

Newsletter of The

Katherine Anne Porter Society

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Shadows on the Page

by Lisa Roney

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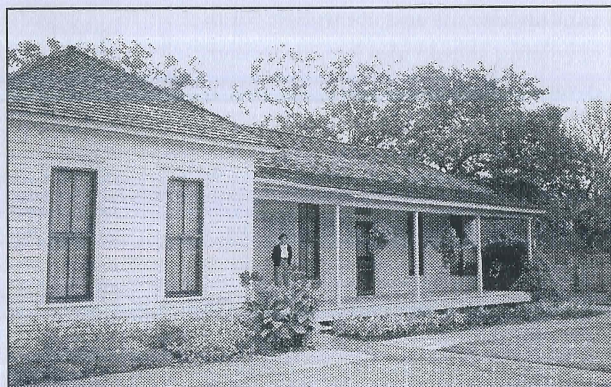
For some years during the middle of this century, Katherine Anne Porter (1890-1980) reigned as Grand Dame of American letters. Her one and only novel, *Ship of Fools*, 20 years in the making, was eagerly awaited and garnered for her a Pulitzer Prize after it finally appeared in 1962. In her later years, Porter herself—with her striking appearance, her dark and soulful eyes, her long string of pearls and gargantuan emerald ring, and her apartment brimming with antiques—cultivated a mythology of self that included

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Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center Opens in Kyle

On the evening of September 27, 2001, the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center formally opened with a reading by Pulitzer-Prize-Winning novelist, E. Annie Proulx. Proulx began her auspicious career as a fiction writer in her fifties. Her first novel, *Postcards* (1992), won the coveted PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction in 1993. Her second novel, *The Shipping News* (1994), garnered her the Chicago Tribune's Heartland Award, the Irish Times International Fiction Prize, the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Her latest work, *Close Range: Wyoming Stories* (1999), is a collection of short stories set entirely in Wyoming, the location of Proulx's primary residence.

The literary center comprises both the 1880 house at 508 Center Street, where Katherine Anne Porter spent the formative years of her childhood, and a newly constructed seminar building. Many citizens, the Austin Community Foundation, the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Clayton Fund, and others contributed to the purchase of the property. However, it was Bill Johnson's Burdine Johnson Foundation that funded the historically correct and extensive renovations, new construction and landscape architecture necessary to complete the project. Southwest Texas State University is currently leasing the house for ninety-nine years at the price of one dollar per year, as a part of an important cooperative project between SWTSU and the Hays County Preservation Associates. The "Angel" Foundation, founded by Curt Englehorn, a nephew of Katherine Anne Porter's childhood friend, Erna Schlemmer, donated the generous gift necessary to fund SWTSU's Writer in Residence appointment at the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center.



Beth Alvarez on front porch of KAP House, Kyle, Texas, October 2000. Photograph by Roy Alvarez.

The six-room historic house serves both as a museum and home for a writer in residence. Currently, the curator of the museum, Melissa Falcon, is the Writer-in-Residence. Falcon, a graduate of the SWTSU MFA program, is currently working on her first novel. Aside from giving tours of the two-room museum which is open to visitors the first Sunday of every month from 2 to 5 pm, Falcon teaches in local schools, community centers, libraries, and at SWTSU. Although none of the furniture or other objects in the museum rooms belonged to Katherine Anne Porter or her family, they are representative of middle-class domestic interiors of Kyle between 1880 and 1900.

The separate seminar building houses the Porter House archives, a library donated by individuals and Barnes and Noble, a catering kitchen, and handicap accessible restrooms. Its walls adorned with photographs of Katherine Anne Porter, the seminar house functions as a venue for classes, readings, lectures, book signings, and other public events. The first of these, the inaugural

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KAP with Monroe Wheeler on balcony of Park Sanatorium, May 16, 1934, Davos, Switzerland. Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

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, University of Maryland Libraries, 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 (North Georgia College & State University), 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.

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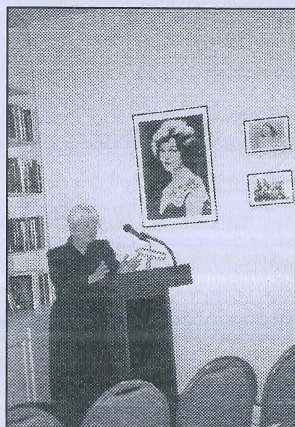
KAP Society Membership

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

Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center Opens in Kyle

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reading by Annie Proulx, was a resounding success. There was standing room only at the event as all the chairs in the seminar room, the screened in back porch of the house museum-residence, and the fenced back garden of the complex were filled with an audience of administrators, faculty, students, and staff of SWTSU, invited dignitaries, donors to the project, high school teachers and students, and the general public. In addition to Proulx's reading, festivities for the open house included a fiction panel discussion beginning at 2:30 p.m. on Sept. 29 at the Porter House. Participants included faculty of



Janis Stout, after her October 9, 2001, talk in the seminar room at the KAP Literary Center. Photograph by Beth Alvarez.

SWTSU's Master of Fine Arts in creative writing program: Leslie Marmon Silko, that year's holder of the Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Chair in Creative Writing; National Book Award winner Tim O'Brien; Debra Monroe, recipient of the Flannery O'Connor Award for short fiction; Dagoberto Gilb, Ernest Hemingway Foundation Award winner; and SWTSU's Tom Grimes, who earned the New York Times Notable Book Award.

