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LIFE ON THE DUNES • NEWSPAPERWOMEN
SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Wisconsin Academy Review

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Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters

Fall 1996 Volume 42, Number 4

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Winifred E. Wise

Cover: April Morning, *Oil on panel, image 9 x 6 inches, 1995-96.*
Back Cover: Burning Memories, *Oil on panel, image 14 x 13 inches, 1995-96.*

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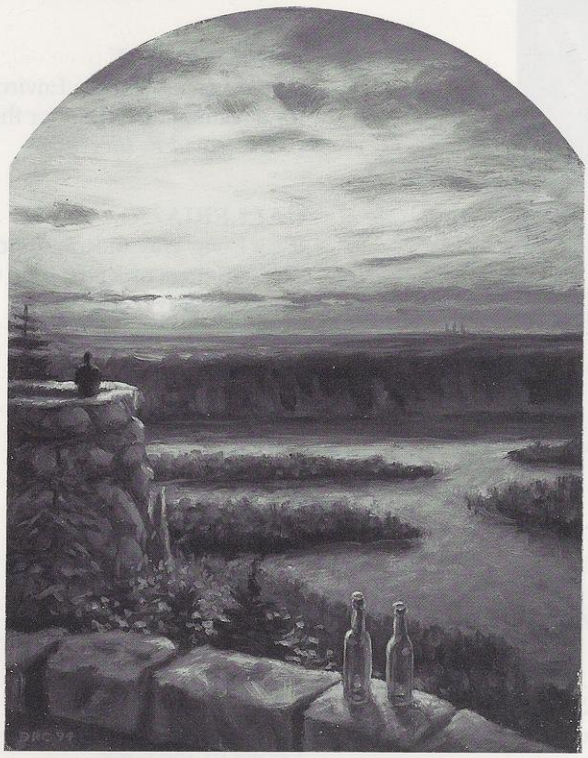
The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters was chartered by the State Legislature on March 16, 1870, as a membership organization serving the people of Wisconsin. Its mission is to encourage investigation in the sciences, arts, and letters and to disseminate information and share knowledge.

Editor's Notes

My experiences in putting together the *Wisconsin Academy Review* have been adventures in familiarity and discovery, anticipation and serendipity. These intrinsic characteristics apply to authors as well as topics, and this particular issue offers some rich examples.

Let's start with the featured artist, Barry Roal Carlsen, whose work appears on both covers and in the Galleria section. Barry's talents have been anonymously evident in the layout and design of the *Review* for years, as he is the artist with whom we work at University Publications. It is impossible to mention Barry in connection with the *Review* without also conjuring up Eileen Fitzgerald, a senior editor at University Publications, for each time we meet she is part of our congenial, creative team. We bring Tom Garver into the mix with his sensitive appreciation of Barry's work, and it all adds up to an example of both the familiar and the warmly anticipated, for Tom also has contributed to the *Review* in the past, including an article in 1990, my first year as editor.



Looking Westward *by Barry Roal Carlsen. Oil on panel, 9 x 6 inches, 1994-96.*

Since I began working on the *Review* I have wanted to do something with the writings of the late Winifred E. Wise. I knew her as Winnie Anderson, and I met her in the 1980s, toward the end of her life. I remember so well her indomitable will, her sense of justice, the luminous eyes that conveyed so much of her spirit. When I contacted her nephew and his wife in North Carolina, we discovered we had "mutual friends" in Tansy and Pussy Willow, the two cats which were so important in the lives of Winnie and her daughter, Jennifer. Pussy Willow still enjoys the good cat's life, sleeping snugly—perhaps even smugly—every night on a great antique bed, a family heirloom. After reading Winnie's unpublished autobiography and working with the Chicago/Indiana Dunes pages of her manuscript, I probably will never again walk on sand dunes without thinking of her. A second part of her dunes story will appear in the winter issue.

Jeffrey Churchwell and Mark Hendrickson represent part of the serendipity in this issue. It is a happy coincidence that their articles complement each other—Jeffrey with his interest in Julia Newell and her 1867 letters to *The Janesville Gazette*, Mark with his research on early Wisconsin newspaperwomen in general. I did not "discover" these two contributors without some help, however: Jeffrey was pointed in our direction by my old friend Carol Liddle at the Janesville public library, who knew of my past interest in Julia Newell; Mark's research was called to our attention by team mates Barry and Eileen at University Publications.

While I have never met David Blockstein face-to-face, we have been in touch off and on for some time. His dad, Bill, headed the committee to plan 125th-anniversary events for the Academy, but sadly did not live to participate in those events. Another Blockstein son, Michael, who lives in California, has contributed art to the *Review* in the past. It's good to have the Blockstein name once again connected with the Academy through David's commentary on the importance of "sound science" in making decisions about our environment.

There is sadness in the story behind the Inside the Academy feature on the cultural map project. Josh Hane, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, was working on the *Review* article and the map itself when he went off to Alaska on a mountain-climbing vacation from which he tragically did not return. Steve Hoelscher, who formerly worked on the project and was in Wisconsin doing research in another area, graciously stepped in and supplied the fine text, which he dedicated to Josh's memory, before returning to his work at Louisiana State University. The cultural map project continues on schedule at the University of Wisconsin–Madison geography department under the direction of David Woodward and his colleagues and will be published this fall by University of Wisconsin Press.

Poetry from first-time and past contributors, book reviews from some reliable readers generous with their time, and prize-winning fiction complete the issue. And though it is hot summer as I write this column, my adventures in discovery and anticipation are underway for the winter issue.

WISCONSIN ACADEMY GALLERY FALL SCHEDULE

September	Charles Munch, paintings
October	Richard Knight, paintings
November	Keith Dalby, Greg Johnson, and Peter Williams, installation

Faith B. Miracle

CONTRIBUTORS

- David E. Blockstein grew up in Madison and received degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Minnesota, where he received a Ph.D. in ecology. He is a senior scientist with the committee for the National Institute for the Environment in Washington, D.C. He chairs the Ornithological Council, which provides scientific information about birds. He is the son of the late William Blockstein, former Academy council member and long-time friend of the Wisconsin Academy.

- Barry Roal Carlsen is a senior artist with the University of Wisconsin Publications in Madison and has been designing the *Wisconsin Academy Review* since 1991. His paintings have been exhibited twice at the Wisconsin Academy Gallery, and his recent oil paintings and pastels will be shown at the Edgewood Orchard Galleries in Fish Creek until October 20. In 1996 he received an individual artist's grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board enabling him to create the work presented here.

- Elaine Cavanaugh lives and writes in Hartland. Her poems have appeared in *The Anthology of New England Writers*, *Wisconsin Poets at the Elvehjem Museum of Art, Touchstone*, and *The Sequoya Review*. Her new collection of poems is titled *Green*.

- Robin Chapman's recent poems have appeared in *The Hudson Review, The American Scholar, Poetry Canada, Poetry East,* and *Prairie Schooner*. Her most recent collection of poems, published by Fireweed Press, is *Learning to Talk.* She teaches courses in language development at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

- Jeffrey S. Churchwell teaches English at Milton High School. His research on Julia Newell, who lived four miles from his home, was done to fulfill requirements for a master's degree in curriculum and instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He became interested in Newell's letters to *The Janesville Gazette* because of her association with one of his favorite authors, Mark Twain.

- L.S. Dembo is emeritus professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he taught literature until his retirement in 1990. He holds graduate degrees from Columbia and Cornell universities. He was a founder and editor-in-chief of the scholarly journal *Contemporary Literature* and has written several books on modern poetry, among them pioneering studies of the Objectivists, Hart Crane, and Ezra Pound. Parts of his autobiographical long-poem, "Vanishing Points," appeared in *northeast*.

- Thomas H. Garver, Madison, is an independent curator, art consultant, and writer who was formerly director of the Madison Art Center. His most recent book is *The Last Steam Railroad in America: Photographs by O. Winston Link,* published by Harry N. Abrams.

- Mark L. Hendrickson holds degrees in journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a marketing officer at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics in Madison and president of The Wingra Group, a marketing and business development firm. He has written numerous feature articles and is the author of two books, *Exercise for Life* and *Kids Don't Know How to Play Anymore.*

- Steven Hoelscher was born in Racine and educated in Minnesota, Toronto, and Madison. He teaches cultural and historical geography at Louisiana State University and is a former research associate in the Department of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is coauthor of the *Cultural Map of Wisconsin* (University of Wisconsin Press 1996). His forthcoming book, *H.H. Bennett's Wisconsin Dells: The Creation of an American Landscape*, also will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press.

- Jan Jahnke is a practicing printmaker living in Milwaukee. She teaches beginning and advanced screenprinting in the continuing education program at Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. Her present focus is large format contemporary prints.

- Dale Ritterbusch is the author of *Lessons Learned* (reviewed in this issue), winner of the 1996 Council for Wisconsin Writers book-length poetry award. He teaches writing and literature in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He has degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and a fine arts degree from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam war and coordinated shipments of anti-personnel mines for dissemination along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. His creative work has appeared in such anthologies as *Carrying the Darkness* (Avon 1985), *Wisconsin Poetry* (Wisconsin Academy 1991), and *The Vietnam War in American Stories, Songs, and Poems* (Bedford-St. Martin's 1995). He lives in his hometown, Waukesha.

- Christine Tachick grew up on a farm near Pound "which has been in the family for four generations" and now lives in Cedarburg. Her short fiction "Learning to Polka" is the title story of a collection for which she was awarded the $10,000 Milton Center Fellowship. This collection of short stories traces the history of a Polish-American family in northeastern Wisconsin from turn-of-the-century loggers to the contemporary dairy farmers represented in "Learning to Polka." Tachick is in the Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and serves as an editor for *The Cream City Review*.

- Sprague Vonier is a retired Milwaukee television executive and long-time poet whose work has appeared in numerous journals. He recently served on the Wisconsin Academy-sponsored Kettle Moraine task force. He is a part-time farmer and teacher and is the author of *Edward R. Murrow*, a book for young readers.

- Winifred E. Wise (Anderson) was born in Fond du Lac in 1906 and died in Madison in 1993. During the years between she lived on both coasts, was an advertising executive for Marshall Field's in Chicago, was staff editor for Compton's Encyclopedia, and wrote eighteen books, primarily for young readers. One of her best-known books is *Jane Addams of Hull House* (1935). Her daughter, Jennifer, who plays an important role in the autobiographical excerpts presented in this issue, died in Madison in 1995.

The Life and Times of Winifred E. Wise

by Winifred E. Wise

PART I

Chicago, the 1940s

America met us again as the silvery Hudson flowed on through the Catskills. Somehow New York always seems to me like a kind of technicolor show that could happen anywhere—even in some far-off planet—not necessarily in America. It seems somehow like the glittering spire of the Chrysler Building and as far removed from the red barns of the rest of America—the shabby porch swings, the houses with peeling clapboards, the shiny filling stations, the courthouse squares, the whir of lawn mowers, and the scent of summer nights when youths gather under street lamps and know more about the world than God on a bicycle.

So we traveled through the Pullman night, through the lights of little towns and crossing gates and ticket windows; and in the morning I got up early to catch a flash of dunes and of Lake Michigan. Then we plunged into the industrial wilderness with Chicago at its heart—the largest steel mill in the world covered with clouds of its own making, the derricks and the cranes and the oil storage tanks, the acres of bawling cattle doomed for the stockyards, the freight yards and the freight cars with symbols on their sides from every railroad in the land.

Yet, to one who knows Chicago well, there is much of sweetness to be found here, like the lilacs blooming in Lincoln Park. It is a city with the honesty of plainness. Despite the flamboyant words of city boosters, it is not a city of pretense. Behind the magnificent lakefront, the sweat of the worker rolls for miles over the prairie, for Chicago is still, in many ways, a prairie town. It has prairie ways. Folk are kinder each to each and more given to ingenuous amazement than one would expect of a great city—more hospitable, more enthusiastic. The jaded sophisticate is something of a rarity here and travels in a small world of his own bounded by the roaring of elevated trains and the rattle of streetcars jammed with folk button to button.

To be successful, a Chicago institution must be all things to all people. Such, for instance, is Marshall Field & Company, whose name was so famous in my Wisconsin girlhood that any child who wore a dress "from Field's" to a birthday party was for that day a person a little special. For a hundred years, Marshall Field's has been a prairie landmark and a place of pilgrimage for those wishing to see the latest and the most of merchandise. It still has the Tiffany dome made of umpty-thousand pieces of glass that was a wonder at the turn of the century. It still has the Linen Room, heavy in black walnut, where tablecloths incredible in the fineness of hand-stitchery are laid before gold-plated brides. At Christmas time, moppets firmly believe that the real Santa Claus has taken up residence at Field's, and their elders gasp at the splendor of decorations down a main aisle that has almost the scope of Grand Central Station.

On the whole, coming back to Chicago was like coming back to a pair of shoes, well broken-in and left briefly beside a fire.

I had trembled with awe some years before when applying for a copywriting job in the advertising bureau at Field's and continued to tremble for months after I got it. Then for five years I had been mother to the Young People's Floor, the Glorious Fourth—blowing its nose, putting it to bed at night, laughing with it, and crying with it. I had dreamed up high school designers' contests and puppet shows, placated temperamental French dollmakers who objected to being billed with trained dogs, torn "Made in Japan" off snowballs to be thrown at a children's wartime fashion show—in short, I had been in charge of sales promotion for this fascinating child.

Now I was coming back to do this old job along with another one that would cover almost a third of the main store, and cover such diversities as cosmetics and corsets, diamonds

and dolls, luggage and lingerie. I found myself a little aghast at the task, even though now I was surrounded by old and much-loved friends with whom I had won many a victory in the battle of the deadline.

On the whole, coming back to Chicago was like coming back to a pair of shoes, well broken-in and left briefly beside a fire. I had been refreshed by the New York experience and was ready to roll up my sleeves in a place where work was the most exciting part of any day. Evenings and weekends were only times to be spent washing and starching the white collar of the white-collar girl before morning or Monday called her out again in full regalia.

Ordinary life is pale by comparison with the stir and crisis, the emotion, the creative outpourings of the advertising department of a great store, where the wording of a headline or the pose of a figure can seem, for the moment, the most important problem in all the universe. At Marshall Field's the fevered atmosphere was tempered by a kind of love and loyalty and gaiety that made everyone a member of some special fraternity. Alumni in all parts of the country never quite lost their attachment and paid visits at any opportunity, sometimes with wives or husbands or children but, more often, only with a certain wistfulness.

For every scream of anguish in the hard-working department, there was also the hilarity of high-jinx. Coming back from lunch, one might find a snake charmer cross-legged on one's desk blowing on a mailing tube to a paper snake dangling from the wall above. The smallest member of the department might appear in the season's largest hat, up for an ad, parading down the row of offices hand in hand with a walking doll or trying out a pogo stick. It was a place full of wonderful, great-hearted people, from the little dynamo known as "The Whip," who mothered everybody, to a boss who could laugh at a pair of outsize rubbers gilded for a birthday present.

The author as a child in Fond du Lac.

❦

My seven-year-old daughter, Jennifer, and I bedded down in crowded quarters on North Dearborn Street with a cat named Peter as our mascot. He was a cat with an ancient Egyptian look of thoughtfulness and the peculiar magic of a talisman. By merely stroking his fur, I had won for us almost immediately an apartment in wartime Chicago, a feat almost as amazing as Aladdin achieved with his wonderful lamp. The tenant, perceiving my fondness for cats, had decided to rent the apartment to us—ahead of a long line of contenders—because she wanted her Peter to have a good home with someone to love him as she had done.

Since there was no place here for a child to play, Jenji went off to boarding school during the week. It was not an ideal situation. Once, in one of the bureau drawers, I found a piece of paper with a pathetic little scrawl written on it that said, "Mom, I'm so lonely. I never see you anymore."

While Jenji was gone, Peter and I held the fort in the Dearborn Street rear apartment some blocks north of the sidewalk orators of Bughouse Square and near enough to Lincoln Park for walks on Sundays. Dearborn here is a kind of barricade for the Gold Coast against the shabby evils of Clark Street—it marks the line between cafe society and Charley's Cafe society, so to speak.

One of the more memorable events in the tiny apartment was an "under-thirty" party for a lieutenant commander in the navy and Burr Tillstrom, close to the eve of the latter's success on television. Burr and Kukla and Ollie, the dragon, were old friends of mine, for Burr and I had started a children's puppet theater at Marshall Field's some years before and had watched it grow to a major Saturday attraction. On one occasion he did delightful shows throughout the store on a very dull subject, that of Quality, and played to full houses until he reached the linen section where Madame Oglepuss seemed a caricature—too close for comfort—of some of the better customers.

Burr, with his crew haircut and pixie mind, was never funnier than when he was parodying the advertising bureau in action, and we all adored him. I don't think any of us will ever forget the Christmas party held at the hotel with Burr at the puppets and Dorothy Donegan at the piano, playing her deep, low-down blues. We all sat on the floor under Christmas trees trailing spun-glass "angel hair" and itched for days afterward.

The author as a successful writer . . .

and advertising executive.

Burr's devotion to his puppets from boyhood and his "following of the gleam" to success was an adventure we all vicariously enjoyed. We knew how hard he had worked, often against serious odds and discouragements, and our hands clapped as "our boy" became famous.

That year Chicago had such a Christmas storm we slid all the way down the ice on the front steps to the street fifteen feet below. It had such winds that one crawled on all fours around street corners with face down against the blinding sleet. Curbs were roped to keep folk from being blown under buses on the boulevard. As usual, everyone said, "Have you ever seen such a winter?" and the Palmolive Building stood like a great lighted candle above a white tablecloth of snow.

The Dunes and the Tar-paper Shack

With the approach of spring, an idea of living on The Dunes, planted in my mind months previously back east on Fire Island, began to stir like a bulb in the ground. I waited a little for it to come up like a tulip. It would be so much simpler to pick a flower than to raise one. Nothing happened—no one to whom I mentioned it had any definite idea about how I could "go to The Dunes" for summer or any other time. "It's a terrible place for sunburn," one would say. And another, "You get off at some station—I forget the name of it—and walk and walk, two steps forward and three back in the sand." A third, "Sure you could go down there on a Sunday or something, but I don't know anywhere you could stay, any hotels or anything."

Curiously, most people in Chicago think of The Dunes as a land mass lying somewhere "off there." I did not then know any of the small group of aficionados, the veteran hikers, who take off with knapsacks and blankets and count the days of the week, as they count their mosquito bites, until they can explore The Dunes again. I had been there only twice and that was long ago—once to sleep on the sand outside an overcrowded summer cottage and once to hike nameless miles, sleep in a niche above the lake, and eat pork chops under-done on an over-smoky campfire. Both weekends had left everyone concerned with frightful tempers, but still I remembered the loveliness of the land.

I decided to send up a trial balloon in the form of an ad in the *Chicago Tribune* for a summer place in The Dunes, and I

received one response. I called the owner of the cottage and wondered what might come of it.

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The man drove Jenji and me down to The Dunes on a sunny Sunday in mid–March. Eight miles from Gary on Highway 12, we turned in and waited for the South Shore electric train to whiz past in a streak of orange. Safely across we waited for another lethal instrument—the New York Central thundering through with a long line of freight cars.

"Lot of accidents here," the man said cheerfully. "Hardly a season somebody doesn't get bumped off. Why, only last summer a man turned to wave at a girl, and there he was way down the track with nothing much left of him or his car."

We traveled a distance and across another track. "This is the worst one yet," he said. "Sand trains use it, but they don't run regularly, and every now and then somebody gets side-swiped plenty."

At the fork in the road, I looked hopefully up at several houses that had a civilized look about them, but he said merely, "That's where the rich folks live," and turned to the right down a track still covered with melting snow. We wound through barren oaks and then into a desolation of sand hills and wasted grass, down into a valley filled with pines and up again to sand, wind-whipped and zig-zagged with the white lines of ancient logs. It was a churning sort of road, full of holes and traps for tires, which seemed to be leading us miles from east-nowhere. Yet, as usual with me, I forgot all this when I glimpsed the lake so blue, dancing in the distance.

To the left of the road was a sizeable piebald shack covered with tar paper in red and green, solid colors and checks with porches slung on it here and there. The chill of winter was hard within as our guide opened the door of the unpretentious establishment somehow thrown together to make several rooms, all well ventilated through cracks in the floor and around the windows. The only sign of civilization was an inside toilet to be flushed by a hand pump in the kitchen. But the situation was beautiful—high on a dune above a valley with the lake beyond, pines dark and fragrant behind. Near it clustered other tar-paper shacks for summer living, all smaller and inhabited, we were told, by members of the boat club nearby.

I hesitated. We had no car, and the distance from the station seemed very long to be walked for commuting two ways each day. The man said it was only three-quarters of a mile, but I had my doubts. Also, the price he quoted for a summer's occupancy would have built the house over again, and better. Still, I knew that summer places in The Dunes were scarce. If I wished to try out my plan for living there, perhaps this was the way to begin—before the idea lost life and became part of a pasteboard card file of might-have-beens. As for the distance, I supposed I could take that in a stride which was long. I had learned that when I was a little girl trying to keep up with my six-foot big brother. For years now I had walked with a speed that usually left my companions panting behind me and crying, "Where's the fire?" I compared the freedom here with the stifling air of a small city apartment in summer. We'd best start here, I thought, with a tar-paper shack and see what might happen from there.

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The land was blue with lupines when we moved out on Memorial Day—patches of sky in every hollow shading from palest blue to purple. Our band was small—just Jenji and myself plus a housekeeper from former years, up from Florida for a quiet summer, and Peter at the helm as usual. Peter had protested the move all the way from Chicago, since he was an old-fashioned cat and did not care for motor cars. Once arrived, though, and satisfied with the taste of country mice, he turned his face to the sun and smiled.

We were the first settlers of the season, and soon discovered why. Shortly the wind began to blow directly from some northern ice cap to numb the ears and hands of any who rashly presumed that summer had come. No doors in our shack shut out any of the cold, and the fire in the fireplace leaped up the chimney to warm the feet only of passing birds. We fought off freezing by toiling up from the beach with driftwood pulled by ropes over our backs, like Volga boatmen. At night we heard ferocious battles under our windows, as though from prehistoric beasts, but in the morning discovered no carcasses aside from our own, congealed as though in another Ice Age.

Suddenly the weather turned whimsically to summer, and so remained. We threw down our plaid shirts and heavy boots and ran barefoot in the sand. Though I discovered that the distance to the station was a mile and a half, I found I did not mind it, except sometimes at night. In the mornings, the walk was an endless source of delight. I had never known how wonderful dawns could be if one went to bed early enough the night before

and saw them each morning like a sort of renewal of the world. Arising at five-thirty put one in the company of waking birdsong and spangling dews, of pinkness and quiet and freshness, as though each day were the first morning of creation.

I held the freshness close as I climbed onto the South Shore electric train for the thirty-eight-mile ride to the city. For an hour and ten minutes, I could read or gaze out the window or doze without hanging onto a single strap or getting a single button pulled off, as happened on the jammed streetcars and busses of the city.

The carpet in my office held little piles of sand from my walking shoes as I changed into high heels for the working day and otherwise hastily transformed myself from morning hiker to advertising executive. Smoothing my dress and combing the wind out of my hair, I would dive into the boxes in my office for quick changes of costume—for jewelry, for flowers, for hats and scarves that would add the kind of chic that is a working costume in a store like Field's. In my walking shoes again at night, I happily trailed sand through the store on my way back to the role of "Dunehilda," a name my friends laughingly gave me.

