

**SOCIETY  
FOR  
THE  
STUDY  
OF**



# **MIDWESTERN LITERATURE**

Newsletter  
Volume Seven  
Number One  
Spring, 1977



Society for the Study of  
Midwestern Literature

Newsletter

Volume VII

Number One  
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The Seventh Annual Conference

The Seventh Annual Conference of the Society was held at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, on May 14, 1977. Presiding at the business meeting was President Gerald Nemanic. The theme of the program, "The Study of Midwestern Literature, Past, Present, and Future," featured two panels. The first moderated by Alma Payne, examined new dimensions. It featured Don Pady, the Society's bibliographer, on "Problems and Priorities of Midwestern Literature"; Clarence Andrews on "A Proposal for Teaching Midwestern Literature Off-Campus"; Gene H. Dent on "A Different Approach"; and Bernard Engel on "Beginning a History of Midwestern Literature."

The second panel, "Work in Progress," was moderated by William Thomas, whose recent novel, The Country and the Boy, won an Ohioana award. The panel featured Arnold Davidson on "The Midwest as Metaphor in Jim Harrison's Farmer," Madonna Kolbenschlag on "Female Consciousness and the City-Country Myth," and Nancy Bunge on "Learning From Confusion: Anderson, Hemingway, Lewis, Bellow." The annual convivium was held at the Andersons. A full report will appear in the Summer newsletter.

A special feature of the conference was the recognition of Professor John T. Flanagan's long and distinguished service to the study of Midwestern literature with the presentation of the first MidAmerica award.

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Election of Officers

The Society's newly elected officers are  
President, Gerald Nemanic, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago  
Vice President, Nancy Pogel, Michigan State University

Executive Council

Expiring 1980

Linda Wagner, Michigan State University  
Alma Payne, Bowling Green State University

Continuing officers are

Executive Council

Expiring 1979

Nancy Pogel, Michigan State University  
William Miller, Ball State University

Expiring 1978

Gerald Nemanic, Northeastern Illinois University

Elizabeth Steel, University of Toledo

(non-elective)

Executive Secretary-Treasurer, David D.

Anderson, Michigan State University

Secretary, Paul Ferlazzo, Michigan State University

Bibliographer, Donald Pady, Iowa State University

Indexer, Susanna Harmon, Jacksonville, Florida

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Important Announcement

Announced at the Seventh Annual Conference for the first time was the development schedule for the Society and the Center for the Study of Midwestern Literature and Culture. Supported by Michigan State University President Clifton Wharton, Jr., it consists of three phases over what is anticipated to be a ten-year period. The schedule includes:

Phase I: Endowment for the Continuation and expansion of Present Programs:

1. The Newsletter
2. Midwestern Miscellany (annual)
3. MidAmerica (annual)
4. Annual conferences and other programs
5. The Chair in Midwestern Literature and Culture



Phase II: Establishment of Outreach Programs:

1. Popular
  - A. Production of audio and video taped programs
  - B. Publication of Midwestern Heritage
  - C. Development of public and school programs
2. Scholarly
  - A. Collecting research materials
  - B. Providing curriculum and materials development support and consultation for all academic levels and mass media
  - C. Providing support for readings and other programs

Phase III: Establishment of the Center for the Study of Midwestern Literature and Culture

1. Erection of a suitable building for:
  - A. Research facilities
  - B. Popular programs and exhibits
  - C. Sound studios for recording readings and interviews
  - D. Work space for visiting writers and scholars
  - E. Housing for collections of major research materials
2. Continuing support for creative and scholarly projects:
  - A. Expanded publications:
    - (1) Monographs and bibliographies
    - (2) A literary journal
  - B. Fellowships for scholars and writers in residence

Such a schedule is admittedly ambitious, and much will depend on the availability of funding and the support of members of the Society as well as its friends. The members are encouraged to donate time, money, effort, and research materials and to encourage others to do so. Research materials have already been given to the program by William Thomas, Russel Nye, and Dave Anderson. All such contributions are tax deductible. A major drive for support will be announced in the near future.

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The Eighth Annual Conference

The Eighth Annual Conference, a symposium on "The Cultural Heritage of the Midwest," will be held at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, on May 18, 19, and 20, 1978. Members are urged to offer papers in the following areas and to announce the program to their colleagues:

The Pre-Colonial Heritage: Archeology and Indian Culture  
Under Four Flags: the Colonial Heritage  
The Agricultural Heritage  
Midwestern Politics, 1787-1978  
Midwestern Education  
Midwestern Art and Architecture  
Midwestern Literature  
Midwestern Humor  
Midwestern Popular Culture  
Midwestern Publishing and Publications  
The Rise of Industrialism  
The Quality of Life in the Midwest,  
Past and Present: Cities, Towns, and the Countryside

Papers should not exceed twenty minutes in length; they should be comparative in nature; and they should, whenever possible, point out areas in which further research is necessary. Proposals, including titles and brief descriptions of the proposed papers, will be received until October 1, 1977.

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

An announcement is included for posting.

