George W. Gardner

Neihardt

Dr. John Neihardt died Nov. 3 in Columbia at the age of 92. His credits include being chosen the poet laureate of Nebraska, three honorary doctoral degrees, chancellorship of the American Academy of Poets. In 1936, the National Poetry Center named him the foremost poet of the nation. But many alumni remember him best as a master teacher.

By JOHN THOMAS RICHARDS

"Let me live out my years in heat of blood!
Let me die drunken with the dreamer's wine!. . .
And grant me, when I face the grisly Thing,
One haughty cry to pierce the gray Perhaps!
O let me be a tune-swept fiddlestring
That feels the Master Melody — and snaps!"

Dr. John G. Neihardt, my old friend and mentor met death calmly. He spent his last two weeks with his daughter, Hilda Petri, in her home north of Columbia, refrained from alarming his friends when he knew that his biological clock was almost run down, and died quietly at 3:30 on the afternoon of November 3 before any ambulance could arrive. He told me a few years ago that he had given up the concept expressed above, of meeting death as a "grisly Thing" with a cry of defiance. "Death," he said, "is going to be the greatest adventure in my life. When I was young, I called it a grisly thing, but I don't feel that way any more. Death will come like a mother, bending over me and holding me kindly, with affection."

Since he came to the University of Missouri at Columbia in 1949 as Poet in Residence and lecturer in English, Neihardt's effect upon nearly two decades of students has been profound.

In the first place, Neihardt's prose sang like his rolling poetry, and he had the stage presence, from years on the lecture circuit, to wrap any audience in the words he flung so well. He may not have been a born actor—he has told me briefly of the early tension and stage fright which first accompanied his public speaking tours—but he took his friend Volney Streamer's advice and practiced his hypnotic public readings and speeches until he could keep an audience completely in sympathy.

His personality was charismatic and could grip and hold the undivided attention of his classes, some of which overflowed the old auditorium at the west end of the library. These were his Epic America classes, in which he taught from his *A Cycle of the West*. There were smaller classes in literary criticism, too—and graduate students responded with hard work and unflagging enthusiasm.

In the second place, Neihardt was one of the first men to teach American Indian Literature in any university. As an old Sioux longhair once said, "His skin is white, but his heart is as Sioux as ours." The folksinger, Buffy St.-Marie, said, "Neihardt is the only white man who ever told the truth about the Indian." My Hopi friend, Dwight Lomayesva, once told me, "I don't know much about the Sioux, Tom, but I can tell that Neihardt knows what he is talking about. He knows how *any* Indian's mind works."

Other white men have lived with the tribes and have come to understand their cultures; among the early trappers in the days of the fur

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The kind of kitchen cooks dream about is a working reality in Claiborne's East Hampton house. Steel fixtures, old wall tiles and copper pots and pans give it real character.

Claiborne 'Bread' Comes from Cookbooks

By BARBIE & PJ JOHNSON

"Most people thought when Craig Claiborne said goodbye to the New York Times *a couple of years ago, he'd be up to his ankles in poverty. Although he does not particularly care for baking, he is, in modern parlance and by his own admission up to his bottom in bread. Money, that is. Thanks to cookbooks"*—Craig Claiborne

It was a warm, sunny Sunday afternoon in East Hampton. We stood on Craig Claiborne's deck outside the living room looking down to a small beach and Gardiners Bay. We'd just enjoyed a casual, but delicious lunch, champagne, and much conversation about the University of Missouri back in the 1940s and Claiborne's subsequent, though not immediate, rise to fame as one of the world's best known food critics. We said we thought we had better be going, as the ride back into New York City on Sundays is always an ordeal. Claiborne asked us a number of times to stay. His other guests had left and he seemed rather lonely. Then he sat down at his typewriter, a permanent fixture in his kitchen, and typed the above. "Here's the lead to your story," he said. "How about it?"

His lead is not at all how we envisioned this article beginning. But as a journalist we respected his contribution, and after later rereading it, we realized what a telling statement he had written.

