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Wisconsin Academy Review

A JOURNAL OF WISCONSIN CULTURE





Else Bigton and Phillip Odden
Norsk Wood Works, Barronett

Cover: Wall hanging, detail. Fill stitch and chain stitch. Colors are those commonly used by Hmong women when they first arrive in the United States. Overall size, 55 x 49 inches. From the Hmong textile collection of Elizabeth and Daniel Perkins, Eau Claire.

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This spring the Wisconsin Academy will hold its annual conference in Eau Claire, and the theme will be "Presenting/Representing the Peoples of the Chippewa Valley." In preparing this issue of the *Review*, we decided to look at this part of the state to see what else has been going on which might be of interest to our readers, and we did not have to look far. Last fall the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire was the site of an international gathering of astronomers, physicists, geologists, chemists, and biologists—the list includes some of the most distinguished planetary scientists in the world—all of whom came together to discuss their research on the origins of Earth. Did they come to an agreement? Well, not exactly, though the comet theory continues to be supported by many. We probably will have to stay tuned for quite a while before we have firm answers, but in the meantime we thought we would share some of the proceedings with you.

Eau Claire is also a center of cultural diversity as evidenced by the examples of arts and crafts featured in the Galleria department. Represented are works by traditional and contemporary American Indian and Hmong peoples along with traditional Norwegian carving done by contemporary artisans. (The two Indian tribes native to this part of the state are Winnebago and Ojibway.) Some roots are new; others go back to the earliest history of the area.

I would guess that a great many of us were moved by the compelling series on television dramatizing the Civil War, and I would guess further that even after all these months remnants continue to enter our thought streams. In this issue we are taking a look at one aspect of this period in our country's memory: the way in which much of history has presented the character and personality of Mary Todd Lincoln. In one article, the author provides a summary of Mary Lincoln's life, and there is an interesting Wisconsin connection in that she spent some time during her later years in Waukesha seeking relief from her suffering through the "healing properties" of the local spring waters. (I have learned that the word Waukesha is of Winnebago extrac-

tion and means "dwelling place by the water springs.") In addition, a Wisconsin playwright has written a drama based on the life of Lincoln, and he has given us permission to use excerpts which focus on what many scholars believe to be Lincoln's true feelings for his wife. In a related piece, *Chronicle* features portions of the correspondence of early Watertown citizen Carl Schurz which center on his role in the Lincoln saga.

Long before Mary Lincoln mingled her tears of sorrow with the spring waters of Waukesha, fascinating ancient creatures made their homes there. Fossils have been discovered (which also hold some clues relating to terrestrial organisms and the evolution of life), and two scientists from Illinois tell their story. And not quite so long ago, stories were being handed down generation to generation by ancestors of today's American Indians. Guest essayist Joseph Bruchac, a member of the Abenaki tribe in New York, tells traditional stories throughout the world. He writes for us with the hope that all people will show more respect for Earth, our only home.

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As I plan for and prepare each issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* I constantly remind myself that this is not my publication, but rather it belongs to the subscribers and the members of the Academy who provide suggestions, encouragement, and support. I find a particularly valuable source of professional support in the members of the editorial committee, all of whom are listed on the last page of this publication. Some members have completed their terms on the committee, and I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for their help and wise counsel. They are: Anita Been of Verona, Nancy Ekholm Burkert of Milwaukee, Ben Logan of Gays Mills, and Kathleen S. Abrams of Wausau. Thank you.

Faith B. Miracle

Faith B. Miracle



Education in the 90s: Nurturing Change

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters was chartered by the state legislature on March 16, 1870, as an incorporated society serving the people of Wisconsin by encouraging investigation and dissemination of knowledge in the sciences, arts, and humanities.

CONTRIBUTORS

- ▼ Peter King Beach is a Michigan native who grew up in New York City and holds degrees from the University of Toronto and Columbia University. He has been writing professionally most of his adult life (chiefly in advertising and marketing) and has been interested in the Civil War era since childhood. He and his wife now live in Wisconsin's north woods near Aniwa. His play about Lincoln has been performed in six states, starring Granville Van Dusen as Lincoln; Delbert Mann is the ongoing director.
- ▼ Ruth Blodgett holds degrees in English and technical writing from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and has taught high school English at Rice Lake and Altoona. She is presently working for the National Business Institute in Eau Claire, a provider of continuing education opportunities, principally for attorneys.
- ▼ Joseph Bruchac is director of The Greenfield Review Press and Literary Center, which he founded in 1969, in Greenfield Center, New York. He holds an M.A. in creative writing and a Ph.D. in comparative literature; has performed as a musician and storyteller throughout the Americas and Europe; taught English in New York and West Africa; and his poems, stories and reviews have been widely published. He is a member of the Abenacki Indian tribe.
- ▼ Ruth Calden was born in Michigan and graduated from the University of Michigan. In 1951 she moved to Madison and during the 1960s was a student of naturalist Jim Zimmerman, who first opened her eyes "to our fragile ecosystem on which all life depends." A field trip experience during the course inspired "Bird Lovers," her first published poem.
- ▼ Clarence DeSpain (C.D. Spain) is a psychologist and part-time instructor at Madison Area Technical College. His poems have appeared in *Heartland Journal*, and he is at work on a novel set in Iowa, where he was born, and in Colorado, where he has also lived.
- ▼ Mary L. Downs was born in Kaukauna and attended St. Norbert College, De Pere. She now lives in Appleton and began writing poetry "in earnest" four years ago. Her poems have appeared in the *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar* and *Fox Cry*, published by the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley Center.
- ▼ Helen Fahrback is a retired librarian who lives and writes in Neenah. She teaches creative writing workshops and is active in writing organizations throughout the state. She has been widely published, and her most recent collection is *A Thousand Journeys*.
- ▼ Joanne Kluessendorf, a Milwaukee native, began her undergraduate career at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and received her Ph.D. in geology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she is a curator at the Museum of Natural History. Her research focuses mainly on carbonate sedimentology and the geology of eastern Wisconsin.
- She found the first fossil in the Waukesha deposit described in the article of which she is co-author.
- ▼ Joyce Koskenmaki teaches art at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and also manages the university art gallery. Her work has been influenced by such sources as tribal arts, folk art, and women's traditional arts. She has exhibited nationally and is represented at galleries in New York, Boston, Chicago, and Minneapolis. She is currently researching ancient rock carvings, and her most recent work focuses on animals and animal spirits.
- ▼ Poet Gary LeBel was born in Maine and now lives in Waukesha. When not working as an optical engineer, his main interests are his family, writing, and painting.
- ▼ Donald G. Mikulic was born in Muskego in Waukesha County. He received his B.A. in geology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and his Ph.D. in geology at Oregon State University. Currently an associate geologist at the Illinois State Geological Survey, he has been studying the geology and paleontology of Wisconsin for more than thirty years. He is also interested in the history of the stone, lime, and cement industries in eastern Wisconsin.
- ▼ Jean Prafke was born in Pewaukee and is currently an art major living in Cleveland, Ohio.
- ▼ Ralph Schneider has lived in Wisconsin for more than twenty years and is a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. His poetry has appeared in such publications as *Wisconsin Dialogue* and the *Kansas Quarterly*. "Melting" was written during a recent sabbatical leave devoted to studying and writing poetry.
- ▼ Helene Clay Silcox (1947–1989), a Menominee/Cherokee artist, worked in ink, oil, acrylic, wood, metal, glass, and fiber. She lived in Wisconsin and later moved to San Jucinto, California. She was the daughter of Milwaukee poet Gerti H. Sennett.
- ▼ Richard Terrill, a Wisconsin native now living in Mankato, Minnesota, taught for three years at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and has also worked in Wisconsin as a musician and a writer. His poems have appeared in such publications as *Ironweed*, *North American Review*, *New Letters*, and *Wisconsin Poetry* (an anthology published by the Wisconsin Academy in 1991). He also has published a prize-winning novel.
- ▼ Kristine Adams Wendt is the children's librarian and assistant director at the Rhinelander District Library, where she has been employed since receiving an M.A. in library science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1974. Her interest in Mary Todd Lincoln began while earning a B.A. in history from Carroll College in Waukesha. An earlier article on Mary Lincoln appeared in *The Waukesha Freeman*.

Life's Building Blocks: Considering Comets

by Ruth Blodgett

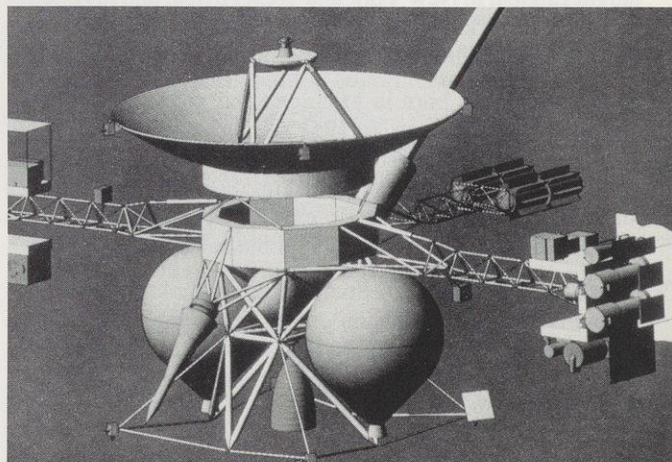
In 1910 the approach of Halley's comet brought fear and near hysteria to the lives of many who thought the comet was sure to bring doom and destruction. It was believed that if Halley passed close enough to the Earth, hydrogen cyanide, known to be a constituent of cometary tails, would poison the atmosphere and certainly cause death.

Comets, sometimes thought to be icy masses of space debris, have traditionally been considered the catalysts of catastrophe. A new look into comets, however, could help dispel the myth that has clung to the celestial tails of comets for centuries. Comets as the origins of life, not the destruction of life, is a concept that modern researchers are trying to explore.

The origin of life, however, is not easily understood, and in some instances, is not taken seriously. Mankind has been struggling with the question of how life began since the beginning of time, and progress seems to be slow. The most remarkable experiment that provided important insights did not occur until 1953 when Stanley Miller, then a graduate student at the University of Chicago, designed an apparatus that simulated the then-current estimates of the Earth's early atmosphere. Mixing together portions of methane, ammonia, hydrogen, and water in a sealed glass container, keeping the water boiling, and introducing an electrical discharge that modeled lightning, Miller thought he had re-created the conditions under which life had formed. Upon examination, Miller discovered that a brown ooze had formed on the inside of the glass. The ooze that Miller had created proved to be amino acids, the chemical link to proteins, the building blocks of life. What Miller's experiment had shown was that the precursors of life could be created through chemical reactions. (Ponnamperuma)

In successive decades, scientists discovered that Miller's atmosphere was probably not representative of the Earth's early atmosphere after all. By this time, researchers had learned that methane and ammonia would have been quickly destroyed by sunlight and the high temperatures of the early Earth, and carbon dioxide would have been dominant. (Owen, et al.) With further study, Miller agreed that he needed to reconsider his experiment. The problem of how life began was more difficult than he had projected.

Miller's experiment sparked interest in pursuing the origins of life, however, and later research led to understanding the structure of DNA, the carrier of the genetic code, and explained how DNA and proteins could have been synthesized in the Earth's early atmosphere.



The Comet Rendezvous Asteroid Flyby spacecraft. Due to budget cuts, the penetrator shown at lower left has been deleted from the design. Photo courtesy NASA.

In the early 1980s, experimenters were closer to piecing together the puzzle. Scientists discovered that RNA might have been able to replicate itself without the help of enzymes and could, in fact, behave as both an enzyme and a genetic code. Some scientists concluded that the first organisms were based in the synthesis of RNA, thus the birth of the "RNA World" that led the process of simple chemistry to the complexity of DNA-based cells. (Joyce)

In recent years, origins of life theories have surfaced and resurfaced. Spontaneous generation, creation, and chemical evolution have all received consideration. Even though none of the origins of life theories has gained dedicated support, neither

has any been discounted. While most scientists agree that the building blocks for life formed in the Earth's early atmosphere as the result of photochemistry, as Miller's experiment had shown, a recent theory has surfaced suggesting that organic molecules may also have been introduced to Earth by cometary impact.

Some scientists think comets played a role in the history of our planet. Comets, they say, might have been partly responsible for the origin and evolution of life on Earth.

On September 30, 1991, more than fifty leading scientists, from as far as Australia and as close as Wisconsin, gathered in Eau Claire for a three-day conference, "Comets and the Origins and Evolution of Life," a meeting they hoped would help them focus on key issues that are being explored in the search for the beginning of life on Earth. Those who assembled at the conference hoped to exchange data on the composition of meteorites, asteroids, and comets; comet orbits; the cratering record of the terrestrial planets; and whether organic materials delivered to Earth by comets could have survived the impact. Although the Earth probably did contain some organic molecules, comets probably brought additional materials to Earth during the period of heavy bombardment that followed the formation of the planet. It is believed that after the formation of the planet, the Earth was most likely too hot to sustain life or an atmosphere conducive to life. With the impact of comets would have come organic molecules, plenty of water, and thus life.

Although cratering records of the Earth's history do not date back much farther than 65 million years, other evidence does exist that our solar system was bombarded by comets and asteroids about 3.5 billion years ago. In fact, lunar craters are evidence of some type of impact about this time, and studies have shown that the moon also contains organic molecules. Any evidence of such ancient craters on the Earth have been long gone, eradicated by water and changing geological conditions. (Ponnampertuma)

Organic molecules may be a significant component of comets, and scientists attending the Eau Claire conference spent much time discussing evidence documenting the composition of comets. Results of the Giotto mission, which flew near and through the tail of Halley's comet in 1986, supported the hypothesis that comets are rich in organic material, as scientists discovered that Halley's comet, at least, was rich in carbon. In fact, researchers discovered that about 20 percent of Halley's composition can be attributed to organic material. (Kissel and Krueger)

Scientists need to know specifics about comet composition, and an idea closely related to comets is comet dust. In 1989 M. Zhao and J. Bada of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography

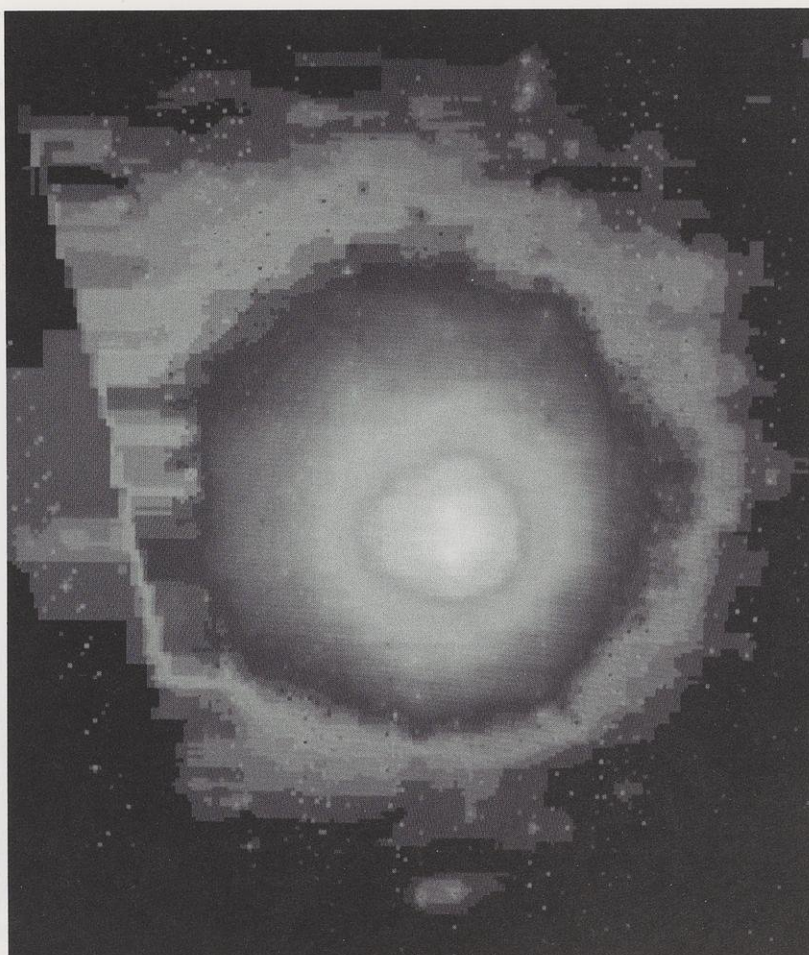


Image of the coma of Halley's comet, the cloud of gases surrounding the comet nucleus. Halley's comet is 12.5 million miles in diameter. The image was compiled from 20,000 separate vertical scans by Pioneer Venus's ultraviolet spectrometer instrument. Data was collected February 2-5, 1986; the image was prepared over a three-week period. The concentric areas show decrease in comet brightness, as it declines from the center outward. This is almost an exact side view of the coma. Photo courtesy NASA.

at the University of California, San Diego, reportedly found large amounts of extraterrestrial amino acids in rocks dated to lie between the Cretaceous and Tertiary periods in rock formations found in Denmark. The amino acids, however, were found just above and below these boundaries but not in the boundary itself. Known as the K/T Boundary, the layer consists of iridium and implies that it may be the result of an asteroid collision, the collision that may have been responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs. Conference attendees Kevin Zahnle of the NASA Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, California, and David Grinspoon of the University of Colorado contend that an explanation for this could be that a large comet trapped in the inner solar system had vaporized, depositing dust. Researchers suggest that the organic molecules would have fallen to Earth in comet dust just *before* and *after* the impact, while they would

have been destroyed *during* the impact, thus explaining why they were not present in the boundary section.

A closely related theory projected by J. Mayo Greenberg of the Laboratory of Astrophysics at the University of Leiden at Leiden, the Netherlands, addresses the thermal properties of a comet. Greenberg contends that a comet nucleus consists of low density ice, which would reduce the heating of a large cometary impact and cause a comet to fragment when it passes through the atmosphere.

Some researchers believe that cometary bombardment could have been responsible for periodic extinction, a theory often associated with the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Researchers believe that even though fossil records are not too accurate, records that have been examined indicate extinction may have occurred on a somewhat regular basis, about every 26 million years. Although the cause is unknown, it has been projected that periodic extinction might be related to background gravity or orbital patterns of objects within the Oort Cloud. (Weissman) Although some scientists still hold on to this theory, those invited to attend the conference did not accept the opportunity to project their hypotheses. (Conference co-organizer Paul Thomas, assistant professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, suspects they might have felt the issue had been talked out and nothing more remained to be said.)

Scientists who attended the conference, though, did have something to say about extinction. S.V.M. Clube of the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, contends that the evolution of life occurred as a result of tidal forces continually tearing comets apart. He believes that the fragments left over after the comets were destroyed hit the Earth and might have posed a threat to life and civilization.

Most scientists, however, do not agree with Clube. It is believed that Clube's data is arguable at best, including the ancient Chinese records that Clube adheres to, writings documenting meteor showers that occurred centuries ago. Some researchers do not believe the records are reliable. In fact Paul Weissman from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena offered evidence supporting his belief that periodic extinction did *not* occur. He showed that geological records supposedly evidencing extinction are in reality not accurate due to changing geological conditions.

Stanley Miller, now of the University of California at San Diego, is not even convinced that the comet idea is plausible. He suggests that even though some organic material may have been

introduced to Earth by comets, the amount was negligible—probably only a few percentages of that from Earth-based synthesis. He believes that most were present on the planet ahead of time, probably synthesized in the atmosphere, collected in shallow seas, and protected in deep sea hydrothermal vents where they had migrated. While he doesn't believe much would have survived the impact of a comet, others do.

Researchers Chris Chyba and Carl Sagan of Cornell University are among those who do. They believe the heavy bombardment could have played an important role in the origins of life on Earth. Not only would organics have survived impact, but they believe the impact would have "shock synthesized" organics in the atmosphere by the heating and compression of the impact shock wave.

