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Gene DeGruson

Shelby Horn

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Ted Watts

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The Little Balkans Review

A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

Vol. 1, No. 2 Winter 1980-81

$3.50

American Folklorist
Vance Randolph
Pittsburg, Kansas

The Little Balkans Review

A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

Vol. 1, No. 2

Gene DeGruson, Poetry Editor
Shelby Horn, Non-Fiction Editor
Steve Robbins, Fiction Editor
Ted Watts, Art and Graphics Editor

All glory comes from daring to begin.--Eugene F. Ware

The Little Balkans Press, Inc.
601 Grandview Heights Terrace
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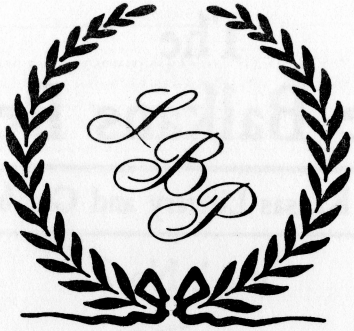
Winter 1980-81



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Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities for grants awarded to Professor Robert W. Cochran for his continuing research of the life and works of Vance Randolph, some of which is published here as "People of His Own Kind."

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"Wild Things," by Margaret E. Haughawout, is reprinted from her **Sheep's Clothing** (Pittsburg, Ks.: College Book Store, 1929), p. 52.

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The
Little Balkans Review

A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

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Preface

In the premiere issue of the **LBR**, we pledged to provide an outlet for the art and heritage of our area and to assist in introducing new talents, as well as recognizing the accomplishments of professionals. In this, our second issue, in keeping with our promise, we are happy to present the work of two previously unpublished poets, Harold J. DuBois and Robert J. Roberts. DuBois' ballad, "The Memphis Express," is based upon childhood memories and carried "beyond the Blue" in a delightful, inimitable manner which should please those of you who expressed a wish to see rhymed verse in the pages of the **LBR**. Roberts reacted to our first issue with his first attempt at poetry, special evidence, we feel, that he is no longer a "Transplant."

Since the appearance of our Fall issue, we have received numerous manuscripts, an indication that there is indeed a need for such a publication as ours. Many readers have voiced a desire to see in print more of the history of Southeast Kansas, and we shall attempt, with your help, to accomodate. In this issue, Laura Stahl tells us of the first (and last) nursing class of the Girard City Hospital. In his study of Vance Randolph, Robert Cochran of the University of Arkansas not only shares his knowledge of the life and work of Randolph, but informs us about early-day Pittsburg, Girard, and surrounding coal camps. Amusing anecdotes concerning historical figures such as Buffalo Bill Cody and Carrie Nation (and their connections with Randolph and the Pittsburg area) abound. (The editors regret that Randolph did not live to read this account, which he was anticipating with pleasure.)

We print the first of a series of explorations of the name, the Little Balkans, in this issue: a 1962 editorial by the late **Pittsburg Headlight** and **Sun** editor, F. W. Brinkerhoff, who saw the region as one composed of rugged individualists--such as Randolph. Another, Margaret E. Haughawout (whose unkempt lawn was always in sharp contrast with her well kept garden), is lovingly portrayed by a former student, Ray Heady. Like Randolph, whose friend and reviewer she was, her ears were keyed to a different drummer. We reprint for you "Wild Things" from her book, **Sheep's Clothing** (1929), as an indication not only of her poetry, but of her personality as well.

Other examples of those who "think and speak for themselves and are not adverse to thinking and speaking for others when the occasion suggests" are Mrs. Wurst (the atheistic niece of a Methodist circuit rider and the object of a conversion in Stephen Robbins' short story, "The Bolt," based upon a true incident) and John Andrews (a former Hippie who rejoins the Establishment in Robert Abel's humorous story, "Jogging"). Contrast their lives, if you will, with the world of Hank Matthews, which V. J. Emmett explores in his short story, "The Houseboater." Although Matthews has his own thoughts, he cannot

ignore--but feels compelled to honor--the petty prejudices and superficial norms of those around him. He is not among "people of his own kind," but pretends to be.

The childhood of three area natives is recalled graphically in our vintage photographs. The recent photographs of David Tate and Mike Gullett capture moods of the geography of Southeast Kansas, while our poets record emotions: Philip Boatright's sensitive examination of depression, J. T. Knoll's poem centering around the impending blindness of an elderly relative, Steven Hind's marriage to "Familiar Ground," and Michael Heffernan's evocation of a frozen, darkened landscape that refuses to speak to us as it has done in the past. Vance Randolph's friend, Rose O'Neill (best known for her Kewpies), presents in her drawing a moment of rest known to all in any time. In our center spread, Charles Cagle tersely and successfully explores the art of Charles Banks Wilson, who generously provided us with selected examples.

Our next issue? Jeffrey Goudy will explore the life and times of Edythe Squier Draper of Oswego. Marlin Perkins of **Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom** shares his early years in the Balkans with us. The prize-winning poems of the tenth annual Kansas Poetry Contest will be showcased. And much, much more....

The editors wish to dedicate this issue to two native writers who added so much to the cultural history of our own time: Anne Tedlock Brooks (1905-1980), originally from Columbus, and Vance Randolph (1892-1980). Their likes shall not be seen again.

Gene DeGruson, a librarian
Shelby Horn, an attorney
Steve Robbins, a journalist
Ted Watts, an artist

People of His Own Kind:

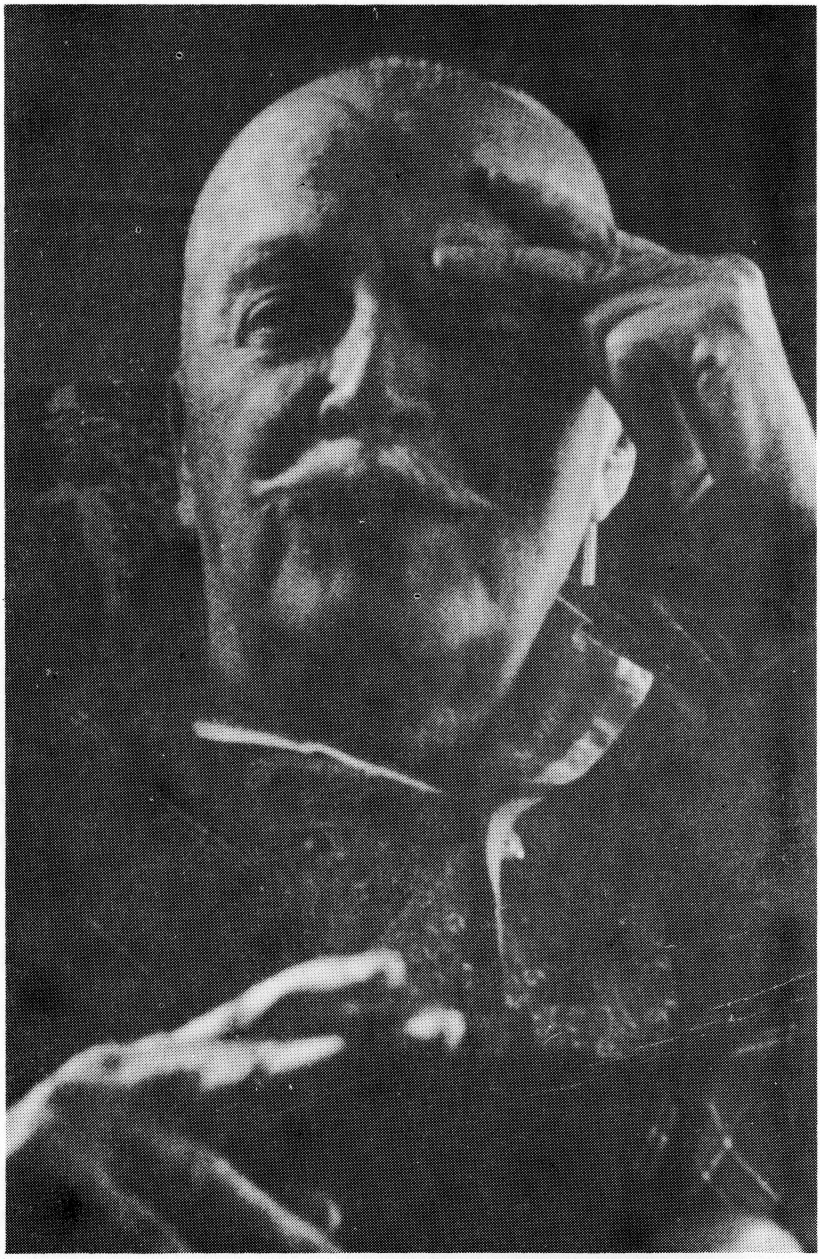
Vance Randolph's Kansas Years

by Robert Cochran

Vance Randolph's continuing reputation is sustained primarily by two groups of admirers. The first, a diverse band, is comprised of celebrators of the Ozark region, people who for reasons of residence, family connection, patriotic ardor, or some mix of all three, have made it their business to publicize the virtues of the area. For folks of this allegiance, especially as they tend to focus their veneration upon the past--the "pioneer" hardihood of the old time residents, the sturdy independence of their culture--Randolph has long been a kind of demigod, a name to conjure with. Even today, at local heritage festivals, old time music fairs, and historical society meetings all over Arkansas and southern Missouri, Randolph is frequently honored with one or another form of "salute." Like the oldest grad at university homecomings, he provides depth, roots, and dimension.

The second group of admirers is composed of scholars--folklorists, cultural geographers, Americanists, historians, students of regional speech, anthropologists. Many of these academicians are professionally interested in the Ozarks, of course, but others have interested themselves in Randolph's methodological innovations, or the perspicacity with which his work anticipated the concerns of more recent investigators.

With this group, however, the attitude toward Randolph is decidedly more ambivalent. He was in their world--publishing articles in their journals and, later, books with their presses--but not of it. He wasn't a professor, never held a full-scale faculty position, and got his only Ph.D. as an honor from the University of Arkansas in 1950. He never graduated



Vance Randolph, 1972.

Norman E. Tanis, Photographer

from high school. His first important books, **The Ozarks** (1931) and **Ozark Mountain Folks** (1932), were published by a Socialist press, lacked the standard bibliographic apparatus, and were ignored by the academic journals. Except for Herbert Halpert, his great friend and champion inside the academy, he had no close friends in the ivory tower. The American Folklore Society didn't get around to making him a Fellow until 1978.

With the scholars, moreover, Randolph's almost exclusive attention to Ozark materials--the very thing which has motivated his canonization by the Ozark heritage boosters--has been a matter for suspicion and criticism, a cardinal matter in his frequent designation as a "collector" instead of a folklorist. Richard M. Dorson, for example, perhaps the foremost defender of academic orthodoxy among contemporary folklorists, classifies Randolph among the "Regional Collectors," in the company of figures like Texas' J. Frank Dobie and Pennsylvanian George Korson. "Randolph admits," says Dorson, that "his concern begins and ends with the Ozarks." A true folklorist, as envisioned by Dorson, will reject such "parochial" limitations. "But our potential American folklorist does not intend to be an Ozarkologist or a Texologist. He is concerned with the whole civilization, and with all its regions and occupations."

This "American folklorist," in short, is quite a fellow, but it cannot be denied that Randolph himself did a good bit to promote the nearly seamless identification of man and region. Introducing a booklet entitled **Wild Stories from the Ozarks**, for example, he waxed eloquent: "There is only one place in the world that really seems like home to me, and that is the Ozark region of southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. I was born in Kansas and never saw the Ozarks until 1899, when my parents brought me down for a week's stay at the O-Joe Club near Noel, Missouri. I was only seven years old at the time, but I perceived at once that a guide named Price Payne was the greatest man in the world, and that the Ozark country was the garden spot of all creation."

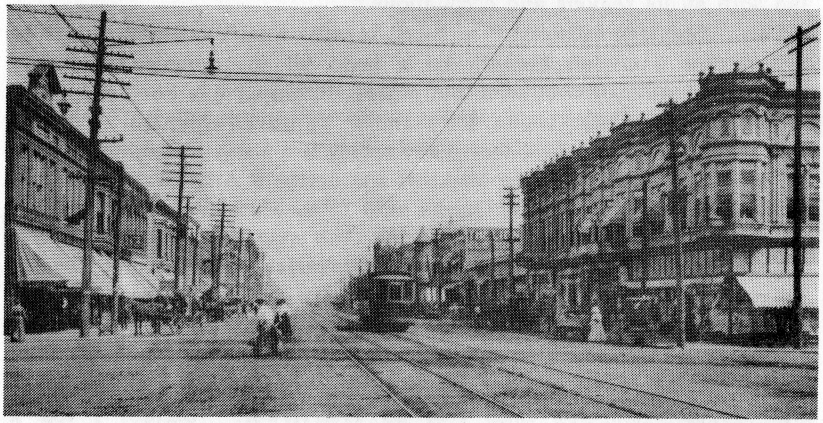
Hindsight, with its zeal for telos, its penchant for symmetry, has prompted other rememberings in this vein. "All the value of my life is after 1920," Randolph once told an interviewer. "Before, I led a wandering life."

There's considerable truth, of course, in all of this. The overwhelming bulk of Vance Randolph's important labor was accomplished in the Ozarks, and was devoted to Ozark subjects. It's true, too, that some sense of directed purpose, however inchoate, must have urged the original move to Pineville, Missouri, in 1920, and that only the fiercest consciousness of mission could have sustained Randolph's long lifetime of largely unappreciated work in the Ozarks.

It's pertinent, in this connection, to note that as early as 1915 he was attempting, unsuccessfully, to enlist the support of Franz Boas, at Columbia, for doctoral work in anthropology with fieldwork centered in Missouri and Arkansas. But Boas, then the leading figure in the American

anthropological academy, and more interested in Eskimos, counseled work in British Columbia. Randolph was ahead of his time, a position he would occupy frequently, usually to his cost, but what's more significant is his sense of direction. He didn't want to learn Indian languages or study Eskimos. He was twenty-three years old, a recently graduated student of psychology (with an M.A.), and already he knew something of where he was headed.

But something is lost in all this focus on the Ozark-centered achievements of Randolph's career. Hindsight's clarity, highlighting the early manifestations of Ozark themes, sacrifices the sense of lived complexity. Fact: Vance Randolph's first twenty years were lived in southeastern Kansas, in the coal mining region of Crawford County. He was born there, in Pittsburg, on February 23, 1892, and he was in his twenties before he ever left. Kansas was the home country, the beginning in fact and spirit, for Vance Randolph, and it's to Kansas the researcher must turn, who would appreciate the sources of that singularly advantaged complex of attitudes and abilities which Randolph brought to his chosen labors in the Ozarks.

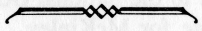


It was a striking place in the 1890's. Pittsburg was a new town, platted in 1876 by a Girard lawyer, a Carthage surveyor, and two lead and zinc mine promoters from Joplin, Missouri, thirty miles to the southeast. It grew rapidly, as the center of a burgeoning coal mining area, and the Pittsburg Coal Company supplied its need for skilled deep shaft miners by importing laborers from dozens of European countries. The resultant ethnic diversity was astonishing--the region was known locally as the "Little Balkans." When Kansas Governor Arthur Capper visited the town in 1916 for a political rally, a "Tower of Babel Banquet" was held in which some thirty naturalized citizens welcomed him to Pittsburg with short speeches in their native tongues.

Southeastern Kansas was also, partly as a consequence of this ethnic diversity, a hotbed of radical political activity throughout the years of Randolph's youth. The nation's most important Socialist newspaper, **The Appeal to Reason**, was published in Girard, the county seat. In 1917, just before being drafted into the Army, Randolph would spend several months writing editorials, articles, and filler paragraphs for the **Appeal**, and it was this connection that introduced him to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, who would soon achieve fame as the originator of the famous "Little Blue Books" series. Down the road, in the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's, Haldeman-Julius would get Randolph through some very lean times by publishing, and paying for, some sixty-five of his booklets and articles. The role of these leftist political interests in Randolph's "career" choices is clearly significant, and the Kansas roots of this involvement will offer important clues to an understanding of the attitudes which informed and motivated his work.

Added to the ethnic diversity and political radicalism of the region was a strong element of western, frontier culture. The Oklahoma "Indian Territory," famed for its lawlessness, was just a few miles to the south, and the great Kansas "cowtowns" had enjoyed their brief, notorious moments of glory as the railhead ends for the Chisholm Trail cattle drives only twenty years earlier. Wyatt Earp was serving as Assistant City Marshall in Dodge City as late as 1879, while "Wild Bill" Hickok was serving the public in a similar manner, as City Marshall of Abilene, in 1871. Closer to home was Coffeyville, Kansas, site of the famous bank robbery attempt (two banks in one raid) that marked the end of the road for the Dalton Gang. The Daltons got theirs on October 5, 1892--Vance Randolph, fifty miles away, was eight months old.

This aspect of his Kansas background also made its mark on Randolph. He grew up to write booklets about Hickok and the Daltons for Haldeman-Julius. In one of these, **Gun Fighters of the Old West**, published under the pseudonym of William Yancey Shackleford in 1943, Randolph ends his survey with a nostalgic reminiscence, noting that he had met the surviving Dalton, Emmett, and had talked with him "several times" in the 1920's: "There have been many murderers and robbers in the West since the Daltons' time, of course. But such fellows as Dillinger and 'Pretty Boy' Floyd seem very small potatoes as compared with the old time bandits."



This place, then, this Kansas, with its rich ethnic mix, its political tumult, and its flavors of the old western frontier, was home to Randolph for the first twenty years of his life. There's a sense, too, in which he never left. In 1946, for example, with twenty-five years of living mostly in the Ozarks behind him, he writes to his close Pittsburg friend, Ralph Church: "There comes a time when a man needs to be with people of his

own kind. I like these Ozarks better than any people I ever knew, but after all they are not my people. Despite the twenty-five years I have spent here, I am still an alien."

Similar comments are dotted through the letters of the 1940's. In 1945, one letter to Frances Church, Ralph's wife, complains about the monotonous diet in Galena, Missouri, and longs for the more varied menu available in Pittsburg. "We live mostly on chicken here now and no meat except a few homecured bacon and sometimes ham. What I want is veal with seasoning in it, or some goulash like Mrs. Joe Prenk, or maybe Katrina, used to make. And some good smoked sausage too, maybe."

A more general comment, again addressed to Church, makes clear the continuing importance of Randolph's Kansas roots: "I figger on coming to Pittsburg a little oftener from now on. I can drive over there, stay a couple of days, and come back full of vittles and good spirits, with corny stories in my head and garlic on my breath."

Following these connections to their source point, to the mother and father responsible, the researcher encounters--not cowboys, Socialists, or eastern Europeans--but solid citizens of Episcopalian persuasion. "My parents were respectable people," said the son. "My father was in politics and my mother taught school and ran the library."

John Randolph, Vance's father, was born in Pennsylvania, came to Riley County, Kansas, in 1870, as a boy of thirteen, and stayed in the state for the rest of his life. In 1881, with two years in a "normal academy" conducted by a Professor Werrel in Paola, Kansas, under his belt, he was appointed principal of the public school in Girard. "A born educator," according to his obituary notice, he was credited with establishing a high school curriculum in Girard, and with founding a County Oratorical Association. In 1886, however, new opportunities called, and the young educator resigned his superintendency to read law with a Girard attorney, James Brown. He was admitted to the bar in 1887, and moved to Pittsburg, where he practiced with various partners, was "always ready, with time and talent, to uphold the cause of the Republican Party," and spearheaded a drive to establish a local library. He married in 1890, and fathered three sons--Vance the eldest--before his death in 1901 at the age of forty-four. He served a term as city attorney of Pittsburg, an appointive office, beginning in 1888, ran unsuccessfully for county attorney in 1890, and was a delegate to the national GOP convention in St. Louis in 1896, where he cast his vote for McKinley.

Theresa Gould Randolph, Vance's mother, had a similar background. Born in Illinois in 1868, she came to Kansas with her family "as a child." Her father, Farwell Gould, had come orginally from Maine, from a family of "sailors and lumbermen," according to Randolph's remembrance. "They were fanatical, meetin'-house Puritans. Grandfather Gould told me he never heard of Christmas until he was twelve, and then his mother said, 'It's just a Catholic holiday'."

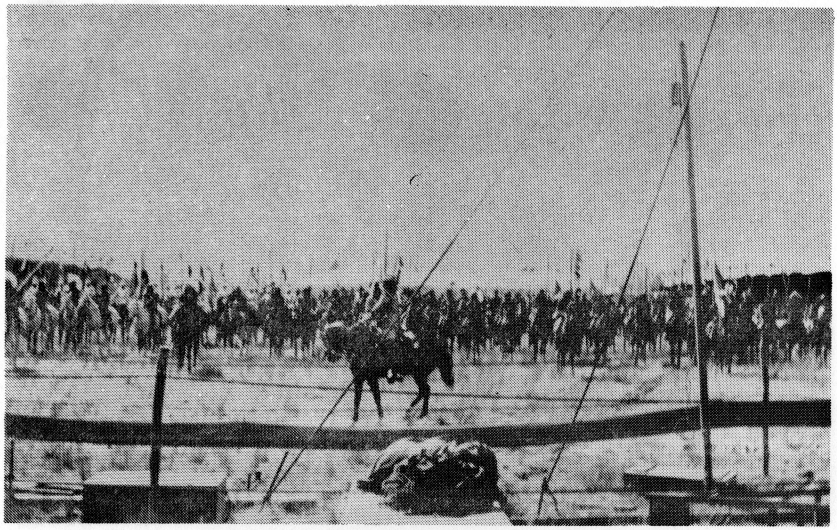
The John Randolph home at 303 W. Euclid
[currently the residence of Mrs. Hazel E. McCullough] Charles Cagle, Photographer.

