

John Dos Passos

NEWSLETTER

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AN ELEGY FOR THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

by

Melvin Landsberg

Ninety thousand people filed past the body of the American Unknown Soldier as it lay in the Rotunda of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. on November 10, 1921. First, in Europe, a soldier's body had been chosen from each of the four permanent U.S. cemeteries there, taken to Châlons-sur Marne, and brought to a small room in the City Hall. An American sergeant then went into that room and placed flowers on one of the four coffins.¹ Amid ceremony, that coffin was then brought to the United States on the *Olympia*, flagship of the late Admiral George Dewey.

At 8:30 A.M. on November 11 the coffin was carried to a caisson in the Capitol Plaza. Huge crowds watched as a military funeral procession accompanying the body passed down Capitol Hill and Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House. Immediately behind the caisson marched President Harding, with General Pershing at his left. Behind these two marched Vice President Coolidge and a ranking admiral, then Chief Justice Taft and another ranking admiral. Following them came the associate justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, more military, governors of the States, members of the Cabinet, the U.S. Senators, eight abreast, then the U.S. House of Representatives. Former President Woodrow Wilson, who had suffered a stroke, was unable to march. He rode with his wife in an open victoria, wearing a poppy on the left lapel of his coat.

Behind the military and the civilian notables from the government, representatives of many organizations—from the Grand Army of the Republic, the Confederate Veterans, the Colored Veterans of the War, the Red Cross through the Rotary Club and the Georgetown Cadets—marched in columns. When the funeral procession, after going seventeen blocks, passed the White House, the enfeebled Wilson returned to his residence, and the U.S. government officials left to ride by automobile to Arlington National Cemetery. But the military escorting the caisson proceeded on foot to the cemetery, as did thousands of members of the patriotic societies.

Admission to the amphitheater at Arlington was by ticket only. Perhaps five thousand people were admitted, and tens of thousands of others gathered outside. From the main entrance to the amphitheater, body bearers carried the coffin to the stage and placed it on a catafalque there. Seated on the stage were many notables, including Marshal Foch of France, General Jacques of Belgium, General Diaz of Italy, Arthur James Balfour of Great Britain, Premier Briand of France, and U.S. Secretary of State Hughes. Still other notables occupied boxes. Three sections of the amphitheater directly fronting the stage were filled with U.S. Senators and Representatives and their families, and other sections held wounded soldiers, Congressional Medal of Honor winners, and Gold Star mothers.²

We turn to the ceremonies at the amphitheater, relying, as above, on the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* for our material. The *Post*, the only newspaper that Dos Passos mentions in his piece on the Unknown Soldier, "The Body of an American," had on its front page a long feature article by George Rothwell Brown, a political journalist, who wrote of the Soldier's being honored by "the mighty country for which he gladly gave his life." When Harding came up to the flag-covered casket, Brown wrote, a noteworthy event transpired: "A light, thin haze had hung in the sky nearly all morning, but now, as the President began speaking, the sun for the first time scattered away the clouds and fell full upon his face, softly illuminating it, a very happy omen, it seemed."³

The *Washington Post*'s lead article made similar use of the sun: "Just as the cortege reached the tomb," it reported, "the clouds that had hung low all day, parted and the feeble rays of an autumnal sun filtered down on the casket. It was as if the heavens had opened to receive the spirit of the dead hero."⁴

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Reading “The Body of an American” in *Nineteen-nineteen* (1932) one is fascinated by Dos Passos’ effrontery in satirizing the august commemoration of November 11, 1921. Actually, he was in Baghdad on November 11, having sailed for Europe in March and, after a stay there, gone on a writer’s journey to Turkey, the Soviet Caucasus, Iran, and some of the Arab lands.