Etta Peterson, NASA Ames Research Center, relayed her own results of shock experiments. The experiments consisted of firing metal cylinders containing powdered amino acids at a target under controlled shock pressures. Results showed that at a high velocity, amino acids did in fact survive the impact.

Even though researchers seem to have evidence supporting the idea that some organics may have been delivered to Earth by comets, the theory of cometary bombardment as the catalyst for life on Earth is complex and combines a number of disciplinary areas—biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, and geology. That is why Paul Thomas felt that Eau Claire would be a good place to host such a conference. "I think a liberal arts college is a good place to organize events that are interdisciplinary. We need people to understand that we actually can say some useful things about how life formed. It requires a lot of different back-

grounds to do that."

Scientists well known in their fields agreed the time was right to hold a conference to discuss important past, present, and future missions and to decide exactly what additional data they need to answer the puzzling question of how life formed.

While scientists gained much valuable information from the Giotto mission, researchers understand that they still don't know much about comets. Explaining the need for an increased understanding of comets, Thomas said, "We don't know what a comet is like close up. We just don't. I think any unbiased person at this conference when asked what to do next would say, 'Let's go look at a comet in more detail.'"

To understand the characteristics and compositions of comets, scientists agree that space missions need to be sent directly to comets. Two missions currently on the books include one co-sponsored by the European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA and one sponsored by NASA alone.



The nucleus of comet Halley as seen from the European Space Agency's Giotto spacecraft. Photo by Dr. H.U. Keller using the Halley Multicolour Camera; © 1986 by Max-Planck-Institut für Aeronomie, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany.

CRAF (Comet Rendezvous Asteroid Flyby), the NASA mission, is scheduled to fly in 1996, providing funding remains available. It will fly by a large asteroid in 1999 and rendezvous with a short-period comet in 2003. The spacecraft and the comet will then orbit the sun together indefinitely. While still far from the sun, cometary activity will be minimal, and the spacecraft will then orbit the nucleus of the comet, ready to use its sensing instruments to determine the structure, composition, and thermal properties of the nucleus. As comet activity increases, the sensing devices will be able to map out properties of the coma. Measurements will include impact rates and velocities of dust grains, energy spectra, and observations of the magnetic field. Instruments will also collect samples of dust. Eventually, the spacecraft will be close enough to the nucleus to obtain high resolution data of the surface, maneuvering closer until it comes into contact with the comet, ending the mission in July 2005. (Neugebauer and Weissman)

While the ESA/NASA mission Rosetta is similar, it is much more ambitious. Rosetta is the cornerstone mission of ESA and has been jointly studied with NASA for the past four years. Rosetta's major goal is to return a sample of a comet nucleus to Earth while maintaining its fundamental properties. Obtaining such a sample would allow scientists to explore the raw materials from which our solar system evolved, and analysis of condensed organic material could establish a link with the earliest beginnings of life.

The spacecraft, consisting of three modules, is planned to be launched in 2002. After a period of six years, the spacecraft will be in a position to orbit a comet, characterize the comet, and map out a landing site. After Rosetta lands, it will be anchored to the nucleus by means of harpoons, and drilling for a core sample will begin. The samples will be stored in insulated cylinders, maintaining temperatures at about 130 degrees kelvin. When sampling has been completed, the spacecraft will be re-launched toward Earth, eventually making a parachute-assisted touch down in the Pacific Ocean. Samples will finally be distributed to the scientific community eight years after the mission commences. (Atzei)

Thomas is unsure about the future of further exploration into the origins of life, as he suspects the budget will be limited. In fact, CRAF is in deep funding trouble and faces cancellation. If that is the case, scientists will have to go elsewhere to find the information they need. This would include further study into the chemistry of the Earth, atmospheres as they exist on other planets, fossil records, and improved computer modeling. He feels the study of the origins of life can be expected to extend into another generation of scientists. After all, we cannot be expected to solve such a complex problem in a short period of time.

The theories and conjectures presented at the origins of life conference leave much to the imagination and much to the curiosity of the average person. The questions scientists are trying to answer are questions people have been thinking about for centuries—and probably will continue to think about for years to come.

An international conference on the origins of life had been under consideration for several years and finally came together at the end of 1989 when Paul Thomas, planetary scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, learned that he had received a grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to help fund the event. Combined with a grant already obtained by Christopher McKay of the NASA Ames Research Center and with additional funding from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Arts and Sciences Outreach office, the conference began to take shape. In addition to Carl Sagan, scientists from around the world who have devoted much time and research to the origins of life on Earth attended, including scientists from such institutions as Stanford University in California; the Max-Planck-Institut für Aeronomie of Kaltenburg-Lindau, Germany; Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California. And, of course, scientists from NASA and the European Space Agency also made the trip to western Wisconsin.

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- K. Zahnle and D. Grinspoon, "Comet Dust as a Source of Amino Acids" (Conference abstract)

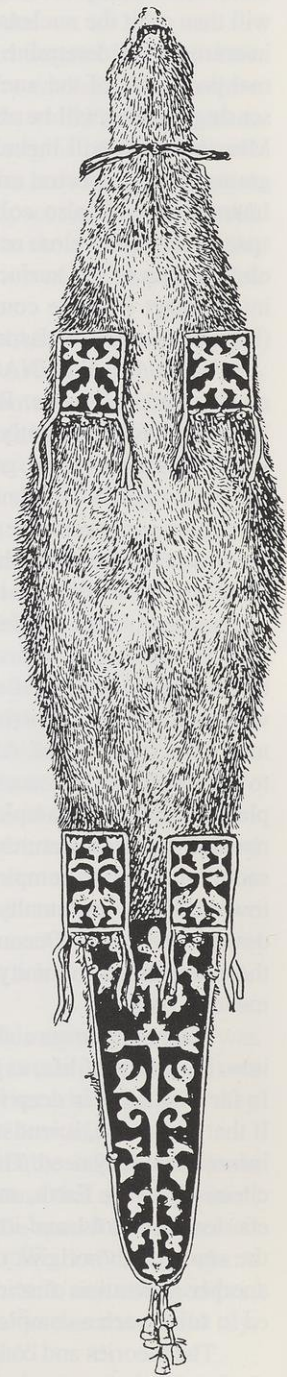


North Country Arts and Crafts

The northwestern part of Wisconsin is a cultural cross-roads where East meets West and old blends with new. From the contributions of the earliest dwellers, the Winnebago and Ojibway people, to the newest arrivals, the Hmong people, the artistic traditions inform and enrich our lives.



ABOVE: Man's shirt in black wool with beadwork applique. Winnebago. RIGHT: Pouch made of whole otter skin, decorated with curving floral beaded design on cloth, influenced by the needlework taught in Canadian convents by Roman Catholic sisters. Winnebago.



ABOVE: Quillwork on buckskin bag. Ojibway. RIGHT: Beadwork. Ojibway.

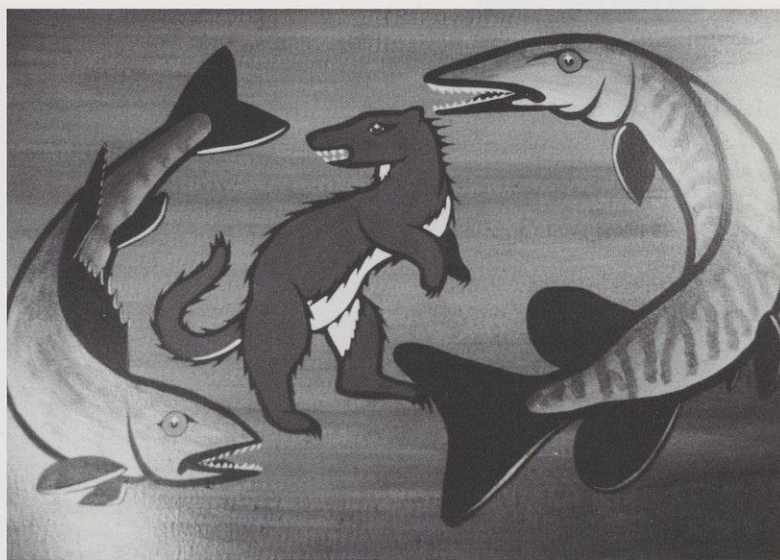




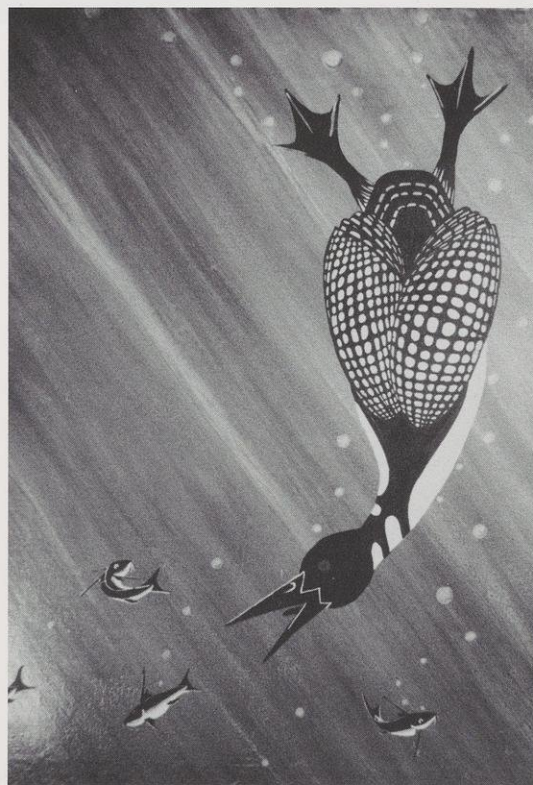
Ajjjak. Acrylic, 12 x 16 inches. 1989.



Bear drum. Acrylic on rawhide hand drum. 1985.



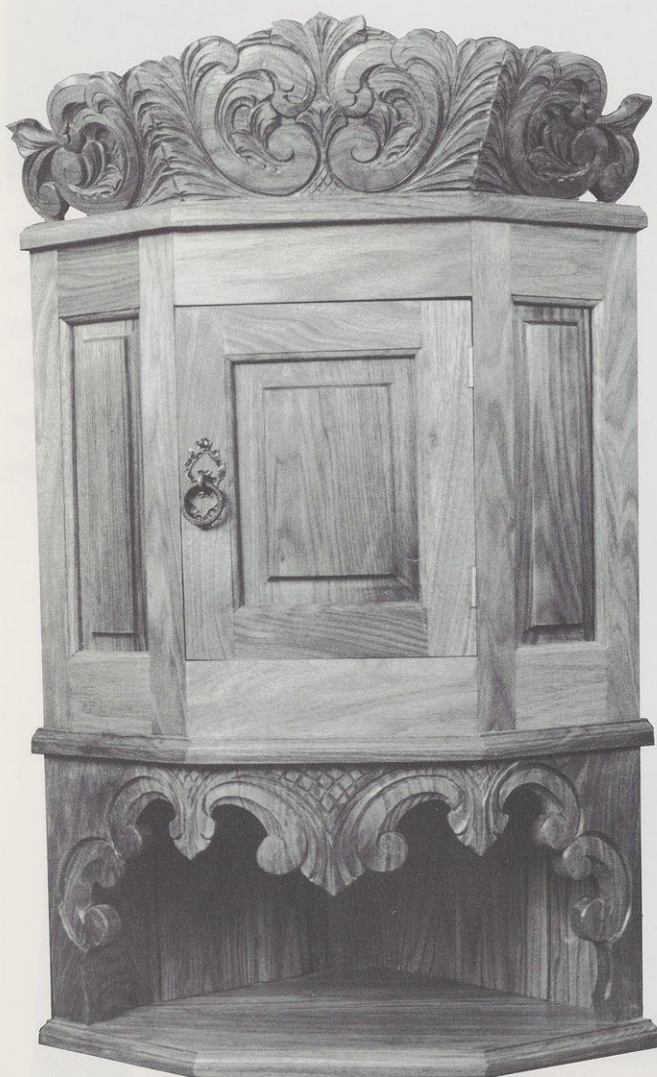
Mink Referees Walleye and Muskie. Acrylic, 18 x 24 inches. 1990.



Diving Loon. Acrylic, 12 x 16 inches. 1990.

Kevin H. Roach, an Ojibway Indian enrolled in the Bad River band, lives on the Lac Court Oreilles reservation and teaches art to students K-12 at the Lac Court Oreilles Ojibway school in Hayward. He works mostly with acrylics on canvas but also teaches such traditional crafts as beadwork, carving, birch bark crafts, and the making of ceremonial clothing.

Else J. Bigton and Phillip Odden design, build, and carve traditional Scandinavian furniture and ornamentation at their studio, Norsk Wood Works, in Barronett in northwestern Wisconsin. Bigton studied traditional crafts in schools throughout her homeland, Norway, and her work has been featured in a number of publications. Odden studied classic Norwegian wood carving at the Hjerlaid School, Dover, Norway. Their work has been shown at regional, national, and international exhibitions since establishing their studio in 1979.



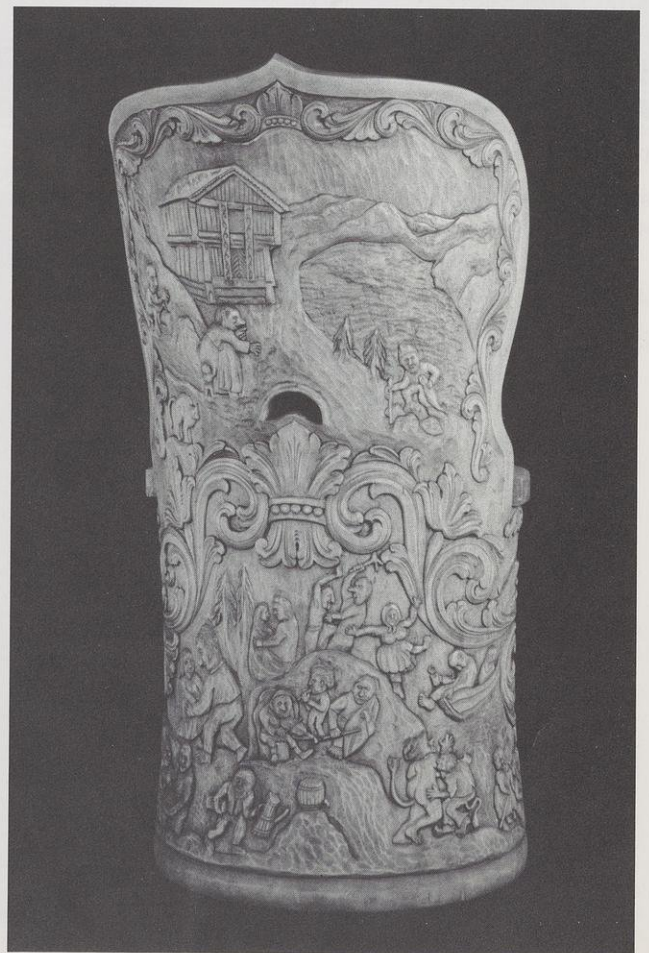
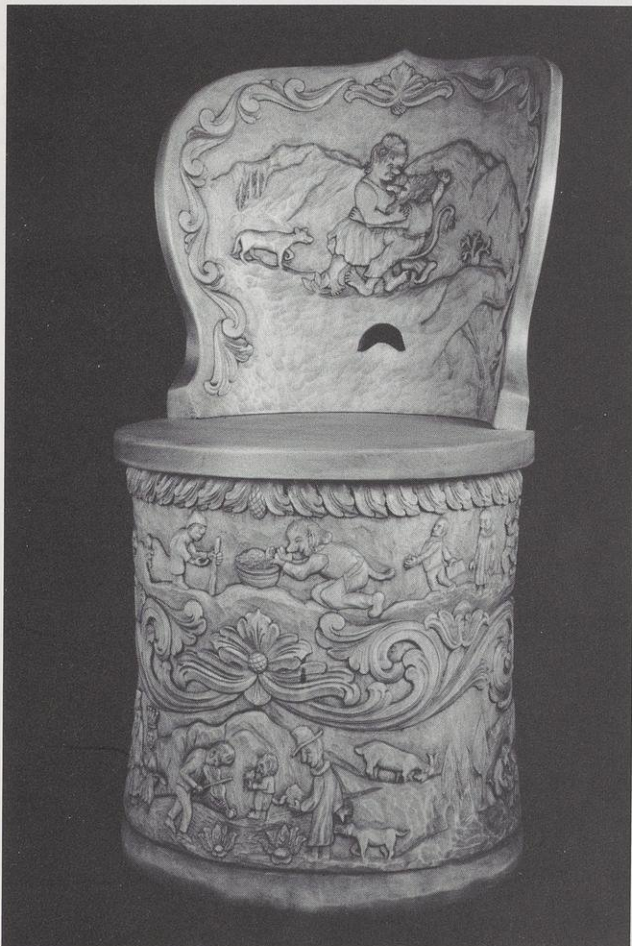
Photos by Bob Mischka.

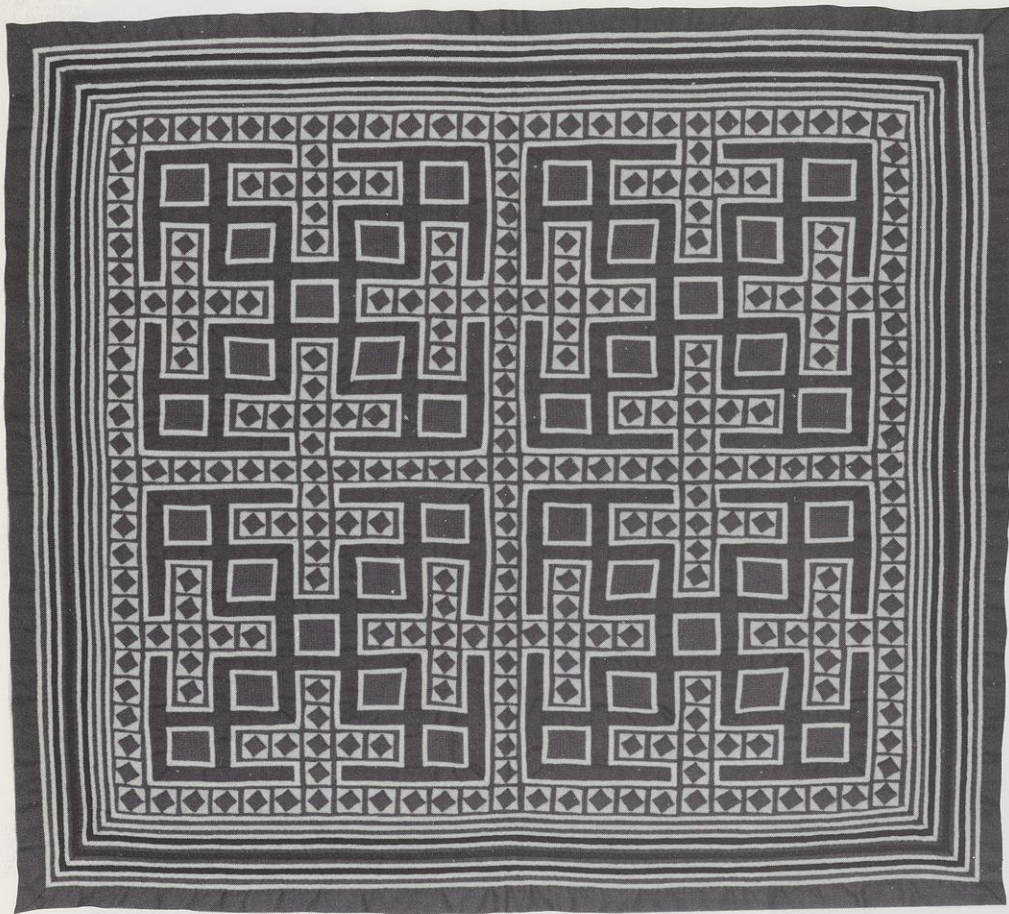
LEFT: Traditional corner cabinet designed and carved by Else Bigton. Butternut, 31 x 14 inches, 1989.

