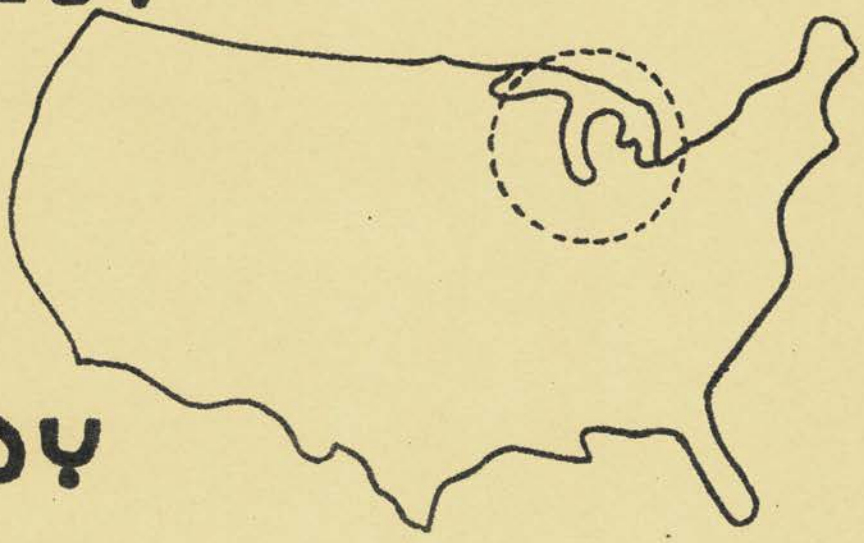
SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF



MIDWESTERN LITERATURE

Newsletter
Volume Four
Number Three
Fall, 1974

Society for the Study of

Midwestern Literature

Newsletter

Number Three
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Volume IV

The Fourth Annual Conference

The Fourth Annual Conference was held at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, on October 12, 1974. Three sessions, including a luncheon session at noon, were held. The following reports summarize the sessions:

The Morning Session

The conference was opened by President Alma Payne. At the morning session, chaired by Professor Nancy H. Pogel, six panelists addressed themselves to the topic, "Women in Midwestern Literature."

In "Caroline and Will" Professor Henry Golemba, Wayne State University, defined "Will" in two senses, "Will" as the name of Caroline Kirkland's husband, and "Will" as "will-power, the passion to get one's own way, the ability to make one's desires prevail." Golemba finds "no pleasant tales of pastoral bliss" in Kirkland's novels. Instead, her books are "full of conflict, clash and tension, especially between wills, especially between men and women." Kirkland deals with battles "not only between the sexes," but with "skirmishes between rich and poor, hunters and farmers, civilization and wilderness, elitists and republicans, employers and employees and many many others." Michigan's "first accomplished writer "does not "gloss over the problem of Will. She confronts it in all its ramifications in the setting of pioneer Michigan."

Professor Robert Bray, Illinois Wesleyan University, re-examined Kirkland's 1839 novel, A New Home. Bray classifies A New Home, not as a conventional "action model" novel, but as "an ironic acculturation story." Therein, unlike the usual "acculturation" story, "the frontier becomes the superior culture while the migrating Easterner must gain entrance to a human community previously disdained from the safe vantage of the urban and urbane East." Professor Bray recognizes that the form was also the basis for Eggleston's Ohio Novels and for Twain's Roughing It. Bray concludes that "Although Kirkland did not create ex-nihilo a new literary form, her version is a genuine contribution that needs to be recognized. . . . The artistic synthesis of form, matter and manner in A New Home offers historians and critics a solidly grounded reference point from which to mar the out-going milestones of midwestern realism."

The Dollmaker, a Detroit novel by Harriett Arnow, was described by Professor Pauline Adams, Michigan State University, as an "ordinary novel" which is "truly anchored" and "tuned into the sense of place," a novel which possesses a quality of "bigness" that will make it "a classic." "Detroit life, as it was and is lived by one sizeable segment of Detroiters is accurately recreated." But there are additional dimensions to "local reality" as Detroit was "a crucial source of America's twentieth century industrial civilization," and many of the novel's "Hillbilly" characters, the migrants to the city, "pre-industrial people," are "catapulted into a super-industrialized society and its unaccustomed rhythm of work and life."

"Mari Sandoz and the Prairie," was Professor Helen Stauffer's study of an author who always considered herself a regional writer and who argued that "America still (in 1937) had sharply defined cultural areas." For Sandoz the Midwest and particularly Nebraska had "unique characteristics" because of both geographical and historical features. Mari Sandoz found "material for writing in every small community as well as in the larger

The Dollmaker
Continued

cities, but the most important theme to her, she said, was that of the farmer and his relationship to the land." Sandoz, like many other regional writers, believed, "that Western and Midwestern regionalism is founded on the conflict between the primitive world of the Indian and that of the advancing white man." Mari Sandoz's regionalism is reflected not only in her story-telling abilities, her choice of conflict and subject, but in her colloquial style and in the language for which she had to fight with Eastern editors and publishers. Professor Stauffer teaches at Kearney State University, Nebraska.

Ms. Peggy Treece's paper, "A Hidden Woman of Local Color: Mrs. Mary Hartwell Catherwood," describes Ms. Treece's difficulties as she researched the life and works of an unknown midwestern woman writer. Catherwood is shown to be a writer who gained from her Midwestern experience, who "combined a clear sense of time and place with themes such as the contrast between rural and city living, urbanization, and regional history." Catherwood's work contains a number of appreciations of the "undisturbed simple beauty of the Midwest in contrast to the "fashionable" city. Ms. Treece also noted the struggle for equality between marriage partners in Catherwood's stories, and she finds Mrs. Catherwood's own early life as a struggling young woman in a fiercely competitive world revealed in the female characters who show a definite tendency to portray "the new liberated woman" who was appearing in the late nineteenth century. Ms. Treece is doing graduate work and teaching at Bowling Green State University.

Frederick Eckman, poet and Professor of English at Bowling Green State University was the morning session's last speaker. Professor Eckman presented a critical appreciation and several readings from the little known works of a midwestern woman poet, Laurine Niedecker.

Nancy Pogel
Michigan State University

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The Noon Session

The quest for yesterday which tantalizes so many of today's youth permeates the works of many 19th century Midwest writers, according to Dr. Alma J. Payne, director of the Center for American Studies at Bowling Green State University.

Dr. Payne, a recognized literary scholar and President of the Society, addressed an Oct. 12 meeting of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature in MSU's Kellogg Center for Continuing Education.