Night after night, I tried to find shortcuts to the tar-paper palace in the sand. I never found any except the shortcuts of friendliness which folk I met on the train often opened to me. They gave me lifts through Ogden Dunes and on to the lake. Ogden Dunes was the place where the road forked, going one way towards my shack and the other to a year-round community of pleasant people with the tradition of giving a ride to anyone who walked. By this route, I could walk barefoot in the lake towards home carrying my shoes against my "little black dress," becoming half barbarian again before arrival. I learned early never to scramble home up the dune below the shack, for that was bad dunes manners. In a land of shifting sand, any house has at best a precarious foothold that can be destroyed by careless walking.

The shortcuts of friendliness became part of my social life. Any other shortcuts always turned out to be the long way around. Lost in a chain of sand hills and sand-cherry thickets, I would wander until I could glimpse the lake as my compass. In times of storms en route, there was little shelter larger than a poplar leaf. Sometimes I got so wet it was like swimming without a bathing suit—and, when one had resigned oneself to the wreck of a dress, almost as pleasant.

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As the summer advanced, many sought out our remote outpost among the sand hills. They would walk from the station with heavy bags that, on a second trip, often would be abandoned for satchels. Our guests included a genuine platinum blonde who turned infrared on the beach and was not nearly so alarmed at this as we were. Another, devoted to the great Southwest, refused to admit that this looked like it—though I always was pointing out some feature that seemed to me straight from a movie set devoted to stage-coach robberies or the Santa Fe trail. Others came out and took pictures, for this was a paradise for camera fans; and others came just for the joy of running around barefoot in the sand.

No one seemed to mind working the hand pump in order to flush the toilet. No one seemed to mind the butter running in rivulets, for we had no refrigeration other than a bucket let several feet down a pipe into sand that grew less and less damp and cool as the summer wore on. Our cooking and our lights were fueled by kerosene.

Everyone ate with prodigious appetite and went to bed soon after dark, worn out with the activities of a day that often included a contest in the spitting of watermelon seeds. We had discovered the best possible way to eat watermelon. It should be chilled in Lake Michigan during the swimming period, watched by a small scout to keep it from floating away to Mackinac

Island, and then eaten in bathing suits during a long-distance spitting contest. For special guests with maximum staying power, we introduced the custom of toad-racing on the beach in the moonlight. Since the toads were hopping anyway at such times, each picked a favorite and lined him up at a starting line.

Jenji and I cavorted on the flat plateau of sand above our house, which we christened The Playground. It was a gorgeous beat of waste and ripple that plunged smooth as a waterfall fifty feet down to the dark pine woods at the base. Nights of full moon in The Dunes were magical to all living creatures, it seemed. Everything danced—one could not be there in the moonlight without leaping and rejoicing in a beauty that was almost unearthly in its pounding intensity. In the mornings the beach would be criss-crossed, circled, patterned in a thousand ways by the marks of a thousand feet—bird feet, mice feet, bug feet—as though the night had been too beautiful for sleep.

To the west from The Playground, the sunsets raged after storm. With the sky still sulky blue and the outlines of trees in dripping silhouette, we could see another Chicago fire aflame along the horizon beyond the lower fire of the steel mills in Gary.

In such a setting, the strain of the city began to slip away. Peter was turning into a beautiful cat, his chest white as ermine now that the city grime had disappeared from his coat of white and tan. Jenji was brown and supple, learning to swim like a fish, making a pet of every live thing that came her way, from a lost and bewildered dog to fairy-size toads and singing crickets. I felt the world-weariness of the past years sweeping away like fog in a fresh breeze.

All summer I ranged along the shore seeking a place where we could live on a more permanent and convenient basis than in a tar-paper shack among summer Brahmins. Somehow the few houses that were for sale seemed to have been built by bachelors and looked it—she said, sniffing. One was so beautifully constructed inside in panelled woods that it reminded one of a violin, yet the only fireplace was outside with the mosquitoes, and the kitchen was just big enough for a can opener. Another seemed to consist largely of beds, all with pink coverlets in rooms converging on a cooking stove and pipes that spread like spiders.

I investigated a settlement populous with buildings moved across the lake from the Chicago World's Fair of 1933, but somehow I did not care so much for the House of Tomorrow now that it was today. In desperation I even thought of off-beat types of dwellings such as a Quonset hut painted yellow for "Peter, Peter" or possibly a streetcar or a caboose made stationary and livable. It was a time of such serious shortages of building materials that one longed even for a hole in a tree—anything but a city apartment stuck back among other buildings and having sun for only a few moments each day.

After each exploration, I would go back to my shack and think while lying on the floor. This was less uncomfortable than the furniture, which was of the kind so often found in summer cottages. Sometimes I would think while I was working on my future advertising plans for the store. I felt somewhat like the high priestess of some ancient cult with a kerosene lamp on either side on the back porch table and the katydids singing in the trees "six weeks 'til frost, six weeks 'til frost, hurry up, hurry up." I was working late and long on plans for The Wonderful World of Cosmetics, for the sections Where Smart Shoes Grow on Trees, for the aisle of Gifts Along the Wabash, for the Young People's Floor, the Glorious Fourth. I also was working on plans for Jenji and for me. I would chase Peter out of the cantaloupe on the kitchen table—he had developed a taste for it as other cats do for anchovies—and go to bed and think some more.

Here it was, in one's hand, the sands of time.

I thought so much that I began to talk to myself on the South Shore train and made some new friends, but no one seemed to have any answers. But before the summer was over, I had decided that living in The Dunes was a good solution, so I purchased a lot and a half that was for sale on which I planned to build a house. Crazy idea for a single woman with a small child? Not so. I had a first cousin in Milwaukee who was an architect, and he said he would design a suitable house there for me.

Almost from the moment I had entered The Dunes, I knew that I never could really leave them in spirit. There was something here which I met later, curiously, on the plains of Kansas—the kind of inexpressible beauty of starkness. Here, unconfused by the mere prettiness of dale and dell, was nature being beautiful without adornment.

Here one saw the very bones of beauty. In the way the grasses drew circles in the sand, in the way gray tree trunks bent against the winds of a thousand years, in the way the lake ridged the sand and the sun shone to the bottom in a kaleidoscope of brilliant change. Here was something of eternity reduced to such simple terms that one almost could understand it. All this had been going on so long that it was almost as though one could reach back to the beginning of time. Here it was, in one's hand, the sands of time.

Sometimes, in an exultant moment, one might even whisper *sands of mine . . .*

To be continued in the winter issue.

Photos of Winifred E. Wise courtesy Edmund and Cynthia Wise of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Watercolors by Jan Jahnke. Excerpts are from the unpublished manuscript Forget-me-nots and Pigweed: The Life and Times of Winifred E. Wise.

The Letters of Julia Newell: Traveling Abroad with Mark Twain

by Jeffrey S. Churchwell

In April 1867 Julia Newell and J.M. May of Janesville responded to a notice which appeared in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle *and other New York newspapers promoting an excursion to Paris and points beyond on the ocean steamship* Quaker City. *The cost was $1250, and the ship departed New York harbor in June after a delay due to weather conditions. There were approximately seventy other passengers on board, including Mark Twain, who was age thirty-two at the time. Though J.M. May didn't stay for the whole tour, Newell did, and she was ambitious and generous enough to compose fourteen letters to* The Janesville Gazette, *dated from June 23 to December 14. Twain's own impressions of the trip were published in fifty-three letters to papers in San Francisco and New York City and later in book form as* The Innocents Abroad, *which is still popular reading today.*

EXCURSION TO PARIS
ITALY, GREECE, CRIMEA
HOLY LAND, EGYPT, &C.

The Magnificent side-wheel ocean steamship

QUAKER CITY
Will leave the above excursion
(accompanied by Lieut. Gen. Sherman)
on

Saturday, June 8
At 3 o'clock P.M.

The ship will visit St. Michael's, Gibraltar, Marseilles, Genoa Leghorn, Caprera, Civita Vecchia, Naples, Palmero, Athens, Corinth, Constantinople, Sebastopol, Smyrna, Holy Land, Egypt Malta, Cagliara, Palma, Valentia, Madeira and Bermuda, and the party will have ample opportunity to visit Paris, Lyons and all points of interest in Italy, Switzerland and the Holy Land.

Gen. Sherman writes:—"Your Programme is all that could be desired, and should be adhered to absolutely."

Applications to join the party
(now nearly complete, the number being limited to 110)
must be made to the Committee through

C.C. DUNCAN
117 Wall Street, N.Y.

Newell and Twain were among thousands who, after the Civil War, left monthly from New York to travel across the Atlantic. There were two major reasons for travel overseas at this time: First, the desirability and possibility of traveling abroad prior to 1867 had been reduced because of the Civil War; second, the 1867 Universal Exposition in Paris was billed as the "most spectacular display of art and industry the world had ever seen" (Ganzel, 11–12).

Since the trip was expensive, the passenger list was relatively upper-class, and it was expected that the home-away-from-home for the passengers would be more than economy-class passage. Many of the passengers were associated with Plymouth Church in Brooklyn and applied for passage because of the opportunity both to travel to the Holy Land and to accompany another celebrity, Henry Ward Beecher, the most famous evangelist in the United States at the time.

With the help of Mark Twain's June 8 letter to *The New York Tribune*, researcher and editor Dewey Ganzel provides a detailed description of the *Quaker City's* characteristics inside and out:

> The *Quaker City* was a good-sized ship for an excursion. Registered at nineteen hundred tons, she was just over thirteen years old in 1867, having served briefly with the Collins (American) line for North Atlantic service between New York and Liverpool and later as a supply ship in the Civil War. Her

service speed was ten knots (twelve for short periods), which was fast enough for a cruise, and she had been, as the advance publicity put it, "newly rebuilt, and fitted up in an elegant manner, with handsome saloons, pantries, etc." . . . She was one of the early ocean paddle-wheel steamers, a hybrid that could not rely wholly on steam for long-distance locomotion, and fore and aft she carried fully rigged masts. Her cabins were large, but not luxurious. They had "room to turn around in," Clemens said, "but not to swing a cat in, at least with entire security to the cat." They were, however, "neatly arranged and more spacious than those of the English steamers," wrote another passenger. . . . "It had two berths, wash-stand, and a long seat with a cover, which you could raise and pack away many articles. This had a cushion covered with red velvet forming a sofa. The state-room also contained a mirror, a number of shelves, and the floor was nicely carpeted" (Ganzel, 11–12).

The *Quaker City* also offered passengers a promenade deck nearly as long as the ship itself. Also on board were large pens of bullocks, sheep, and hogs for passenger provisions.

Court and Main streets in Janesville, ca. 1868. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin

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Julia Newell's fourteen letters to her hometown must have been a delightful change from *The Janesville Gazette*'s usual format. Representing an affluent, articulate member of an influential founding family of Rock County, Newell's letters were well-written, informative, and often humorous. And for readers today, they not only provide accounts of Europe and the Holy Land in the nineteenth century, but also a unique and significant perspective of one of America's most famous writers.

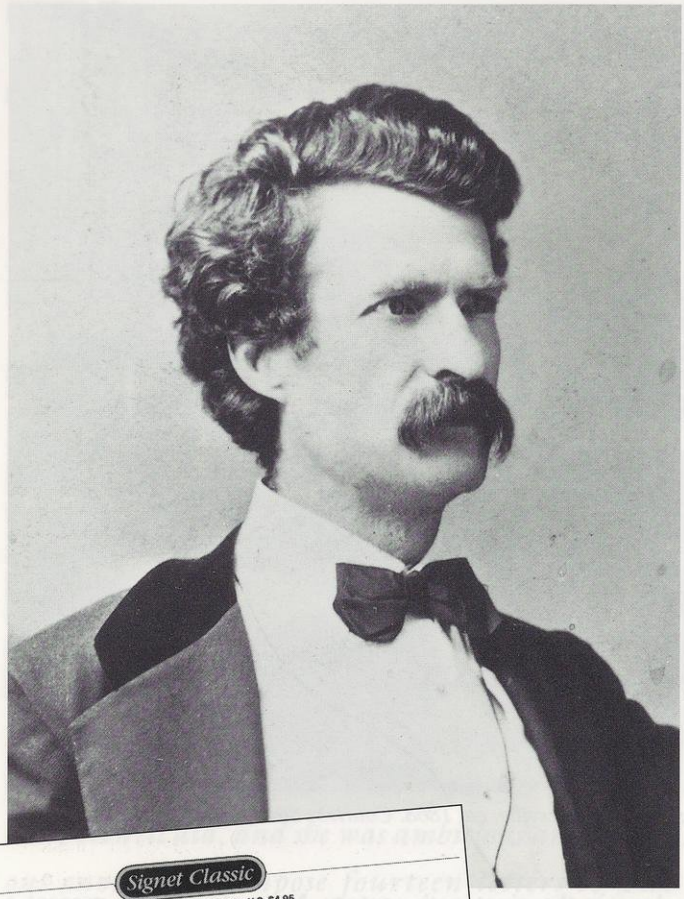
In 1867 the population of Janesville was approximately 7,700. Readers purchasing copies of *The Janesville Gazette* would receive for their five cents an array of news, information, and advertising. In the average five-to-six-page edition, there were local, national, and international news stories, along with an occasional national political editorial; a front page would also contain a local editorial column which provided the opportunity for people both to ask questions and address local concerns. Furthermore, train schedules were published; doctors advertised their services; likewise, local businesses advertised new clothes, dry goods, home-grown fruit, inexpensive furniture, horse equipment, livery services, insurance policies, hair restorer, health elixir, and even metal coffins.

So the average *Gazette* edition supplied needed but quite mundane and unromantic information which paled in comparison to Julia Newell's letters home from abroad. Her letters offer the interesting viewpoint of a single woman traveling abroad alone in the nineteenth century. Not only did she present a unique perspective of a young Mark Twain, but also displayed a western attitude, common at the time, concerning cleanliness and humor and expressed her personal opinions about such issues as female liberation, patriotism, and God.

From Twain's letters to friends, it appears that Twain liked Julia Newell. Ganzel's work sheds light on their relationship, indicating that Clemens danced with Newell on "those moonlit evenings." Her usual escort, however, was Twain's close friend and the tour's physician, Dr. Abraham Reeves Jackson, whom Newell later married.

Judging from Newell's letters, it took a little time before she returned the respect Twain felt for her. The two of them had at least three opportunities for personal, small-group interaction: while traveling in Horta, Egypt, and Spain. We can assume that she eventually changed her initial opinion of Twain, but as the *Quaker City* was leaving the New York harbor in June, she was skeptical of the famous humorist:

> Miss Mitchell [contemporary actress] did not join our party, so the only notoriety we have is "Mark Twain." He is rather a handsome fellow, but talks to you with an abominable drawl that is exasperating. Whether he intends to be funny for the amusement of the party, I have not yet ascertained. In his account of curing a cold, he profanely says: "That after taking a quart of warm water, or salt and water," I forgot which, "he thinks he threw up



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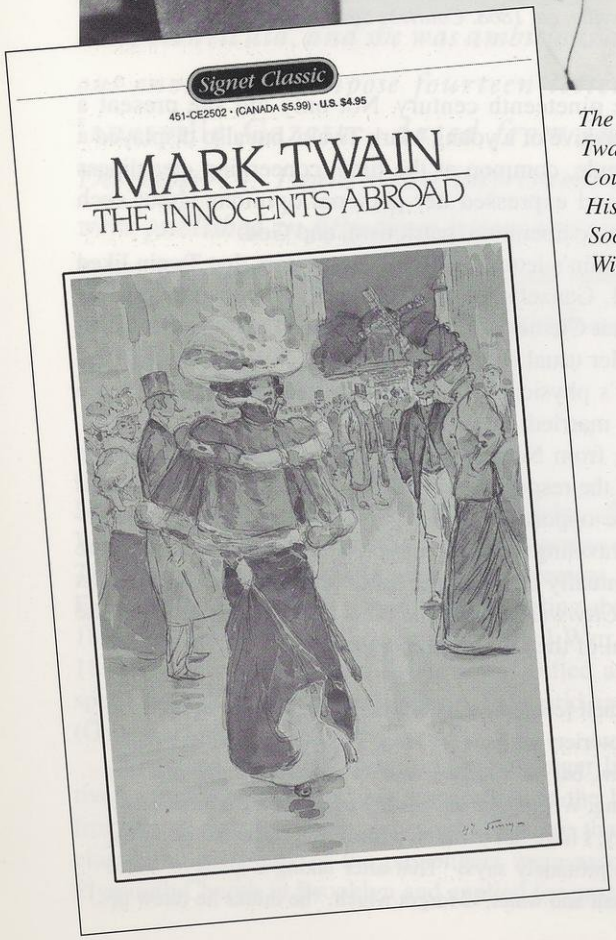

The young Mark Twain, ca. 1870. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin

his mortal soul." In that case certainly, nothing more can be expected of him.

However, her attitude toward him and his brand of humor had changed before she ended that particular letter home, for she reported with greater tolerance Twain's response to beggars while touring the Azores:

> "Mark Twain" who was one of our party of half a dozen, afforded us a great deal of laughter. A poor old crone, with just one tooth, started after us from some corner, and commenced imploring charity by gestures, rolling up her eyes and kissing her hands to us. One of the gentlemen slyly motioned her to Twain, so she persistently followed at his elbow, and he commenced talking to her in the most grave and confidential tone, saying—"My dear madam, I don't know what it can be in my appearance which has so fascinated you. I assure you that I look much better when I have on my best clothes. It is impossible for me to return your affections, for I am engaged—but for that it might be otherwise." The poor thing could not understand a word of course, but took it for encouragement, and became more and more impressive in her gestures. The whole thing was inimitably ludicrous.

But readers of the *Gazette* had to wait until December 14 to read of Newell's developing impressions of Twain; in the letter she seemed quite accepting of and comfortable with Twain's cutting humor. She reported that while traveling in Spain she was provided with a rather awkward mode of transportation that made her uneasy and Twain sarcastic:

> Our Spanish courier went to engage horses for us, and on his return informed me with great complaisance that he had engaged a Spanish chair for me. He evidently expected me to look pleased—so I looked pleased. In answer to my inquiry, if any of the party knew what a Spanish chair was, Mark Twain suggested a curbstone, giving as a reason for that guess that he saw the Spaniard sitting on them oftener than upon anything else.

Though Twain may have influenced Newell's writing style during the six months they traveled together, she initially possessed strong, definite ideas about her world with the ability to express these ideas. She was concerned about female independence and equality—still relatively rare characteristics in 1867. Dewey Ganzel documents incidents that exemplified Newell's independence as she traveled in the Holy Land. He comments that her letters "show her to have been a woman of intelligence and great physical vigor," suggesting that "she was the most self-confident and self-assertive lady on board," laughing at the possibility that "there was any activity on board or ashore that she was not quite as able as any man to participate in." He continues:

> Miss Newell went through Palestine—overland—with aplomb and good humor in spite of the fact that the journey was fraught

> with more difficulties than even the missionaries could envision: Thrown from her horse in the ascent of Mount Carmel, she wiped the blood from her face and remounted; accosted by the Bedouin thieves at the Dead Sea, she scoffed them down (Ganzel, 48–49).

Newell reportedly was the only woman in the group who climbed the great pyramid of Cheops, which rose over 450 feet to the platform. She and her three male companions (which included her future husband, Dr. Jackson, along with Twain) traveled overland under "dangerous conditions" thirty-three miles to Bajez, Spain, and on to San Fernando, finding the road to be good and "the scenery interesting." However, it was not common for foreign tourists to travel overland through Andalusia, "and a woman *never*," according to Ganzel (280).

Her words continued to speak as loudly as her actions did—her desire for equality was further evidenced as she reported on her visit to Constantinople in a letter written September 3:

> We also made an attempt to visit a harem, and were particularly anxious to succeed in this because it was a feat which ladies *only* could accomplish, and as at several places the ladies had been rebuffed, summarily rejected from the holy of holies in heathen temples or required to obtain permits to enter places where gentlemen could go unquestioned or unmolested, we thought it would be peculiarly gratifying to receive admittance to *one* place where no gentlemen could by any possibility come.

Julia Newell formed her own opinions and wrote of Twain from her own perspective.

In her letters home, Julia Newell referred to a number of writers and their works. While touring Genoa, she was reminded of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's references to blue-eyed Italians in "Aurora Leigh." But Lord Byron was a favorite; at least five times in her fourteen letters she quotes from or refers to his works—for example, in an August 24 letter when she was inspired by the grandeur of the Swiss Alps, where she experienced a thunderstorm. Later, in the same letter, while reporting on her visit near Lake Geneva, she visited the town of Chillon, where she was reminded of Byron's poem "Prisoner of Chillon." In a letter from Italy dated September 7 she again quotes Byron, this time *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in which the narrator, a tourist in Venice, is describing the notable cities and monuments of Italy. She also referred to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

One of Newell's most frequent journalistic traits was her wit, characterized by understatement or exaggeration. For example, when the scheduled departure of the *Quaker City* from New York harbor was delayed by the June storm, and she directed the first of many indignant remarks toward what she—like Twain—felt to be a pious group of fellow travelers from the Plymouth Church who displayed poor morale while stranded in the harbor, even refusing to attend Sunday morning services. She commented that they would not have "turned an ear if St. Paul himself had been preaching."

While touring the Swiss Alps, Newell observed the hard-working efforts of the local women. In her August 24 letter she describes them as looking "thoughtful and serious over the inevitable knitting (I have wondered if they knit in their sleep, they certainly do at all other times, talking, walking, or driving cows . . .)."

In Beirut after taking to her assigned bed, which was "not so inviting as might have been desired by the fastidious person," she experienced "a creeping, and crawling, and stinging until I seemed in a bed of nettles." Fleas were the problem, she reports in her letter of September 15:

> There were so many and some of them of such colossal proportions for fleas, that in the stillness of the night you could positively hear them hop!! I stake my character for veracity on the statement—*you could hear them hop.*

While Julia Newell's wit makes for pleasant reading, her preoccupation with cleanliness resulted in letters filled with remarks concerning the lack of public and private sanitation. On September 7 she wrote, "Genoa has the worst odors and the filthiest inhabitants I have yet met with . . . I don't wonder that Columbus wished to discover a new world." She continued a brutal attack on Italy's lack of immaculate cleanliness in a September 23 letter, this time unkindly reporting on the "persistent beggars and sleeping jazzaroni" in Florence, describing the streets as "fearfully unclean, of evil odor." She writes:

> Along these streets, flat on the stones, or inclined against an unspeakably dirty wall may be seen cart-loads of dingy loaves of bread. Occasionally some of these loaves are purchased and carried off on the heads or under the arms of the smuttiest most scantily-clad urchins imaginable.

There is no mention of sympathy or concern for what she describes as "the dirtiest people on the face of the earth."

In her October 21 letter, Newell began by reporting on how beautiful the city of Constantinople appeared from the bay. But after landing and closer inspection, the city's streets and its inhabitants also failed to live up to her expectations. She found the streets "wretchedly paved, filthy," where it was necessary "to pick our way through the miserable mangy curs asleep in the sun, and so thickly laid out as to hardly leave a path." Apparently there was no sympathy for the "mangy curs,"

Julia Newell of Janesville

Julia Newell was born November 2, 1832 in Bradford, Vermont, but lived in Rock Prairie during her teenage and early adult years. Her father, Noah Newell, explored the Great Lakes region at a time when land west of New York was considered to be unexplored territory. He went on an inspection tour of Wisconsin in 1836 and finally settled in Rock Prairie, an area east of Janesville, in 1846. Here he continued his mercantile business and benefited from grain and livestock. When he retired in 1858, he took up residence in the city of Janesville. He and his wife had three daughters. The youngest, Mrs. B.G. Webster, lived in Janesville all her life and was the mother of Frank Newell Webster, a Rock County businessman.

