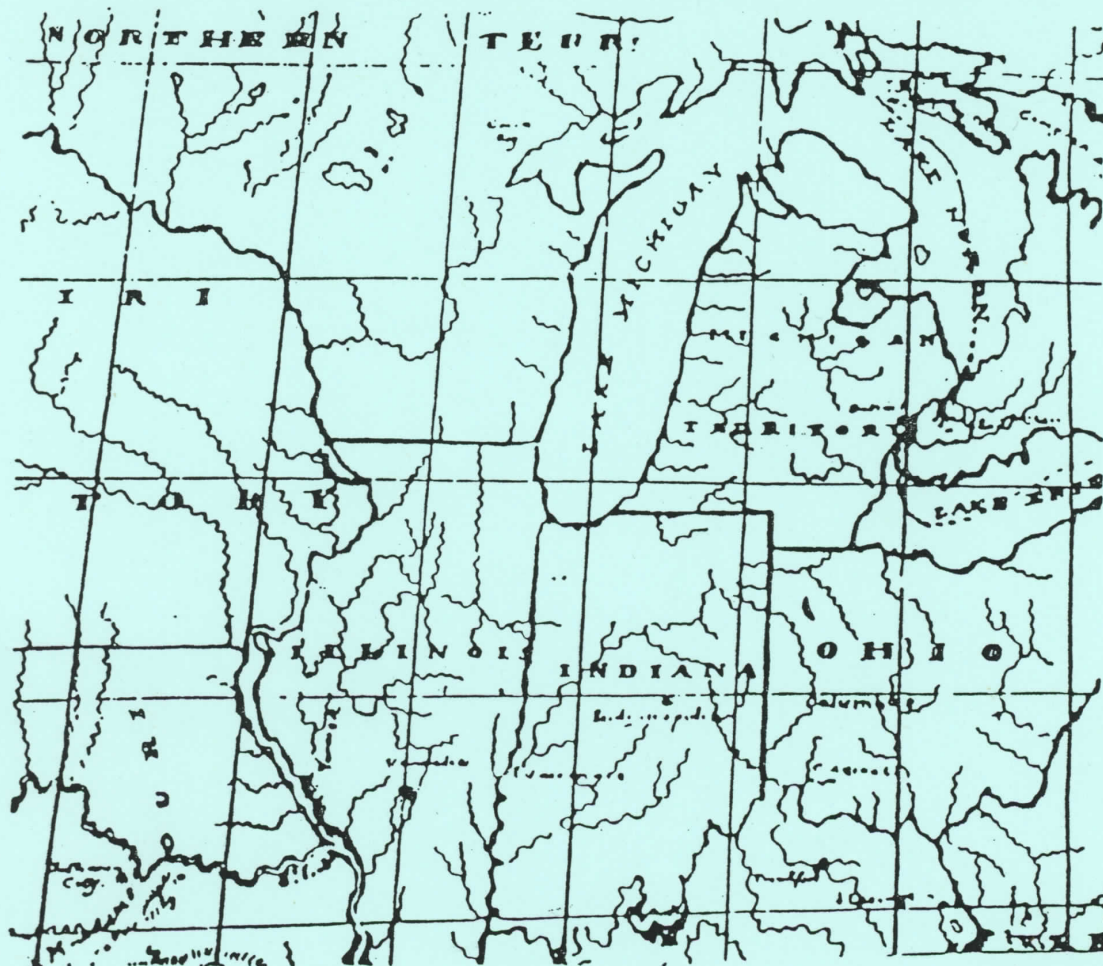


SML *Newsletter*



The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

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Midwestern Literature and Culture

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Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

Newsletter

Volume Twenty-Five
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The Twenty-Fifth Annual Conference

The twenty-fifth annual conference of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, the symposium "The Cultural Heritage of the Midwest" and the concurrent Midwest Poetry Festival, was held at the Marriott Hotel, East Lansing, Michigan,, on May 11-13, 1995. About 100 members participated by presenting papers, giving readings, chairing panels, and participating in the annual business meeting and the editorial board meeting of the Dictionary of Midwestern Literature project.

Featured at the Awards Dinner on Friday evening, May 10, was the presentation of three awards, the MidAmerica Award for distinguished contributions to the study of Midwestern Literature to Douglas Wixson, the Mark Twain Award for distinguished contributions to Midwestern Literature to William Maxwell, and the Distinguished Service Award to Roger Bresnahan.

Also announced at the dinner were the new officers for 1994-95.

Ronald Grosh, President
Jean Strandness, Vice President and President-Elect
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Mary Jo Miller, Executive Council

At the annual convivium, held at the home of Roger and Mary Bresnahan on Saturday afternoon, May 13, announcement was made of the winners of the conference awards founded by Gwendolyn Brooks. Winners were:

Midwest Poetry Award

Winner: Mary Ann Samyn for "Midnight in the Kitchen"
Honorable Mention: Margo LaGattuta for "Finding Jon"
Honorable Mention: F. Richard Thomas for "Wisdom"
Honorable Mention: Will Clemens for "Aligator Shoes"

Midwest Fiction Award

Co-Winners: Robert Narveson for "The Second Anchor"
Sam Longmire for "Mad Ravene"

Midwest Heritage Essay Award

Winner: Guy Szaberla for "George Ade at the 'Alfalpa European Hotel'"
Honorable Mention: Thomas Pribek for "The Voyager of Radisson
According to Lily Long"
Honorable Mention: James A. Lewin for "The Insight of the Outcast:
Nelson Algren and the '60s"

The next conference will be held at the East Lansing Marriott on May 23-25, 1996. Mary DeJohn Obuchowski will be in charge of the program and Roger and Dave Anderson will be in charge of local arrangements.

David D. Anderson

The MidAmerica Award for 1995

As rich as is the literary output of the Midwest in fiction, poetry and drama, the tradition established by those who teach us to understand and know that tradition is equally rich, and in 1977 the Society brought the MidAmerica Award into being as a means of honoring those who have enhanced our understanding of the literature of our region. The first recipient was John Flanagan of the University of Illinois, whose work taught us that there is a Midwestern literature; he was followed by Russel Nye, Walter Havighurst, and Harlan Hatcher, who were responsible for defining the parameters of the region as well as its writing; in more recent years, Bernard Duffey, Walter Rideout, Clarence Andrews, Kenny Williams, and others have been honored for giving us clear insights into the literature of the region.

There have been, over the years, a wide variety of major studies of that literature written by recipients of the MidAmerica Award, studies that have not only enhanced our understanding of that literature and the people who made it, and they deserve every bit of the recognition they've received. But only about once a decade or perhaps even once in a generation a truly major study appears that opens up a vast new area of critical and scholarly appraisal and points out the direction that much future study must take.

Tonight we're honoring the author of a major original study that ranks with Bernard Duffey's The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters as one of the scholarly milestones in Midwestern literary history. Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Missouri, Rolla Editor and/or author of dozens of books, articles, and essays, primarily on his subject, dedicated caretaker of a literary reputation, his Worker-Writer in America: Jack Conroy and the Tradition of Midwestern Literary Radicalism, 1898-1990 is the finest literary study of the generation. I'm pleased to present the MidAmerica Award for 1995 to Douglas Wixson.

