



The St. Gatien Courier

Summer 2022

After the Jazz Age: F. Scott Fitzgerald at La Paix

By Geoff Cabin

In his public image, F. Scott Fitzgerald tends to be associated with the locales of his novels - the Princeton of *This Side of Paradise*, the Long Island of *The Great Gatsby*, the French Riviera of *Tender Is the Night*, and the Hollywood of *The Last Tycoon*. It is somewhat less well known that, for a year and a half, Fitzgerald was a resident of Baltimore County. During that time, he wrote the bulk of one of his most highly-regarded works, *Tender Is the Night*.

Early Life

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born on September 24, 1896 in St. Paul, Minnesota to Edward Fitzgerald and the former Mollie McQuillan.¹ Fitzgerald was named after Francis Scott Key, a distant relative of Fitzgerald's on his father's side of the family, which had roots in Montgomery County, Maryland.² After attending the St. Paul Academy in Minnesota and the Newman Academy in Hackensack, New Jersey, Fitzgerald entered Princeton University in the fall of 1913.³ In the fall of 1917, following the U.S. entry into World War I, Fitzgerald received a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and left Princeton to report for duty at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.⁴ While stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Fitzgerald spent his spare time working on a novel about life at Princeton entitled *The Romantic Egotist*.⁵ In March 1918, Fitzgerald submitted the novel to the publisher Charles Scribner's Sons, but did not receive an immediate response.⁶

In June 1918, Fitzgerald was transferred to Camp Sheridan, outside of Montgomery, Alabama.⁷ While attending a country club dance in Montgomery



Publicity photo of F. Scott Fitzgerald, circa 1921. (Photographer unknown.)

the following month, Fitzgerald met a local southern belle named Zelda Sayre.⁸ Sayre, who had graduated from high school the previous month, was the daughter of Anthony Dickinson Sayre, a judge on the Alabama

Supreme Court, and the former Minnie Machen, the daughter of a Kentucky senator.⁹ During the weeks that followed, Fitzgerald spent much of his spare time courting Sayre and they soon fell in love.¹⁰ Fitzgerald asked Sayre to marry him, but she was noncommittal - although Fitzgerald repeatedly assured her that he was going to become famous, she had doubts about his ability to support her.¹¹

In August, Fitzgerald received a response from Scribner's about his novel, *The Romantic Egotist*.¹² Rather than accepting or rejecting the novel outright, Scribner's offered suggestions on how to improve it.¹³ Fitzgerald revised the novel and re-submitted it to Scribner's in mid-October, but this time Scribner's rejected the book outright.¹⁴

Meanwhile, World War I was coming to an end. Before Fitzgerald's division could be deployed overseas, the armistice of November 11, 1918 was signed.¹⁵ Fitzgerald was discharged from the army on February 14, 1919 and, shortly afterwards, he left for New York to make his fortune.¹⁶ He planned to support himself as a journalist until he was able to make a living writing fiction.¹⁷ Fitzgerald hoped that, once he was comfortably established, Sayre would join him in New York.¹⁸ Things, however, did not go as planned. Unable to find a job as a journalist, Fitzgerald took a job that he disliked as an advertising copywriter with the Barron Collier Agency.¹⁹ He spent most of his spare time writing stories and submitting them to magazines.²⁰ Fitzgerald managed to sell one story, "Babes in the Wood," to *The Smart Set*, which was edited by H. L. Mencken and the drama critic George Jean Nathan.²¹ Apart from that, however, Fitzgerald received nothing but rejection letters.²² Between February and June, Fitzgerald made three trips to Montgomery to visit Zelda Sayre and plead with her to marry him.²³ The last of his three trips to Montgomery ended with Sayre breaking off their relationship.²⁴

Feeling that he now had nothing left to lose, Fitzgerald quit his job with the Barron Collier Agency, returned to his parents' house in St. Paul, and spent the summer revising his novel.²⁵ In early September, Fitzgerald submitted the revised novel, now entitled *This Side of Paradise*, to Scribner's.²⁶ Two weeks later, he received notice that Scribner's had accepted the novel.²⁷ At Scribner's, the novel had been championed by Maxwell Perkins, who would become Fitzgerald's editor and staunch supporter for the remainder of his career.²⁸ (Perkins also would act as editor for Ernest Hemingway, Ring Lardner, Thomas Wolfe, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and James Jones, among others.)

With the acceptance of his novel by Scribner's, Fitzgerald's fortunes as a writer improved. He obtained an agent, Harold Ober of the Reynolds Agency, who immediately sold several of Fitzgerald's short stories to magazines like *The Saturday Evening*

Post for substantial fees.²⁹ Acceptance of his novel also allowed Fitzgerald to win back Zelda Sayre. When Fitzgerald visited her in Montgomery in November, she agreed to marry him.³⁰

First Success and the Jazz Age

This Side of Paradise was published by Scribner's on March 26, 1920.³¹ The novel created a sensation and established Fitzgerald as a celebrity and up-and-coming author. While the novel's portrayal of college life may seem rather tame by today's standards, it was a marked departure from the more genteel literary standards of the time and helped to usher in an era of more frankness and honesty in literature. "It's memorable feature... was that it announced a change in standards," wrote the literary critic Malcolm Cowley.³² Many young people identified with the novel's protagonist, Amory Blaine. "Young people found in Amory's behavior a model for their conduct - and alarmed parents found their worst apprehensions realized," wrote social historian Mark Sullivan.³³

