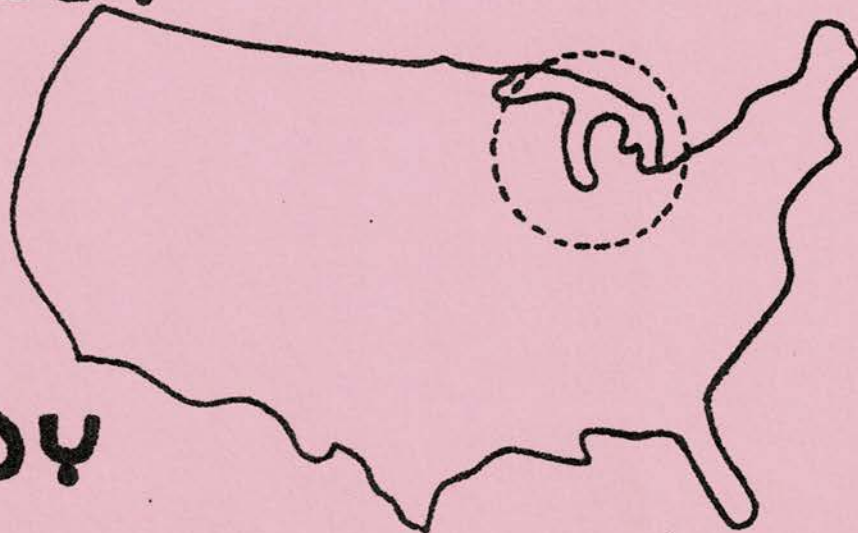


**SOCIETY
FOR
THE
STUDY
OF**



MIDWESTERN LITERATURE

Newsletter
Volume Six
Number One
Spring, 1976

Society for the Study of

Midwestern Literature

Volume VI, No. 1

Newsletter

Spring, 1976

Election of Officers

The mail ballots for officers for 1976 have been tabulated, with the following results:

President: Linda W. Wagner
Michigan State University

Vice President: Gerald Nemanic
Northeastern Illinois Univ.

Executive Council (term expiring in 1979)

Nancy Pogel
Michigan State University

William Miller
Ball State University

Continuing Members (expiring 1978)

Gerald Nemanic
Northwestern Illinois Univ.

Elizabeth Steel
University of Toledo

Continuing Members (expiring 1977)

Alma Payne
Bowling Green State Univ.

Paul Ferlazzo
Michigan State University

Non-elective officers are:

Executive Secretary-Treasurer:
David D. Anderson
Michigan State University

Secretary:
Paul Ferlazzo
Michigan State University

Bibliographer:
Don Pady
Iowa State University

Indexer:
Suzanna Harmon
Jacksonville, Florida

Announcements

The Sixth Annual Conference:

The Sherwood Anderson Centenary Program

The Society's Sixth Annual Conference, the Sherwood Anderson Centenary Program, will be held at the Kellogg Center of Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, on September 9, 10, and 11, 1976. Included in the program will be the active participation of more than forty scholars from the United States, Canada, England, France, and Japan, who will present papers and serve on panels; the first showing of Anderson's paintings since 1924; exhibits of portraits, including a centenary portrait painted by Gilbert Wilson, and of manuscripts, photos, and rare editions; two dramatic presentations, a live production of "The Triumph of the Egg" and the new video production "Story Teller's Town," produced by Gene H. Dent; and poetry readings. Honored guests will be Mrs. Sherwood Anderson and other members of his family. The program will be followed by a two-day program in Clyde, Ohio. For details contact: David D. Anderson, Chairman
Room 181, Ernst Bessey Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824
Phone (517) 353-4370

MidAmerica III is now available. Please order it and insure that your institutional library does so also.

MidAmerica IV is being prepared. Essays of 10-15 pages, dealing with significant aspects of Midwestern literature, are welcome, but only members' works will be published. The theme of the volume will be "Two Hundred Years of Midwestern Literature."

The Sherwood Anderson Society

At the Sherwood Anderson seminar held in December, 1974, at the MLA meeting in New York, it was decided that one of the tributes planned for 1976, Anderson's centennial year, should be a society created to honor him. It was further suggested that this organization be based at the University of Richmond, Eleanor Anderson's undergraduate alma mater.

During the past several months The Sherwood Anderson Society has taken shape, and already several dozen scholars, libraries and friends of Anderson have joined. The first issue of The Winesburg Eagle, the official Society publication (semi-annual), appeared in November, 1975. The Eagle will contain short articles, reviews, an annual bibliography, a book exchange, notes and queries, reports on work in progress, and notices of commemorative events.

You and the library of your institution are invited to join the Society. Annual dues are \$5.00; they include a year's subscription to the Eagle and full participation in all other Society activities, including the publication of articles. For details, write Welford D. Taylor, Dept. of English, University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia 23173.

At the 1977 MLA meeting in Chicago, the program for Division Three--Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century American Literature--will be devoted to Mark Twain, with preference for but not exclusive emphasis on papers dealing with Mark Twain as author, lecturer, ceremonial speaker, and culture hero. Please address any papers or inquiries to Louis J. Budd, Department of English, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina 27706.

Susan Glaspell Revisited: A Workshop Report

With an announcement in the Quad-City Times of Davenport, Iowa, on February 9, 1975, St. Ambrose College entered into the planning stages of a bicentennial project to lift the native playwright and novelist Susan Glaspell

"out of obscurity." The project became concrete in a workshop conducted by St. Ambrose College, under the direction of Sister Ritamary Bradley, Head of the English Department, on September 5/6, 1975.

Among the participants were faculty and students of St. Ambrose, delegates from the University of Iowa, members of the AAUW, teachers from the Davenport schools, and other interested individuals from the Davenport area.

As lecturers and consultants St. Ambrose College had invited three specialists on Susan Glaspell and Iowa writers in general: Dr. Clarence A. Andrews (Iowa City), author of A Literary History of Iowa (University of Iowa Press, 1972), Dr. Gerhard Bach (Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg, Germany), author of Susan Glaspell und die Provincetown Players (Marburg, 1971), and Dr. Arthur E. Waterman (Georgia State University), author of Susan Glaspell (New York, Twayne, 1966).

