Dear Mark--

Distance keeps elapsing between the intention to do this letter and its actuality. So I'll at least get it begun, though maybe not finished this very day--Carol's dad is in the hospital getting a new kneecap, and life is going to be a trifle hectic until we see how that operation works out.

Abruptly, or so it seems, Carol and I are back at our work life tooth and nail. Christmas vacation was nice, particularly the last week or so of it, when we simply kept quietly to ourselves and went out every day for a walk somewhere in the city. There was a considerable recurrence of the infamous Seattle drought, which I find people in New York know more about than I do, and which brought such delightful consequences as ripe tomatoes in the garden right up to Thanksgiving, and so we just went out day after day into dry walking weather. As to the resumed work, I'm pecking away at the final novel of the McCaskill trilogy, to take place in Montana during its 1989 centennial hoopla, and the ms has felt comfortable to resume. Moreover, as Vernon would want me to say as a transition, I've taken the bold step of planning to go to Havre by train in April, for a few days of gawking around en route to a speech in Great Falls. And Carol this quarter is teaching a course shared with--brace yourself--three other professors. I guess the usual expectation would be that they're ready to kill one another by now, for classroom offenses imagined or otherwise, but it's really been going very smoothly, all four professorial shoulders to the grindstone or some such. Carol does the mass media aspect, featuring David Potter's book People of Plenty, the college's Pacific NW historian does his schtick***, and then there's an English prof and Jean Roden, the librarian whose house once embraced the Wymans, to shepherd the students through papers and projects. Carol says at least she's learning a lot.

Well, I think I looked up when I heard that end-of-September yell and shouted back, "Congrats on Balch, Mark!" But just in case, congrats on Balch, Mark. You didn't quite equal the dozen blind editors who turned down House of Sky before the 13th one took it, but perilously close. So when is publication?

Jan. 20--New--or at least different--typewriter, at the sunny end of the house. Yesterday did indeed get interrupted with hospital bulletins. Carol's dad's operation apparently has been a success, but he's having what the doctors call "a cardiovascular event": blood vessels contracting at a strategic place in the brain, so that he talks perfectly patterned sentences but the words are gibberish. He had one of these a couple of months ago, was entirely over it in about 24 hours, and that's the prognosis again. It's a bit spooky, having him reel off what sounds like Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky," but likely not serious.

As you'll have guessed, my autumn went to "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," one way or another. I too had my moment of Chicago stardom, although it was only a between-planes stop of about 4 hours, just long enough to jot my name into a stash of books from Kroch's and be talked to at the Tribune. There was a gratifying new level of interviews etc. with this book--particularly so, in that the reporters at the Trib, Wash'n Post and WCBS had never heard of "This House of Sky" and were talking to me sheerly on the basis of having read "Dancing." Meanwhile, like all good generals of wars literary and otherwise, I was busily fighting the last war--out on the book-
store ramparts, doing signings at about three dozen bookstores from, say, Jackson, Wyoming to Palo Alto. For that diligence, it turns out I sold a helluva lot fewer copies of "Dancing" in bookstore appearances than I did of "English Creek" three years before--although mea nwhile "Dancing" was selling twice as many nationally as "Creek" did. So, next time around I'll cut back on the bookstore stuff, and undoubtedly find out that, no, this time I should've doubled the bookstore stuff and... I do want to relay to you some of the incidents and folks who crossed paths with me in those stores last fall, because it mmm sounds as if you're having an equally gratifying personal response to "your" railroaders book. In Eugene: fairly attractive middle-aging woman presents herself, introduces me to her husband. She is Ann Kay, whom I went to high school with--an attractive, rather fragile-looking girl, unattainable so far as any of the male teenage gowks such as me could figure out, in fact downright risky because her father was one of our teachers. But as she went away, after that chat in Eugene, I thought of what she went through immediately after her seemingly ethereal high school years: college in Missoula, where she met and married a young smokejumper, who was promptly killed on a fireline--widow before she was much past 20. In Mt. Vernon: the McClatchys! We coincide with them about every three years at some kind of event, swap Montana tales a while. In Helena: a very determined little old lady in a wheelchair advanced on me and declared, "I could have been your mother." Since she was Jeanette Christison, of the Tierney Basis homestead colony where my dad grew up, and dated my dad before he ever met my mother, I guess she had an arguable thesis there. In Jackson: peppy little guy, evidently a rancher come to town on Saturday, kept bopping past me as I signed books, dropping a comment each time as he zipped off to look at one book or another. I finally found a way to ask, who the hell are you? "Jim Bama," was the answer; i.e., artist James Bama whose super-realistic, almost-photographer-than-photographs, portraits sell for a ton of money. A few minutes later, the bookstore owner asked if I'd mind inscribing a book for one of his prime customers, Aldo Leopold's son Luna. A few minutes after that, a woman came up, remarked that she'd noticed my first books were with Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, then said, "My father hired Jovanovich. It was his worst mistake." i.e. again, her father, Scott I think his name was, had been president of Harcourt Brace. Jackson was some place.

What else have I got rattling around in me. Saw Vernon about a month ago, and he was so-so, in general vigor. He went thru a bout with mmm bronchitis, after the WHA when he went to D.C. for some fete of Wayne Rasmussen; and I guess there is the brute fact that he is, what, 80? (The NY Times recently had the obit of one of his college roommates, Wilbur Schramm, the communications prof, of that Stegner-Schramm-Carstensen college bunch at Iowa.) Saw Dick Brown at the U. of Oregon and Bill Robbins at Oregon State during my bookstorestorming; Dick as ever is committed within an inch of his life, but as wonderfully affable and informed as ever, while Bill has managed to shake loose into a sabbatical, to do some "plundered province" theorizing. And that's about it from this household; as the sign Thurber once put up at The New Yorker office said it, "ALTERATIONS AS USUAL DURING BUSINESS." All best wishes for '68.
Dear Mark--

As a fellow traveler of the Pope, you no doubt noticed the news story that the car dealer who's leasing a fleet of white Pontiacs for the Pope's Calif. visit has high hopes of then selling them cars for considerably above their $19,000 sticker price. Popescules, indeed.

Well, certainly the Dois have nothing to rival your Irish-Polish odyssey in reportage. A few buffalo, a glimpse inside the Washington Post--I dunno, do those get us any points on the exotica scale? The American Booksellers convention was in D.C. over Memorial Day weekend, and we went back (partly my publisher's idea, partly nudge from me) to be in on the launch of "Dancing at the Rascal Fair." And by god, Athenaeum did launch it. They gave away to booksellers a couple of thousand copies of pre-publication paperbacks, which the booksellers more slyly call merely "reading copies"--these are the uncorrected page proofs of the forthcoming hardback, but bound in a special oversize paperback format. It turns out they have been worth their weight in gold to me, as I've been hearing ever since from bookstore people who read that pre-pub, liked it, and are now primed to push the real book onto their customers. This was the second of these annual booksellers' throngs Carol and I have been to--they're really astounding gatherings, twenty thousand book people under one roof in a maze of publishers' booths--and though we know that literary lore has it that authors should be hoity-toity toward the filthy commercial end of writing, Lord help us, we both love those commercial book-selling circuses. A feature writer for the Washington Post came and did a long article in which you can literally see him recoiling in shock from the glitz and glitter of the book biz--we read an identical piece by a San Francisco Chronicle writer when the booksellers met in SF a few years ago--and meanwhile he's missed every bit of the trenches, the gossip and deals and publisher-bookseller horse-trading, that goes on. Anyway, mea culpa, it seems to me the most valuable thing I do, next to the actual writing of the books, is to savvy how books get sold, and get in there with the sales force at these booksellers' galas. Memorable sociology, too. Washington, D.C., is so plainly white folks on the upper economic level and nonwhite ones doing all the service jobs that it has the feel the cities of the British Raj must have had. The booksellers aside, the more memorable people we were around were the taxi drivers, Haitian, Pak, India Indian, and so on, who drive big old clunkers cabs through these wide streets of Washington like kayakers shifting from current to current in a river.

Ah, yes, and the Post, the benighted feature writer aside. At one of my publisher's shindigs we met Reid Beddow, an assistant editor of the Post's book review section, Book World, who in the past has enticed me to write a couple of reviews for them. As we talked and he learned Carol is a communications prof, he asked, "Would you like to see them inside of the Post?" She would merely kill for such a chance, is all, and I'd be right there accomplishing. So the next day he did tour us around: indeed, there was Ben Bradlee in a glass-cage office, the set-in-lead page with the boxcar headline NIXON RESIGNS on display, and a covey of a dozen or so editors hanging around outside his office waiting for the daily 11 o'clock meeting to put the paper together; indeed, again, there was Bob Woodward off in another glass cage, and there was what seemed acres of newsroom, mostly empty because reporters were out on their beats. The book people of course are off in a warren of their own, with a side room just for the handling of books that come in the mail; they didn't have an exact figure of how many books inundate them, but Clarus Backes of the Denver Post book page says he gets thirteen thousand a year.
As you can tell, the forthcoming book dominates our life and thinking, these days. The auguries are excellent, with the prospect of selling maybe twice as many as House of Sky or English Creek did. I'm having a comp copy send to you, and one to your dad for his lingo help—it really was useful to me, please do assure him, even if he doesn't see many particulars in the book; the sentence structure and turns of phrase he, and you, provided did help me think out how I wanted those characters to sound—and you'll see when it arrives that it's dedicated to someone we have in common, i.e. Vernon. My first bound copy came a couple of days ago and I've just scrambled another one out of Athenaeum's first batch, so in the morning I believe I'll blithely go by and deliver to the Carstensen residence. I haven't seen Vern for awhile, as Jeannette was laid up with a bad back and had to be on hand at home all the time. His old sidekick Stegner has a novel out this fall; not a bad one by any means, but regretfully a little flat—I know I'm saying this to the wrong guy, but Jesus it's hard for anyone, even Stegner, to write interestingly about faculty life. Colleagues and campus politics always predominate, and the life of the mind, let alone that hidden species called students, never get their due. Anyway, you may well like the Stegner novel more fulsomely than I did; much of it is set in Madison in '38.

Buffalo, as promised earlier. Just after school let out, we made a quick impromptu Montana trip—we went over from Portland—and mostly ended up at the National Bison Range north of Missoula, at Moiese. I'm going to put it in my next novel, about contemporary Montana, and so we went just to have a look, and were captivated. Magnificent country, there at the south end of the Flathead Valley, and in our first few minutes, yup, there were buffalo, there were elk, there were antelope; and most of all, the real surprise, there was birdsong, constant music from the many birds that thrive in real prairie grass. Highly recommended, when you next get to Montana.

We head for there again—Montana and another stint at the Bison Range—on Labor Day, and by the end of that week we shall see whether the WHA left any of Billings standing. I'm to give a speech to a "cultural congress" put on by the state Humanities Commission; a view of Montana writing from the outside, so I guess this makes me an official auslander now. We'll ramble around the state until Carol flies home to begin teaching, the last Mon. of Sept., and I finish touring the bookstores. That's pretty much going to be our autumn, Carol holding home and hearth together while I trot around on behalf of Baskin Fair. There's a chance I may be through Chicago, but I'm afraid it really will only be through—simply a veer from the airport to be at Kroch & Brentano's, and then head home to Seattle.

We visited Jim Welch on that earlier Montana trip, and he's very pleased with the results of the book you heard him read from, Fools Crow. Viking sold about 20,000, and are bringing out a nice Penguin paperback, so Jim feels thriving, as well he should.

And that's about it from us—a hunkered-in summer (one of Seattle's driest, and when it is nice, one of the pleasantest in weather), with a roving autumn coming fast. Tell us more of Europe and all that.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

For several weeks I have been thinking of writing you, carefully piling up tales to tell, but in Ireland it seemed too soon and in Poland I worried about censors opening the letter, so here it is June 13 in West Germany and I have just been reunited with most of my family after a month away from home. This week we are with Eva’s mother, Saturday we go to Paris for two days and then to Spain for two weeks and then home. At times I feel I will never travel to Europe again, but then I know that is probably not true.

Ireland was a boom as far as research goes, but quite a depressing surprise otherwise. Of course, I did not get over to the beautiful west or southwest, but stayed in Dublin and had just one Sunday foray into the Wicklow Mountains adjacent to the south. A wonderful young historian named Gerard Moran drove me south of Dublin along the old Military Road, laid out by the British in the early 19th Century to attack marauding Irishmen; we headed through Sallygap, along delightfully steep mountains reforested into the deep green of thriving treefarms. At Glendalough we saw the thousand-year-old monastery ruins, and I enjoyed very much seeing where peat is dug, both by hand and by machine. People from Dublin drive out and pay for permission to dig it from certain areas; I asked if this was a modern environmentalist fad the way some wood stoves are in the US, but he said it is purely economic—fuel is expensive in Ireland and this is cheap. The depressing aspect of Ireland is the economy, which has everyone talking emigration again, especially the young. Prices were so high that I ate almost all of my meals in the University College Dublin cafeteria, where for $3 – $4 I could get some sort of potatoes with some sort of fish and a tiny container of milk. I had planned to buy several clothing items but gave that up quickly and came away only with a hat to shield me from the continuously-falling rain.

After a wonderful day in London—the sun came out and I walked through Kensington Gardens and around Westminster, attending a great play ("The Business of Murder") that night—I went on to Poland via the national airlines, LOT.

My host was Adam Walaszek, a young professor I was put in contact with two years ago, who came to the U.S. last year and spent a week with us. I helped him learn of some short-term archives scholarships which he applied for and received, and I also squired him around to the U of Illinois collections and the State Historical Society collections in Springfield. He then worked with me for two days at the Polish National Museum Library in Chicago, translating while I pounded away on the typewriter. We used the same system in Kraków, the old city in the south of Poland where he teaches at the Jagiellonian University; after a week there we went to Warsaw and worked in the "Archive of New Files," going through Polish consulate reports from the U.S. after 1918, where the subject of Returned Emigrants was a frequent one.

Of course Poland was fascinating to me—only the second time I have been in a Communist country, after spending a week one day in Bulgaria en route to Turkey in 1960. I was soon surprised at the lack of the predictable Communist apparatus—no screaming signs, no ubiquitous hammer-and-sickle, no red stars on everyone from children to traffic cops. But the presence of communism certainly is unavoidable once you spend some time with the citizenry. Of course, almost all of my contacts were with university people. They all have a quiet frustration, with a long list of complaints to counter any positive comments a visitor might make. Thus, I noted the majority of them seemed to have traveled abroad in previous years; all had good libraries; the bus-tram service is both cheap (3 zl) and frequent; there are parks throughout the cities. But they tell of censorship at every turn: when books arrive from the outside, even if these are innocuous ones, they must go through a justification for use by them, and any that border on anti-Communism are not allowed through. (Censorship has its built-in ridiculousness, of course: I was told to remove covers of any novels I wished to send then, because a bad cover will hold a book back; similarly, my
Polish friend receives the NY Review of Books and never has any trouble because the censor can't wade through the thick text and the illustrations never offer any offense.) But many things led to their despondence. Does your son go swimming? I asked as the little 6-year-old cavorted around us. Where would he swim in Warsaw? was their response. How about in the Vistula? It's so polluted— they said—that when their dog went swimming there a year earlier he got sick. Heat rationing— frequent shortages (the first long line I saw outside a store was to get toilet paper)— and the unending presence of the state's newspapers and radio: these are taking their toll. My professor friend gets quite glum about Poland and fears they are becoming "Sovietsized."

Which perhaps explains Ronald Reagan's popularity in Poland. The day of my arrival Adam told me he had heard on the BBC that when Teddy Kennedy and entourage came out of the cathedral in Gdańsk a few days earlier, many in the crowd shouted, "Greetings to Reagan!"—which must go under the classification of "Messages We Doubt Will Ever Be Delivered." A Pole with whom I discussed this said that when he was in Gdańsk in the early 1980s at one of the massive Solidarity parades, the crowd was chanting "Reagan Is With Us."

And then there is the Pope. The first week of my stay in Poland was the time of preparation for his visit; the second week—when I was in Warsaw—was during his visit. It was obvious the first week in Krakow that he is a favorite; in fact Krakow was his home for many years and a lot of people there know him. Long yellow-and-white banners hung from the churches, often with a cross part of a red-and-white banner; the yellow is the papal coloring, the red-and-white is Poland's flag. Pictures of him were everywhere, especially on the balconies of apartment buildings. We were in Warsaw when he came, and tried to see him in the morning from one of the vantage points along the highway in from the airport, but the crowd was so large we couldn't see him, although Adam went that evening and saw him leaving the cathedral. Then he left Warsaw and went to various Polish cities before returning there on the weekend. One night we were having dinner in the small apartment we used, and the radio carried his speech in Łódź or somewhere, and I asked whether the government ever shut off his sermons when he got on controversial subjects. Like what?, Adam asked. Oh, I said, what if he said that the government should allow free elections? He looked at me in wonder; that is what he says all the time, over and over, he said. Adam said he had heard on the street that the Pope would be going to Fr. Popiuła's grave (the priest who was tortured and killed by the police 3 years ago), and now I have seen that on the news here. So all in all the Pope's visit to Poland has become much more of a political event than I had been aware of. And I have to admit that my admiration for him has grown considerably. He seems to feel that the Polish people need to be picked up spiritually, their courage strengthened, if they are not to be conquered. At any rate, it was an interesting time to be in Poland.

In Krakow I was lucky enough to get into the International Festival of Short Films on several nights. It is probably not one of the biggest festivals; the audience was overwhelmingly made up of Poles. After one Canadian short film on a NY anti-war rally—which was certainly slanted in favor of the Joan Baezets, Bella Apuzes, etc., that were interviewed—the audience simply sat on their hands. I had never heard such deafening silence before. The East Bloc films all hit Germany pretty hard, not mentioning the USSR's invasion of Poland, and I was told that the East Bloc will simply not let World War II end. It is all they have. The one American film was a weird entry: a very interesting Smithsonian Institution documentary narrated by Gene Kelley on the great American movie palaces of old. It did not fit into the festival at all. The Polish amateur film that the crowd liked best was called "The Cage," and at the beginning it showed a hamster trying to eat through the matchstick-thin bars of a cage. The crowd agonized with him as he tried to nibble first one bar, then another, until he finally made it through—and then the camera backed up and we saw that in reality he had broken into a cage, and he was busily chewing up some bits of food that were on the floor. That was the end of it and the audience went wild.
On one of my last days in Warsaw i finally met a Returned Emigrant—the object of my research. We were in a bank and I saw an older man with a U.S. government check; I surmised it was a U.S. Social Security check, and asked him if he was an American. "I lived there 25 years," he said. He told me he had worked in a factory in New Jersey, and had a pension from there also. When I asked whether he could live decently in Poland on the two pensions, he replied, "Each winter I go to Florida."

My second night in Krakow I overheard some English being spoken in the hotel restaurant, and stopped by to chat on my way out and was invited to sit with them awhile. It was two US professors lecturing there on a Fulbright, plus an English prof from Leeds and a Polish professor. The Americans were Larry Rudner, who teaches American lit at North Carolina State, and Natalie, a linguist from San Diego State. They had been in Poland for awhile and had some terrible stories to tell about LOT airlines (which I came in and flew out on!), queues for food and other items, and so on. Later I ran into Larry and learned that he has his first novel coming out early next year with Houghton Mifflin, with a title that is something like "Of Magic and Memory." He has been coming to Poland for years, he said, and has set the novel in Poland in the years between the wars. He is Jewish, from Detroit, and told me of some of the overlooked Jewish remnants in the old Jewish quarter of Krakow.

Adam and I went through materials in the Archbishopric archives in Krakow, covering the period before 1918 when south Poland was part of Austria-Hungary. The good Archbishop ran questionnaires of all his parishes in 1891, 1907, and 1913, asking about emigration: how many had left from the parish, gone to where, how many returned, moral status of the returnees. From this I got a major shift of emphasis for my part of my research, because it was clear that most were going not to America but to nearby parts of Europe—especially Prussia, but also Denmark, Saxony, and Boreavia. There was real unhappiness among the parish priests over the moral disaster that was work in Prussia for these Poles—many girls returning pregnant with illegitimate births ahead, debauchery, drunkenness, and so forth. There were almost no worries about those returning from America.

Temporary migration was also something that jumped out at me from the research I did in Ireland. I spent most of my daytime hours in the Irish Folklore Commission archives at University College Dublin, going through the materials on emigration they collected in the early 1950s. Included was a specific instruction to get recollections, sayings, stories, songs, etc., on emigration and return migration. If you ever plan to have some Irish characters in your writing, I say, I would strongly recommend a visit to these collections. Their folklore people out in west and southwest Ireland seem to write as they speak for the most part, and these are obviously people with an ear for folk speech and stories. Much of the material was on leaving Ireland, which actually is not at the heart of my research; so while I passed much of it by, some was so interesting I took it down for personal satisfaction or possible use in my course on Immigration History.

Such was the case with some of the descriptions of America Wakes, held the other morning before the emigrant would leave for America (and never held in the case of temporary migration to work in Scotland or England). Thaddeus Murchadha of Munster wrote of some he had attended, with dancing and drinking and singing all night: "In the '70s up to the late '80s, the nearest railway station to the districts covered by this account, i.e., from Enniskillen to Cahirmaugan, was Killarney, a distance of some 60 miles. The emigrants left home about eight o'clock in the morning on a horse and farm cart, or on a mule and cart. Their luggage was usually light—a wooden box made by the local carpenter, or a tin box bought in a shop—which they packed their few belongings and the presents given them by friends and neighbours. The neighbours, young and old came to see them off, and set off on foot after the horse and cart. This was referred to as 'conveying the Yankees.' After they had accompanied the emigrant for a distance of a few miles, the older members of the procession went no further. They bade the last goodbye.
to the emigrant, never to see him again perhaps, and gave full vent to their sorrow in a loud and prolonged casine (lament). There they stood on the road until a bend hid him from their view as he waved his handkerchief back at them, and then with heavy and sorrowful hearts they returned home." Other writers recalled specific America Wakes. This same writer told of the importance of the money coming from America, and how people would look forward to the Christmas letter which always contained money: "...during the Christmas rush the postman usually arrived at a very late hour, very often at midnight—with his donkey and cart in which he brought the sacks of mail from the sorting post office which was four miles distant—to watch out for and to await his coming. This vigil usually began about the second week in December and continued up to Christmas Eve, and for us, youngsters, was a time eagerly looked forward to, as we thought it a very manly thing to be out late at night. Every village in the district was always very strongly represented at these vigils and every household turned out its quota of boys and girls to wait the coming of postman Con Shea and his ass. When the mail was sorted, Con came forward to the post office door and called out the names of the persons for whom he had American letters, and as the recipient of the letter came forward, Con would remark: 'Take that home to your father now, boy, and be very careful of it—there is something good in it.'"

Michael Corduff of County Mayo told of expressions that originated from the returned emigrants: "And you mean to tell me this is America"—this saying originated from an emigrant who went first to a friend's house in a Pennsylvania coal mining district, and was so dejected by what he saw that he turned around and went back to Ireland. Others: "Waal! I guess, as the Yank says." "Waal! I calculate, as the Yank says." "It sure will, as the Yank says." "Two weeks from now, as the Yank says." "The 'goddam thing,' as the Yank says."

Joseph Wade of Crookedwood in County Westmeath told of some of the returnees in his district: "I knew one in particular that lived in Bute (SIC.) City Montana he was a typical yank. Spoke with a nasal twang had very peculiar way of pronouncing some words. Thus, produce, produced— for produce and produced. But out from that he would and did described life and living in the city where he lived. He was well and sensibly dressed, with the diamond studded shirt front and gold tiepin links... He always spoke well of the Irish people male and female in the city where he lived as compared with the vice and viciousness of other nationalities or born yanks... He would describe the little socials the Irish would have when they would foregather to an Irish mans house... . . ."

Joseph Wade also repeated stories told by John Gaynor, a neighbor who apparently had emigrated: "He could tell of big fish mermaids banshees fairies ghosts and goblins or of the cock blackbirds that took to feeding on corn with the result that the corn fermented in their crops and turned into whiskey got drunk and merry so much so that they could be heard in every glen grove and garden whistling the Cruesheen lawn and the jug of punch."

One returned visitor talked so much that a listener described him thus: "You know Annie, he wasn't a blow but a constant blast."

I strayed from my research often to jot down stories they told. One man wrote that a "nigger" shot at him in a saloon in Philadelphia, but then the Irish policeman and the Irish judge urged him not to press charges. Finally the judge explained that an election was coming up, and this nigger was important in the district, and the judge worried that if the nigger was convicted the judge would not be re-elected. The case was dropped and one immigrant learned something of American justice. Another story involved an Irish girl working as a maid who was left alone to care for a house while the family was gone. She invited a friend over, and as they sat in the living room one night they heard a burglar breaking in. To summon courage they began to sing old Irish songs; the burglar left, and a week later they received a letter from the burglar, saying that he was Irish and when he heard those songs—songs his mother had taught him—he couldn't continue. Thus it goes in the lands of the emigration. In two days we go by train to Ferris, where Eva has friends; then down to Spain for two weeks. Then home July 7 in time for a big Wyman clan reunion Aug. 2. Best for a productive summer in Seattle and Montana. —Mallc
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Long overdue with you folks— it has been a hell of a s-p-r-i-n-g, to paraphrase the old New Yorker joke. Now I have less than a month before I head for Ireland and the beginning of two months in Europe. I'll be back July 7, and the rest of the summer after that is already filling up with the onerous task of running a 5-year departmental review as well as trying to get my return migration stuff in order to begin to prepare to commence to start to write in the Fall.

I wish I could give a report on the DP ms.--in fact, I kept putting off writing in the belief that in just one more week, or two more weeks, I was assured of having a report—but I can't. Schocken is apparently a haphazardly-run outfit, and I made monthly calls starting in mid-January to get a report, only learning that they were extremely busy getting out the Spring list. Finally I called in Mid-March and told them I wanted a report by early April, when it would be five months; at that point the editor (Bonnie Fetterman) called me back, praised the manuscript, begged that she was getting ready to head to a book fair in Jerusalem and could she have it until the end of April when a decision was promised. So I gave in, of course. She was willing to let me send it to other publishers; you probably would have done so, I somehow didn't want to. I did make a reference to the lack of footnotes and the substitution instead of a chapter-by-chapter discussion of sources with specific references to several key quotes' sources; she was surprised (apparently had not noticed that, if in fact she had read the ms. as she claimed) and wondered why I had not included footnotes. The result was that I spent the next 10 days laboring away to insert footnotes (or rather, endnotes) into the ms. and then xeroxed it all again and sent it off. If they turn it down, I do have an idea for sending it before I leave for Ireland: the Balch Institute in Philadelphia (an ethnic group center with museums, etc.) now has a joint publishing venture with Associated University Presses, and I will turn to them. A pro pos of that, the Balch head recently wrote a book about the Slovaks and said that historians should write for the ethnic groups themselves, not just for scholars. So perhaps he will be sympathetic.

Yes, the European trip is gradually falling into place. I'll go to Ireland May 12 for two weeks of work on the interviews done since the early 1950s with people concerning emigration; some of the questions centered on return migration. I might work a bit in the Dublin Diocesan archives while there. If I finish many days before May 27, I'll dodge over to London to see some theater and walk about; on May 27 I am due to fly from Heathrow to Poland on famous LOT Airlines. I'll be in Cracow for a week, as guest of Jagiellonian University there; my friend, Adam Walaszek, was here a year ago and I squired him around here, Champaign, and Springfield, and helped him get some needed things as well as two small research grants. I am hiring him to be my translator; since he did his dissertation on post-WW-I return migration to Poland, he is a good helper on this. We worked together for two days in the Polish Archives in Chicago—him translating, me typing—and while it was exhausting it was enormously profitable.
Adam wrote me recently asking whether or not I might want to change my visit: "Pope will be here then, and it will be a crazy time in Poland." I wouldn't change it for the world! Perhaps I could go to Chicago and get the franchise to sell "Pope-sicles," which proved to be popular during the Pontiff's visit there a few years back.

I realize that I am getting to the point where I want to write, when I start getting tired of the subject. That's what's happening to me now. It is certainly an immense subject, and I keep turning up two new sources (at least) for every one I complete. I enjoyed finally reading a book I had heard of years ago, Christ Stopped at Eboli, by an anti-Fascist who was ordered in the mid-30s to live in a tiny, isolated village in far southern Italy. It was an extremely backward place, with sanitation non-existent: the men just urinated in the streets and the women dumped their pots into the street at all times. He had this story on the returned immigrants: one of them told how they had missed their homes when they were working in New York, and so every Sunday a group from the village would take a train heading out of the city, and they would get out when it reached the open country. Then they would run over to a tree, all drop their pants and let fly, and the first one finished would shout, "Viva l'Italia!"

(Similarly: today in a Germany book—which Eva's mother is currently translating for me—we learned that Hungary tried to urge its people to come back by telling them that "In America it is a crime to urinate in the streets.")

On June 13 I will fly out to West Germany, linking up in Bonn with Eva and the girls who will have arrived a few days earlier. (Dan is staying home to take care of the dog and cat, take a summer course at ISU, and work, if he can get a job.) On June 20 we, with Eva's mother, will take a train for Paris, where we will spend two days with some friends there; then take an overnight train for Madrid, where we will start a two-week Spanish visit. Eva has wanted to go to Spain since I first met her; now she has a chance. We'll spend a few days each in Toledo, Córdoba, Granada, and Malaga; then on July 7 Ruth, Miriam, and I will fly back home, while Eva and her mother will leave for Germany. Eva will come back July 20 after visiting with her parents for awhile.

A chance encounter in Northern Wisconsin introduced me to something I had not thought of for years; I might even do something about it in a journalistic or scholarly way. Dad and I went up to the cabin over Christmas, and decided to drop in on the man who runs the township dump to ask about a few things. We had a good talk with him, outside his trailer home and surrounded by junk—junk-junque—all sorts of things, from straw bales to fishing rods to fencing and antlers and bottles—to, well everything. This guy raises chickens and ducks, and recounted his problems with timber wolves and owls. He was losing a chicken a day for awhile, then set a trap that caught one of the wolves—at least he saw it fleeing, dragging the trap. Then an owl came up into the coop through the intricate gate he had made—and on he went with details of his struggle with nature. The game warden came around and reminded him there was a steep fine for killing a timber wolf, since they are an endangered species; and killing the owl would carry a fine too. Hearing this poor guy tell his tale of struggling against a malignant forces, I realized that this was the American frontier from 1600 on, to about 1940, probably. We have missed this because since the war the pesticides have become so powerful and effective that nature has been beaten back. But it would produce quite a different attitude toward the "beauties of nature." Any Montanans present could elaborate on this tale, I suppose.

All for now -- thanks for your good letter. Shall I ask for Papal intervention in your next ms.?
Dear Ivan and Carol,

It has been a few moons now since Rascal arrived and your letter, and both of you have cheered me enormously in an Autumn that has had few breaks from an onslaught of university-induced labor. The labor has been such that I have not yet (I am ashamed to admit) finished Rascal, but what I have read I have really liked. Since you have been commenting on various aspects of it to me over the past couple of years, from the horse drowning to the arrival of outsiders, I read the book with a different set of eyeballs than perhaps anyone else. It is great to see you creating your own domain in Montana just as Faulkner did in Mississippi; it is Doig territory, and you are the ruler of it. Congratulations. I am really honored to have the book from you. This Fall I have not been doing reading of even the Chicago Tribune, let alone other papers of the big towns, so I have yet to see a review. But I did hear one review and I am burned up about it. I am speaking, of course, of the NPR interview by some guy at George Mason—NPR has this bad habit (perhaps forced by budget cuts) of turning to anyone in the Washington area as their expert. They never (almost never) call a Japanese expert at the University of Washington, for example, although there are many there; always from Washington, or other spots along the East Coast. And so rather than get someone from out in the country with some experience in the Western novel or novels set in the late 19th Century West, they get this guy (English prof., I presume) who did a terrible job. I was offended.

The Normal Public Library bought Rascal, I noticed; the other Doig book in that somewhat-small library is Sky. So you are probably right in guessing this will hit Sky’s record and probably exceed it.

Your mining account is good. I thought you might do more with it, but you did just what was necessary for the novel. The Scots would not have understood much more than he told them. And probably I am one of a small group who knows where you got the whiskey-sipping method of the teamster. Nice that you gave VC the dedication—he will certainly treasure that. It seems his grads of ’70 and ’71 are actually coming through.

My big news you can read in the enclosed clipping. All my life I have wanted to make the Chicago papers, and finally I have done so and my thoughts now turn to things one does when he accomplishes his goals: retiring early, lying on the beach, taking a degree in Mayan pottery. Draugas is the Lithuanian daily in Chicago; I once interviewed an old Lithuanian priest who works there, about his work getting a paper started in a DP camp. I wrote him about the manuscript’s acceptance, and he inserted it in the column, "Aplink Mus" (which you know means "Around Us")

Balch had the ms. all summer, and in August sent me their reader’s comments which were very favorable. But he—and the press’ head—wanted more extensive endnotes than the sketchy ones I had done as a compromise between my no-endnote approach and one with full notes. So I was working on that in my free time, when your letter and then the book came. The editorial board met in late September and I got a phone call on Sept. 30—you undoubtedly heard the yell.

Balch Institute is an ethnic museum in Philadelphia; they run different programs every few weeks and I assume (from their literature) they run a large number
of people through there. Less than a year ago they decided to become a publisher also, and so they tied in with Associated University Presses, which publishes for such places as Folger Shakespeare Library, Corning Museum of Glass, Farleigh Dickinson Press, and University of Delaware Press. I have yet to hear from the AUP people, which may be a bad omen. I want to see about chiseling the price down some, by cutting out photos if necessary. Anyway, that ms. is accepted after 9 rejections over 3 years. (What did you suffer before Sky was accepted? You told me once but I forgot.)

One of the reasons I have been keeping my nose to the grindstone is my selection to write four reports on our department for the Board of Regents, at 50 pages apiece. I think I wrote you about that. Actually, I am glad to do it because I feel I owe the rest of the department something; I am just not a committee man and they had have realized that over the years. As a result, I serve only occasionally on committees, and then usually on one-shot affairs that last a week or two; others are on dreadful ones that meet all Wednesday afternoon for three years—things like that. So I owe this to the department since it is a job no one wanted. Two are done, and the third should be done in a couple of weeks.

I had taken on a special task for August that I am glad I did: to write an introduction to a volume of oral histories of Bloomington railroad workers to be published under the title, "The Bloomington C & A Shops: Our Lives Remembered." It is due out in just a couple of weeks. I learned from doing this—learned something I had forgotten, about how beautiful the speech of the common people can be. And I learned that I am possibly desecrating that speech when I take notes (as I did in my DP interviews) rather than use a tape recorder and then have the speech transcribed. I was prepared to like these oral histories, which I read through completely before writing the introduction; I was not prepared to like them so much. I turned in my introduction on a Monday morning; when I hadn't heard from them by Friday with any comments I called, and the director said: "You fell in love with these interviews, didn't you?" "Yes," I agreed, "I fell in love with them." He said that it sure showed. I videotaped some of them and wrote from that. Here are some examples of what I am talking about:

One oldtimer praised Jakey Mose, who "could set his air brakes and by the time he got to the depot he wouldn't drag that water crane three feet. There was a ten-foot space there that he stopped in that we could water the tender without having to move so he was an artist."

Another told about an accident: Joe Penn described how a cable broke on the crane and "took that right off—right off you know cut it right off... and then the old doctor—you know what he done? He just taped that on there and I went back to work."

"Anthony Koos described the C & A cabinet shop: "...there were eight benches that rotate. As an apprentice, I had one up to the front, on the outside, up against the wall, and right next to me, to my left, was a German. In behind him was an Englishman, behind me was a Swede, then another German, then another Swede and the foreman was a Swede. Those men, as cabinet makers, they were real good."

They told of the kids hired as "callers", to go around to the engineers' and firemen's homes at night and tell them to go on duty (because none had telephones). Nellie Dally said neighbors would hear boys making their rounds: "...you could hear them many times in the middle of the night calling 'Frank' and rapping on the window." 'Number 80 North. Two-thirty. Are you awake?""
It was amazing to me to learn of their skills in telling engines apart, and even lines: Thomas Moore recalled that with the sharp crack of a steam engine's exhaust "we could almost tell from five or six miles out of town which engine was approaching." With one engine, the 15297, "I can tell it no matter where it was...It was very similar to the whistle of the Wabash; they had a different sound than the ones on the Nickle Plate or any of the other ones. We could tell which way that the engines (were) coming in, from the east or west, the Nickle Plate and the New York Central, because they had a different sound than ours did."

And especially I liked them telling of why they loved it, for the engines took on almost human characteristics: "...you sort of felt with steam locomotives you let it tell you what to do, if it was laboring then you'd change the reverse level little by little bit and got more steam into the cylinders, and that kind of thing. And, of course, rhythmic sounds about them, there was the clapping of the rods, of course, and the exhaust, and the boiler toiling and a different kind of machine all together."

Too much to quote in a letter, I'll admit, but I did want you to see this folk speech since you have such an ear for it. I really loved it.

That was some description of the booksellers' conference; it reminded me of Dad's comment in a speech (I don't know the source of the quote): "Writing is like prostitution. First you do it for your pleasure, then you do it for the pleasure of others. And finally you do it for money." I too had a tour of the Washington Post newsroom a few years and count it as one of the dreams of my life also; my guide was Jim Yenckel, an old Chile hand who has labored in various Post vineyards for years and lately has been a travel writer. Ben Bradlee looked at me with a quizzical look, as I recall.

Last weekend I had the experience of meeting someone whom I have no hesitation to call the strangest person I have ever met. Ric Hargrove (sp?) went to a meeting at Western Illinois University of Dan's Progressive Student Union, got interested in the coming march at Illinois State University to show solidarity with the people of El Salvador, and so wanted to come over here last weekend with Dan to participate. Dan was coming Friday but Ric offered to drive him, so Dan called us to see if Ric could stay here overnight; he warned us about him. We agreed it would be OK, since only for one night, and so there he was on Friday evening.

Ric has a Ph.D. in history from Duke, is a New Yorker, taught at Central Michigan and then at Western Illinois for a few years until (for reasons that were not explained) something snapped in his brain a couple of years ago. Now he is on permanent disability from WIU, at $13,000 a year, which I think was a payoff to get him to drop his suit against them when he was fired. But his brain did snap: it was as if all the wires in his head had come apart through some big jolt, and then they were put back all wrong, incoming being attached to incoming and outgoing going to outgoing. He dresses like a late 60s hippie, with long blondish hair held against his thin head by a soiled, rolled headband; he had flimsy and dirty clothes--blue jeans, of course, and some sort of an old work shirt that had mainly buttons missing. He gave off an odor of months or years without a bath (again typical of the late 60s), He admitted to us he is gay.

But what made him strange was his speech, which consisted of an endless string of sentences, most of them connected in some word or date to the previous one. It went something like this, for about an hour as we sat bemused and increasingly frustrated across the table from him:
"My mother was born on May 12, 1912. Dan Wyman was also, I learned, born in May. My mother had a brother, my uncle, who was a railroad man. He voted for Eugene V. Debs in 1920. Debs got the votes of a lot of railroaders then. I once saw the Twentieth Century Limited leaving New York with only three cars. Just think! Three cars! My real name is Ric; it was Richard but I had it legally changed by the Circuit Court, on April 27, 1985. That was in Macomb, Illinois. Western Illinois University is in Macomb. Once I took the train from Macomb, Illinois, to Quincy, Illinois, but when I was getting off the train in Quincy I stepped on that bottom step, I don't know what it's made of, but I guess I fell. No, I was in downtown Quincy and somehow I had an accident, I don't know how, and I learned of it later when a Country Companies agent told me I had an accident."

Well, he went on and on like that, rambling, loosely connected, unconnected, sometimes about modern events, sometimes bringing up stuff out of his dissertation which apparently was on some British whacker who got in on the final act of the American Revolution. My mind was going numb when we finally got him upstairs to bed; he kept running back to the kitchen table to wipe off the crumbs from the cake we had given him. He claimed to have had only 90 minutes sleep a night for several weeks. Dan was embarrassed at this guy, but said that when he drove he would not talk at all (still, he got all mixed up and took 3 hours for a 2-hour trip.) Dan said he had told someone about this guy, and the person commented that dreams are connected like this, and perhaps Ric is only verbalizing dreams as they float through his mind. I told Eva that if I ever read about such a character, I would never believe it; and so, as you novelists tell us, truth is stranger than fiction—much stranger.

All for now. Rascal is out; DP is accepted; all's right with the world. Probably my Returned Immigrants will have to wait for January before I launch a new attack on them; I would like to finish the research by summer. By then you will have another novel well along, populated this time by buffalo.

The best to you both,

Mark

P.S.—Eva wearing down with 2 hours of driving to her two teaching jobs daily. The girls full of high school activities; basketball comes soon. Dan majoring in philosophy, of all things.
Dear Mark—

In your Christmas note you wisely advised me to take a day off sometime, and I did— I believe it was yesterday—and now I'd better catch up in the letter sweepstakes with you. You'd have heard from me sooner, but we're having one of our non-Februarys out here, the temperature wandering above 50 and occasionally up to 60, so I've been dedicating the warmest part of each afternoon to garden dabbling, transplanting strawberry plants, putting in new raspberries, moving the rhubarb. All the stuff that starts the gardener's hopes to budding this time of year.

As you may have divined from the fact that we resorted to a Christmas letter for the first time ever, instead of individual cards, it was a busy end of the year for us. (Also educational. Nobody ever said anything about our Xmas cards, but we've had terrific praise for the Xmas letter. So much for the personal touch.) I sent the Rascal Fair manuscript to New York on Xmas Eve, and less than 72 hours later we were on the freeway taking Carol's dad to the emergency room. His ailment, a steady stabbing pain about like having had a sword run through him, turned out to be an intestinal blockage brought on by flu virus. He was in the hospital 5 days and had another shaky week or so after that (he's fine again now, parking along nobly as he usually does); we spent a goodly amount of the holiday trekking back and forth to the hospital, and given that we weren't able to get away or do any other vacation friskiness, I simply used whatever spare time there was to do the apparatus for the book—the map, the acknowledgments, etc. By the time I was out of that, my editor had read the ms and made his main suggestions (thank god, nothing major, just fleshing out a few scenes); by the time I feathered those into the ms, he'd done his line-editing; by the time I responded to that, it was Feb. 4. Life does take up a person's time, huh? Anyway, auguries seem good for the book, and I have simmered down from the pace I was keeping. Oh yeah, one last book bit: you're undoubtedly due a refund on the help you provided me with the lingo for a southern Illinois family. As I was working on that scene, of toilless homesteaders coming to Montana and getting trapped in dry-land farming, I kept wondering who these Illinois folks ought to be, and eventually I saw they had to be the Hebners, the sort of hillbillyish family you maybe remember in English Creek. I did keep their Oblong origin, but dropped the joke (?) about it being close to Normal when I took the trouble to look at a map and saw that it ain't. If I'd let it, that'd tell me something about my memory: I was dead sure Oblong is about where Heyworth or Maroa actually is. Be assured, I am taking care in the acknowledgments not to cynically link you and your dad directly to my crime— tempting though it is, I'm not going to cite "guidance on Illinois hicks was provided me by the Wymans pere et fils."

Speaking of your incomparable if oblong state, I've lost my other Illinois correspondent. I wonder if I've mentioned him to you down through the years—Ainsley Roseen of Evanston, who was the managing editor of The Rotarian when I was on that magazine staff '64-'66. Ainsley retired in the spring of '66, a few months before I left and Carol and I made our leap to Seattle, and as soon as he walked out the door the other three or four of us editors were staggered by a blizzard of little crappy tasks he'd been silently and automatically handling—the magazine's goddamn jokes page, poetry filler, letters to the editor, fitting the ads in, scheduling copy and art deadlines, and on and on, not to mention the actual overseeing of printing the magazine at Donnelly.
It was like walking into a swarm of gnats, now that the screen of Ainsley was gone. He was a small unprepossessing guy, clerically in every way, and of course greatly more had gone on in his life than that appearance showed. He left Moline for the U. of Illinois in the early 1920's--crossed paths there with my old Decatur editor Dave Felts, who Ainsley with his slightly sly self-effacing chuckle said was a Big Man on Campus--and then on to Chicago and magazine work. If you know your history, you'll recall Senator Francis Case of South(? ) Dakota, who maybe represented that state when you were laboring in Minneapolis? Case's brother Leland was editor of The Rotarian magazine through the '30s and '40s, one of those remarkable bastards you look back at and wonder why somebody didn't push him out the window of his office. (In a knot of fate, Leland Case had had his effect on not only The Rotarian when I worked there, but on the magazine Carol was then an editor for, the Methodist Publishing House's Together; both publications had the same ills, too many departments and too much gewgaw artwork--a passion for frills.) Leland Case hired Ainsley and as I have the story, proceeded to break his spirit as a writer, by telling him he wasn't worth a damn at it (which was palpably wrong; I have 20 years of letters from Ainsley full of deft touch and puckish liveliness) and turned him into the chowhorse of the magazine. At home, Ainsley had another burden: his ill mother-in-law lived with them for more than 50 years. I didn't know all this when I wandered onto the Rotarian staff at the dewy age of 25, up from Decatur, but I quickly realized what Ainsley was up against on an everyday basis in the office--the magazine's art editor, Frank Follmer, a man of infinite delays and excuses. At the time, my attitude toward Frank was summed in one of my dad's straightforward sayings--"a guy like that ought to be taken out and shot"--although I now realize Frank was genuinely mentally ill, probably manic depressive. I watched in appalled fascination the monthly ritual, a kind of foxtrot on either side, of Ainsley trying to elicit artwork from Frank in time for the publication deadline. Anyway, Ainsley kept in touch, 2 or 3 letters back and forth a year, after Carol ran out here, and I count myself privileged to have known the guy; typically, when he died he had everything arranged for the care of his Alzheimer's-stricken wife, the funeral back home in Moline, etc.

You cited White Earth, Red Earth in your Xmas note, and as you were the second or third to do so, I'd better get around to having a look at it. I've got a great amount of reading to try and catch up on; my eye ginkliness cost me the reading of 30 or so books last year, I figure. In unintentional but no less heartfelt tribute to you and your feeling for the streets of Chicago, I've been looking at Saul Bellow's The Adventures of Augie March, which I'd never peeked at before.

Saw Carstensen a few weeks ago. He's reveling in Irangate. But then, aren't we all?

Not much else to report. We're intending a spring-break trip to Monterey, then 3 weeks or so in Montana in early summer. Things are perking along okay just now, not boiling over at all. Any news on the DF me?

best
WE'RE RUSHING to send news & greetings for Christmas and Chanuka
DAN Picked to go to El Salvador in January with student group. Is busy at Western Illinois University, active in debate and on student newspaper. Likes philosophy and archaeology. Was "Outstanding Speaker" at Butler U. Debate Tourney, where he and partner won Novice Division.


MIRIAM Soccer, volleyball, basketball, and now tennis are favorite sports. Walked beans last summer for $18/day. Plays drums in Metcalf band. An 8th grader, her favorite class is Drama; she is in "Babes in Toyland," school play. On student council. She had Bat Mitzvah last June at Moses Montefiore Temple.

EVA Teaching Spanish at Wapella and Heyworth high schools south of Normal; adviser to Wapella's Spanish Club. She also taught an evening class in Spanish at ISU during Fall semester. Went to visit parents in Germany last summer. This summer she will finally get to see Spain as four Wymans (minus Dan) take trip to Europe.

MARK Teaching Illinois History and U.S. History Survey in Fall, adds Immigration History for Spring. Continues his research on returned immigrants. Last summer helped organize retrospective art exhibit for his mother in River Falls, Wis., timed to coincide with 30th high school class reunion.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Here's hoping Dancing at the Rascal Fair is now in the stocking of your NY editor, cheering his/her holiday time. I look forward to reading it, especially the part about the Illinois people. Glad I could be of some (minor) help.

Tonight we pick up Dan, and will be pumping him with questions about El Salvador. The sum total of our knowledge of it is contained on the opposite side of this letter. He has been active for more than a year with various groups opposing Reagan's Central American policy.

It certainly is a quieter house without Dan around. But in another year the girls will be in high school and then a "new ball game", as they say, will begin.

I just finished Will Weaver's White Earth, Red Earth. I wonder whether you have read it? The Upper Midwest aspects intrigued me, as well as the story line. He reaches too far for metaphors at times, but still writes well. I think it gives a good representation, too, of the '60s and '70s.

We look forward to hearing your news as the new book moves toward publication. Why not take a few days off sometime?

-- Mark, Eva, Dan, Ruth, Miriam
Dear Ivan and Carol --

Just a short note with something to cheer you up during what must be a difficult time for you both. Perhaps Carol can read the enclosed to Ivan as he sips his evening whiskey. This certainly made my day!

My mind is already half-way in Billings. That will be sort of a home-coming for me, although I seriously doubt whether I will recognize anything but the rimrock. I intend to wander into the Gazette office; and I'll read the Gazette to see whether it still has the same clipped writing style.

Then I'll give you a full report.

Get back on track soon---both of you.

Mark
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Oblong? Never heard of it. On the Mpls Tribune we had various people in from the hinterlands around the ND-Minnesota border, who reported weekly papers thereabouts that ran headlines: "Fertile Woman Dies in Climax," those being names of little towns there. My favorite headline from my Tribune days, however, is not based on a little prairie town but on one of the world's great cities: "Rome--a Mecca for Christians!"

I have been doing a bit of spadework for your campaign to run down some Illinoisisms of the 1910 era. The best material will come from my dad, whom I wrote today asking him to send on some expressions from you. By 1910 he was two years old, speaking prose already, probably with a good collection of expressions picked up at hog-butcherling time when he got to eat a chitlin. I would hope he will be writing in a week or so.

I got on the phone to a friend who is an aficionado of expressions, and a worker in the American Dialect Society's efforts to make a dialect map of the U.S. First he suggested that you see the ADS Dialect Notes 1898-1920, a five volume work that is random from all over the country. He also made these suggestions: (all American Dialect Society publications)

1. ADS Publication # 62, November 1969 - word check list from Olney, Ill., the personal documents of a 16-year-old boy, with comments on the 1876 campaign and other things, with bibliography.


4. ADS Dialect Notes, v. V, pt. 5 - Intentional Mispronunciation in the Central West.

5. ADS publication # 38, Nov. 1962, Roger Shuy, "Northern Midland Dialect Boundary of Illinois," which includes old-fashioned terms.

There you have it. Did you know scholars got so detailed over something as incapable of being pinned down as common speech? And by the way, are you watching "History of English?" The show on the Scots' speech was the most fascinating of the series for me. The opening two shows, and the Black Speech, were also great, I thought.

Before I forget: should you want to contact this Dialect man directly, he is Garrett Scott, a local high school teacher, at (309) 452-8116.

Well, the Western. It is an interesting turn of events that I am now identified through my association with you. People talk to me and mention you. A couple of people recalled your banquet talk to them some years ago; one said it was the best speech they had ever had for the banquet. Two women fought over which book was better, House of Sky or English Creek. (I pick Sky.) Margaret Connell Szasz asked about you; I discussed you while in that session with Ed Svete at the Gazette. (When I got home I was down in the basement and saw the trunk with the legend painted on it: Mark Wyman, c/o Gazette, Billings, Mont.) And of course my conversation with Bill Lang centered partly on your writing.

