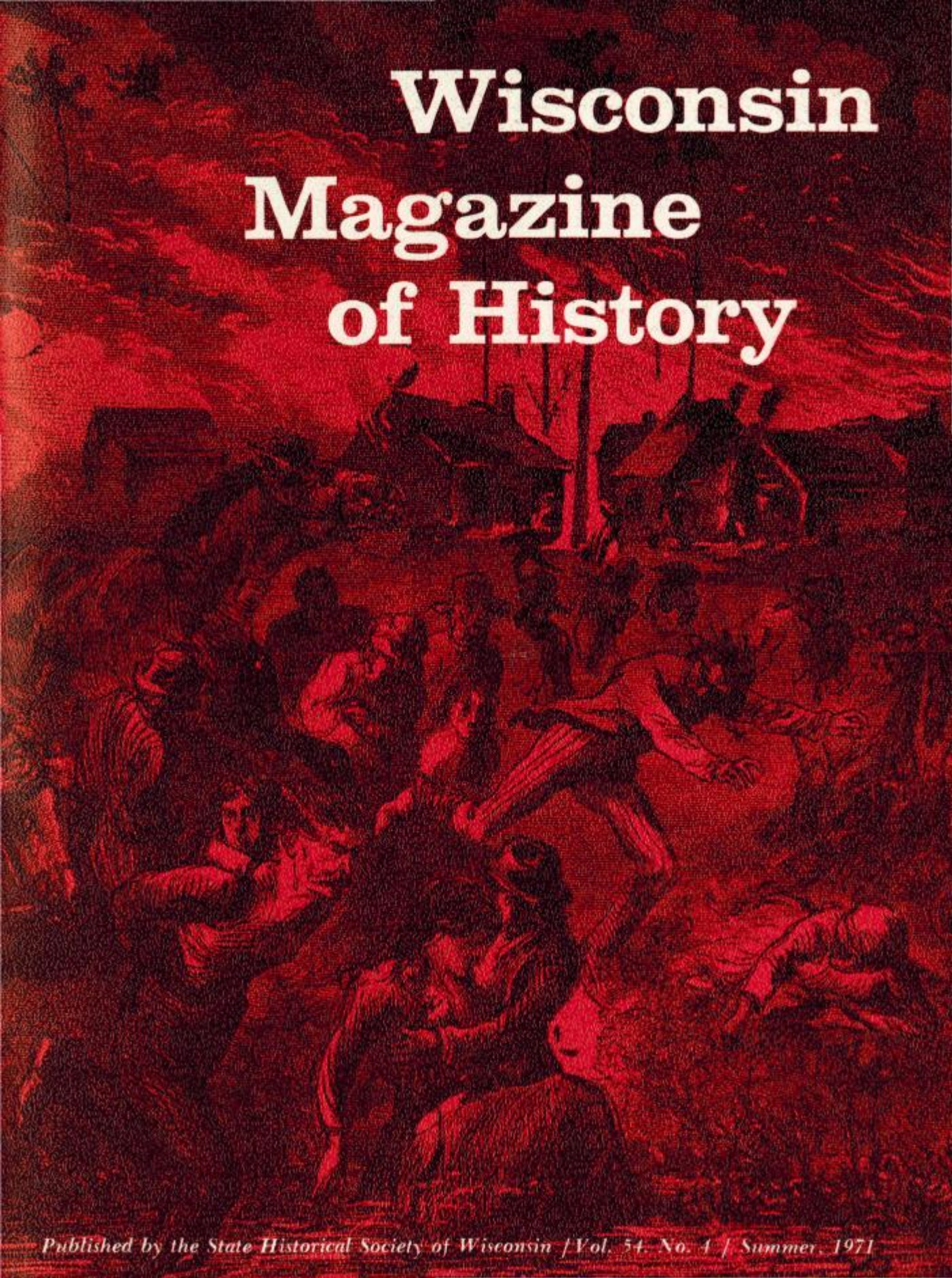


Wisconsin Magazine of History



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Wisconsin Magazine of History

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THE GREAT PESHTIGO FIRE:

AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

By REVEREND PETER PERNIN

Introduction

OCTOBER 8, 1971, marks the centennial of the two greatest natural catastrophes in the history of the Middle West. Ironically, both happened not only on the same day but almost at the same hour; both had been preceded by ample but disregarded omens; and both stemmed from the same fundamental causes—wood rendered tinder-dry by prolonged drought, plus the factor of human carelessness. In Chicago, a lantern thoughtlessly placed within kicking distance of a cow in a barn on De Koven Street is reputed to have set off the most destructive metropolitan blaze in the nation's history, resulting in a property damage of \$200,000,000 and virtually annihilating the city's core. In northeastern Wisconsin, fires set by hunters, Indians, lumberjacks, railroad workers, and farmers burning stumps and rubble culminated in the nation's worst forest fire, in terms of lives lost.

Although the Wisconsin fire ravaged 2,400 square miles and destroyed numerous settlements and isolated farms on both sides of Green Bay, it has gone down in history as the Peshtigo fire, because it was in this village and in the farming area immediately surrounding it that industry and population were the most concentrated, that the fire reached its greatest virulence, and that the majority of the fatalities occurred.

In the fall of 1871, like other localities to which the expanding railroads were bringing an undreamed prosperity, Peshtigo, on the river of the same name in Marinette County,

was exploiting the surrounding forest lands to the fullest advantage. William G. Ogden, the Chicago millionaire, had invested heavily in what was then the country's largest woodenware factory to convert the river-borne logs into such articles as pails, tubs, broom handles, barrel covers, and clothespins. There was also a sawmill, a sash, door, and blind factory, a foundry and blacksmith shop, stores, hotels, a boarding house, and, to the villagers' considerable pride, a schoolhouse, and a Protestant as well as a Catholic church.

All this was as of the early evening of October 8, when the village's official population of 1,700 was swollen by an influx of recently arrived laborers to work on the railroad right-of-way, in addition to the usual number of salesmen, travelers, and visitors to be found in any similar village. By daylight less than 1,000 of this number were still alive, and only one structure, a partially constructed house, remained standing.

The occurrences of that dreadful night have never been accorded their proper place in the history of American disasters, primarily because Chicago's ordeal was by its very nature more spectacular, more universally publicized, and more often revived in print. Peshtigo's chief historians have been two journalists and a novelist, Frank Tilton—a Green Bay newspaperman who in 1871 put together a book of eyewitness accounts and his own reportage to sell for the benefit of the survivors—Robert W. Wells of the *Milwaukee Journal*, who in 1968 gave the Peshtigo story a skillful and readable reconstruction, and William F. Steuber, Jr.,

who in 1957 used the tragedy as the basis for a prize-winning novel.

But no writer has yet to equal in vividness, imagery, or sheer drama the contemporary account written by Father Pernin, the parish priest for Peshtigo and nearby Marinette, whose churches both burned to the ground. Published in Montreal in 1874, ostensibly to raise funds for a new church in Marinette, Father Pernin's account may have also been an attempt to exorcise the memories of that October night during which he suffered fearfully while behaving heroically.

Not a great deal is known about Father Peter Pernin except that he was born in France about 1825, and served parishes in L'Erable and Clifton in Illinois from 1865 to 1869. He was parish priest in Oconto in 1870 and in Marinette from 1871-1874. From 1876-1878 he was at Grand Rapids (Wisconsin Rapids), and in 1879 he was at LaCrescent, Minnesota, in which state he continued to serve a number of parishes, the last recorded one being in 1898 when he was at St. Joseph's Church in Rushford, Diocese of Winona.

In 1918-1919 Joseph Schafer serialized parts of Father Pernin's account in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Vol. 2). In reprinting it during this centennial year we have added some material which Mr. Schafer omitted and have supplied footnotes wherever they seemed necessary to further clarify the events being described.

W.C.H.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Full bibliographical information about the works on the Peshtigo fire mentioned above is: Frank Tilton, *Sketch of the Great Fires in Wisconsin at Peshtigo, the Sugar Bush, Menekaune, Williamsonville, and Generally on the Shores of Green Bay; with Thrilling and Truthful Incidents by Eye Witnesses* (Green Bay, 1871); Robert W. Wells, *Fire at Peshtigo* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1968); William F. Steuber, Jr., *The Landlooker* (Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1957); and *The Finger of God Is There!, or Thrilling Episode of a Strange Event Related by an Eye-Witness, Rev. P. Pernin, United States Missionary, Published with the Approbation of His Lordship the Bishop of Montreal* (Montreal, 1874). Wells' book contains a useful summary of sources, especially of newspapers consulted. Strangely, no writer on the subject seems to have consulted the valuable material contained in the appendices to the *Wisconsin Assembly Journal*, 1873.



Society's Iconographic Collections

Wood engraving of Father Peter Pernin, about 1874.

A COUNTRY COVERED with dense forests, in the midst of which are to be met with here and there, along newly opened roads, clearings of more or less extent, sometimes a half league in width to afford space for an infant town, or perhaps three or four acres intended for a farm. With the exception of these isolated spots where the trees have been cut down and burned, all is a wild but majestic forest. Trees, trees everywhere, nothing else but trees as far as you can travel from the bay, either towards the north or west. These immense forests are bounded on the east by Green Bay of Lake Michigan, and by the lake itself.

The face of the country is in general undulating, diversified by valleys overgrown with cedars and spruce trees, sandy hills covered with evergreens, and large tracts of rich land filled with the different varieties of hard wood, oak, maple, beech, ash, elm, and birch. The climate of this region is generally uniform and favorable to the crops that are now tried there with remarkable success. Rains are frequent, and they generally fall at a favorable time.

The year 1871 was, however, distinguished by its unusual dryness. Farmers had profited

of the latter circumstance to enlarge their clearings, cutting down and burning the wood that stood in their way. Hundreds of laborers employed in the construction of a railroad had acted in like manner, availing themselves of both axe and fire to advance their work. Hunters and Indians scour these forests continually, especially in the autumn season, at which time they ascend the streams for trout-fishing, or disperse through the woods deer-stalking. At night they kindle a large fire wherever they may chance to halt, prepare their suppers, then wrapping themselves in their blankets, sleep peacefully, extended on the earth, knowing that the fire will keep at a distance any wild animals that may happen to range through the vicinity during the night. The ensuing morning they depart without taking the precaution of extinguishing the smouldering embers of the fire that has protected and warmed them. Farmers and others act in a similar manner. In this way the woods, particularly in the fall, are gleaming everywhere with fires lighted by man, and which, fed on every side by dry leaves and branches, spread more or less. If fanned by a brisk gale of wind they are liable to assume most formidable proportions.

Twice or thrice before October 8, the effects of the wind, favored by the general dryness, had filled the inhabitants of the environs with consternation. A few details on this point may interest the reader, and serve at the same time to illustrate more fully the great catastrophe which overwhelmed us later. The destructive element seemed whilst multiplying its warning to be at the same time essaying its own strength. On September 22 I was summoned, in the exercise of my ministry, to the Sugar Bush,¹ a place in the neighborhood of Peshtigo, where a number of farms lie adjacent to each other. Whilst waiting at one of these, isolated from the rest, I took a gun, and, ac-

companied by a lad of twelve years of age, who offered to guide me through the wood, started in pursuit of some of the pheasants which abounded in the environs. At the expiration of a few hours, seeing that the sun was sinking in the horizon, I bade the child reconduct me to the farmhouse. He endeavored to do so but without success. We went on and on, now turning to the right, now to the left, but without coming in view of our destination. In less than a half hour's wanderings we perceived that we were completely lost in the woods. Night was setting in, and nature was silently preparing for the season of rest. The only sounds audible were the crackling of a tiny tongue of fire that ran along the ground, in and out, among the trunks of the trees, leaving them unscathed but devouring the dry leaves that came in its way, and the swaying of the upper branches of the trees announcing that the wind was rising. We shouted loudly, but without evoking any reply. I then fired off my gun several times as tokens of distress. Finally a distant halloo reached our ears, then another, then several coming from different directions. Rendered anxious by our prolonged absence, the parents of my companion and the farm servants had finally suspected the truth and set out to seek us. Directed to our quarter by our shouts and the firing, they were soon on the right road when a new obstacle presented itself. Fanned by the wind, the tiny flames previously mentioned had united and spread over a considerable surface. We thus found ourselves in the center of a circle of fire extending or narrowing, more or less, around us. We could not reach the men who had come to our assistance, nor could we go to them without incurring the risk of seriously scorching our feet or of being suffocated by the smoke. They were obliged to fray a passage for us by beating the fire with branches of trees at one particular point, thus momentarily staying its progress whilst we rapidly made our escape.

The danger proved more imminent in places exposed to the wind, and I learned the following day, on my return to Peshtigo, that the town had been in great peril at the very time that I had lost myself in the woods. The wind had risen, and, fanning the flames, had driven them in the direction of the houses. Hogsheds

¹ There were three of these farming communities: the Lower Sugar Bush, comprising settlements extending for about seven miles west of Peshtigo on the road leading to Oconto; the Middle Sugar Bush, made up of settlements along a road running to the southwest; and the Upper Sugar Bush, containing settlements along what was known as the Lake Noquebay Road. In all, they consisted of about 300 families. Frank Tilton, *Sketch of the Great Fires in Wisconsin at Peshtigo, the Sugar Bush, Menekaune, Williamsonville . . .* (Green Bay, 1871), 7.

of water were placed at intervals all round the town, ready for any emergency.

I will now mention another incident that happened a few days before the great catastrophe:

I was driving homeward after having visited my second parish situated on the banks of the River Menominee, about two leagues distant.² Whilst quietly following the public road opened through the forest, I remarked little fires gleaming here and there along the route, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. Suddenly I arrived at a spot where the flames were burning on both sides at once with more violence than elsewhere. The smoke, driven to the front, filled the road and obscured it to such a degree that I could neither see the extent of the fire nor judge of the amount of danger. I inferred, however, that the latter was not very great as the wind was not against me. I entered then, though at first hesitatingly, into the dense cloud of smoke left darkling behind by the flames burning fiercely forward. My horse hung back, but I finally succeeded in urging him on, and in five or six minutes we emerged safely from this labyrinth of fire and smoke. Here we found ourselves confronted by a dozen vehicles arrested in their course by the conflagration.

"Can we pass?" inquired one.

"Yes, since I have just done so, but loosen your reins and urge on your horse or you may be suffocated."

Some of the number dashed forward, others had not the hardihood to follow, and consequently returned to Peshtigo.

IT MAY THUS be seen that warnings were not wanting. I give now another trait, more striking than either of those just related, copied from a journal published at Green Bay.³ It is a description of a combat sustained against the terrible element of fire at Peshtigo, Sunday, September 24, just two weeks before the destruction of the village:

Sunday, the 24th inst., was an exciting, I might say a fearful time, in Peshtigo. For

² A league varies from about 2.4 miles to 4.6 statute miles, depending on the nation involved. Pernin was probably using the English league which is about 3 miles, since Peshtigo is about seven miles from Marinette.

³ The account is from the *Green Bay Advocate*, October 5, 1871.

several days the fires had been raging in the timber all around—north, south, east, and west. Saturday the flames burned through to the river a little above the town; and on Saturday night, much danger was apprehended from the sparks and cinders that blew across the river, into the upper part of the town, near the factory. A force was stationed along the river, and although fire caught in the sawdust and dry slabs it was promptly extinguished. It was a grand sight, the fire that night. It burned to the tops of the tallest trees, enveloped them in a mantle of flames, or, winding itself about them like a huge serpent, crept to their summits, out upon the branches, and wound its huge folds about them. Hissing and glaring it lapped out its myriad fiery tongues while its fierce breath swept off the green leaves and roared through the forest like a tempest. Ever and anon some tall old pine, whose huge trunk had become a column of fire, fell with a thundering crash, filling the air with an ascending cloud of sparks and cinders, whilst above this sheet of flames a dense black cloud of resinous smoke, in its strong contrast to the light beneath, seemed to threaten death and destruction to all below.

Thousands of birds, driven from their roosts, flew about as if uncertain which way to go, and made the night still more hideous by their startled cries. Frequently they would fly hither and thither, calling loudly for their mates, then, hovering for a moment in the air, suddenly dart downward and disappear in the fiery furnace beneath. Thus the night wore away while all earnestly hoped, and many hearts fervently prayed, for rain.

Sunday morning the fires had died down, so that we began to hope the danger was over. About eleven o'clock, while the different congregations were assembled in their respective churches, the steam whistle of the factory blew a wild blast of alarm. In a moment the temples were emptied of their worshippers, the latter rushing wildly out to see what had happened. Fire had caught in the sawdust near the factory again, but before we reached the spot it was extinguished. The wind had suddenly risen and was blowing a gale from the northwest. The fires in the timber were burning more fiercely than ever, and were approaching the river directly opposite the factory. The air was literally filled with the burning coals and cinders, which fell, setting fire all around, and the



Tilton, Great Fires in Wisconsin

The Peshtigo Congregational Church in 1871.

utmost diligence was necessary to prevent these flames from spreading. The engine was brought out, and hundreds of pails from the factory were manned; in short, everything that was possible was done to prevent the fire from entering the town.

But now a new danger arose. The fires to the west of the town were approaching rapidly, and it seemed that nothing short of a miracle could save it from utter destruction. A cloud of hot, blinding smoke blew in our faces and made it extremely difficult to see or do anything; still prompt and energetic means were taken to check the approaching flames.

The Company's teams were set to carrying water, and the whole force of over three hundred of the laborers in the factory and mills were on the ground, besides other citizens. Goods were packed up, and moved from buildings supposed to be in immediate danger. Indeed a general conflagration seemed inevitable. I have seen fires sweep over the prairies with the speed of a locomotive, and the prairie fire is grand and terrific; but beside a timber fire it sinks into insignificance. In proportion as the timber is denser, heavier, and loftier than the

prairie grass, the timber fire is intenser, hotter, grander, than the prairie fire. The fire on the prairie before a high wind will rush on and lap up the light dead grass, and it is gone in a breath. In the timber it may move almost as rapidly, but the fire does not go out with the advance waves which sweep over the tops of the trees and catch the light limbs and foliage. Nor is there the same chance to resist the approach of fire in the forests. It is as though you attempted to resist the approach of an avalanche of fire hurled against you. With the going down of the sun the wind abated and with it the fire. Timber was felled and water thrown over it; buildings were covered with wet blankets and all under the scorching heat and in blinding suffocating smoke that was enough to strangle one, and thus passed the night of Sunday.

Monday, the wind veered to the south, and cleared away the smoke. Strange to say not a building was burned—the town was saved. Monday the factory was closed to give the men rest, and today, September 27, all is quiet and going on as usual.

What did these repeated alarms filling the minds of the people with anxiety during the three or four weeks preceding the great calamity seem to indicate!

Doubtless they might have been looked on as the natural results of the great dryness, the number of fires lighted throughout the forests by hunters or others, as well as of the wind that fanned from time to time these fires, augmenting their strength and volume, but who will dare to say that they were not specially ordained by Him who is master of causes as well as of their effects? Does He not in most cases avail Himself of natural causes to execute His will and bring about the most wonderful results? It would indeed be difficult for anyone who had assisted as I had done at the terrible events following so closely on the above mentioned indications not to see in them the hand of God, and infer in consequence that these various signs were but forerunners of the great tragedy for which He wished us to be in some degree prepared.

I cannot say whether they were looked on by many in this light or not, but certainly some were greatly alarmed and prepared as far as lay in their power for a general conflagration, burying in the earth those objects which they

specially wished to save. The Company caused all combustible materials on which a fire could possibly feed to be taken away, and augmented the number of water hogsheads girdling the town. Wise precautions certainly, which would have been of great service in any ordinary case of fire but which were utterly unavailing in the awful conflagration that burst upon us. They served nevertheless to demonstrate more clearly the *finger of God* in the events which succeeded.

As for myself, I allowed things to take their course without feeling any great anxiety as to consequences, or taking any precautionary steps, a frame of mind very different to that which I was destined to experience on the evening of the eighth of October.

A word now about my two parishes.

Peshtigo is situated on a river of that name, about six miles from Green Bay with which it communicates by means of a small railroad. The Company established at Peshtigo is a source of prosperity to the whole country, not only from its spirit of enterprise and large pecuniary resources but also from its numerous establishments, the most important of which, a factory of tubs and buckets, affords alone steady employment to more than three hundred workmen. The population of Peshtigo, including the farmers settled in the neighborhood, numbered then about two thousand souls. We were just finishing the construction of a church looked on as a great embellishment to the parish.

My abode was near the church, to the west of the river, and about a five or six minute walk from the latter. I mention this so as to render the circumstances of my escape through the midst of the flames more intelligible.

Besides Peshtigo, I had the charge of another parish much more important situated on the River Menominee, at the point where it empties into Green Bay. It is called Marinette, from a female half breed, looked on as their queen by the Indians inhabiting that district. This woman received in baptism the name of Mary, *Marie*, which subsequently was corrupted into that of Marinette, or little Marie. Hence the name of Marinette bestowed on the place. It is there that we are at present building a church in honor of our Lady of Lourdes. At the time of the fire, Marinette possessed a



Society's Iconographic Collections

"Queen" Marinette and her home, one of the first to be built in the vicinity.

church, a handsome new presbytery just finished, in which I was on the point of taking up my abode, besides a house in course of construction, destined to serve as a parish school.

The population was about double that of Peshtigo.

Before entering into details, I will mention one more circumstance which may appear providential in the eyes of some, though brought about by purely natural causes.

At the time of the catastrophe our church at Peshtigo was ready for plastering, the ensuing Monday being appointed for commencing the work. The lime and marble dust were lying ready in front of the building, whilst the altar and various ornaments, as well as the pews, had all been removed. Being unable in consequence to officiate that Sunday in the sacred edifice, I told the people that there would be no mass, notifying at the same time the Catholics of Cedar River that I would spend the Sunday among them. The latter place was another of my missions, situated on Green Bay, four or five leagues north of Marinette. Saturday then, October 7, in accordance with my promise, I left Peshtigo and proceeded to the Menominee wharf to take passage on the steamboat *Dunlap*. There I vainly waited her coming several hours. It was the only time that year she had failed in the regularity of her trips. I learned after that the steamboat had passed as usual but stood out from shore, not deeming it prudent to approach nearer. The temperature was low, and the sky obscured by a dense mass of smoke which no breath of wind arose to dispel, a circumstance render-

ing navigation very dangerous especially in the neighborhood of the shore.⁴ Towards nightfall, when all hope of embarking was over, I returned to Peshtigo on horseback. After informing the people that mass would be said in my own abode the following morning, I prepared a temporary altar in one of the rooms, employing for the purpose the tabernacle itself which I had taken from the church, and after mass I replaced the Blessed Sacrament in it, intending to say mass again there the next Monday.

In the afternoon, when about leaving for Marinette where I was accustomed to chant vespers and preach when high mass was said at Peshtigo, which was every fortnight, my departure was strongly opposed by several of my parishioners. There seemed to be a vague fear of some impending though unknown evil haunting the minds of many, nor was I myself entirely free from this unusual feeling. It was rather an impression than a conviction, for, on reflecting, I saw that things looked much as usual, and arrived at the conclusion that our fears were groundless, without, however, feeling much reassured thereby.

But for the certainty that the Catholics at Marinette, supposing me at Cedar River, would not, consequently, come to vespers, I would probably have persisted in going there, but under actual circumstances I deemed it best to yield to the representations made me and remain where I was.

God willed that I should be at the post of danger. The steamboat which I had expected to bear me from Peshtigo, on the seventh of October, had of course obeyed the elements which prevented her landing, but God is the master of these elements and Him they obey. Thus I found myself at Peshtigo Sunday evening, October 8, where, according to all previous calculations, projects, and arrangements, I should not have been.

The afternoon passed in complete inactivity. I remained still a prey to the indefinable apprehensions of impending calamity already al-

luded to, apprehensions contradicted by reason which assured me there was no more cause for present fear than there had been eight or fifteen days before—indeed less, on account of the precautions taken and the numerous sentinels watching over the public safety. These two opposite sentiments, one of which persistently asserted itself despite every effort to shake it off, whilst the other, inspired by reason was powerless to reassure me, plunged my faculties into a species of mental torpor.

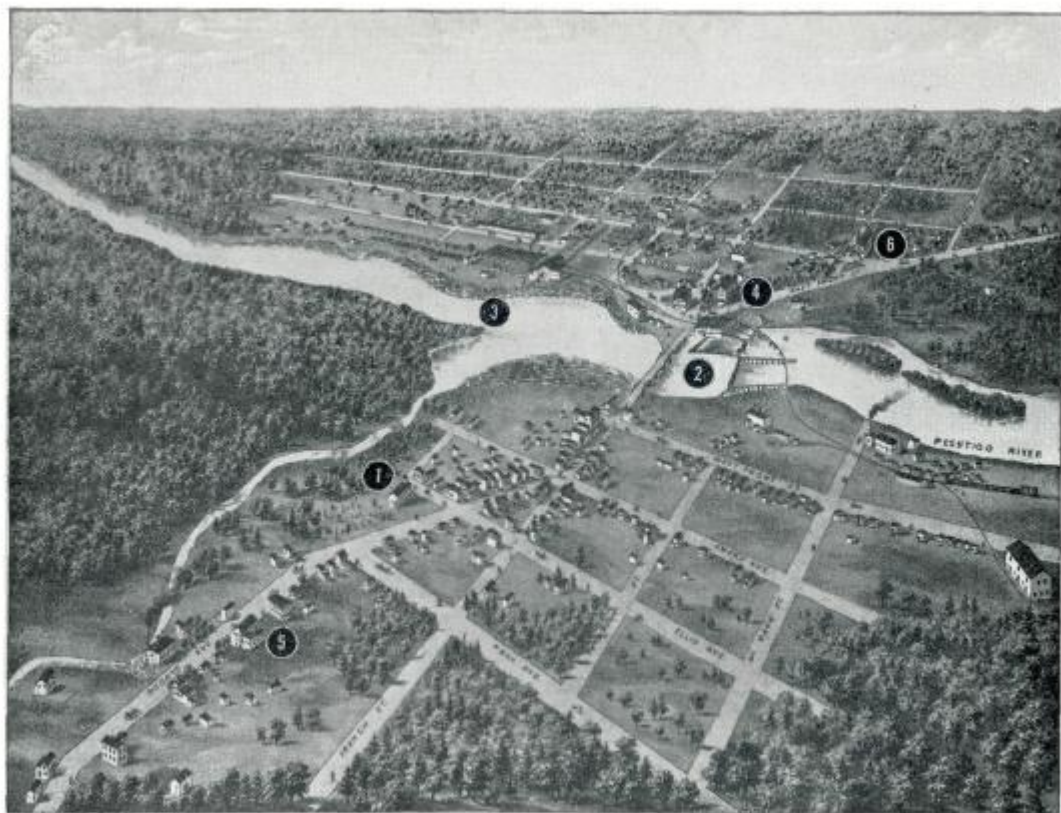
In the outer world everything contributed to keep alive these two different impressions. On one side, the thick smoke darkening the sky, the heavy, suffocating atmosphere, the mysterious silence filling the air, so often a presage of storm, seemed to afford grounds for fear in case of a sudden gale. On the other hand the passing and repassing in the street of countless young people bent only on amusement, laughing, singing, and perfectly indifferent to the menacing aspect of nature, was sufficient to make me think that I alone was a prey to anxiety, and to render me ashamed of manifesting the feeling.

During the afternoon, an old Canadian, remarkable for the deep interest he always took in everything relating to the church, came and asked permission to dig a well close to the sacred edifice so as to have water ready at hand in case of accident, as well as for the use of the plasterer who was coming to work the following morning. As my petitioner had no time to devote to the task during the course of the week, I assented. His labor completed, he informed me there was abundance of water, adding with an expression of deep satisfaction: "Father, not for a large sum of money would I give that well. Now if a fire breaks out again it will be easy to save our church." As he seemed greatly fatigued, I made him partake of supper and then sent him to rest. An hour after he was buried in deep slumber, but God was watching over him, and to reward him doubtless for the zeal he had displayed for the interests of his Father's House, enabled the pious old man to save his life; whilst in the very building in which he had been sleeping more than fifty people, fully awake, perished.

What we do for God is never lost, even in this world.

Towards seven in the evening, always

⁴ During early October the smoke was so dense on the Bay that during daylight hours navigation was done by compass, and fog horns were kept blowing continuously, the shores being invisible. *Green Bay Advocate*, October 5, 1871.



Society's Iconographic Collections

Bird's-eye view of Peshtigo as it appeared in 1871 shortly before its destruction. The sites indicated by circled numbers follow the order in which Pernin introduces them in the text. (1) is the Catholic church; (2) shows the dam to the right, the bridge to the left, with the sawmill directly above the number; (3) shows the Company warehouse and factory on the far side of the river; (4) indicates the site of the Company boarding house where the loss of life was probably the heaviest; (5) is the Forest House, also pictured on page 256; and (6) marks the location of the Congregational church and the schoolhouse, pictured in greater detail on pages 250 and 264 respectively. Flames leaping between the sawmill (2) and the boarding house (4) prevented Pernin from going downstream after he had crossed the bridge.

haunted by the same misgivings, I left home to see how it went with my neighbors. I stepped over first to the house of an elderly kind-hearted widow, a Mrs. Dress, and we walked out together on her land. The wind was beginning to rise, blowing in short fitful gusts as if to try its strength and then as quickly subsiding. My companion was as troubled as myself, and kept pressing her children to take some precautionary measures, but they refused, laughing lightly at her fears. At one time, whilst we were still in the fields, the wind rose suddenly with more strength than it had yet displayed and I perceived some old trunks of trees blaze out though without seeing about them any tokens of cinder or spark, just as if the wind had been a breath of fire, capable of kindling them into a flame by its mere contact. We extinguished these; the wind fell again, and nature resumed her

moody and mysterious silence. I re-entered the house but only to leave it, feeling restless, though at the same time devoid of anything like energy, and retraced my steps to my own abode to conceal within it as I best could my vague but continually deepening anxieties. On looking towards the west, whence the wind had persistently blown for hours past, I perceived above the dense cloud of smoke overhanging the earth, a vivid red reflection of immense extent, and then suddenly struck on my ear, strangely audible in the preternatural silence reigning around, a distant roaring, yet muffled sound, announcing that the elements were in commotion somewhere. I rapidly resolved to return home and prepare, without further hesitation, for whatever events were impending. From listless and undecided as I had previously been, I suddenly became active and determined. This change of mind was

a great relief. The vague fears that had heretofore pursued me vanished, and another idea, certainly not a result of anything like mental reasoning on my part, took possession of my mind; it was, not to lose much time in saving my effects but to direct my flight as speedily as possible in the direction of the river. Henceforth this became my ruling thought, and it was entirely unaccompanied by anything like fear or perplexity. My mind seemed all at once to become perfectly tranquil.

IT WAS NOW ABOUT half past eight in the evening. I first thought of my horse and turned him free into the street, deeming that, in any case, he would have more chance of escape thus than tied up in the stable. I then set about digging a trench six feet wide and six or seven feet deep, in the sandy soil of the garden, and though the earth was easy enough to work my task proved a tedious one. The atmosphere was heavy and oppressive, strangely affecting the strength and rendering respiration painful and laborious. The only consideration that could have induced me to keep on working when I found it almost impossible to move my limbs, was the fear, growing more strongly each moment into a certainty, that some great catastrophe was approaching. The crimson reflection in the western portion of the sky was rapidly increasing in size and in intensity; then between each stroke of my pickaxe I heard plainly, in the midst of the unnatural calm and silence reigning around, the strange and terrible noise already described, the muttered thunder of which became more distinct as it drew each moment nearer. This sound resembled the confused noise of a number of cars and locomotives approaching a railroad station, or the rumbling of thunder, with the difference that it never ceased, but deepened in intensity each moment more and more. The spectacle of this menacing crimson in the sky, the sound of this strange and unknown voice of nature constantly augmenting in terrible majesty, seemed to endow me with supernatural strength. Whilst toiling thus steadfastly at my task, the sound of human voices plainly audible amid the silence and species of stupor reigning around fell on my ear. They betrayed on the one hand thoughtlessness, on the other folly.

A neighboring American family were entertaining some friends at tea. The room which they occupied at the moment overlooked my garden; thus they could see me whilst I could as easily overhear them. More than once, the smothered laughter of some of the guests, especially of the young girls, fell on my ear. Doubtless they were amusing themselves at my expense. About nine, the company dispersed, and Mrs. Tyler, the hostess, approached me. The actions of the priest always make a certain impression, even on Protestants.

"Father," she questioned, "do you think there is any danger?"

"I do not know," was my reply, "but I have unpleasant presentiments, and feel myself impelled to prepare for trouble."

"But if a fire breaks out, Father, what are we to do?"

"In that case, Madam, seek the river at once."

I gave her no reason for advising such a course, perhaps I had really none to offer, beyond that it was my innate conviction.

Shortly after, Mrs. Tyler and her family started in the direction of the river and were all saved. I learned later that out of the eight guests assembled at her house that evening, all perished with the exception of two.

At a short distance from home, on the other side of the street, was a tavern. This place had been crowded all day with revellers, about two hundred young men having arrived that Sunday morning at Peshtigo by the boat to work on the railroad.⁵ Many were scattered throughout the town, where they had met acquaintances, while a large number were lodging at the tavern just mentioned. Perhaps they had passed the holy time of mass drinking and carousing there. Towards nightfall the greater part of them were too much intoxicated to take any share in the anxiety felt by the more

⁵ The northern extension of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway from Fort Howard to Menominee and thence to Escanaba to connect with the iron mines in upper Michigan was under construction. In clearing the right-of-way, many fires had been allowed to escape into the woods. Tilton, *Sketch of the Great Fires*, 10; letter dated July, 1927, from John J. Casson of Los Angeles, a mechanic at the Peshtigo woodenware mill and a survivor of the fire, in Archives-Manuscripts Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

steady members of the community, or even to notice the strange aspect of nature. Whilst working in my garden, I saw several of them hanging about the veranda of the tavern or lounging in the yard. Their intoxicated condition was plainly revealed by the manner in which they quarrelled, wrestled, rolled on the ground, filling the air the while with wild shouts and horrid blasphemies.

