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Editors' Note

We are delighted to present this anniversary issue of *Vitae Scholasticae*, which marks a quarter of a century of scholarly work in the field of educational biography. This issue also signals other changes at the journal. The International Society for Educational Biography – formerly the sponsor of *Vitae Scholasticae* – has become its publisher. After concluding a successful term as editor, Naomi Norquay is the new book review editor. Linda Morice has assumed Norquay's role.

In honor the twenty-fifth anniversary, we invited Craig Kridel to write "Biographical Meanderings: Reflections and Reminiscences on *Writing Educational Biography*." Kridel's work is familiar to many educational biographers. He served as longtime chair of the American Educational Research Association's Biographical Research Special Interest Group. He also edited *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research* (1998). One of the book's contributing authors was Louis M. Smith, who is also featured in the current issue of *Vitae Scholasticae*. Readers will enjoy Smith's insights in his review of Nigel Hamilton's book, *How to Do Biography: A Primer* (2008).

In his essay, Kridel discusses the range of types and methods of biographical work. That variety is reflected among the articles in this anniversary volume. Two are historical in nature. In "Company Schooling in the New South," Bart Dredge examines the life of Lawrence Peter Hollis, who shaped educational programs for textile workers and their children in the southeastern United States during the first half of the twentieth century. Kelly Ann Kolodny details the life and contributions of a nineteenth century educator, Mary Swift, who was in the first class of students to graduate from a state normal school (teacher training institution) in the U. S. Utilizing a/r/tography, a newer methodological approach, Monica Prendergast of Lesley University and education faculty at the University of British Columbia present "Pedagogy of Trace: Poetic Representations of Teaching Resilience/Resistance in Arts Education." Lucy Townsend, a former *Vitae Scholasticae* editor, reflects on her own career in "Climbing the Slopes of Academia: The Educational Biographer at Work." Laurel Puchner, a new member of the Vitae Scholasticae

Editorial Advisory Board, discusses perspectives on progressive education in her review of J. Wesley Null's biography, *The Peerless Educator: The Life and Work of Isaac Leon Kandel* (2007).

We share the hope that Craig Kridel expresses in his essay for the future of educational biography. We also celebrate the work of many people who have contributed over the years to the vitality and success of *Vitae Scholasticae* by submitting papers, reviewing manuscripts, and offering editorial advice. The credit for the journal is yours!

— Linda Morice
— Patricia Inman

Biographical Meanderings:
Reflections and Reminiscences on *Writing Educational Biography*

Craig Kridel

University of South Carolina

I am honored to be invited to contribute to this special twenty-fifth volume of *Vitae Scholasticae*. I still recall the excitement as a post-doctoral student when my colleague, Professor Timothy Leonard of St. Xavier College, informed me of the (International) Society for Educational Biography and the journal *Vitae Scholasticae* —then subtitled "the bulletin of educational biography" that was in fact over 250 pages in length! I recognized Tim as one of education's true scholars, and I believed any journal that received his praise was one worth reading. My assumptions were quite correct as I looked forward to receiving and devouring cover to cover each issue, including Leonard's own work, "The Ethos of the Disciplines and the Life-Stories of its Participants," as well as many other significant pieces. And I will never forget the excitement of attending my first ISEB conference and hearing Joan K. Smith's presidential address, "Metabiographics: A Future for Educational Life-Writing." I appreciate the working relationship that I developed through the years with your tireless executive secretary, Martha Tevis, as we coordinated the dissemination of information of ISEB activities with those of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Biographical Research SIG (Special Interest Group), a small association that I chaired during the past 17 years, stepping down from responsibilities in 2007. I was touched when first contacted by *Vitae Scholasticae* editor Linda Morice and invited to write this essay and, I must admit, a bit surprised when she reminded me that

my primer, *Writing Educational Biography*, was celebrating its tenth anniversary as well. I certainly cannot say that "it seems only like yesterday." That ill-fated education division of Garland Publishing released *Writing Educational Biography* just months before terminating its activities, dashing my hopes that an introductory text could assist the important work of the ISEB, *Vitae Scholasticae*, and other journals and societies in generating more interest in biographical inquiry in education. So, I was a bit astonished that someone would even remember the edited collection. With "sweet thoughts of reverie" and with some sense of remorse, this invitation permits me to celebrate and bemoan the current status of biographical research in the field of education.[1]

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> The most compelling biographies are those, written with passion and intensity, that seek to redress the wrongs, reconstitute the spirit and restore the subject. Blanche Wiesen Cook[2]

The ISEB conferences, *Vitae Scholasticae*, along with the presentations and newsletters of the Biographical Research SIG, the journal *Biography*, the *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, the *Narrative Study of Lives* series, and specific books on biographical method (updated and now known in the Biographical Research SIG as the Biographical Theory Bookshelf which is listed below) all helped to forge my thoughts about biography and my hope that biographical inquiry would become commonplace within the field of education. That has certainly not taken place, and I continue to wonder why. When I enter a Borders or Barnes and Noble bookstore, I have yet to see a large sign indicating the autoethnography or life history collections. I always find the biography section and certainly agree with today's professional authors who note the growing popularity of biography for the general public. If the literary form is so popular, then why is not biographical research more accepted in the field of educational research? We can all applaud the efforts of Alan Sadovnik and Susan Semel whose *History of Schools and Schooling* series with Peter Lang has made a commitment to publishing full length biographies as does also the Education/Biography series of SUNY Press. Yet, in the defining publication for the field of qualitative research in education, Denzin and Lincoln's *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, biographical method has lost ground with each succeeding edition: from a biographical method chapter in the first edition by Louis M. Smith to an indexed segment in the second edition to scattered references in the third edition where life history writing is described, oddly, as a form of autobiographical narrative.[3]

I am inclined to believe at times that biographical research in education may have taken a step backward during the past decade. I hope you disagree and, of course, there is much to question, even if one does accept my mere

speculations to be accurate. But I continue to see one cause to account for the decline (or lack of expansion) of educational biography in the field of education: insufficient attention to method among educational biographers. I have found that many biographers are so enraptured with their subjects that they would much rather focus on historical detail and minutiae rather than address the significance and implications of their work for the field of education. Too often the well-meaning educational biographer takes on a self-righteous tone: "What's wrong with all of you; you don't know about my subject. Well, I'm here to tell you." As a curator of a small museum, I have met many such individuals: those "research frothers" talking endlessly about locating some obscure document, foaming at the mouth, and describing with earnest a random historical point. Such a research perspective is all too common in historical and biographical work, alas, and represents "the willing suspension of significance." I wish not to condemn since I, too, have fallen frequently into this same state of mind.

Ironically, while I have found qualitative researchers' seemingly endless discussions about methodology to be tedious and trying at AERA conferences, I have come to believe that educational biographers should be talking more about method. As I call for more self-examination and awareness, however, I have found at times a commonsensical simplicity in biographers' descriptions of their work: biography is biography and different from autobiography. With all that has happened in our field during the past decade—the seemingly endless forms of new qualitative research methodologies during the "blurred genres" and "crisis of representation" eras and an unlimited array of hermeneutical and ethnographic variations taken from the disciplines of sociology and anthropology—I do not read enough accounts of biographical method in education drawn from the quite substantial body of literature of the humanities. There is much to explore, and many connections and applications are waiting to be made.

Developing an organizing framework has become my quest in recent years as I sought to articulate different types and methods of biographical work. My intent was not to sort researchers or to privilege styles of work but instead to allow for educational biographers to discuss differences and commonalities in their approaches and to recognize that methodology can serve as a focal point for dialogue in addition to the more common themes of content areas and historical eras. Initially I drew from Stephen Oates' tripartite configuration of biography, as described in *Writing Educational Biography*. Now I have adopted his advice that biography "must be more than the compilation of research notes— more than what one has gleaned from letters, interviews, reminiscences, and other accounts. The prose of the biographer must radiate a sense of intimacy and familiarity, quite as though the author himself has lived the life and walked the ground."[4] Such a view guided my

thoughts from an emphasis on the social sciences to a broader conception of biography as combining humanities and social sciences, leading to distinct yet fluid and vibrant forms of educational biography.

Perhaps any discussion of method is meaningless, some could say, when in qualitative educational research areas seemingly anyone who writes about an individual, including themselves, is characterized as writing biography. At AERA, many researchers involved in autobiographical narrative consider their work as biography; those engaged in writing teacher or student case studies call themselves biographers; and others engaged in oral history research refer to their work as biography. This has led to a euphoric acceptance during our neo-postmodern time of new waves, "eight and ninth research moments," and "fractured futures" where researchers are seen (and proclaim) to offer the best and most accurate description of their genre.[5] In contrast, I wish to propose a framework for educational biography that may in some way allow all to reconsider their scholarship and that of others and to encourage a discussion of research focus, purposes, and directions.

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I have come to see five large realms in the area of educational biography, perhaps the most common being *biography as "scholarly chronicles"* with its focus on the documentary, historical portrayal of an individual. This more traditional orientation includes telling the subject's story in a chronological pattern with more emphasis upon developing a "quest plot" and describing those life-periods of recognition (or notoriety) to the general public. In no way am I suggesting any type of hierarchy or taxonomy. Such scholarship seems to be the most popular in the field of education, and George Dykhuizen's scholarly chronicle of John Dewey, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey,* remains a significant work and surpasses in quality many efforts in other forms of biography.[6] The scholarly chronicle, however, is markedly different from an *intellectual biography* with its focus on motive, critique, and a conceptual analysis of the subject's significance in the world of ideas. One need not draw fine distinctions between these areas; realms are crossed continually as the motive and purpose of the biographer becomes more clearly defined. Those writing intellectual biography have overcome "interpretive angst" that I have noticed from so many educational researchers who include pages of student-teacher transcripts in their articles but who refuse to interpret motives and feelings. Also common in the field of education is *life history writing* (and the narrative study of lives) with its allegiance to social science research traditions. This has taken many forms, perhaps resonating most in the area of teacher education with the burgeoning "first year teacher" research and the "study of teachers lives" scholarship. Another popular type of educational biography in recent years is "*memoir biography*" (still distinct from autobiography) with attention to the researcher in relation to the biog-

raphical subject. A life story is being told but in relation to the transactional experiences of the biographer which, in turn, influences and foreshadows similar experiences of the reader.

The fifth type, *narrative biography*, represents a "dynamic" portrayal of a life without the need for "absolute facticity" or a comprehensive account from birth to grave. Neither is this style burdened by a definitive interpretation of the subject that must be accepted by all. Facts do exist and some interpretations are more thoughtful than others, but the biographer, while consciously aware of his or her personal emotions and reactions to the subject, recognizes that the telling of the story is primarily defined by the subject in relation to readers. Too often the reader is forgotten in much of our "myspace research"; narrative educational biography insists that the significance of the biographical subject is constructed in relation to the anticipated needs and interests of the reader.

I am reminded of Louise DeSalvo who, in her epilogue for *Writing Educational Biography*, encourages the aspiring biographer "to be clear about why a reader would be interested in this life; in what ways would the reading of this life be useful to a non-specialist, to a 'common reader.' To me [DeSalvo], all the truly great biographies provide the reader with a deep and abiding sense of the miracle that is accomplished by human beings as they struggle to make and find meaning in their lives. This is why I write people's lives: to illuminate the process by which creative people make their lives worthwhile through their work."[7] I have come to find such sentiments to capture the spirit of narrative educational biography where the "artist under oath" description is merged with the anticipated interest of the reader and a commonly-held, constructed notion of significance.

With a list of five types of biographical work (to which I hope the reader can add many others), thoughts immediately turn to differences rather than commonalities. In final form, such distinctions are quite difficult to determine, but I wish to add one key point to my passionate plea for more discussion of method—namely, what I have found to separate biographical types is not only the intricacies of method but, equally important, is an examination of the basic purpose of our scholarship. While I encourage all educational biographers to articulate their research methods, one fundamental question must be asked and not just assumed: why does one write a biography about a specific person? As an archivist, I have seen too many researchers whose response could only be described as "because I discovered materials" or "because I am interested." I find narrative educational biography so important for the field because, ironically, it does not dismiss our "social science mission" of agency—that there must be purpose to our work. Writing biography is not therapy nor is it preparing long book reports and "dragnet-like/ just-the-facts" documents. A clear sense of purpose—albeit, accepting

that not all lives may be worthy of biographical pursuit—must continue to guide and define the field.

Distinctions and nuances of method, however, come about through the focus and emphasis of the biographer and the way materials—documents, interview transcripts, material culture—are perceived and valued. "Insider-outsider" relationships, interviewee trusts, perspectives and triangulation: these defining methodology topics of the ethnographer and oral historian are not as important to the biographer. Rather, other "building blocks" of biographical inquiry cause researchers ultimately to confront (or decide not to address) broad research themes and to define themselves and their craft, including *interpretive research topics*:

establishing the biographer's voice (or, indirectly, attending to Edel's "figure under the carpet");

defining the parameters of research accuracy and truth;

ascertaining the biographer's relation and fascination with the subject;

articulating moral judgments made by the biographer; and

documentary research topics:

attending to and filling biographical gaps;

overcoming archival and copyright difficulties;

ascertaining archival significance;

articulating the ethics of documentation.

I would like to think that all educational biographers—scholarly chronicle writers as well as those writing memoir biographies—would discuss their treatment of each of these issues. Such accounts would confirm my belief that "interpretive biography" is a misnomer and rather redundant since all biography is interpretive.

I must make one addendum to this conversation: a clear distinction of auto/biography in relation to memoir biography during a time of blurred genres in qualitative research. I originally included teacher narrative in *Writing Educational Biography* and, in fact, now find myself more interested in autobiography than ever before with the emerging line of "hoax memoir" beginning with *The Education of Little Tree*, continuing with the national attention of the James Frey scandal, and now turned into a genre with the recent releases of Timothy Barrus' *Geronimo's Bones* "memoir," Margaret Seltzer's *Love and Consequence*, and *Misha: A Memoire of the Holocaust Years* where the author, Misha Defonseca, subsequently admitted, "The story is mine. It is not actually reality, but my reality."[8] Certainly, George Orwell's witticism that "autobiography is the most outrageous form of fiction" has been surpassed with Tom Wolfe recent comment that memoir is much like Wikipedia: "it is possible that parts of it are actually true." But I continue to be astonished when qualitative researchers view the difference between biography and autobiography as a mere slash (auto/biography). I wish not to criti-

cize the many educational researchers who are presently engaged in significant work in the area of autobiography and narrative; however, I call upon them, too, to begin engaging in discussions of method as a way to articulate and define crucial differences among and between the forms of our research.

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After the release of *Writing Educational Biography*, I decided to become a miniaturist and to write biographical vignette. Again, Louise DeSalvo was my guide when she said to "focus on 'the story' [you] want to tell about the subject's life, and to leave the rest to someone else. I [DeSalvo], for one, read biography not to find out all the facts about that person's life–what they did, wore, ate, where they lived, and whom they loved. I wanted to know what the biographer makes of the subject's life."[9] Her comments stressed the importance of creative non-fiction writing, and this became an aspiration (in fact, permitting me to spend a semester working with her). I put aside the social science qualitative/biographical methods of John Creswell and others and the social science life history orientation of Norm Denzin and picked up Joe Williams' *Style*. Guided by Paul Mariani, I tried to learn "how to tell a *good story* . . . to tap the peculiar energies of the biography."[10]

The primary question, however, became: how long is the story? Vignettes have a distinguished history in empirical, experimental social psychological research as well in other forms of work. Many of my thoughts were inspired from Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's *The Art and Science of Portraiture* as she redefined social science research and the quest for an expressive aesthetic whole (or unity) within the context of artistic, aesthetic, and humanities perspectives. "The portraitist's work is deeply empirical, grounded in systematically collected data, skeptical questioning (of self and actors), and rigorous examination of biases—always open to disconfirming evidence."[11] Yet, I saw great differences between the form and purpose of her portraitures and my efforts as a biographical miniaturist. Also, I began to realize the significance of personal temperament and research aspirations, a theme that I suspect will gain increased attention for me in the upcoming years. I found that interest guided my initial forays into biographical inquiry rather than the "need to prove," an underlying current that I always felt when reading portraiture (a theme most appropriate for social science research). Further, I found many stories and facts that, while important to learn through the course of biographical research, were not necessarily crucial to report. Vignette writing seemed more in accord with my temperament: interests continued to fuel my work, but I need not accept the responsibility of proving and reporting all. Further, I have viewed a fundamental trait of the biographer as that of curiosity and, as a biographical miniaturist, I found that I could keep my "unbridled curiosity" under control.

Preparing biographical vignettes offered a slightly different perspective:

certain attributes were now important—grace, thoughtfulness, insight, irony, focus—and characteristics of other forms of educational biography—comprehensiveness, clarity and succinctness, proof—became less crucial. After many years of developing an essayist style, I found writing a good story as a researcher and biographer was different. I turned to Stephen Oates who has often referred to biographers who draw upon the "magic of language, interpersonal dynamics, and dramatic narrative sweep."[12] While I have not always been successful in my efforts, that was the approach I adopted when preparing a book with Robert Bullough about the Progressive Education Association's Eight Year Study. Originally entitled *With Adventurous Company*, the 2007 publication was later renamed, alas, by the publisher as *Stories of the Eight Year Study*: *Reexamining Secondary Education in America*.[13]

I approached this grand topic, an experimental project staged by the Progressive Education Association between 1930-1942, as a series of issues, presented in story form: a show-down between participants and the sponsoring foundation; a staged rebellion by a group of principals; a conference presentation that decried the direction of testing. These and other events formed the basis of the treatment of educational issues, crucial to Eight Year Study staff and important to educators today. We then prepared vignettes about specific individuals who were emblematic of each issue and paired these with chapters. So, for example, we coupled the Prologue with Wilford M. Aikin's vignette entitled "Hope, Success, and Realistic Expectations" as a way to confront the mistaken belief that the Eight Year Study had been a "modest success." In essence, we used Aikin's name and career, misspelled and misunderstood through the past 75 years, as a metaphor for the entire project. Chapter 1, "The Educational Context of the Eight Year Study," was coupled with a vignette on one of the staff members, V. T. Thayer. This portrayal of a progressive educator was entitled "A Middle Position of Integrity without Compromise" and allowed us to introduce a unique group of the Eight Year Study Progressives who carefully forged a sophisticated and balanced ideology of education that stood the extreme and bifurcated positions within the PEA. The Tests and Records chapter gave opportunity to portray E. R. Smith as a "caring progressive" who recognized "the futility of statistics as an end in itself'" and used tests in a unique manner characteristic of these 1930s secondary school progressives.

The Ralph W. Tyler vignette served as seasoning to the denouement of the book, developed in Chapter 4, as the grand show-down among the school principals, testing experts, and Tyler's evaluation staff. An Alice Keliher vignette, accompanying a "factual interlude chapter" for the master narrative, allowed me to dangle interesting unknown connections to the project, and the Caroline Zachry vignette, somewhat removed from chapter six, offered too many wonderful opportunities to create contrast and tension between

her and commission staff and to show yet another unknown dimension of the Eight Year Study. The use of biography became crucial to the telling of the story, and only through vignettes could we play with ideas in such a manner as to suggest the exploratory and experimental nature of the project—"being with adventurous company." In contrast, the Alberty vignette served as an occasion to expand the curriculum chapter. In a more scholarly, comprehensive style, we took this opportunity to introduce the fundamentals of core curriculum, what we saw as important and forgotten educational content. Our final two content oriented chapters, philosophy and teacher education, were accompanied by the portrayals of a quirky educational philosopher, Boyd H. Bode, and an astonishing (adventurous) classroom teacher, Margaret Willis. Full length biographies have been written about some of these individuals; however, I feel that our vignettes captured "essences," and I say this knowing that many biographers question the existence of "an essential self." We were quite content in using this biographical method—vignettes in the form of narrative educational biography—to suggest and imply ideas for the reader to discover.

Stories of the Eight Year Study received accolades from biographers and educational historians I greatly respect, notably Dewey biographer Jay Martin, author of *The Education of John Dewey*, who described our use of vignettes as "balancing and counterpointing movements and individuals . . . After all, history is a gigantic collection of biographies. Things do not happen. People do. Education is best illustrated by the activity of persons doing it . . . ." I concluded that too many educators are limiting themselves with the assertion that most (if not all) biographical research must lead to a full-length biography. As a biographical miniaturist, I brought out a sense of intimacy and familiarity and strengthened the grand narrative immeasurably by being able to select from a larger array of biographical subjects. While at times I feel as if life as a biographical miniaturist is dismissed by the single-subject biographer, so be it. Writing vignettes as narrative educational biography continues to be my quest and a true art form that I, happily, will never master.

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Biography, a genre that still awaits a full vindication. Carl Rollyson[14]

With all of my bemoaning and muttering, I still have great hope for the future of educational biography. While many educational researchers may not describe or define biographical inquiry as I have done, this merely opens possibilities for new conversations and invitations for the further examination of our work. Our love for biography will permit us to froth at times and, after regaining our breath, allow us to also begin discussing the common issues of research methodology that will bring all of us together. As a form of research, few activities offer simultaneously such profound professional

development. As I have noted before, writing educational biography, life histories, and/or auto-enthnographic personal narratives permits us to reexamine our lives and "to inspire comparison. Have I lived that way? Do I want to live that way? Could I make myself life that way if I wanted to?"[15]. This is when educational biography transcends the boundaries of qualitative research and brings together the disparate communities in education so that we may consider the universal in a single human life. This is when the sweeping gestures of the biographer, the force of the narrative, method, and compositional form enter the field of education with great promise and power.

