

Newsletter of The

Katherine Anne Porter Society

Volume 6

May 1999

The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 1997 Plus More for 1996

By Christine H. Hait,
Columbia College
Columbia, South Carolina

Janis Stout's 1996 bibliographic essay ended with this challenge: "The need to supplement the report for 1995 in this essay prompts me to urge all of you Porter scholars out there to let me know if you find that your work has not been reported. Demand a higher standard! Even better, demand to write the bibliographic essay yourself." I hasten to make clear the reason Janis did not produce this year's bibliographic essay. I did not demand to write the bibliographic essay myself! Because of her increased administrative responsibilities at Texas A&M University, Janis asked me if I would assume responsibility for the bibliographic essay. My reason momentarily addled by the surprising news that Janis, productive scholar and busy administrator, saw limitations on what she could accomplish in a year, I agreed to the task.

Some brief remarks about

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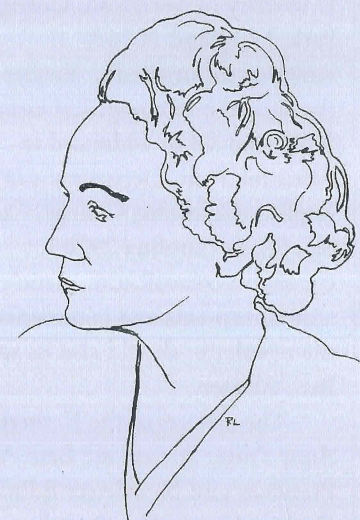
Center for the Study of the Southwest Hosts Porter Symposium

By Mark Busby, Southwest Texas State University

What would have been Katherine Anne Porter's 108th birthday was celebrated with a day-long symposium at The Center For The Study Of The Southwest at Southwest Texas State University on May 15, 1998, in the Aquarena Center, San Marcos, Texas. This symposium celebrated both the birthday of Katherine Anne Porter and the acquisition of Porter's childhood home in nearby Kyle by the Hays Country Preservation Associates and Southwest Texas State University. Additionally Porter was the featured writer for Texas Writers Month, May 1998. As Center Director Mark Busby noted in his welcoming remarks, it was a day that probably would have reflected Porter's long-term attitude toward Texas, because the skies were darkened by smoke from forest fires in Mexico.

Symposium participants included Texas literature and Porter scholars. The papers were published in a special Fall 1998 issue of the journal *Southwestern American Literature*, published biannually by the Center. Janis Stout, from Texas A&M University — College Station, noted Porter scholar and author of the critical biography, *Katherine Anne Porter: A Sense of the Times*, began the symposium with "Writing Home: Katherine Anne Porter, Coming and Going," in which she discussed the significance of Porter's numerous letters home. Next,

Darlene Unrue, from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and author-editor of numerous critical works on Porter, concentrated on a small part of her forthcoming biography and a subject especially appropriate for the day of the symposium, "Katherine Anne Porter's Birthdays." And Larry Herold, from Southwest Texas State University, in a lively presentation looked wryly at "Katherine Anne Porter and Marital Bliss."



Line drawing of Katherine Anne Porter by René LeBlanc for the Center for the Study of the Southwest Symposium on Katherine Anne Porter, San Marcos, Texas, May 15, 1998.



Poster designed by Marc English for Texas Writers Month, May 1998.

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Center for the Study of the Southwest Hosts Porter Symposium

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Katherine Anne Porter Society

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 Beth Alvarez, Archives and Manuscripts, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, ra60@umail.umd.edu. Entries for the annual bibliographical essay on Porter should be addressed to Christine Hait, Department of English, Columbia College, Columbia, South Carolina 29203, chrishait@colacoll.edu. Articles, announcements and comments for the newsletter should also be sent to Beth Alvarez.

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

KAP Society Membership

Katherine Anne Porter Society annual dues are \$10 a year. Checks made payable to KAP Society should be mailed to Beth Alvarez, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. The KAP Society has tax exempt status through the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Foundation, the fundraising arm of UNLV.

Like these papers that dealt with specific aspects of Porter's life, several others focused upon some of the main elements of Porter's relationship with her home state, which has become increasingly important to discussions of Porter's life and work. The house, of course, is pivotal to Porter's formative period in Texas, but there are three other major points at which Porter connected with Texas—in 1939 when Porter expected to receive the Texas Institute of Letters Award for best Texas book only to be insulted when the award went to folklorist J. Frank Dobie. James Ward Lee, founder and longtime director of the Center for Texas Studies at the University of North Texas, focused on this event, as well as the important points of comparison and contrast between the two Texas contemporaries in "Romance v. Decadence: KAP and the Dobie Years."

The second major event in the tumultuous relationship between Porter and Texas occurred in the 1950s when Porter was first invited to teach for a semester at the University of Texas at Austin. Porter eventually declined the full semester assignment, but she accepted an invitation to present a lecture. It was during that time that Porter began to believe that UT would build a library and name it after her, Texas's most famous literary daughter. But somehow she and UT President Harry Ransom miscommunicated, and Porter, as we all know, left her materials to the University of Maryland Libraries. In "The Lady and the Library: KAP and UT," Dick Holland, the founding curator of the Southwestern Writers Collection at Southwest Texas State University, examined this event and her relationship with the University of Texas using original materials from the University collections. Holland found an excoriatory letter to Porter from Frank Wardlaw, the founder of the University of Texas Press, after she withdrew her contribution to Three Men in Texas, which Wardlaw had already had set in print. Holland's research fleshed out the details of Porter's dealings with the University of Texas.

