

ALPHA CHI RECORDER

Vol. 50, No. 3

Alumni Issue

Fall 2007

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On the cover

The visual, architectural, educational, and spiritual center of John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, is the Cathedral Group, three buildings completed fifty years ago and currently being restored. JBU is home to the Arkansas Lambda chapter, winner of the 2003 President's Cup as the society's outstanding chapter.

The Last Eyewitnesses

*In Search of America's
Oldest Veterans*

By **Will Everett**

A dozen years ago, while living in France, I paid my first visit to the trenches. I had heard that after the Armistice, with 500 miles of trenches to deal with, some had been left intact for posterity, exactly as they were when the soldiers all trudged off for home in 1918. One such sector was at Ypres, a medieval Flemish town of fairytale splendor that had been leveled in World War I. Farmers in the area still plow up old gunstocks, bullets, and bones in those placid fields.

One misty morning I met a World War I veteran, a man in his mid-90s being led by the arm by his elderly son. They might have been just out for a cold-weather stroll, except that

This is the third in a series of articles about distinctive programs or projects at Alpha Chi colleges and universities. The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College, home of the Texas Alpha Omicron chapter, provided support for Will Everett's audio documentary on surviving World War I veterans in the form of a grant from the office of the provost, Dr. Jose Martin, and research assistance from two professors of history.

the old man seemed to be searching for something. They were walking along an observation platform, looking down into the trench. Every few yards the old man would peer into the trench, then up at the nearby ridge, as if trying to get his bearings.

Later, while the father was walking alone, I asked the son if his father was a veteran, and he said that he was. What was his father looking for? “After it rains, things that have been buried for years suddenly come to the surface, and with the next rain they sink back again forever. You can find the strangest things.”

Recovering the Past

Belgium’s World War I veterans are all gone now; the last one died in 2004. Scotland lost its last veteran in 2005. The last Austrian and Hungarian veterans both died in March 2006. As of August 2007, France had four veterans, Germany had two, Britain had three, and Canada had one sole survivor. When I began searching for surviving U.S. WWI veterans at the start of 2006, twenty-four veterans remained. Now there are only three.

In some ways, it was the memory of an old man staring down into that damp trench that sent me, in early 2006, in search of America’s last WWI veterans. As a freelance documentary producer, I look for subjects of historical importance that will connect with a National Public Radio audience. I also look for stories that for one reason or another have slipped past other TV and radio producers.

To my surprise, no project was currently under way, either on TV or radio, that spotlighted this shrinking handful of WWI veterans. How had World War I faded from the public consciousness? For one thing, WWI suffered from the technology of its time; newsreel photography was scarcely out of its infancy, and sound movies hadn’t yet been invented, leaving little tangible evidence for later generations. For another thing, WWI was eclipsed by the horrors of a more terrible war, one in which U.S. interests were more crucially affected. Also, WWI was a *very* long time ago.

More than 65 million men and women were mobilized for military service worldwide in 1914-1918. Some 8.5 million were killed. If you lined up these casualties shoulder to shoulder, they would span a distance from New York to Rio de Janeiro. As of this writing, however, only twenty-three WWI veterans remain from all participating countries.

Historians mark the end of any military era with the passing of its last veteran. The last Revolutionary War veteran died in 1869, eighty-six years after the war. The last Civil War veteran died in 1953, eighty-seven years after the war. Given that it’s been eighty-nine years since the Armistice of 1918, it’s hardly an exaggeration to say that we are fast approaching the end of an era.

But how many U.S. veterans of WWI are still out there? More than 4.5 million Americans were mobilized during the roughly eighteen months that the U.S. fought in World War I. If you enlisted in 1918 at the age of 18, you’d be 107 years old now. Only 2 percent of the population lives to be 100, much less 107. How many survivors could there be? And, more to the point, how many are left who could give a coherent account of that long-ago time?

So began my quest, with the help of the U.S. Office of Veterans Affairs, to track down and document the memories of America’s oldest veterans. Through Lexus/Nexus searches, Internet newspaper searches, and a thorough perusal of existing V.A. records (most were destroyed in a fire in 1973), I was able to identify what were *probably* America’s last WWI

veterans, though in coming months several others surfaced as news about the project began sweeping the country.

We found thirteen of these veterans still living. Three were veterans who'd seen service on the Western Front, five served in the Navy patrolling the Atlantic, and the remainder never got out of boot camp before the war's end, but are considered active duty. Nearly half of the thirteen were underage enlistees. The group ranged in age from 105 to 114.

Next we needed a host for the program, one with a connection to twentieth century history and a reputation that would lend a voice of authority to the project. We could think of none better than Walter Cronkite, who, when approached, was eager to participate in the program. While the story of America's involvement in WWI would largely be told by the veterans themselves, we devised a script whereby Mr. Cronkite could offer a historical perspective on the years leading up to 1917.

Tales of Yesterday

Having identified the veterans, I then began going out to meet them and record their reminiscences. Despite their advanced age, the veterans proved remarkably lucid. There were surprisingly few veterans who couldn't be interviewed, although there were some whose families felt they were not physically or mentally up to the challenge. And then there were the curiosities like Harold Gardner, who got on the train to go to boot camp on November 11, 1918, and was told to get off the train a few hours later when the Armistice was signed, receiving a paycheck of one dollar for his one day in the U.S. Army.

In traveling across the U.S. to meet these last WWI veterans, I quickly realized they weren't a brotherhood of heroes. The war touched them all, but their contributions were simple, sometimes unpleasant, usually dull. What made them important wasn't their contribution to the war but their longevity. The First World War was little more than a footnote in their long lives.

Part of my search for the last World War I veterans was a search for common ground, a connection to the past that would help me to understand such a remote point in time. The history of WWI is well

documented. I knew these centenarians would add little to the military story, but I hoped perhaps that I could extract the sort of anecdotal evidence that would bring that era into relief.

Take George Johnson, at age 112 the oldest man in California when I met him in May 2006. He lived alone in the house that he and his late wife had built in the California Bay

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*George Johnson**Jack Babcock*

PHOTOS BY JOEL LAMAR

area in 1930. He was blind but in great health—a loud-talking soothsayer with a sharp wit and great stories. The story of his early life is an adventure classic. He told me that before I could understand his military experience, I had to know something of how he first came to learn that the world was at war. When George was about 16, he and a friend were canoeing on the Delaware River near Philadelphia when they came upon an Argentinian battleship. Naturally they wanted to climb aboard and look it over, and while Johnson was below decks the ship pushed away from the pier and he was carried off as an accidental stowaway. He spent two years trying to get home. It was while traveling to England on a merchant ship that he first learned of the German submarines that were prowling the Atlantic. He arrived home and was drafted at the end of the war.

Understanding the world of 1917 and 1918 meant understanding how these men filled their incidental hours, what they did for fun. As it turned out, life was pretty mundane for average soldiers or sailors in World War I, but they found ways of livening things up. Homer Anderson (age 109) cut quite a figure on the dance floor. Ernest Pusey (age 110) went AWOL in England after meeting a pretty girl, and spent six months under house arrest. Jack Babcock (age 105) and his fellow underage enlistees in the Young Soldiers Battalion would get up at dawn to go skinny-dipping in the English Channel.

It was Babcock who introduced me to the music of the time. When I visited him at his home in Spokane, Washington, I persuaded him to sing some of his favorite songs from 1917. He remembered five or six of them in great detail and wasn't in the least reluctant to belt them out on tape. Babcock was Canadian and thus joined the Canadian Army, though a decade later he would become a U.S. citizen. Recent newspaper articles have thus omitted him from the ranks of American WWI veterans, though for purposes of our documentary his nearly 80 years of American citizenship more than qualified him for inclusion in the program.

Few of the veterans interviewed for the program saw active duty in the trenches. While 113-year-old Moses Hardy had the distinction of being the last African-American veteran of WWI, he saw little of the battlefield until after the Armistice, when his unit (the



PHOTO BY JOEL LAMAR

*Antonio Pierro at age 110
and in uniform at 19*



805th Pioneer Infantry) was used to sort and identify human remains. Howard Ramsey (age 108) drove a truck and delivered supplies, but never fired a shot. Frank Buckles (age 105) was also a driver, but his commission kept him near Bordeaux, far from the fighting.

For purposes of our documentary, the title of last surviving U.S. combat veteran went to Antonio Pierro, the only living American to have personally witnessed the bloodshed of the Western Front. Born in Italy, he joined the Army at age 19 to gain U.S. citizenship, fighting in the Argonne and Meuse offensives. He was 110 years old when interviewed for the documentary and died shortly after the program aired.

What was critically lacking was a member of the Army cavalry, which played an important role in protecting the U.S.-Mexico border against the perceived threat of a German invasion through Mexico. This was only a year after Pancho Villa's small paramilitary force attacked Columbus, New Mexico, killing sixteen soldiers and a handful of civilians and leaving the town in ruins. President Wilson responded by deploying 15,000 cavalry troops to the border and sending a punitive expedition into Mexico. The expedition was led by Brigadier General John J. Pershing, who would head the American Expeditionary Force in Europe the following year.

New events would create an even greater exigency for protection of America's southern border. In early 1917, a telegram was sent by the German Foreign Secretary to the German Ambassador to Mexico, Alfred Zimmermann. It proposed a military alliance with Mexico



PHOTO BY JOEL LAMAR

Samuel Goldberg

and promised, in exchange, the return of Mexico's "lost provinces" in Texas and New Mexico. The interception of this telegram was a galvanizing event in the months leading up to U.S. participation in World War One. With Germany's resumption of unlimited submarine warfare in the Atlantic, the Zimmermann telegram made Germany's intentions abundantly clear. With the U.S. declaration of war against Germany on April 6, 1917, cavalry units were dispatched along the entire length of the U.S.-Mexico border.

I could find no record of any surviving cavalry soldiers from 1917-1918. Then, several months into the production of our documentary, I received word from Veterans Affairs that a 106-year-old cavalry soldier named Samuel Goldberg had contacted the V.A. to find out if any of his regiment buddies were still alive from his period of service at Hatchita, New

Mexico. He was told that not only were all the Hatchita veterans gone, but he was in fact the last member of the U.S. Cavalry from the period of the First World War.

Goldberg would prove a fascinating and energetic interview subject. But he was important for another reason. A documentary of this scale requires the collaboration of an institution of higher education, from both a financial and a humanities standpoint. We had established such a collaboration with the University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College, which is located on the banks of the Rio Grande River in what was formerly Fort Brown, an important border fort dating back to the Mexican-American War. We had engaged the intellectual contributions of two of the school's history professors with expertise in both World War I and border history, Dr. William Adams and Dr. Anthony Knopp. Given the prominence of border issues in prompting U.S. participation in WWI, a cavalry connection was vital to the story we hoped to tell. Finding Goldberg was thus one of the more serendipitous moments in the nine months of documentary production. He was a man of keen insights and amazing long-term memory. He passed away three months after our interview.

Goldberg's death put me in mind of a fact that should have been apparent to me from the beginning: these were men who weren't long for this world. During production, and following the November 2006 release of the documentary, I began getting periodic e-mails from the V.A. alerting me to the passing of one or another of my interview subjects. Each one hit me like a fist in the gut. The veterans and I had talked about their longevity. I'd wanted to know the secret to living a long life, and they all had their own ideas on the subject. Some had avoided meats, some had avoided alcohol, but all in all they were men whom death had forgotten. But not for long. One by one I began losing them.

The veterans of World War I had taken me on a journey through time with their stories, and they were expert navigators. But the ultimate story was still to be told, and they wouldn't be around to tell it. I wanted to know their feelings about eternity. What did they think would happen once they crossed to the other side? The results were mixed. Some were believers in

an afterlife, but a surprising number (about 70 percent) believed that death was the ultimate end. Most were believers in a Supreme Being but had long ago lost any interest in religion or an afterlife.

Farewell to an Era

We've had the Lost Generation, the Greatest Generation, Generation X, and so on. I came to think of the World War I veterans as Generation One—born in the nineteenth century, eyewitnesses of the twentieth, holding on into the twenty-first.

