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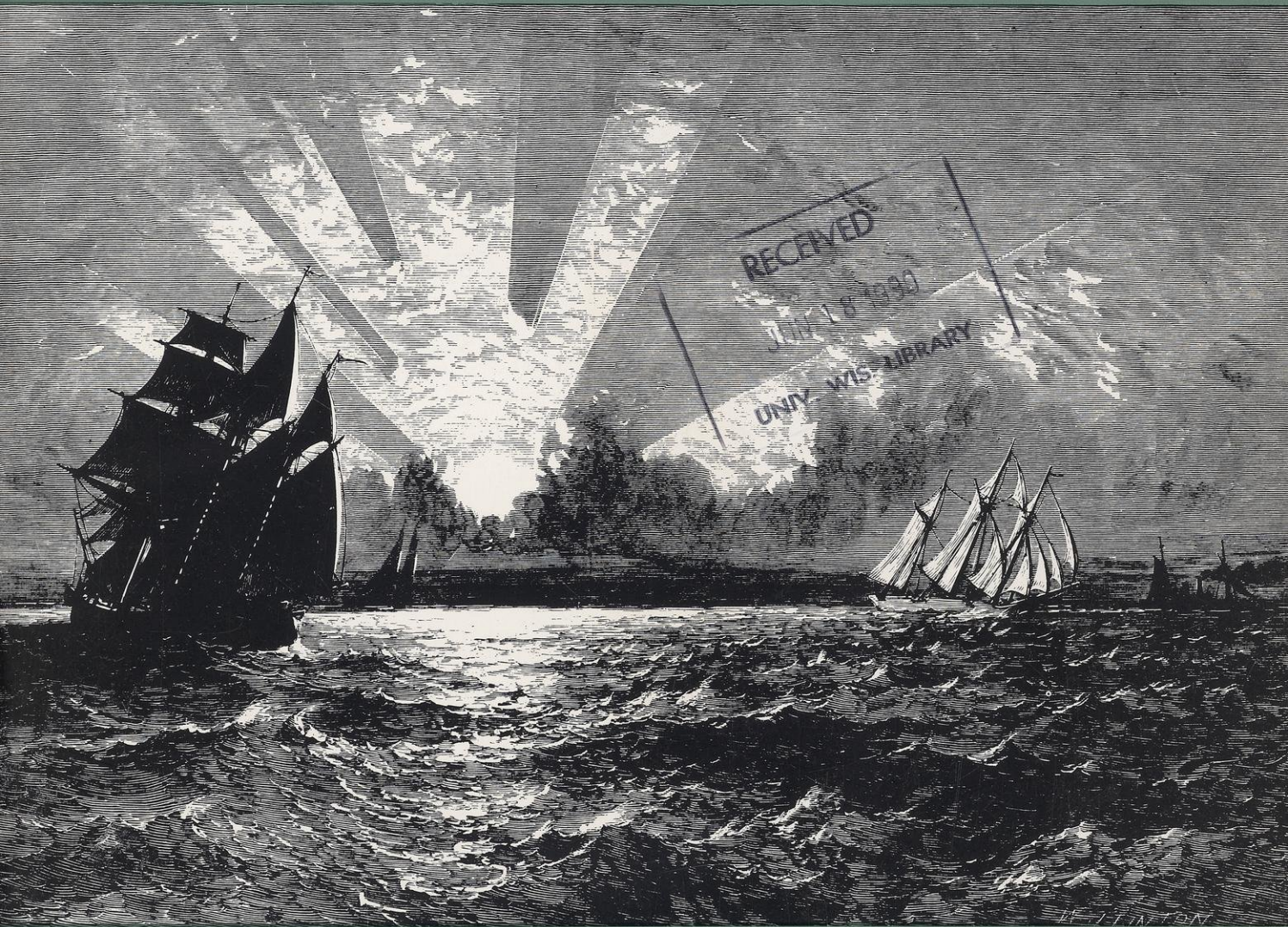
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WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW

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June 1990
Volume 36, Number 3



THE WISCONSIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS AND LETTERS

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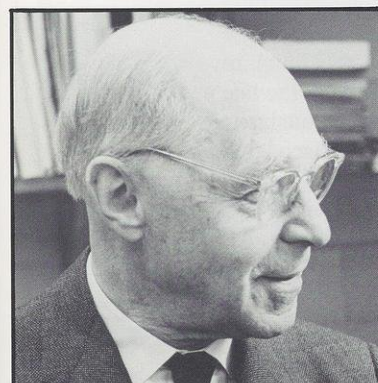
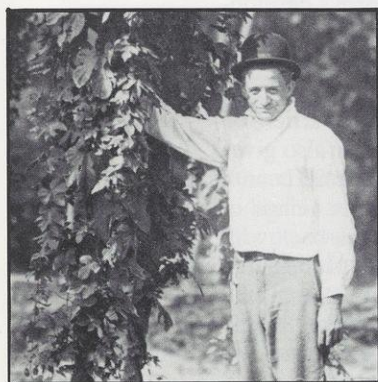
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EDITORIAL

Putting together a publication such as the *Review* requires that the editor work far in advance, and that is exactly what Pat Powell did. She began organizing this issue long before she left the Academy for her present editorial position. My role, therefore, primarily has been that of facilitator, final copy editor, and production coordinator. Pat also began work on the September issue, which will focus on art collections in Wisconsin. I am well into coalescing ideas for the December issue, even though at this writing next winter seems a long way off.

The contents of this spring issue offer glimpses of various stages of Wisconsin's development during the last two centuries. "Alfred Waud's Wisconsin" reminds us of how fashionable it was to romanticize during the nineteenth century. "The Hops Era" gives us a portrait of the dark side of over-romanticizing, the inevitable fall. Readers will experience the adventurous spirit and stamina of the nineteenth-century woman through the article on the Cairns collection and the short story "Through Fire and Water." The latter also gives added insight into the tragedy of the Peshtigo fire and can be placed in juxtaposition with the articles on Waud's art and the hops-growing period for an even clearer image of Wisconsin during the last century. Reading the article on H. J. Muller back-to-back with the book review on the biography of Gerald L.K. Smith provides a brief but interesting retrospective of the social and political climates during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Three contrasting genres represented, the short story "That's for Indians," the technical article "Effective Wind Barrier Design," and the poem "One by One by One," focus on important, albeit disparate, areas of concern in Wisconsin today: race relations, soil erosion, and care for the disabled.

We hope this eclectic collection of book reviews, fiction, nonfiction, illustrations, and poetry adds up to a package of reflections which will affect, however subtly, the reader's perception of our ever-changing state.

I am pleased to have the benefit of an editorial board whose members have agreed to offer guidance and technical advice when asked. May I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Academy, to thank the retiring members of this board who have completed two-year terms: **William Carl Taylor** of Oak Creek (science), **Warren Moon** of Madison (art), **Janet Shaw** of Ridgeway (letters), and **Mark Peterson** of Ashland (general). Members of the 1990 editorial board are: **Anita Been** of Verona and **Donald E. Thompson** of Madison (science); **Nancy Ekholm Burkert** of Milwaukee and **Warrington Colescott** of Hollandale (art); **Ellen Hunnicutt** of Big Bend, **Ben Logan** of Gays Mills, and **Gianfranco Pagnucci** of Platteville (letters); **Kathleen S. Abrams** of Wausau and **Daniel Perkins** of Eau Claire (general). Thank you for your willingness to stand by.

During recent weeks I have spent considerable time looking over past issues of the *Review*, for a multitude of reasons. I have been impressed by the wide range of topics covered and the remarkable extent of talent in the state from which to draw material. I am reminded of a brief but stimulating conversation I had in New Orleans with poet and public radio commentator Andrei Codrescu. When he noted where I was from, he was quick to tell me that he teaches the poetry of the late Lorine Niedecker (Fort Atkinson) and the late Felix Pollak (Madison) in his university classes in Louisiana. (He also was enthusiastic about the small magazine collection at Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison.) Wisconsin scientists, artists, and writers have a long history of distinction, and the prospect of working with contributors to the *Review*, who continue in the tradition of Niedecker, Pollak, and others in the sciences and arts disciplines, is challenging and exciting to me.

Faith B. Miracle
Managing Editor

Alfred Waud's Wisconsin: Images from the Gilded Age

By Robert Brinkmann and Howard Deller

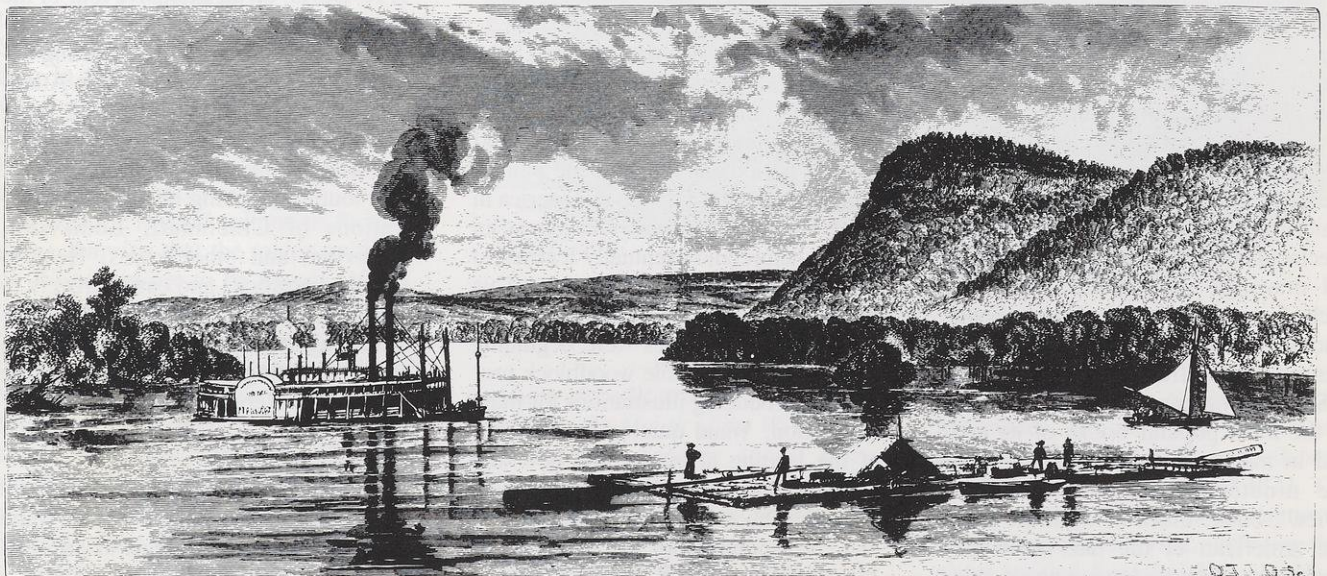
Its publishers claimed that no publication of the kind had "ever been attempted in the country on a scale so large, with design so liberal, and with results so really magnificent." They also promoted it as the "handsomest illustrated work ever produced in this country," and yet, now almost 120 years later, who has ever heard of the book *Picturesque America*? Probably few residents of Wisconsin, which is truly unfortunate since this large, heavy two-volume work, edited by the famous poet and newspaperman William Cullen Bryant and published in the early 1870s by D. Appleton & Co. of New York City, contains four chapters which include

sections on Wisconsin and over twenty-five engravings of some of our state's most beautiful scenery.

Picturesque America was designed for the elegant adornment of the drawing-room table. It was aimed primarily at members of the rising middle class and represented a continuation of the tradition of elaborately illustrated travel books of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as a response to the public's interest in having a personal record of the country's rapid development and the beauty of its remaining natural scenery. Most Americans could not afford the original sketches, watercolors, and oil paintings of America's top landscape artists,

but they could easily afford and enjoy some of these images via the medium of the wood engraving—the true popular art form of the period.

Conceived by George Appleton and Oliver Bunce, *Picturesque America* was the result of a massive project costing over \$100,000 and containing in its final form chapters on the most well-known regions of the United States. Most of the areas included were regarded as the prime tourist attractions of the late nineteenth century and were described in romantic prose and lavishly illustrated with wood engravings. Altogether, the effort required the skills of more than thirty artists and twenty-eight writers who traveled to



At the Mouth of the Wisconsin.



CITY OF MILWAUKEE.

the most remote corners of our still young nation to capture on paper the "picturesque and sublime beauty" of our lakes and rivers, our fields and forests, our mountains and rolling plains, and our small hamlets, growing towns, and great and thriving cities.

Today, while the text of *Picturesque America* is still readable and interesting, it is really the wood engravings which give this book its true distinction. The images are often said to be the culmination or climax of this art in America and, according to one critic, the "old style of wood engraving" in America "reached its height" in these spectacular illustrations based on original drawings and sketches made by such famous artists as Harry Fenn, Thomas Moran, J.D. Woodward, John Kensett, and Alfred Waud.

Since *Picturesque America* was one of the most popular books of its age, and in many ways the culmination of the nineteenth-century American "view" book, much of what the average American of the late nineteenth century would have known about Wisconsin would have come from this single source. We are fortunate then that all but one of the magnificent engrav-

ings of Wisconsin were based on sketches and drawings made in the field by a man considered by some to have been one of the best newspaper illustrators of his day, Alfred R. Waud (pronounced Wode).

Alfred Waud in America

Waud was born in England in 1829. As a young man he was trained as a decorator's apprentice, received instruction in art at London's School of Design, and worked periodically as a scene painter for theaters. After moving to America in 1850, Waud worked at various jobs of an artistic nature and eventually learned to draw on woodblocks for engravers. This was during the period when newspapers and weekly magazines were beginning to use the very durable woodblock process for producing illustrations for mass circulation. Waud quickly became one of the leading artists in this new and growing field and at the outbreak of the Civil War became a war artist and special correspondent for the *New York Illustrated News* and later, *Harper's Weekly*. It was during the Civil War that Waud developed his artistic reputation. According to Frederic E. Ray, the for-

mer art director of *Civil War Times Illustrated* and the author of a 1974 book on Waud's drawings and sketches, Waud was "undoubtedly the greatest of the Civil War combat artists."

After the war, *Harper's Weekly* sent Waud and another former war artist, T. R. Davis, on an extensive tour of the South and Southwest to depict the devastations of war and the resulting recovery. While Davis visited the Atlantic coast states and then turned west, Waud traveled down the Ohio River to the Mississippi and points further west and south, sketching on the way illustrations of Cincinnati, Louisville, Nashville, and other towns. He also sketched cowboys and cattle drovers in Texas, emigrants in ox-drawn wagons traversing the Great Plains, and scenes of the building of the Union Pacific Railroad in Nebraska.

Appleton's grand project

After quitting *Harper's Weekly*, Waud worked on several projects as an illustrator of books and magazine articles. Then in 1872 he joined the large staff assembled by D. Appleton and Co. of New York to produce *Picturesque*

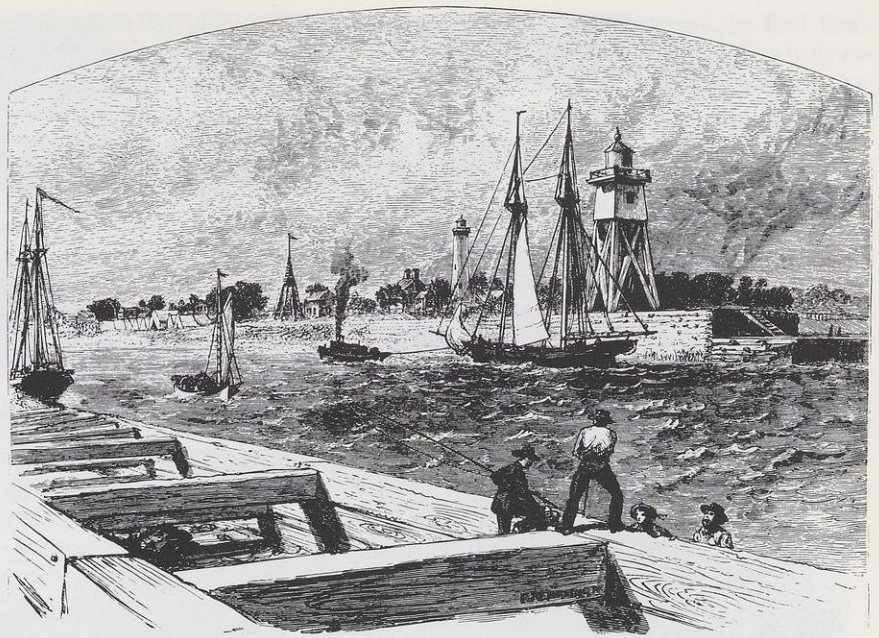
America. The method of publication of this work was by subscription. Chapters were "published in semi-monthly parts, at Fifty cents each, payable on delivery." Each part contained "one highly-finished engraving on steel and a large number of finely-executed woodcuts." In addition, once all forty-eight parts were published, the work was made available to the public in two volumes luxuriously bound in green leather. Each volume contained over 550 pages and nearly as many illustrations.

The writers of the text were chosen not for their eminence, but because of their intimate knowledge of the localities described. Articles differed greatly in length with a page and a half, for example, devoted to Mammoth Cave, while the Yosemite area of California covered eighteen pages. In its organization there was no logical sequence and the text and illustrations were probably published in the order in which the materials were received from the artists and writers on the scene.

