

Michigan Today

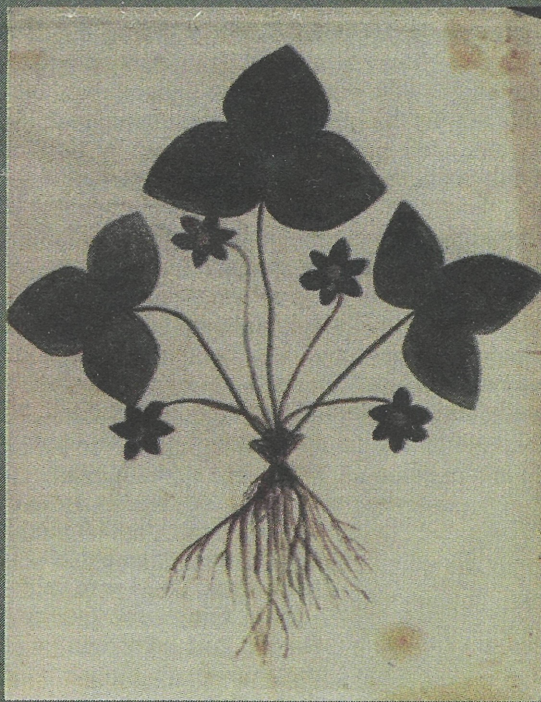
THE DIARY OF GEORGE PRAY

University of Michigan June 23 1844. Journal.

I went to the presbyterian church
Prof Whiting preached. Things not
to proceed of us many watching
as usual & they hitched and twitched
their huge bustles as much as ever
other more attentive than usual be-
cause notwithstanding their eyes of glass
had direction of some fair objects. In
the difference of effect produced
and written discourse in the forenoon
sermon was delivered which although
attracted the attention of all. In the afternoon
a sermon was read which although

JOURNAL.

Commenced June 23d A.D. 1844.



JOURNAL

Commenced June 2nd A.D. 1844.

THE FIRST CLASS

Diary



Of

GEORGE
WASHINGTON
PRAY

A serious but romantic young intellectual

recorded the life and times

of Michigan's pioneer undergraduate class of 1845

By Linda Robinson Walker

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The Farm on State Street

When 16-year-old George Washington Pray jumped down from his father's farm wagon in Ann Arbor on September 25, 1841, he wasn't the first student to arrive at the newly opened University of Michigan. Lyman Norris from Ypsilanti had beat him to the campus by a week. But Pray has a greater distinction—he kept a diary in which he unashamedly and unflinchingly wrote down everything. Through the next four years, until earning his bachelor's degree in 1845, Pray—the awkward farm boy—and the raw backcountry university would grow up together.

George was able to go to school because his father, Esek, was wealthy enough to dispense with his son's help on the farm at what is now 8755 Plymouth Road. Esek Pray came to Michigan in 1825 and bought land for a farm and tavern. After George's birth on August 27, 1825, in Angelica, New York, Sally Pray joined her husband with their three older children. Four more children were born in Michigan. In 1836, Esek was a delegate in Ann Arbor to the Michigan Territory's second constitutional convention, called to ratify the swap of the Upper Peninsula for Toledo, Ohio, a requirement for Michigan's admission to the Union. Esek was active in educational and agricultural organizations and the Democratic Party, and served at least nine years as a justice of the peace.

On that September day, young George made his way up the stairs of Main Hall—lugging a portmanteau containing more books than clothes—to an unadorned suite still smelling of wood and whitewash. (A facsimile of his quarters, including his own trunk and coverlet, is on standing exhibit in the Student Activities Building on Maynard St.) Five other students arrived that day and three more would trickle in—and one would trickle out—by the end of the first academic year, leaving nine freshmen. Perhaps as many as 20 young men were part of Pray's class at one time or another, including transfers into upper classes, but only six of the original nine freshmen were among U-M's 11-member first graduating class in 1845.

These nine young men, with two professors and a part-time librarian—who made up the entire student body, faculty and staff—embarked on an experiment in democratic, state-supported education. They did so in a young country, in a state only four years old, on a campus that was short on elegance and long on utility. Ann Arbor's *True Democrat Weekly* complained in 1846 that in summer, "The hot suns and the bare ground" plagued the campus and that "the bleak winds and storms of winter now sweep over this place as over a sandy desert, with not a tree or shrub scarcely to break their force." Instead of being a "place of study and meditation," the paper editorialized, "the beautiful enclosed grounds occupied by this institution is [sic] now used as a farm."

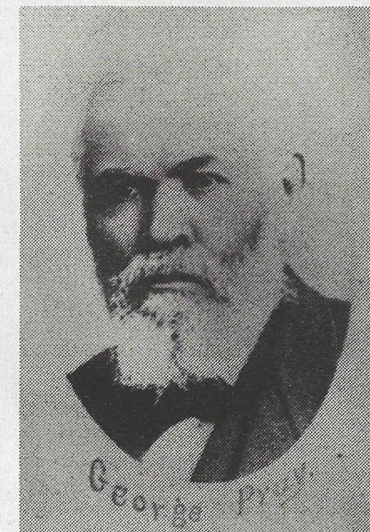
It was a profitable farm, however. Patrick Kelly, the University's caretaker, once harvested 800 bushels of wheat from its 31-acre field.

Four houses for faculty and their families had been built by 1840 (only the President's House remains), but their solemnity was lost in a jumble of sheds, shacks, wellheads, latrines and improvised stables for horses, cattle, chickens and hogs kept by the faculty and Kelly. Pray did his writing when other students gathered on evenings for "a cheerful and pleasant chat" at the stile on the high picket fence—built as



Esek Pray's log cabin home burned down in 1839. He rebuilt the present brick federal-style house in 1840. It stands today at 8755 Plymouth Rd. George Pray often walked the 10 miles between his house and his room on campus.

Photo by Linda R. Walker



Pray was a 53-year-old state legislator when this photo was taken. He ran for the Michigan Legislature as a Republican in 1870, as a Prohibitionist in 1872 and perhaps one other time before succeeding as a Republican in 1878.

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Diary frontispiece sketched by G. Pray

much to keep out the hogs and mad dogs that roamed Ann Arbor as to keep University livestock in.

For Pray, the entire University was contained in the fifth building, Main. Here he slept, attended recitations and lectures, studied, went to chapel, took part in literary society meetings, examined the University's scientific collections—including one of the largest stores of mineral specimens in the world—and read books from the school's 4,000-volume library.

Pray's chum, or roommate, was George Parmelee. No one so vexed Pray as this lazy, puffed-up and boisterous townie. Pray's diffidence and his scholarly bent—he called himself “an ambitious and ardent minded student”—made it a trial to share quarters for four years with a study-hating “shirk.” He complained in his diary that Parmelee “bored him almost to death” by constantly inveigling him for help with his Greek lessons. “He asks, ‘How do you read this sentence?’—or ‘What is this word from?’”

As unlike as they were, Pray and Parmelee formed that bond that roommates often do. Of all the people he knew at Michigan, it was Parmelee whom he most often wrote after graduation separated them. Part of that was the camaraderie of shared tasks. U-M had no gas, electricity, running water or sewage system then. Night trips between campus and the town meant weaving a path through stumps and ditches in complete darkness. In their room, light came from candles or from the fire in the iron stove. In all weather they used the latrine behind the building. Unless they heated it in a kettle on the stove, the water for washing, shaving and scrubbing the floor was always cold. They drew the water from the faculty's well, carried their buckets across the muddy, unpaved campus and lugged them up to their rooms. Nothing was cleaned or done in their rooms unless Pray and Parmelee did it. They “sawed and got a lot of wood in the room,” Pray wrote. “We had a great time in the afternoon scrubbing the floor and putting up the stove pipe and blacking it, etc.” The price of sloth was bedbugs.

Country Mouse and City Cats

Pray's diary begins in a burst of indignation and lust. Before Sunday, June 2, 1844, he'd kept a notebook about birds and mathematics. But what he saw at the Presbyterian church that morning made him rail against the “pert misses” of Ann Arbor who were “possessed of as many witching and enticing ways as usual,” Pray wrote, “and sought the graveyard only for making love, and I might and will add, for making babies.” A couple of Sundays later, he returned to the subject: “I hate a fashionable church. The young misses come to show their pretty faces—their big bustles—their big breasts & bellies.”

But these Sunday sirens—students at Mary Clark's Young Ladies' Seminary and daughters of the village's burghers—were unavailable. Pray had many flirtations, chiefly among the daughters of old family friends. He was pursuing two of them at the time he began writing the diary. Sarah Doty was engaged and would be married within four months but seems to have been of a mind to experiment a bit while her parents obligingly left them unchaperoned when Pray called. As Pray recounted it, with “my arm around her, she at full length on the settee,” he undertook some amorous maneuvers, which he described in detail, despite being “surprised several times by the unexpected entrance of some one of the family when we were in rather an awkward position.”

Later that summer, Pray paid calls on Caroline Bagley from Superior Township who was spending the summer in Lower Town (the part of Ann Arbor on the other side of the Huron). Obliging, the “old folks” took themselves off, “leaving us alone to our glory.” Pray laid siege, but Bagley, too, resisted and sent him away at midnight. Later, he regretted his advances. “I wronged her,” he wrote of Doty, and he blamed “my own baseness” for separating him from Bagley.

Pray's move to town cost him his sense of ease. He'd grown up around farmers and recognized that his education among a tiny elite was separating him from the very people whose company he most enjoyed. “Perhaps if I had been educated differently, I might take pleasure in a way that others do,” he wrote. This conflict caused him unending pain and self-doubt and is a poignant refrain throughout his journal. In Ann Arbor, only 10 miles from his home near Dixboro, he was “a strange being—an odd and lonely one”:

I take more pleasure in being alone in my room—my books my only companions... I felt that I was a stranger in a strange land. I have often looked upon society about me with longing eyes and wished that I too could mingle with those about me—no longer companionless and unknown. I have had the opportunity to mingle in the best society of the village but I shrink from it.

Calling himself a “great despiser of pride,” he longed to be in the country, “where I am ever most happy, free from the arbitrary restraints of society,” free to “act as I am prompted to.” He wrote with pleasure of evening drives from farm to farm collecting local girls and boys—one night over 50—to frolic and sing and eat suppers like the one that was so delicious his “eyes bunged out with fatness just by looking at it.” With these girls, childhood friends, country manners prevailed; Jane Tooker once gave him “a pressing embrace which threatened to break every bone in my body.”

But at college he avoided social functions. Time after time he failed to attend a party to celebrate the end of a term or graduation, reluctant to call on the “ladies of the town.” It was a self-defeating cycle that he understood but could not break. “Maybe I make myself unhappy,” he wrote, “forsaken by the whole world, I feel but persuaded that it's because I forsake the world.”

A Foe of Drink and Hubbub

Pray's Sodom and Gomorrah, the village of Ann Arbor, had about 2,500 inhabitants in 1844. As home of the University and the county seat it held an importance beyond its size and attracted a professional class of teachers, professors, lawyers, booksellers and itinerant dancing masters. Pray enjoyed studying human nature. “I went all over town twice today,” he wrote in January 1845, “and saw almost every kind of people. It is pleasant to study man—to study their dispositions—the effects of circumstances on their characters.”

But too often, these “circumstances” were “the degradation of drink.” Ann Arbor's two breweries, five taverns and three distilleries fueled the public drunkenness and brawling that appalled the abstemious son of a tavern owner. Public events—political rallies, the circus (“real humbug”)—dismayed him. Even hubbub supported only by spirits of another kind repelled him:

I went to the courthouse to an Abolition Methodist meeting. It was nearly out and such a yelling I never heard. It was a disgrace to religion, to the community. Imagine fifty cats together and all in a rage.

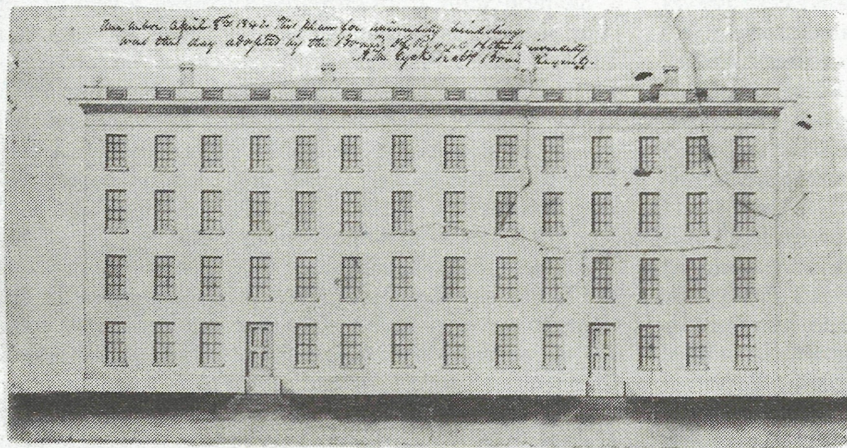


Sketch of hepatica by Pray, an avid botanist in his youth.

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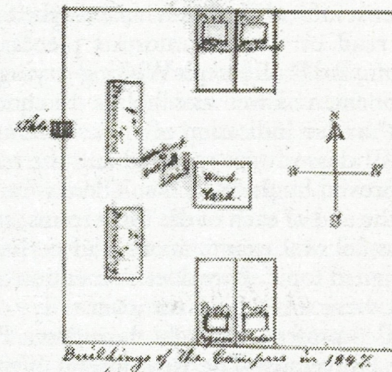
THE FIRST ENTRY OF PRAY'S DIARY

Sunday, June 2, 1844: “I went to the Presbyterian Church twice today. Prof. Whiting preached. Things at church as usual. The girls possessed of as many witching and enticing ways as usual—they hitched and twitched and showed their huge bustles as much as ever. The students rather more attentive than usual because Prof. preached; notwithstanding their eyes often wandered in the direction of some fair object. Today I noticed the difference of effects produced by an ex tempore and written discourse. In the forenoon an offhand sermon was delivered which although not elegant riveted the attention of all. In the afternoon an original and more finished did not so much engage the attention as the other. Some even slept. Toward evening I went walking with Friend [Edmund] Fish in the woods. The woods are my places of devotion. Separated from all the world and in the solitary wood with trees and birds and sweet wild flowers for my companions...”



A drawing of the front of Main Hall from the late 1830s. In 1848 the building became Mason Hall in honor of Stevens T. Mason, one of U-M's first Regents and Michigan's first governor. Later it was swallowed up into behemoth University Hall.

Buildings



Buildings of the campus in 1847. For a book of recollections, Edmund Andrews, Class of 1849, sketched this map of the campus as it appeared four years after Pray's graduation.

Although Pray supported the campaign to end slavery and was absorbed by the course of the new American republic, he loathed politics. He cited the example of "one miserable demagogue borrow[ing] twenty five cents to buy a vote." He once attended the raising of a hickory pole in honor of James K. "Old Hickory" Polk, his 1844 Democratic choice for president. This uncharacteristic enthusiasm also led him to cast his sentiments in poetic form, "A renunciation—to the Whigs," published in *The Ann Arbor Argus Weekly*. The poem refers to the "guilty blood" on the hands of the slave-owning Henry Clay:

*Your Clay is deeply sunk in vice,
And basely stained with guilty blood;
He is not such as could devise
Measures for our great country's good.*

Later in Pray's life, civic responsibility won out over contempt. He ran for state legislator as a Republican in 1870, as a Prohibitionist in 1872 and perhaps one other time before he was finally elected on the Republican ticket in 1878.

Through Pray's eyes we see the importance of the "cars," the new railway that sped the public's comings and goings; of Samuel Morse's new "magnetic" telegraph; of the new daguerreotype studio where he had his likeness done. He hung out at the *Argus*—setting type in exchange for getting the news early—and joined the crowds at the post office to hear election results. All these new forms of communication bound the young nation together; yet news still arrived slowly. Pray heard of the death of Andrew Jackson on June 17, 1845, nine days after it happened.

The Student's Daily Round

"The student's life especially in the winter is a life in a circle," Pray wrote. "He eats and studies and recites, recites and studies and eats." Caretaker Patrick Kelly rang the bell for chapel at sunrise (as early as 5 a.m. in the spring and fall and 6 in the winter) early enough that occasionally Pray "did not awake at the wringing [sic] of the bell" and missed prayers. After prayers came two recitations, one before breakfast—not until 8 a.m. or later—and one after. Recitations were formal; the professor called on a student to summarize, explicate or answer questions about sections of the texts or a previous lecture.

In the afternoons there was still another recitation or a class lecture, and perhaps another lecture on weekday evenings as well. On Saturdays, Pray attended morning assembly, a time when students and faculty came together almost informally. Students used the Saturday assemblies to read or recite humorous pieces, which may have prompted Prof. Joseph Whiting—trying to make them into gentlemen as well as scholars—to condemn "loud laughing" as "an indication of a vacant mind."

All classes were required and the texts were fixed and approved by the Regents. There were no grades; rather, at the end of each of the three terms, students were given pass-fail oral examinations and perhaps an essay on an assigned topic. Pray doesn't mention any student failing, but there was a great turnover.

Two professors taught throughout Pray's four years at the University. The Rev. Joseph Whiting taught Greek and Latin and George P. Williams natural philosophy and mathematics. The University had also appointed three prominent professors to teach mental philosophy (includ-

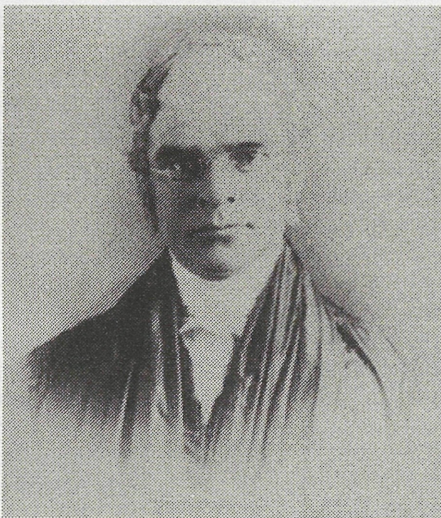
ing, for example, logic), political economy (outlines of constitutions), moral sciences (proofs of the accuracy of Christian doctrine), and chemistry, geology, zoology and botany. But none of the three showed up during Pray's four years on campus so U-M made do with

younger, less experienced men. The Rev. Andrew Ten Brook, formerly a Baptist pastor in Detroit, joined the faculty in fall 1844 and immediately delighted Pray with his accessibility ("he wishes us at any time to ask questions of him on our lessons"). For chemistry, they turned first to Silas Douglass, a physician who began teaching in the fall of Pray's senior year. Abram Sager, another physician, arrived in spring 1845, three years after his appointment but just in time to put Pray to sleep with his botany lectures.

Pray liked Greek "very well," but mental philosophy had him complaining about the "muddy miry misty and gloomy mazes of Metaphysics." His passion was botany. The natural world in which Pray grew up was in a near edenic state. Wolves, bears and wild cats were at home on the land, and the rivers teemed with fish. On one hot summer afternoon, Pray, his sister and her husband caught more than 300 from the Huron. With typical Victorian zeal he saw in the native flora an abundance that cried out to be classified. In September 1844, Pray "arranged my herbarium and found that I have 280 specimens." By early 1848, he had 600, and in June 1849, when he could claim, "I know every plant there is," he considered studying birds or reptiles next.