Biographical Theory Bookshelf

> I am especially distressed at the way biographers often ignore each other. Too often they make extravagant claims of originality, ignoring the work of their predecessors or devaluing it . . . . To engage in this kind of blinkered biography is a disservice to the genre itself; it prevents readers from seeing biography as a cumulative and incremental enterprise . . . . If biography is not very well understood and is often reviewed badly (receiving hardly more than a summary of the subject's life with a perfunctory nod to the biographer), it is because the biographical tradition has been disregarded or discounted. Carl Rollyson[16]

Sara Alpern, et. al., (Eds.) *The Challenge of Feminist Biography* (Champaign, IL: University of Il Press, 1992).

Lloyd Ambrosius, (Ed.) *Writing Biography: Historians & Their Craft* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

Carol Ascher, Louise DeSalvo, Sara Ruddick, (Eds.) *Between Women* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

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Prue Chamberlayne, et. al. (Eds.) *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

Norman Denzin, *Interpretive Biography* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1989).

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John A. Garraty, *The Nature of Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957).

Nigel Hamilton, *Biography: A Brief History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

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Craig Kridel, (Ed.) *Writing Educational Biography* (New York: Garland/Routledge, 1998).

Paul Mariani, *A Usable Past* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

Stephen B. Oates, (Ed.) *Biography as High Adventure* (Amherst: University of Mass. Press, 1986).

Catherine Parke, *Biography: Writing Lives* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

Brian Roberts, *Biographical Research* (London: Open University Press, 2002).

Carl Rollyson, *Biography: An Annotated Bibliography* (Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1992).

Carl Rollyson, *A Higher Form of Cannibalism?Adventures in the Art and Politics of Biography* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2005).

Carl Rollyson, *American Biography* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2006).

Meryle Secrest, *Shoot the Widow: Adventures of a Biographer in Search of her Subject* (New York, Knopf, 2007).

Linda Wagner-Martin, *Telling Women's Lives* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

Notes

[1]J. Timothy Leonard, "The Ethos of the Disciplines and the Life-Stories of its Participants," *Vitae Scholasticae* 2:2, (Fall 1983): 373-383; Craig Kridel (Ed.), *Writing Educational Biography* (New York: Garland/Routledge, 1998).

[2]Blanche Wiesen Cook, "The Issue of Subject: A Critical Connection," in *Writing Educational Biography* (Kridel, ed.) (New York: Garland/Routledge, 1998): 76.

[3]Louis M. Smith, "Biographical Method," in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 1st edition, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, editors (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994): 286-305. While biography is no longer represented with a chapter in the second edition of *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, there appears an interesting and unique chapter on life history: William Tierney, "Undaunted Courage," *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, editors (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000): 537-553; Susan Chase, "Narrative Inquiry," *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, editors (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005): 652.

[4]Stephen B. Oates, ed., *Biography as High Adventure* (Amherst: University of Mass. Press, 1986): 129.

[5]Yet, I still maintain that interest in biography has dwindled since these researchers characterize their work first as personal narrative, case study research, and oral history and secondarily as self-study research, lives of teachers research, authethnography, life-history writing and many other genres. The topic of biography remains as a distant third descriptor. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Eds.), *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005): 1123.

[6]George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1973).

[7]Louise DeSalvo, Advice to Aspiring Biographers, in *Writing Educational Biography* (Kridel, ed.) (New York: Garland/Routledge, 1998): 270.

[8]Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press (1976); James Frey, *A Million Little Pieces* (New York: Anchor, 2005); Timothy Barrus, *Geronimo's Bones* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005); Margaret B. Jones/Margaret Seltzer's *Love and Consequence* (New York: Riverhead, 2008); Misha Defonseca, *Misha: A Memoire of the Holocaust Years* (Boston: Mt. Ivy Press, 1997).

[9]Louise DeSalvo, Advice to Aspiring Biographers, 270.

[10]John Creswell, Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997); Norman Denzin, *Interpretive Biography* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1989); Paul Mariani, "Reassembling the Dust," in *Biography as High Adventure* , Stephen B. Oates, ed., (Amherst: University of Mass. Press, 1986): 109.

[11]Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffmann Davis, *The Art and Science of Portraiture* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002): 85.

[12]Oates, *Biography as High Adventure.*

[13]Craig Kridel and Robert V. Bullough, *Stories of the Eight Year Study: Reexamining Secondary Education in America* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007).

[14]Carl Rollyson, *American Biography* (New York: Universe, Inc., 2006): xiii.

[15]Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives* (New York, Knopf, 1984): 5.

[16]Carl Rollyson, *American Biography*, xiii.

Company Schooling in the New South:
Lawrence Peter Hollis and the Parker Mill Schools in South Carolina

Bart Dredge
Austin College

Introduction

Early in 1922, a number of cotton textile executives from Greenville, South Carolina, petitioned the State Assembly to establish the Parker District, in part a consolidation of company-owned schools that would create the largest such district in the history of the state. Passed on February 17, 1922, Special Act 369 combined nine large mill villages including Woodside, Mills Mill, Monaghan, Poe, West Greenville, Judson, Dunean, Union Bleachery, and American Spinning (Sampson Mill).[1] The new District also included the suburbs of CityView and Sans Souci, both "areas of deterioration between the city and the mill communities."[2] At the time, over 7,000 students attended company-owned grade schools in the District, yet no high school awaited those children who had successfully completed their elementary grades. The District had been named for Thomas F. Parker (1861-1926), a local textile entrepreneur and cousin of another significant textile leader, Lewis W. Parker (1865-1916).[3] Both believed that mill schools should teach habits of industry and principles of workplace efficiency as forms of moral uplift among workers, because "anything which tends to degrade or lower the employees as a class meets our earnest and persistent disapprobation."[4]

While other forms of welfare such as churches and recreational activities were important in the new District, it was in its schools that Parker was soon

to make educational history. Recognizing that success in the mill schools would require effective management, Thomas F. Parker turned to his trusted assistant, Lawrence Peter "Pete" Hollis, whom he had hired in 1905 to manage expanding mill welfare programs intended to "improve the ethical, mental, social and physical standards of the mill village community."[5] Now, with Hollis fully acclimated to the special concerns of the textile industry, Parker in 1916 called on him to serve as Superintendent of the fourteen schools scattered among the mill villages, eventually including the new high school. The appointment turned out to be a brilliant decision, and Pete Hollis quickly became synonymous with company schools throughout the textile South.

Born on November 29, 1883, in Chester, South Carolina, Hollis worked on the family farm and enjoyed only the episodic moments of formal education that were possible in part-time schools typically in session only during the two months of "lay-by time" every summer between "cotton hoeing and cotton picking."[6] Even when available, classes were not separated by grades, and study consisted of little more than rote memorization in preparation for when the principal would "hear your lesson." While this left Hollis woefully unprepared for college, much of his later success in the Parker District resulted from his repudiation of the still common method of rote learning and recitation.[7]

Pete Hollis at the start of welfare work in 1905 and Hollis near the time of his death in 1978.

As a teenager, Hollis took a college entrance exam and "got nowhere with it," leaving officials to suggest that he return home and come back when better prepared. Afraid that he would disappoint those back home who had earlier celebrated his leaving for college, and knowing that such a failure would leave him "ruined socially," Hollis arranged to meet with the president of South Carolina College (now the University of South Carolina), who eventually agreed to accept him on a probationary status. Hollis persevered and eventually graduated, although regretting for the remainder of his life that he had not gone home to prepare for the rigors of college work. Only an average student, Hollis nevertheless distinguished himself by becoming a student leader, eventually accepting the presidency of the "Clarisophic Literary Society," then the "highest honor in the school," winning the Roddy Medal for debate in 1904, and serving as president of the college YMCA.[8] Hollis graduated from the college with a B. A. degree in 1905.

It was through his work with the college YMCA that Hollis met I. E. Unger, a former Christian missionary and current welfare secretary for Thomas F. Parker at the Monaghan (Mill) YMCA in Greenville.[9] Through his contacts with Unger, Hollis came to Parker's attention and soon accepted an appointment as assistant welfare secretary for the mill communities near Greenville. Shortly thereafter Hollis took over full responsibilities for the mill welfare plans, and later explained the rapid promotion as the result of Unger's lack of ease among the thousands of Southern mill hands. Evidently Unger did not "speak the same language we spoke here in the cotton mills," and had even married a woman who "said things that she thought" – a problem because some of those things "did not take well with the people." In any case, Hollis rose quickly and soon controlled the welfare activities offered to mill hands.[10]

Hollis began his work in the mills at $40.00 per week and quickly brought professional knowledge and skills to the earlier hodge-podge of ineffective welfare methods in a mill community that at the time boasted "207 homes and 125 cows," as well as a boarding house for an additional fifty mill hands.[11] As part of his work, Hollis took over a greater role in mill village education when appointed head of the Victor-Monaghan elementary schools in 1916.[12] From the beginning Hollis earned the favor of mill workers and company officials alike, and long remembered his first days as a time when the mill hands "arose up [sic] and demanded that I be made the [welfare] secretary of the YMCA." While this may represent a bit of selective memory, his success came from a combination of technical skills and personal savvy, as well as extraordinary energy and a "little ability to work with people."[13] To help him better understand the mill people and their lives, Hollis lived in the Monaghan village along with the mill superintendent, an overseer, and five teachers from the company school.[14] And, to further improve his knowledge,

he frequently traveled to national conferences where he learned the details of YMCA welfare work as it came to be practiced in a number of industrial settings.[15]

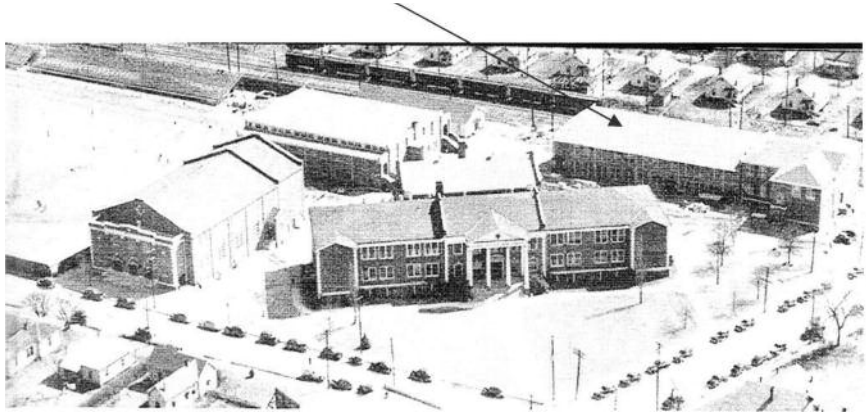
One early goal tackled by Pete Hollis was the elimination of the costly tendency among mill operatives to move about among the mills, never staying long enough in one place to become members of the community. With the support of Parker, Hollis first began to address the unpleasant and unattractive living conditions faced by residents in most mill villages. He had the small backyards between the company homes plowed for gardens and provided the necessary seeds and fertilizer. From Georgia he purchased "carloads of cows and pigs" and distributed them among the mill hands, believing, "if a man had a fat hog in the summertime down South here, he couldn't move that hog very well, and he couldn't kill it because the meat would spoil."[16] He would stay in place. On another occasion, Hollis traveled to New York and returned with a "motion picture man and four actors" who produced a film intended to discourage mill hands from packing up in one village and moving to another. One memorable scene showed movers carelessly dropping and destroying a valuable organ, — a not-so-subtle message that it was "foolish to move around" if the mill hands might "lose all they had" if they tried to do so. By Hollis' own account, the experimental movie as "quite a success."[17]

Hollis also ordered bathtubs for families who chose to purchase one, and for the others provided showers at the company YMCA. He organized regular celebrations for the Fourth of July, and Christmas parties that featured fruit baskets for the mill children.[18] Finally, to help recruit new workers to the District mills Hollis outfitted one of the nicer mill homes as a "show house" to help lure potential workers. Located in a particularly pleasant setting, and featuring a sewing machine, sofa, rugs, and a prominently displayed family Bible, the house was a routine stop for the mountain families considering the move to the Piedmont textile communities.[19] Hollis also tried to connect mill families to the company towns through the printed word. For example, in late 1923 he published a District newspaper called "The Joymaker" that featured local events and gossip and, when it failed for lack of subscribers, Hollis began the more popular *Parker Progress*, a village weekly that billed itself as the "official organ of the Parker District." The first issue of sixteen pages appeared on March 6, 1925, and sold for five cents, promising on its masthead that it would be the official newspaper for "all the PEOPLE of that populous, progressive group of mill villages and suburbs [emphasis in original]."[20]

Although the Parker District was a model for company-owned schools at the elementary level, by the early 1920s Thomas F. Parker had come to understand the importance of expanding educational opportunities beyond the

lower grades. As a result, his plans for the new Parker High School developed rapidly, with a laying of the cornerstone on April 5, 1923. The celebration began with "full Masonic rites," and a long procession through village streets with music provided by the Parker District band. Over one thousand spectators accompanied the mill chorus with "Welcome Sweet Springtime" and later listened to the keynote address, "The Ideal of the School," by Furman University professor Francis Pendleton Gaines. Recognizing the historical importance of the new mill high school, many cheered as Gaines described the school as the "gateway of youth; the fortress of democracy; and a temple of the spirit."[21] At the end of the ceremonies, the presiding officials buried into the cornerstone a copper time capsule that held, among other things, a sheaf of local news reports on the creation of the school, a copy of the legislative Act that created the District, a map of the Southern textile region, cotton items produced by local mill hands, and a photograph of Lawrence Peter Hollis, our subject here.[22]

Upon its completion in October, 1924, the new school boasted a main classroom building, and an annex with library, conference room, "materials bureau" and cafeteria.[23] Students enjoyed a large gymnasium with two basketball courts, a football field and quarter-mile track, six bowling lanes, horseshoe pits and volleyball courts, steel bleachers seating five thousand spectators, and a large field house. Later the school expanded to include a new "Vocational Building" with welding and machine shops, sewing and other textile equipment, a drafting department, and spaces for cosmetology and commercial studies.[24] Seventeen students graduated from the first class in 1924, and the school quickly became the centerpiece of the District. By the



Parker High School – Arrow indicates textile training mill on campus.

end of its first decade, thirty-three teachers taught nearly nine hundred high school students per year, while another 6,500 students attended an elementary school associated with one of the Parker mill villages.[25]

Parker Curriculum

While Pete Hollis may have reluctantly accepted the appointment with the Parker District, and then only after other candidates had "visited the district, took a look at the ancient buildings, read the figures in the meager budget, and declined the offer," he nevertheless soon embraced the work.[26] From the beginning, his plan for mill children included physical health and recreation, the inculcation of strong spiritual values, the appreciation of aesthetic beauty, and most importantly, the acceptance of authority and the ability to "adjust to the problems of life."[27] Having once told a student reporter that "We do not believe that head training is any more important than training of hands, heart and health, which includes character training," Hollis launched an educational program clearly intended to serve the mill companies that provided the schools.[28] As reported in the trade magazine *Textile World*, Hollis infused into his school district "an impulse which, for want of a better term, we shall call industrial consciousness."[29] Even today the prominent two-story textile training facility on Parker High School grounds remains the visible representation of the historical relationship between mill companies and the education they provided cotton mill children. The textile production process would soon be taught to those planning to enter the mills, and any discussion of Pete Hollis' contribution to textile education must begin with this narrow focus. After all, as David Clark, the controversial editor of the *Southern Textile Bulletin* and the South's greatest defender of textile interests once noted, the "mills know that ninety per cent of the children in the mill village will be mill operatives and the object of the mill school is to educate them and make them better citizens and more proficient in their life work."[30]

While the Parker High School was not the only mill school to include a training mill facility – the Saxon Mill in North Carolina created a created a "Textile Industrial Institute" of six buildings and a "handsome little model mill" for the training of mill hands – the size and scope of the Parker experiment stands alone."[31] From the beginning, Pete Hollis prepared Parker District children to work on equipment "they had never seen nor heard of before," because he understood that while some children would escape the textile industry, most would not, and he was obliged to prepare them for work in the area mills.[32] Hollis based his educational philosophy on the belief that "the child learns by doing," and that he or she would be happier "if the program includes the things which affect him at present." At Parker students could "learn what they live," and the school offered an education that would

"make sense to these sons and daughters of the mill workers"[33] The program took mill children beyond material offered in "regular text books," and led them to appreciative preparation for their work in the mills.[34] As Greenville *News* reporter Don West noted, "book learning" was not "unduly stressed" in the Parker schools that instead focused on "fitting the student" for a trade required by the textile industry.[35] At Parker, the "Hollis system of education starts with children, not with textbooks," and the curriculum centers on the belief that "students learn better by doing than by rote."[36]

While some condemned a "dictatorial" training that might "ruin the future of those children," Hollis nevertheless insisted on a curricular emphasis on "cooperative work, social attitudes, character development, and so forth," rather than academic knowledge.[37] In his study of the Parker High School curriculum in 1936, Tippett noted that school officials devoted some effort toward "skills of reading, writing and arithmetic," but that the central focus was on the "qualities of co-operation, initiative, resourcefulness, respect for self and social order, creativeness, practice of desirable characteristics, open-mindedness, and acceptance of responsibilities."[38] All of these traits were important to the textile employers who would hire these children and they were never far from the center of Pete Hollis' curricular plans. As one observer confirmed, the students who attended the Parker District schools were the children of mill hands and, for the most part, "education has been adopted to meet their particular needs."[39] A Parker education served textile employers as students learned the habits of work, the correct attitudes on the job, and the development of workplace co-operation and sociability. As the vice-president of Judson Mills once noted, the Parker High School was a benefit for mill hands who needed to be "happy in their homes and contented with their work and wages."[40]

Gil Rowland of the Greenville *News*, and a Parker High School teacher from 1931 to 1945, confirmed the picture of a curriculum firmly in Pete Hollis' hands. He recalled that Hollis thought it impractical to teach mill children "traditional college-preparatory courses," as most could be expected to spend their "working lives" in the "mill district," so the centerpiece of the school was an "application of vocational training" of value only to those who pursued jobs "needed by the mill community,"[41] Throughout his career, Hollis successfully nurtured the relationship between the schools and the mill officials who supported them, and frequently offered public statements of appreciation for the contributions textile employers made to the schools. He was thankful, for example, that the mill foreman and overseers assisted in the development of "our course of study," and that the mills regularly donated supplies to keep the campus "machines running," and allowed students to "work with their regular employees so that they may get mutual experience on the job."[42]

A 1925 editorial in the Greenville *Journal* agreed with Hollis and noted

that in the Parker District the "importance of local industries is stressed" and that connecting work to school created "pride in the occupation of the father" and inculcated the important value of giving fair service to one's employer.[43] As Hollis once taught, all the luxury items in the world failed to be as rewarding as the "thrill which comes from doing a good job."[44] In fact, Hollis often taught students that "whether you plow or whether you cook or whether you build a wall or whether you make cloth, all of these things may be just as beautiful as a picture which an artist would paint."[45] As John Gillespie, a teacher at Parker High School from 1956 to 1986 recalled, Hollis believed students should rise to their fullest potential – even if that meant only being the "best mill operative one could be."[46]

To facilitate the training for textile work that he had in mind, the Parker High School boasted a two-story building that "duplicates an actual cotton mill," in which students learned the "carding, spinning, twisting, quilling, and weaving" functions of a typical cotton mill.[47] Area mills donated the equipment needed to have "raw cotton transformed into woven cloth," and when new equipment emerged, Parker officials saw to it that the students had access to the same equipment.[48] Parker students could also focus on "home economics, carpentry, machine shop, mechanical drawing and textile courses in weaving, in loom fixing, cloth analysis and designing," as well as textile machinery repair, and those who studied in the campus textile facilities soon manufactured finished products such as towels, curtains, and blankets that they sold to other students and their parents.[49] In addition to textile training, other opportunities were available as well, especially for female students. For example, the cafeteria doubled as a workroom for Home Economics classes that allowed girls to "get their hands in the dough."[50] The female students also learned to walk properly, dress and apply cosmetics, and behave on dates, while many took advantage of "special courses" in clothing design, ready-to-wear garment selection, and the best methods of "laundering, patching and darning." Additional training exposed students to the "preparation and service of wholesome meals," nursing, first aid, and home care of the sick. Despite these additional opportunities, however, it was the "textile division" that dominated the high school curriculum. Training in loom fixing, carding, weaving, designing, card grinding, roving frame fixing, spinning frame fixing, and cloth inspection prepared most Parker students only for work in a textile industry that expected a return on their investments in mill village schools.[51]

It is important to note, though, that in addition to vocational skills, Pete Hollis worked to encourage certain values of citizenship among the students. To that end, in 1931 he initiated a complicated system of student government, complete with a written constitution and an adversarial judicial system. Before long the student government included not only a school president and other executive officials, but a student senate and house of

representatives, student court with prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges, and student juries charged with adjudicating minor disputes and assessing responsibility for the violation of various campus rules. [52] While citizenship training is a common and laudable goal in any school, in this context Hollis hoped to teach a brand of citizenship that featured "dependability, punctuality, vocational competence and cooperation" – a definition sure to please most of the mill officials who were to employ Parker graduates.[53]

While most of the training for mill work and life occurred in the high school, the Parker District elementary schools also offered a steady diet of explicit and implicit instruction that focused on textile manufacturing. In the "social science" offerings, for example, teachers stressed the interdependence among various components of society, highlighting foremost the social utility of cotton production and textile manufacturing. Students in the first grade learned that "farmers raise lots of cotton to sell," and "buy things for the farm with the money;" second graders discovered that "merchants sell cotton cloth," made from "cotton raised by the farmer;" third grade teachers taught that the "Dutch manufacture cotton cloth;" and fourth grade children examined farm states that sell wheat and corn to the South in direct exchange for "cotton and cotton goods." Later, fifth grade students learned that the United States exchanges "cotton goods for wool, silk, and linen from Australia, Japan, and Belgium."[54]

