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WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW

Published Quarterly by the Wisconsin
Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Volume 24, Number 1
December 1977

Harry Nohr's
Friends Remember
pp. 9-32

A Fitting Symbol

I never knew Harry Nohr. I never bought a Harry Nohr bowl. But reading the pieces by six of Harry Nohr's friends has made me think about how his bowls are a distilled essence of the man, his life, and what he stood for.

Everything that went into him, from earliest childhood on, it seems to me, is reflected in his art. Harry's love of people is indicated by his enjoyment of the art fairs he participated in, and the fact that he loved to talk to bowl lookers and bowl buyers.

His bowls themselves are a combination of talent with tools, an eye for beauty, a love of trees, a familiarity with nature, an ability to work hard, and, connected with the last, the slowly accumulated knowledge of what hard work can get you, besides tired.

I think hard work must have been a very important element in Harry's understanding of life and the way he lived it. The turning, the rubbing—all the difficult steps of the painstaking process of bowl making—brought out the true character and beauty of the grain of the wood. In the same way, the hard work of Harry's life—his response to the turning and rubbing of experience—brought out the true character and beauty of Harry Nohr.

I wish I had known him and bought one of those bowls.

—E.D.

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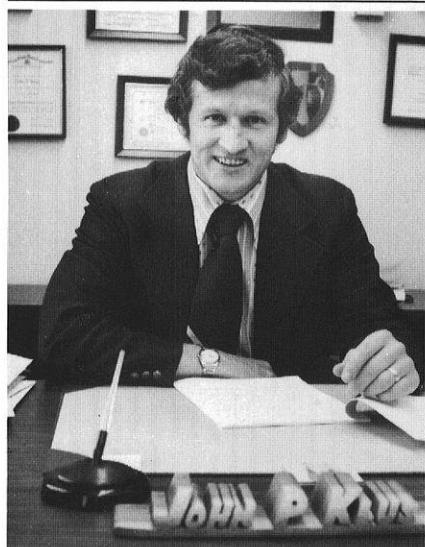
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CONTENTS

- 3 A RESPECTFUL LOOK AT HENRY DODGE - 150 YEARS
LATER
Edna Meudt
- 9 HARRY NOHR'S FRIENDS REMEMBER
Special lift-out section
- 33 WIARD'S ICE BOAT
James Batt
- 34 POEMS BY MARION CONGER STEWART
- 36 WINDFALLS
Arthur Hove
- 39 BOOK REVIEWS
- 41 INSIDE THE ACADEMY
Robert A. McCabe

ABOUT THIS ISSUE...



John Klus

This issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* is unusual in that a special section is devoted to one man, a man whose notably significant life, we thought, would be of interest both to those who knew him and those who did not. Some of those who knew him best have worked hard to bring this special section about.

John Klus, who spearheaded the project, and Clay Schoenfeld have known Harry Nohr since they were children. The durations of the friendships of the others: Don Anderson, Jean Lucey, Howard Mead, and Robert Gard, are impressive too. Together, these people have known Harry Nohr over 145 years. They wanted to remember him and they have.

The Johnson Foundation of Racine has contributed generously

Don Anderson

Robert E. Gard



toward this issue so that more copies of the special section could be printed. Laura Nohr's help, especially in lending photographs from her collection, has been invaluable. We are reproducing several photographs, including the ones on the covers, courtesy of Johnson's Wax. The Academy's own Walter Scott has been helpful also with advice and photographs.

In addition the influence of the outdoor writer, Gordon MacQuarrie, is felt in this issue. He would undoubtedly have jumped at the opportunity to add more, if he had not died first. It is comforting, though, to think that he was already on hand, with the Sickie Man, to greet his old friend upon arrival in the big yonder.

Harry Nohr served the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters as vice president for arts in 1976, the last year of his life. One of his bowls, of rippled walnut, a gift from Harry, graces the living room of the Steenbock Center. Beside the bowl, on a card, are the words: "Trees are a lot like people; they are a lot prettier if they had to struggle to grow."

Edna Meudt's extensively researched piece on Henry Dodge illuminates an historical figure of truly noble proportions. Mrs. Meudt agreed to take on the project

Clay Schoenfeld and Harry Nohr



Edna Meudt

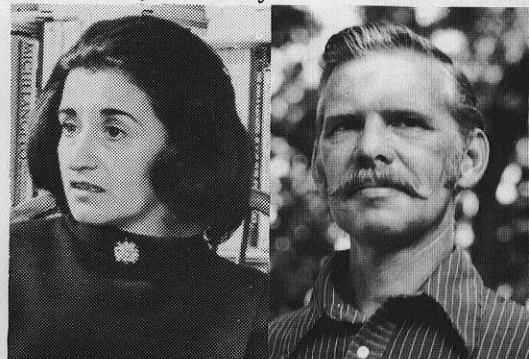
for a "respectful look" at Dodge when she realized how badly misinterpreted he had been. Her Bicentennial play, "Promised Land, the Life and Times of Henry Dodge," together with this article, help to dispell the inaccurate picture of the man as merely an "Indian fighter."

The fact that she lives near Dodgeville in southwestern Wisconsin puts her in close proximity to many reminders of Dodge's influence in the state. She recently had dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Cleghorne Dodge of Baraboo. Bruce Dodge and Russell Eggers, of Bemidji, Minnesota, both great, great grandsons of Henry, have aided Mrs. Meudt in her work. The photo was taken by Academy member Mary North Allen.

Poet Marion Conger Stewart remarks, "Despite my western-mountain background, I am much stirred by the Wisconsin landscape." She grew up in Montana and graduated from the University of Colorado. Three years ago she moved to the state and now, with her husband and three children, resides in Sheboygan. She received a first, two thirds, and several honorable mentions in the 1976 and 1977 National Federation of State Poetry Societies national contests and a first place in poetry in the 1977 Jade Ring Contest of the Wisconsin Regional Writers Association.

Jean Lucey

Howard Mead



For two centuries the family of Tristram Dodge, who landed on Block Island (off Rhode Island) in 1661, prospered from its instinct of migration. Its trail winds throughout the land, marked by Indian wars, exploits in frontier settlements, and a decoration for Israel Dodge from General George Washington for heroic action in the Battle of Brandywine. The record gained new strength with Henry Dodge, born to Israel and his wife, Nancy Ann Hunter, six years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The date was October 12, 1782, and he was the first white child born in what is now Indiana. An Indian chief of the Piankeshaw, seeing the baby, threatened to kill him. But Moses Henry, a manufacturer of arms, in whose house Henry Dodge was born, saved him by telling the chief that the child and mother would not stay there but would soon leave for their home in Kentucky. In gratitude, Nancy Ann named her firstborn after their benefactor, Moses Henry.

Eight years later Israel left his wife, son, and six-year-old daughter at Bardstown (where he had built the first stone house and tavern) to seek adventure and fortune in the Spanish country, in what is now Missouri.

Moses Henry Dodge was but 14 years of age when one day he saw an Indian standing over a prostrated woman of the village, about to scalp her. Dodge responded to the woman's screams by felling the Indian with a sharp stone. This was the nadir of his life in Kentucky, called then, "the dark and bloody land." He had already, at the age of six, witnessed the killing of his grandmother and aunt while hiding with his mother. Five of his uncles on the paternal and maternal sides fell under the hatchet. He had seen some of them borne into the stockade in which they lived. So it was that out of fear of reprisals from the Shawnee, he spent the night following the stone throwing in a graveyard. The next day, in tears, Nancy Ann sent her son and 11-year-old daughter, with a party traveling west, to join their father at Ste. Genevieve, Missouri.

It should be told that Nancy Ann's bravery as a young girl living at the ill-fated Clark's Colony below the mouth of the Ohio River is recorded in history in *A Heroine of the Revolution*. Two of her sons and a grandson were to sit in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, as delegates and senators from different territories and states. American political history does not record any other such triumvirate. They exerted a profound influence over the development of our nation: Henry, the subject of this piece, from whose name the "Moses" was dropped when he joined his father in Missouri, influenced the history of six states. The other son, Lewis Linn, was called Missouri's "model senator" and "the father of Oregon." Augustus Caesar Dodge, Henry's son, was one of the first two senators from Iowa. He introduced the bill for the Nebraska Territory which evolved into the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, commonly claimed

A Respectful Look at Henry Dodge — 150 Years Later

by Edna Meudt

to be the most important measure that led directly to the Civil War.

He had already, at the age of six, witnessed the killing of his grandmother and aunt while hiding with his mother.

Henry Dodge grew to manhood under the care of Israel. With the help of slaves he worked the land and later directed its operations. He learned and performed the various duties connected with his father's mills, distilleries, salt and lead mines. He accompanied Israel on shipping trips up and down the Mississippi River. At the "Bonne Homme" settlement (near St. Louis) he met Christiana McDonald whose father ran a trading post. They were married in 1800. Five years later he became a deputy sheriff under his father, the first public office in a civil and military career that was to span 50 years. He was a brigadier general in the War of 1812 and a delegate to the convention for the adoption of the constitution of Missouri, July 19, 1820. Civil duties included a trusteeship in the Academy of Ste. Genevieve.

Late in March 1827, in protest over unjust taxation, and lured by the fame of the upper Mississippi lead mines, the two future U.S. senators, father and son, set out from St. Mary's Landing, Missouri, bound for Galena, Illinois. Embarking that morning on the steamer "Indiana" in addition to Henry and Augustus Caesar Dodge were Christiana McDonald Dodge and eight children and wards. In the party also were many miners and three freed slaves, all with their families.

Reaching the rapids of the Des Moines River, they were forced to transfer to a keel boat. With the help of 40 French oarsmen, engaged at Keokuk, this primitive craft was rowed and towed against the strong currents of the Mississippi for 24 days. Enforced stopovers caused further delay so that the party did not arrive in Galena until July fourth. Several months were then spent in prospecting for lead, and Dodge was mustered, briefly, into quelling an Indian disturbance.

That same autumn, on October 3, the men in the party established themselves in what is now the city of Dodgeville. They had failed to locate a suitable mining site, but had found housing for their families in Galena. Morgan L. Martin, who in 1831 was to be elected with Dodge to the fifth Legislative Council to represent the entire area west of Lake Michigan, was then touring the mining regions. He later wrote:

At Dodgeville, where Henry Dodge had started a "digging" we found his cabins surrounded by a formidable stockade, and the miners liberally supplied with ammunition. The Winnebago had threatened to oust the little colony, and were displaying an ugly disposition. Dodge entertained us in his cabin, the walls of which were well-covered with

guns. He said there was one gun for every man, and that they would not leave unless the Indians were stronger than they.

One of those cabins remains today on its original site.

It was a large block house two miles south of Dodgeville to which Dodge brought the family in 1828 and this remained his home—with additions—for 40 years. A dozen weddings were held there: seven-daughters, a sister, and several wards. A bronze marker is on the opposite side of County Road Y designating the homesite.

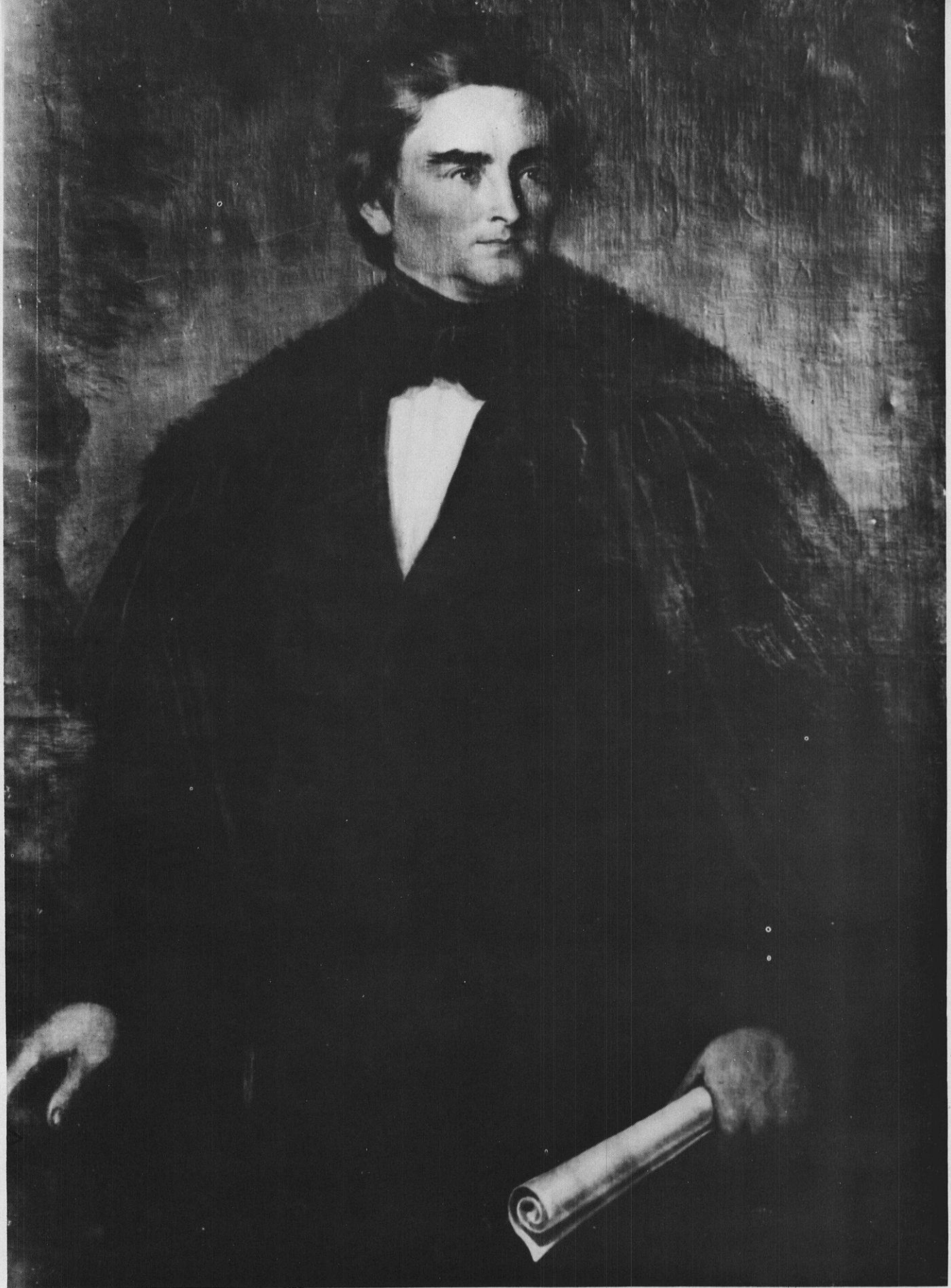
It has been said that Dodge never refused anyone lodging or a loan and that he "freed the slaves in the Dodge party." The latter is inaccurate. The law of the Michigan Territory prohibited slavery. It is noteworthy that these blacks came here on a share-and-share-alike agreement with the other miners, and that Dodge helped provide the Earlys, Wesleys, and Tobey each with a cabin and 40 acres of land. A black woman named Leah lived with the Dodges till the end of her days. And John Tobey remained the faithful servant, accompanying Henry Dodge throughout his life during military and political vicissitudes. Mr. Tobey then spent his last years in the cabin south of Dodgeville where he was often consulted by local historians.

It seems logical that Henry Dodge named Mineral Point after the town of that name in Missouri where some of the Dodge holdings were located. Though Henry had inherited much wealth, it had more or less vanished. But his talent for leadership seems to have been a constant. Adele P. Gratiot, writing of his arrival at Galena: "General Dodge was busily engaged in organizing troops, and creating order and confidence out of terror and confusion." The pattern holding, he was the first chief justice of the Iowa County Court in Mineral Point. He was also one of the first vestrymen of Trinity Episcopal Church which he had helped to found there.

In February 1829, Dodge entered the first of his many petitions to the federal government that there should be a separation of this region from the Michigan Territory. It read:

Taxation and representation should go together, and it will readily appear that the people of the lead mining country have paid a greater amount of taxes than any equal number of citizens in the U.S. or Territories.

Many events transpired to delay the separation. The commission was not issued until April 30, 1836. The new Wisconsin Territory covered a vast domain which included the present states of Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin and all of the Dakotas east of the Missouri River. Henry Dodge was appointed governor for the



This Bowman portrait shows Henry Dodge in the early territorial days when he was chief justice of the Iowa County Court.

Photos from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin



From the State Historical Society of Iowa

One of several paintings made of Henry Dodge by famous western artist George Catlin.

original territory of Wisconsin and superintendent for Indian affairs at a salary of \$2500.

The years preceding this appointment had been crowded with more than mining activities. The Black Hawk War has been variously interpreted. But it cannot be overlooked that it was General Atkinson, not Colonel Dodge, who was in charge. A significant incident occurred when Dodge reached Fort Crawford after the defeat of Black Hawk's band. Atkinson ran out to meet and embrace him, saying, "You have led me on to victory—you have saved me!" The story goes that President Andrew Jackson had issued a warning to Atkinson that if he did not soon end the uprising, his name would be stricken from the rolls of the U.S. Army.