David D. Anderson

The Mark Twain Award for 1995

If we've learned nothing else in the past twenty-five years of the Society's existence, we certainly have learned that the Midwest has produced a distinguished array of writers, those who have created the literature that we study and celebrate. In the years since 1980 the Society has honored one of those writers, a living writer, each year, a total of fifteen, not only for his or her distinguished contributions to the literature of the Midwest but at the time as surrogate for all those we've been unable to honor. The list is impressive, ranging from Jack Conroy, Wright Morris, Frederick Manfred and Harriette Arnow through Gwendolyn Brooks and John Knoepfle to Jim Harrison, Ray Bradbury, Mona Van Duyn, and William Gass, an array of writers who in microcosm represent the breadth and depth and richness of Midwestern writing.

Tonight we are honoring a writer who, in the truest sense, epitomizes the best in that literary tradition. Appropriately he was born in Lincoln, Illinois, in 1908, and in 1934, sixty-nine years ago, he published his first novel, The Bright Center of Heaven. That was followed by They Came Like Swallows (1937), The Folded Leaf (1945), and seven other novels, the last, The Outermost Dream, in 1989. Early this Spring, he published his fifth collection of stories, All the Days and Nights.

Our honoree is, of course, William Maxwell, whose sixty years of residency in New York and forty-year tenure as fiction editor at The New Yorker enhanced the clarity of his memories of Lincoln, Illinois, as his literary place, that which, he said, contributed "three-quarters of the material I would need for the rest of my writing life."

Mr. Maxwell has had health problems recently, and he is unable to be here, but he writes:

1/25/1995

Dear Professor Anderson:

I can't tell you how gratifying your letter was. If I am not the child of Mark Twain, I don't know whose child I am. Certainly not Hemingway's or Henry James's. During a recent spell in the hospital I reread "Life on the Mississippi", conscious as I turned the pages of how original the style he was forging in this book was, and how indebted most American writers are to him for superimposing so precisely a written language on the vernacular, so that the writer's voice comes through.

I should have greatly enjoyed being at the awards dinner but I have had to give up traveling. My absence will make, possibly, a hole in what will be a very pleasant occasion, and for this I offer my apologies and with them my sincere thanks for the honor the Society for the Student of Midwestern Literature has bestowed on me.

Yours,

William Maxwell

I'm very pleased that the Mark Twain Award for 1995 goes to William Maxwell.

David D. Anderson

The Distinguished Service Award

Normally we present two awards, the Mark Twain Award and the MidAmerica Award, at this annual awards dinner, but for some strange reason—perhaps cheaper by the quarter dozen—I seem to have a plague left over. I wonder what it can be. There seems to be a name on it—I wish I had new glasses—yet it is— the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature presents the Distinguished Service Award to Roger Bresnahan for years of unselfish and outstanding service to the Society, its causes, and its membership.

Two Writers' Conceptions of Realism [1]

Ethan Lewis

Though unlikely, it does not strain plausibility to suppose, on that very day Sherwood Anderson sketched his Winesburg cornfield, Willa Cather to have written the following:

Last summer, in a season of intense heat, Jim Burden and I happened to be crossing Iowa on the same train. He and I are old friends, we grew up together in the same Nebraska town, and we had a great deal to say to each other. While the train flashed through neverending miles of ripe wheat, by country towns and bright-flowered pastures and oak groves wilting in the sun, we sat in the observation car, where the woodwork was hot to the touch and red dust lay over everything. The dust and heat, the burning wind, reminded us of many things. We were talking about what it is like to spend one's childhood in little towns like these, buried in wheat and corn, under stimulating extremes of climate: burning summers when the world lies green and billowy beneath a brilliant sky, when one is fairly stifled in vegetation, in the color and smell of strong weeds and heavy harvests; blustery winters with little snow, when the whole country is stripped bare and gray as sheet-iron. We agreed that no one who had not grown up in a little prairie town could know anything about it. It was a kind of freemasonry, we said.[2]

Of course (discounting season), they could just as well have looked at the same field--their different depiction's deriving not from the scene but from their respective minds' eyes. Cather exploits more concrete images, and more of them, than does Anderson. Her remarkable, almost ever-present tactile sensitivity (cf. "billowy") lends a dimension which *Winesburg*, for all its laying on of "Hands" (to which that first story typically implies), virtually lacks. But Anderson writes according to a hierarchy of values; he subordinates nature to emotion. Cather, pledged to a more egalitarian aesthetic, codes emotion in nature.

Evaluative terms ("alive," "beauty," "quiet," "failing") bear the burden of representation in "The Untold Lie" (the most visual *Winesburg* tale).

He was a sad, distracted mood and was affected by the beauty of the country.

There they stood in the big empty fields with the quiet corn shocks standing in rows behind them. . .

Every time he raised his eyes and saw the beauty of the country in the failing light he wanted to do something he had never done before. . .

...the little clusters of bushes in the corners by the fences were alive with beauty. The whole world seemed to Ray Pearson to have become alive. . .[3]

In Cather's prose, overt evaluation fortifies an image already implicitly evaluative--either in itself ("stimulating extremes of climate"), or in context ("when the world lies green and billowy beneath a *brilliant* sky). "[F]aint starlight" simply builds upon the feeling in here scene:

There seemed to be nothing to see; no fences, no creeks or trees, no hills or fields. If there was a road, I could not make it out in the faint starlight. There was nothing but land: not a country at all, but the material out of which countries are made.

Had Anderson chosen "faint" rather than the stronger (i.e., semantically *weaker*) "failing" to describe the light gilding "the beauty of the country," the opinion packed into the single word would still have accounted for the feeling. Absent assistance from verbal *and* natural surroundings, the image functions less to imply a value in the presentation than impose one through impression.

The authors' use of metaphor compares similarly. "[W]ashed" and the colors mentioned in *My Antonia* are *related* to the natural scene:

This slope was trampled hard and bare, and washed out in winding gullies by the rain. Beyond the corncribs, at the bottom of the shallow draw, was a muddy little pond with rusty willow bushes growing about it.[4]

In "The Untold Lie," nature must accommodate the painterly metaphor:

If you knew the Winesburg country in the fall and how the low hills are all splashed with yellows and reds you would understand his feeling. . . .

All the low hills were washed with color. (204, 207)

But to censure such passages seems hardly fair. "In Anderson's world, there [is] very little of the stuff of actuality," carps Lionel Trilling. "Lawrence," in contrast (and Trilling could have cited Cather as felicitously), "had eyes for the substantial and even at his most doctrinaire he knew the world of appearance" [5]. Ah, but are appearance and reality synonymous? Not according to the boys from Wittenberg—Hamlet and that transplanted Dane who studied at the branch Academy in Springfield (OH):

The surface resemblance is of no consequence...The real significance lies in the deep awareness Anderson evokes of the hidden life of people and things. [His] images have no plastic

value. The author is not interested in painting the outside but in suggesting what is inside, 'the infinitude within,'...[6]

Universtiy of Illinois — Springfield

Notes

1.) Title adapted from Anderson's essay "A Writer's Conception of Realism," in *Sherwood Anderson's Notebook* (New York: Viking, 1926).
- 2.) Willa Cather, *My Antonia* (1918; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954), np; subsequent excerpts may be found on pages 7, 14 of the Houghton Mifflin, 1954), np; subsequent excerpts may be found on pages 7, 14 of the Houghton Mifflin edition.)
- 3.) Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919; New York: Viking, 1966) 204-07.
- 4.) Cf. the similes in he opening passage: "sheet-iron" and "freemasonry" reinforce the natural setting.
- 5.) Lionel Trilling, "Sherwood Anderson," *The Liberal Imagination* (1947; rpt. in John Ferres, ed., *Winesburg, Ohio* [New York: Viking, 1966], 461-62).
- 6). Roger Asselineau, "Langue et Style de Sherwood Anderson dans Winesburg, Ohio," from *Configuration Critique de Sherwood Anderson* (1963; rpt. in Ferres, ed., 353; translated by the editor). Asselineau quotes Henry Michaux.