However his novel *Three Soldiers* appeared in 1921 and was being reviewed in October of that year.⁵ Although the novel’s close antecedence to the November 11 ceremonies was coincidental, it struck a note of opposition to officially sustained versions of wartime service. In his elegy “The Body of an American” Dos Passos struck that note again but now more specifically. He placed the elegy, strategically, at the very end of *Nineteen-nineteen*, the second volume of *U.S.A.*, which deals with the war years.

“The Body of an American” is a brilliantly written modernist elegy, with some of its roots in the traditional pastoral elegy—e.g., Milton’s “Lycidas” and Shelley’s “Adonais,” in English literature. As we shall see, it fictionalizes details, and should not be read as factual history.

The work is a montage, juxtaposing and interweaving four voices:

1. An initial voice giving a slurring, perfunctory rendition of President Harding’s proclamation on bringing the body of an American back for burial in the memorial amphitheater of Arlington National Cemetery.⁶

2. The author’s narrative voice.

3. A newspaper account of the memorial service, alternating glib patriotism with pleasure in the pageantry.

4. The imagined voice of the Unknown Soldier, shortly before his death.

The voice reciting Harding’s proclamation has all the concern of a courtroom clerk asking: “Doyou solemnly swearto tell the truth the whole truth, and nothing but-thetruth?” It is Dos Passos’ introduction to what is being played out as an outpouring of national emotion.

THE JOHN DOS PASSOS NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter seeks to promote scholarship on and interest in Dos Passos’ writings and biography, and will publish short articles on these subjects. It will also publish news items, notes, letters, and queries on these and other relevant matters. Among these matters are work in progress, manuscript locations and accessions, bibliographies, and textual scholarship.

For return of manuscripts, contributors should send, along with their submissions, stamped envelopes addressed to themselves. They should address all queries and manuscripts to the editor, Melvin Landsberg, Department of English, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045-2115.

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Without transition we are in a “tarpaper morgue” in Châlons-sur-Marne, where several American soldiers endure the stench to choose a corpse. The soldier directing the operation is saying:

Make sure he ain’t a dinge, boys.

make sure he ain’t a guinea or a kike...

But, asks the author’s voice in mimicry, how can the soldiers tell? There is so little left of these dead.

Without transition again, we are reading a newspaper account of the ceremony:

The day withal was too meaningful and tragic for applause. Silence, tears, songs, and prayer, muffled drums and soft music were the instrumentalities today of national approbation.

We go on to some of Dos Passos’ biography of the Unknown Soldier. The narrating voice is tough and clipped, and his account is made up entirely of specifics, in contrast to the syrupy abstractions found in the newspaper account: “meaningful,” “tragic,” “national approbation.”

The narrator’s list of the Soldier’s possible identities may remind us of sections 15 and 16 of Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself.”⁷ It is interrupted by the newspaper account:

though this was a time of mourning, such an assemblage necessarily has about it a touch of color. In the boxes are seen the court uniforms of foreign diplomats, the gold braid of our own and foreign fleets and armies, the black of the conventional mourning dress of American statesmen, the varicolored furs and outdoor wrappings of mothers and sisters come to mourn...

The list of the Soldier’s possible identities then is taken up again, and then again followed by the newspaper account. Then Dos Passos’ narration continues with the Unknown Soldier’s life:

Naked he went into the army;

they weighed you, measured you...charted your urine and your intelligence...

In the same clipped language the narrator proceeds to recount typical experiences in a U.S. soldier’s basic training and typical phrases to which the Unknown Soldier would have been subjected during his brief life. These are contrasted with the primary biological sensations of a human being. Narrator’s voice and Soldier’s voice merge as Dos Passos gives us likely and possible circumstances of the Soldier’s death. The account is interrupted three times by a refrain in the Soldier’s voice, the first instance being: “Say feller tell me how I can get back to my outfit,” and the third a frightened: “Say soldier for chrissake can’t you tell me how I can get back to my outfit?”

