WIU cosponsors first Upper Mississippi River Conference

By Jeff Dodd

Western this summer was instrumental in bringing together various interests on behalf of a national treasure: the Mississippi River.

Taking part in the inaugural Upper Mississippi River Conference on Aug. 21-23 at the iWireless Center in Moline were the U.S. Army Corps of ; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the U.S. Coast Guard; and especially the Quad Cities-based River Action, a nonprofit group that advocates for the river's environmental, economic and cultural vitality, along with students and faculty involved in research on the Mississippi and its tributaries.

Titled "Weaving Multiple Uses into Sustainable River Communities," the conference attracted city planners, elected officials, landscape architects, environmental educators and groups, and economic developers to attend sessions on natural resources, river recreation and urban waterfront needs. Many presentations focused on various river management projects over the years and how those projects changed the upper Mississippi in the last century.

The conference stemmed from an idea from WIU Trustee Bill Griffin, who in 2006 thought of developing a partnership between Western and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Rock Island District. Through the efforts and support of Col. Robert Sinkler and Ken Barr of Corps, WIU's Vice President for Advancement and Public Services Dan Hendricks, College of Arts and Sciences Dean Inessa Levi, President Al Goldfarb, and Institute for Environmental Studies Director Roger Viadero, a memorandum of agreement between the Corps and WIU was signed last December. It emphasizes environmental assessment, preservation, restoration and remediation; Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for planning and decision making support; and socio-economic studies related to using natural resources.

True to Griffin's concept, in addition to Western Illinois University, the conference also included the involvement of several other state, regional, and federal organizations, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA).

Photo by Visual Production Center

Students and professionals interacted at the August River Conference, which benefited from involvement of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Quad Cities' River Action and WIU.

"Having UMRBA as a sponsor for the conference opens the door to many opportunities for WIU and everyone involved in the conference," said Griffin. "UMRBA is a consortium of the governors of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. It was formed to coordinate the states' river-related programs and policies. It works with federal agencies that have oversight of the rivers. A signnificant goal of the association is to manage opportunities under the "Water Resources Development Act of 2007," which authorized flood control, navigation and environmental projects, and studies by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"The legislation, which has been authorized but at present remains unfunded until the next Congress is seated, provides for $1.9 billion set aside on a 50/50 cost share between the federal government and the Inland Waterway Trust Fund to address mooring facilities, switch boats and new 1,200-foot locks along the upper Mississippi River basin and Illinois waterway," Griffin continued. "Of greater significance to the University under our agreement is another $1.7 billion that has been appropriated on a 93/7 cost share between the federal government and the states to reduce the cumulative environmental impacts of navigation systems and to improve ecological integrity. It is this part of the law where I think WIU can have the biggest impact because of our GIS Center, the Institute for Environmental Studies, and the Environmental GIS program.

"The act is just the first step in a larger program of navigation improvements and ecological restoration along the Mississippi River upstream from Lock and Dam 19 at Keokuk, Iowa, through Lock and Dam 11 at Dubuque, and the Peoria and LaGrange locks and dam on the Illinois waterway," he said.

Western Illinois University — the only institution of higher education to have this sort of agreement with the Corps' Rock Island District — hosted the opening reception which included a greeting by Goldfarb as well exhibits and interactive displays by Western students and faculty, according to Viadero, who's also a Professor of Biological Sciences.

"Afterward, conference participants were able to meet with students and faculty researchers from the Institute for Environmental Studies, the Alice

L. Kibbe Life Science Station, the Department of Biological Sciences, the Department of Geography, and the GIS Center. Highlights of this event were interactive displays of Mississippi River fish and mussels and GIS equipment," Viadero continued. "We were also fortunate to have the new 'landing craft' boat from Kibbe Station on display right outside the iWireless Center.

Photo by Visual Production Center

Moline's iWireless Center hosted the inaugural Upper Mississippi River Conference last summer.

"I was fortunate to play a number of roles in the first Upper Mississippi River Conference, " he added. "I served as a member of the conference steering committee and co-chaired the 'Environmental & Natural Resources' track, where I moderated a panel. My colleague John Duyvejonck, a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I also put together a field trip that enabled conference participants to visit Nahant Marsh, a former Superfund site that has been restored into one of the most ecologically significant urban wetlands on the Upper Mississippi River. This effort was supported heavily by Brian Ritter, the Naturalist at Nahant Marsh [and] a graduate student at WIU-QC.

Throughout Friday and Saturday, three main tracks covered Natural Resources and Environmental Planning, River Recreation Opportunities and How They Are Realized, and Urban Waterfront Needs in the Ecological City. The common theme among all presentations was how much the rivers in the upper Mississippi River valley have changed in the last 200 years and changes in the future.

Speakers ranged from Marcia Maslonek from the Wildlife Habitat Council and U.S. Congressman Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) to Jeffrey Potter, a consultant for Biodiversity Group, and Rick Laurence from the Natural Land Institute and Ducks Unlimited.

On Friday, the group's field trip to Nahant Marsh in Davenport Ritter explained how the marsh had been used for skeet and trap shooting from the 1960s through 1996. As a result of lead contamination, the EPA listed the 513-acre urban wetland as a Superfund site. Three years later, the EPA removed more than 143 tons of lead-contaminated soil from 13 acres at a cost of $2 million, according to River Action.

"The field trip offered participants a unique opportunity to see the positive outcomes of cleanup in the context of an important, but rapidly diminishing resource — urban wetlands," Viadero said.

On Saturday Richard Louv — author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* and a 2008 Audubon Medal recipient — described the transformation in the relationship between children and nature and how society teaches people to avoid experiencing nature. He suggested that the unintended message is delivered by schools, families and even organizations devoted to the outdoors and codified into the legal and regulatory structures of many communities. Summarizing evidence showing how important contact with the outdoors is to child development, Louv touched on such health issues as ADHD, child obesity, stress, creativity and cognitive functioning. He suggested action by parents, grandparents, government, conservationists, urban planners, educators and others concerned about the future of childhood and the Earth itself to launch a "Leave No Child Inside" movement.

