

Newsletter of The

Katherine Anne Porter Society

Vol 2

1996

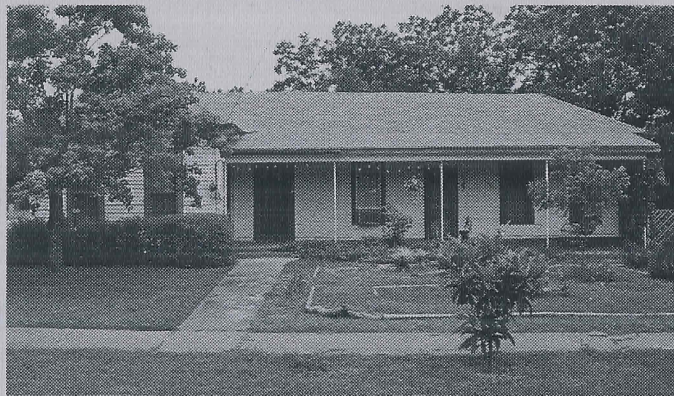
Southwest Texas State University Includes Porter Memorabilia in Southwest Writers Collection

The Center for the Study of the Southwest at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas, has established the Southwestern Writers Collection. In a large room on the top floor of the campus's new library, glass cases display memorabilia of writers from southwest Texas. Katherine Anne Porter is represented along with J. Frank Dobie, William Goyen, Larry McMurtry, and others. Porter artifacts include letters written by her, periodicals in which some of her short pieces first appeared, and some of her personal possessions, donated by her nephew Paul Porter.

KAP Society Annual Dues Still \$8

Katherine Anne Porter Society annual dues remain \$8 a year. Checks made out to KAP Society/UNLV Foundation should be mailed to Darlene Unrue, Department of English, University of Nevada, Las Vegas 89154-5011. The KAP Society has tax exempt status through the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Foundation, the fund-raising arm of UNLV.

Katherine Anne Porter Celebrated in Home Region



Home in Kyle Opens as Historical House and Museum

In spite of little recognition by Texas during her lifetime, in recent years Katherine Anne Porter has been honored increasingly in the region of her birthplace, Indian Creek, Texas. Most significant among acknowledgments of the importance of Porter to Texas letters and twentieth century literature have been the efforts of Yana and David Bland, owners of the house in Kyle, Texas, in which Katherine Anne Porter spent her childhood



years with her father, Harrison, her brother, Paul, her two sisters, Gay and Mary Alice, and her grandmother, Catharine Ann Skaggs Porter. Toward their goal of converting the Kyle house into a museum, the Blands have established the Katherine Anne Porter Association (KAPA).

The Blands, who are currently renting the house at 508 Center Street to tenants, secured a special use permit from the Kyle City Council for a zoning exemption that would allow them to run a museum in a residential area. The Katherine Anne Porter Museum was opened to the public in November, with visiting hours 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, and 9

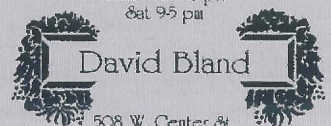
Katherine Anne Porter Literary Festival part of Kyle's "Fair-on-the-Square"

In 1994 Yana and David Bland and the Kyle Eagle established an annual Katherine Anne Porter essay and story contest, the winners to be announced during Kyle's annual "Fair-on-the-Square" each autumn. Winners are selected in the categories of fiction and nonfiction and by elementary, secondary, and adult classifications. School children are especially encouraged to enter the contest. Judges are drawn from local libraries and schools.



