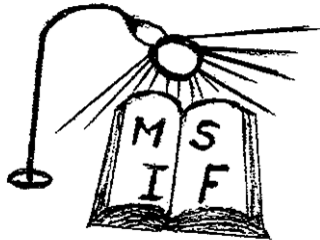


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History in Review

Table of Contents

History Issue

2-Feature:

Thinking, Suffering, and Voting 2020

Joseph Amato

5-Oral History Grant Project:

Blood, Fire and Something Else – It Began Here

Peter Simmons

8-Book Review:

Curt Hillstrom

Conservation on the Northern Plains: New Perspectives

Anthony J. Amato, Ed.

10-Remembering:

Kay Schwie – Dale Schwie

4-Earth Day

7-Space Flight

11-Programs and Meetings

11-Editor's Perspective:

In Light of the Times

Evelyn D. Klein

12-Minnesota Swedes Raising

Cane – Marilyn McGriff

13-Minnesota Women: First

in the Nation to Vote in

1920 – Lois Glewwe

14-Poetry Day via Zoom

Joseph Amato, Evelyn Klein,

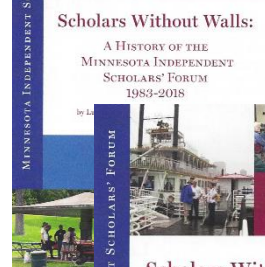
Vicki Mickelson

16-Upcoming Programs, Events



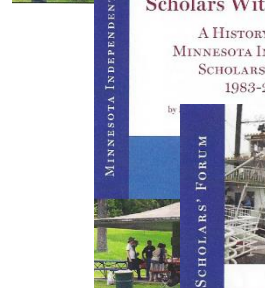
An excellent book...

-JB Anderson, University of Wisconsin



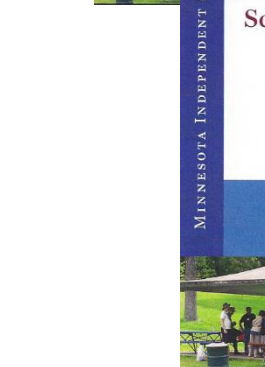
...thought provoking...

-Laura Weber, Editor,
Minnesota History



...an invaluable contribution to Minnesota history...

-David Grabitske,
Texas Historical Commission



Scholars Without Walls:

A HISTORY OF THE
MINNESOTA INDEPENDENT
SCHOLARS' FORUM
1983-2018

by Lucy Brusie, Evelyn Klein, and Mike Woolsey

These writings take
an open road
of independent passage.



Thinking, Suffering, and Voting 2020

by Joseph Amato

The 2020 national politics challenges me to vote. In contrast to those who trumpet the autonomous individual with absolute right of choice, I subscribe in the round to Catholic social philosophy, the rights of local unions and state governments, a political middle ground based on basic rights and the constitution.

The coming election painfully reminds me I cannot easily reconcile the U. S. as republic, democracy and nation-state that is a global economic and political power. I join “the old” in saying, an empire is not a republic. While I appreciate American democracy’s continuing quest for freedom and opportunity, with fairness and justice, I know that promises of progress do not preclude unforeseen events, mistakes, and tragedies.

Each decade of my eighty years compound age’s caution. My political compass as a trained intellectual historian informs that we know best, not by the logic of Cartesian rationalism but by studying what societies over the ages thought, wrote, legislated, did, and believed. Everything human has a history that can teach us.

Graduate study under Professor A. W. Salomone at Rochester taught me how much nineteenth century Europe was formed out of diverse and contending poles, ideals and powers. He saw Italian unification, the Risorgimento, fashioned out of a triad of principles embodied by Cavour’s and his statesmanship, Garibaldi’s revolutionary and military boldness, and Mazzini’s articulation of liberal-democratic nationalism.

My own doctoral dissertation, *Mounier and Maritain: A French Catholic Understanding of the Modern World* took up the fate of Catholic social and political ideals in the first half of the tragic and crises-laden interwar Europe. As much as Mounier’s personalism was underpinned by a “tragic optimism,” it sought to find a middle way between abstract

spirituality and unbounded commitment, divisive individualism and totalitarian collectivism. Unfortunately, personalism had no response to German aggression, tanks, or the indecisiveness of British and French parliamentary democracy.

Politics and Democracy

Before offering my opinions about the upcoming election, I briefly share some general views about politics and democracy. Since I first studied nation states, I have found them having a great capacity for good and evil. Aside from their positive role in consolidating lands and unifying peoples under a governing order, I see social-political struggles for control disintegrating into warring factions and resulting in violent tyrannies.

All states insist on their sovereign right to collect taxes, raise armies, and adjudicate the supreme law. Unregulated by constitution or limited by tradition, they deny all challenges to their power over land and peoples. The concept of nation makes select peoples (whoever they are deemed to be) the ultimate source of the state’s rights and authority. Uninhibited, especially during war and revolution, they transform themselves into tyrannies.

The violent fusion of state and nation was first witnessed in the later stages of the French Revolution and during the Napoleonic Empire. Nation-states in Europe and across the world extended their sovereignty and hegemony in the course of the nineteenth century. The most radical proponents of the nation underwrote the use of increased control at home and defensive and aggrandizing missions abroad. Purportedly in the service of equality and justice, states leveled societies and elevated themselves as overarching moral referee and supervisor.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the emergence of new continental states Italy and Germany, traditional empires Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Turkey feared for their existence, while

newer states and nationalities wanting to be nations entered life-and-death struggles for the future and their place in sun.

The First World War arose out of a set of regional wars, an arms race, aggressive new nations, and fearful empires. With the partitioning of Africa and plans to divide China, the age of global competition and imperialism arrived. The drop of a pin might have started a war—the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand did. The concept of survival of the fittest seemed to define the plight of nation-states in an ever-smaller world.