Claiborne is a man who wielded great power when he was at the *New York Times*. His enthusiastic review of a restaurant literally could mean financial and social success to its owners. A negative review could be the kiss of death. His expense account at the *Times* allowed, actually required, him to be a world traveler. He's dined in practically every restaurant in the world worth mentioning. But despite this, Claiborne at 53, is a quiet, modest man who has never really gotten over his childhood insecurities. There is a lot of pride in his 5-9 frame and he doesn't want anyone to think he's sitting in the grave, as he put it, waiting to die.

Craig Claiborne was born in Sunflower, Miss., in 1920. As a boy growing up in Indianola about halfway between Jackson and Memphis, he spent a lot of time in the kitchen. "My mother ran a boarding house and I loved to cook. It was largely a children's lib reaction. I wanted to cook better than my mother." The memories however aren't pleasant. He says he spent much of his life in abject poverty and that the reason for his cooking competition was his deep dislike of his mother. To this day Claiborne goes away at Christmas because of bad childhood memories.

He enrolled in pre-med at Mississippi State College but only stuck it out for two years. As he says: "I hated pre-med. I threw up anytime I smelled formaldehyde."

Claiborne transferred to the University of Missouri. "I was very unaware as a kid, but I knew Missouri was the oldest school of journalism and I loved to write poetry, so I decided to become a journalist."

The years in Columbia are remembered as somewhat haphazard, directionless times. "I had no real goals and only passing grades. I went through more or less unnoticed," Claiborne says, not to be modest, but to explain the phenomenon of many who later become famous. There is a sort of drifting of the spirit while they are in college. They are the ones professors call "late bloomers."

Claiborne remembers two instances where his creative writing ability was shot down. One was a musical he wrote for Savitar Frolics. "It was really racy for 1941. It had to do with a football player who runs around with a bad dame." His work was not produced.

The other creative put down was as a J-School student selling advertising for the *Missourian*. One of his accounts was Wolfe Brothers. "I wrote what I thought was the greatest headline. 'You too could be a Wolf in Wolfe's clothing.' They rejected it."

Graduation in 1942 was followed by three years in the Navy in Europe and the Far East. After the war he went to Chicago—which he loved—until it started closing in on him. "I got to know too many people. Sunflower was a town of 250 and I hadn't come to Chicago to relive my Mississippi days."

When the Korean War broke out he went back into the Navy. The interruption proved a turning point. In 1953 Claiborne followed his earlier inclinations toward cooking and enrolled in Ecole Hoteliere, the professional school of Swiss hotel keepers in Lausanne.

The experience landed him a job with *Gourmet* magazine and then as part of the team of Seranne & Gaden, a pr firm specializing in foodservice. All the while Claiborne had his eye on the food critic's job at the *New York Times*. When the opening came he hesitated applying as no man had ever held the position. However, after learning that they'd rejected a number of applicants he made his move. "When I joined the *Times* it was the first time in my life I'd made as much as $5,000 a year." That was about 15 years ago.

Today Claiborne collects an annual six figure income from just the royalties of his cookbooks. He publishes a monthly newsletter journal with his friend Pierre Franey, former chef of Le Pavillon. The Journal sells for $50 a year and has subscribers from all over the world. Claiborne is a food consultant for *Travel & Leisure* magazine and is constantly asked to take on special projects and speaking engagements. For the most part, he declines. However in less than a month's time he made a demonstration in Ft. Wayne, Ind. (he gave his fee to the Fine Arts Museum there) and helped host a 12-day Culinary Cruise on the S. S. France to the Caribbean. In the last three years he's been written about in such magazines as *House & Garden, Esquire, National Review, Ladies Home Journal* (three times) and *Harpers Bazaar*. When he's not working he's entertaining. His guests range from Helen Hayes, Iris Murdock, Willie Morris, Lillian Gish to Henry Creel, a 1931 University of Missouri graduate and former Shell Oil executive, and Burton Rouche, another Missouri graduate and well-known writer.

Despite his notoriety Claiborne classmates would undoubtedly find him much the same today as he was in 1942. Sensitive. Scrupulously honest. Terribly enthusiastic about things that interest him. Somewhat self demeaning. A kind and loyal friend. □

empires, more white frontiersmen "went native" than Indians accepted white ways. But it is rare indeed to find a highly educated, cultivated man with Neihardt's talent as a teacher who would become a Sioux—after living among the Omaha just after the turn of this century—and learn the Siouxan truths, and then teach them to university students.

