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Editor's Note

This issue of *Vitae Scholasticae* serves as a reminder that teaching and learning can occur in unexpected places. Von Pittman's "Correspondence Study and the 'Crime of the Century'" presents readers with a pair of improbable educational visionaries: two convicted murderers who worked with a little-known university administrator to develop a comprehensive system of high school education for incarcerated adults. Using a variety of primary sources, Pittman highlights the life of the correspondence program along with the contributions of individuals who created and sustained it.

In "With or Without Reservation: An Indigenous Community Accesses Charter School Reform," author Alison Reeves shares her autobiographical experience as director of a school for the Tohono O'odham tribe in Arizona. Reeves' story details the work of teachers, administrators, parents, and citizens to provide a rich, "ethnically focused" education for indigenous people in the wake of centuries of colonization.

The U. S. Civil War provides the backdrop for James Morice's article, "Organizational Learning in a Military Environment: George H. Sharpe and the Army of the Potomac." This biography examines General Sharpe's efforts to build a learning organization by systematically collecting and analyzing information about the enemy. The author shows how Sharpe's comprehensive efforts impacted organizational decision-making and foreshadowed subsequent U. S. military intelligence operations.

Louis M. Smith shares the process of writing an educational biography in "The Experience of Biography: Decisions in Organizing and Writing Chapter One." Smith's article is a reflection on his process of writing a biography of Charles Darwin's granddaughter, Nora Barlow. Barlow performed an important educative function by writing four books on the Darwin papers. A longtime scholar of educational biography, Smith wrote the chapter on "Biographical Method" in Denzin and Lincoln's *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994).

The current issue of *Vitae Scholasticae* also contains reviews of four newly-released books. Lucy E. Bailey examines Hermione Lee's overview of the biographical genre in *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*. Donyell L. Roseboro discusses the new biography of a famed black educator in Robert J.

Norrell's *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington*. Laurel Puchner addresses the barriers confronting female students in Beatriz R. Alvarado's *Voices and Agencies in Andean Rural Young Women's Education.* Larry LaFond explores the life of scholar and linguist John M. Swales in *Incidents in an Educational Life: A memoir (of sorts)*.

We thank the authors for providing notable examples of the influence of biography within a variety of educational contexts. We hope you enjoy the issue.

—Linda Morice

Correspondence Study and the "Crime of the Century":

Helen Williams, Nathan Leopold, and the Stateville Correspondence School

Von Pittman

University of Missouri-Columbia

In late November, 1930, Helen Williams, Director of the Bureau of Correspondence Study at the State University of Iowa (SUI; now the University of Iowa), received a letter of a kind that independent study directors at American universities continue to receive today. Written in pencil on a sheet of cheap, lined paper torn from a tablet, it bore the rubber stamp mark "CENSOR." The number 9306 followed the writer's name. A convict wanted information about studying advanced mathematics by correspondence. He described his previous math work, said he would like to study"The Calculus," and asked for advice on the best courses in which to enroll.[1]

Correspondence study (now generally called "independent study") offices have long responded to such letters with a course bulletin and perhaps a form letter stipulating enrollment procedures. In this case, however, the Director of Correspondence Study took the time to study the request. After consulting one of SUI's math professors, Williams suggested that the convict's completion of high school algebra and his independent work in plane trigonometry while in prison should have prepared him to do satisfactory work in analytic geometry. By paying a fee of $14.00, he could enroll for three semester hours of credit as an unclassified student.[2]

On December 1, 1930, Nathan Leopold, one of the country's most notorious convicts, drew a money order from his account in the warden's office of the Illinois State Penitentiary in Joliet. He then applied for enroll-

ment in the SUI program.[3] Leopold's enrollment in an SUI geometry course, by correspondence, marked the inauguration of a partnership between a notorious murderer and an obscure university bureaucrat that would lead to the creation and sustained operation of a rigorous, effective, and respected high school. This high school—formally named the Stateville Correspondence School (SCS)—would serve thousands of men throughout the penal systems of Illinois, then in a handful in other states, at no cost to the State of Illinois. This prisoner-run and prisoner-taught school endured until the early 1950s, when the Illinois State Penitentiary system completed the institution of a comprehensive system of state-funded prison education. It chose not to replace the Stateville Correspondence School but to integrate it into the new system. Thus, the informal, and largely accidental, partnership between Nathan Leopold and Helen Williams would have a profound impact upon prison education programs within the Illinois penal system, and—to a limited extent—beyond it.

Richard Loeb's and Nathan Leopold's murder of Bobby Franks in the Spring of 1924 has inspired numerous novels, films, and plays, the first of which—Robert Harris's play *Rope*—opened in 1929.[4] In addition to the usually sensationalized newspaper accounts from the 1920s, journalistic accounts have continued to appear in print periodicals and on Web sites. However, in spite of the wide and persisting popular interest in the "Crime of the Century," it has prompted little scholarly work. Until very recently, only Hal Higdon's *Leopold and Loeb: The Crime of the Century*, first issued in 1975, provided a comprehensive account.[5] In 2008, Simon Baatz, a professor at John Jay College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, published *For the Thrill of It: Leopold, Loeb, and the Murder that Shocked Jazz Age Chicago*, a scholarly book that could qualify for the "true crime" genre in bookstores.[6] It now represents the definitive account of the murder case and trial.

Material on the incarceration of Leopold and Loeb, Loeb's death, and Leopold's life after being paroled is understandably harder to obtain, although both Higdon and Baatz provided some information. Leopold's memoir, *Life Plus 99 Years*, is critical to the study of this period.[7] However, because it was a part of Leopold's strategy to obtain parole and release, it must be used cautiously, even skeptically. Not surprisingly, Leopold created a highly self-serving narrative. Reporter Gladys Erickson's *Warden Ragen of Joliet* provides useful detail on Loeb's murder and the latter stages of Leopold's incarceration.[8] With the exception of *Life Plus 99 Years*, none of these sources deal with the SCS in any detail.

Leopold and Loeb created SCS with virtually no assistance from the State of Illinois, or its penal system. Leopold's long-term friendship with Helen Williams, Director of the Bureau of Correspondence Study at SUI, pro-

vided a useful, high-quality secondary education to a population that previously had no access.

Courtesy of Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum.

Nathan Leopold

Courtesy of Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum.

Richard Loeb

Student-Convict and Adviser

In the spring of 1924, Leopold and his friend Richard Loeb kidnapped and murdered a fourteen-year-old boy named Bobby Franks, then sent a ransom note to his father. Although Leopold and Loeb had begun planning their crime in the late fall, their choice of a victim was last minute and almost random. While highly intelligent young men, they quickly failed as criminals. Once placed under arrest, their alibis and evasions fell apart. The district attorney asked for the death penalty. Only their youth—Leopold was nineteen, Loeb, eighteen—and their families' good sense in hiring Clarence Darrow saved them from the gallows.

Helen Williams had earned her undergraduate degree at SUI in 1910. After two quarters of graduate work in history at the University of Chicago, she taught school for two years in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She returned to Iowa City to work in various capacities for the SUI Extension Division. A slight woman, her picture reveals an infectious smile. She became the first Director of University Extension's Bureau of Correspondence Study in 1920.[9] At that time, SUI had been offering correspondence courses for only four

years. Williams would remain in the same position until 1949. She is now remembered as a pioneer in the field of collegiate distance education and in the delivery of college courses by radio. She was one of the few female administrators at SUI, albeit at a low rank. In 1990, the American Association for Collegiate Independent Study (AACIS) named its major prize for curriculum design "The Helen Williams Award."[10]

Courtesy of The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

Helen Williams, 1925

From the beginning of their incarceration, both Leopold and his friend and fellow felon enrolled in correspondence courses. Soon after arriving at the "Old Prison" at Joliet, Leopold began to work his way through the textbooks that William Rainey Harper, the founding president of the University of Chicago, had created for use in his Hebrew correspondence courses in the late nineteenth century. Loeb enrolled in a Latin course from Columbia University. Between them, they would enroll in numerous courses—both esoteric and practical—including Egyptian hieroglyphics, Greek comedy, Sanskrit, and business shorthand. During civil proceedings after his release from prison, Leopold would use his knowledge of Sanskrit to take notes so that he could keep them absolutely confidential.[11]

Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb differed from the usual correspondence student in several ways. They were not only convicts, but "lifers." Nineteen at the age of the Franks murder, the short, sallow Leopold had already received his undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago and was enrolled as a first-year law student at the same university. Richard Loeb, a tall, fair, outgoing young man, had graduated from the University of Michigan at eighteen and then begun graduate study in history at the University of Chicago. Both were graduates of elite private prep schools: Leopold from the Harvard School and Loeb from the University of Chicago's "U-High."

According to Leopold, while in prison, he became obsessed with learning how to calculate the area under a curve. "I got hold of a catalogue of the Home Study Department of the State University of Iowa and addressed a letter to the director. In so doing I acquired a friend who has stood by me steadfastly ever since."[12] Why Leopold chose to explore SUI courses rather than courses from the University of Chicago or some other institution is unknown. The most likely explanation is that he looked at the catalogues of several university programs—possibly shelved in the libraries at Stateville and Joliet or obtained by family members—and inquired about the courses that most interested him. Even today, convicts frequently send inquiries to every program for which they can find an address. The fact that Leopold received a personal answer from SUI, with a considered response to his question, no doubt made its program attractive. Williams's almost certain recognition of Leopold's name probably accounts for her decision to send an encouraging reply, rather than a form letter, to his inquiry.

While still working on his first SUI math correspondence course, Leopold asked to enroll in an advanced Hebrew course. This presented an embarrassing problem for Helen Williams. As often happened in correspondence/independent study programs, while the course listing appeared in the catalogue, the study guide and lesson sheets had never been written. Professor (and Rabbi) Moses Jung had agreed to write them but had never gotten around to the task.[13]

Williams contacted Professor Jung and explained the problem. "I am enclosing a letter from a person whose name I believe you will recognize at once as a prisoner in Illinois State Penitentiary at Joliet." She continued, "I am writing Mr. Leopold, telling him that I am asking for your advice, but I am not telling him that our course in Hebrew language has never been written. I believe this is the first actual request that we have ever had for it."[14] She suggested providing an "arranged" course, in which Leopold and Jung would communicate directly, outside the University's correspondence program. She would turn Leopold's entire tuition of $12 over to Jung, without taking the Correspondence Bureau's normal overhead charge. Jung assented. He not only guided Leopold through the arranged course, he worked with him one-on-one for several more years, as Leopold studied large portions of the *Talmud*, as well as medieval and contemporary Hebrew literature.[15]

Upon completing his lessons and receiving the professor's comments in Math 4C in March, 1941, Leopold asked Williams to approve John Taylor, Superintendent of Education for the Illinois State Penitentiary, to proctor his exams.[16] As has always been the practice in collegiate correspondence programs, exams had to be mailed to designated authority figures who observed the students as they took them. That approved proctor then sealed the examination, signed a statement that the student had taken it in his or

her presence, then mailed it back to the university. Williams approved Taylor as the proctor and mailed Leopold's exam to him. After receiving nothing from either Taylor or Leopold for more than a month, she wrote Taylor, gently reminding him that exams should be administered and returned promptly. "It would be a good thing if Mr. Leopold could take his examination before long."[17]

Williams did not know about the violence that had broken out inside both the "Old Prison" at Joliet and the more modern facility at Stateville, five miles away. The "Old Prison" had been in a state of high tension since late February, when guards—who had been tipped off—lay in wait for an expected escape attempt, then shot and killed three prisoners as they tried to scale the wall. The next day, the convicts set fires—one with Leopold's lighter—in retaliation. The guards quickly extinguished them. A riot broke out in the kitchen. The inmates broke windows, captured a guard captain, and broke his arm. The guards on the walls ended the incident by firing down into the yard, killing another two prisoners. Immediately after regaining control, the staff "shook down" the cells. When Leopold was allowed to return to his cell, he found that all of his books, correspondence, and papers had been confiscated.[18]

Shortly after the "Old Prison" riot, a guard told Leopold that he would be moved to the new facility at Stateville, where he had temporarily been housed earlier, and which he much preferred. Just as the prison bus transporting him and twenty-nine other prisoners pulled up to the Stateville gate, a riot broke out there. The bus returned to Joliet. A few days later, when the administration regained control, Leopold once again took the bus to the new facility.[19] Given the state of affairs, Superintendent Taylor's choice not to assign a high priority to proctoring Leopold's test is not surprising.

In late April, Taylor sent Williams two communications. In a conventional business letter, he simply said that he had not yet been able to schedule the exam. Also, he said, the textbook that Leopold had borrowed from the SUI library had been lost. He did not mention the shakedown. However, in an undated, handwritten note, Taylor told Williams that the riots had prevented him from administering the test; he hoped to be in a position to do it soon. Also, he had searched for the lost book so that Leopold could study for the exam, but had had no success. Williams used her own funds to purchase another copy of the textbook, which she mailed to Leopold so that he could prepare for the test. Finally, in late May, Taylor returned the completed exam and said that the "lost" textbook had been found and would be returned.[20]

Helen Williams became a sort of *de facto* academic adviser and advocate for Leopold, frequently working as a "go-between." In October, 1931, as Leopold was about to complete his second math course with Professor John Reilly, he asked Williams how to proceed: "I should like to work toward an

understanding of the Mathematics of Relativity. I have no idea how long this would require, nor what specific courses would be necessary, and it is precisely this point which I should like to have explained."[21]

Williams took Leopold's question to Professor Reilly, who suggested SUI's second course in integral calculus as the next logical step. After that, he would consider arranging some individual courses for Leopold. While his department unfortunately had a policy against offering advanced math courses by correspondence, Reilly hoped it could be changed. However, should that not happen soon, Leopold could take courses in differential equations, analytical geometry, mechanics, and perhaps the theory of equations. Williams passed his message along to Leopold.[22]

The Stateville Correspondence School (SCS)

Leopold credited Richard Loeb with raising the idea of creating a correspondence study high school inside Stateville. The sole school in the penitentiary offered only grades one through eight. It covered only the most fundamental skills. Most participants were barely literate, at least when they began. The elementary school's classification as a work assignment amounted to a disincentive. Students were not allowed to request other work assignments that offered greater status and slightly more commissary money. School assignments offered fewer privileges and a considerably lower status than jobs in the carpentry shop or kitchen, for example. Thus, inmates with more desirable work assignments rarely chose to leave them to attend school.

Beyond elementary school, proprietary (commercial, profit-seeking) correspondence schools offered the only alternative. Most offered little beyond lists of assigned readings followed by sheets of objective questions. Few offered serious instruction. Even then, only the few inmates whose families could afford to pay for such courses had access to them. In January, 1933, when the Stateville Correspondence School opened, only three men were enrolled in proprietary correspondence courses.[23]

Loeb and Leopold decided that the greatest need for education inside Joliet and Stateville was at the high school level. They chose the correspondence teaching-learning model for several reasons. They knew that few men would participate should they be forced to give up the status and privileges of their other work assignments. With correspondence courses, they could hold on to their work assignments and do their schoolwork during cell time. Because there were no extrinsic rewards for participation, Leopold and Loeb said, only men who sincerely wanted high school-level instruction for its own sake would enroll. In a formal proposal they prepared to submit to Education Superintendent John Taylor and Warden Frank Whipp, Loeb and Leopold explained:

> The advantages of this system are obvious. It would place a high school education within the reach of any inmate industrious enough to take advantage of the privilege. To those interested in some particular subject, such as history or languages, it would offer a chance to spend their spare time pleasantly and profitably. Finally, since certificates of completion could be given, following satisfactory work in a course, the inmate would have a definite goal to strive for. A great deal of the irregular studying, at the present time done by inmates, could thus be directed into channels which would benefit them and have a direct effect on their rehabilitation as members of society.[24]

Correspondence study was not a new idea in the United States generally, nor in prisons specifically. Indeed, this instructional format enjoyed great popularity in the period between the World Wars. During the 1920s, more than two million people enrolled in correspondence courses—usually vocationally or professionally oriented—each year. As Dorothy Canfield Fisher noted, that amounted to more students enrolled in all of the postsecondary institutions in the country.[25]

Penitentiary inmates often enrolled in correspondence courses, usually at their families' expense. However, some state-funded prison education programs made correspondence courses—supplied by either outside vendors or university extension programs—available to inmates. The New Jersey State Prison had introduced correspondence courses to the American penal system in 1906. By the 1920s, California inmates could take correspondence courses free of charge from the University of California Extension program. At San Quentin, residents could take a dozen"letter box"courses that had been written and printed—and were graded—inside the prison.[26]

There is no indication that Leopold and Loeb were influenced by other prison education correspondence course programs. However, from their own experience, they were familiar with correspondence study's advantages and limitations. It did not prevent men from holding desirable work assignments. Just as important, if not more so, it could be offered at virtually no cost to the institution.

Loeb, who sometimes did domestic work in Warden Whipp's quarters, told Mrs. Whipp about the program. She encouraged him to take it forward. Warden Whipp eventually granted Loeb a hearing that resulted in permission to open the correspondence school. Leopold and Loeb spent the last two months of 1932 preparing course materials. Leopold told Williams that he and Loeb had modeled their school on university departments such as hers. They intended to offer as comprehensive a high school curriculum as practicable. The teachers were inmate volunteers. Superintendent of Education John Taylor would supervise the entire project, to be known as the Stateville

Correspondence School (SCS).[27]

Leopold asked Williams for help. In particular, he needed lesson sheets for subjects that could be offered in the high school curriculum:

> I realize that this is a bold request, but I feel sure that in view of the very good purpose to which this material will be put, you will not consider me presumptuous in asking whether you could see your way clear to helping us in this way.[28]

He cautioned Williams to keep the information about the school to herself. He knew from experience that publicity could cause problems. Shortly after arriving at Joliet in 1924, he had begun teaching small groups of students. A story in the Chicago papers provoked an outcry about allowing a convict of his notoriety and "deficient character" to teach other men. The warden had then shut down his classes and Leopold had not taught since.[29]

Williams sent the written materials—course guides, lesson sheets, and exams—for numerous courses. The University of Chicago's high school—U–High—and its collegiate Home Study Department also contributed instructional materials. Several years later, the University of Illinois would contribute some courses. These materials proved invaluable as outlines and templates, but Loeb and Leopold decided that in order to work for their students, the materials should contain considerably more detail. Loeb wrote a complete textbook for *English A: Seventh and Eighth Grade English*. He designed this course around his own experience with prisoners and his perception of their practical educational needs. Because the greatest need of all for the men upon release would be to seek employment, he designed "English A" to emphasize business correspondence. This course consistently enrolled the highest number of students on an annual basis.[30]

In all cases, students would follow the course outlines, read assigned materials, then respond to typed lists of questions that had been edited by Loeb or Leopold and reviewed by Superintendent Taylor. Taylor would collect the students' answer sheets and deliver them to the volunteer inmate instructors for grading and commentary. Foreign language courses offered face-to-face sessions to complement correspondence work.[31]

Helen Williams enthusiastically supported the Leopold-Loeb high school project. In addition to outlines, lesson sheets, and other ancillary materials, she sent books that were out of date for her courses but potentially useful at the prison school. While incarcerated students taking SUI courses could borrow books from the campus library, as Leopold had, non-students—like SCS inmates—of course, could not. When an SCS instructor needed a book for use in writing a course, or when a student doing research wanted a book that SCS could not provide, Williams often would check it out

from the SUI library in her name and pay the postage to mail it out of her own pocketbook. She did this dozens—if not hundreds—of times in the 1930s. Sometimes, she could arrange for students to borrow books from sympathetic professors, like John Reilly. When prison instructors needed assistance on fine points of the disciplines they were teaching, Williams frequently would refer their questions to SUI professors with appropriate expertise who she believed should be sympathetic to the prison students.[32]

SCS's rules and procedures were few and simple. The program was entirely voluntary. While it required that students be qualified for high school work, it did not demand elementary school credentials. It recognized that many of the men were self-educated. The school office personnel and the Superintendent of Education evaluated applicants. If students had sufficient funds in their prison accounts, they were required to purchase textbooks, which averaged about $1.00 per course in 1936, and $1.50 per course in 1938.[33]

Students were expected to work on their lessons on their own time—meaning that they could retain their prison work assignments—at their own pace. When a student turned in a lesson, it would be graded and returned within twenty-four hours, the school promised. Students who ran into problems that could not easily be resolved in writing could request an appointment with the instructor. Or, if the instructor spotted the problem, or if the student simply stopped turning in lessons, he could summon the student. Halfway through the course, and again at the end, the student went to the school office for a proctored exam, so that there could be no doubt about who was really doing the course work.[34]

Leopold, presumably with the assent of the SCS faculty and the various education superintendents, repeatedly published a guiding rationale in the school's annual reports. This boilerplate suggested that education could lead to better employment prospects for men who had been released, which should lead to reductions in rates of recidivism and parole violations, a proposition that Leopold would test statistically. But further,

> [the school] furnishes an adequate outlet for pent-up mental energy, which finds few other opportunities for vigorous application; it offers opportunity to keep the mental faculties alert by constant exercise; above all it furnishes an excellent distraction from the brooding and worry to which many prisoners are prone.[35]

If true, the SCS program would not only improve the mental health of the inmates, it would help make the prisons safer and more secure facilities.

Even though the new school taught felons and employed a non-traditional teaching format, it developed some conventional features. SCS offered a full high school curriculum, with the exceptions of physics and

chemistry. For obvious reasons, the faculty could not find a way to overcome the lack of lab equipment and supplies, nor, presumably, the administration's concerns about security. Because so many men lacked language skills, the school offered remedial courses in English grammar and composition.[36] Its course manuals (study guides) rivaled those of the large state and private universities. This is because the bulk of the first round of courses originated at the Universities of Chicago, Iowa, and Illinois. Loeb's—and especially Leopold's—commitment to academic standards also contributed to the instructional quality of SCS course materials. SCS issued a sophisticated, comprehensive *Handbook for Teachers*.[37] Marcie McGuire, a veteran independent study curriculum editor at the University of Missouri examined this publication and described it as follows:

> [it] provides useful and interesting information about the nature and scope of teaching in the prison schools. The chapters introduce both theoretical and practical topics, including the aim of education in correctional institutions, theory of adult education, nature of curriculum and assessments, and potential problems. . . . It also provides practical guidelines for new teachers (e.g., descriptions of the types of students, characteristics of effective teachers, sample grading scales, lists of available tests, samples of marked papers, lesson plans).[38]

Prison regulations necessitated an indirect communications channel. Because inmates' outgoing letters were strictly regulated in number and frequency, all mail related to the high school had to be addressed to the Education Superintendent. Leopold told Williams to send letters pertaining to the school to Superintendent John Taylor, who would pass them to him.[39] Most of the letters he sent to her were mailed over the signatures of Taylor and subsequent superintendents.

SCS opened on January 11, 1933, with twenty-two students enrolled in four courses—Spanish, English, history, and mathematics. Sixty-four additional students had applied for admission, pending verification of their claims to have received an eighth-grade education. The Illinois State Penitentiary's administration—no doubt with a wary eye toward public reaction—stated its support for a program that "would help solve the problem of idleness."[40] Leopold and Loeb were both in Stateville at the time, but the correspondence method made it possible and convenient for men in Joliet to take courses, also. The two prisons were located only a few miles apart and operated under a single administration. Only the Spanish course demanded actual class meetings[41] and thus could not be offered outside Stateville.

The *Chicago Tribune* identified Richard Loeb as the "Head Master," a title

that does not appear in any of the archival sources pertaining to SCS. Loeb and Leopold administered the program under the supervision of the Education Superintendent. At no time was there an inmate principal, superintendent, or master. The SCS faculty members were a well-educated, colorful lot. Former University of Kansas student Teddy Dillon, the "society bandit," taught English.[42] Attorney, teacher, and kidnapper Joseph Pursifull offered Latin, while forger Mark Oettinger took charge of some of the math courses. The *Tribune* did not mention Nathan Leopold, even though he took the largest role in creating the school. Hal Higdon, the author of one of the major accounts of the Leopold-Loeb crime and prison time, speculated that the prison authorities, fearing public reaction, might have structured press releases in such a way that the two men's linked names never appeared in tandem.[43]

Indeed, both Loeb and Leopold (with his prior prison teaching experience) worried that the announcement might spark a negative public reaction that could brand the school as a frivolous and misdirected exercise. Leopold said:

> We'd obviate that by seeing to it that our courses were tougher and more complete than corresponding courses outside. We'd lean over backward in setting high academic standards—higher, just because we were convicts, than would be necessary in the free world.[44]

One Illinois-based correspondence school immediately complained about the competition. In a sidebar to a 1933 article on commercial correspondence schools, *Fortune* magazine noted that "the correspondence school started at Joliet Penitentiary by Richard Loeb, of Leopold-Loeb notoriety" was responsible for a decrease in the normally robust prison enrollments of the Moody Bible Institute. Besides placing the school in the wrong prison, *Fortune* erroneously stated that the University of Chicago had created some of the school's courses.[45]

Once the program was up and running, Warden Joseph Ragen of the Illinois penal system's Menard facility asked permission for inmates there to participate. Initially, few men at Menard were prepared for high school. Over time, however, enrollments grew to several dozen a year. Later, a handful of inmates from other male units of the Illinois penal system began to enroll.[46]

Leopold and Helen Williams maintained a respectful, but always businesslike, correspondence until 1934, when Leopold was admitted to the prison hospital for minor surgery. Williams sent Leopold a personal note, wishing him a quick recovery.[47] This initiated a personal correspondence that lasted until Leopold's death in 1971.

Later the same year, Williams told Leopold that she had been in Joliet recently, visiting friends. She had considered seeking permission for a visit,

"but since I felt so certain that my request would be refused I did not make the attempt."[48] Leopold was delighted:

> I was particularly touched, Miss Williams, by your desire to stop in for a little visit. I can think of nothing which would give me more pleasure and to which I would look forward more eagerly than the opportunity of meeting personally the lady who has been so extremely good to me.[49]

A year later, in preparation for a visit with the same friends, Williams applied for—and received—permission to visit Leopold. Warden Whipp allowed Leopold and Loeb to show her the school and the prison's Sociological Research Office. Williams and Leopold became fast friends. Leopold told Williams that he had "adopted" her; she was now "Aunt Helen." She began addressing him as "Babe," the nickname Leopold's family had given him as a child, and still used.[50] Although Williams had already made a major commitment of time and energy to SCS, her new friendship with Leopold strengthened the partnership that served hundreds of convicts during the 1930s.