The First World War dictated to all: mobilize to survive. The war and post-war birthed tyrannies and totalitarian states in Russia, Italy, and Germany. In those three, the unification of party and state became grounds for claiming the future, fulfillment, and destiny of their people and the future of mankind. These states placed themselves beyond individuals, groups, rights, traditions, institutions, cultures and religions.

If this justly characterizes the nation-states of Europe, does it in any way describe the United States? Or do we treat the United States as exceptional, because it has a unique geography, constitution, and history? Did it, somehow, remain free of the flaws of state and empire in its rise and growth from an insular republic of thirteen relatively autonomous seaboard colonies to a then democratic republic? Unquestionably, it had fought the Civil War over the issues of states' rights and emerged from it as a unified nation-state. In less than fifty years, it completed its dominion reaching from sea to sea. Having subdued all indigenous peoples on its territory, the 1898 Spanish-American War made the United States the dominant nation of the Americas. Just twenty years later, in 1918, it emerged from the First World War as the most powerful democratic and capitalist nation-state in the world.

With its victory in First World War, the United States, under President Woodrow Wilson, determined the new but short-lived democratic national order of post-war Europe and gave birth to the League of Nations, which it itself did not join. Within a decade, the League failed the test of keeping peace in face of rising powers in Europe and Asia.

After its victorious emergence from the Second World War, defeating Germany and Japan, the United States rebuilt much of Western Europe and

made itself the principal architect and defender of freedom and democracy, nationalism, and capitalism across the globe. It confronted Russia's annexation of Germany and Eastern Europe, the global hegemony of Communism and entered into full-scale nuclear arms race against the Soviet Union.

In the post-war world, the United States formed alliances, established programs of foreign aid, initiated world trade, and was instrumental in establishing the United Nations. It militarily intervened in Korea and Vietnam, and later in Iraq, the Near East, and elsewhere. It carried out a world mission, essentially an open and free society, while, paradoxically, becoming the greatest state and largest economic empire in the history of the world.

The world and all its complex affairs became incalculably America's. Its citizens increasingly have been required to ask what in the world is not of their interest? They are tested to comprehend and judge their own country's power. Beyond the most complex foreign politics and matters of war and peace (now compounded by fear of cyber wars) American citizens interrogate themselves over their nation's responsibility for phenomenal growth of world populations; economic disparity; countless wars beyond and within national borders; violation of human rights and the matter of neighboring and worldwide migrants and immigrants.

Additionally, American citizens must face increasingly urgent and complex issues associated with short- and long-term worldwide climate change and pollution; disproportionate water, mineral, and energy resources; disparate stages of social and economic development. There are matching and interrelation problems arising from growing cities; the extension of commercial agriculture and the exhaustion of soils; the depletion of natural resources; rising seas; increasing wildfires; and as irrepressibly revealed in 2020, world-wide pandemics. Vital and indispensable ecological zones such as seacoasts, the rain forest and Polar caps are sacrificed for national progress and world economic development.

These international and global matters increasingly go to the heart of American politics, straining understandings and testing loyalties. Conscience repeatedly asks: At what price and at whose expense is American prosperity and progress purchased? Can economic and material progress truly serve national and world freedom and justice?

Will this progress give rise to a centralization that will deny local, traditional, and high cultures? Does national politics offer a key or prison for future life and humans?

National parties and ideologies offer conflicting and self-serving national narratives of who benefits and suffers. Only the most naïve believe they know and can write this narrative with certainty. Ever in debate are freedom and justice, progress and tradition, individual and community.

The Forthcoming 2020 National Election



There are many reasons why I suffer the forthcoming 2020 national election. Presidential elections are traditionally taken to be turning points. They summon us to choose candidates who speak to local, national, and global issues. As change accelerates in the world, possibilities multiply. Everything and anything could happen, and we are forced to navigate by suspicion, conjecture, and ideology—anything other than a sure compass.

The years of the Trump’s presidency have set the stage for coarse passions and polarizing opinions. His egotistic style of command—head of the bully pulpit of a great bureaucracy—is accented against the background of a long growth of the imperial presidency in this century and last. The Democrats, headstrong and reckless, desire to impeach without a chance of having the votes to do it, testify to their desire to be righteous and victorious accusers.

I, as one voter of 150 million voters—know my singular vote counts little—in truth, nothing. Adding to my sense of irrelevance, my reasoning finds no footholds on the nasty cliffs of contemporary issues and their rising, craggy summits. At the same time, I am worn dumb and dull by political preachment, redundant news, pseudo criticisms generated out of imagined absolute perfection.

Nevertheless, I will go to the November presidential polls, despite my own ignorance and fallibility before such taxing problems as health care today and tomorrow for 331 million, the complexities of farm policy, and the elements and cost of national defense. I will go to the polls as admittedly uncertain of who and what is best for nation, world, and self. I will go to the polls as a “a peasant skeptic,” a grandchild of Sicilian and other European

immigrants, a Vietnam anti-war activist, Catholic worker and a constitutional liberal-conservative in the spirit of Lord Acton. I know that I am at odds with both parties and the secular ideologies of progress that underpin them.

Admitting I owe this nation respect for its constitution and gratitude for its law and opportunities, I will vote my faint hopes with strong doubts in 2020. I still retain, though frayed, a belief that American constitutional republic and people’s democracy matter to the nation and world in which tyrannies wax. As in most human affairs, I light a candle that I choose the good.

The final note I add to this confessional essay is: Corona virus has added to my election blues. I fear the United States will emerge in 2020 ever more centralized and regulated. And it will evermore suffer the problems and contradictions of world trade and be tested by the containment of China (and other dictatorial regimes) as it tries to be both a prosperous and dominant friend to the world.

