

**SOCIETY
FOR
THE
STUDY
OF**



MIDWESTERN LITERATURE

Newsletter
Volume Five
Number Three
Fall, 1975

Society for the Study of
Midwestern Literature

Volume V, No. 3

Newsletter

Fall, 1975

The Fifth Annual Conference

The Fifth Annual Conference was held at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, October 4, 1975. Three sessions, including a luncheon meeting and address, made up the program. The proceedings are summarized in the following reports.

The Morning and Afternoon Sessions

Professor David D. Anderson welcomed members of the society to the conference. In his opening remarks he predicted an increase in dues to meet the increasing costs of society publications and mailings.

Following the short business meeting, panelists addressed themselves to the day's topic, "Midwestern Writers and the Cultural Mainstream." Professor Nancy Pogel chaired the morning session. The afternoon session was chaired by Professor Linda Wagner.

In "Howells and Spiritualism," Clare R. Goldfarb examined the place of spiritualism in late 19th and early 20th century America, its fascination for 19th century writers generally and for William Dean Howells particularly.

Although Howells' response to the public penchant for spirit messages, seances, spirit photographs and the like, was carefully qualified, it was apparently greater than that of his fellow realists. Howells dealt with spiritualism reportorially and also in fiction. Relatively early in his career he printed controversial essays on the subject. He also introduced spiritualism into his own fiction. Most notably in The Undiscovered Country but also in The Landlord of Lion's Head and in short story collections

such as Between the Dark and the Daylight and Questionable Shapes, there are occult references and situations. Why, Professor Goldfarb asked, was Howells, for all his skepticism, also so interested in spiritualism? She concluded that a background in Swedenborgianism "may have helped him respond openly...and perhaps he was more inclined to mysticism all his life than many students of realism have supposed." Dr. Goldfarb, however, most prefers to believe that, "He responded so often and in such a variety of ways because he was a first-rate journalist, and he possessed a good newspaperman's curiosity about a movement that held the attention of millions of his fellow countrymen." Clare Goldfarb is Associate Professor of English at Western Michigan University.

"Ray Stannard Baker and the Paradox of Midwest Progressivism," Professor Eugene Huddleston's paper, dealt with Baker in his personality as a Midwestern muckraking journalist and in his pseudonymous personality as David Grayson, a philosopher of the rural environment who represented the values of pre-industrial America. Critics consider Grayson the key to Baker's paradoxical mentality, a mentality he may have shared with other progressives of his day.

"Their liberalism is paradoxical in that both populism and progressivism apparently in touch with the realities of the age and its trends were actually retrogressive. Their aim was not reform but revolt, revolt against industrialism and its evils."

Professor Huddleston rejected traditional historical and literary interpretations alone as satisfactory for understanding Baker's relationship to "his other self." Instead, adopting a psychological approach, Professor Huddleston finds the muckraking Baker in revolt against a strong father figure; Baker

is seen as demanding "change within institutions that his staunchly conservative father thought inviolate." David Grayson, "worked as an escape for the guilt he /the muckraking Baker/ felt in disobeying his father."

The Grayson character was no longer a necessity for Baker once Baker became Woodrow Wilson's biographer and attached himself emotionally to the president. From Wilson, Baker received "acceptance of the passiveness in his nature and paternal approval of his muckraking and insurgency."

Although Professor Huddleston concludes that Baker's progressivism grew from his "desire to preserve the values of a simpler America... from the encroachment of industrialism,...the recognition of the paradox...in no way diminishes his accomplishments as a Progressive Journalist." Professor Huddleston is Associate Professor of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University.

In, "From the Grove Meeting House to Fall Creek" Professor Jane S. Bakerman examined Jessamyn West's Indiana novels, The Friendly Persuasion (1945), The Witch Diggers (1951), Leafy Rivers (1967), Except for Me and Thee (1969), and The Massacre at Fall Creek (1975) to find Midwestern themes and motifs and to evaluate West's contribution to Midwestern literature.

Professor Bakerman noted with what vividness West presented detailed descriptions of the Midwestern countryside. In West's books there is a clear sense of setting used primarily for developing tone and seldom in the sense that place "controls or really alters the characters."

In addition to settings, Professor Bakerman considered West's Quaker theme and placed special emphasis on the female maturation theme central to West's work, but seldom examined fully by critics.

According to Professor Bakerman, Jessamyn West's contribution to the literature of the Midwest is more important than has generally

been acknowledged. "She /West/ perceives the duty of the human being to be the coming to a fuller understanding of oneself and the world one lives in. This struggle, often set in a beautifully rendered scene, is at the heart of her work and has created a memorable array of characters, most notably the young women. It is an achievement deserving of recognition and respect." Professor Bakerman is a member of the Department of English, Indiana State University.

Professor Ron Primeau's "Zen in the Midwest: From Kerouac to Motorcycle Maintenance," compared the images of the Midwest in Jack Kerouac's classic early 60's account of the Beat Generation, On The Road, with those in Pirsig's book, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, written in the 70's. In examining Midwestern landscapes as metaphors of the Eastern belief which is central to so much of counter culture thought, Professor Primeau discovered more than the obvious similarities between the two works that most people find on a first reading.