She saw turn-of-the-century authors' works as "a retreat before the militant complexity which was the late 19th century, back to the seeming simplicity of an earlier age, an age of established values, an age when sense of community prevented the alienation of the individual, when personal identity denied submersion of self in a mechanized mass."

Dr. Payne, an officer of many American studies organizations, pointed out that the Midwest was both "a resource and a refuge" to the early 19th century writer.

She noted that the writers "used the Midwest as a resource -- a literary quarry from which they obtained the basic material for their structure" -- despite feelings which, more often than not, were negative. They drew on their own lives and their own communities, she counseled.

She said that her studies of William Dean Howells, author and longtime editor of the Atlantic Monthly, and his Midwest contemporaries are revealing an attitudinal pattern -- a rhythm of repulsion and attraction: the writers not only depict the wild beauty, romance, sympathy, humor and unity of life in the early Midwest, they also include the harshness, the hard work, drudgery, tragedy, loneliness, hypocrisy and and religiosity which were also part of the frontier picture.

She noted that some authors, including Howells, attempted to reshape society in the image of earlier American institutions.

And she added that some, including Howells and Mark Twain, in their later years, revisited the scenes of their youth, seeking again "the wine of life" only to find that a changing society had destroyed the security which they remembered. Virginia Baird
Information Services

Afternoon Session

The afternoon session of the fourth annual conference of the Society featured five speakers. The session, chaired by Paul Ferlazzo of Michigan State University, focused on Midwestern Popular Culture in Midwestern Literature.

Prof. Ronald Primeau of Central Michigan University spoke on "The Midwestern Slave Narrative: Historical Document and Popular Fiction." Noting the analogous responses of the slave and the dime-novel hero to their restrictive environments, Prof. Primeau focused on Happy Smith's 50 Years in Slavery (Grand Rapids, 1891) a hybrid of the ante-bellum slave narrative and the dime-novel.

Mrs. Patricia Anderson, Librarian at Pleasant View School in Lansing, took as her subject, "Everyday Life in the Midwest: Popular Preoccupations in Children's Books." Speaking of several popular children's books with Midwestern settings, Mrs. Anderson drew attention to recurrent characteristics. Among the elements noted were a sense of continual movement, and preoccupations with machines and with the weather.

Clarence Andrews, Professor at Michigan Technological University spoke on the history, legends, and culture of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Going back in time to the region's earliest inhabitants, Prof. Andrews surveyed the facts as well as the fallacies which make the Upper Peninsula an area of great interest.

Prof. Gene H. Dent of Lakeland Community College described the trials and triumphs of making a documentary videotape of Clyde, Ohio, the town Sherwood Anderson used as a model for Winesburg, Ohio. The project grew out of his experience of teaching the novel to urban students who had a poor concept of a small town and small town life.

Prof. Dorys C. Grover of East Texas State University spoke on "Hough and Koerner: Versions of the Old West." Delineating the relationship between the novelist Emerson Hough and the artist William Koerner, Prof. Grover focused on the complementary versions of the Old West both men shared. Their work mixes realism with a romanticized view of the Old West.

Paul Ferlazzo
Michigan State University

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Notice of New Dues Structure Approved by the Membership at the Annual Conference on October 12, 1974

Member emeritus (receives Newsletter)	no dues
Student member (receives Newsletter)	$1.00
Regular member (receives Newsletter)	$2.00
Regular member (receives Newsletter and MidAmerica II)	$5.00
Institutional Membership (receives Newsletter and MidAmerica II)	$6.00
Special offer for 1975 (Newsletter, MidAmericas I & II)	$8.00

Also available is a life membership at $100.00. Please contact Dave Anderson about this.

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The MMLA Seminar

A Seminar in Midwestern Literature was held at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Modern Language Association. The Seminar met from 10:30 to 12:00 A.M., Friday, November 1, 1974, in the Georgian Room of the Chase-Park Plaza Hotel, St. Louis.

Topic of the program was "Research in Progress," and it included the following reports: "A History of Middle Western Literature," by Clarence Andrews, Michigan Technological University, "A Bibliographic Guide to Midwestern Literature," by Gerald Nemanic, Northeastern Illinois University, "The Annual Bibliography of Midwestern Literature," by Donald Pady, Iowa State

University, "An Edgar Lee Masters Discovery, by Ronald Primeau, Central Michigan University, and the "Mind of the Midwest," by David D. Anderson, Michigan State University.

Dave Anderson chaired the seminar.

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MLA Special Program

The Society sponsored a special program at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association. The program was held from 8:30 to 10:30 A.M., on December 28, 1974, in Le Petit Trianon of the New York Hilton, and discussed "Myth and Metaphor in Midwestern Literature."

The program included: "The Relevance of Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby," by James Austin, Southern Illinois University, "Midwest Space in Poetry and Architecture," by Jeremy Mattson, Michigan State University, "Caroline Kirkland en famille," by Henry Golemba, Wayne State University, "The Search for a Living Past," by David D. Anderson, Michigan State University. The program was chaired by Bernard F. Engel, Michigan State University, Vice President of the Society.

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The Seminar at MLA

Teaching and Research in Midwestern Literature.

This year's seminar featured four brief presentations, followed by questions, comments, and discussion.

The program included: Prof. Linda Wagner, "Hemingway, Pound, et al.: A Subliminal Emphasis," Prof. Dorys Grover, "Emerson Hough's Definition of the West," Prof. Milton Reigelman, "The Midland in Midwestern Literature," and Prof. Robert Bray: "The Progressive Novel."

The program was held on Friday evening, December 27 from 9:15-10:30 P.M., in Morgan A, Hiltons and was chaired by Blair Whitney.

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Pop Culture Meeting

The Society is again sponsoring a session at the National Popular Culture meeting, to be held in St. Louis, March 20-23, 1975. The program will include:

Eugene Huddleston, MSU, "Odd McIntyre's 'Country Town Angle'"

Nancy Pogel, "Mark Twain and The Clocks"

Jennifer Banks, "Midwestern Fiction in Film"

David D. Anderson, "Minnesota's Seven-Storied Mountaineer"

Patricia A. Anderson, "The Lincoln Myth and Midwestern Children's Literature"

Douglas Noverr will serve as Chairman and Jennifer Banks as Secretary.

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Notice

Again the Society will sponsor a number of programs during the coming year -- at MMLA, MLA, PCA and the annual conference, and perhaps others. If you are interested in participating in any of them, please let me know your preferences and interests.