They remembered the world before the airplane, before the Soviet Union, before radio—a quieter time. And these were quiet men. They were curious about the contemporary world, but many or perhaps most of them had become rooted to their own long-ago time, a time most have forgotten. They cared about how people remembered the First World War. They wanted to be remembered.

When you meet a veteran of World War I, you're in their life for a couple of hours or as long as it takes to get the story. But as a producer you have them with you for weeks and months as you hear their words over and over. Their way of speaking, their values, their sense of life all become enmeshed in your own. You don't want them to go, but you know they will.

World War I is truly the forgotten war. Its causes are vague, its goals unclear, its heroes largely forgotten. I approached the subject of World War I with the memory of a Belgian veteran peering into a trench one rainy day a dozen years ago, looking for whatever would turn up in the mud. Time will move beyond World War I, as it will move beyond World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq. Time moved beyond that 90-something veteran I met in Belgium, but the legacies of his war are with us today.

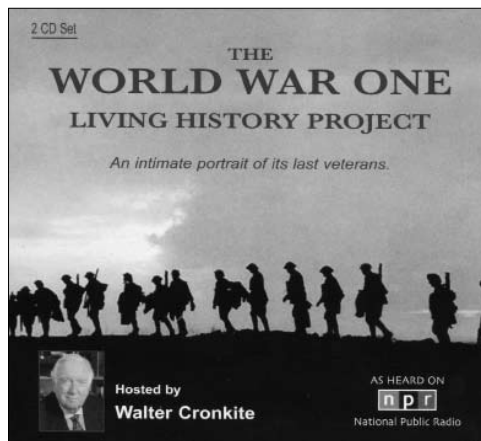
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Patton, there must be the
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World War I was the beginning of the new world order. The United States, which lost comparatively few lives in the war, gained the most in terms of international stature. American values were shaped by the events of 1917 and 1918. From a policy of isolationism, the U.S. became a key player on the international stage. World War I gave us the Treaty of Versailles, and with it the economic strangulation of Germany that gave rise to Adolf Hitler. World War I gave Russia the impetus to raise a 12-million-man army, and, with the famine and hardship that followed, brought the 300-year-old House of Romanov to an end, giving rise to the Soviet Union. It killed the European monarchies and gave birth to parliamentary rule across the continent.

A full understanding of the twentieth century begins with a study of the First World War. The bungling course set by a handful of diplomats, politicians, and generals in 1914 is the course we sail by today. Those men are gone, but a tiny handful remain as witnesses to that fading time. They weren't historical figures, but time and circumstances have appointed them custodians of the First World War.

One day, perhaps very soon, the circle will be completed, and the veterans of World War I will join the ranks of those who gave their service in other wars, in other times. For every army raised by an Alexander or Nero or Napoleon or Pershing or Patton, there must be the last man standing, the last eyewitness, the last link. And then that era is relinquished to history.

For more information about the World War One Living History Project, visit www.thelivinghistoryproject.org. The two-hour documentary is available in a 2-CD set from Amazon.com and CDBaby.com.



Will Everett is a freelance radio producer and president of Treehouse Productions. His reporting has taken him most recently to Afghanistan and throughout the Middle East. For nine years he produced the weekly music and literature program Theme and Variations. He is currently at work on a documentary based on his travels in Iran.

Mentoring New ELL Teachers

A Novice Induction Program That Works

By Patricia Ann Williams

Are first-year teachers, like many of their pupils, at risk of dropping out of school? Under new career pressures, too frequently new teachers quickly leave the profession. Normal first-year stresses are amplified when these beginning teachers find themselves unprepared for teaching English language learners (ELLs), students for whom English is a second language.

In 2002 the Texas State University System and Houston Endowment Inc. developed a partnership to discover how to retain teachers. The Novice Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), a comprehensive induction concept, included support and resources, such as graduate seminars designed specifically for neophytes at no cost to them. Data results are good—the program was successful.

After describing the teacher retention problem, I will explain NTIP's components and present statistics that support the program's effectiveness. Most school district illustrations are from Aldine Independent School District, the twelfth largest district in Texas with a 61

percent Hispanic population. During the 2002-2005 academic years, I served as the university professor for the NTIP graduate courses taught in that district.

New Teacher Scenario—“The Revolving Door”

Let’s visualize a typical scenario. In August, Rosie Glass, newly graduated teacher, arrives for her first professional development day with high expectations and a winning smile. “It’s going to be a great year,” she exclaims to all the teachers she meets. Her third grade team members smile and welcome her, walk her to her classroom, and leave. She’s not sure where to find bulletin board materials or how to work the copy machine, and she thinks she may need more desks. Where are the custodians? She soon discovers that most of the materials and the best furniture have been scooped up, and she’s in a quandary about what to do.

When she confides in the assistant principal, Mr. Fry, about her predicament, he reminds her, “Other teachers have seniority. One of these days, you’ll have the best.” Her walls are bare, and the students are to arrive tomorrow at 8 a.m. As she reads the roster, she notices student names such as Catalina, Juan, Margarita, and José. She pauses a few minutes to contemplate what to do if these youngsters are not English proficient. However, these thoughts quickly give way to immediate problems. She’ll be at school until midnight decorating her multicultural classroom.

By the third week of school, Rosie is exhausted and hoping to survive until May. She keeps getting paperwork, but she doesn’t know how to organize it all. Some of it is lost on her desk. She’s been promised two file cabinets that haven’t arrived yet. She had Catalina’s reading tests several days ago, but she can’t find them now, a fact that doesn’t amuse the bilingual specialist who visits. Catalina’s test scores are needed for the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee meeting to be held that afternoon. As the specialist leaves, Rosie’s heart sinks. She knows she will hear from the principal soon.

At home, hours of nonstop sleeping between crying bouts become common practice. As December arrives, she feels totally inadequate and quits. On her last day, a human resource staff member interviews her about her departure. Why would she leave her chosen profession after only four months? She meekly replies, “I don’t know. Maybe I really wasn’t cut out for teaching. It’s too exhausting and too many hassles. I don’t think I’m any good at it.”

In walks Newton Greene, a new employee, who feels that he understands what happened. Ms. Glass just wasn’t prepared and organized. He’s substituted before, and it was a cinch. On the first day, the principal, assuring him that he wants to support his teachers, introduces him to Rosie’s third grade class. This semester the school has instigated a new induction program, and the principal introduces him to his mentor—the teacher next door, Mrs. Wise. Newton instantly feels at home. He has met a new friend who can show him everything. She’s been at that elementary school for twenty-five years. Each morning she waves at him on her way to her class and shouts, “Let me know if you need anything. I’m right next door.”

As time progresses, Newton is a bit dismayed. Ms. Wise is friendly, yes, but she’s also team leader and seems too busy to meet with him often. He has questions about the three new English language learners in his class. Where can he find resources? Are any books available in Spanish? How can he keep them active and engaged? They appear bored and aren’t learning anything. He’s tried calling the parents, but no one is ever home.

Plus, he missed the last ESL professional development meeting because no one

informed him about it. Administrative pressure is mounting to make sure everyone passes the state-mandated reading test, and he knows his students are falling behind the other third graders. To complicate matters, he's beginning to have classroom management problems. Some youngsters have been bullying each other, using racial slurs, and making fun of the poorer kids' clothing. Apparently lacking their respect, he's lost control of the class. It's only February. Can he make it until May? By then he'll be ready to retire from teaching.

In August, Angelica Newbie, a newly certified teacher, is hired to replace Newton, and the elementary principal tells her about a third grade position. She's overjoyed. She's wanted to be a teacher all of her life, can't wait to meet her youngsters, and has exciting plans for this school year. In

fact, she intends to write a parent newsletter in Spanish and English, and she wonders where she can find paper. As she's scouting for another room, the counselor finds her in the workroom. Two Vietnamese twins just enrolled this morning,

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and they've been put in Angelica's class. As the counselor hands her their telephone number, she mentions that the parents speak "broken English" and the children seem anxious.

The cycle of at-risk beginning teachers continues. How do we retain teachers such as these three, who had been eager to begin a meaningful education career?

Why Care?

Unfortunately, in some schools, especially those hard to staff, "this scenario repeats itself in classroom after classroom and for some children, much of their academic career is spent suspended in this revolving door of school staff challenges" (Huling 2006, 96-97). Stopping this cycle would not only improve children's chances of getting experienced and successful teachers and thus a better education, but it would also save money spent on recruiting and retaining teachers. In Texas that cost a few years ago was about \$8,000 per new employee, spent on wooing teachers to a particular district, paying moving expenses, and arranging new employee professional development and induction sessions (Texas Center for Educational Research 2000). Every time a new teacher leaves, the district's initial investment is lost.

This cost becomes exorbitant when multiplied by the number of new faces each year. Nationwide, school districts within the next decade are expected to experience an unparalleled demand, 2.2 million teachers, coupled with the needs of an increasing minority population (Webb, Metha, Jordan 2007). By 2110, Stephens and Harris (2000) predict, one in three students will be minority, compared to only one in twenty teachers. According to the Public Education Network and the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, there are approximately "5.5 million English language learners in U.S. public schools who speak more than 400 different languages" (1). The vast majority, 80 percent, speaks Spanish as

their first language. This number constitutes more than 12 percent of all public elementary and secondary school students (Public Education Network and National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education n.d.). These figures correlate with Grant and Gillette's data. In 2000, "one-third of the United States population [was] nonwhite and 31.8 million people communicate[d] in 329 languages other than English" (Grant and Gillette 2006, 44).

However, fully certified ESL and bilingual teachers are scarce (Webb, Metha, Jordan 2007). One study reports that in the United States "only 2.5 percent of teachers who instruct ELLs have a degree in ESL or bilingual education" (Crawford). The Texas Education Agency 2004-05 statistics indicate that 14.4 percent of Texas students are enrolled in bilingual or ESL programs, and 7.7 percent of all teachers are beginners (Texas Education Agency Web site; Texas Education Agency Pocket Edition). Even though a small percentage of teachers are

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teaching specifically in bilingual/ESL classes, a large number have ELLs in their classrooms. It seems vital then for all teachers, especially those new to the career, to have extensive training in understanding cultures, language acquisition, and strategies to help

ELLs. Retaining qualified teachers is of utmost concern because, as Kain and Singleton (1996) note, strong evidence exists that teaching effectiveness increases dramatically after the initial teaching years. Teachers need time and experience to grow and learn. As Huling says, it is imperative that "new models must be designed and implemented on a wide scale to stem attrition and increase teacher productivity in the early years of teaching" (1). The question arises, what can we do to retain teachers so all students, including ELLs, are getting the best teachers possible?

Overview of NTIP

One three-year research project on the problem of retaining quality first-year teachers began in 2002 in the form of a partnership between the Texas State University System and Houston Endowment Inc. Between 2002 and 2005, the Houston Endowment board granted \$4.7 million to fund the program. NTIP involved seven Texas universities that had teacher education programs, 954 first-year, fully certified teachers, and 32 professional mentors. Two Texas State University associate deans and mentoring experts, Leslie Huling and Virginia Resta, served as principal investigators, directed the overall program, and met with the coordinators, mentors, and university faculty to implement and evaluate the program.

A faculty member from each university served as local coordinator, directing the institutional program, interviewing and hiring mentors, and planning bimonthly mentor training meetings. All the mentors had been in the school business for years, and most were

retirees. For example, all three Aldine ISD mentors were former principals in that district. Although the Aldine mentors had never had the sole responsibility of mentoring new teachers, these retirees, with a total of seventy-five years of school-business experience, knew how to locate answers to beginning teachers' questions.

By attending bimonthly meetings and semiannual conferences, mentors became better acquainted, shared stories, and considered new strategies to support neophytes. In fact, they usually told about situations they had encountered and sought advice. They knew the conversations would not be divulged elsewhere, so they explored options and worked as a team. As one university coordinator stated, "We shared deep moments of warmth even though we joked about 'red shoes' and the 'Conroe twins.' We were inspired by heartfelt poetry . . . and entertained by the 'Arkansas traveler' who was a master of one-liners. . . . Suddenly those buzzwords of 'colleagueship,' 'respect,' and 'mutual trust' really had meaning" (Sullivan 2004, 4).

