

Spring 1974
Midcontinent American Studies Association (MASA) Bulletin

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NAKED DINNER: Your faithful editor thought of rising, after the Presidential Address at the MASA banquet in Edwardsville, Illinois, March 29th, to announce that he would entertain a motion from the membership there assembled, acting as an *ad hoc* editorial committee of the whole, to the effect that *American Studies* run the first glossy centerfold nudie photograph ever to appear in a scholarly journal. This because our (surprisingly) outgoing president had just delivered what was at least the greatest public oration since Gettysburg, "Dada in Contemporary America: Beyond Freedom and Dignity." Pun-wonderful and chestnut-studded, Wheeler's Edwardsville Address was cruelly timed: buffet-stuffed conventioners laughed themselves into heartburns. The nut insecurely planted in his right eye, President Wheeler struck (streak, stroke, struck?) up a list of eight points, eloquently described by our newly-elected Executive Secretary:

Wheeler illustrated his principles with visual aids that made his presentation the most revealing one in the memory of the oldest living member of the Association. Having carried out Hawthorne's injunction, which streaked immediately to the mind's-eye of the beholder, to "show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet something whereby the worst may be inferred," he sat down to generous admiration and applause.

There was no point, ultimately, in calling for the fold-out motion: nobody had brought a camera. Besides, before anyone had stopped laughing, yr. faith. ed. had gone up in a sheet of flames.

The rest of the proceedings are outlined in the program below. It needs only to be said that, in the hiatus between Executive Secretaries, program chairman Jules Zanger had a large task thrust upon him; his job was made no easier by cancellation of our reservations at one motel at the last minute. Even that Jules could

have straightened out had he not been stricken with the flu, and had not both family cars declined to run on the day of the convention. Or had the shuttle bus which he thoughtfully arranged to schlep us back and forth between motel and meeting rooms shown up on time or at all. Laryngitis was the final low blow: poor Jules was voiceless in MASA. Y.F.E. had to chair several sessions, introducing people he did not know who then read papers he had not seen. He filled the awkward gaps, of course, with wit, making such clever remarks as, "Unhh our next speaker is um lemme see. . . ."

The program follows.

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 1974
Morning

THE CULT OF VIRGINITY IN
NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA
— William C. Jones, University of
Missouri at Kansas City

THE GIRL OF SPIRIT IN EARLY
AMERICAN DRAMA — Daniel
Havens, Southern Illinois University
at Edwardsville

AN UNHOLY TRINITY: RACE,
CULTURE AND RELIGION IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA
— Thomas Collins, University of Iowa

WHITMAN AND THE AMERICAN
FRONTIER — Cathy Tudisch, St.
Louis University

Afternoon

METHODOLOGIES FOR THE
TEACHING OF AMERICAN
STUDIES — Stuart Levine, University
of Kansas; Paul Williams, Principia
College; Sister Elizabeth Kolmer,
St. Louis University

ABSURDITY IN THE BLACK
IMAGINATION — John Reilly, State
University of New York at Albany

HOW HIGH THE MOON:
HISTORICAL STATISTICS ON
AMERICAN MUSIC PUBLISHING —

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D. W. Krummel, University of Illinois at Urbana
SOCIAL SOURCES OF ALTERNATIVE FAMILY PATTERNS — Donna Schafer, University of Kansas
SCOTTY IN WONDERLAND: FITZGERALD'S HOLLYWOOD YEARS — Norman Hostetler, University of Nebraska

Evening

ROOTS OF THE ST. LOUIS BLUES — Jean Kittrell, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and the Old Guys Jazz Band featuring Jim Austin, MASA Representative and Tail-Gate Trombone

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1974

Morning

REVOLUTION AND NATIONALISM IN THE MODERN CANADIAN NOVEL — T. H. Coulson, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada
TOM AND HUCK AT WOUNDED KNEE — Carter Revard, Washington University

SPRING THANK YOUS: *American Studies* extends its thanks to the following scholars, identified by institution, who helped us recently by acting as consultants to examine submitted articles: Eugene Ferguson, The Hagley Museum; Warren French, Indiana University at Indianapolis; H. Roger Grant, University of Akron; Roy Gridley, University of Kansas; James Gunn, University of Kansas; Theodore Hovet, University of Northern Iowa; Sara Kiesler, University of Kansas; Walter Kollmorgen, University of Kansas; Donald McCoy, University of Kansas; Raymond Mohl, Florida Atlantic University; Nathan Reingold, The Smithsonian Institution; Edward Ruhe, University of Kansas; Michael Shaw, University of Kansas; and Elmer Suderman, Gustavus Adolphus College.

MASA HAS NEW OFFICERS, too, as follows: President, Jules Zanger, English, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville; Vice-President, Hamilton Cravens, History, Iowa State University; Executive Secretary, Norman Hostetler, English, University of Nebraska.