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Popular Culture Meeting

The Society sponsored a special program at the National Conference of the Popular Culture Association at the Baltimore Hilton on April 30, 1977. The program included:

Nancy Pogel, Michigan State University,  
on "Max Shulman's Humorous Fiction"  
Barry Gross, Michigan State University,  
on "William Inge and the Midwest Milieu"



Reed Baird, Michigan State University, on  
"Opie Reed: An American Traveler"  
David D. Anderson, Michigan State University,  
on "Brand Whitlock's Popular  
Political Reality"

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#### Announcements

Alma Payne, former President of the  
Society, is now editor of the National  
Newsletter of the American Studies  
Association. She solicits items of  
interest which may be sent to

Alma J. Payne  
Center for American Studies  
Bowling Green State University  
Bowling Green, OH 43403

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#### CALL FOR PAPERS

##### Perspective on the Culture of the Upper Mississippi Valley

On October 1, 1977, the first in what  
is intended to be an annual conference  
on the culture and life of the Upper  
Mississippi Valley will be held on the  
campus of Western Illinois University,  
Macomb, Illinois. Ideally, topics will  
be diverse and may range from studies of  
individual regional writers to discus-  
sions of agricultural patterns, settlement  
history, folk architecture, and regional  
dialects. It is thus hoped that the  
conference will reflect a wide variety  
of interests, and that the result will  
be a broad, interdisciplinary account  
of the Upper Mississippi Valley as a  
cultural area. While it is planned for  
several artists and leading scholars  
to address the conference, the greater  
part of the program will be given to  
refereed papers.

Papers concerned with the culture and  
life of the region may be submitted  
from any academic discipline, including  
(but not limited to) literature,  
history, geography, linguistics,  
archeology, architecture, and agriculture.

Paper length should be the equivalent of  
a 15 minute oral presentation, and should

be addressed to a general audience rather  
than to a group of specialists in a par-  
ticular field of study.

An original and one copy of the paper  
should be sent to

Professor Timothy Frazer  
Department of English  
Western Illinois University  
Macomb, Illinois 61455

by June 1, 1977.

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POETS and readers of poetry will want  
to receive the periodic "Third Coast  
Poetry Newsletter" that tells of upcoming  
poetry readings and poetry publications  
in Michigan. The "Newsletter" is a  
publication of the Poetry Resource Center,  
which sponsored the highly successful  
Michigan Poetry Conference last December.  
If you would like a subscription to the  
"Newsletter," send your name and address  
to Poetry Resource Center  
126 Lake Huron Hall  
Thomas Jefferson College  
Grand Valley State Colleges  
Allendale, Michigan 49401

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#### Toward a new scholarship

SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND  
SOCIETY is an international and inter-  
disciplinary forum devoted to the new  
scholarship about women. Now in its  
second year, SIGNS has already become the  
largest in circulation and one of the  
most respected academic journals in the  
field.

SIGNS represents a concerted attempt to  
grasp a sense of the totality of women's  
lives and the realities of which they  
have been a part. To achieve that end,  
SIGNS has become a truly interdisciplinary  
journal, publishing work from distinguished  
critics and scholars in such areas as  
history, sociology and anthropology,  
economics, biology and medicine, political  
science and law, psychology, theology,  
criticism and aesthetics.

The journal is not limited to any partic-



ular orientation or ideology but presents original research, contemplative essays, reports, commentary, and reviews from a variety of perspectives. Also, appearing in each issue is a special section of *Review Essays* in which the status of women, current research, and literature is assessed for a particular discipline, area, or profession.

International in scope, SIGNS actively seeks new material from authors abroad as well as translations of work published in other languages. A network of foreign correspondents has been established to alert the editors to developments and prospective contributors in other countries.

"We sense the presence of a vital, constructive consciousness that has buoyed and heartened us," writes the editor of SIGNS. "It supports our conviction that to care for the new scholarship is to nurture a scholarship of hope." In its first year, the journal has made significant contributions to this new scholarship about women, rectifying old errors, adding fresh materials, and suggesting new paradigms. In the coming year, these will continue to be the primary goals of SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY.

SIGNS is edited by Catharine R. Stimpson and coedited by Joan N. Burstyn and Donna C. Stanton. It is published quarterly by The University of Chicago Press.

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#### Announcing

PHRASE/PARAPHRASE  
by Charles Guenther

#### The Book

The poems of Charles Guenther have had a legendary reputation among poets and editors since his first publication in *Palisade* magazine with William Carlos Williams over twenty-five years ago. PHRASE/PARAPHRASE, the first book-length selection of his verse, includes work reprinted from a wide range of periodicals. It also contains twenty-five poems never before published.

PHRASE/PARAPHRASE reveals an important constant of the poet's nature: a double awareness of actuality and history. Writing in the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, Julius A. Molinaro of Toronto noted that "Guenther...has been referred to as one of those modern American poets--others would be James Dickey, Louis Simpson, W. S. Merwin, and Denise Levertov--who do not hesitate to treat such subjects as modern warfare, concentration camps, automobiles, or advertising."