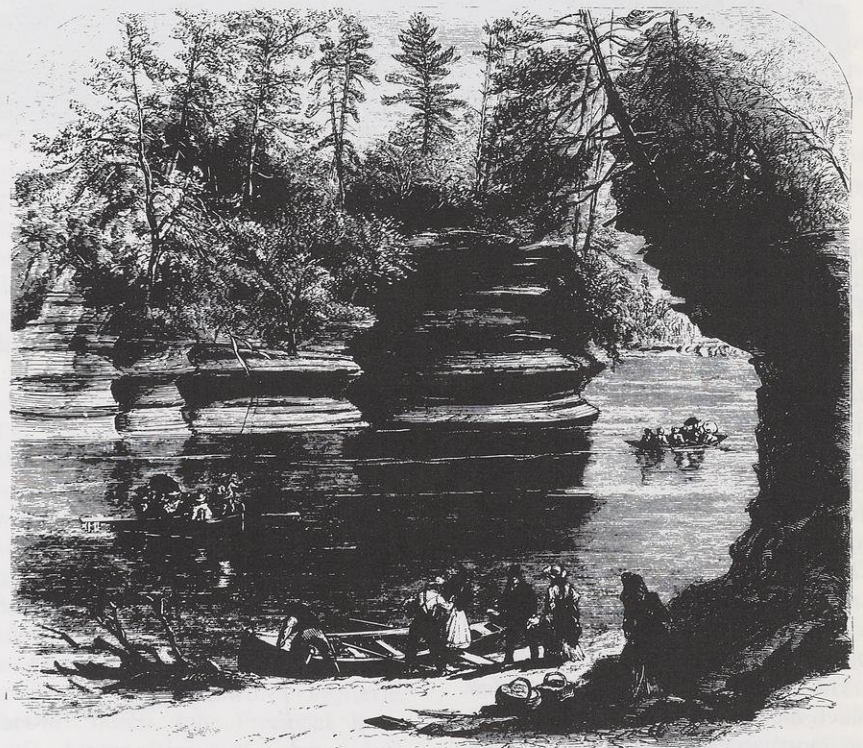
Picturesque Wisconsin

In the final published version of the book, the first volume contains a chapter on Lake Superior written by Constance F. Woolson. Most of this chapter is devoted to the Upper Michigan shore of Lake Superior, and Woolson includes only two paragraphs on the Apostle Islands and the Wisconsin mainland. Most of these comments relate to the history of the islands and to the location at Bayfield of the United States agency for the Chippewa Indians. In this chapter there are several wood engravings made from sketches done in the field by the artist William Hart, but none of these appear to be of the Wisconsin shore.

It is in the second volume of *Picturesque America* that the major sections on Wisconsin are to be found. Of the thirty-four chapters in this volume, three discuss our state, though none of the chapters are devoted exclusively to Wisconsin. A chapter on "The Upper Mississippi," written by R. E. Garczynski, describes parts of the Wisconsin River bank from the southern border of our state to the Lake Pepin area. Several of the plates used to illustrate this chapter are definitely of Wisconsin scenes, though for others it is harder to determine exactly what specific regions are depicted. Those which are



Kenosha Harbor.

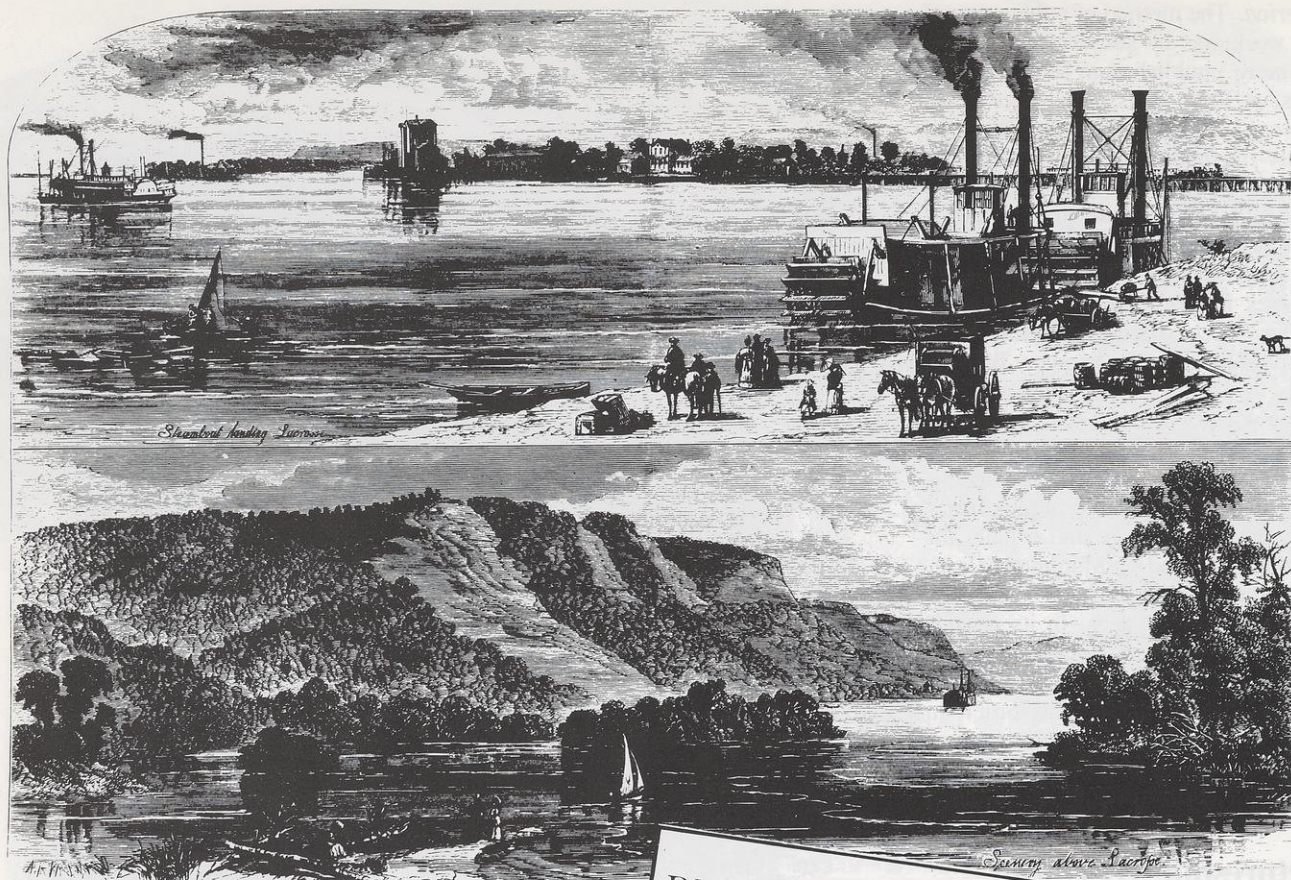


Steamboat Rock, Wisconsin River.

certainly of the Wisconsin bank include Waud's *At the Mouth of the Wisconsin*, *La Crosse and Scenery Above, Three Miles Above La Crosse*, *Trempealeau*, *Lake Pepin*, and *Maiden Rock, Lake Pepin*.

Otto Bunce wrote the chapter entitled "Chicago and Milwaukee," a chapter which starts at Chicago, works its way north through several lake ports,

and culminates with a description of Milwaukee. We know that Waud made at least ten sketches while in southeastern Wisconsin in August of 1872. Of these sketches, several were engraved for *Picturesque America*, including the plates entitled *Kenosha*, *Kenosha Harbor*, *Racine*, *City of Milwaukee*, and *Milwaukee River at Milwaukee*. As far as we could determine, it is not known

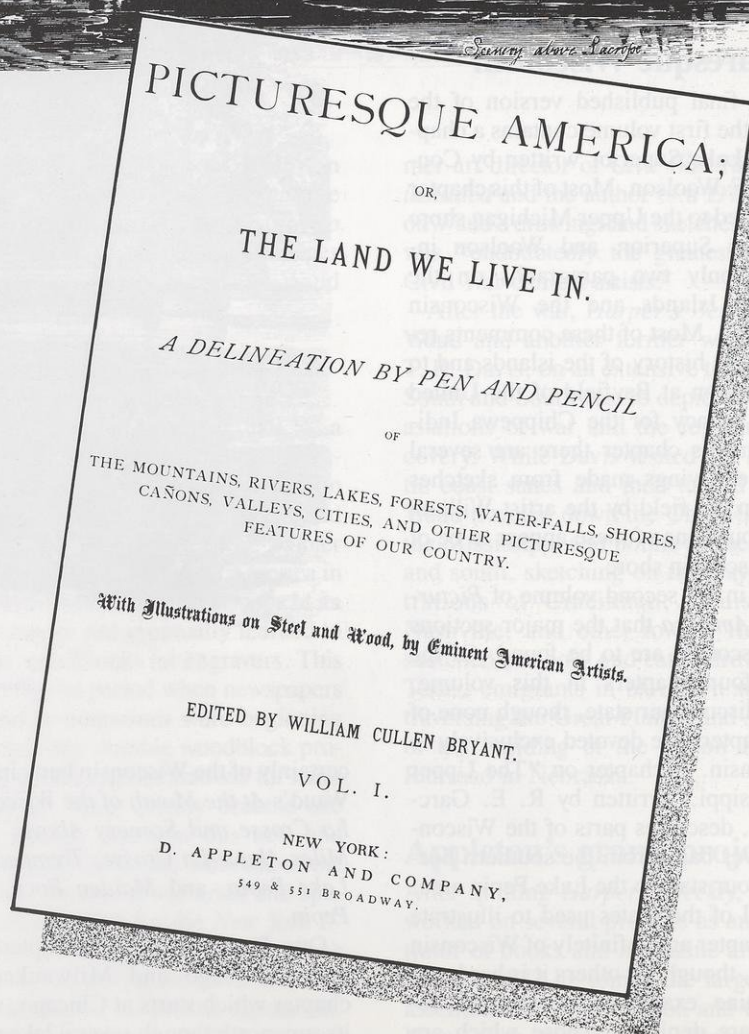


LA CROSSE, AND SCENERY ABOVE.

when he made the sketches for the stunning *Sunset, Lake Michigan*, one of the most spectacular engravings in the entire book.

Finally, the Devil's Lake area and the Dells region of the Wisconsin River are included in a chapter entitled "A Glance at the Northwest" by W.H. Rideing. The plates illustrating this chapter depict such well-known landmarks as Devil's Door-way and *Cleopatra's Needle* from the Devil's Lake area, and the "Dalles," *Steamboat Rock*, *Stand Rock*, and *Lone Rock* on the Wisconsin River.

The sections of *Picturesque America* which focus on Wisconsin cover only the most accessible and well-known areas of our state. Since Waud traveled mainly by railroad and river steamboat, this is only to be expected. Other regions were completely ignored. The Door Peninsula, now known as one of our major tourist regions, for example, was still regarded in the early 1870s as a remote and rugged farming area. Its picturesque coastline and unique character were not yet familiar to those who could afford to travel for pleasure and scenery. Like several other now well-known regions of Wisconsin, it was off



the beaten track and not unique enough to be regarded as a hidden treasure worthy of national attention in Appleton's landmark publication.

While not representative of Wisconsin as a whole, the three regions emphasized in *Picturesque America* were perhaps the ones which most Wisconsinites of the time would have mentioned if asked to list the most scenic and "picturesque" regions of our state. The Mississippi border country and the cities of Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee had been known and discussed for a long period of time and settled heavily since at least the late 1840s. Devil's Lake and the Dells of the Wisconsin River, by contrast, were just beginning to be discovered by a national public. While steamboat cruises had been popular on the Mississippi for over thirty years, it was only in 1868 that a small steamboat began to make the rounds for tourists on Devil's Lake. Shortly afterwards, H.H. Bennett's scenic photographs of the Wisconsin Dells became widely known, drawing sizeable crowds to the region. After 1873 the first sightseeing steamboat began operating on that previously ignored portion of the Wisconsin River. While many attribute the development of the Dells' tourist industry to H.H. Bennett, it may have been even more influenced by the national publication of Alfred Waud's wood engravings and by the famous 1872 tour of the region by the "lady in black," the widow of Abraham Lincoln.

In any event, the text of *Picturesque America* gives many examples of how these regions were seen, or were expected to be seen, by the traveling tourist. Trempealeau, for example, is described as a place which "ought to be visited by every painter and poet in America, and should become the headquarters of every one who loves the scenery of his country during the summer months." The reader is told, furthermore, that "it is a grief that Americans should wander off to the Rhine and the Danube when, in the Mississippi, they have countless Rhines and many Danubes." Other areas are de-

picted in similar glowing terms. The Dells are described as six miles of "enchanted beauty" and at the *Jaws*, "we move from one spot which we think the most lovely to another that excels, and on through inexhaustible beauties, in a state of unalloyed rapture." Even the lumber rafts one finds on the river are of interest and the "half-savage, outlandish fellows" who man them are "thoroughly picturesque in aspect, if nothing else."

The main tone throughout the book is basically romantic and picturesque. Even Wisconsin's southeastern port cities are beautifully and sympathetically portrayed. Racine, for example, is described as "handsomely laid out in wide and well-built streets," and Milwaukee, at the time a city of nearly eighty thousand people, is said to be "more hilly than Chicago," and "in many particulars, the prettier" of the two. It is further described as "one of the most active and prosperous cities of the Western country" and "one of the most charming." Though it is a picturesque city with "so many domes, turrets, cupolas, spires, and towers" that one might imagine oneself "in some Mediterranean port," it is also seen as a growing industrial center with "immense brick breweries," "a flouring-mill that grinds one thousand barrels of flour daily," and one giant elevator with a storage capacity of "five million bushels of grain."

To modern ears, most of the text sounds idealized and overly romantic. The accompanying engravings, however, are realistically detailed landscapes and it is apparent that great care was taken in choosing and arranging just the right compositions at just the right moments. These carefully rendered and richly detailed engravings are as beautiful and as moving as the long ignored but now sought after landscapes of Thomas Cole, Frederic Edwin Church, John Frederick Kensett, Albert Bierstadt, and Asher Durand.

While not the most famous book of the nineteenth century, *Picturesque America* was an epoch-making work,

and contains some of the best landscapes ever cut in America—a truly extraordinary collection of expertly engraved images. It is our hope that through the small sample of Waud's engravings of our state reproduced here, the members of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters may come to appreciate the visual richness of these spectacular engravings of Wisconsin's landscape produced over 115 years ago by one of America's most famous illustrators. Waud's hauntingly familiar images are a part of our visual heritage, products of the romantic mood and character of late nineteenth century America, and reminders of the scenic beauty of our great state.

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Acknowledgements

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Effective Wind Barrier Design: A Linear Dilemma

By David H. Behm

Wind erosion is the process of detachment, transportation, and deposition of soil material by wind action. Across the nation severe wind erosion received considerable attention during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. During the 1950s the Great Plains continued to receive attention as drought and high winds once again resulted in dramatic dust storms, though not as severe as those in the Dirty Thirties. Wind erosion rates reached fifty-six tons per acre per year during those decades, permanently damaging some fifteen million acres of cropland and rangeland. In contrast, it is believed that the maximum rate of erosion which permits sustained long-term productivity of soils is only five tons per acre per year.

Wind erosion is usually considered a major problem in semi-arid regions such as the Great Plains, but reports over the years show that sandy soils even in humid areas suffer severely from wind erosion. It is also a serious problem on unprotected muck soils and irrigated land. All of these characteristics can be found in central Wisconsin in the area called the Golden Sand Plain. The wind erosion problem of this area was first documented some ninety years ago by a University of Wisconsin soil physicist, F. H. King.

Since the 1950s the rapid conversion of pasture, scrub oak and jack pine woodlots, and pine plantations to intensively cropped, irrigated agriculture has resulted in more total soil exposure in this region, which has heightened the opportunity for wind erosion. The effects of wind erosion will probably become more pronounced and cause

damage to more extensive areas in the years ahead unless proper and adequate measures are adopted by landowners to reduce or abate wind erosion.

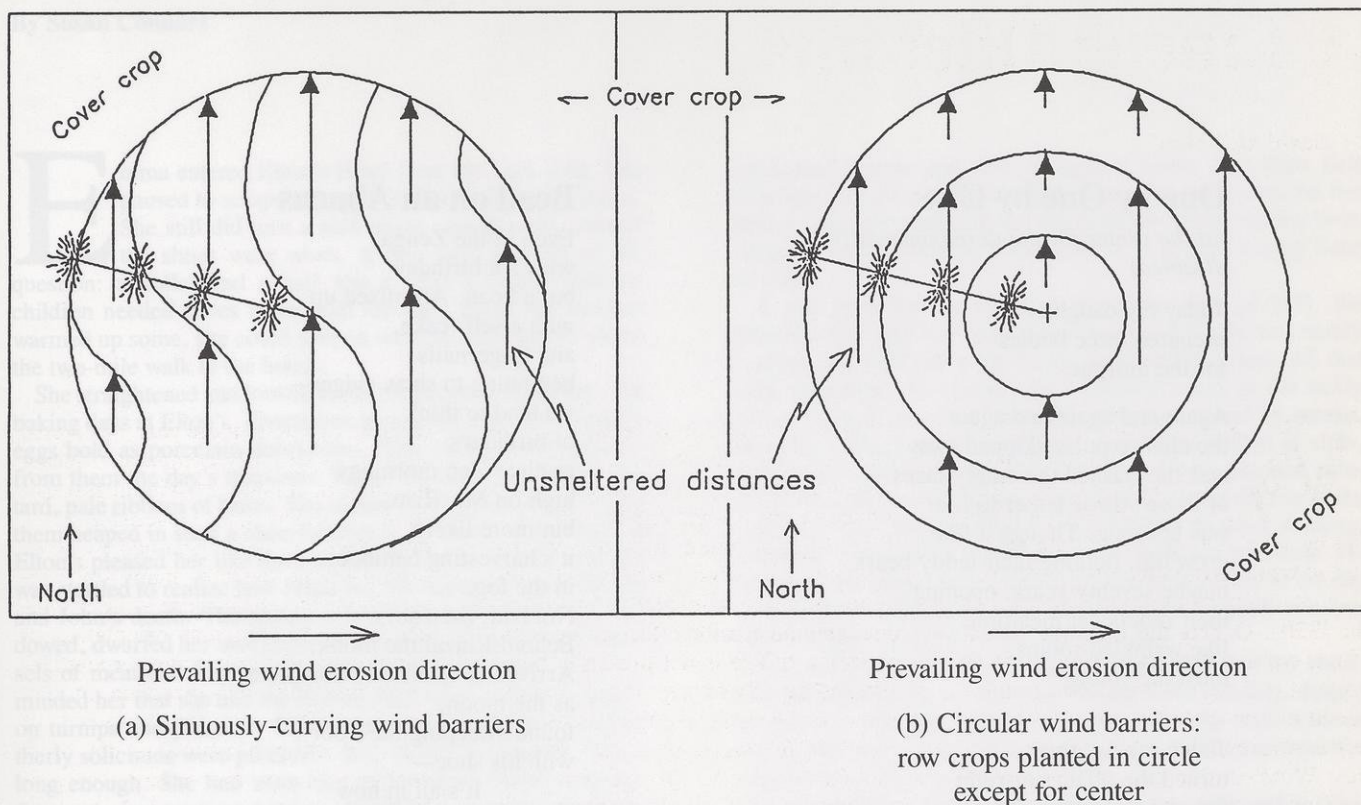
Traditional wind erosion control practices like wind barriers will continue to be the principal means of reducing wind erosion effects, since conservation tillage is not presently being adopted rapidly enough in this region. However, there is no logical reason to continue relying upon linear designs for wind barriers. Erosive winds are not limited to a single direction; arrangement of wind barriers should not, therefore, be limited to a single wind direction. I present my argument for using nonlinear designs of wind barriers based upon assessment of eighteen years of erosive wind data which I recently analyzed for Portage County. The idea has obvious widespread application for center-pivot, irrigated cropland.