He produced evidence that Pirsig's book is not merely an updating of Kerouac, but "images of the Midwest in the two books point to some basic differences in the ways the two relate Buddhism to the American counter-culture. Pirsig's world view in the 70's is decidedly less "frenzied" than the tone of the famous beat scene in On the Road. In fact, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, which does not translate "space into speed" as Kerouac's On the Road begins to do, and which is "poised," and more "classical" in tone than the earlier Beat "groovey" "romanticism," is a criticism of Kerouac's kind of counter-culture. While Beats rode in enclosed cars and saw the Midwestern landscape framed by windows, Pirsig's characters are more immediately involved and more open to the formless Midwestern landscape as they ride motorcycles.

For the 70's cyclist, "Buddha resides in a gear of a cycle transmission or in the circuits of a digital computer as comfortably as he resides at the top of a mountain or in the petals of a flower." Professor Primeau

is Associate Professor of English at Central Michigan University.

"From a few yellowed copies of magazines gathering dust and mildew in some stranger's attic," Professor Gene Dent began the resurrection of William Neidig, a man who may be one of the most deserving unacclaimed midwesterners. Professor Dent's paper, "The Re-discovery of William Neidig" celebrated Neidig's accomplishments in three worlds, the academic world, the world of popular writing, and the world of science.

Neidig's painstaking research into the dating of Shakespeare's 1619 Quartos, his 40 patents on inventions, his teaching at three major universities, his short stories that appeared in a number of popular journals, his 43 Saturday Evening Post mystery stories published over a 20 year period, and his several novels--all these credits lend credence to Professor Dent's belief that Neidig was a midwesterner of "far-reaching talents and interests who merits more attention than he receives." Professor Dent is Associate Professor of English at Lakeland Community College.

Martha Curry's comparative analysis "Transatlantic Innovations: Joyce's Dubliners and Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio" showed how "two collections of stories, and the individual stories they contain, represent important landmarks in short story writing." Dubliners and Winesburg were not mere collections of stories but represented a structural departure from earlier short story collections in that they were collections "that form/ed/ a whole greater than the sum of the parts."

Professor Curry also provided evidence that not only were these new kinds of short story collections, but the "two volumes also contain short stories that are innovations in technique." "In their insistence upon writing stories that are true to life, not literature, and in their practice of structuring stories not around a well-made plot but around an epiphanic moment, both Joyce and Anderson wrote wholly new kinds of short

story collections--collections of stories that 'belonged together' and that depicted the lives of the drab, isolated, and defeated citizens of Dublin, Ireland, and of a 'mythical' Winesburg, Ohio." Professor Curry is Assistant Professor of English at Barat College.

The Luncheon Session

In his luncheon address Professor Bernard F. Engel described the delicate balance which any regional criticism and scholarship must maintain between emphasizing regional characteristics in its writers and remembering that the best "literature will deal with the preoccupations of the great majority of men and women--with nature, death, survival, love, the world and the universe."

Professor Engel, a recognized literary scholar and President of the Society, took issue both with the so-called high-culturists' disdain for Midwestern regional literature and criticism and with the opposite extreme, those critics and readers who exalt and sanctify the regional perspective at the expense of larger themes. According to Professor Engel, both groups meet at the point where they suggest that regional writers are limited by their interest in the trivialities of a particular locale, where they see "that our writers have dealt not with major themes but with the falsely romantic and sentimental."

An explication and interpretation of William Stafford's "Lake Chelan" and "Travelling Through the Dark" as well as selected poems by James Wright and Thomas McGrath, provided the specific illustrations in which Professor Engel observed the complicated nature of the poet whose work rests upon regional materials, "the deepest sources within us," but always moves outward from the regional to "interpret our land and arrive at our ideals." In Stafford's, Wright's, and McGrath's poems, Professor Engel found the Midwestern landscape, both urban and rural, but he proved that such poetry is more profound than the "genteel pathos" some critics

and readers expect from writers who return to regional experience for a poetic source. "While subject matter and themes /in Midwestern poetry/ are not always unique," Professor Engel noted that, "The range is as great as it is anywhere on the globe."

Re-emphasizing that the task of the society is to see the midwestern region in a balanced fashion, as the immediate touchstone of experience from which the Midwestern writer reaches for the universal, Professor Engel concluded, "let it be our aim to find the universal which may be attained by the writer who, like William Stafford, knows that the regional is 'the deepest place we have,' that it is, 'From Here We Speak.'"

Nancy Pogel

Chicago in Fiction

One of the Society's most successful programs, entitled "Chicago in Fiction," was held at the meeting of the Midwest Modern Literature Association in Chicago recently. Participants included Nancy Pogel, on "Chicago's Hyde Park in Fiction"; Pat D'Itri on "Richard Wright in Chicago"; Gerald Thorson on "Norwegian Immigrant Novels Set in Chicago"; Neale Reinitz on "The Chicago Novel as Polemic"; and David Boxer on "The City as Image: Nelson Algren and the Chicago School." Dave Anderson chaired the program.