Julia Newell married the *Quaker City's* physician for the tour and a close friend of Mark Twain's, Dr. Abraham Reeves ("Tom") Jackson. Their wedding took place on February 8, 1871, and they moved to Chicago where Dr. Jackson founded the first Women's Hospital of Illinois; in 1892 he was appointed president of the American Gynecological Society. The Jacksons had two daughters: Margerite, who died just days after birth, and LaVinnia J. Newell-Russell. Julia, who survived Dr. Jackson by twenty-eight years, died on May 1, 1920. Her ashes were buried alongside her husband in the Newell family plot in Janesville's Oakhill Cemetery.

In the section detailing her husband's career in the *Dictionary of American Biographies*, Julia Newell Jackson is referred to as a woman of "great talents and social prestige."

either, or for the dogs in Nazareth who were "apparently too spiritless to move" or for donkeys who suffered the blows of their masters.

Newell did display love for God and loyalty to country. In particular she evidenced a devoted patriotic attitude toward the United States in comparison with what she saw abroad. For example, in a letter written on July 9 from Florence, she seems to feel a bit guilty for admiring the Italian flag. She liked the white, green and red color combination, found it to be "very handsome." She wrote, "If it were not treason, or at least unpatriotic, I should say a more beautiful combination of colors than our own, and the shades of color are exquisite." Five weeks later, after touring the San Carlos theater in Naples, she again felt the need to remain loyal: "This far famed theater is large but not handsomer than some of ours in America," she wrote.

Surely Julia Newell had no idea of the future influence and greatness of her traveling companion Mark Twain; it is doubtful she had read his popular *Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* (1865). His major writing achievements were still ahead of him. And, of course, she was quite unaware that the *Quaker City* tour would be the inspiration for one of the most famous travel books written by an American about Europe and the Holy Land, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). Julia Newell formed her own opinions and wrote of Twain from her own perspective. Thus she chronicled some of the early traits that eventually would characterize the great author and lecturer. ❧

Editor's note: We were unable to locate photos of Julia Newell, and the house she lived in near Janesville is no longer standing.

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Pioneer Newspaperwomen of Wisconsin

by Mark L. Hendrickson

They didn't receive much recognition a century ago. In fact, most of the newsmakers of the day were men—as were those who reported the news. The contributions of the women editors and writers of Wisconsin were frequently overshadowed by the works of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. But throughout the history of community newspapers, there have been women who stepped in to fill the shoes of a husband or father as owner, president, editor, or publisher. There were also many independent women editors who would have burst to the forefront in any generation and in any field they chose to pursue.

During this country's formative years, most businesses were family run. If the male household member died without having a suitable male heir ready to succeed him, his closest female relative often took over. Prior to World War II, however, it was still rare for a woman to run her own business. Newspaper work with its messy inks, toll-taking physical demands, and long hours wasn't a likely place for the woman entrepreneur. When a family change in newspaper management was imminent and the daughter expressed interest, she often met this kind of response from her mother: "What kind of business is this for a girl? Why don't you go into the blouse business? At least then I could get something wholesale."

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, women were working for suffrage, law enforcement, health, education, the arts, and in journalism. But they weren't always welcomed in the newsroom. It was as if they were trying to join a "men's-only club." A stereotype existed: A man in the same position would be exactly twice as good as a woman. Common doubts persisted about their professionalism and ability to perform. Editors asked themselves, "Can she write? Will she become too emotional in her work? Is she accurate? Will she plunge the paper into a lengthy libel suit?" Few editors accepted women without reservation or doubt.

Often it went beyond mere reservation or doubt. Some of the most well known authors of the time were confounded by the literary persistence of women. Mark Twain once dubbed women writers as "that pack of damned scribbling women." But the early women of the Wisconsin press persisted. They were drawn to this profession of letters either through family association, through an increasing need to create, or through a desire to take a stronger stance on civic issues of the day.

Mark Twain once dubbed women writers as "that pack of damned scribbling women."

The assignments that came to women were often features—the softer brand of news. The impact on the front page was still the barometer and the critical test. Many editors felt that women were better suited for feature writing—with an ability to put more color, emotion, and animation into their stories than the hard-news writers who were mostly men. General assignments for women were society, the home, fashion, recipes, the woman's page, and club news. When women received an evening assignment, men were often required to accompany them if the events began after seven o'clock.

Women made a growing presence for themselves in journalism as they continued to strive for meaningful work. In 1887, Amos Wilder of the *Wisconsin State Journal* in Madison wrote:

> They deserve special credit because in the beginning the great city editors endeavored to degrade them. They were sent out on midnight slumming tours, sent out on sensational errands of every description, or else they were given some trivial and

> unworthy things to do, for instance, preparing the often slushy departments known as 'Women Pages.'

The news-writing women proved to be hard-working, accurate, and honest. Genevieve Boughner in *Women in Journalism* notes:

> When the story is in the paper, she rarely remembers what she has suffered in the pursuit of news. The excitement is its own anesthesia. Nothing is left but the afterglow.

"She will present you with an article worthy of your attention."

In 1889, Emma P. Veeder of the *Janesville Signal* wrote that the main ingredient needed in a successful newspaper person is the genuine love of work. Women's adaptability to newspaper work, she said, seems evident. However, she added that those women who took up the pen as a diversion rarely succeeded, while those who loved literary work rarely failed. Commitment and dedication to the profession of letters was the separating factor.

She characterized the pen as "the conveyance of thought" and for women a sword that has cut through obstacles mountain high, until "today, you, the gentlemen of the Wisconsin Press Association, sit in respectful silence while a woman recounts to you the results of the long but successful struggles of the sisters of the press."

Veeder, in this 1889 talk titled "Women in Newspaper Work," told the Wisconsin Press Association (WPA) delegation that a woman can indeed begin at the foundations of journalism and build a fine career. She continued:

> And so whether a woman pens a bright bit of editorial matter in the dingy office of a nine-column paper in a seven-column town, or writes a "leader" in the luxurious office of a city paper, I am sure she will present you with an article worthy of your attention.

"It is a fortunate thing for any country to have a portion of its literature to fall into the hands of women."

Susa Humes Sturtevant was a writer at *The Oshkosh Northwestern* in the late 1800s and early 1900s. She wrote that women drifted into journalism rather than first choosing it as a career. Sturtevant said the pulpit and bar were closed to women, so they looked elsewhere. "She could make herself heard only through the press and with active intuition she quickly seized upon the one medium of voicing her ideas and urging her influence. The thinking woman . . . finds expression for her convictions and the newspaper became the vehicle for helpful suggestions," Sturtevant wrote.

She said it is a fortunate thing for any country to have a portion of its literature fall into the hands of women, because their influence is sure to be powerful and good. That sentiment appeared to be in agreement with a societal attitude of regarding any woman who dared to offer her thoughts for publication as a "blue stocking," an epithet that conveyed covert criticism and open ridicule.

Sturtevant, nonetheless, was encouraged by the few contemporary women who had successfully followed the profession of letters. Although she wasn't well known outside her community, and certainly not known throughout the state, Sturtevant was one of the few newspaperwomen who realized what was happening: The men's-only club was beginning—if somewhat reluctantly—to open its doors. That Sturtevant wanted to help open those doors, that she was an active supporter of women's rights and women in the newsroom, is an understatement. At the 1904 Wisconsin Press Association convention, Sturtevant opened with these remarks:

> It was my original purpose to inflict on you a thirty minute dissertation on women in general and women in journalism in particular, but the wise restriction to twelve minute papers . . . not only saved the day for you, but cut me off and left me stranded. . . . I rejoice that I have you at my mercy for one-fifth, if not one-half, of an hour.

The year is 1909.
Ask twenty women
to think about a woman
and a machine.
You will hear fifteen women
refer to a sewing machine,
four the political
machine, and one
the linotype machine.

Sturtevant spoke of women's power in journalism as a power of good. She drew a parallel between the pulpit and the stage in terms of its influence for good. She said journalism is a field that may surpass—because of women of the press—the pulpit and the stage in its range of civic virtue and ability to do good. Every great newspaper or periodical of the time, Sturtevant said, recognized the influence and power of women and has on its staff women editors, reporters, and contributors.

In rural communities, Sturtevant told the WPA, women's influence is often at the helm of the local paper. The women's column, she said, is no longer a "jamble" of recipes, but instead is filled with scientific facts on household economics, the arts, history, biography, and "municipal betterment and other matters of vital importance to those who aspire to higher living and better thinking." The world of letters, according to Sturtevant, was

Left to right: Sarah Lillian (Otis), Garrett Veeder, Garrett Veeder, Jr., Newton Murdoch (Otis), Emma P. Otis Veeder, Willis Clark (Otis), 1888. Courtesy Rock County Historical Society.

the first to recognize the value of the influence of women—clearly demonstrating that women's views on the issues of the age were valuable.

Society was waking to a more active, informed, and aware woman. Many steps were to be taken after 1904, to be sure; but Sturtevant was an early supporter and was aware of the coming movement. She said the freedom accorded to women in all professions during the later years of the nineteenth century was due more directly to the efforts and helpfulness of women of the press than to any other single influence.

There were many people who felt women should stay in the home. To them, Sturtevant said that children grow up and go out in the world, leaving their mothers to turn their experiences into new channels. And she said that motherhood is a fine prerequisite for a career in journalism: "They sympathizes with youth because they have trained it; with age, for they see it on the western side of the hill to the top of which they have climbed." A more inviting or appropriate field than journalism may not be found for these women of middle age, literary taste, wise judgment, and a facile pen. "Of all the liberal professions this at least puts no ban on maturity," she said.

There was little need for formal journalism training, she reasoned. At the time of Sturtevant's writing, the majority of people did not receive extensive training in many fields after high school. Many, in fact, didn't complete high school. Sturtevant felt the requirements for a successful woman journalist were the following: She must be well informed, quick of comprehension, gentle, firm, gracious; and above all things, she must have the courage to present her opinions.

If these requirements are met, a rewarding career awaited many women. But the pay? Like that of other vocations pursued by women, the pay didn't compare favorably with that of men. A female editor receiving $5,000 yearly in the largest cities had achieved the highest financial success.

Susa Sturtevant pursued the press with great zeal—and *The Oshkosh Northwestern* in particular. The paper knew her well and honored her on its centennial. The commemorative issue of the newspaper, dated June 14, 1968, carried two stories about her.

"A combination full of power."

The year is 1909. Ask twenty women to think about a woman and a machine. You will hear fifteen women refer to a sewing machine, four the political machine, and one the linotype machine. That one woman might well be Ada R. Markham of the *Independence News-Wave*.

The former Ada Rogers of Osseo was married October 11, 1891, to George Markham, who had purchased a community newspaper, the *Independence News*, in 1887. After their marriage, she joined Markham in publishing and editing. Seeking to spread the cause of the Prohibition Party, George Markham began publishing *The Wave*. Several years later, he combined the two papers under the title *Independence News-Wave*. When George died on July 16, 1909, Ada took over the newspaper and publishing business and soon became an avid supporter of women's rights and women in the workplace.

This was an era when people who ran the local print shop also produced the paper. Putting out the paper was a matter of who was best suited to do it, not a matter of journalism training or writing expertise. The linotype machine—a keyboard typesetting machine that produced each line of type in the form of a solid metal slug—was state-of-the-art equipment. It made the work quicker and easier. But almost anything was an improvement over hand-set type.

In 1909, the linotype machine was a novelty in most country newspaper offices. The work of the day was most often still completed by hand. But more country editors realized that time was to be saved by the new machine. According to Ada Markham, "So accurate, so rapid, so unassuming, and yet you have a line of type ejected from the mold which . . . has no bat-

tered letters and was set in about one-fifth the time it would have taken in hand setting." The Margenthaler Linotype, she said, "is the nearest to being a machine that talks, of any we have seen, unless it be the political machine, and that does nothing else." The linotype machine, she added, is of great value to the country office. "A machine of wonderful mechanism, a woman with wonderful possibilities; a combination full of power," said Markham.

Ada Markham worked hard in her shop, clearing the casting wheel, setting the lines, and pulling the lever for many years. In 1909 she was asked to present a paper on "The Woman and the Machine" before the WPA annual convention. Her talk was the first delivered on the literary side of the program, following the business agenda. The officers of the WPA often separated the business (hard news) from the literary (soft news). Of the two, the women contributors were assigned topics of a literary nature. Markham was unsure of what machine to talk about at first—the sewing machine, the political machine, or the linotype machine. So she began:

> Being a woman who has little knowledge of the intricacies of the sewing machine; no insight into, but a deep-rooted prejudice for, the political machine . . . and having had a very intimate acquaintance with the linotype machine for the past few years, we judged that was the kind of machine he wished us to make the subject of our observations.

Throughout her talk, Markham referred to "we" as if she were speaking for all women in journalism. She was not. She was, perhaps, speaking for women on the printing side of the profession, not the composing side. She made fine use of her opportunity to speak. She expanded what could have been a machine-like dissertation about linotype machines into a well-prepared discourse on women at work and women in journalism. She chided some men as being narrow-minded, especially those who felt that "women's place" was preparing food, sewing buttons, and darning socks. Markham said the printshop of the early 1900s was not a place for fluffy femininity, but rather it was a place for the woman full of determination and zeal for her work.

The self-confident man, Markham added, deems it right and proper for a woman to occupy any position she desires for which she has education and training—there weren't many self-confident men in those days, so it seems. She said,

> For should the Prince Charming come along, he will have to be a man of thorough common sense, as there will be no lily white fingers to kiss and the dimples in the smiling face may be covered with a smirch of machine oil. The woman who operates the linotype machine isn't afraid to get her hands dirty. For she is interested in her work and her machine, as the engineer is his engine, the captain his ship.

They had the natural curiosity that embodies the who, what, why, how, when, and where of civic events—the basis of solid news coverage. What they accomplished decades ago illuminated the path for women who would follow.

"I am sure within the next five years you will see many women editors."

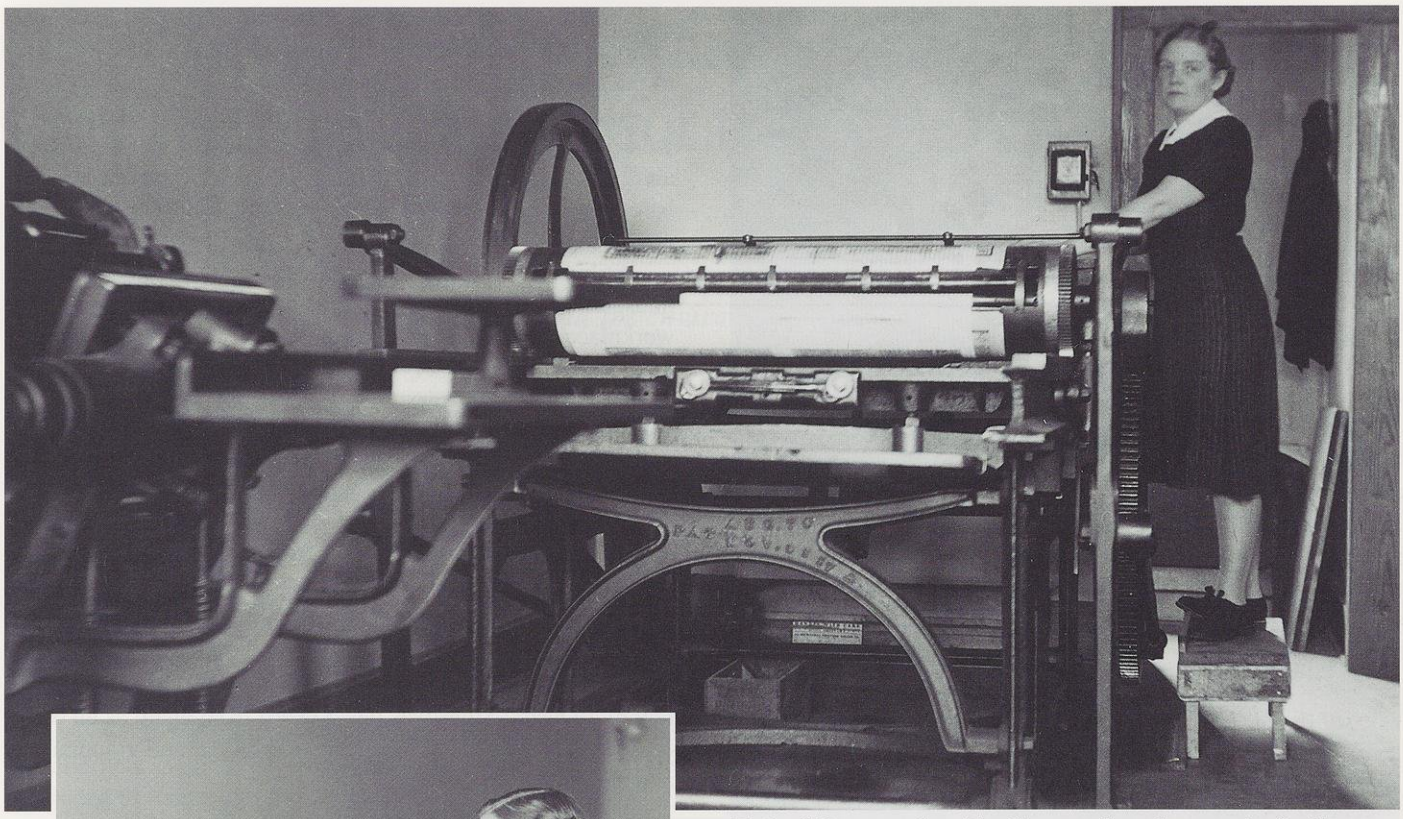
Elaine Stiles was an only child, daughter of the publisher of *The Kingston Spy*. As a little girl, she had often gone to the newspaper office to watch her father at work. She never dreamed that at the age of seventeen it would be her work.

The Spy was a family business started in the late 1800s on tea paper wrappings in a farmhouse near Kingston. Elaine's father, Adam Stiles, had published the newspaper for twenty-six years when he died suddenly in March 1935, and Elaine's mother was named publisher of *The Spy*, with a male printer in charge of the paper. Elaine, an honor student, graduated from Ripon High School that June and went ahead with her plans to become a nurse. Her application for admission to the St. Agnes Hospital School of Nursing in Fond du Lac was on file and would become effective when she turned eighteen on April 3, 1936.

The family hoped the hired printer would stay to carry on the arduous task of running the press. The printer, however, had other plans; he gave one day's notice before quitting. Though Elaine had never been attracted to newspaper work, family tradition was strong, and she gave up her wish to be a nurse.

With only the training she could secure from the printer during his last day at work, Elaine Stiles began to operate the newspaper and job office. Community readers, aware of the family dilemma, shook their heads doubtfully. Could a girl fresh from high school perform this important community function? Apparently undaunted, she became reporter, publisher, advertising solicitor, type-setter, and press operator, never missing a weekly deadline. When Stiles was a child, she had been taught that good housekeepers washed on Monday, ironed on Tuesday, and worked on schedule for the rest of the week. As it turned out, she sold advertising on Monday, promoted circulation on Tuesday, dug for news all week, and set her own type by hand and printed her own weekly newspaper each Thursday. She took on these weekly challenges at a time when other young women were dreaming of marriage or continuing their education, usually in teaching or nursing.

In accepting her new assignment, Stiles became the youngest editor and publisher of a community newspaper in the



Elaine Stiles at work at The Kingston Spy. *Courtesy the family.*

United States. Publishing a four-page weekly newspaper may not seem a large task to the casual observer. But the lack of a linotype machine meant hours and hours of setting type by hand. *The Spy* consisted of two hand-set pages and two syndicated printed pages. Winter months found Stiles at the office at six in the morning shoveling snow, carrying wood, and thawing out the presses for the day. When she arrived, it was frequently below zero inside. She often worked until midnight, printing nearly 500 copies of the paper every Thursday. Though the profits were small, she maintained a home for her mother.

Her hard work at *The Kingston Spy* didn't go unnoticed. Wisconsin newspapers—*The Milwaukee Journal*, the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, and others—carried stories of her work. Out-of-state papers such as the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Chattanooga Times* also found her dedication quite remarkable. Additionally, *Life*, *Look, American*, and *Popular Science* magazines featured stories on the young editor/publisher. In April 1936, United States congressional leaders also noticed Elaine Stiles and sent her a telegram that read:

> Kingston Spy, Kingston, Wisc. Outstanding Washington National Hill leaders offer congratulatory comment your Elaine Stiles on spunk in carrying on family paper.

Elaine Stiles and husband-to-be ,Walter Affeldt. Courtesy the family.

At age nineteen, Stiles was selected as one of the Wisconsin women represented and listed in the second edition of *American Women*, the official Who's Who among the women of the nation. She also became active in the Wisconsin Press Association, and at the WPA convention in April 1936 at the Hotel Medford in Milwaukee, she presented a talk titled "A Woman Can Do Anything." Her talk, before a special round table for women, was so well received that she was persuaded to repeat it before the full convention. Unfortunately the written record of what she said has been lost through fire. However, the monthly publication of the WPA, *The Wisconsin Press* (May 1936), said Stiles stole the convention spotlight from the managing editor of the National Editorial Association, the field secretary of the Missouri Press Association, and the field manager of the Minnesota Editorial Association.

Despite her strong public statements on women in the workplace, Stiles couldn't have succeeded had she not had the ability to write. One reviewer said, "There's a certain characteristic American homeliness about her writings which carries an appeal to your better nature."

Stiles was well aware that what she was doing was rather unusual. She remained a steadfast proponent of women in the workplace. She said:

> I am sure within the next five years you will see many women editors just as in the last ten years you have seen more women doing general reporting. There has been a tradition that only men could hold executive positions on papers—but it is slowly breaking down. Its beginning has been with the small newspaper—it will soon spread to the larger publications.

In 1941 Elaine Stiles married Walter Affeldt, the operator of a large farm. Her last issue of *The Kingston Spy* was published on September 25, 1941. The paper was sold and continued for a few more years. Stiles was never heard from again as an editor or publisher. She became housewife, mother, and grandmother and died in 1978.

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Emma P. Veeder of *The Janesville Signal*, Susa H. Sturtevant of *The Oshkosh Northwestern*, Ada R. Markham of the *Independence News-Wave*, and Elaine Stiles of *The Kingston Spy* were women keenly aware of their roles in the newsroom and in the expanding role of women in journalism. They were key members in family management and operation of their respective newspapers. The prominent positions held by these women demonstrated to other women just what they could do, and they offered clear answers to the question "what if?"

These four women pioneers of the Wisconsin press rose to whatever level was dictated by their drive, ability and perseverance. They were among many others who were good at what they did; they had the natural curiosity that embodies the who, what, why, how, when, and where of civic events—the basis of solid news coverage. What they accomplished decades ago illuminated the path for women who would follow. ❧

This work is extracted from a longer, as yet unfinished, manuscript by the author that describes the lives and work of more than a dozen pioneering newspaperwomen.

