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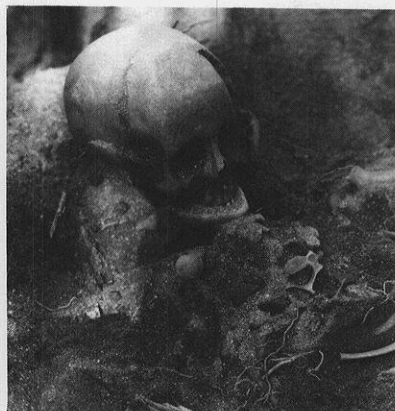
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**June 1986**

**Volume 32, Number 3**



**Mrs. Pat**



**Ancient Maya**

**On the cover: Kate Elsner's  
photograph from a 1985 series,  
"Vision." More of her work in the  
Wisconsin Photographers' Showcase**

# WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW

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## Editorial

### THE WISCONSIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS, AND LETTERS

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

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A magazine with a small staff such as the *Review* depends on others to gather information about research and creative activities around the state. We rely on our council, our members, and on the *Review* editorial board. With this issue we welcome a new editorial board. Advising us on science issues will be Reid Bryson, professor of meteorology and geography at UW-Madison and renowned climatologist and Brock Spencer, professor of chemistry and associate dean of Beloit College. Keeping us current on trends in art and on state artists will be Jane Brite, administrator/assistant curator of the Cudahy Gallery of Wisconsin Art, Milwaukee Art Museum and Warren Moon, professor of art history at UW-Madison.

Conferring with us on writers and literature will be Ron Ellis, professor of English at UW-Whitewater and editor of the journal *Windfalls*. Reading poetry manuscripts will be Angela Peckenpaugh, poet, professor of English at UW-Whitewater, and editor of the Sackbut Press; John Rosenwald, professor of English at Beloit College and a former editor of the *Beloit Poetry Journal*; and Ron Wallace, poet and director of creative writing program at UW-Madison. Consulting with us on interdisciplinary issues will be Roger Drayna, director of public relations for the Wausau Insurance Companies and Henry Halsted, vice president of the Johnson Foundation.

We also want to express our gratitude to outgoing advisors Sally Behr, UW-Madison art department; Barbara Fowler, UW-Madison professor of classics; Arthur Hove, UW-Madison director of information services and assistant to the chancellor; Peter Muto, professor of chemistry at UW-River Falls; and Ray Peuchner, of the Ray Peekner Literary Agency of Milwaukee. For your suggestions, manuscript readings, and direct advice on special issues, we thank you.

**1986 and beyond:** Coming up in September will be the annual literary issue with fiction, essays, and poetry. In December the topic will be changes in farming in Wisconsin. Special issues planned for 1987 include the performing arts—dance, music, and drama; the bicentennial of our constitution; and wildlife artists. Readers are invited to submit articles or suggest appropriate authors or topics for any of these forthcoming issues.



—Patricia Powell

## Authors and Artists

**Margot Peters** is a writer and a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, with a Ph.D. in Victorian literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is the author of *Charlotte Bronte: Style in the Novel*, *Unquiet Soul: A Biography of Charlotte Bronte*, *Bernard Shaw and the Actresses*, and *Mrs. Pat: The Life of Mrs. Patrick Campbell*. Awards she has won for her biographies include The Friends of American Writers Award for the Best Work of Prose (1975), the Banta Award for an outstanding contribution to the world of Ideas (1980 and 1984), and the George Freedley Memorial Award for the best theater book of the year (1980 and 1984). She has held the Kathe Tappe Vernon Chair of Biography at Dartmouth College and lectured at Harvard University, as well as served as juror for the American Book Award, the National Medal for Literature, and the Pulitzer Prize. Currently she is working on a biography of the "Royal Family" of the American theater: Ethel, John, and Lionel Barrymore.

**Jim Missey**, who teaches in the English Department at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, had a short story, "The Rhodesian Woman," in the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, June, 1982. Since then he has published, among other pieces, a personal essay, "Thoreau's Turtledove and Mine," in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 December 1983, and a critical essay, "Theme and Speakers in Shumway's 'Song of the Archer,'" in *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy*, 1983. The grant which supported his study of the London theater was provided by the UWSP's University Personnel Development Committee.

**Donald E. Thompson** received his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University. He is professor of anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he has been teaching since 1961. His latest book, with coauthor Craig Morris, is *Huánuco Pampa: An Inca City and Its Hinterland* published in London by Thames and Hudson in 1985.

**Jeff MacKinnon** received a B.A. from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and M.A., M.S. and A.B.D. from UW-Madison. He taught high school humanities and was chosen as an outstanding Wisconsin teacher. He was awarded a scholarship to Oxford, England. He has done archaeological field work in the U.S. and Guatemala and has directed the Point Placencia Archaeological project in Belize for the past three years. He is director of the Celtic Renaissance, which performs court and country music and dance of the British Isles from the Renaissance and baroque periods. He plays bagpipes, recorders, krummhorn, and harpsichord.

**Frederic W. Braun** received his B.A. in economics from the University of Wisconsin in 1933. After World War II he set up an accounting practice in Antigo in which he is still active. He is a member of the Thoreau Society and has written for its bulletin.

**Richard J. Lohr** received a B.A. from Wartburg College and a M.S.T. from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, with a concentration in East Asian history in the twentieth century. From 1967 to 1983 he taught world history at Wausau West High School. In 1980 he took part in the first teacher exchange with the People's Republic of China. Since 1983 he has managed the Pine Valley Golf Course in Marathon, which he helped his parents build. He and wife Joyce live in Marathon with son Eric and daughter Tanya.

**Gail Roub** was born in Monroe (1926), where he often rode along to observe his veterinarian father at work. Later, when he started teaching history at Fort Atkinson High School, he remodeled a fishing shack built there by his veterinarian grandfather, and that is how he met the poet, Lorine Niedecker, who lived nearby. Now a teacher with thirty years' experience, he hopes to retire in three years when his oldest children are graduated from high school. Roub took his undergraduate work at Northwestern University and earned his M.S. in history-education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1965. He received a Fulbright Scholarship in 1964 for study at the Sorbonne University in Paris and has twice been named teacher of the year (1966 and 1983) in his local school district.

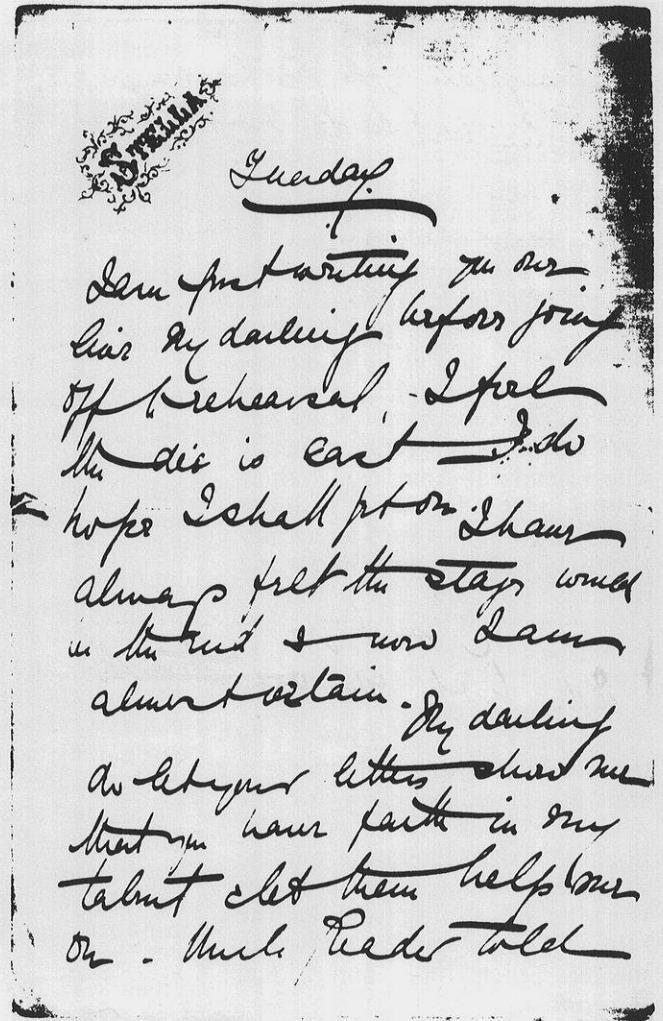
**Karl Gartung** is founder and director of literary programs for Milwaukee's Woodland Pattern Book Center. He counts himself lucky as a writer to have found Lorine Niedecker's work and to have the opportunity through the center to attempt to build the community of her dreams.

**James Van Deurzen** studied ceramics with Don Reitz. Van Deurzen is a practicing artist working in glass. From his studio near Mazomanie he creates objects that are exhibited throughout the United States. His work is in many private and public collections, including the Corning Museum of Glass. He has recently had a one-person show in Atlanta. His work can be seen in Wisconsin at the Cudahy Gallery of the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Edgewood Orchard Gallery in Fish Creek. He holds a B.S. in art, B.A. in art history, M.A. in art, and M.F.A., all from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

continued on page 64



The actress's first major success in the title role of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* by Arthur Wing Pinero in 1893



## Deciphering Mrs. Pat

By Margot Peters ©1984

One night during the years I was writing a biography called *Bernard Shaw and the Actresses*, I awoke from a nightmare. All that day I had been poring over copies of three letters written by Mrs. Patrick Campbell to Shaw, trying to decipher that impetuous Edwardian actress's even more impetuous handwriting. In my dream I was no longer writing a biography of Shaw, but of Mrs. Campbell. Instead of three letters, my desk was heaped with thousands—all of them dashed off with that blithe disregard for convention that inspired Shaw to brand her "a Monster of illiteracy," all containing the most tantalizing secrets—if only I could read them.

Three years later I actually found myself writing a biography of Mrs. Patrick Campbell. At first, lack of new material made the task comparatively easy. Stella Campbell's letters to Shaw had already been published in 1952: Stella Beech, familiar with her mother's hand,

Pat plainly a Saturday  
 that he could do nothing  
 for him, & perhaps thinking  
 of our debts, I cannot  
 look & work at once.  
 Looking back can look  
 forward just work work  
 work - if I only felt stronger  
 I am so afraid I shall  
 faint tonight.  
 I am your darling  
 I do hope you are thinking  
 of me - your own  
 Stella

The famous scrawl rescued from the dustbin announcing that she has decided to become an actress: "I feel the die is cast" (1886)



The actress as Militza in *For the Crown* in 1896. Courtesy of Patrick Beech

had transcribed them for *Bernard Shaw and Mrs. Patrick Campbell: Their Correspondence*. Of course, I did not know where the originals of those letters were; no one seemed to—I had been trying to trace them for years. But clearly the bulk of Stella's letters to Shaw were already in print. Then, the actress had included a number of her letters in her 1922 autobiography. Presumably Mrs. Campbell could read her own calligraphy; these should be fairly accurate. I myself had translated a handful, though I still did not know whether Mrs. Campbell had told the producer Nigel Playfair that she could not afford to *risk* or to *rest*, or whether she complained to her friend Harriett Carolan about her present *moves, means, views, or news*. But these were trifling puzzles, not the nightmarish heaps of indecipherable letters of my dream. In fact, I soon longed for letters: while the actress's professional life was reasonably well documented, much of her private life was a blank.

Then Dan H. Laurence, the noted Shaw scholar, sent me a clipping from the *London Guardian* of December, 1974. Titled "An actress reveals all," the article reported the discovery of "a collection of intimate and often revealing family letters" written by Mrs. Patrick Campbell to her sister Louisa ("Lulo") Tanner. The reporter, whose deciphering abilities were enviable, quoted just enough of these letters to convince me that here was the kind of evidence crucial to a biographer. Immediately, I booked a flight to London. There was only one problem: the clipping was seven years old. Anything could have happened to those letters in seven years.

In the United States it's a minor miracle when anyone stays on the same job for seven years. It seemed miraculous, then, that I found Lindsay Mackie still reporting for the *Guardian*; she was, however, currently on vacation. There was no lack of sleuthing while I waited. The British Library, the Mander and

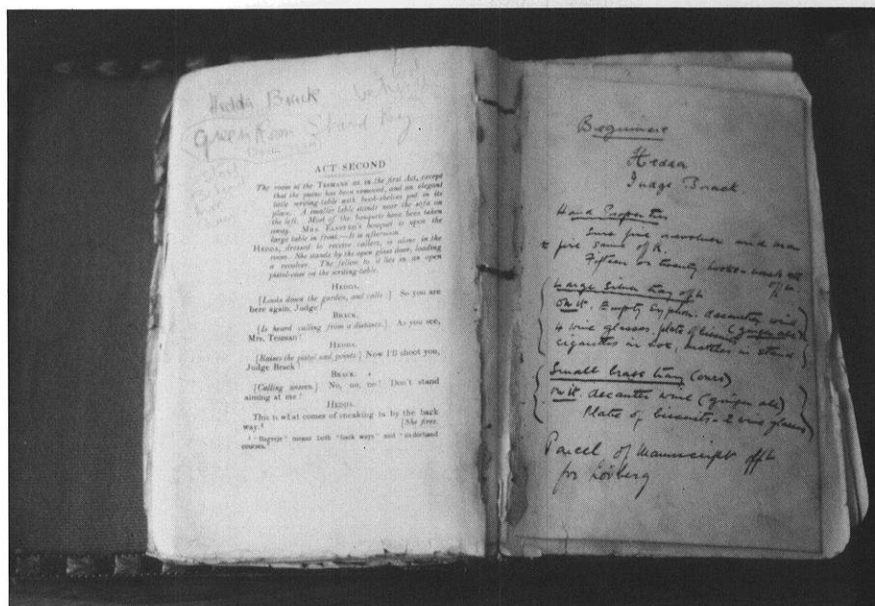
Mitchenson Theatre Collection, St. Catherine's House—above all the Victoria and Albert Museum's Enthoven Collection with its photographs, reviews, and fourteen of Mrs. Campbell's own prompt books—all yielded up treasure. But I could think of little but the trove of letters, and was thus overjoyed one day finally to get Miss Mackie on the line. Yes, she remembered doing the story; it had been, in fact, her first assignment. The letters had been discovered by a porter at the Onslow Court Hotel. Unfortunately, she could not remember his name, nor had she any idea where the letters were now. However, if I called round after four at the *Guardian* offices, she believed she could take me to the porter's flat, which she remembered as being located above a garage off Marylebone Road.

I did call round, promptly, and was escorted by Lindsay Mackie to a rusting yellow Austin that seemed to be held together largely by black tape. We began the long crawl westward across the hot, traffic-choked city, Miss Mackie gripping a loose door with one hand and steering with the other as she wondered whether the flat might have been above a *Volvo* garage and whether she would recognize the porter if we found him. We finally ground to a stop in a side street somewhere north of the point at which Marylebone becomes the Westway. In front of us was a mechanic's shop, surmounted by a complex of flats. We climbed open steps and faced an outside corridor punctuated by four doors. Miss Mackie's valiant but faltering memory could not remember which door might produce the porter. Our first knock roused no one; our second an Iranian clad only in a bath towel. Lindsay tackled the fourth door, while I rapped at the third. It was opened by a slight, middle-aged man who raised his eyebrows expectantly. I could think of nothing to say but, "Mrs. Patrick Campbell?" He nodded, and the next moment Miss Mackie and I were inside.

Even after seven years, William Sheridan, his friend Judy Brown, and Lindsay Mackie recognized each other almost immediately. I was introduced as an American professor, which instantly accounted for the eccentricity of our visit. Clearly Mr. Sheridan, ex-porter of the Onslow Court Hotel, was delighted to be in the spotlight again: he recounted with relish his discovery ("One dark and rainy night!" put in Mrs. Brown) of a large brown paper bag in one of the hotel's dustbins. "Why had he rescued a sackful of letters?" I wanted to know. "Why, you see," said Mr. Sheridan, "I caught the name Campbell, and thinking the letters had something to do with the great football star, I fetched them out and brought them home with me!"

It had been Judy Brown (herself a former newspaper woman) who, after hasty research at the nearest library, informed him that this Campbell was not his hero, but Mrs. Pat, the actress who had won fame as Pinero's Second Mrs. Tanqueray and Shaw's Eliza Doolittle. It was also Judy Brown who had reported the find. But how, we all marveled, had the letters got into the dustbin in the first place? Since most of the letters were addressed to Lulo Tanner, we speculated that she had left them at the Onslow Court sometime in the thirties. If this was the case, then the hotel had kept them for thirty-odd years before deciding in 1974 that its custodial duties were void. Or, as the theater expert Joe Mitchenson had speculated, perhaps an American woman who advertised for Campbell material in 1960 might provide the key—if one could find her.

Hanging in the air was the question I dreaded to ask. Lindsay Mackie's article had concluded, "The finders of the letters hope that if true ownership is not claimed they can be given to a museum. Their monetary value would be relatively small." But no one had contacted the *Guardian*. Had, in fact, William Sheri-



Mrs. Campbell's own prompt copy for her production of *Hedda Gabler*

dan and Judy Brown disposed of them? In answer, Mr. Sheridan rose and, reaching onto the top of a wardrobe, drew down a large, dusty, green filing case. After seven years, the letters were still in his hands.

Biographers tend to become so engrossed in their work that they think their subject is the center of the universe. All I could think of as I hastily examined the considerable contents of the green case was, "This is a priceless treasure; how can I persuade Mr. Sheridan to lend it to me?"—for even a brief glance convinced me that it would take weeks—months—to sort through the letters. I had to have them. He would never let them go.

But that is a biographer's delusion. Mrs. Patrick Campbell was not the center of William Sheridan's universe, nor did he particularly value her scraps of paper. "Take them and welcome," he said expansively. Mrs. Brown was more prudent; she produced a slip of paper and I willingly signed for them. Mr. Sheridan, however, continued to press the letters upon me: "They're yours. Glad to be of help!" Only Lindsay Mackie seemed wary; I'm sure she believed me an unscrupulous American adventurer about to make off with Mr. Sheridan's find. She need not have worried. Before leaving London, I realized that deciphering and chronologizing the undated letters would be a matter of half a year. Mr. Sheridan wanted to sell; I wanted to buy: seven years later his discovery rewarded us both.

The adventure of the hotel porter was succeeded by the considerable pleasure of at last meeting Mrs. Campbell's grandson, Patrick Beech. Scholars familiar with the intricacies of the Stella-Joey correspondence know that Patrick Beech's two daughters were designated by Shaw himself as the ultimate beneficiaries from the publication of the letters. But I knew little else about Patrick Beech himself, so that it was with decided interest (and many wrong turns) that I piloted my rented car at last into the stableyard of Mill Bank near Great Malvern, and was greeted by a slender, gray-bearded man in tweeds who did not look like Mrs. Pat (as I'd hoped), but did prove to resemble strongly the portrait of her grandfather hanging in the Beech's upper hall. Patrick's wife Merle produced tea and cake and then, quite sensibly more interested in her horses than in Mrs. Campbell, left us to it. In the long ensuing conversation (which produced such fascinating discoveries as the fact that Beatrice Stella Campbell was always known to the family as "Mother Beatrice" or "M.B."), I suppose I was happiest to learn that Patrick Beech had liked his grandmother. The actress's dominating personality and whiplash wit are, of course, legendary. "She had to be queen," said Beech. His mother, Stella Beech, had stood up to her; the result had been persecution, quarrels, estrangement. Quite naturally, Patrick Beech took his mother's side. Yet Mrs. Campbell could also be warm, generous, and

Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the New York production of E. F. Benson's *Aunt Jeannie* in 1902. Peters found the postcard in a theater memorabilia shop off Charing Cross Road.



charming. This was the side that she showed her grandson, and Beech recalled with a smile the five-pound notes that she had sent him at school and happy vacations with his grandmother's aristocratic friends at Ruthin Castle and Stanway. It was quite three hours later that I finally rose to go and, belatedly, thought to ask him whether he had any idea where the originals of Stella Campbell's letters to Shaw were. Libraries didn't know, Shaw scholars didn't know. "M.B.'s letters?" said Patrick Beech. "Why, they're upstairs in my study. Would you like to take them with you?"

The nightmare had come true. Not thousands, but hundreds of Stella Campbell's letters piled on my desk—many requiring hours of examination under a magnifying glass before I could crack her code. Back in the



Costume sketch for Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* (1914)

States, I learned that Bernard F. Burgunder, the collector responsible for the excellent Shaw and Campbell cache at Cornell University, had recently purchased for the library Mrs. Campbell's letters to her business manager, Arthur Bertram. I phoned and found him fuming. "I paid a fancy price," he complained, "and when I got them into my hands, I couldn't read a word!" Sympathizing, I hung up and went back to my own ordeal.

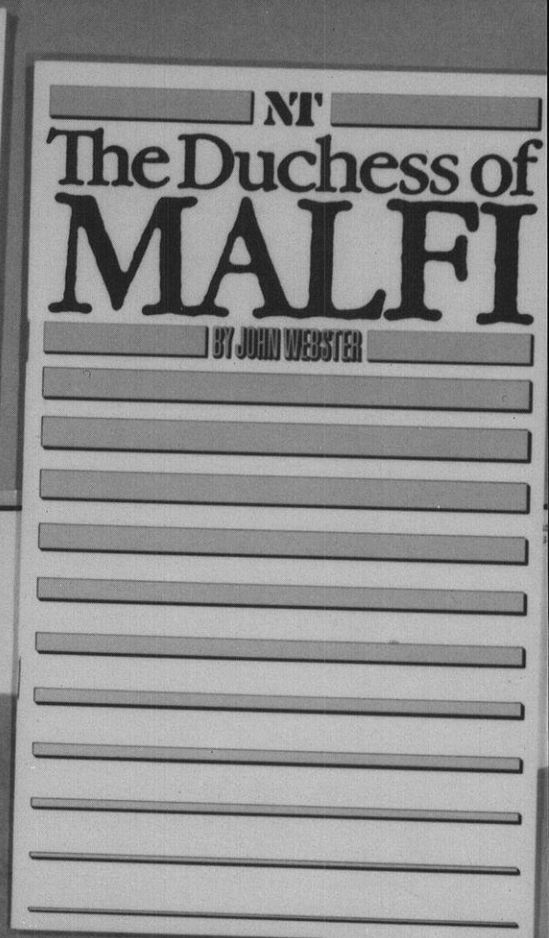
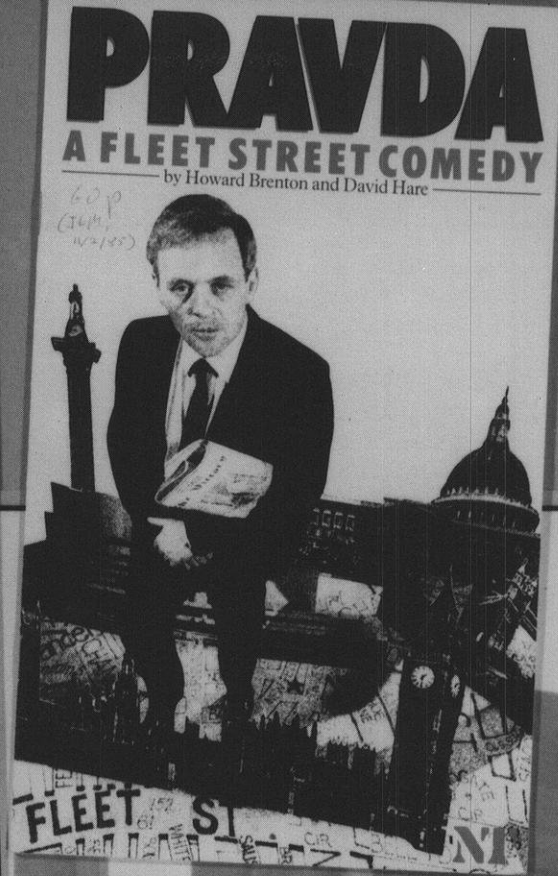
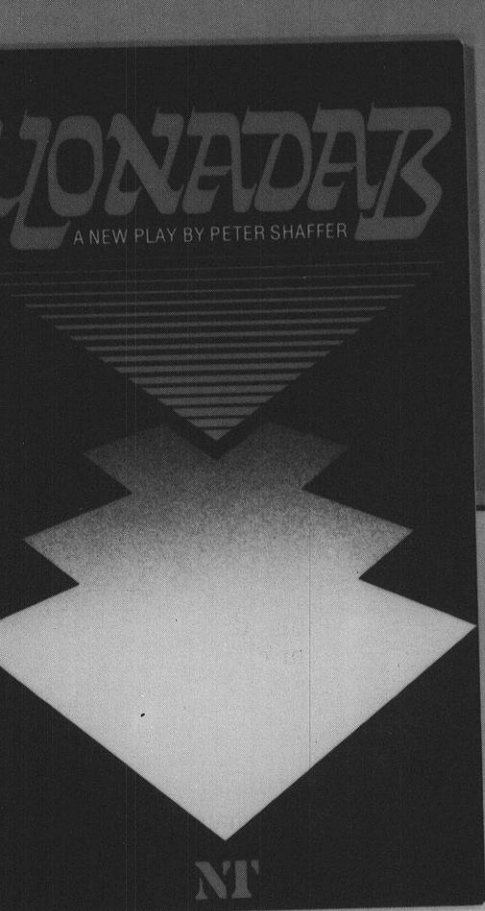
The missing pieces kept coming. Frances Tompkins wrote from Florida. She had been Mrs. Campbell's part-time secretary in the late thirties and owned a small parcel of the actress's letters: would I be interested? Harvard's Houghton Library yielded dozens written to the playwright Frederick Witney; Cornell dozens more to Agnes Claudius, the companion who nursed Mrs. Campbell as she lay dying in Pau, in the south of France. Churchill College Library, Cambridge, contributed Stella's letters to her intimate friend, Dame Edith Lyttelton. Stella Campbell, it was turning out, was hardly Shaw's "Monster of illiteracy": she had written copiously and to many correspondents. She certainly was, however, "a monster of indecipherability." As she ingenuously wrote Dame Edith, "I really believe you haven't been able to make out a word all these years!"