On April 3, 1920, a week after publication of *This Side of Paradise*, Scott and Zelda were married in the rectory of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.³⁴ For their honeymoon, they stayed at the Biltmore Hotel in New York, attended parties and the theater, and became the toast of the town.³⁵

The start of Fitzgerald's writing career coincided with the dawn of the jazz age, with which he always would be associated. "America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history and there was going to be plenty to tell about it," Fitzgerald wrote.³⁶ Through his writing, Scott became a chronicler of the jazz age and a spokesperson for the younger generation that was coming of age in the decade after the end of World War I and challenging established social mores. Zelda became a role model for young women dubbed "flappers" who defied convention by bobbing their hair, raising their hemlines, dancing the Charleston, and smoking and drinking in public.

"In the twenties, his heyday, he was a kind of king of our American youth..." wrote Glenway Wescott.³⁷ "...*This Side of Paradise* haunted the decade like a song, popular but perfect. It hung over an entire youth-movement like a banner..."³⁸

During the decade following the publication of *This Side of Paradise*, the Fitzgeralds lived extravagantly, spending much of their time abroad in Paris, Rome, and the French Riviera. During Fitzgerald's heyday in the 1920s, he wrote two further novels, *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) and *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and three story collections, *Flappers and Philosophers* (1921), *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922), and *All the Sad Young Men* (1926).



F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald in 1923. (Alfred Cheney Johnston)

After the Jazz Age: At La Paix

By the early '30s, the Fitzgeralds' fortunes had changed. The jazz age had come to an abrupt end with the crash of the stock market in October 1929.³⁹ For years, Scott had been struggling to write a new novel but had made little progress.⁴⁰ He also was drinking more and more heavily, to the point of becoming an alcoholic.⁴¹ In addition, the Fitzgeralds were facing financial difficulties. Years of extravagant living had left them in debt and Scott's short stories, which were the couple's main source of income, were no longer commanding top dollar from publications like *The Saturday Evening Post*.⁴²

Most seriously of all, Zelda was battling mental illness. In June 1930, she was diagnosed as schizophrenic and admitted to a sanitarium, Les Rives de Prangrins, located on Lake Geneva in Switzerland, where she remained for 15 months.⁴³ In the fall of 1931, when Zelda finally was well enough to travel, the Fitzgeralds left Switzerland, returned to the United States, and settled in Zelda's hometown of

Montgomery, Alabama.⁴⁴ After a period of relative stability, Zelda experienced a severe breakdown in early 1932.⁴⁵

Seeking help for Zelda, Scott contacted H. L. Mencken in Baltimore and asked for the name of the top psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins University Hospital.⁴⁶ As an editor of *The Smart Set*, Mencken had been an early supporter of Fitzgerald's. In addition to publishing "Babes in the Woods," *The Smart Set* had published some of Fitzgerald's other early stories such as "Benediction," "The Debutante," "The Diamond Big as the Ritz," and "May Day."⁴⁷

"I assumed at once that Zelda was the patient and recommended Dr. Esther Richards, of the staff of the Phipps Clinic, the psychiatric pavilion at the Johns Hopkins Hospital," Mencken wrote.⁴⁸ The Phipps Clinic was run by Dr. Adolph Meyer, a Swiss psychiatrist who was a leading authority on mental illness and schizophrenia.⁴⁹

Scott made arrangements for Zelda to enter the Phipps Clinic and accompanied her there on February 12, 1932.⁵⁰ After Zelda entered the clinic, Scott returned to Montgomery, where he planned to remain until the lease on the house that the couple was renting expired and their daughter finished the current school year.⁵¹

At the clinic, Zelda found a release from her anxieties by engaging in creative work such as painting, sketching, and writing.⁵² During her first six weeks at the clinic, she wrote an autobiographical novel,

Save Me the Waltz, a thinly-veiled account of Zelda and Scott's life together.⁵³ Without telling Scott, Zelda sent the book to Maxwell Perkins at Scribner's.⁵⁴ When Scott found out about the book and read it, he was furious.⁵⁵ In the book, the character based on Scott is portrayed in a very negative light and he took it as a personal attack on him.⁵⁶ He also felt that Zelda was appropriating some of the same material that he planned to use in his own novel on which he currently was working.⁵⁷ In addition, he resented the fact that Zelda had written the novel in six weeks, while he had been forced to interrupt work on his own novel in order to crank out short stories to pay for her treatment in sanitariums.⁵⁸

For her part, Zelda felt that she had as just much right as Scott did to use their common experience as material for a novel.⁵⁹ She was, however, persuaded to make changes to the book. With editorial supervision from Scott and Maxwell Perkins, Zelda revised the novel and eliminated or toned down the sections to which Scott objected.⁶⁰

The protagonist of the finished novel, Alabama Beggs, bears a strong resemblance to Zelda. She grows up in an unnamed town in the state of Alabama as part of a family similar to Zelda's. During World War I, Alabama meets and falls in love with David Knight, a lieutenant stationed at a nearby base. The character of David Knight is based on Scott, although he has been changed from a writer to a painter. The events of Alabama's and David's life together closely parallel those of Scott and Zelda - Alabama and David move to New York and get married; David achieves popular success with his painting and the couple become famous; they go to the French Riviera where Alabama becomes involved with a French aviator; they move on to Paris where they attend parties and David retaliates against Alabama by becoming involved with an American actress; and Alabama asserts her independence and tries to establish her own identity by studying to become a ballet dancer.