Theresa Gould was teaching school in Girard when John Randolph came along. They were married in 1890, and after his early death she served as head librarian of the Pittsburg Public Library for nearly thirty years. For several years she wrote weekly book reviews for the local newspaper. She was a member of the D.A.R.

These are, on both sides, mainstream connections, in strong contrast to the rude life of the mining camps. Even in spiritual matters, the Randolphs moved in the best circles. "When I was a boy in Kansas I was confirmed by the Bishop," Vance remembered, "a regular High Church bishop with a golden mitre two feet high." The camps, and later on the Socialist gatherings, offered striking contrasts to the home he was born to.

As early as 1900, young Randolph was branching out, exploring the world around him, observing it with all the careful, piercing attention that would later distinguish his work as a recorder of Ozark folkways.

"When I was eight or nine," he recalled, "I had a job delivering 'special delivery' letters on my bicycle. I got eight cents for each one. Most of them were addressed to the whorehouses--huge, rambling mansions with ornate bathrooms. One of them was the biggest frame house I ever saw, I think down in the southeast part of town. It had elaborate grounds, with gravel walks and carefully tended lawns. I met all the girls--they used to invite me in for soda pop and a piece of pie. They had names like Shirley, Donna, and Karen. My parents knew about the job, of course, but they didn't know about the whorehouses."



Buffalo Bill Cody in Pittsburg, October 1901.

Another early memory, this one especially cherished, centers on the visits to Pittsburg of the famous Buffalo Bill Cody, with his touring Wild West Show. "As a boy in Kansas I saw him several times," Randolph later wrote. "He was always dressed in buckskin, with polished jackboots reaching far above his knees. We marveled at his fabulous moustache and goatee, and his long gray hair flying in the wind."

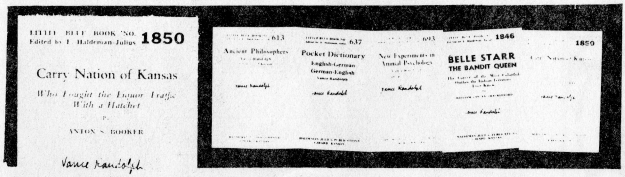
These recollections, found in yet another Haldeman-Julius booklet, go on to detail the experience of this extravaganza as it seemed to the young boy in Kansas. The first order of business, when the troupe appeared in town, was the erection of the giant tent. Then, on the morning of the show, there would be a great parade, led by Cody in person. "Following him came a great cavalcade of mounted Indians, scouts, trappers, soldiers, cowboys and other frontier characters in costume." The performance itself was held in the afternoon and evening (a typical show ran to three or more hours), and featured war dances, skirmishes between Indians and U.S. cavalrymen, a buffalo hunt, Pony Express riders, and other thrills. A special attraction was "the famous Deadwood Stage Coach--an ancient vehicle drawn by six horses, with passengers inside and armed guards riding on top. Suddenly the stage was attacked by Indians, who rode close up and discharged arrows--one could actually see the feathered shafts sticking in the sides of the coach! The passengers defended themselves with revolvers, while the guards fought to the death with great booming buffalo-guns. Just in the nick of time came a troop of cavalry, led by Buffalo Bill himself, and drove the redskins off with heavy losses."

Randolph goes on to emphasize the "odd sort of authenticity" involved in the show, noting that "mere description makes it appear that the Great

Wild West Show was mostly hokum, but somehow it was not." The booklet closes with a straightforward assertion of Cody's stature: "To American boys of my generation, Buffalo Bill Cody was a very great man. He became a sort of legendary hero in his own lifetime, and he will be remembered after many a famous General and President has been forgotten."

To one boy in particular, Cody's visits brought a great enhancement of local prestige. "My father," Randolph recalled,"always claimed that he had been out west in the 1870's, and that he knew Buffalo Bill. And when Bill came to Pittsburg he did come out to my house. He remembered all of my father's tales and swore they were true. He was the most handsome man I have ever seen in my life, with long white hair. All of the kids in the block looked up to me for a year afterwards because Buffalo Bill was in my house."

In other moods, Randolph was more inclined to skepticism: "After all, my father was the city attorney and a prominent lawyer, and Buffalo Bill's show had to get a license. This might have jogged his memory. Of course, there's no way of knowing...."



Another famous visitor in the days of Randolph's childhood was Carry Nation, the hatchet wielding enemy of alcohol and self-styled "Home Defender." She too, according to Randolph's own account (like Cody Carry Nation was the subject of a booklet-length study written for Haldeman-Julius in the 1940's), was a visitor in the Randolph home: "I was just a little boy when Carrie Nation came to Pittsburg but I got a good look at her through a crack in the kitchen door. It was a hot day, and Carrie was a very ugly woman. She kept waving her arms, and yelling at the top of her voice. Nothing like that had ever happened in our house before. We were all shocked and embarrassed."

Carry's ire was centered on the "joints," all twenty-seven of them, according to Randolph's count, which were operating on Broadway in defiance of Kansas law. "Father was the City Attorney in those days, and Carrie wanted him to put the saloon-keepers in jail. But father did not believe in bothering saloon-keepers, so long as they kicked in regularly." Carry's visit, if it failed to galvanize the father, nonetheless made quite an impression on his son: "I was only 10 years old at the time, but I remember exactly how Carry looked. To my eyes she was exactly like the political cartoons of Mark Hanna. She was the ugliest woman I have ever seen."

Mrs. Nation later changed her name from "Carrie" to "Carry A. Nation" when she viewed her crusade as national in scope.

In spite of such occasional attractions and excitements, however, the Pittsburg he was born to was often a stultifying place to the young Randolph. It was taken for granted that the sons of such respectable parents would follow closely in their footsteps, would themselves eventually grow up to hold responsible positions in the community. But for Vance Randolph, when such a future seemed bleak and uninviting, there was another world, exotic and exciting, immediately to hand. He'd visited it first, in fact, in the company of his father, when he tagged along on campaign forays to the mining camps. "My father was always running for something," Randolph told an interviewer. "He wasn't much of a lawyer, but he was a spellbinder. He knew a little bit of French and Italian, and a smattering of German. Enough to ask the miners how their families were coming along. He made the damndest political speeches and jury orations. The juries would weep and carry on. In his speeches to miners he would use all three languages. Very ornate, flowing speeches."

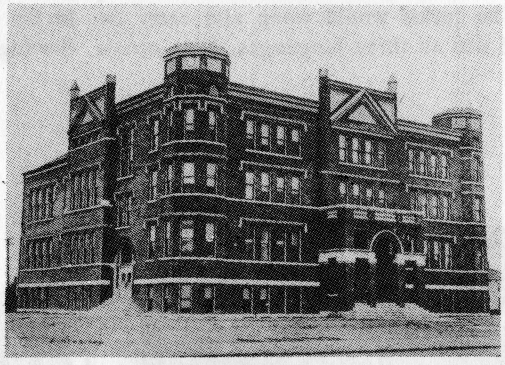
McKay Street, Frontenac, 1900.

In the early experiences, a striking and fundamental polarization presented itself. At home, at the center, there is Pittsburg itself, the Episcopal Church, the Republican Party, the parents who are active in the establishment of the Public Library. Surrounding this, circumference to the center, are the mining camps--Frontenac, Chicopee, Radley, and the others--exotic places, alive with many languages, different foods, different politics. It was a world drawn close, the ordinary and the alien side by side, in extraordinary proximity.

Randolph's initial experiences in the public schools were troublesome--he recalled that he was "painfully shy" and soon developed a "bad stammer" which exacerbated his problems. He also thought his teachers "stupid and ignorant."

"When I was six years old my people made me go to the old Washington School on Locust Street. I didn't like it very much. I could read pretty well, before I ever went to school at all.... The only teacher for whom I felt any respect was Blanche Howard, who had been to Hawaii. She taught us to sing several songs in the Hawaiian language, and I remember some of them to this day."

Randolph also remembered one incident which encouraged his low regard for the educational achievements of his teachers. "Later on I went to the new Lakeside School, where the principal was Martha Sandford. She read aloud to us out of a book called **The Five Little Peppers and How They Grew.** When Miss Sandford came to the word "camera" she accented the second syllable, and it was evident she had no idea what the word meant."



Pittsburg Kansas Manual Training High School.

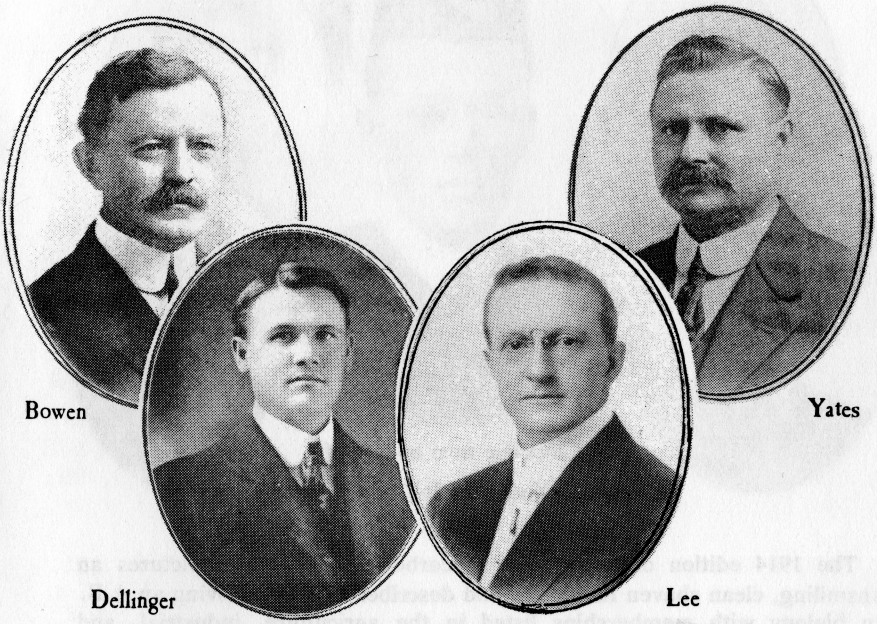
In spite of these drawbacks, the young scholar managed to struggle through the years of elementary school. "I cannot recall why," he said, "but the idea of high school terrified me. I was much more afraid of high school at thirteen than I am of death now. After a week or two--I remember that the high school was at Eighth and Broadway, clear at the other end of town--I got over it, but I never liked high school very much. Finally I quit, against my mother's wishes, and got a job in the Roberts Pool Hall on East Seventh Street."

Having a dropout for a son was likely a severe trial for Mrs. Randolph, and it is easy to appreciate her relief when the pool hall denizen "suddenly felt a yen for more schooling." She was quick to encourage this impulse with an offer of free board and lodging--contingent only upon continued enrollment and good academic standing--and in 1911 Vance Randolph began his studies at Pittsburg's newly established State Manual Training Normal School (now Pittsburg State University).

This institution, like everything in Southeast Kansas in those days, was new. Established by the state legislature in 1903, the school opened its doors with an enrollment of forty-three and a faculty of five. By 1910, the

year before Randolph enrolled, things had improved, and thirty-two teachers greeted a student body of 723.

Randolph's suspicions of professorial inadequacy continued unallayed--he, for example, abandoned plans for majoring in English when the department head told him she had never heard of George Borrow--but all in all his collegiate years seem to have been much more successful than his brief encounter with high school. He was graduated in 1914, with most of his course work centered in the social and natural sciences, plus a good bit of literature, and a sprinkling of what today would be called education courses ("School Methods and Management," "Practical Teaching").



Bowen

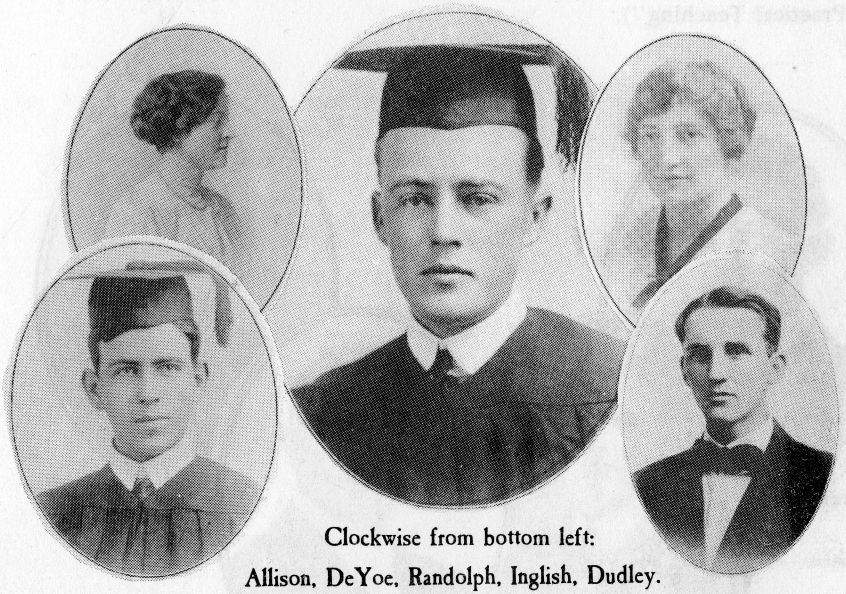
Yates

Dellinger

Lee

Looking back twenty years later, he had good things to say about a number of his teachers, in spite of the fact that "some of the 'professors,' as judged by present-day standards, were unbelievably incompetent." The best courses, he felt, were given in the biology department by O.P. Dellinger. Dellinger held a "bona fide Ph.D.," had established a reputation for work on locomotion in amoebae, and "was easily the strongest man in the college at that time." Also singled out for praise were D. M. Bowen, head of the education department, who "understood the educational set-up in Kansas better than anybody else who ever came to Pittsburg," and J. A. Yates, who taught physical science. "A fine fellow and a capable teacher," said his former pupil.

But Randolph's highest accolades were reserved for C. F. Lee, who taught psychology. Lee was a "very poor lecturer" and had "very little knowledge of psychology," but in spite of these shortcomings, he influenced Randolph, by his own accounting, more than any of his teachers. "He taught me what little I know of literature, and introduced me to what were then regarded as very advanced conceptions in politics, and ethics, and sociology. . . . I thought that he was a very great man, and I still think so." Such teachers, he concluded, "represent the very best traditions of a romantic and turbulent period in the educational history of Kansas."



Clockwise from bottom left:
Allison, DeYoe, Randolph, Inglish, Dudley.

The 1914 edition of the college's yearbook, **The Kanza**, pictures an unsmiling, clean shaven Randolph, and describes him as receiving an A.B. in biology with memberships listed in the agriculture, industrial, and biology clubs, as well as the Porterian Literary Society. A short saying, after the manner of yearbooks everywhere, is appended to this record: "I don't care what happens, just so it doesn't happen to me."

There is also, in the same yearbook, a strange photo of thirteen figures robed in sheets, seated in a semicircle around a grinning skeleton, also seated. This photo is labeled "Corrigenda," Latin for "corrections to be made." "It was a secret society," recalled Randolph. "I was a member. The name meant we were interested in improving the quality of things in the town and the school. All the members were men, but I think we had some members who weren't in school. I'm in the picture--my friends Allison and Church were members too."

Corrigenda

Ralph Church would become Randolph's closest friend and steadiest correspondent. The two met in 1913, while Randolph was a student in Pittsburg and Church, who was seven years older, was living in nearby Erie, Kansas, and selling insurance. Church stayed in the insurance business and did well. He accompanied Randolph to the West Coast for the latter's brief stint as a screenwriter in the early 1930's, and the two men also traveled to Illinois together several years later, to undergo the then-famous cure for alcoholism at the Keeley Institute in Dwight. Randolph stayed off the booze for at least eight years, but Church's cure was less successful. "He could have been president of the insurance company," said Randolph. "He made a good deal of money--got so high up they couldn't put him out."

Vernon C. Allison was another college friend--they were about the same age, graduated the same year, and went off to Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, for graduate study together. "Clark gave us tuition scholarships," Randolph recalled. "Allison got his degree in chemistry, and went on to become a specialist in explosives. Even back in Pittsburg, he was always playing around with chemistry tricks. He'd paint some liquid mixture he'd concocted on logs and benches--when the stuff would dry it would blow up. He loved things like that. I remember he used to carry dynamite around in his pockets--scared me to death."

Allison and Randolph kept in touch after 1915, when they left Clark--Allison going to the other Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania, and Randolph, after a brief stay in New York, returning to Kansas. "Allison visited me once in the VA Hospital in Fayetteville," Randolph said, "and he came to Eureka Springs once too, while I was living there. He died sometime in the 1970's, I think."

All in all, Randolph's undergraduate years seem to have been pleasant ones. In 1955, he told an interviewer that college students had become "a solemn lot." "We were more lighthearted in college," he said. When he revisited the Pittsburg campus in 1935, he was taken to a party, where the festivities provoked a reminiscent mood: "The blonde with whom I danced was easily the prettiest girl in the room, but I was thinking a little wistfully of Lucille Richey, and Eula Inglish, and Nell Clark, and that DeYoe girl who married Si Burton and went to Texas. The young men were pleasant enough, too, but I was remembering such outstanding individuals as Rex Tanner, and Pat Crowell, and Vernon Allison, and Ben Fuller, and Ed Dudley." In 1980, another forty-five years had passed, but Randolph could still remember his college years with fondness. "There were lots of pretty girls at the college, but the one I like the best, and still remember, was a music major named Catherine Prenk."

After graduating from Clark with an M.A. in psychology and spending about a year in New York City working mostly as an editor and ghost writer, Randolph returned to Kansas in the summer of 1916 and landed a job teaching biology at Pittsburg High School, the focal point of his earlier fears. He'd come full circle, from dropout to youthful scholar, and there are people still living in Pittsburg and Frontenac today who were students of Randolph. He's remembered as a good teacher, witty, interested in the subject, and innovative in his teaching.

But the school board was not impressed. His "irregular" lifestyle was offensive to important people. The last straw was an "immoral proposition" reportedly offered to a waitress. "She told her father; he told the superintendent," recalled Randolph. "They were mostly Christians and Baptists. I was a Socialist. I gambled too, and I drank too much. They didn't like the way I taught either--I took the students on field trips. We collected a great deal of stuff. I dissected cats, too--another bad thing, according to the school board."

Things quickly went from bad to worse. "They told me the school board was going to investigate my conduct--hold a hearing about me. I didn't much like the idea of this investigation, so I resigned, and went to work for the **Appeal**. I knew I had to go into the Army pretty soon anyway."

The move to the **Appeal to Reason** was no sudden immersion in Socialist politics. His friend Church was a Socialist, "infatuated with anarchism," said Randolph. "He knew all the Socialist big shots in the region--plus he knew Big Bill Haywood well. Church was a literary fellow--he never threw any bombs or anything like that."

As a college undergraduate, Randolph had of course seen copies of the **Appeal** in Pittsburg, since the paper had recently experienced dramatic growth under the direction of the "Fighting Editor," Fred D. Warren, and had doubled its circulation in the years from 1908 to 1912. By 1913, the **Appeal** had a nationally distributed readership, and a circulation of about 760,000. It was without question the most popular and most influential publication in the period of the Socialist Party's greatest success.

But Randolph and his radical friends were not impressed. "We didn't think much of it then," he recalled. "We were young midwesterners, and like most others we tended to look down on the local product. We thought it was lowbrow, and we were more impressed with the New York crowd--with the **Masses**. We thought they were more intellectual and sophisticated. We were damn fools, of course--the **Appeal** really reached a lot of people--but we were young then, and we wanted to be sophisticated."

By the time he left Clark in 1915, Randolph had become an enthusiastic radical. His writing in New York was done primarily for the Socialistic Vanguard Press, which would later issue several of his hackwork "crambooks" for students as well as his first two major works in folklore. When Randolph published a poem, in August of 1915, as his first signed work, it seemed appropriate that it appeared in the **Masses.**

Back in Pittsburg, for his brief career as a high school teacher, Randolph's Socialist leanings soon became well known. "I carried a Party card in those days," he recalled. "I never did carry a Wobbly card, even though I sympathized with the IWW--most Socialists did. While I was teaching in the high school some damn fools put me up for school board on the Socialist ticket. One of the radical papers even listed me, but I told them I wasn't running. There was a little story in the **Headlight** (Pittsburg's most enduring daily newspaper)--'Randolph Won't Run' was the head."

Randolph worked for the **Appeal**, writing editorial copy and articles, from the middle of July through the end of September 1917. Two pieces of this work are signed--one is titled "Proverbs and Poverty," and the other is "The Motives of Men." The former offers a brief glimmer of folkloristic interest, though Randolph's list of aphorisms and epigrams is subordinated to their analysis as agents of capitalist oppression. "The literature of capitalism portrays poverty in one of two ways: it is either a virtue or a chastisement, either a commendable quality or a merited punishment. . . . The purpose of both is to quiet the worker and to make him content with his humble lot, that he may not complain or revolt against the established order."