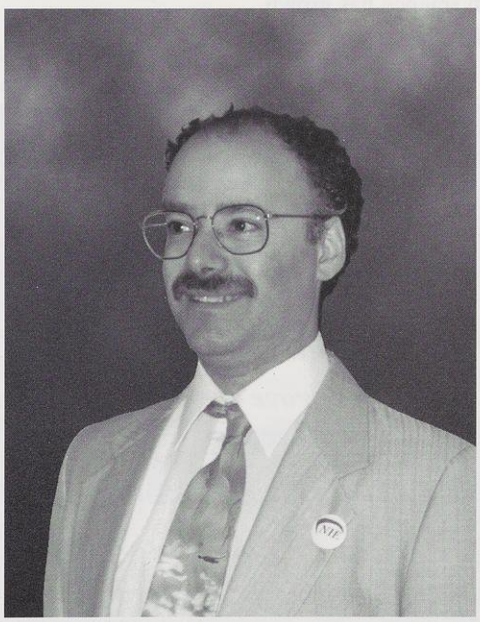
Sources include *Women in Journalism: A Guide to the Opportunities and a Manual of the Technique of Women's Work for Newspapers and Magazines* by Genevieve Boughner. New York: D. Appleton, 1926.

Sound Science for the Environment: A Proposal for a National Institute for the Environment

by David E. Blockstein

The relationship between science and the environment has come under increased scrutiny in the present decade. The cry of "sound science" has become a mantra among groups concerned that the present system of environmental rules and regulations is not based on the best scientific principles and knowledge. A presidential commission and the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council (NAS/NRC) recently issued reports on risk assessment and risk management. Other reports of the NAS/NRC and other national bodies have concluded that the federal government's structure of environmental research is inadequate to deal with the environmental problems of the twenty-first century.

The question of how to ensure that environmental policy is based on science is not new. Science historically had an important role in detecting and solving environmental problems. Earlier in the century, new methods of crop rotation and management were developed to reduce the problems of soil erosion. Public health and human life expectancy were aided immeasurably by research which revealed the relationships between bacteria and disease and then by innovations, such as the pasteurization of milk, that were developed to counter disease threats. In the 1960s, environmental detective work, such as the global effort led by the late Dr. Joseph Hickey of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, identified DDT as the cause of eggshell thinning in predatory birds leading to the extirpation of peregrine falcons in eastern North America and in other parts of the world. The list is long; science has played a major role in identifying virtually every threat to our health and environment that we now recognize. In many, but not enough cases, science has also proposed behavioral or technical solutions that could help minimize these threats.



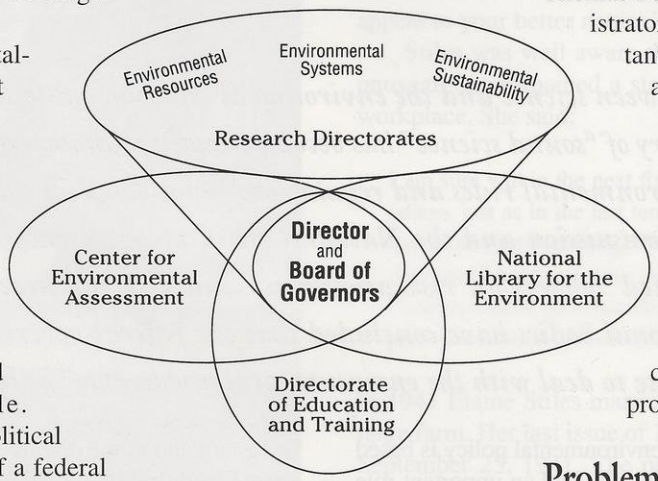
David E. Blockstein

As causes of our environmental problems have moved from the obvious (such as overhunting, overcutting, and gross pollution) to include the subtle and insidious (such as toxicants, ozone depletion, and exotic species), the need for scientific evidence to guide policy action has become even greater. Of further concern is the fact that we are now faced with such difficult issues as potentially widespread reproductive effects of PCBs and other persistent endocrine disrupters, where science is presently inadequate to do much more than frame the question. In addition, we need to increase investment in cleanup techniques, such as bioremediation of toxic wastes. We must also deal with the ultimate question of sustainability: How can a human population of nearly six billion, heading toward twelve billion, persist on this planet without eating ourselves and other species out of house and home? The need for science in our efforts to address problems of the environment has never been greater—and I use the term *science* to represent the full range of physical, biological, and social sciences and engineering that relate to understanding environmental problems.

The nation's universities and colleges are responding to these needs and to increased student interest in environmental careers and increased public demand for environmental solutions. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Institute for Environmental Studies (IES), born in the environmental awakening of the 1960s, has been reorganized and revitalized. Literally hundreds of faculty members and thousands of students in IES, School of Natural Resources, Environmental Toxicology Center, Sea Grant Institute, Biotechnology Center, Water Resources Center, and in individual departments from agronomy to zoology, are involved in environmental research and education. Other campuses in the University of Wisconsin system and private schools in the state have environmental programs and focuses. For example, the

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, which has natural resource management as a core mission, is providing national leadership in environmental education. The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay was formed with an environmental focus and continues this tradition. There is an explosion of environmental education across the nation at all levels, from elementary and secondary schools to colleges and universities.

Despite this educational revitalization and the public demand that is driving it and despite the increasing challenges of living in harmony with the environment in our technological society, the federal government is lagging in its role. The federal government has a responsibility to provide for the common good where the benefits are broad and serve the citizenry as a whole. Environment, which crosses all political boundaries, is a classic example of a federal responsibility. Only the federal government has resources and the long-term perspective to support the science and education necessary to understand the environment. However, federal funding for environmental science has grown little over the past decade. For example, the National Science Foundation (NSF) reports that in fiscal 1996, total federal spending for basic research in environment and natural resources was $237 million, compared with $206 million in fiscal 1985.



A new movement for science for the environment

Recently, a national movement has emerged to propose changes in the relationship between science and decision-making on environmental issues. Leading the effort is the Committee for the National Institute for the Environment (CNIE). The CNIE is a national, grassroots organization of over 9,000 scientists and other citizens working together for the creation of a National Institute for the Environment (NIE) to improve the scientific basis for environmental decision-making. The NIE effort has been endorsed by more than 300 leading universities (including University of Wisconsin campuses at Madison, Green Bay, Milwaukee; Marquette University; and Ripon College), scientific organizations, businesses (e.g. S.C. Johnson and Son), state and local governments and community organizations (including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce), environmental organizations (e.g. the Wisconsin Environmental Decade), and leading environmentalists such as Wisconsin Secretary of State Douglas La Follette, Madison Mayor Paul Soglin, Dane County Executive Richard Phelps, and former Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson.

In the present Congress, bipartisan legislation to create the NIE is sponsored by more than fifty representatives, including Wisconsinites Tom Barrett (D), Scott Klug (R), and Thomas Petri (R). Three former EPA administrators and all of the former EPA assistant administrators for research have also endorsed the NIE proposal.

The NIE would be an independent, non-regulatory science institute with a mission to improve the scientific basis for making environmental decisions. Its goal would be to provide the information needed to anticipate, prevent, and solve our country's complex environmental problems.

The NIE would be an independent, non-regulatory science institute with a mission to improve the scientific basis for making environmental decisions.

Problem with the present federal structure for science and the environment

Last year we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Earth Day and the establishment of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. During this quarter century, the U.S. government has promulgated a complex command-and-control system to protect the environment. In 1994, the U.S. spent an estimated 135 to 158 billion dollars (2.0-2.4% of GNP) on pollution abatement and cleanup. Costs to human health and quality of life caused by environmental degradation are incalculable, but likely several times greater. In the same year, the federal government spent approximately 3.9 billion dollars on environmental research, much of it focused on cleanup and rectifying poor decisions of the past. Yet, the federal government and the nation have not invested in the "ounce of prevention" science needed to avoid—or at least substantially reduce—these costs.

Today, there is general agreement that the country needs a much better scientific basis for making environmental decisions. The scientific, business, environmental, and state and local government communities know that the scientific knowledge, the scientists, and the infrastructure to communicate scientific findings on environmental issues are often seriously inadequate for guiding policy decisions. As a result, too many decisions are based on emotional appeals and fears, whether reasoned or not, and are not based on solid scientific information.

Continued on Page 29

It's a Long Way to Row Across the Lake: The Paintings of Barry Roal Carlsen

by Thomas H. Garver

I recall the first time I saw Barry Carlsen's paintings. It was in the late 1980s and a friend said that I must have a look at these tiny pictures which were so charged with emotion and feeling. When I called at his studio, the garage behind his home in an older neighborhood on Madison's east side, my first reaction was one of shock. The small space was crowded with pictures, but they were large and complete with constructed attachments that seemed eager to snatch at my clothing. These were earlier works, which Carlsen now accurately characterizes, as "overwrought graduate school stuff."

But there, nestled on the back wall, was a group of tiny pictures, none of them larger than this page. Not only were they small, they were simply and directly painted and glowed with a wonderful internal light. One longed to pick them up and look at them closely, but the artist was a bit diffident about them. They were personal, too small, and maybe "just not important enough to exhibit," yet they possessed an absolute ring of sincerity, made all the sharper by their large companions at the front of the studio.

Closer to Home. *Oil on panel, image 13 x 22 inches, 1996.*

It took Barry Carlsen a little time to acclimate himself to these works, for what had been produced as an intimate act of love and faith was so shockingly different from everything that he thought was important about the so-called "art of museums" in which he longed to participate. He was about to learn that the best art of museums is created from a personal amalgam in which honesty plays a greater role than fashion.

As so often happens with artists, Carlsen's creative force was set in motion through a seminal and critical life experience, the death of his father a few years before. The great personal loss was compounded by a stark visual one: the demolition of a splendid and coherent group of nineteenth-century warehouse buildings in Omaha, Carlsen's home town, to be replaced by an indifferent corporate headquarters structure. In seeking a personal way of commenting on these losses from his life, Barry Carlsen began to make small paintings of his memories, personal "anti-masterpieces" in an old-fashioned style and size. Perhaps he had also come to recognize that the art he had created as a student was empty of meaning and true emotion, and the only way to grasp both form and content, structure and feeling, was to start again.

Barry Carlsen began to make small paintings of his memories, personal "anti-masterpieces" in an old-fashioned style and size.

The tiny works I saw in the studio that day, the first pictures of his "mature" style, contained much of the visceral, intellectual, and visual information that continues to inform his work, including the paintings reproduced here. His paintings were (and continue to be) approximate and spiritual memories, triggered by the recall of magical times when his family traveled from the stifling heat of Omaha to the cool refreshment of a summer cabin on Toad Lake in northern Minnesota. Here Barry and his father went fishing, and it is to this place that his images (with many variations) returned, and continue to return. Almost all the pictures portray water, and Carlsen recalls not only the days and evenings spent on the water but the emotional effect water had on him. "Water to me has always been mysterious. Sometimes it's intriguing, even compelling and sometimes frightening. It's always had that duality, and I've always wanted to live around water so I could experience it more often."

Barry Carlsen's little scenes are visions of landscape on the cusp of change, either before or after the heat and light of midday. In these penumbral works, the light is so soft that detail is masked in ambiguity, the distant shore is all but lost in shadow, and a light across the water becomes a mysterious beacon. These are very quiet pictures, and must be comprehended as they were painted—within the reach of one's arms—an envelope of creation we are obligated to enter if we are to experience them fully. Let it never be said that paintings must be large to be powerful.

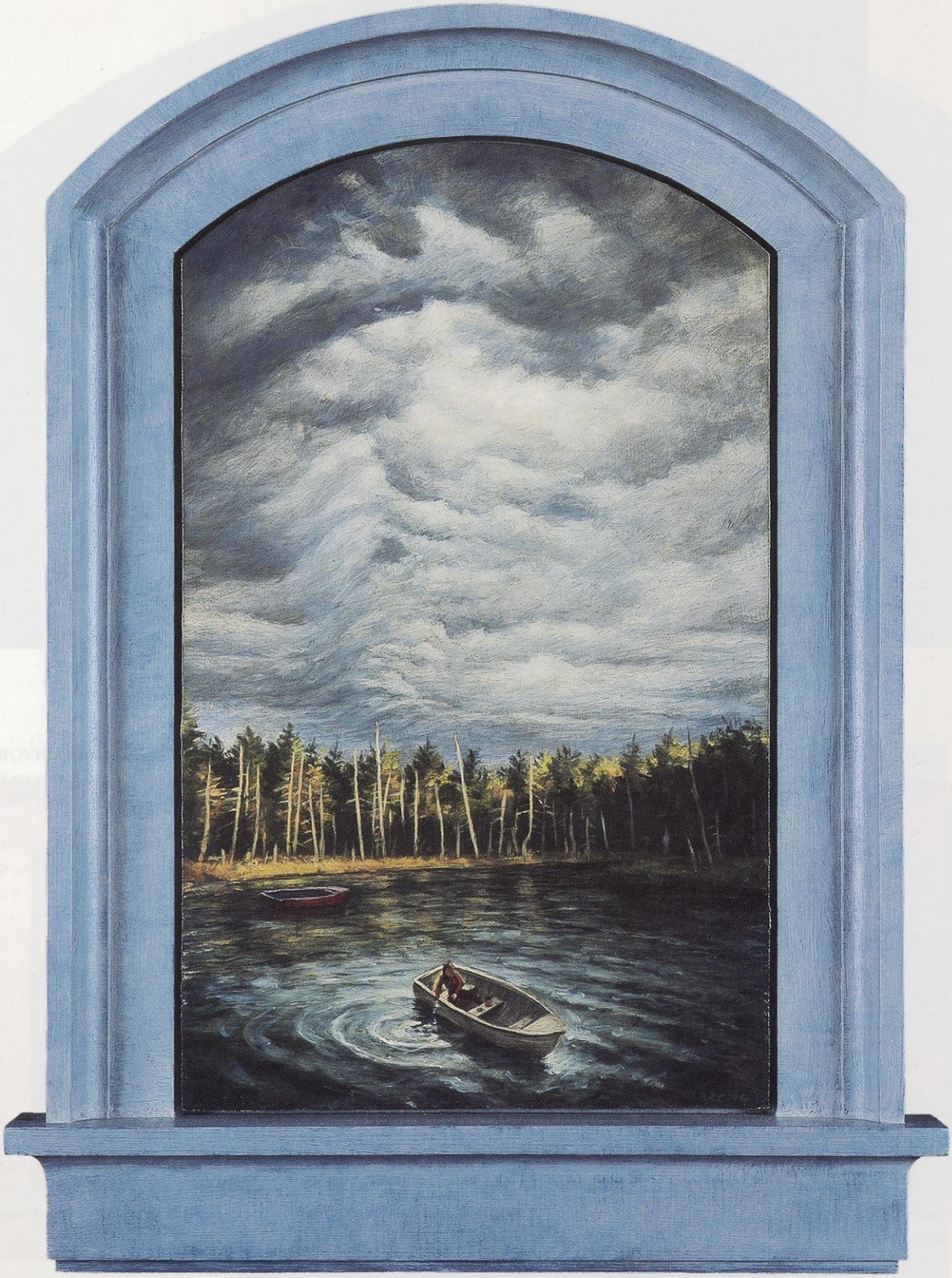
Some have suggested that Barry Carlsen's paintings are in some manner "surreal," to which I would have to disagree. Time and space are not manipulated, but are rather selected to suggest a longer and more slow-moving skein of thoughts. The paintings hint at a time past, but they certainly are not simply visual elegies to some undefined loss. Rather, by the diffusion of their subject, we are made to reflect upon our own experiences and memories.

Consider the two pictures which frame this portfolio on the front and back covers of the publication. The painting on the front, *April Morning*, has a real zest to it. The boat and rower are near to us, the physical activity of rowing more present, and the lake into which the rower moves is covered with a glorious warm mist. The sun is rising on the beginning of a day of splendid memory. The image on the back cover is a night scene, *Burning Memories.* There are no human figures present, a rare work with no boat upon the water, yet a human hand has stoked that fire. Here, warmed by the blaze, one gazes out across the water, lighted by the cool glow of the moon. Moonlight and firelight: steady cool intellection tempered by the flickering heat of a more physical sort. We are warmed by the fire, but we are on the beach, unprotected and vulnerable. The pleasures of the evening will finally be tempered and tested by the long row back across the lake, to the dock on which a light has been left burning for us. Then we will be at home.

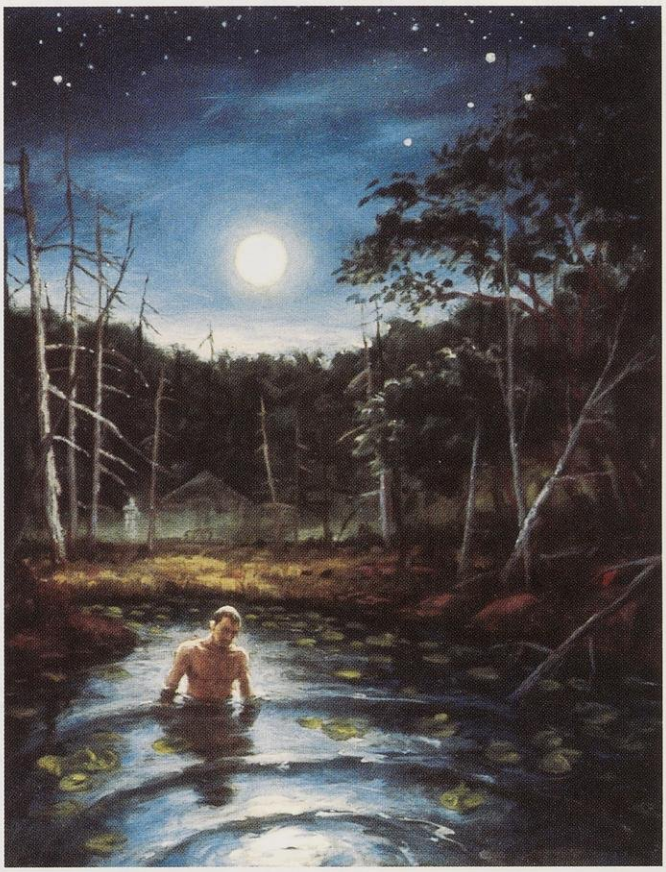
❦

Barry Carlsen is now approaching his fortieth year, and what in the long apprenticeship of the artist will be his greatest and most productive period, both in the quantity of the works of art he produces and in their quality. Yet this is not an easy time for any artist, particularly one who lives and works in a city which cannot offer the nourishment of the rich art life of one of the few great creative centers in America. Barry must seek his sustenance from within, and like the painters of old, he must be able to continually renew forms which are respected by their venerability. He must do this by the act of bringing his own life experience to the works of art he creates so that these pictures are marked as creations of the present time and not a retrograde worship of the past. It is a fine line to follow, for it takes humility and a willingness to shake off quick praise for a more considered analysis. We shall watch Barry Carlsen's paintings—today and tomorrow—with great interest, and enjoy them with great pleasure. ❦

Contributions from the Edgewood Orchard Gallery in Fish Creek and Tom Bliffert in Milwaukee helped make this special color section possible.



A Question of Belief. *Oil on panel, image 9 x 15 inches, 1996.*

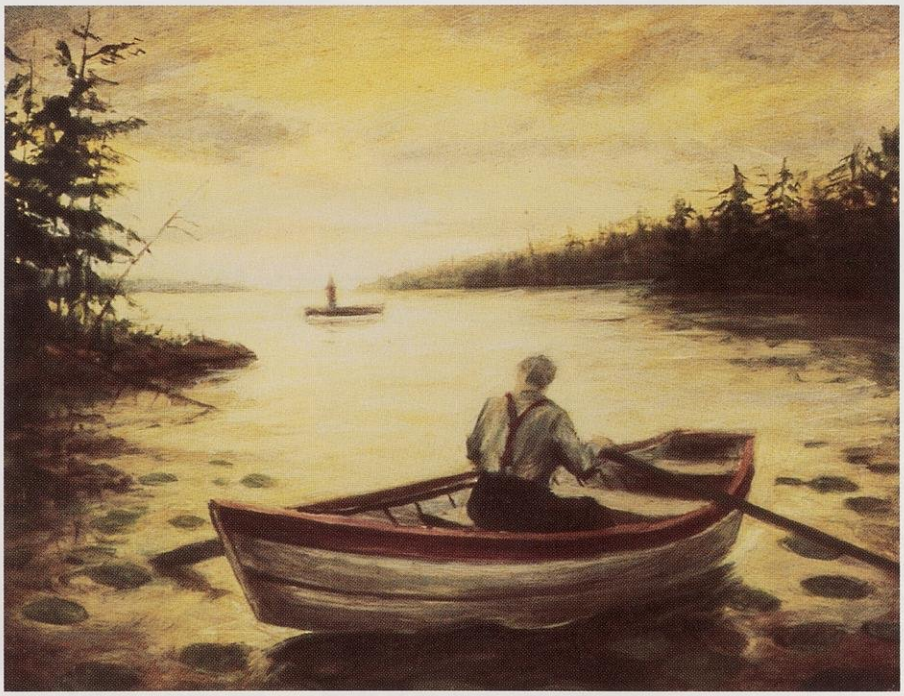


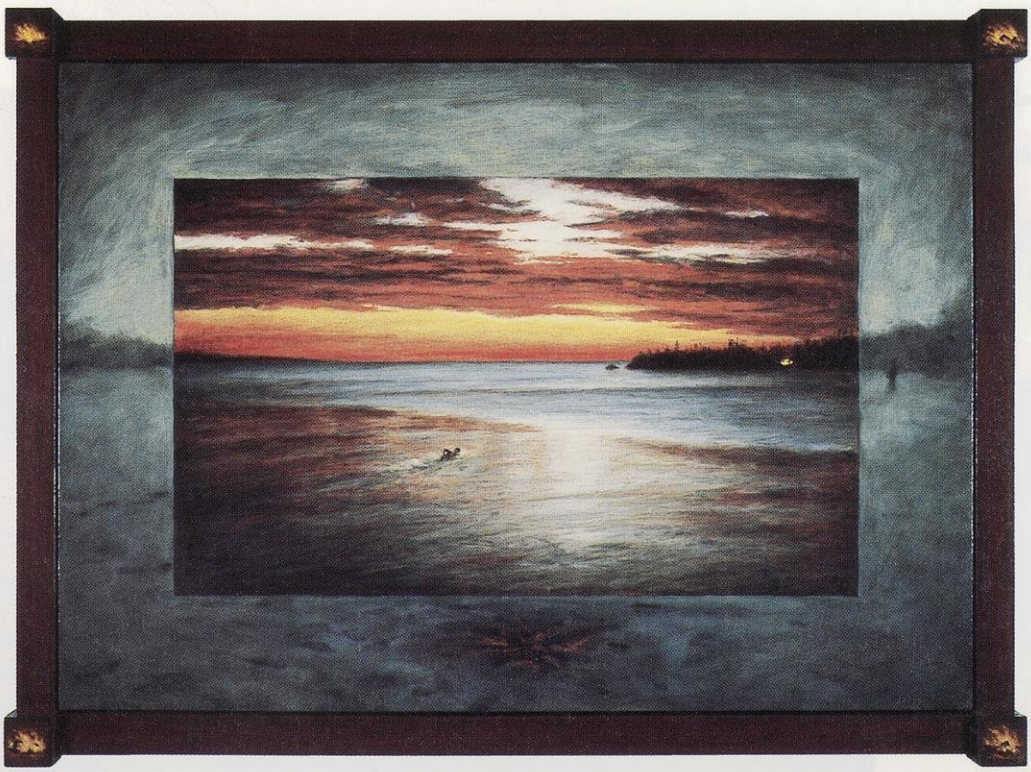
LEFT: Pool.
Oil on panel,
9 x 7 inches, 1996.