The conference scope was designed to be broad, reflected in its subtitle: "Weaving Multiple Uses into Sustainable River Communities."

"We hope conference participants gained an appreciation for the ways in which often disparate areas of interest are actually highly inter-related," Viadero said. "In the context of sustainability on the Upper Mississippi River, environmental concerns are necessarily related to the health and vitality of our local communities and economies.

"This was a terrific opportunity to show off Western's long history of high-quality research, education and outreach on topics related to the Mississippi River," he added. "Likewise, it's always great to show Western's commitment to the Quad Cites and Upper Mississippi River."

Griffin sounded satisfied, too.

"This inaugural conference brought many of the major organizations who play a critical role on the rivers of the upper Mississippi River valley together for the first time," Griffin said. "It gave the region a great platform on which to build an annual conference not only to facilitate communication among these organizations but to increase public awareness and about our rivers and waterways. This was an outstanding success in its first year, and I'm looking forward to many more conference in the future."

another proposal. This time, he worked to better focus his proposal on undergraduate research and his lab's research goals. His years of effort were rewarded and he received a grant for $350,000, a significant award for WIU and for Musser personally.

Photos by Jeff Dodd

Hum-Musser uses a pippettor to administer precise amounts of solutions to chemical reactions.

Today, Musser strolls confidently around his lab – now filled with expensive, modern equipment – cured and optimistic about his future.

If the circumstances were a Hollywood happy ending, the script could not have been written any better.

"It was like a game-show contestant winning a million dollars," he says. "There was sheer excitement. The grant will really benefit the students."

Enthusiastic and quick to praise their professor for his guidance and leadership, Musser's students now work and learn with fewer financial or emotional pressures.

Musser is quick to attribute his good fortune to his partnership with Sue, saying that he could never have achieved the same outcomes alone.

"Sue was definitely a rock in getting me through, and taking care of the family at a stressful time, and then supporting me on my research pursuits," he says. Her commitment and extra efforts throughout the past year resulted in more good news for the Musser household. Sue received a tenure-track position, giving her more job security and better access to lab space. "She's the detail and I'm the big picture," Musser says.

After the infusion of resources, WIU's biology laboratory is now comparable to labs in larger universities, Richard says – and even better equipped than some.

His team of students, including several new graduate assistants, currently works on an extensive experiment on the relationship between caterpillars and various types of plants on a genomic level. They are studying how plants respond, at the molecular level, to being fed on by different insects – similar to how the human immune system reacts to being invaded by bacteria, viruses and other pathogens. The true benefits of this research are yet to be seen, although Richard is hoping that the results could be prove to be significant, particularly in helping reduce pesticides in the environment.

"This could be useful down the road," he says. "You never know where the next cure is coming from."

Though he is reflective about his own cure, and the remarkable manner in which his family's life has changed over the past 18 months, it is clear that the job makes the man, as it's said.

"It makes you wonder a bit," he says.

If this dramatic turnaround doesn't convince him of good works rewarded, there may not be much in this world that would.

He said that his scientific knowledge, as well as a natural curiosity about the nature of the cancer, gave him the confidence to disobey doctor's orders and press on with normal life – even during weeks of treatment.

"What gave me confidence was that I knew it was curable, so that was a benefit for me," he says. "It has motivated me to shift some of my research in to a cancer research area in the future.

"I'm no Lance Armstrong," he adds, smiling, "but I'm getting there."

Jackson Board is a junior Journalism major from Bathurst, Australia, where he's studied at Charles Turt University.

New book tracks outlaws from Western Illinois into legend and lost history

By Bill Knight

A newly uncovered yarn, an old geography bias, timeless social and psychological fragmentation, and familiar media hype all come together in a new book by WIU Professor Emeritus John Hallwas.

Few tie the Wild West to Western Illinois, but the historian and writer does in a tale made more captivating by its being true.

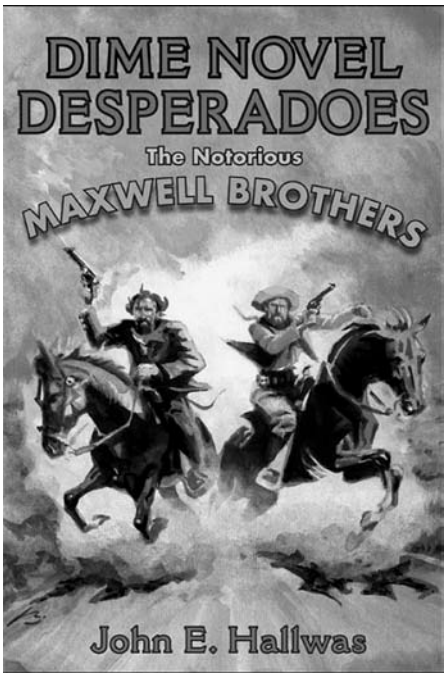
Dime Novel Desperadoes: The Notorious Maxwell Brothers (University of Illinois Press) is about the Maxwell brothers, largely forgotten outlaws despite escapades that became infamous nationwide and despite a climax that ended in both tragedy and mystery.

"Once upon a time there were real horse thieves and gunfights, sheriff's posses and lynchings, right here in the Midwest," Hallwas said this summer, "but historians have not delved into that very much, except for Missouri's James Gang.

"Hence, the Maxwell brothers — the greatest outlaws of all time from the Upper Mississippi River Valley — were forgotten even though they became early outlaw heroes of dime novels, the publications that led to later westerns."

The Midwest was a harsh place in the 19th century, with crime not uncommon, as theft and robberies, assaults and killings all are recorded in surviving public records and old local newspapers. The Maxwells' misadventures were sensational but eventually overlooked, if not dismissed outright, perhaps because they didn't fit the stereotyped mold of six-gun-wielding cowboys, ranchers and town marshals taming the wilderness well west of the Mississippi River. Still, the two achieved national prominence through their actions, authorities' reactions, some journalistic accounts and exaggerated versions of their feats.

