

Newsletter of The

Katherine Anne Porter Society

Volume 3

1997

KAP Papers at October 1995 WLA Conference

By Thomas Austenfeld,
Drury College

At the annual Western Literature Association Conference in Vancouver, October 1995, Katherine Anne Porter was the subject of two papers delivered in a panel on "Women of the Southwest," chaired by Janis Stout of Texas A & M University. Ann Parkhurst of the University of Nebraska spoke about "Betrayal, Loss, and Eternity in 'The Jilting of Granny Weatherall.'" Colleen M. Tremonte of Michigan State University gave a paper entitled "Katherine Anne Porter and the Present/Absent Frontier," in which she challenged limiting regional identifications of Porter's work by calling on Patricia Nelson Limerick's argument in *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*.

The 1996 Western American Literature Conference, to be held in Lincoln, Nebraska, will feature a panel of four Porter scholars under the heading "K. A. Porter: The West and Beyond." Janis Stout, Thomas Austenfeld (Drury College), Colleen Tremonte, and Chuck Etheridge (McMurry University) will present papers.

The question of Porter's Texas identity is of continuing interest to Porter scholars. While Porter cannot be labelled a "Western writer" without a great deal of explanatory comment, her prominence in these conferences expands opportunities for scholarship by placing her in new contexts: without a doubt, our readings of Porter differ when we compare her to Cather and Austin as opposed to O'Connor and Welty.

Katherine Anne Porter Letters at Washington State University Libraries

By Robert N. Matuoizzi, Manuscripts Librarian, Holland Library

Donated to the Department of English at Washington State University in June 1994, the Katherine Anne Porter-Eugene Dove Pressly Papers offer a highly selective but fascinating glimpse into the lives and careers of a significant American writer and the man who was her husband for roughly five years (1933-1938). The processed collection (a small Hollinger box of papers) is currently housed in the University Archives of Holland Library at Washington State University. The documents in it span the years 1924-1962, with the bulk of the materials dating from the 1930s and 1940s.

Eugene Dove Pressly (1904-1979) was Katherine Anne Porter's husband during the period when she created some of her most enduring



Eugene Pressly, in Mixcoac, outside Mexico City, March 1931. From the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland at College Park Libraries.

1942 until the end of World War II, he worked as a translator in a mobile radio unit of the psychological warfare section of the Office of Strategic Services in southern France and the Rhineland. In addition to his rather interesting international career during the period 1928 to

fiction. The Pressly series consists of personal and professional correspondence, employment and military records, biographical papers, a folder of unidentified shorthand manuscripts, and two typescript prose fragments. During the period of his relationship with Katherine Anne Porter, Pressly was employed by the U. S. Department of State as a clerk-stenographer and translator in postings in Mexico (where they met), in Europe, and in South America. Pressly worked for the American Ambassador in the Soviet Union at the height of the Stalinist Terror in the years 1937-1941. From

Continued on page 2

The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 1994

By Janis P. Stout, Texas A & M University

This bibliographic essay, summarizing 1994 work and work belatedly reported in the *M. L. A. Bibliography* for 1994, initiates what is expected to be an annual feature of the newsletter. Certainly, greater timeliness would be desirable. It is hoped that 1996 will also see another innovation: semi-annual publication of the newsletter. If that goal can be achieved, I will expect to provide a second bibliographic essay this year, catching us up through the year's work of 1995, with a similar schedule to be continued thereafter.

My plan is to let the arrival of the print *M. L. A. Bibliography* in my mailbox serve as a trigger. Yes, I do realize that the bibliography is available on CD-Rom, updated quarterly, and that reliance on the print volume is anachronistic. But allow me, please, my idiosyncrasies. I like the print version. I enjoy holding it, spreading it open on my desk, and marking its margins. Even more, I like having a reliable triggering mechanism for a commitment such as this. Once the bibliography arrives, then, I will undertake to obtain, read, and summarize all the listings shown under Porter's name, plus any others I delve up by consulting other keywords that strike me as likely sources. If my experience with the present year's listing is any indicator, that second category is not likely to turn up much. I decline to include materials that contain only passing references (there would be no end to the search), and passing references were

Continued on page 3

KAP Society Annual Dues Still \$8

Katherine Anne Porter Society annual dues remain \$8 a year. Checks made payable 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 fundraising arm of UNLV.

The *Newsletter of the Katherine Anne Porter Society* is published at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, by the Katherine Anne Porter Society, with the sponsorship of the UNLV English Department. Membership inquiries and renewals should be directed to Darlene Unrue (president of the society), Department of English, University of Nevada, Las Vegas 89154-5011, unrue@nevada.edu. Entries for the bibliographical essay on Porter should be addressed to Janis Stout, Department of English, Texas A & M University, College Station, Texas 77843, j-stout@tamu.edu. Articles, announcements, and comments for the newsletter should be sent to Beth Alvarez, Archives and Manuscripts, McKeldin Library, UMCP, College Park, Maryland 20742, ra60@umail.umd.edu.

The officers of the Katherine Anne Porter Society are Darlene Unrue, President; Janis Stout, Secretary; Beth Alvarez, Newsletter Editor. Members of the Executive Committee are Beth Alvarez, Virginia Spencer Carr (Georgia State University), John Edward Hardy (emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago), George Hendrick (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Janis Stout, and Darlene Unrue.