The following research areas from among the numerous possibilities were outlined at the beginning of the workshop as primary aims:

1. To analyze and define Susan Glaspell's role as an American writer on the basis of her intellectual and cultural background;
2. To establish her position in the development of modern American drama;
3. To suggest and outline activities for a bicentennial community festival honoring Susan Glaspell;
4. To define areas for future activities, research and scholarship.

These areas provided ample material for a number of seminars, discussions, and lectures (C. Andrews: "The Davenport Socio-cultural Milieu of the Early 20th Century;" A. Waterman: "The Theme of the 'new woman' in Glaspell's play The Verge;" G. Bach: "Susan Glaspell Revisited.")

Grouped according to the four areas indicated above, the results can be summarized as follows:

1. and 2. An initial uncritical awareness of Susan Glaspell's existence as a "local

Davenport writer" gave way to her recognition as being representative of:

- (a) the midwestern intellectual "little renaissance" in art and literature. Reflected in her dramatic writings are the advantages of using a definite cultural background as a literary resource, as well as the conflicts of the 'modern' artist with his 'conventional' society.
- (b) a literary tradition which is regional but whose influence extends beyond the physical and mental boundaries of the Midwest. She is a writer who surpasses her midwestern contemporaries in the genuine quality of her subject matter which has proven to be at once timely and timeless.

Such recognition extends to the level where a critical audience today is encouraged if not forced to accept and re-evaluate a score of controversial ideas and issues projected in her best works (namely her plays written for the experimental theater of the Provincetown Players) as being still relevant:

- in view of a clearer understanding of the midwestern socio-cultural heritage: viz. Trifles;
- in view of contemporary social issues that call for involvement: viz. Inheritors;
- in view of contemporary psychological and sociological issues that call for critical (self-) analysis: viz. The Verge.

3. Practical conclusions to be extracted from a recognition of Susan Glaspell as summarized above were formulated in a number of suggestions for bicentennial projects.

- (a) Play Production. On the basis of dramatic and literary quality, stage-ability and appeal, and topical relation to the Bicentennial, the following plays were suggested for production, either by amateur-groups, the College theater, or - as in the case of The Verge - professional theater companies:
 - One-act plays: Trifles, Close the Book, Suppressed Desires;
 - Full length plays: Inheritors, The Verge

- (b) Study Programs. The Glaspell festival, it was generally agreed, should be embedded in the broader themes of cultural learning and social experience. The following study programs and projects, therefore, were suggested to provide this background:

- courses in the St. Ambrose curriculum on Iowa writers with special emphasis on Susan Glaspell; on the Provincetown Plays and Glaspell's contribution to them; on the socialist movement in the Midwest and its Davenport origins.
- workshops and seminars closely linked with possible play-productions: reading and discussion of the individual plays to be produced;
- a bicentennial Glaspell workshop featuring lectures, seminars, and reports on projects and research areas previously neglected.

4. The lectures and seminars of this workshop produced a score of questions which either could be answered in part only or had to remain entirely unresolved. They were catalogued and assigned to specific academic areas, and their quantity gave rise to a general demand for more intensive research and scholarship. Some work, it was discovered, is already in progress, some found its genesis during the workshop, much, nevertheless, is still being neglected. The following items list those areas that might be of general interest:

- (a) St. Ambrose College has started a library collection of Glaspell-related materials. So far, it consists of primary and secondary sources on Glaspell and her circle. The collection includes, besides manuscripts, magazine articles, reviews, letters and scripts, and materials from the Newberry Collection (Chicago), a typescript of Glaspell's unpublished drama Chains of Dew. Eventually, the collection will be a primary source for Glaspell research.
- (b) Several research areas were judged to suffer from a "depression" and, therefore, to need scholarly attention:
 - Glaspell's roots in and her influence on midwestern literature; the midwestern quality of her writings: their themes, backgrounds,

ideals and ideologies.

- An analytic history of the ideas and ideologies of the social and cultural movement which Glaspell represents, including its philosophical sources (Hegel, Darwin, American Transcendentalism, Nietzsche, Freud, Jung, the Midwest Socialist Movement).
- An analysis of the female characters in Glaspell's plays and novels (dissertation on novel-heroines in progress); the social and cultural role or function of Glaspell's "new woman."
- The German roots of socialism in Iowa.
- The influences of European Naturalism and Expressionism on midwestern writers of Realism.
- An evaluation re-establishing a proper balance among the early dramatists of the modern American drama.
- The publication of critical editions of a representative cross-section of the Provincetown Plays, and of a number of Glaspell's plays (in progress).
- The publication of a critical edition of the hitherto unpublished play by Susan Glaspell, Chains of Dew (in progress).
- The publication of a bibliography of dramatic criticism of Glaspell's plays (in progress).

In retrospect, the existing awareness of Susan Glaspell as an unresolved and exciting literary "case" was reflected in the course of this workshop's development. Projects in progress were introduced and their issues weighed, giving rise to a score of new questions and theses. The success of the workshop was evidenced above all in the self-confident and balanced appraisal of Glaspell's literary achievement, an appraisal in which her importance as a writer in whom specific midwestern and national traditions converge was neither underrated nor overestimated, thus circumventing the dangers of local nostalgia and mere patriotic interest.

Gerhard Bach

The University of Chicago Press is pleased to announce the publication of SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY,

an international forum for scholarship about women.

Scholarship about women is not new. What is novel is the amount of intellectual energy men and women are now spending on such work and their application on the concepts, tools, and techniques of modern scholarship. The result is both a new awareness of the forces that have shaped our ideas of feminine and masculine and an increased questioning of the social, political, economic, and psychological arrangements that have governed relations between female and male. SIGNS is a serious interdisciplinary voice for this new consciousness and for these questionings.

