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THE LAW AND JOHN DuBAY
BIODIVERSITY • ARTIST ELSA ULBRICHT

Wisconsin Academy Review

A JOURNAL OF WISCONSIN CULTURE



Summer 1992

Volume 38, Number 3



Artist Elsa Ulbricht at Saugatuck.
Photo courtesy Jeune Nowak Wussow.

Cover: *Looking On* by Karen Halt. 16 x 20 inches, acrylic, 1990. The cover is provided by the Walter and Trudi Scott Review fund.

Karen Halt was born in Ohio and was a psychiatric nurse at Cleveland Psychiatric Institute before moving to Muckwonago, where she now lives and paints using acrylic as her medium. Her work has been widely exhibited, has received numerous awards, and will be featured in the Wisconsin Academy Gallery in October. Through her art she hopes to foster "conciliation among life forms" in a harmoniously shared environment.

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I knew I had found some good reading the day I came across *DuBay: Son-in-Law of Oshkosh* at a used-book sale. An on-the-spot sampling of the text indeed proved interesting, but equally intriguing was the photo gallery of portraits which scanned like a Who's Who of Wisconsin territory and early statehood. From the beginning I foresaw an article for the *Review*, and Jack Stark seemed the logical author with his legal expertise, literary bent, writing skills, and interest in history. Jack has taken the DuBay story beyond its potential for drama and infused it with a thoughtful lesson on the importance of a just legal system, lest we take justice for granted. Incidentally, the infamous DuBay murder trial took place in 1857, the year Juliette Magill Kinsey published *WauBun: The Early Day in the North West*, the story of her life while at the Indian Agency House at Portage (site of DuBay's crime). This book, which is still in print and considered an important document for historical research, was just off the press in 1857 and was introduced as evidence at the trial. In particular the jury was asked to study Kinsey's sketch of the Indian Agency grounds and adjacent area. (We are using a later, more detailed sketch with Jack's article.)

Now for a word-association mini-quiz: Aside, possibly, from friends and family, whom do you think of first when you hear the name Martha? Perhaps that willing worker and helping hand of Biblical times? Or maybe the beribboned and grandmotherly wife of the father of our country? For many, Martha brings to mind the last passenger pigeon to live among us. When Martha blinked her final blink in a metal cage at the Cincinnati zoo (September 1, 1914), she closed an era which has become legendary in the annals of ornithology. Martha represented the official end of her species; in fact, as pointed out by David Wilcove in *Audubon* magazine (September 1989), the last large nesting aggregation of passenger pigeons in the nation was recorded in Wisconsin in 1887. At one time, Wilcove writes, a single colony covered an estimated 750 square miles in Wisconsin. (Aldo Leopold referred to it as the "feathered tempest.") In the spring of 1887 they stayed here briefly, then abandoned their nests ("probably because of hunters," according to Wilcove), and winged away to extinction.

The loss of the passenger pigeon was an ecological event of profound significance, altering the lives of predators and prey, shifting and changing the pathways of nutrients and energy flow in ways we will never fully understand. (Wilcove)

We seem to be making sincere efforts to assure there are no Marthas among cranes, wolves, and swans. But what about less glamorous creatures, such as spiders, snakes, turtles? Or furry but non-cuddly creatures such as the reclusive bobcat, who prefers wild places rather than the company of people? We are talking biodiversity, and one can't talk biodiversity without also talking about preservation of habitat. In this issue of the *Review* two ecologists express concerns, from different but analogous perspectives, and they ask for and deserve our attention.

We are pleased to present the work of five contemporary artists in this issue. In addition, we salute the spirit of pioneer artist and craftsperson Elsa Ulbricht (1886-1980). Ulbricht lived a long life and spent most of it sharing her talent and inspiration with students and other artists. Though she worked in many artistic media, we are featuring but one aspect of her oeuvre in our Galleria department: her block prints. Ulbricht counted among her friends such Wisconsin stars as Zona Gale, Laura Sherry, and Carl Sandburg. But Ulbricht needed no peripheral luminaries to add glitter to her life. She brought her own special light and color to all she did.

In an essay in *Life* magazine (February 1992), editor-at-large Roger Rosenblatt reminds us that during these difficult times "there is this Emerson fellow to pull down from the shelf and draw upon. . . . Emerson relied on the self, and I rely on Emerson." Integrity seems to be the key, and internal centering the option. "If the country is falling to pieces, I, at least, can try to stay whole," writes Rosenblatt. With all due respect to Mr. Rosenblatt, we need not turn to the national media to learn more about transcendental thinking. It is our good fortune in Wisconsin to have an Emerson scholar among us, and we are pleased to publish an article by Merton Sealts in concert with the publication of his latest book on Emerson.

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Welcome to the new members of the *Review* editorial committee: Bud Hutchens, Carroll College, Waukesha (sciences); Patrick Farrell, Milwaukee (arts); and David Graham, Ripon College (letters). Thank you for being willing to offer advice and expertise.

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Education in the 90s: Nurturing Change

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

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- ▼ Hazel F. Briggs (Rice) was editor of a trade publication until her retirement in 1966. She has lived in Madison since 1921 and first created Mary Carter and the five mythological maiden aunts in 1939.
- ▼ Erik R. Brynildson is a landscape architect and consulting ecologist who specializes in historic landscape restorations. He lives on and is restoring Fountain Lake Farm National Historic Landmark in Marquette County and is owner of Daycholah Designs in Green Lake.
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- ▼ James Pieper specializes in wildlife art and works out of his studio in Campbellsport. He creates designs for etched glass pieces in addition to working in oil and with pen and ink.
- ▼ Kay Saunders, a native of Michigan's upper peninsula, now writes from her home in Appleton. She is a facilitator for creative writing classes in senior and extended care facilities, teaches at an Elderhostel near Tomahawk, and conducts workshops and poetry readings throughout the state. She is the author of four books: two poetry, one adult nonfiction, and a children's storybook.
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- ▼ Phyllis Wax's poetry has appeared in such publications as *Windfall*, *Plainsong*, and the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. Her work also appeared in an award-winning poetry video, *Drive*. She has been an editor, bookstore proprietor, gift shop/gallery manager, and teacher. She graduated from the University of Chicago and now lives in Milwaukee.

A Case of Frontier Justice: The State of Wisconsin v. DuBay

by Jack Stark

As early as 1830 the name DuBay began appearing on maps of Wisconsin territory. An 1836 map shows Prairie Du Bay settlement located northeast of the present town of Boscobel. A map done by Increase Lapham in 1855 shows Du Bay Point settlement, between Stevens Point and Wausau, as "Du Bay's." Today the name DuBay still appears on the map of Wisconsin, one of the few reminders we have of a colorful and controversial character in the early history of what is now the state of Wisconsin: Jean Baptiste DuBay—trader, lumberman, steamboat- and stage-line owner, mill operator, legislative lobbyist, and linguist. Referred to as the Daniel Boone of the north country, DuBay was a prosperous businessman widely known throughout the Northwest. He also was the defendant in one of the most dramatic murder trials in Wisconsin's early history—a trial which involved such prominent citizens as Moses Strong, Hercules Dousman, James Doty, Henry Dodge, and Solomon Juneau. The trial occurred in 1857, and a study of the records reveals a great deal about the character of the state in its early years.

The salient facts about the killing for which DuBay was tried are few, but a book titled *DuBay: Son-in-Law of Oshkosh* by Mer-ton E. Krug (Appleton: C. C. Nelson Publishing Company, 1946) provides some background material and long excerpts of newspaper reports. DuBay and William Reynolds, who had recently moved to the Portage area from California, were engaged in a complicated dispute about the ownership of a parcel of land abutting the canal that connected the Fox River and the Wisconsin River, located just north of the Indian Agency house near Portage. Title to the land was far from clear, partly because of doubts about the validity of pre-statehood claims as well as doubts about an act passed by the state legislature. The two men were litigating their dispute. Despite the unresolved argument about ownership, Reynolds began to build a structure on the land, which led to threats by DuBay and his destruction of that building. Eventually, a confrontation took place when Reynolds, his partners, and a group of spectators went to DuBay's home. Shortly after the group arrived, DuBay shot Reynolds, who died almost instantly.

DuBay was arrested, charged, and indicted by a grand jury. Because of the tumult the incident caused in Portage, the trial was moved to Madison. The jury deadlocked, six members voting for acquittal and six for conviction, so DuBay remained

a free man but in jeopardy of a retrial, which indeed occurred. Several of the lawyers appeared again, although there was a different judge and, of course, a different jury. The second trial stimulated considerably less interest than the first one, and the press virtually ignored it. The result, however, was another hung jury. The prosecutor decided to try a third time and even began filing papers in Iowa County, where, according to author Krug, the records of all three proceedings remain. However, the prosecutor, for unknown reasons, did not proceed to trial. As a result, DuBay was never convicted.

The press considered the first trial to be highly significant. *The New York Tribune* printed stories about it; the Madison newspapers ran long

accounts of it (including lengthy summaries of the testimony) and brought out special editions at key junctures. Murder trials always generate press coverage, but even today this trial seems fraught with meaning, although Krug's account reveals only part of it. The characters, the setting, and the development of the trial make it appear to have virtually mythic dimensions. It is those dimensions and the lessons that they teach us today about life in a society—and in particular about life in Wisconsin—that make it worthwhile to examine again, after 135 years, a killing

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*So we have a situation
involving a key piece of real
estate and many of the state's
most important citizens.*
.....

and a trial in which the perpetrator escaped punishment. It is a compelling story.

John Baptiste DuBay was born in 1810 or a few years earlier, probably in Green Bay (Fort Howard), the son of a French-Canadian man and a Menominee Indian woman (reportedly the daughter of Chief Pewatenot). He married Princess Madelaine, daughter of Chief Oshkosh, and was present, occasionally as an interpreter, at some of the important negotiations between American Indians and the United States government. He had worked for John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, the most powerful business concern in territorial Wisconsin. In fact, his claim to the land that was in dispute related back to that company's claim on the land; according to the testimony, the land had passed from the American Fur Company to DuBay in 1840 as part of a business agreement.

Because of DuBay's many connections and his enterprising nature, he was well known by people in this state, including many who were wealthy and influential. Some described him as a peaceable man who was "generous and good hearted." Others, however, claimed he was a man who would push an advantage and who had a dangerous temper.

The judge for DuBay's murder trial was Alexander L. Collins, who had been a member of the council of the Territory of Wisconsin and had run unsuccessfully for governor once and for the United States Senate twice. During the year after the trial he became a law partner of James Doty, one of the witnesses for DuBay. The nominal prosecutor was Levi Barden, the Columbia County district attorney, who later served in both houses of the legislature and as a county judge. The burden for the prosecution was carried mainly by Luther Dixon, who within a year after the trial was a member of the Wisconsin Supreme Court and within two years was its chief justice.

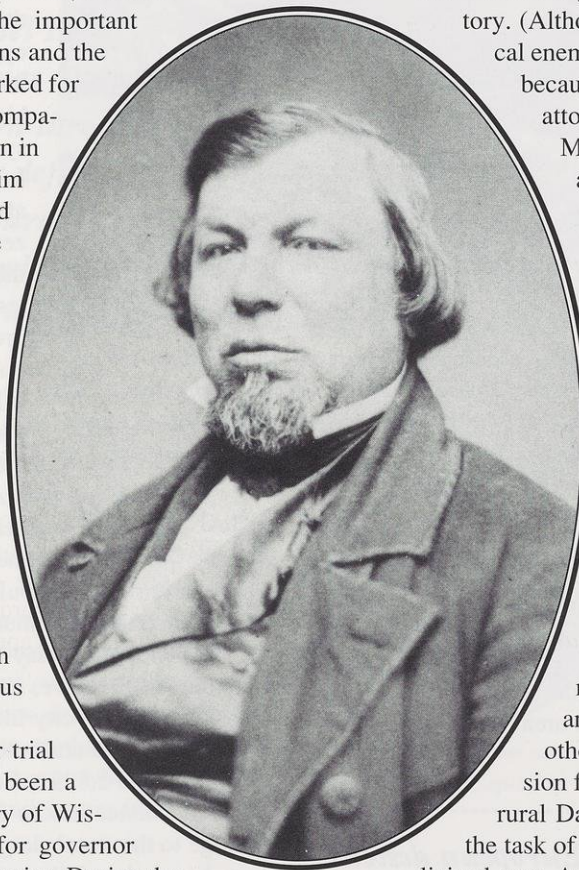
Dixon's main adversary was Moses Strong, who at the time was speaker of the Wisconsin Assembly and who had been a member of the state's first constitutional convention. Strong had made his mark as a lawyer by successfully defending James Vineyard in a murder case arising from a shooting on the floor of the legislature during 1842, a feat he managed despite frequent recourse to whiskey during the trial. His co-counsel was Harlow Orton, who also became a chief justice of the Wisconsin

Supreme Court as well as a legislator and the dean of the University of Wisconsin law school.

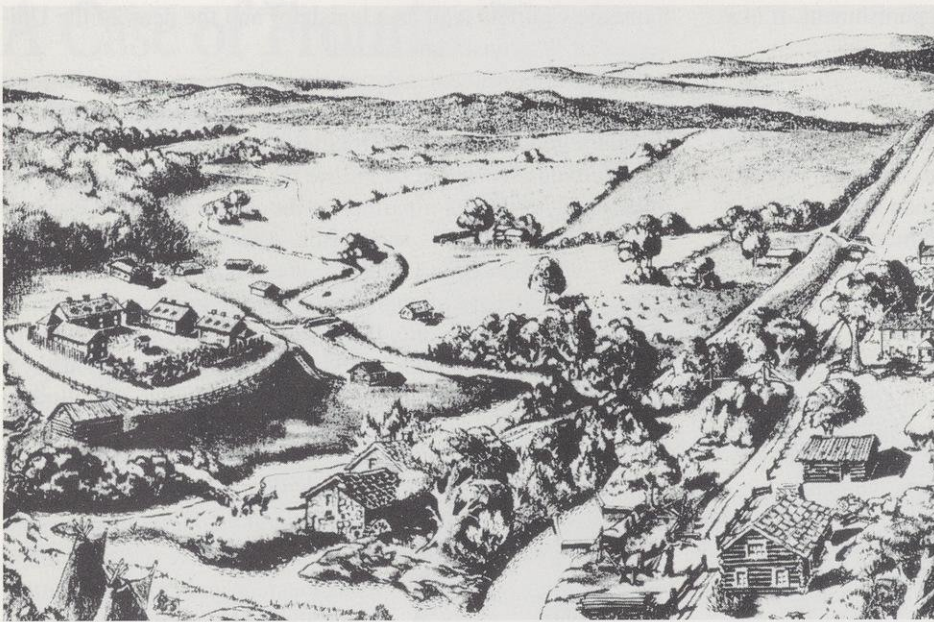
Other prominent persons were witnesses. They had not seen the shooting but were called by the defense to attest to DuBay's good character, particularly his peaceful nature. One was Hercules Dousman of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin's first millionaire, who was a partner in the American Fur Company and had been DuBay's supervisor. Another was James Doty, who had been governor when Wisconsin was a territory. (Although Moses Strong had been his political enemy, Doty was induced to testify, perhaps because his brother Baron had been DuBay's attorney before the case began.) Simeon Mills, a wealthy Madison businessman and civic leader, and Augustus Bird, the mayor of Madison, also attested to DuBay's good character. If the members of the jury were not acquainted with Dousman and Doty, they surely knew about Mills and Bird, and they probably were impressed by the fact that DuBay's attorneys could elicit help from such prestigious citizens.

In contrast, among the jury there were no persons whose names are familiar to most students of Wisconsin history. Only three of the twelve appear in the Madison city directory of 1858: Otis Albee (a harnessmaker), Milo Hawes (a gunsmith), and David Shipley (a contractor). The other nine, one can deduce from their omission from that directory, were probably from rural Dane County. These private citizens had the task of arriving at a just result in a highly publicized case. As we shall see, some of the legal experts involved in the trial made their task not easier, but more difficult. Jury members also may have been overwhelmed by the many influential persons who appeared in court.

So we have a situation involving a key piece of real estate and many of the state's most important citizens. However, as we consider the circumstances of this story we need to be a bit skeptical of the background information provided by Krug in his book. For example, Krug claims that Frederick Jackson Turner's father, "Alfred J. Turner," was the secretary of a mass meeting held in Portage shortly after the shooting. Although it would be interesting to imagine the future historian of the frontier learning of the trial at his father's knee, the senior Turner was named Andrew and did not arrive in Portage until 1858. Also, as useful as Krug's book is, it does not ana-



John DuBay. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin.



Drawing by Russell Fagerburg, an Illinois artist, showing the vicinity of Fort Winnebago near Portage as it appeared in 1857. The Indian Agency House is in the background at the right, DuBay's cabin in the foreground at the right, and Fort Winnebago, including the surgeon's quarters, at the left. At the right, running top to bottom on the picture, is the canal which connected the Fox and Wisconsin rivers; the Fox River winds to the left, past the fort.

lyze the legal issues involved in this case nor, more importantly, does it explain the historical importance of the case.

The significant meanings that lie beneath the surface of the account in Merton Krug's book begin to emerge if one contemplates the setting of the killing. For decades after persons of European descent began to explore the area that became Wis-

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consin and to exploit its resources, the site that became Portage, because of its location, was the most important in the region. That is, it literally was a *portage*, a place where canoes and other small craft could easily be carried between the Fox River, which led to the Great Lakes, and the Wisconsin River, which led to the Mississippi River. That location was thus a nexus for much of North America. In fact, the plot of land where DuBay killed Reynolds had been part of the portage, which by that time had been converted into a canal. It was no accident that the

astute persons who ran the American Fur Company established a trading post at that location or that the federal government built a fort and established an Indian agency there. The spot where Reynolds fell and its very near environs thus represented the most important location in frontier Wisconsin.

The most significant meaning of the DuBay trial is that it presented an opportunity for Wisconsin to transform itself from a frontier society into a more highly developed society, an opportunity symbolized by the setting of the killing. In fact, the events that occurred shortly after DuBay was arrested reveal the citizens of Portage attempting to do just that. First, a large number of them coalesced into a mob and stormed the jail in order to lynch DuBay. In a scene right out of a western movie, several public officials convinced them to disperse, and a series of meetings followed. The first meeting evolved into an attempt to organize for the purpose of reinstating the death penalty. Those attending the final meeting tried to organize in order to

ensure a fair trial for DuBay, a goal far different from the goal of the lynch mob and much less in the frontier vein.

This is not to say that, impelled by the drama in which they found themselves engaged, the citizens of Portage quickly transformed their city into a paragon of civilized society. But Portage did have attributes that would have aided in that effort. In 1860 it had 2,879 residents. In 1857, the year of the killing, railroad connection to Milwaukee was completed, binding Portage to the state's largest city and making possible the business boom that followed. However, elements of the frontier remained there. Frederick Jackson Turner, who was born in Portage in 1861, recalled that seeing American Indians in his home town and wagon trains passing through it during his boyhood influenced his later interest in the frontier, his great historical subject. At least to him, the frontier was still alive in Portage after the DuBay trial. In fact, during 1869 two instances of vigilante justice that were not prevented by authorities happened in that city.

Changing the venue of DuBay's trial to Madison ought to have made it easier for the event to be the impetus for the state's development into a more civilized society. By 1857 Madison for nearly a decade had been the site of the state government and the University of Wisconsin. Its population had grown at a remarkable pace, from 1,500 in 1850 to almost 12,000 in 1857, although it would soon begin plummeting almost back to its 1850 level. During 1858 the city, ignoring signs of the Panic of 1857, had issued \$100,000 in bonds for public buildings; another

er \$100,000 to aid a railroad in hopes that it would accelerate the city's development; and \$50,000 to expand and thus keep the capital in Madison. In 1856 Madison had established a common council, and in 1858 its city hall was completed. In short, if in 1857 Portage was a semi-frontier settlement, Madison at that time was semi-urban and reasonably well developed.