Two Hundred Years of Midwestern Literature

The Society's special program to be held at the MLA meeting in San Francisco on December 26 is based on the theme "Two Hundred Years of Midwestern Fiction." The first of two parts, it will cover the period 1776-1886, and include the following: Douglas Noverr on "Midwestern Travel Literature"; James Austin on "Abraham Lincoln in Political Satire"; Jeremy Mattson on "Midwestern Humor in Song"; and David D. Anderson, "The Queen City and a New Literature." The program will be held at 9:00 p.m. in the Cypress Room of the San

Francisco Hilton. Part II, 1876-1976, will be held in New York in December, 1976.

MidAmerica III

The third publication of the Society's yearbook, MidAmerica III, will be available early in 1976. It includes the following works by members of the Society.

"Notes Toward a Definition of the Mind of The Midwest", David D. Anderson

"Poets of the Moving Frontier", William D. Elliott

"Primitivism in Stories by Willa Cather and Sherwood Anderson", Robert A. Martin

"Women as Social Critics in Sister Carrie, Winesburg, Ohio, and Main Street", Nancy Bunge

"The Fiction of Wright Morris: The Sense of Ending", Ralph N. Miller

"Wright Morris's One Day", G. B. Crump

"A Forgotten Landmark in Dramatic Realism", Herbert Bergman

"The World of Petroleum V. Nasby", James C. Austin

"Mark Twain and the Clock", Nancy H. Pogel

The Annual Bibliography of Studies in Midwestern Literature for 1974, Donald L. Pady, editor

If your institution library or local library does not yet subscribe to the MidAmerica series, please suggest that it do so. A limited number of back copies of MidAmerica I and II are still available.

Dues Notice

Annual dues for 1976 are due on January 1, 1976, and are payable now. Because of the pressures of inflation and decreased University support, we must revise our dues schedule as follows:

1. Regular membership (receives Newsletter and Midwestern Miscellany) - \$3.00
2. Regular membership including above and MidAmerica - \$7.50
3. Society Patron (receives all publications) - \$10.00
4. Life member (receives all publications) - \$100.00
5. Members emeritus - no fee
6. Back issues of the Newsletter or Midwestern Miscellany - \$.75
7. Individual or back issues of MidAmerica - \$5.00

Work to be Done

From time to time in the Newsletter we hope to include suggestions about the fundamental work that remains to be done and that must be done in the fulfillment of the Society's purpose. A service to members and to graduate students, it will attempt to stimulate research and criticism that will provide the necessary foundation for work as far into the future as it is possible to foresee. If you have suggestions for such work, please send them in.

The Newsletter continues to solicit brief essays, reviews, checklists, announcements, and whatever else may be of interest to the members.

Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature Newsletter

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Editorial Office: 240 Ernst Bessey Hall
Michigan State University
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Edited by David D. Anderson

Assistant Editors: Paul J. Ferlazzo
and Nancy Pogel

Editorial Assistants:

Joan Brunette	Toni Pienkowski
Sue Cook	Sharon Simons
Pat Mask	

Cover Artist: Dan Preston

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MidAmerica IV is in preparation. We solicit from members of the Society essays of superior quality that explore significant dimensions of Midwestern literature. We are particularly interested in the exploration of fundamental issues: definitions, relationships, and significances. Length should approximate 3,000 words, with minimal footnoting.

If you are interested in receiving the announcement of plans for the Sherwood Anderson Centenary observance, please write Dave Anderson.

Announcements

Susan Glaspell Conference

On September 5 and 6, 1975, the St. Ambrose College, Davenport, Iowa, sponsored a two-day conference on Susan Glaspell, novelist, short-story writer and dramatist who was born in Davenport. Miss Glaspell, with her husband George Cram Cook, was instrumental in founding the Provincetown Theatre (Provincetown Playwrights) and in encouraging the work of Eugene O'Neill. O'Neill's first productions were produced by the group.

Under the direction of Sister Rita Mary Bradley, Chairperson of the St. Ambrose English Department, two Glaspell scholars--Dr. Arthur E. Waterman of Georgia State University and Dr. Gerhard Bach of Heidelberg University (Germany)--and Dr. Clarence A. Andrews came to Davenport to serve as resource persons. Attending the conference were students, teachers, writers and Quad-City residents.

Dr. Andrews outlined the intellectual milieu--represented by Floyd Dell, Cook, Harry Hansen, Charles Eugene Banks, Octave Thanet and others--in which Miss Glaspell grew up and which influenced her early writing. Drs. Bach and Waterman focussed on Miss Glaspell's fiction and dramatic productions. A local resident gave a reading from a supposedly-lost Glaspell play manuscript.

The conference reached several conclusions: a decision to produce several Glaspell plays in Davenport as part of the Bicentennial observance; a decision to hold a Glaspell seminar at about the same time, this seminar to focus on Miss Glaspell's fiction with particular regard for her attitudes about male-female relationships; and a decision to attempt a definitive edition of the Provincetown plays produced during the period from 1915 to 1922. These plays were written by O'Neill, Glaspell, Cook, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Floyd Dell and others.