A Partnership Ended

On the morning of January 28, 1936, Leopold and Loeb were enjoying some of the privileges that had been conferred on them—directly or indirectly—for their work with SCS. Instead of going to the dining hall for breakfast, they had sweet rolls delivered to their cells. When they got to their office, they graded papers and worked on plans for a new math course. One of the chief privileges was the washroom and shower that came with the school office. Loeb decided to take a shower before lunch. While Loeb showered, a former cellmate, James Day, entered the room, carrying a straight razor that he had kept hidden in the Protestant chaplain's office. A few minutes later, Loeb staggered out of the washroom, having sustained at least 56 slashes. Day handed the weapon to a guard and said that he had been forced to defend himself against Loeb's homosexual advances. With Leopold in the room, Loeb bled out in the prison hospital in spite of the efforts of seven doctors.[51]

Day's motive has never been clearly established. Using essentially the same sources, Leopold's *Life Plus 99 Years*, and stories from Chicago newspapers, the authors of the two scholarly accounts, Hal Higdon and Simon Baatz, offered differing interpretations of the role of prison privileges—most important, commissary goods—in provoking Day's attack. Until Joseph Ragen's arrival in 1935, inmates had enjoyed unlimited commissary privileges. They

could spend as much money as they liked from their prison accounts. Prisoners whose families deposited money in their accounts therefore could supply other inmates with cigarettes, candy, and other goods. Loeb's family gave him an allowance of fifty dollars a month. He used it to provide goods to friends and others. In addition, Leopold and Loeb's positions at the school made them "Stateville's princes of privilege."[52]

Ragen ended the largess of the more monied prisoners, who were no longer able to reward friends or control other inmates. Higdon leaned toward attributing Day's actions to his resentment over no longer receiving "perks" from Loeb. Baatz offered another interpretation: Leob had used his relative wealth and his ability to award privileges to maneuver Day into assenting to his persistent sexual advances. The respected Catholic chaplain, Father Eligius Weir, took the opposite position and said that, if anything, Day had been enraged because Loeb had rejected his sexual overtures.[53]

The state's attorney tried Day, demanding the death penalty. However, as usual, no prisoner would testify against another, particularly in a capital case. Beyond that, the foreman later described a homophobic consensus among the members of the jury. Finally, it is possible—even probable—that nobody wanted to convict the man who had killed one of the perpetrators of the "crime of the century." After less than an hour of deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of "not guilty."[54]

Warden Ragen, frustrated by the verdict, sought to avoid further trouble by removing both Day and Leopold from the general population. He sent Leopold to the mental unit, or "bug cells." Ragen told Leopold personally that this was for his own protection. Leopold never accepted this reasoning. Because of this isolation, he could not resume his SCS work assignment for a full six months.[55]

When Leopold returned to the general population, he seriously considered asking for permission to trade his work assignment, which consisted of administering SCS and teaching some of its courses, for something new. His association of the school with Loeb made it difficult to continue, he said. However, when he had a chance to review the status of the school, he became concerned. While a clerk had kept the mechanical operations moving smoothly, Leopold found that many men had just quit sending in lessons. He contacted all currently enrolled students. Many got started again, and a few dropped out. The other teachers were not as strongly committed to SCS's survival as he. Most of them who asked for other work assignments, with more privileges, had no trouble securing them. It was becoming difficult to replace instructors who were paroled. Leopold talked enough instructors into continuing to keep the school going, saying that it should be a memorial to Richard Loeb.[56]

SCS Reaches Maturity

Leopold continued to run the school without Loeb but with increasing support from the warden's office and from Helen Williams. SCS began to gain notice at the state and national levels. The school added a selection of college-level math and foreign language courses in 1938, then in 1939 renamed itself the Stateville Correspondence School and Junior College, a title used until the State of Illinois's consolidation of its prison education system in 1954.[57]

In 1939, a convict named Edward Farrant, who was serving a life term in Iowa's Ft. Madison Penitentiary, asked for Williams's help in finding a Spanish correspondence course. Like most convicts, Farrant was indigent. Williams referred him to a Works Progress Administration (WPA) program that provided college correspondence courses to convicts. However, the WPA's contractor had no Spanish course at the proper level. Farrant again asked Williams for help.[58]

She enlisted Leopold, who suggested that either she or the warden at Ft. Madison should ask Warden Ragen if he would allow Farrant to enroll in the Stateville program. Ft. Madison's Director of Education made the formal request on Farrant's behalf. Leopold, writing in the name of Stateville Superintendent of Education P. J. Fitzgibbon, who had replaced Taylor, relayed the word back that,"The Warden feels that for the time being, we are not in a position to extend service outside the State of Illinois."[59]

Ragen changed this policy in 1941, Leopold's last year in SCS. Williams relayed word to Farrant that Stateville now welcomed enrollments from Ft. Madison inmates. Under the new policy, students from anywhere in the United States could enroll. That year, prisoners from two Iowa institutions, New York's Attica prison, and the South Dakota Penitentiary at Sioux Falls enrolled in SCS courses. In 1958, at Leopold's final parole hearing, Williams said that by the early 1940s, students from nineteen states had enrolled in SCS courses.[60]

Professional educators, particularly from the Chicago area, began to take notice of SCS. In the late 1930s, Dr. William Johnson and Dr. Don Rogers of the Chicago Board of Education administered some of the SCS tests to 500 high school students. According to Leopold, the Chicago students' highest grades were a close match to the lowest grades of SCS students. Johnson arranged to grant SCS students academic credit at any Chicago high school upon their release. The state-level educational bureaucracy also inspected SCS and adopted the same policy. When SCS added junior college-level courses to its curriculum, it changed its name to the Stateville Correspondence School and Junior College.[61]

The SCS's inmate faculty created an honorary Advisory Council of five

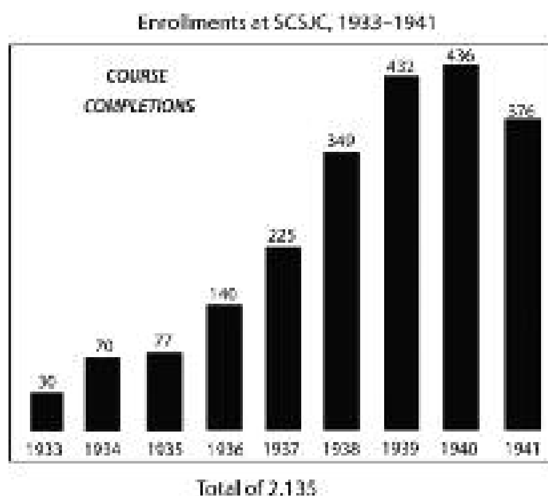
people who had significantly assisted the school. University of Chicago Professor Ernest Burgess, Indiana University Professor Edwin Sutherland, and Northwestern University Professor Arthur Todd—all sociologists—as well as Father Elegius Weir and Helen Williams received this honor. Thereafter, every annual report, study, and other official document carried the names of this group.[62]

Leopold designed a study that compared the rates of parole violations after release by inmates who had taken courses with SCS against those who had not. He received top-drawer assistance with his research design. University of Iowa professor E. F. Lindquist, who created the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, still used heavily across the United States, and who would later introduce the American College Testing Program (ACT), was already a world-renowned authority on testing. When Leopold told Williams that he wanted to do a study to test the worth of SCS classes, she contacted Lindquist and asked if he could help. Lindquist consented, providing advice on some of the statistical tests. Leopold released this study in 1940 and published its findings in the SCS 1941 *Annual Report*.[63]

Overall, Leopold found that when compared with nonstudents serving in the same years, only about half the number of SCS students violated parole. He conceded that other variables, such as age and intelligence, accounted for much of the difference. However, with Professor Lindquist's assistance, he controlled for such factors. "When correction is made for all these factors," he said, "students violate parole from a third to a fourth less than do comparable non-students."[64] He explained, "The chances the difference in favor of the students is due to chance are one in twenty-five."[65]

This was good enough for Helen Williams. She showed the study off to several interested SUI professors. She told sociologist F. E. Haynes, "He [Leopold] has been trying to prove that the prison school is a good thing and I believe he has proved it scientifically."[66]

Between 1933, when Leopold, Loeb, and Warden Whipp opened SCS, and 1941, when Leopold applied for other work assignments (although he continued to grade some correspondence courses), students in the Joliet, Stateville, and Menard units of the Illinois penal system, plus a handful of other units, completed a total of 2,135 correspondence courses, ranging from a low of 30 in the first year to 436 in 1940. Figure 1 provides a tally of course enrollments. Like other correspondence schools, SCS counted enrollments in individual courses. It did not use a head count. By 1941, SCS offered a selection of 120 courses. That year, its faculty graded and returned an average of 968 lessons per month, with each student averaging 2.3 lessons completed monthly. It did not record enrollments from institutions outside Illinois in its count.[67]



Source: *SCSJC Annual Report*, 1941.

Figure 1

By March of 1941, Leopold had long since decided that he needed to leave the school. Warden Ragen had cancelled all of the privileges that had once made it a plum assignment. It had devolved to a situation of close confinement and hard work. After asking several times for a new job and being ignored, Leopold approached new Warden J. R. Doody in the prison yard and asked him directly for a new assignment, preferably in the x-ray room of the prison hospital. After more than a month, he received notice to report to the hospital for his new assignment. Even though Leopold would never again be involved in the administration of SCS, he would continue to grade courses—including Latin—for its students until the early 1950s.[68]

The SUI's Correspondence Bureau apparently closed its file on SCS at that time. With the exception of a 1947 request to borrow a library book, the last items in the Nathan Leopold Papers at the University of Iowa are from May, 1941. There is no evidence that Helen Williams maintained any involvement with SCS after that date. SCS continued its operations until 1954, when the Illinois State Prison School System merged it into a comprehensive educational program, offering both correspondence study and residential instruction, known as Stateville Schools.[69]

A Convict's Motive

Why did Leopold and Loeb invest so much time and effort in creating, then administering, SCS? Why did Leopold persist in his stewardship? Did

the two cons envision the school as an opportunity to provide a needed service to men they considered oppressed and in need, or did they exploit it as a means of making serving time easier, more pleasant, and, with luck, shorter? According to Leopold, Loeb advanced the idea as a way to improve the educational opportunities inside Joliet and Stateville. The educational program, such as it was, was definitely limited and lacking. He continued it out of a sense of duty to Loeb, he claimed.

Leopold presented his version of his motives in his memoir, *Life Plus 99 Years*. His chief reason for writing it was to promote and enhance his chances for parole. Opportunism was definitely a factor. However, his long correspondence with Helen Williams seems to reveal a genuine idealism. He also took obvious pride in the State of Illinois's certification of the school's effectiveness and the post-release success of some of its alumni.[70]

Administering SCS offered some immediate, tangible rewards. Once it was operational, the pay matched that of such desirable assignments as the woodworking shop and the kitchen. That had not been the case in earlier educational programs. This was enough to keep Leopold and Loeb flush in prison currency—tobacco and other commissary goods—until Warden Ragen changed the rules. In time, Warden Whipp assigned the school an office, one with its own washroom. This gave Leopold and Loeb a great degree of privacy, a rare and precious commodity in prison. They had unprecedented access to most parts of the prison. At least once, their privileged status saved them from serious disciplinary trouble. A guard captain discovered Loeb, Leopold, and two other men sharing a bottle of good whiskey. While the four were immediately sent to solitary confinement, in under an hour, both Loeb and Leopold were released to the general population.[71] However, they had not expected such privileges when they began planning the school.

Like any school, anywhere, using any teaching format, SCS experienced cheating problems. Warden Ragen initiated the practice of recording all grades in each student's"jacket" (file), so that the parole board could consider school participation when evaluating parole applications. This attracted men with no real interest in school other than beefing up their jackets. Sometimes convicts would find someone else to do their lessons. This tactic had little impact, however, because each course required two proctored exams. However, after Warden Ragen left in 1941, the school's instructors, who had been residing in a different area than the students, were moved back into common housing, and most of their privileges were withdrawn. According to Leopold, he heard "rumors" that embittered teachers were selling grades. After about a year, and Ragen's return, the teachers were moved away from most of their students and back into a separate cell house. At least, according to Leopold, the selling of grades then ceased.[72]

Gene Lovitz, who would later write a biography of poet Carl Sandburg, advanced a cynical view of Leopold's motivation. Lovitz began a sentence for armed robbery at Stateville in 1948. He and Leopold became close friends and regularly talked for hours about all manner of topics. Their friendship ended when Lovitz rejected what he considered Leopold's sexual advances. Even so, he maintained the highest regard for Leopold's intelligence. He passed his reactions along to Carl Sandburg, who then began to take an interest in Leopold's parole applications. However, for all of his regard for Leopold's intellect, Lovitz believed his achievements were overrated and that "he and Loeb had established the prison school for the opportunity of getting together."[73]

While Loeb probably and Leopold certainly had self-serving motives, their school nonetheless benefited the penal system and population of Illinois. There can be no doubt that the two men made SCS a useful, effective, and respected institution. Several university educators—most important, Helen Williams—gave them strong assistance. As mentioned earlier, formal external evaluations by Illinois and Chicago education authorities, as well as University of Chicago and Northwestern University professors, provided external validation of the school's worth.[74]

A Lasting Friendship

While Williams's involvement with SCS effectively ended in 1941, she maintained her correspondence and friendship with Leopold. For ten years, she travelled to Stateville to attend all of his parole and clemency hearings. In 1958, Williams was among a group of witnesses, including Carl Sandburg, who appeared to testify in what turned out to be Leopold's final parole hearing.

She recounted Leopold's personal academic achievements and his role in creating and maintaining SCS. She concluded,"My acquaintance with him has shown him to be generous, thoughtful, ready to help those who have not had his advantages. In short, following the Judeo-Christian ethics of behavior, even to the point of forgiving his enemies."[75]

Upon his release on March 13, 1958, Leopold moved to Castaner, Puerto Rico, to work as an x-ray technician in a missionary hospital operated by the Church of the Brethren. He earned a master's degree in medical social work at the University of Puerto Rico, coming in first in his class and winning election as class president. He later taught math there—in Spanish. He wrote a book, *A Checklist of the Birds of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands*.[76]

Leopold chafed under the terms of his parole. He frequently broke all of them, he told his attorney. "I have visited most of the better whore-houses, cheap bars, and gambling casinos in greater San Juan and like 'em fine."[77] In

1961, he received parole-board permission to marry Trudi Feldman Garcia, a widow he met at a *Seder* dinner. Upon his final release from parole in March, 1963, Leopold could travel as he pleased. Among his other trips, he and Trudi visited Helen Williams in Iowa City. She later visited them in San Juan.

A collection of Leopold's letters to Helen Williams—written after his release—now held in the private collection of an owner of the Web site AmericanLegends.com, reveals that he frequently discussed with her Stateville "alumni," politicians, parole board members, and prison employees he disliked. He expressed a special degree of contempt for Joseph Ragen, even though the Warden had strongly supported his parole application.[78]

Leopold sold an option for the film rights to his story to the actor Don Murray in 1962. Aware that funding for the project was not a sure thing, he nonetheless found the prospect exciting. He told Williams to start thinking about how she would like to be portrayed. Would she want her name used, for example?[79] Perhaps she would prefer to be a lady older than Leopold, "connected with a university." However,

> Even that, I am afraid, would not veil you entirely from the folks who know you. But gosh! If I had ever done for another one-tenth of what you have done for me, I'd be so proud that I'd want the whole world to know it. Please think about it and don't make a snap judgment.[80]

When Murray wrote his "treatment," he reduced Williams to a small, elderly, unnamed woman who attends the parole hearing and "gives a moving message of faith" on Leopold's behalf.[81]

Murray let his option expire due to an inability to raise funds for the project. Leonard Rayner, a producer, bought an option that expired for the same reason in 1967. The partial treatment his writer produced did not include a character based on Williams. Another actor, Tom Bosley, expressed an interest in buying rights to Leopold's story to make a film that would not deal with his crime or trial but would concentrate on his "good works," including SCS. Not surprisingly, Leopold liked the concept. However, when Bosley learned that an option was currently in effect and that he would have to wait until it expired, he broke off communications. Don Murray made another unsuccessful attempt to secure funding in 1971. In February of that year, just months before his death, Leopold told Williams that the film would not be made that year.[82]

Helen Williams and Nathan Leopold remained friends until his death by heart attack in San Juan on August 30, 1971. Upon Williams's death in Iowa City five years later, Trudi Feldman Leopold said,

> Nathan was not held in high esteem by most of the world. Still, this gallant little lady, despite warnings from many of her friends and acquaintances who warned her against him, chose to ignore those pleas and continued to help him in every way possible until his death.[83]

Williams's assistance to—and friendship with—Nathan Leopold dominated her brief, twenty-six-line obituary. Her long and distinguished career in collegiate distance education received comparatively little attention.[84]

Conclusion

This account of Nathan Leopold, Helen Williams, and the Stateville Correspondence School is neither a straight crime story nor an inspirational story of redemption. The principals acted from motives both ambiguous and unclear. However, this odd partnership between one of the most notorious murderers of the twentieth century and an unknown, low-status educational administrator, working on the margin of her university, resulted in the creation of a school that provided a rigorous and respected secondary education to a population that the State of Illinois had chosen to ignore. Until after World War II, it represented the only opportunity for formal education at the secondary and junior college levels in the Illinois penal system. It taught via a format being used throughout the United States, and the world, to extend access to educational opportunity to places and to populations the established educational institutions had little or no interest in reaching. When the State of Illinois finally created a comprehensive prison education system, it incorporated the SCS correspondence program as one of its four major divisions. The partnership of the notorious murderer and the low-key educator exceeded all reasonable expectations.

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Notes

[1] Nathan Leopold to Secretary, Bureau of Correspondence Study, State University of Iowa, November 20, 1930, Nathan Leopold Papers, University of Iowa Libraries (hereafter cited as Nathan Leopold Papers).

[2] Helen Williams to Nathan Leopold, November 22, 1930, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[3] Warden's Office Voucher, December 1, 1930, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[4] Simon Baatz included an essay on the creative works inspired by, or derived from, the Leopold-Loeb case in *For the Thrill of It: Leopold, Loeb, and the Murder that Shocked Jazz Age Chicago*, (New York: Harper, 2008), 249-251.

[5] Hal Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb: The Crime of the Century* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1999).

[6] Simon Baatz, *For the Thrill of It: Leopold, Loeb, and the Murder that Shocked Chicago* (New York: Harper, 2008).

[7] Nathan Leopold, *Life Plus 99 Years* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958).

[8] Gladys A. Erickson, *Warden Ragen of Joliet* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1957).

[9] Jack Edward Bass, "The History of the State University of Iowa: The Extension Division" (master's thesis, State University of Iowa, 1943), 29-30.

[10] Von Pittman, "Out on the Fringe: Helen Williams and Early Correspondence Study." *American Educational History Journal*, 33, no. 1 (2006).

[11] Hal Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb: The Crime of the Century* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 304, 327; "Loeb Studies Latin in Jail: Chicago Slayer Enrolled in Columbia Home Study Division," *New York Times*, November 4, 1927.

[12] Leopold, *Life,* 188-189.

[13] Williams to Leopold, March 16, 1931; Helen Williams to Moses Jung, March 16, 1931, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.; Leopold, *Life*, 117.

[16] Leopold to Williams, March 2, 1931, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[17] Williams to John Taylor, April 23, 1931, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[18] John Bartlow Martin, "Nathan Leopold's Thirty Desperate Years: Murder on His Conscience," pt.2, *Saturday Evening Post,* April 9, 1955, 71.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Williams to John Taylor, April 30, 1931; Helen Williams to Nathan Leopold, May 1, 1931; John Taylor to Williams, Undated; John Taylor to Helen Williams, May 22, 1931, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[21] Leopold to Williams, October 26, 1931, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[22] Williams to Leopold, October 29, 1931, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[23] Leopold, *Life*, 223-224; "Plan for High School Correspondence Courses Under the Direction of Professor Taylor," undated manuscript, Nathan Leopold Papers; *Stateville Correspondence School Annual Report* (1936), 2, copy from Sheldon Glueck Papers, Special Collections Department, Harvard Law School Library, Cambridge. Series XII, Subseries a, Box 55, File 4; *Stateville Correspondence School and Junior College Annual Report* (1941), 8, 13, copy from the collection of American Legends, Inc. (hereafter cited as American Legends collection).

[24] "Plan for High School Correspondence Courses Under the Direction of Professor Taylor," undated manuscript, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[25] Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *Why Stop Learning?* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1927), 23; Walton S. Bittner and Hervey F. Mallory, *University Teaching by Mail* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 31.

[26] Ray Mars Simpson, "Prison Stagnation Since 1900," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology,"* 26, no. 6 (March 1936), 879-882; Benjamin Justice, "A College of Morals: Educational Reform at San Quentin Prison, 1880-1920," *History of Education Quarterly*, 40, no. 3 (Fall 2000), 280-301.

[27] Leopold, *Life*, 226; Leopold to Williams, December 1, 1932, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Leopold, *Life*, 226; Williams to John Taylor, December 6, 1932, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[30]"Loeb, as Head Master, Opens Prison School," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 12, 1933; Williams to Edward J. Tarrant, May 2, 1941, Nathan Leopold Papers; Leopold, *Life*, 226; *SCS Annual Report* (1936), 2; *SCSJC Annual Report* (1938), copies from Sheldon Glueck Papers, Special Collections Department, Harvard Law School Library, Cambridge. Series XII, Subseries a, Box 55, file 4.

[31] *SCSJC Annual Report* (1941), 8, 13, American Legends collection.

[32] Leopold, *Life*, 190; Williams to Leopold, May 27, 1931; Williams to Leopold, December 21, 1932; P.J. Fitzgibbon to Williams, December 14, 1936, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[33] *SCS Annual Report* (1936), 1; *SCSJC Annual Report* (1938), 1.

[34] *SCS Annual Report* (1936), 1; *SCSJC Annual Report* (1941).

[35] *SCSJC Annual Report* (1941), American Legends collection.

[36] *SCSJC Annual Report* (1941) 5, American Legends collection.

[37] Statesville Correspondence School, *A Handbook for Teachers in the Stateville Schools*, undated, Leopold and Loeb Archive, Series LXXXV (Elmer Gertz Papers,), Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Library (hereafter cited as Leopold and Loeb Archive).

[38] Marcie McGuire to Von Pittman, July 15, 2008, in the author's possession. Marcie McGuire has served as the Head Editor of the Center for Distance and Independent Study at the University of Missouri since 1998. She is responsible for the development and editing of curricular materials for more than 150 collegiate and 200 high school level courses offered via distance education formats. Before taking this position, she wrote and edited curricular materials for the Project Construct National Center at the University of Missouri. From 1987 until 1993, McGuire wrote and tested curricular materials for the University of Missouri's Assessment Resource Center. She has taught college-level composition at the University of Missouri and Stephens College.

[39] Leopold to Williams, December 1, 1932, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[40]"Loeb, as Head Master, Opens Prison School" *Chicago Tribune*, January 12, 1933.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb*.

[43] Ibid., Chicago Tribune, "Loeb."

[44] Leopold, *Life*, 225.

[45]"Smaller Fry," *Fortune*, 7, no. 6, (June 1933), 66.

[46] Leopold, *Life*, 232; *SCS Annual Report*, (1941), 33, American Legends collection.

[47] Leopold, *Life*, 189-190.

[48] Williams to Leopold, May 22, 1934, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[49] Leopold to Williams, May 28, 1934, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[50] Leopold, *Life*, 189-190; P. J. Fitzgibbon to Williams, March 18, 1935; Nathan Leopold Papers.

[51] Leopold, *Life*, 266. Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb*, 295-300.

[52] Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb*, 292.

[53] Ibid., 292-294; Baatz, *For the Thrill*, pp. 430-431.

[54] Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb*, 300.

[55] Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb*, 303; Leopold, *Life*, 272.

[56] Leopold, *Life*, 281-282; 293.

[57] *SCSJC Annual Report* (1938), 1 American Legends collection.

[58] Edward Farrant to Williams, April 8, 1940, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[59] J. E. Rees to P. J. Fitzgibbon, May 15, 1940; P. J. Fitzgibbon (Leopold) to Williams, May 20, 1940, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[60] Williams to Edward Farrant, May 20, 1941, Nathan Leopold Papers; *SCS Annual Report* (1941), 12, American Legends collection; Elmer Gertz, *A Handful of Clients* (Chicago: Follett Publishing, 1965), 79.

[61] Leopold, *Life*, 283.

[62] Leopold, *Life*, 283-284.

[63] *SCS Annual Report* (1941), American Legends collection; P. J. Fitzgibbon (Leopold) to Williams, April 29, 1940, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[64] P. J. Fitzgibbon (Leopold) to Williams, August 29, 1940, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[65] *SCS Annual Report* (1941), 4, American Legends collection.

[66] Williams to F. E. Haynes, April 30, 1940, Nathan Leopold Papers.

[67] *SCS Annual Report* (1941), 5, 14-16, American Legends collection.

[68] Leopold, *Life*, 293, 296, 347-348.

[69] *Illinois State Prison School System, A Survey of the Stateville Schools* (1957), unpublished report, Leopold and Loeb Archive, box 14, folder 7.

[70] Leopold, *Life*, 233-234.

[71] Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb*, 290.

[72] Leopold, *Life*, 282-283.

[73] Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb*, 307-308.

[74] Leopold, *Life*, 255, 283.

[75] Cited in Gertz, *A Handful of Clients*, 80.

[76] Nathan Leopold, *A Checklist of the Birds of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands*, bulletin no. 168, Agricultrual Experimental Station, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, 1963.

[77] Leopold to Elmer Gertz, May 4, 1947, cited in Higdon, *Leopold and Loeb*, 337.

[78] Leopold to Williams, March 16, 1964, American Legends collection; Gertz, *A Handful of Clients*, 146. Leopold praised Ragen's skills and fairness as an administrator in his memoirs. This was no doubt a political position, since he wrote the book as part of his campaign to obtain parole.

[79] Leopold to Elmer Gertz, July 26, 1968, Leopold and Loeb Archive, box 1, folder 6; Leopold to Williams, March 2, 1964, American Legends collection.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Don Murray, *Beyond the Night: A film Outline from Life Plus 99 Years*, undated film treatment, Leopold and Loeb Archive, box 1, folder 6.