Books
Antiques
Art

Tues - Fri 10 am
Sat 9-5 pm



508 W. Center St.
Kyle, TX 78640
(512) 268-2220
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Katherine Anne Porter's Statue in Sea World's "Texas Walk"

In 1986 Harcourt Brace through Sea World of Texas in San Antonio commissioned eighteen life-size statues by Texas sculptors of native Texans who had made significant contributions to society. In May 1988 Sea World opened the four-acre botanical garden in which the statues have been placed along winding paths. Katherine Anne Porter's statue, created by Lubbock sculptor Glenna Goodacre, stands with, among others, those of Sam Houston, Lyndon Johnson, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Howard Hughes, and Scott Joplin. At the opening ceremony the artists and their subjects or representatives were honored as the statues were unveiled. Paul Porter, Katherine Anne Porter's nephew, represented his aunt. Although the garden no longer is called the "Texas Walk," the statues are a popular part of the Sea World garden.



Paul Porter and Glenna Goodacre with her bronze statue of Katherine Anne Porter at Sea World in San Antonio.

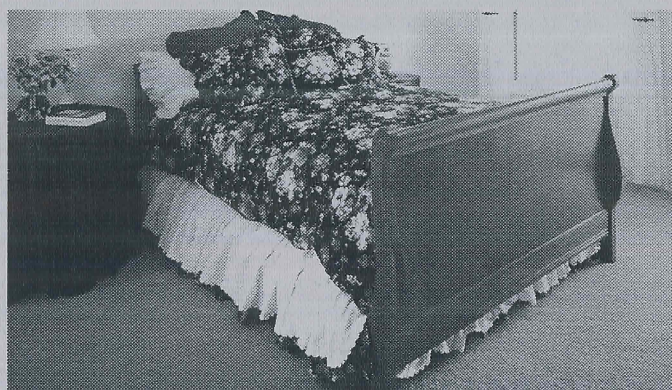
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a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays. Admission is free.

The Blands have described the purpose of the museum as that of educating local people about the Pulitzer-prize-winning Katherine Anne Porter, who lived in the house from 1892 until 1901. David Bland told an interviewer from the *Hays County Free Press*, "We want it to be open to the public, and we want children to know that a famous writer lived here" (15 June 1995). The museum will use the front rooms of the house. An antique shop offering gifts, antiques, books, and artwork is being set up elsewhere in the house to help underwrite the cost of maintenance and operation. Porter's nephew Paul Porter has lent memorabilia of his aunt for display in the museum.

The Blands have financed the conversion of the house into a museum, but they also are seeking grant funding to maintain the building.

Bed and Breakfast Features Katherine Anne Porter Room



About twenty-five miles southwest of Austin and east of Wimberley on the road to Kyle is the Inn Above Onion Creek. One of the six guest rooms is the Katherine Anne Porter Room, which is furnished in yellow and white, with a queen size sleigh bed, a bath with whirlpool tub, and a two-sided fireplace. The other rooms are also named for famous persons of the region, including Captain Fergus Kyle. Janie Orr, who with her husband owns the Inn, says that each room has been decorated to tell its own story about its namesake. The Inn Above Onion Creek is also close to Buda and San Marcos, towns significant in Katherine Anne Porter's early years.

The American Literature Association (ALA) Newsletter

The Newsletter of the American Literature Association provides information on the Association and the author societies of which it is composed. Persons who wish to subscribe to the ALA Newsletter should send a check for \$10.00, payable to the American Literature Association, to Professor Alfred Bendixen, Department of English, California State University, Los Angeles, 5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, California 90032.

Paul Porter Speaks at Kyle Library Event on Anniversary of Katherine Anne Porter's Birth

May 15, 1995, the Kyle Community Library and the Katherine Anne Porter Association celebrated "Women in Texas History." Paul Porter, Katherine Anne Porter's nephew, presented a talk titled "Katherine Anne Porter's Passion for Gardening," and Texas author and social worker Ruthe Winegarten spoke on "Texas Women and Their Literary Tradition." David and Yana Bland hosted a reception with refreshments afterward, and books by and about Katherine Anne Porter and an artist's rendering of Porter's childhood home were offered for sale.