Finally an attempt will be made to uncover documents (letters, journals and the like of Miss Glaspell. Anyone having any knowledge of such materials is encouraged to address Dr. Waterman at his campus in Atlanta.

Essays in Literature and Western Illinois University are sponsoring a Bicentennial collection of critical essays on three poets from the western Illinois region: The Vision of This Land: Studies of Vachel Lindsay, Edgar Lee Masters, and Carl Sandburg. Interested scholars are invited to submit manuscripts. There is no restriction on paper topics, although the editors would especially welcome studies dealing with Illinois or the American heritage in the poetry or prose of one or more of these figures. Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the MLA Style Sheet. The recommended length for papers is 2,000 to 8,000 words, and the deadline for submission is December 1, 1975. The book will be published in the spring of 1976. Manuscripts should be sent to: The Editors, The Vision of This Land / Department of English / Western Illinois University / Macomb, Illinois 61455.

In December, Burt Franklin & Co., Inc. will publish the first number of Prospects: An Annual Journal of American Cultural Studies, edited by Jack Salzman. Prospects will be devoted to works of historical, biographical, and bibliographical scholarship which explore the essential nature of the American character. The first number of Prospects will feature a special section celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the publication of Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy. Subscription price is tentatively set at \$17.95, with a 15% discount given to charter subscribers. For information about subscriptions, write to the publisher at 235 East 44th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017. Manuscripts should be sent to the editor, c/o English

Department, Long Island University, Brooklyn
Center, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

5 October 1975

Dear David D. Anderson:

I'm a grad student in Renaissance English literature at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and I have built and donated to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin a collection of 25,000 items of Madison People's street literature definitively documenting the course of Community life here since 1969, with some items back to 1965 thanks to the gift of a lot of items from Robert Becker, a Wisconsin Ph.D. in history now teaching at LSU--Baton Rouge. (He gave around 500 items and I have another 2-300 items from that period from other gifts.)

I'm wondering if you'd be good enough to run a notice of this in your Newsletter sometime. Although most of the collection is posters, there are certainly several thousand white papers and other texts, some quite straightforward, but others polemical and others satiric. The collection has many interests, but one of them is certainly literary, and we have reason even modestly to believe that this is the best collection of its kind in existence, first because every item is numbered and dated for when it first appeared in the streets, second because I am a bibliographer and many variant states and settings have been saved where appropriate, and finally because (a) collections made on other campuses focused on handouts often saving no posters at all and (b) collections made on other campuses focused on activist stuff but neglected non-activist stuff, whereas I have built this collection in the belief that student activism must be viewed in the context of the totality of the student experience, and therefore I have saved everything. I have certainly over 5,000 film posters, I have rock band/beerhall posters, I have People's candybar labels, etc., etc.

The Society honored my gift with a donor's show last November and December and reverse* is the notice of the first half of it from their journal. The second half, consisting of around 15,000 items will be restricted rather than completely in the public domain because it contains some of the rarer things, it contains my diary, etc.

Naturally I remain permanently eager to correspond with serious students of street literature nationally (I have respectable lots from Massachusetts and Vermont) and Wisconsin literature in particular.

Sincerely yours,

J. Wesley Miller--424
207 W. Washington Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

P.S.: I also have 400 color slides and have delivered a number of addresses including two under the auspices of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, and others under the auspices of the UW Library School, the State Historical Society, and the UW-Milwaukee School of Fine Arts and Department of Art History, etc. The show featured sun rising and rainbow motifs (4 months before the Rainbow Show in S.F.) and I have published in the fall 1973 Wisconsin Academy Review a little harmless article about rainbows and new mornings in Madison Street art.

* the Madison People's Poster and Propaganda Collection, 1966-1972, compiled by J. Wesley Miller, consisting of about 10,000 advertisements, leaflets, and notices about antiwar issues and demonstrations, film societies, rock concerts, Teaching Assistants' Association strike, poetry readings, voter registration, Wisconsin Student Association activities, the women's movement, political campaigns, gay liberation, the Drug Information Center, etc., presented by Mr. Miller,

Robert Becker, and others.

Edited by M. Thomas Inge
ix, 331 p., cloth October 1975 \$15

Midwest Writers' Workshop

Over one-hundred writers and would-be writers from throughout the United States attended the annual Midwest Writers' Workshop held on the Ball State University campus this summer. The featured speaker for the conference was Jesse Stuart, who also received an honorary doctorate from the university. Teachers in the workshop were Vestle Fenstermaker and Harry Petrakis (Short Story and Article Writing), Tom Mullen and Dorothy Hamilton (Beginning Fiction and Religious Writing), John Knoepfle and Jamie Lee Cooper (Poetry and Advanced Fiction). In addition to daily classes, special mini-workshops, such as the one on "Ms Preparation, Marketing, and Photojournalism" taught by Kate McNair, were held throughout the conference.