On an average annual basis neither the frequency nor the duration (two hours) of erosive winds observed in Portage County are cause for great concern regarding wind erosion. However, average annual values describing the erosive nature of wind are not very revealing regarding the significant potential for damage to soils and crops during spring months when they may be highly susceptible to damage. Therefore, my analysis of wind data focused primarily on critical monthly and weekly time intervals. For purposes of discussion, erosive winds are defined here as those greater than or equal to eighteen miles per hour as reported daily in local weather forecasts.

Erosive wind frequencies show how the prevailing wind erosion direction

changes throughout the year; yet it also suggests a westerly component during the critical months of March through June, October, and November. This latter fact has been assumed to be of primary importance by many soil conservationists and farmers alike as evidenced by the singular orientation of windbreaks and crop rows perpendicular to this prevailing direction on area cropland. However, the constancy of this prevailing direction is not great enough to justify over-reliance on protection from a singular wind direction when prescribing the orientation of permanent erosion control practices such as field windbreaks.

The extreme wind velocity and direction information analyzed in my study suggests a substantially variable nature of the erosive winds observed in Portage County. In other words, when an erosive wind blows from the south (which is perpendicular to west, the prevailing wind erosion direction during March through May), it may be a very severe wind event which could result in substantial soil erosion *even if* typical north-south wind barriers are in place. Therefore, reliance upon a monthly prevailing wind erosion direction to dictate orientation of erosion control practices is unwarranted and undesirable. Frequency of erosive winds from all directions for the most critical time intervals (weekly, for example) should be an equally important criterion for proper orientation. The extent of variability in the direction of erosive winds for Portage County suggests that the orientation of wind barriers, especially wind strips, should be reevaluated. Consideration should focus on the design of strips in configura-



Wind barrier design providing soil and crop protection from a south wind under center-pivot irrigation.

tions other than straight rows perpendicular to the prevailing wind erosion direction.

The figure illustrates two configurations of wind barrier for use on center pivot irrigation fields designed to minimize soil movement regardless of wind direction. Wind strip barriers, comprised of perennial grasses, are maintained as either (a) sinuously curving rows oriented generally perpendicular to the prevailing wind erosion direction, or (b) circular bands parallel with crop rows. A critical difference between these designs and straight-row wind barriers is that the area of exposed soil (erosive fetch) between wind barriers does not equal the entire field length as it would if a straight row orientation were used. Because this distance is substantially reduced, soil erosion rates could also be significantly reduced under virtually all erosive wind conditions.

Use of nonlinear wind barriers on irrigated cropland in central Wisconsin would greatly reduce annual crop and soil damages resulting from wind erosion. However, design standards and specifications for these nonlinear practices are not presently available to local soil conservationists. This information is urgently needed so that local soil conservation staff can maintain credibility with agricultural producers who wish to protect their crops, reduce soil degradation, and maintain their eligibility with the many new cross-compliance government programs.

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Effective Wind Barrier Design:

A Little Zen

One by One by One

(at the center for the developmentally disabled)

Today my daughter
prepared three bodies
for the morgue.

Again and again and again
the elusive pulse skipped away
and she washed the empty faces
of those whose tether to life
was not long. Though a few
grow old, holding their teddy bears
maybe seventy years, opening
their mouths at mealtime
like wrinkled robins;
most die young.

Today my daughter
turned the pliant not-right
form of a six-year-old,
his knees falling aside
like failed miracles.

I, who manage to forget
that all who enter the world
will one day leave,
have raised a child who never forgets
that everyone leaves.

Today my daughter
worked an extra shift
and wheeled her throbbing questions
down the hall.

Jeri McCormick

Bead on an Abacus

Even in the Zenga,
what's a birthday
but a koan. All mixed up
with a self, cake,
and fingernails
beginning to show ridges—
we tend to think
of birthdays
as clear Zen mornings
high on Mt. Riso,
but more likely
it's harvesting bamboo
in the fog.
Not bad, even so.
Behold Rinzai the monk,
Arrived & Realized, Complete
as the moon,
found sweeping the floor
with his shoe—

It's all in how
you perceive such things.

Birthdays, after we reach
our majority,
are just small beads
on an abacus,
threaded one then one
and merely
for the counting.
Nevertheless
your own bright birthday,
dear Monk-friend,
though perhaps sweet
as Peking oranges
also pierces
like a bell, like a star.
Count it dear.

Susan Peterson

Through Fire and Water

By Susan Connors

Emma entered Elton's Hotel from the back door. She paused to scrape the mud off her high-button shoes. She still did turn a nice ankle, she thought, even if the shoes were worn. A new pair was out of the question: a dollar and a half was a week's wages, and the children needed shoes more than she did. When the weather warmed up some, she could save on wear by carrying her shoes the two-mile walk to the hotel.

She straightened and looked to the broad plank worktable. On baking days at Elton's, Emma was greeted by a basket of sturdy eggs bold as porcelain doorknobs. They called her to conjure from them the day's treasures: foamy meringues, creamy custard, pale ribbons of batter. She smiled for the pleasure of seeing them heaped in such a cheerful clutch. So much of her work at Elton's pleased her like this, so simply and so keenly, that she was startled to realize how bleak her life had been since the fire and John's death. The spacious hotel kitchen, white and windowed, dwarfed her own dreary one-paned cabin kitchen. Morsels of meat and fragrant sausages that she brought home reminded her that she and the children had eked out their winters on turnips and potatoes. Mr. Elton's courtly manners and fatherly solicitude were pleasures, too, for she had kept to herself long enough. She had been like an ice block under sawdust, frozen against warmer weather; slowly now she was softening, touching up against small joys, hungering for a fullness of heart.

She yearned for the family she had blithely left behind her in Ohio, her mother, her father, her two sisters. How Martha at the Oberlin Conservatory would gawk to see her sister walking barefoot to do cook's work!

"It's too rough," her father had said. He had come to Cleveland to see Emma and John board the steamer to Green Bay. "The beginning can be a lonely time. When your mother and I came to Ohio almost fifty years ago, it was a new state, too. She almost left because of the loneliness." He kissed her and said in a rush, "You were always quick on a decision, and I pray this is one you won't regret." He had stood on the pier for as long as she could make him out, and she waved herself giddy in the exuberance of steam puffs and whistles and dreams of home-staying in a young state.

She had been a sharp-sure girl then and had not thought twice about traveling to the deep woods of Wisconsin with a husband she had known only two months. It was never lonely work alongside John. They cut an immense clearing and built a snug cabin on the top of a rise. On the roof they added a tiny viewing platform that was worth more to Emma than all the refinements of Cleveland.

As she snuggled the strings of the white butcher's apron around her waist, Emma saw in the basket a single bantam egg, a cunning wheaten imitation of its heartier mates. She reached for it, tiny and perfect, and brought it to nestle in her palm, turning its smoothness. A web of sorrow rose from a deep center within her. She was used to the sorrow. It was like a yeast dough that expanded into any unguarded crack. She was vigilant against it, but this little egg had caught her unaware.

They had bought a bantam hen for Carrie right before the fire. It had been an extravagance, but the saucy feather-booted bird

enchanted Emma and they brought it home with their first chickens. All six chickens ignited at the same time when the fire struck, and she could still see the brief arc of the blazing birds rising in a burst, settling to earth as no more than a dusty flake of ash.

It had been five years since the Great Fire of 1871, the Peshtigo fire. She had been lucky to escape. Carrie was barely walking and Ned just a few weeks of being born then. All that long September, Emma and John watched warily in the sickly yellow light of the days. The sun, almost obscured by smoke, was like a blood mark on the sky. Ash flakes drifted in clots, eerie premonitions of disaster. John and Emma planned carefully: should the house ignite, they would wait out the fire in the center of the clearing. But on that terrible October evening, when the ravaging fire finally did come, John was not home. He had gone the four miles to the Jorgensen farm earlier in the day to help Harold clear trees from around his potato patch in hopes of providing a possible refuge for his family.

Emma had tied Carrie in a blanket and lashed it to her chest, determined to carry two buckets of water to the clearing, despite her burden. The water saved them. She spent the night soaking the blanket wet, extinguishing the sparks that fell upon them like crazed biting fireflies.

In the morning the fire had passed. It was unbearably cold, except for places where tree roots smoldered underground or a tangle of trunks sputtered fitfully. Emma picked her way through the charred woods to the Jorgensens' with Carrie clenched above the heavy weight of the baby. There was nothing, no John, no house, no food, not even a road. The Jorgensens were gone, burned, and John, nothing but ash and the foul flat ashen smell of it. John, the Jorgensens, and probably a thousand others.

Emma had made her way to John's cousin in Oconto in time to give birth to Ned. When she was able, she had even traveled to the improvised hospital in Marinette to view the badly scarred victims there in the vain hope that by some queer kindness of fate she might still find John alive. Marie Glinski's husband, only thirty yards from Marie, had exploded into a white pillar of flame, incinerated before her eyes. Was it better to have the certainty of seeing his end? Emma never knew.

"Mama!" called Carrie. She banged open the door to the hotel kitchen. "Mama, Mr. Elton said we could go to the stable, can we?" Emma lowered her fist, but did not show the egg to her daughter.

"May we," she corrected automatically. "Did you and Ned set the tables in the dining room?"

"Yes, we did. May we go please?" Carrie persisted.

"Go ahead, dear. Don't stay too long—and be sure to watch Ned."

"Thank you, Mama, I will."

Carrie ran through the dining room to collect her brother. Emma sighed. She would have to punish her if she could not stop running through the hotel. Thank heavens there were only a few customers. If the children could behave and help with little chores, she could still bring them to the hotel when she came. She worried that this arrangement might not continue.

She was fortunate to get this baking work. It was a welcome change from taking in washing and mending. The children thrived in the bustle of the hotel, and customers seemed to enjoy their presence. But while a dollar and a half a week was generous enough for wages, it was never enough. She was always making impossible choices: shoes or a warmer coat for Carrie, shoes or trousers for Ned.

The big black oven was hot enough for baking. Emma left the kitchen door open. She needed the air—and she liked to watch the customers in the dining room. She knew most of them by sight. They were all men, most of whom boarded at Elton's Hotel, some of whom came to take meals at the hotel on a regular basis.

There was Mr. Travis, the roly-poly drummer, who often put his head in the kitchen to remind her how he had loved that rhubarb-custard pie. Mr. Gephardt, the pharmacist, lunched regularly in the hotel dining room, as did Mr. Keaton, the banker. There was a tall man, Mr. Perry, who would seriously greet the children and engage them in grown-up conversations. The children said he was going to stay in town to build a dry goods store and that he was going to teach them magic tricks.

Emma floured the large wooden work table. She would make a dozen pies today, mostly apple. The greenings were still good. There were canned gooseberries enough for one or two special pies. Emma began to sift four pounds of flour. Baking days were her pleasure, blending, mixing, dough to pies, batter to cakes, yeast sponge to bread. But today the little bantam egg perched on the table like an eyeless mouse fixing itself in her view, and the sorrow rose again spinning sticky in her throat, flaming her cheeks, burning her eyes. She batted at tears with the back of her floured hands. Mr. Perry had been breakfasting at the table facing the open door. He was gazing at her solemnly. Emma flushed deeper. She walked around the wooden table and softly closed the door. It would not do to see the cook cry.

Emma began to cut the lard into the flour and salt, adding water to transform lump and powder into a single large ball. She had lived with John's loss and was strong enough to live with hard work, but it was the life of hardship for her children that broke her heart. Carrie and Ned had a life of bare essentials, with a mother who had no time for them. When she got home there was still wood to split, water to draw, wash to boil.

A bantam egg could make a dolly cake. Emma's mother had shown her how, using her little dolly tea set, when Emma was just Carrie's age. Emma pinched a large ball of pliable dough. She could still feel the trembling of her eager fingers as she delighted in holding out the little blue china cups and little tin spoons the size of her fingernail. "Just like a person-cake," said her mother as she bent next to her, mixing the smell of her rich thick hair with Emma's fragrant jumble of butter and brown nutmeg.

It was just like a person-cake, Emma knew now, but made magical with dolly portions: 1/2 dolly cup of butter, 1 dolly cup sugar, 1 bantam egg, 2 dolly cups flour, 2 dolly spoons baking powder, 1/4 dolly spoon nutmeg, 1/2 dolly cup boiling water. "Good for little girls and their dollies," her mother had said as she set the little tin of magic cake to cool.

Emma patted the large ball of dough flat with her hand. She thumped it. Her daughter had never had a dolly cake—or dolly dishes. She couldn't even start school yet because she was needed to watch her brother. Emma reached into the cool flour and dusted the silky powder onto the rolling pin.

Carrie came through the door. "Mama, Mr. Perry in the dining room wants to talk to you."

Emma sighed. She was often called to receive compliments from diners. She was a boon to Mr. Elton's business, she knew,

and her baking was exceedingly popular with his customers. Mr. Keaton was always at the hotel on Wednesdays because of the fresh apple pie, and everyone said her salt-rising bread was the best in the county. People even said she should start her own business. That was a useless dream for her. How could she buy baking supplies when she could barely afford the wood to keep her family warm?

She wiped her dusty hands on her apron, patted at her hair, and stood straight as if a ramrod back could unbend melancholy. Docilely she followed Carrie as though on a lead. The dining room, chilly after the stove-warm kitchen, seemed stark and gloomy.

Mr. Perry stood and offered his hand. "Thank you, Carrie. May I speak to your mother privately?" Carrie gave a hint of a curtsy and scampered off.

"Mrs. Englund, won't you sit down?"

"Thank you, but I cannot. I must return to my baking," replied Emma, studying the gravity this sandy-haired man had assumed to commend good food. She thought of a wheat loaf, well formed and sturdy.

"Then I shall remain standing, Mrs. Englund, but I hope you consider me no less serious." He cleared his throat. "I'm a wealthy man, Mrs. Englund, and I'm lonely. My wife died years ago. I have no children. I am not young, and do not choose to live out my life alone."

Emma rested her hand on the back of the chair to steady herself. This stranger's words were leading her on an unknown road, and somewhere on this road she would have to choose a turning.

"I come here regularly," he continued. "I know your circumstances. I have seen your children and admire the way you have brought them up. They are spirited but well mannered. You are a good mother and an excellent cook. I like what I see, and I have this proposition for you . . ."

She felt as though the road had quickly brought her to a river that she would have to cross, as though the water were lapping about her ankles. She could feel her senses sharpening. She sat. He followed suit, still looking directly into her face, courteous and grave.

"I would like to propose marriage to you. Your children would share equally in inheritance with any children we might have together. They would have a good future. I would be a good father to them. You could choose help to run the household, and I would treat you with all the respect and courtesy due my wife."

Mr. Perry stopped, as though he had been concentrating on careful delivery of a brimming pitcher and was watching to see whether the contents would be spilled over carelessly or taken down in drink with calm deliberate thirsty swallows.

Emma studied this man. He did not ask her to answer now or to think about it and answer him in a few days. He had made his proposal straightforwardly and without condition and did not direct her how to deliberate.

She remembered stepping into a cold spring river as a girl. The river had pierced her legs with its chill, then flooded her with a keen, clear rush of energy. That same cleansing vigor seized her now. The webbing in her throat sank in on itself. She stood. She removed her apron and folded it over the back of the chair.

"I accept, Mr. Perry," she said, "and when I have spoken with Mr. Elton, I shall be ready."

He rose to his feet. She thought to herself that when she knew this man better, she would make a dolly cake, and they would all eat it together.

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"Riding for Life." Civil War nurse and spy Emma E. Edmonds.

Browsing Through the Cairns Collection: Women Writers Speak

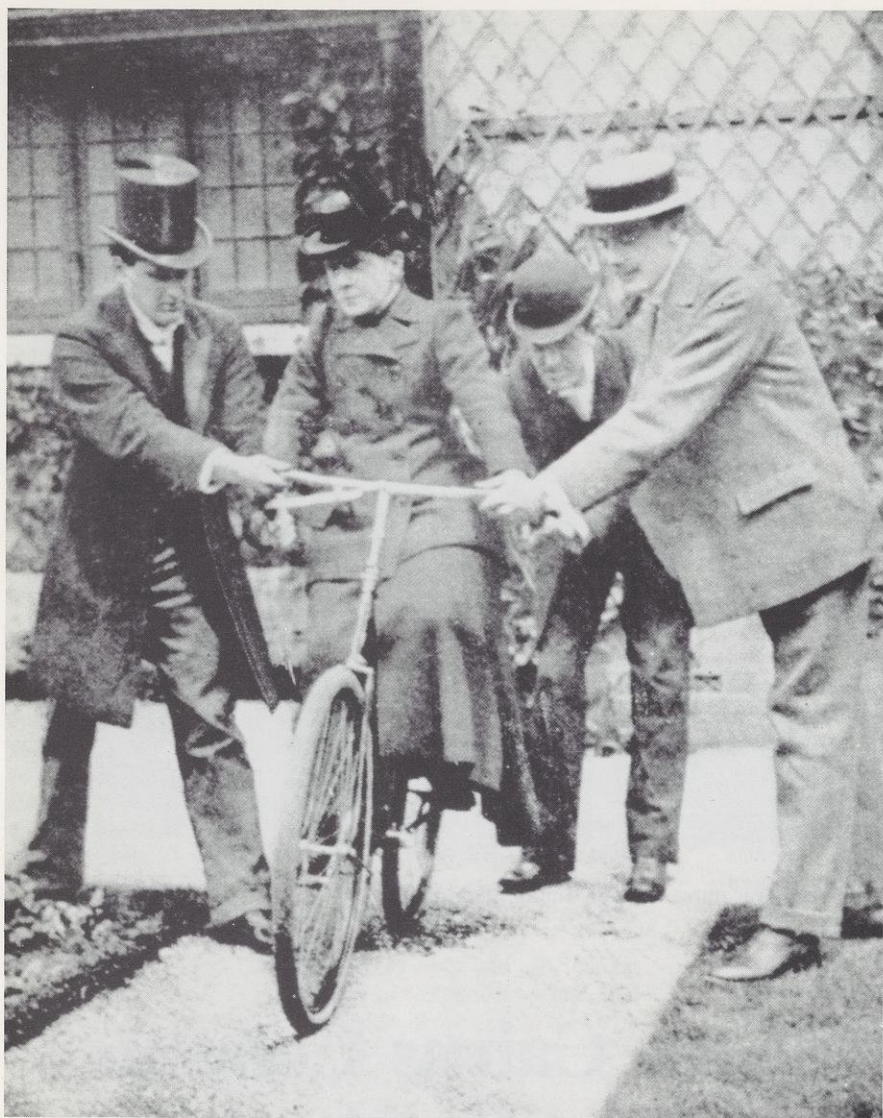
By: Jeffrey Steele

The William B. Cairns Collection of American Women Writers, housed in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of Memorial Library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is one of the most important collections of American women's writing in existence. It consists of over 4500 volumes—a collection that has doubled in size over the past five years. One of the first things that anyone browsing through the shelf list of the Cairns Collection notices is the tremendous variety of books written by American women, many of them in genres that have been considered "popular" or non-literary and, therefore, outside of traditional academic study.