The office of Executive Secretary has been redefined; he will now deal with coordinating American Studies activities throughout our region. Unlike his predecessors, Professor Hostetler will not have to bother with the day-to-day rush of journal subscriptions, circulation, advertising and comparable matters; these

functions have been transferred to the University of Kansas, where they will be handled by a Business Manager, who looks, if you examine our masthead page, suspiciously like our copy editor. As of now, in short, all routine business correspondence can be addressed to *American Studies*, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045.

WITH THIS ISSUE we welcome to the editorial board Linda K. Kerber of the Department of History, University of Iowa, and extend thanks to Robert Carringer, Department of English, University of Illinois, whose term of service has now expired.

Rejoining us in a new capacity is Robert A. Corrigan, now Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Under a fine new arrangement, UMKC has joined the University of Kansas and MASA in sponsoring *American Studies*, and Bob, who has had to resign from the Executive Secretary's job because of the press of deanish duties, will remain affiliated with us in the newly-created post of Consulting Editor. Bob has been consulting for us on and on-and-off basis for a number of years. The title recognizes the fact.

PROFESSIONALIZATION is fine for those who want it or need it, but there's no need to impose it on others. As everyone in the field knows, there's been a strong movement in American Studies to professionalize the field, to make it more of a "discipline" by developing one or more approaches or methodologies to the study of American culture and society.

Inevitably interest in doing so centers in the universities which have full scale American Civilization or American Studies programs, with "professional" faculty and degrees in the field.

And so concern has been expressed by several MASA regulars that MASA itself may be developing so much in the direction of professionalization that members from places in which American Studies is an avocation, or a program administered informally among several departments, might come to feel "out of it" at our annual meetings.

Absolutely right. We must be very sure that this doesn't happen. The scholar or student for whom "American Studies" means a combined interest, say, in American history and literature should con-

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tinue to feel as welcome and should be as involved in the planning and presentation of MASA projects as should the person who believes that American Studies is a "discipline." I would like to continue to believe that American Studies can be both a discipline and an anti-discipline. That some of our American Studies people have succeeded in incorporating themselves into "departments" will not, let's all hope, blind them to the fact that the field began as a rebellion against the arbitrary walls which departmental divisions create. Some of MASA's best people teach at schools in which American Studies is unknown; others haven't had training in it themselves, but come to MASA because exposure to people in adjacent fields enriches their own understanding of their areas of competence. Some have told me they come because they believe in breadth of knowledge, and don't want to worry too much about its "application."

Moreover, such points of view are well-represented even at the most "professional" places in our region. American Studies is supposed to be hospitable to divergent interests and approaches; it's supposed to be somewhat relaxed in its attitude towards what labels get put on what its adherents produce. Presumably, people who have become learned through the judicious examination of diverse material will have interesting and valuable observations and insights to communicate. I think that MASA over the years has provided a forum both academic and social for this kind of communication; I think that the semi-pros in American Studies have as much to contribute at our sessions as do the people who are professionally committed to careers in American Studies departments. American Studies is not merely a discipline; it must also be an intersection, a place where roads cross, where one expects to meet, learn from, and enjoy the company of people traveling in different directions.

GREAT PLAINS ISSUE: Yet another special issue topic has been announced: in conjunction with next spring's MASA meeting at the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer in Grand Island, Nebraska, *American Studies* announces a special issue on the general subject of the Great Plains. A detailed prospectus is available from this office or from Hamilton Cravens, History, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50010. Papers are invited,

and should a sufficient number be accepted for publication, we will publish a special number devoted to the study of the Great Plains.

CONSERVATION HISTORY: The Forest History Society will meet this year in Seattle, August 29, 1974, concurrently with the meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the A.H.A. The two groups are jointly sponsoring a session on Forest and Conservation History. For further particulars, write to the F.H.S.'s Associate Director, Harold K. Steen, P.O. Box 1581, Santa Cruz, California 95061.

AT UCLA: A conference to consider the multiple ways in which the discovery of the New World affected the thought, modes of life and institutions of the Old. "First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old" is held in honor of the Renaissance Society of America, and will convene February 6-9, 1975. Detailed poop is available from the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Bunch Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles, California 90024.

REAPPEARANCE: We discover and report that *American Speech*, the quarterly journal of the American Dialect Society, is publishing again after an eclipse that lasted several years. A sampling of articles in press: "The Language of Railroad-ing," "The Semantics of Negritude," "Spanglish: Language Contact in Puerto Rico," "The *New Monthly* Magazine and American English, 1814-24," "The Language of Nursing," and more than fifty others. Manuscripts should be addressed to the editor, John Algeo, Department of English, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30601.

LONG-SUFFERING EDITOR, you should know, faithfully reads hordes of press releases from publishers: everything coming out, of course, is "a significant new examination" of this or that, and every new journal tries to "bring together the best minds." The prose, however, in a piece of flack from Behavioral Publications in a release announcing *The Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* was a little different from the usual, and we reproduce it in part: "Behavioral Publications is especially proud to publish this valuable vehicle for communication and cross-fertilization, helping professionals dealing with marriage and sexuality keep abreast of new developments."

