



Practical Thinking

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Fame was not fair to Herbert W. Gleason

By Dale R. Schwie

"Fame is not just. It never finely or discriminatingly praises, but coarsely hurrahs. The truest acts of heroism never reach her ear, are never published by her trumpet." H. D. Thoreau, *Journal*, June 6, 1854

Today, when outstanding achievement is not a prerequisite for fame, and one can become famous merely for being famous, the lives and works of those who are truly worthy of our interest and admiration are often overlooked.

"I would not subtract any thing from the praise that is due to philanthropy, but merely demand justice for all who by their lives and works are a blessing to mankind." H.D. Thoreau, *Walden*

Photographer Herbert W. Gleason (1855-1937) is among those to whom justice is due. Gleason never achieved fame during his lifetime, nor posthumously in photographic history. Though fame may have been of little concern to Gleason, he probably would derive satisfaction from knowing that his contributions as a landscape photographer and environmentalist are at last earning him a rightful place in photographic history. At the core of his work are his photographs of "Thoreau Country," which were inspired by the writings of Henry David Thoreau and recorded over a period of nearly forty years.



Herbert W. Gleason
Photograph courtesy St. Anthony
Park United Church of Christ.

Gleason, originally from Malden, Massachusetts, moved to Minnesota in 1883, not to pursue a career in photography, but to answer a call as a Congregational minister. He served in that capacity for two years in Pelican Rapids, and another two years in Minneapolis where he was the pastor of the Como Avenue Congregational Church, and helped to start another church in Saint Anthony Park in St. Paul. For the next twelve years in Minneapolis, Gleason served as managing editor of a denominational newspaper, *The Kingdom*; but of greater significance is that during this time, he first became acquainted with portions of Thoreau's journal, and began to experiment with photography. Over one hundred of Gleason's Minnesota negatives, dating from 1899, are now included in a collection of over seven thousand of his negatives in the Concord Free Public Library in Concord, Massachusetts. The catalyst for

Gleason's career change from managing editor of *The Kingdom* to photographer was not ill health, as is generally believed, but a libel suit against The Kingdom Publishing Company—a suit that was lost on a technicality despite the best

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efforts of attorney Clarence Darrow, who took on the case for the defense.¹

When *The Kingdom* newspaper closed down, leaving Gleason unemployed, he and his wife, Lulie Rounds Gleason, an accomplished pianist and music teacher at the Northwestern Conservatory of Music, and President of the Thursday Musical for its first eight years, moved back to



Lulie Rounds Gleason
Photograph courtesy Hennepin County
Library, Special Collections

Boston. At the earliest opportunity, Gleason visited Concord, Massachusetts, to search for and photograph places described by Thoreau. While on Thoreau's trail, he found a new career and a relationship with the author that he later described as "remunerative in more ways than one."² His Concord excursions he wrote, "...were self-rewarding, entirely apart from their historical or personal interest. A breezy walk over Concord meadows

or uplands far exceeds in exhilaration and inspiration any afternoon upon a golf course or any conceivable trip in a motor-car."³

Gleason needed work

When Gleason returned to Boston, his first priority was to generate an income while searching for permanent employment. He returned to his earlier profession of court reporting, where he found a demand for his services among his former stenographic associates. Gleason's willingness "...to take twenty-five dollars a day out of the lawyers,"⁴ enabled him to invest in photographic equipment and devote more time to rambling among Thoreau's "beloved haunts." Not intending to make a career of court reporting, and doubting that he could succeed as a professional photographer, Gleason continued to explore other options including returning to Minnesota.

When, however, the Houghton Mifflin Company became interested in Gleason's photographs of Thoreau country, his confidence grew and doubts about succeeding as a photographer vanished. He signed lucrative contracts with

Houghton Mifflin to supply photographs for special editions of the writings of Thoreau, and eventually for the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, John Burroughs and others, as well as Gleason's own book, *Through the Year With Thoreau*, which was published in 1917.

When Gleason first began photographing in Minnesota, and using photographs to illustrate a series of "Out of Doors" articles for *The Kingdom*, he was taking the initial steps of a journey that would lead him across the North American continent some forty times. Along the way, he was appointed by Stephen Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, as an Interior Department Inspector assigned to photographing current and potential park sites. Some of Gleason's lantern slides, hand-colored by Mrs. Gleason, make up what has been considered "...one of the first and best national-park lantern-slide collections."⁵

In addition to his work with the National Park Service, Gleason photographed other threatened landscapes and lectured extensively in support of the conservation of natural areas. Organizations such as the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Sierra Club provided Gleason with new outlets for his illustrated lectures, and introduced him to leaders in the conservation movement. Foremost among these was John Muir. Gleason and Muir became close friends who worked together in efforts to preserve the California redwoods, and on a hard fought, but unsuccessful, battle to prevent the damming of the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite. Today, Gleason's photographs of the valley before it was flooded are being used by activists in a movement to restore the Hetch Hetchy Valley.

Although Gleason has gained some recognition since the 1970s, after the publication of two beautiful books of his photographs, *Thoreau Country* and *The Western Wilderness of North America*, and others illustrating the writings of Thoreau, he is still relatively unknown except to photographic historians, and to those familiar with his Thoreau country images.

