

Spring 1972
Midcontinent American Studies Association (MASA) Bulletin
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IN CALIFORNIA, where just a few years ago American Studies was essentially unknown, there are now a gang of majors, courses and programs. They vary enormously: at the University of California at Irvine, American Studies is part of a comparative cultures program which sounds intriguing. At some of the state colleges, the major has been introduced because of a state law requiring education majors to show an academic concentration. Too little thought, it seems to me, has been devoted to making such programs cohere. Many education majors transfer in from junior colleges, and must squeeze in American Studies "majors" on top of education requirements in the two years remaining. In my experience, they arrive almost totally untrained, and, since they have not even a smattering of courses dealing with the United States, are not really ready for "synthetic" American Studies work. High-grade counseling on the junior college level would help immensely by steering them into courses which would be of use in this later American Studies work. Most told me they heard of American Studies only after they arrived at the college campus in their third year.

Specialized and flexible American Studies programs tailored to the sort of teaching they plan to do would help, also. Let a student who plans to teach history in a ghetto school build a major of minority group studies, sociology, ethnic history, and so forth. The California colleges have deceptively solid faculties, but lines of communication seem undeveloped: the good nineteenth-century intellectual historian tends not to know the nineteenth-century ideas man in English. Lively students told to "inventory" the faculty resources available to them and to suggest coherent programs could help not only themselves but their schools, which badly need the sorts of personal and professional ties we at state universities take for granted. At present, a few American Studies "majors" "luck out": planning to major in history, English, sociology or some other field relevant to American

Studies, they arrive better prepared, discover American Studies and graduate enthusiastic about their major. It shouldn't be a matter of luck. And since the California system is huge and by necessity bureaucratic, there is only a limited amount that faculty can do to make a student's college experience more coherent: counselling of the formal sort is largely perfunctory. Student unrest in that state is partly the result of student frustration with a system too big to comprehend—too big, indeed, to comprehend itself. A constructive American Studies student organization devoted to frank and early counselling could work wonders, and intelligent American Studies departments would find it a boon to their own planning and curriculum development.

Hopeful signs in the junior colleges of that state: here and there, good American Studies men such as Ed Krekel at El Camino College have set up imaginative American Studies courses, and report good results. Student carry-over into the senior colleges could establish the lines of communication needed to get things together.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, long a slumbering giant so far as American Studies is concerned, is rumbling with creative ideas, among them American Studies for teachers, the American Studies major tailored to the student's career plans. More on this as Lincoln develops its plans.

HIDING IN MEXICO on a Fulbright, your editor is joyously out of touch with the day-to-day operations of the journal. A rather sentimental letter from Ms. Mary Jane Harmon points out that this is the last issue with which she is to be associated: now a Master's student completing her course work in the department, Mary Jane has been a student assistant of one sort or another for six years, the last several as Graduate Editorial Assistant. Six years is half the life

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of *American Studies* to date! *American Studies* involves its Graduate Editorial Assistant in all aspects of scholarly journal publication, from dealing with contributors to production, promotion, grant-chasing and proofreading. Tenure alone would suggest her current capacity, but Mary Jane has more than experience on her side: she's bright, sensitive and hard-working. Hopefully she'll turn out to be wrong about this being her last issue: we expect to see good articles from her once the degree is in her pocket and she's off teaching somewhere.

HER LETTER says also, "I feel that we should give a special note of thanks to Charles Chatfield, guest editor for this issue. He has worked harder and more diligently than any other guest editor I have had contact with. I think that the general excellence of this issue can be attributed to his ideas, suggestions and groundwork. . . . [He has made] my job much easier and more enjoyable." My own dealings with Professor Chatfield before I left Lawrence last June confirm her judgment; *American Studies* is indebted to its guest.

AFTER YEARS of shuttling business matters back and forth between Lawrence

and our Executive Secretary's office, we have decided to centralize. From now on, both editorial and business matters can be transacted through *American Studies*, 1135 Maine Street, Lawrence, Kansas 66044.

OUR SPECIAL ISSUES work splendidly in the classroom, and can be adopted as textbooks in the usual way. With our business office now located in the same place as the editorial office, we fill orders fast: bundles of "Perceptions of Black America" (XI, 2) or "Peace Movements in America" (XIII, 1) generally hit the mail the day we receive the bookstore order.