The Soldier’s primal animal sensations (e.g., heart pumping blood) are matched by his experiences in nature (“tiny striped snails hung on the underside of the blades”). But “the shell had his number on it,” says the narrator, using an item from the wartime bag of clichés. In Washington, D.C., mourners with their own agendas subject the remnants of the body to their rites and oratory.

I have spoken of “The Body of an American” as an elegy. But, one could ask, may we call it a poem at all? I believe so. Much of it is written in free verse, whether line by line or run together in prose paragraphs. Like Whitman, Dos Passos makes extensive use of parallelism. Dos Passos’ piece is rhythmic, except in the first paragraph, where he deliberately has discord. And at points where the still-alive Soldier speaks for himself, his lines are not only a refrain, but also one with incremental repetition.

Richard P. Adams, in an essay “Whitman’s ‘Lilacs’ and the Tradition of the Pastoral Elegy,” says: “Of seventeen devices commonly used in pastoral elegies from Bion to [Matthew] Arnold, seven appear in ‘Lilacs.’”⁸ Going through Adams’ list of all seventeen, I find that nine appear in “The Body of an American”—I use Adams’ words in listing them:

1. “The dramatic framework” (here used partially)
2. “The announcement that the speaker’s friend or alter ego is dead and is to be mourned”
3. “the funeral procession with other mourners”
4. “the eulogy of the dead man”
5. “The dead man’s biography”
6. “The account of when and how the man died”
7. “The account of the dying speech and death”
8. “The placing of flowers on the bier”
9. “The resolution of the poem in some formula of comfort or reconciliation”

Of course, some of these devices are used ironically or sardonically, for “The Body of an American” is a satirical exposé of the State’s myth, as it was expressed in the orations of government officials and in the columns of establishmentarian newspapers. From the start, Dos Passos’ method is to depict facade and reality.

We begin our illustration of this method with the announcement that the speaker’s friend or alter ego is dead and is to be mourned. But the announcement is President Harding’s proclamation, offered without thought or emotion. For the narrator, who shared in the Soldier’s experiences and might have encountered him (as the reader knows from “The Camera Eye” in *Nineteen-nineteen*), the Soldier is a military acquaintance.

Dos Passos gives us, we have said, historical fiction, not history. Never mind that only one soldier, a sergeant, chose among four coffins, not four visible bodies, at Châlons-sur-Marne.⁹ “Enie menie minie moe,” says the narrator, using a racist counting formula.

A listing of the soldier’s possible identities is interrupted by the newspaper “excerpt” on dress and color at the amphitheater.¹⁰ Following a resumption of the listing, the newspaper article again interrupts by describing and quoting President Harding as he concludes his speech. The Chief Executive is introduced by the fatuous comment: “President Harding with a reverence seemingly more significant because of his high temporal station...” (Might this be in mockery of Brown’s report of the “very happy omen”?) Harding makes the problematic assertion: “As a typical soldier of this representative democracy he

fought and died believing in the indisputable justice of his country’s cause.” Then he offers the Lord’s Prayer. For officialdom this is the elegiac resolution in a formula of comfort or reconciliation.

Dos Passos’ refutation of this formula will come with his comment on the Soldier’s death:

The blood ran into the ground, the brains oozed out of the cracked skull and were licked up by the trenchrats, the belly swelled and raised a generation of bluebottle flies...

But we have moved ahead of ourselves. After Harding’s Lord’s Prayer passage, the narrator resumes his account of the Soldier’s life. He describes the young man going into the army, where recruits are processed as if on a conveyer belt. The President’s eulogy of the dead man is mocked by the depiction of the processing of the man’s body and mind. Never do we find the Soldier genuinely thinking.

Though we do not have a procession of mourners from the Capitol—for artistic purposes, Dos Passos foreshortened events—mourners we have aplenty towards the end of Dos Passos’ piece: Harding and “the diplomats and the generals and the admirals and the brasshats and the politicians and the handsomely dressed ladies out of the society column of the *Washington Post*.”