Perhaps an explanation for Gleason's not achieving fame as a photographer may be found in the venues he chose for displaying his images, and in his own independence. Gleason was a self-promoter; he was not dependent on the gallery scene and photographic societies; he specialized in illustrated lectures and books. Thousands of photographs taken by Gleason while he was employed by the National Park Service became their property. Gleason lectured to audiences throughout the U.S., but the ephemeral nature of illustrated lectures, and early sales of books by Henry D. Thoreau, John Muir, John Burroughs and others containing his photographs, did not bring fame his way. However, Gleason, who found "...a peculiar satisfaction

in being on hand at the beginning of things,"⁶ might also concur with Thoreau's words: "For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done for ever."⁷ Today, many of Gleason's Concord images, along with Thoreau's botanical notes, are being studied by biologists researching the effects of global warming on plant growth. In Minnesota, examples of Gleason's work and multiple talents, can be found not in photographs, but in the logo of the Thursday Musical where his laurel wreath design is still in use after 116 years, and in a pulpit that he built and hand carved in 1884 for the Pelican Rapids Congregational Church. His articles in *The Kingdom* newspaper provide valuable insight into his years in Minneapolis, as well as interesting local history.

Fame's trumpet may not have published Gleason's achievements, but his commitment to photography and the conservation of natural beauty was not dependent on coarse hurrahs. No doubt, he would find a peculiar satisfaction in knowing that the photographs he dedicated nearly forty years of his life to creating, are today a source of new life for him and his works. Fame may not be just, but perhaps for Gleason it has been delayed, rather than denied.

Notes

1 The American Book Company vs The Kingdom Publishing

Reflections from the Wireless Pond

by Charles Cubrimi



It wasn't Kermit, but it really was a green frog on the poster croaking the thesis of a one-day conference on Saturday, March 1, 2008. Entitled "Afloat in the Wireless Pond," the event was sponsored by the Minnesota

Independent Scholars Forum and the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information, organized by Lucy Brusic and Mary Treacy and funded in part by a grant from the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Commission. Throughout the day about 60 people were on hand to hear an exciting array of speakers at Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

Setting the tone with a suggestive image, Laura Waterman Wittstock, CEO, Wittstock & Associates, evoked the long house as a place for discussion. The discussion taking place there, however, was not just to deliberate on issues for the present moment, but to decide what would encompass

Company. Libel suit against The Kingdom Publishing Co. for publishing a booklet entitled: *A Foe to American Schools*, that accused the American Book Company of using corrupt business practices to introduce their textbooks to public schools.

2 Letter, Herbert W. Gleason to Dr. Thomas S. Roberts. 2 June 1920. University of Minnesota Archives. T.S. Roberts Natural History Correspondence.

3 Herbert W. Gleason, *Through The Year With Thoreau* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), xxix.

4 Letter, HWG to TSR, 12 January 1900. University of Minnesota Archives. T. S. Roberts Natural History Correspondence.

5 Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks*. 3d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1970), 93.

6 Herbert W. Gleason, "Early at the Lake," *The Kingdom*, 12 May 1898, 590.

7 Henry David Thoreau, *Resistance to Civil Government*, Reform Papers, ed. Wendell Glick (Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), 75.

Dale Schwie is a member of MISF and serves on the Board as its treasurer. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Concord, Massachusetts, based Thoreau Society. Retired after a career in photography, Dale is now writing a biography of photographer Herbert W. Gleason whose photographs were used extensively to illustrate the writings of Henry David Thoreau and other nineteenth-century American authors.

seven generations forward. Waterman Wittstock urged us not just to think in a "now" centered way, as if we had no future. Rather, she coaxed us to enter the long house and think of matters that have consequences for the future, for seven generations.

Kenneth Brusic, Editor of the *Orange County Register*, (Santa Ana, CA) the keynote speaker of the day, did have the future in mind in his illustrated talk about the role of newspapers in the present and in times to come. Evoking a Minnesota song writer, Brusic intoned the editors' lament: "The Times, They Are A' Changing." He was referring, it seems, to the *New York Times*, *The Star Tribune*, and his paper *The Register*; but he was also speaking, calmly (but with a hint of anxiety), about the sea changes affecting information gathering in general and newspapers in particular.

Disruptive technology caused the demise of Western Union, Brusic observed. Similar forces are at work disrupting the

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newspaper industry, things like Craigslist, Google News, and other media advances. *The Daily Show*, he noted wryly, is a major source of news for a sizable portion of the younger population. Substantial sources of revenue (like the Want Ads) have migrated to faster and less costly electronic servers. Erosion of credibility, he lamented, has hurt the industry as well.

Questions abounded: how do we sort through the glut of information? Do we really need professional journalists? How do we persuade people to read views that challenge—rather than support—their already existing views? Brusic offered few answers, but he did point to some ways in which newspapers are struggling to sail the waters of changing times and evolving technology. For one thing, he noted, newspapers need to redefine themselves as executive summaries of the flood of—often conflicting—information. Further, local and more focused news features need to be developed to reach diverse populations and neighborhoods. Finally, he concluded, changing technology doesn't have to be the enemy. On the contrary, efficiently integrated, it can encourage newspapers to be more efficient, timely, and informative.