[82] Leopold to Elmer Gertz, July 26, 1968; Alfred Allen Lewis, *The Nathan Leopold Story: Outline for a screen treatment*, undated; Tom Bosley to Elmer Gertz, September 14, 1967; Leopold to Elmer Gertz, July 26, 1968, Leopold and Loeb Archive, box 1, folder 6; Leopold to Williams, February 1, 1971, American Legends collection.

[83] Trudi Leopold, unpublished manuscript, Helen Williams News File, University of Iowa.

[84] Obituary of Helen Williams, *Iowa City Press Citizen*, 8 January 1976.

With or Without Reservation:
An Indigenous Community Accesses Charter School Reform

Alison Reeves

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

One of the perhaps-unanticipated elements in the development of the charter school movement[1] has been the appearance of "ethnically focused" charter schools. Many Indigenous communities, looking for alternatives following centuries of inappropriate educational experiences, have embraced charter school reform.[2] Currently, there are (at least) forty-four Indigenous-serving charter schools in the United States. The missions of these schools include increasing academic achievement (the cornerstone of charter school legislation) but also other commitments such as promoting cultural recognition, revitalizing and maintaining Indigenous languages, promoting tribal sovereignty, and reclaiming community control of schools.

The Tohono O'odham,[3] like other United States tribes, have struggled since European contact for control over the education of their youth.[4] In the late 1990's, Ha:sañ Preparatory & Leadership School (HPLS), a public charter school, was founded to:

> … serve as an academically rigorous, bicultural and community based high school for the Tohono O'odham Nation. By infusing all aspects of the educational experience with elements of the O'odham Himdag (O'odham cultural heritage), the school will nurture individual students, helping them become strong and responsible contributors to the Tohono O'odham community.[5]

I was a co-founder of this school and have continued to be involved with the school in various capacities. In writing this I hope to present an account of what living inside a project like this can feel like, while recognizing that this entails, perhaps artificially, "assigning meaning to a series of experiences, after they have taken place, by means of emphasis, commentary, [and] omission."[6] The following is a story[7] of the winding path I took along with a small group of concerned educators, parents and citizens to initiate the operation of Ha:sañ Preparatory & Leadership School (HPLS), an Indigenous-serving charter school in Tucson, Arizona, and the challenges we faced as grassroots organizers trying to confront and resist the tragic effects of centuries of colonization.

Becoming a Social Justice Educator

After earning my degree in elementary education, I made a decision to teach kindergarten in the remote Four Corners area of the Navajo Nation. Although I had traveled, I had never lived outside of a 20-mile radius centered on my home in southern Illinois or been away from my family for any extended period of time. New to "Indian Country," I possessed very limited knowledge of the Navajo people, or Indigenous history more generally. This was a period of intense personal growth for me. I gained rudimentary expertise at the craft of teaching, explored my personal educational philosophy while teaching Navajo youth, and learned (perhaps most importantly) what a privileged, middle class upbringing I had enjoyed. These lessons happened in the uncomfortable context of being an outsider for the first time in my life.

By the end of my third year of teaching in Chinle, Arizona, I was learning conversational Navajo, co-teaching classes in Canyon de Chelly with my teaching assistant who had family land there, and, in my personal time, exploring all but the most remote parts of the canyon on foot or by jeep. By many indicators I was successful at my job. I had a full roster of parent requests for children to be placed in my classroom, and some of my teaching practices were being replicated across my school district. Even so, I didn't really know why what I was doing "worked," and I was largely unaware of the socio-historical implications of my role as a teacher in a community that had been deeply affected by a history of colonization.

Family issues in southern Illinois prevented me from continuing in Chinle; I needed to live in a less remote area so I could travel home more easily. I knew I wanted to continue working with Indigenous youth because though I was teaching, I was also learning more about myself and the complexities of the world than ever before. I considered several locations and chose Sells, Arizona, the capital of the Tohono O'odham Nation, because it is only one hour from an airport in Tucson, and I could concurrently pursue

graduate work at the University of Arizona.

So, in 1995 I moved to Sells to accept a position as the Coordinator (and sole teacher) of gifted education in the public K-12 school district. I began my work with a promise to the administrator who hired me that I would work to promote student success in college, which he stated was a most pressing community concern. I was immediately impressed both with the potential of the students and with their parents' commitment to high-quality education. I received a warm welcome from community members, parents, and students who went out of their way to come to my classrooms or my apartment[8] to visit, share meals, and check on assignments. By the end of my first year, I started to realize some of the many challenges students faced, both in and out of school. Although there were many dedicated and talented teachers and administrators employed in the school district, there were some who regularly expressed their low expectations of students. One teacher commented to me that soon I would "stop trying so hard at my job." Although the student population was overwhelmingly Tohono O'odham, most classrooms were devoid of any acknowledgement of this in terms of curriculum or pedagogy. Textbook-based instruction was the order of the day in many classrooms, doing little to engage many students. Teacher and administrator turnover was extremely high, while staff and student morale was low.

Some of the high school students (and even some middle school students) in the gifted program were dropping out of school, stating that they were bored in their regular classes and in a few cases mentioning that other students were threatening them or stealing their homework. Some students only attended on days when they had my class or some other activity that interested them. Some students skipped school but were waiting to visit various teachers after school at the teacher housing to borrow books, use our computers, or just hang out. The local after-school program, offered by a community-based organization and including a garden and instruction in traditional arts such as basket weaving, was usually bustling with students – a far different climate than that at the school. All of this led me to believe that if the program and school climate could be improved, students would succeed. Many students were clearly interested in learning, just not necessarily in the school contexts available to them.

Obvious student resistance to irrelevant and unhelpful schooling was overshadowed by dramatic evidence of the more life-threatening struggles students faced outside of school, a reflection of the broader challenges faced by the reservation community. During my second year in Sells, one of my students took his own life.[9] A week later a student with whom I was working on an application to a top-ranked university was beaten nearly to death with a baseball bat.[10] One week later another sixth grader killed himself – three of my students in one month, and these were just three students I knew. Tragic

occurrences such as these illustrated to me the devastating effects of the grinding cycle of poverty[11] more provocatively than I had ever been challenged to consider. I felt moved to do something more that might improve educational opportunities affecting this vicious cycle.

In this same time frame, I started my doctoral studies at the University of Arizona. Working and living on the reservation while being a doctoral student created a "true revolution of values"[12]which led to a critical turning point in my life as an educator. In my university coursework, I learned about the historical schooling experiences of various U.S. minority groups, opening my eyes to equity issues I had not been fully aware of. My work with vulnerable youth in my school district helped me see that the issues I was studying were not only a part of America's history of schooling, but still were issues that needed to be confronted. I focused my studies on Indigenous education issues and realized that although I had now worked in two different Indigenous communities, I really hadn't critically considered my role. I began a long and painful process of confronting the meaning of my work with Indigenous youth up until this point. Did my work represent "true generosity" or "false charity?"[13] While I was confused about the ethics of my work, I also felt passion about the potential for doing things differently. If I was unintentionally functioning as an oppressor, how could I stop? What could I do to contribute to more emancipatory results in the community where I worked?

My first effort thusly informed was an attempt to expand options for gifted students at the school district. My studies in gifted education had led me to believe that all students can benefit from a challenging curriculum. My previous work as a teacher on the Navajo Nation had given me insight into the importance of including Indigenous language and culture in the curriculum. My goal then was for all students to have appropriate (meaning culturally relevant) and challenging education every day in all classes as opposed to a few hours each week for a few students in an enrichment pull-out program. A proposal made to the school board for expanding the enrichment services by hiring an enrichment teacher to coordinate this at each of four schools was initially approved, but later was scrapped for lack of funding. Increasingly, I felt morally and ethically responsible to make things better for the students I was serving. I would soon find out that many others shared similar concerns and felt their own sense of responsibility to the Tohono O'odham community and its vulnerable youth.

Growing Grassroots Support

Conditions were ripe for the design and implementation of a school like HPLS. Though some members of the founding group had not yet met, our parallel activities were planting the seeds for a bicultural college prep school

serving Tohono O'odham. The idea for the HPLS charter school and the subsequent charter application was conceived in 1997 by a small group of concerned parents, teachers, and community members who were deeply concerned about the profound lack of good educational opportunities provided to students attending the local schools on the reservation, and how this lack of opportunity negatively impacted the community. Three of us worked as teachers at the public school district in Sells and had first-hand experience with the educational challenges faced by our students. Two others were founders of Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA), a community-based organization in Sells. One founder was teaching at a remote reservation Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) high school where students faced similar challenges. Another important thread of support came from members of a group of concerned parents who had joined together to address issues facing the local public school district. Each of us contributed to writing and/or shaping ideas that would be included in the submitted charter application.

TOCA, then housed in a local church, was and continues to be a "community-based organization dedicated to creating a healthy, sustainable, and culturally vital community on the Tohono O'odham Nation."[14] Teachers in the local school district began working with TOCA through their community garden project (which had opened its arms to be an extension of my classroom), creating an alliance that would cultivate the new school. Juan,[15] one of the co-Directors of TOCA, explains how he came to be involved with HPLS:

> … I just was amazed at, seeing people who were not from the community trying to do this thing for the community, to better the community, and I knew it was going to be a hard fight, and I wanted to be a part of it, I wanted to be a part of history, in the sense that this was a huge undertaking and plus there wasn't any other community members really excited about it, or willing to go through what they had to go through to get the school started, and I was part of another, an organization that started, and it was just getting on its feet and was going through a lot of struggles and I thought, well that is not hard. It wasn't hard to be the person who gets criticized or ridiculed for starting up an organization that could benefit the community. I thought, hey, I did it once; I am going to do it again. I started to develop a thick skin at that point, not giving any thought to the backlash, or the . . . what was to come, and on a personal level, the idea of the charter school, and what it was about, you know was an amazing opportunity, for an O'odham boy or girl to go to and to learn about their culture, their language, and given the proper education, and not caught up in the system where they are just passed along...[16]

Important to the formation of the school was that it was designed with attention to community development principles. Two of the members of our charter-writing team (one who was a teacher in the local public school district, and one who was involved with TOCA) had extensive background in community development work and helped lead the charter-planning process in this direction. This meant that the mission and goals of the school were derived primarily from the felt needs of the Tohono O'odham community. From the outset, the community was defined as the parents, students, and community members who would be interested in such a school. This definition did not focus on the incumbent institutional stakeholders already responsible for educational conditions in these communities. Grassroots support helped define HPLS, kept the idea alive throughout the tumultuous pre-opening year, and continued to shape the school as it became established.

"It Was for My Brothers and My Cousins"

The concept for the school as outlined in the charter was based on several different sources. These sources included a 1996 survey of Tohono O'odham Nation members conducted by the Tohono O'odham Education Department, concerning priorities in education, which generally represented the expressed needs of the school's future parents, the founders' first-hand experiences with students, parents, and community members, and current research on appropriate educational practices for Native American youth. Although those of us on the initial planning team had various priorities guiding our involvement, review of several data points had converged on a concept that everyone could support: an academically rigorous, bicultural, experiential school. Each founder brought forward a unique perspective and passion that fueled his or her particular interest in getting involved. At the heart of each person's motivation was a desire to provide something different from, and more appropriate than, what was currently being offered. But we also shared a sense of urgency and a deep commitment to do whatever it might take to do something to change the status quo?

Kateri, a teacher in the community, had strong concerns about the quality of education available to students living on the main reservation and the effect it was having on students:

> In studying environmental education, the focus on my work in education was on helping students gain an internal locus of control – a sense of efficacy to change themselves and the world around them . . . . Two things really spurred me toward working at Ha:sañ: my hope to have an effect in the work I did with kids and my desire to work

with kids' communities that had truly been "shafted by the system" and deserved real opportunities. . . . . I sensed the serious injustice and felt a lot of passion toward a school such as Ha:sañ that could make a difference for kids. This passion grew exponentially over the next year or so of my life. Upon completion of my degree, I moved to Arizona and took a job as a science teacher at the [other] high school on the reservation . . . . Throughout the year at [this school] I not only personally understood why a school like Ha:sañ was needed; I felt the urgency with which such a school was needed. [The School] that I was teaching at had created a horrendous educational climate of low expectations and cultural alienation for students, which was made even worse by an entirely irrelevant curriculum and instruction. The combination of the relationship I developed with students that year and the sheer abandonment by the school of any appropriate educational expectations and preparations for students fueled my drive to help start Ha:sañ and to try to make it the polar opposite of the educational experiences the kids had lived through at the [other] schools.[17]

Gabriella explained that her interest in O'odham language and culture brought her to the project:

My whole reason for wanting to work at Ha:sañ was that I was personally invested in the mission, and in the community it was going to serve, in the stakeholders, the passion that went behind language revitalization, and cultural revitalization and maintenance, I was totally invested in that, and so I felt that it was appropriate as far as working there, but initially, when I was going to the university, I was seriously considering working at a Tucson public school or relocating somewhere, even though I had these strong passions, about language and culture, I was trying to figure out where I could make them work. Where is a school that will take that type of curriculum? After meeting the other stakeholders, we definitely had a shared mission and so I banded with them.[18]

Some of the founders had more personal reasons for getting involved, in addition to broader community concerns. Juan noted that the closing of a regional Indian boarding school[19] combined with lack of opportunity locally was an additional impetus towards his efforts:

My personal motivation was the fact that this was something new and something different, and also at that time I had my two younger

> brothers who were still in school, and the school that they were going to was actually going to be closing, the boarding school that my parents had decided to take them to, because they thought that they would get the best education that they could get there. But it was closing, and the schools on the reservation, I knew for a fact that they weren't very good, and the school needed to be started, it was a necessity, and . . . . It was for them, my brothers, and my cousins...[20]

"Dedicated to the O'odham People"

Each of us had particular hopes for what the school would accomplish and how it might provide something different and positive for students. Kateri, who had also experienced many tragedies in her work with students, wanted to create a school climate that would be more nurturing of vulnerable O'odham youth:

> I hoped that we would provide a context for students to develop their confidence and self-esteem, concurrently with their critical thinking skills to enable them to explore, question, and act on the world around them in ways they deemed positive for themselves and their community. I think we wanted to accomplish this through our mission to develop a more relevant curriculum and nurturing school climate for students . . . bicultural, bilingual, experiential, etc., which would prepare students to be successful in the paths they chose in life, whether it be a path toward college, a technical career, family, and/or community leadership.[21]

Juan hoped that the school would be a unique option for Tohono O'odham students in particular, focusing on language, culture and identity while helping students prepare for the future:

> . . . I saw it as an immersion school, language, and it involved a lot of the culture stuff in it, and it was solely dedicated to the O'odham people. I thought that finding who you are, as a person, in your tribe, definitely would help, bring in other things, like reading and writing and spelling and the school stuff, I thought that was the goal, but also to prepare and to get a better education and to go onto college. It was a preparatory school, and I didn't know if it was going to happen, it was a lot of hard work, and the people who chose to take on this task had a long fight [and] had a long road to reach...[22]

Roberto explained that although he supported a bicultural focus, college

preparation was never his main goal for the charter design:

> I always hoped that our kids would leave with a foundation in both their culture and the language and the dominant language and culture. I never envisioned college prep courses, it wasn't my goal . . . . I always thought that people or kids could be what they wanted to be, if it was college prep, it was kind of unfair to those that weren't planning to go to college, to have to take college courses, and preparing them for college which they would never go to . . .[23]

The Politics of School Reform: "A Long Road to Reach"

With little but these motivations, hopes, dreams, and a handful of supporters, we submitted an application to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) in June, 1997. The ASBCS provisionally approved the application that fall. At the time, provisional approval meant that the charter application was complete and that planning could continue pending a second level of approval. This provisional approval gave us the impetus and permission to begin working on finding a site for a school that was intended to open the following fall. Consistent with the reaction of some other rural districts in Arizona toward charter school competition,[24] the planning year was fraught with obstacles and challenges stemming from tensions between us and some officials of the local school district over the provisionally-approved charter application.

Because of the rural and small-town setting on the reservation, word spread rapidly about the idea for the school and the provisional approval from the ASBCS, long before there was an actual building that could be called a school. Because the local school district was politically connected through its governing board to churches and tribal government offices on the main reservation, each of us felt the burden of the conflict about the school, to varying degrees and extents. School district personnel called on those of us involved with the charter writing who were teaching in the local school district to demand explanations for the charter application. I had signed the publicly-available charter application, and was directly associated with the charter project; this caused me to be an initial focus of the local school district's attention.

During the workday, on September 11, 1997, I received a phone call from my supervisor requesting information on the charter school application process. I responded, including a copy of the state statute regarding public school district employees being protected from reprisal for involvement with starting a charter school, and the matter quickly escalated to the school district Superintendent. On September 23, 1997, I was asked to sign for

receipt of a letter from the Superintendent intended to"express the substance of [his] concerns as well as [his] expectations concerning your employment with the District during this school year."[25] This memo detailed concerns about conflicts of interest relating to the college prep mission of the planned charter school vis-à-vis my role as coordinator of district gifted education, potential use of district resources during the charter application process, and included a request for information including:

> . . . an explanation of all information-gathering procedures you have pursued in connection with the charter school application. In particular I would like to know whether and to what extent this information gathering occurred during your work time with the school district, whether and to what extent school district or student records were used, and whether and to what extent you used your position as an employee of the school district in general, and your position as coordinator of gifted programs in particular to facilitate the gathering of information for the charter school application . . . at your earliest convenience.[26]

I had naively assumed that the charter application either would be well received or would attract little notice. The planned school did have a college preparatory mission, but it was being planned as an option for all potential high school students, not only the best and the brightest (in line with admission requirements for Arizona charter schools that prohibit admission criteria). Accordingly, I replied to the same school district administrator that:

> The state law clearly states that charter schools as public schools cannot discriminate based on test scores; amongst other things . . . this information is formally articulated on the last page of our charter application. It is my belief that all Tohono O'odham youth are capable of attending college and assuming leadership roles.[27]

I further noted,"Any and all information used in the charter application was derived from information which is a matter of public record,"[28] which was the case, though this would not be the last time this topic would come up. Finally, I pledged my commitment to the students I was currently working with in the school district. Being fully aware that we were legally protected from "unlawful reprisal"[29] I contracted my union lawyer to get advice for all of the teachers on our team. We were advised to send another copy of the state statute regarding the rights of public school district personnel to the school district and to work earnestly at our current jobs.

The potential competition and loss of funding to the existing public

school district caused ripples of conflict that polarized the community, often in unexpected and non-obvious ways. One example of this conflict occurred when we visited a favored potential school site on an in-holding of land within the reservation off of San Pedro Road, approximately 30 miles equidistant from both Tucson and Sells. This site was preferable because it was inside reservation land and would have provided easy access for tribal members. Tribal officials who opposed the charter school forced our plan to be revised by officially blocking right of way to the access road, making the potential of getting a loan for the property untenable; when we went to visit the potential site we were shocked to find it literally barricaded, foreshadowing what would turn out to be a further difficulty.

After these personal confrontations and broader efforts to keep the charter school off of the reservation, I continued working at my job and always asked people to come to my home in the evening if they wanted to discuss the charter project. Other founders who were working in the school district did the same. Sundry places around town became impromptu meeting spots, such as the grocery store, the video store, the TOCA office, and mountain bike trails. My apartment in the teacher housing, which was already overrun with students after school, soon performed double duty well into the evening as interest in the new school grew.

On October 14, 1997 the ASBCS met to consider granting us the second level of approval. The allotted time for the presentation was three minutes. We composed a narrative about a specific student who was both traditional and very capable but unfortunately had dropped out of school. In the presentation his educational options were outlined: he could attend the local public school district near his reservation home (one of the lowest achieving schools in the state), move away to boarding school, move 90 miles with his entire family to Tucson so that he could attend a better school, or he could just drop out. This grave scenario resonated with the charter board; they applauded the presentation, asked no further questions, and quickly moved to approve our application. More than twenty applications were ranked at the end in order of quality, and our application was rated as the second best. Only the Edison Corporation,[30] a national educational corporation with immense resources, bested our application.

We were invited to make a presentation to the Sells District Council[31] on October 16, 1997, and after the presentation there were several hours of questions. The beginning of the meeting was characterized by the District Council's concern over our neglect in not following tribally-accepted protocol, which might have entailed going to each district on the reservation and talking about the school before the initial application was submitted. We had known this protocol might be expected but had made a strategic decision to wait until state approval was obtained. We were also asked to recount what

other efforts had already been made to make improvements within the local public school district. Midway through the meeting, one HPLS parent supporter repeated the story of why the school was being started in O'odham. It took over an hour. Several parents wept openly, and one expressed that the school was a much needed option. I noted in my journal after the meeting that "telling them that their children deserved much better seemed to really interest them." Although formal approval was not requested or granted, the meeting ended with the District Council mentioning their appreciation for the presentation.

Officials of the school district, no longer content to treat the potential of a charter school merely as a personnel issue, now directed effort at getting the charter school application revoked at the state level. The topic of the charter school application was slated for a noon November 7, 1997 school district board meeting. I was in attendance, along with another founder and a parent supporter. During the meeting, the district school board decided to write a letter to the ASBCS to express concern about the HPLS application. At one point, a board member called into the audience to the two O'odham supporters who were there with me, saying to them "How dare you! How dare you get involved with this charter school!" After school, we met to debrief the situation at the TOCA office. The conflicts had started to create fissures within our group. One co-founder resigned, and one community member who had written a letter of support for the original charter application retracted her letter of support because of concerns expressed by members of a local church at which she had previously been a Reverend. For some us, however, this opposition only redoubled our determination. At the end of the meeting, Lillian, a parent supporter, expressed her opinions about the school board's reaction to the new charter school:

> When this school is going, we will never give them any credit for starting this school. We will never sit in chairs looking down at people. We will never have chairs like that and we will never work with people who sit in chairs like that. This is a grassroots school. It is for everyone who doesn't have a chair like that. We will sit here, just like this, doing our weaving and talking; it will always be just like this.[32]

Well-known and influential individuals made efforts to provide negative information on charter schools in general and on HPLS specifically to influence the Tohono O'odham community and intimidate others who supported the new school. At the annual Tohono O'odham Education conference on November 11, 1997, a member of the Arizona House of Representatives provided a keynote address including comments on the negative aspects of charter schools. This conference was mandatory for all educators in all

schools on the Tohono O'odham Nation and was accordingly attended by several hundred public school district and BIA employees. The ongoing controversy polarized the community on the issue, spurring both those against the charter school and those in support.

"A Blanket of Smallpox"

Our commitment was ultimately challenged when we presented to Tribal Education on November 24, 1997. Although we had requested to present on the charter application to Tribal Education Committee in early September, the initial concern expressed at this meeting was that they (the Tribal Education Committee) had not been informed about our charter application. Many on the committee, some of whom were board members at the local school district, seemed to be focused on utilizing this venue to campaign against HPLS. Throughout the presentation, different members of the Tribal Education Committee and the audience stood up to confront us, often in the midst of our formal presentation. The aforementioned Arizona legislator was present to talk about a purported lack of accountability with charter schools. School district employees, including the Superintendent, also spoke to criticize the quality of the charter application. Members of a local church congregation spoke about problems with the date on the charter application's letter of support from their former Reverend. One of the members of the Tribal Education Committee, also a school district board member, likened the new charter to "a blanket of smallpox."[33] A resolution of non-support was passed, seriously testing our resolve. To move forward meant we would be doing so with no backing from a key unit of tribal government. After this meeting, Juan and Lillian decided they required time to decide if they still wanted to support the school. We decided to stop and think over the Christmas break about how to proceed. Some of the group members wanted to move to a three- to five-year plan before opening, taking the time to garner support from each and every District Council on the reservation as well as the Tribal Council and Tribal Education Committee. Others (myself included), feeling the urgency of the situation, and not wanting to disappoint parents and students with another broken promise, wanted to relocate the school to Tucson to obviate the pressures from opponents. Some of us started exploring potential sites in Tucson, and everyone committed to talking with parents, students and community members about the pros and cons of the available choices.

The Circle of Support Expands

These black clouds quickly turned out to have a silver lining. News of the building crisis (and the other tensions) had spread quickly around town and

the local school district. In early December, I was approached by a colleague at the school district who offered to put me in touch with a cousin in Tucson who "had a building but no charter" and was interested in starting a school. As it would turn out, this was not exactly the case. Roberto (my colleague's cousin), who was at that time a leader of the Council for Excellence in Education for Native Americans (CEENA), did not have a building or funding; he did have passion for starting a school and quickly joined the charter founding effort. Roberto says of this first meeting that:

> . . . I think the other founders found me. I had no idea that someone else was trying to start a school. I had been trying to work on one for several years on my own and with other people who had the same idea, a bilingual/bicultural school. But, we never really got started on it and I guess through a cousin of mine, an employee at [the school district], he knew what I wanted and he knew the other founders who were working down there, and arranged for a meeting and he told them where to find me and that was at the University of Arizona site on the dictionary project of the O'odham language, and that was the first time I met the other founders, and from then on it was a mutual or made in heaven partnership and that is how [it] came about, probably by good chance and by luck and by good fortune I guess.[34]

Roberto led us to discover that there was a steady group of interested people in Tucson who had been working on forming a charter school to serve Native American students for several years prior and who were very interested in collaborating with the charter planning team. Our contact with this broader group of Indian education reformers centered in Tucson breathed new life into our seemingly hopeless situation and re-enlarged our group to nearly a dozen participants.

The reformers from Tucson were primarily associated with the CEENA and its parent organization, the American Indian Educational Consultants (AIEC). In the two decades prior to working on HPLS, CEENA and AIEC had tackled issues in Indian education, focusing on improving high school and college graduation rates for Native American students and on recruiting Native American teachers. This was done through various channels of advocacy and activism, including working with various governing bodies to advocate for Native students and parents, establishing new programs, lobbying, and engaging in outreach activities. Notably, CEENA provided the impetus for the creation of the Tucson Metropolitan Commission on Urban Native American Affairs in 1989 and hosted the National Indian Education Association's (NIEA) 1995 conference in Tucson. After all of these efforts,

working towards a college preparatory charter school was a logical next step for some of CEENA's members. Roberto pointed out that:

> As these efforts progressed and various programs were created it became obvious that there was a lack of qualified southwestern Native professionals to fill these positions. This was due to the very low number of Native southwestern college graduates. Most often the individuals hired Native professionals unaware of the local community and its problems. Several members of CEENA proposed that the organization's primary goals be the preparation of local urban Native students for enrollment and graduation from colleges and universities.[35]

CEENA, once with a fairly large membership (up to 45), suffered internal conflicts around a core group's desire to serve the local community versus other members' desire to work on Native American concerns in general, with less emphasis on local communities. A group of Tohono O'odham, Pascua Yaqui, and Hopi members became the group that put their energy towards opening a charter school as interest and participation in both AIEC and CEENA waned.