When hastening through the street, on my way to the river at the moment the storm burst forth, the wind impelled me in the direction of this house. A death-like silence now reigned within it, as if reason had been restored to the inmates, or fear had suddenly penetrated to their hearts. Without shout or word they re-entered the place, closing the doors as if to bar death out—a few minutes later the house was swept away. What became of them I know not.

After finishing the digging of the trench I placed within it my trunks, books, church ornaments, and other valuables, covering the whole with sand to a depth of about a foot. Whilst still engaged at this, my servant, who had collected in a basket several precious objects in silver committed to my charge, such as crosses, medals, rosaries, etc., ran and deposited them on the steps of a neighboring store, scarcely conscious in her trouble of what she was doing.

She hastily returned for a cage containing her canary, which the wind, however, almost immediately tore from her grasp—and breathless with haste and terror she called to me to leave the garden and fly. The wind, forerunner of the tempest, was increasing in violence, the redness in the sky deepening, and the roaring sound like thunder seemed almost upon us. It was now time to think of the Blessed Sacrament—object of all objects, precious, priceless, especially in the eyes of a priest. It had never been a moment absent from my thoughts, for of course I had intended from the first to bring it with me. Hastening then to the chamber containing the tabernacle, I proceeded to open the latter, but the key, owing to my haste, slipped from my fingers and fell. There was no time for farther delay, so I caught up the tabernacle with its contents and carried it out, placing it in my wagon as I knew it would be much easier to draw it thus than to bear it in my

arms. My thought was that I should meet someone who would help me in the task. I re-entered to seek the chalice which had not been placed in the tabernacle, when a strange and startling phenomenon met my view. It was that of a cloud of sparks that blazed up here and there with a sharp detonating sound like that of powder exploding, and flew from room to room. I understood then that the air was saturated with some special gas, and I could not help thinking if this gas lighted up from mere contact with a breath of hot wind, what would it be when fire would come in actual contact with it. The circumstance, though menacing enough, inspired me with no fear, my safety seemed already assured. Outside the door, in a cage attached to the wall, was a jay that I had had in my possession for a long time. The instinct of birds in foreseeing a storm is well known, and my poor jay was fluttering wildly round his cage, beating against its bars as if seeking to escape, and uttering shrill notes of alarm. I grieved for its fate but could do nothing for it. The lamps were burning on the table, and I thought, as I turned away, how soon their gleam would be eclipsed in the vivid light of a terrible conflagration.

I look on the peculiar, indeed almost childish frame of mind in which I then found myself, as most providential. It kept up my courage in the ordeal through which I was about to pass, veiling from me in great part its horror and danger. Any other mental condition, though perhaps more in keeping with my actual position would have paralyzed my strength and sealed my fate.

I vainly called my dog who, disobeying the summons, concealed himself under my bed, only to meet death there later. Then I hastened out to open the gate so as to bring forth my wagon. Barely had I laid hand on it, when the wind heretofore violent rose suddenly to a hurricane, and quick as lightning opened the way for my egress from the yard by sweeping planks, gate, and fencing away into space. "The road is open," I thought, "we have only to start."

I had delayed my departure too long. It would be impossible to describe the trouble I had to keep my feet, to breathe, to retain hold of the buggy which the wind strove to tear from my grasp, or to keep the tabernacle



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Artist Mel Kishner's conception of the terrorized populace fleeing down Oconto Avenue toward the protection of the river.

in its place. To reach the river, even unencumbered by any charge, was more than many succeeded in doing; several failed, perishing in the attempt. How I arrived at it is even to this day a mystery to myself.

The air was no longer fit to breathe, full as it was of sand, dust, ashes, cinders, sparks, smoke, and fire. It was almost impossible to keep one's eyes unclosed, to distinguish the road, or to recognize people, though the way was crowded with pedestrians, as well as vehicles crossing and crashing against each other in the general flight. Some were hastening towards the river, others from it, whilst all were struggling alike in the grasp of the hurricane. A thousand discordant deafening noises rose on the air together. The neighing of horses, falling of chimneys, crashing of uprooted trees, roaring and whistling of the wind, crackling of fire as it ran with lightning-like rapidity from house to house—all sounds were there save that of the human voice. People seemed stricken dumb by terror. They jostled each other without exchanging look, word, or counsel. The silence of the tomb reigned among the living; nature alone lifted up its voice and spoke. Though

meeting crowded vehicles taking a direction quite opposite to that which I myself was following, it never even entered my mind that it would perhaps be better for me to follow them. Probably it was the same thing with them. We all hurried blindly on to our fate.

Almost with the first steps taken in the street the wind overturned and dragged me with the wagon close to the tavern already mentioned. Farther on, I was again thrown down over some motionless object lying on the earth; it proved to be a woman and a little girl, both dead. I raised a head that fell back heavily as lead. With a long breath I rose to my feet, but only to be hurled down again. Farther on I met my horse whom I had set free in the street. Whether he recognized me—whether he was in that spot by chance, I cannot say, but whilst struggling anew to my feet, I felt his head leaning on my shoulder. He was trembling in every limb. I called him by name and motioned him to follow me, but he did not move. He was found partly consumed by fire in the same place.

Arrived near the river, we saw that the houses adjacent to it were on fire, whilst the

wind blew the flames and cinders directly into the water. The place was no longer safe. I resolved then to cross to the other side though the bridge was already on fire. The latter presented a scene of indescribable and awful confusion, each one thinking he could attain safety on the other side of the river. Those who lived in the east were hurrying towards the west, and those who dwelt in that west were wildly pushing on to the east so that the bridge was thoroughly encumbered with cattle, vehicles, women, children, and men, all pushing and crushing against each other so as to find an issue from it. Arrived amid the crowd on the other side, I resolved to descend the river, to a certain distance below the dam, where I knew the shore was lower and the water shallower, but this I found impossible. The saw-mill on the same side, at the angle of the bridge, as well as the large store belonging to the Company standing opposite across the road, were both on fire. The flames from these two edifices met across the road, and none could traverse this fiery passage without meeting with instant death. I was thus obliged to ascend the river on the left bank, above the dam, where the water gradually attained a great depth. After placing a certain distance between myself and the bridge, the fall of which I momentarily expected, I pushed my wagon containing the tabernacle as far into the water as possible. It was all that I could do. Henceforth I had to look to the saving of my life. The whirlwind in its continual ascension had, so to speak, worked up the smoke, dust, and cinders, so that, at least, we could see clear before us. The banks of the river as far as the eye could reach were covered with people standing there, motionless as statues, some with eyes staring, upturned towards heaven, and tongues protruded. The greater number seemed to have no idea of taking any steps to procure their safety, imagining, as many afterwards acknowledged to me, that the end of the world had arrived and that there was nothing for them but silent submission to their fate. Without uttering a word—the efforts I had made in dragging my wagon with me in my flight had left me perfectly breathless, besides the violence of the storm entirely prevented anything like speech—I pushed the persons standing on each side of me into the

water. One of these sprang back again with a half smothered cry, murmuring: "I am wet"; but immersion in water was better than immersion in fire. I caught him again and dragged him out with me into the river as far as possible. At the same moment I heard a splash of the water along the river's brink. All had followed my example. It was time; the air was no longer fit for inhalation, whilst the intensity of the heat was increasing. A few minutes more and no living thing could have resisted its fiery breath.

IT WAS ABOUT TEN O'CLOCK when we entered into the river. When doing so I neither knew the length of time we would be obliged to remain there, nor what would ultimately happen to us, yet, wonderful to relate my fate had never caused me a moment of anxiety from the time that, yielding to the involuntary impulse warning me to prepare for danger, I had resolved on directing my flight towards the river. Since then I had remained in the same careless frame of mind, which permitted me to struggle against the most insuperable obstacles, to brave the most appalling dangers, without ever seeming to remember that my life might pay the forfeit. Once in water up to our necks, I thought we would, at least be safe from fire, but it was not so; the flames darted over the river as they did over land, the air was full of them, or rather the air itself was on fire. Our heads were in continual danger. It was only by throwing water constantly over them and our faces, and beating the river with our hands that we kept the flames at bay. Clothing and quilts had been thrown into the river, to save them, doubtless, and they were floating all around. I caught at some that came within reach and covered with them the heads of the persons who were leaning against or clinging to me. These wraps dried quickly in the furnace-like heat and caught fire whenever we ceased sprinkling them. The terrible whirlwind that had burst over us at the moment I was leaving home had, with its continually revolving circle of opposing winds, cleared the atmosphere. The river was as bright, brighter than by day, and the spectacle presented by these heads rising above the level of the water, some covered, some uncovered, the countless hands employed in beating the waves, was singular and painful in the



Harper's Weekly, November 25, 1871

An artist's reconstruction of the panic which ensued at the riverside.

extreme. So free was I from the fear and anxiety that might naturally have been expected to reign in my mind at such a moment, that I actually perceived the ludicrous side of the scene at times and smiled within myself at it. When turning my gaze from the river I chanced to look either to the right or left, before me or upwards, I saw nothing but flames; houses, trees, and the air itself were on fire. Above my head, as far as the eye could reach into space, alas! too brilliantly lighted, I saw nothing but immense volumes of flames covering the firmament, rolling one over the other with stormy violence as we see masses of clouds driven wildly hither and thither by the fierce power of the tempest.

Near me, on the bank of the river, rose the store belonging to the factory, a large three-story building, filled with tubs, buckets, and other articles. Sometimes the thought crossed my mind that if the wind happened to change, we should be buried beneath the blazing ruins of this place, but still the supposition did not cause me much apprehension. When I was entering the water, this establishment was just taking fire; the work of destruction was

speedy, for, in less than a quarter of an hour, the large beams were lying blazing on the ground, while the rest of the building was either burned or swept off into space.

Not far from me a woman was supporting herself in the water by means of a log. After a time a cow swam past. There were more than a dozen of these animals in the river, impelled thither by instinct, and they succeeded in saving their lives. The first mentioned one overturned in its passage the log to which the woman was clinging and she disappeared into the water. I thought her lost; but soon saw her emerge from it holding on with one hand to the horns of the cow, and throwing water on her head with the other. How long she remained in this critical position I know not, but I was told later that the animal had swam to shore, bearing her human burden safely with her; and what threatened to bring destruction to the woman had proved the means of her salvation.

At the moment I was entering the river, another woman, terrified and breathless, reached its bank. She was leading one child by the hand, and held pressed to her breast what

appeared to be another, enveloped in a roll of disordered linen, evidently caught up in haste. O horror! on opening these wraps to look on the face of her child it was not there. It must have slipped from her grasp in her hurried flight. No words could portray the look of stupor, of desolation that flitted across the poor mother's face. The half smothered cry: "Ah! my child!" escaped her, then she wildly strove to force her way through the crowd so as to cast herself into the river. The force of the wind was less violent on water than on land, and permitted the voice to be heard. I then endeavored to calm the anguish of the poor bereaved woman by suggesting that her child had been found by others and saved, but she did not even look in my direction, but stood there motionless, her eyes wild and staring, fixed on the opposite shore. I soon lost sight of her, and was informed subsequently that she had succeeded in throwing herself into the river where she met death.

Things went well enough with me during the first three or four hours of this prolonged bath, owing in part, I suppose, to my being continually in motion, either throwing water on my own head or on that of my neighbors.

It was not so, however, with some of those who were standing near me, for their teeth were chattering and their limbs convulsively trembling. Reaction was setting in and the cold penetrating through their frames. Dreading that so long a sojourn in the water might be followed by severe cramps, perhaps death, I endeavored to ascend the bank a short distance, so as to ascertain the temperature, but my shoulders were scarcely out of the river, when a voice called to me: "Father, beware, you are on fire!"

The hour of deliverance from this prison of fire and water had not yet arrived—the struggle was not yet over. A lady who had remained beside me since we had first taken to the river, and who, like all the others, had remained silent till then, now asked me:

"Father, do you not think this is the end of the world?"

"I do not think so," was my reply, "but if other countries are burned as ours seems to have been, the end of the world, at least for us, must be at hand."

After this both relapsed into silence.

There is an end to all things here below, even misfortune. The longed-for moment of our return to land was at length arriving, and already sprinkling of our heads was becoming unnecessary. I drew near the bank, seated myself on a log, being in this manner only partly immersed in the water. Here I was seized with a violent chill. A young man perceiving it threw a blanket over me which at once afforded me relief, and soon after I was able to leave this compulsory bath in which I had been plunged for about five hours and a half.

I CAME OUT of the river about half past three in the morning, and from that time I was in a very different condition, both morally and physically, to that in which I had previously been. Today, in recalling the past, I can see that the moment most fraught with danger was precisely that in which danger seemed at an end. The atmosphere, previously hot as the breath of a furnace, was gradually becoming colder and colder, and, after having been so long in the river, I was of course exceedingly susceptible to its chilly influence. My clothes were thoroughly saturated. There was no want of fire, and I easily dried my outer garments, but the inner ones were wet, and their searching dampness penetrated to my inmost frame, affecting my very lungs. Though close to a large fire, arising from heaps of burning fragments, I was still convulsively shivering, feeling at the same time a complete prostration of body and spirit. My chest was oppressed to suffocation, my throat swollen, and, in addition to an almost total inability to move, I could scarcely use my voice—utter even a word.

Almost lifeless, I stretched myself out full length on the sand. The latter was still hot, and the warmth in some degree restored me. Removing shoes and socks I placed my feet in immediate contact with the heated ground, and felt additionally relieved.

I was lying beside the ruins of the large factory, the beams of which were still burning. Around me were piles of iron hoops belonging to the tubs and buckets lately destroyed.⁶ With

⁶ John Casson says in the previously cited letter: "All of the bodies were so badly charred we used iron barrel hoops under the necks and limbs to move them."



Society's Iconographic Collections

This painting by Mel Kushner graphically illustrates the plight of victims trapped in such outlying areas as the Sugar Bushes.

the intention of employing these latter to dry my socks and shoes, now the only possessions left me, I touched them but found that they were still intolerably hot. Yet, strange to say, numbers of men were lying—some face downward—across these iron circles. Whether they were dead, or, rendered almost insensible from the effects of damp and cold, were seeking the warmth that the sand afforded me, I cannot say; I was suffering too intensely myself to attend to them.

My eyes were now beginning to cause me the most acute pain, and this proved the case, to a greater or less extent, with all those who had not covered theirs during the long storm of fire through which we had passed. Notwithstanding I had kept head and face streaming with water, the heat had nevertheless injured my eyes greatly, though at the moment I was almost unconscious of the circumstance. The intense pain they now caused, joined to a feeling of utter exhaustion, kept me for a length of time extended on the earth. When able, I dried my wet garments, one after the other, at the blazing ruins, and those near me did the same. As each individual thought of himself,

without minding his neighbor, the task was easy even to the most scrupulous and delicate. Putting on dry clothes afforded immediate relief to the pain and oppression of my chest, enabling me to breathe with more ease. Finally day dawned on a scene with whose horror and ruin none were as yet fully acquainted. I received a friendly summons to proceed to another spot where the greater number of those who had escaped were assembled, but the inflammation of my eyes had rapidly augmented, and I was now perfectly blind. Someone led me, however, to the place of refuge. It was a little valley near the river's edge, completely sheltered by sand hills, and proved to be the very place where I had intended taking refuge the evening previous, though prevented reaching it by the violence of the hurricane. Some had succeeded in attaining it, and had suffered comparatively far less than we had done. The tempest of fire had passed, as it were, above this spot, leaving untouched the shrubs and plants growing within it.

Behold us then, all assembled in this valley like the survivors after a battle—some safe and well, others more or less wounded; some

were very much so, especially a poor old woman who, fearing to enter the river completely, had lain crouched on the bank, partly in the water, partly out of it, and, consequently, exposed to the flames. She was now stretched on the grass, fearfully burned, and suffering intense agony, to judge from her heart-rending moans and cries. As she was dying, and had asked for me, I was brought to her, though I fear I proved but a poor consolator. I could not unclothe my inflamed eyes, could scarcely speak, and felt so exhausted and depressed myself, that it was difficult to impart courage to others. The poor sufferer died shortly after.

Those among us who had sufficient strength for the task dispersed in different directions to seek information concerning the friends whom they had not yet seen, and returned with appalling tidings relating to the general ruin and the number of deaths by fire. One of these told me that he had crossed to the other side of the river, and found all the houses as well as the church in ashes, while numbers of corpses were lying by the wayside, so much disfigured by fire as to be beyond recognition.

"Well," I replied, "since it is thus, we will all proceed to Marinette, where there is a fine church, new presbytery, and school house, capable of lodging a great number."

About eight o'clock, a large tent, brought on by the Company, was erected for the purpose of sheltering the women, children, and the sick. As soon as it was prepared someone came and urged me to profit of it. I complied, and stretched myself in a corner, taking up as little place as possible, so as to leave room for others. But the man employed by the Company to superintend the erection of the tent had evidently escaped all injury to his eyes during the night, for he perceived me at once. He was one of those coarse and brutal natures that seem inaccessible to every kindly feeling though he manifested a remarkable interest in the welfare of the ladies, and would allow none but them under his tent. As soon as his glance fell on me he ordered me out, accompanying the rude command with a perfect torrent of insulting words and blasphemies. Without reply I turned over, passing beneath the canvass, and quickly found myself outside. One of the ladies present raised her voice in my defense,

and vainly sought to give him a lesson in politeness. I never heard the name of this man, and rejoice that it is unknown to me.

Ten o'clock arrived. After the sufferings of the night previous, many longed for a cup of hot tea or coffee, but such a luxury was entirely out of our reach, amid the desolation and ruin surrounding us. Some of the young men, after a close search, found and brought back a few cabbages from a neighboring field. The outer leaves, which were thoroughly scorched, were removed, and the inner part cut into thin slices and distributed among those capable of eating them. A morsel of cold raw cabbage was not likely to prove of much use in our then state of exhaustion, but we had nothing better at hand.

At length the people of Marinette were informed of our condition, and, about one o'clock, several vehicles laden with bread, coffee, and tea arrived. These vehicles were commissioned at the same time to bring back as many of our number as they could contain. Anxious to obtain news from Marinette, I enquired of one of the men sent to our assistance if Marinette had also suffered from the fiery scourge.

"Thank God, Father, no one perished, though all were dreadfully alarmed. We have had many houses, however, burned. All the mills and houses from our church down to the Bay have gone."

"And the church?"

"It is burned."

"The handsome presbytery?"

"Burned."

"The new schoolhouse?"

"Burned also."

Ah! And I had promised the poor unfortunates of Peshtigo to bring them to Marinette and shelter them in those very buildings. Thus I found myself bereft in the same hour of my two churches, two presbyteries, and schoolhouse, as well as of all private property belonging to them or to myself.

BETWEEN ONE AND TWO O'CLOCK I left in one of the wagons for Marinette, and after arriving there, sojourned for some time at the residence of one of my parishioners, Mr. F. Garon, receiving under his hospitable roof all the care my condition required.

The two banks of the river respectively named Marinette and Menominee and which, united, formed another parish, were strangely changed in appearance. These two sister towns, one situated on the south and the other on the north side of the river, were no longer recognizable. Life and activity had entirely given place to silence and a species of woeful stupefaction. A few men only were to be seen going backwards and forwards, looking after their property, or asking details concerning the conflagration at Peshtigo from those who had just arrived from that ill-fated spot. No women were to be seen in the streets nor even in the houses, the latter having been abandoned. The children, too, with their joyous outcries and noisy mirth had disappeared from the scene. These shores, a short while since so animated, now resembled a desert, and it was a movement of overwhelming and uncontrollable terror that had created, as it were, this solitude, a terror which dated from the preceding night when the tempest of fire came surging on from Peshtigo, consuming all that part of Marinette that lay in its path. Intelligence of the fate that had overtaken Peshtigo farther increased this general feeling of alarm till it culminated in a perfect panic. Dreading a similar catastrophe to that of Peshtigo, many families hastened towards the Bay, embarking on the steamers, *Union*, *Dunlap*, and *St. Joseph*, which had been kept near the shore so as to afford a refuge to the terrified inhabitants. The consternation was indescribable, and one unfortunate man on arriving panting and breathless at the boat fell dead from fear or exhaustion. These boats afforded anything but a safe place of refuge, for if the conflagration had broken out as suddenly and raged as fiercely as it had done at Peshtigo, nothing could have preserved them from the flames, and the only alternative left to those on board would have been death by fire or water. Fear, however, is generally an untrustworthy counsellor, and the expedients it suggests remarkably ill chosen. The inhabitants of Marinette and Menominee passed the night of October eighth dispersed in the different boats, and it is unnecessary to add that few slept during those hours of strange anxiety. Terror effectually banished slumber, producing the result fear generally does on the Christian soul, turn-

ing it instinctively to prayer, even as the terror-stricken child casts itself into the arms of the mother it has summoned to its help. What are we, poor mortals, exposed to the wild fury of the unchained elements, but helpless children? The Catholics present with one accord cast themselves on their knees and prayed aloud, imploring the Ruler of the elements to stay His vengeful arm and spare His people. They prayed without shyness or human respect. Doubtless, there were present those who had perhaps never learned to pray, or who had forgotten how to accomplish that all important duty, and these latter might in other circumstances have felt annoyed at such public manifestations of devotion, but in this hour of common peril, all hearts involuntarily turned towards heaven as their only resource. There were no tokens of incredulity, impiety, or bigotry evinced by any. The Protestants who were present, being unacquainted with the Catholic formula of prayer, could not unite their supplications with those of the latter, but they encouraged them to continue their devotions, and when they paused, solicited them to recommence. Danger is a successful teacher, its influence immediate and irresistible. No reasoning succeeds so quickly in making men comprehend the greatness of God and their own insignificance, His almighty power and their own helplessness. Naught else detaches souls so completely from earth and raises them towards Him on whom we all depend.

The preceding details, furnished by individuals coming and going from the boats, were full of interest to me. During this time I remained with my kind host, Mr. Garon, being too ill even to leave the house. The kind attentions of which I was the object soon restored me in some degree to health. Tuesday evening, I was able to visit several persons who had been injured more or less grievously by fire, and to prepare the dying for their last end, as far as lay in my power, in the total absence of everything necessary on the sad occasion. Feeling strong enough, I resolved to return to Peshtigo on Tuesday night, and commenced my preparations. The clothes I wore had been greatly injured by my long sojourn in the water, and I would have willingly replaced them, but found this impossible. The storekeepers, fearing a similar misfortune to that

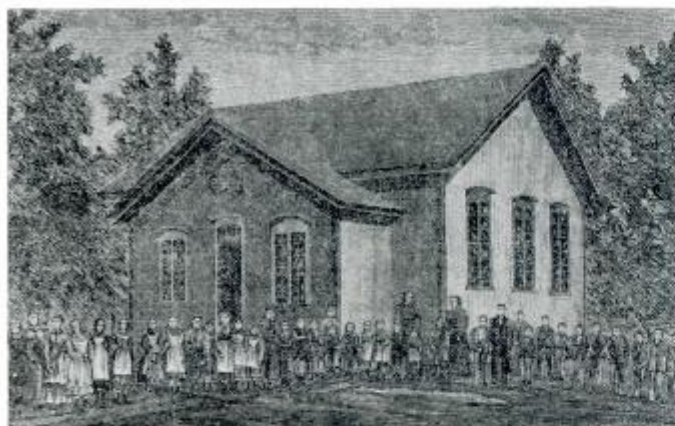
which had overtaken the merchants of Peshtigo, had packed up the greater part of their merchandise and buried it. I could get nothing save a suit of coarse yellow material such as workmen wear whilst engaged in sawmills. In the absence of something better it had to answer, and about ten o'clock at night I went on board a steamboat about leaving for Green Bay, calling previously, however, at Peshtigo. The night was very stormy, and it was only about daybreak that we ventured to land, the water being very rough when we reached Peshtigo landing, which was about nine or ten in the morning. I remained there only a few hours, during which time I visited the sick beds of several victims of the conflagration.

About one o'clock in the afternoon a car was leaving for Peshtigo, conveying thither men who went daily there for the purpose of seeking out and burying the dead. I took my place with them. The locomotives belonging to the Company, having been burned, were now replaced by horses, and we progressed thus till we came up with the track of the fire. We walked the rest of the way, a distance of half a league, and this gave me ample opportunity for examining thoroughly the devastation and ruin wrought, both by fire and by wind. Alas, much as I had heard on the sad subject, I was still unprepared for the melancholy spectacle that met my gaze.

It is a painful thing to have to speak of scenes which we feel convinced no pen could fully describe nor words do justice to. It was on the eleventh of October, Wednesday afternoon, that I revisited for the first time the site of what had once been the town of Peshtigo. Of the houses, trees, fences that I had looked on three days ago nothing whatever remained, save a few blackened posts still standing, as if to attest the impetuous fury of the fiery element that had thus destroyed all before it. Wherever the foot chanced to fall it rested on ashes. The iron tracks of the railroad had been twisted and curved into all sorts of shapes, whilst the wood which had supported them no longer existed. The trunks of mighty trees had been reduced to mere cinders, the blackened hearts alone remaining. All around these trunks, I perceived a number of holes running downwards deep in the earth. They were the sockets where the roots had lately

been. I plunged my cane into one of them, thinking what must the violence of that fire have been, which ravaged not only the surface of the earth, but penetrated so deeply into its bosom. Then I turned my wondering gaze in the direction where the town had lately stood, but nothing remained to point out its site except the boilers of the two locomotives, the iron of the wagon wheels, and the brick and stonework of the factory. All the rest was a desert the desolation of which was sufficient to draw tears from the eyes of the spectator—a desert recalling a field of battle after a sanguinary conflict. Charred carcasses of horses, cows, oxen, and other animals lay scattered here and there.⁷ The bodies of the human victims—men, women, and children—had been already collected and decently interred—their number being easily ascertained by counting the rows of freshly-made graves. To find the streets was a difficult task, and it was not without considerable trouble that I succeeded at length in ascertaining the site where my house had lately stood. My next care was to look for the spot where I had buried my trunks and other valuables. This I discovered by means of the shovel which I had employed in digging the trench and which I had thrown to a short distance, my task completed. There it still lay, half of the handle burned off, the rest in good order, and I employed it once again to disinter my effects. On moving the sand, a disagreeable odor, somewhat resembling that of brimstone, exhaled from it. My linen appeared at the first glance to be in a state of perfect preservation,

⁷ All other accounts mention that in addition to the ruins noted by Father Pernin, a partially completed dwelling survived the disaster, one side of which had been burned to cinders while the side facing the fire had not even been scorched. A photograph of the house, showing one of the charred beams which was included in the final construction, appeared in the *Milwaukee Journal*, October 8, 1951. An appendix to the *Wisconsin Assembly Journal of Proceedings*, 1873, page 173, lists the following loss in property and livestock: 27 schoolhouses, 9 churches; 959 dwellings; 1,028 barns and stables; 116 horses; 157 working cattle; 266 cows and heifers; 201 sheep; and 306 hogs. The figures undoubtedly are incomplete, since many homesteads were so completely destroyed that no trace of any living thing could be found. The heaviest individual loser was William G. Ogden, the Chicago railroad magnate, who is reputed to have lost three million dollars in the Peshtigo and Chicago fires. Wells, *Fire at Peshtigo*, 142.



Tilton, Great Fires in Wisconsin

Wood engraving of the Peshtigo Schoolhouse prior to the fire.

having kept even its whiteness, with the exception of the pleats, which were somewhat discolored; but on touching it, it fell to pieces as if the substance had been consumed by some slow, peculiar process, or traversed by electricity. Whilst touching on this subject we may add that many felt a shock of earthquake at the moment that everything on the surface of the earth was trembling before the violence of the hurricane. Here again was a total loss. A few calcined bricks, melted crystal, with crosses and crucifixes more or less destroyed, alone pointed out where my house had once been, while the charred remains of my poor dog indicated the site of my bedroom. I followed then the road leading from my house to the river, and which was the one I had taken on the night of the catastrophe. There, the carcasses of animals were more numerous than elsewhere, especially in the neighborhood of the bridge. I saw the remains of my poor horse in the spot where I had last met him, but so disfigured by the fiery death through which he had passed that I had some difficulty in recognizing him.

Those who have a horse, and appreciate the valuable services he renders them, will not feel surprised at my speaking twice of mine. There exists between the horse and his master a species of friendship akin to that which unites two friends, and which in the man frequently survives the death of his four-footed companion.

Whilst wandering among the ruins I met several persons, with some of whom I entered

into conversation. One was a bereaved father seeking his missing children of whom he had as yet learned nothing. "If, at least," he said to me, with a look of indescribable anguish, "I could find their bones, but the wind has swept away whatever the fire spared." Children were seeking for their parents, brothers for their brothers, husbands for their wives, but I saw no women amid this scene of horror which it would have been almost impossible for them to contemplate. The men I met, those sorrowful seekers for the dead, had all suffered more or less in the battle against wind and fire. Some had had a hand burned, others an arm or side; all were clothed in blackened, ragged garments, appearing, each one from his look of woeful sadness and miserable condition, like a ruin among ruins. They pointed out to me the places where they had found such and such individuals: there a mother lay prone on her face, pressing to her bosom the child she had vainly striven to save from the devouring element; here a whole family, father, mother, and children, lying together, blackened and mutilated by the fire fiend. Among the ruins of the boarding house belonging to the Company, more than seventy bodies were found, disfigured to such a fearful extent that it was impossible to tell either their age or sex. Farther on twenty more had been drawn from a well. One of the workmen engaged in the construction of the church was found, knife in hand, with his throat cut, two of his children lying beside him in a similar condition; while his wife lay a little farther off, having evidently been burned to death. The name of this man was Towsley,⁸ and during the whole summer he had worked at the church of Peshtigo. Doubtless seeing his wife fall near him, and becoming convinced of the utter impossibility of escaping a fiery death, his mind became troubled, and he put an end to his own existence and that of his children. There were several other similar cases of suicide arising from the same sad causes.

These heartrending accounts, combined with the fearful desolation that met my gaze

⁸ Although the implication here is that the bodies were found in Peshtigo, they were actually discovered in the Lower Sugar Bush. In the list of recognized bodies printed in the appendix to the *Assembly Journal*, 1873, the father is given as C. R. Towsley.

wherever it turned, froze my veins with horror!

ALAS! that I should have to record an incident such as should never have happened in the midst of that woeful scene! Whilst struggling with the painful impressions produced in my mind by the spectacle on which I looked, my attention was attracted to another quarter by the sound of voices, raised in loud excitement. The cause of the tumult was this: In the midst of the universal consternation pervading all minds, a man was found degraded enough to insult not only the general sorrow and mourning but also death itself. Enslaved by the wretched vice of avarice, he had just been taken in the act of despoiling the bodies of the dead of whatever objects the fire had spared. A jury was formed, his punishment put to the vote, and he was unanimously condemned to be hanged on the spot. But where was a rope to be found? The fire had spared nothing. Somebody proposed substituting for the former an iron chain which had been employed for drawing logs, and one was accordingly brought and placed around the criminal's neck. Execution was difficult under the circumstances; and whilst the preparations dragged slowly on, the miserable man loudly implored mercy. The pity inspired by the mournful surroundings softened at length the hearts of the judges, and, after having made him crave pardon on his knees for the sacrilegious thefts of which he had been guilty, they allowed him to go free. It may have been that they merely intended frightening him.

Weary of noise and tumult, and longing for solitude, I left my previous companions, and followed for a considerable distance that road to Oconto on which I had seen so many vehicles entering, turning their backs on the river to which I was hastening with the tabernacle. I had not gone far before I saw much more than I would have desired to see. All in this line had perished, and perished in masses, for the vehicles were crowded with unfortunates who, flying from death, had met it all the sooner and in its most horrible form. In those places where the flames had enfolded their victims in their fiery clasp, nothing now was to be seen but calcined bones, charred

mortal remains, and the iron circles of the wheels. It was with some difficulty that the human relics could be distinguished from those of the horses. The workmen of the Company were employed in collecting these sad memorials and burying them by the wayside, there to remain till such time as the friends of the dead might wish to reclaim and inter them in a more suitable manner.

I left them at their mournful task, and returned to the site where our church had so lately stood. There also all was in ashes, nothing remaining save the church bell. The latter had been thrown a distance of fifty feet; one half was now lying there intact, while the other part had melted and spread over the sand in silvery leaves. The voice of this bell had been the last sound heard in the midst of the hurricane. Its lugubrious note yet seems at times to strike on my ear, reminding me of the horrors of which it was a forerunner.

The graveyard lay close to the church, and I entered and waited there; for I expected momentarily the arrival of a funeral. It was that of a young man who had died the evening previous, in consequence of the terrible burns he had received. Never was burial service more poverty-stricken nor priest more utterly destitute of all things necessary for the performance of the sad ceremony. Nor church, nor house, nor surplice, stole nor breviary: nothing save prayer and a heartfelt benediction. I had felt this destitution still more keenly on two or three previous occasions when asked by the dying for the sacrament of Extreme Unction, which it was out of my power, alas, to administer to them. I left the graveyard with a heavy heart, and turned my steps in the direction of the river, which I had to cross in order to seek for my tabernacle with whose ultimate fate I was unacquainted. A bright ray of consolation awaited me and seldom was consolation more needed.

I crossed the river on the half-charred beams of the bridge which had been joined together so as to offer a means of passage, though a very perilous one, to those who chose to trust themselves to it. I had barely reached the other side when one of my parishioners hastened to meet me, joyfully exclaiming: "Father, do you know what has happened to your tabernacle?"

"No, what is it?"

"Come quickly then, and see. Oh! Father, it is a great miracle!"