A panel composed of Peter Shea, Morgan Grayce Willow, Tom Eland, Marion Rengel, and Helen Burke concluded the morning session. With different styles and skills the panelists dived into the digital pond and created a drenching series of thoughtful splashes. Rengel, public spokesperson for the Digital Library Project, talked about how a digital library is in our future with access being the primary goal. Eland, Director of Information, MCTC, called the audience to think in different ways, with information literacy being the basic concern. He challenged the notion that Google gets to set the agenda about what and how we learn. The structures we see developing do not build sustainable and caring communities; and that should be a concern for us all.

Willow, a poet who teaches at MCTC, made a plea to restore vitality to the use of language. She talked about poetry sites on the Web and how helpful they can be. But she cautioned us to cast a wide net in what we read: one should not be solipsistic and read only what one likes. Burke, Senior Librarian of Government Documents for the Hennepin County Library System, summarized her thinking with a thoughtful, cautionary, and proverbial statement: just because we send emails doesn't mean we communicate.

Shea, who teaches philosophy at Gustavus Adolphus College, gave a dramatic four-point presentation which he outlined (in low technology on a white board) as “ignorance” (we are not only ignorant, but we are ignorant

of our ignorance); “surprise” (we need to be surprised); “generosity” (you've gotta think about stuff you've never thought about; and if we lose generosity in this respect, the game is over—that's why libraries are important); “IGNORANCE” (We should not be pessimistic because we are ignorant; but we need to use not just our eyes but our other senses as well. Luther Seminary has good janitation, Shea sniffed, because, by using the nose, one can tell how clean the restrooms are).

Afternoon sessions

Following a substantial lunch and a generous door prize giveaway (including the signature green frog), the group reconvened for several demonstrations. Tom Hoogland from the Minnesota Historical Society gave an encouraging summary of History Day as a life transforming experience for the 30,000 kids in Minnesota who participate. While affirming that the Web helps young people in doing their research, he warned against “Googlepedia: click/point/file/paste.” He introduced History Day student, Sophie Naylor, who placed second nationwide. She described and then showed her film project on the Starvation Study from 1944. Not only was this video a moving presentation, it also demonstrated the capacity of the digital pond to provide vast and varied research material.

Jim Ramstrom from the Land Management Information Center demonstrated that accessible maps can tell stories and teach important lessons. With a series of map illustrations, for example, Ramstrom showed how Benjamin Franklin did his homework and influenced the map of the newly forming United States. Franklin successfully made the case for drawing the U.S./Canada border substantially farther north than it might otherwise have been.

Later in the afternoon, Carol Urness, map historian and former head of the James Ford Bell Library, reviewed the history of printing and pointed out that information is not necessarily knowledge. She also referred to Benjamin Franklin's use of maps in setting the northern border of the United States so that it would include Isle Royale. Tom Leighton, principal city planner for Minneapolis, described his work in the revitalization of West Broadway in Minneapolis and raised questions about the usefulness of technology in urban planning. Although some technology, such as the telephone, is so widespread that we no longer think of it as technology, other technology is perceived as a threat by some populations. He questioned whether increasing access to the Web would increase community involvement.

The final speaker for the day was David Wiggins, National Park Ranger with the Mississippi River National Park. David offered various reflections in an eclectic presentation

that covered a good deal of his life and his connection to the history of Minnesota. His conclusions demonstrated that the Web is still many things to many people: for some it is a great connection to the rest of the world even though its organization sometimes seems akin to chaos theory; to others, the Web is problematic because it robs us of time to think and integrate the vast amount of information it brings to us. The diversity of Wiggins's presentation underlined the diversity of the various viewpoints explored during the day.

The day was long and fruitful. One came away bursting with new ideas and worries, with a cautious but informed

appraisal of the treasures and pitfalls of the electronic/information age in which we live. It seems that, like the frog on the poster, we can dive into the pool and swim in the waters or we can just sullenly sit on the lily pad—and croak.

Charles Cubrimi is the pen name of an engaging writer and musician of minor repute. He grew up in New Jersey and moved to Minnesota a score of years ago.

■ Another reflection on this conference by Wallys Conhaim is available at <<http://www.allbusiness.com/government/public-policy/8957149-1.html>>.

Hidden Heroes

Editor's Note: One of the ideas Mary Treacy hoped to use at the Internet Conference (see preceding article) was to get people to talk about their “hidden heroes”—unsung people who made a difference. The idea didn't jell for the conference but it seemed like such an appropriate thought for this MISF anniversary issue that I invited people to submit essays about unrecognized but significant people for the journal. The following essays are responses to this invitation.

Mary Kraft, CSJ

Write what you know. When Lucy Brusic asked me to write about a “hidden hero of Minnesota history” I browsed through my long list of individuals who have collected, organized, preserved, and otherwise made accessible the story of our state. Identifying those special people intrigues me, particularly as I try to sort out how it all works in the digital environment.