SIGNS presents articles and criticism in the range of academic fields--sociology, political science, law, economics, history, biology and medicine, psychology, literary criticism and aesthetics--from writers and scholars of international reputation. Appearing in the first volume are, among others, Julia Kristeva, Elizabeth Hardwick, Hanna Papanek, James A. Brundage, Gertrud Lenzer, Marnie Mueller, Helene Cixous, and Janet M. Todd. In Spring 1976 SIGNS will also publish a special supplementary issue on occupational segregation, drawn from the Conference on Occupational Segregation held at Wellesley College in May 1975.

In addition to major articles, SIGNS will include in each issue: Review Essays, assessing the status of women, research, and current publications in a particular discipline or profession; Archives, presenting relevant documents, essays, and fiction retrieved from the past; Reports/Revisions, comprising notes on research-in-progress, meetings and upcoming events, new periodicals and programs.

SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY represents a concerted attempt to grasp a sense of the totality of women's lives and the realities of which they have been a part. Through that attempt, SIGNS seeks to illuminate the institutions and culture to which we all belong.

SIGNS is edited by Catharine R. Stimpson, Associate Professor of English at Barnard College, who has for several years been in

the forefront of the new scholarship about women. The journal is published quarterly, and one-year subscriptions may be purchased from The University of Chicago Press, 5801 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637 at \$16.00 (institutions) and \$12.00 (individuals). Single copies are also available from the Press at \$4.50 (institutions) and \$3.60 (individuals), or they may be ordered from your bookstore.

Indices to American Literary Annuals and Gift Books 1825-1865 by E. Bruce Kirkham and John W. Fink - in a printed and bound volume -

Research Publications, Inc. completed the microfilm collection in 1966. At that time, it was suggested by the academic community that the collection would be made more valuable if detailed indices were made available to guide the user through the 469 gift books and literary annuals. This bibliographic tool is now available in the form of the 634-page book entitled Indices to American Literary Annuals and Gift Books compiled by E. Bruce Kirkham and John W. Fink. RPI is pleased, and proud, to be its publisher.

The Indices is an important bibliographic tool designed to amplify the usefulness of Ralph Thompson's bibliography. Used in conjunction with Thompson's book, it will enable the researcher to locate individual stories, poems or illustrations, and to identify writers, engravers, printers, editors, etc., both quickly and easily. In fact, the Indices provides master keys to data on nearly every facet of the volumes' production and contents.

The Indices' authors and the editors at RPI realized that it would make an ideal index to the microfilm collection. Therefore, when this Indices was being created, each Thompson entry number was annotated with a microfilm reel number giving the location of each item in the microfilm collection.

A tremendous amount of detailed information on the contents of the 469 volumes was analyzed by the authors, and organized into

two parts.

Part I of the Indices reproduces the title page, publishing information, table of contents and list of illustrations with painters and engravers for each of Thompson's major entries, arranged in alphabetical order. Authors' names which appeared with the selections in the text of the book, but which were not listed in the original table of contents, have been added to the table of contents. The names of painters and engravers appearing on the plates, but omitted from the lists of illustrations, have been added to these lists. When no list of illustrations appeared in the original volume, but illustrations were included in the book, a list has been supplied. Where a name appears in more than one form, all variants have been included.

Part II contains indices for editors, publishers, cities and states of publication, stereotypers, printers, titles of poems and stories, authors, titles of illustrations, painters and engravers. The order of the indices follows the order of the information found in the entries in Part I.

The availability of this important research tool, together with at-hand access to all 469 volumes in the micropublication itself, can provide the basis for substantial and important scholarship.

HEMINGWAY AND FAULKNER: Inventors/Masters by Linda Welshimer Wagner 297 pages, 1975, \$11.00

Hemingway and Faulkner: Inventors/Masters is the first book to show the parallels between the careers of these two major American novelists. Born near the turn of the century, both Hemingway and Faulkner matured during years of exciting artistic ferment, and their early writing is a direct result of new aesthetic concerns in painting, film, and music as well as in literature.

Wagner devotes her opening chapter to a study of this artistic milieu, and then

traces the development of each writer chronologically. The later work is shown to be thematically similar but technically different from each writer's early fiction, and Wagner's craft-oriented perspective helps to make these changes in method clear. A relatively new reading of several major novels results. Her study includes all the major novels and many of the short stories of each man.

The book closes with appendices on Hemingway as poet, Faulkner as poet, and some interesting possible sources for much of Faulkner's later fiction. Notes; index.

Linda W. Wagner is Professor of English at Michigan State University and newly-elected President of the Society. Currently working on a book on John Dos Passos as a Guggenheim fellow, she is the author of two books on William Carlos Williams and others on Denise Levertov, Phyllis McGinley, and T. S. Eliot. She has edited Ernest Hemingway: Five Decades of Criticism and William Faulkner: Four Decades of Criticism, and compiled Ernest Hemingway: A Reference Guide. Her essays, poems, and short stories have appeared in many journals and magazines.

Institute in Northwest Literature and History at the University of Oregon

Under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a four-week institute will be held at the University of Oregon June 21-July 15, 1976. It is open to 20 teachers in Northwest colleges interested in learning more about this region's culture and in developing courses in Northwest literature, history, and related fields at their own colleges.

Activities of the institute will include study, research, writing, and discussion in daily sessions, Monday through Thursday, during the institute. There will also be a symposium featuring papers and discussions by leading scholars in the fields of Northwest literature, history, folklore, etc.; workshops on developing materials for classroom and community use; as well as films,

recordings, slide-tapes, dramatic and artistic presentations. The institute will serve to focus attention upon the cultural significance of the Northwest and to celebrate and commemorate the Centennial of the University of Oregon and the Bicentennial of the United States.

Project directors are Edwin R. Bingham and Glen A. Love.

FILMSTRIP AND CASSETTE COMMENTARY ON KANSAS LITERATURE PREPARED FOR KANSAS BICENTENNIAL USE

Dr. Ben W. Fuson, professor of English at Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina, Kansas 67401, has just prepared BICENTENNIAL MILESTONES IN KANSAS LITERATURE, a 110-frame filmstrip accompanied by an 80-minute running commentary spoken by Dr. Fuson and recorded on cassette. A complete typescript is available, and also a 40-minute abridged typescript for use on occasions when the full lecture overruns a limited time slot.

