

- INTELLECTUALS, INFLUENTIALS AND ISOLATOES: Unstated, though strongly implied, in one of the book reviews in this issue is the fact that the author of the book under review is grievously out of touch with the best people in this specialty. My impression, although his specialty is not mine, is that the fault is probably not his -- there probably was no way in which a bright man coming to the field could conveniently find out what was the consensus of the best opinion. Good scholarship, one knows for a fact, exists, but it exists in isolation, often in articles written to fit the formulae of specialized magazines. In the sciences, specialists go to conventions for the purpose of finding out such things as, Where do we stand? What is the implication of the new work which has been done since we last met? What are we sure of, what is hypothetical, where are the debates? I do not wish to suggest any simple analogy between the pursuit of knowledge in the sciences and in the humanities, but it is clear enough that our conventions should but certainly do not generally serve this function. I can think of some exceptions, including, I am proud to say, some of the annual sessions of the MASA, but we all know that generally the purpose of an academic convention is to provide opportunity for large numbers of people to get their names on the program, just as the purpose of academic journals is to provide opportunity for people to get their stuff in print. It is the policy of this magazine not to accept articles which do not plainly indicate how the new work contained in the individual article affects its field, although I am sorry to report that frequently when we ask an author to provide this information about his own perfectly good work he is not only unable to do so but reports back sadly that there doesn't seem to be any place to which he can turn to find out. Too many very good men, in other words, are working, essentially, in isolation.

I do not think that the remedy for this situation is a proliferation either of scholarly organizations or of journals. That would, I fear, produce only more fragmentation. A simpler solution is suggested by the situation in some of the sciences: the science historian Donald Fleming speaks of men whom he calls "influentials," by which he intends something a bit different from what the Saturday Evening Post means by the term. He says that research in a great many areas centers around men often known less for their own original contributions than for their ability to keep in touch with a number of different people doing related work. Often working informally, the "influential" does a great deal to steer new scholars into areas in which the work is needed and to keep tabs on directions in which established people are going. Indeed, because he acts to some extent as a spokesman for men in his field, he often can exert a

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certain beneficial influence on the total aim of new research. If he uses his influence modestly and well, he is liable to have the confidence of a great many very good men who will see to it that he is a prominent member of organizations and committees which make decisions about such varied things as new graduate programs, foundation or government support of research and even faculty placement. Now it is of course doubtful, since the cash underpinning in humanistic fields and in the social sciences is so much less considerable than in science, that "influentials" in these fields could ever achieve the stature which they do in the sciences. And there are obviously dangers to be avoided -- the clique, old-school-tie and personal prejudice especially. Still, the need seems great enough to be willing to risk these things and to place some trust in the really very high professional ethics of our vocation. I am sure that we have in all fields admired and solidly established scholars, not necessarily of the first-rank in originality, but sane, steady, open-minded, considerate and reasonable -- perhaps the kind who now tend to wind up in administration but unhappy with it -- who could perform such functions were they called upon to do so. The gains would be very great. I take it, for example, that some of the difficulties encountered by the author of the book under discussion at the beginning of this note were largely the result of a kind of intellectual isolation. (It happens that he is on the faculty of a major university, which makes the story even sadder.) Were men working in that field in continuous, close and friendly contact through the good offices of an "influential," the book in its present form would never have been published; instead we would have had the far better book which the same author would have produced had he had a good sense of the attitudes and opinions of other bright men working in the area. At the very least, the university press which published the book, having decided -- correctly, I believe -- that here was a work which deserved publication, could then have obtained for the author contact with those people whose collective points of view could have given his work the tempering which it needs. Our reviewer tries honestly to indicate the nature of the difficulty, but of course we do not give him the space he would need to document what he says in a satisfactory manner: clearly, by the time the work reaches the reviewer, it is too late. What is needed is friendly professional contact with the community of investigators working on related problems. Since universities and even departments are not set up to provide this very specialized type of community, and since specialties now are too fragmented for even the professional journals of societies to provide it, I can think only of the "influential" system to do the job.

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- Here is the program for the tenth annual meeting of the Midcontinent American Studies Association, Saturday, April 3, 1965, on the Alton campus of Southern Illinois University:

Conference Theme: "*The Settling of St. Louis*"

9:30 - 10:45 a. m. First Session

Chairman: James Austin, Professor and Chairman,
American Studies Program, Edwardsville Campus,
Southern Illinois University

Paper: "The French Settlement of St. Louis"

J. F. McDermott, Research Professor, Southern
Illinois University

Discussion Leader: George Brooks, Director, Missouri
Historical Society

11:00 - 12:15 p. m. Second Session

Chairman: C. H. Schultz, Historian, Jefferson National
Expansion Memorial, St. Louis

Paper: "The German Settlement of St. Louis"

Ernst Stadler, Technician, Anheuser-Busch

Discussion Leader: J. Orville Spreen, Secretary, The
Westerners of St. Louis

12:30 - 1:45 p. m. Luncheon (Student Union, SIU, Alton) and Business Meeting

Chairman: Kenneth LaBudde, Past President MASA

Greeting by Robert W. MacVicar, Vice President for
Academic Affairs, Southern Illinois University

Presidential Address: "The Minor Writer in American
Studies" — John Q. Reed, President MASA

2:00 - 3:15 p. m. Third Session

Chairman: John C. Abbott, Head Librarian, Edwards-
ville Campus, Southern Illinois University

Paper: "Fifty Years of Negro Settlement in East St.
Louis" — Elliot Rudwick, Professor, Southern Illi-
nois University

Discussion Leader: Seymour Mann, Director, Public
Administration and Metropolitan Affairs, Southern
Illinois University

Nicholas Joost was in charge of the program and of local arrangements.

- Our next issue will be devoted entirely to articles on the current situation of the American Indian. If we are able to obtain a fairly substantial foundation subvention, the issue will be extremely large -- ten papers are already accepted. If not, it will be merely oversize, not huge, and the articles which don't fit will appear in future numbers. In either case, the single-issue price for that one number will be \$2.00 instead of the usual \$1.25 (though we will honor orders made prior to our decision to

change the price.) Subscribers will, of course, receive the special issue at no extra cost. We would appreciate your mentioning the issue to friends in anthropology; it has already been adopted as a text for several courses, but since we plan to print only as many copies as we receive advance orders, single or group orders must be placed before September 1. For personal orders, a check for \$2.00 made out to MASAJ goes to Professor Hauptmann at Park College, Parkville, Missouri. For class adoption, orders go to Professor Hauptmann, who will make available the usual bookstore discount.

NEW RESOURCES FOR AMERICAN
STUDIES III: TOM SAWYER IN
FLORIDA

The manuscript for Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, used for the first publication of the book, is owned by the Missouri State Park Board and is permanently on deposit at the Mark Twain Memorial Shrine, Florida, Missouri. The manuscript is temporarily on display in the Missouri Building at the World's Fair in New York. The manuscript of 655 pages is largely in the hand of a professional copyist but has fifteen pages and many notes and corrections by Mark Twain. It is the script read by William Dean Howells and includes many corrections, suggestions and questions in Howell's hand. With the manuscript are several unpublished letters by Mark Twain.

Ralph Gregory, Curator