BELOW: Night Crossing II.
Oil on panel,
image 8 x 24 inches, 1996.

ABOVE: Eagle Lake.
Oil on panel,
image 13 x 22 inches, 1996.

RIGHT: Visitor.
Oil on panel,
6 x 9 inches, 1996.





TOP: Lost Lake. *Oil on panel, image 17 x 24 inches, 1996.*

LEFT: The Swimming Man. *Oil on panel, image 17 x 24 inches, 1996.*

Sound Science

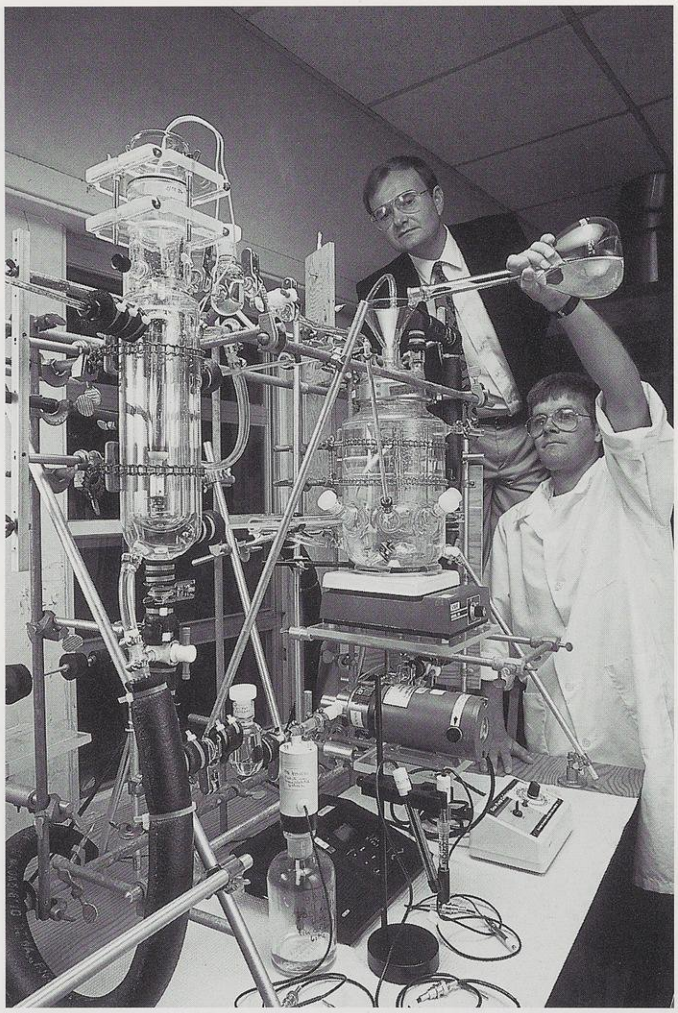
Continued from Page 22

Over the last four years, four independent blue-ribbon panels have made thoughtful appraisals of the way that the federal government supports and uses science related to the environment. The Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology and Government; The National Research Council's Committee on Environmental Research; the National Commission on the Environment; and the Committee for the National Institute for the Environment have each concluded that the present structure is not capable of providing the science that is needed to guide sound environmental policy. The Clinton administration agrees and has implemented reforms that have improved coordination among agencies, but they are insufficient.

There was broad agreement among these panels that the present federal system of environmental science has at least seven significant shortcomings:

- lack of clear leadership—the federal government has no mechanisms for setting national environmental research, education, and information priorities and tying them to budget processes;
- lack of sufficiently sound, credible, and impartial science by federal regulatory and management agencies;
- exclusion of most citizens, state and local governments, and businesses who need timely and accurate information from the process of setting science priorities and goals;
- inadequate monitoring of long-term trends (although millions of dollars are spent, most monitoring programs exist in isolation);
- no regular assessment of the current state of knowledge—what science knows and doesn't know and what decision-makers need to know about particular issues;
- insufficient attention to the collection, management, and quality assurance of environmental information, and the inaccessibility of the information that does exist; and
- inadequate education of the public and insufficient training of scientists and professionals so that although universities are increasing their environmental offerings, many schools lack the trained faculty and funding for curriculum development.

To make matters worse, new and more complex challenges have arisen that demand institutional flexibility and innovation. EPA's science advisory board recently concluded that "the EPA—like the nation—has focused its environmental attention almost exclusively on the present and the past." Yet today's environmental issues are too broad and complex to fit into the purviews of programs created to address the priorities of the past. Separate government agencies study pollution, oceans and atmosphere, natural resources, agriculture, human health, and energy production. Basic science is funded from a separate agency, the NSF. But many high-priority environmental problems cut across these responsibilities and thus become nobody's responsibility.



© Bruce Fritz

Photocatalytic reactor can break down microscopic environmental contaminants such as PCBs. Courtesy University of Wisconsin–Madison College of Engineering.

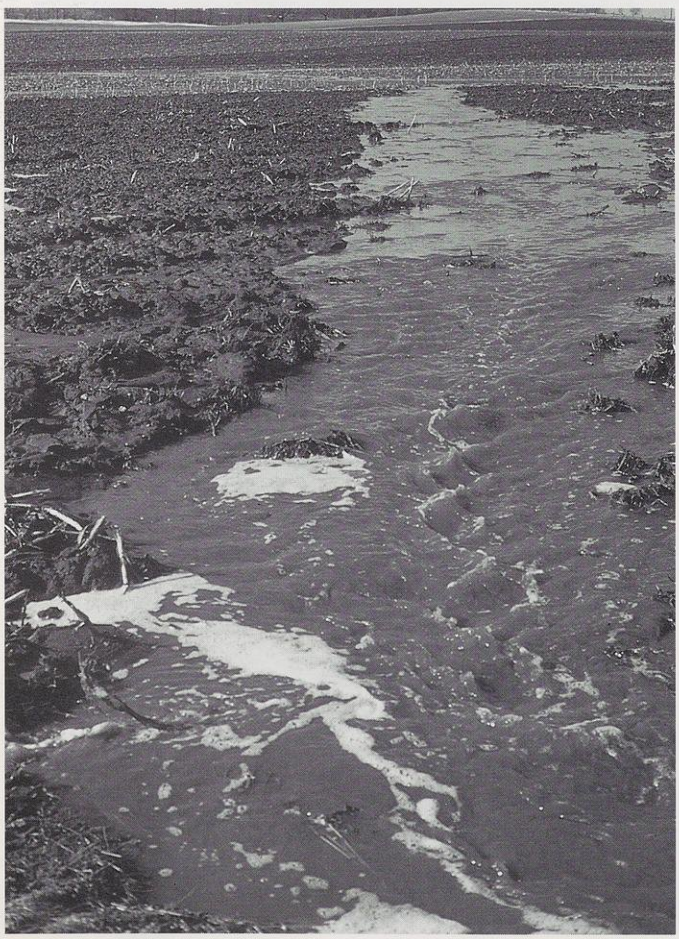
For example, estrogen-mimicking chemicals and other contaminants that appear to disrupt the functions of endocrine systems have recently been implicated as a cause of reproductive failure and developmental abnormalities in fish and wildlife. There is some indication that these chemicals may be responsible for what appear to be falling sperm counts in human males over the past forty years. Unfortunately, we have very little scientific information on the concentration, distribution, transport, and fate of these chemical substances in water supplies and the environment in general, let alone which chemicals have the greatest impact. This problem potentially affects the health of humans, as well as fish and wildlife. It cuts across the fields of ecology, endocrinology, epidemiology, oncology, ecotoxicology, chemistry, earth sciences, public health, and others.

This is just one example of a potentially major environmental problem about which scientists know next to nothing. Many more examples could be cited, ranging from the effects of multiple environmental stresses on humans and ecosystems to the relationships between climate change and biodiversity.

No government agency focuses on the environment as a whole, looks beyond the horizon to emerging issues, communicates environmental information effectively to the public, or educates and trains the environmental professionals needed to solve future problems. Consequently, the present system needs major reform to ensure that science is an effective means of environmental problem-solving and prevention at all levels of government and in all sectors of the nation.

The solution: the National Institute for the Environment (NIE)

The proposed NIE is intended to make our national environmental science enterprise more relevant, credible, responsive, and cost-effective. The NIE's fundamentally new approach is based on the following principles:



Controlling agricultural runoff, a major source of water pollution, requires careful public policy-making. Courtesy University of Wisconsin–Madison Institute for Environmental Studies.

- support of independent science without a regulatory agenda
- governance by both the providers and users of environmental science and information
- support of extramural, long-term, problem-focused, multidisciplinary science through competitively awarded, peer-reviewed grants and contracts
- integration of knowledge assessment, research, information, and education

Specifically, the new NIE will:

- assess environmental knowledge and identify issues of critical importance where information is needed for decision-making
- fund peer-reviewed research in whatever combination of disciplines is required to understand an environmental issue
- communicate environmental information through an easy-to-use electronic National Library for the Environment
- support public education and sponsor training for future environmental scientists and professionals

Because the NIE will not set policies or enforce regulations, its research will be insulated from the political influences typically experienced by federal agencies.

The NIE will be governed by a board made up of leaders from state, local, and tribal governments and scientific, business, environmental, and community groups representing broad cross sections of society. The NIE board will work with an interagency advisory committee to determine the priorities and goals for NIE science and ensure that it addresses the needs of the entire nation. This process will enhance the credibility and relevance of the institution and the scientific information it provides to those making policy and management decisions.

NIE research will be dramatically different, cutting across traditional scientific disciplines to address complex environmental problems, such as impacts of climate change and ozone depletion, mercury and other contaminants, product life-cycle analysis, and risk-assessment methodologies. Experts in the natural and social sciences, engineering, economics, and other fields will work together. The NIE will not operate laboratories but will competitively award extramural, peer-reviewed research grants and contracts to the nation's best scientists in academic institutions, government laboratories, private companies, and non-profit organizations.

Peer review will ensure accuracy and quality. Extramural grants will give the NIE flexibility to move from one problem to another at the lowest cost. This flexibility will enable the NIE to anticipate and address emerging environmental issues in a timely manner in order to prevent potential environmental problems from becoming costly crises.

Creating the NIE

The fiscal constraints facing the nation are serious. The NIE fits in with national desires to strengthen the scientific basis for environmental decisions, protect the environment while reducing regulatory burdens, and balance the budget. In order to achieve these goals, a cost-effective mechanism is needed to ensure that environmental policy is grounded in sound science. Mistakes, be they over-regulation or under-regulation, are expensive. Science can reduce the margin of error. Science will produce information that is needed for meaningful regulatory reform and risk assessments. Science will help the country's bottom line as wasteful practices are eliminated and new technologies for environmental remediation and management are created.

Policy-makers and scientists alike are coming to realize that a new institute is required. Simply retrofitting agencies that were created for different purposes and that have science as a low priority will not be effective.

Creating a new institute in this era of downsizing government and reducing the deficit is difficult. But if the nation is serious about reforming government to more efficiently and effectively meet national needs, it must consider forming new, but appropriate, institutions and not just eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy.

Former administrators of the EPA Russell Train, William Ruckelshaus, and William Reilly stated in a letter to President Clinton that "merely adapting existing research programs will not solve the problems of the current, fragmented system . . . perhaps most importantly, the independent status and the role of stakeholders in the NIE would provide, more than any restructuring of the current federal system, greater long-term assurance of credible research conducted by the nation's best scientists, as well as a degree of insulation from the changing political winds that constantly buffet environmental research."

Satelite images of the Earth's surface permit large-scale environmental monitoring and assessment. Courtesy University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences.

After more than six years of thorough study—and after consulting with the nation's foremost environmental scientists, leaders of business, state and local government, and public interest groups, as well as former federal agency officials and the best thinkers about institutional reform—the Committee for the NIE has concluded that only a new, independent, and non-regulatory National Institute for the Environment can provide the strategic, long-term, credible, and independent science for the environment that the United States needs to formulate environmental policy. As election year rhetoric about science and the environment increases, it is a good time to ask politicians whether they agree.

The author can be reached at the Committee for the NIE, 1725 K St. NW, Suite 212, Washington, DC 20006–1401; phone 202–628–4303; fax 202–628–4311; e–mail David@NIE.org

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Learning to Polka

by Christine Tachick

The beeper goes off while we're still in bed. Tom crawls over me and grabs his jeans off the floor. The belt is still in the loops, clinking as we listen to the dispatcher read out directions: a 10–33. The worst kind. Tom jams the beeper on his belt and pulls a shirt from the closet, setting all the wire hangers jangling. "See ya, hon," he says. The kitchen door slams before I hear the dispatcher give a name. Mostly it's people we know, more people dying in spring or fall, it seems. I don't know why. We always seem to lose barn cats the same way, spring or fall, although a person would think winter would be the worst.

I hear the higher pitched engine of my car, since his pickup won't always start right off. His left foot punching the floor boards where the clutch isn't, he takes off down the driveway, adjusting the seat backwards as he pulls out onto the blacktop road. I've seen him do this.

So I'll take his pickup into the beauty parlor. The truck has a smell, the pine tree deodorizer and stale corn cobs that roll around on the passenger side tangled with binder twine. I don't wear seat belts in the truck, which really bothers Tom, but I can't very well cut hair all day with a grubby seat belt mark across my blouse.

Things go in streaks, a month with no squad runs, then a week of them, all while Tom's on call.

❦

We just had a call the other night, right while we were sitting at the Rescue Squad Banquet, passing platters of chicken down the row of tables when all the beepers in the room went off at once, high-pitched, startling us as the dispatcher read the call to Richard's Steak House, Richard's Steak House—right where we were sitting.

From the other part of the restaurant we heard someone shouting "Call 911." Three men jumped up, my Tom one of them, his chair tipping flat on its back. Calling 911 couldn't get anybody that wasn't there already, for the banquet. Most of the men in our room settled back into their chairs, knowing from practice when to swallow adrenalin and stay out of the way.

I looked from our side room and saw the startled face of a middle-aged lady lifted above the heads around her. Tom's face was just behind hers, at her ear as he heaved her weight in the rough jerk of a Heimlich. It was quiet enough to hear the dish-washing crew back in the kitchen talking and running water, until we finally heard the long *oooh* of air being sucked back into the woman's lungs.

"Give some room." The squad guys bossed the farmers back to their tables. The woman nodded *okay, I'm okay*, although her face was flushed as she gulped air. Tom unwrapped his arms from where they were clenched, fist on fist, just below her breasts.

I knew the look he was giving her as he searched her face for symptoms. The lady's husband, a farmer for sure, was still clutching the back of his chair. His fingers, farmer fingers like Tom's, thick as hydraulic hose, were white with pressure. He probably got shouldered out of the way by Tom and the other guys; no room for *excuse me's* when a person's going to die.

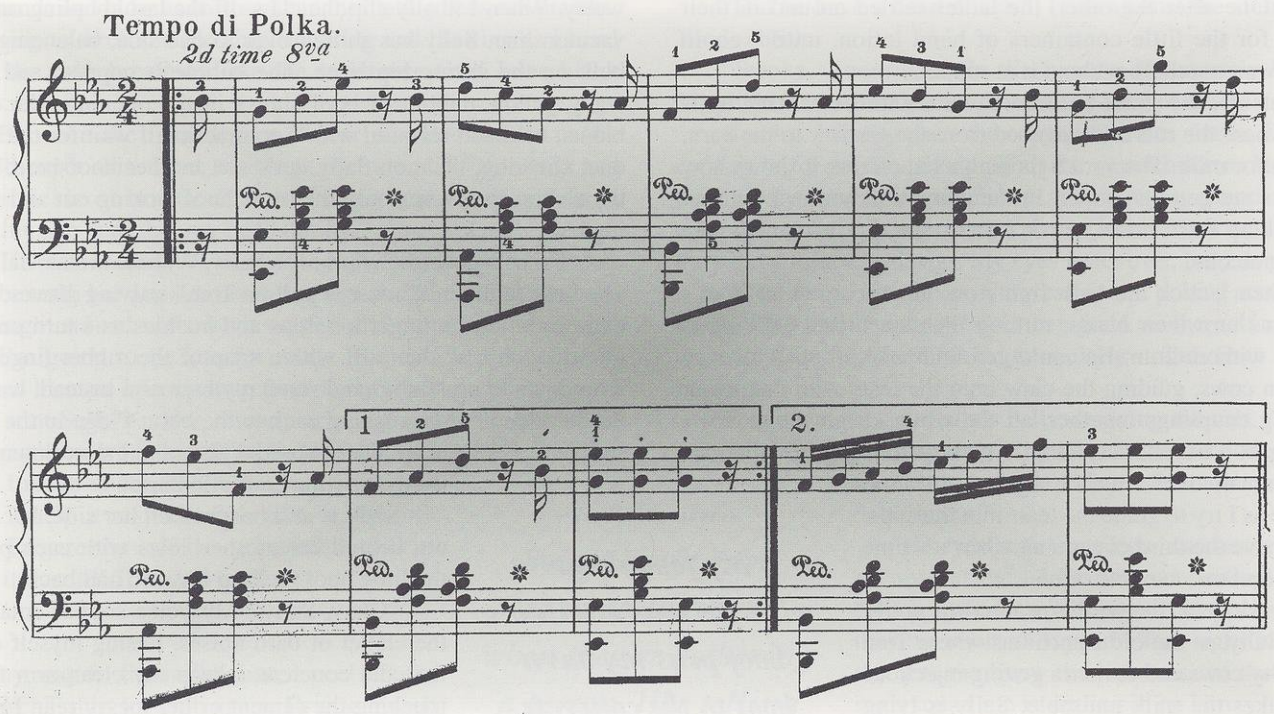
Rich and Tiny edged back through the room divider ahead of Tom, saying, "It's all right," loud enough for everyone to hear. Our table started clinking silverware and shuffling chairs up to the table. I could see Tom at the divider, shooing off the farmer's outstretched hand offering him money.

Talking at the same time, Rich and Tiny told us what happened, "She was just getting blue to the lips . . ."

"Yeah the lips were blue. We do the Heimlich and out pops this chunk of steak. Watch your steak there, folks." They were in a joking mood, relieved. Next to me, Cindy started telling about the time her brother choked on a piece of candy, but I still caught Tom's retreat into our room, refusing the farmer's gratefulness.

"What happened?" I asked him when he was sitting again, poking at the cold food on his plate.

Things go in streaks, a month with no squad runs, then a week of them, all while Tom's on call.



"The woman was choking. I know them from somewhere, it'll come to me . . ." Tom told it pretty much the same as I've already heard, but sometimes it's good to let a person get it off their chest. It's like that when he gets in from a call in the middle of the night and needs to settle down for a couple hours' sleep before chores—he props himself half-sitting against the headboard, both pillows behind his back, while I listen, sleep-drugged, to his voice.

When announcements were over—the five- and ten-year service pins, the money raised from the raffle—a polka band on the hardwood dance floor started warming up, the trumpet running through a couple scales, and the accordion wheezing chords in and out. *Wartelewski's Polka Band*, the logo read across the drum. "You lovebirds dancing or what?" Rich asked, tossing back the last of his highball.

"Show us how it's done," Tom countered. Cindy laughed and followed Rich to the floor as the band started with the *one*-two-three of a polka. Tom said, "Want to?" and stood, pulling the creases out of his pants.

We danced the back and forth steps that he had to teach me at other people's weddings, the summer before we got married. The only dancing I'd ever done was in high school. I grew up in the next town over, but that's a lot different from being part of the farm families, with their polka weddings. The best part about learning to polka was the way he bent his head, coaching me in secret. "Just step between my feet," he'd whispered in my ear, "No, don't look, look at me, that's it, just one-two-three, in between." It was strange, learning to dance all over again, learning the dances with steps.

We took a break, pulling up chairs alongside the edge of the room. While Tom went for drinks, I watched the older couples dancing, doing fancy two-steps with extra swipes of their feet, knowing from habit where the other person was, as they made their way full-circle around the dance floor. Old Rodney took Clara into an overly dramatic dip at the end of a song, but you could tell from the way it happened that she's used to being surprised.

❦

This is the first time in two years of marriage that I've had to do morning chores alone. The chore-time squad calls just never fell on Tom's turn before. I look through the dresser for my barn clothes; jeans from when we got married (on the tight side now) all stained up with perm solution and color paste, leaving brown smudges that look like manure.

Most of the farm wives help with milking, even if they have a job, but Tom rarely asks me to go to the barn. So when I do follow him out of bed, he grins and teases like the farmer-lover he is. One time, just a month or so after we were married, I helped with chores and he hollered for me as he kicked bales down the chute. I figured he had a surprise, a new batch of kittens, like, but it was a game to get me up there, to roll around in the hay. We lay there afterwards, sweaty and chilled, covered with so many red scratches from the hay that it looked like measles. The barn smell was rich in his hair as the cows bellered downstairs to be milked. A cat picked its way across the mow to rub itself against Tom's back. All the ladies in the beauty parlor that day were *tsk-tsking* the condition of my

hands. One after the other, the ladies rattled around in their purses for the little containers of hand lotion, until I could hardly wait to tell Tom about it at supper.

Outside, the grass is almost white with dew. Dark trails show where the cats have crossed from the granary to the barn, waiting for milk. The yard light isn't even off yet, it shows how the days are getting shorter. In the damp milkhouse, I pull out the milking stuff: hoses, paper towels, teat dip that smells like rubbing alcohol.

When I click the barn lights on, the two rows of Tom's Holsteins turn their heads, rattling the stanchions. Milking is strange without Tom. He could go blind and still push his way between cows, guiding the claw onto the teats with one hand, slapping couplings together, all the while keeping four cows milking at a time. Everything is clumsy for me, the inflations flopping all over, suctioning at straw and manure as I try to guide the teats into the cups. I only have the third cow going when it's time for the first one to come off.

I work down the north row of cows, until I get to Sally, in the old stanchions where Tom keeps dry cows and the ones getting injections that makes the milk unusable. Sally is lying half-sideways, and doesn't get up as I pat her with a mock-confident slap. "Hi Sally, hey girl," I say to her. She just lies there, her huge side swollen like a glove, the black patterns standing out like islands. She swishes her tail, dripping gutter water, *splotch,* against her side.

In the long pink opening under her tail is a blob of bluish sac. It hangs there, unpopped, a strange liquid-filled bubble between the sides of her vagina. I squat behind Sally, trying to figure out what stage of delivery she's at, my stomach pinched with nervousness like it hadn't since the morning of our wedding. This was something I haven't seen in all the times I helped Tom deliver calves, early on for fun, and later to hand him binder twine, rope, or even the winch during difficult births. All I've ever seen in the pink opening was the tiny hooves of calves, followed by the nose and body, the back legs last, like a drawn-out sausage before the mess of afterbirth. Delilah, next to Sally, lets a runny green pie splatter to the cement. Mostly I'm out of the way in time.

I try to calculate how long until Tom will be back from the 10–33. Usually two, three hours. If they start CPR, they're not allowed to quit until the E-room doctor says.

"Sally, Sally," I say in my best Tom voice, "what is this?" I touch the sac, sticky like egg whites, but it doesn't break. I'm scared to hurry things. Breaking the water makes things go faster—I know from the customers who tell me every last birthing detail while I roll perm rods across their scalps. I figure I have enough time to finish milking and see what happens before calling the vet. We don't need a vet bill.