She exaggerated—a little, as I have—a little. Time, effort, and sheer will proved much of Mrs. Campbell's script legible. She was perfectly aware herself that her dashing, telegraphic communications were no works of art: "My letters are worth two pence," she told Shaw, "—yours fifty quid." "I chose to be an amateur, and not a professional!" she retorted on another occasion to the playwright's perpetual reminders that she took the written word too lightly. Still, she was acutely aware of the ephemeral quality of the actress's art. Her exasperation with Shaw's eternal consciousness that every word he wrote was destined for the British Museum was half chagrin that her words were not. She was thirsty enough for immortality to get Hollywood to film her when she was almost seventy, fifty pounds overweight, and terrified of the camera. The humiliation of discovering that she looked like "Mussolini's mother" was compensated for by the fact that she had preserved the ghost of her artistry on celluloid. For the same reason she carried the Stella-Joey correspondence around with her in a large black hat box till the day of her death. Published, the letters offered another guarantee of lasting fame. And yet, always perverse, she dashed off her communications carelessly, cryptically, irregularly, often illegibly—challenging both her immediate readers and future biographers to decipher the fascinating personality that was Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Taken all together, they are a not unfitting signature to a remarkable woman's remarkable career. □

Amey will send her  
a telegram saying I  
have arrived in  
Bournemouth. Mother  
thinks written will be  
better which will be  
put in her on Sunday  
evening. I am much  
sorry every one is very  
kind to me etc etc -  
I have missed lessons  
from 6.15 till 10.15  
9 - I have been very  
tired morning  
the 10.7. I go to Bournemouth.

Still with I send you my  
address - next letter tell me  
in the next letter all mine are true.  
Darling that all mine are true.  
Everything is arranged  
for 6.15. I had the  
doctor's string in his  
pocket yesterday.  
He has seen that  
clergyman about it -  
at 11.00 -  
in a room or relation in  
the church. I have been  
the last letter Mother  
ordered till Mother  
the would make just  
now stand a end  
to. Mummy at 6.15 on

This letter to her sister Lulo confiding her elopement with Patrick Campbell in June 1884 was another bit of dustbin treasure



# The London Theater Fall 1985

By Jim Missey ©1986

June 1986/Wisconsin Academy Review/9

For the fall of 1985 I was appointed to the semester abroad in London of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. While there, I had a grant which enabled me to survey extensively the London stage, about which I made some observations.

First, but not most important, I was struck by the inexpensive admission to the London theaters. During my three months there, I saw thirty-eight shows and paid ticket prices all the way from one pound, for standing room at a matinee performance of *Pravda*, to fifteen pounds for a ticket to *Cats* from a scalper. I paid an average six pounds, twenty-one pence for each ticket (the equivalent of nine dollars); the seats were adequate to good, even the standing room, which was inconvenient but provided a good view of the stage.

I was also favorably impressed by the abundance of plays offered in London. In the weekly guide to cultural events, *Time Out*, for September 19-25, I count about a hundred plays and musicals being offered on any given day. Because some theaters—notably the National—offer plays in repertory, with more than one play alternating in a single week, the number of plays offered in a seven-day period exceeds a hundred.

Although the London theater offers about a hundred plays at one time, not all the productions are of professional quality. I think of the London stage as composed of three sorts of theater—the West End (the conventional, commercial theater), the Fringe (intimate theaters, often associated with a pub, usually outside of the West End, and corresponding to the off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway theater in New York), and the subsidized (the companies, notably the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, which receive substantial funding from government agencies—58.8 percent of its annual income for the National). In *Time Out* for September 19-25, about half of the plays listed are at Fringe theaters.

One can understand the multiplicity of plays in London by looking at the listing in the same issue of *Time Out* of one Fringe venue, The Cafe Theatre Upstairs. It lists four plays a night: Dario Fo's and Franca Rame's *Medea* and *The Same Old Story* at 6:30 p.m., Sartre's *Intimacy* at 7:30, and an adaptation of Dostoyevsky's *Underground Man* at 8:30. And the listing for the National Theatre, containing three separate stages, indicates a reason for the number of plays per week: the National has two plays at the Lyttleton, two shows (one a double bill) in repertory at the Olivier, and one play at the Cottesloe.

London theater offers not only plentitude but great variety, including new plays and classics, straight plays and musicals, serious drama and light pieces. The National Theatre produces the richest variety of plays, usually of high quality, but it is only one of many theatrical venues in London. The variety is suggested in the shows I saw in a two-week period: a revival of Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* and Sheridan's

*The Critic* on a double bill at the National; a new play by Howard Barker, *The Castle*, at the Pit (the small stage at the Barbican Centre, the London base of the Royal Shakespeare Company); the British premiere of *Ludlow Fair* by the American playwright Lanford Wilson at a pub theater; a new play by Malcolm McKay, *Airbase*, at a small West End theater; a new play by Peter Shaffer, *Yonadab*, at the National; a five-play bill (new one-act plays) at the National; a short play, *Catch Sixty-Nine (A Spoiled Identity)*, at a small lunchtime theater; a new play by Ronald Harwood, *Interpreters*, at the Queen's in the West End; and Webber's *Cats* at the New London Theatre in the West End. Some of the plays I saw during my three months in London give an even better idea of the variety: revivals of classics, like Shakespeare's *Othello*, Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and Chekhov's *The Seagull*; new plays, like Wallace Shawn's *Aunt Dan and Lemon* and Poliakoff's *Breaking the Silence*; adaptations, like dramatizations of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and of *As I Lay Dying*; and musicals, like *West Side Story* and *Les Misérables*.

Though I was impressed favorably by the modest admission cost, abundance, and variety of plays in London, I found the quality uneven. Several plays, including some about which I had had high expectations, were disappointing, though I saw some high quality plays.

Among the disappointing plays, I would mention first three plays by Howard Barker, a prolific new English playwright, presented in repertory at the Pit: *Downchild*, *Crimes in Hot Countries*, and *The Castle*. Though the plays contained verbal brilliance, it sometimes obscured the plots; each play seemed to be a potpourri of currently fashionable subjects; and I found in them often a disparaging view of women underlying the superficially sympathetic one.

*Crimes in Hot Countries* contains an example of obscure plotting. A group of English people go to a colony (one of the "hot countries" of the title, another perhaps being the central female character, Erica), which a group of people, including a military garrison, already inhabits. Some of the characters revolt, but I could not determine whether the rebels were the newcomers or the older settlers. In *The Castle* some men who have been on a crusadelike venture, return to their home country to find it taken over by women who have become lesbians. Someone continually asks for the fortifications of a castle to be built higher and higher; but I was never sure who made the requests nor who fulfilled them.

The charge that Barker throws together a thematic stew can most clearly be documented in *Downchild*, in which he lumps together infidelity, gayness, and abortion, the only difference between Barker's dish and a stew being that real ones have simmered into a unity.

It is in the treatment of women by Barker, however, that I am most uncertain regarding his achievement.

I came away from the plays feeling that he did not like women because he basically presents them unfavorably. The portrayal of Erica and of the prostitutes in *Crimes in Hot Countries*, for example, shows Barker's ambivalent attitude. The actress Maggie Steed does a fine job of portraying a woman whose nerves are tautly drawn. However, the character Erica, by inviting casual sexual gropings, seems pitiable rather than sympathetic. Though Erica's sexuality is pitiable, she is clearly a sexual creature; but the three young prostitutes in the play who have gone out to the colony to serve the men are like boards on a picket fence. In the other two plays, Barker also presents a fundamentally pejorative view of women. In *Downchild* an Erica-like character invites casual sexual encounters that are so abrupt as to be nearly assaults, and in *The Castle*, after the men have returned and retaken control of the country, most of the women are destroyed, with the one woman survivor being forced to carry around a dead child that is slowly rotting. Of course, one might say Barker is merely showing the effects on women of a male-dominated society, but I felt that underlying a feminist intention was a disparaging view of women.

Another play which disappointed me was Harvey Fierstein's *Torch Song Trilogy*, about a Jewish drag queen, Arnold, who falls in love with Ed, who is presumably bisexual. Though Arnold was performed flawlessly by Anthony Sher, who won the *Evening Standard's* award for best actor in 1985 for his performance as Shakespeare's Richard III, *Torch Song Trilogy* itself was not flawless. The first act, in which Arnold is an endearing performer who wins over the audience with slightly self-mocking one-liners, is successful. The one-liners begin to pall in act two, however, which takes place at Ed's farmhouse in upstate New York, where Arnold, his new boyfriend Alan, Ed, and Ed's wife Laurel come together for a weekend holiday. The four become deeply entangled as Ed seduces Alan, and the act is variations on stereotypes about relationships. Because the emotions like jealousy are about gay and bisexual relationships, the audience is asked to believe that the situation is significant. It's basically stereotypical, however, as is act three, in which Arnold becomes a Jewish mother playing against his own Jewish mother. The playwright only slightly redeems the act by introducing Arnold's adopted teenager David, a precocious, engaging boy.

A final play I found disappointing was a new drama by Peter Shaffer, *Yonadab*, which opened at the National shortly before I left London. As in *Equus* and *Amadeus*, Shaffer uses a narrator (Yonadab), an undramatic device that causes the play to rely heavily on long speeches. Though *Yonadab* (played by Alan Bates) more often comments on the action than relates it, the long speeches undermine the potential power of the play, especially in the first act. The second act, in which Yonadab becomes more directly involved in the action, is more successful. The success partly comes from the playwright's limiting the focus to the change

in Tamar, who was raped by her half brother, Amnon, in the first act. Her evolution from a typically soft character to a harsh but wiser person gives the play its limited power. I felt, however, that, as in *Equus* and *Amadeus*, Shaffer strives for profundity and in striving misses it. In *Yonadab*, Shaffer deals self-consciously with weighty issues like incest, but the self-consciousness weakens his treatment.

If some of the plays were disappointing, I, nonetheless, saw some highly successful plays. One provocative play was Wallace Shawn's *Aunt Dan and Lemon*, with the central character Aunt Dan acted by Linda Hunt, who won an Oscar for her performance in *The Year of Living Dangerously*. The characters' opposing attitudes led the audience to continue thinking about it long after the curtain had fallen.

I understood the play to make an antifascist and antiauthoritarian statement, though Aunt Dan, who is personally authoritarian and who champions Kissinger in his role in the Vietnam War, is a sympathetic character. She is sympathetic, however, not because of her opinions but because of her affection for her protegee Lemon and the forcible way she argues, especially about Kissinger.

Though Aunt Dan argues forcibly, particularly with Lemon's mother, she finally does not argue convincingly. Mother, who speaks inarticulately, should be crushed by the weight of Aunt Dan's arguments; yet Mother feelingly questions Kissinger's actions: "I'm sure he makes his decisions thoughtfully. And I'm sure he believes himself to be justified. But I was asking, is he *actually* justified, as far as *I* am concerned?" Through the juxtaposition of Aunt Dan's and Mother's approaches, Shawn exposes authoritarianism—Kissinger's no less than Aunt Dan's.

Shawn also criticizes authoritarianism in Lemon's concluding remarks about Nazism. The concluding remarks are part of the opening remarks, with the main body of the play a lengthy flashback. At the end, Lemon likens treatment of the victims of Nazism to Europeans' treatment of American Indians:

There was no chance to build the kind of society the Europeans wanted with the Indians there. If they'd tried to put all the Indians in jail, they would have had to put all their effort into building jails, and then when the Indians came out they would undoubtedly have started fighting all over again as hard as before. And so they decided to kill the Indians. So it becomes absurd to talk about the Nazis as if the Nazis were unique. That's a kind of hypocrisy. Because the fact is, no society has ever considered the taking of life an unpardonable crime or even, really, a major tragedy. It's something that's done when it has to be done, and it's as simple as that.

By having Lemon say that the Indians, once freed from jail "would undoubtedly have started fighting" again, Shawn shows his admiration for them. The

viewer then knows that Shawn is ridiculing the superficial view, which seems to justify genocide. I concluded that Shawn is also criticizing Lemon's attitude towards the Nazis' program of genocide.

Authoritarianism is also condemned in a play by Stephen Poliakoff, *Breaking the Silence*. The central character, Nikolai Pesiakoff, tries to retain aristocratic pretensions in revolutionary Russia but, at the end, becomes a rebel against the state. At the opening of the play Nikolai, convincingly portrayed by Alan Howard who is associated with the Royal Shakespeare Company, simply seems to be a pathetic artistocrat with no stature in revolutionary Russia. But he is given a sinecure by the revolutionary government, as a railway inspector, and he and his family are sent out of Moscow to the provinces, in a railway car that becomes their home. Nikolai is not interested in his job, however, but in the development of talking movies. Continual harrassment by the government transforms him from a useless member of a once-privileged class into an artist fighting against the state. The stripping of his elegant clothes at the end symbolize this transformation.

The play also shows the growth of the two central female characters—Nikolai's wife Eugenia and the Pesiakoffs' maid Polya—from appendages of Nikolai to people with independent aspirations and lives. The growth of the two women is subtle, achieved without diminution of their loyalty to Nikolai. Polya's development towards independence does not lessen her dedication to the development of talking movies, a goal she has shared with Nikolai. Eugenia's growth, however, is somewhat ambiguous: as she becomes more independent (partly by working outside the home), she continues loving Nikolai; but when Nikolai learns that he can emigrate to England, Eugenia feels her independence is endangered and would prefer to stay on her own in the new Russia. Thus, the play ends on a disturbing but provocative note.

Another play which, like *Aunt Dan and Lemon* and *Breaking the Silence*, makes an antiauthoritarian statement is Howard Brenton's and David Hare's *Pravda—A Fleet Street Comedy*, one of the two or three best plays that I saw in London last fall. The play is a withering attack on the English press as being cowardly and mercenary. The central figure in *Pravda* is Lambert Le Roux, based on the Australian newspaper owner Rupert Murdoch and brilliantly acted by Anthony Hopkins. In the play Le Roux is a white South African rather than an Australian, a deft transformation creating an illusion more truthful than reality.

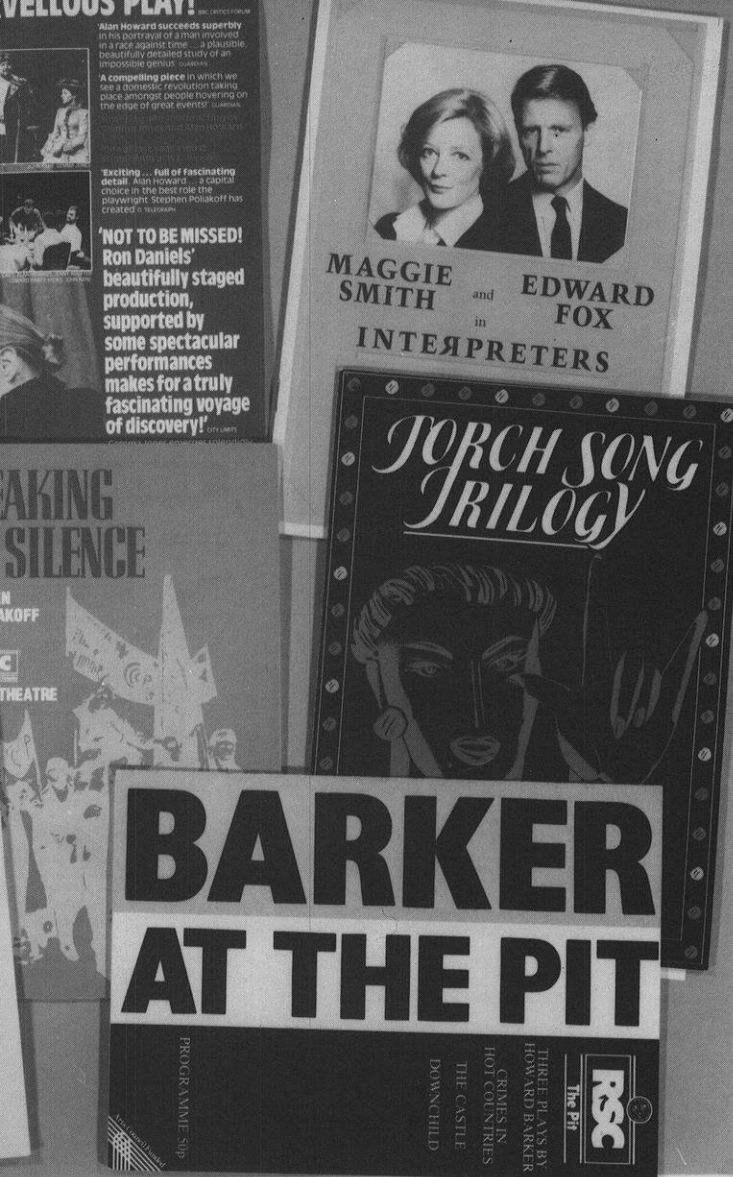
Le Roux buys out a series of newspapers and buys off or fires editors and journalists. The principal character who must decide whether to give in to Le Roux's demands is Andrew May, whose surname puns on the idea that he may or may not take a stand. At one point, somewhat hesitantly, he takes a stand by deciding to publish some documents leaked to his wife about the unsafe storage of some plutonium. As a result Le Roux



sacks him: "You have a left-wing wife and a right-wing proprietor. The tensions in your life are irreconcilable."

Andrew May vows revenge and thinks he has found the means when he, with some other unemployed journalists, is offered a deal to buy one of Le Roux's rival newspapers, *The Usurper*, and publish some dirt on Le Roux. But it is a setup by Le Roux, who wants *The Usurper* to publish lies so he can have the paper shut down. At the end, Andrew May, having failed in revenge and having lost his incorruptible wife, crawls back to Le Roux for a job.

Hopkins performs Le Roux to show the necessary blend of intelligence and bullheadedness of a character interested only in the accumulation of power and wealth. His bent frame suggests a morally misshapen personality, and the places in which director David Hare has him freeze wonderfully symbolize Le Roux's stubbornness and moral frigidity. Strong acting in *Pravda*, particularly by Hopkins, is thus wedded to a rich text.



Another play which had an intrinsically rich text associated with brilliant acting was the performance of Chekhov's *The Seagull* at the Queen's Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue, the single best production of all the plays I saw in London last fall.

*The Seagull*, about the conflict between the demands of family and those of art and about the disillusionments of young people as they try to find their ways in the world, seems more timely than many new plays. Not only are the grand themes of the play pertinent to contemporary concerns, but Chekhov's skillful demonstration of the way in which life is made up of an accumulation of quotidian details makes the play immediate. And in having his characters in his major plays talk past one another, Chekhov anticipates the absurdists.

It was not only the thematic appeal of *The Seagull*, however, that made the play engaging but the effec-

tiveness of the particular production. The casting of the four major roles was nearly perfect: Vanessa Redgrave as Arkadina, the aloof, middle-aged actress who does not show her son the love that she feels; Jonathan Pryce as Trigorin, the successful, middle-aged writer, who is Arkadina's lover; Natasha Richardson (Redgrave's real-life daughter) as Nina, a young actress who throws herself upon Trigorin and whose innocence is tarnished by the end of the play; and John Lynch as Arkadina's son, an aspiring writer in love with Nina. The success of the casting could be seen in Redgrave's flippant disdain towards the importunities of her son combined with a certain distraction, in Pryce's masterful evocation of the charm of a successful man in early middle-age, in Richardson's capturing the effervescent innocence of the traditional ingenue and demonstrating the innocence as tattered but not completely lost after her disillusionments, and in Lynch's portraying an anxious and neurasthenic Konstantin who is the opposite of Trigorin, with whom he competes for his mother's attention and for recognition as a writer.

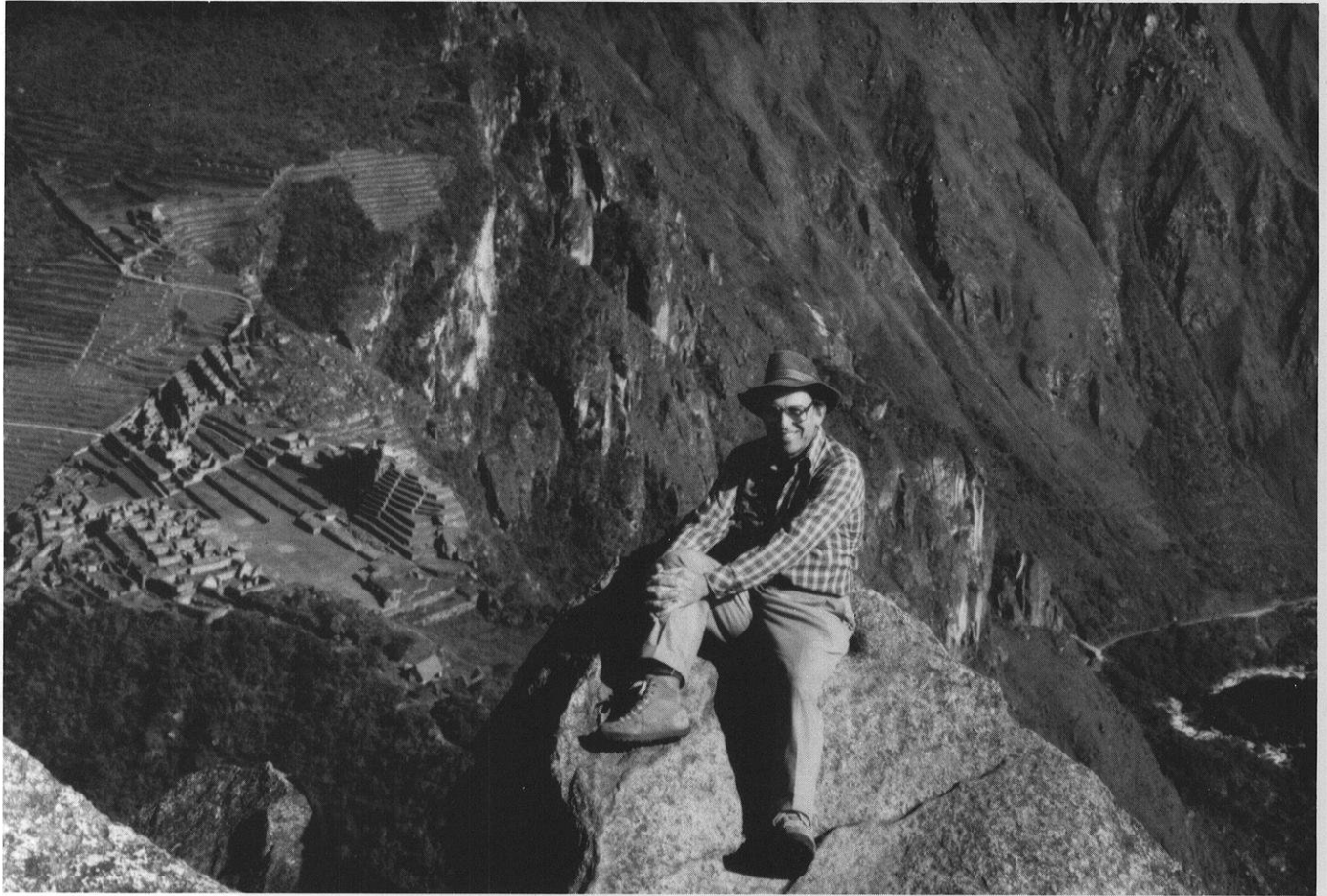
Konstantin's and Trigorin's competition as writers are reminders that *The Seagull* is, among other things, about the difficulties of writing effectively and is a drama about drama. At the beginning of the play the characters assemble to see a playlet written by Konstantin and performed by Nina. Before it begins, Nina says to Konstantin that acting in his play is difficult because it has "no living characters in it." When she actually presents the play, reciting a long, portentous speech about "all living things, all living things, all living things" becoming extinct, one senses in the turgid diction and lifeless symbolism of the piece the truth of Nina's comment. At the end of the play, however, when Nina sees Konstantin for the last time, she recalls to him some of the happiness of their past, asking him whether he remembers "How clear, warm, joyous and pure life was." She recites part of her speech from Konstantin's playlet, but this time she invests it with a lyrical and affective quality:

"Men, lions, eagles, and partridges, . . .—all living things, all living things, all living things have completed their cycle of sorrow, are extinct . . . For thousands of years the earth has borne no living creature on its surface, and this poor moon lights its lamp in vain. On the meadow the cranes no longer waken with a cry and there is no sound of the May beetles in the lime trees. . . ."

Nina has lifted the words, which were flat when she recited them in the first act and inspired them with a poignancy that is genuinely sorrowful.

It is the inspiring of the written word to create an illusion of life that makes the theater an exciting medium. During the time I spent in London, though I did not always think the illusion was successful, I always found it sufficiently engaging to want to experience and reexperience it. □

The author on top of Wayna Picchu with Machu Picchu far below to the left and the Urubamba River to the right.