As I mulled over my fledgling list, I pondered how I'd find time or opportunity to talk with these folks or dig into the lives and work of the archivists, librarians, genealogists, historians, government officials, compulsive learners, and storytellers who have had a hand in reminding us who we are. Endless intriguing possibilities.

Then came the “write what you know” mantra. It struck me as I stopped in for the zillionth time to chat with Mary Kraft, CSJ, archivist for the St. Paul Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJs). I stop to visit Mary on the days I work as a stringer at the CSJ Ministries Foundation. Mary's office is in the lower level of the Provincial House, the venerable edifice at the center of the CSJ campus at Randolph and Fairview in St Paul (just east of the College of St. Catherine).

As CSJ archivist Mary is responsible for collecting, organizing, preserving, and making accessible the records of this remarkable community. The Sisters of St. Joseph first arrived in St. Paul in 1851. Four Sisters, invited by Bishop Cretin, had made their way up the Mississippi from St. Louis. By year's end they had opened St. Joseph's Academy on Western and Marshall in St. Paul and St. Joseph's Hospital near downtown St. Paul. By 1853 they had opened St. Anthony High School in Northeast Minneapolis and by 1905 they had launched the College of St. Catherine, now the nation's largest women's college.

The archives Mary Kraft tends today are bulging with records carefully maintained by the Sisters for these 157 years. High school teas, proms and basketball games, faculty members, groundbreakings, graduations and ministries to the elderly, to sick people, to street people—they are all recorded in handwriting, Kodak photo, DVD and spread sheet—preserved, organized, and made accessible through decades of careful work by hundreds of Sisters. The codified archives tended by Mary were formally opened in 1968.

Though the archives at 1890 Randolph are the official archives of the CSJ Sisters, several of the programs run by the Sisters maintain independent historical archives—among these are the St. Joseph Hospital archives and the archives of the College of St. Catherine. (Some of the CSJ Archives are incorporated in the Minnesota Digital Library Project.)

Stories abound—stories of women who broke ground in the education of women, in health care, in meeting the needs of the homeless, immigrants, and children without families. They also broke literal ground as they built the

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College of St. Catherine, St. Mary's Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, the Academy of Holy Angels, Derham Hall, St. Joseph's Academy, St. Anthony Academy, St. Margaret's Academy, and other schools and hospitals through the Twin Cities and in western Minnesota and North Dakota. The role of women religious is an integral and essential thread that runs through women's history. The record is open—and meticulously organized—for scholars with a commitment to tell the whole story.

The work of the Sisters continues—and Mary Kraft continues to collect, organize and preserve the clippings, the photos, the correspondence, and the stories. Today it's the stories of Hope Community, Peace House, Learning in Style, St. Mary's Health Clinics, and missions in Japan, Peru, and Chile.

Week after week, visit after visit, I'm reminded by observing Mary's work of the time, skills, and commitment required to make certain the history of an era lives. Because the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet is such an integral component of our state's history, the archives are essential to our understanding of Minnesota. Thousands of CSJs have helped shape that history and scores of Mary Kraft's predecessors have made certain we can know the stories.

Mary is headed off to France and a visit to LePuy, the international center and birthplace of the Sisters of St. Joseph worldwide. When she gets back serious scholars will find her at the archives of the St. Paul province, 1890 Randolph, 612-690-7001 or <mkraft@csjstpaul.org>. In the meantime, you might want to check the library for a copy of *On Good Ground*, by Helen Angela Hurley, CSJ. Published in 1951, it's the lively and meticulously documented story of the Sisters' first century in Minnesota.

Mary Treacy

Mary Treacy is a librarian and the convener of two complementary and long-standing coalitions, one focused on access to government information and the other on information/telecommunications policy.

Louis Greene

My father, Louis Greene, was born in Romania, but is listed as “born in the United States,” because he was born just before his wife received money from her husband—who'd already emigrated to America—to buy tickets for herself and their other children. So she carried a pillow with a slit in it, and whenever she needed to hide him from immigration authorities she slid him into the pillow and hoped he wouldn't cry!

He did receive his citizenship shortly after he arrived, and his “career” in journalism began when he was a five-year-old peddling newspapers downtown to help support his family. He attended the University of Minnesota part time for seven years, without earning a degree, but he had a very successful career as sports reporter, and later as copy editor, on the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*.

He also wrote a weekly column for many years for the *American Jewish World*, and was a dedicated community volunteer because, as he liked to say, he couldn't give big money, so he had to give himself. He was honored at many community events, received a Minneapolis “Man of the Year” plaque for public service in 1961; in 1964 a forest was planted in Israel in honor of his community service and active participation in raising money for the Jewish National Fund to support the new State of Israel.

Louis Greene met his wife, Florence, at the *Tribune*, where she worked in classified advertising; they married in 1927, when she was 27 years old and he was only 23. I have his Social Security card, dated 12/7/36, which was the year Social Security began!