Save Me the Waltz was published by Scribner's on October 7, 1932.⁶¹ It received a mixed critical reaction and went on to sell a modest 1,392 copies.⁶²

On March 30, 1932, Fitzgerald left Alabama to move to Baltimore.⁶³ On arriving in the city, Fitzgerald stayed at the Hotel Rennert on Saratoga Street in downtown Baltimore while he searched for a suitable house to rent.⁶⁴ Fitzgerald was assisted in his search by a local lawyer, Edgar Allan Poe, Jr., a distant descendant of the author and an acquaintance of Fitzgerald's from Princeton.⁶⁵

In May, Fitzgerald located a house that suited him - a Victorian mansion called "La Paix," which was situated on a 28-acre estate owned by Bayard Turnbull and located in Towson, just north of Rodgers Forge.⁶⁶ La Paix had been built in 1885 as a country house for Bayard Turnbull's father, Lawrence Turnbull, and designed by the architect John Appleton Wilson.⁶⁷ The house was a rambling Victorian mansion with a spacious porch, brown shingles, and gingerbread trim.⁶⁸

Even before Fitzgerald's arrival, La Paix had a bit of literary tradition attached to it. Lawrence Turnbull had edited a magazine called *The New Eclectic* and his wife, Francese Hubbard Litchfield Turnbull, had written historical romance novels and founded the Woman's Literary Club of Baltimore.⁶⁹ When Lawrence and Francese Turnbull's son Percy Graeme Turnbull died at a young age, they endowed the Turnbull Memorial Lectureship on Poetry at Johns Hopkins University in his honor.⁷⁰ Poets who came to Baltimore to deliver the lecture were entertained and housed on the Turnbull estate.⁷¹ Among the poets who delivered the lecture were T. S. Eliot, Archibald MacLeish, W. H. Auden, and Robert Frost.⁷²

In 1926, Bayard Turnbull, an architect, designed and built a new house for his family on the Turnbull estate.⁷³ The new house was known as "Trimbush" or the "Bayard Turnbull House."⁷⁴ In addition to Bayard Turnbull, the Turnbull family consisted of his wife, Margaret, and their children, Frances, Andrew, and Eleanor.⁷⁵ When the Turnbull family moved into the more modern Trimbush, they put La Paix up for rent.⁷⁶ "My husband had placed an ad in *The Sun* to rent our old summer home," recalled Margaret Turnbull.⁷⁷

While Fitzgerald was living at La Paix, he and the Turnbulls' 11-year-old son, Andrew, struck up a friendship, which grew out of a shared interest in football.⁷⁸ Andrew Turnbull went on to become a literary historian and wrote a highly-regarded biography of Fitzgerald. In the biography, Turnbull recalls first hearing that Fitzgerald was going to rent La Paix and gives a description of La Paix at the time that Fitzgerald lived there:

I remember my father causing a stir at the breakfast table when he announced that a novelist had rented the other house on our property. My mother, the reader of the family, had heard the name Fitzgerald but couldn't recall anything he had written, which was not surprising, for the Jazz Age had roared past almost without our knowing it. Our twenty-eight acre place on the edge of Baltimore was a cultural pocket whose atmosphere had changed very little since my grandfather built the old house there in 1885. Stolidly Victorian, La Paix had lost whatever charm or style it might have once possessed. It was a ramshackle affair of faded reds, browns, and grays, with the gables and heavy trimmings and discordant bulges of the period, and the whole thing girded round by an open porch. A sign over the door said "Pax Vobiscum." Peaceful it certainly was - no one could deny that - but it also was dim, cavernous, and from a child's point of view spooky, and I was glad we weren't living there anymore.⁷⁹

...

...The old house, with the red brown paint bleaching on its Victorian gingerbread, had begun to disintegrate; its trembling windows suggested a massive looseness, and squirrels from the surrounding oaks

nested unabashed in its downspouts and mossy eaves. Yet this obsolescence did not daunt Fitzgerald. "I'll take it," he said after a brief reconnoiter with my father. "I never was interested in modern plumbing."⁸⁰

H. L. Mencken, who visited the Fitzgeralds at La Paix, described it as "a ramshackle old barn in a deep woods," and added that "the whole place had a spooky air."⁸¹

Sara Mayfield, a friend of Zelda's from Montgomery, also visited the Fitzgeralds at La Paix and described it in a book that she wrote about the Fitzgeralds:

The house, whatever the color of its original paint, was a rusty gray, a veritable Hatter's Castle - and a Mad Hatter's Castle at that - with gingerbread arches, bays thrown at random, and a porch decorated with jigsaw scrollwork encircling it. Scott had a talent for picking out dreary living quarters. Even so, he had outdone himself this time. The interior of La Paix was even more depressing than its fantastic exterior. It was sparsely furnished with Victorian relics; the woodwork was dark and scarred; at rare intervals, worn carpets deadened the echoes of the bare floors; some of the windows were curtained, some were not.⁸²