Editor's Note

Now that the first issue of the newsletter under my editorship is completed, the society and I propose to publish two issues of the newsletter annually. We will aim to publish one issue in May in time for the meeting of the society at the ALA Conference and a second six months later in November. Please note, however, that in order to do so, the society must receive annual membership dues.

I encourage all members to submit reports of conferences and work in progress, personal reminiscences, and other items of interest for inclusion in the newsletter. I look forward to seeing many of you in Baltimore in May.

Porter Letters

Continued from page 1

1947, Pressly also had literary aspirations. The only quasi-literary effort to see publication, however, was the collaborative translation he did with Porter on Jose Fernandez de Lizardi's *The Itching Parrot*, which was issued in 1942. Porter's 22 May 1942 letter to Pressly describes how the publisher had cut their manuscript "to the bone," eliminating the illustrations, map, and notes they had worked up for the edition. Pressly's life took a downward turn in later years after he suffered a beating in a work-related robbery in 1966.

The collection's three Pressly letters to Porter offer a window on his personality. He writes on 28 June 1938, in the aftermath of their recent divorce, that "words were always difficult for me, on paper or spoken, and just now there is nothing that urgently needs to be said or spoken." But though apparently taciturn, the second Pressly letter, of 26 October 1939, shows his dark sense of humor. Referring to a black box of his possessions that Porter had complained was cluttering her home, he cryptically observes that "All of us have our black boxes, troublesome, in the middle of rooms." Curiously, the correspondence reveals that Pressly's mother did not learn of her son's divorce until some sixteen months after it happened, and this in the 14 August 1939 letter she received from Porter. The Pressly materials are especially good at documenting his life and activities through the 1940s.

The Katherine Anne Porter series is perhaps the more significant part of the collection. Many of the twenty-eight unpublished letters that date from 1934 to 1946, chiefly missives sent to Pressly, offer valuable insights into Porter's personality during a crucial period of her artistic development. Some document financial worries ("You know how it is, jam yesterday and jam tomorrow but dam little jam today." [KAP to EDP, 10 December 1937]), concern over Pressly's situation in Russia shortly before the outbreak of World War II, her intense devotion to French bath oils (*Essence pour Bains*), and her penchant for pearls and black outfits. They also briefly document the strained nature of the Porter-Pressly marriage. Her 17 January 1938 letter paraphrases her statement in the divorce petition, "your manner and attitude towards this defendant [sic] was in effect so distant (I suppose meaning you were usually somewhere else?) that she became convinced you did not love her any more. . . . Now this is the truth if ever I saw or said it." The correspondence reveals Porter's impatience to end an unfruitful arrangement in order to plan her "life definitely with no more threats of change and uncertainty, and waste and frustrated hopes" (KAP to EDP, 11 January 1938, dated 1937). In addition, Porter dashes off a series of striking psychological aperçus on her estranged husband.

Porter offers a version of her genealogy in the 2 June 1934 letter to Elizabeth Merchant, then her mother-in-law: "My whole family, in every branch since 1780 at the latest, and in some branches earlier, are southern." In the same letter she notes that her love of travel and exposure to people were important aspects of the writing life: "For myself, I am interested in every creature living, I like hearing as much as I can about the world and all the people in it. I suppose this belongs to the nature of a writer for its [sic] no good writing about life until you've lived a little."

The 1930s was a period of intense productivity for Katherine Anne Porter. By 1939, three collections of stories sufficed to establish her as a major figure in twentieth-century American fiction. The letters in this collection show her life at this time hedged by intermittent health problems—at one point she was taking medicinal infusions—and financial worries. The letters also provide documentation of her work in Hollywood in the 1940s; she complained, "I will die if they [MGM] try to keep me" (KAP to EDP, 17 April 1945), despite the \$2000 a week salary. In another letter from this time (27 September 1945) she evinces delight over the fact that "Aldous Huxley and Thomas Mann and Bruno Walter and Lotte Lehmann" also resided in the Santa Monica area. These letters highlight Porter's persistent search for a suitable place in which to live and work. For a period of time in 1942-1943, she apparently found this in South Hill, her "blessed house in the country" near Yaddo, the artist's retreat, in Saratoga Springs, New York. Additionally, the Porter correspondence offers some insight into her fiction, her reactions to World War II, her views on life and people, and wry comments about her stints as a lecturer and "public" figure. The letters reveal levity, too; Porter and Pressly occasionally traded jibes over their weight.

The Porter-Pressly Papers at Washington State University add to our knowledge of these two people during an important period in their lives. In particular, they fill some gaps in our knowledge of Eugene Pressly, who has assumed a peripheral status in Porter scholarship but who was an interesting figure in his own right during the period in which he was associated with her. Porter's letters offer a portrait-in-miniature of a hard-working writer who in 1966 was awarded the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize for literature.

Porter: 1994

Continued from page 1

all I found. But perhaps next year's will be different.

In the case of the dissertations I will consult DAI. My summary comments on dissertations, then, will be based on only the published abstracts; I do not plan to obtain complete dissertations from University Microfilms, even though I am confident that poring over them in full would be educational. This year only, the dissertation category will include past years' work as far back as 1990, in hopes of bringing the Hilt and Alvarez bibliography that we have all found so useful up to date in that one category at least.