KAP Society Holds Dinner at ALA Convention

The Katherine Anne Porter Society held a dinner for members and guests in the Baltimore Room at the Stouffer Harborplace Hotel Friday evening after the KAP session, the KAP Society business meeting, and the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries' reception. Ever mindful of Katherine Anne Porter's culinary skill and appreciation, Society members and guests dined on the following: Spanish tomato soup with baby prawns; Belgian endive and spinach salad with seared orange vinaigrette; grilled chicken and petite filet of beef with roasted peppers, onions, and tomato tarragon sauce; and banana royale torte with vanilla bean sauce. An open bar allowed personal choice of wine and other beverages. After dinner, Carl Griffin presented a slide lecture focusing on Katherine Anne Porter's birthplace and childhood home in Texas.

Katherine Anne Porter and Porter-Related Collections at the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries

By Beth Alvarez,

Curator of Literary Manuscripts at the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries

There has been progress on many fronts in the year that has elapsed since the publication of the last issue of the newsletter. An apparent rise in scholarly interest in Porter is evident in the increased number of research visits and reference inquiries. Both independent scholars and those affiliated with domestic and foreign academic institutions have made use of Porter materials. Although there was increased use of the collection by residents of the state of Maryland, the bulk of those who used the Porter and Porter-related collections in the last year were from other states: Georgia, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. In addition, there was one visiting scholar from a Norwegian university. Telephone, mail, and e-mail inquiries have also been received from researchers in California, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Canada.

Popular interest in Porter also seems to be increasing. During the period from May 1994 to April 1995, there were 408 visitors to the Katherine Anne Porter Room, an average of thirty-four a month. Many of these guests took advantage of the hours the room was open on Monday and Thursday afternoons during the academic year, thanks to the volunteer docents. Dorothy Galvin and Freddy Baer, who returned to serve during the 1994-1995 academic year, were stalwart mainstays. They were joined by Ginny Reinhart and Jackie Wintle during the autumn semester. Student assistants Jennifer Bourget and Ed Day also filled in during that semester. During the spring semester, Mary Moore, Beverly Lewoc, and Elizabeth Warner joined the program, which will continue during the coming academic year.

Several groups were entertained in the Porter Room during the year. In October, an group of invited guests witnessed the opening of an exhibit to honor University of Maryland photographer Al Danegger. Part of the exhibit, featuring Danegger's photographs of Miss Porter, was mounted in the Porter Room by graduate assistant Jodi Bunnell. A lively and inquisitive group of sixty Advanced Placement English students and two of their teachers from a suburban Maryland high school visited the Porter Room in late January for a brief explanation of literary research in primary sources. In April, conventioners from the Association for Childhood Education, whose records are also housed in the Archives and Manuscripts Department, were delighted to learn about Miss Porter. Also in April, some of the readers for the Libraries' annual reading marathon, including Art

Buchwald, were received in the room. The Board of Governors of the University of Maryland at College Park Alumni Association met in the Maryland Room in early May; before the meeting and during the break, I was able to give informal tours of the room. Finally, on May 25, a book signing and reception in honor of Janis Stout's new work on Porter was held in the room.

Significant improvements to the exhibition/reception area of the Porter Room were completed in summer 1994. Track lighting, walnut baseboard molding, and picture molding were installed. New exhibit cases and other furnishings ordered last year will arrive this summer, enhancing the Libraries' ability to mount museum-quality exhibits in this space. There continues to be interest in using Porter materials for Libraries' exhibits. Various items from the Porter collection were used in "Transforming Homer: The Odyssey of a Myth," mounted in connection with a University production of Claudio Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, and in exhibits in honor of women's history month and National Library Week.

The Libraries received several generous donations of Porter and Porter-related materials in 1994 and 1995. Most notable both in value and size were those conveyed by Miss Porter's nephew Paul Porter of Austin, Texas. When he visited in May 1994, he brought with him two beautiful perfume bottles given to Miss Porter by Eudora Welty. Another donation of additional manuscript and other materials for the collection of his papers, housed in the Archives and Manuscripts Department, was received in July 1994. During 1995, he has donated nine books from his own library, seven of which were given to him by Miss Porter. Also acquired from Mr. Porter are five letters written to him by his aunt between 1946 and 1965. The manuscripts, correspondence, and photographs have been incorporated into the papers of Paul Porter, the books into Miss Porter's library, and the perfume bottles into the collection of her memorabilia.