Sets of this presentation (filmstrip/cassette/typescripts) are now in the following Kansas repositories: library of Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; Porter Library, Kansas State College at Pittsburg; Salina, Kansas, Public Library; and Western Kansas Heritage and Cultural Center, Dodge City. Loan arrangements may be made for use of the filmstrip in college and highschool classes, study clubs, etc. Kansas Wesleyan's Department of English also has a set--and also the original color slides and master tape. Sets may be purchased outright for \$40 each, prepaid; address orders with payment to Dept. of English, Kansas Wesleyan, Salina 67401.

The presentation is informative and informal, and should be especially timely during this Bicentennial period.

William V. Miller has been elected President of the Indiana College English Association

Joseph F. Trimmer was named Book Review Editor for The Old Northwest: A Journal of Regional Life and Letters published at Miami University (Oxford). Trimmer's article, "Myths and Monuments: Three American Arches," appears in Houghton-Mifflin's annual magazine, English News.

Frederick Manfred and Siouxland: Re-Examination and Re-Emergence

For more than thirty years, Frederick Manfred has continued to write substantial, incisive novels set in the upper Midwest of his origins, and for almost all of that time he has exhibited a remarkable unconcern for recognition, particularly from critics of the not necessarily mutually exclusive Eastern or academic varieties.

Perhaps the most important reason for that concern is the fact that he has been too busy to notice or to pay much attention because during those three decades he has been one of the few American writers to create an authentic world of his own--that which he calls Siouxland--; people it, and trace the mutual development of its history and myth. The record of this accomplishment--nineteen novels and collections of stories and verse--is impressive evidence of his concern with his own work, as is the fact that his works from the 1944 publication of his first novel, The Golden Bowl, through that of the Giant in 1951, were published under the name Feike Feikema, and not until 1954 did Frederick Manfred appear on Lord Grizzly.

Nevertheless, Manfred's massive and major achievement has long demanded recognition, and the publication of Joseph M. Flora's Frederick Manfred in Boise State University's Western Writers Series, following the publication of Conversations With Frederick Manfred in 1974 is indication that Manfred's work is gaining the academic recognition that a handful of us have long known that it deserves. Manfred is an important writer, one of our few true regionalists, and, perhaps more than any other living writer, he understands what it is that has made America and Americans, in Siouxland and out of it,

what it is and what they are.

Professor Flora's Frederick Manfred is a good introduction to Manfred's works, and it makes important generalizations about the nature of his achievement: that "he has achieved a place in American literature;" that he is a "maverick.../who insists upon remaining/ free from literary coteries and foreign models;" that "...an even larger acceptance...is already on its way."

Perhaps the most important evidence supporting Professor Flora's generalizations is the appearance of Manfred's newest novel, The Manly-Hearted Woman (Crown, New York, 1976, \$7.95) in March of this year. This is a return to origins, to the Indian past that provides foundations in both history and myth to his Siouxland. The story, derived from the Dakota lore of the area, is that of two young Dakotas, Flat Warclub, a young brave, and Manly Heart, a young woman who takes on a brave's identity after a vision. Their destinies become bound together during a fight against the Omahas, and Manfred explores their sensitivities, their roles, their identities, and their relationships with their tribes in a manner as intriguingly and frighteningly contemporary as it is authentically mythical.

Just as Manfred's people and his region live in the Golden Bowl, Lord Grizzly, and the others, they do also in the Manly-Hearted Woman; his people, whether Indians, mountain men, or settlers, are, like Manfred himself, larger than life, and they, too, are mavericks, sensitive seekers of an elusive, visionary fulfillment. The Manly-Hearted Woman of the title and Flat Warclub are worthy additions to the population of Manfred's Siouxland, and the novel itself is a first-rate narrative as well as a sensitive recreation of a time and people who, though long-gone, still cast their long shadows over the landscape.

David D. Anderson

The Great Lakes Review's Second Issue

The quality and variety of the pieces in the

second issue of Great Lakes Review at once impress the reader with the importance of this scholarship. Seas of material remain to be mapped if we are to understand our culture. How did so much remain unknown for so long?

Paying as much attention to image as to substance is said to be a contemporary vice. But Jerome Rodnitsky shows that Edmund James as president of the University of Illinois from 1904 to 1918 was both an educational leader and, perforce, a creator of an image of the university that extolled intellectual and service functions while appealing to state pride. We academics will say that what any university contributed to its society is primarily its education of the young. But the society's understanding of the university is at least as much a consequence of the actions of its president (well--and its football coach). More study of the leadership of universities would show us how our society and its institutions have functioned. We have a fair number of biographies of presidents, usually with a parochial slant; we need more studies that focus on the nature of an institution's administration, on how this has influenced, and been influenced by, the culture.

Joseph Amato's "Parents and Grandparents: We Are All Immigrants and Migrants" again explores a theme that tantalizes because so much is there but so little is known, let alone understood. Amato's rambling essay might have been more effective if presented in a disciplined form such as the short story; but it opens a door on a terrain that is accessible to all of us though generally ignored.

To my taste, Jack Kerouac's On the Road does not merit the attention that Ronald Primeau's solemn article gives it. Blair Whitney also over-values his material when he remarks, with apparent approval, that college courses are treating Indian literature of the Great Lakes "as seriously as Shakespeare or Joyce." And there has been, as the journal's bibliography shows, enough study of this material to suggest that Whitney errs in describing it as "little known." But of course Indian culture is not well enough known. Extensive bibliographies of studies by anthropologists

and literary critics do not prove that the larger world knows anything of the subject.

The issue also gives a bibliography of folklore in the Midwest, and a current bibliography. Reviews include Victor Contoski's consideration of three books of verse by Midwestern poets--a matter even less well understood than immigrant history and Indian culture. The leading impression remains: together with the new courses in Midwest literature and culture appearing in college catalogs, and the several other new regional journals of culture, the Review is opening doors to a world that we must no longer shut away.