Among the other events that took place at the house in its inaugural season, of most interest to society members was Janis Stout's talk entitled "Katherine Anne Porter and the Restless Life," which took place on October 9. As part of SWTSU's Lindsey Literary Series, the following public readings, book signings, and workshops were held throughout the semester:

Mei-Mei Berssenbruge, reading & book signing, October 3

Don J. Snyder, reading & book signing, October 23 & 25; fiction/memoir Q&A, October 27

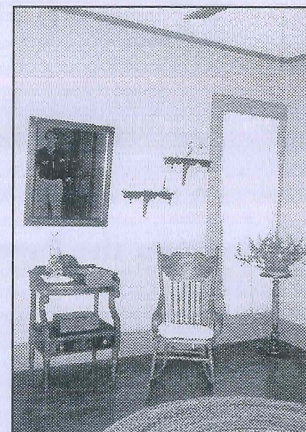
Jim Daniels, reading & book signing, November 13 & 15; poetry workshop, November 17

Phillip Levine, reading & book signing, February 12 & 14; poetry workshop, February 16

Tessa Rumsey, reading & book signing, March 26 & 28; poetry workshop, March 30

James Galvin, reading & book signing, April 5; poetry workshop, April 8

The coming year will bring recent U. S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass, National Book Critics Circle Award winner Mark Doty, PEN/Faulkner finalist Kate Wheeler, Granta Best Young Novelist Chris Offutt, and multiple award winning poet Jean Valentine. For more information about the MFA program or the literary series, please contact Renee Le Blanc, MFA in Creative Writing program administrator, at (512) 245-7681 or visit the Lindsey Literary Series Web site at <http://www.English.swt.edu/TKL>. The Web site for the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center is <http://www.english.swt.edu/kap/historypage2.html>. The e-mail address for the center is porterhouse@swt.edu; Melissa Falcon's e-mail address is MARLYSPRUCE@yahoo.com.



View of interior of museum room in KAP House, Kyle, Texas, October 2000. Photograph by Roy Alvarez.

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a Southern plantation kind of background and a convent education in New Orleans, the elements of which had only the barest connection to the reality of her poor Texas childhood in Texas.

Why did Porter fictionalize her own past to such a degree, when, as biographer Joan Givner points out “her actual life was more heroic than anything she invented?”

One clue may lie in Porter’s health, one of several aspects of her life about which she hedged, but one that I found little explored in the available work on Porter. By the time Porter had established her literary reputation, one of her doctors noted in a medical record that she reported no personal or family history of tuberculosis. However, she had certainly spent two years, from 1915 to 1917, in and out of Texas TB hospitals, and it seems likely that her mother died of a combination of tuberculosis and other factors, that her older brother suffered from it, and that a favorite cousin died of it as well.

In the vast collection of letters that she wrote over the years, now archived at the University of Maryland, I found that Porter sometimes reported having tuberculosis and sometimes that doctors told her she merely had chronic bronchitis. This may be literally true, as diagnosis of tuberculosis was uncertain during those years and infection can go in and out of active stages. But what is certain is that Porter relocated repeatedly in attempts to find better climate for her lungs, that she frequently experienced bouts of respiratory ailment, and that one of these in 1934 required convalescence in the renowned tuberculosis haven of Davos, Switzerland, most famously immortalized in Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain* (first published in English in 1927). As late as 1938, Porter notes in letters to her future husband Albert Erskine that her doctor tells her she shouldn’t marry until—or unless—“the spot on her lungs clears up.” Even after the advent of antibiotics, she suffered respiratory difficulties from lungs scarred by the disease, and she lived with the constant fear and distress of TB for at least 20 years.

Tuberculosis, at the time Porter received the diagnosis, was a controversial disease around which much discourse about the social good revolved. Up through most of the 19th century, tuberculosis had been dreaded but accorded a romantic status as the disease of poets, of refinement, of the beautiful and young, even of genius. However, with the discovery of the tuberculosis bacillus in 1882, ideas about TB began to shift. Fear of the illness grew as the disease’s contagion was established, but because some exposed people never developed the disease notions of genetic inferiority also gained in popularity. In addition, social reformers had begun to conduct epidemiological studies that associated tuberculosis with the poor, those living in crowded urban slums and small-town boarding houses in particular. Bad genes and filthy habits both were blamed.

The sanatorium experience itself was often humiliating and stressful, its purpose as much quarantine as recuperation and its

routines always rigid and often deadly dull or harsh. Many sanatorium patients expressed dismay at being confined there, entering the often lengthy limbo of waiting for a recovery that might or might not ever occur. Since the prognosis was so variable, doctors often could not back up their prescriptions of bed rest, diets replete with eggs and milk, lack of excitement, and leisurely walks in fresh air with actual results. Treatments took on a heavily moralistic tone, and patients, including Porter, often rebelled against authority.

Concern about related issues—who is responsible for the plight of the poor, whether certain genetic constitutions are “superior,” what amount of personal hygiene and caution in lifestyle is appropriate, and how to respond to authority—permeate Porter’s fiction. Yet none of these issues has been before significantly linked to her health, perhaps partly because she does not write much about tuberculosis as such. One aspect of my study has been, therefore, to look for traces of tuberculosis in writing where tuberculosis is not the topic, a tricky endeavor but one that has been fruitful in this case.

For example, Porter’s famous novel, *Ship of Fools*, is traditionally read as an anti-Nazi allegory written largely in response to the horrors of World War II. However, the sometimes contradictory attitudes and beliefs that Porter developed in response to her tuberculosis also may be traced there. Porter, after all, began working on the novel as early as the mid-1930s, well before the revelations of Nazi atrocities. In addition, one of the first groups that had been targeted by the Nazis for destruction was the tubercular. It is also interesting to note the myriad similarities between *Ship of Fools* and Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*, between life on board an ocean liner and that restricted to a sanatorium. Both contain an arbitrary grouping of individuals brought together by necessity; both groups are forced into mostly idleness, with a focus on dining-room meals at regular times, the occasional skit or shenanigans of the badly behaved, slow promenades, and hours reclining on chaise lounges, whether on deck or on a porch. An episodic structure, a remoteness from the events of the outside world, and characters who attend to petty differences between each other are all shared by these two novels.

The obsessions of *Ship of Fools* are also TB obsessions. The most positive character, the closest the novel comes to a hero, is Dr. Schumann, a physician who is suffering from an invisible yet serious heart condition, and it is in part this ailment that renders him empathetic and almost moral. He is contrasted with the ship’s captain, an empty authoritarian who spouts off about the superiority of the German people and who orders one discovered to be married to a Jew removed from his dinner table. It is the healthy strapping Texan, Denny, who is most occupied with his personal hygiene and the vitamins that will promote his strength. And throughout the novel the middle-class mostly German passengers

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Porter, “Gringo” in Mexico

“Gringos in Mexico,” an exhibit on display at Southwest Texas State University’s Southwestern Writers Collection from February 1 through July 31, 2001, follows several generations of American writers who have travelled south of the border in search of insight and inspiration. Highlighting the archives of the Southwestern Writers Collection, the exhibit displays books, unpublished memoirs, raw manuscripts, journal entries, and authors’ personal memorabilia, showing the entire range of perceptions American writers have held about Mexico. These writings often reveal as much about the authors and their attitudes as they do about Mexico itself.