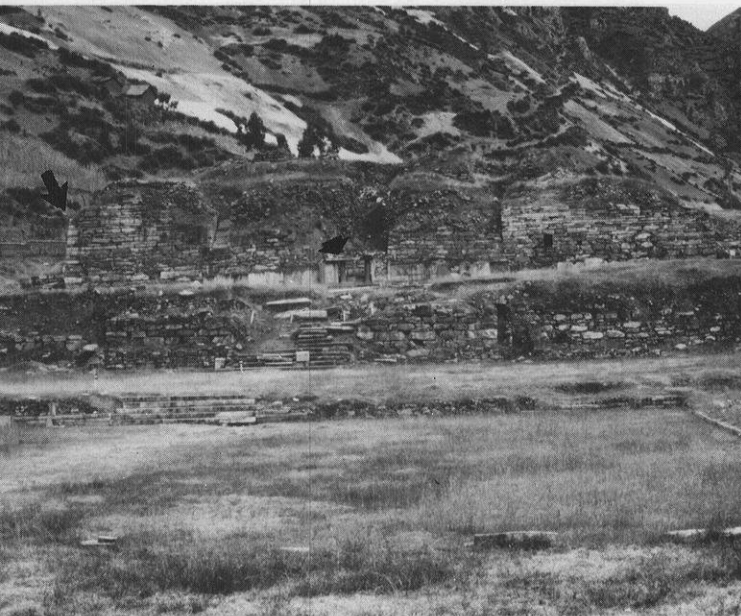


## *Travels in Peru's Past*

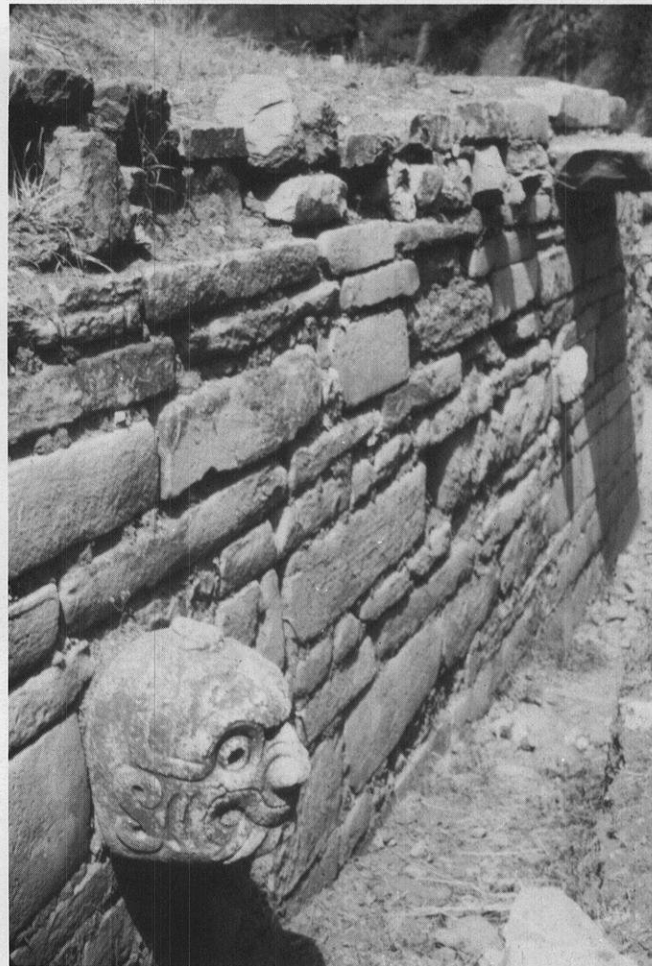
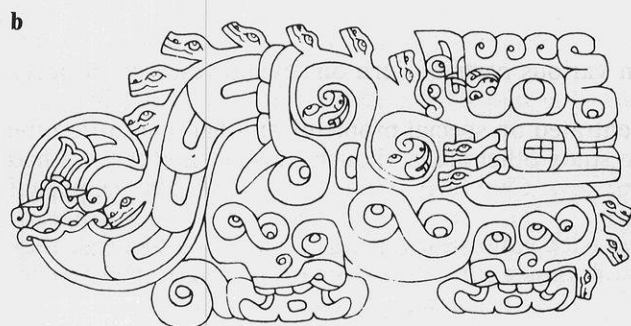
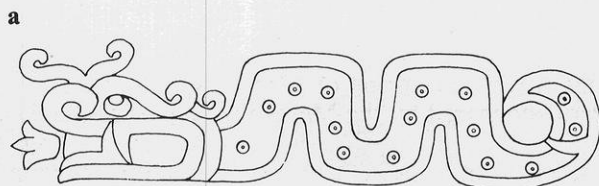
Text and Photographs by Donald E. Thompson

I knew from my previous experiences in Peru that it was going to be a rough day—but a splendid one. We left Lima early in the morning, traveled north along the Pacific coast, alternating between long stretches of bone dry desert and small lush green valleys, rather like oases. We then turned inland and ascended the Fortaleza Valley in an almost never-ending series of switchbacks to a 14,000 foot pass, then descended from the high marshy headwaters of the Santa River to Huaraz, where we spent several days. Huaraz, a colorful Andean Town and capital of the province of Ancash, was the base for local trips into the snow-capped Andes of the Cordillera Blanca, to local ruins such as little-known Wilkawain and to the more distant Chavín de Huantar, a spectacular but seldom-visited site dating long before the Inca ruins, such as Machu Picchu, which have made Peru so famous.

This trip in the spring of 1985 was the second one to Peru sponsored by the Madison Chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA). Loretta Freiling, secretary of the AIA chapter and program assistant to the Institute for Research in the Humanities, organized the details; I as an Andean specialist in the UW-Madison Department of Anthropology served as lecturer and consultant. One might suppose that such a trip would bore someone who had lived five years in various parts of Peru on several research projects, but such is not the case; on research trips I had concentrated on special problems and had had little time to study other areas, though I had visited them. I had last seen Chavín de Huantar in 1956, for example. I enjoy walking around sites and discussing their meaning with enthusiastic people, and I like to think they profit in some measure from my sharing of thirty years of Andean research.



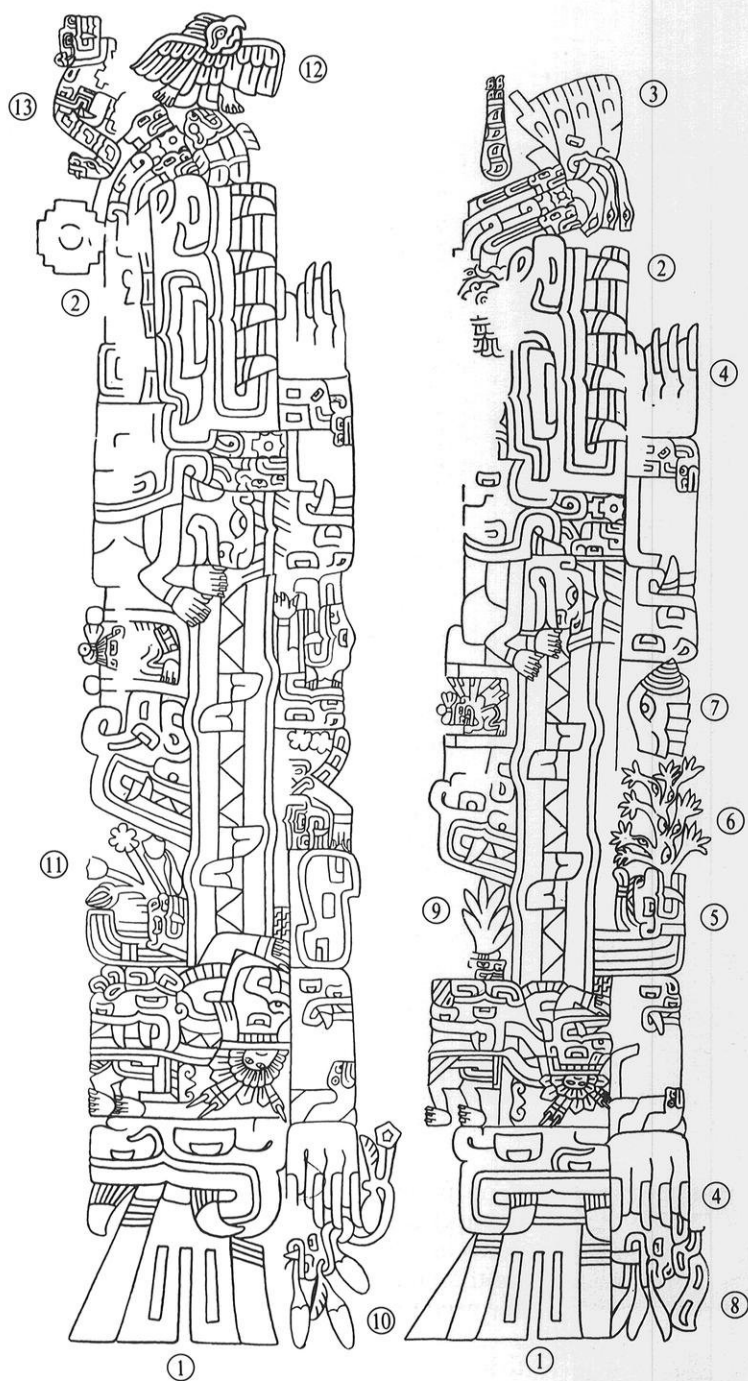
Chavín de Huantar. *Above:* In the foreground lies a sunken rectangular courtyard. Steps lead up to the level of the *castillo*. The central arrow points to the main entrance portal with two carved columns supporting a carved stone lintel. The left arrow points to the corner of the *castillo* with its alternating thick and pairs of thin courses of well-cut masonry. *Above right:* The back of the *castillo* at Chavín. In the alternating thick and pairs of thin courses of masonry, the tenonned head is one of what was once a row; others are at the National Museum in Lima. Upper right shows a carved cornice stone. *Below:* Drawing (after Chavín Guidebook) of low relief carvings on the cornice shown above. (a) a snake carved on the outside edge. The dots on the body are stylized markings of the anaconda; its feline head has enlarged canine teeth and a stylized forked tongue in front of its mouth. (b) a feline facing right, carved on the underside of the cornice. Note the whiskers and hair metaphorically treated as snakes. The tail and each foot come out of a profile mouth. All mouths have associated asymmetrical eyes.



My return to Chavín de Huantar fully lived up to my remembrance of it. We left Huaraz in the early morning, drove up the Santa River Valley (known as the Callejón de Huaylas), then turned eastward and climbed up into *puna*, the local word for high altitude grassland, which is here surrounded by the icy peaks of the Andes. Today sheep and cattle graze where once were herds of llamas and alpacas. We continued climbing up past a beautiful lake and through a narrow, one-way tunnel to the headwaters of the Amazon drainage (the Marañón River). We then descended a few thousand feet to Chavín de Huantar.

Chavín flourished between about 850 and 200 B.C. The site is composed of open sunken courtyards and flanking buildings of cut stone. The largest building, the *castillo*, is riddled with dark interior passages, ducts, and galleries, which are eerie to explore by the limited and highly directional light of Coleman lamps.

Unlike the architectural starkness of the much later Inca sites, Chavín architecture is augmented with sculpture and therein lies one of its principle attractions for both the casual visitor and the speculative archaeologist.



Drawing (after Tello) of two sides of the Tello Obelisk, originally from Chavín de Huantar, now in the National Museum in Lima. The drawings show the two sides of a cayman with its tail (1) at the bottom and head (2) at the top, its back to the left. The interpretations of Rowe, Tello, and especially Lathrap indicate that the sides are associated with root crops (right) and seed crops (left). The right figure is surmounted by a spondylus shell with snakes (3). Between its feet (4) a head (5), perhaps representing the head of a penis, is spouting, like sperm, a manioc plant (6), complete with eyes, beyond which is a conch shell (7) with an eye to go with its mouth. Clutched in the rear foot are manioc tubers and perhaps peanuts (8). On its back the figure bears an achira plant (9), which, like all the other plants here, is a root crop associated, like the shells, with the subsurface. The left half is similar but carries chili peppers (10) in its rear foot and a bottle gourd plant (11) on its back. Appropriate to these above ground crops, the signifier on top is a bird (12), probably an eagle. The jaguar (13) lies between the two, perhaps indicating that it can cross over between the two worlds like the cayman.

Chavín stone carving is mostly very low relief or incision on flat slabs or occasionally on slightly shaped three-dimensional blocks. The designs reveal combinations of human, feline, raptorial bird, snake, and other animal motifs interwoven with one another to produce a complex but highly organized whole. Visual metaphors and puns are common: hair is often carved as snakes, even braided ones; the mouth of a shell may have an associated eye; and a tail can protrude from a mouth like a tongue. A detailed study of the motifs yields some fascinating insights into the Chavín culture and world view. One relief shows a warrior carrying three darts and a spearthrower in one hand and a human trophy head in the other, thus suggesting that the people at Chavín practiced head hunting, much as the Jivaro of the Upper Amazon in historic times.

Another sculpture shows a fierce human with the canines and claws of a feline, twisted snake hair, large pendant earrings, and a spondylus shell in one hand and a conch shell in the other. The shells indicate contact with the Pacific Coast, and since many of the animals in Chavín art are peculiar to the Amazon rain forest, it is clear that Chavín contacts were trans-Andean, a fact which is also partly reflected in the wide Peruvian distribution of the art style, especially in other media such as pottery and textiles. Some people interpret the distribution of the Chavín style as the spread of a religious cult, which makes sense since the motifs are clearly ceremonial and religious, not purely decorative.

Equally fierce is a similar figure who at first glance appears to be carrying a club in front of him. Recent interpretation, however, has leaned toward explaining the club as a piece of cactus known as San Pedro, a powerful hallucinogen still in use today by shamans on the coast of Peru; other hallucinogens such as *ayahuasca* are still regularly employed by shamans in the Amazon drainage. It appears as though the association of drugs and religion is an old one in the Andes.

Other famous pieces of Chavín sculpture have been removed to the National Museum of Anthropology in Lima, where I had been able to discuss them earlier on our trip. One, a tall monolith, was carved as the amphibious cayman, one side representing the sky aspect associated with seed crops, the other side representing the subsurface and associated with root crops. This figure may well represent the giver to humans of the basic crops; such duality is widespread in the Americas.

#### Right:

The smiling god from Chavín de Huantar. Note his fangs, large earrings, twisted snake hair, and clawed feet. In his left hand a spondylus shell, in his right, a conch, the same shells found on the Tello Obelisk. The conch shell may be a male symbol and the spondylus, a female.



Pachacamac. *Above:* In the foreground is the courtyard in which Estete and H. Pizarro may have stood in 1533. Behind lie the irregular terraces of the Temple of Pachacamac. The faces of these terraces still preserve flakes of paint, all that remains of the "figures of wild animals" mentioned by Cieza de León. The tall structure in the right background is the Temple of the Sun built by the Inca. *Right:* A street in Pachacamac. The adobe bricks are laid on stone foundations.



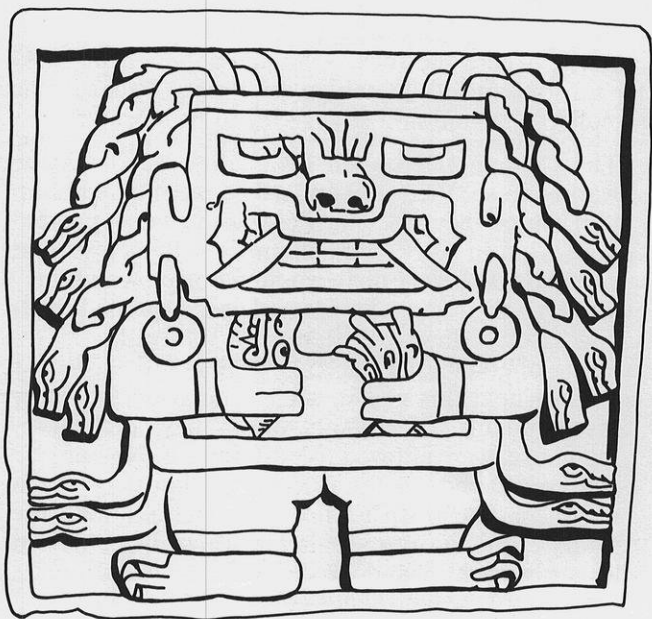
On this trip and on our earlier AIA trip in 1983 we visited Pachacamac, an oracle and pilgrimage center of great historic and prehistoric interest just south of Lima. Pachacamac was built long after Chavín de Huantar, but it also dates before the Incas, who later conquered it and added their own buildings. Most Inca buildings are clearly distinguishable archaeologically from the earlier ones on the basis of specific architectural features such as trapezoidal niches and distinctive pottery shapes such as tall necks with widely flaring rims. Pachacamac continued to function as a major religious center until the Spaniards destroyed it shortly following the conquest by Francisco Pizarro and his men in 1532.

Pachacamac is a huge community built of adobe (sun-dried) bricks rather than stone, though stone blocks appear in the foundations. The desert conditions of the Peruvian coast account for the fine preservation of the site, which under rainfall would have eroded away centuries ago. Still, 450 years of wind and occasional rain have taken a toll, and many structures are partly hidden under mounds of disintegrated building materials. And the Spaniards also deliberately destroyed buildings which kindled their religious fervor.

In addition to archaeological information we have for Pachacamac some eyewitness and slightly later accounts which add another dimension to our understanding of Inca and pre-Inca society.

One such writer was the soldier-chronicler Pedro de Cieza de León (*Incas*, 334–36), who, though he traveled in Peru fifteen years after the conquest, gathered reliable oral traditions:

Leaving the City of the Kings [Lima] and proceeding [southward] along the same coast, four leagues off lies the valley of Pachacamac, famed among these





**Inca pottery vessel. The combination of the conical bottom, low strap handles, tall flaring neck, and everted rim with pierced nodes is unique to the Inca. This vessel comes from Huánuco Pampa, but could have been found at Pachacamac.**

Indians. This valley is pleasant and fertile, and there stood there one of the most sumptuous temples to be found in these regions. They say of it that, despite the fact that the Inca lords built many temples, aside from those of Cuzco, and glorified and embellished them with riches, there was none to compare with this of Pachacamac, which was built upon a small, man-made hill of adobes and earth, and on its summit stood the temple which began at the foot, and had many gates, which, like the walls, were adorned with figures of wild animals. Inside, where the idol stood, were the priests who feigned great sanctimoniousness. And when they performed their sacrifices before the people, they kept their faces toward the door of the temple and their backs to the figure of the idol, with their eyes on the ground and all trembling and overcome, according to certain Indians still alive today, so that it could almost be compared to what one reads of the priests of Apollo when the [Greek] Gentiles sought their vain oracles. And they say more: that before the figure of this devil they sacrificed many animals, and human blood

of persons they killed; and that on the occasion of their most solemn feasts they made utterances which were believed and held to be true. . . . The priests were greatly venerated, and the lords and caciques obeyed them in many things that they ordered. And it is told that beside the temple there were many and spacious lodgings for those who came there in pilgrimage, and no one was deemed worthy nor allowed to be buried in its vicinity except the lords or priests or pilgrims who came bearing gifts to the temple. When the great yearly feasts were celebrated, many people assembled, carrying on their diversions to the sound of the musical instruments they possessed. And as the Incas, powerful lords that they were, made themselves the masters of the kingdom and came to this valley of Pachacamac, and, as was their custom in all the lands they conquered, they ordered temples and shrines built to the sun. And when they saw the splendor of this temple, and how old it was, and the sway it held over all the people of the surrounding lands, and the devotion they paid it, holding that it would be very difficult to do away with this, they agreed with the native lords and the ministers of their god or devil that this temple of Pachacamac should remain with the authority and cult it possessed, provided they built another temple to the sun which should take precedence. And when the temple to the sun had been built, as the Incas ordered, they filled it with riches and put many virgins in it. The devil Pachacamac, highly pleased with this arrangement, they say revealed his satisfaction in his replies, for the one and the other served his ends, and the souls of the misguided remained fast in his power.

Another writer, Miguel de Estete, recorded less oral tradition, but he accompanied the first European party to visit Pachacamac and was thus an eyewitness to its operation and initial destruction. Estete (*Discovery*, 116–18) had traveled early in 1533 with Francisco Pizarro's brother, Hernando, on an expedition from Cajamarca, where the Inca, Atahualpa, was being held for ransom and ultimately execution, to Pachacamac to collect the gold and silver said to be stored there:

The Captain [Hernando Pizarro] . . . said that he wanted to see their idol and asked them to lead him to it, which they did. The idol was in a finely painted house, but in a very dark chamber with a close fetid smell. It was a very dirty wooden object, which they said was their god who created and sustained them and assured their subsistence. At its feet lay an offering of golden jewels.

They held this god in such veneration that only his attendants and servants, whom they said he himself chose, were allowed to wait on him. No one else was considered worthy to enter his house or touch its walls. The truth is that the devil assumed the shape of this idol to speak with those who were in league with him and proclaim his wicked oracles throughout the land. They considered him a god and

made him many sacrifices. Pilgrims came to this devil from a distance of three-hundred leagues with gold and silver and cloth. On arrival, they went to the gate-keeper and offered their gift. He then went in and spoke with the idol, and said that the offering might be presented. Before one of his ministers entered to serve him, it was said that he must fast for some days and refrain from women. In all the streets of this town, at the principal gates and all around the temple, there are many wooden idols which they worship as they do this devil.

Many important men of this country have stated that . . . all the people of this coast brought gold and silver to this 'mosque,' paying a fixed tribute each year. They had houses in charge of officials, to which they brought their tribute; and in them Hernando Pizarro found a little gold and signs that much more had been taken away. On inquiring from many Indians he learnt that it had been removed on the devil's orders.

The people were shocked and alarmed merely that the Captain should have gone in to see it, for they thought that when the Christians departed it would certainly destroy them all. The Christians explained that they were much mistaken, and that what spoke from inside this idol was the devil, who greatly deceived them. They admonished the Indians that henceforth they should neither believe in him nor follow his counsel, and they said more on the subject of idoltry. The Captain ordered that the vault in which the god stood should be pulled down and the god broken up in front of them all. He then explained our holy catholic faith and taught them the sign of the cross which they must use to defend themselves against the devil.

This town of Pachacamac is of considerable size. Beside the 'mosque' is a temple of the sun, standing on a hill; it is of fine masonry and is surrounded by five walls. There are also houses with terrace roofs as in Spain. The town appears to be old, for it has many ruined buildings and the greater part of the outer wall has fallen.

Visitors to Pachacamac today are treated to a large and spectacular site, but most of them, I fear, do not read Cieza de León or Miguel de Estete and are drawn to the Inca temple of the sun, which dominates the site, rather than to the temple of Pachacamac, which was the most important structure and the stage for that dramatic encounter with European culture.

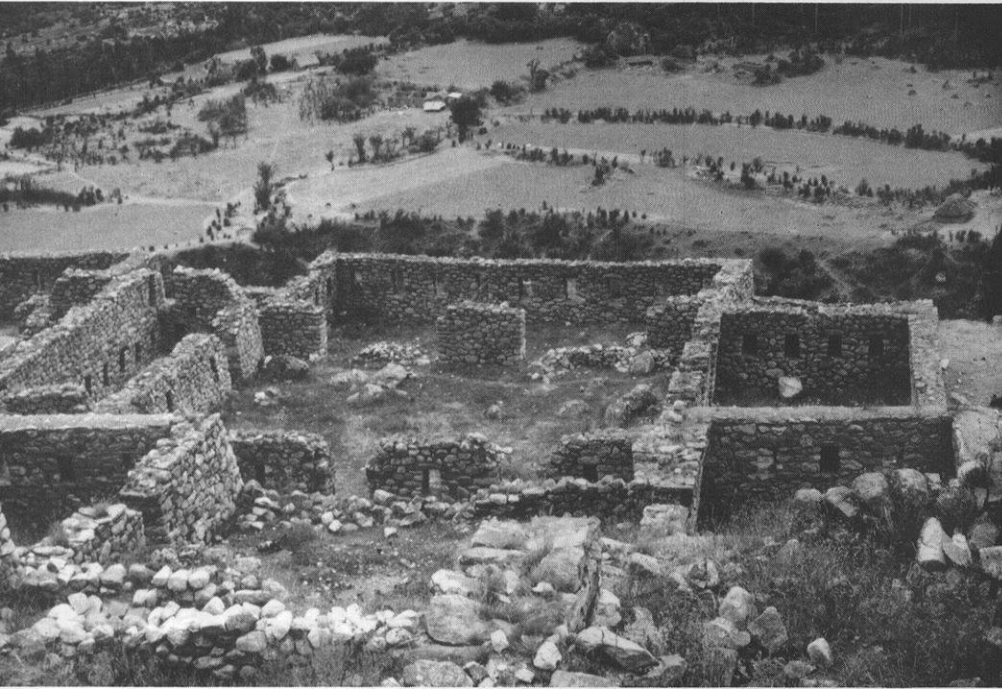
When Peru is mentioned, it is usually the Inca, the conquerors of Pachacamac, that come to most people's minds. And of all Inca places, it is the picture postcard, travel poster "Lost City" of Machu Picchu that leaps to the foreground, in front even of the former Inca capital city of Cuzco.

Machu Picchu is everything the pictures suggest and much more; photographs cannot capture the sweeping panorama or the aura or the feeling of mystery or the sense of place. Most people visit Machu Picchu by

train from Cuzco, returning the same day. The luckier or more enthusiastic spend the night in the tiny hotel as we did in 1985 and have the site to themselves for an additional late afternoon and following morning.

In 1983, however, our AIA group approached Machu Picchu as the Inca themselves would have done, by hiking along the Royal Road for five days. On that five-day hike we not only inspected spectacular but seldom-visited Inca sites inaccessible except by foot, but we also passed through a whole series of ecological zones which paralleled on the humid eastern slopes of the Andes, the zones we later ascended in 1985 on the western side to get to Huaraz. These zones encompassed everything from the dry bottom of the Urubamba River Valley just above the roaring whitewater through humid cloud forest to *Puna* grassland. Each zone had its own special flora, including many varieties of colorful flowering orchids.