Porter's third major Texas event was Lou Rodenberger's subject in "The Prodigal Daughter Comes Home." Rodenberger, coeditor of last year's acclaimed book, Texas Women Writers, detailed Porter's experiences when she returned to Texas in 1976 to receive recognition from Howard Payne University in Brownwood. It was on that trip that Porter visited her mother's grave in the little cemetery in Indian Creek and decided that her remains on her death belonged beside her mother. Rodenberger interviewed many of the Howard Payne faculty involved in that visit to examine the details of that penultimate Texas trip. Porter was invited by Howard Payne President Roger Brooks, whose letters, inscribed books, and audio tapes associated with Porter's visit have recently been secured by the Southwestern Writers Collection at SWT.

Mark Busby's presentation, "Katherine Anne Porter and the Southwest: Ambivalence Deep as the Bone," was also concerned with Porter's relationship with Texas, but it covered her ambivalence toward her home area in both her life and her work. Bert Almon, from the University of Alberta, took the discussion into another area related to Texas in his "Katherine Anne Porter and William Humphrey: Mentorship Reconsidered." Almon previewed his work on Humphrey, now available in his new book William Humphrey: Destroyer of Myths. Rob Johnson, (University of Texas, Pan-Am) in "Among, But Not Of: Revolutionary Mexico and the Short Stories Of Katherine Anne Porter And María Cristina Mena," discussed the possible relationship between Porter's stories about Mexico and the work of Maria Cristina Mena, who published stories about Mexico in Century Magazine during the same time. Jeri R. Kraver, then of Texas A&M International University, examined another aspect of Porter's south-of-the-border experiences, tracing her changing attitudes toward revolution in "Troubled Innocent

Abroad: Katherine Anne Porter's Colonial Adventure."

Several presenters explored specific works. Don Graham, the J. Frank Dobie Professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin, looked carefully at "What's Buried in 'The Grave'?" And Christine Hait from Columbia College in South Carolina, looked at "The Princess," an unfinished story recently published in Uncollected Early Prose of Katherine Anne Porter, for evidence of Porter's interest in the relationship between gender and creativity in "KAP and Creativity." Terrell Dixon, from the University of Houston, applied his expertise in environmental literature to "Knowing Nature in Katherine Anne Porter's The Leaning Tower And Other Stories."

Sylvia Grider, from Texas A&M University — College Station and coeditor with Rodenberger of Texas Women Writers, anchored the day's presentations and prepared the group for the trip to the house in "Katherine Anne Porter and Folklore." Using her training in material culture, Grider discussed the significance of Porter's growing up in the small house in Kyle.

After the presentation, the group adjourned to Kyle, five miles north of San Marcos, to the Katherine Anne Porter House, and some participants also visited the grave of Porter's grandmother, Aunt Cat, in the Kyle Cemetery. The Porter house serves as a museum and modest monument to a writer whose achievements are among the most impressive in

American literature. The house had just recently been purchased by the Hays County Preservation Associates and had not yet

begun the planned renovations. After the house is renovated, Southwest Texas State University will lease it to use for a writer-in-residence program and for literary events sponsored by University's English department, its MFA program, and the Center for the Study of the Southwest.

We know that Porter's relationship to her childhood home was intense after she moved with her father, two sisters, and brother to live with her grandmother in Kyle after her mother's death in 1892. And this house and the nine years living in Central Texas became the source of Porter's most enduring stories. Its continuing presence will inspire future Porter scholars as they, like the participants in this symposium, attempt to understand her life and work.

For information about the special Porter issue of Southwestern American

Literature, e-mail either Mark Busby or Dick Heaberlin (mb13@swt.edu or dh12@swt.edu), the coeditors, or write to Editors, Southwestern American Literature, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas 78666.



Porter inscribed this photograph, "Ophelia in Mixcoac, March 1931, KAP," Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

In Memoriam: Toni Willison

Florence Willison, known to her friends and family as Toni, died Saturday, May 13, 1998, in Schenectady, New York. She was born in 1903 and grew up in New York City. As a young woman, she worked as a button painter and dental assistant. During the 1920s, Mrs. Willison lived in Greenwich Village. An early marriage to Jack Tworkov ended in divorce. George Findlay Willison and Toni began their life together in 1928, residing in Annapolis, Maryland; Croton-on-Hudson, New York; Provincetown, Massachusetts; and Washington, D.C.; before settling in Malta, New York. The Willisons had one son, Malcolm. Like her husband, Mrs. Willison was politically active. She supported the Loyalists during the Spanish Civil War and British, Chinese, and Soviet allied war relief during World War II. She was a volunteer for the League of Women Voters and the American Civil Liberties Union and, for many years, served as an election official in Malta.