Bernard F. Engel

Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature
Newsletter

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An Open Invitation

It is still possible to hear the meadow lark's song ascending as one walks down a Midwest country road in May or June, though the occasion will be less frequent than it was for Willa Cather or Mari Sandoz. It is still possible - even if increasingly improbable - to find the choicest asparagus, that wild, sweetest kind, along the fence or wind rows. It is still possible for students and professional writers to record the melody, the substance, and the distinctive flavor of Midwest experience - past or present.

The materials for poetry and fiction, for historical research, and for journalistic reporting about the era of settlement of this region and the subsequent developments are almost as available as they have ever been though never before from this year's perspective. Yet the availability of these sources is speedily diminishing because of the deterioration of written materials and because of the death of persons who have first-hand knowledge about particular experiences. In this note, therefore, I have a two-fold purpose: to alert interested persons to a few items that seem worthy of further study, and modestly to suggest that students of whatever level or genre may find, like the Hamlin Garlands and Mari Sandozes among us, the most fertile sources and resources in their own locales. Furthermore, considering the surfeit of bicentennial feast or famine we are presently being served, many persons may find new pleasure in plain Midwestern fare.

If an indigenous literature is to develop further, is there a more effective way than for it to grow from the consonance of a student's own Midwest life and his/her search for the local or regional source of the particular qualities of that life? A neophyte's quest for little known facts and figures of local, regional, or wider interest may be the route by which he/she discovers the excitement of intellectual pursuit for its own sake, as well as discovering the relation of the past to current experience. Then, working through the

difficulties of expository expression, often as hard to crib as an obstreperous calf, the student finds it necessary to improve his way with words, to record his own voice. Such creative necessity arises, as all you readers know, whether it happens to a professional writer of established reputation or to a freshman beginner, but, if it should happen to the latter, teacher and student as well as others gain.

Several experiences occasion this comment. Recently I ran onto references to a local woman who was widely admired throughout Midwest Populist circles but little acclaimed at home. Sarah Elizabeth Van de Vort Emery lived in Lansing, Michigan from 1869 to 1895. She was a teacher and an author who espoused Populist, woman's rights, and temperance causes. Her books and speeches in behalf of the Populist cause (from 1887 to 1893) brought her enthusiastic audiences throughout the Midwest; her arguments were sufficiently cogent to arouse detailed responses from her chief political target, Secretary of Treasury John Sherman, whose anti-trust legislation, she saw, primarily, as a cruel hoax. Shortly I hope to present further aspects of her contributions to the issues of her times. But what I intend is only a beginning. The material merits more. The difficulty is that the original material (as far as I have found) is very fragile and rapidly deteriorating. I have reproduced copies of most of this and on request shall be glad to loan it. Anyone interested in the Michigan labor movement, temperance, feminism, politics, or Lansing history may find something useful.

Like unwinding a ball of hoarded string, Mrs. Emery's name led to many others, criss-crossing all the geography of the region: such names as "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, "Cipher" Ignatius Donnelly, on to Reedy's Mirror, and The Prairie Schooner; they all entice one to follow the string. One of these names was Annie L. Diggs. She probably is well known in Kansas where she was active in Populist affairs as an organizer, speaker, and an effective social reformer. Surely there is a story there for wider audiences.

In 1844, not far from Kalamazoo, Michigan, Dr. H. R. Shetterly founded Alphadelphia (first brotherhood) and published The Primitive Expounder. Alphadelphia was an agricultural commune of about 200 members, not long lived, but surely of interest. Dr. Shetterly's papers and the official papers of this commune are in the Michigan Historical Collection at the University of Michigan. Incidental to other pursuits I have come upon a few references to this group which I shall be glad to pass on. I don't know the extent or value of this material, but at least the imagination is teased.

Having lived on a farm, in small towns, small and large cities in six of the twelve states ordinarily thought of as Midwestern and for three or more years in each location, I know the literary and historical dimensions of each and every geographic spot are largely hidden, waiting development. The subjects will be unique to each locale yet expressive of a common Midwestern milieu. But there are difficulties. Midwesterners, I believe have not traditionally had much faith in the importance of their story (except the fact they endured the harshness of homesteading), nor have they "kept things." Neither journals, nor letters, news clippings, nor other memorabilia such as even today are available to scholars of the Adams family or of Thomas Jefferson, et al, will be found extensively; neither, if found, will they be as sophisticated or erudite. Aware of this, Midwesterners are often apologetic. But two circumstances also suggest that we may be surprised.

The intentness and the lively sense of search seen on the faces of persons looking up genealogical data in the section of a library set apart for such research indicates largely untapped sources for other material. And the reports of mounting interest evidenced by applicants for registry as state centennial families suggest a curiosity and a pride in roots, even while ordinarily most Midwesterners tend to be modest, private, or oblivious of such claims.

As you no doubt have already seen, the possibilities are almost limitless, whether the

story begins with the serpentine mounds of southern Ohio or with the rolling tumbleweed that carries along a restless and lonesome South Dakota spirit. Surely some sequel (better written) can blend the nineteenth century of Donnelly's Caesar's Column with the more recent and unique political history of Minnesota. And the openings do not stop with the past. If, indeed, the achievements of the Minneapolis Regional Citizens Council in improving the quality of life are as beneficial as we are told, surely the experience deserves communication as free of polluting jargon as the cleared air and the restored water of Lake Minnetonka and environs.

Obviously, this lure and lore will bring no sure-fire material gain. Rather it is for those who can let ideas float like Midwest thistle-down or milkweed seed, carried in harmony with the breeze, alighting in uncertainty; millions more fly than take root. It's a growing situation, yeasty, full of enzymes tending to other letters of invitation.

Larks and wild asparagus may be crowded out; papers dry, become fragile, deteriorate; people who were there, or who remember others who were, die. But the excitement of discovery and the kinship to present experience can engender a kind of regeneration. So the fields of literary and historical imagination await a 1976 harvest.