W. Hewitt Bayley sent significant augmentations to his wife's papers in 1994. His two separate donations included correspondence, manuscripts, photographs, and books. Most notable among these acquisitions are Mrs. Bayley's notes from the University of Kansas writers' conference where she met Miss Porter in 1948.

An unexpected gift of two of Miss Porter's letters came from Julius S. Held. The correspondence between them was initiated by Professor Held's response to *Ship of Fools*; the second of her letters to him, written on 28 April 1963, is perhaps one of the clearest statements Miss Porter made about the novel. These letters have been incorporated into Miss Porter's papers.

Maria Walsh also added to the papers of Thomas F. Walsh; in February, she donated copies of two photographs used in *Katherine Anne Porter and Mexico: The Illusion of Eden*. Another acquisition made in 1994 includes five letters written by Miss Porter to George Core from 1968 to 1973. These, too, have been incorporated into Miss Porter's papers.

There have also been significant preservation initiatives taken in the last year. The charming and valuable 1922 caricature of Miss Porter by Miguel Covarrubias was successfully

treated by a paper conservator. The caricature and the Mexican painting on bark given to Miss Porter by Thomas Walsh were archivally framed by a firm that does work for major museums. A group of Porter photographs, including works by Manuel Alvarez Bravo and George Platt Lynes, received treatment to stabilize and preserve them. Both a textile conservator and a furniture conservator examined Porter memorabilia this year. The Libraries are awaiting the report of the furniture conservator in order to determine what appropriate treatment of Miss Porter's furniture, housed in the Porter Room, may be undertaken in the future. At present, approximately half a linear foot of brittle and flaking correspondence and manuscript materials from Miss Porter's papers are being treated by a paper conservator.

Progress has also been made in processing Porter and Porter-related materials since May 1994. Graduate assistant Jodi Bunnell worked completely through the papers of Katherine Anne Porter in 1994, doing minimal reprocessing of the papers and recording suggestions for rearrangement that will be used when the collection is entirely reprocessed for microfilming. Some revisions based on her work have already been incorporated into the guide to the collection. Other significant work on Miss Porter's papers was undertaken by Jennifer Bourget, another graduate assistant. She reorganized Series IV (printed matter) and created an entirely new series for Miss Porter's collection of periodicals, incorporating a large volume of material that had previously been unprocessed. In addition, she has completed the processing and preparation of an inventory of more than 700 audio recordings that formerly belonged to Miss Porter. This valuable part of the collection will be incorporated into the guide sometime this summer. Graduate assistant Debby Volk and I were also able to complete revisions to the inventory of the photograph collection which at present is a separate ninety-page guide.

Porter-related collections on which work has been completed or is in progress include the papers of Paul Porter, Ann Heintze, Seymour Lawrence, Grace Delafield Day Spier, and Donald Elder. Jodi Bunnell completely reprocessed the Papers of Paul Porter, incorporating additional materials donated by Mr. Porter while at the same time rewriting the guide to the collection. James Lacewell, another departmental student assistant, reprocessed the Papers of Ann Heintze and completed a new guide. Karen Fishman, an intern from the College of Library and Information Services, incorporated unprocessed manuscript materials into the existing Seymour Lawrence collection and created a new finding aid. Debby Volk completed a new guide for the Spier papers. Docent Jackie Wintle, who retired recently from the Library of Congress, is working on a revision to the guide to the papers of Donald Elder.