Zelda provided a more whimsical description of La Paix in a letter to Maxwell Perkins. "We have a soft shady place here that's like a paintless play-house abandoned when the family grew up," she wrote. "It's surrounded by apologetic trees and meadows and creaking insects and is gutted of its aura by many comfortable bed rooms which do not have to be floated up to on alcoholic inflation past the cupolas and cornices as did the ones at 'Ellerslie' [a house outside of Wilmington, Delaware where the Fitzgeralds lived off and on from 1927 to 1929]."⁸³

Scott arrived at La Paix accompanied by his and Zelda's 10-year old daughter, Frances Scott Fitzgerald, known as "Scottie."⁸⁴ While living at La Paix, Scottie attended the Calvert School and then Bryn Mar School.⁸⁵ Scottie became friends with the Turnbull children and the Turnbells served as an extended family for Scottie during her stay at La Paix.⁸⁶

"We are living near Baltimore now, on a big estate of 32 acres," Scottie wrote to a playmate she had

known in Paris. "...On the same place, but in a different house live a boy and a girl. So it is like as if I had a brother and a sister. (I wish I had.)"⁸⁷

"It was a big, beautiful place, with high old oak trees and a little stone house where we gave plays," Scottie later recalled about La Paix. "Summers we used to swim and ride and play tennis; winters we went skating and sledding."⁸⁸

Starting in early June, Zelda was able to spend part of her days at La Paix.⁸⁹ On June 26, Zelda was discharged from the Phipps Clinic and came to live full time at La Paix, while meeting with a psychiatrist once a week at the clinic.⁹⁰ In addition to working on her painting, Zelda wrote a dramatic farce entitled *Scandalabra*.⁹¹ In June, 1933, the play was performed by a local repertory troupe called the Vagabond Junior Players, but was not well received.⁹²

Shortly after arriving at La Paix, Scott advertised for a secretary. It was the height of the Depression and he received a strong response to the ad. After interviewing a number of applicants, Scott hired a young woman named Isabel Owens for \$12 a week.⁹³ In addition to her duties as secretary, Owens helped to look after Scottie and acted as a companion to Zelda.⁹⁴

Scott expected Owens to be available to assist him whenever he needed her. "He thought nothing of calling me up at midnight and asking about something or other, a check or a bill he wanted," she recalled. "He called me once at four in the morning, and when I asked him if he knew what time it was, he said, 'No. Why? Is it late?'"⁹⁵

The Fitzgeralds invited H. L. Mencken and his wife, the writer Sara Haardt, to dinner at La Paix. Haardt was from Montgomery and was a childhood friend of Zelda's.⁹⁶ According to Mencken, the evening did not go well. He described the dinner as "painful indeed," noting that Zelda was "only half rational" and Scott "was too drunk to notice." After dinner, Zelda insisted that the Menckens look at her drawings, which Mencken found to be "only too painfully psychopathic." By the end of the evening, Mencken wrote that Scott was "so drunk that he could barely stand up."⁹⁷

Scott continued to socialize with the Menckens, dropping in on them at their third-floor apartment at 704 Cathedral Street in the Mount Vernon neighborhood of Baltimore.⁹⁸ Mencken, however, eventually banned Scott from their home for showing up drunk.⁹⁹ "Sara was fond of him and so was I, but we simply could not endure him," Mencken wrote.¹⁰⁰

A more successful social occasion occurred when T. S. Eliot came to Baltimore to deliver the Turnbull Memorial Lecture on Poetry at Johns Hopkins University. The Turnbells hosted a dinner for Eliot at Trimbush and invited Scott to attend. At the request of Margaret Turnbull, Scott read some of Eliot's poems aloud and his reading was well received by the attendees at the dinner.¹⁰¹



The only remaining trace of La Paix - a stone gateway on La Paix Lane at its intersection with York Road. (Geoff Cabin)

“...T. S. Eliot and I had an afternoon + evening together last week,” Fitzgerald wrote to the writer Edmund Wilson, a friend of Fitzgerald’s from Princeton. “I read him some of his poems and he seemed to think they were pretty good. I liked him fine. Very broken and sad + shrunk inside.”¹⁰²

When Fitzgerald arrived at La Paix, it had been seven years since the publication of his last novel, *The Great Gatsby*, and his standing in the literary world had fallen. “When Fitzgerald came to La Paix his period of greatest acclaim was over,” Andrew Turnbull wrote. “He hoped he might regain the lost ground, as he hoped he might regain Zelda, but he was by no means sure.”¹⁰³ Fitzgerald was hoping that the new novel that he was writing, which would eventually become *Tender Is the Night*, would reestablish his position on top of the literary world. “Everything now hinged on *Tender Is the Night*,” Andrew Turnbull wrote. “It would be the test of whether Fitzgerald was a big novelist or a flash in the pan.”¹⁰⁴

Fitzgerald had begun working on the book that would become *Tender Is the Night* at Antibes in the summer of 1924.¹⁰⁵ At La Paix, Fitzgerald largely abandoned earlier drafts and plot lines for the novel and started over again.¹⁰⁶ Working at a desk in his study, Fitzgerald wrote in longhand on legal pads, which he then gave to Isabel Owens for typing.¹⁰⁷

Owens remembered that Fitzgerald often paced while he worked, walking about his study and talking to himself before sitting at his desk to write something.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Andrew Turnbull remembered Fitzgerald pacing up and down a road behind La Paix, working out problems with the novel in his mind, before returning to his study to write things down.¹⁰⁹ Fitzgerald made good progress on the novel, although he couldn’t concentrate solely on it because he still had to turn out short stories for the *Saturday Evening Post* in order to make money.¹¹⁰