Jerry Thornton

The Actress in Cather's Novel My Antonia

In Book III of My Antonia, regional classic by Willa Cather, Jim Burden, the narrator, escorted Lena Lingard to the theater to see Camille. They saw the leading actress transform the stage through her moving performance. Jim described her as "already old, with a ravaged countenance and a physique curiously hard and stiff." He commented that he thought that she was lame, having remembered some story about a malady of the spine. These notations in the novel published in 1918 lead the reader to suspect

that the actress was, in reality, Sarah Bernhardt.

As a child, Miss Bernhardt, a famous French actress, shattered her kneecap, which may have started the suffering that she was to have with her leg in later life. She had the leg amputated in 1915 but continued to perform in Europe and even toured in America in 1917 at the age of seventy-two. On an earlier tour in the United States it is certain that Willa Cather saw the actress in Camille, for she wrote in the Nebraska State Journal on June 16, 1895, page 12: "Bernhardt enjoys Camille." In a review of the play, Miss Cather described Camille as perfection. Whether or not Sarah Bernhardt was seen in this play in 1917 after the amputation is uncertain. However, her injured knee could have left the impression of physical rigidity on Miss Cather at any earlier date.

Willa Cather in the capacity of journalist and reviewer for the Nebraska State Journal and Pittsburgh Leader travelled widely. While working on The Library, another magazine, she spent the winter in Washington with the opportunity of seeing Miss Bernhardt. Miss Cather in her articles on art idolized the actress apparently. She said of Bernhardt's perfection in La Tosca: "It is a thing of feeling, you cannot apprehend it intellectually at all." "Under Bernhardt's emotional power and physical impact is a perfect art, the result of rigorous training." "She never was beautiful," she wrote in the Journal on October 14, 1894, but the actress, compelling admiration, did not let her age and wrinkles trouble her. Miss Cather spoke frequently of the actress's perfect voice. "She phrases her lines as if they were music" (Journal, August 11, 1895, page 9). Miss Cather stated that Bernhardt, the actress, "was never at her best before her fortieth year" (Journal, May 3, 1896, page 13). She had what Cather called the "old, eternal, primitive power of life," reminiscent of Antonia's "fire of life." Bernhardt was a good deal like certain human emotions "that everyone studies and reads about and theorizes on, and then, when they

once actually experience them, they are knocked senseless."

About Camille, she wrote: "If you have seen her (Bernhardt) in the fourth act of Camille when she meets Armand once again, catches his hand and passes it swiftly over her face and arms, draws one quivering breath and then takes his curses in silent stupor," one then can comprehend the impact on Jim and Lena of that same scene. (Introduced to Dumas in college, Willa Cather must have liked his plays since her reviews of them are usually complimentary." She wrote in 1895: "Camille unites in itself those affinities so seldom mated, measureless feeling and perfect form" (meaning logical construction). The play with its emphasis on morality was a suitable choice by Miss Cather for her chronicle of events in My Antonia. And the fact that the play was one of Sarah Bernhardt's repertoire further confirms the belief the aged and crippled actress so admired by Jim and Lena could only be the strong and legendary Miss Bernhardt.

Jean B. Bridges

From a Midwest Notebook: Distant Relatives

There is something satisfying, a distinct personal reward, in making the discovery and acquaintance of a distant relative. Of near relatives we all have--have we not?--too many. Who has not among his cousins one he shrinks from, whose every visit is an annoyance or an ordeal, an uncle who is a bore, or an aunt who is a pest? But a distant relative is of another species--in effect unrelated--one of that tribe whom we may speak of as "related", or merely "connected"; or completely ignore.

Some years ago I discovered that among the early settlers in the region where I live were two of my sixty-four great-great-great-great-grandparents, William Brundige and his wife Anna. And, as their descendants of the three succeeding generations were recorded, I was able to construct an extensive and elaborate genealogical chart. For information

about later offspring, there were a number of relatives to consult, and my first cousin twice removed, Anna S., told me of another cousin in another line who was also interested in assembling and charting family history.

So began a correspondence and subsequently occurred a meeting with Hazel B., my fourth cousin once removed. "My Cousin Hazel," I said to the lady of my household, "is going to New York and asks if it will be convenient if she stops here and stays with us a few days. I trust I may answer that it will be convenient."

"I've never heard you mention any Cousin Hazel. Who is she?"

"She is my fourth cousin once removed. I've never seen her, but I'm sure she's an agreeable woman."

"If she's like -- But you always say you can't stand --"

"Relatives improve with distance. Third cousins once removed are tolerable, some fourth cousins are rather interesting people, and Hazel --"

"Your fourth cousin once removed! How does she get to be that?"

"Hazel is the great-great-great-granddaughter of my Great-great-granduncle Daniel, who was an older brother of my Great-great-grandfather Samuel."

"Your mother's side or your father's?"

"My mother's."

"Mother's mother's or mother's father's?"

"Mother's mother's."

"Mother's mother's mother's or mother's mother's father's?"

Mother's mother's mother's. Samuel was my mother's mother's mother's father. Daniel was Hazel's mother's father's mother's mother's father. She and I are about the

same age, as Daniel's line got in another generation. Now my cousin Wendell, whose mother's father's mother was Mary, Daniel's and Samuel's in-between sister, has a son, Bob, my fourth cousin, to whom Hazel is likewise a fourth cousin once removed, and to Wendell she is a third cousin twice removed. My fourth Cousin Sarah's father's mother's mother's mother was Nancy, a younger sister to Daniel, Mary, and Samuel. That makes her, like me, a third cousin once removed to Wendell, a fourth cousin to Bob, and a fourth cousin once removed to Hazel. And there are my third cousins Mildred and Cora, who are the great-granddaughters of my Great-grandaunt Jane Ann, who was Samuel's daughter, and my second cousin once removed, Pauline, the granddaughter of my Great-granduncle Cyrus, who was Samuel's son. You see, we all stand on our respective rungs in several ladders meeting at the top."