Tracking the Maxwell clan back to Pennsylvania, Hallwas follows the family's migration to Ohio, Iowa, Illinois and Nebraska, where they struggled to survive as farmers and seemingly always found themselves



a step or a season late for economic promise.

Hallwas, who's written more than 20 books and monographs, decades ago wrote a magazine feature on the Maxwells, then did considerably more research into the times and their crimes — helped by a journal left by Lon Maxwell.

As boys and young men, the Maxwells' relatively short statures had them trying to measure up physically as well as socially, but they weren't exactly the coarse villains featured by western novelists such as Louis L'Amour, Max Brand or Zane Grey (an avid reader of dime novels).

Ed didn't smoke, drink or chew tobacco, and he seldom cursed, Hallwas found.

But upright conduct doesn't always make a difference, of course.

Poverty and repeated failures, the chaos of frontier life and the tension of the post-Civil War all contributed to the brothers' feeling wronged, even oppressed, and definitely outside the mainstream of the young country.

"[There was] an increasing social divide between owners and workers, the insiders and outsiders," Hallwas writes. "In the public mind, relative poverty and criminal propensity were fused."

Add disasters beyond most people's control — such as the national depression in 1875 — and some sought to organize against forces they perceived as ruthless and tyrannical in groups such as the Grange. Others seemed to surrender to impossible odds and turned to the law-breaking and violence that seemed forced upon them as destiny.

The Maxwells — frustrated and even ashamed at being sons of a poor, almost itinerant tenant farmer — were alienated, isolated from their surroundings, apparently never feeling as if they belonged to a community, church or class. The brothers — particularly Ed, born in 1853, five years before Lon — fought to find themselves despite complex and seemingly distant forces. Followed by Lon, Ed seemed attracted to the temptation to try to live up to an identity as a man to be reckoned with, a dangerous character, even a desperado of near-mythic proportions.

Their once-infamous, seven-year career as outlaws (1874-1881) followed a sequence of events that 130 years later seems, by turns, mundane, exciting, deadly and full of the dread of an impending, unavoidable doom. Ed stole a suit in Blandinsville, then stole a horse in an escape from

authorities, then hopped a train before being arrested, tried, convicted and imprisoned in the state penitentiary in Joliet for a year.

After his release, Ed joined up with Lon and they committed burglaries, stole horses and escaped incarceration at the county jail in Macomb. They roamed through rural Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska, living off the land — or its settlers — and were again apprehended and sent to prison.

Lon was released first in 1877 and made his way to Wisconsin. There — in a side of the story that reads like a Hollywood subplot — Lon lived under the alias Williams, settled down to work at a mill, and fell in love with a church-going young woman named Fannie.

However, Lon was injured on the job in 1881, the same year Ed got out of prison. Unable to support his wife, Lon felt forced to again partner with Ed, and the Maxwell brothers (now AKA the Williams brothers) embarked on a crime spree that included robberies and more.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Lon, his wife was pregnant and, while he was a fugitive, came to term and died in childbirth.

Shocked at this loss, the Maxwells sought someone to blame — a doctor, the law, almost anyone — and stumbled into a confrontation with two popular lawmen named Coleman — oddly, also brothers. The lawmen probably didn't identify themselves, the Maxwells undoubtedly saw a need to defend themselves, and the subsequent shootout and killing sparked a public outrage and grew into a myth that trapped the Maxwells and much of the Midwest into an almost inevitable outcome.

"Ed's confrontations with and escapes from lawmen and posses were always driven by his need to validate his identity as a desperado – to show that he was not a helpless

Continued on next page

10 more bits of forgotten western Illinois history

By Chris DeJonge

Western Illinois decades ago briefly adopted the name "Forgottonia" to stress to the legislature that it was overlooked. But besides lawmakers, historians, media and regular people through the years have overlooked other people and places in the region.

From the state's first official entomologist to the author of "Fuzzy Wuzzy" to a conductor on the underground railroad, western Illinois' heritage is richer than most of us realize.

1. BEARDSTOWN was the setting for two of Abraham Lincoln's most famous cases while the young lawyer traveled the area. Most successful at civil litigations during his career, Lincoln occasionally represented defendants in criminal cases ranging from trespassing to murder.

In the spring of 1839, Lincoln lost his first and only capital case when defendant William Fraim was convicted and sentenced to hang. Fraim, a shipmate on a steamboat, had stabbed another member of his crew after the man blew cigar smoke in Fraim's face. The incident occurred while the boat was docked on the Illinois River across from Beardstown.

Lincoln successfully had the trial moved to Carthage, where he hoped he could escape a prejudiced local jury, but there was an eyewitness and the one-day trial resulted in a guilty verdict.

Public executions were still a rarity in Illinois at the time and special gallows had to be built outside of Carthage. Fraim was hanged in front of a large audience, which included children. (School had been dismissed so they could attend.) **— C.D.**

2. BEARDSTOWN was also the site of Lincoln's famous "Almanac Trial" in 1857, when he successfully defended Duff Armstrong against a murder charge by raising questions discrediting an eyewitness.

The witness's statement was unreliable, Lincoln argued, because the crime would have been impossible to see on the night in question — when the Moon couldn't have lit up the scene, according to an almanac Lincoln placed into evidence. **— C.D.**

3. CAMBRIDGE/ ROCK ISLAND. Although Benjamin Walsh was born in England, his contributions to entomology (the study of insects) in America were so impressive that he was named Illinois' first state entomologist.

His love of insects also would lead to his death.

In England, Walsh was a classmate of Charles Darwin and would later spend a great deal of time corresponding with Darwin on his theory of evolution.

Walsh moved from England to a 300-acre farm outside of Cambridge, in Henry County, in 1838. He eventually relocated to Rock Island after the Cambridge area was struck by malaria following a nearby Swedish colony damming a waterway. While in Rock Island, Walsh owned a successful lumber yard and rental properties.