Mentors worked twenty hours per week and received \$20,000 per year, far less than they had been paid as veteran teachers and administrators, but they enjoyed being needed. During one mentor meeting, we calculated the number of years our NTIP team had spent in the school business. The astounding answer—350 years (Sullivan 2004)! As one mentor exclaimed, "We have reached 'professional immortality.'" They felt rejuvenated, and university coordinators came to recognize that the education system needs to honor such sages who have spent countless years in this noble profession (Hammer and Williams 2005).

Before hiring mentors, coordinators contacted superintendents to determine what districts wanted to participate. At my university, the coordinator selected districts where the field experience director had typically placed student teachers and worked with the administrators and staff. The program was a win-win situation because districts automatically had access to a well-developed induction program at no cost to them, and the university had new graduate students who hopefully would continue working on advanced degrees. After receiving the superintendent's approval, the coordinator invited school principals to have their campus designated as an NTIP site. Those administrators who agreed encouraged their first-year, fully certified teachers to enroll in the graduate courses. Although some beginners decided that they could not handle another obligation, others agreed that this program would help them become better organized and eliminate some stress. They looked forward to having the mentor's extra pair of hands in a weekly visit. As soon as other district administrators discovered the new program and its advantages, they requested to become partners too.

As part of NTIP, beginning teachers enrolled in two graduate classes, usually held in the district schools. The grant paid for tuition and books, so six hours of free college credits and short driving distances were two important incentives. Each semester, Aldine teachers met every other week for a three-hour evening seminar and one all-day Saturday class. Other universities had various arrangements.

As the grant mandated, the curriculum was based on novices' needs, and they completed questionnaires to provide input concerning topics to address. For example, the Aldine ISD 2004-05 class selected ESL/bilingual as a major topic, so we met for six hours in Ms. Lopez's bilingual classroom. She showed material she had accumulated for years, discussed ways it helped her students and how she organized the activities, and arranged supplies so that novices could make the products that day. Make-and-take sessions became a favorite activity for beginners because it gave them time to make the innovative materials they saw in veteran

teachers' classes. Other seminars focused on such topics as writing/math/reading strategies, classroom procedures, and multicultural activities.

Aldine ISD Support System

According to the 2002-05 NTIP study, beginning teachers need support from various sources: colleagues, personal friends, mentors, district personnel, and university faculty.

Colleagues

One tool to facilitate colleague communication was an online program called NiceNet, which was used extensively in the graduate course. NiceNet is a "free Web-based learning environment for classrooms, distance learning programs and collaborative academic projects" (NiceNet Webpage). Every two weeks each novice teacher posted a challenge (problem) and responded to two other colleagues' e-mails. This friendly chat format helped them develop a camaraderie that lasted far beyond their initial year. They asked questions about how to handle behavior problems, irate parents, and mounds of paperwork. Although these new employees may have felt uncomfortable asking an administrator about handling behavior problems, they knew that their peers were not formally evaluating them. There wasn't a red pen in sight. Three e-mails from Aldine ISD beginning teachers provide examples of neophytes' needs, both in and out of the classroom:

"My whole class changed today. I am now teaching fourteen ESL kids. Consequently my whole daily routine was rearranged by the assistant principal as well as all of the materials, books, and junk that have to be relocated."

"I am a kindergarten bilingual teacher. I am looking for a better system to call parents at least twice a month. It seems that with all the meetings and workshops during and after

Although these new employees
may have felt uncomfortable
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school I really do not have the time. If you have any suggestions please answer. Thank-you."

I would like to do more hands-on math games with my 5th grade bi-lingual students any ideas????? Both low and high level students."

By interacting in the classes and

through NiceNet, beginning teachers experienced one of the most vital supports to make them successful. This support brace of other beginning teachers, often facing similar dilemmas, provided invaluable advice.

Personal Friends

Some turned to family members and close friends when trouble or questions arose.

Personal issues, including where to live in a large metropolitan city, how to meet friends, where to go for fun, and what car mechanics treat customers fairly, were common discussion topics. On the other hand, some lived far away from their families and found it harder to find personal support. Several first-year teachers had been recruited from small towns in Ohio, Iowa, and Idaho, and they had not seen much diversity in schools. They had few experiences that prepared them for an urban, multicultural setting. Others had arrived from Mexico, especially those who were teaching bilingual classes. They knew little about the Houston metropolitan area, but they had worked with Hispanic students. The amount of personal support varied tremendously.

Mentors

Mentors provided another vital brace. They received mentee “exit slips” every two weeks that included three open-ended statements: “Share a success,” “My greatest challenge is. . .,” and “A challenge that I am willing to try this week is” Based on this feedback, mentors focused on each teacher’s most pressing needs. An analysis of the 2002-03 exit slips from Sam Houston State University offers insight into mentee perceptions. The 1,196 slips, most from Aldine ISD, revealed eight major challenges: classroom procedures (27.5%); behavior management (24.1%); evaluation/assessment (13.5%); personal (8.6%); curriculum (8.4%); special populations (6.4%); communication (6.2%); administration (5.3%) (Williams, Sullivan, Henderson, Hewitt, and Contant 2004, 13). Examples of special population concerns were “reteaching first grade skills to ESL students” and “meeting the needs of all the students who qualify for special services” (Williams, Sullivan, Henderson, Hewitt, and Contant 2004, 15).

Handling class procedures and managing behavior topped the list, so mentors and graduate faculty emphasized these topics during conferences and graduate seminars. Sometimes discussing cultural differences, such as why some Hispanic students will not “look me in the eyes” when they are being scolded, helped new teachers understand their students better. Drawing on their vast experiences, mentors often anticipated and helped solve problems before they escalated.

Like colleagues and personal friends, mentors at times also provided a safe haven to vent new teacher frustrations. As Flores aptly notes, “Isolation, loneliness, lack of support, individual search for solutions, learning by trial-and-error, and feelings of ‘giving up’ are some of the daunting situations novice teachers have to face in their first years of teaching” (2006, 62). A mentor often becomes “a listener, a sounding board, an advisor, not necessarily a problem-solver” (Foltz 2004, 3). At times, a mentor must instantly switch roles, depending on the situation, acting as “counselor, friend, cheerleader, colleague, advisor, expert, coach, confidant, problem-solver, helper, supporter, and teacher” (Hammer and Williams 2005, 23). Whereas one NTIP mentor took her mentee to Starbucks to alleviate stress, another taught her neophyte’s class while the beginner called students’ parents. Others demonstrated how to teach a dynamic math lesson that engaged bilingual students, tutored students who were having reading difficulties, and contacted the curriculum specialist about district ELL resources. In fact, the ESL specialist visited the Aldine ISD graduate class and provided insight into the district’s bilingual and ESL programs.

Along with calling and e-mailing, mentors visited their ten assigned mentees each week. Sometimes sessions took a few minutes and a friendly smile and wave; however, most lasted

for several hours. During these consultations, the mentor and neophyte discussed challenges and made a specific action plan. Mentees were treated as colleagues who played the major role in the decision-making process, not subordinates. At times this action meant that the mentor disagreed but went along with the new teacher's choice. Because their salaries were paid through the grant, mentors never felt obligated to share mentee faults or problems with school district administrators. In addition, they did not complete any evaluation instruments. Therefore, the mentees never felt threatened by their presence; they were seen as friends and confidants. NTIP design clearly tested the belief of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, which says that there is "clear evidence that beginning teachers who have access to intensive mentoring by expert colleagues are much less likely to leave teaching in the early years" (2002, 12).

District Personnel

District administrators, supervisors, and other teachers constitute another support team segment. For instance, staff development directors listened to new teacher concerns about curriculum issues, and principals set a welcoming atmosphere with an open-door policy (Reiman and Theis-Sprinthall 1998). Many mentees have not learned to network yet. In fact, most 23-year-olds have not experienced business networking, and a large number of these graduate students were in their twenties. By encouraging these teachers to attend professional development programs, giving them insight into school and district politics, and helping them locate resources, administrators contributed to their staying in the teaching profession.

University Faculty

Any successful induction program requires "creativity, advance planning, careful preparation of a cadre of mentors, and sufficient resources to support design, implementation, and evaluation" (Reiman and Theis-Sprinthall 1998, 18.) Part of this cadre team is the university faculty member who, along with the mentors, planned the coursework, visited students in their classrooms, and dried tears. Students experienced major life-altering problems—a Hispanic mother whose baby had an undiagnosed life-threatening illness, an African-American mentee whose house burned, a Mexican student who needed help locating an immigration lawyer. These individuals needed more than ways to engage their students in fun-filled activities. They needed extended support and solutions, and oftentimes a hug.

Along with helping find answers and simply listening, faculty planned assignments that saved teachers time. For instance, each beginner wrote an action plan based on three semester goals. Two actions had to involve the classroom, and one could be personal. Several decided to make ten positive parent calls or e-mails each week for one month. They designated the time when they would call and made a checklist to assess their progress. Often they needed to find an interpreter because the parents spoke another language. Other mentees wanted to organize their files and desk so that they could find the surface. By the day's end, they had mixed all the writing, science, and social studies assignments together in one monstrous pile. They needed a better system. Still others decided to make ten new, creative activities, especially for their ELL students. They were tired of handing students more boring worksheets. For personal goals, many opted for attending exercise sessions, changing eating habits, and getting a personal life. This action plan focused them on the specific needs and goals they wanted to accomplish.

We also devoted graduate class time to preparing lessons and locating materials. An article that delineated specific classroom management tips, materials to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, research on Freda Reiter's art, and a Web site filled with the "perfect" ELL mathematics lesson plans—these were materials that students located when they used class time to surf the Internet. In fact, the class selected the best Web sites and everyone received a list for future reference. Resources are readily available, but new teachers often do not know where to locate them, nor do they know who is responsible in their district/school for particular programs, such as ESL, bilingual, gifted, and so forth. They have not learned the network yet. One mentor commented, "They don't know what they don't know"; therefore, staff and mentors became guides.

The graduate students' culminating activity, a *Bright Ideas* book, helped make them a more cohesive unit and build friendships.

Each person selected two roles, such as editor, assistant editor, proofreader, artistic director, and cover designer. They created a book showcasing the year's best ideas, and they organized the materials under various sections: best

The graduate students'
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lesson plans, ideas, successful handouts, and parent contact tips. They were proud of their accomplishments and wanted to share what had worked for them. Book entries included "Venn Diagram for *In My Family* by Carmen Lomas Garza" and "Multicultural Learners: Latino/Hispanic." They left the graduate seminar with a collection of *Bright Ideas*, a clearer vision of what to do next year, and a set of wonderful new friends.

NTIP Findings

Are Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) right? Do teachers who participate in high quality mentoring programs stay in the profession at higher rates and become competent more quickly than those who must learn by trial and error? Although we do not have the complete NTIP results yet, the answer is definitely pointing to a resounding "yes." Data indicate that NTIP teachers are remaining in teaching longer than their counterparts. The retention data summary tables show the results, and comparison data is based on the statewide Texas Education Agency teacher retention information. Dr. Pat Yeargain, the project manager, provided three tables to show the percentages. While 84.5 percent of the 2002-03 cohorts remained in the profession for the past four years, statewide only 79.82 percent remained. Of those in the 2003-04 NTIP group, 91.71 percent of the teachers were retained for three years, whereas statewide a total of 83.75 percent of teachers stayed in the profession. The 321 NTIP participants in 2004-05 again showed higher retention rates. A total of 92.83 percent taught the second year. However, only 91.47 percent of those statewide remained (Yeargain, 2007).