~Joseph A. Amato has a Ph.D. in history and wrote multiple forms of intellectual and cultural history, including poetry, philosophy, and ethics. He pioneered the writing of local, regional and family history. Amato published more than twenty-five books. Recent works include The Book of Twos, Everyday Life: How the Ordinary Became Extraordinary, Buoyancies: A Ballast Mater’s Log, My Three Sicilies, and Towers of Aging.

Celebrating 50 Years Earth Day

An oil spill
coast of
1969
U.S. Senator
Nelson of



along the
California in
precipitated
Gaylord
Wisconsin

and environmentalist Denis Hayes to bring about the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. The event attracted millions of people and initiated an environmental movement as well as annual events to protect the environment. On Earth Day 2016 climate change was addressed internationally in the Paris Agreement.



Blood, Fire, and Something Else –

It Began Here

by Peter Simmons

During the peak years of the Vietnam War (in Vietnam, it's called the *American War*), United States citizens began, publicly, to refuse to participate in that war to an extent nearly unprecedented in the nation's history and in ways unique to the twentieth century. That refusal, which became known as "The Resistance" and "The Movement" grew to be nationwide and multi-generational. Thousands of young American men disobeyed orders to be inducted into the military and were, then, federally indicted. Over three thousand were imprisoned. In Minnesota, during 1969, 1970 and 1971, more than half of all federal criminal indictments were for Selective Service violations.

Some went further. Beginning in 1966, and at least through 1971, American peace activists began not only to refuse the draft, but also to attack and dismantle its administrative foundation: the county Selective Service offices. Those offices held records that identified men eligible to get orders to report for induction. The attacks involved taking or destroying draft files (there was a separate file for each individual registrant) and sometimes damaging office equipment, such as typewriters.

For those who weren't alive then, or who weren't tuned in, here's some context: The Selective Service Act of 1948 required that every eighteen-year-old male resident of the United States (not only citizens, but *all* young men) register with their local Selective Service office (draft board). They were to keep that office informed of their place of residence and to carry on their person at all times both their registration card and their classification card. Classification indicated availability and fitness for service, e.g. IA (available), 2S (student), 4F (unfit), etc. As the Army called for manpower, the local draft board—composed of local citizens of good repute—would choose from those classified IA (this was the "selective" part) enough men to meet their county's quota. Those chosen were sent a notice ordering them

to report to a specified location either for induction or for a pre-induction physical exam. These notices notoriously began "Greetings," and they were increasingly dreaded once the United States began to send more and more ground troops to Vietnam in 1965 and thereafter.

Refusal to cooperate with the draft had been increasingly frequent and visible after a few young men publicly burned their draft cards at a small peace demonstration at Union Square in New York City, on May 16, 1964—Armed Forces Day. By October 16, 1967, a national day of protest had been organized by the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. An estimated 1400 draft cards were destroyed by young men on that single day.

Refusing to submit to induction, failure to report for induction, destroying or failing to carry one's draft cards, or failure to register in the first place, were all federal felonies, with penalties of up to five years in prison, plus fines of up to \$10,000.

Increasingly, large demonstrations against the war took place across the country. Among these were the March on the Pentagon on October 21, 1967, and two National Moratorium marches on Washington, on October 15 and November 15, 1969. The peace movement was fully visible, although not yet widely supported by the general public. Returning combat veterans told stories that were at odds with official claims of "light at the end of the tunnel." The My Lai massacre had happened on March 16, 1968 but wasn't revealed to the public until November 1969. Lines were drawn – "Hawks" vs. "Doves." Opposition to the war was becoming open rebellion.

This was the setting in which taking direct action against draft boards developed. In an essay in the *New York Review of Books*, September 25, 1969, the writer Francine du Plessix Gray labeled those who took such steps "The Ultra Resistance," which neatly captured the degree to which the Selective Service System had come under attack. By the end of 1969,

there had been at least a dozen major raids on draft board offices. Tens of thousands of files were destroyed.

In the 21st century, the rationale for these acts of destruction may not be clear. But at the time, there were at least two reasons which were crystalized in 1967 by the second such act, or “action,” as these events came to be called. The first was in 1966 and will be described later. On October 27, 1967, four men—a priest, a minister, an artist and a poet—all veterans of the Civil Rights movement, entered a draft board office in Baltimore and poured blood on drawers filled with files of the local registrants. Their aim was to protest both the Vietnam War as well as the bureaucracy that fueled it with young draftees. They stayed at the scene and were arrested and jailed. It was, for them, an act of Christian witness, meant to demonstrate vividly that those seemingly benign files were the instruments – and the quiet office that housed them – the agency of blood and death for Americans and Vietnamese alike.

For the Selective Service System, this assault was more than a disruptive nuisance. To the surprise of the Baltimore Four, as they were soon called, Selective Service – stupidly – had never made copies of registrants’ files. In 1967, there were no computerized offices as we now know them today, no external hard drive backups and no “cloud.” There was only carbon paper which was no help if it was not used. Several Catholic peace campaigners, who were following the Baltimore Four trial, quickly realized that destroying draft files would effectively result in erasing men from the system, making them safe from conscription, even though that had not been the particular aim of the Baltimore blood pourers.

Those peace campaigners turned Baltimore trial observers, and a Minnesotan in particular, decided to “do more of those” actions against local draft boards. Draft board offices weren’t well protected. Young men were, after all, *supposed* to come into them. And the files were right there.