In this article I'll focus on five such categories of women's writing: 1) personal narratives, 2) captivity narratives, 3) travel writing, 4) advice books, and 5) books about or for children. In the process, I hope to provide a number of cross-sections of the collection—samples that suggest the ways the interests of different readers might intersect with it.

Only recently have scholars recognized the importance of women's autobiographies as a field of study. There are several American texts that have already reached the status of being considered classics, works such as Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Mary Chesnut's Civil War diaries, edited and reprinted as *Mary*

Chesnut's Civil War, and Jane Adams's *Twenty Years at Hull-House, with Autobiographical Notes* (1910). Nearly everywhere one looks in pre-twentieth-century American women's writing, personal narratives—diaries, journals, letters—play an important role. Such books have been an invaluable source of information about the daily details of female existence; but they also remind us that autobiographical impulses also played an important role in women's fiction and poetry. Even writers not usually thought of as autobiographers (for example, many of the popular women novelists of the 1850s) ended up writing about what they knew best: incidents that had shaped their lives or those of close



Frances Willard learns to ride a bicycle with the help of three "strong-armed" friends. Willard, who grew up on a Rock River farm near Janesville, was a feminist, writer, national temperance leader, and international lecturer.

friends. While it goes without saying that women's experience in the nineteenth century was quite different from that of men, the exact dimensions of those differences and the nature of the literary strategies that women used to record them have been subjects inspiring much heated inquiry.

In order to suggest the range of interest in personal narratives found in the Cairns Collection, I have selected several volumes. For example, Fanny Kemble's *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839* (1863) provides a detailed description of slavery prior to the Civil War. Kemble, a famous English actress, settled in America when she married a Georgia plantation owner in 1834. Then, after the birth of two daughters, she

moved to Georgia, right in the midst of southern slavery. Although she kept a journal of her experiences, she didn't feel the need to publish it until the Civil War, when the pro-slavery sympathies of many of her English friends spurred her into action. In addition to its portrait of slave society, Kemble's *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* is noteworthy for its inclusion of a letter to the editor of the London *Times* testifying to the "truth and moderation" of Harriet Beecher Stowe's writing as "a representation of the slave system in the United States"—a testimonial based upon Kemble's first-hand experiences as "an eyewitness."

A second personal narrative, one that verges on high melodrama, is S. Emma E. Edmonds's *Nurse and Spy*

in the Union Army (1865). Edmonds was a Civil War soldier, who served two years disguised as a man and who became, in later years, the only woman officially recognized as a veteran of the Union army.

In one exciting passage, she describes her first mission as a spy among the Confederates. Disguised as a Negro slave, she traveled "with a few hard crackers in my pocket . . . my revolver loaded and capped . . . [and] without even a blanket or anything which might create suspicion." Two other volumes record the experiences (and hardships) of women married to famous men: Elizabeth Custer's *Boots and Saddles; or, Life in Dakota with General Custer* (1885) and Josephine Peary's *My Arctic Journal: A Year Among the Ice-Fields and Eskimos* (1894).

And then there are more whimsical books such as Frances Willard's *A Wheel within a Wheel: How I learned to Ride the Bicycle, with Some Reflections along the Way* (1895). Willard, twenty-year president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, learned to ride the bicycle near the end of her life as a form of physical therapy. Here is her description of the first attempt to ride:

First, three young Englishmen, all strong-armed and accomplished bicyclers, held the machine in place while I climbed timidly into the saddle. Second, two well-disposed young women put in all the power they had, until they grew red in the face, off-setting each other's pressure on the cross-bar and thus maintaining the equipoise to which I was unequal. Third, one walked beside me, steadying the ark as best she could by holding the center of the deadly cross-bar, to let go whose handles meant chaos and collapse. After this I was able to hold my own if I had the moral support of my kind trainers, and it passed into a proverb among them, the short emphatic word of command I gave them at every few turns of the wheel: "Let go, but stand by."

Willard, of course, learns to ride, but only after a nasty spill for which she had to be administered ether to kill the pain. The ensuing feeling of intoxication was a new experience for this leader of America's temperance movement. "Then there settled down upon me," she writes, "the most vivid and pervading sense of the love of God that I have ever known." In the end, however, she became an accomplished bicyclist, fulfilling her doctor's injunction to get more exercise and freeing

herself from the sense of constriction she felt at her “long skirts that impeded every footstep.” Once again, she felt able to return to the sense of “the freedom of my prairie home [that] had been one of life’s sweetest joys”—the sense of exhilaration she felt during the early years spent on her family’s pioneer homestead near Janesville in the Wisconsin Territory.

A sub-genre of personal narrative is formed by those works known as captivity narratives—books that depict the capture, imprisonment, and eventual escape of the narrator, who is often victimized by Indians. The classic work in this form is *A Narrative of the Captivity, Suffering and Removes, of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, an account written by the wife of a seventeenth-century Massachusetts clergyman who was captured by Indians during King Philip’s War and held in captivity for eleven weeks. But the captivity narrative as a literary form had a widespread appeal extending beyond its origins. Two books that display this especially well are Rosamund Culbertson’s lurid account, *Rosamund; or, A narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of an American Female under the Popish Priests in the Island of Cuba* (1836) and Ann Eliza Young’s *Wife No. 19, or the Story of a Life in Bondage. Being a Complete Exposé of Mormonism* (1876).

Rosamund Culbertson tells of her captivity in Cuba—a world she describes as a place of diabolical intrigue, licentiousness, bizarre rituals, murders, and corruption. This portrait begins to make sense within the context of the widespread American anti-Catholicism of the nineteenth century. We might take as a representative passage Culbertson’s description of the “purgatory room” found in a Cuban convent:

It was twilight when we passed through the rooms, I was dressed in the habit of a Monk, and Father R_____ led me through by the arm. I could just perceive one of them was full of figures in different forms, one of which was the image of the Old Adversary, with a blue flame issuing from his mouth, with all his troop. Another was the figure of a man, dressed like a Monk, with a horrible and frightful countenance, who stood near the jar of sulphur, brandishing a torch in his hand, which burnt with a blue flame.

A different kind of purgatory is described by Eliza Young, one of Brigham Young’s wives, who presents

in *Wife No. 19* an equally lurid exposé of Mormonism, reminiscent of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes thriller, *The Sign of the Four*. Almost singlehandedly, Young, through her publications and lecture tours, provoked widespread indignation against the Mormons’ multiple marriages—a sense of moral outrage that led to the passage of anti-polygamy legislation and the eventual abandonment of polygamy by the Mormon Church in 1890, after it had been official Church doctrine for forty-eight years.

In ways similar to Culbertson, Young plays against nineteenth-century

American anxieties; in this case, the image of polygamy as an institution that threatened to undermine the bedrock of American society—the loving, monogamous couple in their happy home. The following passage, for example, describes the gradual erosion of a marriage after a woman’s husband brings home a second wife:

It was not long before the first wife discovered that polygamy was a much more serious matter even than she had supposed it to be, and that it grew constantly worse and more unendurable, instead of better and more easily to be borne, as she had been taught it would become. She



Book cover art for *Three Vassar Girls Abroad*.

grew to cordially hate the young wife, and although they were compelled to live under one roof, she could not even make herself feel like speaking to her; so they lived without addressing one word to each other. She grew nearly insane under this trouble, and was wrought up to such a frenzy by jealousy and despair that she committed the most flagrant acts of violence.

Culbertson's and Young's easy extension of the tradition of the captivity narrative into popular accounts suggests how familiar a situation female captivity was for their readers. Similar patterns are found in women's fiction as well. Many enormously successful books study in intimate detail the forms of entrapment experienced by their heroines. To take just one example, Susan Warner's bestseller, *The Wide, Wide World*, portrays the captivity of the young Ellen Montgomery, who is trapped first at the house of an uncongenial aunt in upstate New York, later at the home of relatives in Scotland. Her rescue from such bondage takes the familiar forms of deep religious faith leading up to and reinforcing her marriage. But despite the novel's apparent happy ending, the perceptive reader wonders if Warner hasn't provided as well a kind of captivity narrative that unwittingly reveals the ways in which some women were imprisoned in family situations that ruthlessly shaped both their expectations and their aims.

A third popular category of books written by American women were accounts of travel and portraits of different geographical locales. With the nineteenth century's emphasis upon the home, it is difficult to remember that travel writing was an important genre for women writers. In some quarters, it has become a critical commonplace that nineteenth-century male writers present journeys and quests through the country, while women writers focused upon the home and domestic settings. But the facts of publication don't support such assumptions. There were hundreds of travel books written by women, not to mention accounts of pioneer experience and novels set on the frontier.

One of the classic books of travel is a prime example of what was called the "literary excursion": Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*, which records the author's journey from Boston through the Great Lakes to Wisconsin. Fuller's travelogue is filled with striking descriptions of the condition of

women—both Indian and white—on the frontier. Pioneer women, she found, managed to endure the dehumanizing drudgery of their existence, often maintaining remnants of the culture they had left behind. But to Fuller's sympathetic eye, many of the Indian women, such as those she visited in an encampment southwest of Milwaukee, were victims. "More weariness than anguish," she writes, "no doubt falls to the lot of most of these women. They inherit submission. . . ."

Pioneer women . . . managed to endure the dehumanizing drudgery of their existence, often maintaining remnants of the culture they had left behind.

Other memorable accounts of travel include: Margaret Van Horn Bell's *A Journey to Ohio in 1810* (1810) and Abby Jane Morrell's *Narrative of a Voyage to the Ethiopic and South Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Chinese Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean in the Years 1829, 1830, 1831* (1833). One writer who obviously hit upon a successful formula was Elizabeth Champney, who published a series of books: *Three Vassar Girls Abroad* (1883), *Three Vassar Girls in South America* (1885), *Three Vassar Girls in Russia and Turkey* (1889), *Three Vassar Girls in Switzerland* (1890).

Other titles worth mentioning give a sense of the extent of the authors' travels: Adna Brown, *From Vermont to Damascus, Returning by way of Beyrut, Smyrna, Ephesus, Athens, Constantinople, Budapest, Vienna, Paris, Scotland, and England* (1895); Septima Maria Collis, *A Woman's Trip to Alaska* (1890); Frances S. Howe, *14000 Miles, a Carriage and Two Women* (1906); and a book that one-ups Howe, Carrie Adell Strahorn, *Fifteen Thousand Miles by Stage: A Woman's Unique Experience during Thirty Years of Path Finding and Pioneering from the Missouri to the Pacific and from Alaska to Mexico* (1911).

Just as personal narratives and captivity narratives provided literary forms that were echoed in works of

other women writers, travel writing seems to have played a similar function. A sense of geographic locale and descriptions of place play an important role, for example, in the works of women writers who have a regional identification—authors such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Rose Terry Cooke, and Sarah Orne Jewett. I can illustrate this point by comparing two books that were both set on the seacoast north of Boston: a travel book, Celia Thaxter's *Among the Isles of Shoals* (1873), and Sarah Orne Jewett's fictional masterpiece, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896). Both writers describe life along the New England coast; both are concerned with the effect of place upon human consciousness and, often, with the vestiges of human habitation that come down in the form of local legend.

Celia Thaxter, the daughter of a lighthouse keeper, grew up on a small three-acre island, one of the isles of shoals, nine miles off the coast of New Hampshire. Her literary locale is that desolate island world, the place where she spent all but one of the first thirty years of her life. This place evokes from her both a sense of "wildness and desolation" but also of a "strange beauty" found, for example, in "the caressing music of the water" that "break[s] the utter silence." Thus, Thaxter describes her visit to Boone Island, the site of a disastrous eighteenth-century shipwreck, both as an encounter with intense human suffering but also as the recovery of a consoling connection with the natural world. Sarah Orne Jewett presents an analogous moment late in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* when the narrator visits the ruins of Joanna's house on Shell-Heap Island. As Jewett's character stands alone, absorbed in her sense of the tragedy of Joanna's solitary existence on an isolated Maine island, she also finds consolation in the midst of possible despair, a sense of self amidst the detritus and wreckage of others' lives.

The connection between Thaxter and Jewett is clinched when we learn that the two were acquaintances. Jewett had often stayed at the island hotel owned by Thaxter's father, and both Jewett and Thaxter were members of that circle of writers surrounding Annie Fields in Boston. Even more striking is the fact that the year after Thaxter's death, in 1895, and the year before *The Country of the Pointed Firs* appeared, Jewett edited a posthumous edition of Thax-



"Prairie and Long Grove in the distance," from *Summer on the Lakes* by Margaret Fuller. Sketch by her companion Susan Freeman Clarke (1844).

ter's works entitled *Stories and Poems for Children*. But more work needs to be done on this connection, as well as on the many other ties between nineteenth-century women's fiction and travel writing.

A different set of books deals more directly with women's experience in the home and the marketplace. As nineteenth-century America became urbanized and the competition for jobs increased, middle-class women were encouraged to restrict their interests to the home and to embrace the ideal of "true womanhood," defined as the embodiment of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. A number of books, such as Lydia Sigourney's *Letters to Young Ladies* (1833) and *Letters to Mothers* (1838), supported this ideal. Similarly, Louisa Tuthill's *The Young Lady's Home* (1839) argued that woman's "true and most powerful influence must be—at home." In this volume, Tuthill took up the cause of domesticity against "female demagogue[s]" and "masculine marauders" such as the English reformer Harriet Martineau and, one supposes, the Grimke sisters and Margaret Fuller.

In a similar vein, Harriet Beecher Stowe's sister, Catharine Beecher, provided both practical advice on the best modes of kitchen arrangement and the suggestion that women should arrange

their feelings, like their kitchen utensils, to suit their families. In *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1848), she wrote: "There is nothing, which has a more abiding influence on the happiness of a family, than the preservation of equable and cheerful temper and tones in the housekeeper. A woman, who is habitually gentle, sympathizing, forbearing, and cheerful, carries an atmosphere about her, which imparts a soothing influence, and renders it easier for all to do right, under her administration, than in any other situation." Finally, Margaret Coxe's *Woman, Her Station Providentially Appointed* (1848) went even farther in its suggestion that woman owes absolute obedience to paternal authority: "... she is to seek to know and do her Father's will; feeling powerless in herself."

In contrast to the passivity encouraged by Beecher and Coxe, other writers of the same time directly addressed the need for women to challenge and expand existing norms of behavior and decorum. For example, Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) provides one of the most famous critiques of the passive "model-woman of bride-like beauty and gentleness" through its assertion that women possess as much creative energy and innate power as men. Simi-

larly, Elizabeth Smith argues in *Woman and Her Needs* (1851) that "in our age, the woman of intellect" needs to be "allowed the free exercise of her talents." While three decades later Frances Willard (of bicycle fame) emphatically asserts in *How to Win. A Book for Girls* (1887) that "There is not one thing that men ought to do, there is not one thing that ought to be done, which a woman ought not to be encouraged to do, if she has the capacity for doing it." Still other books dealt specifically with the nitty-gritty of women's work—books such as Harriet Prescott Spofford's *The Servant-Girl Question* (1881), which asserts the need to take housework seriously. Particularly noteworthy, as well, is Martha Rayne's *What Can a Woman Do* (1887), a book which documents the advances that women have made in literature, journalism, law, medicine, music, government, and other areas of work.

Both those books, bent on maintaining the status quo in women's lives and those that aim at reform, remind us of the important ethical and moral teaching functions served by a great deal of early women's writing. It is difficult at times for twentieth-century readers to approach such books, for most of us have been trained to suspect books with a moral. But the nineteenth century, despite the contrary evidence found in



Josephine Peary and her Arctic dogs.

the works of many famous *male* writers, had a different set of expectations. A novel such as *The Wide Wide World* (to return to an earlier example) was expected to instruct as well as delight. As a result, the line between manuals of etiquette, books of advice and reform, and novels often seems shadowy indeed.

I want to single out one final group of popular books written by women: works written about or for children. Several writers wrote about the special needs of children. In *Theory of Teaching* (1841), Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, one of the founders of the American kindergarten movement, argued that children should not be forced to learn by rote but rather should have lessons geared to their abilities. Later in the century, Kate Douglas Wiggin, author

of *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, asserted in *Children's Rights* (1892) that the parent or teacher is "a divinely appointed guardian" not an owner or keeper of the child. In addition to such works on the education of children, we all remember that a number of books written by American women have become children's classics: Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868, 1869) and *Little Men* (1871), Mary Mapes Dodge's *Hans Brinker, or, The Silver Skates* (1866), Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), and Eleanor Hodgman Porter's *Polyanna* (1913), which, believe it or not, was on the best-seller list for three years!