And it was a happy coincidence, to say the least, when a tolerant and foresighted University of Missouri President, Elmer Ellis, set his sights on Neihardt as his university's Poet in Residence, and persisted until he wooed Neihardt away from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and into the academic world which Neihardt had once sworn he would never accept. "You can't be a teacher and a writer, too," Neihardt once told me. "This is contrary to current beliefs, but most of my ideas are against the current of contemporary opinion. When I came to Columbia, I knew that I wouldn't get any writing done." He had finished *When the Tree Flowered*; the manuscript only had to be polished to meet a publisher's deadline date. His next published poem, after years of self-imposed poetic silence, was a contribution to *The Poetry Bag*, fully a year after his retirement from MU in 1965.

Neihardt was a pragmatic mystic, one of those paradoxical men who, living by the pen, are able to save money, invest wisely in gems, books, horses, property, so that they can afford to write well what they wish, without the admonition of a hunger-pinch.

How did I come to know this man? One day, after I transferred to Columbia from another college, hobbling about—a cracked kneecap was my souvenir from Fort Leonard Wood and my passport to the academic maze—I chanced to see an afternoon televised talk show. This was in the fall of 1958, when Neihardt was doing a series of public television appearances as part of an experiment in televiewing education. I knew instantly that I had to meet this man who spoke of men like old Hugh Glass with his mangled leg, crawling across the wilderness, like one who knew the torment of that crawl from personal experience, who spoke of history which was alive and singing in the wind, not Carlyle's "dryasdust."

It took a while. I watched his televised courses every chance I got, I went to hear his public lectures—he lectured on every subject from Indians and frontier literature to ESP—and finally, a year later, I squeezed into a packed Epic America auditorium. Before that semester was over, I had battered on the door of his patience until he let me learn more than in the classroom. In the old greasy-spoon restaurant which used to be across from the rear doors of Jesse Hall, he and I would eat thick stew and converse; that summer, I would drive out to Skyrim Farm and learn from long hours of conversation. Wherever my wanderings took me after that, to teaching jobs in Arizona, to other jobs elsewhere, I would always come back to touch home base at Skyrim, or write long letters which he always answered.

In 1961, I became a member of Neihardt's groups of parapsychological experimenters who ran a long series of tests for telekinetic and psychokinetic evidence. These experiments Neihardt shared with his friend, Dr. Joseph Banks Rhine of the F.R.N.M. at Duke University. I have described them in my book about Neihardt- *Luminous Sanity*.

Neihardt had a zest for living, a zest which drove him to live the epic which he wrote, which made it necessary for him to retrace the route of the fur trappers down the Missouri as he describes this glorious adventure in *The River and I*, to explore on foot the badlands through which Hugh Glass crawled, to live with Indians who, as youngsters, had been present at the death of Custer and the massacre at Wounded Knee, "where a dream of peace and brotherhood lay bloody in the snow." He communicated this zest and joy in living to his students and his disciples.

But his zest for living included a zest for dying. "I look upon death as a glorious adventure," he said a year ago, but years before, he sang:

"Seek not for me within the tomb;
You shall not find me in the clay!
I pierce a little wall of gloom
To mingle with the Day!

I brothered with the things that pass;
Poor giddy Joy and puckered Grief;
I go to brother with the Grass
And with the sunning Leaf. . .

My God and I shall interknit
As rain and Ocean, breath and Air;
And O, the luring thought of it
Is prayer!" □

Three Mizzou Profs Propose Building Sun-Wind Converters To Combat Energy Crisis

By JOSEPH J. MARKS

To meet the energy crisis, get your own private power supply.

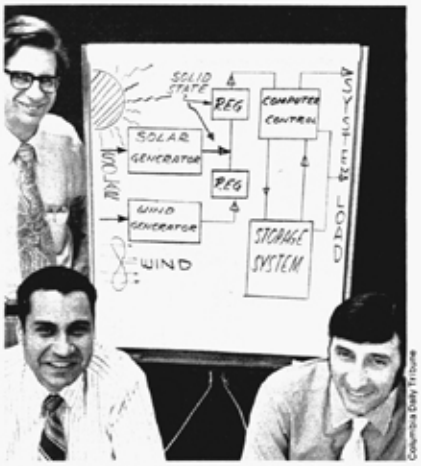
And put your money on those "limitless" power sources: sun and wind.