The cows know when someone else is milking. They seem edgy, side-stepping as I work between them, as if they sense my worry. When I finally slip the claw off the last coupling on the vacuum line, Sally has shifted over to one side, balancing her bulk on the jutting hip bone. The bubble is popped, and one waxy yellow nubbin of hoof shows in the opening. Her side bloats, held and released with a contraction. I wait for the next one, cheering, "C'mon Sally, let's see another hoof here," but the next pulse pushes only the same hoof, poking out and sliding back. Stuck.

"I'll be right back," I promise Sally. With no time to call the vet, I run to the milkhouse. I pull on Tom's calving gloves. The extra room at the fingertips flops and buckles as I turn on the faucet, so I yank them off with a snap of the rubber fingers. I strip down to my T-shirt and scrub my bare arm instead, way to the shoulder, before rushing back to the barn. Pidge in the first stall jerks her head up, dusty-nosed with grain. I slow down. No use getting the cows riled up.

Sally is still beached on her side, her legs out behind her as she bloats with each push, the little hoof rocking forward and back.

"Okay, Sally." My voice sounds small in the clatter of barn noises. Easing myself onto the cold concrete, I keep my clean arm from touching the cement or her messy rear. I slide my hand in the opening, tucking my fingernails against my palm to keep from scratching anything. Sally shifts but doesn't try to roll her feet beneath. I feel my way inside, groping along the pencil-thin leg.

A contraction squeezes my hand, but the pressure is surprisingly mild. I'm almost up to my armpit, reaching in, before I am past the lump of head and down to the chest where the other leg attached.

Bracing one foot in the gutter, I push myself farther in, all the way to my shoulder. I turn my face from the closeness of the manure smell. For all the times I have seen this done, I've only watched the outside, Tom's grimaces and lip-biting as he fishes for the missing leg. I try to reach the knee, to bring it around, but everything is too cramped for it to bend. I need to muscle it somehow against the tight wall of the uterus.

My foot rings with pain as Delilah's hoof pins my barn boot to the concrete. She settles her weight, the bulk searing across my toes. "Move! Move it!" I holler, furious, kicking my free foot at Delilah's leg. Slowly, Delilah shifts her weight enough for me to yank my foot out. I curl it toward me, wiggling the toes to check what's broken. My toes move and I exhale, and feel the bulge of calf leg in my hand. The knee is bent—I must have pulled it.

I jerk on the rest of the tiny leg, bringing the ankle and hoof under the knee. The calf follows, slipping out with a gush of liquid, landing half in the gutter. It lies still, not breathing. I poke a finger in each nostril, reaching in the mouth to scoop out membrane as Tom does. Still nothing but a limp calf, the barn lights reflecting off the wet skin.

I swallow a bitter, coffee taste of nervousness and cup my hands, just like Tom, around the muzzle. I put my mouth to my

My foot rings with pain as Delilah's hoof pins my barn boot to the concrete. She settles her weight, the bulk searing across my toes.

wet hands and blow as hard as I can, hesitating between breaths, counting to three and blowing, counting and blowing as I bend over the calf, breathing into the resistance until I see black spots. I sit up.

Between the front legs a flicker of pulse moves in the waxed-paper skin. I put my cheek up to the calf's nostrils and feel a tickle of breath. I could faint—from relief and from breathing so hard that my head throbs.

The calf shakes as I carry it to Sally's nose. Sally rolls her legs beneath her and heaves to her feet so she can lick the calf, pushing it around with rough swipes of her tongue.

I'm going to be late for work. The calf lets out a high-pitched bleat as I scoop it up from Sally's licking. "Eat, you." I push it at Sally's udder, already dripping with colostrum. The calf punches around with its nose, slavering, until I reach under and hold a teat to guide it onto. I help it reattach each time it slips off, until I figure the calf has got enough milk to hold it over till Tom gets back.

❦

On my way to the milkhouse, I peel off the half-wet T-shirt to scrub again. Drying myself with paper towels, I shiver in my bra, filthy jeans, and work boots. I hear the car pull in. Through the dirty milkhouse window, I see Tom hesitate between turning the key off and flicking the steering wheel tilt-level to get his knees out. The pause tells me that it was not a good squad run. I lean out the door just as the car door slams. "I'm down here." The outside air is cold on my drying skin as Tom walks to the barn. The shadows of the power pole and the chicken coop stretch across the driveway. The dew is completely gone.

"Hi hon," Tom says. He takes in the uncleaned mess of milking equipment, the calving gloves lying limp across the sink next to my T-shirt. "What's going on?"

"Sally had a calf. It's okay now."

Tom doesn't ask about it. He notices the goose bumps prickling across my bare skin and rubs my arm distractedly.

"What happened?" I ask, after trying to wait. He pulls me to his chest, a heavy hug, not romantic. I hope it wasn't someone we knew. He would've told me right away if it was someone I knew.

"It was Jerry Miller. Jerry." He shakes his head.

No one I know, I realize with a guilty trickle of relief. I listen to the hum of the bulk tank as I wait for him to talk. Some things have to come out right when they're bothering a person, like telling a bad dream while it's still half real and fading.

"And I just saw him Thursday at the feed mill. He was getting corn ground for his turkeys. 'Come see my turkeys,' he goes." Tom holds me tight again. "He was in the bathroom. We had to pull him out from between the tub and the john to get him on the stretcher."

"Did he have a heart attack?" I ask against the stubble on Tom's cheek.

"Stroke. Aneurysm. He died in the Emergency Room. They'd just sent Bernice out to wait and he shut down."

Bernice. I finally place the couple, fifties or sixties, Bernice coming in for perms, talking about the grandchildren. Her husband always waited in the pickup after running errands, never coming in to look at magazines. I picture Bernice driving alone in the pickup full of feed bags. My eyes water over, but I don't cry.

When we go into the barn, the calf is still poking around for milk. Sally half-heartedly noses her grain as the calf nuzzles and tries to suck. Afterbirth hangs in clotty strands from Sally's opening.

Tom squats beside Sally's belly, studying the calf. "Was it hung up long?" he asks. So he did notice.

I stop to think. "Maybe five, ten minutes, I don't know."

He eyes both front legs, watches it punch its nose at the udder without finding a teat. "It's a little slow," he says. "Happens when they run short of oxygen." Tom sighs in a way that lets me know the heaviness of the morning's squad run is settling in on him.

❦

I wonder how far into the day I will get before Jerry's death comes in with a customer. My ten-thirty appointment, Irma Washelewski, has the news already.

"Did you know Jerry Miller passed away of a stroke?" She pauses significantly, pulling the netting off her hair as she sits for her shampoo and style. If there's no rush, I usually give long shampoos to the widow ladies, the ones that schedule appointments oftener than they have to. They remind me of cats, wanting touch, to have their hair rubbed against gravity. I'd hate to be alone myself. The old ladies make a point of asking for me, booking up all my hours with their measly two-quarter tips. Job security is my only payback, a guarantee of white heads to wash, color, perm, trim. But today Irma is going to get a quick shampoo, I decide, as I pull towels from the cupboard.

"Isn't that Bernice's husband?" I ask, steering away from surprise or knowledge.

"He was only sixty-one. Sixty-one." Irma makes a clucking noise as she tucks her hair net into her purse.

"Okay, there you go, lean back," I say, adjusting the vinyl seat to the sink. I test the water spray for temperature against my hand and notice the thin line of grunge beneath my fingernails.

"The wake is Friday already, at the funeral home. The kids are flying up. They're only in Indiana, I can't imagine why they'd fly. The funeral's supposed to be at three, but I haven't heard if they're having it at the Lutheran church or just staying at the funeral home. I'm making lemon bars. They always go, I never bring any back home with me."

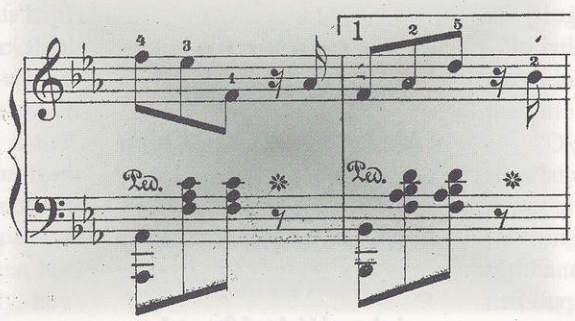
Some things have to come out right when they're bothering a person, like telling a bad dream while it's still half real and fading.

As much as Irma bothers me, I give in then and massage the shampoo into her scalp, into the spot just above the neck. I wonder if Tom knew Jerry Miller well enough that we'll go to the funeral, in which case I, too, will have to bring a pan of bars for the "lunch" afterwards. It seems so cold-hearted to worry about chocolate chips and vanilla on the occasion of a death. But homemade bars are a sign of respect, like writing out wedding invitations by hand.

❦

Tom wasn't *that* close to Jerry Miller. If Tom hadn't been on the squad call, we probably would have just stopped by the wake. But midday Saturday we get dressed up and go to town for the funeral.

The funeral home seems dark inside when we come in from the parking lot, with the sun reflecting off all the chrome and mirrors of the cars. We move through the usual pattern, shaking hands, mixing and visiting, voices lowered and hushed. Tom and I gradually drift into clusters of farmers talking crop yields and women talking about the strep throat going around. Up by the coffin, a bright shiny blue one, I see Bernice hug another person in the line of people waiting for a last look.



When Tom and I are finally up at the coffin ourselves, Bernice hugs me, her crying stopped for a moment. She looks to Tom, trying to place him. She stares with the dazed grieving look you see so often at funerals. "Hi, it's Tom Polczynski," he said, and shakes her hand in both of his. She recognizes him then, piecing together the Sunday–dressed farmer with the unshaven EMT. "Oh," she says, in a normal voice. Then she is sobbing, wrapping her arms around Tom. He doesn't pat her back or say anything. He just holds her. In the line of people waiting to file past the coffin, we can hear people talking about the school board and milk prices.

Bernice's sobs quiet to long shuddering breaths. "Thank you for coming," she says, finally, the only thing there is to say. I dig around in my purse, feeling keys, cough drops, wallet, until I find the plastic wrapper on a little pack of tissues, which I hand to Bernice.

Tom and I file past the coffin. The body is dressed in a navy polyester suit like all the farmers wear. The hands, laid one over the other on the chest, with wrinkled knuckles and white lines of scars, look more life-like than the face, caked with a light-colored foundation that shows around the ears. I try to recall the face in life, but picture only the reflection off the pickup windshield as he waited in the parking lot of the beauty parlor. Tom is staring, though. A faint black smudge of Bernice's eye makeup crosses his dress shirt.

❦

I hang the gray dress back on the hanger and sit on the bed to peel off my nylons. We have a certain set of clothes that we always seem to wear to funerals, my gray dress, his black dress pants, or my black skirt, his navy pants. Tom tosses his shirt into the laundry pile. "I suppose I'll try to get that unloader going before chores," he says. He looks tired.

I wait for him to say more, but he goes to the kitchen. I envy a real ambulance service, with paramedics that get toughened by driving night after night to the heart attacks and the strokes and car wrecks. They get to pick up strangers.

I go down to the basement and move the slabs of meat wrapped in freezer-paper. I set the packages aside, the frozen meat clicking like stones, until I get to a package marked *T-bone—2* in my own handwriting. I hide the steaks under a colander to thaw.

On my way to the barn, I tie one of Tom's red bandanna handkerchiefs over my hair—the old farm wife trick to keep the smell out. I find Sally tied up at the end of the barn, the calf bumbling against her legs.

In the milkhouse, I pick up the phone carefully, in case Tom is on the other extension. "Hi, this is Rachel," I tell Rich when he answers the phone.

"Hey, you want to talk to Cindy?" Rich says cheerfully. I can hear the TV going in the background.

"Well, actually, I was going to ask you a favor. Could you cover for Tom?"

"Sure, sure. You got to pick something up in town? What time you need me till?" Rich says.

I look out the window and see Tom crossing from the shed back to the house. "Monday." I offer no explanation when Rich is silent for a moment and only the sound of a ball game comes over the phone.

"Hmmm, Monday, I guess there's no reason that I couldn't. We weren't planning . . ." Rich sounds surprised, but is too polite to ask anything.

"Thank you so much. Bye." I hang up. I don't know whether I'll take the batteries out of Tom's beeper or just tell him what I've done. But first I start the chores. ❧

"Trip It Lightly" polka by Alfred Fieldhouse. Evans Music Co., 1904.

That Kind of Day in Wisconsin

Homage to Wallace Stevens

1. On A Day Like This

Stevens knew that the world
Sometimes made it easy for poets,
Gave them gratis such profusion of material,
During the right moment, at the right place,
That he needed no imagination,
But only the simple ability
To describe what he beheld.
He also knew that a gloomy day
Might require more imagination than he possessed
And not just imagination but feeling
That would not leave his words joyless
And his poetry uninspired.

That is when his "pharynx is bad,"
And he is "pent up" in his being
—Not a time for "ploughing North America"
But for suffering in solitude and silence
The "malady of the quotidian."
Well, I'd settle for being Stevens at his least poetic,
Even though I wonder just how much he could teach me
About being pent-up in one's being,
Afflicted with the malady of daily living.

And I know what it means to yearn for snow,
During a sunless chilly February in Wisconsin
When the Queen of the Winter Carnival
Has nothing new to say or show to the world,
And the King is home in bed with the flu.

2. Something Happened

As soon as "the man with the blue guitar"
Finished playing a half-dozen flamenco pieces,
The world they were holding up collapsed
In a cloud of concrete and splintered wood.
Nobody was killed, but nearly everyone suffered an injury
And those who had been injured the least
Were talking the loudest about lynching
The whole troupe of gypsy dancers
As well as the soloist himself.
That was when the guitar turned white and the man turned blue
And poetry as we knew it changed forever.

3. Autumn Flights

Walking alone around a pond
In the golden-green light
Of a Wisconsin autumn,
I could feel my thoughts peel off
Like falling leaves, as my mind
Slowly filled with nothing
And the soft stagnant water
Began to draw me into itself.
As I reached for the sky
In its numbing blue silence and white emptiness,
Geese, wave after wave, suddenly appearing overhead,
Broke formation and descended on me,
Until I too was airbourne and swept
Into their descending spiral,
To an earth that would give them sustenance and rest
And lift them again for further flight.

This time tomorrow they'll be more than a hundred miles farther south
While I will be no farther than where my path began
And thankful I had made it at least that far.

L.S. Dembo

Suddenly the Sumac

Among the white asters the monarch feeds,
Her closed orange wings as brilliant
In sun as the sumac, suddenly red;
Till, letting go, she is caught up
In the wind; and though she soundlessly
Turns and turns, back toward
The burning white branch, she is no match
For the larger shadow of her desire,
The river of air moving south.

Robin Chapman

Fisherman in the Mist

The wind is rising and a gray mist
on the gray water is turning to rain.

Still the fisherman, his small boat swinging
against its anchor, stays far out in the fading light.

We can barely see him now as he casts
his line into the gathering dusk,

and I wonder what he hopes for
that the long day did not bring

or what he thinks he has to fear
if he should come to shore.

Sprague Vonier

Lorine by the Lake

A hawk escapes green pockets of oak leaves, catches
a winddrift, holds it in the creases of its wings.

A storm moves like a painting an artist can't get right.
Small houses along the road wear dark pyramids for roofs.

She knows the steps of folding paper into perfect
3-D boxes. A young hawk steps from an oak limb,

drops like a stone, lifts new wings, thrusts beak
and talon at the sky. To paint a storm, an artist

lets go all lessons. In the second of a breath,
Lorine recreates the dance. She does not wish

to awe us with her words. If she emerges with a poem
like a painting, then her work is done.

Elaine Cavanaugh

Queen Anne

In old walls
filled with the nests of mice,
all the wonderful finds
of restoration:
hair and glass, pieces of cloth,
toy soldiers and marbles,
and small bright tokens
stolen in late night scurrying
mindful of hungry cats
while families fall asleep
to their hurried movement between joists,
across headers, up and down
long studs that reach
from sill to top plate, twenty feet
of fir and oak from forests alive
when St. Francis talked to the fire,
wild deer and wolves at his feet.

When I rip out old plaster—
brown horse hair holding it all together—
a century of dust fills the air:
I find more nests and toys, an
odd skeleton among nut shells,
an old spoon, and the pelts,
still silky and smooth
from generations of careful mice,
enough to make a long coat
for an old man frail
from all his many years.

Late at night, dust
in my lungs, my arms
tired from ripping out
the wiry lath, I lie
and listen to the naked
mice remaking the world
content with bits and pieces
of useless junk, a simple sharing
worth more than the many
worlds of our making.

Dale Ritterbusch

LESSONS LEARNED by Dale Ritterbusch. Burning Cities Press, 1995. 125 pages, softcover. ISBN 1–885215–08–8

THE PARTY TRAIN, a Collection of North American Prose Poetry edited by Robert Alexander, Mark Vinz and C.W. Truesdale. Minneapolis: New Rivers Press, 1996. 353 pages, $18.95 softcover. ISBN 0–89823–165–5

by Justin Isherwood

This farmer cannot read Dale Ritterbusch's book of war poems objectively. *Lessons Learned*, which won the 1996 Council for Wisconsin Writers award for a full-length volume of poetry, comprises seventy-three poems that are ammo clips as much as they are poems. They perform atrocities, they lay covering fire and kick up dirt from which I duck and cower. I cannot read them without falling head and intestines again into that moist, warm time when my generation had their last chance at the war story. When we were the fuel to that loose beast.

> actually a friend of a friend
> . . . got drunk, popped some pills,
> bent his arm backwards on a table
> and had someone jump on the elbow . . .
> Jesus, all that just to avoid the draft
> and with a mind like that
> he would have done just fine in Vietnam.

The author does not offer distinct compass bearing on the war. Instead, he allows Vietnam its variable magnetism. It was neither the worst war America ever fought nor the first one we ever lost; and it was not the first to have no clear moral imperative necessary to fuel the fire of a war with sound limbs and untroubled sleep. What went wrong in Vietnam is not yet a sense we know how to say to ourselves. Someday, if we scratch at it as Ritterbusch does, Americans will come to understand why we lost in Vietnam and exactly why it was so necessary to do so.

I do not think it wise in critical circles to bow and scrape to an author and his work. It really isn't up to the intellectual standard to do so, but this farmer is gonna get on his knees and say: great book, great heart, great attempt at healing.

As a farm boy I relished the *Reader's Digest* as an essential to life because its back-pocket, bite-size prose permitted the chance to read between the cracks of the daily routine. I carried with me a disposable copy of *RD* wherever I went, never mind the conservative, rose-colored religiosity of that publication. *The Party Train* is an attempt to infiltrate poetry among the odd niches and fractures of our lives. Were there outhouses yet in America, this book would have a natural shrine. Prose poetry has the ability to fit those so-few places of our too-harried, too-worried, too-occupied lives.

The representative pieces do what poetry is supposed to do, what every vintner and garden tender of the blackberry cane understands: condense and trim and thus increase the yield, despite the vine is less.

Numerous Wisconsin writers are included in this volume. In an opening chapter, editor Robert Alexander provides a guide to what prose poetry is and where it's been. S.C. Hahn offers a view of the cut-over and the dug-over; there's Jim Hazard's short marriage to Emily Dickenson, Paula Goldman takes us to the bath, Gordon Hickey invokes Jean Harlow, Ellen Kort follows a turtle, Warren Lang's bread rises, W.R. Rodriguez snatches a purse, Terry Spohn follows accountants to the beach, and Alison Townsend sits us down to a dinner of rough drafts and ex-husbands, served with decaf and lots of extra cream.

The prose poems are odd things, odd as a sprawled, slowly widening corpse of a roadkill is odd, as dreams and soil chemistry and subatomic physics are odd. These poems do not offer advice, most cannot be described as pretty; what they all offer is a look at some twisted artifact.

The prose poem is an unknowing participant in the particle theory. If we know the particles and study the broken, bitten-off, isolated bits, then we know something the whole does not and cannot reveal. A prose poem cuts to the chase same as a chainsaw. Prose poetry is an emergency room procedure, the cuts done in haste and unmitered, but the bleeding has stopped and the hole is plugged.

Justin Isherwood writes and farms in Plover. His most recent book is Book of Plough: Essays on the Virtue of Farm, Family and the Rural Life *(1996). His essay "Isherwood House: Hospitality in the Pinery" appeared in the Fall 1995* Wisconsin Academy Review.

NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN WISCONSIN 1630–1960: A Study of Tradition and Change by Robert E. Bieder. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995. 288 pages, $37.50 hardcover, $17.95 softcover. ISBN 0–299–14524–7

BURIED ROOTS & INDESTRUCTIBLE SEEDS: The Survival of American Indian Life in Story, History, and Spirit edited by Mark A. Lindquist and Martin Zanger. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994. 162 pages, $42.00 hardcover, $12.95 softcover. ISBN 0–299–14444–5

by Michael Longrie

I was fortunate twice in reading these books. First, I read with interest about a topic I wanted to become more familiar with, Native American history in Wisconsin and Native American culture, especially its view of the land. Second, I fortuitously read them in the sequence noted, with Bieder's book providing a fine, informed background for my deeper understanding of the collection of essays and stories in the latter.

Bieder's title, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600–1960: A Study of Tradition and Change*, augurs both its subject and its method. In his own words he "envisioned a book for the general audience" and "opted . . . for a narrative approach" (9). What results is a compelling narrative indeed. Arranged chronologically, the book comprises eight chapters, focusing on three major concerns in each: native customs,

views of the land, and changing economic and social patterns as a result of contact with European and American incursions.

The first two chapters, "The Land that Winter Made" and "How They Lived in the Old Time," discuss native traditions and geographical habitudes in pre-contact years. The next three chapters, "The Years of the French," "The Years of the British," and "The Arrival of the Long Knives," chart the effects of contact on tribal ways, with special concentration on economic and ecological matters, up to mid-nineteenth century. The final three chapters, "The Shrinking Land," "Wandering Like Shadows on a Disappearing Land," and "Epilogue: Reading the Past," discuss the ravaging effects of hegemony, both the appropriation of traditional native lands through allotment and the establishment of reservations and the devastating consequences on Native American identity in American attempts to mainstream them.

Bieder has written a valuable book with solid scholarship and compendious notes and references. It is also a handsome and well-edited book, containing over thirty illustrations and photographs, eleven well-placed maps, and a method that reinforces itself. By that I mean he first discusses the five general tribal areas in Wisconsin somewhat established by 1600; then, as historical events affect these, he partitions the narratives to elucidate the effects on five areas/tribal concentrations. This does make for some repetition of data—yet I found such reinforcement helpful. Bieder's prose is also repetitious and sometimes too mechanical, especially in the first half, and he sometimes becomes almost folksy: "Bears are also nice and fat just before winter hibernation." Yet these are minor stylistic lapses which do not detract from this solid, interesting, and informative book. Any Wisconsinite, whether native or non-native, would cherish this history, for in it they will read themselves.

Buried Roots & Indestructible Seeds: The Survival of American Indian Life in Story, History, and Spirit, a project growing out of a series of conferences sponsored by the Wisconsin Humanities Committee in 1990–1991, is an uneven compendium of essays and stories that, in the words of Kimberly M. Blaeser, will "trace the struggle and indestructibility of Indian people in this country" . . . which "give us a sense of [the] . . . survival power of Indian people" (4). Its focus is two-fold: 1) attempts to explain the power and sustaining vitality of oral narratives within Native American peoples and 2) historical essays discussing the development of treaties, Bureau of Indian Affairs policies, and land use issues that have both sapped and, finally, strengthened Native American communal identities.