Squiggy"
It was an unusual turn of events that brought me to hear Jim Welch talk. I took the walking tour of the city Thursday afternoon, but after the museum no one else wanted to walk all the way to the Yellowstone Art Center, but I did. I asked about your friend there, and was led to her--interrupting her conversation with Jim Welch. So I chatted with him, learned of his talk that night, bought a paperback of one of his books and had him autograph it, and then that night after Dad and I had dined with Carstensen and Paul Prucha, Dad and I went to the art center. The talk had just started; about 60 or so people there, I think, mainly people in their 20s and 30s, most of them probably working on a novel. Jim talked on some of his sources (one was Evers' ethnological work on the Blackfeet; I wanted to tell him that at that moment Evers was about 5 blocks away), and his troubles in getting "in" to the time period. He read a part about the Blackfeet stealing horses from the Crow, then answered questions: people wanted to know about some poetry teacher at the U of Montana (Jim liked him much, told of the teacher's encouragement and even financial help), about how he developed his dialogue, about whether he will write more poetry (probably not). Then we bought some gifts in the gift counter, and headed back to the hotel where the group was due back from the Custer battlefield. I was very happy to have met Jim Welch. While I don't feel he comes up to your best writing, he is still quite good and provides a great contrast in looking at the modern West.

Carstensen seemed in great shape, certainly better than my Dad who has made a fine recovery from surgery last summer. I asked about Runte, and he would only say that Runte is obnoxious to some important people. He did say, however, that if he were chairman and the Dean were against a 20-3 department vote, he would be out picketing the dean's office the next day. (Of course, I have only read one of his books--vs. all of yours.)

What about my work? I am bogged down right now in translating parts of an Italian tome on 1910-1923 emigration from Italy. But it moves better after I have been hitting it for a few days. Regarding the DP manuscript which you have given me repeated assistance on, I called Schocken and they wanted to see it, so after re-typing some messier parts I sent it off to them. Next I will try Pantheon, then Beacon, then I think I'll contact your HBJ friends. I certainly appreciate your help, Ivan.

Your Alaska trip sounds like Dorothy's visit to Oz to me and out here in the flat prairie land. Such a trip must have zoomed your spirits into previously-unknown areas. Will you write about Alaska again? I took the liberty of photocopying your letter and sending it to my nephew at Madison who worked two summers on the salmon run; he wants to write, I have heard (although he almost never writes me!), and I thought he should see something of your use of words.

Those of you who are Sherwood Anderson fans have a treat here this week: Ray Lewis White of our English faculty, who has written umpteen scholarly studies on Anderson, is going to give the Fall Arts & Science lecture on "A Walk Through Winesburg, Ohio." I pulled the book out last night and read parts of it again, loving every word. But what more did he write? Windy MacHerson's Son is not up to that.

All for now. Good luck on the Central Illinois dialect circa 1910. Won't you be let down if it turns out their favorite expression was, "Have a good day!"

best -- Mark
Dear Mark—

I've lost track of the schedule of WHA glory at Billings, but I guess by now you are either (a) replete with magnificent memories of the rimrocks and passionate panel discussions or (b) readying yourself to be replete etc. I much await your report. Be warned that I intend to track down Vernon and compare your report with his, humm?

Carol's back in the classroom, I'm still at the keyboard; the orbit of the Doigs is as usual, I guess. But as you know, we girded for the rest of this year by heading to Alaska the day after Labor Day. Short(?) report: Fairbanks and central Alaska were more autumnal than we ever dreamed, the streaks of gold birch foliage starting pretty soon after we flew past Denali (aka McKinley, especially amongst non-native Alaskans) and going on and on, up the long ridges around Fairbanks and then north along the river valleys and in small patches even across the tundra. A bit dazzling to those of us whose eyes recognize only evergreen any more. While we mooched off our friends the Reeburghs for the next 10 days or so—both sides amiably admitting that we were getting back at them for all the times they've mooched off us when they've passed through Seattle as the first step of jaunts "Outside"—we found out that the weather was late October, whatever the hell the calendar said about Sept. 3, 4, etc. You maybe know Fairbanks began as a gold mining town (about 80 years ago), and given that the mining was big corporate hydraulic hose-down-the-world-and-sort-out-anything—that-looks-like-money stuff, the town isn't much like the older settlements, such as Sitka and Juneau, we'd been to before. But I guess we recognized some of the Alaskaness we'd noticed in those other places, people doing umpteen different things a day, cramming into all their lives all the things that need doing when you're out at the end of terrific distances, and their nerve ends often a little frayed accordingly. The Reeburghs, for instance, live ten or so miles out of Fairbanks on a ridge with a nifty view of the Alaska Range of mountains, and so Carelyn is president of the volunteer fire department, sorting out what sounded to us like an incredible amount of politics and just general snits about what fire district has jurisdiction over what, who does what, and so on; Carelyn also was on the election verification board the first several days we were there, and one of the thought-provoking duties of that job is informing convicted felons who have voted that their vote don't count; she says she carefully scrawls her name unreadably on those little billet-douxes. Bill is an oceanographer at the Institute of Marine Sciences at the U. of Alaska, and was just readying to go down to Yakutat, whereof you may be forced to nauseam and beyond about the Great Seal and Dolphin Rescue, to do some real scientific stuff, studying the oxygen levels etc. of Russell Fjord now that the glacier was turning it into a fresh-water lake. So, he was muscling the UA maintenance for a winch he needed, Alaska Airlines for guaranteed delivery of the 7 tons of equipment he had to have at Yakutat on a given day, the Forest Service for a place to stay, the Forest Service and the Park Service for sufficient access to the fjord/lake for his reasearch, and so on. All in all, it much impressed us, how much sharper a person's elbows need to be in order to get things done, Up There.

Our tourist mode: a weekend at Denali Nat'l Park, which was vivid with knee-high yellow willow and reddish-purple berry bushes below that. One big Oriental rug, Carol says that country was. So Denali was one peak, you should pardon expression, of our gawking around, and the other was a flight up across the Arctic Circle with
the Reeburghs' bush pilot son Scott. 5 1/2 hours in a single-engine Cessna, just us and Scott and a couple of handfuls of mail and--you ready for this?—case after case of soda pop. The two native, i.e. Indian, villages and the one Eskimo village we were delivering to are dry of alcohol, but sweet of tooth; the amount of 7-Up that we were dropping off at villages of 200 people would have about floated each of those villages, and Scott, who works for a flying service that has a number of these mail-and-freight routes, told us he also flies in the dentist once a year, with all his gear, to spend a week of repair work on the teeth of each village. Live and learn, Doigs, we thought to ourselves. Anyway, sociology aside, the flight was terrific for: the two bears and six moose we spotted on the tundra; the sense of expanse, country going on and on and not all of it the same, a different look to it every ten minutes or so; and the final delivery leg of the flight, through (literally) the Brooks Range during a storm, clouds and mountains looming all around and the plane bucking like hell as Scott followed the river that would take us to the Eskimo village, Anuktuvuk. We've known Scott since he was two years old, and so were confident we were in sober competent hands; and quite a lot of the time in those mountains, we figured those were the kind of hands we needed to be in.

Well, that's the micro version of macro-Alaska. To other business: Prepare to snicker at this, as a true Midwestern grandee ought to, but as I whale away at finishing this homesteader novel I'm resorting (blessedly briefly) to one of those old Oblong-Normal jokes I picked up in my Decatur days. Generally wedding headlines, right?—Oblong Miss to Wed Normal Man. To underscore the moil and general disorder of the Montana homestead boom around the time of WWI, I thought I'd have one of my Scotchmen, burr still pretty much intact, meet up with a newcomer from Illinois, with resultant dialogue along the lines of: "We come from Oblong, Illinois. Ever hear of it?" "Illinois, yes." "Oblong is near to Normal." "Is it really. I wouldn't have thought so." You get the idea, right, even if it probably does have vaudeville dust all over it? (And I swear on a stack of Pantographs that it was Oblong and not your peerless community that set me off on this.) But does Doig really know how an rural Illinoisan, Oblong variety, talked, circa 1910? Hell no, but Wyman surely does! Any quick suggestions or sources come to mind, on ruralisms of that area? I wondered if you might have anything of the sort in Immigrants in the Valley, but couldn't ferret out any there on a quick look. All I have in mind is a "by gee" or "ayup" sort of characteristic, the way Montanans say hello with "How ya doin'"? for instance. Don't, DO NOT, go to any research work on this, Mark: but if you've got anything handy in your head about what farm (or other) folk in the area might plausibly say, as an interjection or some other habit, or you know of a folkway or linguistic book that might have something, I'd be plumb happy to hear it.

What else, with us. Not much, really. We went to Mt. Baker last Sunday for our annual fall jag of resplendent scenery, and got it. Pete Steen of the Forest History Society and the Carstensen class of 7 was through here last week, and got me in to a lunch put on by the Weyerhausers at their Versailles between SeaTac and Tacoma; Pete was real good in his bit of speaking, and the guest speaker, Dixy L. Ray, was real wacko in hers. I guess that's pretty much the way the world looks to me, what with Reagan coming back from Iceland and proclaiming it a famous victory; my friends are just fine, but the rest of them out there tend toward wacko or worse. Give me the world view from Obl-- sorry, Normal, okay?
Dear Ivan and Carol,

The morning news brings a report of Seattle's garbage problems, which set me to recalling the rather unusual garbage system we employed in that summer of 1981. Which led me to think that it is some time since we have corresponded, and perhaps it is my turn. I learned that a letter I had sent to an English friend (in Scotland) never reached him, and perhaps a letter I sent to you last Spring also was in the same undelivered pouch. Anyway, here comes a brief manuscript from the heartland—typed on my 1961 Olivetti portable due to the repairs being given my electric gizmo.

School began here a week ago; earliest in memory for anyone. Our advantage is that we now will get out earlier in December, and isn't that a treat! I have only two classes, since I'm coming off sabbatical, but one of those has 180 students. I am having to alter my lecturing style sharply: I have found that I can't read any long quotes, that I must repeat my main points several times, and that I have to start putting something—anything—on the overhead projector with 6 minutes left or they all stand up and leave. But putting something on the overhead keeps them in their seats for they must copy down everything.

Summer brought considerable research progress on the returned immigrants, although I have the unusual problem in that I have not yet read piles and piles of the material I acquired. Dissertations, theses, unpublished articles, short pieces in Finnish and Swedish, and a massive bunch of pages from the 1905 Italian parliamentary debates. I made a couple of research trips, including one to the Swedish archives at Augustana College in Rock Island, but most of the time we were here and I was reading. I tried to spend 30 minutes a day on the Italian.

The one big break in the summer came with the customary trip to Wisconsin, only this was special: I had my 30th class reunion, and those same days my mother put on a retrospective art exhibit, her first. I had come up with the art exhibit idea last year, and once I mentioned it the rest of the family got behind it and the River Falls Town & Country Art Club sponsored it. Then, when everything was set regarding details, we told my mother. Of course she went along, and soon was organizing it. She had works from her Art Institute days in the '20s, all the way to her more recent oils and her current pastime of painting flowers with water colors. The exhibit turned out to be a sort of reunion, with old friends coming by the droves, so that made it special too.

My high school reunion was a lot of fun. Eva had gone to see her parents in Germany, so I was alone but actually I enjoyed myself more without worrying whether Eva was happy or bored (at the last reunion we attended there, in 1976, she was quite bored). One of my best high school pals attended for the first time; he is now RETIRED from the Air Force!
I sensed once in awhile a growing awareness in the RHHS Class of '56 that we are drifting into that period when we will be the old ones in our communities. Several from the class have recently lost their parents. Others commented that they are the last of the line, etc. Quite by accident I sat at dinner beside a girl I had been in grade school with also; she came from a farm in the Bohemian settlement south of town near Big River. This girl was always tough, lacked much refinement, but we had a great talk about old times, and I realized that at the dinner I talked more with her than I had during 4 years of high school. She now is married to a dairy farmer, seemed to have arms of iron, and had a deep tan that I knew was from being out throwing hay bales rather than in a tanning salon. I got her talking about her childhood—this I recalled her bringing homemade soap in to show the class, and also about styles of "old-time" dancing (as we called it). I have come the full circle on old-time: in junior high I kind of liked doing the polka and schottische, but then in high school it was rejected, the "shit-kicker" style. Now I like to remember how gracefully and how beautifully some of those farm kids could dance the polka.

Things are changing around our house, too. Dan went off to college two days ago, going to Western Illinois University at Macomb. It has about 10,000 students, and above all has a great debate program which attracted Dan. I drove him over, got him unloaded in his dorm room, then drove the two hours back. He has left a hole in our life here. The girls are busy as ever, with soccer, music lessons, and all the typical 8th grade activities.

I'm wondering what to do about my DP manuscript. I wrote the agent last March to inquire, and he responded quickly with a report on the list of rejections—American Heritage, Viking, Simon & Schuster, Dodd Mead, Hill and Wang... He said he only makes periodic reports. He got the ms. in May 1985, so we are now coming up on two years with him; it went out for almost a year before that, of course. I was told by the woman at Norton that she was sure Indiana U. Press would take it. What would be your advice? Write the agent again to ask for a progress report—and then inquire what he thinks? The DP Act was signed in 1948, so the 40th anniversary is coming up and I would like to have the book out then.

Our tentative plans for next summer are to have a short family visit to Spain, probably in June, and then after visiting the relatives in Germany, Eva and the girls would fly home while I go in to darkest Poland. I also will hope to do some research in Rome and maybe Ireland. But it is all quite tentative. Watch this space for details.

I'll be going to the WHA in Billings—why don't you come too?

How goes the homesteader novel? When can I count on seeing it?

the best —

Mark
Dear Ivan and Carol,

School got out for the kids today, providing the abrupt change in seasons that is dictated to families by the school calendar. We have had a pretty wet spring, basically cooler than usual, enough to frost some early corn. Now we are getting set for a visit by my folks on Sunday for a few days (to see Dan graduate), and then by Eva's mother for two or more weeks. I am not teaching this summer, thank goodness, but will be continuing my research and preparing for a new survey class in fall.

Thanks for your newsy letter of April 30, especially your report on Montana visit. Funerals do present a web of family relationships; I usually find that the reunion aspect makes them quite cheerful when an older person has died—was it not so with yours? The only time I got to see some of my distant relatives is at funerals, but in the late 1940s we chased and fought around places like Gunnison, Colorado, and Henning, Illinois.

My sabbatical has ended, and everyone asks me "How was it?" I got much done, but not enough, but when I stop to realize that one of my time-consuming tasks was learning Italian, then I must conclude that I accomplished much. I am able now to skim most Italian documents, settle on a paragraph I need—and then take an hour looking up words to translate it. Vocabulary is the problem—not grammar. And there is much in these old documents, since Italy was one of the early European countries to realize there was gold in the fact that many emigrants were returning to their old homes.

But I have been slogging through some government documents from this side of the Atlantic, as well as numerous secondary works that sometimes touch on the return movement. One of the best was a dissertation finished at Indians in 1983, in folklore, by Marsha Penti (now with the Finnish Archives at Suomi College on the Upper Peninsula). It was on the "Ethnic Folklore of the Returned Finns," and was made from the interviews she conducted in Finland in the 1970s among the numerous returned Finns. Most of them stick together with each other returnees, where they praise and defend America and criticize the Finns, whom they call unfriendly! They long for jello and maple syrup, and join clubs of returnees in Finland. Many of the stories concern embarrassment in the U.S. over language problems; one of my favorites (did I write this to you last time?) was told by a woman who had been hired soon after her arrival in New York, as a maid for a very wealthy family that was having a big dinner party that night. They dispatched her to the drug store with a list containing two items; she presumed both were for the party. So when the guests were served their dishes of ice cream that night, each scoop had two pink plastic-coated suppositories stuck in it.

Mention of folklore reminds me of an incident the other day when I was having my car fixed and chatted with the garage peon who was driving me home. I asked if he had ever heard of the "death car" story, the car that sold for so cheap (although it was a large, luxurious model) and it was finally discovered why: a body in the trunk had thoroughly impregnated the vehicle with its odor. No, the peon said, he had never heard that. He settled his paunch back in the seat, and added that he had known about a nearby case where a T-bird had been driven off a winding country road in a ravine, where it was not noticed for weeks. By then the dead driver's body had exploded from the heat, and the fiberglass was saturated with such a smell that it never could be removed. Of such stories are folktales made.
I have enjoyed much evening reading this past semester of my sabbatical, not having to worry about getting a lecture ready for the next day, or grading tests. Probably the biggest book I read was Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*, a book I enjoyed despite my relative paucity of language know-how; I think anyone who knows Latin would enjoy it far more. Now I am reading Ole Rolvaag’s *The Beast of Longing*, which the Minnesota Historical Society has recently reprinted. He published it in English in the early 1930s, and is quoted as having said that he liked it best of all his writing—not better than Giants in the Earth. He may have liked it better, but it is not on the same level with Giants. It begins in that far, far northern area of Norway where Rolvaag was from, and then jumps to Minneapolis where the hero stays in a rooming-house with so many different languages spoken that it is called "Babel." There are touches in the book that remind me of Giants, but I suppose he mainly liked it because it gave him a chance to write about his childhood.

Recently I had a talk with an elderly biologist here, about changes in some populations brought by mankind’s presence. It is said—and he agreed—that there are more deer now in Wisconsin than there has ever been, thanks to the abundance of smaller trees and bushes for browse, items that were much scarcer in the days of the large trees. He said that the near-destruction of the beaver in the early 19th Century probably had a big ecological effect, but man was then able to stop that effect anyway: I’m referring to beaver making dams, and ponds, and therefore sloughs and swamps. He said there is a beaver parasite, a beetle, that must have been near extinction too. Now the beaver is on a big comeback; we even have them in Normal!—about five blocks from here, merrily damming up a tiny creek that runs through a park. Regarding other animals, he said robins have obviously adapted to town life, and he ventured that there are more robins now than there ever had been in the U.S. Rabbits seem to thrive in towns, mainly because their predators from rural areas are scarce inside the city limits.

What news you brought of the Livingston Shops! When I was there in 1961-62, the poor shopmen were engaged in a bitter battle with the NP to keep the merger, and to therefore assure that the shops would always stay there. I went down when two of the union men were being sent off to testify at the hearings in Minneapolis. One had a flannel plaid shirt that clashed profusely with his Hawaiian sunset tie; and I remember him making a fist and vowing, "We’ll lick 'em!" The wire services brought us reams of copy on the testimony of the railroads—doubtless handed to the newspapers by messengers, obviating the need to cover the lengthy hearings—but nary an item on the testimony of our two Livingston shopmen, as I recall. So now they are defeated—truly defeated. Everyone I knew there, especially in my Army Reserve unit, seemed to be connected somehow with the shops. Here is a secret: one of my regular beats, to be covered daily, was the "Depot beat", to pick up railroad news.

Which brings me to the Montana trip again: I really feel a need to get out to Montana this summer, but don’t see how I can hatch it. Money is a major problem. I do have a fiction project I have occasionally come back to, and to continue much more on it I need to get up into that country in northern Idaho or northwestern Montana, toward the border, in July or August. If I do raise the money, I’ll contact you anyway.

Yes, I recall the Macbeths. He went off to St. Olaf College, which then dropped him after a few years. I understand (from Alden) that Corinne has inherited a parking lot in downtown Seattle that keeps the wolf from the door.

My agent is still moving the DP ms. around. I suppose he will give up in a short time, and return it to me, at which point I will attack the university presses. Thanks for your part in helping me find a publisher, even though that fell through. They just do not see DPs as a market. I do. Each ex-DP will want to buy a copy for his/her children. But—must
Dear Mark--

Corinne McBeth:
Wife of Mike McBeth?!
Mnolake neighbors of the Wymans?? Mike in grad school with
us???

There. I told her I'd of course impeccably remember to mention
running into her--at an east-of-Lake-Washington AAUW group I did a
reading to (for? at?)--and if I've plucked the right name out of the
scribbles in my notebook, I duly have. And if I remember right, she
said Mike's now a banker or some such. She remembered the Wymans
once having them and the Doigs for a social evening, and when she
said so I could recall it having happened but couldn't recall Mike
for the life of me. Ah, but you will. Now you have to.

Just when I finally find a week that the writing starts going
easier, that April weather Puget Sound style is getting noticeably
less cruel, that my allergies simmer down, what happens but that the
Rooshdians irradiate the universe. The only good I see in the
world's current trends is that Carol's classes benefit the more, the
worse the world gets. The space shuttle disintegrating, Marcos dis-
integrating, Chernobyl disintegrating, it is all media grist, and I
know something has happened in the world when she comes home and
asks, "Have you had the news on?"

The world aside, which is where I usually try to put it, we're
doing okay. I do seem to be over the hump on the homesteader novel,
even though I still have a hellacious total of pages to write before
New Year's Eve. Have hit the point in the plot where I can look
ahead and see where everything (well, almost) fits, and given my
magpie style of composition I can now make the day's quota of pages
wherever the dickens I want, as long as it's in that plot ahead. As
Carol said this morning when I may have actually whistled in the
kitchen, "There stands a happy man, able to write anywhere in the
book he pleases."

Been kind of a slog getting here, though. We've recently been
through a bathroom re-do and Carol's case of flu, neither of which
we want to repeat in the next 30 years. When she went down with the
flu toward the end of winter quarter she even stayed home from work
a day, which is always a gauge that she feels pretty truly crummy.
Guess it begins in grade school, huh, that any educational group
of more than one person starts handing around pestilence; certainly
year after year, flu rampages through Carol's students and then the
faculty. Or do germs behave better than that in the Midwest?

Here on my front, I've been to Montana, briefly: in February my
uncle Wally, my mother's youngest brother, died of cancer. Of three
kinds of it, in fact, at 61. When I was a kid growing up Wally and
I were close--I boarded out with him and his family a number of
times in my ricocheting grade school career--but drifted
considerably apart since my grandmother died; one of those strange
funeral-aftermath things, in which I thought I was doing Wally a
favor by splitting Grandma's funeral costs with him and he evidently
thought, perhaps on the basis that I have enough money to live in
Seattle and therefore can afford about anything, that I should pay
it all. I was more hurt than miffed (though a little of that, too,
you betcha), but in any case, that and my lifelong pull away from that side of the family, which my dad and I had always felt inextricably tangled in for Grandma's sake, kept me from seeing much of Wally in recent years. But he named his own pallbearers and so there I was one more time, at graveside in White Sulphur Springs with the wind whipping sleet down out of the Castle Mountains. Beforehand I asked the undertaker, a truly fine guy—he's fond of saying, "These damn funeral parlor operators are giving us undertakers a bad name"—and good friend who buried my folks as well as Wally, does anybody in Montana ever die in good weather, and he semi-seriously said, not in his memory. I made a very quick trip of it, or at least as quick as can be done in these days of deregulated air travel which actually touches down anywhere between the right and left coasts of America (one flight a day in and out of Helena, for example), and so didn't, thankfully, get in on much of the family stuff. Just enough to see what I suppose is also getting to be standard American, the his-her-ours-those-who's collection of family; in Wally's case, his first wife, mother of his two sons, still lives in White Sulphur and so was at the funeral, quite broke up with the occasion; but his third and current wife, who was really agonizingly distraught, isn't from there, so she was a stranger to everybody and pretty much to Wally's sons as well, but she did have with her a dozen or more of her first family, sons, grandsons, I don't know who all. I was out of all this, seated in a front pew with the other pallbearers, but I could see that the shielded side room of the funeral chapel where the family sits kept filling up with people who only semi-knew each other.

Wally's younger son Dan, who lives in White Sulphur and works as a ranch hand, a modern cowboy actually, was telling me the perplexity of it all during Wally's last lingering weeks, Dan trying to figure out how to console people he really knew nothing about; which I thought was no small mark of maturity in Dan, whom I'd last seen as an addleheaded rodeo punk—he knows enough now to know when he's in over his head.

Well, pardon all the damn funereal stuff, but I thought you might harken to a bit of small-town sociology. Incidentally, or not so, we're holding firm on our intention not to go to Montana this summer; I'm gonna stay home and write; but if you go, be ready for grim economic times. Burlington Northern just closed the last of its Livingston shop, the state had a very near-miss on drought wiping out the spring planting, coal tax revenue is down, oil etc.—the only bright spot anybody seems to see is you tourists.

Speaking of the genus, if I sawdied the Carstensonian itinerary properly, even as I write Vernon and Jeannette are invading Switzerland. I had lunch with him on the 21st, heard the plans for this 2-week trip to see Jeannette's son in Amsterdam and then Vernon's old Madison buddy in Switzerland, and concluded the pair of them have more energy than I do. Particularly given that Jeannette had a helluva siege of internal bleeding, about Xmas. I asked V. the latest scoop on the Al Runte situation in the UW history dept., and evidently the straight skinny is that Runte isn't going to get tenure, even though he's done the requisite work, etc. Dumb fracas for the dept. to have got itself into, I say from my safe sidelines.

Not too much else new here, I guess. How about you, when you're not hobnobbing with Cuomo?
Dear Ivan and Carol,

No, nothing to report yet on the ms., just an attempt to improve my correspondence with you-all to make up for some rather lengthy lapses last year. I hope the oscillating eyelids has quit acting up and that all powers are concentrated on your ms. The weather news from your section has all been lousy of late, but perhaps you can hole up in that canyon and forget what is happening outside, resorting to kerosene lamps if needed.

I am still bubbling over a two-day research trip to the Chicago Historical Society last Friday-Saturday, during which time I met Adam Walaszek, a Polish historian with whom I had been corresponding since last summer. He did his dissertation at Cracow on returned immigrants to Poland, and graciously has provided me with a lot of suggestions on books since then. I will expect to get translation help from him in Poland in summer 1987 since my Polish (as you know!) is about as extensive as my Tlingit.

We had lunch together Friday near the CHS; then on Friday night I had him take me into deepest Polonia where we had dinner at a Polish restaurant. I swear that from the time we got off the El and transferred to a bus, only Polish was spoken in the streets (sounded to me like Polish—might have been Tlingit). Our waitress spoke to me in American teen-age English and to Adam in Polish teen-age Polish. We froze to our marrow waiting 20 minutes for the bus that evening, but back in my hotel I warmed up with a hot, hot shower and have only good memories of the evening.

At the Chicago Historical Society I spent my time on an interesting project of the 1930s, when the WPA wisely put the out-of-work teachers and writers (how joyful to note that we would have been cared for!) to work translating Chicago's ethnic press back into the 1890s, at least selected articles. These were then grouped by topics. So I went through section "III.G" and "III.H." for Polish, Hungarian, Italian, and Lithuanian newspapers published in Chicago from 1890 to 1930, and found quite a few good items. Sometimes the translator was obviously concerned about names, providing lengthy lists of who had signed a petition demanding that the Czar quit bullying the people of Vilna. But generally it was pretty good—stuff on groups formed to aid those returning, for example; some pretty angry editorials telling Americans (at least those who could read Polish) that because of the treatment given to Poles many of them were going back home. And a gem of an editorial urging the Poles to start acting better—boys should not pull a knife at every opportunity, girls should quit going to "questionable" dances; then the Americans will develop a better opinion of the Poles. (I have seen a similar editorial at almost the same period, from a Negro newspaper.)

There is something about being immersed in ethnic Chicago that is always thrilling to me. Until I am in it, I tend to scorn Chicago. But to be riding the El on a Friday night, and to realize that you are just about the only native-born American of WASP background in the car, while all around you people are speaking Spanish, Polish, and other exotic languages—it gives a sense of Walt Whitman's joy of democracy: in this case "the varied carols I hear" coming in varied languages as well as varied occupations. There can be beauty in humanity, I realize in such moments, as well as in the mountain vistas and forest trails that we love.
Back at my desk here (I'm on sabbatical now), I have been going through secondary studies that touch on return immigration. A book on Irish immigration had some interesting sidelights of the "returned Yanks," who mainly liked to toss around American gobbledygook and expressions. The author told of an Irish lass who returned home, and the first night her parents had a party where all her friends showed up. The girl kept walking around calling out "Where's Papa? Where is Papa?" Meanwhile the shy Gaelic-speaking father was sitting in a corner of the kitchen; he finally responded, "I think you left it hanging behind the door." And the author told of a returned Yank who failed back in Ireland just as he had failed in America. Each time he got drunk and took his only cow to sell, so he could buy a return ticket to Amerikay. Each time somebody saved him, so he had the cow to try to sell again—which he tried repeatedly, until the cow became known locally as "America."

Nothing on the DP ms., as you might have guessed. We are now at the three-month point with Viking, and I think I will drop my agent a letter next week, saying something like: "I see that Viking has now had the ms. for three months. Should I assume that this is a good sign? Or that it is forgotten on a shelf?"

One of the highlights of my life recently was a chance to hear Mario Cuomo speak. The Lincoln Association brought him to Springfield for the annual program on Lincoln's birthday. I have never attended these, partly because of the cost (this was $25), partly because the previous star attractions have not been among my pantheon of heroes. But I wanted to hear Cuomo, and was happy I went. It was perhaps not as good as his Democratic convention speech, but overall it was quite good, bringing together the broad themes in Lincoln's life down to day—when not 1 in 7 is a slave but rather 1 in 7 is in poverty in this land of wealth. I like him because he shows a sense of history, and because he obviously loves the language and is able to use it often with a feeling for its beauty and power. The contrast with Bush and Reagan is enormous.

My luck was seated next to an assistant of Senator Paul Simon; he had been with Simon and others as they chatted with Cuomo upstairs in his room before the dinner. He said Simon had sent Cuomo his book on Lincoln the congressman, and Cuomo had responded with a detailed two-page letter which indicated that Cuomo had indeed read it. Cuomo commented in that session, he said, that he tries to read each morning from 6–8 a.m., reading books that have nothing whatever to do with his day-to-day business as governor. I shook hands with him afterward, mentioned my research on immigration, and he expressed enough interest that I have taken the enormously humble step of sending a copy of the immigrant book to him. Whether I will be named his vice-presidential candidate in 1988 is still undecided at this point—his aides are conferring.

bad news about the oil spill. You had assured me that Senator Magnuson got a law passed banning oil in Puget Sound. But good news that the spit is as yet untouched. And you can take hope from reports of areas of other oil spills in recent years, which show a surprisingly quick comeback.

Did you hear that there was a fire in the Presidential Library? -- Yes, both volumes were burned, but it wasn't quite so serious because Reagan had not finished coloring one of them.

And so I leave you for now. all the best—

Mark
Dear Mark—

First missive of the year, this, though I don't have a helluva lot to report. Which must be a measure of how quiet our holiday season was. Our only travel was to Dungeness Spit, for New Year's Eve and Day. We did that with much trepidation, because of an oil spill from a tanker that grounded at Port Angeles about three weeks ago. The kill of birds was considerable—we noticed, for instance, a total absence of diving birds on the Pt. Angeles side of the Spit, while the inner eastern side was pretty much full of ducks etc. as ever—and the cruxier question will be how much the food chain of the refuge's tidelands will be affected. The good news was that the Spit itself was not oily. I felt despoiled myself when the story of the spill came. That Spit for almost 20 years now has been our favorite place in the world, it figured in my writing of both Winter Brothers and Sea Runners, and so I guess it is no wonder that the news came to me like a death in the family. I'm somewhat reassured after we didn't find oily beaches there, yet still apprehensive too. That was the 12th oil spill in Puget Sound—Strait of Juan waters in the past 5 years, and in a statistician's perspective wasn't "serious"—only 190,000 gallons of the 3.4 million aboard the tanker spilled. Why do I feel more like a Luddite than a statistician, though?

A medical bulletin from the Carstensens: Jeannette was hospitalized for 23 days with a bleeding diverticulum, got out yesterday feeling fine. In fact she felt fine during most of the hospital stay "except that I was bleeding to death," she reports. I'm having lunch with Vernon on Monday; both he and she sound chipper.

Yes, I hope too that Viking lead pays off for you. But don't elevate your hopes too much; my concern, frankly, is that you may be too scholarly for them. More in topic and aspect than actuality, I know you can write. But I think professors have a strike or so against them at commercial publishing houses—unless of course they're professors of English writing novels about professors of English writing novels. Anyway, hang in there, Viking or no Viking.

After what I thought was a big year of work in '85, I evidently face another one at least as big, in finishing Dancing at the Rascal Fair. Am close, a few weeks, to sending the first two chapters, 130 pp., off to my agent and editor, their first look at this ms. I dunno if I've written you—likely haven't—since a quirky left eyelid began bothering me. The goddamn thing, which is merely a popped-up gland in the middle of the eyelid, cost me about 3 weeks of work between Labor Day and Christmas, what with blurred vision, hotpacking, and finally minor surgery on the lid. And then had a mild recurrence just before Xmas, which I hope is under control. For all my supposed patience I don't think I'm a particularly good patient, and so I'm fretting a little for this ms and for the work ahead, even though the calendar tries to tell me it'll all come out okay again, Dec. 31 of this year.
This is beginning to read like a report from a field hospital, so let me get off medical topics to tell you the story of The Durer in the Suitcase. (Although now that I think about it, this involves jaundice...) Have been meaning to relay this to you, apropos (?) your DP passions. One of Carol's faculty colleagues, Katrina Maloof, was a youngster in WWII Germany, went through Dresden the morning after the fire bombing, etc. Her family took refuge, if it could be called that, somewhere in East Germany. The Russian occupation troops were everywhere, particularly in the local castle, and Katrina's father while walking through the woods one day came onto a bunch of Russians whooping it up, having a bonfire, scattering stuff around. He picked up a piece of the stuff, which looked like a painting, put it inside his coat and took it home. Upon close look it proved to be Durer's painting of (I think I have this title close to right) The Man with a Yellow Spot, the fellow pointing to his side where the jaundice was afflicting him. The family hid the painting, wondering what to do with it. Finally, years later, when Katrina was to leave for the West (ultimately to a Fulbright at one of the Seven Sisters schools and a Ph.D. at UW), they decided she would carry it out in her suitcase, get it to her brother in West Germany, who would then get it to the proper museum. Which ensued; but also, as Katrina points out, her brother was rewarded with some sort of scholarship, while she who came across the border with the Durer in her Suitcase got zilch! The story even goes on from there: Katrina's German-speaking literary club here in Seattle got around to reading Gunter Grass's latest novel a few years ago, and there as the cover illustration was the selfsame Durer painting. The literary German ladies of course wrote to Grass, and got back an inscribed copy of the book from him thanking Katrina for rescuing the painting.

Latest Montana report came in a letter from Great Falls today: after the hottest summer in the state's history came the wettest autumn and then the coldest November. So gird for superlatives, when you get out there next summer. More and more, I'm pretty sure you're gonna be on your own there, I don't foresee us making the trip this year. Among others things '86 will need to be a year of work on this house. Come '87 we're practically going to live in Montana, but till then...

Notwithstanding the good time you had at your Wisconsin 25th, I'm determinedly passing up my Northwestern reunion this year. Not quite sure why I feel so stoutly against going—well, I have great fun at our high school reunions—but it's maybe that I've kept in touch with the people I really liked and so there's really no element of surprise waiting there. Also, Carol and I have been considerably miffed at the direction Northwestern has recently taken, deciding to put money into competing (?) athletically with the rest of the Big Ten, for instance, and we both seem to feel Evanston and that life is behind us. Be interesting to see if we change our minds on that eventually.

Well, that's about it with us. Gently girding for the new year, I suppose is our status report. But alas, we know no matter what all else we manage to accomplish in '86, we won't come out of it knowing how to order a glass of water in Rome.

all best
Mark Wyman, left, receives award from Mark Plummer.

Second award for Wyman book

The Illinois State Historical Society has presented its Award of Superior Achievement to an ISU historian for his book describing the 19th-century influx of immigrants to the upper Midwest.


Although written about the decades prior to the Civil War, his book has special relevance to the changing times of the 1980s. During the past month, Mitsubishi and Chrysler automobile companies announced that Diamond-Star, their new joint venture company, will be constructed west of Normal, bringing a large new industry and many newcomers including some Japanese families to the area.

The situation was similar in the 1850s, when the railroad came to Bloomington, resulting in a large industrial yard and thousands of German, Irish and other immigrants with cultural backgrounds new to the area.

Wyman's book describes the interactions, which sometimes erupted into conflict, between the newcomers and earlier settlers in the Upper Mississippi Country from 1830-1860. The region includes Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

These diverse groups frequently clashed over such issues as drinking, public schools and the proper observance of the Sabbath. What one group considered a basic right another considered a sin.

Wyman's book, his second, was supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and by a sabbatical leave from ISU. A former labor reporter for the Minneapolis Tribune, Wyman has been on the ISU history faculty since 1971.

Another member of the ISU history faculty, Mark Plummer, is president of the Illinois State Historical Society. He presented the award to Wyman, and also gave an award in absentia to Mrs. Elizabeth Ives of Bloomington for superior achievement in historical preservation for her role in saving the Matthew Scott home in Chenoa. A six-person awards committee determined those to be honored.
Miller wins Cavanagh Award

David L. Miller, an archeological technician with ISU's Midwestern Archeological Research Center (MARC), is receiving the seventh annual Helen Cavanagh Award for the best master's thesis written in history during the past academic year at ISU.

He is being honored at an awards banquet at noon today in the Founders Suite of Bone Student Center.

Miller's thesis is titled "Archeological Investigation of the Historic Miller-Davis buildings in Bloomington, Illinois." The thesis documents the history of three buildings owned by prominent citizens. Historical documentation and archeological interpretation were combined to reconstruct the history of the buildings.

The award carries a $250 prize and is named for Dr. Helen Cavanagh, professor of history emerita, in honor of her contributions to the field of history. She taught at ISU from the mid-1940s through the mid-1970s, and had an honorary doctorate bestowed on her by ISU at the 1981 commencement. She now lives in Battle Creek, Mich.

Miller is a native of Galesburg. His thesis was directed by Professor M. Paul Holsinger and was selected for the award by the Department of History's Awards Committee.

Peruvian diplomat to speak

Juan Capunay, consul to the Peruvian delegation to the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, D.C., will be the guest speaker at the annual conference of the Illinois Conference of Latin Americanists today and Saturday at ISU and Illinois Wesleyan University.

The conference, co-sponsored by the two universities, is the first ever held in the Twin Cities by the organization, is the first to be sponsored jointly by a public university and a private institution, and is the first to be expanded to include high school teachers.

The title of the two-day conference is "Aspirations and Realities of the Andean Region." The conference is facilitated by the College of Continuing Education and Public Service.

Capunay's keynote address will be at 7:30 p.m. today in the Circus Room of Bone Student Center and is free and open to the public. He will discuss "A Latin American Point of View on the Central American Crisis: The Contadora Process and the 'Lima Group'." Questions and discussion will follow.

Friday events on the Wesleyan campus will include political science ("U.S. Influence on Latin American Politics"), anthropology ("Two Ecuadorian Communities Coping with Culture Change"), panel discussion ("Multi-disciplinary Views on Liberation Theology"), literature ("Poetic Visions from the Andean Countries"), three feature films from Colombia and Bolivia and Capunay's keynote address.

Saturday's activities at Bone Student Center will include workshops for social studies teachers and Spanish language teachers, literature ("Andean Literary Themes and Ideology"), and history ("Culture and Politics in Colombia").

Moderators and featured discussants during both days will include Susan D. Gillespie, James J. Alstrum, Charles Gray, Olga Martinez and JoAnn Rayfield from ISU; John Heyl, Robert Leh, Greg Leyh and Margaret Jacobson of Illinois Wesleyan, plus educators and specialists from the region.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Woe is me! Fil to Wyman who lets almost three months go by without writing the Digs. Obviously I don't deserve any response from you, much less agency work on my behalf. Briefly, this is the busiest semester I have had since about my second year of teaching. More on that later. I have been planning to write to you for a couple of weeks, but kept putting it off—mostly through lack of time, partly through the fading hope that my manuscript might get accepted and so I could report that proudly to you. Then this morning came a call from a man named Frank at Viking/Penguin, reporting that you have urged him to look at the DP manuscript. I gave him the name of my agent, Gerard McCauley, whom he immediately recognized; he will contact McCauley, he said. Well, I am quite indebted to you--wish I had some way to repay the favor, but doubt that you will ever need any benefit that I can bestow. So thanks, molt.

That last word gives a clue to one reason for my lack of extra time. I am taking Beginning Italian, and while it eats up only 1-2 hours per day it seems that that was all I had extra. It means the rest of my time tends to be quite scheduled, even at home. I am taking Italian because I am targeting a pile of Italian government investigations of the Returned Immigrants—my new research project. Some 1.2 million Italians returned from the U.S. in 1908-31, and each of these Americans apparently took something of America with them. My aim is to write a book on the phenomenon of return immigration (it was a mammoth thing, not really recognized by historians here or in Europe), emphasizing both the conditions they lived in here and the impact they had on their homelands. I plan to go to Europe in Summer 1987, and have started the grant applications toward that end. I have translators already lined up in Poland and Sweden; I will hit a big collection in Ireland, and in Italy x I am hoping to have a reading knowledge by Summer 1987. Of course, my Spanish background helps me. And it is quite a challenge to be taking a class again, cramming for exams, and actually feeling some stimulation of the brain cells from the concentrated effort. So buon giorno to you.

Several weekend trips have also crowded the schedule. The most recent was last weekend, when I drove up to Madison on Friday to attend the 25th reunion of my Class of 1960. My initial reaction to the Alumni Association mailing was to toss it into the wastebasket, but they already had a list of attendees and there was my predecessor as Cardinal editor, and another Journalism friend now on the Milwaukee Journal. So I sent in my check, and then sat back and thought of who else I would want to see at a reunion. I came up with two names of the most effective idealists in student government at Madison (who helped get the black sit-ins connected with our campus). I always felt these two were honest in their activities, not just promoting themselves as was common in student government. And I was—above all—curious about what they had done in the 1960s. So I obtained their addresses, wrote to them urging them to attend, and they were there.

Their presence helped make it a different kind of gathering for me. I did pump my friends on the 1960s, found most behavior predictable (one of my invitees had indeed led anti-war activities, as I expected), and found them...
willing to discuss the disruptions that followed the Ramparts revelations that the CIA was funding National Student Association activities on the international scene. We had quite a discussion about that. One of my invitees had sued the CIA for information they had on him, and he won, obtaining an enormous amount of information that is mainly laughable. (Sample: the CIA file said that "A G. Weissman led a rent strike in Brooklyn in 1948." But this G. Weissman lived in St. Louis, and he was then 10 years old.)

The girls were all very pretty, none of them very fat—which meets my prediction based on attending one high school reunion: girls do not attend reunions if they are fat, or if they are unmarried; boys and girls do not attend if they have something they are ashamed of. On the final point, I noted (as I expected) that one of my hometown classmates was not there—her son committed suicide two years ago.

So that was the big weekend in Madison. If you ever have a chance to attend one at NU, my advice would be—Go, but first make sure that people you want to see are going to be there.

Enclosed is a clipping on something on my Immigrants book. Sales of that thing are not tiny that I will not reveal them to you; suffice it to say that my first book is now outselling my second book. I wrote the publisher about it, wondering about putting it out in paperback, but he is not interested. I hope they remainder it soon.

d heard a fascinating talk on the Mississippi a few weeks ago, by an Augustana professor of English who some years ago won an NEH grant with the unusual proposal to "get re-acquainted with the river." He said that apparently the judges had a sense of humor, so they picked him for a grant. He became re-acquainted by, first, reading all he could on it (of course), but also by camping along it from Lake Itasca to St. Louis, and then by traveling on a houseboat from Prairie du Chien down to St. Louis. His talk kept me on the edge of my seat—so often in my life (I grew up 12 miles from where the Mississippi joins the St. Croix) I have wanted to write something on the Mississippi. Now the brain waves are picking up new signals.

My 21-year-old nephew went to Alaska last summer to work. Anchorage was so crowded that (much to his credit) he left there the day after arriving. He and a friend made their way to Naknek, got a job on a fishing boat piloted by a man called Elmer Fudd; that ended after a month (he sent home $2500 for his savings) and he went to work for PPI in—I think—Petersburg. I don't know his wages there except they were very high; he often worked 16-hour days and 7-day weeks. He was making so much money he couldn't afford to come back to school, and now is making his way down the coast to San Francisco preparatory to going to Australia. He did write that the crew was so fed up with the job that they were putting notes into the canned salmon: "Do not eat this."

About Montana next summer: we will keep you informed. Our summer is already filling up, amazingly. I hope Dan will get a USFS or National Park job, but it doesn't seem he is too interested. I want to hit Northwestern Montana, to compile some information and get some impressions for a bit of fiction I have been nursing. I have sabbatical in the Spring and will shape my trip plans then.

I don't deserve a reply to this for at least three months, but will be overjoyed if I could get a full log report sooner.

best to you—molto grazie.

Mark
Dear Mark--

Faced with too many call slips and too little time my last afternoon at the Montana Historical Society library, I looked at the slip for Bell, EJ, HOMESTEADING IN MONTANA, and told myself "Naah, skip that one, Wyman will send it to you and you can do it at leisure later." Well, maybe it didn't happen quite like that, but that's the way it worked out. The Bell material, which looks dandy, was in a category I'd talked myself into not looking at, on the grounds it was too far east in Montana--I can find grounds of this sort pretty readily the last day of a research stint--and so your providing of it had really added something to my homesteading lode. Many thanks.

This has been a summer and a half, as evidenced by the gap between my letters. August in particular has gone out of control. I'd intended to lay off on the homesteading novel for awhile at the 1st of August, but that date came and the opening chapter's lack of completeness and plenitude of gawkiness still bothered me, so I decided to give it another week. Not only did it turn into about as intense a week of writing as I've ever done, but here came some Alaskan friends through town to stay with us overnight, while they had the growing in the transmission of their pickup listened to. Overnight turned into 9 days, as calamity after calamity happened in the Dodge dealer's already desultory effort to fix that transmission. The Alaskans—he's an oceanographer at U. of Alaska—were on their way to begin a sabbatical in Denmark and LaJolla, so they fidgeted mightily, we swallowed hard and elbowed room for five in this two-person house, and we all managed to stay on speaking terms. That unexpected stint of houseguestness is about to be followed (tomorrow) by visitors we have been anticipating, Linda Miller and a husband we've never met. In between, Carol has been striving to paint the interior of the house and I've been trying to do other looming maintenance. Maybe you Wymans have got an idea there in trooping off to a cabin someplace.

Montana literally burned into your memory this summer. Drought and then some. Chances are strong this will prove to be the state's driest summer on record and it was dispiriting to see those crops, so short (grain about shin-high) you couldn't really tell the fields were growing anything, it simply looked as if the ground had turned that color. I went to Billings for a speech just before Memorial Day and the Custer National Forest rangers were issuing the fire warnings they ordinarily do in July or August. While we were in Gt. Falls, July 3 or so, we saw a tremendous white cloud to the southeast which we at first thought was a storm building; but kept watching it and it didn't move, base was firm to the horizon. It was the Sand Point fire about 40 miles from White Sulphur Springs, the biggest forest fire ever on that national forest (the Lewis & Clark, I guess it is there). At that afternoon in Gt. Falls, it was 100 degrees with a hot wind gusting to 55 mph; the trees in the back yard were in a constant dry rattling roar that sounded unnervingly like fire.

Climatically, our 3 Montana weeks were grim. Personally, socially, professionally, just fine. We had Bill Lang's house, near Clancy, for about 10 days while he and family biked in Europe and I got in a strong week then at the Historical Society library. Clyde Albright of Utah State was there on the MHS summer research fellowship ($4,000), looking for patterns in pioneers' reminiscences, and one day Donald Jackson, whom I'd never met, passed through. The three of us went down to the Windbag for lunch and spent the time bitching about publishers and royalties.
Rich Roeder, who was Malone's colleague in Bozeman, now is in Helena full-time, as assistant to the Lt. Governor, and Carol and I had a terrifically enjoyable supper with him. Rich knows more about Montana history sources than anybody except maybe Lang, but he's burnt out (self-admittedly) on teaching and seems to be thriving as a bureaucrat. When Carol and I headed on to Bozeman we stayed 3 nights with Mike and Kathy Malone, our first extended time around them. Malone is in mental motion as constantly as a beehive; he gets in the car and turns on the radio before starting the engine; comes down for breakfast, switches on the TV first thing. His step-daughter swears he can watch TV (has a satellite dish), listen to music on earphones, and read a book, all at once. Remarkable to see a mental energy level like that; I do believe that if Mike's collaborators on the intended new Western history text can keep up with him, they may produce the dominant book.

Montana in '86 summer, you wonder about. Montana, you have unerringly aimed at the one summer, recent and future, when the Doigs likely won't hit Montana. At least it's been my proclaimed intention to stay home next summer (until we may go up to Alaska after Labor Day and mooch our revenge on the recent Alaskans) and just peck away at life and the homesteader book. Carol may talk me into a quick visit to Montana—she going there switches her head off from the school year and back into life, she says—but if we do it'll probably be no more than a week. So the odds for coinciding with us aren't real good. Let's keep the topic in discussion, though, and if nothing else we can provide you a few eating places, how to visit a terrific Nature Conservancy preserve we've been to, etc.

Your advent of an agent sounds excellent, particularly in that he specializes in what you want done. I think that's vital, though not too many people seem to realize—to have an agent who fits the size of your work. A couple of my Missoula buddies I think are over-aged; they have big-name agents who have big-name clients, and naturally the time and attention goes to the bigger names rather than the lesser.

Your guy Stephen Gates, I see, if going to write a biography of Faulkner, which I'm glad to see. Blotner, the English prof who did the 2-volume elephantiasitic bio of F., put everything into it except judgment. You can find out in there everytime Faulkner farted or blew his nose, but no hint of how he wrote.

Jim Harrison, you asked about. I guess I'd say he's a writer I admire but who perplexes me some. I have Farmer around here but haven't read it, and I've liked the sound of Sundog. Harrison is most famous (out here) for Legends of the Fall, which was the longest piece of fiction ever to run in Esquire, I think; it's set in Montana, purportedly around Choteau, and while the prose has impressive powerful compression, the characters were leading a frontier memorial life that I either couldn't recognize or grasp. So, his most famous stuff eludes me, but other samples I've seen look good and strong.

Like Montana, Seattle is in a drought summer, but here that simply means pleasant day after day of sunshine. My garden is thriving as never. And actually, Carol and I are doing okay too. Hope the same is true of all the Wymans.

best,
807 N. School St.,
Normal, Ill. 61761
June 20, 1985

Dear Ivan and Carol,

Enough of this wait to report good news: perhaps no news is good news when you're waiting for a publisher, and that is all I have now. But I guess you would be happy to know that I did find an agent, and he gave me a list of publishers and announced he had just mailed it to the first one, the Free Press. The agent is Gerard McCauley, to whom I turned after several people over recent years had suggested him: Steve Oates (recent book on ML King, earlier ones on John Brown, Nat Turner, etc.) visited here to speak and told me McCauley is his agent; your friend Decker; and then Norton when they finally turned me down. I presume getting McCauley to accept the ms was a big hurdle, since he only deals with academics wanting to get published by trade publishers. But if he strikes out, I am ready to send the DP ms to Indiana, which was what the editor at Norton finally suggested.

Enclosed is Homesteading in Montana, which I picked up at a garage sale. I suspect that you already own it, or have seen it, or at least have gone through Bell's materials in the Montana State University library. But I thought this ought to go to you, so here it is--a belated Christmas gift, or perhaps an early 1985 gift.

Summer school has started, and I don't begrudge my decision to teach this summer. I am just not in a position to plow ahead on research. I am composing three projects going--my 1960s research which I intend to pursue as a novel (mainly, I predict, to fail and thereby get it out of my system), and the Returned Immigrant project. I am doing actual research on the 1960s, while with the latter project it is still rounding up titles, possible collections, etc. Everyone I talk with who has lived in Europe or has relatives there confirms my suspicion that the continent is half-filled with people who at one time lived and worked in America.

My sabbatical next Spring will be spent tracing down more of these sources, lining up names and addresses in Europe, and applying for grants. I hope to go to Europe in Summer 1987, probably combining it partly with a family trip.