I hurried with him to that part of the river into which I had pushed as far as possible my wagon containing the tabernacle. This wagon had been blown over on its side by the storm; whilst the tabernacle itself had been caught up by the wind and cast on one of the logs floating on the water. Everything in the immediate vicinity of this spot had been blackened or charred by the flames; logs, trunks, boxes, nothing had escaped, yet, strange to say, there rose the tabernacle, intact in its snowy whiteness, presenting a wonderful contrast to the grimy blackness of the surrounding objects. I left it in the spot where it had thus been thrown by the tempest for two days, so as to give all an opportunity of seeing it. Numbers came, though of course in that time of horror and desolation there were many too deeply engrossed with their own private griefs to pay attention to aught else. The Catholics generally regarded the fact as a miracle, and it was spoken of near and far, attracting great attention.

Alas! Nothing is more evanescent than the salutary impressions produced on the mind of man by divine blessings or punishments. Time and the preoccupations of life efface even the very remembrance of them. How few there are among the rare survivors of the fire that swept Peshtigo from the face of the earth who still see the power of God in the calamity that then overwhelmed them as well as in the preservation of the tabernacle, events which at the time of their occurrence made so deep an impression on their minds.

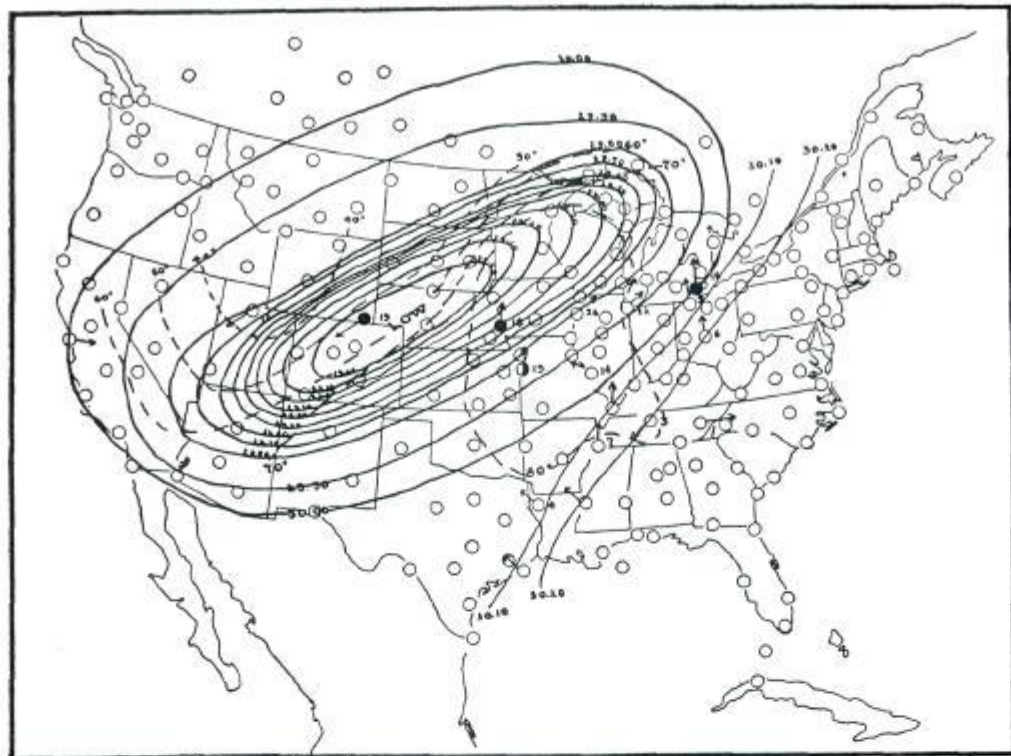
When the duties which had detained me three days amid these mournful scenes were completed, I took the tabernacle from the place which it had occupied of late and sent it on to Marinette where I intended soon saying mass. When the right time arrived, I forcibly opened the tiny door. There—circumstance as wonderful as the preservation of the tabernacle in the midst of the conflagration—I found the consecrated Host intact in the monstrance while the violent concussions the ciborium must have undergone had not caused it even to open. Water had not penetrated within, and the flames had respected the interior as well as exterior, even to the silky tissue lining the sides. All was in a state of perfect preservation!

These sacred objects, though possessing in reality but little intrinsic value, are nevertheless priceless in my eyes. I prize them as most precious relics, and never look at or touch them without feeling penetrated with sentiments of love and veneration such as no other holy vessels, however rich and beautiful, could awake within me. In the little chapel at Marinette, which replaces the church burned there more than two years ago, the same tabernacle is on the altar and contains the same monstrance and ciborium which were so wonderfully preserved from the flames, and, daily, during the holy sacrifice, I use them with a species of religious triumph as trophies of God's exceeding mercy snatched so marvelously from destruction.

I must beg my readers to return with me for a little while to the banks of Peshtigo River—but not to linger there long. Before removing the tabernacle I was busily occupied three days and two nights, now in seeking for the dead, then in taking up from the water various objects which I had thrown by armfuls, at the moment of leaving my house, into the wagon and which had been overturned with it into the river. The most precious of all these was the chalice, which I was fortunate enough to find, together with the paten. My search was greatly facilitated by the opening of the dam and letting out of the waters which were here fifteen or twenty feet in depth. This step was necessary for the finding of the corpses of those persons who, either seized by cramps, or drawn in by the current, had been drowned during the night of the hurricane.

For the space of these three days our only habitation was the tent, the shelter of which had been so arbitrarily refused me the preceding Monday. It covered us during our meals, which we took standing and as best we could, and during the night protected the slumbers of those who could sleep, a thing I found impossible. Our beds were made on a most economical plan—the river sand formed our substitute for mattresses, and a single blanket constituted our covering.

During this period I first learned the fate of the city of Chicago. A physician, come from Fond du Lac to attend to the sick and burned, brought a newspaper with him, and in it we read of the terrible ravages wrought by fire,



Society's Map Collections

This U.S. Weather Bureau map, prepared from reports made by U.S. Army Signal Service observers at 5:35 P.M. Central Standard time, October 8, 1871, shows the course of the cyclonic storm that prevailed on the day of the Chicago and Peshtigo fires.

on the same night, and, strange to say, about the same hour, not only at Peshtigo but in many other places and above all at Chicago. This great conflagration at Chicago proclaimed to the world by the myriad voices of journal and telegraph, created far and wide an immense outburst of compassion in favor of the unfortunate city, diverting entirely the general attention from the far more appalling calamities of which we had been the hapless victims.

ON THE AFTERNOON of Friday, the thirteenth, I had about finished my labors on the desolate banks of Peshtigo River. The corpses found had all been decently interred, and the sick and maimed carried to different places of safety. Exhausted with fatigue and privation, I felt I could not bear up much longer, and accordingly took place in a wagon that had brought us supplies, and was now returning to Oconto in which latter town I had friends who were awaiting my arrival with friendly impatience. I enjoyed two days of the rest at the residence of Father Vermore [A. Vermore], the excellent parish priest of the French church. Monday following I left for Green Bay to visit his Lordship, Bishop Joseph Melcher, dead, alas, even now while I write these lines.

As often happens in such cases, the most contradictory rumors had been circulated with regard to myself. Some declared that I had been burned in the church whither I had gone to pray a moment previous to the outburst of the storm, others asserted that I had met a fiery death in my own abode, whilst many were equally positive that I had perished in the river.

On seeing me the Bishop, who had naturally been rendered anxious by these contradictory reports, eagerly exclaimed: Oh! at last! I have been so troubled about you! Why did you not write?" "My Lord, I could not," was my reply, "I had neither pen, ink, nor paper, nothing but river water."

He generously offered me every thing I required, either from his library or wardrobe, but I declined the kind offer, as there were still a number of my parishioners on the river Menominee and it was for them to help, not him. He then wished to appoint me to another parish, declaring that I merited repose after all I had endured, and that a farther sojourn among my people, poor and decimated in number, would be only a continuation of suffering and hard toil. Remembering, however, that my parishioners would thus be left without a priest at a time when the ministrations of one

would be doubly necessary to them, recalling, also, how much better it was that their poverty and privations should be shared by one who knew and loved them, I solicited and obtained permission to remain among my flock. Soon, however, the sufferings I had endured began to tell on my constitution; and to such an extent that, having been invited by the Rev. Mr. [P.] Crud, parish priest of Green Bay, to preach on All Saints, he was told by Bishop Melcher he must not count on me as my brain was seriously injured by the fiery ordeal through which I had passed. I cannot well say whether this was really the case. I know that I was terribly feeble, and hoping that a few months' repose might restore my health, I resolved to travel, determined to make the trip conducive at the same time to the welfare of my impoverished parishes. My first intention was to visit Louisiana returning by the East, but I was destined soon to learn that my strength was unequal to the task. Arrived at St. Louis, I was attacked by a fever that kept me confined to the bed each day for three or four hours, and which made sad inroads on the small stock of health left me. Accordingly I went no farther. The kind people of St. Louis showed me a great deal of sympathy, and I made friends among them whom I can never forget, and whom meeting with once more would be a source of great pleasure. I will not mention their names here, but they are written on my heart in ineffaceable characters. I can do nothing myself to prove my gratitude, but I will whisper their names to our most powerful and most clement Lady of Lourdes, in her church of Marinette, and she will atone for my incapacity.

Having mentioned the claims of the inhabitants of St. Louis on my gratitude, it would be unjust on my part to pass in silence over those of my own parishioners and friends in Wisconsin, who spontaneously offered me help in the first moments of distress. Ah, they are not forgotten! Very pleasant is it to recall these warm expressions of sympathy, springing directly from the heart. Amongst many similar traits, well do I remember the words of a friend in Oconto who, wishing me to accept decent garments to replace those which I had brought back from the conflagration exclaimed on my persistent refusal, "I insist, for well I know that, if I happened to be in

your place, you would equally desire to render me a similar service."

IT MAY BE as well to record here some of the extraordinary phenomena and peculiar characteristics of the strange fire that wrought so much desolation, though I was not personally a witness to them all. I was too near the inner portion of the circle to be able to see much of what was passing on the outside. It is not he who is in the middle of the combat that has the best view of the battle and its details, but rather the man who contemplates it from some elevated point overlooking the plain.

Whole forests of huge maples, deeply and strongly rooted in the soil, were torn up, twisted and broken, as if they had been willow wands. A tree standing upright here or there was an exception to an almost general rule. There lay those children of the forest, heaped up one over the other in all imaginable positions, their branches reduced to cinders, and their trunks calcined and blackened. Many asseverated that they had seen large wooden houses torn from their foundations and caught up like straws by two opposing currents of air which raised them till they came in contact with the stream of fire. They then burst into flames, and, exposed thus to the fury of two fierce elements, wind and fire, were torn to pieces and reduced to ashes almost simultaneously.

Still, the swiftness with which this hurricane, seemingly composed of wind and fire together, advanced, was in no degree proportioned to its terrible force. By computing the length of time that elapsed between the rising of the tempest in the southwest, and its subsiding in the northeast, it will be easily seen that the rate of motion did not exceed two leagues an hour. The hurricane moved in a circle, advancing slowly, as if to give time to prepare for its coming.

Many circumstances tended to prove that the intensity of the heat produced by the fire was in some places extreme, nay unheard of. I have already mentioned that the flames pursued the roots of the trees into the very depths of the earth, consuming them to the last inch. I plunged my cane down into these cavities, and convinced myself that nothing had stayed the course of combustion save the utter want of anything to feed on. Hogsheads of nails

were found entirely melted though lying outside the direct path of the flames. Immense numbers of fish of all sizes died, and the morning after the storm the river was covered with them. It would be impossible to decide what was the cause of their death. It may have been owing to the intensity of the heat, the want of air necessary to respiration—the air being violently sucked in by the current tending upwards to that fierce focus of flame—or they may have been killed by some poisonous gas.

It is more than probable that for a moment the air was impregnated with an inflammable gas most destructive to human life. I have already mentioned the tiny globules of fire flying about my house at the moment I quitted it. Whilst on my way to the river, I met now and then gusts of an air utterly unfit for respiration, and was obliged on these occasions to throw myself on the ground to regain my breath, unless already prostrated involuntarily by the violence of the wind. Whilst standing in the river I had noticed, as I have already related, on casting my eye upwards, a sea of flame, as it were, the immense waves of which were in a state of violent commotion, rolling tumultuously one over the other, and all at a prodigious height in the sky, and, consequently, far from any combustible material. How can this phenomenon be explained without admitting the supposition that immense quantities of gas were accumulated in the air?⁹

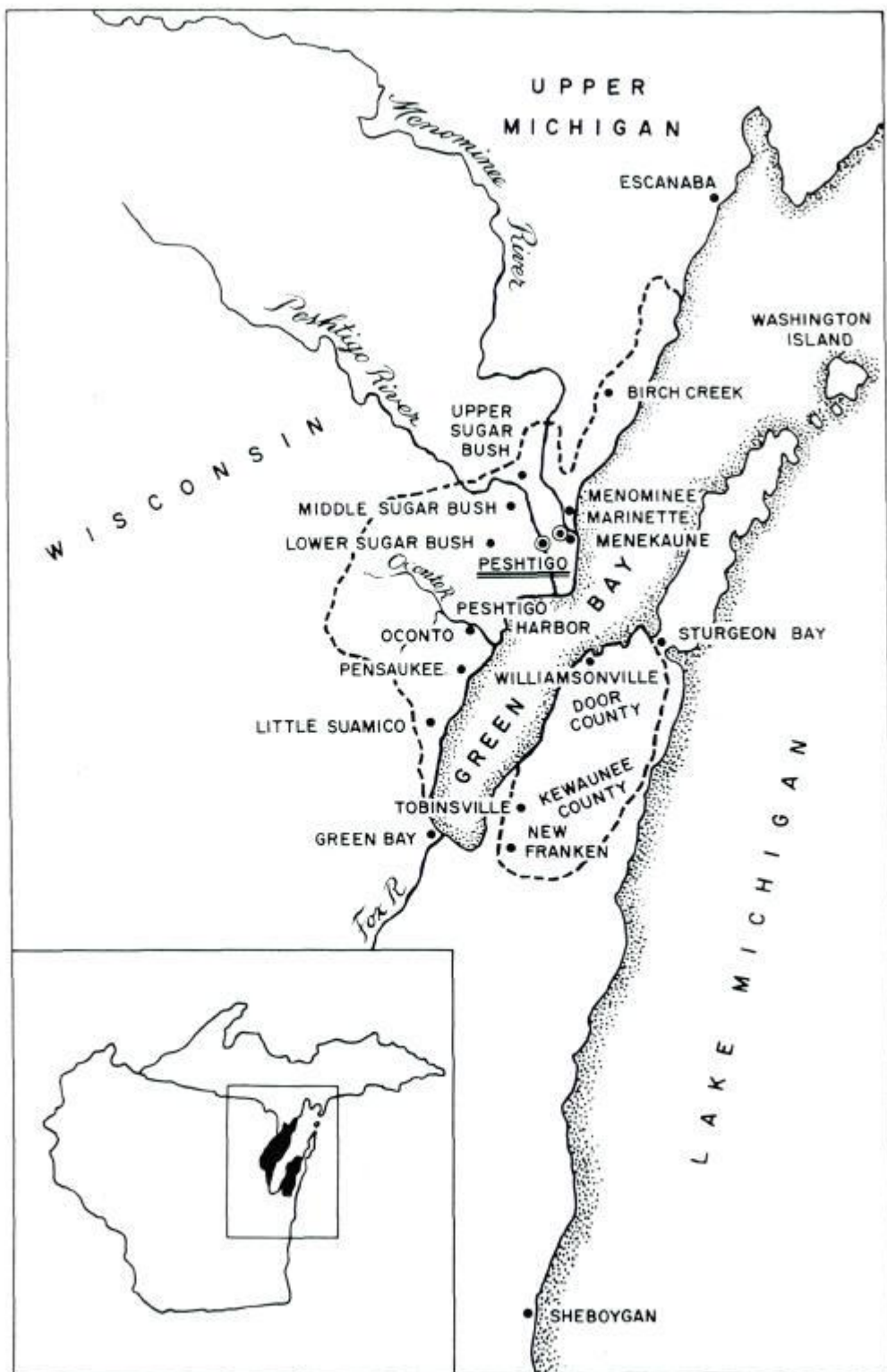
Strange to say there were many corpses found, bearing about them no traces of scars or burns, and yet in the pockets of their habiliments, equally uninjured, watches, cents, and other articles in metal were discovered completely melted. How was it also that many escaped with their lives here and there on the cleared land as well as in the woods? The problem is a difficult one to solve. The tempest did not rage in all parts with equal fury, but escape from its power was a mere affair of chance. None could boast of having displayed more presence of mind than others. Generally speaking, those who happened to be in low lying lands, especially close to excavations or even freshly ploughed earth with which they could cover themselves, as the Indians do, succeeded in saving their lives. Most frequently the torrent of fire passed at a certain height from the earth, touching only the most elevated

portions. Thus no one could meet it standing erect without paying the penalty of almost instantaneous death.

When the hurricane burst upon us, many, surprised and terrified, ran out to see what was the matter. A number of these persons assert that they then witnessed a phenomenon which may be classed with the marvelous. They saw a large black object, resembling a balloon, which object revolved in the air with great rapidity, advancing above the summits of the trees towards a house which it seemed to single out for destruction. Barely had it touched the latter when the balloon burst with a loud report, like that of a bombshell, and, at the same moment, rivulets of fire streamed out in all directions. With the rapidity of thought, the house thus chosen was enveloped in flames within and without, so that the persons inside had no time for escape.

It is somewhat difficult to calculate the extent of territory overrun by the fiery scourge, on account of the irregularity of the course followed by the latter. Still, without exaggera-

⁹ In his report to Governor C. C. Washburn, Captain A. J. Langworthy, chairman of the Green Bay Relief Committee stoutly upheld the theory that inflammable gas, particularly marsh gas from peat swamps which in the preceding weeks had often burned to a depth of three feet, played a major role in increasing the fire's intensity. He enclosed in his report a statement from Increase A. Lapham supporting the view that "carburetted hydrogen" produced great masses of combustible gas resembling balls of fire which would explode on contact with oxygen. Langworthy also included a letter from C. F. Chandler of the Columbia College School of Mines in New York flatly denying that combustible gases could be produced in the atmosphere. As a final clincher, Langworthy included depositions from Luther B. Noyes, Marinette judge and editor, and from a noted chemist on the faculty of the U.S. Naval Academy, both upholding the gas theory. In 1927 Joseph Schafer attempted a scientific explanation for the great fires of 1871, but it remained for Robert Wells, using research reports furnished by the U.S. Forest Service to supply the most intelligible explanation for the origin and nature of the fire. Conceding that marsh gas may have played a minor role, Wells concludes that the convection column—a whirling chimney of superheated air generated by the fire—suddenly broke through the blanket of heavier, smoke-laden air into the colder air above, thus creating a huge updraft which led to the fire tornado, the whirlwinds, and the curious phenomena reported by survivors. See appendix to the *Assembly Journal*, 1873; Joseph Schafer, "Great Fires of Seventy-One," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 11:96-106 (September, 1927); and Wells, *Fire at Peshtigo*, 199-214.



Courtesy Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Map adapted from Tilton's Great Fires in Wisconsin, and used in Robert Wells' Fire at Peshtigo to illustrate the burnt district in Wisconsin and Michigan. The dotted lines indicate the approximate extent of the devastation, as do the blackened areas in the insert.

tion, the surface thus ravaged, extending from the southwest to the northeast of Peshtigo, may be set down as not far from fifteen to twenty leagues in length by five or six in width. The number of deaths in Peshtigo, including the farmers dwelling in the environs, was not less than one thousand—that is to say, about half of the population. More than eight hundred known individuals had disappeared; but there were crowds of strangers, many of whom had arrived that very morning, whose names had not been registered, and whose number will ever remain unknown.

Among those who escaped from the awful scourge, many have since died, owing to the hardships then endured, whilst others are dropping off day by day. A physician belonging to Green Bay has predicted that before ten years all the unfortunate survivors of that terrible catastrophe will have paid the debt of nature, victims of the irreparable injury inflicted on their constitutions by smoke, air, water, and fire.¹⁰ If the prediction continues to be as faithfully realized in the future as it has been in the past, my turn will also come.

May the construction of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, at Marinette, be then completed, so that some grateful hearts may pray there for the repose of my soul.

Epilogue

FROM PESHTIGO the fire roared toward Marinette, destroying Father Pernin's other church and its newly built presbytery, but leaving the village mainly intact. Then the fire split into two forks, the one on the right going on to consume the village of Menekaunee, the one on the left jumping the Menomonee River to rav-

age the Birch Creek settlement in Michigan, killing eight men, two women, and twelve children.

Some sources have estimated the number of dead as 1,200. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* gives a total of 1,152, evidently using the figure arrived at by Stewart Holbrook in his *Burning An Empire*. However, the true total will never be known, since whole farmsteads were erased, leaving no trace, and no one knows how many itinerant workers died in Peshtigo's company boarding house or in its two churches to which many fled in panic, or in isolated logging camps deep in the surrounding woods. People simply became piles of ashes or calcinated bones, identifiable only if a buckle, a ring, a shawl pin or some other familiar object survived the incredible heat. A painstaking, three-month investigation by Colonel J. H. Leavenworth, as printed in the *Assembly Journal* for 1873, lists the names of only 383 identified dead: 77 in Peshtigo, 12 in Lincoln, 50 in Brussels, 3 in Nasawanpee, and 22 in Birch Creek, Michigan. The heaviest losses were in the Sugar Bushes, where no convenient river furnished a refuge from the flames. Here a total of 241 identified bodies were found, of whom 123 were those of children. How many died subsequently or were maimed for life is not known. At any rate, according to Leavenworth's report, a year after the event many survivors remained partially or permanently demented as a result of their ordeal.

News of the disaster did not immediately reach the outside world. Isaac Stephenson, the Marinette lumber baron, on learning of Peshtigo's fate, had an emissary sent to Green Bay—the nearest place where the telegraph lines had not been burned out—to transmit a message to Governor Lucius Fairchild. The message did not reach Madison until the morning of the 10th. Fairchild and all state officials were in Chicago, whence they had gone with carloads of supplies to aid the stricken city. A capitol clerk took the telegram to Mrs. Fairchild, who immediately swung into action. For a day this remarkable woman, then less than twenty-four, was to all intents and purposes the governor of Wisconsin. As her daughter, Mrs. Mary Fairchild Morris, recalled in a letter to Joseph Schafer in May, 1927, her mother commanded a boxcar loaded with supplies destined

¹⁰ Although many survivors subsequently died of their dreadful burns and others were disabled for life, the unidentified physician's prediction fortunately did not hold true. When ceremonies were held on the eightieth anniversary of the fire in October, 1951, nineteen survivors were present to witness the unveiling of the first official state marker, erected in the refurbished Fire Cemetery. The oldest survivor was 96. As late as 1958, Fay S. Dooley, curator of Old Wade House and a former Peshtigo resident, was able to identify six survivors still living then. *Milwaukee Journal*, October 8, 1951; *Peshtigo Times*, October 4, 1951; William F. Steuber, Jr., "The Problem at Peshtigo," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 43:13-15 (Autumn, 1958).



Society's Iconographic Collections

Ten years after its destruction, as this 1891 bird's-eye view demonstrates, Peshtigo had risen phoenix-like from its ashes. Indicated by the circled numbers are the rebuilt Catholic Church (1), the restored Peshtigo Company Sawmill (2), and the new Congregational Church (below 3).

for Chicago, ordered railroad officials to give it priority over all other traffic, and then discovering that the car contained food and clothing but no defenses against the October cold, rallied Madison women to supply blankets to stuff into the already loaded car. After the car was dispatched, Mrs. Fairchild issued a public appeal for contributions of money, clothing, bedding, and supplies, with the result that a second boxcar left Madison that night.

Immediately on receiving the news of the Peshtigo disaster, relief committees were organized in Green Bay, Oconto, and Marinette; emergency hospitals were set up for the injured, and lodgings were found for the homeless survivors. Eventually the Green Bay Relief Committee was augmented by a second in Milwaukee, and hardly a community in the state failed to establish some kind of relief organization. Following Governor Fairchild's broadcast appeal for aid, contributions began to pour in from all over the state, the nation, and several foreign countries. In all, \$166,789 was collected in cash donations, while the United States government contributed from army supplies 4,000 woolen blankets, 1,500 pairs of trousers and overcoats, 100 wagons with sets of harness,

and 200,000 rations of hard bread, beans, bacon, dried beef, pork, sugar, rice, coffee and the like.

Slowly the devastated area began to recover. Schoolhouses and bridges were rebuilt, roads were repaired. Despite his substantial losses, William G. Ogden ordered that his woodenware company be rebuilt; others followed suit, and Peshtigo struggled back to life. In January, 1873, Governor Cadwallader C. Washburn, who had succeeded Lucius Fairchild, reported in the *Assembly Journal*: "In the month of July I visited the burnt district on the peninsula, as well as on the west side of Green Bay. I found the devastation produced by the fire fiend such as is impossible for the mind to comprehend without the aid of the eye. I was pleased to find that a majority of the survivors had returned to their clearings; many had raised fair crops, and were hopeful of the future. . . ."

Part of the process of reconstruction included the rebuilding of Father Pernin's church, Our Lady of Lourdes. It still stands today on Main Street in Marinette as a part of Central Catholic High School, its sanctuary serving as a chapel and the remainder of the building as a rehearsal hall.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

By WILLIAM CONVERSE HAYGOOD and JOAN SEVERA

IN 1967, in an effort to establish a central reservoir of information concerning the present location of items formerly used to furnish and decorate the White House, the Smithsonian Institution's Division of Political History sent a letter of inquiry to museums and historical agencies throughout the country. Margaret Brown Klapthor, writer of the letter and the Division's associate curator, whose current interests include the china services used by successive administrations,¹ was pleasantly surprised at the response from the Society's Museum. It was somewhat unexpected that a Midwestern museum would be able to claim even a small selection of Presidential china among its holdings.

The collection in question, from the china services of five Presidents of the United States, was donated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. Actually, it represents only one of the many tangible evidences of T. R.'s long association with the Society, beginning with a letter written on February 11, 1886, to Lyman Copeland Draper, the Society's first Secretary.

¹ See Margaret Brown Klapthor, *White House China of the Lincoln Administration in the Museum of History and Technology* (United States Museum Bulletin 250, Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology Paper 62, Smithsonian Press, Washington, 1967). In a letter dated November 24, 1970, Mrs. Klapthor indicates that her completed history of presidential china will be published in its entirety, rather than as separates.

Twenty-eight, and already the author of three books written in rapid succession,² Roosevelt was at the time in the process of writing the first volume of his *Winning of the West* (a book, incidentally, which Draper's biographer asserts that Draper should have written himself).³ In the letter, Roosevelt made a respectful request to obtain information from the renowned assemblage of frontier and pioneer materials which Draper had spent the major part of his earlier career collecting and the latter part battling to withhold from his fellow historians:

I am now engaged, on a work in reference to the extension of our boundaries to the southwest from the day when Boone crossed the Alleghenies to the days of the Alamo and San Jacinto.

I know of no one whose researches into, and collections of material for, our early western history have been so extensive as your own; so I venture to ask you if you can give me any information how I can get at what I want. I wish particularly to get hold of any original or unpublished mss; such as the diaries or letters of the first settlers, who crossed the mountains, and

² *The Naval War of 1812; or The History of the United States Navy During the Last War With Great Britain* (1882); *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885); and *Thomas Hart Benton* (1886).

³ William B. Hesseltine, *Pioneer's Mission: The Story of Lyman Copeland Draper* (Madison, 1954), 289.



Four pieces in the Society's collection of presidential china, presented by Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. The plain gold-bordered dinner plate at the left is from the State china used during the Cleveland Administration. The two floral pieces (top and bottom center) are from the Grant setting, while the purple-bordered plate at the right was used during Lincoln's presidency.

their records of the early Indian wars, the attempt at founding the State of Franklin [Tennessee] etc.

Do you know if there are any records in existence in ms. or otherwise, of Sevier, Shelby, Robertson, and the other early Tennesseans? or of Clark, Harrod and their companions?

Ramsey in his *Annals of Tennessee* speaks of the Sevier mss; I wonder how they could be got at. Extracts from Clark's journal have been published; but I do not know if all of it has been, nor, if it has not been, where it could be seen.

Trusting you will not think I have trespassed too far on your good nature, I am Most Truly Yours . . .⁴

Unfortunately Draper was not addicted to preserving copies of his own correspondence, so we have no way of knowing what his response was, although the fact that he did

furnish Roosevelt some information, however grudgingly, is attested to by a letter written by the latter on February 21, 1886, thanking Draper for "your courtesy in answering." In it, the future President tactfully reproached Draper for not making his papers more widely available. "I am very glad," he wrote, "that you intend to publish at least some of your papers. Only the other day two or three of us who were talking together were regretting that you had not made public more of your researches. I shall await with interest your life of Clarke . . ."⁵

⁴ Roosevelt to Draper, February 12, 1886, in the Draper Collection, Archives-Manuscript Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Unless otherwise noted, all letters cited hereafter are in the Society's collections.

⁵ Roosevelt to Draper, February 21, 1886, in the Draper Collection.

Roosevelt's next letter, dated March 5, 1888, while still respectful, reflects Draper's evident reluctance to co-operate in the young man's quest for source material:

Pardon my writing you again. I appreciate thoroughly the impropriety of asking any one for information which by any possibility he may himself use; but it occurred to me that possibly you might have some matter you did not intend to do anything with that would nevertheless be of direct application to my subject . . .

For instance, if you have any material concerning Boone that you are not going to make use of—or anything about Crockett—it would be invaluable to me. Indeed, any material, of no service to yourself, relating to that period (1775-1815), would probably help me over the dark points.

When is your Clarke⁶ coming out? I am very anxious to see it. I think it is *the* biography that we most need. No one has done justice to Clarke; at least no one in the east.

I trust you to understand that I do not wish for an instant to trouble you by asking for anything you are unwilling to give; but I thought that in your remarkably complete collection of mss. you might have material for which you yourself had no use.⁶

The following month Roosevelt wrote a polite note to thank Draper for a reprint of his article, "Autographs of Signers of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution" which appeared in volume 10 of the Society's *Collections*.⁷ This volume, the last to be edited by Draper, had been scheduled to appear in 1886, but owing to unavoidable delays (meaning Draper's dilatoriness and legislative parsimony) did not appear until 1888. By then Reuben Gold Thwaites had succeeded to the secretaryship of the Society, Draper having retired in January, 1887, although he continued to work on his various, never-finished projects and to use the Society's letterhead for his correspondence.

Finally, in 1889, the year in which President Benjamin Harrison made Roosevelt a civil service commissioner as a reward for his political support, the first two volumes of *The Winning of the West* appeared, and the mutual antagonism that he and Draper had hidden beneath a surface of bland courtesy came into the open.

In his prefatory acknowledgments Roosevelt mentioned neither Draper nor the Society—a slight which must have rankled. Although William Best Hesseltine asserts that Draper had little regard for "the shallow glibness of young Theodore Roosevelt," the direct evidence is lacking,⁸ since there are no replies in Draper's papers to the two letters on which the assertion is based. On June 28, 1889, a Philadelphia friend wrote: ". . . Yesterday in New York in Putnam's, I looked through Mr. Roosevelt's new attempt at rivaling you, so I directed that a copy be addressed to you, which please accept with my regards." Another friend, writing on the stationery of a Denver Hotel, wrote, "It is a great pity these 'dabsters' should trifle with the subjects of which they must have the most limited data, and so deaden interest in works of real merit such as you propose, founded on so much more."⁹

More direct evidence of Draper's disapproval can be inferred from the Society's copies of the first two volumes of the original edition of *The Winning of the West*, both heavily annotated by Draper himself. Writing in angry red ink, he notes inaccuracies in names (e.g., George for John Bradford), lapses in grammar, contradictions in facts, uncritical use of unreliable sources, and the ignoring of important ones. Whole pages are studded with question marks; entire passages are heavily underlined for reasons not now known. Roosevelt's spelling of Boone as Boon seemed especially to irk him,¹⁰ and on the end papers

⁶ Hesseltine, *Pioneer's Mission*, 289.

⁷ Letters from George P. Smith, June 28, 1889, and Posey S. Wilson, September 3, 1889, in the Draper Collection.

¹⁰ Interestingly, in his letters Roosevelt invariably refers to George Rogers Clark as "Clarke," but spelled Boone's name correctly. Although volumes I and II of *The Winning of the West* omit the final e in Boone, it appears in volumes III and IV, while Clark's name is correctly given throughout.

⁸ Roosevelt to Draper, March 5, 1888, in Elting E. Morison (ed.), *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, 1951), I:138-139.

⁹ Roosevelt to Draper, April 26, 1889, in the Draper Collection; State Historical Society of Wisconsin *Collections* (Madison, 1888), X:373-447.

of each volume are lengthy and sometimes illegible comments of a derogatory nature, most of them concerning the fact that Roosevelt had totally ignored Draper's major contribution to history, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes*, published in 1881.

Whether Draper communicated his reactions to Roosevelt is not a matter of record, but in a letter to Francis Parkman who had praised his work (probably because it was dedicated to him) Roosevelt concluded with the remark, "Mr. Draper unfortunately thinks one bit of old ms. just exactly as good as any other."¹¹ Writing to William Frederick Poole, librarian of the Newberry Library and founder of *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature* (the forerunner of the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*), Roosevelt shed all pretense of respect for Draper's scholarship: "Such a book as Draper's *King's Mountain* for instance is not a history at all; it is a mass of matter, some of great historical importance, most of it useless, much untrustworthy, out of which a history can be built by somebody else."¹²

Roosevelt's final letter to Draper, dated May 23, 1890, indicates something of the nature of the meagre information he had received from Madison:

My Dear Sir:

A man named Butterfield has recently published a life of Simon Girty. In it he makes some criticisms upon my *Winning of the West*, mostly of a perfectly silly character. He however entirely discredits the story of Girty's speech at Boonsborough and the answer made by young Aaron Reynolds. In giving account of this I stated that I put it in because you told me that the incidents had been related to you by several old men who had themselves been in the fort. Butterfield asserts that you were evidently entirely mistaken, or that the old men did not know what they were talking about. I would be much obliged therefore if you would give me some data to go by so



Society's Iconographic Collections

The James R. Stuart oil portrait of Lyman Copeland Draper.

that if necessary I may answer him. I mean the names of your informants as well as what they said, and the sources of knowledge they had as taken down in your notes at the time. Any letter you write me I will quote entire, giving you the full credit for it, or make any other use of it that you wish.