There in 1869, Walsh was returning from the post office when he became so engrossed in an entomology book he was reading that he didn't notice warning bells at train tracks where he walked. By the time he noticed a locomotive, it was too late to completely escape injury and his left foot was severed from his leg, eventually leading to his death.

Walsh had collected more than 30,000 insects and had published more than 800 articles on entomology, but his collection of specimens

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victim of the social order, a man shamed by his inadequacy, but a revenger," Hallwas writes. "That was the problem with creating an identity as a desperado: You always had to live up to it, no matter how dangerous."

A growing posse pursued the pair on land and on water, numbering more than 400 plus militia and cavalry called in to aid. A reward for their capture reached $2,200, the highest reward then for anyone except the James Gang.

Ed was captured and, in custody, exaggerated his own infamy and, therefore, prominence and social significance to police and reporters.

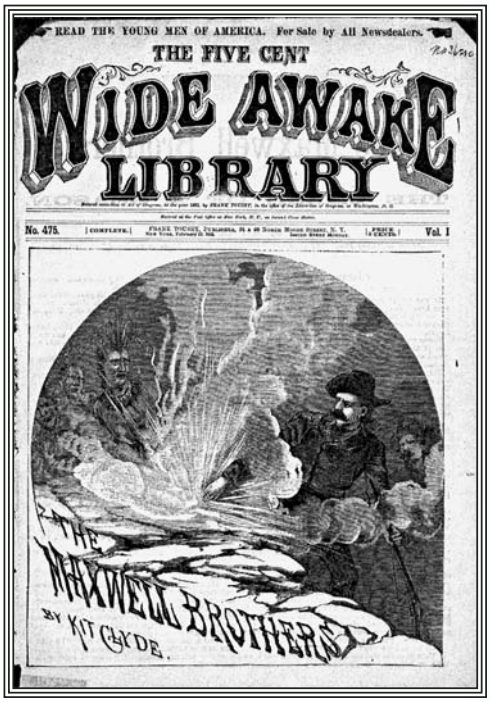
Lon vanished.

That November, before Ed could be tried, a Durand mob seized him from his cell and lynched him outside the courthouse there.

Local power-brokers covered up his killing, and newspaper stories grew into fictionalized versions of their exploits. There had been dozens of articles in the *Chicago Tribune*, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and other Midwestern and national periodicals.

The public's fascination with the Maxwells created what today would be seen as a celebrity culture. In fact, Ed — who said he read dime novels — had led the Maxwells on a trail marked by an unspoken "Code of the West" that seemed to require for any perceived insult or injury some sort of confrontation, revenge or violence. It was a trail blazed since 1866 by the James-Younger Gang, one that began to wind down for them the year of the Maxwell's final, fatal crime spree in 1881 — the same year of the Gunfight at the OK Corral and as Billy the Kid's rise to prominence.

Since the only real mass medium of the time was print — ranging from newspapers published weekly in rural areas and daily in some cities, to magazines and their distinctive cousins, pulps, or dime novels — stories that started in



At least eight 19th century dime novels featured accounts of the Maxwell brothers' crime sprees.

rough or even respectable newspapers could evolve elsewhere.

Tens of thousands of pulp titles — dime novels — were being produced, and writers were willing to embellish to get published, and readers were eager to buy the tales. The first of at least eight dime-novel adaptations of the Maxwells/Williams' deeds came out the month after Ed's lynching. Variations continued to be published through 1893.

Thankfully, Hallwas has restored perspective and delivers a factual account of their seven-year explosion across mid-America. Hallwas' research is substantial and formidable, his writing both straightforward and eloquent. Given his obvious zeal for accuracy and thoughtfulness, the book requires some equivocation — "may have," "surely," "unlikely," and so on — but Hallwas resists any urge to really speculate. Also, detailed footnotes are valuable, but an index would have been helpful, too.

Finally, *Dime Novel Desperadoes* offers that rare blend of history and fiction: thrills and chases, nuance and depth — and it really happened.

Here, in the Midwest.

Starting in western Illinois.

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was lost in the Chicago Fire of 1871. **— C.D.**

4. CARTHAGE. One of the world's most recognizable nursery rhymes was actually a poem, a verse penned here by lifelong writer Rowena Califf, born here in 1891:

Fuzzy Wuzzy
Was a bear.
Fuzzy Wuzzy
Had no hair,
Fuzzy Wuzzy
Wasn't fuzzy
Was he?

The 24-syllable poem was published in 1935 in Califf's book *Fuzzy Wuzzy and Other Stories*, but probably was written years earlier. Although Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem in 1890 titled "Fuzzy-Wuzzy," Califf's verse has next to nothing to do with the British writer's reflection on Osman Digna, a Sudanese resistance fighter who for 17 years battled the British Empire in Africa and earning soldiers' begrudging respect as a formidable opponent.

Similarly, a 1944 song credited to Milton Drake, Al Hoffman and Jerry Livingston probably owes more to the Carthage native than vice versa since Califf's poem came out about a decade before.

Califf's poetry frequently involved play — word play, daydreaming, fantasies and so on — so it's much more likely that Rowena was drawn to an unusual name she'd heard, perhaps as a little girl, and eventually conjured a light line to use it and amuse readers — or the kids who heard it read aloud.

In Carthage, Califf led an active, civic life, giving many programs to schools and service organizations and staying involved in the Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O. International), once serving as President of Illinois' Chapter J in Carthage.

Also active in the Daughters of the American Revolution and a

Poet Rowena Califf at her desk at the clothing store her family would eventually run.

50-year member of the Order of the Eastern Star, Califf most often could be seen at local retailers on the Courthouse Square or her modest apartment.

She was the bookkeeper at Owsley's Clothing Co. — founded in 1899 as Quinby and Gill, bought and run by Califf's family for 35 years as Califf's Menswear, and since 1980 operating as Royalty's until this year, when it's scheduled to close. She also was a familiar holiday employee specializing in wrapping gifts at Sherrick's Drugstore, recently purchased by Wear Drug. Also she could be heard, if not seen, in her upstairs apartment two blocks west of the business district, writing on her manual typewriter.