The plans for preservation microfilming of the Porter collection are proceeding slowly. Lauren Brown, Curator of Archives and Manuscripts, and I met with and received clarification from the University's legal office concerning the copyright and other issues involved in microfilming the collection and the use of such microfilm. As noted above, reprocessing of the collection continues piecemeal. In May, graduate assistant Debby Volk processed selected boxes of Miss Porter's correspondence to provide an accurate baseline assessment of the staffing needed to complete the project. This test processing has continued throughout summer 1995. Outside funding, such as grants, donations, or a combination of them, will have to be sought, as only a fraction of the total cost as now projected can be financed with Libraries' funds. If any of the members of the society have suggestions for sources to underwrite this effort or any questions concerning the Libraries' Porter holdings, please contact me, Beth Alvarez, Curator of Literary Manuscripts, Archives and Manuscripts, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland at College Park Libraries, College Park, MD 20742, 301-405-9298, ra60@umail.umd.edu.

Book Signing Held in Katherine Anne Porter Room of the McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland at College Park

On May 25, the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries and the University of Virginia Press sponsored a reception and book signing in The Katherine Anne Porter Room in McKeldin Library in honor of the publication of Texas A & M professor Janis Stout's intellectual biography, *Katherine Anne Porter: A Sense of the Times*, published by the University of Virginia Press. Stout's book has been described as the first intellectual biography of Porter, a careful and compelling study that effectively places Porter in the context of her time. Stout is also the author of *Strategies of Reticence: Silence and Meaning in the Works of Jane Austen, Willa Cather, Katherine Anne Porter, and Joan Didion*; *The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures*; *Sodoms in Eden: The City in American Fiction before 1860*; and three works of fiction: *Home Truth*, *Eighteen Holes*, and *A Family Likeness*.

The Katherine Anne Porter Society at the American Literature Association (ALA) Convention in Baltimore, May 26-28.

Beth Alvarez, Curator of Literary Manuscripts at the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries, chaired the 1995 Katherine Anne Porter session at the American Literature Association convention held at the Stouffer Renaissance Harborplace Hotel in Baltimore, May 26-28. The title of the KAP session was "Katherine Anne Porter in Context." The papers delivered were the following: Charlotte Beck (Maryville College), "'Grasshopper and Ant': The Complementary Careers of Katherine Anne Porter and Caroline Gordon"; Thomas Austenfeld (Drury College), "Porter's Totalitarianism Revisited"; and Jeanette McVicker (SUNY, Fredonia), "Katherine Anne Porter, the New Criticism, and the 'New' Modernism."

After the session and the KAP Society's business meeting, the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries hosted a reception honoring the society and its guests.

The American Literature Association 1996 Conference in San Diego

The 1996 conference of the AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION will be held at the Bahia Hotel in San Diego May 30-June 2 (the Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday after Memorial Day Weekend). Preregistration conference fees will be \$40 (with a special rate of \$10 for independent scholars, retired persons, and students). The hotel is offering a conference rate of \$77 a night (single) or \$82 (double).

The 1996 conference director is Susan Belasco Smith, English Department, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK 74104-3189. e-mail: engl_sbs@vaxl.utulsa.edu

KAP Society Selects Officers, Ratifies By-Laws

During the 1995 convention in Baltimore of the American Literature Association, The Katherine Anne Porter Society, a member society of the ALA, ratified its by-laws, which were sent to all members in advance of the May 26 meeting. With the ratification the following became official: The Coordinating Committee became the Executive Committee, with the designated power to name honorary members of the Society, determine dates of general meetings, determine membership dues, appoint members to chair special committees, and select officers for the first two years. Members of the Executive Committee are Beth Alvarez, the University of Maryland at College Park; Virginia Spencer Carr, Georgia State University; John Edward Hardy, Emeritus, The University of Illinois at Chicago; George Hendrick, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Janis Stout, Texas A & M University; and Darlene Unrue, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The first officers of the KAP Society are:

Darlene Unrue, President

Janis Stout, Secretary

Beth Alvarez, Editor of the *Newsletter of the KAP Society*, effective 1996.

In 1997 the full membership will elect a president, a secretary, a treasurer, four members of the executive committee, and the editor of the Newsletter.