Although there were differences in opinion about the grade levels to be served and the specific foci of the school, collaboration began between our group in Sells and those working towards a school in Tucson. With this development, we redoubled our building search in Tucson, started having regular outreach meetings on the University of Arizona campus at the Native American Student Graduate Center, started doing formal presentations to various branches of the tribe and other interested entities, and began recruiting student enrollments in earnest. Many of us felt that locating the school site in Tucson would not only side-step conflicts on the main reservation, but could entail other benefits as well. We started looking at sites in Tucson and settled on an old church with several buildings on a large lot with room for the gardens we envisioned. The building was centrally located a few blocks from the University of Arizona campus. Securing a loan with non-existent resources and renovating the building to meet the soon-to-change building codes would prove to be further hurdles to be overcome.

The decision to locate HPLS off the reservation did cause the conflict between HPLS and individuals within the reservation public school district to recede, albeit slowly. Now that the school was to be centered in Tucson, additional groups were part of the HPLS school community. Still, the prior conflict raised its head again on February 8, 1998, when a member of the ASBCS called us to get information about the charter application process. The legislator who had spoken out against charters at various meetings on

the reservation called an ASBCS board member to express concerns about the charter application and to see if the approved application could be revoked, once again calling into question the entire project. After a thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding the charter application, and verification of the connections of this complaint to the local school district, the ASBCS disposed of this concern.

Around this same time, funding for the building was secured after months of conversations and negotiations with an unusually socially-conscious venture capitalist at a growing financial firm. This lender was committed to the school's goals and willing take a chance on the loan, in large part because of the intense enrollment interest the school had already piqued. The site was purchased, finally giving the school and planning team a place in which to operate.

From this point on, we shifted focus and began to form relationships with agencies and schools for the purpose of recruiting and enrolling more students rather than navigating various political struggles and scouring the region for sites. There were mixed reactions from the various Tucson public schools to the idea of the new charter school. Sometimes there were positive relationships with individuals within a school district, such as with counselors or others working closely with Native American students, even though there might have been opposition from other individuals within the same school district. In particular, people responsible for counseling Native American students helped interested Native American students find their way to HPLS. Personal connections between the planning group and various employees in several Tucson school districts allowed for word to get out about the new school among potentially interested parents and students. One urban school district was happy to allow recruitment of Native American students from their dropout list. Yet another was happy to include the school's contact information in a brochure for Native American families. Another high school, part of a local Tucson school district, allowed HPLS to set up a recruitment booth at their "Indian Day" celebration. Also, the year the school opened, two Indian boarding schools closed that had previously served the same population. St. Catherine's Indian School in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Southwest Indian School in Phoenix both closed the spring before HPLS opened its doors, providing an additional pool of parents seeking alternative schooling options.

Throughout the startup year, many community members on the reservation and in Tucson helped the school, and the early support they offered contributed enormously to the school's survival and eventual successes. Along the way, whenever advice was needed, our team was able to confer with any of several dozen community members, including parents, students, elders, and various education professionals. Each of us had a list of people we regu-

larly consulted, and we would meet and weigh the various opinions when deciding a course of action. Juan noted that "I think that was enough, all of the players were there, and I just think that the people that we listened to, that influenced us or encouraged us, was just enough to get everybody going."[36]

Both during the time that the charter planning occurred primarily on the main reservation and later, there was a core group of supporters who were interested in comprehensive change in the educational system and were willing to pursue every avenue possible. Some of these supporters were also members of a "concerned parent group," agitating for change in the public school district on the reservation. The "concerned parent group" began its efforts at reform by interviewing teachers within the public school district to get information about the conditions in the classroom. The parents documented their concerns, including pictures of dilapidated school buildings and outdated textbooks. On February 23, 1998 the Sells District Council invited the parent group as well as leadership from the local school district to speak. When the local school district administrators did not show up, the concerned parent group took the opportunity to share information about the problems at the school district. The Sells District Council was shocked about the issues facing students at their schools and concerned that they had not been informed about the possibility of the district moving to a year-round school schedule. A resolution was passed concerning the local public school district that requested, among other things, the removal of all current board members and the removal of the district superintendent. Although the focus of the concerned parent group was improvement of the local school district, these efforts illustrated a context that was ready for change, helping pave the way for the new charter school.

Because of the school's community-focused mission, efforts were made to work with various branches of the Tohono O'odham tribal government. Presentations were made to several of the districts of the Tohono O'odham Nation. An important part of all of these presentations was to simply provide information, and to persuade the various groups to encourage parents and students to participate in the educational choice that would be available with the new charter. No resolutions of support were requested and none were given by any District Council on the reservation, with the exception of the San Xavier District, representatives of which were extremely supportive of the new charter school. As it would turn out, this support proved crucial to the school's success. Given the history of educational problems for San Xavier District students, who don't attend reservation schools but rather Tucson public schools, members of the San Xavier District's education committee were happy to evaluate and explore options. Enrollment applications were made available to students residing in the San Xavier District, and resources

were offered. Before HPLS even opened, a second bus route to serve the San Xavier District was added to accommodate student and parent interest.

With outreach and recruitment well underway, we faced another obstacle to opening–preparing the building so tenuously acquired. The City of Tucson was in the process of passing an ordinance limiting the conditions under which charter schools could locate within Tucson when Ha:sañ received its provisional charter approval. We received the building permit for renovations of the building we had already purchased a mere two days before this ordinance went into effect. Had the building permits been approved but a few days later, it is probable that the school would have been delayed or prevented from opening in its current location and thus anywhere, ever, because the new ordinance mandated that at least five acres were needed for a charter school site, and the school site was little more than one acre. Once the appropriate permits were received, many delays occurred at the city's Development Services division, the unit responsible for building permits. In some cases, they were augmenting the statutes governing charter schools with their own requirements, such as requiring the City fire inspector to sign off on the occupancy permit, rather than the State fire inspector as the statute requires. These delays, combined with initial problems around funding and actual construction eventually caused the school to begin with a weeklong, overnight camp on Mt. Lemmon. Classes were conducted for four more weeks at a local university's Tucson campus until a certificate of occupancy could be obtained from the city.

The Journey Continues

The start-up story of HPLS ends with the school opening its doors in its Tucson location in late September 1998. The school had five full-time teachers and a full capacity enrollment of 125 students. We now had to dig in to the difficult but important work of learning and unlearning. We knew that we didn't want to repeat the practices that had already failed our students and their communities; now we had to learn to implement the alternative reality we had envisioned.

What started as a very tense and seemingly impossible situation evolved into a primarily collaborative and productive working relationship with the various communities surrounding HPLS. After six years of operation, HPLS was rated as one of "the strengths of the Tohono O'odham Nation education system"[37] in the Tribe's comprehensive education survey. Given the challenges faced early on, the high rating is ironic evidence that, with the passage of time, the initial qualms have been overshadowed by the reality of new opportunities for Tohono O'odham and other Native American youth.

Reflections and Conclusions

As I sit to finish this account and to reflect on my work with the HPLS start-up, I'm looking at a wake notice for an HPLS co-founder who will be buried later today. This gentleman was my colleague, mentor, teacher, and dear friend during the past decade. In less than two years, all three of the Tohono O'odham elders involved in the school start-up have passed away, none yet 60 years old. These three elders kept HPLS and its foundling sister school, Ha:sañ Middle School, focused on the vision of maintaining and revitalizing Tohono O'odham language, history and culture throughout the start-up and consequent decade of operation amidst a sea of challenges. These elders encouraged us to look for answers to educational problems in the O'odham Himdag[38] and to create a school culture in harmony with O'odham beliefs. My life as an educator has been indelibly altered by working with these educators, each of whom patiently helped me learn to "work with" not "for"[39] Tohono O'odham and other Indigenous people as they face the future with hope for self-determination.

Being involved with this project has at times blurred the borders of my identity. The fact that this project involved a *charter* school is perhaps ancillary in light of the history of Indigenous schooling, but in terms of my identity as an educator, it is significant. In many regards, it was far more comfortable working "for" the O'odham in the traditional public school district. My role was clear. It was also more socially rewarding in many ways. While working in the school district prior to being involved in this project, I was rarely critically questioned about the implications of my work, for participating in the day-to-day marginalization of a community–my work was seen as charitable, missionary, and therefore good. Because of the fraught politics of charter schools, however, being involved in this project alienated me from many progressive friends and colleagues whose support for the ideals of the traditional public school system prevented understanding the necessity of making immediate efforts (by accessing charter reform) as a means of interrupting patterns of colonization in this specific context. In this case, charter school reform allowed a much-desired option for publicly funded education that reflected the needs of the community. Going "off the reservation" by accessing charter school reform is ironically what made it possible for me, along with other educators, to act as agents of potential change for Tohono O'odham youth.

Notes:

[1] Center for Education Reform, "Charter School Law Ranking and Scorecard, 2009," Center for Education Reform, http://www.edreform.com/templates/dsp_cLaw.cfm

(accessed September 20, 2009). Since 1991, 40 states and the District of Columbia have legislation allowing charter schools.

[2] See for example: Mary Belgarde, "Native American Charter Schools: Culture, Language and Self-Determination," in *The Emancipatory Promise of Charter Schools: Towards a Progressive Politics of School Choice*, eds. E. Rofes and L. Stuhlberg. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); Brian Bielenberg, "Charter Schools for American Indians," in *Learning in Beauty: Indigenous Education for a New Century*, ed. J. Reynar, et al. (Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University, 2000).

[3] The Tohono O'odham were known until 1986 as the Papago, a Spanish Barbarism. The Tohono O'odham Nation is located southwestern Arizona. It is the second largest reservation in the United States, comprising nearly 2.8 million acres in the heart of the Sonoran Desert.

[4] For a detailed account of Tohono O'odham educational history see, Maxine Wakefield Hagen, "An Educational History of the Pima and Papago Peoples From the Mid-Seventeenth Century to the Mid-Twentieth Century." PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1959.

[5] Ramin Karimpour, Tristan Reader, & author, "Application to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools," (1997).

[6] Sidonie Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 45.

[7] This story is but one part of a larger, ethnographic case study that sought to understand the HPLS site in its socio/political/historical context through exploration of various participant perspectives and is based on documents, observant participation, and interviews. This story is told from my perspective, and in relationship to my intellectual growth as an educator. Care has been taken to accurately represent the participants in this research. However, responsibility for any errors, omissions, or misinterpretations ultimately is mine.

[8] Due to the very remote and rural nature of many reservation schools "teacher housing" is provided to teachers.

[9] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Demographic and Dental Statistics Section of Regional Differences in Indian Health,* (Rockville, MD, 2002). The Tucson Indian Health Service area, serving a proportionately large Tohono O'odham population, has the highest suicide rate of any Indian Health service area (33 per 100,000 for Tucson Service area as compared to 20.2 per 100,000 for all Indian Health Service area, and the U.S. All Races average of 10.6 per 100,000).

[10] Ibid. Homicide rates for those in the Tucson Indian Health Service Area are 15.2 per 100,000 as compared to 8 per 100,000 for U.S. All Races.

[11] United States Bureau of the Census, 2000. The per capita income for the Tohono O'odham is $8,241, as opposed to $12,923 for all American Indians and $21,587 for U.S. All Races. The percent of Tohono O'odham living below the poverty line is 39.9% as opposed to 25.8% of all American Indians and the U.S. All Races average of 12.4%.

[12] bell hooks. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 27.

[13] Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (20th Anniversary Edition)*. (New York: Continuum, 1997), 27.

[14] Tohono O'odham Community Action, http://www.tocaonline.org/Home.html

(accessed August 15, 2009).

[15] A pseudonym. All participants (excluding the author) have been given pseudonyms per the IRB approving this research. Actual names are used for HPLS, HMS, TOCA, AIEC, CEENA and geographic locations. Some people and one school have been given a pseudonym or generic name to protect participant identity.

[16] Juan [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, August 8, 2005.

[17] Kateri [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, January 23, 2005.

[18] Gabriella [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, February 12, 2005.

[19] For an overview and introduction the Indian Boarding School era, see, Margaret Archuleta, Brenda Childs & Tsianina Lomawaima, eds., *Away From Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences 1879-2000*, (Phoenix: Heard Museum, 2000).

[20] Juan [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, August 8, 2005.

[21] Kateri [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, January 23, 2005.

[22] Juan [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, August 8, 2005.

[23] Roberto [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, January 28, 2005.

[24] Frederick Hess & Robert Maranto, "Small Districts in Big Trouble: How Four Arizona School Systems Responded to Charter Competition," *Teacher's College Press* 103 (2001): 1102-1124; Frederick Hess & Robert Maranto, "Letting a Thousand Flowers (and Weeds) Bloom," In *The Charter School Landscape*, ed. S. Vergari. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002); Robert Maranto, "Finishing Touches," *Education Next* 1 (2001): 20-25.

[25] Superintendent [pseud.], school district correspondence to author, September 22, 1997.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Author, letter to Superintendent [pseud.], September 27, 1997.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Arizona Revised Statute (2004-05), sec. 15.181-15.189.03.

[30] The Edison Corporation, http://www.edisonlearning.com/ (accessed August 15, 2009).

[31] The Tohono O'odham Nation is comprised of eleven separate districts: Baboquivari, Chukut Kuk, Gu Achi, Gu Vo, Hickiwan, Pisinemo, San Lucy, San Xavier, Sells, and Sif Oidak.

[32] Lillian [pseud.], personal communication with author, November 7, 1997.

[33] Carl Waldman, *"Atlas of the American Indian,"* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000). The various devastating smallpox epidemics among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas between 1516 and 1833 were primarily caused by European contact with Indigenous people who lacked immunity to European diseases. However, during Pontiac's Rebellion in the 1760's, it is reported that blankets and handkerchiefs infected with smallpox were given to the Ottawa by the British during conflict to slow the Ottawa's attack on Detroit.

[34] Roberto [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, January 28, 2005.

[35] Roberto [pseud.], personal conversation with author, September 23, 2004.

[36] Juan [pseud.] (co-founder, HPLS), interview by author, August 8, 2005.

[37] Tohono O'odham Nation. *Comprehensive Education Study 2004 (Special Reprint for Education Summit)*. Sells, AZ: Tohono O'odham Nation, Tohono O'odham Community College.

[38] Tohono O'odham Community College, "Himdag Policy," http://www.tocc.cc.az.us/himdag_policy.htm#himdag. The Tohono O'odham Himdag is defined as "…the culture, way of life, and values that are uniquely held and displayed by the Tohono O'odham people. Himdag incorporates everything in life that makes us unique as individuals and as a people. It is a lifelong journey."

[39] Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (20th Anniversary Edition)*. (New York: Continuum, 1997), 26.

Organizational Learning in a Military Environment:
George H. Sharpe and the Army of the Potomac

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On February 24, 1865, George H. Sharpe, who was then serving with the Union armies besieging the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, wrote his uncle Jansen Hasbrouck in Kingston, New York, to announce he had just been promoted from the rank of colonel to brigadier general.[1] Normally, such an event would have been an occasion for pride and rejoicing, but in Sharpe's case those emotions were tempered by frustration over the unusual steps he had been forced to take in achieving recognition he felt he thoroughly deserved.

As the person principally in charge of intelligence operations for the North's largest army since early 1863, Sharpe gathered, collated and analyzed information from a wide variety of sources, winnowing the false from the true and creating an actionable context to inform decision-making by senior Northern commanders. The organization he built and led carried out an educative function that one historian rated "alongside the war's well-known innovations, such as the control of distant armies by telegraph and the development of ironclad warships"[2] and that a Central Intelligence Agency monograph said "foreshadowed the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Division" that was created several decades after the end of the American Civil War.[3] Despite such accomplishments, however, recognition did not come easily for Sharpe.

In the letter to his uncle, Sharpe said that "When [Army of the Potomac

Commander General George G.] Meade recommended members of his staff [for promotion], I had just been removed to that of the Lieutenant General [Ulysses S. Grant, overall commander of the Union armies] and he left me out. This irritated me a little…"[4] In response to what he considered a snub from Meade, Sharpe successfully sought the endorsement of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, "who very naturally recollected that I was one of the very few staff officers he knew, and with whose services he was personally acquainted."[5] He also gained written recommendations from General Joseph Hooker, who commanded the Army of the Potomac at the Battle of Chancellorsville and had initially named Sharpe to his intelligence post; General Daniel Butterfield, who served as chief of staff for Hooker and, for a time, Meade; and General Andrew A. Humphreys, Meade's chief of staff for the previous year and a half. Ultimately Meade learned of Sharpe's actions, and added his recommendation to the others.[6]

While Sharpe was pleased with the outcome of his efforts, in his letter he also indicated his unhappiness at having been forced to undertake them. He explained to his uncle that he had not written him for some time, because "I am one of the hardest working men in the Army, when we are lying still. My only relief is when we begin marching or fighting – and I take it you don't want a letter written on horseback."[7] And indeed, Sharpe's tenure as head of intelligence for the Army of the Potomac had been characterized by a considerable amount of hard work, as well as by other, less positive, influences.

The Union Army began intelligence operations almost immediately after the onset of hostilities with the South. General George B. McClellan retained Allan Pinkerton's detective agency as his personal intelligence service when he assumed command of the Eastern theater's Army of the Potomac in the summer of 1861,[8] and General John C. Fremont created a similar organization, called "Jessie's Scouts" in honor of his wife, when he was named commander of the Western theater of the war at about that same time.[9] Beginning in 1862, Grant relied on an extensive intelligence network operated under the direction of General Grenville Dodge to monitor Confederate activities during his Western campaigns.[10] None of these operations were as comprehensive or as successful as Sharpe's, however.

Sharpe did not leave extensive personal correspondence from the Civil War period, although a significant amount of his official communication is available. While he is given passing mention in the diaries and memoirs compiled by several Union Army officers, no comprehensive contemporary biographies exist. He was largely ignored by authors of historical works dealing with the Civil War until the 1996 release of Edwin C. Fishel's seminal *The Secret War for the Union*[11] and William B. Feis' *Grant's Secret Service*[12] in 2002. While Sharpe figures prominently in both these works, each of them places him in the context of a broader account of the North's intelligence

effort. Following Fischel and Feis, some subsequent writers, such as Stephen W. Sears,[13] have included discussions of Sharpe in their accounts of specific battles.

This essay relies on Fischel and Feis as well as a variety of primary sources, but examines Sharpe in the context of organizational learning as well as military history. For purposes of the current discussion, a learning organization is one that actively captures, creates, transfers and uses knowledge, enabling it to more successfully adapt to a changing environment. As would be expected, viewed from the perspective of modern learning and organizational theory, the Army of the Potomac was not a full-blown "learning organization" during Sharpe's tenure as director of intelligence. Rather, it exhibited what Peter Senge termed "survival" or "adaptive" learning,[14] a shorter-term and externally-focused type of behavior, and not the more transformative and all-encompassing "generative learning" that "enhances our ability to create."[15] Given the situation it faced, such a limited approach to organizational learning was appropriate in many ways: unlike present-day business corporations, for example, which are expected to serve a variety of constituencies and attempt to achieve a broad range of goals within an essentially unlimited time frame, the Army of the Potomac existed for only one purpose, to destroy the South's principal combat force, and was to be disbanded as soon as that objective had been accomplished.

But it is also true that the Army's ability to gain the benefits of adaptive learning, and to survive in a constantly changing and extremely threatening external environment, was remarkably enhanced by the working of Sharpe's organization. And it did exhibit, in at least rudimentary form, several of the characteristics associated with what today would be termed a true "learning organization," and which were central to its ability to perform an educative function within the broader institution it served. For example, as will be seen, Sharpe and those he led demonstrated a highly developed sense of personal mastery, which Senge defines as living "in a continual learning mode";[16] they questioned their "internal models" of reality, subjecting them to ongoing and rigorous scrutiny in light of newly developed information;[17] they had a sense of "shared vision" built around "a set of principles and guiding practices" that enabled them to demonstrate remarkable individual initiative;[18] and the relatively relaxed and non-hierarchical environment Sharpe fostered allowed for a productive if unself-conscious form of "team learning."[19]

Perhaps even more revealingly, at least when it came to viewing their Southern opponents, Sharpe and those with whom he worked achieved a sophisticated level of "systems thinking," which Senge considers to be a cornerstone of organizational learning. As Senge notes, the systems viewpoint "is generally oriented toward the long-term view…"[20] and is capable of identifying "interruptions in the flow of influence which make the conse-

quences of an action occur gradually."[21] Although it is not possible to explore every aspect of Sharpe's operations within the confines of this essay, it is important to note that his ongoing evaluation of Confederate capabilities exhibited those very traits, going with some regularity well beyond conventional military topics to explore such issues as civilian morale, currency inflation, the availability of food to the citizens of Richmond, political and policy disputes within the Confederate government, and indications that the South faced increasing difficulty in securing raw materials necessary for the production of munitions. These factors were unlikely to affect the outcome of any individual battle, but were extremely useful in understanding the war's broader dynamics at a strategic level.

In part, at least, Sharpe's ability to create an organization with these positive characteristics is attributable to the fact that, despite earlier attempts to set up military intelligence units, he was free to adapt his actions to current reality rather than being constricted by an outmoded conception of how an intelligence organization should be organized and operated. Terry Terriff notes in his study of the United States Marine Corps that the presence of powerful pre-existing beliefs and behaviors "provide a compelling explanation for why specific military organizations may continue to pursue ways of warfare that are incompatible with emerging or prevailing strategic and operational realities…"[22] In the American Civil War, for example, it is widely accepted that commanders on both sides ignored the development of the rifled musket, which increased the distance at which their troops could be subjected to accurate gunfire by a factor of five, and continued to use outmoded tactical formations that resulted in staggering casualty rates. In contrast, Sharpe bore no such burden and was in many ways operating from a *tabula rasa* that permitted him to build his organization as he saw fit, and as demanded by the situation as he found it.

As a result, many of the challenges Sharpe faced were external to the organization he led rather than internal, arising from the way that organization functioned within the broader Army of the Potomac. This essay examines several examples of such negative factors, including placement of the intelligence/learning function within the organization; institutional and personal jealousy of Sharpe; the volatility of the environment in which he operated; and broad political rivalries that created barriers to organizational learning.

Sharpe's Early Life

Sharpe was born at Kingston in 1828, the son of Henry Sharpe, an influential merchant, and Helen Hasbrouck. He graduated from Rutgers in 1847, where he delivered the salutary address in Latin, before studying law at Yale

College.[23] After practicing at the bar for a short time, he travelled to Europe, serving as secretary of the U.S. Legation in Vienna from 1851 to 1852. He returned to the United States in 1854, where he established a successful law practice in his home town,[24] and in 1855 he married Caroline Hone Hasbrouck, daughter of the president of Rutgers University.[25]

Although he was active in the New York state militia, Sharpe had resigned his officer's commission shortly before the bombardment of Fort Sumter.[26] With the outbreak of hostilities, however, he resumed his military career, joining the 20th New York Volunteers, a Kingston-based regiment, as a captain for three months' duty. In accordance with the practice of the time, he was one of three officers nominated to assume the rank of lieutenant colonel and second in command of the regiment, after the previous holder of that position resigned. However, Sharpe lost the election to then-Major Theodore B. Gates, with whom he retained a personal relationship.[27] Gates was later named to lead the 20th and achieved the rank of full colonel when its previous commander died of wounds during the summer of 1862.[28]

After mustering out of the 20th, Sharpe was appointed by New York Governor Edwin D. Morgan to raise and command a new regiment of infantry in response to President Abraham Lincoln's July 2, 1861, call to enlist 300,000 volunteers. Assuming the rank of colonel, Sharpe successfully completed that assignment, and the 120th New York Volunteers arrived in Washington, D.C., for active duty on August 27.[29] However, the regiment did not undertake combat operations until joining the Army of the Potomac shortly before the disastrous Battle of Fredericksburg on December 11-15, 1862,[30] and even in that engagement it did not see heavy fighting, suffering only one person wounded.[31]

In the wake of his defeat at Fredericksburg, General Ambrose Burnside was replaced as commander of the Army of the Potomac by General Hooker on January 26, 1863.[32] Shortly thereafter, Hooker directed General Marsena Patrick, provost marshal general for the Army, to create a "secret service department" to provide comprehensive information on Confederate activities.[33] Patrick immediately set to work, albeit with some misgivings. His diary entry of February 5 states: "Am trying to make up a System of Secret Service, but find it hard to organize where there is so little good Material——."[34] However, on February 10, he noted "… Have had a long conversation with Col. Sharp[e] of the 120th N.Y. as to the organization of the [Secret Service] Dept. with him, a Lawyer, for its Chief—- He appears well, & I think he would be a pleasant man to be Associated with…."[35] Sharpe accepted the position two days later.[36] (Although "detached" from the 120th to serve on Patrick's staff, Sharpe was still associated with that unit and closely followed its activities throughout the war.)

At the time of his appointment Sharpe had almost no combat experi-

ence, and Patrick's selection of him appears to have been based upon his respect for Sharpe's non-military education and his amicable demeanor, rather than because of a record of accomplishment in the Army. Certainly persons with more extensive military records showed themselves capable of successfully undertaking intelligence assignments during the war, but it is also true that Sharpe and some of his most trusted associates did not have such backgrounds, and were not typical soldiers. For example, Sharpe's second in command and chief interrogator was John C. Babcock, an architect by training and–although unofficially termed "captain"–a civilian who had worked for Pinkerton and made maps for McClellan earlier in the war.[37] Another of Sharpe's senior personnel was Captain John McEntee, a former grain merchant from Roundout, New York, a town near Kingston, who attended college at Clinton Institute. He served as a report writer and interrogator, and also on occasion conducted semi-independent operations at some distance away from Sharpe's headquarters. Nicknamed "McAnty" by Babcock, he transferred out of Gates' 20th New York in April, 1863, for the less structured and more independent environment of what Sharpe soon named the Bureau of Military Information (BMI).[38] It may well have been that the BMI's relatively unregimented and unconventional setting tended to attract individuals whose traits of behavior and thought were particularly well adapted to gathering and analyzing information in an intense wartime environment.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Colonel George H. Sharpe, commander of the Bureau of Military Information

If so, Patrick's selection appeared to have been an appropriate choice. Photographs of Sharpe show a rather unmilitary-seeming man with narrow, rounded shoulders and a receding hairline. His eyes are intelligent but preoccupied, like those of a person who is thinking of several things simultane-

ously, and they lack the intense, focused gaze of the warrior or hunter. Sharpe's lips are fleshy and rather sensual, covered by a large, drooping moustache that almost seems intended to hide that part of his character. In one photo, Sharpe and three of his senior officers are shown sitting in front of a tent, completely at their ease, leaning back comfortably in canvas chairs with their legs crossed. No one is brandishing a weapon or assuming an heroic pose, as was often the style at that time: The image has more the look of a gentleman's hunting lodge than that of a military installation.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Winter quarters, Brandy Station, Virginia, 1863-64. Colonel Sharpe, "Captain" John Babcock, an unidentified officer, and Captain John McEntee.