Occasionally these poems show a conditioning of the craftsman by his dialogues and correspondence with Ezra Pound. At other times the poet appears as a master parodist, as in "The Brown Rat," which Richard Eberhart called "better than the original" of his famous "The Ground Hog." Rounding out the collection are samples of the translator's art which drew high praise from Mark Van Doren and caused critic Wallace Fowlie, as foreign editor of *Poetry* magazine, to acclaim Guenther as "one of the best translators in this country."

#### The Author

Charles Guenther has published poems and translations in more than two hundred American and foreign magazines and anthologies including *Accent*, *Black Mountain Review*, *the Critic*, *Kenyon Review*, *The Literary Review*, *the New Yorker*, *Perspective*, *Poetry* (Chicago), *Quarterly Review of Literature*, *The Reporter* and *New Directions*. He has translated three books of Italian verse--among them, *Modern Italian Poets* (San Francisco: Inferno Press, 1961)--and a selection titled *Paul Valery in English* (Olivant Press, 1970).

For more than a generation Guenther has brought new foreign verse into our language. During the fifties and sixties editors recognized him as "the most active translator" of verse then appearing in little magazines.

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Sherwood Anderson: The Dimensions of His Literary Art.

Edited by David D. Anderson. Michigan State University Press, 1976.

In one of our many conversations about books and writers, the Editor asserted that he was going to spark a Sherwood Anderson revival. That was twenty years ago, long enough for new age-groups to become devotees and for enthusiastic students to become competent critics. Anderson, who has never been out of favor academically (it seems safe to say that any anthology of American literature widely used in college classes during the last half-century is sure to contain an Anderson story), may be in the way to secure a readership that was denied him in the last decade of his life and during the years of limbo. The signs are unmistakable: reawakened interest among the reading public and more sober assessment of Anderson's work by academics.

The book in hand is one of the fruits of that recent scholarship. It is a significant book, and may even become a landmark in Anderson criticism. Every one of the eight essays it contains is soundly based in knowledge and understanding of Anderson's fiction. There is no overlapping of subject matter. Each limits its discussion to a carefully circumscribed facet of Anderson's total work. I find no contradictions within the essays as a group. I find nothing to take exception to (aside from such mechanics as the inaccurate page numbers of the table of contents).

William Miller writes lucidly of the "narrative source" in an Anderson story, showing that instead of removing himself as author Anderson sought to inform the reader of the effect on the narrator (the implied author) of the events described. Ray White praises Anderson for his "honest use of sex", reminding us that he wrote without the privilege accorded to writers by our present-day freedom. Walter Rideout examines the unpublished Talbot Whittingham and its relation to Winesburg. Welford Taylor discusses the history of Anderson's reputation, and goes on to the difficulty of categorizing him and to relate him to the so-called New Humanism.

Linda Wagner discourses on the influence (I'm always uncomfortable using that word; Wagner uses it but once) of Gertrude Stein. Martha Curry expounds Anderson's theory of fiction, insofar as it can be extracted from The Writer's Book, which she edited. William Sutton's narrative of the letters to Marietta Finley is an adventure of scholarship. The closing essay, by the Editor, is a detailed consideration of the myths surrounding Anderson, and Anderson's share in creating and fostering them.

In sum, the book is altogether praiseworthy and should be illuminating to both readers familiar with Anderson and students reading him the first time. The latter, especially, may be saved by it from the obtuse pronouncement of the critic named by the Editor in his Introduction, who, born post-Hemingway, is obviously unwilling to apprehend Anderson's method.

My acquaintance with Anderson began when I was twenty years old. I read four of the five then-published novels (I came to Many Marriages a long time afterward), the story collections, A Story Teller's Story, and all the Anderson stories and articles I found in periodicals. It was the romantic element in Anderson that captured me, no doubt, but my avidity wasn't all uncritical enthusiasm; I knew he was a great writer. Later I came back to the stories -- always to the stories, naturally enough, as they were anthologized. And I have never found reason to dissent from the judgment prevailing among the contributors to this book: some of those stories are among the finest in the language. After I finished reading Sherwood Anderson: The Dimensions of His Literary Art, I went to my file of The American Mercury and read "Death in the Woods".

William Thomas

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SHERWOOD ANDERSON: CENTENNIAL STUDIES, ed. Hilbert H. Campbell and Charles E. Modlin. Whitston Publishing Company, Troy, New York, 1976.

What is so attractive about this book, and



what makes it a fitting tribute to Anderson's centennial, is that for nearly half of the book we are invited to contemplate the presence of Sherwood Anderson himself as citizen, husband, and friend before we get down to the business of Anderson the artist. The first half of the book consists of largely personal material relating to Anderson the man, and the second half consists of essays by new and established scholars ranging wide over the art, influences, and evaluations of Anderson the writer. It is a balanced and sober approach to the celebration of an anniversary and avoids the impulse to over-indulge in either panegyric or "auld lang syne."