We conclude with what in the traditional pastoral elegy is the “placing of flowers on the bier.” But we have, instead, mostly the bestowal of medals. In reality the medals were pinned or placed on the flag draping the Unknown Soldier’s coffin. Dos Passos renders this bitterly and unforgettably with “Where his chest ought to have been they pinned...”

After the coffin was put into the sarcophagus, Hamilton Fish, Jr. (a conservative congressman and prominent anti-Communist in 1932) placed a wreath on the tomb. A U.S. war mother, who had lost a son, and a British war mother, who had lost three sons, also placed wreaths there. The Chief of the Crow nation, Plenty Coops, then placed his feathered war bonnet and his coup stick on the sarcophagus.

Dos Passos describes this selectively and sardonically in the final lines of the elegy, and combines medals, wreaths, and Indian wampum in the pinning. “All the Washingtonians brought flowers,” he says in the penultimate line.

A final section, of only a single line, concludes the elegy: “Woodrow Wilson brought a bouquet of poppies.” We have seen that Wilson, incapacitated by a stroke, returned home when the funeral procession reached the White House. But Dos Passos did not wish to allow any sympathy for “Meester Veelson,”¹¹ whom he saw as betraying his anti-interventionist followers and leading the United States into war. In the elegy, Wilson makes an appearance at Arlington Cemetery, and the poppy on his lapel has turned into a bouquet.

Bitterness is absent in Whitman’s “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d,” a greater American elegy, which in its mood of national reconciliation provides a contrast to

“The Body of an American.” But bitterness is an element in “Lycidas” and “Adonais.” Milton in honoring Edward King, refers to English bishops as “blind mouths.” Shelley thus addresses the anonymous reviewer whom he represents as having killed John Keats: “Thou noteless blot on a remembered name.” Dos Passos seems even more bitter than Milton and Shelley, and his bitterness is expressed in the very strategy of the elegy—he exposes the chief mourners as the veritable killers.

Notes

1. *New York Times*, October 24, 1921, p. 5.
 2. On the funeral procession from the Capitol and on the ceremonies at Arlington, see *New York Times*, November 12, 1921, pp. 1-2; *Washington Post*, November 11, 1921, p. 2; November 12, 1921, pp. 1, 4, 6.
 3. George Rothwell Brown in *Washington Post*, November 12, 1921, pp. 1, 6.
 4. *Washington Post*, November 12, 1921, p. 4.
 5. Melvin Landsberg, *Dos Passos' Path to "U.S.A."* Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, pp. 67-77.
 6. For the text of Harding's proclamation, see *New York Times*, October 1, 1921, p. 15.
 7. In the ninth edition (1891-92) of *Leaves of Grass*.
 8. Richard P. Adams, “Whitman's ‘Lilacs’ and the Tradition of the Pastoral Elegy,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 72 (June, 1957), 479-487. All the quotations are on p. 479.
 9. For the selection of the body, see *New York Times*, October 24, 1921, pp. 1, 5.
 10. I dutifully searched the *Washington Post* (the only newspaper mentioned in Dos Passos' piece) and the *New York Times* to see whether the excerpts might have come from one of their columns, and ascertained that they had not. I might have searched further; but in view of the fictions in Dos Passos' piece, of his gift for parody, and of the excerpts not being credited, I take them to be parodic fiction.
- Some of the actual newspaper reporting in the *Times* and *Post* was so far from communicating grief that Dos Passos in his parody may have thought it best to subdue the resulting irony. Consider the subject of clothing. The *New York Times*, in paragraph after paragraph listing notables in the amphitheater, described their dress and decorations in detail (November 12, 1921, p. 2). The *Washington Post* offered a society-type article, on over two thousand women marching to Arlington, with a subhead declaring: “Salvation Lassies Lend Picturesque Color.” Contrasting the marchers with some other women, the *Post* reported: “Those who stepped out of limousines and occupied reserved seats held for notables and representatives of organizations within the amphitheater would have honored any fashion parade ever held on Connecticut Avenue”—and it went on to give details (November 12, 1921, p. 4).
11. Title of Dos Passos' biography of Wilson in *Nineteen-nineteen*. On Dos Passos' view of Wilson, see also Landsberg, *Dos Passos' Path to U.S.A.*, pp. 194-195.