So that is where we are here. Summer teaching is a drag, filled with desperation after awhile, and I keep having flashes of reminiscence of that summer of 1961 in Seattle when I had to have each class all set to go long ahead because my time blocks fitted together so closely. It is becoming that way here this summer--little chance for new preparation, or for research.

Thanks for suggesting the Clancy piece to the Montana centennial publication group. As my agent, please settle for nothing less than 24-pt. Cheltenham for my name on the cover. It should be an interesting volume and I look forward to it.

We had a good visit for a week from Eva's half-brother and his wife, from Germany. Mario was born in Chile, then when Eva's father and his wife went to Germany in 1964 he went with them. He is now working for a bank that deals with South America. I had some free time in early May and so drove them about. We had a nice drive over to Lincoln's New Salem, in that magical period when the plowing is done and only the tiniest sprouts are coming up from
the corn and beanfields. In that setting, with some light fog and everything bordering the fields such a bright green, the farmsteads seemed like islands, floating in an undulating sea. Much of it reminded me of a Grant Wood painting. I also took them to Dixon's Mounds, an Indian burial site, which was less interesting somehow; I think we were so built up to it, and then the reality was kind of a disappointment.

Well, Dan and I went to the Unitarian service a few Sundays back. I had forgotten how "with it" the Unitarians are. I used to attend a Unitarian service in Minneapolis, because the sermons were so stimulating; and I went to their Single Adults club because it was filled with divorced young women who were quite eager for romance. When Dan and I went, I picked up the hymnal and found various listings of hymn numbers: "Hymns without gender problems"; "Hymns in which the only problem is the personification of a natural object or abstract idea"; "Hymns in which the only problem is reference to God as 'Lord'." "Hymns in which the masculine reference is obvious because it refers to Jesus;" and so on. The organist got up and addressed the congregation at one point, saying she was sorry for pauses in the prelude, but the noise was so great from the crowd that she could hardly hear herself play; she said; "You should be sorry, too." The sermon was on pornography, and the minister quoted from Ms. magazine and went right down the line on pornography as exploitation of women. On the whole it was an interesting service.

Well, Normal has its first bag lady. It was quite surprising—a sad surprise—to see her some weeks back, on a hot day, dressed in a winter coat, with gloves, hauling a shopping bag, that look of fear on her face that we saw on the bag ladies of New York city a year ago on our trip there. I have seen her walking several times since, and it provides an occasion to discuss such cases with Ruth and Miriam. I still am haunted by the look in the eyes of a fairly young bag lady we stumbled upon in New York.

I have found an interesting author who writes about the northwoods better than any novelist I have yet read: Jim Harrison, of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I remember John Fryer told me Harrison is one of those who summers around Livingston. I read his Farmer, and am now reading Sundog, which is less satisfactory as a novel but still a gem in its descriptions of the north country. Do you know Harrison's work? Opinions of him?

Eva was all set to head for Europe again in May, when my dad had to have surgery after something closed his bile duct. After preliminary exams, the doctors said it was probably cancer. But it turned out to be old scar tissue, and now he is well on the road to recovery, thank you. Now she has rescheduled the trip and will leave in mid-July for three weeks.

We will get up to Wisconsin in mid-August for some days, after summer school ends, but this will mainly be a stay-at-home summer. However, next summer (1986) I really want to get out to the northern Rockies for some hiking. Any chance I could link up with the Doigs for a few days? What period do you usually head back to your native sod? I might have one or two of the girls with me. I will want to get up close to the Canadian border for some hiking, to take notes and do some photography.

I of course will let you know when/ if the DP ms. is accepted somewhere. (You'll probably hear my whoop clear to Seattle!) With an agent, I doubt that there will be the contract questions as occurred on the last one.

Best wishes for a summer filled with hikes and writing—

Mark
Dear Ivan and Carol,

$20,000! What can you do with that? --buy the P-I, seal off the Olympics, purchase a Senate seat? Anyway, congratulations for an award well deserved. It probably won't change the quality of the next book, but will perhaps enable you to dine at better restaurants and stay at better hotels on your next Montana trip. Since I was fixing to apply for a Guggenheim in a couple of years, I will hold your comments about the "cosmic toilet" in my mental attic for use when the time comes.

Our mild Fall finally produced a cold winter about mid-January, as part of the media's Deep Freeze hit here. It was a fairly brief cold spell, but of course wreaked devastation in Dixie. Now we again have had some bitterly cold days, but things seem warming up a bit now. Eva and I took a nice long hike over from some rough land near a park here, inspecting beaver dams. Luckily, I have not had to drive in the bad weather as was your wont.

I can report that I finished English Creek, and have cheered it thoroughly. There are parts of it that will, I predict, live forever in American lit and especially in the literature of the West. I am thinking especially of the 4th of July scenes, which are priceless. Top writing! Congratulations! And you give clues to family history enough so that you open the way to your next book.

Of course the Forest Service material interested me greatly, with my two summers of USFS work, part of it (1957) in the same region, although over the divide in north-central Idaho. I did talk quite a bit with our old-timers there about the fires of the 1930's; 1934 was the one they were most voluble on. One of my USFS friends had worked tree-planting one Fall with an old cowboy who had been hired as a packer in Wallace on that 1910 fire. So it was like meeting old friends to see your references to those fires in English Creek. I expect you'll get letters and perhaps calls from USFS veterans to offer praise or perhaps corrections. My fire experience was different, limited to hiking in to isolated lightning strikes rather than working on a fire line. The only thing I missed--and perhaps your sources were too civil to tell you about--was that the water cans were called "piss-cans," because of the similarity of the hose device to a male appendage.

I think I will try to make contact with our mutual friend John Dally to find out the status of my DP ms. at Norton. It is now three months since they have received it, that is, if Dally forwarded it to them as he said he was going to. My worry is that it is sitting on a shelf somewhere. Every few days I see something keyed to the 40th anniversary of WWII events, and so I am eager to get the thing en route to publication while public interest is being whetted.

Research now is going in three directions: I occasionally do something on locating sources for an eventual book on the Returned Immigrant--immigrants who came here, worked awhile, and went home; also, I am now looking up some more sources for an article I plan to free-lance on "Cigarette Power," on the phenomenal importance of cigarettes for money in the post-war years in Europe; and finally I am going through some stuff on the student turmoil of the Sixties, for a writing project that is slowly taking shape in my mind.
I have a lighter load this semester, and a sabbatical in Spring 1986, so I hope to get a lot done in the next 16 months (not much this summer, however, when xx I'll be teaching).

I recently stumbled onto a book by Harold Sinclair, a Bloomington fiction writer of the '50s and '40s who is best known for "The Horse Soldiers," made into a film with John Wayne. The book I am reading is American Years, which takes the early years of settlement in Bloomington, changing names of most pioneers and places. I am really impressed with his writing style—sorry I did not happen on to it earlier, since I was aware of Sinclair soon after we came here. Sinclair died before we arrived, but his widow lived here until recently, famous as the Pantagraph's librarian and as someone who could answer just about any question on local history. I met her once at a local historic gathering. I have been told on good authority that Harold took the money he got for the Wayne movie and blew it on booze and high living, alienating his children severely. His son Ward is on the Washington Post. I am reading the book—which I have been told was a best-seller of some sort when it came out—with an eye to what he does with local history and how he works it into his fiction.

One aspect of local history has intrigued me: how the famous first families fare. The big one locally has been the Davis family, descendants of Judge David Davis, the Lincoln friend who helped swing the nomination in 1860 and then spent time on the Supreme Court thanks to Abe's influence. But my reading of the judge is that he was quite a good man, liberal for his day, concerned about the rise of big business. The Davis mansion is his old home, now preserved here and open for tours; the family is wealthy, owning numerous farms; and my kids have been in school with Davis kids since soon after our arrival here. The surviving elder is my age, and he combines some of the worst features of such class—insecure with the position thrust on him by birth, turning to heavy drinking, finally a divorce and now mention in the police columns for disruptive behavior. How the mighty have fallen! It is a story repeated often in these towns.

We had some people in the other night and I pumped Elleke, our Dutch friend, about her war experiences. She was a young girl during the war, sometimes carrying messages for her father who was in the Resistance. Then in early 1944 the Germans informed them they would have to vacate their coastal village home by 6 the next morning—all buildings in the town were to be dynamited. The Germans were preparing for the invasion which they expected anywhere from France to Estonia, apparently. She recalled that her father crept into the backyard that night and carefully cut up the sod, then buried family silver, jewelry, etc., there so neatly that when the sod was returned no one could tell. (It is a *noisy* story several DP's told; I think I quoted one to you once—"No one knows what treasure is buried in the East." Which makes me think that somewhere in g Moscow is a bureau whose only job is to locate valuables left underground when people pulled out in 1944 and 1945.) They then spent late 1944 and early 1945 on the family sailing yacht, a small boat tied up in an inland waterway. The tensions were terrible, she recalled, and have never quite been removed from her relations with her brother and sister. Perhaps I get my thrills vicariously—for so many people life has been a series of life-and-death encounters, but not for me. Even my wife has known that, though at a very early stage.

Eva, incidentally, has just had 24 hours where she was deaf-and-dumb, as part of a project for a Special Ed class she has to take to get her high school teaching certificate renewed. It was a strain on all of us—writing her notes while we ate, avoiding talking because she knew she couldn't hear us. Of course in the real world I would have learned sign language to communicate.

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*best to you* Much
Dear Mark—

I suppose I'd better confess that you may be an inadvertent collaborator in the anthology Montana is putting together for its '89 centennial. What do you prefer to be called, fellow traveler? Sidekick? My own role I see as neutral conduit. (Which reminds me of a definition of "editorial writer" apropos of my Decatur days: an editorial writer is the guy who occupies the moral high ground until the battle is over, then comes down and shoots the wounded of both sides.) All I did was pass along your Clancy Post story of the miners heating up their powder in the oven, the powder catching fire, the shack catching fire, etc., in 10 below weather. Whether this and any of the other random literary tidbits I sent to the anthology committee will get selected, we'll only know by thumbing into the pages in 1989.

I descended into this anthologizing during our spring-break trip to Montana. The committee heads, Annick Smith and Bill Kittredge—they were 2 of the 3 makers of the homestead movie Heartland—are buddies of Carol and me, and we were having a casual drink when I discovered I suddenly was a consultant to this anthology project. It since has become clear to me that this translates to something like "curator of the obscure," because they pointed out to me that I supposedly prowl around in libraries where no self-respecting writer would go and don't I know of anything from those that would qualify for the centennial anthology? Well, I said, there's my friend Wyman's shepherder jokes, but he's already being sued by the National Woolgrowers' Association and... Carol and I sat in on the first meeting of Annick's committee as they started to nominate selections for this book—they intend a 600-pager, funded by NEH and coal-tax money and lord knows what else—and it was a Montana version of that Casablanca line, "Round up the usual suspects." Bill Lang you would have known among them, and possibly Rich Roeder, who taught and co-authored with Malone at Bozeman? The couple of hours of people reeling off what's been written about Montana (starting with Lewis and Clark) was boggling and I have to say inspiring. Here they were, half a dozen people who are going to put together what I think will be a helluva fine selection of readings, just getting around a table in a Helena hotel room and doing it, while our entire state of Washington, also a centennial babe of '89, hasn't begun to get its act in order.

Then other bonus of our week in Montana is a set of slides Carol took, from the Missouri River near the Gates of the Mountains north to Augusta and Choteau. My homestead lads are going across that country by stage and freight wagon in the next book and so I needed to see it this time of year, and on the day we set out to do so I questioned my sanity, it was windy and squally. But Carol captured some light and tones I've never seen before: the horizon hogbacks and buttes as stark as if they're shot in black-and-white, while the brown and yellow of dead winter grass in the foreground is vivid. Snowpatches and the swirling clouds must have accounted for this strangeness of light; I think I'll have to have a character report that the experience was almost like being in two worlds at once, a photographed one of black and white all around me and the tangible one at his feet. Enchanting pics from my personal photog, one more time.
Haven’t seen Vernon since before Christmas. My fault, or rather the next book’s fault, as I found myself writing on it, against intentions and inclinations, week after week since the first of the year. I have about 25,000 words roughed, and feel like I’ve cleared my throat enough to make a real start on the manuscript, sometime soon. But I do want to catch up with Vernon in the weeks to come.

We had a recent instance of history-on-the-hoof pass through here. I may have told you Carol’s folks moved out here a year and a half ago after living all of their 87 years in New Jersey; her mother died a year ago, and her father is in a retirement home east of Lake Washington. A day in mid-March his phone rang, it was his youngest brother whom he hadn’t seen or heard of for 20 or so years, passing through Seattle on his way home from business in the Far East. Carol’s dad had a strange upbringing, living with his grandmother while the other five kids lived with his parents, so he’s never been close to those brothers and sisters. We next got a stunned phone call from him, asking if we can go out for dinner with him and this suddenly-materialized brother, and we said sure. The brother, Tom, turned out to be a bright and personable guy—as Carol later said (okay, maybe it was me), Tom was a younger version of her father without all the New Jersey guff. So we all liked him and got to talking with him about what he’d been up to in Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, etc., and it turned out to be what he calls “offshore sourcing”—i.e., buying basic goods (his company makes valves of some kind) that the Asians now make cheaper than we do. This bothered Tom no little bit, as he’s a thoroughly American engineer, holder of some patents, staunch American corporation man and all; but he admits the overseas stuff is not only cheaper but as good and sometimes better than U.S.-made, and he sees no way around buying it. He also brought back with him an image that summed up to him what the decaying US basic industries are up against: a Korean smelterman, working a hot pot of some kind, barefoot.

I devoutly hope you’ve by now had word, and a good one, from Norton about the DP book. Perplexing that they’ve delayed as they have, as I’ve always heard it’s one of the most scrupulous publishing houses.

I’m intrigued that you may write about the student turmoil of the 60’s. I wish you would, as I was so damn dumb I mostly missed it all. I didn’t keep a diary during UW grad school, and when it comes to daily details, I find that one of the haziest periods of my life. Possibly it’s because I was distracted by my dad’s illness and the prospect that my Reserve unit would be activated Vietnam-ward (as indeed it was, right at the end of my term and so we short-timers were excluded), but I am vague on the time. So I’ll look forward to being set straight by you.

best,

p.s. Did I tell you your mining core file provided me the handless miner I need? Thanks hugely.
Dear Mark--

We are living with snow and ice, to a degree where we might as well be in damned Illinois or someplace. It snowed Dec. 29, a kind of south-pointing wedge of storm which hit us with a couple of inches, Everett with three or four, Bellingham with eight. And to the considerable surprise of the Doigs, blithely on their way to celebrate New Year's on Dungeness Spit, it dumped heavily on the Olympic Peninsula and absolutely glazed the damn roads. I guess it disbeliev must have us persevere, keep driving, and eventually spend three white crisp days at Dungeness. Imagine our total of disbelief when we came back yesterday and the roads were even worse. Between Sequim Bay and Hood Canal Bridge 11 cars were in the ditch, some of them smashed after having done wheelies into each other. And our Ford, a treacherous sonofabitch too, scooted its rear end from under me and started us into a skid I was much relieved to get us out of. I ask you, is this the gentle rain-fed Northwest of reputation and lore?

But we did hike '81 out and '85 in on Dungeness Spit, saw the seals and scooters and mergansers and cormorants, watched the sun set behind Hurricane Ridge(1) as it does this time of year instead of sinking into the end of the Strait the way it's supposed to.

And we came home to mail and our main news, at least the mainest I've had in a long time. I got a National Endowment for the Arts writing fellowship. Or to put it succinctly, $20,000. I'd been sure my application went the way of the 5 Guggenheims and a few other things I've ever applied for, down some cosmic toilet they have back there on the East Coast, but the notifying letter is still here on my desk today, hasn't dematerialized or anything. A Port Townsend writer named James Heynen and I were the only pros in the whole Pacific Northwest to get these, so I am doubly, nay multiply, astounded. The fellowships are given on the basis of a manuscript sample--I sent the part of English Creek where Mac and Dick first encounter Stanley Mxassell, to where Stanley tells Dick he's going to spend the evening under the ministration of Dr. Al. K. Hall--which a panel of other writers reads, so that must have come through for me where the G'heim describe-a-project never has. (If I knew how to describe it, I probably wouldn't have to write it in the first place.) Anyway, this considerably perks me up about the long process of writing the homesteader novel, because at first glance into the tax guide it looks as if the more of this dough I can spend on research, typists, machinery and so on, the better. It looks like some fun.

Other than that windfall, we had a kind of hippydippy holiday season. Carol came down with stomach flu, luckilly only a 24-hr brand, about noon of Christmas Eve. Her dad was with us, just out of the hospital after a bladder blockage that was the urological equivalent of Grand Coulee Dam. For some weeks he had been off his feed and looked oddly swollen, so they got him in the hospital, cat-scanned him and all else they do, and concluded he had a tremendous cyst there in his lower abdomen. Nurses and young doctors would come by to hear this thing sloosh in him. The day before they were ready to operate, the urologist got to looking at the x-rays etc. and said, wait a minute, where's this guy's bladder? Indeed the huge slooshing sac was Frank's bladder, they stuck a catheter in him,
and overnight took 5 quarts of urine out of him. Why he didn’t explode internally nobody knows, but here he was in our living room a few days later, the medical version of a motormen’s friend strapped to his leg, whistling and singing along with the radio carols. So, I did what I could to celebrate with whomever was up and healthy at the moment, Carol or Frank, and we got through in reasonable style, only to launch ourselves onto those icy Peninsula roads. We have hopes the days ahead may be healthier and saner.

The Wymen Christmas/Hanukahmissive was great. Did you summon the ghost of Thomas Nast to do it for you? I hope to get to the UW library tomorrow and if so will see what JAH said about that book of yours. I had around here a NY Times clipping to send you, about the guy I’ve taken to calling “the other Wymen.” But Carol apparently glopped the piece for scholarly purposes of her own. David S. Wymen, author of The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-45. Know anything of him? Better yet, is he some sprig of your Wymen tree? The NYTimes sometime last month described him as a prototypical Protestant patriot who has evolved to be a Judaic Studies prof. I think at U. of Mass., a skeptic of this country’s response to the Jews’ plight in WWII, and a big rawboned New Englander who now feels most at home among the Jewish scholars in his dept. Helluva fascinating article, and guy.

So you Downstaters finally got a Senator, huh? I think Paul Simon might have been in the state legislature during my unlearned Decatur stint; at least there was a rumor there was an honest man somewhere in Springfield, though we Lindsay-Schaub newshounds were never able to verify it. I had a Christmas letter from my mordant buddy Ralph Johnson who covered the legislature for L-S in those days, but Ralph was so busy telling how Hondale blew the waiting-to-be-had endorsement of his current paper, the Toledo Blade, that he never mentioned Simon. I feel historic, or something, because I was on hand back then for the emergence of Chuck Percy onto the Illinois political scene. He always did seem to me not exactly a Jack Dempsey in heavyweight intellectual terms, but god how we used to fasten hopes on any Republican (ah there, Bill Scranton) who wasn’t a club-carrying caveman. The best thing I ever heard about Percy was not political but personal, and I’m still not sure what it signified. My boss at The Rotarian magazine, Karl Kruuger, lived in a Chicago suburb near where Percy did in (I guess) his early Bell & Howell days, and if I remember this right, some friends brought the newly-widowed Percy along to Christmas at Karl’s house—Percy’s first wife died or was killed, in that streak of tragedy that’s lain alongside Percy’s success. To Karl’s astonishment, Percy went out of his way to make everyone else’s Christmas pleasant, was attentive, seemed caring, the whole works. Totally normal. Which strikes me as rather unearthly; maybe his behavior was noble, maybe it was something else, but it just didn’t sound gut-wrenchingly human. So I have watched Percy these 20 years and still don’t know who I’m looking at.

Onward to ’85 and our own unknown quantity, Gov. Booth Gardner. Tell us how the ski lodge was. Tell us you’ll consign all future winter weather from us, as Midwesterners were put on earth to do. And have a happy new year.

best,
NORMAL WYMAN CHRISTMAS

WITH NEWS, ANECDOTES, AND ANTIDOTES FROM 807 NORTH SCHOOL.
THE CHILDREN:

Dan
High School junior... active in debate and on the school newspaper, the Inkspot. Has taken up the bass guitar; now has driver's license and is doing his part to wear out the family auto. Looking into a possible career in journalism.

Ruth
in Mrs. Fisher's Sixth Grade at Metcalf School... plays violin, flute, piano. Was on soccer and softball girls' teams. Now is active in 4-H for the first time, as well as Girl Scouts. Has role of an Indian in the school play, "Peter Pan."

Miriam
in Mr. Isele's Sixth Grade at Metcalf School... Looking forward now to the start of Girls' Basketball after the holidays; played on softball and soccer teams in 1984. In Girl Scouts, and joined 4-H this Fall; plays drums in school band, while continuing piano lessons.

THE PARENTS:

Eva
ending second semester as teacher of Spanish and German at Eureka College, alma mater of President Reagan... Won scholarship last summer for a two-week program at the Goethe-Institut in Munich, West Germany, for German teachers. Visited parents in Germany before and after the Munich seminar.

Mark
saw 2d book come out last Spring: Immigrants in the Valley--Irish, Germans, and Americans in the Upper Mississippi Country, 1830-1860... Gave talks based on the book before Upper Illinois Valley Association groups in Chicago and Utica, Ill. In fourteenth year as historian on Illinois State University faculty.

NOT TO FORGET: Ted, our dog of unknown genetic background, is now well into his second year but has finally stopped growing. He was joined by a cat, Peter, who has the same color scheme (black and white) but exhibits different personality traits.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Your good note came today, with the barbujner of a Washington Post review. Something is happening when the local reviewers turn cool and the Easterners get hot—I would guess this means you are ready for some real national recognition. And I will cheer you on from my Midwestern vantage point. I must confess that the grading has not ceased for weeks and weeks now, and I only get a chance to grab a few pages of English Creek once in awhile. It will have to wait for the holidays, or the post-holidays, it seems. But I eagerly await the chance to curl up with it!

Immigrants in the Valley has finally been cracking off reviews, after months of picking up one here, one there. Two scholarly journals have weighed in, and both have had mainly praise: Journal of American Ethnic History, and the JAH. About the same time, two Springfield magazines came out with reviews that were quite favorable (Illinois Issues and Illinois Times). The latter even shows the new lower price. Now I am working on two things with that book; to get the publisher to bring it out in paperback, and to win at least one award. Your friend helped me get the DP book sent to Norton; they have now had it almost two months so again I am hopeful.

We head up to Wisconsin on Sunday for a week, which will include 2½ days at a ski lodge. Thank goodness it has a swimming pool and a sauna! Best wishes to the Doigs. Hambug to the P-I! Hail to the Post!

Christmas and Hanuka greetings—1984

The Wymans
807 N. School, Normal, Ill. 61761
Dear Ivan and Carol,

I have been seriously remiss: a couple of weeks ago the copy of English Creek arrived, entering the house at the same time the last-half-of-semester pile of term papers and exams began to come in. As a result, I have been able only to read the first 50 pages, and pronounce it a whale of a book, showing you again branching out into different directions. You are totally unpredictable in what you take up in each book: this is no Winter Brothers, no Sea Runners, not really House of Sky. So I will continue on as my grading permits, looking forward with eager anticipation. Thanks for including me on the list. I'm afraid I am falling woefully behind—still no word from Norton on D.P.

Winter is settling in here, finally. It has been a warm and wet Fall. At least Simon bested the Reagan love-feast. Isn't all the talk funny about "realignment", or "end of the Democrats"? Wait til we get another Watt running the ecology, and the School Prayer amendment is pushed along, and see how much realigning there is. I suppose the only good thing is that now the Republicans can take the blame for the economic troubles that will start coming home in a year or so.

-- More later, after I finish the book. Thanks again! Mark
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Moving into a less-rushed Autumn here, the first time in years when I have not been pushing ahead on a manuscript. Hot weather has returned, but dry, and we are enjoying it as we sit on our back porch for supper. It is my favorite season, and the time when I most often get nostalgic for the land and the time of my childhood. When I go to the WHA meeting in St. Paul in October I'll really be going so I can get over to my home stomping grounds in Wisconsin—first time there in October in 17 years. I am excited about it! (Also to be there for homecoming at River Falls State Teachers College—long since renamed University of Wisconsin—River Falls.)

I enjoyed Ivan's recent letter immensely. You really had a time among the Scots, it seems. I am a bit embarrassed that I did not report to you about my friend in St. Andrew's, but the more I think about it, the more I know that it wouldn't have worked. I met Tony when I was in Turkey as a delegate of American Quakers to an international work camp in 1960. He and I have been friends ever since, and I went and visited him in St. Andrews in 1978. The difficulty is his wife, who is a fastidious, somewhat stern being who makes him (and me) take off shoes upon entering the house. No, it just wouldn't have worked. I can take it since I have known him for years and can judge the friendship on a long-term basis. It would have been disastrous for you to call on them, I know.

But at least we both know something of St. Andrew's. I went walking about on my own, too, and found a folksong program in a local hotel which I then took Tony and wife to. Tony's Chemistry office overlooks St. Andrews golf course, and I walked around that end of the course some. Mainly, however, we drove out of town (Tony and I) to go youth hosteling and hiking around Glen Coe.

My view of Edinburgh is less developed than yours, for sure. I stayed there in 1960 but can't recall where. I do remember trying to find the apartment of an American I met on the ship crossing the Channel: I think the address was "Lady Luck Lane," or something like that. It seems to have been located in a godforsaken slum, where people stared at me as I tried to find house numbers that were usually missing. I found what had to be the right building, and stumbled up a long, dark, flight of stairs, but could find no light or anything to indicate any habitations up there, so finally gave up and—a bit frightened—made my way back to Princes Street and the more usual tourist attractions. I would love to return there form a more leisurely stay sometime.

I am still trying to find a publisher for my DP book. Houghton Mifflin had it for two months, with my hopes rising by the day by August. However, I think it was the summer shutdown that kept the ms. there that long—not any enthusiastic scrutinizing. Then I gave it a read-through before mailing it out again to your friend John Dally (who promised to send it on to Norton), and I was shocked at the complexity of some chapters, the piling up of examples, the never-ending nature of several chapters. So I began to mark it up, and to cross out large portions, and now four chapters are being retyped while others will have some changes made. I think it will be a much tighter, better story when I sent it out to Dally, within the next few weeks. Thanks for putting me on to him!

Immigrants in the "alley has gotten few reviews, although CHOICE informed me they will have a review in "Kirkus was unable to tell me when it will appear, whether it will appear, or whether they received a copy!
I have yet to get my first sales report on that, although it is due next week according to the contract. I don't expect too many, because the library journals have not yet reviewed it. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the Milwaukee Journal did review it, and the statewide genealogical bulletin did a brief description, and a few other minor mentions have been made. The publisher has agreed, thank goodness, to send copies for various book competitions. I am getting those lined up now. Since it will never sell many copies at $3.95, I might as well try to get some recognition through competitions. I would dearly like to win one of the three Midwestern competitions.

One of my Latvian DP's—a doctor in South Dakota—called me the other day to ask how the book is doing. I presume some of them are antsy about it, as I am. He had worked for a couple of years as doctor on the ships taking DP's to Australia, and had been friends with a Frenchman who later became head of the World Health Organization. The Frenchman—now retired from WHO—visited him this Fall and was apparently enthusiastic about this book. He told the Latvian he wants me to come with the Latvian to his home in southern France next Spring!—a trip I will have to decline, this time.

This summer I got bogged down in two projects, typical Carstensian, and this Fall I have more of the same. I think I wrote you of the two this summer: a chapter in a Greenwood book on Illinois history bibliography (mine was on "The Peoples of Illinois"), and a chapter in a Greenwood book on historiography of the Frontier (mine was on Mining; Roger Nichols is the editor and most of the chapter-writers are ex-Carstensen Ph.D.'s.) This Fall I have three talks to give, based on my research, and a report to write on "The Rise of the River Towns," to accompany a local archaeologist's study of the Hannibal, Mo., flood plain which is being covered up with some Corps of Engineers excavation. Then—promised you, I promise myself—no more of such little projects and back to a book project. I have a few ideas swirling around, some very scholarly, one in the line of fiction that I have been promising myself I would undertake next. We'll see. I have your example and that goads me onward.

I really need to get out of this place for awhile—hate to complain, but I need to. We got out to New York City early in the summer, as you know, and that was good although being with a wife and three young kids kind of limits the activity to certain types of things. I might be teaching next summer; at any rate, I might try to head West just before summer session. Since Eva heads to Europe alone every summer, perhaps I can get away too, either with some kids or alone. I, too, want to do some on-the-spot research in the northern Rockies.

Here's to English Creek!

P.S. — I had sealed the letter before I realized that I had made no comment on your Castle Garden research. I think you could benefit from the "Immigration History of U.S. Policy" section in the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups. Philip Taylor, The Listant Magnet, is good, and he cites a number of late-19th Century investigations and books that you would find useful.
Dear Mark—

Does the weather turn around on Labor Day weekend in your bemighted part of the country? It does in Montana—always cold and usually rainy and once every a while snowy for the 2-day Labor Day rodeo in White Sulphur, then Indian summer fog and I'm about to conclude it does here. Our sunny August, a continuation of a sunny July here, ended this morning with overcast, almost indiscernible mist in the air. You wouldn't think it was even the same country as yesterday.

How about this; Scotland was in a drought. Worst in a century or so. Despite that, we managed to get rained on for several consecutive days on Skye. A good stay there even so. We lucked into a well-heated(1) well-plumbed(II) bed and breakfast house which overlooked the town of Portree and its harbor and headlands. The b-and-b was run, and that's definitely the word, by a Mrs. Davidson, a woman in her mid-thirties who would disappear into the kitchen to deal with two or three yowling youngsters, have an argument with her husband while she was there, then reappear in the breakfast room with perfect meals for the 8 or 10 of us guests. It was a household with real life to it—family squalls came and went, immediately forgotten—and Carol and I had a helluva lot of fun being at the edge of it. Also, we plucked up our nerve and energy and went out to Stornaway in the Hebrides for a day; drove the length of Skye right after breakfast to catch the ferry at Uig, made it with that much to spare before sailing time, settled down on the ferry to watch the oh so slow loading (ship's elevator took 4 cars at a time into the hold) that made the ferry considerably late in leaving, birdwatched from deck for the 2-2½ hours across to the Harris port of Tarbert, got on a bus there for Stornaway—a trip of about 30 miles which proved to take an hour and 45 minutes of bucking riding on a single-lane road. But that island of Lewis was astounding to see. Except for a couple of government tree plantations of pines in rows like Illinois corn, nothing grows higher than grass, not even gorse or heather, so far as we could see. So the landscape was grass, endless sheep, peat, great boulders, ridgelines and lochs: sort of like the moon would look like after a few centuries of inhabitation by Scotchmen, probably.

As to the research, I got some good stuff—am still trying to digest it all, though I did begin writing, last week and part of this; have got my fair share of young men off the dock at Greenock and aboard the steamship in their journey to Montana and fate; a ways to go yet, as you can see—and garnered some library tales as well. At the U. of St. Andrews, I stepped into the reading room to begin using the emigrants' letters I'd come for, and the archivist, specs down on the end of his nose, said avuncularly, "Ye may want to be doon at this end of the room, away frrrom the airrr." The "air" proved to be the air conditioning, which proved to be frigid: within half an hour I was huddled under a plaid lap robe, vowing to go home at lunchtime for a sweater to put under my jacket.

And the entire St. A library was being revamped this summer—no summer session, it's a university that struck us as a wee bit indolent—so that I perpetually would find entire counters or sets of shelves blockading an aisle, or come upon white-haired custodians in dustcoats, staring puzzledly down at the wiring gutter in the floor where the new computer terminal was somehow supposed to be engrafted.

St. A took some perseverance; the card catalogue is in 4 incarnations, from ledgers to computer, and including a devilish pair of microfiche catalogues, one of which reads vertically and the other horizontally, so that for a 1960 book you had to scan across and for a 1961 book you had to remember to scan down; but we hung on for 11 days, the town of St. A itself perfectly pleasant, and did accumulate much of what I needed on 1880's Scotland.
The other research stints were Glasgow—3 highly efficient days at the Mitchell Library there—and Edinburgh. Will tell you in person sometime my tale of being the lone non-genealogical researcher among the crowd the morning I went to Register House for the 1891 census records, as it requires a repertoire of gestures and Scotch burrs. (The prospect could be worse: I've been assuring other friends Carol and I will do a 6-hour bagpipe dust for them.) But you might be interested in where we stayed in Edinburgh. U. of Edinburgh graduate housing, a damn nice flat right on the Royal Mile, about 100 yards down the street from the Castle. Generous quarters, well-kept, not that expensive, especially given the advantage of having a kitchen. If you're ever interested we'll pass along info.

I've felt like a real rookie in the Wyman League these past few days, stumbling around in books about the immigration process. My aim is specifically 1889, so I've been reading whatever I can about Castle Garden, which I guess was the NY entry facility until 1890. My main source so far is a book with a number of good pics, Novotny's STRANGERS AT THE DOOR. If you know of any other good stuff, or good reminiscence/description of what it was like to go through that process of arriving in America in the late 1880's, I'd be glad to hear of it.

There, I've given you the perfect opening: bring on the DP tales! How's it going with the ms, agents, etc? I've always thought NY publishing disappears like a turtle into a shell in summer, so if you've made any progress you've done well.

Bill Lang tells me he's been in touch with you, and the pair of you will rampage through the St. Paul WHA. Dick Brown of Oregon was here for lunch a few weeks ago; usual story (Carstensenian genre) of a good dedicated scholar who is too much of a good citizen, and is doing all manner of professional good works but not his big book. I'm going to try get after Dick about it; I think he could do his if he can get some time free. Haven't seen Vernon since early in summer. Inadvertently I had lunch recently with Al Runte, Mr. Personality himself; I guess his scholarship is okay, and Vernon seems to think it is, but as other than that... As for myself, I'm going to hit the Montana History Conference briefly—a breakfast quick-talk-and-a-few-slides—but otherwise my autumn will be the huckstering of English Creek. Jesus, things look good. So good I'm nervous about whether they can last. A big first printing, an ad budget, blurbs from Stegner and Wright Morris, a good first (Kirkus) review, anticipation from booksellers. This is kind of getting to be fun.

Well, account for your summer, when next you write. Family cabin life? Ice cream socials? Heat prostration? Tell all.

best,
Dear Mark--

Just a quick longshot that occurred to me this morn. A young bookstore employee from Elliott Bay bookstore here recently became the sales rep in the Chicago area for W.W. Norton & Company. His name is John Dally, and if you can track him down, through the Chicago area phone book or any Chicago bookstore folk you might know, you might ask him if he can recommend a Norton editor to submit your DPs to. He's a bright eager guy—writes poetry, loves books—and did a considerable interview of me for the Elliott Bay bookstore's newsletter. Use my name, and tell him I think your work, readable but solidly based in scholarship, is Norton's type. Dunno if this will work, but it's one more thing to try.

Got to go pack. Best,
18 May '84

Dear Mark--

Hey, snazzy new stationery. You're looking prosperous, even if you do feel like a professor who's just been through a school year. I've got one of those cases around here, too.

I'm eons behind in catching up on letters, largely because about 6 weeks ago Carol's mother died and we've been dealing with the sundry aftermaths of that atop our already crammed-full working lives. I may have told you her folks moved out here, to a retirement home in Kirkland, last August. Her mother was very frail, an unimpeachable heart condition, and the relief to everybody was that she went out in her sleep, did not decline into a nursing-home existence. Carol's dad is coping well—particularly given that they'd been married 56 years, and he was accustomed to doing everything for her these past years—but he does need seeing a couple of times a week, and so on. We had just begun to feel we had the household schedule under control again when a ripsnorting cold hit both of us; now we think if we can just make it until Carol is through with school on June 11 we can catch our breath for a couple of weeks, before Scotland.

I don't mean this spring to sound grim, really. Carol said the other night it's like the opening of Tale of Two Cities, best of times and worst of times. Among the bests have been the auguries for my novel, English Creek; far and away the biggest first printing I've ever had, and fat orders from bookstores here in the Northwest and in Montana. I'm waiting on galleys now; some portion of them will be here next week, I'm told. And the other news is that I absolutely wasted my time hanging around in that PhD factory with you and the other characters—Bozeman is going to give me a doctorate for nothing. As you might divine, Mike Malone headed the committee on honorary degrees at Montana State this year, and so it's me, the guy who designed the Sydney opera house, and the head of a colossal mutual fund. Carol and I are flying to Bozeman June 8-9 for all this; I told Malone it makes me feel like I'm doddering on the edge of the grave, but it ought to be kind of fun, too.

Do you suppose the slowness of reviews on Immigrants in the Valley is simply tardiness at your erstwhile publisher in passing them along? I should think they will show up. Besides, if people are buying the book anyway, you don't have to put up with half-assed critics, right?

About 20 hours from now we expect Bill Lang (editor of Montana Mag of History) and his wife to pull in here, on their way home to Helena from the PNW History Conference in Bellingham. I turned down a request to go, and talking with Carstensen on the phone the other day I asked if he was going—now, he said, it sounded hellishly dull, the only good thing he'd heard about it was that Frank Friedel had some $$ from his endowed chair to buy booze for everybody on Friday night. We agreed that sounded pretty good in itself, but maybe not enough to go all the way to Bellingham for. Anyway, I'll see what Lang has to report.
Did I tell you that you left Livingston waay too soon to reap its ultimate human interest story? My Nebraska aunt, the youngest in my dad's family and the sole female after those six Dog brothers, came back to Montana to visit last summer, after being widowed for a year or so. There she encountered a guy named Lyle Essex, whom she'd dated more than 50 years ago. And before anybody could blink, they got married. I have around here an extraordinarily lucky photo, taken when my dad was courting my mother in 1929: it must have been a real occasion of some sort, because lined up across the porch is almost everybody from both sides of my family, all the Ringers and Doigs of that generation. This aunt, Anna, is not in the picture because she was the one with the camera; but there is an extra figure, non-family, sitting kind of woebegone down at one end of the porch, whom I've never been able to figure out. I checked, and indeed, it's Lyle, the guy she's now married; the longest photographic prophecy of romance I know of.

This month of May is one I've been aiming for, determined that I'd keep it set aside to think and tinker toward the next book, the homesteader novel. And except for a few details such as galley proofs and coming down with a cold, I've managed to keep the month's slate clear. So I sit around here and fiddle with file cards, and try to do some real outlining (a radical invention, for me), and just generally see what wants to come into my head. Pretty damn surprising how efficient this "leisure" is proving to be. I'm also trying, by letter or tape recorder, to talk with people who grew up on Montana homesteads circa WWI. It's a race with the undertaker, the rate that generation is going, but I have had much luck. Talked for a couple of hours with a woman in Olympia, who was 12 when her folks homesteaded near Jordan, up northeast of Billings, in 1913. If nothing else, talking with such people reminds me that those generations had passions and verve of their own. This woman's daughter is a retired teacher, the type we would have called in the pejorative bad old days an old maid, and so she rather fusses at her 83-year-old mother, whom I found really quite fetching and even a bit flirty. The mother told a story, of when she was 16 and wanted to go out with a boy who'd asked her, only to be denied permission by her homesteading mother who's gotten married in Texas at 14. When she pointed this out, her mother the homesteader declared, "Yes, but I had more sense then than you'll ever have." So we all yucked at that, and on my way out, the spinster teacher-daughter took me by the family photo wall and showed me the picture of the mother when she was that rambunctious 16-year-old--glorious long hair, a really striking girl. "So you see," allowed the spinster daughter, "Mother was rather attractive then." I turned to her mother to speak my agreement, and that frail 83-year-old made a mild face at the back of her daughter and then gave me broadest wink I've ever had.

Remembered your story of your TA mumbling at you after that summer class you taught at the UW that there's a guy named Tom Robbins writing out here too, so thought you'd like to see this current scorecard from a recent Washington Post. Excuse the self-advertising blue arrows; it's a copy I marked up to send my editor before I found out he'd already seen the piece.

That's about it from here. Will try drop a note before Scotland, or maybe better, from there? Give us a New York report. And just because you're at rest on the DP ms, that doesn't mean the end of DP stories, does it? Carol and I have gotten hooked on them--like waiting for the ship to come from England with the latest chapter of Dickens. Enjoy the summer. All best,
Dear Ivan and Carol,

The last grades were turned in two days ago, and so I am now in a state of awful exhilaration as I slave away at the desk while the kids are at school, or take some time to read through books at the bookstore, or have a leisurely lunch with a colleague. Thank goodness I have beaucoup work to do on the DP ms. still, or I would likely waste away in this situation. I have finally realized that I am someone who must always have a project, or I will turn into a wreck shortly. This will probably be true until my death.

I have here your wonderful letter of last February from Cheyenne, and your card of March 7 noting receipt of the book. Thanks for both. I'll admit I let the letter-writing slide the last few months. From mid-semester on I have had more than the usual amount of pressures on me; seldom do I get much done after mid-semester anyway, but this time we are selecting a new chairman, and hiring a black history faculty member, and both have required my presence at all kinds of receptions, meetings, get-togethers, and other sundry affairs. Also, in a weak moment I accepted a bid to write a chapter on "Peoples of Illinois" for a Greenwood bibliography that someone at Urbana is putting together, and that took some time. I mailed the revision to him today.

I envy you your time in Cheyenne, and also your escape. I have picked up clues on Gressley over the years, either admiration for the collection he has put together, or remarks on his pushy ways. I once knew a pathetic figure—I'm not sure you ever knew him in Seattle—named Ekhard Toy, who had worked under Gressley. Toy quit the Wyoming job before he had another one to jump to, and thereafter just had a series of temporary positions until he left ISU and returned to the apple orchard in Oregon run by his father-in-law. He was in Seattle my last semester and I was one of his TAs. He told once about substituting for Gressley at some Rocky Mountain gathering of history society people, when he addressed them thus: "Mr. Gressley could not be here today. While you are gathering here, he is gathering there." And Ixx that afterwards one New Mexico woman came up to him and shrieked, "You tell Gene Gressley to STAY OUT OF NEW MEXICO!!" I will avoid him, I think.

Immigrants in the Valley is making its rocky way. I can't figure out the slowness of the reviews, and it makes me wonder whether the publisher's incompetence is showing again. I have a total of two reviews: Milwaukee Journal (more of a summary, in the book editor's weekly column), and the Belleville News-Democrat (across from St. Louis; they assigned a reporter to do it and he called me up). Even Choice, Kirrus Reviews, and similar early journals have not featured it yet. I will say that locally it has brought a flood of good comments, and some have bought it despite the price. I am really waiting for the Chicago Tribune, I guess.

I've had trouble with my readers for the DP ms. A colleague whose field is German history, and particularly World War II Germany, read it and offered some helpful comments. Then Joe Yekka Velikonja, a UWash geography professor and Carstensen friend (when you are introduced to him someday you will remember having seen him in Smith Hall), who as a Slovenian was a non-camp DP in Italy, did a marvelous job of reading and offering suggestions. But my others have fallen through—a Ukrainian library at Urbana who has had it
over two months but now is off to Europe; a Latvian sociologist on our staff who had it a month and then didn't have time, and a Polish Jewish chemist here who had helped operate a DP transit camp in Berlin in 1945, and who just couldn't get to my ms. before his cancerous hip forced him to go to Mayo's. I think I will call a Ukrainian professor in Chicago tomorrow to check on whether he could read it—I really need to be saved from some possibly fatal errors.

I did locate an agent in New York who is willing to read the ms. He also wants a pile of information on me. The woman who referred me to him was named Ruth Gruber, friend of a friend—and then the monthly Jewish magazine comes and features her and her new book, Haven. It turns out she accompanied a group of European refugees here during the war, who were somehow let in and then forced to be interned during the war in Oswego, N.Y.

This summer we have a few things planned. I'll not be teaching. We are driving out to New York in early June, our first family trip eastward. We have a friend in New York, in whose apartment we will stay for 4-5 days; she is looking for a job in Washington so I thought this might be the last chance we will have for a family trip there. Eva's aunt in suburban Clark, N.J., is in a bad way so we want to see her also, and Eva will stay on with her for a few days. Then Eva will go to Germany in early July, for a two-week language training workshop in Munich, and she'll see her folks for a few weeks more. Dan has a two-week debate workshop at the end of July into early August, so in that time I'll be up North with the girls visiting my folks.

But I need a restful summer, time to recoup. At some other time I will go into the troubles of the past year, but I believe me, they have been pretty bad. I have tried to divorce my writing mentality from my day-to-day mentality, and sometimes I succeed and sometimes I don't. But now with the return of warm weather, and the end of school, I slowly feel the old power returning. I sat and read fiction the other night, with a favorite classical record on, and I could slowly feel a new spirit coming again. Now if I could hike up Mt. Baker all would be well! -- but not this summer, I'm afraid, although I do hope to head West next year, perhaps in early summer again.

End of report. Have a good trip to Scotland, hiking up every ben and avoiding every loup, but visiting every pub. Scotland is one of my favorites, so I envy you much.

always,

Mark

PS—Thanks for helping.

Martin Fitzpatrick.
Dear Mark—

All right, Mr. Professor who teaches the frontier course; what is the western sense of place? They're so curious about that (or maybe just lonely for faces from the outside) at the U. of Wyoming that they've flown me in from Seattle and Julie Jeffrey (who's written on women and the wilderness experience) from Goucher to hear what the hell we have to say about it. Thus here I sit, trying to fathom this this this this borrowed electric thingamajig and hoping fervently that the big storm coming off the Pacific doesn't hit here until after noon tomorrow.

This is my first time out on one of these speaking gigs in a year and a half—yep WHA was about the last one—and so it seemed time to earn a dollar. I gave a reading at Jackson, then flew to here, spoke y'day and give a reading this afternoon. Strange ritual; colossal time and expense involved, a total of 2 weeks of my time in writing and travel and I'm making sure to charge them commensurately (is that a word?), ditto with Julie Jeffrey who's had to re-arrange her classes to get here, and I can't imagine what either of us could say to be worth all that. Ours not to reason why. The American Studies program here does something like this twice a year; interesting source of dough here, a $750,000 endowment 30 or so years ago from a right-wing member of the Coe family, I'm told the same Coe who provided Yale that western collection. If the guy can see up through the ground to my red beard and to Julie, who began as a feminist historian, he's probably on slow-spin cycle in his grave. A lot of academic intrigue and politics—they don't have much else to do here—has accompanied this American Studies program, the guy who now runs it has told me. He's Eric Sandeen, an Iowa PhD, early young guy who was brought in here a year and a half ago from Pocatello to shape up this program. He says it had become a fiefdom of Gene Gressley, the manic collector who has built the archives here. Do you know Gressley? Seems to me one of the really strange ones of western history, an absolutely driven collector; House of Sky hadn't been out 2 weeks, I swear, when he wrote me asking for my papers. And he keeps asking, despite my pointing out that UW or someplace in Montana is logical for them. (After seeing what a moonbase Laramie is, I'm more convinced than ever.) Anyway, I gather there's finally been some attempt to stop Gressley from running everything here—he's some kind of special assistant to the president, equivalent of the Academic 800-pound gorilla—and overhearing all this for a few days makes me profoundly grateful I'm not in the midst of campus politics full-time.

So do you have an immigration book in public yet? Hell of a note, that they've taken so long. The one advantage of a commercial publisher should be that they're faster than a univ. press. Which leads me to urge you not to hold off too long on starting to find agent and publisher for DP (I can see the movie ads now; they came from OUT THERE! Would their alien ways change America?) because once the spring sales conferences are done—early May—
the publishing world starts to phase toward summer oblivion. A little gets done in June, not much in July, and not a goddamn thing in August. So for the sake of getting stuff to bodies while they're at their desks, don't polish that ms to perfection. Best advice I've seen recently--for from an editor, even--was to submit your favorite section of the ms as a sample.

Since I am in this Laramie motel, I plainly am not writing litrachooor at the moment. Finished up the revision of the novel--4 weeks' worth, surprised me how much fine-tuning I wanted to do to it (the editor primarily only wanted 6-10 pages cut from the first part of it) but after I'd slogged through the revising, the ms felt like it was now carved in granite. Good, bad or indifferent, the SOB is now ineffably what it is; I'm not sure I'd know how to move so much as a comma in it, now. They like it at the publishing house; that never translates into how many copies they think they can sell, though. So I have ahead a non-frantic spring; read the galleys, think about the homestead novel, plan our trip to Scotland for part of this summer. Gentleman of leisure, by god.

During Carol's spring break we hope to go to California, for the week; part of it in Santa Cruz, seeing Pete Steen before the Forest History Society pulls up stakes for Duke. The FUW blew its chance to land the FHHS, surprising nobody; Runte and Vernon made an effort to persuade the administration, but Vernon doesn't really have an in any more, and to quote something I read somewhere and stole in The Sea Runners, Runte couldn't lead his shadow.

You know anybody on this Laramie faculty? The western history guy is named something like Bob Ryder--the Bob I'm sure of, at least--and I guess T.A. Larson is still on the faculty, although I think he's a state legislator and in session now. Guy I've liked best and felt most in common with here--hardly any of these damn western-experience scholars set foot into the west until after grad school--is an English prof named Bob Kulp, who grew up on a ranch near Lander. I've been amused as hell to see that he and I are the only ones on campus wearing the old red-and-black plaid ranger caps with earflaps; we look like a mini-session of the woolgrowers association circa 1955.

Not too much else to report, I guess. Keep that DP stuff coming, we like to hear it. You ever coming west again, or are you gonna be like the rest of our remote effete eastern colonial masters, sit back there and never experience the glories of Laramie on a zero morn?

best,

p.s. This afternoon I'll read from a sheepherder section of my novel; I will not tell any of your slanderous goddamn sheepherder jokes.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Before you scratch my name from your address book, let me send this on its way from the frigid Midwest. We are just getting out of our second deep freeze of the winter, but of course my letter-writing silence is because of rushing for several weeks to meet my self-imposed deadline on the DP ms. But letter-writing can wait only so long: I enjoy receiving letters from good friends and so have an obligation to keep up my end of the deal.

The latest on the Immigrant book is the first week of February. However, I no longer believe them. I would guess I will receive my first copy in March, appropriately making it two full years exactly since Nelson-Hall accepted the ms. I must tell Carstensen that—he has some story about how the standard used to be one full year, before all the new technology in publishing came along.

A little after midnight on the night of January 2d I completed the rough draft of my last DP chapter, missing my own deadline by two days but, of course, basically making it. Then I put it aside for almost two weeks to get caught up on course preparation for the next semester, then returned to re-type my badly-mauled draft, and now I am revising all ten chapters. The first is completed and I was happy with the speed I was able to accomplish it in. But as I look over later chapters I am bothered with how dull and scholarly much of it is. Hopefully I will be man enough to slash it to pieces.

Thanks for your good advice on publishers. I will keep them in the file for now, but might come back at you on the German at HBJ. Incidentally, a Slovenian-American in Cleveland recommended I send it to HBJ because Jovanovich apparently keeps contact with the Yugoslav-American community. My aim at the moment is to attempt to get an agent who is experienced in handling historical subjects such as mine. I have two names; one from Steve Gates, who spoke here a year ago; the other from Ruth Gruber, former NY Times reporter who is writing a book on one group of refugees caught here by the outbreak of war. One of the Americans I interviewed knows Gruber, put me in contact with her, and she urged me to write to her agent. I have not done so yet, having decided to get a bit further along—revisions, checking all my attributed quotations from interviews.