In June 1933, Zelda tried to burn some clothes in a disused fireplace at La Paix and ended up setting the house on fire.¹¹¹ Fortunately, the damage was minor and largely limited to the second floor.¹¹² Scott apologized for the damages but requested that repairs be postponed because he was nearly finished with his novel and didn’t want his work interrupted by the presence of workers in the house.¹¹³

Over the summer, Fitzgerald continued to make good progress on the novel. “The novel now plotted + planned, nevermore to be permanently interrupted,” he noted in his ledger in August, 1933.¹¹⁴

In the fall of 1933, Fitzgerald delivered a draft of the novel to Maxwell Perkins at Scribner’s.¹¹⁵ After going through several working titles for his novel, Fitzgerald decided on the title *Tender Is the Night*, which he took from a line in John Keats’ poem *Ode to a Nightingale*.¹¹⁶ “This novel, my 4th, completes my

story of the boom years,” Fitzgerald wrote in a letter to Perkins. “It might be wise to accentuate the fact that it does not deal with the depression.”¹¹⁷

The novel chronicles the lives of Dick and Nicole Diver. Dick Diver is a brilliant young psychiatrist who falls in love with a wealthy patient, Nicole Warren, and marries her; while Nicole struggles with mental illness, Dick sinks into alcoholism and dissipation. The characters of Dick and Nicole Diver are a composite, based partly on Scott and Zelda and partly on Gerald and Sara Murphy, an expatriate American couple who maintained an apartment in Paris and a villa in Cap

d’Antibe.¹¹⁸ While living in France, the Fitzgeralds had become part of a social circle that revolved around the Murphys and also included the writers Ernest Hemingway, Archibald MacLeish, and John Dos Passos, the songwriter Cole Porter, and the artist Pablo Picasso.¹¹⁹ Scott was enamored of the Murphys’ elegant lifestyle and the early scenes in *Tender Is the Night* of the Divers hosting picnics on the beach and parties on the terrace of their villa, are modeled after events hosted by the Murphys.¹²⁰

The trajectory of the Divers’ lives, however, follow that of Scott and Zelda.¹²¹ Nicole Diver’s history of mental illness is based closely on that of Zelda - Scott went so far as to include in the book quotes from Zelda’s letters and medical history.¹²² Similarly, the course of Dr. Diver’s career follows that of Scott. Rather than pursuing his ambition of performing research and publishing academic papers, Dr. Diver lives the life of the idle rich, wasting his talent and sinking into alcoholism - just as Fitzgerald thought that he had wasted his talent as a writer and had sunk into alcoholism.¹²³

In December 1933, while preparing for the publication of *Tender Is the Night*, the Fitzgeralds left La Paix and moved to a less-expensive townhouse at 1307 Park Avenue in the Bolton Hill neighborhood of Baltimore.¹²⁴ Zelda’s condition continued to deteriorate and she reentered the Phipps Clinic on February 12, 1934, exactly two years after she had first entered it.¹²⁵ She left Phipps again on March 8, 1934,



1307 Park Avenue, where F. Scott Fitzgerald lived from December 1933 to early 1935. (Geoff Cabin)

although her condition had not improved.¹²⁶ Zelda next entered Craig House, an expensive, upscale clinic in upstate New York.¹²⁷

Tender Is the Night was serialized in *Scribner’s Magazine* on a monthly basis from January through April, 1934 and published in book form on April 12, 1934.¹²⁸ Although *Tender Is the Night* was not the failure that it sometimes is portrayed as, neither was it the big success for which Fitzgerald had hoped.¹²⁹ The book received a mixed critical reception, appeared in the middle range of the best-seller lists for a few weeks, and went on to sell around 13,000 copies.¹³⁰ While these were respectable sales figures, they were small by Fitzgerald’s standards.¹³¹

As was Scribner’s practice, they followed up the publication of *Tender Is the Night* with the publication of a collection of short stories, *Taps at Reveille*, on March 10, 1935.¹³² The collection received favorable reviews, but sold modestly and did little to improve Fitzgerald’s situation.¹³³

During this time, Fitzgerald entered a particularly dark and difficult period in his life. The tepid response to *Tender Is the Night* destroyed Fitzgerald’s already-shaky self confidence and his drinking problem spiraled further out of control.¹³⁴ Also, it was becoming increasingly apparent that Zelda was never going to fully recover from her mental illness. On May 19, 1934, Zelda was transferred from Craig House in upstate New York to the Shepard and Enoch Pratt Hospital in Towson, next door to La Paix, where she remained for the next two years.¹³⁵ “I left



52 East 34th Street. Formerly the Cambridge Arms, where F. Scott Fitzgerald lived during 1935 and 1936. Currently Wolman Hall, a Johns Hopkins University dormitory. (Geoff Cabin)

my capacity for hoping on the little roads that led to Zelda's sanitarium," Fitzgerald wrote.¹³⁶

After spending the summer of 1935 in Asheville, North Carolina, Fitzgerald returned to Baltimore and rented an apartment in the Cambridge Arms on the corner of North Charles and East 34th Streets, across from the Homewood campus of Johns Hopkins University.¹³⁷