The first part of Centennial Studies contains fifty-four previously unpublished letters covering the period 1920-40, Eleanor Copenhaver Anderson's interview of "Sherwood Anderson on Poor White" done in 1931 when she was a graduate student at Columbia, an interview with her in 1975 conducted by the editors of this book, two brief essays by the past and current curators of the Anderson papers at the Newberry, and finally, "A Catalog of Sherwood Anderson's Library."

Since there are thousands of Anderson's unpublished letters at the Newberry and other libraries, the process of selection is an arduous and frustrating task. Nevertheless, these fifty-four are good representatives and they serve to reveal various aspects of his mind and life, and to point up several close friendships during the period.

What especially emerges from the two pieces by Eleanor Anderson is that she is a person who deserves to be studied in her own right and not solely as the wife of a famous writer. Her career with the YWCA was a significant one, and she has done much work on an international level for the labor movement. And, of course, there are memories and insights within her relating to Sherwood Anderson and numerous other writers which have yet to be heard, and would serve not only to reveal the lives of significant writers, but also the life of one of America's significant women.

The catalog of Anderson's library which

rounds out this section of Centennial Studies is good to have, but its usefulness to the development of Anderson scholarship remains to be seen. It is admittedly not an indication of every book Anderson ever read, nor of every one he may have owned throughout his life. Nor can the compilers of the catalog indicate those which he loved, or may have been influenced by, since Anderson rarely marked the books or made notations in them of any kind. It is a listing, simply, and one which unfortunately does not appear to point in any direction. Of course, in conjunction with other materials something yet may be made of it.

Of the eleven essays which comprise the second half of the book, six explore Anderson's relationship with other artists, specifically George Borrow, Edgar Lee Masters, Henry Adams, Alfred Stieglitz, Louis Bromfield, and J. J. Lankes. Of the remaining five, two are bibliographic in nature, one deals with Clyde, Ohio, another with Anderson's pastoralism, and the last focuses on the characteristically ambiguous endings of Anderson's novels.

Of particular note are the essays by John H. and Margaret M. Wrenn, "T.M.": The Forgotten Muse of Sherwood Anderson and Edgar Lee Masters," David D. Anderson's "The Search for a Living Past," and Glen A. Love's "Horses or Men: Primitive and Pastoral Elements in Sherwood Anderson." In the Wrenn article, despite some almost superstitiously observed coincidences that appear to exist in the lives of Masters and Anderson, there is a rather provocative case made for seeing Tennessee Mitchell as the muse behind Spoon River and Winesburg. David Anderson strikes out on new territory by replacing Van Doren's "Revolt from the Village" as the unifying myth behind midwestern literature with his own generative idea that "the myth of the search" provides a comprehensive interpretation of Midwestern literature. Love surveys most of Anderson's fiction and suggests that inadequacy of the term "primitivism" to meaningfully describe Anderson's motives and methods. He convincingly suggests that "pastoral" more clearly defines Anderson's vision.



In all, much new ground is broken in Centennial Studies with the inviting promise that much needs still to be done as the second one-hundred years of Sherwood Anderson studies begin.

Paul J. Ferlazzo  
Michigan State University

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### Poetry in the Classroom

Browsing through a dozen or so anthologies of poetry intended for classroom use, one realizes that under all the machinery of types, forms, divisions, parts, and principles, there is a sameness: well known poems presented in what the anthologists hope are original groupings with what they also hope are fresh labels. One suspects that the experienced instructor disregards the editorial paraphernalia.

One fresh tide in this sea wherein every wave is different but all are the same is The Poem Itself, a multi-lingual anthology edited by Stanley Burnshaw (with Dudley Fitts, Henri Peyre, and John F. Nims as associate editors; Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976). Astonishingly, this text presents poems in their original languages by 45 poets working in four European languages--13 French, 5 German, 11 Italian, and 16 Spanish and Portuguese (sensibly recognizing what the speakers of these last two sometimes refuse to acknowledge, that they are mutually understandable).

It is the sort of anthology that language majors--including upper division English students--ought to be able to profit from. Since four of the tongues represented are Romantic, the student who knows one can without undue effort follow the sense of the others. Only the German selections call for another enlightenment.

Though the editors English each poem, they do not attempt verse translation but, following Frost's advice, see that each is "discussed into English": they give a prose version which in 800 or 900 words paraphrases sense while explaining alternate critical interpretations. They ask the student to consider not so much the critics' understanding as their methods

of approach, the sort of question one having only a beginner's familiarity with a language can deal with.

Admittedly it is impossible for those of us without a thorough familiarity with a language, a knowledge usually requiring long residence in a country where it is spoken, to assess the work of a poet in that tongue. But we can with guidance arrive at paraphrases which will show us something of what the poet is trying to do; we can recognize methods even if we cannot always perceive accomplishment; we can observe contribution to the changes--what these editors term the revolutions--in poetry of the last two centuries; we can even get something of the savor the pieces must have for readers born to the tongue.

The collection usefully reminds us that though in our time most of us believe poetry ought to be rooted in a place more definite than a vague international culture, there are international tendencies; that there is much mutual reading among modern poets; and that poetry from a region--the Midwest, for example--cannot be merely regional if it is to command attention from the resolutely reluctant world.