One of the things that happens when women's writing is restored to the literary canon is that a number of intrigu-

ing, critical questions are raised. While it should not surprise us that children play a much larger role in writing by American women than that found in books by men, this is a fact that has received little critical attention until recently. But critics have begun to examine in detail the set of ethical values that goes along with the nurturance of children. To consider the importance of such values is to develop a radically different vision of American culture than that found in works such as *Huckleberry Finn* or *The Red Badge of Courage*. In part, it is to confront the fact that the childless world so often found in the books by nineteenth-century *male* writers was not the norm of experience in America, but rather a radical distortion of the world inhabited by both men and women. It is an intriguing possibility that the popular academic vision of American literature as a preserve of male values is actually a mirror image of the true state of affairs. Rather than placing female writers in a male-defined context, it seems more appropriate to read male writers within a context of female literary values, especially given that the reading audience in America was predominately female and that the best-selling writers were women.

At this point, no one knows for sure how the contours of American literary history will change when nineteenth-century American women writers have been restored to the canon. It seems eminently reasonable to assume that Harriet Beecher Stowe, for example, is at least as important a writer as Edgar Allan Poe, but her works have received, at best, only one-twentieth of the critical attention paid to Poe. I might make similar points about Catharine Sedgwick and James Fenimore Cooper, Margaret Fuller and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sarah Orne Jewett and William Dean Howells. Until these women writers are studied with the same care and attention paid to their male contemporaries, we will be left with a one-sided portrait of American literature.

A bibliography of titles mentioned in this article is available on request from the Wisconsin Academy.

Photos taken by the author from selected books in the Cairns collection.



H. J. Muller and graduate student examine cultures of *Drosophila melanogaster* (vinegar fly).

H. J. Muller, Scientist and Humanist

James F. Crow

Graduate students enjoy talking about their elders; at least they used to. From my student days in the late 1930s, I recall discussions, usually over a glass of beer, about who was America's greatest geneticist. There were usually several nominees, but always two finalists. One was Sewall Wright. Some gave him the edge because, in addition to his experimental work, he was a pioneer in statistics and the mathematical theory of evolution. The other was H. J. Muller. He was not mathematical, but more imaginative; he was the idea-man of the first half-century of genetics. Both spent time at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Their personalities and lives could hardly have been more different. Wright was shy, modest, undemanding, and easy to get along with. Of course he was highly intelligent and hard working. His personal life, for the most part, was typical of academia. After graduate school at Harvard he was employed successively by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the University of Chicago, and the University of Wisconsin. Muller, in contrast, was often petty, touchy, and argumentative. He had social convictions, and he actively and vociferously promoted them. He was constantly involved in controversies, often public. His life was anything but an orderly academic progression; it was rather a succession of setbacks and difficulties. He got caught up by the two great dictatorships of his time, Hitler Germany and Stalinist Russia. He was the hard-luck guy of genetics. Yet, nothing kept him from his research.

Muller's eventful life is the subject of this article.

Muller's Life

Herman Joseph Muller, Joe to his friends, was born in New York City in 1890. His mother was of Sephardic Jewish ancestry, diluted by several marriages to Christians. His father, also named Herman, was the son of a German immigrant. The senior Herman was a highly intelligent, scholarly man and led his class at City College in New York. He started graduate work in international law, but returned to the family business when his father died unexpectedly. He apparently hated the business, the making of artistic metal castings. He retained his intellectual interests, and took his son Joe to museums, discussed Darwinism with him, and inculcated his social idealism.

Herman, Sr., died when Joe was nine years old. The family, although not left destitute, was poor, and Joe worked much of the time. With the aid of part-time and summer jobs he was able to attend Columbia University, graduating with honors. Although he started as a student of physiology, he was attracted to the exciting new subject of genetics.

Thomas Hunt Morgan of Columbia University had two brilliant students, Alfred H. Sturtevant and Calvin B. Bridges. They were exploiting the genetic potential of the vinegar fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*, to unravel the mechanism of inheritance. This was one of the most exciting times in the history of science. It was inevitable that Muller, with his intense scientific curiosity, would gravitate to this group. But he never became a regular part of the "fly room," as it was called. Each day he rode the subway to Cornell Medical School to teach the physiology lab, then to Columbia for classes and a visit to the fly lab, and then downtown where he taught an evening class in English for foreign students. He then took the subway home again, usually late at night.

Morgan and his students were all crowded into one rather small room. Work and conversation both were continuous. Ideas flowed freely, and everyone knew everyone else's experiments. Muller contributed importantly to the two greatest accomplishments of this period: Sturtevant's use of breeding data to "map" the positions of genes on the chromosome, and Bridges's use of chromosomal errors to prove the chromosomal basis of heredity (an er-

ror in the chromosome behavior produced a corresponding deviation in the inheritance pattern). It was an exciting time, for new understanding came at a rapid pace. Everyone put in a seven-day week.

Yet, all was not tranquil. Morgan believed that the origin of ideas was not important; the crucial thing was to do the experiments. He gave credit to those who did the work, not those with the original thought. It is impossible to assign credit for ideas in such a free-for-all environment. Yet, Muller was exceedingly imaginative and creative,

Here was a man in his fifties, arguably the world's greatest geneticist, with no permanent job.

and I don't doubt that he produced a disproportionate share. He soon began to think that he wasn't getting enough credit. His feelings that the group was profiting from his thinking became stronger and stronger and led to considerable ill will, although I think it was mostly submerged. Muller's priority complex became obsessive, and remained so throughout his life.

In 1920 Muller accepted a position at the University of Texas in Austin. He didn't like the climate, meteorologically or politically, but it was a good opportunity for work. The next decade was a period of great scientific activity. Muller's influence spread, especially after he discovered that he could produce mutations with x-rays, and soon two other professors, T. S. Painter and J. T. Patterson, were also working on *Drosophila*. Characteristically, Muller began to worry that they were exploiting his ideas, which they were. When I was a student there a few years later, the Texas group was still following some of Muller's suggestions.

At the same time, Muller was engaged in leftist political activities. He was faculty sponsor for a student group, the National Students League, which was apparently under the surveillance of the FBI. He also had two Russian visitors during this period.

Needless to say, Texas was not the best place to be preaching communism in the 1930s. As far as I know, Muller was never a party member, but he followed the line pretty closely. He became ever more discouraged by the inequalities of wealth and the racism in America and finally decided to try Europe.

Muller was eager to stay involved in the socialist movement, and Germany seemed promising. In 1932 he moved to Berlin to work with Timofeef-Ressovsky, a great Russian geneticist who had interests similar to his. The laboratory was located in the Institute for Brain Research, headed by Oscar Vogt. Muller arrived there at the worst possible time, however, for in a few months Hitler became chancellor. Regina Fischer, Muller's secretary, was Jewish and having a hard time, so she moved to Russia where she later worked for Muller again. She was to become the mother of chess prodigy, Bobby Fischer. Vogt refused to fire Jews, and Muller witnessed break-ins, both at the Institute and at Vogt's home, where equipment and furniture were destroyed and people were injured.

Muller clearly couldn't stay in Germany. Still disillusioned with America and in trouble in Texas, he accepted an invitation to direct a genetics institute in Leningrad. The position was offered him by the great plant geneticist, Nikolai Vavilov. A year later the Leningrad laboratory was moved to Moscow.

This was one of the most productive periods in Muller's life. He had a large, talented, devoted staff. The giant chromosomes of the salivary glands of *Drosophila* larvae had recently been discovered, and the group exploited this powerful breakthrough. But soon the Stalin reign of terror began to be felt. Genetics came under the influence of Trofim Lysenko, who espoused a particularly naive, Lamarckian view of heredity. His rash promises of increased crop yields caught Stalin's attention, and he soon became the dominant figure in Soviet genetics. Vavilov, the man who had brought Muller to Russia, was later imprisoned and died.

As Lysenko's power grew, Muller engaged in public debate with him. But it was hard to go against Lysenko's glittering promises, and more important, Stalin's backing made criticism of him dangerous. Soon Muller's associates began to disappear. Those who were able to remain did so "in inverse proportion to their honor," to use Muller's

words. His two former associates at Texas were among the first to be executed. Muller finally took a leave of absence to join the International Brigade in Spain in the fight against Franco. He thought that by leaving Russia in this way he would not appear to be disloyal to the regime, and he could perhaps protect his surviving friends. His particular research project was the storage of cadaver blood for use in transfusions. The blood program eventually fell apart because of bickering in the competing administrative units, a phenomenon not unheard of in other leftist circles.

After several unsuccessful attempts to find a job, Muller finally obtained a temporary position in 1937 at the Genetics Institute at the University of Edinburgh. The main handicap there was a dearth of technicians and of central heating; he never learned to do as his assistants did, work with gloves on. He had a close colleague in Charlotte Auerbach, a German refugee, later to produce mutations with chemicals. During this period, Muller met another refugee, Dorothea Kantorowicz. Her father, a distinguished Jewish surgeon, had been sent to a concentration camp, but was released through the intervention of Prince Carl of Sweden, who at the time was head of the International Red Cross. The family had moved to Turkey, and Thea somehow ended up in Edinburgh to become the second Mrs. Muller.

Muller seemed fated to be in the wrong place; when World War II erupted he began looking for ways to get back to the United States. He obtained a temporary post at Amherst College, but they had no position for him when the war was over. He tried to find a job, but without success, possibly for political reasons. Some thought him a communist for having been to Russia; to others he was a fascist for not supporting Russia when he returned. He wryly remarked that at least they could not both be true. There was possibly an additional reason: he was known to have a "difficult" personality. I well remember how incensed this made me at the time. Here was a man in his fifties, arguably the world's greatest geneticist, with no permanent job.

Finally, in 1945 things changed. Frank Hanson and Warren Weaver of the Rockefeller Foundation prevailed on Fernandus Payne, head of the Zoology Department at Indiana University, to take Muller on. Payne himself was a

Drosophila worker and had once worked with Morgan. He wasn't bothered by Muller's leftist background, his reputation as a poor undergraduate teacher, or his personality. He said he already had several prima donnas on the staff and one more wouldn't make any difference. Furthermore, Muller was very good with graduate students and Payne knew of Muller's path-breaking research. At last, at age fifty-five, Muller had a university position, research funds, assistants, and graduate students. The Nobel Prize came the next year.

Needless to say, Texas was not the best place to be preaching communism in the 1930s.

Muller continued at Indiana University until his retirement in 1964. He then spent a year in California and one at Wisconsin. Unfortunately, during the time he was in Madison his heart was failing. He wasn't the old Muller; the old energy and the hair-trigger mind were gone. Yet, he taught his famous course in evolution, although he had to be brought to the classroom door and an oxygen supply was kept in readiness. He died in 1967, shortly after returning to Bloomington.

My Acquaintance with Muller

I entered graduate school at the University of Texas in 1937, hoping to study with Muller. I knew that he had gone to Russia, but thought he would return. My acquaintance with him started a few years later when he was at Amherst. At the time I was teaching at Dartmouth, not far away, and Muller invited me to give a seminar. The visit was one of the most memorable events in my life. It was my first acquaintance with the Muller mind. I was so excited that I lay awake all night with sheer intellectual excitement, the only time that has ever happened. I remember receiving a \$5 or \$10 bill for my semi-

nar, and losing it on the way home. It may have been Freudian; I felt guilty taking any money when I had received so much intellectual stimulation.

During the war Charlotte Auerbach, still in Edinburgh, had discovered that mustard gas produced mutations. On one of my visits to Amherst, Muller asked me if I had heard of Auerbach's work, obviously wanting to talk about it. I said no, expecting him to explain it to me. Instead, he changed the subject. I learned after the war why he didn't feel he could say anything; mustard was a war gas, and any research involving it was a military secret. I have wondered many times how Muller knew about Charlotte Auerbach's results, since his leftist background would make it unlikely for him to have clearance for any military secrets.

I had the chance to visit Auerbach in Edinburgh in 1988. She said that she had written Muller, saying that an experiment he had thought not worth trying had worked. I saw her letters in the library at the University of Indiana and they conformed scrupulously to secrecy requirements. They gave all the necessary information for him to understand the experiments, but the chemical substance was never mentioned. Yet, one might have guessed from this statement: "Unfortunately, I had not been warned sufficiently of the danger, and as I seem to be exceptionally susceptible, I was punished with an allergic rash on both hands, which was very unpleasant and lasted many weeks. I started to do the mice too soon before the skin was properly hardened, and now I am going through life with several septic fingers which have to be dressed every day." A few months later: "Robson was right after all with his hunch about the substance. I got heaps of [mutations]." (Robson's hunch was that mustard gas might be mutagenic because of the similarity of mustard and x-ray injuries, as Auerbach had learned so painfully.) On October 1, 1946, Auerbach again wrote: "The ban has been lifted at last and you can speak freely about Robson's and my work." At the time of my visits at Amherst, Muller knew all this but did not feel that he should discuss them.

The Amherst period was the beginning of an acquaintance with Muller that lasted throughout his life. He was responsible for getting me on a National Academy of Sciences committee on the biological effects of atomic radiation. We collaborated on a paper on

analysis of human inbreeding data. I spent a semester as a visiting teacher in Indiana. Muller's daughter, Helen, was a student at the University of Wisconsin—she was in my class—and her parents visited her several times. And, of course, I saw a great deal of Muller during the year he lived in Madison.

Muller, the Scientist

This is not the place for a lengthy review of Muller's scientific work, most of which is highly technical. His Nobel Prize-winning discovery of artificial production of mutations is only a small part. His great strength was seeing far beyond the immediate consequences of any experiment or observation. No one equalled him in seeing connections between seemingly unrelated facts. For him there was hardly ever an uninteresting experiment or observation; he would see something in it, usually something that the author had not thought of. He was also skillful in devising new experimental methods. Above all, he asked deep, important questions and thought of ways to approach them. All else in his life pales beside his great scientific accomplishments.

Muller, the Crusader

Muller, after his early disappointments in communism, had two great issues and he missed no opportunity to push them.

The first was radiation dangers. In his very first paper announcing the mutagenic effects of x-rays he warned of the possibility of harmful mutations from indiscriminate use of radiation. He never stopped this crusade, and the rigorous radiation standards now in effect probably owe more to Muller than to any other person. I believe he (and others) overdid it, with the result that the general public now has what I regard as an irrational fear of low level radiation relative to other greater risks.

The second cause, one that started in his undergraduate days, was eugenics. Muller was very critical of the wrong-headedness of the American eugenics movement. He argued that in a society with such environmental inequalities as existed in the United States, a fair genetic assessment was impossible. His paper at a eugenics congress in 1932, entitled "The dominance of economics

over eugenics," was a mortal blow to the already weakened American eugenics movement. But he still believed a scientific eugenics to be possible. It was one of his hopes for Russia that social inequities would be minimized, making genetic assessment more realistic. He even hoped to influence Stalin.

Muller's objection to the early eugenics was its simplistic genetic assumptions, its association with racism and class differences, its advocacy of compulsion, and its emphasis on negative aspects. He was never content with the idea that the sole aim of eugenics is to decrease the incidence of genetic impairment. He hoped for a better human species. He referred to *Homo sapiens* as "hastily made-over apes" and rejected the assumption that present-day mankind is as good as it could be. He envisaged a population in which the average person could have the joys of an easy understanding of relativity, the late Beethoven quartets, and the poetry of Rilke. He saw no reason why the future should not bring high intelligence, artistic appreciation, good health, and cheerful, cooperative disposition to almost everyone.

Muller's suggested means was artificial insemination. He recognized the great potential for molecular genetics, but he didn't want this future possibility to deter the present generation from getting on, at least in a small way, with his program. I think that even he would have been surprised at how powerful molecular techniques have become. He didn't like the existing practice of using medical and graduate students as the primary source of sperm donors; he preferred that sperm be stored and not used until the person was dead. In this way the lifetime accomplishment could be assessed, there would be no possibility of self aggrandizement, and one could guard against genetic defects of old age. He rejected "the stultifying assumption" that people would have to be "coerced rather than inspired" to participate in this form of human betterment.

Needless to say, Muller's program was greeted with opposition, and I suspect even more annoying to him, with indifference. Few shared the view that people would behave as idealistically as he expected, and I don't think he ever considered this aspect realistically. Muller's crusade against radiation was too successful; his crusade for eugenics, a total failure.

Muller, the Humanist

Muller hoped for a rational basis for a value system, and found what he wanted in the Humanist Society. If Muller was involved in anything, he was actively involved. He gave talks. He served on committees. He drafted its constitution. He advocated resolutions favoring birth control and urging drug addiction be treated as a sickness not a crime. I suspect that, were he still alive, he would be advocating treatment and decriminalization as preferable to drug-related crime.

I played a small role in Muller's Humanist experience. In 1963 he was named Humanist of the Year and recommended me as the person to deliver the citation. Much to my delight, I found his letter recently. Referring to me, Muller said, "Although his parents were Quakers his sympathies are with us." Even a Quaker background was not a hopeless impediment.

In reading my citation, I said: "If it were possible to send a man to Mars and bring him back safely and quickly, my candidate would be H. J. Muller. For one thing, his spirit of adventure and scientific curiosity are such that I think he would enjoy the trip. But more important, he would have more interesting, exciting, and scientifically important observations to report than anyone I can think of."

I could see him beaming as I read it.

This is a shortened and edited version of a paper presented at the Madison Literary Club on September 11, 1989.

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THE HOPS ERA: Wisconsin's Agricultural Gold Rush

By Laura Paine

The development of agriculture in Wisconsin was, as in other states, characterized by a gradual transition from experimentation with many different crops to a concentration on a few. But, for a brief period in the 1860s, Wisconsin farmers allowed themselves to be swept up by an agricultural fad and gambled in a big and disastrous way on the culture of hops. They took the opportunities provided by hops cultivation—a minor cash crop since early settlement days—and built the Wisconsin hops crop into the largest in the nation in a matter of a few years. They began growing hops “with almost unbounded zeal,” in the words of a *Milwaukee Sentinel* report of June 29, 1867. In less than a decade, hops production in Wisconsin increased nearly one hundredfold. For a time, as production increased so did the price, and some hops growers made great profits. With much encouragement, more and more hopyards were planted, and hops-growing was touted as a sure path to prosperity. And indeed it appeared that wealth could be gained simply by planting a few acres. But the prosperity was to be short-lived, for as quickly as favorable market conditions arose, the economic climate changed, and the state's record crop came at the worst possible time. In 1868, production far exceeded demand, and with the market flooded, prices dropped and many farmers sustained huge losses. Fortunes were made and lost in quick succession. And nearly as quickly as the hopyards sprang up across the state, they disappeared beneath the plow.