The “observers” went to Catonsville, Maryland, on May 17, 1968. There were nine of them, seven men and two women. They entered the Catonsville draft board, where they hauled hundreds of files to the parking lot outside. They, then, burned them with homemade napalm and stood in prayer holding hands while awaiting arrest. All were Catholic clergy or other lay persons, and included the

priests, brothers Daniel and Phillip Berrigan. For them it was an act of faith carried out by a faith community, and it planted a seed. Several of those arrested that day began to range across the country soon after they were released on bail. Led by Army veteran George Mische, a devout thirty-one-year-old Catholic from St. Cloud, Minnesota, they organized small meetings and retreats at seminaries and monasteries and in less institutional settings, like Catholic Worker houses. (It’s worth noting that some of those very first draft card burners in 1964 were Catholic Workers.) These gatherings were meant for both reflection and recruiting: Do you have the fortitude, family situation, and faith community support to face years in prison? These recruiters had seen other organizers do much the same during the Civil Rights movement just a few years before.

At this point, what was becoming known as the “Catholic Left” had put its own stamp on the “ultra-resistance” to come, and it was strikingly unique. Prayerful attendance at the destruction of “property that had no right to exist” and standing by to be publicly, peacefully arrested, while wearing clerical garb, was thought-provoking: What was “witnessing” about? What were they praying for? Why would Catholics do that, since the Church generally supported the war? Suddenly, everyone was watching.

The seeds planted by the Catonsville Nine sprouted, most notably in Milwaukee, on September 24, 1968. Mische had been instrumental in assembling a group of clergy and laity, including four Minnesotans, one of them a secular Jew from St. Paul. They burned thousands of draft files in a downtown street. All of them – the Milwaukee Fourteen – were arrested at the scene, ultimately convicted, and imprisoned.

After Milwaukee, raiding took off; the missionary travel of George Mische and others had been hugely successful. By the end of 1971, hundreds of draft boards had been attacked. Magnetic tapes had been destroyed at the Michigan headquarters of Dow Chemical (principal maker of napalm), and Dow recruiters were blocked at universities. The FBI office at Media, Pennsylvania had been successfully burglarized, and Daniel Ellsberg had carried out the slow-motion theft of what became known as the Pentagon Papers. The character of the raids also changed, from acts of witness and faith to outright

sabotage, with often the secular and political idea of: “do it; get away; and then do it again.” The goal was to impair the operations of the targets, to stimulate further resistance, and to show that “we’re not helpless.” The war had come home.

Draft board raids continued until active conscription ended in 1973, but they were infrequent after 1971 because of improved security measures. The last major raid took place in Camden, New Jersey, on August 22, 1971. It was unique in that all those charged – the Camden Twenty-Eight – were acquitted by their federal jury. The tide was turning.

That was nearly the end, as the war itself was to end in 1973, but the attacks on Selective Service offices have a beginning which is of particular local interest. Barry Bondhus, a nineteen-year-old from Big Lake, Minnesota, had received an induction order from his Sherburne County draft board. On February 24, 1966, Barry went into that board’s offices in Elk River, Minnesota. His act that day would be personal, spontaneous, earthy, and oddly engaging. Barry was equipped with two large buckets, which contained his and his ten (!) brothers collected excrement, over a week’s worth. This was the “something else” of this article’s title. After brief indecision, he opened several file cabinet drawers and emptied the pails into them.

Barry, who was imprisoned at the Sandstone, Minnesota federal prison for fourteen months and died in 2018, was part of a Christian fundamentalist

family. His father, Tom, had been ready to refuse induction during WWII but failed his physical. Barry and his family were not peace activists, and they didn’t protest the war. But they responded – uniquely – when the war came to them. Tom Bondhus was opposed to wars on principle, believing that they were fought on behalf of business interests. He wrote that *he* would “declare war” on the United States government if it came to take his sons.

Barry’s completely original act was indeed the first known destruction of Selective Service files ever in the United States, a fact in which some Minnesotans take pride.

~Peter Simmons wrote this essay in connection with a 2018 Minnesota Historical, Cultural and Heritage Grant, sponsored by the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum. During 2018 and 2019 he conducted interviews with eight Minnesotans involved in the resistance to the United States’ war against Vietnam in which he took part. Simmons has a B.A. in American History and a B.S. in Agricultural Business Administration. He has now retired from Health Partners and Hennepin County Medical Center.

First of Its Kind Space Flight

Two astronauts will have the privilege and enjoyment of looking at planet Earth from another perspective. Space X’s historic flight will usher in a new kind of space travel, conducted for the first time by a private company, taking astronauts Bob Behnken, an Air Force colonel, and Doug Hurley, a retired Marine, to the International Space Station. It launched, after a brief postponement due to weather conditions, on Saturday, May 30, 2020, from the same launch pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida, as did NASA’s Apollo shuttle missions which closed in 2011. Since 2012 the private company launched cargo capsules to the space station.



Time travel used to be thought of as just science fiction, but Einstein’s general theory of relativity allows for the possibility that we could warp space-time so much that you could go off in a rocket and return before you set out

~Stephen Hawking



Book Review: by Curt Hillstrom

Conservation on the Northern Plains: New Perspectives

Edited by Anthony J. Amato

The Center for Western Studies, Augustana University,
Sioux Falls SD, 2017, 215 pages

This book contains eleven essays and a foreword by outdoor writer Dennis Anderson. It covers conservation trends on the northern plains from northern Illinois to eastern Wyoming and north into the prairie provinces of Canada, from its first settlement to what is happening today. The authors are academics, farmers, ranchers, historians, sociologists, and writers who generally take a broad view of the topic. And while alternate viewpoints are discussed (in neutral language), there are no specific political power groups – environmental, private property advocates, socialists, or libertarians – represented.

In his Introduction, editor Anthony Amato discusses the term “conservation” in the book's title. To many it seems a bit quaint, an “old-fashioned” word appropriate to the first half of the twentieth century. But words are important to the authors. Other words – sustainability, resilience, re-wilding, bioregionalism, environmentalism, preservation – could have been used. But these have definitions and connotations that are various and conflicting and are often used as political cudgels. In the end, the word “conservation” was, appropriately, considered the best choice to represent the issues, people, and backgrounds being discussed. Understanding this gets you a long way into understanding what this collection of essays is about.