ABOVE: Acanthus mirror frame by Else Bigton. Basswood, 32 x 17 inches. 1985.

NEXT PAGE TOP: Little lady ale bowl by Phillip Odden. Basswood, 14 inches long x 5 inches wide x 6 ½ inches high. 1991.

NEXT PAGE RIGHT: Troll wedding kubbestol (log chair) by Phillip Odden. Basswood, 36 inches high x 18 inches diameter. 1991. (Front and back views) Private collection.



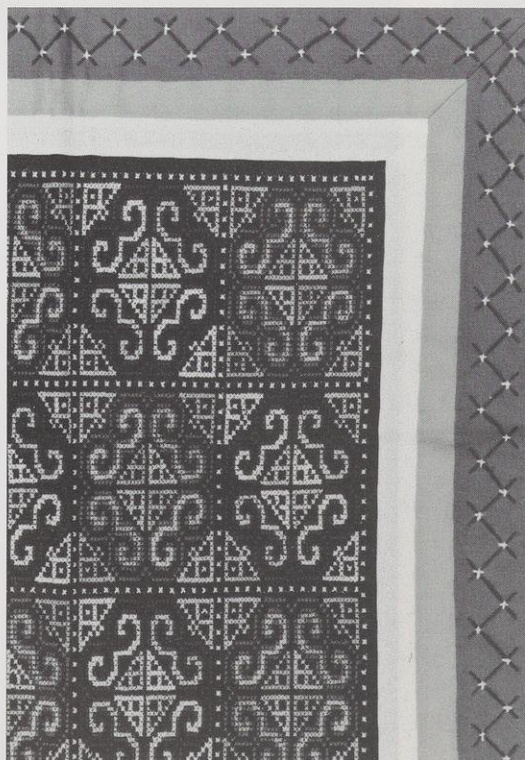


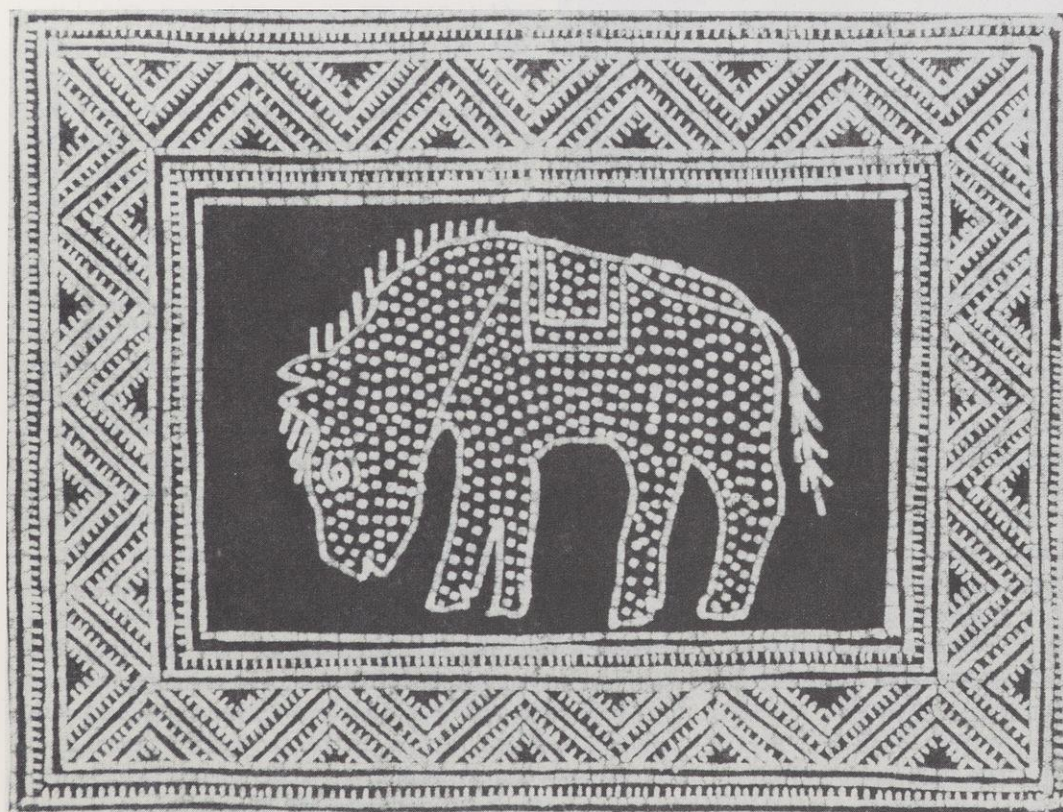
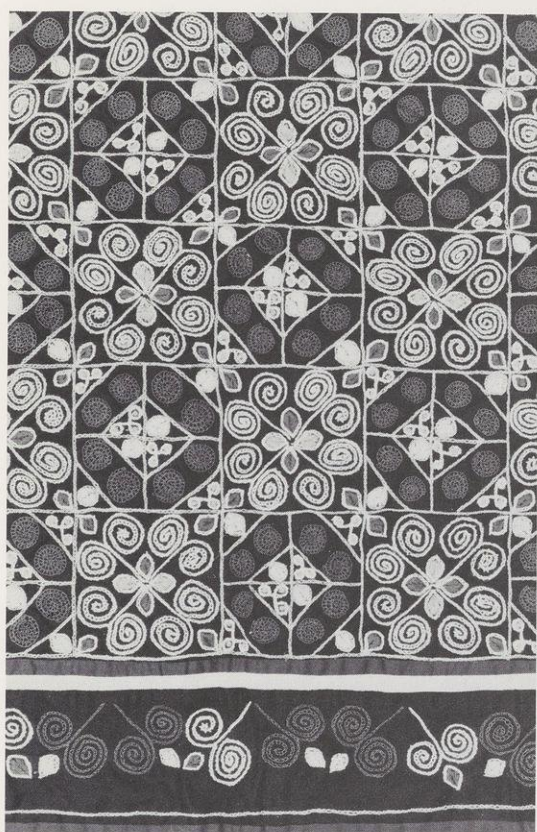
All techniques used in producing Hmong textiles are called *pa ndaub* (pronounced pon-dow), which means “flower cloth,” including applique, reverse applique, fold-and-tuck, piece work, a wide variety of embroidery stitches, and batik. All of the work shown here was done by northern Wisconsin Hmong women and their families. (Some family members are in other parts of the United States or in refugee camps in Thailand.) The pieces are in the collection of Elizabeth and Daniel Perkins of Eau Claire.

LEFT: Pillow cover used in funeral ceremony. Applique and fold-and-tuck work done in traditional red and yellow. Green Hmong funeral piece (Green indicates a sub-grouping by costume and dialect). Traditionally made by a daughter-in-law for her husband’s parents.

BELOW: Heart design in reverse applique and top stitching. Detail.

BELOW LEFT: Counted cross stitch. Traditionally this was one of the first techniques learned by Hmong girls at about age four or five. Detail.





TOP LEFT: Chain stitch and fill stitch embroidery. Detail.

TOP RIGHT: Buttonhole stitch and chain stitch with applique.

LEFT: Image of a horse. Batik, done with wax, stylus, and dye—a rare craft with Hmong artisans.

Mary Todd Lincoln: "Great Sorrows" and the Healing Waters of Waukesha

by Kristine Adams Wendt

*M*rs. Abraham Lincoln penned these words in one of two letters written while she was staying in Waukesha during the summer of 1872, and they were published by Justin and Linda Levitt Turner in their book *Mary Todd Lincoln: Her Life and Letters*. In their exhaustive search for letters written by Mary Lincoln, the Turners found few existing examples from the period between 1871 and 1876. Physically ill and mentally despondent, Mary Lincoln lived a nomadic life following the death of her youngest son, Thomas "Tad" Lincoln, on July 15, 1871. Her sojourn in Waukesha was but one of many visits to popular health spas in the United States, Canada, and Europe during the last restless years of her life.



The Hubbard boarding house, Waukesha, where Mary Lincoln stayed during the summer of 1872. (The house is no longer standing.) Courtesy the Waukesha Freeman.

In 1872 Waukesha was one of the newest spas in the Midwest. It had been only four years since Colonel Richard Dunbar, a sufferer of diabetes, chanced upon the medicinal properties of what he later named the Bethesda Spring while viewing a parcel of land recently purchased by his sister. Testimonials found in a Dunbar brochure of 1873 proclaimed the miraculous benefits of Bethesda Mineral Water for persons suffering from all manner of urinary tract and bladder problems, diabetes, Bright's disease, torpid liver, indigestion, chronic diarrhea, dropsy, and "female weakness," among others.

In the summer during which Mary Lincoln visited the springs, area newspapers carried accounts of a community ill equipped to handle its new popularity among the suffering multitudes. The *Semi-Weekly Wisconsin* (Milwaukee) of July 31, 1872, reported "that fully 500 visitors are quartered in hotels and scattered in private families here, seeking benefit from the marvelous waters. Quite as many more have been here this summer and left; and the general statement is that the larger portion are getting help; that the reputation of the spring is advancing, and that a large, spacious new hotel, is among the immediate necessities of the village." On September 10, the *Waukesha Plaindealer* boasted "Thousands have visited here this summer and still they come. Every train bears visitors to the spring, from all parts of the Union, and although the hotel accommodations are inadequate and private houses are filled, yet for the sake of the water all stay who can be crowded in.

Large numbers are obliged to leave, unable to secure comfortable quarters, having water expressed to their houses."

Mary Todd Lincoln arrived in Waukesha by train on July 6, 1872, and took up residence on the outskirts of town at the boardinghouse of Mr. and Mrs. O. M. Hubbard. She was accompanied by her maid, probably Mrs. Richard Fitzgerald (the mother of stage comedian Eddie Foy), who also served in the multiple capacities of nurse, guard, and traveling companion. The pair occupied two front rooms on the ground floor. Not only was the old Acme Spring located on the rear of the Hubbard

property, but the house was also near the popular Bethesda Spring and the lesser known Hygenia Spring. (The Hubbard home, which later became 354 West St. Paul Ave., was made into a two-family dwelling after an addition was built prior to 1937. It was razed to make way for an apartment complex in February 1987.)

Were it not for a series of small notices in local newspapers and the reminiscences of several residents, Mary Lincoln's visit to "The Saratoga of the West" might have passed unannounced and unremembered, as she no doubt would have wished. H. M. Youmans, publisher of the *Waukesha Freeman* at the time, remembered "seeing Mrs. Lincoln strolling along the shady sidewalks. She was always by herself. She looked frail and worn, as one who had been buffeted by many sorrows. She went to the spring occasionally, but otherwise kept to her room. She did not want to meet people or talk with them." (*Freeman*, April 25, 1959) An article written for the *Toledo Blade* on August 9, 1872, and reprinted in the *Waukesha Freeman* on August 22 described Mrs. Lincoln as "living the life of a recluse, seldom appearing and then closely veiled." A young girl who lived near the Hubbards, Lydia (Fletcher) Dwinnel, said Mrs. Lincoln was "not very well and hardly ever went away from the house. . . . She was all in black, with a full skirt to the dress which was very long. She wore a black bonnet with a white frill around her dear face." (Waukesha County Historical Society) Readers of the *Waukesha Plaindealer* were told on September 10, 1872, "Poor Mrs. Lincoln carries a heavy heart, and she is much of the time in tears."

•

How is it that the melancholy widow of the nation's first martyred president came to be leaving a trail of tears on Waukesha's shady sidewalks? By this time in her life, Mary Todd Lincoln had been more unpleasantly criticized from various standpoints, both private and public, than any previous First Lady. To attempt to know this slight figure dressed in black, it is necessary to understand the cause of her "great sorrows" and the origins of the contemporary public opinion that gave her no respite.

"Ill luck," Mary Todd Lincoln wrote to her daughter-in-law, Mary Harlan Lincoln, in 1869, "presided at my birth—certainly within the last few years it has been a *faithful attendant*."

Born into a wealthy Lexington, Kentucky, family in 1818, Mary Ann Todd was the third daughter of Robert and Eliza Parker Todd. In 1825 her mother died of complications following the birth of her seventh child in twelve and one-half years.

Fourteen months later, Mary's father married Elizabeth Humphreys, with whom he had nine more children over the next fifteen years. The new Mrs. Todd's relationship with her



Mary Lincoln by Mathew Brady. 1861. Courtesy the Brady-Handy Collection, the Library of Congress..

stepchildren was not cordial and was made all the more difficult by the open antagonism of Eliza's mother, Elizabeth Parker, who lived next door and frequently championed young Mary.

Robert Todd was absent from home as much as four months each year attending to his business and political activities. Despite the advantages of receiving a thorough formal education unusual for female children during the first half of the nineteenth century, Mary's young life was a series of losses and abandonments.

Writing to her cousin, Eliza Stuart Steele, in 1871, Mary Lincoln confided, "Broken-hearted as I am over my deep bereavement, yet the memory of. . . those who were so kind to me in my desolate childhood is ever remembered by me. My life was so enriched by the most loving and devoted of husbands

which makes the present all the more sorrowful to bear.” (Turner and Turner, p. 588)

In 1839, having reached the dangerously unmarried age of twenty-one, Mary Todd journeyed to Springfield, Illinois, to live with her older sister Elizabeth (Mrs. Ninian Edwards). A third sister, Frances, had recently become the bride of William Wallace in that city, and so the way was cleared for Mary to next find a husband and build a family of her own.

An assessment of the young woman who won Lincoln’s heart was written by her half-sister, Emilie Todd Helm, who said Mary’s “features were not regularly beautiful but she was certainly very pretty. . . . She was singularly sensitive. . . . She was full of humor, but never unrefined. Perfectly frank and extremely spirited, her candor of speech and independence of thought often gave offence where none was meant, for a more affectionate heart never beat.” (McClure’s magazine, September 1898)

Mary Todd met thirty-year-old Abraham Lincoln shortly after her arrival in the new capital of Illinois and soon included him in the lively social circle that gathered around her at the Edwards home. By December 1840 they were engaged. The engagement, however, was broken off on New Year’s Day 1841 due to Lincoln’s doubt about his own ability to be a good husband and provider, as well as the opposition of Elizabeth and Ninian Edwards to what they viewed as an unsuitable match. Mary’s letters during 1841–42 show her bearing this sad and embarrassing turn of events with quiet dignity, while Lincoln’s correspondence refers to his living in melancholy misery.

After a year and one-half of separation, the pair were reunited by friends and revived their plans to marry. They chose November 4, 1842, as the date, only telling the Edwards family that very morning and completing the simple ceremony in the Edwards parlor later that evening after the wish for family solidarity overcame all objections. The groom inscribed his bride’s wedding band with the words “Love is Eternal.”

The Lincolns took up residence in the Globe Tavern where their first son, Robert Todd Lincoln, was born on August 1, 1843. In January 1844 they moved into the house at the corner of Eighth and Jackson streets which remained their home until they left Illinois for the White House seventeen years later. Here, Edward Baker Lincoln was born in 1846 and died of tuberculosis on February 1, 1850, after being nursed through fifty-two days and nights by his distraught parents.

Mary Lincoln’s prostration after Eddie’s death was prolonged and complete, although the Lincolns had two more children, William (Willie) in December 1850 and Thomas (Tad) in 1853. This unhealed scar fostered in her a protective nervousness and fear for the other members of her family. Fighting destiny and raging against desertion characterized Mary’s mourning throughout her life as “ill luck” relentlessly took one member of her family after another and left a deeper mark on her character with each blow.

The biographies of Mary Todd Lincoln by Katherine Helm, Ruth Painter Randall, and Jean H. Baker provide detailed descriptions of the Lincolns’ Springfield years. Patient scholarship using accounts by those who knew the Lincolns best during this time has helped demolish the post-assassination, gossip-driven stories that painted their married life as a domestic hell. They each had their moods, faults, quirks, and shortcomings, and apparently they had their fair share of spats. The demands of Lincoln’s law practice and political activities kept them apart more than they both would have liked. They were loving and indulgent parents, who found joy in sparing their sons the

deprivations of their own childhoods. Above all, accounts indicate they were proud of, contributed to, and loved each other.

The news of Abraham Lincoln’s nomination for the presidency in May 1860 thrust Mary Todd Lincoln into an unrelenting publicity spotlight that was to keep her in its constant glare for five torturous years in the midst of tremendous national crisis and upheaval. As the southern-born-and-raised wife of the northern Union’s first Republican president, Mary took up her duties as hostess and helpmate under difficult circumstances that all but doomed her to failure before she set foot in Washington. When the Union split apart, residents of the capital found themselves surrounded by hostile territory and preoccupied with hatred, rumor, and divided loyalties.

Unfortunately, Mary Lincoln had a series of liabilities in her nature which made it easy to create plausible tales about her. In the words of biographer Ruth Painter Randall, “In impulsiveness and imprudence, in emotional immaturity, in that tendency to view things personally which shuts out broader wisdom, in susceptibility to flattery, in nervousness aggravated by migraine headaches and the mental tensions of the menopause, in growing irrationality as to money, she had hidden weaknesses that were to pull her down in one of the most taxing situations a woman ever faced.”

.....
*I am trying as you will perceive,
to make the most of this fearfully
wearisome summer. . . I live in a
retired manner in a private
house on the outskirts of the town
where there are no other boarders
and have all the advantages of the
country. . . . I am so miserable
over my great sorrows, that at
times I feel it is impossible to see a
strange face.*
.....

Mary Lincoln's nervous system was already carrying a tremendous load when little Willie Lincoln died on February 20, 1862, probably of typhoid or malarial fever. Deprived of White House entertainments which had been criticized for being too extravagant in war time, Washington society next criticized the depth and duration of the First Lady's mourning for a second lost son. Her Todd relatives killed fighting for the Confederacy were, of necessity, mourned more quietly.

With the death of her husband on April 14, 1865, Mary Todd Lincoln lost her chief protector. Each year of her widowhood brought fresh disasters and grist for the mills of the "vampyre press." The public furor started almost immediately. Although souvenir hunters pillaged the White House while she lay prostrate with grief for five weeks, missing objects were later said to have been taken away in her twenty trunks and fifty packing boxes. She was forced to fight the city fathers of Springfield who were planning to erect a magnificent tomb for Lincoln in the center of town. In the process of securing his burial in the quiet of Oak Ridge Cemetery, she gained the enmity of most of Springfield's citizens.

The blow of the assassination plus newly magnified feelings of insecurity caused her weary mind to anticipate abject poverty. The better part of the next year was spent marshaling what influence she still possessed in order to obtain the remainder of her husband's 1865 salary from Congress, solicit donations from influential friends, pay outstanding debts, and reorganize her finances to purchase a house in Chicago.

In the fall of 1866, a sensation was created by a series of lectures delivered in Springfield by William H. Herndon, Lincoln's former law partner and someone with whom Mary Todd Lincoln had always shared a mutual antipathy. It is ironic that the busy brain of a man who seemed to idolize Abraham Lincoln as a modern saint would become the source of contagion for myths and legends that only served to blight Lincoln's character and subsequently infect several gen-

erations of biographers and historians with misinformation. To Mary Lincoln, the most damaging of Herndon's assertions was that Lincoln had never loved her during their twenty-three years of marriage because his heart belonged to Ann Rutledge of New Salem. This cruel theme was expanded to include fanciful remarks about Lincoln "the defaulting bridegroom" leaving her at the altar in January 1841 and later marrying only to save his honor at the expense of domestic peace by consigning himself to share life with a nagging shrew.

Mary Lincoln was understandably astonished and enraged at Herndon. As she had confided in a letter to Mary Jane Welles a year earlier, "It was always music in my ears, both before & after our marriage, when my husband, told me, that I was the only one, he had ever thought of, or cared for. It will solace me to the grave." (Turner and Turner, p. 296) Not only was Herndon acquiring money and status from his mockery, but he was also threatening to deprive Lincoln's widow of her last comfort.