It was especially in the fifth grade that the educational focus on the textile industry became more comprehensive, including the science classes in which students were required to identify the various insects that might threaten cotton crops, and others learned to test the comparative strength of cotton and wool fibers. Even music students practiced and performed songs with lyrics that recalled the mills, including "The Spinning Song," and "Spin, Maiden, Spin," or the musical ode "To the Little Silkworm." One public presentation featured students dramatizing a "cotton plantation scene," complete with performances of the life histories of Eli Whitney and early textile industrialist Samuel Slater – as well as student reenactments of the life of a cotton plant from raw fiber to finished fabric.[55] Finally, on one occasion a Poe Mill elementary class constructed a thirty-foot square miniature city. "Parkerville" was lighted by street lamps and featured scale replicas of a fire station, post office, hotel. Most notable on the model, of course, was the cotton mill.[56] It should be noted that the connection between mill education and textile employment also found expression in printed materials as well. The South Carolina supervisor of mill schools, William Banks, complained in 1923 that many textbooks used in other state schools were "unsuited to mill schools." For example, mathematics problems that required the "measuring acres of ground, computing size and value of piles of wood," were fine for other students, but the "mill child" required practical problems. He should be learning

how to "measure cloth, to compute the number of strands in a yard of cloth," and other tasks of immediate use to the textile manufacturer.[57]

Finally, the textile education that dominated the Parker District curriculum was not something about which one might only speculate. In "The Objectives of Parker High School, 1964-1965," Pete Hollis and other textile officials made clear their intention to "meet the major occupational needs of the industrial community, which is primarily textiles, by offering a three-year course in textiles and other subjects" that would also serve local industry.[58] Likewise, in a 1925 letter to mill village residents Hollis noted that it was the "policy of the board of trustees" to developed the "first practical trade school in the South right here in the Parker District" so that the children of mill hands could "prepare for a useful occupation."[59] It should be kept in mind as well that the District charter called for five unelected trustees selected from among textile executives of the District mills, and as such the dominance of the textile industry was clear.[60] The Parker trustees had the power to levy taxes, select textbooks, and determine the curriculum of all District schools, and it remains no surprise that they developed a curriculum that best served their own interests. [61]

Teacher Training

The mill education required by the area companies called for a cadre of teachers who could engage in the "desired training in vocational and textile work."[62] As might be expected, Pete Hollis personally selected the "teaching corps" in terms of their understanding and willing acceptance of his view of education, and when he found teachers who were unsure of themselves or his project, he quickly trained them himself. During the first decades of the Parker District, hiring teachers with no college education or professional certification, Hollis developed the "Parker Institute" – an extensive in-service training plan for mill teachers.[63] As part of the training, Hollis imported speakers from other "teacher-training institutions" to present new theories and practices to the Parker teaching staff. For example, Dr. Thomas Alexander of Teachers College, Columbia University, helped initiate a series of "standard tests" for use by teachers who wanted to gain insights into the talents of their individual students. Alexander visited the Parker District on several occasions in its early years, first arriving in 1927 to help Pete Hollis establish his version of "progressive education" on the campus of the high school.[64] At other times, Hollis sent individual teachers for extra training, as in 1924 when he sent "Professor" D. W. McSwain, the head of the Parker textile department, to New York and the Boston Training School to study advanced methods of vocational training.[65]

Of more immediate significance, Hollis also taught teachers to translate

"general theory into specific practice," through annual training sessions at a mountain camp owned by the Victor-Monaghan Mills – later expanding the training in 1935 at another mountain retreat at Tamassee, South Carolina, which was owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution.[66] For Hollis, it was important for new teachers to develop a clear sense of "how Parker District differs from other communities," and the training sessions could help Hollis assess just how "loyal, without any pay, our teachers are."[67] Later, when no longer able to use the new camp at Tamassee, Hollis arranged a donation of a 100-acre spot at Blythe Shoals in the South Carolina foothills. Soon called "Camp Parker" (and later "Camp Hollis"), the mountain location quickly became a favorite for teacher training and other District events including an annual "Band Camp" for members of the Parker High School Band and Orchestra.[68] One tangible result of the Parker training was a series of booklets produced during the summer sessions and later shared across the District, on such topics as poetry, health, industrial arts, and physical education, and later a set of "spellers" appeared along with twelve sets of second grade readers.[69] These books also joined the over five thousand books already devoted to teacher training and held in the library at Camp Parker.[70]

Despite the apparent success of summer training, Hollis remained concerned about the lack of professionalism among Parker teachers, and knew that the entire system was vulnerable to criticism on those grounds. To remedy this problem, in 1931 Hollis arranged for twenty-six Parker teachers to travel by bus for six week of formal training at the Teachers College at Columbia University, and later provided funds for similar travel to other locations in Florida, Georgia, Ohio, and North Carolina.[71] On another occasion, twenty-one teachers traveled to Peabody College for additional summer training, and small groups of teachers also visited experimental programs in Seattle, Nashville, Chicago, and elsewhere.[72] Another such trip found ten Parker High School teachers in Columbus, Ohio visiting a new "demonstration school" developed at Ohio State University.[73] Finally, to supplement the travel away from campus and follow up on lessons already learned, Hollis invited outside speakers to visit the District, including one such invitation in 1941 to Dr. Daniel R. Prescott, then director of child development studies at the University of Chicago.[74] No matter the method, Hollis invested extraordinary time, energy and resources to ensure the best possible teaching staff. Hiring teachers from outside the normal pool of competent and credentialed teachers, Hollis could not otherwise have been successful in pursuing his particular educational vision.

Night School

In addition to offering industrial training for students in the various

schools of the Parker District, including the high school, Hollis joined other Southern mill officials promoting night classes as a prerequisite for internal advancement, and stressed practical subjects such as "textile mathematics and the credo of paternalism."[75] For example, at one point Hollis organized a "Textile Club" that helped mill hands study leadership, personality improvement and adjustment, and the "specific duties of the foreman."[76] He also offered instruction to nearly 600 adult students each year through a variety of "trade extension" classes that met for four hours per week, including in 1932 an array of opportunities that included fourteen courses in loom fixing, two in cloth design, four in card grinding and fixing, two classes in frame fixing, and one in weaving.[77]

People's College

A more ambitious experiment began in October, 1929, when Hollis developed the "The People's College." With classes held at times convenient for the housewife, courses included interior decorating, cooking, rug making, dancing, music, and dressmaking – all intended to help "the average family appreciate and make a better life."[78] Operating under Hollis' slogan, "All Sorts of Classes for All Sorts of People," the "People's College" sought to develop "more cooperative attitudes" among mill hands and soon became an important feature of Parker District life.[79] Meeting on Tuesday and Thursday nights, each session featured an end-of-term assembly for the performance of demonstrations, plays, "chalk sketches," movies, and slide presentations – most concerning some aspect of the textile industry.[80] Beyond a dollar tuition that was due at registration, students paid no additional fees, a high school diploma was not required for enrollment, and there were no examinations, tests, or reports. Well over one thousand people registered for the first sessions, and over time nearly three thousand workers took courses in the "People's College," studying a wide array of topics including singing in a choir, butchering various cuts of meat, and the "art of setting a table" – in the process developing "more cooperative attitudes" toward their employers.[81]

Pathfinder

Another major educational innovation that Pete Hollis brought to the Parker District came with the commissioning of a ""truck library" in October, 1922. The first "bookmobile" in South Carolina, the truck delivered carefully chosen books to mill workers and their children throughout the District.[82] On the first day of operation, the truck "drove up to the Poe Mill" and workers checked out books at the rate of one a minute for the three hours the truck remained in place.[83] Outfitted specifically for this task, the truck had

glass doors that made book selection easy, and in its first six months the truck distributed over thirty thousand books to District residents.[84] The library truck received early international attention when featured in the *Christian Science Monitor* and described as a "Library on Wheels" that was a "highly economical" means of serving a large number of people. Moreover, the truck carried with it a "certain air of romance" for the adults and children who "had the advantage of the mill schools," but had never before had books "come their way."[85]

The library project, later called the "Pathfinder" after a naming contest that awarded a ten-dollar gold coin to the winner, received financial support from the "generous help" of Thomas F. Parker and Pete Hollis, as well as District mill students who sold ribbons for fifty cents each to support the mobile library. An additional $1800 was raised from contributions from mill parents through the Parker District PTA.[86] The "Pathfinder" was first staffed by the "chauffer and librarian" Nell Barmore, a graduate of Randolph-Macon College for Women and the Carnegie Library School of Atlanta. Barmore was by all accounts a competent librarian and, as an extra bonus for this particular job, there was "very little that Miss Barmore" did not know about an automobile."[87] The "Pathfinder" program was so successful that by September, 1925, Hollis pressed a second truck into service, and Miss Margaret Moseley from Monaghan – a member of the first graduating class at Parker High School – became the second "Pathfinder" librarian.[88] The library program lasted for well over ten years, and eventually boasted nearly 18, 614 adults and 84,164 children as "registered borrowers."[89]

Most Parker residents seemed to prefer "love," or "adventure," or popular "out-of-doors" books, and by 1925 novels were so popular that the Pathfinder staff began carrying two copies of each.[90] Beyond limited access to pleasure reading, however, an early news article announced to mill residents that they would soon be able to check out books of more practical educational value, including books on the history of cotton growing, and the weaving and spinning of cotton cloth.[91] As Lyons noted in 1937, a mill managers "know[s] what reading matter is good for the child-like minds" of his workers and he "selects it." This seems to have been the case here, at least in terms of the vocational offerings made available by the "Pathfinder" staff.[92] Nevertheless, mill schools typically owned few books, but one could often find eager students "in the yard around the library truck, which was undoubtedly a major component of the educational program in the District."[93]

Parker School of the Air

In 1933, Pete Hollis reaffirmed the value of company education when, to

acquaint local adults with the activities in the District schools, he began a weekly broadcast from local radio station W.F.B.C.. The "Parker's Half-Hour" broadcast thirty minute programs on such topics as "Home Economics Night,""Alumni Night,""Using the library," and "Vocational Activities." Other programs, including "What Makes a Good Teacher?" and "Are We Training Boys and Girls in Character?" targeted parents and others who Hollis believed needed to further appreciate the work done in the District schools.[94] The radio program enjoyed an immediate audience of over six thousand listeners, but to broaden the audience even further in 1934 Hollis used funds from the Parker PTA to supply radios for each of the District schools. Once the radios were in place, Hollis foreshadowed later projects by supplementing classroom teaching with the radio programs, requiring teachers to discuss with their students the issues raised during the Thursday morning broadcasts.[95] Finally, with similar educational goals in mind, Hollis had a large truck constructed that became the Parker "school mobile," announcing its arrival through a huge loudspeaker intended to "attract the attention of housewives." Home Economics teachers assigned from Parker High School to the truck taught mill families short courses on up-to-date methods of baking biscuits, making dresses, and vacuuming floors.[96] There were also demonstrations of electric stoves, sewing machines, modern refrigerators and other appliances, and in 1935, the "school mobile" joined with the South Carolina Board of Health in a regional campaign against pellagra, explaining through moving exhibits the importance of a balanced diet.[97]

Maternity Shelter

A final example of the educational efforts initiated in the Parker District by Pete Hollis reveals his concern for the health and well-being of the mill children and families under his charge. In 1928, Hollis used $1,000 to buy and outfit a small frame house near Parker High School to "do something for the mothers who are going to have child birth [sic]." Hollis later recalled that "We called it the maternity shelter, and we took nobody but people who didn't have money."[98] Patients were not billed for the services, and the local mills provided the necessary clothing, towels and sheets.

Hollis saw the Maternity Shelter as providing a safe and healthy environment for child birth.[99] Assisted by Emily Passmore Nesbitt, a Red Cross nurse and community worker employed for a time by the Parker District, he appointed teenage girls who resided in the Parker District to offer rudimentary medical advice, care for babies and their mothers, and provide follow-up services for as long as two years following a birth. These girls also conducted weekly clinics in individual mill homes, and working under the auspices of the high school, lent "much weight to the preparation for parenthood."[100]

Also, after acquiring parental permission to do so, the girls assisted during child birth, and after twenty hours of service became "Health Couriers" who traveled among the mill homes "preaching" the importance of proper screen windows and sufficient and healthy family diets, while also reporting any illnesses or other problems they thought might be of interest to mill officials.[101] As a later part of the work of the Maternity Shelter, Parker High School students also organized a "Health Club" in the school, and club members wore specially made uniforms as they held monthly classes for District girls and women. [102]

By one account in 1935, the high school girls who ran the Shelter conducted over ten thousand individual services in its first ten years of existence, including pre-natal clinics, tuberculin tests, adult hygiene classes, health-related home visits and over 370 births.[103] Hollis also later claimed that there had been over three thousand births "in that little old shelter."[104] The "Maternity Clinic" operated at least until 1951, although before that time it had been moved to one of the rooms in the school gymnasium and its services had been dramatically reduced.[105]

Dental/Medical

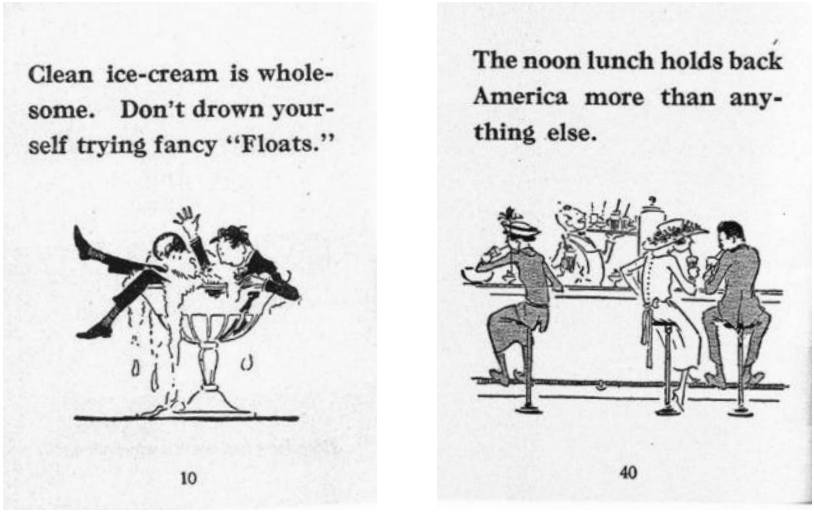
Again addressing health problems to provide better conditions for textile education and mill village life, Hollis in 1925 hired Dr. W. T. McFall as a full-time dentist to work with District children.[106] If nothing else, Hollis understood that "sick people do not show up regularly for work."[107] Whatever the motivation, by early 1925 McFall could report that, among other services, he had performed over two thousand "operations," with many of these procedures conducted in his mobile dental clinic.[108] In June 1925, he also announced that he had given twenty-five lectures in school "chapels," nineteen presentations before PTA gatherings, sixteen lectures to grade school classes, forty-three oral hygiene and tooth brushing drills, three presentations to public health nurses, twenty-one home visits, and nineteen charity dental calls. Among other specific dental treatments, he treated 1,620 patients in thirteen schools, and completed 1,068 amalgam fillings, 654 cement fillings, 837 extractions, and more. While this seems an impressive accomplishment in a short time, McFall also reported that approximately 97 percent of all children in the Parker District suffered from significant "dental defects." [109]

While laudable, the dental program risked humiliating the very people it served. For example, under Dr. McFall the District required children to keep a "Health Booklet" that asked them for private details of personal hygiene, including the frequency of the brushing of teeth, the presence of clean linen in the home, and the bathing habits of themselves and their parents. They

were also required to report on their consumption of milk, leafy vegetables, and fruit, their daily consumption of coffee or tea and, undoubtedly most disturbing, the timing of their most recent bowel movements.[110] While some parents and students undoubtedly felt uncomfortable with these requests, McFall offered ongoing encouragement in a column called "Tooth Tales" that he wrote for the *Parker Progress*.[111] Finally, another health-related program arranged by Pete Hollis during the spring of 1924 was a visit by "Professor Happy," who led student health-related discussions called "Feeding and Washing the Human Structure." Professor Happy was actually Clifford Goldsmith of Child Health Associates of New York, brought in by Hollis to improve the overall health among mill hands.[112] Goldsmith had published a short guidebook from which he taught children with bits of homespun advice such as "sleep with the windows open and the mouth shut," and "have horse sense and eat oatmeal," as well as the insight that "thin soup never made anyone fat."[113]

Conclusion

In 1951 Parker High School consolidated with the state school system, and shortly after began to lose its distinctive identity. Most teachers remained loyal and stayed with the school, and Pete Hollis maintained an office in the high school for several years, earning a stipend from District mill executives for his services as an anti-union consultant.[114] Late in 1970, Pete Hollis met



Examples of the Wisdom of Professor Happy

with a reporter from the Greenville *News*, and recalled his experiences, remaining unapologetic about the narrowly-defined industrial focus of the school curriculum. With evident pride he noted that "We were starting from scratch, so we didn't have to conform to educator's [sic] prejudice. We were going to have a school that started off with pupils, working from what the needs and interests of the people are." To that end, Hollis remembered that the Parker District offered classes in "textile, machine shop, carpentry, auto mechanics, typewriting, and cosmetology, and that this gave students "an opportunity to make a good living from the things we taught them in school."[115] The final class of Parker High School students graduated on June 6, 1985.[116]

Hollis retired in March, 1952, and was succeeded at Parker High School by J. H. Anderson who had served as Assistant Superintendent since 1924.[117] By the time of his retirement, Hollis had received two honorary degrees from Furman University and his alma mater, the University of South Carolina. He served as the President of the Association of Retired Teachers in South Carolina, and following retirement invested two years organizing South Carolina school boards after the Greenville County school consolidation that drew Parker High School into the state system.[118] He had earlier served as president of the South Carolina Education Association in 1928, and had been appointed in 1939 to the legislative commission of the National Education Association.[119] Pete Hollis died in 1978 at the age of ninety-five, having during his long life married twice, once to a teacher retired from the Parker schools. He had four children and later enjoyed eight grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren who affectionately knew him as "Daddy Pete."[120] Among other honors, Hollis had been named as one of America's top one hundred educators by "Look" magazine in 1949, and today there is a new full-sized statue of Hollis in Greenville, South Carolina, erected in honor of his contributions to the Parker District schools.[121] The statue is prominently situated on a corner of the newly-designated Pete Hollis Memorial Highway – on the outer edge of the Parker District to which he had devoted his life.[122]

Notes

[1]A. V. Huff, *Greenville: History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 296; Ellison M. Smith, "Effectively combining academics and practical education: How the Parker Junior-Senior High School meets the needs of girls and boys and is promoting the welfare of the District's people, institutions and industries," *The Greenville Journal* 4 (October 1925):6-7. Act 369 was unsuccessfully challenged in court on the grounds that it gave corporations the right to levy taxes. See *Walker v. Bennett*, 125 S.C. 389, 118 S. E. 779 (1923).

[2]Joy Kay Bates Saxton, "A history of Parker High School of Greenville, South Carolina," (M.S. thesis, Furman University, 1965): 22-23; Azile Milling Fletcher, "Parker High School's graduates look at its curriculum." (M.A. thesis, Furman University, 1940): 4, 7.

[3]Judith Bainbridge, "Closing of Parker is the end of an era," *Greenville News* (October 7, 2003); Allen Tullos, *Habits of Industry: White Culture and the Transformation of the Carolina Piedmont* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989): 181.

[4]Lewis Parker, "Compulsory Education: The Solution of Child Labor Problem," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 32 (1908): 40-56, 49.

[5]Thomas F. Parker "The true greatness of South Carolina," Address delivered to the Federation of Women's Clubs of South Carolina, (Columbia, South Carolina, May 1908): 5.

[6]Hollis describes his early memories in his unpublished autobiographical account, Hughes Library, n.d., p. 1.

[7]Hollis, 3.

[8]Ibid, 4.

[9]Mary G. Ariail and Nancy J. Smith, *Weaver of Dreams: A History of the Parker District, (*Greenville, South Carolina: R. L. Bryan Publishers, 1977): 24; Judith T. Bainbridge, *Greenville Communities*, Unpublished essays separately numbered, at the South Carolina Room, Hughes Library, (Greenville, South Carolina, 1999).

[10]Hollis, 4.

[11]Bainbridge, n.p.; Hollis, 7.

[12]Huff, 296; Ariail and Smith, 24; Samuel F. Stack, "A critical analysis of welfare capitalism as educational ideology (Parker School District)," (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1990): 78.

[13]Hollis, 4.

[14]Bainbridge, n.p.

[15]Hollis, 5.

[16]Recalled in Hollis, 5.

[17]Hollis, 5.

[18]Bainbridge, n.p.; See also *Joymaker* 1 (April 14, 1924): 3.

[19]Bainbridge, 1999, n.p.

[20]The remaining copies of the *Parker Progress* can be found on microfilm in the South Carolina Room, Hughes Library, Greenville, South Carolina. See *Parker Progress* (March 6, 1925); Ariail and Smith, 73; Huff, 297.

[21]Quoted in James Arthur Dunlap, III,, "Changing symbols of success: Economic development in twentieth century Greenville, South Carolina," (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1994): 86; see also the Greenville *News* (April 19, 1924), copy in the Parker Scrapbook Collection, Volume 1, p. 14, Hughes Library, Greenville, South Carolina. The Parker Scrapbooks are a series of eight over-sized scrapbooks that contain well over 3,000 clippings from various sources pertaining to the history of the Parker District and its schools.

[22]*Joymaker* 1 (April 4, 1924); also Parker Scrapbook 1, 10.

[23]Greenville *News* (November 11, 1924): 7.