This craze had far-reaching economic effects; more than five years passed before hops prices in the world market stabilized after the crash. Growers in this state and elsewhere around the world were affected, but in



Hops pickers, probably on the farm of Knudt Heindal, Town of Deerfield. Photo by Andrew Dahl.

Wisconsin there was a positive result of the economic turmoil. The hops craze resulted in an infusion of money into the agricultural community at a rate much higher than at any previous time. Buildings were upgraded and equip-

ment was purchased, and although some improvements were subsequently lost, those which were retained contributed to the overall development of the strong agricultural base that Wisconsin enjoys today.



Milwaukee area hops pickers. Photo by J. Robert Taylor.

About Hops

Hops have been cultivated at least since Roman times, and although now associated with beermaking, this is not the only use of the plant, nor the earliest. The hops plant, *Humulus lupulus*, has been grown for centuries as a medicinal herb. A member of the *Cannabis* family, hops contain the chemical lupulone, which is a mild sedative, similar to its only relative, *Cannabis sativa*. Herbals recommended filling a pillow with the flowers to induce sleep. Other uses included making a decoction of the root to cause the patient to sweat, once a popular treatment for many illnesses. In addition, the stalks and leaves of the hop plant yield a yellow dye. These uses long preceded the use of hops in brewing beer.

Both beermaking and hops cultivation existed long before the two were brought together. Not until the ninth or tenth century did European brewers begin adding hops to their beers. Before this time, beers were flavored with bitter herbs such as alehoof and alecoast. By adding hops in place of these herbs, brewers not only provided flavoring, but lengthened the product's storage

life. The use of hops represented a great advancement in beermaking and was adopted by all but the English, who clung to the use of bitter herbs until the sixteenth century. Their traditional ales, although made very differently today, are a uniquely British beverage.

The female flower cones of the hops plant are used in beermaking. The acids in them provide the bitter flavor of the beer; the oils provide the aroma. These occur in varying quantities in the cones depending on several factors. There are many cultivars, and the ratios of these components differ from one to another. In addition, the quantity of the hops is influenced by climatic and soil conditions as well as by how they are handled during harvesting and drying.

For centuries, the highest quality hops have been raised in Bavaria. Bavarian hops were held up as a standard of excellence in nineteenth-century agricultural journals; they are still a symbol of quality beer today. At the height of the hops craze in Wisconsin, the *Baraboo Republic* (September 4, 1967) claimed that some growers were producing hops "equalling the famed Ba-

varian hops" in quality. Although Bavarian hop growers were emulated, the hops-growing tradition in America seems to have its roots in England. English settlers in New England first grew hops as a cash crop in the eighteenth century. Gradually Vermont and New York became top producers, with the latter gaining prominence and producing a large share of the nation's crop into the twentieth century. Several successive years of failed New York hops crops helped set the stage for the hops craze that swept Wisconsin in the 1860s.

Background

Settlement of Wisconsin began on a large scale in the 1830s. Early farming efforts were, by necessity, of a subsistence nature, but as the state became more settled, growing cash crops became more common. As in many newly opened territories, Wisconsin's first major cash crop was wheat. The fresh fertile ground of the Midwest and the plains was well suited to wheat production, and the crop grew well for a time. Wheat production in Wisconsin increased from the 1840s until it

peaked in the early 1860s, and for a brief period the state stood second in the nation in wheat production. "The Golden Harvest of 1860" was a bumper crop of 29,000,000 bushels, nearly twice as large as any previous crop, and the price was high, at nearly a dollar a bushel. In the next few years the crop declined. By mid-decade a combination of economic conditions, decreasing soil fertility, and the ravages of disease and pests caused a sharp decline in the wheat crop and in its profitability. By 1865, the state wheat crop was reduced to twenty percent of its 1860 level. As described in the *Transactions of the State Agricultural Society* (v. 9, 1870), "the chinch bug committed such ravages as greatly to diminish, and in some cases almost completely destroy, the crop."

Wisconsin farmers searched for profitable alternatives to wheat, and agricultural experts encouraged diversification. Experimental crops included flax, sorghum, corn, cranberries, tobacco, and of course, hops. Several of these were and have remained successful on a small scale in the state. Perhaps, if Wisconsin farmers had grown hops in a more cautious way, Wisconsin would still be a hops-producing state today.

The craze

We do not know when hops were first grown in Wisconsin, but the roots were probably brought by early pioneers and grown in the garden as a medicinal herb. As an income-producing crop, however, hopyards began appearing in the 1840s in small numbers. Several early growers have been documented, the earliest being James Weaver who emigrated to this country in 1830 from England. He settled in Waukesha County in 1837 and planted a hopyard of several acres. Over the years, other English immigrants settled in this area, and although the county was never a major producer of hops, this was an important source of income for these people during the mid-nineteenth century.

In addition, several Waukesha County Englishmen became distinguished hops dealers, developing profitable businesses buying the crops and delivering them to both local and distant markets for sale. One of the most successful companies was R. Weaver and Brothers, one of the largest dealers in agricultural products of the time.

Another account of early hops growing involves a Hungarian who settled in what is now Sauk County in the early 1840s. Count Agostin Haraszthy is said to have founded the village of Sauk City (for a brief time named for him) and planted the first hopyard in the area in 1843. The count, after a few years, moved on to California, but he left behind the seeds of the hops craze; for it was in Sauk County that the fervor for hops growing reached its highest level.

By the 1850s, the cultivation of hops, in the words of a *Milwaukee Sentinel* writer, "became . . . an extensive and important branch of agricultural industry." The newspaper reported high yields and large profits. Hops were said to be a "safe, paying, and reliable crop." (November 3, 1854) However, even in these early stages, the fickle nature of the hops market was noted, and a few warnings were issued. The factor responsible for both the boom

and bust in the market was foretold in simple terms in an April 6, 1852 article in the *Milwaukee Sentinel*: The profit depended "upon the demand, which is very fluctuating."

Beginning in the early 1860s, several factors contributed to a steep rise in hops growing in the state. The decrease in the profitability of wheat production added to the momentum toward raising hops. The state's growing brewing industry assured producers of a local market for their crop; four-fifths of the counties of Wisconsin had at least one brewery. A series of poor harvests in other hops-growing regions of the world ensured a market for the crop abroad.

Newspaper and magazine articles offered encouragement with examples of lucrative profits. A *Milwaukee Sentinel* article of December 7, 1865 indicated that on a per-acre basis a farmer could expect to make \$250 to \$500 per acre on

HOPS ARE KING!

Wherever raised in the North-West.

JUST PUBLISHED—A Treatise giving Plain Directions and the Practical Details, from the selection and Preparation of the Soil and Setting and Cultivation of the Plants, to Picking, Drying, Pressing and Marketing the Crop, as practiced in Sauk County, Wisconsin. Every Hop Grower and Farmer in the North-West should have one of these Pamphlets. By D. B. & E. O. RUDD, Practical Hop Growers of eight years' experience in said County.

Enclose Fifty Cents to GEORGE B. BURROWS, No. 100 State Street, Chicago, and he will send by return mail (post paid) a copy of this valuable work. Ten copies to one address, \$4.00; twenty copies to one address, \$7.50.

A HOP YARD

— IS —

More Profitable than a Gold Mine.

The Hop Growers of Wisconsin have averaged for the past two years from \$700.00 to \$800.00 profit per acre.

Sauk County (Wis.) English Cluster Hop Roots for sale by

Geo. B. Burrows,
100 State Street, Chicago.

hops; whereas planting that acre in wheat would gain the farmer only \$100. In a widely distributed pamphlet entitled "Statement about a Sauk County Hopyard of Four Acres," the profits over two years were given as \$12,341.00. The prospect of such easily gained wealth tempted many farmers, experienced and amateur alike. They had, of course, varying results depending not only on the marketplace, but also on their agricultural expertise. Hops growing was not simple, but the complexities of its culture were often downplayed in reports and articles.

Hops culture

In 1868, two brothers from Reedsburg, Wisconsin published a sixteen-page treatise on hops culture. As the foremost growers of hops in Sauk County, the Rudd brothers decided to share with the other farmers their knowledge. Entitled "The Cultivation of Hops and Their Preparation For Market As Practiced in Sauk County, Wisconsin," the pamphlet gave detailed in-

Huge feasts were prepared and eaten, and in the evening workers gathered around a bonfire for storytelling and dancing.

structions in all phases of the process, from tying the vines to poles using the ravelings of an old sock to constructing the most efficient hops kiln. The pamphlet, however, came too late for many Wisconsin growers who, by the end of the 1868 season, had sustained huge losses and who plowed up their hopyards in succeeding years.

The complexities of hops growing spelled failure for some inexperienced farmers. Hops is a labor-intensive crop which demands more knowledge than the average field crop. The hop plant is perennial, and a well-established yard can be expected to produce a crop for fifteen to twenty years. It is slow to mature, producing no crop for two years after the field is planted. It was suggested that the plants be started from roots in hills with eight feet between hills and 680 hills per acre. Hops are a vining plant that must be trained to a support and at the time, fifteen-



Typical gathering, probably near Madison. Note hops poles in the background. Photo by Andrew Dahl.

foot to twenty-foot poles were used to support the twenty-five-foot vines. The production of these poles became an industry in itself since a minimum of 680 poles was needed for each acre of hops planted.

The female flower cone has the economic value. Female and male flowers are borne on separate plants, and usually only one male plant is needed for every eight female plants to influence the production of fruit (the cones) on the female plant. Somewhat in jest the *Baraboo Republic* of September 12, 1886 reported that a pile of male hop roots was stolen from a local farm (there being no visible difference between the male and female), and an utterly worthless two-acre hopyard was subsequently planted nearby. The thief received his just deserts. To the reader today, the article indicates how tricky

the culture of hops could be for the novice.

After the hopyard had been properly prepared with the correct ratio of male to female plants, the grower cultivated the field and, in the years before the hops matured, could interplant an annual crop of corn or cabbage between the hills. Finally in the third year, the first harvest could be made—a major undertaking and the most labor-intensive part of the process. This aspect of hops culture affected the social life of the 1860s. In September, at hops-picking time, an army of men and women descended on the hopyard to harvest the crop. Most actual picking was done by women and children, with the men acting as "box-tenders," doing the heavy work of cutting down the vines and removing the filled boxes of cones. Workers were paid according to the

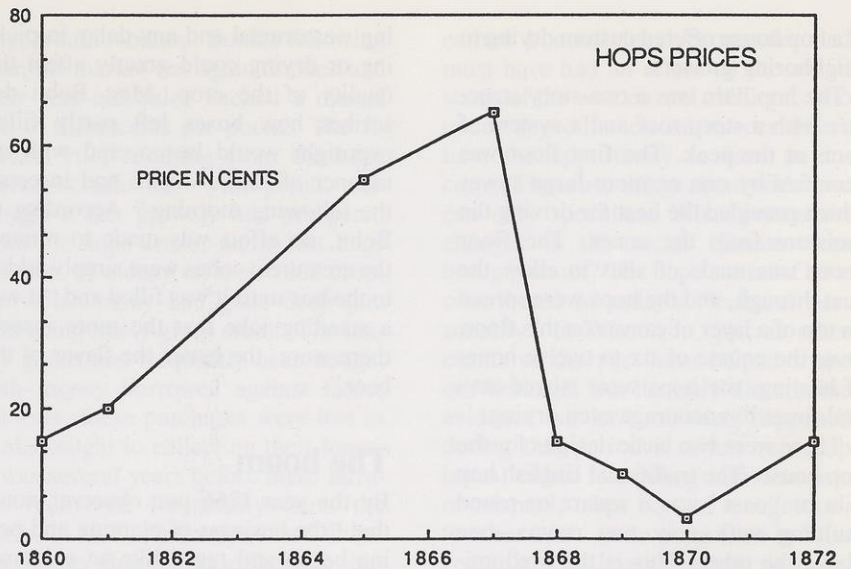
amount they picked. An average wage was \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day, a good wage for women and children whose employment opportunities were limited. Often groups of pickers would travel from farm to farm to help with the harvests, much the way wheat threshing was done. Housing and meals were often provided and good, bountiful meals insured that hop pickers would return the following year.

It is estimated that the 1868 harvest involved 70,000 women and children. In Sauk County, where 30,000 workers were employed, 20,000 traveled into the area from other parts of the state. Newspapers recounted the migration of workers by wagon and train across the state.

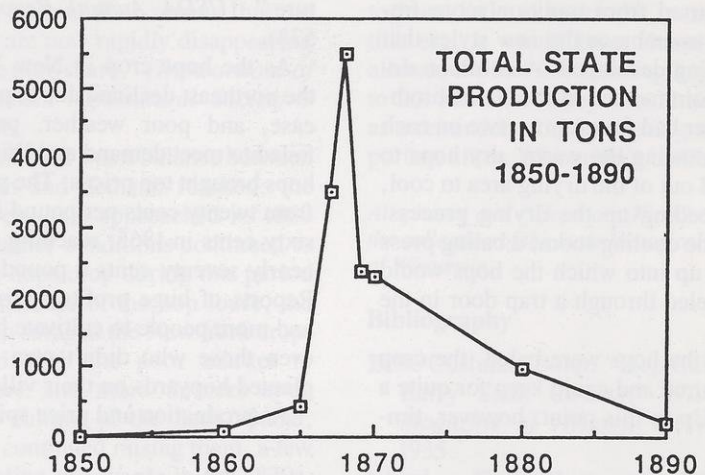
In 1935, Belle Cushman Bohn recorded her childhood memories of the hops harvest in an article for the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Vol. 18, 4, June 1935, 390-391). She recalls a festive atmosphere—the work in the hop-yards accompanied by singing, flirting, and practical joking. Huge feasts were prepared and eaten, and in the evening workers gathered around a bonfire for story-telling and dancing. One successful Sauk County hop grower planned a lavish new house complete with a thirty-six-foot ballroom for dances during the hop harvest.

As the growers' wealth increased, the workers grew discontented with working conditions and wages. In some areas, they organized to make demands and gained the support of local newspaper editors and other prominent people. In a *Milwaukee Sentinel* editorial (September 4, 1866), growers were reminded of their dependence on feminine employees and recommended that "strong inducements . . . [be] . . . held out, by giving a price equal to that given male laborers." There is no indication that this revolutionary idea was adopted. Instead, the worker's wage was commonly tied to the price per pound on the market. The hop cones were picked into boxes of a standard size; three feet by two feet by eighteen inches high, and workers were paid by the box.

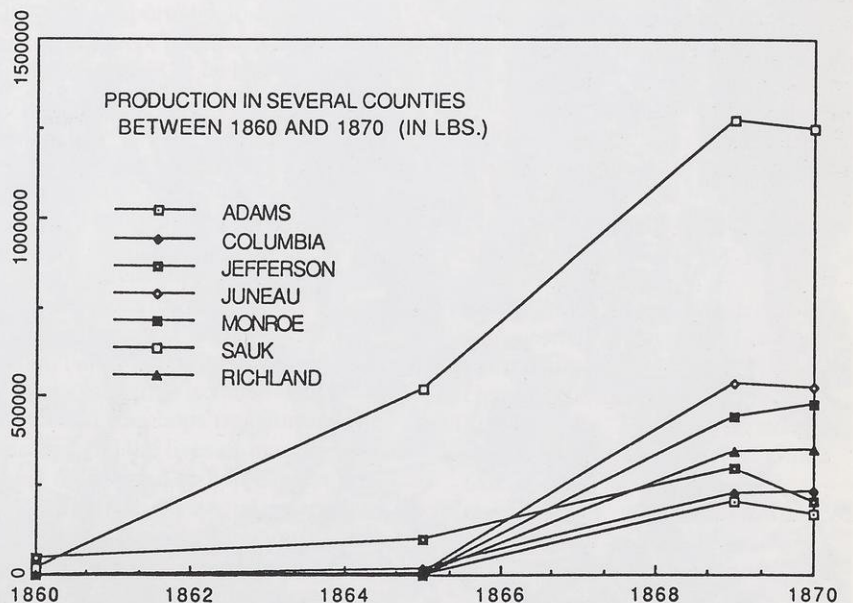
As the hop cones were picked, they had to be dried. The quality, and therefore price, depended on preserving the hop cones properly; they tended to heat and ferment when packed together. For drying the crop, a hop kiln was needed, a major investment only a few wealthy growers could afford. Often, the owner



Data for this graph were taken from the *Transactions of the Wisconsin Agricultural Society, 1850-1872*.



Data for this graph were taken from Merk, Frederick *Economic history of Wisconsin During the Civil War Era*.



Data for this graph were taken from the *Annual Report of the Secretary of State, 1860-1870*.

of a hop house offered custom drying to neighboring growers.

The hop barn was a two-story structure with a steep roof and a system of vents at the peak. The first floor was occupied by one or more large stoves which provided the heat for driving the moisture from the cones. The floor above was made of slats to allow the heat through, and the hops were spread on top of a layer of canvas on this floor. Over the course of six to twelve hours of heating, the hops were stirred several times to encourage even drying.

There were two basic designs for the hop house. The traditional English hop kiln or "oast" was a square or round building with only two rooms—one above the other. This is the predominant type found in the Waukesha County area where many English immigrants settled. In other areas, growers departed from tradition more frequently to embrace the new styles that were being developed. A common design recommended in the Rudd brothers' paper had four rooms, two on each floor, allowing the warm, dry hops to be raked out of the drying area to cool, thus speeding up the drying process. Below the cooling room, a baling press was set up into which the hops would be funneled through a trap door in the floor.

Once the hops were baled, the crop was secured and could keep for quite a while. Up to this point, however, tim-

ing was crucial and any delay in picking or drying could greatly affect the quality of the crop. Mrs. Bohn describes how boxes left partly filled overnight would be covered with all manner of "lice, worms and insects" the following morning." According to Bohn, no effort was made to remove the creatures; cones were simply added to the box until it was filled and "it was a standing joke that the more insects there were, the better the flavor of the beer."