Another “moment of fame” was described in Carl Rowan's autobiography, *Breaking Barriers*. When Rowan graduated from Journalism School at the University of Minnesota, he thought he'd never find a job as a reporter, but *Tribune* publisher John Cowles had decided it was time to hire a Negro. But then Cowles assigned Rowan to the copy desk, to learn how newspapers are put together. Rowan says my father would scream at him things like, “God damn it, Rowan, don't you know that commas come in pairs?” But then, after two years, when Cowles told Rowan it was time to start reporting the news, Rowan says he loved my Dad so much he didn't want to leave. So as we joke, my father ran the “Lou Greene School of Journalism” at the *Tribune*.

He also had repeated battles with sports reporter Sid Hartman, whom he thought was an absolute incompetent. Sid went on to have a very successful career on radio and TV, though. When my Dad died suddenly from a heart attack in March, 1972, Sid wrote a letter of condolence to my mother: “His death came as a real shock to his many friends at the *Tribune* who loved and respected him so much. Things have never been the same since he left. I've heard some of the executives say many times that there was only one Louis Greene... and I can second that motion. I know he'll be missed by many.”

Rhoda Lewin

Rhoda Lewin is a founding member of the Minnesota Independent Scholars' Forum and the author of three books about Jewish history. She has a Ph.D. in American Studies from the UMN.

Ernest Greene

Ernest (Ernie) A. Greene (b. 05 Dec 1918; d. May 2002)

As a boy growing into manhood in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Ernie Greene's employment opportunities reflected the problems most blacks faced in the United States at that time; his choices were limited to “pin-boy” in a bowling alley or bare-fist boxing for the “entertainment” of white men at local men's social clubs. Greene chose the pin-boy route and soon learned that his duties involved not only the loading of pins in a semi-automatic device that placed them on the lanes, but also the agility to avoid being hit by patrons who enjoyed throwing bowling balls at the “niggers” while they filled the pin slots.

As a fast learner and hard worker, Ernest was accepted by Hampton Institute in 1935 (a premier Negro college founded in 1868), where he began a B. A. program in Education and met his future wife, Kok. The two married in 1937 and Ernie served in the Army Air Corps before settling down, in 1946, in Kok's hometown of St. Paul. He soon found that choices for Minnesota employment were not so different from those he had faced as a youth back in New Jersey. Degreed and non-degreed blacks in this state had the same work opportunities: janitor, cafeteria worker, vocal musician, choir director, or if really lucky, as a steward or car-attendant on the Great Northern Railway. Greene completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Minnesota with a schedule focused in the sciences. In 1946 he came to the attention of Victor Lorber, M.D., Ph.D, in the Physiology Department of the University of Minnesota Medical School.

Dr. Lorber, a Jewish biochemist at Case-Western Reserve (Cleveland, Ohio), lost his national medical research funding when he was “blackballed” by Wisconsin Sen. Joseph McCarthy; but Lorber had been noticed by Minnesota's great visionary and medical researcher, Maurice B. Visscher. In 1946, Dr. Lorber moved to Minnesota and joined the University's Medical School, in the Physiology Department. Lorber would later reciprocate Dr. Visscher's trust by winning the American Heart Association's first “Career Investigator” funding award (a national total of thirteen would eventually be named). Lorber, assisted by Ernest Greene, established and ran one of the finest cardiovascular research laboratories in the country from the 1950s through the 1970s.

Because of their brilliance as teacher-researchers and their challenging backgrounds, Lorber and Greene made a formidable team, training multiple young researchers who would move on to medical and research positions

nationwide. Not only was their laboratory so well designed and maintained that new ideas could be reliably pre-tested in days or weeks, rather than months (or longer), Lorber and Green also promoted and used a “checks and balances” approach to the handling of experiments and data that resulted in an exceptional degree of accuracy. Over the lab's productive existence, research results elucidated the normal flows of Na⁺, K⁺ and Ca⁺⁺ into and out of the muscle cells during cardiac muscle contractions; it had previously been thought impossible to obtain these measurements. Additionally an environment was provided in which each doctoral candidate learned and practiced basic research program management and technical speaking, writing, and editing—skills that would enable a researcher easily and responsibly to disseminate new scientific knowledge.

Lorber and Greene emphasized that the pursuit of basic science, though exciting and important, was only one small part of society, and that scientists had responsibilities to the whole social fabric. In practice, as part of a daily 8 A.M.-6 P.M. (and often later) schedule, they established two half-hour Tea Times (10 A.M. and 3 P.M.) during which local and national events were researched and hashed over, and letters to officials or to the editorial pages of local newspapers were encouraged.

The Greenses were members of an exceptional St. Paul group of ten professional black families, “CREDJAFAWN,” that formed a credit union in order to obtain fair lending and banking rates for themselves and their families. Select white friends and spouses, who volunteered, were asked to help address local inequities by visiting listed “For Sale” homes in the Twin-Cities area, to obtain “truer” asking prices, before prominent members of the black community made their visits.

In later years, these same families took vacation trips together. In 1976, this author and his wife were asked to join members of the ten families for a cruise of the Caribbean; we were dubbed their “token integration pair.” It was an education, being a minority within a minority on board ship; we were able to observe how important these stalwart Minnesotans were as ambassadors of Minnesota and the United States.

Mr. Greene served our state as a member of the Human Rights Commission and for many years spent time as a volunteer tennis coach in the inner city park system.

