
Second edition
New York: Libbey

Published in Slovak
Dva sveity. Román
Translated by J. ...
Bratislava: Obr

Published in Yugoslav
Dalje od pakla.
Translated by M ...
Beograd: Izdava
- 5 - *Till I Come Back*
Boston: Little, Brown
Published in English
London: Jarrold
Published also in English
during World War II

appetite let loose in a
vent in his books. He
, Keats, Dumas, Proust,
as Huxley, James Joyce,
ned to appreciate and
: names and works of
: rlioz, Bruckner, Haydn
record collection. And
riminating music lover.

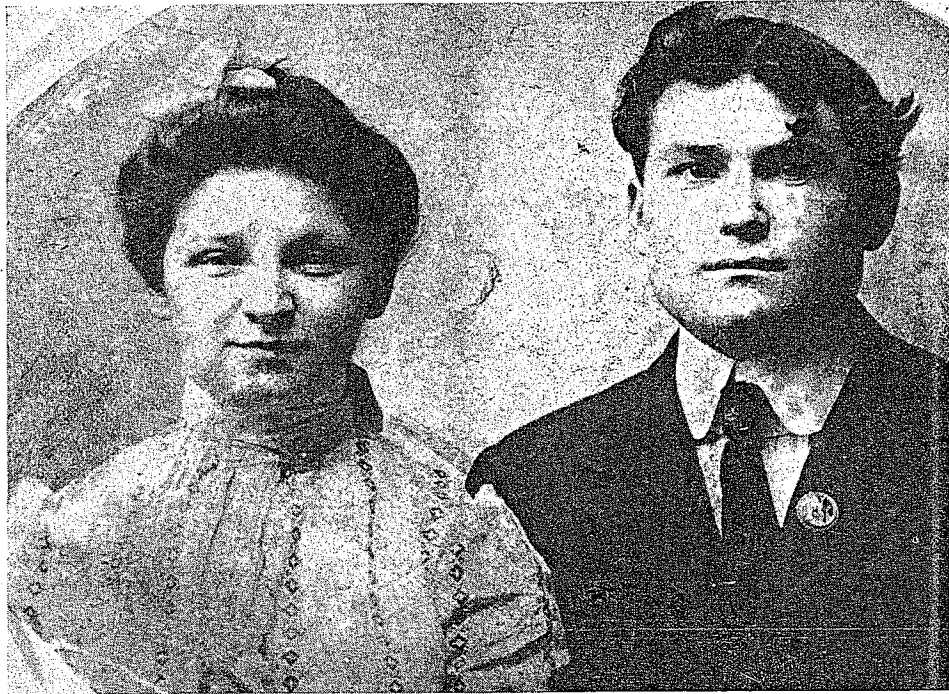
composers.
his opinion, it was the
un. Works by Meister
us, Sartre, and other
incomprehensible and
7, muddled, painful in
levance to the life and
pear that Bell rejected

ork with \$15.00 in his
ob. His first job was
op. Then he shipped
eighter. Between the
he was through with
ve with a family, the
inally he got a job as
bookstore (old and rare
Avenue. When he felt
1261 Merriam Avenue
sters to live with him

he was 14 enabled
ot, the details of their
onditions. A sensitive
ty, he listened to the
actively sought infor-
their specific work in
example is Mr. Frank
t, Pa., as he informed
that Thomas already
as gathering informa-
apparently planning to
l, as his works amply
the steel mills have



THOMAS BELL, at the age of 43. (New York City 1946)



