

Spring 1963
Midcontinent American Studies Association (MASA) Bulletin

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MASA BULLETIN

● In terms of number of manuscripts received--indeed, in terms of good manuscripts received--the Journal is in fine shape. But there are two kinds of article we want and don't get. First, one which follows this general formula: "Here is some recent work which I have been doing. I think such-and-such about so-and-so. I think I'm right because of this-and-that. And this is important for the entire field because we are beginning to see X, not Y. Recent work in this and related subjects has been going in that direction; it is typified by A's book on B and C's fine study of D. For people not in the field, the importance of all this is that. It is related in the following ways to work going on in other disciplines." In short, your editor conceives of the Journal as a place where people in the various areas of American Studies can brief themselves on the direction of thought in the many fields in which they cannot personally read everything published. How many of us in English departments are still repeating historical generalizations which the good historians outgrew twenty years ago? And vice-versa? And how many of us know what historians of American science now think about the old cliches about the strengths and weaknesses of American research? Issues of this sort are what men in the different disciplines talk about among themselves; they are what make them feel their own work significant. Too seldom do they realize that these issues are precisely that portion of their work which should be communicated to "the outside world." We invite articles of a brave and generalizing sort.

Second: we have run several articles under the general heading, "New Resources for American Studies." The first, for example, dealt with the impressive collections and facilities of the Truman Library. We want more.

- ASA is after the names of scholars, students and friends abroad who would appreciate free books--ten chosen from a list of fifty. The ASA office at the University of Pennsylvania has forms. I saw several of these packets in the homes of appropriate people in Argentina; the selections are good and the recipients grateful.
- A Max Weber Centennial Commission is at work planning an April, 1964 symposium in Kansas City. Weberians and others, regardless of academic discipline, interested in participating are invited to contact its headquarters, 716 Railway Exchange Building, 706 Grand Avenue, K.C., Missouri. Wayne Wheeler and Jerzy Hauptmann serve as co-chairmen.

(Continued on inside back cover)

- Here's bad news: with the editor safely out of the country, the Editorial Board held a sneak meeting (under cover of night, no doubt) at which the treasurer (perhaps with the aid of spirituous beverages) conned its members into raising prices. A low blow, no? Here are the new rates: As of now, back issues cost \$1.00 per copy. As of January 1, 1964, the price will be \$1.50. Moral: if you want a complete file, act fast. Worse: While Volume IV (1963) will still cost only \$1.50, Volume V (1964) will set you back \$2.50.

- A number of the libraries connected with the various bi-national cultural exchange centers in foreign cities already subscribe to the Journal. My own experience in six cities in Argentina suggests that those which do not would like to; they simply do not know the magazine. If you know men connected with these institutions, we would appreciate your suggesting the Journal to them; we will help by sending literature. These libraries are lively and useful places, and they are heavily used; it would be nice to be in more of them.

- The program of the annual meeting at the University Center of the University of Kansas City, Saturday, April 6, 1963:
 - 9:30 a.m. "Old Harp Singin'. A Southern Mountain Tradition" (Demonstration Lecture): Jack Ralston, University of Kansas City
 - Commentators: Ernest Manheim, University of Kansas City
 - Gordon Stevenson, Kansas City Public Library
 - 10:45 a.m. "Religion and Politics in Mid-America: Presidential Voting in Missouri, 1928 and 1960": Richard A. Watson, University of Missouri
 - Commentators: Howard Neighbor, Park College
 - Robert Branyan, University of Kansas City
 - 12:15 p.m. Lunch. Presidential Address: Richard L. Herrnstadt, Iowa State University
 - 2:00 p.m. "Using Carnegie Slides in Depicting American Culture" (With special attention to the impact of Industrialization): William H. Pierson, Jr., Williams College
 - Commentators: W. Howard Adams, Governor's Council on Fine Arts for Missouri
 - George Ehrlich, University of Kansas City
 - 3:15 p.m. visits to Nelson-Atkins Art Gallery, Linda Hall Library of Science and Technology and the card catalogue of the Snyder American Collection of the University of Kansas City General Library

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- We call our readers' attention to the fact that the translation of Henri Herz' travelogue-account of his American adventures, large portions of which first appeared in print in this magazine (I, 1 and II, 1), has now been published in book form by the Wisconsin State Historical Society and the Department of History of the University of Wisconsin.