George and Toni Willison were long-time residents of Malta, a small village near Saratoga Springs in upstate New York, where

they enjoyed country living and were respected members of the community. They came to Malta in 1946 at the invitation of Katherine Anne Porter to determine if they would like living in South Hill, the house Miss Porter purchased and renovated in 1941. Their subsequent agreement to buy the house from her began a long friendship and correspondence. George Willison lived at South Hill until his death in 1972. Toni Willison remained there until 1997, the year in which the University of Maryland Libraries acquired the Willisons' correspondence with Miss Porter. In 1998, Tom and Sue Nolen, themselves Malta residents of many years, purchased South Hill from the Willison estate and now reside there.

Mrs. Willison is survived by her son of Schenectady, New York; a sister, Grace Peaty of Pompton Lakes, New Jersey; and a granddaughter. A memorial service was held on June 13, 1998, at the Malta Ridge United Methodist Church and included music, reminiscences by family and friends, and photographs and memorabilia. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Ballston Spa Public Library, the Malta Ambulance Corps, or to a charity of one's choice.

The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter

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my approach are in order. Like Janis, I used the MLA bibliography as the source (the CD-ROM version, not the print version that Janis used), working only from the topical listing provided for "Porter, Katherine Anne" (Janis also used the keyword listing). Like Janis, I based my report on dissertations on the abstracts published in *DAI*. Although the CD-ROM version of MLA that I used included scholarship published in 1998, I have continued the tradition of the yearly bibliographic essay. Thus, the report focuses on scholarship published in 1997, although, like Janis, I have supplemented the previous year's report, including scholarship published in 1996 but not included in the 1996 bibliographic essay.

1996

Articles

Joan Givner, in "Letters to Lodwick: Uncovering the Hidden Life of Katherine Anne Porter," *Southwest Review* 81.1 (1996): 11-27, reflects on the complex relationship between biographer and subject and on the sustaining power of a friendship "developed on paper between two people who never met." Reviewing her correspondence with critic Lodwick Hartley during the period of years in which she was writing her Porter biography, Givner provides a fascinating account of her encounters with Porter's literary contemporaries (including Matthew Josephson, Malcolm Cowley, Eudora Welty, and Allen Tate), with early friends Erna Schlemmer Johns and Kitty Barry Crawford, and with Porter herself. However, her encounters with Hartley in their lively correspondence prove the most memorable for readers of Givner's article.

Merrill Skaggs, in "Willa Cather's Influence on Katherine Anne Porter's 'He,'" *Southern Quarterly* 34.2 (1996): 23-26, points out a number of striking resemblances between the title character of "He" and Marek, Antonia's youngest brother, in Cather's novel *My Antonia* and between the Whipple and Shimerda families in general. Skaggs

does not tackle the difficult questions of influence and coincidence that these resemblances provoke, concentrating instead on identifying the "different ends" Porter and Cather pursue, "while sharing the same characters." Skaggs's discussion of doubleness in Porter's story and Cather's novel is particularly of interest.

Dissertations

In chapters that "focus on the connections among war, human relationships, and language," Ellen Bonds, in "Imagining War and Peace: American Women's Short World War II Fiction," *DAI* 57.5 (1996): AAG9629349, completed at Lehigh University, discusses Porter in the context of other women writers, such as Shirley Jackson, Ann Petry, and Kay Boyle, whose short fiction reflects on the complexities of war.

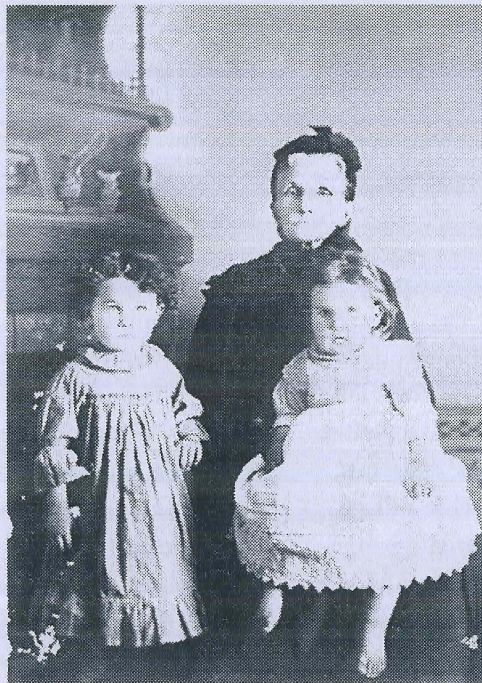
Deborah Nahamah Cohn, in "The Burden of the Past: Visions and Revisions of History in Latin America and the United States South," *DAI* 57.9 (1996): AAG9704008, completed at Brown University, explores connections between Latin American fiction and fiction of the American South. Included in her discussion is a chapter drawing connections

between Porter's Old Order stories and Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo*, focussing on "the role of memory and storytelling in strengthening communal structures threatened with disintegration by the changing of orders." Other writers discussed in the dissertation include Isabel Allende, Ralph Ellison, William Faulkner, and Mario Vargas Llosa.