The boom

By the year 1866 one observer noted that "the business of planting and picking began and raged like an epidemic . . . [and] . . . the next year the excitement extended over the whole state, completely revolutionizing its agriculture." (*USDA Annual Report* 1869, 538)

As the hops crop in New York and the northeast declined due to pests, disease, and poor weather, production failed to meet demand and Wisconsin's hops brought top prices. The price rose from twenty cents per pound in 1861 to sixty cents in 1865, reaching a high of nearly seventy cents a pound in 1867. Reports of huge profits spurred more and more people to cultivate hops, and even those who didn't own farmland planted hopyards on their village lots.

As production and price spiraled up-

ward, an era of prosperity ensued. New houses were built and furnished with pianos and expensive furniture. Fine horses and fancy carriages were purchased. Investments in farm machinery were made and farm buildings were upgraded. Hops growers were, as a *Milwaukee Sentinel* reporter suggested, "making use of their rapidly incoming wealth to build up homes such as a few years ago farmers would hardly have thought of." (August 27, 1866)

The *Transactions of the State Agricultural Society* for 1868 noted that in many cases, the first crop taken "paid for the land and all the improvements; leaving subsequent crops a clear profit." (8, 37) Even as the market approached the point of collapse, many saw no risk involved, only a bountiful income. Wisconsinites scrambled to plant their hopyards and get in on the profits. Production increased from 829,377 pounds in 1865 to seven million pounds in 1867 to a peak of eleven million pounds in 1868. During the years 1867 and 1868, fully seventy-five percent of the country's hops were produced in Wisconsin. Within the state, Sauk County accounted for a quarter of the crop, producing more than twice as much as any other county. Sauk County's 1868 crop value was estimated at 1.5 million dollars. Sauk County was both the center for hops growing and the hub of marketing activities in the state. The village of Kilbourn (known



Hops field at harvest time. Photo by Andrew Dahl.

today as Wisconsin Dells) claimed to be the largest hops market in the world during the last half of the 1860s. Bales were brought there from much of the state to be shipped by rail to Chicago and from there to the east coast, some being exported overseas. There was a well-established trade network involving not only the settled areas of the United States, but also European markets. For this reason, the crash of the hops market in Wisconsin had far-reaching effects.

The crash

As more hopyards were planted, a few analysts warned of the inevitable result of the trend. In a May 13, 1867 article, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* condemned the crazed farmers of the state and those reporters who published "estimates of costs of raising hops so erroneous that they are calculated to seriously mislead the uninformed." They further warned that the current crop was "nearly equal to the home market and the next one . . . [was] . . . sure to overstock it." Wisconsin farmers had probably sealed their fate two years earlier, because as hundreds of acres of maturing hops came into production in 1868, the crop in the state swelled to its highest level ever. The 1868 crop of eleven million pounds was a third larger than that of the previous year and one hundred times greater than the crop of only eight years earlier. At the same time, the New York hopyards produced their first good crop since early in the decade. With the market flooded, the price quickly fell from the high of seventy cents the year before to twenty-five cents early in the 1868 season. Weather conditions in many parts of the state interfered with the harvest: heavy rains hampered efforts in some areas and early frosts decreased yields in others. While the number of producers increased across the state, the average yield declined from 1400 pounds per acre to 800.

As the price dropped during the harvest season, pickers whose wages were tied to the price per pound lost interest in the work, and even growers with crops not affected by other factors had to contend with a labor shortage.

By the end of the season, the price had dropped as low as ten cents per pound, far below the cost of production. Because they had no hope of covering their costs that year, some growers held on to their crops, hoping the

price would rebound. But the following year, the market was again flooded and their year-old bales fetched a dismal two to three cents per pound. The financial ruin resulting from the hops market crash was widespread. Although a few growers had prospered from the hops craze, many lost huge amounts of money on their 1868 crop, for which many had gone deep into debt using freely given credit. The luxury goods had frequently been bought with money borrowed against future harvests; these purchases were lost as banks sought to collect on their loans. It was several years before these farmers recovered financially from the crash. In 1870, an anonymous Columbia County observer described the situation like this: "During the late hop mania, many farmers and many men who were not farmers tried their hands at raising hops to their sorrow, but the hopyards are now rapidly disappearing before the plowshare." (*Transactions of the Wisconsin Agricultural Society* 9 [1870] 386)

Not until 1872 was a balance between production and demand reached; the price never again approached its 1867 level. Weather conditions continued to affect the hops crop during this period and the increase of the hop louse, the pest which ravaged the New York crop, combined with the poor market to drive more and more farmers away from the culture of the hops. Some, however, continued raising them, a few even planting new yards in the 1870s. One such gambler was Knudt Heimdal, a Deerfield farmer who set out a yard in 1874 and reportedly lost money on every crop except his first. He was still raising hops in 1879, when photographer Andreas Dahl captured his harvest festivities on film. In general, though, Wisconsin farming shifted away from hops growing and the number of hopyards dwindled into the early part of the twentieth century.

The tall poles draped with masses of leaves and vines have long since disappeared, with only a few of the distinctive hop barns standing to remind us of the hops craze in Wisconsin. But for a brief period, the hops transformed the landscape and the lives of many people around the state. The hop harvest provided a vehicle for social interaction that had not existed previously and ceased to exist very soon after the great harvests of 1867 and 1868. Enormous numbers of people gathered to work and play together. The money they

earned boosted local economies and must have had an effect on the social status of the women and children, who under any other circumstances didn't have the opportunity to earn an income. These are things about which we can only speculate. What permanent changes in the social climate were brought about? The hops era must have contributed to today's "cultural personality" in Wisconsin, just as other events of the past have helped shape our heritage. But the only discernable evidence we have of what happened during this period is a few rare hop barns, either fast falling into disrepair or adapted, often beyond recognition, to other uses. At no other time in Wisconsin's past has an event so completely transformed the economic and social life of its people, then completely disappeared from the landscape to leave little to spark the memory of this era. It would be a shame if we allowed the last few standing hop barns to fall into ruin. They should be saved as a reminder of an interesting and important era in Wisconsin's history.

All photos and "Hops are King" ad from the collection of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

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101

Lessons in a brave
world, that midwestern
extension, my mother born
just before the end
of the year. A quick
study, how she
left the provincial
assignments of a school
girl's locker, the combination
of high walls and flat
Wisconsin passages.
What brought me
to that state was the statue
frozen in the middle
of Lake Mendota, Liberty
still holding her head
above water, and my mother
saying cool, bright, sharp,
as though the students
finally shared minds
of winter. How I
went back in different
clothes, a forty-year
span opening the same
books, lecturing the same
eager eyes, clearing
away all the tracks
of lineage: skirts
in the wind. How I went
back, face to the ice
in the air, to study
my mother in the center
of pearls, that gray
picture hanging
on a sorority wall.

Justi Echeles

Prairie Longing

Oak sprouts into the wind, and the river grows
with timothy; in May the cardinal
whistles the moon up like a sunflower,
and everywhere a worm can turn the earth,
it does: life rolls in the grass, and violets
rise by a rusted car as well as a willow,
where the singular blood of a breeze
blows in my own, where signpost meets memory
and home begins: Friends startle the cold
out of the winter, friends walk in the steps of the deer;
Father keeps his jeans near his tuxedo,
Mother darns a sock or a symphony.
I could touch the land from root to horizon,
breathing in the sky, stretching the heart.

Victoria Ford

Northwoods Night

The dark
Is my black blanket
On a night with
No moon.

Clouds obscure the stars.
Sometimes from trees
Come little murmurs,
And the stirrings
Of birds in fitful dream.

Meanwhile, the creatures
Whose night is day
Move with canny stealth
Through the air,
Over the earth,
Measuring their targets.

Suddenly I'm awake. Too soon.
My eyes catch no light.
Reason is powerless.
My heart tells me
I have gone blind.

Willa Schmidt

That's for Indians

By Cal Lambert

"It's right on empty now. What's the next town?" My wife consulted the map of South Dakota, spread across her lap, as the five-year-old van continued to run smoothly.

"Kearney Springs, I think," Jill said, "but it's just a dot, too. Everything's probably closed."

It was at least 100 degrees outside, so hot the asphalt seemed soft and spongy. We were in the northwestern part of the state headed back east after vacationing in Yellowstone. We had left Interstate 90 at Spearfish early on Sunday morning and were seeing some new country and damn little civilization. We were about halfway between 90 and 94 where they cut across the state from east to west and cruised along somewhere near the Missouri River close to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

"I don't know why the hell I didn't fill it up in Spearfish, but we had over a quarter, and I thought it'd save time. Stupid!"

The oversized tank held thirty-three gallons when it was full, so we could go almost 350 miles, despite the guzzling of the big, eight-cylinder engine.

"It's going to be a hot walk," Jill said and smiled ruefully at me. She was the one who liked the roads off the main highways, liked to stop and take pictures of "America." If we had plenty of time, I would humor her. I grinned and patted her knee. She was worth it.

"The way this country looks, we'd better walk together."

We had passed through three towns about seven or eight miles apart since the needle had dropped into the deep red. Only one of them had a gas station still in business, and it wasn't open on Sunday. One of the towns didn't have any operating businesses at all that we could see, and another had only a broken-down, one-story cafe-bar with a few Indians sitting in its shade outside. Sioux, I thought.

"I suppose I should shut off the air conditioning," I said, "but we'd broil in here."

"Wait. Isn't that a water tower ahead?"

There weren't many hills, but we were on a slight rise that dropped down into a valley that held a few green trees.

"Yeah. We'd better stop whether there's a gas station or not. Maybe somebody can sell us some, unless the whole place is deserted."

We drove into the valley, and there was a weathered sign saying "Kearney Springs." A few yards further was a battered "B-siness Distr-ct" sign pointing off the road, into the few cottonwoods. I turned off onto a dusty gravel street. An old two-story building was on our right, worn to a grayish white by the sun and wind. Dark, glassless windows gaped like missing teeth. The door was boarded over, and the remnants of a curtain hung out of one side of an upstairs window, moving lazily in an almost-breeze.

"There's something," Jill said and pointed ahead.

Up a slight rise, past a few small residences, was a store, with a few pickups in front.

"Thank God, they've got a gas pump!" I said.

Grass in front of one of the houses, the only one that had paint on it, was secure behind a sturdy, high fence. No grass

in front of the store, nor gravel either, just dirt.

"Jack's Trading Post," I read aloud and stopped by the pump.

Hunkered down on their boot heels, three Indians sat smoking. They wore boots, denims, and dark plaid shirts. One of them had two braids of coal black hair running from under his hat halfway down the front of his shirt. Another leaned against the side of one of the battered pickups, rocked back and forth slowly, oblivious to his surroundings. His legs were further apart than natural, and he stared stolidly at the ground.

"Hi," I said, not too loud, as I got out of the van by the pump. One of the squatting Indians raised a hand, and another grunted. None of them looked young, but grizzled and worn. The three squatters were lean as whips, with faces of wrinkled leather, but the standee was fat, with a paunch hanging over his belt. His bottom shirt button was undone and his belly poked through.

I looked at the pump. Dammit, it's regular, I thought.

"I'll have to go inside," I told Jill. She nodded, tugged at the neck of her blouse and folded her arms across her breasts.

Inside I found a display room about twelve feet square. A counter ran along the back of it, opposite the aluminum screen door, and a white man stood behind it smiling, holding a fly swatter. On shelves behind him were cigarettes, tobacco, snuff, some pipes, a few wrist watches, and odds and ends. An old refrigerator hummed beside him. One wall had shelves with canned goods and the other held bottles of liquor, mostly half-pints of whiskey or pints of wine.

I looked to my left, and the wall by the door held some boxes of detergent, salt, flour, and a rack of belts and bolo ties.

Another skinny old Sioux was talking to "Jack."

"We used to camp right up there on the hill." He smiled and had his hands hooked into his back pockets, thumbs out. "We'd camp there for a week sometimes, listen to the grandfathers, do a little hunting, maybe a little dancing, sometimes maybe try to get in a different blanket. We'd come down here to trade."

Jack said, "A long time ago."

"I was a young buck then. We'd dance, maybe one guy would come down, buy some whiskey, come back up. We'd drink it and maybe howl a little. When that was gone, somebody else would go."

"Yeah," Jack said. "Lots of headaches."

The Indian smiled more, looked at me for the first time. He didn't have too many teeth, and one eye was cloudy. His clothes were grimy, faded, and old, and he had a bolo tie with a turquoise stone that must've been worth \$500. He had been drinking, but wasn't drunk. Jack raised an eyebrow at me, but I signaled I wasn't in any hurry.

"Yeah, a long time ago," the Indian said. He sighed and pointed at a half-pint of Ten High.

"Four dollars and fifty cents," Jack said, and the old Sioux dug in his jeans and came up with the money. He nodded at me and went out, already breaking the seal on the

Ten High, his boot heels slow and solid on the board floor.

"What can I do for you?" Jack said.

"I'm about out of gas. Have you got any unleaded around?"

"Nope, just the regular. Which way are you going?"

"East."

"Hell, you're only fifteen minutes from gas."

"I don't think that's close enough. I've been riding on empty for thirty miles, and I think she's just about done."

"Well, I can sell you a few gallons, I guess."

A thought struck me. "Have you got one of those funnels that let you put regular into an unleaded tank?"

"Nah, don't need it. That pump'll fit anything. Just don't

say nothin'."

"Don't worry, I appreciate it. I'm just traveling through."

I went out and the old Sioux had joined the other three squatters. They slowly handed the bottle around, still in its paper bag. I started the pump and stuck the nozzle into the van's tank. It fit fine. As it started to run in, I checked the price on the tank and then looked again. Cripes, it was \$4.80 a gallon! Better just put in two or three gallons. I ran it up to \$15 and went in and handed Jack a twenty. He gave me back a ten and a five in change.

"What's this?" I asked and looked as dumb as I felt. "The pump said fifteen dollars."

"That's for Indians," he said and smiled again.



BOOK MARKS/WISCONSIN

WISCONSIN LITERARY TRAVEL GUIDE. Madison: Wisconsin Library Association, 1989. 64 pp. \$7.50

By Polly Athan

If you love Wisconsin and love books, you will love *Wisconsin Literary Travel Guide*. Designed to fit in the glove compartment of your car, the *Guide* attempts to highlight the diversity of Wisconsin places and authors by running through Wisconsin cities, A to Z, that have literary connections. Listings include an identification of the writer who once lived in that community and a brief description of his or her contribution. Some entries include an excerpt from a poem or other work; others locate a home or other site important to or associated with the writer.

As long as a writer lived in a particular community, the Wisconsin connection is established. Some writers, like Thorstein Veblen or Mark Schorer, were simply born in Wisconsin and left the state before their literary careers began (though the *Guide* doesn't always make this clear). These writers

are included in the *Guide* because the Wisconsin setting conceivably influenced and colored their creative lives.

The book is ideal for the Wisconsin enthusiast or for those with special interests in individual state writers. Isn't it nice to be able to visit a town where a favorite author once lived, even though it might have been several decades ago, and walk down the same street that he or she once did, or stop at an old pond that the writer once fished in? Absorbing the same "sense of place" that Wisconsin writers have absorbed is what this book is all about.

The *Guide* includes a few individuals not primarily known for their writing, such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Georgia O'Keeffe. A few libraries and one or two establishments dedicated to books and writing, such as Milwaukee's Woodland Pattern Book Center, are listed as well. Finally, the reader can learn the location of a few writers' burial sites and of a couple of monuments to writers. Did you know that the only monument in the United States honoring Johann von Goethe and Johann von Schiller, the eighteenth-century poets and philosophers who are

considered among Germany's greatest writers, is in Milwaukee? Another monument, this one to the Scottish poet Robert Burns, can also be found in Milwaukee.

The researchers and writers of the *Literary Travel Guide*, all associated with the Wisconsin Library Association, do not claim that the *Guide* is a complete listing of Wisconsin literary personalities. Still, I wondered why they chose not to include Roy Lukes and his books about the natural world of Door County, or such local writers as Barbara Vroman and Erna Olesan Xan. Marnie Wilkins, the author of the delightful children's natural history book *Long Ago Lake*, based upon her recollections of a 1930s childhood in northern Wisconsin, also deserved a spot in the *Guide*.

I did, however, learn the names of several new (to me) Wisconsin authors whose works I now intend to find, such as Craig Rice, the 1940s mystery writer from Fort Atkinson, and, out of sheer curiosity, the nineteenth-century Hazel Green geologist James Gates Percival, whose poetry is housed in the Yale Collection of American Literature.

The authors of *Wisconsin Literary Travel Guide* have compiled, in a very accessible form and with a number of appealing photographs and drawings, a useful guide to Wisconsin's literary connections. It is also a pleasure just to peruse this book.

Polly Athan is research coordinator at Pleasant Company in Middleton.

GERALD L. K. SMITH: MINISTER OF HATE by Glen Jeansonne. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. 283 pp. \$25.00.

By Jerrold C. Rodesch

Those who regard Wisconsin as a "progressive" state may find uncomfortable and aberrant the state's connections with political leaders and ideas on the far right. But Joseph R. McCarthy flourished here, the Posse Comitatus had its day, and George Wallace drew almost thirty-four percent of the votes in the 1964 Democratic presidential primary. Wisconsin was also technically the home of Douglas MacArthur. The association of his ambiguous political dreams with Wisconsin is tenuous, but the roots of a man who promoted MacArthur as a hero of "Christian Nationalism" went deep in this state.

Gerald L. K. Smith was born in Pardeeville in 1898, grew up on a farm in Richland County, and graduated from Viroqua High School. He went on to become, according to his biographer, a man of "bitter prejudice and perverted ideals," a "bigot" and a "hate-monger," and, according to John Morton Blum, "the most infamous American fascist."

Smith's paternal grandfather migrated to Columbia County from Virginia. He was a "country preacher," like Smith's father, who modeled for his son the fusion of primitive religious belief with Fourth of July patriotism that was to be the heart of Smith's public message. His father also embraced a political hero whose impact Smith recalled late in life: "My father was a great admirer of Robert La Follette. We were taught to admire his freedom from the status quo political thinking of the time." *La Follette's Weekly Magazine* was a political text for father and son.

Smith's career began in the ministry. After graduating from Valparaiso he

returned to Wisconsin to serve Christian churches in Soldiers Grove, Footville, and Beloit. He married Elna Sorenson of Janesville in 1922. A powerful speaker and energetic pastor, he moved on to churches in Illinois, Indiana, and, finally, Shreveport, Louisiana. There he became an ally of Huey Long, left the ministry, and started his political career as national organizer of Long's "Share Our Wealth Society."