To avoid as much of the anticipated public onslaught as possible when her pension request was brought before Congress in 1869, Mary and Tad Lincoln fled to Europe. He attended school and she wrote black-bordered letters back to the United States requesting friends to contact such influential members of Congress as Carl Schurz (then a senator from Missouri and a member of the Committee on Pensions) and intercede on her behalf. Renewed humiliating newspaper attacks and insinuating remarks made in Congress about her character and wartime loyalty characterized the eighteen-month battle to secure passage of an annual \$3,000 pension.

Their exile disrupted in the summer of 1870 by the Franco-Prussian War, the Lincolns fled to England, where they spent nine weeks in Leamington. In this town one hundred miles northwest of London, known for its medicinal baths and mineral water, Mary Lincoln found some relief from the cough, headaches, biliousness, and neuralgia that plagued her. The pair



The last known photograph of Mary Lincoln, probably taken by a Boston "spirit photographer" during the spring of 1872, shortly before she came to Waukesha. The superimposed image of Abraham Lincoln, his hands resting on her shoulders, can be seen in the background. Courtesy The Lincoln Museum/Part of the Lincoln National Corporation, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

returned to America in May 1871 for a reunion in Chicago with Robert, his wife Mary, and their infant daughter, also named Mary. Once there, Tad became ill with a severe cold, probably caught aboard ship, that passed into pneumonia and ended his life six weeks later.

Mary Todd Lincoln's unresolved mourning now had a new focus, and she resumed her incessant traveling, seeking relief from physical complaints and overwhelming grief in endless visits to health spas and consultations with spiritualists. She had begun dabbling in spiritualism following Willie's death as a means to maintaining the unbroken family circle that was always her first priority. By 1869 Mary Lincoln was writing to her friend Sally Orne, "I am not EITHER a spiritualist—but I sincerely believe—our loved ones, who have only, 'gone before' are permitted to watch over those who were dearer to them than life." (Turner and Turner, p. 525) Spiritualists, at least, did not expect Mary Lincoln to just passively submit to her many losses and tribulations. Instead, they gave her the hope of retaining linkage to her departed children, as well as the power that came from feeling that her idolized husband was nearby watching the transgressions of others.

Sometime during early months of 1872 before her arrival in Waukesha, she visited the Boston studio of William Mumler, a dubious "spirit photographer" who had recently been charged with and acquitted of fraud in New York. This sitting produced her last known photograph, a singularly unflattering portrait in which the pale, superimposed image of Abraham Lincoln, a tender expression on his face and his hands resting protectively on his widow's shoulders, may be seen in the background.

Despite Mary Lincoln's efforts to avoid publicity while in Waukesha, controversy followed her even there as three rival newspapers got into a spat while reporting her latest spiritualist activities.

The *Semi-Weekly Wisconsin* of July 31, 1872, carried a story from "special correspondent F.A.M." writing at Waukesha on July 24: "Mrs. President Lincoln has been here three weeks in a private family and is regarded chief among the visitors. She visits the springs almost daily, and it [sic] is getting gratifying relief from a dropsical affection. She is disinclined to receive visitors at her boarding place, and is reticent toward those who obtrude upon her. Mrs. Lincoln has recently visited the great mediums east and was deeply interested in what she saw. She visited Mumler in Boston *incog.*, and obtained a shadowy, but striking likeness of Mr. Lincoln on the same plate with herself. She spent five days at Moravia [New York], and saw twenty-two different spirit faces—among the rest, that of her son 'Tad.' She speaks

of Moravia as one of the most fascinating places she ever visited, and she hopes to make it a second visit."

On August 13, the *Waukesha Plaindealer* joined in with this tidbit: "Mrs. Lincoln, relic of the 'late lamented,' who is spending a few weeks in this village, recently visited Milwaukee to have an interview with a spiritual medium there, which is reported to have been very satisfactory. During the last few weeks she has been holding spiritualistic communion through the most celebrated mediums of the east, and has now opened communication through the operator at Milwaukee. The particulars of this spiritual interview are not made public."

Two days later, the *Waukesha Freeman*, possibly miffed at missing the same scoop, issued an editorial reprimand to the other newspapers: "Mrs. Abraham Lincoln is living in Waukesha at present, in retirement, and has manifested no desire to thrust herself upon public notice. Under these circumstances we consider it in very bad taste for newspapers to concern themselves with comments upon her visiting Spiritualists or any other persons whom she may wish to visit."

The first of Mrs. Lincoln's two letters from Waukesha was written to James H. Knowlton, a former LaFayette County (Wisconsin) judge and member of the Wisconsin

assembly from Janesville who was then practicing law in Chicago. In it, she directs considerable venom toward Ward Hill Lamon, Lincoln's former law partner at Danville, Illinois, who published *The Life of Lincoln from his Birth to his Inauguration as President* in May 1872. Lamon had purchased the rights to Herndon's research for \$4,000 after Herndon fell upon financial difficulties in 1869. He then hired Chauncey F. Black, a man whose personal politics were distinctly unfriendly to Lincoln's memory, to ghost write the project.

Under the prodding of Lamon and Black, Herndon elaborated upon the gossip stories from his lectures. Printed as written in Black's uncharitable style, Herndon's assertions assumed new ugliness. Herndon's biographer, David Donald, characterized the book as "probably the most harshly critical biography that had appeared in America." In addition to the old Ann Rutledge/defaulting bridegroom/unhappy marriage trilogy, *The Life of Lincoln* also cast doubts on the legitimate birth of both Abraham Lincoln and his mother, disparaged the shiftless character of his father, portrayed Lincoln as pretending to be a Christian, and further cast him as a cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled political schemer. (Donald, pp. 250–269)

For Mary Lincoln, Lamon's name on such "vile slander" was yet another betrayal by someone she had considered a friend. The letter to Judge Knowlton is significant as the opening salvo in what became a ferocious clash between Mary Lin-

.....
*We understand the
pure air of Waukesha,
together with the
Bethesda Water, have
greatly benefitted her
health, and she is better
now than she has been
for several years.*
.....

coln and the Herndon followers during the next eighteen months. In this round of her "brave, wholehearted fight to get the better of destiny," (Helm, p. 111) Mary Lincoln sought to salvage her husband's memory and reputation, little dreaming that the work of these "small barking dogs" would ultimately savage only her own portrait for posterity. (Turner and Turner, p. 606)

Mary Lincoln's other surviving letter from Waukesha was directed to Norman Williams, a young Chicago lawyer and friend of Robert Todd Lincoln, who evidently minded her Chicago mailbox while Robert and his wife were vacationing in Europe. It contains the only known reference to the Chicago fire of October 8, 1871, among Mary Lincoln's correspondence, although she was probably in the city when it occurred.

The letter also mentions Reuben Fenton and his daughter with whom Mary Lincoln had become acquainted while in Germany in 1869. Fenton served as governor of New York State from 1865 to 1866 and assumed a seat in the U.S. Senate about the time Mary Lincoln's pension came under debate, thus becoming someone she depended upon for support. Somewhat apologetic and condescending on her behalf, Senator Fenton had admitted to his colleagues that Mrs. Lincoln might at times have been "indiscreet," and thereby have forfeited "a measure of respect," but this did not seem to have affected her feelings of friendship toward him thereafter. (Turner and Turner, pp. 533-572)

Mary Lincoln's travels to Madison and further north in Wisconsin "up to a wild part of the country" are verified by a brief announcement of her arrival from Baraboo at the Park Hotel in Madison on August 24, 1872, in the *Wisconsin State Journal* of that date. One might speculate that she took in the sights around Wisconsin Dells and Devil's Lake. On September 3, the *Waukesha Plaindealer* noted "Mrs. Abraham Lincoln left this place last week for an extended tour through the West. We understand the pure air of Waukesha, together with the Bethesda Water, have greatly benefitted her health, and she is better now than she has been for several years. She expects to return again before winter." Although Mary Todd Lincoln continued to wander restlessly for another decade, searching for restoratives for her health and a place of refuge from the prying eyes of the press, there is no evidence to suggest that she ever again visited Waukesha.

In the spring of 1875, the stress of observing the tenth anniversary of the assassination coupled with the effects of an overuse of chloral hydrate to combat insomnia exacerbated Mary Lincoln's already eccentric behavior. Embarrassed by his mother's exaggerated fears for his safety and other publicly displayed peculiarities, Robert Lincoln became convinced that she should no longer be responsible for her own financial affairs. He swore out a warrant for his mother's arrest as a lunatic "for her benefit and the safety of the community" and carefully orches-

trated the required jury trial for her commitment on May 19, 1875. Robert's actions took Mary Lincoln entirely by surprise; she could not mount a suitable defense and the desired verdict was rendered. She spent fifteen weeks in a private sanitorium and then was released to the custody of Elizabeth and Ninian Edwards in Springfield. There she fought to regain control over her finances and have a second jury reverse the lunacy conviction. Both were accomplished on June 15, 1876, the earliest date permitted by law.

Newspapers across the country proclaimed that Mrs. Abraham Lincoln was restored to her reason and freedom, but this latest in a long series of abandonments and public humiliations exacted a terrible toll. With his decision to use insanity as a convenient method of ridding himself of an inconvenient mother, Robert Lincoln committed an act that, in effect, caused his mother to end her days childless—the rift between them was never repaired.

After four more years of travel in Europe and the United States, Mary Lincoln's poor health at last forced her return to the Edwards home in Springfield. On July 15, 1882, the dreaded anniversary of Tad's death, she collapsed in her bedroom and lapsed into a coma. The lonely woman who had written of her "great sorrows" from a Waukesha boarding house ten years earlier died of a stroke early the following morning.

This article is based on a seminar paper titled "The Vilification of Mary Todd Lincoln" prepared in 1972 under the guidance of James R. Renberg, then chairman of the history department at Carroll College, Waukesha. The author thanks Professor Renberg for his inspiration and encouragement.

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The Memoirs of Abraham Lincoln

A one-man play in five scenes and two acts

by Peter King Beach

[Excerpts from Act I, Scene 1]

Abraham Lincoln is dressed in black broadcloth and black string tie. A gold watch chain hangs along the front of his vest. The props: a rocker, a desk, a podium, a large rug, a United States flag, a pitcher of water, a glass.

[Midway in the scene he says:]

I used to think
us Lincolns were just plain, dumb, happy
hardworking country folks
living on the frontier, trapping,
chopping down trees,
putting up fences, making a little whiskey when
the opportunity offered.
Not so
according to William Herndon,
my third law partner.
After my demise Billy Herndon launched
a brilliant 23-year career as the world's
greatest living expert
on your obedient servant,
A. Lincoln,
attorney-at-law,
jolly melancholic,
et cetera. Billy said:
"Lincoln rose from a stagnant,
putrid pool!"
Billy was referring to
my family. He must have been drinking more than
usual that day. Billy was a
little-bitty fellow with
the finely-honed instincts
of a bushwhacking Border Ruffian.
He hated most foreigners,
all Irishmen
(because they were usually Democrats),
all Catholics (for the same reason),
all of my children,
my wife Mary—
especially my wife Mary!
He hated my father,
he hated the memory of my dear mother Nancy,
he hated my step-mother

Sarah Bush Lincoln, a certifiable saint.

He hated a representative assortment of my cousins, aunts,
uncles and neighbors.

Billy hated anybody, I think, who
couldn't fight back,
which certainly included me
after I was plugged by another bushwhacker,
John Wilkes Booth.

After my hasty departure hence, on Good Friday in April of 65,
Billy Herndon quickly launched the rumors
(while artfully denying their certainty)
that I was the illegitimate son of
an illegitimate mother and that
I had suffered from syphilis all
my adult life.

I suspect Billy never forgave me
for two things: 1,
I finally suggested he stop drinking the day
I left for Washington;

2, I never invited him to my home
in all the years we were partners.

Mary would not
allow it.

She said he was a drunkard. She had a good point.

He got back at her after my death
by fabricating the story of
my love for Ann Rutledge, who broke my heart
forever by dying
without consulting me.

I had told Mary
that she was the only woman I had ever
loved and along comes

Billy and
says it ain't so.

Billy also said
that even with my monumental collection
of flaws and faults and foibles

I was as near a perfect man
as God ever made,

proving Billy
was as near a perfect fool
as God ever made—and He, as you may have observed,
has made an astounding number of nitwits in His time.

...

Eleven years after I left home
 I got married.
 I was practicing law at the time
 in Springfield, Illinois.
 My wife's name was Mary Todd.
 She was 23, I was 33.
 I needed the 10-year advantage.
 She was quite a woman.
 Full of fire and passion
 and unremitting love for me,
 her tall Kentuckian, as she called me.
 We had met in Illinois, though we were both Kentuckians.
 It took us both a long spell to
 get used to Springfield.
 It was a giant town to me, a small one to her.
 I remember her enjoyment
 when I told her a story about a friend named Campbell
 who served with me in the Illinois legislature.
 He had heard that a preacher had come to Springfield
 to address the entire
 body of Illinois lawmakers.
 What's your text
 he asked the preacher.
 "I'm going to talk about the second coming of Christ."
 "Forget the sermon, preacher! If the Lord has been
 to Springfield once
 he won't be back!"
 Mary was well educated and much better read
 than I.
 She spoke French fluently.
 She was lovely to look at,
 loved to dress up, worked hard all the time,
 loved to entertain.
 She considered herself my equal. And she was.
 Mary and I had four children.
 Four sons.
 No daughters unfortunately.
 Our second son Eddie
 died of tuberculosis while we were livin' in Springfield.
 Our third son
 Willie died while I was President.
 Typhoid fever killed him.
 Of all our children I was closest to him.
 Tad, our youngest, named after my father Thomas,
 died at 19 of pneumonia,
 seven years after I was dispatched
 by Mr. Booth.
 My darling Mary died 10 years later
 at 64. Diabetes had undermined
 her health for years.
 Robert Todd Lincoln, our eldest, expired
 in 1926 of complications stemming from
 old age and broad-gauged meanness. His
 mother once summed up his character by

calling him "a dirty dog."
 His mother's nervous afflictions had given
 Robert the opportunity
 to railroad her into an insane asylum—
 thank God for only a few months!

...

So there you have it. That's who I was:
 country lawyer, country father,
 country politician,
 country bumpkin sometimes.
 A fellow who somehow became the 16th President
 and who stumbled and blundered and staggered his way
 to the very top of the mountain
 that overlooked the glorious, slave-free,
 flower-bedecked plains
 of the promised land
 we call the United States.

[Excerpts from Act II, Scene 3]

Lights up to reveal an ecstatic Lincoln. He dances, he sings, he shouts. The date is April 14, 1865. Lee has surrendered to Grant a few days before. The Union has been saved! Slavery has been destroyed! Lincoln sings throughout this scene snatches from "The Battle Cry of Freedom," the most popular rallying song of the war.

...

Oh, it's been quite a day—
 maybe the best day of my life.
 And it's not over yet.
 Mary and I got to talking about
 what we'd do four years from now
 when I was out of politics.
 I said I'd open an office in Chicago
 and perhaps write my memoirs before folks told
 too many lies about me.

I got to thinking about my Mary,
 my sweet Kentuckian.
 Three brothers and two brothers-in-law
 killed fighting for the Confederacy
 and not a word against me or the Union. It's true
 she didn't like Grant. Said he was a butcher. It's true she
 hated McClellan, said he was a humbug, a fraud.
 She doesn't know the half of it.
 She isn't without strong
 points of view. It's part of her charm.
 I don't know what I would have done
 without her.
 Yes I do.
 I would have gone mad.



Abraham Lincoln taken in
 Mathew Brady's studio in
 1862. Courtesy the
 Brady-Handy Collection at
 the Library of Congress.

She created for me an island
of tranquility
in a sea of insanity and greed and ambition and blood.
She loved me, and loves me,
not some of the time,
but all of the time.
Most of my life
even my best friends have treated
me with a touch of ridicule:
I was too tall, too thin, too awkward,
even too strong.
I was homely,
I was uneducated,
I was backwoods.
I was from Knob Country, back in the hollow.
I was a goriller, as Petroleum
Vesuvius Nasby has called me repeatedly.
In my early days I sure acted like one.
I loved to fight, and
I never met a man I thought I couldn't
whip.

Mary.
Talkative,
opinionated,
extravagant,
suspicious,
jealous,
argumentative.
I love her more today
than I ever have. She's
more beautiful to me this minute
than she ever has been.
When I was an uneducated, debt-ridden,
unsophisticated nobody and she
was a sophisticated somebody,
one of the belles of Lexington,
I fell in love with her.
Someday I may be a nobody again
and I know she'll still love me.
Does she have faults? Good God, yes!
Loving me and the children too much is one of them.
When Eddie died at four, she died some.
She died some more when Willie died.
I'm grateful I've lived out the war.
If I had perished
what would have become of her, how could
she have survived?

(SINGING) Rally round the flag, boys!
Rally once again—
Shouting the battle cry of freedom!

(SPEAKING) Tonight we go to the theater.
With a Major Somebody and his fiancée.

General Ulysses Grant and his wife were going
with us
but they asked to be excused:
they wanted to visit their young children
in New Jersey. *Entre nous*, as Mary would say, I think Grant is
jumpy
because
he's heard rumors that Rebel assassins are in town.
I understood. I said—go to New Jersey! Go
see your children, General.
Go! Go! Go! (SINGING)
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

...

Now if Grant had come with us
to Ford's Theater
I would have put him in my rocking
chair
and said to him:
General, enjoy yourself!
Get to feel what it's like
being President—and then go home and forget it!

God help us, North and South and West,
if we have to depend on generals
to get us through this reconciliation
between the Union and the Confederacy!
What we need for the next four years
is a slightly ridiculous country lawyer
holding hands with our 11 prodigals,
getting them back into the Union family without
a lot of fussing.
The war's over.
The fighting's over.
The killing's over.
Or just about anyway.
The hell with generals.

It's time to go.
May I say farewell to each of you?
I'll see you again sometime.
I always like to talk to
folks from back home.
Which reminds me of a story.
There was this fellow—
oh, oh
don't have time to tell it to you.
(BREAKS UP LAUGHING)
Next time for sure.
All right, Mary!
I'm on the way!
(QUIETLY—TO THE AUDIENCE:)
Good night.

CURTAIN

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Carl Schurz: Raising the Breeze for Lincoln

edited by Faith B. Miracle

Wisconsin's culture has been significantly influenced and enriched by the influx of German dissenters who fled their native country during the rebellion of 1848. Carl Schurz (1829–1906) found his way to Watertown in 1855 and made this community his official residence until 1866. It was during his years in Wisconsin that he began his career as a statesman and writer.

Schurz has left us voluminous journals and letters which reveal his thoughts and opinions; particularly interesting are his feelings about Lincoln, his political observations, and his comments on the Civil War. He was an eloquent speaker, and he campaigned tirelessly for Lincoln in 1860. In 1864 he resigned his position as a major general in the Union army to campaign for Lincoln's re-election.

The two men were not always on easy terms, however. Schurz refers in his journals to Lincoln's "somewhat loose ways of conducting the public business . . . his rustic manners . . . the robust character of his humor." Wisconsin historian T. Harry Williams, in his book *Lincoln and His Generals* (Knopf, 1952), refers to a specific incident in which Schurz wrote to Lincoln on November 8, 1862, criticizing his judgment in selecting military officers. Lincoln replied angrily on November 24, advising Schurz that "there are men who . . . think you are performing your part as poorly as you think I am performing mine." Williams comments, "Anybody else but Schurz would have been demolished. He kept on writing letters." (Williams, p. 13)

We are reprinting excerpts from two letters written by Schurz to an old school friend from Germany, Theodore Petrasch. The first letter is interesting in that it serves as a mini-autobiography; the second reveals the prophetic admiration Schurz had for Lincoln. Both letters were written at a time when Schurz maintained his residence in Watertown but was stationed elsewhere.



Carl Schurz, age nineteen, as a student in Germany.