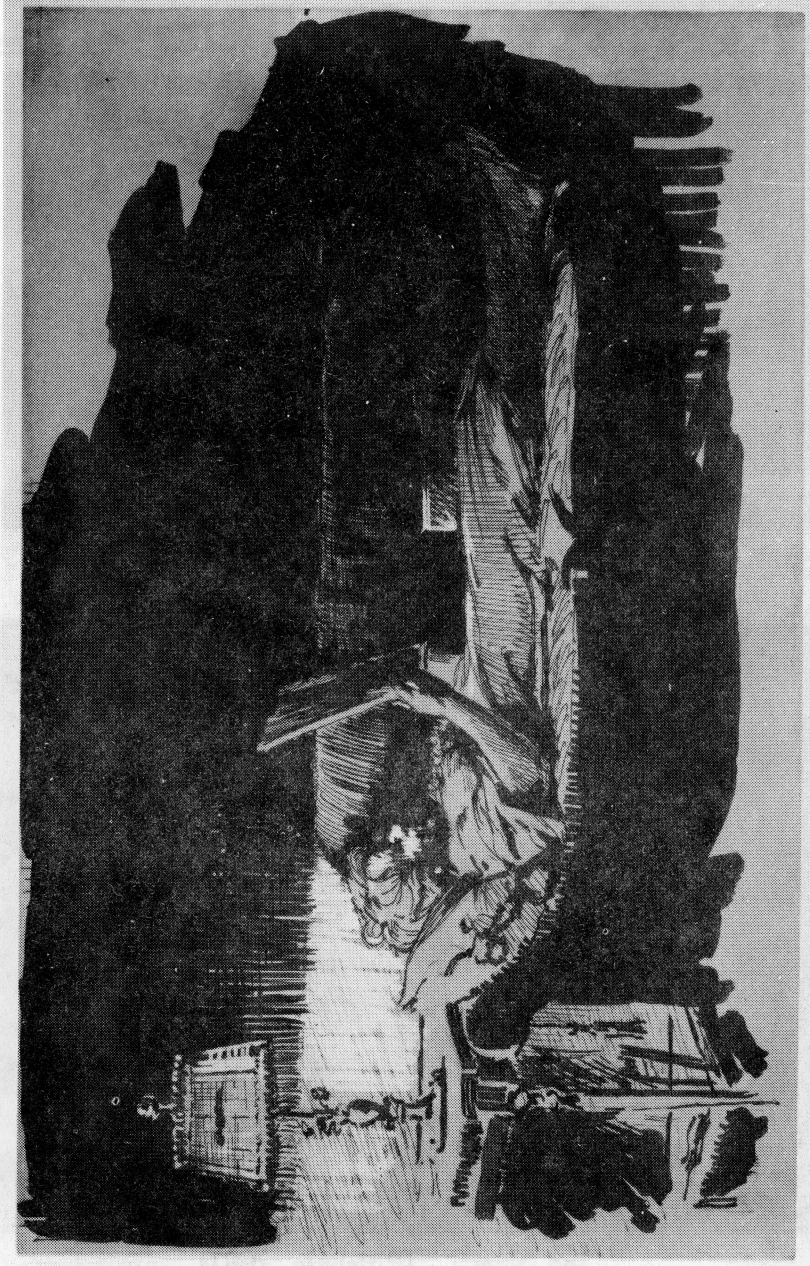
The second piece is much more abstract--it contrasts "two great philosophies" with regard to their notions regarding human motivation. One, "the scientific, practical, rational" perspective, is contrasted to the other, described as "poetic, abstract, and metaphysical." Randolph's analysis operates greatly to the advantage of the former--most "modern thinkers," in fact, are described as adhering to one of its two great schools, the Freudian and the Marxist. The latter, especially, is credited as "one of the corner-stones of the Socialist philosophy." This piece is notable only for the portrait it gives of Randolph's youthful science worship--an attitude which would hold throughout the 1920's, and be in evidence in almost any of the numerous Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books on scientific or philosophic topics.

Randolph's employment with the **Appeal** ended in the autumn of 1917, and the reason is easy to find. The **Crawford County Honor Roll** lists Randolph as entering the armed services on October 13, 1917. He first trained in Camp Funston in Kansas and later at Camp Pike in Arkansas, where he wrote to Church, back in Pittsburg, that he had arrived in the company of "about seven hundred of the lame, halt, blind, syphlitic and illiterate of the Famous Sun-Flower Regiment--the Fighting 353rd! Praise Gawd." The letters from this period repeatedly convey a rollicking irreverence for the respected verities--though the same letter does note the presence in camp of "one Patriot," a citizen of the Philippines who "says he is 'fighting for liberty and justice, with equality for all'."

Pittsburg's less than eager contributor to the war effort would spend most of his service time in the hospital--with influenza first and "a slight hernia" second. The latter got him discharged, and he promptly lit out for California. "I was in San Francisco when the Armistice was signed," he recalled. A period of hoboing about the country followed--the boy from the town's center had long since moved to the edge--but now he was almost ready to make his big move. In less than a year, he'd be living in Pineville, Missouri. The future Mr. Ozarks was about to hang out his shingle.

He'd go back to Kansas often, of course, even live in Pittsburg for brief periods. He'd continue to flirt with the old mainstream world now and again--as when he enrolled at the University of Kansas in 1922, as a graduate student in psychology. He'd quit, though, short of the degree, and head back to the hills. It was an old move by then, second nature to the kid who quit high school for the pool halls, and preferred the company of the Germans and Italians in Frontenac to the solid citizens of Pittsburg. "Yeah, I liked the miners and the radicals," he recalled. "I still think about them sometimes--Alec Howat, the local UMW leader, and Caroline Lowe, and the Callery boys. Debs--I'll never forget how pleased I was when he called me by my first name one day over in Girard. Every now and then I'll still remember one of those fellas--like Lewis Lewis, a Welshman from Frontenac, or Bill Delladio and his wife. They were bootleggers, good friends of mine. They were fine people--seems like they had a lot of fun, enjoyed themselves more than the folks back in Pittsburg."

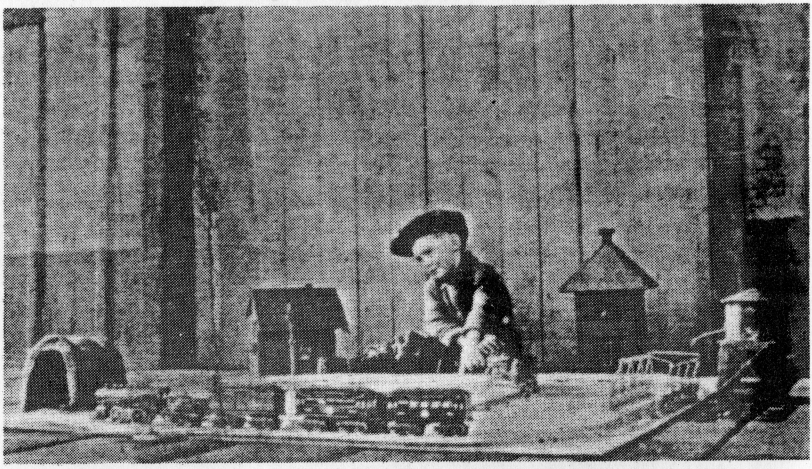
Vance Randolph, it's clear from all this, came to his work in the Ozarks prepared to listen, to respect, even to identify with the mountain people he would describe many times as "deliberately unprogressive." A shared marginality, a romantic liking for stubborn eccentricities of character not really appropriate in a devotee of science's deterministic gods--these traits, Kansas born and bred, served him well in the Ozarks, in the accomplishment of his chosen labors. The mountain folks, Randolph's own disclaimer notwithstanding, were in important ways similar to the miners of Frontenac and the Socialists of Girard, and they were, both, people of his own kind.



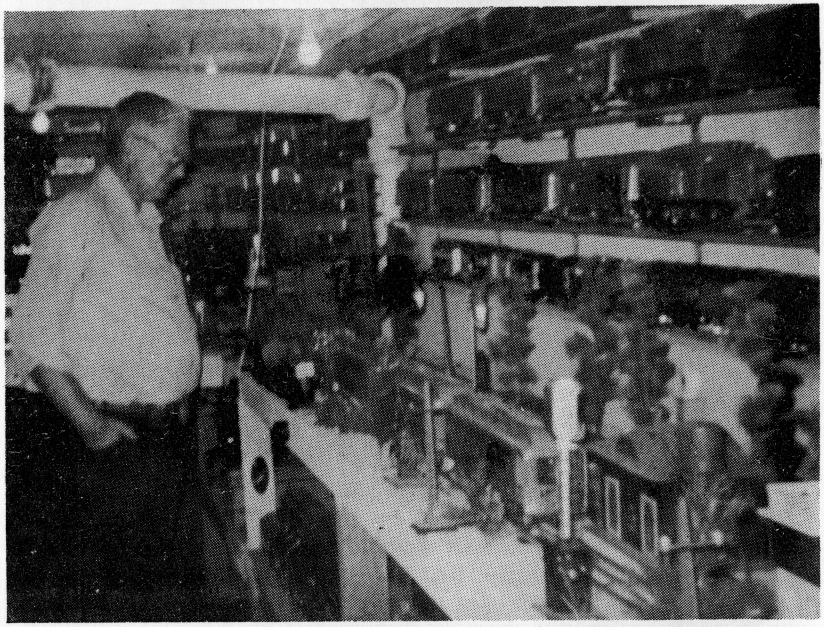
Reading by Lamplight
[Ink Drawing, 1922]

Rose O'Neill

A Boy and His Trains



. . . Then (Labette City, 1923)



and Now. . . (Pittsburg, 1981)

Clarence W. Miles

The Memphis Express

by Harold J. DuBois

I would like to tell you about the little town where I grew up, nestled in the heart of the beautiful Ozark Mountains, where the most exciting thing that happened all day long was when the Pullman train went through on its way from Springfield, Missouri, to Memphis, Tennessee. How the people loved the railroad.

How they'd pause in silent wonder when a train was going by,
Listen for its whistle, watch the smoke cloud in the sky.
For the trains belonged to every hamlet and the people living there,
And the country folks all loved them, though not one could buy a fare.
But ask any mountain farmer, "What's the greatest thing in all creation?"
"Why son, the answer's simple--it's nothing more or less
Than the combination club car on the Memphis Night Express!
And, ah, someday, I'd like to ride 'er,
Even though not very far, order me up one o' them fancy drinks,
And a fifty-cent cigar!"

In the early of the evening, when the sun was going down,
That's when that Pullman sleeper came a-roarin' through our town.
A rush, and whoosh, and she was gone--steam belchin' from her spout.
And we'd hark to hear a fading whistle, at a crossing four miles out.
Then home I'd walk to dreamland, when the night had set its sails,
And travel down through Arkansas, to the clicking of the rails.
Sometimes, I'd go all the way to Memphis.
Memphis!
It was a place without form or substance, sort of like heaven--
Yet that train was going to get there, tomorrow morning right at seven!

On very rare occasions the agent set a flag a certain way,
And there was much excitement, for it meant the train would stop that day.
Then we'd all go down to meet her!
We'd peer into the diner where waiters dressed in white
Carried silver coffee pots, burnished shiny bright.
But, ah, the Club Car!
All dressed up in fine new clothes, so they looked like men from Mars,
People sat and sipped Martinis, smoked fifty-cent cigars!
Were these real people on that train?
Would they our language understand?
No--they weren't real--
They wouldn't even bother to wave a friendly hand...,
For these were mystic people, who traveled through this humble place,
From New York, or San Francisco, or somewhere in Outer Space.
And they always went to Memphis--just why I'll never know--
But I swore that if I ever could, that's where I'd want to go.

But the years went by and I grew up. I traveled far and near.
Gone the childish fancies I had once held dear.
Then one day I came to Springfield--arrived there on a plane,
And I was much annoyed to learn from there I'd ride a train!
I took a taxi to the station, checked my baggage through,
Sat down in the waiting room--there was nothing else to do.
I got tired of sitting there (that bench was very hard),
So I decided to take a stroll around in the railroad yard.
There was nothing but confusion--switch engines all about,
Some trains were on the sidings, and others pulling out.
Smoke hung in the atmosphere; all about the cinders fell.
Then high above the tumult I heard the ringing of a bell.
It sounded so familiar, I looked down along the rail
And saw an ancient engine plodding
And I heard her whistle wail.
She'd been patched in a dozen places,
Her flags were grimy, black.
I could see the rust stains on her catcher
As she came wheezin' up the track.
But at that moment I was sure I'd met with fate.
Her face still bore a legend--the number seventy-eight!
She pulled up right beside me, her bell was ringing clear,
And down from the cab with an oil-can climbed a venerable engineer.
"I say, old man, is it possible that this big rusty mess
Is the engine I remember as the Memphis Night Express?"
"Not for long, my bright young chappie;
Tonight she makes her final run.
Tomorrer, nothin' but diesel freighters
With new men strong and young.
They're turnin' me out to pasture,
And my tired old engine, too--
Gonna set 'er up in a playground
Out by some city zoo.
But I'll go down on summer mornings
And tell the children gathered 'round
How she made the run to Memphis,
And I'll describe the whistle's sound

As she flew down through the mountains,
Throwin' smoke into the sky!
How the people paused in wonder when my train was goin' by."

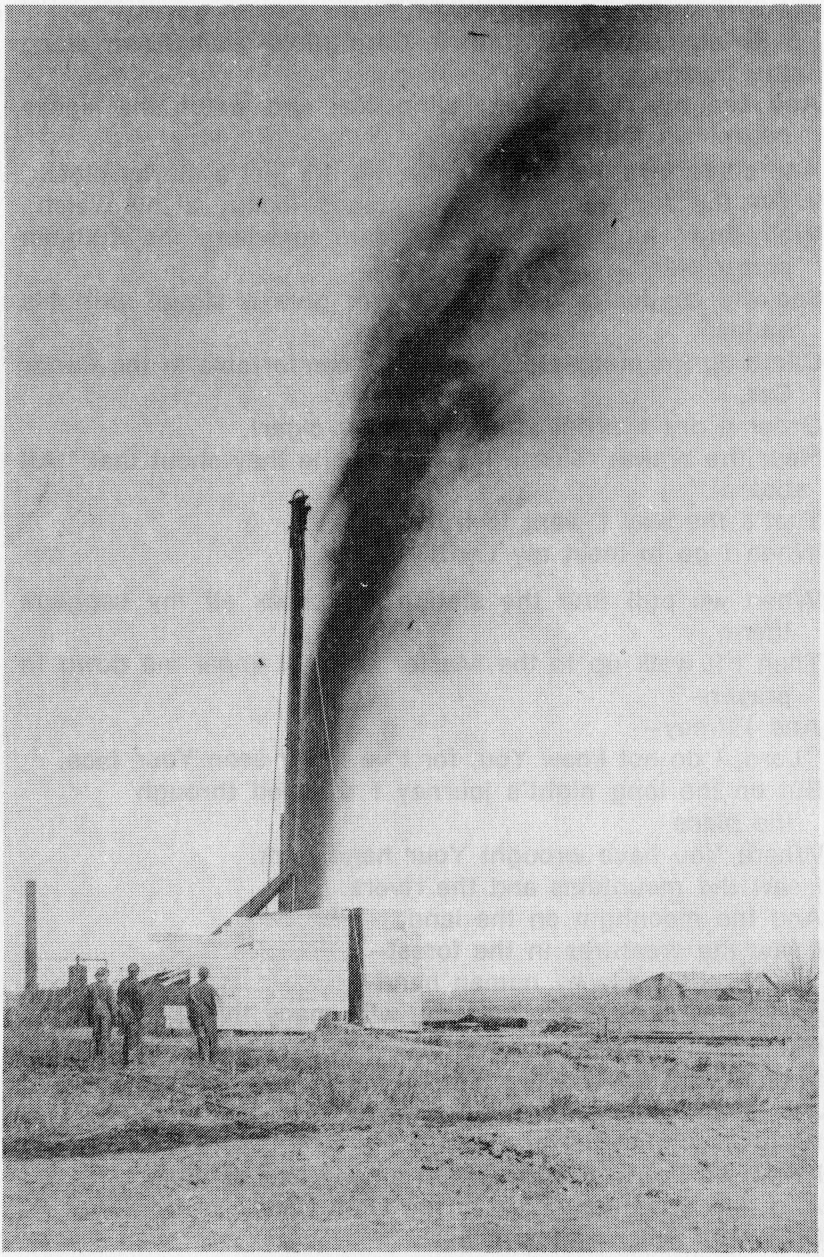
Well, I went in and changed my ticket, and paid some extra fare.
I perforce must ride to Memphis, though I had business otherwhere.
Then I climbed into the Club Car and told the man behind the bar--
"Gimme an extra dry Martini and a fifty-cent cigar!"
What a night to cross the Ozarks!
I stood on the rear platform and watched a frosty autumn moon
Rise from a purple ridge,
Saw it shimmer on the water as we crossed a railroad bridge.
And, as I stood out on that platform, all alone there in the dark,
I saw a deer bound in the forest and heard a fox-hound bark.
It's been years since I took that ride, but I remember still
The light from a tiny mountain cabin
High on a distant hill.

Up in the cab the old engineer was crowdin' that throttle on!
And we were across the mountains, and I saw the rosy dawn
Burst in the eastern sky
And we came rollin' into Memphis!
When we pulled into the station, I got out and looked around.
Memphis?
Shucks!
Just another bunch of buildings
Spread out there on the ground!
Still, to me it is a symbol, living in my memory yet,
Of a train ride through the mountains--
An emotion never to forget!

Now, they say some folks will go to heaven; others may not do so well.
Y'know, I'd like to start my final journey to the ringing of a bell.

I'd like to catch that train in Springfield--walk down along the track
And see the fireman shoveling coal and watch the smoke pour from the stack
And climb into the evening sky, till it's just a murky blotch,
While the engineer's checkin' gauges--lookin' at his watch;
Walk down along the baggage cars to where the Pullman porter stands,
See the conductor on the platform give a signal with his hands:
Climb up the steep steel steps, get comfortable in the Parlor Car,
Order a dry Martini and a fifty-cent cigar!
Hear the brakes release their air, while they shout that "All aboard!"
That's the way I want to travel
When I go to meet my Lord!

When we pull into the station I'll check all my baggage there,
Then I'll walk up to the Master and I'll kneel me down in prayer--
And I'll say--
"Lord, I do not know You, for I've never seen Your face,
But on the long night's journey I traveled through the place
Where You have wrought Your handiwork.
I saw the mountains and the rivers
And the moonlight on the land,
I saw the creatures in the forest--
Things not made by human hand--
And, Lord, I know You're busy, with many things to do,
But couldn't we have a railroad
In that land beyond the Blue?
Just a plain old mountain railroad!
With an engine burning coal.
I want no better transportation for my Eternal Soul.
And me? I wanna sit up in the Club Car,
Chat with Peter and St. Paul,
And, maybe, sip a dry Martini
And smoke a fifty-cent cigar!"



"Thar she blows." Iola, Kansas, 1890's.

The Bolt

by Stephen L. Robbins

Pryl Kohn thought about Mrs. William Wurst sitting ramrod straight in an overstuffed armchair across the room. Convincing her would be like wrenching a stick from a snapping turtle's jaws.

But Pryl Kohn expertly broke down unchristian arguments. After three years of night classes at the Kansas Bible School in Independence, he lined up his arguments on soul-saving with all the efficiency of a travelling brush salesman spreading forth his wares. And he also sold vacuum cleaners when he wasn't at the school.

Now, as the minister of the Holiness Gospel Church of Liberty, Kansas, Kohn suspected a truth about evangelism: you must work just as hard convincing people there was a John the Baptist as you did in demonstrating that ACME vacuum cleaners sucked hard-to-get dirt and animal hairs off sofas.

Quarters and nickels from his parishioners supplemented his regular church salary. Lask week, Kohn preached a good sermon, full of chest-thumping references to sin and personal salvation, but the collection totaled only thirty-five dollars and sixty cents. And there was even a note, tucked under a soiled bill, reading "Yer a bore!!" The money didn't cut by half his grocery bill at Lew's Market.

Kohn pulled down a corner of his slick tweed vest and brushed his hand through his red crewcut. His glasses were like small moons hanging over the plain of Kohn's acne-pitted face. Kohn would bring Mrs. Wurst into the fold, and more importantly, into his accounts receivable column. His vacuum cleaner experience told him Mrs. Wurst was yet only a potential, but he would spend as much time as necessary on this muggy day tallying her name in the committed column. Kohn loved ham hocks, and his grocer, a middle-aged alcoholic who drank from a bottle wrapped in butcher's paper, told him more money was needed for more ham hocks. Of course, if Mrs. Wurst's soul were saved, so much the better.

"You don't believe in the Resurrection?" Kohn asked in disbelief. For him, the question was similar to a series of questions leading to: "You don't believe our ACME vacuum cleaner will suck up Fido's hairs?" Kohn called this clincher the "real McCoy." The Resurrection was a closely-guarded belief, and the doctrine lay in his mind like a Gideon's Bible in a tacky chest of drawers.

"Naw. I don't believe in the Resurrection," Mrs. Wurst said. She rolled her tongue out of her eighty-year-old face and jerked her lower jaw like she was drawing the string on the neck of a flour sack. "Once you're dead, you're dead."

"Mrs. Wurst, of course you're not," said Kohn. "The Holy Book says man shall rise again like our Lord Jesus Christ." He knew he had to separate himself from his arguments. A good salesman could and he was an excellent salesman, but Mrs. Wurst's adamant refusal to join them in church not only threatened his ham hocks, but rattled his religion as well.

"Well, let me tell you something. My Uncle Isaac didn't think so either and look what happened to him."

"Your Uncle Isaac?" Kohn hated the way these rural people assumed their family history somehow equalled common knowledge. "And who is he?"