Writers discussed in Kristina Kaye Groover's dissertation, "The Wilderness Within: American Women Writers and Spiritual Quest," *DAI* 57.10 (1996): AAG9708128, completed at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, include, in addition to Porter, Sarah Orne Jewett, Zora Neale Hurston, Harriett Arnow, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor, and Kaye Gibbons. Applying feminist psychology and theology, Groover points to the ways that these writers reject the traditional pattern of the spiritual quest and offer "alternative constructions of spirituality" that locate

spirituality "in community, rather than in solitude."

A surprising aim of Ellen Rachel Lansky's dissertation, "Something for the Lady: Women Alcoholics and Their Partners in American Modern Fiction," *DAI* 57.6 (1996):



KAP, her grandmother Porter, and her younger sister, Mary Alice Porter, ca. 1893-1894. *Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.*

AAG9635872, completed at University of Minnesota, is “restoring the woman alcoholic—as author and character—to the canon.” Lansky’s series of intertextual readings include a reading of Dorothy Parker’s “Big Blonde” and Porter’s Ship of Fools. Lansky argues that the texts she explores “are complicated by two constructions: the gendering of alcoholism and codependency and the authors’ construction of codependent readers.” Lansky applies the idea of “the resistant reader” to her study of alcoholism in literature, arguing that the authors she discusses place the reader in the position of “drinking partner” or “enabler,” a position the reader should resist.

1997

Books/Collections

Darlene Unrue’s Critical Essays on Katherine Anne Porter (G.K. Hall), in James Nagel’s Critical Essays on American Literature series, follows the series’ format, including previously published reviews of the fiction and non-fiction and new and previously published essays on the fiction and non-fiction. Although a number of the essays Unrue includes can be found in other collections of Porter scholarship, welcome additions to collected essays on Porter include Suzanne Jones’s “Reading the Endings in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Old Mortality’” and Debra Modellmog’s “Concepts of Justice in the Work of Katherine Anne Porter.” Porter scholars will wish to take note of two interesting new essays written for the volume: Unrue’s “Katherine Anne Porter and Sigmund Freud” and Beth Alvarez’s “‘Royalty in Exile’: Pre-Hispanic Art and Ritual in ‘Maria Concepcion.’” Unrue’s introduction is particularly valuable for its review of Porter scholarship published after 1988 and thus not included in Katherine Anne Porter: An Annotated Bibliography (1990), by Kathryn Hilt and Beth Alvarez.

Articles

Rae M. Carlton Colley’s “Class and Sexuality in a Mexican Landscape: Katherine Anne Porter’s Marginalia on D.H. Lawrence” is included in Speaking the Other Self: American Women Writers, published by University of Georgia Press and edited by Jeanne Campbell Reesman. Colley’s analysis of Porter’s marginalia on D. H. Lawrence reveals that Porter considered Lawrence hampered as a writer by his “inability to separate social class from sexuality,” which resulted in his failure to create a sense of order in his works. Colley’s essay includes not only a detailed discussion of Porter’s marginalia on Lawrence, but also a useful summary of the various categories of notes that make up Porter’s marginalia in general.

Glenda Lindsey-Hicks’ “The World of Word, Line, and

Labyrinth in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Flowering Judas’” is included in Creative and Critical Approaches to the Short Story, published by Mellen Press and edited by Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr., a volume not likely to make its way to many scholars’ bookshelves due to its exorbitant price (\$120.00). Using J. Hillis Miller’s narrative theory, Lindsey-Hicks emphasizes the maze-like plot of

“Flowering Judas” and points to the etymology of words and names in the story as evidence of the story’s imagery of webs, nets, mazes, and lines. The article is labyrinthine in its own way, and readers may have trouble following the line of Lindsey-Hicks’ argument, made difficult by the essay’s style and structure (much of the essay is comprised of numerous one- or two-sentence paragraphs that fail to develop a coherent argument). The essay is worth reading for its theoretical approach and for its provocative, if not always convincing deconstruction of words and names in the story.

Janis Stout, in “Behind ‘Reflections on Willa Cather’: Katherine Anne Porter and the Dilemmas of Literary Sisterhood,” Legacy 14.2 (1997): 110-22, offers a thorough review of Porter’s various revisions and early versions of her essay on Willa Cather found in Collected Essays and of her marginalia in books by and about Cather. Extending the argument she made previously in “Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Reflections on Willa Cather’: A Duplicious Homage,” American Literature 66 (1994): 719-35, Stout provides convincing evidence of the insights available to Porter scholars who mine the rich resource of the Porter Papers at University of Maryland Libraries.