BROADCASTING WITH *U.S.A.* — A REMINISCENCE

by

Calder M. Pickett

John Dos Passos came into my life sometime in the early 1950s, a time when I seemed to be trying to consume the total works of a good many American writers. No college professor had pointed my way to him, that I know. It was probably a friend, like the one who got me to reading Thomas Wolfe, or the one who insisted that I give up my silly notion that *Moby Dick* wasn't worth my time.

Anyway, I read all the books, and I especially was taken with *U.S.A.* A few years later, when Dos Passos seemed to be in league with Barry Goldwater and the John Birch Society, I still stayed with him, and it was then that I was teaching an undergraduate seminar in American Studies and required *U.S.A.*

I required *U.S.A.*, I think, out of my own politics and my disgust with what was happening in American politics. I blatantly admit that I wanted my students to read *U.S.A.* because it might be a reaction to all the nonsense accompanying the academic, as well as non-academic, opposition to the new left. I was not an admirer of the new left, but I did feel there was more merit in the *U.S.A.* point of view than there was in much that was passing for rightwing philosophy in the 1960s.

What attracted me to *U.S.A.* was not the fictional narrative so much as the biographical portraits, “Newsreel” and “The Camera Eye.” And it also seemed important that my students get to know the book (and possibly the writer) that I believed to be the best of the twentieth century.

In any case, my first real experience with using *U.S.A.* was in the classroom. We read the book together, and we discussed it, and we got into the biographies and argued some. They're the main thing I want to talk about in this essay of memory. About that time, as I remember, I saw a dramatic production of *U.S.A.* (mighty limited, of course) in the Experimental Theater at the University of Kansas. Some of this is vague to me, but I'm pretty sure the Isadora Duncan sketch was in it, and possibly the Rudolph Valentino.

Now, to the place where I have used *U.S.A.* most extensively, and that place is “The American Past,” the weekly radio hour I have done at KANU-FM on the KU campus since the autumn of 1973. I dug back into my files, pulling out some of the old shows, and there I realized that the first time I used *U.S.A.* on the radio program was January 30, 1974. I should tell you briefly what my “American Past” hour is like: an attempt to synthesize, I realized after a few years, the American experience through various documents and artifacts; I have done programs on every year of the twentieth century (except for two, obviously), all the consequential presidents, and some of the inconsequential, many of the more important American

writers (Mark Twain, Melville, Hawthorne, Henry James, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Cather, Wharton, and obviously Dos Passos, plus others), many popular entertainers, various time periods (I almost consumed the years of the American Revolution during our Bicentennial), the Civil War, the westward movement, World War I and World War II, the twenties, the depression years, Vietnam, and such other matters as the IWW, Social Darwinism, heroes and heroines, success, hoaxes.

Back to the first time I used *U.S.A.* on the air. It was for the second of two hours I called “Some Glimpses of the Jazz Age.” In my History of American Journalism class, when I lectured on the 1920s, I had been reading aloud the entire “Adagio Dancer” portrait of Rudolph Valentino as a manifestation of pop culture in that somewhat glamorous (to the students) decade. So I used the Valentino sketch on a show that talked about the movies and the theater, Sinclair Lewis’ *Main Street*, a bit from Fitzgerald, the voices of Al Jolson, Rudy Vallee, Eddie Cantor, and Helen Morgan, “Tiptoe Through the Tulips,” prohibition and gangsters, Izzy and Moe, Herbert Hoover and Alfred E. Smith, the Florida real estate boom, and the 1929 stock market crash.