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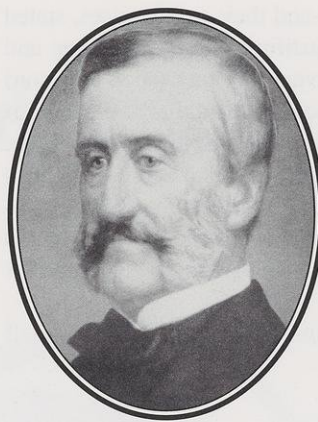
Referred to as the Daniel Boone of the north country, DuBay was a prosperous businessman widely known throughout the Northwest. He also was the defendant in one of the most dramatic murder trials in Wisconsin's early history

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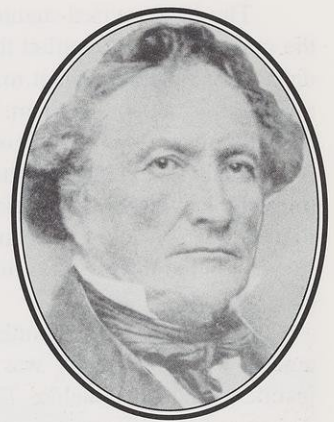
Moreover, Wisconsin's law at the time was anything but a frontier code. In 1849 the legislature and the governor had enacted the first revised statutes. By freely borrowing from other states and re-enacting some of the territorial laws, they had produced a full-blown legal code. In fact, as the trial of DuBay was in process so was the drafting of the second revised statutes, which were enacted in 1858. Also, Wisconsin was already beginning to establish its reputation as an innovator. For example, the 1849 revised statutes did not provide for a death penalty, although nearly all of the other states' statutes at the time did so provide. In other words, the statutes under which the trial took place were certainly sufficient to produce a just verdict. Nevertheless, something went wrong. A man who, from today's perspective, appears obviously to be guilty went free.

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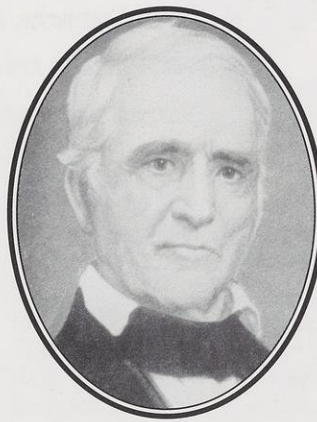
The thing that went wrong was the legal system, specifically the work of the defense lawyers and, far more significantly, the judge. The killing having been admitted, the case turned on the issue of whether or not it was justified. The defense argued that it was justified for two reasons, one of them being defense of a home. DuBay, based on the advice of his previous attorney, James Doty's brother, probably believed that he was justified for that reason. Defense counsel Harlow Orton cited several treatises (general summaries of the law in this country) to support his position on this issue. However, prosecuting attorney Luther Dixon correctly pointed out that defense of property in a general sense is not a justification: "No man is the arbiter of his own rights, or has the right with a strong arm and deadly weapons to defend himself in that which the government was established to protect."



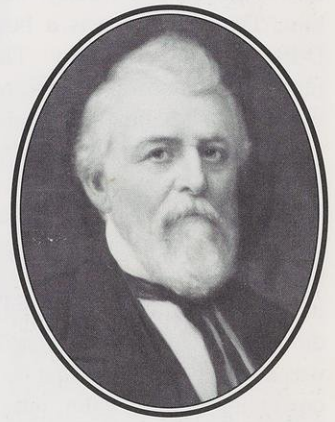
Alexander Collins. From an original portrait which hangs in the Dane County Courthouse in Madison.



Solomon Juneau, founder and first mayor of Milwaukee. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin.



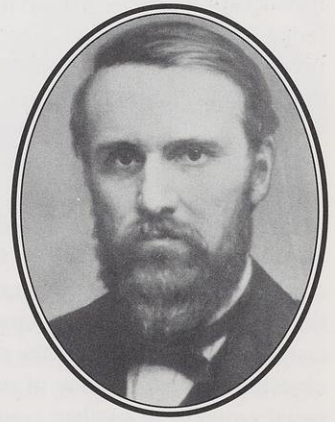
Henry Dodge. From an original portrait in the Capitol in Madison.



Moses M. Strong. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin, from a painting by James Reeve Stuart.



Hercules Dousman. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin, from a painting by Charles W. Heyd.



Luther S. Dixon. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin, from an original portrait in the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

The 1849 revised statutes—and they, not treatises, stated the relevant law—specified the justifications for a killing; and defense of a home, except to prevent a felony (such as arson) against it, is not among them. No one alleged that at the time of the killing there was a threat of a felony against DuBay's home. Nevertheless, the judge instructed the jury that defense of one's property is in fact a justification for killing, and he did not mention a threat of felony. Because of that instruction, it is not as surprising that the jury was hung as that six members voted for conviction!

On the other hand, under those statutes defense of oneself against a felony clearly was a justification for homicide. The defense lawyers, especially Moses Strong, urged that point. One, but only one, witness of the homicide testified that Reynolds was brandishing a board just before DuBay shot him. That witness was a boy, DuBay's brother-in-law. The jury had to choose between, on the one hand, believing him and severely discounting threats that DuBay had made against Reynolds and, on the other hand, believing that DuBay was not defending but avenging himself. Judge Collins, in his instructions, firmly nudged them in the former direction. He told them that those threats were conditional (meant only if Reynolds did certain things), so that there was no premeditation. That is, DuBay acted spontaneously and, one could logically infer, out of fear that he would be harmed. That may be, but the evidence, I think, clearly points the other way. More important, by making those remarks the judge abridged the jury's right to decide the facts of the case.

Two themes in the trial befuddled the jury and thus contributed to a verdict that seems to me to be wrong and an instance of frontier, not civilized, justice. The first was the judge's admission, over Luther Dixon's objections, of the repetitive testimony about DuBay's peaceful nature. The law on evidence in the 1849 statutes was rudimentary on the issue of relevance. Thus, the common law applied, and behavior that cast light on the defendant's actions, if it was not prejudicial, probably was admissible. However, testimony about DuBay's general character by persons who did not know him well ought to have been excluded by Judge Collins, who instead explained at one point that he believed in erring on the side of admitting testimony. Second, a racial theme that to a modern reader is distasteful developed during the trial. In one instance, the defense objected to the testimony of two African Americans purely on racial grounds; in another, counsel Orton described DuBay as a "savage" who ought to be held to low standards of behavior. Similarly, Orton, who was born in New York, appealed to xeno-

phobia by implying that Reynolds deserved his fate because he was an interloper from California!

In short, by obfuscating the law, manipulating the jury, and presenting a parade of famous character witnesses the defense lawyers, abetted by the judge, turned the trial of a man for a homicide into something else. Luther Dixon identified that other thing: "The old pioneer spirit has been dragged in here." DuBay embodied the frontier, which in a sense was the *real* defendant on trial, and it prevailed. Violence, which was perpetrated beyond the limits of law, acknowledged as proper by a group of persons who were virtually a pioneer Wisconsin hall of

fame (the character witnesses), went unpunished. Hence, Wisconsin missed the opportunity presented by this trial to put the worst aspects of the frontier behind it.

One can see the significance of this lost opportunity by remembering Aeschylus's *The Eumenides*. In that tragedy the curse of the House of Atreus, a sequence of vengeful murders, is ended when Athena establishes a court, which, on an evenly split vote,

acquits Orestes. The even split in the jury is the same as the result in the DuBay case. In the DuBay case, however, the frontier spirit of vengeance, not the rule of law, prevailed. The Athena, the embodiment of reason, in the DuBay case was Luther Dixon, but he did not win. Fortunately, this state eventually did develop and come under the sway of a just law. In fact, as we have seen, within two years Dixon was chief justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Nevertheless, the DuBay case suggests that we should not take for granted civilization and one of its more important buttresses, the law.

Editor's note: It appears that DuBay never again was involved in far-reaching business activity after the trial. In 1865 Isabelle Buchanan, a school teacher, visited the DuBay family in their home at Du Bay Point. Her diary entry for August 22 of that year reveals their dismal state of affairs: "I went to see Mr. DuBay's sick child. Sickness is hard when surrounded by luxuries. But in a wigwam, stretched on a board and covered with rags it makes the heart ache. I do not think she will suffer much longer."

According to the January 15, 1887, edition of the Stevens Point Journal, John Baptiste DuBay died on January 11, 1887, at his home on the Wisconsin River. The article states, "During his latter years [DuBay] was supported by his children, but he had handled a great many thousand dollars worth of goods, and there are people who can remember when he used to drive the finest team between Wausau and Portage."



Wisconsin's Biodiversity: It's More Than Fur and Feathers

by Stanley A. Temple

In February 1991, I testified in support of a bill (now law) which provides state funds to match donations to the endangered resources checkoff on state income tax forms. As the discussion of funding for endangered species projects unfolded, one legislator asked what kinds of animals the money would support.

"I certainly hope that it won't be spent on things like bugs and snakes. Especially not rattlesnakes!" the legislator stated. "We should probably sponsor legislation to eradicate rattlesnakes in Wisconsin."

I suppose the legislator truly represented his constituents, because attitudes like this, unfortunately, pervade the general public. Negative feelings toward cold-blooded animals have obviously impeded efforts to conserve them.

Only recently have people started viewing these animals as worthy of the types of conservation efforts we direct toward warm-blooded birds and mammals. Many fish, mollusks, amphibians, reptiles, and insects were first protected when the federal government passed the Endangered Species Act in 1973. As a result of such enlightened legislation, these species can now hold their ground like other animals more favored by society. We all recall the snail darter's conflict with the Tellico Dam project on the Little Tennessee River. By and large, despite an improving public climate, strong social biases still devalue these cold-blooded animals.



When Stephen Kellert of Yale University surveyed Americans' attitudes toward wildlife, he developed questions to help quantify their feelings. Kellert asked if those interviewed would favor holding up a hypothetical dam project to protect a threatened or endangered species found at the construction site. A full 90 percent of those surveyed said they'd stop the project if the animal were a wolf. Some 85 percent would hold up the project if the species was a bird, like a bald eagle. All of the species hav-

ing less than 50 percent approval, with the exception of a rat, were cold-blooded animals. At the bottom of the list, only 18 percent of the American public would hold up a project to protect an endangered spider. As we run the gamut of species, Americans clearly favor furry and feathered, warm-blooded animals.

Yet when viewed with an impartial biologist's eye, the cold-blooded animals really shine. Each simple invertebrate can be just as valuable a contributor to its ecosystem as a sophisticated mammal: It's "one species—one vote" in matters of biological diversity.

Traditionally, conservation programs have focused on highly-valued species like game animals and sport fish that draw public attention. As we develop programs that address the needs of a wider diversity of organisms, cold-blooded species must receive the attention they deserve.

Although species should be viewed as equally valuable when making conservation decisions, they do not function equally in a given environment. Some animals are considered "keystone" species whose population fluctuations have greater consequences for the ecosystem. Many of these key species are cold-blooded, but people tend to take them for granted. Some ecologists note that many ecosystems could continue to function without any vertebrates. On the other hand, removing invertebrates would collapse most ecosystems rapidly. They are vital members of the food chain, critical for pollination, decomposition, and a host of other ecological services.

By sheer numbers, cold-blooded species outnumber the higher animals. We can tally about 4,000 species of mammals and 9,000 birds, so warm-blooded animals account for only about 13,000 species. By comparison, we know of about 6,300 reptiles, 4,000 amphibians, 19,000 species of fish, 750,000 insects, 125,000 other arthropods, 50,000 mollusks, and a variety of other invertebrates totaling more than a million species.

Most biologists who study the diversity of life suggest we have only scratched the surface of the earth's invertebrate richness. Perhaps as many as 10 million invertebrates may live on earth. When you put that into perspective, the warm-blooded vertebrates we think of as being "dominant" species may constitute less than 1 percent of the animal life forms on the planet. The other 99 percent deserve some respect; they are clearly in the majority.

If you measure success by weight rather than numbers, the cold-blooded animals again are the heavy favorites. They are small individually, but collectively their organic mass tips the scales hundreds, if not thousands, of times more than higher vertebrates. For instance, most people are surprised to learn that eastern deciduous forests, impressive for their wide variety of

birds, squirrels, mice, and other mammals, actually contain far more cold-blooded species that are rarely seen. Salamanders alone account for twice as much biomass as birds.

Cold-blooded animals are often inconspicuous, but they are plentiful and obviously very important to the forest ecosystem. Densities of some of these species are truly astounding. For instance, the red-backed salamander, a common amphibian in deciduous forests, reaches densities as high as 1,200 per acre. Few people are aware of salamanders on a forest walk, but these amphibians are important in their ecological community.

Other aspects of their biology and evolutionary history also make these animals special. They've been here a long time. Some invertebrates first appeared more than 700 million years

ago. They've adapted well and have diversified to fill many ecological niches. By comparison, the higher vertebrates are relative newcomers. We date the first fossil remains of mammals from about 225 million years ago; birds have been around about 185 million years. None of these warm-blooded animals is as diversified and refined as many cold-blooded creatures.

Most cold-blooded species have strategies for survival very different from warm-blooded animals. Birds and mammals typically have few offspring, on which the parents lavish a fair amount of attention. They consequently have a fairly long lifespan. Most cold-blooded animals are at the other extreme. They produce huge numbers of offspring. They don't tend to live long or spend time parenting. So, they have very different ways of coping with environmental changes. Setbacks can quickly be recouped by these fast-breeding animals.

Unlike some mobile birds and mammals, many of these animals are relatively sedentary. They don't migrate or travel long distances. Consequently they have difficulty expanding their ranges and moving into new regions with suitable habitat. It's interesting to speculate how species like freshwater sponges manage to get from lake to lake. Certainly they aren't walking!

The sedentary nature and high densities of some cold-blooded species may confine them to a single body of water, a cave, a spring, a watershed, or other small areas. Unlike higher vertebrates, they are often in a good position to persist in large numbers in small places for incredibly long periods of time. In Wisconsin several of the vertigo snails—Pleistocene relicts that lived in the cool climate of the Ice Age 10,000 years ago—still thrive on cold, moist talus slopes. Perpetual ice at the base of cliffs and in rocky cracks provides continual air conditioning and a very cold microclimate. One could not expect a bird or mammal to similarly tough it out for so long in such a small habitat. Warm-blooded vertebrates need more space.

Then there is the fact that cold-blooded animals are subject to the whims of their thermal and physical environment.

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They can't regulate their body temperature very well, and many have trouble coping with temperature extremes. People fail to appreciate that climate changes which warm-blooded animals view as relatively benign can be catastrophic to some of the cold-blooded species. In Wisconsin, reptile and amphibian populations often fluctuate predictably, depending on drought cycles and winter severity.

During the last ten years I've monitored snakes wintering in a hibernaculum nestled in the rocky bluffs behind my house. The number of snakes surviving to springtime is affected by winter severity. The colder the winter and the deeper the frost penetrates, the fewer snakes emerge in the spring. The same is true for several amphibians hibernating in my cattail marsh.

The diversity of organisms here is enhanced by our geographical location. The state is strategically located where three major ecological regions meet: deciduous forest, prairie, and coniferous forest. Consequently, many animals reach the northern, eastern, or western limit of their geographic distribution in the state. We have virtually no species that are truly endemic to the state; there are few species that we can call our own. Neither are we a global repository for rare species, with the possible exception of some freshwater mussels that are found in small numbers and are largely endangered in our rivers.

Despite this, Wisconsin habitats support a remarkable diversity of species. In the state, we've identified 72 species of mammals, 252 breeding species of birds, 35 reptiles, 20 amphibians, 157 species of fish, and about 19,000-20,000 insects. That's a remarkable job of recolonization when one considers that two-thirds of the state was covered with glacial ice as recently as 10,000 years ago. The mobile species recolonized quickly as the glaciers receded. The smaller number of amphibians, reptiles, and, to some extent, fish reflects the fact that these species reoccupied Wisconsin more slowly.



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Kids need to be exposed to cold-blooded animals in their natural settings. We can't afford to wait for a few people to take an interest in studying ecology during their college years.

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Most of the amphibians and reptiles found in the state reach the fringes of their ranges in the upper Midwest. The few exceptions, for which Wisconsin is near the heart of their distribution, include the Blanding's turtle, massasauga, fox snake,

and the blue-spotted salamander. Most reptiles and amphibians have the center of their range farther east or south. Many of the rarest cold-blooded species in Wisconsin came from the Southwest during periods of warming climates. Species like ornate box turtles, slender glass lizards, and prairie skinks reach their northern limits as relict populations in Wisconsin. They only survive in a few pockets of sand prairies where they can burrow deeply to hibernate through our long, cold winters.

Fish recolonizing Wisconsin after the Ice Age largely came up the Mississippi River. Of our 157 fish, 137 are associated with the Mississippi River drainage basin. The farther north you go from the Mississippi River tributaries, the fewer fish species you find. For instance, Lake Superior has only 74 fish species, while Lake Michigan has more than 131 species.

Winter weather is physiologically stressful for many cold-blooded animals. Under the best of circumstances, some species are barely holding on in Wisconsin, and they are especially vulnerable to any additional stresses. Human changes to the environment can very quickly create situations in which cold-blooded species can no longer maintain their numbers. The impressive biodiversity that survives here is easily threatened because so many of these species are living on the ragged edge of their natural range.

Among the factors that threaten the survival of cold-blooded animals we find a familiar litany of environmental problems. Habitat alteration—whether caused by fragmentation, isolation, or outright destruction—is very important. Changes in riverine ecosystems, wetland drainage, channeled streams, and dredged harbors all take their toll.

Amphibians and aquatic invertebrates are exquisitely sensitive to environmental pollutants. Many cold-blooded animals have highly permeable skin that freely exchanges ions, nutrients, and chemicals in contaminated water. These organisms are also sensitive to atmospheric and thermal pollution and to pesticide exposure. Many species, like the darters and water

fleas, are so sensitive to changing aquatic conditions that they are viewed as indicator species—their very presence in an area is a measure of good water quality.

Exotic species introduced in Wisconsin by people pose other problems for cold-blooded animals. We tend to pay attention to exotics like zebra mussels, rusty crayfish, Japanese bee-

tles, and the like that cause some hardship for human beings. We are much less aware of the arrival of exotic cold-blooded species that may not directly affect human recreation or commerce. Clearly, human activities have turned Wisconsin into a melting pot of species that would not occur together naturally. We haven't assessed how these exotic organisms change the population dynamics of cold-blooded species.

Overexploitation can decimate some species. Historically, excess clamming; overfishing; and zealous collecting of turtles, frogs, and rare butterflies dramatically reduced their populations. We have to be careful to curb desires to commercialize species that may be rare.

The loss of one species, particularly a keystone species, may trigger a cascading effect that devastates other species in the community. When the upper Mississippi River was

dammed, the skipjack herring was extirpated in Wisconsin. Several other species relied on this herring for food, and rare mussels relied on the herring to spread their young to new breeding grounds. Juvenile forms of the ebony shell and elephant ear mussel formerly attached to the gills and gill rakers of skipjack herring. Remnant populations of these rare mussels survive in the upper Midwest as pockets of old mussels that show little evidence of reproducing, certainly not enough to allow these species to hold their own.