FAMILIES

William Thomas

My Aunt Susan could talk well on many subjects, but one she talked on superlatively, and if she failed to get onto that herself I would say "Tell me some more about our delightful family". Then she would recount how the bull bunted old Uncle Joe Phillips into the water tank and how she and her brothers tormented their slow-witted Uncle Jim, and tell about Hans Werter, the German music student who became a man of renown, the dangers and embarrassments of taking a girl out in a dogcart, and what might happen to a party dress. Her delicate phrasing of indelicacies was a literary marvel, and if she told me the same thing several times, the repetition solidified my picture of the life they had or an added detail clarified or sharpened it, and there was always a good chance that she would recall an episode she had not thought to tell me before. During hours of talk about these good and pleasantly dull people, whose activities are so much more interesting in recollection that they could have been in the happening, I would be seeing Aunt Susan as a sixteen-year-old tomboy, a belle of twenty-three, or a plump matron of thirty-five instead of a wizened old lady in a wheel chair.

Susan's knowledge, however, was nearly confined to firsthand experiences of her generation, and I was impelled to supplement it with earlier names and dates. The first significant date is 1806, when Nathaniel and Anna Brundige Wyatt came with Anna's parents and brothers into the valley of the Olentangy River. Nathaniel and Anna had four sons and six daughters, of whom all but one daughter lived to rear families of from four to ten offspring. Scarcely less prolific were their fifty grandchildren, and, with second marriages in both generations, the lines of descent are such as to elate a genealogist. Once (when I could not procure drawing paper in a roll) I covered the back of a strip of wallpaper with a great chart comprising all the names and dates I could ascertain of both near and remote connection. It was, however, from one son, Samuel, that sprang the host of Wyatt progeny who used to be introduced to me at family reunions as my cousins. I then had no idea who they really were, and when I looked with incredulity at some skinny girl with pigtails whom I disliked at sight, or a freckled-faced lad who appeared ready to fight at a word, I would be told "She's your cousin, you know" or "why, he's your cousin".

Samuel Wyatt married his cousin Lovinah, daughter of Nathaniel Brundige. Editha, the oldest of their nine offspring, Susan's grandmother, is earliest to come alive in the family picture, and as that is filled in it becomes more and more dominated by the vigorous personality of this capable, strong-willed, and resourceful woman. Her life was not a good one, in the sense of giving her joys and comforts and satisfactions, but it was a full one, and as only those who experience great sorrow can apprehend the highest delights, I like to think it was other than a life of unalloyed pain. By her first marriage, in 1839, to Wright DeVore, she had three sons. Samuel died at sixteen, Cyrus was killed "at the battle of the Arkansas Post" in 1863, and only Sanford lived out a life expectancy. Wright DeVore died in 1846, and after five and a half years of

widowhood Editha married Michael Phillips, whose Geburt und Taufschein states: "Dieson beyden Ehegatten, als Peter Phillips und sener ehlichen Hausfrau Ekaterina eine geborne Enders ist ein Sohn zur Welt geboren und getauft in America, im Straat Pensilvanien. . . ."

Was it real emotional attraction that led Editha at thirty-one to marry the fifty-five-year-old bachelor, a cobbler whose financial status could hardly have bettered her situation? It is charitable and reasonable to think so. Everywhere Michael appears his ineffectuality is manifest. He was so meticulous, so slow, so imbued with the spirit of the craftsman that he literally could not make a living at cobbling. Whether Editha's self-assertion was innate or developed out of necessity, obviously she was the manager of this pair, and the land they owned was in her name. They had a daughter, Mary Jane, and after there was a son-in-law things were better. Michael was a gaffer about the house.

To look at their pictures in Mary Jane's album is a sentimental journey into America's past. How I should like to have known them all! Michael, very old, with his benign face and a glint in his eye that says as plainly as anything can that he was not above inciting his grandchildren to mischief. His brother John, very like him in appearance, more self-conscious at having to pose. His brother David, younger, but with a chin beard and somewhat dour. And his brother Joseph, with what must have been one of the handsomest, most luxuriant beards in all Christendom, a double for Herman Melville as J. O. Eaton painted him. Peter, their father, smooth-shaven but with straight hair combed forward from the middle of his head and over his ears. Fanny Eleanor Lanz Howald, "the Grossmutter" (she was born, grew up, and married Andrew Howard in the Swiss canton of Bern), a personification of the dignity and grace and charm of serene old age. Her twin sons, John Fredrick and John George, at twelve or thereabouts, as undistinguishable as newly-minted dimes, with a marvelous solemnity of countenance they could not have worn unless preparing to perpetrate a joke. Jacob Howald, their brother, and his wife Nancy. Michael's twin sisters Susan and Jane Ann in youth, wearing velvet jackets over basques and voluminous taffeta skirts. Cyrus Devore, a sober young man with a shadow of chin whisker. Editha's youngest sister, Ruth, a plain girl but beautiful in middle age, and her handsome husband. Their brothers, "Uncle Sam", "Uncle Davey", "Uncle Jim". George Howald and Mary Jane at the time of their marriage. Editha herself, with sharp and severe face--a disappointment, for in the genealogy her role is almost that of a heroine. Her mother Lovinah, who, born in 1799, outlived her, with her second husband, David Dudley.

How to get by their voluminous garments, beyond their gay or sad eyes, to see into their minds? What did they feel, and what did they think? Little evidence survives. So far as I know none kept a journal, and the only written records of their lives, other than vital statistics, are in a few preserved letters. Those exchanged between George and Mary Jane before their marriage are of so private and personal a nature that reading them now seems a breach of trust. But time has made them social history. Under date of 21 July 1872 he addresses her "Dear Friend" and begs here to excuse him for failing to keep an engagement. His explanation is not very good: his brother Jacob persuaded him to go "to quarterley meeting over at fulton Creek" even though "i know i could enjoyed myself beter with you than i did where i was". If she still thinks him worthy of her company he "will call in two weeks from last night if it will be al rite with you". If it is not all right he "will com anaway". He cannot come sooner "because fred will want the buggy next Saturday". Her answer is unknown. Ten months later he writes while recovering from the measles: ". . . it has ben so long scince i hav seen you I

most have forgotten how you look but I expect you look as gay as ever gas as a peach and twice as sweet". He is "loosing al the good buggy rides". Then, after half a page--there is no punctuation or paragraphing--of trumpery and (mirabile dictu!) the weather: "I dont feel mutch like writing I am deaf and that makes be bout half mad I dont know wheather I will ever get over my deafness or not I did not know that the measles were half that hard but i took cold what made me worse". Then, realizing this may be found somewhat immoderate, "I just thought I would write to pass away time". In a letter to him (not an answer to the foregoing), she addresses him "Friend George" and proceeds to comply with his request "to tell you all of the news", which fills three pages. On the fourth: "I wish you was here tonight, but as you are not, and cannot be tonight, I hope that it will not be very long untill you can be here, for I am wanting to see you very bad, for it seems like a long time since I have seen you. I must close. I remain as every, your friend." They did not write their love in plain words, and I wonder if they even dared speak it; such were the reticence and conventions of their day that they could only tell how much they missed each other. But the spirits of the lovers breathe from these letters, though it is not easy to think of my grandmother, who in my recollection is a rather crotchety old woman, as the same being as this glowing girl.