At Hooker's direction, Sharpe created what has come to be known as an "all source" intelligence network comprised of both "active" and "passive" data gathering techniques. Active sources included espionage involving union sympathizers within the Confederate lines, and the scouting of enemy positions by enlisted men serving on Sharpe's staff who disguised themselves as civilians or Confederate soldiers. In addition, the BMI derived passive information by interviewing refugees and escaped slaves, by interrogating deserters and prisoners, by reviewing captured documents, and by closely monitoring Southern newspapers. Hooker provided additional perspective by making sure that the BMI received ongoing access to other sources of information generated within the Army of the Potomac, including reports by cavalry patrols, observations by balloonists, and telescopic surveillance conducted by the Army's Signal Service.[39]

Because the BMI derived and correlated information from so many sources, it was able over time to greatly improve its ability to detect both intended and circumstantial misinformation, and to increasingly determine

the correct significance of the data that came into its possession. And importantly, under Hooker's direction, the BMI developed daily summaries for the Army commander that "provided not raw information but [were] the product of careful analysis," according to Feis.[40]

Sharpe's Methodology At Work

Two examples further illustrate Sharpe's methodology for gathering information, and transmuting it into usable knowledge.

On June 19, 1864, Sharpe sent a dispatch to General Humphreys, Meade's chief of staff, reporting information derived from "a colored man named Riley [who] had been sent in from the Second Division, Eighteenth Army Corps. He is very ignorant and makes a very confused statement…"[41] Riley lived in Richmond, but said that during the previous week he had been hired as a servant by a man named Phillips, a lieutenant in the First South Carolina Rifles, which Riley understood to be part of a brigade commanded by an officer named McGowan. In his statement, Riley recounted his travels since Phillips had hired him, doing his best to identify local landmarks and to describe areas that he had never seen before; he attempted to estimate the size of a wagon train he had been told to join and the number of soldiers in various Confederate units he encountered (he said he had seen a "'right smart' of troops," according to Sharpe's account);[42] and he described a pontoon bridge he crossed as his party travelled toward Petersburg, a vital rail center that supplied Richmond. Perhaps some of Riley's confusion was due to the fact that, after reaching the Appomattox River, "he was fired upon by the rebel and Union pickets and that he swam the river to our lines."[43]

It is characteristic of Sharpe that he gave an honest assessment of the person who was providing him with information, enabling the reader to form an independent opinion as to his or her reliability. In Riley's case, the informant's willingness to risk his life in reaching the Union lines no doubt lent credence to his story, even though his fear and disorientation contributed to a confused report that–at least initially–appeared largely useless. However, based on the intimate knowledge that the BMI had developed of the Confederate army's table of organization, Sharpe was also able to state that Riley's "story has borne the test of a very careful examination…" Since Sharpe already knew that "the First South Carolina Regiment, in *McGowan's* brigade, was originally a battalion and was known as the First South Carolina *Rifles* (emphasis added)…",[44] the terminology Riley used in telling his story had the ring of truth, as did his identification of the brigade's commanding officer. Sharpe therefore moved from passive to active information gathering, sending out scouts to validate the information Riley had provided, and to develop additional details.

Sharpe's scouts attempted to infiltrate the route Riley described, and in his report Sharpe carefully identified the specific roads his operatives had followed up to the point they were fired upon by enemy troops and were forced to retire. "On their way they saw the rebels very busily engaged in the erection of a considerable earth-work, or fort, as they call it, about a mile and a half south of Petersburg and about half a mile westerly of the Jerusalem plank road before alluded to," Sharpe wrote. "Between this earth-work and the Jerusalem plank the rebels had a skirmish line."[45]

Two things are particularly noteworthy about Sharpe's brief report. First, by combining an in-depth knowledge of how the Confederate Army was organized with the skilled application of both passive and active intelligence techniques, Sharpe was able to provide Union commanders with very specific and actionable tactical information about the placement and strength of the enemy they faced within 24 hours of Riley's interrogation. Second, because Sharpe had derived so much valid data from what had appeared to be an at-best marginal source, he was that much more able to evaluate and understand the reports he subsequently received, constantly updating and improving an intricate and increasingly accurate mosaic representation of the Southern army's overall dispositions and capabilities.

The broad informational sweep and useful organizational learning provided by that mosaic can be seen in a second report Sharpe submitted on September 3, 1864, which Grant forwarded to Secretary of War Stanton the next day.[46] In it, Sharpe provided a detailed description of the Confederate Army's dispositions throughout the entire Richmond region, identifying the location of specific enemy divisions and brigades and giving detailed estimates of their strengths and capabilities. For example, the 7th Georgia Cavalry had just arrived in Richmond with 1,200 men but fewer than 50 horses, and was operating on foot until mounts could be supplied,"of which they do not seem to think the prospect is good."[47] Where he was unsure of his information, Sharpe carefully separated what he knew from what he believed to be true, buttressing clearly delineated, informed speculation with factual background. For example:

> It is quite certain that two brigades of Field's Div. (Law's & Anderson's) are lying in the ravine between the plank road and the lead works. Supposing I am correct that there is but one brigade of Field's Division on the north side of the James [River], this would leave two brigades of Field's Division to be accounted for; but it is to be remarked that the Texas Brigade of this Div. is exceedingly small, and probably is not reckoned as more than a regiment, even at the present low estimates.[48]

Sharpe then went on to describe the losses various Confederate units had experienced, and their effect on morale. In one instance, for example, he cited the report of "an intelligent deserter" from the 27th South Carolina Regiment of Hasgood's Brigade, who spoke to a colonel of another of the brigade's regiments while the two were in the hospital. Sharpe's informant said that when he commented that the brigade, which initially contained 3,700 men, had suffered considerable losses, the colonel replied: "'Yes, if the sick and slightly wounded were all present the brigade would now number about eight hundred men.'" Sharpe added that "(t)hey have not only lost heavily in fighting, but many of them have deserted, and gone singly to their homes."[49] In a similar vein, "an intelligent man, born in Pennsylvania" who was serving in Colquitt's Georgia Brigade, said that when the lieutenant commanding his company learned of his intention to desert, the officer replied that "he will come into our lines himself at the first opportunity."[50]

Following his review of enemy losses and morale, Sharpe provided a survey of Confederate logistical capabilities, reporting which trains were running to what cities, and how often they ran, and identifying what railroad bridges had been destroyed and whether or not they were being repaired. That summary was followed by a brief discussion derived from information provided by the Richmond newspapers, which reported that a Colonel Gordon had been promoted and transferred to Vaughn's Brigade. That unit had previously been part of the army commanded by General Jubal Early in Maryland, Sharpe noted, but according to the press report about Colonel Gordon it was now attached to the Confederate Army of the Tennessee under General John Bell Hood. Although Sharpe was careful to point out that "I do not know, however, how long it [Vaughn's Brigade] has been absent from Early …"[51] the development was significant because Hood had evacuated Atlanta under pressure from General William T. Sherman's Union army only two days previously. The announcement of Gordon's promotion and reassignment indicated that the Confederacy was using its "interior lines" (that is, its central position between the various Union armies invading the South) to shift its forces from one area to another to meet what its leaders perceived to be the greater threat.

The scope and detail of Sharpe's report provided Union commanders not only with a clear picture of their opponents' physical dispositions, but of their psychological and logistical states as well. And, by remaining sensitive to the broadest implications of the information he received, he was able to alert his superiors to the importance of developments that extended beyond his immediate locale to other theaters of the conflict. At its best, Sharpe's operation served to continuously educate the Union command structure on the environment in which it, and its opponent, existed. Not surprisingly, the information Sharpe provided can be tied to specific battlefield events, indi-

cating the value of the organizational learning he and his colleagues fostered within the Army of the Potomac.

For example, on July 2, 1863, after the second day of fighting at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, had concluded, Union commander Meade asked Sharpe to determine how much of the Confederate army had been engaged in the battle so far, and what reinforcements General Robert E. Lee, his opposite number, could expect by the next day. Based on the interrogation of Confederate prisoners by Sharpe and Babcock, and their intimate knowledge of the Confederate table of organization, Sharpe soon returned with his report, telling Meade: "All the Confederate troops have been in action except Pickett's division, and a small body of cavalry. Pickett's division has come up and is now in bivouac, and will be ready to go into action fresh tomorrow morning."[52] While this accurate assessment was not critical in convincing Meade to hold his ground at Gettysburg for another day, as Babcock apparently believed, it was useful nonetheless because–despite the heavy losses his army had already experienced–Meade had sizable reserves available to him as he pondered his next move.

Later in the war, Brigadier General John A. Rawlins of Grant's staff telegraphed Grant on January 21, 1865, that "We have information today from Col Sharp[e] that on tuesday last an order was issued in Richmond that the rebel fleet should go down the [James] river, either pass or attack our Iron Clads and attempt the destruction of City Pt."[53] Had it been successful, such a raid would have had potentially catastrophic significance, because City Point was the major supply base for the Union armies besieging Richmond. Armed with this foreknowledge, Grant grew highly frustrated with what he perceived to be a lack of aggressiveness by the Navy in repelling the Confederate vessels, which in the event were largely countered by Army heavy artillery units deployed along the water's edge rather than by the warships that were readily available. However, Grant was able to report to Secretary of War Stanton on January 25: "Present danger from the Rebel Navy in James River is at an end and I will take care that there shall be none in future. With a proper Naval commander, and the fleet there is at his disposal there should have been no cause for apprehension."[54]

Finally, when Confederate General Lee met with Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, to surrender his Army of Northern Virginia, Grant offered to supply Lee's troops with rations of food, and asked Lee how many soldiers remained with the colors. "Indeed, I am not able to say," Lee responded, explaining that his command structure had been so disrupted by his army's frantic attempts to escape from the Union forces over the previous several days that he lacked an accurate idea of the number of troops lost to battle casualties, desertion and straggling.[55] In his memoirs, General Horace Porter, a member of Grant's staff, explained that "Grant had taken great pains

to have a daily estimate made of the enemy forces from all the data that could be obtained,"[56] a task that would have been carried out by Sharpe and the BMI. Grant offered Lee enough supplies to feed 25,000 men, an estimate which was within 3,000 of the actual number who remained with the Confederate Army[57]–a remarkably accurate tally, given the chaotic retreat the Southern forces had undertaken since evacuating Richmond on April 2.

Based on these examples, it is apparent that Sharpe and the BMI significantly enhanced the Union Army's ability to successfully adapt to a changing environment, thereby contributing to its ultimate success. But that contribution is all the more remarkable in light of a variety of negative factors that hindered Sharpe and impeded organizational learning

"Culture Clash"

One such factor was Hooker's decision to locate the intelligence function within the Provost Marshal's Department, led by Marsena Patrick. There was precedent for such an approach in that McClellan had initially placed Pinkerton's operation under the authority of Patrick's predecessor, General Andrew Porter.[58] Additionally, one of that department's duties was to oversee the internment of enemy prisoners, who constituted a major potential source of information to any intelligence operation. Nonetheless, Sharpe's experience, as reflected in Patrick's wartime diaries, indicates a significant "culture clash" between Sharpe and Patrick that at best distracted Sharpe from his primary duties, and at worst compromised his effectiveness to some degree.

For the major responsibility of the Provost Marshall and his department was to enforce the rules; Patrick was in charge of tracking down deserters, of prosecuting crimes, of regulating merchants who sold goods to the troops, and a variety of similar activities, in many of which he regularly involved Sharpe. But Sharpe and his BMI colleagues expended considerable energy in convincing people to break the rules; they encouraged civilians to provide them with information that would be used against a government that was supported by their friends and neighbors, and they convinced captured Confederate soldiers and deserters to reveal what they knew, even though doing so might put their former comrades in harm's way.

Moreover, these conflicting priorities were reflected in the characters of the two men. As evidenced by his reports, Sharpe's more subtle intelligence sought out inconsistencies and nuances, looking for snippets of information that could be put into a broader context, proving or disproving an apparent "fact" and giving him the fullest possible understanding of a constantly changing situation.

But as Fishel noted: "Provost Marshall General Marsena Patrick com-

bined the qualities of a regular army disciplinarian with those of an Old Testament prophet."[59] Although Patrick thought Sharpe might be "a pleasant man to be associated with" when he met him in February, 1863, by March 17 he was beginning to have doubts. In his diary he noted that he and his staff had been invited by General Thomas Meagher, commander of the army's Irish Brigade, to attend a St. Patrick's Day celebration that featured "a near-lethal punch containing eight baskets of champagne, ten gallons of rum, and twenty-two gallons of Irish whiskey."[60] Patrick wrote: "Every body got tight & I found it was no place for me—so I came home, [Captain James P.] Kimball & … Sharpe remained and came home at dusk, tight as bricks…"[61]

In subsequent months, Patrick continued to discover aspects of Sharpe's character and behavior that concerned him. On June 2, 1863, Patrick complained that Sharpe had brought his wife to visit him, commenting: "It is all a farce this business of not allowing ladies to come to the Army when everyone that has a friend at Head Quarters can get permission without applying to me for a pass…"[62] And by October 5 of that same year he wrote that "Col. Sharpe is not the man to place much reliance on, so far as business in a *business* way is concerned—- He is quite too fond of a nice time, loves fun and is very irregular in all his ways—-."[63]

However, it is likely that the very characteristics Patrick found objectionable–Sharpe's sense of play, his refusal to be bound by routine or a strict regimen, and his willingness to bend the rules—made him precisely the kind of leader capable of fostering individual initiative among his staff and of creating useful knowledge for the institution he served. An example of the latitude Sharpe provided to his enlisted personnel, and the way they put that freedom to work, can be seen in the reminiscences of Sgt. Judson Knight, one of the BMI's scouts.[64]

Knight reported that in late June, 1864, about two weeks after the Army of the Potomac took up position outside of Petersburg, he decided there "was no reason that all of us should stay in camp every night," so he determined "to make a night-trip and see if I could learn anything of importance."[65] It is revealing that, although an enlisted man with little formal authority, Knight felt empowered to undertake his expedition "saying nothing to anyone of my intention, and not even asking for a pass to get out of our lines."[66] Making his way into territory controlled by the Confederate Army, he took up a hidden position before sunrise, and then observed a large Southern force assembling in preparation for an attack on a Union position. Knight returned to spread the alarm shortly before the assault began, warning the units that were in danger and then returning to Army headquarters. However, he "said nothing about where I had been or what I had seen, but concluded to let them [the headquarters staff] hear through the regular channels."[67]

As productive as Knight's self-directed expedition was, it is very doubt-

ful that a person of Patrick's orientation and assertiveness would have sanctioned such a freewheeling approach. A stickler for discipline and respect for authority, on one occasion the 54-year-old Patrick recorded in his diary that he went to bed with a sore shoulder,"(p)robably owing to my having knocked a man down, this evening, who was insolent…"[68]

However, even more important to Patrick than his general unease with Sharpe's work habits and leadership style was his concern—possibly justified—that Sharpe was trying to undermine his authority, indicating that Sharpe too felt the relationship was unsatisfactory. On September 20, 1864, Patrick wrote that Sharpe had been encouraging him to take an extended leave of absence during the coming winter, but that Patrick had arranged for both him and Sharpe to visit their homes at the same time. "I hope he will now cease plotting—at least so far as I am concerned…" Patrick wrote.[69] David S. Sparks, who edited Patrick's diaries, has speculated that this entry refers to a warning Patrick received from another member of his staff that Sharpe would attempt to take control of the Provost Marshal's Department while its commander was absent.[70] However, the matter apparently did not end there, for on March 15, 1865, Patrick wrote: "To night I have had to talk with Sharpe very unpleasantly, for meddling with matters that do not belong at all to him…"[71]

Although Sharpe's relationship with Patrick survived for two years, and Patrick intervened as best he could on Sharpe's behalf when Hooker and Meade criticized the BMI chief, there can be little doubt that the fit was far from perfect, and that it had a negative effect on Sharpe's ability to carry out his primary duties.

Institutional and Personal Jealousy

A second element of "friction" that affected the environment in which Sharpe operated was institutional and individual jealousy of the influence he and BMI gained as a result of the information they gathered and the knowledge they disseminated.

On an institutional level, the most consistent skepticism of BMI's value could be found among the Union cavalry, some of whose leaders apparently felt that Sharpe and his operation were at the very least redundant to their intelligence-gathering capabilities, and perhaps even a threat to their primacy in that area. As early as March 5, 1863–that is, only a few weeks after the BMI had been created—Patrick noted: "The Scouts sent out by Col. Sharpe were arrested & sent back by [Union Cavalry Commander Gen. William W[.] Averill [sic], notwithstanding they had my pass—— It was a great piece of arrogance & stupidity combined, which caused 'Fighting Joe Hooker' to swear very wickedly…"[72] And as late as May 22, 1864, General Thomas A. Torbert,

commander of the Cavalry Corps' First Division "…told the General [Meade] that Sharpe's 'scouts' were not worth a button; that he found them just outside the picket line simply plundering and not scouting at all!"[73] Although there were exceptions to the rule—General Phillip Sheridan, one of the North's most successful cavalry leaders, created his own unit of scouts and cooperated closely with Captain McEntee when he took over command in the Shenandoah Valley during the summer of 1864[74]–the BMI's relationship with the cavalry was at best tenuous throughout the war.

On a personal level, there are indications that Sharpe's prominent visibility and ongoing access to the most senior union commanders aroused potentially troublesome jealousies among some of his peers. Indeed, Sharpe himself appears to have been well aware that information constituted a type of leverage he could use to enhance his personal position, and he used that tool regularly. In his private notebooks, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Lyman, a member of Meade's staff, reported that Sharpe visited Washington during the summer of 1864 while Confederate General Early was threatening to capture the capital, and he had pulled off a "good joke."[75] Many civilians had become panicked by Early's raid, and those Sharpe met in Washington claimed the Confederate general led an army of 92,000 troops, while Sharpe assured them the Southern force was no more than 25,000. "He offered a heavy bet they would fall back the moment the [Union Army's] 6th Corps appeared in front of Washington; and it came so to pass!" Lyman recounted.[76] In effect, Sharpe used his knowledge of Confederate strength to buttress his personal position among government leaders in Washington, and his knowledge of the fears that plagued civilians to enhance his standing within the army.

Similarly, Patrick's diary contains numerous references to information Sharpe provided about political developments in the Army and in Washington, none of which had a direct bearing on either Patrick's or Sharpe's immediate responsibilities, but all of which were interesting. For example, on Dec. 16, 1863, Patrick wrote that Sharpe "tells me that [Daniel] Sickles openly announced his intention to fight the battle with [Henry W.] Halleck, who has made more serious & damaging charges against him than Meade did…",[77] and on May 16, 1865, Sharpe told his superior "… that [Benjamin F.] Butler is at work, taking advantage of this excitement in regard to the Assassination of Lincoln, and that he will, probably, be Successful in driving Stanton out of the War Department…"[78] The individuals Sharpe named in these reports were almost certain to attract Patrick's attention. General Sickles was a Tammany Hall politician who commanded the Union III Corps when he was badly wounded at Gettysburg. After the battle, he conducted a personal vendetta against Meade, claiming it was his leadership rather than Meade's that had resulted in victory. Halleck, Grant's chief of

staff, had been the North's most senior general earlier in the war and was at that time based in Washington, the center of political influence. And Butler, a Massachusetts "War Democrat" who retained command of the Army of the James because of his political influence until he was relieved by Grant for incompetence in December, 1864, continued to wield considerable power, even though he was no longer with the army.

If Sharpe gained benefits from his position as an insider, he also appeared to arouse potentially damaging jealousy in some quarters. One example of this seeming animosity can be found in the actions of Colonel Gates, a former neighbor with whom Sharpe had served briefly while assigned to the 20th New York Infantry early in the war. Gates' experience had been very different from Sharpe's, and he had seen considerable combat in the battles of Second Bull Run, Chantilly, South Mountain, Antietam and Gettysburg, where he was slightly wounded.[79] Gates and Sharpe remained in contact during those years, and their interactions became even more frequent when Gates and the 20th were assigned to General Patrick's Provost Guard, policing Confederate prisoners and guarding City Point, in the late summer of 1863.[80]

Sharpe crops up frequently in Gates' war time diary. To cite several representative examples, Gates stopped by to visit Sharpe in January of 1863 after seeing Patrick to get a pass to travel north;[81] in February, he and Sharpe conferred for a short period about the possibility of consolidating Gates' regiment with Sharpe's 120th New York;[82] and on December 25, Sharpe and several other officers from the 120th brought their regimental band to serenade Gates, with Gates noting "They came in & had quite a jolly time. Retired at 1."[83]

To all appearances, Gates had a friendly and professionally valuable relationship with Sharpe. And yet, on Sept. 8, 1864, he noted in his diary: "Went to Hd Qrs A[rmy] of P[otomac} & had a long talk with Gen. Patrick about [Col.] G[eorge] H[.] S[harpe.]"[84] This rather arcane reference is illuminated by a parallel section in Patrick's diary for the same day:

> Col. [T.B.] Gates came up at my call and I have had a talk with them–*him*, I should say, in regard to Col. Sharpe—- He tells me that the Colonel is known, at home, and by *his* Regt[.], as a man on whom little reliance can be placed—- Tricky and full of all sorts of Policy—- Sharpe has written me to ask for *his* Regt.–I have not, yet, asked for it.[85]

Although Patrick's diary entry is unclear in some ways, apparently Sharpe was seeking to have the 120th transferred to Patrick's command. What is very apparent, however, is that Gates had no hesitance in telling Sharpe's

commanding officer that Sharpe could not be trusted, and was accorded almost no respect in his home town, or among those who knew him well among the line infantry regiments. While there is no evidence that Gates' assessment was accurate (for example, after the war Sharpe held a leadership position in the 120th's regimental association, and he was chosen by the association to deliver the keynote address on June 25, 1889, when a monument commemorating the 120th was dedicated at Gettysburg),[86] there are a variety of reasons Gates might have taken such a negative position. For example, he could have simply been telling Patrick what he thought the general wanted to hear. However, it is extremely unlikely that Gates' response to Patrick was unconnected to Sharpe's prominent position in the army's command structure, which–despite his relatively low rank–regularly brought him into contact with its most senior leaders, and which he had achieved through his intellectual agility rather than physical bravery on the battlefield. Because of their pre-war relationship in Kingston, Gates' negative attitudes toward Sharpe might have been more pronounced than some, but it is probable others would have felt similar resentments, and that those prejudices would have to some degree undermined Sharpe's credibility and hampered him in doing his job.

A Damaging Intelligence Failure

A third area that limited Sharpe's effectiveness was the extremely volatile environment in which he carried out his educative function. The Army of the Potomac was moving or fighting almost every day for weeks on end during the spring and early summer of 1864, operating against an opponent that was much more familiar with local roads and geographic features, and that had the support of most area residents. Moreover, in such a fluid environment, the mechanics of gathering and processing information were particularly difficult and time consuming, and facts that were determined to have been true as of the day before could have become disastrously false in the intervening period. Importantly, the "subject" that Sharpe was studying–the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia–was not a passive participant in the learning process; rather, it did whatever it could to keep its actions hidden from its enemy.

A graphic example of the challenges Sharpe faced occurred on June 12, 1864, when Grant secretly moved the Army of the Potomac from Cold Harbor, Virginia, where a futile Northern attack had been repulsed with the loss of approximately 7,000 men in less than an hour, to a position south of the Chickahominy River, from which he could attack Petersburg, a rail center that supplied Richmond. As chance had it, on that same night Lee put two divisions of General Richard Ewell's II Corps under the command of General

Early, and sent those troops north to the Shenandoah Valley in an offensive that would ultimately take them to the outskirts of Washington, seriously disrupting Grant's plans. Fishel notes that each army increased its own security to prevent desertions that would have informed the opposing force of its pending move; but since both armies were focused on maintaining secrecy within their lines, they were less able to keep a close eye on their opponent. "Here we see two stolen marches occurring on the same front on the same night—surely the most remarkable of coincidences in a war that was replete with them," he noted.[87]

It wasn't until June 20 that Sharpe's BMI picked up rumors of Early's raid, when a deserter from a Georgia brigade—"a man of intelligence" according to Sharpe—reported that "Ewell's corps left General Lee at Cold Harbor; that it was understood to be going toward the [Shenandoah] Valley toward Lynchburg; at all events, he has not seen part of it since, and it is quite certain that no part of General Ewell's corps is on our front."[88] The following day, deserters appeared to corroborate that "Ewell's Corps" had left Lee's army, but they offered a different explanation of where he had gone: "They think from all they have heard it has gone to Western Virginia."[89] On June 23, Sharpe reported "…I can hear nothing of Ewell's corps,"[90] and on July 4 a deserter stated that "it was rumored in camp last night that Ewell was going into Maryland; that he had with him his own corps and the detached forces that have been lately operating in the Valley."[91] Only on July 5 did Sharpe gain a reasonably clear picture of what had happened approximately three weeks earlier, when two deserters told interrogators "…that it was currently reported within their lines, both at Richmond and in Petersburg, that General Early was making an invasion of Maryland, with the intention of capturing Washington, having under his command two divisions of Ewell's corps…"[92]

Caught in the Middle

A fourth factor that hampered Sharpe's effectiveness was his involvement in a broader dispute between Grant and Meade over authority within the Army of the Potomac. When Grant took control of all Union forces in the spring of 1864, he decided to leave Meade in command of the Army of the Potomac, but to accompany that Army when it invaded the South. This decision reflected his confidence in General Sherman's ability to conduct independent operations in the Western theater of war, his desire to escape the political climate of Washington to the greatest degree possible, and his understanding of the importance of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia led by General Lee, who would be Meade's opponent.