Savillon Shoff, from Portland, Michigan, a year behind him, shared Pray's interest, and with this "great naturalist" and others Pray created a new club, The College of Natural History of the University of Michigan, in 1845. Every member specialized. Pray was to study and give reports on entomology and Shoff on botany. The others were to handle geology, mineralogy, ichthyology, osteology, ornithology, crustaceology or conchology. The "College" faded away in a matter of months.

Always pressed for funds the state was slow to turn over, the University Regents and faculty depended on the students to get elsewhere the training the University could not yet provide. With no professor of modern languages, the faculty allowed Pray and others to take (and pay for) lessons with an itinerant professor of German, William Mentzing. In the same way Pray also took classes in elocution, which he practiced diligently enough to become "quite sore in the chest." Students even undertook to plant the needed trees. The juniors planted in bulk, but Pray's



George Palmer Williams in 1849. Williams taught Pray all four years in the subjects of natural philosophy and mathematics.

senior class tried to form an artful XLV design "to mark the year we graduate, though I think it will be hard work to read it."

Two student organizations also served the University well, the literary societies Phi Phi Alpha and Alpha Nu. Pray was a founding member of both and a president of the former. The two societies gave students experience in writing constitutions, in debating and in writing for the first student publications, *Castalia* and *The Sybil*. With a library lacking not only a number of Greek and Roman classical works but much modern American and European literature as well, the societies' student-funded libraries were immensely valuable. As Alpha Nu's librarian, Pray presided over a collection of 100 books.

Books were Pray's abiding delight. He attended auctions and traded skillfully. His personal library contained at least 100 books and was worth \$100, 10 times the cost of tuition; in his senior year he deemed it the "largest and best private one in the building." Although George could be prevailed upon to lend his books, he grumbled about the "time it takes to hunt up books that are lent." He loved his collection so much it worried him ("I am so proud of my little library that I almost idolize it"), and the range of his reading was prodigious. In the four school terms covered in his diary, in addition to his assigned texts, Pray read about 60 other books in Latin and German as well as English, ranging from poetry to science, religion to historical novels. His favorites included Irving, Burns, Chaucer ("many a laugh have I had over his fine descriptions") and exotic romances.

A Chicken in the Pot, a Horse in the Hall

Pray and his fellow students were very young. Of his 20 or so classmates, the ages of only 12 are known; of these, three were 13 or 14 years old; five, including Pray, were 16, and three were 17 or 18 in 1841. One, Fletcher Marsh, entered as a 23-year-old sophomore, probably because he was poor (Pray called him a "student by charity"). Marsh had to borrow \$40 despite working before and during his years at Michigan.

Looking back three years after his graduation, George felt that he had been extraordinarily young in college, despite the fact that he seems to have been in the middle of the age range. He wrote that some of his schoolmates "were older than I am now, and superior to me." It helped that he had been a student at Percival C. "Domine" Millett's Ann Arbor Classical Institute with three of his fellow U-M students. William Perry, his "first and always loved friend," was the son of an Ann Arbor book dealer and a year behind Pray, entering the University in 1842. At the time the diary began in 1844, when Pray was obsessed with the unapproachable women of town, it was Perry who accompanied him on walks "among hills and valleys, engaged in friendly conversation." His other friends from the Classical Institute included the pious Judson Collins, who became one of the first Methodist Missionaries to China, and Thomas "Tom Thumb" Cumming, "who derived some benefit from being small" when, during the Mexican war in 1848, "a bullet passed through his hat."

Although so many of the students in Pray's class were 16 or younger, their supervision was spotty. The Regents and faculty agreed in November 1841: "Much in the early

stage of the Institution will depend on the wisdom and fidelity, the prudence and zeal, the vigilance and energy, the industry and discernment of the Faculty. It has therefore been judged best to define the general features of the government, only as a guide to them till future experience may qualify them ... the better to adapt to the state of things." In the meantime, the University required and assumed, as the Calendar put it, "good moral character." The Regents and faculty didn't get around to writing up rules of conduct until January 1848.

When the professors left Main Hall to return to their homes, the man in charge was the current tutor. In 1844, the tutor was Jonathan Beach. He had much to endure. Pray reported that Beach was the butt of caricatures got up by dissatisfied freshmen. In the same year, William Garwood, two years behind Pray, "had a fight this evening with the tutor and was going to cane him. But the Tutor put him out of his room so that there was no damage done."

Pray seems to have come and gone as he chose, returning many nights far beyond midnight and showing worry only once, when he feared he might be suspected of a late night robbery that occurred while he was still out. It appears that students could live at home at least for a brief period—Parmelee seems to have done so in the summer of 1845. Two boys from the East, "James from Connecticut and Smith of Boston," Pray wrote, evaded supervision altogether by building a house in the woods for \$150 to \$200.

Tutor Beach's absences opened the door—literally—to student pranks. One satisfying hullabaloo was stirred up when "some waggish student" smuggled a horse into the hall, "which thrashed and kicked and danced about and made a great racket." Another night some students made "a great row. They got together in a room with fiddles, etc. and they jumped & danced & sung and hooted and...kept us all awake till 12 o'clock. Tutor was away at a party." Pray records a fad of flinging an artificial snake at the "green uns [youngest students]—one was so frightened that he jumped 4 feet high and broke both his suspenders."

But the most famous row involved George Parmelee, Pray's roommate. One midnight, Parmelee, joined by Saterlee Hoffman, raided a nearby chicken house. Making his exit with as many squawking chickens as he could hold, Parmelee was startled by pistol shots. He dropped everything and ran back to Main. But it was Hoffman's joke. He had stationed pistol-wielding friends on either end of the barn to scare Parmelee off. Hoffman completed the theft, and the students, minus Parmelee, dined on the purloined chickens. But Parmelee was furious and told all to the farmer, who stomped into Main demanding pay from Hoffman.

Deidamia of the Red Cheeks and Lips

With no cafeteria in Main Hall, Pray made his way across the four- or five-block swath of undeveloped land between the University and town for breakfast, lunch and dinner. From the time he entered as a freshman, Pray took his meals at the boarding house of Earl Gardiner, an editor of the Argus, and his wife, Frances. There he met Frances's younger sister, Deidamia H. Pope, who was named after the wife of Achilles.

"I was a sophomore, the only boarder," Pray wrote of

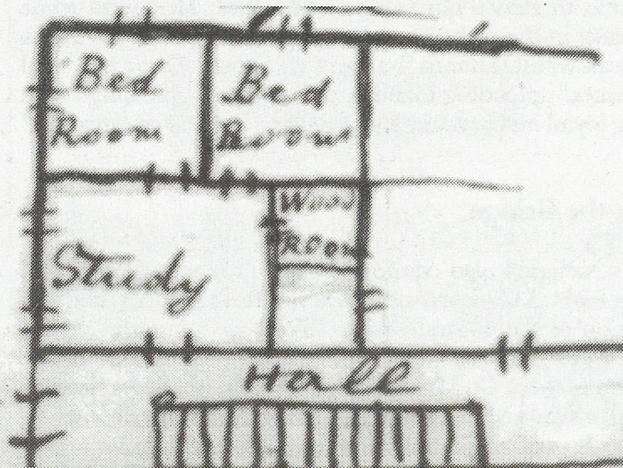
his first meeting with her when he was 17, in 1842. Deidamia was about 14, "tall, beautiful, red cheeked and red lipped," a companion in his loneliness. "I was ardent, she timid. I was vexed with her, still she influenced me." He marveled at "how entirely did she gain my childish and youthful affection."

Deidamia united the town sophisticate and the country innocent. She was one of the minuscule number of women receiving schooling then. The University housed a state-supported preparatory school for a few years, but unlike others—in Monroe, White Pigeon, Niles and Tecumseh, for example—U-M's did not admit women. Deidamia found her way to the well-regarded Ann Arbor school for young women run by Mary Clark, who offered Latin, French, German, botany and math as well as piano, drawing, painting and fancy work. As one of the up-to-date young women of the town, Deidamia dressed in the way Pray despised, "disfigured by a diabolical big bustle." Sharing meals, George and Deidamia spent hours in each other's company, reading the same books (George lent her Abercombrie's *Intellectual Powers*), sharing the same interests (she lent him one of her rare plant specimens) and growing closer as the years passed.

George found Deidamia a "singular girl." She once confided "many thoughts" to him,

which could only belong to one who has deep poetical fancies and feelings. She referred especially to the influence of the moaning and whistling winds on the thoughts and imagination—to stray thoughts which sometimes invade the mind ... [from] another world—as messages from the region of fancy. She spoke of the ancient doctrine of transmigration and that they might be thoughts of some event which happened when our souls tenanted another's body.

But perhaps most important, Deidamia also fit into George's country life. His sister Almira was a good friend of Deidamia's at Miss Clark's and, to George's delight, often brought her to the Pray's family's home. "The girls came home; we had a great time playing singing frolicking, etc."—such a good time that he even "dared to kiss her," on New Year's Eve, 1844.



Edmund Andrews drew the layout of his suite in Main Hall, the same building Pray lived in. Each suite had two bedrooms, a shared study and wood closet. The building had no through hallway, but rather two short, disconnected ones that opened at either end to the outdoors. With the two halves of Main cut off from each other, supervision was difficult for the resident tutor.

Deidamia was as capable of silliness as her niece Esther, the 12-year-old daughter of Frances and Earl Gardiner. Joining Deidamia and Esther one night when the Gardiners were away, George stayed "till about 2 o'clock" while they "played and sung together." The beautiful night drew them out into the garden where Deidamia "yielded up to me the rich treasure of first-pure and virgin love." He, in turn, "dared to call her dearest" and stole a lock of her hair. By March 1845, George confessed that he had devoted himself to his now 17-year-old beloved, and Deidamia answered, "And I to you."

Pray, struggling with intense emotions caused by leaving what was probably his Methodist faith to become a Baptist, and suffering through the most severe illness he recorded in his diary, began to have "some most awful thoughts" about Deidamia, thoughts he "could not remove from my mind." He convinced himself that she had committed a "base crime" and abruptly broke off with her. Deidamia had undertaken the same religious conversion as George and seemed to have assumed that their love was imperishable, their destinies entwined, for the rejection took her by surprise and "grieved her almost to death," George wrote.

They remained apart throughout that summer despite the fact that her friendship with Almira Pray and George's boarding with the Gardiners threw them together all the time. The breach was short but they were apart during the significant time of George's graduation in 1845. Through the fall and on into 1846, Pray relied on her "friendship and love" at a time when he was no longer living among other boys in school, and he felt particularly lonely; "how few friends I have," he wrote.

Then ensued a particularly loving time between them. Living together in the same rooming house, they spent long evenings reading to each other from adventure romances like John Richardson's *Wacousta, or The Prophecy: A Tale of Canada* (1832) about Pontiac's Indian uprising, and a similar tale titled *Elksuwatava* (1838) by James Strange French. George confessed in the summer of 1846 that the "usual fights, brawls, whores and whoremongers" he saw at a camp meeting filled him with "so much of the devil" that he unsuccessfully attempted "to feel of Deidamia's 'Hills of Delight'.... She has got a noble and sweet pair and takes good care of them."

At the end of 1846, Deidamia returned to her home—probably near Pontiac—and her parents, Willard and Barbara Pope. George, celebrating Christmas without Deidamia, visited his sister Almira, now married to Pray's closest friend from home, Freeman Galpin. There he "heard something in confirmation of my worst fears" about Deidamia, and immediately decided he must "solemnly renounce her."

Deidamia, not knowing her fate, wrote him a letter that "breathes forth such pure love and in so confidential and kind a way," he knew she would be "grieved" by his decision. Nonetheless he remained firm. "Oh, how cruel I am if she is innocent," he admitted, knowing that his actions might "wrong a true heart." But it was "an issue of policy," and therefore, even if Deidamia were innocent, he was completely "sincere and honorable."

Probably angry as well as disheartened, Deidamia wrote him a cutting letter and began 1847 by setting off for Constantine, Michigan, in St. Joseph County to teach school, and not, as Frances Gardiner told George, expected "to return very soon."

'Moral Melancholy'

It was the fashion of the times—it was the romantic period, after all—to suffer exquisitely. A correspondent to the *Argus* had complained in 1843 about the essays written and recited by the girls who studied at Miss Clark's. The writing was humorless, he said, and all had a sameness, a "moral melancholy."

Two years later, when Deidamia presented a sketch at her exhibition in 1845 with George in the audience, things hadn't changed. The program included poems and reflections bearing such titles as "Death—a Sketch," "The Battle of Life," "The Heart Knoweth Its Own Bitterness" and "When and Where I Would Die." We don't know which was Deidamia's.

George's description of her performance reveals his ideal of womanhood. She wore a "simple robe of white, the emblem of virgin purity," and when she delivered her sketch, she "breathed in every line innocence [sic] of thought—and romantic feeling."

George always knew he had "poetical feelings." He comforted himself when estranged from Deidamia with a poem by Rogers, "... There's such a charm in melancholy, / I would not, if I could, be gay." Was he striking a Byronic posture? The two U-M literary societies had addressed the issue of whether Byron's works brought benefit or evil to the world (one had voted benefit, the other evil). Or were the recurring miseries of his days—his brutal ruptures with Deidamia, his retreats to the woods or to his books—caused by depression? A reading of every word of Pray's 1,036-page diary raises the question, why was he so often miserable?

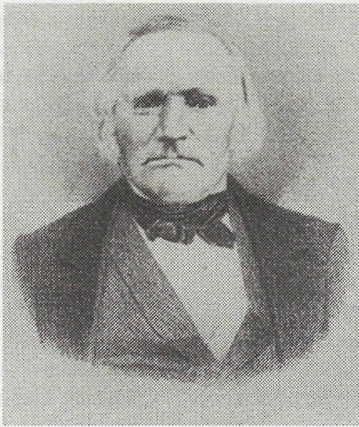
Esek Pray may have been willing to spare his son's labor on the farm, but he had required a very young George to serve in his tavern, with telling consequences.

"For a long time I was barkeeper—sold the liquid poured down the throats of miserable men, even sipped it myself," he wrote, grateful that those bar room scenes "left an impression of disgust instead of liking." "Oaths and obscene songs," Pray remembered, and "smoking, swearing, chewing tobacco, petty gambling—nearly every vice was before me."

"How I longed to flee my prison," he wrote. That he wasn't "worse than I am" he credited to his mother and reading. Unlike his brother Joseph, for example, who could only write a misspelled and ungrammatical letter, George became a scholar:

It was suggested to me long long ago by my mother that if I would read through the New Testament, I should become the possessor of a new Bible. I went at it and performed my task nights after returning from school and doing up my "chores."... [I]n that way I acquired a taste and habit of reading which were fostered by the fact that every book I read through became my own. The taste which I thus acquired, thanks to my mother, has never left me.

Being sent to Millett's school in Ann Arbor freed Pray from the saloon's atmosphere, yet, paradoxically, also made him feel as if he had been brutally expelled from home ("I left home when I was 13, and went among strangers companionless and unknown"). His sudden



Esek Pray, George's father, was born in Connecticut on Nov. 29, 1790. He and Sally Ann Hammond of Rhode Island married July 21, 1811.

breaks with Deidamia and the persistent motif, "I am alone in the world," hint at a terror of being abandoned.

The circumstances of Pray's life were indeed harsh. He was seriously ill several times. In March 1845, at the time of his baptism and his first break with Deidamia, he was so ill his concerned family enjoined him "not to study but to run around and exercise at all spare times." The next year he suffered so severely from eye problems that he could not read for almost three months and had to rely on friends to read to him.

Pray also endured the deaths of many young friends and family members. In the course of his five-year diary, his sister Eliza and Eliza's husband's brother died, as did his sister Catherine's husband George and George's brother. Sister Almira's husband, Freeman Galpin, lost his sister at 18 in childbed (Almira herself would die at 24). One of George's best friends from home, Oscar Starkweather, died at 21. And Sarah Doty, the engaged friend who allowed him to join her on the settee, died in 1846 at 20.

The one death Pray never recovered from in the course of his journal took place in September 1843, nine months before he began keeping it. The "departed and sainted" Ann Tooker was the childhood friend he had "loved the most." "Our lost Ann" was the "gayest of the gay," he wrote, "she was so liked, she gave me access to young society."

Tooker's death intensified the fear that always hounded Pray:

It seemed to me a horrid, a dreadful thing, that I must die and be no more for ever—that my little body must be laid away and mingle into dust. At length I thought I might perhaps die after a long long time—and that thought comforted me—but even that thought was taken from me, for soon one of my childish companions, one of nearly my own age and one with whom I had played at school and out of school, was snatched away by the ruthless hand of death. ... No one can tell how sad I was, how many tears I shed in secret.

It's not hard to guess that the effects of these deaths lingered in Pray's illnesses and anxieties. He found some solace in the curative power of physical exercise. After a break with Deidamia, he spent vacation at home as a "real farmer," spreading manure, planting corn, plowing "with the joyful independent life I lived as a careless country boy."

At the Bridge

Religion also comforted him. Pray was devout and his faith in God was steadfast, buttressed by his interpretation of the natural world. "There is enough in nature and in the Bible," he wrote, "to convince anyone of the Goodness of God." But he was a restless believer, attending at various times virtually every Protestant denomination, as well as Catholic and Jewish services. In his senior year, under the influence of Deidamia, the Gardiners, Professor Ten Brook and the Doty family, he embraced the Baptist faith and tried unsuccessfully to persuade fellow student William Perry "to go with me and serve the Lord" through baptism.

The University expected students to attend a church, but not all professed religion, and Pray found that many of the "hardest cases" resisted it altogether. His baptism by total immersion in the Huron near the Broadway Bridge attracted "a lot of students," he wrote, "drawn by the curiosity of seeing me, one of their number, baptized." So many people came on Sunday, March 9, 1845, to see him, Deidamia, Frances Gardiner and four others baptized that "just before baptism a part of the bridge which was the most crowded fell and about 60 persons, nearly all women and children, were precipitated together into the river," Pray wrote that evening.

As the bridge fell one yell arose from all the multitude—and then there was a rush—all were saved—and none were much hurt. All were wet and very much frightened. There was a great loss of fine clothes. It is a wonder that all escaped alive and uninjured. After the confusion had subsided seven of us were baptized.

A couple of days later he added that "a variety of stories were afloat, but the true one is that no one was severely injured." He took solace in the fact that the incident "will make known the fact that there is in Ann Arbor a Baptist church."

'The First-Born of Their Alma Mater'

The first graduation at the University of Michigan, on August 6, 1845, brought a "great crowd" to Ann Arbor to see what the *Michigan State Journal* called "the first-born of their Alma Mater" sent out into the world.

The approach of graduation was a painful time for Pray, beginning with blows he could not have anticipated. After the annual junior exhibition on April 16, the students dispersed for a month's vacation before the final term. Pray had gone home to Dixboro where he got the stunning news that his best friend, William Perry, was "a wanderer and a fugitive from justice."

The day after the exhibition, "a beautiful young girl who lived with [Perry's] family was delivered of a child of which he is the father. He is about 18—the girl 16," Pray wrote. In an "evil moment he yielded to temptation," with the result that "the object of his love is made wretched for life—and he is a wanderer."

There was worse. "Parmelee is taken up and bound over to court—under a thousand dollar bond," Pray wrote, for a "flogging which [he] gave to a girl which [sic] lives with his mother." Pray forgave William Perry, who had been "led away by temptation," but he took a different view of "cruel" Parmelee, in whose "baseness," he judged, "there is nothing to exculpate."