When is your life of George Rogers Clarke coming out? It is a greatly needed work, and I hope we shall soon see it."¹³

Roosevelt must have known perfectly well who the "man named Butterfield" was since he had cited Butterfield's book on Colonel William Crawford's Sandusky campaign in *The Winning of the West*—inaccurately, as Draper took pains to note in his annotated copy. Consul Willshire Butterfield, a native of New York, had succeeded William Croffutt as Draper's literary assistant. Croffutt and Draper had collaborated amicably to produce a volume called *The Helping Hand*. Published in 1870, it was a curious conglomeration of

¹¹ Roosevelt to Parkman, July 13, 1889, in Morison (ed.), *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, I:172-173.

¹² Roosevelt to Poole, November 8, 1889, in George Burwell Utley, "Theodore Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West*: Some Unpublished Letters," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 30:502-503 (March, 1944).

¹³ The incident referred to occurred not at Boonesborough but at Bryan's Station, Kentucky, a stockaded fort then under siege by Indians led by Simon Girty, an interpreter for the British and an ally of the Indians, known as the "Great Renegade" or the "White Savage." In an attempt to force the fort to surrender, Girty issued an ultimatum which was supposedly hotly and profanely rejected by young Aaron Reynolds, one of the fort's defenders. Roosevelt's letter to Draper is in the Draper Collection.

household hints, farming advice, and miscellaneous information which proved something of a financial disaster. It was Croffutt who later observed that Draper, whom he liked and admired, was "a gleaner rather than a compiler."¹⁴ From the start, Butterfield and Draper were incompatible, partly because, unlike Croffutt, Butterfield did not share Draper's enthusiasm for spiritualism, and partly because the precise and disciplined Butterfield deplored Draper's procrastinating and seemingly disorganized approach to his work. Their association degenerated into a bitterness which led Draper to stipulate in his will that his books and papers, which he had willed to the Society, were not to be made available to Butterfield under any condition. Nevertheless, the two did manage to produce together "Border Forays and Adventures," which, failing to find a publisher, reposes today in the Society's Archives-Manuscripts Division, together with Draper's partially completed biographies of Daniel Boone and George Rogers Clark.¹⁵

Roosevelt had reason to be nettled, for even the most thick-skinned author would have protested Butterfield's merciless attack. In his life of Girty,¹⁶ published in 1890 after he had parted company with Draper and had removed himself to Omaha, Butterfield, in thirty-four different citations, not only dwelt on Roosevelt's numerous inaccuracies but also demolished his historiographic credentials. Nor did he neglect to disparage Draper. In a footnote (which led to Roosevelt's plea for substantiation) he accused Draper of having confused misty reminiscence with actual fact. There is no record that Draper, who died in August of the following year, sent a reply.

IN THE FIVE YEARS in which he had been executive officer of the Society, Thwaites had quietly begun the groundwork which was not only to make him one of the country's most distinguished librarians and historical

editors, but also, in the words of Frederick Jackson Turner, "the builder of a new type of state historical society."¹⁷

A former schoolteacher and managing editor of the Madison *Wisconsin State Journal*, Thwaites set out to create a new image of the Society as a vehicle not only for scholarship but also for public service. His journalist's sense of public relations must have led him, the year following Draper's death, to invite Roosevelt—whose efforts to eliminate all traces of the spoils system from the Civil Service Commission had brought him national publicity—to deliver the Society's biennial address on January 24, 1893, in Madison. Although no copy of Thwaites' letter exists, it seems evident from Roosevelt's reply that Thwaites had cannily included an invitation to inspect the now accessible Draper Collection. From Washington Roosevelt replied:

All Right, I'll speak on the 24th, and for not more than 60 minutes; and I will remember your suggestions. How would the "Northwest in History," or the "Old Northwest," do? I'll try to shape the title better and will send you a manuscript a week in advance.

I have to be in Chicago Friday the 20th, and it would be useless to return here for so short a time; so I shall go on to Madison about the 22nd, and if you will permit me, will spend Tuesday looking at your collections—especially at such of the Draper manuscripts as you may be willing to let me see, as I am greatly interested in them, in connection with my "Winning of the West." As I thus may stay on two or three days, I think I had better go to a hotel, and not impose too much on your kindness; what is the best hotel? and how long does it take to reach Madison from Chicago?¹⁸

Evidently in a subsequent letter Thwaites assured Roosevelt of complete access to the Draper Collection, for in early January the latter wrote suggesting two alternate titles for his address, and ending, "I am very sincerely obliged to you for your courtesy about the

¹⁴ Hesselstine, *Pioneer's Mission*, 254.

¹⁵ For an account of Draper's relations with Butterfield, see Hesselstine, *Pioneer's Mission*, 258-260.

¹⁶ *History of the Girtys, Being a Concise Account of the Girty Brothers—Thomas, Simon, James, and George. . . .* (Cincinnati, 1890).

¹⁷ Quoted in Clifford L. Lord, "Reuben Gold Thwaites," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 47:3-11 (Autumn, 1963).

¹⁸ Roosevelt to Thwaites, December 30, 1892, in the Reuben Gold Thwaites Papers.



Society's Iconographic Collections

Reuben Gold Thwaites at his desk in the Society's Rooms in the Capitol; from a photograph taken by Mrs. Thwaites about 1897.

Draper MSS. Are you not going to have them published?"¹⁹

Roosevelt spent two days in Madison, during which time he was widely entertained. Ex-Congressman Robert M. La Follette, Sr., and his wife gave a reception for him on the evening of January 23 at their West Wilson Street home. The newspapers reported that about 800 of "some of the best people of the city" were in attendance from eight until about eleven p.m. Belle Case La Follette had first met Roosevelt at a New Year's reception in Washington at the home of ex-Governor Jerry Rusk, then Secretary of the newly established Department of Agriculture. While she was attempting to serve Roosevelt a cup of coffee, one of his emphatic gestures inadvertently dashed the contents over the front of her white dress, greatly to Roosevelt's embarrassment. The next day he sent flowers and a note of apology, and later he once said, "I blush when I wake up in the dark and think about spilling that coffee over Mrs. La Follette's dress." Doubtless they laughed about the incident together

at the party in Madison, which Mrs. La Follette described as being in the nature of an open house and "largely attended. Politicians, reformers, scholars, big-game hunters, and people generally were much interested in meeting him. He was 'delighted' to meet them. In introducing the callers, Bob gave the cue as to who they were, and Roosevelt came back with just the right response. The occasion was a success, as were all of the social events of his visit."²⁰

The next day, both the *Madison Times* and the *Wisconsin State Journal*, in addition to detailed accounts of the past evening's festivities and the magnetism of the guest of honor, carried the following notice: "Theodore Roosevelt, the well known political reformer, will give an address in the Assembly Chamber this evening under the auspices of the State Historical Society, his subject being The Northwest in the Nation. The lecture will begin at eight o'clock. The simple announcement of a lecture by this eminent gentleman will be sufficient to fill the chamber to overflowing."

Nearly identical articles appeared in both papers the day following the lecture, containing resumés of its content and references to Roosevelt's humor. According to the reports, the speaker followed his introduction by saying that he was commonly presented in western states as "that well-known writer from the east" and in eastern states "as that well-known cow-puncher from the west." After Roosevelt's address, the University Glee Club sang, and there was a reception "in the Historical Society's Rooms," at that time three floors in the south transverse wing of the capitol.²¹

Belle Case La Follette was not overly impressed by Roosevelt's presentation. "I think," she later wrote, "that he had come in advance intending to do some work on his speech, but he was absorbed in having a good time and his address gave the impression of lack of preparation." She also noted that Roosevelt made it a point before leaving Madison to make a formal call on the La Follettes and later wrote a cordial note of thanks for their hospitality. Although La Follette and Roosevelt were to

¹⁹ Roosevelt to Thwaites, January 5, 1893, in the Thwaites Papers.

²⁰ Belle Case and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette* (New York, 1953), I:86, 105.

²¹ *Madison Times* and *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 25, 1893.

become future political enemies, Mrs. La Follette noted that "in these earlier years Bob entertained a genuine feeling of regard and good fellowship for Roosevelt; but it was never in the nature of a close personal understanding, such as he felt for McKinley."²²

When Roosevelt found the time to look at the Draper Collection is a question, although later evidence indicates that he did. But to the Society his appearance under its auspices was worth far more than the \$100 fee which he received. Thwaites also arranged to have Roosevelt made one of the eleven honorary vice-presidents of the Society, a post he held until the entire category was abolished in 1897. Thwaites also printed Roosevelt's speech in full.²³

IN NOVEMBER, 1894, in order to gain legislative support for a new fireproof building, Thwaites solicited endorsements of the Society from such luminaries as Woodrow Wilson, James B. Angell, Melvil Dewey, Edward Eggleston, William Rainey Harper, Albert Bushnell Hart, John G. Nicolay, Justin Winsor, and Theodore Roosevelt. Among the twenty-eight responses received and printed, Roosevelt's was one of the most fulsome in its praise: "I can conscientiously say that I don't think that in the entire country there is a single historical society which has done better work for American history than yours, and but one or two can rank with it at all. Every American scholar, and in particular every American historian, is under a debt to your Society, and a debt to the State of Wisconsin for having kept it up. I earnestly hope that you will get your new building."²⁴

Both the Society and the University libraries were outmoded and overcrowded, and acting together the Board of Regents and the Society's Board of Curators petitioned the legislature for a new building on a site whose "title shall rest in the name of the Society as the trustee of the state," and which would house not only the Society's and University's libraries but

also that of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters.²⁵ The legislatures of 1895, 1897, and 1899 appropriated in all \$580,000, and the building, which took five years to construct, was formally dedicated on October 19, 1900.²⁶ It was a fortunate move, since in 1904 a disastrous fire swept the second capitol building, destroying many irreplaceable state records, among which would have undoubtedly been the Society's library and collections.

Meanwhile, Frederick Jackson Turner had delivered his provocative "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" at the July, 1893, meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago, and later redelivered it before the Society's forty-first annual meeting in Madison, December 14, 1893. It was duly printed in the *Proceedings* of that year, as well as in the annual report of the AHA.²⁷ On reading it, Roosevelt wrote Turner a congratulatory note, in which he said, ". . . I intend to make use of it in writing the third volume of my 'Winning of the West'; of course making full acknowledgement. I think you have struck some first class ideas, and have put into definite shape a good deal of thought which has been floating around rather loosely."²⁸

In 1894, the third volume of *The Winning of the West* appeared, and Roosevelt handsomely acknowledged in the preface his debt to Thwaites when he wrote: "The material used herein is that mentioned in the preface to the first volume, save that I have drawn freely on the Draper Manuscripts in the Library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison. For the privilege of examining these valuable manuscripts I am indebted to the

²² Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *The State Historical Society of Wisconsin . . . Memorial Volume* (Madison, 1901), 103.

²³ Vernon Carstensen, "A Building Is Achieved," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 39:68-72 (Winter, 1955-1956); Thwaites (ed.), *The State Historical Society*, 103.

²⁴ *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington, 1894), 199-277; *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1894), 79-122.

²⁵ Quoted in Wilbur R. Jacobs, *The Historical World of Frederick Jackson Turner: With Selections from His Correspondence* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1968), 4.

²² Belle Case and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette*, 1:105-106.

²³ *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1893), 92-99.

²⁴ *Ibid.* (Madison, 1895), 83.

generous courtesy of the State Librarian [*sic*], Mr. Reuben Gold Thwaites; I take this opportunity of extending him my hearty thanks." Nor did he neglect his promise to Turner, for after paraphrasing Turner's frontier thesis—and as some critics have suggested, failing to grasp its essential point²⁹—he refers in a footnote (p. 208) to *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* as "A suggestive pamphlet, published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin."

In the *Nation* for March 23, 1895, Turner submitted an unsigned review of Roosevelt's first three volumes of *The Winning of the West*, which, while generally favorable, deplored the fact that only in the third volume had the author drawn on the Draper Manuscripts. This elicited an immediate response from Roosevelt, who in a letter addressed "to the Author of the Review of the *Winning of the West*," made obvious the frustrations he had suffered at Draper's hands. "I was not able to use the Draper manuscripts," he wrote, "for the excellent reason that the good old Dr. Draper was then alive and would not let me nor anyone else look at anything he had gathered. He was immensely put out when I was able to get copies of his originals, or originals of his copies, having the real antiquarian desire to hoard his information."³⁰

Turner wrote back, thus initiating a correspondence which both men evidently found stimulating. In a long letter dated April 10, 1895, Roosevelt indicated his method of utilizing from a distance the materials he had examined in Madison. "By the way," he wrote, "I must get my friend Thwaites to tell me somebody in Madison by whom I can have your Fallon papers copied, or at least as many of them as are necessary."³¹ However, when the fourth and final volume of *The Winning of the West* appeared in 1896, Turner's critique in the *American Historical Review* for October, 1896, was less favorable than had been his review in the *Nation*. Roosevelt, he noted, "frequently fails to work his subject out into its

less obvious relations; and the marks of actual haste are plain in careless proof-reading and citations." Turner would have been less than human if he had not been a bit annoyed at being cited in a footnote on page 220 as "Frederick A. [*sic*] Turner of the University of Michigan [*sic*]." He also raised several questions of interpretation which led to further correspondence, with Roosevelt ultimately conceding Turner's points. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Turner's frontier thesis had a profound impact on Roosevelt, and it might well be that his personal interpretation of it may have led him to see the whole world as a new American frontier, and accounted for much of his eventual expansionist political philosophy.

In his April 10, letter to Turner, Roosevelt had expressed the hope that following the issuance of the fourth volume of *The Winning of the West* he could write another which would carry the story through the Mexican War. "... but whether I can ever do this or not," he concluded, "I don't know. I certainly can't until I get entirely out of political life; a move I am strongly tempted to take."

However, a two-year stint as president of the New York Board of Police Commissioners, followed by McKinley's grudging appointment to the Assistant-Secretaryship of the Navy sent him back into the political arena; and his exploits as Colonel of the Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War—colorfully publicized by Richard Harding Davis and himself³²—assured that he would remain there. Riding the wave of national adulation accorded a war hero, and affectionately known to the public as Teddy (a nickname he cordially despised), he won election to the governorship of New York in 1899, much to the dismayed surprise of Thomas Collier Platt, Republican boss of New York. Uneasy over Roosevelt's independence in office and his reform proposals, Platt and his cohorts, despite McKinley's lack of enthusiasm, succeeded in getting him out of New York and onto the ticket as Vice President at the June, 1900, Republican Convention in

²⁹ See Frederick Logan Paxson's sketch of Roosevelt in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 136.

³⁰ Roosevelt to Turner, April 2, 1895 in Morison (ed.), *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, I:438.

³¹ *Ibid.*, I:440-441.

³² Davis reported the Spanish-American War for both New York and London newspapers and wrote *The Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns* (1898). Roosevelt's own *The Rough Riders* (1899), together with Davis's accounts, helped to create an aura of glory.

Philadelphia. Roosevelt, dubious about accepting a post which might lead only to a political dead-end, cast the only dissenting vote.

Nevertheless, dubiety did not prevent him from becoming McKinley's leg-man and conducting a vigorous canvass in the President's behalf. On September 10, 1900, he was once again in Wisconsin, this time to address a heavily attended Republican rally at La Crosse, in which he and La Follette rode together in the lead carriage in the parade preceding the evening's oratory.³³ After his election to the Vice Presidency, Roosevelt's fears of having gotten himself into a cul-de-sac increased. Then, on the afternoon of September 6, 1900, while attending a public reception in Buffalo, McKinley was shot by Leon F. Czolgosz and died six days later. On September 14, shortly before he turned forty-three, Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as the twenty-sixth President of the United States.

His prediction to Turner had come true: history itself prevented him from writing history. His projected continuation of *The Winning of the West* was abandoned, and his letters to his friend Thwaites ceased. Not until 1902 did Thwaites attempt to renew his contact with Roosevelt, this time as a seeker rather than a giver of favors. In June of that year he had received the following letter from Byron Andrews of *The National Tribune: The Favorite Fireside Weekly of the Nation*:

No doubt you are aware that each administration, from perhaps Madison's time, has had a set of characteristic china, specially made for the mistress of the White House, but being paid for out of public funds, it being left by the retiring President as an heirloom for the successor.

It has been the custom occasionally to sell at public auction certain portions of this china along with other junk, and of course it brought tremendous price as souvenirs. The pieces that were sold were those which were slightly marred or chipped. President Roosevelt has decided to stop all this junk business and also the miscellaneous distribution of old White House china among

personal friends of the employees of the establishment.

I am now getting to the meat of the matter.

If you will write to President Roosevelt soon, and say that you understand that Mrs. Roosevelt has recently presented a collection of examples of White House china to The Albany Historical and Art Association, and that the State Historical Society of Wisconsin would be under lasting obligation, etc., if a similar collection should be presented to it for its new historical museum, I think you will get it.³⁴

Thwaites lost no time in following up this lead. He had his assistant, Annie A. Nunns, write directly to the President, and on July 1 came this reply from William Loeb, Jr., Roosevelt's assistant secretary:

The President has referred your letter of the 25th ultimo to Mrs. Roosevelt, who has taken pleasure in ordering a collection of examples of White House china sent to the Wisconsin State Historical Society. She prefers that the china be sent to historical societies, where the public can see it, rather than have it fall into the hands of individuals.

We may not be able to forward the plates for some time. On account of the alterations going on in the White House, everything has been put in storage.³⁵

Loeb wrote again on February 11, 1903, to say that the collection was being shipped that day by Adams Express. When it arrived it was found to consist of seven plates from the services of Presidents Lincoln, Hayes, Grant, Cleveland, and Harrison.³⁶

Thwaites, meanwhile, had been making good use of the Draper Collection. In November of 1902 he sent Roosevelt—and received an acknowledgment from a White House

³³ Andrews to Thwaites, June 18, 1902, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, General Correspondence, April–November, 1902. Andrews, author of *The Facts About the Candidate* (Chicago, 1904), appears to have been part of Roosevelt's circle of acquaintances, and may have thus picked up this bit of inside information.

³⁴ Loeb to Mr. [sic] A. A. Nunns, July 1, 1902, in SHSW General Correspondence Series 27, Box 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Series 27, Box 7.

³⁶ Belle Case and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette*, I:135.



Additional pieces from the Society's collection of White House china. The plate at the lower left is from the setting made for Benjamin Harrison; the other two were made for the Hayes Administration. The entire collection is currently on display in the office of the Lieutenant Governor in the capitol.

secretary—a copy of his newly published *Daniel Boone*, dedicated to Draper and based largely on Draper's notes and chapters from his unfinished biography of Boone.³⁷ On June 11, 1903, Thwaites again wrote the White House:

My dear Mr. President:

Possibly you may be aware, through literary announcements, that I have been editing for publication in six volumes by Dodd, Mead & Co., the original journals of Lewis and Clark. These have never hitherto been published exactly as written—for Nicholas Biddle's edition (1814) was, as of course you know, but a paraphrase, though exceedingly well done; and Coue's edition is an annotated reprint of Biddle,

with a good many foot-note citations from the originals—though these are, in the giving, editorially "improved." It fell to my lot to be invited to edit the originals themselves, directly from the manuscripts preserved in the American Philosophical Society's rooms in Philadelphia where Jefferson placed them in 1818. This I have done, *verbatim et literatim*, with foot-notes, introduction, and other editorial accompaniments. Fortunately, I have been able to add to the Lewis and Clark journals those of Sergeant Charles Floyd (in the possession of the Wisconsin Historical Society) and of Private William Whitehouse (the existence of the latter unknown till a few months ago). Publication will commence this coming fall, and the publishers propose to give it the very best of dress.

I wish very much to dedicate this publi-

³⁷ Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Daniel Boone* (D. Appleton, New York, 1902).

cation to you—for three good reasons: (1) We have long been personal friends, as well as fellow laborers in the same field of history; (2) your “Winning of the West” especially associates you with this earliest path-breaking to the Pacific; and (3) it would seem eminently appropriate that the first complete publication of the results of the expedition which President Jefferson fathered a century ago, should be inscribed to the chief executive in this centennial year—he who has but recently dedicated the exposition which celebrates this exploration, and whose own recent journey to occidental tidewater has of itself proved a veritable “Winning of the West.”

Had there been an opportunity for five minutes’ private conversation with you, when you were in Madison on your recent trip, I should have proffered my request in person, and this letter has awaited your return from the West. As I expect to send the first volume to the printers within a fortnight, may I venture to beg an early reply?³⁸

THE REFERENCE in the last paragraph is to the two-hour stopover Roosevelt made in Madison on April 3, 1903, during the course of a Western tour. Met at the station by an official delegation at nine A.M., he rode in a carriage with Governor La Follette to the capitol where he made two speeches, one before a joint session of the legislature and one from a platform erected at the east entrance of the capitol, where he was introduced to the large crowd by the governor. Belle Case La Follette later observed that the President “made no reference to politics in either of his Madison speeches, although a word on the primary bill and the fulfillment of platform pledges would have had great influence at this time.”³⁹ Roosevelt also was given a reception in the governor’s office which Thwaites attended. According to a reporter: “When Mr. Reuben Thwaites approached the President, the Executive grasped his hand enthusiastically



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Roosevelt speaking beneath a canopy raised at the east entrance of the capitol, April 3, 1903.

and said: ‘Mr. Thwaites I am overjoyed to see you. I wish I had time to talk over a million literary things with you . . .’⁴⁰

Roosevelt was not tardy in giving his permission for the Lewis and Clark journals to be dedicated to him. A typewritten letter on White House stationery, dated June 13, 1903, states: “I have your letter of the 11th instant. Few things could please me more than to have you dedicate these volumes to me. I accept with the greatest pleasure, and I am very much touched by your kindness.”⁴¹

The Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, expanded to eight volumes, appeared in 1904-1905. A letter from William Loeb, Jr., evidently in reply to a letter from Thwaites, says: “We are looking forward to the receipt of the volumes of Original Journals of Lewis and Clark to which you refer.”⁴² On July 30, 1906, Roosevelt dictated two letters to Thwaites from his home at Oyster Bay, both on White House stationery and both typed in the peculiar shade of blue which characterized most of his correspondence. The first reads: “That magnificent edition of Lewis and Clark

³⁸ Thwaites to Roosevelt, June 11, 1903, in the Thwaites Papers.

³⁹ Belle Case and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette*, I:160.

⁴⁰ *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 3, 1903.

⁴¹ Roosevelt to Thwaites, June 13, 1903, in the Thwaites Papers.

⁴² Loeb to Thwaites, October 2, 1905, in the Thwaites Papers.

is now in my library, where I placed it yesterday, and I must write you a line to say what an admirable bit of work it is and how deeply I appreciate your having dedicated it to me. It was the kind of compliment that meant much to me" The second note, obviously in reply to Thwaites' request for a reworking or enlargement of Roosevelt's flattering 1894 estimate of the Society, says: "I am afraid I shall have to ask you simply to reprint what I have already said. If I should now issue a new note I am afraid I might get into difficulties with some other institutions who are continually asking me to do similar things."⁴³

The last letter in the Society's collection is a note of thanks to Milo M. Quaife, who succeeded Thwaites as the Society's superintendent on the latter's death in 1913, and who had evidently furnished Roosevelt some source material in which he was interested. It is dated October 11, 1918, and is written on a letterhead which reads, "The Kansas City Star, Office of Theodore Roosevelt, New York Office."⁴⁴ Out of office in 1909, Roosevelt, finding that the income from his comfortable estate was insufficient to maintain his standard of living, had turned to writing articles for *Outlook*, the *Metropolitan Magazine*, and the *Kansas City Star*.

Roosevelt's last visit to Madison was on April 15, 1911, and was again a stopover following a speaking tour of the West. Once again he addressed a joint session of the legislature, and also gave a speech at the University Gymnasium. In both, his praise of La Follette and the reforms initiated under his leadership led La Follette and his supporters falsely to assume that Roosevelt would support La Follette as a presidential candidate in the election of 1912. Instead, he himself entered the race as the Progressive candidate, and split the Republican vote between William Howard Taft and himself sufficiently to insure the election of Woodrow Wilson. It was an action La Follette never forgot nor forgave.⁴⁵

Whether Roosevelt saw Thwaites during his 1911 visit is not known, but in Thwaites' papers there is one of Roosevelt's personal calling cards with the handwritten notation: "For Mr. Reuben G. Thwaites, very sorry to have missed you. I shall call again."

On the subject of the disposal of damaged White House china, Archie Butt, Roosevelt's personal aide, furnishes an interesting sidelight in a letter written on December 11, 1908:

I had a rather interesting time the last few days looking over the china at the White House with a view to destroying all that is chipped or broken in any way. Mrs. Roosevelt does not want it sold at auction, for she thinks this method cheapens the White House In former years it was regarded as the property of the mistress of the White House, who would give it away as she desired, but Mrs. R. thinks that it should never be given away—and it should not, in my opinion, for it is government property just the same as the furniture. If it were sold by private bids it would create an awful howl in the press should it become known, and so I am convinced all concerned that it should be broken up and scattered in the river, which will be done ⁴⁶

The importance of the Society's small collection of presidential china is growing. The examples of White House china scattered in various institutions around the country are few and will remain few. According to legislation passed by Congress in 1961, all decorative objects of historic interest are now permanently owned by the White House and may be exhibited only in the Smithsonian Institution.⁴⁷ All damaged pieces are reduced to powder.

Thanks to Byron Andrews' inside information, Thwaites' prompt action, and Roosevelt's personal regard for the institution with which he maintained ties for most of his adult life, the Society was able to acquire this unique material before its circulation was prohibited.

⁴³ Roosevelt to Thwaites, July 30, 1906, in the Thwaites Papers.

⁴⁴ Roosevelt to Quaife, October 11, 1918, in SHSW General Correspondence, 1918.

⁴⁵ Belle Case and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette*, 1:327-328.

⁴⁶ Lawrence F. Abbott (ed.), *The Letters of Archie Butt: Personal Aide to President Roosevelt* (New York, 1924), 237.

⁴⁷ Public Law 87-286, 87th Congress, S. 2422, September 22, 1961.

A TIME OF CHANGE: GREEN BAY, 1815-1834

By JOHN D. HAEGER

I have no very agreeable news to relate to you my Dear Friend but if it is not tiring your patience too much I will give you a little detail of my situation in life. I will commence in saying that the first Year after the War was the last year I saved myself for every year since I have been loosing money & not a little in that cursed Indian trade that I have always persisted and do Still persist to continue which will soon put me a beggar (but you may well say or ask the question why do you still continue since you find it a loosing business.) I will say I do not know what to do else as I am not capable of doing or following any other kind of business. I always lived in hopes but I am at last beginning to despair the old times is no more that pleasant reign is over & never to return any more. . . .¹

THIS CRY of anguish represented the feelings of many French and British inhabitants of Green Bay in the period between 1815 and 1834. These people were the original settlers of the Old Northwest who, for over a hundred years, had traded with the Indians and had constructed a simple, communal society which was disturbed only by the periodic contests of France, England, and the United States for control of the territory. The War of 1812 was the final struggle marking the emergence of American control over the Old Northwest and the decline of the simple frontier life known by hundreds of residents at small outposts such as Green Bay. In the process of Americanization, which took place from 1815 to 1834, the French and British citizens of Green Bay found their lives severely altered. By 1834, when farmers

began to arrive, the fur traders were a broken and destitute people, a casualty of America's frontier expansion. What happened at Green Bay probably occurred time and again as America moved swiftly across the continent.²

In the decades immediately preceding 1815, Green Bay had been a wilderness village with the fur trade as the inhabitants' principal occupation. The outpost was theoretically under British control, with settlers of British and French lineage. The foremost residents of the community included Jacques Porlier, a native of Montreal, who settled at the Bay in 1791, and John Lawe, who first traded at Mackinac and then moved to the Bay in 1797. Equally prominent were the Grignon brothers, especially

¹ John Lawe to Mrs. Hamilton, September 12, 1824, in "The Fur Trade in Wisconsin, 1812-1825," *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1911), XX: 351. Hereinafter cited as *WHC*. Original punctuation and spelling have been retained in all quotations.

² The contention that the Green Bay fur traders were exploited by American society during the frontier period is an attempt to answer the call of Wilbur Jacobs for a new look at the fur-trade period in American history. See Wilbur Jacobs, "Frontiersmen, Fur Traders, and Other Varmints, An Ecological Appraisal of the Frontier in American History," in the *American Historical Association Newsletter*, VIII: 5-11 (November, 1970).

Augustin and Pierre. The traders received manufactured products from British firms in Canada to exchange for the animal pelts collected by the Indians. There were few pressures concerning profit and loss and minimal conflicts between Indian and white civilizations as the two races freely intermarried and shared the economic benefits of the trade.³ But the War of 1812 abruptly changed this idyllic life style. During the war, the Green Bay residents had assisted the British cause against the Americans.⁴ When the war ended and the British supposedly relinquished all territorial and trade rights in the Old Northwest, the Green Bay traders suddenly faced the eagerness of the Americans to bring the area under their control.

As officials of the American government set to work to devise military and Indian policies for the Old Northwest which would affect the society at Green Bay, many officials harbored hostile feelings toward the fur traders and Indians because of their complicity with the British during the war. General Jacob Brown, commander of the Northern Division of Military Departments recommended, for example, the wholesale exclusion of all British nationals from the territory.⁵ Governor Ninian Edwards of the Illinois Territory specifically cited Green Bay as a British stronghold and recommended the forceful removal of all traders and their replacement by American citizens.⁶ Governor Lewis Cass of the Michigan Territory also perceived a British threat and urged the establishment of military posts at Green Bay, Chicago,



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John Lawe, who settled in Green Bay in 1797.

and at the Grand Portage, thereby guarding the major communication arteries and preventing British infiltration into the Old Northwest.⁷ The War Department reacted to these suggestions and established a military post at Green Bay in 1816, convinced that the traders required careful supervision.

Military control, however, was not alone sufficient to guarantee frontier security, so the government also established an Indian agency at Green Bay under Colonel John Bowyer. The Secretary of War indicated that one of the reasons for this action was "that the menaces of the Indians throughout the Indian countries require immediate attention, and among the means which are proper for restoring harmony, preserving peace, and defeating the arts employed by intrusive traders to generate Indian hostilities, it is recommended that there be immediately established an Indian agency on the Fox River in the neighborhood of Green Bay. . . ."⁸

Colonel Bowyer's major responsibility, there-

³ Information on the early history of Green Bay can be found in the following: William Francis Roney, *Wisconsin: A Story of Progress* (New York, 1940), 56; Augustin Grignon, "Seventy-Two Years' Recollections of Wisconsin," *WHC*, III: 242-245; Louise P. Kellogg, *The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison, 1935). Studies which highlight the differences between Green Bay before and after 1815 include Albert G. Ellis, "Fifty-Four Years' Recollections of Men and Events in Wisconsin," *WHC*, VIII: 217-221; Henry S. Baird, "Recollections of the Early History of Northern Wisconsin," *WHC*, IV: 205. An excellent secondary source is Alice Smith, *James Duane Doty, Frontier Promoter* (Madison, 1954), 63-66.

⁴ Reginald Horsman, "Wisconsin and the War of 1812," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XLVI: 3-15 (Autumn, 1962).

⁵ Henry P. Beers, *The Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1935), 35n.

⁶ Governor Ninian Edwards to James Monroe, March 3, 1816, *WHC*, XIX: 401-404.

⁷ Lewis Cass to Alexander J. Dallas, Acting Secretary of War, June 20, 1815, *ibid.*, 378.

⁸ Report of the Secretary of War to the President, June 19, 1815, Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received and Sent, I: 72-74. These records are a National Archives microfilm publication. Hereinafter cited as MSIA.

fore, was to curtail British influence among the Indians, an influence which the British had built up through years of involvement in the Indian trade. The Indian agent's lever of control was government legislation requiring all fur traders to possess a license to trade.⁹ Colonel Bowyer naturally would have had a tendency to withhold licenses from many Green Bay traders. After all, Bowyer needed only to remember their obvious British sympathies during the war.

Matthew Irwin joined this group of American officials in 1816 to direct the Green Bay factory, a system which had been established in 1795 to regulate the Indian trade. It was administered by the Superintendent of the Indian Trade who was responsible to the Secretary of War. The government provided the factory with money and supplies to exchange for the Indians' furs. Its most distinguished aim was humanitarian, for the factory hoped to eliminate the impoverishment which the Indians suffered in dealing with the supposedly unscrupulous fur traders.¹⁰ When Matthew Irwin arrived at Green Bay, the unscrupulous fur traders were by definition former British subjects, such as John Lawe, Jacques Porlier, and the Grignon brothers.

The fur traders' dilemma was only beginning, for at the very time that the government formulated policies in Washington, John Astor was building an even graver threat to the traders' economic and social lives. For several years before the War of 1812, Astor had worked to wrest control of the fur trade in the Old Northwest from British firms. In 1811 he entered into a partnership with a British company for the trade of the Old Northwest. With the conclusion of the war and the expulsion of British interests from the Old Northwest, the territory seemed open to wholesale exploitation by Astor's American Fur Company. Beginning in 1815, he organized the administrative details of his

firm, hiring two dynamic frontiersmen, Ramsay Crooks and Robert Stuart, to oversee the defining of trade territories, to recruit traders, and to stifle any opposition. A few years later the American Fur Company moved into the Green Bay region as a step toward securing a monopoly of the fur trade in the Old Northwest. The fur traders would soon learn that the methods of the American Fur Company bore little relation to the fur trade they had previously known.¹¹

IN 1816 the future looked dim indeed for Green Bay's residents. They faced the outright hostility of the military, the Indian agent, and the government factor, because government officials were convinced that the traders' British sympathies represented a threat to frontier security. The traders, moreover, were subjected to a government policy which was not only inconsistent but also possessed of startling contradictions which only added to the problems which they now faced.