A misconception about Black Hawk is that he was chief of the Winnebago. In fact, he was a leader of the Sack village at the mouth of the Rock River. True, this

was the home of his people and great were the injustices wreaked upon them. However Black Hawk's outrage over the burial place of ancestors seems somewhat overblown when one reads Edward Tanner in the *Detroit Gazette*, January 1819:

The Foxes and Sauks, having become confederates, wrested from the Illinois, 1784, their possessions, and incorporating the remnant which they spared of that numerous tribe, occupied the territory which had been the home of the Illinois. The principal seat of their power was the country about the mouth of the Rock River.

Black Hawk, born in 1767, was then about 17 years of age. He was in the service of the British in the War of 1812, and thereafter received pay from, and kept up connections with, Canada. His confrontation with Dodge in the Black Hawk War was not their first. It was an old hostility, stemming from encounters at Miami Pass and Boone Lick Settlement. "Black Hawk's passions were many, but the consuming passion of his life was hatred of the Americans," according to Stevens' *Black Hawk*. Whatever his well-founded reasons, it is hard to absolve Black Hawk from guilt for leading his followers into a battle that could, against such overwhelming odds, only end as a massacre. Henry Dodge spent two nights in conference with Chiefs White Cloud and Whirling Thunder and other of Black Hawk's lieutenants on May 25, 1832 at Four Lakes (Madison) and again on June 4 at Mound Fort (Blue Mounds). Dodge tried to explain the odds: 4000 militiamen and volunteers against what he knew could not be more than 700 Sack and Winnebago warriors. From Gratiot, a few days later, he wrote in a letter to Dr. Addison Philleo, printed in *The Galenian*: "I am convinced that we are not to have peace with this banditti collection of Indians until they are killed in their dens."

This excerpt from the *Iowa Journal of History* might seem a description of the South in the spring of 1865 rather than of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, 1832:

Conditions were deplorable: fields unplowed, houses vacated or burned; mechanics, farmers, smelters, and miners had forsaken their places of business; cattle were running at large; the mails had stopped; there was grave danger of possible famine.

It was into this theater of war that Black Hawk and the prophet Neopope led their band on June 30, crossing the border into Michigan Territory near the present city of Beloit. It would end miserably at Wisconsin Heights and Bad Axe, battles over which Brigadier General James Henry—not Colonel Henry Dodge nor Colonel Zachary Taylor—had the command. The battalion under Dodge, the military man, has been described in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. II: "A volunteer force, they were a dare-devil, adventurous set of men gathered from fields and mines. They

knew no manual of arms but were spurred on by a hatred of the red race." Thus closed, on August 2, 1832, the last of the Indian wars in this territory—much of which had been, up to this time, a "dark continent." This event blazed the way to western settlement. Twenty-five days later, Black Hawk and Neopope, who had been captured by two Winnebago braves, were delivered to agent Joseph Street at Prairie du Chien.

"As long as I represent the people of Wisconsin I feel bound to conform my actions to their instructions, or resign my position."

"For the defense of the frontier" read the congressional act of June 15, 1832, which had created the battalion of Mounted Rangers. A commission bearing the bold signature of Andrew Jackson had, on June 22, named Henry Dodge to the position of major over this force of six companies. For about a year after the war, this battalion patrolled the frontier. Major Dodge's final order to this force is dated August 7, 1833. During the interim he witnessed several important Indian treaties, settled the matter of fugitives, acted as quartermaster, silenced vague rumors of trouble with the Pottawattamie, and laid down some strict rules as to the conduct of the military in relation to the rights of private citizens. Thus ended the history of the Mounted Rangers. No blood had been shed, no battle had been fought, no acts of heroism recorded. "Major Dodge was able to perform the duties of adviser and friend among a people who with each generation had to look less at a rising and more to a setting sun," records Louis Pelzer's *Henry Dodge*.

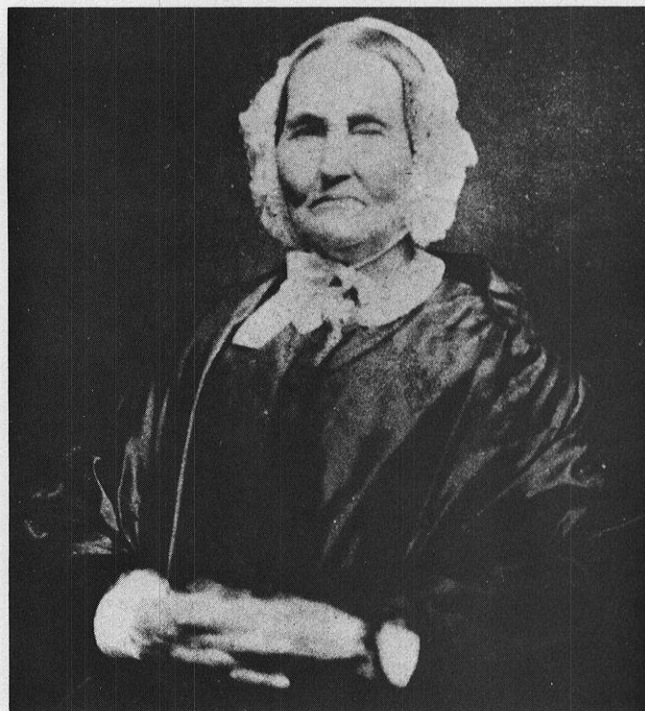
Now came nearly three years of military life and exploration to the Far West as colonel of the first regiment of the U.S. Dragoons. Jefferson Barracks, a post ten miles below St. Louis, was selected as headquarters for the regiment consisting of 748 officers and men. It was a time of utmost extremes. The initial expedition was undertaken over Dodge's protests ("Washington will have it so," he wrote) about the merciless heat at that season. In a letter to George Jones: "The heat of the sun exceeded anything I ever experienced. We marched from Fort Gibson with 500 men and reached the Pawnee/Pict village with not more than 190 fit for duty—the others left behind sick." The noted artist George Catlin accompanied the Dragoons during this period, painting members of various tribes who had never before seen white men. In his *Journals* he wrote of Dodge's bravery under these conditions. It was Dodge's practice to ride forward, flanked only by a standard bearer and an interpreter, to meet the Indian warriors. This entire mission to the West was a peaceable one with not too subtle undertones. Always, greetings from the President were extended but surely there was the intent to impress the red men with the

power of the white men. The 11th and last expedition was in direct contrast to the first, being a 1600-mile trek through the Rocky Mountains. Climate was ideal, water and buffalo were plentiful. Along the way, the troops had been hosted by the Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Arickara, Kickapoo, Kiowa, Choctow, Cherokee, Osage, Otoe, Omaha, Pawnee, Seneca, and others.

In the fall of 1835, Henry Dodge returned to his home and family. The following spring he would begin the years of law enactments, road planning, land and railroad grants, designation of ports and harbors, and new mail routes for the territory of Wisconsin.

The first legislative council was convened at Belmont in Iowa County. There was a frame building for the capitol, three lodging houses, two grog shops, a tavern, a printing office, and an unfinished stable. Delegations arrived on October 26, 1836. The session lasted 46 days. With cold weather the discomforts increased. Wood was scarce; it was difficult to secure enough water for toilet purposes; many slept on floors; and the food left much to be desired. One legislator wrote: "Empty stomachs may make clear heads but not good laws. The Lord deliver us from a set of hungry legislators." However, they enacted 42 laws.

The next convening was at Burlington (now in the state of Iowa) and was a contrast to the first. A cotillion was given in honor of the legislators. Hotels were adequate, community meals consisted of prairie chicken, wild turkey, duck, prairie venison, and fish. Governor Dodge delivered his message on the second day in the hall of the House which had been con-



Christiana McDonald Dodge—they were married for 65 years.

structed for that special use. The entire structure was destroyed by fire on a bitterly cold night late in December. Substitute quarters were found, and adjournment was January 20. One hundred laws had been added to the books, including codification of territorial laws, reapportionment of districts, and designations for county jails.

Then came the third autumn session held in the Assembly hall, the only public building in the "paper city" of Madison. There were one fireplace and one small stove—not enough to keep the ink from freezing, though fortification with whiskey was not uncommon. The floors had been laid with green oak boards full of ice, and seats were of the same material. Near the fireplace the green boards had shrunk, leaving large cracks open to the basement below where James Morrison's large drove of hogs had taken possession. Even in those days there were some members who spoke buncombe. When men of this ilk became too tedious, others would take a long pole and stir up the hogs to a pandemonium of noise. Compelled to stop speaking, the legislator would often give forth with samples of his more private vocabulary.

Four years later, in this same hall, near the fireplace, Charles P. Arndt, zealous partisan and friend of Governor James Doty, was shot to death by a fellow member of the Council, James R. Vineyard. Primitive times or civilized, the line between comedy and tragedy is ever finely drawn.

"It was a tall, dignified, and erect figure that stepped up with a military bearing to take the oath of office in the U.S. House of Representatives, when on December 7, 1841, Governor John Reynolds of Illinois presented the credentials of Henry Dodge," reads the *Congressional Globe*, 27th Congress. In the preceding September election, all but four of the 17 counties had given him a majority of votes. The foregoing description does not fit the "swaggering, gun totin'" image sometimes attributed to Dodge—nor do other parts of his record. For instance, when he was the chief justice of the Iowa County Court, and there was a killing during a trial at Lancaster, he ruled that no one carrying arms could enter a place of justice. In the U. S. Senate, Dodge intercepted gun play between two senators. Henry S. Foote, following an argument, drew a pistol on Thomas Hart Benton. It was Dodge who made the motion for appointment of a committee of seven to report and to investigate action against such incidents in the future. He was appointed chairman but declined to serve because of his friendship with Benton.

One of his earliest votes in the Senate was in favor of extending the slavery prohibition of the old Northwest Ordinance over the territory of Oregon. And so went all his votes on compromise measures. He was scrupulously honest and obedient to his constituents. Once, when Senator Walker (Wisconsin) disregarded his instructions and voted for admission of California with a pro-slavery clause, Dodge, rising

from a sick bed, had himself carried to the Senate Chamber. When his name was called he requested the clerk to read the instructions from the Legislature of Wisconsin to her senators. He then firmly said, "Nay!" It was an action which retired Walker from the confidence and esteem of Wisconsin. In that same spirit, Dodge voted against his son, Augustus Caesar, and many of his friends, on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. In 1856, when the debate over the admission of Kansas was raging, he rose to say:

I have heretofore voted against the extension of slavery. I shall continue to do so. Although I have seen much to approve in the bill and that it is calculated to give peace to the people of Kansas, as long as I represent the people of Wisconsin I feel bound to conform my actions to their instructions, or resign my position.

"He helped to make and to mould two mighty Mississippi Valley Commonwealths."

Henry Dodge was ever aware of his almost total lack of an early academic education and though he surely knew that experience and ability compensated, still this lack influenced his most important decisions, as when national offices were within his reach. He was a warm friend of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, and refused the nomination for President in 1844 at the Democratic Convention because he was loyal to Van Buren. Had he accepted, he would have been President instead of James K. Polk. Four years later his name was again presented to the convention; they subsequently nominated Lewis Cass, who was defeated by Zachary Taylor, an old companion-in-arms of Dodge at the battle of Bad Axe. In June 1848, Dodge received the nomination for Vice President at a convention in Utica, New York, but declined. The following August, a Free Soil convention at Buffalo, New York nominated him for President. He refused the nomination, and Van Buren was named as the presidential nominee with Dodge as vice presidential nominee, and when he declined again the name of Charles Adams was substituted. In 1851, he was proposed for President by Senator Thomas Hart Benton, and received early votes before again withdrawing. Books have been written about Dodge's exceptional courage and stamina but almost no attention has been paid to this higher quality of putting the good of his country before personal ambition.

In the U.S. Senate, his personal dignity, martial bearing, and unstained record ranked him with Webster, Clay, and Calhoun. (He was a pallbearer at Clay's funeral.) When he retired in 1857 he was an old

continued on page 38



Harry Nohr's Friends Remember

A Special Section

With an introduction by
DON ANDERSON and
articles by JOHN KLUS,
JEAN LUCEY, CLAY
SCHOENFELD,
HOWARD MEAD, and
ROBERT E. GARD.

INTRODUCTION

by Don Anderson

The names of the authors whose stories follow this are a tribute to the memory of the man about whom they write.

Harry Nohr was a personality with many shining facets. Each of these people knows something special about one or more of his varied talents and skills. My own acquaintance touched only a few of his high spots, but I cherish each and wish there had been more.

He was as common and comfortable as an old shoe. He was unselfish and undemanding in his relationships. One constantly was rewarded with glimpses of his understanding of nature, his love of the beauty in it, his dedication to good craftsmanship.

It was fun to hear him tell a story, cuss words and all. They never sounded profane, just an accurate reporting of how real people talked and lived. Seldom were they about sophisticated or intellectual people; almost always about railroad men, lumberjacks, fishermen, small town folk. He would tell how they helped him find walnut and maple burls for his bowls; how he could teach them to appreciate the lovely grain in even the more commonplace trees.

Harry tried to teach me how to turn bowls on my lathe. I worked hard, learned his techniques, copied his tools. The best of mine never was 70 percent as good as his. I didn't have the hands, the eyes, nor the patience. He was the best of his kind, just as his bowls are.

Trout fishing was our main contact. We rode horses for miles to the little streams high in the Montana mountains looking for the big cut-throat that spawn there. We fished and talked, caught many and brought home few. Luring them to the hook was the sport. The Indians in North Central Wisconsin, to whom he had been kind as a boy, taught him how to tie his own flies, how to entice the wily ones to

his lure. They taught him how to skin a fish and tan the skin, something few white fishermen can do.

One memory sticks with me. We were wading and fishing Montana's fast Gallatin River. Harry spotted a big rainbow lurking behind a rock. I was all for going after him. Harry suggested we rest awhile and wait for a hatch. So we sat on the bank and talked.

Soon there was a hatch of may flies in the air. Harry grabbed and caught one. He studied it, then looked in his fly book for one he thought might match. He tied it to the end of his hair-thin leader and started making long false casts. Finally he dropped the fly, ever so gently, within inches of where he had spotted the fish. The trout took the hook.

Then began an exciting scene of an artist at work. Rod high, he carefully fed out taut line as the fish darted and dodged up the river; then he stripped in line as it turned and came downstream toward us. The fish broke water a dozen times in graceful arches. Quick as a flash, Harry would lift the rod even higher and tighten the line. After probably 20 minutes of careful playing, the rainbow was in the water at our feet, ready for netting.

Harry took a long look at the nearly exhausted speckled beauty, then let his line go slack. Smiling, he said:

"Well, old fellow, you put up a game fight and deserve another chance. We'll leave you here for someone else to have some fun with."

With the tension gone, the trout worked the hook out of his mouth and rather slowly swam off for safer waters.

That was my Harry Nohr. Great sportsman! Great man!

Don Anderson is the retired publisher of the Wisconsin State Journal.

HARRY NOHR, THE MAN

by John Klus

The great sports and outdoor writer Gordon MacQuarrie once said, "If you have ever wondered what became of Huckleberry Finn after he grew up, Harry Nohr could be that character. A native of Wisconsin—as native as wild apple trees and blackberry thickets in Iowa County—Nohr has savored the best this state has to offer."