**Camp at Catlett Station, Virginia
September 24, 1863**

Nothing could have been a more joyful surprise than your letter. I recognized the handwriting again instantly. I should have discovered it among hundreds. Far separated in space and time, we may have dropped out of each other's life and sight; but the recollections of the cherished days of youth, when we clung together like brothers, nothing can destroy in me. I still see you as I used to see you in our *Gymnasium* years in Cologne. We were at an age when a couple of years' difference means much. I was younger than you, bashful by nature, with the budding consciousness of strength which I did not yet rightly trust. You had already ripened to a certain manliness which to me had something imposing about it. You spoke out with boldness what I often thought but hardly dared to express. I often wondered how you could become thus attached to me, and did not understand it. When I now recall how far ahead of me you were at that time I still do not understand it. I leaned upon you with enthusiastic friendship; you drew me out of the narrow sphere which my circumstances and training built about me and gave me a glimpse into life. You taught me first to overcome my anxious bashfulness. I have to thank you for every encouraging word, because you were the first to awake in me the consciousness that I did not belong to the commonplace. Then, when I had just gained courage to stand on my own feet and the ability to be something to you, the vortex of life seized us both and drew us asunder. And only now do I receive a word from you and you from me.

I cannot recall without emotion that time of enthusiasm which kept the heart so warm and so receptive to the beautiful and the great. Men may laugh at ideals, because they often contrast so strongly with reality. Enthusiasm is, nevertheless, the finest thing in man; so long as it lives Youth does not die.

You have told me about your history, and I rejoice to see what was attainable to you in your sphere of life over there. To that which you know about me I can add but little. I ended my refugee life in London in the year 1852 because I found its instability unendurable and longed for a productive activity. I lived here in America for several years in quiet retirement in the happiest family circle. I wish you knew my wife. She is much better than I, and we have two precious children. I studied, observed, and learned much.

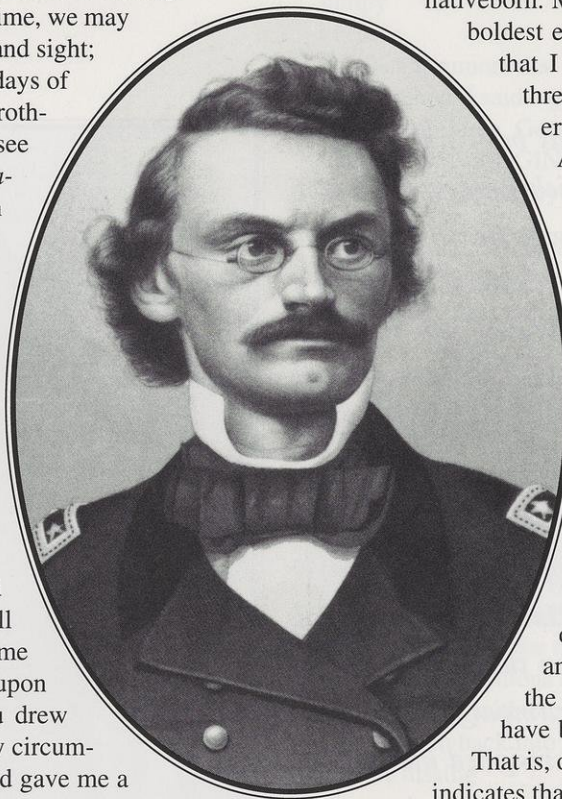
Finally, in the year 1856, as the movement against slav-

ery spread tremendously, I found myself drawn into public life. I knew that I could accomplish something worth while. America is the country for striving talent, and the foreigner who studies conditions here fundamentally and knows how to appreciate them can open for himself an even greater career than the nativeborn. My success surprised even me. I saw my boldest expectations exceeded. I suddenly found that I had become a celebrity in America. I threw myself unreservedly into the antislavery movement and therein showed the Americans something new. The broad German conception of life which opened to them wider horizons; the peculiar speech of the foreigner which, although modeled upon the best patterns of English literature, still indulged in a multitude of unfamiliar variations; the power of true conviction which is not found too often in its purity, all of these things had a rare attraction for Americans; and so I won, perhaps more quickly than anyone here in this country, a continental reputation; a reputation which in many particulars exceeded my deserts. My activities were very extended and had a large and direct influence upon the political development of the country. I have been told that I made Lincoln president.

That is, of course, not true, but that people say so indicates that I contributed something toward raising the breeze which carried Lincoln into the presidential chair and thereby shook slavery in its foundation. I devoted my whole strength to it and became exceedingly wearied with the herculean labor.

As happens in moments of exhaustion, I sought rest. For that reason I went as minister to Spain, but I soon found that rest at a time like this was for me the most irritating exertion. The rebellion which is to decide the future of this country quickly reached enormous proportions. The noise of the struggle penetrated even to my hermitage in Madrid. It became uncanny to me in my quiet. The enforced apathy of insipid diplomatic life was terribly oppressive to my temperament and my conscience. Then the news of the first great disaster to our army, the battle of Bull Run, came like a thunder-clap. I immediately begged the President to recall me. I belonged to the party that had brought on the crisis; I could not avoid the chances of the struggle. Finally, in December, 1861, I received a leave of absence, returned hither at once, laid down my ministership, made another effort to induce the government to adopt the policy of emancipation, thus smoothing the way among the people, and then entered the army. In the course of the summer campaign of 1862 I was

advanced to the position of major general, the highest rank



Carl Schurz as a major general in the Union army.

one can attain in the army of the United States. I shall doubtless continue in service to the end of the war. Then I will return to my old activities with the satisfaction not only of having labored definitely for the future of this country, but also of having loyally shared its fate.

In the political phases of the new developments which this revolution must produce, I shall undoubtedly have an important part and my voice will be heard. This is the bright external side of my life. I have labored much, struggled much, endured much, and also suffered much—so much that I needed strong convictions to keep me upright. How often in moments of irritation have I wished I could be one of those who, in humble occupation, can eat their bread in peace with their loved ones!

**Bethlehem [Pennsylvania]
October 12, 1864**

Now I shall have to schoolmaster you a bit. I cannot share your opinion about what I ought to do or not do in the present crisis. You certainly would not have judged in this manner had you participated in the great battle which lies behind us. Perhaps you were surprised when I came out publicly for the present administration. I believe, however, that a few words on my view of things will make the matter clear to you. Every crisis in human affairs has its main question to which all side issues must unconditionally subordinate themselves. We are engaged in a war in which the existence of the nation—and that means everything—is involved. A party has arisen in the country which threatens to throw away all the results of the war, and this at a moment when by a firm adherence to the present policy the outcome can hardly be doubtful. The government has unquestionably committed great errors; the individuals who direct the affairs of the country are doubtless not ideal statesmen, although not nearly so undistinguished as people would like to represent them; but all this is incidental. The main thing is that the policy of the government moves in the right direction—that is to say, the slaveholder will be overthrown and slavery abolished. Whether it [the government] moves in that direction prudently or imprudently, slowly or rapidly, is a matter of indifference as against the question of whether a policy should be adopted which would move in another, an opposite and destructive, direction.

Under such conditions my choice was easily made; it was not doubtful for a moment. If Fremont and McClellan had been my bosom friends and the

members of the present government my mortal enemies, I would have come out for the latter without hesitation. The counter arguments of a personal character which you advance, such as base criticism, etc., could not enter into the scale. If we want to accomplish something important we must not let petty things disturb us. I have long been beyond such things. People may say of me what they please. I do not expect thanks, nor even recognition.

After all the only genuine compensation one has is in himself. The satisfaction which I desire I have every day, today just as much as formerly. It consists in this, that the ideas put forward in my own way are repeated by a multitude of other people in their way, and thus spread. Whether or not my patent right is respected is a matter quite indifferent to me. The real purpose of the propaganda of ideas is better attained if the origin of the ideas is forgotten. I have seen and experienced many things of this sort which give me the profoundest satisfaction. The signs of the time at this moment are exceedingly favorable. The reelection of the President is almost beyond question—it could be prevented only if a tremendous reverse should occur upon the theatre of war, and this is not to be expected.

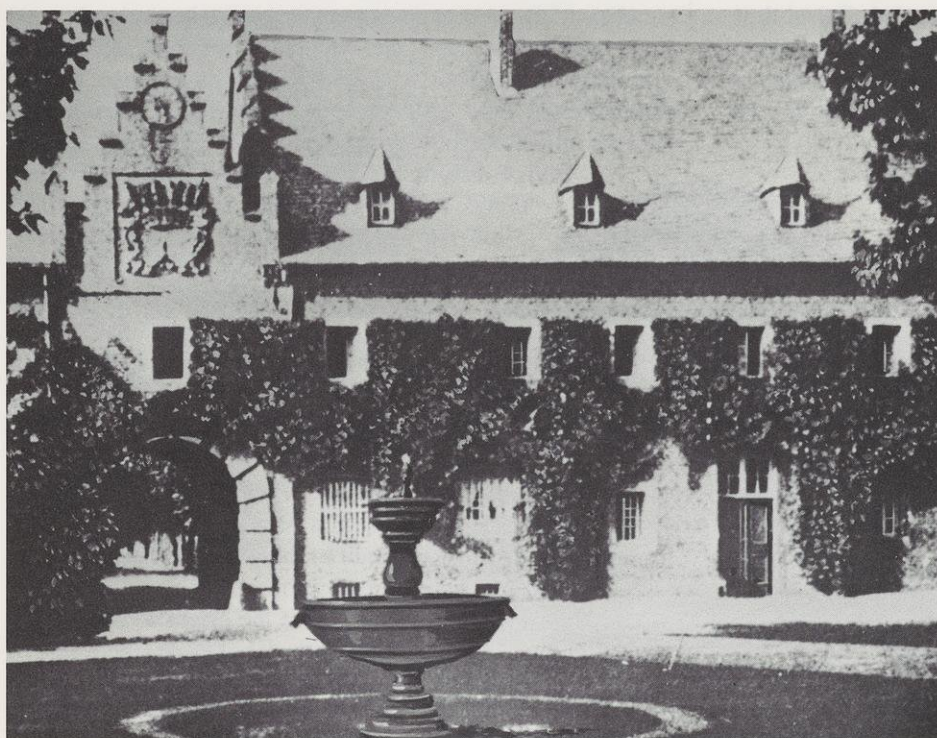
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Your opinion of the President is too deprecatory. He is indeed a man without higher education and his manners harmonize little with the European conception of the dignity of a ruler. He is an overgrown nature-child and does not understand artifices of speech and attitude. But he is a man of profound feeling, just and firm principles, and incorruptible integrity. One can always rely upon his motives, and the characteristic gift of this people, a sound common sense, is developed in him to a marvelous degree. If you should sometime find opportunity to read his official papers and his political letters you would find this demonstrated in a manner which would surprise you. I know the man from personal observation as well as anyone and better than most. I am quite familiar with the motives of his policies. I have seen him fight his way heroically through many a terrible battle and work his way with true-hearted strength through many a desperate situation. I have often criticized him severely and subsequently have not infrequently found that he is right. I also understand his weaknesses; they are the weaknesses of a good man. That he has made great mistakes in endless complications of his office cannot be denied but can easily be explained. Other men in the same situation would per-

haps not have made the same mistakes, but they would have made others. Lincoln's person-



Margarethe Schurz (wife of Carl), founder of America's first kindergarten, in 1856, at Watertown.



The castle at Liblar, Germany, where Carl Schurz was born.



The Schurz home near Watertown. It was destroyed by fire.

ality, however, has in this crisis a quite peculiar significance. Free from the aspirations of genius, he will never become dangerous to a free commonwealth. He is the people personified; that is the secret of his popularity. His government is the most representative that has ever existed in world history. I will make a prophecy which may perhaps sound strange at this moment. In fifty years, perhaps much sooner, Lincoln's name will stand written upon the honor roll of the American Republic next to that of Washington, and there it will remain for all time. The children of those who now disparage him will bless him.

Schurz sold his Watertown home in 1866 and moved to Missouri. In 1869 he became the first German-born American to serve in the Senate, and he was appointed secretary of the interior during the Hayes administration. He became editor of the New York Evening Post in 1881 and devoted the later years of his life to writing. The Schurz house in Watertown was destroyed by fire, but the building in which Margarethe Schurz held kindergarten classes still stands.

Photos courtesy the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The letters are reprinted from The Intimate Letters of Carl Schurz. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin. 1928.

Francois

by C.D. Spain

When Francois was four and kneeling by his bed—with his mother beside him, touching as they always did—a tear fell on his arm. It was a warm surprise. Francois looked up. When he saw tears in his mother's eyes, his ran too—as they always did when she was sad.

“Oh, mon petit,” his mother said and clasped him to her, rocking, “Monsieur says you must go. He will marry me, but he does not have heart enough for two.”

Francois did not understand.



Francois did not cry when she was gone, when the sweet-rose smell of her was gone, but he waited only, watched the rain make long tears on the window pane until Madame pulled him away. "You must go with the others. Play with Pierre, Roland, Marie," she said. "You are four. Non le enfant. Go to play."

Pierre was rough and Roland had too many friends, but Marie was kind. She had the smell of sweet cakes. When she laughed and shook her head, the black ringlets of her hair danced for joy.

Francois laughed and played, but he did not understand.

Then Marie became seven, wanted him to be her "bebe"—which he could never do. Besides, Madame had said. And when Yvonne and Marie began to hold their heads together and look at him and laugh and run away, he let Pierre pound on his arm 'til they were friends. (He did not cry.) And Roland let him play. And other children. Still, he did not understand.



On the day Francois was eight, Madame Bonard said to everyone, "Today, you will see a great bateau. Sailors will come for you. They will take you to their ship. But it is an excursion. You will not stay."

Francois saw a sailor come to Pierre, to Roland. To Marie and Yvonne.

And a sailor came to Francois.

"My name is Fred," the sailor said.

Fred's hair was curly and dark like Marie's, and his teeth were very white. He took Francois' small hand in his great one. "I'm glad to meet you, partner," he said. He also smiled.

Francois tried to understand. He knew the man was not Monsieur. Monsieur spoke only French. Then, Francois thought of his mother. But he did not cry.

The omnibus they rode to the harbor at Marseilles was red. The great floating bateau was grey. It did not fly the flag of France but one with stripes and many stars. Francois looked up, watched the flag wave in the small breeze. The man said, "It's the flag of my country—the United States."

Francois did not understand, but he was happy because the man saw what he saw.

The man looked into a small book. "Je suis Fred," he said.

Francois studied the man's face, waited for more words. But the man said, "Would you like to visit the bridge? The Captain is there." He took Francois' small hand. "This way," he said.

Francois looked up at the man. "Fred?" he said.

"Yes," the man said, "my name is Fred and yours is Francois. I am a sailor."

"Salor? Un marin?" Francois said.

Fred looked into his book. "Un marin," he said.

They smiled together.



The boat was very large. It had many stairways and ladders. It also had a kitchen and a grand dining room where some of the children ran about. But not Francois. He held tightly to Fred's hand, stopped where he stopped, looked where he pointed.

Fred showed Francois where he slept. "My berth," he said and patted the blue blanket, tucked tight around the bed. There was also a white pillow. Fred tossed a coin onto the blanket. The coin bounced. "Ship shape," Fred said.

"Sheep shap'," Francois said, and he smiled.

Fred put the coin into Francois' hand. "Take it," he said.

Francois studied the coin. It was not a franc. He looked at the coin. He looked at Fred.

"Put it in your pocket," Fred said.

Francois shrugged his small shoulders to say he did not understand.

Fred slid the coin into Francois' pocket.

Francois smiled.

Fred pointed to a picture on a shelf behind his bed. "This is my wife." He pointed to a second picture. "And my mother and father." All of the people in the pictures were smiling.

Francois tried to understand.

Fred took the small book from his shirt pocket, turned its pages, studied it. "Elle est bonne epouse," he said and pointed to the first picture.

"Oh," Francois said.

"Elle est mon mere—" Fred began. He looked down at the book. "—et mon pere." He pointed to the second picture.

Francois looked at the picture, looked at Fred. "Tu as la mere?" he said.

"Oui. Yes."

Francois studied Fred's face carefully. "Tu as le pere?"

"Oui. Yes. I have a mother and a father."

Francois studied the picture, studied Fred. "Je suis non . . ."

"I know," Fred said. He took Francois' small hand and led him away from where the pictures were to the grand hall where there were tables. The other children and the sailors were there. Eating. "You sit here," Fred said.

Francois looked at the long bench, looked at Fred.

Fred picked up Francois, placed him on the bench. "Wait here," he said.

Pierre was nearby. He waved. His sailor's hair was light and not curly. His nose was very red. They were eating ice cream.

Francois saw Fred coming through the aisle the tables made. He had something in his hands. It was ice cream—chocolat, Francois' favorite. And there were cookies—with much sugar. Madame would not approve.

"Eat up, mate," Fred said. "We have to get going."

Francois saw that some of the children and sailors were leaving. He questioned Fred with his eyes.

Fred took the book from his pocket again. "Tu as aller," he said.

"E vous?" Francois said.

"Oui," Fred said. "I'm coming, too."

Francois ate the ice cream and a cookie. They were very good. When he did not eat the second cookie, Fred wrapped it in a napkin, put it into Francois' pocket—the one without the coin. The cookie felt fat in Francois' small pocket.





Riding the bus, Fred did not talk, but he pointed to many things for Francois to see. And when they were off the bus, at the gate of Madame Bonard, Fred stopped Francois with one of his great hands and stooped down until his eyes were close to Francois' own. "Well. This is it, little buddy—Francois. I have to go back to the ship." He made a gesture toward the bus.

Francois understood.

Fred looked up at the tall building of Madame Bonard, and he looked at Francois. His adam's apple bobbed. Tears came to his eyes. "Tu as aller," he said. His voice was rough and sad, the same as Francois' mother's had been the day—

Tears came to Francois' eyes.

"Hey! Hey, little buddy," Fred said. He pulled a great kerchief from his pocket, wiped Francois' tears, held it to his nose. "Blow," he said.

When Francois blew, his nose honked.
Fred laughed.

Then tears came once again to Fred's eyes. "Hey, little buddy—mon petit," he said, "it isn't the end of the world. Not yet. I'll come back to see you. I will. Hey!" Fred honked his nose into the great kerchief.

They laughed together.

Fred reached out his arms and Francois hugged him. Fred placed his round sailor's hat on Francois' head. "Here," he said, "keep this for me—until I come back."

Francois touched the hat on his head. He understood.

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Illustrations by Joyce Koskenmaki

Bird and Home, 1988. Crayons, 18 x 19 inches.

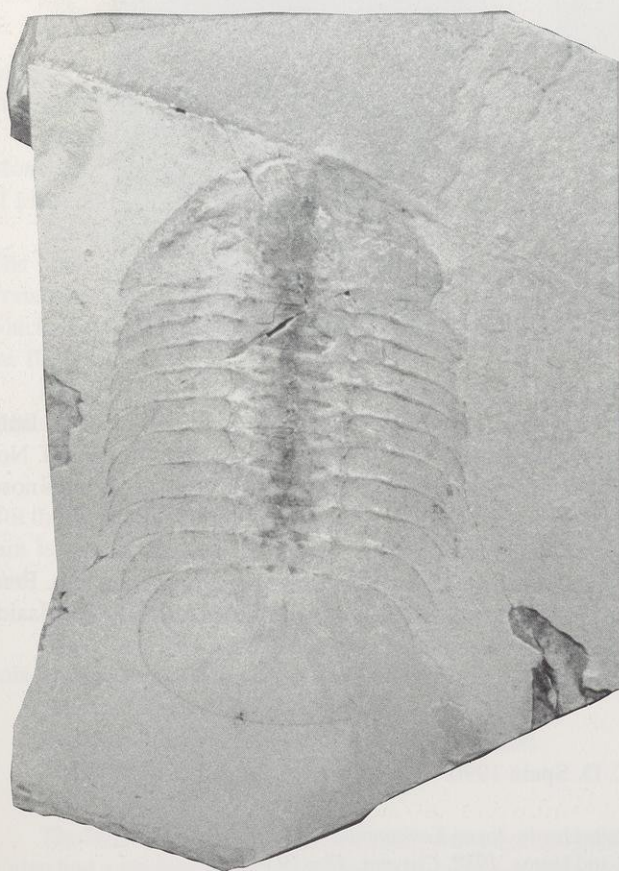
Night Song, 1990. Watercolor and pencils, 18 x 18 inches.