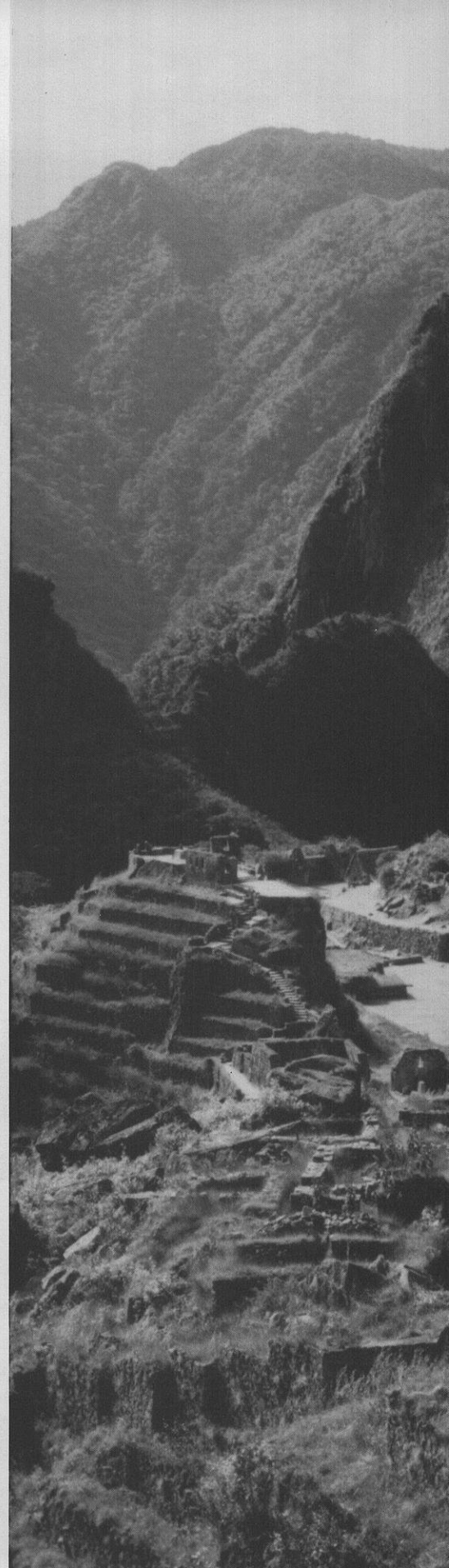


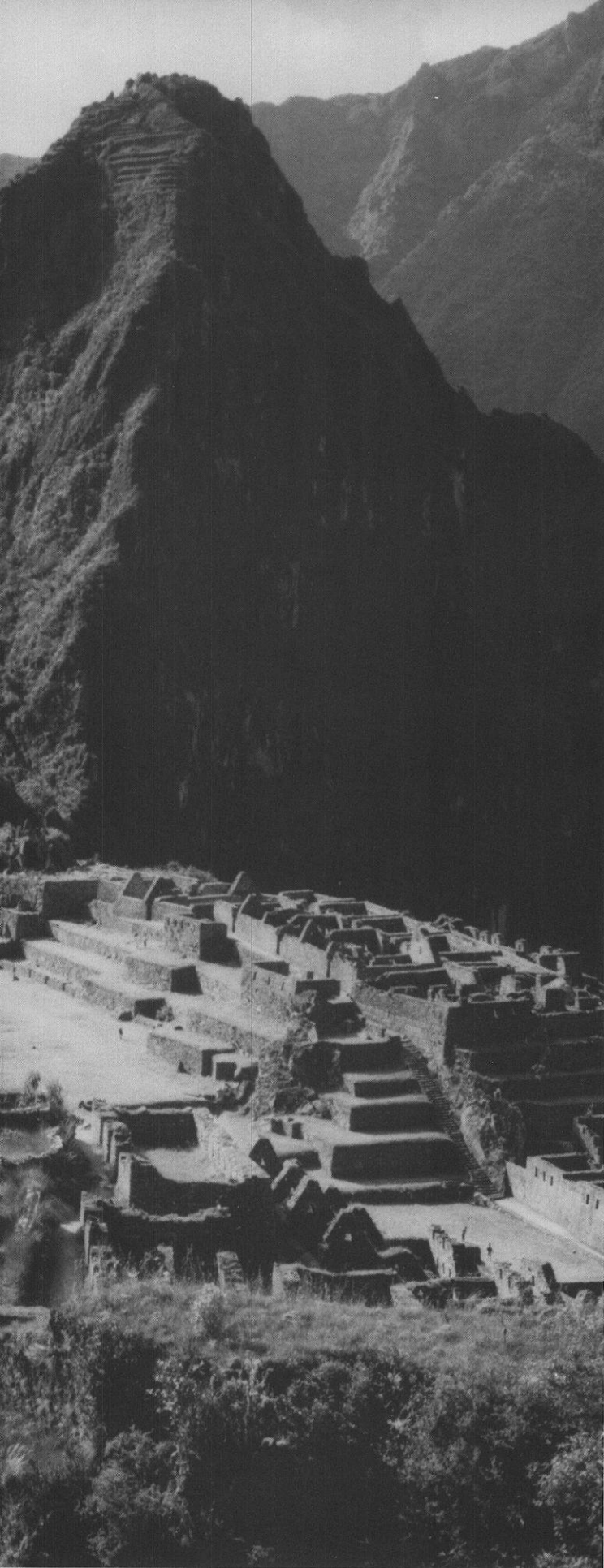


***Above:*** House group at Patallacta on the Inca trail. Note the typical Inca arrangement of structures around a rectangular open courtyard.

***Right:*** Machu Picchu. Courtyards, terraces, and steeply gabled roofs are visible. The picture of the author on page 14 was taken looking down on Machu Picchu, from above the terraces on top of Wayna Picchu, the steep peak in the background. Such terraces are a tribute to the engineering skill of the Inca.

***Below:*** An Inca structure at Wiñay Wayna, along the Inca trail. Note the steeply gabled roof line to the left and the trapizoidal niches, typical Inca architectural features.





The multiple ecological zones on both the eastern and western slopes of the Andes had great economic and political significance in the past, as they do also today. By exploiting a series of ecological niches, the pre-Columbian Andean peoples not only had access to a wide variety of products, both plant and animal, but also insured themselves against the potential disaster of crop failure in any one zone by having fields in several others. The system is pre-Inca and still survives today, though it is breaking down under modern land reform measures which discourage multiple land holdings. Moving through these zones on foot allowed us an intimacy with the individual niches and the changes between them which would be impossible in a car or train.

The ruins along the trail were discovered by Hiram Bingham, who also discovered Machu Picchu, and were later briefly described by Paul Fejos, but they are little known archaeologically. Today they are being damaged by inconsiderate hikers and, because of the clearing of the vegetation cover, by exposure to the elements. Though most of the ruins lie in the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu, there are virtually no funds and no personnel to protect the sites. They present a very immediate practical and ethical dilemma to Peru and to the field of archaeology today.

As my comments here suggest, I believe the past can only be understood in terms of the present and conversely the present only makes sense as a product of past cultural events. Moreover, such understanding as one can glean must come from multiple sources. Thus we try to look at art and architecture, pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern; at a wide variety of ecological zones on either side of the Andes; and also at markets, folkdancing, and the fancy suburbs of Lima. We do as much as we can on foot, and we even try to sample as many local dishes as possible, though some balk at eating *picante de cuy* (guinea pig in hot sauce) and sometimes we do indeed suffer from Atahualpa's revenge. Such, I suppose, is the price of awareness.

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# In Search of the

Text and Photographs

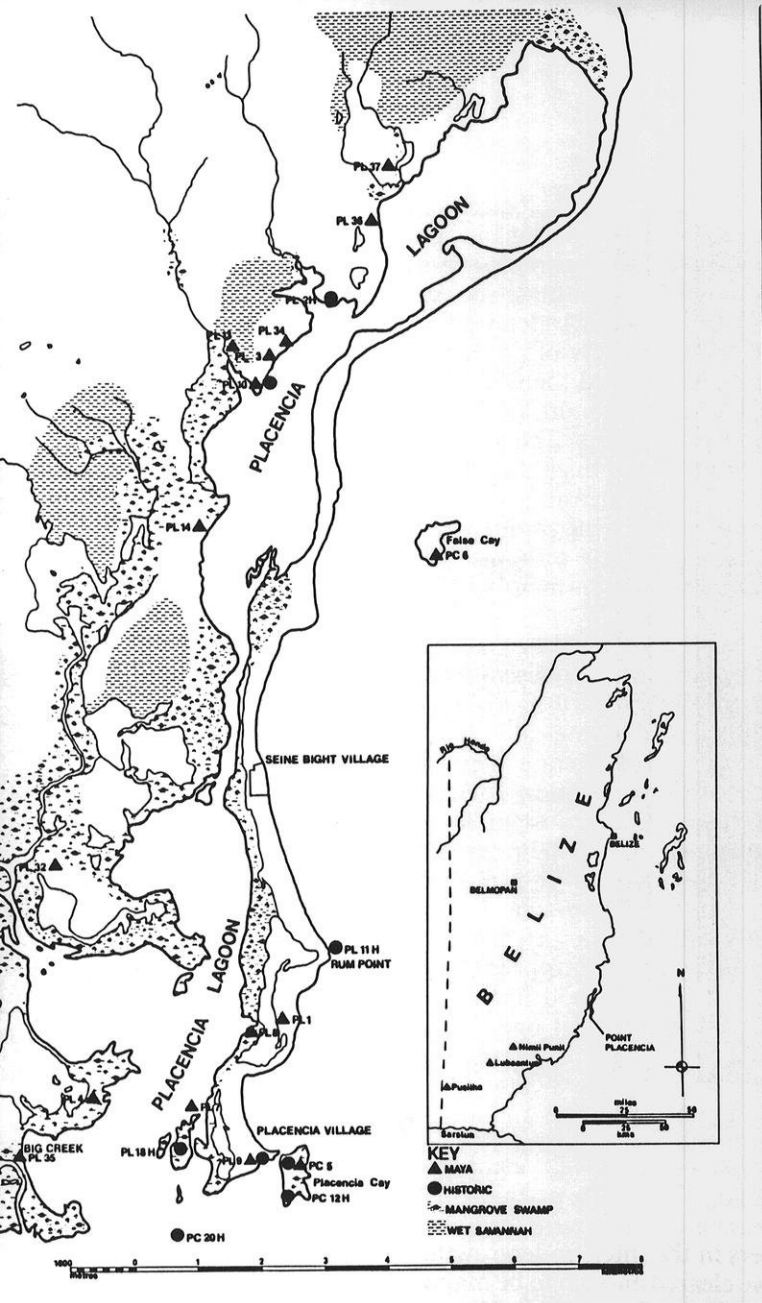


Figure 1. Point Placencia Archaeological Project. Map by Jesse Ryan.

Students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison are studying modest housemounds and trash heaps left by the Maya on the shores of coastal lagoons and the small islands, or cays, of the Belizean barrier reef in Central America. These efforts address the question of the role the sea played as a resource base and as a trade route in the development of ancient Maya civilization. This project is funded and assisted by Earthwatch, a unique organization which makes it possible for enterprising amateurs to participate in archaeological and other scientific discoveries.

In its Classic phase (A.D. 300–900), Maya civilization was focused in major ceremonial centers containing the residences of the elite, temple platforms and tombs of their revered ancestors, and specialized structures such as sweat houses and courts for the ceremonial ball game. Stretching out into the countryside from the central plazas of these sites are the housemounds on which the general populace built their pole-and-thatch homes. These large centers have attracted attention from travelers and archaeologists alike. While much is known about individual centers, we have yet little understanding of the political and economic relationships between centers and, therefore, cannot with assurance generalize about the nature of Maya civilization as a whole and the forces acting on it.

The Point Placencia Archaeological Project (Fig. 1) deliberately focused on an area at the periphery of the Maya realm, in which no major centers were known and in which almost no archaeological work had been carried out. The study area, the southern half of the Stann Creek District, Belize, Central America, contained a 22 km. barrier beach, Point Placencia, which defined a lagoon and estuary system, and over fifty small cays extending up to 25 km. out into the Caribbean along the world's second largest barrier reef. Our intention was to look at Maya civilization from sea level rather than from the top of a pyramid.

We know from Spanish accounts that, following the collapse of the Classic ceremonial centers, in the Postclassic (Early Postclassic A.D. 1000–1200, Late Postclassic A.D. 1200–1525) Maya civilization invested far

# Ancient Maritime Maya

by J. Jefferson MacKinnon

fewer resources in civic/ceremonial architecture and developed a flourishing sea trade which linked Central Mexico with lower Central America via Yucatán. This maritime trade must have moved through the Placencia area, and we hoped our work would recover evidence of this ancient activity. Archaeological work has been carried out at some of the major ports-of-trade along this route, such as at its southern terminus at Naco in northwestern Honduras, on the island of Cozumel at its midpoint, and most recently at Isla Cerita, the port for Chichén Itzá on the north coast of Yucatán. We wanted to find evidence of this trade in between major stops on the route.

## *Archaeological survey*

Three seasons of research supported by Earthwatch have resulted in our identifying and testing fifty-six archaeological sites, all but eleven previously unknown, ranging in time from the Archaic (pre-Maya, possibly earlier than 1000 B.C.) to post-Maya sites from the days of the Spanish Main and later. Our primary goal was to find every site in the study area and carry out test excavations to determine its nature and chronology.

First we inspected the area by light plane and took color photographs to augment Royal Air Force black-and-whites. Students interviewed local villagers, particularly hunters and artifact collectors, to develop leads and to try to confirm information from the photographs. These interviews saved countless hours of slogging through mangrove swamps. Next, through boat reconnaissance of the lagoon and cays we checked the leads we had and found other promising areas. The ancient Maya tended to settle near freshwater streams and on higher ground. Their activities created refuse which raised the elevation and changed the soil chemistry of their sites so that, even after a thousand years, differences in vegetation were noticeable from our boats. These vegetational differences were what we looked for both in the photos and in the actual vicinity of suspected sites.



To inspect likely areas we waded through lagoon mud, climbed over mangrove roots, and swung our machetes vigorously. Visibility was at most a few meters in the thick undergrowth. As we discovered a site, we cleared enough to be mapped and collected artifacts on the surface. We could usually determine the extent of the site by inspecting the material brought to the surface by land crabs, whose burrows riddled the landscape. These crustaceans, which tunnel all the way to the water table, saved us much digging. With the extent of the site and possible areas of activity determined by the surface collection, we carried out test excavations to determine the date of occupation and types of past activities.

Many of the sites were located on cays or close to the shores of the lagoons and partly or sometimes completely under water, so that the extent of the site had to be determined, and the artifacts collected, by snorkeling. Sea level must have been lower when these sites were inhabited, for even those sites located on higher ground had artifacts below the present water table. When fully analyzed, this information should provide insight into past climatic fluctuations.

Before the rise of Maya civilization, early hunter/gatherers visited the shores of Placencia Lagoon and left evidence of their toolmaking. The absence of for-



Students and volunteers, piloted by Jeff MacKinnon, leaving base camp in Placencia Village for a day's work.

mal tools and consistently patterned waste flakes from forming and thinning a bifacial knife or projectile point or systematically reducing a stone core to a predetermined tool indicates that this toolmaking occurred perhaps a thousand years or more before the rise of Maya civilization. Unfortunately this site, PL-13, was bulldozed for an airstrip.

#### *Lime-making site*

In the Early Classic, c. A.D. 300, coastal traders or people having contact with them gathered mud conch and oyster shells in Placencia Lagoon and reduced them to powder by heating them. The lime powder was used to provide calcium in the diet, to soften corn to make grinding easier, for mortar, and to plaster walls and floors. We believe this site, PL-1 in Figure 1, on the map, is the first ancient Maya coastal lime-making site to be found. An experiment in heating modern shells indicated that the most likely method of reducing the shells to powder was to build a stack of alternating layers of shell and wood atop very large (50 cm. or more in diameter) ceramic platters which catch the final product of ash and powder and keep it from being contaminated by contact with the ground. Great numbers of platter and large storage jar fragments were heaped together in a refuse midden above the ancient working surface which 1500 years later is strikingly different in color and chemical composition from the surrounding soil due to the lime-making activity. This was not a permanent habitation site, for the full range of household artifacts was not present and there was no indication of structures. That this was a special activity site is evidenced by the skewed percentages of rim fragments from pottery vessels—80 percent from platters, 14 percent from large storage jars, and only 6 percent from bowls, usually the largest category. Our experiment in making lime suggests that the large number of platter fragments is due to the fact that they often break in the fire as ours did. Lacking metals in quantity, the Maya would have had to use ceramic material to catch the lime. Today local people use galvanized roofing on the infrequent occasions when they make lime in this manner. Mud conch is edible, so food would have been produced as a by-product. The shells that one boy collected for us in thirty minutes provided a conch soup which was lunch for our staff of twenty-five students and volunteers.

A remarkable feature of this lime-making site was that fragments of basal-flanged polychrome bowls, the fine hand-painted pottery of the lowland Maya, were

MacKinnon examines archaeological find.



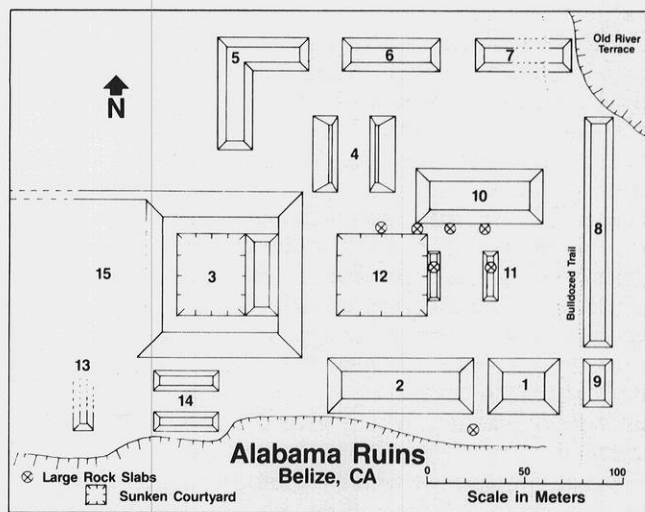
also found on the working surface. In contrast to the utilitarian wares, these bowls are not of a local clay and were probably obtained from coastal canoe traders, perhaps in exchange for the lime. Early Classic sea trade routes were not previously known to have extended this far south. This site supports the argument that sea trade was important in the Early Classic before the great center of Teotihuacán near Mexico City came to control Mesoamerican trade by overland routes.

The lack of any artifacts in the Placencia area from the time of Teotihuacán's prominence, the middle part of the Classic period, further supports this view. It appears that Maya civilization looked to the west economically at this time, first to the Teotihuacán-dominated center of Kaminaljuyu, present-day Guatemala City, and then to Teotihuacán itself. Following the fall of Teotihuacán about A.D. 650, maritime trade slowly picked up as the expanding Maya population of Late Classic times moved into areas which it could service. Sea trade became the dominant pattern in the politically confused Postclassic times when the Maya realm became a balkanized region of conflicting politics and overland routes were unreliable. A commercially and militarily aggressive Maya group, the Putun, originally from the Gulf coast of Tabasco and Campeche, established a canoe trade linking central Mexico with lower Central America via the coasts of Yucatán and Belize.

This view of Maya economics is confirmed by the evidence uncovered in the Placencia area. In the Late Classic a trading station developed on Placencia Cay (site PC-5), a well-protected anchorage much favored by yachts today. No Late Classic sites were found out on the off shore cays. In its early stages, the redeveloping maritime trade apparently moved close to the coast and then up rivers to major centers like Lu-baantun and Pusilha in southern Belize.

### **Salt-making site**

**A**lthough sea trade did not cause large numbers of people to settle on the coast in Late Classic times, the coastal lagoons of the Placencia area became attractive as inland populations grew dramatically in the Late Classic, and major centers were established in southern Belize. The Placencia project excavated seven fishing and salt-making sites on the shores of Placencia Lagoon (sites PL-37, 36, 34, 3, 10, 14, and 32) and tested others on two other lagoons to the south, uncovering the first evidence of this activity on the Belizean coast. These sites were probably used during the dry season when salinity was highest in these coastal bodies of water. Since sea level was lower when these sites were occupied, the lagoons would have been shallower and evaporation could have resulted in higher salt concentration in these waters than in the sea itself. The discovery of seven of these salt sites on one lagoon, and more on other lagoons whose shores have not been fully searched, suggested that a fairly large inland population was being supplied.



**Figure 2. Structures: 1, 2, 10 palaces; 3 main temple; 4, 14 ball courts; 5-9, 11, 13 low platform mounds of undetermined use; 12 main plaza court; 15 large platform still unexplored. Map by Jeffrey Olson.**

### ***Ceremonial center discovered***

**B**y extrapolating from the location of these salt-making sites and the major ceremonial centers to the north and south, we were able to predict correctly where a major center might be located in our study area. A previously unknown Late Classic center with pyramids, ball courts, and palaces was located 16 km. inland from the shores of Placencia Lagoon near a plantation called Alabama by its American owners. (See Figure 2) While it has been reported to the Belizean Department of Archaeology, I will not disclose its exact location since at this writing it is one of the very few sites in Belize to escape completely the artifact hunters' looting which is destroying the archaeological heritage of Belize. This new find cannot be protected, and we can only hope that looters will not do major damage before our Earthwatch excavations begin in December of 1986.

When Classic Maya civilization declined, the inland and coastal sites were abandoned. By the Early Postclassic, a different coastal settlement pattern emerged. The lagoon shores were totally abandoned. Placencia Cay (PC-5) with its protected anchorage saw activity in this period and a unique site, unknown elsewhere in the Maya realm, grew up on False Cay (PC-6), the

next nearshore cay north of Placencia Cay. Here chert from northern Belize was brought to be manufactured into stone tools. This production station on the canoe trade route was a true "crossroads" of Mesoamerica. Our snorkeling and excavations recovered artifacts from the Valley of Mexico, highland Guatemala, the Pacific coast of Guatemala, and from northern and southern Belize.

The inhabitants built their housemounds from coral rock instead of earth as did the Late Classic salt-makers. Why this cay, which is not located near any major Postclassic site or area of activity, was chosen for the manufacture of stone tools is a mystery. It is not located near a source of the raw material for the tools. These sites on False and Placencia cays date to the time of the rise of the Putun Maya who had links to central Mexico and confirms their presence in southern Belize. The location of Early Postclassic sites on cays just off the mainland suggests that the canoe trade route at this time followed the coast toward its ultimate southern terminus, the rivers near the Guatemala-Belize border which give access to the Guatemalan interior.

In Late Postclassic times yet another settlement pattern emerges. A large village, perhaps a square kilometer in extent, developed on the southern tip of Point Placencia opposite Placencia Cay (PL-9), but False Cay was abandoned. The Maya were now also interested in the cays along the barrier reef, as far out as 25 km. from the mainland. Evidence of their presence was found on Gladden, Ranguana, Funk, Quamina, Cary, and Wippiari cays. Some of these may have been just visited by the occasional fishing party, but it is likely that the Placencia villagers maintained a station to service the canoe trade on Ranguana Cay, given the close similarities in the artifacts from these two sites. Fishermen today garden on this cay, and our salinity testing revealed no trace of salt in the shallow wells they dig. Thus a small staff with links to the mainland could provide the food and water needed by the passing canoe traders. Offshore islands would be a more secure place to let the slaves who propelled the large canoes go ashore than a mainland stopover. The most direct route from the midpoint of the trade route on Cozumel Island of the east coast of Yucatán to the new southern ports-of-trade at Nito on the mouth of the Rio Dulce in Guatemala and Naco on the Rio Chamelcon in Honduras is along the islands of the outer reef, and these cays had a greater density of artifacts than the cays midway between the outer reef and the mainland.

Columbus described one of the trading canoes he saw as eight feet wide and "as long as a galley" with a crew of twenty-five plus cargo and passengers. Another phase of our study of Maya maritime trade is to build a replica of a Maya trading canoe and retrace a voyage from Cozumel to Honduras via the sites we have discovered. Construction is already underway; the voyage will take place in the spring of 1987.



### *The project*

The Point Placencia Archaeological Project appealed to Earthwatch volunteers interested in Caribbean coastal environments and underwater work as well as those with a particular interest in archaeology. This diversity aided Earthwatch in recruiting volunteers. Earthwatch is an international organization which supports approximately 100 scientific expeditions each year by recruiting volunteers willing to share in the costs of the expedition and work on the project as well. In return their contributions are tax-deductible, and they are fed, housed, and trained, and participate in all the pain and excitement of scientific field research. Although not professional archaeologists, volunteers bring knowledge, skills, experience, and enthusiasm, which is often valuable to a project, and they help create an exciting intellectual collaboration. On an archaeological project in a Third World country with many logistical problems to be solved and improvisations to be made, the varied backgrounds of the volunteers can be invaluable. As well as giving them experience in archaeology, the project takes volunteers to ancient Maya ceremonial centers and sacred caves and to modern Maya, Creole, and Black Carib villages. Staff members give evening lectures on prehistory, environment, and local cultures and lead discussions on the day's work. Thus Earthwatch provides a happy link between scholars in need of funds and fieldworkers who enjoy initiating people into their discipline and enthusiastic amateurs who want more from a vacation than beaches and buses. Readers interested in more information about Earthwatch and its programs may contact:

Earthwatch  
Box 403  
Watertown, MA 02172  
617-926-8200



# Thoreau and Montaigne

By Frederic W. Braun

**H**enry David Thoreau's *Walden* is a popular book today. With the flourishing of the environmental movement, his works now are quoted more widely than ever. When I was much younger, I read and reread his *Walden or Life in the Woods*. I was impressed by his original observations (I thought) on life in general, little sermons on how life should be lived. But in the last few years, when I read Montaigne's essays (1533-92), I was disturbed to find that those Walden homilies which I had read with such delight were not so original after all. In Montaigne's essays I found passages quite similar to Thoreau's. The similarities could only be coincidental, but evidence suggests that Thoreau may have been liberally exposed to Montaigne before and during the time he spent at Walden and the years later when he was writing his book.

First, before we deal with the Montaigne-Thoreau linkage, let's compare some passages. (I quote Donald Frame's translations of Montaigne's essays.)

Each wrote an essay on solitude. Thoreau begins by describing an evening on the shores of Walden Pond and his return to the cabin. Then the "asides" come in, strikingly like Montaigne's dissertations:



Montaigne:

The soul cannot escape from itself. Therefore we must bring it back and withdraw it into itself: that is the real solitude, which may be enjoyed in the midst of cities and the court of kings, but is enjoyed more handily alone. Now since we are undertaking to live alone and do without company, let us make our contentment depend on ourselves, let us cut loose from all the ties that bind us to others; let us win from ourselves the power to live really alone and to live that way with ease. ("Of Solitude")

Thoreau:

I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. We are for the most part more lonely when we go abroad among men than when we stay in our chambers. A man thinking or working is always alone, let him be where he will. Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows. The really diligent student in one of the crowded hives of Cambridge College is as solitary as a dervish in the desert. ("Solitude")

Note how each essay insists that solitude can be experienced in crowds. Each claims the superiority of solitude over the company of men.

Here are two passages which are remarkably similar in their imagery.