[24]William G. Dwyer, "Technique in administration for improving the high school curriculum: A report of a "Type C Project,"" (Ed.D. thesis, Teachers College, Columbia

University, 1951): 25; William Hays Simpson, *Life in Mill Communities*, (Clinton, South Carolina: Presbyterian College Press, 1941): 43-44.

[25]Dunlap, 91; Ira Claude Davis, "The educational program of the Parker School District," (Ed.M. thesis, Duke University, 1935): 21.

[26]George Kent, "Mill town miracle," *School and Society* 54 (1941):81-85, 82.

[27]Stack, 5.

[28]Parker Scrapbook, 1, 86.

[29]Editorial quoted in Huff, 298.

[30]David Clark, "Education of Mill Children," *Southern Textile Bulletin* 15 (April 4, 1918): 14.

[31]Marjorie Potwin, *Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont: A Study in Social Change*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1927; reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1968): 84-85.

[32]Hollis, 4, 7; Jim McAllister, *L. P. Hollis: A Man Ahead of His Time: An Interview*, (Greenville, South Carolina: Greenville County Foundation, 1975): 8.

[33]Dwyer, 26.

[34]Davis, 16.

[35]Quoted in Tullos, 181; Huff, 277-279, *Parker Progress* (October 15, 1926): 6.

[36]Unidentified clipping, n.d., Hollis papers, Strom Thurmond Archives, Clemson University, Mss161.

[37]Orlando Ramirez Pena, "A study of the ways in which the Parker School cares for individual differences," (M.A. thesis, Furman University, 1938): 34, 53.

[38]James F. Tippett, *Schools for Growing Democracy*, (New York: Ginn and Company, 1936): 312.

[39]Parker Scrapbook, 8, 41.

[40]Pena, 28; Mahon quoted in the Greenville *Journal* (October 1925): 9.

[41]Rowland quoted in Stack, 112.

[42]See Davis, 48-49.

[43]Sadie Coggans, "Schools to fit the individual, not individuals to fit the schools: Work of Parker schools is not limited to the three R's but is on a broad scale intended to help all pupils, to advance then as they merit and to aid right living,"The Greenville *Journal* 4 (October, 1925): 14-15.

[44]Quoted in Toby Harper Moore, "The unmaking of a cotton mill world: Place, politics and the dismantling of the South's mill village system." (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1999): 83; Huff, 298; Tullos, 180-181.

[45]Hollis, 13.

[46]Stack,117.

[47]Tippett, 236.

[48]Dwyer, 34.

[49]Davis, 46; Ariail and Smith, 47.

[50]Saxton, 27; Gil Rowland, "Good afternoon, this is Gil Rowland," Greenville *News-Piedmont* (July 16, 1964): 4.

[51]Pena, 40-42.

[52]Bainbridge, 2003, n.p.; Dwyer, 32.

[53]Hollis quoted in Samuel F. Stack, "Lawrence Peter Hollis: A charismatic leader

in education," *Vitae Scholasticae* 8 (1989):323-328, 327.

[54]Tippett, 269-271.

[55]Ibid., 157-159.

[56]Parker Scrapbook, 3, 43.

[57]Annual Report, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education,* (Columbia *South Carolina, 1923*): 114-130; cited in Moore, 82.

[58]Saxton, 1965, Appendix E, Objective #3.

[59]Letter entitled "Dear Parker Patrons," *Parker Progress* (May 29, 1925): 1.

[60]To get a sense of the dominance of textile interests in the Parker District, one must only consider the make-up of the original board of trustees which included Richard W. Arrington, Superintendent at Union Bleachery; Clifford N. Wallace, Cost Accountant at the Dunean Mill; Edward Hutchings, a merchandise broker and president of the Textile Bank; J. Frank White, a local real estate broker and owner of various businesses on Woodside Avenue in the middle of the Parker District; and Thomas M. Bennett, an official at Brandon Mills. See Dunlap, 84, fn. 20.

[61]B.L. Parkinson, "The Parker School District," *South Carolina Education* 5 (1925):7-9. South Carolina Law 5547(3) Special Tax, gave the Parker District the "power to levy and collect" taxes on "all real and personal property" in the District. See Saxton, 63.

[62]Parker District Faculty, *Parker High School Serves Its People: A Report Prepared by the Parker District High School Faculty, With the Assistance of the Staff of the Southern Association Study*, (Greenville, South Carolina: Parker District Schools, 1942): 1.

[63]Parkinson, 7-9.

[64]Tippett, 118; Parker Scrapbook, 8, 96.

[65]Parker Scrapbook, 1, 14.

[66]James S. Tippett, "A venture in teacher education," *Childhood Education* 15 (1939): 413-416, 413.

[67]Hollis, 11; Dwyer, 30.

[68]Dwyer, 27.

[69]One such manual was *The Teacher's Handbook in Natural Science for the Elementary Schools*, 1929; the other was *A Social Studies Handbook for Teachers*, 1933. Both were published privately by the Parker School District.

[70]Parker Scrapbook, 4, 14.

[71]Tippett, 1936, 26-28; Davis, 14; Dwyer, 27; also Parker Scrapbook, 4, 5-6.

[72]Parker Scrapbook, 1, 68.

[73]Ibid., 8, 39.

[74]Ibid., 8, 89.

[75]Harry Boyte, "The textile industry: Keel of Southern industrialization," *Radical America* 6 (1972): 4-49, 25; Harriet Herring, *Welfare Work in Mill Villages: The Story of Extra-Mill Activities in North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929): 77.

[76]Dwyer, 35-36.

[77]Davis, 97-98; Tippett, 1936, 238-239.

[78]Dwyer, 36; Mendel S. Fletcher, "Parker Peoples College," *South Carolina Education* 12 (1930):13-14, 13.

[79]Ariail and Smith, 35; Fletcher, 13; Greenville *News* (January 3, 1932): 1.

[80]Fletcher, 1930, 14.

[81]Ariail and Smith, 35; Fletcher, 13; Kent, 83.

[82]Ariail and Smith, 27; Judson W. Chapman, "The Parker District is half of Greater Greenville: And the halves are everlastingly and steadfastly united, for their mutual good – What this vast district is, who its people are, and what they are doing," *The Greenville Journal* 4 (October, 1925):3, 24.

[83]*Joymaker* 1 (October 19, 1923): 1; Greenville *News* (October 2, 1923): 3.

[84]*Joymaker* 1 (December 14, 1923): 1.

[85]Anonymous, "Library on Wheels," *Christian Science Monitor* (October 15, 1924): n.p.

[86]*Joymaker* 1 (October 19, 1923): 1.

[87]Anonymous, n.p.

[88]Parker Scrapbook, 1, 23.

[89]Fletcher, 1940, 13.

[90]For a brief discussion of the schedule and the popularity of novels on the Pathfinder, see "Parker Progress" (March 13, 1925): 5,7.

[91]*Joymaker* 1 (November 16, 1923): 4.

[92]Ralph M. Lyon, *The Basis for Constructing Curricular Materials in Adult Education for Carolina Cotton Mill Workers*, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937): 57.

[93]Coggans, 15.

[94]Parker Scrapbook, 6, 8.

[95]Davis, 114-115; Parker Scrapbook, 6, 18.

[96]Davis, 104-105.

[97]Tippett, 1936, 309-310.

[98]See Hollis, 9; McAllister, 1; Davis, 106. Additional funding came from Junior Charities, the American Legion Auxillary, the St. Paul Mission Association, and the Palmetto Club. See Parker Scrapbook, 6, 4 and 8.

[99]Hollis, 10.

[100]Dwyer, 85; Parker Scrapbook, 4, 47; Parker Scrapbook, 1, 87.

[101]Kent, 82-83.

[102]Hollis, 10.

[103]Cited in rudimentary chart form in Davis, 1935, 107.

[104]Hollis, 10.

[105]Dwyer, 25.

[106]Greenville *News* (October, 27, 1923): 1.

[107]Robert Elliott Veto, "Looms and weavers, schools and teachers: Schooling in North Carolina mill towns, 1910-1940," (D.A. diss., Carnage Mellon University, 1989): 86.

[108]*Parker Progress* (March 13, 1925): 5.

[109]Walter T. McFall, "Mouth hygiene program, Parker School District," *South Carolina Education* 7 (1926):138-139.

[110]McFall, 138. The Parker High School motto was, interestingly, "Head, Heart, Hand, and Health." See Ariail and Smith, 51.

[111]*Parker Progress* (January 7, 1927): 8.

[112]Joymaker 1 (March 26, 1924):1

[113]Clifford Goldsmith, *The Wisdom of Professor Happy by the Professor Himself,*

(New York: American Child Health Association, 1923).

[114]Stack, 1990, 116.

[115]Greenville *News* (October 26, 1970): 1.

[116]Dunlap, 77, 135: Greenville *News* (May 19, 1985): 1.

[117]Saxton, 44-45.

[118]Hollis, 12.

[119]Parker Scrapbook, Volume 8, 24.

[120]Hollis, 6, 13.

[121]Bainbridge, 2003, n.p.

[122]Greenville *Journal* (August 5, 2005): 52-53.

Mary Swift:
Member of the First Class of the First State Normal School

Kelly Ann Kolodny
Framingham State College

Courtesy of the Independent Association of Framingham State College Alumni

Mary Swift

The Role of Women in the Normal School Movement

Mary Swift joined the first class of the first state normal school in Lexington, Massachusetts, in 1839. This institution, along with subsequent normal schools, was established to provide standardized and regulated teacher preparation and to help produce an assemblage of trained educators to meet the needs of a growing Common School Movement. State normal schools were modeled after the Prussian state-supported system of teacher training that was established in 1819 and attracted worldwide attention. They also were modeled after the French *ecole normale*, from which the normal school name was derived.[1] Though there were other institutions that provided teacher training in the nineteenth century, such as academies and some departments of colleges, the state normal schools were unique in that they were devoted exclusively to teacher training.[2]

Women were seen as ideal candidates for normal schools. As early as 1818, Emma Willard, founder of the Troy Female Seminary, argued that women were prone to patience and "the gentle arts of insinuation," and therefore were well suited to teach children.[3] Horace Mann, the first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, also noted that women had a "natural love of the society of children" and "superior gentleness" that enhanced their teaching abilities.[4] When Massachusetts underwent urbanization and industrialization during the nineteenth century, men moved into the public sphere of manufacturing and trade. Teaching was viewed as an extension of family and home and became increasingly connected to the private sphere of women. As the state's teaching force became feminized, single women enjoyed new access to an occupation and a means of economic freedom. Nonetheless, gender stereotyping persisted. For the most part, "a belief in women's capacity for high intellectual attainment did not go hand in hand with a belief in full gender equality."[5] Though women were seen as promising teachers, they also were viewed as cheap labor and received low wages, a factor that shaped the status of women in the profession.[6]

Women, the Normal School Movement and the Gap in Research

Normal schools developed quickly as states sought to meet the demand for well-trained teachers in common schools. By 1870, eighteen states had at least one normal school. A total of thirty-nine state normal schools were located in New England, the mid-Atlantic states, the Midwest, and California. By the early twentieth century, there were 180 normal schools in states throughout the North, South, East, and West.[7]

Despite the historical significance of this movement, gaps remain in our understanding of the state normal school experience. There is a notable lack

of information about the first groups of students, largely women, who took part in this initiative. Little is known, for example, about the meaning of the experience for "normalites," as they called themselves, the activities they undertook during normal school and afterwards, and the support networks on which they relied. Christine Ogren suggests that the students who participated in the early state normal schools expanded their environment, which enabled them to "enter a new world."[8] However, without detailed information about this process, one is left wondering how they entered and experienced such a new world. Demographic data suggest that women who graduated from state normal schools typically taught for short periods of time before marrying and starting families.[9] However, the stories behind the statistics offer the possibility of a richer understanding of how, for example, these women drew on their normal school studies and teaching experiences after they formally left the profession.

When one looks at Swift's life, answers to such questions are uncovered. She is noteworthy not only as a member of the first class of the first state normal school, but because she also made important contributions to the field. After her studies at Lexington, Swift worked at the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind where she educated Laura Bridgman, a "deaf, blind, mute child," and helped her learn to communicate in the formative years of deaf-blind education.[10] Swift was involved with the initial conception and establishment of a deaf school of education that emphasized articulation, a new pedagogical approach to deaf communication. She was a founding member of the YWCA in Boston for which she worked for over forty years.[11] Though the life experience of Swift is only one story, it nonetheless is a significant and informative one in helping to make more complete the compelling narrative of the early state normal school movement, particularly from the experience of a student.

Role of Biography

Megan Marshall, noted biographer of the Peabody sisters, wrote that "biography comes as close as any genre can to capturing the sense of what it felt like to be alive, in all the complexity that word suggests, at an earlier time."[12] This is what I hoped to achieve with the story of Mary Swift. Rather than focusing on gathering data that could be calculated into statistics about the activities and experiences of a number of early normal school graduates, I made a conscious decision to focus in depth on one member. A biography provides an opportunity for the reader to identify with a person's life journey. By taking part in this exercise with Swift, her experiences become more clearly part of the larger story of the state normal school movement.

Creating this narrative proved to be a sizeable task that required research

at a variety of locations. I conducted archival research at Framingham State College, which evolved from the first state normal school at Lexington, Massachusetts, the Nantucket Historical Society, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the American Antiquarian Society, and the Perkins Institution for the Blind.

The Archives Department at Framingham State College contained a copy of Swift's bound journals that depicted her normal school studies. Handwritten journals of other members of her class also were located in the archives. They provided insight into the activities and work of Swift and her peers, particularly during the years that followed their graduation. The Archives Department also contained records from the first class at Lexington.

At the Nantucket Historical Society I obtained information regarding Swift's childhood, her family background, and the educational environment on Nantucket that provided encouragement for her to enroll in the normal school. The Massachusetts Historical Society contained papers of the Lamson family into which she married. These papers were useful in piecing together aspects of Swift's public as well as private life after her normal school training. For example, the collection contained personal letters from Laura Bridgman that were written to Swift over a period of forty years following their formal work relationship. The collection also contained letters that were exchanged between Swift and her husband during the Civil War, as well as letters and journals kept during travels to Europe, particularly during the later part of her life.

My research at the American Antiquarian Society provided me with access to nineteenth century Massachusetts public records. It was in one such record that I first learned of the connection between Swift and the establishment of a deaf school of education which subsequently became the Clarke School for the Deaf. The finding of this reference was a pivotal point that also enabled me to see how the connections between Swift and fellow normal school students carried on in a professional sense, many years after they completed their formal schooling.

The Perkins Institution for the Blind houses the papers of Laura Bridgman and Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, two individuals with whom Swift worked. Review of these papers revealed letters written by Swift, as well as her father, to these individuals. The letters were useful in piecing together her professional life, particularly during its inception.

A rare find was discovered when I visited a used bookstore through the Internet. I purchased *Records of the First Class of the First State Normal School in America: Established at Lexington, Massachusetts 1839*, which proved to be the original copy that had belonged to Mary Swift.[13] In addition to class records, it contained some hand-written poems from her normal school peers as well as Swift's notes of classmates' obituaries. These obituaries and

poems suggested close connections with normal school peers, a theme I realized permeated Swift's life.

After these materials were collected and reviewed, I began the task of piecing together Swift's life. Her story is informative, complex, and layered. It merits critical examination and reexamination, and gives insight into the normal school movement through the experiences of one student.

Biographical Sketch of Mary Swift

Childhood in Nantucket

Mary Swift was born in 1822 on the island of Nantucket, the oldest of four daughters of Paul Swift and Dorcas Gardner Swift.[14] Her mother's family dated back to the 1600s on Nantucket and was one of the island's largest families. Her father, who was originally from Sandwich, Massachusetts, settled on Nantucket when he married Dorcas Gardner in 1821.[15]

Swift's parents were Quakers and were deeply involved with the thriving Quaker community, or the Society of Friends, as they preferred to be called. The Quaker community on Nantucket, at times, far outnumbered other religious denominations such as the Congregationalists. By the mid-eighteenth century, a Quaker meeting house had been constructed on Nantucket to house two thousand people, a majority of the island's population.[16]

The Quakers took exception to some of the strict beliefs of New England Congregationalists. For instance, the Quakers "denied the authority not only of the clergy but also the primacy of scripture as the sole expression of God's will."[17] They believed that an individual could access the spirit without accessing ceremony and liturgy. The spirit was understood to be truth. Both men and women took leadership roles in the Quaker religion.

Many of the Nantucket Quakers made their living by taking part in the whaling industry. Swift's father, however, was a doctor and provided medical care to the families on the island.[18]

As a child Swift attended private school in Nantucket where she met and studied with Cyrus Peirce. He was a graduate of Harvard University and Harvard Divinity School and initially served as a Unitarian minister in North Reading, Massachusetts.[19] However, his passion was for teaching, and he taught in both public and private schools in Nantucket.

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* Peirce also served as secretary of the island's Education Society. He and his brother-in-law, Samuel Haynes Jenks, were instrumental in bringing public education to the island.[23]

While under the instruction of Peirce, Swift studied the classics, Greek and Latin. Although this was an advanced education for a female of the period, some early nineteenth century Quaker communities offered such instruction to both boys and girls.[20] Within this context, Swift was considered an extremely learned, capable, and conscientious student.

Normal School Training

Swift's acquaintance with Peirce did not conclude with her studies in Nantucket. In 1839, he was recruited by Horace Mann to serve as principal of the first state-supported normal school in Lexington. Mann became acquainted with Peirce on one of his trips to Nantucket and was impressed with his teaching practices. Mann also had been a regular visitor and speaker at the meetings of the Education Society.[21] He believed that Peirce was the most suitable teacher to lead this new initiative.

Attendance was restricted to women at Lexington, though subsequent Massachusetts state normal schools were co-educational. At Peirce's invitation, Swift enrolled at the school and kept a detailed journal of her experiences. Initially, there were only three women in the first class; this number grew to twenty-five during that first year.[22]

Classes were in session from Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a two-hour break at noon. Swift and the other scholars studied the curriculum that included natural philosophy, moral philosophy, physiology, composition, enunciation, arithmetic, and bookkeeping. Other areas of focus were the art of teaching, school government, and practice teaching.[24] Students participated in teaching lessons at the Model School, located on the first floor of the Normal School building. Peirce expressed regret that Swift would no longer study the classics as she had on Nantucket, and offered to tutor her privately three nights a week.[25]

The normalites kept evening study hours and participated in sewing circles and reading groups.[26] Many students, including Swift, boarded in the third floor attic of the normal school building; they paid two dollars a week and enjoyed free tuition.[27] Despite the low cost, the early Lexington students were daughters and relatives of ministers, doctors, and individuals in the mainstream of society. Horace Mann's two nieces, Rebecca and Eliza Pennell, attended the school.[28]

During the course of their studies, Swift and her classmates met and heard lectures from many notable individuals including Horace Mann; transcendentalists such as Bronson Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson; educational reformer George Emerson, who also served as President of the Boston Society for Natural History; and several different phrenologists. Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, who was from the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, also visited the school. These meetings were recorded

in detail in journals. Swift, for example, wrote about her first meeting with Howe and one of his teachers at the Perkins Institution in 1839:

> Tuesday. Oct. 1st
> This day will close the term, & tomorrow we shall be scattered in various directions…A gentleman & lady called, she looks like a "to be" scholar. – P.M. What a poor guesser for a Yankee! The gentleman was Dr. Howe the superintendent of the blind institution in South Boston & the lady one of his teachers.[29]

Her first interactions with Howe and the teacher are interesting to reflect on because Swift could not envision this young woman as a teacher. Swift, at a young age, also would become a teacher at the Perkins Institution, which would profoundly shape her life, as well as the lives of others.

During their studies at the normal school, connections between the students grew strong. They referred to each other as sisters as well as normalites and, for the most part, remained connected for the remainder of their lives. Perhaps as a result of these links and the initial common purpose they shared, their dedication to the normal school movement was strengthened. However, normal school life was not without trials. There were times when the students were discouraged by the small number of scholars in attendance. Students also encountered personal setbacks. For example, Swift occasionally studied to an excessive degree, became ill, and needed to leave the school and her studies to recuperate. Sometimes her writing suggested she was ambivalent about her decision to take part in the normal school program.

> Saturday, August 31st (1839)
> The last day of summer, & we have been here two months. Tis true that time waits for no man & it would appear that he had left us far behind but on taking a more favorable view of the subject we find that we have become initiated into the customs & rules of the school & thus have laid the foundation for future advancement.[30]

Nevertheless, the connections that formed among the students were strong, and they persevered with their schooling.

Work at the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind

Swift completed her normal school program in 1840, and that same year went to work with Samuel Gridley Howe at the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind in Boston. Howe, a friend of Horace Mann, was impressed with the Lexington normal school and eager to recruit some of the graduates of the program.[31] Since Swift was viewed as a capable

student and knowledgeable of the classics, Howe hired her to prepare a blind boy, Joseph Smith, for Harvard. This was Swift's first assignment.[32]

Her father, Paul Swift, wrote to Howe on two occasions about her work at the Perkins Institution. On the first occasion Mr. Swift expressed concern that teaching the blind might be too taxing for his conscientious daughter. He added that she was committed to the teaching profession, and he would support her if she wished to work at Perkins.[33] The father wrote a second letter when Mary Swift returned home after collapsing from exhaustion at the Perkins Institution. He noted that he encouraged his daughter to teach in a private school in Philadelphia, his new residence; however, she intended to return to Perkins. Mr. Swift requested that she receive a lighter workload and a raise, adding that his daughter had offers for positions at other schools at higher pay, including the high school in Nantucket. Mr. Swift indicated that his opinion would have a strong and controlling influence over her decision to work at Perkins.[34] Howe subsequently agreed to the father's terms.