This Arthur Long photograph of Porter probably was made in August 1958. papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

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Porter Activities at the University of Maryland Libraries

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland

The completion of the preservation microfilming of the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter is the University of Maryland Libraries' most significant accomplishment since my last report. The Libraries now have 108 reels of microfilm that include the first six series of the Porter papers: Series I, Correspondence, 1880-1980; Series II, Writings, 1918-1979; Series III, Awards and Professional Activities, 1940-1976; Series IV, Financial and Legal, 1906-1977; Series V, Personal, 1927-1977; and Series VI, Clippings, 1919-1980. This achievement comes as a result of the efforts of project archivists Rachel Vagts and Patricia J. Rettig, student assistants Pascale Compere and Jennifer Evans, and volunteer extraordinaire Bill Wilkins. When Ms. Vagts took another archival position midway through the project, Ms. Rettig, who had previously served as the project graduate assistant, came on board in August 1998. A graduate of Wittenberg University whose primary scholarly interest is Flannery O'Connor, Ms. Rettig received her M.L.S. from the University of Maryland in May 1998. Her work in bringing the project to a successful close has been invaluable. She completed the preparation of the papers for filming, handled communication with the vendor, supervised our student assistants, worked with me on completion of the guide to the collection, and did all of the work to update and augment the literary manuscripts portion of the Libraries' Web site. Her report on her activities appears elsewhere in this issue.

The microfilm edition of the Porter papers became available for research use in the Maryland Room in McKeldin Library in February 1999. Also open for consultation on site are the six series that were not filmed. These include Series VII, Printed Matter, 1899-1975; Series VIII, Serials, 1842-1977; Series IX, Manuscripts of Other Individuals, 1923-1977; Series X, Audio Recordings, 1934-1978; and Series XII, Photographs, ca. 1860s-1978. Researchers may also gain access to the microfilm of the first six series of the papers through interlibrary loan at a research library near them. A researcher or

qualified borrowing institution may initiate an interlibrary loan request through the institution's interlibrary loan department or by contacting me directly. Researchers may borrow three reels of microfilm per loan, the handling fee for which is \$10 per reel. Microfilm may be borrowed for two weeks with a two-week renewal period. As the university's legal office has advised us that we can only have a second service copy of individual reels of microfilm produced when researchers request them, there may be a slight delay in fulfilling requests as we begin this service.



On the back of this photograph of Hart Crane and herself, Porter wrote, "Hart and Mrs. Sloth at Mixcoac, April 1931," Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

As much of the Porter collection was closed to researchers while it was being microfilmed, there were no on-site researchers between May 1998 and March 1999. However, there were many telephone, mail, and e-mail inquiries. These came from researchers in California; Connecticut; Florida; Georgia; Illinois; Kansas; Kentucky; Maryland; Massachusetts; Missouri; Nevada; New Jersey; New York; Ohio; Pennsylvania; South Carolina; Tennessee; Texas; Washington, DC; and Wisconsin. There were also inquiries from abroad: Austria, Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, and Spain. Requests came from academics, independent scholars, graduate students, undergraduates, and high school students. Steady demand for reproductions of photographs from the Porter collection continues, both from indi-

viduals and the media. Photographs from the collection appeared in Marc English's poster for Texas Writers Month, in Sara A. Wilson's "A Writer's Writer" in the September/October 1998 issue of *Humanities*, and in Angela Moore's "Check Out D. C.'s Shelf Life" in the February 1999 issue of *Where Washington*.

Photographs from the collection also feature prominently in the exhibit I mounted in the Porter Room in February 1999. This display includes fifty-five photographs, mostly portraits and snapshots of Porter that date from 1893 to 1975. Part of the exhibit highlights Porter's friendships with Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, and Caroline Gordon, fellow Southern writers with whom Porter had significant relationships. This portion of the exhibit contains photographs taken by Welty in 1940, facsimiles of correspondence exchanged between Porter and the others, and books by Welty, O'Connor, and Gordon given as gifts to Porter. The second section of the exhibit

features materials that illustrate the important role Mexico played in Porter's art and life; photographs taken by Porter and others document her Mexican experiences and acquaintances between 1920 and 1931. Also on display are Mexican pottery and folk art she collected and a 1922 Miguel Covarrubias caricature of Porter. China, stemware, and silver serving pieces that Miss Porter used in her various homes comprise the final portion of the display.

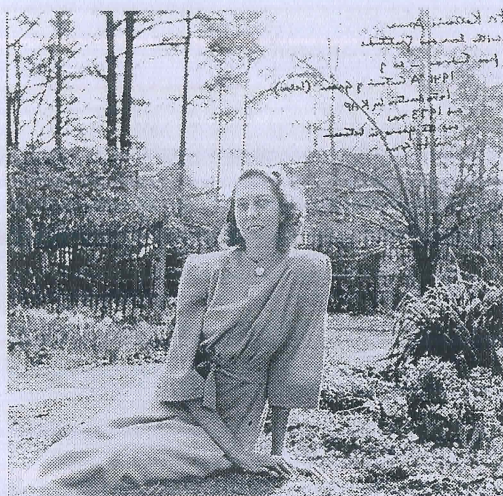
Volunteers and interns have made extremely valuable contributions of time and effort in the last year. First and foremost among these is Bill Wilkins. He assisted in preparing the Porter papers for microfilming, dating undated materials, and rehousing the KAP photograph collection in acid-free boxes and Mylar sleeves. At present he is completing a preliminary inventory of the unprocessed KAP photographs, before we embark on completely rearranging all of these images. During summer 1998, Steve Hausfeld, a graduate student from Wright State University, completed a 300-hour internship under my direction. As a part of this, he revised the guide to the Papers of Caryl Chessman, KAP's literary agent. In addition, he completed the work of processing the Papers of Harry C. Perry, KAP's accountant between 1960 and 1964, that student assistant Pascale Compere had begun. Kathy Willis, a graduate student in our university's College of Library and Information Services, processed the Papers of George and Toni Willison and wrote the guide to that collection.