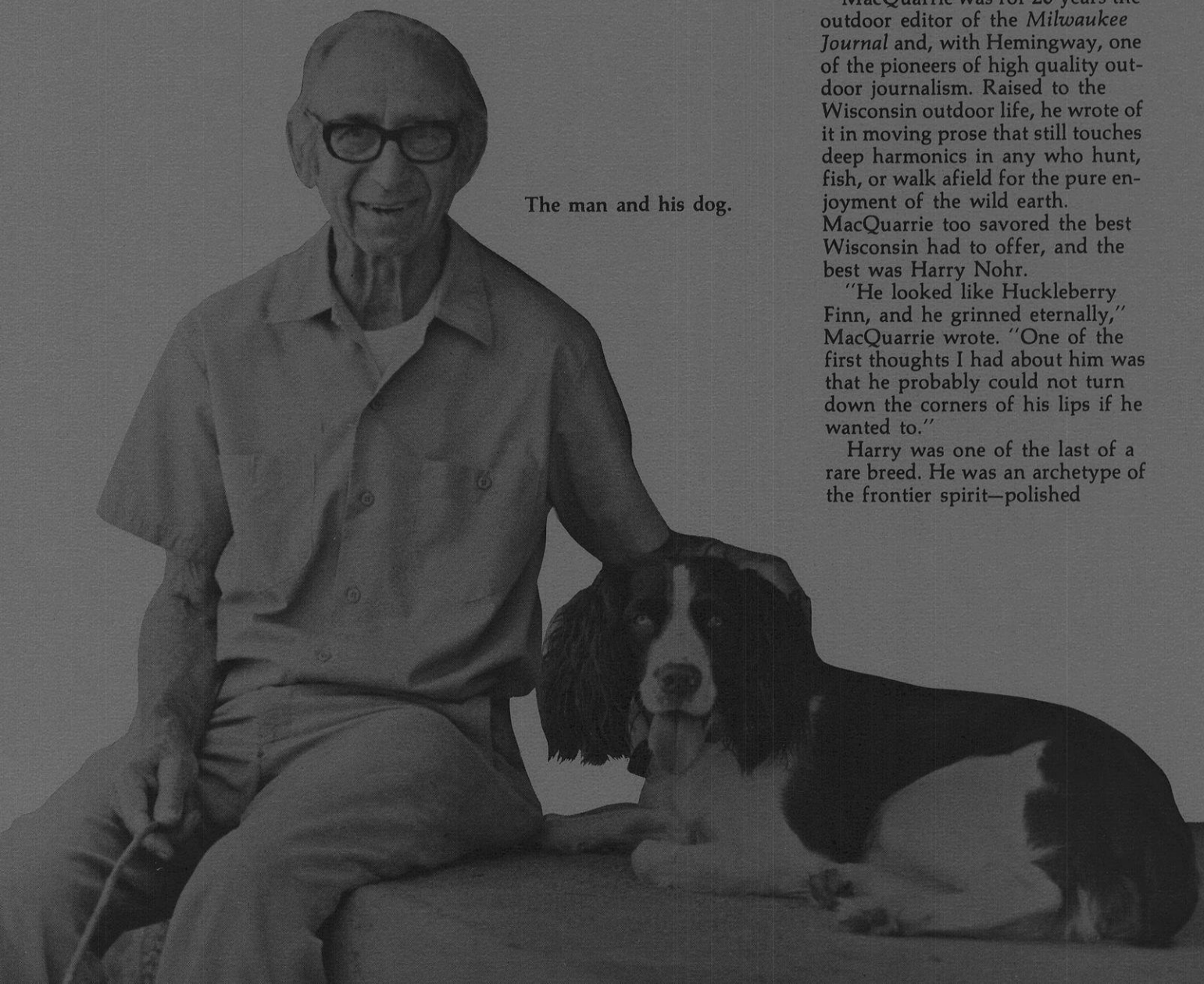
MacQuarrie was only one of Harry Nohr's admirers and friends. Over the years they have praised him as "a true countryman, a species almost extinct," "the most civilized man in Wisconsin," and even "one of nature's most delightful creations." Yet no one could match the eloquence that sprang from Gordon MacQuarrie's literary flair and bloomed through his years of close friendship with Harry.

MacQuarrie was for 20 years the outdoor editor of the *Milwaukee Journal* and, with Hemingway, one of the pioneers of high quality outdoor journalism. Raised to the Wisconsin outdoor life, he wrote of it in moving prose that still touches deep harmonics in any who hunt, fish, or walk afield for the pure enjoyment of the wild earth. MacQuarrie too savored the best Wisconsin had to offer, and the best was Harry Nohr.

"He looked like Huckleberry Finn, and he grinned eternally," MacQuarrie wrote. "One of the first thoughts I had about him was that he probably could not turn down the corners of his lips if he wanted to."

Harry was one of the last of a rare breed. He was an archetype of the frontier spirit—polished

The man and his dog.



shrewdness in a rough exterior, industrious and adventuresome, full of wonder, outrage, and amusement with the world, charged with irreverent humor and penetrating insight.

The writers of this memorial series are among those who loved and admired Harry. Like MacQuarrie, I was very close to Harry. Now, like MacQuarrie, I would like to share my vivid impressions of Harry Nohr, the man, through my memories of incidents in Harry's life, stories he told, and principles that guided him. If I do not have the eloquence of a MacQuarrie, then perhaps Gordon would not mind if I steal some of his material. Harry might enjoy the joke on his old friend.

It was during World War II that I first met Harry. I was only nine years old, but it didn't take me long to realize that there was something different and special about him. My father had a resort on Lake Hilbert in Armstrong Creek in northern Wisconsin, and Harry stayed with us when he came up to indulge his love for trout fishing in that summer of 1943. I spent most of my time selling minnows, renting boats, taking care of the lawn and the outdoor toilets, and resurrecting huge blocks of ice from storage beneath the sawdust in the ice shed to sell to people who had cabins in the area. But ah, when my chores were done, how I loved to fish!

"I KNEW YOU'D COME"

One day Harry took me along in his canoe for some trout fishing on the Popple River. We paddled up from the old campgrounds to Camp One Falls. The mile stretch of quiet water provided an opportunity to view the beauty of blended hardwood and conifer forest. We put in to shore and separated, Harry working his way downstream and I going in the opposite direction. I spent much of the day around the base of the falls, where the sandy bottom sank into a deep hole, and fat trout lurked. Time passed pleasantly from early

afternoon into evening and finally I returned to the canoe to wait for Harry. I waited a long time. The sun sank through the trees and behind them, the last beams crawling up through leafy boughs and slipping off the treetops. I waited as the air became cooler and black shadows crept from the underbrush and began filling up the forest. Night was moving in. The impulse was growing upon me to launch the canoe and head back downstream. Harry might be just minutes away on his way back to the rendezvous spot, but those few minutes might make it more difficult to navigate.

Finally I could wait no more. I had to assume that Harry would be waiting on the river below and, if not, he must be lost in the woods in need of help. Either way the best course of action was to leave. Fifteen minutes downstream I spotted the dusky form of Harry casting serenely into the current. When I beached the canoe and asked him why he hadn't shown up, he replied confidently, "I knew you'd come down the river looking for me."

How, I wondered, did he know that when even I had been in doubt? How did he know that I would take the decisive step of leaving the rendezvous spot instead of waiting? How did he know that I wouldn't, either from concern or fear, stay there shivering in the darkness by the falls?

I looked up at this sage, old woodsman and wondered if he might be some kind of superhuman.

With the passing of years my impressions of Harry became more realistic; yet my respect and admiration for him increased. I fished and hunted with Harry through high school and college, and then I went away to the service and didn't see much of him or his wife, Laura, for quite a while. When I went to school at Houghton, Michigan, I saw them again every fall; and when I came back to Madison for my Ph.D. work we began getting together often.

But it was after Harry's retirement in 1962, when he started making bowls, that I really got to spend a lot of time with him. It was the bowls that provided our best opportunities to sit and talk. Nobody could *just* sit and talk with Harry, of course, and that was where the bowls came in. After the bowls had been thoroughly coated and soaked through with successive applications of epoxy, and the epoxy had dried, they had a hard, varnish-like finish. To remove this finish, to bring out the natural texture and luster of the wood, required hours of rubbing. This rubbing process was what made the bowls so uniquely different. The task could be brutal drudgery—Harry called it a punishment for our sins—but it was very pleasant in pleasant company. With Harry it provided the most joyful times of my life. During the past 15 years Harry and I have probably spent hundreds of hours in his basement rubbing bowls.

We would start early on Saturday morning and rub for hours that glowed with hot debates and interesting stories. Sometimes when Harry wanted to raise my blood pressure he would talk about religion. An agnostic, he loved to stir me with an attack on some part of my religious beliefs, and I would launch counterattacks on his political philosophies. When the tempo got out of hand and the voices too loud we might hear Laura rapping on the floor upstairs for us to quiet down and stop disturbing her guests. Harry would always apologize quickly. He claimed that the only reason he whipped up the debate was to get the bowl rubbing into high gear.

I had always wanted to use a tape recorder and make a permanent record of some of these discussions, and I regret that I never quite got around to it.

On a specific weekend I might start out by asking Harry to tell me everything he could remember from the day he was born until he was 16. He would usually start out by saying that the first thing he

could remember was the doctor slapping him on the ass. But when he got down to the real stories, I am certain he remembered them accurately. A story, told at two different times, 15 years apart, would be identical; unlike some outdoorsmen (notoriously fishermen), whose imaginations paint their adventures in carnival colors where the years have faded their memories.

DRAWERS FULL OF SOCKS

Harry's parents were from the old country, his mother from Denmark and his father from Norway. He was born June 22, 1896, at a time when his parents were impoverished by the economic panic of those years and the scars of his hard beginning showed long afterwards. He used to laugh that he couldn't pass up a warm pair of wool socks. He had whole drawers full of them. That squirrel instinct also required an addition onto his basement to keep over 1000 rough-cut wooden blocks for turning into bowls.

"You just never know when you're going to run out of good wood," he used to explain.

At nine years of age, Harry had to leave home and live with family friends, the Barlows, in the little town of Rural, Wisconsin. There he earned his keep doing chores around the house as well as in the garden and yard.

One day Harry told how he learned the first great lesson of his life, on the Fourth of July, 1907. It was customary in the early morning of the Fourth to shoot firecrackers, a gun, anything to make a loud noise. At the tender age of 11 Harry thought it might be interesting to try a few sticks of dynamite. He knew that if he could explode them high in the air they would surely make a noise worthy of comment. He put four dynamite sticks in a metal bucket, strung a piece of rope on the bucket, and threw the rope over a lofty branch of the ancient tree in the center of town. He pulled the bucket into the air and tied the rope's other end to

the bottom of the tree's trunk. A long fuse dangled beneath the bucket, which fuse he lit, and then ran. When the dynamite went off it blew away half the tree, smashed every window in the nearby church and general store, and rocked the whole town out of their beds. The town fathers had no trouble finding the culprit. He had to spend the rest of the year working after school and when his other chores were done in order to pay for the damage. He learned the hard way that people must pay the consequences of their acts. He often commented that the same principle is not being applied today, and he found that unfortunate.

Harry's life as a woodsman and conservationist also began about this time. He had an early love of nature that carried him often into the woods for hunting and fishing. Every summer Indians would come to camp on the Crystal River. The man whom MacQuarrie would later characterize as "a trout fisherman, a fly tier, a deer stalker, a small-mouth bass specialist, and a crack shot" was befriended by the Indians and learned from them a great deal about the outdoors. He learned the names and moods of nature, and may already have been forming the ecological concepts that later made him a prime mover in Wisconsin's conservation programs. He learned to fish, trap, make things out of wood and leather, and generally to be self-sufficient. The future president of the Old Duck Hunters Association, Inc., began his star-spangled career one day with a single shot shotgun and a single shell. Sneaking up on four ducks, he aimed his gun and waited patiently until two heads came into line. He walked home weighted down with the bulk of two ducks and buoyed up by the pride that only a young boy can have.

"FIND A WAY"

Making do with materials at hand became a major theme of Harry's life. One of his favorite sayings was "Find a way." He

believed it could always be done.

"If I wanted a sled," Harry said in later years, "my mother would say, 'You'll have to make it yourself.' And I would say, 'Well how?' She must have said to me a thousand times, 'You must find a way.' I've always remembered that."

When one of Harry's projects lacked some vital ingredient, he would find it or form it. Harry designed all the tools used in making his bowls, a common practice in Harry's life. When Harry served in France during World War I, French soldiers were making souvenir vases from shell casings and selling them to American soldiers.

"They made them pretty crude," Harry recalled, "and they sold them for 20 francs. My friend bought one and asked me why I didn't buy one too and I said, 'I think it's crude. I can make a better one than that myself,' and my friend laughed at me, you know, in a manner that made me decide to show him."

"I got some old shells. I didn't have any punches or tools but I had already learned that you can find a way if you want to bad enough."

In the firing pins from old German rifles, Harry found good steel for making punches. He needed longer punches as well, and these he made by filing points on the ends of push rods taken from the engine of a French spad airplane that had crashed in a nearby stone quarry. He decorated his vases by tracing an eagle, the statue of liberty, and other designs from a magazine, and sold the finished products for 55 francs apiece.

When Harry was 80 years old he still loved to dance, and he still did so gracefully. He had an ear for music that developed early on. At 12 years of age he took up the clarinet, and when he had to quit school a couple of years later to work cutting wood for local farmers, he began playing in a little orchestra that toured much of Waupaca County. Along with his love for music, Harry began building a love for people as he traveled.

"GET A TRADE"

One of his farmer employers once advised him that if he was going to do anything with his life he would have to get a trade. Harry became apprentice to a butter-maker, a profession respected highly in that area of the state. He had to pay for the training and work long, long hours, seven days a week. His apprenticeship complete, he then found a job in Surging, Wisconsin, 40 miles north of Green Bay, and labored there for several years more until the boss's son came home and got Harry's job. Harry moved back to Waupaca for a short time until he got wind of a buttermaking job in South Dakota. Although he didn't know it at the time, he had struck paydirt.

As a buttermaker he became a highly valued citizen of a little village settled mostly by Russians. He gained great respect for their hard work and community spirit. When his buttermaking duties were going smoothly, Harry began experimenting with ice cream production. He figured out how to make it, keep it, and sell it without too much equipment or investment and soon ice cream became as profitable as buttermaking. But Harry was already off on another undertaking. He noticed that the poor Russian farmers were selling their eggs at the local store for miserable sums of money. Organizing a co-op, Harry was soon shipping the eggs to nearby cities where they brought much better prices. Butter-maker, ice cream maker, and co-op manager, Harry still needed a vent for his excess energy, so he joined a small band that played one or two nights a week around South Dakota.

Harry had been in South Dakota only a year and a half when the patriotic fervor of World War I carried him to the local induction center. He was rejected for being too scrawny, but a helpful sergeant suggested he go home, gorge himself with food and drink, avoid the bathroom, and try again. A few days later he was in the signal corps.

Since he had already been rejected as "Harry I. Nohr," however, he signed in as "Harry E. Nohr," and so he is known to this day.

Harry trained with a cavalry unit and developed a love for horses. Years after, he would criticize my father mercilessly when we were working in the woods, because my father sometimes switched his horse and treated it roughly.

"That's not the way we did it in the army," Harry would inform him.

Harry had also worked with wild mustangs rounded up in the West, for the cavalry. He had learned from a man who maintained that every horse can be handled without once using stirrup, stick, or whip. "It takes months to bring a good horse around," Harry lectured.

My father would complain, "I don't have months to bring this #@#* horse around. I've got to get this pulp out in a week."

Harry had always had a hard time understanding why they had trained with horses to conduct a modern war in France. When he had actually reached France he had wound up carrying messages on a motorcycle.

Now we had a nice fire going in the rubbing room's little woodstove, and it reminded Harry of how cold he used to get on that motorcycle and of the comfort and warmth he had found in front of fires on the front lines and in headquarters. He was thankful, he said, that he had not had to spend more time on the front lines. I'm certain that was not his reaction then, however; he always wanted to do his part no matter what the circumstances.

"What happened when you returned from the army?" I asked.

After the war Harry sank his savings into a partnership in a creamery. Harry's partner, Rube Ellsworth, was a shrewd and enterprising businessman, and Harry proved adept at running the creamery operations. Together they built a very profitable operation, worth about \$35,000 in fact.

A GREAT REGRET

One of the greatest regrets of Harry's life, as he told it, was over something that happened about this time. He lived in a Mineral Point rooming house. Another occupant, Newell Boardman, was an attorney and close friend of Harry's during those years, but he was not the artist at fly fishing that Harry was. Once when several of them were fishing in northern Wisconsin, they made a bet as to who would catch the biggest fish. Similar bets had been made before and poor Newell had never had a chance. But this time it was different. Newell came back in triumph with an outstanding 22-inch trout. The others had only a few small ones. When Newell asked what Harry had caught, Harry pulled out several smaller trout and then, with unkind dramatic flourish, hoisted a 24-incher before Newell's eyes.

The stove was hot and the energy of Harry's rubbing was forming beads of sweat on his brow as he added, "If I go to hell, I deserve it for having pulled out that last trout. I've never quite forgiven myself for doing that."

The creamery grew to fill an increasing demand for milk products, until they apparently stepped on the toes of a much larger creamery. The big company decided that Nohr and Ellsworth had to go, and continuously undercut prices until they went under. Refusing out of pride to declare bankruptcy, Harry went to work selling calendars and paid back all his debts.

In 1925 he took a job with C. H. Stewart, Inc. out of Newark, New York. His job was to set up local distributors who would go from house to house selling the Stewart product line. He was to travel the entire United States. During the summer of 1925 he married Laura Jacka, a lovely girl who was to share the rest of his life with him. They traveled together for C. H. Stewart throughout the country. The long evenings allowed an opportunity for reading great and interesting books as well as for learn-

ing from thousands of different people in all parts of the country. Harry built a grass roots understanding of America that few people have had the chance to develop. In 1934 Harry's sister died, leaving six children to be parceled out among relatives. Harry took on the responsibility of raising six-year-old Loraine, whom they later adopted. Because life on the road would have been difficult, Loraine stayed with Laura's mother while in school, joining Harry and Laura on their travels during the summer. In the late '30s they finally decided to settle down for Loraine's sake. They put down their landing gear in Mineral Point, where Harry then got a job running the Ford Agency. He was to become one of Mineral Point's most recognized and memorable citizens. As one of the few Democrats in a Republican town he had his difficulties, of course. During the McCarthy era he was called a Communist, and he eventually was critical of the American Legion, of which he had been a proud member after World War I.