One prefatory word more: When I first began to think of undertaking this project, I determined that my annotations or comments would be strictly summary in nature, not evaluative. I have concluded, however, that such a policy would at times make the report of marginal usefulness. Evaluative observations, then, will occasionally appear. But I hope that they will never be of the snide variety that we have all seen at times.

With that, here is the listing of the year's work on KAP for 1994.

Books

None that I am aware of, although the period 1990-1993 produced some twelve books, including the Bayley edition of the letters, the Carr collection of reprinted essays on "Flowering Judas," the Clark and Machann volume of new essays on Porter and Texas, the revised edition of the Givner biography, two books on Porter published in India, and books by Alvarez and Walsh, Brinkmeyer, Stout, Tanner, and Walsh (the prize-winning Katherine Anne Porter and Mexico).

Articles and Essays and Chapters in Books

The year's publications in journals and edited volumes demonstrate that 1994 continued the spirited state of Porter scholarship in the past decade and a half. As we would expect, much of this body of work addressed Porter's short fiction (one article each on "Flowering Judas," "Old Mortality," and the "Old Order" group), but there were also articles on other parts of the *oeuvre*.

P. Jane Hafen's "Katherine Anne Porter's 'The Old Order' and Agamemnon," Studies in Short Fiction 31 (1994): 491-93, is, as a note should be, quite focused. The identification of an allusion to Agamemnon's "hare, ripe, bursting with young unborn yet" in the slain pregnant rabbit of "The Grave" will strike some readers as strained.

Helge Normann Nilsen's "Laura Against Sexism: A Feminist Reading of Katherine Anne Porter's 'Flowering Judas,'" in Excursions in Fiction: Essays in Honour of Professor Lars Harveit on His 70th Birthday, ed. Andrew Kennedy and Orm Overland (Oslo: Novus Press, 1994), pp. 145-56, offers an argument that "feminism and rejection of radical, revolutionary politics are fused and amount to a sustained attack against patriarchal cruelties and injustices wherever they are found." Although this interpretive point is of interest, it is somewhat unsettling that the most recent scholarly or critical work on Porter cited is from 1986. Nilsen writes that Laura sometimes goes into churches "from the force of habit" and reads the male saint's "lace-trimmed drawers hang[ing] limply around his ankles" as meaning the drawers have fallen down, leaving the pitiful and illusory nature of religion and church . . . another patriarchal institution which has neglected to address the concerns of women."

Suzanne W. Jones's "Reading the Endings in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Old Mortality,'" in Famous Last Words: Changes in Gender and Narrative Closure, ed. Alison Booth (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), pp. 280-99, is quite another matter. Also a feminist reading, it is firmly grounded in theory, specifically, reader-response theory. The central

argument can be well summarized in Jones's own concluding words: "Porter demonstrates the difficulty of reading or writing a story rather than being read or written by it—the problem of unconsciously playing out old plots, even after one has become a feminist reader aware of their dangers." The extensive notes include the complete text of an important letter to Porter from her bother Paul, dated March 23, 1909.

Another valuable contribution, Thomas Austenfeld's "Katherine Anne Porter Abroad: The Politics of Emotion," Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht 27 (1994): 27-33, is indexed by M. L. A. as pertaining to Ship of Fools, but in fact treats the poem "After a Long Journey" as an indicator of a rhetoric of affectively-sensed politics in "The Leaning Tower" and the novel. It presents in brief form an argument that Porter's characters—and indeed she herself—react to political events with the same emotional intensity with which they respond to family burials and other private matters, indeed with the same intense tug-of-war between fascination and repulsion which they usually reserve for their lovers." We can hope this essay will be reprinted in a volume that will make it more generally accessible.

The year's listing of articles on Porter is rounded out by two contributions of my own: "Something of a Reputation as a Radical: Katherine Anne Porter's Shifting Politics," South Central Review 10 (1993): 49-66, a study of her left-leaning politics and its Texas roots, and "Katherine Anne Porter's 'Reflections on Willa Cather': A Duplicious Homage," American Literature 66 (1994): 719-35, a reading of that splendid essay of tribute to a sister writer that finds it to be not entirely a tribute.

Dissertations

It is notably evident in the abstracts of doctoral theses of the past several years, up through those degrees awarded in 1994, that treatments of Porter continue to see her in relation to feminist constructs, often quite aggressive ones. We cannot suppose that she would be happy, of course—but then, neither was she happy with being called, as she was for so long, a stylist.

Ruth M. Alvarez, "Katherine Anne Porter and Mexican Art," University of Maryland, 1990. The abstract of this dissertation is not published, but Alvarez's searching work on the roots of Porter's work in Mexican art is partially accessible in the editorial introductions in Uncollected Early Prose of Katherine Anne Porter (University of Texas Press, 1993).

Ricki Heller, "Action and Inaction in the Stories of Katherine Anne Porter," University of Toronto, 1991; DAI November 1993, A-1804. "St. Augustine and the Bullfight" defines a spectrum of five basic types of behavior, from "passivity lacking insight" to "positive, productive action that is directed by clear vision." Characterization according to this spectrum of types provides "a unity to the canon."