The six women who previously served as docents in the Katherine Anne Porter Room continued their tenure this academic year: Freddy Baer, Shirley Bauer, Dorothy Galvin, Beverly Lewoc, Joan Phelan, and Betty Warner. When an unanticipated health problem forced Shirley Bauer to withdraw for part of the autumn semester, my mother, Mary Moore, graciously agreed to substitute for her. Intern Steve Hausfeld also stepped into the breach on short notice as a substitute. In the period between May 1998 and March 1999, the Porter Room was open to the public forty-three afternoons, and there were 205 visitors.

Some interesting gifts and purchases were acquired this past year. The Libraries received approximately two linear feet of additional materials for the Papers of Isabel Bayley in August and September 1998. W. Hewitt Bayley, donated his wife's files related to Porter's French Song-Book, while current Porter

literary trustee, Barbara Thompson Davis, gave the Libraries the financial papers of the Literary Trustee of the Estate of Katherine Anne Porter for the period between 1985 and 1993. Paul Porter generously parted with his aunt's personal copy of

the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language and a snapshot she took in Paris in July 1963. Last summer, Porter scholar Darlene Unrue donated a rubbing she had made of the tombstone of Mary Alice Jones Porter, KAP's mother, some years before. I am happy to report that the rubbing has received conservation treatment and is now framed and hanging in the Porter Room. My colleague Tom Connors, Curator of the National Public Broadcasting Archives, discovered, among his recent acquisitions, an interview of KAP broadcast in June 1973 on Jim Day's public television program, "Day at Night." Mr. Day graciously donated a videotape copy of this delightful exchange to the Libraries. Finally, the Libraries were able to purchase seventeen letters exchanged between KAP and Edna Frederikson during the years 1941 to 1943. KAP and Eudora Welty



On the copy of this photograph in the Katherine Anne Porter Room, Eudora Welty wrote, "For Katherine Anne with love and gratitude from Eudora—as of 1941 'A Curtain of Green' (below) Introduction by KAP and 1973 now and the years in between and to come—" Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

befriended Frederikson, whose novel Three Parts Earth was published in 1972. The correspondence between Porter and Frederikson discusses South Hill, writing, and various personal matters.

The Libraries also received, in memory of the late Professor Thomas F. Walsh, a copy of Susannah Joel Glusker's Anita Brenner: A Mind of Her Own, which traces her mother's intellectual growth and achievements from the 1920s through the 1940s. Dr. Glusker donated the book as a part of her slide-lecture in the Porter Room on October 19, 1998, sponsored by the Friends of the Libraries to celebrate its publication. Brenner (1905-1974), an acquaintance of KAP in Mexico and New York, was a journalist, historian, anthropologist, and creative writer, two of whose works, Idols Behind Altars and The Wind That Swept Mexico, were reviewed by KAP.

Many hours of my time in the past year have been devoted to devising plans for the renovation of Hornbake Library where the Libraries' special collections will move in late 2000 or early 2001. Some researchers will remember consulting the Porter papers in the basement of this library between 1991 and 1992, while McKeldin Library was renovated. When work is

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From the Project Archivist's Perspective

By Patricia J. Rettig, University of Maryland

As the second person to fill the position of project archivist for the microfilming of the Katherine Anne Porter papers, my involvement has been mainly on the downhill side of the project, bringing it to its conclusion. That conclusion has been exciting, especially as it leads to a new beginning.

When I began as project archivist in August 1998, the prep work for Series I, Correspondence (34.5 linear feet), was finished, and all I had to tackle was Series II through VI, which amounted to 24.25 lin. ft. These series—Writings; Awards and Professional Activities; Financial and Legal; Personal; and Clippings—were logistically the more challenging ones. They contain a variety of materials that made filming more difficult,

such as KAP's pasted-together research notes and manuscript drafts, galley and page proofs, bank books and check registers, marriage certificates and passports, address books and calendars, and many years' worth of dusty newspaper clippings. The beauty of the microfilm is that now all of these various materials are easily and readily accessible. There is no more need to deal with either undersized or oversized materials, both of which can

be awkward to use. Perhaps this ease will encourage scholars to increasingly consult these previously seldom-used materials and shed new light on KAP.

The final part of the project has been creating remote intellectual access to the KAP papers to facilitate use of the microfilm. After painstakingly checking every word, comma, and colon of the 185-page guide to the papers and producing a

paper version, I have now mounted that guide on the Internet. Its format comprises numerous Web pages, which (I hope) are easily navigable. The benefit of the Web version over a paper copy is not only the remote access, but also that it is electronically searchable. A readily downloadable version is soon to come.

I have also created Web pages containing information about

interlibrary loan of the microfilm and the forms that researchers need to fill out and submit. These pages should be helpful in answering researcher questions and facilitating the loan of the microfilm. While on the Web creating these pages and updating others, I also revised the page on the Katherine Anne Porter Room. This includes new text by Beth Alvarez describing the origins of the room and some of the objects it contains, along with three color photographs, also by Beth. Check out a full color photo of the infamous coffin, as well as other Porter pages, by starting at www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/ARCV/litmss.html and following the appropriate links.