Montaigne:

It is no wonder, says an ancient (Seneca), that chance has so much power over us, since we live by chance. A man who has not directed his life as a whole toward a definite goal cannot possibly set his particular actions in order. A man who does not have a picture of the whole in his head cannot possibly arrange the pieces. What good does it do a man to lay in a supply of paints if he does not know what he is to paint? No one makes a definite plan of his life; we think about it only piecemeal. The archer must first know what he is aiming at, and then set his hand, his bow, his string, his arrow, and his movements for that goal. Our plans go astray because they have no direction and no aim. No wind works for the man who has no port of destination.

("Of the Inconsistencies of Our Actions")

Thoreau:

I would not have any one adopt my mode of living on any account; for, beside that before he has fairly learned it I may have found out another for myself, I desire that they may be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue his own way, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead. The youth may build or plant or sail, only let him not be hindered from doing that which he tells me he would like to do. It is by a mathematical point only that we are wise, as the sailor or the fugitive slave keeps the polestar in his eye; but that is sufficient guidance for all our life. We may not arrive at our port within a calculable period, but we would preserve the true course. ("Economy")

Note that each essayist stresses the importance of a goal in life. Both use a nautical reference.



Here both deal with conformity.

Montaigne:

He who walks in the crowd must step aside, keep his elbows in, step back or advance, even leave the straight way, according to what he encounters. He must live not so much according to himself as according to others, not according to what he proposes to himself but according to what others propose to him, according to the time, according to the men, according to the business. ("Of Vanity")

Thoreau:

Why should we be in such desperate enterprises? If

a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, how measured or far away. ("Conclusion")

Montaigne's passage is a complaint about man's conformity. Thoreau's passage is a charge to man to get out of conformity.



To expand on Thoreau's "lives of quiet desperation," let's compare two more passages.

Montaigne:

Men give themselves for hire. Their faculties are not for them, they are for those to whom they enslave themselves; their tenants are at home inside, not they. This common humor I do not like. We must husband the freedom of our soul and mortgage it only on the right occasions; which are in very small number, if we judge sanely. See the people who have been taught to let themselves be seized and carried away: they do so everywhere, in little things as in big, in what does not touch them as in what does; they push in indiscriminately wherever there is business and involvement, and are without life when they are without tumultuous agitation. They are in business for business' sake (Seneca). They seek business only for busyness.

It is not that they want to be on the go, so much as that they cannot keep still; no more nor less than a stone that has started falling, and that does not stop until it comes to rest. Occupation is to a certain manner of people a mark of ability and dignity. Their mind seeks its repose in movement, like children in the cradle. They may be said to be as serviceable to their friends as they are importunate to themselves. No one distributes his money to others, everyone distributes his time and his life on them. There is nothing of which we are so prodigal as of the only things in which avarice would be useful to us and laudable. ("Of Husbanding Your Will")

It is for little souls buried under the weight of business, to be unable to detach themselves cleanly from it or to leave it and pick it up again. ("Of Experience")

Thoreau:

Some of you, we all know, are poor, find it hard to live, are sometimes, as it were, gasping for breath. I have no doubt that some of you who read this book are unable to pay for all the dinners which you have actually eaten, or for the coats and shoes which are fast wearing or are already worn out, and have come to this page to spend borrowed or stolen time,

robbing your creditor of an hour. It is very evident what mean and sneaking lives many of you live, for my sight has been whetted by experience; always on the limits, trying to get into business and trying to get out of debt, a very ancient slough, called by the Latins *aes alienum*, another's brass, for some of their coins were made of brass; still living and dying, and buried by this other's brass; always promising to pay, to-morrow, and dying to-day, insolvent; seeking to curry favor, to get custom, by how many modes, only not state-prison offences; lying, flattering, voting, contracting yourselves into a nutshell of civility, or dilating into an atmosphere of thin and vaporous generosity, that you may persuade your neighbor to let you make his shoes, or his hat, or his coat, or his carriage, or import his groceries for him; making yourselves sick, that you may lay up something against a sick day, something to be tucked away in an old chest, or in a stocking behind the plastering, or, more safely, in the brick bank; no matter where, no matter how much or how little. ("Economy")



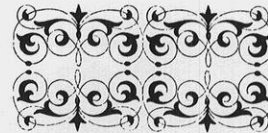
Here are the views on clothes and appearance.

Montaigne:

Of the mask and appearance we must not make a real essence, nor of what is foreign, what is our very own. We cannot distinguish the skin from the shirt. It is enough to make up our face, without making up our heart. I see some who transform and transubstantiate themselves into as many new shapes and new beings as they undertake jobs, who are prelates to their very liver and intestines, and drag their position with them even into their privy. I cannot teach them to distinguish the tips of the hat that are for them from those that are for their office, or their retinue, or their mule. ("Of Husbanding Your Will")

Thoreau:

We don garment after garment, as if we grew like exogenous plants by addition without. Our outside and often thin and fanciful clothes are our epidermis, or false skin, which partakes not of our life, and may be stripped of here and there without fatal injury; our thicker garments, constantly worn, are our cellular integument, or cortex; but our shirts are our liber, or true bark, which cannot be removed without girdling and so destroying the man. I believe that all races at some seasons wear something equivalent to the shirt. It is desirable that a man be clad so simply that he can lay his hands on himself in the dark, and that he live in all respects so compactly and preparedly that, if an enemy take the town, he can, like the old philosopher, walk out the gate empty-handed without anxiety. ("Economy")



Thoreau scholars consider him more a borrower of literary ideas than an original thinker (See *The New Thoreau Handbook* by Harding and Meyer). The same book states "the record of his reading is nearly complete," but no reference is made to Montaigne, although many other sources are cited. Thoreau mentions Montaigne once, in his *Journal* January 8, 1852. If Thoreau did read Montaigne and borrow Montaigne's ideas, it might have been through his patron, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson, a life-long admirer of Montaigne, included him in his essays on *Representative Man* ("Montaigne, or The Skeptic"). In 1843, Emerson wrote to Thoreau, then in Staten Island with Emerson's brother, William, to say that he had just received a new translation of Montaigne. Two years later, Thoreau went to Walden, where he started writing *Walden*, which was published in 1854. The relationship of Emerson and Thoreau makes it plausible to assume that Thoreau became acquainted with Montaigne through Emerson.

If Thoreau borrowed from Montaigne, he didn't embrace all his ideas and thoughts. Montaigne is far ranging and tended more to cover the entire human experience. For example, Thoreau, as a bachelor, considered women a mystery, a part of the world he never entered. Montaigne was explicit on sexual matters.

Thoreau, who scorned organized religion and preachers, was not a churchgoer. Montaigne was a faithful Roman Catholic, although tolerant of Protestants. Yet he was so critical of the church's actions that after his death his writings were put on the Index, which prohibited Catholics from reading them.

Montaigne examined his own thoughts and actions, was self-analytical. Thoreau, not so much, at least not critically. Although Thoreau had personal friends in Concord, Montaigne was more generous and tolerant in his assessment of mankind. Thoreau wrote of the world as he thought it should be. Montaigne wrote of the world he saw.

Thoreau spoke for specific causes: civil disobedience, his concern for nature. Montaigne's appeal is more universal as shown by his many admirers, imitators, and sponsors: Bacon, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Pascal, Rousseau, Sterne, Byron, Thackeray, Virginia Woolf, Emerson, Sainte-Beuve, and many others.

A youth can dream with Thoreau of the life in the woods, of communion with nature. As he grows older, he enters into a career, marries, and raises a family, things that Thoreau derides. Then Montaigne's practicality becomes more attractive. Thoreau's idealism, high-mindedness, iconoclasm attract youth, who willingly tolerate his outrageousness and abrasiveness. Old age is comforted by Montaigne, his affability, his serenity, his happy nature, and his good sense. □

**Fisherman with his crew of cormorants**



**Constricted neck prevents cormorants from competing with owner-fisherman**



# Siberian Cranes in China

By Rick Lohr



Poster promoting crane conservation in Wucheng, China

**B**oats emerged out of the mist, as if out of the veil of time. The boatmen were standing, pushing silently on the oars. Large gawky birds swam beside the boats and dove with enthusiasm. Cormorant fishing. I could see where the fishermen had tied the necks of the birds to constrict them so they could not swallow the fish. A cormorant surfaced near me with a fish lodged in its beak and upper throat. The neck of the cormorant took on its distorted silhouette. The fish's tail wiggled vainly as the cormorant raised its beak, and, just as vainly, attempted to swallow it. Seeing the wiggling tail as tempting bait, another cormorant swam over and bit its successful rival on the neck—cormorants are fierce competitors. The fisherman ended the dispute by extending a long pole and snagging the cormorant's leg with a noose, pulled it in and shook out the fish. In a few seconds the bird was back in the water to continue its hunt. The cormorant, with its fierce green eyes and sharp hooked beak, enjoyed its futile game as it dove in pursuit of other quarry. The small fishing boats glided into the mist as quietly as they had appeared, leaving only excitement of the journey to come.

Wucheng, China, is a long way from Marathon, Wisconsin, and yet, here I was, in January of 1985, a member of the International Crane Foundation (ICF) expedition heading for the wintering area of the endangered species, the Siberian crane. I had no "birding" experience; the goose bumps on my skin were not all from the cold mist and fog. The fog, however, had delayed our boat trip up the Gan River to the Wucheng-Lake Poyang Bird Reserve. The ICF expedition was to confirm the number of Siberian cranes that winter at the Wucheng-Lake Poyang Reserve and to study the natural and human environment in which the cranes exist. We knew little about the Lake Poyang area other than it had rarely been visited by Westerners in recent years. Cormorant fishing was a hint of the historic nature of the area we were visiting. The trip was to be an adventure into China's past. The response to China's new economic reforms would be very interesting in this remote agricultural area. We were involved in a very "Chinese" paradox, studying the new by visiting the old.

Dr. George Archibald, of the International Crane Foundation, in his mid-forties, with dark hair and trimmed moustache and beard, was the group leader. An incurable optimist, humorist, and compulsive worker, he thrived on much less sleep than the rest of the group. As a founder and head of the International Crane Foundation, he has spent twenty years working to save the endangered crane species of the world. George's international reputation draws official attention everywhere he travels. Bureaucrats from China's Ministry of Forestry flocked around us to "learn from the renowned Dr. Archibald." A television crew, newspaper reporters, and photographers recorded his every move. If all of the film taken was produced, George Archibald may be doing his crane dance on Chinese television at this minute.

Morning mist on the river





Three men work in shade of roof to make jute ropes

Farm in Jiangxi province

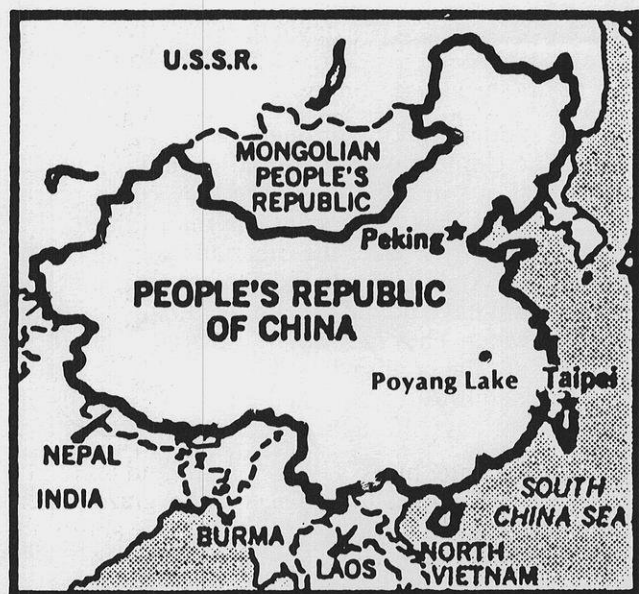


We had a long, cold trip down the Gan River, seeing only the high bleak banks on either side. In the summer, the monsoon season swells the five rivers that feed Lake Poyang—the Gan, Fuhe, Xin, Yaohe, and Xiushui—so that the lake covers an area of about 5,050 square kilometers (2,000 square miles). The smooth running, warm water is rich in nutrients and aquatic life washed in by Lake Poyang's feeder rivers. Some varieties of fish swim against the current up from the Yangtze to the north. The dry season, which lasts from October to March, decreases the rate of flow of these rivers, and Lake Poyang shrinks to a surface water area of only 500 square kilometers. This exposes expanses of mudflats, grasslands, and scattered shallow lakes which are rich in nutrients, mollusks, shrimp, and fish—a paradise for water birds. The grasslands and mudflats also prove a bonanza for villagers who graze water buffalo, domesticated geese, and ducks. The ability to use this land in the winter contributes up to three fourths of the annual income for some peasants.

George Archibald told us that only fourteen Siberian cranes had arrived at their wintering grounds in India this year and five in Iran. The Afghanistan flock was presumed lost. Cranes are edible and easy to capture. For their specialized feeding habits they need shallow water; they do not swim or often feed on dry ground. Yet, the cranes continue to exist, just as they have for sixty million years. We were deep in China, searching for an old Siberian crane refuge.

Soviet scientists are increasingly concerned about the Siberian cranes, which are important wildlife in the Soviet Union. Ornithologists were informed about the declining western flock that winters in southwest Asia, but not about the wintering habitat of the more numerous eastern flock which roosts summers in the Yakutia region of Siberia. They had counted two hundred Siberian cranes in that area. Because the Soviet ornithologists could not work directly with the Chinese, for political reasons, the International Crane Foundation is coordinating efforts to locate the wintering grounds of the eastern flock and get an accurate count of the birds. The Chinese Ministry of Forestry aided in the search for the cranes for several years and gave Chinese ornithologists bus money for travel. With the vast expanse of China to search it seemed an impossible task, but because the Siberians are such specialized feeders, the possible areas where they could winter were limited. In the winter of 1980/81 Lake Poyang was located as the key area. We traveled there to confirm the Chinese ornithologist's count, conducted in February 1983, of 840 Siberian cranes.

As the boat rounded a bend in the Gan River, we saw our home for the next ten days, the village of Wucheng. Steps led down to the water's edge. Chickens and pigs roamed freely as several women wrung out clothes and beat the excess water out with sticks. They got clothes clean, but with each day dawning foggy or misty, laundry never did completely dry. People scampered up and down the steps with large loads



balanced on shoulder poles. They moved with a strange gait, quicker than walking, with more of a bend in the knees, and the strain of the effort showing on their faces. Logs for boat-building were tied to piers while men on the bank worked with hand planes and adzes shaping them into boards. The boats were made of heavy lumber, tightly fit, and well nailed. The fresh yellow of the logs and the simple functional design gave the boats a rough, primitive beauty. I could imagine the pride with which the new owner would push off into the swift river current, his boat loaded with ambitious dreams of the new China.

**E**arly the next morning we moved downriver toward the most promising lake for sighting Siberian cranes. We left the boat, and after about a mile hike in misty highlands, descended into a giant crater with red bluffs surrounding a vast land of grass, mud flats, and shallow lakes. Water buffalo grazed. Farmers guided domestic ducks in rows of up to a thousand. George Archibald, excited, pointed toward the misty horizon. We trained our field glasses on a dark line in the distance, a lake filled with thousands of birds. They were a long way off, but with our goal in sight, we began to hike more enthusiastically. The bluffs overhanging the lake of the birds seemed close, but required much trudging through soft ground and reddish mud. We slopped along in knee-high boots carrying our cameras, scopes, tripods, and box lunches. The soft red sandstone bluffs flaked easily, and the crumbling shoreline showed that wave action was still wearing a large watershed for the lake. We finally reached Dahu-zer (the Great Lake), about seven kilometers from the village, and climbed the gentle back slope to get a view of the birds. High on the bluff, we saw the fragile, hazy landscape dotted with thousands of waterfowl wading or swimming in shallow water about



George Archibald in light jacket leads group in counting Siberian cranes in Dahu

two kilometers away. Most dramatic was the cloud of white far out in the lake. The Chinese smiled, and pointed, "white crane."

George Archibald and expedition birders excitedly set up tripods and scopes and began to count the tiny specks of white. George was ecstatic, saying this was the greatest day in his life. The counters averaged over 1,200 Siberians—far more than we had expected. I shared the excitement over the numbers, but the experience was not as I had imagined. I had hoped the cranes could be viewed easily with fieldglasses. We could get no closer since there was no cover on the grassy lake bottom, and we couldn't disturb this huge congregation of birds lest we make accurate count more difficult.

The next morning we walked through the early morning mist toward Dahu. Sturdy workers with padded blue workclothes stared at us with intense curiosity. When we waved, they smiled and greeted us "nee-how." Junks sailed down the river with families doing early morning chores. People dug chunks of sod out of the lake bottom; others carried sod-laden baskets balanced on shoulder poles up the steep slopes of dikes to repair damage from last year's flood. Workers cut seven to eight foot high marsh grass with a scythe, then gathered and carried the hay to the river bank where it would be loaded for sale downriver.

There was no road to Dahu. We walked on dikes protecting fish ponds and along the neatly terraced rice fields lying fallow in the winter. Surprisingly, vegetables were still green in the fields. Chinese cabbage looked very good. The villages were picturesque. Buildings were sturdily constructed red brick. The people were friendly. Quick smiles, nods, and laughter greeted our salutations. Parents often ran to get their children to look at the foreign procession.

The cranes were still in the lake the next day. Several counts by ICF members, Chinese researchers, and Jiangxi officials verified the average number of Siberians in the lake as 1,300. One hundred and fifty other Siberians counted on Zauhu (Long Lake) were seen coming and going from Dahu. These Siberians, added into the Dahu number, produced the largest official count of the trip, 1,450. The count included 119 immature birds, which have a rust tinge to their white feathers and white feathers covering their red-skinned faces. Each immature crane was with an adult pair, even though Siberian cranes usually hatch two eggs. Our observation reinforced the idea that while two eggs are often hatched one chick eventually chases the other from the nest.

The Siberians stood probing for food in the shallow water. They eat tubers of grasslike sedge plants, snapping them off and raising their long necks to swallow them. We also found evidence that they were feeding on clams and shrimp which are plentiful in the lake. Hooded cranes walked and pecked for food in the shallower water, while the Siberians inhabited the deeper water. White-naped cranes were also plentiful and fed leisurely near the Siberians. Further out, geese, ducks, and swans swam contentedly. Some of the six lakes appealed to particular birds, but each lake had a va-

riety of species. Our total crane count included 1,350 Siberians, 1,165 white-naped, 105 hooded, 20 common, and one lost lesser sandhill.

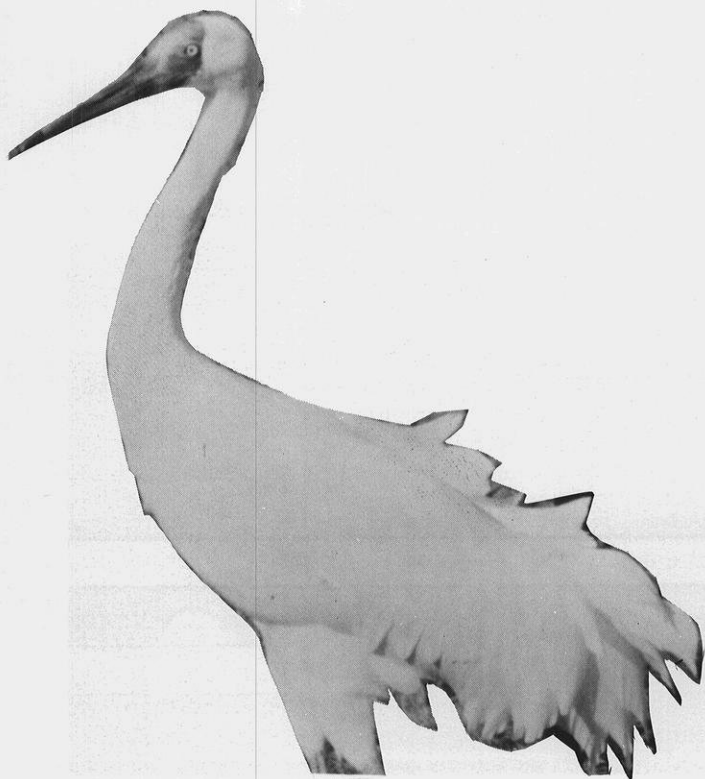
Once while we were observing the birds at Dahu, a man was spotted walking through the lake toward the cranes. The Chinese officials ran after him, although he was well out in the lake before they could reach him. The birds flew away from the man toward the opposite side of the lake; the Siberians were the last to fly. George Archibald said they do not react quickly to danger and have not adapted to feeding other than in shallow water. They may not be too bright—but they are beautiful! The bright white of their feathers stands out in stark contrast to the usual grays and browns of the dark cool days. In flight, the black primaries are exposed, and the contrast with their white feathers is especially beautiful against a blue sky. At times we saw flocks of a hundred or more fly to their roosting lake at the end of the day. When the Siberians leave on their 3,700 mile migration to the Yakutia area of Siberia, they split into pairs and roost in widely dispersed territories on the tundra. Siberian cranes mate for life and are incredibly loyal. George told us stories of cranes standing guard over dead mates, not leaving until finally driven off. Lake Poyang is the only place in the world where the huge flocks of Siberians can be seen.

#### The highlands of Wucheng



As part of our effort to stir interest in the wildlife of Lake Poyang, I taught a sixth grade class at the Wucheng middle school. The students laughed and responded to questions through an interpreter. Their teacher asked many questions about life in the United States, but I needed an interpreter to communicate with him. He had studied English at the university in the 1960s or 1970s, but his education was cut short by the Cultural Revolution. This school was nothing like the quality schools I had observed in the coastal cities when I was on an educational tour in 1980. These students will have difficulty passing the tests to enter China's universities. Education is a key to the future for ambitious young people who want a better lifestyle.

Our stay in Wucheng passed too quickly. We developed an appreciation for the cold misty beauty of the crane's habitat and a genuine affection for the friendly people, who lived and worked with them. New construction was already changing Wucheng, and the curiosity which greeted us will pass. A new fifty-bed guesthouse is under construction with a restaurant and an office building to follow. The Ministry of Forestry, in charge of these developments, sees them as part of an overall plan to develop the Wucheng-Lake Poyang Nature Reserve. The reserve was established in 1983 in response to a threat to the birds wintering in the lakes. In the winter of 1981/82 people from the surrounding area had made cannons out of steel pipes



When I became sick with a stuffy head, sore throat, headache, and uncontrollable hiccups, I asked our interpreter, Mr. Ou, if he could get a good Chinese doctor for me. He asked if I meant a Western-trained doctor, and I told him, a traditional Chinese doctor. He said there were several in the village, but he preferred Western-trained doctors. When we returned from our day at Lake Poyang, a doctor and the administrator of Century Hospital of Yeng County turned up quickly. When word spread that I was consulting an acupuncturist, three other members of our group showed up with aches and pains. The doctor put several needles in my chest, legs, arms, and neck probing for soreness inside the muscles. "Tender? tender?" she asked, until the answer was a painful "Yes!" Then she laughed and worked with another needle. The needles were left inserted for about twenty minutes with the doctor vibrating them from time to time and asking, "Tender?" The needles hurt when she manipulated them; otherwise, they were nearly painless. My hiccups stopped quickly, and gradually my headache lessened. When she pulled out the needles, all of them had bent. She told me that I have very tight muscles. I had several more treatments to help my chronic neck pain and felt better after each treatment. The other three members of the group, however, declared total relief from short term pains. Mr. Ou thought we were all crazy!



**This traditional medicine salesman acts as doctor and pharmacist**

and fired shrapnel from many such weapons into the large flock of birds, killing hundreds at one time. This was against the law. Yong Xiu County officials arrested three ring leaders who were sentenced to three to six months in jail and fined 3,000 yuan (\$1,000) each. Efforts to gain the support of the local people for the protection of wildlife included an educational campaign emphasizing conservation and an enforcement campaign of regular patrols of the lake basin. Since the winter of 1981/82 there has been no trouble at the reserve.

Officials stated that conflicts between the wildlife reserve and the local people were difficult to solve. The people in the area have depended heavily on winter revenues from the lake. This includes not only grazing animals, but also draining the lakes to catch all of the fish. This has been done historically, but officials were not certain if it was a more extensive practice now than in the past. They were embarrassed that Dahu was swiftly drained while the ICF team was observing the lake. This was the most probable reason that the large flock of 1,300 was last seen on Dahu the second day of our stay.

Several villages existed as islands within the boundaries of the reserve. Offers to buy the land from the owners had been met with much resistance. George Archibald was concerned that if the Ministry of Forestry pushed too hard on this solution, the inhabitants might settle the issue by killing the cranes. Another solution is to pay a government subsidy to those whose land borders on the lakes to replace their lost winter income. Only people whose land borders the lakes have fishing rights in them. George Archibald felt that since the cranes and people had coexisted this long, the government could educate the people about the purpose of the reserve and understand their economic problems to find a balance of interests.

Although we were only in Wucheng for about ten days, we established that a more healthy eastern population of Siberian cranes exist than was expected. We found concerned officials who were ready to go out and do research. We found a commitment by the Ministry of Forestry to organize and fund the reserve. During the Cultural Revolution the Ministry of Forestry had been closed completely. Since that time 260 reserves, covering 155,400 square kilometers, have been established demonstrating a renewed interest in the natural environment. This is good news for the Siberian cranes as well as for the new China. □

# *Getting to Know Lorine Niedecker*

By Gail Roub



**I**t took me several years to get to know Lorine Niedecker. I don't mean the person—she was easy to meet and comfortable. I mean the poet. I knew Lorine was a poet before I met her, and her poetry was always there as the most important thing about her, but it took a while before I began to read the poems with genuine enjoyment, and it took years before I could read them with deep appreciation and delight.

I mention this because I may be typical. It may also help to explain why Lorine does not have a mass audience, even though she has been described by respected writers and critics as one of the finest poets of the century.

Like Bach's music and Vermeer's paintings, Niedecker's poems may be in danger of being overlooked by people of her own time, except for a dedicated few, notably the poets Cid Corman and Jonathan Williams, who have recognized her importance from the beginning and have labored to introduce her to a reluctant public.