For Christmas every year I would give Harry four days of free Polish labor. This meant spending six or eight Saturday mornings—and sometimes afternoons—making blocks, rubbing bowls, or helping out in some other way. Best of all were the bowl-rubbing sessions because they brought out a special closeness between us. When Harry and I were together in Europe once, we toured a Helsinki hotel and ended up in their sauna, where we sat to talk a few minutes. The few minutes turned into 45 before someone came to get us for dinner. And when I show people around my own sauna, it is surprising how often we sit down and talk. There is something secure, something that encourages frank and intimate discussions, in a small and comfortable space. So it was with Harry's rubbing room located between the workshop and the wood storage room in Harry's basement. It was small and poorly decorated, with

bare rafters, a furnace, and the little wood stove. Most of the rubbing room's character came from the stove. Cast iron, with a broken handle on the ash bin, it was a focal point that radiated comfort. It provided a slight diversion now and then to throw a few wood scraps in. Sometimes we talked about the smells of different kinds of wood—walnut, apple, cedar.

When starting a new rubbing session, Harry would say, "Okay, it's your turn to pick the subject, and I'll pick the sides, and let's have a go at it."

I would argue either side and Harry would do the same. He said that in his family it was felt that people must learn to discuss and disagree without hard feelings. When we first started rubbing bowls I would sometimes get very angry with Harry, but I realized that one lesson I had to learn from him was not to feel malice in disagreement.

Harry was a good diplomat, with a great ability to understand and work with people. He often said, "To the degree that you lack tact, you must use force. On occasion you will have to use force but you should never feel good about it."

These words still linger in my mind and affect my relationships with people as I have to supervise them. One day when I asked him what to do about a problem I was having with some clerical help, he told me what he had once done while working at the Badger Ordnance Plant during World War II.

"TREAT PEOPLE LIKE DOGS"

Harry was put in charge of a production line that had been a disaster area of complaints, conflicts, constant sick leaves, low morale, and poor production. These trends reversed soon after Harry took over the operation, and production rose dramatically. Greatly impressed, the plant manager asked Harry to give a short seminar to the other line managers. Harry reluctantly agreed. When the supervisors were assembled, he started his talk this way:

"Gentlemen, you have to treat these people like dogs."

The only sound in the room was the stifled breathing of managers too stunned to talk.

"I love my dogs," Harry proceeded softly, "I treat them with kindness and respect. When they're feeling down I give them the gentle affection that humans and animals both need. My dog Boots will retrieve ducks in the coldest of weather, just because he cares for me. If you can make your workers care for you as an individual, there is no telling what it will do to improve the speed and quality of their work."

Unlike many managers, Harry never forgot that the workers were innately his equals in their need for understanding and personal dignity. Combined with Harry's strong insistence on productivity, this philosophy made him so successful a manager that he received a "Simon Legree" whip as a Christmas joke. Harry proved himself a leader. No one forgot his opening words of that seminar or the message that followed. The lesson he taught guides me today as I assume similar responsibilities.

Harry was a teacher, probably more skilled at that art than most university professors, myself included. With the elegant turn of a simple phrase he could convey more understanding than a bushel of masters theses. He loved to work with young people, often accompanying boy scouts on wilderness trips as far away as Canada. One thing he always taught them was that every campsite should be cleaner and have more wood in it when they left than when they arrived.

"Always leave a place better than when you got there," Harry said, and like all good teachers he carried his teachings over into his life. Indeed, Gordon MacQuarrie once remarked of Harry, "A very nice thing about him is that everybody feels a little better when he shows up in a crowd."

Harry had a truly strong belief in education, defending investments in education wherever required. He

was delighted when I got involved in education, and he described my getting my Ph.D. as one of the proudest moments of his life. In one of our philosophical discussions, which usually came when we were working with large bowls, I asked what was his definition of education. He gave me what I believe is a good definition but one not often used in educational circles:

"Education is the subjugation of emotion with reason."

CHILDREN SHOULD QUESTION

One day my three-year-old daughter Lisa came downstairs while we were rubbing bowls and wanted to go into the storage room. Harry said, "No, you must not go in there or the big bear will get you."

By then she knew there wasn't a bear, but she would go along with the story. She asked, "Uncle Harry, why don't you come in with me then?"

Harry said, "Oh no, I'm afraid of the big bear."

So Lisa declared, "Then I'll go in myself."

She had developed a high sense of the gaming that was going on, and was pretending there really was a bear. She went in and scolded it.

After Lisa left, Harry commented, "It is important that children question and reason, and not believe everything that adults say. And it is wonderful that after they have developed that ability they can play games just as we do."

This was one of Harry's philosophies that I appreciated deeply, for he had taught me the same lesson a generation before he taught it to my daughter. In the long-ago summer of our first meeting, I now suspect, Harry saw in me some of the little boy who had once moved in with the

Barlows. Harry was an outstanding fisherman. He took care of his gear like no one I had ever seen and he had this lovely Old Towne canoe that I would have given away the whole resort for. Because I knew Harry could teach me about fishing, I clung reverently to his words. One day he cautioned me always to take good care of my casting reel, and said that the best way to do that was to rub it in the sand.

I asked, "Why would you want to rub it in the sand?"

"Don't ask questions when your elders speak to you," he replied. "Just rub it in the sand."

Apparently I caught the jest in his eyes, and said, "That doesn't sound very sensible."

"That's the trouble with you kids nowadays," Harry said. "You have no respect for your elders."

Then he laughed and explained

Hunting companions: Laura, dogs, Harry, and, at right, Gordon MacQuarrie.



how bad sand can be for a reel. Harry felt sorry for gullible children, and was glad when he could invest them with a healthy cynicism.

Harry always took good care of his things in order to be prepared for the next time he wanted to use them. "Prepare well" was a motto he lived by. He put care and planning into everything with a skill that few people have mastered, whether cleaning fishing tackle, getting ready to go hunting, cutting wood, or making a bowl.

When he wanted sections cut from burls for bowl making, I was the only one he trusted to use a power saw without ruining the wood. When I got to his house early of a Saturday morning he would have three saws sharpened and laid out, gasoline standing by, and three or four boys well instructed on how to help out. One boy kept the saws filled with gasoline and lubricated with oil, one helped Harry make the outline of a bowl on each block, which I then rough-cut, and one stacked the trimmed blocks. I cut continuously and smoothly from the moment I started.

IMPROVE THE PROCESS

In the same way, when I arrived for some bowl rubbing, Harry always had everything laid out—sandpapers, pumice stone, rotten stone. And he was always seeking ways to improve the process. We sat on chairs that were slightly higher than average, to facilitate the "proper" bowl-rubbing posture. Positioned to complement that posture, a lamp hung down over the rubbing area, shaded to protect our eyes from glare. Arms had to be extended to avoid excess force and to get the most effective circular motion. The proper motion was smooth, almost hypnotically so. You had to apply just the right pressure to the surface and it could not change—too light and the job would take too long; too hard and you would soon grow tired. Once when Harry went upstairs to answer the phone, I sat for a long time in the silent basement, slowly

and softly rubbing, rubbing, rubbing until I caught myself about to fall on the floor. I was not drowsing; just so tranquilized that I had lost track of everything but the motion of the rubbing. Harry had evolved the soothing and repetitious process to make the most efficient use of energy. When I would relax and sit wrong he would say, "That's the way the Poles are. They don't know how to conserve energy."

If he saw me sweating, he would accuse me of wasting energy. I sweated because I was going faster than he was, but he would never give me the proper credit.

Whatever Harry did he put his very best into it.

"There is dignity in all work," he used to say.

COMMITMENT TO WORK

In the Mineral Point post office where he worked he believed there was as much dignity in delivering the mail as in running the operation. Each should be done with the fullest commitment. How he laughed when people called him an artist in his early bowl-making days. He claimed that he wasn't an artist, but just a guy who put in a lot of hard work, especially "this damned rubbing."

It was hard to tell how much of Harry was work and how much was art. In a review of his life, both run together in a blur of ceaseless motion. Psychologists have described how people who submerge themselves deeply enough in their work can enter a euphoric state of total involvement that floods them with energy. Commonly associated with artists, this "creative transport" is believed to be only a temporary state. But if ever there was one who entered that state, settled down, and took out a mortgage, that was Harry Nohr.

The man never lived, said Gordon MacQuarrie, who could fill up each moment of a day like this one. After one particular day of hunting with MacQuarrie, Harry "tied into the ducks and partridge. When he had finished cleaning them his in-

satiable eye fell upon the woodpile."

"You can spot those real country-raised boys every time when they grab an axe. They know what to do with it. No false moves. No glancing blows. In no time he had half a cord of fine stuff split and piled for the kitchen range and he went on from that to the sheer labor of splitting big maple logs with a wedge for the fireplace. He spotted my canoe and considered painting it, but decided it was too cold, and anyway, it had begun to snow a little. Then he speculated about the weather, and when I said I wished I had a weather vane on the ridgepole, he went into action.

"He whittled out an arrow from an old shingle, loosely nailed it there firmly. I suppose that if I had mentioned building an addition to the back porch he'd have started right in. He came down from the roof covered with snow and said he wished he hadn't killed those four ducks in the morning, so he could go again."

At this point Harry "should have been bone tired. Certainly I was. But before I relit the big heater he took down its 15 feet of stovepipe, shook out the soot, and wired it back to the ceiling. He carried in enough wood for the remaining three days, stamping off snow and whistling and remembering such tales as one hears in all properly managed hunting camps....He spied a seam rip in my buckskin pants and ordered me to take them off so he could mend them."

"His last act that evening was to go to his car and return with a bushel of hickory nuts. He set up a nut-cracking factory on a table, using a little round steel anvil he had brought for busting 'em. He had a pint of hickorynut meats when I put the grub on the table."

In spite of Harry's claims to the contrary, he was an artist. He found art in all things and dignity in all work. He viewed even the smallest tasks as important and worthy, and tackled them with the same devotion he put into his bowls.

Something that always comes to mind when I think of Harry and hunting or fishing, is his sense of humor. Harry was a great practical joker, and his rascal wit was never more mischievous than when he was away from the sobering influences of civilization.

One of Harry's favorite stories was about the time he took his first fishing trip with my father, on the Pine River. When a big storm began to gather, they took to shore, set the rubber raft up against a tree, and sat quietly developing their newfound friendship. Harry happened to reach into his pocket and his fingers came in contact with his fuel cube, a small brick of wood fiber, wax, and kerosene used to start fires. Harry knew that my father chewed Copenhagen tobacco. The fuel cube was slightly chipped on the edge, so Harry pretended to have taken a bite and asked my father if he wanted a chew of the new tobacco brand.

"I'll try it," my father said amiably, and took a bite. From that point on, Harry claimed, "He quit calling me 'Mr. Nohr.'"

Our sessions in the basement were often reminiscences of those early experiences. We never seemed to sit there quietly as we always did in fishing. It was a time to talk, a time of looking into the past, and it was often a humorous look.

ANTICS AT "THE SHACK"

Our hunting camp in Armstrong Creek, known as "the shack," was surely Harry's favorite hunting place. It was more than a cabin in the woods. It seemed to have picked up a little of the character of everyone who had stayed in it. A new fellow coming into the camp really didn't have a chance. I suspect that Harry was a would-be actor and loved playing all kinds of different make-believe parts. He and my father both did this to perfection. The movie "The Sting" could have been written about them. Their favorite was the fake telephone routine. After a few drinks, and a little talk to stir the

blood, they would begin planning the evening. Harry would say, "John, it's Saturday night, and it must be six months since we had Mary and the girls over. I'm ready, how about you."

My father would reply, "I can't understand why you waited so long."

So Harry would rush to the phone and "dial" Mary's house of ill repute. He talked on the phone with such conviction that even I sometimes had a hard time believing he wasn't talking to Mary. He would argue about price, and how many girls he needed, and mention the new guy in camp who would need something special because of his inexperience. Then Harry would ask all the boys to declare their interest and pledge some cash. My father would lead off, everyone else would join in, and of course the newcomer had to follow. Then they let him in on the joke.

The pranks that were played in that cabin were as much a part of the enjoyment as a successful hunt or a big catch of fish. In the heat of one political argument, Doc McGin and Harry challenged each other to a cooling-off period below the ice of the pond. Recognizing a rare opportunity, my father bet them \$5 they wouldn't do it. The argument, the challenge, and the bet were too much. They broke ice and dipped naked under the water. Harry was about 70 at that time, but was not going to be outdone by "that damned Republican."

When Harry suffered his first stroke, I recall commenting to Jim Engels, a close Mineral Point friend, how fortunate it was that Harry happened to meet our family and become one of our hunting gang. Jim replied that, "There was nothing happenstance about that. It would have happened if you were in the middle of a jungle or a desert."

Harry was a wide-roaming man who searched out every corner of this state, and I guess it's true, he would have found us sooner or later. He didn't settle for what was handed him by happenstance, but shaped his world like he shaped his

bowls. He looked it over carefully, carved out what he liked, and then made it better.

Pondering the questions of Harry's life, I wonder if he would have achieved greatness in the eyes of so many people if he had not gotten into bowl making. Some say yes, some say no. My guess is that, without the bowls, without the stories of Gordon MacQuarrie, Harry would have found some other way to get on the world's nerves and into its heart.

Long before Gordon MacQuarrie ever met Harry, he gave him an unwitting posthumous tribute. It was actually written for Al Peck, Gordon's father-in-law and the first president of the Old Duck Hunters' Association, Inc. But I think Gordon would pay this same tribute to Harry, who succeeded Mr. Peck as the second and last to hold that exalted office.

"When the president of the Old Duck Hunters' Association, Inc., died," Gordon wrote, "the hearts of many men fell to the ground. There was no one like Mr. President. When the old Timers go there is no bringing them back, nor is there any hope of replacing them. They are gone and there is a void..."

After Harry died, one of his friends and I were standing in the rubbing room, newly whitewashed by Harry just a few months before. We were looking at the broken handle on the ash bin of the wood stove, and the old friend was telling how he'd been promising for a couple of years to fix that handle but had never gotten around to it. He started to cry, so much did it mean to him that he would never have the chance to do that little thing for Harry. A week later he came down and put a new handle on.

I felt that same need to keep doing things for Harry. In the months since his death I have spent a good deal of time rubbing the bowls that Harry didn't get to finish. But near the end I stopped, leaving two unrubbed. I never could bring myself to finish them.

John Klus is a professor of engineering in UW-Extension.

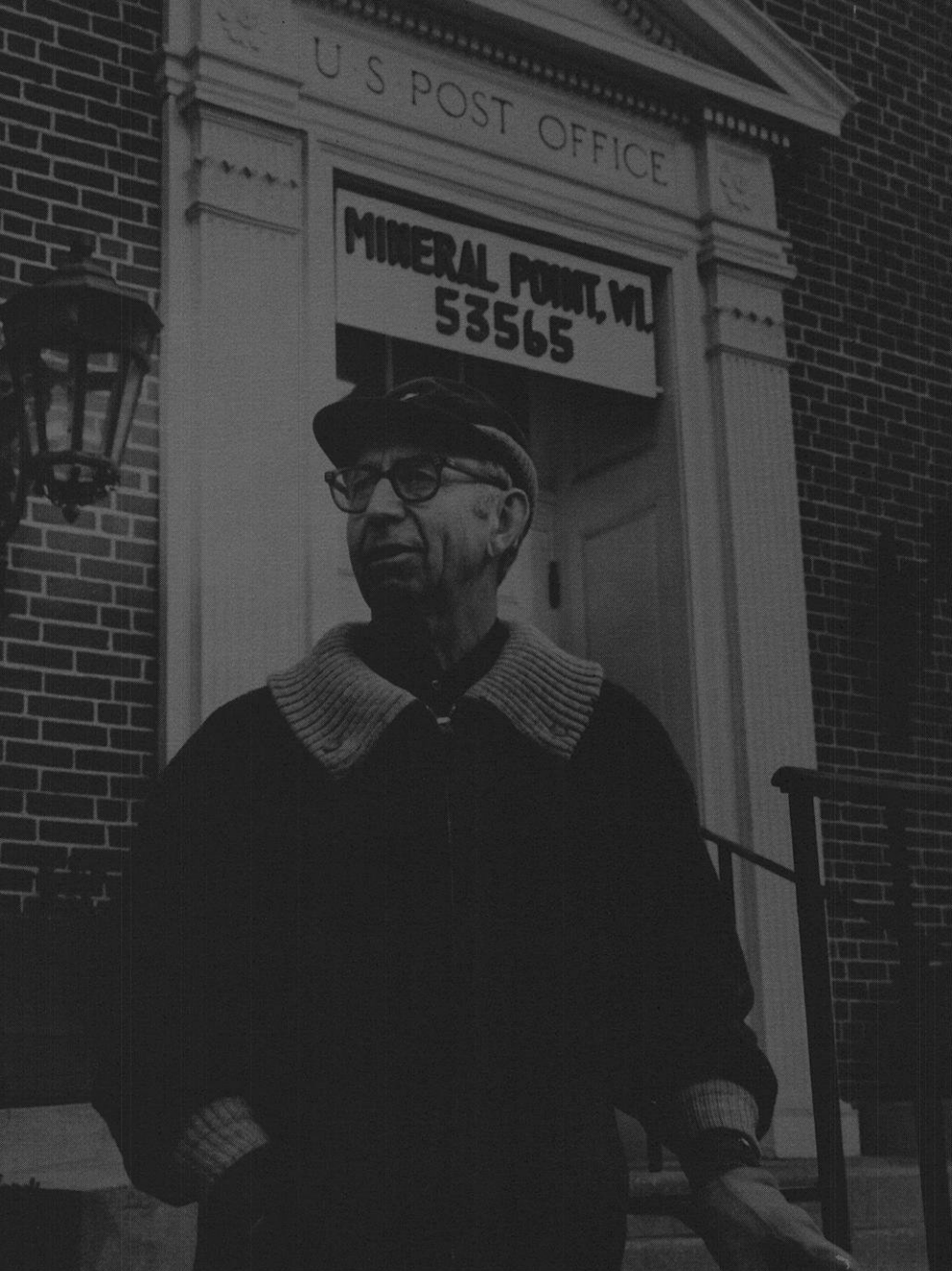


Photo courtesy of Johnson's Wax

HARRY NOHR, CITIZEN

by Jean Lucey

Nohr, the postmaster, stands in front of the Mineral Point post office.