As a textbook the compilation seems impractical for courses at the level of appreciation of poetry. But it should be useful in comparative literature classes, in upper division courses in foreign language departments that seek to be other than merely provincial, and in upper division English and humanities courses offered in department which can expect students to be passably familiar with at least one of the prominent modern European languages. The collection might also have some audience among those who read poetry non-professionally, those general readers who we all hope are out there someplace, even though they elude the patrols of present-day marketing strategists.

Bernard F. Engel  
Michigan State University

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### On Talking With Authors

One of the most rewarding developments in modern literary criticism is the fact that



we rarely quote and almost never observe Julius Lemaitre's dictum that writing about living authors is not criticism but conversation. We do indeed talk as well as write about living authors, and admittedly much of both is on the level of conversation, but a good deal more is criticism that is both valid and useful---useful not only to teachers, scholars, readers, and students, but to the writers as well. And even more fortunately, we can even converse with the writers, exchanging information and gaining insights that might otherwise be lost.

In the study of Midwestern literature we are particularly fortunate that a good many of our best writers are alive and active -- Saul Bellow, Nelson Algren, James T. Farrell, Wright Morris and Frederick Manfred, to name a few. Not only can we read and study their works and write about them, but we can talk with them as well. And even more fortunately those conversations are increasingly being published for the benefit of those of us not lucky enough to take part in them. Within the past several years we have had Conversations with Frederick Manfred, and now we have Conversations with Wright Morris, edited by Robert E. Knoll (University of Nebraska Press, 1977). Those of us who occasionally -- or frequently -- deplore the impact of electronics on literacy can take some solace from the fact that tape recorders are increasingly used not only to provide the raw materials of scholarship but to record voices and insights that otherwise would be lost or poorly remembered.

Conversations with Wright Morris is, however, more than mere recorded conversation, and even Lemaitre might give it his approval. It had its origins in the Montgomery Lecture series at the University of Nebraska--Lincoln in the fall of 1975. Morris was novelist in residence at the time, and the lectures focused on "The Art of Wright Morris." Visiting scholars came for two or three day visits while Morris was in residence, and each spoke about Morris's work and recorded conversations about his art and craft.

The visiting scholars were John W. Aldridge, Wayne C. Booth, Peter C. Bunnell and David Madden. The resulting book contains

three lectures, four conversations, a concluding essay by Morris, and a bibliography compiled by Robert L. Boyce. It also contains a group of Morris's important and impressive photographs, most of them selected from a concurrent exhibit, and photos by Walker Evans and others that serve to illuminate Morris's work.

One might expect the resulting book to be disjointed, fragmented, or confused, but it reflects instead the unity inherent in Morris's own work: an abiding respect for his subject and for the art and craft of fiction, perhaps the most important lesson Morris learned from his mentor, Sherwood Anderson.

Two important thematic commentaries run throughout the book: the significance and substance of Morris's achievement, and the extent to which this important writer comments perceptively on the Midwestern world he has made his own. In effect, he reiterates Emerson's dictum that the local is the only universal as he comments that "The characteristics of this region have conditioned what I see, what I look for, and what I find in the world to write about."

Wright Morris is indeed one of our important living writers, as this symposium makes clear, but he is almost invariably overlooked in any list of such writers, even, unfortunately, by some of the critics who appear in this volume. In more than twenty volumes of fiction published since My Uncle Dudley in 1942, Morris has, as had Sherwood Anderson before him, attempted to explore the range of human experience in America in his time, not as incidents to be exploited but as metaphysical experiences to be probed. Thus, like Anderson, Morris writes of the human condition, of individual human lives caught up in the search for meaning, for permanence in a constantly changing reality. Morris's people, like Anderson's, can only find meaning in their relationship with others.

Morris shares another important characteristic with Anderson: his works, like Anderson's, are the record of a single journey, and each individual work is subtly but surely related to the others. Like Anderson and Faulkner and another



important but too-often neglected Midwestern writer, Frederick Manfred, Morris has created a world of his own based in reality but transmited by his sensitivity into a new American mythology. His own insight into that creative process is rare:

When we say, "How well I remember!" we invariably remember rather poorly. It is the emotion that is strong, not the details. The elusive details are incidental, since the emotion is what matters. In this deficiency of memory, in my opinion, we have the origins of the imagination. To repossess we must imagine: our first memories are as dim as they are lasting. Until recorded history, memory constituted history and memory processed by emotion was our only means of repossession. When this is done with appropriate craft we define it as art.

As Morris himself recognizes, there is a close affinity between his photographs and his fiction. Not only has he produced two photograph-text novels, The Inhabitants (1946) and The Home Place (1948), multi-dimensional, graphically as well as psychologically visual works, but he sees each art form as a unique reflection of reality, a unique attempt to retain a particular moment of time: "With both photography and writing," he says, "Beyond a certain point, what you do just isn't comprehensible, and you have to come back to the point of departure."