Her other books of verse, mostly aimed at children, include *Pinkey Dew and Other Stories* (1929) and *Just Being Me* (1967).— **Bill Knight**

5. COLCHESTER. During Prohibition, one of Illinois' most famous and lucrative bootleggers resided here: Thomas "Kelly" Wagle.

Although by reputation he was prone to violence and cruelty, Wagle was nevertheless considered somewhat of a local hero. Wagle was able to get around the law by using a front as a taxi cab driver and delivering liquor from Colchester to Chicago.

The story of Wagle and Colchester was told in the book *The Bootlegger: A Story of Small-Town America* by John E. Hallwas.

While Wagle was somewhat of a sinister character, he often played community benefactor, donating food or money to needy families and buying uniforms for the town's first high school football team. He also sponsored members of the infamous Chicago "Black Sox" baseball team to come to Colchester to play with local athletes against a Macomb team.

In fact, Wagle helped save the life of Edna Bell Clark, a child who was suffocating after glass had punctured her windpipe during an auto accident. Wagle rushed little Edna to the hospital in Macomb. Later, Edna would later visit Wagle every Sunday while he was jailed in Macomb, bringing him ice cream.

Wagle was killed in Colchester walking from a local restaurant, shot to death by three shotgun blasts from a passing motorist. He died as his bullet-riddled body was being carried to a doctor. **— C.D.**

6. GALESBURG/PEORIA. George Fitch was a "Jack of all trades" in turn-of-the-century publishing, where he started working on his family's country weekly, became a campus correspondent, rewrote announcements, did reporting, handled layout and even drew some cartoons en route to making a national mark as a humorist and progressive.

Born in Galva, Ill., in 1877, George Helgesen Fitch was brought up hanging around the weekly *Galva News*, purchased by his father Elmer in 1883. Fitch moved to Galesburg, where he attended Knox College — which offered a variety of valuable contacts in media: Sam McClure, Robert Finley, John Phillips and John Sisson (*McClure's* magazine), advertising pioneer Earnest Elmo Calkins, muckraking magazine publisher Benjamin Hampton, and others.

He wrote for newspapers in Galesburg, then his family's weekly, Iowa dailies and the Peoria *Herald-Transcript*.

During this period, he started writing humor in a newspaper column; features for periodicals, including *Collier's, Munsey, Ladies Home Journal*, and *American* magazine; and a series of 20 short stories set at fictional "Siwash College." Featured in publications such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Kansas City Star*, the stories were well-received and eventually were used as the basis for the 1940 William Holden movie, *Those Were the Days*.

By 1910, Fitch not only was a respected writer but became a nationally syndicated columnist for George Matthew Adams' news service. Fitch's "Vest Pocket Essays" and other articles appeared in dozens of periodicals, and Fitch became associated with the syndicate's stable of stars dubbed "Adams' trained seals," which included Kansas editor and publisher William Allen White, reporter and playwright Edna Ferber, and editorial cartoonist Jay "Ding" Darling.

"George Fitch came out of the Middle West, the nursery of our literary orchards," wrote poet Edmund Vance Cooke. "Much of its budded stock is transplanted early, but George Fitch came to full fruition in the soil which gave him birth."

After covering the political conventions in 1912, Fitch quit the *Transcript* in a dispute over Progressive Party presidential candidate Teddy Roosevelt and ran as a Progressive for a State Representative seat. He won and served one term, writing humorous essays about state politics for the *Chicago Tribune* as he did.

A year later, en route to a humorists convention in San Francisco, Fitch was stricken with

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appendicitis and died at the age of 38. After his unexpected death, Ferber commented, "He was just as sane and sweet and lovable as everything he wrote." – **B.K.**

7. JACKSONVILLE was home to a music teacher and band leader who'd later write campaign songs for Abraham Lincoln. Ben Grierson, who had a stellar career in the armed forces, eventually becoming a General in the U.S. Army in 1867.

During the Civil War, Grierson led a successful campaign against Confederate forces throughout the South that served as a diversion to help General Ulysses S. Grant gain control of Vicksburg, Miss. What would later become known as "Grierson's Raid" had a major impact on the Union's ability to win the war. Grierson and his 1,700 troops freed slaves, destroyed railroads and demolished Confederate storage buildings during a drive through the South.

Fictional accounts of Grierson's Raid were the basis for the novel *The Horse Soldiers* by Harold Sinclair and a 1959 movie version from United Artists starring John Wayne and William Holden. — **C.D.**

8. MACOMB. In 1834 the murder of John Wilson by Elias McFadden and his son David was the first recorded and prosecuted murder in McDonough County. Wilson had moved to the Macomb area in 1832 and settled on a piece of land near McFadden, one of the area's earliest settlers.

The McFaddens, known to be troublesome and standoffish, had had several disputes with neighbors over the years.

Trouble between Wilson and the McFaddens began over a piece of wooded land which both claimed as their own.

In November 1834, Wilson, his wagon and team of horses were asked to accompany Deputy Sheriff Nelson Montgomery to the McFadden home to help with a collection notice issued by two local merchants.

Used with permission of Special Collections and Archives, Knox College.

Well-known cartoonist Jay "Ding" Darling drew this caricature of humorist/journalist George Fitch.

While there, McFadden was told about the collection and was leading Wilson and the sheriff around the side of his house when a shot was fired from a window, striking Wilson. Montgomery went to find help for the wounded Wilson, who'd been mortally wounded and received no help from McFadden, who was mending a fence when the sheriff returned with help.

An investigation of McFadden's home found a pane of broken window glass and a rifle nearby. The window sill had evidence of powder burns.

A trail led from McFadden's home to his son David's home, where David was at work at a workbench. Both McFaddens were placed under arrest and tried in Rushville after a change of venue was granted.

