

# Alberta Women Who Make News Include Noted Novelist, Scenarist

*This article is the ninth in a Saturday series concerning Alberta women who have made news in the west.*

*—By Naomi Lang.*

IT may be true that Mrs. Francis F. Reeve lives "very quietly" now, as she says. It is not true that she always has. It is not true that she has "no story to tell."

As the author of 24 successful novels and hundreds of popular scenarios, Mrs. Reeve has had a life as varied and interesting as any of the stories she has written under her pen name, Onoto Waimana.

Her first story, "A Poor Devil", was published in a Montreal newspaper when she was only 13 years of age, and at 17 she whisked off to Jamaica to comprise the other half of the staff of a tiny West Indian newspaper.

Returning to America, she did all sorts of jobs, beginning as a stenographer in the soap department of a packing plant, confesses that she cooked her suppers over a gas jet, and was frequently down to her last ten cents. She managed, however, to put herself through Columbia University, and gradually, although her manuscripts came back with "unflattering regularity," established herself as an author.

Many of her stories are about Japan, including the world-famous "A Japanese Nightingale", which had a sale of over 200,000, was translated into many other languages, and was produced as a play in America, England and France.

Surprisingly enough, Mrs. Reeve has never been to Japan. She was born in Montreal, one of 14 children, and her knowledge of the oriental country came to her through her father, the late Edward Eaton, son of the Squire of Macclesfield, and at one time one of the wealthiest men in Japan.

She has always thought the Orient a fascinating setting for stories, she explains, and since her sister wrote successfully about China, she chose Japan. "Actually," she says "I'm ashamed of having written about the Japanese. I hate them so." She is herself



Mrs. Francis Reeve

partly Chinese on her mother's side, and very proud of the fact.

Mrs. Reeve was already well-known as a novelist when she sought and won fame in another field — movies. Going to New York, she was given a contract as scenario writer for Universal Pictures, and within three months became editor-in-chief of the department, handling stories in several different studios in New York and Hollywood. She was editor-in-chief for Universal for five years, and later spent a year and a half as a scenarist for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. In these capacities, she wrote hundreds of screen plays, titles, adaptations, and "treatments." One of her assignments for Universal was the adaptation of Edna Ferber's "Show Boat."

She loves Hollywood, but doesn't think it has glamor. "No indeed," she smiled, quoting one of her own little jingles:

"Twinkle, twinkle, movie star  
Who in heck do you think you  
are?"

Just a year ago, sweet Mabel,  
You were waiting on a table."

Mrs. Reeve insists that she has retired—"I have nothing to say to the world which someone else cannot say very much better." Among those "someone elses" she would probably place her son, Paul Eaton Reeve, New York poet and critic, of whom she is very proud.

Mrs. Reeve spends her time very pleasantly in a beautiful home filled with objects of art, and surrounded by a pleasant garden in which she is nearly always to be found. Their home is "open house" to any airmen who wish to go there, Mrs. Reeve says, and she and her husband always take some of the lads with them on the trips which they make to Banff almost every week-end.

Very fond of riding, Mrs. Reeve particularly enjoys these outings which give her an opportunity to spend hours on the mountain