Swift worked at the Perkins Institution for five years, a considerable period for the nineteenth century when teachers typically taught for two to three years. In addition to preparing Joseph Smith for Harvard, Swift taught other individuals, including Laura Bridgman, a "blind deaf-mute child," who attracted worldwide attention for her success in learning to communicate.[35]

Laura Bridgman had been a student at the Perkins Institution since 1837 and initially worked with Howe and her first teacher, Miss Lydia Drew. Howe was interested in the normal school experiment, however, and sent Drew to study at Lexington.[36] It was there that she met Swift. After a short period of time, Drew returned to the Perkins Institution and resumed her work with Laura Bridgman, only to leave shortly thereafter to marry. She suggested to Howe that Swift assume the work with Laura Bridgman. Howe concurred.[37]

Communication with Laura Bridgman occurred through "finger talk," a process by which one would spell into the hand of an individual who was blind and deaf. In the case of Laura Bridgman, she would place her right hand over the hand of the individual who was spelling so she could feel the change of the position of the fingers.[38] Laura Bridgman learned "finger talk" from Drew.

It was Laura Bridgman who subsequently taught Swift the "finger alphabet."[39] Once Swift mastered it, she taught Laura difficult concepts such as arithmetic, colors, parts of speech, and gender differences. Swift also provided answers to Laura's questions, some of which were recorded in her journal.

> January 13 (1843)
> Commenced her conversation by asking, 'Is salt made?' She was very much interested in an account of it. Her next query was, 'How is gravy made? What is sauce made of? What is lead in my pencil? What is oil made of, and hair-

> oil, and rum, and camphor, and cologne? What would I do if I drank them?' When told that rum would make her sleepy, and she could not walk straight, she said, 'I was very sick in the head last summer, and very sleepy, and walked crooked.'[40]

Swift also made journal notes of the times when she did not feel that she fully addressed Laura's questions.

> Jan. 13 (1842)
> Laura had found a notice of a Trustee's meeting, which was printed in raised letters, and brought it for explanation. 'What are Trustees?' When told they were men who took care of this house, 'And the girls and boys?' she added, 'and horses?' After a long explanation of 'Sir," Yours respectfully, etc.,' I asked her if she knew about it now. 'Little, - because you said long words.' It always makes her unhappy to be left with a subject half understood, so I went over it all again and explained it to her satisfaction.[41]

During her work at Perkins, Swift kept in close contact with her peers at the normal school. Some, such as Eliza Rogers, also assumed positions at the Perkins Institution and taught with Swift. However, even if they did not teach together, there was a connection among the normalites. In 1883, Louisa Harris, one of Swift's classmates, recorded their post-graduation interactions:

> Saturday afternoon accompanied Susan and Sarah into the city to little purpose, which we regretted the more upon reaching home and finding Mary Swift & Eliza Rogers with this little deaf, dumb and blind pupil, Laura Bridgman, of whose society we had been so long deprived, with so inadequate a season pense.[42]

There were times when Swift brought Laura Bridgman to meet with other normalites, in addition to those hired to work at Perkins. These students continued to write, meet, and serve as a support network to each other.

Though Swift only worked at the Perkins Institution for five years, she remained in contact with Laura Bridgman through letters and visits for the next forty-two years.[43] She was considered faithful to Laura even when other individuals ceased contact. Their formal teacher-student relationship ended, however, at Howe's urging.

In 1843, Howe married Julia Ward and traveled overseas for an extended honeymoon in Europe, accompanied by his friend Horace Mann and his new bride, Mary Peabody Mann. Because of the publicity that surrounded his work with Laura Bridgman, Howe received many invitations for visits while in Europe. He was "hailed as one of the greatest humanitarians and pedagogical geniuses of the age."[44] Swift, at the age of twenty, was left as the primary teacher and caretaker of Laura Bridgman for almost a year.[45] It was at this

time that Laura's family stopped seeing her on a regular basis. This proved to be a challenging situation for Swift as Laura could be a difficult student and prone to tantrums. Swift, already overburdened, was sometimes punitive toward Laura. On occasion, Swift separated Laura from the other students for extended periods and was reserved, rather than affectionate, toward her. When Howe returned from his travels, he was upset to read Swift's journals that described some of her work with Laura Bridgman.[46]

Swift and Howe further disagreed about Laura's education, particularly her religious instruction. Howe, a liberal Unitarian, wanted to wait for an appropriate level of understanding before exposing Laura to religious teachings. He disapproved of orthodox practices of indoctrinating children into religion. Swift, by contrast, felt that Laura was intellectually ready for this discussion when Howe departed for Europe. Swift believed that a failure to answer Laura's questions about religion—which were prompted by interactions with other Perkins students —would lead to her increased anxiety and inappropriate behavior. (Swift was also moving toward evangelical Christianity and did not share Howe's liberal views.) A few weeks prior to Howe's return to Perkins, a group of evangelical Christians visited with Laura and explained their religious beliefs. Swift appeared to have played a role in this interaction as she was Laura's constant companion. When Howe returned, he was deeply distressed to find that Laura asked questions that suggested some type of religious instruction.[47]

Due to these disagreements, Howe publicly criticized Swift in his 1845 report.[48] This was disconcerting to Swift, who had a sensitive nature. In addition, Laura Bridgman had become known worldwide for her progress in learning to communicate, and there were many individuals who faithfully read Howe's reports. This public criticism was extremely distressing. Swift objected to the fact that Howe ceased his interactions with Laura while in Europe, yet was quick to blame her teacher on his return. Swift resigned from Perkins.

She remained publicly silent about the disagreement for many years, perhaps because she and Howe maintained a cordial and connected relationship. (It also would have seemed unrefined for Swift to criticize a prominent person such as Howe.) However, in 1878, after Howe died, she wrote a book about her experiences with Laura Bridgman that was titled *Life and Education of Laura Dewey Bridgman: The Deaf, Dumb and Blind Girl*. In the preface to this book, Swift wrote:

> Applications were made to the writer from various parts of the country to take up the work at once, lest that which was considered to be of much importance to the scholar be lost irretrievably. Most reluctantly have I yielded to these requests, appreciating fully my own inability to fill the place which rightfully belonged to him who first devised a way to pour light into a mind thus darkened. [49]

It is notable that Swift's descriptions of her work with Laura Bridgman differed considerably from those of Howe's.[1] In this book, she explained her disagreements with Howe about Laura's religious instruction. Swift wrote that she followed Howe's directions at that time and avoided such instruction, even though she felt Laura was impatient for this knowledge.

> The influence of my enforced reticence on such subjects was disastrous, may readily be perceived. While she entirely understood that it was the wish of Dr. Howe, and therefore refrained from asking me questions save when her soul was so full it must find utterance, yet there was, especially in the last year of my intercourse with her, an impatience in waiting that extended to other things.[51]

Swift's book was a means for her to convey her side of the story.

Personal correspondence with Laura Bridgman reveals that the two discussed the book after it was published. Laura had questions about some of the included material to which Swift responded.[52] The nature of the communication was tactful and did not suggest a close relationship. However, other letters exchanged between the two were more personable. The book publication was successful; it was reviewed in periodicals such as the New York *Nation* as well as overseas papers.[53]

Marriage and Family

In the mid-nineteenth century it was typical, and largely required, that women teachers exit teaching when they married and started their families. The circumstances of Swift were similar. In 1846 she married Edwin Lamson, who was a wealthy merchant, as well as a leader of the Park Street Church in Boston. When Swift married, she left the Society of Friends to which she belonged as a child to become a Congregationalist.[54] She and her husband had four children. Her first child, a daughter named Mary, died when she was two.[55] Her subsequent three children, Helen, Gardner, and Kate, lived into their adult years.* Swift focused her attention on raising her children during this time. She kept journal entries about the family's steamship travels on the Mississippi River. The Lamsons had the luxury of household help.[56]

Despite their affluence and prominence, the family felt the stress of separation during the Civil War, which began in April 1861. That month Swift traveled to Baltimore to visit her youngest sister Elisabeth (Lizzie) and her family. Swift was unable to travel back home because of the troops that

*Gardner Lamson became an opera singer and performed in Germany. Kate Lamson worked with a foreign mission in Africa.

surrounded Baltimore and the hostilities that ensued. Her letters to her husband suggest that she missed her children and was anxious to return.[57] By the end of April, Swift secured transport to Philadelphia where she met her mother and father and stayed with them for a period of time. Thereafter, she wrote to her husband that she would not care to be far from the family again during a period of war.[58]

Personal correspondence between Swift and her children suggests they stayed connected over the years and that her family was an integral part of her life. Nonetheless, her professional work was ongoing, as were her connections to normal school peers.

Work in the Field of Deaf Education

Swift continued to work with Howe, the students of the Perkins Institution, normal school peers, and deaf students in Massachusetts. In 1861, Howe invited her to a reunion for teachers of the Perkins Institution. Some of the normalites who worked at Perkins, such as Eliza Rogers, attended the gathering.[59] Though Swift did not attend, she wrote a letter to Howe, sending her regrets and wishing him success with the event.[60] This may have been a turning point in their strained relationship. In 1864, Howe and Gardiner Hubbard, a lawyer-financier and father of a deaf child, tried to obtain a charter for a deaf-mute school in Massachusetts. The school was to use articulation as a method of instruction. Articulation, rather than the use of signs, was seen by some as a means to support the deaf in mainstream society. The two men sought Swift's assistance with this matter. During 1864, in a hearing before a legislative committee, Swift gave evidence against the use of signs in the instruction of the deaf, and instead favored the manual alphabet and teaching by articulation.[61] This approach to teaching deaf students was controversial and opposed by teachers of sign language.

Swift's testimony drew the attention of Mrs. James Cushing of Boston, who had a deaf child. She decided that her child would be taught articulation. Swift recommended that Cushing request the services of Harriet Rogers of Billerica, Massachusetts.[62] She was the sister of Eliza Rogers, Swift's normal school classmate. Harriet Rogers had also attended the normal school at Lexington.[63]

After a few months of successful work with Cushing's child, Harriet Rogers decided to devote her life to this work and sought to secure additional pupils for a new school. In 1865, Swift hosted a meeting at her Boston home at which Harriet Rogers told Swift's guests what she had accomplished with one pupil. The audience included President Thomas Hill of Harvard College, Samuel G. Howe, Reverend Norris Kirk (a revivalist pastor of the Mount Vernon Congregational Church), and Gardiner Hubbard.[64] An advertisement was published by this group, and in 1866 Rogers opened a school

for the deaf in Chelmsford, Massachusetts with five pupils.[65] Swift served as a reference along with the other aforementioned guests.[66]

Convinced of the practical merits of articulation, these "friends" of the school made a second application to the legislature for a deaf school of education. (The legislature had rejected the original request in 1864.) In 1866, John Clarke of Northampton, Massachusetts, informed the Governor that he was willing to endow such a school. Persuaded by the work of Harriet Rogers, the resources provided by Clarke, and the Governor's recommendation, the legislature passed two bills for an institution for "deaf-mutes" to be established at Northampton.[lxvii] Harriet Rogers became the principal of the school, known as the Clarke School for the Deaf.[67] The school's 1910 Annual Report noted that Swift deserved more than a passing mention for early efforts with oral work for the deaf in the United States.[68]

Swift's work with Howe, Laura Bridgman, the Perkins Institution, and the Lexington normalites also led to a connection with author and lecturer Helen Keller, the first deaf and blind person to graduate from college in the United States. In 1889-1890, Swift was overseas in Europe when she received a letter from Harriet Rogers requesting that she secure an audience with Lars Havstad of Christiania, Denmark. He had written to Rogers about a blind, deaf-mute girl who had been taught to speak orally. Swift met with Havstad, who arranged for her to meet Ragnhild Kaata of Norway, the "deaf, blind and mute girl." When this meeting occurred, Swift conferred with the child's instructor, Elias Horgaard, who explained the remarkable circumstances that resulted in the child's learning to speak. She had been miserable and ungovernable until sixteen years of age when she was admitted to the institution for the deaf at Hamar, Norway. Horgaard taught her to write, speak and read by touch from the lips in a period of eighteen months.[70]

Swift was impressed with the progress of this child. Upon her return to Boston, she immediately shared this news through finger talk with Helen Keller who, with her teacher Annie Sullivan, had connections with the Perkins Institution.* Helen Keller later wrote,"Mrs. Lamson [Mary Swift] had

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*Helen Keller learned about the Perkins Institution from Alexander Gramham Bell. Mr. Bell had connections with the Clarke School for the Deaf, as he married Mabel Gardiner Hubbard. She was the deaf daughter of Gardiner Hubbard who sought a charter for a deaf school in Massachusetts that would utilize articulation as a method of instruction. After her meeting with Swift, Helen Keller convinced the reluctant Sullivan to take her to meet with Sarah Fuller, principal of the Horace Mann School, so she could begin speech instruction. Although Fuller was not a Lexington graduate, she trained at Harriet Rogers' school in Northampton in preparation for her work at Horace Mann.[73]

scarcely finished telling me about this girl's success before I was on fire with eagerness. I resolved that I, too, would learn to speak."[71] Annie Sullivan recorded in personal letters to Michael Anagos—the son-in-law of Howe and the director of the Perkins Institution—that Helen Keller learned to orally speak by July of 1890.[72]

Founding of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

In addition to her work in the field of deaf education, Swift was influential in other public initiatives. She was a school committee member in Winchester, Massachusetts. Appointed by the Governor, she also served on the Board of Trustees of the Lancaster State Industrial School for Girls. Perhaps one of Swift's greatest achievements was that she organized the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Boston in 1866 and worked for that organization for forty years. Although her participation in the YWCA suggests a different path from her normal school studies, it is an important part of her story.

The founding of the YWCA was not an easy undertaking. The first Women Christian Association (WCA) was formed in New York in 1858. In 1859, Lucretia Boyd from Boston asked a few elite Christian women, including Swift, to consider their duty to the young women who were exposed to temptation when they sought employment in the city. It was believed that these women resided in the attics of houses that were filled with men on the lower levels.[74] Swift agreed to address this problem by founding a Young Women's Christian Association in Boston. Though excited about this project, she quickly encountered challenges. Strong opposition arose from an unexpected source - the clergy. The Young Men's Christian Association had been in existence for eight years in Boston. There was growing apprehension among clergy of various denominations that young men might withdraw from church activities in favor of the association. When it became apparent that the YWCA also was to be formed, there was a large outcry from clergy. Opposition kept the YWCA from opening in Boston until 1866.[75]When the organization officially opened, Swift served as Vice President as well as Honorary Manager.

Although the YWCA's initial purpose was to assist young Protestant women with lodging and employment services, the organization expanded its focus and was replicated in other states. In 1893 Swift wrote a paper titled "The History of Women's Christian Associations and Young Women's Christian Associations." which was read before the Congress Auxiliary to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago.[76]

Normal School Foundation, Connections, and the Life of Swift

Throughout her educational career, Swift maintained close friendships and professional relationships with persons she met at the Lexington normal school. They held reunions until 1895 and met for birthdays and funerals.[77]They also reflected on their studies at the normal school. Mary H. Loring, one of Swift's class members, offered the following observation at their first reunion in 1850:

> Twelve years ago, how often were we obliged to call up Mr. Peirce's hopeful reflection, 'Strength does not consist in numbers!' How fortunate For us – else we were weak indeed – the Pioneers! the Matriarchs! The Old termites of Normalty, as we used laughingly to call ourselves.[78]

Swift's professional life, as well as her private life, undoubtedly was shaped by her early schooling experiences at this institution. It was a foundation on which she built a life of collegial networks, professional growth, and civic contributions. This is not to suggest that her life was unaffected by other factors, but rather to propose that the normal school experience was pivotal. In 1903 Swift published the *Records of the First Class of the First State Normal School in America*. When she died in 1909, her obituaries—recorded in publications such as The *Cambridge Tribune* and *Faith and Works*—consistently made note of her participation in the normal school. It was an experience of which she was proud.

Completing the Normal School Story

When one looks at the existing research about the state normal school movement one is struck by the absence of stories of the early students. Yet our understanding of the movement is more complete when we are privy to this key information. We learn so much when we explore the perceptions of these individuals regarding their normal school training, their teaching experiences, and other activities.

Swift is interesting to study from this perspective. She was a capable normal school student who approached her studies with a solid educational foundation. Her experiences as a normalite connected her with notable individuals including Samuel G. Howe, director of the Perkins Institution. This work put her in a distinct public light. Swift's normal school studies also linked her with peers who shaped her professional work. These were significant ties that allowed her to continue to contribute to the field of education, often from peripheral yet influential angles. Swift raised a family, but her interests were intellectual as well as domestic. Her story is often overlooked

in the history of the state normal school movement, but it is an informative one.

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Notes

[1] Christine A. Ogren, *The American State Normal School "An Instrument of Great Good"* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): 1, 14.

[2] *Ibid*., 23.

[3] *Ibid*., 11.

[4] *Ibid*., 11.

[5] Margaret A, Nash. *Women's Education in the United States 1780-1840*. (New York: Palgrave, 2005): 1.

[6] Jill K. Conway. "Politics, Pedagogy & Gener," *Daedalus* (2005): 134-144.

[7] Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 1-2.

[8] *Ibid*., 51.

[9] Richard M. Bernard and Maris A. Vinovskis, "The Female School Teacher in Ante-Bellum Massachusetts," *Journal of Social History* 10, no. 3 (1977): 332-345.

[10] Mary Swift Lamson. *Life and Education of Laura Dewey Bridgman: The Deaf, Dumb and Blind Girl* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1881).

[11] Mary Swift Lamson, "The History of Women's Christian Associations and Young Women's Christian Associations" (paper presented at the Congress Auxiliary to the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893).

[12] Megan Marshall, "Why Biography?," *Common-Place* 8, no. 1 (2007): available from http://www.common-place.org/vol-08/no-01/: INTERNET.

[13] Mary Swift Lamson, *Records of the First Class of the First State Normal School in America: Established at Lexington, Massachusetts 1839* (Boston: Printed for the Class, 1903).

[14] Eliza Starbuck Barney. "Eliza Starbuck Barney Genealogical Record," Nantucket Historical Association: available from http://www.nha.org/library/genealogy.html: INTERNET.

[15] Oversized Marriage Certificates, Collection 383A, Nantucket Historical Association.

[16] Robert J. Leach and Peter Gow. *Quaker Nantucket: The Religious Community Behind The Whaling Empire* (Nantucket: Mill Hill Press, 1997): 81.

[17] *Ibid*., 6.

[18] Lamson, *Life and Education of Laura Dewey Bridgman*.

[19] Arthur O. Norton, comp., *The First State Normal School in America*: *The Journals of Cyrus Peirce and Mary Swift* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926): xxvi.

[20] Margaret A. Nash. *Women's education in the United States 1780-1840*, 4.

[21] Arthur O. Norton, comp., *The First State Normal School in America*, xxviii.

[22] Mary S. Lamson. *Records of the First Class of the First State Normal School in America*, 1.

[23] Barbara Linebaugh, *The African School and the Integration of Nantucket Public Schools 1825-1847* (Boston University: Afro-American Studies Center, 1978): 2.

[24] Christine A. Ogren, *The American State Normal School,* 43.

[25] Mary S. Lamson. *Records of the First Class of the First State Normal School in America.*

[26] Arthur O. Norton, comp. *The First State Normal School in America*.

[27] Eleanor Craven Fishburn. *The First State Normal School in America* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1900s): 10.

[28] Mary S. Lamson. *Records of the First Class of the First State Normal School in America.*

[29] Mary Swift Lamson, "Journal," in *The First State Normal School in America: The Journals of Cyrus Peirce and Mary Swift*, compiled by Arthur O. Norton (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926): 123.

[30] Mary Swift Lamson, "Journal," in *The First State Normal School in America*, 99.

[31] Ernest Freeberg, *The Education of Laura Bridgman: First Deaf and Blind Person to Learn Language* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001): 142.

[32] Elisabeth Gitter, *The Imprisoned Guest: Samuel Howe and Laura Bridgman, the Original Deaf-Blind Girl* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001): 185.

[33] Dr. Paul Swift to Dr. Howe, 1840, Howe Papers, Perkins.

[34] Dr. Paul Swift to Dr. Howe, 1841, Howe Papers, Perkins.

[35] Lamson, *Life and Education of Laura Dewey Bridgman*, 99. To illustrate the world wide attention that Laura Bridgman gained, it is documented that when Charles Dickens visited America in 1842, he met with Laura Bridgman, as well as Mary Swift who was her teacher at that time. See Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Matin Chuzzlewit and American Notes* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922): 377-393.

[36] Elisabeth Gitter, *The Imprisoned Guest*, 184.

[37] *Ibid*., 184-186.

[38] Lamson, *Life and Education of Laura Dewey Bridgman*, 7.

[39] *Ibid*., 49-50.

[40] *Ibid*., 134-135.

[41] *Ibid*., 96.

[42] Louisa Harris Papers, 1840-1905, Box 1, Framingham State College Archives Collection.

[43] Lamson Family Papers, 1840-1885, Box 3, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[44] Ernest Greeberg, *The Education of Laura Bridgman*, 156.

[45] *Ibid*., 155.

[46] Elisabeth Gitter, *The Imprisoned Guest*, 177-180.

[47] Ernest Greenberg, *The Education of Laura Bridgman*, 157-172.

[48] Perkins Institution, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Trustees of the Perkins*

Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, (Boston: Eastburn's Press, 1845): 22-50.

[49] Lamson, *Life and Education of Laura Dewey Bridgman*, xxxi.

[50] Mary Klages, *Woeful Afflications: Disability and Sentimentality in Victorian America* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999): 223-224.

[51] Lamson, *Life and Education of Laura Dewey Bridgman*, 276.

[52] Lamson to Bridgman, 14 October 1878, Laura Bridgman Papers, Perkins Institution.