It was to be a big meeting. Young Bob La Follette went to Richland Center sometime in the spring of 1946 to deliver a major and lengthy speech in which he exhorted the Progressives to join the Republican Party. Harry Nohr was there because his heart and soul in those days were with the La Follette Progressive movement. Upon hearing these opportunistic words, he jumped to his feet to assert, "We should not get in bed with the Republican Party because our ideas and policies are so unlike theirs."

Young Bob shot back, "We will get in bed with them and push them out."

Harry objected to such an absurd coalition and became disillusioned with the Progressive movement after that. He avoided further political involvement. After the war, however, he began moving toward supporting the new Democratic leadership. In 1948 he supported Harry Truman against Tom Dewey and subsequently the candidacies of Carl Thompson, Tom Fairchild, Bill Proxmire, Gaylord Nelson, John Reynolds, and Patrick J. Lucey.

During all of this, of course, he was swimming up-current in Mineral Point and Iowa County. The majorities, both vocal and silent, were on the other side. But Harry was always willing to stand alone, if need be, for what he believed because he had an unremitting sense of social justice and felt a continuing responsibility toward good government.

Politically, of course, his role and influence were shaped and in a

sense limited by his irrepressible, sometimes whimsical, often irreverent, intellectual honesty which made him appear to some as a kind of community gadfly.

Was Harry Nohr really a gadfly who took unpopular positions simply to annoy his townspeople? Or was he in fact a substantial force in our society? Was there a pattern to his criticism in the light of what has happened since? Did he measure up to his earlier political ideas? The answers are very much in Harry Nohr's favor.

He opposed the fanaticism of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s when they were polarizing communities throughout Wisconsin. It was very unpopular to take a stand against Klan hysteria, but Harry Nohr did just that. He fought hard to diffuse its effect in Mineral Point and was ostracized by the community for his views, but he rightly saw it as a threat to our political system. In 1949, after loud protests from the KKK in Iowa County, Harry was appointed postmaster and served in that capacity until he retired in 1965.

A LONELY POSITION

He also stood up against the fear tactics and tub-thumping of Joe McCarthy, when McCarthyism was at its height in the early '50s. He too, along with Pat Lucey and others, was dubbed a "Commiecrat" by tail-gunner Joe. Again, far ahead of others in his community, he saw this as a threat to our freedoms and our political system. So he took a lonely position, one that was sneered and frowned upon in southwestern Wisconsin. He was cruelly discriminated against for doing so.

He opposed the war in Vietnam long before many of us did, not because he was of military age, not because he had a son or daughter that might be called up in the draft, but because he viewed it as morally wrong. He opposed the war with consistent and effective criticism throughout its duration. He had a deep and abiding aversion to war and towards the end of his life some

cynicism crept into any conversation on that subject.

Harry Nohr was not just a gadfly trying to annoy people. He was, in fact, a serious student of our society who chose periods of crisis to make himself heard. As we look back on that segment of more than 50 years, surely most thinking Americans would support the Nohr position against the KKK, Joe McCarthy, and the Vietnam War.

Waves of extremism troubled Harry Nohr. Before the KKK we had the Guardians of Liberty, he used to say, and after the KKK we had Joe McCarthy. As he relived those dark moments in our history, Harry wondered aloud "what's next?" and hoped that future generations would see such movements for what they were—hysterical pauses in world sanity.

To better understand and appreciate Harry Nohr, the man, let us go back to his beginnings. When family poverty made it necessary for Harry to be farmed out to his neighbors, the Willie Barlows, he learned early about earning his own keep. Farming children out to neighbors was not uncommon practice with large rural families in those days. Hard work, inventiveness, and good-old-enterprise were the tools of survival then; and Harry used them skillfully and profitably.

BIBLE READING AND WOOD SPLITTING

Mrs. Barlow, an ex-school teacher, realized that Harry read poorly so she set up a schedule designed to improve this failing. He was assigned to read a chapter a day from the Bible and give an oral report before bedtime. Until he moved in with the Barlows, his school attendance had been limited to those months of the year when the ground was frozen. He could not afford to be in school on days when there were crops to plant or potatoes to dig. Christmas was not a time for fun and games. Skiing was time-wasting and sledding, a sport for idlers. He had to earn ten

cents a cord splitting wood and an additional five cents a cord stacking it.

Harry dropped out of school as a freshman when Mr. Barlow fell and broke his hip. Harry had to help run the farm with Mrs. Barlow and from that day on, the "school of hard knocks," as he called it, became his campus.

Harry once told me he never dreamed, while enduring life's early adversities, that Nature would be so generous to him. Her peace and power overwhelmed him at times, but he believed that man often made the difference in her climatic swings, and he worried about the fragile nature of the future. It was this involvement that led to his becoming an avid conservationist.

Harry was an extraordinary man. He was slight, whimsical, wiry, with a keen, quick eye and a quiet, calm manner. His humor was subtle, even droll, but it related to his everyday life. He was not a burly, noisy type of sportsman; he was reflective and had an inner strength which radiated a peaceful ease with the elements. He had an open and alert mind. He had patience, a trait that brought satisfying rewards through aesthetic and artistic achievements. He had a superb sense of beauty and his bowls, now international works of art, reflect this unusual talent. He won many awards, appeared on an ABC television special called "With These Hands," one of eight craftsmen/artists chosen for such recognition. He achieved national and international acclaim for his unique artistry.

In the early '50s when Pat Lucey was organizing a citizen-based political party, he sought out Harry Nohr whenever he was in Iowa County. Because those were the lean days, Democrats in many areas of the state were intimidated from declaring themselves.

George Bechtel, now director of information for the department of transportation and then owner of the Mineral Point newspaper, recalls the time Harry got him on the phone to find out if he were going to cover the monthly meeting

of the Iowa Democratic Party. Bechtel replied that he was just leaving the house to attend. Harry, without missing a beat, replied, "Well, you better hurry, we're both here!"

WARMTH AND A WELCOME

Harry and Laura's home was a magnet for visitors. It reflected that easy, pleasant, homespun ambience that slowed a visitor down to an older era's pace. People from near and far always felt welcome there because the Nohrs were happy to see them, happy to show them their garden of flowers and vegetables, willing to go down to the workshop to explain carving techniques. Harry never hesitated, never withheld his knowledge of bowl making. He had no fear that someone would copy and commercialize his work. To Harry, sharing was learning.

Their big white house, high on a hill, was usually buzzing with visits from politicians, artists, neighbors, children, dignitaries, and friends. He and Laura always had a pot of fresh-brewed coffee to warm a chilled soul, freshly baked pies to tempt the most arduous weight-watcher, and the warmth and loving openness of children.

Harry's community interests were many and varied. He worked against a fox bounty, saving that animal from extinction in Wisconsin. He also was effective in his efforts to have the mourning dove declared a "song bird."

He took great interest in the quality of education, served on the local school board, helping every child who sought more education to get it.

An ardent conservationist, he placed special emphasis on clean air, wilderness sanctuaries, and wildlife preservation. Harry was well ahead of the pack long before such concerns became popular. Harry attended a task force meeting of the Democratic Party on environmental matters back in the '50s. Many in the room were smoking and the air was getting pretty thick, as the rhetoric on air quality was building to a pitch of indigna-

tion over the smoggy climate of Los Angeles, New York, Washington, and cities in between. Harry, who also took a dim view of that form of pollution, finally said with some asperity, "I have been in all those places, but it was no worse than the air we environmentalists are polluting in this very room."

He served his community in many ways. One of the most fruitful of his career involved Harry and Harold Pittz of Dodgeville, the two men undoubtedly most instrumental in bringing Governor Dodge Park into existence.

THE BIRTH OF A PARK

One day as they were fishing the trout stream in the area, and enjoying the beauty of the site, it occurred to Harry that this spot with its rolling hills, lovely woods, and vast clearing would make a fantastic park. He was so right! So Nohr and Pittz presented their idea to the Iowa County board, proposing that the county acquire the land. They were flatly informed that there were no funds available for such a grand endeavor. Shortly thereafter the man who owned part of this land died without heirs and the county became its owner. Harry, upon learning of this, immediately drove to Madison to talk to people in the conservation department. When they drove out to Iowa County to look over the area, they saw its potential and offered to put up some of the money for acquisition. The county went along with this proposal and Governor Dodge Park was born.

Today it is a 5000-acre park with excellent cross-country ski trails, trout streams, a beautiful lake, vast hiking and biking trails—thanks to Harry and Harold, a public park of unparalleled beauty!

He took great interest in the Wisconsin Rural Art Association, but he also made his mark in other ways. He and Laura have helped young people of promise to higher education. They have taken in youngsters and given them the attention which for various reasons

they were not able to get at home. They both were an inspiration to people high and low on the status scales.

In 1965 Harry was honored by the UW-Madison, for his "creative work and for the many contributions he made toward a broader community interest in Art." In 1975 he was elected Vice President for Arts of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

As a member of the local Kiwanis Club, Harry was working the last few years toward interesting Mineral Point officials in building a sorely needed new water tower. He hoped it would be one not only of functional value, but one that would have an aesthetic quality; one that would stand tall as an example of the lively sense of artistry existing in this small southwestern Wisconsin community. Nohr admirers all over the state are hoping it will be built.

One fall day two years ago, Pat and I kept a promise to ourselves and drove out to Mineral Point to visit Harry. We had known and admired him for many years. We liked visiting with him, hearing his views on political trends and seeing his newest carvings. Harry kept his ear to the ground, knew what people were talking about and thinking about politically. Invariably, his judgment was sound and sensible, his advice worthy. And he had this special sensitivity to emerging problems and human concerns.

The golden autumns of Wisconsin with their crispy breezes, bright nights, and shorter days are Nohr days for Pat and me. The beauty of those hills, the romance of Shake Rag Street with the Cornish cottages and log cabins, the history of the lead mines, the new uses of the defunct brewery—these steadfast symbols of Nature and man seem permanent today. We know that Harry, somehow, keeps vigil over all of it.

Jean Lucey, wife of the former governor of the state, is a businesswoman and writer.

HARRY NOHR, CONSERVATIONIST

by Clay Schoenfeld

Growing up in Mineral Point, I first knew Harry Nohr as "the postoffice man." Actually I first met Harry in Painter's Hardware Store on High Street. I had saved up the munificent sum of \$2.50 by selling *Better Homes and Gardens* annual subscriptions door to door at 35 cents from which I could keep a dime each. With my hoard I was bent on buying a genuine Horrocks-Ibbotson bait casting rod and reel with which to hurl live frogs at bass in one of the branches of the Pecatonica River. Harry convinced me my fortune would be better spent on a good, long, jointed cane pole with which I could skitter a Skinner spoon under shelving banks while standing at a rearward vantage point from whence my shadow would not be cast on Spensley's creek. It was my first lesson in artificial lures and piscatorial prowess. Harry turned out to be absolutely right. He waxed properly eloquent when I displayed my first smallmouth one

summer day at the postoffice.

Harry later got to be a well-known Wisconsin personage, but I like to remember him best simply as a postman who befriended a little boy.

Without a doubt Harry Nohr was a superb outdoorsman, weaned as he was on the savvy of Indians in northern Wisconsin. As Gordon MacQuarrie once said of him:

"Turn him loose anywhere in his native heath, which is Wisconsin, and given matches, an axe, a fishhook, and some string, he'll never go hungry or cold. He is a true countryman, a species almost extinct."

In quest of quarry, Harry came to roam far afield—to the Dakotas for pheasants, to Canada for mallards, to Montana for trout, to Florida for sea bass. But it was his experiences in southwestern Wisconsin that made him more than a sportsman. He was a conservation statesman.

Uncontaminated, southwestern Wisconsin has a unique natural beauty. This is the "driftless area," the land that the last great glacier forgot. Sandstone castles and mural escarpments can punctuate the skyline. Springs can gush forth from the great maws of grotesque crags. The steep banks of streams can be paleontological libraries with volumes of incredible fossils. Bass and trout can flourish in the rocky runs. On slopes too steep to farm, grouse and rabbits and squirrels can abound, and deer.

But this was also lead and zinc country. The first miners came from Cornwall and Wales in the

It was all there for Harry Nohr to see, and he recognized the script. He also decided to do something about it.

Harry Nohr sits in the front row (next to the "Iowa" placard) at a Wisconsin Conservation Congress gathering held in 1942 at the Loraine Hotel in Madison.

Reading the minutes of the Congress is to recall Harry Nohr at work as a conservationist who looked far beyond the minutiae of session lengths and bag limits to the gut issues of wildlife ecology and land use reform:

September 1948—Argued in favor of an any-deer season in southwestern Wisconsin "to keep

A black and white photograph of a large assembly of men seated in a grand hall. The men are arranged in many rows, filling the room. Many of them are holding up small, rectangular signs with names written on them. Some of the visible names include DAN, ROCK, COLUM, GREEN, SHAW, WAUGH, WALSH, DEY, CRAW, IOWA, LAM, and KERN. The hall has a high ceiling with a large chandelier hanging from it. There are tall columns on the left side of the room, and the overall atmosphere is formal. The men are dressed in suits or shirts and ties. The signs are held up at various heights, creating a sense of a large gathering. The photograph is taken from a slightly elevated position, looking down into the assembly.

the herd from degrading the habitat."

December 1948—"Some of the finest streams in southwestern Wisconsin are being ruined by pollution and erosion. Regulations should require controls. I want to get the barn locked before they steal the horse."

February 1949—Testified before a State Senate committee in favor of increasing the cost of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses, with the revenues going to fund research and habitat improvement.

July 1949—Favored a closed season on quail in the face of disappearing fence-rows.

September 1949—"Preservation of habitat is more important than artificial propagation."

December 1949—"Let's go full-speed ahead to save the native prairie chicken."

January 1950—Campaigns for more funds for wildlife research and for conservation education.

Harry was no bar-stool conservationist. Professor Harold C. "Bud" Jordahl, former chairman of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, can recall Harry at work in the field. Bud was a game biologist in northern Wisconsin at the time, charged with playing host to Harry's Wisconsin Conservation Congress wildlife habitat committee.

"I thought they'd want to retire to the nearest tavern while I explained our deer problems with charts and slides," Bud says. "Not Harry Nohr. He led us over hills and into swamps at an all-day pace that left me puffing. Only late in the evening did we stop for refreshments."

TROUT, GROUSE, A STATE PARK

Harry was not only a statewide leader; for a number of years he headed up the Mineral Point and the Iowa County conservation clubs. There are trout in southern Wisconsin waters today because Harry and his fellows helped bring back fishable populations. There

are grouse in southern Wisconsin coulees because Harry and his fellows campaigned to "get the cows out of the woodlots." There is a Governor Dodge State Park because Harry and his fellows took up the cudgel, along with Ed Mundy of the *Dodgeville Chronicle*.

It was his love of the outdoors and his keen knowledge of trees that led Harry to his craft as a maker of exquisite wooden bowls. He spent hours and days afield looking for just the right burls to shape into those famous paper-thin bowls, and every finished product had in it the glint of the morning sun, the smell of autumn leaves, the faint sound of a babbling brook, and the touch of a friendly hand. Harry was a perfectionist at whatever he tried.