One of the most interesting parts of recent work was getting into exile literature. Since I was doing that in the Fall, perhaps I wrote you about it and this will all be a bore. I can not say that I went deeply into it, only reading some exile book translations, mainly short stories, and some critical essays. My favorite was this from the Estonian writer Karl Ristikivi, from his Ki Koik, mis kunagi oli ("All That Ever Existed"):

"Even in the garden of the Dean, the apple trees blossomed on only two Sundays each year, but looking back it seemed as if there had been fifty-two. And it seemed as if the Dean always was sitting in the apple-trees, bareheaded, hands folded on his breast, eyes closed, as he was sitting on that Sunday morning which turned out to be the last. Because by next Sunday, the blossoms had already fallen, and next year the trees did not blossom any more."

Many of them talk longingly about those days—golden, of course—before the Russians invaded in 1940, and then the Germans, and then the Russians again later in the war. One critic says that the experience of exile was a liberating one for many writers, for it opened their minds to subjects and ideas they never would have considered if locked in their tiny countries. But for others it became a straightjacket, their writing never getting far beyond nostalgia for the lost homeland and hatred for the Communist invaders.
One critic writes that "There are many novels, short stories, and poems being written now, amid the noise and bustle of the great American cities, in which the quiet brooks of the homeland keep on flowing, and the trees rustle, and old neighbors from a village, not knowing that they have become mere ghosts, come over and shake your hand."

Enough about my writing.

Your Thanksgiving sounds interesting, as always. Some of your descriptions over the years have been quite good, making us want to sit at the table with you and gaze at the strange conglomeration of people present. Strange only to us, I must add—and strange only from this distance. If we met them we would probably find them a fascinating lot. I was thinking as I strode out on Thanksgiving that it is always the most dreary holiday of the year—dull brown leaves, frozen earth, a general paucity of coloration—but the thought of clustering together with old friends on that day makes it the warmest holiday of the year for me. And so it was here again, with our friends the Pajardos (his late father was the Spanish anarchist of whom I wrote once).

Then our cold weather began, although we had some luscious days when moisture came in the night and the next day the rime was coating everything, under a deep blue sky. That was the day after the Rose Bowl, and I envisioned God—the God of your choice—feeling pity for Illinois and so giving us that rime-filled day as recompense for losing so disastrously in sunny California. Now we will need several weeks of temperatures in the 90s next summer to thaw out after these days of -10 to -18 temperatures. Our weather, as everyone says, runs to extremes; last year it was 61° on Christmas day.

One of my spies sent an interesting article about you from The Oregonian on November 6th. Quite a nice piece, noting the number of writers thereabouts. I would say you would have to be the best, although my knowledge of others than Murray Morgan is scant. One of my summer school students in '61 jawed on about some science fiction type in Everett and all sorts of others in cabins out in the hills.

And thanks for that wonderful picture of you two. I shall treasure it.

Good news from my folks: my dad had a cataract operation and it is so successful he is talking about returning to p'tridge hunting next Fall. Since I have his eyes, and doubtless will be developing cataracts someday, I am happy to learn of the success of Dad's and others' operations in the past couple of years. My mother continues well, although much of it (I think) is that she is bound and determined never to complain about her ailments. Since she wears an absolute herd of copper bracelets on each arm, we know she suffers from arthritis, but is bound not to give in to it. Since her sister died fairly suddenly in Colorado 15 months ago, she sometimes thinks back to her youth in the Grand Mesa country and, when undecided about some fact, realizes that she is the last one: "There's no one to ask anymore."

We still have too much chaos in our house to stop and think much about some things, although I realize I am a much older man at 45 than I was at 42. Dan is now a sophomore, the girls are in 5th grade, and the challenges of raising them have brought out the demon in me that I never knew existed. Eva has just started teaching Spanish and German at Reagan's alma mammy, Eureka College, 25 minutes from here. They have been very open to us over there, and I must say that the people I have met there are fairly un-Reaganesque. I see it as a new era for Eva, a perfect job for her, and as long as it lasts it will be a happier era for our family. I'm using Parkman's Oregon Trail in the Frontier course: I love it, especially the descriptions about eating dog meat!

best to you --

Mark
Dear Mark--

Turning your historian's telescope to the student turmoil of the 60's, huh? I wish you guys would quit thinking of that recent stuff as history; to the rest of us, it's just yesterday. Apart which, I thought you might like to see this grumpy NY Times column, if you haven't. Also, the P-I on Ivar the fish king's largesse (yes, even Ivar proved to be mortal!). Looks to me like we both ought to go get an MBA somewhere, then teach at the UW biz school.

This quickie note is not only an excuse to get rid of these clippings. I also have a question about mining lore, and so naturally you came to mind. In the next book, I may base a character on a Montana guy a couple of old-timers there have told me about: a fellow who lost both hands in an accident, yet learned to shoot, write, take an unassisted pee, and the ultimate--to tend bar. The pair of sources have separately recounted this guy's abilities, so I trust them pretty far (also will check with handicapped-rehabilitation people about the plausibilities); problem is, neither remembers or ever knew how the man lost his hands. I'd like to have my fictional version lose his in, yes, Montana mining. Have perused Hard Rock Epic again, and I don't see a specific case that fits precisely. But as per the incident of John Strong on p. 127, would you think a box of blasting caps going off would fit the instance I'm trying to contrive here? The guy has to survive essentially whole except for the hands; the accident ideally would happen to him in some small mining enterprise of his own--that is, not in a Butte shaft; and I don't have to describe the event itself, as my narrator will meet him later in life when he's attained his bartending and other abilities. If you've got any thoughts or instances on this, leftover from your Hard Rock research, I'd be glad to hear.

All for now so I can put this in the mail in the morn. It's cold as hell here; been about 30 all day, down to 26 last night. Arctic, huh?

more later. best,
Dear Mark—

You’ve surmised accurately, about the last of the Montana novel occupying me to capacity. Tomorrow begins the last 2½ weeks of actual writing; then a couple of weeks of tinkering and looking over the typists’ version, and mail the damn thing in a red bow to NY about Xmas time. I’ve just finished writing about haying, which shows how wondrously consistent I am with the seasons. I think this book is going to have some gawky places, mostly where I try to give background, but I’m telling myself they are worth it for the momentum and scale they add. In any case, by standing on tiptoes I guess I am within sight of the end.

Helluva note about the price and timing of the immigrant book. About all I can say is that the publisher ought to know the market, so maybe indeed the library folks will buy it whenever. Carol and I were told, lo these 10 or 11 years ago, when we were doing the journalism text for Prentice-Hall, that the rule of thumb then was libraries would buy 3000 hardbacks. P-H indeed published that many hardbacks, along with I think 5000 paperbacks, and sold out both (and eventually sold another 5000 in paperback). Budget cuts might have changed that library total, but on the other hand your book will have appeal in public library genealogy sections where they wouldn’t let ours in the front door. I had a random thought about your DP book; a publisher you might consider is Pantheon. They, along with Beacon in Boston, strike me as among the most socially conscious commercial publishers; have done a lot of books just because they deserved to be in print. Within the past 2-3 years, there was a Publishers Weekly story on Pantheon, which you might look up if you’re interested. I’m also in touch with an editor at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich who is actually looking for writers; he made this start as a translator from the German—won an American Book Award for his translation of a book whose title eludes me— and lived in Germany several years. Young highstrung guy, in love with words, and has some imagination. Let me know if you want me to nudge him about you. Also on the DP book, you sound like a guy positively pining to see Klagenfurt etc.; is there no chance? It might be valuable to your prose.

We have got winter. A 3-day blizzard, cleverly coinciding with the Veterans’ Day holiday. Carol is wrestling a cold, so we wouldn’t have been going anywhere anyway. Next thing in sight is the Juan de Fuca motel, minutes from Dungeness Spit, for New Year’s.

I don’t know if I told you Carol’s parents moved out here from NJ in mid-August. Their resettlement has taken considerable of her time—occasionally, as we come into view of the Kirkland suburb where this pair of 80-year New Jerseyans are now in a retirement home, I think of your DPs—although life has settled down a lot since their initial 3-week stay with us. The retirement home they’re in is a good one, thankfully; well-stocked, excellent food, doesn’t cost any more than the wretched place they were in in NJ. How claustrophobic they’re going to get in their first NW winter, we’ll shortly find out. Carol’s mom is very frail, and this move is her dad’s message to us that he’s not sure how much longer he can cope.
Our summer stay in Montana seems long ago and far away, but it was a
good stint. We were there about a month. I did an uncommon amount of
writing—in a Choteau motel room, in a borrowed bedroom in Dupuyer, in
Bill Lang's house, of Helena. I had to, and desperation worked. Came
home with 2 tough sections of the middle of the book, a description of
my fictional town and a 4th of July rodeo, pretty well whipped. Didn't
get to Bozeman, so didn't see Malone. We underwent an 18-hour thunderstorm
while at Lang's place—he and his family were out here hiking and using
our house as a—which was about as much rain as I've seen in Montana.
Best things of the stay, which was our 3d Montana summer sojourn in a row,
were the country, it seems. Two morns in a row I got up about 6:15 to go
out onto a benchland near the mountains and watch dawn come. Brilliant
clear morning, best weather of the trip, and it's stunning stuff, seeing
the sun come up between the Sweetgrass Hills 70 miles off. For better
description than "stunning stuff," you'll have to await the novel, wherein
my hero rides across the benchland each dawn to his haying job at his
uncle's. The other dandy thing was being shown around the Nature Conservancy's
Pine Butte Preserve, west of Choteau. It is a butte, I suppose a thousand
acres or more in itself, and maybe a quarter of a mile high, and all around
is a fen which is the last "prairie"—i.e., non-mountain—habitat of
grizzlies. The Conservancy guy was in a helicopter one day this spring,
and they saw 10 grizzlies. Astounding country, in there west of Choteau.
This butte and fen, and a few miles away the goddamnedest gravel
plain I've ever seen, and in another direction dinosaur hunters are digging
up one of the two known sites in the world of dinosaur eggs. A.B. Guthrie's
place is also nearby, and we called on him after the butte tour. He's a
phenomenon in himself, going on another book at age 83. He and his Carol
have been very civil to us, and this time there was a special episode of
Guthrie grace. We had with us our Dupuyer friend Tom Chadwick, who is
mildly brain-damaged, and in roomful of us Guthrie made warm unobtrusive
conversation with Tom. Tom kept telling us on our way home to Dupuyer,
"That Bill Guthrie's a nice guy, ain't he."

I talked briefly with Carstensen on the phone yesterday—holed up as
I've been, I haven't seen him since late spring—and he sounded okay, though
the occasion wasn't a bright one. I was inadvertently nominated to tell
him about the death of Oliver Knight (FOLLOWING THE INDIAN WARS), the
U. of Texas El Paso historian who I guess was Vernon's original prototype
of Wyman-Dodg: former newspaperman, wasn't he? Anyway he died on Oct. 28,
a note from his son asked me to tell Vernon, and when I called and asked
Vernon how things were, he started moaning by saying he'd had bad news lately—
which turned out not to be my Knight news, but the auto death of Alan
Hynding (San Mateo), another of Vernon's PhDs. Necrology aside, Vernon
reported briefly on the WMA, said he makes a sentence occasionally, and
we agreed to have lunch in Dec.

That's about it from here. I'm simply hunkering through the rest
of this year. And 'Chis bound to be a memorable one, eh?

best

p.s. Thanks for the Tyrone Guthrie place material; Carol said, "why couldn't
it be in Scotland?" The background sound is a Tyrone 6 whirling in his grave.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

In recent months you have popped up in my thoughts often, especially when I browse through your volumes on my shelves, read a Carstensen letter, chat with a graduate student who was formerly with the Decatur newspaper, or even see the weather report for Puget Sound. Now, while you get in your final Fall hikes out on the Spit, let me force you to tarry for a few moments for old times' sake.

My guess is that you are just putting the final touches on your Montana novel. From your earlier comments, that would seem to be where the schedule is now. And I am looking forward to seeing it soon, to see just what you came up with in weaving a story out of the land and people you know best, at the time you know best.

My immigrant book is supposedly coming out sometime soon, but the company keeps inching the date into the future. Once it was September; then it was late October; the latest from the marketing man is that it will be delivered to the warehouse in December, and will be released in February or March. I can't figure that out yet. The biggest blow came in late summer when I saw their catalogue: my book was featured on the opening page, but the price was $27.95. I couldn't believe it, and called my editor. She said that they produce mainly for libraries, with special paper, binding, and the works, and so they charge more. There goes my dream of selling a copy to every genealogist in the country. They do a few paperbacks, however, so maybe that is a possibility down the line somewhere.

A graduate student is writing his master's thesis on "Editorial Policies of Lindsay-Schaub Newspapers in Illinois, 1948-1978: Sources, Presentation, Impact." He is an older guy, at least my/your age or beyond, and he worked in a variety of advertising and management positions in Decatur. His name is Martin Fitzpatrick, and I take it he was booted there a couple of years ago and now wants to become a history teacher. He writes fairly well--what little I have seen--but of course really knows a lot of people in the business. He lists these possible interviews: Tom Blount, William Boyne, John Gardner, Robert Hartley, Richard Icen, Ralph Johnson, Edward Lindsay, Robert K. Reid, Kelso C. Towle, John Zakarian. I told him about you and he might want to contact you. He knows your former boss, Felts. He remembers you.

Enclosed for you is something I got through my Irish contacts, on the Tyrone Guthrie Center at Annaghmakerrig. It sounds interesting, but perhaps you (like me) prefer your writing in solitude without having to explain yourself every mealtime. You seemed the logical one to pass this on to.

My own research is kind of winding down. I have two more chapters to go on the DP book's first draft, so I am hopeful that I'll be able to spend much of the holidays when we are here working on rewriting. On Nov. 3 I fly off to Toronto for a conference on Ukrainian Displaced Persons, and I might pick up some ideas there, but basically my interviewing is complete and there are very few books that I still need to go through for the remaining chapters. Other authors dealing with similar historical topics have given me names of two agents, both in NY or environs, and I think I might check them out before I try to submit this anywhere.
The biggest flurry of interviewing I did recently was in September, when I was desperately trying to locate some Polish Jews who returned home after the war and then decided to head back to Germany and become DPs. I had talked to local Jews, then wrote all sorts of Jewish agencies in Chicago, buttonholed visiting Jews to campus—everything, but got nowhere. Finally I called one of the Jewish agencies in Chicago, one that had never answered my letter, and explained again what I was doing and how I wanted to find a Polish Jew who had gone home and then left. "Well, I did that," the woman on the other end said. And so I drove up to Chicago two days later, had a delightful 2-hour interview, located another Polish Jew through her, had a very good interview with him, and came back with bubbling.

Both of them were in concentration camps, surviving (apparently) because they were in the prime of youth and were strong, good workers. The guy told me that his repatriation train dumped them at the border of Germany-Poland, and they had to wait there a day for a train to carry them on in to Poland. A border guard came secretly to them and wondered why they were returning to "hell"—"I'm trying to get out of hell." When this guy finally arrived with some other Jews in his little village, the first person they encountered was a local policeman who greeted them with, "You still alive? I thought the Nazis killed all of you." It was the same with the woman going back to her hometown, where she had to fight to get the furniture, books, and chinaware back from neighbors in her apartment building. The guy told of his escape, going by train to Posen, on the way seeing the right-wing Resistance army going through the train and throwing off four Jews as the train sped on, throwing them through the windows.

This is the story I try to tell in one of the chapters, weaving into it the old dream of Jerusalem and Israel, the bitterness at the rest of the world, the unorganized and extremely organized escape routes, and the infighting among Jewish groups.

Now I am working on a chapter on the rebirth of nationality in the DP camps, which saw theater carried to a high state in some of the camps, while mimeograph-machine publishing houses churned out new editions of the national classics.

So that's my report—exciting research at times; much of it simply drab plodding, of course. I hope this is the last book I ever write in which I have not covered the ground myself, physically. I would love to go to south Austria, near Klagenfurt, to see the territory where thousands of Yugoslavs came in the final days of the war, believing they were safe with the British, only to find that the British forced many of them into trains and sent them back to Tito's waiting Partisans.

Greetings to the whole crew, Carstensens, Rodens, Burkes, all. We are awaiting news of the next Doig publication.

the best—

Mark
Dear Mark—

Just to let you know the Doig's haven’t fallen off the Pacific edge of the world. A hectic, hectic fall: Carol at one point was simultaneously negotiating the faculty contract at her college, getting her folks resettled out here from N.J., and teaching. I’ve been in a footrace to get the final third of this novel done. Am now getting it under control, but it’s been an effort. Anyway, we’re surviving, and I will write a respectable letter one of these weeks.

Interesting Senate race out here: Dan Evans (or his on-loan GOP strategists) decided to aim for the right wing, and it may be boomeranging—Lowry the Demo is within 1 points of him in the polls, mostly by being his unreconstructed liberal self. Nobody can believe Evans will lose, but he’s given a recent imitation of doing it.

best, for now.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

You have WHOOPS; we have a terribly hot, dry summer. Who can say which is worse? Luckily, two years ago we installed central air conditioning, and so I have been able to work long into the night throughout the summer, something I could never do in the old days in the summertime. Perhaps you wisely stashed your capital into Exxon or Texas Instruments and so you, too, have saved yourselves from disaster.

Our Western trip was too quickly finished, but very enjoyable nevertheless. In two consecutive days I was with my Forest Service trail crew bosses from McKenzie Bridge, Oregon (1956), and Pierce, Idaho (1957). The 1956 boss has gotten religion and had just finished up a one-year Bible course at a fundamentalist training center at Corvallis, Montana, in the Bitterroot Valley; the 1957 boss I found retired in a trailer house (which is what half the West lives in) at Weippe, Idaho, just over the Clearwater River before the long Greer Grade up to the top.

And so it was a trip of some memories, but a lot of discoveries. We went first to Butte, and I must confess it was my first stay of more than an hour or so there. I was surprised at how bright and sprightly much of the housing is; our friends said that Anaconda paid to move everyone when they dug the pit, and so all those new houses still sit there. But they told of the problems of living in Butte: you find a good store, return there three weeks later and it is closed forever. They brought a young couple over one evening; they are from Ohio, and would refuse to ever live east of Colorado, but they can't take Butte. Or, more accurately, the wife can't. So we talked of possibilities for writing there, photography, and so forth. I tried to get her to feel the excitement of an old mining town; I fear I failed. Dan has a nose for junk and junk, and he led us unerringly to a downtown store totally jammed with old stuff—from miners' lanterns to photographs of 1907 baseball teams to license plates and statues filched from Russian Orthodox churches. The place was dirty, and dark, and the owner was unpleasant; he didn't really want to sell. I suppose I would go back to the store if I had a few hundred dollars to spend, but otherwise, it's probably not worth it.

We hiked one afternoon in the mountains east of Butte, and of course I loved that. In a short spell we found three old mine dumps, and examined them closely. I presume that all the hills around Butte have been worked extensively by off-duty miners, during strikes, shutdowns for machinery repair; copper price downturns, and so on.

We finally traveled on the Lolo Trail, and loved it. Have you been on it? A signpost told us that it was opened in 1952 as a highway (earlier it was a pack trail), was upgraded in 1962, and more recently has been resurfaced. It is a dandy road now, through what is essentially unspoiled wilderness if you can ignore the highway and the fact that much of the slope across the river was burned over in the 1930s. When I worked in Idaho in 1957 I was warned to take a chain saw if I ever tried to drive a car across on the Lolo; but now it is opened and a dandy trip it was. We stopped at the historic Lochsa Ranger Station, now manned in the summer by the old guys who once worked there in the summertime. Our guide—completely delightful—had worked there summers from 1937-41 while he
was a college student at, I think, Whitman.

The rivers, of course, were all running high, especially around Boise. We went with Bob Romig into Spanishtown, but he only took his handsaw because in all previous years he had never met more than one deadfall. We didn't get on the Cayuse Creek road until mid-afternoon, and right away began meeting deadfalls blocking our way. We finally quit at 9:30 p.m. after having sawed out 9 of them. We were tired! We camped there, on the road, and next morning walked into Spanishtown, finding another 9 deadfalls that would have to come out before Bob's truck could go in. And his ditching operations in the valley were in bad shape from the late winter storms. I can see there would be no mining this summer, but instead a lot of tree cutting and hauling stuff, so he changed his mind on remaining to help Bob for a few weeks. Bob understood, and certainly all our news since then is that Bob will do no mining this summer—probably not next summer. He is overly ambitious on what can be done.

So we drove home, in three very long days from Boise, and soon after that Eva returned from Germany, and then the really hot weather began.

Since I am not teaching this summer, and since my research was far enough along, this has been a summer of writing. My goal was a chapter a month, and I made it for May, June, and July; I might just miss it this month, however, with a short trip up to Wisconsin next week, the beginning of school on Aug. 22, and the need to do an index for my immigrant book. (They say the page proofs will arrive around Aug. 16.) It is very nice not to have to teach and to be able to write.

Research has continued, bit by bit. Last weekend I went to St. Louis and interviewed a delightful Serbian couple, and a less delightful Croatian priest. The Croats know that people know they murdered thousands and thousands of Serbs during the war, so it is always interesting to see how they handled it: embarrassment? ignore it? The priest said that it was done by a small group of 40 Croats, and not the entire Croatian people.

I continue to flirt with the idea of seeking an agent for this. One of the Americans I interviewed in New York—who had worked for UNRRA—knows an ex-NY Times reporter from the late 1940s who is working on a book on that era, and I have asked some advice from her on agents. Probably in the end I will just mail it off as I have always done before, collect rejections, and finally find some two-bit publisher who will do it.

The stories told by the ex-DPs are all very anti-Russian, of course. I suppose I am a bit more of a hard-liner than I was, although I am still for the "freeze". One of the stories is of the Russians' great penchant in the post-war years for stealing or robbing watches from everyone who came back from the West. The story goes that in a Budapest movie house one night they were showing a newsreel, sometime in the late 1940s, and in the newsreel Stalin was meeting with some visiting dignitaries; he put his arm around one of them, and someone in the Hungarian crowd yelled, "May I have your watch?" The authorities marched everyone out of the movie house and fined them all, on the argument that everyone had laughed even though they may not have been the one who yelled.

Enough for now. -- John Fryer at Sax & Fryer in Livingston, my old friend, stocks your books and looks forward to the next one. Livingston has become a summer haven for writers, movie men, photographers. Writers: Torey Hayden, Tom McGuane, Russell Chatham, Richard Brautigan, Spike, Van Cleef.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Just a short, quick note to let you know our June plans are still in flux, so we want to keep in contact with you in hopes our paths might cross in Montana.

Bob Romig called from Idaho the other night that he might have to have an operation soon, which would cancel out all our reasons for going south to Boise after we finish up with our two Montana visits. That would of course free us to tarry in Montana a few days to connect with you. We apparently won't know on Romig until almost May 21. We plan to leave here May 25.

So expect a call from me around May 22-23 or so.

Eva arrives back in Chicago June 18, which means that we have to be heading back here in the first half of that week. We were going to go first to Wisconsin, but not necessarily.

Here, incidentally, are the two Montana addresses:

Jim and Lori Schwartz, on the Energizer staff of Montana Power Company in Butte. I have lost the home address, but the home phone is (406) 723-6005. MPC number: 723-5421.

We were going to go there around June 3.

Harry J. Yost, Box 476, Corvallis, Mt. 59828 (406) 961-4620.

Reading galleys for Immigrants in the Valley now. Fairly clean, but somehow the whole operation seems second-string compared to California Press. type face, etc. But I like what I wrote.
Dear Mark—

The same mail that brought your revise of summer plans brought one from Bill Lang, editor of Montana Magazine of History, revising his plans to visit out here. That's the trouble with you people east of the Cascades, no constancy.

The Doigs on the other hand are absolutely mired in constancy. So much so that we can't get out of here until June 19. By which time, if I read you aright, you'll be back in Normal? Too bad we can't connect, but Carol isn't even through giving exams until June 10, and the week after that is kind of an atoll of the year thus far: all manner of stuff remaining to be cleaned up, including some interviews of me by a UW prof who's to write the pamphlet (or at least tiny book) on me for the Boise State series on Western writers. And I can empathize that you don't want to come on to Seattle, having summered here not all that long ago; given how short your time is, I don't see how you could anyway. So it looks like solo renditions of Montana, this time around, huh? At least we can eventually compare notes.

We are in glorious spring here, at least on days when winter isn't revisiting. It's been a pollen season beyond memory, and my usually innocuous allergies have had nascuous moments. In fact, for a week I had a blaze of hives along my left side from armpit to hip. More than esthetic setback than a serious one, but nothing I'd look forward to again.

Reading galleys, huh? My envy is boundless. This novel continues to shape up well, but it still has about 7½ months of daily shaping yet to come. I am less surprised than you may think that Immigrants reads good.

Not much else; just wanted to fire this off to you in hopes of saving you a futile phone call. I hope the report on Romig is good; sounds like a fine opportunity for Dan, if it comes through. Have fun in Livingston. (You're damn near in Bozeman once you're there—are'nt you going over to give Malone a bad time?)

best
Dear Mark--

Sorry to have dropped from epistolary view. I'm not actually in oblivion, only 1939. This novel of Montanans in my natal year not only goes pretty well, it goes and goes and goes. It'll be in 3 major sections, each one novella-length, so I have a year-long push to get them in shape and then get them to align with one another.

Anyway, there and Missoula have been the recent Doig sites. Carol and I spent the week of her spring break in Missoula, having arranged a house swap with one of the UM English profs. They just got our house. We got their house, two teenage daughters, two big dogs, and a horse. Luckily the daughters are mature, pleasant, fencing types, of the sort that supposedly ceased when generations no longer walked ten blizzardy miles to school every day, and they took care of the dogs and horse. I spent most of the week in the archives—in the basement of the library, down there with Mike Mansfield's desk. I kept hoping MM himself would show up, as he has a reputation for abruptly appearing for about five minutes, asking something like "How you doing?" and vanishing again for a year or so. But evidently he was busy ambassading the Japanese. I was digging around in the files of a forest fire researcher named Harry Gisborne, and indeed excavated the forest fire case histories I need for this novel. As ever, the extraneous stuff was frequently more interesting, and possibly useful, than the main target: Gisborne turned out to be one of those wonderful margin-scribblers, his Forest Service letters and memos adorned along the side with "where in the g.d. hell did he get this idea?" and "dampshool notion". Also, if I had any shame, I simply would give up on fiction. It can't begin to compete with the drama of fact. Gisborne, whose whole professional life had been research on forest fires, died of a heart attack while tramping the ridges for a post-mortem on the Mann Gulch Fire near the Gates of the Mountains in 1949, the one that killed 13 smokejumpers. An hour or so before he died, he said to the ranger who was with him: "This one blows away all my theories."

I also, with both excitement and chagrin, came onto what looks like an 8 Million Word Man: a rancher in the Roundup country who kept copious diary for more than 50 years. His stuff—old blue spiral school composition tablets—is there at the UM archives, too. I definitely don't want to do anything much with that trove—even read very much of it, because it's both a dismal ranch-routine life and oddly enthralling—for the foreseeable future, except use a couple of summers of the late '30's as mulling material for this novel. But the guy, who never really amounted to as much as say the Swan of Winter Brothers did, is fairly ruthless about putting his moods (mostly foul) on paper every damn night. Not to mention such matters as visiting "the line" in Billings, where his choice of damsel was "a little slim nigger woman...in a very abbreviated sun suit."

While on Montana matters, so to speak, I don't know yet whether we can get to western Montana as early as you're going to reach there. Carol (a real teacher) isn't done until June 10, and I think we need the next week to marshal ourselves.
I'm in the process now of trying to line up a place for us to live in Chouteau for a month or so, and once I get that whipped I can provide you some definite info on our schedule. I'd definitely say proceed on your own schedule and let us try meet it, rather than vice versa. Anyway, I hope we can hook up, if only to stand on a corner in downtown Livingston and curse the wind together.

Was interested in your Stars and Stripes stuff. I once blundered across a master's thesis in the UW stacks by a WW II veteran writing about Yank—sounded like a similar irreverent publication. Somewhere in this very house, Carol and I have what I think is Bill Mauldin's first book, Back Home, which both has his cartoons and very vigorously liberal and sardonic text about the U.S. in the first years after the war. In mental shorthand I tend to think Joe McCarthy started all the nuttiness, but of course there was crap in the air even before him.

You mentioned Richard Maxwell Brown, my currently favorite book reviewer. He was up here in Feb. for a lecture—Walker Ames, I guess—by Bernard Bailyn of Harvard. Dick is done as dept. chairman at Oregon this year, and I'm hoping like hell he'll write a Northwest book he's been threatening to. Bailyn incidentally was real good. General topic was the qualities that make a influential historian; in mental shorthand again, which seems to be all I have up there at the moment, he thought the prime good stuff is the ability to let the topic surprise you and take you where it will—Nader on rotten boroughs, Roy Symmes (?) on the generational recruiting of the Roman Empire, Perry Miller on Puritan rhetoric—plus, and this part I liked best, the imaginative scope of a novelist: Tolstoyan, Dickensian. He said he's been doing research on immigration patterns in colonial America which take him into Mississippi, and he says he finds that Faulkner was a pretty terrific historian; says Absalom, Absalom is a dandy piece of history. I don't know how Count No 'Count did it, but he sure as hell could dance on a lot of different floors, Yoknapatawpha to Hollywood.

Haven't seen Vernon since the Bailyn lecture, but I had lunch with him around that time and he was in fettle. It sounded as if he was working on the Patterns on the Land book; every so often I can prod something out of him about that, but it ain't easy. He did say something wonderful while I was trying to get him to talk about any projects of his own; he said, well, reading ms for the UW Press had recently sidetracked him—paused, then said reflectively, "I sidetrack easily...".

I guess that's about the sum of things here—somewhere above zero but we're not sure how far. Huckster that Immigrants book shamelessly; no matter how shred and tarnish your demeanor, you will never out furthermore Maler, out Susann Susann, out Vidal Vidal...the one reward of being a writer is there are always going to be cosmic schmucks who outschmuck you far and away. And with that tender thought, best

[Signature]
"It is very difficult to know people and I don't think one can ever really know any but one's own countrymen. For men and women are not only themselves; they are also the region in which they were born, the city apartment or the farm in which they learnt to walk, the games they played as children, the old wives' tales they overheard, the food they ate, the schools they attended, the sports they followed, the poets they read, and the God they believed in. It is all these things that have made them what they are, and these are things that you can't come to know by hearsay, you can only know them if you have lived them. You can only know them if you are them. And because you cannot know persons of a nation foreign to you except from observation, it is difficult to give them credibility in the pages of a book."
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Before our new wallpaper arrives I'll turn to you via typewriter; if I miss another weekend it may be Easter before I get back to writing letters. I always end up at the finish of the Christmas holidays exhausted from letter-writing and now my answer list is long.

A letter from Vernon recently brought a brief report on you and said all was well. I had written him for some information we could use in a retirement party roast for one of his old ag. history friends. I had hoped he would issue a gushing sentence that I could quote or put on the program such as "He turned around the entire approach to agricultural history in our generation"; but nothing like that emerged and so we will have a more subdued and honest party.

By now the Atheneum book shipment has hopefully reached Seattle and you can start autographing books again. All I know about pushing a book I have learned from you whether watching you operate, reading your letters, hearing of your multifarious activities from others. I expect galley proofs any day and when Immigrants in the Valley finally comes out I will personally shake the hand of every descendant of Irish, German, and Yankee in the entire Mississippi Valley. I have quite a long list of genealogical societies now, and related publications.

I stumbled upon Richard Maxwell Brown's review of Sea Runners in the Montana magazine the other day--I certainly echo it, and can only wonder when you will break through into more national recognition again (after that first Time review).

My own research on the DPs is creeping now; I am expected this, however, and so am not too frustrated. I have the regular load of one large class and two small ones, plus an extra course I am doing for the Continuing Education folks. But one of my regular classes is a new one: Immigration History. And so my research/writing time is quite limited. My goal is to turn out a rough draft of Chapter III by the time final grades are turned in, that is, mid-May. A week from today I will spend my second day this semester at the large University of Illinois library, interviewing a Ukrainian there and poring over Polish Review and other journals of that type. I have just finished going over a Lithuanian bulletin that was issued in the late 1940s and, of course, was filled with items on the DP camps.

But the most interesting research of late brought me, paradoxically, the fewest returns: I went through the Stars and Stripes for summer 1945. Since the soldiers had to herd DPs into camps and look over them, I reasoned that the soldiers' newspaper would be crammed with articles on DPs. There were a few--VD cases picked up from Polish nurses, DPs looting German farms--but really a tiny number. But reading those issues of the S & S was something like working again on a college paper: the same staff hijinks, the fun in headlines, the dirty jokes appearing between the lines in cutlines on the mandatory leg art in each issue ("We don't think you soldiers will want to know all the details about pretty Veronica Welch that her Miami agent sent with this photo, so we'll just comment that she has her good points.") Finding so little about DP's, I spent much time reading the comics (some of the stories
seem to have awakened memories in the deep, deep recesses of my brain: Joe Palooka, Terry and the Pirates, even L'il 'Abner) and the letters to the editor: much controversy on the no-fraternization order, on poor food, on having to sleep in tents while Germans lived nearby in their beautiful homes, on brass who hogged the visiting starlets, and even defending the Russian troops they had met from the rising attacks in the Hearst papers back home. So it was quite enjoyable reading for me, kind of a nostalgia trip. Of course, it also helped place me a bit more mentally into the post-war era.

Here are our plans for summer; I hope we can link up. Eva will again fly to see her folks for a month, leaving here around May 22. The kids get out of school a few days later, and so we will drive up to Wisconsin to visit with my folks through Memorial Day. The current plan is to leave May 31 for Montana. I thought we might drive first to Butte, where we now have friends; perhaps from there I might drive down to Livingston for an afternoon. Then over to see another friend who has just moved to Corvallis, just north of Hamilton. Would you be in the area then—in the first or second week of June? After that we will cross into Idaho, and perhaps visit the place where I worked with the USFS in summer 1957 (out of Pierce 34 miles). Our goal will be to get down to Boise, to link up with old mining friend Bob Hoag, who is going to teach Dan the fine art of mining for the rest of June. The girls and I will probably stay a couple nights out at Bob's mine and an old place called Spanish town, in the Sawtooths NE of Boise, and then we will head for Grand Junction, Colorado, to visit my uncle there who is a retired game warden; then home.

I hope you'll be in the vicinity of some of these travels so we can get together. These plans are quite flexible now, so just let us know your whereabouts. I don't think we want to push on to Seattle this summer, however.

I await word on your Montana novel. Work Livingston into it and they'll name the public library after you.

the best —

Mark
Dear Mark--

In a perverse way I'm glad you heard that All Things Considered interview(?), because having heard it and having laid eyes on the Sea Runners you have pretty much encountered both ends of the spectrum of my ambivalence. The ATC snippet was hacked from about a half hour of fairly decent interview Noah Adams did with me by Satellite, and he was going to work it up for the Friday night newscast; when some news of Alaska oil leases came on Thursday, though, evidently some producer said what the hell, let's do all this Alaska stuff at once... I guess you never know how those things are going to turn out. When Winter Brothers came out, Noah Adams spent almost 3 weeks working up a piece on it, getting an actor to read Swan, fitting in mandolin music--by far the best attention anybody paid that book. On some sort of cosmic average, then, I've won one and lost one on ATC.

Meanwhile the Sea Runners makes its own way in the world. Good reviews, often in surprising places--it's been on the Sun-Times "editor's pick" list all fall--and word came yesterday that a 1st printing is happening, to bring the in-print total to 17,000. The flip side of that is that the 3d printing hasn't yet made its way west by oxcart and children pulling little red Flyer wagons, and stores are running out of the book just as the Xmas shopping really starts. I have a new definition of mixed emotions: going into the U Book Store yesterday and finding that Sea Runners has sold so well, they're out. The supply of books has been the only real gripe so far with this publisher, Atheneum. Several years ago when conglomerates were Pacmanding publishing houses for breakfast, Atheneum and Scribners and I guess Rawson Wade allied into some sort of shared sales force and press-run arrangement, and while that circle-the-wagons maneuver kept them independent, the selling and supplying has been a notorious weak point, at least out here. I am, though, about to sign with Atheneum again for the next book, the Montana novel, and I suppose two years from now you'll be hearing the same perplexed grieve out of me.

I had some DP stuff marked for you in last Sunday's P-I, but evidently if you want it you'll have to come out and get it from the King County dump. At least, I can't come up with the clippings just now. But here's what they were: in the new novel by Steve Tesich, screenwriter of Breaking Away, the teen-age boy he's writing about is either a DP or son of one, and as I remember the review, says something about going through life feeling like "a displaced person." Then there was review of a new book I think called something like The Belaris Conspiracy, by John Lofton(?), and if I haven't muddled the memory entirely, it mentioned that Yezlorussian anti-Semites--maybe even actual Nazis--were brought into this country (I guess by OSS/CIA and/or FBI?) as DPs. I don't really see how any of this will help you, but I'm assuming you're in the phase where if you wander past a hardware store with a sale on Dust Pans the D and P fly into your eyes.

The Phoenix speech evidently went all right. I at least gave it as well as I can, and got sundry congratulations afterward. The one I prized, evidently from somebody who's sat thru too many banquets, was "You didn't say 'uh' once!" Got in some good visiting--particularly with Bill Lang and Mike Malone--and met a lot of folks I'd only ever heard of. Had the smallest possible grad school reunion--Margie (Carreaston) Scass and me. John Evers of the Smithsonian gave a truly fine slide show of the Firewater Frontier--the whiskey trade with the Indians, as portrayed over a century and a half. I sat in on a folklore-and-
history—must—they—always—try—push—each—other—in-front-of-the-bus? session
which was pretty good. Poked my nose into a room where somebody was delivering
a sardonic paper on country-and-western music—seems to me you can be critical
of c-and-w or enthusiastic about it, but being sardonic is dumb; while that guy
was in there talking down his nose, probably 10 million people between Kansas
City and IA were listening to one c-and-w song or another—and stalked out.
Spent some time, though not a lot, with Vernon and Jeannette. I'm told he was
proud as a pride of lions about me at the banquet mike. I'll try have lunch
with him before Xmas. I hope I'm askew on this, but I do seem to see age
working on Vernon. And I may be way off in thinking he'd be weathering better
if he'd kept working on something big, the patterns on the land book maybe,
instead of drabs and drabs of articles and talks; but then, who the hell knows
what another person is physically capable of. I keep coming back to the
comment of my Montana uncle who said probably only this one wise thing in
his life: it's hell to get old.

Phoenix horrified me. It's colossally too big for its landscape, and
water supply, and air supply; it looks like they have just kept trucking in
skyscrapers and suburbs and said, plug 'em in here. I suppose it's rain
forest chauvinism, but I am rooting for the Sun Belt to fall flat on its
sunburned nose.

Um, and one more cavil about the WHA, where I actually had a pretty good
time. At every session I went to (except Evers!), the first 10-15 min. of
each paper went to defining terms. I longed for somebody to get up and begin,
"I consider that I'm here to make trouble, so here's what I think about..."

And back here in real life, I'm more or less trying to be a writer. Have
managed some pages on the Montana book this fall, despite distractions. And
I've recently done a repeat of my classified ad ploy maxim: searching out
grasshopper-poisoners, only this time I've asked for folks who put up hay in
the Big Hole Basin in the 30's. From my ads in the Ravalli Republic, the
Deer Lodge Silver Valley Post, and the Dillon Daily Whatchamadingus, I've had
8 or 10 good responses. Hay-putter-uppers are calmer and more factual than
grasshopper-poisoners, I'm glad to say. A bonus of this Depression novel is
the technological change coming to the ranch country at the time; in the Big
Hole, for instance, power buckrakes began to replace the horse variety just then.
Also some good lingo coming from these letters: the hay hands were called
heydiggers in the Big Hole, and one guy who drove what I always knew as a
scatter rake says they called it a "crazy rake." So, stuff piles up, and
I try to process it through the keyboard. We're thinking pretty seriously of
going to Missoula over spring vacation, to see if I can talk to guys who've
fought forest fires.

That's about it, I guess. The Shepherders' Legal Aid Society has asked
me to notify you that they're going to sue your ass off for defamation, but
otherwise, nothing new. Happy holidays.

best

[Signature]
Dear Ivan and Carol,

My spies at the WHA have yet to report, so I know nothing about your talk there—whether the audience was drunk, whether some obnoxious businessman from Tombstone stalked out angrily, whether a delegation arrived from White Sulphur Springs and applauded each reference to Montana. But I assume it was an interesting talk and I look forward to learning more of it, and to get your evaluation of the ceremonies. Congratulations for being invited to speak there—it betokens a rising star.

Last night I finally pushed away term papers and attacked The Sea Runners, which you so kindly had sent to me. It is a fascinating book, showing further development in your multifarious writing skills. I think, however, that the major thing for me is that you have attempted here something entirely different; you are really blazing new trails, and blazing them in a way you can now follow in other books. I can’t imagine me trying anything like that—it frightens me to think of doing it. But you have done it and done it wonderfully. You obviously know that territory like the back of your hand, and from our brief foray with you to the coast we could recognize that stretch, too. It will be interesting to read what the Pacific Northwesterners say about it; undoubtedly someone will claim that you have placed island X where island Y should be; such comments can be dispensed with ("Writers wishing to collect their thoughts may look in the editor's wastebasket," as Josh Billings put it). I'm not sure you needed to adapt the modern Alaska rather than the Russian label, but that's the entire extent of my nit-picking. It is a smooth book, especially the Sitka end of the tale.

And I wanted to report that I heard your NPR interview. It was at once the most-avidly-listened-to interview for me, and the most incompetent one. That is, since it was you I glued my ear to the radio speaker and heard every golden word, something I seldom do in the rather casual way I listen to radio. But I had trouble figuring out just how much preparation the questioner had done: did he think Ivan was an expert on all Alaskan history? Some of the questions were the type that would be known only by a grad student who had worked for 10 years on a narrow dissertation. Nothing asked about your book. It was mystifying, and helped me develop some doubts about the NPR news. It's kind of like when you find that Time has done an article about something you know intimately—and you discover that they have made enormous errors.

I have put away a rough draft of chapter I on my DP opus, and am now slogging through some extra reading for a chapter on becoming a DP. I will have to do some more interviewing in 1983, mainly of Serbs, Croats, Byelorussians. But I was on the whole pleased with how the first chapter went. I have given my first talk on this project (to the "Friends of the Library") and now the district Lions Club wants me to address their ladies auxiliary. Meanwhile, I continue to get mixed reports on Nelson-Hall: here comes praise for some books they have done, and then comes a report that they take forever.
The old order passeth away. A week ago I spent the weekend in Grand Junction, Colorado, in the area of my ancestral roots, where an aged aunt had died and my mother decided she would like both her sons as well as her husband on hand. So we all flew there, and had a wonderful family reunion with cousins and others who came in from all corners of the country. I saw cousins I had not seen since 1940. We talked, and reminisced, and asked, and drank, and told stories, and had a great time. Of course, since the aunt was a truly beloved woman, one of the old school who had time after time dedicated her time to helping nurses someone back to health, it was kind of hard to see her go. "I know everyone has to go, but I somehow never thought it would happen to Dot," my mother said, paraphrasing somebody. And now it means my mother is the end of the Bryant line--none of the others of her father's lineage survive. We were talking about a distant mountain visible from her hometown of Appleton--which snuggles between Grand Junction and the Utah line--and she was telling of how she climbed that on a church picnic when she was about 3 years old. I asked more about it, and she said the church used to make two-day excursions in wagons and then camp out, but she suddenly said, "I can't remember any more of it, and now there is no one left to ask." And so beneath the joy of reunion there was that sense of an old pioneer family just about gone. All three of the daughters were strong, dedicated women; the son was an artist and had a few problems but eventually was a pretty decent sort. I think their development can be seen mainly through the amalgamation of the influence of a very stern patriarch father (Church of the Brethren preacher) and an extremely gentle, sensitive mother. They had met in the Nebraska homesteading days and then moved on to Colorado right at the turn of the century, on the land taken from the Utes. A remarkable family--I shall never really understand them, for my grandfather I never knew and my memories of the grandmother are too dim.

I did hear one more sheep story, which I shall pass on to you since you must be collecting them, given your interest in 1930s Montana. This story comes not from Montana, but from my cousin who was a Navy doctor at the end of WW II in the Pacific: he said his ship was torpedoed, and he made it to an island where about 100 sailors of various nations were waiting for rescue as the war wound to a close. After 3 weeks he asked someone casually what they did for sex? His friend told him that when the tide was low they could swim across to a neighboring island where there were about 10,000 sheep. "That's disgusting!" my cousin said. "Gross--filthy. Ugh! I would never do anything like that!" But after another 2 weeks and no rescue, he was ready to go with the boys. So at the next low tide they all swam across, and as he came up on the shore he saw a sheep, ran at it, mounted--and realized that all the other sailors were having a fit of laughter, falling on the beach, hysterical. "Hey, what's the matter? I'm doing just what you guys said to do!", my cousin demanded. "You picked the homeliest sheep on the island!!" they yelled back.

Now I am starting two books, both very interesting but very different: The Thresher, written by Herbert Krause, a slightly-known author of farm life of the northern Plains. It rings true. The other is by Erich Maria Remarque: A Time to Love and a Time to Die; the man who gave the world that beautiful book All Quiet on the Western Front. I read Thresher just for awareness of regional literature; I read Remarque for his beautiful, simple style, and also to keep me in the mood on the war.  

I value the book highly. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Mark
Dear Ivan and Carol,

The packet of stuff from the WHA about their October convention brought the wondrous news that Ivan will be a banquet speaker! Hurrah! I am very happy for the WHA, and angry that this is a convention I had earlier decided I could not attend. But I will get reports on it from various spies—VC, of course, and one of our better library types who will be there—and so can get at least some vicarious pleasure out of it. I have been a complainer for several years that the WHA was getting so stodgy, so professorial, that the buffs were going to opt out in droves. This year's convention seems jammed with all sorts of goodies. I urged VC when he was president to have a showing of a classic Western film as a fixed part of the program each year. I also urged that they have a Western sing-along each year, with a few local guitarists, but that idea was apparently too radical for even that bunch.

Anyway, I congratulate you. You are going to be the best-respected writer out West. And you should be.

Your sheepherder references brought back a few memories of Montana. We were near Big Timber, of course, and there was obviously a lot of community rivalry between the high school teams that was expressed in the form of anti-sheepherder stories. I heard many—my editor was a walking emporium of sheepherder jokes—but this is the only one I can recall:

A sheepherder was brought before the judge in Big Timber. The judge glared down at him and said firmly: "You are charged with having sexual intercourse with the following animals, to wit: sheep, cows, deer, elk, dogs, chickens."

"CHICK-ens??" the sheepherder yelled.

My dad once loaned me a wonderful volume written by a Wyoming sheepherder, that was full of stories and lore about raising sheep. I think it was called simply Sheep. If you are interested but can't locate it I could ask him for the exact title and author.

Havre remains in my memory, too. Not that I was there during my newspaper term in Montana; this came earlier, I think in 1956 when I first went West to work with the Forest Service. The GN came to Havre around midday, and stopped 20 minutes for water (this is what the NP would do at Livingston, I now realize). I got out and walked down the street, in the hot glare of early summer sun, and found myself being stared at by dozens of Indians who leaned against all the buildings on that rather decrepit Main Street. I think I got an ice cream cone and then beat it back to the train. It was to be my last stop in Havre.
We are into the school year now—Dan already trying out for a play ("Glass Menagerie"—he didn't make it), the girls playing soccer, Eva driving two days a week to take a course at the U of I in Urbana, and three days a week the other direction to teach at the community college in East Peoria. My mother in law is visiting us for a few weeks.

I have a reduced load for Fall—two courses only—and so I began last week to read over every speck of information I have gathered in my DP research. It is already getting me fired up, as I read through the interviews. I still will want to interview people from various groups, like the Croatians and Serbs, but most of that kind of research is now finished. It is a good feeling, to finally begin.

Godspeed on your Phoenix trip! Tri Tip a few up for me as you mingle with that host of former Carstensen students and others. It is to their good fortune and reputation that they finally have Ivan on the program. If you hand out copies of your talk to the local press, I would appreciate having same; but you probably will write your notes on your shift cuff and that will not travel well in an envelope.

as ever,

Mark
Dear Ivan and Carol,

We are sliding into harvest time, the local corn now gracing our tables and the zucchini-raisers suddenly becoming zealously friendly as they search for people to donate their harvest to. Only one more week of summer session, so I have just finished grading four sets of exams/papers, and a week from today will receive final exams from my two classes. Since there are about 20 in a class, it is not quite so bad as it has been at times. Our Fall semester begins Aug. 23 already.

Good news on Sea Runners and on the Montana novel. It will be interesting to see what you do with it, writing on your own era, interviewing people, but tying it into a fictional account. My spies are all around, and one of them sent me a clipping from a Montana newspaper based on an interview with you; that provided more clues as to what you are doing. You continue to enjoy a good press, as do most ex-journalists who enter other fields. Journalists tend to take care of their own, unto the grave, in a sort of substitution for the occupation's inadequate pensions. So enjoy those clippings!

I have some good news on the immigrant book whose birth has been so difficult. Nelson-Hall sent the copy-edited manuscript early in the summer, and when I returned it I asked the copy editor to please inquire for me as to when they expect publication. She responded that publication is set for end of summer 1983. (I then checked with a colleague whose ms. was accepted by U of Illinois Press the same week mine was accepted by Nelson-Hall: his publication date is December 1983. So private presses are faster.) The copy editing was pretty good, incidentally—perhaps even a bit better than that of the U of California Press since this Nelson-Hall woman actually knew something about Midwestern immigration and regional history.

Meanwhile, I have made trips to Cleveland and to Chicago. I spent four days in Cleveland, almost entirely among Slovenians. It is the center of Slovenian life outside Yugoslavia. (Slovenia is that corner of Yugoslavia nearest Venice and Trieste.) I found an area of the city whose main drag was pretty broken down as to buildings, store fronts, etc., but whose residential areas were neat and kept up even if many of the homes were obviously fairly old. Someone told me that some of the older Slovenian women even sweep the street in front of their houses—something I don't recall you doing in Seattle. I interviewed a former Chetnik (anti-Tito) fighter, and spent a great day at a Slovenian private park east of Cleveland where the most Catholic group holds an annual service commemorating the victims of Tito. I talked with several people who were of college age at the end of the war, and whose DP experience was therefore largely spent in Italian or Austrian universities. (Memo: If I ever have to be a refugee, I would like to be college age. I think they did better psychologically than older groups.) I met a writer who admitted that none of his books have been published in English. Many of them now return for visits to Yugoslavia, so some of the worst wounds seem to be healing. And they told me a story: the Yugoslav Airlines is one of the world's worst, and its stewardesses are absolutely the worst in the entire Universe (because it is such a "plum", with travel, cocktail parties, wonderful tips, the stewardesses are almost always the daughters of party hacks). On a recent charter flight which my host (editor of Ameriska Domovina) took, they took KLM to Brussels and then were amazed to see upon descending from their plane that the Yugoslav Airlines plane was actually there waiting! They were accustomed to
having lengthy waits in Brussels! And so they all gave out a lusty cheer right there on the runway! Then they went into the reception area and discovered that it was yesterday's plane—that plane still had to go all the way to Belgrade and back before they could board it and finish their flight.

I suppose if someone visited the Slovenian area of Cleveland, he or she would conclude it was a dismal urban spot. But what I found was something of the excitement that bubbles beneath the surface, in which immigrant arguments are fought out and in which folksongs and dances of the old country share the spotlight with religion and traditional foods as the centerpiece of life. My host asked me, "What do they do instead of this"—indicating folk singing and dancing—"in native-born American communities?" That is, he could not envision a community without all that. I told him we have the Bloomington Corn Festival, and a lot of bluegrass music that is moving up in people’s attention to "older" ways, and a tremendous new push for genealogy.