In the conversations we hear an important American novelist at the peak of his career discussing his work and the art and craft of fiction and photography, conversations so well and subtly edited that they are spontaneous and absorbing. In fact, the book itself is well done; only one lapse mars Robert Knoll's editing. He comments, perhaps in the noble attempt to save Morris from a critical fate worse than oblivion, that Morris "is in no sense a regional writer." For that unfortunate remark he should be forced to copy fifty times or more the late John T. Frederick's definition of regionalism:

A good regional writer is a good writer who uses regional materials. His

regionalism is an incident and condition, not a purpose or motive. It means simply that he uses the literary substance which he knows best, the life of his own neighborhood, of his own city or state--the material about which he is most likely to be able to write with meaning. His work has literary importance only in so far as it meets the standards of good writing at all times and in all places. Yet in a country so vast and varied as ours the regional writer gives special service to the nation as a whole by revealing and interpreting the people of his own region to those of other regions. He serves most significantly if he can reveal and interpret the people of his region to themselves.

Morris is indeed a regional writer, a Midwestern writer, a good one, and he is at the same time an American writer, among the best of his generation. The two identities are not mutually exclusive but synonymous.

David D. Anderson

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#### A Partial Checklist of Midwestern General Magazines

Bend of the River Magazine. Editors: Christine Alexander and Lee Raizk, 109 East Second St., Box 238, Perrysburg, OH 43551.

Buffalo Spree Magazine. Editor: Richard Shotell, P.O. Box 38, Buffalo, NY 14226

Chicago Magazine. Editor: Allen H. Kelson, 500 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611

Chronicle. Editor: Steve Orr, 227 South Hayford St., Lansing, MI 48912

Cincinnati Magazine. Editor: Jean Spencer, 120 West Fifth St., Cincinnati, OH 45202

Cleveland Magazine. Editor: Michael Roberts, 1632 Kieth Bldg., Cleveland, OH 44115.

The Detroitier. Editor: William Hinds, 150 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48226



Focus/ Midwest. Editor: Charles L. Klotzer,  
P.O. Box 3086, St. Louis, MO 63130.

Illinois Issues. Editor: William L. Day,  
Sangamon State University, Springfield,  
Ill. 62708.

Indianapolis Magazine. Editor: Craig J.  
Beardsley, 320 N. Meridian, Indianapolis,  
Ind. 46204

The Kansas City Magazine. Editor: Robert A.  
Wood, 600 Tenmain Center, 920 Main St.,  
Kansas City, MO 64105.

Lansing. Editor: Anthony A. Petrella,  
3308 South Cedar St., Lansing, MI 48910.

Madison Select. Editor: E.C. Rankin,  
114 N. Carroll St., Madison, WI 53703.

Michigan Travelog. Editor: Edward C.  
Hutchison, 3240 Christy Way, Saginaw,  
MI 48603.

Minnesotan. Editor: Bill Farmer,  
1999 Shepard Rd., St. Paul, Minn 55116.

Missouri Life. Editor: W. R. Nunn,  
1209 Elmerine Ave., Jefferson City MO 65105.

Outdoor Indiana. Editor: Herbert R. Hill,  
Room 612, State Office Bldg., Indianapolis,  
Ind. 46204

Pittsburg Renaissance. Editor: Herb Stein,  
4802 Fifth Ave., Pittsburg, PA 15213

St. Louisan. Editor: Libby Ferguson,  
6306 Clayton Rd., St. Louis, MO 63117.

The Sentinel. Editor: Robert Gale,  
216 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill 60606.

The Western Reserve Magazine. Editor:  
Mary Folger, Box 243, Garrettsville, OH  
44231.

Wisconsin Trails. Editor: Jill Dean,  
P.O. Box 5650, Madison, Wis 53705

David D. Anderson

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'The Least Studied Years' and other Years  
As Well: Mark Twain in the 1870's

The January, 1976 issue of Studies in  
American Humor is devoted to Mark Twain in

the 1870's. Today when critical attention is focused on Clemens' late works and recently published fragments, guest editor Louis J. Budd is wise to remind us of precedents. The 1870's are important to Twain scholars because during the '70's Twain emerged as a major literary figure but as Budd observes, despite their significance, the 1870's are among Twain's "least studied years." The January issue of SIAH is a timely number, then, not just because it takes a close look at the early years, but because it is helpful for students of all phases of Twain's career.

The issue about a decade (and much more than ten years) is noteworthy for its variety and critical richness, for its careful documentation, and for a style which, happily, is in the tradition of the best Twain criticism--it is scholarly but short on stodginess.

Included in the volume are "Mark Twain's Comedy: the 1870's," (David E.E. Sloane), "English Notes: A Book Mark Twain Abandoned," (Robert Regan), "The Formation of Samuel L. Clemens' Library," (Alan Gribben), "Of Detectives and Their Derring-Do: The Genesis of Mark Twain's 'The Stolen White Elephant,'" (Howard Baetzhold), "The Useful and the Useless River: Life on the Mississippi Revisited," (Stanley Brodwin), and "Mark Twain's Theory of Realism or the Science of Piloting," (Sherwood Cummings).