That's the course being followed by three University of Missouri-Columbia scientists. If their efforts go as well as expected, you'll be able to buy your own supplementary energy system—a sun-wind energy converter—in four to five years!

Dr. Walter Meyer, professor and chairman of nuclear engineering, and Dr. Aly Mahmoud and Dr. Carmelo Calabrese, both professors of electrical engineering, are confident they can build the energy converter. Its basic components already exist. It's just a matter of putting them together.

To build an experimental model, the scientists will need about two years and $125,000 (which they first requested from the National Science Foundation February 1973).

Once a model is built, a manufacturer could mass produce the unit, bringing costs down to $2,000 to $3,000 per home.



From the left, Dr. Meyer, Dr. Mahmoud, and Dr. Calabrese.

Here's how the supplementary energy system will work:

Atop your house will be a wind converter with a propeller driven generator. It will be about as big as a good sized TV antenna (5 to 10 feet in diameter) and hopefully, will supply 70 percent or more of the home energy you'll need. (Wind is an inexpensive energy source.)

On the sides of the roof will be two skylight-like panels, each about the size of a desk top. They will contain silicon cells which convert the solar energy into electrical energy.

Electric cables from wind, solar energy units, and the public utility will be interconnected via the electronic brain (more about that later). These cables will run to the basement into large storage cells (like automobile batteries).

The storage batteries, about the size of two file cabinets, could cost about $700 to $800. That expense will be in addition to the cost of the energy converters, but the batteries should last 7 to 8 years. Once charged, they could give your home enough power for two weeks, even if the public utility should shut down and there's no sun or wind during the entire time.

There will be an inverter to convert DC (direct current) to AC (alternating current) near the battery. The battery produces DC current, while everything in and around the house—assuming it operates as it does today—runs on AC.

Somewhere in the house will be an electronic control device—a "brain" that will automatically control the amount of power coming into the house, distribute it throughout the house, and send the excess to the utility company or to the neighbors who need it. This "brain" might also be programmed so that you can tell it which part of the house should be turned on first when power comes in and which should be turned off last in case of a shortage.

When the University of Missouri-Columbia scientists set out to develop the supplementary energy system, they recognized there was no single solution to the energy crisis. They wanted to make as much use as possible of energy sources which would have an endless supply (sun and wind) and combine them with a familiar source (a utility company). Their idea is to develop and build a system that will supplement the power now provided by utility companies without placing total faith in any one source of energy.

Meyer is primarily interested in the sun as an energy source and sees the converter's main utility as supplementing the power we are now receiving from oil, gas, coal, and nuclear plants.

Calabrese likes the converter idea because energy would be generated "right at the home itself."

And Mahmoud, who is directing the research project and who has already patented some of the solid state devices used to make up the electronic brain, sees the project as "a challenge" and a chance to involve graduate students in "something that will work to meet society's needs."

As you learn about the supplementary energy system, you can almost picture hundreds of thousands of people flocking to buy one. It would provide a much needed energy source. It wouldn't be any noisier than the wind blowing around your home. And, while it would be fairly costly, it would seem like a worthwhile investment.

But, Mahmoud isn't so convinced that acceptance will be enthusiastic. "If people really need to have these things," he said, "they'll probably get them. But there's a lot of difference between accepting something and having it crammed down your throat.

"A lot of subdivisions don't even allow outdoor TV antennas. What do you suppose people might think of something that looks like this?" he said, pointing to a drawing of the sun-wind energy converter.

"I think people will accept these units, but it will take time."

Mahmoud admitted there might be a way to avoid putting a supplementary energy system in every residential structure. Bigger units could be built to serve a city block or subdivision.

He said something like his energy converter might become a necessity because of the limits of existing energy sources.

How about that big stockpile of oil that's supposed to be locked in shale? We're supposed to have the technology to get it by 1980. "I'll be thrilled if we get it by 1990," said Mahmoud. Even then, we will still have to develop a system to move it to where we need it."

What about nuclear power? "Even with the rapid developments in nuclear power," said Meyer, "the utilities would welcome supplemental power systems to offset part of the demand."

So the sun-wind energy converter keeps looking better. I've already sent in my order. □