I used the tango, “La Cumparsita,” to accompany the depiction of Valentino. Dos Passos, with his unique punctuation, his run-together sentences, and his multiple adjectives isn’t always easy to read aloud, but after a few tries I figured how to do it. One thing that could always keep the students awake was the story of Valentino, and I have used the Valentino story at other times and in other places.

On February 20, 1975, I used *U.S.A.* again, this time on an American Past hour called “Heroes and Heroines—Mostly ‘Pop.’” Here I was attempting to understand heroism and our inclination to follow particular people, and I employed narrative and some sketches, beginning by quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson from his essay on Napoleon. This time I had Davy Crockett, Victoria Woodhull, Annie Oakley, Jim Thorpe, Van Cliburn, Amelia Earhart, Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, Frank Sinatra, John Glenn, Barbra Streisand, and John Wayne. And, from *U.S.A.*, Joe Hill.

Joe Hill had become a hero of mine ever since I read Wallace Stegner’s *The Preacher and the Slave*. I think he also was a hero because he was put to death in the Utah state prison, and Utah was my home state, and a friend of mine had done research on Joe Hill for Stegner. Hill, of course, was a Wobblie, an IWW, and he was executed for a crime he probably did not commit. The *U.S.A.* sketch of Joe Hill is a short one, but I have used it a couple of other times, I find as I dig through this stack of file folders by my side.

On May 11, 1978, I came to John Dos Passos full scale, on a program I called “Dos Passos and His Books, Especially *U.S.A.*” This was a pretty comprehensive job, for an hour, and it began with biographical material, used a bit of music to provide a break from my voice and that of a woman who read for me, and I got into the books. *Three Soldiers*, to begin with, and then *Manhattan Transfer*,

which used some of the techniques that would be used in *U.S.A.*, and then *U.S.A.* Which biographies? Well, there was “The Boy Orator of the Platte,” about a politician who interests me though I don’t admire him much, William Jennings Bryan, and then John Reed. “Newsreel.” “Camera Eye.” And *The Adventures of a Young Man, Number One, The Grand Design*, and *Midcentury*. This was my conclusion to the hour:

My view is that John Dos Passos declined as a writer at the same time that his politics seemed to change; *Midcentury* and the other later books are rather dull, and the zest found in *U.S.A.*, certainly, is not in them. I also think that one succeeds more with academia and with popular literary criticism if he is somewhere over there on the left of the ideological spectrum. Dos Passos was like many people, especially many in recent years, who came to see that there were as many dogmas within liberalism and radicalism as within the conservatism and reaction they themselves had long condemned. What is important, more than all of this, I think, is that here is a writer always deserving of study, that he is always there for us to recapture, that those who scorn him because of his unpopular political positions should set such irrelevant matters aside and go back and read—maybe go back and discover for the first time—the excitement of some of the most remarkable writing American literature has offered us.

Many years later I got to Dos Passos again in a long “American Past” series on our writers. But I find that I leaned on him many other time. On October 4, 1979, I offered “What Mr. Edison Wrought.” This was what I thought was a pretty good picture of Thomas A. Edison: history, biography, a couple of examples of his voice, some early recordings he made possible, and that lengthy biography in *U.S.A.* called “The Electrical Wizard.” I don’t think Dos Passos much liked Edison, a man who was a hero of my boyhood, but his portrait was a good one:

Thomas A. Edison at eighty-two worked sixteen hours a day; he never worried about mathematics or the social system or generalized philosophical concepts; in collaboration with Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone who never worried about mathematics or the social system or generalized philosophical concepts; he worked sixteen hours a day trying to find a substitute for rubber; whenever he read about anything he tried it out; whenever he got a hunch he went to the laboratory and tried it out.

(You’ll note that I avoided the Dos Passos typographical arrangement.)