Initially, Meade was impressed by Grant and accepted this arrangement, although he recognized it would diminish his role. He wrote his wife on

March 14, 1864, that his new commander "showed much more capacity and character than I expected," but added that "…you may look now for the Army of the Potomac putting laurels on the brows of another rather than your husband."[93] As the campaign wore on and Meade's prediction turned into fact, Lyman wrote to his wife that "…what I don't understand is, that the successes are Grant's but the failures Meade's. In point of reality, the whole is Grant's; he directs all, and his subordinates are only responsible as executive officers having more or less important functions."[94]

Meade's temper, never known to be particularly well controlled, appears to have grown shorter as Grant's prominence rose, with Cyrus Comstock, a member of Grant's staff, noting in his diary on July 7 that "Meade is a bear to his subordinates. I have heard him abuse Burnside, [General Winfield Scott] Hancock & [General Gouverneur K.) Warren to their faces…"[95] Receiving promotion to higher rank and being given an independent command away from Grant's shadow became major issues for Meade, and in November he upbraided Grant because Sherman and Sheridan had been made major generals before he had, and an opportunity for independent command he thought should have been his was given to Sheridan. "You continually profess to be my friend, but your friendship is the ruin of me," Meade told Grant. "You allow the papers to heap lies on me, when a word from you would set it right; you allow honors to fall to others while I am left to work obscurely."[96]

Although it appears Meade's distrust of Grant was largely misplaced, and Grant was able to work successfully with his subordinate throughout the remainder of the war, their unstable relationship created the context for an extended dispute over how information should be amassed, analyzed and distributed within the Army. This disagreement, which dragged on for several months, revolved around two major issues. First, should Sharpe and his staff be allowed to conduct the "all source" approach to information gathering that had been created initially under Hooker? And second, should Sharpe communicate directly to Grant, or should Grant receive Sharpe's information through Meade?

The first issue appeared to have been resolved long before Grant's arrival, with Meade deciding in the summer of 1863, shortly after the Battle of Gettysburg, to prohibit Sharpe's access to information generated by the cavalry and the Army's Signal Service (balloonists were no longer used by that point in the war). Thus, Sharpe was required to rely solely on the sources of information he controlled (that is, his scouts, agents behind Southern lines, the interrogation of prisoners, interviews with deserters and refugees, and captured documents and newspapers), and to forward his findings to Meade's chief of staff, General Humphreys, who combined them with reports provided by the cavalry and Signal Service into an overall assessment.[97] And, since General Patrick reported to Meade, Sharpe's reports only reached Grant

indirectly, through Meade's headquarters of the Army of the Potomac.[98]

Although by the early summer of 1864, Sharpe "was spending half or more of his time at Grant's headquarters, consulting with the general almost daily,"[99] Meade's overall arrangement remained in place. After Confederate General Early eluded detection to threaten the Northern capital, however, Grant set about to improve information gathering and to put it more directly under his control. His first move was to have General Patrick report to the headquarters of the Armies Operating Against Richmond (that is, Grant's command, which included both the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the James), rather than directly to Meade. Although Grant initially agreed to Meade's request that Patrick remain physically with him, Patrick's reporting relationship–and, by implication, Sharpe's as well–was clear.[100]

This seemingly minor change resulted in a major eruption by Meade, with Patrick recording in his diary entry of July 6, 1864, that when informed of Grant's decision Meade "became very angry–not as he *said*–with me, or with Grant, but with every body & thing…" and Meade said that "he would not have any partnership with Grant, etc. etc." Patrick noted that Sharpe's operation would remain with Meade until he and Grant reached further agreement, and that "Meade said to me, only a few days ago, that the whole Bureau of Information was good for nothing–that it furnished no information not already received thro' the Cavalry–that it ought to be broken up & that Genl. Grant thought so, too."[101]

However, as BMI scout Knight reported in his account published after the war, by late July or early August Sharpe had moved several of his best men to a building near Grant's headquarters at City Point with orders to set up daily communications with Union agents in Richmond, "which eventually we did."[102] Knight added that Sharpe "had also removed from Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac to City Point…"[103] although in actuality Sharpe split his time between City Point and Meade's command post until later in the year, when he moved his operation completely to Grant's headquarters.[104]

Interestingly, on July 15 Grant contacted Meade with a proposal that his chief of staff, General Humphries, be given command of the Army's Xth Corps if "you feel now as you did some time back about sparing him from his present position."[105] While the dispute over Patrick and Sharpe was not mentioned, had Meade accepted Grant's offer it would have been easier for Grant to shift Sharpe completely to his headquarters, since Humphreys was the person on Meade's staff in charge of assimilating intelligence reports from all available sources. However, Humphreys remained with Meade until November, when he replaced Hancock in command of the Army's II Corps.

It was not until shortly thereafter, on December 8, 1864, that an order formally shifting Sharpe to Grant's command was issued.[106] Importantly, the

BMI was once again provided with access to information generated by the cavalry and Signal Service, enabling Sharpe and Babcock to provide comprehensive, ongoing intelligence summaries as they had initially under Hooker.[107] However, even after Sharpe was formally assigned to Grant the dispute with Meade did not end, with Patrick reporting in his diary on February 13, 1865 (that is, only eleven days before Sharpe informed his uncle of the difficulties he had experienced in being promoted to brigadier general): "This Afternoon Capt. Oliver was sent back by Genl. Meade, with an insolent letter from Meade to … Sharpe–The Arrangement was made by Sharpe, with Meade, in a perfectly Satisfactory Manner & this comes like a thunderbolt–He (Sharpe) will pay him off…"[108]

There is no indication that Sharpe ever succeeded in "paying off" Meade, or even that he particularly wanted to pursue the matter further. But there can be little doubt that Meade, in restricting Sharpe's access to information and in involving Sharpe in his dispute with Grant, impaired his Army's ability to fully understand and react to the environment in which it operated.

Sharpe and Organizational Learning

Sharpe's experience illustrates both the value of organizational learning, and factors that can enhance or inhibit the functioning of a learning organization.

Several elements contributed to the success of the BMI under Sharpe's leadership. If he was not *the* right person for the job, he was certainly *a* right person; that is, he was curious, he had an orderly mind, and he expressed himself articulately. Moreover, since the BMI was a distinct unit within the Army of the Potomac, Sharpe's "un-businesslike" behavior was capable of fostering a learning environment among its members that encouraged independent thinking and personal initiative to an unusual degree, and was in many respects at odds with the more general military culture represented by Marsena Patrick. And, at least under Hooker and Grant, Sharpe was able to cut across conventional organizational lines not only in gathering information, but in providing well-considered analysis directly to those who could most effectively put it to use on the organization's behalf.

But Sharpe's tenure at BMI also indicates factors that can impair the functioning of a learning organization. At least one such factor was inevitable: the relationship between contending armies is intrinsically volatile, creating numerous barriers to the timely collection and accurate analysis of information. And one of the difficulties Sharpe faced resulted from a seemingly logical action, when Hooker decided to place Sharpe under Patrick's command, without considering the impact of personal relationships on the organizational learning process. And finally, some of the challenges

Sharpe had to deal with were created by the very value of the service he provided, which aroused institutional and personal jealousies, and made control of the educative function a matter of contention in Meade's larger dispute with Grant.

According to his obituary in the *New York Times*,[109] Sharpe resigned from the Army in 1865 with the rank of major general, going on to pursue a politically active career of public service. In 1870, then President Grant appointed Sharpe as United States Marshal for the Southern District of New York, where he played a significant role in ousting the Tweed Ring from its control of the city's municipal government. Grant then named Sharpe to the post of Surveyor for the Port of New York in 1873, one of the most prominent patronage positions in the country at that time; he was a member of the New York state assembly from 1879 through 1883, serving as speaker of the lower chamber from 1880 through 1881; and from 1890 through 1899 he served on the Board of United States General Appraisers. He survived to see the dawn of the 20th century, dying on Jan. 12, 1900.

[1] Unbound letter, "Hasbrouck" Genealogy File, Old Senate House Historic Site, Kingston, NY.

[2] Edwin C. Fischel, *The Secret War for the Union*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 3.

[3] Thomas Allen, *Intelligence in the Civil War*, Public Affairs Division, Central Intelligence Agency (2007). http://www.fas.org/irp/cia/product/civilwar.pdf (accessed Sept. 17, 2009)

[4] "Hasbrouck" Genealogy File.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 53.

[9] William B. Feis, *Grant's Secret Service*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2002), 15.

[10] Ibid, 126.

[11] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union.*

[12] Feis, *Grant's Secret Service.*

[13] Stephen W. Sears, *Chancellorsville*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), and *Gettysburg*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004).

[14] Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline, The art and practice of the learning organization*, (London, Random House, 1990), 14.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid, 142.

[17] Ibid, 9.

[18] Ibid, 9.

[19] Ibid, 236.

[20] Ibid, 92.

[21] Ibid, 90.

[22] Terry Terriff, "Warriors and Innovators: Military Change and Organizational Culture in the US Marine Corps," *Defense Studies*, 6(2) (July 2006): 219.

[23] G. B. D. Hasbrouck, "Address on Major General George H. Sharpe," in *Proceedings of the Ulster County Historical Society, 1936-1937* (Kingston, NY), 27.

[24] *Gen. G. H. Sharpe Dead*, The New York *Times*, Jan. 15, 1900.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 288.

[27] *The Civil War Diaries of Theodore B. Gates*, edited by Seward R. Osborne, (New York: Longstreet House, 1991), xi.

[28] C. Van Santvoord, *The One Hundred and Twentieth Regiment, New York State Volunteers: A Narrative of Its Services in the War for the Union*, (Roundout NY: Kingston Freeman Press, 1894), 26.

[29] Ibid, 9-10, 20.

[30] Ibid, 28.

[31] Ibid, 35.

[32] *Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of General Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac*, edited by David S. Sparks, (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1964), 208.

[33] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 287.

[34] *Patrick Diaries*, David S. Sparks, ed., 211.

[35] Ibid, 212.

[36] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 287.

[37] Allen, *Intelligence in the Civil War*, 23

[38] Feis, *Grant's Secret Service*, 197, and Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 293.

[39] For a detailed discussion of the BMI's methodology, see Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 298-300, and Feis, *Grant's Secret Service*, 196-200.

[40] Feis, *Grant's Secret Service*, 200.

[41] *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, electronic version, y38227998u.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] *The Grant Papers*, edited by John W. Simon, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), Vol. 12, 437-8.

[47] Ibid, 438.

[48] Ibid, 437.

[49] Ibid, 438.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] *Heroes of the Civil War*, The *Daily Freeman*, Kingston NY, Jan. 18, 1899, and the *The Career of Col. Babcock*, The *Daily Argus*, Mount Vernon, NY, Nov. 21, 1908.

[53] *Grant Papers*, John Y. Simon, ed., Vol. 13, 304.

[54] Ibid, 322.

[55] Horace Porter, *Campaigning With Grant*, (New York: The Century Co., 1897), 482.

[56] Ibid, 483.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 259.
[59] Ibid, 275.
[60] Sears, *Chancellorsville*, 78.
[61] *Patrick Diaries*, David S. Sparks, ed., 225.
[62] Ibid, 253.
[63] Ibid, 292.
[64] *How Scouts Worked. Serg't Knight Tells How they Went About Getting Information*, The *National Tribune*, Washington, DC, May 5, 1893.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] *Patrick Diaries*, David S. Sparks, ed., 477.
[69] Ibid, 422.
[70] Ibid, 423.
[71] Ibid, 479.
[72] Ibid, 219.
[73] *Meade's Army: The Private Notebooks of Lt. Col. Theodore Lyman*, edited by David W. Lowe, (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2007), 170.
[74] Feis, *Grant's Secret Service*, 241-2.
[75] *Lyman Notebooks*, David W. Lowe, ed., 235.
[76] Ibid
[77] *Patrick Diaries*, David S. Sparks, ed., 323.
[78] Ibid, 508.
[79] *Gates Diaries*, Seward R. Osborne, ed., xii.
[80] Ibid, xv.
[81] Ibid, 61.
[82] Ibid, 66.
[83] Ibid, 119.
[84] Ibid, 158.
[85] *Patrick Diaries*, David S. Sparks, ed., 425.
[86] Van Santvoord, *The One Hundred and Twentieth Regiment,* 216.
[87] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 546.
[88] *Official Records*, y3880940u.
[89] *Official Records*, y3966825u.
[90] *Official Records*, y4130650u.
[91] *Official Records*, y4856868u.
[92] *Official Records*, y5296962u.
[93] *The Life and Letters of General George Gordon Meade,* edited by George Gordon Meade, (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 1994), Vol. II, 178.
[94] *Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865; Letters of Colonel Theodore Lyman*, edited by George R. Agassiz, (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1922), 224.
[95] *The Diary of Cyrus B. Comstock*, edited by Merlin E. Sumner, (Dayton: Morningside, 1987), 279.
[96] *The Private Notebooks of Lt. Col. Theodore Lyman*, David W. Lowe, ed., 301.

[97] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 540-1.
[98] Feis, *Grant's Secret Service*, 235.
[99] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 243.
[100] *Grant Papers*, John Y. Simon, ed., Vol. 11, 180.
[101] *Patrick Diaries*, David S. Sparks, ed., 393.
[102] *How Scouts Worked. Serg't Knight Tells How they Went About Getting Information.*
[103] Ibid.
[104] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 547.
[105] *Official Records*, y5817133u.
[106] *Grant Papers*, John Y. Simon, ed., Vol. 13, 469.
[107] Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union*, 548.
[108] *Patrick Diaries*, David S. Sparks, ed., 470.
[109] The New York *Times*, Jan. 15, 1900.

The Experience of Biography:
Decisions in Organizing and Writing Chapter One

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1. Purpose

Writing a biography involves a number of decisions. The first chapter of the biography poses some of the most difficult of those decisions. Where to start? At birth? If not there, where, why? Catherine Drinker Bowen[1] began her biography of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes with some 70 pages recounting the nature of New England where Holmes was born. She presents his family, particularly his father, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was important in his life. All this occurs before she formally introduces Chief Justice Holmes. Without this knowledge one cannot understand Holmes – so she argues. Nonetheless, that's a long introduction. Similarly, in Nigel Hamilton's[2] discussion of his biography of President John F. Kennedy, the book does not begin with Kennedy's birth but with an account of Kennedy's funeral. Hamilton argues that this is the scene everyone knows, and the funeral allows him to present some very different views held by Kennedy's wife Jackie Kennedy and mother Rose Kennedy. Aspects of these differences, really conflicts, will appear throughout Hamilton's book of Kennedy's life. The decisions of Bowen and Hamilton were not reached easily nor necessarily early in the thinking and writing of the lives. These openings have considerable power in the later telling of the lives. The accounts indicate what I mean about decisions in organizing and writing the first chapter.

In the present essay I will present the content of Chapter One of Nora Barlow and the Darwin Legacy,[3] my biography of Nora Barlow (nee Darwin). I will recount the struggles and decisions underlying each part of this first chapter of the biography. I have italicized the parts of this essay that constitute my reflections on Chapter One, while the actual chapter is presented in normal font. The chapter begins after another italicized comment.

2. Images

Nora[4] is an unknown person to most of the readers I see as my audience, bright young women such as those I have in my classes of undergraduates at Washington University in St. Louis. I thought and decided that vivid images of Nora scattered throughout her life would not only be informative but enticing to my readers. That decision came after finding and sorting through an immense amount of data gathered over several years.

2.1 The Dominant Intellectual Image

In the autumn of 1933, the University Press at Cambridge published the book, *Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle.*[5] Shortly thereafter, *The Times Literary Supplement* did a front page review. A nearly fifty-year-old woman, Nora Barlow, the editor/author of the *Diary*[6] took the first giant step that was to earn her a place in one small strand in the history of science, the beginning of what one day would be called "the Darwin Industry." But it was not only the *London Times* that reviewed the book. Shortly thereafter, the *New York Times Book Review, Nature*, and dozens of other journals reviewed it as well. But it was *The Cambridge Review*[7] that caught Nora Barlow's contribution in glowing terms:

> There were two things which Dr. [Samuel] Johnson felt himself fitted to do very well. One was an "introduction to a literary work, stating what it is to contain and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner." The other was "a conclusion, shewing why the execution has not been equal to what the author promised to himself and to the public." Mrs. Barlow would have had no reason to fear the doctor's censure. He would surely have smiled upon her. She sets forth exactly what the work she is editing contains, and her editing with its bibliography, notes, maps, critical apparatus and index comes as near to perfection as is humanly possible.[8]

The later steps of Nora Barlow's intellectual career would include editing three more books on the Darwin manuscripts. Her volume of Charles Darwin letters from *H.M.S. Beagle, Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the "Beagle",*[9]

appeared when she was in her sixties. She published the unexpurgated, "de-edited," version of *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882,*[10] in her seventies. And in her eighties she published a book on the lifetime of letters between Darwin and his mentor John Stevens Henslow, *Darwin and Henslow, the Growth of an Idea.*[11] Within each of these books would be the original documents – Darwin notebooks, letters, details of conflicts, and biographical and interpretive statements of her own. And beyond the books Nora lectured and wrote on related topics.

Questions come to mind immediately. Who is this woman? Why the late in life productivity? And why such a large quantity of intellectual work? Why the focus on Darwiniana? What kind of family did she come from? What was she like as a child? What was her education that led to such a productive life? Did she compose her life improvisationally, like making a quilt, as some have argued that women do? Or was there a script for composing a life culminating in such significant bold intellectual strokes? Does her life have importance for young women of today seeking images and alternatives for their own choices of life styles?

My intent is to begin to establish the fact that here was an important and striking woman. The opening answers the first question often asked, "Why a biography of Nora Barlow?" See Bateson (1990)[12] and Heilbrun (1988)[13] for scholars asking how women compose and write their lives.

2.2 Family

Factual items are like the small tesserae in a mosaic. Nora Barlow was born Emma Nora Darwin in Cambridge, England on December 22, 1885. She was the third and youngest child of Horace and Ida Darwin. Her father Horace was the youngest son of Charles and Emma Darwin. Ida was the daughter of Lord and Lady Farrer of Abinger, the family home in Surrey in southern England. Charles Darwin had died in 1882, three years before the birth of his granddaughter Nora. *The Origin of Species*[14] had been published in 1859, and the theory of evolution by natural selection was in the midst of its immediate and stormy career. Emma Darwin, Charles' wife, was a Wedgwood of the several generations of pottery makers in central England. But as world famous as the Darwins already were, Charles had to enter negotiations toward an initial matching dowry of £5,000 and a later additional matching £5,000, with the Farrers. They were worried that Horace Darwin, then the founder of a small "shop" for making scientific equipment, seemed not a likely prospect financially for their daughter Ida and the upper class Victorian life style to which she was born. Eventually their worries were to be unfounded for Horace Darwin's shop was to become a very successful business, later to be named the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company.

But Nora was only one of Charles Darwin's nine grandchildren. All were born and raised in Cambridge. Delightful stories of them and their parents

are recounted by another of the grandchildren, Gwen Darwin Raverat, in her little book, *Period Piece: A Cambridge Childhood.*[15] Several of the other grandchildren's lives intertwined with Nora's over the one hundred years of her life. It was an unusual family, and being a Darwin had its problems as well. Another cousin, Bernard Darwin, in an autobiographical book recounted a story of a giant of a soldier, 6'10" in height, that he had once met. As individuals with a question in their eye approached, the soldier would tell them "six foot ten" before they could ask the question as to his height. Similarly, as he, Bernard Darwin, was introduced to people, he would say "grandfather" before the question was asked as to how Charles Darwin was related to him.[16] Currently, individuals who marry into the Darwin family have an informal club of "in-laws." Nora Barlow wore her Darwin lineage quietly and unobtrusively, but none-the-less very proudly. Stories, factual or symbolic, also present their own patterns, on their way toward images. And images are important for personality and character in biography. A plethora of stories exist.

3. Images over a Lifetime

The dominant image of Nora Barlow is editor/author of four well-recognized books on the original Charles Darwin manuscripts, mostly published in her later adulthood. Smaller anecdotes and stories enrich this view and provide contributing images toward an initial portrayal. And these stories as they arise from other individuals in different times and places convey some of the subtleties and complexities of her life.

3.1 The Bustle Story

Nora's cousin Gwen Raverat, reflecting back and writing in 1952, when both she and Nora were in their late 60's, told a delightful story of Nora as a child of eight or nine.

> It is an interesting proof that "bustles" were still familiar to us, that when my mother was expecting another baby, my cousin Nora asked her nurse: "Why does Aunt Maud wear a bustle in the front?" This was only partly a very naughty joke on her part – though who would have expected such shocking flippancy from Nora? Quiet Nora, who always reminded me of a little, obstinate grey Quaker donkey, so clever and sober and pretty.[17]

Nora and Gwen grew up together, traveled to Europe together with their mothers and aunts, and attended the Levana finishing school together. At the school they worked on the yearbook, both writing and sketching. They

generally were the liberal "rebels" in the school. Now some five decades later she is describing her cousin as a little girl. Each adjective carries a potent sub-image of the little girl Nora. A naughty joke and shocking flippancy from a little sober sided girl who was also obstinate, clever, and pretty? And a grey Quaker donkey as well! Some parts of one's character come early, and perhaps stay, and take on particular and idiosyncratic forms over a lifetime?

3.2 The Young Scientist

As an intellectually-oriented young woman of eighteen, the clever and sober and pretty Nora Darwin decided to become a scientist. In 1904 at Cambridge University, it was possible to enroll in courses in botany and in the new science of what would soon be labeled genetics without matriculating in the University or becoming a part of one of the colleges. Unlike her older sister Ruth, who was a student at Newnham College, Nora elected not to enroll in either Newnham or Girton, the other of the two women's colleges. F.F. Blackman, an experimental botanist and William Bateson the geneticist, both eminent scientists, were Nora's teachers and mentors. In 1908, Nora, then 22, presented her first research paper at the British Association for the Advancement of Science at the annual meeting in Dublin, Ireland. A large contingent went from Cambridge. That year Francis Darwin, Nora's uncle, was overall President of the Association, and Blackman was President of the Botanical Section. To the young Nora Darwin the boat ride to Dublin among family and friends had a picnic atmosphere. But it was also a serious time.

In a long letter to her cousin Gwen, describing the events and people of the meetings, she made an interesting personal comment:

> It did look so grand to have a Paper by ND and FF Blackman down on the programme of the days proceedings. I felt disgustingly puffed up, but now I feel grovely humble about it – because I realize that all the thinking was done for me.[18]

The obstinate grey Quaker donkey was growing into an independent and autonomous individual. Emotions and feeling, "looked so grand," "disgustingly puffed up," and "grovely humble," were a bigger part of the young intellectual than she was willing to admit on other occasions to other people – except her cousin Gwen. And "all the thinking was done for me" is perhaps most important of all!

3.3 The Warren

The houses one turns into homes become symbols for long episodes in a lifetime. After her marriage in 1911, Nora and Alan Barlow lived in two

different flats in London. During World War I an unexploded bomb or anti-aircraft shell actually fell through their roof. That event helped make the decision to move to the country, to a large house called "The Warren," in Buckinghamshire, an hour commute by rail into London. The house provided ample space for raising their six children – Joan, Thomas, Erasmus, Andrew, and shortly thereafter Hilda and Horace. The home contained a large garden that enabled Nora to continue some of her genetics research on trimorphic flowers. The house and grounds were large enough for a large active family to move about and the children to play. They lived there for over a decade, the happiest of Nora's life. In 1930 they moved a short distance away to Boswells, a much larger home and estate. The house was also in Buckinghamshire; the Barlow home had been built at the turn of the century by Alan's father, Dr. Thomas Barlow, who happened to be Queen Victoria's physician. It was just an hour away from London by train. Family stories allege that Queen Victoria did not want her family physician to be more than an hour away. But it was the Warren that Nora loved most. At the time of the move Nora the forty five year old wrote a poem expressing her feelings.

The Empty House
Empty and bare, with damp-stained walls & floor
Whose brown boards frame a pale unlovely centre;
The dusty windows shut, and every door open
for echoing passer-by to gaze or enter.
Like some loved face, whence health and mind are fled.
With haunting ghosts in the dull eyes reflected
So ghosts flit past as every stair tred –
I see them pass through dusty panes neglected.
These walls for years absorbed my fears and sadness.
My dreams slid in & out at cold grey dawn
These bleak bare rooms echoed with children's gladness
On winter nights, fire lit & curtains drawn.
This deep emotion I must not let harden.
Forget the anguish blank as felt today
But keep cushioned the friendly peaceful garden
The sunlit walnut tree and scent of hay.[19]

3.4 A Husband's Perspective

In 1936, Nora had the opportunity to travel to Bali with her good friend Beatrice Bateson, widow of William Bateson, to meet Margaret Mead, the distinguished American anthropologist who was to marry Beatrice's son Gregory. An American divorcee marrying into a third generation St. John's College family was an event in its own right. But Nora and Gregory had been

friends since Gregory was a little boy and Nora had been doing genetics research intermittently with his father "W.B." for several decades. Through the years she and Beatrice had become good friends.

Nora was now fifty years old. She had been married for twenty-five years. Her six children were adolescents and young adults, between the ages of 15 and 24. Nora's mother Ida was in her 80s. In the mid 1930s a six-week trip, half-way around the world, traveling out by ship and returning by aeroplane on the recently established Imperial Airways was a major event. Concerns and reservations remained. Her husband Alan, in his usual articulate and reasoned style, wrote a poignant and revealing note urging her to make the trip.

> As regards Bali, my feeling is that you ought to go. It is generally a mistake I think to stand by in case one is wanted, if there is good reason for going away. The children can manage for three months without you – not of course as well as if you were there – but I don't see why anything shd go seriously wrong. The Orchard [her mother's home] I think you ought to risk; I'm sure R [her sister Ruth] wd say so. I have missed you so much this last fortnight, especially after three weeks of your daily (& nightly) company that three months' absence is a gloomy prospect; but this you will dismiss as mere sentimentality, and anyway the reflected pleasure in your travel would outweigh the emptiness of your absence. I really ought not to have mentioned this, but I won't refer to it again.
>
> But to put it shortly, for goodness sake be a little self indulgent for once in a way, & run away from all your obligations.[20]

Alan's supportiveness and reasonableness of argument seem vivid. "Mere sentimentality" and "really ought not to have mentioned this" carry their own connotations and meaning of him, her, and their relationship. But it is the phrasing of the last sentence, "be a little self indulgent for once in a way" and "run away from all your obligations" that suggests other dimensions of Nora's personality and character in middle adulthood. Nurturance vies with soberness in the obstinate grey Quaker donkey of her childhood.