Particular emphasis is placed on Texas writers, who share a common history and border with Mexico and have been much more likely to travel through the country. The authors’ experiences in Mexico are as varied as the country itself: Katherine Anne Porter wished to travel to Paris and join the literary expatriate community forming there in the 1920s. But the journey was too expensive, so she traveled to Mexico City instead. There she fell in with a group of revolutionary artists including Diego Rivera, and Mexico became the source of her first published fiction.

In the 1930s, folklorist J. Frank Dobie traveled through Mexico on a mule, collecting experiences for his most personal book, *Tongues of the Monte*, while also interviewing survivors of Pancho Villa’s army. In the 1960s, Edwin “Bud” Shrake lived in a cave with the Tarahumara Indians of Chihuahua as he conducted research for his novels. In the 1990s, playwright and actor Sam Shepard went to Mexico to act in a Japanese film. Along the way he collected tales in his journal, eventually turning them into his book *Cruising Paradise*. Other notable

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peer over the railing and make snide comments about the lower-class people traveling in steerage. The only truly heroic action is taken by one of these lowly men, who dives off the ship and drowns rescuing a pet dog that two children have tossed overboard. Porter’s themes in *Ship of Fools*—that often the most ordinary-seeming people contain evil, that neither malingering nor mistreatment of the weak is acceptable, that one must have the courage to take dramatic action or risk a living death—seem, strongly influenced by her struggles with TB.

Even the notorious pessimism of Katherine Anne Porter’s vision is more readily understood if read through the lens of a life threatened by both the illness of tuberculosis itself and the social attitudes that made TB such source of shame that Porter would later deny even having had it. That she never publicly acknowledged the influence of TB on her work is all the more reason why we should do so today.



KAP and mariachi band, late November 1964, Guadalajara, Mexico. Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

writers with archives in the Southwestern Writers Collection featured in the exhibit include James Crumley, John Graves, Shelby Hearon, Elithe Hamilton Kirkland, Cormac McCarthy, and Bill Wittliff.

The exhibit was curated by Steve Davis, Assistant Curator of the Southwestern Writers Collection. The Southwestern Writers Collection is a major archival repository focusing on the literature, film, and music of the Southwest. The Collection is located adjacent to the Wittliff Gallery of Southwestern & Mexican Photography on the campus of Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos. The Collection is housed on the top floor of SWT’s Albert B. Alkek Library. Hours are 8-5 Monday through Friday (til 9pm Tuesdays), 9-5 Saturday, 2-6 Sunday. Call 512-245-2313 or visit Southwestern Writers Collection website (<http://www.library.swt.edu/swwc/index.html>) for more information.

2002 Conference on American Literature in Long Beach

The Katherine Anne Porter Session at the forthcoming American Literature Association conference will be chaired by Beth Alvarez of the University of Maryland. The topic for the session will be “Katherine Anne Porter’s Non-Fiction.” Anyone interested in submitting a proposal should send a 150-word abstract to Beth Alvarez, Curator of Literary Manuscripts, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD 20742. Her e-mail address is ra60@umail.umd.edu; the departmental FAX is 301-314-2709. The deadline for submissions is December 15, 2001.

The conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach, 200 Pine Avenue, Long Beach, CA, May 30-June 2, 2002. Details of the conference and information about hotel reservations will appear on the home page of the American Literature Association (<http://www.americanliterature.org>).

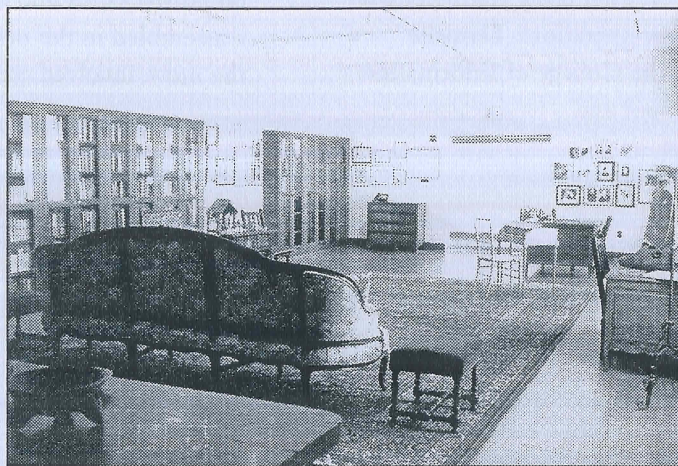
Porter Activities at the University of Maryland Libraries

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland

This report on the activities related to the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter and other Porter-related collections at the University of Maryland Libraries covers the period between April 2000 and April 2001. There were fewer on-site researchers during this year because of the Archives and Manuscripts Department's move from McKeldin Library to Hornbake Library in January 2001. Nine on-site Porter researchers consulted Porter or Porter-related collections in the thirteen-month period covered by this report. Those from out-of-state came from Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. The single foreign researcher was Elisabeth Lamothe, a member of the faculty and Ph.D. candidate of the Département des Pays Anglophones, Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux, who spent six weeks researching her dissertation in College Park. Five of the on-site Porter researchers were University of Maryland students or Maryland residents. Telephone, mail, and e-mail inquiries have also been received from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Washington, DC. I also corresponded about Porter with individuals from Argentina, Austria, Canada, China, France, India, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands, Norway, and Spain. During this period, the Libraries supplied more than 2,700 photocopies to meet researcher demand, provided thirty-one prints of photographs, and loaned seven reels of the microfilm edition of the Porter papers.

Popular interest in Porter remains high. Prior to the move of the Porter Room from McKeldin Library to its current location, there were 181 visitors to the Katherine Anne Porter Room. The room was only open on twelve Monday and Thursday afternoons in McKeldin Library before mid-May 2000, when we began packing its contents for the move. The enthusiastic band of volunteer docents, Freddy Baer, Shirley Bauer, Dorothy Galvin, Beverly Lewoc, Joan Phelan, and Betty Warner, have all promised to return when the room reopens to the public on a regular basis in September 2001. About forty individuals visited the McKeldin Porter Room during our second all-campus open house on April 29, 2000. This year, Jessica Ford Cameron, my graduate assistant, and I entertained approximately sixty visitors during the event on April 28, which

marked the unofficial opening of the Hornbake Porter Room. Popular interest in Porter is also evident in two local publications. Martha Hopkins and Sheila Harrington's *A Literary Map of Washington, DC*, published by the Washington Chapter of the Women's National Book Association, features KAP's Washington area homes and haunts including the Porter Room. An article that grew from the map project, Martha Hopkins's "Author, Author," which appeared in the *Washington Post*, "Weekend," on October 13, 2000, featured a



KAP Room, Hornbake Library, looking toward south wall and glass doors, April 2001. Photograph by Beth Alvarez.

photograph of her and description of the Porter Room.