Then to Chicago last Saturday to spend the entire day among Lithuanians, in their enclave just east of Midway Airport. Small homes, close together, but well-kept yards with lots of flowers; I think if I had to live in Chicago I would probably want to live there if it was at all close to my job. I began by interviewing one of the editors of Draugas, their daily Lithuanian newspaper, and then went on to talk with people who organized schools and other activities in the DP camps. One was a girl (woman) about my age, who was helpful in prodding her mother when her mother gave superficial or blanket answers to my questions. At this point in my research I am noting that groups want to be included—their pride is so great that they don’t want to be left out! And because of this I must seek out and find some Croats—they were the largest Yugoslav group, the most chauvinistic, and the most Argentine in their claims to be superior. If I leave them out of my book I might be in real trouble—in Cleveland the bomb-throwers among Yugoslavs are all Croats.

All the while I have been going through secondary stuff, with occasional finds in old magazine articles (where some journalist wandered into a DP camp, for example). I have piles more to do, but want to do a chapter right away in the Fall semester to kind of see where I stand. I hope to get 3 or 4 chapters done in rough form by next summer, then get a couple more done next summer when I will not be teaching.

Which all is probably quite boring to you, with your trips to Glacier and Point No Point, your evenings at the theater and your literary salon musings. But life in Normal goes ever forward! The whole town is talking about the Wyman's newly-laid concrete sidewalk! You should see it!

The Borges piece is for you because you are such devotees of the horse and the horseman. Actually, I think you will basically agree with the thrust of his piece (written in 1951, the editors informed the NR readership a week later). You feel the cowboy stands for freedom, I think; you have never argued that the cowboy is a civilizing force.

At the beginning of the summer, before the summer session began, I plowed through Corky Park, which I think is overblown but still has some nice parts, and Monday’s House of Dawn, which is a real gem. Since then I barely can keep up with Time and New Republic. But the session ends in another week, and then I hope to spend some peaceful evenings reading on our screened back porch (new since you visited, several eons ago). ☀️

News of Carstensen? Has Washington declared bankruptcy yet? Has the U.S. government?

P.S. Dan goes in a week to Northwestern’s Archaeology Camp.

Sincerely, etc., Mark
Dear Mark—

Record heat in Seattle. All the way into the high 80's, these last 3 days. I know that's not even enough to start to melt the homemade ice cream in a Normal backyard, but it feels pretty warm here. Carol is capitalizing on it by painting the house. I'm struggling to get the winter's cord of fireplace alder delivered. Just made my second phone call to inquire of Denny Hill Fuel, an establishment which would share the imagination of Dickens, to ask where the hell my wood is: "We was just talking about that," the fellow assured me.

Thanks a lot for the Borges piece. I hope to slander cowboys considerably in this Montana novel, or at least make them look bad in comparison to the west's true nobility, shepherders. One of my characters says something apropos of cowboy-shepherd comparison, like: "You may come across a herder who's crazy now and then, but at least they aren't apt to be such self-inflated sonsabitches."

So you saw, thru means I can't divine, the St. Falls Trib clipping on our Montana sojourn. You're right that journalists are pretty generous to ex-journalists. I do take some care not to queer that amiability by avoiding that line which journalists incessantly hear (or at least I did), usually from a p.r. flack or somebody equally fatuous: "You know, I used to be a newspaperman myself..." That Trib interview actually had its startling moments. I was talking to the reporter for the Havre daily—one of the worst newspapers I've ever seen—when a voice trumpeted beside me, "Mr. Doig, I'm Karen Davis of the Tribune." She was pretty damned perturbed about something I couldn't fathom, and the Havre daily person in turn was unstrung by this cloud of perturbance: it turned out that Davis had held the job the Havre reporter now possessed, been fired from it in a dispute with the editor, etc. All in all, an acrimonious little time. I don't know what it says for the profession of journalism that both stories turned out immensely sadder than I imagined they could.

Havre was like that, everybody and everything, including the weather, a little skewed. But the Havre stint fortunately was only the last 2 days of an otherwise grand month in Montana. A beautiful start of summer out there, a very rainy spring and precipitation continuing most of the time we were there, so that the crops are bummer and the grass is green and belly-deep on the cattle. I got a dozen interviews from Depression-era folk, some minor lodes out of the Conrad and Choteau weekly papers of the late '30's, a bunch of stuff from 3 days at the State Historical Soc. library in Helena. Mostly though, we gawked at the country, Carol taking pictures of it, me trying to get it inside myself.

We were focused on the Choteau area most of the time, so one afternoon were invited out to say hello to A.B. Guthrie. He's got a book on the way—Fair Land, Fair Land, which continues the story of Dick Summers after The Way West. A beautiful cover, a watercolor of Bear Mountain, the peak Guthrie sees from his writing desk. Half the people in Montana assure you Guthrie is drunk and the other half assure you he is senile, but he isn't any of either. He's 82, but pray that either of us is functioning as well if we hit that age. I can't claim that the Doigs and the Guthries are real friends—we've only been around each other about three times—but we get along okay, gossip a little, and I think all in all behave more civilly than writers are ever imagined to. I am luke about chunks of his prose, but I much admire the idea he had in that westering trilogy, and
also his great good citizenship on behalf of the landscape since he moved back to Montana.

Didn't see Mike Malone this trip, as we stuck to northern Montana, but we had a good time with Bill Lang, editor of Montana Mag of History and one of my favorite people.

No news of Carstensen. This is turning out to be a real working summer for me, so I'm kind of holed up. I can report that I was at the UW yesterday and the place is looking more and more cadaverous, lights off in various library rooms and skeleton staff on duty, more and more effects of budget-cutting showing thru.

We're, Not too much else doing out here. We, or at least I'm, biding through Carol's folks' visit the next few weeks; then we'll head for the Oregon coast for the week before she goes back to work. We did get to Vancouver BC a week or so ago, for the first time in 1/2 years. Still a good interesting city, though with ferocious traffic; it was a bit like driving in New York City without having to go east to do it. I was dazzled by the Museum of Anthropology at UBC; I suppose it's the Louvre of NW coast Indian art. Wonderfully overpowering stuff.

Your news sounds dandy on all fronts, from N-Hall publication date to the Slovenians. I anticipate you'll make it to the Wisc. family cabin sometime before school starts; maybe even as I write this?

all best
Dear Mark--

--For a book I'm writing about Montana during the Depression, I'd like

to hear from anyone involved in grasshopper-poisoning projects of the late

1930's. Ivan Doig etc. (classified ad run in Havre, Glasgow and Malta papers).

--I see your aid (sic) in the Phillips County New (sic) ... we put out

poison, if it done any good I do not know ... Fred Olson, Malta

--What would you like to know? Why are you a Washingtonian writing about

Montana anyway? Elmer Gwynn, Havre.

--Being pretty much of a native of Montana I thought I might be able
to give you a little light on the topic you ask about. Leon Jones, Peerless.

That's the way it's been going around here, letters steadily coming in
from guys who fought the 'hoppers with a mix of sawdust and arsenic. I got
I suppose a dozen responses, most of them very good about the procedures
and gizmos used in the poisoning, and I intend to talk with 3 or 4 of the
retired farmers who've ended up in Havre. That summer of '39 in northern
Montana, the focus of this novel I have underway, was particularly dramatic
because it appeared that the drought at last had broken, and taken the
grasshoppers with it; then the 1st of July it turned into a scorcher of
a summer and the 'hoppers reappeared. All this will be a fairly tangential
part of the novel--Carol tells me I'm experiencing overkill of info on
grasshopper-killing--but it has me kind of interested. As, evidently, are
Elmer Gwynn, Fred Olson, et al.

We head for Montana Tuesday morning. Will put in about 3 days at the
State Historical Society in Helena, then go on to Great Falls and take over
the house of friends who'll be vacationing for about 10 days. The next
couple of weeks we need to be in the Choteau-Dupuyer area where I'm
setting this book, but seismograph crews and similar dedicatess of Jim Watt
have overswarmed that area so that there's barely ever a motel room available,
let alone a house or apt. So what we've come up with, and I don't know at all
how it'll turn out, fascinating or a fiasco, is the sub-rental of the teacherage
at the New Rockport Hutterite colony north of Choteau. I'm very surprised
that the Hutterites, whom you may know are a religious communistic order
(out of German Anabaptist origins 400 years ago), will let worldly types such
as onto the place, but the council of elders met and said we could come.
There'll be about a hundred Hutterites on the colony, the men all in black
except for bright flannel shirts, the women in long skirts and bright kerchiefs,
throngs of kids around (10-12 to a family, usually). I have the feeling that
out of a lot of memorable Montana trips, this one may stick out.

Right now, we're not doing much except trying to pack for Montana. I've
read page proofs on The Sea Runners, and that book's now in the hands of the
publishing gods. Carol finished her school year on Friday, is leaning in about
a 45-degree angle of anticipation toward summer and Montana. The last couple
months have whirled past me, mostly in research or planning for this novel;
I've also managed to write a few words of it. We did go to Boise for an
English teachers conference, and briefly encountered the friends of yours--
I think he's a Spanish teacher—who visited you here in Seattle last summer.
Whether or not I have the absolute particulars right, they send you howdy.
The news out here usually is the economy, which keeps getting more dismal. The state's finances stagger and stagger, and the Republican legislators in control won't talk about an income tax. Evidently there's going to be an 8% across-the-board cut in state funds this summer, and maybe worse later in the year. It looks as if things are really going to have to go to hell before the strangulation of public services stops.

Other than that, my vegetable garden is thriving, and I guess Carol and I are too. Good luck among among the Serbs and Croats of Cleveland. Now I've got to go pack the car.

all best

p.s. Read a reminiscence of building the Milwaukee railroad tunnel near the Mont-Idaho line which said among the several nationalities employed were Montenegrins, of course known to the locals as mountain niggers.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Your letters are piling up in the in-basket, so it behooves me to get the lead out and send a missive perambulating through old sol's rays toward that land where gentle Pacific's foam caresses far Puget's shores.* Winter has returned, with snow in the forecast for tomorrow; you will remember the situation well.

Your advice has been of a particularly high quality on my second publishing venture. I got the library's Nelson-Hall catalogue and wrote down all the history books still in print—I think there may have been two dozen—then looked them up in our card catalogue. We had perhaps a bit more than half of them, and I found most of those. The printing seems OK, but their work on typeface, spacing, and art seems erratic—some books very good, some poor. Several books featured title pages which had obviously had no overseeing by someone familiar with layout. I am still waiting their letter with comments from the managing editor—which I assume will include a publishing schedule—and when that comes I will send them my comments on how I would like my book to be like ______.

Their acceptance of my manuscript came in a week after I had mailed it to them—try that after waiting 7 months for the U. of Illinois Press! I was overjoyed, then read the contract they enclosed. It had two infamous paragraphs:

"Because of the high cost of professional and technical book publication no royalty will be paid on the first two thousand (2000) copies sold. Five percent (5%) royalty will be paid on all copies sold from two thousand and one (2001) through five thousand (5000); ten percent (10%) royalty will be paid on all copies sold from five thousand and one (5001) through fifteen thousand (15,000); and twelve and one-half per cent (12½%) royalty will be paid on all copies sold above fifteen thousand..."

and,

"In order to induce the Publisher to enter into this Agreement and in consideration of the Publisher's undertaking to publish the Work, the Author hereby grants to the Publisher the option to publish the Author's next work, whether of the same or similar nature or otherwise, on the same terms as those herein set forth. Such option shall be exercised in writing within ninety (90) days after receipt of the manuscript of such work at the Publisher's office."

My original thought was to go to Chicago and argue with them. That, in retrospect, would have been disastrous. I am weakest in personal confrontations. Your advice was best, mix and that's what I did. I got my U of California contract and typed in the royalty paragraph (10% on first 5,000; 12½% on next 5,000; 15% on rest), and I crossed out the offending Options clause. Then I had my next-door neighbor witness my signature, and initial the two changed paragraphs. I mailed it to them, noting (as you suggested) that my UCAL book was much more narrow, and yet I had gotten the standard royalty pact for that; UCAL had likewise done nothing about an options clause. I told them that "because I am now planning on pursuing other types of writing, including fiction, I cannot agree to inclusion of paragraph 15 on the 'option to publish the Author's next work.'" And I added: "If you do not agree to these changes, please return my ribbon copy of IMMIGRANTS IN THE VALLEY immediately; another publisher has asked to see it."

* This sentence included without extra cost.
Then I added: "But I hope that you will agree that IMMIGRANTS IN THE VALLEY has a much broader market—especially among the descendants of Irish and Germans in the Chicago area. Nelson-Hall would be the best publisher for this book."

That was mailed March 8; on March 11 came the reply: "After a minor in-house battle I have persuaded our people that Nelson-Hall should accept the Agreement as you modified it. We are delighted, therefore, to become the publisher of this excellent book. / "Deletion of Clause No. 15 was not difficult. It is understandable that if you are going heavily into trade book publishing that you would not want to tie up your future manuscripts. However, there were some misgivings about the financial wisdom of spending on one author so much more than we have budgeted for this purpose. It will all work out well, though, if your book does have a substantial sale through the trade, in addition to the educational and library sale we confidently expect."

I responded happily to that and said I would await more information on the book's schedule, etc.

So I am even further in the Doig's debt. May I give you one of my children? Two? Three?

My only advice on your search for Montana lingo and lore, would be to try to find some jury testimony, perhaps coroner's jury testimony. That was one of my maxims surprising discoveries in my research for Epic. At Cripple Creek I inquired of the fossil behind the counter whether they had old coroner's jury records that might describe mining accidents; she said they had none, but yielded when I asked to go into the vault. I found them, of course, and even in the 1880's they were taking down verbatim testimony from scores of accident witnesses and victims, and these were being preserved in the records by people with beautiful writing hands. Soon they were being typed.

My DP research is currently concentrating on secondary works. I had been expecting to go over to Cleveland to interview some Yugoslavs who were forcibly repatriated after the war, then got out later, but that trip has been moved to the June 20 weekend when Slovenians, Serbs, Croatians and others from all over the U.S. and Canada will congregate in Cleveland for ceremonies commemorating those who lost their lives in the anti-Tito struggles. It should be a lively time. I am starting to feel good about the material I have. A new book just out helps me narrow my topic: America and the Survivors of the Holocaust, by Leonard Dinnerstein of Arizona State. He writes mainly about the Jews, and very heavily on US policies. That frees me to tell the story of the displaced persons—most of whom were not Jews. (Jews have gotten about 9/10 of the historical attention for that period—probably they merit it on pure suffering, although perhaps not; it's just that they were stated targets of Nazism while Poles, for example, weren't.)

Monday night we "roast" Carstensen's first Ph.D., Arlan Helgeson, who is retiring early due to his wife's allergy problems. (They will move to Prescott, Ariz.) Arlan has become one of my favorites here. He grew up in one of those little Norwegian towns along the Mississippi in western Wisconsin, was in the war, came back and went on to get his degree from Madison, and has been here since 1951. He always has a joke of some sort to tell, and he tells them well. I made the menu-program for our dinner, and on the menu is bread, choice of herring or lutefisk, and water (brought to Norway in 1946 from England). Should be fun.

Helgeson and everyone else raves about "Northern Lights", a film on PBS last Tuesday, about the Non-Partisan League of North Dakota in the WWI era; delightfully jammed with Norwegians and old customs and people who spoke variations of the English. I had a class and so missed it. But tonight I caught most of "Prairie Home Companion" on public radio, which you ought to hear sometime—music for the "singing impaired" and stories about the Upper Midwest, mainly. Best to you both —

[Signature]
Dear Ivan and Carol,

GALENA, ILLINOIS

GRANT'S PRE-WAR HOME. Captain U. S. Grant left this home to answer the call of his country in 1861. His wife and four children waited here for his return.

Color Photo by Joe E. Clark

Your advice was very good: the Nelson-Hall boss wrote yesterday that after an in-house fight they had decided to sign my amended contract. He commented that they expect sales to the trade, as well as schools and libraries, to justify the move. Everyone here wonders how I did it—I just tell them about my pal Ivan and his experience with publishers. Thanks, pal; your main reward will be in Heaven but I'll try to provide something earlier.

best mark dp

Dr. and Mrs.
Ivan DOIG
17021 10th Ave. NW
Seattle, WASH. 98177
Dear Mark—

You mean to tell me you went ahead and did whatever it was I suggested might be tried on Nelson-Hall? I'm going to have to be more careful with my mouth.

Actually, I'm glad as hell, and relieved, that matters worked out for you. Certainly it's an indication that they think well of your book, that they'd give ground as they did. Now I can sit back in fascination and see whether the two guys I regularly correspond with, Illinoisans both but unbeknownst to each other, and with nothing in common except occasional letters out of this typewriter, coincide in the making of this immigrant book. The half of the equation besides you is Ainsley Roseen, just past 80, managing editor of The Rotarian when I was there and now a part-time proofreader for Nelson-Hall. I doubt there's much chance your book will find its way to Ainsley; he seems to do just occasional work, on random stuff—the last book he mentioned I think was a history of rock music. But your galleys sure as hell would get a microscopic treatment if they came to Ainsley. I may have told you what a detail he was at The Rotarian. He retired one April Friday in 1969, and on Monday the other four of us on the editorial staff discovered we had to sort out the letters to the editor, the limerick contest, the jokes page, the inventions page, the poetry filler—by the time we shoveled around all the crap Ainsley had been handling single-handedly, we each had three or four of those dismal chores like warts on our regular work. Ainsley incidentally is a midwesterner after your own heart; born in Moline, a MEPP U. of Ill grad sometime in the 20s, Methodist, teetotal—well, some of you are a little looser than that.

We advice-givers of course always stretch our luck, and I've tried to think a bit about what else you ought to watch out for, having swiveled past N-Hall's hyster contract. I guess one thing is the production job itself—typeface, layout, white space, etc. Carol and I bird-dogged Prentice-Hall on every step of our News text, then the galleys arrived and they'd set the damn thing in a san serif we didn't like. Too late then, of course. What you might do, if any of this matters to you, is get hold of a Nelson-Hall catalogue of their current books—your university bookstore "buyer" ought to have one—and by way of that, track down some recent books for a look. If you find one you like, there should be no problem in saying in some letter, or phone call, to your N-Hall editor that you hope yours can be as much like that one as possible. That's normal writer behavior, a legit concern on your part, and even the doperiest publishers we've encountered, such as Prentice-Hall, would try please us if we caught them in time. Also, you might give some thought to title—is the publisher 1000% sold on it, and if not, how much are you prepared to fight about it—and to cover. If there's some great topical illustration you know about, you might suggest that as a cover possibility.

Saw Carstensen and Jeannette just passingly, at a talk on FDR by the UW's million dollar prof Frank Freidel. Also in the audience, Burke, Pease, the Bestors, Katz, Treadgold—I felt like Banquo's ghost at the banquet.
Carol has just gritted her way through a berighted innovation at her college—a three-day exam "week", in which she had to give and grade four exams. This morning, she's looking as if she may recuperate. Now a week of spring break, which I guess will mean the Olympic Peninsula for us, St. Helens permitting. We go to Boise about a month from now, for me to say something to the regional conference of English teachers, and I'll be glad to see Gary Bettis again. Also am somewhat more interested in the Boise country since having read Angle of Repose.

We too did a bit of cross-country skiing, over in the Methow about a month ago. Carol and another couple from her college bought a weekend at a cabin, during the AFT's benefit auction, and off we all went, into about four feet of snow on the level, north of Winthrop. First time we had cross-country skied, and it wasn't bad. Also snowshoed, played shaggy poker, and incessantly fed the cabin stove. Striding to me, who declared quits with snow and ice when we moved there, how lovely the Methow Valley was under all that snow. I got up early one morning, walked the road for an hour or so by myself, listened to and watched an osprey on a rock in mid-river, saw a coyote go up a cutbank ahead of me, studied the patterns of fence post tops and bare trees. A good time, and useful reminder there's life east of Puget Sound.

Am pretty much clear of The Sea Runners now, just waiting on galleys. Got through the copy-edited ms last week, virtuously struck out a few of my purpest patches of prose. Also found some old illustrations which I hope the editor will like well enough to use as chapter headings. And that same gala week a photocopy of the artist's version of the cover came, and I love it—the guy, Paul Bacon, I think has done even better this time than he did with House of Sky. Caught this coastline extraordinarily, particularly for a guy whose office is in Carnegie Hall. Now I'm trying to gather steam for the Montana novel. Have been ransacking to find lingo for it, and going through stuff collected by folklorists, found some "Jonathanisms" which reminded me of your stuff from mining town papers;

--There is a young man in Vermont who feeds his geese upon iron fillings and gathers steel pens from their wings.
--They have got a fellow in jail in Chicago for swindling. He dried snow and sold it for salt.
--In Vermont are two men so old they have forgotten who they are, and there are no neighbors living who can remember.

Also arrived this week, from a writer in Gloucester smitten by Winter Bros: "We are only as we find out we are," which he attributes to poet Charles Olson.

Not much else new. This state continues to go to hell as fast as the troglodytic Republican legislators can tip it that way. I'm heartened a little bit on the national scene by the growing protests against the Reagan budget and the bulls-eyeing of El Salvador/Nicaragua; we've maybe turned a corner, people rousing against these sonsabitches. Spring is certifiably on its way, I got my potatoes planted.

You sure a Norwegian party isn't a contradiction in terms? all best

p.s. Give me the details of how you turned N-Hall around. Good news is so rare in publishing, I'd like to hear it all.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Melting time here—rivers along the edges of the streets, ponds appearing in the midst of snow-covered yards, the ugliness of a long winter's castoffs now poking up through the snow as it melts. It has been a long winter but now it is ending and the spirits are high.

Partly to celebrate the end of winter we held a Norwegian party last night. When we returned from Wisconsin after Christmas I brought back a large load of lefse that I had bought in a grocery store there—that is the flat potato pancake of the Norwegians. We froze it and then made plans to have our department's three Norwegians—Austensen, Helgeson, and Reitan—with their wives for a cooperative dinner. Each was given an assignment: Reitan showed slides documenting his family's move from Norway 100 years ago; Austensen brought his accordion and played Norwegian songs while we tried to sing; Helgeson told Norwegian jokes. (Helgeson was WC's first Ph.D. at Wisconsin; he came a here in 1951 and is now taking early retirement to Arizona because of his wife's allergies.) Sample Helgeson joke:

A Norwegian from Wisconsin went back to the old country for a visit, and while driving along a fjord saw a pier jutting out into the water and it took his breath away: It was the most beautiful pier he had ever seen, and he was determined to make something exactly like it back in Wisconsin. So he got out of the car, took his measuring devices and a sheet of paper and pencil, and went down by the water to the pier. He decided to count the slats, and soon got down on his hands and knees and crawled out, counting them as he crawled. But he got so absorbed in the task that he went off the end into the fjord, and swam back into shore with difficulty. He was last heard wandering along the shore muttering, "When you're out of slats, you're out of pier."

We did a little cross-country skiing and some sledding and tobogganing, but not much. Somehow a hard winter tensed to keep you inside, and to sap your energy at the same time. Normal had four days when it was -20° F, which is a record here. The Wymans' new furnace performed well, probably using less gas as well. All the reports we got from the Pac NW were that the rains were even more unending than before; combined with the gloomy news from the university's budget crunch I have visions of you all sitting around with sour faces as you drink your whiskey on those long wet evenings.

Good news on your writing and NY dealings. I look forward to the Alaska book, and expect to learn a lot from it about how writers adapt history to fiction. I guess of your three books, this one will be the one that I would someday like to attempt.

My own report is not so good. Nebraska read and rejected the immigrant ms. for the same reasons as the U of Illinois: not scholarly enough, needs to confront the scholarly studies on immigration. They also invited me to rewrite it for them. Then I wrote Oklahoma; having gotten no answer in 3 weeks I wrote Nelson-Hall, a Chicago-based publisher that has done quite a bit of history, including some immigration and frontier stuff. Now Oklahoma has responded that they would like to see the ms.; but I think I'll give Nelson-Hall another week to answer. When I was talking to people about a publisher for Hard-Rock Epic I remember being told that Oklahoma took forever. And now a well-known labor historian has written me, saying that he is scout for several publishers, and do I have any manuscripts ready? One of his houses is Greenwood, I know, and I have no wish to get published there, but I'll keep his letter as a kind of last resort if I don't get anywhere this spring.
The LP book research moves along well. I am now going through Times of London microfilm from 1945, right at the end of the war. The subject of DPs often drew the Times' attention, so it is good reading. More fascinating, of course, is that end-of-the-war exuberance, as poor England erupts in joy when the Nazi machine is finally crushed. There were many tales of the Americans in the Tirol coming across vast stores of art masterpieces, gold bars, cash, etc., and Dan is now collecting on some of them. Can you imagine him going through the Tirol with his metal detector? I told him he had better arrange a satisfactory cover, such as doctoral candidate in Tirolean land use, or a geologist studying rock formations.

My hope is that I'll be able to start writing in the Fall. I think it will be OK on the first couple of chapters by then. I intend to do some interviewing later in the Spring, of people who were forcefully repatriated to Poland, Yugoslavia, or wherever, and later got out and emigrated to the U.S. I have been told that a contact in Cleveland--editor of the Serbian newspaper there--can find such persons for me.

This is quite a challenge, to recreate an era. I clipped this from a recent New Republic article on remembering FDR:

"Whenever one reads the revisionist historians of the recent past, they seem to have forgotten so much of what it was like at the time; or perhaps, many of them being so young, never knew. They are able to write of the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine, for example, as if it is of little account that Europe in that terrible winter of 1947 was a hell frozen over. They forget that Europe had collapsed as an organized industrial and political community, and that this was the reality that faced the Americans who had to decide and act. The trouble with the revisionists is that they seem to have only the documents. They appear to have no memory; not only no memory of their own, but no sense of historical memory. They work busily on the documents, but with no historical imagination. They fail to take into account the voices of the ordinary people who lived through that time." New Republic, Jan. 27, 1982, pp. 17-18.

We are expecting a rather dull summer, a stay-at-home time. I will be teaching, and so we will probably go to Wisconsin at the beginning and end of the summer. But for summer 1983 I foresee another trip West, probably not to Seattle, more likely to Boise and up to Montana. We will try to arrange it to connect with the Doigs' annual roots trip.

I re-discovered IB Singer recently--I had forgotten how fascinating some of his stuff can be. He sets the scene in a very, very detailed fashion; I tried to think about some incidents from my past and I really doubt that I could give a Singer-style description. He sees things a blind man sees (to paraphrase some artist). Döblig can do that, too.

best wishes to you both —

Mark
Dear Mark—

We have come through New York, Xmas, and New Year's Eve relatively well, and sit here now at the edge of '82, wondering how it'll be. The general Dog viewpoint these days is that both of us are doing just fine, and we wish the world was doing fractionally as well.

The week on the East Coast wasn't bad, as those things go. Luckily, I guess, our first day and a half in NY was sub-freezing, so the accumulation from the garbage strike—bags high as barricades; squint just a bit and you could imagine there had been street-fighting—wasn't aromatic. Carol, who has the functioning nose in this family, said the stuff was starting to perk a bit with the warming weather. The subways and buses were dismal, dirty, decrepit; we walked whenever we could. New Yorkers were pleasant and helpful, just as they'd been when we were there a couple years ago. And I liked again some of the energy in that city. The take-out counterman at the coffee shop where we had our breakfasts, for instance, wrapping open paper bags, chucking in the coffee-to-go, the bagels, already having called to the cook the order of the next person in line and instantly asking the next person beyond that, "Yeah?" And the woman who's agenting this novel for me, calmly talking to me in her living room between phone calls every 5 or 10 minutes, focusing right back on wherever we were before the interruption.

The more dismal part of the trip was the Jersey shore, which we have watched decline for a dozen or more years now; I suppose a benchmark would be the black riot in Asbury Park in the late '60's, which with fire and terror brought the situation into the open. Asbury Park is a city of 15,000-20,000—I think the biggest place between Jersey City and Atlantic City—absolutely cancerous in its downtown. This time when we got off the bus from NY, the bus station was defunct. The old-line dept. store which held on for years in its square-block bastion long since has pulled out for the shopping malls; there are something like five in a ten-mile radius. Carol's journalistic alma mater there, the Asbury Park Press, big and fat and thriving, has a new plant, away from downtown. On and on. I keep pillaging what I supposedly learned from the UW history dept. and telling myself it can't always be like this, places wax and wane, there'll be a turnaround here—but I can't imagine what could bring it about. One thing that's really noticeable in that area is the failure of transportation. Trains and buses are miserable. I don't know if it's a chicken or egg situation, but as a result everyone drives everywhere in juggernaut cars—none of those namby-pamby Japanese imports back there. Carol says it seems to her that people of that area bought the American dream—big houses and big cars—and OPEC and all the rest notwithstanding, they ain't budging an inch on it.

The meeting with agent and editor went fine, so far as I can tell. The editor said the right things—he'll turn loose on this novel the same jacket designer who did Sky and Winter Brothers; they'll intend to publish the book early next fall. Now, I simply have to find out his reaction to the manuscript is. I think I'm pretty pleased with the book—I'm delaying re-reading for a few weeks more, to get some distance on it—but of course don't know how it'll translate in New York. It did turn out to be a tougher piece of work than I'd anticipated; I went through a kind of Bataan march to get it done before we went to NY, and indeed was still muddling slogging at it until the day before we left.
Unexpectedly, the history is maybe the toughest part. Alaska in the 1850's is tough to ferret out; all kinds of stuff written about Baranov's time, earlier; and plenty when the Russians were about to pull out and the Americans to buy. But there at mid-century when the Russians were finding out that even with a few half-decent administrators and some minimim fresh investment, they weren't making a go of it; right about that hinge of period, the traveler's accounts and the government inspectors and so on are damned scant. The best source of detail for the precise time of my Swedes' escape, 1852-3, I found down at the Bancroft; the notes which one of Bancroft's scribes had taken on a journal kept by an American merchant who visited New Archangel for three weeks. Tantalizing as hell, but the journal itself, supposedly 80-some pages of copious gossip and detail, apparently has vanished.

Speaking of gossip, not much notable in Xmas cards from our OH gang. Mike Olsen didn't renew his chairmanship at Highlands; that was a mess, he was heading about 9 people in charge of 13 disciplines, or something. Pete Steen is still at Forest History, his new wife runs a gift shop—we met her a year ago; nifty lady. Haven't seen Vernon, but will try get him and Jeannette over here for a meal next week.

Your DP lode sounds increasingly rich. When'll you be able to make the time to write?

Appreciated, I guess, the New Republic piece on the writers' congress. I've seen some other rippling pieces about it. I guess the point is valid, writers are garrulous and vapidly idealistic and ego-fat, particularly in groups, but I look at, say, the Reagans, and wonder if those writerly sins amount to much. I don't suppose that congress will yield anything, yet the underlying concerns of it are apt: conglomerates, technology, censorship, they're all goddamn happening. My tendency as usual is to hunker in the middle and support the Authors Guild with some contributions.

Not much else doing, I guess. Just before Xmas I ix at last read Angle of Repose, and was much impressed, particularly with the early part of the book. Yesterday at Shorey's I bought a first edition of Ernest Haycox'x novel set in the Willamette, The Earthbreakers, which I read with pleasure several years ago; interested to see how it looks now. Am just biding time, of course, EXXX until DP is between covers.

all best

p.s. We tried to get Dan's cup away from Jean Roden, but she insists she's gonna send it to you. If you don't get it in the next couple of weeks, nudge her.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Thanksgiving day is winding to a close, just as this semester is finally nearing its end—assuredly the busiest semester I have had in nine years. We were scheduled to drive down to St. Louis this morning, our first venture away from Normal at Thanksgiving time. But our 13-year-old was sick the past two days, and this morning he was very sick, and so we cancelled out. We called some friends who we thought might be alone, but they had invitations for dinner, and so we fixed up a right respectable Thanksgiving feast ourselves for suppertime. Now the kids are in bed, Eva is taking her customary evening nap (she will later arise and work for 2-3 hours at her desk), and I am alone with my thoughts and my typewriter (a new electric model, I might add).

Right off: I apologize for the delay in writing. I note that your letter was written Oct. 18, so I am now way over a month in reply. Somehow, I have not had my head really above water this semester. The main problems are my own—arriving the night before classes began, and then the eight-day New York trip that left me grading papers for two weeks solid. But also, I had two graduate students turning out stuff and that has added to my woes, as has my large (105 students) freshman class. Enough apologies—anyone can find them if they choose. And I am (I hope) mature enough to know that only a busy person has time to do anything.

My Eastern trip was a kaleidoscope of people, places, hurried images that are usually kind of blurred in my memory. I headed first to New York, was there Saturday through Tuesday night (Sept. 19-22), when I took the Metroliner to Washington for 24 hours, then to Philadelphia for Thursday and Friday and home very late the night of Sept. 25. I had my time pretty well planned so there was a free moment to sightsee. Since Carol is from Jersey, and since you have been in New York much more than I these past few years, my hotel and other advice is probably not very good. I wanted a cheap place above all—no, a safe place above all, and 2d a cheap place. I finally settled on the Travel Inn, 515 W 42nd Ave (695-7171). The area is pretty bad—walking back late at night was an experience, although the streets are lit up and there are cops about. It was, I think, $42 a night for a single. They are remodeling a building across the street, and the room itself was clean and neat; it was just the neighborhood. Later in Philadelphia an archivist at the Quaker center told me he stays at the Abbey Victoria (51st and 7th—246-9400), and the price I had on that is $60. Others I located through a friend's AAA book: Windsor, 100 W 58th, $75 single, 265-2100; Salisbury, $69 single, with a toll-free 800-223-0680. I did go to the open-air Fifth Avenue book fair, when I had some hours free Sunday afternoon, but otherwise I was on my way to interviews in the city or suburbs (up north to Wilton, Conn., for example).

The people I interviewed were old hands in the DP business. All had that mixture of idealism and practicality that so many people came out of WW II with (but not out of Vietnam with, or Korea, it seems to me). I had three interviews at the Catholic bq., then interviewed two men (now with Jewish services for the aged) who worked with UNRRA running camps (one of these was on the first UNRRA team sent into Germany, while fighting was still going on). And I interviewed a man who had just retired from a career with the UN High Commission for Refugees—the group that just won the Nobel. He began with the Army's DP work, then UNRRA, then the US DP Commission, and then with the UN High Commission on Refugees (where he directed the Gaza
Strip operation among others). I got onto most of these through some
detective work: in going through 1948-era reports I compiled a list of
some 50+ names of Americans who worked in the DP camps in Europe.
Then I got recent State Department personnel lists, and finally I
found two of those names among recent personnel: I wrote them, got one reply--
and that one person (now retired in Washington) eventually put me on the
trail of many others.

No one has ever interviewed them. They were kind of proud, it seemed to me,
that someone was giving them attention. Two of them were pack rats--the
kind of people historians love. These guys saved everything from the Nazi
warning posters they encountered as they pushed into Germany behind the troops,
to requests for supplies that they sent up monthly from their DP camps. I
got a pile of photos, from my interview people, and from the UN Archives and
from the National Archives (where I spent an afternoon in Washington). And
the Quaker archives produced abundant material and photos.

One of the interesting sidelights of my trip was going to the Washington Post
newsroom with my old Chilean pal, Jim Yenckel. Jim has a pretty soft job,
writing for their Post's once-a-week Careers section. He does at most two
articles a week! It is an enormous newsroom, of course, with no sounds of
clacking typewriters anymore now that everyone has his own word processor.
I found two other old friends there--from Minneapolis days--and someone who
had once worked for the St. Paul Dispatch, our Minneapolis rival. I gazed
at the glass-walled box where David Broder sat typing; and as I sat
in a friend's desk I got a curious stare from Ben Bradlee, who was
glad-handing his way down the aisle. From my friend Yenckel I learned
what one could suppose: that office politics is a big part of the Post's
life. I have always shunned office politics, which has signified that
I know little of what is happening around my own university these days.

So my DP book made a big leap this fall, although since returning from the
East I have done very, very little work on it. At Christmastime I will be
interviewing some elderly Lutherans around Minneapolis who worked for the
Lutheran World Federation in the DP camps after the war. But in the spring
I must plow through a mass of printed material, and finally get to the
newspaper and magazine reports that appeared so abundantly from 1945-52.
The immigrant manuscript, turned down by River City Publishers, is now
with U of Nebraska Press, whose editor sounded sincerely enthusiastic about it.

Before I forget: when you are at the Rodens' next, would you please get
Dan's Boy Scout Camp Parsons mug that he left in their cupboard? I figure
we will see you before we see the Rodens. Please ask if they found their
missing sheets.

Enclosed: an interesting article on the American Writers Congress. You
probably got materials on attending (I did not).

I have had some enjoyment perusing Oliver Wendell Holmes' Autocrat of the
Breakfast-Table. He comments: "Life and language are alike sacred.
Homicide and verbicides—that is, violent treatment of a word with fatal
results to its legitimate meaning, which is its life—are alike forbidden."

Our warmest and driest fall refuses to stop. It got cold the other day,
putting an end to our outside chores, but then today was very mild though wet.
Minnesota and Wisconsin, of course, have another experience. We will head up
there for Christmas holidays. Reports indicate some moisture in the air out
your way—better stay off Dungeness Spit for awhile.

best to you —

mash
Dear Mark—

We are begoggled—literally, not in the usual figurative way. We’d hoped to head for Mt. Baker one day this weekend, hike out from Artist Point and see the huckleberry in flame and Baker standing white over it, but there’s a real muck clamped all over the Sound country. About 500 visibility, and that’s it.

So you underwent one of the classic American adventures—on the road, those day-long dashes against the continent’s breadth—and came out of it at the end with what, not a book or epic poem, but a class to teach? Kerouac and I are now little disappointed in you. I guess that mystique of aiming oneself into our big distances still has some wattage among writers. A writer at Pt. Townsend has just published a book called Singleton, about a truck driver. And in Missoula, at least sometimes, there’s a writer named Jim Crumley who evidently takes off on ricochets, down to Nevada, LA... He did a Chandleresque detective novel a few years ago, The Last Good Kiss, which had a lot of that in it. I thought it was pretty good, and a lot of critics thought it was really good. Anyway, I still think there is something potent, compelling, about those vast drives. Something of it used to come to me, times when I’d be returning from Montana, as dusk and early night would bring in the 50,000-watt radio stations (something else technology is obliterating, I read somewhere). Once there came the election reports seeping in from British Columbia, the New Democrats upsetting the 25-year-old rule of W.A.C. Bennett, the astonishment of that in those commentators somewhere out there in the northern dark; and in Nov. ‘74, the results which were personal manna to me, the Republicans getting banished even from sheriff’s offices and county commissioner seats in Montana in the Watergate backlash. Anyway, I hope you put down a few notes of your long run.

I met up with Lew Saum in the NW Collection last Saturday afternoon and he said he was going to the WHA to give a paper. Oh, I said brightly, you’ll be there for Vernon’s valedictory. He cleared his throat about six times and said, um, he’d already heard Vernon’s incomparable brilliance on, um, many occasions and so was going to go out instead and, um, look at the river country. I thought, jeez, Wyman isn’t going at all and Saum is going but ain’t sticking around, I hope Vernon doesn’t have to declaim to empty seats. I’ll see if I can’t hear the results from the man’s very lips, sometime in the next few weeks.

A note on the Roden household you may appreciate. A few weeks ago we had rain which made even us blink, 3 1/2 inches in 24 hours, and as I get the story, the drain on the Rodens’ south patio clogged and John came downstairs to find water across the floor of the rec room. Carol and I flew to the same instant question: the flooring intended to last these many months to be put down in the kitchen, it was there under the ping-pong table, did it...? John had some luck there—or maybe foresight, who knows?—and had put the flooring on a pallet, so it escaped soaking and warping. Close, though.

Much dire financial stuff in this state, which I guess was gathering while you were here but now is coming down in what is being called a great frogstorm or worse. Probably the state Govt is going to have a billion dollar deficit by year’s end; so far only (?!?) $400 million of that is admitted, and diked back by a Citibank loan. Carol’s college has taken a 10% budget cut, may have to
take more. A bill to destroy tenure, for the sake of easier firing, evidently will show up in the special legislative session. At the UW, the faculty senate, I think it was, announced it understood the economic compulsions to lay off faculty—which sounds to me like lining up to be shot. Carol keeps telling me I'm lucky to be self-employed; thin an income as it is, she's beginning to seem right.

Give us any advice you have on New York. We intend to go to NY for the last three or so days of Xmas week, give me a chance to meet my agent and editor, then we'll spend the holidays with Carol's parents on the Jersey shore.

Some academic mortality you may have heard about. Stull Holt, the UW dept. chairman before Burke, killed himself with sleeping pills. He was 85, had cancer, and left a note saying he was shortcutting the indignity of such suffering. And Ross Toole died of cancer in August. I imagine there's been some jostling at the WHA, over who'll assume that endowed chair at Missoula. Under Toole it was a kind of barony of FTEs, the Montana history lecture course with 600 students or some such sum.

Not much else to report here. I'm grinding away at the last of the Alaska ms, wondering ahead a bit to next year, how that book will do, how the tv miniaturization of Winter Bros will turn out (my guess is, so-so), how it'll feel to start the Son of House of Sky novel I intend next—plenty of hows in this life, anyway. Write me of Downstate autumn, comfort me with verities. Love to Eva, Dan, Miriam, Ruth.

all best

p.s. Anything yet from River City Press on the immigrants ms?
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Perhaps it has crossed your mind that we might not have made it back—that we careened off a roadside boulder and collided with a Wall Drug sign—that we arrived at Custer Battlefield in juxtaposition with an AIM rally—or that the Iowa popcorn fields began popping as we drove by, assuming it was snow, we froze to death. But such was not to be. We made it in four days and nights, struggling in at 7:30 p.m. CDT on Sunday, Aug. 23.

The trip was so fast that now only flashes of it remain. We drove away from UW at 11:15 that Thursday morning, hoping to get beyond Spokane; we were there by 5 and so we stopped at Best Western and learned we could make reservations for a Missoula Best Western, which we did and so drove there until 11. It was then that we noted a change: the night was friendly again—crickets, chirruping, cicadas, all sorts of instruments in the orchestra of the night. We had lived a summer of six silent nights, but now it was over. The next day we took Carstensen's famous cutoff at the Custer battlefield, heading due east there on a fairly straight but up-and-down road, but the weather was stormy and we had to help a stalled Indian family, and we got to Spearfish at 11, again. Long days, late nights. The third day we got to Sioux City, then home the Fourth, finally seeing hordes of Illinois license plates as we crossed Iowa. I presume they had all been to Colorado.

It took me a week to begin to recuperate from that trip. I hope I never have to do it in 4 days again. The kids were perfect, and it was good to have them to chat with, but at my advanced age that is not for me.

I arrived behind for the fall semester, which began Aug. 24, and have never really gotten over that. This is to be a lost semester as far as having my head above water is concerned. This Thursday I head East on my long-discussed eastern research trip; to New York until Tuesday night, then down to Washington for a day, then to Philly for two days. In NY I'll be at the Travel Inn hotel, in case you'll be there also; my interviews are spread out from Darien, Conn., to Great Neck, and I'll be at the UN archives and the Center for Migration Studies on Staten Island. I have been not to the city since 1967, when I took some foreign journalists there on leave from the Tribune. I really won't have much time to go to restaurants, certainly not to the theater, and I am too long out of touch with old friends on Sports Illustrated and Time to try to contact them. But it should be a good visit anyway.

I wrote the Rodens, but have not heard from them regarding our final bill for the summer's utilities and various damages. You are probably keeping them busy hopping around the Olympic's trails.

That certainly was a great summer for us. And the brightest star belongs to the Doigs—without you it would have been incomplete, unfulfilled. We count you among our best friends. And now we will shift to communication by letter again, something that has never seemed to harm our relationship. But now you will know we are with you in spirit as you hike those trails, dawdle by a stream, or pursue an idea.

Many, many thanks—

[Signature]
25 May '81

Dear Mark--

Nothing urgent about this, but I thought I'd try hit you with a line before you get to be a real moving target in your westering.

Our own schedule is that we intend to drive from here to Missoula on June 16, and we expect to be back in Seattle by July 17, possibly before. The house chores at our place will be pretty simple—water the lawn and garden if it really turns dry, check the house once a week or so to see nobody's packed it off—and I think I'll leave a list and the necessary keys. It's likely simplest, too, if Jean shows you the way to our place. But just for your reference, here's the outline of directions:

Come north on Greenwood Ave. N. to N. 160th St.; through that intersection, take a veering left, past the entrance to Shoreline College; continue on that street, Innis Arden Way, all the way down the hill to the first stop sign; turn right; ours is the 4th house on the left, the 1st one with a screen of trees; green Volvo under the carpopt.

Feel free to use the place if you run into any snag of going to Carstensens' that first night or two.

Recently met a guy who works with Pat McClatchy up at the Mt. Vernon community college. Also have seen Chuck LeWarne this spring; if you're interested, maybe we can have a mild history reunion some evening. As to hiking, yes, the end of July might be a prospect; if there's any chance you can clear a Friday, that would help in beating the traffic, but it's not essential.

Don't know much else. Will catch up with in July.

best

p.s. At the UI Press, I can only repeat to you what Norman Maclean said to me two springs ago when he learned the Guggenheim people had turned me down: "The fuckers."
Dear Ivan and Carol,

It has just occurred to me that since I’ll be leaving here two weeks from today, I had better write to you now, providing you an opportunity to check back with me if any disaster has occurred. I expect to leave here May 29, with Dan and Miriam; Eva and Ruth will fly to Germany for three weeks. Dan, Miriam, and I will go to River Falls, and the next day I plan to drive into Minneapolis to an immigrant history conference on Louis Adamic. We’ll go to the family cabin for some days, and probably leave for Colorado June 5 or 6. From my relatives’ home in Grand Junction, we will eventually get up to Boise, probably around June 11 or 12. My old friend Bob Romig has plans for us to spend that weekend of the 13th and 14th at his old family mine at Spanish Town, up in the Sawtooths. Our plans are to arrive in Seattle late the night of Monday, June 15, going to Carstensens’. A letter came today from VC and so that is set.

I might not be able to talk with you before you pull out June 16, so please leave me a note somewhere. I am concerned about borrowing your typing machine, mainly. Carstensen says he has the books I need. Also, please tell me how to reach Frank Zorich to inquire about the P-I files. Other points, such as taking your car out for a walk, should be mentioned there, plus anything you want me to do for your house.

This has been kind of a black day here—mainly because the U of I Press finally (after 7 months—count them, 7) turned down my immigrant manuscript. I have no idea of how University presses operate—it could be that the long time was in my favor, that the editor liked it but kept getting reports from readers opposing it, etc. Now I am going to try that private outfit in Michigan, Van Bredams, that has done some respectable Midwestern history. They are basically a printer, not a publisher in the writers’ use of the term; Bob Howard told me that didn’t touch a word of his ms. for Illinois: A History of the Prairie State.

I have done little on the DFs lately, devoting my time instead to preparing Seattle classes. I hope I have no class problems—argumentive Marxists, for example—and can have some fun without killing myself preparing. Eva’s mother will be with us for the three weeks after June 21, so that will probably squelch camping then. Dan goes to Boy Scout camp on Hood Canal July 12. Hopefully by the end of July you’ll be back and we can at least do some hiking.

If you should need to reach me after I leave here: May 29-June 5: c/o Wyman, 415 Crescent, River Falls, Wis. 54022. June 6-9 (?): c/o John D. Hart, 440 N. 17th St., Grand Junction, Colo. 81501. June 11-14: c/o Bob Romig, Idaho Historical Society, Boise; or 2408 Skillern Dr., Boise 83709 (phones: office is 334-2120; home 376-6278).

I hope I can remember to quiz my ex-UFS uncle. Did I mention that the new Williamette Natl. Forest director is a personal friend?

best to you both—

Mark
Dear Mark—

Probably the only virtue of this reply is going to be quickness, given that I've been bleary from a hellacious cold and that the next virus to tackle me is liable to be the Moral Majority; this morning at a press conference I called them "pious vigilantes." The occasion was the denunciation by a number of us, writers, booksellers, local publishers, librarians, of the MM's "anti-pornography" bill, which sailed through the House out here and is coming up in Senate committee. It's got an entire barn door in it: says that any citizen or group can initiate a civil suit against those who produce or sell "lewd...obscene" stuff—the potential for harassment in that seems to me deadly. Anyway, much as I want to stay out of it, I seem to be getting into the gobbling match with those turkeys.

Points of your letter: you're welcome to whatever books I have here, but you'll likely find I've thinned away pretty badly on history. You can have my Royal standard—non-electric, I'm afraid; we're still pretty primitive out here beyond the Platte—until I get back from Montana, at which point I'd probably swap to you my Adler portable; it's so goddamn solid and heavy it'll be just like using a standard anyway. You may (or may not; winter finally arrived here with April, and it's been gusty and miserable ever since) inherit the earliest of my vegetable crop, in which case you have to promise not to fall over laughing at my effort compared to your Downstate jumbo provender.

I think you'll like the Roden house. I don't exaggerate when I say it must be at least three times as big as the one the UW history guy offered you, with a long fenced yard, patio, garage...there should be space for the sundry Wymans to have some Seattle space to themselves. Jean Roden mentioned that she thinks Spectrum, the UW listing of each quarter's activities, will have summer stuff which might interest Dan; it hasn't come out yet, but I'll try think to pass it along as quickly as it does. I'll also begin watching The Weekly, a local (surprise) weekly which maybe will have summer doings. I think, though, you'll be able to come up with much, even after you get here.

If your Grand Junction uncle was in the Forest Service 1939-41, please ask him where he was when he heard of Pearl Harbor, how he heard, what he did; the same questions about Sept. '39 when the Nazis went into Poland, although I don't much expect answers on those; and what he remembers the Forest Service doing (if anything) to tool up for WWII before we got into it—any change in his job, the more minute and detailed the better, dictated by aspect of war. Also, any lingo you can pick up from him—sayings, names of horses or mules, what the Colorado words were for "drunk" ("snoothful" just came back to me the other day). Now aren't you sorry you asked?

I haven't tripped across any DPs yet, but before I forget it, let me tell you that a writing buddy of mine, Frank Zoretich, has access to the Post-Intelligencer morgue, which as I understand it has a card-file system not duplicated by the UW's NW Collection version: we ought to get Frank to see if DPs in that file are of your era, rather than SE Asians.
O Chicago. Your visit to Little Poland was splendid. I've been thinking some of Chicago myself, just having read Studs Terkel's Talking to Myself. I'm a bit leary of Terkel's work, wondering how much he touches up those taped interviews, but I liked a lot about this sort-of-autobiography, especially some of the sense of Chicago grit. Hilarious section in there where Terkel is talking to a pair of Chicago minor hoods about Watergate and one of them, Kid Pharoh, refers to "the guy with the big neck, what's his name?" "Ehrlichman?" "Nah." "Haldeman?" "Nah."...on and on, thru most of the illustrious twenty-three, until he hits on McCord, the specific big neck he had in mind.

Not much new here. Will write something more coherent whenever I get more coherent. We can see, closer to the time, how you want to billet the Wymans your first night: you're wise to check with C'nsen, but you can have this place if we're gone—or some of it even if we're not—and the Rodens can sleep a small army at their place.