It was only natural that a man of Harry Nohr's vigor and foresight would intrigue another man of vigor and foresight, Gordon MacQuarrie. Gordon was the premier outdoor editor of the *Milwaukee Journal* and a frequent contributor to *Field & Stream*. His stories often dealt with the doings of the Old Duck Hunters' Assn., Inc. (The "Inc." stood for "Incorrigible") The ODHA was a fun-loving organization, and Harry Nohr was a fun-loving man. It was only a matter of time until he signed on. The Association boasted a membership of two: MacQuarrie, the member, and Harry, the president, known affectionately as "Hizzoner." Harry was actually the second president. The first was Al Peck, MacQuarrie's father-in-law, from Superior. MacQuarrie disbanded the Association for a time after Al died, but the gavel sounded again when he met Harry Nohr during a Wisconsin Conservation Congress meeting in Madison. The rest is literary history, and some of it can be read in a book called *Tales of the Old Duck Hunters and Other Drivel*—"Red" MacQuarrie at his best.

When Steve Hopkins of the (Madison) *Wisconsin State Journal* heard of Harry Nohr's death not long ago, he reminded his readers of one of the Old Duck Hunters

stories. Harry and MacQuarrie had just returned from a day afield, and they were talking quietly on Harry's back porch. I'll let Gordon himself tell the rest of it:

"We spoke of the country we had seen. I suggested he should consider himself lucky to be living in the midst of it, but said there would come a day when the old geezer with the big sickle would come along and put an end to our days.

"Mister President sat bolt upright in his chair.

"'Let him come,' he said. 'I've got to have a guarantee from him that he's got some trout and bass water up there in the big yonder—yes, some first-rate grouse cover and some duck hunting.'

"'You can't take it with you,' I said, which was indeed the obvious reply to this man challenging fate. 'Nor can you send it on ahead. What are you going to do if the Sickle Man tells you he will not bargain?'

"There was nothing obvious in the reply that the president of the Old Duck Hunters snapped at me:

"'In that case, I ain't going.'"

As it happened, Red MacQuarrie went before Harry did. In tribute, Harry formed the Gordon MacQuarrie Foundation for Conservation Journalism. The Foundation annually recognizes outstanding Wisconsin environmental communicators and graduate students in conservation journalism. Harry's constant theme was the need for "better communications to get the findings of research biologists to hunters, fishermen, and other users of the outdoors to assure understanding and better environmental management."

I was the proud recipient of a MacQuarrie citation in 1968 from the hand of Harry Nohr himself. Harry said he couldn't exactly recall an afternoon long ago in Painter's Hardware Store, but he allowed as how he remembered my first smallmouth. I believed him. Harry was that kind of guy.

Clay Schoenfeld is director of the office of inter-college programs at UW-Madison.

HARRY NOHR, BOWL MAKER

by Howard Mead

To most people Harry Nohr was the artist-craftsman who made incredibly beautiful, delicate wooden bowls out of almost every native Wisconsin hardwood. As near as anyone can remember, Harry didn't make his first wooden bowl until 1960 or 1961. Already by 1966 his strikingly handsome bowls were being displayed in national collections and winning awards. It might seem as though he achieved almost instant recognition. Not so. Harry brought a lifetime of skill and a love of working with wood and with his hands to the making of his bowls. A friend who went to visit Harry in those early days described the bowls as instant heirlooms. "They're treasures," he said. "They are so beautiful they will be passed on from generation to generation among a family's most prized possessions."

Harry Nohr, as the range of articles in this issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* indicates, was an amazing man. He was a man with

an incredible variety of interests, a warm human being with an inquiring mind, fantastic energy, and an outrageous sense of humor. Harry was an original. So is each of his bowls. All Harry's bowls seemed to capture the essence of the wood from which they were made. They captured the essence of Harry, too. There was something almost mystical about Harry's understanding of and feeling for the wood that he turned into bowls. None of the things that Harry ever did, none of the fun that Harry ever had, meant nearly so much to him as the making of his bowls. And it is hard to say which he loved more—making bowls or meeting the people who came to buy them. Gordon MacQuarrie once told Harry, "You are the kind of person people like." It was true.

The way Harry made his bowls can be neatly divided into segments. First, and critically important, was finding the wood. Harry's bowls were special not only because of his skill as a craftsman,

his ability to turn a bowl with such a delicate edge, but because he was able to recognize and secure the choicest wood. My wife Nancy and I bought our first Harry Nohr bowl about a year after he'd started making them. That yellow birch bowl is one of the most interesting and beautiful we have ever seen. From the beginning, Harry was always looking for—and finding—exceptional wood.

FROM BURLS TO BOWLS

Some of the most exciting bowls Harry made came from burls, those knobby malformations that develop like huge warts on older trees. He used to say that only one of every 10,000 trees had a burl on it. No one who knew Harry, and who had heard his theory of how burls developed, ever again went into the woods without looking for burls. Harry had people all over the state watching the woods for him. Two sawyers for the Goodman Lumber Company in Forest County were constantly on the lookout for

burls. Harry had shown them how to cut a burl out of a tree so as to provide the most wood to work with. In a good year they supplied him with as many as 15 or 20 burls. But at best only one out of every three burls is sound and can be made into bowls. From these sound burls, though, Harry made his finest bowls. In these intriguingly beautiful bowls, the distorted grain patterns are fascinating—swirls, knotted turbulences, rippling configurations.

Harry didn't find good wood only in burls. He was always on the lookout for an interesting old tree that would yield something different. He compared trees to

people, and he felt that "if you had to struggle a little bit to survive, you turned out a whole lot better and, in the case of a tree, a whole lot prettier." He particularly admired gnarled trees that struggled to grow on hillsides or lacked a good water source or were denied direct sunlight. In these stunted and twisted trees the growth rings were close and irregular and often provided Harry excellent bowl wood.

Harry had a nose for bowl wood. He found it everywhere. Once he came upon a 400 pound white birch burl while he was deer hunting. John Klus and his father used a horse to skid the burl out of the

woods through miles of deep snow. The Johnsons from Racine once hired a truck to send Harry a cottonwood burl that was almost six feet tall. Harry made half a dozen huge tables from that one. Often people would arrive at the Nohr house in Mineral Point lugging a burl. Unhappily the burl usually wasn't any good, and Harry felt awful to have to tell them all their effort wouldn't result in a bowl.

We own what Harry always told us was the biggest and best bird's-eye maple bowl he ever made. Whenever I started feeling a bit puffed up to be part owner of this ultimate bowl, Harry would take me down a few notches by saying

"Harry would get very, very intense when he was turning."

Photo courtesy of Johnson's Wax



something like, "Howie, I just got a load of the best bird's-eye I've ever seen. I'm going to make some bowls out of it that will make that bowl of yours no more than a 'pretty good.'"

AN EYE FOR BIRD'S-EYE

Harry was partial to bird's-eye. A worker at the sawmill at Goodman kept an eye out for good bird's-eye for Harry. The worker always had on hand half a dozen bird's-eye logs as large as 36 inches in diameter and 12 to 16 feet long. Even for Harry it was a real guessing game when it came to choosing a bird's-eye log. If you chip off the bark, you can tell a good bird's-eye log; but when you chip a log, you ruin it for veneer. So Harry had to rely on his intuition. The logs he picked were cut into big blocks, wrapped in plastic to keep them from drying out, and driven back home to Mineral Point.

A tradition at the Klus hunting camp in Forest County (where Harry hunted until his last few years) was that anyone who failed to shoot a buck was elected to bring a load of burls down to Harry in the back of the station wagon where the buck was supposed to be. After arriving in town with the burls, you'd call Harry up and tell him that you were home—without a buck but with a load of wood for him. He could barely wait until you brought the burls to Mineral Point. He'd bury the precious lumps of wood in a big sawdust pile in his backyard. That way they would stay damp until they could be cut and waxed. (It was always chancy transporting wood during the summer months because it dried out so fast. If you did bring Harry some wood in the summer, he would bury it in the sawdust and then turn the lawn sprinkler on the pile to keep the wood wet until John Klus could come to cut it into rough, bowl-sized blocks.) Harry's anxiousness was not only to make sure that the wood wouldn't be spoiled; he couldn't determine its quality until the wood was cut.

The cutting of burls, chunks of



Bowl blocks wrapped in newspaper to age.

From burl to bowl—a long, hard process.

Photos courtesy of Wisconsin trails



crotchwood, and bird's-eye logs was hard, exacting work. John Klus and a couple of young fellows from Mineral Point would often spend a weekend working with Harry. John did the sawing. One of the boys kept the chain saws sharp; the other helped move the logs around. Harry made the decisions. Harry and John were like diamond cutters as they decided how each burl and block should be cut to make the best bowl. On a really choice burl it could take Harry as long as half an hour to decide exactly how the cut should be made.

After the rough blocks were cut, they were coated with the same liquid wax lumber mills use to cover the ends of logs so they won't check. This mixture never really hardens. Harry painted the wax directly on the wood to keep moisture from escaping too quickly and to ensure slow and even aging. Newspaper was wrapped around each block before it was carefully stacked by type of wood. Even the wrapping in newspaper was part of Harry's grand organization. It kept the blocks from sticking together and made them easier to handle. And the date on the newspaper told Harry when the block had been set away for aging.

AN OPTIMIST'S WOOD SUPPLY

At this point the blocks were cylindrical and bowl-shaped and marked at the center point, top and bottom, by an ingenious device Harry developed. Squirreled away in his humidity-controlled basement, Harry always had from 1000 to 1500 blocks of wood. Harry made only about 90 bowls a year, so that supply marked him as an incurable optimist. At age 80 he kept better than ten years' worth of wood on hand.

Sometimes Harry couldn't wait to go to work on a choice block of wood. Once he got some red cedar—he had never made a red cedar bowl before—and he couldn't wait to turn it. Only a month after he'd put the wood away to age, he tried to turn a bowl. The wood was too wet. A couple of weeks later he

tried again. It was still too wet. After he finally forced himself to wait the proper length of time, he made some elegant bowls from that cedar. Generally, he aged his wood from six months to two years.

Harry always said that when the wood was cut into blocks and waxed and stored in the basement, the job was half done. Most people didn't understand that this was indeed true. The most familiar part of Harry's bowl making was the turning of the bowls, the painting on of the coats of epoxy, and the rubbing of the bowls to their warm and lustrous finish. But the most important part of the process was Harry's ability to find really special wood and to cut it in such a way that the essence of the wood would be revealed.

Of course, turning the bowls was important, too. It was an exacting, dramatic step in the bowl-making process. Harry would start by smoothing the outside of the roughly sawed block of wood to give it a nice, smooth action and to balance it on the wheel. The turning didn't require strength but it took a lot of finesse. Harry would get very, very intense when he was turning. And he could never leave a bowl half-turned. After he had smoothed the outside, he'd start hollowing the center of the bowl, working outward with his knife. On some big bowls he'd drill out the center of the bowl and then work outward from the drill hole, cutting smoother and deeper with his knife. He always called his cutting tool a knife. And he pushed forward into the grain, never backward, which would have compressed the wood.

THE ULTIMATE FRUSTRATION

As the wood grew thinner and thinner, the outer edge began to dry faster and faster. More than once Harry had had a bowl he was turning suddenly crack and shatter. He had a lot of tricks in his bag to combat this problem. He kept a damp cloth by the lathe and wet the outside of the bowl as he cut it thinner. Often the moisture was enough to keep the wood from

Photo courtesy of Johnson's Wax





Sanding and rubbing a bowl took hours and hours of "brutal drudgery."

cracking. Other times he would put a little strip of heavy, fiber-filled tape around the outer edge of the bowl to help keep it from splitting. But sometimes, after hours and hours of turning—an average bowl took two to three hours, a big bowl could take eight to ten hours of steady turning—despite everything he could do, the bowl would crack and be ruined. It was the ultimate in frustration—a lovely chunk of wood, chosen so carefully, cared for with such tenderness, so close to completion, lying on the floor in bits and pieces.

Harry's inquiring mind was always seeking ways to do things better. When he started looking for cutting knives, he tried every kind of commercial tool he could lay his hands on. None of them was just right. He became something of an expert on tool steel. His knives had to be strong (but not brittle) and able to hold a fine edge for as long as possible. He finally found an alloy that he could make into a knife that suited him, although he had to sharpen it several times on the grinder alongside his lathe in the course of turning a single bowl.

And he was always trying to learn more about wood. He talked to the experts at the Forest Products Lab and to people who worked in the woods and the sawmills. What was the wood structure of different trees like? Why does one variety check so fast and another slowly? What were the properties of different woods? Along the way Harry developed a theory for almost everything that had to do with wood and bowl making. And he was totally certain he was absolutely right, until proven wrong.

Once the bowls were turned they could sit almost indefinitely, but they had very little moisture in them and were very fragile. If one were dropped, it would shatter. But Harry wanted to remove even more moisture, and to do this he baked the bowls in Laura's oven. They had to be bone dry when he applied the epoxy so they would really soak it up. Sometimes he would put a bowl in a special metal rack he had devised. This put the bowl under

stress and changed it from a symmetrical shape to a graceful free form. "That bowl," he'd joke, "baked two hours at 300 degrees. Turned out very well, too." But it was no joking matter to get all the moisture out, for if there was any left in the wood, the epoxy wouldn't be absorbed and would never really dry.

Harry tried more than two dozen finishes before he settled on an epoxy mixture that gave the bowls their surprising strength and durability. The epoxy was volatile and very toxic. Harry hated working with it. When he was applying it he'd wear coveralls and gloves and, to prevent breathing the fumes, a mask that covered his whole head. Each bowl received four applications of epoxy, a day apart, to let the wood drink each coat to the point of saturation. After three heavy coats, the wood was so saturated that the bowls were almost indestructible. But the epoxy build-up was so great that they were also very shiny. Harry learned the hard way never to stack freshly coated bowls while they were curing. He did it once, and the stack bonded together.

HOURS OF RUBBING

After curing for three weeks, the bowls were perfect for rubbing. Each week after that, the finish became harder. So John and Harry tried to have rubbing sessions about three weeks after the last coating of epoxy. They did about three batches, of 25 or 30 bowls apiece, each year. Harry really meant it when he said he hated rubbing the bowls. He loved the bowl-rubbing sessions with John Klus, but not the rubbing itself. Yet it was the rubbing that finished the job, removing the shiny, hard, epoxy finish and bringing out the natural luster of the wood. It took hours and hours of rubbing, first with sandpaper, then with powdery pumice stone, steel wool, and finally rottenstone, powdered, dusty-green and very fine-grained.

Of course, even when the rubbing was done there was more. The bowls were stacked on the table in

Harry's den, just off Laura's pleasant kitchen. There they were for sale. The atmosphere of the Nohr home was always friendly and relaxed. There was always time to talk to people and to show them bowls. Harry had strong opinions about his bowls. There weren't many things that irked him, but one thing that *did* was treating his bowls like delicate works of art to be exhibited under glass. He didn't hesitate to tell people that he made his bowls to be used. He was pleased that we used our birch bowl to hold our Sunday night popcorn.

"Is that popcorn really buttery and salty?" he'd ask. "Are those hulls really tough?"

"You bet!" I'd reply.

"And the finish is holding up!" he'd say triumphantly. "They're not just to look at. Use them. Enjoy them."

Once he made Nancy and me a pair of beautiful hickory canoe paddles. Epoxy impregnated, rubbed down, and sporting his benchmark right at the top of each blade, they were lovely—two prized possessions that we couldn't bring ourselves to use. "They're just too beautiful to push off rocks with," I told him.

Harry was disgusted. "I wish I'd made you an ugly canoe paddle," he said. "What's the good of having a canoe paddle you don't use?"

A month after Harry died, Nancy and I were skiing north of Merrill when we came upon an old maple tree more than three feet in diameter. It was the wartiest, most grotesquely burly tree we had ever seen. Seventeen burls on that one massive tree. We stood there stricken. To think that we had found the ultimate tree and we couldn't get that tree for Harry. But you know, that old maple is a treasure out there in the woods. It'll keep. Harry was always sure that others would learn to make bowls like his. One day I'll meet that bowl maker of the future, and I'll tell him where that big tree is. I'll say it is a gift from Harry Nohr.

Howard Mead is publisher of Wisconsin trails.



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin trails

"Owning a Harry Nohr bowl is a wonderful and responsible experience."

A HARRY NOHR BOWL

by Robert E. Gard

Over the years I have become intrigued by what appears to be a mystical relationship between objects and persons. There is certainly a symbolism that grows and develops around objects that is the result of a close association between object and individual. The object often becomes the symbol of a tradition, of a way of life, of a feeling that actually waxes important in the routines that all of us follow, or in the rituals that support our struggles to find happiness, peace, or satisfaction in values that are meaningful to us.

Objects that attain a symbolic status are almost always those which have been with us or near us for some time or with which we associate intimate experiences. We

often act as if we believe objects can influence us in exploring a particular lifestyle; or they arouse memories, or we prize them for many other personal reasons.

I am sure that the modest collection of Harry Nohr bowls which we display in our home is an excellent example of what I mean. The bowls, mostly in our living room, have meanings for us almost beyond my ability to articulate them, and each bowl arouses its own kind of response.