The Libraries received a number of donations that increased or benefited the Libraries' Porter and Porter-related holdings in the last year. Clark Dobson, whose earlier gift of Porter's wooden coffin now graces the Porter Room, gave the Libraries a significant portion of his own Katherine Anne Porter collection. His donation includes Porter correspondence, most addressed to Dobson and Jack Horner and dating from 1958 to 1978; a lock of her hair in an inscribed envelope; eight photographs of her (1958-1974); and music, both bound and sheet, that had formerly been hers. Paul Porter donated Porter's copy of Ernst and Johanna Lehner's *Devils, Demons, Death and Damnation* (New York: Dover, 1971). KAP's inscription on the bookplate reads "Theophila/Born free—she daily thrashed her weight in eager gentlemen cats who couldn't take no for an answer. New York City/1920/Greenwich Village/ No friend to witches, my Theophila—she knew a trick worth 3 of theirs—K.A.P. Last Day Summer, 1975." This book has been incorporated into Porter's library. A generous monetary gift from the Literary Trust of the Estate of Katherine Anne Porter provided support for some of the enhancements and renovations in the Hornbake Katherine Anne Porter Room, which will be detailed below.

The Libraries' Porter holdings also benefited from significant support from two volunteers. Bill Wilkins, who has been providing me support for five years, was indispensable this year. Not only did he review and revise the new arrangement of the photographs in the Porter papers, he was involved in nearly every aspect of preparing the literary manuscript collections for our January move. In June, he helped me pack the memorabilia

Porter Activities at the University of Maryland Libraries

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in the Porter Room. Over the course of many months, he assisted in tying and taping the collections for the move, in labelling the boxes with their exact shelf locations, and in packing my office. He remains an exemplary volunteer who has become an integral part of our operation. Danielle DuMerer, a graduate student in the College of Information Studies, completed the arrangement and description of the Papers of Herbert Schaumann as a practicum under my direction. This collection of twenty-five letters and other correspondence exchanged by Porter and Schaumann between 1944 and 1947 was acquired from Waverley Auctions in May 2000. Schaumann (1909-1982) was a minor poet, a World War II veteran, and an associate professor of Comparative Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Maryland. In 1944 Schaumann met Katherine Anne Porter in Washington, D.C. In the period covered by the correspondence, they developed and ended an intimate relationship. Their letters include discussion of World War II, films, and writing, as well as personal matters.

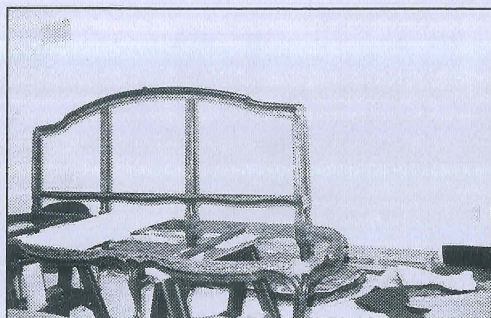
Last year, I reported that construction for the portions of Hornbake Library, where the Libraries' Special Collections were to move, was scheduled to be complete in July 2000. In fact, renovations to the first two floors of the facility, which house Marylandia and Rare Books, the National Trust for Historic Preservation Library Collection, and my department (Archives and Manuscripts), are only nearing full completion in mid-May 2001. Important features of the new Porter Room were not complete by January 8, 2001, the date on which our actual move began, nor were they complete on January 23, when everything except the furnishings of the Porter Room was settled in Hornbake Library. The actual move, though physically demanding, went extremely well. This undoubtedly was due to the extensive preparations by Special Collections staff, students, and volunteers. As I have previously alluded, preparations began with packing the memorabilia and framed items in the

Porter Room last spring. Soon thereafter, staff and students of Marylandia and Rare Books moved Porter's books from the bookcases in the Porter Room to interim storage in the rare books stacks, so that the book cases could be disassembled and reassembled in the new Porter Room. Further preparations for the move involved tying or taping every single box of our

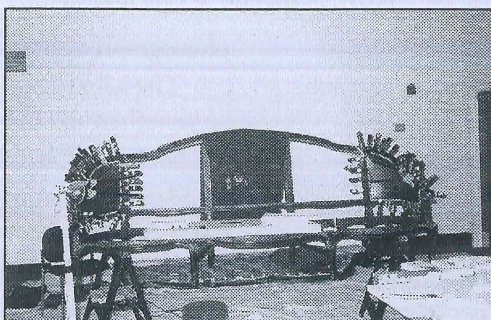
holdings (approximately five linear miles), wrapping and securing items in mapcases, labelling every one of our archival boxes with its exact shelf location in the new facility, and packing and labelling the contents of offices and storage spaces as well as our supplies. When the move actually began, Special Collections staff and students both packed and supervised packing of books and archival boxes onto carts and wheeled boxes. Because McKeldin and Hornbake Libraries remained open to the public during the move, Special Collections staff and students as well as other Libraries' colleagues provided security for our collections in areas where they were staged before being loaded on trucks.

Our Special Collections reading room in McKeldin, the Maryland Room, closed on December 15, 2000. The Hornbake Library Maryland Room did not open to the public until February 12, 2001, primarily because we did not have necessary computers, electrical power, and network connections until nearly the date on which the room opened. Of course, various parts of the renovation continued after February 12. These included completion of key elements of the exhibit room that fronts the new Maryland Room on the first floor of the library: application of stencilled signatures on the plate glass walls and installation of track

lighting. In addition, a campus vice president in Facilities decided to fund lobby improvements, which were not actually part of the scope of the project: demolition, drywall, lighting installation, refinishing, and painting. The contractor for this work proposed finishing it before the new lobby and stair carpets were laid (in time for the April 28 all-campus open house). In fact, most of this work was completed by our deadline.