There are letters to Michael from his brothers Samuel in Pennsylvania and Jacob at Bellville, Ohio, telling about crops, prices, wages, the children, and business opportunities. In the summer of 1827 Samuel proposes coming to Ohio if Michael will assure him he can obtain work as a miller. But "now there is such a noise about the banks that a person dont know whether to venture from home or not". In 1848 Jacob debates between entering the employ of a cabinet-maker and setting up his own shop. In February 1864 Sanford DeVore, in the Union Army, writes to his mother, who is evidently in distress from want of firewood. (Where was Michael, or what was his condition?) He advises her to "hire the would cut let it cost what it will". and "If you can only get along till I get home will try and make times easier somehow or other". He tells her "you must not get like grandmother and always look at the worst side of the picture". (Was that Lovinah's way?) He expects to be home within three and a half months. (May he have misdated the letter and actually been writing in 1865?) But on the first of June 1865 he is still in the army, in North Carolina, "doing the last work of closing the rebellion". Officers are absent and he has been commanding his company more than a month. He has "some notion standing examination for a colored regt in the regular army" but "I shall not go against your will".

Sanford came home and the following January was married. Editha lived twenty more years and Michael eighteen. Their difficulties must have been resolved somehow. Their lives--those of Mary Jane and George, Michael and Editha, Editha's sisters and brothers, and the generations behind them--were good lives in freedom from want and fear. None became rich, for one generation could not accumulate property enough to go far when divided among the next, and few died poor. Yet the abject suffering of urban poverty was something they never conceived of. Money was scarce, and they knew hard times; but most of their edibles--grains, vegetables, fruits, and meats--grew on the land; George Howald and Mary Jane reared a family of seven and provided for several other relatives on eighty-five acres. There were mostly farming folk, though the men might follow various occupations in youth before they settled down to farming or combined farming with dealing in grains and livestock. Many of the women, including Mary Jane and Lovinah, taught school before marriage, as young women do now.

But for the country dwellers they were lives of intellectual poverty and what must have been for at least a few of the women bitter loneliness, mud-bound in winter to drafty, musty houses, impossible to heat adequately, where all the water used had to be pumped or drawn by hand and carried, lit through the long evenings by kerosene lamps or tallow candles, with the lantern on a kitchen shelf for carrying to the barn or the privy. They might sing and play at the organ (Michael was an amateur flautist), work needlepoint, or make scrap-albums out of cuttings from The Youth's Companion, Arthur's Home Magazine, Peterson's, or Godey's Lady's Book--but not dance or play cards. Their letters testify that families living no more than a dozen miles apart saw each other only during the summers; and then, when the roads were dry, the fastest transportation, aside from the railroad, was horse and buggy. Visiting was planned months ahead. They could send letters, but not packages, by post, and had to go to the village post office to mail and collect them, where they would receive also The Cincinnati Weekly Times and a local weekly newspaper.

None were intellectuals, for had they been a recollection or a tradition or some tangible evidence would have remained. I should like to think of Lovinah and Editha reading Scott and Cooper and Irving and Dickens and Thackeray, and going to hear famous lyceum speakers, but I do now know that they read Susan Warner, Mrs. Southworth, Mary J. Holmes, Maria Cummins, and Augusta Evans. I know Mary Jane, my grandmother, read these sentimental and sensational writers, in youth and after. Many years a widow, she suffered partial paralysis in her old age, and endured a sad and lonely end of life with periodic shifts from one house to another of her daughters and sons-in-law. But she liked reading, and passed a good deal of time that way. Her greatest solace was The Youth's Companion. Her enthusiasm for this publication was life-long (I believe she was a subscriber from girlhood), and as she lived three and a half years after its demise she must have missed it sorely. As is aptly said by Frank Luther Nott, "There has never been another periodical quite like it, and in the opinion of the oldsters there can never be another so good".* That is exactly what my grandmother thought of The Youth's Companion.

Lovinah, Aunt Susan remembered, greatly admired Charlotte Temple for its grave moral lesson. Michael had books, and a printed bookplate bearing his name and the place and date of purchase. But when a man dies all his glory among men dies also, and it is hardly any time until his belongings are scattered or become mere lumber to his descendants (many relics in the attic of my grandmother's farmhouse were destroyed when that house burned in 1924), and the only books of Michael's I have even seen are The Universal Pictorial Library and Howe's Historical Collections of Ohio. The bookplates in these bear different dates (though both are of the year 1848), so I cannot conclude that Michael acquired all his books on the same day, and it is equally difficult to believe he had a bookplate printed every time he bought a book. One supposes he made a date list of his purchases and had the printer run off the requisite number for each date. The family record of marriages, births, and deaths was kept in Editha's bible, but most of the record antedates the book, for she was near the end of her life when she came to possess it.

*A History of American Magazines, Vol. II, p. 274.

After the several months during which I was able to ascertain and order many facts about these forebears, they had come to be as real people whom I had talked to and heard speak, and their existence continued in my thought and my life and would remain there until my life's end. It signified nothing that those among them I knew best had been dead sixty years. It was my privilege to hold the knowledge of them that had been give to me until I could transmit it to someone of a newer generation who would also revere them. This is the immortality of men and women who do not write books or music or paint pictures or become renowned statesmen or jurists or make inventions or discoveries. They do not, any more than skilled or learned folk, wholly die, but live in the minds of those who come after them, dying only if those fail to give them there a small place.

Ohio State University/Marion

Down the O-HI-O

Patricia A. Anderson

One of my first memories of the Ohio River is the memory of my mother playing the song "Beautiful Ohio" on the piano. The few lyrics I remember are these:

Drifting with the current
Down a moonlight stream,
While above the heavens
In their glory gleam.
Beautiful Ohio
In dreams again I see
Visions of what used to be.

Actually, our home was closer to Lake Erie than to the Ohio River which I saw only once as a child. Since then I have crossed it by car with my husband perhaps five times, and I have flown over it more times than I can remember. I've stood by the river front in Cincinnati, Ohio, and in Louisville, Kentucky, in Madison, Indiana, and at Cairo, Illinois. I've taken the inclined railroad car here in Pittsburgh and have seen how the Allegheny from the north and the Monongahela from the south join to become the Ohio.

The Iroquois Indians called the river "Ohio" which the French translated as "the beautiful" or "La Belle Riviere", according to R.E. Banta (8) in the book titled The Ohio (1949) in the Rivers of America Series.

It was only natural that my husband and I should buy a used book titled Down the O-HI-O when David spotted it at a used book store this past summer. "This looks interesting", he said, and I agreed. For both of us, born and raised in Ohio and book collectors for many years, this clearly was a book we had to own and read; and in doing so, I found that the book was not really about a trip on the river, although a short trip, an important trip, does take place early in the novel. Let me tell you what I did find when I read the book.