What's the matter with those wimps at the U of Ill, don't they know greatness when it stares them in the face?

all best
807 N. School St.,
Normal, Ill. 61761
March 29, 1981

Dear Ivan and Carol,

Having just written the Rodens a letter tonight, I had best send a note to you to keep you informed of our plans. The long-awaited letter finally arrived from the University of Washington—it turns out Mac Burg had been sitting on the permission form for a few months. Well, that’s how I understand it, anyway. I sent in my book order a couple of days ago, for the Pacific Northwest History and the Labor History. Tonight the letter confirming the Rodens’ terms went off—their terms are so mild and favorable to us that I hesitate to use the word. Their gifts would be better. And it all has to be because of the Doigs.

Thanks for sending the info on the MA thesis on the DP camp. That looks very important for me. Could you start noting down names of DP’s you know or hear of around Seattle? Practically any Pole, Ukrainian, Latvian, Estonian, or Lithuanian who came from 1946-52 is probably a DP; as are many Czechs, Italians, and even Germans who came then.

In a few weeks I intend to send you and Carstensen a book list; that is, books I will be needing to have on my desk this summer, which I would rather not haul out from Illinois. Most would be in the library too, of course. But if you could lend me your copies for June-August it would help. Also, I’m wondering whether you might have a klunk typewriter I could use at "home" during our Seattle stay? I would rather not carry my portable all that way since we will probably be heavily-laden.

I will certainly look out after your car in your absence. But I don’t want to use it more than is automechanically necessary, just so we don’t become a two-car family unbeknownst to ourselves.

Briefly: I plan to drive out with the kids, stopping to see relatives in Colorado and old friends in Boise, arriving in Seattle the night of June 15, a Monday. Since you are leaving soon (according to the Rodens) I think we’ll ask Carstensen if we can stay with them that first night; then on to Rodens the next day. Eva will be flying direct from Frankfurt to San Francisco on the 16th, catching a plane up to Seattle the night of the 16th. We will probably climb Mt. St. Helens on the 17th.

I have a note that you were asking about something on US Forest Service veterans, but I see nothing in your letter. Perhaps we discussed it on the phone. Anyway, if you are interested, my elderly uncle in Grand Junction, Colorado, worked for the USFS awhile years ago when it was just a shirt-tail operation in Colorado; then he went with the State Game & Fish Commission and rose to deputy/Commissioner. If you want to talk to him I can arrange it—we’ll be staying with them on our way West.

Well, I went to Poland some 9 days ago, and later this week I go to the Ukraine. To go to Poland you take Amtrak to Chicago, walk 2 blocks south to the E1 station, and take the E1 northwest to the Chicago-Milwaukee intersection station. Then you get out and you are in Poland—more correctly, Polonia.
It was an emotional, draining day, as I had expected. I went to call on an old lady and wound up spending four intense hours with her, nibbling kalach and drinking coffee while hearing her terrifying description of the years 1935-46. I was not once bored or tired during those four hours—too intense, too exciting. But when it was over I was tired, and my second interview (at the Copernicus Senior Citizen Center on Milwaukee Avenue) was shorter. The old lady showed me a portrait that a fellow-prisoner had done of her husband before the Nazis moved him to Auschwitz—it had a haunting quality, peering out wondrously from the wrapping-paper on which it was drawn. And then the photo album: here is the beautiful young couple, living at a dam construction site in Southern Poland in the late '30s where the husband is an engineer; here they are scrambling up the low-lying mountains with the little boy Aleksandr, here they are in a lively party with a bunch of other young couples, and sitting on the terrace, and showing off their newly-constructed house. All the things a young couple does. And then the sudden silence—almost like a shriek or whatever the opposite of that is—in September 1939. How many families have a similar story? And the agony of war years, searching for loved ones, and then the flight after the war, filled with more drama and excitement than most of us will ever know.

And as I rode home that night, the words of that day still bouncing in my brain like some sort of cerebral handball court, I thought of another factor in the distance—downstate Illinois, that city: Chicago is the silent possessor of thousands and millions of individual tales of tragedy, excitement, escape—it is all there bubbling below the surface in that city, hidden from us as we pass through in cars or dart in and out of O'Hare. And downstate knows it not. What different worlds!

This week I have a group interview set with a bunch of Ukrainians. I am trying to read up on them, to avoid saying something that would link me to the wrong group in their internecine warfare. Then I am going to put aside the DP research and concentrate on preparing for my summer teaching. (Incidentally, you might have heard my whoop when I found my old notes from Pacific NW History when I was a PA, under Mary Avery and Norman Clark. That one discovery provided at least 8 extra days of mountain climbing for me this summer.) But I will hope to interview a few DPs in Seattle, and probe the records of Washington State's unusual approach to DP resettlement which placed major control in the hands of county committees.

No word on U of I Press. Shall I punt?

Sincerely,

Mark
Dear Mark—

DPs sounds just great. You did indeed mention the notion in a pre-Christmas letter—I blush that I haven’t responded before now—and the enclosed is a fleck of research possibility at the UW. I took a quick look at the NW Collection’s card catalog, and found that displaced persons there mostly means Southeast Asians. One thing I do hope: that there’ll be some Wyman in this book as well as the Latvians et al. Your responses as a kid to a Martin Vituals and the baffling horrors within him are valuable first-person stuff, as of course are your ruminations now as a mature historian pondering a perhaps-not-too-likeable, narcissistic nation which nonetheless has opened its borders to such folk as Martin V...

I’ve just been reading Anthony Bailey’s two-part piece in the New Yorker about coming here as an English schoolboy refugee in WWII; liked it considerably, although this was certainly a genteel sort of DPism.

Yes, I’m launched, along with the Swedes, on the fiction book, and a reason you haven’t heard from me before now was an 8-day trip to Alaska in late January. A chance came open for me to ride the U. of Alaska’s oceanographic ship Alpha Helix down from Juneau when it came south to a shipyard here, so I went and did. Stopped at Sitka for two days first, trying to soak up winter mood there for the sake of the novel, then flew to Juneau, an act I never knew whether to think of as brave or just foolhardy; there’s a high ridge just at the end of the Juneau runway, with the first shaved short so the plane has less chance of clipping into them, and it scares the hell out of me. Anyway, at Juneau the ship was docked for a couple of days of open house while the oceanographers tried to charm oil money out of the state legislators, and I filled time at the local libraries. In at least one level of its existence Juneau must operate as a cue for passing weather systems to change—last summer when we were there for most of a week, we watched cold banks flow into town, down the place, then zip away—and these couple of days went from muck in the morning to sun-lit peaks atop the town by afternoon. And meanwhile a school of sea lions and a humpbacked whale were swimming around in the harbor, and the local Scots-descendants got up a huge Robert Burns birthday celebration, pipe band and all, to which I was invited, and a drink cost $2.50 anywhere downtown and a piece of pie $2.75—proper priorities, at least; Juneau is like nowhere I’ve ever been, nor even imagined.

The voyage down was work, but good detail for the book. I stood in the wheelhouse 6 hours each morning and another 2-3 each afternoon and took notes on the passing coast. Had two bouts of seasickness, both times when the ship was crossing a sound with big swells coming in from the open sea, but at least found that I got over it at once by going and lying down. I also proved for all time that seasickness isn’t a state of mind. I particularly wanted to see Queen Charlotte Sound, a 2½ hour crossing, so I took Dramamine, drank coffee to offset any drowsiness from it, went up to the wheelhouse determined to ride out the situation, stood in an open doorway so I’d have ample fresh air—and within 20 minutes was flat on my back in my bunk. Also, it took me about 3 days here at home to get my inner ear convinced that the floor no longer was rolling under us.
Il Feb.: I didn't manage to finish this yesterday, and so can report our first snow of winter, a skiff about the thickness of a shoe sole. Thank god I'm not doing Winter Brothers this winter; there'd not have been enough season to write about.

Winter Bros indeed has done well by me, vastly better than I could have hoped. It'll never be the world's easiest or most-straightforward read, but I think it'll remain a book I'm glad to have done tackled. The reviews have been okay, the biggest ones the most generous—NY Times, New Yorker, Wash. Post, even, jest of heaven, People. The best responses of all, though, have been from other writers; Stegner and David Lavender providing excellent blurbs, some lesser-known ones getting in touch privately to say, hey, that was pretty good...So I'm more than content. I seem to have got out of that swamp of the second book without the boogers getting me, and that's just dandy. Now for the quagmire of my first fiction...

I don't think I've written since my change of publishers. About a trio of reasons behind it—Harcourt is the first publisher to adopt a no-returns policy toward booksellers, which is going to cut drastically the amount of fiction booksellers will be willing to gamble on; Harcourt accordingly (I guess; maybe it was just lousy me) was wan about my turning to fiction; and Harcourt fatally, from my point of view, opened negotiations by offering me half the total of what I'd received as advance for Winter Bros. What the hell, here, I figured; inflation-fighting is one thing, but a 50% pay cut seems a bit much. The upshot has been, I've signed for this novel with Athenaeum, where a former Harcourt editor is the new editor-in-chief. It'll be an adventure, and maybe will turn out not to have been so great an idea, but seems to me worth the try. Was it Disraeli who said Britain had no permanent alliances, only permanent interests? That's my abiding notion as regards publishers, as I now loop arms with number four in my none-too-lengthy career of books.

I'm glad to know you'll likely get west, one way or another, this summer, and we'll work out some way to coincide. I do have to underscore what you already know, that you shouldn't bet the family farm on the UW's summer budget prospects. This state is crying shortfall something dreadful; I can't imagine how bad off we'd be if Boeing hadn't been on a spree in recent years. (On the other hand, I believe conspicuously little of big industry's money finds its way into this state's tax coffers.) So we'll hope to see you lolling on the lawn at the UW, but will come up and touch you for possible evanescence before we quite believe it.

Carol's college is finishing up the process of selecting a new president, to be announced the end of this week. She said it's been fascinating to see, because the trustees have a classic choice to make among the four finalists: a stand-patter who's already in the administration; a computer whiz who's been in the state education bureaucracy and probably would shake the place; a brisk Illinoisan who seems quite an administrator but is foreign to the politics out here; an Arkansan who managed to offend the faculty whenever he opened his mouth but who might good ol' boy his way along in the politics. Carol's betting on, and pulling for, the computerer. About three days a week she comes home and reassures me I'm lucky I work for myself. I wonder what she means by that?

all best
Dear Ivan and Carol,

It behooves me to get back in contact with you, ere you conclude your Midwestern branch office has closed out operations, stuffed the shoeboxes in the local archives and joined the trek west. It was a strange end-of-semester time before Christmas, as I indicated to you; the biggest rush we have ever had, followed immediately by our annual visit to my parents in Wisconsin, and that followed by days of wood-stripping and varnishing and painting and then the new semester. Of course I keep expecting a letter from the U. of Illinois Press regarding my immigrant manuscript; but the letter never comes and I have decided that I will write them a short note on Feb. 8, the anniversary of (four months) that I gave the manuscript to them. Do you think that is being hasty?

I finished Winter Brothers early in the new year and liked it a lot. I think I wrote earlier—after having read just a bit—that I liked the leaner prose. My now I have seen the reviews in the NY Times Book section and the New Yorker. Congratulations on those—you continue to fly high, and your "sophomore book" is certainly not going to be anything other than a success. I am a bit embarrassed at my entry into the book, but my personal involvement with you always makes it difficult to read your works with any kind of detachment. So I thank you for your mention of me, but am surprised that the critics have not taken me to task for intruding.

Is the new book, the fiction adventure, launched yet? Are you into writing?

I also thought I would have some news for you about next summer, but that news will also apparently be late. Since Carstensen wrote me at Christmas about my being accepted on the UW summer staff, I assume you have heard of it also and wonder why I haven't mentioned it to you. WC is jumping the gun, going beyond the evidence (to use his phrase to grad students). I had sounded out Treadgold early in the fall, and got an ambivalent letter which said that times were tough and so he doubted I had much chance. Then later in the fall the successor to Sylvia Wells-Henderson, Mack Burd, called and wrote regarding what books I would require, the course descriptions (Pacific NW History, Labor History), etc. Treadgold had called by then also, asking about my salary. But he still warned that nothing was definite due to the budget situation. I have prepared myself to be turned down, in which case we will come part-way west in June, maybe not quite to Seattle; probably I will go with Dan and daughter Miriam while Eva and daughter Ruth go to Germany. So there you have the honest appraisal on the summer chances—Summer Brothers? Not for sure.

The year here is busier and busier, due both to the kids' ages and to Eva's continued work and study. Eva teaches one course in Spanish at ISU, and drives 3 days a week to the U of Illinois (1-hour or so away) for graduate work. My day effectively ends at 2:45 p.m. when I pick up the kids and bring them home; I seldom get more than a few minutes at the desk after that, until they are in bed about 9 p.m. and I then re-enter my sanctum. But I have adjusted to it, and will no doubt look back with real nostalgia someday to these happy years when I was with the kids each day for a fair length of time.
I am in my new study, built at the end of the porch we put on the rear of the house last summer. I have been putting bookcases in, but now am against a shortage of the boards I need as well as some of the vertical standards. They should be in any day and then I will cut, sand, stain, varnish, and install, and poof! I will have all my books right here and room to spare.

This comes as I start work on a new book. I did mainly bibliography work on that history of the lead region, then put it at a lower priority. Now I am pushing ahead on something that promises to be much different, and that's why I'm doing it. It is a history and a memory of the DPs—the displaced persons who came here after the war. Perhaps I have mentioned this to you, but I don't recall doing so. The term "displaced persons" was used to apply to many after the war years, but from 1948-52 the US had a Displaced Persons Act that brought in 395,000.

It was then that I met my first DPs. A tall college boy came from Estonia, briefly. Then one day on the playground there was Martin Vitums, a Latvian who (we learned) had been through terrible bombings. He lived in his own hell, stalking around with frightened eyes, his hands pressed to his jaw, groaning and grunting and laughing in strange ways. Of course some kids made fun of him, and to this day I bear a horrible guilt over my refusal to intervene when the school bully jumped on Martin one day. But there were more, soon, kids who were not shell-shocked but who took quickly to American ways. You undoubtedly had them in Montana and New Jersey—everyone had them. There is absolutely no problem finding people who knew DPs, or finding DPs.

The problem will be in drawing the limits, and making sure I cover the right groups. I am worried at this point about finding people who went into the camps right after the war, people who worked for the International Refugee Organization, or the DP Commission, or church agencies. I have a load of letters to write. I will make a few trips to Chicago this Spring. Washington State had a different DP program in that county groups were given much authority there, so if we come to Seattle I will want to do some interviewing there. I have an extensive bibliography, including plenty of congressional testimony. It seems I will write about the European background, camp life (my interviews to date show that camp life was great for kids—1946-50 in one camp, with schooling, girl scouts, the works; and enough to eat), the fitting of the Cold War into this (some interesting camp stories); then the varied issues involved in coming to the US. It is fun, so far, and will probably continue to be so if I can keep my work quiet enough so I am not beslaged with former DPs who want to tell me their story.

The topic was individualism the other night. Our Japanese visitor noted how the Japanese always warn their children, "Don't act wildly—if you do the neighbors will laugh at you!" And he said Americans are much more individualistic in not caring what the neighbors say; but there are some exceptions. The desire for conformity is extensive, and yet individualism seems to flourish. I would say selfishness rather than individualism; that is, egotism, narcissism. The women rushing to join EST or whatever it is are showing individualism only in a minor way; they are part of a gigantic movement wherein people are trying to escape responsibilities that have been part of mankind through the ages: to children, to spouse, to community. Our society continues to encourage this: a TV in every bedroom in many homes, so no compromising is necessary in picking a TV show to watch; individualized food packages (the anthropologists have some interesting comments on that; bones found in old garbage pits show that the carcass was not carved up but cooked whole, and all ate together from a common pot). But enough of this for now —
Dec. 20, 1980

Dear Ivan and Carol,

This seems the only stationery I can lay my hands on at the moment, but better to launch a letter to you on this than put off further a report that is weeks and weeks overdue. I keep thinking I'll have something to report from the U of I Press, but it is only about two months that they've had the immigrant and I know I shouldn't be antsy. The end-of-semester push took more of my time than usual this time, perhaps indicating that I was a bit more conscientious in reading students' work, or (more likely) I didn't space the assignments out enough and so there was a glut of it at the finale. Last night I completed grading the final class' work, turned the grades in today, and so am trying to write Christmas notes tonight. I will try to write tried and true old friends first, and relatives, and leave the rest for tomorrow and the next day if I have time. We go to Wisconsin Tuesday.

Winter Brothers arrived, and I got about a fourth of the way into it before the pile of exams and final papers began arriving, swamping me. What I read I liked a lot. It seemed to me your prose is a bit more spare—do you agree? I can imagine everyone within sight of the Olympics demanding a copy as a basic right; I can see people generations from now wanting to have their children read it as part of their heritage. In short, you have made the difficult jump from autobiography to creative writing about someone else; I have no doubts at all that you can now jump completely to historical novels. I am a bit embarrassed to see my name in the credits; you should not have done that for so tiny an assist. If you mention my name for that little quote, you are going to have to start mentioning dozens and dozens of people. I did not expect a mention, and would urge you to save your praises for those who really labor on your behalf. Hopefully I will merit a mention someday, when I shall have spent many days finding material for you, but so far that hasn't happened. Enough said. Thanks, very very much, for the book.

I have been casting about a bit for my next project; to satisfy the academics I prepared bibliographic work on a history of the lead region. But more and more I thought that I would like to break away from pure history and try something else. I think I'm going to poke into something on the D.P.'s. I don't know if you had them in Montana—the Displaced Persons who came in such droves after the war. We got Latvians in our town, and in our school, and I have many memories that tie in to them somehow. I hope to locate one or two of them in Minneapolis when we go to my parents' home in a few days, and at least sit down to go over their lives. I have compiled quite a list of books done on them in the late '40s and early '50s, including some lengthy government investigations. I suppose I'll entitle it: DP.

Recently I stumbled upon an extremely interesting book, despite it being an academic study: The Tryin'Out of Moby-Dick, by Howard F. Vincent. Do you know it? I read parts of it around the middle of the semester, and want to get back to it this vacation period. He has gathered a lot of convincing material on how Melville put together Moby-Dick, first planning another

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sea adventure story like his first books, but then having to think
more deeply on man's plight—helped by Hawthorne's visits and especially
by Mosses from an Old Manse—and finally reworking Moby-Dick to make it
a much deeper kind of study as well as an adventure story. Somewhere
I read a short study on how Mark Twain redid Rounding It, and I suppose
some graduate student someday will write on how Ivan Doig remade Winter People.

Since you two are people very much concerned about words and their use and
misuse—I would even say you are desperately concerned—I often think of you
when I face this subject. Recently on "Sixty Minutes" there was a piece on
the spirit of Dallas, in which a Dale Carnegie type was shown instructing his
eager audience to answer the question "How are you?" by yelling, "Terrific!!" I
pondered this, realized that I have known people that, and then realized that
it was all part of the philosophy pushed so hard these days: words are not to
be used for what they mean, but to provoke a result that will be of benefit to
the person using them. It's the same with all modern advertising, of course:
what happens to the word love when we say that "Kids love Kool-Aid"? And the
last political campaign probably had the greatest per capita use of words
intended as symbols rather than their true meaning. The polling people worked
overtime to find the effect of each phrase. You may have read about our ISU
political science prof, John Ocracun, who interviewed people in Peoria (where else?) to come up with the perfect politicians' speech on defense policy.
It was totally built of clichés, top to bottom, each with a vague meaning
that could be taken several ways by different audiences. And used, of course,
only to rebound to the politician speaking the words rather than to explain a
policy or a stand. Since you follow modern fiction writing—which I don't
follow at all—I presume this is working into that field. Joseph Kraft did
a thoughtful column recently on how Americans today are guided by symbols
more than by rational thought; certainly it has always been a problem but
he feels it is much worse today, particularly since Reagan in the White House
seems unable to operate in any other way. Carter, of course, did this
repeatedly and our problem may have been that we didn't think he would be the
type to do it. Now at least we can be on our guard against Bonzo's co-star.

Our son Dan is off to Germany for the second Christmas in a row, there to
spend the holidays with Eva's mother. She rents a hotel room at Seefeld,
in the Austrian Tyrol, and so Dan has a couple of weeks of taking four hours
of ski lessons daily, hiking with his Om along the mountain roads, swimming
in heated pool, etc. Tough. It makes for happier Christmases all around.
In past years Eva's mother was very lonely at Christmas, and indicated this in
her letters, with the result that Eva spent her Christmases moping and crying.
So now the grandmother is happy, Dan (I think) is happy, and Eva is happy.
That makes me happy.

I am increasingly made aware of this problem among the elderly. How I hope
I die before my wits leave me, before my health declines! I wish the same
for you and for everyone. I no longer am against suicide in such cases—the
decrepit, minds gone, a crushing burden on their survivors. Spare me that!
Yesterday the girls and I went to a neighbor lady(an 80-year-old) with some
cookies, and of course talked with her for a while. She talked and talked,
the way people who live alone sometimes do, but this woman has twinkling eyes
and walks perhaps a mile a day for exercise.

Exam time brings its joys and sorrows. One student wrote about the Montgomery
bus boycott, and said it happened when a Black woman refused to give up her
seat to a white; it happened in Rosa Park. Another student was asked to
discuss one public figure active in Illinois politics in the 1900-1920 years;
she picked Abraham Lincoln. And so it goes at the emporium of knowledge.

-- Mark
Dear Mark—

It must have been the summer of 1963 during my editorializing in Decatur that a North American Newspaper Alliance piece came in with a quote from Vice PresLBJ that to get the civil rights bill through Congress, the Senate leadership would have to "kill off" a few Senators—i.e., battle the Southerners' filibuster until the health of the eldest Trotskyite gave out. We had a brilliant but scatter-witted Swede on the editorial-writing staff then who tended to fling together the page on his days of making it up, and of course he entirely missed NANA's frantic mandatory kill notice on the story when Lyndon blandly denied saying such a dastardly thing. The Decatur Review I guess scooped the world by being the only paper to run that story—and as I recall, we never heard a peep about it from NANA, from any interested reader, anybody. Anyway, what brought it to mind was the spectacle of Strom Thurmond saying what the country really needs to cure its ills is the death penalty, John Tower saying what the country really etc. is the neutron bomb, not even ol' Lyndon is around to suggest forthrightly how much a few strategic mortalities would improve our prospects.

Slade Gorton I think is the very least of our troubles (Wash. State version) out of the election results. He's been a good attorney general, and seems a decent man. He in fact had to survive a primary challenge from a true flamethrower, Lloyd Cooney, who used to recite editorials over KIRO, the Mormon TV station here. If Cooney and Dixy had both survived the primary and been elected, it would have given this state the distinction of having the ex-IV personalities as governor, senator, and mayors of Seattle and Spokane, an ignominy I'm not sure I could have lived with. The demise of Magnuson is our real woe out here, particularly if it opens Puget Sound to tankers (Maggie hid an amendment on a bill dealing with oleomargarine or sea otters or something, which has kept the supertankers out). I tend, as curmudgeons do, to blame that particular result on the "new people" out here; we have had, particularly in King County, an influx of young professionals who evidently didn't stop to figure out Maggie's value to this area and, I would argue, to the country. Funniest thing of the campaign: Gorton's campaign people, who persistently showed him as lean, dynamic, worshipped by Adoring Wife, came up with a camera sequence of Maggie slowly descending the landing stairs of a plane, as the minutes ticked away. Maggie's people immediately began running the same sequence, with the tagline something like, "Whatever the meeting is, it doesn't begin until Maggie gets there anyway."

I share your view about the dopiness of the Moral Majority thinking they've captured this country. My main worry is not so much the next 4 years—although that's more than plenty to worry about—as whether the Reagan followers will try skew the system to hang onto power, a la Nixon's inclinations. Maybe you historians will tell me the system is more resistant than I think.

Was interested to hear your WHA report; I'll likely have lunch with Vernon next week and get his version. At the Montana History Conference in Billings, Mike Malone of Montana State commented that that gathering, I guess nearly 100 strong, now was almost as big as the WHA. I took it as praise of the MHC rather than denigration of the WHA, but I see now it cuts both ways.
Mike also, and more pertinently, remarked that he'd "like to see" the U. of Montana--Missoula--gather you into its history dept. I'm a bit slow at academic tea leaves, and it took me about a week to realize he must have been referring to the opening there's likely to be there, when cancer does in Ross Tool. (I haven't seen Tool for a year and a half, but am told repeatedly by Missoula friends about his cancer fight.) I mention this because I don't know whether anyone else has. I also don't know whether you're at all interested; there major budget problems at Missoula, which you should gather the gory details of if you're ever considering the place. You do have a passionate supporter in Maloy--not that he may have all that much influence on the rival campus, but I think he is the best-known, and probably canniest, of the historians within the state--who tells me Hard-Rock pic is one of the very best Western books.

The gathering at Billings was about 1000% more fun than the WHA sounds like. Rex Myers was stretching things on my behalf; the WHA actually invited six writers, with three of us--Norman Maclean, Spike Van Cleve and me--doubling as meal talkers. The Saturday morning panel of Van Cleve, Doig, A.B. Guthrie, poet Richard Hugo and Blackfeet novelist Jim Welch, seems to have been the hit of the show--indeed, the only panel I've ever seen, let alone been on, that worked. Guthrie got us off right with a stem-winding opener on Montana's literary tradition, and things went on from there with surprising wit and thoughtfulness. Also, there were conference touches which I think a Montana History get-together ought, genetically, to have: such as the history prof, whose name you'll doubtless hear at the WHA or elsewhere, who passed out sitting up, at the exact peroration of Norman Maclean's banquet speech, and had to be packed out like a side of beef afterward. Such as the story, apocrypha probably but certainly true in spirit, that the Missoula prof's swung home on a drinking tour of places such as Harlowton and White Sulphur, and at one point got so roisterous that the local ranchers and hangers-on demanded of the bartender, "Who the hell are those guys?"

In such company, we writers came off as eminently sane and sober. It was a good gathering of the clan. Guthrie, at 80, has just begun a sequel of his Big Sky mountain men--what becomes of them roughly 1835-70, he says. It's a book he probably should have done 20-30 years ago, but we're all hoping he can do it, and regain his skills. He is a tough old bugger, entirely alert. Norman Maclean, at 78, says he's been fighting his current novel for five years, finally has a first draft done. Jim Welch has in his head--that's the way he works, makes very few notes before writing--a novel of the Blackfeet along the east face of the Rockies, the winter before they were put on the Reservation. Everybody has a book underway, all of us fairly sanguine at the moment.

I'd have been interested to have heard Larry McMurtry, incidentally. I have some trouble with his novels, but I thought his book of Texas essays, in a Narrow Grave, was wonderful. What a puncture job he did on J. Frank Dobie. I've thought that was richly deserved ever since I opened Dobie's book on longhorns, read the first sentence something like "The Longhorn was the most important cow in the history of the world," thought of vast dairy herds and much of the religion of India based on definitely un-longhorn stock, and slammed the book closed permanently.
It's great good news about the U. of Illinois looking at Immigrants. I'll forecast that you'll have a big Christmas gift—or maybe Valentine's—of them taking it on. Incidentally, when you get to lead mining, watch in Galesburg for my maternal grandfather, Thomas Abraham Ringer--any of the Ringer family, really. He was born there about 1875. The one time Carol and I visited the town, before I knew anything of family origins there, we were intrigued with the place.

You should have a copy of Winter Brothers by now, or at least imminently to arrive by book rate mail. I wish I had some clear report to give, but as usual in publishing, muck is more the order of things. The book has been selling beyond my expectations, or at least moving into the bookstores: the 10,000 first printing is gone, the publisher has done 2500 more, and a local wholesaler here has just taken 800 of those. Publication date is next Monday, the 17th. Only a couple of reviews, Kirkus, Pub'rs Weekly, Pacific NW magazine—all polite and a bit baffled. The book of course is riding House of Sky's broad brocaded cocktails; I sold 500 copies of Winter Bros in Montana bookstores after the Billings conference, for pete's sake. So far, Winter Bros is easing me past the sophomore jinx, and that's about all I can ask of it. I think it has a chance at getting some really good national review—but also of getting a really bad one, from somebody bothered by its lack of a traditional storyline. The one reviewer I think would have definitely done well by the book—Bob Kirsch of the LA Times, who reviewed both Sky and Epic—died this fall, leaving all of us the poorer. So far, though, the book is surpassing my expectations. On the other hand, the next book, the Sitka-to-Astoria novel, is being met at the publishing house with underwhelming enthusiasm so far. They've offered me $7500 advance, and no I didn't leave any digits out of that, for what will amount to at least a year's full work on that one. I've taken a NY agent, anticipating this sort of thing, and she's telling them $25,000, which I consider a more livable wage. The publisher pretty rapidly came up to $15,000, but what's going to happen from here, I don't know. We have another prime candidate publisher to try the ms sample on, then a list of others if need be, so this may take a while. I feel remarkably composed about it, I guess, likely because Carol can keep us fed in the meantime.

Not much else to report. We may go to California--Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Francisco—for Christmas week, some work thrown in. It's seeming fairly definite that we'll try spend time in Montana next summer. Hope you can make it, too.

all best
Dear Ivan and Carol,

A Friday night at home with no obligations presents me with the grand opportunity to write to you, basking as you are in the first weekend in months when you can venture forth without being accosted by Slade Gorton. I was not too surprised over Gorton's win, for I remember hearing him in the news constantly during my tenure in Washington and have heard of him repeatedly since then. I don't recall that he was very conservative, but will defer to your explanation (which I hope you will provide). The most fun this week—since Tuesday night—has been listening to the Radical Right claim a "massive shift to the right", the "death of liberalism", etc., etc. They are masters of self-delusion: give them four years to be forced to face the music about allocating American resources, yielding to oil companies over Indians, building missiles rather than day-care centers, and their brief day in the sun will be over. I actually think they are stupid, very stupid as well as being dangerously taken-in by the NRA, Anti-Abortion, Moral-Majority crowd.

I had a good time at the Western History meeting in Kansas City, hearing your name on just about every hand (unsolicited). Rex Myers of Dillon was telling our Membership Committee about how they were trying to broaden their Montana history meeting's appeal, by inviting Ivan Doig to talk. (He didn't bother to explain who Ivan Doig is—no need.) Others casually dropped your name in conversation. Carstensen of course talked about you. I may have talked with a guy named Bill Walker from Butte; at least soon after I returned home there came a big envelope from him with a nice booklet about Butte's history bibliography, and his letter seemed to indicate he knew me.

The WHA does need to broaden, or it is going to die. Several people I chatted with—such as Harwood Hinton, a Carstensen Ph.D. who heads Arizona and the West—agreed that it is a professors' organization now. It was founded as a group for professors, book dealers, and buffs, but the latter two have largely dropped out. Two years ago in Hot Springs I looked over the program and found almost nothing of interest to non-academics. This year's program in Kansas City had a nice afternoon tour to the Truman Library for a slide talk on the art of Benton, Wood, and Curry, and Larry McMurtry spoke at the final dinner. I think McMurtry should have been asked to do a reading from his works earlier in the day, but at least he was on the program. I think they ought to invite Doig to at least do a reading. And why not a sing-along with guitarists, from 5 - 6 p.m. on the Thursday of every convention? Why not show a classic Western film one night at each convention?

I rode to the convention with my colleague Arlen Helgeson. He is a tall, Lincolnesque figure, Carstensen's first Ph.D. at Madison, a guy who grew up in a Norwegian community just north of La Crosse near the Mississippi. When I came here he had just been given a double deanship, and so I taught his frontier course for four years.
We located Carstensen the first night and so had dinner with them. It was a jolly gathering. Carstensen looked the best I had seen him in years—possibly since the Saturday before his wife was killed, when I had stopped by their house to give him a chapter. And so while I once had some fears about him taking the WHA presidency, I hold them no more.

Arlen, incidentally, grew up in Hamlin Garland country and has some tales about him. Arlen said he has a cousin who became an undertaker, and when he joined a local undertaking establishment he was rummaging in the garage and found a large container marked "Ashes of Hamlin Garland." He asked about it, and was told that after Garland's death the ashes were sent to the establishment, with instructions for the undertaker to fly over the coulee country and throw the ashes out to flutter down on that sacred soil. But the then-undertaker was afraid of airplanes! So the ashes were put in the garage and no one was the wiser. Arlen's cousin, however, thought they deserved some permanent marker, and so he got a marker made in a local graveyard and buried the ashes of Hamlin Garland there.

You may ask, How is Wyman's ms. doing? About a month ago I drove it over to the U. of Illinois Press, at their invitation (I wrote them a few days earlier and got a speedy reply). Wentworth, the head, seemed genuinely interested. He said they would have liked to have published Hard-Rock Epic! I told him I never thought of them for that, and he said that their new big push is labor history and social history; that they plan for the '80s to become America's No. 2 publisher of American social history. (Oxford is first, he said, to my surprise.) So they now have IMMIGRANTS IN THE VALLEY: The Struggle of Irish, Germans, and Americans in the Upper Mississippi Country, 1830-1860. I suppose I might hear by Christmas time.

I am "in between", as you writers say. I had to apply for a summer 1981 research grant here, and so I threw together a bunch of stuff on a social, political, and economic history of the lead region of SW Wisconsin, NW Illinois, and eastern Iowa. It has—strangely—never had a general treatment. Everything written about it has been on the Wisconsin lead region, the life of [redacted], and so on. But I am not panting to get going on it. I have some other ideas floating around, and occasionally peg away at them. I daresay you are heading into your third big book by now.

As usual, as soon as the semester nears its midpoint my outside reading falls to near nothing. I did read William Maxwell's So Long, See Your Tomorrow, which often made me think of your Montana book. Maxwell was a New Yorker fiction writer for years, but he grew up south of here in Lincoln (a town you might remember, for it is just west of Decatur) and writes in this book of a murder that shocked that little town in 1921 when he was a kid, and his somewhat distant connection with it (or, rather, its effect on him, even these many years later). I occasionally find time to plug away a bit more on W.H. Hudson's Green Mansions, but I have a long way to go in it. I will chip away on that tonight, and possibly a Bruce Catton.

This Fall has been unusual in that it presented two seminal speeches which I had the good fortune to hear. One was at the WHA, where
Tom Hagan (WH A president) gave his presidential address on the resurgence of tribalism: he described how the federal government has absolutely fostered the growth of tribalism, among "tribes" that in some cases had never had tribal status or functions. They win initial recognition by the feds as a tribe; then the feds provide them with some land which becomes their tribal ground; and then they are free to get in line for all sorts of federal aid to the tribe for welfare, job training, school aid, etc. All because the federal government has taken those steps! Somehow I can not be too angry over that, if only because everything else has failed with the Indian and so we might as well try this. A tribal identity might—furthermore—provide many Indians with some sort of psychological belonging that seems missing from the Indians I have heard about at the Chicago Indian Center (for instance).

The other great speech was given here, by one of our main sociologists, and it was on the definition of race. He told how the KKK, NAACP, liberals, right-wingers, Census Bureau, and everyone else in the US, has the same definition for Negroes: anyone with any Negro blood. So a man with 1/16 Negro blood is black, and if he tries to forget it we say he is "passing for white". But if a man 15/16 Negro acts like a Negro we don't say he is "passing for black." He said no other country follows this definition—even South Africa has a separate classification of "coloureds" for mixtures. The Caribbean recognizes mulattos, and even has names for different blood percentages. It was a stimulating, challenging speech—things I had never once thought about, but which I recognize as of great importance.

Enough lecturing from the professor. Next summer's situation is in flux—perhaps next letter I will have more to report. Hopefully there will be news from the U of I Press then too.

Best wishes in your "huckstering"—

Mark
Dear Mark—

Labor Day weekend ironed in, and had you remained an honest newsman, you would be readying for the bated-breath readers of Minneapolis some tale or another invoking Frances Perkins, Gompers—The Reuthers? John L. Lewis? Instead, you are barbecuing in that big backyard, or reading Sandburg’s Lincoln in that new porch office. Tsk.

Well, Alaska. Rain. Straight up-and-down terrain. Airports scrunched onto not-quite-big-enough islands, scaring bejesus out of the Dologs just about every landing. (Seven flights in 12 days, we puddle jumped around southeastern Alaska.) Almost everybody fishes or logs, everybody has a boat and a car or pickup without a muffler. Everybody male, including the governor and a passel of legislators, has a beard. The towns are close-stacked along little ledges of shoreline like canned goods on a pantry shelf, and right behind them the mountains go up crazily. Everybody flies everywhere, and everybody still has cabin fever, ranging from fairly benign to virulent. The drinking is sissy stuff compared to Montana. The energy level is terrific, people doing their jobs during the day, then probably collecting a bunch of neighbors for a beer and supper, then going off to dabble with the garden or the boat until 11 pm, when it starts to get dark.

A lot of the energy just kind of flies off at random, I thought. Among the people we got to know in Juneau, and it was a remarkable number for just a four-day stay. I evidently got to be known as a prodigy of efficiency for going off to the state library every morn at the same time, spending the same number of hours researching, emerging the same time each evening. An Alaskan in that same span of hours would have darted down to the harbor to buy halibut steaks or crabs for the freezer, probably met or delivered someone at the airport, gone to a committee meeting of one kind or another, and lord knows what else. Anyway, we liked the people, and Juneau as a place, but both felt it’d be very constricting to live in.

Sitka, five or six days’ worth, was wonderful and exasperating, sometimes wonderfully exasperating. The main intersection downtown, 4-way stop, has a noise level about max like New York City’s as the junker vehicles screech to a halt then rev or roar or rattle off. It took us 3 nights, change of room each night, to find a place where we could get a night’s sleep. We arrived, on a day when I desperately needed to hole up and write on the research freshly got in Juneau, to find that our motel had on one side a track where kids were riding dirt-bikes and on the other, I kid you not, a chainsaw repair shop with a magnificent stump outside where the repairs were tried out every few minutes. But when we finally got situated into the quietest room of a big downtown lodge, everything was fine: the scenery is boggling, mountains and islands everywhere, the clouds swoop through all day long. My research, on what the place looked like as New Archangel in the early 1850s, went well, and we had such bonuses as a tour of the 18th century Russian bishop’s house from the Park Service guy in charge of restoring it. It’s a tremendous 2-story-and-attic log building,
currently levitated on 200 jacks as the foundation is being replaced. The
accomplishment, mostly from Finns, that went into the place is nearly unbelievable,
it's so sophisticated and adept.

So that was the trip, with final legs to Prince Rupert and across to the
Queen Charlotte Islands. I think it was a restorative to both of us. The
research results certainly have maximized this novel of the runaway Swedes
I'm working on, and Carol says she thought the Alaskan days were sensational.
It also bolstered me a lot to find that I can finally move around without too
much trouble, after some very achey months with my right leg. It seems to be
something sciatica-like, from a tipped spinal disk probably earned by heroics
on the high school football field. But it's calmed down a lot now, I'm currently
walking 5-7 miles a day to strengthen the leg, and Carol's dad, who is visiting
here with us just now, has real sciatica enough to reassure me there's not all
that much wrong with me.

Haven't seen Vernon, what with Carol's folks here the past 10 days or so.
I did meet up at the Northwest Collection with Richard Maxwell Brown of U.
of Oregon—relieved to find he introduced himself as just plain Dick. I
didn't know his work, but maybe you do, on American violence. Anyway, a
pleasant gent. He has the position Earl Pomeroy had at Eugene, so even has
some travel money, courtesy of the endowed chair.

Otherwise, I am simply picking strawberries (bannana year in the backyard),
reading about how Joseph Conrad did it (write, not pick strawbs), and waiting
for Winter Brothers to come out in early November, so I can go huckster it
in bookstores. I don't imagine you've heard anything from Knopf or anyone
else in this summer dead-time, have you? As far as publishers I can tell,
publishing just damn near closed down in toto during August. I hadn't known
it, but my new editor at Harcourt tells me the printers vacation in July.
No wonder it takes so ungodly long to make a manuscript into a bound book.
In any event, the bookstore and publishing people I've talked to, and read
about, think the business may swing back up this fall, which would bode well
for a project such as Erinbaden.

About 3 weeks now and Carol will join your professoring ranks again.
She proclaims herself truly ready, missing the classroom considerably by
now. It'll seem empty around here with her gone up the hill during the day.

all for now... all best
July 17, '80

Dear Mark—

Ordination by Havighurst! Hallelujah, and hallelujah again! You should be very pleased, and not a little proud. Share the news with Carstensen, who coincidentally told me the last time I saw him that Havighurst had done one of the very best of the bicentennial state histories. "And he's in an English department," Carstensen said in his mock astonishment.

This is just a quickie amid some packing for Alaska; on Monday, we go up to see where your canoeing Swedes came from. But I did want to share notions on editing while your letter was fresh in my head. Yes, I had good editing in Winter Brothers—because I did most of it myself, along lines suggested by my editor. This sounds self-puffing but it's not: there's a school of editorial thinking that the best way to work over a manuscript is to tell the author what seems to be wrong, and have him fix it. When I was doing travel pieces for the NY Times, in fact, that was precisely the way it was put: a call would come, the editor would say it's a nice piece but it needs just a couple of "fixes" and I'd spend a week in rewrite and the article would end up 30 or 50% improved. So the major editing on Winter Bros was done this way—remote control, through me—-with just a couple of specific things done by the editor herself: one, a very good and omni-cial move, was to reverse the first two days of the book, to provide a more readable lead; the other, an insistence that I swap around a couple of pages about Fort Townsend, a move which didn't (still doesn't) seem to me to make much difference one way or the other. Anyway, the point is that unless you luck onto a real whiz, the kind of editorial direction you're likely to get at a commercial publisher is this how-about-fixing-this? attitude rather than the editor blue-pencil for you. I'd say you have a good shot at getting thoughtful editing of this sort at Knopf, and a few other NY publishers.

Couple of other things: double that 8 or so Eastern publishers you think you'll send the ms. to. The 13th publisher took sky, and as such matters go, that was fairly rapid. Don't worry overly about the title just now. (I more and more like "New Erin, New Baden," though think it needs a helluva good subtitle to say more what the book's about.) If the publisher doesn't like the title you've got, insist that they pitch in in thinking up something better; that'll get some fresh minds looking at the problem, and if it doesn't turn up something better it should show them your original choice was really pretty good. You seem to have asked Havighurst about footnotes: I don't think you ought to have them in this book. I know it'll give the academics a rupture, but you want to make this book as broadly readable as possible and that militates against footnotes. Why not use that Barbara Tuchman system: running source notes in the back with key phrases to identify the places in the text? That seems to me ideal: anybody who's really curious can flip back to the notes, nobody else had to be bothered.

over
Your notion of meeting in Montana is a dandy; I wonder if we can work it out. Carol's not out of her teaching until likely June 12; which, for that matter is still plenty early to think about any mountain hiking, unless there's another open winter this year. I don't at all have firm plans yet, but think things are conspiring to take us to Montana, likely next summer, for some weeks of diddling around toward the next book or two. As to your possibility of summer teaching, then or sometime, I'd only add a possibility or two: Montana State, in Bozeman, where you're highly thought of by Mike Malone and where the campus budget has been in better shape than Missoula's; and Eastern Montana College in Billings, which maybe is a bit dinky—I think enrollment of 4,500 or so—but is near the mining (coal) and is the growingest place in Montana; Billings now 100,000 or over, and Yellowstone County with 1 of every 6 Montanans in the state. I guess you've heard the UW has taken on Alfred Runte for the West course; don't know anything about him. Corvallis might be a consideration, too. Anyway, we'll hope you can get west one way or another, if only for some weeks; we could show you a lot of Montana in ten days or so. And no, I don't have the least worry about Danny keeping up; he'll hike the legs off the rest of us.

Continuing good luck with Erinbaden.

all best
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Why not take my first afternoon in my new study to write the Doigs? Why not inaugurate this stupendous building project—new ceileum floor in, but walls still drywalled—with a long-overdue note to the folk out on Puget Sound? I have been walking around with guilt feelings for many weeks, just not having time to sit down and write more than a brief note to you, but knowing you deserved more than a "How are you? I am fine" report.

Your lecture tour through the cultural centers of Wyoming and Montana probably ranks with Mark Twain's and Charles Dickens' perambulations, and I've no doubt you will cherish many happy memories of the people you met and the responses to your reading. I join in cheering you—wish I could hear you read from both Sky and Winter People. Was the editing on the latter creative editing? Or did they touch it much at all? I think I mentioned that I was a bit disappointed by the UC editor—just a lot of little nit-picking, not much on a broader scale of emphasis, etc.

I wanted to wait to write you until I had begun my search for a publisher for To New Erin, To New Baden. Yes, that's the title I seem to have settled on, although once in awhile I come back to something like Immigrants and Americans. I am, as you know, starting at the top; I wrote to Knopf on Monday, enclosing copies of two readers' letters and quotes from those of Walter Havighurst and the Rev. Andrew Greeley. Do you know the works of either? Havighurst is kind of the grand old man of Old Northwest letters—he is a Wisconsin native, who got esconced at Miami of Ohio many years ago, teaching English, and has poured out a few dozen books tying in literature and tradition and history. I would guess he is known upon by many historians. My dad suggested that I get in touch with him, and he readily agreed to read the ms. I am enclosing a xerox of his letter. Greeley is a somewhat leftist priest, at the National Opinion Research Center at the U of Chicago, who does a weekly column carried in many dailies in heavily-Catholic cities (such as St. Paul, Minn., whose afternoon paper is read by my folks) and Chicago; he did some early books on modern ethnic problems, and that is why I asked him to read my ms. He recently had a book on the politics of selecting the current pope. He was rave about my ms., and very brief, which makes me think he didn't read more than a chapter. But how could a man who does so much have time to read an ms.? Incidentally, he urged me not to send it to the U of Chicago Press: "They are an arrogant bunch..." Of course I had no such plans. After Knopf, I will send letters to a bunch of Eastern trade publishers, perhaps as many as 8. After that I'll contact the U of Illinois Press, which I think has come up a lot in recent years and has shown with The Plains Across that it can adequately market a book.

We had a delightful time up in Wisconsin in early June while Eva was with her folks in Germany on that annual trek. The kids are old enough now—Dan 12, twins 7—that they travel well and can entertain themselves much of the time. At the cabin the weather was delightful—some rain, some very cool times, some very warm days—but the ticks were out in force. We imagined all sorts of scenarios in which ticks were tabbed as an endangered species, and the Sierra Club was engaged in a last-gasp struggle to save them. Dad wondered at Noah's wisdom of bringing a pair of wood ticks on the ark. Each evening we would go over our bodies, searching for the crawling creatures—it reminded me of nothing so much as the Chinese grandmother in Michener's Hawaii going over her body each night for evidence of leprosy.
But to get back in nature is of course an elixir for someone teaching school all year, especially down here on the prairies. Once there was fog over the lake, and the loons' mysterious calls came to us like ghostly voices; on the lake a canoe approached, just barely coming into vision, and it too was like a dream, floating somehow unattached to earth or sky or water. On a canoe trip down the Namekagon, we saw more wildlife than I think we had ever seen there—an eagle, deer, dozens of turtles sunning themselves on the trees hanging over and down into the water, many snakes curled up on rocks, two great blue herons, numerous ducks.

Perhaps just as exciting to me was our drive from River Falls down along the Mississippi River to La Crosse, where I went through some of their photos on the Mississippi's riverboat heyday. I had not been along the river there for years—more than a dozen years, at least. And yet when I was in college in the 1950's I often went that way at the beginning or end of vacations as I left Madison or returned to it. I especially remember returning after Christmas vacation once, when the whole land was groaning under repeated blizzards, and we drove down out of the hills to Lake Pepin, and there, in late afternoon, was the whole wide, broad river covered with white like a powerful glacier brooding below us. It had such power and our little car was so puny compared to nature's dominance that I shall never forget it.

We found the Wisconsin side of that river still delightful in its small Huckleberry Finn towns, its winding roads, its brilliant views. Still un-touristy, still unexploited by weekend visitors, where restaurants still feature local fish and life centers on that artery that has been so important in man's life on the continent. I was refreshed after seeing all still there, so much as I had remembered it. It is one of the beautiful drives of the land, I think.

Here we are enmeshed in summertime, as you guessed. Yesterday we had guests here, to sit on our new screen porch, eat ice cream that I had cranked up, then carry lawn chairs over to the park to see the fireworks. It ended with the flag and a sign "Good Night." We have had magnificent harvests of string beans, and the transparent apples will soon be coming. Raspberries are ready now too. Then tomatoes. But you will undoubtedly continue eating clams.

I'm teaching summer school, which helps explain how we could add this porch-study on to the back of the house. We get about one year in three to teach summer school, and no one does it willingly—only to make money. My spring was spent sweating out the readers' comments on To New Erin, and making some changes. Now I hope to get it accepted this summer by someone, so I can push forward into something else. I only have a few vague ideas for magazine projects, but I almost definitely will try to get some research moving on two or three projects, then after a while shift to one of them and push it through.

Here are a couple of long-term ideas that have been popping into my mind, that concern you: One would be @ to attempt a Wyman-Polig rendezvous and hike in Montana early next summer. Eva will be going to Germany again in late May=early June, probably, so if I could get someone to be with the twins for a week or so, Dan and I could meet you for a few days' hiking (backpacking) somewhere. Dan grew 5 inches last year, and will probably pass me up sometime in 1981. He will do OK on hiking, is my point.

My other idea is to apply for a summer teaching job at the U. of Washington, U of Oregon, U of Montana, or similar school. I remember we had an old Carstensen student in to teach one summer when I was there. Perhaps you had better not mention this— I will write Carstensen for advice on how to proceed.

Your new project sounds fascinating, as your projects always do. But it will be a dishonest book unless you personally have canoe 1,000 miles in midwinter from Alaska.
P.S. A teachers' institute here brought in a visiting fireman the other day, and he was quite interesting. His name is Bob Manley, formerly an academic historian at the U. of Nebraska who was fired or quit in a huff over the footnote-orientation in the department there. His forte is history based on interviewing relatives or local old-timers; he claims all history can be taught from local sources. Although he puffed himself up a lot (Eva left in anger) he still had some good ideas, particularly when he told of encountering people who claimed "Nothing ever happened here." One of his best stories was of his talk with a man who years ago delivered rural mail in a buggy. He had two prime horses—both perfectly trained to trot along at a fair speed so that he could be sorting the mail without looking up, knowing they would stop at every mailbox on the route. But one day one of the horses was sick, and so he had to substitute a horse of unknown qualities. The new horse balked, kicked, raced, did everything to upset the mail operation. As they went along the early part of the route the new horse suddenly bolted, breaking the rigging from the buggy and sending the mailman up over the wheels in a somersault while the mail sailed down upon him. He landed in a pile of dust, quite badly shaken up, but he was angered when he saw a farmer rushing up to him from his plow in a nearby field—and the farmer was laughing! "How can you laugh at this?" he demanded as he got up to brush his himself off. "I ain't laughing at you—I'm laughing at them!" he said, pointing down the road at the two horses. And then the mailman looked and saw his two horses, racing from side to side of the road, but stopping precisely at each mailbox before racing on.

I chatted briefly with Manley, and he told me that he once met with Howard Lamar, Atherton, and other Western historians (I presume it was executives of the Western History Association) and made his pitch for his approach to history. He said
they listened politely, but then informed him they didn't believe his approach had validity. At that point—according to Manley—he pulled out a paper in on which he had quoted from their own writings: Lamar had written in the preface to his first book that he had first learned to love history from stories told by his grandfather, and so on. Manley was hard to take for two full hours, and I disbelieve his claim that all history can be taught from local sources, but there is a germ of truth in what he says and we—you and I, the history profession in general—can learn from him. Perhaps I can learn more than you can.
Dear Mark Wyman:

I have enjoyed reading your portrayal of diverse people who despite differences and contentions held common hopes for their future in a new green land. Amid a mass of material you have kept the reader aware of this sustained and embracing theme. While the theme is familiar, having been developed by various scholars and writers, your ethnic focus and organization are somewhat new. Your sequence is logical as well as chronological, with segments so linked that each chapter carries a maintained momentum to the next one.