Coming soon will be revised pages for the KAP Society, which will include back issues of the newsletter. View the current pages and watch for updates at www.lib.umd.edu/Guests/KAP/Welcome.html. Feel free to send suggestions or comments to me at prettig@wam.umd.edu.

The only unfortunate occurrence related to the recent completion of the microfilming project is that there is no more work for our faithful student assistant, Pascale Compere. Pascale performed the technical and bibliographic inspections of all 108 reels of film. My present position is also of limited duration, but luckily my contract extends for several more months, for the new work of loaning the film is just beginning.



Porter at work in her New York City apartment in 1949, photograph by Arthur Long, Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.



"Caroline Gordon in the dining room of 'Benfolly' near Clarksville, Tennessee, 1937-38," Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter

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Dissertations

Stacie Lynn Hankinson in her dissertation, completed at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, "Politics, Pacifism, and Feminist Liberation in the Works of Katherine Anne Porter," *DAI* 58.5 (1997): AAG9733781, argues that like her accounts of her life, Porter's disavowal of feminism cannot be trusted. According to Hankinson, "[C]ontextualizing Porter within a feminist framework enables her pacifism to be viewed in newer and richer ways."

Tamara Horn's dissertation, completed at University of Alabama, "To Grandmother's House We Go: Modern Grandmother Archetypes in Works by Porter, Hurston, McCarthy, O'Connor, and Olsen," *DAI* 58.7 (1997): AAG9735713, groups Porter with other writers who explore "the power of the Victorian True Woman in spite of modern strides in women's rights." The dissertation includes analysis of the grandmother figures in "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," "The Old Order," and "Old Mortality," who, according to Horn, "use domestic arts as vehicles for communication."

Rhonda Ann Morris's dissertation, completed at University of Florida, "Authoring Bodies: White Southern Women's Writing, 1920-1940," *DAI* 59.2 (1997): AAG9824121, offers connections between Porter and other white southern women writers, including Evelyn Scott, Frances Newman, and Zelda Fitzgerald. Morris focuses on the writers' various explorations of the South's "social regulation of female corporeality." According to Morris, "Katherine Anne Porter's Miranda stories critique the social order by exposing the mangled bodies that Porter sees at the heart of every domestic story. But Porter's depictions of Miranda Gay's continual flight suggest that women can avoid re-enacting the deforming stories of their mothers."

Although not indexed, of course, by MLA, *Texas Monthly* did a fine job in 1997 of bringing well-deserved attention to Porter. In January it published Porter's recipe for Mole Poblana, with a brief introduction by Patricia Sharpe, and in May Don Graham's essay "Katherine the Great," which offered the many readers of *Texas Monthly* a lively introduction to this most important of Texas writers.



*KAP, Seymour Lawrence, and two unidentified men at the party celebrating the publication of *Ship of Fools*, April 1, 1962. Lawrence is at KAP's left. Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries*

Porter Activities at the University of Maryland Libraries

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complete, the building will house Archives and Manuscripts, the department of which I am a part, Marylandia and Rare Books, the National Trust for Historic Preservation Library Collection, the National Public Broadcasting Archives, the Library of American Broadcasting, and Nonprint Media Services. The plans for the first phase of the construction call for a new and larger Porter Room, a large exhibition space, and a new state-of-the-art Maryland Room, all off the lobby of the first floor of the building. While I do not welcome the disruption occasioned by this move, all of us in special collections anticipate with pleasure the higher profile the move into our own building will bring as well as having much more easily accessible parking for our visitors. I will notify the research community of any disruptions of access to the Porter collections the move may cause. Anyone who has questions concerning the Libraries' Porter holdings should not hesitate to contact me, Curator of Literary Manuscripts, Archives and Manuscripts, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, 301-405-9298, ra60@umail.umd.edu.

Katherine Anne Porter Society Activities at American Literature Association Conference in San Diego

Will Brantley, professor at Middle Tennessee State University, chaired the Katherine Anne Porter Society's session held in San Diego on Sunday, May 31, 1998. The session consisted of three papers. The first, "The Subtle Politics of 'He,'" was read by Beth Alvarez, Curator of Literary Manuscripts at the University of Maryland Libraries. Trent Masiki, graduate student at Texas A & M University, presented "Issues of Black Self-Determination in 'The Circus' and 'The Old Order.'"

"Xochitl, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Katherine Anne Among the Indians," was the subject of the paper of Robin Cohen, instructor at Southwest Texas State University who is a Ph.D. candidate at Texas A & M University.

The Society held a short business meeting on Friday, May 29. President Beth Alvarez reported that the balance in the Society's account in 1997 was \$246.46. Revenue for 1998 was \$210.00. As there were no expenses during 1998, the balance in the Society's account at the time of the meeting was \$456.46. Alvarez announced that the Executive Committee will revise the Society's by-laws this year and will distribute the proposed changes to the membership by mail. Voting on the proposed changes will also be conducted by mail. Members were encouraged to contribute articles for the newsletter and to submit proposals for the Society's paper session in Baltimore in May 1999.