Published in 1891 by A.C. McClurg and Company in Chicago, Down the O-HI-O was written by a man named Charles Humphrey Roberts. A check in the National Union Catalog for books prior to 1955 showed only this one book by Roberts and described it as being about Quakers in Ohio. Roberts was listed in Ohio Authors and Their Books (1962), an entry which said that he was born in Mount Pleasant, Jefferson County, Ohio, on October 11, 1847, and died in Hot Springs, Arkansas, on November 30, 1911. During his life Roberts had taught school, worked as a superintendent of construction for the Camden Iron Works in Philadelphia, graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1878, and afterwards had practiced law in Chicago.

Jefferson County, Ohio, shares its Ohio River border with what is now West Virginia. Roberts' birthplace, Mount Pleasant, was primarily known as being the town where an anti-slavery newspaper The Philanthropist had been printed in the early 1800s. (Bowman, David W., A Short History of Ohio, 1943, 246-247) There were many Quakers born in Jefferson County and in Belmont County to the south. Nearby

Guernsey County even has a town named Quaker City. Was Roberts a Quaker? I don't know, but his book indicates an intimate knowledge of that sect, the area in which he was born, and his fellow lawyers. Clearly Roberts had followed the old advice to write about what one knows best.

The novel begins sometime prior to the Civil War. The author writes, "Pittsburgh was in sombre gloom. A dingy cloud of smoke, mist, and soot shrouded the city of forges...." (13) He goes on to describe the furnaces, rolling mills, and the men who work in the steel mills. Suddenly steel claims a victim: a man named Dunc Allingham is struck by a fly wheel and badly hurt. He is carried home to an unkept second story flat, one which had been allowed to deteriorate after Allingham's second marriage. His first wife had been used to a "superior station in life" (19) and had made their home one of the better workman's houses, but she had died, leaving behind Dunc and a little girl Karen, or Kit as she was called.

When the author writes of the second wife he is very harsh and more than a little preachy. He writes:

Nature has no blight like a worthless women.
Imperceptibly the affairs of the house declined;
carelessness and untidiness became successors to the
first wife's thrift, and squalor soon joined to keep them
company.

The sole child, the child of the earlier marriage,
was in a few years completely transformed. Little Kit,
the fond mother's "Little Karen," by her so gently
nurtured and hitherto so daintily kept, through combined
neglect and abuse became a half-wild creature, a haunter
of by-streets and alleys, and leader of a half-savage crew
of similar outcasts in all manner of daring though
childish atrocities. (20)

Dunc Allingham's injuries prove to be mortal, and on his death bed Dunc gives his daughter a watch that had belonged to her mother and asks Kit to read the inscription, something she is unable to do. He tells her that it is her mother's maiden name. Karen Bane, and that Kit has an aunt who lives in Ohio. If her stepmother, "Mother Lizzie," proves unkind, Kit should go to Ohio and look for her Aunt Eleanor Bane. (22)

We aren't told how old Kit is at this time, but we are told that she cannot read. I suspect that she is about ten or twelve. Roberts describes her in this way:

"....she was a neglected child, whose hair, of a tawny
red, hung in matted, unkempt locks over her shoulders.
Her dress was dirty and torn; her face, youthful and sweet
in repose, had in wakefulness a sharp look, as if it might
readily harden into fierceness and defiance." (21)

It wasn't very long after Dunc's death that Kit realized that she must leave her stepmother and escape the latter's violent drunken tempers. When "Mother Lizzie" gives Kit a coin and sends her to fetch more liquor, to fill the empty black glass bottle, Kit accidentally drops and breaks the empty bottle. She quickly decides to leave. Sliding

the coin under the door of their flat, returning it to "Mother Lizzie", Kit heads toward the Ohio River, stopping only to say goodbye to a small boy and give him her broken china doll. She has taken her first steps toward her trip down the Ohio.

Kit stows away on the famous steamer, the Thomas Swann, and as the boat nears Martin's Ferry, Ohio, where Kit will go ashore, the author makes one of his interesting asides, this one about the town. He writes:

Even when wide awake it was not an ambitious town,
and it is doubtful if its placid slumbers were ever stirred
by dreams of a youthful townsman destined in years after
to give the world a new method in literature, and to be
himself a noted leader of a distance school of literary
expression. Its sleeping visions were clearly not of
notoriety of any world-wide kind. (26)

Martin's Ferry was, of course, the birthplace of William Dean Howells in 1837.

It is not quite daybreak when Kit is put ashore with the captain's curses about stowaways mixed with the songs of the Negro deckhands ringing in her ears. Kit is shown to be determined, intelligent but naive, and very, very brave. A few men are hanging around the wharf, and when one of them asks her if she is looking for someone, she replies, "I'm goin' to the Ohio country. Do you know where the Ohio country is?" (30) He tells her, "...there's a good bit of Ohio country right around here, --out back." (30)

As Kit left the wharf area and walked along the river bank she spotted something in the water; a swimmer finally emerged and struggled up the bank. It was a Black man who asked Kit not to tell anyone that she's seen him. He then disappears into the woods. The author writes that Kit "...knew something of slavery and knew the slave was escaping. . ." (34), but that she didn't know that she was on the "border-land" of slavery, near an important line of the underground railroad.

Here may be a good place to describe the structure of this book and some of the techniques the author uses, while leaving you in suspense wondering what becomes of Kit, what happens to the escaped slave, and whether the two ever meet again.

Roberts has divided his book into thirty titled chapters, each with an epigraph. One of the early chapters is called "On the Old State Road" and the epigraph is "Hush my dear, lie still and slumber! Holy angels guard thy bed." (42) With that epigraph we know that all will go well for Kit. Still another epigraph, this time for Chapter XV, is a line spoken by Sancho Panze: "Every one is as God has made him, and oftentimes a great deal worse." (126) This chapter concerns Lem Fairfax, a lawyer who will later be important in Kit's life. Fairfax says of himself that "...there were things he would do; there were things he would not do. . ." (127) And we see him in this chapter help a poor woman collect money owed her, a task made quickly because the man who owed her was afraid that Fairfax would foreclose the man's mortgage for ten thousand dollars if he didn't pay the poor woman.

The writer generally has a smooth style except for his use of Negro dialect in short scenes throughout the book. For example, when Kit and Sam first meet, Sam says "I's oba Jo'dan!". . . I's a strikin' now fo' de norf sta' shuah. . ." (33) Of course, the use of such dialect was common in the 19th century, but it makes for slower reading.

Roberts' characters get didactic at times. For example, when men come searching for Sam in the home of a Quaker couple who are hiding him, Hannah Redstone says

ironically: "You should be proud of your business. . .proud of chasing poor black people over the country, to send them into slavery....What would your mothers think if they knew you had descended to this?" (66)

The author has carefully and intricately plotted this story, and the chapters are almost like scenes in a play, carefully fitted together. He digresses occasionally, as I have just done, and then goes on with his story, as I will now return to Kit.