A good example of the inconsistency of government policy and its effect on the traders was evident in the government's regulations for licensing fur traders. Especially sensitive to British influence in the Old Northwest, Congress passed a law in April, 1816, which stipulated that "Licenses to trade with the Indians within the territorial boundaries of the United States shall not be granted to any but citizens of the United States, unless by the express direction of the President of the United States, and upon such terms and conditions as the public interest in his opinion requires."¹²

The law was designed to encourage and to aid American business in capturing the fur trade from British firms. The national govern-

⁹ The Indian agent's role on the frontier has been discussed by Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834* (Cambridge, 1962), 52-57.

¹⁰ Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 84-93; Ora B. Peake, *A History of the United States Indian Factory System, 1795-1822* (Denver, 1954).

¹¹ A description of John Astor's tactics in organizing the American Fur Company can be found in Paul Phillips, *The Fur Trade* (Norman, 1961), II: 136-140; David Lavender, "Some American Characteristics of the American Fur Company," in Russell W. Fridley, ed., *Aspects of the Fur Trade* (St. Paul, 1967), 30-39. The literature on the fur trade is voluminous. Important works include: David Lavender, *The Fists in the Wilderness* (Garden City, New York, 1964); Kenneth W. Porter, *John Jacob Astor: Business Man* (2 vols., New York, 1931).

¹² U.S., *Statutes at Large*, III: 331-333.

ment never intended that all foreigners should be excluded, since there simply were not enough American citizens to carry on the business. Thus, the President delegated his authority to the Governor of the Michigan Territory and the Indian agents at Mackinac, Green Bay, and Chicago to exercise discretion in determining who and how many British traders should be licensed.¹³

The Green Bay traders must have waited anxiously on the local Indian agent for an interpretation of the law. Their answer came quickly. In June, 1816, Major William Puthuff, Indian agent at Mackinac, seized the furs of Jacques Porlier and Louis Grignon, claiming that they were trading without licenses. In certain respects, Puthuff had the strictest type of legality on his side. Porlier and Grignon were shipping furs to Drummond Island, center of British control on America's northwest boundary, and most likely were trading without licenses.¹⁴ On the other hand, Puthuff exercised little human understanding. The Green Bay traders had no other outlet for their furs in 1816 since American businesses, especially the American Fur Company, had not, as yet, entered the Green Bay region. The charge that the traders did not possess trading licenses was also harsh, because the law was passed in April, 1816, and the furs were seized in June, 1816. Considering the frontier's primitive communications system, this was not sufficient time to conform to the law's requirements. Major Puthuff was overzealous, perhaps because to him, as to many frontier officials schooled by a bloody war, Green Bay represented the very seat of British influence and therefore required a strict application of government legislation.¹⁵

Major Puthuff's rigorous enforcement of the law was soon tempered by instructions from Lewis Cass, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, who pointed out that American businesses required the employment of some British traders.¹⁶ In April and May, 1817, the traders suddenly found that trading licenses from Colonel Bowyer were available for the asking. Louis Grignon appeared somewhat confused by this change in policy: "... In regard to the License After all the Trouble possible Col Bowyer has decided to give them to every person who asks for them. He has said Openly that if the matter was at his option no one should obtain a license, but Mr. Rouse, Mr. Lawe, & Mr. James. . . . I believe there will be as many traders as Houses."¹⁷

Louis Grignon's confusion was understandable. It stemmed from the fact that government policy attempted to balance a number of conflicting interests, and its policies shifted from satisfaction of one interest and then the other. The War Department, which was responsible for the military posts, the Indian agencies, the factory system, and the enforcement of legislation relating to these institutions, had one primary goal—the elimination of British influence in American territory. A principal method of accomplishing this objective was to exclude the British from involvement in the fur trade. But the War Department also realized that if American businesses, especially the American Fur Company, captured the trade, then the British would lose their hold over the Indians. Thus, the War Department might at one point outlaw all foreign participation in the trade and then later permit a few exceptions, if such exceptions benefited the American fur trade companies in defeating their British competitors.¹⁸

Not all government officials agreed with this policy. Thomas L. McKenney, director of the

¹³ William H. Crawford to Governor Cass and Indian Agents, May 10, 1816, *WHC*, XIX: 406. A discussion of the law of 1816 is contained in Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 77-80.

¹⁴ Pierre Rocheblave to Jacques Porlier, June 20, 1816, *WHC*, XIX: 416; Pierre Rocheblave to Louis Grignon, June 20, 1816, *WHC*, XIX: 417.

¹⁵ Major Puthuff to Governor Cass, May 14, 1816, *WHC*, XIX: 408-409; Major Puthuff to Governor Cass, June 20, 1816, *WHC*, XIX: 423-424. Both letters indicate Puthuff's great fear of the British influence in American territory. Numerous authors have mentioned Puthuff's policy. See Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 78; Lavender, *The Fist in the Wilderness*, 236-245.

¹⁶ Governor Lewis Cass to Major Puthuff, July 20, 1816, *WHC*, XIX: 427-428. Also see Cass to Puthuff, June 19, 1817, in the Lawe Family Papers, Letter Folder II, Chicago Historical Society.

¹⁷ Louis Grignon to M. Dousman, September 14, 1817, *WHC*, XIX: 475-476.

¹⁸ William Crawford to Governor Lewis Cass and Indian Agents, May 10, 1816, *WHC*, XIX: 406; George Graham, Acting Secretary of War, to Governor Cass, May 4, 1817, *WHC*, XIX: 457-458; Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 77.

factory system, and Matthew Irwin, the Green Bay factor, had a common interest with the Indian agents and the military in curtailing the influence of British traders, since they competed with the factory system. Shortly after arriving at Green Bay, for example, Matthew Irwin requested John Bowyer, the Indian agent, to withhold licenses from the traders at Green Bay because "whilst these and other British subjects are suffered to enter and continue in this Country as traders, It will be useless in the Government to continue this factory here; principally from the ascendancy which an interrupted intercourse of many years has enabled them to acquire over the minds of the Indians, supported by extensive family connections with them."¹⁹

Matthew Irwin and Thomas McKenney, however, went one step farther, for they opposed the licensing of all traders, British or American. Their aim was to control the fur trade so that no trader could defraud the Indians. The War Department's policy of encouraging private enterprise through the licensing of traders was directly opposed to its factory system. Major Irwin accurately described these conflicting lines of authority between the Indian agent and the government factor at Green Bay:

There appears a palpable incongruity in the manner of conducting the Indian trade; the factors are sent to supply the wants of the Indians, and the Indian Agents can adopt such measures as to defeat all their plans to that end. It is very certain that the authority vested in them to issue licenses is well calculated to destroy all the benefits that might be expected from the factories. . . .²⁰

The national government's attempt to balance the interests of the American Fur Company, the

factory, the military, and the Indian agencies created a chaotic situation for several years at Green Bay. When the War Department did not stringently enforce the law of 1816 to exclude all foreigners from the fur trade, Thomas McKenney asked government officials for a stricter application of the law. McKenney had received the first accounts of the Green Bay factory which indicated that it had been unable to gain the Indians' business. Major Irwin claimed that the failure of the Green Bay factory was caused by the looseness of government policy which allowed British traders in the territory.²¹ McKenney appealed to higher officials in Washington, first to George Graham, Acting Secretary of War, and then to Henry Southard, chairman of the Select Committee on Indian Affairs. McKenney argued that government policy which allowed private traders in areas supplied by the factories hindered the effectiveness of the factories and permitted the British to maintain their influence with the Indians.²²

McKenney's appeals and a subsequent report of the House Committee on Indian Affairs forced a change in government policy. In January, 1818, War Department orders instructed Indian agents to exclude all foreigners without exception.²³ No sooner had the War Department's orders been issued than the American Fur Company indicated its strong objections to this policy. Two months later the national government changed its policy once again.²⁴ As of April, 1818, the War Department allowed foreigners to participate in the fur trade, but only as employees of an American citizen. This directive at least provided Porlier, Lawe, and the Grignons with the hope of obtaining licenses and pursuing the trade, although they, theoreti-

¹⁹ Major Irwin to Colonel John Bowyer, July 24, 1817, *WHC*, XIX: 470.

²⁰ Major Irwin to Colonel Thomas L. McKenney, September 29, 1817, *WHC*, VII: 274-275. Surprisingly few authors have detailed the confusion in government policy. Theoretically, the factory was to operate in areas where private traders could be or had been excluded. In actual fact, factories at Chicago and Green Bay were in the most competitive locations of the Old Northwest. Government policy was also affected by conflicting lines of authority within the War Department. The Secretary of War was directly responsible for both the factory system and the Indian agents.

²¹ Thomas McKenney to Matthew Irwin, January 6, 1817, *WHC*, XIX: 448; Irwin to McKenney, [1819], *WHC*, VII: 277-278; Irwin to McKenney, March 10, 1817, *WHC*, VII: 270-271.

²² Thomas McKenney to George Graham, Acting Secretary of War, September 30, 1817, *WHC*, XIX: 480-481; McKenney to Henry Southard, January 6, 1818, *WHC*, XX: 12-16. Southard was chairman of the Select Committee on Indian Affairs. On January 22, 1818, he reported a bill to establish additional factories, *WHC*, XX: 12n.

²³ Governor Lewis Cass to John Bowyer, January 22, 1818, *WHC*, XX: 16. Also see Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 79-80.

²⁴ Ramsay Crooks and Robert Stuart to John Astor, January 24, 1818, *WHC*, XX: 18.



The J. Saintain oil portrait of Ramsay Crooks, owned by the Society.

cally, had to proceed to the Indian country under the direction of an American citizen. The local Indian agent, Colonel Bowyer, still possessed the prerogative of excluding any foreigner whom he judged to be dangerous to the United States.²⁵ Considering Bowyer's unfavorable view of the Green Bay traders, his subsequent decision to refuse licenses to the traders came as no surprise to the Green Bay residents.²⁶ The enormous difficulties and constant uncertainties surrounding his attempts to obtain a trading license led Jacques Porlier to comment that

. . . I cannot make out what is going to become of us, abandoned as we are not know-

ing our rights nor where we shall be attacked. In an obscure labyrinth, loaded incessantly with the most atrocious calumnies without means of unmasking them, what are we to do? I would never have believed that among any people it would be a title of reprobation to have been a British subject, to have belonged to a Government which has always seemed to me so kind to foreigners. I begin to perceive the word *liberty* in the language of politics or of the Governments does not mean the same thing as we commonly suppose.²⁷

If the traders became American citizens, however, they could escape the prejudice of American officials and national legislation toward British subjects. But the road leading to citizenship was a long and arduous one. In 1819 the Green Bay traders applied to Colonel Bowyer for American citizenship, a request which Bowyer denied. The acting governor of the Michigan Territory, William Woodbridge, however, granted the citizenship request on the grounds that Porlier and the other traders had resided in the territory since 1796 and fell under the provisions of the Jay Treaty which made citizenship all but automatic.²⁸ Some national and local officials, however, perceived a threat to frontier security from these "dangerous" traders and requested the Attorney General of the United States to review the decision. The Attorney General ruled that the Green Bay traders could not automatically become citizens under the Jay Treaty because recent legislation required prospective citizens to swear an oath before the proper official. On the basis of this technicality, Governor Lewis Cass was forced to revoke the traders' citizenship and trading licenses, which they had just recently secured.²⁹ The action of Cass plunged the traders into

²⁷ Jacques Porlier to Forsyth, Richardson, and Co., (no date, about 1818), *WHC*, XX: 94.

²⁸ Louis Grignon to Governor Cass, August 27, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 120; Adam Stewart to John Bowyer, September 3, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 120-121; Robert Stuart to Governor Cass, November 13, 1819, *WHC*, 135-136.

²⁹ William Wirt, Office of the Attorney General, to John Calhoun, Secretary of War, September 3, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 121-122; John Calhoun to Governor Cass, September 6, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 123; Governor Cass to Indian agents at Michilimackinac, Green Bay, Chicago, Fort Wayne, Piqua, October 11, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 127-128.

²⁵ Governor Lewis Cass to the Indian agents at Chicago and Green Bay, April 23, 1818, *WHC*, XX: 43-46.

²⁶ Jacques Porlier to Forsyth, Richardson and Co., (no date, about 1818), *WHC*, XX: 93-94; John Lawe to Thomas G. Anderson, November 13, 1818, *WHC*, XX: 93. Bowyer clearly indicated his opinion of the Green Bay traders in a letter to Governor Cass, May 16, 1818, *MSIA*, Letters Received and Sent, II: 403-404.

despair, for they had already accepted, on credit, a supply of goods for the trade. Without licenses, they had little hope of obtaining furs to pay their creditors.³⁰ One government official was extremely pleased by this development. Informing Matthew Irwin of the Attorney General's decision, Thomas McKenney's assistant commented, "This will rid you I hope of a number of the greatest enemies to your factory and enable you to carry on a much more advantageous trade in the future with the Indians."³¹

ONE CAN only express bewilderment at the American government's attitude during the licensing and citizenship controversies with the Green Bay traders. There was little doubt that John Lawe, Jacques Porlier, and the other Bay traders conducted business with British companies in the first years after the war, but they had little choice since American firms did not immediately enter the fur trade in the Green Bay area.³² The War Department was also correct in viewing the traders as British sympathizers, but what other attitude could be expected after the war? One fact which the national government never considered was that the traders were simple men, desirous of living free from political entanglements. The almost paranoid fear of the national government that the Green Bay residents would continue to further British interests prevented the formulation of a more reasonable policy which would have incorporated the traders into American society.

Not surprisingly, the traders' correspondence expressed their frustration with the American government. John Lawe lamented, "This is three years . . . since peace has been made and

I have been in Hell ever since, I wish I could sell out and leave this country forever."³³ At one point they seriously considered a move to land in the Red River district made available to them through a Canadian acquaintance, Lord Selkirk. His death, however, forced the traders to make the best of their plight at Green Bay.³⁴

Harassed by the frontier officials, plagued by the competition of the factory system, and beset by the necessity of obtaining licenses and citizenship, the Green Bay fur traders recognized the advantages of employment with the American Fur Company. The first years after the war, they had refused to join the American Fur Company, preferring instead to trade through an old British friend, Jacob Franks, then employed by a Detroit firm, David Stone and Company.³⁵ When they had failed to gain licenses and citizenship in 1818, they turned in desperation to the American Fur Company, hoping that its power would bring a quick resolution of their problems. There was justification for their decision. Since establishing headquarters at Mackinac, Ramsay Crooks and Robert Stuart had slowly fashioned a monopoly in the fur trade. Government policy had facilitated this development. The law of 1816 eliminating all foreigners allowed the American Fur Company to capture many areas previously supplied by the British. When the American Fur Company desired the employment of selected British traders, pressure was exerted on national and local officials to relax the laws. Indian agents, such as Major Puthuff at Mackinac, who opposed the granting of favors to the

³³ John Lawe to Captain Thomas Anderson, November 13, 1818, *WHC*, XX: 90-93.

³⁴ Louis Grignon to Robert Dickson, February 6, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 102-103; Robert Dickson to John Lawe, April 23, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 105-106; Lord Selkirk to Robert Dickson, May 21, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 110-111. Selkirk had been involved in the fur trade in the early nineteenth century and had just received a grant from the Hudson's Bay Company to begin a colony in the Red River district.

³⁵ Lavender, *The Fist in the Wilderness*, 267; Phillips, *The Fur Trade*, II: 372. Both authors believed that the traders' inability to obtain licenses drove them into the arms of the American Fur Company. Phillips claimed that Ramsay Crooks convinced the Secretary of War that the Green Bay traders should not receive licenses in order to destroy David Stone's Company in Detroit.

³⁰ Robert Stuart to Governor Cass, November 13, 1819, and November 21, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 135-137; O. N. Bostwick to John Lawe, September 10, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 125; John Lawe to Captain Thomas Anderson, November 13, 1818, *WHC*, XX: 90-93; Louis Grignon to Robert Dickson, February 6, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 102-103.

³¹ Jeremiah Bronaugh to Matthew Irwin, September 10, 1819, *WHC*, 123-124.

³² In 1816, the American Fur Company attempted to enclose Green Bay within its monopoly, but the traders then refused to join the Company. See the discussion in Lavender, *The Fist in the Wilderness*, 267, 285, 301-302.

American Fur Company, found that the Company's influence superseded his own, even to the point of reversing his decisions or affecting his position. Matthew Irwin, government factor at Green Bay, once described the power of the American Fur Company:

... The agents of Mr. Astor held out an idea that they will ere long, be able to break the factories; and they menace the Indian agents, and others who may interfere with them, with dismission from office, through Mr. Astor. They say that a representation from Messrs. Crooks and Stewart [sic] (Mr. Astor's agents) led to the dismission of the Indian agent at Mackinac, and they also say that the Indian agent here is to be dismissed.³⁶

Once employed by the American Fur Company, the traders benefited from its power. Robert Stuart pledged to aid them in obtaining licenses and citizenship and seemed confident of success when he wrote to Governor Cass explaining the hardships suffered by the traders because of government policy.³⁷ By July, 1820, the members of the Green Bay community had received American citizenship.³⁸

The necessity of working with the American Fur Company was all the more imperative in their struggle with the factory. To the fur traders the factory was a business intending to eliminate their only source of economic livelihood. This attitude was shared by the American Fur Company, for it feared the competition of the factory in the fur trade. Employed now by the American Fur Company, the Green Bay traders had a powerful ally in the fight to end the factory system. Numerous authors have detailed the methods used by the American Fur Company in its struggle with the factory system. In Washington and in the offices of major

territorial officials, Astor, Crooks, and Stuart threatened, cajoled, and lobbied before the government, claiming that the factory was a business competing with private enterprise. In the actual trading territories, the competition was intense for the American Fur Company offered lower prices than the factory, utilized liquor as a means to gain the furs of the Indians, and hired all personnel in a particular area merely to cause a manpower shortage at the factory.³⁹

Granted that all the charges against the American Fur Company were true, it seems of little value to narrate a familiar story, for it only succeeds in hiding the real causes for the factory's failure. The government's inadequately conceived Indian policy, which permitted private traders to flourish in areas supplied by the factories, hindered the success of the factory system. Success for the factory system, moreover, depended upon its ability to obtain the trust and confidence of the Indians. Considering that the traders naturally opposed the system and also held the trust of the Indians stemming from years of intercourse, it was hardly surprising that the Green Bay factory was an unprofitable venture. Only after several years of intense warfare between the traders and the factory did the national government move to adopt a more realistic approach. As early as 1818 Governor Lewis Cass had urged the government to close the factories and to adopt a policy of regulation over private enterprise involved in the trade. John Calhoun as Secretary of War recommended just such a policy, but no action was taken. In 1820 the Reverend Jedidiah Morse suggested that the Indians were not maltreated by the traders. The Indians dealt with the traders, Morse observed,

³⁶ Matthew Irwin to Thomas McKenney, 1819, *WHC*, VII: 278; Lavender, *The Fist in the Wilderness*, 276-280.

³⁷ [Robert Stuart] to Bernard Grignon, October 28, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 128-129; Robert Stuart to Governor Cass, November 13, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 135-136; Stuart to Cass, November 21, 1819, *WHC*, XX: 136-137; Stuart to Jacques Porlier, May 20, 1820, *WHC*, XX: 171-172.

³⁸ Naturalization papers of Charles Grignon, July 20, 1820, *WHC*, 177-178; Citizenship papers of John Lawe and Jacques Porlier, *WHC*, XV: 215-216.

³⁹ The fight between the American Fur Company and the factory system can be followed through the excellent collection of letters by Matthew Irwin, Thomas McKenney, Robert Stuart, and Ramsay Crooks in "Fur Trade and Factory System at Green Bay," *WHC*, VII: 269-288. Additional letters and documents are found in the National Archives microfilm publication of the Superintendent of Indian Trade, Letters Received and Sent, 1807-1824. Especially revealing concerning the tactics of the American Fur Company were the statements presented by Indian agents before the Committee on Indian Affairs. See *Documents Relative to the Indian Trade* (17 Congress, 1 session, Senate Document no. 60, serial 59, Washington, 1822).

because they lacked confidence in the government's factories.⁴⁰ In 1822 the national government responded to the overwhelming political pressure of the American Fur Company and abolished the factory system.

But the years between 1815 and 1822 had been critical for the Green Bay fur traders, for they discovered that their lives were severely restricted by government regulations and the outright hostility of the conquering power. Realistically they could not leave their homes at Green Bay; their only alternative was to join the American Fur Company. After all, Robert Stuart and Ramsay Crooks guaranteed them annual trading licenses, more supplies to compete with the factory, and a promise of richer rewards.⁴¹ The promise of rich rewards did not materialize. Twelve years later, when the traders' association with the American Fur Company ended, they were a destitute people.



Augustin Grignon, from an oil painting owned by the Society.

AFTER ACCEPTING employment with the American Fur Company, the traders were forced to alter their system of fur trading. In earlier years, when profits had not been of real concern except to provide the few necessities of life in the wilderness, the traders had roamed the length and breadth of present-day Wisconsin in their search for animal pelts.⁴² The American Fur Company, however, demanded profits, and with the increasing numbers of traders filtering into the territory, the Green Bay fur traders were forced to accept the more refined methods of business enterprise urged on them by the American Fur Company. The Company employed only the most respected

and powerful members of the French-British community: Louis, Pierre, and Augustin Grignon, John Lawe, and Jacques Porlier. To simplify accounting procedures, these traders operated under the title of the Green Bay Company, each trader agreeing to share one-fifth of the profits or to suffer one-fifth of the losses of the trade with the American Fur Company. The trade goods were to be obtained exclusively from the American Fur Company, thus preventing the Green Bay Company from buying goods or exchanging furs with any competing enterprise. The agreement was to last for three years. One signatory of the contract remained at Green Bay to handle administrative details, such as the packaging and shipment of furs to Mackinac. The remaining traders hired the necessary boatmen and clerks and journeyed to selected regions in the Indian country.⁴³ By establishing the Green Bay Company, the American Fur Company dropped from its accounts many other traders previously supplied on an individual basis. These traders probably obtained goods from competing firms, but

⁴⁰ Reverend Jedidiah Morse, *A Report to the Secretary of War on Indian Affairs* (New Haven, 1822), 49; Governor Cass to John Calhoun, September 14, 1818, *WHC*, XX: 82-86; *Report of the Secretary of War of a System Providing for the Abolition of the Existing Indian Trade Establishments of the United States and Providing for the Opening of the Trade with the Indians to Private Individuals* (15 Congress, 2 session, House Report no. 25, serial 17, Washington, 1818).

⁴¹ The argument that the government's inconsistent policies aided the American Fur Company in capturing the allegiance of the traders has also been expressed by Lavender, *The Fist in the Wilderness*, 301.

⁴² Louis Grignon to Charles Grignon, July 23, 1822, *WHC*, XX: 268-269. Also see "Porlier's Narrative," *WHC*, XV: 439.

⁴³ Agreement among Augustin Grignon, Pierre Grignon, Louis Grignon and John Lawe, August 24, 1821, *WHC*, XX: 206-210. Also see Ramsay Crooks to Jacques Porlier, August 24, 1821, *WHC*, XX: 211-212.

Crooks and Stuart seemed to feel that a centrally organized Green Bay Company could subdue rival interests.⁴⁴

The American Fur Company also assigned each trader a specific location, usually along the Fox and the Wisconsin rivers. Areas which the Green Bay traders had formerly visited were now allotted to traders from different regions. The Green Bay men, for example, had often journeyed up the Wisconsin River to the Mississippi in search of favorable trade. By 1822, however, this territory was controlled by other traders of the American Fur Company, notably Joseph Rolette operating from Prairie du Chien.⁴⁵

The Green Bay traders were never able to adjust to the regulations of the American Fur Company. The detailed accounting procedures and the restricted trading territories were unlike their earlier practices in the fur trade. During the next decade, the traders experienced year after year of unprofitable trade, partially because of the harsh economic practices of the American Fur Company.

Soon after the Green Bay Company was established, for example, Augustin Grignon of the Green Bay Company continued the practice of trading along the lower Wisconsin River, despite the American Fur Company's directions that this area belonged to Joseph Rolette. Ramsay Crooks considered Grignon's conduct symptomatic of a lack of principle.⁴⁶ In the winter of 1822, Grignon and Rolette bitterly fought for the Indian trade along the Wisconsin River, and Grignon's trading post was destroyed by the Indians. There seemed little doubt that Rolette had deliberately provoked the Indians into this act.⁴⁷ The American Fur Company, aware of Rolette's actions, refused to censure him, because he conducted one of its most profitable outfits, while the Green Bay Company struggled along year after year. Crooks did caution Rolette to be somewhat more moderate toward the Green Bay traders:

I am perfectly aware that the capital placed in your hands by the Company gives you the power to injure all your competitors, if not to destroy their business altogether, and I am not ignorant of the advantages which such a result would secure nor have I the smallest doubt that such is your aim—Still however obvious the benefit, *moderation toward those who derive their supplies from us*, must be the governing principle. . . .⁴⁸

Why did Crooks urge moderation toward the Green Bay traders even though he also admitted that "benefit" might accrue from ruining their trade? Crooks' position represented a carefully developed business strategy of the American Fur Company. Crooks realized that there was considerable competition for furs around Green Bay, for it was the first permanent settlement on the western shore of Lake Michigan and naturally the first place the vanguard of westward migration stopped en route to the opportunities of the West. This early migration included many merchants and lawyers who originally settled in the immediate neighborhood of Fort Howard, an area which came to be known as Shantytown. Two of these merchants, Daniel Whitney and Robert Irwin, were fairly typical. They opened general retail businesses, but since there were few settlers at Green Bay they needed other sources of income. Both Whitney and Irwin, therefore, entered the fur trade and provided competition for the American Fur Company. They were supplied with trade goods from Detroit and generally received a larger supply and wider assortment of goods than the personnel of the American Fur Company.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Louis Grignon to Augustin Grignon, February 19, 1822, *WHC*, XX: 243-246; Jacques Porlier to Lewis Cass, June 8, 1822, *WHC*, XX: 258-260; Governor Cass to John Calhoun, Secretary of War, July 9, 1822, *WHC*, XX: 265. Later, Grignon was informed that the government could take no action against Rolette because there was no definite proof. See James G. Soulard to Augustin Grignon, July 29, 1822, *WHC*, XX: 274. Rolette was considered the most ruthless trader in the territory. See Lavender, *The Fists in the Wilderness*, 321-325.

⁴⁵ Ramsay Crooks to Joseph Rolette, September 5, 1823, AFC Papers, III: 14; Ramsay Crooks to Robert Stuart, April 8, 1822, AFC Papers, II: 248.

⁴⁶ Henry S. Baird, "Recollections of the Early History of Northern Wisconsin," *WHC*, IV: 202; Alice Smith, "Daniel Whitney, Pioneer Wisconsin Businessman," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIV: 283-304 (March, 1941); John Lawe to Robert Stuart, January 4, 1823, Lawe Papers, IV.

⁴⁴ Ramsay Crooks to Louis Rouse, September 4, 1821, in the American Fur Company Papers, II: 133, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Hereinafter cited as AFC Papers.

⁴⁵ Ramsay Crooks to Joseph Rolette, September 4, 1821, *ibid.*, 132.

⁴⁶ Ramsay Crooks to Robert Stuart, January 4, 1822, *ibid.*, page number illegible.

The Shantytown merchants were a serious threat to the members of the Green Bay Company. The traders often gave the Indians merchandise on credit before the winter's hunt, only to see the Indians later sell their furs to the Shantytown merchants. To prevent the Indians from dealing with Whitney and Irwin, John Lawe urged the traders to conduct all business with the Indians in the interior, away from Green Bay and the influence of Shantytown. At one point, Lawe considered spreading a rumor that smallpox was ravaging the Green Bay community to keep the Indians in the interior.⁵⁰

Realizing the intensity of the competition at Green Bay, Crooks and Stuart abandoned any hopes of ever attaining a monopoly. They were convinced that the Green Bay area would never yield a profit; the merchant businesses of men, such as Whitney, were just too solidly entrenched.⁵¹ The American Fur Company, however, maintained a token opposition at the Bay to prevent its competitors from ever gaining a real foothold in the trade, a base from which they might threaten more profitable trading areas along the lake shore or in the interior. The Company did not communicate this strategy to the traders. In fact, it allowed the Green Bay traders to believe that they were treated equally with all other employees. When informed of Daniel Whitney's presence by the Green Bay traders, Stuart led them to believe that Whitney would not affect their trade.⁵² Stuart also derided the efforts of another merchant, Robert Irwin, to hire traders at the Bay. Writing to Jacques Porlier, Stuart observed, "I believe the house of which Mr. Irwin is said to be agent will create more noise than effect; the Lord knows the trade is already bad enough; but if more fools will come, why we must welcome them."⁵³

Stuart's letters to the traders gave the im-

pression that he was singularly unconcerned about the opposition and had no doubts that the traders could still secure profits. At other times, however, when communicating with more favored traders of the Company, Stuart expressed his real policies regarding Green Bay:

For they [Green Bay traders] have got goods from Irwin at the bay, (which he got from Detroit) . . . besides I know that Lockwood made them a liberal offer to supply all their wants; and let the result be loss again, they would have strengthened his opposition so as to make it of serious consequence to your operation for there would be no restraint whatever; and it would be throwing them completely into the arms of our opponents which, as I have already stated, might be of no beneficial result to either of them but still must have turned out of serious detriment to us. . . .⁵⁴

Stuart accomplished his objective of maintaining a token resistance at Green Bay in a number of ways. Inadequate supplies were consistently sent to the Green Bay traders while more elaborate outfits were shipped to areas where the American Fur Company's monopoly was more secure, such as at Prairie du Chien. Although this was certainly a sound business procedure, it sealed the Green Bay traders' fate: they could not compete with the opposition, and consequently they lost money.⁵⁵

IN 1823 Stuart disbanded the Green Bay Company, but for the next decade he supplied traders on an individual basis.⁵⁶ When losses in the trade continued to grow, Stuart adopted additional financial measures to reduce the losses suffered by the American Fur Company. The traders were forbidden to advance credit

⁵⁴ Robert Stuart to Joseph Rolette, August 29, 1822, AFC Papers, II: 326.

⁵⁵ Ramsay Crooks to Pierre Grignon, October 2, 1821, AFC Papers, II: 152; I. Mason to Rolette, August 22, 1822, AFC Papers, II: 325; Stuart to Crooks, November 11, 1822, AFC Papers, II: 438.

⁵⁶ In 1823 the American Fur Company merged with Stone, Bostwick and Company, a Detroit firm. This merger necessitated a complete accounting of the Company's books. At this time, Stuart decided to terminate the Green Bay Company and establish new agreements with selected traders. See Robert Stuart to Ramsay Crooks, November, 1823, AFC Papers, III: 33; Stuart to Jacques Porlier, June 10, 1823, AFC Papers, II: 453; Stuart to Louis Rouse, May 10, 1823, AFC Papers, II: 449.

⁵⁰ John Lawe to Jacques Porlier, November 14, 1823, *WHC*, XX: 322; John Lawe to James Porlier, February 3, 1824, *WHC*, XX: 331-332.

⁵¹ Ramsay Crooks to Robert Stuart, January 4, 1822, AFC Papers, II: page number illegible; Crooks to Stuart, April 8, 1822, AFC Papers, II: 248; Stuart to Crooks, November 10, 1822, AFC Papers, II: 442.

⁵² Robert Stuart to John Lawe, October 10, 1821, *ibid.*, 120.

⁵³ Robert Stuart to Jacques Porlier, October 27, 1822, *WHC*, XX: 290.



Society's Iconographic Collections

Daniel Whitney, pioneer Green Bay businessman, who settled there in 1819.

to the Indians for a winter's hunt in hopes of obtaining furs after the season.⁵⁷ The traders also were refused permission to reduce the price of their goods to compete with the merchants of Shantytown. As more and more settlers trickled into the frontier community, Stuart opposed cash sales to them because he feared that the traders would not devote their full attention to the trade in furs.⁵⁸ Such cost-cutting measures on the part of the American Fur Company were sound business procedures, but they were financially ruinous to the traders. Each year their losses increased and also their debts to the American Fur Company. If they could not advance credit to the Indians or lower prices, their chances of ever competing with the Shantytown merchants were nil. If they could not trade with the settlers, they were absolutely prevented from ever participating in the changing economic structure of the Green Bay community. The account books of the American Fur Company indicate the traders' fate. In 1822 the Green Bay Company was \$16,000 in debt, and each year thereafter the debt increased.⁵⁹

In 1826 and 1827 Green Bay experienced its worst trade years. But this time the economic

pinch also hit the Shantytown merchants, forcing Daniel Whitney to tender an offer to the American Fur Company to sell his interest in the trade. Always the master strategist, Stuart refused the offer. Conditions were now favorable to the American Fur Company, for a stalemate had been achieved at Green Bay. Commenting on Whitney's offer, Stuart observed, "Whitney must have suffered severely — and wished me to buy him out, but he may make the most of it for altho we cannot abandon that trade, I would rather he should supply some of the people, than we; for whether there is opposition or not, no money is to be made there."⁶⁰

From the beginning of their association with the American Fur Company, the traders had realized Stuart's strategy. In 1822 Jacques Porlier bitterly complained that the Company was supplying other traders with goods at cheaper prices and locating them in trading territories which, for years, he had occupied. In an amazingly accurate summary, John Lawe indicated the traders' knowledge of Stuart's tactics:

As I wrote you last year they made us form a Company at the Bay but it is a mere Burlesque for to throw us into misery & trouble they pretend it is for our own good it is true it would be if we had the privilege of others (that is to get our goods as low as they Could really give them and with a good profit) and . . . at least liberty to go where we please but no it is quite the contrary they don't wish I believe to ruin us for fear an opposition might form and come into the country.⁶¹

Many historians have claimed that the story is not complete without recognizing that the Green Bay traders contributed to their own difficulties.⁶² Certainly such charges hold some

⁵⁷ Robert Stuart to Michael Dousman, August 13, 1825, *WHC*, XX: 378.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* The American Fur Company had always been opposed to the sale of goods to settlers as a supplementary occupation for the traders. See J. Ward Ruckman, "Ramsay Crooks and the Fur Trade of the Northwest," in *Minnesota History*, VII: 27 (March, 1926).