There is a catalpa bowl that rests on the top of a Civil War period desk. Both desk and bowl have fascinating stories, and have become parts of our family legend. The desk, no doubt hand-crafted by a country carpenter, is created of

several kinds of woods. It is pigeon-holed with a narrow writing shelf, slanting, and doors that open to disclose other storage places for documents. The desk belonged to my wife's great grandfather. He was the business manager for the famous Tredegar Iron Works of Richmond, Virginia, the foundry which made most of the heavy armament for the Confederate Army and Navy. For many years, Anton Osterbind, a Prussian immigrant, sat at the desk, and over it and around it flowed much of the ordnance paperwork of the Rebel war effort. In a small drawer, when the desk was shipped to us from Georgia where it had been owned by another Osterbind relative, was a railroad spike made from the ar-

mament of the mighty ironclad, *Merrimac*. Jeff Davis's government had the spikes made for sale to the public to raise funds to support a desperate army, low on supplies and cannon. The word *Merrimac* is stencilled on the spike.

I sit often at the old desk trying to recreate what went on: to imagine the forgotten voices that spoke, made decisions. The old desk chair is there, too, very uncomfortable; no springs in that chair. Anton Osterbind probably did not sleep at his labors.

And on top of the desk is the Harry Nohr bowl of catalpa wood, turned and shaped by Harry at our special request, and delivered to us in person in, I believe, 1966.

A DYING CATALPA

Behind that bowl is a story, too. We had a large catalpa in our front yard that suddenly, in 1964 or 1965, showed signs of decay and disease. We loved the tree, for its blossoms were, we thought, more plentiful and more beautiful than those on the other catalpas in our neighborhood. We were desolate when it became apparent that the tree, 70 to 80 years old, was dying. Our neighbor next door, a noted physicist, Julian Mack, stood with me often, looking at the tree, and I am certain that he felt as keenly as we the impending loss. Julian was a remarkable man, noted in nuclear research—I believe he had photographed the earliest explosions of the atomic bomb at Los Alamos—but beyond his scientific knowledge and achievements he was a warm and dear man, a splendid neighbor, interested in all that went on involving trees, wild animals, or his friends' best interests.

When the catalpa finally went, Julian came across the yard to tell me that he had just phoned Harry Nohr. Julian knew Harry well, they were good friends, and I was a friend of Harry's too, often stopping at the Nohr house in Mineral Point to swap stories, or to glean information on local matters. At the university we were much interested in Mineral Point at the time. University Extension wished to use

the community as a study center; Harry had definite ideas about his town, and how it ought to realize its potential as a cultural center for southwestern Wisconsin.

I suspect that Harry had run into some local road blocks on that. He tended to be impatient with the community for not moving fast enough. Anyway, Harry came to Madison on the day that the old catalpa was cut. He brought his station wagon and Julian and I helped him load in several large pieces of the tree. We had no idea at the time what kind of result Harry would produce, but Julian made a special plea to Harry to create some bowls. He said that bowls made from the catalpa would surely have a special atmosphere of spring, of white blossoms, and he said, of hope.

Julian never mentioned that he was dying of cancer, but this did transpire before the bowls were finished. Julian never saw the beautiful bowls that Harry made of the wood of the catalpa; but in demonstration of what he meant by hope, Julian willed his eyes, so that some handicapped person might have sight. I have often wished that I knew who was the benefactor, so that that person might see our catalpa bowl.

Harry brought the bowls to Madison when they were finished. We obtained one, a lovely, light color, grained with intriguing patterns. I don't know whether we had the first bowl or not. It may well be that Mary Mack, Julian's widow, got the first. We both cherished the bowls, and Mary has hers in display too, in her house, which is next to ours. I think that Karen Keland of Racine got one too. Ours took an immediate place on the cherished desk, and became a symbolic object; for whenever I notice it the stream of memory begins. I think of the great occasions when Harry and I met, and the appreciation I had of his humor, and his unusual observations on life. I think of Julian, too, and of our meetings in the front yard, and of the reality of good neighbors.

We also own a great black

walnut bowl that Harry turned from a burl—a burl which, he told us, he had obtained under great difficulty, and which was probably one of its kind. We believed him, because Harry never said anything about one of his bowls that wasn't accurate. He might, occasionally, spin a tall tale—what storymaster does not? But where his bowls were involved he never stretched what actually happened. My wife, who was exceedingly fond of Harry, told him one day that she earnestly wanted to own one of the greatest bowls he ever made, and to select one. Harry called her one evening and told her that he had a wonderful black walnut bowl—in his opinion one of the finest he had ever turned. She instantly said, "Harry, please hold it for me."

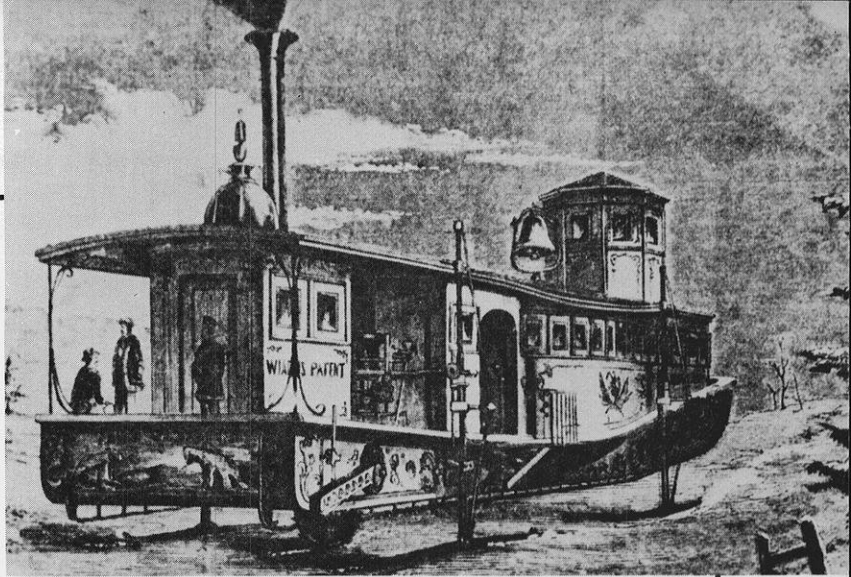
Eventually we got the bowl paid for; it took some time. Typical of Harry: at Christmas that year (1976) he called me. We had paid something on the bowl, not all. He said, "Laura and I are coming to Madison to spend Christmas with the Klus family. We are bringing the black walnut bowl. We want Maryo to have it for Christmas."

ONE OF THE GREATEST

It was, of course, her best Christmas present; and the bowl, now completely ours, rests on a table under the portrait of a great Nashville woman and close friend, Jane Inge. On the table too, are the Bohm Canadian Geese, the family group commissioned by President Eisenhower. Canadian Geese are very special to me, as they were to Harry. Bowl, figures of the geese, the portrait, make a symbolic corner and remind me of the geese at Horicon Marsh, of Harry the sportsman, and of Harry and Jane Inge, humanists. Owning a Harry Nohr bowl is a wonderful and responsible experience. The symbolism does increase. What a wonderful man, Harry was. What a wonderful craftsman and artist.

Robert E. Gard, well-known Wisconsin author, is president of the Wisconsin Academy and director of UW-Extension arts.

Wiard's Ice Boat



'Wiard's Patent'... Making a Highway of Mississippi River Ice

I was looking around in the mean time to find out where I should go to seek my fortune. An inventor at the Fair (Wisconsin State Fair, Madison), by the name of Wiard, was exhibiting an ice boat he had invented to run on the upper Mississippi from Prairie du Chien to St. Paul during the winter months, explaining how useful it would be thus to make a highway of the river while it was closed to ordinary navigation by ice.

—John Muir
The Story of My Boyhood and Youth

What kind of ice boat did Muir have in mind? What had this fellow Wiard come up with that would make a highway of the frozen upper Mississippi?

One might imagine—but it wasn't until recently that Wisconsin Academy member Sylvester F. Adrian of the rural Montello area unearthed an old photo sketch of Wiard's giant forerunner to the snowmobile. In the illustration, the lettering "Wiard's Patent" can be faintly discerned along the starboard of the stern (for you landlubbers, that's the right side of the rear of the craft, to the left of the photo). Just below the lettering, near the bottom of the photo, is the toothed gear that propelled the steam-driven ice boat along on its runners.

Wiard, having seen Muir's "inventions for keeping time, getting folk up in the morning, and so forth" on exhibit at the Fair, offered the young man a place at his foundry and machine shop in Prairie du Chien. Muir accepted and "rode with him to Prairie du Chien in his ice boat, which was mounted on a flat car."

He soon found that Wiard was seldom at home and that there seemed little to learn at his small shop. In a few months, he returned to Madison and eventually enrolled at the University. But after four years Muir "wandered away on a glorious botanical and geological excursion...always happy and free, poor and rich, without thought of a diploma or of making a name, urged on and on through endless, inspiring, Godful beauty." The great naturalist concludes the autobiography of his boyhood and youth with the explanation, "I was only leaving one University for another, the Wisconsin University for the University of the Wilderness."

Described by the National Geographic magazine as a man "who has made Muir's Wisconsin years his life's vocation," Sylvester Adrian was instrumental in the establishment of Muir Memorial Park, located at the site of the Muir family homestead on Highway F, south of Montello. More recently, the enterprising octogenarian has been advising the Lothian Regional Council of Muir's native Scotland on the establishment of a John Muir County Park.

—J.B.



Marion Conger Stewart

FROM HIGHWAY 43

The snow fence down, these fields have turned
and come about like a wind-filled sailboat.
My hungry eyes, having searched and yearned
the winter, now grab, hold on, float
in hopes, in the new feel, the green smell.
There, gulls sit wave-borne as if field were sea
oval white shapes on green, on brown, they tell—
nothing; hieroglyphics, a simple mystery.
It seems a question, this day, these gulls,
and the fields having come about;
The moment hovers, urging even as it lulls
and I ask it of the next rise, an inner shout.
A still blue tractor, lonely, yields
the only answer, singing from the startled fields.

SISTER

In the sunshine of our childhood's yard
your plans hatched like wet new robins
in the honeysuckle nest above.
I honored your shadow, hollyhock thin,

knew you tougher than pain
when you fell from
swinging the tree limb
back flat to the ground, utterly
without wind, but unbroken,

knew you closer than parents,
knew you best,
your hands' look on our
shared piano,
your zeal in concocting
the paperdolls' massive misfortunes.

To make you laugh made me giddy,
and your anger had a glimmer like
brass in sun.

Therefore I cannot countenance
this diminished sky,
your brave days come under a feeble
winter sun,
your robin strong plans undone;

where I am I call forth your sister's powers,
I will not allow,
I make incantations,
even reading I mutter prayers
and in my sleep recite the childhood Book of Hours.

Marion Conger Stewart

LAYERS

Outside, this bitter yellow husk, hull, shell,
prickly with burs, tart spikes, thorns
ready to catch on and go where the chance is
pick up on the passing dog, or fox
grasp fur and hang on, going, moving
to a chance chosen place, a space the choice of
time where the hull will split, widen, gap
and drop that inner wood-grained nut, button,
charm, closed with a leather patch.
It glows. It has a warm face.
And inside that?
Most secret, the pale yellow, verging green
earnestly ready. The coil's head. The spring waiting.
Closed in the hand it seems a small heart,
already growing, already moist and bursting,
the unnerving sweet start.

THE DARK SPACE BETWEEN STARS

The flowers they brought him, my mother carries down
in the elevator now. Outside, the lights of town
block out the stars. The heat of the valley floor
has risen. My mother carries down the flowers
in silence. "Tonight we'll go and view the stars,"
my father said, smiled at her once more
sometime in daylight hours.

Her upper lip is damp above the leaves.
In the parking lot under lights her shadow weaves,
grows small, then large, then small among the cars;
her walk, toes out, seems girlish, young, absurd.
We stop. She turns my mother's face to me
telling now of the dark space between stars,
her eyes the only word.

CHIAROSCURO: DAY #118

This is the day that the gull
hath made, here cloud gray
there dark, there light, and full
of the cold bliss of spray.
It has the clean flavor of strong
wind, pulling the wet cry
out, calling the camber of long
wings to the urgent curve of the sky.
Watch him haul up, hang, lie
on the wind, fishing the frayed
wave with a yellow eye.
This is the day that the gull hath made
let him be glad therein and rejoice
naming it well with his petrel voice.

WINTER LETTER

Watching this harsh light
of winter in a flat terrain,
the white sky
angling over stubbled fields
around a silo, over gray grass
flattened by the wind
I want to send you pictures
not of me or you
but of courage come
square-shouldered out of
a calm room,
of the gentle face of making do;
I want to say,
while time elapses in
its side-slip way,
I send a message, will you hear me?
I am guessing through crow country
hoping to at last flap free.

WINDFALLS

Into the Maelstrom

by Arthur Hove

"Here the vast bed of the waters, seamed and scarred into a thousand conflicting channels, burst suddenly into phrensied convulsion—heaving, boiling, hissing—gyrating in gigantic and innumerable vortices, and all whirling and plunging on to the eastward with a rapidity which water never elsewhere assumes, except in precipitous descents."

This passage, from Edgar Allen Poe's story, "A Descent into the Maelstrom," was written more than 130 years ago. It is a harrowing story about a man who survives a trip into the maelstrom—a powerful tidewater whirlpool off the coast of Norway. In many respects, Poe's whirlpool is a fittingly contemporary metaphor.

The modern maelstrom is not a swirling vortex of rushing water, but something more familiar, something we encounter in our everyday lives—the shopping mall, of all things. The mall has much the same kinetic influence as the maelstrom. As you approach the mall, you are sucked towards its center with an attraction comparable to that which pulls objects into the whirlpool.

Most malls are situated in areas where they must be approached through a swirling pattern of roads

leading into huge asphalt parking lots which sometimes seem as immense as the sea (particularly when you are trying to remember where you parked your car). In the center of this expanse is the mall itself—a huge hangar or pavilion filled with commercial delights which are not a normal part of the surrounding landscape.

What strange force pulls us inward to the halls and catacombs of the mall? Is it some kind of invisible presence which invades our subconscious and makes us respond without thinking to the promise of the delights inside?

Could be, but it is probably something simpler, something closer to our primal human instincts. Here, in this hippodrome of consumerism, we can indulge ourselves by participating in that relatively harmless yet thoroughly modern religious ritual of buying something.

The late poet/essayist Randall Jarrell, in the title essay of his collection *A Sad Heart at the Supermarket*, asks rhetorically, "Reader, isn't buying an important part of your and my emotional life?"

Of course it is. Who can deny the momentary euphoria one experiences in buying something he

really doesn't need but is convinced he must have? When you're depressed, psychiatrists advise that a good way to raise your spirits is to go out and buy something. Treat yourself and don't be too concerned about the price.

The mall is designed to facilitate the search for the new or the ultimately useless item that you are convinced you want. The mall offers a wonderland of retail merchandise, ranging from fashionable clothing and jewelry, to appliances, console organs, shoes (both for the walker and runner), pets, food (from peanuts to pepperoni pizza), and on through a catalog of the latest items that decorate newspaper and magazine advertisements.

There are other enticements, too. Malls have replaced Main Street in a number of towns. Malls, symbolic of the migration of large chunks of the population to suburbia, flourish as the central cities are eaten away by the acid of social change. Events are staged at malls to take advantage of the all but captive audiences that come to trade there. These happenings include displays of new cars or boats, petting zoos, puppet shows, Boy Scout demonstrations, art fairs, and antique shows.

The Mall offers another important attraction—the chance to promenade. We can now enjoy the opportunity to see and be seen—a pleasure which had largely disappeared with the coming of the automobile and the growth of the suburbs, those communities where Main Street is not a focus of social and business activity, but simply the principal thoroughfare leading from one town to the next. The shopping mall has made it possible for us to have it both ways now—to drive to a place where we can leisurely stroll as we stare at others and have them return the favor.

The resultant ambience that one encounters in a shopping mall has a certain appeal. It provides an offset to the underlying emphasis on consumerism. People can be seen actually strolling rather than racing down the corridors of the mall as they pass from one shop to the next. There is an occasional hint of the frenzy that one can expect on big city streets, but here, in the center of the vortex, the pace is reasonably nonchalant.

The mall can also offer therapeutic benefits. Certain people I know—recuperants from such ailments as heart surgery or hernia—have told me they get their exercise walking the trails that lead through the shopping mall. They dutifully pace off the blocks, or miles, as they roam over the tile or carpeting in an environment that offers an all-weather shielding from the elements.

Their perambulations are not without peril, however. Sometimes, their initial appearance on the scene draws suspicious glances from observant security personnel who suspect that this idle stroller is really someone casing the joint for a possible heist, or someone serving as a decoy while an accomplice deftly pilfers items off the racks and countertops.