Comments from novice teachers, mentors, principals, and coordinators give insight

into the program's benefits. These are a few excerpts:

"Each week I had a challenge for my mentor. Without fail she gave me helpful advice. She has been invaluable." (novice teacher)

"New teachers nowadays are desperately in need of mentors who make it their only job to help these teachers. . . . Several of mine would have quit already had they not had this program." (mentor)

"This program is very beneficial to the novice teachers. They are able to collaborate freely without stress and gain experiences from an expert. It is truly a wonderful partnership for all." (school administrator)

"Seeing mentees move from the survival mode to a more proactive, professional role is very rewarding." (university faculty coordinator) (Huling 2004, 6-7)

Future Plans and Recommendations

Further data are currently being studied. The NTIP manager is also analyzing how well the public school students in the mentees' classes did on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the state-mandated test. She intends to compare these scores with those of students whose teachers did not participate in an induction program. Will students in an NTIP teacher's classroom outperform students in classes where teachers did not have an induction program? This question is a major part of the grant self-study, and one for which we are anxiously awaiting the results. If the findings are as positive as anticipated, state and national legislators may be persuaded to replicate the NTIP program. Tracking all NTIP teachers for five years to determine if they are retained in teaching is another important grant component. Because Yeargain is contacting the state agency to check individual teaching records and tracking those who have moved out-of-state, the process is time-consuming and tedious, but accurate. She is investigating actual employment records to determine who was retained and who quit, not relying on the perceived intentions of teachers.

These program outcomes may lead to final answers about retaining quality teachers, especially beginners. If so, a comprehensive, systematic induction program may be forthcoming. However, new funding sources will be needed, and state and national government sources, along with district monies, may be required. Why lose \$8,000 each time a new teacher leaves? Instead, use this money to create a well-developed support system for those who are dedicating their lives to our nation's children. Rather than reinventing education programs or beginning new ones, let's stick with what works—the Novice Teacher Induction Program.

Retention Data for Cohort One (2002-2003 NTIP Participants)
Both One and Two Semester Program Completers

Cohort 1 (2002-03)	Number in NTIP	% Retained in Profession to Year 2			% Retained in Profession to Year 3			% Retained in Profession to Year 4		
		NTIP	ESC Region*	State	NTIP	ESC Region	State	NTIP	ESC Region	State
Angelo State Univ.	32	93.75	93.78	91.93	90.63	89.21	85.61	90.63	85.06	79.82
Lamar Univ.	36	91.67	91.56	91.93	86.11	85.65	85.61	86.11	78.63	79.82
Lamar/Orange	NA	NA	NA	91.93	NA	NA	85.61	NA	NA	79.82
Sam Houston State Univ.	74	97.30	91.47	91.93	85.14	87.36	85.61	81.08	80.93	79.82
Sul Ross State Univ.	49	95.92	94.93	91.93	95.92	89.47	85.61	89.80	85.73	79.82
Sul Ross/Rio Grande	12	100	92.55	91.93	83.33	86.61	85.61	66.67	82.55	79.82
Texas State Univ.	68	94.12	90.07	91.93	94.12	81.02	85.61	83.82	74.55	79.82
Total	271	95.20	91.43	91.93	90.04	84.54	85.61	84.50	78.46	79.82

* ESC (Education Service Center) figures indicate the retention rates in the geographic regions served by the seven universities. The state is divided into 20 such regions. Data provided by the State Board for Educator Certification.

Retention Data for Cohort Two (2003-2004 NTIP Participants)
Both One and Two Semester Program Completers

Cohort 2 (2003-04)	Number in NTIP	<u>% Retained in Profession to Year 2</u>			<u>% Retained in Profession to Year 3</u>		
		NTIP	ESC Region	State	NTIP	ESC Region	State
Angelo State Univ.	30	100	93.39	90.93	100	88.05	83.75
Lamar Univ.	48	95.83	90.34	90.93	91.67	82.97	83.75
Lamar/ Orange	16	93.75	93.48	90.93	93.75	88.20	83.75
Sam Houston State Univ.	118	94.07	92.46	90.93	84.75	86.00	83.75
Sul Ross State Univ.	42	97.62	93.80	90.93	95.24	89.22	83.75
Sul Ross/ Rio Grande	18	94.44	93.00	90.93	94.44	88.00	83.75
Texas State Univ.	90	94.44	87.37	90.93	95.56	77.95	83.75
Total	362	95.30	89.69	90.93	91.71	81.91	83.75

Retention Data for Cohort Three (2004-2005 NTIP Participants)
Both One and Two Semester Program Completers

Cohort 3 (2004-2005)	Number in NTIP	<u>% Retained in Profession to Year 2</u>		
		NTIP	ESC Region	State
Angelo State Univ.	34	91.18	95.69	91.47
Lamar Univ.	46	95.65	92.05	91.47
Lamar/Orange	18	88.89	93.77	91.47
Sam Houston State Univ.	84	90.48	91.96	91.47
Sul Ross State Univ.	48	100.00	93.14	91.47
Sul Ross/Rio Grande	12	83.33	95.36	91.47
Texas State Univ.	79	92.41	88.34	91.47
Total	321	92.83	91.04	91.47

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“American Harem”

Mormons as Racial Other in 19th Century Rhetoric

By Tonia M. Compton

In 1879 the political magazine *The Wasp* published the cartoon “Uncle Sam’s Troublesome Bedfellows.” The drawing reflects what was regarded as the collective racial problem of the era: how best to deal with the Irish, the Chinese, the Indians, the blacks—and the Mormons. Today, despite evidence of lingering uncertainty about Mormonism, seen for example in religious questions about the current presidential candidacy of Mitt Romney, the inclusion of Mormons in such a list of racial groups seems incongruous. But in the popular imagination of the nineteenth century, Mormons had become a racial Other because of the practice of polygamy. The rhetoric of the anti-polygamy movement of that era relied heavily upon racial imagery to denounce the practice of plural marriage among the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, more commonly known as Mormons. The depiction of Mormon polygamists as a racial Other is striking, for those who most loudly criticized them were generally, like the Mormons, white, middle-class men and women.

The reasons behind the use of racial, often Oriental, imagery stem from three particulars. First, the anti-polygamy movement grew up alongside the anti-slavery movement in the

1850s, a connection that instinctively prompted reformers to think in racial terms. Second, the strain of nativism that ran through American culture and politics beginning in the 1830s influenced the anti-polygamy movement, prompting activists not only to use racial language but also to adopt an anti-immigration attitude. Finally, the geographical location of the Mormon settlement in Utah tied the practice of polygamy to popular thinking about the wild and untamed West with its native racial Other—the Indians—and their attendant marriage practices that, like plural marriage, defied the American ideal of family life. For all of these reasons, looking at Mormons in racial terms underscored the belief that the federal government, especially after the Civil War, bore responsibility for regulating race relations in issues such as the after-effects of slavery and immigration controls.

Slavery and Polygamy

The pronouncement of plural marriage by the Mormon Church in 1852 occurred when the nation as a whole was struggling with the fragile peace over slavery that followed the Compromise of 1850. Two years later the Kansas-Nebraska Act shattered the carefully constructed system on which the political issue of slavery balanced. In 1856 at its first national convention in Philadelphia, the newly formed Republican Party adopted a platform that focused on slavery and its applicability to the issue of westward expansion. The platform committee wrote a policy that not only condemned slavery but also targeted polygamy, declaring that “the Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign powers over the Territories of the United States for their government; and that in the exercise of this power, it is both the right and the imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism—Polygamy, and Slavery” (“Republican Platform” 48).

How was it that polygamy had become a part of the debate over slavery? The connection between the two existed at multiple levels in 1850s America. The previous decade had witnessed the publication of numerous anti-slavery and anti-Mormon novels that followed a



“Uncle Sam’s Troublesome Bedfellows”

typical model condemning the moral wrongs being perpetrated against the helpless—slaves and women. The self-evident commonalities between the two types of fiction led one book reviewer to proclaim that Fanny Stenhouse’s *Expose of Polygamy in Utah: A Lady’s Life Among the Mormons* would, like Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, “bear its noble part in emancipating from a condition worse than slavery the miserable women of Utah” (Harold 6). Politically, the issues of slavery and polygamy became intimately tied to one another in the debate over popular sovereignty. Stephen Douglas’ solution to the slavery question prompted

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widespread outrage over the refusal of the federal government to deal with slavery, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the extension of slavery into the western territories. Observers saw more at stake, however, than the spread of slavery into the far West. If territories were allowed to decide the

for themselves, then they should also be allowed to decide for themselves whether or not to allow and legitimate the practice of polygamy. That the Utah Territory boasted both slavery and polygamy did not escape the attention of those opposed to popular sovereignty.

Throughout the nation opposition to polygamy fueled opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. In an Indianapolis political parade protesting the bill, one float carried a wagon with a mock Brigham Young, his six wives, and a banner declaring that slavery and polygamy would flourish in the territories if the bill passed (Iversen 100). In 1855 an article in the *New York Daily Times* opined that Mormons should not expect the principle of popular sovereignty to extend far enough to permit admission of Utah into the Union while the practice of plural marriage continued (“Mormon Emigrants” 4). Following passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, an article in *Harper’s Weekly* suggested that Mormons would soon demand statehood using arguments of “Religious Freedom and Local Sovereignty; of Universal Toleration, and of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill” (“The Mormons,” *Harper’s* 258-59).

The issue of polygamy exacerbated the debate over popular sovereignty. One observer called the “false and mischievous doctrine” of popular sovereignty “a cunning invention, to save a Presidential aspirant from perplexity, to enable the Democratic Party to wear two faces, so that it might secure the support of hostile sections, and to exempt the Slavery-Propaganda from Congressional interference” that had prevented Congress from taking action against the practice of polygamy in Utah (“Utah” 70). In an unusual interpretation of the reach of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, one author, discussing a bill to organize the territory south of Kansas, denied the government’s ability to prohibit the practice of polygamy in the region. “These Indians are polygamists,” the writer declared. “We protest that under the doctrine of the Nebraska bill we have no right to interfere with their polygamous preferences” (“Neosho” 4). This argument established Mormons as a racial Other by comparing polygamy to native

marriage practices, while denigrating the extension of slavery under the Kansas-Nebraska Act to the territories of the West.

Anti-polygamy rhetoric also drew from specifically anti-slavery understandings of American politics, including ideas about the containment and spread of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, long after chattel slavery had been eradicated. For example, a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* in 1859 blamed southern “slave power” for the government’s failure to strike out against polygamy: “The interference with [Mormon] ‘domestic institutions’ would have afforded a dangerous precedent against Slavery, and therefore the South would not permit it,” the author proclaimed (“American Politics”). Another writer pointed to the danger of polygamy spreading throughout the nation, just as abolitionists feared that opening the territories to slavery would threaten free states. The lands of Utah, he noted, “are so occupied that accessions to the Mormon population pass into Arizona and Idaho, and are poisoning the whole region adjacent to the polygamous territory. This process will go on” (“The Prelude” 127).

Following the Civil War, reformers used the recent battle against slavery and its aftermath as demonstrative of the dangers of polygamy. This approach solidified the racial othering of Mormon women in polygamous marriages by casting them in the same light as the enslaved African-American female. Ann Eliza Young, a former polygamous wife of Brigham Young, wrote, “Slavery was permitted to grow strong until it could be got rid of only by the shedding of blood. Is it wise to permit polygamy to become established in like manner, and defy, as it surely will, judges and juries?” (Young, “Mormon Polygamy” 9). Young commonly relied on the depiction of plural marriage as slavery, noting in an open letter to First Lady Lucy Webb Hayes that “women in Utah are but child-bearing slaves,” and titling one of her public lectures “My Life of Bondage” (Young, “Letter” 9). In an 1870 lecture on Mormonism, Mrs. C. V. Waite declared, “Utah needed reconstruction as much as any Southern State ever did” (“Polygamy in Utah” 4). One editorial declared in 1880 that previous administrations had, like James Buchanan in the 1850s, continually compromised on the issue of polygamy “under the mistaken impression that if polygamy were only left alone it would die out of itself,” an attitude that had also been applied to slavery in the decades leading up to the Civil War (“Polygamy” 4).

The Women’s National Anti-Polygamy Society (WNAPS) relied heavily upon the language of slavery and abolition in its publication, the *Anti-Polygamy Standard*. The first issue justified the intrusion of women reformers into the lives and marriages of Mormon women, declaring, “Had the abolition of slavery in the South depended entirely on the slaves striking for freedom, they would have remained in bondage until this day” (“The Ladies”). In urging the formation of branch societies, the *Standard* argued that the creation of auxiliary groups would urge people to seek more information about the “peculiar institution,” overtly adopting the inflammatory language of the abolition movement (“The Women’s”). In the campaign against admitting Utah to the Union without first abolishing the practice of plural marriages, the *Standard* reprinted an article from the *Christian Register* that declared that “to admit Utah as a polygamic State with polygamy would be as bad as to admit Montana as a slave State” (“The Insult”).