The Midwest Writers' Workshop is in every way a cooperative enterprise. The conference is supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Indiana Committee for the Arts. And certainly Ball State University, and in particular the School of Continuing Education and the Department of English, helps to insure the professionalism of the conference. But the success of the workshop really depends on the enthusiasm and dedication of the members of the Muncie community who plan and organize the yearly program.

For further information about next year's Midwest Writers' Workshop, contact Carol Fisher, Office of Continuing Education, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana 47306

Announcing for fall publication from
Archon Books

THE FRONTIER HUMORISTS
Critical Views

Full of tomfoolery, bravery, and rude strength, the work of the humorists of the Old Southwest spoke volumes about 19th century America. A. B. Longstreet, G. W. Harris, J. J. Hooper, and others provided in their tall tales, their Sut Lovingoods and Simon Suggses, a style and language that flowered in later realists Twain and Faulkner, and continues today. This anthology brings together some of the best historical and critical essays published on these men and their work, with an introduction by the editor surveying the development of the school of writing.

Contributors include Edgar Allan Poe, Franklin J. Meine, John Donald Wade, Walter Blair, Donald Day, Brom Weber, Edmund Wilson, Milton Rickels, Eugene Current-Garcia, George Kummer, James H. Penrod, John Q. Anderson, James Atkins Shackford, Pascal Covici, Jr., Randall Stewart, and Willard Thorp. A checklist of criticism by Charles E. Davis and Martha B. Hudson concludes the volume.

Through a special arrangement with the publisher, members of the American Humor Studies Association and individual subscribers to American Humor: An Interdisciplinary Newsletter may purchase the book at a 10% discount before the end of the year.

ILLINOIS WRITERS

Illinois Writers Inc. is a new organization based in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. Their first project is to publish a bi-monthly newsletter as a service to citizens of the Illinois area who are interested in creative writing. The first issue will contain information on grants available to writers, the Illinois "Poets in the Schools" program, and copyright laws. Every issue will feature up-to-date information on grants, readings,

workshops, seminars, contests, new publications, and manuscript solicitations. You can receive the first complimentary issue or contribute information of interest to other Illinois area writers by writing to:

Illinois Writers Inc.
c/o Community Writer's Library
McKinley Foundation
809 S. Fifth Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820

From a Midwest Notebook:

NEIGHBORS AND THE BLACKSMITH SHOP

i. Neighbors

Mr. Everett's farm adjoined ours on the north, but his house was on the other side of the road, back a long lane. My father, eminently practical, did not like long lanes, and I too could perceive how it put Mr. Everett at a disadvantage: it was too far from the house to the river. He was a devoted fisherman, and in summer was often to be seen, carrying several cane poles and always wearing rubber boots, following the Bend to a likely spot where perhaps he had for several days baited the carp with bits of dough or grains of corn. He always used doughballs on the hook and seemed able to catch fish any time he wished to. This was mysterious to me, whose hook no fish would attach itself to, whether it were baited with dough, worm, or craw-dad. So I gave up fishing early in life, and inclined to the view of a professor of English whom I later met that The Compleat Angler is a delightful book but fishing a very overrated sport. Mr. Everett, who certainly never heard of Izaak Walton, knew nothing of the sporting angler's scorn of the carp, and would bring us sometimes a handsome seven- or eight-pounder, when he had caught more than his family could eat.

Mr. Everett's experience was wide and varied. You couldn't bring up a subject he hadn't an opinion on or knowledge or experience of.

His personal narratives were endless, and if you asked him a question as lucid as "What is this shrub that grows along the fence-row?" you might hear about a horse that got sick from eating it and then about a Texas horse race of 1896 before you got the answer--if the answer came. The subject he wouldn't talk about was how to catch fish: that was his secret, and his implied view was that it might remain to the rest of the world a mystery.

My earliest associations were with the Riders. Their house, to which belong fifty acres, was easy to reach--you had only to climb a couple of fences, and there you were. It was a "settler's cabin," built of big hewn logs and chinked with mortar, and had some time been plastered inside. Its doors scraped on their sills, and its floor rippled, and it was exactly the sort of house you would expect the Riders to live in, and they were exactly the people you would expect to find living in it. They were also fishermen, but their fishing was less eclectic than Mr. Everett's. In summer they kept trot lines set nearly all the time, and used a seine. And every now and then, Perry, my favorite, or another of them would lead me to a barrel and show me a big turtle.