Colleen Marie Tremonte, "The Variable Presence of Place: Narrative Construction in the Fiction of Katherine Anne Porter," Texas Christian University, 1991; DAI June 1992, A-4335, studies Porter's work from a socio-spatial perspective, using geographical, architectural, and sociological theory, and finds that her protagonist "ultimately acquires or rejects personal and/or social selfhood in accordance to perceptions of place."

Mary Michele Bendel-Simso, "The Politics of Reproduction: Demystifying Female Gender in Southern Literature," State University of New York at Binghamton, 1992; DAI June 1993, A-4318. Porter is treated along with Kate Chopin, William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, and Alice Walker in a study of female roles, especially a nondesiring and asexual motherhood, imposed as hegemonic structures in the South. The dissertation is grounded in the theories of Gramsci and Foucault.

Pearl Amelia McHaney, "The Monster upon the Bank: Eudora Welty's Book Reviews and Major Essays," Georgia State University, 1992; DAI

Continued on page 4

Porter: 1994

Continued from page 1

January 1993, A-2371. Welty's essay on Porter is among those studies in demonstration of the "common threads of Welty's critical prose."

Colleen Warren, "A 'Hard Unwinking Angry Point of Light' and 'The Fluctuation of Starlight': Female Identity in the Short Fiction of Katherine Anne Porter and Eudora Welty," University of Florida, 1992; *DAI* July 1993, A-183. Porter's conception of female identity differs from Welty's in its emphasis on "constancy and singularity" rather than "multiplicity of identity." These conceptions "determine the degree and quality of their female protagonists' subjectivity, voice, objectification, and relationality."

Margaret Bauer, "The Fiction of Ellen Gilchrist: An Intertextual Reading with Works by Ernest Hemingway, Katherine Anne Porter, William Faulkner, and Kate Chopin," University of Tennessee, 1993; *DAI* December 1993, A-2147. Porter is seen, along with Hemingway, as an exemplar to whose work Gilchrist's responds in its development of "a composite personality for her extended story cycle."

Carol Vandever Hamilton, "Dynamite: Anarchy as Modernist Aesthetic," University of California, Berkeley, 1993; *DAI* May 1994, A-4087. Porter is included in the fourth chapter, entitled "Fellow Travelers: American Writers and the Sacco-Vanzetti Case." The dissertation seeks to "historicize and reconceptualize modernism as riven by revolutionary as well as reactionary impulses."

Nancy Pollina Ford, "Tropes, Exempla, and the Rhetoric of a Feminine Corrective in Selected Short Fiction of Katherine Anne Porter," University of Houston, 1994; *DAI* December 1994, A-1559. Rhetorical analysis of

thirteen stories, leading to the conclusion that Porter "proposes options for women beyond the accepted gender roles." The positive and negative exempla discovered imply a "critique of the patriarchy."

Barbara Nealt Kelber, "Making Places: Writing Women of the American South," University of California, Riverside, 1994; *DAI* February 1995, A-2391. Porter is among "many southern authors, including Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, Alice Walker, Carson McCullers, Bobbie Ann Mason, Laura Riding, and the Fugitive/Agrarian group, whose works are examined for their negotiation of the "conceptual space in which they have 'learned their place.'" Unlike male authors of their time, these writers envision a challenge of "the power of the white, eurocentric, middle class male" through the construction of alternative symbolic spaces.

Jeraldine Rachel Kraver, "Paris South: What a Generation Sought and Found in Post-Revolutionary Mexico," University of Kentucky, 1994; unfortunately, not in *DAI*.

Charlotte Megan Wright, "Plain and Ugly Janes: The Rise of Ugly Women in Contemporary American Fiction," University of North Texas, 1994; *DAI* March 1995, A-2837. The figure of the homely old maid in nineteenth-century American fiction becomes more recurrent, and her homeliness accentuated, in twentieth-century fiction, where the ugly woman is seen as exerting "power over her own life and the lives of others." Porter is among some twenty-six twentieth-century writers mentioned by name as being treated.

To anyone whose work I have missed I offer my heartiest apologies. My e-mail address is j-stout@tamu.edu, if you care to send me your addenda, which can be incorporated into the next report.

Porter Activities at the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland at College Park

This report on the activities related to the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter and other Porter-related manuscript collections at the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries covers the period between May 1995 and December 1996. While there were fewer researchers who travelled to College Park to consult our Porter holdings during this period, the demand for information about and access to the collections, particularly for photocopies of materials in them, continued to rise. Although the majority of these researchers were professors and graduate students from academic institutions across the United States, the entire group included undergraduates, independent scholars, and members of the general public from North America, Europe, and Asia as well. On-site researchers included residents of the states of Maryland, Nevada, New York, Texas, and Washington and one scholar from Austria. Telephone, mail, and e-mail inquiries have also been received from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington as well as from Austria, Canada, England, Japan, Mexico, and Spain.