In the late 1970s Ernie took early retirement from the University and began a second career as a tennis pro, instructing in South Minneapolis and Lillydale, while himself becoming a nationally ranked player on the senior circuit.

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Mourners at Ernie's funeral in 2002 numbered in the hundreds: from the scientific and university communities, the regional tennis communities, and the St. Paul capital and neighborhood communities. Ernest Greene was a true renaissance man who had the acquired gift of being able to get you to laugh while he quietly changed your inequitable beliefs.

David F. Juncker

David Juncker has a Ph.D. in Physiology from the University of Minnesota and is the outgoing president of MISF.

Hester Crooks Boutwell

The life of Hester Crooks Boutwell (1817-1853) provides an insight into the Anglo and Indian worlds that existed side by side in the area that would eventually become Minnesota.

Hester Crooks was born May 20, 1817, on Drummond Island in Lake Huron. She was the daughter an Indian woman named Abanokue and Ramsay Crooks, the manager of the American Fur Company at Mackinaw. Hester's mother was probably a mixed blood; she was almost certainly an Odowa-speaker, because Hester later in life had to "brush up" on her Ojibwe. Ojibwe and Odowa are similar, but not the same, languages.

Ramsay Crooks was not on Drummond Island when Hester was born, but he acknowledged her as his daughter and provided for her schooling at the Mackinaw Mission School, where she probably received the equivalent of an tenth-grade education. Hester was described as having her father's intelligence and her mother's "Indian" eyes.

The surge of evangelism known as the second Great Awakening brought many people into the mission field in this period. The establishment of the Mackinaw Mission School in 1823 was itself directly related to an awakened religious impulse on the part of Henry Schoolcraft, the American Indian agent at Mackinaw in this period. So it makes sense that when Hester finished her education, she elected to go to the Yellow Lake Mission (in Burnett county, Wisconsin) to teach the preschool class.

It is probable that she met her future husband, William Boutwell, in the late summer of 1833, on the boat trip west from Mackinaw to La Pointe, on Madeline Island. From La Pointe, Hester took off for Wisconsin and William went to Leech Lake to establish the first Protestant mission to the Ojibwe of Minnesota.

But less than a year later, when William decided he needed a wife to help him in his mission work, he wrote to Hester

at Yellow Lake to ask her to marry him. They were married on Madeline Island, September 11, 1834. Hester then accompanied William back over the Savannah Portage, even carrying her own "utensils" up the three-mile hill. She set up housekeeping at Leech Lake, to the great interest of the Indian women who had never seen an "American" woman.

Hester spent twelve years in the rugged mission field with William, first at Leech Lake and later at Pokegama, Minnesota. She bore William nine children, of whom seven survived her. Life in Minnesota was so harsh and uncivilized that she and William decided, when they were home on furlough in 1840, to *give* their two eldest children to William's childless brother in New Hampshire.

Hester collaborated with her husband and other missionaries in a translation of the Bible into Ojibwe; she also assisted in the preparation of school texts and primers to teach English to Ojibwe children. She was only 36 years old when she died in 1853 from complications after the birth of a child. She is buried with her husband in a family plot in Stillwater; the plot is owned and maintained by the city of Stillwater.

Hester Boutwell has generally been esteemed for her loyalty and her work in her husband's mission field. However, it is no longer fashionable to extoll a woman because she is a loyal helpmeet to her husband nor is it popular to recognize the indispensable contributions ministers' wives have made to their husbands' profession. In addition, the work of Christian missionaries among the American Indians, however well-intentioned it may have been, is now evaluated with ambivalence.

Nonetheless, Hester Boutwell is a significant figure in the history of early Minnesota—although she seems very far removed from today. She lived in a time when the boundaries that separate races (and probably sexes) do not seem to have been so pronounced as they later became. She probably spoke at least four languages (everyone who lived on Mackinaw spoke both French and English; she spoke at least two Indian languages as well). Through wit, charm, and intelligence, she was able to step between the world she was born into and the world she married into. I am fascinated by her because through her I can see some of the complex texture of the Anglo-Indian frontier in the Upper Midwest.

Lucy M. Brusic

In addition to being an avocational historian, Lucy Brusic is the great-great-granddaughter of William Boutwell's brother, James.



BOOK CORNER

***Riding Shotgun: Women Write About Their Mothers*, ed. Kathryn Kysar (Borealis Books: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2008, \$24.95)**

Anthologies are "like a box of chocolates," great as nibbles before bed or with morning coffee, if you can nibble just a few pieces. Limiting nibbles is harder when the twenty-one authors are formidable with words, all of them teachers of writing or award-winners or both, distinguished literary lights with recognized names—the last in the book (provider of the title) our own Morgan Grayce Willow, poet, and longtime member of the Minnesota Independent Scholars' Forum. It's even more fascinating when what they all address is something we each find "difficult to put into words," or sometimes even to get a grip on—our relationship to "mother." Each piece is preceded by a photograph, usually but not always of the mother written of (often in Mom's youth), always illustrative of the writing to follow.