At some time, then or later, I learned that Clydie was not the boys' mother. But I knew what a stepmother is, and found nothing odd about her situation. It was many years before I knew she was the housekeeper whom August had never married. Their alliance was so far in the past that her status as common-law wife was no longer a subject for comment, and she went by the name of Rider. The Riders moved away, and, though their new home was only a mile off, Perry was lost to me as a companion. At age five one might permissibly go two hundred yards to make a visit but not a mile.

ii. The Blacksmith Shop

A mile south of our farm a big iron bridge spanned the Scioto, and across, on the road to the north, was John Berridge's blacksmith shop, where my father took his horses to

have them shod. It was a wondrous place, a cavernous shed from whose rafters and beams hung fantastic shapes of iron and on hooks horseshoes of all sizes. The south end was bright with sunlight from the open big west door, and there on the plank floor a horse was tied while John held one of its feet between his knees against his leather apron. I watched eagerly when he nailed the shoe, and was amazed at the deftness with which he clipped off and clinched the nails on the upper side of the hoof. I asked my father if it didn't hurt the horse, and he said it didn't. The horse seemed not to mind, except rarely, and then John would skillfully manoeuvre him off balance and have the hoof between his knees in spite of the horse's resistance. After the nails were clinched, he pared off the edge of the hoof outside the shoe with a curious knife whose blade at the end had a sidewise curl.

In the middle of the shop was the big anvil, bolted to a great block of wood on the floor of packed earth, and near the east wall the forge, a square, brick structure, chest-high, containing a heap of coals whose center was a red- and yellow-fire. Its brick chimney rose close to the east wall, above a gaping mouth, and against the chimney was a mechanical blower, operated by a short handle, like that of a grinding wheel. With his long tongs John would take a horseshoe from the yellow coals, hold the glowing red tip of one prong over the anvil point, and hammer it into a short angle or hook. The shaping of both prongs done, he plunged it into the big vat of dark water by the forge, whence issued a great sizzling and a cloud of steam. Cooled at once, it was ready for nailing to the horse's hoof. While standing by the vat, John gave the handle of the blower a turn, sending a white radiance out of the forge, where another shoe was heating, although I hadn't seen him put it there.

Here in this middle area, along the west wall, were upended nail kegs for casual visitors to sit on, and for the habitual guests luxurious comfort in a fully upholstered automobile seat, in front of which

was plenty of room to spit. Beyond, filling the gloom of the north end, were wagon wheels and tires, big iron pipes, and complicated-looking iron shapes; on pegs, big and little iron bars and rods; and on nails in beams and walls, clevises, single-tree hooks, and hames. You couldn't get within ten feet of the north wall because of this profusion of iron.

It is assumed difficult to hold in the memory specific tastes or odors; but I can easily recall the blacksmith shop's peculiar and distinctive smells. That of fresh manure was evanescent; but there was the pungent and durable odor of hoof parings, like strong, stale sweat; the smell of the forge itself, not smoky, as of an ordinary fire, but sharp and tangy and agreeable; and the sudden, brief, prickly scent that came with the steam out of the vat when the hot horseshoe was plunged into the water. Even the iron had an odor, but thin and delicate, overpowered by the others, which were ambrosial.

Whenever I bent a pedal hanger of my tricycle, it was John Berridge who straightened it. My father took the tricycle along in the wagon when he had the horses shod or on one of his frequent trips in the buggy to our other farm. John would stop whatever he was going and attend to it at once--it took but a minute--and never charged for it. He grasped the frame with his left hand, lifted it, placed the end of the pedal hanger on the anvil, and gave it a couple of hard blows with his hammer. It seemed to me he was hitting it on the wrong side, but my father said not, and it was done. John would tell me to ride it home.

William Thomas

Bill Thomas's novel, The Country and the Boy, is on the Fall list of Thomas Nelson Publishers.

On Sherwood Anderson, Teacher of Writing,
and his "Writer's Book"

There are perhaps as many principles of reviewing as there are reviewers or journals that print them, but for the past two decades I have had only two: I never review a book I don't like or respect, and I insist on the right to say whatever I feel will give insight into the book, the writer, and the source of my pleasure and respect.

Consequently, over the years, I've become convinced that reviewing is, next to the act of writing itself, one of the most enjoyable ways of spending one's life, and I acquire new evidence for the validity of my reviewing principles as well as new pleasure with each book I read, reflect upon, and write about. Occasionally a book will possess particular qualities that enhance my pleasure and my faith in my principles as I read it.

Martha Curry's edition of Sherwood Anderson's "Writer's Book" (Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1975) is such a book. Its subject matter is a work by a writer who has had more to say to me personally than any other writer in our time, a work with which I was far less familiar than I should have been; its editorial treatment is not only impeccably scholarly but pleasantly sympathetic; and the result is a combination that is both instructive and edifying in the classic sense as well as in the informal, highly personal manner that characterized so much of Anderson's work and his life.

The "Writer's Book" is one of the three works, including the twice-edited Memoirs and a projected collection of short stories, that Sherwood Anderson left unfinished at his death and, although Paul Rosenfeld used parts of the manuscript to flesh out his edition of the Memoirs, the manuscript remained largely untouched in the fragments, notes, and typed pages that Sherwood left behind him. In this first published edition Martha Curry has put it into the form that it appears Sherwood would have done had he lived to complete it, and she provides

ancillary scholarly information that combines with the text to provide a substantial and valuable addition to Anderson scholarship.