[53] Lamson to Friends, 1880, Lamson Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[54] This may have been a point of notice for her parents who were committed to the Quaker community. At this time, the whaling industry on Nantucket was in decline and there was an exodus of Quakers from the island. Her parents left Nantucket and relocated to Philadelphia where there was a strong Quaker community. Her father thereafter became an admired Professor of English and Natural Sciences at Haverford College, a Quaker College. Haverford Alumni Association. *A History of Haverford College for the First Sixty Years of its Existence.* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1892).

[55] Lamson Family Papers, 1840-1885, Box 2, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[56] Lamson Family Papers, 1840-1885, Box 2, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[57] Mary Swift Lamson to Edwin Lamson, 20 April 1861, Lamson Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[58] Mary Swift Lamson to Edwin Lamson, 27 April 1861, Lamson Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[59] Eliza Rogers to Dr. Howe, 1861, Howe Papers, Perkins Institution.

[60] Mary Swift (Lamson) to Dr. Howe, 1861, Howe Papers, Perkins Institution.

[61] *Public Documents of Massachusetts: Being the Annual Reports of Various Public Officers and Institutions for the Year 1875,* (Boston, MA: Wright & Potter State Printers, 1876): clxiv.

This particular pedagogical approach would be seen as controversial in the twentieth century as it did not favor sign language. At the time it was supported by key individuals in the field, including Dr. Howe, as a way to support access to mainstream society. The Clarke School of Education still exists in Northampton, Massachusetts and continues to emphasize an oral approach to instruction.

[62] Fred DeLand. *Dumb No Longer: Romance of the Telephone* (Washington D.C.: Volta Bureau, 1908): 36.

[63] *State Normal School Framingham, Mass.: Catalog of Teachers and Alumnae 1839-1900* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., State Printers, 1900).

[64] Fred DeLand. *Dumb No Longer*, 37.

[65] *Public Documents of Massachusetts: Being the Annual Reports of Various Public Officers and Institutions for the Year 1875*: clxiv.

[66] Fred DeLand, *Dumb No Longer*, 38.

[67] *Public Documents of Massachusetts: Being the Annual Reports of Various Public Officers and Institutions for the Year 1875*, clxiv.

[68] Fred DeLand, *Dumb No Longer*.

[69] Clarke School for the Deaf, *Forty-second Annual Report for the Clarke School for*

the Deaf at Northampton, MA 1910: 20.

[70] Fred DeLand, *Dumb No Longer*, 181.

[71] Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life (Restored Edition),* (NY: The Modern Library, 2004): 48.

[72] Sullivan to Anagnos, 7 July 1890, Annie Sullivan Papers, American Antiquarian Society.

[73] Fred Deland, *Dumb No Longer*

Pedagogy of Trace:
Poetic Representations of Teaching Resilience/Resistance in Arts Education

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> Teachers must be careful with the stories they tell and write. Honourable teachers must be careful because stories can be dangerous in their teachings. Simple little stories *aren't*. Stories seduce: they build desire – to know *what* happened, to watch *who*, to visualize *where* and *when*, to make meaning about *how*, and to more deeply understand *why*. There is a loss of innocence each time the teller tells, the listener hears, the reader reads. Stories educate because they lead us to see, know, become something else as the heart matures or withers, as the mind connects or disengages.[1]

Introduction

What remains behind as the residual after-effects of a teaching process? How may we trace our way through a pedagogical experience in order to reveal hidden shadows and ghosts of the strong emotions that mark the space and place of the classroom? Where do the vestiges of our teaching go?

How may we trace a path through our own teaching passages that leaves clear markers for those who may follow? When do our own [curved] learning processes intersect with the [planed] curriculum? How can we make ourselves transparent enough that others can trace their own patterns, superimposed with concentration and care? What are the methods we can draw upon to decipher (with difficulty) the poietic [productive, formative] and esthesic [receptive, perceptive] processes of pedagogy?

All of these research questions are stimulated by the traced encounter with a narrated experience of pedagogy as told by Julie, a secondary level art teacher. The traced response to Julie's story is articulated by Monica, a professor of arts education and former secondary-level drama and English teacher. A *pedagogy of trace* is therefore the creative and collaborative process of superimposing teaching stories one over another so as to track the breaths, hints, intimations, ghosts, shades, suggestions, suspicions, tinges, tastes, touches and whispers left behind by our own pedagogical praxis.

Our methodological position taken here is that of *a/r/tography* (Bickel 2008; de Cosson et al. 2005; Gouzouasis 2006; Irwin et al. 2006; Irwin and de Cosson 2004; Irwin and Springgay 2008; Sinner et al. 2006; Springgay 2008; Springgay and Irwin 2008; Springgay et al. 2005; Springgay et al. 2008; Springgay et al. 2007). The development of this arts-based methodology in arts education has generated many scholarly contributions in the form of books, handbook and textbook chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, theses and dissertations. While space restrictions here limit a detailed overview of a/r/tography, the method is centred on relationality and living inquiry in artistic, research and teaching practices:

As an arts-related methodology, a/r/tography interfaces the arts and scholarly writing through living inquiry. In a/r/tographic practices, the identities, roles, and understandings of artist/researcher/teacher are intertwined in an approach to social science research that is dedicated to perceiving the world artistically and educationally.... It is an inquiry process that lingers in the liminal spaces inside and outside—and between—of *a(artist) and r(researcher) and t(teacher)*.[2]

As practicing a/r/tographers, we consider it important to not just accept and value as complete the stories generated in the reflective processes of inquiring into our lives as artists/researchers/teachers. It is a challenging process, both intellectually and emotionally, to offer our stories relationally and dialogically to each other for the purposes of *trace*:" to follow, discover, or ascertain the course or development of something" (Trace 2008). As practicing a/r/tographers committed to artistic processes of inquiry, these pedagogical traces are most likely to reveal themselves in arts-based forms. Thus, in this present essay, we enact a narratively and poetically-infused a/r/tography interested in modelling the relational praxis of arts-based living inquiry.

This illustration of a/r/tography offers only one of endless possibilities that may come into play, into being, when artist/researcher/teachers begin to share their stories of teaching in and through a pedagogy of trace.

The overall intention of such tracings is to resist the potential of fixed individualism within self-study processes in inquiry practice through recognition of the inherently fluid relationality of pedagogical experiences. If we can enter into meaningful dialogues with colleagues in both classrooms and universities around the most deeply-felt aspects of teaching and learning, may it not follow that teaching and learning themselves may be revisioned and renewed? It is the posing and attempted response to this guiding question that begins the tracing process undertaken herein.

Thus, in Part One of this essay, we undertake a pedagogy of trace investigation using a *poetic transcription* (Freeman 2006; Glesne 1997; Whitney 2004) of art educator Julie's story of encountering a difficult situation in her teaching practice as the relic or remains (or trace) of a pedagogical process that we can trace over with our own a/r/tography. In this first section of the paper, the first author (Monica) uses poetic transcription to trace her own response to the second author's (Julie's) original narrative of teaching by carving out the words and passages that resonate most with her own experiences of teaching. Poetic transcription draws on the literary process of *found poetry*; that is, poems are created out of pre-existing texts of various kinds (see Butler-Kisber 2002; Prendergast 2004, 2006; Pryer 2005; Sullivan 2000). Next, Monica writes her own responsive traced teaching story of difficulty – employing the useful and provocative guiding metaphor of "The Crack" – in poetic form. This emergent and improvisational methodological approach does not begin with a research question or central topic beyond the willingness to approach another's (An Other's) story in as open a way as possible.

Part Two of the paper draws out research issues that emerge from this relational dialogue between two teachers' stories. The themes that present themselves around teacher *resilience vs. resistance* seem to offer some significant (albeit previously hidden) insights into teaching practice and teacher education that lend themselves to further investigation.

Part One: Two Teaching Stories

1. Julie's Story

Our *Comfort Quilts* project would be seamless. With 25 years of cyclical dreaming, planning, and teaching under my belt, a rich family tradition of textiles behind me, and a supportive cast of students and colleagues at my side, I was ready to rock the teaching world.

In recent years, the British Columbia Ministry of Education has called on teachers to orchestrate experiences in which students might gain a height-

ened sense of social responsibility. Acting on this initiative, the Fine Arts department in my school, which includes music, theatre, visual arts, home economics, and culinary arts, has risen to the challenge year after year. Together we work. Through paint or clay, voice or horn, fibres, threads, theatrics, or culinary creations we share the responsibility to lift the spirit and stir the soul of our school community. Each year we develop one shared vision, one fine arts celebration, one integrated event. We strive to awaken our youth to the world of social consciousness, drawing on our artistic talents to create a positive difference in the world around us.

And so, in August of 2004, the *Comfort Quilts* concept was born. The master plan seemed to ooze with potential. Art and textiles students would design and stitch quilts, music students would select and practice songs, drama students would compose and rehearse expository writings, and culinary arts students would prepare delicious refreshments. If everything went according to plan, the fruits of our labour would be shared at a grand quilt unveiling event in the school auditorium in February. The quilted gifts would be presented to four deserving recipients that night.

At first glance, I thought my role in this project would be so easy. With the help of my sixty Grade 9 Multimedia students I set out to make a quilt for the Domestic Violence Program at Vancouver Hospital. Our quilt would take the form of an "I Spy" game. Combined with a special handmade book, we hoped to create a quilt that would not only provide physical comfort and warmth, but would also serve as a pleasant diversion for families, and especially children, whose home life was in a state of upheaval. So with months of time ahead of us… a few stitches here and a few stitches there…we set off to make our vision a reality. This project truly had "wonderful" written all over it.

To make the project even more remarkable, I invited my mum to be part of the process in my classroom. I knew it would be fabulous to have her on board. Now a retired teacher, and a pretty "with-it" granny, I had watched in awe as she had masterfully handcrafted countless quilts over the years. This would be a grand occasion for me to see my Mum interacting with kids again AND a great opportunity for my students to connect with a fun-loving senior in the community.

Yes, on the surface it all seemed too good to be true! I suppressed my prejudicial reservations about boys quilting and teenagers mixing with seniors and launched into the project. But deep down inside, I knew this project would be unlike anything I had tackled before. Not only would I be delving into a lengthy textile design process for the first time since my undergraduate days, but also my own mother would be standing in the room next to me as the project began.

On our first day, we did introductions. My mum quickly engaged the

class with stories of quilt lore and enlisted the help of many in stretching the already pieced quilt top over a quilting frame. I stood by and tentatively watched the students' reactions. They were smiling: their eyes alert, their heads nodding. In both classes, when Mum asked for volunteers, the boys rushed forward to lend a hand.

I heaved a great sigh of relief at the close of the day. The introductory lesson seemed to be a success and it appeared that our quilt project would provide something for everyone: hands-on experience for the kinesthetic learners, clear techniques to be practiced and perfected by the more analytical high achievers, and, as an added bonus, endless days ahead for all of us to collectively linger and "stitch and bitch" around the quilt frame.

Before heading home, I did a cursive sweep of the room, collecting wayward paintbrushes, lifting stools off the floor, and in my travels, one small scrap of paper caught my eye from the corner table. It was a student's note, presumably passed in class earlier that day. As I peeled it open and unmasked the words, I knew they were intended for a friend…jarring raw comments for a teacher. The scribbled words assaulted both the project (as stupid and gay) and my mother (as an old Grandma). I reeled as I read and re-read the cruel, heartless remarks. I realized there was a crack in my seamless plan.

My mind raced. Who wrote the note? How could someone be so abusive? Well, one thing was certain. I would dig to the bottom of this. I would launch a classroom investigation. I would publish an overhead of the note for all to see and surely humiliate this person. No, I would be-rate, disparage, slander, scorch… No, then again, perhaps a public lynching was the answer, No, hang on…

A few quiet moments passed. I sat down at my desk, broody and dejected, staring at the crumpled paper. A handful of disconsolate tears dropped onto the desktop below. While I knew that a communal flogging was not the answer, I acknowledged that the content of the note would certainly need to be addressed. This was a teachable moment… a crack…unlike any other; a moment for all of us to step back and reflect on the larger purpose of our project.

Following a weekend of contemplation, I strode into my classroom on Monday morning ready to talk calmly and openly about the quilt. Choking back tears, I told the class about the note, my feelings, and I asked students for their input. In as much as I wanted everyone to be a part of this project, I couldn't see anyone working on it if they truly felt it was "stupid". In fact, I felt false hands might somehow tarnish this precious creation. I explained that our quilt needed to be made by hands of those who honestly cared and wanted to help others in need. Most students were aghast. Predictably, those that spoke up couldn't believe someone could write such a mean note. (There is nothing quite so melodramatic as a self-righteous 14 year old). We talked

over the situation as a class and then I spent a bit of time with each student, asking individuals if they wanted to continue with the project. They were all - 100% - committed to staying the course.

Four months and thousands of stitches later, our finished quilt was unclamped from the frame and took on a new life. This soft cotton work of art was now padded full with caring and meaning. United in our purpose, we had stitched tirelessly across the surface of the quilt, and on the night that our work was unveiled; we witnessed a positive ripple effect moving out in the community. We made a real difference in the world.

That evening, four grateful guests graciously accepted a handmade quilted gift as a symbol of comfort and support. It was a night I will never forget. I am certain that all recipients felt respected, honoured, and even cherished that night. I am confident that my students too, felt very special. For there, seated in the fourth row with her mother, was Janet, the infamous note writer: smiling, proud, and satisfied with her accomplishment. Together we shared an evening replete with tantalizing colour, powerful music, delectable treats, emotional speeches, and above all, sincere caring. As hoped, both the learning processes and the culminating event raised the social consciousness of the students involved. This student collaboration, however, provoked an emotional response from our students, our staff, and our community well beyond anything we could have fathomed.

Yes, there was a crack in the so-called seamless plan. A crack that I initially thought would ruin the entire process. But, as Leonard Cohen so aptly wrote:

> "Ring the bells that still can ring,
> Forget your perfect offering,
> There is a crack,
> A crack in everything,
> That's how the light gets in."
>
> Leonard Cohen, *Anthem*, 1992

2. Julie's Story: Poetic Transcription

Contextual note: Monica first heard Julie's story presented at AERA in San Francisco in April of 2006, then read the narrative written by Julie from which the poetic transcription below and the poem following it were created in traced response.

Comfort Quilts

seamless...

a rich family tradition

to orchestrate experiences
of social responsibility.
Together we work
to lift the spirit and stir the soul
    one shared vision,
    one fine arts celebration,
    one integrated event.
to awaken our youth
    to the world
        to create a difference

Our concept
oozes with potential
(if everything goes according to plan)
        to make a quilt
(a few stitches here
    and
a few stitches there)
        to make our vision

My Mum
to be part of the process
(fabulous to have her)
masterful handcrafter
    of countless quilts...
        too good to be true!

(suppressed
reservations
deep
down
inside)

Our first day
students' smiles
    eyes alert,
    heads nod
collectively linger
"stitch and bitch"
around the quilt frame

Heading home
a cursive sweep
(one small scrap of paper)
a student's note
    peeled open
        unmasks words
            …jarring raw
scribbled assault
    stupid gay
        old Grandma
            cruel, heartless remarks
                ...a crack

I will:
dig to the bottom
launch a classroom investigation
publish an overhead of the note
humiliate this person
berate, disparage, slander, scorch…
a public lynching...

A few quiet moments
broody and dejected,

staring
at the crumpled paper
(a handful of disconsolate tears)

a teachable moment… a crack
to step back and reflect

A weekend of contemplation
calm and open
(choking back tears)
to tell my feelings:

"False hands
tarnish this
precious creation."

Staying the course
thousands of stitches
filled with care and meaning.
a handmade quilted gift
a symbol of comfort and support

(the infamous note writer
now
smiling, proud, and satisfied)

an emotional response
well beyond
anything fathomed.
Yes
a crack
in the so-called
seamless plan

"There is a crack,
A crack in everything,
That's how the light gets in." Leonard Cohen, *Anthem*, 1992

3. Monica's Story: Poetic Response

in 1998
i left teaching
after only five years
in the classroom

the sense
of failure
in me
to live
as a teacher
to survive
is strong

a crack

i plaster over
this pain-filled
fissure
with teaching
outside the system

in theatres
in universities

but
a crack
is a crack

a stigma
a scar

like the blackboard
it is never
quite erased

white shadows
of smeared words
leave

their chalky traces

like fat cow
that's what he called me
my grade 10 English student
in venomous careless
teenage fury
out loud
in front of the class

because i what?
asked him to move
to another desk?

the details fade
but
not the shock
and
the flinch

then the absurdity

he is sent
to the VP
who calls
as i struggle
not to cry
but
rather to teach

she asks me
over the phone
to tell her
what was said

to repeat the injury
to scar myself
    with its
encore performance
    out loud
in front of the class

she needs to know
in order to punish

in order to punish

she needs to know

i refuse to say
the wounding words
targeting my body
        not my person

so i write them
on a slip
of paper
fold it
maybe tape it
closed

send it
to the office

my punishment?
to write myself
into being
as a fat cow

not a teacher
not even
        a person

i am erased

replaced
by someone
who is always
on her guard

who becomes guarded
who becomes a guard
                not a guide

i left teaching
not because
of this event

but it is the crack
the scar
the stigma
the stigmata

that marks
my failure
to remain
resilient
&
resistant
in the classroom

to weather
the disinterest
and casual cruelty

of those few
    who
so trapped
in their own
furies
refuse
    to see

the humanity
of those
who teach

who
refuse
to be taught

[with thanks to Michel Foucault 1979, 1980; Helene Cixous 1998/2005; Deborah Britzman 1998, 2000, 2007; Susan Walsh 2006]

Part Two: Ruminations and Articulations: Resilience and Resistance in Teaching

Following the arts-based processes articulated in a/r/tography, the study is centered around an interpretive self-inquiry that asks here: "What are the cracks in my teaching?" This guiding or root metaphor of the crack is explored in Julie's Story and its poetic transcription [by Monica] that tells of one long-term art educator's pain-filled encounter with student resistance (as in, "I refuse to be taught"; see Kohl 1994). In this particular inquiry, "Julie's Story" is traced over – in the form of a *palimpsest* – that then allows for the relational emergence of the issues in a newly-felt comparative understanding of the nature of *resilience* and *resistance* in teaching. This particular interpre-

tation (only one amongst many possible) unfolds the theme of *teacher resilience* (Bernard 2004) in its transcription that reveals Julie's decision to turn a personal injury into a "teachable moment" that allows both her and her quilting project to survive and to thrive in the classroom.

Key terms that emerged in the poeticizing of Julie's original narrative, through the processes of *found poetry*, are seen in the various section headings of the resulting poem sequence: **I will, A few quiet moments, A weekend of contemplation, Staying the course,** and **Yes**. The transcription traces the processes of anger and hurt, thoughtfulness, courage to confront and the subsequent ability to regroup with students in a renewed atmosphere of trust and commitment, to carry on. These findings confirm Starnes' list of the qualities of resiliency:

> [Skills associated with resiliency are:] responsiveness, flexibility, empathy, sense of humour, problem-solving skills (which include reflection, abstract thinking, ability to find alternative solutions to challenges); autonomy (a sense of one's own identity and the ability to act independently) and a sense of purpose or future (healthy expectations, achievement, motivation, hopefulness).[3]

Our traced interpretation also resonates with Waugh, Fredrickson & Taylor's definition of resilience:

> Our definition of trait resilience … describe[s] a continuum of resilience, on which high ego-resilient people are characterized by their ability to exert appropriate and dynamic self-regulation, whereas low ego-resilient people (i.e., ego-brittle) tend to rigidly under or over self-regulate. This ability to dynamically and appropriately self-regulate allows high trait resilient people to adapt more quickly to changing circumstances.[4]

Julie's ability as a highly-experienced teacher was to "adapt more quickly to changing circumstances"[5] with the qualities of personality outlined by Starnes above. In capturing these qualities of resilience in Julie through her poetic transcribing process, Monica's internalized relational response led to another angle of interpretation.

In response to this story of resiliency in the classroom is "Monica's Story", the tracing of the edges and depths of her own previously hidden yet deeply felt sense of failure to be resilient and to therefore remain in the classroom. However, in its poetic rendering, this story ultimately reveals a newly discovered sense of *teacher resistance* that is experienced as far more empowering than that of a student who is resisting his or her education (although there are compelling reasons why this is the case for many students; see Kohl 1994 and Langhout 2005). A brief literary analysis of descriptive word

choices in "Monica's Story" supports this interpretation: *failure, pain-filled, stigma, scar, erased, shock, absurdity, punishment, guarded, stigmata, cruelty.* These are all words of suffering and of the narrator's recognition and processing of that suffering.

Teacher resistance in this particular instance is a resistance to the oppressive imbalanced power constructs of the ever-more centralized, technocratic (therefore dehumanized and alienating) and politically-driven system of public education (Cho and Lewis 2006; Foucault 1979, 1980). Interestingly, in a database search of the literature on teacher resistance, the majority of research has been around teachers who resist new curriculum or technological innovations, and thus are seen as an administrative problem. This understanding is antithetical to our view taken here of teacher resistance as an act of critical pedagogy. In concert with Langhout (although writing about student resistance), we note:

> Resistance is a response to an institutional definition or dominant narrative, both of which are powerful in terms of meaning-making and shaping discourse. The goal of resistance is to move toward self-definition and self-valuation … via an alternative narrative or discourse.[6]

As a result, in our a/r/tographic traced articulation of "an alternative narrative or discourse"[7], one teacher (Julie) chooses to stay resilient within a system that makes it hugely challenging to engage students in meaningful, authentic artmaking practices. The other teacher (Monica) chooses resistance to these institutionalized constraints in the move away from the classroom and toward the academy. Thus, unfortunately, Monica becomes part of the thirty to fifty percent attrition rate in teachers leaving teaching in the first five years of their careers, an appalling statistic and indictment against teacher education (Halford 1998; Gonzales and Sosa 1993). Education is "the only profession that eats its young."[8]

Ironically, it is the latter, more resistant teacher who is more likely to be inscripted subsequently into the continuing reproductive tasks of teacher education as a faculty instructor/supervisor, as Monica has earned her doctorate in drama/theatre and education and is now a full-time educational researcher and university professor of arts education. The resilient classroom teacher may instead become the mentor teacher who takes on student/apprentice teachers and who models her resiliency for future teachers in this way. This finding resonates very well with Deborah Britzman's (Britzman 2007, 2000, 1998) psychoanalytic critiques of teacher education and the forces of resistance often felt by faculty from their education students who cannot help but sense the truth behind the mask: They are being taught by those who resisted the very system they are now charged with reproducing.