After an introduction, the first half consists of four essays, discussing the didactic yet significant role of oral stories in Native American traditions, with two essays paying particular attention to the role of the Trickster figure. Taken together, these reveal an essential difference between native and Euro-versions of the land: how the community interacts with nature, the soundness of native ecological ideas based on experience with the land, and its fundamental conflict with capitalist exploitation. Furthermore, the tales function crucially as "dream space"—a place essential for the psychic communal health of native people. Here, I found Gerald Vizenor's essay "Trickster Discourse" intelligent but laced with unsuitable attacks on the academic community's attempt to study and understand native tales. I found his tone to be demeaning, even self-serving at times.

The second half contains three historical essays and a short story by Denise Sweet. These were an odd grouping. The historical essays on treaties, governmental policies, and land use issues were informative, balanced, understanding of competing claims, and most helpful in explaining how we have arrived where we are with these issues in the late twentieth century. Respectful of Indian traditions, the writers were careful to explain the conflicts between native/non-native claims, internative conflicts, and larger economic pressures. The story by Sweet, adopting Vizenor's tone, seemed to this reader to be inordinately harsh in her portrayal of Catholic nuns. Despite these niggling—perhaps personal—objections, a rich reading experience that carefully elucidates the complexity which has marked native and white exchanges in the contact period rests inside these covers.

Michael Longrie, a native of Superior, is an assistant professor of English and teaches American literature at the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater.

A FACE IN THE ROCK: THE TALE OF A GRAND ISLAND CHIPPEWA by Loren R. Graham. Washington, D.C.: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 1995. 160 pages, $22.00 hardcover. ISBN 1-55963-366-2

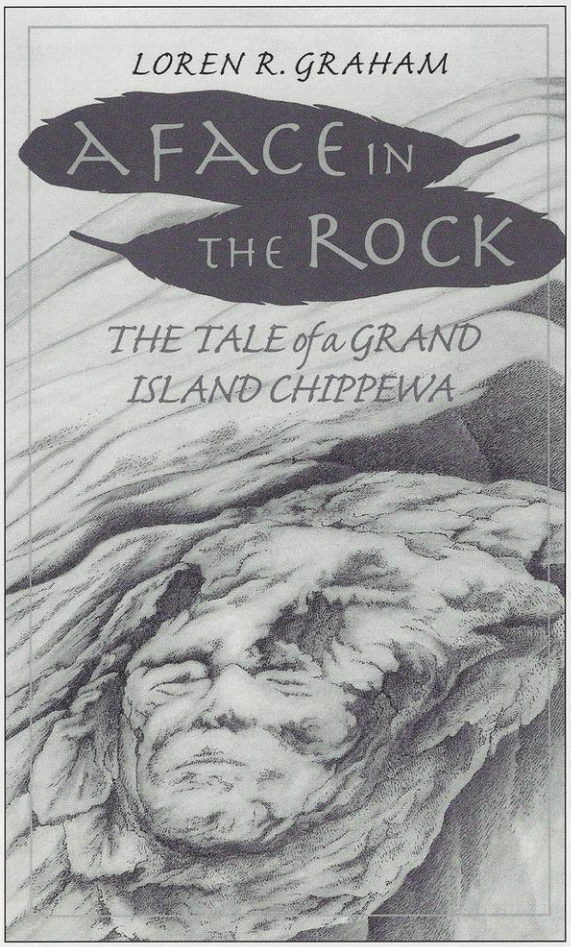
by Gladyce A. Nahbenayash and James A. Gollata.

In the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, near the settlement of Au Train, a face is carved in the rock cliff on the shore of Lake Superior. The carving is the work of an unnamed French trapper, who in 1820 preserved the visage and memory of "Powers of the Air," the only local survivor of a battle between Indian tribes.

Science historian Loren R. Graham, who holds a joint appointment in the Department of the History of Science at Harvard University and the Science, Technology, and Society Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, relates the tale of a band of Chippewa (Anishinabe, Ojibway) Indians who once lived on Lake Superior's Grand Island, near present-day Munising and the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. *A Face in the Rock* is specifically about "Little Duck" (later "Powers of the Air"), the son of "Autumn Duck," an Anishinabe leader, and "Sound of Wind In The Trees."

The Grand Island Anishinabeg were pacifists by nature and would not join the Anishinabe war parties that traveled west to the land of their traditional enemies, the Sioux. Again and again, the mainland Anishinabeg pressured the Grand Island men into going into battle, warning that if they didn't fight they would be regarded as cowards and would become outcasts of the Anishinabe nation. The island men were taunted, called

"waubosog," or rabbits. When the Grand Islanders eventually acceded and agreed to do battle, Nahbenayash, the Grand Island tradition-keeper, told about the various feared-ones in Anishinabe mythology, such as Kwasind and Mishemokwa. The women of the tribe listened to these descriptions and transformed them into "terror-inspiring grimaces and twisted visages" as they painted the faces of the men for war. The men, in turn, became emboldened by their own appearance, and anyone who looked at them was filled with dread. The twelve Grand Island men then joined in a war dance on the mainland, frightening even their Anishinabe compatriots, and proceeded to travel to enemy territory, joined by many other Anishinabe warriors along the route.



All of the Grand Island Anisinabeg were killed by the Sioux in the Battle of the Cavern, except for Little Duck, the fastest runner, who had been designated in advance to return to the Grand Island people and report the fate of the doomed warriors.

Nahbenayash (Line of Thunder Clouds) was sought out by Little Duck (now called Powers of the Air, transformed by his return from and reporting of the battle saga) to help preserve the memory of the fates of the "Courageous Twelve." Together, they wrote a song to commemorate the Grand Island men who had refused the Sioux's offer of safe passage home when they were trapped in the cavern with no hope of survival.

Through the years Powers of the Air sang the song to any who would listen, including Henry Schoolcraft, the ethnohistorian who recorded much of the Lake Superior woodland Indian culture and who provided the source material for Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, which takes place in the vicinity of Grand Island. Powers of the Air named his son Nahbenayash (in honor of the respected elder), who in turn named his son Nahbenayash. This grandson of Powers of the Air, whose government enrollment name was Thomas Cornelius Thomas, became an ordained Methodist minister who periodically preached at Indiantown (Thomasville), where Powers of the Air was a lay minister.

Graham's interest in the legends and history of Powers of the Air and Grand Island began over forty years ago, with his initial visit to the area, where he still summers. In an even fashion, Graham presents several components of Anishinabe culture, including information on clans; lodge structure; pictograph history; and funerary, courtship, and warfare practices. He also tells of individuals, such as Shingwauk, a shape-shifting shaman of the Midewiwin (Grand Medicine Society), and Manabozho, the trickster of legend. Graham also addresses the importance and sacredness of words in the Anishinabe language and culture: Words have power—words such as the "secret" word "chemonpoll"/chemaun poll used to propel a canoe on Lake Superior, a word which Powers of the Air had shared with Schoolcraft and which eventually found its way into Longfellow's poem.

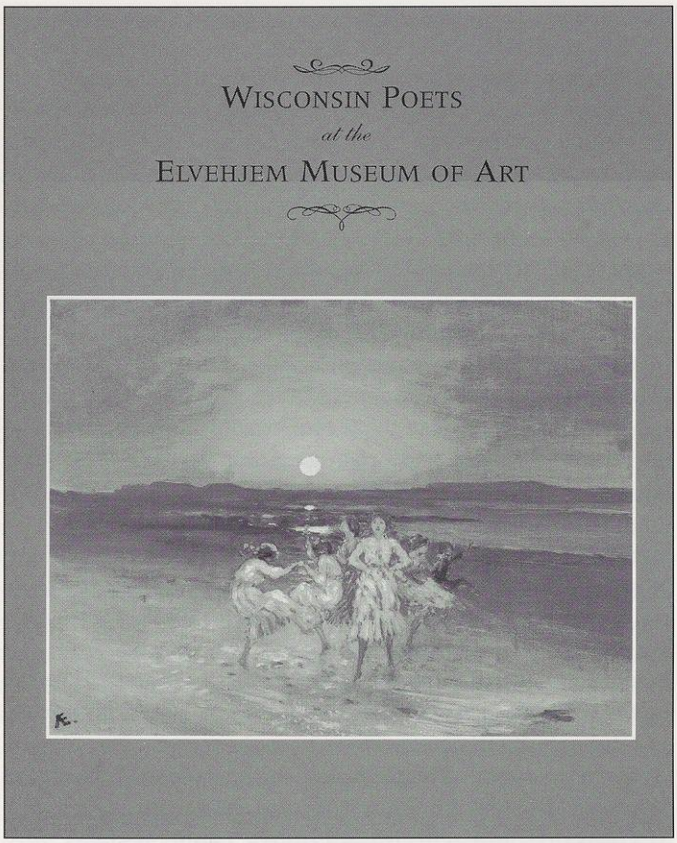
In addition to the service which Graham provides through the re-telling of this history, of particular value are the primary sources which he lists and addresses, including interviews with descendants of the Grand Island band and others connected with its history. *A Face in the Rock* illuminates the story of a strong people from their classical history, through their "collective calamity" and later contact with European settlers, and the impact of that contact on their environment and survival.

Gladyce A. Nahbenayash, assistant professor of American Indian studies at the University of Wisconsin–Superior, is the granddaughter of Thomas Cornelius Thomas, grandson of Powers of the Air. James A. Gollata is director of the library at the University of Wisconsin Center-Richland in Richland Center.

WISCONSIN POETS AT THE ELVEHJEM MUSEUM OF ART edited by Patricia Powell. University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1995. 72 pages, $15.95 softcover. ISBN 0–932900–38–0.

by Bruce Renner

Multi-media experiments have become so commonplace that, for the most part, they scarcely seem experiments at all. And that's just fine. In the arts, the whole idea of calling anything experimental seems almost silly. *Wisconsin Poets at the Elvehjem Museum of Art* is, therefore, no exception. In the catalog's foreword, in fact, Russell Panzcenko reaches back to



Aristotle to point out such connections, in this case to those concerning poetry and art, the main focus of this contemporary catalog. The catalog is also a celebration, we are told, of the museum's twenty-fifth anniversary.

We're also told that the project began with a poetry reading, ostensibly to generate new poems about the collection of art in the museum, and that this project, by its very nature, was bound to weigh in on the side of the art, and not the poetry. Despite this reservation, it is an impressive catalog, and one I strongly recommend.

While numerous books on the relationship between poetry and art have recently appeared, most of them choose to focus on the similarities between the mediums, as this one does. But I think their differences ought to be stressed and appreciated just as much. It's true that both are visual mediums, but I recall a writer once made a distinction between poetry and prose as being only a step removed from one another. I thought at the time that this was arbitrary. In terms of poetry and art, I wonder, which direction do we step first, and does it matter?

In the catalog the direction is always first toward the art work itself. In fact, the art for the most part seems to maintain this early advantage, whereas something more of a dialog at least would be preferable.

The distinction also has to do with the fact that, in the case of the art itself, we are dealing with museum pieces. The new poems are written about, but after, these. So essentially, in terms of the overall quality of both the poetry and the art, it's a stacked deck. The art work is invariably more interesting, hands down. But the idea of the dialog, or some kind of dialog, between the two mediums is still interesting, just as it would be if the process were reversed, as sometimes happens, and the art sprang from the poems.

Given the dialog here, the historical pieces have the greatest advantage, such as *Dancing Ganesa*, Unknown Indian, from the eleventh century, in carved black stone (Pala Period, 730–1086), which opens the catalog, and which in itself provides a stunning parallel to Max Ernst's *Janus*, which appears much later. Other striking pieces include *Young Woman in Black*, by Homer Boss, oil on canvas; *Crackled White* by Antonio Tapies, mixed media; and, more recently, *Pistachio* by Helen Frankenthaler, acrylic on canvas.

The best poems, however, are found elsewhere. For the most part the poems at the end of the catalog, those paired with the most "modern" art, fare best. The earlier poems are more stilted, more forced. The later art apparently allowed the poets more license. Among them, Eva Larkin's poem "Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight" (after Charles Burchfield's watercolor by the same name) and Kelly Cherry's "Rothko" (after Mark Rothko's untitled tempera) sparkle. Larkin's poem is free-flowing and explores most of the page, and so it's difficult to draw from for this review, but Cherry's is not:

> *The paintings were of what wasn't there,*
> *as if of the shadow of air . . .*
> *sharpened edges shading into something*
> *as sad as suicide, or painting nothing.*

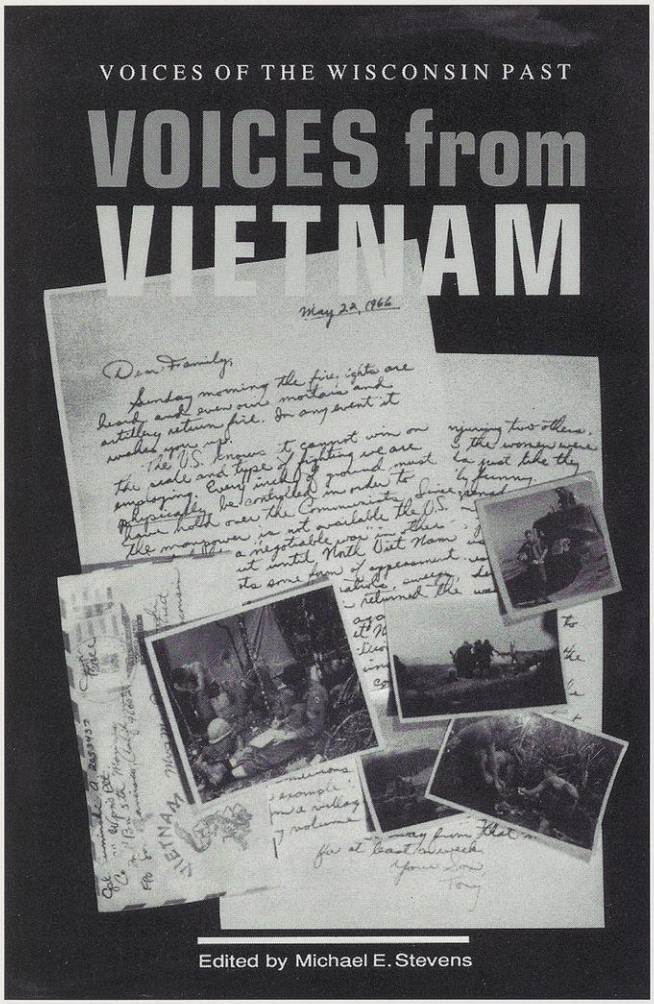
All my reservations aside, this is a beautiful catalog, and when it works, its full-color reproductions and best poems provide a sinuous dialog between self and surround. This is a handsomely produced book of often surprising quality.

Dodgeville writer and art critic Bruce Renner's most recent book of poems is The Language of Light Ambits. *He currently is a member of the* Wisconsin Academy Review *advisory committee.*

VOICES FROM VIETNAM edited by Michael E. Stevens. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996. 255 pages, $12.95 softcover, ISBN 0–87020–287–1; $24.95 hardcover, ISBN 0–87020–285–5

by Paul Schultz

Given the extent to which the war in Vietnam still sparks controversy, editor Stevens picks a safe entry point: Basic Training. The selection is safe, for soldiers have traditionally complained about this process which the military readily admits is meant to break down a civilian sense of individualism and replace it with a fighting team spirit. After this introduction, however, we go to war to experience a powerful collection of letters written by Wisconsin service personnel while stationed in Vietnam.



One of the arguments made to still dissent during those years was the belief that anti-war activities lowered the morale of our fighting men and women overseas. But readers of this collection discover just how split our own soldiers were. Bob Rock, for example, in a November 1969 letter writes, ". . . I can't say, nor can any of my platoon, whether we'd support Nixon or demonstrate against the [war] but we're all convinced we'd do one or the other." In a March 1970 letter Ronald J. Doering writes that "our country is the best! We are willing to fight for what we have and for what we are, the greatest nation in the world!" Meanwhile, Howard M. Sherpe in an August 1966 letter writes, "How the hell is my being here helping America keep its freedom? To stop the dominoes they say. Stop the Communists here or they'll eventually take over America. That's a bunch of . . . bullshit!"

More soldiers, however, reflect their own confusion or uncertainty. In June 1967, Robert S. Boeker writes that "something is wrong." Tom McCabe, June 1969: "It will never cease to amaze me how unorthodox this war seems compared to how I imagined it. There are no set lines of battle & it is usually over as fast as it starts. We move 100 meters from the battle & set up almost as nonchalantly as we would on LZ Dolly. This is truly a strange war both physically & mentally . . ."

There are race problems between the Vietnamese and Americans. David Sartori in July 1968 tells of a shoeshine boy who keeps upping the price until David complains. At that point, three Vietnamese military police appear and demand that he pay the full price to *them*, since the payment had "to be registered." When a truck full of American marines happens by, David enlists their help. The MPs quickly leave. The boy is nowhere to be found, but he has left behind his shoe box, which contains among the shoe shining equipment a "small plastic bomb."

Yet not all the American contacts with the Vietnamese are so unpleasant. David Olson in November 1967 tells us, "Most of the people are very friendly and the kids are cute. You really can't help but like them."

Our relationship with the native people takes an ironic twist, appropriate for this war, in a June 1968 letter from John Abrams. After a village has been leveled, soldiers chip in money to buy supplies and help rebuild their school.

Though the military discouraged marriage between soldiers and Vietnamese, romantic relations developed, as in Scott Alwin's letter of November 1968. "Why do I suddenly love some girl in a far away place? That is a difficult question."

We see, too, the beginnings of what will later be called post-traumatic stress syndrome. Tony Paulson writes in August 1970, "When I get home I think I am going to let go with a whole year's worth of emotions. And I'll cry like a baby. Until then I really can't think short or anything . . . I have been having bad dreams lately and am real nervous & jumpy . . ." Darrel Lulling in an October 1969 letter tells us, "I have been in a sort of a daze—I am still shaky . . ."

A point that often arises is that life is fragile. Bill Jung writes in October 1969, "Life is really so short and can be snuffed out so fast." In an August 1967 letter, Joseph Pilon understands this fragility and realizes what responsibility comes with parenting. "It must be terrifying. Perhaps if men understood this more, if they were able to experience the same terror day after day, . . . there would be no need to go seeking terror in battle." Kris Blumer understood it best. In a letter written a few months before his death in June 1969 he concluded, "The Vietnamese people are much the same as any other people . . . Even the people who don't speak any English at all seem to understand the words please & thank you. I guess people are much the same everywhere."

Paul Schultz is the Wisconsin Academy's business manager, a published writer, and a Vietnam war veteran.

The Culture of Maps and Maps of Culture(s): A Wisconsin Example

by Steven Hoelscher

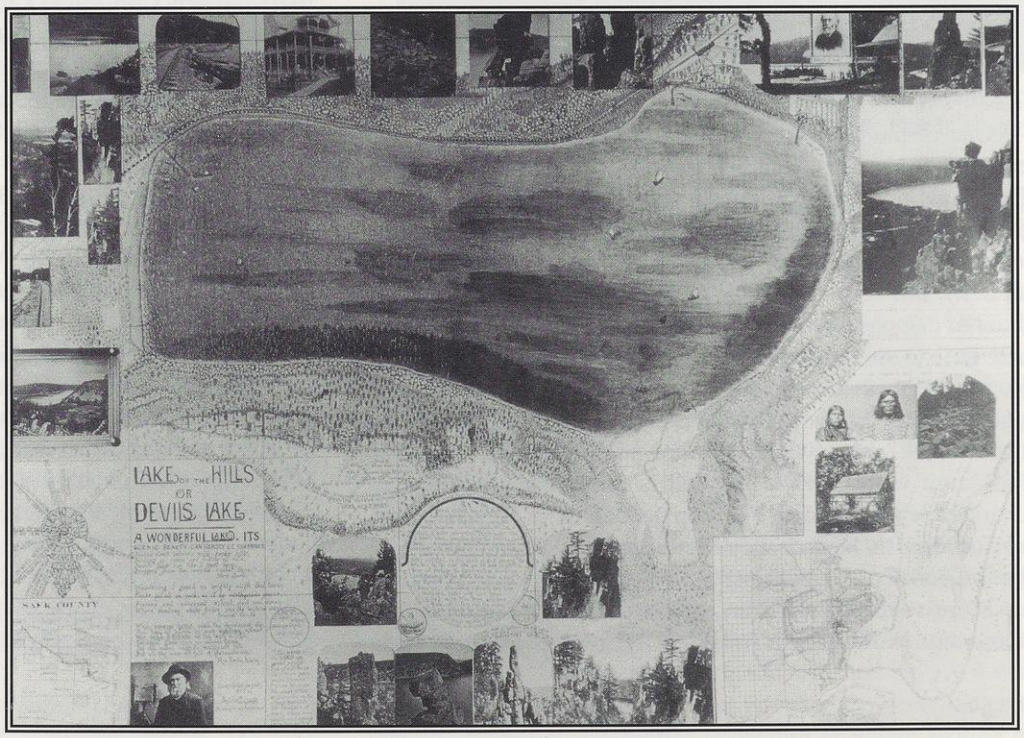
After three years of research and graphic design, the Cultural Map of Wisconsin *will appear this fall in bookstores and libraries across the state. The idea for a map of the state's culture dates back nearly a decade to discussions among David Woodward, Faith Miracle, and others at the Wisconsin Center for the Book, now a program of the Wisconsin Academy. At that time, there seemed to be a need for a comprehensive graphic representation of literary and artistic sites in Wisconsin, a need that quickly expanded to encompass the much broader realm of "culture."*

We acknowledge, with the literary critic Raymond Williams, that culture is one of the most complicated words in the English language. Accordingly, any map that purports to graphically depict such a complex, but immensely important, concept is bound to be fraught with challenges. As the *Cultural Map* makes its way from the printing press to the bookstore, this is perhaps an appropriate time to recount some of those challenges and our goals in creating a cartographic portrait of the state. This essay offers a brief theoretical, historical, and programmatic overview into the process and context of mapping culture in Wisconsin.

❦

Maps, for all their contrasts in design and function, inevitably work as way-finding agents. Nowhere is this more obviously true than the state highway map, the purpose of which is to show how to drive between two known points. Try to discover something about the space between the points, however, and the traditional highway map comes up lacking. A little-known cartographer highlighted this central idea more than twenty years ago when he observed that "the tourist map of the United States needs a great designer." Joseph Harrington lamented that inexpensive, functional, and standardized gasoline station maps had become the archetypal travel map of this country. He felt that mapping companies such as Gousha (for whom Harrington worked for more than eleven years) put the needs of its oil company clients before the needs of the map readers. This "disordered priority," he believed,

> coupled with the overwhelming concern for the mapping of road data and the neglect for the character of the land . . . has produced



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Lake of the Hills or Devil's Lake. *Map by William K. Caufield, ca. 1898. Courtesy the State Historical Society of Wisconsin map collection.*

> a map that is nothing beyond a diagram of road classification laced to an array of towns graded mechanically according to population sizes, [and] sprinkled with an odd mixture of names and symbols for fish hatcheries, airports, and curious relics. The automobile road map is an admirable directory in the manner of a telephone book but it is no description of the land. [It] has never been designed to give a sense of place [nor] has it been designed to make us open our eyes and really look at our land by showing us what to see and how to see.
>
> *Proceedings of the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping*, 1974

Harrington's interpretation of the standard travel map's "placelessness" is critical, because it points to our chief concern: namely, how to project a sense of place onto a map. In this regard, we aim to identify some of the elements underlying the personality of places in Wisconsin. By sense of place, we should consider its twofold meaning: (1) the characteristics that make a place distinctive or memorable and (2) the emotive bonds that a person or peoples have toward an environment. What concerns us is not so much how "experts" describe Wisconsin's unique sense of place or their personal "structure of feeling," although that may contribute toward making a place distinctive. Rather, we are interested in exploring those values which the inhabitants of the state themselves attribute to the landscape.