Rare aquatic insects, butterflies, and moths are also of special concern, but no group is as threatened as our native reptiles. Eight of thirty-five reptiles found here are threatened or endangered; all are near the northern periphery of their range.



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*It's "one species—one vote" in
 matters of biological diversity.*

WHAT DO WE DO TO STEM THE PROBLEMS COLD-BLOODED ANIMALS FACE? THEY HAVE SERIOUS NEEDS:

▼**Conduct basic research.** We don't know very much about these animals compared to the higher vertebrates. Consequently we are in a very poor position to know what to do to help them. Volunteer surveys to track the abundance and distribution patterns of these organisms will help build a foundation for future decisions. We need much more inventory work to determine their true status and assess their problems.

▼**Protect special habitat.** We need to be particularly careful about the small pockets of habitat that can be very important for cold-blooded species: an individual mussel bar on a river, a small talus slope, a small pond, a wetland, or a hibernaculum site could be crucial. If we can identify these critical places, then small, local protection projects can make an enormous difference for some species.

▼**Continue pollution controls.** Obviously we need to control pollution and improve water quality. Some species can only survive in the most pristine aquatic environments.

▼**Stem the spread of exotic species.** We need to be more careful about the spread of exotic organisms and consider how exotic introductions affect all species, not merely humans.

▼**Apply proven restoration techniques to cold-blooded species.** We need to consider reintroducing species to areas where the habitat may be suitable for them. Local catastrophes like fires, floods, or freezing weather may have wiped out cold-blooded animal populations at some time in the past. Little is being done to consider reintro-

ducing species even though it ought to be possible to quickly rebuild populations of species that have high reproductive potential.

▼**Foster education and enthusiasm for cold-blooded animals.** The last thing we need to do is certainly the most important. We need to do a lot of educating. People have built-in biases against these species. Most people are not impressed by the kinds of facts I've presented here. Our approach should include not only sharing facts, but sharing experiences and enthusiasm. Conservationists must let other people know how excited we are about these species. We need to be advocates for cold-blooded animals and break through the prejudices against them by showing we are fond of them and care for them.

We've hidden our enthusiasm for these creatures for too long. Few organizations represent the interests of cold-blooded creatures. Herpetological societies and groups like the Xerces Society, dedicated to protecting invertebrates, are as inconspicuous as the animals they represent. They need to make their presence better known and their outreach wider.

Moreover, it's very important to create an appreciation and curiosity about cold-blooded animals when children are very young. Edward Wilson, noted spokesman for the conservation of biological diversity, talks about "biophilia"—the love of other living things. A close bonding takes place between some young people and wild creatures. Those childhood experiences leave important impressions that

affect adult actions. There is a period in a child's life when the mind is fresh, unburdened by societal prejudices, and very open to establishing positive feelings toward cold-blooded animals. It was that way for me. I became fond of turtles and snakes by keeping them as pets, and an insect collection stimulated my curiosity about invertebrates. I know those early experiences influenced my career choice.

How do we establish these feelings among youngsters? One place to start is in the classroom. Most classroom "pets" expose children to animals that they already have lots of exposure to at home—warm, cuddly creatures. We could encourage schools to have cold-blooded animals in the classroom—displays with insects, snakes, reptiles, amphibians, and fish—as part of their program. Our work has to spread outside the classroom as well. Kids need to be exposed to cold-blooded animals in their natural settings. We can't afford to wait for a few people to take an interest in studying ecology during their college years.

If we are successful, Wisconsin can continue to hold its place as a state that is rich in biological diversity. If we fail, many of the state's sixty-two threatened and endangered cold-blooded species are not likely to survive. We need to create both social and natural environments that are hospitable to these types of animals. We need warm-hearted approaches to convince people that the natural world includes more than fur and feathers.

Illustrations by Debbie Blue This article is based on a keynote address delivered at a symposium held in March 1990 in Madison. An edited version appeared in the February 1992 issue of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine, and it is reprinted here with permission.



There is no value in any monument, and books are written in vain, if they do not make us stop our busy lives a moment for solemn thought. Is it not true that more of our bird species became extinct in the last century than in the one before? Is it not true that even while we watch, others are vanishing? Must these things be inevitable while we remain helpless observers?

This is not a gesture of the soft-hearted who are affected by the disappearance of our native species. It is a challenge to the strong who will fight for the rightful heritage of their sons and daughters as they believe it should be. This, then, is a time for dedication of ourselves to a cause that we see as just and a purpose that is good to lend our efforts in the direction of the perpetuation of our native wildlife in its native habitat wherever such course of action is possible.

Walter E. Scott

From Silent Wings, published by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology on the occasion of the unveiling of the passenger pigeon monument at Wyalusing State Park in May 1947.

*Illustration by Walter Thorp, Baraboo (b. 1887).
Passenger Pigeons in Wisconsin. Pencil and watercolor.*



What Are Dead Cats Good For?

by Erik R. Brynildson

"A species must be saved in many places if it is to be saved at all."

—Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*

As I prepare this essay, my eyes gaze out upon Muir meadow in pre-ides March, through wet sand thickets of osier burgundy, past umbers of larch, over the iced transparency of Fountain Lake, into the matching sky—cloud free—and onto the light of a hanging hawk. Lids closed, my thoughts turn inward, then journey northward to places of aurora borealis, Thuja swamps, loon yodels, and muskeg-scented cats. I remember a night in youth when my ears received the curdling shrill of a bobcat, its din piercing the September spectrum overhead, somewhere along the Peshtigo River. I have not heard one since.

I pause, I wonder: Why are there no reports of car-killed bobcats in Wisconsin? Generally, car casualties can provide at least a clue to local profiles of animal abundance and movement. Then

I recall the tales and lore of many an old northerner I once knew, told in patched wool through the gray of suspended pipe smoke. "Used to be cats all over the state, even pe-zu (Chippewa for lynx) and catamount (vernacular for puma/mountain lion/panther/cougar)—hell, now you'd be damn lucky to see the track of a wildcat, even way up here."

Not long ago the furnace in my former riverside retreat on the headwaters of the Wolf River gave out and I called a repairman. While he was tending the burner, he mentioned that he had hunted bobcats with dogs throughout the northern tier of Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan since 1950, but in over forty years hadn't seen cats as scarce as now, especially during the last four or five years. When I asked why he killed bobcats, he replied that it was "something to do." I then asked what he did with the perished felines. "We use them for rugs and wall hangings, or once in awhile you'll get a bar or nightclub that'll want a full mount for display."

He had jolted my memory. Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, I thought. . . . Twain's dialogue goes like this:

"Hello Huckleberry!"

"Hello yourself, and see how you like it."

"What's that you got?"

"Dead cat."

"Lemme see him, Huck. My, he's pretty stiff—wher'd you get him?"

"Bought him off'n a boy."

"Say—what are dead cats good for?"

"Good for? Why, to cure warts with, that's what!"

I also recalled that pioneer apothecaries believed that eating bobcat meat would cure chronic headaches.

My furnace-side chat closed with my asking, "Since you believe bobcats are in serious trouble, will you support an indefinite moratorium on any further killing?" The repairman stood somber, then finally said: "I hate to say it, but I guess we need to think ahead." He could tell I was pleased. I have reflected on that spontaneous encounter many times since. His sincerity ran marrow deep, and I understood the struggle he had with his sacrificial reply. I had been an ardent hunter for fifteen seasons.

Aldo Leopold wrote that "the last word in ignorance is the person who says of an animal or plant: 'What good is it?'" The ability of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the greater continuum is a

characteristic of genuine maturity and wisdom in both individuals and nations. My repairman, whether he knew it or not, had achieved a lofty level of understanding.

Presently our planet is experiencing countless life-threatening pressures that are being exerted at an unprecedented mag-

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The United States Forest Service has announced its decision to proceed in a business-as-usual stance with regard to large contiguous areas of pseudo-wilderness landscape. More net loss timber sales, networks of access roads, and developed campgrounds mean even less biological diversity and stability. And fewer bobcats.
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nitude and rapidity. Typically, many Americans regard such crises as being distant and removed, problems to be reckoned with from the recliner via remote control. Now, early in a fresh decade, it is time to take a serious look at some of our traditional attitudes.

What does all this have to do with holistic concepts of ecology and strategies for the salvation of Wisconsin's bobcats? Plainly, everything. Be it Lake Superior bobcats, tropical orchids, Asian cranes, or African rhinos, ecological diversity as a synergistically-whole functioning sphere of life is facing global-scale catastrophe.

To fine-tune this proposition somewhat, let us focus for a moment on Leopold's biblical text titled *Game Management*. Published in 1933 and based on earlier surveys, it is still the foundational work for the discipline of wildlife management even though dramatic changes have occurred in the midwestern countryside since that time.

At about the same time Leopold's book appeared, the initial set of U.S. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) aerial photographs were completed. ASCS photos are taken incrementally and provide a vivid portrayal of the enormous degradation of the American landscape. In many cases, preeminent natural features, particularly vegetation, have been either completely annihilated or altered beyond place-recognition. Clearly, native and wild, uninterrupted living spaces or habitats, specifically optimal quality-intact communities, have reached endangerment. Obviously, the organisms, both botanical and zoological, that are totally dependent on the sheer unbroken size and pristine character of these spaces directly suffer as a result of such losses.

The degree to which an individual plant or animal suffers is related to its general ecology. Those species with constricted ecological amplitudes or low adaptabilities to accelerated change are affected first. Many of these organisms are ultra-spe-

cialized, exhibiting niche-symbiosis, endemism, and low fecundity. Their overall resiliency threshold or bounce-back ability following a population collapse is poor. Species that display such traits represent most of the life-forms now classified as threatened or endangered worldwide.

We are comparatively quick to define the plight of such specialists, but what about the majority of life in the temperate climates that is more moderate or general in habit? For example, think about how life has been for the bobcat since the time of the Great Depression.

Place history should be the cornerstone of all decisions which affect landscape. The past tells us the bobcat was widespread throughout Wisconsin in presettlement times. Specimen records exist for nearly all seventy-two counties. Later, A. W. Schorger's classic studies in eco-history indicate that the cat soon plummeted across its historic range with the advent of mass European invasion. Subsequent logging and agriculture forced the bobcat to retreat to the yet unsettled northern fringes of its natural range.

By evolution the cat has been selected to occupy a share of the trophic apex, most commonly in old-growth forests having a relatively dense midstory with at

least some coniferous element in the composition. Wet-mesic to hydric white cedar—black spruce—alder swamps are preferred habitats. Save but a small number of scientific areas, all of which lack size, Wisconsin's prime bobcat habitat is gone.

Addressing biological resiliency, the bobcat is a moderate. Not as specialized as the other indigenous felids of the northern latitudes, namely the lynx and puma, nor as undifferentiated as a farm cat, the bobcat persists in places only marginally suitable to meet its requirements for survival. The creature's innate eco-durability is the paramount reason for its continuance. To be sure, everything humanly possible has been done to keep the bobcat in check.

In 1914 the Animal Damage Control Act authorized the secretary of agriculture to "promulgate the best methods of erad-



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*The past tells us the bobcat was widespread
 throughout Wisconsin in presettlement
 times.*

ication, suppression and control of mountain lions, wolves, coyotes, bobcats, prairie dogs, gophers, ground squirrels, jackrabbits and other animals injurious to agriculture." In that same year, the Earth lost John Muir and Martha—the final flutter of the passenger pigeon.

Referring to the old Wisconsin Conservation Department booklet "Wisconsin Wildlife" published in 1954, I note that 740 wildcats were reported killed in Wisconsin during the 1952-3 season. The total estimated pelt value was \$680.80, which computes to 92 cents a cat. The same lethal ledger shows a "take" of 2,664 "wolves and coyotes," with no distinction made between the two canids. Bounties paid for both species combined equaled \$1,545.12, or 58 cents per animal. Today, the wolf is a federally protected endangered organism and the penalty for killing one, at least on bureaucratic paper, can subject the violator to incarceration and hefty forfeitures.

The same source states that the bobcat is "fairly common throughout the northern part of Wisconsin" and that "every living thing seems to have a purpose." (Author's emphasis) The Wisconsin Conservation Department also ranked the economic value or goodness level of each wild life-form. For example, the Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks are rated as "harmful," while the peregrine falcon is a boring "neutral." The publication also records that the great horned owl is "harmful in settled communities"!

Looking farther back, one can find in Volume 1 of *The Geology of Wisconsin*, published in 1883 and based on data collected from 1873-1879, the "economic relations of our birds." About the pinnated grouse or prairie chicken it states: "... a common resident, but rapidly disappearing before the zeal of sportsmen." The wild or passenger pigeon was fond of chestnuts, so it says, a scene now unrestorable. But it also notes, on page 461, item seven, that "the scientific, educational and aesthetic value of birds, though mentioned last, is not the least consideration which should challenge the thoughtful and influential whenever a bird is proposed for extermination." Certainly not a statement that Earth First! would be proud of, but nonetheless an important one for its vintage.

The trio of members representing the family *Felidae* indigenous to Wisconsin are mentioned briefly in this early work. They are listed as panther, Canada lynx, and wildcat, with their abundance noted respectively as rare, medium rare, and frequently common. All are judged by Moses Strong to be "carnivorous and injurious."

What may have been Schorger's last article appeared in Volume 61 of the *Transactions* of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, published in 1973, about a year after Schorger's death. It is titled "The Mammals of Dane County" and is a short synopsis of the area's presettlement mammalia. He

includes several accounts of lynx killed in Dane County and says that "the bobcat was formerly common in the county but is now extinct."

Hartley Jackson's 1961 *Mammals of Wisconsin* says that "even in years of cycle peak there are possibly some 2,500 to 3,000 bobcats in the entire state." Jackson notes their distribution as being statewide and that bobcat pelts seldom net as much as two dollars. He further alludes to the cat's economic status by saying the bobcat possesses slight value in its preying on overly

abundant rabbits and mice, but on the other hand it destroys many rabbits during cycle lulls and ebbs that could otherwise be used as "game" by sportsmen. He also provides methods and specifications for effective bobcat trapping and warns us against making them pets.

The premier significance of history lies in its ability to clarify the present. Pertaining to the bobcat, and ecological integrity in general, it behooves us to periodically blow the dust from yellowed records, if only to remind ourselves of the gradient we are on. Our history clearly suggests that the process

of environmental deterioration on this continent originated with the initial onslaught of European intrusion and has rapidly accelerated since. Simply, North America is no longer the same place. Neither by Nature nor anthropic influence do things remain static; life, and all that it holds, is dynamic. What constituted a breakthrough in knowledge sixty years past, does no more. Many long-cherished theorems are no longer sacred and may no longer be applicable. Plainly, the rules of the "game" have drastically changed.

Bobcats were completely unprotected in Wisconsin until 1970. Then, in the words of the state's Department of Natural Resources, "the agency had the desire to *elevate* the species to *game* animal status." (Author's emphasis) Thus a five-and-one-half-month season began. The season has since been progressively shortened to the current two-and-one-half-month period.

Until 1980 there was no limit on the number of bobcats a hunter could kill in a given season. For the past decade, a one-cat-per-hunter limit has been in effect. Hunters, particularly those that pursue bobcats with rifle, radio, and dog, favor the scarcer, larger male specimens, with the smaller females being disproportionately represented in the kill tallies—so much so in fact that in late 1979, a United States district court in Washington, D.C., found Wisconsin, as well as eight other states, to be delinquent in matters of bobcat protection. According to the complaint, which names the plaintiff as Defenders of Wildlife, Inc., versus the defendant, cited as the Endangered Species Scientific Authority (a part of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service), nine states, including this one, have failed to comply with the requirements set forth by the Convention on Interna-

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"The greatness of a nation
and its moral progress can
be judged by the way its
animals are treated."
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tional Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora, known by the acronym CITES, a treaty of the United States. The court's findings of fact specifically alleged that Wisconsin's management efforts failed to adequately protect the bobcat. The court noted that trapping pressure is increasing and the resultant "harvest" is declining throughout much of the cat's former range, where it was previously thought to be common. The ruling further stated that track count surveys verify the declines and that twice as many females as males are being killed.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources research report No. 123 (Creed and Ashbrenner, 1983), titled "Bobcat Harvest and Population Trends in Wisconsin, 1973-81," briefly addresses the issue of habitat. Included is a passage that reads: "Bobcat habitat within the primary range appears to be quite secure except near highly developed lake regions. Conifer types in the north are increasing in acreage, a trend that should generally favor bobcats." The statement does not mention that this expansion in northern coniferous acreage is entirely in the form of young, monotypic, monstructural, often hybrid or exotic, even-aged row plantings growing almost exclusively for industrial purposes. Such sterile *plantations* should not be construed as being substitutions for complex *forests*. I submit that most of this

increase in coniferous area is in actuality an ecological void that suppresses the bobcat, as well as a myriad of other wild life-forms. Solitary roamers such as the bobcat that are dependent, at least partially, upon gymnospermous communities, require these habitats in the form of mature boreal forests, cedar/spruce swamps (which are not reproducing due to unnaturally high deer browsing pressure), and ancient pineries. None of these community types "are increasing in acreage" in Wisconsin; all are acutely endangered. Fragmented "woodlots," pinefields, and cutover aspen uplands offer nothing to favor sentient creatures that have evolved in regions of roadless solitude.

The United States Forest Service has announced its decision to proceed in a business-as-usual stance with regard to large contiguous areas of pseudo-wilderness landscape. More net loss

timber sales, networks of access roads, and developed campgrounds mean even less biological diversity and stability. And fewer bobcats.

As I confessed earlier, I killed for sport throughout my youth. But things do change, as they must. Earth evolves, people evolve, cultures evolve. Life is dynamic! Gandhi once said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." And Aldo Leopold prophetically asked, "At what point will governmental conservation, like the mastodon, become handicapped by its own dimensions?"

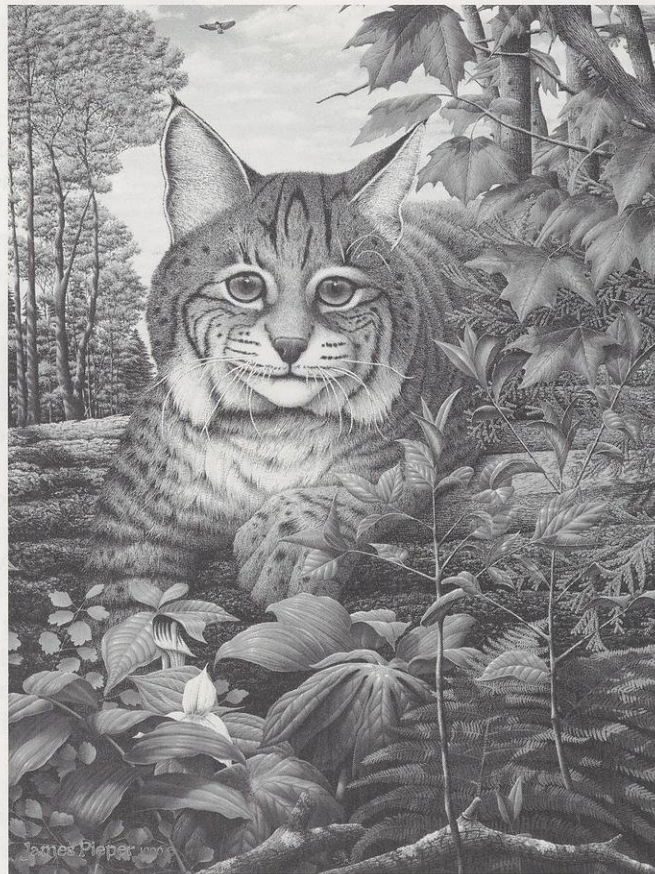
As we lean into a new century, we face the most profound set of decisions in human history. As people and their collective cultures grow in understanding and compassion, it will be necessary for us to abandon those traditions, rituals, and beliefs that no longer serve in the community's behalf. This is especially applicable to the biological professions. The traditional practice of wildlife management must shed an instar and grow into the art of wildlife restoration. Single or preferred species "game management," as well as other purely utilitarian "resource" approaches, should be revised in favor of holistic habitat restoration and whole-landscape ecology. We must think and act synergistically!