KAP's sofa disassembled for conservation, KAP Room, McKeldin Library, December 2000.



Progress of conservation of KAP's sofa, February 2001.



Completion of conservation of KAP's sofa, March 2001. Photographs by Beth Alvarez.

Between November and April 28, my greatest concern was the Porter Room and its contents. Don Williams, the furniture conservator who had begun work on Porter's eighteenth-century serpentine sofa at the end of November, completed the conservation and reupholstery at the end of March. The piece, which not only looks magnificent, is now completely stabilized, thanks to the generosity of Paul Porter. While the Porter Room was closed, a local firm cleaned and appraised Porter's large Persian carpet, and another reframed some of the room's framed items. In late November, carpenters disassembled the walnut bookcases in the McKeldin Porter Room and transported them to the new Porter Room in Hornbake Library. Additional walnut bookcases that had been stored since the 1991-1993 McKeldin renovation were also installed in the new room and several of the bookcases were reconfigured. As a result, additional walnut stock had to be ordered, bleached, and stained to match the existing wood and milled to order. The installation of this millwork and walnut baseboard in the Porter Room and the corridor leading into the room was completed on January 26. At about this time, one of the university's carpenters securely mounted the Thibault de Navarre portrait of Porter on the north wall of the room. New drapes were hung on March 21, and the track lighting installation was completed on April 2. Movers brought the antique furniture to Hornbake Library on April 13, a Friday, and luckily everything survived intact. Between April 13 and 27, my faithful spouse helped me hang



KAP Room, Hornbake Library, looking toward north wall and Thibault de Navarre portrait, April 2001. Photograph by Beth Alvarez.

framed items on the walls and adjust the track lighting. We were not able to move Porter's library books into the new Porter Room until glass shelf liners to protect them from the wooden shelves were installed on April 24. Bill Wilkins, Jessica Ford Cameron, graduate students Susan Keller and Ozgul Tamur, and I moved the books on April 25, 26, and 27. The end of this long saga is happy. The Katherine Anne Porter Room in Hornbake Library was open and received guests on Saturday, April 28. I urge members of the society to visit this beautiful installation. I will be giving tours on demand and expect to have the room open on a regular basis, staffed by the docents, during the academic year. My colleagues and I in Special Collections are working with the President's Office as well as our Dean of Libraries to get a special event celebrating our new facility on

the calendar sometime in the next year. When plans have been finalized, I will see that all members of the society receive invitations.

Anyone who has questions concerning the Porter Room or the Libraries' Porter holdings should not hesitate to contact me, Curator of Literary Manuscripts, Archives and Manuscripts, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, 301-405-9298, ra60@umail.umd.edu. To locate the Katherine Anne Porter resources on the Libraries' Web site, begin at www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/ARCV/litms.html and follow the appropriate links.

News from Porter Biographer Joan Givner

The editor of the newsletter received a letter from Joan Givner written in late December 2000, in which she noted how remote KAP studies seem to her at a distance of more than twenty years since the completion of *Katherine Anne Porter: A Life*.

I lead a very different life now. I no longer teach or do academic work but am currently writing novels. Of course, I've always written fiction—short stories—but for the first time I'm really living as a writer. I even have a room of my own and an income of 500 pounds or the modern equivalent—elusive items unless one works for them and that defeats the whole purpose.

The letter also enclosed clippings about her last novel, *Half-Known Lives* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2000), which she thought "might be of interest to the readers of the KAP Newsletter since everything I write is bound to be full of echoes of KAP with whom I lived for so long." The novel's plot involves a group of women taking a man hostage, impregnating him, and holding him prisoner for the duration of his pregnancy. The novel traces the consequences of this experiment to the end of the characters' lives, affording a "a bird's-eye view of 1970s feminism." Joan Givner's web site is <http://uregina.ca/~givnerj>; her e-mail address is dgivner@attglobal.net.

The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 1999

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

Articles in journals and essays in collections continued to be the most popular form of scholarship on Katherine Anne Porter in 1999. I found no book-length studies of Porter listed in the MLA Bibliography for 1999. Articles and essays on Porter in 1999 defy easy categorization. However, Porter's connections to other writers; her relationship to region; her insight into women's lives; and her profound impact on those who knew her, loved her, and wrote about her were subjects of work published about her in 1999. I begin by supplementing last year's essay on Porter scholarship in 1998.

1998 Chapters in Books

Jan Nordby Gretlund's essays on Southern literature are collected in *Frames of Southern Mind: Reflections on the Stoic, Bi-Racial and Existential South*, published by Odense University Press. Chapters on Porter include "Katherine Anne Porter and the Old South" and "The Man in the Tree: Katherine Anne Porter's Lynching Story."

Dissertations

Hiroko Arima, in "The Theme of Isolation in Selected Short Fiction of Kate Chopin, Katherine Anne Porter, and Eudora Welty," *DAI* 59.07A (1998): AAG9841400, completed at University of North Texas, identifies the common theme of isolation in the short fiction of Porter, Chopin, and Welty and categorizes the writers' exploration of the theme into five areas: "Passion and Isolation," "Family and Isolation," "Feminine Independence and Isolation," "Social Issues and Isolation," and "Isolation and Writing as Resistance."

Mary Virginia Brackett, in "The Contingent Self: An Ideology of the Personal," *DAI* 59.05A (1998): AAG9833830, completed at University of Kansas, uses postmodern and feminist theory to critique traditional academic writing. Practicing personal literary criticism, the author discusses various writers, including Porter, and explores the formation of self-concept in their writings.

1999 Articles and Essays

According to Susana Jiménez-Placer, in "Motherhood as Conflict in Katherine Anne Porter's Short Fiction," *Short Story* 7.2 (1999): 77-90, "Katherine Anne Porter's personal experience as motherless girl and childless woman made her feelings about motherhood complex."

Jiménez-Placer develops a category of female characters in Porter's stories that she refers to as "childless mothers," including María Concepción, the Grandmother in "The Old Order," and Rosaleen in "The Cracked Looking-Glass." Jiménez-Placer points out the significance of breastfeeding as an action

symbolizing the resolution of conflicts about motherhood in Porter's stories.

