

Camden Maine, Oct. 11, 1955

Mary S. Komerda  
Long Island

copy

Dear Madame,

The Librarian, Mrs Pitcher, is away on her vacation but before leaving asked me (her assistant) if I would answer your letter. Incidentally she knew I was in Vincent's class in Camden High School for three years, graduating in June 1909.

If you called here in the Library while you were in town last summer, you no doubt saw our "Millay Scrapbook" in which we have tried to gather all data we can find, but anecdotes and facts, not generally known, are something not as easily acquired, to place in a scrapbook.

I remember the first time I saw Vincent, it was in the spring of 1906 when I moved here, and one day visited the High School, since I expected to enter in the fall. Vincent was in the class room and looked up as I entered, quickly seeing my "red head" she pointed, with a smile, to two enormous red ribbon bows she was wearing, one on top of her head and <sup>one</sup> at her neck, top of her long braid, bringing these 2 red bows quite near together, <sup>really</sup> ~~making~~ quite a splash of color for her "red" hair. When she left the room

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Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Maine Historical Society

MMN # 77898

Date: October 11, 1965

Description: Letter from Corinne Sawyer to Mary Komerda describing Sawyer's high school friendship with Edna St. Vincent Millay.

she came over to speak to me, saying the  
"red bows" were in answer to a dare. You  
see, in our day, pink and red were ~~not~~ considered  
~~not~~ good harmonious ~~color~~ for the so called red  
head. It was in the days too, before "bobs"  
became the fashion and we both had very  
long hair, reaching below our waistline, ^ braids  
and ribbons were quite a neat necessity  
for us. Sometimes our braids got tied to the back of our  
chair by some mischief maker, & [?] come back  
when [?]  
Vincent was a very brilliant scholar in <sup>everything</sup> except math. I remember her translations  
in French, especially any poetry, the teacher most  
always called for her to give these as her  
translation were so beautiful and poetic. While  
the rest of us just struggled through a literal  
statement, no rhyme, no reason, no sense, ^ her  
versions were a revelation to us as we  
had missed much of the story told in verse.  
It was during these three years of High  
School that the first basket ball ^ for girls was  
organized and Vincent made one of the teams  
and at that time the game was more for  
fun than a game of skill and "public relations"  
as it appears today between schools. The two  
girls teams in our school played against each  
other as the "Spartans" and the "Athenians."  
I think it was the winter of 1908, four  
of us girls had a reading club, "Huckleberry

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Finners, so called as that was the first book<sup>s</sup> we read, we met once a week, in the evening and while one was a reader, the rest had their sewing and embroidery. Most always before the reading time was up, we were glad to have Vincent take over, because she was such an entertaining reader, she could trip smoothly over the page, the rest of us just settled back, sewing forgotten, just enjoying the pranks of Huck and Tom" via Vincent's impersonations. Oh, yes, after the reading, our hostess served refreshments, I remember Vincent as hostess one night, had packed individual lunch boxes as if we were going down the Miss. R. on the boys' raft.

Another group of us used to meet Sunday afternoons for tea, generally going for a long walk before we would meet at one of the girls' home for tea and an evening of singing.

There was one of Vincent's many talents and it was thought at one time she would choose that as her career. In fact, no doubt, it was the result of her musical ability that brought her the chance for her education at Vassar, as it was while attending a party at Whitehall Inn and during the evening she sang and played the piano, but you

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probably called at Whitehall Inn this summer  
and visited the music room which was dedicated  
to Vincent a few years ago. and while there,  
you read the accounts of the week's activities  
in her honor, also saw some of the mementoes,  
manuscripts, and pictures on display.

Am afraid I have not been able to give  
you the information you wished but you wrote  
you were able to collect quite a <sup>generous amount</sup> ~~little~~ while  
here. I can only add a little from the few  
years when Vincent was here and I knew and  
loved her very much. Our "red-heads" perhaps  
was the common bond, for I could neither  
sing, play any musical instrument, nor even write  
~~English composition & poetry~~ ~~at~~ ~~yet~~ today. It  
seems to fall my way to write you, who  
wishes for facts and stories about one of our  
most famous <sup>American</sup> girl & poet - Edna St Vincent Millay.

Am sorry I have not the talent to write you  
something to help enliven your paper. you  
are to give before the League of American Penwomen.  
The only facts I can give seem to be sort  
of first hand ones.

Anyway, I do hope you much success  
with your paper. Sincerely,

(Miss) Corinne Sawyer  
36 Harden Ave  
Camden, Maine

P.S. We have "Mine the  
Harvest" in the Camden  
Library, in fact most of Vincent's books.

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