

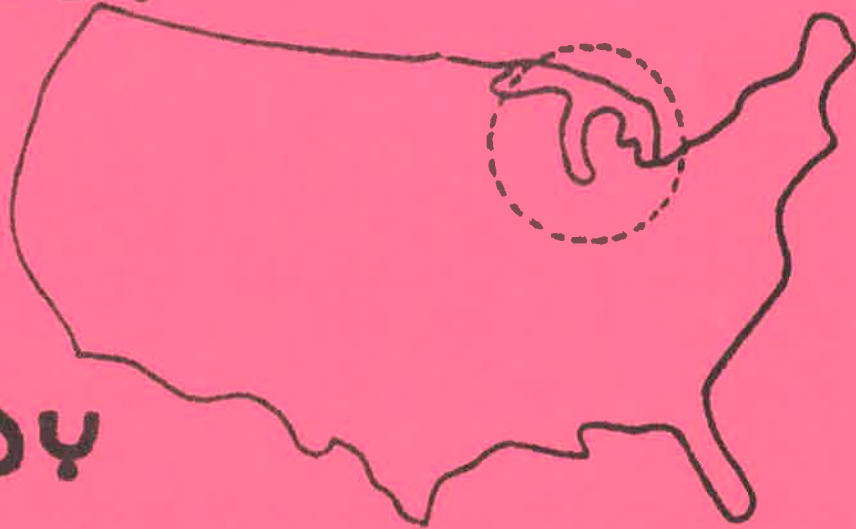
**SOCIETY**

**FOR**

**THE**

**STUDY**

**OF**



**MIDWESTERN**

**LITERATURE**

**(MIDWESTERN MISCELLANY III)**

# MIDWESTERN MISCELLANY III

Proceedings of the Fourth Annual  
Meeting of The Society for the  
Study of Midwestern Literature,  
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Edited by Paul J. Ferlazzo and Nancy H. Pogel

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## PREFACE

Periodically, the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature publishes essays of interest to its members and to readers of *Midwestern Literature*. This third Midwestern Miscellany is a long overdue collection of the proceedings of the society's fourth annual meeting, held in October, 1974 at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University. Included here are papers from the morning session, "Women in Midwestern Literature", and papers from the afternoon session, "Midwestern Popular Culture in Midwestern Literature." The third is the largest of the Miscellanies published to date; it includes the work of writers ranging from Texas on the one hand to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan on the other.

Midwestern Miscellany III, like its predecessors, required the efforts of a number of talented, hard-working people. The editors are grateful, not only to the contributing essayists, but to David D. Anderson for his continuing encouragement and good counsel, and to Joan Brunette, Yvonne Titus, Sharon Sims, Barbara Hanna, Iola Keebler, and especially Toni Pienkowski who have each made this publication possible through their special efforts.

Nancy H. Pogel and Paul J. Ferlazzo

## CONTENTS

### Preface

#### I. Women in Midwestern Literature

Pauline Adams, A Sense of Place: One Aspect of Harriette Arnow's  
The Dollmaker

Henry Golemba, Caroline and Will

Robert Bray, The Art of Caroline Kirkland: The Structure of A New  
Home: Who'll Follow?

Helen Stauffer, Mari Sandoz and the Prairie

Peggy B. Treece, A Hidden Woman of Local Color: Mrs. Mary Hartwell  
Catherwood

#### II. President's Address

Alma J. Payne, The Midwest: Literary Resource and Refuge

#### III. Midwestern Popular Culture in Midwestern Literature

Patricia A. Anderson, Everyday Life in the Midwest: Popular  
Preoccupations in Children's Books

Ronald Primeau, Notes on a Midwestern Slave Narrative as Historical  
Document and Popular Fiction

Gene H. Dent, Sherwood Anderson/A Story Teller's Town: The Filming  
of a Documentary

Clarence Andrews, Literature and Lore of the Upper Peninsula

Dorys C. Grover, Hough and Koerner: Versions of the Old West

A SENSE OF PLACE: ONE ASPECT OF HARRIETTE ARNOW'S THE DOLLMAKER

Pauline Adams

There is no mention of the Windsor Tunnel, the Ambassador Bridge, Jefferson Avenue, Gratiot Avenue, Van Dyke Street, Woodward Avenue, or the old Chrysler factory in The Dollmaker. Landscape is not more important than character. Henry Ford, Father Coughlin and Bing Crosby are not spoken of directly; they are disguised as Mr. Flint, Father Moneyhan and Bing Nolan. The familiar signposts and names are absent, yet this novel is unmistakably about the city of Detroit.

I asked my students, many of whom are children of that city, if they recognized Detroit even though we, the readers, are claustrophically hemmed into one alley of a government housing project, sadistically called Merry Hill, near the city airport during World War II. One student instantly replied yes, and when I asked him why he thought so, he unhesitatingly explained it was because of the weather. The greyness closes in on you in Detroit; the wind is sharp and bitter; the summer sun is joyless and merciless just as Harriette Arnow described.

A woman student of Polish American origin said the ethnic descriptions and conflicts made her feel uncomfortably at home. Homer Anderson, ironically the most insensitive character in the novel and a resident of the alley, is gathering material to write a doctoral dissertation entitled "Patterns of Racial and Religious Prejudice and Persecution in Industrial Detroit." As his wife explains, "Almost nothing has been written about the hatred of the foreigner for many of our native-born Americans whose religion and social customs are different from his own. /Homer's/ always finding evidence of it; it's interesting." Homer, the reader knows, is not equal to the task, but Harriette Arnow is. The Dollmaker portrays, in part, this very phenomenon as well as the reverse phenomenon, hatred of native-born Americans for the foreigner.

However, and this is a big however, The Dollmaker does next to nothing with racial tensions. The Merry Hill housing project did not allow blacks as residents. As Maggie says to Gert, the day she arrived at her new home in Detroit: "Yu outta be glad.... I betcha got pull. Yu come to Detroit straight to a big three-bedroom place like this. These houses, they're good and worm anu rent's cheap, an they're the only places in Detroit where they keep u niggers out, really keep un out - sagainsa law." (p. 180)

One student, and she is the last one to whom I'll refer, thought of her father who had worked 19 years on the night shift of a large plant. All those characters in the novel - Victor, Clovis, Sophronie - who worked at night and tried in vain to adjust their lives accordingly, suddenly gave her new insight into why her father had never really been a father to her.

Although The Dollmaker is written in the third person, everything is told from the point of view of the protagonist, Gertie Nevels. We know only what she knows; we feel only what she feels. She does not work in the factories, but she learns what it is like as her life touches the lives of those around her. Gertie is horrified by the death of the bubble gum boy's mother who was crushed by the

return home. One illustration is a song that was recently popular in some parts of Detroit, the words of which are as follows:

Home folks think I'm big in Dee-troit City.  
From the letters that I write they think I'm fine.  
But by day I make the cars,  
By night I make the bars.  
If only they could read between the lines.  
I wan-na go home.  
I wan-no go home.  
Oh, how I wan-na go home.

Even more recently an article appeared in The Lansing State Journal, on April 1, 1974, the essence of which was the same as the NY Times article. The same nostalgia runs through the interviews quoted. For example, Elden Partin was reported as saying in a voice choked with emotion: "I been here since 1947 and I'd like to leave before daylight if I could. But I got seven more years to go at Chrysler, then it's 30-and-out, and I head for Kentucky.....I'm going back to Kentucky to sit on the front porch, chew tobacco and pick guitar. I've never chewed tobacco, but I'll learn."

Although I have seen no study on this, I would hypothesize that the popularity of George Wallace recorded in the Michigan presidential primary of 1972, is partially explained by the value systems of these uprooted people. I hasten to add that this is not a reflection of what many simplistic and superficial observers attribute primarily to racism. I believe it is a symptom of alienation and nostalgia of a pre-industrial people catapulted into a super-industrialized society and its unaccustomed rhythm of work and life.

Certainly, the popularity of the long-running Sunday morning radio show, Renfro Valley Gathering, on Detroit's WJR is explained by the presence of these hill people in Michigan. The show originates in Renfro Valley, Kentucky where, as the MC explains, "time stands still" and features artless renditions of old time hymns, poems and homilies.

In the novel, the Nevels, the Meanwells, the Millers, Max, all represent this group of migrants that now characterize an important segment of the Michigan Industrial work force. Social workers have observed that these people make a surprisingly rapid adjustment to the factories. They catch on quickly to industrial politics. Clovis, Gertie's husband, illustrates this form of adaptability in a conversation he has with Gertie on the day she and the children join him in Detroit. "Gert, don't start a worryen. Jist git it into yer head that I'm a maked big money. I ain't no sweeper maked th lowest. I done what I aimed to do, got on as a machine repair man. An it shore took some tall talken, an a heap a white lies. But it was worth it. I git in a heap a overtime, too." (p. 187)

These migrants from Appalachia, again according to the social workers, are immediately caught up in the consumerism of an industrialized society. Though it brings them, often for the first time, radios, refrigerators, washing machines and ready-to-wear clothes, because it is based on installment buying and inferior quality, it tends to keep the family in economic bondage. Gertie, that first

incidents. I don't mean the books that are devoted entirely to an elucidation of a given landscape like Thoreau's Walden. I mean ordinary novels. When they are well and truly anchored in nature, they usually become classics. One can detect this quality of 'bigness' in most books that are so sited, from Huckleberry Finn to The Grapes of Wrath. They are tuned in to the sense of place. You could not transplant them without truly damaging their ambiance and mood..... \*

The Dollmaker is one of those "ordinary" novels "tuned into the sense of place." What is more, it possesses the quality of "bigness" that will make it a classic.

\*Lawrence Durrell, "Landscape with Literary Figures" in Ernest Francis Brown, ed. New York Times Book Review: Opinion and Perspectives (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), p. 253.

## CAROLINE AND WILL

Henry Golemba

The particular bead I wish to draw is not on local color, American culture or universal issues of ontology, time or art. Instead I would like to uncover the woman behind the pen, to investigate the personality, problems, ambitions and frustrations of this, Michigan's first accomplished writer. I call this paper CAROLINE AND WILL and I mean 'will' in a two-fold sense--literally as the name of her husband and also symbolically as will-power, the passion to get one's own way, the ability to make one's desires prevail.

Caroline Kirkland realized it was a man's world, a world that erected imperious impediments to a woman's will. As her husband archly illustrated, a spouse might be bumbling, and beaten, but he was still considered boss. To an ordinary woman, male hegemony was too powerful to fight. For a nineteenth century woman in the West, it was difficult even to survive. On a single page of Forest Life, Kirkland offers two alternatives of Western womanhood. One is a drudge of work, a slave to her husband's every whim. The other, Miranda, tries to make her own way at the only position open to a female--school teaching. Miranda works hard, performs competently and dies on the job. Even this meagerly self-sufficient position proves fatal. A woman as talented as Caroline Kirkland, gifted enough to survive by the pen, was clearly aware of what limited opportunities the male-dominated system provided her sex. In 1864 at the age of 63, she died--like Miranda--of exhaustion.

If I have alienated the male half of the audience, let me hasten to disappoint the female quarter, for Caroline Kirkland was no feminist. In Forest Life she explains her position precisely.

I, though no champion of woman's rights in a technical sense, and even a firm and submissive believer in the inferiority of the sisterhood in many essential points, deny this particular imputation entirely /that women are fools about clothers/; and defy those who write us down popinjays to anything like reasonable proof. So much by way of general protest.

Throughout her writings, Kirkland insisted on making her own way, desiring no help from her sisters and giving none. Self-culture was her path, not group effort.

The matter of the will is thereby highly complex. At times, all she wants is her own way, though this desire might mean a fight with other women and men. At other times, she enjoys playing the game of a poor, weak female. When her husband died, for example, she, her husband's superior in every way, wrote to a male friend of his: "I am left a life of struggle and anxiety..... My loss is all--I depended, heart and soul, on my husband--I feel unfit to walk alone--and I have unhappily not learned to depend.....on God for the same kind of support



and counsel." Sometimes this melodramatic delight in the myth of feminine inferiority caused her to applaud the privileges granted the weaker sex. While Margaret Fuller said, "Let /women/ be sea-captains if they will," Caroline Kirkland was often content to let women and children have precedence in leaving a sinking ship.

Of all her writings her scenes of Michigan pioneer life alone remain valuable. Her other writings are too mannered, moralistic and superficial. In the frontier sketches, one predominant concern is with the power of the will, especially the clash of wills that occurs in male-female relations. She might have enjoyed writing on weightier, more profound subjects as an incident in A New Home suggests. A lynch-mob chases a man who warns them he has the means to defend himself, meaning pistols. At that moment, Caroline appears on top of a hill, her arms outstretched, wearing a long, flowing white gown. This surrealist vision frightens the mob away, and Kirkland relishes the feeling of power this incident gives her. She would have liked to have held equal sway on intellectual matters, but she knew that society laughed at bluestockings and that Lowell would parody Margaret Fuller's "I-turn-the-crank-of-the-Universe air." She admits in Forest Life that she is well aware that "...women's wisdom is always laughed at, so that we have no inducement to be profound."

Yet in spite of the ridicule, in spite of the sneers, she must write. For this compulsion, her husband deserves some credit. As Caroline says, "People write because they cannot help it. The heart longs for sympathy, and when it cannot be found close at hand /like across the breakfast table/ will seek it the world over. Thus she confides in an imaginary gentle reader "without fear of reproach or ridicule." Out of kindness to Will, she seldom mentions him, except when she cannot restrain herself. Once, she just has to tell how he killed her pet dog through neglect and blamed it on distemper. Generally, however, she chooses to voice her views on the clash of wills through her selection of supposedly non-autobiographical romances.

A pattern exists in the three Michigan books: her first book A New Home offers two full-blown love affairs; Forest Life has four; twelve of the fourteen chapters of Western Clearings have mating as the principal theme. The two romances of A New Home are foiled: one involves two beautiful people with exquisite taste whose spouses are lesser beings. They have an affair which is discovered and both sets of families leave the state in shame. In the other romance, the village school teacher is seduced by the village whore and also leaves town--is his case to be hanged later as a revolutionary in Toronto.

In Forest Life, two love stories end happily. In a 100 page sketch, Seymour Bullitt rises from uncultivation to flower in intelligence, skill, courtesy and manliness, while his mate, Caroline, sheds the artificiality of the East to become a down-to-earth individual. In the other story, Lewis, though a strong individual, allows himself to be wound around Candace's finger; they marry and live--we imagine--not unhappily ever after.

The moral of these romances is that when a woman relinquishes her will to a man, the result is disastrous, slavery for the woman and unhappiness for the family. If a man gives into a woman's will, not much harm ensues, although

nothing great is necessarily accomplished. When the two wills harmonize, however, especially after a prolonged testing period of friction and conflict, then luscious blossoms bloom. The mates experience full growth and realize their greatest potential.

These three types of mating ritual are most successfully represented in Kirkland's third book, Western Clearings. The best stories are "Ambuscades," "The Schoolmaster's Progress," and that near Poesque creation of horror, the last story in the collection--"Bitter Fruits from Chance-Sown Seeds." In Ambuscades, Tom Oliver, the master hunter, a "Kentucky Apollo" and "the spirit of the West" is courted by two women--Celestina Pye, who merely wants a husband and is frightened by bulls, and Emma Levering who, although raised "a most devout believer in the lawful supremacy of the stronger sex," wants more than a husband; she wants a home, a home that will serve as a civilizing influence upon the wilderness. In spite of Celestina's more aggressive courtship, Emma through her stoic will--a will that harmonizes with her nation's destiny--cures Tom of his uncivilized forest ways and defeats the superficiality of Celestina's Eastern-bred values.

In The Schoolmaster's Progress, Master Horner also has two women. The first, his pupil Miss Bangle, becomes his social teacher and causes him to become "more earnest and manly and literate." Unfortunately for Miss Bangle, she is too good a teacher. Master Horner rises above her level and turns his eyes towards the regal Ellen Kingsbury who had played the strong-willed Mary Stuart in the school play, and he wins her hand, if not her sceptre. Stylistically Kirkland parallels the schoolmaster's development by referring to him as "Horner" whose meaning is obvious in the first part of the story and as "the master" in the last half.

In Ambuscades, the mating result is merely good. Tom and Emma are of solid stock and will people the Midwest with decent, able, wholesome folk. In The Schoolmaster's Progress, however, Horner and Ellen rise to great heights and develop far beyond most settlers. In the third story of this trio, "Bitter Fruits from Chance-Sown Seeds," Kirkland shifts ground and demonstrates how dangerous the will can be when frustrated, especially in a woman whose will the system attempts to smother. Julia Brand is the heroine of the tale, and her name--a brand: a piece of wood meant for the fire--is indeed ominous. There are plenty of precedents for Julia in Kirkland's writings, but Julia Brand's case is far more complex and, I think, more personally revealing.