Our a/r/tographic interpretation offered in this section is reiterated as only one of multiple possible interpretations available to the reader. The aesthetic praxis of a/r/tography demands a more open interpretive process than is generally found in qualitative inquiry, and that is more akin to those of reception in the *artworld* (Danto 1964). While standardized practices in scholarship demand that we provide an interpretation in the context of a potential peer-reviewed publication, we maintain that perhaps a more idealized (utopian?) version of this present paper might present the traced narratives (as story and poems) and invite readers to enter into the conversation with their own traced response, to reflect upon their own "cracks" in their teaching lives. That may be the most authentic representation of a pedagogy of trace. Thus, readers may find shortcomings, even strong disagreements, with the themes of teacher resilience and resistance presented and reflected upon in this section. If this is the case, the a/r/tographic invitation is to enter into a traced interpretive process with the writings presented in Part One, and to write (or paint, or dance, or dramatize) your own Part Two.

Conclusion

How possible is it to conclude without concluding? One of the key discoveries made in this investigation of the *pedagogy of trace* is how necessarily and inherently unique each tracing process can, indeed *must*, be. As discussed above, any other person who took Julie's original story of teaching difficulty would trace an entirely different path over and through the landscapes of their own interests, locations and experiences. This contingency-based truth highlights the improvisatory nature of pedagogy of trace and a/r/tography. But, of course, it this essential contingency that aligns these approaches with aesthetic process. Artistry resists reproducibility; it is commerce that manufactures copies of artworks and sells them as home decor. Any teacher knows that if you ask 25 students to draw the same tree, you will get 25 very different trees. And yet, ironically, we are asked to seek a kind of uniformity and transferability in our lived identities as teachers and in our research practices in arts education that seem counter to our own personal/professional teaching/artmaking practices, as any look at a standardized arts education curriculum will disclose. This is the space of resistance to conformity that pedagogy of trace – assisted by the a/r/tography movement's contributions – opens up.

Pedagogy of trace is the understanding of understanding that genuinely invites other teachers into these important *inter-reflections* on the practice of teaching and learning. We often don't tell these stories, for many complex reasons. Kit, for example, resists telling her art education students the story of a student who committed suicide, excluding this from her teaching practice not as an act of censorship, but rather as one of caring and concern for

their developing sense of resilience as teachers. What do we do when a story is too hard to tell? Sometimes it can feel too painful to admit that we can't solve the world. Pedagogy of trace, as an a/r/tographic act, gives us a way to process our painful experiences, to admit our own censorship. We want to tell ourselves, each other, our students the truth, but perhaps not the whole truth. We can tell students that teaching will break their hearts but not how. How far can we go? Where do we draw the line? What traces are we willing to trace? When does it lead to our own therapeutic work and what are the boundaries? When can we start to tell our stories that hit us at a deeply personal level in a teacher education program? How might opening up these difficult stories serve to address the ongoing problem of teacher retention in education?

Traces of pedagogy come and go, traces you can see through, emerging and retreating. This study concludes by suggesting that the tracing of pedagogical practices through a/r/tography – shown here in poetic representations of autobiographical/ auto-ethnographical teaching stories of difficulty – may provide one way for us to better see and feel the patterns of resistance and resilience that underpin so much of what we do.

Notes

[1] L.C. Fowler, "A Curriculum of Difficulty," *Language & Literacy 3* no. 2 (2002): unpaginated.

[2] Springgay, S. et al., eds., *Being with a/r/tography* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2007), 84.

[3] B. Starnes, "What we Don't Know," *Phi Delta Kappan 87*, no. 5 (2006): 384.

[4] Waugh, C., B.L. Fredrickson and S.F. Taylor, "Adapting to life's slings and arrows," *Journal of Research in Personality 42*, no. 4 (2008): 1032.

[5] Waugh, C., B.L. Fredrickson and S.F. Taylor, "Adapting to life's slings and arrows," *Journal of Research in Personality 42*, no. 4 (2008): 1032.

[6] Langhout, R., "Acts of resistance," *Culture & Psychology 11*, no. 2 (2005): 125.

[7] Langhout, R., "Acts of resistance," *Culture & Psychology 11*, no. 2 (2005): 125.

[8] Halford, J.M., "Easing the way," *Educational Leadership 55*, no.5 (1998): 33.

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Climbing the Slopes of Academia:
The Educational Biographer at Work

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> How shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?
> —John Dewey[1]

In the mid 1980s, I traveled to San Antonio, Texas, to deliver my first scholarly paper at a conference hosted by the International Society for Educational Biography (ISEB). For years I had felt like an academic slave caught in the part-time college teaching mill. Having recently completed a Ph.D., I believed myself to be finally qualified for a full-time, tenure-track position in the Academy. In San Antonio, I met professors who offered employment leads, and one sent a strong letter of recommendation. Because of their support, I eventually pitched my tent along the lowest slopes of Academia, began a long climb, and today am one of only 26 percent of full professors who are women.[2]

For years, I have watched aspiring climbers on their first treks: some working on dissertations, others looking for academic positions, and still others, serving as assistant professors. What has disturbed me is the large number of conference attendees who have disappeared after presenting only one paper. Why? The answer may be, at least in part, that they have not found or kept full-time tenure-track professorships. In 1985, around one in four U.S. higher education institutions were in the process of cutting faculty posi-

tions. Faculty who did manage to find employment were as likely to hold contract as tenure-track appointments.[3] Today, the situation has not improved. Over half of faculty receiving new full-time employment are in tenure-ineligible positions,[4] according to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. More than 40 percent are part-time employees, and 65 percent of those with new appointments are part-timers. What these statistics mean in practical terms is that large numbers of scholars lack institutional support for sustained research, travel and publication. How, then, might a neophyte educational biographer[5] set up camp on the slopes of Academia to pursue a sustained program of teaching, research and publication? This narrative explores seven survival strategies similar to those of mountain climbers attempting 7,000 to 14,000-foot peaks.

Knowing Thyself and Thy Mountains

The first important survival strategy is to know oneself and the mountains one hopes to climb. When I embarked on a doctoral program in Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) at Loyola University Chicago, I had a master's degree in English literature and another in Protestant theology; had taught in K-12 schools for three years and at the college level for seven, and had published considerable religious curricula, fiction and plays. I believed these experiences and a C&I doctorate would fully equip me for employment in a Protestant theological seminary or a university. But I was wrong.

After taking the required C&I courses and reading a vast quantity of books and articles in preparation for comprehensive examinations, I came to realize that C&I offered an inadequate foundation for asking and answering my most pressing intellectual questions. Educational history was far more intellectually satisfying, but I did not dare change programs. I was afraid a specialization in educational history would doom my changes for academic employment. When I began to write a dissertation proposal, I thought I could take up quantitative research, the approach that dominated C&I. Yet whenever I reflected on the study I was designing, I was frustrated by its superficiality. Eventually I discarded the first design and planned a second, but it too seemed all wrong. The only doctoral research project that truly excited me was a biographical study of Anna Sill, the founder of Rockford Female Seminary, a small woman's institution established in 1846 some 80 miles northwest of Chicago. Today called Rockford College, the school is known primarily because of its most celebrated alumna, Jane Addams of Hull-House. The college archives were chock full of primary and secondary sources, and the life of Addams' principal illuminated many facets of women's struggle for higher education. I enjoyed working on the paper so much I decided to meet with Joan Smith, the professor who had suggested

the study. Would it be possible, I asked, for a C&I student to complete the dissertation requirement by writing an educational biography? Joan was optimistic. I had taken some classes in educational history and would need to take an additional class in historiography, she said. She added that if my C&I adviser objected to the plan, she (Joan) would serve as a *de facto* dissertation chair. Joan's status as a tenured professor in the Foundations of Education and associate dean of the Graduate School gave me the confidence to approach my adviser, who readily agreed to the change in plans. I would be the first C&I doctoral student at Loyola Chicago to pursue a qualitative study, my adviser said. Only much later did I realize that these doctoral choices were problematic, as they revealed an inchoate academic self straddling the fields of C&I and educational history. It would be several frustrating years before I would have enough self knowledge to commit fully to educational history as the discipline to teach, research and publish.

Mapping a Trail to the Summit

A second survival strategy is to plan a trail to the summit of a mountain, not somewhere down the slope. In planning my dissertation, I followed a similar strategy. Rather than writing a document simply to earn a doctorate, I set out to write a book-length manuscript ready for publication. At the time, publishing a scholarly book seemed as significant as scaling a 7,000-foot peak. Despite experience in the publishing world, I wasn't sure how to proceed. I read a number of biographies and selected one I believed to be the most engaging: *Opening the Gates,* the narrative of the life of Mary Lyon, founder of Mt. Holyoke.[6] I studied the volume carefully to decide what the author did well and what might be improved. I also read a number of biographical dissertations. I wrote each chapter as if the committee were the editors of my soon-to-be-published book which would inform them about nineteenth century women's education while captivating them with the fascinating narrative of Anna Sill's life.

The two members of my committee from the C&I Department said that they had never read a dissertation like mine. It taught them a great deal about educational history and read like a novel. That reaction was what I had intended when I searched for details about Sill and the people and places or "scenes" in which key events occurred—the season, people's clothing, their relationships with one another, their feelings, their actual words. I also devoted considerable attention to exploring the broader contexts of Sill's life—her immediate family, life in frontier Rockford, fledgling collegiate institutions on the Midwestern frontier, the religious movements that influenced her and the Rockford board of trustees, and movements in nineteenth century women's education.

The most challenging aspects of the dissertation were combating the nagging worry that I would construct no new significant knowledge and doubts that I would ever have a full-time academic position. The most enjoyable aspects of the study were exploring sources other scholars had neglected, imagining the people and movements of the nineteenth century, and reinterpreting the past from a feminist perspective.[7] Despite changes in style, the manuscript received approval from the doctoral committee, and I graduated in 1985.

A major challenge was to find a publisher for the dissertation. Some scholars devote years to elaborating and refining their dissertations and eventually search for a major press to publish their work. I knew of no publishing houses interested in women's history, and I lacked the confidence to seek out a major university press. I did submit the manuscript to a group of feminists at the University of Michigan, but they rejected the manuscript. Joan Smith told me about Educational Studies Press, a small non-profit entity that her husband, Glenn, had established at Iowa State University and later moved to Illinois. Joan said that the press published educational biographies, so I gave Glenn a copy of my dissertation, which was published three years after its completion. As I held the published volume in my hands, I felt elated that I had finished the entire scholarly process, from inception to publication. I felt as though I had just climbed a small mountain, and now I was ready for a bigger challenge.

Setting Up a Well Stocked Base Camp

A third survival strategy for successful mountain climbing is to establish a base camp with all the necessary supplies to sustain an expedition. This was a daunting challenge since I did not want to live apart from my husband, and to ask him to give up his well-paid editorial position in exchange for an insecure assistant professorship seemed unwise. Hence, I did not even ask him to consider that possibility. I began a search for institutional affiliation by submitting papers to two Protestant theological seminaries nearby. Both granted interviews, both had all-male search committees, and none showed the least interest in hiring me. In fact, one was hostile.

Eventually I received one offer—to teach composition and journalism in a four-year Protestant, liberal arts college in the small city in which I lived. Having no apparently alternative, I agreed to teach there. Yet during the first semester, I had so many students that I spent most of my time teaching classes and grading papers. I could well envision a future of endless stacks of papers. This base camp simply had too few provisions for the rigorous demands of research and publication. Thus, at the end of a frustrating semester, I resigned. I believed I would probably never find a teaching position

again. After all, I had broken my contract—a nightmare decision! In despair, I fell back on free-lance writing and coped with dark thoughts by keeping a prayer journal. I also continued to explore, write and present biographical research at nearby conferences. Although I did not fully realize it, these presentations demonstrated my ability to carry forward a program of research and dissemination, hence setting me apart from other applicants for tenure-track appointments.

After six months, I received a phone call from Glenn Smith, Joan's husband, who asked if I wanted to teach summer classes in the Foundations of Education at Northern Illinois University (NIU). In the 1980s and 1990s, he was also chair of the largest department in NIU's College of Education. I gladly accepted the offer, and after a year at NIU, participated in a faculty search that resulted in a full-time tenure-track position in the Foundations of Education. Joan—and now Glenn—had enabled me to establish a base camp that would provide all that I needed for academic expeditions.

Yet I realized, as never fully before, that C&I and educational history are like different mountain ranges requiring climbers to develop separate bodies of knowledge, terminologies and friendship networks. To be fully competent in educational history, I needed more advanced coursework in history, a lacuna that was filled by applying for and receiving a grant to study history part-time at the University of Chicago. Receiving the grant as well as release time to attend classes was strong evidence that my base camp was well stocked.

Slogging up the Slopes

A fourth strategy successful mountain climbers follow is to make slow, persistent progress up the slopes, checking meticulously to ensure a solid foundation for every step. The educational biographer intent on publishing regularly needs to follow a similar strategy. When I began teaching at NIU in the late 1980s, several senior professors informed me that if I were going to be tenured, I had to write and publish several refereed articles each year. This requirement has actually increased over time, according to a 2002 report by the Modern Language Association. Tenure committees in many universities that formerly accepted a group of articles, an edition, a concordance or textbooks as acceptable evidence for tenure now demand one or even two book-length monographs. Yet today's assistant professors have more difficulty finding publishers for their scholarly books than before because library purchases of academic monographs have plummeted and many sponsoring institutions have dropped financial support for university presses.[8]

Despite my knowledge of academic publishing, I was determined to become an educational biographer who kept up a steady pace of research and publication. Finding topics was a daunting challenge, so I followed a pre-

cept derived from free-lance writing: *Use what is closest at hand.* What this entailed was looking over the research I had already completed to see if I might use it as a springboard. For example, four figures loomed large in Anna Sill's life: her grandfather, called "the father of the common schools" in New York State; the Reverend Aratus Kent, her strongest supporter in Rockford; Zilpah Grant Banisher, her most outspoken educational critic; and Jane Addams, her most famous student.

Although I wanted to publish biographical essays about all of these people, I could not develop significant new knowledge unless primary documents were close at hand. Fortunately, both Kent and Addams had extensive papers in nearby libraries; hence, they were the subjects of biographical essays. Kent, the earliest Protestant missionary in Illinois, was instrumental in founding several frontier churches and schools. I decided to write an article explaining why the collegiate institutions he founded lasted when so many others failed. The documents related to Addams were even more extensive, so I was able to write several papers about her. I published several of these papers in *Vitae Scholasticae,* the journal of the International Society for Educational Biography (ISEB).[9]

I devoted quite some time to thinking about new articles I might write and realized that another body of knowledge close at hand was methodological. My first such article, called "The Biographer as Sleuth: Using the 'Concentric Circle' Method," was a brief account of how I had conducted the research for my dissertation. Although I presented this paper at an ISEB conference, I decided to send the manuscript to *Biography*, an interdisciplinary journal. I was amazed when the manuscript was accepted. Among other publications along these lines were articles about locating primary sources about the lives of female educators, the organizational structures of the educational biographies published in several leading U.S. and Canadian historical journals and the implications of the choices a biographer makes when constructing a biographical narrative.[10]

My goal was to publish two to four essays every year, a daunting challenge in addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate students. Inertia was always a problem. Like several of my Christian colleagues, I kept a prayer journal in which I listed possible topics for research, papers I was developing, those I had sent for review, and those that were rejected or published. Reading the journal and thanking God for the essays I had published were encouraging activities, but I continued to struggle with deep feelings of inadequacy. Several aspects of the publishing process contributed to these feelings. The first was the need for accurate and complete documentation. I felt so much pressure to publish that often I found myself making many small errors. I learned gradually that I had to double check every quotation, every page, and every citation. This checking process was extremely time consum-

ing and tedious. Often I was so focused on writing an elegant and persuasive narrative that I neglected to bookmark the sources I was using. Such omissions meant that several days or weeks later, I had to spend whole days trying to locate sources, including the pages and lines in the documents. I now have a box for each major research project in which I keep photocopies of articles and book chapters in alphabetical order. Fact checking is still tedious, but it is manageable with a good storage system in place.

Another difficult task was revising and resubmitting a manuscript. When I received a letter advising me to make revisions, I set about trying to rewrite the article to meet the editor's expectations, but the motivation to write seemed to dissipate like steam. Eventually I realized that the reason for my inertia was the feeling that I had lost control of the manuscript. I shall never forget hearing a student from one of the elite women's colleges state that she had responded to an editor's suggestions for revision by telling the editor he did not understand the article's theoretical approach; hence, the revisions would destroy the article's purpose. This student went on to say that the editor was persuaded by her argument and decided to publish the article without any substantial revisions. I was amazed that the student was so confident about the quality of her work. I began to wonder why I felt that the editor knew more than I did. I decided that I needed to start negotiating with my editors. That is, I read their comments carefully and made the changes that I believed would enhance the essay; but I refused other suggestions and told the editor why I resisted them. This approach seemed much more satisfying than my previous practice and resulted in more publications. Like mountain climbers making slow, persistent progress up the slopes, checking meticulously to ensure a solid base for their next steps, I was slogging toward tenure and promotion.

A third problem was that the journals in which I was publishing lacked sufficient prestige. Three full professors who looked over my curriculum vitae told me that I was productive, but I needed to place my work in at least one prestigious journal. They suggested the *Harvard Educational Review* or *Curriculum Theory,* both of which would cast a golden glow on everything else I published. I did not subscribe to these journals and had no idea how to publish in them. Hence, I felt discouraged and frightened. Several years later, I learned that none of these professors had published in the *Harvard Educational Review*, *Curriculum Theory,* or any other journal of comparable quality.

The prestige problem was solved when I received a letter from an editor at Oxford University Press asking if I would submit an essay on Aratus Kent for the forthcoming *American National Biography,* a series designed to update and expand the prestigious *Dictionary of American Biography.* I leaped at the chance. Later I also agreed to write an essay for the *ANB* about the fifth pres-

ident of Rockford College, Julia Gulliver, who was among the first group of women to receive an American Ph.D. In the late 1980s and 1990s, it seemed that everyone was publishing a biographical dictionary, so I submitted articles to several others besides the *ANB*: *European Immigrant Women in the United States, Historical Dictionary of American Education,* and *Philosophy of Education: An Encyclopedia*.[11] These brief essays were written to formula, each organized to meet the editor's specifications, but I found that they required as much time and effort as lengthier articles. Thus, I eventually stopped writing them and focused instead on writing books.

Climbing Together

Mountain terrain can be treacherous, the weather uncertain. Thus, a fifth survival strategy is to avoid climbing alone. The same can be said for researchers. I discovered that projects carried out with trusted colleagues usually led to more enjoyment and greater productivity. For example, after completing the life of Anna Peck Sill, I began to search for another woman's educator whose biography I might write. I settled on Emma Willard, a New England institution builder who had gained public recognition with the publication of *Plan for Improving Female Education* (1819), a closely reasoned argument urging legislators to invest public funds in rigorous women's institutions. Willard's Troy Female Seminary (founded in Troy, New York, in 1821 and today called Emma Willard School) was widely regarded as one of the finest nineteenth century women's schools in the United States. Willard educated and placed hundreds of women in teaching positions, pioneered social studies teaching methods, held numerous teacher institutes, and promoted the common school cause. Her textbooks and charts, estimated to have sold more than one million copies during her lifetime,[12] disseminated her ideas widely in the United States and Europe.

It might seem that a woman of Willard's stature would generate considerable scholarly interest, yet I found only two full-scale Willard biographies, the more recent issued in 1929.[13] I perused a number of indexes and databanks, generating a list of some twenty-five repositories with Willard documents. I then wrote a grant proposal that enabled me to travel to Emma Willard School, in upstate New York, but found only around 200 Willard letters in the school's archives. Clearly there were too few sources for a book.

A few months later, I met the editor of the Jane Addams Papers, Mary Lynn Bryan, and told her how grateful I was that she had published the Addams papers. "If only someone would do that for Emma Willard," I said. She smiled brightly and asked why I didn't do that. When I explained that I was an educational historian, not a librarian, she informed me that the task required the expertise of a historian. When I said that I didn't know how to

collect and publish papers, she smiled again and said that I could learn by attending a summer institute. She explained that scholars from papers projects discuss every phase of their activities at a ten-day institute held annually at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. I decided to go, so I wrote a grant proposal, received some money, and attended the ten-day institute. There I learned that paper gathering does not require the purchase of costly documents. Rather, one searches in a variety of repositories and private collections, and when the papers are found, purchases photocopies of them. These photocopies are organized, edited and published for use by scholars in a process called *documentary editing*. Microform is considered the most durable form for the publication of papers despite the proliferation of digitization. For these reasons, many publishing companies continue to microform paper collections.