In a letter to Laura Guthrie written in September 1935, Fitzgerald expressed his feelings about Baltimore:

Baltimore is warm but pleasant - I love it more than I thought - it is so rich with memories - it is nice to look up the street + see the statue of my great uncle [Francis Scott Key], + to know Poe is buried here and that many ancestors of mine have walked in the old town by the bay. I belong here, where everything is civilized and gay and rotted and polite. And I wouldn't mind one bit if in a few years Zelda + I could snuggle up together under a stone in some old graveyard here. That is really a happy thought + not melancholy at all.¹³⁸

In a series of essays written while living in Baltimore, Fitzgerald wrote about the anxiety and depression that he was experiencing. In one essay,

Fitzgerald compared himself to "a cracked plate, the kind that one wonders whether it is worth preserving."¹³⁹ Suffering from insomnia, Fitzgerald spent nights pacing and brooding about "[w]aste and horror - what I might have been and done that is lost, spent, gone, dissipated, unrecapturable."¹⁴⁰

Later Life

Fitzgerald's fortunes eventually did improve somewhat. In June 1937, Fitzgerald accepted an offer to go to Hollywood and work on movie scripts.¹⁴¹ While in Hollywood, Fitzgerald met and fell in love with the gossip columnist Sheila Graham, with whom he would maintain a somewhat turbulent relationship for the

remainder of his life.¹⁴² Fitzgerald also began working on a new novel, *The Last Tycoon*, which drew on his experiences in Hollywood.¹⁴³

Toward the end of November, 1940, Fitzgerald suffered a heart attack.¹⁴⁴ On December 21, Fitzgerald suffered a second heart attack and died at age 44.¹⁴⁵

Fitzgerald had wanted to be buried alongside his father and other relatives in the family plot in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church cemetery in Rockville, Maryland, but the church denied permission because Fitzgerald was not a practicing Catholic.¹⁴⁶ Instead, he was buried in the Union Cemetery in Rockville on December 27, 1940.¹⁴⁷

Fitzgerald's funeral service was conducted by Reverend Raymond P. Black, rector of Christ Episcopal Church, who cut the service short due to rain.¹⁴⁸ "The only reason I agreed to give the service was to get the body in the ground," Reverend Black stated. "He was a no-good, drunken bum, and the world was well-rid of him."¹⁴⁹ Black's comments show the extent to which Fitzgerald remained a controversial figure to some people.

The Last Tycoon was left uncompleted at the time of Fitzgerald's death, but the completed chapters were published posthumously in November 1941 along with Fitzgerald's notes and outlines.¹⁵⁰ The novel showed that, despite all of the difficulties and setbacks that Fitzgerald had encountered, he still was working seriously at his craft and trying to write about a world that had changed since his heyday during the jazz age.

“His half-finished *Last Tycoon* was a sincere effort to catch up and come to grips with reality, no matter how distasteful it might have seemed to him,” wrote the journalist Hunter S. Thompson.¹⁵¹

In April 1936, Zelda Fitzgerald left Shepard Pratt and entered the Highland Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina.¹⁵² Four years later, Zelda was released from Highland Hospital and went to live with her mother in Montgomery.¹⁵³ For the remainder of her life, Zelda alternated between living with her mother in Montgomery and staying at the Highland Hospital. On March 10, 1948, during one of Zelda’s stays at the Highland Hospital, the hospital caught on fire; Zelda was trapped on the top floor of the hospital and died in the fire at age 47.¹⁵⁴

Zelda was buried alongside Scott in the Union Cemetery in Rockville, Maryland.¹⁵⁵ The Fitzgeralds’ daughter, Scottie, subsequently obtained permission for her parents’ remains to be moved to the family plot in St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church cemetery in Rockville and, following the reinterment, a graveside service took place at St. Mary’s on November 7,

1975.¹⁵⁶ The Fitzgeralds’ grave is covered by a capstone on which is carved the famous last line from *The Great Gatsby*: “So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.”¹⁵⁷

The Last Days of La Paix

During the 1950s, La Paix was home to the La Paix Nursery School, which was run by Frances and Harris Milstead (parents of the actor Glenn Milstead, better known as Divine).¹⁵⁸ In October 1958, the Turnbull estate was sold to St. Joseph Hospital, which was looking to relocate from its quarters at 1400 North Caroline Street in East Baltimore.¹⁵⁹ There are conflicting accounts of the date, but sometime in 1961 or 1962, La Paix was demolished to make way for construction of the hospital.¹⁶⁰ St. Joseph Hospital opened its doors at its new location on November 25, 1965.¹⁶¹ Today, the only trace of La Paix that remains is a stone gateway on La Paix Lane at its intersection with York Road.