The plot of the story is simple. Julia, who has "the eye of a Sappho," the Negro classical poet, thus linking Julia with America's most repressed race, is "proud and high-spirited, impatient of control, and particularly jealous of any assumption of superiority in others." Her guardian-grandfather Richard is rich but feeble, loves Negroes but hates Indians. For a nursing home, in his old age, he chooses the household of the Coddingtons who are wise but aloof, causing their neighbors, especially the hateful Blanchards, to accuse them of excessive pride--the chief deadly sin in the democratic West. Under the Coddingtons' care, Julia ripens into womanhood, intellectually as well as physically, at the age of 15. The Blanchards in their spite seek to destroy the Coddingtons by corrupting Julia.

Their first step is to substitute her usual poetry reading--Cooper and Milton, Young and Pollock--with modern romantic stuff:

.....here was a new world opened to her; and it was not a safe world for the ardent and unschooled child of genius, who found in the glowing picturings of a spirit like her own, a power which at once took prisoner her understanding, aroused her sensibilities, and lulled that cautious and even timid discrimination, with which it had been the object of her friends (the Coddingtons) to inspire her. She finished the reading at a sitting, and as she returned to the house with her grandfather, the excitement of her imagination was such that the whole face of nature seemed changed. A new set of emotions had been called into play, and the effect was proportioned to the wild energy of her character. Poor Julia! she had tasted the forbidden fruit.

The Blanchard's next step is to introduce young Mr. Blanchard who softened her defenses for the following stroke--a visit by the cold Easterner, Minister Milgrove, with whom Julia falls passionately in love.

Now under the Blanchard's complete influence, Julia is enticed into thinking the Coddingtons are trying to enslave her. At the Blanchard's urging, Julia decides to burn down the Coddington's house while they are away. She does so, and her grandfather accidentally perishes in the blaze. She confesses her crime to the Coddingtons, and Allen Coddington seeks to sue Blanchard for incitement to crime. The grand jury, however, declares Julia at fault.

Such is the story, simple in plot but complex in meaning, for the Grand Jury is right. Julia's crime is Julia's crime--her deliberate, premeditated, willful crime. The Blanchards are actually forces in her own soul who whisper to her will, "triumph! prevail!" To do so, she must kill her grandfather because he is "an old wizard," the only person who had complete control over her. When she does kill her guardian, she finds that patricide is a complex matter, for in a male-dominated system, plenty of other men stand ready to become Mosaic if not magical father figures.

When the Coddingtons return from their trip, Mrs. Coddington tells Julia that Martha--her pale, feeble, willess daughter--has died. She says to Julia, "My daughter! my dear, my only daughter! what should I be now without you! You must take the place of this blessed creature who is gone!" Julia wants none of this. She has not killed the old wizard only to become the Coddingtons' pale pet. Shrinking from Mrs. Coddington's vampirish embraces, she shouts out her "Bosom-Sin," thus warning all of what blazes her will is capable. But her would-be mother demands to know who poisoned her innocent mind. Julia insists, "Oh no--no! no one is to blame but myself. I alone am answerable for my crime! I did it all with my own free will--out of my own wicked heart....!"

Though adamant before her would-be mother, her defenses crumble when her would-be father appears. She still makes some effort to clutch her own sin

like a child to her bosom, but Allen Coddington will not allow it. He warns her not to be a "proud and self-worshipping hypocrite," and lays down the law. He demands that Julia atone for her crime "by entire submission to what I shall see fit to direct," Poor Julia. In order to achieve her freedom of will and independence of pride, she has resorted even to the extreme of patricide. Still society succeeds in enslaving her. Mr. Coddington, a man of "strong and decided character" with his chauvinist wife as ally, quickly becomes her new father. The old wizard is dead; long lives the old wizard.

Anyone seeking pleasant tales of pastoral bliss will not find them in Kirkland's tales of early Michigan life. No shepherd's idyll here. Instead, as the last story illustrates, Kirkland's books are full of conflict, clash and tension, especially between wills, especially between men and women. Rather than pastoral pieces, her books read like war chronicles. The battles reported here are those between the sexes, and they also include skirmishes between rich and poor, hunters and farmers, civilization and wilderness, elitists and republicans, employers and employees and many many others. Rather than gloss over the problem of the will, Caroline Kirkland confronts it in all its ramifications in the setting of pioneer Michigan. The inability of people to live in harmony, the desire for and the envy of superiority over one's fellows is humanity's grievous loss and literature's compensatory gain.

THE ART OF CAROLINE KIRKLAND:

The Structure of A New Home: Who'll Follow?

Robert Bray

In the myriad game of literary status, at least as it is played with American literature, there is a certain ploy of categorization which results in a few books' being designated "minor classics." Now the one thing that can surely be said about this small and peculiar family is that its members' privacy is rarely violated: such books are talked about more often than they are read. One of the best examples from ante-bellum American literature is Caroline M. Kirkland's A New Home (1839). That this curious volume of "lucubrations," as the author called them, is indeed regarded as a minor classic may be seen from the de rigeur bows in its direction in the literary histories. This has been going on now for over a century--from the Duyckincks to Van Wyck Brooks to Alexander Cowie. And that A New Home is discussed rather than read might be inferred from the scarcity of detailed analyses of its form--those few who have commented having largely chosen to dwell on the aspects of the book which show the distinctive, if incipient, beginnings of frontier realism. Of course, one knows that the call for re-evaluation has been sounded many times for many books and is a regular feature of American literary studies. Yet in the case of A New Home I think another interpretive look is easily justified: if the book has anything like the importance to American literature occasionally attributed to it, then the reasons for this importance ought to be specified as carefully as possible.

Of the many qualities of Kirkland's work, the formal are the least well understood. A New Home, like other "hard" books in American fiction--I am thinking of things like Melville's Confidence Man--might possibly have been undervalued because it is not readily assimilated into the class of work we call the novel. The book, while clearly some sort of prose fiction, lacks the characteristics of what Ralph Rader terms "the action model."<sup>1</sup> And since this is the class of prose fictions with astronomically the greatest number of members, we are more likely to find fault with it as an ill-formed novel than to ask ourselves if perhaps this work--which I believe we react to as solid, complete and moving--belongs legitimately to another class of prose fiction. In this brief essay I shall attempt to suggest (and suggest only) some non-actional formal criteria for A New Home, and then mention briefly the native American materials which Kirkland developed to help her realize the form of her book. But first, by way of prelude, I would like to place A New Home in a general context of American literature in 1839, the year of the book's appearance.

In 1839 the serious student of literature would surely have been reading Irving, the early work of the Boston Brahmins and Emerson, the English romantics, perhaps some poetry from the South, scarcely any novels, English or American. But the rapidly expanding reading public, the demotic audience if you will, would have been devouring novels with the hearty appetite that would characterize the entire century. The novel readers would have been

reading Cooper and Dickens--whose Pickwick Papers had appeared just the year before under an American imprint--and, to be sure, Scott. The historical romance was, to say the least, established; its practitioners on both sides of the Atlantic were flourishing. In America, besides Cooper, who turned them out with machine-like regularity, there was the violent frontier sensationalism of R. M. Bird's Nick of the Woods (1837), and the popularized Chateaubriand mentality of Timothy Flint's George Mason, A Young Backwoodsman (1829). Beyond the historical romance, and to some high brows entirely sub-literary, was the development of native American humor, first in New England, then in the Old Southwest, which was given a focus and an audience by the founding of The Spirit of the Times (1821-61) by W. T. Porter in New York. The point of this rough sketch is simply that, even in its young republican days, the literature of America was manifold in its branches, though the mainstream into which these tributaries flowed was not yet apparent. American literature's "father of waters" would, of course, be realism. Caroline Kirkland must have been aware of these goings-on in American literature. She was a cosmopolitan New Yorker both before and after the sojourn in the Michigan backwoods. She was impressively well-read, as can be gathered from her irrepressible allusiveness, knew the English romantic tradition, knew Chateaubriand and a great deal of travel literature, including the despised English tradition represented by Captain Basil Hall.<sup>2</sup> In short, she was immersed in belles lettres, saw writing as a vocation, and was aware of that from which she departed when she wrote A New Home and invented, in a single book, household realism and the ironic acculturation story.

This brings us, at least in my mind, not quite to the book itself, but to Poe. For it is one of those pungent little ironies of our literary history that Kirkland is remembered today mainly because Poe chose to praise her. And is it not odd that this formidable critic touted work as different from his own as that of Cabell's from Sinclair Lewis' in our own century? What did he find to admire in A New Home? I am convinced that he liked the book because of its seeming lack of artifice:

With a fidelity and vigor that prove her pictures to be taken from the very life, she has represented "scenes" that could have occurred only as and where she has described them. She has placed before us the veritable settlers of the forest, with all their peculiarities.....<sup>3</sup>

Certainly Poe, like so many other easterners, was curious about the West and its folk. Yet Poe's remarks seem to me to indicate that he saw in A New Home a significant departure from the highly wrought romantic tradition of believable fantasy in fiction--a departure, that is, from the acceptable norms of the historical romance, the Victorian "development story," and indeed Poe's own structural notions as set forth in "The Philosophy of Composition:" "Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its denouement before anything be attempted with the men. It is only with the denouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention."<sup>4</sup> Poe clearly did not perceive A New Home as a member of the "action model" class of fictions,

for had he so perceived it he could not have done otherwise than dismiss the book as an egregious piece of art. In fact Poe discusses its structure not at all. The American critic with the most highly developed theory of literary cause and effect in his day somehow missed much of the point of A New Home. Is it then much of a wonder that there has been little advance over his view in the succeeding century?

What kind of prose fiction is A New Home? I think it can best be described as a kind of imitative autobiography. This is a type of fiction that has only recently been adequately specified. The paradigm example of the class is Defoe's Moll Flanders. Ralph Rader, who has done the best work with the form, observes that "the primary formal fact about Moll Flanders is that its form does not within itself convey the information that Moll is not the real agent of the story. To the contrary, it may be said to be an obviously positive feature of the form to make Moll seem the real author of the story but not of the events of the story--to make the work seem, in a word, literally true. This formal argument is entirely confirmed by the external historical fact that many sophisticated readers have mistaken Defoe's unidentified fictions for fact, as Donald Stauffer in 1941 mistook Robert Drury's Journal, whereas not even an unsophisticated reader could so mistake Richardson's (Pamela)."<sup>5</sup> This statement of form in Moll is almost applicable to A New Home (the difference should become clear below). Mrs. Clavers is taken to be the author of the story, and the story seems literally true. Again, Rader comments, "If we take seriously the idea that an intention to make Moll seem like a real story is the whole principle of the book, then it follows directly that, as a matter of positive artistic principle, it would display neither of those features called plot and judgement, the desert/fate curve of the action model."<sup>6</sup> I think a strong case can be made that something very close to this was Kirkland's intention in A New Home.

There are striking similarities as well as substantial differences in the introductory materials of both books. Moll emphatically attests a stranger-than-fiction truth for itself, or, as Rader puts it, a "man-bites-dog" sensationalism. But A New Home, while similarly wanting to certify its unimpeachable truth, warrants that truth not in sensationalism but in the commonplace. "I have never seen a cougar--not been bitten by a rattlesnake. The reader who has patience to go with me to the close of my desultory sketches, must expect nothing beyond a meandering recital of commonplace occurrences--mere gossip about every-day people....."<sup>7</sup> Moll's is a hair-raising story naively related; Mrs. Clavers' is as she puts it "desultory," but she is naive only with respect to the frontier environment she has adopted and in her claim to artlessness: the narrative will not be "enhanced in value by any fancy or ingenuity of the writer," whatever merit accruing to it being due to its plain "truth" (p. 33). Moll appears to learn nothing from her experiences. This often happens in life; never in action-model novels. Mrs. Clavers, however, does change, though she is not vouchsafed much awareness of this process. We, the readers, know about it, but, again, it is the condition of dramatic self-awareness that distinguishes action-model characterization.

Here then is the germ of the ironic acculturation story, as I have called it. "Acculturation," as coined and defined by John Wesley Powell,<sup>8</sup>

involves the effects upon a so-called primitive society when it is assimilated into a superior culture, also so-called. But for the purposes of narrative, the usual process of acculturation is given a neatly ironic twist: the rugged, democratic, embryonic frontier society becomes the superior culture, while the migrating easterner, genteel, tender-footed and often full of "social notions," must gain entrance to a human community previously disdained from the same vantage of the urban and urbane East. This is precisely the scenario as described by Frederick Jackson Turner in his "The Significance of the Frontier in American History,"<sup>9</sup> but here it is being used for literary purposes more than half a century before he formulated it as the dominant force in American history. The ironic, or if you prefer, democratic acculturation story was to serve as the basis for an important strain of American literature that lasted well into the twentieth century--may in fact be with us yet. Edward Eggleston used it freely in his Ohio Valley novels, as did Kirkland's son Joseph in his Zury. Mark Twain could not have done without it in Roughing It, and where would the greenhorn-turning-into-seasoned timber plot of the western be, from the dime novel to Wister to Zane Grey to Hollywood and television, without this admirable conception of the democratic, socially fluid West's stipulating the social rites of passage for wide-eyed, physically and morally flabby easterners and demanding that they work through their trials or else. It was a literary mother load, certainly, no matter what its final status as historical process.

All this works delightfully in A New Home. Much of the book synthesizes around the one salient fact of the narrator's future in Montacute, Michigan: if she is to live with felicity in that region, she will need to come to an accommodation with its ambience. Just as the physical wilderness at first confounds her, so will the micro-insular society of the village force fundamental changes in her behavior, and all those changes will be in the direction of moderating her eastern cultural chauvinism, no matter how patently superior she believes the East to be at the outset. Michigan at first gives her fits, and her response is a barrage of quotations and allusions from her eastern heritage--just to hold the chaos of the frontier back: Shelley on wildflowers, Miss Mitford's travel narratives and those of Captain Hall on America, Lamb and Bulwer on nothing in particular. As a woman who regards migration to the frontier as a sentimental journey in the mode of Sterne, Mrs. Clavers has quite a bit to learn. But learn she does, early on wondering at her travelling companion's sarcasm when she asked when they would get to the hotel, only to be disabused of her expectations on arriving at a whiskey-drenched log hut at the edge of one of the countless oak-openings. If here, as elsewhere, Mrs. Clavers is set up a bit unfairly, the humor at least emphasizes the chasm between her and her adopted culture. And this is just what A New Home is to be about.

She soon finds herself caught up in the new democratic rhythms of Montacute. Pioneering daughters will "hire out" only long enough to save money for a new dress. Servants are unheard of. The lesson is that Mrs. Clavers must fend for herself, and she learns to get along pretty well, despite her neighbors' head shaking over the "gimcracks" brought hundreds of miles from New York, and their observation that her precious japanned tables were "better for kindlin's than anythin' else (p. 76)." Though never entirely at ease with the Montacute women's smoking and chewing, her level of tolerance steadily rises, and soon she is able to patronize a woman more recently arrived than herself. She **advises**



Mrs. Rivers, a genteel expatriate suspiciously like Mrs. Clavers a season earlier, that "her true happiness lay in making friends of her neighbors." But the task, as she well knew, could be exasperating:

"Mother wants your sifter," said Miss Ianthe Howard, a young lady of six years' standing, attired in a tattered calico, thickened with dirt; her unkempt locks straggling from under that hideous substitute for a bonnet, so universal in the western country, a dirty cotton handkerchief.....

"Mother wants your sifter, and she says she guesses you can let her have some sugar and tea, 'cause you've got plenty." (p. 102)

It was not a question of borrowing, you see. The sifter, like all such luxuries, was wanted--according to the local outlook that goods of the affluent were at the service of the community. There was little of the invidiousness usually attached to private property. The have things, "and not be willing to share them in some sort with the whole community, /was/ an unpardonable crime." (p. 102) Here was no cringing back-door petition, but rather a strident demand for material and social equality. And, inexorably, the Clavers household was being converted to the system.