"I'll never be the same woman again. Yes, you may tell Hazel to come if you promise to keep her from trying to straighten me out on your relationship."

Hazel came, and I met her at the railroad station, a tall, square-shouldered woman with dark hair and gray eyes. The next day we called on several of our relatives, to whom I introduced her as "Mrs. B., your second cousin three times removed." Or I might say: "This is Mrs. B., the great-great-great-granddaughter of my Great-great-granduncle Daniel." I became adept at expressing degrees of relationship, and astounded my auditors with my glibness.

To our Cousin Anna I said: "Hazel is your second cousin three times removed."

Anna looked bewildered, and I explained. Hazel wanted to know a lot of things about our ancestors that Anna didn't know, but she thought Cousin Lydia might be able to give the answers, or Cousin Horace. Cousin Horace perhaps would be able to remember more about the older generations. He was eighty-eight. Lydia and Horace, daughter and son of, respectively, Samuel's daughter Clara and son John, were first cousins to each other and to Anna, first cousins twice

removed to me, and second cousins three times removed to Hazel.

We found Cousin Horace emerging from his barn in a bitter mood. "That dad-blamed bull got out again, and I had a dad-blamed whale of a time gittin' 'im back. Went through the melon patch and smashed a dozen of the best Stone Mountains I ever grewed."

"Maybe you can save pieces of them," I said. "Or weren't they ripe yet?"

"Just about. I was aimin' to bring some in. Let me get a couple for you."

He wouldn't give us any but perfect melons. There isn't any better watermelon than a Stone Mountain.

In a genealogical way Cousin Horace was unilluminating. I could have told Hazel it would be like that, but Hazel is the kind of woman who has to be shown.

In the evening we looked at the pictures in the family album. "This chap with the funny whiskers, did you say he is Horace's father?"

"Horace's Uncle James, Anna's father. This is Horace's father, with a beard like a coal stove."

"Oh, what a solemn-looking little girl!"

"That is Ruth, your great-great-great-grandaunt."

In the family--the parental household--of my Great-great-grandfather Samuel and my Great-great-granduncle Daniel were ten siblings, of whom Ruth (who died at nine) was the only one prevented from fulfilling the human destinies of marriage and reproduction--and her name was carried on by a niece, one of Samuel's daughters, and by the niece's grandniece, my mother. With several second marriages in the first Ruth's generation, widows with children marrying widowers with children and having more children--a chart showing all relationships would look like the green bay tree.

"Our lives," said Hazel, "are but moments in time like theirs and all the others'. Sixty or seventy or a hundred years from now somebody like you and me will be laughing at our pictures and talking about us."

And as Hazlitt said, several times, no young man believes he shall ever die. But we are sojourners in life, and the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy. So instead of thinking on the lugubrious prospect we look backward, and I have found it interesting to record some vital statistics and to speculate on the personalities of these people who are but names on gravestones, many of those names almost obliterated by weather and time. Another of Samuel's sisters, Elizabeth, married a man named Phipps, and their children died young: James in 1819 at the age of two, Moses in 1826 and Ruth in 1831 each at four years and two months. Aaron, who died in 1838, was seventeen. Whether they had other children who lived to maturity I have not learned. But these four young Phippses, my first cousins three times removed, their gravestones in a row--were they not sweet new blossoms of humanity that never came to fruition?

In pursuit of genealogical data I have spent much time in graveyards, recording barely readable dates and inscriptions, and once I came on the stone of Willie Thomas, who departed this life 16 May 1870. His stone adjures: "Sleep on, sweet Willie, and take thy rest. God called thee home. He thought it best." I cannot claim Willie among my forebears, though I am inclined to regret I cannot. He was but another blossom who dropped to earth, at the age of eight.

Rich or poor, distant relatives cannot overmuch affect you. If they are rich, you cannot reasonably expect to inherit from them and do not build hopes on such a possibility. If they are poor, there is yet little chance that they may sponge on you. If they are thieves or murderers, you are free to claim or disclaim them according to the impression you may wish to create. I have always felt it would be a distinction to

have a pirate or a robber baron in the family. My remote cousins were mostly staid and respectable people, the few exceptions being commonplace drunkards with only one murderer among them. This man, a cousin to my Great-grandmother Editha Phillips (so I may call him a first cousin three times removed), quarreled with his son and killed him. My ancestors, I am sure, thought that a deplorable and sordid affair (as it doubtless was) and omitted it from family tradition--I discovered the fact altogether by accident.

My friend H. recounts a more colorful episode in the life of a female second cousin once removed--she was the granddaughter of his great-granduncle--which made her an eminently respectable, and respected, manslayer. This lady, being of the species known as maiden ladies, preserved and guarded her virginity to and beyond middle age--despite designs and efforts of pursuing males. One suitor, however, persisted to an extent that became annoying to her. Her tolerance at an end, she refused to open the door to him and told him from within the house that if he broke it open she would shoot him. Undeterred by a woman's threat, he broke open the door and received a blast from both barrels of a twelve-gauge shotgun in his belly. That, said my friend, was a misfortune from which he never recovered.

Long-dead collateral kin cannot properly be thought of, however, as distant relatives, for they are as distant as heaven and hell and scarcely more related than the sons and daughters of Cain. Everybody has them, nobody claims them as relation. You never saw them, any more than you saw your great-great-grandparents, or cannot remember them if you did. It is only a cousin of a living generation--your own or that just before or after it--who really counts. But to find a fourth cousin once removed--and to find in that person a kindred spirit, as I found in Hazel B.--that is truly a joy and a delight.

William Thomas

Nebraska, the World, and Willa Cather

Philip Gerber's new assessment of Willa Cather, no. 258 in Twayne's United States Author Series, represents two important events in the re-vitalized study of Midwestern literature: the spate of renewed interest in Willa Cather, growing out of the recent centennial of her birth, and the remarkable outpouring of studies of authors who would otherwise remain neglected, the most important contribution of what has come to be known as "the Twayne Series," made up of "Twayne Books."