Now that Kit has reached Ohio, she wanders into a village and then out again. A passing wagon full of produce headed for Wheeling hits a run in the road and spills some apples which Kit gratefully picks up. After knowing the rough and mean streets of Pittsburgh, she feels perfectly safe in this rural environment. Suddenly three horsemen ride toward her. They are looking for the escaped slave. Has Kit seen him? She doesn't answer, but takes a bit of an apple. The man asks again, and again Kit doesn't answer. Angry now, the man snaps his whip toward her face. It misses, but Kit considers it "a declaration of war." She scampers down the bank, picks up stones. Here the author writes, "Without an instant's hesitation, she opened a rapid fire with these upon her enemy, with a skill and precision of aim born of much practice, and for which her sex in general do not receive credit." (40) A stone strikes the one man, and he tries to ride his horse nearer to Kit, but his companions urge him to ride on or the slave will get too far away. Kit is safe, and the author muses: "Alas, poor motherless Kit! Whatever possibilities of gentle womanhood may slumber under thy small bodice, they are deeply buried as yet. . . ." (41)

But poor motherless Kit really doesn't need pity. She proves herself more than able to cope with her situation. After approaching a small Quaker school, fighting with the school children, and then injuring the young schoolmaster as he breaks up the fight, she finally comes to rest in the home of a prosperous Quaker farmer and his wife--Jazar and Ruth Frost. The schoolmaster had seen that she was a child who needed help and took her to his friends.

The rest of this novel is entertaining, instructive, and basically delightful. I suspect it was popular in its day. Although the author puts many difficulties in Kit's path, he also leads us to believe that all will end happily. In the meantime we learn about the Quakers, their work on the Underground Railroad, human foibles, and certain lawyers. As Kit grows she becomes the manager of the Jazar farm and later the farm of Nathan and Eleanor Frame. All the neighboring farmers and villagers admire and respect her. The author writes: "It was soon learned that what was confided to her to do was almost certainly performed, and what she did was well done." (106) Later a character says, "But she is a winning girl, a very winning girl, and very venturesome," (151) as he watches Kit ride a wild horse which she has tamed. She is very close to being a Superwoman, but she does make mistakes such as singing at a dance, an act which angers Jazar Frost who turns her out of his house. The schoolmaster again helps her by taking her to a more liberally Quaker farm, that of the Frames.

For most of the novel all the Quakers accept her and she accepts them. She learns to use "thee" and "thou". Her red hair is still brilliant in color, but it is now tamed in style. Ten years pass, and Kit has never found her aunt, but events have occurred elsewhere which will bring the two together.

In Pittsburgh several lawyers have been introduced into the story. The epigraph to Chapter IX is a line from Shakespeare, "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." (79) This chapter introduces Thomas Cottle, the villain of this novel and Lemuel Fairfax who has befriended and hired the escaped slave, Sam. Lemuel with the help of Sam will eventually, though a complicated plot, reunite Kit and her aunt, who turns out to be a

Quaker woman with whom Kit has been living--Eleanor Bane Frame, the latter also turning out to be the heiress to land which evil lawyer Cottle has been trying to get because of oil.' Cottle, thinking that Kit is the heiress had wooed her and almost won her, but at the last minute Kit realizes that she really loves the schoolmaster Barclay Taylor, the young man who has been an important part of her life since she arrived in Ohio.

As the novel ends Attorney Fairfax and Sam, the former slave, have both moved to the Quaker country. Fairfax has had a house built on a hill overlooking the Ohio River, and Sam has a neat home nearby. When a villager questions why Fairfax would want to leave his prosperous practice in Pittsburgh, another says, "When a man has lived rich a spell, 'n had everything paved and level like, he's glad to get out in the country an' climb hills like poor folks." (311) He continues, "An' I've noticed, too, when the sun strikes a feller that way, it's apt to knock him into a good congressional district..." (312)

And so, a nineteenth century romance is played out. In a short preface the author had written:

As a gazer at a play, I myself have followed, careless reader, this orphan maiden down the dark and wimpling river and along the old State Road; have shared her hard fare, her cheerful spirits, and her adventures not without doubt and question, and yet not without entertainment.

Sometimes I have smiled at her and at the quaint people she met, or have admired her vigor, her elasticity of spirits, and her stanchness; and have marked, also, her weakness and failings.

And now that the brief journey is over, I hand you the glass, half doubtfully, as to one who may not like a play set with scenes so largely matter-of-fact, yet with movement as uncertain as fancy.

The author need not have been doubtful. In Down the O-H-I-O Charles Humphrey Roberts created an exciting plot, believable and memorable characters, and most of all he created a modern woman when he created Kit. As Shakespeare said, "All's well that ends well."

Review of Louis J. Cantoni, A Festival of Lanternes

--John F. Roche

Louis J. Cantoni has had a "fascination with brevity" since his early teens, when he wrote epigrams and short lyrical poetry. While a professor at Wayne State University (from which he is now emeritus), Cantoni came across the 5-line lanterne form developed by Lloyd Frank Merrell, and has experimented with it for some two decades. After publishing two volumes of somewhat longer verse, plus editing the 50th anniversary anthology of the Poetry Society of Michigan, he has produced an engaging volume completely devoted to this "terse verse." This 1994 collection, from Harlo Press of Detroit, is comprised of 170 lanternes, arranged into thematic sections titled "The Human Condition," "Creatures Great and Small," "On the Light Side," "Musical Notations," and "Eternal Verities."

The lanterne, named for its shape, though with echoes, perhaps, of Diogenes and Aladdin, is comprised of 5 unrhymed lines of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 1 syllables. It thus halves the cinquaine's pattern of 2, 4, 6, 8, and 2 syllables. In short poems, compression is all. Their advantage is to force the writer (and the reader) to attend to language at its most particular level. Without rhyme, each work demands its own weight, and the gravitational pull of each work, acting on words occupying its own line, primarily, and on those on nearby or remote lines, secondarily, creates tensions of sound and meaning that the poet can exploit. Whereas some contemporary poets abandon traditional syntax to increase the randomness of the poetic "event," Cantoni takes the middle course of maintaining a predicate direction, and hence clarity, in most of his lanternes:

"Flute and Harp"

Twinned
they merge
citizens
of heaven and
earth.

Despite the deceptive simplicity of such short poems, the pauses and unexpected syncopations can produce disturbing overtones or delicious ironies:

"Caboose"

Small
comfort
for a crew
tending endless
rails

In such short poems the title gains additional importance; we perceive it almost as a "sixth" line, or perhaps, as a fugal theme, the ground from which the flight is launched. Such resonances are multiplied by the arrangement of poems on the page. Rather than simply placing one poem on each page, Cantoni arranges anywhere from three-to-six thematically related poems per page in columns, X-patterns, and so on: lanternes titled "Hell," "Heaven," and "Pilgrimage" occupy the center of facing pages; poems titled "North," "Northeast," "Southwest," and "South" frame the four corners of a page. Accompanying ink-drawings reinforce the themes, while conveying an intimate tone reminiscent of Oriental floral sketches, not inappropriately, for Cantoni mentions that "listening to the recorded lute music of Toyohiko Satoh enhanced my writing." While his lanternes share the meditative and wonder-embracing moods of Japanese poetic forms (as well as their laughter at human self-importance), they are definite expressions of his own personality, thankfully avoiding the forced exoticism of much American haiku. Some are downright Midwestern, as the following:

"Our Classy DeSoto"

fell
ill with
a fatal
case of vapor
lock.

Or:

"Greasy Spoon"

A
place where
fat flies greet
you all winter
long.

In a different vein, but just as surely drawn from a life spent in Michigan, are the many nature poems included:

Wing
to wing,
ten bronze birds
soar into our
lives.

I am sure that many readers of this magazine will succumb to the seductiveness of the lanternes, agreeing with Louis Cantoni:

"Gentle Reader"

Who
could know

you would fall
in love with a
lamp.