Like Thoreau, bobcats are reclusive yet quietly social and prefer to walk at night because, as Thoreau wrote, "by dark there is less of man in the world." What are dead cats *really* good for? By

Nature, nutrition only; by archaic tradition, vanity garments, tavern ornaments, and cabin rugs. But the breathing bobcat is "good" for much more. Such wild beings are inalienably entitled to chase snowshoe hares, scream at the moon, and sleep under rolling thunder. As Thoreau wrote, "In wildness is the preservation of the world." I submit that in the salvation of bobcats lies the preservation of Wisconsin's wildness.

Oil painting and ink drawing by James Pieper.

This article is based on a paper given at a tri-state symposium, initiated by the author, titled "The Secret Life of the Solitary Bobcat: Survival Strategies for the 90s" held in Wausau on March 10, 1990.



Elsa Ulbricht: An Unquenchable Spirit

by Janet Treacy

"It was all for art." Elsa Ulbricht

Elsa Ulbricht was an acclaimed artist, educator, performer, and leader. She had style, a strong sense of self, and an independent spirit which led her to act upon ideas which were considered unusual for women of her time. Her pioneer work in the arts and her contributions to the Wisconsin arts community were far-reaching and remain evident more than a decade after her death. She continued in the tradition set by that early group of Milwaukee aesthetic visionaries which included Richard Lorenz, Alexander Mueller, Louis Mayer, and Edward Steichen, and for forty years she influenced scores of aspiring fellow artists at the Ox Bow Summer School of Painting in Saugatuck, Michigan. But Milwaukee was her home base, and for more than sixty years she served as a creative and dynamic force in the city's cultural life.



Elsa Ulbricht on the dunes at Saugatuck, Michigan (circa 1918).

Ulbricht was born in Milwaukee in 1886, daughter of Oswald and Augusta Ulbricht, and she lived in her family home at 914 N.28th Street most of her life. Her parents encouraged creativity and appreciation of music, and they designated the spacious attic of their home as a place for freedom and play. This home and the open environment she enjoyed there remained important to Ulbricht even as an adult. On June 5, 1966, she wrote to her friend Carl Sandburg,

I am at home in my still lovely old house built by my father in 1894, with high ceilings and selected woods of solid birch and oak. And tho I spend much time in Saugatuck, I come here whenever it is possible. . . . It has made me feel very nostalgic. I am in the midst of looking over my own "archives" before submitting to the march of the destruction that is taking place in Milwaukee in the name of progress.

Her grandfather, Henry Buestrin, came to Milwaukee from Germany in 1839 and was widely known in the construction industry. He attracted attention because of the somewhat unorthodox methods he used in solving engineering problems, but he probably is best remembered as builder of the landmark Milwaukee Water Tower.

As a child Ulbricht retrieved scraps of wood from her grandfather's business, which she made into toys, and she was fascinated by the various sizes and shapes. A

family friend in the printing business gave her trimmings from colored paper which she also used in creative play. A small, shy child with curly hair, she thought of herself as something of a non-entity and hated being a girl, believing boys enjoyed more freedom. Raised with three younger brothers and with playmates who mostly were boys, she was interested in dolls only because of the clothes she could design for them from scraps of cloth that found their way to that magical place, the Ulbricht attic.

During her years at West Division High School in Milwaukee she had some problems with German and physics—she sensed that her teachers disliked females in their classes—but she did well in math, grammar, and athletics. Her high school years apparently were uneventful, but during this time she began developing leadership and physical skills by directing play activities and games for her brothers. As her success on the playground increased, so did her self confidence; leadership and problem-solving ability eventually became strong personality traits.

When it was time for her to consider a profession she chose kindergarten education. With her ability to play the piano and sing, along with her talent for art, she glided easily through the curriculum at Milwaukee Normal School, and she taught kindergarten for three years while taking evening classes at the Wisconsin School of Art. Then, motivated by the encouragement of drawing teacher Lucy Doyle Hale and the Ulbricht family along with her own fierce determination to further her career, she enrolled in the art training class at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. With that decision, Elsa's commitment to the field of art was secured. She once stated that her life really began when she started normal school, but it was the Pratt credential that anchored her career in the arts.

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The historical development of the Wisconsin design and craft tradition has its roots in the English movement and the ideals of William Morris (1834-1896) and John Ruskin (1819-1900). These men and their followers reacted against the industrialists' philosophy that removed the worker from the creative process. American industrial society was using machinery in the preparation of materials such as clay and sheet metal; machines refined the nature of craftsmanship but never succeeded in forcing out the value and beauty of the handmade object. With the many changes taking place in material culture, there was logic in American craft artists' efforts to organize design and craft councils. It was a way to recognize the work of craft artists out-



WPA handcraft worker.

side of industry, and it was a vehicle for creating a market for affordable, artistically conceived objects. Elsa Ulbricht was an innovator and leader in this movement in Wisconsin. And she was never held back by conventional notions of what women's roles were expected to be.

Graduating from Pratt in 1911 was perfect timing for Ulbricht, as she was invited to help reorganize the Wisconsin School of Art which had recently become part of the Milwaukee Normal School. She developed the art department curriculum by adding craft courses that were just becoming recognized as fine art. She taught first-year drawing along with crafts, education, and the supervision of practice teachers. She introduced classes in weaving, basketry, bookbinding, and, in later years, puppetry, textile screen printing, graphic arts, costume design, and woodwork. In these early years of the twentieth century so little had been written about craft methods that it was necessary to do a great deal of experimentation. Ulbricht often spent evenings and weekends exploring new techniques and taking courses. With the expansion of the curriculum, new instructors were added, many of whom had studied under Ulbricht and were influenced by her philosophy.

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In 1913 Alexander Mueller introduced Ulbricht to Frederick Fursman, teacher at the Art Institute of Chicago art school, and it was through her friendship with Fursman that she began her long association with the Ox Bow Summer School of Painting at Saugatuck. Fursman had founded the school in 1909 with Walter Marshall Clute, and it was closely associated with the



Study in Rose and Gray, 1927. Oil on canvas, 24 x 25 inches. Collection of the Milwaukee Art Museum (gift of Dr. and Mrs. George Wussow). Photo by Richard Eells.

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Ulbricht's style captured the spirit of the period, though the mood and palette belie the anxieties which were present in America in the 1920s and 1930s.
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alumni of the school at the Art Institute of Chicago. Ox Bow was located on 107 acres of unspoiled natural landscape which had been bequeathed to the school by Chicago architect Thomas Tallmadge, and the environment provided a scenic and inspiring atmosphere for serious art students. Ulbricht eventually succeeded Fursman as director and headed the school for eleven years, and her love of fun, adventure, and excitement became legendary and set the tone for Ox Bow.

In 1935 she was asked to direct a Works Project Administration (WPA) program called the Woman's Work Project. The district director, Harriet Clinton, wanted to develop a handicraft project under the sponsorship of the Milwaukee State Teachers College which would provide work for unemployed and indigent women and enable them to produce articles of the "highest standards." Clinton's plan for keeping people busy was to have them cut patterns from wallpaper books and paste them in scrapbooks; Ulbricht insisted that the work be meaningful, have artistic merit, and be supervised by qualified arts personnel. She also insisted that staff be sensitive to the troubled mental state and low morale of those who were unemployed and be prepared to meet these problems with understanding and concern. These concepts agreed upon, Ulbricht accepted the challenge, remaining on the faculty and at the same time directing the project. During the Depression many college graduates were unemployed; they had studied under Ulbricht, knew her standards were high, and eagerly took these project positions. Bookbinding was the first craft program to be established.

Cut-out pictures were mounted in book form and given to hospitals, nursery schools, and kindergartens. The number of women in the Woman's Work Project swelled from 250 to 900 in just one week! Block printing became the second project. Initially, prints were made on paper and then on cloth which was used to make drapes and bedspreads. The project ultimately employed 5,000 unskilled men and women in the production of dolls, toys, books, costumes, quilts, hooked and woven rugs, furniture, and hand-screened block prints. The program received nationwide attention, and

today some of the materials can be found at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The majority of the work is housed at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

Ulbricht had many interests beyond the field of education. She helped found the Wisconsin Society of Applied Arts in 1916. This group organized so that artists could be informed

about the national art scene, assist fellow artists with exhibiting and marketing opportunities, raise the aesthetic standards of objects in common use, and advance and support all branches of applied arts produced in Wisconsin. It continues its work today as the Wisconsin Designer Crafts Council.

Ulbricht was an avid thespian and participated in all aspects of the Wisconsin Players: as actress, dancer, director, and stage-set and costume designer. This innovative group, founded by Laura Sherry, Zona Gale, and Thomas Dickinson, was the first "little theatre" in America and is considered to be the beginning of the experimental theater movement in this country. Ulbricht also was a charter member of the Walrus Club, along with such early Milwaukee leaders as Faye McBeath, Laura Sherry, Francesco Spicuzza, and Gustave Moeller. This group was formed to bring together journalists, artists, and musicians. They held spirited costume balls each year (except during the four years of the Depression), and enthusiasm for their Saturday night gatherings, for the most part held at Cudahy Towers on Prospect Avenue, never waned.

In 1966 Ulbricht received the governor's award of the Wisconsin Arts Foundation for outstanding

support of the arts. (It pleased her that she received the award, presented by Governor Warren Knowles, the same year it was presented to Georgia O'Keeffe.) In 1971 she was honored by the Milwaukee County Historical Society, and in 1980 she received the Milwaukee Arts Commission award in recognition of her work with the WPA program which established educational and cultural development in the community.

In 1973 Ulbricht's oil paintings, watercolors, graphics, and drawings were displayed at the Charles Allis Art Library



Elsa Ulbricht (circa 1945-1950).

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*Elsa Ulbricht had a personality
 well suited for a creative life. She
 was inclined to reject the norm
 and search for something new.*



Students in front of Ox Bow studio ready for a day of work.

(now Museum). It was her first solo exhibition. For many years she had been recognized as a superb craftsperson, principally as a weaver. When the Allis exhibit was installed, many of her colleagues were surprised to see the extent and artistic quality of her work. Ulbricht's style captured the spirit of the period, though the mood and palette belie the anxieties which were present in America in the 1920s and 1930s. Broad areas of light color and portraits with relaxed poses were her hallmark. Summers spent at Saugatuck allowed her time for painting and printmaking. It is not surprising that the prints reflect scenes of area; she especially was affected by the ever-changing nature of the sand dunes and the charms of the old boathouse, the lighthouse, and the quaint ferry which was the only way to get to the school. The exhibition represented the accomplishments of an amazingly productive, talented, and dedicated artist.

The Allis exhibition in 1973 was the direct result of the efforts of Jeune Nowak Wussow of Wauwatosa, friend and former student of Ulbricht's, and Margaret Fish Rayhill, then curator at the Charles Allis Art Library. The oil paintings, which dated from 1907 when Ulbricht was studying with Alexander Mueller, were discovered in the attic of the old family home during a search for WPA project materials for a 1970 exhibit, "WPA + 35," held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. They had been stored there for some thirty years; they were dusty, dirty, and many of them were stuck together. Wussow painstakingly helped with the restoration.

At age eighty-eight, still vital and active, Ulbricht accompanied Wussow on a trip around the state to retrieve additional artworks for the exhibit. (Today fifteen linoleum and zinc plates

remain with Wussow, who is investigating the possibility of an edition of restrikes with Milwaukee's master printer John Gruenwald.)

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Elsa Ulbricht had a personality well suited for a creative life. She was inclined to reject the norm and search for something new. She believed in freedom of expression for herself and for her students. She advocated change, recognizing new artforms and concepts as they emerged. No obstacle was impossible to overcome. She adopted this philosophy very early in her life and once stated,

I believe in people as individuals and have a live-and-let-live philosophy. I refuse to prod my students. I want to stimulate them to be themselves, to show initiative and effort, and to solve their own problems. I believe in never growing stale. There is always something new and different to be done even with the old.

Ulbricht did not agree with those who called her a bohemian and a rebel. Commenting on this description of herself to James Auer (*The Milwaukee Journal*, February 11, 1973), she said, "It was all for art." She died in 1980 still in possession of her unquenchable spirit.

The author used the personal papers of Elsa Ulbricht in preparing this article. Photos courtesy Jeune Nowak Wussow.



The Art of Elsa Ulbricht: Block Prints

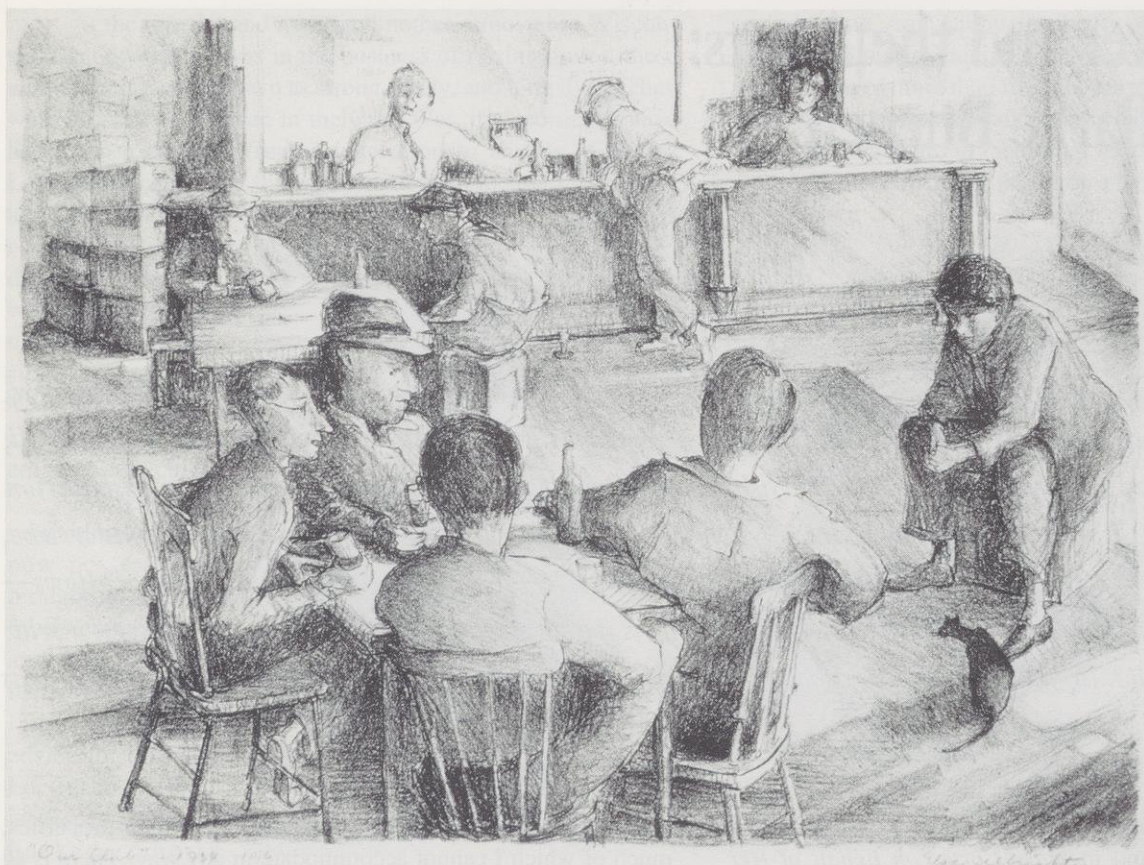


At the Ferry Store, 1937.
Stone lithograph, 9 1/2 x 12
3/4 inches.

Old Wharf, 1935. Zink litho-
graph, 11 1/2 x 16 1/2
inches.



Collection of Jeune Nowak Wussow.
Photos by Richard Eells.



Our Club, 1938. Stone lithograph, 9 3/16 x 13 1/4 inches.

Fishing Boat, 1935. Linoleum block print, 10 x 7 1/2 inches.

Boat Livery, 1935. Linoleum block print, 10 x 10 inches.



Mary Carter and the Aunts: Letter to Parke Burnett

by Hazel F. Briggs

Introduction by Clarence DeSpain

According to legend, the very first time author Hazel F. Briggs saw Mary Carter her mind's eye, Mary was seated on a bench beside a pine-strewn path writing a letter. Intrigued by this "tall, somewhat ungainly" and nice, fortyish strawberry blonde, Briggs soon developed a fascination that would, through letters, span many years in each of their lives. What good fortune for the reader who, through the Carter-Briggs correspondence, is allowed to experience—as nearly as vicarious pleasure allows—Mary Carter's heroic efforts to protect her five maiden aunts from the dangers inherent in the modern world: parking violations, lost luggage, mail-order shopping, and, yes, publishing. Now, due to the demise of the aunts and an inheritance, Mary must come to grips with the estate sale.

"Letter to Parke Burnett" is an addendum to those previous fictional letters found in *Mary Carter on Behalf of Her Aunts* by Hazel F. Briggs (Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1979), most of which also appeared in the *Wisconsin Academy Review* (March, June, September, December 1978 issues).

Briggs doubts that "anything more will or should follow." But since Mary Carter appears still to be very much with us, we shall see.

February 9, 1960

Parke Burnett
Estates and Properties
New York City, New York

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to you regarding the estates of my Aunts, the Misses Elsie, Libbie, Fannie, Ruth, and Grace Leslie, formerly of Madison, Wisconsin, and now unfortunately deceased. However, had they lived up to this time three of my Aunts would have passed the hundred-year mark, and even Aunt Grace, the youngest, who sadly died first, would be well over ninety. This is not surprising when I tell you that my grandfather, Moses Leslie, father of these charming ladies, also lived to a ripe old age as did my grandmother who passed away at the age of eight-seven while hanging out clothes in the back yard.

Now, however, I am not only without the pleasure and company of my dear Aunts, but I am the recipient of their entire

estate and it is incumbent on me to dispose of their properties, much of which I cannot accommodate in any way. There is so much valuable furniture, individual items, jewelry, and other material—all of which has come into my possession.

My dear husband, Mr. Seymour Parsons, who is knowledgeable in matters such as this, being an experienced business man, has suggested that I turn to you for advice as being the most esteemed company dealing with the disposal of estates and properties.

Located as you are in a big city—in fact, New York—you probably had never heard of Mr. Parsons and the work in which he has been engaged these many years. He is now retired. But he was in his day a well known authority on septic tanks and played a significant role, I am sure, in giving advice and help to farmers and rural citizens in Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and even as far west as Nebraska.

Perhaps I should give you a brief summary of the Leslie family so that you may make some judgment of the family and of the properties in my possession.

My grandfather, Moses Pomeroy Leslie, came to Wisconsin in the mid-1860s from New York State and bought considerable land on the outskirts of Madison, now directly across from the cemetery, which was then outlying territory. I am happy to say that this is a Protestant cemetery since the Leslies have always been devout Baptists and it would distress Grandpa Leslie even now to lie directly across from a Papist institution. I do call a cemetery an institution and believe this is a proper designation.