One important reason “conservation” was favored is because of its historical ties, since this book's approach is largely historical. The essays are bookended with two well-written pieces: a scientific history of the plains by William Hoffman and a social/political history by Joseph Amato. The former is the most technical and footnote-laden essay. It focuses on Minnesotan (and northern plains-raised) Raymond Lindeman for its presentation. Perhaps a

straightforward, chronological approach would have made the message clearer for readers not familiar with the subject. While Lindeman made critically important contributions to the science of ecology – he was a pioneer in analyzing ecosystems using energy flow rather than who eats what – all this could be a bit off-putting for some readers, perhaps discouraging them from continuing.

In between these are essays that cover various aspects of the northern plains. Some of my favorites were Peter Carrels' piece on three farmers who were economically “forced” to adopt more progressive agricultural practices; Linda Hasselstrom's vigorous argument for livestock raising as the best use for the western prairie; Lisa Payne Ossian's historical look at the interplay between government programs and Iowa farming; and Anthony Amato's careful analysis of what is and has been going on with the viewpoints and behavior of the powers-that-be on the northern plains. I also enjoyed Andrea Glessner's essay on wild horses. Wild horses? That has to be peripheral. But she shows how stories and images can change human attitudes and lead to important changes in policy. Also, Miles Lewis expands Ossian's inquiry with a look at farmer-ranchers and government policy in Montana. Stephen Eliason reports on some studies of hunters and outfitters to understand why the former are declining and the attitudes toward wolves of the latter (no surprise: most of them hate wolves, government, liberals, and outsiders). And Barry Stiefel outlines the development of parks and preserves on the plains in the U.S. and Canada.

Clearly, as the book shows, change is a constant. The universe continues to expand. Continents move. And what happens on the northern plains – from being covered by glaciers to being covered by farmland – is changing. On the human scale, the primary driver of these changes – not

counting natural forces but resulting from them – is use. Prehistoric fauna once grazed these lands, followed by the animals that hunted them, including humans. Eventually European settlers discovered the fertile soil of the northern plains and have come to dominate them with their farms, ranches and cities.

With the arrival of homo sapiens, ambitions, viewpoints, attitudes, concepts, and values became overwhelmingly important. Settlers, like most people, operated on the assumption that the way things are today is the way they will be tomorrow. Once humans set things up the way they want them to be, a way that makes them happy (and makes them money), the status quo becomes very resistant to change. But things change anyway. On the plains, years of ample rainfall can be followed by years of drought. Boom and bust cycles are common. Furthermore, what works for one group of people does not always work well for other groups, who have other values, other objectives, other agendas.

The result of these changes and these clashes of values on how to use the land has resulted in government intervention, which then creates winners and losers. And the losers blame everyone else, especially government, for not getting their way. This is illustrated in Lewis' article on agricultural extension services in Montana. When things are going well, farmers and ranchers want nothing to do with government. But when they aren't, they want the government to step in, and the political strength of the different factions, largely local, controls the outcome. As Ossian points out in Iowa, the consequences can be unpredictable and undesirable. Even if they are generally beneficial, once government programs have been set up, changing policy is very difficult, despite changing social attitudes and needs.

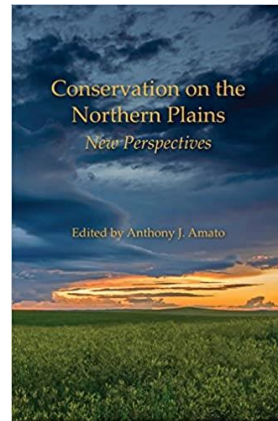
Hoffman's discussion of the science relevant to the plains is an important part of the book's examination. As natural scientists in the nineteenth century began to move from just collecting and cataloging species to trying to understand how everything fits together, we see the beginning of the development of what today we call ecology. With the exploding advancement of technology in the past decades, scientists can now “see” what is happening in more detail and in more places than ever before. And this new information is spawning new understandings, new theories, and bolstering or

diminishing arguments for and against particular policies concerning issues on the northern prairie.

These issues are extremely important and involve the source of a significant part of our nation's food. How should we use the land? Farmers and ranchers want land dedicated to agriculture. Hunters want access to land that is attractive to game. Environmentalists want more areas set aside for nature. Industrialists want to exploit fossil fuel and mineral deposits. Cities want space for new businesses and housing developments.

We are beginning to understand that the soil does not bounce back quickly from being plowed-up prairie and then abandoned. Continuous corn production drains the soil of much of its fertility, leading to increased use of synthetic fertilizers which, along with modern herbicides and pesticides, pollute aquifers and rivers and our drinking water. This is exacerbated by our ethanol program which actually contributes to global warming rather than reducing it and uses the land for a non-food crop. Ditches that were built early in the twentieth century to drain low-lying land, marshes, and shallow lakes have led to major erosion losses and further pollution of our waterways. Greater use of irrigation has led to our aquifers being drained faster than they are being refilled. Ownership of rights to the limited water supplies on the plains has become a complicated and litigious mess.

Ownership, not just of water rights, but also of land is critical. While the U.S. was setting aside the first areas in the West for national parks, monuments, and forests, it was giving away the plains to private interests because there were no “natural wonders” there. Further privatization of land and resources have managed to lock out other users. Some things (Hasselstrom notes cattle production in the meat cycle) are controlled by a limited number of corporations with deep pockets and political influence. While some governmental protection has taken place, particularly for grasslands (most of them originally meant to save the buffalo), prairie potholes for duck production (due to pressure from hunting



organizations), and various other spaces for recreational or unique characteristics (largely by states), the basic mosaic of the plains and its issues has remained the same.