When the narrative is well underway, there are even some didactic interpolations to show the reader what happens when proud ones refuse to habituate themselves to the social environment. One such is the sad plight of the "B\_\_\_\_\_'s:" the husband, desiring to be a country squire in the virgin Michigan forests, had frittered away a fortune through the sporting life, disdaining a true American yeoman's toil, and had thus left his family destitute. But since in their salad days they had spurned the society of the low-lived Montacutians, and were still too proud to ask assistance, they were now thrown into direst poverty (pp. 112ff). Another object of satire--but this time without the moralizing--is an affected young poetaster from the East. Of course, Mrs. Clavers has forgotten her own poetic propensities of not so long ago, and is now ready to agree with the community that poor Eloise Fidler is "kind o' crazy" for spending her hours under the oak trees writing verse in her "gold and satin album," all the while lamenting the misfortune of not having a romantic-sounding name (pp. 142ff). We sense that the democratization of Mrs. Clavers is just about an accomplished fact. Near the end of the story are two chapters entitled "Democratic Vistas" and "La Fraternité ou La Mort!" As she prepares to leave Michigan after several years of the great experiment, she can speak unaffectedly of frontier democracy and invoke the motto of the French Revolution with only the gentlest of ironies. In a kind of final address to the reader Mrs. Clavers sets forth the democratic lesson she has learned in Montacute:

I should be disposed to recommend a course of Michigan to the Sybarites, the puny exquisites, the world-worn and sated Epicureans of our cities..... It would require volumes to enumerate all the cases in which the fastidiousness,

the taste, the pride, the self-esteem of the refined child of civilization, must be wounded by a familiar intercourse with the persons among whom he will find himself thrown, in the ordinary course of rural life. He is continually reminded in how great a variety of particulars his necessities, his materials for comfort, and his sources of pain, are precisely those of the humblest of his neighbors. The humblest did I say? He will find that he has no humbler neighbors. He will very soon discover, that in his new sphere, no act of kindness....will be considered as anything, short of insult, if the least suspicion of condescension peep out. Equality, perfect and practical, is the sine qua non..... (p. 220)

By way of concluding, I would like to offer some examples of another vital contribution which A New Home makes to the tradition of midwestern fiction. Here are some of the comic and folk stereotypes, genre scenes and democratic motifs mentioned and often developed in the book. There is the Yankee Peddler, the rural schoolmaster, the politician canvassing for a vote; there are county-seat wars, outdoor political rallies, and wildcat towns; pipe-smoking, toothless women and white trash families, spinster poetasters and malicious gossips; know-it-all storekeepers, lynching mobs, confidence men and always "demon rum." It is simply a matter of fact that the flowering of midwestern fiction after the Civil War depended a good deal upon this catalogue of democratic types. Add to this the humorous use of dialect and other comic techniques and the artistic total is imposing: literary form (the imitative autobiography, generally; the ironic acculturation in particular); literary matter (the catalogue just mentioned); and literary manner (comic techniques). No one would want to argue seriously that Kirkland alone realized the value of this vital body of folk-based American humor--the material was inchoate in the oral tradition for many years before A New Home, and the profession of American humor and humorist was just getting going in 1839, especially in the Old Southwest and in New England. Nor, as we have seen, did she create ex nihilo a new literary form. But the ironic acculturation story, at least in her version minus the romantic trappings of Cooper, is a genuine contribution that needs to be recognized. And the artistic synthesis of form, matter and manner in A New Home offers historians and critics a solidly grounded reference point from which to mark the outgoing milestones of midwestern realism. Eggleston, Twain, E. W. Howe, Garland, Booth Tarkington, David Ross Locke and William Allen White, to name some of the obvious examples; could not have fashioned the tradition they did without drawing, consciously or not, upon the "desultory sketches" of a remarkable woman who was an American pioneer in the two places where it really counted: in life and art. One thinks inevitably of Joseph Kirkland's fulfilling in Zury, nearly half a century later, the realistic promise of his mother's work. And we must conclude, with a smile, that he would not have been possible without her.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ralph Rader, "Defoe, Richardson, Joyce, and the Concept of Form in the Novel," in Autobiography, Biography and the Novel, Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1973, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>See Basil Hall's Travels in North America (1829), a book that also mightily displeases Melville, who reflected his feelings in The Confidence Man (1857).

<sup>3</sup>Edgar Allen Poe, "Caroline Kirkland," in The New York Literati, Works of Edgar Allen Poe, New York: Harpers, 1903, V. p. 124.

<sup>4</sup>Edgar Allen Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," Works, V. p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Rader, pp. 39-40.

<sup>6</sup>Rader, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup>Caroline M. Kirkland, A New Home, ed. John Nerber, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953, p. 18. (Further references cited in the body of the paper).

<sup>8</sup>The Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary cites Powell as the first source of the word in print in his Study of Indian Languages (1880).

<sup>9</sup>Turner writes: "The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European (for our purposes read 'easterner') in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization, and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and the Iroquois, and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish....."

LOCAL COLOR: MARI SANDOZ AND THE PRAIRIE

Helen Stauffer

The works of Mari Sandoz (1896-1966), deal with the trans-Missouri region of her birth. Her works, over twenty-one volumes, include her Great Plains Series (Old Jules, Crazy Horse, Cheyenne Autumn, The Beaver Men, The Buffalo Hunters, The Cattlemen); three novellas: The Story Catcher, The Horsecatcher, and Winter Thunder; novels; collections of short stories and articles; and historical works such as Love Song to the Plains and The Battle of the Little Big Horn.

In 1937, shortly after her first book was published, Sandoz debated the subject of Regionalism with another writer. Her opponent, himself a writer and editor, asserted regional writing was passe, that a regional writer assumed that America still (in 1937) had sharply defined cultural areas, while in fact our culture was clearly becoming standardized. Sandoz pointed out that the Midwest, particularly Nebraska, did indeed have unique characteristics, because of both geographical and historical features. She said in a 1937 speech:

It makes no difference where you may come from in Nebraska. There is always someone near you who has seen the Indians moved out and the settlers rush in. Here, within one life-time we have assembled the conflicts of nationalities and races from all over the world, from the first settlers who came in by way of Bering Straits to the last Mexican smuggled, perhaps only last night, into the sugar beet region of the North Platte valley. Here then, before us, is a comparatively simple society from the stone age to the present, one whose processes are not lost in antiquity, one with all the conflicts, the hopes, the dreams and aspirations of man visible and free for the taking ("Stay Home, Young Writer," Paper for Nebraska Writers Guild, May 1937).

She noted there was material for writing in every small community as well as in the larger cities, but the most important theme to her, she said, was that of the farmer and his relationship to the land: "Why doesn't someone who really understands the farmer's weaknesses and his strengths, his triumphs and his problems--and appreciates the fierce affection that grows up in him for his not always friendly plot of soil--write of him?" These were her themes: the veneration of the old civilization of the Indians, the beauty of the prairie, the life of the towns large and small, and the plight of the farmer.

Her writing covers great distances of time within the vast Missouri-land, from the earliest sign of human life on the Great Plains to the epic struggles for control of the land between the white and Indian races in the nineteenth century, between settler and rancher, farmer and banker, in the twentieth. It ranges from the problems of the individual, white or Indian, to the struggles of entire nations of peoples or animals to exist and endure the changes that

sweep across the area.

As Sandoz pointed out in the Foreword to Old Jules (p. vii), her first book, she was raised in a region of story-tellers, for the frontier, she said, is, "whether by Turner's famous definition or by any other.....a land of story-tellers, and in this respect remains frontier in nature until the last original settler is gone." She spoke repeatedly of having heard the story-tellers as they swapped stories with her father: "I lived in a story-teller region--all the old traders, the old French trappers, all the old characters who had been around the Black Hills.....told grand stories of their travels and experiences..... The Indians were wonderful story-tellers. Many a night I sat in the wood-box and listened" (Hostiles and Friendlies, pp. xv-xvi). The Sandoz homestead lay on the Niobrara River in northwest Nebraska, their house close to an old river crossing. Jules Sandoz, her father, knew many of the travelers, who stopped to visit with him on their journeys. Mari often listened to their stories until she fell asleep, in the wood-box by the kitchen stove.

These oral takes, heard when she was young enough to absorb them unself-consciously, gave her a unique insight into the views of those who stopped to "yarn" with her father. She was thus "inside" their cultures, she understood their allusions, their points of reference. This gave her a sense of authority in her later writings. Her knowledge of her Crazy Horse material, for instance, went far beyond that found in books, for after all she had grown up with the old hostile Oglala Sioux around her home, their stories in her ears. And in Cheyenne Autumn, her first acknowledgement went to Old Cheyenne Woman, who had told her of the Cheyenne outbreak at Ft. Robinson, and who had been "one of those pulled wounded and bereaved from the Last Hole below Hat Creek bluffs," in the last attempt of this group to escape from Indian Territory to their northern homeland on the Yellowstone River in 1878-89.

The influence of the early story-tellers may have been misunderstood by some Sandoz critics who stress their importance, for, while she often credits their tales as being her first information, her files indicate she meticulously checked written records for verification. She examined the oral tales carefully, and accepted them as true unless proved otherwise, an accepted practice with oral historians.

Sandoz, however, was more than a historian; she was herself an accomplished story-teller. Her ability to enchant her audience is recalled by her brothers and sisters, to whom she told stories as a youngster, students from her school teaching days in the sandhills, and fellow students at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. One Lincoln friend remembered that Mari held children enthralled by her storytelling and she could reduce her friends alternately to tears and laughter by her anecdotes about Old Jules, his wives, his lawsuits, and his innumerable idiosyncracies. When Sandoz received the honorary Doctor of Literature Degree from the University of Nebraska in 1955, she was most pleased to receive recognition as a story-teller.

Of great importance to her was her belief in the spoken word, both as it was used by the story-tellers she enjoyed as a child, and by Indians and others she interviewed later. This belief is a factor in her ability to create scenes

of visual accuracy or great dramatic action. It is also the determinative factor in her style in the narrower sense of the term. It affected her use of dialogue. It also contributed to her use of metaphor, since figures of speech are characteristic of the story-teller. The use of oral tradition explains aspects of her work that are closely related to the skalds of the ancient Norsemen, or to the ubiquitous story-telling entertainers and teachers in a culture which has no written literature.

The poetic descriptions for which her work is noted may have been at least in part a result of her listening to the old buffalo-hunting Indians' descriptions. Since Indian languages are usually poor in adjectives the object must be described often by its function, which results in a picturing of the object. Months, for example, are designated by the Sioux as "The Moon of the Red Cherries," or "The Moon of the Popping Trees."

The matter of language was always important to Sandoz, for she felt that the images, metaphors, figures of speech, and even the rhythm of the prose, must rise from the work itself; it must be consistent with the setting, the action, and the character, whether he be white, Indian, or a persona. She felt that language must convey more than literal meaning, and she felt a special responsibility when attempting to convey the feeling of an Indian speech; because our words are not too good for conveying the fine shadings of thought in our own language, they are of necessity inadequate for conveying that of an Indian culture. She evoked, therefore, a unity of feeling as well as she could by selecting a prose rhythm that suggested to her the stresses of the Lakota (Sioux) language and the pattern of a nomadic hunting life, the slow cycle of universal law that made of every man a brother in the universe, an adult part of the whole. In her Foreword to Crazy Horse, for instance, she explains her use of language: "I have used the simplest words possible hoping by idiom and figures and the underlying rhythm pattern to say some of the things of the Indian for which there are no white-man words, suggest something of his innate nature, something of his relationship to the earth and the sky and all that is between" (Crazy Horse, p. x).

For ten years before Old Jules, her first book, was accepted for publication, Sandoz wrote short stories, attempting to break into print. She was almost completely unsuccessful, receiving over a thousand rejections. Sometimes the editors criticized the structure of the story, but usually the objection was based on the story's melodramatic content or on the language style. Sandoz refused to change either. The stories were often based on actual events in the sandhills and the language was, she felt, authentic. The Eastern publishers simply did not know the Midwest. In returning one story, an agent's reader commented, "Author presupposes knowledge reader doesn't have, so story is meaningless to such an extent reader takes no further interest. One is constantly barked and confused by not understanding words and expression." He then asks for definitions for nester, settler's price, and hazer. Sandoz's reply was that one of her purposes was to bring her region to the attention of the reading public. She felt she could best do this by retaining the flavor of its idiom. While publishers agreed in principle, the difficulty usually lay in the translation. Sandoz obviously felt the readers should be interested enough to find explanations for unfamiliar words; the publishers often felt the

terms were sometimes so esoteric the story could be meaningless.

In 1935, after ten years of writing, Sandoz reached success. The biography of her father, Old Jules, was chosen unanimously over 582 manuscripts for the Atlantic non-fiction contest. Its choice vindicated the author's own belief in her words (the book, written between 1928 and 1933, had been rejected by thirteen publishers, and had been rewritten and revised constantly). But her victory soon became a battle between the writer and her publishers. The editors specified the book had to be cut 15,000 words and needed editing. Edward Weeks, the Atlantic editor, sent a seven page, single-spaced letter, detailing changes. Some events seemed overdrawn or improbable; these needed to be made more veritable or taken out. And there were questions about her use of language. Sandoz discovered then, and in the conferences that followed when she went to Boston, that the revisions represented two widely divergent points of view. She began a long battle to retain what seemed important to her in structure, subject matter, point of view, and idiom. Much of the difficulty lay in the differences in grammar. When Mr. Weeks questioned her spelling of sandhills as one word, contrary to the dictionary or to Atlantic usage, Sandoz pointed out that she always used a dictionary religiously outside her own field, but she felt that certainly the specialist in his own field, which she considered herself to be, should not need it. In spite of her determination she sometimes lost the argument. Too late she discovered the printer had used plough and centre rather than her less formal plow and center. The formal spelling was fine for a scholarly work, but incongruous, she felt, for her Old Jules story.

She never quit battling for her own word choices. During her apprentice years in Lincoln she had struggled to find a style that was both correct and urbane. Dr. Louise Pound, the distinguished pioneer in folklore and linguistics studies, convinced her that her westernisms and pungent colloquial expressions were precisely right for her regional writing, giving it more authenticity, more life, and more flavor than the correct but more stilted grammarbook English could do. Dr. Pound often referred to her former pupil as an authority; Sandoz became an arbiter of Western usage. Furthermore, because of the very nature of her meticulous revising, her sentences were, in a sense, handcrafted, each word polished and shaped to fit. When someone tampered with her prose, she reacted as a poet would, resentful that anyone would dare interfere with the syntax, the rhythm, or the meaning. She once commented that as a student of Dr. Pound she considered English a living, growing language, and like every creative writer she tried to use it as a live, dynamic instrument.

The battles that began with the first letter from the Atlantic and continued throughout the years with most of her publishers--she had eleven--only pointed up the really great philosophical and cultural differences between the East and West which Midwestern and Western writers insist still exist. The Westerners accuse the Eastern seaboard publishers of crass provincialism and bland disinterest in anything that happens in the middle of our country: Easterners often frankly see little of interest in the hinterlands or view the inhabitants as quaint. Thus, whether Sandoz was defending her colloquialisms or charging her publishers with lack of marketing aggressiveness, she was actually saying that Easterners do not care enough to make the proper effort to understand. She expressed her philosophy clearly, ideas she stressed

all her life, when she charged the Atlantic with objecting to her colloquialisms-- the terms that seemed to her to express her meaning more precisely than the language of scholars developed for an entirely different purpose--and failing to recognize her concept of the West and Middlewest in the period of Old Jules as a ravished colonial region, beginning with the Indian dispossession and continuing to the small land owners' dispossession in the 1930s. She reminded the publisher that the Atlantic people never objected to her unattractive portraits of the sandhillers, but when she suggested they were so at least in part because they were exploited colonials, the Eastern publishers found the idea unconvincing or melodramatic. Sandoz as well as other writers believed that Western and Midwestern regionalism is founded on the conflict between the primitive world of the Indian and that of the advancing white man, the world of the primitive settler and farmer opposed to that of the city's materialistic sophistication. More than one observer has remarked that at every point in our country's history until recently (and possibly it is still true) there has been a point at which the oncoming civilization has confronted the savage, the primitive, and the elemental concepts of Nature. Because these events are so recent, writers have the opportunity to take a position between the Indian and the white man, between the land and the city, between primitivism and civilization, and to examine the essential spiritual problems involved. (I am indebted to John R. Milton, "The Western Attitude: Walter Van Tilburg Clark," Critique II, 3 (1959), 58-59, for much of this last sentence). Mari Sandoz recognized these facts, acknowledging that the accident of time and place contributed to her vision; she knew that every writer is molded by his environment. It is through her unique story-telling skills, so strongly influenced by those earlier story-tellers she heard as a child, that she can bring clear insights about those conflicts to the reader.