Though nebulous and complex, this dilemma pales next to more general problems of the representation of culture, our second theoretical interest. First triggered by debates within cultural anthropology, the so-called crisis of representation questions the way in which we portray the world in our books, articles, ethnographies, and maps. In particular, little agreement exists over the question of mimesis—the view that, with the right instrumentation and calibration, our representation of the world can be objectively and universally accurate. This perspective, dating from the Enlightenment, has been called increasingly into question, with especially vocal critiques coming from historians of cartography. As Brian Harley, Denis Wood, and others have shown, in spite of rhetorical claims to objectivity, maps are inevitably a cultural system, part of a social world in which they are produced. This recognition is important because it causes us to challenge many orthodox words in the cartographer's vocabulary: "impartial," "objective," and "scientific." We are realizing that even something as seemingly neutral as a state highway map is riddled with ambiguities, myths, and perspectives.

Cover to Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Summer Outings. *Originally published by the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, ca. 1941. Pamphlet includes cover and map. Courtesy the State Historical Society of Wisconsin map collection, reprinted with permission of the Union Pacific Railroad.*

I suspect that this critique of mimesis sounds familiar to readers of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. Nevertheless, a significant question remains: after learning how to *deconstruct* maps, how do we then *create* maps? It seems to me that there are three possible answers to this question. The first—still favored by many—is to ignore it and merely try to develop new techniques that more accurately symbolize the reality "out there." The second is to follow such critics as Doug Aberley and branch off into segmented, non-interacting communities in which every interest group constructs its own "separate, but equal" cultural map. A third direction attempts to accommodate the critique of mimesis by decentering exclusive control of representation. Here, a heightened awareness of the role of the cultural geographer and cartographer in map and text production sits astride the inhabitants' local knowledge. This third strategy, the one adopted for the *Cultural Map of Wisconsin*, sees representation not as avoidable bias but as an inescapable part in the formation of knowledge.

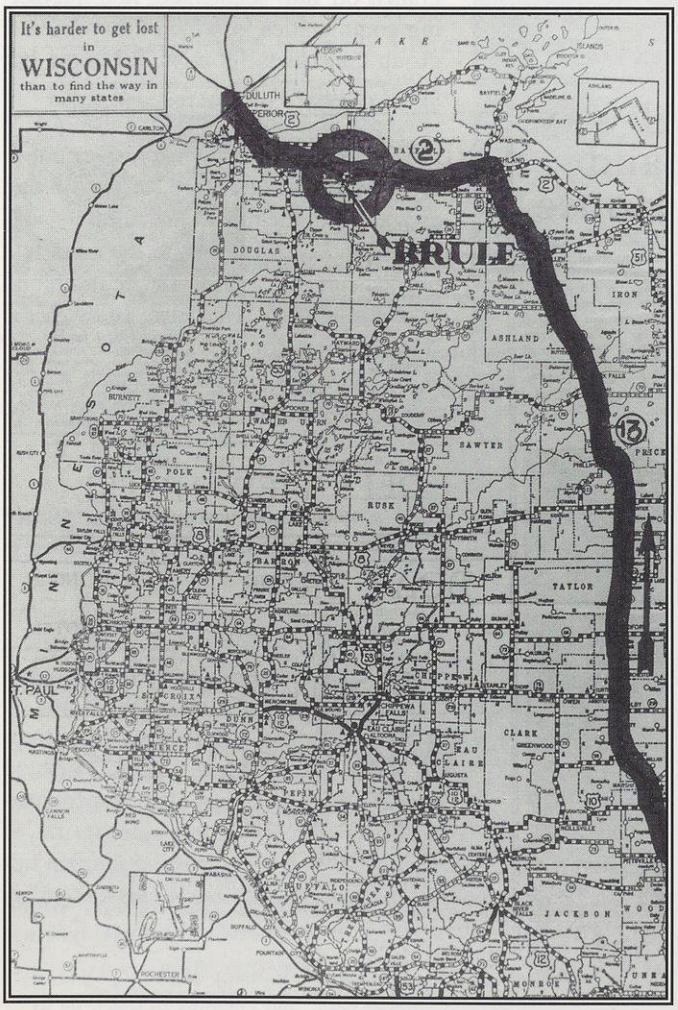
❦

Tourism and culture are rarely combined in the same sentence, unless the former is seen to denigrate the latter. "Tourists," Henry James noted a century ago, expressing a sentiment common among many elites from his day and our own, "are vulgar, vulgar, vulgar." We would do well to question such an easy assumption, for if touring, or travel, can be a source of scorn, it can also be a foundation for education and celebration of diversity. Montaigne, for one, believed that behind tourism lies a distinctly geographical motive—"to rub our minds and polish them by contact with others." He went on to remind us that

> there are so many different tempers, so many different points of view, judgements, opinions, laws, and customs to teach us to judge wisely our own, and to teach our judgement to recognize its imperfection and natural weakness.
>
> *Journal de Voyage*, 1770.

Of course, not all tourists are as sensitive to their surroundings as that French writer. Still, for many, travel *is* based on a desire to know more about the world as a way to greater self knowledge. Unfortunately, and all too often, the path to an educated tourism has been poorly illuminated. Four very different travel/cultural maps of the state illustrate this point.

William K. Caufield's 1893 map, *Lake of the Hills or Devil's Lake*, is one of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's earliest known cultural maps. Caufield, pictured in the bottom left margin of the map, was an early promoter and developer of the region. His map reflects not only a booster's vision of future recreational development (illustrated in the upper right corner by the railroad bringing visitors for a stay at the tiny cabins), but also a whimsical appreciation for the "wonderful lake." As he was breaking all the rules of scale and proportionality, Caufield conveyed some of the magic of Devil's Lake.



Wisconsin "Lucky 13" Official Highway Map. *Originally published by* The Wisconsin State Journal, *ca. 1927. Courtesy the State Historical Society of Wisconsin map collection, reprinted with permission of* The Wisconsin State Journal.

The railroad companies, such as the Northwestern line, could ill afford such fantasy, however. In their effort to market weekend escapes to the industrializing region's growing middle class, the railroad companies most frequently produced maps with tremendous detail in destinations, train schedules, and resort locations. Still, the land through which one sped remained a virtual *terra incognita*. The railroad companies applied the lion's share of their creative energies into the watercolor covers depicting serene, natural settings.

The great boom in mapping for travelers and tourists came not with the railroad, but with the automobile. It is with road maps that the lack of a tradition of a *cultural* cartography becomes most visibly apparent. At virtually any scale, James Akerman recently suggested, highway road maps served the sole purpose of guiding the motorist and little else. "Automobile touring has had less to do with traveling *in* the country than *through* it. The bold-line, sparsely detailed aesthetic of American road maps reflects this detachment from the countryside." Nowhere is this aesthetic more clearly visible than on a map such as the 1927 *Wisconsin "Lucky 13" Official Highway Map*. Designed to deliver the motorist safely from the Illinois border to the "Summer Whitehouse at the Brule River," the map does everything in its power to keep the traveler from getting lost. But its promise to "lead you through scenic wonders unsurpassed in the entire nation" must be taken on faith alone.

The *Wisconsin Romance Map*, designed by Nina Balman in 1934 and a lyrical celebration of the state's cultural geography, is very different from the touring maps of its generation. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* published the Wisconsin artists' map three years later to commemorate its 100th anniversary. The *Wisconsin Romance Map* was meant not only to guide the tourist but to encapsulate key historical moments and cultural sites, as it was "checked and approved for accuracy" by the State Historical Society's leading scholars. Notable firsts (roads, white settlements, courthouses) are given prominence, as are cozy events in the mythic past: Nicolette's showy landing on the shores of Green Bay and Eastern Indians happily "becoming American citizens."

What can we conclude from these four maps? First, they were produced inevitably by those whose livelihood depended on an active tourist trade: owners of resorts, the railroad, automobile associations and mapping companies, and chambers of commerce. This led to the inevitable result of a map based solely on serving the needs of the producer, as, for example, the oil companies' ambitions to sell gasoline or the resort owners' hopes of directing clients to northwoods retreats. Equally important, where maps do attempt to present a view of culture, slipping into cliches is all too easy. This is demonstrated on every map, but none better than on the *Wisconsin Romance Map*. The question then remains: How can one construct a map that captures Wisconsin's many senses of place, is balanced enough to provide a baseline of cultural/geographic literacy, and serves as a genuine guide for the contemporary traveler?

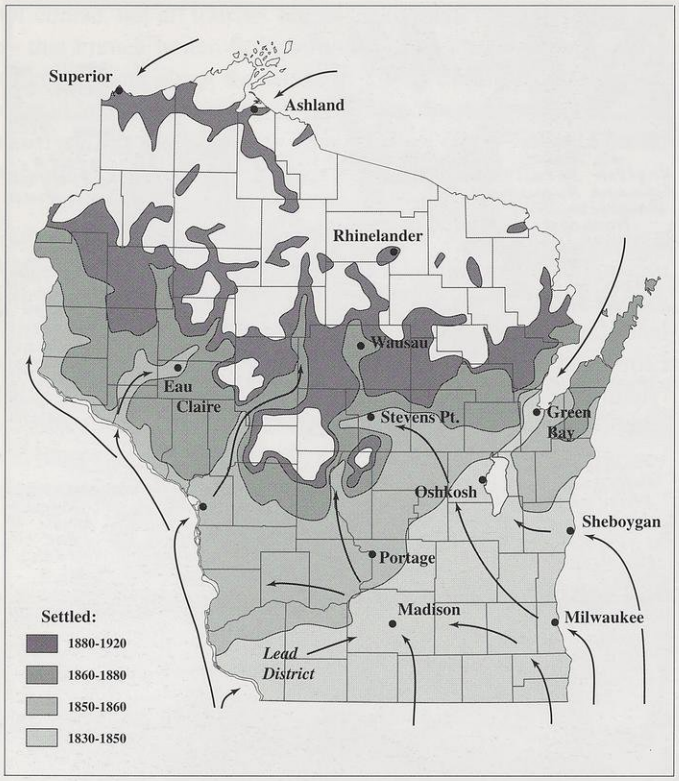
A map, like any text, is only as good as the research and thought behind it. Accordingly, we have traveled the state talking with people and gathering literally thousands of maps, local histories, brochures, pamphlets, and historic property inventories. Our methods of data compilation have been twofold. First, we made extensive use of the State Historical Society's library and archival sources, including contemporary and historic travel accounts as well as local and regional histories. We have gleaned primary sources from National Register site proposals, state and federal censuses, and various iconographic and manuscript archives.

It is with our second method of data compilation, however, that we begin to approach the twin problems of mimesis and sense(s) of place. Our solution has been to democratize the process through extensive public outreach. We have accomplished this in several ways. First, we have tried to make site visits to as many of the locations in the state as possible. This includes visits to local museums, factories, farms, county and local administrative units, and festivals. It would take a lifetime—and a long one at that—to visit every potential site in the state. Thus, we have invoked participation through correspondence, our second way of involving local citizens. In response to letters sent to local historical societies, ethnic organizations, and other groups, in addition to considerable media coverage, we received hundreds of letters from people throughout the state offering suggestions and critiques of the map idea. Lastly, we conducted nine public forums and seven less formal presentations in such diverse locations as university campuses, public libraries, tribal reservations, and historical museums.

Wisconsin Romance Map. *Map by Nina Balman, ca. 1934. Originally published by the* Milwaukee Sentinel *and reprinted with permission. Author's collection.*

Our primary goal was to obtain local residents' views about what might and might not be included on the map. Attendance at the forums varied from nearly fifty in Milwaukee to fourteen at the Lac du Flambeau Cultural Center. The public meetings attracted a diverse audience, bringing in local history buffs, committed community activists, tribal elders, teachers, and students. This collaborative approach, in turn, facilitated public debate about what constitutes "culture" and what sites in their home regions most clearly display that culture. The forums helped generate interest that resulted in many spinoff discussions and follow-up letters advising, counseling, and at times cautioning us about the places local inhabitants know best.

In short, our inclusion of the voices of local residents in the compilation process has been our way of approaching, however imperfectly, the problem of representation. Our map "informants" notified us of little-known cultural sites and to vernacular knowledge not immediately accessible to outsiders. By "culture," we have concentrated on aspects of the public and the social—what people achieve and create. This can be material, as in a landscape, or nonmaterial, as in an event such as a festival. Conversely and equally important, we have been alerted to contestable places that require considerable care. The most immediate example is the inclusion of hundreds of prehistoric burial mounds spread unevenly across Wisconsin. As one



Cultural Map of Wisconsin *inset showing the advance of Euro-American settlement.*

forum participant made clear, the cultural map had better not degenerate into a treasure map!

Finally, to put us in contact with less well known groups throughout the state; and to add a critical perspective, we have relied on our twenty-five-member advisory board made up of specialists in various aspects of Wisconsin's cultural and historical geography. They were sent a draft of the map and invited to comment critically on it. Their feedback was enormously helpful.

The resulting map is a full-color, rich source of geographical and cultural information. Substantial explanatory text appears on the face of the map and in the margins. Short place-narratives illustrate ethnic sites, regional literature, agricultural patterns, environmental history, and unique landscape features. Encapsulating critical moments in the life-history of a place or community, the place-narratives strive for balanced coverage, immediate local recognition, and a connection to larger geographical forces. To accompany the place narratives and to fill out principal cultural sites, point symbols of festivals, museums, literary sites, and seven other categories are keyed to an accompanying booklet.

A crucial feature of the map is its light shaded relief background, which will display the state's rich variation in landforms. Emphasizing the relationship between physical and cultural geography, the map depicts, for example, the drumlins of southeast Wisconsin, the sand plains of central Wisconsin, and the rugged driftless region of the southwestern part of the state. We find it unlikely, in other words, that one can understand the Norwegian settlement of Vernon County without considering the hilly topography to which the settlers were first attracted.

Lastly, the map's reverse side features large-scale maps of the state's major urban regions. We intersperse these with seven thematic maps accenting such different facets of Wisconsin's historical geography as indigenous peoples' regions, the emergence of an urban-industrial system, agricultural and industrial patterns, and European colonization.

❦

The real hallmark of the *Cultural Map of Wisconsin* hinges on whether we, as Andrew Clark once put it, "have gotten under the skin of the region." This does not mean that we need or even can discover some underlying truth or essence to the state; it does confer the hope that our representation imparts some of the complexity, tensions, and beauty that people of Wisconsin have expressed about their state. It speaks of the desire to capture some of the state's many senses of place.

If our goal is to present an objective depiction of the state, we will surely fail, for clearly maps are not slices of objective reality transposed onto a sheet of paper. Rather, they are a mode of discourse that reflects the limitations and biases as well as strengths of their makers. Nevertheless, I would argue that this realization need not paralyze us. If the *Cultural Map of Wisconsin* helps open our eyes to see the land anew, if it leads us to rethink our home or adopted state as we travel through it by car, bicycle, canoe, or armchair, we will then know that *this* cultural map does indeed work.

Acknowledgments

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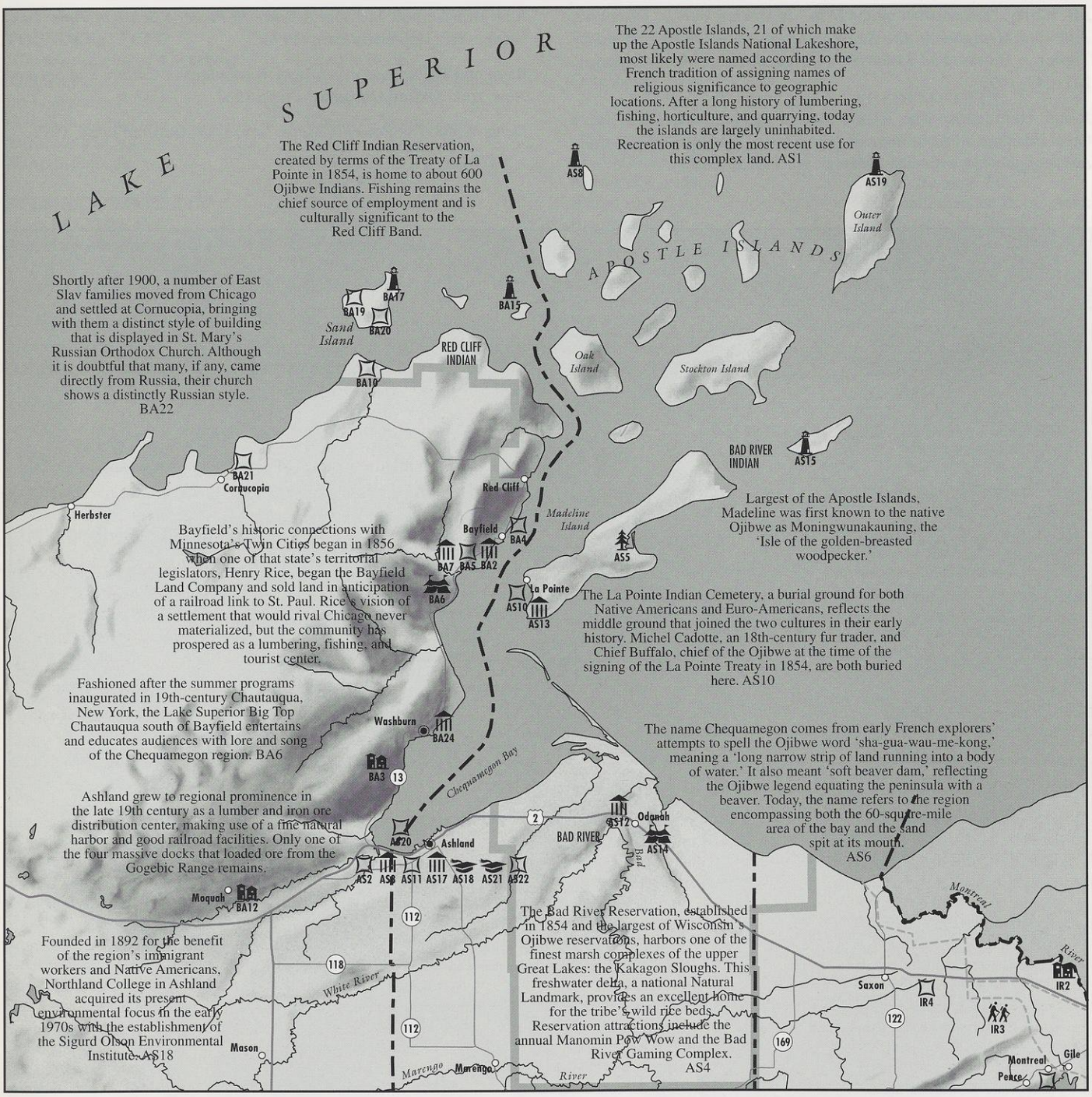
This article is dedicated to the memory of Josh Hane, who lost his life in July 1996 while mountain climbing in Alaska.



Cultural Map of Wisconsin *detail, Lake Superior region.*

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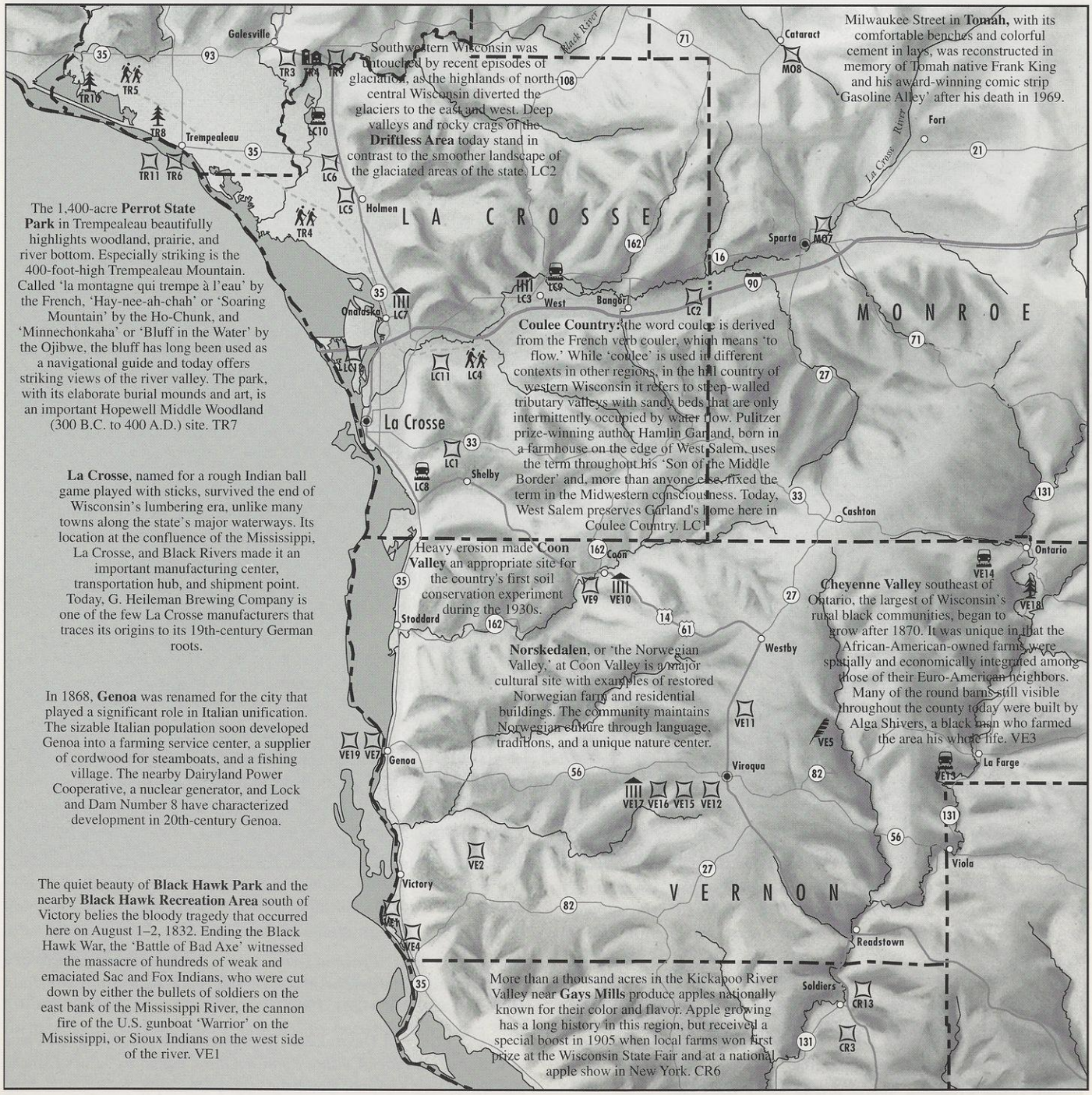

Cultural Map of Wisconsin *detail, the driftless region, including Vernon County.*

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