Both Elias and David McFadden were found guilty of murder and hanged outside of Rushville in front of a large crowd. — **C.D.**

9. BLANDINSVILLE. A rural man from McDonough County's Hire Township refused to report for military service during the Civil War; was labeled a deserter; pursued by lawmen; and got in to a shootout, killing a deputy provost marshall.

And some say he got away with murder.

John Bond was the man who resisted the 1864 induction; William A. Randolph was the shooting victim.

The county hadn't had enough volunteers to fill its government quota so a list of draftees had been drawn up. Randolph, a Macomb resident, was deputized and assigned to find and arrest men who didn't report for duty, like Bond.

Randolph found Bond in a Blandinsville saloon, but Bond refused to go with Randolph, fleeing to a hotel owned by his brother, James. While there, Bond gathered James and another brother, Miles, and prepared for a fight.

Arriving at the hotel, Randolph tried to arrest Bond, who shot and wounded Randolph. Randolph returned fire and followed Bond, but was shot again, this time by Miles. Randolph fell in the street with four bullet wounds, and the three brothers fled while Randolph lay dying.

It would be four years before officials caught Miles in Kentucky and another two years before John and James were captured in Missouri. After the arrest of John and James, all three Bond brothers were brought to trial.

However, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty for all three men. — **C.D.**

10. QUINCY. Richard Eels was originally from Connecticut and settled in Quincy in 1833, quickly establishing a medical practice and an important stop on the Underground Railroad.

An abolitionist, Eels has been credited with aiding in the successful escape of more than 200 slaves to

their eventual freedom.

Eels' home, built in 1835, still stands as a historical landmark in downtown Quincy. Four blocks east of the Mississippi River and directly across the border from Missouri — which remained a slave state — Eels' home served as a key stop on the Underground Railroad for slaves who'd escaped bondage.

Eels was arrested for his efforts while helping an escaped slave from Monticello, Mo., named Charley. Barryman Barnett, a freed slave, had witnessed Charley swimming across the Mississippi and brought him to Eels. While helping Charley find a safe hiding spot, Eels was confronted by a search party that had tracked Charley. Charley escaped the posse and hid in a nearby cemetery but was later found and returned to Missouri.

It was 1842 when Eels was indicted for harboring a fugitive slave, and he was found guilty — by Judge Stephen A. Douglas, some say — and fined $400.

The case was appealed, eventually to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the conviction was upheld there in 1852.

Eels stayed active in the abolitionist movement, helping along the Underground Railroad and — as president of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Party — and worked to pass an 1843 law outlawing slavery.

Considered a possible Presidential candidate from the anti-slavery Liberty Party in 1844, Eels unsuccessfully ran for Illinois Governor on the Free-Soil Party ticket in 1846.

Eels died that year while traveling east on a river boat along the banks of the Ohio River near Cincinnati, reportedly exhausted from his campaigns and trials and financially drained. **— C.D.**

Chris DeJonge is a junior Journalism major from Arlington Heights, Ill. Bill Knight also contributed to this story.

'Vishnu Springs' given to WIU, becomes Post Wildlife Sanctuary

By Sarah Zeeck

A 140-acre parcel of land that's been a medicinal spring, a tiny village, a country resort, a student commune and even a rural site for small rock concerts has been donated to WIU to be used as a wildlife sanctuary and outdoor learning lab.

Olga Kay Kennedy, a 1946 WIU alumna, donated the property formerly known as "Vishnu Springs," and it's now the Ira and Reatha T. Post Wildlife Sanctuary, named after Kennedy's grandparents.

The Land's Past

In the early 1840s, the land was purchased by Ebenezer Hicks, who eventually discovered springs on the property. In 1885, Hick's son Darius inherited the land, and over the next few years, developed it by building a four-story hotel, restaurant, livery stable, post office and windmill — all to serve what Hicks hoped would be an attraction to draw people interested in the mineral-rich water's "healing properties" and pretty wooded scenery.

Crowds of up to 2,000 people reportedly attended events there in the 19th Century.

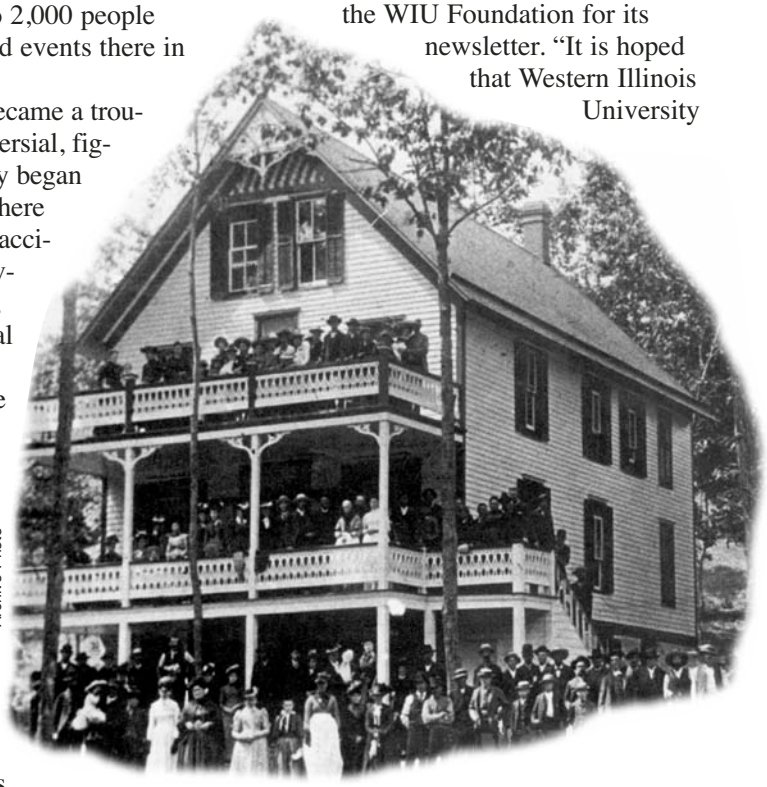
Hicks himself became a troubled, even controversial, figure, and the facility began to lose its luster. There reportedly was an accidental death involving a Ferris wheel, and Hicks' personal life deteriorated. Divorced about the time he took over the property, Hicks married a woman who brought her three children to the marriage but then died of Bright's disease in 1896. Hicks then married a third time — to his step-daughter — causing some locals to shun him. He moved to nearby Colchester, then to rural Blandinsville. There, his third wife died in childbirth in 1903, and a despondent Hicks committed suicide in 1908.