⁵⁹ Robert Stuart to Ramsay Crooks, November 11, 1823, AFC Papers, II: 438; Stuart to Crooks, July 26, 1826, AFC Papers, III: 327.

⁶⁰ Robert Stuart to Ramsay Crooks, August 18, 1827, AFC Papers, III: 460-469.

⁶¹ John Lawe to Jacob Franks, August 26, 1822, *WHC*, XX: 277-278; Robert Stuart to Jacques Porlier, May 16, 1822, *WHC*, XX: 255.

⁶² This is also the position of Lavender, *The Fists*

truth. Often they refused to journey into the wilderness for trade. At other times, John Lawe freely dispensed credit to the Indians and fur traders alike, although he knew their ability to pay was doubtful.⁶³ Stuart once commented on such business habits: "There exists among the gentry of that district an unconquerable aversion to economy, and their only care seems to be to get into their profession the means of pampering their indolence. . . ."⁶⁴

Rather than view these faults as justifications for the American Fur Company's business policies, it seems more appropriate to say the fur traders were fairly consistent. They continued to follow the life and economic pattern they had known before the frontier entered a transitional period. This was the tragedy of the Green Bay community; both the government and the American Fur Company in their desire to exploit and develop the frontier economy took little notice of a segment of the population incapable of adapting to new conditions.

But why did the traders continue their affiliation with the American Fur Company for so long, even as their debts increased? The traders had few alternatives, for trading was their only skill. They were culturally and economically different from the "Yankee" migration exemplified by Daniel Whitney. Whitney, too, had entered the fur trade, but at the same time he was involved in purchasing land, in retail trade with the settlers, and in the supply of Fort Howard with beef and grain.⁶⁵ This economic diversity gave Whitney an enormous advantage over the traders. Where Whitney could trade with the settlers, the fur traders could not because of the rules of the American Fur Company against retail trade. While the military proved an economic advantage to merchants such as Whitney, it represented purely a regula-

tory body to the traders, since its duties involved the supervision of French and British traders. Government contracts for beef, oats, and grain, therefore, were rarely granted to the traders. They were primarily involved in fur trading with few opportunities for providing such products. Their reputation as British nationals, moreover, made it difficult to surmount the influence of the "Yankee" merchants.⁶⁶ Soldiers' payrolls also failed to benefit the traders because of the rule of the American Fur Company against sales to settlers and because of their inability to compete with the prices and influences of the Shantytown merchants.⁶⁷

It is not surprising, therefore, that the fur traders viewed the military as a threat, rather than as an economic boon to the Green Bay community. The traders must have been slightly amused when the military arrived in 1816 to protect them from the Indians, a race with whom the traders had lived for years in relative harmony. As the years passed, the traders' correspondence was filled with comments on the disastrous effect of the military on Green Bay. John Lawe once commented:

... There has been a great number of U.S. troops garrisoned or that [are] Stationed at Green Bay but what good does that do me it is only to assist in ruining of me & the Pilfering or general Stealing, Killing of Cat-

in the Wilderness, who first claimed that the Green Bay traders were used by the American Fur Company as a block to other fur trading interests. Lavender, however, tended to believe that the traders were indolent and lacked business skill. See Lavender, *The Fists in the Wilderness*, 345-346.

⁶³ Robert Stuart to Ramsay Crooks, November, 1823, AFC Papers, III: 33; Robert Stuart to John Lawe, September 10, 1826, AFC Papers, III: 356.

⁶⁴ Ramsay Crooks to Robert Stuart, January 4, 1822, AFC Papers, II: page number illegible.

⁶⁵ Smith, "Daniel Whitney," 283-304; Francis Paul Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet* (Lincoln, 1967), 161.

⁶⁶ This statement is at variance with most of the literature on the military and its effect on frontier communities. Prucha claimed that the military was an economic stimulus to Green Bay. Although this statement is true, it needs careful distinctions. Government contracts benefited men, such as Daniel Whitney, not the fur traders. My argument is impressionistic, derived from reading countless letters of the traders. Additional research, however, on the disposition of government contracts would substantiate these generalizations. In 1830, for example, only Daniel Whitney and John P. Arndt received government contracts for supplying Fort Howard. See *Letter from the Secretary of War Transmitting Statements of the Contracts Made by the War Department during the Year 1830* (21 Congress, 2 session, House Executive Document no. 73, serial 208, Washington, 1831). Also see Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet*, 161.

⁶⁷ John Lawe to Jacob Franks, September 5, 1823, *WHC*, XX: 308-310; John Lawe to Mrs. Hamilton, September 12, 1824, *WHC*, XX: 351-353; Ramsay Crooks to the Secretary of War, May 7, 1835, in Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. XII: *The Territory of Michigan* (Washington, 1934-), 909.

tle and committing every kind of depredation that they can. . . . They are a nuisance to Society and in place of being put there for the protection of the place they are the destruction of it.⁶⁸

THE FINAL BLOW to the Green Bay traders occurred in 1834 when John Astor sold his interest in the American Fur Company and it was reorganized under the direction of Ramsay Crooks. Crooks decided to close all affairs in Green Bay and required a final accounting. Since the 1820's, the traders had steadily lost money. To satisfy their debts, they mortgaged their land claims and deeds to the American Fur Company.⁶⁹ What, on the surface, seemed an equitable settlement, left the traders with little capital or a marketable commodity—land—in the 1830's as the fur trade died out.

As the American Fur Company acquired title to the traders' land in Green Bay, the land's value suddenly skyrocketed because thousands of farmers and town dwellers arrived to settle along the western shore of Lake Michigan. Astor, Stuart, and Crooks then plotted a town at Green Bay, appropriately named Astor. The land rose in value while the traders remained impoverished.⁷⁰ A contemporary resident described the conditions leading to the plotting of Astor:

. . . The land was originally owned by John Lawe and the Grignon family. Together with other real estate it was taken in payment of balance due the old Green Bay Company to the former Company; the debt having accrued by loss in the Indian trade—for in this business, it generally happened that the small traders who purchased their goods at higher prices, after years of toil and privation spent in the trade, came out with nothing leaving to the great monopoly the lion's share of the profits. The consideration received by the former owners, was trifling compared with the present value of the property.⁷¹

The traders did not suddenly leave Green Bay; many lived on there until the 1850's. John Lawe still received a few goods from the American Fur Company; others dabbled in land speculation and local politics. These activities, however, can not conceal the fact that few traders achieved material success and that Green Bay's history was now dominated by the restless American frontiersmen.⁷²

Thus, the frontier period in Green Bay from 1815 to approximately 1834 was transitional and with change came confusion, contradiction, and exploitation. The government experimented with suitable policies for military defense, the Indians, and the fur trade. Its initial efforts were often inconsistent, as indicated by the government's enforcement of the law of 1816 and the establishment of both Indian agencies and government factories. To the American Fur Company this period was both the heyday and the decline of the fur trade in the Old Northwest. Time was short, investment was great; the need for the close scrutiny of trade and traders was obvious. At first, the fur trader willingly attached himself to the American Fur Company as a refuge from what seemed the cruel and oppressive policies of the American government. Later, he discovered that his life with the Company was no better. Uninitiated in the methods of corporate enterprise, that is, defined trading territories, and his role as a block to other fur trading companies, he gradually compiled unpayable debts to the American Fur Company. As the frontier scene changed from fur trade to settlement, the fur trader had neither the skills nor the capital to enter fully into this new economic life. The American Fur Company refused to allow retail trade with the settlers and requisitioned his only other asset—land. As with the land and the Indians, the fur trader was exploited, sometimes intentionally, other times quite unconsciously, by a society in the process of change.

⁶⁸ John Lawe to Mrs. Hamilton, September 12, 1824, *WHC*, XX: 351-353. There are many letters of the traders expressing their opposition to the military. See, for example, John Lawe to Jacob Franks, September 5, 1823, *WHC*, XX: 310; John Lawe to (unknown), March 9, 1820, Lawe Papers, III; Jacques Porlier to Governor Cass, June 8, 1822, in Carter, ed., *The Territory of Michigan*, XI: 243.

⁶⁹ Smith, *James Doty*, 158-159. The transfer of deeds can be followed in the Lawe Papers, X-XX.

⁷⁰ Smith, *James Doty*, 158-173, describes in detail the establishment of Astor.

⁷¹ Baird, "Recollections of the Early History," *WHC*, IV: 215.

⁷² Many traders went on to local politics and to open small businesses, but the later history of Green Bay made it evident that the fur traders had relinquished community leadership to men such as James Doty and Daniel Whitney. As late as 1840, for example, John Lawe owed \$22,500 to the American Fur Company. Contract between Samuel Abbot and John Lawe, August 28, 1840, Lawe Papers, XXII.

THE POLITICS OF ANTI-COMMUNISM:

A REVIEW ARTICLE

By ROBERT GRIFFITH

THE BOOKS under review in this essay concern McCarthyism, or, more accurately, America's second great Red Scare. The distinction is important, for the two are not synonymous. The term McCarthyism was coined during the early 1950's to describe the politics of anti-communism. This politics did not begin with Joe McCarthy's famous speech at Wheeling, West Virginia, nor did it end in 1954 with his censure by the Senate. Indeed, the term itself vastly exaggerates the Senator's importance and distorts the past of which he was only a part. During the past several years a growing number of scholars have sought to interpret (and in some instances reinterpret) the politics of anti-communism in mid-twentieth-century America.¹ The books under review in this essay are representative of this effort.

The first and most important of these books is Michael Paul Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter*,* winner of the American Historical Association's Albert

J. Beveridge Award. First published in 1967 and now reissued in paperback, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy* is a brilliant analysis of the political origins of McCarthyism and a devastating critique of that explanation of McCarthyism popularized in the 1950's by Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset, Richard Hofstadter, and the other contributors to *The New American Right*.²

During the 1950's, argues Rogin, American liberals, traumatized by the impact of wars, revolutions, and totalitarian mass movements, sought to explain McCarthyism in terms of a mass-based, "radical right" threat to America's conservative institutions. Led by Bell, Lipset, and Hofstadter, they identified McCarthyism with populism and described both as irrational responses to the secular, industrial state. McCarthy was the heir to La Follette, they argued; McCarthyism was populism gone sour. Disillusioned by what they believed to be the consequences of mass democracy, these "pluralist" scholars instead placed their confidence in interest groups, in public and private bureaucracies, and in the educated elite which governed both. They discovered in these institutions and in their instrumental politics, a conservative bulwark against the dangers of popular passion.

NOTE: The titles of those books under review are identified by asterisks; complete bibliographical information is given at the end of the article.

¹ See, for example, the following: Donald J. Kempner, *Decade of Fear: Tom Hennings and Civil Liberties* (Columbia, Missouri, 1965); Earl Latham, *The Communist Controversy in Washington: From the New Deal to McCarthy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1966); Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1970).

² Daniel Bell (ed.), *The New American Right* (New York, 1955), and its revised edition, *The Radical Right* (New York, 1963).



UP-Capital Times

Senator McCarthy, arm in cast following an accident, leaving the Senate after its first tentative vote to censure him.

This interpretation of McCarthyism is inadequate, argues Rogin, for three reasons. In the first place it rests on the false assumption that there is a continuity between agrarian radicalism and McCarthyism. After carefully analyzing voting patterns in Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota, Rogin concludes that there is no such continuity. If anything, the opposite is more accurate; agrarian radicalism, where cohesive, has contributed not to the Republican right, but to the constituency of Democratic liberalism.³

Secondly, the pluralists misinterpret the nature of agrarian radicalism. Caught up in a system of thought which defines mass movements as automatically irrational, the pluralists have on the one hand underemphasized the specific issues and goals of populist protest (in *The Age of Reform*, for example, Richard Hofstadter quickly passes over economic issues

in order to examine populist rhetoric for evidence of anti-semitism, anti-intellectualism and irrationality), while on the other hand they have failed (through "the sin of noncomparative analysis") to see that many of the characteristics which they attribute to the populists are far more applicable to the conservative and elite adversaries of populism. "The point here is not to absolve Populism of sins by spreading the guilt, but rather to question interpretations which locate the roots of contemporary provincial extremism specifically in the agrarian radical tradition." Like Norman Pollack, Rogin sees populism as a rational, mass-based protest, not against industrialism *per se*, but against control of the industrial process by groups inimicable to agrarian interests.

Finally, Rogin argues that McCarthyism, unlike agrarian radicalism, was not a mass movement. It did not split apart existing coalitions or create a new mass basis for politics. Rather, McCarthyism was the product of actions (and inactions) on the part of conservative (and liberal) elites—precisely those groups to whom the pluralists would turn for the orderly operation of society. From the outset McCarthy's power and prestige depended upon the active support of conservative Republican leaders, and upon the acquiescence of Democrats and Republican moderates. Once such support and acquiescence became inexpedient, as it did after 1954, McCarthy's influence rapidly evaporated. McCarthyism thus becomes not, as the pluralists would have it, an object lesson in the beneficence and wisdom of elite rule, but a cautionary tale about the dangers of abandoning popular democracy.⁴

This is a brilliant book, the importance of which goes far beyond the problems of McCarthyism and agrarian radicalism. *The In-*

³ On this point also see David A. Shannon, "Was McCarthy a Political Heir of La Follette," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 45:3-9 (Autumn, 1961).

⁴ This same point was made earlier by David and Esther Thelen in their fine study of the McCarthy recall movement, a grass-roots movement frustrated by the timidity and self-interest of the state's pluralist institutions. "As the leaders of the recall movement discovered, every institution or pressure group has a vested interest in perpetuating its own existence. And when public endorsement of an unorthodox social or political movement might threaten that existence, the institution inevitably balks, hesitates, and in the end does nothing at all." David and Esther Thelen, "Joe Must Go: The Movement to Recall Senator Joseph R. McCarthy," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 49:185-209 (Spring, 1966).

Intellectuals and McCarthy poses a fundamental challenge to modern pluralism, the liberal political theory which has until very recently prescribed and limited the study of American politics.⁵ According to Rogin, modern pluralism centers on the interest group organization of American politics and upon elite management of these interest groups. Politics, in this analysis, becomes the process through which these various elites seek to maximize the interests of their groups. This process takes place in an atmosphere of compromise and civility made possible by the insularity of leaders from their constituents and contributes to the orderly functioning of government. Mass politics, in the pluralist view, threatens the operation of government through the introduction of emotionalism, inflexibility, and unreasonableness.

As Rogin points out, such a theory can explain neither elite support of irrational, anti-democratic movements such as McCarthyism, nor creative and democratic mass movements. Populism, industrial unionism, the civil rights movement (and, one might add, opposition to the Vietnam War) have all been creative popular movements organized outside the normal channels of American politics. Yet all of them fall outside the pale of pluralist respectability. Pluralism, concludes Rogin, is "a peculiar mixture of analysis and prescription . . . [which] may best be judged not as the product of science but as a liberal American venture into conservative political theory." This is an important work and one which should be read by every serious student of modern America.

ONE MAY also follow the debate over the sources of McCarthyism in the pages of *Joseph R. McCarthy*,⁶ a collection of documents and articles edited by Allen J. Matusow for Prentice-Hall's *Great Lives Observed* series. In addition to a representative sampling of McCarthy's own inimitable speeches, Matusow has included excerpts from the writings of the

Senator's admirers, Roy Cohn and William S. Schlam, as well as critics such as Arthur Eisenhower and Will Herberg. The final section contains three examples of the "pluralist" analysis by Nathan Glazer, Peter Viereck, and Seymour Martin Lipset, all contributors to *The New American Right*. There is also a class analysis by the editors of *Monthly Review*, Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy. The collection includes Nelson Polsby's important 1960 article, "Towards an Explanation of McCarthyism," which attacks the status-anxiety hypothesis and argues that McCarthy's supporters were primarily Republicans acting on the basis of conventional political considerations. The volume closes with an excerpt from Rogin's *The Intellectuals and McCarthy* which emphasizes the role of political elites in sustaining McCarthyism.

The achievements and limitations of elite resistance to McCarthyism are nowhere better revealed than in Thomas C. Reeves, *Freedom and the Foundation*,⁷ a thoroughly researched and well-written study of the Fund for the Republic. The Fund was incorporated in late 1952 as an independent subsidiary of the Ford Foundation which turned over to it some fifteen million dollars for the defense of freedom and liberty. After several years of cautious delay, the Fund, under the bold leadership of Robert Maynard Hutchins, proceeded to disburse some eleven million dollars to finance books, articles, pamphlets, speeches, seminars, and other projects in the area of civil rights and civil liberties.

This was an exceptional endeavor given the timidity of most tax-exempt foundations during this period, and one which no doubt contributed to the decline of McCarthyite sentiment during the late 1950's. Certainly the Fund's activities were significant enough to arouse the furies of the Right. Fulton Lewis, Jr., Paul Harvey, David Lawrence, the Hearst papers, and others kept up a steady stream of criticism; while Congressman Francis E. Walter (D-Pa.) and the House Un-American Activities Committee repeatedly harassed the Fund's officers and directors. The Internal Revenue Service, moreover, subjected the Fund to continuous and excessive scrutiny.

None of this, of course, bothered the redoubtable Hutchins, who as Dwight Mac-

⁵Also see Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism: Ideology, Policy, and the Crisis of Public Authority* (New York, 1969); and Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston, 1965).

Donald has observed, feared controversy as Br'er Rabbit feared the briar patch. "If your object is to promote justice," Hutchins once declared, "you're likely to be attacked, because if people weren't profiting by injustice it wouldn't exist."

But controversy did bother the Fund's directors and it did bother Henry Ford II, and their response helps to illustrate the narrow limits of business liberalism.⁶ Ford, for example, had developed a dislike for Hutchins during the latter's tenure as associate director of the Ford Foundation, and it is unlikely that his opinion changed after Hutchins shifted his base of operations to the more controversial Fund for the Republic. The receipt of a small number (1,200) of irate letters from Ford customers and dealers further unnerved Ford, who in December, 1955, sharply criticized the Fund. "Some of its actions, I feel, have been dubious in character and inevitably have led to charges of poor judgement," declared the automotive heir. Ford's criticism contributed to the increasing caution of the Fund's board of directors and to their growing resistance to Hutchins' bold projects.

The board itself was made up, as Reeves wryly observes, of solid citizens of "Impeccable Reputation." They were sincerely dedicated to the preservation of freedom and liberty, but they interpreted this mandate very narrowly. As the Fund's attorneys declared: "... the Fund is free to engage in partisan advocacy for the principles of the Constitution

of the United States and the Declaration of Independence. Such advocacy is merely to support existing systems and not to promote reforms." The directors were fearful of controversy, moreover, and tended to tack in the face of criticism. When, for example, Hutchins named to the Fund's staff an attorney who had pleaded the Fifth Amendment before a congressional committee, the board rose up in full rebellion. One director resigned and four others called for Hutchins' resignation.⁷

Hutchins weathered the storm, but the directors subsequently restricted his freedom of action and during the next few years the pace of Fund activity slackened appreciably. In 1959 the Fund for the Republic transferred its attention (and its remaining money) to the Hutchins-inspired Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, an important but relatively uncontroversial undertaking.

Professor Reeves, of the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, has carefully examined the minutes, records, and other papers of the Fund for the Republic (now at Princeton University). His book, *Freedom and the Foundation*, is an important and original contribution to the study of American politics and philanthropy.

JAMES ARONSON has tried to examine the reaction of the press, another elite-managed institution, to McCarthyism and to the cold war crisis of which McCarthyism was but one facet. His book, *The Press and The Cold War*,* is part memoir, part polemic.

Aronson is a radical journalist of the old-left variety who in 1948 helped found the *National Guardian*. Part of his book traces, in elliptic fashion, the history of this small, radical weekly. The *National Guardian* supported Henry Wallace in 1948, denounced American foreign policy (including U.S. intervention in Korea), and defended Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs. On the eve of the Korean War it had a circulation of over 50,000. Shortly afterwards, as a result of governmental persecution, the paper's circulation was halved and one of

* Ford's response to the 1952 campaign of Democratic Senator Blair Moody of Michigan is a good illustration of how the "instrumental" orientation of America's interest group leaders contributed to McCarthy's success. In 1952 Moody was opposed by Republican Congressman Charles Potter, a member of HUAC who had won a reputation as "something of a junior McCarthy" during the 82nd Congress. McCarthy campaigned for him in Michigan and his election was interpreted as a victory for the Wisconsin senator. Ford's position on the contest was summarized in a letter to Moody: "Also, I feel that I will have to vote for Rep. Potter for Senator, since it seems to me that you have consistently played only one side although you have sometimes taken a position that has been helpful to industry. However, in my opinion, your reasons for taking that position is that labor's interest is also served by your taking such a position." Henry Ford II to Blair Moody, July 23, 1952, in the Blair Moody Papers, Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The grammar and punctuation belong to Ford.

⁷ The latter group was led by Dean Erwin N. Griswald of the Harvard Law School, who had recently authored a book entitled *The Fifth Amendment Today*.



Madison Capital Times

G. David Schine, Roy M. Cohn, and Joseph R. McCarthy, during the March, 1954, Army-McCarthy Hearings.

its editors driven into exile. It never really recovered, although Aronson himself hung on for more than a decade, resigning in 1967 following a dispute with younger staff members.

The main argument of Aronson's book is that the press has served America poorly because of its subservience to governmental policy. This is an important thesis and one which deserves a far better job than Aronson has done. Unfortunately, *The Press and the Cold War* is marred by poor organization, sketchy documentation, and inflated rhetoric. Too much of the book depends on the reader's acceptance of Aronson's assumption that the Rosenbergs were innocent, that Syngman Rhee started the Korean War, and that United States policy is "the chief source of the world's problems."

The best portions of the book are devoted to a not altogether original exposure of the *New York Times*. For example, Aronson points out that between 1945 and 1950 twenty-two of the thirty books on China reviewed in the *Times* were reviewed by Far Eastern specialists who

were also members of the Institute of Pacific Relations. In the early fifties the IPR became a prime target for Joe McCarthy and Pat McCarran. As a result, from 1952 to 1955, not one of the IPR-related scholars was asked to review a book for the *Times*. In effect, the *Times* was deferring to the judgment of McCarthy and McCarran. On another occasion the *Times* succumbed to pressure from Senator James Eastland by dismissing employees who had taken the Fifth Amendment before the Mississippi Senator's Internal Security Subcommittee. It is unfortunate that the *Times'* libertarian professions did not extend to their personnel practices. It is even sadder to note that the American Newspaper Guild acquiesced in the dismissals. Pluralism, in these instances at least, contributed not to the defense of freedom and liberty, but to their erosion; and Aronson's book, despite its many faults, provides considerable evidence on the shortcomings of pluralist institutions.

President Harry S. Truman had the dubious distinction of presiding over America's second great Red Scare. *The Politics of Loyalty** by

Alan D. Harper is an account of Truman's response to this crisis: his establishment of a federal loyalty program, his battle against the McCarran Internal Security Act, his efforts to quiet critics by the establishment of a Commission on Internal Security and Individual Freedom.

Truman emerges from these pages as an embattled champion of civil liberties. Where his liberalism faltered, it was usually because of the incredible partisanship of the Republican opposition, the cowardliness of the congressional Democrats, or the intractability of the federal bureaucracy. Certainly there is much truth in this description. But it is also true, as Truman was fond of pointing out, that the buck stops at the White House and that the President himself must assume responsibility for the record of his administration. Much of this record is admirable, for example, Truman's ringing pledge to veto the McCarran bill "regardless of how politically unpopular it was—election year or no election year."⁸ But there was another less courageous side to the Truman record, much of it unrecorded in this book; for Professor Harper, like Norman Vincent Peale, has chosen to emphasize the positive.

Harper ignores the point recently made by Athan Theoharis that the Truman Administration contributed greatly to the hysteria of the fifties through its rhetorical justification of cold-war foreign policy, as well as the earlier suggestion by William Berman that the Truman Administration helped to fashion an "incipient garrison-state ideology . . . by means of its loyalty program, Attorney General's list and prosecutions under the Smith Act."⁹

Harper barely mentions, for example, the crucial change in federal loyalty standards made by Truman in April, 1951. Under pressure from right-wing critics, the President

amended the program by changing the criteria for dismissal from "reasonable grounds" to suspect disloyalty to "reasonable doubt" of an employee's loyalty—an alteration which meant a sweeping reversal in the burden of proof. Harper mentions this change in the context of a discussion of the Nimitz Commission on Internal Security and Individual Rights. There is no mention of Truman and the casual reader is likely to assume, erroneously, that the President had no hand in it.

Only two noncommittal sentences are devoted to the dismissal of veteran diplomat John Stewart Service. In a memorandum not cited by Harper, one of Truman's aides described the case as "a miscarriage of justice."¹⁰ The Truman Administration, however, apparently preferred political expediency to justice.

There are other omissions and oversights. For example, Harper does not deal with the Justice Department's prosecution of communist leaders under the Smith Act, although surely this constitutes an important chapter in the "politics of loyalty." Harper's legislative history of the McCarran Act ignores one of its most controversial features—the "concentration camp" proviso sponsored by Democratic liberals Paul H. Douglas, Harley M. Kilgore, and Hubert H. Humphrey. And although Harper criticizes Truman's appointment of conservatives to head the loyalty program, he does not examine the impact this had on the disposition of individual cases. The stories chronicled by Bert Andrews and Adam Yarmolinsky (neither of whose books is cited in the footnotes or bibliography) might have provided the material for a more critical appraisal of the Truman loyalty program.¹¹ Similarly, little attention is paid to the activities of the federal government in regard to immigration, aside from a brief discussion of Truman's veto of the McCarran-Walter bill. Even a cursory investigation of the activities of the U.S. Immigration Service during these years would have produced a picture of the Truman Ad-

⁸ Quoted in Stephen J. Spingarn, *Memorandum for the Files*, July 22, 1950, in the Spingarn Papers, Harry S. Truman Library.

⁹ Athan Theoharis, "The Rhetoric of Politics," in Barton J. Bernstein (ed.), *Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration* (Chicago, 1970); William C. Berman, "Civil Rights and Civil Liberties," in Richard S. Kirkendall, *The Truman Period As A Research Field* (Columbia, Missouri, 1967).

¹⁰ Donald Hanson, *Memorandum*, January 3, 1953, in the Spingarn Papers. Service was re-instated by order of the Supreme Court in 1957.

¹¹ Bert Andrews, *Washington Witch Hunt* (New York, 1948); Adam Yarmolinsky, *Case Studies in Personnel Security* (Washington, 1955).

ministration sharply different from that presented by Harper.¹²

Finally, *The Politics of Loyalty* is badly padded by the presence of two unnecessary chapters—one on American policy in China and another on the removal of General Douglas MacArthur. Both of these chapters are based primarily on secondary sources and neither adds substantially to our understanding of these problems. The book's lengthy appendices might also have been eliminated; more than half of the material has already been printed in the public record, the remainder is interesting but unnecessary. A resourceful editor might have trimmed more than a hundred pages from the book and, presumably a few dollars from its exorbitant (\$13.00) price.

A FAR MORE CRITICAL APPRAISAL of the Truman Administration emerges from two recent books by Athan Theoharis of Marquette University. In his first book, *The Yalta Myths*,^{*} Theoharis traces the rise of the Yalta Conference as an issue in American politics. In 1945, he argues, most Americans shared the Roosevelt Administration's attitude toward the Soviet Union, an attitude which emphasized the necessity for mutual understanding, trust, and co-operation. Criticism of the conference was confined to right-wingers whose primary purpose was to discredit New Deal liberalism. By the early fifties, however, Yalta had become a symbol for the failure of Democratic foreign policy. Concessions which in 1945 had appeared reasonable and realistic were denounced as stupid and even treasonous, and in the 1952 campaign the Republican party pledged itself to "repudiate all commitments contained in secret understandings, such as those of Yalta, which aid Communist enslavements."

What had changed, of course, was not the Yalta Conference, but the climate of American politics. In part this was a measure of public response to the emergence of the cold war with its attendant anxieties and frustrations. More importantly, it represented a means to

success for Republican partisans long denied access to national office. Following their defeat in 1948, Republican campaigners increasingly stressed foreign policy and "Yalta" as a means of discrediting the Democrats. But the Republicans were able to capitalize on Yalta, Theoharis argues, only because of the Truman Administration's fundamental reorientation of American foreign policy. The adoption of containment and its rationalization by means of a rhetoric of crusading anti-communism radically altered popular assumptions as to what constituted a wise foreign policy. As a consequence, the Truman Administration's conservative critics were able to mount an attack based on the very assumptions of the administration itself, while, conversely, the administration was prevented from raising more than a half-hearted and partisan defense of past policies. "As the Administration reversed its views on the reasonableness and desirability of trusting the Soviet Union," Theoharis concludes, "Yalta became a conference that it had never been."

This is a valuable study, although it is not without shortcomings. Theoharis has not examined any of the relevant manuscript collections, but instead has confined his analysis to the rhetoric of foreign policy debate. As a consequence, his study has a somewhat one-dimensional quality. His presentation, moreover, is marred by a rigid chronological framework and is often repetitious. His argument concerning the role of the Truman Administration, while not unconvincing, rests more on inference and assertion than on evidence, and is more fully developed in his second book.

Theoharis extends his indictment of the Truman Administration in *Seeds of Repression: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of McCarthyism*.^{*} For Theoharis, McCarthyism was not only "a logical extension of traditional conservative politics," but was also a function of the cold war and the rhetoric used to sustain it. The success of conservatives, and in particular the Republican right, was made possible by the dramatic changes which took place in the climate of American politics between 1945 and 1950; and these changes, he argues, were in large measure the product of the Truman Administration. Truman's militantly

¹² See, for example, Kemper, *Decade of Fear*, 33-35; and Ellen R. Knauft, *The Ellen Knauft Story* (New York, 1952).



Wisconsin State Journal

A 1946 campaign photograph taken by the Rierson Studios of Madison. Before the picture was made, the photographer induced McCarthy to get a shave and buy a new necktie.

anti-communist rhetoric, with its stress on American innocence, Soviet depravity, and the need for confrontation with communism, contributed to a new political environment which narrowed the arena of legitimate political debate and sharply reduced the flexibility of American foreign policy. The administration's Republican critics, Theoharis argues, were faithful to Truman's own assumptions when they denounced the Yalta Conference, blamed the administration for "losing" China, and demanded total victory in Korea.

In a similar manner the Truman Administration legitimized red-baiting at home through its loyalty program (which applied sweeping standards to all government employees, not just those in sensitive positions), through the Attorney General's list (which, based on the concept of guilt by association, rapidly became the most widely used litmus for "subversive tendencies"), and through its public quest for total security (which raised an impossible standard by which the administration itself would be judged and found wanting). The Justice Department in particu-

lar, as both Harper and Theoharis point out, consistently undercut the administration, both through the sponsorship of legislation opposed by the White House and through its hysterical rhetoric. "There are today many Communists in America," Attorney General J. Howard McGrath told an audience. "They are everywhere—in factories, offices, butcher shops, on street corners, in private business—and each carries with him the germs of death for Society." At that very moment, McGrath warned, they were "busy at work—undermining your Government, plotting to destroy the liberties of every citizen, and feverishly trying, in whatever they can, to aid the Soviet Union." With spokesmen for the Truman Administration calling for a holy war on communism, it is hardly surprising that McCarthyism flourished, or that McCarthyite congressmen attacked the administration for its failure to act in accordance with its own rhetoric.

This is an original and controversial study which challenges the conventional view which depicts McCarthyism as *only* a function of conservative politics and Truman as *only* its innocent victim. While Alan Harper's study seeks to exculpate Truman from any responsibility for the creation of McCarthyism, Theoharis makes Truman its principal architect. His case is, perhaps unavoidably, overstated. He underestimates the depth and tenacity of pre-war anti-communism which structured the response of both Truman and his critics; he exaggerates the influence of the President over the post-war political environment; and he underestimates the influence of conservatives in shaping the political context in which Truman operated. On balance, however, this is a persuasive and important book—one which unsettles the comfortable assumptions of previous scholarship and advances a bold and biting critical interpretation of the Truman Administration.

THE IDEOLOGY of America's anti-communist politics is examined by political scientist Michael Parenti in *The Anti-Communist Impulse*.^{*} "If America has an ideology, or national purpose, it is anti-communism," argues Parenti. His book is a polemical attack upon the intellectual assumptions of this ideology and upon its baleful influence on Amer-

ican foreign policy.¹³ The anti-communist impulse, he argues, imposes a false categorical uniformity on diverse and competing communist systems and then interprets all of them as interchangeable parts of a threat to the "American way of life." At the same time, it assumes the innocence of American intentions and the benevolence of American actions. The result is a crusading foreign policy of global counter-revolution.

The Anti-Communist Impulse is not a terribly original book; most of the points Parenti makes have been made before, although they obviously have not penetrated the thinking of official Washington. It is also thinly researched. The chapters on foreign affairs, for instance, are based on the selective use of a narrow range of revisionist studies. Finally, it fails to explain adequately the origins of the anti-communist "impulse" or its persistence as a dominating influence in American life. These reservations aside, *The Anti-Communist Impulse* is a useful antidote to the stereotypical thought produced by America's long cold war.

The McCarthy years are still close enough to the present to remain the subject of autobiographical reminiscences. *Enough Rope*,¹⁴ by Senator Arthur V. Watkins, is one of several books in this genre to be published during the last five or six years.¹⁵ Watkins was a conservative Republican from Utah who in 1954 chaired the Senate's Select Committee to study censure charges against McCarthy.