Dave Anderson

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Announcements

The Sherwood Anderson Centenary 1876-1976

A seminar to discuss plans for the centenary observance and the formation of a Sherwood Anderson Society was held at the MLA meeting in New York on December 28, 1974, Madison A, New York Hilton, at 4:00 P.M.

The Sherwood Anderson Centenary Program will be held at the Kellogg Center on the Michigan State University campus, East Lansing, on September 9, 10, 11, 1976.

The tentative program will include the following:

A. A dramatic sequence, consisting of readings of Anderson's verse, a stage

production of "The Triumph of the Egg," a viewing of the PBS production of "Winesburg, Ohio," and other features now being planned and/or produced.

B. General discussions, including panel discussions of the above and of the state and future of Anderson scholarship, largely by contributors to the volume of essays.

C. A series of programs consisting of papers by scholars relatively new to Anderson criticism, each paper to be followed by discussion and commentary.

D. Other possibilities are still in the discussion stage. We will welcome comments, suggestions, and volunteers.

If you are interested in participating, especially by presenting a paper, please send me your proposed title and, if possible, a brief summary as soon as possible. Places on the program are necessarily limited. Much will depend upon funds available.

Discussion of the formation of a Sherwood Anderson Society was led by Welford D. Taylor, University of Richmond, at the seminar in New York.
If you have copies of journals or off-prints of articles on Sherwood Anderson that you are willing to give to the cause, please send them to me well before September, 1976.

David D. Anderson
Department of American Thought and Language
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Mich., 48824

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Midwest Writers' Workshop

The first Midwest Writers' Workshop, August 11-16, drew nearly 150 writers from 12 states to the Ball State campus. In addition to teaching daily classes, instructors offered half-hour private conferences and conducted an evening panel session midway through the week of writing and literary discussion.

Two professors of the English Department served as instructors. Thomas Thornburg taught the only course in poetry offered at the workshop, and Harry Taylor was one of the two short story instructors. Five other well-known writers taught courses in the novel, short story, article writing, and writing for juveniles.

Michigan City's Hal Higdon, one of the few full-time free-lance writers in Indiana, whose articles have appeared in dozens of publications including Saturday Review, Playboy and Sports Illustrated, and Tom Mullen of Earlham, known for his many religious and humorous articles and books, including Where Two or Three Are Gathered, Someone Spills the Milk, were the two instructors in article writing. Local author Dorothy Hamilton, who has had 21 books for children accepted for publication since 1971, taught juvenile writing; Jamie Lee Cooper, a popular novelist from Richmond, taught a course in the novel; and Vesle Fenstermaker, a literary consultant and manuscript editor from Indianapolis, taught a course in the short story.

The classes, interspersed by manuscript reading sessions and "mini-workshops" conducted by local writers and editors on such topics as "Writing for the Newspapers," "Fiction Techniques," and "Playwriting," took place (during the day) in Carmichael Hall. During the evenings, participants and auditors attended programs featuring Jessamyn West.

In the course of a panel session Monday evening, Ms. West spoke of her forthcoming book, The Massacre at Fall Creek, which is set 30 miles from Muncie and concerns the trial of the first white man prosecuted for killing an Indian. Her new book will be a Literary Guild selection this coming season. In a televised interview the next morning, Miss West fielded questions from newspaper and broadcast reporters on the resignation of her second cousin from the presidency. Upon her return to California, Jessamyn West wrote that an earlier work, Friendly Persuasion, had been placed in the cornerstone of a new library in her hometown, alongside a copy of Jonathan Livingston Seagull. "Imagine spending all eternity with that bird!" she wrote.

Noted philosopher and author D. Elton Trueblood and editor Frederic Birmingham also spoke to the group. Trueblood has published numerous articles in journals and a total of 31 books, including his recent biography, While It Is Day. Birmingham, assistant publisher and managing editor of The Saturday Evening Post, founded Gentleman's Quarterly, and his career as editor has included various positions at Esquire and other magazines.

The first Midwest Writers' Workshop was the result of several local authors and interested persons joining with Ball State faculty and staff to design and implement the workshop. "I am particularly impressed with the ability of faculty and citizens to work toward a common good," says Dick A. Renner, chairman of the English Department.

The success of this first Midwest Writers' Workshop means that it will probably become an annual event. Professor Thornburg, who found the workshop "very stimulating," said that "it will make it next year on the strength of what happened this year." Professor Taylor also found his class "interesting, interested, and enthusiastic." The week passed swiftly, it seemed, "but it is a start for people who are going home and write."

Designed differently than most, according to William Lawbaugh, project director, the workshop placed the emphasis upon work. "We did not want to produce just another writers' conference." Thus, some classes focused on writing exercises, composing query letters, or plotting an entire novel in one week's time. At least three of the classes had extra sessions in late afternoon or evening, and the work of Hal Higdon's class is expected to appear in the Chicago Tribune Magazine.

The workshop participants, from as far away as Georgia, Virginia, and California, had a wide range of publishing experience. About a fourth of them were seasoned, professional writers. Some of the less confident applicants chose to observe rather than submit an original manuscript for examination. Professor Taylor observed: "It generally helps a writer to have a few years under his belt, and for that reason I enjoyed the Midwest Writers' group. I hope they write; I hope they come back."

Those who wish to be placed on the mailing list for next year may send their names and address to Professor Carol Fisher, Midwest Writers' Workshop, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, 47306.

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Dr. Dorys C. Grover, literature and languages faculty, East Texas State, has been appointed to the National American Studies faculty of the American Studies Association funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, according to Dr. John A. Hague, director. Dr. Grover will participate in faculty-sponsored projects as lecturer and will assist universities in developing new interdisciplinary curricula.

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Vern Wagner, Wayne State, will serve as Director of the American Studies Reseach Center in Hyderabad (7), India, during 1974-1975.

For those who wish to write him at the address given, air mail rates -- 26 cents per half ounce.

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Linda Wagner (MSU) has published two collections of essays on authors she claims are Midwestern; in fact, she stresses that fact in her introductions to the volumes. T. S. Eliot, $2.25 in the McGraw-Hill Contemporary Authors Series, includes essays by Ezra Pound, M. L. Rosenthal, Daniel Moynihan, Bernard Bergonzi, Dame Helen Gardner, and others; a selected bibliography; and a biographical introduction by Wagner.