Embarking on a project to collect Emma Willard's papers was a risky professional decision. Many educational historians do not view documentary editing as rigorous scholarship, and I lacked tenure. Still, I knew how valuable the Jane Addams Papers were to scholars interested in women's history. Perhaps I should lay the foundation for scholarship on Willard by devoting a portion of my time to her papers. Barbara Wiley, the head librarian of Emma Willard School, was very interested in the project. Each of us had skills and institutional resources the other lacked. I had recently been asked to serve as part-time curator of the Blackwell History of Education Museum at Northern Illinois University (NIU). This role enabled me to hire several student workers to transcribe documents. There was also the possibility of receiving grants and perhaps a sabbatical leave. Emma Willard School had computer resources, a staff, and a well-defined system for organizing and storing documents, not to mention a valuable collection of Willard papers. I told Barb I would take responsibility for most of the search process, and she agreed to manage the documents.

I began the search for documents by compiling a dictionary of the persons who might have corresponded with Willard, which numbered over two thousand. Work-study students entered into a computer databank all the names, the people's connections to Willard, and the probable years of correspondence. If the potential correspondents were students, their parents' and husbands' names were included. Male names are important because papers of women are usually found only among their male relatives' papers. Using indexes, I identified over seven hundred repositories likely to contain Willard correspondence. I then sent general letters to six hundred repositories and letters with more detailed information to around one hundred others. I also sent a general mailing to some twenty French repositories as well as e-mail appeals to historians in the Women's History Network and those specializing in French history. In addition, I sent letters to all members of the Association

of Documentary Editing who were collecting nineteenth century documents. I searched databases such as *Archives USA*, *WorldCat* and *RLIN*, and ordered books edited by Willard's friends, hoping to find Willard selections therein.

For more than a decade, I traveled to 25 states and the United Kingdom to hand search special collections, and Barbara joined me in several cities. In addition to correspondence and diaries, we collected the earliest extant editions of Willard's textbooks, icons of her and her family, her articles in newspapers and magazines, and state and national government documents. In all, we gathered around fifteen thousand pages of published pages and documents. The staffs of our institutions transcribed handwritten sources, and Barb organized and edited each document. I found a small microform publishing company that agreed to publish the papers, and Barb and I wrote numerous letters and emails asking some fifty repositories to grant permission to publish their documents. LexisNexis, a huge corporation, bought our small publishing house, and its lawyer and that of Emma Willard School haggled over a contract. Finally, in 2004, our 25-reel microform edition was published. A year or so later, our 63-page guide also appeared.[14]

As I reflect on that thirteen-year project, I realize that it was a long-distance collaboration that resulted in a wealth of scholarly knowledge and experience. Even more importantly, I had learned how to work closely with another scholar on a mutually satisfying venture. Had I depended on this extremely demanding project to support my bid for tenure and promotion, it would probably have failed. The project was not even half completed when I came up for tenure in 1993. In fact, it was still incomplete when I submitted my papers for a full professorship in 1998. Still, I did have something valuable to use in the tenure and promotion process—a letter of support from Mary Lynn Bryan on Duke University letterhead. I also had the support of Martha Tevis, a well respected biographer whom I had met at ISEB, and Gloryanna Hees, a former president of the American Educational Studies Association.

A second fruitful collaboration came by way of an invitation to contribute to a collection of memoirs. In 1990, I delivered a paper at the History of Education Society in Liverpool, United Kingdom. While there I met a life writer from the University of New Hampshire, Susan Franzosa, who asked if I would contribute a memoir to a volume she was editing called *Ordinary Lessons: Girls Growing Up in the 50s.* If an untenured professor were to ask my advice about whether to be involved in such a project, I would now say, "Be cautious." I exercised none. I thought an autobiographical essay in a non-refereed book was not going to contribute much, if anything, toward a fully developed program of focused research. Yet as I reflected on the offer, I realized how I missed the creative thrill of writing for the general public! So I moved forward on the memoir project with only a twinge or two.

I realize now that Susan Franzosa's offer required far more than I anticipated: many hours of writing, worries about whether I had *gotten it right*, conversations with family members, repeated revisions, a project meeting on the Maine coastline, and several conference presentations. What I also failed to include in the equation was Susan's standing as a well-respected feminist philosopher of education. I have since realized that a volume she edited would be viewed favorably by a number of scholars specializing in educational history. I was also unaware that a feminist memoir could actually contribute to my other research on women's history, a strong component of which was women's life writing. From the memoir project emerged collaborative relationships that spanned many years and numerous conversations. These and other collegial relationships led to theoretical essays I was unable to write until I tried my hand at autobiography, for example, writing about conceptualizations of the self, current debates on the meaning of narrative structure, ethical issues of writing about living people, and the nature of truth in autobiographical writings.[15]

Conclusion

Is it possible to spend one's career on the slopes of Academia writing educational biography? Yes, it has been so for me. In this essay, I have compared mountain climbing to scaling the slopes of Academia to illustrate six strategies for survival as a full-time professor. The first is to develop knowledge of oneself and a field of inquiry. While C&I appeared to provide the greatest promise of academic employment, I quickly discovered that it lacked the kinds of knowledge and research methodologies that would sustain my interest for many years to come. Thus, I had to reconstruct my scholarly self, and later request and draw on grant money to extend my knowledge of educational history, the discipline I had now embraced. A second survival strategy is to begin every research project with publication in mind. Aware of the high value placed on published books, I researched and wrote a dissertation that I believed would attract a publisher and took the first opportunity available to publish the manuscript. Other scholars devote many more years to research and publish a more exhaustive work, but I chose instead to complete a modest study and move on to other projects. Given the increased precariousness of tenure-track positions, I would make a similar decision today.

A third strategy is to seek employment in an institution dedicated to supporting its professors' research agendas, something more probable in a research university than a liberal arts college. A regional institution such as NIU was ideal in this regard, providing travel and grant money, along with release time, for research projects. A fourth strategy is to experiment with various methods to ensure steady progress toward research and publishing

goals, checking manuscripts carefully to ensure solid, accurate scholarship. For example, I continued to use a practical principle I had learned in freelance writing: to use first what is close at hand. This constraint enabled me to select several individuals to research whose papers were within driving distance of my home and to write methodological essays based on my varied research experiences.

One of the greatest challenges I faced was the nagging fear that the journals in which I published were insufficiently prestigious. What I failed to realize was that scholars throughout the nation would still become aware of my work, and some invited me to submit essays to their more prestigious publications. Thus, in time my work began to appear in some prestigious publications.

When I began my career in Academia, I viewed educational biography primarily as essays or lengthy volumes about people's lives. Since then, I have learned that educational biography may be the study of one's own educational life or the lives of many people. It may also take many forms, including explanations of the process of writing biography, analyzing various biographical genres, and exploring theoretical constructs such as the self and the narrative. It may also concern the peculiar kind of truth biographers tell. It may be even the collecting and editing of icons and papers related to a life. I cannot image doing all of this without the assistance of colleagues who have shared my passion for educational biography and have collaborated with me to produce more nuanced, complex writings. Thus, the fifth and final survival strategy is to collaborate with congenial colleagues. Is it still possible to write educational biography and sustain a career in Academia? That I cannot say, but I can say that it was possible for me and may be for others as well.

Notes

[1] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938), 23.

[2] Nicholas H. Wolfinger, Mary Ann Mason, and Marc Goulden, "Problems in the Pipeline: Gender, Marriage, and Fertility in the Ivory Tower," *Journal of Higher Education* 79, no. 4 (July/August 2008): 388.

[3] Elaine El-Khawas, "Campus Trends, 1985," Higher Education Panel Report, no. 71 (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1985), 13. ERIC Document ED 267 682.

[4] William M. Plater, "The Twenty-First-Century Professoriate," *Academe Online* 94, no. 4 (July/August 2008). Retrieved Nov.1, 2008 at http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2008/JA/Feat/plat.htm.

[5] In this paper the term *educational biographer* is defined as one who studies individual and/or group lives in educational settings or the lives of individuals who have influenced the theory and practice of education. *Life writing* is a broader term that

includes autobiographies (narratives of the self) and biographies (narratives of other people's lives).

[6] Elizabeth A. Green, *Opening the Gates* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England), 1979.

[7]When I refer to a feminist perspective, I mean that I believe in the full equality of women and men and that gender is a major factor in all our lives.

[8] MLA Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of Scholarly Publishing, "The Future of Scholarly Publishing," *Profession* (New York: MLA, 2002): 172, 175.

[9] Lucy Townsend, "Aratus Kent: Portrait of a College Founder, *Vitae Scholasticae* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 303-319; Lucy Townsend, "Jane Addams: Myth and Reality," *Vitae Scholasticae* 5. nos. 1-2 (Spring/Fall 1986): 225-246; Lucy Townsend, "Jane Addams Abroad: Travel as Educational 'Finish,'" *Vitae Scholasticae* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 185-206.

[10] Lucy Townsend, "The Biographer as Sleuth: Using the Concentric Circle Method," *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* 16 (Winter 1993): 18-30; Lucy Townsend and Elizabeth Johnson, "Life-Writings in History of Education Journals of the United States, Canada, and Australia-New Zealand," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'Histoire de L'Éducation* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 212-225; Lucy Townsend, "Constructing Educational Biography: What Are the Choices?" *Vitae Scholasticae* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 27-40.

[11] *European Immigrant Women in the United States: From the American Revolution to the Present*, eds., Judy Barrett Litoff and Judy McDonnell (New York: Garland, 1994); *Historical Dictionary of American Education,* ed. Richard Altenbaugh (Greenwood, 1998); *Philosophy of Education: An Encyclopedia*, ed. J. J. Chambliss (Garland, 1996).

[12] Mark David Hall, "Emma Willard on the Political Position of Women," *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 6, no. 2 (2000): 14.

[13] The two full-length biographies are John Lord's *The Life of Emma Willard* (New York: Appleton, 1873) and Alma Lutz's *Emma Willard: Daughter of Democracy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929).

[14] Lucy Townsend and Barbara Wiley, *The Papers of Emma Hart Willard, 1787-1870* (Baltimore: LexisNexis, 2003); Lucy Townsend and Barbara Wiley, *A Guide to the Papers of Emma Hart Willard, 1787-1870* (LexisNexis, 2004).

[15] Lucy Townsend and Constance Hanson, "The Self and the Narrative: A Conversation on Educational Biography," *Educational Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 38-52; Rebecca Butler and Lucy Townsend, "Constructing the Audio-visual Educator: A Gender Sensitive Analysis of Audiotapes," *Vitae* Scholasticae 19 (Spring 2000): 77-91. Betty Franklin and Lucy Townsend, "Relational Ethics in Writing a Woman's Life," *Journal of Thought* 30 (Spring 1995): 71-83. The rest of the papers have been presented at a series of conferences and are now being published in the forthcoming book, Lucy Townsend and Gaby Weiner, *Deconstructing and Reconstructing Lives: Auto/biography in Educational Settings.*

Book Review:
Null, Peerless Educator: *The Life and Work of Isaac Leon Kandel*

Laurel Puchner

J. Wesley Null. The Peerless Educator: The Life and Work of Isaac Leon Kandel. New York: Peter Lang, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8204-7458-8. 334 pages.

Isaac Kandel was a prolific and influential educator who had a long and illustrious career, including 23 years (1923-1946) on the faculty at Teachers College in New York. He wrote or edited over 60 books, and published about 275 journal articles and book chapters. Relatively few educators are familiar with Kandel's name today, and in *The Peerless Educator: The Life and Work of Isaac Leon Kandel,* J. Wesley Null provides an important service in describing Kandel's life and work as a comparative educator and as a proponent of educational essentialism.

After an introduction in which Null relates his thoughts about the current relevance of Kandel as well as reasons why Kandel is virtually unknown today, the biography is organized chronologically. Kandel was born in 1881 in Romania. His Jewish family escaped persecution in Romania by moving to Manchester, England, when Kandel was four years old. Kandel grew up in Manchester, and attended the prestigious Manchester Grammar School on a scholarship. He went on to attend the University of Manchester as an undergraduate and then as a graduate student in education, earning his master's degree and teaching diploma in 1906.

After teaching for two years at a school in Ireland, Kandel moved to the

U. S. to pursue doctoral studies at Teachers College. The faculty at Teachers College at the time included Edward Lee Thorndike and John Dewey; later Kandel would be highly critical of their work. After finishing his dissertation on German teacher education, Kandel stayed in New York, teaching courses in history of education and comparative education at Teachers College, working as a "Research Specialist" at the Carnegie Foundation, and publishing articles on a variety of educational topics. Thirteen years after receiving his doctorate, in 1923 Kandel became the first Jew to be given the rank of Professor at Teachers College. Now a full-fledged member of the Teachers College faculty, Kandel wrote and spoke prolifically in his primary field of comparative education and as an outspoken critic of progressive education. As part of his belief in a universal, traditional curriculum for U. S. schools, Kandel also addressed teacher education, arguing for integration of content knowledge and pedagogy, high quality teacher education, and integration of comparative education and teacher education. The bulk of the book details Kandel's work in these areas, but Null also integrates information about Kandel's personal life, including his marriage and the raising of his two children. Although he was forced to retire from Teachers College at age 65, Kandel continued working productively well into retirement. He died in 1965 at age 84.

The biography is well-researched, and Null used a variety of primary and secondary sources, including interviews with Kandel's son and daughter, Kandel's own writings, and writings of Kandel's influential instructors and colleagues in higher education. Null also consulted a variety of historical books in order to provide interesting depictions of the times, such as life for Jews in Romania and in Manchester at the turn of the century, and descriptions of Teachers College in the early to mid-1900s.

Despite Null's less than facile and somewhat repetitive prose, the book is interesting to read and generally clear. However, there are two problems with Null's approach to the biography. The first is that in describing Kandel's life, Null's obvious personal disdain for progressive ideas in education comes through very strongly in the form of exaggerated language and some mischaracterization. His vocabulary choice for describing some progressive educators' belief in meeting the needs of individual learners is one telling example. Null writes that "*Worshiping* the wants, needs, and desires of children became a *crusade* for the existential progressives" (p. 133), that William Heard Kilpatrick "*trumpeted* the individual experience of learners" (p. 163), and that existentialist progressives "*deified* individualism" (p. 191). (Italics added in all three quotes). Null's derision for progressivism also comes through in statements such as the following generalization, which can surely be contested considering the great diversity in perspectives of early progressives: "There was…a consensus on the part of the existential progressives that anything

old was bad and that whatever was new, revolutionary, and supposedly "Progressive" was good" (pp. 133-134). Kandel himself used exaggeration and even satire in his biting critiques of the ideas of progressive educators, but a biography deserves a more balanced approach, and Null's use of Kandel's life story as a platform for expressing his own dislike of progressive education does an injustice to Kandel. Indeed, the parts of the book that describe Kandel's important contributions to comparative education make better reading than the parts about progressive education.

The second problem with Null's treatment of Kandel's life is the unwavering assumption throughout the book that Kandel was always right and his critics wrong. Null's apparent support for Kandel's ideas is unproblematic. However, the failure of the biography to consider multiple possible perspectives leads to a more simplistic analysis than is called for. It also seems to lead to unsupported claims, such as the following statement regarding Kandel's retirement from Teachers College: "Kandel…would no longer have to deal with colleagues who did not understand – or who refused to consider – Kandel's way of thinking" (p. 212). Null provides no evidence that Kandel's colleagues actually did misunderstand or refuse to consider Kandel's ideas, and stating simply that Kandel's colleagues "disagreed" would have been more appropriate.

Null's book is aimed at a conservative audience, given his use of language and his focus in the analysis. Null also appears to assume a certain anti-intellectualism on the part of his readers, betrayed by such statements as the following: "[Kandel] was a moral philosopher...When I say 'philosopher,' I do not mean that he was someone who sat around contemplating the clouds…Philosophy, to Kandel is anything but engaging ourselves in obscure discussions about irrelevant, technical matters" (p. 13). Given the broad scope of Kandel's contributions to education, Null's failure to aim for a wider audience is a shame.

Book Review:
Hamilton,
How to do Biography: A Primer

Louis M. Smith

Nigel Hamilton. *How to do Biography: A Primer*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-674-0276-1. 379 pages.

Nigel Hamilton's (2008) *Primer* is a splendid book. It is beautifully written, interesting, and pulls the reader along paragraph-by-paragraph and chapter-by-chapter. The epigrams introducing each chapter are brief and to the point. For instance, Oscar Wilde's "The play was a great success but the audience was a disaster" opens the discussion of "Defining your audience." And Pope's intriguing "Tell me, my soul, can this be death?' begins chapter twelve, "Ending your story." The fourteen chapters are grouped into three sections: "Getting started,"" Composing a life story," and "Variations on a theme." At the end are notes, selected bibliography, acknowledgements, and an index.

The *Primer* is a sequel to Hamilton's successful *Biography: A Brief History*. (2007). And that poses a problem. The *Primer*, although organized differently and appropriately, especially by examples, remains more of a history than a doing biography book. But in the examples to make his array of points, Hamilton is superb. For instance, Clarke's biography of Truman Capote tells of the genesis of Capote's work that became *In Cold Blood* (1965). In the switch from short stories for which he was famous to non fiction he was restlessly searching for a beginning project. Capote found it in a short squib in

the New York *Times* relating the murder of a Kansas farm family. The moral for beginning life writers: biographies have quite interesting and variable ways of finding a topic or subject.

For this reviewer, the best examples of 'doing biography' are those that are autobiographical, that is, from Hamilton's own substantial biographies. Listen to his agonizing about doing the biography of Field Marshall Montgomery.

> Again, I demurred. I had loved him – therefore I would be too prejudiced from the start. Moreover, I had by then moved abroad, to Finland, and had remarried [after the death of his wife], in an effort to fashion a new life as a self-made exile. Taking the job would mean returning to England, and would lead to upsetting memories. But when I was asked who I would therefore recommend among historians or biographers of my generation (I was thirty two) I was troubled. I had spent my vacations with Monty; his home had been my second home. We'd had many an argument and spat, but over the years I felt I'd gotten to understand him – his eccentricities, strengths, and weaknesses. Suppose someone was appointed who got him wrong? Most American historians did and many British ones too. Wouldn't I feel I had let him down? (pp. 26-23).

The poignancy of his struggles, even discounting possible rationalizations, is very apparent. Most beginning biographers reading this book for insights would not be in quite this situation of eminence of subject, personal knowledge, and publishers pursuing, but struggles there will be. Personally, my doing varied life writing projects presented many similar struggles and agonizing. Each of us will have our own story.

To take another example, in Hamilton's biography of President John Kennedy he wrote about being stuck about a beginning.

> Don't worry! As E.H. Carr explained, the process of writing is messy and illogical, and it may take a while before you get the design right. Only very rarely will you know where to start at the commencement of your labors. I remember reaching the very last section of the first volume of my life of John F. Kennedy. *I still had neither a title, nor an incisive opening* for an extraordinary tale, which incorporated so many hitherto unknown and unpublished documents and interviews. And then it dawned on me that although the book would only chronicle Kennedy's early years, before he entered politics it should start with the scene that was imprinted most vividly on readers memories: the November 1963 funeral cortege, which had been filmed and broadcast across the world (Pp.130-131) (Italics added)..

It's reassuring, perhaps, and surprising to find an accomplished biographer struggling for a title when almost finished with the writing, and

searching late for an introductory episode. The beginning life writer may have considerably more anxiety than Hamilton seemed to have. The phrase "and then it dawned on me" leaves many unanswered questions of what had happened to Hamilton at that time. Reading the prologue to the biography itself, *J.F.K. Restless Youth* (1992) suggests many more aspects of this beginning were occurring in that selection to make it a powerful opening. Topic by topic he gives the reader an enticing illustration to ponder as s/he thinks through his or her own biographical writing project.

The vividness of these autobiographical examples leads to one final question. In beginning my attempts at shorter life writing and biographical portraits I had found two books to be especially important. Why had Hamilton not indexed nor included a discussion of Catherine Drinker Bowen's *Adventures of a Biographer* (1959) and James Clifford's *From Puzzles to Portraits* (1970)? In my view, that would have made an incisive opening or powerful conclusion to his *Primer*. For example, Bowen's account of not being made official biographer of Justice Holmes left her without access to his formal papers. Discouraged, she countered by interviewing all but one of his twelve legal secretaries. From frustration to creative alternatives is a major guideline for a beginning biographer. On another occasion, in a moment of reflection in the setting of an auction of some of John Adams' possessions, her feelings of exclusion by two 'notable' ladies occurred. By then she was in he middle of her Adams' biography. The experience left her thinking of an Adams quote: "I will stand collected within myself and think upon what I read and what I see" (Bowen 1959, 122). With resolution she got up to leave; she didn't want to miss the train to Boston to continue working. How many of us don't want to miss a train to Boston?

In Clifford's book there is an account of two young men, Clifford and his cousin, responding to "the vague footnote" that began a kind of mystery story. They bicycled from London, west, then all over Wales. Eventually they found a major unknown cache of letters of Mrs. Thales, a friend of Dr. Johnson. The experience was not only an exciting, motivating event for Clifford, but also a thrilling episode for the novice biographer. Serendipity and cleverness seemed to follow the young Clifford. The chance of seeing the gifted Hamilton comparing and contrasting Bowen and Clifford's experiences with his own experience and perspective would have been a delightful and instructive addition to his fine book.

In Hamilton's organizational scheme, the episodes from Clifford might fit nicely in his "Getting started" section. As each researched their subjects, Clifford's biking to Wales might be seen as an aspect of 'courage" and "deep sea trawling" (p.68), metaphors that appeal to Hamilton. And within Hamilton's second section, the chapter "The starting point," Bowen's view of Adams "standing collected within himself" would exemplify Hamilton's

general point. In the final section, among several interesting topics, the challenges Hamilton proposes regarding "Truth – and its consequences" are both poignant and incisive. As I read his book, I found myself in intensive debate about similarities and differences in my approach to life writing. Giving a reader that kind of stimulation is as good an approbation as any writer would want.

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