APPLICATIONS for senior Fulbright-Hays awards for lecturing and research during 1973-1974 in over 75 foreign countries will be accepted in the spring of 1972. American Studies people who are U.S. citizens and have college teaching experience are invited to complete a simple registration form, available from: Senior Fulbright-Hays Program, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C., 20418. Registrants will receive the detailed announcement of available awards as soon as it is issued.

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BOOK REVIEW POLICY: *American Studies* is contemplating something of a reversal in the direction in which its book review policy has moved in recent years. Old readers will remember that we used to run a few review essays covering major shifts in important areas, and a great many brief reviews of books in any American field which we thought might be of interest to readers. This was modified a couple of years ago; more emphasis was placed on the longer review essay and upon medium-length reviews of books which were felt to be explicitly in American Studies (as opposed to sociology, American history, American literature, and so on). Now we're thinking of changing again.

Word reached us informally recently that *American Quarterly* is planning to drop many of its bibliographical services. We've written to their staff, with whom we've always maintained very cordial relations, to confirm this rumor, and as of the present date, have not heard. At its recent meeting, our editorial board decided that if the story were true, *American Studies* was unequipped to assume these functions: even should a suitable bibliographer be located, we do not have the budget to print the extensive bibliography which American Studies practitioners customarily find in the summer supplement to *AQ*. But it was thought that we could pick up a good deal of the slack by returning to a policy of numerous brief reviews of books dealing with many aspects of the American experience, whether or not these books were in fact "American Studies in orientation." If we go to this policy, we will retain the essay reviews and medium-length reviews, adding to them, presumably, a relatively large number of fifty or 100-word brief reviews, and one-line statements about the nature of good but more specialized works.

By way of tooling up for this possible change in direction, we have begun again to send out large numbers of books to

our family of reviewers. These will doubtless come rolling in between now and the spring issue. Since the spring issue is a special number devoted to the city, it is likely to have both a review section devoted to its special topic, and a second, general, review section behind that.

A PRESS RELEASE from a commercial reference book publisher may be related to the presumed change in the *American Quarterly* bibliographical policy: Donald M. Koster, the ASA bibliographer who has supervised the ASA's bibliographical services in *AQ*, is to direct a large American Studies bibliographical series to be published by Gale Research Company.

ZITHERS: The place is set, but not the exact date for the MASA spring meeting. MASA will gather at the Amana Colonies in Iowa. Much talk at the fall executive board meeting about innovations in format and imaginative themes. If you are not a MASA member but would like more information, drop a line to the executive secretary, who will put you on his mailing list, or fill you in on the state of the program. MASA meetings are generally fine affairs, small enough in scale so a newcomer can get to know everyone, and modest enough in format so there's time to discuss the papers or panel topics. But this one carries some insurance: suppose papers and panels are dull. Suppose tensions at the various colleges and universities are so severe that we all show up cross. There are still Amana wines to fall back upon—it's called "sampling"—, stupefying mounds of Amana food, and, generally, zithers.

FROM JOURNAL TO BOOK: Sometime around May 1973 Schocken Books, Inc., will publish a somewhat expanded version of our special issue of last spring, *Peace Movements in America*. Teachers who would like to use this material in class before it is available in the Schocken

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edition may place orders for it directly with us, since we still have on hand a small number of extra copies.

This is the second time that an entire issue of the journal has reappeared in book form; our issue on the contemporary American Indian situation (VI, 2 [Fall, 1965]) appeared in 1968 in hardback form (Everett/Edwards, Inc.) and as a Penguin-Pelican paperback in 1970.

Moreover, an unusually high percentage of our articles have been anthologized or have become parts of monographs produced by their authors. Two notable recent examples come to mind: Gerda Lerner's article, "The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson" (X, 1 [Spring, 1969]), is perhaps the single most-reprinted piece we have ever run. We also have heard recently that Bernard W. Sheehan's "The Quest for Indian Origins in the Thought of the Jeffersonian Era" (IX, 1 [Spring, 1968]) will appear in Sheehan's forthcoming *Seeds of*

Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian, which Chapel Hill will publish soon.

POE RALLY: Eric Carlson writes to inform us of plans to organize a Poe Studies Association. By the time you read this, the organizational meeting will have been held. Those interested can communicate with Eric c/o the Department of English, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut 06268.

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION sends us the preliminary outline of its 1973 annual meeting on February 26-27 in New Orleans. A number of the sessions seem of special interest for American Studies people. Since this is a field we have perhaps made too little use of in the past, AS types interested might want to contact Paul H. Mattingly, at the School of Education, New York University, 737 East Building, Washington Square, New York, New York 10003 for detailed program information.