Mrs. Wurst rocked slightly in her chair, her face now dark, now light against a Venetian blind behind her. "Never heard about Uncle Isaac? Why I thought everyone knew about him."

"I'm from Blue Jacket, Oklahoma."

"Oh. Then I'll tell you about him."

"Go ahead, Mrs. Wurst. I'd enjoy listening to you," Kohn said. To save his ham hocks, he'd listen to anything.

"My uncle rode in here in 1889." She shot the words off her tongue like they were slick watermelon seeds. "He was a circuit rider. A Methodist. Rode his horse around this state and in Oklahoma preaching revivals before he got struck by lightning."

"By lightning?" Kohn pictured a white-haired God hurling a flaming bolt at a black-frocked preacher in his pulpit. Maybe he could forego the ham hocks this week. "In church?"

"No, not in church," Mrs. Wurst said. "Outside. On the ground."

"Oh, I see..." Kohn didn't see.

"I'll get the newspaper articles about it. Then you'll understand," Mrs. Wurst said. She left her chair and rummaged through a pile of movie star magazines and photo albums on a walnut coffee table.

"Here." She thrust a yellowed newspaper clipping into Kohn's face. "Read it. That's what I'm talking about."

Kohn carefully unfolded the brittle paper and read, with his back to a window, the clipping from the **Liberty Gazette**, August 1906.

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

A bolt of lightning struck the Rev. Isaac Wurst late yesterday afternoon as he left his tent revival meeting.

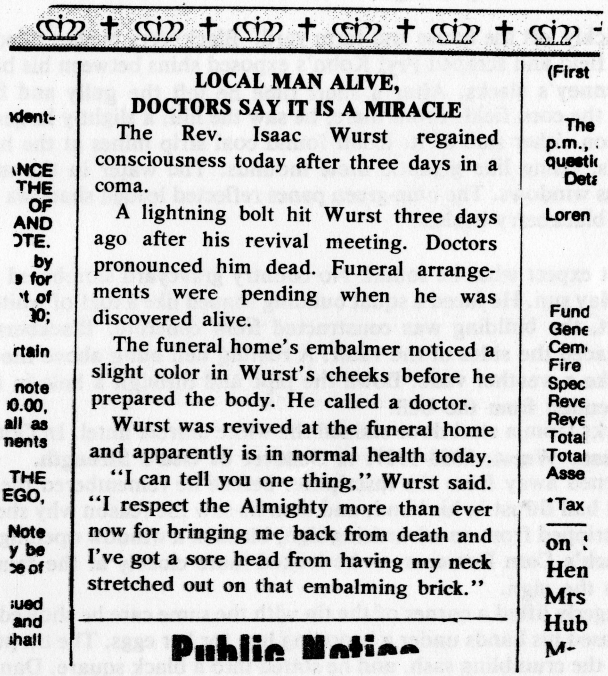
The lightning bolt knocked the minister unconscious. Persons attending the revival took him immediately to Goodman's Funeral Parlor.

Doctor Frank Mepps pronounced him dead at the parlor. Funeral arrangements are pending.

"Nothing extraordinary," said Pryl Kohn. "Lightning hits all the time." But he vowed not to leave his church building during a thunderstorm. A man couldn't be too careful in matters of faith.

"No. No. Read the other clipping, too," Mrs. Wurst said, snaking out her tongue. Kohn remembered an ugly lizard he saw in a traveling sideshow as a boy and how he and his friends watched the lizard snatch horseflies trapped in its cage.

The second clipping stuck to the back of the first. He read:



LOCAL MAN ALIVE, DOCTORS SAY IT IS A MIRACLE

The Rev. Isaac Wurst regained consciousness today after three days in a coma.

A lightning bolt hit Wurst three days ago after his revival meeting. Doctors pronounced him dead. Funeral arrangements were pending when he was discovered alive.

The funeral home's embalmer noticed a slight color in Wurst's cheeks before he prepared the body. He called a doctor.

Wurst was revived at the funeral home and apparently is in normal health today.

"I can tell you one thing," Wurst said. "I respect the Almighty more than ever now for bringing me back from death and I've got a sore head from having my neck stretched out on that embalming brick."

Public Notice

"Extraordinary?" asked Mrs. Wurst when Pryl Kohn finished reading the clipping.

"Yes. Extraordinary," agreed Kohn. "I'm afraid I still don't see how this applies to Christ's Resurrection, though."

"That ain't the whole story. The other chapter is out back in the pasture."

"The pasture?" Kohn thought Mrs. Wurst was contemplating him much in the same fashion as the lizard in the cage measured a circling fly.

"This old farm was Uncle Isaac's and he's buried here."

Kohn found nothing unusual in this. Many farms still had their small cemetery plots on knolls. He pictured their peculiar, old-time inscriptions, lost now in the sunflowers and Johnson grass. "But Mrs. Wurst. We really should talk about our upcoming revival meeting. I'm sure if you'd come, you'd enjoy the services."

Mrs. Wurst sighed and leaned back in her chair. "You look then."

"Look?"

"Yes. Where he's buried. Then you'll understand why I'm telling you I don't believe in church going."

Kohn started to say something about older persons remaining unpenitent, then thought better of speaking. The old woman still might be gathered into his flock. And he wasn't prepared yet to sacrifice part of his grocery list, and maybe the old woman had no will. He would go to Uncle Isaac's plot to humor the woman. Besides, he needed to escape the hot farmhouse.

"Okay. I'll go. When I get back, we'll talk more about our Sunday services. Where is it?"

"Go past the barn and follow the gully down to the lower corn field. Uncle Isaac lies on the hill to your right."

Kohn quickly left the house and farm yard. Blackberry bushes filled the gully to the corn field and scraped Pryl Kohn's exposed shins between his black socks and his Penney's slacks. After a short time he left the gully and followed a cowpath to the corn field. From there, he saw the hill, a slightly larger one than two knolls on either side of it. Kohn found coal strip mines at the base of the smaller hills, rising like gigantic mole mounds. The water in the mines was stained-glass windows. The blue-green panes reflected leaded shadows of cottonwoods and blackberry bushes.

He didn't expect what he found. No country graveyard slumbered peacefully under the May sun. He faced a squat building shaped like a loaf of white bread. A burial vault, the building was constructed from concrete. Blackberry bushes and vines laced the sides of the vault. A rusting bell hung above the center of the vault like a weather vane. Down the pipe and through a hole in the top, a chain descended from the bell.

Rust marks from a steel door stained the white marble lintel. In Gothic script, he read: **Isaac Wurst, 1853-1907. A Believer in God's Strength.**

Kohn turned away from the inscription before he remembered the flashlight Mrs. Wurst had thrust in his hand, and then he saw the reason why she gave it to him. Tin, stripped from an advertising sign, blocked a window opening. He spelled out **French's Corn Remover** as he looked more closely at the faint, yellow lettering on the sign.

Kohn gingerly lifted a corner of the tin with the same care he showed, when, as a boy, he eased his hands under a brooding hen for her eggs. The tin pulled away easily from the crumbling sash, and he stared into a black square. Dank air from the tomb cooled his face.

He remembered his training in the Kansas Bible School and the method ministers used to approach bereaved families. But he knew parlor room techniques were useless here. Kohn simply had to look.

His flashlight scored the darkness and illuminated a rusting pick and shovel propped against a stone bier. Swinging the light upwards, he stared into the leathery face, green with mold, of Isaac Wurst.

Kohn nearly dropped the flashlight. He withdrew his face and hand from the hole as if he had been shoved into a nest of yellowjackets. He felt faint, his face flushed, and he leaned against the concrete wall and gazed at the bushes and to the corn field, a hazy green in the distance. The landscape vibrated, a light aura shimmered around a cottonwood in front of him, and the green became mauve. He imagined he was in the pulpit and Mrs. Wurst shouted at him from the rear pew, her face contorted, her tongue lashing before a jagged flame changed her into Isaac Wurst.

Sitting in her rocking chair, Mrs. Wurst's face was not twisted, only slightly mocking as she poured ice water from a milk jug into Kohn's tumbler.

"Run all the way?" Mrs. Wurst examined Kohn's sweating forehead.

"No." He lied. He had run--part way, and if in his wind hadn't failed him on the cowpath, he would have sprinted into Mrs. Wurst's backyard, His lower side still throbbed with the exertion and his sports jacket seeped wet spots on the chair.

"You saw him." The statement was an assertion of faith and carried the tone of victory.

"I saw something." Now, Kohn knew he was mistaken in going to the tomb. Mrs. Wurst waited to exploit him, he knew, and he had no words ready for his defense.

"I saw something. I don't...." He felt like a harried housewife, retreating before a ACME vacuum cleaner salesman.

"Oh. You saw Uncle Isaac," Mrs. Wurst said matter-of-factly.

"He wasn't buried. His coffin?"

"Rotted away. Did you see the shovel and pickax?"

"Inside? Yes. I really don't understand." And Pryl Kohn didn't understand.

"After the lightning bolt, he got scared. Ordered his brother, a carpenter, to build him the tomb. He said he didn't want to wake up underground. The funeral home was bad enough."

Kohn felt foolish, but he asked anyway. "The bolt....Didn't it kill him?

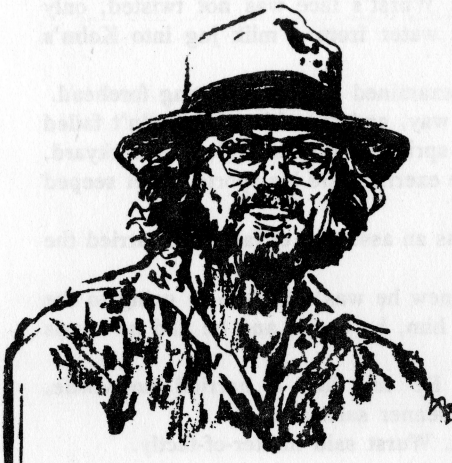
Mrs. Wurst wrinkled up her loose skin into a taut smirk. "Nope. Drank himself to death. He got out of the preachin' line and opened up the Lucky Shot Tavern.

"Oh. And that's the reason you're not coming to church." He asked the question in a negative way, his selling lessons failing him.

"That's right," said Mrs. Wurst emphatically. She blinked and looked contented. "You die and rot. There ain't no soul. That's why I don't believe in the Resurrection."

The room darkened and the pit rolled out of Mrs. Wurst's mouth, pulling him toward a swirling vortex of lightning flashes. He couldn't remember a Bible lesson for the pit stretchin in all of its immensity at his feet. He felt himself sliding toward the precipice's edge, his glib answers no help for the darkness before him. Then Kohn saw the mouldy face of Isaac Wurst in his coffin and the tomb's reminder of mortality.

And just as suddenly, Mrs. Wurst reappeared on the edge of her rocker. The heat was the cause of his discomfort, Kohn thought. He could talk more easily about dog hairs than about the human soul. He knew his ham hocks were a luxury, more often cut from his grocery bill than added to it. And he knew his ACME vacuum cleaner line was safer than preaching.



Lightning

"I'd be pretty good if I could see....I can't read. I can't write. I can't do a shit firin' thing." Aunt Helen
Arcadia, Kansas, 1979

She gropes for it in the deepest shadow
calling out her pain so elegantly

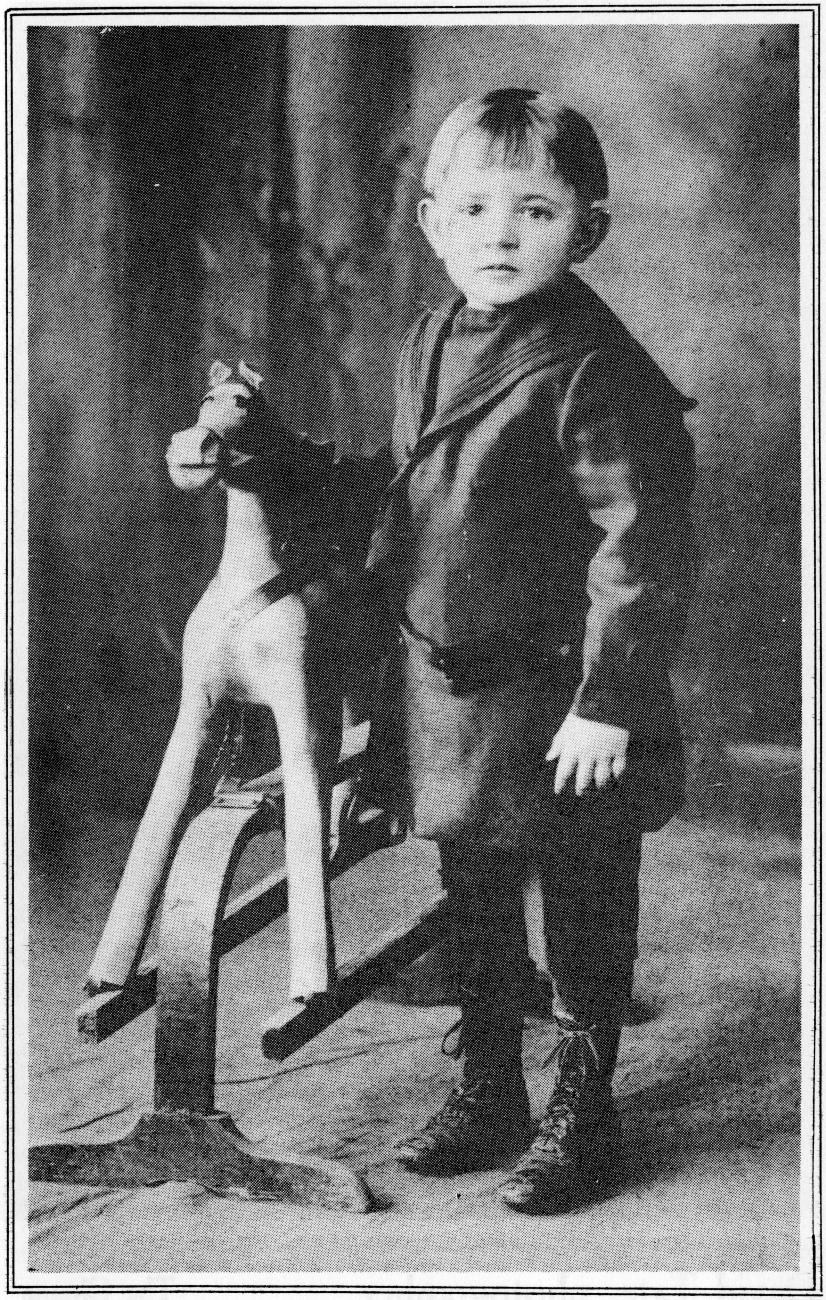
rearranging the furniture for the last time

hungry for it
becoming more iron than anything
knowing somehow it will soon return

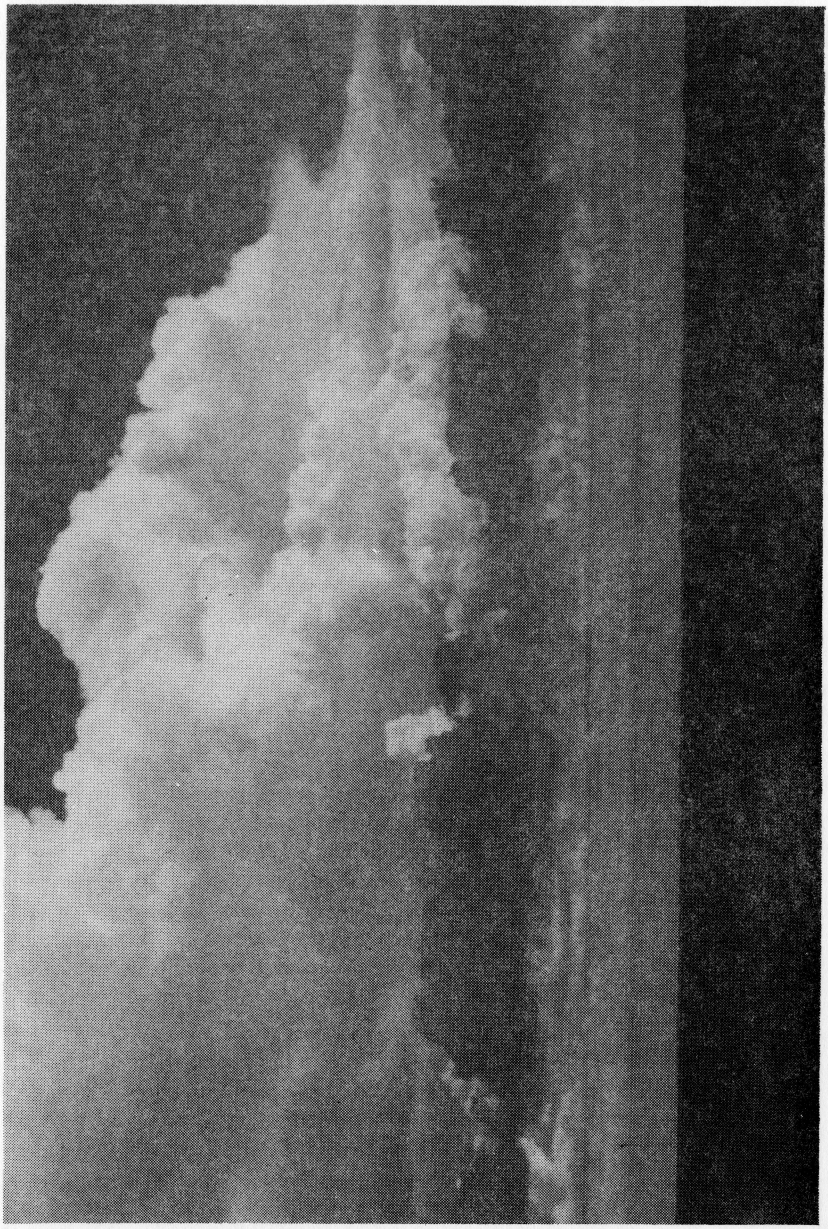
running with the wind
falling with the rain

inviting the spark of death.

J.T. Knoll



Gene Newbanks, 1923
Montana, Kansas



David Tate, photographer The Clouds

Winter Abstract

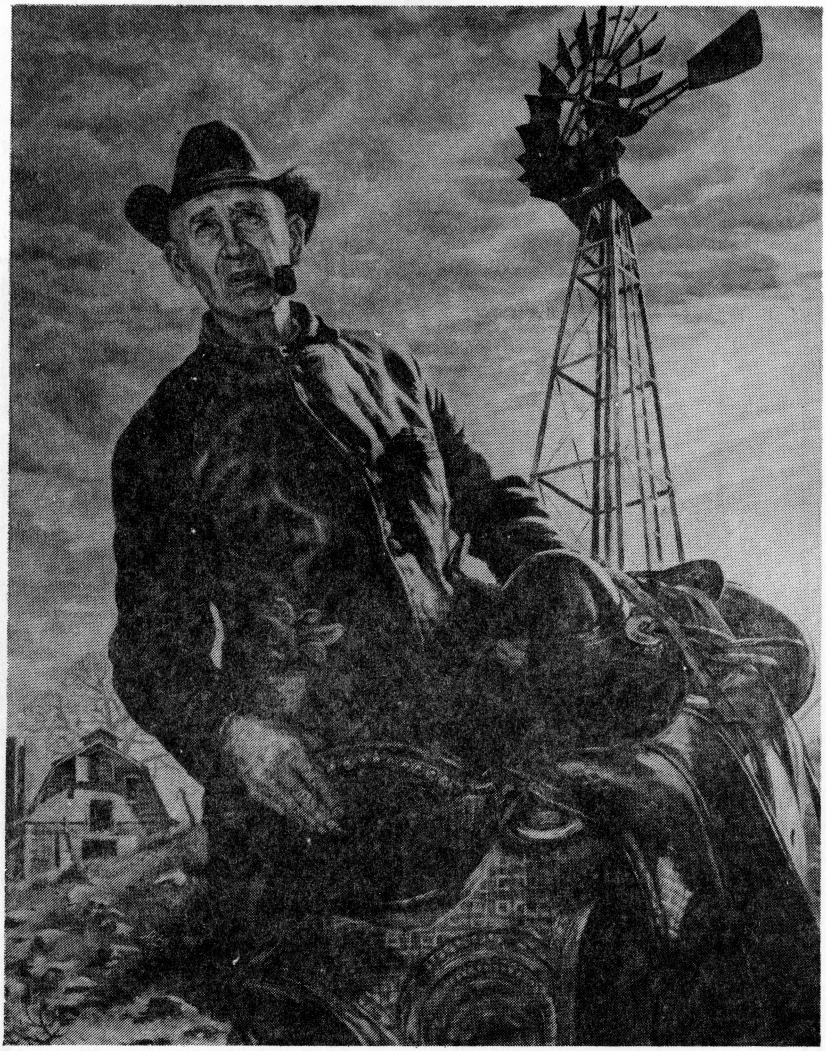
We say it is the weather depresses us.
December, no more than 12 degrees today,
No sun, harsh north light
Glints. Last week's snow dirties.

Or loneliness, we say. Makes us remember.
And remembering brings us to our knees
Without explaining anything: confusion,
Humiliation, loss.

We say,
While the day moves in splendid indifference.
The law is perfect, Singh,
If we but cleanse our sight.