At the time he and my grandmother removed to Wisconsin, Grandpa Leslie was in the business of raising mules, these animals being well known as strong, sturdy, and long lived. They were of great value even in the Civil War, transporting, I have heard, even cannons from one location to another. Grandpa Leslie did prosper, and this is where he built the house where he and Grandma Leslie raised their six daughters, none of whom, except my mother, ever married. My mother, Victoria, married Henry Carter, and I am their only child.

Many of the valuables which I now possess were brought to Madison by my grandparents, and it is on these items that I particularly want your advice for disposal. For instance, there is a sofa—straight-backed, cherry wood, and originally covered with a horsehair material. I can remember when I was a small child the original covering was still on the sofa and I found it very scratchy. The sofa has since been recovered in a rich deep purple velvet and is in remarkably good condition. The woodwork is beautifully carved and it seats three people comfortably in an upright position. But of course we must remember that sitting up straight was expected when entertaining or being entertained in those days.

There are also two companion chairs of cherry wood that have been recovered to match the sofa. Presumably they were also once covered with horsehair material. These chairs are high-backed and not very comfortable to sit on for long. One has a tendency, if relaxing, to slide off. But I have been told these three items are of much value.

I am not sure if you would be interested in the fine Axminster rugs—I think they were called carpets—which lay on the floor of the dining room and parlour. The pattern is badly worn in places, which is not surprising, and I do remember that Aunt Grace when she was in her dying condition did suggest that more cheerful carpets would be pleasant. However, my Aunts did not know then that Aunt Grace was dying, and since the carpets were not

entirely gone, Aunt Libby, the thrifty one, felt the cost would be too high. She did inquire and learned that it would entail an expenditure of more than fifty dollars to replace them, which the Aunts agreed might be called extravagant.

The sideboard in the dining room is of walnut. There is a sterling silver coffee and tea set on a large silver tray on the side-

board which the Aunts kept well polished. This was a gift to my grandmother on her wedding day, and I have decided I should not part with it. This treasured item, therefore, will go to Mr. Parson's niece since Mr. Parsons and I were united in matrimony rather late in life. I would rather not disclose my age, as I am sure you will understand. Suffice it to say we have no progeny to

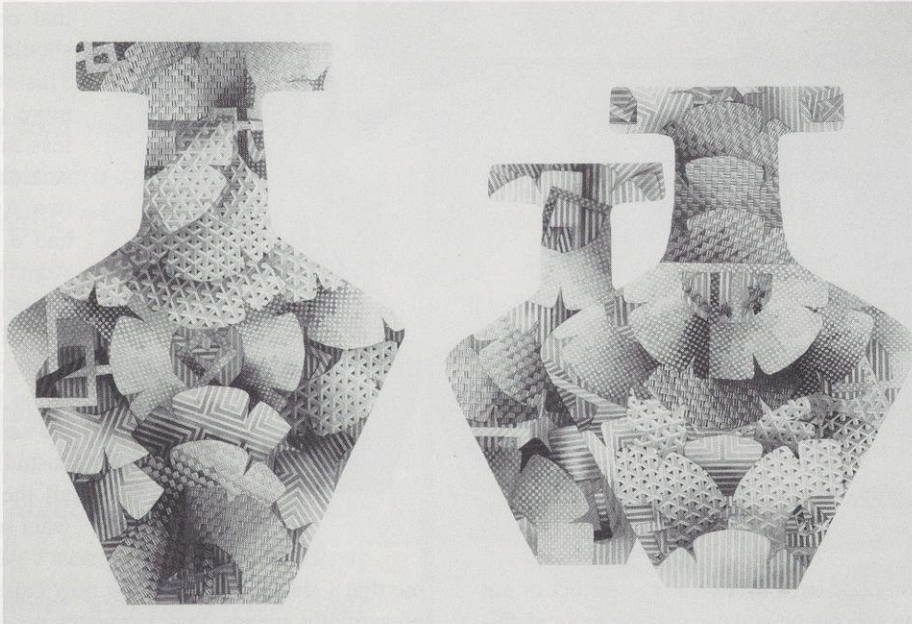
inherit this family heirloom. Although Mr. Parson's niece is not a true member of the Leslie family, the connection is close as you will agree. Happily this young lady is married to a fine young gentleman and they have two lovely children.

The dining room table has four removable leaves, also walnut, and there are seven chairs and a captain's chair with arms—all in good condition and leather covered. The leather is well worn and cracked in many places, never having been replaced since the set was brought to Madison by my grandparents from the East. I do believe there is also horsehair under the leather.

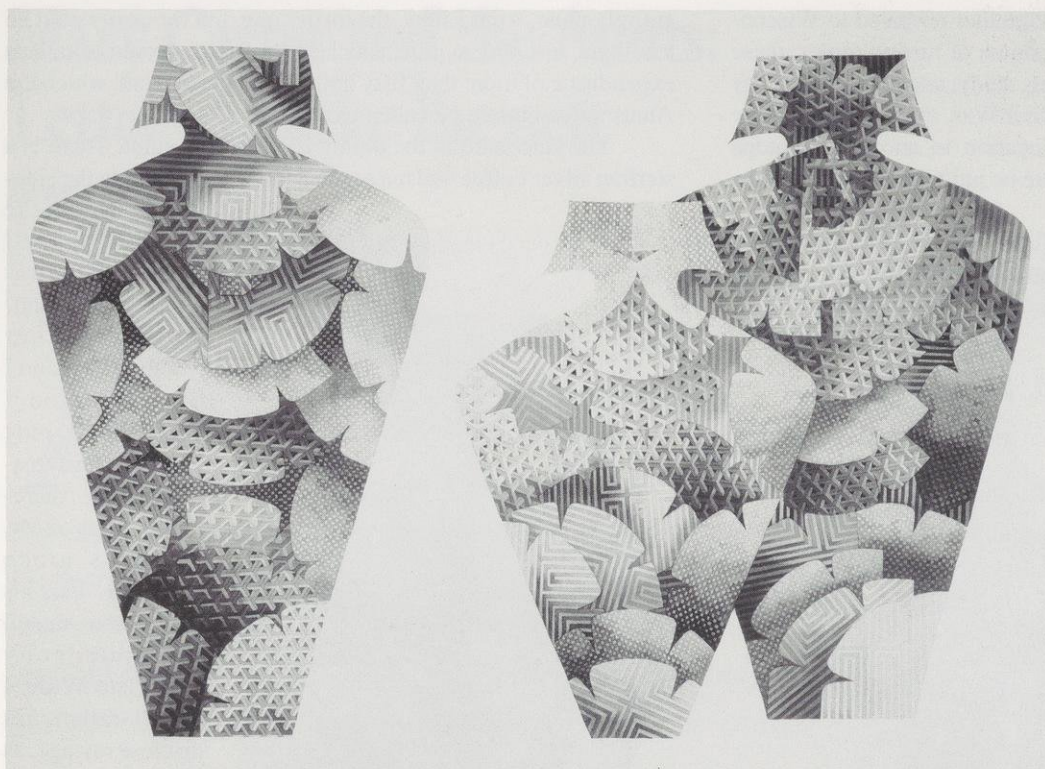
The eating utensils are all Rogers best silver plate—not sterling, which often saddened my Aunts. But when my grandparents were married they were not well off and could not afford the best. However I do believe that not one single fork, knife, or spoon is missing from the

set of twelve. This should surprise you as it does me when one remembers the many years they have been in use.

In the walnut cupboard in the dining room is a complete set of Haviland china—the carnation pattern—and again not a single dish, plate, cup, saucer, or bowl has been broken or lost. I remember the Aunts used it sparingly and there were many



.....
*But of course we must
remember that sitting up
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entertaining or being
entertained in those days.*
.....



arguments when company had been invited as to whether or not the company merited the serving on and use of the Haviland china. There is also a full set of Johnson china—a handsome pattern—which was always used by the Aunts and for guests on most occasions.

Of course when Mr. Parsons and I were united in Holy matrimony, my aunts served the wedding dinner on the Haviland china, even to placing on the table at each place the tiny butter plates, each of which holds only one small pat of butter. In fact, I must tell you that a more festive board was never set by the Aunts in their combined lives, even though I do believe that my Aunt Grace was somewhat put out. Aunt Grace had always hoped throughout her long life to be claimed as a bride, and of course my having achieved matrimony was a sad reminder of her own loss. But that did not mar the joyful and happy occasion.

Upstairs in the master bedroom, as these rooms are now called, bed and dresser and chest of draws all match as does the small commode with its china wash bowl, pitcher, soap dish, and so on. There is a canopy of pink silk over the bed and there is a step stool at the side of the bed as mattress and spring are somewhat elevated. The original horsehair mattress has never been replaced and is, I understand, in good condition. The pink silk in the canopy has not survived well these many years that it has graced the bed. It is in shreds and very dusty. But that can be easily replaced. This room has not been in use since my grandparents died.

There are three more bedrooms in two of which there are also double beds, quite old fashioned, I think, since they are nar-

rower than what is sold nowadays. I do remember that my dear Aunt Ruth who was tiny and a very private person resented having to share a bed with Aunt Grace until it was jointly decided by the Aunts that one of the spare rooms should be designated as hers. This was to give Aunt Ruth more privacy. I have to confess that there had been considerable friction between the two Aunts since Aunt Grace had a tendency to look into Aunt Ruth's dresser drawers without permission.

I enclose a complete list of all there is in the Leslie home to give you an idea of the vast amount of which I am custodian, and I have marked all the items which I do not want sold.

It has been suggested to me that I should have what is now called a garage sale, which presumably means that strangers go through the house and select items, large and small, which they want to purchase at prices set by me. This somehow seems to me to be an invasion of the privacy of my Aunts and I hesitate to do so. What do you think?

Yours very truly,

Mrs. Seymour Parsons, nee Mary Carter

P.S. Mr. Parsons suggests that perhaps the most sensible solution to this problem would be for us to move into the Leslie home since he has no particular attachment to this home where we now reside. This might be the answer since I find it painful to part with as much as a spoon from anything that belonged to my dear Aunts. In that case Mr. Parsons and I can continue to enjoy the sacred trust I have inherited. I shall let you know.

Mary Carter Parsons

Clarence DeSpain contributes time and talent to the Review as an editorial assistant.

Illustrations by Lisa Englander. Vessel Series #2, 1989. Collection of Wisconsin Electric Power Company. Vessel Series #6, 1990. Collection of the artist. Both are transparent watercolor on paper, 30 x 42 inches.

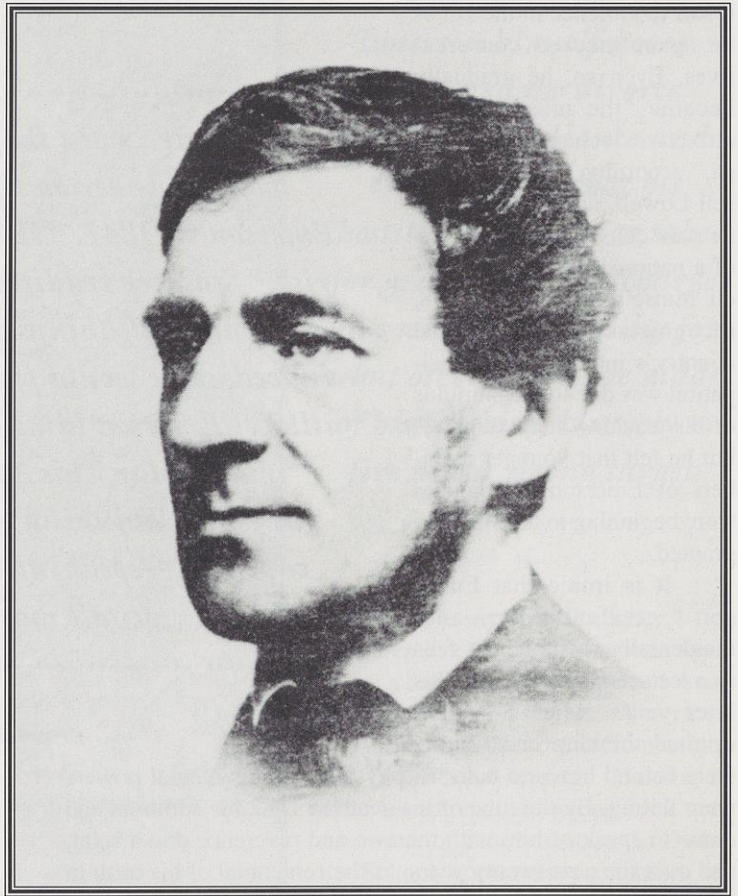
Emerson Then and Now

by Merton M. Sealts, Jr.

The fame of a great man is not rigid and stony like his bust. It changes with time. It needs time to give it due perspective." So said Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1835, in the course of an early lecture on Milton, adding that a man's fame "characterizes those who give it, as much as him who receives it." If this remark was true of Milton's reputation in the nineteenth century, and indeed it was, it is equally applicable to Emerson's own fame in the twentieth, with a genuine Emerson revival under way—a revival that reached something of a high point in 1982, the centennial anniversary of his death, and has continued even more vigorously since that time.

The Emerson revival is a comparatively recent development, as I have cause to know. Nearly thirty years ago, not long after I had joined an editorial team working on a projected scholarly edition of Emerson's *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, a concerned colleague from another discipline paid a special visit to my study to give me a friendly warning:

since Emerson had nothing to say to present generations, it would be the ruin of my professional career if I became known as an "Emersonian." But I have survived professionally, and by 1982 the new edition of the *Journals* stood complete in sixteen volumes. A scholar already known for his two books on Emerson, Joel Porte, has since published a volume of selections from the complete text called *Emerson in His Journals*, intended primarily for the general reader, and other Emersonians—or would-be Emersonians—have come out of the closet everywhere. More than two dozen books on Emerson have appeared



Ralph Waldo Emerson. This is a seldom-reproduced portrait of Emerson identified only as "Emerson in London, 1847-48" by Joel Porte in his book *Emerson in His Journals*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982.) Reprinted with permission of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

since the 1950s, and I know of several more, including one of mine, that are either in progress or actually in press. Once again, Emerson is "in."

During Emerson's own day his fame developed only gradually, first in his native New England through the 1820s and 1830s, then in the mid-Atlantic states and across the ocean in England and Scotland during the 1840s, and finally in what was then "the West"—Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin—during the 1850s. In these years he became known initially as a preacher, then as a lecturer, an essayist, and a poet. To

many listeners and readers, however, he was a controversial figure. His address to the senior class at the Harvard Divinity School in 1838 outraged conservative Unitarians and led one of them, Andrews Norton—nicknamed “the Unitarian Pope”—to fulminate in a celebrated *Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity*. In secular affairs, Emerson’s long refusal to turn his hatred of slavery into political activism disappointed his more radical contemporaries in the Abolitionist movement, but when he approved John Brown’s resort to violence in the 1850s he again shocked conservatives. Even so, he gradually became “the most steadily attractive lecturer in America,” according to James Russell Lowell, and by the 1860s he was considered something of a national institution. Lowell himself, writing in 1868, recognized “how much the country’s intellectual emancipation was due to the stimulus of his teaching and example,” but he felt that younger members of Emerson’s audiences were beginning to take him for granted.

It is ironic that Emerson’s greatest fame—and, incidentally, his highest fees as a lecturer—came during his later years, when his most original thinking and writing were behind him and both his physical and his mental powers were failing. By the time of his death in 1882 his admirers had come to speak of him with the awe and reverence due a saint, and over the next twenty years, as the centennial of his birth in 1803 approached, Emerson’s biographers and critics erected a kind of statue whose “shape and pose . . . clashed with the figure of the man and the spirit of his beliefs.” I quote here the words of H. L. Kleinfield from a fascinating essay in cultural history called “The Structure of Emerson’s Death,” in which Kleinfield explores what newspapers and magazines were saying about Emerson as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth. It was just that “rigid and stony” image against which later generations were to react so strongly, beginning with the general revolt against one’s parents and grandparents, literal or figurative, that characterized the years of World War I and the decade that followed it. That nineteenth-century writers like Emerson in this country and Matthew Arnold in England had become symbols of all that the young of that period rejected is tellingly illustrated in a poem of 1915 by T. S. Eliot about “Cousin Nancy”: her aunts look on in obvious puzzlement as she pursues everything that is “modern,” while “Matthew and Waldo” keep their silent watch “upon the glazen shelves.”

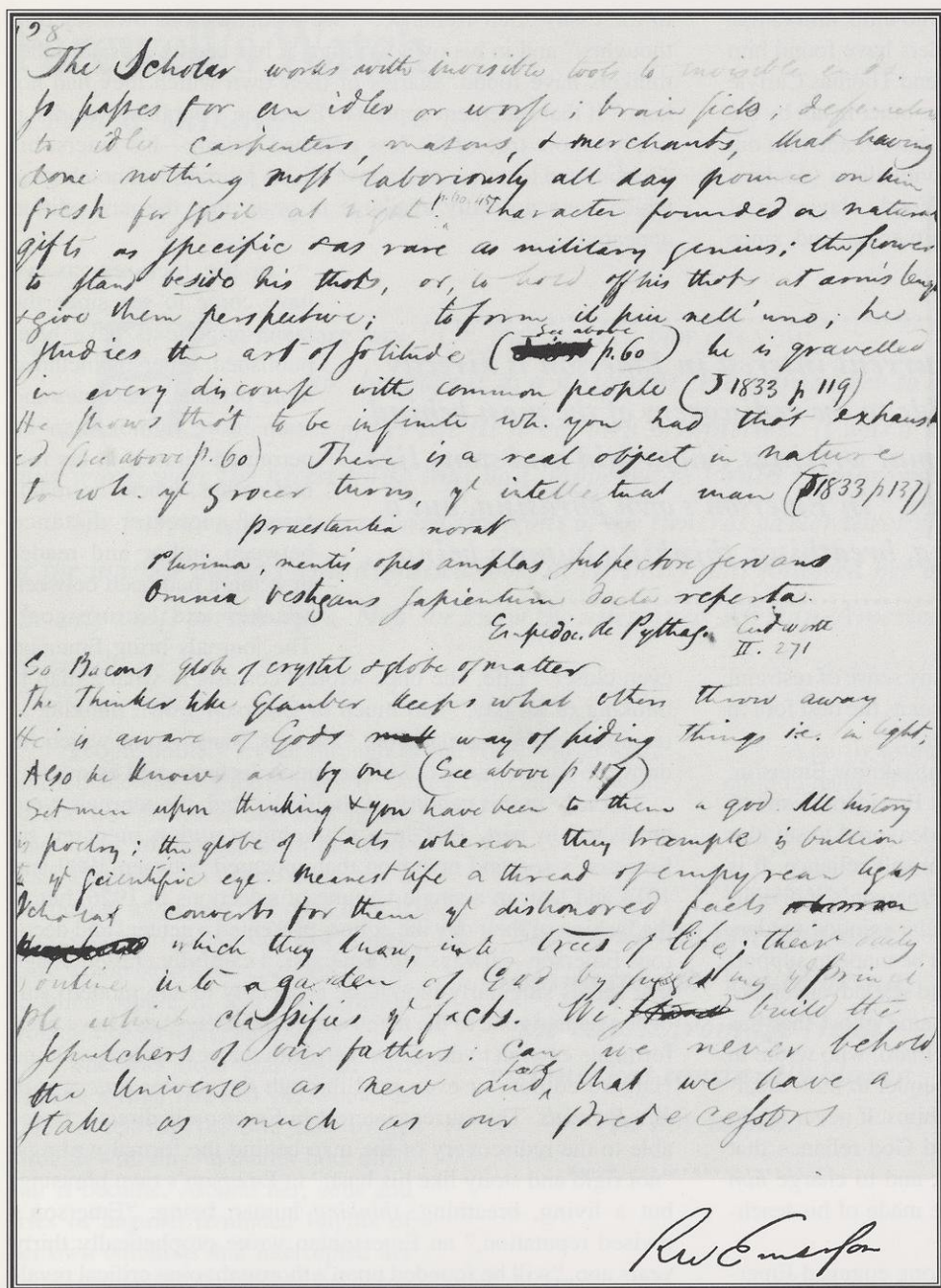
It was that very conception of Emerson as an inflexible “guardian of the faith” and champion of “unalterable law” that was in the mind of my colleague of the 1960s who warned me that for the twentieth century, Waldo Emerson was not only dead but forever incapable of resurrection. Yet it is not difficult to show how greatly the living figure of Emerson himself and the life-giving spirit of his writings contrast with this lifeless image. For a typical example, consider the opening paragraph of his first book, *Nature*, published in 1836 when he was thirty-three:

.....
*“Beware when the great God lets
 loose a thinker on this planet,” said
 Emerson in 1841. “Then all things are at
 risk.” Staunch traditionalists do not like
 to think of all things as being “at risk”;
 indeed, some would prefer not to think at
 all! Yet Emerson himself characterized his
 “true scholar,” his American Scholar,
 as “Man Thinking”—capital M and
 capital T—speaking for all mankind
 to all mankind.*

Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? . . . [W]hy should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquer-

ade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

Words such as these made Emerson appear a dangerous radical to some of his own contemporaries, just as certain men of *this* century who have worked innovatively in the Emersonian spirit—Frank Lloyd Wright, for an apt example—have seemed beyond the pale to followers of tradition rather than insight. “Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet,” said Emerson in 1841. “Then all things are at risk.” Staunch traditionalists do not *like* to think of all things as being “at risk”; indeed, some would prefer not to think at all! Yet Emerson himself characterized his “true scholar,” his *American Scholar*, as “Man Thinking”—capital M and capital T—speaking *for* all mankind *to* all mankind. And what he liked to call “the scholar’s courage” was a form of self-reliance, his cardinal principle. As early as 1833, when he was thirty, he affirmed that “A man contains all that is needful to his government within himself. He is made a law unto himself. All real good or evil that can befall [I] him must be from himself. He only can do himself



Journal page on The Scholar (1836) which includes a sentence used later the same year by Emerson in Nature. Reprinted with permission of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association and The Houghton Library at Harvard University.

any good or any harm. . . . The purpose of life seems to be to acquaint a man with himself." Then comes the key sentence: "The highest revelation is that God is in every man."