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A HIDDEN WOMAN OF LOCAL COLOR: MRS. MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD

Peggy B. Treece

If I were to begin my presentation today by saying my subject is Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1890) or Ellen Glasgow (1874-1945) or Willa Cather (1876-1947) or Edith Wharton (1862-1937) or even Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), most of you would be in a position to critically analyze what I say in terms of what you already know about each of these famed women of local color. However, the subject I have chosen is Mary Hartwell Catherwood who has provided me with a topic of intrigue and a topic of frustration.

My initial encounter with Mrs. Catherwood's works came about as I, the novice graduate student, made a last minute attempt to select a subject for an American 1890's seminar paper. In a very unorthodox fashion, I began flipping pages of Ohio Authors and Their Books and discovered a two-and-one-half page biography of an unfamiliar author, Mary Hartwell Catherwood. Thus began my study and interest. Being one who enjoys digging for material, I was pleased to find only two of Mrs. Catherwood's many literary contributions on the shelves of the Bowling Green State University Library.

The first novel of Mrs. Catherwood which I read amazed me with its compactness of values, morals, standards, and general relation of the 1890's. The Spirit of an Illinois Town (1897) was particularly a novel of the development of a Midwest town, one in Illinois. The first sentence of The Spirit of an Illinois Town expresses a theme of local color and relates transportation to urban development. The story begins, "The prairie was intersected by two railroads, and at their junction, without a single natural advantage, the town sprang up."<sup>1</sup> One of Mrs. Catherwood's characters examines the diversity of people on a walk through the town and notes "a square mile of Ohio cheer, New England thrift and conscientiousness, Kentucky hospitality, New York far-sightedness with capital to back it, and native Illinois grit."<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Catherwood, undoubtedly, illustrates a knowledge of the nineteenth century Midwest and rightly so. She spent nearly her entire life in the Midwest states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The life with which she was familiar became the life of her literary works.

To investigate not only Mrs. Catherwood's works, but also her life, I took leads from Dr. Robert Price's biography of Mrs. Catherwood in Ohio Authors and Their Books and began sending letters of inquiry to newspapers, historical societies, and libraries in cities and towns where Mrs. Catherwood is supposed to have lived. To name some of the inquiries I made, the most helpful have been The Newark Advocate, edited by Mrs. William Rogers and The Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana.

Having been born in Luray, Licking County, Ohio, young Mary Hartwell moved with her family, like so many adventurous families of the 1850's, to Milford, Iroquois County, Illinois. After both her parents died within two years of the move, Mary along with her brother and sister was returned

to her maternal grandparents in Hebron, Ohio. Many of her stories are about the farming region where she grew into womanhood. At age thirteen, she held a teacher's certificate and received a position in Lima township of her native county. Within a short time, however, she found her true love to be free-lance writing. Her first poems and short stories were published in the Newark, Ohio North American, edited by Milton L. Wilson. With the aid of Mr. Wilson, eighteen-year-old Miss Hartwell was admitted to the Granville Female College where she completed a four-year degree course in three years. According to Fred Lewis Pattee, Mary Hartwell's attainment of a college education from a new college in Ohio was the beginning of an era in which higher education was no longer centered in the East. Granville and, later Danville, Illinois, not only provided teaching assignments, but also subjects for her local color writing. Her works began infiltrating the pages of Wood's Household Magazine, Ladies' Repository, Golden Hours, The Atlantic Monthly, Lippincott's, Harper's Bazaar, Saturday Review, Century, and Hearth and Home, not to name the newspapers of the Midwest.

As Mary Hartwell's literary fame developed, she found herself financially-sufficient as a writer and discarded teaching totally. Her pioneer spirit in the exploitation of the Midwest Corn Belt during the 1880's established her works as Midwest local color. She entered literary circles and held acquaintances among such noted male counterparts as Hamlin Garland, William Dean Howells, and James Whitcomb Riley. It has been speculated that Riley and, by the time of meeting in 1879, the married Mrs. Catherwood developed a somewhat more than platonic friendship. The collaboration The Whittleford Letters halted before its completion, supposedly because this fictional romance of two young writers meeting and maturing was too illustrative of their own relationship. However, Riley's obituary notice at the death of Mrs. Catherwood in 1902 infers a sincere friendship in their professional field. "Mrs. Catherwood was a dear friend of mine. I first knew her in Indianapolis, and her death is a great shock to me. I had a high appreciation of her fine mental endowment. Her death, to my mind, is a distinct loss to the fraternity of letters."<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. Catherwood's marriage to James Steele Catherwood in 1877 offered the periodic relocations within the states of Indiana and Illinois. With each move and travel experience, she enhanced her perspectives of the Midwest region and its people. An example of her experiences translated to local color fiction is found in The Spirit of an Illinois Town. Mrs. Catherwood knew the life of a boom town where railroad tracks intersected. She and her husband had established their first home over the Oakford, Indiana railway station where many different customs, languages, and dialects met.

The struggle for equality between marital partners prevails in some of Mrs. Catherwood's works. In Craque-O'-Doom (1881), a direct statement is made of the emerging role of woman in marriage. The strong-minded woman, Rhonda Jones, is no longer content with sacrificing her own family's birth name to accept the last name of her husband. The idea of equality in marriage is more apparent as names are united, just as two persons are united in marriage. "I shan't be Burns-Jones," Miss Jones of Craque-O'-Doom proclaims, "but Jones-Burns."<sup>4</sup> Miss Jones, the epitome of the "new liberated woman,"

is not about to concede any of her independence. She tends to favor a reciprocal understanding in matrimony. "Marriage is only one incident in men's lives," she calculates, and "and why should it be more in ours?"<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. Catherwood's early life as a struggling young woman in a fiercely competitive world is probably best revealed in her first book A Woman in Armor (1875). Comparing the central character, Helen Dimmock, to Mrs. Catherwood is a simple task of sensing the potency of brief references: "From childhood Helen's life had been against the tide of circumstance.... She rose to womanhood, developing every spiritual and mental muscle."<sup>6</sup> An underriding theme and character-development in A Woman in Armor becomes a major predecessor of nearly all Mrs. Catherwood's works. The female characters show a definite tendency to portray "the new liberated woman" who was appearing in the late nineteenth century Middle West.

Helen Dimmock, "the woman in armor," shoulders the responsibility of caring for her sister and her small nephew after the father of the home leaves the two unprotected and helpless. Helen establishes the three of them in Little Boston. Again illustrating the Midwest, Mrs. Catherwood sets Little Boston in Ohio. It is a town highly conscious of tradition. "She /the town/ was not born, as thousands of towns are, the child of railroads, and cradled in pineboard houses. No; again she rendered thanks and took airs; her parents were stalwart pioneers from Massachusetts, who hewed her out of an Ohio wilderness."<sup>7</sup>

Another interesting theme appears in A Woman in Armor which becomes visible in a number of Mrs. Catherwood's subsequent works. Helen Dimmock, following the sentimental pattern of nineteenth century fictional women, falls in love. The intriguing idea is that her love, Lancelot Stanthorne, is a newspaper writer. Mrs. Catherwood's familiarity with journalistic literature is a natural result of her own publications and her friendships among newspaper personnel. Some of the author herself is revealed through Lancelot as he says:

Let no man think he writes to be forgotten. We say a story is written to-day, published tomorrow, and buried the day after. But this is not true. Alas! what insufferable trash I can remember reading long ago which haunts me yet. What we read grows in us, and is in time transmitted by us. So every one who writes achieves some sort of immortality--woe the day!<sup>8</sup>

The newspaper theme is a dominant factor in the short story "The Assistant: A Newspaper Story." Again, a woman is in the forefront. Young India Bradshaw cares for her two older brothers and encourages them in their endeavor to print a successful newspaper, but pushes her brothers to work for the positions they want. The work ethic still existed in Catherwood's Midwest.

One of Mrs. Catherwood's juvenile stories also portrays the newspaper business, but, this time, from the perspective of a small boy and girl,

Bony and Ban. Bony and Ban (1898) reflects rural living in the Newark-Granville, Ohio area. The two are abandoned by their father after the death of their mother. They find living with Uncle Cornelius Albright an unfortunate fact of life. Bony looks forward to the day that he can become a printer and support his older sister. In the course of the simple story, Bony walks from Granville to Newark at night to meet the printers of the newspaper and learn the trade.

Bony's journey to Newark is an excellent description of the Ohio countryside. It reinforces the scenic beauty of Granville reflected in the first several pages of Bony and Ban. "At the eastern and western ends are Young Ladies' Seminaries, that yearly swarm with girls from various states, who brighten the half dozen stores on shopping Saturdays, and for constitutionals climb Sugar Loaf's cone, toward the sunset, or pant up Mt. Parnassus's high shoulder on the east. Or, by favor, they extend their walk, in processions, with a teacher at the head, to that relic of the mound-builders, a mile on the Newark road, Alligator Hill, where a gravel-colored reptile stands distinctly up from summer greenness. Or they pass the valley southward and climb Flower-pot, where arbutus may be found in spring."<sup>9</sup>

Another true appreciation for the undisturbed beauty of the Midwest develops in the juvenile book, Rocky Fork (1882). Bluebell, a little girl living a "plain" life in the mountain home of her father, enjoys her freedoms and appreciates the "simple life" after attempting to conform to "fashionable" city customs. As the eight-year-old opens her school dinner pail to find a currant pie, she delights, for "...so little made a triumph in that region and time."<sup>10</sup> Other customs of the region and time, such as the church partitioned between the sexes, and the social importance of the one-room school, combine to make a story of Midwest simplicity. As Mrs. Catherwood describes the one-room schoolhouse, it comes to life:

The school-house was chinked with clay and had double doors which opened close beside a travelled road. The woods and heights rose behind it, and at one side a sweep of playground extended into a viney hollow where hung the grapevine swing for which all the girls in school daily brought pocketfuls of string.<sup>11</sup>

The typical tension between the rural Midwest and the city is also a matter of concern in Rocky Fork. The old family friend feels Bluebell should be reared in the Eastern city where nature may not be romantic, but where the culture necessary for success is available.<sup>12</sup>

The contrast between the East and the Midwest is developed even more vividly in The Secrets at Roseladies (1888). This is the juvenile story of a group of five cousins who are visiting their Uncle Roseladies. Cousin Sarah is appalled at the fact that Easterners refer to her home as a "howling wilderness" and to the Midwesterners as "ourang-outangs." To the Easterner, a farm is ten acres; to the Midwesterner, a farm is hundreds of acres.<sup>13</sup>

The banks of the Wabash River set the scene and even become the river home of a friend of the cousins. Mrs. Catherwood's beautiful description cannot easily be surpassed.

"It was about sunset, and the Wabash River had all the milk and fire and changeable green tints of opals. It came in a broad volume round a bend betwixt hills in the north, and spread around sandbanks, islands, and across pebbled shallows, in some places asleep against drift; so the distance seemed long from the east shore to the west."<sup>14</sup>

The nearby Shawnee Burial Mounds provide not only color but plot for The Secrets at Roseladies. As the children attempt to dig into the mounds, they uncover a history of earlier inhabitants and learn the folklore of the region: the pot of gold presumably buried with the bodies.

Mrs. Catherwood's years of residence in Cincinnati, Ohio provided a prime opportunity to write The Dogberry Bunch (1879). This juvenile book has been credited as a forerunner of Five Little Peppers. Although the situation is incredibly unbelievable, Mrs. Catherwood settles seven orphaned children in an Illinois town. As in other works previously mentioned, the reader is given the sense of place. The Dogberry children live in a two-sided village--the Old Town of traditional families divided from the New Town by a railroad.

Unable to stay totally aloof from her work, the author adds a personal reference to prepare the reader for a time change in the story.

It is a fact in our existence that some days or weeks, crowded with events, seem longer and of more importance than months or even years of quiet living. During the years, however, we are growing ready to burst into the flower of new events.<sup>15</sup>

The few selections and works presented today provide only a sampling of the writings by Mrs. Mary Hartwell Catherwood which combine a clear sense of time and place with themes such as rural living, urbanization, and regional history. I have yet to unearth and investigate many others, for my studies of Mrs. Catherwood and her literary contributions have opened many doors in a variety of areas. Since my initial contact with The Granville Booster, a central Ohio newspaper, I have developed a written correspondence with a living author who attended school with Mrs. Catherwood and whose grandfather was Mr. Milton Wilson, the editor of The North American (newspaper) and partial benefactor of Mrs. Catherwood's college education. Mrs. Minnie Hite Moody, like her classmate, writes about the Midwest, particularly central Ohio.

Both Mrs. Catherwood and Mrs. Moody are excellent illustrations of the opportunities still remaining in the field of Midwestern literature. Milton Wilson's Biography of Mary Hartwell Catherwood (1904) begins with a dated

statement: "In many of our Public Libraries, as well as in the homes of the better class of citizens in the United States and Canada, may be found the literary works of Mary Hartwell Catherwood."<sup>16</sup> Yet, I have made slow progress in locating copies of Mrs. Catherwood's novels and collections. Most come from the rare library collections of Case-Western Reserve University, Ohio State University, Cornell University, Indiana University, the University of Illinois, with some from the shelves of Bowling Green State University.

Knowledge about Mrs. Catherwood herself is nearly as difficult to find. Milton Wilson's Biography of Mary Hartwell Catherwood is written much like a piece of fiction. The only systematic study is the product of Dr. Robert Price (Ohio State University, 1943), now of Otterbein College. The preparation for his dissertation, A Critical Biography of Mrs. Mary Hartwell Catherwood: A Study in Middle Western Regional Authorship, 1847-1902, required work at the Ohioana Library (holding books by and about Ohioans) and Newberry Library in Chicago (where personal papers are held).

Mrs. Catherwood's books are dated in their perspective; but, that perspective is an excellent primary source of history and literature. Disregarding faulty and sentimental plots, her works provide a reservoir of historical local color.

My present project is a so-far fruitless search for the name of a Findlay, Ohio businessman at the turn of the century. He studied under Miss Hartwell in a central Ohio one-room school. According to Mr. Wilson's biography, "Con" (the only clue I have as to name) was put in his place by his teacher and later, as a success in life, thanked his successful teacher for it!

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Mary Hartwell Catherwood, The Spirit of an Illinois Town (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1897), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Catherwood, Illinois Town, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Wilson, Biography of Mary Hartwell Catherwood (Newark, Ohio: American Tribune Printery, 1904), p. 85.

<sup>4</sup>M. H. Catherwood, Craque-O'-Doom, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup>Catherwood, Craque-O'-Doom, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup>Mary (Hartwell) Catherwood, A Woman in Armor (New York: G. W. Carleton and Co., Publishers, 1875), pp. 22-23.

<sup>7</sup>Catherwood, A Woman in Armor, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Catherwood, A Woman in Armor, p. 135.

<sup>9</sup>Mary Hartwell Catherwood, Bony and Ban: The Story of a Printing Venture (Boston, Mass.: Colonial Press, C. H. Simmonds and Company, 1898,) pp. 7-8.

<sup>10</sup>Mary Hartwell Catherwood, Rocky Fork (Boston, Mass.: D. Lothrop and Company, 1882), p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>Catherwood, Rocky Fork, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup>Catherwood, Rocky Fork, p. 87.

<sup>13</sup>M. H. Catherwood, The Secrets at Roseladies (Boston, Mass.: D. Lothrop Company, 1888), p. 182.

<sup>14</sup>Catherwood, Roseladies, p. 21.

<sup>15</sup>Mary Hartwell Catherwood, The Dogberry Bunch (Boston: D. Lothrop and Company, 1879), ch. I.

<sup>16</sup>Wilson, Biography, p. 7.

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THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS:

THE MIDWEST: LITERARY RESOURCE AND REFUGE

Alma J. Payne

I have been privileged to be associated with the Society for the Study of Mid-Western Literature since that time when it was a gleam in the eye of Dave Anderson to whom great credit must go for the nurturing of the Society to its present maturity. The widely circulated Newsletter, the growing membership and the first volume of MidAmerica speak of its growth. Our first year was spent in a very spirited consideration of what the Mid-West was: a geographical entity, a chronological-historical epoch or merely a state of mind. I find it a healthy sign that most of us retain our individual interpretations still. Next we turned to identifying who could be called Mid-Western writers. Must they live in whatever the Mid-West is; was birth the identifying consideration; or did Mid-Western citizenship depend on subject matter? Most recently we have been considering how the Mid-West has been and is being used by American writers. This morning we enjoyed a wide-ranging description of how women writers have used the Mid-West in works which can be described as "local color." This afternoon's panel will address itself to the uses of popular culture in literature which can be classified as Mid-Western.