KAP Program at Dallas Museum of Art

On April 1998, Arts and Letters Live concluded its 1998 Texas Bound series with a program entitled "Rediscovering Katherine Anne Porter" held at the Dallas Museum of Art. The program featured readings by Undermain Theatre co-founder Katherine Owens, a video interview with playwright Horton Foote, and a panel discussion with Vivian May of Texas Women's University and Laurin Porter of the University of Texas at Arlington. The featured speaker of the evening was Don Graham, the J. Frank Dobie Regents Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Professor Graham's talk "re-claimed" Porter as a Texas writer drawing on Porter's biography and correspondence as well as on his wide knowledge of Texas writing.

2000 Conference on American Literature in San Diego

The Katherine Anne Porter Session at the forthcoming American Literature Association conference will be chaired by Professor Thomas Austenfeld of Drury College. Anyone interested in submitting a proposal should contact Professor Austenfeld, Drury College, 900 Benton Avenue, Springfield, MO 65802. His e-mail address is taustenf@lib.drury.edu.

The conference will be held in San Diego, California, in May 2000. Details of the conference and information about hotel reservations will appear on the home page of the American Literature Association (<http://humanities.byu.edu/ALA>).

Barnes & Noble Tribute to Katherine Anne Porter

To celebrate the selection of Katherine Anne Porter as the featured writer for Texas Writers Month, May 1998, Barnes & Noble sponsored a program in her honor at their Westlake Branch in Austin, Texas, on Tuesday, May 5. Liz Carpenter reminisced about interviewing Porter during her days in Washington and read selected passages from Porter's wry account of the Kennedy inauguration. Janis Stout, Dean of Faculties at Texas A & M University, spoke about Porter's involvement in the history of her time, especially during her years in Mexico. Don Graham, J. Frank Dobie Regents Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, addressed Porter's ambivalence about feminist issues. A lively question-and-answer session followed. The store featured a display of works by and about Porter, including Stout's Katherine Anne Porter: A Sense of the Times. An exhibit fabricated for the University of Maryland Libraries' 1991 Porter Symposium in College Park, Maryland, was also displayed.

Katherine Anne Porter House Restoration Project

The second phase of the Katherine Anne Porter House Restoration Project is moving forward. Last year, the first phase, purchase of the childhood home of Katherine Anne Porter in Kyle, Texas, was completed. The Katherine Anne Porter House Restoration Committee has been formed to oversee the restoration. Members of the committee include Bill Johnson and Mary Giberson, Co-Chairs; Carroll Wiley, Secretary; Bob Barton, Treasurer; Wynette Barton; Rosa Corrales; Mary Etheredge; Tom Grimes; and Paul Porter. The committee retained architect Emily Little, who has completed a master plan for the site and architectural models. The plans tentatively call for restoration of the house to be used for a writer-in-residence. The target date for initiation of the writer-in-residence program is sometime next year. The projected master plan also provides details for an outbuilding with restrooms, kitchen, and seminar room to be constructed on the site. Members of the committee have written grant proposals for funding the last two phases of the project and have had the generous support of the Burdine-Johnson Foundation. Phase Three will seek an endowment to fund the writer-in-residence program and the maintenance of the house.

Anyone wishing to contribute to this important project should make checks payable to the Friends of the Hays County Historical Commission—Preservation Associates, Inc., and designated to the Porter House Preservation Project. They should be mailed to 1717 North Burleson Street, Kyle, TX 78640.



Porter inscribed this photograph of herself from the late 1920s to her friend Delafield Day, Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

Katherine Anne Porter School

Plans are underway to establish the Katherine Anne Porter School in Hays County, Texas. A nonprofit high school chartered by the Texas Education Agency, the school will offer free education and individualized instruction to high school students in the county, especially those who wish to develop their writing skills. It is being established as a lasting tribute to Katherine Anne Porter, who grew up in the town of Kyle in Hays County.

The Katherine Anne Porter School will offer an accelerated high school curriculum in a quiet, book-rich environment with a high staff-to-student ratio and computer-assisted instruction. It is scheduled to open in August 1999. All students of high school age may enroll. Home-schoolers, working students, and students who have dropped out are welcome. In addition to courses required for a high school diploma, classes are planned in journalism, art, music, and health and the environment. Student enrollment began in March 1999.

At present the interim board is looking for a suitable location to house fifty to 200 students in Hays County. The board also welcomes interested individuals, especially parents and educators, to serve on the board or to act as a resource. The board meets on the first Thursday of each

month at 6:30 pm at the Kyle Community Library, Blanco Street, Kyle. For more information, contact Yana Bland, Ph.D., Administrator, P.O. Box 615, Kyle, Texas 78640, 512-268-2220, yana@centuryinter.net.



KAP and Ole Possum, North Farm, Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, NY, February 2, 1941. Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

Katherine Anne Porter Society Membership Application/Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

Institutional Affiliation _____

Telephone (work) _____ Telephone (home) _____

FAX _____ E-mail _____

Make checks payable to the Katherine Anne Porter Society; mail to Beth Alvarez, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.