- Paperback volumes received since our last listing and which we do not plan to review because they are essentially reprints: Alfred Vincent Kidder, An Introduction to the Study of Southwestern Archaeology (new Introduction by Irving Rouse) (Yale, 1962); David M. Potter, Ed., Trail to California: The Overland Journal of Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly (new Introduction) (Yale, 1962); David M. Potter, Lincoln and his Party in the Secession Crisis (new Introduction) (Yale, 1962); Stella M. Drumm, Ed., Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico: The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin 1846-1847 (Yale, 1962); Glendon Van Deusen and Herbert J. Bass, Eds., Readings in American History, 2 Volumes (Macmillan, 1963); Donald R. McCoy and Raymond G. O'Connor, Readings in Twentieth Century American History (Macmillan, 1963). The editors of that last volume are regular contributors to the Mid-continent AS Journal. Sterling chaps, both, so adopt it on any old pretext.

- Which reminds me that a number of our regular hands have new books now in print, which we will be happy to plug by way of editorial gossip if the authors will drop a hint to their publishers. Even your editor has blossomed forth with a text in a field about which he knows less than most people—Technical Writing—and which his publishers (Allyn & Bacon) assure him is going like hot-cakes in every walk-up technical school in Saginaw.

- The care, sweat and conscience which the Journal's readers expend on submitted manuscripts continue to delight and astound the Editor. Professors Grier, Johannsen, Campbell, Ehrlich and Wheeler act as though our Comment Sheets are too small, appending detailed and careful letters, adding interlinear comments and checking citations. Professor Campbell bears perhaps the heaviest load because we receive more articles which begin in literature than in any other field. The mortality rate is highest there, too, because too many of the articles we receive begin in literature and remain in literature. We seldom get bad articles, but we do get many which are not of interest to people in other disciplines, and we do reject them, however good they are. May we urge contributors to read the statement of our editorial policy on page 2 of the Spring, 1963 number? We take seriously that word "Interdisciplinary" on our masthead.

(continued on page 97)

(Continued from page two)

- We would like to apologize, on behalf of the Watson Library of the University of Kansas and the printing and production staff of the University Press, for the very late mailing of the last issue of the Journal. While our regular subscribers received their copies on time, those libraries and institutions which receive theirs through exchange arrangements with Watson Library did not. Since the Press does not know what happened to the missing copies, the Journal and the Library have pooled their extra supplies to make up the deficit. Mailed along with that issue, by the way, was our pamphlet-format Index to volumes I-III, printed at a size which is small enough so that it can be bound with the Journal.
- The Kansas Folklore Society, a large and lively outfit whose members include everything from folkpots and folkniks, little old (but bright!) ladies with uncanny memories, barefoot professors with guitars and shaggy-looking undergraduates to genuine folklore scholars, Indiana PhD.'s, Arthurians and like that, is running a recruiting drive. Annual meetings are refreshingly free of snobbery; everyone seems to have something to learn from everyone else. The general format for meetings is sound academic papers in the afternoon and hootenanny at night. Negotiations are in process now with MASA; the 1964 meeting may be a joint session with our group when we hold our own annual meeting at Pittsburg, Kansas. Dues are \$3.00 per year (the year begins January 1, 1964). In the past, members have received at least \$1.50 of that sum back in materials which the Society has obtained at bulk rates and shipped out free to them. If you want to join, send \$3.00 to Portia Allbright, Treasurer, c/o Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.
- Two instances of an editor's dreams coming true: 1.) If you will compare Professor Cadenhead's essay on Will Rogers with Professor Reed's reconstruction of Ward's first comic lecture, you will note certain marked similarities. Of course Ward's function in his society and Rogers' in his are in some ways quite alike, but the common anti-intellectualism and the tendency to reflect rather dumb attitudes which the comedians seem to think are almost universal are very striking and rather troubling. The two essays taken together make some fruitful suggestions about the nature of popular entertainment. 2.) Professor Horowitz came into the office to read proof on his article and told me about some work he had done on a brief tale of Mark Twain's. The tale itself is pretty raucous; William Dean Howells, editor of the magazine in which the piece containing the tale was to be printed, seems to have spotted in it something more than raucity, for the piece as published was without the tale. What's in it, especially in its original context, seems to be a line of rather wickedly-used religious imagery. The more Horowitz

and I chatted, the more familiar the tale seemed. "Hold on," quoth I, "Isn't that the one about the coffin in the baggage car?" It was indeed the tale which Professor Austin suggests Twain heard Ward tell in Virginia City in December, 1863. Since such mutual-sheddings-of-light within the pages of the magazine are "an editor's dream," there was the temptation to run Horowitz' explication along with Austin's historical explanation: the temptation, but not the space. But the exchange will, I hope, be a good thing: Professor Horowitz, meet Professor Austin. The Journal will be happy to provide a pound package of rare ripe limburger cheese (which we will ship by slow freight on a hot day) over which you two can get together to discuss the early publishing history, the late publishing history, and the succulent import of this fragrant tale.