Unlike the late Georgia O'Keeffe, who dismissed her Wisconsin roots as insignificant to her work, Lorine Niedecker's poetry is woven from a particular site in Wisconsin which she loved and celebrated. Except for two years at Beloit College and other brief intervals, she lived all her life in a marshy, low-lying community of fishing shacks and summer cottages called Blackhawk Island, about four miles downstream from Fort Atkinson where the Rock River flows into Lake Koshkonong. The way of life in this often-flooded place, the sounds and silences, miseries and delights, visual experiences—these became in Lorine's poetry a universal expression of the human condition.



It took me far too long to appreciate her poetry. Maybe I was standing too close. I probably resisted the idea that a local poet could be great. When I met her in 1964, she had published only two slim paperbacks. For all I knew, she had paid to have them printed herself (not true). When I mentioned her to my friends in town, few had heard of her and those few were older people who might have known her years before in high school or in one of the places where she worked. I, who had moved to town five years before, already knew hundreds of people through work as a high school teacher, yet Lorine, who had lived here since 1903 and had published a book of verse in England, remained virtually unknown to the community.

Slowly I approached her poems—it was not easy to find copies—and at first they seemed cryptic. What should I make of a poem like this?

What bird would light  
in a moving tree  
the tree I carry  
for privacy?  
Down in the grass  
the question's inept,  
sora's eyes . . .  
stillness steps.

I read and reread the lines. What is she saying, I wondered, this woman who is so pleasant, so down to earth, "so true," as Cid Corman later described her to me. When I asked about the poems she said, "It's not easy to talk about them. When I'm writing it's as if my mind is operating just below the level of consciousness."

On the other hand, some of the poems seemed simple and almost childlike, such as

Remember my little granite pail?  
The handle of it was blue.  
Think what's got away in my life—  
Was enough to carry me thru.

but I know now that I wasn't listening for the unspoken meanings that characterize so much of Lorine's poetry.

She knew I was interested. I think she sensed my difficulties, and as trust grew between us she decided to allow me in some ways to share the privacy of her artistic life. I had probably known her about a year when I suddenly and directly asked her, "Lorine, who are you?" Her equally direct reply with a slight smile: "William Carlos Williams said that I am the Emily Dickinson of my time." After that I began to try harder.

A kind of breakthrough came in the summer of 1965 when I was relaxing from the school year and attempting to paint. I had bought some of the new acrylic colors and was trying for a vivid spring background into which I planned to place a prothonotary warbler, the brilliant little chrome yellow bird that frequents watery places like Blackhawk Island. It was an unself-conscious painting, very sketchy, the yellow and green background almost vibrating on the eye, and somehow the little blob of yellow bird pulled the whole painting together. I was sitting there looking at it when Lorine knocked at the door for a quick visit as she passed by. When she saw the painting, she threw up her hands in delight and I could see that she wanted it, so of course I gave it to her.

A week or so later she told me she was writing a poem about the painting, in fact had written several versions. She sent me the poems with notes about them and indicated she would probably keep the second version, which she did, and that is the one that first appeared in *T & G* and the *Collected Poems 1968*. Fortunately, I saved these notes, which provide some insight into the process of her writing. Here is the key idea in Lorine's own words: "Version I—fairly conscious. II is the one I'll probably keep as the one *sleeping under* (her italics) the other, in large part subconscious." Here are the two versions:



### Prothonotary Warbler I

Clerk of May Court  
singing ringing  
yellow green

St. Francis image  
as perch—why judge—  
a niche in the wall

and the man made green ring  
in his painting—grass  
the sweet bird flew in

### Prothonotary Warbler II

Bird singing  
ringing yellow  
green

My friend made green  
ring  
—his painting—  
grass  
the sweet bird  
flew in

The warbler poems illustrate what Lorine was always trying to do in her poetry—*condense*. Whether she was writing about a bird, a sound “Get a load of April’s fabulous / frog rattle like freight cars in the night”—note also the play on words between “load” and “freight cars,” which is characteristic), an idea, a great person like Darwin or Jefferson, a relationship, she sought to express it in the fewest words possible; not only the fewest—in the best of the fewest words, in the best possible arrangement, in the most appropriate arrangement on the page. For her the visual

experience of the words is almost as important as the music and the thought.

I was beginning to understand. Basil Bunting, the noted English poet who died just last year and who once visited Lorine on Blackhawk Island, put it this way: "No one is so subtle with so few words" as Lorine Niedecker. He also called her "the best living poetess."

After the warbler experience Lorine gave me copies of many of her poems before they appeared in print. She wrote me fairly long letters when she was in Milwaukee with her husband and away from her beloved Blackhawk Island, and I knew that I should save these letters. She wrote about everything that interested her—whether the river would flood, what Thomas Jefferson thought about England, the comments of literary friends with whom she maintained a large and important correspondence, interesting scraps of information she found doing research. I knew when she was involved with Henry James or Charles Darwin, and when she would finish a poem I would find a typed copy in my mailbox, often with comments written in the margins.

Of immense importance to Lorine was the ongoing publication of her poems. I do not believe she sought any kind of fame, and if the world had beaten a path to her door she would have fled from it and tried to recover some place where she could again find the "deep silences" so necessary to her art. Yet I sensed in Lorine a quiet anxiety that her work might be overlooked, and this bothered her, not because she sought public adulation, but because she had a very clear idea of who she was, what a rare talent she possessed, and how much she had achieved in spite of great personal difficulties. What mattered to her was that her poetry should be read and enjoyed and not get buried.

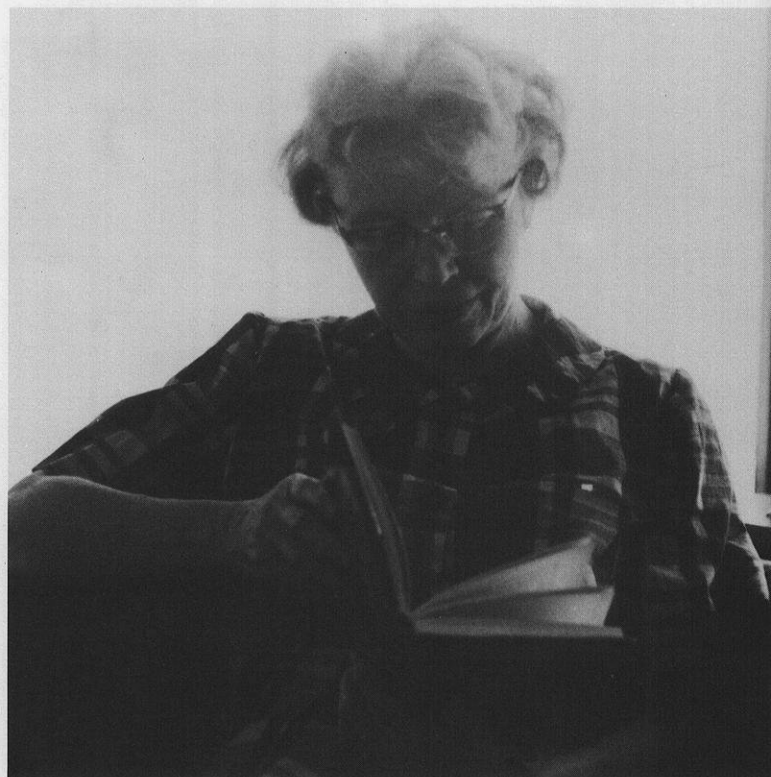
Her Christmas card to me in 1967 was a copy of *Poetry Magazine* that included three short new poems. I especially liked the third which commented on the three periods of life using the image of migrating birds:

Young in Fall I said: the birds  
are at their highest thoughts  
of leaving

Middle life said nothing—  
grounded  
to a livelihood

Old age—a high gabbling gathering  
before goodbye  
of all we know

I knew I still had a way to go when Lorine told me she considered this to be one of her "more obvious" poems after I said how much I had liked it. I understand now what she meant, but I still like the poem. The third stanza may express her belief that there is no life beyond this one. I don't honestly remember what Lorine believed about ultimate questions. I know



she was interested in the writing of Albert Schweitzer and that she corresponded with the Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, about poetry and eastern religion, and that he sent her three of his books, all inscribed. Her wonderful poem on Charles Darwin, written just before her death, refers to Darwin's observations as his "holy, slowly mulled-over matter . . ." She once wrote to Cid Corman: "I'd like not to be steeped in traditional music—O to be as free from that as I am from traditional church religion."

Having noted that, let me add that I consider Lorine to have written some of the most spiritual poetry I have read. In her last years she explored and celebrated the relationships between all living and inanimate things, trusting most in the revelations of scientists who had sought to discern the truth for its own sake:

Far reach  
of sand  
A man

bends to inspect  
a shell  
Himself

part coral  
and mud  
clam

Her poem "Wintergreen Ridge" explores this unraveling mystery, as does the following:

The smooth black stone  
I picked up in true source park  
the leaf beside it  
once was stone

Why should we hurry  
home

In 1968 I startled my students and friends by announcing that I would marry for the first time at age forty-two. While courting my wife Bonnie, I was anxious that she would accept my life on Blackhawk Island, and one evening I showed her a copy of Lorine's typescript of "Paeon to Place," the long and lovely poem in which the poet evoked the deepest images of her life in haunting language. Bonnie read the poem slowly, then read it again and again. Always more intuitive than I, she sensed the beauty and power of the language even before she fully understood what Lorine was doing. Like me, she is now a true believer in the importance of Lorine's work.

Bonnie and Lorine discovered a spiritual bond at once, and Lorine confided to her some personal history never divulged to me. From their conversation on a long walk we began to understand more about Lorine's father, Henry, who not only seined carp but also foolishly lost his money to a woman who flattered him, seduced him, and dropped him when the money was gone. This bitter theme emerged clearly in several of the poems. It remains for some scholar to identify the woman, who may still be living and whose mercenary affair made it necessary for Lorine to scrub floors in her later life.

We lost Lorine very suddenly in December 1970. I did not know she was sick, although Cid Corman noted that she was shaking visibly when he visited her in November of that year. A heart condition and high blood pressure led to a stroke, from which she never recovered. Fortunately, she had left a copy of her poem on Darwin in my mailbox or we would not possess a true version of the poem, because the only existing version was one Corman had transcribed from a tape recording of her reading of the poem. Not until this less accurate version appeared in Corman's collection called *Blue Chicory* did I realize that I had an obligation to make contact with those who were guarding Lorine's legacy.

Today as I write I can hear Canada geese flying over Fort Atkinson, and it immediately makes me think of Blackhawk Island, where I spent ten of my happiest years living in a wonderful little house remodeled from my grandfather's fishing shack. The "island"—really a peninsula—is narrow and low, and one is always aware of shimmering water, except on a very still day or in winter, when all liquid motion stops. My living room was so close to the river that sunlight reflected off the choppy surface and made happy dancing light on walls and ceiling, and when the moon did this same trick it was worth turning off the lights to watch. "What a wonderful house!" said Lorine the first time she stepped

in and saw her beloved river framed by the big windows—and across the river a wilderness that had changed little from the days when Marquette and the French *voyageurs* came this way.

On a summer night you could fall asleep to a great horned owl's distant trumpet or the din of frogs in the marsh across the road. I knew this place as a child, because we often spent summer months there, but for Lorine it was her first and lasting awareness of reality, the glass through which she saw and interpreted the world. She wrote me about this in a letter from Milwaukee, how this place was inseparable from her poetry and her being.

Classified as an Objectivist poet (her mentor and teacher, Louis Zukofsky, was a leading Objectivist) she was preoccupied in the summer of 1967 with an attempt to define herself as a poet and apparently felt her writing could not be easily categorized. She had come up with the word "reflective" to describe her way. Lorine's thoughts on this are well worth quoting:

Much taken up with how to define a way of writing poetry which is not Imagist nor Objectivist fundamentally nor Surrealism alone—Stella Leonardos of Brazil sensed something when I loosely called it 'reflections' or as I think it over now, reflective, maybe. The basis is direct and clear—what has been seen or heard—but something gets in, overlays all that to make a state of consciousness . . . The visual form is there in the background and the words convey what the visual form gives off after it's felt in the mind. A heat that is generated and takes in the whole world of the poem. A light, a motion, inherent in the whole. Not surprising since modern poetry and old poetry if it's good, proceeds not from one point to the next linearly but in a circle. The *tone* of the thing. And awareness of everything influencing everything. Early in life I looked back of our buildings to the lake and said, 'I am what I am because of all this—I am what is around me—those woods have made me . . .' I used to feel that I was goofing off unless I held only to the hard, clear image, the thing you could put your hand on but now I dare do this reflection. For instance, *Origin* will have a narrow, longish poem, sensuous, begins 'My life / in water' and ends 'of the soft / and serious— / Water.'

Now that I'm into Lorine's poetry, now that I've read and reread the reviews and poured over her letters, how I wish I could have a good visit with her and ask her what she may have had in mind for this or that line of poetry. As I think back, she was more than ready to tell me. If only I had pressed the button on a tape recorder and just let her talk. These are not small regrets, but they pale beside the richness Lorine has brought to me and to Bonnie. She seems very near, and we know her better all the time. □

# One by Herself

## *The Achievement of Lorine Niedecker*

By Karl Gartung

**L**orine Niedecker was born in 1903 in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, and lived there nearly her entire life. She was a Wisconsin *native* in her writing as well, indigenous in the way such European plants as blue chicory, Queen Anne's lace, and black-eyed Susans are indigenous—to all but the botanical historian.

### Consider

the alliance—  
ships and plants

The take-for-granted bloom  
of our roadsides  
Queen Anne's Lace  
Black Eyed Susans  
rode the sea

'Specimens graciously passed  
between warring fleets'

And when an old boat rots ashore  
itself once living plant  
it sprouts

She had no Indian heritage that I know of, though she was well aware of the history of white-Indian relations—read white dominance and usurpation. She knew through books how the Black Hawk War started, how Fort Atkinson got its name:

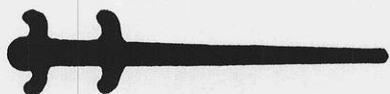
Black Hawk held: In reason  
land cannot be sold,  
only things to be carried away,  
and I am old.

Young Lincoln's general moved,  
pawpaw in bloom,  
and to this day, Black Hawk,  
reason has small room.

The cabin in which LN lived and wrote until her marriage to Albert Millen



She did not fall into the recent (perhaps most imperialistic of all) trap of attempting to write "Indian" poems. Her work is deeply related to both the form and the nature of the truly indigenous and is itself indigenous to the twentieth-century viewer.



Wisconsin was in 1832 the site of some ten to fifteen thousand effigy mounds, both abstract and figurative. Most of these were eradicated through looting, town construction, and agriculture. Fewer than a thousand remain, several of them on a golf course near the south shore of Lake Koshkonong (site of Black Hawk Island) including the *only* remaining intaglio effigy mound (the shape, called panther by anthropologists, formed by excavation rather than piling up dirt). That effigy, its forty-foot long tail now bisected by a suburban gravel driveway, was directly en route from Black Hawk Island to Fort Atkinson. LN must have passed it thousands of times on her way to and from town. The effigy mound construction achieves absolute economy, without a single unessential detail, although many details may have been removed by erosion, by time itself. LN achieved through her poetry, quite knowledgeably, an analogous economy. Hard, durable, meaningful form. On many of the remaining mounds, large trees grow.

Lorine Niedecker stayed in Fort Atkinson. Hers was an essentially lonely position. She was perhaps the truest radical to this date in American letters. She wrote of and for her "folk" in their own words. She never wrote down to them. Her ears and hands heard and recorded the speech of common people in a specific place and time, preserving them against homogenization. Her position regarding her neighbors is one of respect in the true sense of their words:

I was the solitary plover  
a pencil  
for a wing-bone  
From the secret notes  
I must tilt

upon the pressure  
execute and adjust

In us sea-air rhythm  
'We live by the urgent wave  
of the verse'



In a letter to Louis Zukofsky (1947) she noted "A woman in Fort threw herself into the river off the bridge one night last week. 'She must have been insane,' they said—you can't help but feel it must have been a lucid moment among the patches of ice." She did not "like"

them in many ways—an enclosure with a letter to Gail Roub is an example. A Jefferson stamp was centered about a quarter of the way down the page. Beneath it one of her Jefferson poems faces a news clipping quoting a poll in which the people rejected the Declaration of Independence as communist propaganda. "Are *these* the people I write for?" the handwritten note asked.

This was her dilemma: her decision to remain in Wisconsin next to her sources—land, water, and people—separated her from the community she craved. In a letter to Cid Corman following a reading by Jonathan Williams in Milwaukee, she reflects:

I couldn't help thinking as I looked around at that quiet little gathering of somewhat select persons what it would be like to live in a community of poets! A little too cold to speculate while there and by now each one of us is an isolate dot on the page again . . .

### Easter Greeting

I suppose there is nothing  
so good as human  
immediacy

I do not speak loosely  
of handshake  
which is  
of the mind  
or lilies—stand closer—  
smell

Her poetry (the most important part of her life—before every thing and one else) made her feel an oddity in her own community. A letter to poet Ron Ellis (also of Fort Atkinson and a teacher at UW-White-water) lays this out:

Would like to ask: not too much publicity, please. Not local publicity. I've tried to stay away from it all these years. I came close to being written up in the Union a couple of times but *begged* it not be done. I live among the folk who couldn't understand and it's where I want to live. I'd like not to appear a freak. If I appear a freak to you I won't mind so much—might even be a compliment!

Her deliberate local isolation was relieved late in life by her friendship with Gail and Bonnie Roub and by her marriage to Albert Millen in 1963, at age sixty. The wedding picture shows a large man and a small woman, looking somewhat nervous. With Millen she traveled, to the Black Hills, around Lake Superior, and to Door County, Wisconsin. These travels inform two late poem sequences: "Lake Superior" and "Winter-green Ridge" from which:

... Nobody, nothing  
ever gave me  
greater thing

than time  
unless light  
and silence

which if intense  
makes sound  
Unaffected

by man  
thin to nothing lichens  
grind with their acid

granite to sand . . .

The marriage was not completely happy, although  
Al obviously loved her and she him:

I knew a clean man  
but he was not for me.  
Now I sew green aprons  
over covered seats. He  
wades the muddy water fishing  
falls in, dries his last pay-check  
in the sun, smooths it out  
in Leaves of Grass. He's  
the one for me.

Her relationship with Gail Roub was for a while  
tinged by Al's (unfounded) jealousy, but Gail's mar-  
riage to Bonnie changed all that. Their first child evoked  
this from Lorine:

### Katherine Anne

A poor poet  
devining Gail

The baby looked toward me  
and I was born—  
to sound, light  
lift, life  
beyond my life

She wiggles her toe  
I grow  
I go to school to her  
and she to me  
and to Bonnie

Al relieved her of her "knuckleheadedness" over  
meeting people, but grew nervous when on their trips  
she took notes over conversations. During their eve-  
nings together, he often walked down the road for a  
drink, while she stayed at home, working:

I married

in the world's black night  
for warmth

if not repose.  
At the close—  
someone.

I hid with him  
from the long range guns.  
We lay leg  
in the cupboard, head  
in closet.

A slit of light  
at no bird dawn—  
Untaught  
I thought

he drank

too much.  
I say

I married  
and lived unburied.  
I thought—

When she had her cerebral hemorrhage, she turned  
to him and said, "Al, I don't know what is the matter,"  
and fell. In the hospital she turned to him and said,  
and repeated, "Cuss, Cuss." Later, during her funeral  
(he was too grief-stricken to attend) he realized she'd  
meant, "Kiss, Kiss."

A group of us visited Black Hawk Island, to find  
her place, hoping to talk with some of her ac-  
quaintances. Ray Brisk operates the Black Hawk Club  
(a bar) with his wife Myrtle. He dug her grave and  
buried her on January 3, 1971, in a snowstorm. The  
minister "that bastard talked over her for an hour in  
a blizzard—we were up to our armpits! And she didn't  
even attend church!—She went into the ground hard."  
We made of *From This Condensery* a gift, to the place.  
Immediately, eagerly, they asked "Is there a poem in  
here about the time Al fell in the river and dried his  
check in her book?" Delighted to find it, who couldn't  
care less about *poetry*, PROUD. Later, Myrtle says Al  
gave her a copy of *My Life By Water*, after LN died.  
They were high-school friends. An heirloom. Asked  
whether LN often came with Al to the club of an eve-  
ning, she shook her head, "Lorine usually stayed be-  
hind and studied . . . she was one by herself."

Fifteen years after her death in December, 1970, of  
a cerebral hemorrhage and six years after her post-  
humous book *Blue Chicory* (Elizabeth Press, 1976)  
went out of print—Lorine Niedecker's work is finally  
widely available to us in two complementary editions:  
*The Granite Pail: The Selected Poems of Lorine Nie-  
decker*, Cid Corman, ed. (North Point Press, 1985);  
and *From This Condensery: The Complete Writing of  
Lorine Niedecker*, Robert J. Bertholf, ed. (The Jargon

Society, 1985). The coincidence of these titles in a single year, after so many years without any of her poetry, constitutes a major event in American letters.

*The Granite Pail* is an excellent introduction to Lorine Niedecker through a sparse anthology of her early poetry, with a fairly complete rendering of her later poetry. The selection is based on Cid Corman's knowledge of her from an extensive correspondence and a personal visit at her home in the last months of her life, and upon his sensibilities as a poet who includes among his primary influences Japanese and Chinese masters (especially Basho) and the Americans William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky. These influences and passions he shared with LN.

His selection of the early poems in general deprives them of their original sequences, inevitably relieving them of much subtlety. The famous poem

There's a better shine  
on the pendulum  
than is on my hair  
and many times

\* \* \*

I've seen it  
there

is removed from the early sequence "Mother Geese," taking from it the additional sense of words possibly overheard (under the clear autobiographical voice). LN later separated this poem herself, making this a logical, if necessary, choice.

An odd choice, considering editor Corman's preferences, is the removal of the title "In Exchange for Haiku" from a late sequence which in *Granite Pail* is shortened by twelve of twenty-one poems (assuming their correct grouping in *Condensery*). Some poems acutely missed here include:

If only my friend  
would return  
and remove the leaves  
from my eaves  
troughs

—

Fog-thick morning—  
I see only  
where I now walk. I carry  
my clarity  
with me.

—

I fear this war  
will be long and painful  
and who  
pursue  
it

—



This looks out on Lake Koshkonong from Ray Brisk's dock. 'The soft and serious water'

Such gaps are keenly felt and are inevitable to any anthology of LN's work. This points to her absolute achievement rather than to any error of sensibility or commission on the part of editor Cid Corman. *The Granite Pail* is indispensable as an economical introduction for anyone new to the poetry of Lorine Niedecker.

*From This Condensery* has all, or nearly all, of LN's writings excluding her correspondence (works of major importance themselves). Poems are included here in and out of original and changing sequences. The value of this treatment is beyond estimate. We are here given a rare and loving panorama of a poetic life. The various versions of poems on display in the "For Paul" section of the book—central to her life and work—evoke in their repetitions and evolution a major musical work, an oratorio, perhaps the St. Matthew Passion. They are that beautiful.

"For Paul" powerfully portrays LN's literary kinship to Louis Zukofsky and to his son, the concert violinist Paul Zukofsky. She celebrates the childhood of an artist:

All children begin with the life of the mind—  
if there were no marsh or stream  
imagine it . . .

and that Paul is being reared as an artist:

Ten o'clock  
and Paul's not in bed!  
He's reading *Twelfth Night*  
all Viola said.

Drink to three, the family  
around the bathroom tap.  
Little Paul—Corelli  
what's that? Belly!

Wash and say good night  
to varients and quarto texts,  
emendations, close relations.  
Let me hear good night.



The two and one-half room house Albert and Lorine had built and lived in together until her death. In background note the original cabin

and the sensibility essential to art and science:

The trouble with war for a botanist—  
he daren't drop out of the line of march  
to examine a flower. What flower?

as against:

Boys who play the fiddle never amount to anything  
the storekeeper screamed  
with the radio in his face  
so he raised his son to shop work  
turn screws, grind scissors  
and in the end own stores

and:

Not all that's heard is music. Paul, we leave  
an air that for awhile was good, white cottage,  
spruce . . . What if the sky is gone and they hold  
the hill armed with tin cans—they're not bad kids  
but fascists—you have the world. Remember the  
lovely notes, "the little O, the earth."  
This thing is old and singing's new—you  
just more full. Come, we'll sit with our birds  
between city bricks. See! the sun hits.

She notes these differences with astonishment and  
conviction in one of the best-known poems of the "For  
Paul" sequences:

In the great snowfall before the bomb,  
colored yule tree lights  
at windows,  
the only glow for contemplation  
along this road

I worked the print shop  
right down among 'em  
the folk from whom all poetry flows  
and dreadfully much else.

I was Blondie,  
I carried my bundles of hog feeder price lists  
by Larry the Lug,  
I'd never get anywhere  
because I'd never had suction,  
you know: pull, favor, drag,  
well oiled protection.

I heard their rehashed radio barbs—  
more barbarous among hirelings  
as higher-ups grow more corrupt.  
But what vitality! The women hold jobs,  
clean house, cook, raise children, bowl  
and go to church.

What would they say if they knew  
I sit for two months on six lines  
of poetry?

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow," goes  
the hymn, and when it came to the "folk," she did,

not without bitter cost and not (certainly) blindly; but she sang without condescension. Along with "Paeon to Place" and "My Life by Water" "For Paul" may constitute LN's most autobiographical work. This autobiography is of voices she heard as well as what she thought. In the poem above, try thinking of what you read as an overheard coffee break with her thoughts interspersed. You may possibly discover no fewer than four voices, intertwined with her reflective memory of the situation, and the amazing conclusion—amazing not because those two months are by comparison rich, but that vitality!

She had no children and had forsaken immediate contact with the community of poets to be found elsewhere, say New York, to remain in Fort Atkinson. There she took care of her parents until they died and lived among "the folk" attending the "flow" and the possibilities local to her mailbox. When her mother died she wrote:

Sorrow moves in wide waves,  
it passes, lets us be.  
It uses us, we use it,  
it's blind while we see.

Consciousness is illimitable,  
too good to forsake  
tho what we feel be misery  
and what we know will break.