An Extraordinary Soft-Bodied Fossil Biota from Waukesha

The Fossils that Made Waukesha Famous

by Joanne Kluessendorf and Donald G. Mikulic

On a blustery winter day when the windchill dips to -10 degrees Fahrenheit it is difficult to imagine that Wisconsin once was covered by shallow tropical seas. Admittedly, that was more than 350 million years ago. It's far easier to envision the time only 10,000 years ago when glaciers covered the state. Yet both of these very different episodes in Earth history left behind a rich, natural heritage that has placed Wisconsin in the geologic spotlight for more than a century and has attracted the attention of geologists, including such eminent early scientists as Increase Lapham, James Hall, and Thomas Chamberlin.



Scutelluid trilobite (about 9 centimeters long).

The lakes and landforms created by the recently departed glaciers not only provide Wisconsin with some magnificent scenery, but they demonstrate important concepts about how continental glaciers work. Geologists from around the world have studied the state's drumlin fields, moraines, and kettle lakes; and generations of college and university students from around the Midwest have learned about glacial geology on weekend field trips to this spectacular outdoor classroom.

Another geologic feature for which Wisconsin is famous are fossil reefs. During the Silurian Period, about 400 million years ago, reefs thrived in what is now southeastern Wisconsin. In 1862 one of these mound-like structures became the first fossil reef described in North America when James Hall, the most eminent paleontologist of the day, recognized its similarity to the modern coral reefs then being studied in the Pacific by James Dana and Charles Darwin. Until the mid-twentieth century, Wisconsin's Silurian reefs served as textbook examples of fossil reefs, and any geologist interested in ancient reefs made a point to visit the state.

Wisconsin, and in particular Waukesha, is again attracting scientific attention with a unique fossil deposit found in marine rocks of Silurian age about 420 million years old. Unlike most fossils, which comprise the hard parts of animals and plants such as shell, bone, and wood, these fossils are extraordinary because they preserve the remains of soft-bodied animals and plants.

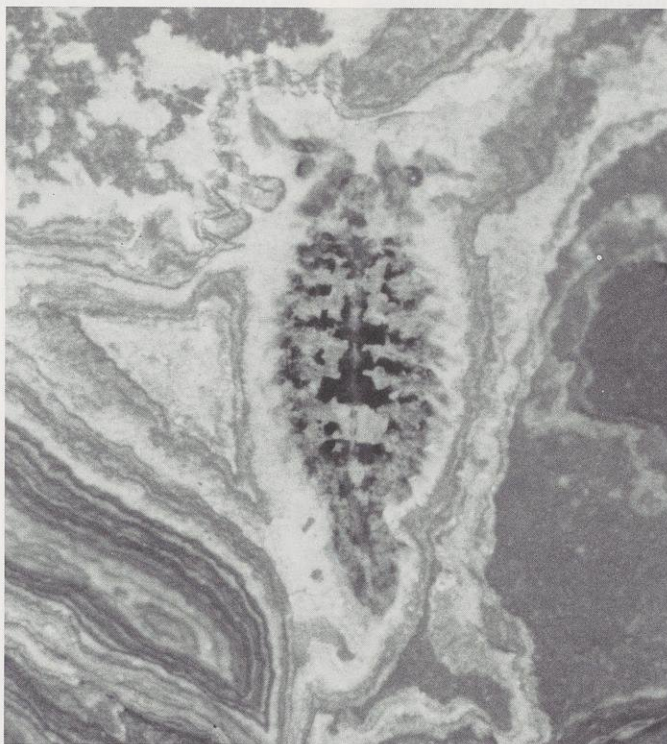
The odds of any organism becoming fossilized are poor at best considering all the hazards that await an organism upon death: scavenging and predation, microbial decomposition, and scattering of parts by current action and by animals crawling on and through the sediment. Without doubt, the fossilization pro-

cess favors those organisms with readily preservable hard parts. Soft parts such as skin, muscle, and chitinous exoskeletons, which are typically the most easily decayed and quickly eaten, are rarely fossilized. In order for soft parts or articulated skeletons (those with all their parts still connected) to be preserved, organisms must be buried by sediment very soon after death in order to escape disturbance. It is also essential that the environment where an organism is buried be inhospitable to living animals that would disrupt the sediment or eat the carcass after burial. In an aquatic setting, currents and waves must also be restricted so that the carcass is not washed away or parts of the body scattered. These conditions are met only under very special circumstances, and therefore occurrences of soft-bodied fossils are rare in the geologic record.

Although rare in the geologic record, deposits of soft-bodied fossils are important for several reasons. First, they provide us with the only body-fossil evidence of organisms without hard parts or with only poorly mineralized exoskeletons. For example, in most rocks, evidence that worms had lived in the sediment comes primarily from the burrows and trails they left behind or from the remains of their tiny phosphatic jaws. In exceptional circumstances, however, the actual soft bodies of the worms may be preserved. Outside of these extraordinary deposits, arthropod fossils other than trilobites are uncommon because most have exoskeletons composed of chitin, an organic material less readily fossilized than the calcium carbonate shells of such animals as trilobites and clams. Secondly, we know that in modern oceans the majority of organisms are soft-bodied; only 30 percent have hard parts that would likely be fossilized. Therefore soft-bodied fossil deposits give us a more realistic view of ancient biodiversity than do typical fossil deposits biased toward hard part preservation. This helps us to better understand the Earth and its ecosystem through time. Finally, these unusual fossils reveal to us the appearance of the soft tissues of organisms which we otherwise know only from hard parts.

Few soft-bodied fossil deposits are known in the world. The most famous and most important of these is found in rocks about 530 million years old in British Columbia, Canada. These fossils are particularly significant because they show that a wide variety of marine invertebrate animals had evolved very soon

after the first appearance of multicellular life. The Waukesha fossil deposit fills a gap of 100 million years for which no diverse group of soft-bodied organisms had been previously discovered, and paleontologists are excited about the information it will provide about the evolution of life.



Possible remiped crustacean, showing large eyes and grasping appendages (about 3 centimeters long).

Geologic Setting of the Waukesha Deposit

As a result of plate tectonics, Wisconsin was located about 20 degrees south of the equator about 420 million years ago during the early part of the Silurian Period. The climate was tropical and humid as it is in the Bahamas today. Sea level had been fluctuating for some time in response to glaciation at higher southern latitudes and, during a period of lowered sea level, much of the area had become emergent. Subaerial weathering produced a slightly irregular topography of shallow troughs and low cliffs on the exposed limestone surface. As sea level rose again, marine sediments were deposited on this weathered surface. The animals fossilized at Waukesha lived in these shallow seas.

The soft-bodied fossils at Waukesha are found only in a single quarry within a bed of gray to black, very finely laminated rock made up of individual layers only a couple of millimeters thick. These sediments were originally deposited as lime mud on the sea floor at the foot of an eight-meter-high rock cliff. The fossil deposit parallels the cliff and extends only a few meters away from it. Farther away from the cliff, these laminated sediments change into typical non-laminated Silurian strata found in the rest of southeastern Wisconsin. Apparently water circulation at the foot of the cliff was restricted, causing a reduction in current and wave activity and stagnant, oxygen-deficient conditions where living animals could not easily survive. Thus the two primary conditions (quiet water, absence of animal disturbance) for exceptional fossilization were met, and the soft-bodied organisms were preserved.

The Waukesha Biota

Arthropods overwhelmingly dominate the Waukesha biota. Of these, trilobites are the most numerous and diverse, comprising thirteen species. Only the dorsal (top) exoskeletons of trilobites are preserved; limbs and soft parts are missing. The hard calci-

um carbonate exoskeletons of the trilobites were dissolved soon after burial, and these animals were commonly flattened and preserved little detail.

In addition to trilobites, all three other major groups of arthropods (chelicerates, crustaceans, uniramians) are present at Waukesha. Most of these other arthropods have a chitinous exoskeleton, which is preserved either as an organic film or in exquisite detail through secondary mineralization. Crustaceans, the arthropod group that includes shrimp, crabs, and lobsters, are distinguished from other arthropods by the presence of antennae and by branched and specialized appendages for feeding and locomotion. Crustaceans are the most common and varied non-trilobite arthropods at Waukesha. Of these, ostracods are the most abundant. Their appendages are not preserved, and their hinged bivalved exoskeletons are found splayed open in a "butterfly" position, not closed as in life. Primitive relatives of shrimp and lobsters also are found in this deposit.

Two other possible crustaceans are present at Waukesha. One of these has a bivalved carapace that covers its entire body and all but the tips of its appendages, some of which are spiny and adapted for seizing prey. These and large, compound eyes made this organism an apparently efficient predator. The geologic range of this crustacean group is extended back 40 million years by the Waukesha specimens. The other possible crustacean resembles a remipede, which otherwise is known only from modern freshwater tropical caves, making the Waukesha specimens the only fossils known for this group. The Waukesha specimens are equipped with large compound eyes and two large grasping appendages at the front, suggesting these animals were formidable predators.

Chelicerates, the arthropod group which includes horseshoe crabs and spiders, are distinguished by the absence of antennae and the presence of pincer-like chelae on certain appendages. The chelicerate at Waukesha is an early relative of horseshoe crabs.

Uniramous arthropods, which include insects, centipedes, and millipedes, have unbranched appendages. Although modern uniramous are nearly all land-dwellers, the group is thought to

have evolved in an aquatic, possibly marine, environment. The Waukesha specimens support this marine origin.

Two other arthropods at Waukesha cannot be assigned to any known group. The first of these enigmatic animals has a short, shield-covered head, compound eyes, possible antennae, and an elongate body with short, lobe-like limbs. It looks some-

thing like a branchiopod crustacean otherwise known only from rocks more than 200 million years younger. The other problematic arthropod has a most unusual appearance, having a bivalved triangular carapace. Most specimens of this organism are small, about 1–2 centimeters long, but a few isolated carapaces as much as 20 centimeters wide have been discovered.

Worms are also characteristic of the Waukesha biota, with annelid worms being the most common. The most intriguing worm yet found has a ring-like structure at one end that looks much like the sucker of a modern leech. This would be the oldest leech in the fossil record, and would extend the range of these worms back more than 250 million years. Oddly, no body-fossils of polychaete worms have been uncovered, although their tiny, phosphatic jaws are not uncommon. Interestingly, many of the Waukesha worms are preserved



Annelid worm, partially coiled (about 3 centimeters long as preserved).

in a tightly coiled position, and there is no evidence of worm trails or burrows.

One of the rarest, least complete, and most poorly preserved fossils at Waukesha is also one of the most important because it shows the soft parts of the conodont animal. Conodonts are typically known only from their tiny, tooth-like elements, which are composed of phosphate minerals and easily fossilized. These elements are abundant in rocks less than 200 million years old around the world and are important for dating rocks because they evolved rapidly. Surprisingly, we know little about the animal to which these elements belonged or how the elements functioned because only a handful of conodont fossils with soft parts have been found. Speculation about their biologic affinities ranges widely, with chaetognath worms and chordates (animals with back bones) as two of the most commonly cited possibilities. Besides the single poor specimen from Waukesha, all other conodont body-fossils, amounting to fewer

than a dozen specimens, were found at one locality in 300-million-year-old rocks of Scotland. These specimens have an elongate, segmented, worm-like body with fins, and the elements are arranged in a symmetrical pattern at the front of the body. The Waukesha specimen resembles this body plan. The discovery of more conodont soft parts is critical for interpreting the animal's lifestyle and its relationship to other animals. Additional specimens from Waukesha may help to solve the mystery surrounding this important fossil animal.

Other common organisms at Waukesha include algae, especially a small, spherical, free-floating type of alga, and graptolites, unusual extinct chitinous organisms that resemble plants but are probably related to chordates.

Interestingly, certain major kinds of organisms are missing in the Waukesha fossil deposit. In particular, organisms with calcium carbonate shells, such as corals, molluscs, brachiopods, and echinoderms, which are abundant in Silurian rocks elsewhere, are either extremely rare or absent. Also missing are organisms that rested on or were attached to the sea floor. Instead, the majority of the organisms found at Waukesha were mobile arthropods or worms.

How the Waukesha Fossil Deposit Formed

The Waukesha fossil bed was deposited under very shallow conditions as sea level rose and marine waters swept across the emergent, weathered, limestone surface. The presence of abundant algae, which required sunlight to photosynthesize, suggests that the water must have been clear and shallow. Mudcracks found within these sediments indicate that the water actually evaporated periodically, allowing the sediment to dry out and crack in the heat of the sun. Shallow water conditions and the presence of the rock cliff were probably enough to restrict water circulation locally, reducing current movement and causing oxygen-deficient conditions, perhaps further enhanced by algal blooms. The cliff also has served as a sediment trap where fine muds and lightweight skeletal debris were washed in and piled up.

Several lines of evidence indicate that oxygen-deficient conditions existed during deposition of the Waukesha fossil bed. In order for laminated sediments to be preserved, they cannot be disturbed by organisms moving about. Under normal marine conditions, animals plow through sediment in search of food and shelter, destroying lamination and creating a churned-up, homogeneous sediment mixture. Preserved lamination therefore indicates that animals were not living in the sediment. The environment was probably inhospitable to life because there was little or no oxygen within the sediment or water column. The absence of stationary or attached sea-floor-dwelling animals, which are even more sensitive to environmental quality because they can't get up and leave, further attests to hostile conditions. The coiled position of many of the worms is thought to signify a defensive response to low oxygen levels as well. Finally, the dark gray to black color of the sediment indicates

the presence of abundant organic matter, which would have been destroyed under normally oxygenated conditions.

If conditions at the site were so unfavorable for life, how then do we explain the presence of any fossils in the Waukesha deposit? As mentioned above, arthropods dominate the biota. In contrast to the worms, none of the arthropods are rolled up in a defensive position. Some arthropods, such as trilobites and ostracods, commonly are missing body parts, and delicate limbs are missing from many of the arthropods. Furthermore the arthropods left no trails or trackways in the mud, which surely they would have done if they were living in the area or trying to escape from it. Taken together, these factors suggest that most of the arthropods at Waukesha are molted exoskeletons, not the carcasses of dead individuals. Because molted exoskeletons, which are shed periodically as the arthropod grows, are lightweight they are transported easily into sediment traps, even by gentle currents. The worms, whose bodies were lightweight while alive, may have been transported to the site while living, which explains their coiling response to the hostile conditions. Most shelled organisms, such as molluscs and corals, were too heavy to transport after death; and while alive, many were attached to the sea floor and not easily swept away by gentle currents. Consequently it appears that most of the animals present at Waukesha did not live in the area where they were buried but were washed into a sediment trap at the foot of the rock cliff, mostly as molted exoskeletons.

Summary

The Waukesha soft-bodied fossil deposit is important to our understanding of Earth's history. Soft-bodied fossils of any age and from any locality are important because they provide a glimpse of the true diversity of ancient life. Because it was deposited at a time when life was just beginning to leave the oceans and colonize land, however, the Waukesha biota may, additionally, hold clues to the origin of some major groups of terrestrial organisms. Furthermore, the Waukesha fossils have extended the geologic range of several major groups of organisms, some by nearly 200 million years. Finally, it has yielded organisms previously unknown to science that force us to re-examine our ideas about the organization and evolution of life. The geologic spotlight will remain focused on Waukesha and Wisconsin as study of this important biota continues to reveal fundamental information about the history of life.

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Rooted in Survival: Storytelling and the Future

by Joseph Bruchac

There is a story told by Chan K'in, a Mayan elder who is over one hundred years old and who has gained world renown for his words in defense of the threatened rain forests of Mexico, reminding us that the roots of all things are bound together and that when the last of the great trees fall, we will not be able to survive them for long. In this story of Chan K'in's, one of the hundreds of traditional stories he has preserved, a man is angered because the animals of the forest are stealing his crops. He prays to be turned into a jaguar so that he will be able to drive the worthless animals from his fields. His wish is granted. He becomes a great jaguar, but as he patrols the edges of his field he sees many starving people in the forest. "Come in, my relatives," he says, taking pity on them. "Eat all you want. I am just defending my field from those useless animals." And from that point on none of the humans from that man's village are ever able to come near that field again for it is guarded by a great jaguar which drives away the humans and allows the animals to come in.

This is a story about reversal of roles. But even more, it is a story about vision. Like so many of the traditional stories which have been preserved and offered to us by Native elders all over the world, it reminds us that the way we see things can affect everything. It also reminds us that we, as human beings, often see only one small aspect of the reality and the worth of the natural world. Becoming a jaguar means that you will see as a jaguar sees—and it is not the same as the way a human views the world. And it is necessary for our survival that we learn—if only through such powerful stories as that of Chan K'in—some small inkling of what it is to see as a jaguar sees.

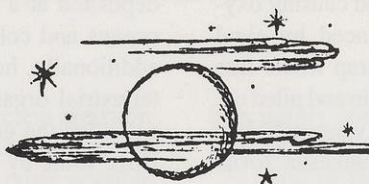
Native stories remind us that all of life is a great circle. Where we are today, we will be again at some coming moment. This concept of the circle, which is so clearly revealed to people close to the earth by the ever-repeating rhythms of the seasons, remains remarkably foreign to the European-based global political culture and economic systems which dominate the world. In the European view, we progress in a straight line. It is, we are told, the shortest distance between two points. To "go forward" is a positive thing: to "get ahead" is our goal. But when we do this, what do we leave behind us? And is it truly left behind or simply transformed from something which sustained us into something which will poison us or our children? We see the shortsightedness of the European view becoming more visible

every day. Each story I read in the news about the troubled environment reminds me of traditional Native tales.

There is, for example, a story told among the Pomo Indian people of California about the coming of fire. Fire was given to the human beings by the animal people, as a gift because the animals took pity on the humans who had no fur coats, who were freezing in the cold. But the humans were reminded of the power of fire, of the necessity to treat it with great respect, to keep it in its proper place. The tragedy of the Oakland fire in the fall of 1991 shows remarkable disrespect for the ecosystems of California, for the plants and animals and for fire

itself. Perhaps no place in North America has greater potential for wildfires than that long California coast where desert winds heading towards the ocean can roar down the canyons and over the hills with incredible force, turning sparks into a firestorm. Most of coastal California is a naturally dry area, and the only way large human populations can be maintained there is by taking water from somewhere else, great distances away, often at great cost to that other bioregion.

Native people, through their familiarity with the cycles of nature and the teachings kept in their stories, were aware of this danger and chose the places they would live with care, with the dangers of wildfires in mind. But the short-term priorities for builders and affluent homeowners on that California coast were



to make money and have a good view. Thus many homes were built on wooded slopes where the fire danger remains great. Wooden shingles, which "look good" in the short term, but are like tinder in the dry climate of that coast, were widely used on houses which could have been built of more fire-resistant material. There was no respect shown for the power of fire. The result was a tragedy, a result of straight-line thinking and a lack of teaching stories. And, sadly, it will happen again as more and more houses are built in such places, as the Earth grows drier while water is wasted.

The current growing hole in the ozone layer—an observable reality and not a speculation—is attributed by innumerable scientists, who have their own understanding of the circularity of life and have in recent years given it the name of "ecology," to human actions, to the dispersal of chemicals in the atmosphere which destroy that protective layer which screens out harmful rays from the sun. This can cause cancers in humans, destroy plants, and, eventually, perhaps destroy most life on Earth. We have the ability to end this process. We as humans know what causes it—it is the release of fluorocarbons through such things as air conditioners and propellants in spray bottles. Yet the changes in technology needed to end this destructive process are being resisted, apparently because of motives having to do entirely with "affordability," with financial profits and losses. We may ask what price human life is worth. (And we may be appalled to find that the United States government actually makes decisions on the basis of studies determining how many deaths per thousand as a result of such causes as increased skin cancer or poisoning from chemicals in food and water can be accepted when profits are being made.) This language of economics and political expediency is so complicated and convoluted that a good story is needed which can cut through it all. Like the Abenaki story of Gluskabe and the Wind Eagle.