Philip Boatright

The Artwork of Charles Banks Wilson

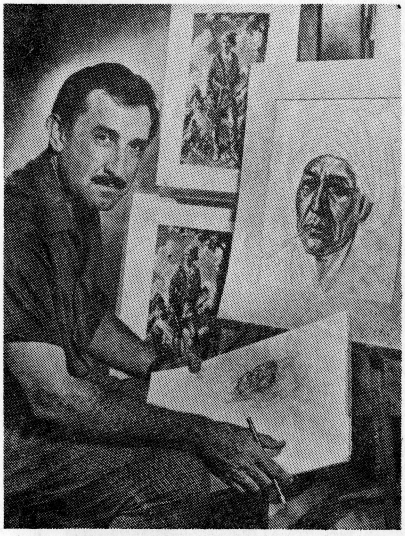


Oklahoma Portrait

Regionalist literature--what you have already come to expect in the issues of the **Little Balkans Review**--and regionalist painting are twins in art, and nowhere in the area could be found a more distinguished and accomplished practitioner of regionalism than the painter, printmaker, magazine and book illustrator, teacher, lecturer and historian--Charles Banks Wilson of Miami, Oklahoma.

Wilson's honors and awards are much too numerous to be entirely catalogued here, but it might be noted that he has been honored by the U.S. State Department, as well as by the International Institute of Arts and Letters in Geneva. He is a recipient of the Western Heritage award from the Cowboy Hall of Fame, and one of his major triumphs is the completion of four huge murals for the rotunda of the state capitol in Oklahoma City.

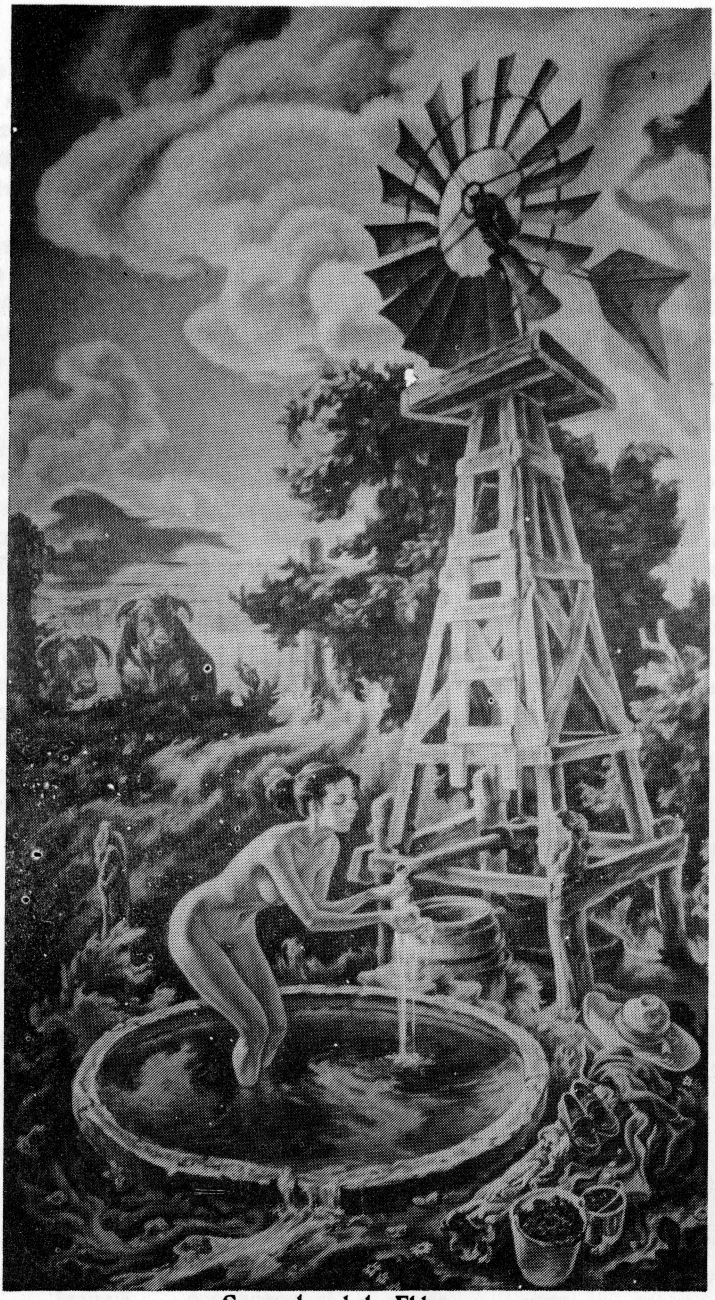
Regionalism in literature and painting addresses itself to the historical and sociological minutiae of a given locale, particularly that locale in which the artist has deep roots, deep understanding, and deep sympathy. From Rembrandt to Cezanne, for example, we have evidence of the "regional" influences in the European mode: Rembrandt's famous painting, **The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp** (1632), and Cezanne's equally famous **Cardplayers** (1892) both reflect the "at home" milieu in which they lived, as do several of Wilson's paintings reproduced here--such as **Oklahoma Portrait, Sorghum Time**, and **Comanche Camp**. The reverence for detail and subject matter in these selected examples is as germane to Wilson's art as the desolate New England beaches and barns are to Andrew Wyeth or the carefully rendered stones and flowers of Florence were to Leonardo da Vinci.



Charles Banks Wilson, 1965

It is this overriding faith in the worthiness of one's own placement in time and geography that best defines the regionalist. Whether it be James Fenimore Cooper learning about the wilderness frontier in his youth on Otsego Lake in New York, or Mark Twain experiencing life as a barefoot boy on the banks of the Mississippi in Hannibal, Missouri, or William Inge coming of age in the tree-shaded streets of Independence, Kansas, the

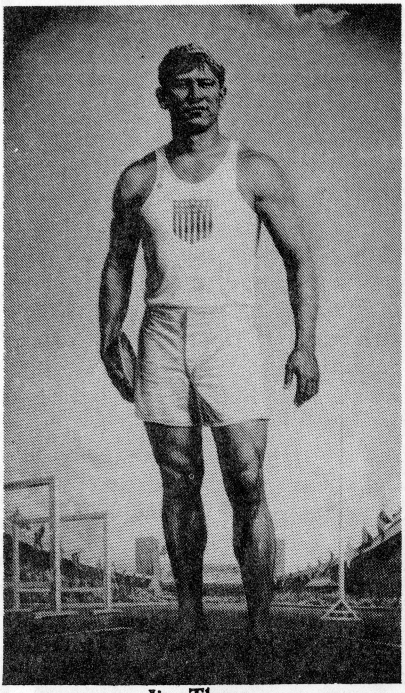
(continued on page 41)



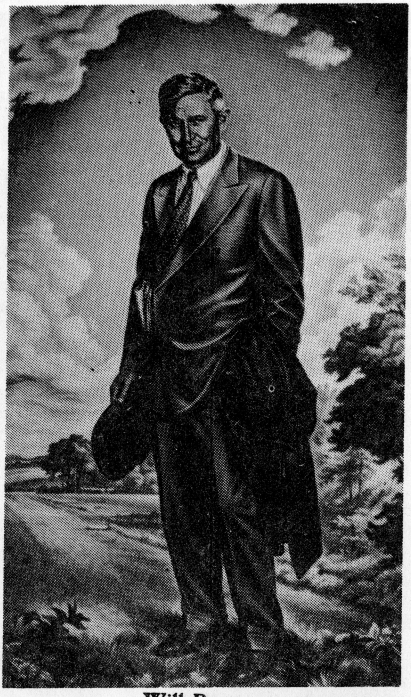
Susannah and the Elders

Comanche Camp

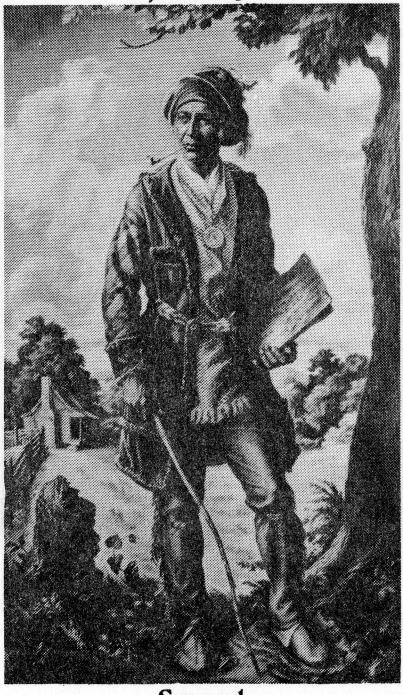
Sorghum Time



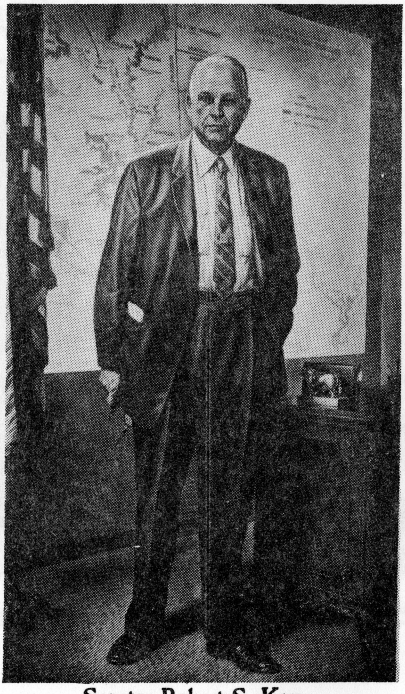
Jim Thorpe



Will Rogers



Sequoyah



Senator Robert S. Kerr

emotional roots of time and place mingle imperishably in the work such artists create. It is precisely such localized wonder--the worlds of farmers, ranchers, Indians, windmills, landscapes, wide skies, history and myth--that Charles Banks Wilson brings to his canvasses, drawings, and great murals.

As if to impress on the viewer the legitimacy of this regionalistic attitude, Wilson (like others before him) feels perfectly free to add his own interpretation of a historical and artistic subject to what has gone before. The example here is **Susannah and the Elders**. Again, Rembrandt felt free to look at Pieter Lastman's painted version of this apocryphal story (1614) and to interpret it for himself in 1647. Wilson's friend and mentor, regionalist Thomas Hart Benton, painted his version in 1938. But in Wilson's work we have both humor and exactness of place. Susannah is a farm girl bathing in a horse trough beside an Oklahoma windmill--and the "elders" are two curiously innocent, even mystified, Hereford bulls.

Perhaps **Race to the Barn** is a picture which best illustrates here the exciting strengths of both the surviving regionalistic movement in American art and the individual stamp of Wilson, the artist. Like those figures on Keats' Grecian urn, we see forever a simple scene of human joy and striving in nature through art. That is real beauty, and all the truth we need to know.

CHARLES CAGLE

Race to the Barn

The Husband Meaner than the Dickens: A Lebanese Folktale

Collected by Patty Kuhel from Marie Farris

There was a woman in the Old Country, and she married a man who was meaner than the dickens. She couldn't please him. Everything she did. She couldn't please him. He'd come home from work and sit down to eat and he'd say, "That's too salty!" And he hit her on the head every time. The next day she'd fix him something different and he'd say, "That's too sweet! You didn't put enough salt in it!" So he'd beat her up.

This went on for years and years, and she got tired of it. So one day she made him majudra. She made two pots: she made one salty and she made one sweet. He came home and he said, "This is too salty!" and he started to hit her. She said, "No! No! Here's another one!" And it was okay, so he went ahead and ate.

In the Old Country they sleep outside where it's cooler. She'd make him a bed and it would never please him. It was either too hard or too soft. So she made him two beds. She made one hard and one soft. He laid down, and it was too soft. And he got up and started to hit her and cuss her up one side and down the other until who wouldn't have it. She said, "Here! I made your bed! Don't hit me! Don't hit me!" The other bed was fine, so he went to sleep.

Just then a big old crow came over and crapped right on his head. So he came in and was going to beat her up. But she said, "If it's too salty, I can make it sweet. If it's too hard, I can make it soft. But I got no jurisdiction over God's own birds!"

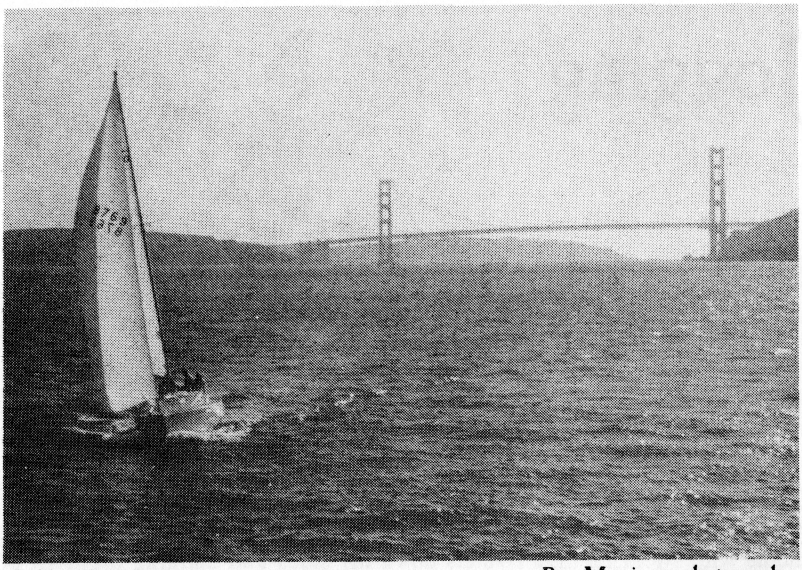
Jogging

by Robert Abel

All I want to do is stay young and live forever. So I am jogging. About three and a half miles every morning before I go into the office. I come home with sweat running rivulets down my sides and marking the front of my gray sweater with a dark V. For the rest of the day, then, I feel free to eat and drink and indulge as I please, and if I really thought I could add years to my life by jogging, I would never stop. Well, almost never. Jogging isn't everything.

You can take eight minutes off your life by eating charcoal-broiled meat on a regular basis; if you live in a city for a couple of decades; if you live near an atomic power plant, or even an oil refinery; if you eat a lot of sugar, or smoke, or drink alcohol in any quantity. It seems every time you turn around you are taking eight minutes off your life. I'm not sure what this means, and if it is cancer you are worried about, then maybe a few scores of eight minutes less suffering would be a blessing. A conclusion like this is not the usual one, is it? Jenkins is always saying about me in those meetings he has with his department heads: "A statistic doesn't mean the same thing to Andrews as it means to everybody else. Where do you get these damned off-the-wall ideas, John?"

Jenkins would be better off if he jogged. He plays handball, sure, but he doesn't play it long enough, and don't tell me he doesn't get winded if he takes the stairs between floors. Because he smokes. Cigarettes will wreck you. Listen to that morning cough of his and deny it. Carbonated drinks will get you, too. And Jenkins is addicted to both, as well as to alcohol, and to sweat it all out of him would take a year of jogging on the beach. It'd kill him first. He's full of impurities, and if he ever donates his body to Langley Porter--the standard joke around the office, right?--they'll be astounded at how his body kept going with all the junk accumulated in it. Jenkins is sort of proud of it. It's stupid. He's taking eight minutes off his life every time he turns around, and he's proud of it.



Golden Gate Bridge Ray Morrison, photographer

Sometimes I like to jog in Golden Gate Park, because I like the feel of the grass underfoot, and because, sometimes, I want to see a lot of other people jogging, too. I suppose it's something of a comfort to feel that if you're crazy for jogging, then the booby hatches are going to be pretty full if they lock every one of us up. That'll be the next thing, you know, a report that says jogging is really very dangerous to your pancreas or something. They'll shoot us full of drugs to induce quiescence, catatonia, to keep us from jogging all around the wards. But the Park is also great because it's no secret some of the women jogging out there are lovely in their sweat and flying boobs and bouncing asses. You can't keep swivelling your head around, but I developed pretty good peripheral vision back in my high-school basketball days, and it's stayed with me because I still use it, right? all the time. They dress for it, too. Some really sharp little jogging outfits, especially in the summer. Those long, tan, California legs! When you jog, you never stop to look at anything, never get the whole story, just glimpses. You're interested in something else, the motion, not the things. You just catch a glimpse of them going by, and that's enough. Maybe it's even better that way.

But mostly nobody wants to be bothered. And mostly, I jog down the beach near the Great Highway where the air is colder, and the running is harder, and it's just altogether more solitary. A couple of times jogging through the park, I've thought I've seen people I didn't want to see again, ever, and was glad for my shades and my towel (which I slipped over my head, Arab-style) and--I don't want to sound vain about it, but it's true--my new, slim physique. Most of the people I don't want to see again

wouldn't recognize me right away. They'd do a double-take, and they'd say something like, "Jesus, man, what happened to the old beer gut?" I don't know what my wife (ex) would say, and don't care, except I don't want to run into her, either, and give her the opportunity to say or feel anything about me, even though it might be a twang of regret, and I might get a little charge of revenge out of it. Capital M, Might. The truth is, women hold up a hell of a lot better than men. I'll bet Jenny looks like a million bucks, and doesn't jog a mile in a year.

But this is a success story, right? How I lost forty pounds, and had to take all my old clothes to the tailor for re-adjustment. Which is a laugh. I never had any clothes a tailor would look at anyway, when I was heavier. Some of the clothes I wore were hand-me-downs from people I knew, some came from the Red Shield and Saint Vincent dePaul charity stores, a few things I wore I actually paid for, at discount stores. The most expensive threads I owned--a leather vest, a Mexican wedding shirt--I ripped off from a downtown men's store where I now have a charge account which is paid off mostly through a bank I once threw bricks into.

Times change. You grow old, you get fat, you go to hell. Everybody notices it, each new gray hair, each new pound, the mounting sag. "Putting on a little weight, aren't you, John?" They joke about it. Time to slow down.

No.

When I bought my clothes at the charity stores, I was dedicated to an enterprise called **Free Seeds**, a little newspaper we thought might help to smash the war (in Vietnam, of course) and carry some information important to people like ourselves who wanted to learn to live outside a war-making, racist, and oppressive system. We carried dope news ("the windowpane acid being sold in North Beach is pure and divine; the 'mescaline' hits in pink capsules are about 90 per cent speed, and a guaranteed bummer..."); and we told lies that, if they weren't true in fact, were true to how we felt about the war and the people who made it and supported it. "Some examples?" Jenkins would write in the margin of my copy. O.K., Boss:

We reported that Hubert Humphrey accidentally chewed off the end of his tongue campaigning after the '68 convention in "Shitcago" and that his mouth was actually being run by a machine;

One of our reporters wrote that Lyndon Johnson had raped him with the help of two secret service men (which was nothing in comparison to an infamous story that appeared in **The Realist**, if you remember);

Miracle Rose (Jenny) wrote a story exposing the ruling class conspiracy to addict all of America to television through the use of subtle electronic rays which created cellular dependency requiring larger and larger doses, more and more viewing time, until eventually no one could exist away from the presence of a boob tube.

We didn't think it was possible to create a lie more gross and absurd and hurtful than a 600 pound bomb, or napalm, or some of those

wonderfully, eerily tricky anti-personnel devices the Air Force was throwing around over there; and we didn't think, really, we could come up with lies more outrageous, gross and damaging than those which were told to justify taking our friends off the streets and throwing them in the jungle 8,000 miles away to do the dirty work for the American ruling class, to absorb the bullets that should have been smashing into their skulls. We didn't expect people to take our reporting literally, or even too "seriously," but we did expect them to get The Idea. And yet we'd get charged with being "inaccurate" and "irresponsible" and "malicious," which was true in a sense, sure, but really irrelevant, and it cracked us up. We didn't waste any time on bullshit like that. Instead, we'd get stoned and make up headlines that had nothing to do with the stories but with how we felt about the progress of the war and our relation to it, the System, and AmeriKKKa (as we always spelled it in our pages). Some of these headlines were obscene; some were just corny take-offs on the way the establishment journalists wrote about the war. And by God, we actually sold some ads, and most of the time it wouldn't take us but two or three days to sell out a press run of ten or twelve and up to twenty thousand copies, which at twenty-five to fifty cents apiece (plus ads, when they were paid for--hah!) made us enough to stay in business, pay the rent on a damaged old building on Divisadero we all lived together in, buy some dope and groceries, and drink enough beer to put little bellies on some of us, including, of course, me. I think I got up to about 220 back then.

I didn't do much writing for **Free Seeds**. Mostly I designed the thing and laid it out. It was very free-flowing, open, with no fixed format (a kind of anti-image making, of course) and we were naturally very "psychedelic" also and used all the printing tricks we could afford and get away with on newsprint--split fountain covers, two-color poster center spreads, full bleeds, the whole works.

So what happens? Here we are telling the world that many of our noble political leaders swap wives and eat Vietnamese babies for breakfast, and you would expect the local "authorities" to go bullshit. Well, they did and they didn't. The cops harrassed us plenty, and we flushed away a lot of good dope from time to time.

We figured our phone was tapped, too, and delighted in telling more gross lies over the phone for the benefit of the nosey bastards who would have to monitor the tape. Miracle Rose (Jenny) was beaten up by a couple of drunken cowboys, but she identified them, and they went to jail, too. We weren't Manson types, you know. We just wanted the war to stop and to get high and screw in peace. What else does anybody want? We weren't cadre-type militant revolutionaries, either, and, in fact, we never could really and wholeheartedly accept violence as a means to peace, or even as a practical alternative for dealing a death blow to the nuclear-missled Monster. What revolutionary organization could ever match the U.S. Army for fire power? We were simply the types these

more radical kinds of revolutionaries could count on to support an action and fill out the ranks. And when the Bank of AmeriKKKa was torched, we were angry enough to join in and staff the blockades and sling rocks and golf balls at the "pigs." That was the most intense, the best or the worst action we ever took part in. Actually we were psychological revolutionaries, far better at singing than slinging (or shooting) and some people recognized that. I told people I was "an inside agitator." We figured it was necessary to change people's minds before any other changes could happen, and part of our goofiness in **Free Seeds** had that more serious purpose, or so we fantasized.