Gail L. Mortimer refers to a number of Porter's stories in "Initiation Stories and Gender," in *Analyzing the Different Voice: Feminist Psychological Theory and Literary Texts*, edited by Ellen S. Silber and published by Rowman and Littlefield. Mortimer uses stories by William Faulkner, Porter, and Eudora Welty to support her argument that the clean breaks from family and other connections with which male authors have concluded many of their male initiation stories are not achieved in the female initiation stories that women write. According to Mortimer, "Porter's characters powerfully exemplify the difficulty in separation that [Nancy] Chodorow and [Carol] Gilligan see as so typical of female experience."

As her title suggests, Mary Ann Wimsatt, in "The Old Order Undermined: Daughters, Mothers, and Grandmothers in Katherine Anne Porter's Miranda Tales," in *Southern Mothers: Fact and Fictions in Southern Women's Writing*, edited by Nagueyalti Warren and Sally Wolff and published by Louisiana State University Press, takes a generational approach to reading Porter's Miranda stories. In the Miranda stories, "Porter depicts women—whether daughters, mothers, or grandmothers—bravely contending with the inevitable uncertainties of existence while attempting to undermine the rigid old order that forms the chief obstacle to personal freedom in their lives."

Writing from the perspective of a public high school teacher, Ralph M. Cline, in "Aging and the Public Schools: Visits of Charity: The Young Look at the Old," in *Aging and*



KAP, "aged 8 years," 1898, Texas. *Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries*

The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 1999

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Identity: A Humanities Perspective, edited by Sara Munson Deats and Lagretta Tallent Lenker and published by Praeger Press, discusses short stories about the aging frequently found in high school American literature textbooks. Of the stories he discusses, Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path" and Porter's "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" are singled out for praise because they "provide portrait[s] of dignity with great age."

Thomas Austenfeld, in "Thomas Wolfe and Katherine Anne Porter in Germany: The Ethical Dimension of Fiction" *The Thomas Wolfe Review* 23.1 (1999): 11-19, finds connections between Wolfe's and Porter's responses to the political situation in Germany in the 1930s. Neither Wolfe nor Porter, according to Austenfeld, "[came] to Germany to study fascism. Rather, they encountered it somewhat to their surprise, were dumbfounded at first, and then started responding with the professional means at their disposal: they wrote." Their experiences in Germany aided both writers in the development of the ethical dimensions of their writing.

Janis P. Stout's experience as a biographer and understanding of theories of biography inform the essay "On the Pitfalls of Literary Biography: The Case of Joan Givner and Katherine Anne Porter," *The Southern Quarterly* 37.3-4 (1999): 129-138. Givner's "infatuation and identification" with her biographical subject illustrate the particular pitfalls awaiting the literary biographer. Awareness of these pitfalls may allow the biographer to avoid them. Stout's essay provides a balanced and thoughtful overview of the controversies surrounding Givner's biography of Porter.

Although listed as a 1997 article, Stout's "Katherine Anne Porter's 'The Old Order': Writing in the Borderlands," *Studies in Short Fiction* 34 (1997): 493-505, was published more recently. Grounding her argument in ideas presented in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Stout claims Porter as a "borderlands" writer whose "imagination was one of doubleness and crossing." Stout emphasizes the South-to-Southwest movement in the "Old Order" stories, a movement that serves as the "spacial equivalent" of the temporal movement of the stories, "from past to present to future." Recognizing Porter as a "borderlands" writer allows readers to appreciate the centrality of Porter's work in Southwestern literature.

Porter scholars will not want to miss Jane DeMouy's personal essay, "Elegy for Katherine Anne," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 75.3 (1999): 504-510. DeMouy visited Porter many times during the last two years of her life, and in this moving essay, she recounts, through journal entries, her visits during Porter's last months and her final visit on September 15, 1980, when she witnessed her death.

Dissertations

Karen Lynn Weathermon, in "Inside/outside: Framing Katherine Anne Porter's Creative Tensions," *DAI* 60.11A (1999): AAI9949951, completed at Washington State University, uses feminist film theory and, particularly, the concept of the "gaze" to explore the tensions in Porter's work and life between conventions and individuals and appearances and identity.

Please send information on any additions that need to be made to this essay to me at chrishair@colacoll.edu so that I may include the information in next year's essay.

Katherine Anne Porter Society Activities at the American Literature Association Conference in Long Beach

Thomas Austenfeld, newly appointed Chair, Department of Language and Literature at North Georgia College and State University, organized the Katherine Anne Porter Society's session held in Long Beach, California, on Saturday, May 27, 2000. The session began with "Women on the Verge: Writing About the Mexican Revolution" read by Andrea Tinnemeyer of Rice University. Karen Weathermon of Washington State University presented "At Home in Books: Utopias and Heterotopias in Katherine Anne Porter's Domestic Space." "Katherine Anne Porter, Seymour Lawrence and 'that whole extraordinary episode of *Ship of Fools*'" was the subject of the paper of Alexandra Subramanian of the College of William and Mary. Darlene Unrue, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, summarized and responded to the three papers.

The society's business meeting took place after the paper session. President Beth Alvarez reported that the balance in the Society's account in the UNLV Foundation in May 2000 was \$1,096. The society has been fortunate in thus far having "angels" at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where the society was officially founded and through whose Foundation it holds tax-exempt status (the reason why all checks received by the society are made out to KAP Society/UNLV Foundation). The English Department at UNLV has underwritten all mailing costs and a former president of the university and a succession of deans of the College of Liberal Arts have underwritten most of (in recent years all of) the costs of printing the newsletter. The University of Maryland Libraries provides institutional support for the president/newsletter editor as well as hosting the society's Web site.

In May 2000, there were thirty-nine regular members of the Society and thirteen honorary members. Alvarez reported that the society's revised by-laws were passed by a vote of twenty members in favor, none opposed. The by-laws call for the election of president this year; the executive committee will conduct nominations. The active members of the executive committee are Darlene

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Annual KAP School Literary Festival

By Mary Elizabeth Davis

Reprinted from the *Wimberley [Texas] View*, 14 February 2001

Awards for poetry and prose were handed out to over twenty adult and young writers at the Katherine Anne Porter School's seventh annual literary festival in Wimberley Saturday, February 10. The annual KAP Literary Festival offered talented writers the chance to win certificates, \$10 cash awards and books written by the school's namesake. . . . Award winners were each given copies of her works, *The Old Order*, *Pale Horse*, *Pale Rider*, and the *Collected Works [sic] of Katherine Anne Porter*.