On July 7, 1996, I offered “Henry Ford and the Horseless Carriage,” and I admit that in using *U.S.A.* I

consumed a good chunk of the hour. Ford was not one of my heroes, nor was he one of Dos Passos'. But here I had an opportunity to use some delightful music, "There's Nothing Like a Model T," from *High Button Shoes*, the old standard, "He'd Have to Get Under," "Henry's Made a Lady out of Lizzie," and several examples of the Ford voice. An admirer of Henry Ford wouldn't care for the Dos Passos sketch, "Tin Lizzie," but I think Dos Passos captured Ford better than he had been captured by anyone else in such a short sketch.

I had forgotten that quite recently I had gone to *U.S.A.* again, for a show called "About the I.W.W." Here I had some authentic material from an excellent book by Joyce Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, the poetry, the speeches, the parodies that so marked the IWW movement. And there were two pieces from *U.S.A.*, once again that Joe Hill sketch, with a recording of "The Preacher and the Slave," and the powerful "Paul Bunyan," about Wesley Everest. Hill is known to many people, in part because Joan Baez sang about him at Woodstock, but I doubt that Everest could be identified by many. I think the Dos Passos sketch about Everest is one of the most powerful things I have ever read, and one of the most terrible, and it isn't easy to read aloud. I recall that when we read *U.S.A.* in the undergraduate seminar the students were especially appalled by this story.

That would be the end of this story, if it weren't for the fact that coming up fairly soon I have three separate hours titled "Portraits from Dos Passos' *U.S.A.*" Here I use entirely, except for narrative and music, the biographical sketches.

On the first I have Eugene Debs, Luther Burbank (a hero of my mother), Big Bill Haywood, William Jennings Bryan, John Reed, and William Randolph Hearst. (I had thought that I used the Dos Passos' piece on Hearst on a show about Hearst in the 1970s, but I was wrong.) This is *U.S.A.* in the earliest period, and the listener will have, in addition to the sketches, "Eight Hours," "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier," and "By the Light of the Silvery Moon."

On the second hour I'll have Bob LaFollette, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Everest again, and the Unknown Soldier. The music accompanying these will be "To a Wild Rose," "Wilson, That's All," and "Over There." And on the third my offerings (with the great help of John Dos Passos) will be Henry Ford, Randolph Bourne (surely an unknown to many listeners), Valentino, the Wright Brothers, and Frank Lloyd Wright. (And I forgot that on a show about the two brothers at Kitty Hawk I had used the *U.S.A.* sketch). The music (and I hope such details are germane to what I'm talking about) will be "S Wonderful," "Jalousie," and "Chicago." "Jalousie," obviously, will be there for Valentino.

Such shows, I hope, will be a celebration not only of the people in the biographies but of John Dos Passos. No other American writer, and that includes such great ones as Mark Twain, has been as important to me in the creation of these radio hours. Dos Passos has provided insights

that are absolutely basic to what I have been trying to do, to present an understanding of American culture through our history, our literature, our propaganda, our music, any artifacts that lend themselves to the written and spoken word.

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REMEMBERING ELIZABETH DOS PASSOS

We are saddened by the death, on March 29, of Elizabeth Dos Passos, John Dos Passos' widow. During their marriage she helped him produce his books and articles, and after his death she assisted scholars in writing about his life and work. We recall her intelligence, good humor, kindness, fairness, and integrity. Mrs. Dos Passos was eighty-nine years old.

JOHN DOS PASSOS PAPERS DONATED TO UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA LIBRARY

Late in 1997 Mrs. Elizabeth Dos Passos gave as a gift to the University of Virginia Library the extensive collection of letters that she previously had on deposit there. These have long been accessible to scholars at the library. However, as a result of the gift, the library is now re-arranging and re-describing its entire John Dos Passos collection; when it has completed this work, the collection will consist of about 158 boxes, and there will be a new guide.

There has been no change in the library's policy on making xerographic copies for research. It still offers that service, provided that a document is not too fragile for handling.

Permission to publish from the John Dos Passos' writings must come from his daughter, Lucy Dos Passos Coggin. The library can inform users of the collection of her address and conditions for permission.