Ernest Hemingway: Five Decades of Criticism (MSU Press) includes twenty-two essays, most of them very recent. Similar in organization to the William Faulkner: Four Decades which was published in 1973, this volume discusses Hemingway as writer, then gives an overview of his writing, and finally includes essays about specific novels and stories. Essays included are those by Robert Penn Warren, Daniel Fuchs, Keneth Kinnamon, Harold Hurwitz, Alan Holder, Joseph Waldmeir, Richard Bridgman, Paul Goodman, Nathan Scott, Edmund

Wilson, Richard Adams, Frederick Carpenter, Carlos Baker, Richard Hasbany, and others. The essays range from 1924 to 1973; the volume is completely indexed.

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Under date of August 28, 1974, the National Endowment for the Humanities announces a program to support research for new tools in the Humanities. Specific mention is made of bibliographies, atlases, dictionaries and catalogs. The letter makes it clear that the point is to encourage broad studies and through societies.

I'd like to propose therefore that the Society for the Study of Middle Western Literature support a proposal to the NEH for support of a program designed to produce machine-based and machine-readable bibliographic and resource tools for research in middlewestern literature. Copies of the finished product would be made available in such a way that anyone desiring to research in the area could plug into the information through a computer terminal, and part of the finished product would include instruction for using the information on this basis.

The end product would include all pertinent background material such as histories, cultural studies and the like; all primary material, including novels, plays, pageants, short stories, musical comedies and films; all critical material including reviews; abstracts; coded lists of storage areas where any particular document could be consulted; biographies; and so on. Material would be cross-indexed by themes, subjects, authors and geographic areas (states, the Copper Country).

This may sound ambitious but NEH is willing to sponsor initial feasibility studies, and, as it now stands, to consider financing over a ten-year period.

Headquarters of the project could be at the Headquarters of the Society.

Clarence A. Andrews

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In Re Sigmund Krausz, Chicago Photographer

In 1896, the Werner Company of Chicago, Illinois published a little book consisting of forty six photographs taken by Sigmund Krausz, accompanied by "literary sketches by well-known authors" and a preface by Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, also of the Windy City, known among some of his Reform-minded colleagues in the American rabbinate as "the high priest of Radicalism."

The Library of Congress card catalogue entry makes no attempt to evaluate the literary contributions, but remarks that Krausz's photos were executed with perception, "high technical quality and straightforward simplicity." Though they pictured carefully posed "Street Types in Great American Cities," (the title of the 1896 edition; with another identical edition offered the reader as "Street Types of Chicago"), the card notes that the pictures were "well established cliches" of the times, constituting "exceptional Americana."

I have for some years tried to find out more about Krausz: his habits, trade, background; whether he was a professional or an amateur photographer; and so on. Likewise, I have not been able to acquire a copy of his book, thence this inquiry. Can any reader of this Newsletter supply information about Krausz or his descendants; any negatives, pictures or records left by him, or contemporary opinions concerning his work?

John J. Appel
ATL-University College
Michigan State University

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Chicago Courses

Mayfair College (Part of City Colleges of Chicago) General Studies Program, 4626 K. Knox Ave., Chicago, Ill., 60630

Course No. 15-0519; Instructor Aaron Jaffe
Chicago's Ethnic Politics (1 credit)
Details the history and current status of ethnically centered political action in Chicago -- Not a "melting pot" but a "salad bowl."

No. 015-0644 Know Your Chicago Ms. June Heimann, includes tours and lectures.

Chicago as an innovator in architecture, a center for fine and performing arts, and a leader in medical research and community services.

Phil Greasley

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Ohioana Meeting and Awards

The 45th Annual Meeting of the Martha Kinney Cooper Ohioana Library Association, honoring Ohio authors and composers, was held Saturday, Oct. 5, at The Fawcett Center for Tomorrow, O.S.U. Book Awards, Citations, the prestigious Career Medal and the Pegasus Award were presented to outstanding Ohioans-of-the-Year.

Dr. Merrill Patterson, President of Ohioana Library, announced the following Ohioans as the recipients of the 1974 Ohioana Awards.

Orville Prescott, a native-born Ohioan whose career has added distinction to Ohio's literary heritage, received the Career Medal. As literary critic for the New York Times for a span of 25 years, he wrote on the average 4 major book reviews each week. As author, he has written numerous books, the most recent being "Lords of Italy", which contains fascinating portraits of flamboyant kings, tyrants, and popes of medieval Italy. Both in his critiques and in his own creative writing, Mr. Prescott has contributed substantially to the world of letters.

The Ohioana Book Awards were presented by Mr. Ernest Cady to the following notable authors.

Donald Smythe of Cleveland for his biography, "Guerrilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing." Father Smythe is Assistant Professor of History at John Carroll University, Cleveland. His excellent biography is both fine history and a character study.

Donald F. Anderson for his book on an Ohio personality, "William Howard Taft: A Conservative's Conception of the Presidency". In writing this biography, Dr. Anderson has utilized his authoritative knowledge of both history and political science. Dr. Anderson, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan, has written an excellent reappraisal of Taft and his four years as president.

Kenneth Koch for a book on poetry-education, entitled "Rose Where Did You Get That Red?" A native Cincinnatian, Prof. Koch now lives in New York City where he conducts English and poetry classes at Columbia University. As poet-teacher, he has authored 11 books.

Mahonri Sharp Young received his literary award for two art books, "The Eight" and "The Paintings of George Bellows."

The Florence Roberts Head book award was presented to Josephine Johnson, of Clermont County, for her new book of memoirs "Seven Houses." Miss Johnson was a Pultizer Prize Winner for her novel, "Now in November."

Ohioana Citations were presented to Ernest Cady, Columbus, book editor of the Columbus Dispatch, author and editorialist; Weldon A. Kefauver, Columbus, Director of the OSU Press; Battelle Memorial Institute for advancing and utilizing science for the benefit of mankind; and E. Richard Shoup, Columbus, Supervisor of Music, State Department of Education, Ohio.

The sixth Pegasus Award was given to Dennis R. Williams, art student at the Columbus College of Art and Design, for his winning Bicentennial Dollar Design.

Mr. Ward M. Miller, co-chairman of Ohioana Library for Scioto County, was honored for his efforts in behalf of the Library during this past year.

Bernice Williams Foley

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From a Midwest Notebook:

THE FARMHOUSE

The house we lived in was like nearly all old farmhouses, ill-arranged, ill-lit, and odorous of rag carpets saturated with dust. To bring it to mind brings an event: one of memory's pictures impossible to fix in time. I see my schoolteacher, Edna Seeds, my mother, and me talking in the sitting room lit only by the glow of the base-burner. John Clay, an overnight guest, being handed a lamp by my father at the foot of the stairs. Aunt Caroline Jefferson, my Granduncle Richard's widow, ill in a bed by the sitting-room window.