Despite his recent illness, Pray plunged into studying for the three-day public examinations required of bachelor's candidates. He reported with horror that they would cover "all studies of our four years' course" and reported anxiety and "much grumbling" among his classmates. Most of the last term, from June to graduation, was set aside for review. With Parmelee gone—Pray does not tell us what happened to his case—and Perry a fugitive, Thomas Clark, "a good fellow full of talk," who had come to Michigan as a sophomore in April 1843, became Pray's "constant companion." They reviewed Greek together and took long refreshing rambles. With "Tom Thumb" Cumming, George exchanged letters in German as a way of boning up.

In addition there was the burden of his senior oration, "The Claims of Agriculture on Science." On July 15, he "read it to Prof. Whiting who said he had no suggestions to make." George then sneaked out to the woods to practice declaiming it "with great effect on the trees and bushes."

Throughout this anxious summer, the heat bore down and Pray was often "too tired to study." In this torpid sultriness, two days after approving Pray's speech, Prof. Joseph Whiting became ill. "Much anxiety is prevalent, both here and in town," Pray wrote. On the 20th Whiting died and "grief is depicted on every countenance." The students formed a procession in order of class and marched through the heat to the church for the funeral on the 21st, and afterwards to the house and grave.

At last, on July 31, the University's first graduating class was examined in math, and Prof. George P. Williams, "the dear man," told them that "we never had put him to shame at an examination and had not in our last." On August 1, they were examined all day in language and mental philosophy, and on the next day in moral philosophy, political economy and on a philosophy textbook, *Butler's Analogy*. At age 19, Pray was ready to graduate.

The University allowed students to come and go in those early days. Despite missing a term, the felon George Parmelee was allowed to graduate with his class that August. Thomas Cumming had missed a year of school and Charles Clark about four months, yet both graduated with Pray, as did John McKay, who had enrolled only that summer. The fugitive William Perry returned in late July, days before his baby died, and graduated on schedule the next year. Not only did their absences not result in delaying graduation, but in Perry's and Parmelee's cases, neither fathering an illegitimate child nor beating a woman was a sufficient deviation from U-M's requisite "good moral character" to result in expulsion.

Among those in the "great crowd" gathered in Ann Arbor for the first commencement, were the "chief men of the state," the *Argus* proudly noted: Gov. John S. Barry, the secretary of state, the auditor general and the attorney general. Friends and family gathered as well at the Presbyterian Church that Wednesday morning, August 6, at 10:00 to honor the 11 graduating seniors: Charles Clark, Judson Collins, Thomas Cumming, Edmund Fish (chosen salutatorian by the faculty), Merchant Goodrich, Edwin Lawrence, John McKay, Fletcher Marsh (chosen valedictorian), George Parmelee, George Pray and Paul Rawls.

Each graduate recited an original poem, play, dissertation or drama. *The Argus* bragged that the University's commencement was "not inferior to older Institutions of the East," but passed on the criticism in the *Detroit Free Press* that the ceremony was too long and stuffed with "too much philosophy."

Pray was satisfied with his speech ("I heard my performance at commencement was highly puffed by several papers"), and he quoted the assessment of the *State Gazette*:

The claims of agriculture on science were presented by George W. Pray of Washtenaw in an address replete with forcible argument and sound practical logic, and was highly creditable to him both for its sentiments and the manner of its delivery. It exhibited the claims of agriculture to the attention of scientific men and the benefits to the country of science so directed in a masterly manner illustrated by much vigor of thought and sound reasoning.

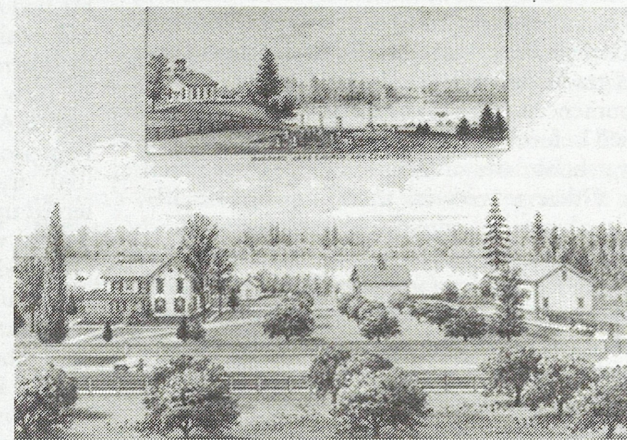
After graduation came the festivities. "Tomorrow evening a party is to be given for the graduating class," Pray wrote. But true to form, he skipped the party and slipped back to Dixboro.

Farming or Medicine?

Before graduation, Pray's only goal had been "to go to that home from which I have been so long absent and go to work and learn the profession of Agriculture—and expend my life on some little farm—as happy and contented as possible." He got more excited as the time grew closer: "Ten weeks from today and hurrah for farming—hurrah!" But his mother did "not seem to like the idea of my being a farmer." In the end, it was wishful thinking: "It can not be—No farm—No money."

After a few weeks at home, no doubt having talked over his future with his parents and friends, the young graduate announced out of the blue, "I have fixed my mind on the study of medicine and am now very eager to make a beginning." To support himself during his studies, he turned to the one thing he was immediately qualified to do—schoolteaching. In the fall of 1845 he went off to teach first in Birmingham and then in Royal Oak while studying anatomy with a local doctor.

Pray hated teaching and was glad to be done with it in the spring of 1846. Returning to Ann Arbor, he continued his medical studies with Drs. Silas Douglass, Moses Gunn and Abram Sager until 1847. He'd studied chemistry and botany with Douglass and Sager, and together with Gunn they made up the faculty of U-M's Medical Department when it opened in 1850. Esek Pray was persuaded to pay for formal medical training, and in November 1847, George went off to Cleveland's Western Reserve College, where he studied through March 1848. Back in Michigan, he assisted in the practice of Dr. E. F. Olds of South Lyon during a severe fever epidemic, using his experience to write a thesis on the subject. He returned to Western Reserve in November 1848, and graduated in February 1849 with an MD degree, elected valedictorian by his classmates.



Pray's farm near Grand Rapids circa 1880, where he and Deidamia settled in 1857. In 1861 they returned to Ann Arbor, and he tried to swap the farm for a house in town. His ad in the Ann Arbor Argus can be read as a gibe at his childless first wife: 'Chance for a bargain in the town of Ronald, Ionia Co., in the best wheat-growing region in the state. 160 acres of choice land.... The owner having no help of his own, and wishing to locate in the region of the University, would like to exchange for property in or near the city.'

'I Am Somebody'

Pray set up practice in Northfield, Michigan, after having scouted out other "rides" in the area for how much income they would produce. Patients came slowly, as did money, but by midsummer 1849 he felt established in his practice. After all he had been through—a lifetime of doubts and insecurities, as well as the anxieties and setbacks of a new practice—he found himself changing. Noting that he had "gained a force of mind and confidence," he wrote, "I am somebody."

In January 1847, George had cast Deidamia aside. She had taken herself off to the far reaches of Michigan, but returned to teach at the very log schoolhouse George had himself attended in Superior Township. They had been estranged for almost a year and a half when in the summer of 1848 they began to talk, breaking the ice. Not surprisingly, he found her "somewhat changed from what I knew her 5 years ago as a blushing and sweet girl of 15," but found that nothing had changed in the "powerful influence she's exerted on me ever since."

When he returned to Michigan from Western Reserve in 1849, he was determined to marry "My Deidy." By summer he felt confident enough to do so. On July 4, on the way to his brother Joseph's wedding to Elizabeth Finton, he and Deidamia ("my first and only love") decided to marry. He was 23, she 21. Deidamia, with her "mild blue eyes," was "beautifully dressed" in "white gauze" and "made a fine appearance." He wrote that night of their long courtship, saying that during their last estrangement, he had been "too proud" and "came near dying." Still, a small bit of doubt hovered in his mind, as he hoped that "I never repent" the marriage.

They did not set up housekeeping right away. Instead Deidamia returned to Ann Arbor, and he to his practice in Northfield. It wasn't until October 27, having spent only about 20 nights together, that she went to Northfield and squeezed her possessions into his 16-by-12-foot room. George sighed for his "poor Deidy," now obliged to spend "the long, dreary winter here." He worried that "she will become disgusted with me and with her destiny and leave for a more congenial home before spring."

Life With Deidy Ends the Diary

George Pray continued his diary for less than a month after Deidamia moved in with him. It ends November 24, 1849, and is replaced by lists of diseases and their various botanical cures.

The conflict between country and town life seems to have pursued Pray all his life. In 1849 he figured out that all his years of study from age 13 to 23 had cost \$2,150 and that if it had been invested, he would have had \$2,500, and "with that I could have been a farmer." Eight years later he seems to have decided to finally give farming a try. George and Deidamia left Washtenaw County in 1857 for Woodard Lake, seven miles north of Ionia, not far from Grand Rapids. He steadily improved the farm and still owned it when he and Deidamia returned to Ann Arbor in 1861, to give town living another chance. With no sale forthcoming they rented a home on the southeast corner of what is now Division and High (then Detroit and Fuller). In 1863, George took time off to work on a thesis, apparently on "Instinct," and the Regent's meeting

**Books George Pray read
In his senior year—
June 1844-August 1845**

Pray's diary for the June 1844-August 1845 period mentions his reading the following works for assignments and pleasure:

Edward Bulwer Lytton's, *Essays, Paul Clifford, The Student, Pelham, Falkland, Eugene Aram, Rienzi, Zanoni, Disowned and The Last Days of Pompeii*. Also: James Mackintosh's *General View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, poetry of Robert Burns, poetry of Thomas Moore, McIlvain's *Evidences of Christianity*, *Essays of Montaigne*, *Josephus' Wars of the Jews*, poetry of Schiller, Isaac Watts on the mind, *The New Testament* in German, Thomas Talfourd's *The Athenian Captive*, *Helen* by Maria Edgeworth, John Trumbull's *The Progress of Dulness: or The Rare Adventures of Tom Brainless*, Edward Theller's *Canada in 1837-38* about the failed uprising, Washington Irving's *Bracebridge Hall* and other works, *The Student of Salamanca* by Jose de Espronceda, *Major Jones' Courtship* by Joseph Jones, a book about Rosicrucianism and alchemy, John Abercrombie's *Inquiry Concerning the Intellectual Powers*. Also the works of Chaucer and John Skelton, Thomas Tusser; Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, poetry of Giles Fletcher, William Habington, and Goethe; Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, plays of Addison, Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* and other works, Edward Nares's *Thanks I To Myself*, Pasley's *2nd Book of History*, *The Prairie-Bird* by Charles Augustus Murray, *Walk about Zion* about the Episcopal Church, and Lorenzo Dow's *Thoughts on Various Religious Opinions*.

of June 1863 records that George Pray BA, MD, was awarded a Master of Arts degree. That October he advertised his new practice in the *Argus*.

The Prays spent the years of the Civil War in Ann Arbor. He had long been an abolitionist, supporting John P. Hale for president in 1848, bound to him by "his principles tending to liberate the slave." In 1846 he had gone to an Ann Arbor gathering to hear "Mr. Henry Bibb, a fugitive slave, [who] gave an eloquent and affecting narrative of his eventful life in which he set forth in a masterly manner the wrongs of his colored brethren." He also attended a talk that year by Owen Lovejoy, whose brother Elijah "was murdered by anti-abolition mob at Alton, Ill."



Sketch of Pray's second wife, Ellen Adele Comstock Pray (called Adele). Adele was 18 when she married George, who was 50, in 1876, a year after Deidamia's death at 46.

In 1866, the *Peninsular Courier* listed the incomes of everybody in Ann Arbor. Pray had earned \$678, which put him among the top third earners in town. The next year, perhaps because no one had bought the farm, he and Deidamia returned to Ionia, and George took up the role of public servant, seeking office at the township, county and state levels. Deidamia became ill with pneumonia and died childless in March 1875 at the age of 46. The next year George married 18-year-old Ellen Adele Comstock and became a father of a boy in June 1877 when he was 51.

George Pray served in the State Legislature in Lansing in 1879-80, filing letters to "My darling little girl" (Adele) with worried concern for the baby's health. George and Adele had five children, three of whom lived and attended the

University, and two of those obtained degrees.

After a day a calling on patients in the depths of winter, George caught a chill, "took to his bed and did not get up again," a local paper wrote. George Washington Pray died on January 27, 1890, at the age of 64; like Deidamia, he died of pneumonia. Pray's two youngest children died of whooping cough within four months. Five months after that, in October, Adele died of consumption at 32, leaving behind three orphaned children, ages 13, 7 and 5.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1845

Before graduation, George Pray wrote brief descriptions of the 10 other young men who graduated with him in 1845 in the University of Michigan's first commencement. Four of the 11—Clark, Collins, Cumming and Rawls—died before their 32nd birthdays.

As he heard about his schoolmates after graduation, Pray noted their doings in his diary. Other sources for the following sketches include U-M surveys of its alumni/ae, other University records and the writings of early matriculates.

- Charles Clark (1825-1854) of Monroe, Michigan, arrived in his sophomore year. Pray described Clark as "abounding in a profusion of words" and predicted that he would find "delight in study through life." Clark was the head of the Monroe preparatory school and was practicing law in Illinois when he died at about 31.

- Judson Collins (1823 or '24-1852) of Lyndon Township, Washtenaw County, was "plain and methodical," Pray wrote, and "sometimes obstinate." Collins taught at Albion College and went to China as a Methodist missionary in 1847, a few years after the Opium War. He became ill and was forced to return home where he died soon afterward at about 28.

- Thomas Cumming (1827-1858) of Grand Rapids graduated despite missing most of his junior year. "Good-hearted" and "preco-

rious," according to Pray, Cumming fought in the Mexican-American war, ran a telegraph in Illinois and edited a newspaper in Iowa. President James K. Polk appointed him secretary to the governor of Nebraska Territory, and he was acting governor of that territory when he died at 31.

- Edmund Fish (1824-1904) from Bloomfield/Birmingham, Michigan, entered as a sophomore from Western Reserve and was "loved and respected by everyone," according to Pray. Fish wrote U-M that he was present at the "Convention Under the Oaks" in Jackson, Michigan, July 6, 1854, when the Republican Party was organized. He was a foe of slavery and friend of John Brown in Kansas. He also attended the Big Springs Convention in Topeka when the movement for a free state was organized. US troops dispersed the citizens at the anti-slavery meeting. He ended his days as a fruit grower in Illinois.

- Merchant Goodrich (1827-1892) of Ann Arbor was "vulgar, low and immoral" in Pray's eyes. Goodrich got an MA at Harvard, the first of his class to get an advanced degree, and practiced as an attorney in Ann Arbor.

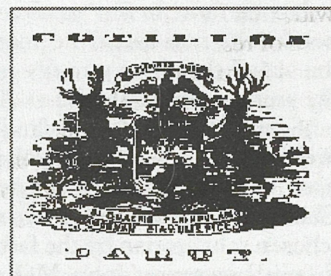
- Edwin Appleton Lawrence (1827-1886) of Monroe, Michigan, was "perfectly careless" but also so "good-natured" that his schoolmates called him "the granny," Pray reported. Lawrence practiced law in Ann Arbor until 1855, when he went to San Francisco and grew rich in real estate. Probably the wealthiest in the class, he donated \$10,000 to a local YMCA.

- John McKay (18??-1874) was a transfer from Oberlin and the only out-of-stater. He came to U-M for his last term, from May to August. Other than his having become an attorney who got into trouble as a secessionist in St. Louis, little is known of him.

- Fletcher Marsh (1819-1893) of Kalamazoo arrived in his sophomore year. The oldest and poorest of his classmates, he was in Pray's words "a good and noble-minded man and what more can be asked?" He earned a theology degree at Newton Theological Seminary and was teaching science and philosophy at Denison University in Ohio when money problems forced him to abandon teaching and run a lumber mill for 10 years. He returned to academic life at Leland University in New Orleans, teaching mathematics and the Bible.

- George Parmelee (1822?-1896 or '98) of Ann Arbor returned to his hometown in 1847, much to his former roommate's disgust. Pray called him "portly, whiskered—the dandy" who, having lived in New York, "couldn't endure Ann Arbor." He had an "exalted opinion of himself, while still hated and detested" by others. Parmelee, having worked in New York and New Orleans, as well as Ann Arbor, wound up in San Francisco. He wrote U-M in 1889 that "the degree of AM was conferred upon me at the time that the degree was first conferred by the University."

- Paul Rawls (182?-1849) of Kalamazoo came to U-M in June of his sophomore year. "Something of a poet," Pray reported, "and a favorite among the ladies," Rawls joined the fighting in the Mexican War. In 1848 he was either wounded or became ill. He returned to Michigan and soon died. **MT**



This invitation to an 1848 'cotillon' [sic] was addressed to a sister of Pray's classmate Merchant Goodrich of Ann Arbor. The Goodriches' father, Chauncey, a hotel man and houseware merchant, was worth \$30,000, according to the 1850 census. Pray's father Esek was considered very well off with an estate valued at \$9,000. These were the social events at which George felt like a country bumpkin.

Linda Robinson Walker '66 MSW is an Ann Arbor writer. She thanks the "wonderful staff" of the Bentley Historical Library for their help in researching and illustrating this story. With the encouragement of history professor Nicholas H. Steneck, George Washington Pray's granddaughter, the late Jeanne Pray Ploger, donated Pray's trunk, coverlet, diary and other papers to the University in 1993.

Life Sciences project vital to University

By Jane Elgass and Rebecca A. Doyle
News and Information Services

The University took a key step May 21 in positioning itself to be a national leader in research and education in the life sciences when the Board of Regents approved the creation of an Institute for the Study of Biological Complexity and Human Values.

Creation of the Institute and an accompanying cross-disciplinary and collaborative Life Sciences Initiative follows recommendations made in February by the Life Sciences Commission. The 20-member group was charged in May 1998 with assessing the state of life sciences at the U-M and recommending new directions and collaborations.

President Lee C. Bollinger noted that the Institute would be "a distinct academic unit with reporting and governance structures that ensure academic excellence and academic integration with the University community."

In moving ahead with the project, estimated to cost \$200 million over the next several years, the University joins a number of other research universities and institutes nationwide that have recognized the importance of this emerging area of research and scholarship. The funds are to be allocated from non-tuition sources within the central administration and the Health System.

President Bollinger plans within a year to recruit and appoint an Institute director, define the organizational structure of the Institute, develop plans for new physical facilities and launch some Institute-related activities.

Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown of Venturi Scott Brown and Associates, the firm that is developing a master plan for the University, presented to the Regents several proposed building sites for the Institute (see accompanying illustration). The plans include parking facilities, two non-laboratory buildings—one for academics and one for a cafeteria—and one laboratory building that would encompass all equipment that would be necessary for state-of-the-art research.

Four deans told the Regents what the Life Sciences Initiative would mean not only to students, but also to faculty and staff in their areas.

LS&A Interim Dean Pat Gurin told the Regents that some may wonder why a new institute is necessary if there already are pockets of research going on in the life sciences all over the University. The new institute will offer a great opportunity "for the integration and mutual enrichment of applied and theoretical basic science," she said.

Stephen Director, the Robert J. Vlasic Dean of Engineering, said that several areas in engineering, especially the Biomedical Engineering Department, already can claim close connections to life science research and have great potential for contributing to and gaining from the Insti-



Courtyard building with large parking garage below

Shaded areas represent proposed buildings for the Institute for the Study of Biological Complexity and Human Values. The plans include parking facilities, two non-laboratory buildings—one for academics and one for a cafeteria—and one laboratory building. The proposed sites border Washtenaw Avenue, East Huron Street and Zina Pitcher Place. Plans include walkways that would enable pedestrian traffic to travel over Washtenaw Avenue near Palmer Field.

tute. He also cited the MicroElectroMechanical Systems projects that have enabled scientists and technicians to reduce entire mechanical systems to minuscule sizes that can be implanted in the body to replace defective human systems—such as the cochlear implant that allows deaf patients to hear.