"This is a very special day for us," said Yana Bland, director of the school. The charter school, which bears Porter's name, opened last year with thirty-six students in the Old Hill Country Emporium building on Farm-to-Market 2325. It is available as an alternative way for students to acquire a high school diploma. Its students have either dropped out of regular high school, are working while attending school, are home schooled students, or have special needs. Half the 115 students enrolled at the school are from Wimberley.

The festival usually draws between sixty and ninety-five submissions. This year the writing contest collected about seventy-five entries. "It was a good response this year," Bland said. "The quality was high this year. We aimed at what we wanted to do which was to encourage people to write." Eight of the winners are KAPS students, along with a commendation for a ninth KAPS student, and one attends Barton Junior High School. Other winners came from Dripping Springs and as far away as Austin, San Marcos, and Nashville, Tennessee. The winners who attended the ceremony were each given the opportunity to read their writing before an audience of parents and other students.

Bland said the festival drew a handful of out-of-state entries because Linda Bingham, a published mystery writer and a previous KAP winner, put the information about the contest on the Internet. Dr. Jeanette Passty and David Bland judged the entries. Judges for next year's contest will be collected from this year's winners in the adult category. Naomi Shihab Nye, a poet and writer of children's books now living in San Antonio, read some of her poetry during the ceremony. She encouraged young writers to continue keeping a notebook of their work and to work at getting their poetry and fiction published. . . .

Maya Di Traglia of Wimberley, who was . . . unable to attend the awards ceremony, won first prize in the children's story and poetry division. Her mother, Priya Di Traglia, read her poem and short story, "A Helping Hand" and "Horses." The youngest writer, six-year-old Marissa Parker of Austin, took second place in the children's short story division for

"Annie and the Butterflies." In the eleven to fifteen age category, Bonnie Cope of Wimberley won first prize in poetry for "Twas the Night Before Midterms." Second place went to Isela Obregon of Barton Junior High School for her poem, "Our World." Third place in poetry went to Megan Schuh of Dripping Springs for "That Moment." Megan also captured the prize for adventure fiction for "Nature's Trick." The prize for KAP Christian fiction in the eleven to fifteen age group went to Lorrie Cope of Wimberley for her story, "A Story to Tell." Kellee Watson of Wimberley won the young adult fiction prize for "College Girl."

The teenagers fifteen to eighteen year old division held the largest amount of winners. Laura Coyle of Dripping Springs won first place in short story writing for "The Transition into a Better Life." Second place for short story fiction writing went to Miranda West of Wimberley. Sarah Meeks of Wimberley won first place in poetry for "The Hunt." Second place went to Ashley Ann Allee of Canyon Lake for "What If . . ." First prize for inspirational verse went to Mahdi Martin from San Marcos. Jennifer Hancock, an eighteen-year-old KAP student living near Wimberley, won second place for inspirational verse for "The Dreamer." Maegan Berry of Wimberley took the KAP Award for poetic satire for her poem, "Siblings." Daniel Welch of Dripping Springs won first place for his autobiographical story, "My Life . . ." The second place autobiography went to Thomas Padgett of Wimberley for "The Day My Life Changed." Lindsay Gross, an eighteen-year-old KAPS student received a commendation for her numerous poetry contributions to the festival. "I submitted every piece of poetry that I thought was acceptable," Gross said. "I wanted to win." Gross has about 100 poems in her notebook.

In the adult group, Dony Wynn of Nashville, Tennessee, received the Katherine Anne Porter Lifetime Achievement Award for work that includes social commentary and philosophy. Wynn received a special commendation for "All that Glitters." Helen Nardecchia of Georgetown received the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Festival Award for her short story, "Duches and Friends." The Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Western Fiction went to Ray Stephenson of Prescott, Arizona, for his short story, "The Welcoming Party." Ann McDaniel of Houston won the Katherine Anne Porter Commendation for Social Awareness for her work entitled, "A Thank You Letter." The Katherine Anne Porter Award for Craftsmanship went to James McKinnis of Austin for "An Afternoon at the Opera in Texas." The Katherine Anne Prize for poetry in the adult category went to Vivian Macias of Houston for her six poems. Second place for poetry went to Kate Benson of Austin.

Joseph Mayhew, Painted KAP's Wooden Coffin

Revised version of appreciation that appeared in the *Library of Congress Gazette*, 21 July 2000.

Joseph Mayhew, a retired library of Congress employee, died on June 10, 2000, at age 57. He was suffering from Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, considered rare in the United States. A Washington, DC, area native, Mayhew grew up in Riverdale, Maryland, and attended Bladensburg High School, the University of Maryland, and the Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Thurmont, Maryland. He graduated from the University of Waterloo in Canada. Mayhew was a long-time resident of Greenbelt, Maryland.

After joining the Library of Congress in the mid-1960s, Mayhew worked at every GS rank from 2 to 12 during his career. He began as a deck attendant and worked in the Law Library as a reference assistant from 1966 to 1967, before moving to the Order Division. In 1978, he became part of the Hispanic Acquisitions Section and was a senior acquisitions specialist at the time he retired in 1993. Fluent in several languages, Mayhew developed a wealth of experience at the library. He served as the first recommending officer for science fiction, and he initiated the collection policy statement for that genre and started an exchange program for Eastern European science fiction, fantasy and horror literature in the library and beyond. With other interested library staff, he raised the profile of science fiction, fantasy and horror in the library and beyond. After leaving the library, Mayhew returned twice to speak to the Library of Congress Professional Association's What IF . . . Science Fiction and Fantasy Forum.

Science fiction also was a passion for Mayhew outside the library. He was a published writer of short fiction, appearing in *Tomorrow*, *Aberrations*, and *Aboriginal SF*. He reviewed science fiction for the *Washington Post* and *Fast Forward*, a local cable TV program.