All you had to do was take one look at us, with our beer bellies, and flabby white legs, and you could see we were not exactly running a lot of obstacle courses or cutting a lot of sugar cane every day. Jesus. Our ideas of great sport was to smoke some dope and take a shower with our favorite friend (Miracle Rose, in my case) or watch TV with the sound turned off and simultaneously listen to some good music--classical Indian music or what we weren't then afraid to call jazz, or whatever, the Beatles now and then, though we were not heavy Rock freaks, either.

Who recognized us was the National Bank Systems, that's who. America's Number One Financial Service Center. I'm not shitting you. I got a call from somebody in their PR ("Pig Relations") department asking who did the design and layout for our magazine. Except they didn't call it PR any more. Then it was Community Information Service, since shortened to Community Services. I said the layout was done by an Eskimo who couldn't speak English. Mr. PR said send the Eskimo around, I want to talk to him and I'll get a translator if I have to, I don't care if he's Mao Tse Tung. I asked him if he wanted to see the Eskimo's dogs, too, and if he thought he could find anybody to speak Husky.

We chuckled over that in our "staff meeting," rap session, planning meeting, whatever. We couldn't imagine what NBS would want with us. Then we went back to work. LSD DROPPED IN MUSKOGEE WATER SUPPLY, we lied. It was not a very scary story anyway, not just because all the heads in Muskogee (both of them) would have been elated for that stroke, but because the regular papers were carrying stories about bacteriological warfare. Now that was scary. There was nothing we could do to match that. Anthrax, you know. Texas or France wiped out in an hour.

You wouldn't believe how much stuff came to us in the mail then, too, stuff we never requested but were sent just for being a newspaper. We didn't even know how they'd get our address. One of these things was **The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists**. Man! What a far-out publication. You probably know this journal has a tiny clock on the cover with minute hands closing in on Zero Hour, signifying how much time is left for personkind before the nuclear holocaust erupts and destroys civilization as we know it (which, I always figured, is not a cilivization worth saving if it allows a nuclear holocaust to occur anyway). I never saw an issue of this thing that

gave the world more than five minutes to survive. Every now and then, though, the minute hand would move back (in the nick of time) to signify a breakthrough of some kind in arms limitations or diplomatic accord with the Reds. I was actually relieved to know time could be moved backwards, and I kind of bought the idea--even though I was certain, too, that American foreign policy makers were screwed up totally about communism and eminently capable of screwing up period--that a gain of thirty seconds or a minute gave the planet just that much more of a foothold, that much more chance to find an answer, to work out the kinks. Time going backwards. Great! Naturally, it would take a physicist to think of that.

So I did an issue of **Free Seeds** with a big clock on the cover, obviously a time bomb, which showed all the Freaks and the Radicals and the People (whoever and wherever the hell they were) trying to push the minute hand back while the Pols and the Military and the Cops tried to push it to Zero Hour, and while the Big Biz Boys placed bets with each other on who would win, kind of like Roman Soldiers beneath the True Cross. It was an elaborate drawing, with some collage, and surrounded by real smoky psychedelic lettering. Well, it was something of a hit, and I saw the cover pinned up or taped up on a lot of walls, in bars and cafes, and some windows on the street. We did a second printing, and it sold out, too. I felt good about that, and I thought maybe I was winning hearts and minds.

Just after this issue was on the street, I got another call from Mr. PR. He loved the cover, he wanted to talk to me, blah blah blah. I was fractured. It was all I could do to keep a straight face. I didn't get on his case too hard this time because after all he was flattering me ("stroking" they call it now) and I was thinking that maybe this guy with all this money could be used for the Revolution, like Sam Adams used Hancock, that kind of scene. Or maybe he was some kind of Bircher trying to lure me into a trap, you know, where the local Fascist fringe would break the hippie cartoonist's thumbs and cut his hair--that kind of thing happened, that was real, for sure, as Miracle Rose would tell you--and send the dirty brown locks back to the newspaper office as a warning to all the other perverted commie dupes who worked there. (As a matter of fact, if somebody asked whether or not so-and-so could be trusted, we'd say, sure, so-and-so is a truly fine Commie pervert and a half-breed Jew to boot. That was credentials.)

But I was curious (blue). I talked it over with my perverted commie Jewish, black and female friends/comrades (including Miracle Rose, or Jennifer, who was, yes, my wife in a former incarnation for both of us of about five years previous before we knew anything about anything and who, yes, liked to take mescaline and showers simultaneously and with everybody, and who, no, never weighed more than 125, which she carried beautifully on her big frame, damn it.) We agreed I should have a talk with Mr. PR and see if we could get a line, after all, on where he was

coming from. What did he want from us? And what could we get from him?

So. I went in my bib overall rags and flab and revolutionary wit straight into the offices of Robert T. Jenkins at National Bank Systems. If I remember right I even had a hash pipe and a few grains of Lebanese blonde wrapped in tinfoil in my pocket, which could have had me put away for a few dozen years, I suppose, if in fact I was being set up. Who knows? They offered me a fabulous amount of money, that's all I can say, to come into what they called their Art Department--and still do--and help design and work out a series of publications for teenagers on what a bank is and how to use it. They didn't ask me what I thought a bank was and what use I thought they should make of it. I don't know if I would have told them the truth just then or not. I was scheming like crazy. My head was all riled up with the thought of all that money. I wasn't sure I was on the same planet as of ten minutes ago, and of course, I wasn't. I mean it. Banks are the doorway to another planet (which is close to what I recently wrote in one of our pamphlets for youth) and none of the rules that apply to money in any situation I have ever known before apply in a banking system. It's incredible. It's demonic. It's all based on the flimsiest set of illusions imaginable, a sack of lies that nevertheless operates with enough internal coherence to keep bankers being bankers. Don't ask me to expain it. I only work here.

I realized while I was jogging on the beach the other day that I am probably a classic type, and not a darling picked up by the gods after all. I should have known. All through the Civil Rights era, the down home black leader raising the most sand was given a job in the local department store or shoe factory. He was the recreation director and organzied company picnics or selected the dining hall vending machines (a most corrupting task), or he was a consultant on racial relations or a "news monitor" who alerted company officials about significant developments reported in news papers not very much like ours. I don't know still if they really wanted me to work for them so much as to get me away from **Free Seeds**. Some day when Jenkins gets drunk enough at a backyard barbecue and slaps me on the back and asks me how I stay in such great shape--not why, but how--maybe I'll weasel the story out of him.

When I returned to our Divasadero commune, of course we had a great laugh. There was no way I could work for NBS. No way. Except maybe if there was a way...The idea of all that money began to take hold. Our car was falling apart and wouldn't take some of those Frisco hills any more. We couldn't afford meat. We couldn't afford to have kids, which we thought we'd better do or the pigs were going to have them all. And the System looked shaky, but like it might last a while after all. Yankee dollars still paid the rent. I was a design genius, you know, because NBS had said so. If there was a way, nobody else in the commune would have to work. Right? How many excuses do you need? We could all live on my salary, and Miracle Rose could do the weaving she wanted to do, and Mike could

maybe do some serious farming (as well as work on a book) and Linda could make those trips to D.C., and Jay could write his treatise on worker morality, and Lea could do more guerilla theatre and get her head together about her sexuality. You know how those dope fantasies go. And then we thought, well, Jesus, maybe there's a way to change NBS from inside, to kind of sway a guy like Jenkins, who was in his early thirties and wore a moustache and took his shoes off in the office (but not his socks), and hinted that marijuana was kind of fun (if you didn't overdo it). Who knows what you could do with a guy like that. Look at what the Christers did with good old Emperor En Hoc Signo Vinces, never mind that his slogan turned up on a famous brand cigarette pack, along with the Surgeon General's warning. (Ain't history amazing, Mr. Marx?) And then, if all else failed, maybe I could get the combination to the safe or something, really case the place out, and when the radicals needed a million bucks cool cash for an arms deal with North Vietnam, or China, why hell we could move right in and rip the old pig m. f. NBS right off! It wouldn't hurt to have an agent within the walls of the enemy, right? Look at what all those SDS guys were doing--driving cabs so they could get their hands on a free communications network.

So what else should I tell you? Times change. You know that. But if you stay in shape, you know, it helps keep your spirits up. Beer is a drug, too, a sleep trip. It's much better to jog, and work the poisons out.

I couldn't inhabit both planets at once. I'd come home pissed off because, after all, it was my money they were eating (of course, it was the people's money coming back to the community, I was reminded), and my wife they were enjoying (but what made me think I owned her body, or her mind, or had any claims other than a kind of mythical state-and-church approved "legal" arrangement that turned us into some kind of phony institution), and my sacrifice that was enabling their leisure (leisure! Man, we are making a revolution here, running a radical newspaper in case you'd forgotten), and my talents that had to be stifled and debased so this could flourish (patience, friend, your turn will come).

Over the years, I've had the disquieting experience of actually "succeeding." Some of the people around here tell me I was lucky, I got in at the right time. Grab that. Before the rush started. As a department head, I've seen a few resumes cross my desk with names on them I know only too well. They are out there, looking for work, for something to do. They jog through the Golden Gate Park in the mornings, or later, after an unproductive job interview and the humiliation that goes along with that. They try to keep their spirits up, too. I don't know if they seriously want to come to NBS or if they are just trying to shake my memory a little bit, to remind me, you know, I didn't always answer to the rich kid sons of former rich kids, presidents and a board of directors. Everything is getting so damned expensive. Nobody can afford a house except an oil millionaire. A bag of groceries can run you twenty bucks. What's a six pack now? Two-fifty? Three bucks? They're not being malicious when they send me

their credentials; I think they're desperate, and sometimes I wonder after reading the paper, the **Chronicle**, right, if some morning when I'm jogging down the beach, they will recognize me, and call me a m.f. class A rotten bastard sellout, and draw their guns, Miracle Rose, who looks like a million bucks, shooting first into my thighs and taking minutes and minutes off my life, and then her partner, lean and gaunt as an Olympic miler, fires too and the hands of the clock come up to twelve like scissors snapping shut.

It could be like that. What are my chances? Christ, a hot dog could kill you if it went bad. Death by automobile is on the scale of a World War. In this country alone. The whole damn state could collapse in a quake, or a nuke plant could go off and take us all out of here in a cloud of superheated dust and steam. Mercury levels in fish. All those people are out there looking for something to do. Look at Italy. Is that the future? I love to run. I hate to run. Since I started telling you this, eight minutes have gone by.

Golden Gate Bridge Ray Morrison, photographer

The English Teacher

Margaret E. Haughawout, 1926
Ferguson Studios, Pittsburg

Wild Things

My hedge is growing tall. I'm glad.
Some grace that passersby deride,
Some wild sweet grace, may grow inside
Its dense unpruned secluding wall.

They want my lawn like forty lawns
They see. My high untrammeled grass
I love, but citizens who pass
Would have it cut. Each morning dawns

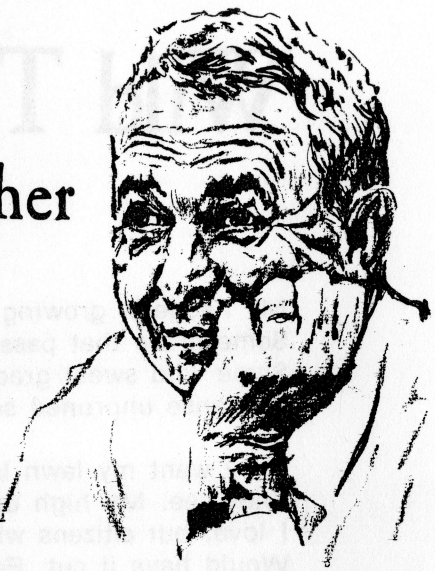
Upon new cornflower, marigold,
Or cosmos in surprising spot.
Brave volunteers from last year's crop,
Unplanned and uncared-for, dare unfold.

And God, who lets wild things grow tall,
Can always look in from above. He let
Some wild sweet grace of nature give
Great Bernhardt to the world. And all

His laws did not prevent some mad
Untrammeled passion giving earth
The gift of Leonardo's birth.
My hedge is growing tall. I'm glad.

Margaret E. Haughawout

The Athlete and the English Teacher



by Ray Heady

First of all, let me say flat out that Miss Haughawout was the finest teacher I had through grade school, high school, and college. She was tough but inspirational. She made me want to learn. I was sad, not happy, when the courses she taught were completed. What grade I received did not matter too much. It was what I had learned and not learned that mattered. The latter was tremendous, the former considerable. Even though the past fifty years have wiped out many of the details, I still retain a basic appreciation of literature as taught by Miss Haughawout.

True, Miss Haughawout was rather individual in dress, raising some eyebrows when she bought a man's suit, with vest, and wore it to an all-school party. She preferred lavender and violet and used rouge moderately on her cheek bones. She dressed, in my opinion, for comfort and individuality, and if it were in style, so be it. I always thought she was well dressed in a practical way, with a flair of her own. I think that if it came to a choice between a new book or a new hat, Miss Haughawout would buy a book.

But let me tell you, this Dutch lady was tough-minded. She was also witty, sophisticated, well-read, and well-traveled. She was a frugal liberal, if such is possible. Her two great passions, as far as I could tell, were hatreds of plagiarism (as in copying from **Scribner's**) and cheating (as on a final examination).

Her cheeks flared red when she caught a student in either situation. The student was dismissed from class and there was no appeal. Her indignation was monumental, although private.

But then, any student dumb enough to copy a mature poem from one of the magazines of the period and try to pass it off as original work didn't deserve much sympathy. Hell's bells, that woman read nearly everything in print. Those publications she could not afford to buy, she read in the library. In addition she knew the literary attainments of her students so well that deviation from the norm sounded like a burglar alarm.

I usually dreaded her examinations because I had no idea what she was going to ask. But I knew better than to cheat because taking a flat zero would have been pleasure in comparison to the wrath that would have followed detection. Honesty was not only the best policy to use with Miss Haughawout, it was the only policy. There were no degrees of honesty in student effort. A student was either honest or dishonest in his writing.

Miss Haughawout sponsored a creative writing group called the "Monday Nighters" from the simple fact that it met on Monday nights at her modest home at 1915 South Elm, about two blocks south of the campus.

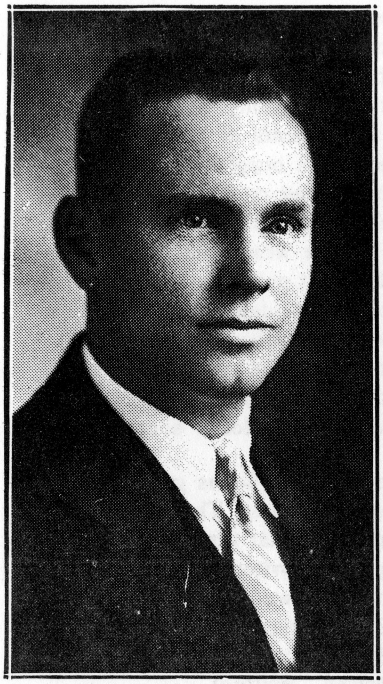
The Monday Nighters were not an elite group so far as grades were concerned, else I never would have been invited to join. There were many straight A students in the English department at that time who were not members. I never knew, nor did I ask, why I was invited to join the group. But I do remember one female "brain" that showed up for a couple of meetings then vanished. She violated the plagiarism rule, and that was that. It was really no loss because the "brain" was too sensitive to peer criticism of her writing (rather her "borrowed" writing).

"Monday Nighters" were a colorful combination. They were sensitive people, especially the poets, yet they were tough enough to stand the criticism that followed each reading of their poems.

Some Monday nights were wonderful. You presented your "masterpiece" and the circle praised it. Miss Haughawout smiled slightly. That usually meant it was worth an A, maybe a B plus. Some Monday nights were horrible. You laid bare your literary soul, there was a long pause, and your wolf brothers started hamstringing your masterpiece. They grew bolder and began a frontal attack.

If the criticism became too severe, and young people can be severe, Miss Haughawout usually came to the rescue and offered a few words of balm. Oh well, there was always next Monday night and a chance for a counter attack. I'm not saying there were no personality clashes in the group, but the clashes came mainly on the value of the manuscript, not on who wrote it. By and large, the criticism was frank but constructive.

The meetings were rather informal. First of all, you had to be invited to attend. The "price" of admission was one bit of creative writing -- poem, essay or short short story. No dues, no minutes, no officers, no announcement in the **Collegio** or on campus bulletin boards. The members just showed up on Monday nights unless otherwise notified.



Coach John Lance

After a few minutes of campus chatter Miss Haughawout served thin sandwiches and a cold drink of some sort. The sandwiches I remember the most were made with thin slices of cucumber as filler. She probably grew them in her backyard garden.

On some Monday nights I arrived late from basketball practice under the critical eye of another campus toughie, Coach John Lance. Lance was a demon in demanding physical fitness from his basketball players. Run 'em down in the first half, beat 'em to death in the second half, was the Lance formula. Lance expected all his players to go top speed for sixty minutes. Miss Haughawout was just as insistent on mental integrity, but in a much nicer way. My hair was still wet from a shower when I arrived at the meeting. I was dead tired and hungry as a wolf. I could have eaten twenty of those sandwiches, but I was polite and took only three.

The Monday Nighters sat in a circle in the living room, with Miss Haughawout near the fireplace. Each had a manuscript in purse or pocket. There was a subdued tenseness in the room as to who would be the lead-off batter and read his manuscript to the circle. The first two or three manuscripts usually received the most dissection, but not always.

Our favorite male writer was Harold Kelley, who specialized in poetry. We didn't understand a lot of Kelley's imagery, but we sympathized with his nervousness. He had a thin, wispy mustache which quivered when he read his poetry. His hands shook. His voice was dry and raspy. Please God, we prayed when Kelley began to read, don't let his voice crack; help him to finish. Kelley always managed to finish, but it was a struggle. He never responded to criticism, just smiled and let it pass. His peers usually let him off easy. Kelley knew so much more about poetry than they that it was dangerous to say too much.

We had no favorites among the co-eds present. They were pretty much on an even plane in sensitivity and imagery. A couple of them were still in the "moon" and "June" phase, but they were improving each week. Miss Haughawout thought Billy B. Cooper was something special. Billy B. had sparkling black eyes and a sparkling style of writing, said Miss Haughawout, and was "going places" as a young poet.

Billy B. had already had a couple of poems published in regional magazines. One generous editor had paid her a dollar. Don't laugh. These were Depression years and poetry was not a fast way to make money. The main thing was that Billy B. had cracked the poetry market, and that was more than the rest of us had done.

I don't recall that labeling Billy B. as "something special" caused any resentment among the other Monday Nighters. It was a fact that everyone recognized. Billy B. worked at learning to write. She worked harder than the others. And writing is work, a fact that Miss Haughawout stressed.

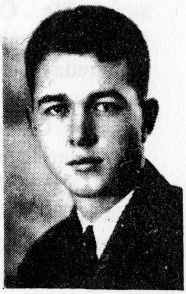
Two of the most intriguing members were John E. Reinecke and Howard Donnelly. They drifted in and out like shadows. They were the rebels of the era, although what they were rebelling at was never clear to me. I'm sure they knew and Miss Haughawout knew, else she would not have invited them. She could spot a gleam of talent in a student's writing a mile away.

The Monday night sessions created some lasting friendships among the members. As diverse as they were, they had a common bond in that they had struggled to produce something of literary value and had survived the critiques. Not only survived but probably matured.

Kelley

Angwin

Weede



Heady

My closest friend was Gordon Angwin of Pittsburg. We became lifelong friends. We joined the same fraternity, Sigma Tau Gamma, played tennis together, went to dances, hunted quail, fished in Canada, watched birddogs run in field trials, discussed new books. His death in the late 1960's was a shattering blow.

Another favorite was Dorothy Weede, also of Pittsburg. She was the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Garfield Weede. "Doc" Weede was head of the physical education department and famous for his track teams. In addition to being a sensitive writer (mainly poems), Dorothy was probably the best dancer (ballroom not disco) in the college. Dorothy's mother, Mrs. Ethel Porter Weede, was also a Monday Nighter, the only other adult, not counting Miss Haughawout, who was a member.

One Monday night, Mrs. Weede read a love poem which obviously described her husband. The poem mentioned that even when the husband and wife were at odds, she was happy to live in the same house where she could breathe the same air he breathed. I made the mistake of laughing out loud at that line. Listerine was putting on a big campaign in the newspapers and magazines at that time and the line struck me as a Listerine commercial.

Neither Mrs. Weede nor Miss Haughawout said a word about my rudeness. But my outraged compeers swarmed at me like hornets. They praised the poem. They denounced my Listerine comparison. They questioned my right to membership. That was the last time I ever laughed outright at a Monday Night session. Snickered maybe, but never out loud.

One piece of original writing a week does not sound like much of a burden, but try it sometime on a busy schedule.

In addition to 15 hours of credit courses, I was also editor of the school paper two years, 1928-30, played basketball for John Lance a couple of years, semi-pro basketball for two years, drove a model-T truck for the Campus Cleaners two hours a day, and tried to find some interlude for social life. Campus wages then were 25 cents an hour. But then a full-course meal, with drink and dessert, was only 25 cents.

Mondays were terribly busy days. Go to class, round up the student columns, write two or three editorials for Friday's **Collegio**, drive the Campus Cleaner truck, practice basketball and somehow produce a piece of "creative writing" for the Monday Night session.