Michigan State University

My Life in the Boiler Shop

David D. Anderson

Strictly speaking, my entire life was not spent in the boiler shop, but more accurately, I spent only about eight months there, between late Spring 1948 and late Winter 1949, although I carried my tattered membership card in Local 149, International Brotherhood of Shipfitters and Boilermakers, AFL, for years afterward, and I even paid my dues on occasion in the early fifties when I thought of it and had the money and the pursuit of a Ph.D. in English threatened to make me something I wasn't sure I wanted to be. But echoes of those eight months--and I'm not being facetious or funny--are with me yet, especially in that long hour between three and four in the morning when I can't sleep, or on those increasingly rare occasions when I slip into a shot-and-a-beer-type bar for a shot-and-a-beer, affectionately known as a boilermaker in my boiler shop days in my youth.

My eight months in the boiler shop were a brief part of more than a century-and-a-half of shipbuilding history in Lorain, Ohio, where the river known to the Iroquois as Canesadooharic--since the late eighteenth century more prosaically called the Black--flows from North Central Ohio into Lake Erie. That history had begun when the sloop General Huntington slid into the river in 1819, thirty-two years after Moravian missionaries found temporary refuge from hostile Indians and Whites alike at the river mouth and twelve years after Nathan Perry, newly arrived from Vermont, built a trading post at the river's mouth, proclaimed it the finest port on Lake Erie, and, in the fine fashion of his New England forebears, turned his efforts to acquiring a sizable fortune. During the next eighty years, the place, originally called the Mouth of the Black River, became Black River, then Charleston, and ultimately, late in the nineteenth century, the City of Lorain, which, because of a fortuitous flood in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 1890, was destined to become a steel-producing town, a shipping center, and a shipbuilding center, where in what passed for poetic profundity in the 1930s, the phrase "the finest port on Lake Erie" was joined by the slogan declaring it to be the place "Where Coal and Iron Meet."

Lorain has enjoyed literary notice if not celebration more recently in the works of Toni Morrison, who managed to parley her memories of Elyria Avenue and East Twenty-Second Street in Lorain in the 1930s and 40s into a Nobel Prize in Literature, as it was earlier, when it was the subject of a graphic vignette--the hobo jungle south of the river at the foot of Ninth Street--in Saul Bellow's The Adventures of Augie March. But to most Lorainites, basking in the recent discovery of its complex ethnic makeup, the result of successive waves of emigration and immigration to staff the steel mills and the shipyard, Lorain is not the literary city; it is "the International City," complete with festivals, foods, and ethnic queens who manage to oversimplify what have become unbelievably complex ethnic heritages, the produce of an immensely successful if politically incorrect melting pot.

Nevertheless, the boiler shop where I spent those eight months in 1949-49--the first and the last sustained period which I spent in Lorain since I had concluded the first eighteen years of my life six years earlier and escaped gratefully on June 9, 1942, out of high school and out of Lorain into that welcome refuge known as World War II--that boiler shop was part of what had, in the late nineteenth century, been known as a "trust" and

later a corporation, The American Shipbuilding Company. "The Shipyard," as it was known, was a consolidation of the small family and individually-owned yards on the East Side of the river, and for more than seventy years it had contributed substantially to the livelihoods of generations of Lorainites, including at various times, my grandfather and my father, and it even benefited from my mother's patriotism during World War II. But locally it was known as a "chicken today, feathers tomorrow" establishment because of the uncertainty of both the shipbuilding and the ship repair market. But the yard endured as the American Shipbuilding Company for three-quarters of a century, until, like the New York Yankees, it fell into the hands of George Steinbrenner, who quickly learned that he could not run a shipyard and closed it down in the late 1970s. However, he hasn't yet admitted that he can't run a baseball team either. When he does, no more New York Yankees.

Anyway, in the spring of 1948 I was a beneficiary of the GI Bill, a refugee from three or four undergraduate programs, most recently from California by way of Mexico, and I came home because, to paraphrase the cliché, they had to take me in. Then, when I heard that the shipyard was hiring--it had an extensive list of repair work as well as contracts for two new 600 foot ore carriers--I walked across the bridge and along the river, was checked for hernia by a decrepit MD who smelled of gin and Juicy Fruit Gum, given a badge, a number--24810--and hired as a boilermaker's helper. The next day I was to punch in and report to the boiler shop. I had no idea what a boilermaker's helper did, but I did know more than a little about demolition and bomb disposal, thanks to my Uncle Sam. That knowledge hadn't hurt me too badly, and I thought this wouldn't either. Besides, there was always the escape route via the G.I. Bill, an event that I knew would eventually come to pass.

Yet, surprisingly, I liked the Boiler Shop, or perhaps more properly, I found it interesting. The Boiler Shop in the shipyard in Lorain in the late 1940s was to my knowledge the last manifestation of a social order and an industrial order that had, to emphasize another cliché, made the United States the foremost industrial society in the world, that had supplied the means of fighting two world wars, and that had endured the depression of the 1930s that linked them.

But I had little interest in sociology, anthropology, or any of the other social sciences, nor have I any interest in sentimentalizing what was going on in the boiler shop on the East Side of the Black River during those eight months in 1949-49. Then, although I wasn't yet aware of it, steam boilers and the steamships, more properly known as boats on the Great Lakes, that the boilers powered were about to disappear from the Lakes as they were to soon to disappear from the railroads, in both cases, replaced by a propulsion system based on the diesel engine. During those eight months I was unaware of that technological revolution just beginning, just as I had little, if any, interest in industrial history. But I was and I remain fascinated by people, and the boiler shop was full of them.

I quickly learned that boilermakers--or their helpers--never work alone but in groups or in teams, although I never heard either word used. The man I reported to in the cavernous, grimy old building flanking the river, whom I assumed was the foreman--he wore a grayish white shirt, a loose, spotted necktie, and a vest hanging open--simply told me to go work with Joe, and he pointed out a stocky man who had to be younger than he seemed, standing by the tool crib. I later learned he was as old as he seemed and as inarticulate as he could be, except when he was across the street from the gate in the establishment know as Bloody Mary's, although I never saw a Mary, bloody or otherwise--or any women--in the place in the months I knew it. It was either a working

man's bar or a drinking man's bar from four-thirty, when the quitting whistle blew, until everyone left but the serious drinkers, Joe often among them. Joe, I learned, was the crew or team chief, although he would hoot at such a title. I learned, too, from his vocabulary that he was Polish—more properly in the boiler shop, a Polack. He must have had a last name but I never knew it. Instead, on more formal occasions, he was called "Black Joe," and I assumed I knew why—that it was derived from his appearance at the end of the day in a shop that lacked any cleaning or washing facilities whatsoever. Joe didn't know my name, and he never asked. Instead, when, shortly after I had reported to him, he caught me looking at the old Ingersoll pocket watch my grandfather had given me years before, I became "Alarm Clock," and I remained "Alarm Clock" all my days in the boiler shop. Sometimes, even yet, in the dark hours, I think of myself as "Alarm Clock."

The second member of the crew, a man whose name I never knew—to Joe he was "hey"—was also a boilermaker, although the title, like the other terminology of the trade, first and last names, and even clear ethnic identities, was never used. His accent was as rich, if not of an origin as easily identified, as Joe's, and he was known to the third member of the team as "the old Hunkie;" at least that was how that third member of the team, the other helper, referred to him when, a few days later he confided to me his hopes of later becoming a boilermaker when Joe or the Old Hunkie died. If they both died, he told me, we could both expect to inherit the exalted positions.