A "story-and-a-half" house, it had eaves at a height midway in the walls of the upper floor, where the upper halves of east and west walls sloped inward with the roof. Successive alterations had converted the kitchen to a dining room and made a new kitchen with a small room beside it (my grandmother's bedroom), added a half-story room over the dining room, and enclosed one end of the front porch to make a small room which my mother used for sewing.

The stairs went up from the front, between the sitting room, on the south, and the parlor, on the north. From the first landing, where the door led to my parents' room, you turned and went up three more steps to the upper hall and thence to the two other bedrooms, north and south. Between the bedroom doors was an alcove, curtained to conceal a bedclothes box and the heterogeneous household rubbish that never got thrown away. Broken clotheshorses, bags of carpet rags, discarded garments, bundles of unused wallpaper, and stacks of McCall's Magazine were hidden by that red curtain.

The north room, with the sagging floor, was supposedly for guests, but its usual occupant was the hired man. In it was the bed with treacherous slats and a feather mattress; the bureau that had lost a caster and a pull off each of two drawers; and oddments of furniture no other place could be found for. The south room was mine, and, having south windows beside the chimney that came up from the fireplace below, was light and pleasant, and I studied at a table in front of one window.

The sitting room was the dreariest in the house. It had a west window, but the fireplace was flanked by a built-in cupboard and a built-in clothes press. The fireplace was never used; it was closed off by a zinc-sheathed board, and in front of it was the base-burner (removed in summer to the smokehouse). The clothes press and the cupboard were walnut inside, with pine doors, the doors painted successively mottled red, gray, and green with the rest of the woodwork.

The parlor, having two north windows as well as a west window, was lighter; it was here that, when the minister came to dinner, we prayed; otherwise it was used little, not because it was sacrosanct but because it was accessible only from the front of the house. I read there a good deal, but never liked the parlor because of the rug. That rug, with its monstrous floral pattern and vivid green background, plagued me through childhood and youth and survived long thereafter; many more years passed before I saw the last of it. It brought twenty-six dollars, at auction.

The parlor, nevertheless, provided me a refuge from other people's activities and the general household commotion. Before I became addicted to reading, I might amuse myself with the Dore-illustrated Bible or with a panoramic box, a series of biblical pictures in color on a long sheet wound on rollers, which were turned by a handcrank; but such pastimes soon palled. On an oaksstand was the music box, a Symphonion (the glazed picture on the inside of its lid showed fat, naked little boys singing), which played with metal discs. I was permitted to play it any time I wished, but I was weary -

of its tinkling tunes and set it going only for someone to whom it was a novelty.

On a Sunday my mother might play the piano, which she seldom did any other day. First she would adjust the stool, for she assumed I had turned it to an improper height, whether I had or not. The seat turned on a large screw, like a jack-screw, which had a squeak so offensive that I stopped my ears if I saw it coming. Why she, who in time accustomed herself to handling wrenches, hammers, and oil cans, did not oil it, I cannot explain, unless she feared getting oil on her skirts or on the rug; rather, I suspect mere disinclination to perform a simple task that could be omitted.

The compositions she played were melancholy in the extreme, or her tempo made them so. "After the Ball", "Hello, Central, Give Me Heaven", "My Sweetheart Went Down With the Ship" (inspired by the sinking of the Titanic), "Burning Iroquois" (not a reference to Algonquin cruelty but in commemoration of the Chicago theater fire of 1903); "reveries" and "meditations", like "Whisperings of the Pines", "Echoes from the Woodland", "Heart's Sorrow", and "Beautiful Evening Star"; or "moonlight" pieces--if not "Moonlight on the Hudson", it would be on the Wabash or the Missouri or any other river whose name was not downright cacophanous. It didn't matter whether they had words or not, for we never sang.

Hamlin Garland, whose family did sing, remarks in A Son of the Middle Border that nearly all the ballads the McClintocks loved to sing were sad. But they were folk ballads, or literary ballads so familiar as to be in effect the same; the sentimental pieces my mother played were sophisticated and insincere, as I then in some way recognized. Her playing them expressed the unhappiness she could not allow herself to put into words; and there was no one who might understand the words had she been able to utter them.

The kitchen walls were visible only between calendars and almanacs, and on the walls of the other rooms were many big framed pictures. There were steel engravings of "The Resurrection" and "The Ascension"; a chromolithograph of young men and women (in attire of the 1850s) picking apples; a colored engraving of Niagara Falls in winter; and photographs of my Aunt Angeline and my Uncle Lincoln in walnut frames. The bedrooms had group photographs of long-grown-up school attendants and of my mother's family, photographs in ornate frames of my cousin Charley as a baby and my cousins, the Jefferson sisters.

At some indeterminate date I replaced the photographs in my room with pictures of Sitting Bull, Poor Bull, Short Bull, and other Indian chiefs, and reproductions of covers from The National Sportsman. I also had sepia prints of the Roman Colosseum and Alma-Tadema's "A Reading from Homer" (whose artist and title I didn't know); a pleasing design of cloth squares (that came in cigaret packages and had been given me) depicting famous ball players; a big Lone Scout flag, the LSA monogram in red on a blue ground; and pennants commemorating, among various institutions, Yale and Cornell and The Ohio State Fair, 1917.

After the war of 1914-18 my father determined to remodel the house. The alterations were so extensive that, as he later said, it would have been better to tear the old house down and start anew. He did not mean that altogether; he was expressing a small pride in having done the wrong thing, when the right would have been a radical act and the wrong had precedent. The shape of the old house disappeared; it became a nearly-square two-story house with a one story kitchen attached; and, with the village carpenter as architect, the change was from an old house with many things wrong with it to a new

Continued--
Farmhouse

one with many other things, and some of the same, wrong with it.

My father, like Silas Lapham, was bent on having the kind of woodwork he wanted -- his being not black walnut but golden oak; having splurged on this, he had to economize elsewhere. The attic was left floorless and doorless; bedrooms were left without closets and closets without shelves. When the head carpenter said he and his men were done, my father paid him in full without inspecting the house for completion; det were of no matter to him.