Popular interest in Porter also remained high. During the last year and a half, there have been more than 500 visitors to the Katherine Anne Porter Room. The room continued to be open on Monday and Thursday afternoons during the academic year thanks to the efforts of an enthusiastic group of volunteer docents. Dorothy Galvin and Freddy Baer, who with

Shirley Bauer initiated the program in November 1993, have provided uninterrupted loyal service for three years. Shirley Bauer, now retired from college teaching, returned to the program in September 1995. Beverly Lewoc and Elizabeth Warner, also retired professionals, joined the group in spring 1995. In September 1995, Esther Birdsall, one of my former professors, and Sy Gertman, our only male to date, swelled the ranks to eight. Although Mr. Gertman was forced to withdraw in January 1996 because of family concerns, the remaining seven have provided stalwart support to me and the Libraries. A highlight for the docents occurred on December 15, 1995. A visit of Barbara Thompson Davis, Literary Trustee of the Estate of Katherine Anne Porter, coincided with the date scheduled for our end-of-semester celebration. Mrs. Davis generously hosted the luncheon for the docents and myself at the Rossborough Inn. Both she and Shirley Bauer regaled us with their personal recollections of Miss Porter.

Groups that have visited the Porter Room included those invited to events sponsored by the Libraries. Receptions following these events took place in the Porter Room, enabling me to introduce Katherine Anne Porter to a variety of new audiences. On November 7, 1995, Phillip Herring, author of a new scholarly biography of Djuna Barnes, delivered a lecture that was followed by a book signing and reception in the Porter Room; after the Porter collection, the Papers of Djuna Barnes are the Libraries' most valuable literary manuscript holdings. Hodding Carter, III, former official in the Jimmy Carter administration and holder of UMCP's Knight Chair of

Journalism, spoke at the kick-off event for the Friends of the Libraries on December 5, 1995. Two events related to the Libraries' Gordon W. Prange Collection of Japanese publications were held in the Porter Room in 1996: the visit of the Librarian of the National Diet Library of Japan on April 29 and a special program to celebrate the opening of the children's publications in the Prange collection on August 1. On May 2, 1996, members of Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, who were meeting in College Park, toured the Porter Room, where the organization was born in June 1972. In addition, I made presentations in the Porter Room for seven members of a University Park book club in November 1995 and five members of the UMCP Undergraduate History Association in November 1996.

The Porter Room, the Porter collection, and several of the Porter-related collections were significantly enhanced by gifts since my last report. Miss Porter's nephew Paul Porter was prominent among the donors. His gifts included a book formerly owned by Miss Porter, copies of family photographs of his father and one of his sisters, and a small group of correspondence and manuscript material. These materials have been incorporated into the papers of Katherine Anne Porter and the Paul Porter papers.

Bill and Fern Wilkins, who became intimate friends of Miss Porter in the 1970s, contributed two memorabilia items for display in the Porter Room. The first is one of the last typewriters Miss Porter used; the second is a blue wool Christian Dior suit. A photograph of Miss Porter wearing this suit accompanied newspaper coverage of the December 1972 "Voyage Beyond Apollo" cruise during which Miss Porter observed the launch of Apollo 17. (For example, see Tom Buckley, "Caribbean Cruise Attempts To Seek Meaning of Apollo," *New York Times*, 12 December 1972.)

Carole Neal and Margaret Frost, daughters of former president of the University of Maryland, Wilson Elkins, and his wife Dorothy, donated eleven letters written by Miss Porter to their late father and mother, as well as some additional manuscript and memorabilia materials. Professor Ray Lewis White of Illinois State University donated his nearly 400-item collection of clippings about Miss Porter and her work. Both of these gifts have been added to Miss Porter's papers.

Clark Dobson, who became a close friend of Miss Porter late in her life, donated the pine coffin that Miss Porter bought in 1974. Now housed in the Porter Room, the coffin is painted with large flowers that were executed by Joe Mayhew, the son of one of Miss Porter's neighbors at the College Park apartment where she was living at the time. The coffin figured prominently in Henry Allen's 31 March 1974 *Washington Post* piece "Katherine Anne Porter: The Vanity of Excellence." Dobson, a dean at George Mason University in nearby northern Virginia, also donated three 1974-1975 photographs of Miss Porter and others from his personal collection; they have been incorporated into the Libraries' collection of Miss Porter's photographs.

Margaret Doherty Neal, the niece of Miss Porter's friend Mary Louis Doherty, has continued to augment the Libraries' collection of her aunt's papers as she locates additional items among the Doherty family papers. These gifts included nearly eighty photographs, twelve items of correspondence and other manuscript materials, and ten legal documents. Perhaps

the most interesting among them are several of Miss Doherty's passports and Mexican Alien Registration cards.

The Libraries were also able to acquire through purchase four letters written by Miss Porter to her sister Gay Porter Holloway. The dates of these letters are 10 December 1947, 12 February 1948, 31 May 1961, and 15 January 1966. They have been interfiled with other correspondence between Miss Porter and Mrs. Holloway in Series I of the Porter papers. Another acquisition of interest in the last eighteen months is a videotape copy of a short interview with Miss Porter filmed by the university in the Porter Room in 1971.

The reporting period also saw the arrival of three large exhibit cases, two cubes to display three-dimensional objects, four leather and walnut benches, a lectern, and display panels for use in the Porter Room. This furniture and equipment has enhanced the ambience of the exhibition space and has allowed us to mount more professional exhibits.