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EDITORIAL WANT-AD: *American Studies* announces the availability of a graduate editorial assistantship starting in the fall of 1975 (there is the possibility of summer 1975 employment). Applicants must have been accepted for graduate work in the Department of American Studies at the University of Kansas. The job requires both editorial and secretarial skills. Stuart Levine handles inquiries, and would appreciate colleagues' pointing in our direction gifted seniors with editorial talents and strong stomachs for work. "Editorial talents" usually means "a good, efficient prose style."

GRATITUDE: *American Studies* feels it, and directs it at the people below, who, although not members of our staff, helped in the last six months by acting as editorial readers for specific submitted articles: James Austin, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville; Ronald Calgaard, University of Kansas; Robert Carlinger, University of Illinois; Robert Corrigan, University of Maryland; Eugene Ferguson, Smithsonian Institution; Warren French, Indiana University; Norman Geske, University of Nebraska; John Hancock, University of Washington; Francis Heller, University of Kansas; Theodore Hovet, University of Northern Iowa; N. Ray Hiner, University of Kansas; John Janzen, University of Kansas; David Katzman, University of Kansas; Clair Keller, Iowa State University; Alexander Kern, University of Iowa; Robert McColley, University of Illinois; Donald McCoy, University of Kansas; Edward Ruhe, University of Kansas; Sakari Sariola, University of Kansas; Steven Sommers, The Latin School of Chicago; Haskell Springer, University of Kansas; Geoffrey Steere, University of Kansas; George Stocking, University of Chicago; William Tuttle, University of Kansas; Roger Whitlow, Eastern Illinois University; and Paul Wilson, University of Kansas. Thank you.

NEW RESOURCES IN AMERICAN STUDIES: The Houston Metropolitan Archives and Research Center, "a serious effort to meet [the] . . . threats [of] fire, vermin, fungus, human carelessness and neglect . . . and preserve historical source materials" deserves the attention of urban scholars. Details are in an article in the *Rice University Review*, reprints of which are available from the Center, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77001.

FROM RUSSIA MIT GOTTES LIEBE: Elmer Suderman's introduction to and explanation of Leonhard Sudermann's *Eine Deputationsreise von Russland nach Amerika*, read at MASA's Amana conference in 1973, is now in print, as a preface to Sudy's translation of that interesting document: *From Russia to America: In Search of Freedom*, part of the Mennonite Centennial Series.

INDIAN-WHITE RELATIONS: Fellowships for the study of same are available from the Center for the History of the American Indian at the Newberry Library; "directors' fellowships are available in unusual cases." The Man is Robert E. Bieder; the address, The Center for the History of the American Indian, The Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610; the deadline, January 15, 1975.

DATES: MASA, a conference on the Great Plains, The Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, Grand Island, Nebraska, May 1-2; OAH, annual meeting, Boston, April 16-19; Women's History Symposium, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York, March 15.

HENRY ADAMS LETTERS: Work on the edition (Belknap Press) is under way; Ernest Samuels and Charles Vandersee are in charge. They would like copies of unpublished letters and leads on "additional letters still in private hands." Contact Professor Vandersee at the Department of English, University

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of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903.

STEINBECK: The new *San Jose Studies* announces a special November 1975 issue devoted to John Steinbeck and invites submissions "from all areas of Steinbeck research." The Woman is Arlene N. Okerlund; the address, San Jose State University, San Jose, California 95192; the deadline, May 15, 1975.

ASSISTANTSHIPS at Minnesota in Immigrant Studies are available to students who read an Eastern or Southern European language. The jobs are half-time, involve research and graduate enrollment in related fields and have summer employment built in. The Man is Rudolph J. Vecoli, Director, the Center for Immigration Studies, 1925 Sather Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55113.

EVERY FEW YEARS we should repeat ourselves a bit: the word "Bulletin" in our column title was chosen to perpetuate the name of the modest but useful dittoed publication which was the predecessor of the current journal. Items in the Bulletin are not limited to concerns of American Studies practitioners in the midcontinent region.

THE BULLETIN remains open, by the way, to descriptions of interesting or innovative American Studies programs, a fact publicized at a recent meeting of the Executive Committee and the Editorial Board. The first response to our announcement was not precisely what we had in mind, but is interesting enough to deserve special attention: William S. Hamerick forwarded to us a detailed outline of the content and schedule of weekly meetings in a "Dialogue with Senior Citizens" at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

Since what we had in mind were academic programs, and since the outline is rather lengthy, probably we should not run it in full. But the idea is intriguing, and Mr. Hamerick can supply copies of the outline to those interested in trying something similar.

A sample entry:

Wednesday, November 20: 2:00 p.m., War and peace again; talk about World War II from a Midwest perspective. 3:00 p.m., light refreshments. 3:30 p.m., choice of seminars, with special themes dealing with senior citizens' post factum perceptions of the progress over the years, if any. 4:45 p.m., adjournment.