Old Mother turns blue and from us,  
"Don't let my head drop to the earth.  
I'm blind and deaf." Death from the heart,  
a thimble in her purse.

"It's a long day since last night.  
Give me space. I need  
floors. Wash the floors, Lorine!  
Wash clothes! Weed!"

The "For Paul" anthem is sung, with a full throat:

He moved in light  
to establish  
the lovely  
possibility  
we knew  
and let it pass

The "For Paul" section alone makes the difference in price between *From This Condensery* and *The Granite Pail* worth paying, but editor Robert J. Bertholf and publisher Jonathan Williams have included until now unknown and unsuspected radio plays, fictions, and other creative prose which reveal Lorine Niedecker as a complete literary genius. *The Granite Pail* then is an exuberantly welcome traveling companion. *From This Condensery* is the essential book, the return home and the life lived in silent reflection.

LN had as preoccupations economy and time (patience). Because fifteen years have passed between her death and these publications, a little more attention to detail would have made these occasions almost humanly perfect. But each of the books has poems broken for the printed page in annoying and unnecessary places. The first two sections of *The Granite Pail* are presented beautifully, one poem to a page; but the last section, containing long poems, breaks them for pages in mid-stanza, leaving the sense of the poems unhinged. And someone should inform the artist responsible for the cover illustration that Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, gets about forty more inches of precipitation each year than the Kansas location depicted.

In *From This Condensery* even short poems suffer from page breaks. In the long sequence "Paeon to Place" every section is followed by a dot, against wishes LN clearly expressed in this published letter to Kenneth Cox about the Fulcrum Press edition of her collected poems *My Life By Water* (1970):

I'm fairly well satisfied. Jacket interesting only to people around here, I suppose—a map of our lake and river area, looking even in its non-abstract utilitarian reproduction as maybe an organ of the body with ducts to and from. The ducts being the river into and out of the lake, in fact the lake is a widening of the river. *The big error and the one I had mentioned to the Montgomery's in no gentle terms is the colophon (large period) after the first few stanzas of Paeon as tho the poem ended there.*[my italics]

(*The Full Note*, Lorine Niedecker, Interim Press, 1983)

Why did editor Bertholf lead off a book of this stature with a poem from her high school yearbook which would be better placed, if at all, in an appendix, or in a desperately needed index?

These and other quibbles pale beside the absolute pleasure of having LN's poetry back in print. This is great poetry and these editions will quite properly find their way in due time to university library special collections. Those who know and sing her poetry have the responsibility of carrying the tune, in public. Her decision to stay in the environment that made her and her ultimate confidence in the power of her words will demand this, of those for whom words and music matter.

With these publications Cid Corman and Jonathan Williams have discharged their commitments as poet/publishers to keep LN's writing public. These men have acted in pure faith and should be repaid and often with gratitude by the caring reading public. Without them we would remain separated by ignorance from Lorine Niedecker's poetry and from much more of the literature that counts from the last forty years. That each of these gentle men is a fine poet in his own right makes the work of publishing others extraordinarily generous. □



## *Teaching and Shaping*

## *Art and Life*

## Interview with Don Reitz

By James Van Deurzen  
Photographs by Dean Nagel

**D**on Reitz is well known to those who follow contemporary ceramics. For many years he has been regarded as the modern pioneer and premiere practitioner of large salt-fired vessel forms. His ability to handle large amounts of clay at the potter's wheel has astonished young ceramicists for decades. His work is always changing, however, and he has recently turned to drawing and painting on slabs of clay and constructing sculptural forms.

Reitz has been teaching ceramics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for twenty-four years and has been a full professor since 1972. His awards and honors are numerous. *Ceramics Monthly* magazine named him "one of the twelve greatest living ceramic artists worldwide." He is a trustee emeritus of the American Crafts Council and a fellow of the World Craft Council. He has received a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship and the Wisconsin Governor's award in the arts. The Academie Internationale de la Ceramique of Geneva, Switzerland, elected him an honorary member and the Maori natives of New Zealand honored him for "distinguished leadership in the dispensing of knowledge between peoples."

His work has been collected by public institutions throughout America. He is represented in the collection of the Renwick Gallery of Fine Art of the Smithsonian Institution and in the Smithsonian Institution's permanent ceramic collection. Other institutions which include his work are the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the Milwaukee Museum of Art; the Art Institute of Chicago; and more than twenty American university collections.

Reitz has held some fifty artist-in-residence positions throughout the United States as well as in New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. He has had over seventy one-person exhibitions in the last twenty years, and he has been represented in over a hundred group exhibitions.

He is known for his dynamic workshops—over 175 of them since 1964. They have been given in such diverse places as Puerto Rico, New Zealand, Alaska, Hawaii, Ireland, Canada, and almost every state in the nation. He has been the subject of some twenty articles and has juried over twenty prestigious art exhibitions. In short Don Reitz is one of the best known ceramic artists in the world, respected not only for his art and dynamic teaching abilities, but also for himself, his deep sense of honesty and integrity.

*What follows is an interview conducted with Don, a conversation really, in January of this year. Part of my interest was in talking to Don about his success as a teacher, because I had been one of his students. One can find students from the UW-Madison ceramic area (jointly taught with Bruce Breckinredge, currently the department chairman) teaching in universities across*

*America and in foreign countries. The UW-Madison ceramic area has one of the outstanding records in the country.*

**JVD:** What does it mean to you to be an art educator?

**DR:** I like to think of myself as an educator, not just an art educator. I have never thought of the education aspect as solely art; art is a vehicle for the big E, education.

**JVD:** How do you begin education with a big E?

**DR:** One big thing is gaining the trust of the students. They feel free to talk to me about what is personal. It is also important to be able to sense the needs of the students as the years change. I try to be a catalyst and teach what I think is essential to life.

**JVD:** Most art students do not pursue careers in art. How does knowing this affect your teaching?

**DR:** If I thought for one minute that every student was going to go into art, I would quit teaching. I hope that their involvement in art will help to challenge their minds and that they will be better persons for having been here. The mind has to be the end product.

They know that I know that they are not all going to be artists. I start out by telling them that art is a gift and that few gifts are given. The task is to find out what their gift in life is. If through the art they can find out what their gift is, then they will be better individuals. You see, a lot of people don't find out what their gift is until they are sixty or seventy years old because they have been doing what society wanted. I'm trying to take all the bark off of it. We keep housing ourselves and covering ourselves from the time we are five: to please our mothers, the church, the school, etc. Pretty soon you wonder 'Who the hell am I?' You get to be fifty and they send you to the shrink, and he tells you that he is going to take you back to five years old. I don't think we had to leave there.

I think we are all endowed with a gift. Something makes up a gift inside of us, which is why we are all unique. It scares us to realize our uniqueness. It is frightening, there is no pattern. I try to help people to look deeper into themselves. We don't ask to be an artist, surgeon, mother, mechanic, etc.; we just are. We need to find our individual gifts. As a teacher you have to be ready to learn, just like the student, which is why I have stayed in it all these years.

**JVD:** You don't seem to separate yourself from or hold yourself above your students, even though beginning students must be in awe of your success and reputation.

**DR:** We're all in the same boat. I try to teach by example, to show what an active, producing artist does in life. They see it's an eighteen to twenty hour day. But it's not work. I feel like I've been on recess my whole damn life. My life has been so good I can't believe it. But it is very serious recess.





One thing I try to instill in my students is that they already know what they need to know. They just need to know that they know and trust themselves enough to act on that knowledge.

**JVD:** Do you feel its important for your students to carry on your philosophy?

**DR:** I don't care if they carry out my philosophy. The important thing is that they evolve their own

philosophy. I don't want them to be a Don Reitz. If they develop their own philosophy, then they have lived my philosophy. Freedom. Choice. We have choices, we choose everything we do. This is what people do not understand. We can choose to laugh or cry; it is up to us. I choose to be on recess; if it hurts I don't do it. The important thing is that each person makes his own choices.

**JVD:** Why do you teach a beginning course every term?

**DR:** They are some of the most stimulating classes. I can lay a groundwork about freedom. These classes give me faith in the world and the future generations. It keeps me informed of where I was and where I still am. I find myself in many of these people. It's a collective thing. The spirit of it is good. I get energy from that wonderful youth energy.

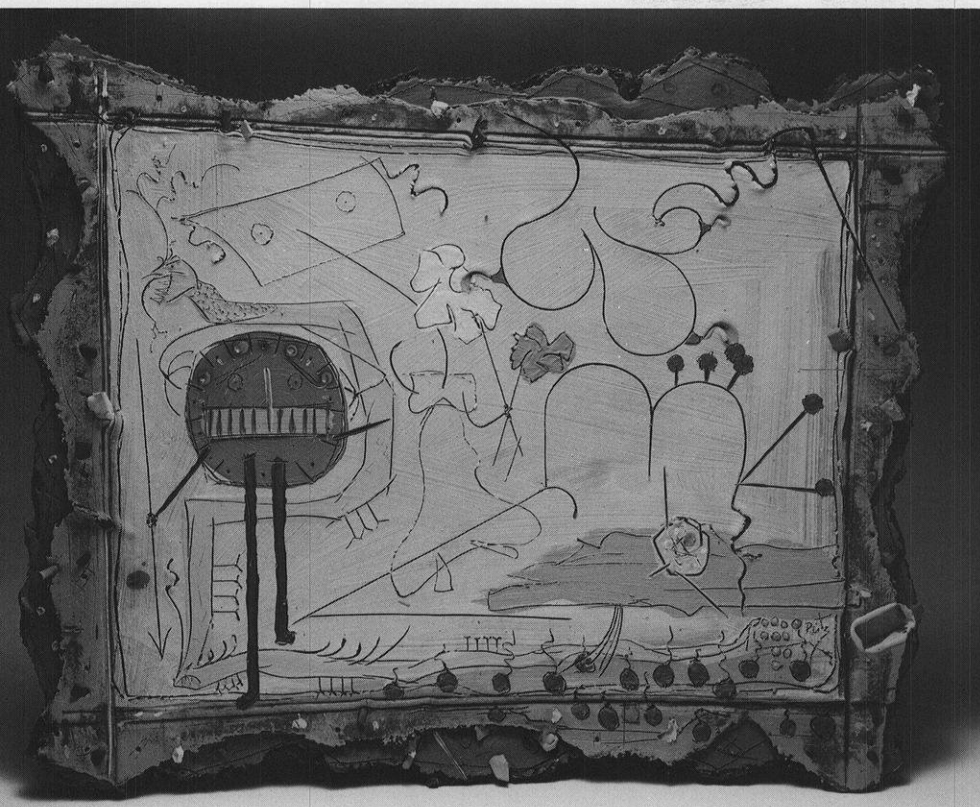
I want to teach them to have a sense of the material and technique, but in the process they gain a philosophy, an understanding of themselves. I want them to have a frame of reference; otherwise I don't think they can express themselves. Technique helps to free us up to give visual vent to an emotion. But if we only have technique, we will be just an object maker, pleasing the galleries and the market place. We need enough guts to know that what we do comes from the heart.

**JVD:** One thing that a successful art educator can do is to teach the student to 'see.' How do you bring that about?

**DR:** You need to see with the eye and with the mind. Seeing, and looking inward to see spiritually, gives you an understanding of perception. I stress drawing a lot, the basis of observation may be in drawing. Relationships of all kinds are important. The power to observe is important. People have to be dealt with individually. I stress commitment and honesty to my students; they might be the most important aspects of teaching. Without honesty we have no basis for talking about things.

**JVD:** It sounds like you teach a course in life.

**DR:** Yea, but I'm an expert in my craft as well. You have to be an expert or you are going to die. I learned that when I was young and lived with some Indians for a while. It is also important that we remember that we have time. We have the time to become experts. We don't need to know what we are going to be when we are nineteen years old. Living has to take place.



**JVD:** What advice do you give to your students?

**DR:** I never give advice. Who follows it? I don't take it, so I don't give it.

**JVD:** A lot of struggling, or so-called struggling artists, who don't teach, often point the finger at people like you and say that you have it made because you have that steady state paycheck coming in. How do you respond to that?

**DR:** I don't have time for people like that. I chose to teach. They can choose to teach as well. I made my choices all along the way. Besides, teaching and being an artist are hard work. I've had lots of jobs, butcher, diver—none has been as hard as this.

**JVD:** How do you feel about tenure?

**DR:** I think it is given too easily; yet it is important to have that security. Otherwise when your pay gets too high they can get rid of you and hire a younger person for much less. I think tenure should be like a fairly long-term contract open to

periodic review. That way there can be the security and still allow for reviewing and removing the deadwood.

**JVD:** What about the institution, the university bureaucracy itself. How are you affected by that?

**DR:** Things are getting worse. I spend way too much of my time dealing with the bureaucratic stuff. I've really had it with that. They seem to be trying to boil teaching down to a formula, to crystallize it and quantify it. What we are teaching is slowly being taken from our hands. Everything has to be reduced to data and put onto a computer. You can't put what I do onto a computer. There are no hard answers. Teaching is searching. It's special. Yet computers want hard data and answers. Because of the computer we keep all of these little jobs for people who are like tits on a boar hog, totally useless. All of this has nothing to do with teaching. I want to teach. But the way I see it, things can only get worse. Everything is being tallied up, the

scorecards come in, and they feel you ought to teach this way or that way. The best people are being pushed out.

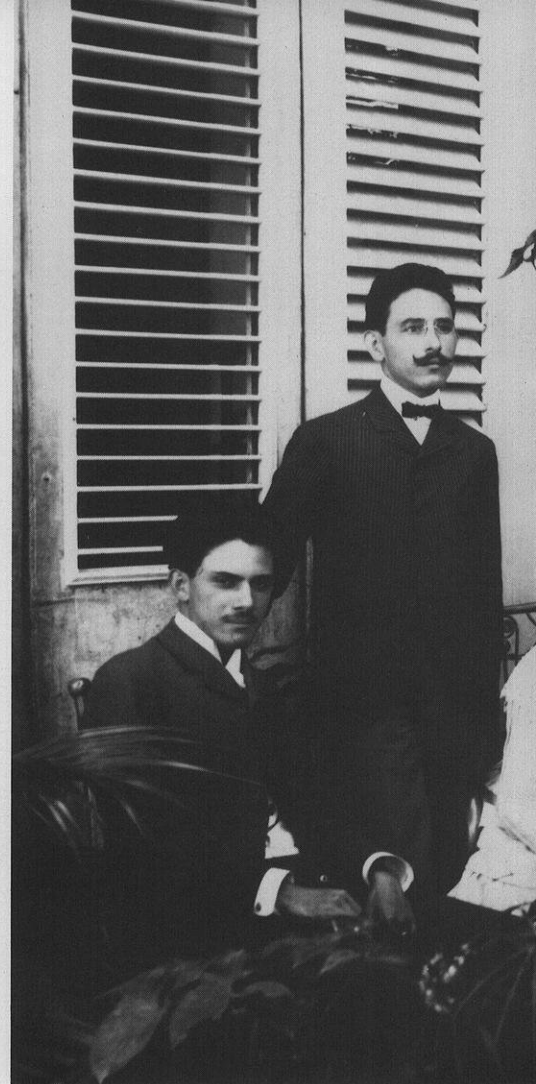
**JVD:** Sum up your contribution. You talk about retiring early to devote yourself full time to your work. What you have accomplished or hope that you have accomplished? What is Don Reitz's legacy?

**DR:** I often kid Paula [Don's wife] and say this is what I want as my epitaph. "Don Reitz / born 1929,— we'll fill in the other year later— / Fine artist and one hellava teacher." That's it. I want to be remembered for those two things.

I would like for people to remember that I have helped them gain their freedom, as a person who has said the magic word that helped open the door to the special magic inside their heads. I hope that's true. That's what I want, in many ways more than to be a great artist. I'm not saying I don't have an ego, I'd be kidding myself if I did. I also do want to be remembered as someone who has helped elevate clay to its rightful place amongst the arts.

**JVD:** What are the special rewards, the most gratifying things that come out of your career?

**DR:** What really gives me a hellava boost is when someone writes me and tells me about the piece they have, how they are living with it comfortably, that it encourages them in their daily life. To know that my physical object is helping someone else spiritually. That is it. That's the gift. Then what happens is the gift you have has been passed on. That's what gifts are for, like momentum transferred. A cue ball hitting another ball. We keep transferring it. Every primitive culture knew that. That's what the potlachs were all about. We need to strive to be givers and not takers, but it is hard because the more you give the more you get back, and then you have to keep giving. I feel that I give through my art. I need the knowledge that people are gaining from what I do, that my work has helped them. One of the great things about teaching is that this becomes very visible. □



## Cultural Exchange Through Art

By Malcolm McLean

“A trip to Cuba? The Pearl of the Antilles! Red hot land of revolutionaries and Fidel Castro! Communist beachhead in the New World! Fabled island of conquest, romance, sugar, and song . . .”

For Wendy and me, who had spent four years in the nearby Dominican Republic in our Foreign Service years before coming to Northland College, it was an enticing opportunity. When Bob and Jane Matteson brought the matter up in June, 1985, we enthusiastically and immediately agreed.

This unusual trip arose because the Milwaukee Public Museum, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and Cuban authorities wished to cooperate in a cultural exchange with private American citizens. Mostly, though, the project took shape because of the keen interest of Robert E. Matteson, of Cable, Wisconsin, long-time government official and



Sumner Matteson's 1904 photograph of General Maximo Gomez and his family in Havana. This photograph of the leader of the Cuban struggle for independence against Spain helped persuade contemporary Cuban leaders of the value of the exhibit.

Far left: Science Museum of Minnesota President James Peterson, right, presents City Museum of Havana Director Eusebio Leal Spengler with a print of General Gomez. This presentation took place at the November 8, 1985, opening of "Cuba 1904: The Photography of Sumner Matteson" at Havana's City Museum

founding director of our Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute here at Northland College, in tracing the path of his Uncle Sumner Matteson who visited Cuba in 1904. An extraordinary artist, Sumner Matteson had taken a treasure-house of photographs of rural Cuba of that day. With the cooperation of the Milwaukee Public Museum, the Science Museum of Minnesota sponsored and prepared a handsome exhibit of eighty-five of Sumner Matteson's photos. Jane and Bob Matteson encouraged a group of mildly adventurous friends to accompany the exhibit and form a "dialog group." A thinly veiled goal of the group was to initiate some "photo diplomacy," which might loosen a diplomatic logjam as "ping-pong diplomacy" did with China a decade ago.

After some negotiation with the Department of the Treasury, which controls travel of U.S. citizens to Cuba, we left for one week in Cuba,

a week that will live forever for us.

Even months after the event, we are still sorting out impressions and memories—the shrill, hysterical tone of *Granma*, official newspaper of the Communist Party of Cuba; the unfailing friendliness of the Cubans we met; the siege mentality; the exhortative, moralistic quality of many of the actions and messages of the government; the thoroughness with which a small country can be organized, up and down, and inside out; the looming but mysterious impact of the "maximum leader" Fidel Castro who now, along with King Hussein of Jordan, has been on the world scene longer than any other major actor of our times; the seediness of once glamorous and exotic Havana; the uplift and pride and hope that animated the faces of the poor; and, in the abstract, questions about the relative merits of the incentive economy and the secure, collective society.

With high hope but uncertain expectation our band of twenty-four Minnesota and Wisconsin citizens landed at Jose Marti Airport to be met by officials of the Cuban Institute for Friends with the People (ICAP), complete with musical ensemble and daiquiris and another rum drink called monjitos. We knew from our previous Caribbean exposure that this was good news. Rum drinks on arrival mean you are considered important.

On a bus to downtown Havana, about fifteen miles away, we passed palm groves, small factories, a sports palace, and housing developments in the soft warm Caribbean afternoon. Havana buildings looked a bit run-down because paint is in short supply, being made from petroleum products which are nearly all imported. We expected to see more flowers in homes and boulevards, as we had remembered from our other Caribbean experience. People were everywhere—

walking the streets, sitting in parks, some working, although we didn't get a feeling of being in a strong "work ethic" country in Cuba. The weather being pleasant, strollers paraded up and down Havana streets until the early hours of the morning. People ranged from very black to very white and seemed to mix easily without prejudice. Clothes generally were inelegant; in fact, the merchandise in the Cuba stores, where citizens may pay with pesos, is inferior and unattractively displayed, while the special dollar stores for foreigners have a wide range of imported goods.

We finally arrived at the Hotel Havana Libre, formerly the Havana Hilton, an imposing 500-room hotel badly maintained. That, like a lot of things, was partially blamed on the American trade embargo which prevented importation of needed maintenance equipment.

Our program, arranged by ICAP, was well chosen, interesting, and not obligatory. We paid for it—a reasonable fee of \$100 a day for the two of us including hotel, meals, guides and interpreters, transportation to the places we visited, and an intelligently organized series of events—so we were not official guests of the Cuban government.

Among our activities was a tour of Havana, which is, along with Lima and Mexico City, one of the

great historic cities of the Spanish Empire in the New World. We had an hour session with Ricardo Alarcon, Deputy Foreign Minister with special responsibility for North American affairs. Alarcon, whose English is good, asserted that the United States, unlike other western nations, adopted a position of unyielding opposition to the Cuban revolutionary experiment. His main argument was that we could not tolerate a Cuba not under Washington's domination. Rita Perreira of the Cuban Federation of Women and a native speaker of English (she lived her first years in New York) stressed that the revolution was a women's revolution as well. Fidel Castro is personally committed to equal rights for women, she stated. She said that increased membership by women in the Central Party of the Community Party of Cuba is a major goal. Housewives, we were told, cannot be members of the party, and party membership is a passport to important position in the society. Teenage pregnancies and delinquency are growing problems, although not nearly as pressing as they are in the U.S. The federation of 2,600,000 women is another of the massive, country-wide organizations through which information is passed up and down, control secured, and services delivered.

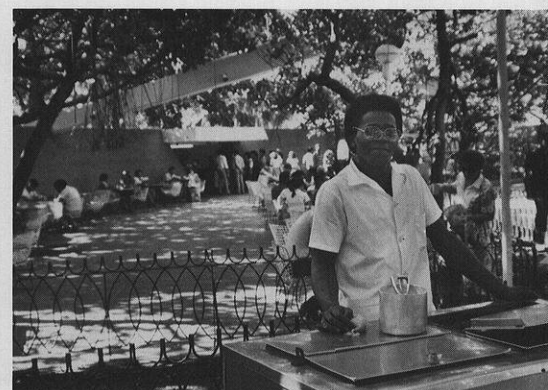
The visit to the sea-front hospital Hermanos Almeijeiras, a huge edifice begun as the central bank, gave us a glimpse of remarkable progress in improving delivery of medical services to the Cuban people. National research is centered in Havana. Health centers ranging from sophisticated provincial hospitals to small aid stations in neighborhoods and rural areas manifest the determination to raise living standards, extend life expectancy, and improve the lot of all the people. But one public health expert in our group worried that their obvious pride in elaborate new medical devices might undermine their strong commitment to medical services for the poor. This is an example of the struggle between international reputation and the needs of the nation.

Che Guevara and Jose Marti are the symbols most evident in Havana. Marti, the apostle of freedom, was a journalist and literary figure who led the fight for independence from Spain and hence becomes a vivid personification of Cuban sovereignty. Thus, it is savagely irritating to Cuban officials that the Voice of America has launched a special service called Radio Marti and is beaming Cuban, as well as international, news to the people of that island. Don Sheehan, press officer at the United States Interests Section of the Swiss



**Cuban students dance in front of the Havana Cathedral**

**Ice cream vendor in a downtown park in Havana**



Embassy in Havana, contended that the name Marti was in the public domain. The station, for example, will remind the Cuban people that about 30,000 of their countrymen are assigned to duty in far-off Angola. It will cover a story like that of the Cuban commander of the military engineering group on Grenada during the U.S. invasion. He was supposed to fight to the end, but he took refuge in the Soviet Embassy on Grenada. When he returned to Cuba, despite being a close friend of Fidel, he was busted to private and shipped out to Angola. That kind of story does not appear in the controlled Cuba media.

Ernesto "Che" Guevara, an Argentine doctor who made common cause with Fidel and the other Cuban revolutionaries, has become the martyred symbol of devotion to worldwide revolution. Killed in 1967 while unsuccessfully trying to foment an uprising of peasants in far-off Bolivia, Guevara was such a striking personality and had such lofty ambitions that Cuba might have been too small for both him and Castro. Unconfirmed reports suggested animosity and destructive rivalry between the two prior to Guevara's trip to Bolivia.

But since space won't allow, and I don't have the scholarly background to provide a real historical and contemporary analysis of Cuba, maybe a few verbal snapshots will carry some of the color of that multi-racial Caribbean nation, only ninety miles from Florida, but so intent these days on a revolutionary, communist, collective course beholden to the Soviet camp.

### *Countryside hitchhiker*

When we drove 215 miles to the interior city of La Trinidad on the Caribbean coast, we frequently offered rides to hitchhikers. It must have been quite an experience for them, squeezing into a small Fiat with four ample middle-aged Americans, speaking adequate but heavily accented Spanish. The most interesting to us was an inspector

## **Sumner Matteson—adopted Wisconsinite**

**S**umner Matteson (1867–1920) sailed from New York to Cuba in February, 1904, for a four-month visit which took him to all parts of the island.

Photographs from that visit were organized by the Science Museum of Minnesota into the exhibit which was inaugurated at the Museum of City of Havana on November 8, 1985—the specific reason for our trip to Cuba. After years of adventure and travel, Matteson moved to Milwaukee in 1909, when he was forty-one. He took a position with the Milwaukee Coke and Gas Company. He lived in Milwaukee for twelve years, but photography was no longer the guiding passion of his life. Surprisingly, though, at an age when some are thinking of retirement, he rekindled his early enthusiasm for Latin America, returned to Mexico and died on October 26, 1920, of a pulmonary edema after climbing Popocatepetl. For more on his fascinating life, see *Side Trips, The Photography of Sumner Matteson, 1898–1908*, by Louis B. Casagrande and Phillips Bourns, published by the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Science Museum of Minnesota.

of buses in one of Cuba's fourteen provinces. Jose Garcia Morales had to choose between loyalty to his father, then in the Cuban Air Force in the late 1950s, or joining the revolutionary band. He chose revolution and the mountains, but was later reconciled to his father who was permitted to return and live in Cuba on the promise that he wouldn't stir up trouble and, surprising to us, receives a monthly pension of about \$250. Jose has been well treated by the revolution. He has traveled to the Eastern Bloc countries; two of his three children are now studying at the University of Havana. He proudly showed his identification card as a veteran of the "Ejercito Rebelde"—the rebel army. The revolutionary government rewarded those who fought in the hills.