Engineers are also working with the School of Dentistry on tissue generation that Director said would allow growth of a patient's cells on an implantable and biodegradable matrix that may replace damaged tissue or organs.

With the expected completion of the mapping of the human genome fast approaching, Medical School Dean Allen Lichter said, the U-M faced a fateful decision: "We have the choice—and we have said this as a faculty—to be a very good place with a lot of money in the bank or a great place with a little bit less money. And when we put it up to a vote, our faculty would rather be a great place with a zero or two less on our bank book than a not-so-great place with the world's largest reserve."

William Kotowicz, dean of the School of Dentistry, said that as one of the campus's smaller schools, Dentistry looks forward to the opportunities for greater collaboration across disciplines that the new initiative facilitates.

For more information about the Institute, see the following Web site: www.umich.edu/pres/LifeSciencesReport/

Stamp honors Salk for vaccine

In a May ceremony in the U-M Rackham Building, the US Postal Service commemorated the development of a polio vaccine by Dr. Jonas Salk with the presentation of a commemorative stamp, "Polio Vaccine Developed."



When the Postal Service asked the American public to select what they considered the most important science and technology advancement of the 1950s, responders chose the polio vaccine, which was tested at the U-M School of Public Health (SPH) by Salk's mentor, Dr. Thomas Francis. The vaccine was proven to be 60 percent-90 percent effective in preventing paralytic polio in clinical trials. The success of the trials was announced at Rackham Auditorium on April 12, 1955.

Few scientific advances can be compared to the impact the Salk vaccine had on the health of children in the 1950s. After having been inoculated, most children successfully fought off the disease that killed and paralyzed children throughout the world. In 1961, Dr. Albert Sabin developed a live attenuated (weakened) oral polio vaccine capable of stopping person-to-person transmission of polio.

Among the speakers at the ceremony was professor of epidemiology H. F. Maassab, who received his doctorate in public health from SPH in 1955 and who, like Salk, worked with Francis on developing an influenza vaccine.

Maassab has developed a nasal spray influenza vaccine using a live attenuated (weakened) virus. The vaccine, which will be marketed by Aviron under the name FluMist, is in the final stages of FDA approval. It is expected to be available in 2000 or 2001.

4 receive honorary degrees

Diverse student body is found to aid learning

U-M News and Information Services

College students who experience the most racial and ethnic diversity in classrooms and during interactions on campus become better learners and more effective citizens, according to an analysis conducted at the University.

The results of broad and extensive empirical studies of college students by psychology Prof. Patricia Gurin indicate that all students, members of minority groups and majority alike, learn better in a student body that includes students who are different from them.

"A racially and ethnically diverse university student body has far-ranging and significant benefits for all students," said Gurin, who also is interim dean of LS&A. "In fact, patterns of racial segregation and separation historically rooted in our national life can be broken by diversity experiences in higher education."

Gurin, who prepared the study as part of her testimony as an expert defense witness in the lawsuits brought against the University's admission policies, examined national information as well as data gathered at U-M. She found that when young people are placed in racially and ethnically diverse classrooms and are exposed to classes that deal with cultural differences, they blossom intellectually when long-held beliefs and ideas are challenged.

In addition, these students develop the ability to understand the ideas and feelings of others, which in later life makes them more likely to live in racially diverse communities, maintain friendships with people of different races and able to function more effectively in an increasingly diverse workplace, Gurin concluded.

Until recently, the assumption among many non-educators and educators alike had been that a racially diverse class benefited only racial minorities.

The full text of her study, including references and tables, is on the Web at www.umich.edu/~newsinfo/Admission/Expert/gurintoc.html.

At Spring Commencement May 1 for 6,000 graduates, the University awarded honorary degrees to Kofi Annan of Ghana, secretary-general of the United Nations; Aharon Barak, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Israel; Shirley M. Malcom, director of education and human resources at the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and Pramodya Ananta Toer, Indonesian author (see opposite page).

As ceremonies began before a throng of 35,000 in Michigan Stadium, President Lee C. Bollinger told the audience that Annan had just taken part in lengthy negotiations in Moscow over the Yugoslavian crisis. Annan could have canceled his appearance to catch up on rest, Bollinger noted, but "chose otherwise, and through a long and difficult flight, chose to be with you."

As two planes circled the stadium overhead carrying banners protesting NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, Annan said that the UN was "committed to the maintenance of national sovereignty and territorial integrity ...[and] equally committed to protecting universal rights, regardless of frontiers."

Annan, who received the honorary degree Doctor of Laws, praised the University for being committed "to tolerance and dialogue," the absence of which, he said, was a key factor in the political and humanitarian crisis in the Balkans.



President Bollinger (far right) on dais with honorary degree recipients (l-r) Pramodya A. Toer, Shirley M. Malcom, Aharon Barak and Kofi Annan.

Photo by Bob Kaimbach

Road Scholars deepen state ties

In the first week in May, fresh from graduating for the winter term, 29 faculty members boarded a bus and became the U-M's first class of Road Scholars on a 1,200-mile weeklong journey across the Great Lakes State.

For those who joined U-M only recently, like Asst. Prof. of Nursing Deborah S. Walker, it was a chance "to relate to my students 'in context' by knowing more about their communities." And for lifelong Michiganders like Prof. Frank Ascione, an associate dean of the College of Pharmacy, "The pace of the tour provided a good overview of the complexity and diversity of our state."

Pharmacy Dean George Kenyon, the newest Michigan resident on the tour at eight and

a half months, said he had arrived with the feeling that the state was highly industrialized. The tour corrected that notion but confirmed his impression that the state "is very uneven in economic development."

Lincoln B. Faller, professor of English, "looked forward to meeting people outside the University who weren't academics, so I'd have a better idea of what my students might become." The trip confirmed to him that the state is "very divided" along lines of class, race and the urban-rural split, Faller added. "We didn't see much in the way of bridges being built across class lines and the urban-rural divide," he said, "though the smoked fish entrepreneur [Jill W. Bentgen of Mackinac Straits Fish Co.] in St. Ignace was a notable and fascinating exception."

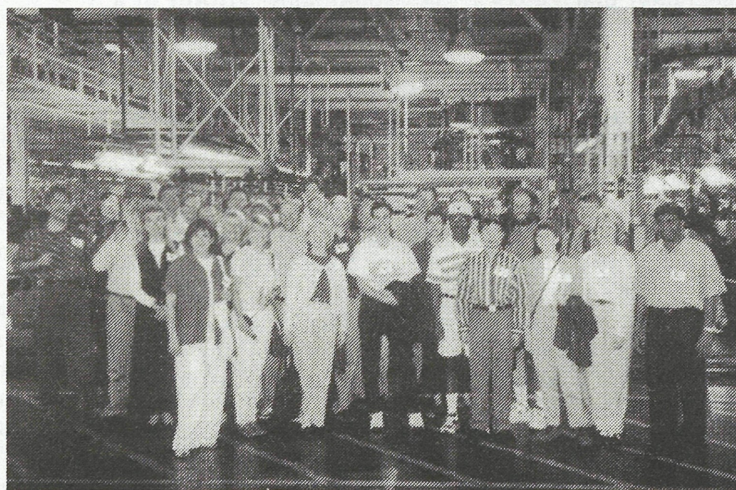
Ex-astronaut Anthony England, professor of electrical engineering and computer science and of atmospheric, oceanic and space science, frankly reported one important reason for the program: "No matter how much we

think of ourselves as a 'national' university, we must function successfully within the context of Michigan. To do that, we must understand Michigan's problems and be aware of significant efforts to address those problems."

Indeed, the purpose of this traveling seminar, funded by U-M Provost Nancy Cantor for two years, is to enable faculty to explore the state's economy, educational systems, government and politics, culture, geography, history, and health and social issues. It also is meant to increase understanding between the University and the people it serves, introduce faculty to the places most of their students call home, and suggest ways faculty can help address state issues through research and service.

"There were some truly wonderful moments," said Susan Froelich, associate director of State Outreach who coordinated the planning for the tour. "Community people were genuinely pleased to have the faculty visit and learn about their respective areas. The faculty themselves were impressive, fun, sometimes irreverent and sometimes slightly demanding, but they clearly demonstrated that they are people who care a lot about the world around them and want to do whatever they can to help make it a better place."

For more detailed coverage of the tour, visit the Web at www.umich.edu/~urel/facultytours.html.



The Road Scholars in Flint's GM Truck and Bus Assembly Plant.

Photo by Youxue Zhang

A CHAT WITH PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TOER

A mute's song resounds, fulfilling a mother's hopes

What if the British had maintained a steadily oppressive rule over a liberty-minded North American population from the 1600s to after WW II? How would the colonists, living on plantations or forced to work at subsistence wages in factories, go about building an independence movement over those centuries, with the levers of power—economic, political, military, legal, cultural—in the hands of the British government?

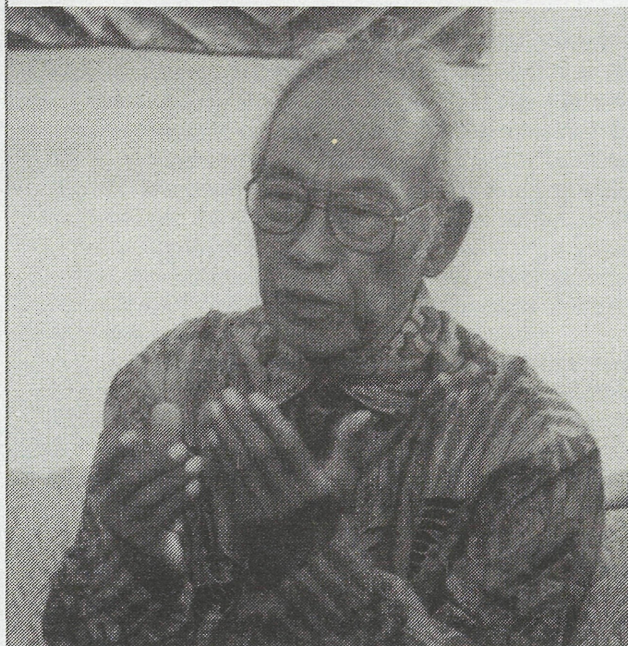
In his exciting series of novels known as the Buru Quartet (*This Earth of Mankind*, *Child of All Nations*, *Footsteps* and *House of Glass*), the Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer dramatizes the development of intellect, will and courage required to organize a freedom movement under such conditions. For his power as a story teller, Pramoedya, as he's known (pronounced Prah-MOU-dia), has suffered tremendously. He has seen his writings banned and notes and drafts of novels destroyed. He's spent 14 years in prison, most of them in a forced labor camp on the island of Buru, forced to eat grubs, lizards and mice or starve, and all the while watching fellow uncharged prisoners die by the hundreds. He lost much of his hearing in a beating by soldiers. And he was separated from and denied contact even by mail with his wife and young children during most of his years on Buru.

Pramoedya was on campus in May to receive an honorary doctorate in humane letters at Spring Commencement. Despite his ill treatment, the wiry 74-year-old has the cheerful and self-composed aura of the similarly fated and minded Nelson Mandela. Pramoedya delivered lectures and readings, signed books (including his recently published prison memoir *A Mute's Silent Song*, titled *The Mute's Soliloquy* in the English edition) and granted an interview to *Michigan Today* with a trio of questioners, Southeast Asian specialists Profs. Nancy K. Florida (Indonesian Languages and Literature, who translated) and Ann L. Stoler (anthropology and history), and *MT's* John Woodford. Also present were Pramoedya's wife, Maimoenah Thamrin, and his friend and editor Joesoef Isak of Hasta Mitra publishing company in Jakarta.

MT: Did you get the background for Minke, your hero who helps lead the Indonesian awakening beginning in 1898, from your father, who was a nationalist leader and educator?

A: Pramoedya A. Toer: When I was creating Minke's adventures, I had students pore over newspaper stories from the period and wove episodes into the plot. But to learn about the internal politics of the Indonesian nationalist groups from our many islands and regions, I didn't rely on my father but on the Dutch scholar Willem Wertheim. He brought out the characters who had been erased from our history.

Q: Who are your favorite American authors? **A:** John Steinbeck and William Saroyan. Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* was the primer I used to teach myself to read English. I was so touched and impressed by those two writers that I'm afraid I have not been as open as I'd like to be to others.



Pramoedya in the Osterman Common Room, U-M Institute for the Humanities.

Q: Who are other favorites? **A:** I read a lot of Zola as a youth, and before my prison exile I translated Tolstoy into Indonesian. I was impressed by his liberation of his serfs but he didn't serve as a model for my writing. Gorky influenced me much more. He was a writer who portrayed the social fabric of his country and gives readers an insight into the distinctive character of the Russian people. The Philippine novelist Jose Rizal [executed by the Spanish in 1896 after three years of imprisonment and torture for championing freedom from colonial rule—Ed.] was also an inspiration for me.

Q: Are you working on a book now? **A:** Yes, on one called *The Originator*, a nonfiction work on the crusading journalist on whom Minke was modeled, Tirto Adhisurjo. The Dutch exiled him to the island of Molucca. His widow's family sent me many important documents that shed light on his life, but government security forces stole them from me and I've never seen them again.

Q: General Suharto's predecessor Sukarno, Indonesia's first leader, also imprisoned you, though briefly. Why was that? **A:** That government didn't like the way I championed the rights of our Chinese minority. I admired and studied the awakening of the Chinese nationalist movement in the early 1900s. Indonesians were inspired by the Chinese movement's principles of social justice and internationalism as expressed in the writings of Sun Yat-sen. The Chinese characters who arise in my stories are symbolic of that influence. I try to show history being played out by what my characters say and do. I first learned of what the young Chinese who came to Indonesia were like from my mother.

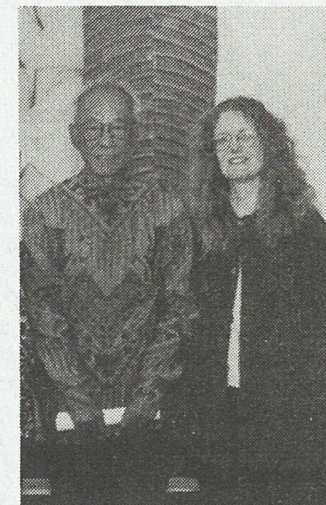
Q: Now that Suharto is out of office, what are your hopes for Indonesian-US relations?

A: I have expressed my opinion everywhere that the United States should stop sending arms to Indonesia, that the armed forces are not a stabilizing factor. Your country—the West as a whole—is very influential throughout the world today. It was thanks to some pressure from the Carter administration that I was released in 1979. I ask everyone to help the youth of Indonesia complete the reformation of the nation. If we don't reform our society there will be social revolution, with people attacking, looting, killing. Only effective national leadership can prevent this hopeless outcome. A social revolution without national leadership would result in Indonesia's vanishing from the face of the Earth. Each faction would establish its own autonomous unit, and since, as Sukarno taught us, this century is the century of intervention, our resources would be up for grabs.

Q: The hero's guardian angel in the Quartet is Nyal Ontosoroh, the former concubine who wins her freedom and amasses a fortune. How did you happen to invent such a strong female character?

A: When I would tell my fellow prisoners the stories that became the novels, I would say to them, "Look at her. Look at what she is doing—and she is only a woman! Certainly we men should be able to do more." I wanted her to inspire them. In real life, my mother was an incredibly strong character, although physically she was weakened by tuberculosis and died at 34 when I was 17. When people ask me to say how my mother influenced me, I say that what is in my books—everything—is what I got from my mother. She used to urge me to continue my schooling after I dropped out in junior high. "You must master Dutch," she'd say, "so you can widen your knowledge. Then you must go to Europe and other countries to learn even more. Do not stop until you have a doctoral degree." And now, thanks to my honor from the University of Michigan, I have finally fulfilled everything she wanted. **MT**

Pramoedya's series of four historical novels known as the Buru Quartet began as tales he made up to entertain and encourage his fellow prisoners. They liked them so much that they took over his grueling prison labor chores for six years so he could concentrate on inventing the stories he told them on work details and at night.



Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Prof. Nancy Florida who led efforts to honor him at Commencement.

Jim Abbott returns to baseball 'An arena I feel comfortable in'



In 1996, former Wolverine pitcher Jim Abbott '89 had the worst year of his life as an athlete. Whatever he'd used to get big league hitters out since his first start as a rookie with the Anaheim Angels in 1989 had deserted him. He ended the year with a record of 2 wins and 18 losses, including an 11-game losing streak. This was the low point in what had been until then an extraordinary life on and off the field.

Abbott's story is inspiring. This Flint, Michigan, native, born without a right hand, had a phenomenal amateur career from his football quarterbacking and baseball stardom in high school, on to his three years at Michigan from 1986-88, when he led the team to regular season Big Ten championships each year.

In 1987 he led Team USA to the silver medal in the Pan American games after carrying the US flag for the opening ceremonies in Indianapolis. At the 1988 Seoul Olympics, he pitched the gold medal-winning game against Japan.

Abbott's accomplishments won him the 1988 Golden Spikes Award as the nation's top amateur baseball player and the Sullivan Award, given each year to the nation's top amateur athlete—the first baseball player ever so honored—and many other awards.

In 1989 he became a professional. As a starting pitcher who could throw a fastball 90 mph, spin a sharp-breaking curve ball and a brutal slider, Abbott spent four solid seasons with the Anaheim Angels, two with the New York Yankees—where he threw his first no-hitter—and part of the 1995 season with the Chicago White Sox.

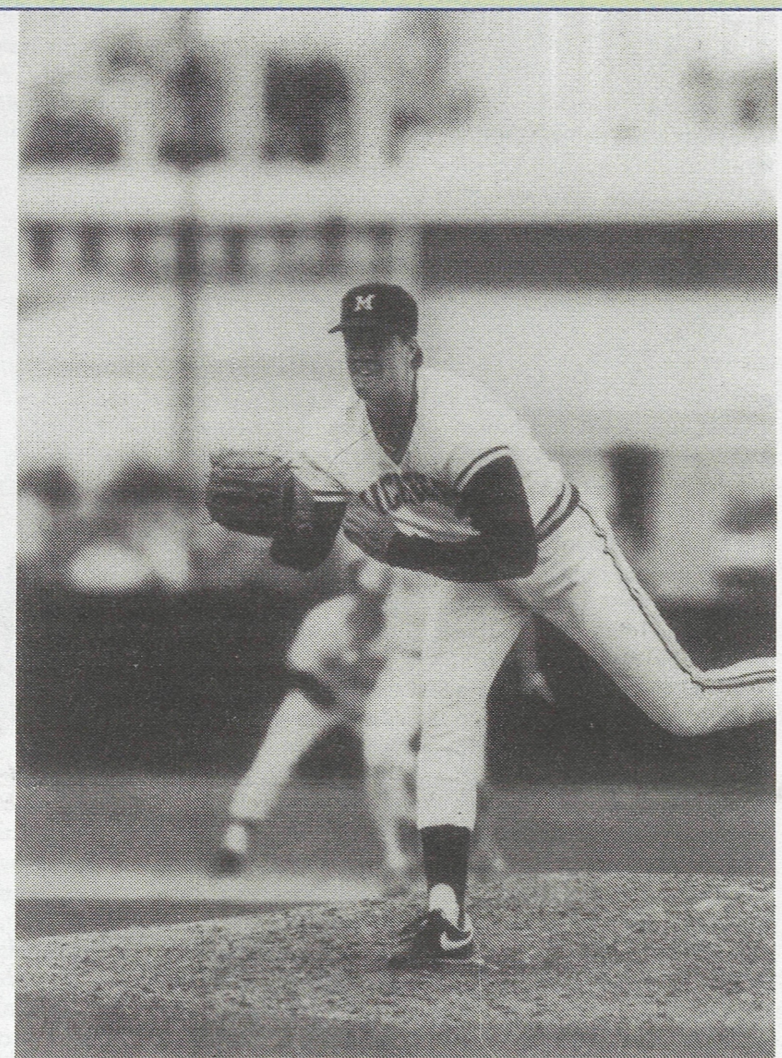
The Sox traded Abbott back to the Angels during the '95 season. He pitched well and looked forward to the approaching season, but in '96 his confidence and strong left arm failed him. He was sent to the bullpen as a reliever late in the season and then, briefly, to a minor league team—each a first for Abbott as a pro. Although he returned for spring training with the Angels in 1997, the team released him before opening day.