For the next few minutes I would like to present and develop another pattern of use, a rhythmic pattern which has increasingly impinged on my consciousness as I have worked on my current project which might be described as "The Howells Family and the Matter of Ohio," a project which will extend over a number of years, for William Dean was not the only literarily prolific member of the family - taking literary in its widest sense. If one considers Howells and his 19th century Mid-Western contemporaries, one is aware of a rhythm of repulsion and attraction, of use of the Mid-West as a resource, a literary quarry from which the artist obtains the basic materials of his structure, despite feelings which more often than not were negative.

This is a pattern which can be traced to the present moment. Start where you will, with Edgar Watson Howe, as I propose to do, or with Kirkland or Eggleston; move on to a member of one or another Chicago literary group: Herrick, Fuller, Riley, Dreiser; or continue with a non-literary figure like Clarence Darrow; consider Tarkington, Lewis, Anderson, the early Hemingway with his Nick Adams; come to the present moment with Purdy's Nephew from Bowling Green, Allan Eckert's fictional history or historical fiction as he brings the Revolutionary frontier to life, or wander the streets of Joyce Carol Oate's Detroit - the Mid-West continues to provide ever changing, ever fascinating raw material.

Peculiar to the last fifteen to twenty years of the 19th and the first years of the 20th century is a design evident in our pattern of usage, which is not so clearly discoverable in today's fiction. I interpret it as a retreat before the militant complexity that was late 19th century America,

back to the seeming simplicity of an earlier age - an age of established values, an age when a sense of community prevented the alienation of the individual, when personal identity denied the submersion of the Self in the mechanized mass.

All of us are familiar with Edgar Watson Howe's The Story of A Country Town, published in 1883. Whether one sees the book in a chain of descent from Hawthorne and Melville, as does Brom Weber; as a part of the revolt against the village; as the accidentally good product of a literary "primitive"; as early naturalism, or as purely a cultural document; the reader is aware of the author's personal experience with and use of a life he has known well and unhappily. There is no doubt that the tone is bitter. Without exception the characters are lonely, alienated from family and community like Jo Erring, and above all, from the church, which offers no comfort, not even to the tormented Reverend Westlock. Howe's later fictional attempts: The Mystery of the Locks (1885), in the best Gothic tradition, A Moonlight Boy (1886), and A Man Story (1888) continued, with less success, his use of the Mid-West, and contemporary reviews of the books, none of which went to a second edition, stress "Americanness" and "new setting in the heart of America." The Anthology of Another Town (1920) is a series of character sketches - many with the potential of effective development, but with no unifying narrator or theme. One is left with the sense of a show composed of unedited slides. Unlike Winesburg the overriding sense is that of nostalgia. By the time that Howe's autobiography, Plain People, appeared in 1929, the "sage of Potato Hill," second only to William Allen White in the telling of short, pithy stories, found the small town of the Mid-West the one safe haven. Only flashes of antagonism toward hypocrisy and religiosity break the tranquility of a well-savored life in Middle America. To his more critical contemporaries Howe must have fit the description given by Sackett in the "Preface" to his Twayne volume: "His triumphs behind him, the old man could only cherish his scrapbook and sputter on to a pathetic end in a world he no longer understood."

Better known than the first work of Howe is Main-Travelled Roads by Hamlin Garland. We all recall the dust drudgery, and terrible stark loneliness of Garland's prairie people, especially of the women cut off from everything beautiful, even the romantic beauty of Nature. Julia exchanges the drudgery "Among the Corn Rows" for what the reader knows will be the loneliness of the prairie on Rob's claim. The impressions left by "Up the Coulee" are those of unending, unrequited work, of mud, flies and hopelessness. Here again the Mid-West provides the material; the author-sculptor creates from it his life-vision. If we take a single scene from the 1891 work - that of threshing day in "A Branch Road," a scene filled with dust, sweat, misunderstanding, and ultimate separation of the lovers for seven years and compare it with an almost identical scene in Boy Life on the Prairie (1899), we see an amazing difference. Although the raw material is similar, unlike Howe's later attempts, there is unity provided by a sustained point of view - that of a boy, who in the course of the book becomes a man. The mood of "The Old Fashioned Threshing" allows the reader to savor every experience as the boy does. The dust and heat and toil are the same but - let the last paragraph speak for itself." Oh those rare days and rarer nights! How fine they were then- and how mellow they are growing now as

the slow-paced years drop a golden mist upon them. From this distance they seemed too hearty and wholesome and care free to be lost out of the world." Garland leaves unsaid what is certainly implied - the contrast with the end of the century which was anything but carefree.

Of course this desire for preservation of the sense of a place or time lies at the heart of any form of local color and nowhere was it more successful than in the boy world created by Mark Twain. Tens of thousands of readers have vicariously walked the streets of Hannibal and floated on a Mississippi so realistically pictured that recognition is immediate when one stands on the bluff from which the statue of Clemens looks down upon town and river. The people, the setting, the life style were the resources of Mark Twain, and he drew upon them repeatedly and, toward the end of his life, desperately, as his unpublished papers have revealed. It was in these same experiences that Twain sought refuge in his Autobiography and particularly in Life on the Mississippi. In refusing an invitation to attend a celebration in California, Clemens revealed what the past meant to him: "If I were a few years younger I would accept..... I would let somebody else do the oration..... I would talk - just talk. I would renew my youth; and talk- and talk- and talk - and have the time of my life..... Those were the days!-those old ones. They will come no more; youth will come no more; they were so full to the brim with the wine of life.....it chokes me to think of them." This letter was written when he was producing his most bitterly pessimistic work and is at least a footnote in the examination of the later Twain.

Twain tried to taste again the "wine of life" when he returned to the river after an absence of twenty-one years. If one ever needed proof that "you can't go home again" it is found here. In St. Louis he found "half a dozen sound-asleep steamboats" instead of "a solid mile of wide-awake ones," a mile of empty wharves, a single Black asleep in "a wide and soundless vacancy." Certainly Hannibal would be the same! Although his illusions carried him through the first of his three days there, gradually reality overcame nostalgia. Despite the shock, the joke must still be made- "Many of the people I once knew in this tranquil refuge of my childhood are now in heaven; some, I trust, are in the other place." In Hannibal, at least Heaven and Hell still existed. But Time was the enemy. "I woke up every morning with the impression that I was a boy- for in my dreams the faces were all young again, and looked as they had in the old times; but I went to bed a hundred years old every night- for meantime I had been seeing those faces as they are now." If Hannibal could not revitalize the past, there was no hope. The remainder of the work is factual and lacking in nostalgic recollection, if not in the usual satire turned liberally upon himself.

A complete consideration of the relation of nostalgia to the later Twain works would keep us here, as Twain would say, a month or more, so I wish to move on to that friend and contemporary, who becomes more and more like Twain as one knows him better. And since he has been my bosom companion- in a purely scholarly sense- for lo these many years, I feel that I know him very well. It is unfortunate that because of critical attitudes, set up in the 1920's and carried by teaching scholars unto the third and fourth generations, that William Dean Howells has been seen as a fugitive from the Mid-West who

became a captive of and a convert to the Brahmin establishment of the East. If one goes beyond the usual two or three best known novels, it soon becomes evident that nothing could be farther from the truth. From the beginning of Howells' career the near-frontier Ohio was his treasury upon which he drew for subject matter, plot line, local color, cultural confrontations, and, finally, when his world toppled around him, for refuge.

I must, of necessity, merely sample some evidences of the Mid-West as resource for Howells. Just as Recollections of Life in Ohio from 1813-1840 by William Cooper Howells shows us the fascinating commonplaces of the then "new West," so the canon of William Dean Howells reveals the Ohio of the immediately post-frontier mid century. But these revelations came late in the century. The young Howells was eager to leave Ohio, and it is interesting that his biography of Lincoln gave him the means to escape- all the way to Venice. The biography was almost aborted, for Howells was too insecure to go to Springfield to obtain the necessary details. But once he obtained the material from James Howard, a young law student whom he commissioned to get it, he was fascinated:

"I felt the charm of the material, the wild charm and poetry of its reality was not unknown to me; I was at home with it, for I had known the belated backwoods of a certain region in Ohio, I had almost lived the pioneer." (Incidentally, the copy was corrected and annotated by Lincoln himself so, pedestrian as it may be, it is the nearest thing to Lincoln auto-biography extant.)

From 1861, when he assumed his consulship to Venice, until 1886 Howells seemingly had joined the Eastern establishment, unless one notes a tiny volume published in 1884 entitled Three Villages. The Villages are Lexington, Shirley (more specifically the Shaker community there), and Gnadenhutton, Ohio. The latter account is scrupulously researched and sympathetically presented. In setting up a bibliography for a graduate seminar on the Revolutionary Frontier, I have found it to be the only such treatment of the town, using sources no longer available to the modern scholar.

In a letter to Ralph Keeler on September 23, 1871, Howells described his difficulty in putting his belief in the value of the average into literary practice:

"I feel more and more persuaded that we have only to study American life with the naked eye in order to find it infinitely various and entertaining. The trouble has always been that we have looked at it through somebody else's confounded literary telescope. I find it hard work myself to trust my eyes, and I catch myself feeling for the telescope, but I hope to do without it, altogether, by and by."

In 1886 in Indian Summer he relinquished "the telescope" for the tool

of sympathetic satire, so subtle that it is often misinterpreted. His hero, Colville, who is a blood brother to James' Christopher Newman, finds himself displaced in Florence and, standing on the Ponte Vecchio, which might have been the Main Street Bridge over the Wabash in Des Vaches, Indiana, thinks, "He had no love for that stream, nor for the ambitious town on its banks- but.....he felt a growing conviction that he had been a great ass to leave them." As a romantic young architect he had lost the love of his life in Florence, had gone to Des Vaches where his brother owned land, a lead mine, and two newspapers. The town didn't need an architect "since the jail and courthouse had already been built" and he became the successful editor of the combined newspapers - providing another opportunity for Howells to promulgate his concept of a good press. Colville could not loaf for he had absorbed the work ethic and he "paid to Des Vaches the tribute of feeling that an objectless life was disgraceful to a man." Without his paper he felt "extinct." A further exploration of the confrontations of cultures, of youth and age, and of sentimentalism and common sense have no place here. Suffice it to say that Mrs. Bowen - from Vespuccius, Ohio- is the victor to whom the spoils of Indian Summer belong. Colville's chief regret points up Howells' memories of his Mid-Western youth. Colville's concern is over what Mrs. Bowen's daughter will lose by living in what Howells calls: an exhausted culture." "For her daughter there were to be no buggy rides or concerts or dances at the invitation of young men; no picnics, free and unchaperoned; no sitting on the steps at dusk with callers who never dreamed of asking for her mother; no lingering at the gate with her youthful escort home from the ball- nothing of that wild sweet liberty which once made American girlhood a long rapture." (Shades of Daisy Miller, for Howells, shades of Columbus, Ohio, where he had found society "free and large" and where he had met Eleanor Meade under the freest of circumstances." As Howells said in an interview concerning Indian Summer, "It is unnecessary to go out of America to get character and material for a novel. The material is at our feet....." From that point on he seldom did look beyond the United States and his material was increasingly Mid-Western.

In 1890 in A Hazard of New Fortunes, or as Cady has called it, "The Fall of the House of Dryfoos," the reader cannot forget the tragedy of the farm family, displaced by the gas boom, whether in Bowling Green or Findlay, Ohio is unimportant, seeking in vain for a place - more than that - for a meaning in life in New York society.

Like Twain, Howells in the late 1880's and 1890's turned back repeatedly to the Ohio sources "of his very being." In 1887, My Year in a Log Cabin, later fictionalized as New Leaf Mills (1913), recaptured the actuality of the family's Utopian experiment near Xenia, Ohio. Reading them again this summer, no longer under the pressure to mold them into dissertationese, I found that both books, but especially the non-fiction, hold up well and I would recommend to those who have been taught that Howells was dull, stodgy, insensitive, his description of this experience which was a renewal of the "wild romance" which his father had always felt lay in pioneer life. Twain himself did not have a better eye for the ridiculous than is found in Howells' description of their use of discarded newspapers to cover walls which bore the mark of their previous occupant, an old Virginian "who had

the habit of chewing tobacco in bed." The implication of hunger for reading material comes clear as he describes their frustration over the fact that the newspapers were identical front pages, carrying a romantic tale which began and began and began, stopping at the end of a column, the fate of hero and heroine forever unknown.

Outside of the cabin was a land, like the river of Sam Clemens's boyhood, where romance still lived and boys could bring to life, not the pages of river history, but the pages of Howe's Historical Collections of Ohio, and people the woods and canal with Simon Kenton, the Pioneer, Simon Girty, the Renegade, Crawford in captivity, or the Moravian Indians massacred at Gnadenhutton. And what a release from the actuality of the New York City which Howells knew, where the hungry searched garbage cans for food, was the transcendental beauty of a moment shared with his brother in the woods at night, a moment which, "seemed to lift my soul nearer and nearer to the soul of all things in an exquisite sympathy." Huck and Jim on the raft would have understood, and their creator shared with Howells the sense that such unity and such sympathy was lost from the world of the 1890's.

In the first winter Howells' boy woke often to find his bed covered with snow which had sifted through the imperfectly patched roof- an experience echoed in Twain's description of his uncle's farm - a passage written in Vienna, probably as late as 1898. And Howells' account, like Twain's, ends with a return- this time after thirty years- with the same terrible sense of mortality and loss.

A Boy's Town, written in 1890, presents with charm and far-ranging detail the many-dimensional portrait of a small Mid-Western town, as seen by a sensitive and observant boy, as Howells says, "from his third to his eleventh year, when he seldom, if ever, catches a glimpse of life much higher than the middle of a man." Here is God's plenty: rivers, streets, games, school, circuses, holidays, elections, superstitions, the under-ground railroad, cholera, the sorrow of leaving, the more bewildering sorrow of joyfully returning only to find that he no longer belonged - that "nobody knew what to do with him." Here, in brief, is the comical-tragical, monotonous- exciting boyhood of Everyman. It is a book deserving of a better fate than the oblivion to which it has been assigned, for here mid-century America is discoverable on every page.

Although Howells' two Utopian romances, A Traveler from Altruria (1894) and Through the Eye of the Needle (1907) are usually viewed as social criticism, I see them as an attempt to re-shape society in the image of the earlier American institutions, especially the family, for Altruria is really a large family and this Utopia provides the same certainties, the same freedom, the same individuality, the same sharing, which Howells had known and which the years and a changing society had destroyed. In a letter to his sister, Aurelia in 1899, Howells' usually reticent secrecy about personal feelings was overcome by his sense of loss. "How impatient I used to be with that beauty in my longing to be out in the world! Now it is all past; I have got what I wanted, and I wish I had kept what I had."

Helping his father with his book in the early 1890's strengthened the son's conviction that in that earlier Mid-Western world lay the essential American experience. In The Kentons (1902) he tried many things, none of them understood by readers who demanded the new romances. Carrington sees Howells "attempting to combine an analysis of contemporary life with his feelings for his father and his Ohio home." It is also obvious that he linked his central character with the mythic frontier scout and with the virtues which that figure portrayed: courage, fidelity, and endurance. It is very telling that the old man can only show these characteristics in the setting of the small town where he understands life. Howells was bitterly disappointed over the reception of the book. In a letter to Brander Mathews he expressed his feeling with a vigor, more expected from Sam Clemens: "They bray at my flowers picked from the fruitful fields of our common life."

Already Howells was on the way to being the "anachronism" which he admitted to being a few years later, but he made one more attempt to use the Mid-West as illustration of the true American values. The result was that neglected classic, The Leatherwood God, written in 1916 and, in a way, bracketing Howells' career, for it reveals his belief that the same "wild poetry and charm" of the frontier, which had recommended the life of Lincoln to the young Howells and sent him into the world of Europe and our East, was viable for an America which had lost itself in a mechanized maze. Rational man, acting according to the tenets of brotherhood, could enforce order upon the chaos of his existence.

It is clearly more than coincidence that each of the major American writers of the late 19th century made his own pilgrimage to the boyhood which pre-dated the chaos of the world he knew as a man. It is true that Adams and James were not of the Mid-West and that their searches, successful or not, must lie elsewhere, but many of the others were. Is it possible that there was a peculiar vitality in the Mid-Western experience? Mencken, that arch-enemy of Howellsian realism, believed it. In a critical essay in The Smart Set he admitted, "The hog-skinners are eager, curious, penetrating, iconoclastic, impatient of finesse, close to the ground." Whatever the answer, in the experiences of their Mid-Western childhood, Twain, Howells and their contemporaries could momentarily escape death and the threat of death, economic disaster, public censure, man's inhumanity to man in the name of patriotism, and find in the words of the one British poet for whom Twain had a good word - that "God's in his Heaven, All's Right with the world."



EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE MIDWEST:  
POPULAR PREOCCUPATIONS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Patricia A. Anderson

There is a series of children's books with such titles as Everyday Life in Ancient Greece, Everyday Life in Ancient Rome, and Everyday Life in Colonial America. Noticibly lacking, however, is the title, "Everyday Life in the Midwest." But one might ask, "Which Midwest? Do you mean the Midwest of the dark forests and treeless prairies that was the frontier of the 18th and 19th centuries, or the Midwest of the tamer 20th century? Do you mean the Midwest of the cities--Detroit, Chicago, Kansas City, or the Midwest of the farm and small towns?" The answer must be all of these, for out of the everyday life of the frontier period grew the everyday life of 1910, 1930, and today; and in children's books certain characteristics appear again and again throughout the historical periods. We might call these preoccupations of the people. Three seem especially important.

Perhaps the most important is movement. Everyday life for Midwestern children and adults is so often concerned with moving, with people going farther west, moving to another state, leaving the city for the farm, or going to a new city to make a fresh start.

Laura Ingalls Wilder, one of the best known and popular writers for children has chronicled such movement in her series of books set from roughly 1860 to 1880. Beginning with her Little House in the Big Woods, set in Wisconsin, Wilder's books portray a sturdy, life-loving family who were not afraid to leave one place for another as they travelled by covered wagon through Kansas, Minnesota, and the Dakota Territory.

There was little time for sentimentality when the Wilders left a place. As the family leaves its house in Wisconsin in the book Little House on the Prairie (1935), Wilder writes:

.....they all went away from the little log house.  
The shutters were over the windows, so the little house  
could not see them go. It stayed there inside the log  
fence..... And that was the last of the little house.

Later in the book after they've built a cabin in the prairie lands of Kansas, the father says "We're going to do well here. This is great country. This is a country I'll be content to stay the rest of my life." The mother asks "Even when it's settled up?" and the father replies, "Even when it's settled up. No matter how thick and close neighbors get, this country'll never feel crowded. Look at that sky." At the book's close, however, they are leaving, and here, Wilder again describes the going away:

The snug log house looked as it always had. It did not seem to know they were going away. Pa.....closed the door carefully, leaving the latch-string out. "Someone might need shelter, he said."

Another book Smiling Hill Farm (1937) by Miriam E. Mason, an Indiana writer, covers the movement of characters from approximately 1800 to the 1930's. She writes of the Wayne family's travels from Virginia to Indiana.

There were no smooth, wide roads then on which people might travel. There were only muddy paths, twisting in and out among the great trees..... There were no bridges across the rivers. There were no inns..... There were only the trees, tall and dark, filled with shadows and wild animals.

Throughout the story the generations at Smiling Hill Farm come and go until at the book's end, a birthday party is held for the ninety-two year old Great-grandfather Wayne, with relatives coming for the celebration. "Some came from far away and some came from close by. Some came on the big blue bus, some came on the train, some came by airplane, but most of them came in their own cars... There were two trucks and two motorcycles. There was a car, with a trailer..."

Phil Stong, in his book Farm Boy (1934) begins by writing: "Anyone likes to go places and anyone likes to ride on trains..." as he tells the story of a boy from DesMoine visiting his grandfather's farm. Here movement or travelling is used as the framework for the main action which involves digging for Indian artifacts on the farm. As the book ends the boy is again on a train, and he waves goodbye to his relatives for as long as he can see them before he begins to think of all that he has to tell his family waiting for him in DesMoine.

Carol R. Brink in her novel of the depression titled Winter Cottage, also uses movement as a framing device in this story set in Wisconsin in 1930. As her novel opens, a father and his two daughters are in a car which breaks down in the Wisconsin woods as they are travelling from Chicago to Minneapolis to live with an aunt, who really does not want them, until their father can find employment. With only a little money left, they decide to stay in an empty cottage until spring. Their luck changes when they win a radio contest, and with their prize money they get their car repaired and leave again for Minneapolis where the father has now decided to open a small book store. As the book ends the older daughter locks the cottage door and the window by which they had first entered the cottage. "Good bye" she said softly. "Good bye! Goodbye!" until the green of the woods finally hid the cottage from view...."

Still another novel of the depression No Promises in the Wind (1970) by Irene Hunt tells the bitter story of a boy who leaves home after differences with his unemployed father. Fifteen year old Josh tells the story and says:

I felt excitement growing in me. "We'll head for the smaller towns... Chicago's too big and ugly... We'll head for the smaller towns that maybe aren't hit so hard.... We'll pick us out an empty boxcar.

Never Younger, Jeannie (1965) by Elizabeth Witheridge begins at the Detroit railroad station as eleven year old Jeannie from California is placed on a train for Saginaw, Michigan, to stay with her grandparents. Her parents are to take another train to New York City, where they will sail for England to be gone a year. Jeannie was excited. She "pressed her face against the grimy window for one last look at her family. They stood there in the dusk..... When they saw her, they waved and smiled, then turned and ran for their train."

Set in 1914, this novel explores the girls' new experiences, including her fears for her parents when World War I breaks out. The parents do return safely across the Atlantic, only to be held up for a Christmas Eve homecoming by a train wreck. As the grandfather says:

.....All the way across the ocean for that--stranded in a railway coach on Christmas Eve. So they got out and walked back to some little town, hired a car and set out for home.....

Robert McCloskey in his Centerburg Tales (1951), a delightful mixture of the realities of a small Ohio town with the tallest tall tales imaginable, has his character Grandpa Hercules entertain the town's children with stories. In one Grandpa says:

It was Hopper McThud's idea that we go out west and try our luck at panning for gold. He came up to me one day and said, "Hercules, things are getting almighty slow hereabouts, since all them Indians are gone. Let's pack up our duds and go out West hunting for gold.

This book and McCloskey's other similar book Homer Price (1943) are both good examples of another popular preoccupation of the people in children's books. This is their very strong interest in machines. The Homer Price volume includes one of the most well-known short stories for children entitled The Doughnuts. In this story Homer's uncle owns a lunch room equipped with "automatic toasters, automatic coffer maker, automatic dishwasher, and an automatic doughnut maker. All the latest in labor saving devices." As Uncle Ulysses says to Homer, "...wonderful things, these labor saving devices."

In this story, however, the doughnut machine refuses to stop, and it turns out enough doughnuts for ten towns. McCloskey describes it:

Meanwhile the rings of batter kept right on dropping into the hot fat and an automatic gadget kept right on turning them over, and another automatic gadget kept right on giving them a little push, and the doughnuts kept right on rolling down the little chute, just as regular as a clock can tick.

This is just a little good humor poked at the Midwesterner's liking for gadgets. In her book Prairie School (1951) Lois Lenski has the mother of the story being a little more cynical about such interests. She says:

Oh, yes, the old car, it's broke down... and the truck and the tractor, they are gone... What for? What is all this machinery for? Always more and more machinery to get out of order, to break down when we need it most. The men are not farmers any more. They are mechanics and poor ones at that.

Later, in this same novel, however, a teacher and some children are trapped in a schoolhouse during a terrible snow storm. They happily watch as a piper cub lands to bring them coal and food. "The plane came slowly down, landing in the open windswept stretch between barn and schoolhouse. It came slowly to a dead stop. The engine purred a while, then died away."

Even Laura Ingalls Wilder concerns herself with machines. In The Long Winter (1940) she writes this description:

Those locomotives came charging down that two miles of straight track with wide-open throttles, full speed ahead and coming faster every second... wheels blurring ...roaring up to fifty miles an hour...

And still later she describes a work train:

It seemed to wake the whole town up to hear the train whistle again and see the smoke on the sky. Puffing and steaming and clanging its bell, it stopped at the depot, then pulled out, whistling loud and clear again.

This same novel is a good example of a third important preoccupation of children's books set in the Midwest. This is a strong interest in the weather and in the changing of the seasons. Just as this novel is based upon a particularly bad winter in the Midwest, so, too, is Lois Lenski's Prairie School which was built around the great blizzards which hit South Dakota in 1948, 1949, and 1950. Some children's authors even use the changing seasons as part of their narrative technique with the plot developing as the seasons change. Betsy-Tacy by Maud Lovelace, Copper-Toed Boots by Marguerite de Angeli, and Little Sioux Girl by Lois Lenski are all examples of this technique.

As Robert McCloskey says in Homer Price, "There's always the weather to talk about, as he has the sheriff enter the barber shop and say, "Well, I put on long... woolen underwear this morning," to be answered by the barber's "Humph"... "I wouldn't wear woolen underwear for anything on earth. It itches!"

Thimble Summer (1938), the Newberry Prize winning book by Elizabeth Enright, is set in Wisconsin in the 1930's during a summer when the sky was

like "a bright skin stretched tight above the valley, and the earth, too, was tight and hard with heat..." On the Hauser farm, they knew that "if the rain didn't come soon there would be no corn to harvest, and they would have to cut the oats for hay." A young orphan boy appears at the Hauser's farm and tells of the real drought that he had seen in Kansas where he "watched a wall of dust roll up from off the prairie" and had seen "the earth all full of cracks, and cattle dead for want of water."

When it finally rains, the heroine of the story, Garnet, holds her breath and listens carefully, for it seemed to her "as if she could hear roots deep in the wet earth drinking and coming to life again.

The changing seasons, machines, and movement. All three of these preoccupations appear again and again in children's novels set in the Midwest. Perhaps these are basic preoccupations of the people of the area, for out of the Midwest have come such men as Thomas Edison, the Wright Brothers, and Henry Ford, all three concerned with taming nature and with conquering distance through applied technology. Perhaps, too, the Midwest has bred people who have always been ready to move, since they knew from their changing seasons that change is the most unchanging aspect of their world.

NOTES ON A MIDWESTERN SLAVE NARRATIVE AS  
HISTORICAL DOCUMENT AND POPULAR FICTION

Ronald Primeau

It is not particularly surprising to note that in the history of popular literature the slave narrative vanished and the dime novel grew in prominence at about the same time. Coincident with the disappearance of the slave narrative as a popular form and the backlash following Reconstruction and the "Hayes Compromise," the dime novel and other pulp fiction assumed increased significance. Though from very different historical origins and based on sharply contrasting cultural premises, the slave and the hero of the dime novel exhibited analogous responses to their restrictive environments. I have reviewed some of these similarities at greater length elsewhere, and I am surely not original in seeing repressed frustration transformed into vicarious liberation in much popular fiction.<sup>1</sup> I am aware also of the dangers of leaning too heavily on such merely convenient analogies. (The dime novel, for example, was a literature of escape from the machine age, while the antebellum slave narrative was concerned primarily with an escape from a feudal agrarian order into a North rapidly becoming industrialized.) Given such limitations, I think it is helpful nonetheless to identify a uniquely Midwestern hybrid of the antebellum slave narrative and the dime novel. What I am proposing entails a broad examination of the slave narrative as popular literature, historical document, and folk art. In these notes I shall sketch briefly some of my assumptions and directions for this study.

Most well-known slave narratives were published for the first time in the 1840's or 1850's, though a few--most notably the life of Gustavus Vassa, the Arican--appeared as early as the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Many were published originally in London, though most were reissued in American editions and supported by the Abolitionists and the anti-slavery press. Research on slave narratives has traditionally concentrated on establishing their authenticity as historical documents and only recently has turned its attention as well to an exploration of their more strictly literary dimensions.<sup>3</sup> Scholarship on the slave narrative also faces severe textual problems. Writing on the "literary forgeries" often concocted by abolitionists in the 1830's, Janheinz Jahn describes such politically motivated narratives as "slave experiences which an abolitionist had recorded, arranged for maximum effect, and then published not as what he had been told but as autobiography by the slave concerned."<sup>4</sup> Such difficulties in determining authorship quite naturally affect as well any assessment of a narrative's literary qualities as popular culture or as authentic folk art.

One of only a few slave narratives known to have been written in Michigan, Fifty Years in Slavery was published in Grand Rapids in 1891--eighteen years after its author, Harry Smith, and his family had moved to Michigan from Kentucky (via Indianapolis) and settled in Reed City, Osceola County.<sup>5</sup> The work circulated some time also after institutionalized slavery, abolitionist movements, and hence pressures to write or re-write in ways that directly served

a "cause" had subsided. Some of the political ramifications of historical accuracy, style, and rhetorical tone that pertained almost exclusively to antebellum narratives had little effect, therefore, on either Harry Smith or his narrator. However, later developments such as the frustrations accompanying the unfulfilled dreams of Reconstruction and the establishment of "Home Rule" following the "Hayes Compromise" of 1877 created an atmosphere of political uncertainty that encases Smith's narrative in at least marginal suspicion.

To further understand the significance behind the publication of Fifty Years in 1891 and in order to appraise the possible influences of contemporary events on its conception, one must recall that few documents like it had appeared following Emancipation. Noting the often overlooked popularity of the slave narrative in the nineteenth century, Arna Bontemps has observed that "the recorded memoirs of the questing slaves" had been considered "to epitomize the condition of man on earth as it documented the personal history of the individual to whom bondage was real and freedom was more than a dream."<sup>6</sup> During Reconstruction, however, the slave narrative disappeared, and the absence of a genre that had served as a popular literary form left a vacuum that was filled by reaction, backlash, and conciliatory strategists. Bontemps stresses the ramifications of the black writer's loss of "a medium of self-expression for which there was no ready substitute":

Decades of relative silence followed, insofar as protest was concerned; and this silence paralleled a growing hostility against Negroes. A crescendo of hatred, projected in the fiction of Thomas Dixon and Thomas Nelson Page on one hand and in motion picture films such as The Birth of a Nation on the other, began to fill the void. Mob violence against the Negro resulted in an appalling increase in the number of lynchings and waves of race riots that sometimes resemble massacres of the blacks. (Bontemps, viii)

Concurrent with these waves of oppression there grew repeated requests from other sources that former slaves write their memoirs in an effort to educate the nation about the evils of slavery and of oppression on the whole. For example, Harry Smith's narrator acknowledges that Fifty Years is a result of many such requests made of him while he was living in Indianapolis and then later in Reed City, Michigan.

Fifty Years exhibits most of the readily identifiable elements of the slave narrative tradition. Though the quality of writing, overall structure, and even type-setting (and proof-reading) are often poor, the narrative supports existing evidence about the experience of slavery in America through a readable account of one survivor's recollections. It would be useful at this point to review the most significant events of the work in order to sketch at least a basic outline of its structure. Fifty Years is divided into fifteen chapters with subheadings throughout. In Chapters One and Two Smith describes his boyhood days in Fairfield, Kentucky and his earliest memories of slavery--including fishing experiences, snake stories, and

characterizations of slave owners. Chapters Three and Four focus on plantation life and consist primarily of Smith's recollections of hunting and his nostalgic reminiscences about some of "the old colored folks." Chapter Five and half of Chapter Six are almost exclusively portraits of various slaves and masters, while the scene changes half way through Chapter Six to Smith's experiences at a "notorious hous" and a poker room and his descriptions of the Kentucky wilderness. Chapters Seven and Eight are concerned respectively with the state of existence for the slaves before the war and the "announcement of freedom" and "how colored people received it" with "great celebration." Confusingly, the scene returns to pre-Emancipation days in Chapters Nine through Twelve and then shifts to Indianapolis and Osceola County, Michigan respectively in Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen. Thus the chronology wanders, and the reader is never informed how Smith achieved his freedom.

With varying degrees of success, Fifty Years illustrates events, themes, and techniques of documentation that historians have identified in independently authenticated accounts representative of the genre. Clearly, Smith's tales nowhere exhibit the best of what John Bayliss has called "Blues in prose,"<sup>7</sup> and they rarely if ever achieve what Janheinz Jahn describes as "spontaneous excitement, outbursts, oath, cry, or invocation, which might have left its mark on the style and made the accounts into fascinating literary works of an Afro-American folk art."<sup>8</sup> But at the other end of the spectrum, Smith and his narrator avoid a whole assortment of possible abuses which Gilbert Osofsky has characterized as "anti-slavery fiction," tampering through the creation of fictional transitional passages, or the undue excess which in the nineteenth century came to be known as "shame-shame."<sup>9</sup> Reaching neither desirable nor undesirable extremes, the narrator is content to provide--in his own words--"nothing....but the most fatidious [sic] can read and gain instructions from."<sup>10</sup> At the same time as literature of escape and of internalized though hyperbolic celebration of liberation, Smith's narrative reproduces patterns characteristic of the dime novel and other popular fiction.