There have been no new preservation initiatives this year, but the grant-writing activity of June 1996 (described below) may ultimately result in large-scale preservation of the most valuable portions of the Porter collection. The deteriorating manuscript materials from the Porter and Grace Delafield Day Spier papers that were sent out in 1995 have received treatment and have been reintegrated into these collections. Other preservation news includes the conclusions of the report of the furniture conservator. I was dismayed to learn how much it will cost to conserve and restore Miss Porter's antique furniture housed in the Porter Room. The conservator estimates that \$12,000 to

\$15,000 will be necessary to repair and restore just the eighteenth-century upholstered sofa.

The most important accomplishments of the last year and a half are a direct result of the return of Jodi Allison-Bunnell to the Archives and Manuscripts Department. She formerly served as a graduate assistant from March through August 1994. In September 1995, she returned to work on a part-time basis as my principal assistant. Her two most important initial assignments were beginning the reprocessing the Porter papers and researching possible sources of funding to microfilm the collection. After completing her degrees in February 1996, she became a nearly full-time employee. One of her first tasks was to help me devise a new arrangement scheme for the collection. Her work was also essential in preparing the collection and information about it for an appraisal that was completed in February 1996. By December 1996, reprocessing of all of the collection, except for the correspondence, photographs, and Miss Porter's manuscripts, was virtually complete. Initial reordering of the correspondence, constituting more than sixty percent of the paper portion of the collection, has also been finished.

Ms. Allison-Bunnell's research on funding sources enabled us to focus our efforts on the most promising among them. We made initial contact with the Division of Preservation and Access of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Pforzheimer, Summerlee, Mellon, Luce, and Delmas foundations. We were encouraged to submit grant proposals by the Summerlee Foundation and NEH. Both of these proposals were submitted by early July. In mid-July, we learned that the Summerlee Foundation of Dallas, Texas, had awarded us a grant of \$10,000 to help defray the costs of



KAP's wooden coffin donated by Clark Dobson.

Continued on page 6

Activities at UMCP

Continued from page 5

completing the reprocessing of the collection and of writing an entirely new guide to the collection. This grant allowed us to hire Ms. Allison-Bunnell in an entry-level professional position as a project archivist. We expect to complete this work by the time the Katherine Anne Porter Society meets in Baltimore in late May. We hope to make a presentation of the completed guide at one of the society's gatherings at the American Literature Association Conference.

Notification of our success with the NEH proposal will not come until Spring 1997. We have asked the Endowment to fund a project archivist, student support, and microfilming of 100,000 of the most fragile and valuable pages of the collection. The effort to complete this grant proposal was truly Herculean. Almost 150 pages in length, the application benefitted from the wise counsel and supporting letters of friends and scholarly colleagues. These included Barbara Thompson Davis, Literary Trustee of the Estate of Katherine Anne Porter; Paul Porter; Darlene Unrue; Janis Stout; Joan Givner; Jackson R. Bryer; and Lewis Lawson. I also received valuable help and advice from my colleagues at the Libraries: Acting Director Anne Scott MacLeod; Desider Viktor, Associate Director for Collection Management and Special Collections; Mary Holland, Development Officer; Doug McElrath, Curator of Marylandia and Rare Books; and my departmental colleagues, Lauren Brown, Curator of Archives and Manuscripts; and Anne Turkos, University Archivist. If awarded, the grant will run eighteen months. Portions of the collection will be closed to researchers at different periods during the time the preparation and actual filming take place. The proposal calls for a third of the 100,000 images (clippings; financial, legal, and personal materials; manuscripts and notes) to be closed to researchers in order to prepare for filming in September 1997, the second portion (half of the correspondence) in January 1998, and the third portion (remaining half of correspondence) in June 1998. If our proposal is not

successful, we will actively seek funds for microfilming from other sources.

Beyond Ms. Allison-Bunnell's efforts, there has been additional progress in processing Porter and Porter-related materials in the last year and a half. Volunteer Bill Wilkins was able to sort through the various drafts and carbons of Porter's Cotton Mather manuscripts to determine which were duplicates. Two interns from the UMCP College of Library and Information Services, Tara Reise and Scott Leonard, made good headway on a new arrangement scheme for the large collection of photographs. Student intern

Jennifer Pitts completed the revision to the guide to the papers of Donald Elder begun by former docent Jackie Wintle. Graduate assistant Michelle DeMartino processed and wrote a guide to the papers of Mr. and Mrs. John Prince, which had been donated to the Libraries in 1982. At present, docent Esther Birdsall is working on a guide to the papers of E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr. In January 1996, Mr. Prettyman removed the restriction on access to these papers. Although the guide is not complete, these papers are now available to researchers.

I regret to report that Jodi Allison-Bunnell will be leaving the Archives and Manuscripts Department in mid-March 1997. She has accepted the position of Archivist of the K. Ross Toole Archives of the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana. Without her exceptional work, both in processing the collection and researching and writing the grant proposals, I would not be recording these valuable accomplishments. She thoughtfully arranged to begin her new position in Montana in order that most of the work of reprocessing and writing will be complete when she leaves. Some of you may be interested in reading her article, "Access in the Time of Salinger: Fair Use and the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter," which will be published in the next issue of the *American Archivist* (dated October 1995, to be published January 1997). It is a great blow to lose her, and I will miss both the support and

intellectual stimulation of working with her every day. However, all of us in the department wish her and her husband success and happiness as they return home to the West.