*"No se rinde"*

That expression, "don't give up" is heard frequently in Cuba. The state of siege suggests that the enemy—us—is nearby and will pounce and therefore all Cubans must be ready. When we visited the former home of Ernest Hemingway, who lived near Havana for most of twenty years, a teenage boy, seeing we were Americans, approached with clenched fist and said he wouldn't give up. What he meant

was, don't attack us but if you do, there'll be big trouble because we're tough. We should, in my judgment, seek where possible to reduce the justification for a "no se rinde" attitude and encourage conversation and exchange.

### *New friends in Colon*

Returning from La Trinidad, we stopped for lunch in a town of about 10,000 named Colon (Columbus). As we waited for our meal (rice, beans, chicken, bread), we talked to three young men and the wife of one of them.

They invited us back to their apartment for a "trago"—a drink—which we really didn't need but we deeply appreciated the opportunity to visit a family dwelling. The wife, pregnant with her third child, stays in Colon with her two other children and her mother. Her husband, who served two years with the Cuban army as an air controller in Angola, works in Havana and comes home on many weekends. The bare, concrete block apartment was adequate but lacked "hominess" and comfort. A big television and photo of Fidel dominated the large sitting room. They served rum and fried sweet potatoes. They were totally friendly and open, and we shall long remember that warm Latin-Cuban hospitality which insisted that we

## Fidel Castro

**F**idel Castro Ruz, now fifty-eight, is the unchallenged "maximum leader" of the Cuban government and nation and of the Cuban Communist Party. Born in Oriente Province, he earned a law degree from the University of Havana. He was active in opposition politics during his student days. On July 26, 1953, he launched a desperate attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago. The attack failed and he was imprisoned. Following release in 1955, he went to Mexico, gained adherents to his cause, and sailed back to Cuba on December 2, 1956 aboard the *Granma*. After guerilla fighting in the mountains of eastern Cuba, he acceded to power January 1, 1959, when Fulgencio Batista fled the country. In 1961, he announced he had always been a communist and that elections would not be held in Cuba. He has been a bitter antagonist of the United States for a quarter of a century. Now, in his late fifties and with his movement having been in power since 1959, he faces the problems of isolation of Cuba in the Western Hemisphere, slow-down and aging of the Cuban revolution, lagging economic production, and possible succession.

visit their home. One jarring note came when I asked their neighbor to take a picture of all of us together. Our host sharply rebuked me, explaining that we might look like Eastern Europeans from afar, but on close range would be identified as Americans. He preferred not to be known for entertaining citizens from the "colossus of the North" in his home.

### *The complaining journalist*

Most of the people we met in Cuba said about what we expected, so when someone strayed off the usual line, we noted it quickly. We went to quite an elegant style show (I had never been to a style show, so my first, oddly enough, was in a land of the people's revolution). A journalist, who also taught and was seeking high governmental appointment, commented to me that socialism was good for the people and the nation, but that it was boring. "We need more of this kind of thing," he added, waving toward the models. "We need more contact with you people." Visitors to Eastern Europe have frequently complained about the gray, leveling sameness of everything. Cuba is spared much of that because of its Caribbean, Spanish, and African heritage, but the same impulse exists to discourage eccentricity and encourage solidarity and national unity. Related to that was the com-

ment from a university professor to one of our group, "You can't be a real academic in Cuba," by which he meant that if an essential part of the academic profession is to follow data, intuitions, and scholarship where it leads on the many paths toward truth, then you're going to get into trouble with a government that says it has a corner on truth.

### *Signs and more signs*

Signs dot the Cuban landscape. Very few tout commercial goods. There is no private sector in the Cuban economy; state enterprises sell consumer goods, but do little advertising. Most signs exhort the people to some better action or embody a government slogan. "Watch out for Obesity!" "Exercise Regularly!" "To Strengthen the Party is to Strengthen the Nation!" are but a few examples. In Cienfuegos, a city of about 100,000, a banner extending over the main street announced: "The foreign debt is unpayable and unjust." It's hard to imagine a sign like that in any Wisconsin city. One street sign with a picture of Jose Marti announced, "I have lived inside the monster and I know his entrails." That refers to Marti's years in New York, the United States being the monster with unpleasant entrails. There's a strident quality to these messages as if Cuban men, given the chance, might fall back into some rum-

drinking, woman-chasing, baseball-loving sloth far from revolutionary ideals.

**W**hat should one make of this? Final conclusions are not advisable on the basis of some reading and a visit of a week, but it is in our nature to assemble data, to think critically about what we have learned, to make judgments on the basis of the information and the values and experiences of our own lives. Therefore, humbly, without suggestion that these thoughts come from one who has studied Cuba extensively, I offer four general considerations.

### *The revolution—the good side*

Most Cubans live far better than they did under the Batista government. Cuba had an active middle class prior to the Castro revolution in 1959, but most people lived in poor, rural areas. Health services are now far better. Literacy has risen to 91.1 percent for all over sixteen. Education touches nearly 2,500,000 from kindergarten through the universities. The birth rate is only 16.7 per 1,000 (world average is 29 per 1,000) and the death rate has fallen to 5.9 per 1,000 compared to a world average of 11. The morass of corruption, prostitution, and crime that characterized the Batista regime has given way to moral probity. The streets are safe. Cuba is a factor in world affairs as never before. Identifying elusive qualities like national pride is hard, but I think national esteem is higher and extends to a much larger group than before. Critics of the revolution, though, rightly ask how Cuba might have progressed in these last twenty-seven years under leadership less extreme than either Castro or Batista.

### *The revolution—the dark side*

The country doesn't work nearly as well as it should and might. It is subsidized by the Soviet Bloc at about four billion dollars a year—principally through undercharged prices for oil and gas and through



Opening of the Sumner Matteson photographic exhibit in Havana. Left to right: Reynaldo Gonzalez, vice president of the Cuban Institute for Friends with the People; Jim

Czarniecki, president of the Minnesota Museum of Art; Jim Peterson, president of the Science Museum of Minnesota; Jane and Bob Matteson of Cable, Wisconsin

dramatic overpayments for Cuban sugar. To choose the Soviet camp was fateful and tragic. To have an estimated 30,000 troops in Angola doesn't make sense for a small country. To pretend to be non-aligned when squarely in the Soviet alliance convinces no one. The succession to Fidel Castro will be agonizing. The last congress of the Communist Party formally named Castro's brother, Raul, as the heir apparent. Five years younger than Fidel, Raul at fifty four has been the leader of the Cuban armed forces for years. His wife, Vilma Espin, perhaps Cuba's most powerful woman, is now on the fourteen-member Politburo. Still, succession will be difficult because Raul lacks the charisma of his older brother.

True revolutionaries contend that they alone understand the processes of history; for us, it is painful to see a controlled press, to see central direction in all important matters in the nation, to note the absence of any opposition element, to witness the rejection of democratic procedures. The Cuban experiment, which has done a lot, has entered middle age; the economy is far from self-sufficient; the existing wealth can be redistributed no further to reduce poverty; running out of gas is a fear; and a dropping of the revolutionary temperature is inevitable unless cataclysm shakes our whole hemisphere.

### *Incentives and security*

Much of politics bounces back and forth between the needs and rights of people for a decent life (security) and the rewards flowing to those who achieve significantly (incentives). These lead quickly to fundamental social doctrines that we've been wrestling with since Aristotle. I admire the determination of the Cuban revolution to help the poor on that island, but constraining initiative and incentive cripples the economic system, a truth socialist planners must deal with. Most Americans want the poor to be included, educated, and given a chance to shape their own destiny. Yet we distrust the overwhelming power of government and centralized control. We believe that people respond to praise, material reward, and position. Mixing those becomes the art of government. Cuba has chosen, at least for now, the collectivist, security state with a demand, not an incentive, economy. How change can be introduced into that, I don't know. That it will come in time, I have no doubt.

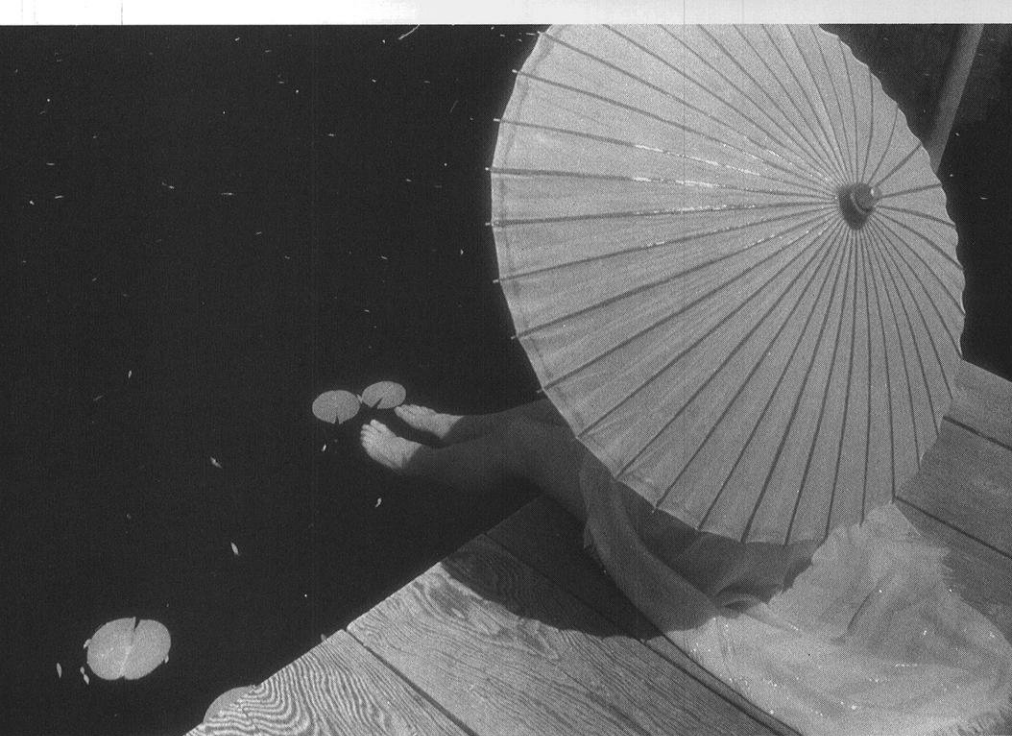
### *A note on US-Cuban relations*

Relations will always be hard between ourselves and the feisty, shrill, bristling revolutionary government of Cuba. We can do better in managing that relationship,

though. To have cultural exchange with the Soviet Union but to deny that to the Cubans is inconsistent. To act as a great nation means dealing soberly with smaller ones, even when they are strongly antagonistic. It means not calling names, but having a clear, steady understanding of our national interest. The confrontational school in our government will argue that world communism has enveloped Cuba, and no reasonable dealing with such a government is possible or desirable. The dialog school seeks to assess where we are and where we might go.

A major goal for us should be to reduce Cuban dependence on the Soviet Bloc and encourage in Cuba some measure of autonomy. That will probably not come during Fidel Castro's lifetime, but it still should be the goal. Progress entails lowering the level of rhetoric, engaging in some nonstrategic trade, initiating cultural exchanges, removing travel bans, and seeking other accords in, say, fishing, immigration, policy on hijackings, scholarly research, and scientific exchange.

Meanwhile, I hope others will have opportunities to travel to that most lovely of Caribbean islands where, despite all the international wrangling and shrill propaganda, we were treated as welcome guests and honored friends. □



## Wisconsin Photographers' Showcase

### *Visions by Kate Elsner*

**I** have to photograph images that have some personal reference for me—people I know, objects that mean something to me, places I have an emotional connection to. My work often consists of recurring images—shapes or objects or contrasts in texture or light.

I am intrigued by shadows, the light and dark reactions of things in nature. I especially love the quality of shadows in the early morning or late afternoon. The light and dark contrasts as well as the position of images draw the viewer into the photograph by defining focal points. Using black and white film, infrared, breaks down the light into high contrasts that have a somewhat translucent look. I try to push the photographic medium one step further than just a reproduction of an object. I like to think I use the camera as an artistic tool, creating imagery that is evocative rather than objectively real.

—Kate Elsner





## Wisconsin Photographers' Showcase





## BOOKMARKS/WISCONSIN

**BIRD CONSERVATION 2**  
edited by Stanley A. Temple.  
Madison: The University of  
Wisconsin Press, 1985. 181 pp.  
Hardcover \$17.50, paperback  
\$12.95.

By James O. Evrard

This book is the second in a series by the U. S. Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation, a federation of twenty-two American organizations interested in the conservation of endangered and threatened species. Stanley A. Temple, the Beers-Bascom Professor of conservation and a member of the department of wildlife ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is the editor of this volume and the first volume published in 1983. While the first book emphasized raptors, this volume deals mainly with endangered bird species on tropical islands.

The same format is followed as in the first volume. The first and major section is devoted to papers dealing with problems of island bird populations. The second section is an abbreviated update of restoration work for the endangered peregrine falcon and California condor in North America. The third and final section is an extensive listing of current literature in bird conservation.

Professor Temple introduces the

book in a clear and concise paper that reviews reasons for the vulnerability of endemic bird populations on Hawaiian, Micronesian, and Caribbean islands. Bird species native to these island habitats evolved in a situation where they are extremely vulnerable to stochastic events. As a result many species are now extinct, and many others are threatened and endangered. The process of extinction is not only a modern phenomenon. Archaeological evidence has shown that many species became extinct before the arrival of Western man in the tropical islands. Primitive man, contrary to popular misconceptions, was responsible for the loss of many species and would have had more impact if not for their primitive technologies.

Western man, however, had a disastrous impact on island floras and faunas, particularly in the Hawaiian islands. Drastic habitat changes and introduced exotic plants and animals raised havoc with many native species. Each paper gives a status report, species by species, for birds that are threatened, endangered, or extinct. The future of some island bird populations is bleak. Forest-dwelling birds of Guam have declined drastically recently for largely unknown reasons. Economic and political conditions existing in some newly independent Micronesian island-nations are not conducive to bird

conservation. All the papers strongly plead for conservation of the birds and their habitats.

Several case histories are of particular interest because of the frank and open manner in which they are presented. The Puerto Rican plain pigeon and parrot restoration efforts are hampered by biological, economic, and political problems, both in Puerto Rico and the United States. However, there are glimmers of hope. Extensive efforts have been made in the past decade to provide base line data needed for restoration efforts. Habitat preservation and restoration efforts are also underway. The environmental and ecological consciousness of citizens of the tropical islands has also been raised in recent years.

The book's section devoted to updates on bird conservation contains both good and bad news. Efforts to restore breeding peregrine falcons to eastern North America are becoming increasingly successful. After releasing more than 600 captive-raised falcons, there were 38-40 peregrine pairs on territory in the eastern United States and Canada in 1985. These birds fledged 46 young, and an additional 125 captive-reared falcons were released into the wild.

The future of the California condor is not as hopeful. Professor Temple documents the demise of the wild population to just nine individuals in the spring of 1985.

However, a total of seventeen condors were in captivity at that time, and the remaining wild birds have since been removed from the wild to add to the captive population. These efforts should produce captive-raised condors in adequate numbers for release to reestablish a wild population.

The final section of the book contains 164 citations, some of them annotated, of both technical and popular bird conservation literature. A few citations also contain the senior author's address if reprints are desired. It would have been helpful if addresses were included in all the citations.

Overall the book was well organized and edited. I did find several small errors but none of consequence. I enjoyed reading the book, not only because of the theme of saving endangered birds, but also I was able to escape momentarily the cold gloom of a Wisconsin snowscape and again experience the balmy brightness of a tropical island. I would recommend the book to both the serious and casual student of birds.

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*James O. Evrard is a research biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at Baldwin.*

### **OLD ABE THE WAR EAGLE**

by Richard H. Zeitlin. Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986. 113 pp. Softcover \$7.95.

**By John K. Driscoll**

Richard H. Zeitlin is a historian, author, and story-teller of merit. Curator of the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall in the Capitol at Madison, doctorate in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, author of works on the American Civil War, Zeitlin has drawn on his own resources and those he lists in nineteen pages of



notes and bibliography to bring forth a story of eagle and man, in camp, on the march, in battle, fictionalized, glamorized, exploited.

Zeitlin tells the story of Old Abe, the eagle mascot of Wisconsin's Eighth Infantry Regiment in the Civil War. Taken from the pineries along the valley of the Chippewa River and sold for a bushel of corn, the eagle spent twenty years of life tethered to a perch, hauled about at the will of his keepers, wings clipped, shot at, kept in a cage and used for the purposes of powerful men.

In telling the story of Old Abe, Zeitlin tells the story of the American fighting man in the Civil War on either side, for their stories are similar. In telling the story of the Eighth Wisconsin, the "Eagle Regiment," Zeitlin takes the reader along the dusty roads, through the mud, back and forth across the Mississippi Valley, and into the line of battle.

The book is rich with excellent photography, but there is a study in iconography therein that is frightening. Zeitlin presents the faces of six volunteers from Wisconsin at one place, simple lads in gray militia uniforms who are doing their best to pose looking fierce and manly. Later, he presents the faces of six veterans whose eyes stare out from the page, hollow and knowing. These are eyes that have looked into hell.

The story of Old Abe is a study of the American Civil War in the west. Excellent maps add to the text.

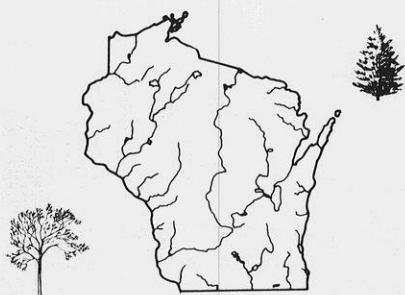
Zeitlin debunks the glamorization, fictionalization of Old Abe. The eagle never dropped artillery shells on enemy lines nor snatched maps from Confederate officers. He did go into battle thirty-seven times, scurrying for the rear at Corinth, but glaring and screeching and crying out in fury and in fear, as were his bearers, on other fields.

Tragically, the story of Old Abe does not end with the Confederate surrender. For the next sixteen years of his life, still caged, clipped, hauled about and exhibited—once with a two-headed calf—the eagle was used by those who would wring every memory and every vote from the war. After his death the eagle was stuffed and exhibited. The veteran of thirty-seven battles and thousands of miles of dusty roads deserved better.

Zeitlin's fine study of eagle and man at war deserves better packaging. Soft-covered, printed on glossy paper, and lacking a table of contents and an index, it is a captivating story of the men of Wisconsin, and their eagle, who went to war.

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*John Driscoll works for the state Department of Administration. He has published articles on Wisconsin's role in the Civil War.*



**WISCONSIN: A YEAR** by Carolyn Wedin Sylvander. Whitewater: R & R Wedin Press, Rte. 1, E. Lakeshore Dr., 1985. 126 pp. \$6.83 (postpaid with tax).

**By Faith B. Miracle**

In northwestern Wisconsin, where Carolyn Sylvander grew up, the coffee pot is "always on, always hot, and always full." That spirit of comradeship pervades this collection of short musings which are seasonal in format but not necessarily in theme. The book is full of Wisconsin, from Madeline Island to Whitewater, from American Players Theatre to the women's studies librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. But most of the writing can no more be classified as regional than could any grouping of thoughts on such universal subjects as youth, death, love, aging, learning, conservation, violence, human rights.

Many of the essays are personal but deal with human emotions common to us all. "Death at a Distance" is a tribute to an old friend's mother—4-H leader, church member, grower of cucumbers, enthusiastic player of PIT—who kept spoons in a glass on the kitchen table. It was written because . . . what else is there to do with memories?

House cleaning and the role of women are addressed. Sylvander resents the implication that only women who oppose the Equal Rights Amendment can bake, proclaiming that she can compose radio commentaries while kneading her famous (around Whitewater) whole wheat bread. Of house cleaning she says, "In the ongoing recognition of flaws and the transitory

joy of order is intimacy." It results in "being in touch with one's womanly roots . . . remembering one's mother." This reader remembered Lorine Niedecker's mother's dying words to her daughter, the poet: "Wash the floors, Lorine! Wash clothes! Weed!"

We are treated to some Sylvander poetry among the prose. "Coming Home" contains a verse about her father:

The old rusty nails my dad  
So carefully

Pulled and stored  
To someday keep us together  
Though he is gone  
Still carry weight.

The author's affection for students is clear. She advises graduates in "Pomp and Circumstance" not to cleave too rigidly to the traditional pomp; there is danger of becoming "a centerless onion of layered habits and expectations." She has had rewarding experiences with young people in the American Field Service (foreign student exchange program) and describes it as a network resulting in "strong knots which just may, some day, hold us together while governments try to rip us apart."

Her empathy for the aged is touching. "Could wisdom be what is left when all the distractions our senses latch onto fade into the dim and quiet distance?" She describes nursing homes as places where most people, as in other areas of society, struggle "in small, beautiful portions of pluck."

"Fall Around the State" is a poetic litany, perhaps inspired by Charlie Maguire's song "Fall is Here." In "Thoughts on . . . Gleaning" Sylvander reminds us that the search is as significant as the find and deplores the effects of present-day "pre-digested knowledge." "The End of Another Gardening Season" introduces us to the old immigrant neighbor woman (she spoke no English) who carefully shook all soil off each proffered plant. "This woman knew from a long history of living on small plots of soil that the only way you have,

year after year, cabbage plants to give away, is to make sure your topsoil stays put." The last essay in the book reveals the dizzying talents of the Sylvanders for making family Christmas gifts and prompts one to cheer for Ron, who lacks sewing, knitting, woodworking, and culinary skills.

This little book tells us many things. We learn that up in Frederic, Sylvander's hometown, folks are concerned equally about such public issues as waste disposal and septic systems and access to art, books, and theater—roses to balance the bread. The author tells us there are phantom snakes in her garden. We read of her worry over practices within the publishing business which spell problems for writers (and, I add, for readers). We are reminded more than once that there is always another hand, as in "on the other hand . . ." We read pragmatic advice about censorship of books in libraries: "Hiding from reality . . . doesn't in the long run work."

This is a book where content definitely outshines the packaging. Unfortunately, it is hexed by typographical errors and misplaced punctuation. Many of these essays have appeared previously in the *Whitewater Register* (Sylvander is professor of English at the university there) or have been given on public radio. In keeping with the journalistic purpose, the writing style is direct and uncluttered. In some instances references to dates are contained in the essays. When this is not the case, the omission of a date does not particularly matter, except, perhaps, to those accustomed to reading journals and collections of letters; habit causes one to grope for a perspective of time. Sylvander admirers will welcome this chance to have her work in hand; those not familiar with her writing will find *Wisconsin: A Year* a pleasing garnish for their other reading fare.

*Faith Miracle is administrator for the Wisconsin Library Association.*

## Authors and Artists

continued from page 3



A native of Duluth, Minnesota, **Malcolm McLean** has been president of Northland College in Ashland since 1971. He is a graduate of Yale University who served from 1955 to 1971 in Korea, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala in the United States Foreign Service. He notes, without concluding anything significant from the fact, that he and Fidel Castro are almost exactly the same age. He and his wife Wendy, a Canadian-born physiotherapist whom he met in Korea, are active members of the Wisconsin Academy. They are parents of three grown sons.

**Kate Elsner** received a B.S. in art and a M.A. in photography and graphics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Since graduation in 1982 she has been teaching middle and high school students art and photography at University School of Milwaukee. Her photographs have been in annual juried exhibitions of the Cudahy Gallery of the Milwaukee Art Museum and in exhibitions in North Carolina, New York, Washington, Missouri, Kentucky.

Dear Sirs:

Your recent two-part article on science and society was one which, I am sure, cut across disciplinary interests. Professor Jameson's ability to relate the consequences of expanding technology to the development of the subjects of Western Civilization is truly remarkable. I should like, however, to make an exception with this work of his. Many of the problems that we are facing today are problems which are basically the responsibility of state and local governments, e.g., such problems as mass transportation, urban renewal, rural enrichment, crime prevention, economic development, health care, and pollution.

# Letters

Dear Editor:

Thank you for allowing me to share with members of the Common Council copies of the article entitled "Nutrient Loads to Madison Lakes" by William Sonzogni which appeared in the December, 1985 *Review*. The article is of great interest to me and the Council in light of our continuing concern for improving the water quality in Madison lakes.

F. Joseph Sensenbrenner, Jr.  
Mayor, City of Madison

Dear Editor:

I am a long-time member of the Academy, having joined when I came to UW-M in 1974, but I have to admit surprise at the content of your December issue. It expresses so much of what appears to be the traditional Madison myopia, which I should think the Academy would have outgrown by now.

Southeastern Wisconsin has many good hydrologists who are working on Wisconsin problems. . . . Yet this issue includes only a Madison-based study on the Menomonee River some years ago and a laboratory toxicological study on the Kinnickinnick River. In view of the abundance of hydrologic talent in the southeast section of the state, I ask whether you invited contributions from these people [named above].

David H. Miller  
Professor of atmospheric sciences  
UW-Milwaukee

We share this concern about reaching researchers around the state, a problem which we encounter in each special issue. Because we have no master list of Wisconsin researchers in specific fields, we rely on Academy members to advise us on specific authors and subjects. The myopia is not a problem of philosophy but information gathering. We invite contributions from people who have been recommended; otherwise we must hope that the notices about forthcoming issues in our newsletter and notices sent to university departments around the state will reach appropriate people.

Editor

Dear Editor:

I would like to order the March 1986 *Review*. I am working on a major study of regional American art developments from the beginning to about 1920, so I know this publication will be of particular interest.

William H. Gerdts  
Professor of art history  
City University of New York



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