During the remodeling we lived in the garage, a concrete-floored lean-to attached to the granary. The dining table and chairs, the big cherry cupboard, the cane-seated rockers, and furniture from the parlor and the sitting room were stored in the barn. Our 1915 Reo was sheltered within the granary itself, and I had my bed above it, in a space that was a grain bin. My parents' bed was on the garage floor, at the west; the garage's east end was the kitchen, and the cooking range had its pipe going out a window. Flies were bothersome, and my mother was wont to dwell later on the inconveniences of that summer. I remember it with pleasure, for to sleep so near the roof made me feel like a pioneer in his rude cabin, and I like the sound of rain on the shingles.

With the move, the rubbish of the upper hall alcove was disposed of, but it wasn't necessary to take anything out of the cellar, and there, on top of the walls between the joists, my grandmother's patent-medicine bottles continued to repose in dusty emptiness for many years.

For my grandmother a room was got with the Lucas family, who lived in one of the two houses on the Jacobs farm. She disliked being made to leave the dwelling which was satisfactory to her as it was, with the prospect of returning to a new room which might not suit her even though it contained a wash basin and a water closet. She was eighty-seven years old, and scarcely to be blamed for that view. But the passage of years must teach that truth whose utterance made Heraclitus famous, and the fact that one is eighty-seven and doesn't like it will not retard the ceaseless flowing of things. Four months after her return she was dead.

The fireplace and the cupboard and the clothes press were torn out, the black-walnut siding of the old house was added to the woodpile and chopped up for kindling, and as we became accustomed to the new house, the old went out of my consciousness and almost out of my recollection.

William Thomas

A Reminder

MidAmerica II will be available early in February, 1975; not only does it contain distinguished essays, but it also contains the first annual bibliography of Midwestern literature. Order it together with payment of your dues for 1975.

Cincinnati Publishing and The McGuffey Readers

Central to the growth of a Midwestern literature in the second half of the nineteenth century was the publishing industry that developed in Cincinnati in the first half of the century, the years that simultaneously saw the emergence of a "Western" literature, primarily in the Ohio River Valley. Both publishing and literature began with the first issue of the Centinel of the North-Western Territory on November 9, 1793, ten years before Ohio became the first state carved out of the Old Northwest.

Edited by the able William Maxwell, that first issue of the Midwest 's first paper proclaimed that it was "Open to all parties, but influenced by none," but the first of its four pages was dominated not by politics but by a three and a half column passage, "The Monk-Calais," from Laurence Sterne's A Sentimental Journey. Perhaps this focus on contemporary literature was dictated more by expediency and the lack of hard news than by the demands of a frontier population starved for culture, but it pointed the way that journalism, publishing, literature, and education joined together in a union that was to flourish to their collective and individual benefit.

By the middle of the century, Cincinnati dominated the cultural life of what was rapidly becoming the Midwest. Not only had it given birth to dozens of newspapers, many of which, like Maxwell's Centinel, survive even yet in one form or another. (Maxwell sold the Centinel to Edmund Freeman in 1796. Renaming it Freeman's Journal, Freeman moved it to Chillicothe, the territorial capital in 1800, where it eventually merged with the still-surviving Scioto Gazette, now the Chillicothe Gazette).

Meanwhile, in 1796, Maxwell laid the foundation of Cincinnati's flourishing book publishing industry with the publication of Maxwell's Code, the laws of the Northwest Territory. By the late 1840's Cincinnati had seven colleges, seminaries, or institutes; it had libraries with a total of more than 20,000 books; it was the home of magazines as diverse as The Ladies' Repository and the Western Review; it boasted of such poets as the Carey sisters, William Gallagher, Otway Curry, Frederick William Thomas and Charles A. Jones (William T. Coggesshall's The Poets and Poetry of the West, published in 1860, included sixty Ohio poets out of a total of 152; most of the Ohioans and many of the others were published in Cincinnati papers and journals).

Much of this literary history is as remote as Cincinnati's long-gone publishing industry, the packing industry that give it the title of "Porkopolis," a name it rejected in favor of "Queen City of the West," or the mound that gave its name to Mound Street. But one connection, that with the eclectic readers of William Holmes McGuffey, is firmly rooted in the history of education and culture in nineteenth-century American values and in twentieth century American nostalgia.

The product of McGuffey's years as professor of ancient languages at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, between 1826 and 1836, the eclectic series consisted originally of five volumes, published in 1836 and 1837 by Winthrop B. Smith of Cincinnati; to these were added two other readers in 1857; two speakers in 1860; and two works by his brother Alexander Hamilton McGuffey, a speller in 1837 and a rhetoric in 1844.

Before the end of the century this series of textbooks became the most widely used in America, dominating the educational structure of the Midwest and the South, with more than 122,000,000 copies in print. The result has been a good deal of confusion among collectors and scholars as reprintings, new editions, and occasional pirating made it virtually impossible to distinguish among the masses of volumes in

attic s,libraries, and, in at least one Midwestern school district, in use as late as the 1960's.

Nevertheless, the original McGuffey-Cincinnati editions, first editions, although they were not called that at the time, can usually be identified. As nearly as can be determined, the bindings are described as follows:

Readers by William H. McGuffey

Eclectic Primer. Cincinnati, Truman & Smith, 1837, 31pp., yellow wrapper.

Eclectic First Reader. Cincinnati, Truman & Smith, 1836, 72 pp., green wrappers or yellow boards. Probably first copies appeared in green wrappers.

Eclectic Second Reader. Cincinnati, Truman & Smith, 1836, 164 pp., yellow boards.

Eclectic Third Reader. Cincinnati, Truman & Smith, 1837, 165 pp., light blue boards and dark blue boards.

Eclectic Fourth Reader. Cincinnati, Truman & Smith, 1837, 279 pp., sheepskin.

Readers by Alexander Hamilton McGuffey:

Fifth Eclectic Reader. Cincinnati, Winthrop B. Smith, ca. 1857, cloth.

Sixth Eclectic Reader. Cincinnati, Winthrop B. Smith, ca. 1857, cloth.

High School Reader. Cincinnati, Winthrop B. Smith & Co., ca. 1857, cloth.

Eclectic Speaker. Cincinnati, Winthrop B. Smith & Co., 1860, boards.

Juvenile Speaker. Cincinnati, Winthrop B. Smith & Co., 1860, boards.

To these are normally added two other works by Alexander H. McGuffey:

Eclectic Spelling Book. Cincinnati, Truman & Smith, 1837, probably blue boards.

Rhetorical Guide. Cincinnati, Winthrop B. Smith, 1844, sheepskin.