This book does a fine job of fleshing out these issues – and especially the history that led to them – without placing blame nor advocating solutions. It does, however, have a clear bias: Things are changing, and in order to control the changes, we need to consider all stakeholders and to be informed by science. Conservation on the plains started with a concern for soil erosion during the dust bowl, but as we realized the effects of our agricultural practices, we found that we needed to monitor water use, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, invasive species, and many other parameters. Climate change complicates the problems. As Anthony Amato points out, “...the land and water of the endless prairie are finite, and a narrow focus on efficiency often leads to a catabolic path.” Slowly, one begins to realize that we are on the cusp of an agricultural revolution, from subsistence farming to commodity farms to industrial agriculture to what?

Conservation movements often begin when some group realizes that what they value is being threatened by the practices of others. When they begin to push for change, the established powers will almost inevitably push back. But conservation movements can also begin when a few users begin to realize that what they are doing is not working, as the farmers in Carrel's piece do when their incomes take a dive. In either case, public attitudes are slow to change, and entrenched interests can thwart progress toward solutions for years.

Nonetheless, government is the critical linchpin in this fight. One of the most important functions of government is to mediate between power groups to find a solution that, ideally, makes all sides happy. Unfortunately, finding this ideal does not happen often. And even more unfortunately, the losers in this fight, seemingly unable to understand the role of government, simply blame “the feds.” Lamentably, sometimes government leaders participate in this blame themselves. (Remember Ronald Reagan's quip, “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'”) This is government's job. Allowing the protagonists to just fight it out can be extremely costly, and the actions of

whoever comes out on top will rarely be the best long-term solution. We should never forget that this, our country, is a democracy and the government is all of us.

Clearly, we need some sort of a model that falls between the industrial factory farm and the romanticized family farm, as well as efforts to share the plains with non-human creatures. But even more importantly, we need to be able to listen to each other with understanding and then to think critically.

~ Curt Hillstrom, a retired systems analyst, graduate of the University of Wisconsin, studied philosophy and mathematics. He attended graduate school in systems science at the University of Louisville, leaving after becoming disenchanted with the traditional educational system. Past president of MISF, he has been a member since 1984.

Remembering

Kay L. Schwie



A long-time member of MISF, she passed away on March 31, 2020.

Kay was a warm, caring, loving woman, who found fulfillment in living a life of service to others. Kay received her B.S. in Health Care

Administration from Metropolitan State University. At retirement, Kay was the vice president of Midwest Stone Management, a medical company specializing in urology. She enjoyed literature, music, and the arts, but it was in nature that she found true solace and outlets for her passion for the preservation of wildlife and natural resources. This led to her becoming the first president of the Friends of the Minnesota Valley, an organization working to protect and enhance the natural resources of the Minnesota River Watershed, including the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Kays is survived by her husband of 56 years, Dale, her sister, Leone, brother-in law, Roger and other relatives and friends. A private interment was held at Lakewood Cemetery. A memorial service will follow at a later date.

~ Dale Schwie

Programs & Meetings



Editor's Perspective:

In Light of these Times



As the coronavirus pandemic has upended our lives for now, it is inevitable that the days to come will bring change to our existence. Hopefully, these changes

will be beneficial at home, in the workplace, health care system, the environment, and the economy. MISF is trying to deal with the situation as it exists now as constructively as we can. After all, Stephen Hawking maintained "Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change."

As the stay-at-home order has isolated the population, and as libraries are still closed after the stay-safe order, who knows for how long, our membership meetings for March and April were cancelled and placed on the agenda for rescheduling.

In the meantime, we considered holding meetings over Zoom. We are fortunate enough to count Bill McTeer, our electronics wizard, in our ranks. He set up Zoom conferencing for our board meetings and with great success, so that we only had to cancel the March board meeting.

This led us to arrange our first Zoom membership meeting which we had to move from May 23 to May 30 at 10:00 a.m. Since so much was in transition, we rescheduled in order to allow sufficient time to notify members of the change to a virtual meeting. The meeting then featured our regularly scheduled poetry program.

Other changes in the offing are rescheduling the missed membership meetings of March and April, possibly over the summer, since it looks like we will all be stuck in place more or less for the time being,

and MISF members are, for the most part, gregarious conversationalists who miss the excitement of their in-person gatherings.

Depending on the state of the pandemic and the availability of the Washburn Public Library, our regular meeting place, we may have to schedule Zoom membership meetings for fall. Because of the upheaval, the board decided to move the Annual membership meeting part of our normal June meetings to September to allow more time to get ready and inform the membership in a timely manner of impending changes and candidates for election, in accordance with our bylaws. Other prospective membership meetings will be scheduled as presenters are comfortable with doing their programs over Zoom, if necessary.

For the latest on future programs and events, follow our website and check your e-mails.

I hope everybody stays safe. I will leave you with the thoughts I recently penned on the Kudo Board to the 2020 graduates of the University of Wisconsin-River falls:

Yesterday lies behind you;
today offers a spring board;
tomorrow forges a new existence,
where change paves the road
and success builds on dreams and
chance.
May your road take you far.

~Evelyn D. Klein,
TMS Editor



Minnesota Swedes Raising Cane

Presented by Marilyn McGriff

Marilyn McGriff has been making presentations on the topic of *Minnesota Swedes Raising Cane in Cuba* in the early 20th century, in the United States as well as in Sweden.

She pointed out that her presentation was from the point of view of the Swedes who had previously settled in America and then moved to Cuba. Apparently, Swedish journalists tried to present the same topic from the point of view of Swedish citizens undertaking this venture. However, because these folks had first settled in the U.S., before heading for Cuba, she felt she had a more direct connection to the motivation and direction of this undertaking by the Swedes, many of whom or whose offspring later returned to the U.S.