End Notes

1. Matthew J. Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 2nd revised ed. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002) 12; Arthur Mizener, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987) 5; Andrew Turnbull, *Scott Fitzgerald* (1962, New York: Collier Books, 1988) 7.
2. Bruccoli 13; Mizener 5; Turnbull 5 - 6.
3. Mizener 116; Turnbull 351.
4. Mizener 33 and 116; Turnbull 79.
5. Mizener 36; Turnbull 81 - 82.
6. Mizener 36; Turnbull 82.
7. Turnbull 82.
8. Nancy Milford, *Zelda* (1970, New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1983) 24; Mizener 36 - 37; Turnbull 87.
9. Milford 24; Turnbull 84.
10. Milford 33 - 36; Turnbull 87.
11. Turnbull 87 - 91.
12. Turnbull 89.
13. Turnbull 89.
14. Turnbull 89.
15. Milford 35; Samuel Eliot Morrison, *The Oxford History of the American People*, vol. 3 (1965, New York: Mentor, 1972) 205; Turnbull 89.
16. Milford 36; Turnbull 91.
17. Milford 36.
18. Turnbull 92.
19. Milford 39; Mizener 43; Turnbull 91 - 92.
20. Milford 39.
21. Sally Cline, *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003) 64; Turnbull 97; Frank R. Shivers, Jr., *Maryland Wits & Baltimore Bards: A Literary History with Notes on Washington Writers* (Baltimore: Maclay & Associates, Inc., 1985) 166 and 248.
22. Cline 64; Milford 39; Turnbull 97.
23. Turnbull 94 and 96.
24. Milford 52; Turnbull 96.
25. Mizener 45; Turnbull 96 - 99.

26. Turnbull 99.
 27. Turnbull 99.
 28. A. Scott Berg, *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius* (1978; New York: Washington Square Press, 1979) 14 - 19.
29. Milford 58; Mizener 46.
 30. Turnbull 101.
 31. Bruccoli 115; Mizener 47.
 32. Malcolm Cowley, "Fitzgerald: The Romance of Money," *The Portable Malcolm Cowley* (New York: Viking, 1990) 233.
 33. Mark Sullivan, *Our Times*, vol. 6 (New York: Scribner's, 1935) 386 - 387, quoted in Berg 24.
 34. Milford 62; Mizener 48 - 49; Turnbull 105.
 35. Milford 65; Mizener 48.
 36. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Early Success," *The Crack Up* (New York: New Directions, 1956) 87.
 37. Glenway Wescott, "The Moral of F. Scott Fitzgerald," *The Crack Up* (New York: New Directions, 1956) 323.
 38. Wescott, 326.
 39. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Echoes of the Jazz Age," *The Crack Up* (New York: New Directions, 1956) 13.
 40. Berg 112 and 181 - 182; Milford 139.
 41. Bruccoli 180 - 183; Mizener 87.
 42. Berg, 50, 60, and 251 - 252; Milford 267; Mizener 90; Turnbull 236.
 43. Milford 161 and 166; Turnbull 193 - 194.
 44. Milford 191 - 192; Mizener 85 - 86.
 45. Milford 208 - 209; Mizener 85 - 86.
 46. Eleanor Lanahan, *Scottie The Daughter of...: The Life of Frances Scott Fitzgerald Lanahan Smith* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) 55; Shivers 248.
 47. Cline 72 and 88.
 48. H. L. Mencken, *My Life As Author and Editor* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993) 262.
 49. Cline 304; Sara Mayfield, *Exiles from Paradise: Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971) 182; Turnbull 233; Shivers 248.
 50. Berg 235; Milford 209 - 210; Turnbull 204.
 51. Milford 214.
 52. Turnbull 206.
 53. Berg 235; Mizener 86; Turnbull 206.
 54. Mizener 86; Shivers 255; Turnbull 206.
 55. Shivers 255; Turnbull 206.
 56. Turnbull 207.
 57. Milford 216; Shivers 255; Turnbull 206 - 207.
 58. Milford 216; Shivers 255.
 59. Bruccoli 322 -323; Cline 307.
 60. Mizener 86.
 61. Bruccoli 327; Milford 262.
 62. Bruccoli 327; Milford 262 and 264.
 63. Berg 236 - 237; Bruccoli 323.
 64. Bruccoli 323; Milford 253; Shivers 181.
 65. Bruccoli 325; Shivers 243.
 66. H. George Hahn and Carl Behm III, *Towson: A Pictorial History of a Maryland Town* (Norfolk, VA: Donning Co., 1978) 47; Shivers 241; Turnbull 207 and 209.
 67. John W. McGrain, *250 Candles for Towson: Documents and Memoirs* (Collierville, TN: Instant Publisher, 2017) 44.
 68. McGrain 44; Shivers 241.
 69. Hahn 47; Shivers 160 and 242; Turnbull 210.
 70. "Margaret Carroll Turnbull, Teacher, Literary Hostess," obituary, *The Sun* (Baltimore), October 6, 1981: D1; Jacques Kelly, "House's Poetic History Is Known to Few," *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore), October 28, 1991: B4; Shivers 242.
 71. "Margaret Carroll Turnbull, Teacher, Literary Hostess," obituary, *The Sun* (Baltimore), October 6, 1981: D1; Jacques Kelly B4.
 72. Shivers 296.