Of these eleven books, the first five, by William H. McGuffey were the most widely used, the most familiar, and those surviving in the greatest numbers, in both their original printings and dozens that followed. Later editions, often "new," "improved," or "revised," continued to be printed in Cincinnati by Smith and his successors, who compiled tidy fortunes in a publishing industry that, in Cincinnati, was dominated by the works of this single group of works, most of them by one man.

W. H. McGuffey's personal success was equally great -- he became President of Cincinnati College in 1836, of Ohio University in 1839, Professor of Philosophy at Woodward College, Cincinnati, in 1843, and Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Virginia, from 1845 to his death in 1873. But his name and his work are permanently associated with Ohio education and publishing; indeed, he provided the foundations of education in Ohio and the Old Northwest, an enduring foundation and an effect perhaps less permanent in its association with publishing as the industry in Cincinnati, after McGuffey, contented itself with the backwater of educational and religious publication, where it remains, waiting, perhaps, for another McGuffey success that has never appeared.

David D. Anderson

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A Major New Chicago Novel

In the more than seventy-five years since the Chicago novel became a reality with the publication of Henry Blake Fuller's The Cliff-Dwellers, more than a hundred novels have become part of that genre. At least a dozen of them -- James T. Farrell's Studs Lonigan trilogy, Nelson Algren's Man With the Golden Arm, Saul Bellow's The Adventures of Augie March, Richard Wright's Native Son among them -- can be

A Major New Chicago Novel (Continued)

considered first-rate novels, and at least another dozen -- with some overlapping, including these four -- in which the city is more than background or setting. Now, for the first time in more than a decade another first-rate Chicago novel has appeared to join them.

The novel is Mark Smith's The Death of the Detective (Knopf, 1974). Its setting is Chicago, but a Chicago that, like Thomas Hardy's heath country, takes on the dimensions of a living force, at once antagonist and picaresque nightmare, but its many social dimensions are vastly more complex than Hardy's nature, however overpowering.

The story is that of a classic pursuit as the dectective, Arnold Magnuson, rich and semi-retired founder of the Magnuson Men, a private agency famous in Chicago, seeks the murderer of his friend, a millionaire who has been murdered in his bed. As he is dying, a letter dictated to a black maid and delivered to a barkeeper becomes the focal point for death: underneath a bush in the shadow of the Newberry Library, in a lake near the Wisconsin line, in a beer salesman's apartment, in a sheep barn as the poor animals are hacked to death, in the morgue as a young man identifies a stranger as his father.

Through all this and through all of Chicago, Magnuson, in his magnificent Dusenberg, in pursuit of his unknown quarry, carries on his duty, pursuing his ultimate destiny, from the high-rise magnificence of the Gold Coast to the thin edge of violence and sanity in hillbilly bars: from the old neighborhood now inhabited by alien peoples to the crisis time turned topsy-turvy. In the process, Mark Smith defines not three dimensions of men and Chicago, guilt and innocence, but a dozen that are ultimately one:

> Convinced of his own innocence and competence, he assumed the responsibility for everyone and gave himself entirely to the chase. The exhileration of that competence. That innocence. The awesomeness of that responsibility. That destiny. The thrill of this cross-country chase, of sweeping aside the wind. The power of those cylinders beneath the polished hood, the miracle of that instant acceleration beneath the foot. The glamour of the passing headlights and the lighted skyscrapers of the Loop retreating behind him as though taken by the turning earth that, miraculously, did not take the Dusenberg. The spaces of darkened concrete eaten up beneath the white wheels.... And somewhere on the road ahead the secret enemy speeding through the same vast, changing landscape of moonlight just as desperate as his own. But it was not so much a man that Magnuson pursued as it was a force. The evil, natural, ultimate force of death. But not so much a force as the working out of Magnuson's own spiritual destiny, which was in the end himself. Which was in the end no more or less than death...

With much of the inevitability of Greek tragedy, with the gargantuan scope of a Thomas Wolfe spawned not by the hunger of man's youth but the surrealistic nightmare of his degeneration, with the violence of a city the microcosmic reflection of man's certainty and identity lost, Mark Smith marks out with indelible force the ambiguity of an age:

> Who is he to make himself responsible for justice? How can he be the caretaker of what is good? But he has been committed to the battle for too long a lifetime to do other than wage his war. Even if he fails utterly, even if he works evil instead of good, even if in the end he is not merely destroyed but damned and doomed, he cannot do otherwise. Even this, he tells himself, is destiny.

The Dectective, like his duty, his city, his nation, carries on his confused pursuit of confused ends until the only possible end -- the only triumpth, indeed -- is the result of duty run rampant, identity gone

A Major New Chicago Novel (Continued)

berserk, ritual become meaningless, and the pious platitudes of a mayor presiding over symphonic chaos.

The Death of the Dectective is a major comment on a time, a place, and a people of which Chicago is as accurate a reflection as it is possible to find.

David D. Anderson

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Emerson Hough and Daniel Boone

The spring issue of the SSML Newsletter contained a resume of Dorys C. Grover's paper on Emerson Hough in which the Midwestern author is praised because, "His emphasis was on the real heroes of the period of which he wrote, and in his search for the past he tried to tell the truth about what he wrote." With our bicentennial approaching, it is appropriate that we especially appreciate Hough's sensitivity to the past as reflected by his portrait of Daniel Boone in The Way to the West. Hough synthesizes the two major strains of the Boone saga; he fuses what Henry Nash Smith labels "the cult of progress" and "the cult of the primitive." From the first perspective Boone is the champion of civilization, carving out the wilderness for the agrarian kingdom to come, servant of the yeoman farmer, and future yeoman himself. Hough explains that he is "Quaker bred," and that, "A sweeter soul than his we shall not find though we search all the pages of history." Boone's exploits are the result of "his belief that he was an instrument ordained by Providence to settle the wilderness." While performing his duty Boone was certainly "no swearer of oaths, no swashbuckler, no roisterer, but a self-respecting gentleman." Thanks to this hero, "The flag of Boonesborough was planted never to come down. The stockade of the homebuilders was defended by an unwavering fortitude."

Simultaneously, however, Hough presents Boone as a restive hunter in need of elbow-room. In this pose the Kentuckian is a son of the wilderness who knows it is time to move deeper into the forest when the smoke from the nearest settlers' hearths becomes visible on the Eastern horizon. Of this man Hough writes, "The creed of the wilderness, the creed of wild things had entered into his soul." He insists that Boone's traits were "distinctly different from those of his scattered wilderness neighbors" because he heard "Voices" that relentlessly drew him West. The frontiersman's encounters with the Indians led him to imbibe "the war-drink of the savages" so that "the spirit of the savage entered into him." At the time of his death Boone was regretfully "overtaken once more by America, once more surrounded by the civilization from which he had by choice always alienated himself." The paradox in Hough's Boone portrait is immediately apparent. He is unique in his balanced fusing of the two opposing strains of the Boone legend to produce a saga which reveals the basic contradiction implicit in American attitudes toward the wilderness.

