

Writer August Derleth, 62, Focused on Wisconsin Life

By Ellen Hoffman

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August W. Derleth, 62, a Wisconsin author who wrote 150 books, died after an apparent heart attack Sunday in Sauk City, Wisc.

He died at his home, "Place of Hawks," which bears the same name as a 1935 novel in his "Sac Prairie Saga." The "Sac Prairie" series and his "Wisconsin Saga," which chronicle the life of the river towns of Sauk City and Prairie Du Sac, were considered by Mr. Derleth to be his "serious" work.

"In the overwhelming majority of my books I am primarily an entertainer, little more than the primitive storyteller who had a place at his tribal fire. I believe in communicating as simply and directly as possible, and am not interested in various literary 'isms . . .' Mr. Derleth wrote in a discussion of his work in "Contemporary Authors."

One of the books in the "Sac Prairie Saga," "Walden

Family," published in 1934, and "Death by Design," published in 1953.

Among his other works are biographies of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, "Solar Pons" stories (pastiches from Sherlock Holmes), supernatural fiction and historical fiction for young people.



AUGUST DERLETH

West," won a nonfiction award from the Council of Wisconsin Writers.

In addition to the two series of novels, Mr. Derleth wrote a series of "Judge Peck" mysteries including "Murder Stalks the Wakely

Mr. Derleth was born in Sauk City and graduated from the University of Wisconsin. He held a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1938 and was a lecturer in American regional literature at the University of Wisconsin during the early 1940s.

In the course of his career, he had also served as literary editor of the "Capital Times" newspaper in Madison, Wis., and contributing editor to "Outdoors" magazine. In 1958, Mr. Derleth created Arkham House, a publishing concern.

He is survived by his mother, Mrs. William J. Derleth, of Sauk City, and two children.

† 1971 July 4
Sauk City, Wis.