I suppose I might never have thought of seeing "mother" through the prism of a snowstorm, an imagined observation from the womb, a percolator (although anyone who's helped sort through a deceased parent's things might recognize that one), family cooking styles, gardening, recurrent dreams and ghosts, "a partial list of things my mother couldn't be bothered with," a box of clippings Mom sent, Dad's ashes, canned pickles, scrapbooks and documentary films made by Mom, migrations, cancer therapies, home sales of Stanley products, or (most disconcertingly to me) technological analogs between adoption and computer programming, but each of these starting points helps provide a web for a different spin on coming to grips with Mom.

There are tales in this book from adopted only-daughters and daughters who are part of huge and extended biological families, daughters of Korean, Chinese, Hmong, Puerto Rican, Sioux, Ojibwe, Delaware, Shoshone, the Ozarks, the Irish, the Polish, German farm families, Chicago's South Side Projects, divorces or long partnerships, mothers who inhibit or mothers who foster independence. But most of these daughters see the concept "mother" in the sense we see it when we are children. Our notion of extended family, of our connection to history and our place in the world, of

what means "home" and "us" to us, begins for most with something our mothers showed us. Indeed, some of these writings talk about "mother" as an inseparable part of the grandma-aunt-old friend-sister clump that child-rears some people. Others had trouble getting much orientation out of mothers who were reticent from some earlier circumstance that may not be illuminated until late in daughter's life, if ever.

I was surprised that many writings that resonated most with me came from daughters whose upbringing was outwardly very different from mine, and that some whose background was similar to mine had mothers and upbringings I hardly recognized—although there were more similarities to me than differences on the whole. The one writer I know personally, Morgan Grayce Willow, had an upbringing (on a farm) of which I had no clue despite talking with her on many occasions. Her family life was one that my siblings and I might describe for ourselves, although we only visited (regularly) the family farms my uncle and grandparents ran. Morgan's "riding shotgun" refers to her job as the child who helped keep her mother awake on the ride home after selling Stanley home products (I still have some my mother bought) to augment income. But "riding shotgun" is a job many daughters fill, on whatever ride their mothers take.

These writers have strong connections to Minnesota and (mostly, but not all) to generations near my own, but they also bring in other states, countries, and times. The human family, especially mother and child, is a strong guide. It helps when twenty-one talented writers help us to "get a grip on" that even unto (in a couple of cases) living through Mom's death. The depth and richness of detail brought by these novelists, poets, and one playwright is what we expect of literature. It illuminates and holds a mirror up to what we had not noticed in ourselves.

Ginny Hansen

Ginny Hansen is a longtime member of the MISF and a self-employed editor, with a speciality in medical editing.

oOo

***Fiddle Game* by Richard A. Thompson. (Poisoned Pen Press: Scottsdale AZ, 2008, \$24.95)**

Crime in Minnesota seems to be on the upswing, at least in recent literature. The Minnesota Crime Wave (that's what they call it) can be detected in such recent anthologies as *The Silence of the Loons* and *Resort to Murder*, wherein about twenty local crime writers pile up the bodies and the mayhem. Another local author, Richard A. Thompson, has made an entry into this area with his debut novel, *Fiddle Game*.

continued on the next page

The main character, Herman Jackson, is a bail bondsman with a shady past. He allows himself to get sucked into a very complex con game involving a priceless old violin, urban Gypsies, and lots of action that stretches from St. Paul to upstate Minnesota, and down to Chicago and Skokie, Illinois. Herman shares some traits with such noir detectives as Philip Marlowe and Sam Spade: he has a code of honor from which he will not deviate; he stays on the scent no matter what; he blithely quips his way through every situation; and he has an insouciant way with the gal he hooks up with—he even manages to hit it off with Rosie, so to speak, in the front seat of a car secreted in a Chicago junk yard while trying to elude deadly pursuit.

The plot, while pretty improbable, is nicely crafted. It includes intriguing snippets of violin history, World War II legend, modern Gypsy life and lore, and lots of local color. In a note at the beginning of the book the author tells us to regard the St. Paul of this story as completely fictitious, which is not always easy to do since there is a lot of verisimilitude in the book. For example, anyone who has been in downtown St. Paul heading toward Seven Corners will not see a fictitious city on page 43 where Herman “headed west, past the Courthouse and the County Jail, past high-rise offices with selective blocks of floors lit up for the night cleaning crews, past the Central Library that looks like the Bank of England and the Catholic soup kitchen that looks like nothing at all, towards the oldest part of the city.”

Save the date

October 11: Special MISF lecture-discussion at Washburn Library

“Physician-Assisted Suicide: it should be a legal option!” will be the topic of a paper to be given by Dr. Kenneth Klein at Washburn Library, Lyndale Avenue, Minneapolis, Saturday, October 11, 2008. Dr. Klein recently delivered a similar paper to the American Society on Aging and the National Conference on Aging conference in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Klein taught philosophy at Valparaiso University from 1964 to 1995. He specialized in topics such as logic, ethics, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion. He was awarded the rank of Emeritus Professor of Philosophy when he retired in 1995.