MARIA KRAČŮN MICHAEL BELEJČÁK
Thomas Bell's parents on their wedding day



FRANCESCO BENEDETTI (33)
Thomas Bell's father-in-law



GIOVANNA BENEDETTI (28)
Thomas Bell's mother-in-law



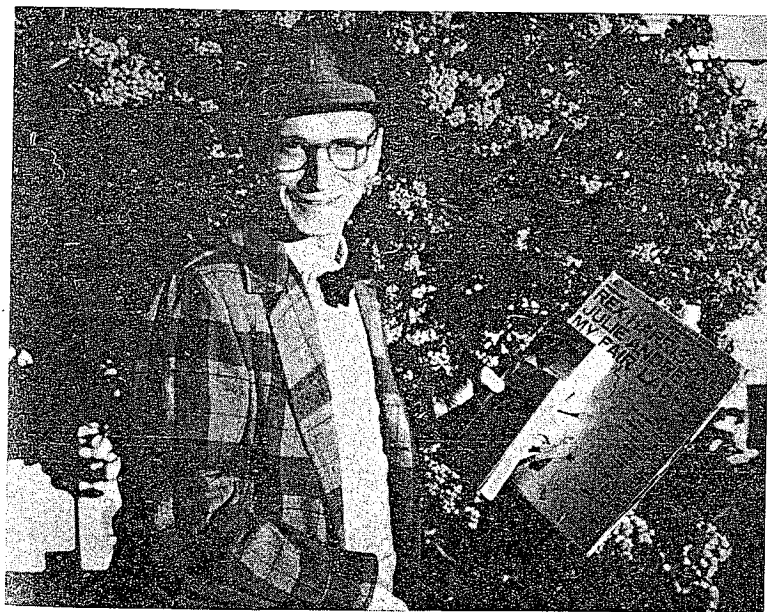
Thoma



Thoma:
In the

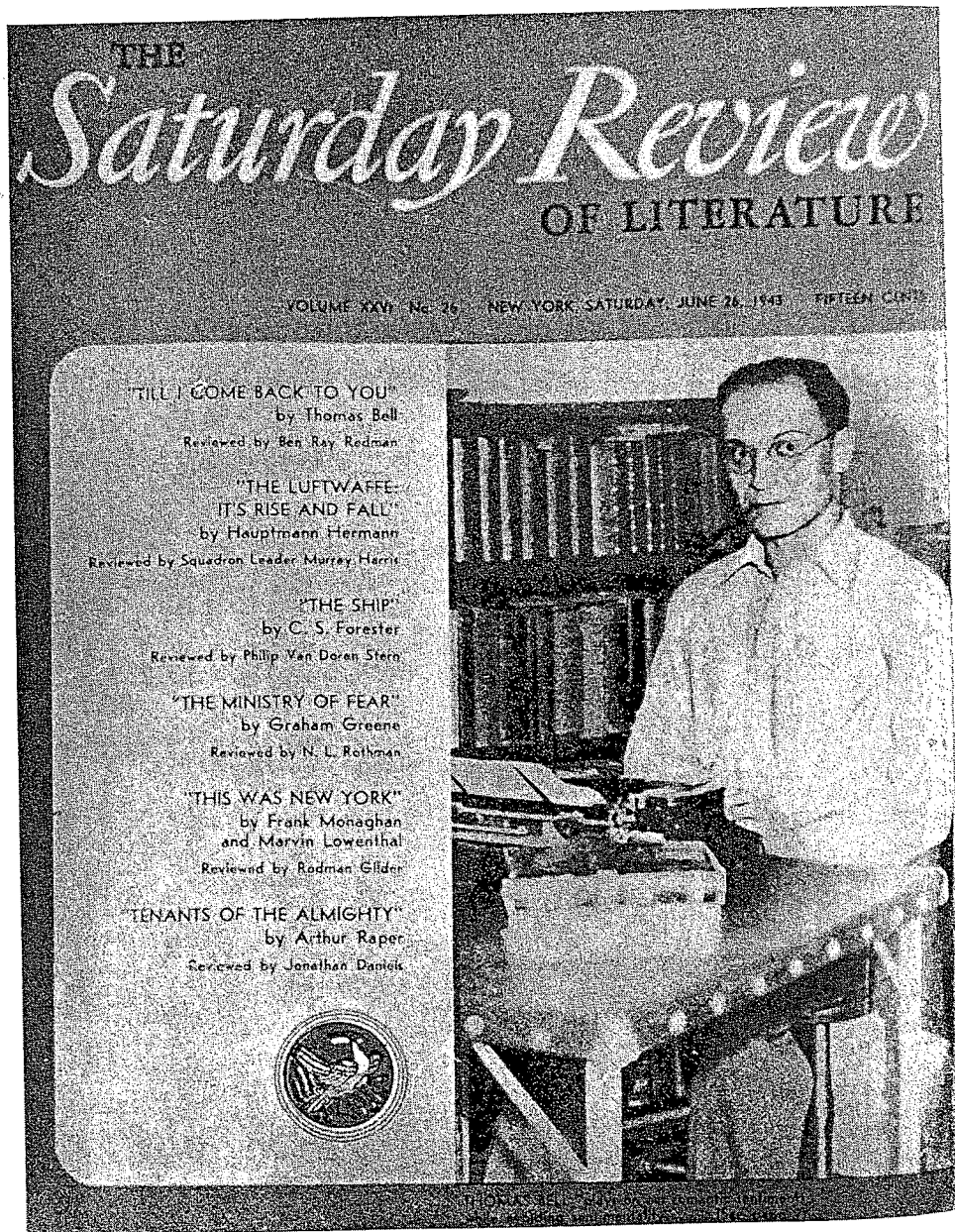


Thomas Bell and his wife Marie moving to California
(New York, Kennedy Airport, 1955)



Thomas Bell's picture used on the back cover of the book
In the Midst of Life. Photo taken in 1960 when Bell was
emaciated by his illness.

TI (28)
er-in-law



Thomas Bell's picture on the front cover of *The Saturday Review of Literature* (1943, No. 26). In this issue Bell's novel "Till I come back to You" was reviewed by Ben Ray Redman.

In his spare time he wrote his first novel *The Second Princess*. Pauline, Evelyn, and I read it; it appeared under the name of the American title, but it was not a novel, nor a first novel, nor a first novel written under a pseudonym. It was a roman à clef, a knowledge about the writer. His attitude toward language and feel for language.

In 1931 Bell published *The Three Sirens*. The book was published in April of 1931. His sister Evelyn and her fellow girls, her fellow girls, her fellow girls, Tom and Pauline, a year later, on the Italian immigration ship in Brooklyn, the Adriatic side, was two years old who live in Rome.

The newlyweds. However, those of it all Thomas Bell's less expensive life for a whole year things began to Avenue in the Yankee Stadium.

After his book a choice by his not both. After His wife consent then on they lived he worked alone work, dinner work cook than she.

In 1935 Bell published *The Second Princess*.