Mayhew had an international reputation as a cartoonist. He was nominated for the Hugo Award for the Best Fan Artist in 1990

KAP Fiction Prize at University of Maryland

The winners of the annual graduate student poetry and fiction competitions sponsored by the Creative Writing Program in the English Department of the University of Maryland read from their works on May 9 in the McKeldin Library Special Events Room. The Katherine Anne Porter Fiction Prize went to Robin Vazquez for "House Rules." Bo Schwerin's "Story for the Dying" received second prize, and Deborah Schwartz, third, for "The Dream of Superman." The Porter Prize was established with an endowment from the Literary Trust of the Estate of Katherine Anne Porter, during the tenure of the late Isabel Bayley.

and 1996; he won this award in 1998 and 1999, the latter awarded posthumously. A compilation of his unpublished works is being planned by the Washington Science Fiction Association (WSFA). An active member of WSFA for four decades, Mayhew served as an officer, occasionally edited the *WSFA Journal*, and chaired the 1987 Disclave, a local science fiction convention. He also was the unofficial greeter to new members, using his courtly manner to make all feel welcome.

As an artist, he was one of the major developers of the modern version of art shows at science fiction conventions, encouraging the growth of this field. For members of the Katherine Anne Porter Society perhaps his most interesting artistic endeavor was painting the pine coffin Miss Porter purchased in 1974. Mayhew, whose mother was one of Miss Porter's neighbors in the Westchester Park high-rise at the time, learned of the coffin and offered to decorate it for Miss Porter. He painted it with large flowers in primary colors, attempting to make it look "like a piñata." Miss Porter delighted in shocking visitors to her apartment by stepping in and out of the decorated coffin, which she kept in a closet. This piece of Mayhew's art now resides in the Katherine Anne Porter Room in Hornbake Library at the University of Maryland.

Besides drawing and painting, Mayhew also established a reputation as a sculptor, often working in wood or Sculpy. A colleague remembered Mayhew creating figures for chess sets on his break time, completing several pieces each session, while carrying on intense conversations at the same time. He also carved intricately decorated walking sticks in wood. Mayhew learned woodworking from his father, who, for many years, was the foreman of the Machine Shop at the Library of Congress.

Just as Mayhew was skilled at molding wood, he was an artist with words. He is remembered for knowing the origin of odd phrases and for his colorful vocabulary. As some collect antiques, Mayhew collected old and new works and searched their beginnings and alternate uses, not only for knowledge but also so he could use them correctly. Mayhew is survived by his brother, sister, sister-in-law, and seven nieces and nephews.

KAP Featured at Chautauqua in North Carolina

Southern Writers were featured at the Buncombe County Chautauqua held June 19-23, 2000. Dr. Lynn Miller of the University of Texas at Austin portrayed KAP on June 22. The program was titled "An Evening with Katherine Anne Porter" and was held at the Smith-McDowell House Museum, Asheville, NC. Earlier that day, Dr. Miller held a workshop for adults at Pack Memorial Library, in Asheville, titled "Art and People in Mexico." Dr. Miller attended an informal breakfast at Malaprops Bookstore/Cafe on June 23. Afterward, she led a children's workshop entitled "Stories from the Old South," in Pack Memorial Library.

Marcella Winslow, Portrait Painter

Marcella Comès Winslow, a prominent Washington portrait painter, whose Georgetown home in the 1940s and 1950s was an informal literary salon for writers and other notables, died July 6, 2000, at the Knollwood retirement center in Washington. She had taught painting at Catholic University from 1965 to 1969 and was a past D.C. chapter president and a national vice president of Artists Equity.

Mrs. Winslow, who came to Washington in 1943, lived at 3106 P Street, NW, until moving to Knollwood in 1994. During her Georgetown years, she hosted such writers as Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, and Allen Tate. Tate and Welty used portraits by Mrs. Winslow on the covers of their books. Katherine Anne Porter lived at Mrs. Winslow's P Street house from April through September 1944, when she was serving as Fellow in Regional Literature at the Library of Congress. The two women remained on friendly terms for the remainder of Porter's life. While Porter was living at her home, Mrs. Winslow began painting her portrait.

Another of Mrs. Winslow's guests and the subject of a 1960s portrait was Alice Roosevelt Longworth, the legendary Washington social figure who was the widow of a House speaker and daughter of a president. They became acquainted because Longworth was a huge fan of the work of Memphis novelist, Anne Goodwin Winslow, the painter's mother-in-law. In 1993, the National Portrait Gallery held an exhibition

dedicated to Mrs. Winslow's portraits of American writers that included Porter, Welty, Warren, and Tate, as well as Ezra Pound and Robert Frost.

In an 1989 article in the *Washington Post Sunday Magazine*, Mrs. Winslow recalled such adventures as painting Pound's portrait while the poet was incarcerated in St. Elizabeth's Hospital and her work on Frost's portrait. Frost told her that "nobody could expect me to finish a poem in a certain amount of time, and you must take all the time you need on this painting." Frost later wrote in her guest book, "Robert Frost, who would be willing to be remembered the way Marcella Winslow made him look." In addition to the National Portrait Gallery, the Nimitz Library in Annapolis and the library of Eliot House at Harvard University include portraits by her.

Mrs. Winslow was a native of Pittsburgh, where she attended the Carnegie School of Fine Arts. She also studied art in London, Florence and Rome. In 1993, she published the book *Brushes With the Literary: Letters of a Washington Artist 1943-1959*. They featured her correspondence with her mother-in-law, telling a story of literary and artistic Washington. Her husband, Army Colonel William R. Winslow, died in Europe during World War II. Survivors include a son, John R. Winslow, and a daughter, Mary Winslow Poole, both of Washington; a sister; and six grandchildren.

Katherine Anne Porter Society Membership Application/Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

Institutional Affiliation _____

Telephone (work) _____

(home) _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

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

Katherine Anne Porter Society Activities at the American Literature Association Conference in Long Beach

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Unrue, Janis Stout, Thomas Austenfeld, Christine Hait, and Beth Alvarez. Other duties of the executive committee include chairing sessions at scholarly conferences and handling the society's routine business. Members were urged to submit articles, news items, and announcements for the newsletter. Future meetings of the Society will be held at forthcoming American Literature Association conferences. Christine Hait will serve as chair at the Cambridge, Massachusetts, session in 2001; Beth Alvarez will chair the session to be held in Long Beach, California, in 2002.

Thomas Austenfeld shared with fellow society members the good news that his book, *American Women Writers and the Nazis: Ethics and Politics in Boyle, Porter, Stafford, and Hellman*, will be published by the University Press of Virginia in 2001. After the session, society members adjourned to a restaurant on the nearby Long Beach waterfront for lunch, where session participants were joined by Lisa Roney of Penn State University and Jan Bloemendaal of Leiden University in the Netherlands.