While all the articles are worth reading, abstracts of two should suggest the quality and the breadth of contributions in the journal. Alan Gribbens' "The Formation of Samuel L. Clemens' Library" is the result of several years of research and part of a larger, much needed addition to Twain scholarship. Gribbens' article warrants special attention not merely because "a large proportion of Clemens' library volumes were acquired between 1874 and 1877" but Gribbens also defines the guidelines by which Clemens' library holdings may be dated and forgeries discovered. The study goes well beyond the '70's to suggest what Twain was reading at significant points in his life. During the '70's Gribbens finds Twain buying such works as Sidney Lanier's edition of The Boy's King Arthur and Dumas' The Iron



Mask, and the scholar of Twain's very late work will be interested to read that in 1904 Twain sneered at "the scarcity of reading matter at the Villa di Quarto near Florence where he was living. The author was forced to fine his reading "in a lonely glass-fronted bookcase containing four shelves of miscellaneous volumes, three-quarters of which were bound volumes of Blackwood and books about Christian Science and spiritualism."

Howard Baetzhold's "Of Detectives and Their Derring-Do: The Genesis of Mark Twain's 'The Stolen White Elephant' is an inquiry into a single work of the 1870's, but it, too, contains provocative inferences and suggestions for scholars concerned with Clemens' larger career. Baetzhold's study is a commentary on Twain's life-long fascination with detectives and detective stories on the one hand and his tendency to burlesque "what he saw as pomposity covering for ineptitude in the detectives whom he encountered in books and real life," on the other.

Although some readers may want to disagree with Baetzhold's view in his opening remarks that Pudd'n'head Wilson is an admirable detective character rather than a burlesque caricature, the article's excursion into the genesis of Twain's burlesque treatment of detectives in "The Stolen White Elephant" is a well-researched, critically astute addition to Mark Twain scholarship. Baetzhold traces the story to contemporary newspaper accounts which often served Twain as sources for parody. Specifically, accounts of the theft of the body of multimillionaire dry-goods merchant, Alexander T. Stewart from a family crypt in St. Mark's churchyard may have provided Twain with material for his story. The pompous self-congratulatory tone of the New York police and a similarly self-assured posture in books describing the exploits of the Pinkerton Detective Agency while both muddled badly through their cases were apparently grist for Clemens' mill.

The newspaper accounts of the Stewart case and the Pinkerton books as well as Frank Vincent's Land of the White Elephants: Sights and Scenes in South-Eastern Asia (1874), items which recorded a dispute between the Siamese king and a

rebellious son, and an article describing the ceremonies that accompanied the death of four royal elephants of Siam were sources for Twain's humorous tale.

"Thus," Baetzhold believes, "Out of a combination of the death of a 'Siamese God,' Pinkerton's detective tales, and a sensational unsolved grave robbery, Mark Twain wove his elaborate burlesque of detectives and their methods." Baetzhold notes that, "'The Stolen White Elephant'...clearly shows the extremes to which the detective's sublime confidence and elaborate methods could easily be carried by one with an eye for the absurd. And what more appropriately absurd quarry for the perspicacious investigators than a huge white elephant, last seen wearing 'a castle containing seats for 15 persons, and a gold cloth saddle-blanket the size of an ordinary carpet.'" There are broad implications here for other burlesques in Twain's work. Concludes Baetzhold, "Not only does acquaintance with the sources make the burlesque richer, but in the face of the absurdities of both Pinkerton's books and the Stewart case, the 'extravagance' of Mark Twain's burlesque seems less far-fetched."

To those of you who are interested in Mark Twain in the 1870's as well as Mark Twain in the 1890's or Mark Twain in the 1970's, we recommend the January, 1976 issue of Studies in American Humor. Back copies may still be available from Studies editor, Jack Meathenia, Department of English, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas 78666. Subscriptions (three issues a year) sell for \$5.00--cheap for the value in the 1970's.

Nancy Pogel

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## A CHAUTAUQUA

on

### Re-Discovering the American Heritage of the Land

Michigan State University is launching an innovative project this year that will use the traditional American idea of the traveling Chautauqua show as a means for teaching Michigan citizens about their heritage of the land.

Entitled "Re-Discovering the American Heritage of the Land," the new Chautauqua is presented on four Sundays in May in Midland, Traverse City, Grand Rapids, and Pontiac. Dr. D. Gordon Rohman, Special Consultant for Lifelong Education to MSU President Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., and Professor of English, is producing the project and will also take part as one of the academic humanists in the show.

The original traveling Chautauqua "put culture under a tent," and carried it throughout the heartland of the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Before the advent of radio, movies, and television, the Chautauqua brought education and entertainment to millions of people otherwise separated by distance and cost from both. The MSU re-creation of the Chautauqua includes many of the standard ingredients of the old tent shows, but will use theater settings in each city and add some modern technological innovations.

The Chautauqua features MSU academic humanists who speak on the American heritage of the land from the perspectives of their own disciplines--history, literature, art, and religion. The speakers are Dr. Douglas Miller, professor of history; Dr. David D. Anderson, professor of American Thought and Language; Dr. Eric Lunde, associate professor of American Thought and Language, and Dr. Mary Schneider, assistant professor of religion.