WNAPS also appealed to the emotional language and legacy of the abolition movement. An article addressed to President James Garfield suggested to the chief executive that his predecessor, Abraham Lincoln, had single-handedly accomplished the abolition of slavery.

Garfield, declared the author, possessed the power to “hurl a telling shaft at the iniquitous monster,” an act that would result in the enrollment of his name alongside Lincoln’s in the annals of American history. The appeal concluded that “[as] one emancipation proclamation freed our country from the curse of slavery, let another do the same for the curse of polygamy” (“President Garfield”). In 1882, following Garfield’s assassination, WNAPS sent a letter to his successor, Chester Arthur, reiterating this argument and urging Arthur to seize the same opportunity to secure for himself a place in history (“Open Letter”).

Nativism

The nativist sentiment of the mid-nineteenth century also contributed to racial rhetoric in the anti-polygamy movement. Nativism expressed itself in the anti-polygamy movement in two distinct ways—opposition to increasing immigration to the United States and the widespread use of Oriental imagery to depict Mormon men and women who practiced plural marriage. Immigration between 1820 and 1860 brought nearly five million new residents to American, more than two million in the 1850s alone. Nativists perceived the new foreign element as a serious political threat because of the potential ability to control political machines through bloc voting, particularly at the municipal level. This fear translated itself into a number of nativist movements that asserted, like the American (Know-Nothing) Party, that “*Americans must rule America*; and to this end, *native-born* citizens should be selected for all state, federal, or municipal offices of government employment, in preference to naturalized citizens” (“American” 38).

The fear of foreign control of the American political process became particularly acute when applied to the Mormons in Utah. Large numbers of emigrants, converted abroad by Mormon missionaries, made their way to the United States and eventually Utah Territory to settle in the new Zion. C. C. Goodwin noted in *Harper’s* that “the Mormon Kingdom in Utah is composed of foreigners and the children of foreigners. . . . It is an institution so absolutely un-American in all its requirements that it would die of its own infamies within twenty years, except for the yearly infusion of fresh serf blood from abroad” (763). Nativists explicitly tied the widespread Mormon immigration to the practice of polygamy, delineating the danger that the combination posed to the country. A writer for *Zion’s Herald and Wesleyan Journal*, an independent Methodist newspaper published by the Boston Wesleyan Association, declared that political blocs of foreign voters would “become foul spots and pestilential sores upon our body politic.” He went on to describe the Mormon aspect of this perceived threat, noting that they had “established for themselves a practical independence of the United States, although numbered among her citizens. Congregated together from all parts of the world, they have adopted demoralising customs, which are at variance with all the ideas of social, political and religious prosperity, as entertained by the whole country.” Moreover, he declared, Mormons “now bid defiance to the law, the courts, and the officers of the government . . . led on by that hoary and villainous old polygamist Brigham Young.” The writer used the Mormon situation to warn readers against other immigrants, speaking out against a group of Germans who had recently settled in Minnesota (G.P.D. 1).

Government officials echoed the sentiments of the popular press in fearing the large numbers of Mormon immigrants. During his presidency, James Buchanan in a letter to Lord Clarendon, Great Britain’s Secretary of Foreign Affairs, wrote, “I would thank you to keep your Mormons at home” (qtd. in Mulder 422). By 1879 the Secretary of State had become involved,

drafting a circular addressing the influx of polygamous European converts to Mormonism arriving in the United States. The document, dispatched to governments throughout Europe, asked for cooperation in eradicating polygamy by keeping such “prospective law-breakers” in their home countries ((Mulder 423). In 1891 the perceived threat of foreign Mormon settlers resulted in the exclusion of polygamists from immigration, a category that also included paupers, the insane, felons, and the diseased. The conjunction of the anti-polygamy movement and increasing immigration restrictions further resulted in the 1907 exclusion of all persons who believed in polygamy, a restriction that precipitated controversy with the Ottoman Empire, which interpreted the new exclusion as targeting Muslims (Cott 139).

The Ottoman interpretation was not unfounded. While largely aimed at Mormons, the polygamy exclusion coincided with long-standing American beliefs about the nature of Eastern countries and their marriage practices. Much anti-polygamy rhetoric depicted Mormon polygamous unions in Oriental terms. One observer condemned the “Harem of the Priesthood” practiced polygamy, noting, “A man living in common with a dozen dirty Arabs, whether he calls them wives or concubines, cannot have a very nice sense of propriety” (“The Mormons in Utah” 2). Such rhetoric cemented in the popular press the belief that Mormons were a racial Other because of polygamy. The description of both men and women as Arabs or Orientals left no room for doubt that Mormons were too different to really be white.

The description of both men and women as Arabs or Orientals left no room for doubt that Mormons were too different to really be white.

Perhaps the best articulation of that belief is found in political theorist Frances Lieber’s “The Mormons: Shall Utah be Admitted into the Union,” an article published in *Putnam’s Monthly* in March of 1855. Earlier Lieber had written that “the Western World—all Europe, with her many descendant nations—acknowledge[s], with one voice, not only marriage, but monogamy, to be of the last importance for the cause of human advancement” (*Essays* 18). Lieber’s later article equated the practice of monogamy with whiteness, arguing that monogamy “does not only go with the western Caucasian race, the Europeans and their descendants, beyond Christianity, it goes beyond Common Law. It is one of the primordial elements out of which all law proceeds.” The corollary was that only uncivilized peoples practiced polygamy. Lieber declared of monogamy that “it is one of the pre-existing conditions of our existence as civilized white men” (“The Mormons: Shall Utah” 234).

With this association firmly in place and fueled by the nativism that coursed through America, mid-nineteenth century critics of Mormon life condemned the practice of polygamy using racial rhetoric that drew on popular images of Eastern cultures. Salt Lake City was referred to as a “City of Harems” and the Mormon “Mecca,” invoking images of an arduous journey to a religious site (“The Mormons and Their Religion” 405; “The Curse” 2). Just a

year after the public pronouncement of plural marriage in 1852, an editorial in the *New York Tribune* lambasted the practice of polygamy in Utah and condemned the Mormons for their "Oriental interpretation of feminine character" ("Mormonism" 4). An 1859 exposition on "Asiatic Civilization" in the *Christian Examiner* observed that polygamy constituted a "great evil" that "shows itself in its worst forms in the notorious harems of sultans, pachas, rajahs, and Mormons" (23). References to Mormon harems abound in the popular literature of the late nineteenth century, including lengthy depictions of the "American Harem" or "Brigham Young's Harem." One particularly nasty description of Brigham Young declared that he ruled his harem as the "High-Priest of Pious Incest and Sanctimonious Adultery" ("A Maze" 7).

In a tongue-in-cheek description of the 1877 Russo-Turkish War, *Puck* noted that in the course of events "Brigham Young has entered into an alliance with the Sultan, and has established his harem in front of Kars on the road leading to Omaha and Key West. The Turkish and Mormon women are already comparing notes. Anna Dickinson has been requested to take charge of all the ladies. Great excitement in consequence" ("Telephonogram" 4). Here the connection between race and empire is articulated not only by drawing on a European conflict between whites (Russians) and "others" (Turks) but also by bringing this distinction to America, by comparing Mormon and Turkish women and situating them in the West (Omaha).

Geography

Just as abolitionism and nativism created an atmosphere in which the racial othering of Mormons became a common means of attacking polygamy, the geographical situation of Utah Territory in the West, with its attendant imagery of wildness and savagery, also influenced the racial rhetoric of the anti-polygamy movement. Comparisons of Mormons and the stereotypical uncivilized Indians of the West further cemented the idea of the Mormons as being racially different because of the practice of polygamy. Travelers to the West in the 1850s sent reports of Indians' strange marriage customs, which included matrilocality and polygamy. In 1854 an Army captain noted that there "existed a striking similarity in many respects, between the Arabs and Tartars of the Old World and the nomadic Indian tribes of the plains," evidence of how prevalent Oriental imagery had become by mid-century. Noting that the Comanches practiced polygamy, he opined that "indeed the women possess no personal attractions whatever" ("New York" 6). Time and again the approach of denigrating indigenous women and, later, Mormon women who entered plural unions echoed throughout Western reformers' language. Impugning white Mormon women, however, would become more problematic as reformers also declared the need to save these women from their lot in life in part *because* they were white, while reform efforts aimed at native women assumed the need to aid them because they were *not* white.

The negative characterization of Mormon women extended to direct comparisons with the living conditions of native women. White observers of native cultures tended to see woman as the "squaw drudge" beaten down by excessive work and often exploited through tribal marriage and sexual practices. A *New York Times* correspondent declared that the Mormon women who participated in plural marriages were "made slaves, and in nothing are they treated with more consideration than are the squaws of the mountain tribes of Indians, who have long been considered the most degraded beings upon the globe" (Richard 2).

In the wake of the announcement of plural marriage, the *New York Daily Times* began a

discussion of the Mormon problem with a description of the native peoples who populated the territory before announcing that a “new tribe”—the Mormons—had taken up residence in the region. Mormons, like Indians, were “in the path to our Pacific possession, perchance in the very line of the Atlantic and Pacific Railway,” and must be “reconciled and harmonized” as westward expansion continued (“The Mormons,” *Times* 4). Suggestions about how best to deal with such a populace varied. In 1857 one author proclaimed that troops stationed in the West should forget the planned expedition against the Cheyenne and turn their attentions instead to the Mormons. “Indeed,” he declared, “it would be far better to let those poor savages pass for the present, if that be necessary in order to provide the means to punish the still greater savages who libel civilization and caricature religion at Salt Lake” (“The Salt Lake” 4). By 1870 the advice had shifted from military action to the natural civilizing force of progress. Now the *New York Times* proposed that “it is as certain as anything can be, that Mormon heathenism is as short-lived as Indian savagery. We have only to wait for that great inlet of civilization, the Pacific Railroad, to get at its full work, when we shall see the beginning, in Utah, of a quick assimilation with the life, habits and laws of the rest of the country” (“Shall We Have” 4). These divergent approaches to the Mormon question mirrored the tactics of the federal government in their dealings with Native Americans: a combination of force—military and civil—would reform these “problem” people into ideal Americans.

As the cartoon from *The Wasp* suggests, it was seen to be the government’s job to negotiate racial differences and create a single white American identity. Men and women deemed inferior by their racial or ethnic backgrounds—as the Irish, Chinese, African Americans, and Native Americans were—faced legal and cultural discrimination. By virtue of the practice of polygamy, members of the Mormon Church, whether or not they contracted plural marriages, fit the racial thinking that characterized discussions of slavery and abolition, nativism, and westward expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is no wonder, then, that Uncle Sam’s duties required action against the Mormons just as he must control other ethnic and racial minorities whose very difference seemed to threaten what it meant to be an American.

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“What Have You Been Reading Lately?”

When Alpha Chi sponsors from around the country get to see each other, which happens mostly at regional or national conventions, they enjoy renewing acquaintances and making new ones. A favorite conversation starter, after the usual pleasantries are offered, is “What have you been reading lately?” The answers are sometimes predictable (so a literature professor likes to read fiction), sometimes surprising (a botanist is hooked on mysteries?), but always stimulating among friends who share an interest in continuing to learn and grow.

We asked chapter sponsors to send us short essays on their spare-time reading. As you’ll see from this collection, in some ways reading of any sort is part of a professor’s work, no matter how obvious or remote the connection to one’s teaching field. The best teachers are the best learners, always feeding their minds and hearts with the instruction and delight of the written word.

It's an Alpha Chi thing

I recently read *The Bookseller of Kabul* by Asne Seierstad, which profiles a Muslim family's struggles in war-torn Afghanistan from the perspective of a Westerner living with them. I also read *Primal Leadership* by Daniel Goleman, which argues that leadership is a result of emotional awareness. I am interested in personality, and this book proved very illuminating in that regard. I am currently reading Walter Isaacson's *Einstein*, a biography of the great physicist whose personality was his methodology. I also regularly read the magazines *Scientific American*, *Popular Science*, and *Smithsonian*. I've read some novels along the way, of course.