Inevitably it is easier for me to talk about Sherwood Anderson than about the editorial apparatus of the increasing numbers of scholarly editions of Anderson's work that have been appearing in recent years, and the "Writer's Book" is no exception. As in the Memoirs and Home Town, it is Anderson celebrating those experiences that he had found most meaningful, here, talking with wonder and reverence about life, art, and craftsmanship, the ultimate values for Anderson in an age characterized not only by change but by an increasing disrespect for all three. The manuscript is eminently worthy of the meticulous attention given it by Martha Curry.

In this case it is as easy for me to talk about the edition. The combination of detailed but never extraneous annotation, denotation, explanation, and reinforcement that makes up the scholarly apparatus of the book is as useful and interesting as it is detailed; indeed, it incorporates in it almost all of the significant scholarly work that Sherwood Anderson and his work have stimulated in recent years, and it provides new information and insights as well. On the eve of the Sherwood Anderson Centenary, it is a useful, worthy publication.

Of more importance to me as well as to the growing number of others also convinced of the relevance of Sherwood Anderson's work to our age and the value of his contribution to the literary inheritance of the race is the fact that Martha Curry has approached her work not only with the respect of the sympathetic and appreciative scholar for a worthy subject, but with the reverence with which Anderson himself regarded the art and craft of literature. The result is a critical edition that is precise, perceptive, informative, and stimulating.

Anderson's concern for young writers and

artists learning their craft is evident throughout his correspondence, particularly of the last decade of his life, and he has a great deal to say to them, much of which appears here in the "Writer's Book." I hope his insights and Martha Curry's receive the wide dissemination that they deserve.

David D. Anderson

An Autobiographical Fragment
from the Midwestern Past

612 W. Main St.
Napoleon, O., 1950.

Dear Mr. Dent:

Here are some notes, indistinguishable from pages from real life, except that they lack proof-reading.

My mother's father was Rev. William Davis, who was the first president of Otterbein College, near Columbus, Ohio. Later he was appointed president of Western College, near Cedar Rapids, Iowa, also a United Brethren institution. He was an ordained minister in the U.B. church, and also a very capable physician. In his earlier days he rode circuit,--the Wabash, Miami and Maumee river fields. I suppose in the early days he saved the lives of half the people along those rivers. My mother was born at Seven-Mile, near Hamilton, some of her brothers at South Bend, Ind.

My father was the son of Jonathan Neidig and grandson of Rev. John Neidig, one of the founders of the United Brethren church, in whose memory the Neidig Memorial church was built at Highspire, near Harrisburg, Pa. Jonathan Neidig married Catherine Hershey, daughter of Rev. Abraham Hershey, also one of the founders of the United Brethren church. He was the son of Christian Hershey, whose family settled near Lancaster back at the beginning of the 18th century. Abraham Hershey was not only a farmer, but a lumberman. He built the first saw-mill in Manor

township,--perhaps the first in the county. Later he bought three farms near Carlisle,--one for himself, one for each of his two children. In 1848 he sold these, chartered a canal-boat or two, and set over the mountains and down the Ohio river with a lot of nephews and nieces, bound for Iowa. He built the first brick building in Muscatine, and the first saw-mill there. The saw-mill at his death passed into the management of a nephew, Benjamin Hershey, and became the largest saw-mill on the Mississippi.

The names of both John Neidig and Abraham Hershey are found on the military lists of Pennsylvania during the Revolutionary War, and some of their descendants are members of the D.A.R. or similar societies. John Neidig was pastor for many years of an independent church at Highspire. Later, at the death of Otterbein, another of the founders of the United Brethren church, he was called to Baltimore, Maryland, to become pastor of Otterbein's great church,--the mother church of the new denomination. His son Jonathan accompanied him, and remained with him during his pastorate. The church building I believe still stands,--the oldest church building in Baltimore.

The emigration to Iowa in 1848 included not only many of the Hersheys, but several families of Neidigs. Jonathan Neidig bought land south of Cedar Rapids, some of which later became part of the campus of the new Western College. My father met my mother there at the new college, of which William Davis by that time had become president, and they were married there.

I suppose my father turned to writing because he had been obliged to study Latin. The Civil War had interrupted his college work. On his return from the war he became editor of the Western Gazette,--he may have started the paper himself. He did so well with it that he was called to Cedar Rapids to become editor of the Cedar Rapids Republican. Later he became editor in succession of the Marshalltown Republican and of the Norfolk, Neb., Republican. He was also active in

politics. He was chairman of the Iowa State Central Committee (Republican) for eight years, and later secretary of the Nebraska State Central Committee. I remember that he was of the staff of Gov. Gear, of Iowa, but just what that meant I have forgotten.

At any rate I grew up very close to some printing office or other, and learned the printer's trade very thoroughly, if not much else. I still know the names of all the type faces, and the width of all the column rules.

It so happened that about the time the new Leland Stanford Jr. University opened its doors I became of college age. I had already decided to enter this college. As a consequence, when Stanford opened I was present as a student, with a room in Encina Hall that I shared with Ernest Pillsbury, who later became a very fine physician. I suppose that I should have learned more than I did at college, but I knew everybody, and most of my friends became millionaires. One of them became president of the United States, another Secretary of the interior; still another, president of the First National Bank of New York City.