For Waldo Emerson, as these remarkable words should make crystal-clear, the vital center of his thinking, and especially of his concept of self-reliance, was his intuitive certainty of a divine presence within the private self. On this moral and religious basis he deplored imitation of any model, however fine, and refused conformity to all wholly external patterns, rituals,

creeds, sects, parties, precedents, curricula, or institutions of any kind, including churches, colleges, and governments. The law he followed, though wholly internal, was rigorous: "If any one imagine that this law is lax," as he

.....
 Emerson himself never
 advocated the divorce
 between self-reliance and
 God-reliance that his
 hostile critics seem to take
 for granted, and to charge
 him with responsibility for
 what other men have made
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 fire at the wrong target.

said in his essay "Self-Reliance," "let him keep its commandments one day." When a man can look within and "read God directly," as "The American Scholar" has it, the hour is too precious for second-hand readings. Holding to this conviction, and looking back with a measure of detachment on the Divinity School controversy of 1838, he could write two years later that "In all my lectures I have taught one doctrine, namely, the infinitude of the private man." His conception of "the private man," essentially religious, idealistic, and optimistic, was the basis of his faith in democracy, in "a nation of men" in which each individual is—potentially if not actually—"inspired

by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men."

From Emerson's day to our own, many listeners and readers have ignored or misconstrued both the religious and the democratic implications of his thought. In 1860, for example, a Wisconsin newspaper, the Kenosha Democrat, labeled him as both "an infidel" and "a monarchist"; in the twentieth century, though Unitarians and Universalists have come to terms with him, there are still orthodox Trinitarians who regard him as

heretical, as there are political egalitarians who think him elitist. Both then and now, some listeners and readers have found him obscure or impractical; even his Scottish friend Thomas Carlyle once called his writings "moonshine." On the other hand, by the principle of guilt by association, still others have made him out to be an apostle of American rugged individualism (Andrew Carnegie read Emerson, and so now does Woody Hayes) or of German fascism: Friedrich Nietzsche read Emerson, and, since Adolf Hitler read Nietzsche, Emerson somehow begat Hitler's version of the *Übermensch*. In a baccalaureate address of 1981 the president of Yale University added his indictment on the basis of a single essay, "Power" (1860), charging Emerson with worshiping sheer naked energy and force: through his teaching, declared the late A. Bartlett Giamatti, Emerson

"freed our politics and our politicians from any sense of restraint by extolling self-generated, unaffiliated power as the best foot to place in the small of the back in front of you."

To those with Yale associations who also know Emerson, these were fighting words, and I'm sure that President Giamatti heard from more than one alumnus who endeavored to set him straight about the real nature of Emersonian self-reliance. It is undeniably true, however, that if one cuts Emerson's individualism loose from its religious roots, as secular-minded readers and skeptical critics may very well do, it *can* be made to support a frightening concept of self-centeredness and self-advancement at the expense of others—essentially the same ghost that has haunted political theorists since the time of Plato, who wrote in the *Republic* that tyranny is the necessary sequel to individualism and the democratic state. But Emerson himself never advocated the divorce between self-reliance and God-reliance that his hostile critics seem to take for granted, and to charge *him* with responsibility for what other men have made of his teaching is surely to fire at the wrong target.

On the more positive side, what has long engaged Emersonians is less a body of doctrine than the spirit of the man himself. "We do not go to hear what Emerson says so much as to hear Emerson," wrote Lowell in the nineteenth century; during my years in the classroom I used to be told something very similar by students about *reading* Emerson. At first many of them were puzzled, expecting to find in his writings the kind of logical arguments and reasoned conclusions that are the staples of academic philosophy. But Emerson was not a philosopher, or a theologian, or even an academic. In his own self-image he was simply "the Scholar," and for him, as we know, the true scholar was never "a mere thinker" but a surrogate for all mankind: the Scholar is "*Man Thinking*." "In every work of genius," he wrote

in the essay "Self-Reliance," "we recognize our own rejected thoughts," and in his own writings, it has been well said, other thinkers have found "diaries of their own which they had not kept." If that statement applies to Emerson's published works, it is even more true of his less polished writing—his letters, his sermons and lectures, and, above all, his journals and notebooks, which were not fully available in print until the new edition appeared.

In the lectures, as we have come to see since the manuscript texts have been published, Emerson included more personal anecdotes and even more humor than he permitted himself in his formal essays, where he maintained a greater distance between author and reader than there had been between speaker and lecture-goer.

The journals bring Emerson

even closer. "Life," he once wrote, "consists in what a man is thinking of all day," and much of Emerson's own thinking is recorded in the journals, the "Savings Bank" from which he drew the basic material of his sermons, lectures, and essays.

Early in this century, it should be said, the journals were published in part, first in a ten-volume edition prepared by Emerson's son and grandson that appeared between 1909 and 1914 and later in a single volume of selections in 1926, but in the fashion of their day the editors presented a genteel and decorous Emerson—always *Mr. Emerson*, a carefully crafted image that seems singularly bloodless, especially to any modern student who has gone to the manuscripts themselves as I have been fortunate enough to do, or worked with the new sixteen-volume Harvard edition, or even read through the shorter *Emerson in His Journals*. The current interest in Emerson is directly traceable to the rediscovery of the man behind the formal writings, "not rigid and stony like his bust," in Emerson's own phrasing, but a living, breathing, *thinking* human being. "Emerson's revised reputation," an Emersonian wrote prophetically thirty years ago, "will be founded upon a thoroughgoing critical reevaluation of the Journals." Much work since then has indeed been *journal-centered*, and such study has in turn served to modify presentation of Emerson in the classroom and to the general public.

Of course there have always been readers of Emerson, from his own day to ours, who knew all along that the man was alive in his writings. But for others, those who for the first time have gone behind the long-prevailing public image, what Emerson himself said of a man's changing reputation has certainly proved true: his fame not only "needs time to give it due perspective," but it "characterizes those who give it, as much as him who receives it."

Farewell's Watch

by Paul M. McInerney

"Hi, how are you." Or, was it, "Hi, how are you?" No, he spoke it as a statement. He wanted her to be all right, a wish to have every little facet of her life fit to her own satisfaction. It was a wish for peace on her terms. Those four words were the nicest thing that had happened to Phyllis Dombrowski on Tuesday.

She burrowed her way toward the front of the funeral parlor through the throngs of people very conscious of the masked glances and disguised looks of curiosity that followed her every move. Phyllis Dombrowski was the only white person there. Now she knew the uneasiness African-Americans must feel when the situation was reversed.

People politely let her through as she edged closer to the coffin that contained the remains of Dextra Demond. She wanted one last glance at him and, in her inner heart, to thank him for his kindness. Phyllis wasn't sure what she'd tell people as to why she was here if directly confronted. She had hoped there would be at least a handful of other white people so that her intrusion wouldn't be so noticeable.

She was tired and hoped that through a final farewell she would be able to rest again. She had to go through with this no matter how difficult it became. Around her, sobs and cries of anguish reminded Phyllis of her own outbursts that interrupted her daily routine and challenged her peace of mind. Normal people just don't start crying for no reason, a dishwasher at work had chided her just this morning.

The nightmares, too, were disturbing her sleep. She needed to rest and was hoping tonight would bring the respite from the fitful visions that constantly blared in her mind.

A man whom she bumped into spoke to her through a blue-black beard that curled in a tightly sculptured web framing his face. She didn't understand a word he said. She smiled back and nodded as she kept moving forward. She emerged from the crowd to stand painfully alone not six feet from the coffin, awkwardly aware of the stares and glances behind her. Perhaps the man in the crowd had tried to warn her that she should turn back. A cold sweat enveloped her body.

A portly woman with what appeared to be a three-year-old child in hand—Phyllis was never good at guessing the ages of children—approached her.

"I'm Dextra's sister," the woman stated bluntly, inviting an identification from this stranger at her brother's final day above earth.

"I'm . . ." Phyllis didn't know what to say. Dear God, she prayed, let me say something and please keep me from crying.

She cleared her throat. "I didn't know your brother. But he spoke to me. I was there. I . . ."

"You were the witness." The black woman's face lit in a manner implying welcome.

"Yes."

"You said he spoke to you?" Dextra's sister seemed surprised.

"Yes. He said hello and wished me well." Phyllis took the liberty to convey his intent.

"I'm surprised," the shorter woman replied, puzzled. "You see, Dextra didn't care much for white people."

"He did wish me well, honestly."

"I believe you," she said looking off in the distance, ignoring the tugging child at her side.

The two women stood silent, and each briefly studied the other's face. The black woman finally grabbed Phyllis's arm and gently guided her up to the coffin. They stood together as

.....
*She needed to rest and was
hoping tonight would bring
the respite from the fitful
visions that constantly blared
in her mind.*
.....

sisters somehow joined, if only for this moment, by the hatred of the world.

"Hi, how are you," echoed inside Phyllis's head.

In a strange way, Phyllis was paying her first and last respects. She had only smiled back at his greeting that sunny afternoon out behind the hospital where she worked. She had been caught off guard by this stranger's friendly gesture, and she hadn't spoken back. By the time she turned at the awful popping sounds, he had fallen to the ground and was struggling to hang on to his life.

Phyllis prayed a Hail Mary, both for the repose of his soul and to give her strength. She left Dextra's sister with an exchange of glances that wished the other well in their brief appreciation of life, if only for a moment.

Departing seemed much easier as she hurried through the crowd. She was glad she had visited the funeral home tucked along a darkened street deep in the inner city. Never before had she ventured to that side of town, known for its violence, hopelessness, and desperation; and Phyllis suspected she might not be back again.

Hours later, the image of Dextra Demond struggling to retain his life, blood pouring from the bullet holes, still plagued Phyllis. Seeing him and thanking him in her inner thoughts had not been the remedy she had thought it would be.

He was a pursued robber who had taken money from a liquor store along with the necklace and watch of a customer, and had been cornered by police in the employee parking lot of the hospital, the newspaper account

.....
*In her austere room, the watch
glowed with a regal radiance
casting a small prism on her wall.
She tried it on.*
.....



reported. The woman customer was quoted concerning her “horrible experience” with “such an awful man.”

At work, in the hospital’s kitchen, Phyllis stared off blankly and fell behind in her duties when Dextra Demond’s death invaded her thoughts. A necklace, watch, and \$147. People glared at her when she gave in to the emotions from her experience. She couldn’t confide in anyone; no one would be able to understand. Phyllis worked her shift in the hospital’s secluded basement, translating menu checks to food trays sorted by wings, floors, and then rooms so the orderlies could get them to their proper destinations. That was most of her life. From there, she’d go home to her two-room apartment above a pharmacy in a turn-of-the-century brick building and pass time through the boredom of television, gossip magazines, and an occasional telephone conversation with a lonely acquaintance still pretending to be a friend. Having her life disrupted by someone who just said hello to her simply wouldn’t be understood. Phyllis knew she’d be ridiculed.

“A witness was present,” the newspaper account had ended. Seeing a human life come to an end with a reticent struggle, summarized by a last heaving gasp to hold on, was much more valuable—yes, that was the proper term, she assured herself—than any necklace and watch, or money. Something valuable could be troublesome, as was her experience.

At 11:50 a.m., Phyllis, as she did every day, left the hot kitchen and went off for a forty-five-minute break. Since last Tuesday, she had avoided re-tracing the route that had led her past Dextra Demond. But today she would try forcing herself to take that scheduled walk out of the hospital’s back entrance, through the parking lot, and . . . she couldn’t remember where she had been headed. The visit to the funeral home, despite having mustered all her courage, had done nothing to relieve her own pain.

She carefully stepped out the back way. It was a day cleansed by the movement of the trees and stirring of the wind under a penetrating sun. Dextra’s last day had been just as sunny, but Phyllis remembered it as having been calm. An eerie stillness gripped her mind as she gingerly walked down the concrete steps and out onto the asphalt parking lot. The faded yellow directional strips that kept order were undermined by a mosaic of cracks that ran in every direction. Attempts to fill the larger crevices had only added to the chaotic patterns that disrupted the surface. A truly systematic person would get lost trying to park in this lot.

Here it all happened, on this spot. Her head bobbed up. “Hi, how are you.” He had been sweating, evidently from run-

ning. His face wore a haunted, hunted look that was belied by a sense of peace deep in his rich, brown eyes.

“I’m fine, thank you. That’s very nice of you to say.” She spoke loudly and clearly as if Dextra would still hear her.

A thousand fingers rushed up her spine to grip her with the singe of death as Phyllis reached the spot opposite the dumpsters, frozen in remembering the pop, pop, pop, pop sounds that crackled through the air. She turned and imagined the young patrol officer crouched behind a car as he had last Tuesday. He looked too young to be allowed to use a gun.

That Tuesday, hours after the shooting, the young officer, ashen with reality despite the accolades and backpats of comrades, had told Phyllis, “He could have taken you hostage.” But he didn’t, he didn’t even try.

This day she again turned her thoughts to Dextra’s withering body that had laid on the ground, helpless, from his ripped and bleeding organs. The entire world had fallen into a morbid deafness as Dextra emitted slight heaves of unaccepted defeat.

“It’s all right Dextra, I understand.” She knelt over the dark, splotchy area on the faded asphalt that marked his last minutes.

In a crack in the concrete she spied a dirt-spattered watch. Phyllis tugged it out and stood up. It wasn’t Tuesday, but Friday. Carefully, she scanned the parking lot and windows of the patients’ rooms overlooking it. No one had seen her. She sighed a breath of relief and continued her walk, circling the hospital complex.

At home, with toothpicks and an old toothbrush, Phyllis carefully picked and scrapped away the dirt and mud that had filled every nook of the woman’s watch which Dextra had pushed into the lot’s crevice as his final act. Had he intended for Phyllis to return it to the rightful owner? Did he hide it for her to find?

Under the mud-caked covering, Phyllis discovered a dainty little watch that was quite beautiful. She didn’t know the value of good jewelry, but sensed that this was well above her price range. It was hard to tell if the little sparkles around the band were diamond chips or a cheaper kind of inlay. In her austere room, the watch glowed with a regal radiance casting a small prism on her wall. She tried it on.

“Thank you, Dextra.”

Initially with the intention of returning the watch to the woman who was robbed, Phyllis looked up her name in the newspaper article and found her address in the phone book. The address confirmed her guess that the watch was worth some money. Meeting the woman gradually became more important than returning the watch. After all, they had been the last two people Dextra had talked to before being shot to death.

.....
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.....

On Saturday, armed with the address, phone number, and a long-stemmed rose, Phyllis set out in her old Ford to pay the woman—Molli Regneri—a visit. Finding her house proved to be more difficult than locating Dextra's funeral home, even though it wasn't that far from the hospital. Auvergne Heights Court was squirreled away amidst the winding inroads of the settled elite. After circling the suburb for close to half an hour, Phyllis called, said she was making a floral delivery, confirmed Molli was there, and got directions.

Molli Regneri answered the door. She was a tall, slender woman with long blonde hair that swirled about her shoulders belying her fifty-plus years. She spoke, confident that she was still attractive and had some control in the world.

"Yes."

"Hi, how are you?"

"Yes," Molli said again with a more determined look.

"Flower delivery," Phyllis stretched out her arm, bare except for the sparkling watch, to give her the rose.

"There must be a message or a card," the woman snapped with dissatisfaction.

Women in this neighborhood probably don't receive just a single rose, Phyllis thought. And she hadn't thought of a card with a message.

"Just, 'Hi, how are you?'"

"What? Where are you from?"

"Teddy's Floral down on Rush Street. No written card, just a verbal message, 'Hi, how are you?'"

Molli Regneri glanced briefly at the watch on Phyllis's arm. "Oh," she hesitated, "Oh, all right. Thank you."

"Oh here," she fumbled in her pocket before producing a dollar bill for Phyllis as she stole one last, befuddled glance at the familiar-looking watch.

Phyllis could feel the confused but damning stare that followed her to the car. She drove away with a glee she hadn't felt in years. Thoughts of the horror of watching Dextra struggle for life now gave way to the surprise of Molli's glances at the expensive timepiece on her arm. For some odd reason, Phyllis felt as if she and Dextra had snatched away some of this haughty woman's control in the world, as if the two of them—Phyllis and Dextra—had planned it all along.

She felt regal wearing the dainty little watch. No matter that it was noticeable because her arm was reddened from so many years of kitchen duty. The watch was hers. Phyllis, not one to show ingratitude, decided she somehow had to thank Dextra Demond for this gift. "Hi, how are you."

Driving back, she planned to stop at the liquor store where the robbery had occurred. Her initial thoughts were to buy a bottle of wine and then see if she could steal something. Anything.

It didn't have to be big. Perhaps a bag of potato chips, or beer nuts, something small. Phyllis had never stolen anything in her life but now felt compelled at least to try it. If caught, she could feign absentmindedness—after all, she was buying the wine.

The plan seemed adventuresome and a perfect cap for her encounter with Molli Regneri. For a time, she was determined to do it, but instead she simply went home. She trudged upstairs, disappointed she had spoiled the excitement of confronting Molli Regneri by cutting short her follow-up plan. Phyllis knew now that her determination was broken and she would never carry out the liquor store scheme.