To me your demographic data is fresh and significant. The 8th chapter musters more evidence than I have ever seen of the immigrants' influence on the slave controversy and Civil War issues. The terminal year 1860 brings an end to a historical period and process, as well as to your book.

Throughout its span the MS. corrects simplistic notions of frontier life, showing its strife and violence along with the persistent hope of betterment. This balanced portrayal may be your book's best claim to attention.

Perhaps you are still too close to the actual writing to review it dispassionately, as I have tried to do. It seems to me that your generally attractive style sometimes lapses into redundancy and wordiness. For an example: the first paragraph of p.194 uses heavy and abstract language, in contrast to the livelier style and specific matter of the "WANTED ..." paragraph that follows. That first paragraph "Immigrants learned early ..." is an unneeded generalization which slows the pace of your writing. Might you delete the 11.4-13 paragraph? There are other places where you make expository generalizations of what is implicit in your specific data.

Do you have a practice of reading your text aloud, to test for tone and cadence? It is my experience that the ear may detect inept diction and syntax that the eye slides over.

In the 23 May letter you say "I plan to send a copy of your comments along with my manuscript when I send it to a publisher." On that score, I think you might quote from this letter rather than send it as a supporting statement. An unsolicited evaluation might be viewed dimly by a potential publisher. The manuscript does of course speak for itself.
You doubtless know the interests and inclinations of certain publishers. Of University presses I would think first of Indiana University Press and Southern Illinois University Press. Among trade publishers you might list Eerdmans of Grand Rapids, Bobbs-Merrill of Indianapolis, Augsburg of Minneapolis, and Follett of Chicago, as well as certain New York houses.

As to footnotes -- the sources of many of your quotations and citations are defined, in a general way, by context. For the unspecialized reader that is sufficient. Should a potential publisher feel otherwise you could readily supply the references, listing them by chapter in the back pages.

I am mailing the manuscript to Normal today. You have a good subject, I believe, and a good book.

Best wishes,

Walter Ingham

Walter E. Havighurst
Shady Hills
Oxford, Ohio 45056
Dear Mark--

You are thought of here, not least because I have newly tacked in front of me the 1873 Olympia newspaper story which is the kernel for the novel I've begun, and among the "Miscellaneous" news items are such as these:

The New national flag of China is said to resemble an old bedquilt with lobsters running around on the edge.

A contemporary speaks of a fashionable tailor as being "one of the old war horses of the trade." A heavy charger, we suppose?

An Ohio man attached a medal to an eagle's neck and with much ceremony set it at liberty on Washington's birthday. Two days later the proud bird made a descent on a farmer's sheep-pen and its brief career was ended by a charge of buckshot.

Now why the hell can't we get news like that these days, I ask you? None of this stacks up with your gleanings from the hard rock research, but the stuff fascinates me even so.

You wondered about the novel. In this 1873 paper, which I was scanning while tracking Swan, is a letter to the editor reprinted from an Oregon paper of 20 years before, saying that the settlers at Shoalwater (Willapa) Bay had just found three Swedes, nearly starved to death, who had come down from Sitka by canoe. The piece says four of them started out, 40 days before; the Haidas got one in the Queen Charlottes. They were indentured workers of the Russian-American Co., could not longer "bear the ill-usagge and tyranny which they were receiving," so stole gear, got a sentry drunk, sneaked from the fort and set off for Astoria. So I'm doing their story as fiction; just taking the fact that they accomplished the 1000 miles by canoe, in mid-winter, through the great seagoing Indian tribes, and imaging from there. So far (35 pages or so), so good.

Had lunch with Carstensen at the UW last week. Seems in good fettle, has done a piece for Pete Steen's encyclopedia of forestry and a 500-worder on fairs for The American West. I very nearly said, good god, Vernon, you've never cleared your throat in 500 words, but thought better of it. He looks good; mentioned, lightly, getting a little harder of hearing, but showed none of it. He'd just seen the sales figures on the Bicentennial state histories he had a hand in, was quite taken in the shrewdness of Norton in snapping up that publishing deal. Have you considered Norton for the immigration epic? It's not a very showy firm, but seems a damn shrewd one.

* a kind of Deliverance in buckskin seems to be the best description so far
We've had no Mt. St. H ash whatsoever, though on its second eruption, the one which belched out onto the Olympic Peninsula, I think some ash did fall by Sea-Tac. Haven't seen any of the volcanic aftermath, either the great blowdown from the eruption—which toppled trees I guess up to 1/2-15 miles away—or the ash fallout. Reports from Portland have been that it's a real mess there. Since the ash seems to be a silicon—i.e., a very fine ground glass—Carol and I haven't been anxious to poke anywhere around it within breathing range. I keep feeling like an idling onlooker at Pompeii. Haven't done any writing about the volcano, nor even felt the urge to do so; simply have tried to keep on with what I was doing before, the proofreading of Winter Brothers and the beginning work on the novel. Part of it, too, may be physical; I've had a pulled hamstring for the past couple of months, and have been damned hampered and uncomfortable—"hamstrung" is truly an expressive word—with it. Just in the past two weeks, it's begun to clear up, and I've become more mobile. But anyway, one of the great natural events of my lifetime has gone off a hundred miles to the south, and I don't do much but read about it, rejig a few travel plans, and mull it a little. Is this the way of chroniclers as history sweeps past them?

Hey, I finally saw the review by Otis Young in Montana, and what a candy-ass job that was. I was incensed by his pecksniffian comment that at first he didn't see why the book had been published even before Carstensen told me Young himself has written on mining, and you can guess how I lashed at him in the backhanded comment that he was glad to see you'd outgrown journalistic failings. Such as the ability to meet deadlines, fashion readable prose, etc., I suppose. Academic reviewing always has driven me straight up the wall—gus like Young I now envision as pygmies with blowguns, but so inept they've dipped the darts in ink instead of poison. I do hope you realize that the LA Times reviewer, Robert Kirsch, is just about the most respected one in the literary world. Kirsch having liked your book and Young having diddled with it is, on a cosmic scale, about a 100-1 victory for you.

This looks like a working summer, which I hadn't entirely intended before the hamstring situation; I'd promised Carol we would do a bunch of Olympic hiking. I guess now we'll do ten days or so after Labor Day. Between now and then, we'll have a couple of weeks in Alaska, going up to see where my Swedes canoed from. I am building files toward a Montana novel, probably a homesteading one, after this coastal one. On the May trip to Montana I really realized how rapidly the people I interviewed and corresponded with for House of Sky are dying off. One rancher, whose family is a particular favorite of ours, indeed began to slip the day before we had dinner at their house; ulcers, and I think some blood pressure. Literally for the first meal of his life, that night he didn't eat beef. We did some joking about it, but it probably was a calamitous moment in his life. Another beef story, out of that same trip. The actor who was Capt. Starbuck in the TV series "Battlestar Galactica" is also from White Sulphur Springs—weirdly, we both were in that issue of Time magazine which reviewed Sky—and he was back visiting the hometown, with a curvy blonde companion (female, I guess, I have to specify, these days). Nobody in White Sulphur seemed much upset about the sinful blonde, but they were agog that she and the actor both ate vegetarian! Right there in the heart of beefland, hoiling up in their motel room to cook bean curd or some such. Unfathomable. Which is what I say about a lot of the world. Hope your Normal summer is a normal summer; ice cream socials, Chattaquas, corn as high as a basketball center's eye.

all best
Dear Ivan --

It seems that I put off writing to you until I would have something to report on the immigrant ms., but nothing has happened for a long time and by now you have removed me from your list. I am embarrassed: your letter came in February! I finally got the ms. back from the two readers; one offered numerous suggestions, some of which I took, while the other just praised it and made two or three corrections of details. So now it is being typed by our university stenos. Then I will ship it out to two other readers, for comments which I pray will help it with Knopf: Walter Havighurst, the Miami of Ohio professor (ret.) who has turned out numerous books on the Old Northwest (Upper Mississippi, Heartland, Long Ships' Passing); and Andrew Greely, the Catholic priest at U. of Chicago who writes a weekly column on Catholic affairs and has published books on the modern ethnics (Irish Diaspora in America) and religious topics (recent book on choosing the new pope). So I would hope to be sending the ms. to Knopf in late June if all goes well. Meanwhile, I’ve collected quite a pile of photos, possibly more than the publisher will want. At the beginning I thought I wouldn’t find many, and so took everything I found. Many of those were quite dull. Now I have gotten into much better stuff, including a trove at the Belleville Historical Society of pre-1860 German immigrants sitting around eating watermelon like niggers.

I await news of Swan. And of your fiction, at least if you care to talk about it. (I am fast becoming someone who doesn’t like to talk about projects until they are quite well formed.) I really think you can do a job of fiction for that Big country—I will cheer you on as much as I can, follow up Midwestern leads, anything to help you.

Apropos of all this, while preparing a lecture on Hamlin Garland recently (for my Gilded Age class) I ran across this in his book of essays, Crumbling Idols: I thought you might find it interesting:

“Art, I must insist, is an individual thing, the question of one man facing certain facts and telling his individual relations to them. His first care must be to present his own concept. This is, I believe, the essence of verism: ‘Write of those things of which you know most, and for which you care most. By so doing you will be true to yourself, true to your locality, and true to your time.’” — p. 35.

“Local color in a novel means that it has such quality of texture and back-ground that it could not have been written in any other place or by any one else than a native.” — p. 64.

Especially.

No one but Ivan could have written House of Sky, even with all the people removed from it.

You asked about sale of Hard-Rock Epic: I was quite chagrined to find that the 1979 total was only a bit over 900. So put it down as a typical academic book. The reviews trickle in, but to tell the truth I have all but forgotten the book. I am enclosing the LA Times review—possibly our only joint reviewer. Perhaps you saw the good JAH review by my friend Diane Smith. It was put down by an economist recently in Journal of Economic History, for not being quantified; and
by Otis Young, Jr., in Montana. Young did it by darning with faint praise, mainly. He is a very good writer, and has done some excellent things on mining, and I suppose next to the LA Times and Am. West reviewers I rank him as most important. I am curious about who will review it for WHQ and the Arizona journal. Many of the reviewers have skipped over, or missed, what I see as the book's major contribution: the changes in liability laws and practices over the time period, as revealed in court cases, company records, and other reports dealing with work accidents. Young didn't mention that aspect at all.

I had a good time for four weeks leading a once-a-week class in Illinois History for people over 65, through the YWCA Senior Services program. I had an enthusiastic class of perhaps 20, who set me straight on our opening-day map quiz, and then helped me learn a lot about farm and small town life early in this century. They appreciated my every word—I have never had such an enthusiastic, thankful audience. I will probably lead some sort of a four-week class again next year, maybe on folk beliefs and customs.

I am actually kind of frustrated when I see how important such outside activities are in spreading the gospel of History—and when I compare how little I do like that. I was going to visit some regional history fairs this past spring, but finally just couldn't leave my family. (Sara is teaching in Peoria three days a week, commuting to the U. of I. twice a week, so I must collect kids after school, prepare supper, etc. She is very tired much of the time, because of this schedule. So I have had to stick closer to home, and probably will for another year or so.) I see the thousands signing up in genealogy groups, the multiplication of local history fairs, and popularity of "Sound and Light" and similar activities with a historical angle—and then I feel quite inadequate over my self-imprisonment in university teaching.

Recently I took part in a regional AHA conference on the teaching of history, and went to sessions on Oral History and the Chicago Metro History Fair. I chided the oral historians a bit for making such vast claims for what is often just pure nostalgia with little historical value; but I conceded that it could be extremely useful in motivating students. The Chicago Metro History Fair presentation was fabulous—the director and a participating teacher were on hand. It is in its third year. Initially, he said, they feared that the kids in the suburbs would put on flashy, expensive exhibits and turn off the city kids. But that has hardly happened—many of the richest suburbs do nothing. Why is this? He thought it was the rootlessness of the suburbs. He told of going to one suburban high school, and being asked what would be a good project for a kid there, and starting to tell them to write a community history—when someone pointed out that the whole place, a subdivision, was cornfield 10 years ago. He said that many families there are there for two or three years before being transferred out, so few kids can identify with a community or neighborhood—something possible in the city even among recent arrivals. It was a fantastic show, as they would say in Chicago.

You praised my meeting quaint, interesting folk. I don't do it more than you, for sure. I am still shy, happily not as much as years ago, but I have to intellectually grapple with each occasion where I wonder about introducing myself and opening a discussion. I did that once in Ireland on a train with a man who was missing the back 1/4 of his skull from some operation—hideous to see, but he was extremely interesting and seemed to appreciate my talking with him. I thought about this recently while we sat through a boring synagogue service, when I found this in the prayer book: "Who are wise? Those who learn from all people."

Sincerely, Mark
Dear Ivan and Carol,

This will, obviously, be a shortie: I am trying to get my revisions finished before classes begin in another week, but I fear I won't make it. But I'll try, and so I'll let the letter-writing wait for a few weeks.

The reason for this quickie is to send out a plea for help on the title. I am in a dither over it, mainly because when I tried out my favorite on a group up at my folks' home over Christmas, it drew a total blank.

You know basically what the book is about: Irish and Germans, Yankees and Southerners, pouring into the Upper Mississippi Valley in the 1830-60 years and having many fights over drinking, respecting the Sabbath, founding schools, reading the Protestant Bible in schools, retaining European languages, and such; And politics, and the rising anti-slavery movement and the need to win the immigrants as allies.

So I'm looking for a title that would lure a reader interested in any of the above. Here are some ideas; keep in mind that there will be a one-page prologue noting how the region's town names tell much of its settlement process: New Erin, New Baden, New Westphalia, Berlin, Plymouth, Vermont, Yankee Settlement, New Boston, and so on. How about:

To New Erin, To New Baden
Immigrants and Natives in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1830-1860

New Erin and New Baden
Immigrants and ....
Immigrants in the Great Valley
Irish, Germans, and Natives in the Upper Mississippi Country, 1830-1860

Immigrants to the Valley
Irish, Germans....

Any ideas?

Please send them soon. I hope to get the ms. to two readers within two weeks, and then to a typist within a month. The early part of the semester allows more time to work; from mid-semester on any manuscript work is nearly impossible.

How did you like John Anderson in the Iowa debates?

We saw "Da" in Chicago on Saturday, for 45th wedding anniversary trip. We loved it—you would too, for it involves the theme of how the memories of parents keep running through adult life. And it made me think of how wonderful a thing that that tiny little island of Ireland, with fewer people than there are in Chicago, can provide the world with such a rich literature.

Give my regards to Swan. I hope he is finished off soon.

The best
Mark

P.S.—I am sending a plea for title help to Carstensen also.
Dear Mark—

Geez, you got a queer idea of where to come for expert help on a title. Carol and I didn't manage to title the journalism text ourselves, my own nominees didn't get used for either of my anthologies (thank god, I now admit), and after two earlier duds in trying to name the Montana book, I finally got on the phone to the editor and said: How about "In This House of Sky"? She said, how about "House of Sky"? I said, how about "This..." So my record is about 3/4 three-fourths of a title out of four. Be warned and take any of my notions, as I'm learning from Swan to say, cum grano salis.

Carol likes an amendment of one of your versions, so that it would read: Immigrants in the Great Valley

The Upper Mississippi Country, 1830-1860.

I pretty much agree that that's the best "academic" title I can see. We're both bothered by having "Irish, Germans and Natives" or "Immigrants and Natives" in the subtitle—"natives" to us meaning Indians.

I kind of like your "New Erin, New Eden" idea, except that it's easily mistaken for a study of only those two communities.

Have tried to think of graphic examples of titles, and one that always comes to mind is: German Seed on Texas Soil (although I guess it does sound kind of onanistic). If only the Irish were involved, you might do something with shamrock and sod, but those Germans complicate matters. A great title, I think one of the best of the last decade, was that one by a Frenchman writing about the influence of the American Revolution on the French: The Wind from America. It could be that there's a "Tide from Europe", "New Waters in the Valley", "Floodtide in the Great Valley--Immigration into the Upper Mississippi..." or some such ...a refinable possibility, but I don't entirely discern it. Another line of metaphor would be agricultural--transplanting, new roots, greening, budding, harvest, somehow used with "the Great Valley" but I don't see a natural there either.

A wild card, which I think suggests more turmoil that you want to:

Valley of Babel

Immigration into the Upper Miss...

Then there's the possibility of synonyms for immigrants: newcomers, pilgrims, journeyers, trekkers.

And that's about all that comes to mind, except this sudden thought: using typical surnames somehow, such as "Murphy and Schmidt in Lincoln's Land." That's sure as hell not it, but the notion would be to convey "The Yankee and The Cavalier" type of dichotomy....

over
I'm in revise too, or rather Swan is, I'm not sure where I am. I think the next 2-3 weeks may do it. I'm fairly content with the level of language in the book so far—though I don't think it's going to be as seamless as House of Sky's; I just won't be spending all those years on it, this time around—and am getting happier all along with the structure as I tinker in points for the reader's benefit.

Anyway, I too will take up letterwriting when I can. Until then.

One last stray thought about the title: somehow work with the dates of your period, *in* The Thirty-Year's *Ep*—not "war," but debate, brouhaha, skirmish, wooing?
Dear Mark--

Well, as everybody keeps asking me, what are you gonna write next?

You will be impressed, when you're not too busy snickering, to hear that we're having our second snowstorm of the winter. About 3 inches worth. Carol bugged out of here this morning to catch a bus to the UW and take a midterm. Odd, but she keeps offering to swap occupations with me on such mornings.

Sometimes when you think of it, please pass along the LA Times review and any others you feel like showing; I simply don't see the sources where the reviews are cropping up, and would like to rejoice in them with you. If Epic has sold another 1000 copies, you'll have done very well indeed with a U press book. Where exactly do you stand with the immigrants book, besides waiting on the pair of readers--have you approached any editors or agents or anybody yet?

You wondered about hanging onto the copyright for yourself. It shouldn't be any great problem. A trade publisher likely will assume that you'll ask to do so; it's one of the customary points of negotiation, and one which I think doesn't really mean much to the publisher; the standard contract will have a phrase granting the publisher the right publish and sell the book "during the full term of copyright" or some such, anyway. I'd say don't bother to bring up the matter at the very outset--i.e., when the ms is submitted--but do so as soon as the publisher starts talking contract to you. There also ought to be an out-of-print provision in the contract, to avoid experiences such as your dad's with the Nebraska book: that is, a clause which terminates the contract and reverts the rights to the book to you, if the publisher puts the book out of print. For instance, Carol and I have hang the rights to our journalism text because Prentice-Hall let it go out of print; not that it's likely to do us any good, because we'd have to entirely rewrite the book to reissue it, but that wouldn't be the case with your history work. I can't remember if I've ever passed along to you copies of any of the publishing contracts I have on file; if you ever want to see any, I'll happily send you photocopies.

Swan once more has gone off to New York, with a bit more structure under him in the manuscript and some improved language from me around him. This one is quite an idiosyncratic book, and I have a hunch the publisher will handle it gingerly because it is. Likely to be a much smaller press run than on Sky, and probably not as much muscle to advertise and get reviews for it. I'm glad I did the book, and am fairly well pleased with it, but am quite aware it's going to have a ruder time in the world than Sky. You wondered whether anyone but Carol has been reading the ms for me, and except for a few friends, of no special expertise, who've read chunks, nobody has. Which is
not what I intended, once having made up an elaborate list of folks
I might impose on—you and Vernon were included—but it was such a
perpetual footrace just to get the ms written that I didn’t follow
through on the readers. I’m likely to pay a bit of a price for that
in the reviews, in that you and a few of the others might have steered
me off from some of the deliberate western provincialism in this ms.
Yet I probably don’t want to be steered off, figuring that the mood,
whether it’s moonshine or not, at least is real in me, and something
I want to write about. Probably the other notable (?) point of this
book will be that it’s more than the world wants to hear from Ivan Doig
in first-person, but as with Sky, that’s primarily a matter of writing
technique: I simply see ways to do things with language and story
structure by using first-person which I can’t get at otherwise. Well,
anyhow, the next intended venture—likely the next two—is fiction,
and there’s a whole new set of tools for me to learn.

Not much to report around here, because I’ve been holed up so much.
Saw Vernon about a month before Xmas, and not since; he was just dandy
then, narrating as his maximum pace and daddling with an ag history
paper of some kind. As far as I can tell, he seems to be doing just
fine, though not doing much, in life. Hope to see him and Jeannette
within the next weeks.

My god, I almost forgot, until I glanced at your letter just now:
how late in May will your western trip be? Carol and I will be in
Montana, and briefly in Wyoming, about May 14-23. Will be in Sheridan
on May 14, in Laramie probably the next day; likely Bozeman the weekend
of May 17-18. Any chance at all of coinciding?

Appreciated your story of Juan Fajardo. You have a real talent
for encountering people of the sort—I think of your old radical met
on a Chicago bus. Ever thought of doing some writing on one or more
of them?

Now to fight my way to the mailbox with this, through snow which
already is almost ½ of a foot deep. You’ll appreciate my heroism.
Did I ever tell you that at Christmas of ’41, which my father and
grandmother spent with me in Decatur, we three Montanans damn near
froze to death?

cheers

p.s. A title thought you may or may not appreciate: I kind of like
"To New Erin, To New Baden" better than I originally did.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Now I have some weeks to pursue my classroom preparation and grade exams, while I wait for the responses of two Illinois historians to my ms. I xeroxed the thing last weekend and got it to them early this week—one is with the State Historical Society, one is the state history man at the U. of Ill. The latter said he would not have time to get to it until mid-March, and so I have a wait. In the meantime I'll get my photos in shape, write a bibliographical essay, check spelling of some of the German words, and work on drafts of letters. Who reads your Swan ms.? Just Carol?

Thanks for the title help. I am still perplexed. I suppose I will go with the academic one, "Immigrants in the Great Valley," but I'm not completely sold. Of course, I never was sold on Hard Rock Epic either, but there it is.

I am eagerly awaiting the next royalty report, probably any day now. Dan bets that it won't sell another 500 (it sold about that in the first half of 1979); I bet it'll be 1,000 or over. I just can't gauge the impact of the LA Times review; I would bet there are hundreds and hundreds of aficionados of mining around and about LA, but whether they will buy the book I can't say. Also, the stimulus to prospecting in recent months might also drive some people to hunt out every book that mentions the names of old Western mining camps. I guess it's safest to prepare for the worst.

I do have one question for you: how did you handle copyright? The Author's Guild does little with it in their samples, but obviously it's important since they devote considerable time in their extra pamphlets on renewal of copyright. I had no choice on the first book; U of Cal. Press took copyright as a fait accompli. I notice that you own your copyright on Sky; xx was there any fight over that? My Dad was angry once when one of his original publishers was asked by Nebraska if they could reprint in paperback. The original publisher agreed—it had done nothing with the book for 20 years—but then it got a large chunk that otherwise would have gone to Dad.

What I'm asking, I guess, is: should I just inform a publisher at the outset that I want to keep copyright? Or will a trade publisher assume that I will do that?

Enclosed is a clipping from the local rag about the Burda affair. I am sure you read the Newsweek review. I met Burda at a New Year's Eve party, liked him, and have heard only good things about him as a person and teacher. And so I just can't make the condemnation of him that Newsweek would want. No one of his integrity (or of any integrity) would knowingly copy from Somerset Maugham. Right? So how can it be explained? All I can imagine is this: you fall in love with a book at one point in your life. You pick it up, read it, and re-read some passages. Years later you can still quote those phrases, almost word for word. I am that way on Tales of the South Pacific. It begins something like this: "I wish I could tell you about the South Pacific. The way it really was."
Certainly Burda is guilty of sloppy work. I would request, however, that any Wesleyan action against him come only after he has had a chance to explain his side. (A couple of years ago Labor History had a lambasting on Philip Foner, the radical historian, and showed parallel passages from his book and from an earlier published dissertation by someone else. That has to be very sloppy research—perhaps paraphrasing something, then losing the source, and finally using it without attribution.)

No word from Carstensen, after a short Christmas note. How is he? I will expect to go to the Fall meeting of the WHA (in Kansas City, I think it is), there I can witness his coronation.

We might go West in late May, definitely to Western Colorado where we have relatives, and then probably up to Boise to see Bob Rome. Maybe then to Livingston and how I can teach summer school. To include Seattle seems like too much for the time we have. But once we see how it goes with all the kids, we can plan further trips in ensuing summers.

best wishes

Mark

P.S. Perhaps you should be told of the death of Juan Fajardo.

He was one of the world's least-known men. I knew him through friendship during the past year with his son, Salvador, who was one of Brat's colleagues last year in the foreign language department at Illinois Wesleyan.

Juan Fajardo was the wrong man in the wrong place in the Spanish Civil War. He was an anarchist in Zaragoza, which was controlled by the Loyalists at the outset. He was drafted into the Loyalist Army of Franco, but escaped and headed for the Republican lines. He always remembered the fruit he ate while on the run—grabbing it from vineyards, given it by supporters of the cause, always existing with the fear of being caught. And he was caught, again and again. They caught him and imprisoned him, and caught him again when he escaped. After the war he kept escaping, and they kept catching him. Salvador can remember as a little kid when his father would suddenly show up, and then they would keep him hidden for the inevitable visit of the Guardia Civil. Once his father escaped over the rooftops. Salvador recalls visiting him in prison, but mainly he remembers his excitement at seeing how big the place was. (The selective memories of a child!)

But when he learned that they were going to execute him from anger at his continued escapes, Juan Fajardo got out once more, made it to his family, and packed them off to some old anarchist centers where he had friends. They asked for help in getting to France, and finally lined it up.

And so it was that one night the Fajardos—mother, father, 8-year-old son—and another family with kids went with two enormous Basque shepherders, to the French border. They hid in a cave, and waited until the Guardia Civil patrol went by above them. Salvador remembers the horses' hoofs in the night. Then they waited longer until the moon passed by, and then the huge shepherders carried them across the river, up to their shoulders, one at a time.

In France they joined some former friends. Some years later they moved to Quebec. Salvador went to college after some years mining, then went to New England to teach, and his French parents joined him when they came here. Thus ended the life of an insignificant participant in a wider dream; but even Juan Fajardo's life has kept that dream alive in a small way.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Weeks and weeks overdue, typically, here's another epistle from your listening post on the prairies. I find myself enmeshed in class preparation while slowly revising the manuscript for the immigrant book, and since I always feel behind I keep putting off letter-writing. So the doings are allowed to wait, and for all I know you are panting for news from Illinois.

It has been the loveliest of Falls here, but for various reasons we only took about three family hikes in the colors. I had an end-of-week research trip to Madison; Eva was gone another weekend; illness felled us once, and various events blocked us on other occasions. In winter we might not mind, but Fall is our favorite and so this was not too rational.

The reviews from Epic are slow and spotty. The Nation gave it a short but good notice; American West's you have seen—by my old friend (and former Garstensen student of sorts from Madison) Joe Conlin, now of Chicago. I have never understood why places like the Denver Post didn't review it; therefore and as many, many weeks ago I wrote my editors asking if they had any word or any opinion on that; they have not deigned to answer. I also sent some pointed questions on various topics whether they had entered the book in various competitions, so that if they had not entered it in certain ones I might enter it myself. But no answer. Authors grow on trees.

You might simply tell Susan Schrempfer that I also had some slow times with Cal Press, but the fact that Rodman Paul was on my side helped, I think. I remember asking him for advice when they didn't write for months. I also remember asking the editors for specific criticisms, after he sent the usual vague remonstrance. That brought a fairly specific letter, which I could act on.

I'm thinking more and more about the submission of the immigrant book. I would like to shoot for Knopf again, and then a whole list of NY houses, before dropping down to U of Illinois Press, probably my first choice of university presses. They seem to have taken Geritol of something about four years ago, for they are big advertisers of their books now and seem to be publishing less turgid stuff. There are also one or two regional presses I might try before Illinois—that is, regional commercial presses.

Right now I'm trying to insert Wisconsin stuff into the manuscript as I revise. The whole Milwaukee story is another book, of course, but luckily someone did a Milwaukee German examination a couple of years ago and I'll lean on that. I think I wrote the political chapter without getting hopelessly entangled in what I have discovered is the old chestnut of Mississippi Valley historians: Who elected Lincoln? Apparently in the 1920s and 1930s they used to yell about that question in MVHA sessions.

This Friday I'll entrain to Chicago for probably my last research trip there on this book. I want to have one final go at some missionary letters of the 1859-60 years; these are at Chicago Theological Seminary. Then I'll spend part of a day going over photos at Chicago Historical Society. I got a few photos in Madison, and got a lead on a painting of an Illinois train crossing the prairie, painted in the mid-1850s by a touring German artist. The original is in Calgary and I have written on them on it.
I stumbled upon something today while preparing an Illinois History class on the Progressive period in Jane Addams' collected writings. She tells the story of the "devil baby" of 1912. One day hundreds of Italian and other immigrant women began to push into Hull House, all wanting to see the "devil baby." What? Jane asked. That day and for months afterward she would learn—in myriad variations—that the news was out that Hull House was hiding a devil baby, with cloven feet and a tail, born to a young immigrant girl. One story was that the husband had knocked a picture of the Virgin off the wall, breaking it; another was that the husband had cursed God a few days before the birth. Nothing Jane Addams and her associates could do would dissuade the callers, who included many men taking their lunch hours off from the factory to trudge to Hull House to see this strange birth. Addams handles it nicely, without putting down the immigrants. Instead, she discusses it in terms of the persistence of traditional beliefs.

But much of the time a couple of weeks ago I was not in Illinois or even America, but was wandering the streets of London with George Smiley. I was reading John Le Carré's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy,* and following avidly the efforts to locate a mole inside the British foreign service. I think Le Carré is the master at characterization—he is so deft with a few words, a phrase, giving us an intimate understanding of the being then described.

I presume you read Carstensen's piece on the 60s in the UW Alumnus journal. It was quite good, of course, and mostly I thought of how lucky the UW was to have him there in a position of authority. I saw him in action during one building occupation, when I yelled at him, "Isn't the lesson of the past in these things, that you should get the police in right away and clear them out immediately?" He just frowned at me and went right on writing down names of those he could identify. In that particular incident his action of waiting and not confronting the brave occupiers paid off: ignored by the administration and police, the occupiers finally gave up that night.

I never did much, really, either way in any of those events. I suppose I would have felt that I had to, if they would have moved to destroy the library. But they didn't. (At Illinois State in those years they had some nights when the faculty were all on guard, patrolling the library and other buildings.) I learned then that I am traumatized by such events—when they warned they would occupy Smith Hall, I was so shaken up that I could not work at all for hours.

Carstensen missed only one important fact, I think. On the Kent State day, one of my fellow grad students saw a student in one of his sections with a pistol. He told the kid to put it away and get out of there. Just think if that gun would have been used! And I would bet there were more guns on campus. UW could have been Kent State; every campus could have been Kent State.

Old Bob Ronig in Boise, a hard-rock miner now with the state historical society, wrote a nice letter about my book. He said that no writer has described "the fascination of mining... Possibly the explanation is simply that writers hearing few expressions of this feeling from miners and not feeling it themselves are scarcely aware of it. I am not talking about the excitement in the uncertainty of prospecting, which still needs more technical treatment, but rather the emotions stirred by the sights, sounds and smells of actual mining." He is right, of course.

By now Ivan is putting away the Swan book, Carol is on another sabbatical. All seems right with the world in Seattle, though not in Iran. always, Mark
Dear Mark--

The Nation? American West? I have entirely been missing Epic's epic, and will try catch up on some of this stuff at the UW library this mid-week. You ought to be fact fairly pleased, having made these and the Kirkus review (which in spite of what you thought was a pretty okay review). It's rather luck of the draw where things get reviewed, and often doesn't have all that much to do with the book's merits. At the Denver Post, to take one of your benes, they have just had upheaval in the book editorship; the guy quit or got fired, I think, in the aftermath of the Gannett papers' investigation of book editors selling their review copies to some NY cheapo jobber. So, while I know even you paranoids have enemies, internal stuff like that does go on.

This is a quickie note just to teach you the danger of passing research stuff along to me. Which is to say, I'd much like to use in the Swan book a swatch of the missionary quote you sent me, to wit: The Reverend Summers, reporting from Benton County, Iowa, in July of 1852: "A young man recently left for California, who for two years has been very anxious to go, but during his minority had been restrained by the influence and authority of his parents. They offered, for the sake of diverting him from his purpose, to furnish him the means of travel and visit the Eastern cities. He derided the idea. He would not turn his hand over to see all that could be seen in the East, but he must go to the Utopia of the New World; and he has gone." I will gaily credit you, in Acknowledgments and probably the text as well, but does the quote slip from something you'll be doing in the immigrant book? If it does, tell me and I'll figure out some way not to use the lines. And be honest about it: tell me to bugger off your material if it is your material.

Saw Carstensen about 2 weeks ago, when he was hosting a CUNY history prof named Dave Hawke, who has a new Lewis and Clark book coming out. Vernon seemed in great fettle--I take your point, as I never fully have before, how important his academic statesmanship was to the UW in the 60's--but what brings the evening to mind is that Hawke's book is being published by Norton. You might think about them for the immigrant book; take a look at pp. 194-195 of Publishers Weekly, Aug. 27, and you'll find they publish a helluva bunch of history. Hawke was pleasant—a "sort of" student of Vernon's from Wisconsin, I guess, not one of his grad students—and Vernon could pass along his address or phone if you're interested in the name of his editor, I should think. Your other ploy, to try Knopf, I think sounds just fine, too. But after you've tried one or two mainline commercial publishers in your respectful way, for god's sake submit the ms., or at least a sample of it, to half a dozen or so others, simultaneously. This is a matter of time; you, or anybody
else with a lifespan of less than 300 years, can't afford to wait
for publishers one-by-one to diddle around with your manuscript. There
honest to God is nothing unethical about multiple submissions—it's
the essence of free enterprise: getting your product to the highest
bidder—and it's even being suggested by an occasional teacher of
writing now and then, I understand. Publishers themselves have grasped
the benefits of multiple submissions years ago: when they sell a book
to paperback publishers these days, they hold auctions—the paperbacks
all get the ms at the same time, must make their bid within a given
number of hours, maybe even have to make a "blind" base bid before
they even see the ms. End of lecture.

I think I have about rassled Swan to a standstill, which is because
he was about to rassle me. This book is a bit too big to have written
in one year's time, and I've had some very weary spells. But last
weekend and the four days of Thanksgiving—we had salmon and the aroma
of my paste pot for holiday around here—I think I've made it over the
hump. Carol and I are off to the East Coast for Xmas with her parents
on Dec. 19, and the ms goes into NY with me then. Am not sure what I
face at the publisher; my editor has had some change in status, giving
up her administrative reins as editor-in-chief, and I'll have to find
out if her head will roll off when she sneezes. Indeed a mysterious
business, making books.

The immigrant book sounds good, you sound good. Read more LeCarre.
Will write you a genuine letter sometime in the holidays. Cheers.
Don't let de debbil baby git you.
Dear Mark—

And where were you forty years ago today, when the blitzkrieg flashed? I at least was snug in my crib in the log ranch house at the foot of Grass Mountain. Had you yet begun to totter around a linoleum-floored Wisconsin kitchen? The friends whom I borrowed the Mt. Rainier cabin from last winter are from Wisconsin, and Trudy remembers being in the backyard with her teenage sister when their father came from his radio to the door and called: "You'd better come in now, girls. The war has started."

There was much talk of the past last night in this house. Carol's parents are here, and it was her father's 76th birthday. Our friends John and Jean Roden came for dinner--John is the one who came into the surf for me at Ellen Creek. He'll be 59 in a few months, and said what a shock it is to have the Pope younger than he is. The dinner flew with talk of Terraplanes, Appersonights, Hudsons, Pierce-Arrows. Astonishing to me, who can barely tell a W3 Beetle from a Kenworth logging truck, what a hold the automobile has on memory. It's even true of me, I guess; I'm clearer about what cars my dad had when I was a kid than I am about those of my adult life. I've been hearing from a guy in Wenatchee who had his memory stirred by House of Sky, and he can recall even the kinds of headlights on different cars of fifty and more years ago. Anyway, after dinner the talk turned to childhood games. Out of his Paterson boyhood, Carol's dad had the most exotic-sounding one--Thrusmen. Over the Gather Band, I think he called it--although he couldn't recall its details, while John contributed Tin Can Shiny, a form of Texas street hockey.

I notice in your last letter you're sounding very much the author, scowling right past the Kirkas description of "poe as "grim and compelling" to the noun word "pedestrian", which looks to me to be in context of what Bill Haywood fans would want of the book rather than a slam at you. It seems to me you did well to get a Kirkas review, and to be called "compelling." Are other reviews coming in, or is this has it been summer doldrums? I take it from the sound of your letter that you don't much want this next book to be done by U. of Cal. Press? I took the Liberty, not so incidentally, of passing your name to a Rutgers historian named Susan Schreiber, who has a manuscript in some kind of baffling ballet with UCal. I doubt that she'll write you, since what she seems primarily to need is someone to give her an editorial look-over and I provided her another name for that. But she was bewildered by the extent of time the Press had hung onto her ms, and the nonspecific criticisms that've been made; I thought you might be able to tell her if you went through anything similar early in the process on Poe, and then matters moved more efficiently once a decision was made. I don't know Schreiber except by phone--through Pete Steen, I did a little editing on her ms when she first began reworking it from her dissertation--but she has very nice material about the Save-the-Redwoods League and the history of setting aside some of the redwoods as California state parks, and it would seem to me to make a very creditable university press book. I think, though, she's caught in the tightening financial screws the u presses.
We've had a hard-working summer, so much so that on any number of bright days I wondered if we're not dumber than hell to be in here slugging away at typewriters. Carol team-taught a course at the UW—The Communications Process, a theory course which she'll now work into her own curriculum at Shoreline—and took an English course in American Fiction since 1945. We took a 3-day break last week, to Whidbey Island, Deception Pass, and Camano Island, but otherwise it's been hammer, hammer. I'm getting curious as to how the Swan book turns out—i.e., whether I can bring it off. The book is to be a considerable technical stunt, in that it's to tell Swan's life simultaneously as it narrates, in journal form, my past winter of investigating the sites and diaries of that life. People ask me, well, just what kind of a book is it, and I've taken to telling them that it'll be a character sketch that happens to be 100,000 words long. I did get the 100 pp. to Harcourt by end of June, and they sent me the next chunk of advance money and some kind words. So now, I try to finish the next draft by the end of September, and revise until year's end.

Next March, there's going to be a British House of Sky, and earlier than that, probably February, there'll be the U.S. trade paperback version. The London agent I lined up while we were there in April—I don't know if I told you—I picked her out of the phone book because her name is Carol, giving me new wife, editor, and agent by that name—has placed Sky with Sidruck & Jackson, who'll buy a thousand or so copies from Harcourt and peddle them. Not much money involved, but more than none. The paperback will be done by Harcourt; no offers that amounted to anything from the big paperback houses. And I'm glad to hear of the copy of Sky in Normal Public, because there haven't been all that many go into the world since the first of the year. Sales are about 16,000 by now, and 15,000 of those were by Christmas. Needless to say, a prime reason I'm slogging away at Swan is to get the book into the stores for Christmas '30.

Not much else has been going on in your lives, although we've got to get back to some work on this house fairly soon. I've been pretty much turned out of politics the past few years, but have watched Carter and company with some fascination this summer. If we don't get a war or economic catastrophe out of what's been going on—two colossal "ifs"—I know—I find a lot of these the summer's happenings fairly hilarious. The Aug. 27 issue of The New Yorker has a piece by Elizabeth Drew about what led to the Camp David mummery. If it's at all accurate, the pollster Caddell is at best sophomoric, at worst a TV soap salesman out of his element. One of his ideas was for Carter to get the country's attention by calling a constitutional convention, just for instance.

Other than stuff like that, my reading seems to get more and more eccentric; more in search of detail and technique than ideas. I think I had better try turn that around a bit next year, when I'm out of the Swan re.

I've lost track; do you teach this fall, or write? Or more likely, both? Carol will spend most of her sabbatical taking courses at the UW, including a modern American history course from Pease, which should be fun. Write when you get a moment; I'd like to hear more about where you are now on the immigrant book.

cheers.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Having just wrapped up another chapter late last night—that is, put away the rough draft version, to incubate until I rework them all next Fall—I now turn to my pile of unanswered letters. Ticks on the list is yours, and of course I owe you thanks for sending the poster. It will adorn my university cubicle so that students can ooh and aah about my Western connections.

Several things have happened since last I communicated. Eva was gone for three weeks, as you know, and during that time I had the kids with me for a week up in Wisconsin. I had wanted a week to just sit in River Falls and try to track down some old friends, faces, ideas: in particular I wanted to ask about a vision out of my childhood, a barefooted and bony man who sold strawberries door to door in the summertime, always going in a horse-drawn wagon. We kids said that he went barefoot in the winter too, but I doubt that. I knew that my brother had two friends who worked with him for one summer, on his small farm out of town on the Spring Valley road, and I wanted to try to run down some of these things. (He was dead by the time I got to junior high and might have worked for him.) And I had some other things I wanted to check, like the Catholic missionary’s letter—which I ran across in an obscure journal—that mentioned going through the Kinzica Valley in 1846, two years before anyone was known to have been there. But family plans changed all that—they of course couldn’t believe I just wanted to be with the kids around town all week, and so pressure was put on to go here, and there, and in the end I barely had time to scunt up to Minneapolis for a wonderful meeting with one of my old Tribune friends.

The Minneapolis visit made me glad, once again, that I got out of big cities when I did and that I left daily newspapering. I think the pressure would have cracked me; and for sure my reluctance to tear into people for information regardless of hour of night or their condition, would have upset my equilibrium. And yet I agree newspapermen have to be rude, and pushy; it’s just that I couldn’t be that way, and while I survived for a few years the stuff I wrote that was okay didn’t require much browbeating. I actually met with two old friends—one from the Tribune, one in labor education at the university. They move in quite different circles, and yet both have gotten divorces, both are living with younger girls, both have taken treatment for alcoholism (which I never knew they suffered from). It is quite a new world; the frightening thing is to think of how young I am and how fast the pace of change has been since my childhood.

Then after Eva got back we took Miriam to St. Louis Children’s Hospital to have a specialist there cut off a cyst which she was born with, under her right ear. It turned out to be no big deal, but had been the occasion for some anxiety because a key nerve runs through that area. But they missed that. For me it was interesting to see the world of the hospital—I presume Agatha Christie has used a hospital ward or room for one of her mysteries. After a few days the hospital is its own world, with different personalities of the patients and nurses and doctors emerging just as in a neighborhood. Miriam was in a room with three other kids, one white and two black. Miriam had a cyst removed; the other white—a little girl also—had a growth from her stomach removed. Little Cortez, a tiny, tiny 3-year-old black boy, had lead poisoning from eating paint, while Dawn, a somewhat stockier 7-year-old black girl, had been burned in a gasoline fire. So you can see that the whites—both from middle-class homes—were in for problems they had been born with; the blacks—both from poor homes—were in for problems apparently related to their economic status. (I am presuming Dawn’s burns came as a result of trying to store gasoline in the house.)
he visiting was quite different too. Of course the Wyman parents either read to their child or, if the child was occupied, pulled out a book or magazine and read it themselves. The other white family did no reading, but devoted their time when there to their daughter. Little Cortez's parents were young—the mother could hardly have been 18, and is pregnant; the father is a gangling guy, perhaps 20. They didn't like Electric Company on the TV, so they went down to the parents' lounge and had a shoot-em-up thriller on IV there; that's how they spent the hour or so a day visiting their child. Dam'd family would come late at night—8 p.m., say, staying until 3 after visiting hours ended at 9—and always come loaded with toys and gifts for her, with portable radio blaring soul music, with lots of laughing and yelling and happiness. What a diverse, and fascinating, world.

Just over a week ago I entrained to Chicago to link up with a man I may have written you about. Joseph Niver was a young radical in the late '20s, who tried to get a literary magazine called Earth going in Chicago in that period and the early '30s. It published one of James R. Farrell's early pieces, also Sterling North and a bunch of people who never achieved fame. The issues of Earth have been reprinted a year or so ago, and it makes fascinating reading. Anyway, in the Fall of 1977 I was enroute to a conference, and after having spent the day working at Chicago Historical, I was enroute out to O'Hare from downtown. A man got on the bus just after it left the hotel downtown, and since the bus was full and he was overloaded and looked tired, I gave him my seat (before you confer sainthood remember that I had been sitting all day). He was Joseph Niver. He began trying to start up a conversation, and I finally yielded, and found his interest in history, his knowledge of radical Chicago of the '30s, and similar points fascinating. I chatted with him briefly in the airport about Earth before he left. We kept up a loose correspondence, and exchanged Earth and Epic, and then he wrote that he would be in Chicago on business last weekend.

Niver had fled Chicago and gone into a sort of back-to-the-earth movement, settling on a farm in New York state where horses rather than tractors were used, no herbicides, etc. He has not really kept touch with Chicago much, except that when he decided to try to get some of his attic materials (like old copies of Earth) reprinted, he had to look up some people. He apparently has many other old magazines there, including The Artisan and one put out by Walt Whitman's old friend Traubel. He went out to meet Traubel's grave after I left him last Monday. He is an ideological communist, still stuck to the IWW's ideas but not really doing much about it. He has had some success with the family furniture polish business, so perhaps lives with the contradictions of being a capitalist and IWW sympathizer. It was fun to argue with someone who disagrees so sharply, and I had to stop and readjust myself several times to not be hurt by his sharp comments. He pressed me on my own political beliefs, and then he inscribed a gift copy of an original issue of Earth with the words: "To Mark Wyman—whom I love even though he is a liberal democrat."

Niver's son came along, just out of the Navy. I was surprised that he did not share his old man's political radicalism, and perhaps that is a tribute to a father who believes in independent thinking. It was a bit of a shock to me, though, to question Niver Jr. about his life plans, and discover that they were nothing more than to settle down on a subsistence farm, with solar heat and power and eventually raising everything he needed to live. Quite a contrast with his counterparts at Northwestern and Wisconsin just two decades ago who dreamed of travel to distant places, who sought to help the world's unfortunates, and who began struggling at the bottom of the ladder to take on the powers of the press and of politics. (I'm not saying that these dreams ever led very far—just pointing out the dreams themselves.)
Thanks for your comments on Epic. Few people have read it, few will. It is not that kind of a book, it seems. I have gotten one review, from the Kirkus people. They do call it "grim and compelling", but also state that "Wyman is more balanced and pedestrian in his economic and political analysis than Big Bill Haywood fans might wish..." Do I look like a pedestrian? That kind of review will kill the thing. Since June 25 was (finally) the official release date, I am wondering if some of the excerpts I prepared might be appearing in Western newspapers soon, as well as reviews. If you should see any please send them on, although since UCAl was so quick about Kirkus I presume they'll be equally quick about others.

I am taking your comment—that you "wanted more Wyman in the book"—to heart as I continue working on my immigrant book. It will be scholarly, without a doubt, but do want to try to pare it down and smooth it out to make it as readable as possible. In Chicago I talked to someone upstairs at a big Kroch's and Brentano's store about their advice on a publisher, and they showed me like I was a nut. First she reeled off the names of some of the major publishers, and then when I pressed her she suggested Southern Illinois University Press. An antiquarian bookseller suggested Northern Illinois University Press because—he said—it might get lost in the many massive list put out by U of Chicago! Having just read the Saturday Review piece on B. Dalton, Bookseller, I am quite dismayed about the whole bookselling racket. I realize now why I love to go in used bookstores, but just walk in and out of places like Kroch's and Brentano's.

I had a pleasant discovery at the Normal Public Library the other day: there was House of Sky, in the new book section! I assure you I have no pull with librarians, and had not mentioned it to them (although perhaps I should have); not needed—they bought it on their own. If Normal is doing it, then thousands of similar libraries all over the country are doing it. So go out and buy that new pair of imported Norwegian hiking boots.

It was wrong of me to spring the word "bodacious" on you. I apologize. That is a Wisconsin fishing term, as: "The bass are very bodacious tonight." "The sunnies are not too bodacious today."

The immensity of the Holocaust continues to come and hit me—us—when we least expect it. I am often struck by the thought that we are wrong to focus on the 5 million or 6 million gassed; rather, it was the tearing up of lives that came from it, the uprooting from place to religion and tradition. Now comes a report from Eva's mother about Eva's aunt and uncle, from New Jersey, who were invited (along with several hundred other emigrants) back to Berlin by the West Berlin government, for some sort of festival or program. The uncle has gone once over the last couple of years, quite badly. Going back to Berlin apparently shook him so much that he wandered away from the hotel, was lost for two days, and finally a prostitute in a distant suburb called the police to come and get the old man. When they brought him in he was talking about having had a nice supper with his mother (died at Auschwitz) and his brother (died right after the war), but he didn't like how the Nazis had come to take him (the police?). He went on and on in this vein. What other stories from the Berlin gathering? It is really too seaward for our imaginations to handle, just as we cannot comprehend 6 million gassed and so we say it as lightly as we would order a strawberry malt.

Now some of our friends (the ones Carol kindly sent information to) appear to be moving to Bellingham. In 20 years the entire country will be lined up on the Pacific shores. Will you move to Montana then?

The best to you both—

Mark

Did you send off 100 pp of Swan yet?
Dear Mark--

Have been struggling all week toward time enough to write a letter to you, and it's finally arrived this Friday afternoon. Meant to include a note with the Who Owns the West poster, but a chance to mail that occurred before my note did. I don't, incidentally, expect you to hang the poster above the mantelpiece or some such; the U of Montana guys gave me an extra, and I thought you'd get a kick out of seeing it, is all.

More on Montana anon. I should say first that I do indeed have a copy of HR Epic, and I think it was my doing rather than yours. I know I cornered some U of Cal guy at the Pacific NW Booksellers convention here last fall, asking about your book and urging that some review copies really be sent around. I think he put my name while he was at it, probably to get rid of me. Anyway, I have been through Epic, loved your anecdotal-type material, admired your research and the scholarly divvy of your topics, and don't have the expertise to say much more than that. I once in a while felt I wanted more Wyman in the book, but on the other hand, it's nice to encounter somebody who lets the material do its own talking. I hope you feel the book is all, or at least 95%, of what you set out to do, because it seems to me to cover your topic copiously and scrupulously. By the way, what is the paperback prospect--might it not get some course use in labor history and the like?

Other book points while I think of them:

---Yes, hang UCAL about submitting the book for awards, and don't bother to apologize to them about it. They owe you some loyalty, as an author who has provided them a good book to print.

---In the middle of p. 30, the only mystification I came across, what are those Chinese doing "passing over ditches and woodpiles"?

---A possible review source for you is the Chronicle Review, of the Chronicle of Higher Education, 1333 New Hampshire Ave., NW, Wash. DC 20036. They tackle quite academic books sometimes, and in the last issue, Howard Lamar reviewed The Plains Across.

---All the pics were a good idea, and they're good pics. Do the same next time.

So, now it's on to the next one--miners to missionaries? There is a map of a good man gone wrong if I ever heard one; I'll know the brethren have really taken you over if you piously break the bottle in my hand the next time I offer you a drink.