The ethnic identify of the other helper was clear; he was a hillbilly from Southern Ohio, as he told me, and he was proud of it, especially in Bloody Mary's after work, when, with two or three boilermakers inside him, he welcomed a fight with anyone who cast aspersions on his origins, which, he once told me, were "like the old country but not so far." The "old country," I had already learned, was the common birth place of Joe, the Old Hunkie, the craneman, about whom more later, and virtually every other man over forty in the shop, regardless of ethnic origin. This other helper was known as Abercrombie. Innocently, I thought for months that it was his name until I learned that it came from a name inscribed over the breast pocket on a jacket he had bought at the Goodwill Store and worn on his first day at work. I like to think that its origins were impeccably Eastern establishment by way of a used clothing bag that had somehow found its way to Lorain and to the boiler shop, where practical wisdom and technical skills were uncorrupted by such useless bits of knowledge as the existence of a place or thing called Abercrombie and Fitch. But, as in the case of Joe and the Old Hunkie, I never learned Abercrombie's real name either.

Abercrombie's jacket, like the foreman's vest hanging open, suggests an important part of the appropriate attire in the boiler shop. No one—at least no one I met in my eight months there—wore what could even euphemistically be called "work clothes." They were simply, old clothes, as I must have known intuitively on my first day on the job. The clothes for everyone there could best be described in Mark Twain's words as their "other clothes," as opposed to their "good clothes" implying only the existence of the suit that each of them wore to his wedding and to the funerals that punctuated his life since. The term also implied, to paraphrase Mark Twain again, the extent of each man's wardrobe. But never in the eight months did I see anything resembling a safety helmet or safety shoes, although I did see a cold rivet bounced, accidentally or not, off the head of a boilermaker in another team.

Joe's team, I promptly learned, specialized not in new construction—there were two huge boilers, each about thirty feet high and at least as long and wide, in the process of being built on the floor of the boiler shop—but in boiler repair in a place that was

called "up the river," at the ore unloading docks at the steel mill. Boiler repair in the shipping season that was already underway in April (it began in early March and lasted until November storms drove shipping insurance sky high) was hot, heavy, dirty, and noisy. When a boat pulled in to unload, either at the ore docks at the river mouth or at the steel mills "up the river" with leaks in the boiler tubes, the steel pipes that ran through the firebox to produce steam under high pressure, the repairs had to be done while the unloading was underway. The boilermaking team pulled alongside in a small boat that had been loaded at the dock beside the boiler shop with spare tubes, chisels, hammers, sledge hammers, and two air hammers with peculiar ends called "seaters", driven by compressed air under strong pressure. The fire, coal or oil, was extinguished and ashes if any were raked by the ship's firemen. The boilermakers, their equipment already hauled up a ladder and down another into the fire hold by the helpers, were ready to crawl in and go to work. Each tube had to be tested by sharp blows from the boilermaker's hammer, the tones revealing immediately which of the tubes were solid and which were not. The defective tubes were marked by melt-proof chalk, and a boilermaker on his knees at each end of the defective tubes—in a crawl space about three feet high normally filled with smoke—began chipping off the ends of the old tubes, while the helpers heaved and tugged, and the old tubes, if rusty enough, snapped; if not, hacksaws in the hands of the helpers or burning torches in the hands of the boilermakers were employed. The old tubes were removed, hauled through the fire box by the helpers, the new tubes were hauled in, and the process of removal was reversed, concluded when the boilermaker "seat" the tubes with air hammers, an unbelievably noisy process. A good team could replace all the tubes—as many as 40—while the ship unloaded, and it could be ready to get underway almost immediately.

But this was not meant to be a discourse on steam boiler repair; although I learned the source if not the specifics of the adjective "black" applied to Joe before lunch on the first day, and I learned more about the other members of the team aboard, others in the shop, and ultimately about myself before we moved back down the river, the whistle blew, and Black Joe told me, "You come Mary's."

Boilermaking language was, of necessity, short, terse, basic, and obscene, and I thought that, after more than three years in the military, having served with British, Canadians, French, and Yugoslavs as well as Americans, my communication skills were adequate to the circumstances, and yet almost immediately I began to learn better. As we gathered the tools and tubes in the boat to take upriver, I stumbling along in a effort to be useful, Joe look at me suddenly. "Call Ape Shit" he shouted over the din of the place.

"Ape Shit?" I wasn't sure I had heard correctly.

"Ape Shit! Ape Shit! Craneman!"

The meaning if not the etymology of the phrase struck me at once, the first of the many linguistic leaps I learned to make on that first day, and by the end of the week, when I needed the craneman to life a bundle of tubes I could shout "Ape Shit" in confidence with the best of them, and the man so addressed ran the crane down the rails to be of help. Of course at the time I thought it was a generic term for cranemen in the shop; I later learned that it was, in multi-ethnic translation, a family name that may have been Montenegrin or perhaps Bulgarian, as unpronounceable to Joe as Joe's name was to Ape Shit and Abercrombie and the Old Hunkie.

At the end of the first day, hot, dirty, tired, hungry—I had forgotten to bring a lunch and had half-a-sandwich from each of the others—I carried a load of rusty tubes on deck, tripped, and sprawled flat. It was too much, and I described my feelings in the most forcefully eloquent language I knew, and to make matters worse, Joe and Abercrombie

stood there laughing. The old Hunkie just shook his head and then helped me pick up the tubes.

Later, on the boat back to the shop he sat down beside me and asked "Why you swear?" I didn't answer, and he went on: "I swear, Old Hunkie, okay. But you American boy, good education, why you swear?" I couldn't answer.

Later, after the whistle and the invitations to Mary's and the days and weeks that went on in the hot fire boxes of the ore boats up the river, on the small boat to and fro, and in Mary's or in the other clubs the crew frequented, I learned a great deal—the class lines in the Shop, lines clear to the insider, unknown to the outsider, about a melting pot in process, one politically incorrect to the point of obscenity in today's world but which produced a rough, workable social order that, although I didn't know it then, was one of the last vestiges of pre-World War I America still in existence in the late 1940s. It was a remnant of a time when diverse young men from a variety of backgrounds forged a workable language and practiced relationships that functioned well under the worst possible working conditions and the boilers were repaired and the ships sailed. The men took quiet satisfaction in their accomplishments as they cut the soot in their throats at Bloody Mary's.

Lorain then was, like London, a city of clubs, but rather than the Atheneum, Boodles, the Liberal, or the others along Pall Mall facing St. James Park, Lorain's were on 28th Street, facing the steel mills: the Open Hearth Club, Polski Dom, the All Nations Social Club, the Russo-Slav Political Club, an arm of the local Democratic Party, where a friend called Koky Joe (his last name was Kokinda) held political sway. Each of the boilermaking team belonged to at least one, and, at a dollar for membership—they made it up on the booze—I joined several. But Black Joe's club remained Bloody Mary's and each time he invited me across the street, I felt flattered and went. And one day, as the whistle blew and he knew that the GI Bill was calling and I was leaving at the end of the week, he said "Alarm Clock! You come Mary's." And then with a wink he said "I tell you how I got my name." And I went and he told me, but that is another story.

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