Incidentally, because of my technical knowledge of printing I was commandeered to help start the Daily Palo Alto, and supervised the setting up of a one-lunged Campbell drum-cylinder press that somebody salvaged from a San Jose junk pile. Others with more free time got out the first issue of the Daily Palo Alto, but later I became managing editor of it, and also editor of the college literary monthly, and one of the editors of the Junior annual,--the Quad. I also took a number of prizes for writing poetry and prose. Since these are no longer distinguished, I speak of them together. I arrived at Stanford riding a high Columbia bicycle; I left Stanford on foot. I was bound for San Francisco, to earn my living as a writer.

During the years that followed I did newspaper work, became a sub-editor of the Argonaut, dramatic critic, features writer

(including Paris fashions following Geraldine Bonner), editor of the Railroad Gazetteer, editor of the Klondike News (published in San Francisco), editor of the Family Journal, book editor and then editor of the Wave, and I don't know what all. I also wrote short stories, for which sometimes I took prizes. I remember especially a Black Cat contest that paid me cash money, a Cycling West contest, a Sorosis contest (Russian setting). I did quite a lot of fiction for various publications, among others, the Youths Companion, which I remember because one of my stories found its way into a school reader. In San Francisco I ran especially with Dan and Herbert Coolidge, Will and Wallace Irwin, Merle Johnson the cartoonist, Dick Culver (also a cartoonist), Jack London, Mae Elinor Gates, Adelaide Knapp, Flora Haines Lockheed (her son is now president I believe of the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation), and a group of artists that included Keith and Mrs. Richardson, Charles Ferguson and Herbert Miller Hopkins. (Dozens of others, like Harry McCarthy, a marine painter, who earned his living acting as head waiter in a swell restaurant.) I also did graduate work at the University of California under Gayley. Along about this time I was asked to go back to Stanford as a member of the English department, and earned my living as a teacher, first at Stanford, then at the University of Chicago (where I did graduate work under Manly), and at the University of Wisconsin.

Meanwhile the Macmillan Company published a book of poems I had written, under the title The First Wardens. It received good American and English reviews (the high class Manchester Guardian gave it a good lift), but in America Harriet Monroe and her North Side angels had come into power and I lost interest in the bear that walks like a man. The First Wardens did win me a place in Who's Who.

While I was working in San Francisco I sold a number of stories to a magazine on the coast that finally went bankrupt while in possession of the scripts. These may have

been sold along with desks and waste baskets,--I wouldn't know. At least they were lost to me. The plot of one of these in considerable detail later turned up in a best seller. One has to learn to accept such coincidences. This one taught me the adventure of attending auction sales. While I've never had the luck to buy up an idea, I've had now and then, mostly through my wife, some exciting adventures in the field of old glass and Chinese ceramics. (At the Studebaker sale in Chicago, for example, we picked up a Sevres plate that had belonged to Napoleon I and bore his private decoration. Yes, it belonged to the wife of one of the South Bend Studebakers,--it was during the depression. No, the auctioneer didn't recognize it for what it was, or we could not have afforded it.) We've had such successes a number of times.

I've had other adventures of an unusual kind in the field of detective research. I once ran back the earliest known date for an American stage play nearly one hundred years. The Nation gave it two full pages. I also became a member of the very small group of Americans who have been privileged to contribute to the knowledge of William Shakespeare,-- John M. Manly, the two Wallaces, Leslie Hotson, and one or two others.

My contribution consisted in proving, three hundred years after the crime was committed, that somebody placed false dates on certain of the Shakespeare quartos. If you remember that the imprint date on the title page of a book is itself almost irrefutable proof that the book was printed in that year, you will see what the problem really was. You will, of course, have to look up this material, if you do a feature story of me. It appeared simultaneously in two magazines, in the October number, 1908, of each. One of these is accessible enough,--the file of Century Magazine will give it to you. The date, again,--October, 1908. The other magazine is a technical scholar's magazine,--Modern Philology, October, 1908. The university library at Columbus or Ann Arbor probably has this file. You may have it in Bowling

Green. The English department would be the one most likely to use it. The two accounts supplement each other,--they are not identical.

I have neither the time nor the memory to go through the lists of my published work during the years since I left college. I've published hundreds of stories during my life. Most of these I've long forgotten. I've known most of the editors of American magazines. Most of the magazines at one time or another have printed stories by me. Some of these are series stories. The Saturday Evening Post printed a good many. The Donovan series of jewel stories, that appeared in the Post, consisted of twenty-seven stories. My work has appeared in a good many foreign magazines, as well, many of which I've never even seen.

I must add that in addition to the long string of stories I've done I've also taken out between thirty and forty United States and foreign patents on inventions I have made. Some of my most important inventions I never patented. One of these is in use by the United States and British navies to-day.

I think this sheet of notes is long enough already. I haven't proof-read it. My eyes aren't any too good, and sometimes I hit the wrong key, but you can make out the sense, I think.

Cordially,
William J. Neidig

Furnished by Gene H. Dent