She lay on the couch in her sparse living room, which was furnished with a few odds and ends of pieces that really didn't match. She took off the watch and placed it on the end table between a multi-colored bird candle and an elephant-shaped ashtray. The telephone rang, but she ignored it. A soft, reddish light that filtered in from the setting sun gently invited her to sleep.

•

Two weeks later, before leaving for work, Phyllis picked up the watch from her end table. The nightmares of watching Dextra Demond die had lessened in frequency, but they still

occurred. Putting the watch out of her thoughts had proved much easier to do. It still looked expensive, but not as attractive to her now.

When noon approached, Phyllis took the watch from her purse and proceeded out into the parking lot. A young man paced in every direction filling the larger cracks in the pavement. Trucks and spreaders poised ready to re-surface the lot. Finding the splotchy area marking Dextra's death was easy. In a swift motion, Phyllis stooped and stuffed the watch into the crack where Dextra had left it.

The following day she peaked out from the kitchen's ground-level window in mid-afternoon to watch the giant asphalt spreader creep across the death spot. The last remains of Dextra above ground, his blood, and Molli's watch, were now covered for good.

Phyllis swiftly turned her attention back to putting the food order menus in proper sequence so the next shift could begin its work on the evening dinners. She was glad to be rid of the watch. It wasn't hers, it was stolen; and it just didn't look right on her. She knew that some day her memory of Dextra would grow dim. It had to. She needed to get back to her life.

Illustration by Stephanie Copoulos-Selle. Imagine a Place that is Always Safe and Warm, 1990. Oil on canvas, 50 x 65 inches.

Rattler!

On a sunlit ledge
loosely coiled pile of flesh
resting in the warmth

Dreux J. Watermolen

Tapping Into Dark

I thought of you
my would-have-been child
as I slickered down the bank.
And if we were meant
to tap the dark, unclarified,
through blind strokes
of decision, then
this garden pool, dappled
in Kyoto light,
indeed reflects your face.
See the koi
pull themselves along:
jeweled shadows
knifing their way
cloudlike
through my mirrored face.
I dip my hand
into the cool liquid—
dark,
living . . .
not to own, but to know
these slippery beings.
My fingers
lift through the surface,
then dip
again,
and again,
all the while memorizing how,
for the first time,
your perfect hands
grabbed hungrily
at empty air.

Bill Keenan

Child's Play

The sizzle of tires on a rainy road
whets the memory, stretches thoughts
until they're relaxed and loose,
gooey, like the gum we found
melting in the heat of summer
on another road
in another time.

The sound moves closer, louder,
recedes into the distance as it pulls
from the vaults of the mind
the memory of running outside
in a bathing suit
during summer showers,
face tilted to the sky,
mouth open,
warm drops clinging to nose and lashes
and soaking into thick braids.

We splashed in puddle and muddy pool,
waded in roadside ditches become our private streams,
relished the feel of bare feet on slippery grass,
having the best time
any of us would ever know

until our mothers' voices pulled us back
to be hosed off and rubbed dry
with clean towels smelling of hot sun.

Phyllis Wax

J L Jones

Running before the wind
on canvas wings,
on lifting hands, empty spirits,
I try, like flying fish
sailing the Pacific,
to transcend my element.

Aloft, a school of gulls
wheel and tack,
dive and rise again,
their angel-white cavortings
uniting the two blues,
just as flying fish
joins his.

But I'm not Jonathan Seagull,
nor Livingston Fish,
a fresh-water rudder man
suspended between the blues,
so even as my spinnaker fills,
I head for shore.

And now, tonight,
writing board on my lap,
I rise with the gulls
above the promontory,
soar with the fish—
snugly anchored
in my study chair.

Art Madson

Wearing a Rainbow Scarf

She walked into my life
bearing a cloudy forecast
hands fluttering like aspen
when the wind grumbles.

She begged me to shelter her
from impending fury
and for one foggy moment
I tried to say no.

But then I saw band-aids
stretched across her copper tan
knew they weren't strong enough
to keep her from bleeding.

The lightning flashed an excuse
to huddle together
until the quiet came
until she felt the calm.

Kay Saunders

Butterflies

Visited by swallow-tailed
butterflies, she knows fleeting
certainties. Sees fragile joy
interrupted and rendered
ordinary. Feels again
the emptiness that was evoked
by children's voices singing
in that faraway garden.
Anticipates night's soft wings
beating against dark sorrow.

Clifton Anderson

Set Free in Summer

Exuberant in spring, the little stream
ripples demurely in summer, gliding
over submerged logs, aiming gentle slaps
at mica-flecked boulders. Water beetles
are black dots on the shiny surface.
They seem half-asleep as they drift downstream.

Walking against the flow, I reach the case
of an old earthen dam where a sawmill
once stood. Water exits through a culvert,
gurgling and spuming as it joins the stream.
Sunlight finds its way through leafy branches
and casts inviting circles on the grass.

Spying a sunlight circle just my size,
I sit and conjure the old Druid dreams.
This place is speaking: the stream has its needs;
trees have roots that yearn, arms that ache to reach
the moon; morning air is blue and tingling.
Who is listening? And who will respond?

From the top of the world, the whine of jet
engines intrudes; then there's nothing. Perhaps
two hundred sightless souls just flitted by!
Another sound: softly scratching a nest
in a loamy mound that once was sawdust
is a snapping turtle. She lays her eggs.

Next, her smooth body turns and erases
all signs of her secret. She moves nearer
to the stream, digs a new nest, fills it,
conceals the traces and moves on. Once more,
the margins of the world fold together.
What was and what will be come close and touch,
jostling like round dark eggs in a safe nest.

Clifton Anderson



Seeds of Change: 500 Years Since Columbus

edited by Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. 278 pp. \$24.95.

by Joseph Bruchac

Few memorial observations have been marked by as much controversy as the current quincennial of the arrival of Europe—in the person of Cristobal Colon—into the New World. It is both understandable and, in fact, quite correct that there should be such concern and divergence of opinion, for no other event in the last thousand years could possibly be of more consequence than the enormous collision of cultures and ecosystems which was set into motion by that rather haphazardly-conceived voyage from Spain to the islands of the Caribbean.

To my mind, only two publications have thus far done true justice to this clash of worlds. One is Kirkpatrick Sale's *The Conquest of Paradise*, a straightforward and determinedly documented history of the voyage of Colon and the times in which that event took place. The other is *Seeds of Change*, published in appropriately large, well-illustrated, and attractive format by America's official custodian of our national history, the Smithsonian Institution. It is a book which has grown out of a monumental Smithsonian exhibit which attempts to put the last half a millennium into new and understandable terms without displaying cultural bias. One of the main achievements of *Seeds of Change* (both the exhibit and the book) is that it succeeds on a number of levels in doing just that.

I'm particularly attracted to *Seeds of Change* for a number of reasons. First, by narrowing its focus to five specific biological aspects—exchanges as it were—of the connection between Old World and New which began in 1492, the editors of this volume allow us to see the general picture through the use of such specific biological immigrants from Europe as the horse, sugar, diseases, and those life- and culture-changing miracle plants from the New World, gifts of Mexican and Peruvian horticulturists, the potato and maize. From those seeds grew such disparate "crops" as widespread African slavery made economically possible by the sugarcane industries of the West Indies, new world-wide agricultural technologies, the decimation through sickness of as much as 90 percent of the original population of the Americas, and the drastic changing of ecosystems which goes on to this day as plant and animal species disappear and the rainforests are destroyed.

Secondly, I was drawn to the careful, yet lively, style of the eighteen contributors whose essays indicate by their titles alone—such titles as "The Demise of the Fifth Sun," "Savoring Africa in the New World," and "Three Faces of Eden"—just how varied and interesting the approaches are in this book. The contributors themselves are an argument for reading the book. Their backgrounds are varied, yet each author presents us with an equally well-thought-out and professional view. Listing some of the authors gives an indication of the many sides from which this exhibit looks at the 1492 exchange: the Native Amer-

ican museum curator and film director George Horse Capture; Steven King, the former chief botanist for Latin America at the Nature Conservancy; Robert L. Hall, a distinguished African American professor and author; Joseph Sanchez, who directs the Spanish Colonial Research Center in New Mexico; and Douglas Uebelaker, head of the Division of Physical Anthropology of the National Museum of Natural History and a specialist on disease and demography. Co-editor Herman J. Viola, who grew up in Milwaukee, is a distinguished archivist, curator, author, and historian with the Smithsonian.

I regard *Seeds of Change* as a necessary book, one which should be in every school library in this country. It is both a marvelous historical document and an engrossing story told well and in many voices, while serving as both antidote to ethnocentric hysteria and a message of the need we all have now for a time of understanding, cooperation, and healing so that our next five hundred years in the now inextricably-linked hemispheres of our world may provide for the generations to come, rather than finishing off the ecosystems of this planet and spelling doom for humanity itself.

Joseph Bruchac, director of the Greenfield Review Literary Center in Greenfield, New York, is a storyteller and writer of mixed European and Native American descent.

Sarapiqui Chronicle: A Naturalist in Costa Rica

by Allen M. Young. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. 352 pp. \$40 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

by Paul G. Hayes

Here comes "el gringo mariposa," chest high in a raging stream, its banks infested with deadly fer-de-lance snakes. Never mind, el gringo is watching the forest vines carefully for the tell-tale movement of his quarry.

Here he is on another page in the middle of the night and in a downpour to boot, lowering himself by rope down a red-mud embankment into grass higher than a man's head, then making his way toward the treasure in a tree.

"El gringo mariposa"—the butterfly man—is the local name for Allen M. Young when he is on one of his regular treks into the tropical rain forests of the Sarapiquí (Sa-rah-pee-KAY) river valley in northeastern Costa Rica. The valley is a paradise of insects.

In his journal, Young, curator of zoology at the Milwaukee Public Museum and an entomologist of national stature, writes not just about science, but the love of it, which he shares through personal yarns about chasing elusive *Morpho* butterflies or yet another species of cicada in the tropics.

Two decades ago Young began to spend a good part of each year in the river valley, which contains some of the best remaining stands of tropical rain forest. Here was his hunting ground for his collections of cicadas.

Here too was “Morpho alley,” where he solved the puzzle of the life cycle of the elusive *Morpho pleides*. Young literally waded upstream in chest-high, rushing cold water as night fell, following a pregnant female *Morpho* as she wafted among the lush entangled foliage seeking the one species of vine on whose leaves she would deposit her previous cache of tiny green eggs.

Not all such quests were so successful. He was hot on the trail of the rare *Morpho theseus*, an iridescent green and white glory, as it hunted a roadside site for its eggs, when a fuming tractor came around the road and frightened the butterfly into the forest. Such scenes over the years have become a metaphor for the receding rain forest of the Equatorial zone.

In his years in the tropics, Young has witnessed the felling of most of the forest by chain saw. The growing human population of Costa Rica; the increased worth of tropical woods in world trade; the demand in the north for orchids, *Dracaena*, and other cultivated ornamentals; and the conversion of the forest to beef pastureland have been the forces behind the vanishing old growth forest.

Thus *Sarapiqui Chronicle* could be a lament, and a little of it is. Much more of it is a scientist’s compelling love of nature, beauty, and relationships. It is shared adventures that amused and sometimes unnerved even the native Costa Ricans.

In presenting data for critical peer review, scientists deliberately render invisible the subjective source of their work—the original wonder, the ambition, the competitiveness, the awe, the love of the chase, if you will. That may be the greatest barrier to the lay public’s full appreciation of science and scientists. What remains hidden in the cold collections and the dispassionate data is the joy of doing it.

As biology professor at Lawrence University, Appleton, for five years, ending in 1975, Young led graduate students into the tropics. As scientist for the American Cocoa Research Institute, he studied cacao pollination in plantations. As museum curator, he directed the collecting that became the museum’s famous rain forest exhibit.

This is a good bedside book, an adventure a night, each illuminating the painstaking processes of science and the extremes to which scientists go to satisfy the collective curiosity of humans.

Paul G. Hayes is a staff writer for Wisconsin magazine (The Milwaukee Journal) and is a member of the Review editorial committee.

Midwest Gardens

by Pamela Wolfe, photographs by Gary Irving. Chicago: The Chicago Review Press, 1991. 206 pp. \$39.95.

by Christopher R. Miracle

Gardeners in the midwestern states are a special breed. The passion they develop from trial and error, triumph and heartbreak, is as exhilarating as a roller coaster ride with mother nature her-

self at the controls. *Midwest Gardens* is filled with enthusiasm and practical advice for dedicated gardeners and landscape professionals in our part of the world.

Pamela Wolfe and Gary Irving take the reader on a grand tour through some very special gardens in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, and Indiana. Wolfe’s work as horticulture instructor for the Morton Arboretum and landscape design teacher at North Central College (both in Illinois) provides the insight necessary to extract the most helpful details from the accomplishments of the fine gardeners featured. Irving’s stunning photography is sensitive to the overall settings of these properties and the complexity, as well as simplicity, that combinations of texture and color can create in a garden. There is a great sense of pride and honesty in the comments of the twenty-two homeowners interviewed for the book. They share their mistakes along with their successes and challenge us all to try new methods, make bold statements, and face the opposition of our rugged climate and varying soil types with confidence. No wind, rain, ice, snow; no drought, rabbit, or slug has been able to derail these gardeners from their will to experiment and improve!

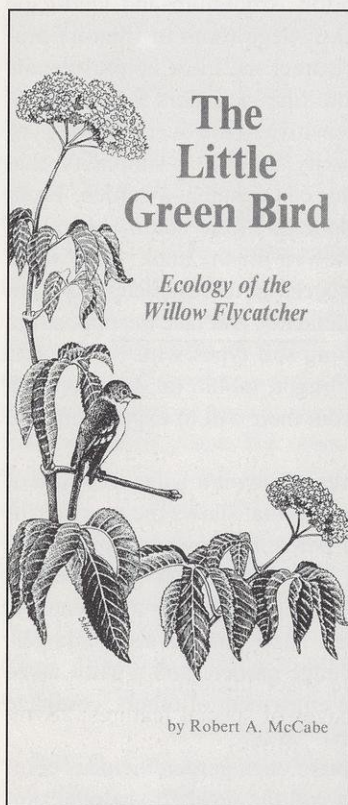
The types of gardens presented cover a wide spectrum of possibilities. There is a hosta garden that shows the diversity of that genus and suggests useful perennial flowers, shrubs, and containers of colorful annuals. There are higher-maintenance, European-influenced cottage gardens and lower-maintenance, woodland and prairie landscapes. Also featured are shade gardens, a rock garden, a water’s-edge garden, and a Milwaukee garden that was planned for the enjoyment of others, complete with accessibility to handicapped visitors.

The meticulous description of each garden includes common and botanical plant names and the detailed seasonal procession of sensory effects. The integrity of Wolfe’s text is built on the inclusion of many “not so popular” gardening procedures that are necessary in order to achieve desired results. The homeowners and, in some cases, their landscape designers are quoted frequently as they recall the monumental effort involved in tasks such as “intensive double-digging” bed preparation and the ongoing need to deadhead spent flowers from the constant parade of blooms that span each season. The reasons for mulching in summer as well as winter, the use of the “Minnesota tip” procedure (completely tipping and burying each rose plant in a trench under a two- or three-foot mound of earth) by northern rose gardeners, and the best methods of staking plants are also discussed. In addition, Wolfe and Irving make an effort to show the fences, benches, pathways, garden edges, water features, statuary, and the homes themselves, revealing how everything is an integral part of the whole.

The attention to detail and the positive encouragement of the gardeners as presented by Wolfe and Irving in *Midwest Gardens* disclose the secrets to their success. This is an invaluable guide for our area, one which will help readers avoid costly mistakes and plant failures. In fact, the experience of reading this book is somewhat like being at a pep rally! As Helene James of Wilmette, Illinois, points out, people in the Midwest can have

gardens that are as beautiful and interesting as gardens anywhere.

Christopher R. Miracle of Menomonee Falls is a landscape designer with Hawk's Nursery in Wauwatosa.



The Little Green Bird: Ecology of the Willow Flycatcher

by Robert McCabe. Madison: Rusty Rock Press, 1991. 171pp. \$35.00.

by William Hilsenhoff

I found this book to be fascinating. It evaluates results of thousands of hours of research and reviews 375 publications, which probably include almost everything ever written about the Willow Flycatcher. All that Robert McCabe learned about the "little green bird" is compared with published findings. The book was written for the lay public and can be enjoyed by any-

one interested in birds, and it also serves as a comprehensive research publication.

There are twenty chapters, an interesting preface, and an epilogue. As an amateur ornithologist, I found some chapters more interesting than others. But when I began reading chapters concerned with behavior (Habitat, Territory/Using Area, Song, The Nest Bush, Nests, Eggs, Cowbirds, Incubation, Nestlings, Renesting, Nest Parasites, Nesting Mortality and Survival, and Food Habits), I was unable to put the book down until I had finished reading. This attests to McCabe's ability as a writer; evaluating scientific data and making it stimulating and easy to read is always difficult. He did this by presenting results in a logical order, commenting on pertinent literature, and interjecting bits of humor.

I thought I was familiar with the Willow Flycatcher, but soon realized how little I knew about the behavior of this bird. Every chapter revealed information that was new to me. I learned that "Elderberry Flycatcher" would be a much better name because 58 percent nest in elderberry bushes and only 3 percent in willows; and the description of the "little green bird's" night-time song and aerial display was particularly fascinating. While I found the final chapters (Density, Ecological

Relationships, and Conservation) less exciting, overall this is an interesting and informative book which I believe amateur and professional ornithologists alike will enjoy.

William Hilsenhoff, professor of entomology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has edited Christmas bird counts for the Passenger Pigeon since 1965.

Teaching Kids to Love the Earth

by Marina Herman, Joseph Passineau, Ann Schimpf, and Paul Treuer. Duluth: Pfeiffer Hamilton Publishers, 1991. \$14.95, soft cover.

Wisconsin with Kids

by Kristin Visser and Jerry Minnich. Madison: Prairie Oak Press, 1991. \$12.95, soft cover.

by Linda Pils

On the first warm spring day, many years ago, our four-year-old son, Alan, and I decided to go for a walk. Alan took along a walking stick as we meandered out the back gate and into the woods. We ended up at the drainage ditch. It was full of ice chunks, running water, and debris left behind from seasons past. We stood ankle deep in the chilly water as the stream parted around our rubber boots. We hopped aboard an ice floe and used the walking stick as an oar to take us to exotic places. We were quiet and watched the birds; we were noisy and threw rocks. It was a wondrous day. *Teaching Kids to Love the Earth* is a wondrous book. There are many books about the earth, recycling, and shrinking ozone layers, but there are few which impart the "sense of wonder" that Rachel Carson felt and told about.

My day with Alan had been a serendipitous one; *Teaching Kids to Love the Earth* demonstrates it need not be so. Thoughtful and purposeful learning projects about the earth and the wonders to be found in it can be organized easily. The authors have suggested dozens of ways that parents and teachers together with children can explore their world together. The natural curiosity within all of us can be encouraged and kept alive through such exploration.

There are five chapters in the "Sense of Wonder Circle": Curiosity, Exploration, Discovery, Sharing, and Passion. Each chapter is introduced by a story involving children in an outdoor adventure. This is followed by the main activity, lots of alternative activities, some background information, and additional resources. The activities were developed by all four naturalists in family-based workshops in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. They write, "At the heart of our teaching is an idea from Rachel Carson's book *The Sense of Wonder*. She wrote that it is more important to begin with *feelings* about the natural world than the *knowledge* of it."