I'll admit I fudged at times. There is little difference between an editorial for a newspaper and an essay for an English class. But an editorial could not be turned into a short short story.

So my contributions to the Monday Nighters were either essays or short poems, never short stories. Miss Haughawout accepted some of my editorials at face value. They were written and they were original. But she added that they were newspaper writing and she hoped I knew the difference. It was a bonus for me because I could test my editorials on a small group before they appeared campuswide.

My poetry at that time (and that's the only time I ever attempted poetry) was an unabashed imitation of Carl Sandburg, the poet laureate of Chicago, hog butcher of the world. Looking back, I'm sure Miss Haughawout must have winced at my juvenile prattle about the greatness of Sandburg's free verse, but she never discouraged my ardor. She merely waited until I had read everything that Sandburg had written and then suggested that if I really wanted to know Sandburg I should examine his roots. One of those roots was Walt Whitman, who at that time was probably as controversial as Sandburg in style and stature. She didn't

assign 100 pages of Whitman a day, just suggested that I read more before I jumped into deep literary water.

It worked. I shifted gears at the beginning of my senior year and became a disciple of Whitman. I was sure Whitman was the greatest thing yet and probably said so many times. Miss Haughawout then suggested I tackle T. S. Eliot's **The Waste Land**. That was too much. I didn't understand **The Waste Land**. Unfortunately her contemporary literature class ended too early that spring. **The Waste Land** was on the agenda, but we didn't get around to it before graduation arrived and the seniors dashed away looking for jobs. The lilacs were blooming on the campus as the spring semester closed. But jobs were not blooming.

Jobs were scarce, any kind of a job. The Depression which started in 1929 was getting worse. Students were dropping out of college right and left.

The Monday Nighters were especially hard hit by the Depression. As a lot, they were rather introspective students and not equipped for aggressive competition for jobs. They didn't need to read **The Waste Land**. Some of them were living it.

I was a bit more fortunate than most Monday Nighters. I had a major in English and a minor in journalism, and could either teach journalism in a high school or practice it on a small newspaper. Temporarily I chose the latter, at fifteen dollars a week. I had to furnish my own pencils. After a few months I switched to teaching journalism, both high school and college. I finally ended up on the staff of the Kansas City **Star**. I stayed with the **Star** for thirty years, retiring in 1973. My finest assignment on the **Star** was that of outdoor editor. I was paid to go hunting and fishing and write about the trips. That was about as close to heaven as this newspaperman ever aspired.

I suppose it could be added that I never completely abandoned my early admiration for Sandburg's poetry, but I did find several other writers equally interesting. But as the years passed I turned more and more to reading prose, some fiction, history, biography and lots of conservation. I did return to KSTC in 1938 for night courses and completed a master's degree on Sandburg. Now buried under forty years of dust it is titled "Literary Techniques of Carl Sandburg." It now sounds rather amateurish but it was the best I could do in 1938. That officially ended my flirtation with writing poetry. From there on to now, it's been hard, lean prose.

While Miss Haughawout's courses were a highlight of my undergraduate years, they did produce a couple of jolts that I still remember. One came when she flatly rejected a term paper because she said in a marginal note it was not my best effort. Nothing specific, just that I could do better work and that she would not accept anything less than my best. That was frightening. It was as if I had a mind reader for a teacher. She was right, of course. It was a lousy term paper.

The other jolt came when Carl Sandburg appeared in Parsons, Kansas, on a visiting celebrity program of some sort. Miss Haughawout heard about the program and arranged transportation for a group of her students to Parsons. Since I was the Sandburg "expert" on the campus, she insisted that I go along. I agreed to go, but with a touch of fear. What if the program turned out to be a bust, after all the praise I had heaped upon Sandburg's poetry? What if my idol were not nearly as impressive as his writing? I went, but for a bit of protection I took a date, a beautiful, blonde physical education major who didn't know Sandburg from Adam. She could give me a candid impression of the evening.

It was a wonderful evening. There was Carl Sandburg, not more than fifteen feet from me, sitting on a tall stool. He pushed back the mane of white hair from his forehead and hit a few notes on his banjo. Then he started reciting in a deep, resonant voice his lyrical poems:

"Give me your lips.
Let Egypt come or Egypt go.
Open a window of stars.
Let a bag of shooting stars fall.
Wind us with a winding silk.
Pick us a slouching, foolish moon.
Take us a silver blue morning.
It is too much--let your lips go...."

It was fascinating to hear him pick up the refrain that is so prominent in his poetry, to hear him emphasize certain words that gave added meaning. I knew some of the poems so well I could have joined in the recital, but that would have been rude. Besides, my mouth was dry and my blood pressure high. I really couldn't have uttered a coherent word. I just sat and listened.

I ventured a couple of sideward glances. Miss Haughawout was enjoying the program. Her cheeks were flushed. My date was enjoying it. So were my fellow students. There wasn't another sound in the packed house--other than that deep Swedish voice pouring out pure poetry.

I could have listened two more hours, but the gentle Swede finished his final stanza. The applause was deafening. Then he did a gracious thing. He stood by one of the exists to receive comments as the crowd filed out. Miss Haughawout insisted that her group meet Sandburg personally. She was excited as she introduced her brood, one by one, and he shook hands with them. I remember she told Mr. Sandburg that I was his greatest admirer on the Pittsburg campus and had read all his published poetry. He nodded, smiled, shook hands.

The line kept moving and Sandburg kept smiling and shaking hands. Then a strange thing happened. He turned to my date and said, "You have a beautiful voice."

Sandburg was right, of course, but what a bombshell statement! This was an English department project, getting the tickets, arranging

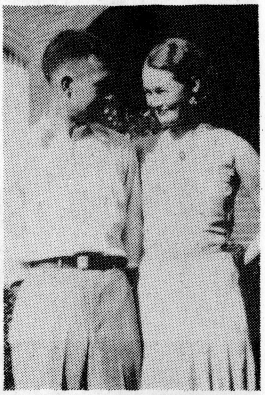
Alpeda, photographer
New York, 1916

Carl Sandburg

transportation, rounding up the troops, and a physical education major stole the show. Just like that.

Another score for Sandburg who graciously pointed out a new dimension of the girl who was my date. I had previously noticed several other dimensions that were attractive, but had failed on voice.

Another chapter in this Sandburgian story was written in 1933 when I married the girl with the golden voice. We celebrate our 48th wedding anniversary this October. She was then Eleanor Wilson, a Kanza queen and a daughter of Prof. and Mrs. I. G. Wilson. Professor Wilson was head of the English department at that time. We have three grown children and seven grandchildren and all of them have nice voices but know little if anything of Sandburg's poetry.



The Author and Eleanor Wilson

Miss Haughawout was atwitter during the trip back to Pittsburg. Her students had met and heard a contemporary American poet. Such opportunities did not occur often in southeastern Kansas. But when they did, she made the most of them.

Me? I just sat in the car on the trip back to Pittsburg and stared at my right hand – the hand that had shaken Sandburg's hand that had played the banjo to accompany the voice that had recited the poetry. That was enough for one evening.

It had been a long road from my sophomore to my senior year. But I remember the main mileposts along the way in my appreciation of literature.

At the end of my sophomore year I discovered Sandburg's poetry quite accidentally. I had a night job with the Kansas City Southern railroad, checking the ice level in the refrigerator cars that came through Pittsburg from the South. These were sweet smelling cars, loaded with strawberries, cantaloupes and other perishable fruits. As a part-time employee, I was eligible for free passes on passenger trains. Late in the summer I had saved a few dollars and had a couple of free rides coming.

So I decided to splurge a little and ride the Southern Belle train down south to Texarkana, maybe even New Orleans, and eat some Southern cooking. Another Gorilla basketball player had planned to go with me but backed out at the last minute because of lack of money. I went alone, all the way to Texarkana, where I became homesick and caught the next train back to Pittsburg. On the way I sacrificed a dollar bill and bought the latest copy of **College Humor** magazine, the slick spokesman for the college crowd in the 1930's.

The cartoons were flapperish with John Held, Jr., art, the jokes slightly tainted, the prose mainly rah-rah stuff, but the bits of poetry scattered

hither and yon were outstanding. That issue featured three Sandburg poems. I had never realized that poetry could be that beautiful.

Thus to the click, click of steel on steel and the gentle swaying of a railroad coach, I made my own discovery of Sandburg. No English teacher made me read him. Maybe that's one reason I went overboard on his poetry. I didn't know who he was, where he ranked in literature, where he came from or where he was headed. I only knew he was a far cry from Longfellow, Bryant, Lowell, and Tennyson, who had been shoved down my throat in high school.

It took someone like Miss Haughawout to put Sandburg in perspective. Bless her heart, she never downgraded my hero. She accepted my sophomoric stance on the man's greatness and encouraged me to widen my scope.

Did I say widen? In her Contemporary Poetry course she exploded my horizon. She matter-of-factly tossed 100 new poets at the class and said "Let's sort them out." Well not quite 100, merely ninety-nine. I had read one of them.

In literature, it seems, a man's work is never done. Nor a teacher's work, either. There is no end.

Several years after I was graduated, I sent Miss Haughawout a Christmas card which contained a Sandburg verse:

> I speak of new places and new things.
> I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes.

She wrote a thanks note and added:

"I don't know what you and Sandburg are up to now, but you should know. You have had a long time to get acquainted."

It seems incredible, but it's been half a century since I sat in one of Miss Haughawout's classes. I don't wish to detract in any way from Billy B. Cooper, but I think that all the Monday Nighters and her former students will agree that it was Miss Haughawout who was "something special."

Argument from Design

One night the trees stood above us in our dream
as dark as ever in any time gone by
when they were dense with messages from the sky
that hung its vagrant faces all around them

in choruses of mouths opening, closing,
smiling, then blossoming into animals
with faces like rocks, bunches of vegetables
or clouds that told us only that the frozen

waste from our mouths would be falling back on us
before nightfall; but that night the trees that stood
above us in our dream said nothing at all

that we could remember that was wonderful
in any way. All over the neighborhood
when we woke up was nothing but frozenness.

Michael Heffernan

Grace Campbell, ca. 1904 Fowler Studio, photographer
Vinita, Indian Territory

Familiar

Clouds rain.
Light
streaks the sky.

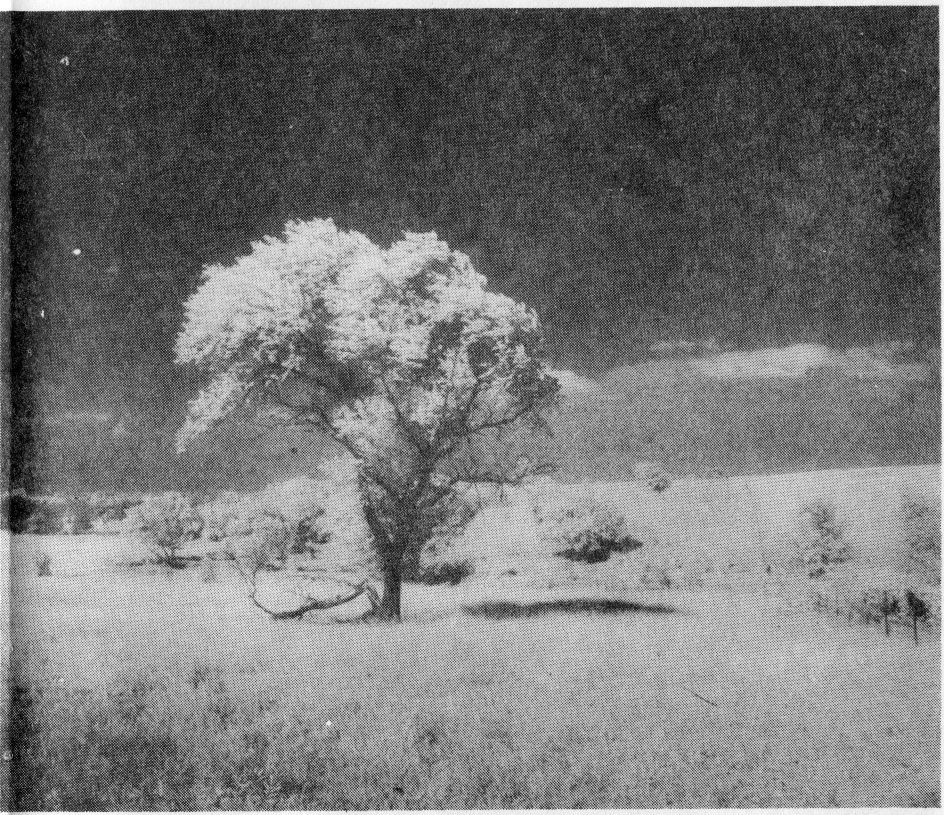
Borders do not
comprehend.
One corner chews
brown river.

Days come and go,
so red and
open.

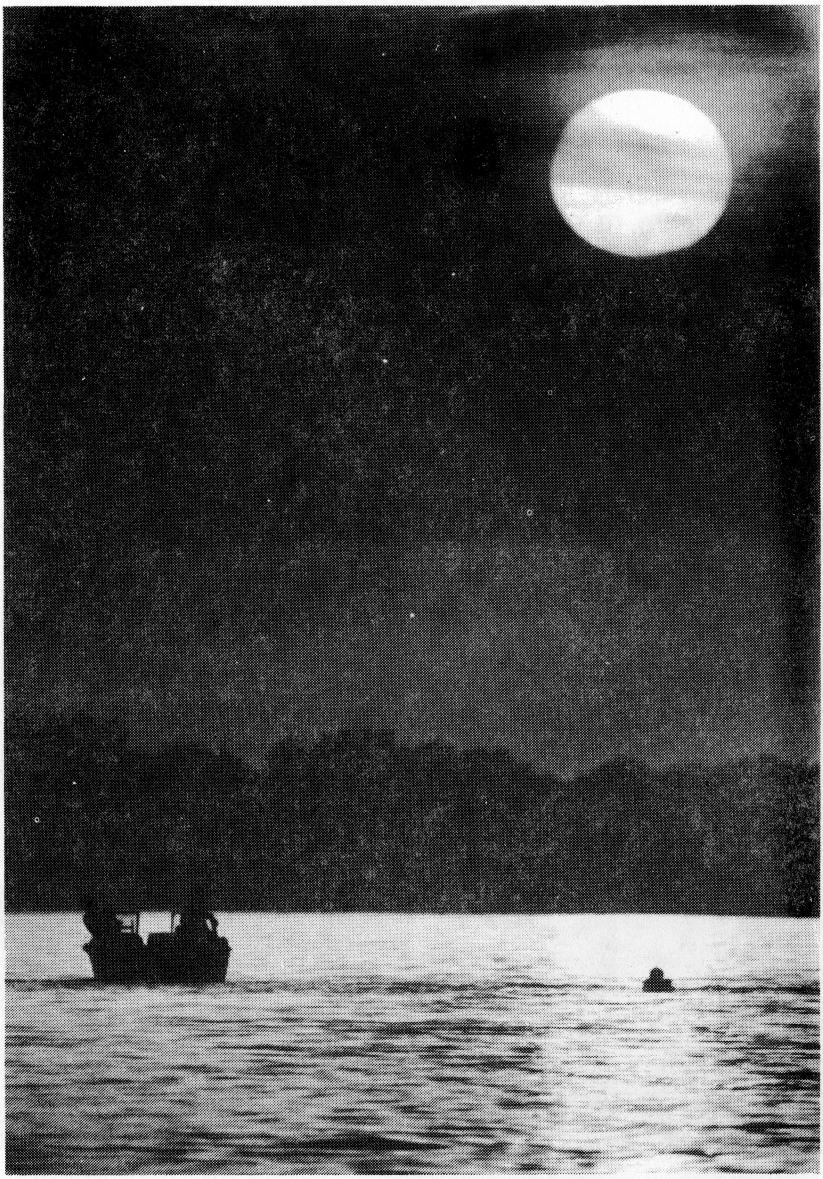
I dream
a life
and a death
in this grass.

Steven Hind

Ground



David Tate, photographer



Mike Gullett, photographer

On Lake Parsons
Labette County, 1980

The Houseboater

by V.J. Emmett

Hank Matthews slipped out of the family room--where Dick Wilson, with a poker and an ice cube, was demonstrating his putting technique to a circle of admirers--and passed through the dining room. It was the Matthews' first cocktail party of the summer, and Hank was not enjoying it. At the end of this hot Saturday afternoon, he would much rather have been approaching the country-club dock on Crow Lake than his own living room with its bogus French furniture and predictable guests. But the annual June dance at the club was tonight, and Angus Green's wife had gotten on the phone ahead of Hank's wife Jean and invited everyone in their circle to dinner before the dance, so Jean had seen no alternative to having a cocktail party before the Green's dinner party. Leaning against the archway between the dining and living rooms, Chuck Wagoner was saying, "Four hundred and seventy cubes, so the economy is nothing to brag about, but the acceleration is spectacular."

Hank nodded and passed on. Diana Schultz, seated on a spurious Louis XVI chair, was telling Jean, "Of course I couldn't come right out and tell her that it was positively unbecoming."

Bucky Taylor was saying, "Biggest God damn channel cat you ever saw. Whiskers on that son of a bitch make aerials for a police car."

Betty Green was saying, "To do the whole room over in oriental."

In front of the fireplace, Burt Schultz was saying, "Probably makes more money than any of us, and he drives a Volks Wagon!"

Hank took a stiff pull at his drink and went into his study. He called it that. Jean called it his den. It had been his favorite room once. In those days it had contained only a big office desk with a typing table at the side, an old shapeless easy chair, a cheap floor lamp by which he could read comfortably, and some plain bookcases that held all the books, mostly paperbacked, that he had accumulated in the years when he'd been on the road for Harriford and Matthews and had had a seemingly endless succession of lonely evenings in motel rooms to kill somehow. In the years

since old Harriford had died and Hank had come in from the road to take over the main office, this room had been a refuge. The worn paperbacks represented to him all that part of his life that was hidden at the office, the country club, and in the other rooms of the house. But Jean--almost two years ago--had changed the room. She liked to contrive such "surprises" for him on their anniversaries.

She had gone to a country auction with Betty Green and had bought a big bookcase made in the middle of the last century. It had a huge, ugly pediment and cumbrous glass doors and came equipped with complete sets of Bulwer-Lytton, Longfellow, Collins, Reade, Henry Arthur Jones, Zane Gray, O'Henry, and with a lot of books by more recent authors, all of whom had three names. To go with the bookcase, Jean brought in some counterfeit Victorian furniture, including a horsehair couch, which belonged in a cartoon with a bearded psychiatrist, and an electrified kerosene lamp with an immense flowered globe. It could not be made to give a decent light to read by. Hank's furniture, along with his readable books, went out. Unwilling to refuse Jean's present and demand the restoration of his room, Hank had gone so far as to retrieve his paperbacks from the trash barrels in the alley and stack them in the garage.

Now, as he entered the study, he was surprised to find, in conversation with George and Fran Maxwell and Angus Green, a round-faced young woman he had never seen before. She was wearing a white pants suit and oversize glasses.

"Is that true?" Angus said. "I didn't know that."

"It's in the Pentagon Papers," the young woman said.

"I don't care," Fran Maxwell said,"I'd hate to think all those boys died for nothing."

Hank leaned against the hated bookcase sipping his drink and enjoying the novelty of an argument at a party. Neither the Greens nor the Maxwells differed from the rest of their circle in their fanatical devotion to the smallest of talk, so Hank attributed the argument to the young woman. He smiled at her as she inveighed against the Pentagon, and at the first pause in the argument, he introduced himself.

"I'm Barbara Nelson," she said.

"Barbara's Betty's sister-in-law," Angus said. "Jean was kind enough to urge us to bring her along."

"It was awfully nice of you and your wife to include me." Barbara spoke mechanically, as though she were in a hurrry to get through the polite formulae and resume her argument.

"Glad you could come," Hank said. "I didn't realize there would be a guest of honor at Angus's dinner party."

"Hardly that," she said. "They didn't know I was coming until yesterday."

"What do you think about Laos?" Hank asked. His attention was distracted from her answer by Jean, who came to the door to tell him that Fritz, the vacationing college student hired to tend bar, had run out of ice. He excused himself and went to get another bag from the freezer in the basement.

When Hank was able to get back to the study, George and Barbara were gone. Betty was telling Angus and Jean about a trip to Arkansas: "Naturally I didn't go to the meetings with George. I found something interesting to do--ever try to play golf on the side of a hill? God, it was awful. You wouldn't believe it. And the greens!"

Hank sat down on the neo-Freudian couch and pretended a polite interest. He looked past Jean's head with its tidy coiffure to the complete works of Bulwer-Lytton in gold-stamped green boards and dreaded his up-coming anniversary.

Each year since old Harriford's death, she'd grasped a comfortable piece of his world, covered it all over with gilt, and handed it back unrecognizable. The more money they had, the bigger the piece she grabbed and the more extravagantly she gilded it. Once she threw away his favorite suit and replaced it with a ridiculous thing she'd seen on television. Then came the study. Then she'd traded a silver station wagon that he really liked for a big black sedan that looked as though it ought to belong to a gangster. No telling what it would be this time, but it would be intended as a reminder that he owed his place in the world to Harriford money.

It was true--in part. He'd met Jean when he was in college, living in the fraternity house and learning to be a Rotarian. A friend got him a blind date with Jean. The next morning he hadn't been able to remember what they had talked about, but he had learned that she was a freshman, that she came from Crow City, that she was a better bridge player than her pledge mother, that she had trouble parking her Buick convertible, that she had been to Hawaii, that her father owned furniture stores, that she owned a muskrat coat, played moderately good golf, spent her summers in the mountains, and thought it must have been just fantastically exciting to have been in the war, especially in the navy, and even more especially in small boats. He liked her. He took her to the spring formal at the house.