73. Maryland Historical Trust, Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey: Bayard Turnbull House, Survey Number BA-1764.
74. Maryland Historical Trust, Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey: Bayard Turnbull House, Survey Number BA-1764.
75. Bruccoli 340 - 341; Turnbull 221 - 223.
76. McGrain 44.
77. Frederick Kelly, "The F. Scott Fitzgeralds in Baltimore," part 1, *Sunday Sun Magazine* (Baltimore), July 14, 1974: 15.
78. Turnbull 211.
79. Turnbull 209.
80. Turnbull 210.
81. Mencken 262.
82. Mayfield 193.
83. Bruccoli 325.
84. Cline 315; Milford 257; Shivers 242.
85. John F. Kelly, "Fitzgerald: Recollections of a Novelist in Decline," *The Sun* (Baltimore), December 31, 1982: B4; Lanahan 58.
86. Cline 316; Lanahan 58; Turnbull 223 - 224.
87. Lanahan 58.
88. Frederick Kelly, "The F. Scott Fitzgeralds in Baltimore," part 1, 15.
89. Milford 257.
90. Milford 257 and 259.
91. Milford 266; Shivers 256.
92. Milford 276 - 280; Shivers 256 - 257.
93. John F. Kelly B1; Milford 259; Shivers 258.
94. Bruccoli 330; John F. Kelly B1 and B4.
95. John F. Kelly B1.
96. Bruccoli 327; Cline 22; Mencken 262.
97. Mencken 262 - 263.
98. Mayfield 190 - 191 and 198; Mencken 264; Shivers 173.
99. Mencken 264.
100. Mencken 264.
101. Bruccoli 341; Mayfield 200 - 201.
102. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters*, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994) 227.
103. Turnbull 239.
104. Turnbull 242.
105. Mizener 71.
106. Bruccoli 336; Shivers 258.
107. John F. Kelly B1; Turnbull 239.
108. John F. Kelly B1.
109. Turnbull 239.
110. Turnbull 239.
111. Mayfield 205; Mizener 89; Turnbull 237.
112. Mayfield 205; Gwin Owens, "The Embers of La Paix," *The Sun* (Baltimore), September 24, 1996: baltimoresun.com retrieved on April 21, 2020; Turnbull 237.
113. Turnbull 238.
114. Bruccoli 330.
115. Berg 254.
116. Berg 288; Turnbull 241.
117. Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters*, 240 - 241.
118. Berg 189 and 292; Milford 284; Turnbull 154 - 158, 163, 184, 208, 239, and 241.
119. Calvin Tomkins, *Living Well Is the Best Revenge* (New York: The Modern Library, 1998) 7.
120. Berg 113; Milford 284; Mizener 76.
121. Milford 284.
122. Berg 290; Milford 284 - 285; Shivers 258.
123. Shivers 257 - 258.
124. Mizener 92; Shivers 241 - 242; Turnbull 352.

125. Milford 283.
126. Milford 288.
127. Milford 288 and 296.
128. Milford 292; Mizener 90.
129. Brucoli 363; Milford 298.
130. Milford 298; Turnbull 243 and 246.
131. Turnbull 246.
132. Brucoli 388 - 391; Mizener 95.
133. Brucoli 388 - 391.
134. Milford 298 and 305; Mizener 95 and 98; Shivers 240.
135. Milford 296.
136. Mizener 90.
137. John F. Kelly B4; Mizener 94; Shivers 263; Turnbull 352.
138. Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters*, 291.
139. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Pasting It Together," *The Crack Up* (New York: New Directions, 1956) 75.
140. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Sleeping and Waking," *The Crack Up* (New York: New Directions, 1956) 67.
141. Mizener 98.
142. Berg 481; Milford 314 - 315; Mizener 101 - 103; Turnbull 288 - 289.
143. Berg 481; Milford 333; Turnbull 305 - 306.
144. Turnbull 320.
145. Berg 489; Milford 350; Mizener 106; Turnbull 321.
146. Brucoli 488; Mizener 108; Turnbull 321.
147. Brucoli 488; Mizener 108; Turnbull 321.
148. Frederick Kelly, "The F. Scott Fitzgeralds in Baltimore," part 2, *Sunday Sun Magazine* (Baltimore), July 21, 1974: 15.
149. Frederick Kelly, "The F. Scott Fitzgeralds in Baltimore," part 2, 15.
150. Berg 510.
151. Hunter S. Thompson, "What Lured Hemingway to Ketchum?," *The Great Shark Hunt* (1979, New York: Fawcett Popular Library, 1980) 433 - 434.
152. Milford 308.
153. Milford 338.
154. Milford 382 - 383; Mizener 109; Turnbull 323.
155. Mizener 108; Turnbull 321.
156. "Peace After 35 Years: Fitzgerald Remains to Get Catholic Burial," *The Sun* (Baltimore) October 12, 1975: A26; "Friends Quietly Celebrate Granting of Fitzgerald's Last Wish for Plot," *The Sun* (Baltimore) November 8, 1975: B2; Brucoli xxx; Mary Jane Solomon, "Where the Somebodies Are Buried," *Weekend* supplement to *The Washington Post*, October 25, 1991: 7.
157. Shivers 254; Solomon 7.
158. Diana Evans, email to author, April 7, 2020; McGrain 44; John Sherwood, "A Beautiful Time, Baby," *The Sun* (Baltimore) September 18, 1960: FA3.
159. Jacques Kelly B4; mdlandrec.net: liber 3432, folio 114; Adrian A. Samojlowicz, "Saint Joseph Hospital - Towson," *Towson Bicentennial 1768 1968 Then...Now* (Towson, MD: Towson Business Association, 1968) 81.
160. Jacques Kelly B4; McGrain 44; Hahn 47; Owens.
161. Samojlowicz 81.

Geoff Cabin is the editor and publisher of the music zine, *Rock Beat International*, and the author of *The Tommy Keene Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to the Music of Tommy Keene* and *The Last Carefree Day: An Oceanic Park Mystery*. He can be reached at rockbeat@starpower.net.