Why is an English professor reading science and psychology, biography and history? Because it's an Alpha Chi thing to do. One of the characteristics of AX membership, to my mind, is an ability and desire (not necessarily in that order) to know more things about more things, to do well in every class, to self-educate, to maintain an active mind.

Martin M. Jacobsen
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Texas Zeta, West Texas A&M University

Recreation meets vocation

Since I am an English professor, people automatically assume that I devour novels and bonbons in my spare time. In the last two or so years, I have perused trashy novels (I define *trashy novels* as fiction that I would not assign in a course). Despite these infrequent excursions, though, biographies and cultural histories remain my preferred avocational reading.

My good friend James Cathey, a veritable Renaissance man who is an Alpha Chi alumnus, first led me down the primrose path of trashy and sleazy fiction. Once he suggested a particularly lurid potboiler with a peacock on its red cover. To complaints that it contained NO plot, James replied with a smirk: “It doesn't need one.” James then provided me with a second disreputable novel. He has yet to forgive me for casting it aside in favor of a biography of Mary Baker Eddy, an action that left him thunderstruck. I defended my choice by stressing that the volume was a facsimile from 1905 with an introduction by Edith Wharton; James remains convinced that I had totally abandoned rationality.

Although the Eddy biography failed to fulfill my expectations, biographies and cultural histories seldom disappoint me. I developed my penchant for nonfiction during graduate school when I read *Little Gloria: Happy At Last*, an account of the custody battle over Gloria Vanderbilt, and *Edie*, an outré biography of pop culture icon Edie Sedgwick. The latter volume I found disturbing, but in both of these nonfictional reads I gained greater insight into twentieth-century America.

A decade later when I read *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America*, I could declare myself thoroughly hooked on biographies and cultural

histories. I acquired this volume because the title fascinated me. The title of *Nuts and Bolts: Technology after the American Revolution*, likewise, captivated me; its \$2 price added to its allure. These books stand out in my mind because I began to see a significant value to such volumes: they enhanced my teaching and research. Tidbits from my leisure reading invariably find their way into my academic life.

The cultural histories mentioned in the preceding paragraph serve as good commentary for American literature courses. A passage from *Sketch of Miss Ellen Jewett*, an account of the murder of a prostitute in New York in 1836, provided the basic for an essay question on a final exam. Both *The Professor and the Madman* and *The Meaning of Everything* gave me hours of pleasure; they also enhanced my teaching in a language study course. *The Architect of Desire*, a biography of Stanford White, offered me new insights into the decades following the Civil War. And the list goes on.

Many people will suggest that I do *no* pleasure reading. Simply stated, I derive great enjoyment from both my avocation and my vocation. The fact that they enhance each other is merely icing on the proverbial cake.

Kate Stewart
Professor of English
Arkansas Zeta, University of Arkansas at Monticello

The magic of mystery

I confess. I am a reader of mysteries and have been for many years. It all started with my first Nancy Drew story when I was in the 3rd or 4th grade, and I have never stopped reading. I read while in line at the supermarket or the ATM. I read during my lunch breaks or waiting for the stoplight to change. I cannot go to sleep at night without reading and sometimes cannot sleep because I read. Though I read many kinds of books, fiction and nonfiction, mystery is my preferred genre.

While there are many types of mystery fiction like the police procedural (P. D. James, Ngaio Marsh), suspense (Patterson, Rendall), private eye (Grafton, Paretsky), my favorite type is the traditional mystery or the cozy. In these stories, there is very little graphic violence and the cast of characters is usually confined to a small setting. These mysteries appeal to me because I like the challenge of solving the puzzle. I try to see if I can take the clues given in the story and solve the murder before the “detective” collects everyone in the parlor and reveals the motive and murderer.

Mysteries give me a chance to escape to another place and another time. I can learn about life in a small Welsh village represented by Llanfair, the setting of Rhys Bowen’s series featuring Constable Evan Evans. I can set aside the responsibilities of my life for a short time while I go to Egypt and experience the excitement of searching for tombs with archeologists Radcliffe and Amelia Emerson, creations of Elizabeth Peters. I have found that most mystery writers spend a lot of time researching their books; in addition to a good story there is an opportunity to be educated and informed.

Nevada Barr is so good at description that I broke out in a cold sweat reading *Blind*

Descent, which takes place in Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The feeling of being in that cave was so strong that I had to finish the book outside in the open air! Other writers that I enjoy are very good at characterization. My favorite series, written by Alabama author Anne George, is about two over-60 sisters in Birmingham who find murder in some strange places. The interaction between these very different sisters is laugh-out-loud funny yet very natural and appealing. Patricia Anne Hollowell and Mary Alice Crane became old friends and I revisit them often. I was saddened when I learned there would be no more books.

When it comes to mystery reading, I discovered I was not alone. Millions of us enjoy sharing our favorite authors with each other. I am fortunate to be married to a mystery reader.

Trish Janutolo
Assistant Professor of Library Science

Like my wife, I also love to read mysteries. I happened one day to read a mystery by Agatha Christie, the grand dame of mystery writers, and was transported to the world of Jane Marple and Hercule Poirot. Like my wife, I know that no matter how hectic my day or my present circumstances, I can find in the pages of a mystery release from the stress in my life. While my wife and I read many of the same authors, I prefer mysteries set in the past. I am less concerned about who did it than about seeing through the author’s eyes what it was like to live at another time in another place. Some of my favorite series are Sister Fidelma mysteries by Peter Tremayne set in seventh century Ireland, Owen Archer mysteries by Candace Robb set in fourteen century England, Charlotte and Thomas Pitt mysteries by Anne Perry set in Victorian England, and the gaslight mysteries by Victoria Thompson about a midwife in New York City near the turn of the last century. Those who haven’t read a mystery lately should read a book by one of these authors. They, too, might become addicted to the genre.

Blake Janutolo
Professor of Biology
Indiana Alpha, Anderson University

Cartography confessional

book is an erudite combination of his knowledge of the history of sixteenth century England and of the life and career of Richard Hakluyt. The e-mail gave me pause. Just why in the world *was* an academic administrator neglecting the production of reports and memos in order to read a life of a geography nut, dead these 400 years?

I guess the strange obsession goes back to my dissertation research, which took me into Ethel Seaton’s 1924 essay on Christopher Marlowe’s use of geographical information in his play *Tamburlaine the Great*. Seaton asserted that Marlowe had used Abraham Ortel’s *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570) to track the main character’s conquests through Asia and Africa. One look at the full-color maps of Elsevier’s 1964 reproduction of Ortel, and the hook was set; I was going to be reading geography and poring over maps for some time to

come.

The geography faculty of my college and the West Virginia Humanities Council have not helped matters much. The former, learning of my weakness, induced me to produce a course on the history of cartography. The latter supported my habit by providing a fellowship that enabled me to buy Claudius Ptolemy’s *Geographica*, a copy of Mercator’s 1569 world map, a copy of William Smith’s *New Geological Map of England and Wales*, and Taschen’s wonderful reprint of Joan Blau’s *Atlas Maior* (1665). I now find myself impatiently awaiting publication of the next volume of Harley and Woodward’s *History of Cartography*.

I am not sure where this compulsion will lead, but I do know that there are copies of Winchester’s *Map That Changed the World*, Wilford’s *The Mapmakers*, and *The London Surveys of Ralph Treswell* in the on-deck circle of my reading list. Maybe a map of my bookshelf would help?

Stephen D. Rowe
Director of Marsh Library
West Virginia Beta, Concord University

When I received an e-mail asking about what I was reading, I was up to chapter 4 of *Hakluyt’s Promise*, Peter C. Mancall’s biography of the Elizabethan cosmographer. Mancall’s

Minding my (money) business

In my spare time, I enjoy reading about personal finance. I subscribe to *Money Magazine*, which gives me lots of ideas on how to be a good steward of my family’s assets. I learned over time that income is important, but it is how you use your money that can make a tremendous difference between “scraping by” and truly creating a large net worth.

Besides my magazine reading, I was very moved by a book entitled *Rich Dad, Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids about Money that the Poor and Middle Class Do Not*, by Robert Kiyosaki. Kiyosaki tells about his being raised by a highly educated father who made very good money. Robert also spent a lot of time with a friend’s father who never graduated from high school. Despite Robert’s father’s salary, there were large house and car payments and other expenses, and the family always seemed to be living from month to month. However, the friend’s father learned to make his money work for him. He saved until he could invest in real estate, the stock market, and other instruments that generated a cash flow. Before long, this dad no longer had to worry about bills. This dad had managed to step out of the crazy rat race that many people find themselves in. Kiyosaki is critical of the current educational system in that it trains college students to become prepared to make good salaries but does not adequately prepare them to make their money work for them.

Another book that I really enjoyed is *The Total Money Makeover: A Proven Plan for Financial Fitness*, by Dave Ramsey. Ramsey has a national radio talk show and advocates Christian values as he attempts to help people become debt free and live by a budget. This book is very easy to read and also has great investment tips along with advice on such topics as insurance and car purchases.

Finally, Jim Cramer’s two books *Watch TV, Get Rich* and *Real Money: Sane Investing in an Insane World* are great if you are actually interested in investing in the stock market. This guy is brilliant. He also has a daily television program on MSNBC called *Mad Money* that is very animated and fun to watch (although my wife can’t stand watching it).

Perry L. Collins

Associate Professor of Psychology and Counseling

Texas Alpha Eta, Wayland Baptist University

Civil War as drama

My discipline is theatre, so it is only natural to assume I would spend my leisure time engaged in reading materials relative to this vocation. My reading over the past two summers, however, revolved around the drama and theatre of the great War between the States. Living as I do in far Southwestern Kentucky, I am only a short day’s drive from some of the major Western battlefields of that great drama that was replete with outsize heroes, featured players, supporting characters, and countless supernumeraries. The authors (collaborators?) of this epic script were Kentuckians by birth, albeit removed at an early age to be nurtured in the Midwest and the far South. From a humble boyhood in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln emerged to become one of the premier presidents of the United States of America. From a more genteel adolescence in rural Mississippi, Jefferson Davis rose to become the only president of the Confederate States of America.

Visiting the remote fields, hollers, and nooks where American heroes fought and died is one thing; it is quite another to understand what brought them to these places to face incredible hardships and death. To assist in my comprehension, my investigation commenced with the Pulitzer Prize-winning work by James M. McPherson. *Battle Cry of Freedom* offers a splendid overview and insight into these turbulent four years of our history. Aside from the narrative of events, McPherson offers little nuggets of information all but lost to the cursory reader. Who would have known, for example, that the great Battle of Gettysburg was prematurely fought because a Southern general coveted shoes for his troops! Pickett’s charge was carried out by a general who sought to ingratiate himself with his superiors and who was oblivious to the carnage that was taking place. Nor can any schoolboy forget the great soliloquy which was uttered here. It ranks with Shakespeare.

Two in-depth studies have added to my information about the conflict. Shelby Foote’s three-volume *The Civil War: A Narrative* provides a global perspective that is easily overlooked. Lincoln realized that recognition of the Confederacy by England and France would legitimize the secession and could provoke an expanded conflict on an international scale. Bruce Catton’s *Civil War* (also three volumes) brings us near the generals and featured players who planned, schemed, and fought against each other for rank and respect of the men they led. We receive a personal portrait of the “Yankee Napoleon,” George McClellan, who thought of himself in his moments of procrastination as the second messiah. By contrast, Robert E. Lee is shown as a consummate military strategist and daring commander who starred in numerous battlefield victories. His star lost its ascendancy at Appomattox, where

that of the plodding and persevering U.S. Grant grew in luster.

One last work must be included, for it provides the political framework to this history. Doris Kearns Goodwin narrates the journey from the steamy convention hall of Chicago to the gunfire shot at Ford’s Theatre with reverence and understanding. Her book *Team of Rivals* allows us to come to appreciate the “Great Emancipator” and the genius by which he was able to assemble a disparate Cabinet and lead them to endorse his goal and vision.