Have been wanting to get to the typewriter to tell you of our Missoula excursion. It came about unexpectedly, the phone ringing a night or so after we got home from Britain and on the other end Bill Kittredge, a U. of Montana English prof and short-story writer I'd met last fall. Wanted me to come to their conference, Who Owns the West?, the neat end of the next week. "Aye, the hell, Bill, I'm just back from Britain and got all this stuff to do..." He broke in to say, "We already got A.B. Guthrie and Norman Maclean." Silence from me, then "I'll do 'er." I don't know whether you know Maclean's wonderful novella* of Montana, A River Runs Through It, but most of us out here in the tulips think it the best single piece of writing about Montana, and one of the
best ever; Maclean retired as an English prof at U. of Chicago 7 years ago and then, at age 70, took up writing (shows there's hope for you academics). So I was curious to meet him because of his wonderful story—In fact, I am hard-pressed to think of anyone else, writer or not, I much give a damn about meeting. And I was curious about Guthrie for another reason: as I was huckstering Sky around Montana last fall, I found bookseller after bookseller who was shy of writers because they'd had Guthrie come for an autographing appearance and he turned up drunk, fell out of his chair, etc. So I was fairly ticked off about him, and couldn't believe he'd be sober through a f-day conference. As it turned out, of course, he not only was sober but was a fine curmudgeonly soul, during one session leading us in attack on them Eastern writers: "Donald Bar-thel-meese; now what are those stories of his in The New Yorker ABOUT? Nor-man Mail-ler..."

The conference had its serious side, which I did not much contribute to: much talk about Montana's future as it sits atop a world of coal, which also happens to demand a world of water, for instance. Historians did not figure in it very much; Alvin Josephy and Frederick Nash had both canceled out late. Ross Toole of the UMontana dept. did run a session, and while I'm told his history isn't so great, he's a terrific pitchman, maybe in the mode you once described Brooks Dury. Fun to watch. Ditto a Flathead tribal council member named Bearhead Swaney, who is a Seventies' version of what Tom Wolfe called Man-mauing the Flak-catchers. But what interested me was the tribal feeling (non-Flathead) of the affair. It became a genuine celebration of Montana writers and writing. The first night, there were readings by Richard Hugo and Fredric DeFrees of the UMontana faculty—both fine poets, and wonderful readers. Next night, readings by Guthrie and Dorothy Johnson (The Hanging Tree; Man Called Horse; The Bloody Bozeman)—a kind of requiem for those two, both in their late 70's, both having taught out long careers at the typewriter. Guthrie read a section, I can't recall whether it's from Inside Arche or Last Valley, about the small-town editor showing up the visiting Red-beater. It is not a good piece of his work, but it obviously meant much to him, and as Carol said, you could see the good man behind the words. I was told that Guthrie in his prime days as a writer had never been invited to the university, even when he lived in Missoula much of the time, so it meant a good deal to all of us to see him back a bit now. Then I read to start an afternoon session, and that night, Maclean read from River and Jim Welch, a Blackfeet-Cree Ventre, read from his new novel coming out from Harper & Row. What makes Missoula interesting is that except for Welch, none of the town's real working writers—Kittredge, Rick Delaridie, Jim Crowley—participated much, just welcomed us expatriates and bought us drinks as we all admired one another.

So, we were parochial as hell for a few days, and it felt good. I met a number of students, and townpeople, out of lives similar to mine, and liked it that I could still be comfortable with them, having written about their place of the landscape. Also, I learned a bunch, especially from hearing Maclean talk a bit about River, and came home writing hard.

Which is what I've got to do for the next month steady. The tedious flackery, as you so unkindly but aptly put it, in our Skirish alumnus sheet was off in its deadline news—it's the end of June, not the 1st, that I owe the publisher 100 pages. Much time to be spent with Sean. Meanwhile, the dishes will have piled to the ceiling at 507 N. School, the twins and Dan will have put themselves up for adoption, and Eva will return home to a grateful town of Normal. Try to survive till then.
Dear Ivan and Carol,

You know that I uncork a letter to you only when I feel a breather and can look over a cleared desk; I am at such a point now, with a mammoth chapter on the missionary influx now put away. But Ivan, at least, will probably not have time to look at this letter, for various clues indicate he is rushing to complete a section of his Swan song.* Still, the letter can be filed away for reading at a more leisurely time, like the Christian Science Monitor or The Times of London.

Thanks a hundred-fold to both of you for your recent correspondence. As I explained, Carol, John Kladik is not a close friend of mine, but his wife and Eva are good friends and I wanted to help him if I could. It seems you are doing quite a bit and I thank you for that; I hope he thanks you too. I'm sure he is a competent financial aide officer or I would not have bothered to help him; and they are such outdoor types that they would thrive out in the Pacific Northwest.

Ivan's letter brought me up to date on your British month, and it impressed me with what complete travelers you both are. Nothing of the tour bus for you—straight to the pubs and the libraries, and up the hills and into some of the most off-beat locales. And from your report on Scotland I can see the next Dig epic taking shape, and it should be a dandy!

We here are batching it for three weeks while Eva goes over to visit her parents in Bonn and Hamburg for three weeks. We took her to O'Hare yesterday, and now must adjust to life without momma. I have it all organized, of course, with lists, and schedules, and plans, but nothing takes the place of Eva's sensitivity. The kids miss her, and I suspect that tonight we will see a repeat of what happened last year when she was gone two weeks—when little Miriam came to crawl into bed with me night after night, around 2 a.m. She never does that when Eva is here, and I think she just does not get the affection that Eva provides her. Anyway, we are here struggling on; on June 1 we'll go up to River Falls for a week before returning just in time to pick Eva up in Chicago again.

I have been reading away on occasion at William Humphrey's The Ordways. Since Ivan has read every book ever published I won't bother to ask whether you know the book. I heard parts of it read over the public radio station's "Chapter a Day" when we were in Madison in 1965-66; I think the show came on at lunch time because I can remember washing dishes and listening to it, fascinated. Now, perhaps 13 years later, I picked up a copy of the book at a thrift shop and am getting into it. The reason I mention it at all is that I am struck by the similarities with House of Sky, especially in writing style and in organization. How close are you to it/him? Not at all?

* The clues are contained in a recent card from wife Carol, and in a bit of bodacious flackery in the recent U-Wash alumni handout.
Enclosed for the enlightenment of you on yon Pacific’s shores is a xerox copy of an address to the American Home Missionary Society in 1853. As I read it, I suddenly realized that I have been teaching history incorrectly for eight years! And Carstensen, Dad, Morrison and Commager, Bestor, Merle Curti, Genovese and all the rest have been wrong, too! I sent a copy of this speech also to Carstensen, assuming that he will get address lists of all his former students and send them copies immediately. It certainly will make my teaching easier from here on out. I assume that it will simplify your writing on historical subjects.

My next target in the immigrant book is a chapter on the reformers’ interactions with the immigrants on Sabbath desecration, the public school question, and possibly some others. It should be a lighter chapter than that missionary one. I looked through a survey of immigration history today and was struck with what a different way of writing history I have. I bury myself in all the original documents I can find, checking secondary stuff after seeing the originals, producing a manuscript that (I’ll admit) is heavy on quotes and examples. After this book, however, I think I’ll move on to some different projects—such as historical novels, or something else which for me will be like heading for another planet.

I got a book review list from U Cal Press recently, and for some reason they have your name on it. So I assume that they’ll be sending you a copy, although whether you’re expected to review it or not I am unsure. I don’t even know where they got your address, for I can’t remember ever sending it. The only time I mentioned your name to them was when I wrote about your suggestions regarding publishing excerpts.

So if you haven’t gotten a copy by the 4th of July, please let me know and yours will be fleeting its way to you posthaste. They keep giving me a different publication date: once it was April, then June 10, now June 25.

I keep checking the catalogues from publishers’ overstock, to see if perhaps they just shipped their copies of Epic directly there. But we’ll see. Nothing has happened on that book for so long that I have almost forgotten it. The publicity girl at Berkeley wrote me (in response to my query) that they had replies from no newspaper—not nobody—on the excerpts. But she said that this might mean they were just checking the book, which had also been mailed to each, and since publication was not until the end of June they had time to wait.

I also wrote U Cal—completely burying all humility—about whether they would be submitting it for any awards. When I see their massive catalogue I am reluctant to ask any special treatment for Epic, but I went ahead anyway, assuring them that I was not pressuring them but that if they were not going to submit it for any of the competitions I listed, I would consider submitting it myself. Nothing from them on that.

Did you happen to catch the review of Hanta Yo in The Nation? It is by one of the Indian ethnologists, and he really hits the book hard, on specific points about Indian life and about the broad view of the book. I was quite surprised, after the preparation and painstaking care that seem to have gone into the book. I have not read the book yet but expect to.
We are here discussing what we can do to cut down our gas consumption this summer. We will outlaw all of our customary rides over to the swimming pool (3 blocks) in late afternoon; and the little girls will have to walk to summer school (8 blocks) in good weather. If we had connections in Chicago we might try to go up to River Falls in train, but we miss connections on Amtrak by an hour or so. I am glad the debate is finally shifting to how can we use less gasoline, away from the search for the culprit — who's got the oil?

Which leads me to the subject of leadership. I honestly feel that the American people have within them a tremendous capacity to respond to any crisis. But to do that they need to have the issues presented to them clearly, forcefully, and in a way that moves them spiritually. FDR did that and a confused, muddled nation suddenly became one crusading to turn back the Depression. I feel that lack terrifically now, but see no one on the horizon who can fill the leadership void. Perhaps Teddy.

And this in turn makes me think about language, and how it is being desecrated on all hands now. In a report on the Canadian election campaign one of the reporters quoted JFK's speech to the Canadian Parliament, in which he had a phrase on how the US and Canada were linked together historically, economically, etc. I'm sorry I can't quote it, but it was an elegant statement, all the better because it summed up beautifully some larger truths. And it made me pause; there was just one JFK phrase — how many of Carter's will ever live? What banality we have coming at us from all sides now! The business world is as bad as the politicians; that has always been true, but somehow I notice it more now. Our university administration — as everywhere else — deals with problems by trying to finesse them through public relations.

So hail to the Doigs! They are students of the language, using it accurately, creatively, and beautifully. You use language as part of your search for truth and meaning. Arthur Koestler spoke of that in his speech in London to the PEN organization in 1976; I have a copy and occasionally take it out although right now I can't locate the complete thing. Here is what I copied on a note from that: "Every great artist has an element of the explorer in him; the poet does not 'manipulate words' as the behaviorists would have it, he explores the emotive and descriptive potentialities of language; the painter is engaged, throughout his life, in learning to see." (Times of London, Aug. 25, 1976, p. 7.)

Anyway, hail to thee.

Mark
charge. They will avail themselves of our political divisions; and the party that would have their votes, may soon find that they can be had at no less a price than the surrender of our free schools. And who can say, looking at the past, who dare say, that no party in this country will consent to pay that price? Here is the source of their strength, and of our danger.

Mr. President, with these startling facts pressing upon our notice, it is evident that Rome is gathering up her mighty energies and preparing herself for some great move in that stupendous game she is playing for empire. What that move is to be, is among the things yet future. I do not say that the final struggle, the last decisive battle foretold in prophecy, is at hand. I will not call it “the time of the end;” and yet it may be the “beginning of the end.” It is obvious that we are coming into closer quarters with the enemy; we are encountering a more incessant activity, a more effective discipline and concentration of forces; the contest thickens; and we are to expect harder work than we have had in time past.

If this be so, I submit whether we do not need a reinforcement of men, of means, and of the spirit of Christ; whether we ought not to throw into this cause a holier enthusiasm, and prosecute it with greater singleness of purpose. I have spoken of increasing difficulties and dangers, not to discourage, but to stimulate. There is nothing in all this to appall the heart that leans upon Omnipotence. Christian faith mans itself in view of difficulties; it gathers courage in the face of dangers. But the dangers must be seen, the difficulties must be felt, or nothing will be done to meet the emergency. To encourage men forward by the promise of a peaceful work, when they are certain to meet the iron hail of a deadly opposition, is to put the whole cause in jeopardy. Let us look calmly at the worst aspects of the case; and we shall learn, in the first place, our weakness—the indispensable step towards victory; and we shall learn, in the next place, where our strength lies. Caleb and Joshua saw the giants, as well as the ten spies who brought an evil report. But they also saw what the ten did not see, the God of the giants! And that is what made the difference between them and their brethren. That was why the one trembled and fled, while the other stood calm and firm; saying, “Fear them not, we be well able to go against this people, for the Lord is with us.” And, Sir, what is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? What is there in the terror of his voice, in the height of his stature, in the swell of his muscles, or in the force of his weapons, to intimidate men who are in league with Omnipotence? The word of faith, in the mouth of some youthful David, may easily bring his pride and power to the ground. Oh, Sir, we have no want of resources; they are ample, if we will only use them. And can we fail to draw upon those resources in such a day as this? With the dread note of warlike preparation from the hostile camp ringing in our ears; with the portents of some great decisive battle thickening upon our sky; with such a country to save; with the destinies of the world at issue; shall we not strengthen ourselves in God, and gird ourselves for a more earnest and vigorous prosecution of the war? Let the sacramental host move at once, and move together, and move in the name and strength of the Lord, and they will move to a certain and glorious victory.

Mr. President, we are urged to such efforts by most animating encouragements. We feel that we are working in coincidence with the divine plan, as indicated in many an illustrious chapter of our history. Why, Sir, did God preserve this whole country more than a century after its discovery, for the English race, turning the foot of the Spaniard to the sunny regions of the tropics? Why did he induce Columbus, just before making land, to veer a few points southward, so that, instead of striking the coast of Florida, as he would have done, had he adhered to his original purpose of sailing due West, he struck the West India Islands? Why did God keep this great country from the English, until they had renounced the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff? And why did he keep it from the Protestants until they had purged the reformed faith from its still remaining Romish tendencies? Why did he wait until he had sifted three Protestant kingdoms for the precious seed wherewith to plant this western world? Why did he hold in check for two centuries the emigration of Papists and Infidels to this country, until the goodly vine transplanted, had taken root and grown strong, and filled the land with her boughs and her fruit? Why did he blast every attempt of the Spaniards to colonize the Valley of the Mississippi? Why, when La Salle, upwards of one hundred and seventy years ago, had taken possession of the whole country, from the mouth of the Illinois to the gulf of Mexico, politically in the name of Louis the Great, and spiritually in the name of the Church of Rome: and when, a few years after, the French
attempted to realize the design of La Salle, by erecting a chain of forts through Peoria and Vincennes, towards the Southwest, building chapels and celebrating mass in the same—why did God drive them from every one of those posts and defeat their well-laid scheme? Why did he compel Napoleon the First to relinquish his cherished design of founding a French empire west of the Mississippi, by so embarrassing his affairs at home, that he was obliged to sell the whole territory to us for purposes of revenue? In fine, why were the immense treasures of California hidden from all the world, even from the keen-scented Spaniard, until she was annexed to this Republic? And tell me, if any one can, why was it that the title deed of transference had no sooner passed into our hands, than she gave up her mighty secret, and unlocked her golden gates? Is it possible not to see the hand of God in all this? Who can believe that a country, over which divine Providence has thus kept watch and ward for three and a half centuries, is to be given up after all to the superstitions of Rome? No, Sir, from these remarkable interpositions we gather the joyful assurance that God has reserved this broad land as an appropriate theatre for such a development of Christianity as the world has never seen. We believe that he has given the whole of it to his Son, that here he may achieve the most signal triumphs of his Gospel; that he is to gather together, in one, all peoples and languages, fuse them into common brotherhood, raise them to a more exalted manhood, and stamp upon them his own divine image. Hence, this exodus of the nations. When was there ever a simultaneous movement from all parts of the earth, tending to, and terminating in, one and the same land, but God was about to make some new and magnificent display of his providence or his grace? So, we doubt not, it is to be in the present instance. We believe that this endless stream of immigration will not inure to the advantage of Satan, but to the unprecedented enlargement and glorification of the kingdom of Christ. But we also believe that this is to be accomplished through the instrumentality of his people. And the surest indication that the end is to fail, will be the failure of the appropriate means. Here, then, is the great work of Home Missions. We are to supply this whole territory with the preached Gospel; to meet these swelling millions, as they pour into that theatre of our country’s future greatness, with the influences of a pure Christianity; upon that young and forming character, to stamp the image of Christ so that no after changes shall be able to efface it; to give a direction to those gathering and growing energies, so that no subsequent revolution shall ever entirely divert them from the support of good government and sound religion; to save the West for the sake of the nation; and the nation for the sake of the world; to win for our Lord a field on which he may reap his richest harvests; a field where his Spirit may breathe on three hundred millions of hearts, bound together by one government and one language; a field from whose countless churches shall ascend on each Sabbath morning, such an anthem of praise as never yet rose from earth to heaven; an anthem which, whether it mingles with the loud waves of the Atlantic, with the deafening roar of Niagara, with the thunder-voiced chorus of the great central valley, with the gentle breezes of the South, or is prolonged in majestic echoes on the Pacific, bears aloft the same familiar tongue, the same sweet refrain, the same precious theme, the same new song—The Song of Moses and the Lamb!

Missionary Intelligence.

OREGON.

From Rev. H. Lyman, Portland.

Portland is the only place where I have preached regularly, though I have preached at two other places occasionally. The number of our church is 20; nine of whom are females. The average attendance on public worship is 70 or 80 the extremes, perhaps, 35 and 250.

Many among the improvident have at times seemed seriously disposed, but I cannot with any positiveness report any conversions among us. Only one has been added to the church by profession; five have joined us by letter.

Our Sabbath school and Bible class have been quite variable in numbers.
A Sunday morning p.s.: Didn't get your letter into the mail yesterday and the weather isn't decent enough for work on the Innis Arden homestead this morning, so I'll add a bit about items you brought up.

read

About The Ordways: no, for some reason I have not that one of Humphrey's, although I remember liking his Home from the Hill (?), and every few years I re-read his short stories, A Time and a Place. I seem to remember, years ago, starting in on The Ordways, then either getting distracted or put off by something in it, and the book vanished in a clean-out. I must give it another chance, and will, soon. Anyway, I'm not consciously close to Humphrey, although I consider it a compliment to be considered so.

Hanta Yo: Yes, I saw the Nation review. Carol and I have a curious, second-hand sort of connection to Ruth Beebe Hill, in that the husband of one of the Shoreline librarians took the jacket photo—that is, the author's mug—for the book, so we began hearing scuttlebutt fairly early on. I have to say I'm not much interested in the book, or almost any other massive block-busting novel; I may be the last American who has neither read nor seen Roots, for instance. Ditto with Ragtime, Centennial, Chesapeake, you name it. My interests and reading time simply go elsewhere. One thing about Hanta Yo that made me uneasy at the start, and that's Hill's announcement that it began when she came across—what was it, an elkhide or something—with the storyline photographed on it? Something like that, anyway. Geaii-like finds of that sort usually make me reach for my wallet to be sure it's still in place. But other than that, which could be simply a case of publicity delirium tremens, I would hope that she did as thorough a job of research as she claims; I just dunno.

best
Dear Ivan,

It behooves one who values friendship to repay newish letters 'ere they turn yellow. There was your July letter, waiting to be answered on my desk, and then came the good postcard from Ketchikan, and now the full report. So thanks. Actually, the contrast between our summers only reinforces my conclusion that this has been the worst summer of my life. Teaching summer school here is no fun because of the pressure combined with the area's negative characteristics of summer heat and mugginess; and then this was about the hottest summer in this region's history, and certainly was the hottest in all my memories. (Previous worst summer: 1959, when I worked on the Reedsburg Times-Press, a weekly about 60 miles NW of Madison. That was made worse than it might have been because I was so bent on adventure then—in 1956 and 1957 I had spent summers in Oregon and Idaho with the USFS; in 1958 I worked in Southern France at a workcamp. The following summer, 1960, I went to Turkey. Reedsburg was the odd-man out in that pantheon of summers.) And so to read of Alaska, and the exhilaration of it all, caused some brooding here, which only reinforces my desire to flee next summer to the West, hopefully to link up with the Doigs somehow. (Why West? A friend asked. I can only explain that my feeling of real adventure has always been linked to going West. I enjoy Scotland, and I dream of visiting the Far East, but only the West gives that sense of adventure. Perhaps I am only reliving my youth, a rather dangerous road to begin traveling at my age.)

I had a nice, honest letter from Treadgold at UW, and actually it wasn't as bad as I had feared. He said things don't look very good for me, because they have just barely been able to employ all the regular staff seeking summer work for a few summers. (That has happened here, too; inflation is the cause.) He said that Hunt worked at Yosemite this summer, and perhaps will do so next summer. (I assume that would help my cause.) He hopes to have word for me in October or November. I will try to write Mike Malone in a few weeks, and talk with him at the WHA meeting in Kansas City Oct. 18th.

The manuscript is still unpublished, but I am quite un-discouraged thanks to your report on the travail of your ms. Knopf didn't want to see it; Simon & Schuster read it and rejected it as too specialized; and now I am waiting for others to respond. I send a letter, a sheet with a chapter outline, and a sheet with juicy quotes from Havighurst and Greely. I somehow have not yet mailed off a raft of letters to various publishers—my ethics must have been learned in the cradle, or at my mother's knee (or other joints). But I vow that in about a month if my favorite publishers have not responded, I will write ten at the same time, then deal on first-come first-serve (if anyone comes). After that I will move to the Midwest: Follett in Chicago, the new VanZandtms in Michigan, then I suppose U of Illinois Press where it probably belongs.

I appreciate all your comments on this process. When—if—I get this thing published I am going to feel like the most experienced writer around.

Enclosed is a copy of a New Yorker poem I ran across in some folders here. It was given to me when I was a TA in Pacific NW history at UW in 1971. The giver was an old, gentle, white-haired lady named Margaret Stapleton, and I valued her friendship very much in that course. I thought you might enjoy the poem too.
Just when you revel some of the truth about trade publisher editing, Time breaks out with its own expose of how bad the editing has become. This has been obvious for some time; we have all been noting the spelling and grammar problems, and the factual slips. As I wrote earlier, the UCal editor seemed a young English grad who didn't know much of the West, but I think his spelling and grammar were good, probably much better than mine. It sounds like the situation is worse among the big NY publishers. Did you know anyone mentioned in the Time piece?

Poor Harry Yost. He is my old Oregon trail crew boss, who worked for the Oregon State Patrol for some years before moving to Alaska, where he tried to farm at Palmer and failed in the dry summer of a few years back. He and his previously-widowed wife cast about for cheap farmland and chose Wisconsin, convenient to her family in northern Illinois. So they live on 20 acres a few miles from the Merrimac Ferry, north of Madison an hour or so; and they raise chickens and a pig, and all kinds of garden truck, and Harry commutes to a tractor mechanic's job in Sauk City. He is bored with that "flat land" (actually it is wonderfully hilly), and increasingly seems bored with the people. He keeps talking with people who are content. He asked me, when we called on them early last summer, what I thought of young men who had no ambition to travel to some other place. I answered that I didn't think much of them—but didn't mention that I am seeing how different I was, and Yost was, and Doig was and is, for while people will move when their corporation transfers them I just don't see many pushing out with the excitement that an 18-year-old feels pushing away from home to a distant job. Or am I just—again—trying to relive my youth? Harry, I predict, will return to Alaska before many months pass.

While school was on this summer I couldn't do much more than think about my next writing projects. At the lake for a week I did more thinking, and now I have done a little preliminary reading and poking about. I want to get several projects going, involving different kinds of writing. I want a Mississippi Valley project, and have about settled on something centering on the lead region of Wis-Ill-Iowa, perhaps a social-economic-political history from Indiana times up through the latter 19th Century. The region was tremendously important, causing the name of both Wisconsin and Illinois ("badgers" because of the small caves dug in the hillsides; "suckers" because the migrating miners arrived from the southern part of the state each spring, like migrating suckers in the rivers), and stimulating transportation and political developments. It has been studied, but always within each state's boundaries; the major book is The Wisconsin Lead Region. I'm sure the scope will change but I think I might like to launch that one; it might get me a summer research grant for 1981, anyway. Other ideas are only vague and so I'll not pop them on you now, not until I have done a bit more thinking. As it is, I'm saved up for two months—this month I have to write an article on "Mining Law in Idaho" for a special issue of the Idaho Yesterdays journal, and in October I must put together a paper on my immigrants and the religious questions, for a December conference in Springfield. So my research time will be limited for awhile.

Again, thanks for the Alaska report. I suppose you arranged for your canoe outfitting—so many peanut-butter sandwiches, wrapped in such-and-such a way. I'm presuming Carol will accompany you—that is just too far to canoe, especially in winter, without someone to help spell you when the wind gets in your face. Better re-read Kon Tiki. What Doig will do for realism!

The best to you —

Mark
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Probably Ivan is stuck in a cabin in the Olympics right now, buried under tons of Spring snow. I will trust Carol to deliver this, and at least when the letter burns in the woodstove it will paradoxically provide some warmth.

I went up to Garrett Seminary at Northwestern last Friday and Saturday, got beaucoup material on the Methodists, and even worked late Friday night in their tri-towered library. It looked too new to have been one of your contemporaries—right? It was a bad weekend to hit the campus—very cold, and dour (to use one of Ivan's favorite words), with not many students about and not very much going on. I stayed in a little wing off the Garrett library, which was just perfect. Friday evening when I shuffled over to the union before going to the NU library, I had that sense of Friday afternoon exhilaration, which I used to feel during my undergraduate days (but not my graduate days) at Wisconsin. It's Friday! The week is done! Tomorrow morning I can sleep late, plug away at weekend chores, go out Saturday night. Of course, that was not what I did on Friday night and Saturday at Northwestern, but I could sense that exhilaration in some of the students tripping around as darkness swept its shades over the lake.

Yes, I had known that Northwestern was on the lake, but I never realized it. The whole campus. It must be beautiful in nice weather. Now I see why Ivan was always so put off by Washington's lack of architectural exploitation of its lake. On Saturday morning I presumed I could get breakfast in the Union, so I walked along the lakeshore nearby for a bit, looking for evidence of the Digs. All I found were ancient writings on the rocks, probably left by a previous civilization: "ROB - I'LL DO IT FOR YOU", and "FREDIE, THE EMOTIONS YOU AROUSE IN ME MUST BE MARKETABLE," and so on. No "Ivan Loves Carol" anywhere—no scrawled "I MISS MON TANA." Then when I went into the Union I was told the cafeteria didn't open until 9 a.m.—clear evidence that there are no farmboys attending NU anymore. So I found my way across campus to a deli on Clark Street, which advertised a bunch of Jewish products and was tended by a young man wearing an enormous star of David around his neck. I imagined that you two must have dropped in there often.

In fact, as I walked around, and as I went to the El stop Saturday evening to begin my trek home to Bloomington, I kept sensing the ghosts that abound on that campus. For I have known many NU grads over the years—Dave Mazie, Jerry Kirschbaum, Dick Steele, Jackie Andre Schmeel, and a few others just in Minneapolis. I would gaze at boarding houses and wonder if that was the one where Ivan and his cohorts became known for their football antics. I ate a pizza at "The Spot," right by the El stop, and it was so pleasant to sit in a good restaurant, in a student atmosphere that was somehow not the loud, raucous type we have locally; and again I could picture Ivan and Carol coming by late one night after studying or attending some campus event.

I found Ivan's book is all the rage there. I was prepared to find the journalism building re-named Dig Hall, but what I was not ready for was "Digburgers" for sale in the Union!
So the research goes on. I have now finished four rough draft chapters, and today will start my extra reading for Chapter 5. I am a bit more than one chapter behind my original schedule at this point—not too bad for me, I guess, although May is going to be quite shot through with interruptions. My folks will be here over a week, for Dad's 50th class reunion May 5, and ISU commencement a week later where he is to be honored alumnus. Then Eva flies to Germany May 20 for a 2 3-week stay with her parents. I will make no more overnight trips, but hope to get to the U of I once or twice more before summer, and perhaps to the State Historical Library in Springfield. Two nights ago I drove up to Sterling on the Rock River, 130 miles from here, and talked to an enthusiastic crowd of genealogists. I think that they constitute a large market for my eventual book.

And it occurred to me that there is quite a contrast provided by them: on one hand, I keep hearing and reading about the decline of History in the universities. Our enrollments in history classes must be down at least 50% since I came here in 1971, and it seems about the same story everywhere. And then I realize that these local genealogical groups are all booming, books on "roots" activities are best-sellers, and I pick up the Illinois Labor History Society newsletter and read of a myriad of walking tours of labor history sites, photo exhibits, evening dinners with people who were important at various key points in Illinois labor history, and publication of multifarious guides to various sites, and painting of murals in some communities where labor history is depicted. So I don't believe there is declining interest in history. It's just that the academics are not sharing in the boom. How do we share in it? I am not a very original thinker, so I have no ideas other than to offer courses on some of these "practical history" aspects; but I think that more and more we'll have to leave the classroom.

I suppose the big news is that I finally got an advance copy of Hard-Rock Epic. It is a good-looking printing job, and when my friends page through it they are struck by all the pictures. I had never thought that any copies would be sold locally, but several people have signalled their intention to buy one—I suppose many people like to have a book written and autographed by someone they know. The California people will now send me my copies, and so within a few weeks a little bundle of mining history should be on your doorstep. Since we can assume that anything Wyman and Big write is good, why don't we from now on limit our comments on each other's books by spelling out how each would have written the other's book? How would you have approached Hard-Rock Epic? More visits to mines? More writing on the sense of the environment? Let me know.

The California people have never told me what has happened to the excerpts I sent them. They called after I wrote about your suggestions, and so I then prepared excerpts for Denver Post, Reno newspaper, Westways (a San Francisco publication I'm unfamiliar with), the National Automobile Club's Western Oriented magazine, American West, and Montana, Magazine of Western History. I told the girl that I didn't send the Montana one as the sort of place we wanted, but she said she though it was, and so I complied with an excerpt on the union movement's beginnings there, or something. But I have no word on whether she even submitted my excerpts to them, or whether any have been accepted or not. The Literary Clipping services were so expensive that I was thankful to learn that publishers usually provide that. --Thanks for your help on that.
A colleague (a Carstensen Ph.D. from Wisconsin, Arlen Helgeson), told me this one that I thought you would enjoy: he once met a University of Chicago anthropologist who had been working extensively in Indian folk beliefs. The researcher had been with the Kiowa and Sioux all one summer, and had tried repeatedly to get them to tell their stories about how they were created, where their people came from, and so on. She did become friends with the headman's daughter, who finally told her that she would learn nothing unless she told the tribe her stories about these things. So the anthropologist began to first tell them some aspect of the Beowulf saga; then the headman would respond with one of their tales; then back to a recollection of Beowulf on the part of the researcher, then the Indians would tell one of their stories, and so forth. Things went well the rest of the researcher's stay there. But just before she was going to leave, another, younger, anthropologist arrived for some similar activities. She got to talk with him a bit before she left, introduced him around, and warned him that he would have to tell stories to the tribe if he expected to get anything out of them. Then she left. Several years later she happened on an article in an anthropological journal, written by that young researcher, on "Elements of the Beowulf Saga in the Folk Beliefs of the Kiowa and Sioux."

That's it for now. How do I feel about the book? As people warned me, by the time the copy is in your hands, you are worn out with proof-reading, indexing, &c. &c. I am happy, but actually I am so wrapped up in my immigrant story that I couldn't answer very many questions about Western mining if asked. As I glance over the book, however, I realize what a whale of a lot of research and work went into it, and I am satisfied that it will remain as one of the basic books on Western miners. That gives me a good feeling, although of course it might prove to be inaccurate. Anyway, there is some sense of jubilation here, especially when I see my colleagues who know what having a book published means.

And how is our friend Swan?

always,

Mark
1 May '79

Dear Mark--

So we have ventured to Britain, in what the poet warned us would be the cruelest month, and it was. Damp and cold virtually all of our four weeks there, with the singular exception of a shirtsleeve-warm Easter, when we and some tens of thousands of Londoners swarmed to Battersea Park to stand around and eat ice cream cones. We arrived back in Seattle night before last to 65-degree weather and felt as if we'd hit the tropics.

...But more travelogue anon. The welcomest news is that you hold Hard-Rock Epic in your hands. If it feels a little unfamiliar, perhaps the way an offspring would seem returning to School St. after the first semester away at college, you are perfectly in the mood of the working writer. Once this winter I encountered a friend at the U Book Store and he asked how the book was doing. Smell, I enthused, I had 30,000 words written, the research was marching along... He interrupted me with a baffled look to say he was asking about House of Sky. All I had on my mind, of course, was Swan. But all that aside--the sensation of the just-published book seeming a stranger, and the next-to-come being your true love of the moment--I hope you are enjoying to the fullest the fact of Hard-Rock at last coming out of its chrysalis into print. In the whisky cliche, there'll be never another moment quite like it for you. Truly, this household looks forward to its copy, to paging through the pictures, skimming the frontbook matter--I find myself fascinated by looking there to see where the writer had been for his research, who he's talked to, what librarians admitted him to what libraries--and at last settling in for the read.

I'm excited that you've been to Evanston; your report on Northwestern and environs was terrific. Yes, the Spot treated Carol and Ivan to pizza more than once, but as young magazine editors rather than students. I think it opened about my graduate year at Northwestern, and it was mama for exactly the reasons you found it: a reasonable, calm place, with decent food. That master's year of mine, I had untold wealth--a 32500 fellowship courtesy of the Chicago Trib--and in those uninflated days I spent the year eating like a king, freed at last of the four years of board-job dishwashing. One night it would be the Spot, another the frilly-grillwork restaurant of the Orrington Hotel for a steak(!), the next at a really wondrous cafe' called, I think, Michelle's, for its belt-busting French dip sandwiches and salads. But the real prize was the one you of course managed to single out, without even knowing its past. The deli on Clark Street at that time was called The Hut, and it was run on a 24-hour basis by two mythic figures named Hank and Irv. They were a classic pair, in the league of Blanchard and Davis, Abbott and Costello, yin and yang... Hank was jovial, avuncular, a bit of a pitchman; on his shift, The Hut echoed with him shouting orders the full length of the place to the kitchen. Irv was small, bristle-mustached, sarcastic. He was famous in those more genteel times for asking the co-eds, when they would order the Hut's famed chocolate donuts, whether they wanted 'em male or female--i.e., with or without nuts.
Latham House, where I lived, was the next building to the left of the Hut as you approached it—at 710 Clark. It long since has been torn down, but a colony of the NU ghosts you mention still haunt its air. Among them are not only Boig, but George McIver, a fellow Montanan of mine named John Prestbo, now a Wall Street Journal editor; movie actor Richard Benjamin; a Broadway singer named Ron Ragge who used to shake the whole house with his bass; and an Oscar Wilde-ish boy named Marshall Mason whom we snickered at and who has gone on to become a director at Lincoln Center. Benjamin-Ragge-Mason were all at Latham when I was, but so of course were the ghosts who don’t want into headlines. My best friend from that time, the best “student” I’ve ever known, in terms of being able to attack a course and come out with every jot and tittle of it in his head, is a high school teacher in the Midwest, and after a busted marriage and a fight with booze seems to be accepting that he is always going to be just what he is. Another Lathamite, who came from Scarsdale and had a sarcastic elegance I had never seen before, also has been battling the bottle, and scrabbling, still as sarcastic and elegant, from job to job.

Enough of old lang syne. Your two (11) letters of April 11 reveal you to be a secret reader of the NY BFÌeìe Review of Books, and a damned keen-eyed one at that. I don’t think I would have spotted the National Book Awards ad if you hadn’t told me. Anyway, you know of the nomination, and likely know by now that Sky did not win—Matthiessen’s Snow Leopards did, and it’s a noble book, the one I’m comfortable about having lost to. The NBA episode was fun while it lasted. Carstensen of course thought it was terrific entertainment, and spent twenty minutes on the phone speculating on my chances like a tout going through the Derby horses; it is part of that man’s immense value that his mind is so damned wide and alive. What a great pope he would have made. Anyway, he worked it out that my chances were 50-50, and the NY Times post-mortem isn’t far from that. To my bemusement, the Times presents Snow Leopard as another of the year’s upset winners, over the favorite—Meyer Schapiro’s book of art history—and the ”other important candidate,” House of Sky. The NBA stuff had a curious consequence for our trip to Britain. The date of the awards fell at the three-week point of our intended month or more in Britain, and when we arrived at Heathrow, we found the place only semi-functioning; air traffic controllers on slow-down, passport inspectors on sick-out and slow-down, etc. To insure that we’d be able to get to NY if Sky won, we had to arrange to pick come back to Heathrow, put up in the Holiday Inn, await the call from the publisher, then scurry to make final our reservations on the Concorde—the one plane we figured them British damn well would keep flying, whatever the strikes situation. Came then, of course, the letdown, and I found I was surprisingly despondent by the news. I hadn’t really thought Sky would win—I’m entirely an outsider in whatever literary politics are involved, and also westerners (exclude Californians, somewhat) simply don’t win NBA’s; that sounds like yahoo paranoia, I know, but the list of winners bears it out—and in a sense the nomination is more valuable to me than winning: a goodly portion of the glory, without the pressures and clamor of being the new fair-haired boy (uh, baldish middle-aged boy?). I think my reaction was like that of a finalist in a lottery: knowing full well that the winning ticket drawn by the person beside you is simply a wild bonus you had a chance at, but feeling the “loss” of perhaps never being that close to such a chance again. So I did spend a considerably glum evening, but found myself snapping out of it the next morning, and the last week of our trip was in some ways the most relaxed and pleasant.
We spent the first two weeks in London, and found it much dirtier and more bedraggled than in our sojourn of six years ago. The postal service was on semi-strike, the National Theatre stagehands were on strike, The Times was still in whatever limbo it's in, the city and people seemed wan from the harrowing winter they've had. Also, our first time on the underground, the train stalled for half an hour somewhere in the deepest bowels of London, and we both came out white with claustrophobia. For all that, a number of the virtues we went for did prove out. We saw some brilliant theatre, stuff which I think will trigger ideas in me as the theatre season of six years ago eventually enriched Sky and other things I've done since. Saw again all the favorite places we wanted; I managed to find a London agent to take on Sky--no mean feat, as two earlier ones and sundry British publishers have indolently told me that it's truly a magnificent book, first-rate, but...we don't think it will travel well. So the London weeks accomplished what we wanted. But we were more comfortable with the country in Scotland, where we spent the 3d week, and in and around Oxford, where we spent the 4th. Scotland is surprisingly prosperous and bustling, in the little Lowlands slice we saw; North Sea oil $$, no doubt. I did some extremely useful research in the National Library in Edinburgh; thought of you, on the trail of your missionaries, as I ploughed through dusty stuff. Spent much time with the Glasgow Herald of May, 1898, which is when the first of the Dois sailed for America on the Carthaginian. I have the family lore of what happened to those first-comers when they arrived in Montana and began trying to search out the homesteader—a brother-in-law—who would put them up for a while, and wanted to get some backdrop on the Scottish side of the trip; I'm still thinking of a Montana novel, set from about 1890 to the winter of 1919-20, and might cast the family lore into fiction to start it off. Anyway, the luck was good, in a macabre way. The Herald carries the story of a dockside incident, a horse and a dray of sugar plunging off the quay, the horse fighting free of all harness except the fatal collar, at last drowning before the milling onlookers...also, there was a big exposition in Glasgow at the moment, the Prince of Wales were there, and so were pickpockets, who filched from the secretary of the exposition his wallet, turnip watch, and...yes, his exposition ticket. Useful grist for a wordmonger, anyway, and I got more when we went up the coast to Carnoustie, which I now know is where my father's people lived. There is some scenery there for me to use, and lore from the little parish of Panbride. All in all, not a bad trove. On the personal side, I was surprised to find how close to the North Sea the family had lived—within sight of it for I don't know how many generations. The area over the horizon to the north, up beyond Arbroath, does begin to look like Montana ridges, but not the home ground near Carnoustie—long gentle slopes to the sea, none of the vigorous up-and-down landscape we've been in for the past 30 years.

Outside London and the other cities, Britain—at least England—still seems the green and pleasant land of the poets. I thought a lot this time about the historical fate that made this garden of an island into the first industrial power, and now maybe the first post-industrial refugee of a nation. Wondered what the country's fate could have been if it somehow had remained, say, a kind of Denmark. And would the populace, not to mention the historians, trade plump agricultural languor for the past Britain has had? Not answerable, I suppose.

And now, or at least tomorrow, it's back to being arm-in-arm with Swan. I left about 60 pages with the typist, and am eager to see how it looks. This is likely to be an odd book, perhaps a kind of interval in my work. I quite
like the material, and think the format will work, but it's not going to be House of Sky, and that alone probably will work against it. Also, it can't possibly match the reviews of Sky, so I had better keep reminding myself that the literary honeymoon is over. I suppose in a sense we're both off into new territory of life now; past 40—at least, I catch up with you in less than two months—and with our big works (the first big ones) newly in hard covers. I have a kind of sense of stepping across generational lines, which I suppose is no new thought in the world. Happily, I feel it professionally rather than physically; along with the wealth of pleasure since Sky's publication has been the luck of not getting the flu, or even a cold, for the first time in years, and I'm eager to begin running again, sweat off the pounds of bitter and Guinness. So, it seems a good time, a promising spring. I'm ready for the footrace with you on our next books. And it's time I closed this and let us both get on with it. Best to Eva, and we wish her a happy time in Germany. When are we going to see you out here again?

very best

p.s. I much liked the tale of Beowulf among the Sioux. Swen taught the Nakabs how to paint dragons and griffins.
807 N. School St.,
Normal, Ill. 61761
April 11, 1979

Dear Ivan,

Now comes the afternoon mail, and as I casually glance through the New York Review of Books I spot the National Book Awards advertisement. And there is Ivan Big! This is wonderful, wonderful, and yet again wonderful! I am very proud for you, Ivan. You have really hit it big, and you have done it by maintaining your integrity, concentrating on your careful, skillful writing with nary a nod to the sex-and-violence purveyors who dominate the media.

This is wonderful! All of us who know you are now basking in the reflected light.

I'm sure you don't need such praise as mine, for you are now surrounded by praise, but I wanted to let you know how proud I am of you—proud that I have known you these years, very happy that we have many more years of friendship ahead.

Always,

Mark
Dear Mark—

Just a quickie to get you this stuff about editors. Note the reference to Argus Cameron at Knopf in the Hanta Yo piece. The postcard names are from a woman here who used to work at Cambridge U. Press; earlier she had given me the name of the current acquisitions editor there:

Steven Fraser
Cambridge University Press
32 East 57th Street
NY 10022

Am much struck with a line in your last letter: your gut feeling that you have a hot manuscript. Given your knack for understatement, I'd say the chances are damned good, then, that you have a hot manuscript. Kick that chapter into shape and get it into the mails.

All is well here, except for the Hood Canal Bridge falling down. Actually, that's terrific for me too—I'm now going around smirking at friends who said last fall, "You're gonna write about what? Winter in the Northwest?" Between me and Swan, we got a lot of weather stuff now.

All for now. Real letter in a week or two.

[Signature]
Dear Ivan and Carol,

Chapter One of the immigrants book is finally finished (in a very rough draft, admittedly), giving me the opportunity to clear the desk of piles of books and notes and emerge from my cocoon and write to you. I'll admit I run a mild case of guilt every time I'm writing something, because I try to stay with it until I come to a chapter end; that made it rough on some of the Miner's Epic chapters which went on forever.

First things first: thanks for the Literary Agents booklet which you thoughtfully had dispatched to me. After your words on my idea of working through an agent, I read the booklet with less life-or-death emotions. I guess my feelings at this moment are that sometime late in the spring I will try to polish up a good chapter fairly well, put together a fairly complete outline, and send copies around, and see what I get.

That is, I'll take your advice and write to publishers directly. I think I'll study the commercial market a bit, to see who is marketing paperbacks well, because I have a gut feeling that the "roots" phenomenon is such that this kind of a book might have a good market among people who have ancestors. Try as I may to shake the universal author's feeling that he has a hot manuscript going, I can't. So you will have to put up with my bloated ego in the coming months; thank goodness the Great Plains lies between us. Perhaps you'll be really lucky and the mail service will get worse.

I sent my plan to Cal Press to contact Sunday Supplement editors along the crest of the Rockies regarding publishing short excerpts from the book, and I still await a reply. It could be they have never dealt with a scholar so crass; the letter is probably passing from in-bucket to out-bucket every Monday.

A tiny item in the paper recently noted that the Lee Chain has just bought the paper where you cut your journalistic teeth, Lindsay-Schaub (is either one spelled correctly?) has sold out the Decatur paper and a couple of others. Whynot know. Those monopoly papers in medium-sized towns, without massive labor union problems, are supposed to be only a little lower than the TV stations as guaranteed money-makers. I wonder whether the plaque in the newsroom noting Ivan's labor there will be retained by the new owners.

Your cabin tale is interesting, and will be duly filed away under "CABIN: Experiences on first night", in my collection. Cabins in general are used for storage, the way a garage is, if you can drive right up to it. If you have to walk some distance up a hill, or reach it by boat, then the cabins are bare affairs. Back in my Minneapolis days I joined up with an old college friend to canoe down the Flambeau, a wild, roaring stream that juts out of the northwoods in the middle of Wisconsin. When getting started on the upper reaches we stopped to see a friend of my chum's, in a small, simple cabin back from the shore in a thick white pine stand. It was reached on a lengthy, rocky, twisting road, as I recall, and it was a man's cabin: potbellied stove, one or two tiny windows, cot, orange crate shelves, plenty of dirt and old hunting and fishing magazines. That was the style of cabin we wanted to make ours into on Miniature Lake, in northwestern Wisconsin. My father bought the land cheap in 1959, on advice of one of his students, when the cabin was half-finished. It remains an uninsulated affair, with Franklin stove and a space heater, no water service after the freezeup.
The barred county road is 30 yards up the hill. We originally (as I noted) thought of it as a hunting and fishing shack, but that was before my mother got hold of it. She even has us rake away the leaves from near the cabin! The porch has been enlarged, screened of course, and now indoor-outdoor carpeting covers the floor. From the nearby dump came some nice furniture, a table, old sofa, and the working part of an outdoor biffy. Electric stove and refrigerator came next, then an old Custer's Last Stand painting from my uncle's country store in Glenwood, Colorado, and so on. Mom can't leave any surface untouched, and so when you come (as I hope you will someday) you'll see designs covering the beams, laboriously but lovingly put there by my artist mother. Oh, it is a far cry from a hunting-fishing shack now. It is such a clean place that, to be truthful, we don't enjoy being up there very long when my mother is there.

My Livingston dentist friends have a cabin in the mountains southeast of Livingston—south of McLeod on the West Boulder. It is an old one, heavy timbers, constructed by some old rich family that played host to Westbrook Pegler once (and everyone huddled around while he phoned out his column on the party line). I found an empty matchbook there once that proclaimed: "I Like McCarthy and His Method!" "Keep Our Nation Out of the U.N. and the U.N. Out of Our Nation!" It had everything like a ranch house in a Hollywood movie, and yet since it was so old I suspected it was at least partly authentic. En route there we passed the old Wells ranch, of Wells-Fargo connection. That cabin was so difficult to get to, even with four-wheel drive vehicle, that it was not jammed with knick-knacks like most others.

Your cuckoo experiences rang a bell here, to mix metaphors. Eva's mother brought us one once, when Danny was quite young, and it awakened both me and young Dan on the hour every hour. We worked so hard to get Dan to sleep in those days, so we could rush to our desks and get back to our writing or studies, that I soon realized the clock had to go. That clock, however, had a look for the little door, so that if you didn't want the cuckoo to emerge you just locked his little door. But that soon stopped the clock, so in the morning you had to open the door, set the correct time, and then listen to the damn bird all day again. Luckily young Dan pulled on the chain enough to break it, and it sits in a drawer today. I have never quite understood how people put up with cuckoo clocks.

The news media are doing their job if reports of our weather have reached you. This is the third winter in a row in which heavy snow has remained on the ground for months. We now have 20 inches on the ground here, Chicago has about 40. Dan and I went skiing once, and last night Eva and Dan took an excellent cross-country ski lesson at ISU. Last week Eva and I tried cross-country without having a lesson to really know what we were doing; it was exercise but the scenery on the golf course is not thrilling. I guess I like to have my exercise be and interesting surroundings. I think that when we go to Wisconsin this summer I'll retrieve my two pairs of snowshoes—one pair of pickers and one pair of Michigans—because they would not be useful here. I used to snowshoe a lot in high school days, going out alone on a Saturday or Sunday, following a ridge back, scouting deer, knocking the massive snowcaps over from their perches atop the limestone bluffs. It was exciting and forms a good memory of winter for me now. I never brought that here because up to this three years ago we never had deep enough snow for long to warrant their use.
I prefer a winter where you can partake in outdoor sports, to the usual Central Illinois winter in which much time is spent indoors looking out at the cold barrenness or the freezing rain. It is interesting, all the same, to occasionally run into a Minnesotan or Wisconsinite and hear them brag about bad weather. Yes! They do that, especially around Illinoisans. It was like that when I was a kid in Wisconsin, when people would discuss the previous night's low temperatures, and then the one-upmanship would begin: "Twelve below at our place, at 7 o'clock this morning." "Radio said it got down to 15." "My sister's boy called from out at Beldenville at breakfast, said it was 19 below there." and then the kicker: "When I was in the Army once, at Camp McCoy, they had 47 below. Yessir, right there outside the mess hall door."

That kind of thing went on forever in winter. It was the same with snow depths. I never encountered it very much in Montana, but when I moved back to the Midwest and joined the Tribune I ran against it smackdab. I suppose there must be a trace of inferiority in the regional character to make them brag so much about bad weather; I have never heard the likes of it anywhere else. Or maybe it is that cold winter weather somehow implies that the people who survive it are tough, while a monsoon or sandstorm does not seem to carry the same implication.

Well, I suppose you are thirsting eagerly for another excerpt from my research. Probably that is the only thing that has carried you through all the above trips. Here it is, my favorite example of long-suffering sainthood and partial martyrdom in the service of Right; savor it as you pour vile brandy down your throat, or hark to it when you feel no one appreciates the pearls you throw before them:


he reports that about a year earlier he began "active aggressive temperance measures", and now the "run party" opposes him.

"I soon became a term of reproach among them & all manner of insult has been given. Men have frequently come out of their dirty den, (drinking place) which was not far from us, & tottered along opposite our house, & turned about in the presence of my wife or daughters pulled down their cloaths & exhibited themselves in the most shameful manner possible. Frequently in my absence, on Saturdays, my wife & daughters have been compelled to shut themselves up closely in the house to protect themselves against this kind of insults. I have heard them cursing me, & the Maine Law, outside of the house while I was lecturing; hardly a week has passed without some mischief being done, at night about my dwelling, such as taking off my gate -- turning hogs into my yard -- stoneing or egging my house -- fastening up our doors, & firing crackers under the windows while we were at our family devotions. They would slip into the church, or school house, through the windows on Saturday night, ring the Bell, & make their escape, or take away the ball rope, so that it could not be rung for meeting next morning; or write obscene sentences on the pulpit & walls. Slip up & pull the ball rope during an evening meeting & make their escape..."

During a meeting where he debated a judge on the proposed prohibition law, a group left the meeting and "committed depredations about my house; greatly alarming my much afflicted wife. At a late hour after the
meeting, some 20 men & boys, organized themselves & marched around my house in rank & file, barking like dogs, howling like wolves, squalling like cats, & cursing like devils; frequently shouting out at the top of their voice, expressions I had used in my address."

So don't let me hear you complaining if your House of Sky sales don't top 50,000! — I.e., you and I are not the only unappreciated ones in American history!

Your travels for the winter book have whetted my curiosity about your project. But I will bide my time here, pecking away at my immigrants book, all the while secretly wondering what Digg is up to at this moment or that moment, and whether he got the cuckoo fixed before the Forbeses returned.

Always,

Mark

[Handwritten note: Congrats on the soon-to-be-ratified substantial. Yours seem to come around more quickly than mine does — or perhaps shoreline does it on basis of merit.]