This only begins Herman’s quest for a pilfered Amati. He is relentlessly pursued by a bent cop. He seeks advice from an imprisoned uncle in an upstate prison. He meets and escapes with Rosie by cleverly foiling a pair of stereotypical dense characters named Pud and Ditto. The tale of the errant Amati leads Herman and Rosie to Chicago and Skokie where the action turns nasty. But luck, pluck, wit, and improbable agility win the day even though a lot of gun smoke fills the air.

The game, which has so long been afoot, finally tracks back to Saint Paul where the complex plot plays itself out in a surprising and satisfying way. At the very end, in a reflection that might as well be a voice-over from a Humphrey Bogart movie, Herman sums things up in a wistfully noir and philosophical way. He looks out into the morning fog and thinks “about appearances and disappearances and names and labels and illusions and scams and how very muddled they all get at times. I thought about the violin case under Wilkie’s huge arm and wondered what was really inside it. Evil? Salvation? Or just an old fiddle? I hadn’t looked inside the case, and I didn’t intend to.” (235) Deliciously ripe. Anyone who makes it to the end of this home town caper will hope that Herman will show up again to walk the mean streets of St. Paul.

Robert Brusica

Robert Brusica is a retired Lutheran pastor with an avid interest in mystery stories.

He holds a PH.D. from Harvard in the History and Philosophy of Religion and is the author of *Positivism and Christianity: A Study in Theism and Verifiability* (Nijhoff, 1974) and of *Issues in War and Peace: Philosophical Inquiries*, co-edited with Joseph Kunkel (Longwood: 1990).

Klein wants to use his paper as a springboard for further discussion of the ways in which people facing terminal diseases can choose to end their lives legally.

This free presentation meeting is sponsored by MISF; admission is open to anyone who wishes to attend.

The Last Word

We have an image of a hero—a firefighter, a soldier, or a policeman—someone who has performed public deeds of heroism that saved lives. However, the purpose of this issue of *Practical Thinking* was to uncover “hidden heroes”—whose unsung and perhaps unrecognized accomplishments have helped people and advanced the less dramatic but significant causes of learning, peace, or art.

The theme of hidden heroes is well worked out in the biographical sketches of people you may not have heard of—Herbert W. Gleason, Mary Kraft, Louis Greene, Ernest Greene, and Hester Crooks Boutwell. I appreciate the enthusiasm with which the writers for this issue approached their subjects and the liveliness with which they treated them. In addition the Book Corner reveals some hidden heroes—mothers—and maybe a fictional one—Herman Jackson. .

This theme of hidden heroes causes me to comment on an Op-ed piece that appeared in the *Washington Post*, May 1, 2008. Written by Amelia Rawls (Yale Law, ‘10), it is entitled “Best and Brightest, but Not the Nicest—A Commentary.”

Rawls’s essay appeared on the day that college students around the country had to make their college choices; it is a reflection on the college application and selection process. In brief, Rawls wonders what happens to the “nice” people in the race to get into the “good” colleges—“The kind of selfless, genuine “nice” that makes this world a better place—but won’t get you accepted to college.”

It is Rawls’s contention that many of the brightest people in this country, especially in the college race, are so concerned with being the best, or the first, or the top, that they overlook being humble, or cooperative, or generous. Top flight colleges reward outstanding resumes by granting admission to the people with superlative accomplishments. In effect, Rawls sees college selection as an almost-Darwinian process that disadvantages the less-concerned-with-winning people who will really make things work. The fact that the Ivy League sends so many people into politics does not escape Rawls’ irony. For some reason, starting a war looks much better in the history books, than does avoiding one.

I thought of this essay as I read the stories of the “hidden heroes,” the people who quietly and without fanfare made a difference to those around them. I suspect that all of us, especially we Nice Minnesotans, have felt passed over when grandstanders (in politics as elsewhere) start jockeying for position.

Humans and structures being what they are, I doubt we can do much to change the status quo. However, we all know those who keep things running, who really listen, and who play fair. We need to affirm these people, support them in their endeavors, and make sure they are heard as often as they speak (which may not be often). I hope that you will recognize, affirm, and maybe even thank a “hidden hero” today.

Lucy Brusica <lucy@brusica.net>

The deadline for the next issue is November 1, 2008. We welcome submissions on any subject, though if you are looking for an idea, you might write about the good and bad features of cities or short descriptions of cities where you have lived.

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Practical Thinking welcomes submissions from members and non-members. We are especially interested in topical issues, but will also welcome essays, reviews, and memoirs. Generally articles should not be longer than 1800 words. Please submit articles electronically, as Word or RTF files. Use as little formatting as possible. All submissions will be acknowledged, although the editor reserves the right to decline to publish an article.

The editor has the right to make minor adjustments in the manuscript. *PT* assumes no responsibility for contributors’ errors. Opinions expressed by contributors may or may not reflect the opinions of the editor.

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Contributors to this issue:
R. Michael Brusica, Ginny Hansen,
David Juncker, Rhoda Lewin,
Dale Schwie, Mary Treacy
Minnesota Independent
Scholars Forum (MISF)
POB 80235, Lake Street Station
Minneapolis, MN 55408-8235
www.mnindependentscholars.org

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MISF
PO Box 80235, Lake Street Station
Minneapolis MN 55408-8235

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