Following a year out of baseball, during which his wife, Dana, had a baby girl, Jim contacted the White Sox, who would give him a chance to come back in '98 only if he proved himself in the minors first. He agreed and was eventually called up to "the show" last September, when he proceeded to win all five of his starts for the Sox.

Was he really back? He needed the test of a full season in the majors, and the Milwaukee Brewers have given him a chance to prove himself in the 1999 season. Joel Seguire of U-M News and Information Services interviewed Jim Abbott for *Michigan Today* in the locker room of the Brewers' spring training facility in Phoenix. Since the start of the season, it's been rocky going for Abbott. Through June 14 his record was 1-5, giving up 7.2 earned runs per nine innings (ERA), while both starting and relieving for the last-place Brewers. For his career Abbott is now 86-105 with a 4.2 ERA.

Q: Michigan Today: You had such a wonderful amateur career. What are some of the memories you hold onto from those years? Jim Abbott: That I had a lot of great friendships is mostly what I remember from baseball. It's part of the reason why I'm playing again; it expands the world you're exposed to and the people you come across. I started seeing some of the world because of baseball, different parts of the country traveling with the University of Michigan, playing with the USA team and moving around. I got exposed to so much.

Q: I remember seeing a picture of you carrying the flag in the opening ceremonies of the Pan Am games. That must have been a thrill. A: Yeah, that was a spine-tingling type of thing, walking into the Indianapolis Speedway. I remember



Abbott as a Wolverine.

we had to wait a long time before we walked onto the Speedway, and it was packed with thousands and thousands of people. Because we were the host country, the United States was the last to be introduced, so we had to wait for all that as the procession went through. Finally, underneath the grandstand where we were, all the workers and all the volunteers—and there hundreds of them—just erupted in this enclosure we were in. It was just deafening. Everybody started chanting, "U.S.A., U.S.A." And then we walked from there and I had the Flag and I was out front. And we walked up the stairs and the whole Speedway just blew up when they announced, "Los Estados Unidos," and everybody stood up. I still get goose bumps thinking about it.

Q: Your mother and father gave you a lot of support in allowing you to find your own way in athletics as you were growing up in Flint as a boy born without a right hand. A: Yes, they were very supportive. I'd put it this way: they allowed me to do whatever I wanted, yet they weren't always extremely involved. And I don't mean that in a bad way—I think it was beneficial.

Q: Did anyone teach you how to throw without a right hand? A: My Dad and I did what was necessary to play catch. We didn't form the basis for a major league career. We just played catch.

Q: Are you limited in any way from throwing certain pitches because you can't hide the ball? Have you had to ask for any special ruling about that? A: No, I didn't ask, but there was an interpretation of a rule. I never knew anything about it. All of a sudden the Commissioner of the American League was there one day during spring training in my rookie year. I do something where I kind of twirl the ball. You can't really see it. The rule is you can't move the ball to deceive the runner at first base. It's nothing more than guys do inside their glove. Anyway, they cleared it and nobody ever said a word about it.

Q: Do you have any doubts that you should have gone right to the majors, that you might have benefited from some minor league experience? A: I don't look back on things. You know, you turn different corners and who knows what'll happen. I wouldn't change a thing of what's happened. I had a real bad year in 1996 and that took its toll, but other than that I'm very proud of the things I've done.

Q: You've said that you're aware of the effect you have on other people whether they be disabled or not, and you seem to carry that well. Is that something that's a weight or is it something you carry with pride? A: Well, my answer to that seems selfish. I really feel that to have an effect, to be someone that can be pointed to as an example, at least on those terms, is to be good [at what I do]. I understand the larger issue, I really do. But the type of example I want to show is not only that you can survive—make it—but that you can flourish. That's what I want to do, and I work hard towards those ends. And if I can answer some letters, if I can meet kids, if I can be involved in a charity, attend events here and there, I'm very happy to do that. But beyond that, I'm no different from anybody else in this room.

Q: Take us back to Yankee Stadium, September 4, 1993, when you pitched your no-hitter against the Cleveland Indians. A: It was a time when I wasn't pitching particularly well. I actually faced Cleveland the time out before that in their park and was knocked out maybe in the third inning. I was given five days rest and I was facing the Indians again back at home. You know that happens quite a bit. You face a team, then you face them again because of the pitching rotation. It's a mental challenge because if you did well [in the prior outing], there's no guarantee. But if you didn't do well, you're really screwed. So the irony that they'd hit me so hard before, to throw a no-hitter the next time against them, I remember that as being strange. I remember it was a cloudy day. A day game, the kind of game I like to throw.

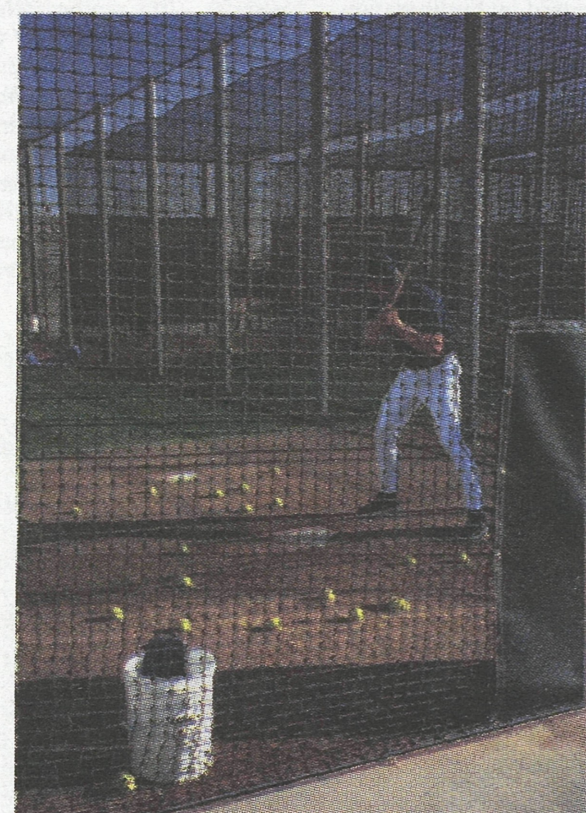
Q: Was there any point where other players stopped talking to you so they wouldn't jinx you? A: I don't remember much of that. Scott Kamieniecki [86], a former Michigan teammate, was with the Yankees then. He and I were joking around a little bit, but I don't usually talk a lot during the games anyway. Sometimes if I feel like I have to relieve the pressure or whatever I will. I think there was a little bit of banter but not much. My wife, Dana, was there, and it was a real thrill giving her a hug afterwards, down in the depths of the stadium. We have very good memories of being in New York that we'll always cherish.

Q: Any lingering thoughts about the very difficult year you had in '96, when you were 2-18 with the Angels? A: It was tough. Really, there's no other way to put it. On the grand scale—obviously, we're playing major league baseball, making a lot of money—it certainly doesn't compare with some of the other things that people go through in life. But for me—I took it too hard. Maybe that was my personality. Maybe I didn't like being so vulnerable. You come out of it hopefully stronger.

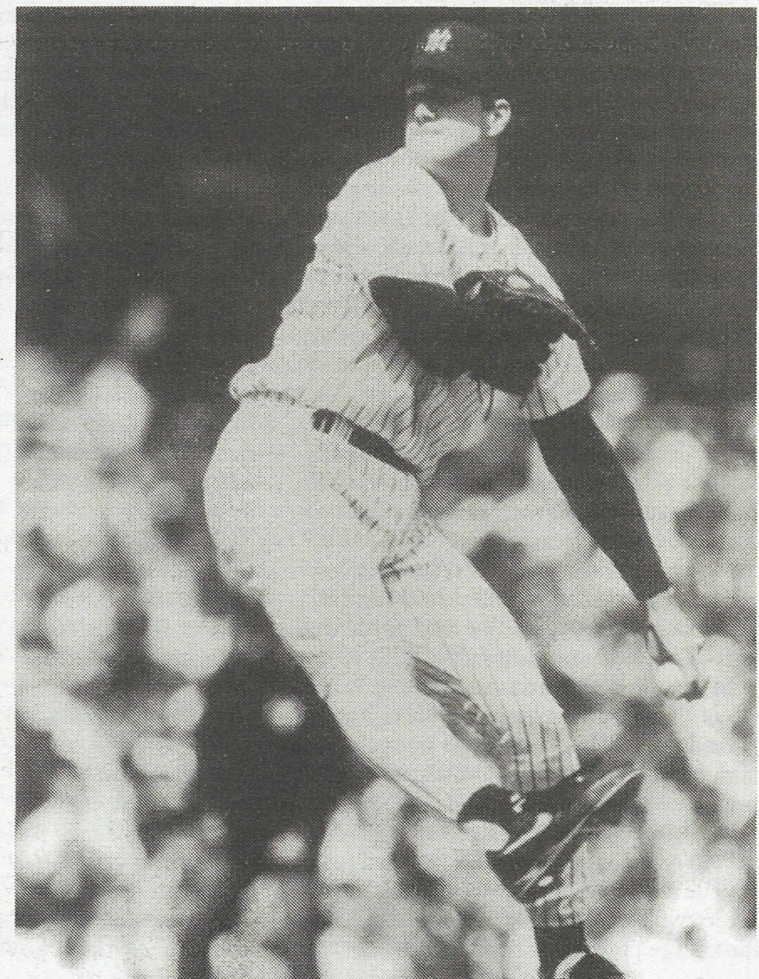
Q: Do you think you did? A: I'm different. I don't get as caught up as I did. I know what's important to me now. I know that what happens on the baseball field from this point on can never affect that. I worry that it will, I'll be honest. I'm worried that I will get caught up in baseball, like if I'm doing well, projecting this thought of having to be good. I struggled a little bit in the minor leagues last year, but I felt that I was improving, and then last fall I won every time I pitched, and this spring I've pitched pretty well, so it's been good times and you need those. It's fortifying. But I didn't have any good times in '96, so I didn't have any fortification against the bad.

Q: Your minor league experience last year was your first since you became a pro except for a short stint in Vancouver. Playing with 18-year-olds, riding the bus, what was that like for you? A: It's something I can't believe that I did, because if you asked me now would you do that, the answer would be no. It was kind of a plan to get to the big leagues [after] a five-week training period. And I thought, I can do it. I can schedule family and I can be here and do this. What it turned into was a long term, a real odyssey. I came across great people, saw a lot of different things, and it wasn't all bad. I don't know why to this day that I did it. I'm glad to be back, and I think my family is, too, but it was a really weird thing.

Q: Wherever you've played it seems your teammates have enjoyed playing with you. Last year, when you came back with the White Sox, you passed the Yankees third base coach, Willie Randolph, as you were heading back to the dugout, and he said, "Welcome back." That kind of thing must feel really good. A: It does, and I can get, frankly, very emotional about it. This is an arena that I feel comfortable in, you know, sitting here in the clubhouse. The banter and the humor. It's different than it is outside. I enjoy it. I really do. I feel comfortable in the surroundings, and I enjoy the guys from the South and the West and the East and different parts of the world. I'm not always so great at the neighborhood get-togethers, although I like those people, too. But this is where I feel most comfortable. And when I'm not here, I like to be around guys who have played major league baseball. It's the camaraderie. **MT**



Abbott in the batting cage during spring training in Phoenix.



Abbott tossing a no-hitter for the New York Yankees in 1993.

If Happened
50
Years Ago
This Spring

By Joanne Nesbit
U-M News and Information Services

There are some so presumptuous as to think that in the spring a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love. But there was one U-M administrator who knew better; that there was another, perhaps stronger, thought engendered in a young man or maybe a not-so young man by the coming of spring—baseball.

The Sprightly Adventure of Instructor Simpson, a Merry Tale of Baseball, a Not-Too-Young Instructor, and the Laboratory Sink is how then-Secretary of the University Shirley Wheeler Smith, Class of 1897, '00 AM, '45 LLD (hon.), subtitled his story for a 1923 University Club festivity.

Twenty-five years later, another U-M grad, Valentine Davies '25, adapted Smith's skit into the screenplay of the 1949 baseball movie classic, *It Happens Every Spring*. The film starred Ray Milland as, in Hollywood movie poster-ese, "The guy who invented the ball nobody could hit," and Jean Peters as, "The girl with the curves nobody could miss."

In the movie version, an accident in the lab of a Missouri university leads to a compound that makes a baseball dodge a bat and encourages a bashful chemistry professor to take to the baseball diamond, where he becomes a great strike-out pitcher for the pennant-bound St. Louis team. And, of course, he eventually wins the hand of Peters, who was not only his student but also the college president's daughter.

The movie's plot elaborates on the broad outlines of Smith's earlier skit and subsequent short story in the *Michigan Quarterly Review*, especially adding the Hollywood staple—"romantic interest." Smith's hero was a 32-year-old married instructor with two children, and his family remained well offstage in the original.

Davies and Smith shared a writing credit for the screenplay and won an Oscar nomination for their efforts.

It Happens Every Spring was the hit of the World's First Author's Premiere at Ann Arbor's Michigan Theater. Reserve seats went on sale at the theater's box office for 55 cents each. Davies, who won two Oscars for 1947's *Miracle on 34th Street*, wrote to the theater's manager, Gerald Hoag, that "I am coming only to pay tribute to Mr. Smith. I think this definitely should be his night and that whatever arrangements you make because of my presence will not detract from it."

The whole city turned out to pay tribute to Smith, who was 74 at the time of the premiere and enjoying emeritus status after his retirement in 1945. The city declared it Shirley Smith Day, and some of his professor friends arranged for Smith to emulate Hollywood notables by putting his footprint in a cement slab for posterity. But Smith would have none of that, saying he "was willing to go along with the ballyhoo in the abstract but not in the concrete."

He added that he used to walk in wet cement as a boy, "but I'm too old for that now. I won't leave footprints on the sands of time, much less in a cement slab in a theater lobby." This quip appeared in local papers, prompting one reader to send the following to Smith:

*Dear Mr. Smith,
Hooray!! I thought everyone except myself had gone goofy. Now I find another. Perhaps if we knew it, there are many others if only all could get together. Anyway, my compliments to one*

with the courage to oppose Hollywood publicists. Or was it the fear that corns and bunions would show up in the soft cement?

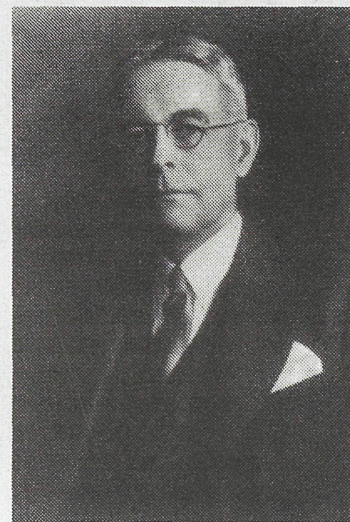
The ballyhoo over, Smith sent a letter to Sid Blumenstock of 20th Century-Fox May 22, 1949, that read, "The shouting and the tumult have died and I am now just another Smith in our town. However, the memory will linger a long time. There was an embarrassing moment now and then, but nothing that even flyspecks the recollection as a whole. The movie itself, as Val [Davies] wrote it and as 20th Century-Fox put it on, seems to have pleased everybody.

"Plumbers are not ordinarily given to humor, but when I thanked one of them for coming so promptly and efficiently opening up a blocked sewer, he grinned and said, 'It wasn't anything. It happens every spring.'"

It would appear from an earlier letter from Davies that the Ann Arbor crowd was not the only one pleased with the movie.

After a first sneak preview at Riverside, California, Davies wrote to Smith, "The audience response was everything that we had expected and then some. There was so much laughter that ... some of the funniest lines were completely drowned out. The preview cards were also most enthusiastic, and what pleased us most was that the women and girls seemed to be no less enthusiastic about the picture than the men."

Smith became even more of a celebrity in Ann Arbor than he had been, constantly recognized, stopped and complimented when he walked downtown. "The thing



Shirley Smith

that makes me feel it is going to be more than usually popular," he wrote his younger co-writer, "is the wide range of people who enjoyed it. I have had echoes from all over, seeming from sneak previews. But the best result of all, I feel, is our friendship of which I am very proud." **MT**

Michigan Today thanks the staff of the U-M Bentley Historical Library for assisting in researching the Shirley Smith collection for source materials.

The Story That Inspired the Movie

From *The Sprightly Adventure of Instructor Simpson*, the 1923 short story by Shirley Smith, Class of 1897, U-M Vice President and Secretary of the University:

"The sporting public loves to worship unreasonably if only it can worship unreservedly."

"Mr. Simpson, gentlemen," said the President, "is one of those rare young men who, with the opportunities of the world open to him to make money almost without end and to win and retain fame of a splendid but still baser sort, yet prefers the more enduring satisfaction found only by those who give their lives to the humanities or sciences. Of course we cannot expect him to return as instructor, and I heartily recommend his appointment as associate professor. He plainly has the spirit of self-sacrifice and research which we desire to encourage."

...Simpson "never discovered the process of manufacturing helium bromide, and he has never discovered, though he has sought an answer over many an evening's pipeful, why the world, in that summer of his sprightly adventure, should have paid him 57 times as much for throwing a little five-and-quarter-ounce ball past a wooden stick as it had been willing to pay him for developing its most valued possession, the youth of the land, in one of the world's most cherished institutions, an ancient and honorable university."



LETTERS

Keep Your Reference Letter File Active

The Career Planning & Placement (CP&P) office is conducting its annual review of reference letter files that have been inactive for the last 10 years. In keeping with guidelines outlined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Career Planning & Placement, files inactive since December 31, 1989 will be deactivated. Transcripts and other academic material will not be affected by the deactivation of inactive files.

To maintain an active file, a student or alumna/us must have conducted one or more of the following transactions since December 31, 1989: transmitted (mailed) reference letters as part of an admission or employment process; added new letters to the file; submitted updated persona data; or indicated in writing to keep the file active.

To reactivate a file that has not been used since 1989, contact the Reference Letter Center by August 31, 1999. You will be asked to supply updated information for inclusion in your file. There is no charge to reactivate a file.

To start a new file, any University of Michigan graduate or current student with at least 12 credits may log onto our website at www.cpp.umich.edu or contact CP&P. Send information or direct questions regarding your file to: Reference Letter Center, 3200 Student Activities Building, 515 East Jefferson Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1316. Phone (734) 764-7459; email cp&p@umich.edu.