This is heavy reading for a summer, but worthwhile for the vicarious experience it gives, along with the greater appreciation of the drama of these United States of America.

Mark Malinauskas
Director of the Honors Program
Kentucky Alpha, Murray State University

My summer vacations

“So what do you do with all that free time?” I am often asked by friends jealous of the idyllic existence professors seem to have after the academic year has ended. While I like to refer to this period as a “starvation” rather than a “vacation” because most of us aren’t paid during the summer months, it admittedly affords an opportunity to pursue interests that would be difficult during the regular school term. My summer work for the past thirty years has served as a wonderful complement to my teaching and scholarship during the rest of the year, helping me become much more effective when I return to the classroom.

When I finished graduate school, I thought I knew everything humanly possible about Shakespeare, my primary field. Soon, however, I took a detour into the fascinating world of professional theatre when my dear friend Libby Appel (long-time artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival) asked me to assist with her summer production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Utah Shakespearean Festival. Simultaneously frightened and fascinated, I objected that I didn’t know anything about theatre production. She promised to teach me, however, and so began a love affair with Shakespeare in performance that has given me a second real-world “doctorate” in professional theatre.

I’ve grown accustomed to the comforting rhythms of summer regional theatre, which fall into predictable patterns and dovetail nicely with my professorial duties. As company dramaturg at the festival, I begin each September by preparing, with the help of my students, a research notebook for each of the six plays we’ll be producing the following summer. These are huge binders filled with useful information for the actors, directors, designers, and other theatre personnel as they prepare each show for performance. During the same time, I assist the director with script cuts, write song lyrics and program notes, and perform any other research duties requested by the festival’s producers.

I’m also a member of each show’s design team—including the director and the set, costume, and lighting designers—during the initial production meetings in November and March, while in early May I’m in residence in Cedar City working with the actors as rehearsals begin to make certain they understand the words they will be saying on stage before nearly

100,000 theatergoers who see our Tony Award-winning productions each year. In July, after the shows have opened, I return to the festival to direct three “Camp Shakespeare” educational programs that bring hundreds of adult students to see the plays, enjoy special backstage tours, visit with the leading actors, and participate in workshops on costumes, set design, music, stage fighting, and all the other divine mysteries of live theatre.

So, what do I do during my summer “vacations”? I work! But it’s a joyful, inspirational labor that refreshes me for the coming academic year and makes me a better informed and more enthusiastic teacher. I just hope everyone else’s summers are as wonderful as mine.

Michael Flachmann

Professor of English, Director of University Honors Programs

California Iota, California State University, Bakersfield

Reading across the curriculum

As the coordinator of the honors program on a urban commuter campus, I encounter students and professors from diverse cultures and disciplines in and out of class. I am fascinated by their often impassioned explanations of newly acquired knowledge in their courses of study, and I will often seek books for pleasure reading on their recommendations. More often, though, I choose nonfiction reading as a way to expand my own knowledge base or to explore a discipline outside of my own. This is a pattern that is consistent with my “generalist” background: a B.A. in speech, communications, and performing arts, an M.A. in special education/gifted, and a Psy.D. in clinical psychology.

My most recent reading choices have included *Who Killed Homer*, by Victor David Hanson and John Heath. This is a treatise on the demise of classical studies, once the foundation for the university experience. It is relevant for me as I plan for the Honors Classics Semester in Greece next summer.

Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain, by Antonio Damasio, is a book that was recommended by one of our biology professors, with whom I developed a course titled “The Evolution of Mind,” with a travel experience undertaken over spring break to the Galapagos Islands and Machu Picchu. The idea here was to examine the development of emotion as a spiritual experience, and one that continues to evolve in mankind.

My incoming freshmen suggested *What the Bleep Do We Know?: Discovering the Endless Possibilities for Altering Your Everyday Reality* as one of our brown bag lunch discussions with our physics faculty. A number of contributors were involved in producing the movie of the same name with Marlee Matlin, which most of the students had seen a year earlier. This proved to be one of the more thought-provoking suggestions, opening the group to a lively discussion of the ways in which our thoughts influence our experiences.

Following Jeremy Rifkin’s appearance on our campus last year, his *Hydrogen Economy* inspired another honors course concerning energy, conservation, and our political and economic interests. The idea that in a hydrogen-based economy all nations would have an equal opportunity for economic development provided a provocative catalyst for an

interdisciplinary honors colloquium, bringing political science, economics, environmental studies, and philosophy to the same discussion.

Finally, one of our students' honors thesis topic, “Cultural Differences in Islamic Practice” (working title), ignited a desire in me to fill a void in my own reading and knowledge. At a local used book sale, I found a text titled *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East*, a compilation of essays with editorial commentary by Kemal H. Karpat on the authors and their relationship to the development of nationalism in the region. Though dated (1982), it gives a compelling historical context for understanding current issues, and is a great help in understanding the differences in political stances taken by such countries as Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon.

Extremely diverse, these texts have stimulated my interest in the subjects covered. Knowing at least a little about the topics discussed helps me to be more conversant with the faculty and students who fill my days with their love of learning, but these are satisfying reading experiences when considered on their own merits.

Kathleen Kardaras
Honors Program Coordinator
Illinois Zeta, Northeastern Illinois University

Charybdis and I

I once read to get *away* from people. The Christmas on my bed reading *The Catcher in the Rye*, I thought how sophisticated I must be getting. I read like some people watch birds, for the sake of a “life list.”

I read poems now, not exclusively, but I read them when I'm up to my best reading. I want the voices, the ways of perceiving and turning a phrase. I read to get close. I want the intimacy that comes from what people say when no one's listening and they're not sure what's coming next. Sure, these poems have been worked over, but you can sense when something's gotten said in a way the writer could not have contrived or set about saying deliberately. Discovery is what I'm talking about—a surprise meeting of self and possibility.

Mornings are best for the energy I need. Sit down with Seamus Heaney or Elizabeth Bishop without focus; try reading John Berryman's *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* in a rush. The poems carom away; you're left try to follow words without a clue. The very way I once read books.

In the last year, I've spent mornings with the likes of Anna Akhmatova, Hayden Carruth, Raymond Carver, Stephen Dunn, Claudia Emerson, Thomas Hardy, Jane Kenyon, Galway Kinnell, Dorianne Laux, Thomas Lux, Herbert Morris, Lisel Mueller, Naomi Shihab Nye, Carl Phillips, W. D. Snodgrass, A. E. Stallings, Dabney Stuart, Virgil's *Aeneid* (the new Robert Fagles translation), Ellen Bryant Voigt, and C. K. Williams.

But I start a morning with the newspaper—front page, a local feature, maybe an obituary, an occasional sports story. I like some comics and then what I'm really looking for,

the Jumble and a crossword, to tune in to words. Did I mention coffee on a warmer and a glass of water with ice? And Charybdis. I have a bunch of secret calls to her that I’m not giving away. I’ve never known a cat that reaches out—I mean literally stretches her forelegs—to touch a person so eagerly. Many a fine hour we’ve had in the chair with the footstool, as I warm into the reading that matters.

I read through a new book of poems quickly. I’m edgy, surveying the territory, finding my way, a little catlike myself. But I get weird, Charybdis might say, when a poem begins to move me: Henry Taylor’s “Summer Hill” and “A Crosstown Breeze” (from *Crooked Run*), Christian Wiman’s magnificent eponymous “The Long Home,” Dylan Thomas’ always-astonishing “Fern Hill,” Heaney’s bog poems, many a poem in Elizabeth Hadaway’s breakout collection *Fire Baton*.

Charybdis’ ears go back when I say the first lines aloud, slowing my reading, letting the poem happen with me as the instrument. Then she hops down and heads to a chair of her own.

Jay S. Paul

*Professor of English, Honors Program Director
Virginia Zeta, Christopher Newport University*

Forty by Price

When asked a few months ago to write entries for the proposed *Christian Writers Encyclopedia* and encouraged to supply names of authors that should be included, I suggested Eugenia Price, my mother’s favorite writer. I happily accepted the assignment to write Price’s entry, knowing that I had an excuse to read her forty books, twenty-six non-fiction and fourteen novels, and call the pleasure work. Still, by the time I finished reading the fortieth book, I was as eager to finish as I had been to begin.

Price wrote radio scripts before being converted by her friend Ellen Riley October 2, 1949. Not long afterward she was invited to write, direct, and produce *Unshackled*, a radio drama telling the true stories of men and women whose lives had been changed when they accepted Christ as Savior and Lord at the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago. That drama, still replayed, succeeded so notably that Zondervan Publishing asked her to write a book. *Discoveries Made from Living My New Life* (1953) garnered little attention, but Price’s second, *The Burden Is Light* (1955), has deservedly become a classic; Price details the conversation with Ellen in her hotel room after the friends left Calvary Protestant-Episcopal Church that memorable afternoon when the “light” came. Soon her schedule was filled with speaking engagements and autographing sessions as book after book sold well.

In November 1961 as she and another friend drove through eastern Georgia reading the AAA guidebook, which mentioned Anson Greene Phelps Dodge’s rebuilding Christ Church memorializing his bride, whimsically they detoured to St. Simons Island, where in the cemetery reading gravestones, Price found the subject for the novel she had always hoped to write. She spent most of the next thirty-four years researching and writing long historical novels about coastal Georgia and northeastern Florida. *Savannah* (1983) is the best of her

novels, largely because she doesn't feel the need to give a fictitious character ten children.

Though Price's fiction sold even better than her nonfiction (and all her books sold so well that publishers sought her), her nonfiction will probably bear the years better than the fiction, which teaches history and is fun to read but romanticizes the antebellum South, with the beautiful, charming, heroic Charles Seton Fleming of *Margaret's Story* (1980) justifying slavery in the claim that the plight of laborers in the slums of Chicago is worse than the situation of the slaves on a Georgia plantation, a claim that leaves twenty-first century readers aghast (even though Price herself held modern liberal views). Throughout the non-fiction Price tells of letters from thousands of readers, discussing their problems and ways to handle them. These personal-sounding books are marred by Price's insistence that hundreds of people, some she has never personally met, are her close friends, but Price also frequently comes up with startling, workable insights, such as that gratitude erases bitterness, that suffering can be creatively redeemed (her prevailing theme), and that friendship with God is more important than service. Reading the books has been a challenge, but I'm glad I did it.

Mimosa Stephenson

Professor of English

Texas Alpha Omicron, University of Texas at Brownsville

Bradstreet windfall

During the summer I quench my reading thirst with contemporary fiction, of which *Windfall*, by James Magnuson, is one of my favorites. Hey, what college professor wouldn't want to find seven million dollars! I also delve into nonfiction, such as *Mistress Bradstreet: the Untold Life of America's First Poet* (2005), written by Charlotte Gordon. After finishing the biography, I feel like I know Anne Bradstreet, a woman of great individuality, albeit cloaked by necessity of time, place, and religion. The work transported me back to the 1600s and the settling of New England.

A line in the preface hooked me immediately: “But, then one of those coincidences happened that change your life” (x). Gordon writes of the day before she was to begin her first teaching job when she discovered a plaque about Bradstreet in the town in which she lived and Bradstreet had lived centuries before, and the rest is history. Gordon provides a detailed description of English politics, religious intolerance, the Puritans' perilous journey, and the uncertainty of life in the colony. And she dispels Puritan stereotypes: “An earthy people who enjoyed their ale and a good feast when the situation permitted; the Puritans sanctioned and even believed in the virtues of sex, even premarital sex, as long as the partners ended up in the married state” (47). The Puritans who crossed on the *Arabella* brought with them 10,000 gallons of ale!

Gordon highlights many Puritan enigmas. They were devoted to God, yet superstitious. They fled religious intolerance, yet were intolerant. They not only banished Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson but also years later were barbaric in their treatment of Quakers.

But Anne Bradstreet, mother of eight, is the superstar of the work. Influences on her

life and poetry are clearly shown, and they bear lessons for today, such as the importance of a father’s belief in and encouragement of a daughter’s talents and abilities, intellectual especially, which modern psychologists attribute as a factor in a woman’s success. The value of education is underscored. Bradstreet’s father educated her, and throughout her life she sought to increase her knowledge despite the many tasks she had to perform to keep her and her family alive and well. When Bradstreet’s house burned to the ground in the 1660s, she lost a library of 800 volumes. How many contemporary homes house such collections?