While the interior of the shopping mall may be cavernous, its atmosphere is invariably Edenic. Fountains bubble up here and there, water cascades over parapets, and pools form oases in the long

stretches of floor that extend from one end of the mall to the other. Pieces of sculpture hang from the ceiling or rise out of islands that are also populated with clusters of live trees and plants. The resultant hothouse jungles seem so natural that one expects to see parrots or cockatoos flitting through the branches.

Even though it is the home of many contemporary flora and fauna, the shopping mall is not, like the downtown of cities, a place which accommodates derelicts, vagrants, garden variety drunks, or others who might chase the customers away. Undesirables are inconspicuously moved along. The shopping mall is simply not a natural way station for the voluntary or involuntary outcasts of society.

Malls are located in solidly middle-class neighborhoods, beyond the natural range of most itinerants who seek the more congenial, anonymous haunts of the central city. The only conspicuous intrusion on the normalcy of the shopping mall might be a knot of teenagers who stand near an entrance as they smoke, talk, and gyrate agitatedly in an effort to call attention to themselves. But they, too, are moved on by the management, or simply become inconspicuous in the general swirl of pedestrians who continually flow in and out of the doors.

The result of all of this is that the modern shopping mall has a noticeably antiseptic quality. The setting is predominantly middle class. There are no vagrants here and there is almost no dirt—whatever trash is dropped is quickly and quietly picked up by attendants wheeling cleaning carts. Temperature and humidity in the mall are constant and there is none of the seaminess or tangible decay we can see downtown. No signs of business failure—no frosted-over windows or barricades across the door. The only telltale evidence that some small businessman hasn't made it, or that all the spaces in the mall aren't sold, is a large blank front separating one shop from

another, a space covered over with a facing designed to blend in with the decor so we hardly notice the omission.

A similar effort to camouflage the more basic aspects of life in the shopping mall can be found outside. Most new malls are designed so that there is no immediately obvious outback area. The business sides of the mall—where the shipping and receiving goes on—are screened from view by bricks or plantings. Refuse is hustled out of the place at discreet times, with the secretiveness of a corpse being removed from a hospital, so that one is seldom aware of the fundamental aspects of moving the merchandise.

Everything in the shopping mall therefore seems contrived, calculated down to the last decimal point of profit margin, figured to the last square foot of usable space. The products on sale here have been put there after extensive market research. Little is left to chance. "Move the merchandise," is the overwhelming credo. But then you can't blame the merchants for that. It's how they stay alive, pay their employees, pay taxes, and thereby contribute their part to keeping the economy vital.

That, of course, is the ultimate influence of the maelstrom that is the shopping mall. Our contemporary destiny seems to rest to a large extent on how vigorously it swirls, on how irresistible its pull becomes. The course of our future seems uncomfortably set as a result. It is discomfiting to see where we might be going. As the man in Poe's story described his own dilemma: "Round and round we swept—not with any uniform movement—but in dizzying swings and jerks, that sent us sometimes only a few hundred yards—sometimes nearly the complete circuit of the whirl. Our progress downward, at each revolution, was slow, but very perceptible."

Arthur Hove is a longtime contributor to the Wisconsin Academy Review.

continued from page 8

man. President Pierce had offered him the governorship of the Washington Territory but he declined, saying that the labors of war and the burdens of peace and the rigors of 75 years entitled him to retirement and rest. He came back to his home near Dodgeville in Iowa County. From here he saw the nation that he had served in so many capacities pass through its gravest crisis, the end to secession and slavery.

On June 19, 1867, he died at the home of his son, Augustus Caesar, in Burlington, Iowa, where he and Mrs. Dodge had also been staying just prior to her death in 1865. They had been married for 65 years. Of the 13 children born to them, nine grew to maturity. Three sons and a daughter died in early childhood; the fourth child, Henry Lafayette, who served with his father in the Black Hawk War, was burned at the stake in Arizona Territory in 1856 by the Apache Indians. Four daughters and the son survived Henry Dodge.

Among the papers found by his son and preserved by the Iowa State Historical Society is a package bearing in Henry Dodge's handwriting this simple inscription: "Commissions in the Service of my Country." These number 26 and bear the signatures of six presidents, as well as of other distinguished persons.

"The Last Will and Testament of Henry Dodge," its whereabouts unknown until January 1977, begins: "In the name of God - Amen." It ends with: "In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal at the residence of my friend Henry Plowman in Mineral Point this twenty-fourth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand and eight hundred and sixty-five." It is handwritten—firmly and clearly. The stone house in which it was written and where Henry Dodge had rooms, at 149 High Street, is one of the city's historical sites.

His epitaph on the monument overlooking the Father of Waters at Burlington reads:

Henry Dodge October 12, 1782 — June 19, 1867
He Served His Generation by the Will of God

Louis Pelzer concludes his book with the epitaph and these lines:

It is a fitting resting place for the man. The strong and ceaseless flow of the great Mississippi symbolizes his pioneer spirit. Its turbulent waves from the north reecho forever the tales of his Indian conflicts. And in its more peaceful moods it reflects his civil and military career during which he helped to make and to mould two mighty Mississippi Valley Commonwealths.

This overview of Henry Dodge is written in the hope that dimension will be added to the long list of bequests to us as a people from this man too long seen only in silhouette, or in the shadows of wars.

Edna Meudt, poet and author of a play about Henry Dodge, produced by the Iowa County Bicentennial Committee, lives near Dodgeville.

THE DELPHIAN COMPUTER

by Paul Thompson

Now that Comsat
Carries direct
DELPHA's latest prophecy,
We can expect

Along with world news,
The stock report,
Predictions by the hour
Of every sort.

*Crops will fail sometimes,
And hurricanes blow;
Armies shall be defeated,
Populations grow.*

*Heroes will be born
In tenements;
And cures will fail to cure
Some ailments.*

*Love will be a feast
For one or two;
But it will be a cry
Of pain for you.*

BOOKMARKS/WISCONSIN

BARNs OF WISCONSIN

by Jerry Apps and Allen Strang;
Tamarack Press, Madison,
1977, 143 pp. \$10.00.

Friends and admirers of Eric Sloane, familiar with his virtually unparalleled portrayals of rural America, are apt to be somewhat startled by *Barns of Wisconsin* which, at first blush, appears to be a thinly disguised take-off on Sloane's *An Age of Barns and American Barns and Covered Bridges*. Even the usual tentative riffing of pages does not immediately dispel this impression. Substituting pencil for pen-and-ink sketches and water color for oil paintings and superficially comparing format and content seem to clinch the similarity.

What it takes to dispel such notions is a very careful reading of the text and thoughtful examination of the illustrations, both of which demonstrate sufficient originality and freshness in their treatment to suggest that with *Barns of Wisconsin* a valuable contribution has been made to the corpus of knowledge concerning America's rural architecture. The book is not a history of rural Wisconsin, although a good deal of history is woven through its pages.

While narrative and illustrations were provided by two individuals, working separately though cooperatively, the results are eminently cogent and coherent. Old barns have happily been placed in particularly sharp focus, but other rural buildings have not been neglected and, quite importantly, the story of these structures does not stop at some arbitrary time point in the past, but for reasons of comparison covers some examples of very recent vintage. Of the 13 chapters comprising its 143 pages one of the most interesting and

perhaps most comprehensive is Chapter 11, "Towers of Ferment: The Place for Silos." What hasn't been said here about silos probably isn't worth saying.

The illustrations provided by Allen Strang are uniformly good and some of the water color plates are really handsome, making them, as the old saying goes, "suitable for framing." If there is any feeling of insufficiency with regard to the graphics, it would probably be that some detailed drawings of the various types of timber framing might have enhanced and clarified the word picture provided by the text.

Barns of Wisconsin should be read by every barn buff in the country as well as by those who do not as yet so qualify, but who could thereby become converts to the end that the best of Wisconsin's old barns may be saved and preserved for posterity. Summarizing his story, Jerry Apps says:

From an aesthetic perspective, many Wisconsin barns are truly works of art and should be preserved for that reason alone. Whereas the modern-day farm structures have a sameness about them, the old barns are distinctive. Each one has a character of its own and makes a unique contribution to society. Beyond their individual artistic qualities, the old barns contribute to the overall beauty of the countryside. Destroy an old barn, and the beauty of a landscape may be destroyed as well. The old barns are of the people, the common people who live on the land, and their preservation is for the people, all of the people.

So mought it be!

—Richard W. E. Perrin

Richard W.E. Perrin is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

A BASKET OF SCULPTURED THOUGHTS

by Gladys Llewellyn Walsh; Straus
Printing and Publishing Co.,
Madison, 81 p.p. \$6.95.

"We gotta right to go in/
Anywhere we wantta go/And you
gotta get an/Injunction to stop us,"
declare the "invading destroyers"
of Gladys Llewellyn Walsh's poem,
"A Home Passes On." Written in
1936 when the author was 37 years
old, it voices outrage against the
despoilers of the land which will
find ready sympathy in many con-
temporary readers.

Mrs. Walsh has spent a long life
in service to the state of her birth,
Wisconsin. She has been a tireless
worker for better legislation and in
1971 was cited by the Wisconsin
Legislature for her "sincere,
vigorous, and continuing interest in
the laws and government of
Wisconsin." They also acclaimed
her as the "patron saint" of the
Wisconsin Constitution.

Her poems, written over nearly
50 years, offer a candid look at the
motivations of a loving and fearless
woman. Religion plays a critical
part in her life and poetry. While
warning that "the forms and drapes
of worship may cold and empty
be," she calls her conscience the
"mirror of God." She had her book
reviewed by a theologian lest she
present incorrectly the teachings of
her church. He found nothing to
criticize.

We, who like Mrs. Walsh long to
"dull the pain of wordy poison"
and to be alive to all human beings
around us, can learn from poetry
that exposes pretention as "varnish
on their souls" and calls us to
remember the "shop girl in the dry
goods basement." Every reader of
these poems is led to reexamine his
motivations as a citizen and as a
human being. Do many poems do
more?

—Lenore M. Coberly

Lenore M. Coberly, a published
poet, is a member of the Wisconsin
Fellowship of Poets and vice
president of planning for United
Way of Dane County.

RUN TO REALITY by Roger Eichens, John Greist, Tom McIn-vaille; Madison Running Press, Bulfin, Milwaukee, 1977. 76 pp. Paper \$3.95.

The run has it—pace, rhythm, movement, a certain exhilaration. *Run to Reality* reflects these qualities. The authors and photographer have been there. Their style is open, flowing, like a run on a brisk fall day. Awareness created by letting go builds with distance, page by page. Long hilly endurance runs mixed with shorter speed workouts; feelings, ideas, observations emerge.

Reality strides across the pages with sometimes aching sureness, usually refreshed spirit. Running lends perspective, not absolute answers. Runners move toward their untapped potential as beings, letting go of familiar yet inhibiting restraints. Runners value each other rather than evaluate differences; a sense of community grows. Running builds acceptance of what is to be carried into the day and shared with others.

As with the early runner, the authors have a tendency to search too hard. Miles teach that the secret is in just being. As with the ad-dicted runner, there is an urge to go too far. There is a time to let silence speak.

Transcending, confirming things happen out there in the open spaces. *Run to Reality* clearly expresses that experience. Suddenly you give way to your self. Pictures form in the mind, like this poem given on the run:

FOG

Crest climbed, hollows, stretches
run.

Nearing the front edge of en-
durance,
Lowland fog wraps around you.
First, hesitation grips the mind.
Then, a feeling of comfort
prevails.

Next now familiar patch
Approached with anticipation,
Like life's episodes.
Running beyond fatigue's sting,
Gaining the unexpected
On the run.

—Blair Mathews

Blair Mathews is Assistant to the Vice Chancellor and Assistant Dean of Students at UW-Madison. Poem from *Moments*, Blair Mathews, Wisconsin House, Ltd. (Now Stanton & Lee Publishers, Inc.).

A STUDENT GUIDE TO RESEARCH IN GLACIAL GEOLOGY compiled by Mark E. Richner; Vantage Press, New York, 1977. \$4.50.

For students and researchers working in continental glacial geology, *A Student Guide to Research in Glacial Geology* will be a useful tool for finding information from professional journals and state publications. There are over 750 references of articles from historical and contemporary sources. All reference items are listed by author and date of publication.

—Frank Zuerner

Frank Zuerner is a teacher of earth science and biology at James Madison Memorial High School.

COSMETICS COUNTER

by Leslie Dock

Gimbel's West rambles, spacious
in its economy; just inside
the expanse of entrance
lie three corrals of glass display
cases, each containing
a lone salesclerk.

All shades of Cupid's redbow
smile and sing out to your pursed
wallet; tiers of eyelashes bat
flirtations, while luxury begs you
to linger, sniff the octaves of fragrance
trapped in long-necked, pear-shaped, potbellied
testers.

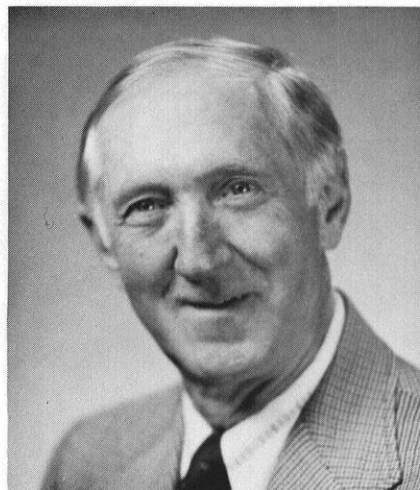
Round the isles we go, wondering
at how tasteful tastelessness can seem.
We're like little girls who, yearning
to know a veil, scavenge in mother's bed
room; their deer eyes lit by gleaming gold
plate, they pry and try to force
the blasted casing, then wrench-and-cleave
it apart. Only then, like cannibals,
can they sink their young teeth into Red Apple
Delight and feel it crumble
into soft oily clumps in their mouths.

When we put on adulthood we forget,
having chewed that smooth applique of skin;
yet even when you're headed somewhere
else, the fragile boxes flutter
your heart, for suddenly you've come upon
a still life: moss roses rampage and recline
on the graves, but the headstones sag to one side,
as if each has lost the battle
between standing tall and being
comfortable in her place.

INSIDE THE ACADEMY

The Sleeping Giant

by Robert A. McCabe
Vice President-Sciences



The membership of the Academy can be likened to a sleeping giant. Great power and service potential lies idle in the expertise and intellectual capacity of its members. In Academy publications, meetings and symposia we stretch our knowledge-muscles and exercise these strengths but because we have not been invited into the decision making arena of state or local governments the efforts are largely academic with limited social impact. That outstanding medical school primarily for black students, Meharry College, has used this slogan to call attention to bright but underprivileged students (I paraphrase) "It is tragic to waste a brilliant mind." Who can but emphatically agree?

It is this same kind of waste that currently exists with our sleeping giant.

At the national level no such lethargy is tolerated either by government or the National Academy of Sciences and its affiliated groups. Congress and the executive branch can call, and have called, on the National Academy to address itself to problems or topics that require broad bases of knowledge and skills. These concerns are then studied in depth by a group of selected specialists who, on very limited logistic budget and no salary, provide a report with the very latest and best in scientific assessment. Often such reports have resolved legislative conflicts and have been the basis for value

judgments in Congress on matters that concern American society and on occasion world wide welfare of people or environments.

A recent issue of the National Academy's newsletter, "News Report," listed no less than 30 publications. These were the end product of committee activity and symposia concentrating the varied expertise marshalled by the National Academy on major national concerns. On page one of the "News Report" are two stories that illustrate the breadth and scope of involvement.

After much to-do about project "Sanquine" here in Wisconsin several years ago, the name and project location were altered and a report on the radiation effects of this naval program, renamed "Seafarer," have now been filed with the National Academy and are thus available to Congress and the President. Similarly, another committee report is entitled "Carbon Dioxide from Fossil Fuel: Questions of Climate Change." Part of a key statement read, "Worldwide industrial civilization may face a major decision over the next few decades..."

If the National Academy of Sciences can provide a continuing source of expert analysis on a national and global basis, then most assuredly the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters can do the same on issues confronting the state and local governments.

Our Wisconsin Academy can

draw not only on its membership, but it can, as does the National Academy, bring together experts with the necessary knowledge and expertise from outside sources. It will be able to do so because the WASAL has in its membership: businessmen, engineers, doctors, lawyers, academics in many disciplines, plus artisans and enlightened laymen.

It must be understood that these reports, whether at the national or local level, are advisory only. They may, however, lead to a variety of options not always foreseeable at the outset of the investigation, in addition accumulating facts to support the committee charge.

To awaken Wisconsin's sleeping giant requires only the confidence of elected officials in the integrity of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. The Academy would welcome an opportunity to demonstrate its ability to serve. Not all problems will fall within Academy purview but those that can be evaluated will be executed thoroughly, in a scientific manner and, above all, without bias.

Robert A. McCabe, chairman of the UW-Madison department of wildlife ecology, has been designated president-elect of the Wisconsin Academy and will succeed Dale O'Brien of Spring Green in January 1979. At that time Mr. O'Brien will become president, succeeding Robert E. Gard.

WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW

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