It began with the Spanish American War of 1898 when the opportunity to settle in Cuba and raise cane presented itself. Cuba was a U.S. protectorate, and they wanted Spain out of the picture. Dr. Alfred Lind, originally from Sweden, who had become a doctor in Minnesota, soon invested in large tracts of land in Cuba. He then sold parcels of land to fellow Swedes with the promotion that the land was cheap and that Cuba had a warm, healthful climate, where crops would grow all year long. Thus, he persuaded some farm families to resettle in Cuba in the hopes of improving their lives. He called it the Swedish Lutheran Colony, and in his brochures, he called the area in which they settled Bayate. While Bayate no longer exists, a museum has been established in memory of its residents.

The new arrivals in Cuba soon developed roads and bridges as well as houses adapted to Cuba. A certain curiosity developed between them and the people already living there because of the Swedes' differing ways to decorate their houses. School was established, and students spoke a mixture of Spanish and English.

Cuba's newcomers began with subsistence farming, new methods, and crops. Railroads made it possible for cane to be developed, and sugar became their main crop. Eventually, they operated a sugar

mill and hired Cubans to help. Often, they would burn the previous year's crops and plant new. Once they had expanded into a neighboring community, their business declined.

As people were attracted to the area, a hotel was built. Young, single men with U.S. citizenship arrived, looking for a new life, though some became disillusioned and did not stay. Many families came to Cuba, and children were born and died there. By 1908, 200 Swedes lived in Cuba. Life, however, did not turn out to be as successful in the Cuban colony as people had envisioned, and many died from disease, and others returned to the U.S.

Dr. Lind had persuaded families like J.P. and Marta Jonsson, who had previously come from Sweden to the U.S., to go to Cuba. They came with nine children and had one more while in the U.S. Unfortunately, Mrs. Johnson died en route to Cuba. Eventually, he opened Jonsson's Crane and Repair Shop which was primarily run by his sons. As his daughters married, one remained in the settlement, but others returned to Cambridge in the U.S., as did other families. Even Dr. Lind's wife, who was not used to such subsistence living, decided to return to live in the U.S.

One of the reasons for the lack of success for this settlement were the mini revolutions that took place at the time, so that surveyors would not come out. By 1917, a more widespread revolution occurred, and the American Swedes were caught in the middle with some members of the colony becoming part of the troops. Eventually, another financier took over Lind's settlement at a great loss for Lind. Lind died in 1924 and was buried in Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis.

Marilyn McGriff is a local historian, researcher, and author. She is currently assisting with publication of a pictorial history of St. Paul's Swede's Hollow. The meeting was attended by about 26 people.

February 22, 2020

Minnesota Women: First in the Nation to Vote in 1920

Presented by: Lois Glewwe

Lois began her presentation by noting that Friday, August 27, 1920, is the centenary of women's right to vote in the United States. A South Saint Paul scholar, she researched women's suffrage in Minnesota which led her to South Saint Paul.

She noted, well before that date, women were always allowed to vote in the state of Wyoming, but in Minnesota women could only vote for the school board. Interestingly, Native American women always had the right to vote.

Women's concern with the right to vote initially caused problems. Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Stanton started the right to vote movement. One major issue was property ownership. Women could not own property or get a divorce. Women lost their right to own property once they married. No progress was made in this respect during the Civil War.

Susan B. Anthony was a reformer who fought for women's rights over their children and the right to hold property. When the 14th Amendment was passed in 1868, she tested its application to women and promptly wound up in jail.

Various attempts were made to get women the right to vote. Adam Fridley attempted to get women the vote in Minnesota, but the bill was vetoed by then Governor Austin. In California, Senator Aaron A. Sargent introduced a bill, but it, also, did not pass. During World War I, women protested and picketed outside the White House. But many were arrested and put in jail, where many were subsequently force fed when they went on a hunger strike, causing serious injury. Part of the argument against women's right to vote was that people were afraid women would take a stand for prohibition. But in 1918 Prohibition passed anyway.

In 1920 the 19th Amendment, at last, made it illegal to bar citizens from voting based on sex. Subsequently, in Minnesota the first woman to vote

on the morning after the ratification was, presumably, Marguerite Newburgh in South Saint Paul, according to the newspaper.

In the early 19th century, many immigrant women were brought to work in South Saint Paul stockyards, where they were eager to become independent working women. Consequently, South Saint Paul had a very active suffrage movement. These women often lived in boarding houses, many of them built by Swift & Co. Although they faced a difficult life, some managed to open stores and many enjoyed an independent life.

Cowboys brought the cattle and liked to drink. Many bars were established in South Saint Paul which did not believe in Prohibition and eventually attracted corruption.

During this time, various ethnic groups formed their own clubs, establishing such venues as the Croatian Hall, Serbian Hall, Polish Hall, among others. The women of these groups were powerful and influential. Wives of bankers and stockyard managers, though living in lovely homes, worked with the suffragettes, contributing to the political/social movement. The fact that there was only one high school everyone attended contributed to this unified effort.

The Glewwe family women, it is assumed, took part in this historic first election in which women participated.

Interestingly enough, the ERA was first introduced in 1923, approved by Congress in 1972 and is still awaiting final ratification by states.

Lois Glewwe is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, with a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She is author of published histories of South Saint Paul, West St. Paul, and Inver Grove Heights, among many others. See www.dakotasoulsisters.com

There were 36 attendees at the meeting.

May 30, 2020

Poetry Day

With Evelyn Klein, Vicki Mickelson, and Joe Amato

On May 30, postponed from May 23 for technical reasons, MISF held its annual poetry reading over Zoom, first time ever. We gathered approximately twelve members for this occasion. As we were having trouble getting both poets aboard, despite previous practice session, we managed to get Joe, but unfortunately lost Vicki.