The Smiths' Tally

THE SMITH family of Grosse Ile hopes that the Gordon family of Detroit will share the record for having the greatest number of siblings who graduated from U-M. You had six and we had six:

Dr. S. Gregory '74-Economics
 Dr. Patrick A. '76-Anthropology; '80 MD
 Paul D. '80 BBA, '84 MBA
 Alison V. '81 BBA
 Alisa (Lyons) '83-Organizational Communications
 Glenn L. '85-Economics, '89 JD
 Our children may have been influenced

by their U-M parents: Veronica Latta '48 AB-Sociology, and Stewart G. '49 AB-Political Science; '52 JD. We were ecstatic when everyone had graduated, as through the years we had paid over 45 years of tuition to the University of Michigan. Gordons and Smiths probably crossed paths in Pasadena many times. We hope that someday we will meet in Ann Arbor!

Veronica Latta Smith
 UM Regent, 1985-93
 Grosse Ile, Michigan

As our alumni/ae correspondents reported last issue on their families' remarkable achievements at Michigan, the Gordons, Eders, Monticello and—with this letter—the Smiths all hold third place with six U-M sibling graduates. The Velmettis and Rays, with seven, have second place, and the Hoffmans claim first with nine—Ed.

AFTER reading and admiring the letters from other families with outstanding records of many siblings graduating from Michigan, we would like to submit the record of the Ellis family: 10 children with a widowed mother and with grandparents who were born slaves, growing up in a dust bowl Oklahoma town during the Great Depression. Five of these children earned a total of seven degrees from U-M, working part-time jobs to pay for their education.

Francis '42 MA Ed.
 Wade '44 PhD Math
 Roberta '45 MA Ed.
 Herbert '48 MA Ed., '50 MPH
 George '52 BBA, '66 MBA

Wade later became a professor at Oberlin College and U-M, serving as associate dean of the Horace Rackham Graduate School. The Ellis family owes a great deal to the University and also to parents who placed the highest value on education, and to grandparents who learned to read and write at a time when slaves were severely punished for even attempting to do such a thing.

Herbert Ellis '48, '50
 Ann Arbor

North Dakotans

FREQUENTLY you have an article of special interest to me. The fall 1998 issue contained such a one—"A Man for all Horizons"—about Prof. Tom Fricke's new project of studying North Dakota. My parents were part of the migration from eastern US and Canada in the early 1900s. Unlike the terrain in the pictured "badlands" my father's homestead in Bottineau County near the Canadian border was flat. The bank at Driscoll is in the style of one in Maxbass (named after a railroad land agent) near my father's homestead. I taught school at a town nearby (Baldwin) my first year out of college.

Georgia Haugh
 Ann Arbor

Dean Ihla of the Bottineau Chamber of Commerce offers this from a Bottineau County history: In 1905, the Great Northern Railroad Company established a townsite that became the village of Maxbass, named after Mr. Max Bass, immigration agent for the Great Northern Railway. After only four months, Maxbass had two banks, four general stores, four lumber yards, six grain elevators, three restaurants, three pool and billiard halls, two hardware stores, two meat markets, two doctors, a barber shop, drug store and weekly newspaper.

By 1910, Maxbass had a population of 240—which showed little change by 1950 when there were 259 residents. By 1990, the population had dropped to 123. The town's school closed in 1997, and the only businesses remaining are services relating to agriculture or oil production. Maxbass is 45 miles north of Minot.—Ed.

Raoul Wallenberg

WE APPRECIATED reading excerpts of Raoul Wallenberg's letters from Ann Arbor. The introduction incorrectly stated that he was 5 years old when his father died. The sad fact is that his father died three months before Wallenberg was born. But most important to the University is its association with the hero of the 20th century. And even more important to the world are Wallenberg's deeds and his humanitarian example. Dear Mr. Woodford: To confirm the information, see *Letters And Dispatches, 1924-1944* (Arcade Publishing, Inc., 1995), which contains Wallenberg's Ann Arbor letters. The Introduction, written by relatives, states on page 3: "His father, a second lieutenant in the Swedish navy, had died of cancer before he was born." See also Wallenberg, *The Man In The Iron Web*, by Elenore Lester (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), on page 26: "Raoul's

father had died of cancer at age 23, three months before Raoul was born." The specific dates of those two events in 1912—May 10 and August 4—are provided on page 30 of Lester's book. Please let me know if you'd like hard copies of these sources.

Thomas E. Schick '70 LS&A
 Susan L. Schick '72 Nursing
 Rockville, Maryland

THE PEOPLE of the United States have learned nothing from the sacrifices and death of Raoul Wallenberg. The meaning of his actions and life were wasted on us. The spirit of the United States used to be achievement, pride, love of country and respect for life. That spirit has changed to power, arrogance and control.

I'm middle-aged. I've never known peace in my lifetime. The last time I contacted the United Nations statistics, there were 135 wars simultaneously throughout the world. Undoubtedly, that number has increased by now; at least by five, since Clinton has added more destruction in his wake during this administration. Add those wars to those created by recent presidents who also lusted for war. What politicians speak or work for peace? Do any? Certainly not Levin or Bonior from Michigan!

Hopefully, the Wallenberg Endowment will provide grants for students to learn the arts of diplomacy and compromise plus respect for human rights, sovereignty, sensitivity, peace and justice. I would be able to die happy with the knowledge that my grandchildren will be able to live in a peaceful world. Enough war!!

Beatrice Scalise '76 MA Ed
 Westland, Michigan

I WAS very much moved by the excerpts from Raoul Wallenberg's correspondence in the spring issue. I hadn't realized that his time at Michigan matched my years (1931-1935) at Albion College, where I received my AB. I came to Michigan in the fall of 1935; Wallenberg and left in February. I wish I had known him!

Wallace A. Bacon
 Taos, New Mexico

Affirmative Action

YOUR COLUMN column "Admission Suits Delayed" in the Spring 1999 issue reports on two "lawsuits challenging the University use of race in admissions." The lawsuits are described as follows: "brought by two white applicants," and "on behalf

of one white applicant." Had the challengers been minorities (as was the case in California) would the writer have identified them as such?

One must wonder if your bias is not showing through. Perhaps *Michigan Today* will comment, in the letters column, on this in the next issue.

Ted Kidd '50
Traverse City, Michigan

I AM writing in response to two letters on affirmative action published in the Fall 1998 issue. I tire of listening to the rhetoric of people like Donald Reeves and A. L. Hodge, especially when they ignore historical facts that have taken place in this country. I suggest that Mr. Reeves go to the library and look up empirical studies on bilingual education. Bilingual education is beneficial for language-minority students; there is empirical evidence to support this. One of the reasons why students of color are not achieving in school is they are denied a basic human right to be treated with respect. In addition, these students are treated as inferior and their language and their culture are equally degraded.

Mr. Hodge's determination to put himself through school is commendable. However, he is not the only one. I, too, have put myself through school. I am in school now to obtain a PhD in education. Mr. Hodge claims that affirmative action is absolutely wrong, unfair, discriminatory and purely racist. But affirmative action was put in place to combat the continual onslaught of racism on people of color.

This country has never been a color-blind society, and as long as the Ku Klux Klan is in existence it never will be. Whether Mr. Hodge or Mr. Reeves wants to admit it—perhaps they're too blinded by their anger—racism continues to be a major problem in this country today. For anyone to stand up and state that the elimination of affirmative action will make the US a color-blind society and everyone will be treated equally is a person living in a fantasy world or in just plain denial.

What policies are in place to protect people who are discriminated against because of their race, color or religion? What happens when affirmative action is abolished and discrimination still persists? These questions can be answered only by empirical research and by laying the cards out on the table. That is to say that people must begin to discuss openly the problem of discrimination and racism that is prevalent in this country. Just closing one's eyes

and pretending that the US is a wonderful and color-blind society is not enough.

Vicki R. Ellison '81
Columbus, Ohio

Martha Cook Alumnae

I WAS delighted to read the article about Colleen London in the spring issue ("Bosnia, An Adopted Motherland"). I met her while I was the director of the Martha Cook Building (1973-79). Colleen was very active in the Martha Cook Alumnae Club of Ann Arbor.

Olive Chernow
Saginaw, Michigan

Alumni Reunions

I WOULD like you to pass this letter on to the agency for alumni matters, in as much as I do not have their address but have yours. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of my graduation from U-M, and I would like to begin receiving information about alumni reunions that will be held in conjunction with such a signature event. You will glean correctly from this that I am not a member of the Alumni Association. Your help will be most appreciated.

Alexander T. Morris '50 Eng
New Bern, North Carolina
Your letter has been forwarded to the Alumni Association (AA). Director Steve Grafton says the Association will provide you and other interested readers with information about the Emeritus Reunion Weekend in June 2000. The AA address is Alumni Center, 200 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1007. Phone (800) 847-4764. E-mail m.alumni@umich.edu. Website: http://www.umich.edu/~umalumni/.

Arthur Miller Award

I WISH to make a correction to your article "In Honor of Arthur Miller '38" in the fall 1998 issue. The Arthur Miller Award was established and is funded by the U-M Club of New York. It is officially called the University of Michigan Club of New York Arthur Miller Award. The award is presented to a member of the Junior Class selected by the English Department for outstanding creative writing. The \$1,000 award is a tuition credit for the recipient's senior year at Michigan. In addition, winners are also presented with a copy of *Death of a Salesman* signed by Mr. Miller.

The Award was the brainchild of Doris Rubinstein '71 who was the Club Scholarship Fund Chairman at the time. She felt that one of our most illustrious New York alumni should be honored by the New York Club. Mr. Miller was contacted and

agreed to the establishment of the award. His ongoing support is greatly appreciated by the New York Alumni Club as part of the Michigan tradition.

Herbert N. Appel
Treasurer, Scholarship Fund
U-M Club of New York

Not Cricket

READER Kathleen Chojonowski, an Aussie transplanted to Topeka, Kansas, called to point out that the photo we identified (Spring 1999 issue) as showing U-M cricketers of the 1870s were holding baseball rather than cricket bats and that the team was made up of nine players rather than 11. She was right. We misidentified a photo from the U-M Bentley Historical Library collection of the U-M 1874-5 baseball team. We have been unable to find a photo of early Wolverine cricketers—Ed.

Homage to Hazel Avery

WITH GREAT interest I read Ann Woodward's letter [Spring 1999 issue] about the U-M Obstetric Hospital in the '40s. My two-month stint in obstetrics was memorable. Our head nurse was Hazel Avery, a tough taskmaster. She had to be, to hold that hospital together while teaching us rookies who were the primary work force. There was a wrought-iron circular staircase with loose marble slabs for stairs. You had to place your foot just right. We carried food trays up and down them three times a day, and if we spilled a drop of anything on our uniforms, it was back to Couzens Hall to change—on our time.

Babies were transported to their mothers on the 2d and 3rd floors every four hours on the freight elevator—the only one in the building—in a cart with four partitions. The large tube Ann mentioned was indeed the fire escape. We were instructed to pass the bundled babies relay style and roll them down the tube to the nurse waiting outside on the ground in case of fire. Then the mothers were to go down, and the lowly student nurses last.

After I saw my first delivery, Miss Avery instructed me to go down to the first floor waiting room and tell the husband he had a nice baby girl. I did, and he promptly fainted. Just like the movies. However, that was the only time it happened. I always had the men sit down before I gave them the good news—just in case.

Our babies and mothers got wonderful care. We never propped a bottle to feed a baby. We rocked them as we fed them, sometimes humming a song, and learned how to bathe them and talk to them so

they didn't cry. They spent 10 days with us in those days, and we had happy, healthy patients mostly due to Hazel Avery's constant supervision.

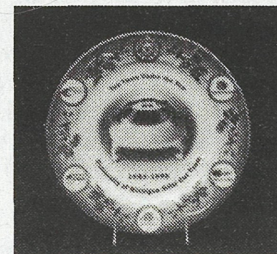
We had one orderly and his name was Earl. Earl was disabled and not very young. He did mostly garbage detail and light maintenance. When state inspectors came to see if we really needed a hospital, Miss Avery instructed Earl to stop the elevator between floors with them in it if he wanted to keep his job, and leave it there for a while as he pounded on something, faking repairs. They stayed stuck quite a while. We were all privy to the ruse. Hazel was no shrinking violet.

In 1947, a new hospital was on the drawing board. Miss Avery used every ward class to get our input on the new hospital plans. It was her baby. When we visited the new hospital during a reunion, Hazel was overjoyed. While showing us around, the nurses' bathroom was first on the list. The old hospital had a little stall with a leaky water closet on the ceiling. She made sure nurses were taken care of better in the new building. Without her, the old hospital would have fallen down. I think it was afraid to!

Elizabeth Lee Payant '47N
Sun City West, Arizona

Solar Car Team Plate

"Ten Years Under the Sun," a \$50 limited edition, 10.5-inch blue on white commemorative plate to benefit the U-M College of Engineering's Solar Car Team, has been produced



by the Ann Arbor firm Classic Collegiate China. All proceeds will go to the present MaizeBlaze team. Plates may be ordered from the team at (734) 764-2257.

THAT OLD BLUE-EYED MAGIC

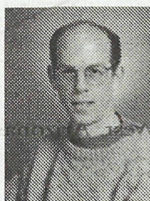
By John Woodford

It's highly unusual for a PhD dissertation to fill most of the 1,700 seats in the Michigan Theater. But it happened in April when Andy Kirshner packed them in for the debut of his roundly applauded experimental musical-theater piece *Relive the Magic: An Evening With Tony Amore*.

Relive the Magic is based quite obviously on the life of Frank Sinatra. The dialogue, lyrics, tunes and arrangements Kirshner wrote and composed fuse into a work that is both homage and parody, a refined evocation of Tin Pan Alley and a satire of American celebrity.

"The closest thing we have to mythological figures today is pop culture," Kirshner says in an interview after his stage triumph. "I realized that when I watched and listened to Sinatra, I felt a complex of emotions. Take 'My Way.' I'd think, these lyrics are really stupid. The M.C. would tell the audience,

please rise for the national anthem, and then comes a song of unfettered egoism with an overblown orchestration. Yet, I'd find myself genuinely moved and thinking, this is really good. I don't think anyone can explain how some things in



Andy Kirshner



Photo by David Smith

Kirshner as Tony Amore.

the popular culture—say a Spielberg movie like *E.T.*—can sweep us away."

In his interpretation of these and other facets of pop-icon culture, Kirshner wrote and orchestrated seven songs—all recognizable counterparts of Sinatra hits but which offer their own authentic pleasures. The songs span the generations and musical styles of Amore/Sinatra's seven-decade career from the 1930s into the '90s.

The music is set within a minimalist flashback drama through which, especially in the later numbers, Amore and Tony Jr., his feckless son, manservant and wanna-be singer,

try to cope with the star's decline in old age.

An adroit singer, backed by a 35-piece orchestra that gave his Nelson Riddle-style arrangements the precise and driving sound of a big band, Kirshner danced, quipped and gestured his way through bobby sox, bebop, swing and ballad styles.

The song "Back in the Saddle Again" is "an anthem to bachelorhood and being a swinger," Kirshner says. Chock full of cowboy lingo, the corny lyrics ("Well, I'm back in the saddle again. Gonna take my favorite mare out for a spin. Where the jimson blooms, and I'm far from home, where the coyote croons and a man is his own") evoke hits of the past like "Don't Fence Me In."

The saloon song "At the End of the Day," tips its hat to "Make It One for My Baby": "I know it's closin' time, but I gotta say what's on my mind, and I hope you understand me all right, 'cause it's the end of the day and I'm drinkin' alone."

No piece better expresses the complex Sinatra phenomenon than "I Could Always Count on Me." Paul Anka adapted a French song, turned it into "My Way" and gave it to "the Chairman of the Board," Kirshner said. "Sinatra didn't like it at first, and came to detest it. But with his power and voice fading, he had to keep singing it because the audience clamored for it. He often expressed contempt for its popularity before singing it."

Kirshner's version, "I Could Always

Count on Me" is as mawkish and moving a pop anthem as the original. He finds such songs are "sonic metaphors for the American sensibility that Walt Whitman expresses in the observation, 'I am multitudes.'" The lyrics without music are exquisitely bathetic:

*I've had my share of losin'
I've had my share of pain.
But through it all, I just stood tall.
For my mistakes, I took the blame.
I call 'em as I seem em.
I call a spade a spade.
To cut through all illusion
Has been my life's crusade.
With nothing to believe in
I could always count on me.*

The word is spreading about Kirshner's captivating compositions and performance. Whether anyone else can perform the role remains to be seen. Meanwhile summer festivals and concert houses as far away as Budapest are discussing staging the work.

"I want to make works that challenge people, but that they like, too," Kirshner says, "not works that they respect but don't like. Musical theater is stuck in this country. Around the world—from Japan to Indonesia to Africa to India—people combine music, theater and dance. I think Americans can enjoy that, too."

Kirshner was assisted in his completion of *Relive the Magic* by a fellowship from U-M's Institute for the Humanities. **MT**

Arthur Miller returns to LSA: 'I wouldn't have bet a dime on *The Crucible's* chances'

By John Woodford

LSA alumnus Arthur Miller '37 returned to campus in June to present the College's first Arthur Miller Award for Dramatic Writing in the inaugural season of the U-M's Festival of New Works. The first recipient of the \$3,000 award was Willy Holtzman for his play *Hearts*, a World War II drama that debuted at the Trueblood Theater.

At a press conference before the ceremonies, Miller said he could never predict how one of his plays would be received and "wouldn't have bet a dime" on the fate of his most-produced play, *The Crucible*.

"I started it in the middle of the McCarthy era," Miller recalled, who said that he is currently working on an essay "*The Crucible* in History." "People were scared of it or hated it," he continued, "All you can do is make something as good as you can make it. After that, the world decides."

Miller said he was attracted to the U-M in

the 1930s because tuition "was cheap—about \$60, I think—and I'd heard they gave Hopwood awards to student writers. For a 19-year-old who knew he wanted to write even though I didn't know what I'd write, the fact that the University gave a dollar prize meant they took writing seriously here."

The varying interpretations of his plays and characters by directors and actors have always interested him, Miller said. The current Broadway production of *Death of a Salesman*—this year's top Tony Award winner with four—"is more modern than the original, which was romantic," Miller said. "This one is like a black-and-white movie, more strident, right from the shoulder. Actors aren't monkeys. They are interpreters. Some find a tone you hadn't heard before."

Elizabeth Franz plays Linda Loman, Willy's wife, "180 degrees differently from the original production," Miller noted. "Linda



Photo by Bob Kaimbach

Miller meets with graduate students in the Film and Video Program during his visit.

is usually very passive, but she [Franz] plays her angrily and aggressively, because the wife knows Willy's suicidal yet their sons and the world are not helping him. It's brand new and yet seems truer to the part."

Miller said he was troubled about the economic threats to the American theater "as far as new writing is concerned." He said that the difficulty of getting a straight play—that is, one that is not a musical or an import from England or Ireland—produced on Broadway today was spreading to Off-Broadway as well.

"Does our society want traditional theater

to continue?" he asked. If so, he said, it must face the fact that "the question of subsidies for the arts will be more important as time proceeds. Our theater could be crippled if there are none," while dramas from countries that subsidize theater fill the vacuum.

Of America's current delight in entertainment with high-tech features, noise and violence, Miller observed that history indicates that "where there is spectacle, you can be pretty sure the drama is dying. It never could compete with a brace of horses galloping across the stage."