Professor Gerber's assessment of Cather is one of the solidest of Twayne's uneven but valuable series, and it is a rational, balanced view of Cather's achievement and her place in American literary history. In his assessment of her achievement, Gerber succinctly summarizes what has been considered her major literary accomplishment: "Willa Cather's premeditated effort to refine her language, to purify it, resulted in the creation of an instrument at once subtle, evocative, and flexible..." and he points out the direction that future Cather criticism must take: "Cather as artist and Cather as social critic." At the same time he avoids excess, however tempting it may be; his quote of Morton Zabel's assessment, "It was her honesty and stubborn sincerity...that made possible her contribution to literature," is not only an accurate and definitive statement of the meaning of Cather's life and work, but at the same time it says much about the nature of the Midwestern writers who came out of obscurity to make their national marks in the first quarter of this century.

Professor Gerber's book has another reward for its reader: he writes well. The result is a contribution to Cather scholarship and the art of the critical biography as well as an example of the major contribution to American literary study that the Twayne Series has made under the expert guidance of Professor Sylvia Bowman.

David D. Anderson

A Memorial to John T. Frederick (1893-1975)

In any discussion of Midwestern literary history today the conversation inevitably turns sooner or later to one man and his work. The man was the late John T. Frederick and the work was The Midland, the journal that he nourished and sustained single-handedly and almost single-mindedly between 1915 and 1933, when it disappeared in the social upheaval of that year.

During those years, Midwestern writing, the Midland, and John Frederick became synonymous in the minds of those who, like Frederick, were convinced of the worth of writing in the American heartland and the valuable role of what H. L. Mencken described as "probably the most influential literary periodical ever set up in America" in disseminating that writing.

Now, finally, the story of Frederick and The Midland has been written by Milton M. Reigelman in The Midland: A Venture in Literary Regionalism, published by The University of Iowa Press. One's first reaction is inevitably, first of all, wondering why it had not been done before (Fred Hoffman et al were accurate in their statement in The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography (Princeton, 1946) that the Midland "must be ranked alongside" Emerson's the Dial, The Little Review, and Poetry among influential, substantial literary journals, but that assessment was necessarily undetailed).

Professor Reigelman's study supplies the detail that has long been lacking, and in gathering it he was fortunate in having John Frederick's assistance and encouragement. The result is both history and criticism. Reigelman divides the study into three parts: "The History;" "The Editorial Polity - Regionalism;" and "The Literature." Two particularly useful appendices are his indexes of contributors and of book reviews in the journal. The parts combine to produce perhaps the most useful study in literary regionalism and particularly of a central figure and journal that has appeared in recent years. As a

dedicated reader of indexes, however, I have one complaint: the book lacks one, an oversight that I hope will be omitted in future editions.

In general, however, John Frederick would be pleased with the result. His interest in the literature of the area remained strong to the end, and his encouragement during the first year of this Society's existence insured its continuation. The book and the Society are in many ways his memorial.

David D. Anderson

It Will Never Come Again: a review of THE COUNTRY IN THE BOY, by William Thomas (Thomas Nelson, Inc. 191 pp. \$6.95)

William Thomas says his book is not literal autobiography. On the dust jacket the work is called - not very accurately - a "novel." It is actually a loosely episodic chronicle, depicting, affectionately but unsentimentally, farm life more than a half century ago in north central Ohio on the banks of the Scioto river. It was an era before tractors and T.V., before chemical fertilizers and weed-control concoctions. Getting into the world and out of it was still a domestic affair that took place upstairs. The family came down from unheated bedrooms before sun-up to splash cold water on their faces and to wipe the sleep out of their eyes on a roller towel.

William Thomas, now a retired university professor and a member of the Society from its beginning, was born in the village of Prospect, Ohio, on the Scioto. He knows the region thoroughly. Into his excellent portrayal of a pattern of life now long gone, he evidently wished not to give the appearance of intruding his personal life. But his reticence and modesty, while becoming, are not necessary. He has produced a nourishing slice of rural nostalgia. He presents a period, a locale, a simplicity, that you dream of when you're driving home on Friday night after a searing week at the plastic factory, your mind bogged with urban

complexities, the air rank with exhaust fumes.

In the opening chapter Thomas describes a flood on the Scioto, then moves on to the old farmhouse where a "Majestic" cook stove, "bulky and imposing, outperformed any other piece of furniture we had. From morning till night it was never idle,....the teakettle simmered on one of its back lids; when food wasn't cooking, flat irons stood heating. The reservoir at the end held an ever-ready supply of warm water."

"Willie," the narrator, like many farm boys, was a coupon-clipper. He tried to get on everyone's mailing list. He received, "absolutely free and without obligation," valuable offers from A. G. Spalding & Sons, and Lionel Strongfort. If, from where he stood on the banks of the Scioto, he could guess how many beans were in a glass jar in Chicago he might win a valuable prize, perhaps a miniature steam engine. Sometimes he received samples of shaving soap and hair oil.

"Susan was my favorite aunt," Thomas writes. "She could whittle a whistle out of a spool, stretch a blade of grass between her thumbs and make it screech like a siren, or blow on a dandelion stem so that it sounded like a foghorn." The household got spices, extracts, flavorings, and horse liniment from the Watkins man and the Raleigh man. And Willie's mother said things like, "Esther was married the spring the Farmer's Elevator burned down."

We are given good descriptions of the one-room school house with its outside privies, the Friday afternoon spelldowns, box socials, cream separators, the distinctive odors of blacksmith shops and the shoeing of horses, the arrival of threshing rigs, and the wretched job of stacking straw in August heat.

And William Thomas does some memorable characterizations of farm people he knew as a boy. One in particular stands out, Jessie Van Brimmer, a most unusual woman. Jessie had a "past;" she had killed a man. At times Thomas's writing matches in its flatness, the dullness of certain aspects of rural life. Yet, more often he sees what Theodore Roethke called the "poetry in sausages" and writes a

swift, evocative prose that unobtrusively achieves those "slightly heightened transcripts of reality" he is striving for.

William McCann