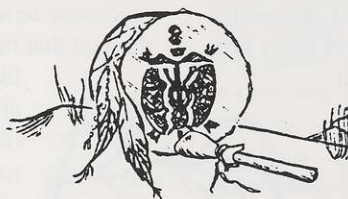
In that story, Gluskabe, a powerful being who lives with his wise grandmother, ties the wings of the eagle who makes the wind. He does this so that the wind will not push him back to shore when he hunts ducks. But after doing this, Gluskabe discovers that the air is stale and hot without the wind, that the water is dirty without the waves caused by the wind, that life without the wind is intolerable. He goes to his wise grandmother for advice. She asks him what he has done and points out to him that the wind is necessary. How, she asks him, will our children and our children's children survive without the wind? Gluskabe realizes his mistake and ends up untying the wings of the wind eagle, reversing the process to return things to the proper balance.

It is a very simple solution, but Gluskabe, who stands for all human beings in their shortsightedness, neither realizes the consequences of his actions when he takes them nor when he is

suffering the results of an unwise tampering with the forces of the natural world. It is only by asking his grandmother, an elder wiser than he, that he is given the answer, and it is only by accepting his mistake and seeking to remedy it that things can be made right again. It is this process which the stories teach us, a process which we must follow as individuals, as leaders, as nations. When things are wrong, we must turn to the wisdom of the stories which counsel us as do wise elders. When those stories show us our errors, we must then take the proper action. A feeling of guilt does nothing. Only action to restore the balance is the proper response.

Another of the Gluskabe stories tells how he made a net which caught all of the fish in the world. But Grandmother Woodchuck told him this was wrong. If all the fish are caught, there will be none left for our children's children. How then can they survive? Gluskabe releases the fish and destroys his fish trap as a result of those words. And each time I think of that story today I think of the drift nets being used by the fishermen of Japan and Taiwan, strip-mining the ocean, sweeping up the fish and other sea creatures and leaving none for their children's children. And I wish they could hear and understand that story of Gluskabe and do as he did.

A few years ago, after many years of using traditional stories to teach young people about the environment, Michael Caduto, a Vermont naturalist, and I put together a book called *Keepers of the Earth*. Combining lesson stories from a number of the original Native nations of North America with activities and scientific information, we hoped that we would reach at least a few people in the ways the old stories had reached their original audiences: by providing lessons in a form which was both memorable and enjoyable. The success of *Keepers of the Earth*, which now has more than 100,000 copies in print, was not, I am sure, due to our brilliance, but to the strength of those stories and the growing awareness on the part of more and more teachers and parents that something has been missing in education and in the way modern materialistic culture (which is now, with multi-national corporations and the growth of new economic powers in non-Western nations, a global culture of greed and not just the culture of Europe and America) views and misuses our environment. The title of the book comes from the "Keeper of the Game," the powerful animal spirit whose responsibility it is to care for its animal relatives and from the age-old Native concept that we do not own the Earth, but only take care of it for coming generations of life. It is an idea which has powerful reverberations for all of us. If we do not "keep" this Earth—"for our children's children," as Grandmother Woodchuck expresses it to Gluskabe or "for seven generations to come," as my Iroquois friends express it—then we will surely lose it.



Sometimes, when I am telling traditional teaching stories, I explain to people that the stories are wiser than I am. That is not false modesty, but a simple truth. The Native stories of North America, those stories which are in some cases, I believe, thousands of years old, carry the wisdom of all those years. There are innumerable instances of items of so-called "folk wisdom," which were dismissed by "scientific information," turning out to be truer than the science which at first discounted them. That folk wisdom was simply the distillation of many generations of experience. Think of it this way: If you live in a house for more than one winter, as they say in New England, you learn where the ice is going to fall off the roof. And how much will you know if you and your ancestors have lived in the same house for ten thousand years?

Long residency, though, has been the exception rather than the rule. The "pioneer spirit" of clearing the land and then moving on, leaving ecological disaster behind, has long been the American way. (I find it ironic that contemporary Americans are condemning the burning and clearing of the Amazon jungles—one of the greatest ecological disasters of this century—without remembering that it is exactly what the "settlers" of America did as they moved west. Contemporary accounts in the 1700s tell of fires made of the great trees of the Ohio valley burning for months at a time and darkening the skies. It is a pattern which the United States gave to the world.)

Today most Americans live a semi-nomadic life based on their jobs. When a job is needed, they move on. As I look out the window of the house I live in, a house I was raised in by my grandparents, I think of all the things I have yet to learn about this small piece of Earth where so many generations of my family have lived. (It is that understanding of all the land holds for us and our children to come which led my mother this year to place the eighty acres of land across the road from us, land on which her house stands, in a conservation easement, protecting it in perpetuity from housing developments, clearcutting, or mining.) Yet many of the people I went to college with have had four addresses in as many states since graduating in 1964. And too many of them neither know nor care what has happened to the homes they left behind. Such rootlessness has made the average American less and less aware each year of where that ice—real ice or metaphoric ice—is going to fall, even if it may be on their own heads! It is hard for them to look to their elders for advice on how to live in harmony with the land, for their parents, too, in most cases, have been part of that same rootlessness.

American Indian people, however, have remained much closer to that original land, moved less, and when they have moved, have continued to return to their original homes. As a result, they see their home not as houses or as a few acres of

land, but as extended ecosystems, as the Earth itself, an Earth which is alive, which is our mother. And in staying close to the original Earth, they also have stayed close to the stories which help them preserve that Earth. How close the Earth is to the Iroquois people can be seen in another commonly used phrase: "The faces of our children are there just under the Earth." Instead of seeing the Earth as "dirty" ("dirt" itself has become a pejorative term in many ways in the English languages, despite the fact that the descendants of Judaeo-Christian traditions are,

like Adam, originally rooted in Earth) or as that dreaded last resting place where the dead are buried (think, for example, of the Western tradition of horror stories, of the "unholy Earth" of cemeteries where the Living Dead come forth at midnight, of Dracula lurking in a coffin filled with Transylvanian dirt—little wonder, then, that modern culture shows such contempt for the land), Native people see Earth as the source of life itself, as the source from which the new generations will come.

It has been said in some circles that we need "new stories" to help us understand this modern world, that things have changed so much that the past no longer has relevance and the old stories are stale and pointless. But those who say this clearly have no understanding of the power and the lessons which remain in the stories of those indigenous

people—not just American Indians, but the aboriginal peoples of Australia, of New Guinea, of Africa, who have held onto those stories which are rooted in Native soils. Those who say that past knowledge is of no use have been too busy talking to truly listen. They do not recognize that life is a circle and that if we travel far enough, we return to the places we thought we left behind. My own knowledge is very small compared to that of many elders, but I have learned enough to know that there is *no* contemporary problem which does not have a traditional story which can be used as a path towards understanding and healing.

In the past, many of those stories were not shared by Native elders. But attitudes have changed. The Traditional Circle

of Elders, which is based at the Onondaga Nation of the Iroquois and includes such important tribal leaders as Oren Lyons, brings together American Indian elders on a yearly basis to discuss these problems of contemporary survival which face us all. That Traditional Circle of Elders made a decision some years ago that it was necessary to start sharing the old wisdom for all of us to survive. The stories which are rooted in Native soil are still here, and there are Native people now sharing them. But to learn, we must listen. To listen, we must close our mouths and open our ears.

Pen and ink drawings by Helene Clay Silcox



East Meets West in Wisconsin

Outside rundown house old woman
waits for Shoua. Shoua drives
neighborhood car they all
helped finance. Today he
goes to Oriental Foods
for rice and beans.

Long dark skirt, colorful blouse
affirm her squatness; black hair
pulled tightly back frames inscrutable
Asian face. After five years
with youngest son and family
she cannot mouth the words
grandchildren quickly adopt.

She minds the little ones, tends
the garden, cuts wild herbs
to season the old way.
Takes pride in painstaking Pa ndau
learned as a child in Laos:
embroidery which speaks of her people.

An outsider the locals avoid
she mourns native mountains,
lost village, missing relatives.
She does not smile, must be strong
for the family, not betray her heart.
Not even when she thinks
of oldest grandson's new title.

Shoua explained it yesterday in Hmong:
Valedictorian of his class.

Mary L. Downs

The School of the Sun

They were going to burn the long grass to the ground
and drag stars from the sky to build an altar you said
after I came home from school for the summer.
When I looked around my birthplace on the Sabbath
they thought maybe I was waiting for a church procession
out of the dirt road north of our lot line.
They thought I would expect warm dishes
to be passed outside on the front lawn
so everyone might be prepared for my words
about the sun,
how I have been taught it is millions of years old
and will one day become a blister on our side
and swell up with goblets of wine, the flutter of
cardinal wings and the hellfire of songs preached
in the steam of the South by tired men.
Bums with stained collars who ride boxcars
will finally look forward to their dream of sleeping
down deep in the ground in late spring.
They will look up at the sun and be ready to spit
at the diligence of sheperds while they are waiting
with the grasshoppers in the crotches of trees
for a plague even the pharaohs could not foresee.

Jean Prafke

Full Circle

Your absence haunts every season
a ravel of memories
strewing my dreams
like dormant flowers
buried under an unforgiving snow

When winter slows with the spurt
of crocus pushing up
the green of spring
is too far away to bring comfort

I long for the burst
of bleeding hearts and tulips
beds of columbine
overgrown and wild

I plan the garden of summer
knowing I alone will dig and plant
and wonder if autumn's crimson fires
will burn grief
winter winds scatter the ashes

Helen Fahrback

Bird Lovers

They sat together on a bench in a bird blind,
male and female, bird lovers, strangers,
barely introduced but assigned to watch
in an overturned box
for possibilities of lust,
for evidence of mating
among the vanishing Prairie Chickens
on a cold spring morning.

Together, hands groping in the dark of the blind,
fumbling, for flashlights, binoculars, pencil and notebook,
eyes fixed to the peepholes,
eager to witness the ancient spring ritual,
anxious to observe the congregating males
on the snow patched booming ground,
determined to try to make out the numbers
on foot bands of strutting males,
committed to sketch a facsimile
of the boundaries of the booming ground

Suddenly there arose
a crescendo of ecstatic cries.
All the males, together, turned,
all orange neck sacs inflated
all tails raised and spread
all feet drummed the frozen earth
heralding the arrival of a small brown female.

She tentative, timid, scarcely turning to the expectant males
skirted along the edge of the booming ground,
lifted her wings and disappeared into the clear cold air.

Together, male and female, bird lovers,
they observed the flight of the female through the peepholes
and recorded in the notebook,
"6:15 a.m. Female Prairie Chicken arrived . . . no mating took place."
They were united in disappointment
for the Prairie Chicken is vanishing from our landscape.
They were united in disappointment
for together they had held their breath
watching for evidence of lust
for the possibility of mating
among the Prairie Chickens
on a cold spring morning.

Ruth Calden

marriage of silences

in the restaurant
they stare off into the gloom
of what they have not become.
though a thousand sunrises
have passed between them,
they have nothing to say
of its color, nothing to say
of the simple splendor of its unfolding,
nothing to tell of the small journeys
that become the true realizations
of the longer ones.
yet they stare off into the gloom
of what they have not become.
their memories are stained
with silences, moments, years
became a marriage of silences.
joy has flown away and vanished
as spring rain into the cold land.
they eat as prisoners while
they stare off into the gloom
of who they have not become.

Gary LeBel

Melting

Sliding from mottle
to speckle,
snow
drips from edge ice
and rills downslope
a herringbone sheet
over butterslick mud
on hard sod.

Into the pond of ticking
ice leaves
thence
gurgling to the marsh
where
everyone
everyone
is wet.

Ralph Schneider

The Possibility of Love

occurs to us like a new color,
like the idea to write a letter,
occurs like the morning of the accident.

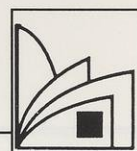
The possibility of love rises like a blanket
shook out after a day at the beach.

The possibility of love is a child.
It's spring in the mind of one red bird.

Other possibilities make you stop and go
The possibility of love is a working vacation.
It's a campaign without a manager,
a campaign with no election,
it is not campaign at all.

In Wisconsin in the 1950's,
wives in long jackets and bright work dresses
ran damp clothes along clotheslines.
Blue clouds blew by.
What the wives hung out to dry
was the possibility of love.

Richard Terrill



In Lincoln's Footsteps

by Don Davenport.

Madison: Prairie Oak Press, 1991. \$12.95.

by Peter King Beach

I once knew an ancient academic who told me he preferred buildings to people. "Buildings are so much nicer," he said. This same fellow would have enjoyed and recommended Don Davenport's guide to key Lincoln sites in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, for at these sites only the buildings remain, "Like scenes in some enchanted isle, all bathed in liquid light," as Lincoln himself wrote in 1844.

The buildings are simple things, some singularly beautiful—a cabin, a barn, a tavern, a courthouse, a store, each the relic of a president they could kill but never silence. And around these relics, other relics—a fence, a field, a stand of trees, a bent and rusted roadside marker proclaiming Ozymandias—like the greatness of a most minor event in Lincoln's life that took place here, on this very spot! And inside the buildings, more relics: a chair, a desk, a table, wooden floors that once creaked under the weight of Lincoln.

Davenport, a travel writer of fine repute, presents the sites in birth-to-tomb order. He also supplies a running historical narrative that sometimes buys into occasional bits of self-evident nonsense about Lincoln's family—for instance, that his father, Thomas, was a nobody. Not true. In a poem about their life in Indiana, Thomas's second child, Abraham, said that "when my father settled here/ 'Twas the frontier line/ the panther's scream filled night with fear/ and bears preyed on the swine." Disneyland it wasn't! Survival was what it was all about. And in any assessment of Thomas we should not forget that two extraordinary women married him and that he fathered (and shaped for twenty-two years) a son of rather rare gifts.

Certainly one value of Davenport's book is that it invites us to sites where we will hear and see clear echoes and broad hints of the real Lincoln. For out of the crucible of twenty-two years as a frontier farmer and twenty-three years as a workaholic country lawyer emerged a man whose vision of a world in which all are equal and all equally deserving of compassion and forgiveness still sets our world on fire.

Peter Beach is a sometimes writer who lives with his wife, Susan, in the woods near Aniwa, Wisconsin. Excerpts from his play about Lincoln appear in this issue of the Review.



Chemistry, As Viewed from Bascom's Hill

by Aaron J. Ihde. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Department of Chemistry, 1990. 688 pp. \$25.00.

by Sharon M. Mulak

Even though this book is a history of the University of Wisconsin chemistry department, it delves deeply into the formation of the university as a whole, the formation of its departments, the administrations that formed its style of teaching and expansion, and the growth into an entire system throughout the state. Ihde is not without opinions, and his judgments are short, often generous, and they cut to the quick of each person's standing within the University of Wisconsin. He speaks very mildly of himself (saying, on p. 597, that "his teaching had been impressive" and that he was "a man for all seasons"), even though this book immortalizes many whose names and faces might otherwise go by the wayside. The quirks and illnesses of faculty members are noted, as well as the famous research conducted here on butterfat and nitrogen fixation, to name just two.

I found the book very readable. One does not need a chemistry degree to appreciate it. Some of the very people who educated the youth here also participated in devilry and held grudges that caused their departure from the university. The importance and development of the Wisconsin Idea comes in for early discussion, and it weaves throughout the book. Many scientists who might have become brilliant teachers were lured by chemical or pharmaceutical companies and left; others stayed, although their hearts were not in their work, and ideas changed constantly about how classes and departments should be structured.

The photos (many belonging to the author) show the men (and the very few women) who molded the chemistry department and, later, the Department of Integrated Liberal Studies. Research is described succinctly. There is also a wide range of knowledge in many fields as Ihde details the rivalries between different schools to correctly analyze or to produce studies that, in turn, made these persons more famous and brought money. Ihde also proudly points to the history of the science department (in which he also served), a development that blossomed after he had a brief appointment at Harvard.

As the University of Wisconsin grew, its status grew as well, and raiding of faculty by other schools began. The outside world (the two world wars, involvement of faculty in the Manhattan Project) and the growth of WARF (Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation) are not neglected. Far from being insular, this book draws a picture of a university in the larger sphere of world and national developments as well as giving minute descriptions of bets made between faculty members and slights that altered the course of teaching.

In publishing this book, it seems consistent with Ihde's style of writing that he let his department get the honors. What

he sees of the university might also be seen in him: a wealth of knowledge, a great resource, and a facility for instilling enthusiasm into new projects. This is a fine book and merits a place in any history of the University of Wisconsin collection.

Sharon M. Mulak is a librarian at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Art Across America: Two Centuries of Regional Painting, 1710-1920

by William H. Gerdts. New York: Abbeville Press, 1990. 3 vols., 1,114 pp. \$425.00.

by Peter C. Merrill

William H. Gerdts, who teaches art history at the graduate school of the City University of New York, is well known for his books and articles on American painting. In *Art Across America* he has produced an important new information source for anyone interested in American regional painters and schools of regional painting in the United States. As Gerdts states in his introduction, general surveys of American painting have had a tendency to focus attention on the great art centers of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. In *Art Across America*, however, Gerdts has come up with something refreshingly different: a general survey of American art which gives due attention to the many smaller art centers scattered throughout the United States. The work is organized along geographic lines, devoting a separate chapter to each state. Each chapter begins with a full-page map in color which identifies the state's principal art centers.

Readers of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* will, of course, be particularly interested in the chapter on Wisconsin, which can be found in Volume One, pages 329 to 341. The map which begins the chapter identifies the following Wisconsin communities as local art centers: Cassville, Delavan, Fond du Lac, Gratiot, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Prairie du Chien, and Sheboygan. The importance of Milwaukee and Madison will be obvious to anyone acquainted with Porter Butts's classic 1936 study *Art in Wisconsin*. The importance of some of the other communities is perhaps less apparent, and it is in this connection that Gerdts's discussion of Wisconsin artists proves to be illuminating. Gratiot, a small town near the Illinois state line, merits inclusion because of its association with the Swiss-born artist Peter Rindisbacher, who lived there from 1827 to 1829. Delavan was important because the Art Institute of Chicago maintained a summer school there, but also because it produced a surprising number of local artists, the foremost being the landscapist Adolph Robert Schulz.

Art Across America provides information on more than eight hundred artists and includes nearly one thousand illustrations, many of which are in color. Each chapter has its own notes and bibliography, which makes it easy to look for further information on a particular state, city, or artist. Each volume is sepa-

ately indexed, but a system of cross-referencing makes it possible to keep track of artists who were active in more than one state. The general reader who has no particular inclination to use this work as a reference source will, nevertheless, find delight in its beautifully produced large-format color illustrations, and I suspect that some general readers will want a personal copy in spite of the high price tag. One certainly hopes that public and academic libraries will recognize the unique importance of this work, which deserves a wide circulation.

Peter C. Merrill is a professor in the Department of Languages and Linguistics at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton.

D. H. Lawrence and the Child

by Carol Sklenicka. Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1991. 191 pp. \$27.50.

by Virginia L. Wolf

Except in selected children's literature circles, there is very little criticism of the roles of children, childhood, and theories of childhood in literature. There is also very little criticism of D. H. Lawrence's interest in and writing about childhood. Sklenicka's *D. H. Lawrence and the Child*, therefore, is a welcome contribution to scholarship.