Smith was, apparently, wholly convinced by Long's scheme to redistribute income, and he remained for the rest of his life devoted to the person of Huey Long. His efforts on behalf of the Share Our Wealth Society gave him national fame as a speaker. He was, Huey Long said, "next to me the greatest rabble rouser in the country." H.L. Mencken called Smith "the greatest rabble-rouser seen on earth since apostolic times." When Long was assassinated in 1935, Smith was at his side.

Smith left Louisiana to collaborate with Dr. Francis Townsend and Father Charles Coughlin in support of the presidential candidacy of William Lemke in 1936. It was an opportunistic move. Smith used their organizations and audiences to promote himself without ever fully accepting their programs. The campaign also gave him a chance to attack Franklin Roosevelt. Smith's hatred of Roosevelt was a major theme for much of the rest of his career. He accused Roosevelt of responsibility for Long's murder, a charge that seemed almost trivial in the midst of Smith's extravagant ranting against Roosevelt as an agent of communism and of international banking. Before the campaign was over, Smith established his own nationalist anti-communist organization. His extremism and arrogance alienated him from Coughlin and Townsend.

After attempts to establish himself in New York and Cleveland, Smith settled in Detroit, where he drew financial support from Henry Ford and other wealthy businessmen and political backing from isolationists like Senator Arthur Vandenberg. His "Committee of One Million" organized supporters who wanted to help "save America." While Smith overstated the extent of his relationship with Henry Ford, Ford did back Smith's crusade until the early 1940s and at first even touted him as a presidential possibility. Smith revered Ford and attributed his own growing anti-Semitism to the "insights" Ford provided.

In 1942 Smith ran for the Senate in the Michigan Republican primary, polling over 100,000 votes. It was the high point of a political career marked by quixotic bids for the presidency as an "America First" candidate in 1944 and a "Christian Nationalist" in 1948. His programs showed a deepening descent into racism and anti-Semitism. He urged deportation of blacks and Jewish Zionists and the concentration of remaining Jews in ghettos. His journal, *The Cross and the Flag*, became his chief means for raising money and disseminating his grotesque message. He claimed to influence elections and issues over the next decades, but his following was not large enough to have any apparent direct impact. He crusaded against the United Nations, the Warren court and sexual promiscuity. He espoused the leadership and causes of Joseph McCarthy, George Wallace, Strom Thurmond, and Barry Goldwater (but they wanted nothing to do with him). In the years before his death in 1976 Smith devoted himself to "sacred projects" in Arkansas, including the monumental statue, "Christ of the Ozarks," an Oberammergau-inspired play, and religious museums.

Glen Jeansonne worked for over fifteen years on this biography. He interviewed Smith and Smith's associates and had access to private papers. It is unlikely that any more thorough study of Smith will ever be attempted. It is some comfort that at this date it is hard to comprehend the nature or importance of Smith's appeal. Transcriptions from his speeches are sometimes comically incoherent. It is hard to grasp through this balanced and sober analysis the actual character and authority of a man whose leadership and historical influence depended so much on the immediate force of his personality and oratory. Jeansonne's contention that Smith attracted mostly people of limited education who were "rebels against urbanism, modernism, internationalism, and secular humanism" suggests that his appeal depended upon transitional conditions.

Jeansonne describes Smith's motives and career as "neurotic." His examination of Smith's personal background is full and careful. He accepts prudent limits for psychological speculation. He concludes that Smith's upbringing helps account for the extremes of guilt and paranoia that perverted Smith's abilities and energy. His career was almost wholly destructive. His extrem-

ism probably served to discredit most of the causes he supported, although that very extremism also functioned to widen the spectrum of American politics, making others on the right appear moderate in contrast to Smith.

We can learn a great deal from this thoughtful study of a strange and disturbing man. Jeansonne rejects Smith's views out of hand but does not doubt that he held them sincerely. The mark Smith left on history owed much to the accidents of his life and circumstances. Among those circumstances was the influence of La Follette progressivism which in moralistically rejecting established powers and celebrating embattled insurgency could, in stirring self-righteous anger, expose a dark side to the veneration of maverick politics and politicians.

Jerrold C. Rodesch, associate professor Humanistic Studies and History at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, is associate editor of Voyageur: Historical Review of Northeast Wisconsin.

THE BOOK OF MAMIE by Duff Brenna. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press. 1989. 338 pp. \$22.50.

By Faith B. Miracle

Who is Mamie? "She appeared one day out of another dimension, in a blaze of light, emerging from a crack in the universe . . . an immaculate inception from the crack of time." In more literal terms, she was a battered teenager, awesome in size (six-foot, three), with amazing physical strength, seemingly retarded but uncannily gifted, an idiot savant, an example of "evolution accelerated." She and her fifteen-year-old friend Christian (he tells the story) lead the reader through a remarkable, often unsettling, series of adventures in which they begin as babes in the woods (Brule country, in northern Wisconsin) and quickly become seasoned veterans of life's vicissitudes.

As much an allegory, morality play, and folk tale as it is a novel, there is a Bunyanesque (I refer to both John and Paul) tone about the book; there are frequent symbolic allusions. The reader is propelled along by the strong language skills and story-telling talents of the author through often wrenching incidents of cruelty, bullying, incest, and violent death. Through an incredible mix of personalities, many with

dislocated minds, human nature is revealed at its lowest levels of degradation, and one is grateful for small acts of kindness, signs of hope, and the generous infusions of wit and humor.

Mamie eventually learns a trade and displays her hidden gifts through the manipulation and guidance of a character symbolically called Shepard. The story climaxes in the small town of Temple with a bloody confrontation between the evangelicals and humanists, the "Rock of Ages" versus the "Rock of Reason," as the author puts it, during which the legendary Mamie stands apart, representing innocence. Christian (also mystically called Crystal), whose goal in life is to be like his father, "a man who could balance all forms of truth," looks on with both horror and forgiveness.

There is a triumphant, though somewhat grisly, finale with an irreverent but characteristically symbolic resurrection. What we have here is an energetic tale of abuse, revolt, friendship, patience, loss of innocence, tyranny, repentance, justice, redemption, and survival. It is not always easy for the reader to digest, but it is never boring.

The Book of Mamie is yet another in the recent string of first novels about rural life in the Midwest written by Wisconsin authors: the brooding *Book of Ruth* by Jane Hamilton (see March, 1990 Review); the whimsical *Farm West of Mars* by Justin Isherwood (see June, 1989 Review); and the gentle *Farm Under a Lake* by Martha Bergland, which we hope to review in a future issue. Each of these books has its own distinctive style and mood.

Author Duff Brenna, a former Wisconsin dairy farmer, now teaches at San Diego University. He received the 1988 Associated Writing Programs Novel Award for *The Book of Mamie* and the *Milwaukee Magazine* Fiction Award for his short story "Cristobell." While *Mamie* is not a book for everyone, the adventurous reader will be engaged by this often moving, always imaginative story of two young runaways—a study of the effects of trauma, resulting from abuse, on the development of a child—and will in all probability be haunted by their characters. Some readers may ask, as did the not-so-innocent character Phoebe Bumpus, reporter for the Temple newspaper, "Did I fall down a rabbit hole?"

Faith B. Miracle is managing editor of this publication and has contributed book reviews in the past.

WISCONSIN DOOR PENINSULA: A NATURAL HISTORY edited by John C. Palmquist. Appleton: Perin Press, 1989, 196 pp.

By Stanley A. Nichols

The stated goal of this book is to describe Door County's natural history to science teachers as well as those who are curious about nature and who appreciate acquiring a deeper understanding of the origin of the landscape. To this end, different authors wrote chapters on the geology, botany, birds, archeology, Indians, environmental history, and maintenance of natural resources in the county. Stimulating an understanding of the natural history of Door County is a laudable goal; this needs to be done for more areas of the state. With many natural assets and a large tourism industry, Door County is a logical place to start.

For a college-level earth-science teacher, the book achieves the first part of its goal. There are detailed descriptions of bedrock, Quaternary, glacial, and environmental geology of the peninsula. An appendix provides a technical account of the Late Wisconsinan and Holocene history of the Lake Michigan basin. My geologist colleagues tell me that the geology chapters were written by experts on Door County geology.

However, as a general natural history the book falls short of the mark. A reader who bought the book based on the title would be disappointed. More than half the book is devoted to geology at a technical level—well beyond the interest of a K-12 science student or the general public. Because different authors wrote different chapters, the flow of the book is disjointed. There is unnecessary repetition between chapters and potential confusion in figures that show the same information labeled differently. As a natural history, many sections are conspicuously absent, including discussions of demography, climate, soils, mammals, fish, coastal waters, inland lakes, and streams.

Dwarf lake iris, floating fens, and other interesting botanical features were described in Jim Zimmerman's chapter about resource maintenance, not in the chapter, "Botanical Primer," which reviewed general plant succession. Jim Zimmerman's approach should have been used in the botany chapter.

Roy Lukes, the recently retired naturalist at the Ridges Sanctuary, wrote the bird chapter—a basic description and check list of resident and visiting birds. I am sure Roy could tell me more interesting and unique things about Door County bird life than were presented in the book.

The last three chapters on archaeology, Indians, and environmental history are more interesting and well written. They tell why people should be interested in natural history—the relationships between humans and the environment. They explain why things are the way they are—a basis for managing Door County's natural resources.

A number of additions would have made this book more readable and interesting. Maps showing location, topography, place names, and land use would greatly aid the reader. Photographs would add interest as would descriptions of significant natural areas to visit while in the county.

In summary, if you are interested in a technical description of Door County geology, you will find this book useful. If you buy the book to read as a natural history/environmental description of Door County, you will probably be disappointed. I would recommend reading the book from the last chapter through to the first chapter. This method will provide a framework to give perspective to the technical geological information and to the maintenance of the natural resources.

Stanley A. Nichols is a biologist and professor of environmental sciences, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, Madison.

THE WISCONSIN ALMANAC
edited by Jerry Minnich. Madison: North Country Press, 1989. 262 pp. \$9.95

By Polly Athan

The Wisconsin Almanac is a good book for a rainy afternoon. Full of trivial facts as well as useful ones, *Wisconsin Almanac* follows the format of the farmer's almanacs of old by presenting gardening tips, puzzles, recipes, recollections, facts about Wisconsin weather, and the odd bit of information which you may never need to recall from memory but which satisfies the inquisitive mind.

The *Almanac* is arranged by month, with each month containing timely in-

formation (such as "how you can tell when a melon is ripe") as well as several irrelevant facts ("The weather lore of the Greeks"). Editor Jerry Minnich and contributors Diana Cook, Don Davenport, Tim Eisele, and Kristin Visser do not spend too much time on any one area, though themes like gardening and seasonal excuses for a party appear month after month. The *Almanac* provides recipes for each month as well, naturally highlighting Wisconsin products (and mostly very rich). A smattering of short articles by such Wisconsin authors as George Vukelich and Marueen Mecozzi have been reprinted from other publications.

There are plenty of facts and miscellaneous Wisconsin lore presented willy nilly throughout *The Wisconsin Almanac*: the location of the state's Confederate burial ground (where 140 Confederate soldiers rest), muskellunge facts, and the news that Wisconsin is the jump rope capital of the world as well as the largest producer of farm-raised mink.

The book can be rewarding to Wisconsin enthusiasts during those times when light and entertaining reading is what is called for. I came across some facts which I do plan to recollect at an opportune time, especially under the category "51 facts you should know about Wisconsin." For instance, I was unaware of the names of Wisconsin's two Nobel prize winners (Joshua Lederberg and Howard Temin) and of the first woman to hold statewide elective office in Wisconsin (Dena Smith), and I was reminded of the existence and location of the state's only surviving covered bridge. Renters such as myself and others who do not garden will perhaps end up skipping over several pages, and I doubt that many readers will spend much time pouring over the book's weather history charts. However, all readers should enjoy the numerous old-fashioned engravings that are scattered throughout the very attractively arranged book.

The Wisconsin Almanac is fun to read. It also makes a great gift for someone who loves Wisconsin, or for a current or past state resident whose interests you have not a clue to; the recipient is sure to find something of interest.

Polly Athan is research coordinator at Pleasant Company in Middleton.

THE WISCONSIN UNION THEATER FIFTY GOLDEN YEARS by Fannie Taylor. Madison: Memorial Union Building Association, 1989. 172 pp. \$11.95

By Nancy McClements

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Wisconsin Union Theater (referred to as "one of the finest legitimate theatres in America" by the *New York Times* and a "cheese box" by Frank Lloyd Wright) has been honored on its fiftieth birthday with this lavish volume by one of its past directors. In her decade-by-decade approach, Taylor describes not only the star performances, but also the lectures, film showings, and campus "theatricals" that were made possible due to the flexibility of the theater's design. A tedious listing of events and names is avoided by interweaving the social and political history of the times around the details of the productions. Quotes from city and campus newspaper reviews provide local reaction to the building and its offerings, which were not always favorable. "The show must go on" is a theme of the book, peppered with tales of Wisconsin snowstorms, on-stage death, and student protests.

The book is beautifully illustrated with hundreds of black and white publicity photos and behind-the-scenes stills of Union Theater staff and crews. Taken from often obscure angles, the numerous pictures of the building sometimes resemble abstract art. The 1930s art deco design of the structure is mirrored in the design of the volume, which uses a similar typeface for chapter headings as the theater does in its own lettering. Rose-colored sidebars supplement the text by highlighting interesting tidbits about the performers, including Metropolitan Opera baritone Leonard Warren's spaghetti-with-meatballs recipe. Simmered in the theater's green room, "the backstage reeked of garlic for a week." There is no index, but a partial listing of artists and programs with dates in the appendix helps place events in the text.

From the gala opening of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne's *The Taming of the Shrew* to presidential candidate Jesse Jackson's 1988 speech, The Wisconsin Union Theater documents the cultural and educational importance of a campus treasure.

Nancy McClements is a theater enthusiast and a reference librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Memorial Library.

Authors

David H. Behm is a native of Wisconsin and a graduate of UW-Stevens Point where his emphasis was on erosion control and crop damage abatement. He is a land use specialist for the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources in St. Paul.

Robert Brinkmann has a Ph.D. in Geography from the UW-Milwaukee and is currently the acting director of UWM's Soils and Physical Geography Laboratory and a lecturer in UWM's Department of Geography. Dr. Brinkmann is known for his work in the field of geoarchaeology and is also the vice president of the Wisconsin Geographical Society.

Susan Connors is a Madison social worker. She is a member of the Wisconsin Regional Writers' Association and won the 1988 jade ring award for juvenile fiction. The idea for "Through Fire and Water" came in part from a family story.

James F. Crow joined the faculty of the UW-Madison in 1948 and is now professor emeritus. His speciality is the genetics of natural populations, using both experiments with *Drosophila* and mathematical theory. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a foreign member of the Japan Academy, and a fellow of the Wisconsin Academy.

Howard Deller has a master's degree in Geography from the UW-Milwaukee. He is currently the literature analyst for the UWM Golda Meir Library's American Geographical Society (AGS) Collection and an adjunct assistant professor in Geography at UWM where he teaches a course in the geography of Wisconsin. In addition, Mr. Deller has served for the last seven years as the state coordinator of the Wisconsin Geographical Society.

Justi Echeles is a graduate of UW-Madison and received a master's degree in creative writing from Boston University. Her work has also appeared in *The Denver Quarterly*, *Ex Libris*, and *The Madison Review*. She currently lives in Boston.

Victoria Ford published her chapbook, *Following the Swan*, in September, 1988 with Fireweed Press, a Madison collective. She now lives in Seattle.

Cal Lambert is a journalism graduate of the State University of Iowa and worked on daily newspapers in Iowa, Illinois, and New Mexico before publishing his own weekly in Lancaster, Wisconsin, which he sold in 1980. He now edits a bimonthly trade magazine and is working on a novel. His three-act play, *Dead and Breakfast*, was produced locally. He and his wife, a teacher and librarian, live in Lancaster.

Jeri McCormick teaches creative writing in the Dane County program Creative Arts Over Sixty and edits *Heartland Journal*, a magazine of works by older writers. She has published a book of poems, *The Sun Rides in your Ribcage* (Fireweed Press) and co-authored *Writers Have No Age* (Haworth Press).

Laura Paine has pursued her interests in plants (for pay and for pleasure) for twenty years. She has tended a number of gardens over the years, from the extensive flowerbeds on the UW-Madison campus to the grounds of an eighteenth-century plantation in Virginia to her own flower and vegetable gardens at home. A thirteen-year resident of Madison, she is currently a graduate

student and research assist with the UW-Madison Horticulture Department.

Susan Peterson, graduate of UW-Madison, lives in Ephraim, Wisconsin, and with her husband owns and runs an art gallery. A chapbook of her poems, *Preparing the Fields*, was published by Spoon River Poetry Press.

Willa Schmidt is a reference librarian at UW-Madison and holds a Ph.D. in German literature. Her book reviews appear regularly in *American Reference Books Annual*. She has been published in *Cream City Review*, the *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar*, and *Fine Lines: A Collection*, an anthology compiled by the Madison Area Writers Association.

Jeffrey Steele is an associate professor of English and Women's Studies at UW-Madison. He received his B.A. degree from Carleton College and M.A.T., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University. He is the current chair of the committee managing the Cairns Collection of American Women Writers and the author of *The Representation of the Self in the American Renaissance* as well as a number of articles on nineteenth-century literature. Presently, he is completing both an anthology of Margaret Fuller's writing and a critical study on her work.

Coming up in future issues of the Review

- ☐ celebration of art collections in Wisconsin
- ☐ ethics and philosophy of historic preservation
- ☐ cultural diversity and social action theater, a new concept in drama
- ☐ Wisconsin's first cardinal and its Mexican mate
- ☐ containment of nuclear secrets . . . a Wisconsin professor of law watches world trade

- ☐ successful approach to the problems of dyslexia
 - ☐ scientific research into new uses for alfalfa, *Medicago sativa*
 - ☐ exploration of fundamental rights, morals, and values
 - ☐ greeting cards of the 1920s . . . an artist who was a pioneer in design
 - ☐ freedom of expression and access to information in the 1990s
 - ☐ poetry, fiction, book reviews
-

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