A devout Puritan, Bradstreet nevertheless questioned and sought answers to make sense of the chaos of life. The biography touched me. Her works were lost to us for a time, but she has made a comeback, and rightly so. She has much in common with feminists who made their mark long after she died. She so ingeniously pursued her art within the confines of Puritan society to leave us a legacy.

Claudia Matherly Stolz
Professor of Humanities
Ohio Zeta, Urbana University

Geographic and beyond

At the outset I will make a little confession: I do not like it when people (even my best friends) say, “Read this book. It is my all-time favorite and changed my life.” To my way of thinking, one of life’s great pleasures is the freedom to find one’s own path when it comes to leisure reading. I seldom follow the example when someone tells me about a favorite book, though I cherish conversations about the interior life. Each reader’s pathway can be as rich, diverse, and individualistic as the voyage of discovery of any explorer of uncharted territory.

I follow the careers of a few American novelists, and I have some old-time favorites. However, at the top of the list of my favorite reading materials, I need to mention the monthly *National Geographic*. As ubiquitous and iconic as it gets, the yellow-framed magazine provides a regular dose of world-class photography and nonfiction with a clear agenda: discover and study the earth’s far corners and try to preserve what remains of natural beauty. This magazine has influenced me more than any other thing I read. *National Geo-graphic* gave me the world as a boy growing up in a small town and enticed me to explore it.

My favorite novelists are Richard Ford, Jim Harrison, Thomas McGuane, and John Steinbeck (all but the last still active). Ford’s trilogy of *The Sportswriter*, *Independence Day*, and *The Lay of the Land* are as good as it gets when it comes to recreating the emotional state of American men in the late twentieth century. Harrison and McGuane are not as widely known but are excellent authors of quality fiction. Harrison’s recent novel *True North* is a concluding statement about a career that has included many great books like *Legends of the Fall*, *Dalva*, *Julip*, *Sundog*, and *The Beast God Forgot to Invent*. Harrison, a gourmet cook and *bon vivant*, always provides readers with a taste of adventure, European culture, and the joy of living. Harrison is also deeply interested in Native American culture. McGuane is the

novelist of Montana, and most of his books, such as *Nobody's Angel* and *Keep the Change*, give readers an abiding love for ranching and horse country. Steinbeck was my earliest idol. After my sister moved to the Salinas Valley in California, I read all the Steinbeck novels, some of them more *reportage* than fiction. As a writer passionate about social justice and preservation of the natural world, Steinbeck is still a giant among pygmies.

Lastly, I need to throw in a paragraph about writers of nonfiction. I would recommend anything by John Krakauer or Annie Dillard. Few books have meant as much to me as Dillard's *An American Childhood* or Krakauer's *Into the Wild*, *Into Thin Air*, and *Under the Banner of Heaven*. The best writers of nonfiction are also the most assiduous researchers, and in that company I would include Anne Fadiman (whose *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* is probably the most important work I have read in the last ten years), and E. O. Wilson, the controversial social-biologist and author of *Consilience: the Unity of Knowledge* who started life prowling the forests of northern Alabama looking for insects. Wilson's life was forever changed when at the age of 9 he read an article in *National Geographic* about ants and went on to pursue a career in entomology.

So I offer these few examples of books along the weird and wonderful path I have found as a reader and wish others similar joy finding their own brave new world in America's libraries and bookstores (preferably ones with coffee shops attached).

Jonathan Thorndike
Professor of Humanities/Honors Program
Tennessee Eta, Belmont University

A serendipity of consilience

What a joy to reflect on spare time reading, for, once read, my books are too often tossed upon the back shelves of my mind, lost among the memories of first dates and last month's gumbo. Sorting through my precariously situated stacks of books has been a refreshing process of rediscovery and even self-revelation, a “reading list as Rorschach” experience that I, as a psychologist, am prone to go for. Thus, rather than generalizing, I sought a snapshot of last semester's core readings (or re-readings) to see what I would find.

Three books explored the speeches of Lincoln: *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, by Garry Wills; *The Gettysburg Gospel*, by Gabor Boritt; and *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural*, by Ronald C. White, Jr. These works reveal Lincoln as theologian, poet, and statesman as he contemplates the possibility of meaning within the evil of the Civil War. Dark and profound, yet hopeful, his are some of our nation's highest thoughts and most beautiful words.

Poetry is always the core of what I read, and this spring's readings, perhaps not surprisingly, reflected the spirit of Lincoln. Sterling Brown's *Southern Road*, Wendell Berry's *Given Poems*, and A.E. Housman's *Collected Poems* are unblinking looks at the mysteries of nature, death, injustice, loss, and meaning. These works are contemplative, elegiac, and reinvigorating.

There were three autobiographies of childhood—memoirs of truth through the eyes

of innocent observers: Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*; Forrest Carter’s *The Education of Little Tree*; and historian Doris Kearns Goodwin’s *Wait Till Next Year*; the remembrances of her Brooklyn girlhood and her beloved Dodgers.

Finally, a trio of books tipped their hats to the more scientific: *The Language of God*, by Francis S. Collins, in which the head of the Human Genome Project presents evidence for belief in God; Daniel J. Levitin’s *This is Your Brain on Music*, a study of the neuroscience of music; and *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*, by Benjamin R. Barber.

Looking back, I am pleased that these readings support the ideal I lift up to students: the integration (or, to use Edward O. Wilson’s term, “consilience”) of truth in areas that are treated as disparate. However, to portray consilience as the force behind my reading would be highfalutin. My reading list consists largely of what captures my curiosity on C-span2’s “Booktv” or in the aisles of Barnes and Noble. Ultimately, I suppose, these books are simply the day’s sustenance in the quest to ponder the meaning of things. Better than some structured program of required reading, perhaps the unplanned following of the heart is what gives books their power to reveal one’s self and to sustain.

Ken Cameron
Professor of Psychology
Arkansas Eta, Harding University

Faulkner’s long shadow

Contemporary literary fiction fascinates me.

It always has, really. Even in graduate school my wife and I were members of the Literary Guild, with new novels by Vonnegut, Roth, Bellow, and others regularly coming our way. In recent years particular subsets of current fiction have drawn me, mostly Southern fiction and British fiction.

Largely that’s because William Faulkner’s fiction fascinated me first. It drew me into hours, days, weeks, years of scholarship. For some twenty years, in fact, Faulkner has been the focus of almost that many of my published articles.

The more I came to know Faulkner’s work, the more I began seeing Faulkner’s shadow in contemporary fiction. Like the ghost of Old Colonel Sartoris, Faulkner became almost palpable in the pages of his literary heirs. And as I continued reading contemporary fiction, the works he haunted came to seem all the richer once I spotted his shadow in them.

Not surprisingly, Faulkner is most present in contemporary Southern literature. He’s somewhere in every novel by Cormac McCarthy. He’s in the language of early Appalachian novels like *The Orchard Keeper* and *Outer Dark*. Later novels, though still rich, use a mature language more genuinely McCarthy’s, but they maintain Faulkner’s intense moral vision, both personal and social.

Evil gets up on two legs and stalks through McCarthy’s novels, from the person of

the Judge in *Blood Meridian* to Chigurh in *No Country for Old Men*, a character similar to Faulkner’s Popeye. Evil inhabits even the best of men; no person and no society is blameless. The best of men rise to goodness only when they recognize their evil, as John Grady Cole does in his secular “confession” to the local judge at the end of *All the Pretty Horses*: “I don’t feel justified, he said. . . . It bothered me that you might think I was something special. I aint.”

Few in McCarthy rise to such self recognition, as few do in Faulkner.

Faulkner’s in other Southern contemporaries as well. He’s in Lee Smith’s narrative style, in the multiple story tellers she uses in novel after novel. In fact, his *As I Lay Dying* is an almost direct model for *Family Linen*, in which a mother dies, has her story narrated alternately by her five children, each chapter bearing the teller’s name. The departed mother even manages to narrate one chapter herself when one of the children finds her old journal.

Faulkner is in Lewis Nordan, too. *The Sound and the Fury* gets a thorough reconsideration in Nordan’s *The Sharpshooter Blues*. There, Jason and Caroline Compson reappear in two sets of parents who are unavailable to their children, one of them because of alcoholism, throwing the children upon one another as Quentin and Caddy Compson are. Benjy Compson reappears as “Hydro” Raney, a mentally impaired young man with an absent mother, and Caddy’s daughter Quentin reappears through her presumed son Morgan, the sharpshooter of the title, the abandoned son of carnival workers reared as a foundling by a black woman. You’ll have to wonder if his carny father wore a red tie.

Faulkner doesn’t haunt contemporary British fiction as habitually as he does Southern, but his ghost is there. Graham Swift, an acknowledged admirer of Faulkner, uses his rich multifaceted storytelling to stunning effect in *Waterland*, which also shares the historical sweep of *Absalom, Absalom!*

Like Smith, Swift clearly models one of his novels on *As I Lay Dying*. His *Last Orders* is a funeral journey in which the deceased’s relatives and friends tell his story and their own in chapters bearing their names—and in which the deceased himself narrates a chapter bearing his name. The novel even features a chapter as short as Vardaman’s “My mother is a fish.” In a two-word chapter, the deceased’s son simply calls his father’s pub mates “Old buggers.”

Faulkner is in Ian McEwan as well. His *Atonement* matches *Absalom, Absalom!* in its reflection on the nature of language, its questioning of the boundary between history and fiction, and its profound depiction of guilty innocence, inescapable guilt, and the pain of living with the consequences of our words and actions.

This subject deserves a whole book, of course. Faulkner shows up in manifold ways in other Southerners like Wendell Berry, Larry Brown, Clyde Edgerton, Tim Gautreaux, and Brett Lott and in other Americans like Kent Haruf, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Toni Morrison. He’s the acknowledged fountainhead of much modern Latin American fiction, including that of Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Mediocre writers are always belittled by his presence. But great ones invariably grow greater.

Terrell Tebbetts
Professor of English
Arkansas Iota, Lyon College

Friends among the dead

It may sound strange, but I don't mind spending my spare time with people who have been dead for centuries, or even millennia. In fact, they are some of the most interesting people I know. They have names like Plato, Dante, and Tu Fu; and every time I spend an hour or so with them, it changes my life. These writers have been brought into high school and college classrooms to have their literary corpses dissected again and again, of course; but I've never thought that this is the best way to get to know them. As with friends, it works best when they are freely chosen.

I don't like to think of them as “classics” either. That term is usually applied to works of art that are boring, difficult, and best admired from a safe distance. But Plato, Dante, and Tu Fu didn't write in order to be admired. They wrote because they had something to say. And they certainly aren't boring, or even all that hard to read. Again, for me they are like friends—sometimes hard to deal with, but most of the time an absolute blast to be around. And, as with friends, each one adds something different and unique to my life.

For example, from Plato I get the feeling of being in an intense coffee-house discussion with someone who is smarter than me, but who is also willing to wait for me to catch up. Not wasting time on social niceties, he prefers to get right down to the big issues—truth, politics, and justice—which will never be settled, but which are always fun to argue about anyway.

With Dante I get the same sensation that I get when I go to a really good movie. His descriptions of the denizens of hell—their disfigured bodies, blasphemous cursings, and pitiable moans—affect me in a visceral way, and I'm often emotionally overwhelmed by the details of his imagery. Somehow, the exiled Dante makes me feel the full force of his rage while also making me feel sympathy towards those he is taking his vengeance upon. Indeed, he is one of the few writers I would follow into hell and back.

Tu Fu, a minor government official during the Tang Dynasty, wrote short, pithy poems that center on the eternal rhythms of life. Some of my favorite poems of his express the thoughts and feelings he has while resting on his boat as it gently rocks in the water. As I read him, I get the same feeling of what it's like to be out in a small boat on a lazy afternoon, letting the sun and wind erase all sense of time and worry.

All in all, not a bad way to spend one's spare time.

Michael Van Dyke

Associate Professor of English

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