KAP's Dior suit on display in the Porter Room. Typewriter donated by Bill and Fern Wilkins is visible on her desk at rear.

Financial Report Katherine Anne Porter Society May 31, 1996

The Katherine Anne Porter Society was established in 1993, membership was invited, and dues received. During its first fiscal year, costs for membership invitations, stationery, invitations to the inaugural dinner, and excess costs for the inaugural dinner were paid by University of Nevada, Las Vegas, President Robert Maxson and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Foundation. Postage was paid by the UNLV English Department.

At the end of the calendar year 1993, the Katherine Anne Porter Society had an unencumbered balance of \$224, the result of twenty-eight (28) paid membership dues.

At the end of calendar year 1994, the Katherine Anne Porter Society had an unencumbered balance of \$256.00 with the payment of four more membership dues. The first Newsletter of the Katherine Anne Porter Society was published in May of 1994, printing costs paid by President Maxson and the UNLV Foundation and mailing costs paid by the UNLV English Department.

At the end of calendar year 1995, revenue increased by \$112.00 with fourteen (14) new or renewed membership dues payment.

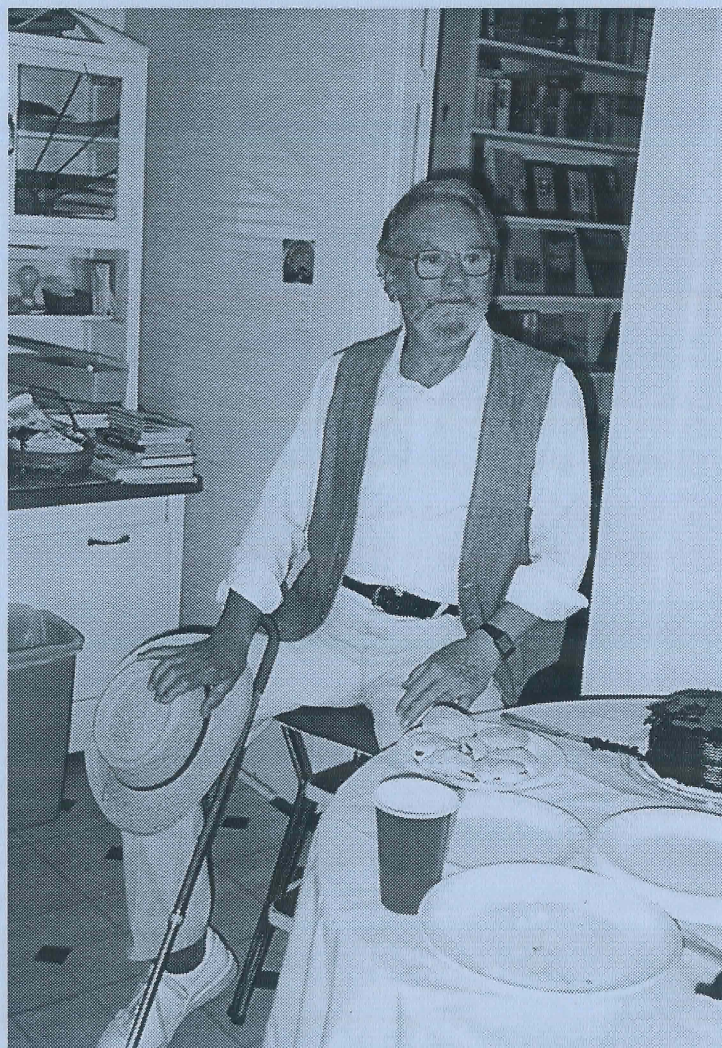
Total:		\$426.00
Expenditures:	\$40.26	complementary society dinner at 1995 ALA meeting for graduate student
	203.28	costs of printing newsletter
Total expenditures:		\$243.54
Balance at end of calendar year 1995:		\$182.46
Membership dues received 1/1/96-5/31/96		\$24.00
Balance, 5/31/96		\$206.46

KAP at Short Story Conference

Susana M. Jimenez Placer, a Ph.D. candidate at the Universidad de Santiago, Santiago, Spain, delivered a paper on Katherine Anne Porter at the Fourth International Conference on the Short Story in English organized by and held at the University of Northern Iowa and the University of Iowa, June 7-11, 1996. The conference, whose theme was "Many Cultures, Many Voices," featured twenty-three panels on different aspects related to the study of the short story including "Social and Political Perspectives," "Latin American Influences," "Psychological and Philosophical Perspectives," "Language and Metaphor," "Regionalism," and "Female Identity in the Short Story." Ms. Jimenez presented her paper, "Laura's Approach to Language and Symbols in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Flowering Judas': Her Unconscious Rejection of the Short Story," on a panel entitled "Women Writers." She plans to travel to the University of Maryland at College Park to do research for her dissertation on Katherine Anne Porter in the near future.