Alan's advice was taken. Nora and Beatrice did travel to Bali. Nora did return by aeroplane. And she and Margaret Mead became good friends. Overall it was a peak experience for her.

Including letters and poems in a biography to illustrate the nature of Nora's personality and character seems quite relevant to literary biography, one might argue (Woolf 1927, 1929)[21] but less relevant and acceptable to social science discussions?

3.5 The Abiding Interest

Nora Barlow's interest in the Darwin manuscripts continued over four decades, from the late 1920s when she started her work on the *Diary*[22] until the late 1960s when she published the Henslow letters in *Darwin and Henslow, The Growth of an Idea.*[23] The central focus of most of these efforts concerned his time on the *Beagle*. In between the above-mentioned books were the unpublished letters and notebooks from the *Beagle*, *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the "Beagle"*[24] that Nora had hoped originally to have published with the *Diary***.** In 1958 Nora published what has come to be known as the complete and authoritative edition of Darwin's autobiography, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882.*[25] R. A. Fisher in a review called it the "de-edited" version in that Nora had included material that her Uncle Frank Darwin had deleted in an earlier edition. She also added an appendix and notes. In this journal for his children Darwin called the *Beagle* voyage the most important event of his life. With the autobiography Nora completed, in a sense, her life's work of Darwin on the *Beagle*. By any intellectual or academic standard, that is a long time to maintain a coherent program of inquiry and writing. In a letter to Gregory Bateson shortly after World War II when she was sixty years old—and just as she had finished her second book, the letters from Darwin's time on H.M.S. *Beagle*—she commented in a poignant and interpretive manner about her work: "My Ivory Tower has been a nice little old sailing ship called the *Beagle.* So remote, so irrelevant, but O so pleasant."[26]

To most people, Ivory Tower probably connotes a non-worldly retreat, a place of meditation. Remote seems distant in time and place. Irrelevant seems a bit more ambiguous, although in the face of World War II, six growing children and a large house with many government figures in and out, the *Beagle* surely was less immediately demanding. And the final phrase, "but O so pleasant" carries a low key emotional satisfaction, notwithstanding all of the above. An "abiding interest" seems a label not too far misplaced.

Nora's four books and a long monograph have been used to make two interrelated points. First, they define Nora as an intellectual; second, they define an abiding interest. The late in life aspect is an issue left untouched here.

3.6 The Intellectually Active Lady of Boswells

Lives have their outside aspects—the visible things that people do, the activities they engage in—as well as the internal world of thoughts and feelings. While living at Boswells near Wendover in Bucks County, as a well-to-do "lady" of a large country home and estate, Nora elected to keep busy with people and events within several interrelated organizations: the Women's Institute, the Workers Educational Association, and the Natural History Section of the Buckinghamshire Archeological Society. She had

founded the Natural History Section and was its president from 1947 until 1968, when she returned to Cambridge after the death of her husband. These groups attracted and met the needs of a broad array of individuals in the local community. Nora was in the middle of all this, or perhaps better, out in front with all of it.

She chaired the Natural History Weekend for a number of years, including in 1960. On one Friday evening, she introduced the course, and presented the lecture with slides. The topic was "Darwin as a Botanist." It was a talk she had given on the continent at a formal meeting; later she would publish it. On Saturday morning the field trip was to her home, Boswells, to see the chalkdown land and the beech woods. Among other speakers was her friend Sir Edward Salisbury, a Fellow of the Royal Society and the former Director of the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew. The quality of people, ideas, and experiences for a local educational program goes without saying. In a fundamental sense it builds upon Nora – her energy, interests, background and contacts. A small part of Buckinghamshire was different because of her.

At a more informal level, a friend, Grace Humber, twenty-five years Nora's junior, recalled an incident from her first years in Wendover:

> When we moved in here in 1952, Lady Barlow said to me, "The gardener is digging up some plants. Would you like to come up for some plants for the garden?" So I went up and she took me around the garden. We walked all around the garden. There were many plants for me, all sorts. I still got [sic] some in my garden now.[27]

And later:

> My husband planted [and showed prize winning] roses. And he gave lady Barlow a rose – a tiny rose that she very much wanted. It was a …anyway it was a big yellow rose climbing up the side of the house. And she was very proud of this rose.[28]

Among her friends, acquaintances, and colleagues in the various groups was another kind of local activism. Grace Humber continued:

> Another thing I remember about her – you know she was very interested in wild flowers, don't you? Well down this lane, at the bottom of the lane, there's a piece of land that was owned by the authority. And in that little piece of land there was a very rare flower that only grows in few places in England. It is called Azabasracca. And every year we had to go and look to see if this flower was still there. We had to climb around a ditch and hang on to a wall, and get

> past to get to see it. ... in a swampy field. And then she heard that they were going to sell the land, which they had down there and build on it. So she goes posthaste down and digs up a bit, you see, and takes it over into the woods opposite. And she planted it beneath a box tree. And every year she went to see if it was thriving. And people have all gone since to see that it is thriving. We've got a young woman down the road here who's written about it. And I asked her and she said, "Yes, it's still there."[29]

Communities are imprinted in varied ways.

3.7 A Potent Relationship: The W.E.A. and Tutor Sidney Argent

Running concomitantly with the Natural History Section activities were Nora's activities in the W.E.A., the Workers Educational Association. This strand of activities picked up some similar aspects of her intellect and character but accented an unusual depth of relationship with an unusual tutor, Sidney Argent. In the late 1940s and early 1950s this W.E.A. tutor Sidney Argent and his wife Muriel came into Nora's life. He was a philosopher based in the "Delegacy for Extra-mural Studies" at Oxford University. On Tuesdays in the 1950s he and Nora had their weekly course meetings. For him, she, now in her sixties, wrote a several page essay titled "Is equality an acceptable principle for social organization?" As a serious instructor with a serious student, and using latter day jargon, he "spilled a lot of red ink" on her paper as he critiqued her position. Without going into the core of her thesis, for it's the relationship with Sidney that is important here, he commented at length at the end of her paper:

> I feel that in this essay you have felt the obstructions of actual social conditions to clear philosophical thought more than you usually do. I have the impression of a writer who not merrily glances over her shoulder at facts awkwardly placed in the way of a straight piece of theorizing, but who turns right round in her path because she thinks she hears some of the facts rising behind her like lions to devour her. - I have been discussing Pilgrims Progress in another connection, but I hope you see my meaning.[30]

But Nora in her mid sixties was also tenacious. On February 21, 1951 she wrote a two-page "Dear Dr. Argent" letter in reply to his comments. Additional images arise of her, her beliefs, and character.

> I certainly do want to discuss your general comments, now that I have digested them though I am not sure I understand them rightly.

> I suppose I do value stubborn and awkward facts more than I do deductive theories. So that if Christian's lions represent such facts, I feel he did wrong to go forward at the word of the porter, watchful when he heard they were chained & a mere trial of faith. He went past them, afraid: is that facing difficulties? The only advances one ever makes oneself is by going round and round between the outward certainties (the stubborn facts) and the inward convictions (faiths) perhaps by reconciling the latter to the former, but not by passing them by.
>
> But I may have your meaning all wrong. The straight path of theorizing may be the attempt to evaluate & preserve the immeasurables of art, literature, science, & morality; the lions in this case are the despairing cry for justice & equality from the under privileged. These lions devour me constantly, & they are hardly chained. It is no easier to pass them by, in the name of eternal values, than it is to pass by the lions of eternal values in the faith & equality of man.
>
> I suppose – as so often happens – I am putting the problem in the wrong terms. That the great men of Greece were not bought at the expense of slavery; nor leisure and grace of life at the expense of sweated labor.
>
> But I hope it is not a time-taking bore to you to have this for further valued comment. I return the essay, as it has the first installment, so to speak; and I have made a note or two on it also. I am not vindicating the essay which I dislike; but am trying to elucidate my position. This theme is constantly at my back – I am not sure I have made myself at all clear in these short-circuited note marks – it is partly to try & clear my own views that I write – as well as to get your clearer thoughts.[31]

Sidney Argent, the hardworking tutor, replied within three days with humor and further interpretation. His opening line in his "Dear Lady Barlow" note was "It was nice to receive after so long a time another of your 'argumentive' letters." He then presented a paragraph of commentary, suggested a time for "talk, and indicated the topic of the next weeks' group meeting."[32] The relationship between Nora and the Argents continued until Sidney's death in 1977, long after Nora had moved back to Cambridge in 1968 and the Argents had retired to Devonshire. And the relationship changed, becoming less formal, and more toward friendship and intimacy. And those changes picked up

at a more personal level than the intellectual arguments of the earlier W.E.A. times. In the late 1950s, actually December of 1957, when Sidney was hospitalized for a hemorrhoid operation, "piles" as he called it, he wrote Nora a long twelve page letter full of humor, ideas, and strong personal feelings. In the letter he reminded Nora that he had called her attention to an article by Annan on the "intellectual aristocracy" from a book *Studies in Social History,*[33] edited by Plumb. After a brief introduction to Annan's central point about the inter-marriage of upper middle class families who "dominated English culture" he moved to the personal:

> One of these families was of course the Darwin's. Charles was not hostile to religion but doubtful about it: like his granddaughter I should say. At any rate, to jump to the point, I know in the best of ways – experience - that your scientific enthusiasm is so far from being incompatible with Christian charity. That true kindness is a major principle of your life. But my experience is of more than this; it is your friendship for me & I have felt it above all now, in this brief period of tribulation. Thank you, thank you, my dear. A spiritually starved childhood taught me to distrust the world. You are among the one or two people who are at last teaching me to interpret it more generously.[34]

Over a decade later, as the visiting and correspondence continued, Sidney returned to several of their shared life activities and themes. His garden of roses and blackberries had run together.

> One of my neighbors looked at the disastrous spread and exclaimed "There's a life's work here."
> The garden is only a part of my Dartmouth life. Mornings are taken with a thousand house jobs. The dark evenings alone are for reading & here I make no new advances. Lately I have been reading a Penguin history of the reformation, but remain unmoved. How much I should like to have been one of the well known men I hear about, who are well known because they have been devoted to their subject since childhood. I on the other hand have been so busy shaking off my working–class past, that I faced a future with nothing positive about it. Indeed, now that I have gotten into that future, I find myself admiring men who have retained skill with their hands like my father for instance, a joiner, who use to plan and make things on our kitchen table, while I played a child's game on the floor.
>
> I often wonder how you are getting on, both with your garden and

> your scientific art. Who writes to you now with their problems, or who comes to you? And do you send them away satisfied?[35]

The intellectually active "lady" of Boswells had built a multidimensional life that intertwined with a variety of interesting people. Images from the twists and turns with the Argents over some three decades suggest other aspects of who and what was Nora Barlow.

3.8 "Scientific Art" and Late in Life Acclaim

Within the "Darwin Industry" Nora was widely recognized as a low key "major player," to use two contemporary labels. Her four books, a monograph, multiple articles, varied kinds of helpfulness, and extensive invitations to scholars to visit Boswells gave her a significant place in that group. One prominent member, Sydney Smith, commented in an interview "Nora had the best Darwin mind since Charles."[36] Outside this small group, even to the sophisticated social historians such as Noel Annan she was unknown or ignored. And that's another small puzzlement. Simple self effacement, shyness, or…?

Nonetheless, she received considerable acclaim. Several interrelated images arise in statements of Paul Barrett, one of the prominent Darwin Scholars. Nora was 91 when Barrett published in 1977 his *The Collected Papers of Charles Darwin.*[37] In the book he commented this way: **"**Dedicated to Nora Barlow, Sydney Smith, and Peter Gautrey – generous and enthusiastic friends of Darwinians."[38] In the acknowledgments he commented further: "Lady Nora Barlow with her gracious courtesy and charm, invited me to browse through her library and gave me many helpful suggestions."[39]

Earlier correspondence from the 1960s indicates some of the variety of events leading to the later dedications. They had exchanged papers. One of these was a bibliography of Darwin manuscripts that Barrett had assembled. The bibliography had contained an 1836 reference to *The Entomological Magazine*. This new and short lived journal had published some of the original Darwin *Beagle* materials from the cluster Henslow had presented to, and had published by, the Cambridge Philosophical Society, before Darwin had returned home from his five year voyage. Nora's frank and matter of fact reply to Barrett's list captures another image. "The list of scientific papers is of permanent value for reference & has reminded me that I have never looked up in the Ent. Mag. to see which letters to Henslow were taken, your item 3."[40]

Later he thanked her for looking over the list of names from the notebooks of Darwin's that he was to publish. And on another occasion he thanked her for writing a letter of introduction to the Athenaeum Club that enabled him to examine some of the original Darwin books that were in their

collection. In addition, he gratefully acknowledged hospitality she showed him and his wife over dinner at Boswells, her home in Buckinghamshire. Nora's relationships with her Darwinian colleagues had multiple facets of helpfulness and nurturance. Meanwhile she was finishing her own editing of the Darwin manuscripts.

4. Summary and Conclusion: Mosaic and Interpretation

A late in life series of books over four decades in the 1930s, 40s, 50s, and 60s is the dominant image of Nora Barlow – student, scholar, editor, and major contributor to the Darwin Legacy. In her introduction to her un-expurgated version of *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin 1809-1882* she states a position that guided her Darwin scholarship.

> He [Charles Darwin] still stands as the leading figure of that revolution in scientific thought which followed the publication of the *Origin of Species* in the middle of the 19th Century, a revolution soon involving all realms of knowledge. But posterity must continually reassess the past, and accurate contemporary sources are specially needed to provide insights into those stormy seasons when the wind of accepted belief changes. The great figures must be seen in their own setting and their own words must be heard, cleared of the posthumous growth of later dogmas.[41]

So she strove for "accurate contemporary sources" and "insight into those stormy seasons when the wind of accepted belief *changes*." She saw herself as an editor, an editor with a forty year *idée fixe.*

This image of Nora reflects my decision that the overall theme of the biography will accent Nora's intellectual life. Much of the personal and social will be in the service of this perspective. One troublesome alternative theme was Nora Barlow and the culture of the intellectual aristocracy of 19th century England. This is argued elsewhere in "Doing Ethnographic Biography."[42]

The late in life intellectually productive student and scholar of the Darwinian manuscripts takes on three dimensional form as images from her own comments and from those of friends and relatives appear. With these comments the Quaker donkey seems to remain grey as she discovers that her British Association for the Advancement of Science presentation has "all the thinking done for me." The "clever and sober and pretty" little girl remains in the serious and responsible adult who "for once in a way" should "be a little self indulgent."

Nora never really was a public person on the grand scale that one might have expected from her achievements and her family and social class back-

ground. And that left her, at least beyond the circle of Darwinian scholars, as a relatively unknown member of the intellectual aristocracy. Noel Annan's view has broader implications than the brief reference made in Sidney Argent's letter to Nora.

Social class in England is often approached with a simple set of distinctions. Working class and middle class come immediately to mind. The landed aristocracy is clearly upper class. Over the last century or two, so it is argued, a strand of upper middle class individuals began to intermarry and began to dominate the cultural and intellectual institutions – the Public schools, Oxbridge, newspapers, literature and the arts. An intellectual aristocracy appeared. The names ripple forth –Macaulay, Trevelyan, Arnold, Huxley, and Keynes, to mention only a few. And amongst this group were the Darwins and the Barlows. In Annan's noteworthy essays Nora is present yet absent by name. He seems to circle around her, but misses her. Another small anomaly, but he presents an important image nonetheless.

> Sir Horace Darwin's elder daughter Ruth, became civil servant and married a civil servant Mr. Rees Thomas. His younger daughter [Nora] married the Treasury official, Sir Alan Barlow, whose father was physician to three sovereigns and President of the Royal College of Physicians. Sir Alan's niece married Mr. Carl Winter, Fellow of Trinity, and Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum. His son, Dr Horace Barlow, Fellow of Trinity and later of Kings, is related through his grandmother to the late Lord Farrer. Lord Farrer was brother-in-law to Sir Edward Bridges, the son of the Poet Laureate and Permanent Secretary to the Treasury and to the historian the Hon. Steven Runciman, Fellow of Trinity, whose mother obtained a first-class in the history Tripos of 1890.[43]

Nora is daughter, sister, wife, mother, and general in-law in this brief paragraph, but not a person in her own right. The other Darwins received their due as well. Nora's Uncles –Francis, George and Leonard – and one Aunt, Henrietta, have their place and contributions. Her cousins Gwen, Frances, Margaret, Bernard, and Charles all appear in their individual attainments and marriages. The Wedgwoods are a separate but related set of "cousins," who, in turn, are related to a number of other eminent intellectual families.

As the interrelated family webs spin out one begins to think of the culture of the intellectual aristocracy. "A way of life" is an important definition of culture. And, as with any culture, the ramifications are pervasive. Annan barely begins this line of thought, but has a provocative sentence that helps our focus on Nora: "… if those children who do not inherit their parent's intellec-

tual talents suffered unjustly by feeling they had failed, the successful children gained by acquiring the habit of thinking accurately in concepts at an early age."[44]

Nora grew up in this culture, married in it, lived in it, and contributed quietly but significantly to it. She knew, studied under, and worked with eminent scientists such as Blackman and Bateson. She was colleague and friends with Directors of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. Social scientists such as Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead flowed in and out of her life for years. A generation of Darwin scholars, e.g. Paul Barrett, Sydney Smith, Peter Gautrey, and Gavin de Beer corresponded, visited at Boswells, and constituted their own invisible college. In a fundamental sense, her life as she contributed to the Darwin Legacy, becomes a particular exemplification of the culture of the intellectual aristocracy. Her negotiations through that maze had its moments of poignancy as well as fascination and excitement.

This set of images of Nora Barlow over a century (1885-1989) in the context of family and friends gives an initial picture of a fascinating and important life. The images and the resulting initial portrayal cut through many of the over simplified stereotypes of personality, class, gender, work and family and of autonomy and nurturance. The varied particulars demand a search for larger patterns, if not explanations, yet the specifics of time and place and people caution against the too quick reach for generalizations. Nora Barlow became a scientist and an historian of science. She raised six children and was the wife of a noted civil servant. Over six decades she managed three large homes – The Warren, Boswells, and Sellenger (her Cambridge house). Over the years she was friend and colleague to innumerable men and women. In this larger, but subdued sense, and probably against some of her conscious thoughts and wishes but perhaps not some of her more latent wishes and concerns, her life can be a story worth telling and a model worth exploring.

Finding, collating and integrating such images is a difficult task and set of decisions for the biographer. The decision to put the images along a rough chronological line is a simple resolution of serious thought and priorities. Accenting some, in terms of length of the image, may seem too much; however, the argument of the importance to displaying Nora's life seemed the critical issue. Finally integrating the images through the concept of the intellectual aristocracy is important in several ways. It clearly shows much about her. Also, and less stressed here is the fact that the intellectual culture idea became part of what I called elsewhere, the class theme. Should the biography emphasize Nora Barlow and the Darwin Legacy or would Nora Barlow and the culture of the intellectual aristocracy be the theme? That puzzlement belongs in another essay of the larger context of her life. In sum, this essay presents the first chapter of the book Nora Barlow and the Darwin Legacy[45] *and the visions and decisions for the chapter's context and structure. The essay integrates*

nicely with the long methodological piece, "Doing Ethnographic Biography: A Reflective Practitioner at Work during a Spring in Cambridge".[46] That monograph was intended initially to be a methodological appendix to the biography per se. The reader of the present essay can see the author's larger perspective.

Notes

[1] Catherine Drinker Bowen, *Yankee from Olympus: Justice Holmes and his Family* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1944).

[2] Nigel Hamilton, *How to Do Biography: A Primer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[3] Louis M. Smith, Nora Barlow and the Darwin Legacy (In Process).

[4] Some readers might find inappropriate my referring to Nora Barlow as Nora. The usage is intentional. The use of Barlow or Lady Barlow is a kind of formality that is inconsistent with the biographical portrait I am writing and with the way in which Nora saw herself and her children and grandchildren refer to her in their conversation with each other and with me.

[5] Nora Barlow, *Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of the HMS Beagle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933).

[6] Ibid.

[7] "Review of Barlow, Nora; Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of HMS Beagle." *Cambridge Review* (1934).

[8] Ibid, 190.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Nora Barlow, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin* (London: Collins, 1955).

[11] Nora Barlow, *Darwin and Henslow: The Growth of an Idea* (John Murray: London, 1967).

[12] Mary Catherine Bateson, *Composing a Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990).

[13] Carol Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Ballantine Nooks, 1986).

[14] Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859).

[15] Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece: A Cambridge Childhood* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952).

[16] Bernard Darwin, *The World that Fred Made: An Autobiography* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1955).

[17] Raverat, 112.

[18] Barlow to Gwen Darwin, 1908. Barlow Archives.

[19] Nora Barlow's poem on leaving the Warren, January 1931, Barlow Archives.

[20] Alan Barlow letter to Nora Barlow, 1936. Barlow Archives.

[21] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace, 1927); Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Hogarth, 1929).

[22] Nora Barlow, *Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of the HMS "Beagle" Edited from the MS by Nora Barlow* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1934).

[23] Nora Barlow, *Darwin and Henslow: The Growth of an Idea* (John Murray: London, 1967).

[24] Nora Barlow, *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle* (London: Pilot, 1945).

[25] Nora Barlow, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin* (London: Collins, 1955).

[26] Nora Barlow letter, 1946, Barlow Archives.

[27] Interview of Grace Humber, June 1992. Barlow Archives.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Unpublished manuscript, February 1951, Barlow Archives.

[31] Barlow Archives.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Noel Annan,"The Intellectual Aristocracy," In Plumb, John H., *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G.M. Trevelyan* (London: Longmans, 1955).

[34] Sidney Argent letter December 16, 1957 Barlow archives, CUL.

[35] Sidney Argent letter November 28, 1970, Barlow Archives.

[36] Interview of Sydney Smith,1992. Barlow Archives.

[37] Paul Barrett, *The Collected Papers of Charles Darwin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

[38] Ibid, iv.

[39] Ibid, xvii.

[40] Barlow Archives.

[41] Nora Barlow, ed. *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882, with Original Omissions Restored* (London: Collins, 1958), 11.

[42] Louis M. Smith," Doing Ethnographic Biography: A Reflective Practitioner at Work during a Spring in Cambridge" *Perspectives in Education* 23 (2009): 201-223.

[43] Annan, 264.

[44] Ibid, 250-251.

[45] Louis M. Smith, Nora Barlow and the Darwin Legacy.

[46] Louis M. Smith,"*Doing Ethnographic Biography.*"

Book Review:
Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*

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Hermione Lee. *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-19-953354-1. 144 pages.

In *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*, biographer Hermione Lee uses British literary biography as a springboard to explore the evolution of life-writing from its ancient origins to present day. This tidy little text, part of Oxford University Press's series of "very short" pocket-sized introductions, provides a compelling overview of the biographical genre in 140 pages, eight chapters, a brief index, and twenty illustrations. Launching her introduction with a description of common metaphors and rules for biography and concluding with reflections on biographers' diverse narrative approaches, Lee demonstrates in her treatment of the genre the very authorial "expertise and judiciousness" (2) and the breadth and detail that she argues is imperative for biographers to exercise in their craft.

Legible throughout this parsimonious text—a striking contrast to Lee's acclaimed biographies *Virginia Woolf* (1996) and *Edith Wharton* (2007), which each stretched to more than 800 pages—is Lee's awareness that representing the richness of the biographical genre, like biographers' efforts to represent the richness of lives, is a partial, situated enterprise that can never fully reflect "the subject." Ushering the reader along with a contemplative tone and engaging excerpts from diverse biographies, Lee explores changes in the genre, its laudatory and "predatory" (2) aspects, and its fraught political and

moral dimensions. Indeed, biography is "never just the personal story of one life" but has "political and social implications" (63). Biographers (and subjects) pursue political agendas, ferret out secrets, privilege certain lives over others, and, inevitably, wrest narrative power from subjects' control to inscribe their own interpretations, "warts and all" (39), into the historical record. To Lee, these implications seem to underscore biographers' fundamental "duty of responsibility to the 'helplessness of the dead'" (69). This short, smart, and sophisticated overview will provide seasoned biographers with new insights into the field of literary biography and inform newcomers of central debates and issues in biographical practice.

Hermione Lee has produced a range of incisive biographical studies, including critical biographies on Woolf, Wharton, Willa Cather, Elizabeth Bowen, Philip Roth, essays on life writing, and edited collections of women's writing. She draws from her extensive experience and previous publications to construct the *Very Short Introduction*. Lee is an internationally-recognized scholar in English Literature who has taught at the University of Liverpool, the University of York, and, most recently, at Oxford University. In 2008, she was appointed as President to Oxford's Wolfson College.

A Very Short Review

Lee organizes her text into eight chapters that each focus on a particular theme in the evolution of biography, but like the genre's relationship to such fields as philosophy and literature, are overlapping and fluid. In so doing, she works to convey the spirit and history of life-writing without concretizing its boundaries and constructing an authoritarian narrative that might seem misplaced in an era of blurred genres and methodological proliferation. Lee opens Chapter One, "Biography Channel," with two provocative metaphors, "autopsy" (1) and "portrait" (2) to capture the "gruesome" (2) aspects and detailed artistry of life writing. These metaphors also seem fitting for Lee's analytic efforts to track the painful betrayals, adulation and vitriol, and humility and self-aggrandizing impulses woven throughout the history of biography, as well as biographers' efforts to paint, with vigilance and "heart" (57), the contours of a given life.

In Chapter One, Lee also mobilizes—and unpacks—a list of "ten possible rules" for biographies to ground her discussion: that biographies be truthful, inclusive of a "whole life," forthcoming with private details, precise with source material, written by someone who knows the subject personally, objective, a form of history, an exploration of "identity," and valuable for the reader. Lee considers each rule and then playfully brushes them all aside in her tenth rule, "There Are No Rules for Biography" (18). Indeed, she seems to care little for such rules in her own biographical practice, not having known,

for example, most of her subjects while they lived and remarking early in her biography of Woolf, "there is no such thing as an objective biography" (3). The craft, ever fluid and evolving, defies rigid definitions.