Although he feels that "none of my plays would be produced as a new play today," he is nevertheless optimistic "because people still want to write plays, others want to act, and people want to see them. We just need to confront and cure the economic problem."

The U-M's current quest to establish an Arthur Miller Theater pleases him, he said, and he'd love to write an inaugural play for such a facility. Whether he could succeed is another matter, he added, because "it's easier to build a theater that will stand up than to write a play that will." **MT**

IS THE ROAD TO HEAVEN PAVED WITH BAD EXAMPLES? CRIMINALS? BOOK THEM!

THE CLEMENTS LIBRARY'S MEDLER COLLECTION

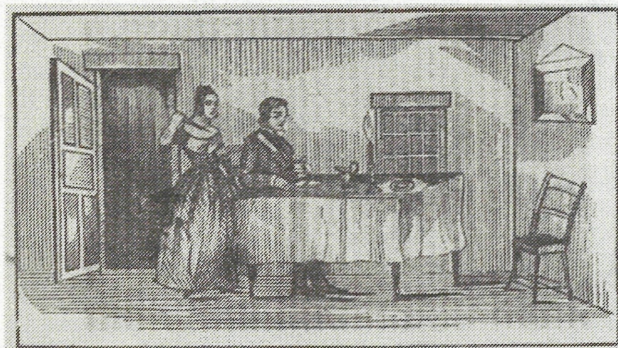
By Cara J. Spindler

Americans' vicarious involvement with violent crime is a focus of social research as well as media profits. And that accounts for the gritty, salacious pamphlets on child-sacrifice and horrific murders, augmented by religious sermons and political tracts and "true life" detective stories that make up the James V. Medler Crime Collection in U-M's William L. Clements Library.

Medler amassed crime literature for 50 years before the Clements, which specializes in original resources for the study of American history and culture from the 16th through the 20th centuries, acquired the collection from him in 1992.

What attracts people to this sort of literature? Clements Library Director John Dann believes it is our fascination with human failings, a fascination reflected today in the lurid headlines of supermarket tabloids and the many pseudo-documentary "news programs" that focus on crime.

The Clements acquired the Medler Collection not to exploit morbid curiosity, however, but to serve as a valuable historical tool for faculty and students. The transcripts of court proceedings show the legal history of the New World colonies. In 1770, six years before the Revolutionary War, the City of Boston's account of "the horrid massacre at Boston" was published a week after the event. "The government at an end—this has been the cry ever since the Stamp Act existed. The province in a state of rebellion ... but nothing can be more false than such a representation." The document ends hoping that the King will not "think unfavorably of his faithful subjects of the province." Similarly, an 1812 report on the trial of Arthur Hodge, convicted of killing his Black slave, sheds light on



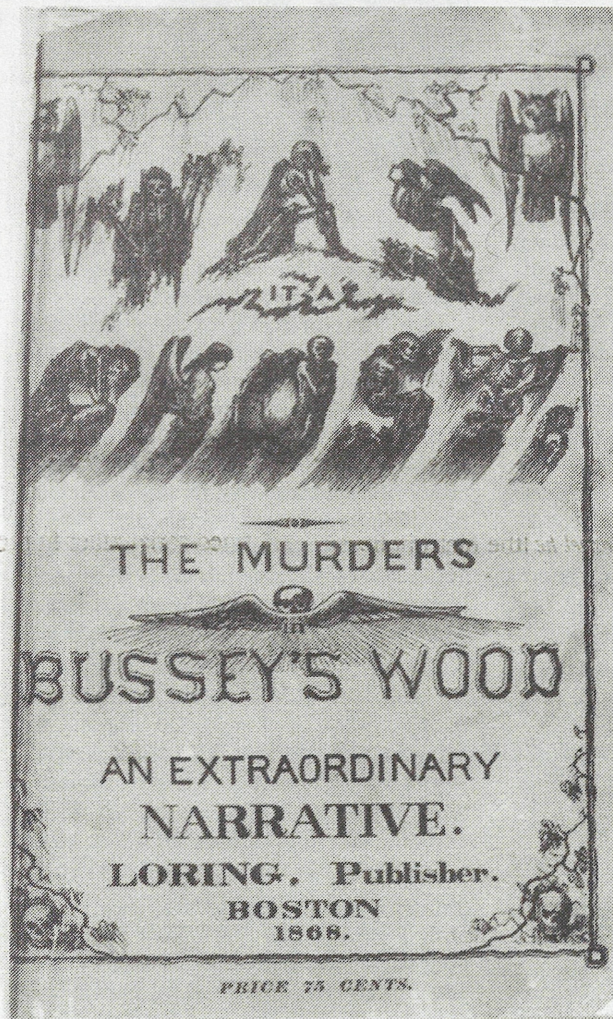
The Life and Confession of Ann Walters, a pamphlet published in New Hampshire in 1849, purports to be a factual account (now discredited) of a murderous tavern-owning gang leader who stabbed patrons to death and cooked babies in her oven. The 'history' closes with Puritan justifications for publishing the gory details: 'Her death was truly heart-rending and awful, and should serve as a warning to all those who read this account to be prepared to meet their Eternal Judge.'

the racialization of justice.

The collection as a whole is a barometer of social, legal and political history, with the reading taken at the level of day-to-day life. It includes criminals' accounts of their own stories and also others' perceptions of criminals. There are confessions written with the "guidance" of a priest, which were made into broadsides to be posted about town. There are pulp pamphlets by Barclay and Co. that highlight "horrific crimes" with graphic woodblock prints. This matrix of legal, social and cultural history is the treasure trove of the Medler Collection.

Interspersed throughout its varied resources we glimpse religious ideals, theories of the criminal mind, how the community regards and punishes its criminals, penology, and the race and gender roles of our past and present culture. In 1786, for example, a 12-year old girl, Hannah Ocuish, murdered a 6-year old girl. Hannah's mother was an alcoholic, and it was well known that Hannah's home life was unstable. However, the Puritan New England community's "eye-for-an-eye" mentality was strong, and Hannah was executed on the gallows.

Execution was a rarely questioned norm of social punishment and cultural regulation in Colonial days and in the young republic. Awaiting execution for thievery in 1773, Levi Ames was paraded through Boston streets every Sabbath with chains about his ankles, reading his "Last Words" to large crowds. Often, a criminal's penitent story was posted as a broadside with the headline, "A Warning To All Young People."



An 1868 pulp, Was It a Ghost? The Murders in Bussey's Wood, by the New York Times Boston correspondent. Two children, Isabella, 15, and John, 8, left home for a nearby park but were found stabbed to death an hour's trolley ride away. The crime shook the public and crowds reaching 1,200 visited the murder site daily. Unfortunately, they destroyed any evidence at the scene and the crime was unsolved.

Take the story of Jason Fairbanks. In 1801, he murdered Eliza Fales and attempted to kill himself. Both were still young, and each of their families forbade them to see each other. The sad ending to their affair, which they'd continued despite their parents' objections, yielded this cautionary broadside in verse: "The bloody knife, O then he seiz'd,/ And cut his throat like the ceas'd,/ And mangl'd all his body o'er,/ Hot streaming with her purple gore!"

William de Beck's 1867 book *Murder Will Out: the first step in crime leads to the gallows*, was printed with a wrapper that reads, "For the family."

Scholars note that such crime literature reveals an implicit assumption that children and adults are inherently sinful and must be trained and reminded to live moral lives.

Of particular note is the collection's number of "Beautiful Victims," admonishing tales of young women deceived by slick con-artists. In these stories, illegal abortions, false names and secret marriages were the downfall of many a bright, pretty and virtuous girl. Carlyle W. Harris, convicted and executed for murdering his young wife with an overdose of morphine in 1892, reportedly

divulged his method to a friend: "[He said he] could overcome any woman's scruples ... one method was to take a bottle of ginger ale and put in it a very large portion of whisky, the other was to marry her, but under an assumed name."

"The Devil made me do it" was, apparently, a reasonable defense at the beginning of our nation's history. However, these early communities were not above using the

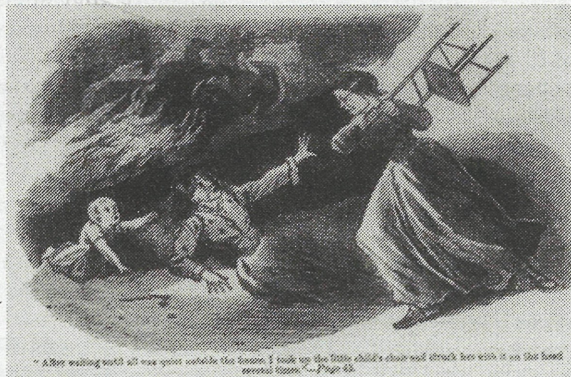
presumably devil-filled individuals for the edification of the flock or solidification of social mores. The Medler Collection contains many early sermons, with long windy titles like "The Danger of Living without the fear of God: A Discourse on Robbery, Piracy and Murder in which Duelling and Suicide are particularly considered: delivered in Boston, February 21, 1819. The Lord's Day Following the Execution of the Pirates."

The intentions behind such sermons seem honorable, however, because despite the racy titles, the texts do not describe violent acts. But by 1850 "pulp novels"—sometimes called "penny thrillers" or "penny terrors"—show a less clear sense of purpose than the sermons. By 1870, the familiar excuse of preparing the criminal and readers to meet their maker takes up only a line or two amid pages of sensationalized descriptions of violence.

As publishing became cheaper, crime magazines became popular. *The Police Gazette* was one of the longest-running and most popular ones; a yearly subscription was \$2 in 1848. Its headlines promise graphic accounts and depictions of violence with titles like "Suitor Shot in Mouth."

It didn't take long before social critics like Junius Henri Browne, in his 1869 "Mirror of New York" social conditions, *The Great Metropolis*, condemned the effect of such literature: "They reprint all the sensational facts and gossip they can find in the country press, or exhume from the licentious haunts of [New York] City. The better class of the community do not read them, unless they happen to contain something extraordinarily racy and wanton, when curiosity overcomes the scruples of conscience and of decorum."

Anticipating many critics of today's mass-media violence, Browne argued that representations incited the criminal's burgeoning young mind: "No marvel he [the metropolitan thug] gloats over these inspiring accounts and cuts of the Police Gazette."



The title of an 1867 Philadelphia pamphlet tells the story: *The Life and Confession of Bridget Dergan: Who Murdered Mrs. Ellen Coriell, the Lovely Wife of Dr. Coriell of New Market, N.J.: to Which Is Added Her Full Confession and an Account of Her Execution at New Brunswick. Dergan's motive was said to have been jealousy resulting from her failure to convince the doctor to return her affections and her firing by Mrs. Coriell.*

The Medler Collection also contains accounts of crimes that are seemingly the antithesis of bloody pulp magazines. Usually written by a police reporter or detective, these are hardcover and maintain a factual rather than shocking tone. Such books often contain transcripts of the court proceedings and, in works published after 1890, photographs. Their informative tone recreates an objec-

tive scene of the crime, or at least the semblance of one.

Edwin Porter's 1893 *The Fall River Tragedy: a History of the Borden Murder* includes photographs of the house and everyone involved in the trial—the servant girl, the jury, the medical examiner—except for the recently acquitted Lizzie Borden or her sister Emma. A sense of decorum pervades the account, and nowhere is the famous chant written: "Lizzie Borden took an axe, killed her mother with forty whacks. When she saw what she had done, she gave her father forty-one." On the other hand Porter does use models to pose as the prone corpses of Mr. and Mrs. Borden, rather like contemporary re-enactments of violent crimes on TV fare like "America's Most Wanted."

The Medler Collection gives us pause to wonder what we will look like when scholars and students look back at our mass media 100 years from now. It also makes us question human nature—not only the failings that lead to violent crime but the obviously widespread delight in

hearing about, reading about, visualizing and re-enacting such crimes. For more information on the Clements Library, visit its Web site at <http://www.clements.umich.edu>

Although the images of violence in pulp magazines were, and still are, shocking, Prof. Leonard Eron argues that the images of today are more violent. Eron, an adjunct research scientist at U-M's Research Center for Group Dynamics and adjunct professor of psychology, has researched the causes of violent behavior in children and young people since 1960. He notes that in contemporary video games the viewer becomes an actual participant. Instead of just looking on as a voyeur, the participant sees, hears and is physically involved in inflicting the violence. The attraction, he believes, "is in the activity, and the activity desensitizes the participant."

Cara J. Spindler '99 was Michigan Today's 1998-99 student intern.

U-M's Most Murderous Alumnus

Mr. Herman Mudgett, aka H. H. Holmes

Among the items in the Medler Crime Collection in the Clements Library is *Holmes, the Arch-Fiend, or A Carnival of Crime*, the story of a Michigan alumnus who has the dubious distinction of being the first identified serial killer in the United States.

Herman Webster Mudgett (1861-1896) graduated from U-M Medical School in 1884 and moved to Chicago to practice pharmacy. He also began to engage in a number of shady business, real estate and promotional deals under the name "H. H. Holmes."

One of Holmes's partners, Ben Pitezel, took out a life-insurance policy on himself for \$10,000 with Holmes as beneficiary. The plan was that Pitezel would "disappear" to Philadelphia and Holmes would produce a false corpse, identify it as Pitezel's and share the payoff with Pitezel's family.

Pitezel disappeared on schedule and Holmes collected the money. But someone tipped off the police about the scheme, and Holmes fled with the Pitezel's eldest daughter.

Telling Mrs. Pitezel that her husband was hiding in a nearby city, Holmes convinced her to follow him, and for months the trio moved separately and together around the United States and Canada, taking the four other Pitezel children with them.

During the group's wanderings Ben Pitezel's body was discovered in Chicago and Holmes was charged with murder. The police then searched a Holmes property in South Chicago, a

three-story building he'd ostensibly built as a hotel for visitors to the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. The ground floor of the Holmes Castle, as it was dubbed, contained shops, offices, a hodge-podge of turrets and bay windows, and Holmes's living quarters. It also held, police discovered, concealed staircases, false walls and ceilings, airtight and soundproof rooms, and chutes leading to the basement. And in that basement were two sheet-iron tanks containing human bones and a large furnace, believed to be a crematory.

Meanwhile, still on the run, Holmes dispatched three of the five Pitezel children and hid their bodies.

Aided by Mrs. Pitezel, the police finally captured Holmes/Mudgett. He was tried, convicted and executed for the murders of Ben Pitezel and the three children. While awaiting execution, he received an offer from the Hearst newspaper syndicate to write a confession, in which he claimed to have killed 27 people. Investigators could neither confirm nor disprove Holmes's assertion because the contents of the iron tanks and crematory, although recognizably human remains, could not be differentiated.

The Holmes "crime of the century" was also the subject of another work in the Medler Collection, *The Holmes-Pitezel Case*, a "true detective" story, published in 1896 in Philadelphia "by permission of the district attorney and the mayor."

—CJS.



'Holmes held the boy between his knees and wrapped his fingers about his throat, slowly closing them upon it like a vise,' reads this caption from *Holmes, the Arch-Fiend, or A Carnival of Crime*, a book about the 'monstrous ogre's insatiable appetite,' published shortly after the U-M alumnus's execution in 1896.

Suggested reading: Books by U-M faculty and graduates, and works published by the University of Michigan Press.

U M

B O O K S

THE BAND PLAYED DIXIE: RACE AND LIBERAL CONSCIENCE AT OLE MISS

By Nadine Cohodas '71, *The Free Press, NY*, 1997, \$26.

Although James Meredith became in 1962 the first African-American known to have enrolled at the University of Mississippi, he was not the first to be part of the institution. Ole Miss's first Blacks came as slaves of the students and later as dining room staff, janitors and groundskeepers. The institution continues to wrestle with its heritage. It is the site of disputes over singing the school's unofficial song, "Dixie," at football games and controversies over "Colonel Rebel," the school mascot. Sketching the University's history, Cohodas uses the school as a barometer of race relations and shows how desegregation came not just as a result of Meredith's courage, but also of pressure by faculty and staff, by white students who opposed segregation with their editorials, and by African-American communities who staunchly supported the rights of their young people to attend the schools their taxes supported. —Cara J. Spindler '99.

THE FALL OF A SPARROW

By Robert Hellenga '63, *Scribner, New York*, 1998. \$25.00

The main character of Hellenga's second novel is Woody, professor of classics at a small Midwestern college. A daughter was killed in a bombing in Italy; his two remaining daughters have recently left home for work or college; his wife is joining a convent. The novel is not simply about grief or healing, it is about life and all its trappings: guitars, nuns, infidelity, higher-education politics, fatherhood, philosophy, courtroom proceedings, Italy. Each canvas is intimate: the bats in the family's farmhouse attic, making salad in Italy, the classroom discussions of *The Odyssey*. —CJS.

PARADISE, NEW YORK

By Eileen Pollack, *Temple University Press*, 1998, \$27.95.

This novel by the director of the Undergraduate Creative Writing Program at U-M is set in the Catskill resorts. Narrator Lucy Appelbaum, is determined to save her family's hotel from the fate of many of its brethren—decaying rubble burnt for insurance money. This humorous, honest, animated novel pops with the sharp, almost-acrid voices of its characters: crazy, grumpy Nana; Nat and Shirely Fidel with their blue-inked wrists; the Yiddish Literature Society (Communists in disguise); and Mr. Jefferson, the Black handyman. Their multilayered stories all wind through the eyes of Lucy, who pulls readers into the events of one summer at hand. —CJS.

THE MICHIGAN GARDENING GUIDE

By Jerry Minnich, *U-M Press*, 1998, \$18.95.

Ever wondered about "loamy" soil or "clay" or "ph"? Ever bought seeds for early April planting, then looked out your window and saw snow? Jerry Minnich's guide will sort such things out for you. Articulate and clear, *Michigan Gardening* starts with soil and finishes with indoor gardening, running the spectrum of green-thumbing, including composting, intercropping, companion planting, organic fertilizing and boosting nitrogen levels; choosing the best flowers for Michigan soils; how to make a root cellar and how to choose an ornamental tree. —CJS.

URBAN RENEWAL AND THE END OF BLACK CULTURE IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

By James Robert Saunders '86 *DA and Renae N. Shackelford, McFarland & Co., Jefferson, NC, and London*, 1998, \$29.95.

The public's attention has been turned recently to the complexity of Thomas Jefferson's legacy in the area of race relations. This powerful oral history of Charlottesville's African-American neighborhood, Vinegar Hill, tells a story far more worthy of the limelight. Denied

meaningful participation in the decision-making process and having no legal defense (chiefly because Blacks were still barred from the University of Virginia Jefferson founded), an ethnic community saw its residents, homes, businesses, churches and other social institutions uprooted and dispersed in the 1960s.

"They tell you, 'We're trying to renovate,'" former resident Raymond Bell told the authors. "It came along with urban redevelopment. And, of course, we refer to it as urban removal of Black people. And I may be paranoid about the subject, but I've always thought that that Vinegar Hill thing was by design to get rid of Black businesses along that street, along Main Street." This is a story that goes far toward explaining the blighted conditions and hopes in our nation's so-called inner cities. —John Woodford.

HOT COAL, COLD STEEL

By Stephen Crowley '97 *PhD, U-M Press*, 1998, \$42.50.

Internal developments in the former Soviet Union have a profound impact on our world's political ecology. That makes this study in contrasts between the organized, active and militant coal miners in Russia and Ukraine and the same regions' passive and vacillating steelworkers of more than academic interest. Full of the voices and writings of various trade unionists, the book conveys the

bewildering and chaotic course of grassroots politics, which roil around the issues of social justice, democracy and the market. —JW.