Foremost among the historical and literary values of any particular slave narrative is the insight it affords into the otherwise inexpressable thoughts of the slave while he was living on the plantation. Repeatedly, Harry recounts tales of his own and his fellows' inner reactions to events that called for more "cooperative" or docile external responses. From his own detailed appraisals of the differing techniques various masters used to control their slaves to the intricate communications networks that enabled slaves to tell stories about their rebellious heroes, Smith takes for granted the sharp distinctions between external manifestations of what was expected or demanded and internal and guarded feelings. Typical also of much popular fiction, Smith revels in otherwise inexpressable mockery of the powerful. When a famous slave-owner finally died after a long illness, Smith records that "few mourned his loss, hundreds rejoiced, and the slaves held a great barbeque celebrating this event" (pp. 109-110).

Consistent with the typical pattern of contrasts between inner thoughts and outer expression, a motif of escape dominates Smith's stories. He notes that when two particularly notorious slave buyers were known to be in an area, many slaves would "run away to the hills and remain often a year before



they returned" (p. 15). In painstaking detail, Harry rehearses his own repeated escapes made possible chiefly because he was "one of the fleetest runners in the whole South" (p. 16). Typical of the genre, too, are Harry's recollections of intricate methods of escape which he had either witnessed or heard of in the stories passed about.

Beyond such simple adventure tales, Osofsky and others have pointed to the role of deception as a "socially useful weapon of survival" so long as the slave's cunning and the intelligence necessary to successfully execute a theme were safely concealed behind appropriate masks (Osofsky, pp. 24 f.f.) Stealing for both survival and the expression of "acceptable" forms of aggression (Smith, p. 11), disguises (p. 48), and even physical violence--as in the account of "Massa Maxwell, who was murdered by his own slaves for unlawful cohabitation with the wife of one of them" (p. 128)--represent Smith's views on what most slave narratives depict as pretense and deception for the purpose of self-defense and sublimated self-assertion. Fifty Years repeatedly documents how "the darkies in many similar instances showed their cunning and shrewdness" (p. 133).

Almost an obsession in Smith's narrative is what Osofsky calls the slave's search for "significant others" in a type of the heroic slave "whose courage others respected, whose overwhelming physical presence coupled with a sense of self-esteem was admired by the other slaves" (p. 38). Smith recalls many such examples from "Armstage Brisee, a powerful man weighing two hundred and twenty-five pounds, whom they had threatened previous to this time, but had never whipped him" (pp. 22-23) to Jim Hayden, "a Guiana negro, who was the most powerful man, either white or black, that ever was known in the state of Kentucky" (p. 135).

One of the foremost uses of the slave narratives as historical documents has been the evidence they provide on the psychology of oppression in the masters. While again uneven, Harry's recollections of the mentality of the oppressor are closer to accounts judged to be authentic than to the character sketches resulting from the tampering of the abolitionists. The long middle section of his narrative is, in fact, primarily a depiction of extreme neurotics in various forms of white-supremist mentalities.

The degree of fantasy or exaggeration present in any narrative often raises suspicion about its authenticity. A minor problem, of course, is the predictable excess that accompanies any moderate embellishment of a good story. Such is common in tales which Osofsky calls "apocryphal in a technical sense"--tales in which a speaker recalls vividly not only what he said and did but also what he had wished to say or do (p. 21). Harry's often lengthy descriptions of whippings as well as his own understandable ego-massaging /there's the widow who offered to "buy him and give him the charge of the plantation if he would marry her," (p. 108)/demonstrate a somewhat tedious but essentially harmless embellishment of believable events.

It is in the area of deliberate excess that Harry Smith's narrator most resembles the dime novel tradition. His description and generalizations are often hyperbolic, and he repeats the pattern though not the substance of

the dime novel's retreat to simplicity, exaggerated heroism, and plain talk. His emphasis on accuracy allows him to proclaim the authenticity of his own account and frees him to express sublimated fears and internal quests in a seemingly unembellished form. The extent to which the narrator of this tale shapes its structure is a subject for another essay. Over-simply stated, Smith's narrator modifies his excess (one might say camouflages it) with his use of (and brazen reminders about) his unembellished style. The narrator looks upon himself as an historian and yet functions as a determining factor whose comments as narrator are--in Wayne C. Booth's terms--"integral to the dramatic structure."<sup>11</sup> The narrator's tales and his style recall the dime novel at the same time in which they preserve what is essential in the slave narrative. This kind of hybridization is not unheard of in the slave narrative tradition. But its emergence in the Midwest of 1891 seems not only predictable but even prototypical of many other such documents awaiting further study.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>"Slave Narrative Turning Midwestern: Deadwood Dick Rides into Difficulties," Mid America I ed. David D. Anderson (East Lansing, Michigan, 1974), pp. 16-35.

<sup>2</sup>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African (London, 1789).

<sup>3</sup>See William W. Nichols' comments on the "illogic" and "scholarly double-think" in historians' dismissing--and at the same time asserting the significance of--evidence attributed to slaves themselves ("Slave Narratives: Dismissed Evidence in the Writing of Southern History," Phylon, 32, 1971, pp. 403-409). I am also much indebted in this essay to Gilbert Osofsky's insights in "The Significance of the Slave Narratives," his Introduction to the collection Puttin On Ole Massa: The Slave Narratives of Henry Bibb, William Wells Brown, and Solomon Northup (New York, 1969).

<sup>4</sup>Janheinz Jahn, Neo-African Literature: A History of Black Writing (trans. Oliver Coburn and Ursula Lehrburger; New York, 1958), p. 162.

<sup>5</sup>Fifty Years in Slavery in the United States of America (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1891). Copies of the original edition as well as a facsimile reprint are available at the Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

<sup>6</sup>"The Slave Narrative: An American Genre," Introduction to Great Slave Narratives, ed. Arna Bontemps (Boston, 1969), vii.

<sup>7</sup>John F. Bayliss, ed. Black Slave Narratives (New York, 1970), p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Jahn, p. 126.

<sup>9</sup>Osofsky, pp. 13-14.

<sup>10</sup>Smith, p. 5. No page number appears in the text.

<sup>11</sup>Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago, 1961), p. 155. Booth further notes that while the author's judgment must exert an influence (in the case of Smith's narrative, the judgment of the ghost writer), "whether its particular forms are harmful or serviceable is always a complex question, a question that cannot be settled by any easy reference to abstract rules" (p. 28).

SHERWOOD ANDERSON/A STORY TELLER'S TOWN:

THE FILMING OF A DOCUMENTARY

Gene H. Dent

The idea for a video-tape documentary about Clyde-Winesburg, Ohio took root four years ago when two of my students visited the community. At the next class meeting, they presented me with a packet of Clyde memorabilia: 1 chamber of commerce brochure, 1 copy of the Clyde newspaper, a dog-eared telephone book, a postcard of the Red Arrow Cafe, directions to Waterworks Pond, and finally a postcard of the Star-Lite Motel. I suspect that their search for adventure encompassed a bit more than literary discovery.

Most of the students at Lakeland Community College come from bedroom suburban communities. Those of us who have used Winesburg have all encountered a similar problem. We find that our students really do not comprehend what the small town is all about. I am sure that my colleagues in sociology can explain this away with a vast array of statistical data and demographic charts. But our problem still remains. How do you make students see that the American small town was or is unique, that it is an entity in its own right?

The idea for the film germinated for several years before we decided to take some direct action. We considered many approaches to the problem. We knew, for instance, what we did not want the film to become. We did not want to produce a mere travelogue, a cataloging of physical places and things. We did not want to make a critical judgment of the work itself. We did not wish to produce a biography of Anderson's life during his ten or twelve years in Clyde. And we did not wish to produce another one of those nostalgic mish-mashes so prevalent in film today.

We had several purposes in mind for the project. We wanted our students to see, and hopefully, feel the impact of a small town. We wanted them to view Anderson's characters, not as mere grotesques, but as human beings, who, although living in a period of time removed from ours, nevertheless had the universal problems of men everywhere. Obviously, these are nearly impossible goals to achieve. We had more practical considerations to worry about, too. Video-tape is a difficult medium. There must be movement as well as narration, space as well as conciseness. We began to mine the novel for references to the town. We came up with a list of approximately 65 possibilities for filming. Main Street, Lower Main Street, Duane Street, Buckeye Street, The Heffner Block, Sinning's Hardware store, the carriage painter's shop, Abner Grof's bakery--the list goes on and on. All of these places, if they existed other than in the mind of Anderson, offered possible location sites.

We made contact with Mr. Thaddeus Hurd, president emeritus of the Sandusky County Historical Society, and a Clyde resident, and arranged for a quick one day visit in July 1973. We discovered more than we had hoped for. We started with a tour of the cemetery. Clyde, like most small towns, is proud of its military heroes. Clyde has three Congressional Medal of Honor winners buried

there--General James B. McPherson and Captain Charles McCleary from the Civil War, and Roger Young from World War II. Those of you who are old enough probably recall the popular ballad they wrote about him at the time of his death. The body of the first enlisted man killed in the Spanish-American War lies in Clyde. And back in the older part of the cemetery, we found the simple headstone of Emma Anderson.

Other famous people have come from Clyde, too--a well-known political cartoonist, a millionaire oil baron of the early Standard Oil days, and an early pioneer of auto manufacturing. In reality Clyde has had more than its fair share of famous people.

As we moved about the town we were struck by one irony. Other than a brief paragraph in the Chamber of Commerce tourist brochure, there is no public acknowledgement that Sherwood Anderson ever lived there. Except for a few people, such as Mr. Hurd, it seemed to us at least, that the citizens of Clyde had completely forgotten the man who gave their community a grip on immortality.

We were amazed at the accuracy of Anderson's descriptions of buildings and locations. Without a great deal of detective work we were able to locate Banker White's house on Buckeye Street. Except for aluminum storm doors, the house is virtually as Anderson described it. Abner Grof's bakery on Main Street is still a bakery today. The Rev. Curtis Hartman's office in the steeple exists today in the Presbyterian Church. And remove one small house which was built after Winesburg was published and you can still peek into Kate Swift's bedroom from the steeple. Incidentally, the current pastor of the Presbyterian Church is the Reverend Miracle--there's food for thought for you. Traces of the Fairgrounds' race track, so vividly described in "Sophistication", are still visible, and we located one of the original stables from Anderson's day.

Waterworks Pond appears to be almost untouched, although the surrounding area has been developed into a community park. Homes now sit atop Gospel Hill or Piety Hill, as it is known in Clyde. And Sucker Run is still called that by a few old-timers. We traced Seth Richmond's house and found that it matches a home in Bellvue, a community eight miles to the east of Clyde. The carriage painter's shop and the harness maker's shop still survive, dilapidated and unpainted since the turn-of-the-century.

While much remains, more has disappeared from the scene. This was to be expected. Clyde at one time boasted three hotels--none survives. With Mr. Hurd's help we have pretty well determined which hotel Anderson had in mind when he created the New Willard House. From its former location you can look down Main Street, as Elizabeth Willard did on many an evening, or you can look down the alley behind the stores on Main Street, where Abner Grof did battle with Sylvester West's cat. The beautiful, old Victorian railroad station disappeared about 15 years ago. Yet the glazed, sculptured brick walk exists. We have secured the use of several hundred historical photographs which will be intercut to show those places now gone. We are now in the process of selecting these shots.

One of the most startling discoveries was that of the opera house that probably played so much a part of Elizabeth Willard's girlhood dreams. We found it on the third floor of a Main Street commercial building--directly above Cindy's Dress Shop. It is in deplorable condition now. The ceiling plaster is falling in, its wallpaper--original wallpaper we are told--is peeling off the walls. The stage boards are rotting away, and the ornate baroque design of the proscenium arch is chipped and faded. The opera house could seat 450 and had dressing rooms for the traveling companies. The gas fixtures are still in place and some good soul has carefully and tenderly wrapped the fragile glass globes in newspapers and stored them away. One of the major sequences of the documentary is filmed in this shambles of a bygone era.

We returned to campus with enough ideas to fill several hours of videotape. We knew that we wanted to hold the time to roughly 50 minutes so that the film could be shown during an average class hour. We struggled for quite some time trying to determine the best approach for narrating the story. Finally, we decided to let Anderson's own words, interspersed with our own narrative comments, tell the story of the small town. As a consequence, we dug into his other works for quotations which probed the myriad facets of the mid-American town. In this way we produced a shooting script which is approximately 40 per-cent direct quotations from Anderson's writings: Winesburg, Hello Town, A Story Teller's Story, Memoirs, Notebook, Tar, etc. In the production Mr. Anderson's words are heard off-camera, while our narrator is seen on screen as he moves about the modern day town of Clyde.

By the time we had finished the script we had run out of time for filming. We were all back in classes, and we simply could not release the mobile, video-truck for the 8 to 10 days we felt we needed to film the project. We spent last fall, winter and spring, refining the script and working out the technical and logistical problems inherent to on-location filming. In March, we visited Mrs. Sherwood Anderson in Marion, Virginia for approval to use Mr. Anderson's quotations. She expressed pleasure with the script and referred us to her agent. Since that time, we learned that a third party had obtained some years ago, all the television, drama and film rights to Winesburg. We are currently negotiating with this individual.

At this point we felt that things were moving along smoothly and briskly. But unforeseen problems cropped up. Believe me they cropped up.

ITEM: We searched for months for a run-down county fair grandstand for use in the Fairgrounds' sequence. We found one in Williams County last December. It burned down last April.

ITEM: Early this summer we discovered that the Clyde Fairgrounds was up for sale for subdivision tract houses.

ITEM: On a visit to Clyde we found Waterworks Pond bone dry and banked by a 12-foot mound of earth. It would not be filled until October--too late for filming this year. Even the wild ducks had abandoned the place.

ITEM: We discovered that Hern's grocery had a new, modern store front. We'll move on down the street for that bit of film.

ITEM: A college budget crunch necessitated postponing the completion of filming until next summer. This was the most crushing disappointment so far because we came within field expense money of finishing the project.

To date we have filmed two of the most vital sequences--those of the fairgrounds and the opera house. We elected to do the opera house now because we were simply afraid the roof will cave in during the first heavy winter snow or that the place will go up in smoke at any time.

Someone has said that to film a documentary of this nature, you must either be dedicated or mad. We are desperately trying to convince ourselves that we are dedicated. But there are moments of doubt.

## LITERATURE AND LORE OF THE UPPER PENINSULA

(An edited version of a talk given  
to the annual meeting of the SSML  
East Lansing, Michigan ~ 1974

Clarence Andrews

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan is a vast body of 10,000,000 acres of land and water, connected to the lower peninsula only by a bridge. Although its area is approximately one-third of that of the lower peninsula, its population is only about one-thirtieth of that of the state. There is some agriculture, but the impression that an air traveler receives is of a vast expanse of forests, lakes, ponds and streams.

The key word for the UP is exploitation. From the days of the couriers du bois who set out from Michilimackinac in their batteaux for furs, on through the nineteenth century razing of the pine forests and the mining of copper and iron, to the late twentieth emphasis on tourism, fishing and hunting, men have come into the UP to exploit the land. Its people have been exploited too by the fur, lumber, iron and copper barons who got here first or who wrested control of the resources from others.

Among those people who came here, drawn by the beauty of the land and water or by the expectation of wealth have been French, Germans, Swedes, Finnish, Croatians, Slovenians, Italians and Cornish. The first comers and many of the later-comers found Indians--Chippewa and Ojibway, woods Indians and peaceful. Except for the struggles around Mackinac, not much of the UP lore is concerned with Indians in the way that the lore of the pioneer Americans is.

Each of these ethnic groups brought with them certain of the lore of their origins. The Cornish, for instance, mined copper and iron as they had mined lead and tin in Cornwall, and the language of mining in the UP reflected their practices--"stoping," for example. The Cornish also brought with them the pasty--a crust-enclosed hash of meat and vegetables which could be warmed deep in the mines by placing it on a shovel and holding the shovel over a candle. (Today, the pasty has acquired a Finnish quality; but in one UP cafe with a Finnish name, it is cooked either by an Arab or a Jew!). In Ahmeek, in Keweenaw County, one can find Saffron buns and Current cookies, Sour Cabbage Rolls, Povatica, Nisua, Rieska, Juusto, Kuglof, Spaghetti, Goulash, Irish Mulligan, and the like.