Along the Trace

for Katherine Anne Porter,
Autumn 1960

This woman paints pictures on paper
with words. Her brush is gravely held, hair
of camel to show the fragile girl
face (sorrow wrapped in a rebosa).
A knife will carve the quickened color
from palette to canvas, and strike the
man-form figure with a single stroke,
poetry in the curve of the line
falling into song with a Latin
beat, now retreating, now lunging down
to break home with shout of strength, rounding
hill and mesa, returning echoes
along the trace to fireside and love
or silence in a man, to Christ in
agony, holding the nails that keep
Him away from me, and bring Him close.

—David Locher*

*originally published in *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, reprinted with permission of David Locher, one of Porter's students at the University of Michigan, and a friend of Porter's until her death.

Alvarez Signs Contract with Mexican Publisher for Volume of KAP Works

The Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, an agency of the federal government of Mexico, has contracted with Beth Alvarez to edit a volume of Porter's non-fiction works about Mexico for publication in its series *Mirada Viajera* (Traveller's View or Foreigner's Account of Mexico). An editorial program of the Departamento de Ciencias Sociales in the Dirección General de Publicaciones of the Consejo, the first volume of the series, Charles Macomb Flandrau's *Viva Mexico!*, was published in 1994 with an introduction by Magarita Carbo and translation by Victoria Schussheim.

The volume, tentatively entitled *Escritos sobre Mexico de Katherine Anne Porter*, will include about thirty of Porter's pieces on Mexico published between 1920 and 1955. The volume's format will be similar to *Uncollected Early Prose of Katherine Anne Porter*, which Alvarez edited with Thomas F. Walsh. It will include a general introduction and head notes for each piece. The pieces to be included will be drawn from *Uncollected Early Prose*, "This Strange, Old World" and Other Book Reviews by Katherine Anne Porter, and *The Collected Essays and Occasional Writings of Katherine Anne Porter*. The Consejo has also expressed an interest in publishing Spanish language editions of a collection of Porter's fiction as well as Walsh's *Katherine Anne Porter and Mexico: The Illusion of Eden*.

Hendrick Chairs KAP Session at 1996 ALA

George Hendrick, Professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is chairing the Katherine Anne Porter session at the 1996 ALA conference in San Diego. In addition to one or two papers, there will be a panel discussion of the current state of Katherine Anne Porter studies: work in progress and work to be done.

Carl Griffin Chairs Katherine Anne Porter Society's Preservation Committee

Professor Carl Griffin, of the Humanities Department at Dekalb College in Dunwoody, Georgia, has agreed to chair the Katherine Anne Porter Society's Preservation Committee, devoted to working to preserve Katherine Anne Porter artifacts and memorabilia. Professor Griffin has spent many years visiting Porter's home region in Texas and collecting photographs and other memorabilia. He was acquainted with Porter during the latter part of her lifetime. Persons interested in participating in preservation activities can reach him at Dekalb College.

Bibliography

Moddelmog, Debra. "Concepts of Justice in the Fiction of Katherine Anne Porter." *Mosaic* 26/4 (1993), pp. 37-52.

Stout, Janis. *Katherine Anne Porter: A Sense of the Times*.

Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995.

Forthcoming in 1995 or 1996:

Givner, Joan. An excerpt from "Letters to Lodwick." *Southwest Review*.

Unrue, Darlene. *Katherine Anne Porter's Poetry*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Wiesenfarth, Joseph. A review of *Katherine Anne Porter at One Hundred: New Perspectives*, by Blanche T. Ebeling-Koning (University of Maryland at College Park Libraries, 1991). *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography*.

KAP Annotated Bibliography Planned

The Katherine Anne Porter Society plans to publish annually an annotated bibliography to include all works relevant to Katherine Anne Porter studies. The bibliography will include articles, books, theses, dissertations, and papers presented at conferences. Please help by sending information to Darlene Unrue, Beth Alvarez, or Janis Stout.