Third Annual Katherine Anne Porter Literary Festival

On Saturday, December 14, 1996, the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Festival was celebrated in Kyle, Texas, where Porter lived from about 1892 to 1902. It featured a writing competition for authors of all ages. The principal speaker was Don Graham, J. Frank Dobie Regents' Professor of American and English Literature at the University of Texas at Austin, who also served as one of the judges of the writing competition. The adult winners were Linda S. Bingham and Mark Busby, both of Wemberley, Texas. They both were recognized for short stories, Bingham's "2,000 Years of Forgetting" and Busby's "The Possum." Houstonian Alicia Austin was awarded the prize for teens, 15 to 18, for her poem "Blue Roses." The prize for younger teens, 11 to 14, went to Laurel Green of New Braunfels, Texas, for her story "Landerel Heights." Two poems, "Not It," by Meredith Orf of Austin, Texas, and "The Dark Hour," by Rebecca Hyde of Kyle, captured the awards for children, 5 to 10. The contest is sponsored by Yana and David Bland, owners and operators of the Katherine Anne Porter Museum in Kyle, and the local newspaper, the Kyle Eagle. Paul Porter provided the awards for the winners.



Paul Porter in the kitchen of the KAP Museum, July 1996.

Katherine Anne Porter Museum

Opened in November 1995, the Katherine Anne Porter Museum is located at 508 West Center Street in Kyle, Texas. Built shortly after the founding of Kyle in 1880, the house served as the retirement home of Porter's widowed paternal grandmother and namesake, Catherine Anne Porter, until her death in 1901. She was joined there by her son Harrison, the father of Katherine Anne Porter, and his four children after the death of his wife in 1892. Owned by David and Yana Bland, the museum is dedicated to literary and cultural education and inspiration. In 1996, it won recognition as a non-profit endeavor by the State of Texas. It is open to the public Tuesday through Friday, 1 to 6 pm; Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm; and the first Sunday, April through August, from 2 to 5 pm. Admission is free and wheelchair accessible. During its first year of operation, the museum entertained visitors from the states of California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Washington, as well as from Texas.

The museum displays a unique collection of pictures, writings, recipes, letters, cassettes, records, and videos by and about Katherine Anne Porter and her contemporaries. Museum visitors can also enjoy local history exhibits, including a collection of tools, weapons, and artwork made by Native Americans who lived in the area for over 40,000 years. There are also displays of the work of local artists and Mexican arts and crafts. The gift shop includes jewelry, books, and antiques.

As a non-profit organization, the museum is dependent upon member-

(Right), Yana Bland, David Bland, and Beth Alvarez, on the front porch of the KAP Museum, July 1996.

(Below right), KAP Museum in Kyle, Texas.



ships, donations (monetary or items), community use, and monthly events to remain open to the public. It is available, by appointment, for meetings, classes, and weddings. You can support this living museum by becoming a member. Memberships range from \$10 to \$1000. Membership pledges and other inquiries may be sent to the Katherine Anne Porter Museum, P. O. Box 615, Kyle, Texas 78640. The telephone number is 512-268-2220; the Fax number is 512-268-1557.



KAP Session at 1996 ALA Conference in San Diego

The society's session at the annual Conference on American Literature of the American Literature Association took place on Friday, May 31, 1996. George Hendrick of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign chaired the session which included two papers and a panel discussion. Gary M. Ciuba of Kent State University, Trumbull, delivered "If I am to be the heroine of this novel: Desire, Deceit, and 'Old Mortality.'" The title of the paper presented by the University of Maryland at College Park's Beth Alvarez was "Royalty in Exile": Pre-Hispanic Art and



Beth Alvarez, Jewel Spears Brooker, Janis Stout, George Hendrick, Gary Ciuba, and Darlene Unrue share a laugh at the KAP session at the ALA conference in San Diego, May 1996.

Ritual in 'Maria Concepcion.'" The papers were followed by a panel discussion, "Katherine Anne Porter Research in Progress/Research Needed," moderated by George Hendrick. Panelists included Gary Ciuba, Beth Alvarez, Darlene Unrue (University of Nevada, Las Vegas), Jewel Spears Brooker (Eckerd College), and Janis Stout (Texas A & M University).

A short business meeting conducted by society president Darlene Unrue preceded the paper presentations. A copy of the financial report, the primary subject of the business meeting, appears elsewhere in the newsletter.

Darlene Unrue will chair the society's session at the 1997 ALA conference to be held in Baltimore, Maryland, May 22-25, at the Stouffer Harborplace Hotel. The session will include papers by Andrew R. Burke of the University of Georgia ("A Spiritual Sense of Gravity: Exile and Self-Identity in Katherine Anne Porter's Miranda Cycle"), Mary Titus of St. Olaf's College ("Fresh Make-Up: Gender Roles, Social Control, and Costume in Porter's 'Pale Horse, Pale Rider'"), Christine Hanks Hait of Columbia College ("The Concept of Wonder in Katherine Anne Porter's Fiction"), and Joseph Csicsila of Eastern Michigan University ("Katherine Anne Porter Anthologized"). Anyone wishing to attend, who has not received information about the conference, should contact the conference director, Gloria Cronin, Department of English, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602. Her e-mail address is croning@jkhbhr.byu.edu.

Preregistration conference fees will be \$40 (with a special rate of \$10 for independent scholars, retired individuals, and students). The hotel is offering a conference rate of \$98 a night (single or double). If you wish to stay at the conference hotel, call soon, as it generally is fully booked quite early. You can make your hotel reservation by calling 1-800-535-1201 and requesting the American Literature Association rate.