An enduring goal for biographers, though, Lee contends elsewhere, is capturing a "vivid sense of the person."[1] In Chapter 2, "Exemplary Lives," Lee traverses centuries of biographical terrain to highlight the genre's classical and gendered emphasis on "remarkable" and "exceptional" (22) Western European men historically—leaders, saints, warriors, philosophers—and the hagiography and narrative conventions that characterize these accounts. Legible in this history are the "contradictory strains" of life-writing that endure in present day, "the epic and the absurd, legends and gossip, the elegiac and the anecdotal, gravity and foolishness" (38). Lee traces Plutarch's lasting influence, "Saints' Lives," and tensions as life-writing diversified then emerged as a genre in its own right in the 17th century.

In Chapter 3, "Warts and All," Lee uses the epic biography of one such Exemplary Life, Samuel Johnson's, to capture the shift in 17th century literary practices from venerating subjects to representing them "authentick[ally]" (43). Thomas Boswell's renowned account of Johnson's life, for example, laid bare his subjects' flawed, sometimes "grotesque" (42) and utterly human characteristics. Lee highlights how context shapes biography, in Johnson/Bowell's case, a "gossipy" literary culture, an expanding print industry, and biographers' emerging interest in identity that intensified their efforts to capture the "'ana' (sayings) and 'anecdotes'" of Great Men (44). Yet many felt betrayed in the wake of biographers' quest for "veracity," a sentiment Oscar Wilde captured concisely when he remarked, "it is always Judas who writes the biography" (71).

From the "tender attachment" (51) Lee describes between Boswell and Johnson to her assertion that the "final stage" for biographers is "separation and letting go" (140), a strength of Lee's text is her attention to the significance of researcher-subject relationships. This intimate, unique, "co-partnership" (52), this odd "dance" (52) between narrator and subject, shapes the production of life narratives, and biographies thus reveal, Lee reminds us, something about their narrators as well as their subjects. Biographers' agendas loom particularly large in Chapter 4, "National Biography," in which Lee details the venerating qualities of 19th century biography and its role in "consolidating a national story" (63). Victorian biographers favored empathetic portrayals of subjects. To serve a nationalistic mission, they began detailing the heroics of common citizens alongside those of Great Men.

While these democratic impulses reflected a broader vision of whose lives were worth documenting and opened narrative space in the biographical record for previously invisible lives, the central role of letters, diaries, written records—in other words, literacy—to constructing a "national story" left

the traces of other lives to dissipate into the historical ether. These are weighty racialized and gendered silences in biographical history. If we consider Lee's remarks in the context of American history, for example, there are simply no written records from the thousands of African-American women who escaped from slavery, and throughout the American Civil War, dutifully laundered Union soldiers' clothes, cooked their food, and sometimes endured their abuse.[2] And for every Anne Frank whose life record survives in a few epistolary scraps, there remain, Lee remarks soberly, "millions of unwritten biographies" (112) that Hitler and Stalin left in their wake. To this reviewer, such are the archival circumstances that inspire postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak's famous question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

National idols fell in the 20th century under the pens of modernists, fueled by increasing experimentation in life-writing and the influence of psychoanalysis. Lee argues in Chapter 5, "Fallen Idols," that modernists disparaged the romanticizing impulses of Victorian biography and sought instead frank, playful, irreverent, or deeply psychological accounts. Freud's theories cast a long shadow in biographies of this period even though the psychiatrist dismissed the genre as packed with lies and biographers' quests as "infantile fixations" on father/subjects (86). Earlier biographers' interest in morality and accomplishments gave way to the lure of interpreting life events through a psychological lens. Lee uses varied examples, including Lytton Strachey's eccentric text, *Eminent Victorians*, to illustrate biographers' interests in their subjects' "inner lives," sexuality, neuroses, and childhood traumas. As Lee traces the biographical approaches that surface and fade at different historical moments, she reminds the reader that tendrils of earlier practices endure, including moral didacticism, "encomium (praise for the dead) and panegyric (praise for the living)" (22), and "chronological" accounts of "significant lives" (91).

In the early 20th century, biographers also began to wrestle with the art of narrating lives. What Virginia Woolf termed the "new biography" (73) reflected her preoccupation with spirit and essence rather than facts, the limits of biographical representation, and the relationship of fiction to biography. Such narrative issues are key aspects of biographical work, and Lee quotes from Woolf's *Orlando* to suggest the inevitable slippage between Lives and their Representation. Woolf writes, "For she had a great many selves to call upon, far more than we have been able to find room for, since a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may well have as many thousand" (81-82). Indeed, many subjects might find an unfamiliar face greeting them from the pages of a biographical account purported to represent them. "The world will never know of my life," Thomas Carlyle observed, "if it should write and read a hundred biographies of me" (71). As one strategy to approach the complexity of representation,

Woolf deems it the "biographers' job to admit contradictory versions of the same face" (81). Lee seems to adopt this approach in her biography of Wharton in which multiple "faces" of her subject appear. Chapter 5 is peppered with images of figures significant to 20th century biography: Woolf laughing in a garden, Freud gazing sternly from a portrait, and Picasso's painting of the formidable Gertrude Stein.

In Chapter 6, entitled "Against Biography," Lee summarizes in seven pages various theoretical, conceptual, and public hostilities to biographical practice. Separating these ideas from other chapters seems to preserve in form some critics' stance against biography. Theorists' and artists' most strident objection to literary biography is its conflation of artist with work, life with art, arguing that we should consider art separate from its creator. Others claim the genre lacks theoretical rigor. Still others object to biographers' voyeuristic excavation of human secrets to feed readers' base appetites, the damage they wreak on their subjects, and their gross violation of subjects' right to control the "facts of his or her own life" (100).

Yet exploring connections between life and work, public and private, the "performative aspect of identity" and "the private writing self," is, Lee argues, "really the whole point of literary biography" (102). In Chapter 7, "Public Roles," Lee describes the particular challenges that narrating public lives pose to biographers who must tease out the mundane from the mythical and the private from the performative. And some public figures—Elvis, Marilyn, Madonna, Princess Diana—remain so hunted and mythologized that little "private" seems left to explore. Biographers' duty to both "the stream" and "the fish" (14) becomes a daunting obligation to fulfill when subjects, such as financier J.P. Morgan, leave behind massive documentary records, and biographers must analyze the staggering "network of forces" (105) that shape such a subject's activities. Lee mobilizes iconic figures such as Horatio Nelson, Che Guevera, and Mother Theresa to suggest the politics of representing those who serve as symbols for political, nationalistic and humanistic causes and whose adoring followers stand ready to pounce on perceived violations of their idols' sanctified status. Equally fraught, for different reasons, is the task of narrating the lives of "appalling public figures" (111) such as Hitler and Stalin that "obliterated millions of lives" (112) and stand immortalized in countless historical accounts. Such biographical work, Lee cautions, demands "steadiness and clarity" (111).

Lee's final chapter, "Telling the Story," returns full circle to her definition of biography as a narrative form (5), a creative and constructed enterprise riddled with biographers' preoccupations, personal agendas and the politics of representation. She reminds the reader that biography is "about choices" (6). Lee's experience is again legible when she returns to Woolf's lament in 1938, "My God, how does one write a biography?" to express the conundrums

that can plague biographers as they approach their narrative task (122). Biographers must sift through documents, choose title, length, tone, and approach, wield strategic silences, speculate and infer, sculpt enticing beginnings and satisfying endings, negotiate their investments in the subject, and in the end, craft a vivid narrative that does some justice to the particulars of The Life. In the final line of her text, Lee returns to the power of narrator/subject relationship and the elusiveness of the biographical subject as he/she fades into the "silence of the past" (140), leaving the biographer gazing mutely into the distance.

Suggestions for Educators

Lee's *Very Short Introduction* is a rich and engaging introduction to life-writing. The author's specific purpose necessarily requires her to offer cursory attention to or exclude altogether substantial aspects of the biographical field. From the outset, she clarifies the parameters of her work, grounding examples primarily in English literary biography, Western theories of individualism foundational to the genre's evolution, and Great Figures who left a corpus of written documents behind. Although Lee's arguments are useful beyond this Western literary context, educators who wish to use Lee's text to introduce students to the field might clarify these origins, supplement her work with diverse examples of biographical approaches, such as postcolonial, educational, or collective biographies, and detail how power and literacy shape the archival record of lives. As Lee suggests, we know more of the captains than the sailors, the victors than the slain.

Also, those sharing Craig Kridel's (2008) concerns that biographers spend too little time on method might crave more attention to biographers' rationales for narrating a given life or the conceptual links between purpose, methodological choices, and representation. For example, a researcher who intends his/her portrait to spur social critique will investigate and narrate the study differently than one who intends to demonstrate a given subject's contributions to the "world of ideas."[3] Lee's work evidences clear awareness of methodology, including subject/biographer relations and the politics of representation, yet she indicates that particular theories of identity can muddy the work of life writing, and sustained treatment of these particulars is beyond the scope of her work.

Educators might pair Lee's overview with a few of the biographical gems she explores. They might, for example, have students compare and contrast the work of Plutarch and Stein, examine researcher/subject relationships in Boswell, or the politics of gender in Woolf. The politics of gender glimmering throughout Lee's work is a particularly useful topic for exploring value, silence, power, and representation in biographical history. She refers to the

genre's Eurocentric and male origins and biographers' devaluation of women's words and lives historically (45), patterns that led Woolf to argue that "women's lives required new forms of writing" (82). Lee notes biographers' gendered representational tendencies in, for example, Elizabeth Gaskell's account of Charlotte Bronte that focused on her femininity and personal trials rather than her professional accomplishments, and the relentless quest for the "real" Marilyn Monroe as a classic reduction of women to their bodies, to myth, to "objects of fear, desire, or ridicule" (119). Lee's portrayals of Woolf, Wharton and Cather reflect her efforts to work against a history of reducing women's lives to the personal. What remains clear throughout this introductory text is that the possibilities of biography as a resource for educators are as diverse as the lives biographers work to represent.

Notes

[1] Hermione Lee, *Body Parts: Essays on Life-Writing* (New York: Random House, 2005), 3.

[2] Ella Forbes, *African American Women During the Civil War* (New York, Routledge, 1998).

[3] Craig Kridel, "Biographical Meanderings: Reflections and Reminiscences in Writing Educational Biography," *Vitae Scholasticae* 25 (2008), 8.

Book Review:
Norrell, *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington*

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Robert J. Norrell. *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington.* Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-674-03211-8. 508 pages.

In *Up From History: The Life of Booker T. Washington*, author Robert J. Norrell scripts Booker T. Washington's life as a complicated one marked by persistent impending threats to his life and work. It was also a life deeply contextualized by the social, political, and economic history of the decades that framed it. Washington's evolution from enslaved child to national leader represents, in many ways, the United States' troubled journey from enslaving nation to international bastion of liberty. Each journey demands an introspective examination of the pivotal moments that shaped it and of the interactions that move or suspend it. Norrell's text is just such an examination, one that illuminates the difficult personal and public choices Washington has to make as well as the collective responses he endures when his choices position him as the enemy of both Black and White Americans.

In describing President Theodore Roosevelt's visit by train to Tuskegee, Alabama on October 24, 1905, Norrell centers his biography on the politics of Washington's life. Though the text includes detail about Washington's personal interactions (particularly his marriages to Fannie N. Smith, Olivia A. Davidson, and Margaret James Murray), Norrell's work foregrounds Washington's efforts as a race leader and educational activist. The text

includes a prologue followed by 18 chapters and 54 illustrations. In Chapters one through five, Norrell chronicles Washington's life from 1865, when he was age nine, to September 18, 1895, the day he delivered the now infamous Atlanta Exposition speech, the speech that would characterize him as too conciliatory, too weakly dispositioned to White America. Norrell's intent in these chapters is clear; he paints a portrait of Washington's perceived weakness as necessary and bound by the times. Though Washington possessed the knowledge and vision to imagine a country with citizens who were not separated by race, "his was an awful time that set narrow and unjust limits on what he could do to pursue his ends" (16). Despite the external constraints imposed upon him, Washington believed that education could ameliorate the effects of racism.

With this belief and a work ethic instilled in him from his mother Jane, he walked 500 miles from Malden, West Virginia to Hampton Institute, a school for blacks near Chesapeake Bay in Virginia. After gaining admission in 1872, Washington did well in his studies, graduated in 1875, and in 1881 was asked by General Samuel Chapman Armstrong to run a normal school in Tuskegee, Alabama. His efforts to establish Tuskegee came to represent the precarious position that he occupied as an educated black man in the deep South (and in the United States). As the school grew, due in large part to his tireless recruitment efforts, Washington had to constantly assuage white peoples' fears that the educated blacks would exacerbate existing racial problems. By the 1890s racial violence, particularly lynching, had increased in the South and such violence threatened Washington's institute and his vision of racial uplift. Norrell argues that Washington believed his speech at the Atlanta Exposition would help to forestall the tide of racial violence. Although the speech was immediately lauded by White and Black Americans, it would later come to represent a divide between those who believed that Black Americans should fight more forcefully for political rights and those who favored Washington's belief that Black Americans should focus on improving their economic status and moral position.

In Chapters six through ten, Norrell focuses on Washington's rise in political prominence and his increasing difficulty with maintaining a conciliatory approach to racial progress. In chapter six, Norrell argues that while Washington's emphasis was on economic progress for Black Americans, his "method for achieving the plan was ideological. He had to change what whites and blacks believed about their future together in America" (136). As Tuskegee's enrollment grew, so did Washington's hope that his efforts might undo racial injustices. In trying to balance white and black expectations, Washington's role, according to Norrell, remained precarious. Norrell specifically says, "Events in the fall of 1898 showed Washington that the only role open to him was that of the fox. To play the lion was to invite disaster" (167).

His inability to forthrightly challenge racial injustice forced him to, more often than not, push for racial uplift in ways that were palatable to whites. Ultimately, Norrell compares Washington to an "underground resistance operative" who had not the capacity to derail the train of injustice but who tried, at every opportunity to "sidetrack it" (185). As time progressed and technology advanced, Washington discovered that his methods had to change accordingly. Norrell notes that the early 1900s, with the advent of photo imaging and the use of it in newspapers, the media's depictions of Black Americans often fueled white fears. While Washington's battle had, up until this time, been largely mediated by oratory, photographic imaging and its dissemination through newspapers transformed his fight into a more embodied one, one that forced him to combat what became a "daily reminder of black deviance" (212).

In the last eight chapters, Norrell illustrates more conflict that Washington encounters with White Americans and with other black leaders (in particular W. W. B. Dubois). Interestingly, as Norrell describes Washington's expanding difficulties in the political arena, he focuses more on his successes in his personal life. His continued efforts to improve the education of blacks (through his work at Tuskegee) demonstrated his conviction that Black Americans needed education to contest the ideological, emotional, and physical assault of racism. In the end, Norrell reiterates his conclusion that Washington's work to improve the lives of Black Americans has been largely ignored because of the perception that his policies were too conciliatory.

Overall, Norrell's attention to historical detail and context is excellent. He uses the Booker T. Washington Papers extensively and integrates newspaper articles into the text as well. The biography would have been enhanced had Norrell cited additional secondary sources to support his interpretations of Washington's life and work. This would have been particularly helpful when Norrell makes characterizations about the physical beauty of Washington's wives; it was not clear if these were his suppositions or descriptions from other sources. This critique aside, *Up from History* is a solid biography which would be useful to use in undergraduate or graduate courses in history, political science, or education.

Book Review:
Alvarado, *Voices and Agencies in Andean Rural Young Women's Education: An Ethnographic View on the Lives of Young Women*

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Beatriz R. Alvarado. *Voices and Agencies in Andean Rural Young Women's Education: An Ethnographic View on the Lives of Young Women.* Saarbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Adtiengesellschaft & Co. KG, 2009. ISBN: 978-3-639-09717-7. 205 pages.

There are many barriers to staying in school for girls in rural Peru. *Voices and Agencies in Andean Rural Young Women's Education* describes these barriers and examines the reasons why many adolescent girls are determined to stay in school despite them. The book provides the results of an ethnographic study of one rural Andean community, analyzing the conditions and the discourses surrounding girls' secondary schooling.

The book contains six chapters, referred to as "parts". Part One introduces the study and the book. Part Two presents background information on schooling in Peru, based on the fairly extensive literature on schooling in Latin America and Peru, with an emphasis on gender and poverty in rural areas. The picture painted is one in which barriers to obtaining a decent education for rural girls are numerous, (including poor school conditions, poor teaching, and high dropout rates), yet in which there persists an 'education

myth,' held by many rural Peruvians, that education will save them from a 'backward' and physically strenuous farming life.

Part Three presents an overview of the various theories that frame the study, including post-structuralism, critical pedagogy, and multicultural education, among other topics. The theory described is consistent with the basic study methodology, described in Part Four. The research was ethnographic in nature, and focused on twelve female students in their final two years of high school. In addition to interviews, focus groups, and participant observation with these girls, the author used document analysis and interviews with teachers, parents, and school staff. Part Four also includes a description of the Andean town, located three miles from the city of Huarez, in which the study took place.

Part Five provides the study results, which are divided into three main themes: "socio-educational factors that impact students' participation, the rural society's socio-educational discourses, and the issues of voice, agency, and empowerment…" (105). The socio-educational factors cited are all factors that discourage school participation, including poorly prepared teachers, irrelevant curricula, and lack of materials. Interview excerpts and results of observations indicate a heavy emphasis on rote memorization and use of humiliation and silencing of girls during class. The students have a very low opinion of their teachers, and teachers have a low opinion of the rural students and their families. While the socio-educational factors seem consistent in their discouragement of schooling, there exist conflicting socio-educational discourses. On the one hand, the teachers generally believe that there is no hope for the girls to be successful in their schooling. They hold low expectations for students and their families, and believe their rural female students will end up farming the land like their parents. This discourse is mirrored in the classroom itself, as observations and interviews indicate that girls are silenced in the classroom by both boys and teachers. The girls' mothers, however, see their daughters' secondary education as the only way for the girls to avoid the meager farming existence that they themselves endure. This section of the chapter also discusses issues of domestic violence, single motherhood, and poverty.

The final section of Part Five describes the girls' desires, which mirror their mothers' aspirations, to have employment in the city away from the land. It also describes an initiative of the researcher that involved developing weekend meetings for the female students during which time they could discuss their problems, desires, and issues. The meetings were initially set up by the researcher as focus groups, but evolved into sessions that included discussion, tutoring, and outside speakers. The author argues that this safe space allowed the girls to develop and express a sense of resistance and agency. The book ends with a concluding chapter (Part Six) that summarizes the study

and provides recommendations for improving the educational situation.

The book deals with a very important issue, and the study provides first-hand evidence, including multiple interview excerpts, illustrating the urgency and nature of the situation. Such evidence can only be gathered by spending significant time in the field. However, reading the book is a somewhat disappointing experience, as the promise of the title is only partially realized inside. The first major problem is that the work appears to be a doctoral dissertation in its original form, and dissertations, without a lot of revision and reorganization, often do not make very good books. Partly due to the dissertation format, the first two chapters are repetitive, and the theoretical framework chapter provides an overview of all the theories remotely related to the study, yet without relating them specifically to the study. These chapters also suffer from grammatical awkwardness and an abundance of typographical errors that unfortunately run through the entire book.

The second major problem is that the highly anticipated voices and identities of the female adolescent participants do not come through very clearly. Three factors contribute to the lack of clarity, and the first is that the findings are presented in a general manner, and it is often unclear how many participants they actually apply to. For example, in a Part Five section on 'domestic violence and alcoholism', we hear about verbal and physical aggression the girls experience from fathers at home, including quotes from two different girls and one girl's mother (we are not told whose). A little later we hear about the difficulties faced by single mothers, including a quote from one more girl. But we do not get a sense of how many of the participants experience domestic violence, or how many have single mothers. Relatedly, while the main teenage participants each appear to have been given pseudonyms, so that when a quote is provided, there is a name attached to it, this is not the case with teachers, parents, or any other participants. Hence with the teacher quotes, of which there are several, the reader does not know whether it is one teacher or several who provided the quotes used. The same is true for the participants' mothers, leading the reader to guess how many different voices are represented.

The second factor contributing to the lack of clarity is that the reader receives a rather fragmented and disjointed view of the main participants, via isolated quotes to illustrate specific study findings related to the girls' beliefs and hopes, and via isolated findings related to the girls' lives. Although first names are provided with the girls' quotes, it is difficult to link a quote from one section to a quote from the same girl in another section, since the participants are never introduced to the reader as individuals, and hence the reader never gets a sense of who they are. Indeed, with just twelve primary participants, an introductory description of each of the girls would have been appropriate and very helpful, enabling the reader to get a sense of each one's

family situation and personality.

The third reason the girls' voices and identities do not come through as clearly as promised is that the final section of the results focusing on the girls' voice, agency, and resistance, is poorly developed. In this brief segment of Part Five, the girls' desire for a different future is reiterated, and the reader learns about the Saturday meetings organized by the researcher, during which the students discussed their problems with her and with each other. The Saturday discussion group seems like a significant intervention, and the author states that it led the girls to carry out specific acts of resistance, yet the description is sparse, and in general this much anticipated part of the book is underwhelming.

Laudably, the author states that the book is a "call for national authorities as well as local communities and families to take action" (9) in terms of the drastic need for improvements in schooling for rural girls in Peru, and the book provides clear evidence of that need. The recommendations provided in Part Six are directed at government officials, policymakers, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and anyone who has a hand in shaping the educational system in Peru. A radical reshaping, reorganizing, and editing of the material in this dissertation, however, would have made it much more likely to be read by its intended audience.

Book Review:
Swales, *Incidents in an Educational Life: A memoir (of sorts)*

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John M. Swales. *Incidents in an Educational Life: A memoir (of sorts)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-472-003358-4. 208 pages.

A common practice in memoir writing is to avoid starting chronologically, since doing so can be boring and fail to hook the reader. John Swales violates this maxim, just as much of his career has violated typical norms. In his memoir, starting with kindergarten in 1942 and closing with his retirement in 2006, Swales recounts the unorthodox and circuitous path that eventually led to his becoming one of the most influential figures in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Swales' output over his long career has been prodigious; he has given 70 keynotes in 30 countries and written or co-written 17 books and over 120 articles and book chapters. But this productivity is not the focal point of his memoir; the heart of the memoir is a recounting of incidents from his educational life, in the form of vignettes.

Swales' story opens with his childhood, spent some 25 miles south of central London during WWII. As remarkable as those times were, his schoolboy years were largely uneventful. Like many boys, he endured boring lessons, bullies, and several schools, public and parochial. He eventually obtained a scholarship in history to Cambridge, although his time at Cambridge did not go as well as he expected. Swales began as a history major, moved on to philosophy, finally to psychology, never quite finding his

niche. He finished his three years with enjoyable experiences outside the classroom (sports, cards, local pubs and the cinema), but few prospects for graduate school. What he did come away with was a chance opportunity to teach English in a grammar school in Bari, Italy.

Swales began teaching without formal training in the teaching of English, relying solely on his native language skills and help from colleagues. The time in Bari initiated a string of jobs in different countries, each of which shaped Swales in different ways. Following Bari, he spent several years working for the British Centre in Sweden. He then accepted a lectureship in English at the University of Libya in Benghazi and finally applied for a Diploma program in ELT and Linguistics at Leeds University in 1965. Following his time in Leeds, he was reappointed to the University of Libya in Tripoli, as a lecturer for the Engineering Faculty.

Swales' return to Libya marked the time when his own professionalism in language teaching began. It was then that he began to develop ideas related to ESP, published his first ESL publication (in the *TEFL Journal*), and saw his love for research blossom (despite an unsupportive Dean who told him that he was there to teach, not do research). Fortuitously, the Libyan Revolution of 1969 closed the university for three months, giving him time to organize his teaching materials into his first textbook. Based in part on the success of his textbook, Swales was able to gain a permanent lectureship back at Leeds in the Institute of Education. Several years later he accepted a position at the University of Khartoum, and from Khartoum, Swales later applied for a lectureship at Aston University in Birmingham.

By now, Swales was already an experienced materials writer for ESP and he continued to expand his scholarly work, slowly gaining international recognition. By 1979, he was asked to become a member of the editorial board for Elsevier's new venture, *The English for Specific Purposes Journal*. In the mid-80s, Swales became a Professor of Linguistics at the University of Michigan, jointly appointed to the post of Director of the English Language Institute (a distinguished institute that had such notable previous directors as Charles Fries, Robert Lado and Larry Selinker). It was there that Swales would spend the last, and most productive, twenty years of his career.

Swales' story is a story worth telling because it is enlightening for those who are working in the field of applied linguistics to understand the origins of the ideas and terminology that are standard parts of the field's professional thinking and speaking. For example, the idea that methodology and practice in language teaching must be rooted in theory, and the concept that language use is always connected to social contexts—views now viewed as axiomatic—are in no small part a direct result of Swales' thinking and writing, most of it directly linked to his experiences as a classroom teacher in university settings for forty-seven years.

The story is also worth telling because it is unusual. His career involved the launch of several important journals related to ESP, the formation of professional associations dedicated to that purpose, and the creation of an entire sub-field of Applied Linguistics, but it was not until 2004, two years before his retirement, that Swales received an honorary Ph.D from the University of Uppsala. If we are to believe the often overly-modest Swales, his success was mostly based on serendipity, being in the right places at the right times. Swales' journey is one marked less by privilege and credentials than, as he himself puts it, "concentration, persistence, and an appropriate degree of educational self-questioning" (202).

One can certainly quibble with the style of writing in the memoir. It is often too self-effacing, blunt, or meandering. The reader is left with a sense that Swales sat down and talked about events from first to last, without constructing a planned, creative, or even well-edited work. Oddly, the memoir lacks true emotion and contains little sense of tension and resolution, though one never doubts the sincerity or honesty of the author. It seems to be an egocentric piece that might more appropriately be self-published than issued by the University of Michigan Press. Friends, family and admirers are undoubtedly the audience who will want to pick up this book for the invaluable glance it gives into a remarkable life. It had to be written, if for no other reason than the story of John Swales' career is worth telling, but it is certainly not a must-read book. Still, for those willing to take the time, the tour is interesting and even inspiring.

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