It was a great party with live music and door prizes and spiked punch and couples necking on the terrace and under the trees in the yard. Being with Jean made him feel good because she looked cute as hell in a blue strapless formal with her hair up. When the band played a set of Glenn Miller arrangements, he asked her to wear his pin, and she said she would. After the pin came a small diamond, and after that a wedding ring.

There were no responsible positions open in any of his father-in-law's stores, so a new branch of the business was opened up for Hank. A warehouse was filled with desks and chairs, and he was sent out on the road to sell school and office furniture. Before long it seemed that every school district in the Midwest was putting up at least one new building. In ten years Harriford and Matthews was one of the biggest firms of its kind. During the same period, Hank began to read. He spent thousands of lonely hours in motel rooms, and reading killed hundreds of them. He read novels, history, politics, plays, psychology, philosophy, poetry--all the things he hadn't paid attention to when he was in college. One night, as he lay on a lumpy bed in a motel on the outskirts of McCook, Nebraska, he fell asleep over his book. He dreamed that he was trying to sell

windmills and that he couldn't make a single sale. He awoke in a panic, thinking, "Of course not. All the farmers have REA electricity now." To combat the lingering dream panic, he sat up and put his bare feet on the cold floor and lighted a cigarette. Thank God old Harriford wasn't in the windmill business.

Hank had gotten over being touchy about his success being impossible without his father-in-law's capital. He had raked the boondocks for orders, working hard for every cent, and had come to feel that his success was the product of his own ability and industry. And it was true that he was able and industrious, but he knew that he couldn't have sold windmills in an era of electric pumps, and that only the most indolent of bunglers could have failed to sell school furniture after the first wave of the post-war tide of babies reached kindergarten. What if old Harriford had been in the windmill business? People didn't raise questions like that--not in his circle. Such questions led to humbling thoughts, and humility was not in fashion. Whether from passion or from habit, Hank had always missed only Jean in his motel beds, but it occured to him then that it would be nice to have a different sort of woman beside him: one who could talk about those damn windmills, which would never mean anything to Jean. After the dream, Hank began to think. Once that happened, the morning dew was gone from his world.

Now as he looked past Jean's head at the showily bound volumes of balderdash behind the glass doors, he felt like a mute at his own party. He got up and went to the family room to replenish his drink. Barbara Nelson was leaning against the plastic-topped bar, talking to Fritz about a production of The Doll's House staged by a women's lib group at the college. Hank stayed and joined the conversation. At first he was aware that he was treating the bartender like a guest, but he didn't notice it for long, because he got interested in what they were saying. Then he was called to the phone, and he didn't get to talk to Barbara again until the dance at the club.

Hank, Jean , the Greens, Bucky Taylor, and Barbara--who had changed into a pale yellow dress--were sitting at the same table in the bar. The band began a set of old fox trots. Bucky and Betty, and Angus and Jean, went into the other room to dance. "Shall we?" Hank said.

"I'm a terrible dancer," Barbara said. "Let's stay here."

"Are you going to be in town long?"

"I don't know. It depends on my husband. He had to go to a meeting in Salt Lake, and there wouldn't have been anything for me to do there. So I thought I'd visit Angus and Betty and see the Midwest."

"There's not much to do here either," Hank said.

"Your party was fun."

"This will sound like a silly gallantry, but it's not," Hank said. "That party wouldn't have been much fun if you hadn't been there. Nobody would have said anything worth listening to. Half the people who were there don't have anything to say, and the other half are afraid to say anything."

"Which kind are you?"

"I think I might be downright mouthy under other circumstances. That makes me one of the chicken-hearted, I guess."

"I don't believe it. What on earth could you be afraid of?"

"It's not any one thing. There just isn't any freedom of speech here."

"I don't understand at all."

"I'm overstating it, I guess. But here's an example. Take socialized medicine, which I happen to think might be a good idea--do you think I could advocate it around this club? To Dick Wilson, the golfing radiologist? Or Burt Schultz, the real-estate gynocologist? Or Guy Renner, the drinking dentist? Not if I want to go on playing poker with them on Wednesday nights."

"Isn't that rather a special case?" she said. "Like delivering an atheist harangue to a clergyman?"

"Maybe so, but any controversial subject would come to the same thing. Suppose I wrote a letter to the editor about Southeast Asia? Whichever side I took, the cranks on the other side would decide not to buy any furniture from my store."

"Really?"

"Sure."

"You're serious," she said. "Either I don't fully understand the pressures, or you were right when you said you were chicken."

The others came back to the table and took Barbara off to play the slot machines in the back room. Hank took a seat at the bar and had a double and thought about how foolish he'd been to sit there telling that woman what a momumental coward he was. Some line! He had another double and thought how nice it would be to go out in his boat with Barbara. A little moonlight cruise. Better yet, a real voyage. Starting in Crow Lake, they could go down the Crow River to the Mississippi and follow it to the Gulf and cross the Atlantic and round the cape of storms called Good Hope. They'd talk, and sail, and talk, and make love, and talk, and sail, and talk. And beyond Good Hope, they'd find an island to be cast away on together. Hank had another double and sat there making up long conversations with Barbara.

The others came back. Jean wanted him to dance....Then she wanted him to dance another set. Eventually he danced with Barbara. She'd been right when she'd said she was a terrible dancer. "Like to see our dock?" he asked.

"I didn't know this was a yacht club too," she said. "I love sailing."

"It's not really, but we have a dock on the lake. Nothing fancy. Want to see it?"

"Is it far?"

"Just down the hill."

"All right."

When they reached the dock, she wanted to know if one of the boats was his. He took her elbow and guided her along the moonlit planks to the

sloop-rigged whaleboat and stood with one foot on the bow line listening to the distant music and the lapping of the waves against the hull.

"She looks stout and trim," Barbara said.

"All her seaworthiness is wasted on this little lake," Hank said, "but I like a boat that doesn't feel like a cork."

"Do you sail a lot?"

"For the last couple of years; it's been an escape for me."

"From the world or from yourself?"

Both, I guess. But it isn't really the sailing. Sometimes I go out on the motor and drop the hook, or even drift, and just lie around, or maybe read."

"Sounds marvelous," she said. "Ever done any saltwater sailing?"

"Not sailing, but power boats." He told her about having been a cox'n in World War II, first of a motorwhaleboat, then of an LVCP, then an LCM. He told her what a great boat the LCM was--big, powerful, maneuverable. He told about all the important landings he'd been in.

"What about that cliche that wars make fatalists of people?" she said. "Did the war make a fatalist of you?"

"Maybe the least little bit of one."

"I can see how it might."

"It saved me from a plywood crawler under a car in an alley garage. Or the G.I. bill saved me. I feel I earned it, but still...."

"So you're here instead of in a little garage because of the war," she said. "That's enough to make anyone believe in Fortuna."

"There's more to it than that."

"Of course."

"I got committed to all this," he said with a gesture that took in boat, lake, and country club, "before I knew what I was doing."

"I understand."

"How can you?"

"The same thing happens to most women--when they marry. Sometimes it turns out well, and sometimes not."

That seemed to give him a fifty-fifty chance. "I guess so," he said with assumed indifference. "As long as we're here," he added casually, "why don't we take the boat out?"

"I don't think we should," she said. "The others might not understand."

He stepped close to her and took her face between his hands. "I don't really want to take you out on the lake for half an hour," he said. "I want to go away with you. To Tahiti, Brazil, anywhere. Let's sail away to Crusoe's island."

"It sounds delightful," she said, "but I'm afraid I couldn't possibly. I didn't bring any deck shoes for one thing, and for another my husband will be here on Monday."

"I suppose that might make a difference."

"Yes," she said. "Maybe we should go back inside now."

He dropped his hands and followed her. She probably thinks I'm crazy, he thought, or drunk; maybe that's just as well.

Hank's anniversary present from Jean was a new boat. It looked like a housetrailer with a gazebo on top, but it was to Crow Lake what Aristotle Onassis' yacht was to the Mediterranean. Powered by two diesel engines driving two paddle wheels, it was as maneuverable as an LCM. In the gazebo-pilothouse, Hank made more use of this maneuverability than he really needed to as he backed away from the club dock. He wanted to prolong the business of getting underway and well out onto the lake. Once it was over, he would have to turn the helm over to Fritz and join his guests. Jean would be waiting for him in the wardroom. He called it that. She called it the livingroom. It took up about half the boat and was furnished with bogus New England country furniture. The paneled walls were decorated with pictures of square-rigged ships braving stormy seas. Jean had ordered these from a catalog.

Fritz came up from below. "Everybody's been served, and your wife hopes you won't be too long."

Hank turned the helm over to Fritz, instructing him to go slowly around the circular lake and then head for the dock. Glancing aft, Hank saw that several of his guests already had come up to the awning deck aft of the pilothouse. Dick Wilson was there, demonstrating his putting technique with a boat hook and an ice cube. Hank went down the ladder to the passageway that led to the wardroom. As he passed the galley, he fixed himself a double scotch.

In the wardroom, Burt Schultz was saying, "Won't even let his boy play with toy guns."

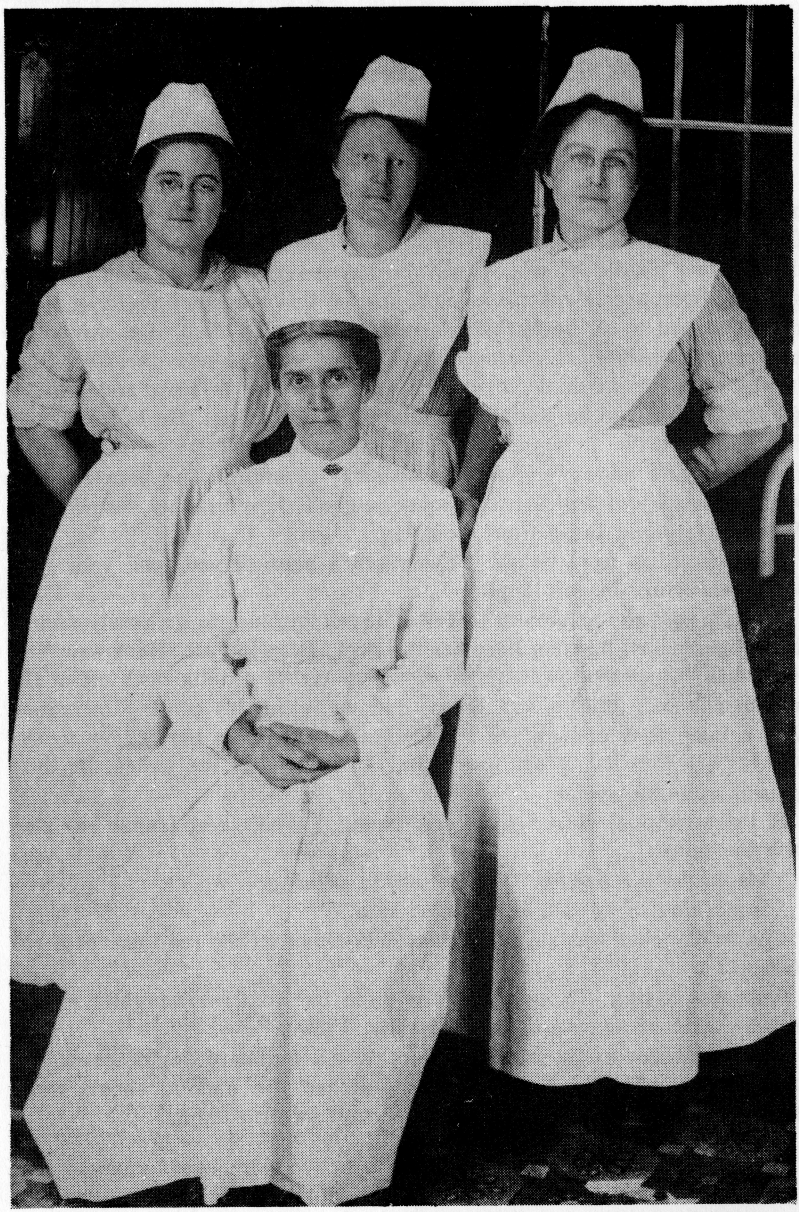
"Maybe he's a pacifist," Hank said in passing.

"Some kind of an odd ball," Burt said.

Chuck Wagoner was saying, "Pass everything on the road except a gas station!"

Jean was saying, "Nothing but the mere fact that her daughter eloped with an Arab of some sort--from Turkey, I think."

Hank went out to the fantail and sat on the starboard engine cover. He took a long pull from his drink and watched the paddle wheels wetly turning as they drove the houseboat around its little orbit.



Anna O'Donnell Wright and the First Graduating Class
Girard City Hospital
Girard, Kansas, 1915

THE FIRST GIRARD, KANSAS, HOSPITAL

When Anna C. Wright accepted the challenge to organize and operate a hospital for Girard, Kansas, in 1912, she asked only that the town fathers support it for six months to satisfy themselves that such an undertaking could be self-supporting. And they did and it was!

Getting a charter from the state to operate a training school for nurses gave her a young, eager staff ready to learn, and from her own background---training in the Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, chief surgical nurse of the operating room staff there, and several years of private duty nursing---she taught and trained these young women.

As this first class was ready to graduate, it was learned they also would be the last class, for the property was purchased by the government to build a post office there.

Mrs. Wright retired temporarily, while Girard tried to find other suitable property, hoping to recall her within a year. However, as time went on and it seemed that another hospital for Girard wasn't soon to be, Mrs. Wright was asked to come to Columbus and take over the operation of their young institution and free their superintendent so that she could go overseas with the Red Cross at the beginning of World War I.

So, in 1917, Anna C. Wright came to Columbus, where she remained as the superintendent of the Maude Norton Memorial City Hospital for more than thirty years, until her retirement in 1947.

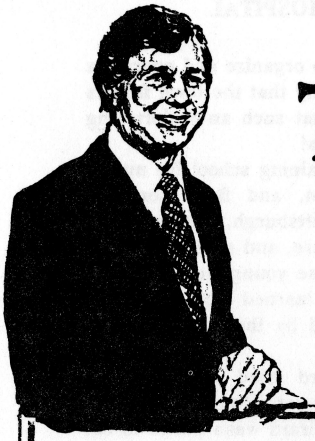
The years from 1897 when Anna O'Donnell entered training until 1947 when she retired covered the early years of nursing, both in hospitals and in homes, where "kitchen-table surgery" was more than just a catch phrase. In Pennsylvania at that time, typhoid fever was rampant, and it was this disease, taking her father's life, that gave impetus to Anna's desire to become a nurse. The private duty nurse from Pittsburgh who cared for her father's last days, opened doors she little realized when she allowed Anna to help her in the sick room.

When she expressed her desire, her mother, Margaret O'Donnell, said, "I'd rather see you scrubbing floors in somebody's kitchen than be a nurse!" Such was the attitude in the 1890's and early days of the twentieth century. On the social ladder a nurse was somewhere between a prostitute and a scullery maid, someone who might be just a bit above eating with the servants and not quite acceptable at the family table, particularly among the wealthier old families of Pittsburgh, where much of Anna's nursing was done.

And while the very correct Miss O'Donnell could take her place at the family table, she preferred the kitchen with the servants, where the food was more plentiful. The farm-bred and reared Annie brought a country appetite to the city and there were many times when she could have eaten everything on the table above stairs. Small wonder that she was happy to be relegated to the kitchen at mealtimes.

It was a big step from those experiences to Girard, Kansas, and the fledgling hospital and training school for nurses, but Anna O'Donnell Wright made it successfully, and in 1915 had the joy of realizing her accomplishment with her one graduating class of nurses.

LAURA STAHL



Transplant

I'm not a native of the Little Balkans—
Here sixteen years and still I don't belong.
The natives look back many generations
And hunt for ethnic spellings of my name.
Perhaps, if I assemble special evidence,
My children will not be transplants like me.

My grandfathers both labored hard in Kansas.
My daddy's daddy came to dig the coal
When things got tough in poor Sebastian County,
Arkansas; he left and headed north.

My other granddad started as a teamster;
Not a union man, he drove a team of mules.
He made the drive from Fort Smith to Fort Scott,
About six weeks' round trip, when roads were good.

I have some odd relations in the Ozarks
(Not strange relations, that's a local phrase).
Raised poor like most of Southeast Kansas people,
I've pulled myself up by my own bootstraps.

I'm not a native of the Little Balkans—
But I'm home.

Robert J. Roberts

The Balkans of Kansas

by F. W. Brinkerhoff

If you look on the map for the Kansas Balkans you will not find them. If you look in Kansas history you cannot miss them. Years ago a wisecracking journalist, mixing realism and imagination with wholesome humor, produced the name which has a geographical connotation. But it was not a region or a section which he intended to describe or to designate. It was a philosophy of conduct, a formula of expression, a program of activity and a plan of battle, in all of which was a spirit of belligerent independence, flourishing in the soil of extreme southeastern Kansas.

In southeastern Europe a group of small states was constantly disturbing the peace of Europe. The Balkan countries let the world know they were there. In Kansas the southeastern corner counties, some of them, had problems that did not yield to conventional treatment for solution. It is a long tale of matters of high importance and items of trivial notice. It is a story of politics and administration and public opinion and of turmoil that traveled fast on highways of many kinds of public interest. The Balkans of Europe were persistently in the headlines. Hence the Balkans of Kansas.

The impact of our Balkans on Kansas was felt long years before they got their glamorous name. The archives reveal southeastern Kansans doing their full share of state character molding during the first half of the century of statehood as well as in the last.

There are no defined or settled boundary lines of the Balkans. Gradually they spread to include the whole Third District as the habitat of Kansans who think and speak for themselves and are not adverse to thinking and speaking for others when the occasion suggests. But the Balkans have not limited their achievements to thinking and speaking. They have sent six men to the governor's chair. Just in case, they have produced six lieutenant governors. This is not mentioned to brag. It is offered in the interest of education.

So here, may it be said, is a place to live and enjoy an association with originality of thought, courage of action, freedom of expression, the right to fight and determination to win for causes that represent the sentiments of the people--our people. There is no flaccidity among the virile folks of the Balkans. They scrap among themselves to keep in trim. Then they salute their own valor and march forward in stern concord to face any foe on any field.

All those who want to be with Kansans at their benevolent best should move to the Balkans.

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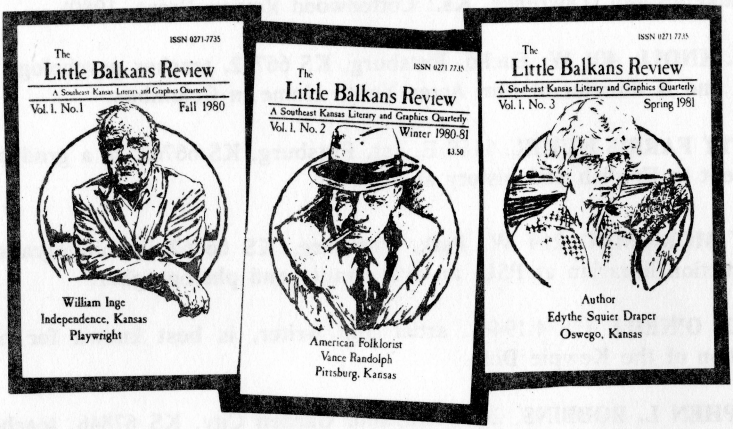
DAVID TATE, 1224 W. 3d, Coffeyville, KS 67337, one of the best photographers in SEK, is manager of Wal Mart in Independence.

TED R. WATTS, 807 W. 4th, Box 303, Oswego, KS 67356, arts editor of **LBR**, drew the portraits of our contributors.

CHARLES BANKS WILSON, 101½ N. Main, Miami, OK 74354, continues his prestigious career as painter, muralist, and lithographer in the town in which he was born.

VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHS: Grace (Campbell) Casto is a retired Vinita, OK, housewife and the mother of Don Casto of Oswego. Clarence W. Miles is an associate professor of Industrial Arts Education at PSU. Gene Newbanks of Oswego is the noxious weed department supervisor for Labette County.

Invitation To Submit



The LBR cordially solicits manuscripts, photographs and art work for publication in forthcoming issues. Under our current editorial policy, each issue of the magazine will have approximately ten pages of poetry, ten of graphics, thirty of fiction and thirty of non-fiction.

Prime consideration is given to works by Kansans and former Kansans, as well as work set in the Little Balkans. Current non-fiction contributions are restricted to subjects related to the Little Balkans. At least half of the poetry of each issue will be devoted to poets who have had limited previous publication. Manuscripts should not exceed thirty-five double-spaced typed pages. Works of local and regional artists are desired, as well as vintage photographs depicting the life and social customs of the Little Balkans; B & W photos of sculpture and over-size art is preferred.

Contributions should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope and mailed to:
ART, PHOTO & SCULPTURE - Ted Watts, P.O. Box 303, 807 W. Fourth St., Oswego, KS 67356.
FICTION - Stephen Robbins, 2001 Arapaho, Garden City, KS 67846.
NON-FICTION - Shelby Horn, 615 Kansas, Oswego, KS 67356.
POETRY - Gene DeGruson, 601 Grandview Heights Terrace, Pittsburg, KS 66762.

We promise to report our reactions to you within six weeks. Upon publication, we can pay only with copies of your issue.

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