Watkins was a zealous anti-communist who had served as a member of Pat McCarran's Internal Security Subcommittee. He was also an isolationist (or as he would have it, a "constitutionalist") who was critical of American involvement in Korea, and, more recently, Vietnam. He was chosen by Senate Majority Leader William Knowland to head the Select Committee because he had never become involved in the McCarthy controversy—in itself a rather disturbing testament to the insularity

of some senators during those troubled times.

There are few surprises in this memoir for those familiar with the proceedings of the McCarthy censure: the disinclination of the Eisenhower Administration to take a stand; McCarthy's unwillingness to compromise (in a sense he *sought* censure); Watkins's firm leadership in the face of incredibly abusive personal attacks. ("They will destroy you," warned his sister, who was convinced that McCarthy was right and that Watkins should not become a party to the censure effort.)

One item that is new concerns the role of Senate Minority Leader Lyndon Baines Johnson and a censure charge relating to McCarthy's abusive treatment of General Ralph Zwicker. The Watkins committee had recommended that McCarthy be censured on several counts, including his treatment of Zwicker. On the final day of debate, however, the Zwicker charge disappeared into a parliamentary mousetrap and never came to a direct vote. According to Watkins this was because Johnson came to him on the floor and demanded that the count be dropped because at least fifteen southern Democrats were unwilling to vote for it.

Watkins was defeated for re-election in 1958 in a three-way contest with Utah's McCarthyite former governor, J. Bracken Lee, running as an independent, and Democratic liberal Frank Moss. Thus, according to Watkins, the McCarthyites, aided by the lavish spending of Lyndon Johnson and the Democrats on behalf of Frank Moss, were able to settle an old score.

The final volume under review in this essay, *Odyssey of a Friend*,¹⁶ is a remarkable collection of letters written by Whittaker Chambers to William F. Buckley, Jr., between 1954 and 1961.

Many of the themes sounded in these letters will be familiar to the readers of *Witness* and *Cold Friday*:¹⁷ Chambers' dark, deterministic conviction that the West was in irreversible decline (the original title of *Cold Friday* was *The Losing Side*); his belief in the pervasive-

¹³ Two similar studies are Sidney Lens, *The Futile Crusade: Anti-Communism As American Credo* (Chicago, 1964); and The American Friends Service Committee, *Anatomy of Anti-Communism* (New York, 1969).

¹⁴ See, for example, Roy Cohn, *McCarthy* (New York, 1968); and Charles E. Potter, *Days of Shame* (New York, 1965).

¹⁵ Whittaker Chambers, *Witness* (New York, 1952) and *Cold Friday* (New York, 1964). The latter book is edited and with an introduction by Duncan Norton-Taylor.

ness of evil and corruption ("All life is rooted in horror as every field of springing grain is dunged with filth and death"); his fixation upon the Hiss case, the "heart of the anti-communist fight" by which "most of the rest stands or falls"; and finally, his deep and overwhelming sense of alienation, alienation not just from the superficial aspects of contemporary society, but from its most fundamental dynamics—socialism and capitalism, communism and anti-communism. Industrialism, materialism, war, revolution, these were the forces which destroyed Chambers's "civilization" and rendered himself irrelevant. "History hit us with a freight train," he wrote in his last letter; and earlier, "we are history's rejects."

His view of McCarthy, and it was this which attracted the attention of the press when the letters were first published, is not surprising. He accepted McCarthy as a fellow combatant in the war against communism, but he preferred to keep his distance. McCarthy had no program, no strategy, but "only a tactic which consisted exclusively in the impulse: Attack."

On one occasion McCarthy crudely used Chambers and the latter never forgot or forgave.¹⁶ McCarthy's antics, moreover, distracted attention from the all-important (in Chambers's eyes) Hiss case. In the end, Chambers concluded that McCarthy was a godsend for the communists; for the Senator united the non-communist left while dividing the right.

The Hiss case and Joe McCarthy aside, these letters are fascinating, although one occasionally wishes that the other side of the correspondence, Buckley's letters to Chambers, were also included. Certainly Chambers is a major figure whose strange odyssey can teach us a great deal about the social and intellectual history of modern America.

¹⁶ In early 1953, during the fight over the confirmation of Charles Bohlen as ambassador to the Soviet Union, McCarthy paid a conspicuous visit to Chambers's Maryland farm. The visit was designed, of course, to suggest that Chambers had some information concerning Bohlen. Chambers had nothing of the sort and resented McCarthy's crude tactics.

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The Anti-Communist Impulse. By Michael Parenti. (Random House, New York, 1969. Pp. xi, 333. Appendices and index. \$7.95.)

Enough Rope. By Arthur V. Watkins. (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, and University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 1969. Pp. xii, 302. Appendices, index. \$6.95.)

Odyssey of A Friend: Whittaker Chambers' Letters to William F. Buckley, Jr., 1954-1961. Edited with notes by William F. Buckley, Jr. Foreword by Ralph de Toledano (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1969. Pp. 303. Index. \$6.95.)



BOOK REVIEWS

STATE AND REGIONAL

Railroads and the Granger Laws. By GEORGE H. MILLER. (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1971. Pp. xi, 296. Notes, bibliography, index. \$12.50.)

This is a well-researched and documented study of the railroads and Grangers, more so of the railroads than of the Grangers; in fact it is so well-documented that almost one-third of the book is given to footnotes, which most of us like to believe are the trademarks of a scholar. The author in challenging the thesis that the laws regulating the railroads generally have been attributed to agrarian influences concentrates on the railroads of the upper Mississippi Valley, the rate law of 1870-1871, the states and the railroads—including detailed accounts of activities in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin—and then enters into a discussion of the Grangers and Granger laws, public and private policy, and a summation. The result is a tightly written, analytical, and highly informative account of the subject that promises to withstand the test of time.

Of particular interest to Wisconsin readers is the least typical of the laws studied, the Potter law of Wisconsin which was viewed as radical and deserving of the criticisms it received. After discussing the question of public aid for railroads in the state, the conditions

they were in, the by-passing of Wisconsin as a place of investment by Easterners in favor of Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota, the decline of the wheat industry and the repudiation of debts growing out of the railway farm-mortgage plan, the author shows that Milwaukee had become the seat of one of the most aggressive railroad systems in the country and that local ownership and control was no guarantee against arbitrary and extortionate rate-making. Although the author argues that discontent transcended agrarian borders, he concedes, especially after the decline of the wheat industry, that the farmer of Wisconsin was a more prominent figure in the movement for state railway control than he was in any other Granger state. Still he needed the support of the more intelligent city people and villagers, the outraged shippers and merchants, without whose help he was ineffective.

What is unclear to the reader is precisely who has been claiming that the Granger laws were primarily the result of agrarian agitation, and when? The author writes as though a hard-and-fast line had been drawn between the rural and nonrural elements of the 1870's. In a section of the country in which rural thinking was as pervasive as in Wisconsin, it is difficult to think of the small business and mercantile interests as being as segregated from the farming interest as is implied. The values of the 1870's for the most part were the values of a rural society, even of the larger towns and cities. The mood, temper, and demands of the farmers, regardless of whether they had to have the

help of the townspeople, were very significant, even crucial, factors in the enactment of sectional legislation.

This in no way is designed to detract from the high quality of the book. It is a well-thought-out and well-presented study that will appeal more to the specialist than the general student, but one that should find its way on the reading list of many courses.

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The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832, Volume I Illinois Volunteers. Compiled and edited by ELLEN M. WHITNEY. (*Illinois Historical Collections*, Vol. XXXV, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, 1970. Pp. xx, 682. Notes, appendix, index. \$20.00.)

The Black Hawk War, which swept across northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin during 1832, resulted from the federal policy of forcing Indians who lived east of the Mississippi River to move west of that stream. For those interested in Indian affairs or midwestern history, the conflict provides a classic example of a frontier clash between advancing whites and the displaced aborigines. This book, the first of a projected three-volume series, is the result of nearly thirty years of work by numerous historians working for the Illinois State Historical Library, but the bulk of the editing has been done by Mrs. Ellen Whitney. The volume includes a long introduction which aptly places the Black Hawk War in its historical context. Next follow the edited muster rolls of the Illinois militia units called to duty for the brief campaign of 1831 which forced the last reluctant Sauk-Fox tribesmen west beyond the Mississippi. Most of the book, however, consists of the muster rolls for the campaign of 1832—the Black Hawk War.

Although clearly aimed at researchers and not general readers, the documents edited here offer varied material for anyone who turns the pages. In addition to giving the names of all men who served in the militia units which took part in the war, the muster rolls include much other information. They show, for example, that militia officers and noncommissioned officers, all the way down through the corporals,

were elected by the members of each company. They give the pay scale which in 1831 ranged from \$40 a month for a captain down to \$6.66 for each private. For mounted units, the rolls sometimes show the sex and color of each man's horse. They even demonstrate the often overlooked practice of using Indian warriors from neutral tribes or those hostile to the Sauk-Fox, and include the rosters of two such Indian companies.

Mrs. Whitney, the editor, lists two goals for this volume. The introduction is supposed to place the conflict in historical perspective. It does. The remainder of the book tries to account for the activities of as many Illinois Volunteers as possible. This is done with an awesome thoroughness and a high degree of technical skill. The extensive annotations and an index of over 100 pages give clear evidence of the painstaking care with which this material has been edited. This is a superior job on a regional topic which has broad national implications. Scholars interested in the problems of frontier government, transportation, finance, and defense can look forward with enthusiasm to the next two volumes in this project.

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GENERAL HISTORY

British Investment in American Railways, 1834-1898. By DOROTHY R. ADLER. Edited by MURIEL E. HIDY. (Published for the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation by The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1970. Editor's introduction, notes, tables, appendices, bibliography, index. \$11.50.)

The Life and Decline of the American Railroad. By JOHN F. STOVER. (Oxford University Press, New York, 1970. Maps, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$7.50.)

These two books are as different from each other as George Stephenson's "Rocket" and today's massive diesel-electric locomotive. Professor Stover, well-known to students through his *Railroads of the South* (1955) and to a wider audience through his *American Railroads* (1961), has written a general history

aimed at the reading public rather than the scholar. The first third of his book brings the reader down to the end of the nineteenth century. This growth phase of the railroad industry is an extraordinary story. Stover tells it clearly, perceptively, and excitingly. With a sure eye for the anecdote or detail that illuminates a point instead of dazzling the reader, he conveys a confident grasp of the main themes. He never lets himself or his reader be shunted off on to branch lines, no matter how intriguing or dramatic the story may be.

The bulk of the book, about 200 pages, deals with the twentieth century. The main theme is the relative decline of the industry. Simply stated, in 1900 railroads were by far the largest enterprises in the nation. They absorbed the most capital, employed the most workers, and hauled most of the nation's freight and passengers. By 1970 railroads had fallen far behind other leading industries, they had lost most of their riders to airlines, buses, and especially to private automobiles, and they had given up much of their most profitable freight to their competitors—pipeline, trucking, and airline companies. If the main outlines of this story are familiar, Stover analyzes the process with a shrewd eye for underlying forces and a judicious understanding for railroad problems. Along the way there are some useful correctives and reminders. So short is the popular historical memory that most of us date the onset of decline after the Second World War. The author pushes it back by almost a generation, though his argument is less convincing than it might be because he uses "operating ratios" as an analytical tool without ever saying what they mean or how they are calculated. Most of us have forgotten that the industry poured millions of dollars into passenger traffic after 1945. Despite new equipment and improved service, riders abandoned the railroads long before the industry abandoned passengers.

Mrs. Adler's book is totally different in scope, approach, and conception. A dissertation completed at Cambridge University in 1958 and published posthumously, it is a work of impressively detailed scholarship and is based on manuscripts in Welsh libraries, official publications, newspapers, periodicals, and secondary works. Of all the aspects of railroad history, finance is perhaps the most complicated and difficult to handle. Consider the problems. Each company has a separate financial history and to understand the industry as a whole one must necessarily understand each of its parts. Given the number of railroads formed in the nine-

teenth century, that is a task so massive as to be beyond the capacity of any historian to master. The record bulks so large that a lifetime of study would be insufficient to examine more than a fraction of the papers available. Some indication of the magnitude of even a small part of the problem can be seen in the list of some 240 securities issued or sold on the London market that Mrs. Adler sets out in two of her appendices.

To be sure, the financial historian's task is lightened by the fact that many records have been lost or destroyed. On the other hand, this means that a great deal of the intricate story can never be pieced together. Moreover, though the archives of many railroads are available for study, relatively few collections of papers of people involved in the Anglo-American money markets have ever been opened to historians. It is not without point that Mrs. Adler had to write her study without the benefit of such insights. For the most part she has been forced into examining what newspapers and financial periodicals said was happening. Because Professor Stover is writing for the general reader rather than the specialist, he solves these problems by ignoring them. It is one of the few weaknesses of his treatment that he gives no general, interpretative view of railroad finance.

For all of these reasons, it is understandable that Mrs. Adler's study of British investment should of necessity be both incomplete and detailed. For the most part, we learn only what the published record shows, and we get one fact piled upon another. In the first chapter, for example, there are 128 footnotes for twenty-four pages; the notes occupy almost as much space as the text. To some extent, that is the reality of the remaining historical record and the intricacies of the financial process. Within the limits imposed by these circumstances, as well as the author not being able to revise her own work for publication or to extend it to World War I as she had planned, we must be grateful indeed for what we have.

What Mrs. Adler gives us essentially is a reference work. The concluding overview excepted (and it is richly thematic), the book is particularly valuable for the way in which it pinpoints details of which railroads placed which securities on the market, when these offerings were put out, which London firms handled them, who took them up, and what types of securities appealed to various categories of British investors at various times. All of this is set out in meticulous detail and

against an ongoing background of fluctuations in American and British money markets.

This is extremely valuable data. One can be sure that it will be mined for many years to come. However, like so many dissertations it presumes that readers, including specialized ones, know as much about the subject as the author does. (Every teacher recognizes the absurdity of this proposition, though many dissertation advisers never act on it.) As a consequence, Mrs. Adler omits virtually all of the essential technical information about the operation of the securities markets that any reader, specialized or not, must have if he is to come to grips with the subject. For example, "senior securities" are mentioned from time to time, but the reader is never given a hint of what they are or why investors might or might not prefer them. Arbitrage is also mentioned but never defined until page 152. Even then, it is the editor who supplies a definition in a footnote. Worse, the explanation explains nothing for the uninitiated. In short, the kinds of revisions that an adviser or a press would normally require have been necessarily omitted. This is understandable and inescapable in this case, but the way is still open for an enterprising graduate student to write a study of British investment that explains as well as reports.

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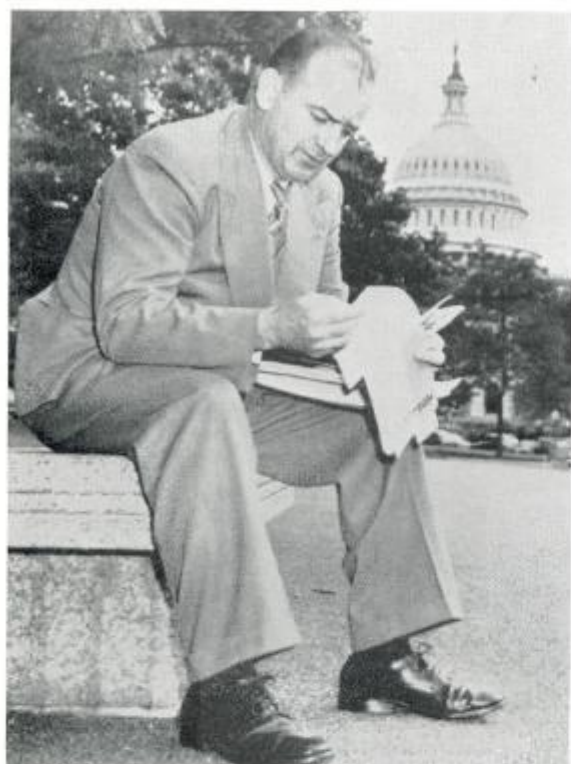
The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate. By ROBERT GRIFFITH. (The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1970. Pp. xi, 362. Preface, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$8.50.)

This significant book won the 1970 Frederick Jackson Turner Award, with which the Organization of American Historians recognizes the excellence of an author's first work. The study focuses on the Senate career of Joseph McCarthy from 1950-1954. Behind the rise of McCarthy, the author discovered five interrelated causes: fear of radicalism, cold war events, McCarthy's demagogic talents, partisan politics, and Senate weaknesses. The latter two factors are emphasized. McCarthy's power and influence rested on more than his own talents. His triumph lay in making himself the symbol of anti-Communism for many Republicans. For five years the Republican party en-

dorsed or tolerated the Senator because of the issues he symbolized and their role in the Republican drive for power. Many Democrats viewed McCarthy as a threat to personal and party fortunes, and, fearful of appearing "soft" toward Communism, sometimes exceeded their opponents in sponsoring repression. Consequently, neither party acted to check McCarthy's excessive behavior. The Senate's conservative institutions of prerogative and precedent became the instruments of McCarthy's worst abuses. When finally persuaded to act, the Senate circumspectly evaded the issues and assumptions upon which McCarthy had built his political career, choosing instead to condemn him for conduct "contrary to senatorial traditions."

Although the book covers some familiar ground, it adds substantially to our understanding of the McCarthy controversy. The variety and quality of sources used, and Griffith's deft handling of them, are the major reasons for the book's value. Although the McCarthy Papers remain unavailable, Griffith consulted more than twenty manuscript collections. He is the first scholar to utilize the Washington files of the National Committee For An Effective Congress (NCEC), which provide a unique inside picture of how the Senate functioned with regard to the Senator. Griffith elucidates the creation and demise of the delicate balance of forces which for five years assured McCarthy his privileged sanctuary.

Griffith offers a lengthy and valuable analysis of the activities of the Clearing House, an offshoot of the NCEC. Commencing in 1953, this small group of political activists publicized McCarthy's activities and lobbied against him in the Senate. The author, however, exaggerates the accomplishments of the Clearing House. Although he contends that the 1954 Louis Bean study (sponsored by the Clearing House) exploded the myth of McCarthy's invincibility, Griffith only shows that the study received "wide distribution" and that copies were "sent" to key political figures. This was true of countless exposés of McCarthy; the important question is whether anyone acted upon such critiques. Unconvincing evidence suggests that the Clearing House was the catalyst behind the ousting of J. B. Matthews in 1953 and that this was a "tentative success" for the group. Griffith slights the most important factors—the spontaneous explosion of public outrage and the maneuverings of White House staff members to have President Eisenhower criticize Matthews. Dubious evidence is supposed to confirm the substantial influence of the Clear-



UP-Madison Capital Times

While a Senate Elections Subcommittee was debating his Senatorial fitness, McCarthy, who had refused an invitation to testify, sat calmly reading on a bench on the Capitol Grounds.

ing House over Senator John McClellan during debate on the censure resolution. The alleged power of the group is multiplied when we are informed—with no documentation whatsoever—that McClellan “held the key to much of the uncommitted Democratic vote” and that Senators Thomas Burke and John Kennedy “tied their votes to McClellan’s lead.”

This shortcoming hardly lessens the substantial contribution of this outstanding study. No historian can write authoritatively on McCarthy, the anti-Communist complex, or partisan politics in the early 1950’s without consulting this book.

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The Irreconcilables: The Fight Against The League of Nations. By Ralph Stone. (The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1970. Pp. 182. Notes, appendix, bibliographical essay, index, \$9.95.)

In a day when the Executive branch of the federal government erroneously seeks to label

its foreign policy critics with the blanket indictment “new isolationists,” Ralph Stone’s able study of the “irreconcilables” of a half century ago is particularly welcome.

In a compact, well-researched, and carefully composed book, Stone demonstrates that the so-called “bitter-enders” were quite far removed from an isolationist “ideologically homogeneous minority set off from the mainstream of American thought.” Fortified as the irreconcilables were by the weighty logic of Washington’s Farewell Address and Monroe’s inviolable doctrine, it remains a wonder that they were forced to operate as a minority and still appear in many historical accounts as a rigid, irrational, and demagogic band of obstructionists.

Stone stresses the “essential diversity” of the sixteen irreconcilables. Indeed, one would be hard put to find two more diverse personalities than Joseph I. France, outstanding physician, Jeffersonian liberal, a peace progressive in sentiment, even an admirer of Lenin, and Miles Poindexter who attacked not only Wilson and the League but also pacifists, socialists, and organized labor.

Stone highlights the careers of the lesser known irreconcilables and shows that in some respects they were more influential than their more famous colleagues, Borah, Reed, and Johnson. Flexible, skilled in debate and tactics, and always able to rely on Wilson’s intransigence to bring them through the tight spots, the irreconcilables raised some probing questions concerning the League and the whole concept of collective security. They, like almost everyone else, were slaves to the belief that the Senate debate over ratification of the Versailles Treaty and American membership in the League was the most important parliamentary battle in the history of the Republic. This feeling, while it added conviction to the struggle, now appears somewhat inflated, for the history of the League probably would not have been substantially different given United States membership. Nevertheless, though no band of angels, the “batallion of death” stood firm in the assurance that they and they alone possessed the courage to protect the proven value of freedom of action in American foreign policy.

The reader finishes the book wishing that Stone’s five-page concluding chapter had explored in greater depth the fundamental issues concerning collective security raised by the irreconcilables. In addition, one wonders why the myth that the League (or the United Nations) would become “a dictatorial superstate”

has persisted? The misuse of the term "isolationist" by Wilson during the Treaty fight and by many politicians and historians since might well serve as the basis for another study linking the League period to our own day.

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Cry from the Cotton: The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal. By DONALD H. GRUBBS. (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1971. Pp. xvi, 218. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$8.50.)

Here is a good social history, the kind of social history we need more of. Maybe a bit overdocumented, but it's better to err on that side than on the other. The major title, *Cry from the Cotton*, leaves room for the whole story, from the slave plantations and poor whites of the old Southeast more than a century ago to today's inner city's problems of erstwhile small cotton farmers, sharecroppers, and day laborers rendered surplus in recent years on the better level lands by power-driven machines and chemical weedkillers, and elsewhere by cattle growing and tree farming. The subtitle, *The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal*, focuses on the *Cry* in the 1930's with minimal attention to matters before or after that decade. The first brief chapter has a few paragraphs on plantation backgrounds and the last five pages of the book bring the story of Harry Leland ("Mitch") Mitchell, the principal subject, up through 1970.

Though delimitation of material is praiseworthy, it is somewhat unexpected to find only a locality reference to the "STFU's Hillhouse Cooperative in Northern Mississippi" (Delta Cooperative Farms), organized in 1936; and no mention of either the National Sharecroppers Fund, set up in 1936, which gave financial and other support to the STFU, or of the reform-slanted Southern Conference for Human Welfare with southwide meetings in Birmingham in 1938 and Chattanooga in 1940.

The book is rightfully compact, with Mitchell and all the other characters (and they are legion) playing their many-faceted roles. Anyone who knows what was going on in the thirties will welcome Grubb's treatment of it; anyone who doesn't know can learn a great deal about it by reading this book. It was a

dynamic period, with a reminder here and there of Populist hopes, of Declaration of Independence hopes, of Kingdom of God hopes—the landless would have land, racism would be set aside, the national government would serve all of the people on the basis of their particular needs. These hopes emerged haltingly in a framework of political expediency, and then faded out almost completely in the same way.

The author lets the record speak, as Will Alexander makes his constructive contributions; as the hopeful Tenant-Purchase Bill of Senator John Bankhead and Congressman Marvin Jones is emasculated before it is passed; as President J. R. Butler of the STFU winds his uncertain way through complicated situations; as Cully Cobb and Chester Davis represent firmly the traditional conservative cotton planters and succeed in unseating the reformers by Deep South political strategy; as Don Henderson follows the Communist line; as Gardner Jackson in Washington unstintingly supports the STFU, insists on harmony, and finally parts ways with Mitchell and his Union; as Howard (Buck) Kester, religiously oriented, steps bravely into the thick of the violent reaction of the planters to STFU activities; as John L. Lewis remains safely aloof; as Mrs. Mary Connor Myers collects facts about sharecropper conditions that prove too unpopular in places of power for publication; as President Roosevelt expresses guarded sympathy for the sharecroppers, understands the politics involved, and sets up the Farm Security Administration; as Norman Thomas goes to bat again and again for the hard-pressed elements of the Southern population; as Rexford Tugwell finds it difficult to be himself in all the confusion; as Henry Wallace tries to carry out some of his democratic ideals in a situation basically undemocratic; and as the charismatic Reverend Claude Williams points to the Promised Land, gets beat up because of his identification with the STFU, and then is expelled by it.

Only one basic inadequacy was noted: on page 8 reference is made to the sharecropper working "on halves": says the author, "half of the proceeds of the cropper's cotton goes to the landlord, who had furnished the cropper with everything he needs to make the crop, from shack to seeds." This gives the erroneous impression that the sharecropper received the other half. Not so: half of the crop went directly to the landlord, and out of the other half the sharecropper paid, usually at high carrying charges, for advances made to him on which to live while the crop was being produced—food, clothing, patent medicines—and beyond that

often for half of the fertilizer and seed. Sometimes the sharecropper received some cash at settlement time; often he ended up in debt.

Two other books from Chapel Hill that wear well with this one are Rupert Vance's *Human Factors in Cotton Culture* (1929), and Sidney Baldwin's *Poverty and Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Farm Security Administration* (1968).

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The Uncompleted Past. By MARTIN DUBERMAN. (Random House, New York, 1969. Pp. xiii, 375. Index. \$7.95.)

Interpreting American History: Conversations with Historians. Edited by JOHN A. GARRATY. (Macmillan Company, New York and London, 1970. 1 vol. and 2 vols. Pp. x, 367, 334. Illustrations. Cloth, \$10.95; paper, \$4.95 each.)

The Politics of History. By HOWARD ZINN. (Beacon Press, Boston, 1970. Pp. x, 390. Notes, index. \$7.50.)

The historian learns little new in these volumes in either content or form despite appearances to the contrary. Both the Duberman and Zinn volumes are mainly collections of previously published essays and book reviews. Some of the Duberman selections appear in their third or fourth version in *The Uncompleted Past*. While the specific pieces by the twenty-nine eminent historians in the Garraty anthology see print for the first time, all the interpretations naturally accord with the previously well-known views of these men. Garraty's volumes, however, use a new form of question and answer in conversational format to present these well-known views. Garraty, a professor of history at Columbia University and author of several biographies, interviewed each historian with a tape recorder. He then reduced each transcribed conversation to a chapter. Each historian then edited the transcription, sometimes extensively, to produce the final chapters of the two volumes. Thus the final version of each conversation reads very much like a standard chapter in any other textbook for a college survey course in United States history. The resemblance is enhanced with the addition of the now-usual chapters on cultural and economic history to the customary framework of political events. Instead of a bibliography, the second volume concludes with a conversation on historiography. In fact,

the publisher promotes the volumes as a text, and the two volumes divide at the traditional point, after the Civil War.

All thirty-two historians represented by the books under review are well-known within the historical profession and some outside it. Garraty deliberately sought to provide "an authoritative overview of American history and of contemporary historical scholarship," in line with his textbook aim, by selecting the "best men" in each field from the "present day historical establishment." Most men, as he points out, therefore are middle-aged or older (some in their seventies), hold chairs in distinguished institutions, are or have headed the major national historical societies, and have won many prizes and honors, including nine Pulitzer Prizes as of 1969. Thus, Bernard Bailyn talks on the American Revolution, Richard Morris on the Confederation and Constitution, Stanley Elkins on slavery, Ray Billington on the frontier, T. Harry Williams on the Civil War, David Donald on Reconstruction, C. Vann Woodward on the Negro in American life, George Mowry on the Progressive movement, Arthur Link on World War I, William Leuchtenburg on the New Deal, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., on political and social change from 1941-1968, and many other scholars as famous as these speak with authority on the fields they helped shape. Garraty specifically omitted the so-called "New Left" historians, like Howard Zinn, from his interpreters. Yet Zinn is as famous in the profession, and perhaps more so outside the academy, as all but a few of those selected by Garraty. A professor of political science at Boston University, he published his dissertation as *La Guardia in Congress* and five other books, besides the present one, among which are *The Southern Mystique*, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*, and *Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal*. His articles appear in such establishment journals as the *New York Times* and *Harpers* as well as *Ramparts* and the *Nation*. He is a scholar-activist who made headlines in 1968 when he and Father Daniel Berrigan went to Hanoi to receive three United States fliers from North Vietnam. Duberman is equally recognized outside the historical profession for his plays, especially *In White America*, his drama criticism for *Partisan Review*, and book reviewing for the *New York Times*, *Book Week*, and many other periodicals. Educated at Yale and Harvard, he wrote two prize-winning biographies of abolitionists, taught at Princeton when he wrote these pieces, and now holds a chair at the City University of New York. In short, all of these men are part of the establish-

ment so far as scholarly credentials go, are eminent in and out of the profession, and are at least ten years older than the magic age of thirty.

What divides these historians then is not their eminence, age, or credentials but their espoused aims for history and the implications those aims have for what they stress in the American past. Garraty, Duberman, and Zinn all want to make the past relevant to the present but see the results in quite different lights with diverse conclusions. Zinn espouses "radical history" for the political end of changing current American society and politics. For him, history like all knowledge possesses the power to sensitize people to the false ideology of their times, thereby persuading people to change the system from supporting racism and violence at home and abroad to humane ends. Historians ought therefore to write and teach toward four ends: to "expose the pretensions of governments," to intensify "perceptions of how bad things are, for the victims of the world," to expose the ideology that pervades the American culture for what it is—a "rationale for the going order"—and to "recapture those few moments in the past which show the possibility of a better way of life than that which has dominated the earth thus far." He sees the traditional historian's belief in objectivity as a disguise for inactivity and a support for the established order of racism, social inequality, aggression, and violence domestically and overseas. Rather, morality must pervade the historian's research and teaching. "To be truly radical is to maintain a set of transcendental beliefs (yes, absolutes) by which to judge and thus to transform any particular social system." All social systems are bad, and the American one particularly so as his substantive sections on class inequality, race, and nationalistic aggression try to show. Throughout the essays on theory and in practice he particularly castigates liberalism as just another ideology of delusion and inhumanity, for in the end it too supports the worst features of the establishment like any other set of beliefs. Although Zinn believes morality should pervade the historian's selection of problems to investigate and the ends to which he directs history, he does not believe that facts should be distorted to fit preconceived notions, moral or otherwise.

That moral ends must distort the evidence of the past as well as direct the ends of the historian is just the fear so often expressed by the historians in Garraty's anthology. Garraty is frank in admitting that the historians he interviewed represented the "consensus school"

in their approach to the American past. Most of them admit that the conflict of class, race, and war on which Zinn concentrates did happen but they feel that the United States' history is better understood by studying the values shared by the majority of Americans throughout their history than dissent by minorities from these ideals. With some exceptions, these historians see American society as more open than closed in social class and mobility, picture power as more distributed among the people than in the hands of any elite, and feel that on balance the American system worked rather well when compared to other societies in the world. In fact, most portray the United States as an exceptional society unique in the good fortune of its heritage. While racism, class, and war occurred in American history, they feel that this was neither the conscious nor unconscious aim of most Americans nor of a conspiratorial elite. For them, American beliefs were not a false ideology propagated by an exploitative elite but a true reflection of the realities of a relatively open and homogeneous society with the minor but tragic exception of black and red men. Thus, most of the historians in Garraty's volume talk about past and present political leaders and view the world through their eyes. In fact, to some this is the only true way to approach the study of past reality, or at least this is how the editor, so fond of political biography himself, has presented their views.

Duberman seems torn between his sympathy for the humane ends advocated by Zinn and the traditional notions of objectivity espoused by his teachers in the Garraty volume. His book is a diary of the change in one liberal's outlook on the world during the 1960's. The young might see *The Uncompleted Past* as naught but an "ego trip" for the author in his *Weltschmerz*. Here is an intellectual who feels that his world is and ought to be the world of everyman. Thus, the sections of his book each begin with the definite article *The*: "The Profession of History," "The Movement," "The Crisis of the Universities." Under these titles, Duberman talks principally about his impressions of the limits and possibilities of the historian's craft as he reviewed books of others, how his impressions of the possibilities of the civil rights movement changed over time, and his experience with students at Princeton during a turbulent decade for academia. At the end of the decade and the book, Duberman wonders whether historians in general, and he in particular, are of any worth in the present calamities and whether the past can really be

understood in any basic way. In short, he cannot reconcile the larger world of politics and life with the smaller world of the historian.

Duberman's dilemma points up the basic problem with the thinking of almost all the historians in these four volumes. With few exceptions all espouse larger moral ends for historical understanding, but they differ about the basic model of society requisite for analysis for any moral end. Zinn is as contradictory in his own essays on the nature of American society in its fundamentals as he differs from some of the authors in Garraty. In fact, Zinn and Duberman at a fundamental level possess the same unsophisticated approach to the analysis of society and culture as so many of the historical establishment in the Garraty volumes. The picture of the past may be gloomy for one and happy for the other, but both sides demonstrate weak causal analysis. Bailyn on the Revolution and Diamond on the European basis of American Civilization were among the few writers in these volumes who showed any application of a complicated approach to causation and the workings of society. Perhaps Duberman is the best illustration of the problem. He seeks the explanation of human actions solely in terms of men's motives. Given his sympathy for the abolitionists of the 1840's and the neo-abolitionists of the 1960's, he must believe that the professed goals of men are frequently the main motivation for their actions; otherwise he agrees with those who see reformers as driven by their subconscious neuroses. Whether he sees motives as conscious or unconscious however, he cannot discover them adequately in past men to give him the complete explanation he so urgently craves, for he lacks sufficient evidence on one hand and must use an elaborate theoretical framework alien to him on the other. Even worse, it is doubtful that historical events can be explained solely by reference to the participants' pictures of the situation or their motives. Other factors often unknown to the participants operate in many cases of historical events, and so Duberman's model of explanation is doubly weak. The frustration he finds in reconstructing the explanation of the past does not bother him as a playwright, for then he creates the motives of his characters and manipulates their actions according to his model of men and their behavior. Perhaps this accounts, as much as his pessimism about current American life, for why he seems to wish to leave history-writing for play-writing at the end of the decade.