Furthermore, Sklenicka, a post-doctorate fellow at Marquette University, Milwaukee, proposes a truly new understanding of Lawrence's aesthetics and literary achievement. She shows that childhood is the key to understanding Lawrence's "blood consciousness." This concept, which is central to Lawrence's thinking and writing, she fruitfully explores as child consciousness, a consciousness of blood and bone and nerve and organ that each of us receives at birth and carries with us throughout our lives. In this consciousness is the person's essence and potential, which parents then shape in either a positive or negative fashion. Such an understanding of one of Lawrence's central theories provides not only a new interpretation of his writing, but also presents his theory of childhood as one that balances Freud's mechanistic theory of familial and social conditioning and the Romantics' understanding of the child as an innocent, angelic being gradually sullied by the world.

Although Sklenicka reviews all of Lawrence's writing, she focuses on the books of the middle period (1913-21), *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, and *Women in Love*, because children and childhood are central to all three.

She quickly addresses Lawrence's treatment of children in the early and late works as part of, respectively, her first and last chapters. These chapters, however, function primarily to establish a context for understanding Lawrence's concept of the child. The first explores his personal experience with children and his debt to Rousseau and Wordsworth and to Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, and George Eliot. In the last chapter

Sklenicka discusses the two essays Lawrence wrote at the end of this period, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, as theoretical explanations of his portraits of children.

The four middle chapters are about the three novels. Chapter two deals with *Sons and Lovers*, analyzing the degree to which the mother/son relationship exemplifies what Freud identified as an oedipal conflict. The next three chapters are about, respectively, Tom, Anna, and Ursula, three generations of Brangwens and the major characters of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Lawrence's creation of the three reveals his evolving ideas about childhood, parenthood, society, history, and character portrayal.

Tom does not find self-expression until he becomes the adoptive parent of Anna, and thereafter he truly becomes the husband of Lydia, Anna's mother. Similarly, Anna achieves balance and security in feeling at one with Tom and then later recognizes her separateness when her mother reclaims her husband. Sklenicka credits Lawrence's "deft, sensitive witnessing of the growth of the child's unconscious through an objective, largely external perspective." (p. 6) Dialogue and dramatized scenes, rather than the interior monologues and interceding metaphors used to portray Ursula, convey Anna's independent personality. Finally, Ursula—in her fear of union—is Lawrence's modern child. Forced into mental consciousness too early by a father who is not whole or balanced, she must struggle before she can merge with her lover because of her fear of loss of self.

In addition to the reasons already given for my appreciation of Carol Sklenicka's book, I recommend it as a "good read."

Virginia L. Wolf is special assistant to the chancellor and is professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie.

Wisconsin Birdlife: Population and Distribution of Past and Present

by Samuel D. Robbins, Jr. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990. 172 pp.

by Terry Daulton Dunn

To those who are familiar with ornithology in Wisconsin, the name Sam Robbins is an endorsement of excellence. Robbins is one of the state's best known birders and has been active in the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology for fifty years. In his recently published volume, *Wisconsin Birdlife*, Robbins has compiled a comprehensive history of the state's ornithology and field records.

At the outset, *Wisconsin Birdlife* offers a historical perspective and takes the reader into the human side of ornithology. Beginning with Native American peoples and moving to the present, Robbins follows the impressive evolution of recorded

information on bird species. It is inspiring to picture Henry Schoolcraft compiling bird lists during expeditions to Wisconsin in 1820, or the young Swedish immigrant Thure Kumlien recording species in southeastern Wisconsin between 1843 and 1888. Robbins affords the reader a glimpse into the lives and dedication of Wisconsin's early naturalists.

Wisconsin Birdlife is divided into two sections. The first includes the previously mentioned history and "The Landscape and the Birds" by James Hall Zimmerman. The second section gives accounts of individual species, and a chapter, also by Zimmerman, on habitat preferences.

In many ways, *Wisconsin Birdlife* has a section for everyone. For the avid birder, the accounts of individual species are arranged like a field guide with range maps and details on natural history. For those with an ecological interest, Zimmerman's sections give a comprehensive overview of how the state's natural and physical features influence bird populations. These sections are reminiscent in content and style to John Curtis's classic reference volume *Vegetation of Wisconsin*.

When compared to other works on Wisconsin's birds, the Robbins book fills a unique niche. While literally too weighty to carry on a birding hike, it is the book to refer to when you return home pondering the mysteries of the bird world. No Wisconsin natural history library will be complete without this volume.

Terry Daulton Dunn is the staff biologist at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College, Ashland.

This Brief Tragedy: Unraveling the Todd-Dickinson Affair

by John Evangelist Walsh. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991. 230 pp. (8 pp. of photos) \$19.95.

by Faith B. Miracle

The story of Emily Dickinson and siblings Austin and Lavinia continues to unfold in this small but dramatic book by John Walsh. While he proposes some new theories surrounding Emily's death in 1886, much of his research has centered on the adulterous affair of Austin Dickinson, venerated pillar of the community, and the much younger Mabel Loomis Todd, sparkling coquette and aspiring writer who organized and helped publish Emily's poems and letters following the poet's death. The identification of Mabel as "much younger" is a key phrase here, because Mabel outlived all the Dickinsons and, along with her daughter, became one of the prime sources for Emily's biographers and other Dickinson scholars. Underlying the varying accounts which have appeared over the years is a sometimes bizarre story in which the death of Emily's young nephew Gilbert probably was the catalyst which led to consummation of the Mabel/Austin affair and catapulted three households into chaos and disaster.

The focus of much of this book, however, is Susan, Emily's brilliant and cultured sister-in-law. Susan has consistently been portrayed as vindictive, cruel, and unloving by previous Dickinson scholars who have been inclined to perpetuate Mabel's devastating characterization of Austin's wife. Walsh has determined to set the record straight and establish a more positive role for Susan in Dickinson history as he attempts to interpret the information available.

Walsh challenges, in part, three past authors of books on the Dickinsons: Mabel's daughter, Millicent Bingham, who wrote *Ancestors' Brocades: The Literary Debut of Emily Dickinson* (Harper, 1945); Richard Sewall, author of *The Life of Emily Dickinson* (2 vols. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974); and Polly Longworth, who published *Austin and Mabel: The Amherst Affair and Love Letters of Austin Dickinson and Mabel Loomis Todd*. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1984)

Works by other Dickinson scholars are touched on as well, including psychiatrist John Cody's fascinating book entitled *After Great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson*. Though every road cannot be explored in one book (as the author points out), perhaps more discussion of Cody's theories would have enabled casual readers to better understand why Susan Dickinson is so important in any historical or literary analysis of Emily's life and work. Cody, more than any author I have had the opportunity to read, dissects the extraordinary relationship between Emily and Susan, in particular the depth and intensity of Emily's feelings for Susan. Susan was a constant presence throughout most of Emily's life, and it is appropriate that attention such as Walsh's be given to clarifying the record of her character—a woman who, like Mary Todd Lincoln, apparently has been maligned by hostile and biased voices.

We probably will never know the whole story, but in *This Brief Tragedy* Walsh provides us with yet another glimpse into the lives of the Dickinsons who, like the unquiet Brontes and O'Neil's "haunted Tyrones," continue to emerge in our collective consciousness. We are transported back to the Amherst of a century ago where the peaceful, stately facades of the Mansion, the Evergreens, and the Dell belied the passion and turmoil raging within.

A resident of Monroe, Walsh is the author of *The Hidden Life of Emily Dickinson* (Simon and Schuster, 1971) and also has written about Frost and Poe.

Faith B. Miracle is editor of the Wisconsin Academy Review.

Reflections: The Story of Cranes

by Gretchen Holstein Schoff. Baraboo: The International Crane Foundation, 1991. 40 pp. \$7.95.

by Spencer Black

Last winter an unusual airline passenger joined the many Wisconsin residents flying south to Florida. She was a whooping



Photo by Robert Miracle

crane bred in captivity at the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo on her way to eventual release to the wild on the Kissimmee Prairie of Florida. The crane's trip is part of a massive effort to prevent the extinction of the whooping crane, one of only two crane species native to North America.

An overview of the International Crane Foundation's work to preserve the whooping crane and the other crane species is a fascinating part of *Reflections: The Story of Cranes*. The real stars, however, are not the people involved but rather the cranes themselves. They are among the world's most graceful and intriguing species but also, unfortunately, among the most endangered.

The largest part of this book, the publication of which the foundation calls "the fulfillment of a dream," is devoted to a description of each of the fifteen crane species. In addition to discussing the habitat and natural characteristics of cranes, the dangers to their future are detailed along with the work of the International Crane Foundation and others to preserve cranes. The text is admirably complemented with delightful photographs of the birds and their habitat.

Perhaps the most important section of the book is a passionate defense of the cranes' habitat: wetlands. Along with overhunting for trophies and food, destruction of wetlands habitat has pushed several crane species, including the whooping crane, to the brink of extinction. This book is especially timely considering the current administration's efforts to remove federal protection for as much as half our remaining wetlands. Anyone who is touched by the beauty of this book will better

understand one of the several vital roles that wetlands play in our natural environment.

The International Crane Foundation is a wonderful place for a visit, and to see the graceful birds there is a delight. But there is a sadness in the necessity of the foundation's work, for seeing these birds in confinement pales in comparison to viewing them in their natural setting. My memories of cranes will always be in the wild—paddling a canoe around a bend and catching a pair of sandhills in the midst of their elaborate mating dance. Nothing is more quintessentially Wisconsin to me than the cry of a crane and its graceful flight against a spring sunset. Let us hope the work of the International Crane Foundation and other conservationists seeking to protect our wetlands will mean that those experiences will be available to future generations as well.

Anyone who has admired these beautiful birds would be well advised to read this book and treasure its text and photographs. While you're at it, it would be a good idea to buy an extra copy and send it to Washington with a note about the proposed wetlands policy.

Spencer Black represents the 77th assembly district in the Wisconsin legislature and is chair of the assembly natural resources committee.

The Lightning Within: An Anthology of Contemporary American Indian Fiction

edited by Alan R. Velie. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. 161 pp. \$19.95

by Jennifer Hirsch

We associate many themes with American Indians—reverence for nature, oppression by the white man, the settling of the American West. These themes have been well explored and exploited in the popular media, including the movie *Dances With Wolves*. A theme less perennial, but no less a part of Native American culture, by its nature lends itself to a literary medium: the oral tradition and the power of words. For preliterate cultures, the spoken word necessarily carried a weight and significance it no longer holds for us today, when we advise “get it in writing” or “write it down before you forget it.” For a people without that option, the spoken word was a less casual process. Speech was the primary means of communicating and the only means of creating a record or history, and as such held tremendous power.

In *The Lightning Within: An Anthology of Contemporary American Indian Fiction*, editor Alan R. Velie and several of the

Indian authors focus on the primacy of language in defining and even creating the world. This theme is set forth most explicitly in the first selection, “Tosomah’s Story,” an excerpt from N. Scott Momaday’s Pulitzer Prize-winning 1968 novel, *House Made of Dawn*:

Consider for a moment that old Kiowa woman, my grandmother, whose use of language was confined to speech. And be assured that her regard for words was always keen in proportion as she depended on them. You see, for her words were medicine; they were magic and invisible. They came from nothing into sound and meaning.

In Momaday’s work, words are not merely a connection with the mystical but are themselves sacred and mysterious. In “Tosomah’s Story,” the priest Tosomah warns his congregation: “Now the white man deals in words, and he deals easily, with grace and sleight of hand.” And yet what may appear as a simple denunciation of the white man shimmers with irony, for Tosomah himself, a preacher skilled in the art of rhetoric, deals in words with much grace and not a little sleight of hand.

Another linguistic manipulator is Gerald Vizenor’s mixed-blood trickster, Griever de Hocus. The trickster is a universal character, appearing not only in many Native American tribal tales but in folktales around the world, from Norse to Chinese. Griever knows “how to disguise and contrive the common world . . . and the art of mythic appearances.” The trickster “unpeels words like oranges” and “chooses verbs like toxins for a ceremonial hunt and rolls his head between fast paragraphs.”

Like many of his characters, Vizenor himself is a Chippewa Indian (also called Ojibway). The Chippewas, an Eastern Woodland tribe, originally populated both shores of Lakes Huron and Superior. Today, along with the Menominee and Oneida tribes, the Chippewa tribe is one of the largest Indian groups in Wisconsin, with populations at the Lac Court Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, and Bad River reservations. Another Chippewa writer whose work is included in *The Lightning Within* is poet-novelist Louise Erdrich, whose tragi-comic tale of Chippewa love medicine gently spoofs a tribal shamanistic tradition.

With the burgeoning interest in American Indian cultures and in “ethnic” fiction—writing which explores the mingling of non-European and American cultures, such as Amy Tan’s—a compilation of fiction by contemporary Native American authors is welcome and overdue. As Velie states in his introduction, “These writers have gained some critical attention . . . but by and large they still are not well known to most readers. It is the purpose of this book to address that problem.”

Jennifer Hirsch of Cross Plains is a free-lance writer and a writer and editor for the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Wisconsin Academy and Affiliations: A Continuing Diversity

by Andrea Potos

In its charter granted by the Wisconsin legislature in 1870, the Wisconsin Academy was authorized to form affiliations with other statewide, non-profit organizations whose interests were compatible with the Academy's mission of promoting the intellectual and artistic life of the state. Section 7 of the state charter read as follows:

Any existing society or institution having objects embraced by said Academy may be constituted a department thereof, or be otherwise connected therewith, on terms mutually satisfactory to the governing bodies of said Academy and such other society or institution.

In no way would the affiliated group relinquish any of its autonomy and authority within its organization. Rather, both the Academy and its affiliate would enhance the greater purpose of scientific and cultural progress by publicizing programs in the newsletter, Inside the Academy, sharing membership lists and Academy office space, and joining with the Academy in planning annual meetings, conferences, and publications.

Today the Academy's affiliations encompass a full range of organizations devoted to the sciences, arts, and letters of the state. Three of the current twenty-six Wisconsin Academy affiliates are described below.

Formally established in 1969 as a section of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, the Botanical Club of Wisconsin seeks to encourage greater understanding and protection of Wisconsin's native and wild plant life. The club is



CHAMOMILE

open to anyone, non-scientists and scientists alike, with a curiosity and appreciation for botany.

In 1968 Academy president John Thomson appointed a thirteen-person committee to study the possible establishment of a botanical club as a section of the Academy. The idea received enthusiastic endorsement by the committee. Many of the club's early members were recruited from the Academy's membership through a questionnaire endorsing the aim and purpose of the proposed Botanical Club of Wisconsin. Over one hundred twenty Academy members responded to the invitation to join, and the Club readied itself to formally gather at the Academy's annual conference. Thomson, now Academy emeritus councilor-at-large, has served as the Academy representative to the club since its inception. Current membership is close to three hundred.

The Botanical Club's *Bulletin* has featured articles on topics as diverse as "carnivores of the plant world," "finger printing trees, shrubs and wildflowers," "the University of Wisconsin arboretum deer situation," "Wisconsin's record tree project," and "adventures with orchids." The *Bulletin*, along with a newsletter, *Wisconsin Flora*, also lists publications of interest, workshops, and field trips sponsored by members. Past excursions have included explorations in prairies, bogs and wet conifer woods, swamps, cliffs, and lakes around Wisconsin. Winter field trips have taken members on "snowshoe hikes" of the Ridges-Toft Point area in Door County and to Bluff Springs and adjacent hills near Whitewater to study winter-active flowering plants and algae of the springs.

The club is comprised of five chapters, including an unaffiliated chapter for members-at-large, with headquarters in Madison, LaCrosse, Stevens Point, and Milwaukee. Periodic chapter meetings give members a chance to gather and exchange new information. Members also work closely with the Wisconsin Phenological Society, an organization devoted to studying biological phenomena such as flowering, breeding, and migration. Since life history studies are needed for almost all of the native plant species of Wisconsin, phenologists are able to provide an important service for botanists.

The annual meeting for the Botanical Club takes place at the Wisconsin Academy's annual conference in April. There, members also have the opportunity to present papers on their own botanical research projects.

Making the state of Wisconsin more "poetry conscious" was one impetus behind the creation of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets in 1950. With a current membership of over three hundred, the fellowship hopes to secure fuller recognition of poetry as a cultural force and to build greater appreciation for the art of the poet. Active membership is open to all Wisconsin poets whose work is accepted by the credentials chair, and associate membership is available to others who write or simply love poetry.

Nationally-known Wisconsin poet Edna Meudt was one of the founders and early presidents of the Fellowship of Poets. She was responsible for some of the fellowship's initial endeavors to make poetry more visible in Wisconsin. Programs at the time included a half-hour celebration of poems and music that continued for three years on WHA public radio entitled *The Poet's Corner*. The promotion of student contests was another of Meudt's important early contributions. The industrial firms of Allis Chalmers, Kroger, and Thorp Finance gave generous cash awards to junior and senior high school students from all over the state.

In continuing efforts to showcase Wisconsin poets, the fellowship has published five anthologies since its formation: *Northern Spring* (1956), *Poems Out of Wisconsin* (1961), and *Poetry Out of Wisconsin* (1967, 1970 and 1980). Anthology editors include the late August Derleth and current fellowship president Jeri McCormick. But perhaps the most

successful project of the fellowship has been the *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar*, an engagement calendar featuring the work of over one hundred Wisconsin poets each year. Begun with seed money from a Wisconsin Arts Board grant, the calendar now funds itself and is sold in bookstores throughout the state.

In April and October of every year, members meet in cities throughout Wisconsin to share poems and conduct the business of the fellowship. As past hosts for the annual meeting of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, the fellowship has invited such nationally-renowned poets as William Stafford and May Sarton to read from their work.

Public poetry readings have received renewed emphasis since the early 1980s, according to fellowship historian Richard Roe. Former president Lenore Coberly stressed the importance of bringing poetry "to the people" through public readings



around the state, including one at the Capitol rotunda on Poetry Day, October 15.



In 1966 the Wisconsin Dance Council was established at the Conference on International Understanding Through Dance at the Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point for the purpose of promoting the appreciation of all types of dance as an art form and as a means of cultural expression. Its one hundred fifty members include dance educators, studio teachers, performers, writers, dance-related organizations, and individuals throughout Wisconsin who enjoy dance and wish to support it.



In its early years, the Wisconsin Dance Council published *Dance Dimensions*, a magazine supported by grants from the Wisconsin Arts Board. *Dance Dimensions* included news from the national dance scene ("The Joffrey Ballet's Point of View"), performance reviews, a calendar of events, and articles exploring possibilities for future directions of the council. One issue discussed in a 1975 edition of *Dance Dimensions* centered upon the possible establishment of a dance consultant for the Department of Public Instruction—a goal they're still striving for, according to Karen Cowan, executive secretary of Wisconsin Dance Council.

Since that time, the primary focus of the council has been that of dance education. Their education committee worked closely with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to establish dance curriculum guidelines for K-12 education, one of the first such guides in the nation. In addition, the committee helped to initiate state certification for dance teachers in public and private schools throughout Wisconsin. The council also acted as an advisor for the arts in society issue, *Growth of Dance in America*, published by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Arts in the early 1970s.

Since 1977 the Wisconsin Dance Council has held its annual conference in Madison every fall. The conference offers master classes, workshops, and performances by guest artists.

Andrea Potos is on the staff at the Wisconsin Academy.

Wisconsin Academy Affiliates 1992

- Botanical Club of Wisconsin
- Citizens Natural Resources Association
- The Clearing
- Council for Wisconsin Writers
- Forest History Association of Wisconsin
- International Crane Foundation
- Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin
- Nature Conservancy/Wisconsin Chapter
- People to People
- Wisconsin Art Education Association
- Wisconsin Archeological Survey
- Wisconsin Chapter/Wildlife Society
- Wisconsin Dance Council
- Wisconsin Entomological Society
- Wisconsin Folklore/Folklife Society
- Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets
- Wisconsin Fine Arts Association
- Wisconsin Heritages
- Wisconsin Library Association
- Wisconsin Map Society
- Wisconsin Phenological Society
- Wisconsin Regional Artists Association
- Wisconsin Regional Writers Association
- Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers
- Wisconsin Speleological Society
- Wisconsin Theatre Association

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