When Richard Dorson wrote his Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers, he based much of it on evidence found among the Indians and immigrant peoples of the UP. The shanty boys lore, as reflected in tales and songs, has been collected and published by Franz Rickaby. John B. Martin's Call It North Country collects UP lore: the notorious "stockades," the legends about the Ontanagon copper boulder, the legendary men and women who were drawn to the UP.



Longfellow drew his Hiawatha from the Algic Researches of Schoolcraft. And whether or not Paul Bunyan got his start in Bemidji, he is certainly a part of the lore of the UP. Today, the tourism people try to create new legends of the "mighty Paul" to persuade tourists to come to the land. Finally, there is the lore of the lakes adjoining the UP--the tales of ships and shipping, of shipwrecks and storms, of ghost ships, of "Indian drums," and the like.

Arnold Mulder, in a Saturday Review essay in 1938, complained that the state of Michigan had not produced many or great writers. Certainly, there is statistical evidence for this--if the output of Michigan writer's is set alongside that of Iowa, a much smaller state, for example - and perhaps, in the UP at least, it is due to the fact that many of the people who came there, came to seek easy wealth or materialistic security.

Yet people, both within and without the UP, have written about it. Perhaps the best known of these is John Voelker, a Marquette attorney and judge who, sometimes under his own name, sometimes under the pen name of Robert Traver, has written about his two interests, jurisprudence and trout fishing. His best known fiction is Anatomy of a Murder. It and Laughing Whitefish, a novel about an Indian woman, are set in the Marquette, Munising area.

The earliest people to write about the UP were the Jesuits who traveled through the area in the mid-seventeenth century. The writings of these and other early travelers and historians is described in Dorothy Dondridge's The Prairie and the Making of Middle America and the University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library (1923). Many of the volumes described in these two books are in the William L. Clements Library on the Ann Arbor campus of the University of Michigan.

The area which has received the greatest attention from writers of fiction is the Mackinac Island area. The best known writer of the nineteenth century to write about Michigan, Constance Fenimore Woolson (Dunbar calls her "Woolman"), wrote Anne, a Tale of Mackinac, using this setting. Other novels using the area for all or part of their setting are Kenneth Roberts' Northwest Passage, Iola Fuller's Loon FaFeather, and Julia Altrocchi's Wolves Against the Moon.

Iron and copper mining have been the backdrops for such novels as Copper Princess (1898, a discovery by one of my UP Literature and Lore students), The Trouble in Thor, Boom Copper, The Long Winter Ends, White Wind, Where Copper Was King, and In the Sight of God. The Indians have been treated imaginatively in Joe Pete, Redcloud of the Lakes, Laughing Whitefish and other novels. Lumbering has been used in Fire on the Wind, Blazed Trail, and other books. Ethnic groups have been used in The Long Winter Ends, Latchstring Out, White Wind, Firewood, and Godhead. Mary Frances Doner, Harold Titus and William Ratigan have written novels about the Great Lakes, as well as other aspects of UP and lower peninsula life.

The treatment of the UP extends also to many other books and even booklets.

Walter Havighurst, James Knox Jamison, the Averys of Au Train, Lewis C. Reimannm, William D. Hulbert and Alvah L. Sawyer are among these. A complete bibliography of the UP is not possible in this short paper. Presently my bibliography of the UP extends to about twenty pages--I'll send a copy to anyone interested.

There is also a great deal of archival material. The library of Michigan Technological Library has a vast amount of material on Isle Royale, collected by a man who wanted to write a book on the subject but who never succeeded. There is a great deal of material in the John Longyear Library at Marquette, and the Suomi College Library has a great deal of Finnish material. Presently oral history collections are underway at both Suomi (Arthur Puotinen) and MTU (Robert Patterson, David Thomas).

Michigan's Upper Peninsula still offers great and virtually unexploited resources for the novelist, the historian, the filmmaker and the folklorist. The novelist will find more than he can cope with in copper and iron mining, subjects relatively untouched by good fiction writers. The historian will find areas where definitive studies have not been made. The filmmaker will find subjects for both documentary and imaginative treatments--in many places the UP is still like it was seventy years ago. No one has yet made full use of the boom lumber towns, especially Hurley (Wisconsin) and Seney. And what about Henry Ford, and the ruins of his attempts to create an autonomous industrial empire all over the UP?

Horace Greeley once lived here and tried to exploit the copper resources. His advice "Go West, Young Man," could have been equally well stated as "Go North, Young Writer."

## HOUGH AND KOERNER: VERSIONS OF THE OLD WEST

Dorys C. Grover

The paths of Emerson Hough (1857-1923), and William Henry David Koerner (1878-1938), first crossed in Chicago in 1897. Koerner was then nineteen and beginning an apprenticeship on the Chicago Tribune, as a staff artist.<sup>1</sup> Hough was forty and the editor of a sports magazine, Forest and Stream, published in Chicago. This paper will briefly survey the fiction of Emerson Hough which W. H. D. Koerner illustrated to determine the view of the West held by each.

When Hough and Koerner met in 1897, Hough had just published his first work on the West, The Story of the Cowboy. The book was illustrated by Montana artist, Charles M. Russell and the head of the art staff of the Chicago Tribune, William N. Wells. The illustrations are romantic. Russell's paintings always tell a story and his cowboys are a pretty wild bunch. Hough's prose about the cowboy, however, is serious. He points out the difference between the Southwestern and the Northwestern cowboy.

Both Hough and Koerner had a long tradition to draw upon in defining their own West. They were both acquainted with the works of Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper, James Kirke Paulding, Francis Parkman, Theodore Roosevelt; and after the Civil War, the humorous west of Mark Twain and Bret Harte. They also knew the histories of George Bancroft and the travel narratives and journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, Stephen H. Long, and John Wesley Powell. Koerner in particular had studied the work of George Catlin (1796-1872), who had made paintings of Indian life and landscapes of the Far West, especially in the region of the Yellowstone River.

Most of the travelers of the West defined it in their own terms so that there were almost as many versions of the Old West as there were writers about it. Artists too were interpreting the West in various ways. There was the romantic western painter, the western surrealist, the landscape artist, the portrait artist, and the "action" artist. By "action" artist, I mean painters such as Russell, Frederic Remington (1861-1909), and Koerner. These artists were also sculptors and they chose for their different media the subjects of soldiers, Indians, cowboys, wagon trains, bucking broncs, maverick cows, buffalo herds, and wild animals--even rattlesnakes--and many of the subjects were frequently in lively action. In addition to being popular magazine illustrators, the artists authored books displaying the same temper as their graphic art. In general, their west was romantic; yet, there is a realism about their work. For instance, Koerner's bucking horses look real. His oxen teams and prairie schooners almost speak of adventure. One remarkable painting is of a prairie storm. It is magnificent in the way the enormous, black clouds sweep into the sky above the light of the horizon, while below, on the wide and vast plain, the small white-topped wagons appear fragile and motionless in the huge light and dark of the land. It is a picture that remains in one's memory, not so much for its beauty as for the threat it poses to that small group of travelers. Yet, there is

romance in the painting, perhaps because in the American mind the most lingering versions of the Old West are the romantic. In this sense then, the versions of the Old West of Hough and Koerner are more similar than dissimilar. One should remember, however, that Koerner was trying to please Hough by providing illustrations that best fit Hough's fiction. Hough wrote popular romantic historical fiction on the level with Eugene Manlove Rhodes, Owen Wister, Zane Grey and others; and, the novels of these writers were illustrated by artists such as Koerner, N. C. Wyeth (1882-1945), Russell, and Remington. The fiction market for the historical western, which Owen Wister had made respectable with The Virginian (1902), began to expand into serials in the mass circulation magazines.

One of these was the popular The Saturday Evening Post edited by George Horace Lorimer. Lorimer persuaded Hough in 1920 to take a series of articles Hough had written in 1919 under the heading, "Traveling the Old Trails," and turn them into a full-length novel for serialization. Koerner had provided illustrations for the series, and Koerner's daughter writes that,

My father's tremendous feeling for the West began in 1919 while he was working on Emerson Hough's Traveling the Old Trails, stories. There were other authors writing about the opening of the great West and W. H. D. K. wanted to understand and paint those years of development of our nation.<sup>2</sup>

In order to ascertain the authenticity of his western scenes, Koerner, who lived in New Jersey, spent many summers in Montana in the land of the Crow Indians. Some time was also spent in the Southwest and in various parts of the Far West, for he was called upon to illustrate stories set in many parts of the nation. In fact, Koerner became one of America's best-known magazine and book illustrators of the 1920's and 1930's.

Hough did rewrite "Traveling the Old Trails," which actually became two novels, The Covered Wagon (1922) and North of 36 (1923). In 1922, Koerner received the assignment to illustrate Hough's The Covered Wagon, and it was one of the longest serials the Post had ever carried. Twenty-four of Koerner's paintings reproduced in black and white appeared with the story. Hough was pleased with the illustrations, and in particular with the Post cover painting of Mollie Wingate, the heroine. He wrote Post artist Arthur McKeogh that,

I don't know when an illustration has hit me in the face the way that one has. Tell Koerner that this is the first time in my career an artist has really pleased me with his work.<sup>3</sup>

The painting of Molly Wingate on the wagon seat is romantic. Hough had been intrigued with the figure of the woman on the driver's seat of the prairie schooner from the time he was a boy living in Newton, Iowa, and had watched

the constant stream of wagons passing through the little town on their way to Oregon. He later expressed his thoughts,

The chief figure of the American West, the figure of the ages, is not the long-haired, fringed-legging man riding a raw-boned pony, but the gaunt and sad-faced woman sitting on the front seat of the wagon, . . . . her face hidden in the same ragged sunbonnet which had crossed the Appalachians and the Missouri long before. There was America, . . . . There was the great romance of all America--the woman in the sunbonnet; and not, after all, the hero with the rifle across his saddle horn.<sup>4</sup>

But, Molly Wingate does not wear a sunbonnet, nor is she a gaunt, sad-faced woman. She is a winsome girl; an eighteen-year-old schoolmistress whom Hough describes as,

A lovely lass... blue of eye and of abundant red-brown hair of that tint which ever has turned the eyes and heads of men...

Above the middle height of woman's stature, she had none of the lank irregularity of the typical frontier woman of the early ague lands; but was round and well developed.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, Molly was the ideal woman of the time. She was also the cause of a great deal of trouble for the wagon train before it finally reached its destination, and the love story between Molly Wingate and Will Banion holds the novel together.

Koerner had put much work into his illustrations for Hough's novel and his paintings followed almost exactly the story lines in the fiction. For example, there is a scene in The Covered Wagon where the wagon train, moving across the vast prairie, is attacked by Sioux Indians. Koerner's drawing depicts the story line: "The War Chief led his warriors in a circle once more, chanting his own song to the continuous chorus of savage ululations."<sup>6</sup> Later, many motion picture scripts incorporated this into: "Circle the wagons, the Indians are coming!" Koerner is careful of every detail of his cowboy figures, his pioneers and his Indians. His Sioux chief, arrayed in war-paint, is correct to the very feathers of his war-bonnet. The buffalo herds, the rustlers, and the trappers are all realistic in form; yet, all have an air of romance.

The other novel formed from "Traveling the Old Trails" was North of 36. It ran in the Post in 1923, after Hough's death. But, while Hough was working on the novel he wrote Koerner that the book was to be of a trail drive of cattle from San Antonio to Abilene, Kansas. He wrote Koerner that,

I think there is a great field for you in the sincere and actual and faithful depiction of the real West,...

... I hope to send you down a very precious old book of mine printed in 1874, "Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade," by Joseph G. McCoy. In these very crude wood cuts you will find material to work up some really great paintings, showing how they forded a river, handled a stampede, etc.... By reading some of the curious old pages you will get the feel of the industry at that day--...<sup>7</sup>

North of 36 was not as popular as The Covered Wagon. It was criticized for its lack of credibility in the fictional story, but praised for the historical background of the long cattle drive. Historian Walter Prescott Webb complained that Hough's novel "carried too much excess baggage in the way of a fair damsel, a Negro mammy, a band of lovesick cowboys, and a convenient Texas Ranger," but Webb found Hough superior to Owen Wister in popular estimation and in fidelity to reality about the cattle country.<sup>8</sup> Koerner provided twenty-four illustrations for the book.

Both The Covered Wagon and North of 36 were filmed. The Covered Wagon was considered a classic for a time, mainly because of the unusual representation of the Old West, the panoramic landscape, and the use of space which gave the film its epic quality. Lillian M. Lusk Koerner writes about Hough and her husband previewing the movie and how both were concerned about the truthfulness of the film. One of the major things the two men objected to in the film was the whiteness of the wagon tops. They should have been gray with dust.<sup>9</sup> Such things as this caused Hough to express disgust with the grotesque, motion picture West, but most of the people who saw the movie had little knowledge of such details.

The literary judgment of the nation is largely made in the East, and since people in the East have little real knowledge about the West, it is no wonder that there are so many versions of the West. Generally, the Eastern view has been fanciful, and the term "Wild West" is one that makes most westerners smile... and probably some Midwesterners! Hough had done some good things in his western writing. He had pointed out the difference between the Southwestern and the Northwestern cowboy. He saw the cowboy and the cattlemen as heroes. So did Andy Adams, Owen Wister, Zane Grey and Walter Van Tilburg Clark. In the course of time, a myth formed around the men and women of the West so that as heroic people they also became romantic. It was not difficult for the factory worker in Lowell, Massachusetts, or in London, to identify with the tall, handsome hero riding a beautiful stallion along a mountain trail where the pungent odor of the pines filled the clear air, and pure water gushed in swift-flowing streams only heroes and stallions could swim. It was easy to imagine a rendezvous with a girl of the golden west on the trail of the lonesome pine. It was the very slight and old formula of the Greeks rewritten in western form.

Emerson Hough capitalized on this formula, and he invited W. H. D. Koerner to join him in the venture. Together, their work provided readers with a romantic view of the West. To give Hough and Koerner both credit, however, one should bear in mind that both did rely upon the actual work of historians and travelers, and their own first-hand knowledge. Hough preferred to write about the Old West, and he says the cattle frontier was the greatest of all the American frontiers. Yet, he does not make the cattle frontier as grim as it really was for the people of that time. Koerner too had a tendency to romanticize his subjects. His cowboys are a rugged and individualistic bunch of men; his Cabelleros are mysterious and threatening; his Indians are stealthy and warlike; and his pioneers are worn and tired, but enduring. Best of all are the animals, and his depiction of horses is better than that of Remington and almost as good as Russell.

If Hough and Koerner led people to see the Old West in a romantic light, they also tried to tell the truth about the land and how some Americans exploited the Indians, the game, and the natural resources. Hough's stories were read and Koerner's paintings were viewed by millions of readers of the Post. A like number also saw the motion pictures. It is quite probable that both writer and artist perpetuated the romantic view of the Old West held in the American mind.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>W. H. Hutchinson, "Packaging the Old West in Serial Form," Westways Los Angeles, Feb., 1973, 20. Emerson Hough's The Story of the Cowboy was illustrated by Charles M. Russell, who received ten dollars each for three paintings; and by William N. Wells who in 1897 was head of the art staff of the Chicago Tribune. Hereafter reference to Hutchinson's work will be to Westways with pagination.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth Koerner Oliver, "My Father--The Artist," W. H. D. Koerner: Illustrator of the West, Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, 1968, p. 8. Koerner was paid \$825. for eleven paintings for the series, "Traveling the Old Trails."

<sup>3</sup>W. H. D. Koerner collection. Letter from Hough, Chicago, to McKeogh, Post artist, Feb. 4, 1922.

<sup>4</sup>Emerson Hough, The Passing of the Frontier: A Chronicle of the Old West (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1819), pp. 93-94.

<sup>5</sup>Hough, The Covered Wagon (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), pp. 8-9. The book was first published in 1922 by D. Appleton and Co.

<sup>6</sup>W. H. D. Koerner collection. See The Covered Wagon, p. 106.

<sup>7</sup>W. H. D. Koerner collection. Hough, Denver, Colorado, to Koerner, September 25, 1922. Koerner received \$3,000 for illustrations for North of 36. The novel appeared in eight installments of the Post during April and May, 1923.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1931), p. 463.

<sup>9</sup> W. H. D. Koerner collection. Deems Taylor in his A Pictorial History of the Movies (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1943), pp. 144-145, says The Covered Wagon was filmed at Snake Valley, Nevada. Antelope Island In Northwest Utah is contiguous to Snake Valley, Nevada.