While members were waiting for the scheduled poets, moderator **Evelyn Klein** began the program. She is an award winning poet, author of *From Here Across the Bridge*, *Once upon a Neighborhood*, and *Seasons of Desire*, books of poetry, prose and art, the latter two books to be found in the Minnesota Historical Society's permanent library collection. She introduced the program with a quote from Robert Frost and continued with an impromptu reading of her own work in progress, including themes of nature, staying at home, and progress. Here is an excerpt:

from **Traveling through Cyberspace:**

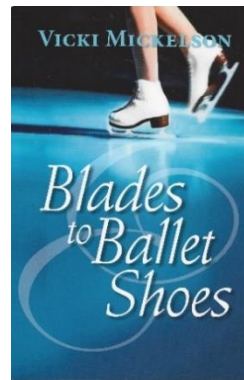
We navigate cyberspace,
our virtual domain, into tomorrows,
tied to be back of Pegasus
with cords of convenience and lure...

This Pegasus, like the steed of
ancient gods,
born of an electronic goddess and
earthly father,
sweeps us across the universe
through our tomorrows. We feel secure
in the web
that catches us on our way, drink
from the Dionysian well it offers us,
as if one generation is all it takes
to safeguard cyberspace,

while Pandora, with help of her brothers,
fills her box with our identity of numbers
and words, names
and places, statements, and images, things
done and left undone.

They will open the box at time
of Revelation.

Vicki Mickelson is a retired educator who taught in the Minneapolis Public Schools for thirty-eight years. She published seven books of poetry, including *Island Attitudes*, nominated for a Minnesota Book Award in 2016. Vicki's poetry



is inspired by life's feats and daily observations and resonates human frailties and achievements. Her six grandchildren fuel her energy for writing.

In Vicki's absence, the moderator read to members from Vicki Mickelson's book, dedicated to her daughter,

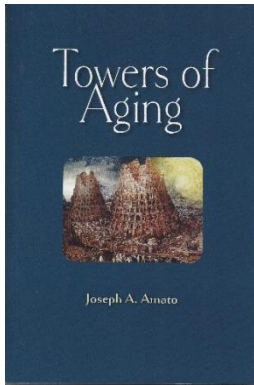
Aanya, *Blades to Ballet Shoes:*

Picking Apples

You were seven and playful
A renegade with a shy nature
Skating with a neighbor at Apple Valley
Arena
Skimming your blades to nowhere
When sassy Stephanie, a skating coach
Told you lessons would make you a star
Gliding in oblivion
Your friend
An accomplice in Rainbow Brite mittens
Circling, stopping, chatting
Geometric pastel sweater
A backdrop for your long blond hair
Insulating your fair skin from the chill

You made up your mind
 You would be a figure skater
 Like Snow White in “Disney on Ice”
 Executing jumps, spread eagles, footwork
 In elaborate chiffon costumes
 With matching skates
 You had made up your mind
 The apple was ready
 Red and succulent
 And you took a big bite
 Thirty minutes to fame

Joe Amato, long-time member and retired history professor, has written more than twenty-five books on history, two memoirs, two



books on philosophy, and a work on magic realism. His four books of poetry include: *Buoyancies: A Ballast Master’s Log*, *My Three Sicilies: Stories, Poems and Histories*, *Diagnostics: The Poetics of Time*. Joe explored the intricacies of aging as he read from his latest book

just out, *Towers of Aging*. Here is an example.

Moving On

Those who walk with canes
 Still remember the time
 When they were captains of their days.
 Then they counted gifts and exchanges,
 Got angry and stored up a grudge,
 And over years wisely learned
 To melt down resentment and jealousy,
 Fashion prayers and memory out of gratitude,
 And make thanks and kindness
 The enduring alloy of self.

The Minnesota Scholar

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The Minnesota Scholar welcomes submissions. We are especially interested in topical issues. We welcome essays, reviews, and memoirs. Generally, articles should be no longer than 1500-1800 words. Please submit articles electronically. Use as little formatting as possible. All submissions will be acknowledged, although the editor reserves the right to decline to publish an article deemed unsuitable. No second party submissions. For guidelines and queries contact the editor.

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Upcoming Events

During the uncertainties of the Covid-19 outbreak, upcoming events are “speculative,” according to Steven Miller, president of MISF. With the success over Zoom at the May meeting, we will have another Zoom meeting in June and, perhaps, further into the future. There is the possibility we will add a meeting in July, also over Zoom, to catch up with a missed program. It depends, to a large degree, on the coordination of technology and the suitability of programs in our new and untried approach to meetings.

It is not clear, at this time, what fall programs will be presented, depending on whether the Washburn Library in Minneapolis, our regular meeting place, will be open again to groups. Scheduled temporarily for fall is the November program. Monthly programs generally begin to gather at 9:30 a.m. with meetings starting at 10:00 a.m., taking place on the fourth Saturday of the month, except in November because of Thanksgiving.

For the most up-to-date program listings, please go to the MISF website at www.mnindependentscholars.org as well as e-mail announcements sent by Lucy Brusic.

June 27, 2020

Bold Vision – ERA 2020

Presenter: Betty Folliard, Founder – ERA Minnesota

This program was postponed from March 28, 2020 and will be presented over Zoom at 10:00 a.m. Complete program details and presenter bio can be found under Upcoming Events in the December 2019 issue of the TMS.

November 21, 2020

Sinclair Lewis: The Centenary of Main Street

Presenter: Patrick Coleman

He is also doing an exhibit at the Minnesota History Center. There will be an opportunity to do a tour related to this program.

Mr. Coleman is the acquisitions librarian at the Minnesota Historical Society. He writes and lectures on topics related to Minnesota culture and history. He served as president of the Library of Congress’s Minnesota Center for the Book, president over Minnesota Book Awards, is on the boards of Coffee House Press and the Minnesota Center for Book Arts. He received the Kay Sexton Award in 2009. He serves as Executive Leadership Fellow at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Integrative Leadership.