The lack of an adequate explanatory framework for men's actions in Zinn's book also leads the reader to wonder how useful radical history will be in changing men's actions as opposed to their minds, for in the end, Zinn, like Duberman, subscribes to a theory of motivation as causation in human affairs. That is why he can urge radical consciousness as the chief goal of the historian's efforts. But, here again, he does not show how this consciousness of the actors' past or present accomplishes any action. He merely posits without proof that it does in his essays. Perhaps, if he looked into the model that Bailyn uses in analyzing the Revolution, he would see both the possibilities and the limits of consciousness as ideology or otherwise in explaining social change. Ideas are needed, but so are certain structural features in the situations to allow these ideas to operate. Neither ideas nor actions nor social structure alone, but all in varying combinations at different times seem to make things happen in the past as well as the present. If this is so, then almost all the historians in these books, regardless of whose side they cheer, need to add elements to their analysis to achieve the ends they espouse. Otherwise they fool themselves as much as they fool their readers.

ROBERT F. BERKHOFFER, JR.

University of Wisconsin

Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America. By WALTER I. TRATTNER (Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1970. Pp. 319. Illustrations. \$10.00.)

A considerable portion of the development of American wealth, both agricultural and industrial, was built out of the bodies of slaves and young children. Slavery was done away with in 1863. Child labor has not altogether disappeared; it is still used and abused in migrant farm-work families. In fact, the bulk of industrial child labor was made illegal only during the depression years of the thirties.

This book by a history and social welfare professor at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee is the story of how an organization fought for child welfare from 1900 to the present. This group of people called the National Child Labor Committee, fought all the battles known to reformers in its seven decades, and

it is still at work. They tried getting state laws passed; they twice passed federal legislation only to have the Supreme Court declare the laws unconstitutional; and they tried a constitutional amendment. They finally succeeded by executive order during the time when emergency powers were being used to fight the ravages of the depression.

The history is one of fighting the Southern textile millowners, the glass factory owners, the mine owners, and the National Association of Manufacturers, organized labor, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and at one period, most of the newspapers. The National Child Labor Committee had many allies, the most important of which was simply public opinion, which grew more and more in favor of controlling the use of children in the labor market. Reformers have become used to having the bulk of voters in favor of something, only to find politicians paying more attention to the rich and powerful people such as those who run the National Association of Manufacturers.

The kind of activity the National Child Labor Committee tried to eliminate from American life was the use of children from six to fourteen years of age working in the humid, lint-filled spindle rooms of textile mills; young boys six to fourteen working in the anthracite mines; young boys working in the furnace rooms of glass factories. The average working day was eleven hours. The children, if they dozed off, were doused with cold water or beaten. In 1900 there were two million workers between the ages of ten and fifteen and many more under ten who were not even counted in the census. They were paid very little, at most a few cents per hour. Included in the excuses for such practices were that they kept the children off the streets and, besides, without such cheap labor, the industries would go bankrupt.

The basic facts about child labor, the organization of the National Child Labor Committee, its trials and tribulations over seventy years are well and clearly reported in this history. For those of us who are concerned about child welfare, it is full of useful information. For those of us interested in the process of successful reform, it describes the virtues of hopeful persistence, a sound knowledge base and hard work. All of those interested in American history beyond military and political developments will find this book is more than satisfactory.

MARTIN B. LOEB

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Clement L. Vallandigham.

The Limits of Dissent: Clement L. Vallandigham and the Civil War. By FRANK L. KLEMENT. (The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1971. Pp. xii, 351. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$10.50.)

Few figures of the Civil War era were as controversial or notorious as Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio, the most outspoken of the "Peace Democrats" and a harsh critic of the Lincoln Administration. To Republicans, he was an out-and-out traitor, "the most unpopular man in the North;" to many Democrats, his arrest for encouraging disloyalty and subsequent conviction by a military court made him a martyr to the cause of free speech.

Frank L. Klement's biography of Vallandigham is the first scholarly appraisal of this Copperhead leader's career. In it, Vallandigham emerges as a dogmatic, inflexible, and ambitious politician, who misjudged both the political situation in the North and the ultimate aims of the South. Nonetheless, Klement feels Vallandigham has been unfairly treated by historians, and a good part of the book is an attempt to dispel the myths and misconceptions which surround his name. As in his important earlier work, *Copperheads of the Middle West*, Klement skillfully discusses such bases of anti-war sentiment as Western sectionalism, opposition to arbitrary arrests and the draft, and

racism. He denies that Vallandigham was involved in any secret treasonable activities, and insists he never urged resistance to the draft or other laws.

Although Klement is by no means sympathetic to many of Vallandigham's views, the book does represent a partial rehabilitation of the Copperhead leader. At times it seems as if Klement accepts Vallandigham's own analysis of the political situation, as in such dubious assertions as "Lincoln became a servant of New England and industrialism," and "Vallandigham and Lincoln saw eye to eye" on Reconstruction. Moreover, Klement seems to slough over some of Vallandigham's more questionable actions. During his brief exile to the Confederacy in 1863, for example, Vallandigham advised Southerners that if they held out until the following year a new, peace-oriented administration would be elected in the North, and he warned that any invasion of the North would solidify Lincoln's support. Did this not border on giving aid and comfort to the enemy?

According to Klement, Vallandigham occupied a "middle position" in the midwestern Democracy, opposing both the War Democrats who supported the administration, and the more extreme peace men who endorsed the Southern cause. He always insisted his goals were peace and union. But his specific peace plans, which included a proposal for an armistice, European mediation, and a national presidential election in 1864, were, as Klement notes, "quite vague and impractical." It may be that Vallandigham never really decided which of his twin goals had the higher priority. Far from being the inflexible dogmatist pictured by Klement, Vallandigham may be seen as inconsistent and vacillating, and having no real alternative to the course pursued by the President.

Vallandigham was not a pacifist—he ardently supported the Mexican War and called its opponents traitors. His opposition to the Civil War was political and legal, and it is on this basis that it must be judged. On the one hand, Vallandigham recognized that the line between dissent and treason can be obliterated in wartime and he helped establish the principle that the prosecution of a war must not be an excuse for the suppression of basic civil liberties. On the other hand, there is no question that his backward-looking political conservatism was anachronistic and inflexible, that racism was a major prop of his antiwar outlook, and that, far from recognizing the role of slavery in bringing about the war, he blamed the conflict on the abolitionists. Unlike today's

war critics, Vallandigham never developed a forward-looking critique of administration policies. His slogan, "the Union as it was, the Constitution as it is," was, at the war's outset, accepted by almost all Northerners. Yet as the war progressed most—though not Vallandigham—came to endorse Lincoln's alternative dictum, "the dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate for the stormy present."

ERIC FONER

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Maury Maverick: A Political Biography. By RICHARD B. HENDERSON. (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1970. Pp. xxiii, 386. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$8.50.)

Maury Maverick stuck out from the Southern conservatism of his day like a sore thumb. For that reason it is unfortunate that Mr. Henderson has seemed to grasp only the thumb, and not the man. The biography is, to be sure, heavily documented, but overwhelmingly anecdotal and surprisingly superficial when it comes to discussing such important themes as Maverick's shifting stands on isolation, civil rights, and racism. The reader is made well aware of these changes, but not of why they occurred. The book is subtitled *A Political Biography*, and perhaps this is the author's excuse for not presenting the reader with the private as well as the public man. Most "political biographies" are thus, not out of choice, but because there are no private papers, and the public man is all that is visible. Such is not the case here, as the bibliographical essay indicates.

One of the major problems in biographical literature is the placing of the subject in the context of his time (present, past, and future). In this area, too, the book is somewhat deficient. Maverick, for example, played an important role in Franklin Roosevelt's wartime agencies, but the author restricts his narrative to Maverick's work in the agencies without giving the reader a feeling for the nature of the agencies themselves (which may well have explained some of Maverick's actions). Furthermore, a greater familiarity with the period in general would have prevented Henderson from making such mistakes as saying that the Gavan Anti-Lynching Bill failed in the House of Representatives (page 141). The negative vote Henderson cites was taken on proposed amend-

ments to the bill. The bill itself passed in the House but was supplanted in the Senate by the Wagner-Van Nuys Bill.

Finally, the author makes much of Maverick's prophecies for the future. While the reader should recognize from the book that Maverick was a perceptive man of broad interests, there may arise some question as to whether the Congressman's batting average was quite as close to 1,000 as is indicated. One tends to wonder, in fact, whether Maury ever guessed wrong—except, of course, in his ability to get elected.

Henderson concludes the biography with a reference to Maverick's "love affair with his land, his people, and his Texas heritage," but, considering the painfully short time in national and local office given to him by his constituents, it appears that Maverick the thinker may have been of more significance than Maverick the political doer. This is why an insight of Maury the man is so important, and it is perhaps why the absence of such is so tragic.

MICHAEL S. HOLMES

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Albert J. Beveridge: American Nationalist. By JOHN BRAEMAN. (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1971. Pp. x, 370. Bibliographical notes, index. \$12.50.)

Albert J. Beveridge is a biographer's dream subject. He was a leading public figure, who as Senator from Indiana from 1899 to 1911 played important parts in the two great political events of his time, imperialist expansion and the emergence of progressive reform. Later, he fought in the front rank of Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive party and in the "battalion of death" which opposed American membership in the League of Nations. At the same time, Beveridge was a reflective, articulate observer of the events in which he participated, and he left a luminous record of his observations in a steady output of magazine writing and correspondence with a circle of close friends who included novelist David Graham Phillips, editors George Horace Lorimer and Albert Shaw, and businessmen-politicians George W. Perkins and John C. Shaffer. Also, after leaving office Beveridge made probably the most successful transition of any American from an active political career to distinguished historical scholarship when he produced his



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Albert J. Beveridge in 1906.

monumental biographies of John Marshall and Abraham Lincoln.

The present work is the second good biography of Beveridge. Its predecessor, Claude G. Bowers' *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (Boston, 1931), appeared soon after his death and was the work of a friend and admirer. Despite certain obvious biases of sympathy and shortcomings of perspective, Bowers' *Beveridge* contained a lively portrait of the man's personality, conveying a clear sense of his burning ambition and ceaseless activity as well as, perhaps unintentionally, his consuming vanity and egotism. The greatest tribute to Bowers' depiction of the personal side of Beveridge comes with Braeman's treatment, which, though sharpening some emphases and offering a number of corrections in detail, reproduces basically the same portrait. In other areas Braeman supplants Bowers. He presents a vivid, incisive examination of the various political contexts in which Beveridge operated—the hard-fought factionalism of the Indiana Republicans, the intrigues and maneuverings within the Senate, and the highly personalized infighting among the Progressives. Braeman likewise scrutinizes Beveridge's historical research and critically dissects his interpretations of Marshall, Lincoln, and their political contexts. As a result, Braeman offers a vastly improved understanding of Beveridge as a public

figure, especially as a practical politician, and as a scholar.

This book has other praiseworthy qualities, too. Braeman's research unquestionably deserves to be called exhaustive. Not only has he made full use of Beveridge's own extensive and rewarding papers, but he has also examined all the relevant manuscript collections of Beveridge's contemporaries and delved into newspapers and local records. Equally impressive is the grace with which Braeman resists impulses to show off the considerable digging that went into his work. Rather, he presents a well-paced, unfailingly interesting, often exciting account of Beveridge's career. Unfortunately, the briskness and becoming brevity of the book also point to its chief flaw. In presenting a spare, fast-moving narrative Braeman passes up many excellent chances for analysis of Beveridge's views and approach to politics. This is not to say that the book is entirely unanalytical. As the subtitle suggests, Braeman finds the key to Beveridge's political outlook in his passionate nationalism. He also makes clear at several points how Beveridge was a self-consciously conservative reformer who wished to ameliorate specified conditions in order to prevent possible turmoil and forestall more radical changes.

The drawback of the morsels of interpretation which Braeman presents is that they amount to only a starting point for a truly perceptive assessment. For example, he uses Beveridge's assertion that he was "an American Nationalist with a big 'A' and a big 'N'" (page 323) as if the statement supplied a self-explanatory concept. Instead of probing the values and emotional projections which comprised that "Nationalism," Braeman simply comments that Beveridge "was a worshiper of order, efficiency, and material progress" (page 273). What kind of order, with what groups in what positions? Efficiency at what costs and to whose benefit? Progress toward what ends and at what expense? These are the kinds of questions one would like to see explored.

The most intriguing and significant problem about Beveridge, which Braeman also does little to elucidate, is how he came to hold his peculiar political outlook. It has long been recognized that Beveridge virtually duplicated Theodore Roosevelt, first in his aggressive, imperialistic views of foreign affairs and later in his philosophically conservative approach to domestic reform. Both men embodied the closest American equivalent to contemporary British "Tory democracy" and Bismarck's position in Germany—an essentially aristocratic

disdain for economic concerns as unheroic, coupled with promotion of social welfare measures for the sake of national unity in meeting foreign challenges. In Roosevelt's case, with his patrician background and cosmopolitan upbringing, it is easy to see how he came by such views. Beveridge, by contrast, was a self-made man who rarely left his native Middle West and did not travel abroad until after his election to the Senate. Yet, as Braeman recounts, from youth onward he scorned "materialism" and declared as a college student, "I would be willing to go to hell if I could make a reputation as great as Napoleon" (page 10).

Beveridge's political outlook becomes even more remarkable in view of what Braeman relates about the persistent coolness between him and Roosevelt. Despite their near identity of basic views, the President never liked or worked closely with his senatorial supporter, and after both men had left office Beveridge's initial admiration curdled over Roosevelt's callous disregard for the Progressive party. Interestingly, too, when the two men differed, it was Beveridge who almost invariably pushed the imperialistic viewpoint further. Whereas Roosevelt developed doubts about the wisdom of retaining the Philippines because of their vulnerability to Japanese attack, Beveridge never wavered in his faith that the Stars and Stripes should wave over the islands forever. Similarly, the Hoosier shared none of his chief's fondness for diplomatic partnership with Britain. He wished to see the United States rise to primacy in seapower, and during the First World War he became decidedly pro-German, out of both admiration for the Teutonic fusion of militarism and social welfare and a longing to see America profit from a British defeat.

The significance of Beveridge's views is much broader than the man himself. After all, the most ardent exponent of an aristocratic-militarist outlook was not, like Roosevelt or Henry and Brooks Adams or Henry Cabot Lodge, from a disaffected, frequently expatriated upper crust. He was the product of America's middle-class heartland, a would-be Middle Border Bonaparte. The genesis and nurture of Beveridge's views raise disturbing questions about the potentialities within American culture and society in the decades following the Civil War. The answers to such questions could yield important insights into what happened to the country in those turn-of-the-century decades which witnessed imperial expansion, myriad efforts at internal reform, and eventual entry into global conflict. It is regrettable that

Braeman has not explored these questions. If he had, he might have written the great biography that Beveridge so plainly deserves.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.
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Progressivism and the Open Door: America and China, 1905-1921. By JERRY ISRAEL. (University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1971. Pp. xxiv, 222. Notes, bibliography, index. \$9.95.)

Professor Israel has written an interesting and valuable study of America's open door policy during the progressive era. What makes Israel's work different from other accounts of the open door is his attempt to link that policy to domestic progressivism, to show, in other words, that Americans viewed and reacted to conditions in the Far East in the same way they responded to problems at home.

Taking his cue from William Leuchtenberg's landmark essay suggesting the relationship between domestic reformism and progressive imperialism, Israel emphasizes the conceptual framework behind the nation's China policy. Noting that recent students of the progressive movement have broken from the traditional political approach to progressivism in order to examine questions of content, he proposes to do the same for foreign policy.

Israel's link between progressivism and the open door is the gospel of efficiency, especially its emphasis on co-operation. Arguing that domestically progressives sought to replace the creed of competition with that of co-operation under the guise of efficiency, he maintains that with respect to China many of them sought also to substitute co-operation among nations for international competition. But just as there were those who opposed the domestic movement towards co-operation, there were those who opposed a similar co-operative movement in foreign affairs. The result finally was a delicate compromise between a competitive and co-operative stance with respect to China. "Finding the middle ground, the classic balance, the acceptable compromise," Israel concludes, "was the legacy of the first two decades of the twentieth century at home and in China." But even those who fought the movement towards co-operation, Israel makes clear, shared the determination of other progressives to create an efficient, harmonious nation in the

Orient similar to the type of nation they were trying to establish at home. Their conflict was one of tactics not of ultimate purpose.

There are several criticisms of Israel's work which need to be raised. In the first place, while the author makes clear the importance that fear of Japan had in leading Americans along the path of co-operation, he still leaves his reader feeling that the nation's policy makers were motivated primarily by ideological factors (i.e., the gospel of efficiency) and only secondarily by consideration of international politics. And this is, indeed, a tenuous position to hold. What is missing is sufficient analysis of the political and economic relationships between the great powers in the Far East. In this respect Professor Israel might have done well to consult the opening chapters of Akira Iriye's excellent *After Imperialism*, even though Iriye writes of the period after 1919.

Secondly, Israel neglects an important facet of the interrelationship of progressivism and foreign policy in which the concept of efficiency played a particularly relevant role, namely the organizational preparations made by the nation's leadership community to capture foreign trade—including that of the Far East. Impressed by Germany's ability in foreign markets, these leaders attributed Germany's success to her overall corporate efficiency and modeled their own efforts in developing overseas commerce along German lines. Much of the talk about co-operation, which Israel emphasizes in international terms, actually concerned domestic co-operation in order to promote trade.

Finally, Israel suggests that the United States during the progressive era directed its attention more to the Far East than any other non-European area of the world. Such sentiment is, perhaps, to be expected given Israel's special interest. But there is at least equal evidence to indicate that the nation's leaders turned increasingly away from the Far East and towards Latin America, which, they believed, offered greater commercial opportunity, especially since completion of the Panama Canal would open the whole west coast of South America to trade development. Thus, Israel's remark that during World War I "China, always the future Eldorado, took on added significance as perhaps the last prize to be left after the war's destruction" is at least questionable.

Nevertheless, these criticisms should not detract from the overall importance of Israel's study. The author has established what other historians have neglected—an ideological link between domestic and foreign issues. He has



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Students at the Canton Y.M.C.A. Commercial Day School in 1910.

bolstered his position with a wide variety of primary and secondary materials, including the infrequently used papers of the American Red Cross and the YMCA. Without neglecting more well-known personages, he has found a place in his study for the lesser-known but still important journalists, humanitarians, and educators who also made their impact on policy formulation. As a result, he has offered additional dimension to the history of America's China policy during the progressive era.

BURTON L. KAUFMAN

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Louis T. Wigfall: Southern Fire-eater. By ALVY L. KING. (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1970. Pp. ix, 259. Notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$10.00.)

Southern fire-eaters present difficult problems for contemporary historians—especially for those who choose to be their biographers. Men of passionate tempers whose raging voices articulated certain of the South's grievances in the decades before the Civil War, they generally stood on the periphery of even their own region's political consciousness until events conspired to push their voices to the forefront. Although once considered by historians as im-

portant members of a "blundering generation" responsible for leading the nation to disunion and conflict, they are now relegated to the backbenches by scholars more concerned with the junctures at which social structure, ideology, and economics meet. And yet presumably a biography of a Southern fire-eater—especially one considered to be an "ideal type" such as Louis T. Wigfall—could illuminate the shadowy area where men and "forces" confront each other, leaving visible marks on both. This, unfortunately, Alvy L. King does not do in the first full-scale biography of Wigfall.

To a considerable extent, the fault rests in the nature of Wigfall's career and with the materials left behind for his biographer. A man of high birth but of limited means, Wigfall's influence—and therefore his importance—was uneven during the three decades of his public life. His few personal papers, concentrated on his Confederate years, reflect this unevenness. A native of South Carolina where he developed an ideological and temperamental affinity for the habits of the Southern aristocracy, Wigfall moved to Texas in 1846 after his short-lived legal and political career had ended in disgrace and penury. He was more successful in Texas where he became an important voice (if not power) within the state's Democratic party. More strident in his states' rights views than most Texas Democrats during the 1850's, Wigfall catapulted into a position of leadership in 1859 when, after John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry (and, according to King, because of Brown's action), he was selected as a United States Senator and thus given an opportunity to carry his extreme defense of the Southern position to the nation's capital.

Throughout 1860 and the early months of 1861, the Texas senator championed his states' rights positions and heaped scorn upon all antagonists. Even after Texas seceded from the Union on March 2, 1861, Wigfall remained in the Senate where he acted both as a gadfly and a covert spy for the newly formed Confederacy. In late March, however, he left Washington to begin his mission as a Confederate politician championing the interests of the military. During the next four years Wigfall served as a Texas senator to the Confederate Congress. Here he voiced a continual defense of the Southern cause—especially its most aristocratic tendencies. He insisted that all other considerations be subordinated to the necessities of military victory, and he quarreled incessantly with Jefferson Davis over the latter's conduct of the Confederate war effort. At this time, Wigfall's influence, disruptive in the main, was perhaps at its height. King, in fact, claims that

"With the possible exception of Jefferson Davis himself, there was no greater contributor to . . . disastrous internal dissension than Louis Wigfall."

Wigfall, then, was a significant if not consistently influential figure during his public career. His views were always too extreme, his temperament too combustible for him to act in the major arena. Nor was he a seminal thinker who left an impressive body of material explaining his positions and justifying his visceral loyalties. Rather, Wigfall's importance rests largely with his disruptive actions during the war—actions motivated by his commitment to the preservation of Southern independence and the hegemony of the Southern aristocracy. It was the very intensity of this commitment which led Wigfall to his intemperate attacks upon Davis and Davis's war policies. Yet King underplays the importance of these larger ideological considerations. Instead, he chooses to portray Wigfall as an exemplar of Richard Hofstadter's "paranoid style" of American politics. Admittedly, Wigfall exaggerated the villainy of the opposition. Yet, given his ideo-

logical predispositions, the North represented a real threat to the continued hegemony of the Southern aristocracy within a slave society. And, as a man who perceived his interests as being identical with those of the large-planter class, Wigfall suffered the impending threat personally as well as ideologically.

King's failure to emphasize the rationality of Wigfall's perceptions and consequent actions largely emanates from the limited setting he has constructed for his subject. Despite an initial attempt to sketch South Carolina society as Wigfall knew it during his youth, King's major concerns are with the deeds of his protagonist. As a result, he is not totally successful in his attempt to play Wigfall off against the Southern aristocracy as a class. Nor does King compare Wigfall with other fire-eaters in an effort to comment on the larger phenomenon of political agitation. And Wigfall simply cannot bear the burden of a narrowly conceived biography by himself.

FLOYD J. MILLER

Hiram College

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ACCESSIONS

Manuscripts

Services for microfilming, photostating, and xeroxing all but certain restricted items in its manuscripts collections are provided by the Society. For details write Dr. Josephine L. Harper, Manuscripts Curator.

Miscellaneous Collections. Papers of the *Association of Wisconsin State University Faculties*, 1918-1968, including correspondence, committee reports and minutes, conference proceedings, constitutions, clippings, and reference and miscellaneous papers from the files of the Association and its officers, presented by the officers of the Association, 1963-1970; papers of the *Congress of Racial Equality's Western Regional Office*, 1948-1967, including correspondence and subject files on administration, education, employment, housing, and reference materials, presented by the Western Regional Office, Oakland, Calif.; papers of *William Donahey*, 1914-1969, creator of the cartoon strip, "The Teenie Weenies", consisting of correspondence, clippings, Donahey's writings, books illustrated by him, music manuscripts, and business and financial papers, presented by William Donahey and his estate, Chicago, Ill.; papers of *Edgar B. Gordon*, 1906-1961, music professor at the University of Wisconsin and pioneer in educational radio broadcasting, including incoming correspondence, articles, addresses, manuscripts of instructional manuals, and other materials relating to music education and appreciation, and reminiscences, scrapbooks, and biographical data, presented by Mrs. Edgar B. Gordon, Madison; *Hadassah—Rachel S. Jastrow Chapter* papers, 1919-1958, the Madison, Wisconsin chapter of the women's *Zionist Organization of America*, including correspondence, minute books, membership and officer lists, reports, clippings, and publications of the national convention and the *Hadassah Medical Organization*, presented by Mrs. Herman Mack, Madison; tape-recorded interview with *Christopher Hexter*, University of Wisconsin student, concerning his experiences as a *Freedom School* teacher in Ruleville and Indianola, Mississippi, during the summer of 1964, presented by Christopher Hexter, New Haven, Conn.; papers of *Langston Hughes*,

1917-1967, novelist, poet, including plays and librettos by Hughes, and miscellaneous programs and clippings, presented by Langston Hughes, New York, N.Y.; a letter, 1836, and a bill, 1846, of *Solomon Juneau*, fur trader, presented by Donald G. Coleman, Madison; tape-recorded interview with *Douglas Korty*, University of Wisconsin student, discussing his participation in civil rights work and labor organizing in Haywood County, Tennessee, May-August, 1965, presented by Douglas Korty, Avon Lake, Ohio; microfilm edition of the papers of *Henry Demarest Lloyd*, 1840-1937, author, journalist, and social and economic reformer, consisting of correspondence, articles and addresses, book manuscripts, notebooks, scrapbooks and clippings, and miscellany, presented by Mrs. Caro Lloyd Strobell, William B. Lloyd, Jessie B. Lloyd, Mary M. Lloyd, Georgia Lloyd, Mrs. William B. Lloyd, Philip S. Foner, Mrs. Albert Hackett, and Michael Hatcher; papers, 1903-1966 of *Richard Paul Momsen*, U.S. diplomat, international lawyer, and businessman, including personal and business correspondence, addresses, statements, documentary materials, clippings and scrapbooks, presented by Mrs. Richard P. Momsen, Cross River, N. Y.; papers of *Abraham Polonsky*, 1936-1968, writer of short stories and novels, and for radio and motion pictures, editor of the *Hollywood Quarterly*, motion picture director, and member of the *Hollywood Ten*, consisting of drafts of his novels, short stories, and articles, diaries, and cinematic materials including scripts and screenplay and production materials, presented by Abraham Polonsky, Red Hook, N. Y.; papers of *Howard Rodman*, 1942-1961, writer of short stories, and for radio, television, theatre, and motion pictures, including scripts, stories and outlines, and a small amount of correspondence, presented by Howard Rodman, Los Angeles, Calif.; papers, 1880-1968, of *Gwyneth King Roe* (Mrs. Gilbert Roe), wife of a former law partner of Robert M. La Follette, physical education teacher, women's suffragist, and friend of Progressives, radicals, anarchists, and muckrakers, including correspondence, family, business, and teaching records, diaries, and notes and drafts of her writings and those of Gilbert Roe, loaned by Mrs. Edwin W. Murphy, Bethesda, Md.; papers of *Anne Romaine*, 1966-1967, consisting of tape-recorded interviews and transcriptions she conducted with several persons active in the civil rights movement, particularly in the *Mississippi Freedom Democratic party*, presented by

Mrs. Anne Romaine, Charlottesville, Va.; papers, 1932-1963, of *George F. Rowe*, secretary to U.S. Senator *Robert M. La Follette, Jr.*, and to U.S. Congressman *Merlin Hull*, special assistant in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, secretary to two professional dairy organizations, and staff member of the Foreign Agricultural Service, including segments of the research files and correspondence relating to his various positions, presented by Mrs. George Rowe, Garette Park, Md.; papers, 1924-1945, of *Clarence Senior*, officer of the U.S. Socialist Party, labor journalist, Latin American specialist, author, and educator, including correspondence, reports, notes and clippings relating to his various activities, presented by Clarence Senior, New York, N.Y.; papers, 1857-1947, of *George F. Shepherd*, Wisconsin immigrant farmer and Civil War soldier, consisting of correspondence, legal records, and miscellaneous biographical data, loaned for microfilming by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fristad, Stevens Point; diaries, 1857-1871, of *Reverend John H. Simpson*, Presbyterian minister and Confederate chaplain, presented by Herbert A. Kellar, Madison; correspondence and miscellany of *Joseph H. Spencer*, 1861-1881, U.S. Army officer from Minnesota, presented by G. M. Wilcox, Chicago; papers, 1896-1933, of *Helen Sumner Woodbury*, labor economist and author, including correspondence, a reference file, writings, and clippings, presented by Robert M. Woodbury, Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Manuscripts Accessioned for the Area Research Centers

At Whitewater. Biographical information concerning *Harry S. Anderson*, the founder of the Bergen Telephone Company, Rock County, presented by Mrs. Jean Lyons, Clinton; statement of *Charles W. Hetzel*, a teacher at Beloit Memorial High School, made before the Beloit Human Relations Commission, April 25, 1968, concerning racial problems in the Beloit school system, presented by Leslie H. Fishel, Tiffin, Ohio; record books, 1844-1901, and a history written by Mrs. Ardis Corey concerning the *First Baptist Church, Janesville*, loaned for microfilming by Mrs. Ardis Corey, Janesville; record books, 1861-1913, of a farm owned by *William P. Phillips*, his father, and his brothers, Lake Mills, including ledgers, livestock records, records of butter production, and a ledger of the Lake Mills Dairymen's Association, presented by Robert Ferry, Lake Mills; financial records, 1887-1952, of a Waterloo harness making shop owned first by Lyons and Seaver and next by *Robert Setz*, including daybooks and account books, presented by Arthur Setz, Waterloo; and the papers of *John and Louisa (Sargent) Smith*, early residents of Rock County, including correspondence, 1832-1871, materials concerning Smithton School, a review of local events of 1891, and a copy of a 1675 will, loaned for microfilming by Mrs. Paul R. Bobolz, Clinton.



Society's Iconographic Collections

Jack K. Jallings, assistant state archivist, processing records for public use.

Contributors



JOAN SEVERA, Curator of Decorative Arts for the Society's Museum and a native of Spring Green, Wisconsin, has been a staff member since 1958, when she began as Museum Registrar. During the years to follow, Mrs. Severa acquired a familiarity with the depth of the collections and became increasingly aware of their exceptional quality. A certainty began to grow that descriptions of many of the collections should be published—as television shows, illustrated lectures, and articles. When in 1965 the post in Decorative Arts was created, Mrs. Severa in the new capacity found further evidence to support this feeling; at the same time greater responsibilities and limited help made rapid progress impossible. Work was begun, however, with various of the ceramic, glass, and costume collections in the creation of six slide-lectures, and other of the Society's museum holdings were brought before the public through television.

With the publication of this article, in joint authorship with William C. Haygood, Mrs. Severa accomplishes the third step in putting the quality of the Museum collections before a wide audience. Another of the rare collections will be given an airing soon when the magazine *Antiques* prints an illustrated article on the shaving bowls collected in Spain in the 1830's by General Lucius Fairchild. A full catalog of this important collection, with many illustrations, should appear sometime next year.

Mrs. Severa is a 1970 graduate of the Wintertur Summer Institute for the Decorative Arts, given by the Henry Francis DuPont Wintertur Museum in conjunction with the University of Delaware. She is the wife of M. James Severa, chief of Administrative Services for the Society.



WILLIAM CONVERSE HAYGOOD was born in 1910 in Atlanta, Georgia, and educated at Emory University, the University of Chicago, and the University of Michigan. After serving as a librarian in Georgia and New York City, he became director of the American Library Association's Latin American project in 1939, and from 1941 to 1947 was director of the fellowship program of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, with time out for service with the 76th Infantry Division in France and Germany. Following the war he was sent by the State Department to Spain to inaugurate a system of United States Information Libraries in Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Valencia, and Sevilla. From 1951 to 1953 he and his wife lived on the Spanish island of Mallorca where he did free-lance writing and where their twins, Billy and Martha, were born. Returning to the U.S. in 1953, the Haygoods lived on a farm outside Madison, where, except for a time as library consultant to the Puerto Rican government, Mr. Haygood continued his writing career. His novel, *The Ides of August*, was published by World in 1956, and in the meantime he had sold stories to such national publications as *Cosmopolitan*, *The Saturday Review*, and *Woman's Day*. In 1956 the Haygoods moved into Madison, and the following year Mr. Haygood joined the staff of the Society as editor of the *Magazine*.

ROBERT GRIFFITH, a frequent contributor of book reviews and articles, is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, but grew up in southern Indiana. He received his undergraduate degree from De Pauw University in 1962 and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1964 and 1967, respectively. Formerly on the history faculty of the University of Georgia, he is now on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His doctoral dissertation won the Frederick Jackson Turner Award of the Organization of American Historians. Published by the University Press of Kentucky.

under the title, *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate*, it is reviewed in this issue. For a photograph and further biographical information see the Autumn, 1970 issue of the *Magazine*.



JOHN D. HAEGER was born in Oak Park, Illinois, twenty-eight years ago, and grew up in Aurora. He attended Loyola University in Chicago, where he was awarded his B.A. in 1964, his M.A. in 1966, and his Ph.D. in 1969. In 1967-1968 he held the first Illinois State Historical Society Fellowship for research in Illinois History. His

doctoral dissertation, a study of the early development of cities along the western shore of Lake Michigan, particularly Chicago, Milwaukee, and Green Bay from 1830-1845, led to his interest in the French fur traders and their place in historical literature. Since September, 1968, Dr. Haeger has been an assistant professor of history at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant. He has published an article on the American Fur Company at Chicago in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, and is currently working on a book on the development of cities in the Old Northwest from 1815 to 1860 with special emphasis on the role of eastern capital in facilitating urban development.

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INDIAN PEACE MEDALS IN AMERICAN HISTORY, by Francis Paul Prucha. Pp. xiv, 178. Illus., notes, bibliography, index. \$15.00.

He Dog, an Oglala Sioux chief, photographed in 1920 wearing a Ulysses S. Grant silver peace medal.
Courtesy Smithsonian Institution.

This engraving, entitled "The Great Fire at Peshtigo," was made from a sketch by G. J. Tisdale, and appeared in Harper's Weekly, November 4, 1871.