His death — along with the area's shrinking population and inferior roads to the site — resulted in Vishnu Springs being largely unused and dormant until 1935 when Ira Post and Lon Cale bought the land and partially restored the complex, which was used until 1954, three years after Ira Post died.

After Olga Kennedy Post's grandparents passed, she inherited the land and restored the hotel again in the 1960s and used it as housing for students and young adults in the 1970s, when occasional daylight outdoor concerts were produced, drawing hundreds of area youth. It was occupied as rental property until the 1980s, after which it stayed empty for two decades.

Finally, Olga Kennedy Post donated it to Western as a wildlife sanctuary — as her grandfather foresaw it.

"My grandfather had a love and a vision for maintaining this naturally beautiful piece of land," Kennedy told the WIU Foundation for its newsletter. "It is hoped that Western Illinois University



Archive Photo

In its heyday, Vishnu Springs attracted big crowds to its rural setting.

will continue the stewardship role with the primary purpose to preserve the habitat for wildlife.

"It is rewarding for me to know that others will have an opportunity to enjoy and benefit from this gift while ensuring that my grandparents' wishes will be honored," she added.

Ira Post — an employee of Western Illinois State Teachers College in the 1920 — had left a sign on the property proclaiming his wishes. It read, "The spring water and the wonderful world of Nature are to enjoy. Vishnu Springs should be left as Nature provided it. Leave the flowers, ferns, rocks, trees, birds and wildlife just as they are. That means do not dig or harm anything of any description. No hunting, trapping or killing. Take care of it all and then all will be benefited in the years to come."

The main structure at Vishnu Springs fell into disrepair after being vacant for years.

The Present

After the donation, Western wanted to use the acreage as Post had intended. Various professors have used the land as a learning experience, especially in the natural sciences. Roger Viadero, Director of the Institute of Environmental Studies, said that measures are being taken to research the land and its flora and fauna.

"Right now, we are working to figure out what's there," Viadero said. "Before anybody goes running around doing anything, we need to establish the biological and environmental conditions."

Geography Professor Chris Sutton has worked with some students and the Archives Department of WIU's Leslie F. Malpass Library to create a map of the Post property and three-dimensional reconstructions of major buildings on the property using global positioning system equipment, Viadero said.

"[The map] is helpful in and of itself because that can be used to locate all of our different sampling sites and things of that nature, but, also, [Dr. Sutton] rendered a three-dimensional reconstruction of the major buildings on the property," Viadero added.

Another study on the property involves insects. Biology Professor Ken McCravy is researching robber flies (predatory, long-beaked insects).

"This is our first study out there, so basically what we're trying to do is get a handle on just what robber flies are out there," McCravy said. "Hopefully, that will lead to more detailed studies of the different habitats out there and what kind of robber fly diversity they support."

McCravy has a couple of students working with him to determine the extent and makeup of the area's robber flies.

"Our trappings are almost over because of the cool weather," McCravy said in October, "so we're hoping by the end of the semester to have everything identified and then maybe by early next semester, we'll have our analyses done."

Thus far, the robber flies have only been collected and will soon be identified to determine diversity, he said, adding that he hoped this would mean they would have reportable findings that would say something about the environment at Post property.

"We've done previous robber fly studies in our field station (the Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station on the Mississippi River in Hancock County)," he said, noting that the two environments differ so the results should be interesting.

Viadero has an ongoing study involving the water at the Post property, which could show fascinating findings considering the site's history as Vishnu Springs. A third study concerns the land's ground and surface water. Viadero said that Geology Professor Steven Bennett drilled three groundwater wells there.

"What this allows us to do is determine the way water is distributed underground," Viadero said. "The only way we can know that is by actually going underground and to access those waters, and take samples."

Water chemistry data should be interesting, too, he said.

"Something that is really cool and really weird is the fact that we have water chemistry data for the spring dating back to 1889," Viadero said. "Believe it or not, things actually look pretty similar.

"It could mean a number of things, and it also might not mean a whole lot of anything," he added.

More professors and more students from more departments are currently researching biological, geographical, environmental, and other aspects of Post property, including Susan Romano, Biology professor, who is studying plant ecology, and Chris Sutton, Geography professor, who is researching the current and historical makeup of the property.

The Future

Works are in progress on many fronts. Most data thus far are inconclusive, since all researchers are in the data-collecting stage of their researching processes.

"We're all trying to make sense of what it means, what it could mean, and where to go next," Viadero said. "We want to make sure we're super well-informed on the front end so we make good management decisions in the future."

It'll be better to have a good feel for the area being studied before jumping into the process and making a mess out of the area, he warned.

Additional plans for further studies on the site include McCravy studying ground beetles, which he says are a good indicator species.

The Post property may have once fallen into the condition of a ghost town, but thanks to the Post family's generosity, its promising to be full of life.

*Some of the material was previously reported in **Western News** by University Archivist Marla Vizdal.*

Western's diversity goal put into practice with Underrepresented Minority Dissertation Fellowship

In July, the Department of Political Science welcomed Daniel Ogbaharya as the inaugural Provost's Underrepresented Minority Dissertation Fellow. Ogbaharya is a doctoral candidate in the Political Science department at Northern Arizona University-Flagstaff and expects to receive his Ph.D. this spring. He received a M.A. in International Affairs/ Environmental Policy from Ohio University-Athens in 2003 and a B.A. from the University of Asmara in his native Eritrea.