The show is designed to appeal to both the head and the heart. Like old-time Chautauquas, the educational lectures are presented in an entertaining context, featuring music, dramatic readings, and

pantomime. Adding a modern touch, the show uses advanced audio-visual techniques to project on three screens suspended over the stage images of historical photographs, landscape paintings, and scenes of contemporary Michigan.

Directing the show is Dr. Sears Eldredge, who teaches theater and film in MSU's Justin Morrill College. Music is provided by the MSU Wind Ensemble under the direction of Professor Kenneth Bloomquist, director of Bands at MSU.

The Chautauqua consists of four parts all integrated around the central theme: re-discovering the American heritage of the land. In the opening section, the audience is invited to re-create in their imaginations the Chautauquas of yesterday. Historical photographs of old-time Chautauquas and of America and Americans in the late 19th century are projected on the three screens to set the past before the audience once again. The stage setting suggests an attic in an old American home with trunks, boxes, and discarded mementoes strewn about. Actors unpack the trunks, setting up the stage for the lectures to follow, at the same time miming the poses and activities being projected on the screens above. The Wind Ensemble plays music of the time including marches, rags, operettas, folk tunes and patriotic songs.

In this way, the prologue creates the nostalgic mood and introduces the idea of "unpacking" traditions regarding the land that have been stored away and perhaps forgotten in the American cultural "attic." The Chautauqua-type show itself is an example of an old American tradition that has been "unpacked" for this occasion and put to new use in our day.

The second part of the program brings on stage the five academic humanists who will develop the theme of re-discovery. They describe the America of the late 19th century, the America of the original Chautauquas, as it looked forward in anticipation of the 20th century, and as it looked backward to its 300-year experience in the New World. They point out that Americans possess many traditions about the land and its use, traditions



that we, looking forward in 1977 to the 21st century, might want to re-examine as we plan for the future. Assisted by actors reading passages from American poetry and prose, singers presenting American songs, and slides of American landscape paintings, these speakers dramatize by their looking backwards and forwards that America has been discovered not once but many times throughout her history. Columbus's discovery in 1492 was actually preceded by imaginative "discoveries" in the minds of Europeans who dreamed of the uses for a "New World."

Throughout American history ever since--from the colonial period to the Revolution, from the early days of the Republic through the great westward expansion in the 19th century, and continuing into the troubled and technologized 20th century--Americans have continually been re-inventing the idea of America and of the American land. A few of their ideas became part of the mainstream, the perspective on American history held by the majority. Many, many more ideas were tried out by other Americans, but for a variety of reasons they didn't last and were consigned to the cultural attic. As academic humanists, the five speakers are concerned to keep alive all the traditions of American culture including our rich diversity of ideas about the land and humankind's relationship to it. They invite the audience to take another look at representative examples of alternative ways of thinking about and using the land drawn from the American tradition as a positive contribution to our contemporary planning for the future.

After a brief intermission, the next section of the Chautauqua presents the Wind Ensemble playing the suite, "A Touch of the Earth." Written by MSU composer Owen Reed, this is a celebration of the land through the perspective of music. It includes the lovely song, "Michigan Morn" which is often performed by choirs around the state. Integrated with the music, slides of Michigan landscape are projected above the band.

The final portion of the Chautauqua is

devoted to a discussion of the variety of traditions and ideas "unpacked" from the cultural attic by the five speakers. The question is: What is there in our American heritage of the land that might be worth pulling out and re-examining as we seek to re-invent tomorrow's America?

The MSU Cooperative Extension Service acts as host in each community where the Chautauqua plays. In addition, citizen groups in each area act as co-hosts for promotion, production assistance and continuing education activities. The project is being supported by a grant from the Michigan Council for the Humanities to the MSU Office of Lifelong Education Programs.

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Mark Twain Speaking

Paul Fatout, editor

Mark Twain's lectures, after-dinner speeches, and interviews from 1864 to 1909 are presented chronologically in this comprehensive edition which updates earlier volumes of 1910 and 1923. Explanatory notes describe occasions, identify personalities, and discuss techniques of Mark Twain's oral craftsmanship. The book also contains previously unpublished material from manuscripts and autobiographical dictations. Fatout feels that scholars of the twentieth century, concerned mainly with Mark Twain as a writer, have neglected him as a speaker, thus ignoring a large part of his life that was important to him. *Mark Twain Speaking* attempts to bring into focus Twain as an orator.

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MidAmerica IV is available. Please recommend that your library order it at six dollars.

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MidAmerica V will go to press in October. If you have items for consideration, please send them soon.

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The Newsletter needs items of interest to the membership.

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Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature Newsletter

Volume seven, Number one

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

Editorial Office:

181 Ernst Bessey Hall  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

Edited by David D. Anderson

Assistant Editors: Paul J. Ferlazzo and  
Nancy Pogel

Managing Editor: Sue Cook

Editorial Assistants:

Martha Brown	Pat Mask
Joan Brunette	Bonnie Trotter

Cover Artist: Dan Preston

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