BETWEEN THE ICEBERG AND THE SHIP

By Anne Stevenson, '54, *U-M Press, paper*, 1998, \$15.95.

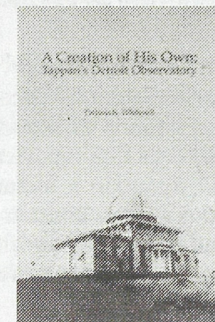
The deep sympathy and the tough-mindedness that illuminate Stevenson's poetry shine throughout these 17 essays. Winner of a Major Hopwood writing award at U-M in 1954, Stevenson addresses topics ranging from writing as a woman to her misgivings about post-modern literary theorizing. Poets she discusses include Sylvia Plath, Elizabeth Bishop, Seamus Heaney, Louis MacNeice and Dana Gioia. In speaking of the latter's poetry she said she "came up with the adjective beautiful—an epithet 20th-century criticism has smeared with suspicion. To speak of 'beautiful' poetry without sneering calls for an explanation." And she delivers a good one in a quick, sharp look at the "civil wars" among American poets from the 1960s to the '80s. For now, she says, the dust has "settled down finally in the halls of academe—where most American poets of all camps now find employment." —JW.

A CREATION OF HIS OWN: TAPPAN'S DETROIT OBSERVATORY

By Patricia S. Whitesell '80 *MA, '94 PhD, U-M Press*, 1998, cloth, \$48.

Biography, history, architecture, science and art combine in this splendidly told and copiously illustrated account of U-M President Henry Philip Tappan's efforts to build the Detroit Observatory at the University in 1854. Tappan's achievement helped establish the tradition at the University of maintaining state-of-the-art capabilities in all scientific and intellectual endeavors—an abstract goal that required then, as it does

now, many a concrete foundation. Whitesell has directed all proceeds from sales to the Observatory's endowment. —JW.



66 GALAXIE

By m loncar '95 MFA, U. Press of New England, Hanover and London, 1998, paper, \$11.95.



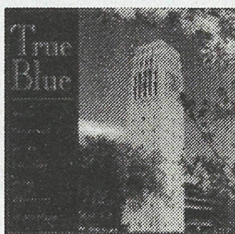
There are so many way stations in the American vastness that this travelin'-man poet seems barely to have time to relay the blips of sights and sounds he takes in as he cruises wildly in his mythical Ford. He's too hurried to let periods and upper-case keys on his typewriter

slow him down. Winner of the Breadloaf Writers' Conference prize for first books, poet-film maker m loncar is a master of surreal comedy and of wipe-that-smile-off-your-face very dark humor. The poem "repeating the word girl" resolves the life vs. art question in with not a word to spare: writing a poem about the girl should never be better/than the girl/ than being with the girl/don't write the poem about the girl/ unless you'd really rather be with the girl. U-M English professor and poet Richard Tillinghast says that "as 66 galaxie glides past, its chrome flashing disconcertingly, one instantly recognizes it as a classic."—JW

TRUE BLUE: MUSIC PERFORMED ON U-M CARILLONS

With U-M Carillonnist Margo Halsted and others, CD, \$10 + postage

The chiming carillons, especially the almost-daily lunchtime recitals, give the University and Ann Arbor a thrilling aural signature. Burton Memorial Tower's 55-bell carillon has rung out since 1936. In 1996, the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Tower



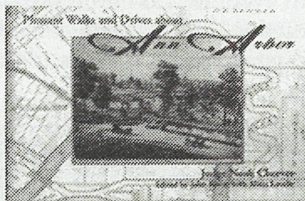
on North Campus added a second U-M carillon, this one with 60 bells. From the first notes, this CD will transport those who've left back to Ann Arbor. The 16 pieces include U-M alum Chip Davis's title piece and five others written for the instrument. Other works include folk songs, a Bach chorale and transcriptions of works by Purcell, Albeniz, Sousa and Elbel ("The Victors"). Halsted and colleagues demonstrate the often-delicate beauty and wide emotional range of the world's most massive instrument. Make checks out to "University of Michigan (\$10 and \$3 for postage and handling) and send to: University Carillonnist, 900 Burton Tower, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1270.—JW.

PLEASANT WALKS AND DRIVES ABOUT ANN ARBOR

By Judge Noah Cheever, Class of 1863, Bentley Historical Library, 1999, \$5.95.

Originally published in 1899 and now reissued as a handsomely illustrated 32-page bulletin, the 10 walks and carriage drives Cheever described 100 years ago are reprinted here. But this version, edited by English Prof. John Knott with undergraduate research assistant Alicia Lavalle '00 of Ann Arbor, also includes an updated section for each excursion to orient today's walkers, cyclists and drivers to changes in street and village names, topography and sight-lines. Just as Cheever's original was a century ago, this publication is a spur for local folks and visitors to get out and enjoy the scenery.—JW.

The booklet may be ordered from the Shaman Drum bookstore at (734)662-7407, or email: books@shamanDrum.com



G E O M A N C Y

By Cara J. Spindler

Eleven thousand years ago, the glaciers striated rocks, ground trees and dirt from cliffs. Sea cows swam off the coast of New Jersey, crocodiles journeyed from the Indian Ocean up the Nile. On the Devonian shield, mastodons watched the ice. Each summer, the onslaught slowed and melted to create a river of muddy orange, a moraine valley, dust litter of pebbles, rocks, boulders—

if these rocks had been granite the river would be gray like cold asphalt. The sabertooths would taste dental fillings, disintegrated orthodontist offices. Smells drifting down the valley would whisper the future of expressways, steel-statues-bearing-cities. If these rocks had been granite, the mastodons could have divined infinity, or at least believed in it like us—

Instead, the sabertooths drank water flavored by sandstone, imagined only beaches, the teas and summer poplins of Chicago people. Lucid under their claws was Singapore, the town now buried under dunes where the Kalamazoo River feeds into Lake Michigan. Their images of the future were sepia-flavored and when the ice dam burst the flood swept past Chicago and gored out the tar pits. A boulder rests in southern Illinois, runaway carried by an iceberg, a sand spray like a careless woman throwing packages to the ground; to decipher its starting point, it was an age.



Spindler '99 of Holland, Michigan, is *Michigan Today's* 1998-99 intern. She won a total of \$5,000 in Hopwood awards during her undergraduate career. An earlier version of "Geomancy" (the practice of divination by interpreting geographic features) was part of a manuscript that received a Winter '99 Hopwood Minor Award in Poetry.

BORDER



Sketches of ancient figurines by P. Ruiz-Bayon

FIGURES

By John Woodford

When Patricia Ruiz-Bayon came to Michigan two years ago to work on her master's degree in fine arts, she already had one artistic objective in focus: to come to grips somehow with the small, mostly headless and female clay figurines found by the thousands on and just below ground in Central Mexico.

"I'd seen them since I was a little girl and always felt a great affinity to them, yet they were still so mysterious," says Ruiz-Bayon, who is, as she puts it, "from Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Mexico. (I always say both because I am a border person, geographically, culturally, aesthetically and in all other senses.)"

"I always wondered why so many of the figurines are female," Ruiz-Bayon continues, "where they have been found, who made them and why. I still can't answer the last two questions, although one of my theories is that they were portraits. No one knows if they were made mainly by women or by men or what purpose they served, such as for toys, for worship, for decorating dwellings and so on."

To guide her in her search for answers she found, quite by luck ("my antennae led me to him"), that U-M's faculty has one of the top experts in Latin American anthropology and archaeology, Jeffrey R. Parsons, professor of anthropology and curator of Meso-American archaeology, Museum of Anthropology. Parsons agreed to accept Ruiz-Bayon as his first Art School student in a reading course he usually offers only to graduate students in his field. Ruiz-Bayon plunged in.

"I tried to make sense of the huge amount of information about the figurines," Ruiz-Bayon says. "Jeffrey allowed me to work at the Museum where they keep the figurines in drawers. They have hundreds of them



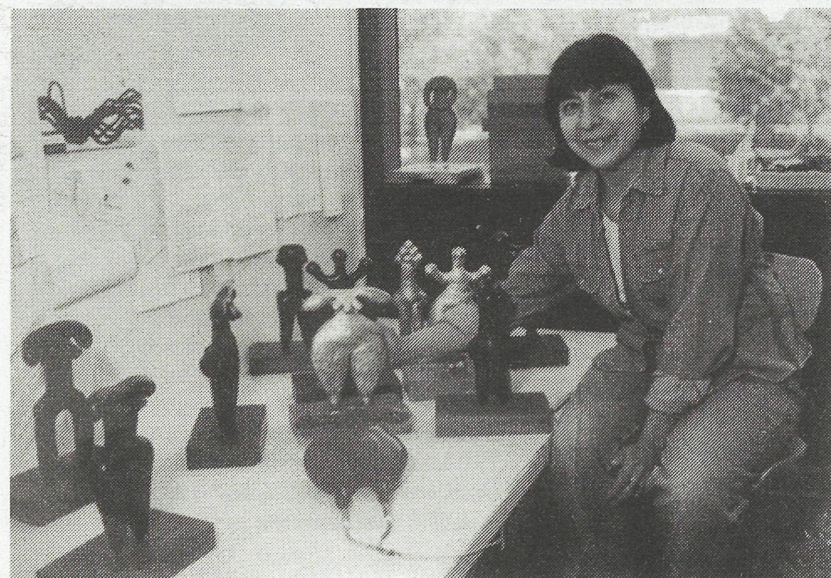
Ruiz-Bayon (left): 'The highlight of my project was working with Jeffrey Parsons. He hadn't worked with an artist before, so the novelty went both ways for us. I didn't know about him when I came to the MFA program. My antennae led me to him.' Parsons: 'Patricia has an ability to synthesize a wealth of information and extract the portions most valuable for her.' The head is from the Valley of Mexico, circa 400-500 AD.

from all over Latin America. I focused on the Mexican specimens and did drawings from the collection."

How to make sense of a huge amount of information: Here Ruiz-Bayon found herself confronting a seemingly paradoxical challenge, one presented not just by the figurines that intrigued her, but by much of our information about the series of great civilizations that rose and fell in Meso-America from perhaps 3500 BC to the Spanish Conquest in the 1500s.

Ruiz-Bayon traces the source of the historiographic difficulties to the Conquest. "The Spanish Conquest—or Contact, as Professor Parsons calls it, which is the scholarly term—was like an alien invasion," she says. "What would bad people from space do to us? They'd force a change in our culture, language, religious practices and way of living. That's what the Spanish did. They took our gold, raped the country, and took our valuable treasures. They completely destroyed something very valid: They did their best to destroy all remnants of our culture."

Central Mexico is the home of the Olmec, Toltec, Aztec and Mayan civilizations, among others, although the Aztecs dominated it from 0-1500 AD. Major cities like Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlan arose there. Teotihuacan (Tay-oh-tee-whah-KAHN) stood from 600 BC to 650 AD, when it was destroyed by unidentified invaders. Some scholars call it the first major urban center in the Western Hemisphere. From at least 300 AD on, Teotihuacan featured huge pyramids, broad avenues laid out in grids and a huge plaza where 100,000 people, half the population, could attend civic events. Tenochtitlan (Ten-otch-teet-LAN), the Aztec capital, was 200 years old and in a golden age when the Spaniards under



Photos by Bob Kalmbach

Ruiz-Bayon in her studio in the Art and Architecture Building. She plans to teach in her home state of Texas after she leaves U-M this summer.



'I conquered my fear of electricity,' Ruiz-Bayon says of her installation of a computerized bubbling machine into her hand-made glass figurine.

Cortez destroyed it in 1521. Mexico City sits on its ruins.

Figurines spanning 2,600 years—1000 BC-1600 AD—turn up in the landfills at these and other ancient sites. What were they for? "When archaeologists don't know the answer to that question," Professor Parsons replies with a laugh, "they call it a 'ritual item.' That's a way of saying we don't know, but it was probably for an activity at the household level. They are found in trash dumps, casual places and in all contexts. Some are in offering caches in temples, however. They are ubiquitous. If they were connected with rituals, we don't know what those rituals were.

"People made things like these all over the world in ancient times, yet nowhere are they nearly so abundant as in Mexico. There are other artifacts that are also found more abundantly in Mexico than elsewhere. The little clay flywheel, called a whirl, that makes a spindle go fast during spinning is incredibly common in Mexican digs. They were used elsewhere, too, but apparently nowhere near as much as in Mexico."

From about 1000 BC to 100 AD the figurines were made by hand. After that, they were made in a mold, although sometimes the heads continued to be handmade, perhaps as portraits. This was a major shift, Parson notes, perhaps suggesting a change in the purposes they served.

Anthropologists and archaeologists study artifacts like the figurines as a way to understand ancient social organization, Parsons says, "while art historians look at them in another way and artists in a still different way. I'm quantitatively oriented. I look at the patterns in style, form, where they were found, and try to make broad generalizations. Recently, borrowing techniques from physics, I've been looking more closely at their chemical composition. Patricia looks at them through a different filter."

In more than two years of reading, sketching and sculpting, Ruiz-Bayon's "filter" extracted those qualities of the figurines that she wished to reawaken in her own art. The result was a sculptural series she calls The Figurine Project, which won her one of eight yearly fellowships from the U-M Institute for Research on Women and Gender. She made seven female figures in three media for the project.

"I portrayed a lot of things in a woman's body that are shamed in American culture," she says. "I did not want to portray idealized beauty of hips, breasts, height, weight and proportion. To see someone adopt that ideal like Cher, with all of those surgeries and dieting, makes me weep. She is a plastic person, denying her natural body. We have hips that are quite big, but instead of rejoicing in that, women diet and go through surgeries seeking an unattainable ideal in a painful attempt to alter themselves. My figurines say, 'This is what I am.'

"I did my first group in bronze based on my drawings of the original terra cotta figurines," she says. "I wanted to work in the Art School's foundry and discovered it to be very male-oriented, I'm sorry to say.



A torso from Tlatlco, circa 800 BC, may show a female in the early stages of pregnancy.



Most of these heads found near Zacatenco date from around 500 BC, but the molded white head is circa 1300 AD.



Not just here but around the world, there is a feeling that metal is a man's substance to control, so you undergo a sort of hazing because you're trying to use heavy machinery and heavy materials. Kent Brown and others wound up helping me very much. Casting, itself, is wonderful. Dealing with fire, such a primitive and powerful force, you have to be precise. I created my own Bronze Age and became 'the maker' as a Mexican-American woman living at the end of this century and millennium."

Her project's second phase was to make seven terra-cotta versions covered in gold leaf. "The Spanish taught our people how to gild the Spaniards' baroque churches, using us as slaves to do it," Ruiz-Bayon says. "Gilding is now in our culture. I gilded the figurines to give the treasure of the gold back to our people, back to women, back to me, and to make a progression of the figures into the new century."

The third figurine phase, recently begun by Ruiz-Bayon, involves hand-made glass versions containing a bubbling red liquid. "I thought of myself as Dr. Ruizenstein," she quips. "I was almost electrocuted as a child, so I'd been very frightened of electricity. Now I can work with it, but I am still careful. I wanted to do something that marked the end of the 20th century. I didn't know how to turn on a computer when I came to Michigan; now I'm working with a little computer-controlled electric motor that makes them bubble as if they're alive."

Ruiz-Bayon cradles her bubbling, broad-hipped and buxom figurine and says, "I have recreated myself in the three stages of this project. They tell a story. My story." **MT**



Molded heads circa 100-300 AD from the great city of Teotihuacan, which was mysteriously destroyed in 650 AD.



BEAUTY IS ALSO IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BEHELD: CAROL BIER OF THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

What makes something beautiful? Sure, the eye of any beholder is important in the determination, but what about the qualities of the object beheld? This is a question that Carol Bier, curator of the Textile Museum in Washington, DC, has gone a long way toward answering as it applies to one source of visual pleasure—so-called Oriental carpets.

“So-called,” because, as Bier emphasizes, “No carpet weaver ever sets out to weave an ‘Oriental’ carpet. In every region where pile carpets are produced by hand (roughly, the sheep-rearing areas of the pre-Colonial world) a young girl, or an old woman, or less often a boy, would set about weaving something called, simply, a carpet in his or her local language. The term Oriental carpet is a Western construct.”

Bier, who was the 1999 Norman Freehling Visiting Professor in U-M’s Institute for the Humanities, lectured and taught a class at U-M this year about the “humble products” of shepherders that are so prized in museums, galleries and homes throughout the world.


Bier delved into fractal geometry and the mathematics of dynamic systems to help us understand the glory of traditional Oriental carpets—the patterns that “tease the mind as they please the eye.” What follows is a greatly abbreviated version of her discussion of the mathematics of woven beauty. For a grander delight to the eye and mind, see the Textile Museum/Swarthmore College-Math Forum Website at <http://forum.swarthmore.edu/geometry/rugs/index.html>.


All patterns, whether in nature or in art, exhibit a systematic organization. We may think of symmetry as a means of systematic organization. Symmetry offers several possibilities for the organization of a pattern, each of which results in a correspondence of points. In rug weaving, this is effected by the construction and placement of individual knots.


Possibilities for the composition of a design are limitless, and may rely upon choices. But possibilities for the repetition of that design, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, are limited by the laws of pattern formation and are subject to the constraints of symmetry.


In all patterns there are four basic symmetry operations that may be performed upon a fundamental region, design or motif. Mathematicians call these rigid motions because they suggest movements without distortion of size or shape around a point, along or across a line, or to cover a plane.

Four Basic Patterns: Here, the letter F (and the blank space around it) is taken as our fundamental region to demonstrate the four basic symmetry operations or rigid motions:

 **Translation: rigid motion with repetition along a line**

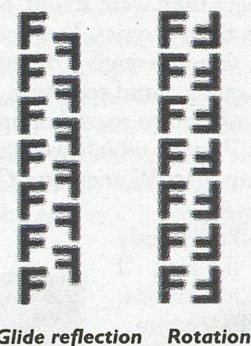
 **Glide reflection: rigid motion with reflected repetition along a line**

 **Reflection: rigid motion with repetition across a line (axis)**

 **Rotation: rigid motion with repetition around a point**

In rug weaving, the repetition of a design to form a pattern is accomplished by counting and repeating sequences of knots. The basic symmetries in carpets are thus effected knot by knot.

Border Patterns: In carpets, border patterns result when any or several of the basic symmetries are repeated in one direction. The constraints of symmetry are such that there are seven possible combinations. These are two of them:

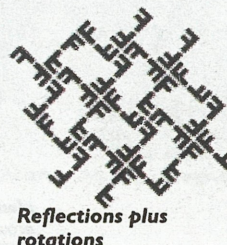


Glide reflection Rotation

Field Patterns: Result when symmetrical repetition takes place in two directions, thus forming a two-dimensional pattern that covers the plane. There are 17 systems which mathematicians classify as symmetry groups. Here are two of them:



Rotations



Reflections plus rotations

Symmetry in nature is always approximate. In the man-made world, patterns that rely on strict symmetry are boring—just think of all the hotel carpets you have seen with symmetrical patterns. In my study of classical Oriental carpets, through the analysis of symmetry and symmetry-breaking, I feel that I have gotten closer to the minds of the makers—and they were never bored!

Mathematicians treat symmetry as an ideal state. But it is in symmetry-breaking that truth is transformed to beauty. The study of Oriental carpets may lead one to suppose that in art, as in nature, it is in the approximation of symmetry, rather than in its achievement, that beauty is to be found.—Carol Bier.



Photos by David Smith

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