The chapter on passion explains that "passion is an embrace, it is two becoming one," and it is more. It is also com-

mitment and a call to action. It is loving and being loved, caring and being cared for. Alan now tells me about his tales of wonder, of canoe trips to the boundary waters, of backpacking in the Porkies, and skating across the ice on Lake Mendota on a clear January morning. I am the receiver of the gifts that we once shared together. Who is the caregiver and who is the caretaker? In this small planet of ours, we all must be both. *Teaching Kids to Love the Earth* enables us to do it better.

Everyone usually has a favorite local spot to take a hike or paddle a canoe. The problem is, how do you discover those special places in someone else's neck of the woods? Kristin Visser and Jerry Minnich have compiled just such a resource for families and have had the foresight to include the beautiful natural areas in our state as well as numerous popular attractions. It is called *Wisconsin with Kids*.

If you are looking for a comfy bed and breakfast or a night on the town, then *Wisconsin with Kids* is not the book for you. But if you are looking for family places to eat, hotels, campgrounds, and activities to accommodate children—and maybe the child in you—then this is the perfect book. You might consult this user-friendly guide about a submarine tour in Manitowoc, a visit to the children's farm at Plamann County Park in Appleton, or a stop to see a drama at the Mabel Tainter Theater in Menomonie.

Authors Visser and Minnich have thoughtfully compiled a tremendous amount of information about the state of Wisconsin which they have divided up into thirteen sections. In the "Things to Do" section there are places to visit including county and state parks in the vicinity, highlights of winter fun, details of special events, shopping, and rentals (canoes, bikes, etc.). All of the recommended activities are "child proof" with ease of scheduling and fun high on the criteria list. In the "Where to Stay" section there are annotated lists of motels, hotels, and campgrounds, all of which have some added attractions to keep children involved long after the day is done; swimming pools and game rooms are numerous in this section. Another plus to this edition is the attention to detail, so that laundry facilities and cribs are mentioned in the description of each accommodation.

Another outstanding feature is that fast-food spots have been eliminated from the "Where to Eat" section. We know all about them, anyway. Mentioned are the places which are unique to the locale and help give each area its own special feeling: the homemade ice cream sundaes served in tulip glasses in Fountain City or the great burgers at Dotty Dumplings in Madison. These are places where children do not have to sit perfectly still and be quiet.

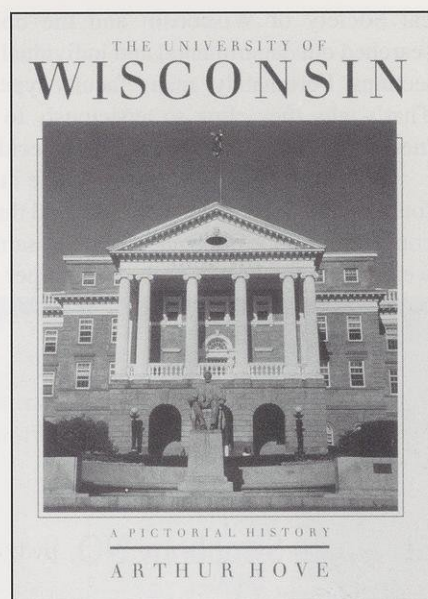
Wisconsin has tremendous diversity to offer and much of it can be found listed in *Wisconsin with Kids*. The bad news for me is that our adolescent children are too old to enjoy many of these activities; the good news for me is that *I'm* not.

Linda Pils is an elementary school teacher and editor of Kaleidoscope, a science education newsletter published by the Wisconsin Academy.

The University of Wisconsin: A Pictorial History

by Arthur Hove with editorial assistance of Anne Biebel.

Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. 352 pp.
\$50.00



This book is a well-conceived summary of the university's history, distilled from the numerous works listed in Hove's "Bibliographical Essay." Faculty-types can be notorious hagiographers, celebrating the lives and accomplishments of predecessors and colleagues perhaps with hopes for their own immortality. This keeps the institutional memory percolating.

As a "pictorial history" should be, the volume is mostly devoted to pictures, although the accompanying text takes up about one-sixth of the available space through page 292. Following that come some sixty pages of special features: "Symbols and Mascots," "Historic Traditions," "Bibliographical Essay," "Feature Credits," and, finally, a useful index to both pictures and text. The middle of the book features "A Contemporary Portfolio" containing thirty-three pages of color pictures (forty-one in all) offering "a sampling of images from the 1980s . . ."

While the text is readable and interesting, especially to a sometime participant, it is the pictures that are seductive. An especially valuable feature is that every picture carries an often extended paragraph that goes well beyond the obligatory who, what, when, and where. For instance, on page 29 there is a picture of John Bascom, university president from 1874 to 1887. He is seated jauntily on a rocky hillside, dressed in what appears to be his Sunday best. An accompanying paragraph, of seventy-five words, establishes Bascom's place in the university's history. The point is that author Hove is inclined to look for a variation from the posed portraits of the early years. He aims to suggest and illustrate the great variety of activities, scenes, and personalities that characterize the university through the changes of its nearly century and one-half existence.

Read the author's "Acknowledgements" (pp. xi-xiii). You will learn there that this book required a wide acquaintance with the present faculty and the many departments and divisions of the contemporary university. This took him well beyond the iconography resources of the obvious places: the State Histori-

cal Society of Wisconsin and the university libraries. He searched out departmental and individual faculty members' collections. Fortunately, many faculty-types tend to be packrats. That's why they cling so tenaciously to their offices in retirement—for author Hove's project, a decidedly useful trait.

This book is big: eleven by nine inches and weighs a full four pounds. It is two inches taller and three inches wider than a conventional book format from the same press. Much of the weight is in the heavy, high-grade paper used to keep print and pictures from showing through. It is clearly a quality product in all respects.

Robert C. Nesbit is the author of Wisconsin, A History. He is a former University of Wisconsin-Madison professor now living in Olympia, Washington.

Beethoven Symphony NO. 9 in D Minor, OP. 125

Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Zdenek Macal Conducting; Margaret Hawkins, Choral Director; Paul Plishka, Bass; Benita Valente, Soprano; Janice Taylor, Mezzo-Soprano; Janice Taylor, Mezzo-Soprano; Jon Fredric West, Tenor.

Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique,

Op. 14, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra,
Zdenek Macal Conducting.

by ellsworth snyder

The Milwaukee Symphony, as is made clear by these recordings, has blossomed tremendously under the leadership of Maestro Zdenek Macal. It is now a first-rate ensemble, and these are strong, straightforward performances. The things that would make it a great ensemble will appear with time: a less dense, more transparent and sometimes limpid orchestral texture; a much wider dynamic range, particularly at the lower level; a string sound which can, in addition to being lovely (as it is now), also soar; and a more relaxed tonal quality in the brass and, upon occasion, in the woodwinds.

The interpretations presented here are well thought

out and structurally perceptive. They are, however, a bit stodgy. The slow movement of the Beethoven, for instance, lacks flow and, more importantly, nobility; the Berlioz offers us no unexpected flights of imagination. In the Beethoven, the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus has been ably trained by Margaret Hawkins, and the soloists are satisfactory, though the tenor and bass voices sound a bit worn. In the Berlioz, the oboe and English horn solos in the "Scene aux Champs" are beautifully done. These are performances for those wishing a solid, accurate rendering of the score and a forthright, but sensitive, interpretation.

There is one philosophical issue that should be addressed: does the public need one more recording of the Beethoven Ninth and the Berlioz Fantastic Symphony? Unless there is an interpretation more glorious and enlightening than ever before, or an important new and revealing musicological discovery about the music, the answer would appear to be no. There is much wonderful music from every musical period that has yet to be recorded, and certainly there is much from the twentieth century that needs to enter the purgatory of music history through recording. With a conductor such as Mr. Macal, it would be more instructive to have a performance of a neglected nineteenth- or twentieth-century Czech composition. Perhaps it is time to reconsider the cultural *raison d'être* for recording.

ellsworth snyder, pianist and teacher, is director of music at the First Unitarian Society in Madison.

BELOW: The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Zdenek Macal, music director.





The Gordon MacQuarrie Award: Communicating Nature

by Faith B. Miracle

To say that good genre writing is simply good writing may sound like word games until one considers, for example, how many people who care little about competitive sports are great fans of sports writer Red Smith. I say *are* because even though Smith died in 1982, his work still is studied in many journalism classes across the country as an example of how to write well. Smith, who grew up in Green Bay, wrote so well that people were inclined to read his work just for the pleasure of experiencing his way with words. For the same reason, biographer Margot Peters, who lives in Lake Mills, will always be on my list of preferred Wisconsin authors no matter what her topic. I will read about a person who doesn't particularly interest me merely to enjoy the clarity and grace of her writing style. And any time I see an article by Paul G. Hayes in the *Wisconsin* magazine or elsewhere in *The Milwaukee Journal*, I will read it because I know that no matter what the story line, it will be thoughtfully developed and eloquently phrased.

For twenty years *The Milwaukee Journal* featured the outdoor writing of Gordon MacQuarrie (1936-1956). He too was a writer whose appeal soared beyond the genre. In 1957, the year following his death, a memorial was established in his honor for the purpose of presenting an annual award to a Wisconsin outdoor writer who best communicated an understanding of nature, professed an environmental ethic, and displayed journalistic integrity in keeping with the example set by MacQuarrie himself. In the beginning the organization was called the Gordon MacQuarrie Foundation, and Walter Scott was its first president; in 1969 it became the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation; and in 1977 the entire program was transferred to the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.



MacQuarrie was born in Superior on July 3, 1900, and died in Milwaukee on November 10, 1956, of a heart attack, reportedly his "first real illness." Early in his career, he spent several years with the *Superior Evening Telegram* as reporter, then city editor, and finally managing editor. In April 1936 he became outdoor editor of *The Milwaukee Journal*.

He invented a fictitious organization which he called the Old Duck Hunters' Association, and named his father-in-law, Al Peck, as its "President." Another hunting/fishing companion assumed the President spot after Peck died, and MacQuarrie wrote some of his most popular stories using this imaginary "association" as a peg.

Though Milwaukee became MacQuarrie's home, he traveled approximately 40,000 miles during his years with the *Jour-*



Gordon MacQuarrie. Courtesy the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

nal, covering outdoor activities in the state and maintaining his special relationship with Wisconsin's waterways, wildlife, countryside, and sports men and women. Before it was fashionable or politic to be known as a conservationist, MacQuarrie made his message clear and left his mark.

This is classic MacQuarrie on the subject of building "the cabin that you have always wanted":

When I meet someone who has been inoculated with the summer-cabin virus, I get him aside, clutch him by the lapel and compel him to listen to my exhortation on the split-log idea. No loquacious survivor of an appendectomy can outdo me in off-

hand filibustering. Once begun, I never pause. I take him right through from the concrete pouring to the installation of the woodpecker door-knocker. (From "Stand the Logs on End," *Field and Stream*, January 1940)

And here is MacQuarrie the fisherman:

If I live to be a hundred, I'll not forget the first time I waded the Namakagon which, I should explain, is a trout stream in its beginnings and a prime small-mouth stream farther down. My first shot at it was in the early twenties, a whoop and half a holler out of Cable at a place called Squaw Bend. On about the third cast of a single wet fly, a Red Ant, or a Black Gnat, I can't recall which, a two-pound brown seized it and was creeled. I thought I was a helluva guy. (From "The Jack-Pine Barrens of Northwest Wisconsin," *Sports Afield*, May 1946)

It is especially appropriate that the Wisconsin Academy should offer an award for outstanding outdoor writing. After all, this is the state that inspired John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Olson, August Derleth, Ben Logan, and, of course, Gordon MacQuarrie. Here are some samples from the writings of past MacQuarrie Award winners.

From "Little Brown Bats" by George Vukelich

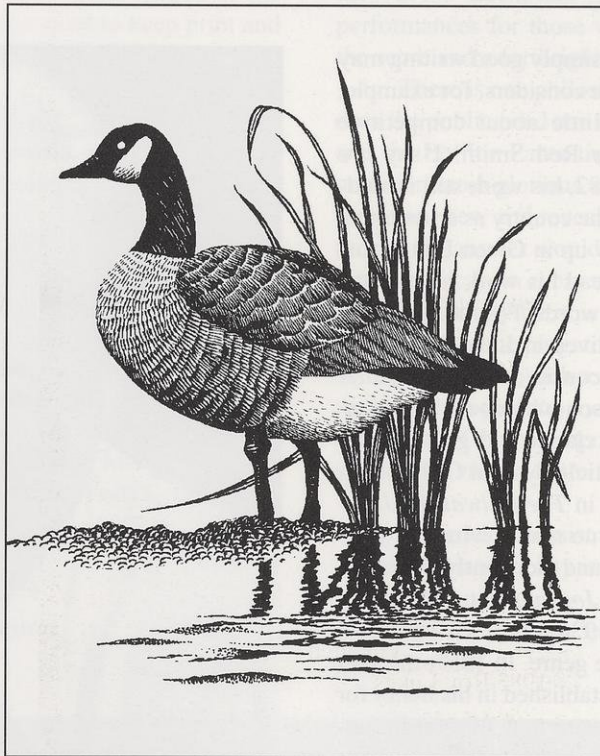
The *scritch-scratching* you hear in the cabin's walls comes from the Little Brown Bats that live under the cedar shakes. All day long, they rest there with mewling little movements, packed in like sleeping night workers hidden away from the daytime world in a regular Bat Condo.

The first time you hear them *scritch-scratching* in the shakes can be a little unnerving, because it sounds like they're coming right through the wall.

But then you realize that they're not coming right through the wall and that they have as much right to be there as the shy little garter snake that suns itself next to the coiled, soft garden hose.

Or the chickadees picking at the sunflower seeds from the mouth of the Mason jar feeder. Or the chipmunks inside the Mason jar, stuffing their faces with seeds, their cheek pouches bulging like a lawyer's briefcase.

Or *you*, sitting inside the cabin with a cup of coffee and sniffing the clean breeze through the screens, winey with sun-warmed pine and berry bushes.



.....
*Before it was fashionable or politic
to be known as a conservationist,
MacQuarrie made his message clear
and left his mark.*
.....

**From "Township Christmas"
by Justin Isherwood**

Christmas comes at a time when the fields lie frozen and resting from the marathon event of summer. Work has cooled its fevered pace; the mows, granaries, and warehouses attest to the green season's end.

Christmas is a time when, for a moment, we are all believers in magic. . . . A time when country boys sneak to the barn on Christmas Eve and sit in the dark, waiting to hear cows speak in human tongues. A time when the weed pullers of summer walk their fields spreading thistle, sunflower, and rye seeds, hoping for a blessing flight of birds over their land in the belief that feathered prayers are best.

From *Wild Goose, Brother Goose* by Mel Ellis

It was during a quiet time that the call came—clear though distant, high and carrying as a silver horn. The lonesome goose on the pond gathered her feathers tight.

There was a speck on a far horizon, growing larger, until the goose saw the glint in the gander's eye and heard the powerful beat of his wings and saw his neck bend as he put his head down to look upon her. He called her to come and follow him, that he knew of a wild place where only the moose came, and sometimes the wolves, but man rarely, if ever.

He insisted that she lift and fly north a thousand miles to a river where there were spits of gravel to come to and broad flats of grass now that the spring floods had run off into the channel again.

And she tried, until her wings were dragging like the wings of a wounded goose which has been chased a long way. She tried until the pond was glistening with bubbles and the frightened trout had gone to the bottom. She tried until her bill came open and her breath was hot in her lungs.

And then when she could not get even a few inches off the water, she put out her neck and lay flat, and she could not even answer when he called. He circled closer and closer and lower and lower. Then, with the sun at his back, he put out his webs, braked hard with his wings, and planed along the water to come alongside her.

From "Eye to Eye With A Primrose" by Roy Lukes

The Arctic Primrose, one of the Sanctuary's most eagerly awaited spring flowers, is beginning to decorate the wet edges of the swales, and even the roadside, with its pastel shades of pink, lilac and magenta. A close look at its basal rosette of leaves and five intricately shaped petals will reveal a plant of great charm and beauty. A study of this plant's distribution in North America clearly indicates a close relationship with cold marly shores of lakes and rivers. In a few isolated sites, such as the Wisconsin Dells region, south central Iowa, and northeast Illinois, their present occurrence can be traced back to post-glacial times, when these particular habitats were shores of lakes or rivers.

Look one of those flowers straight in the eye, and you'll immediately see why so many people refer to it as the bird's-eye primrose. Its pattern of light and dark colors resembles a tiny iris and pupil. Then there are people who prefer to call it the fairy primrose, perhaps because of the flower's delicate colors and diminutive size.

From "Springtime Rises Early in the Countryside" by Steve Hopkins (*Wisconsin State Journal*, March 29, 1992)

Bakken's Pond is along the Wisconsin River between Spring Green and Lone Rock. It is a state wildlife area, recently upgrad-

ed to Lower Wisconsin State Riverway status. Whatever it is called, it is a fine place for a spring morning walk, along a narrow, sandy levee that separates the pond on one side from a wet, grassy marsh on the other.

I stopped there briefly, long enough to walk to the end of the levee and back, long enough to sample the musky marsh smells, to feel the springlike breeze that was sweeping up from the river to bend the cattail stalks on which the recently arrived redwing blackbirds perched. . . . Unseen, but from back in the marsh grasses, I could hear the loud, bugling warning calls of sandhill cranes.

With the exception of a transitional period, 1975-1980, the Gordon MacQuarrie Award for outdoor writing has been given annually since its inception and continues to be a regular component of the Wisconsin Academy's program.

Pen drawing by James Pieper.

Our thanks to Dan Small, 1992 chair of the Gordon MacQuarrie committee, who provided the articles from Field and Stream and Sports Afield from which the MacQuarrie quotes were taken.

Other Sources:

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Gordon MacQuarrie Award Winners

1958 Russell G. Lynch
1959 Ben Lewis
1960 Don Johnson
1961 Mel Ellis
1962 Ruth Hine
1963 Syd Herman
1964 John Wyngaard
1965 George Bachay
1966 Richard Kienitz
1967 William Stokes
1968 Tom Guyant
1969 Quincy Dadisman
1970 Loren Osman
1971 Whitney Gould
1972 Paul G. Hayes
1973 Ralph O. Christoffersen
1974 James Mense
1975 Robert S. Ellarson
1980 Jim Taylor
1981 Walter and Trudi Scott
1982 George Vukelich
1983 Roy Lukes
1984 Dave Otto
1985 Jeanne Smith
1986 Justin Isherwood
1987 Chuck Petrie
1988 George Rogers
1989 Pat Durkin
1990 Dan Small
1991 Jay Reed
1992 Steve Hopkins

EDITOR'S NOTES: Continued from page 2

As you plan your summer travels around Wisconsin, we call your attention to special events honoring two stalwarts in Wisconsin history: August Derleth and Frank Lloyd Wright.

An exhibition of papers, manuscripts, books, photos, and other materials relating to the life of Derleth will remain available to visitors to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison through October 30 in rooms 400 and 416.

A series of exhibits and lectures on Frank Lloyd Wright, his sister Maginel Wright Barney, and his niece Elizabeth Enright (Maginel's daughter) will be held at several venues in Madison. The Milwaukee Art Museum will observe the 125th anniversary of Wright's birth with a major exhibition. We are providing a rough schedule, but check with each institution for details:

July-September: "Elizabeth Enright/Maginel Barney Exhibit" at the Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison

July-September: "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Book Arts" at the Rare Books and Special Collections Gallery at Memorial Library, the University of Wisconsin-Madison

September: "The Artistry of Maginel Wright Barney" at the Wisconsin Academy Gallery, Madison

September 11-November 8: "The Wright State: Frank Lloyd Wright in Wisconsin" at the Milwaukee Art Museum

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