The mythical, psychological and ethical strains of this contradiction have recently been thoroughly explored by Richard Slotkin, who found Boone the prototype of the American frontier hero who must destroy the very wild life which he adores and emulates, who is compelled to "regeneration through violence." Slotkin's interpretation enhances the importance of the ambivalent image of Boone presented by Hough. But the actual facts of Boone's biography, and especially the explorer's experience in what is now the Midwest, sufficiently reveal how directly Hough had probed to "the truth about what he wrote." The circumstances surrounding Boone's involuntary visit to Detroit in 1778 indicate that in this hero there were, indeed, qualities which appealed to both gentlemen and savages. Boone and several of his men were taken captive by the Shawnee Indians while making salt on the Blue Licks in North Eastern Kentucky. Within a month the prisoners were transported by their captors to Detroit, which was under British control. The English Commander, Lieutenant Governor Hamilton, offered the Shawnee chief, Blackfish, a generous ransom for Daniel Boone, even though the Kentuckian was at that time a captain the Revolutionary Army. But Blackfish refused. Boone's skill as a hunter and woodsman during the term of his captivity had so impressed the chief that he wanted to adopt the white man as a son and to make him an official Shawnee warrior. Boone eventually escaped on his own and returned to Boonesborough to warn the community of a large scale attack the Shawnee

were plotting. The Indian aggression was repelled and the settlement saved, but subsequently Boone was courtmartialed for treason. The pioneer's American neighbors did not take kindly to his cordial relations with either the British or the Indians. Ultimately Boone was cleared, and he moved farther West. The two sides of his nature which had gotten him into trouble were then left to mythmakers and biographers like Emerson Hough to recapture.

Michael Daher
Wayne State Univ.

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The Rise and Rise of American Humor

At a time when it is popular for scholars to sob and swab over the death of American humor, it is encouraging to find that American Humor is alive and well, and living at Virginia Commonwealth University and the University of Maryland.

Although Constance Rourke noted perceptively some time ago that, "There is scarcely an aspect of the American character to which humor is not related, few which in some sense it has not governed," there are still few places where scholars may share ideas about the examination and practice of humor in America. Recognizing this lack, M. Thomas Inge, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Lawrence E. Mintz, University of Maryland have produced the new (as of Spring, 1974.) "interdisciplinary Newsletter," American Humor.

The editors wisely make no rash promises that they will provide startling resolutions to the humor confunundrum. Nor do they pledge to be comprehensive. They are interested in issues, in the exchange of ideas, in "cross-fertilization" among various disciplines. By necessity they seem to endorse the need for a pluralistic approach. Most significantly, they treat American humor, not merely as a dead language or ancient history, but as an ongoing enterprize.

Number One, Volume One of AH:II! (their abbreviation) has four sections. The first contains selections included in a symposium, "Three Views of Humor" reprinted with the permission of The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. Discussions out of several depths and from several ideological perspectives are to be found in Milton Mayen's, "Hollow Men, Hollow Laughs" (which typically sees the beginning of the end of humor - "We are losing our capability for being diverted from our daymare."), in "The Uses of Comedy," by Steve Allen (which superficially toys with kinds of humor and questions about humor, but contains no funereal strains), and in Clifton Fadiman's essay, "Humor As Weapon" (which expresses fear over some uses of humor, but finds humor a strong force with which we must always contend).

Of greater interest was the Book Review Section. The essays were perceptive and usually well-documented. Better still, the works reviewed were not all stodgy fare. Mintz examined two books on film humor, Gerald Mast's The Comic Mind and Raymond Durgnet's The crazy Mirror. Mintz rightly found Mast's book to be "more solid and comprehensive," but he urged readers not to be discouraged from approaching Durgnet," who makes observations which prompt considerations of issues well beyond the scope of Mast's inquiry." As one who has found Durgnet's style confusing enough to keep readers from what are probably his best ideas, I should have liked to see one of Durgnet's remarkable observations discussed further as proof of Mintz's evaluation. This slight weakness in the review does not detract, however, from its considerable value to those interested in comedy and American film, and to those who wish to go beyond the Nineteenth Century literary frontier for a broader look at the American comic temper.

Inge's, "The Comics in American Culture" is a lively, and once more, a timely, essay-review as well. In a four and one half page look at four new books on comics, Inge reveals an impressive expertise and critical acumen in a relatively new research field. Inge's understandable reaction to The popular conception of "Saint" Disney is helpful and belongs in his review. When Disney is sainted again in a later section of the Newsletter, the Editor's joke becomes redundant. But again it is a small matter, especially since Mintz and Inge outdo themselves in their third, bibliographical section.

Brief Book Notes contains an ambitious 24 entries, each with a concise but rich summary and critique. The books are various, scholarly and not so scholarly. Included in the group are Harry Levin's, Veins of Humor, Terrence Tobin's, Letters of George Ade, Marvin Kaplan's The Harvard Lampoon Centennial, and Hercules Malloy's, Oedipus in Disneyland: Queen Victoria's Reincarnation as Superman. Molloy's thesis (according to a letter from publisher, The Paranoid Press) is that Alice In Wonderland is really the pornographic autobiography of Queen Victoria who laid her love-life down in symbolism to avoid being found out during her lifetime.

A final section of the Newsletter, compiled by Richard Hagerman and Donald Waters of The University of Maryland, is An Annotated checklist of 43 entries, "Criticism on American Humor: 1972." Only articles are cited here, and there is more helpful summary and evaluation.

The Newsletter is surely not specifically directed at Midwestern Humor or Humorists, but it touches upon the Midwest as well as so much more. If the interdisciplinary Newsletter is any indication of the state of interest in American humor and the practice of American humor, it is clear that American humor has not yet undergone the last rites. For only a $1.00 yearly subscription (two issues), Inge's and Hintz's. AH:IN is well worth the price. It is convincing evidence that reports of American humor's death have been greatly exaggerated.

Nancy Pogel

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Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature Newsletter

Volume Four, Number Three

Published at Michigan State University with the support of the Department of American Thought & Language

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Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

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