"At Western Illinois University, we celebrate, recognize, value and work to further enhance the diversity of our campus community," said WIU Provost Jack Thomas. "We actively engage in recruiting and training faculty, staff and students from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

"President Goldfarb's 'Statement on Diversity' supports activities and programs that enhance diversity throughout the university," he continued. "A part of the response to this priority by the Office of the Provost and Academic Vice President was to initiate the 'Underrepresented Minority Dissertation Fellowship.'

"I am so pleased we were able to attract a scholar of Daniel Ogbaharya's caliber as the inaugural recipient of this fellowship," Thomas added. "His background in political science, international affairs, and environmental policy was an outstanding fit for programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, and I know the Department of Political Science has valued his participation in its program."

Political Science Chairman Rick Hardy echoed Thomas.

"The Political Science department is fortunate to have the services of Daniel Ogbaharya this academic year," Hardy said. "He is a promising scholar who brings a wealth of knowledge concerning African political systems and environmental policies. Daniel can also offer keen insight into U.S. foreign policy with respect to African political systems."

Photo by Visual Production Center

Provost Jack Thomas

Ogbaharya's teaching and research interests include international relations, comparative politics, African politics, politics of developing areas, global environmental politics, post-conflict government, human rights and democratization. His dissertation in progress is titled, "Institutional Change and Continuity in Community-based Governance of Natural Resources in Ethiopia and Namibia: A Comparative Historical Analysis."

Ogbaharya is appreciative.

"The Underrepresented Minority Dissertation Fellowship is a golden opportunity for underrepresented doctoral students to be exposed to, and prepare for, all aspects of a tenure-track academic career," he said, "— teaching, research and university service. I am honored to be one of the first two dissertation fellows at WIU. My experience has been remarkable. Not only do I have the time and resources needed to complete my dissertation, but also I am teaching an upper-division course on African political systems. As a member of the University Diversity Council, I have the rare opportunity to meet and work with people from various departments and offices of WIU on campus-wide programs and activities that enrich diversity. Last but not least, the fellowship provides me with an ideal public forum for disseminating the findings of my research. Thus, I highly recommend the program to doctoral students who are looking for a rewarding academic exposure at a leading student-centered university."

Ogbaharya presented a lecture cosponsored by the departments of African American Studies and Political Science on October 27 titled "Would an Obama or McCain Presidency Result in 'Change' in U.S. Foreign Policy toward Africa?"

The Provost's Underrepresented Minority Dissertation Fellowship was started this year to enhance diversity in research, teaching and service at WIU through the recruitment of underrepresented minority graduate students from across the country who are completing dissertation research. Fellows teach one course each semester in an area related to their academic preparation and a need of the department hosting the fellow. They are expected to devote significant time to the completion of the dissertation; work with a faculty mentor; and be involved with co-curricular activities, including the University's cultural diversity initiatives.

Fellows must be dissertation-stage doctoral degree candidates studying in a field taught at WIU. Preference will be given to persons in disciplines in which minorities are traditionally underrepresented, with experience in diverse educational programs and environments, and a willingness to participate in WIU's diversity initiatives.

The Real Sequel

Harlan L. Watson

A 1967 WIU honors graduate in Physics, Harlan L. Watson, is best known now as the Senior Climate Negotiator and Special Representative for the U.S. Department of State. After leaving Macomb, he earned a doctorate in Solid State Physics at Iowa State University in 1973 and worked for consulting firms in military strategic planning and advance weapons systems and the Department of Energy.

He returned to graduate school and earned a Master's degree in Economics from Georgetown University in 1981 and worked as a staffer in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives for more than 16 years. After serving as White House Science Adviser in 1989, Watson in 1993 was appointed Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary to the Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science, and through 2001, served as Staff Director for the House Subcommittee on Energy.

He was named the chief negotiator on climate change in 2001.

Photo provided bu Harlan Watson

Blandinsville native and 1967 grad Harlan Watson

By Bill Knight

As a Blandinsville native and graduate of Northwestern High School in nearby Sciota, did Western seem like a comfy neighbor or an odd, even urban, community sort of plopped on the prairie?

More of a comfy neighbor. I was very familiar with the University, had been to many sporting events on the campus and knew many who had or were attending Western. In addition, I was able to secure a scholarship and a steady part-time job that made it possible for me to afford to get a collage education.

What were some memorable classroom moments or mentors of your time in Macomb?

With the passing of more than 40 years, I can't say that I recall any particular memorable classroom moments. However, the greatest influence on my time at Western and beyond was Professor of Physics Yan Lwin, who inspired me to continue on to graduate school and to earn a Ph.D. in Physics. His counsel and guidance were invaluable to me.

Off-campus — whether a part-time job or socializing — what was college life like then?

For me, it was an exciting, but very busy time. While at Western, I always had a part-time job, and between work and study, I had little time for extracurricular activities. I always carried a heavy courseload, and spent many hours a day studying. Then on weekends, I worked at a part-time job in a grocery store. This was also during the 1960s, which was a period of major change and debate, and I also spent time discussing and arguing about current events and politics with my roommates.

You earned a degree at WIU in Physics, a doctorate at Iowa State in Physics, then a Master's degree in Economics. What was the connection in your head as a twentysomething — and has it paid dividends?

I first earned a Ph.D. in Physics and then a Master's degree in Economics. I earned the latter, quite frankly, to make myself more employable as the job market in physics in the early to mid-1970s was not strong due to the decline in science funding during the Vietnam War years. It has also paid dividends as demonstrated by the fact that I have never been unemployed since I left graduate school over 35 years ago.

Last year you commented that the U.S. government "will come through with a national scheme for reducing GHG emissions, but we will not accept an international mandatory regime of emission caps," and praise for you as "conciliatory" from an environmental group. I wondered, were you interested in politics or diplomacy or negotiations as a student?

It was a comment I made at climate talks in Vienna in August 2007 that reflected the reality at that time. Yes, I was always interested in politics as far back as I can remember and feel fortunate to have worked in the political arena for nearly 30 years.

In recent years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Surgeon General and NASA's James Hansen all have complained about interference from people they felt were from the political