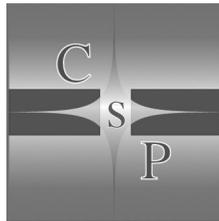


Florida Studies

Florida Studies:
Proceedings of the 2007
Annual Meeting of the Florida
College English Association

Edited by

Claudia Slate (General Editor)
and Keith Huneycutt (Executive Editor)



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Florida Studies: Proceedings of the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Florida College English Association,
Edited by Claudia Slate (General Editor) and Keith Huneycutt (Executive Editor)

This book first published 2008 by

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2008 by Claudia Slate (General Editor) and Keith Huneycutt (Executive Editor) and
contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-84718-629-7, ISBN (13): 9781847186294

To Steve Glassman, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University,
Past FCEA President and first editor of FCEA Proceedings

President

April Van Camp

Indian River Community College

Vice President

Donald Pharr

St. Leo University

Secretary

William Wall

Santa Fe Community College

Treasurer

Rich McKee

Manatee Community College-Venice

Local Arrangements 2008

Donald Pharr

St. Leo University

CEA Liaison

Steve Brahlek

Palm Beach Community College

Past President

Keith Huneycutt

Florida Southern College

Webweaver

Jane Anderson Jones

Manatee Community College: Venice

At-Large Board Members

Deborah Coxwell-Teague

Florida State University

Carole Policy

DeVry University: Orlando

Stone Shiflet

Northcentral University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	x
Preface	xi
Pedagogy	
Florida Crime Writers and the (Classroom) Environment.....	3
Karen Connolly-Lane	
Using Florida Literature – Even in a Class Focused on Public Writing....	11
Linda Moore	
Ritual and Region in Student Writing	17
Cherelyn Bush	
Old Florida	
Portrait of a Florida Artist: Helen Tooker	25
Steve Glassman	
Florida Picaresque	33
Maurice O’Sullivan	
Zora Neale Hurston: Finding the Meaning of Home in a Florida Author’s Life	45
Steven Knapp	
“The Dream is the Truth”: Remembering My Life with Zora Neale Hurston	59
Sarah M. Mallonee	
Civil Rights, Disobedience, and Protest in Tallahassee’s Two Public Universities.....	65
Salena Collier	

Frontier Florida through Fiction's Eyes: Patrick D. Smith's <i>A Land Remembered</i> and Theodore Pratt's <i>The Barefoot Mailman</i>	75
Joy M. Banks	
Iris Wall: Indiantown Pioneer "Cow Huntress"	81
Nancy Dale	
Modern Landscapes, Modern Labyrinths: Ways of Escape in Hemingway's <i>The Sun Also Rises</i>	91
Julia Rawa	
Species Muck, Floating Sanitoria: Deconstructing and Historicizing Lanier's "A Florida Ghost" (1877).....	111
Martha L. Reiner	
Contemporary Florida	
Connie May Fowler's <i>Remembering Blue</i> and the Eco-centric Novel.....	155
Laura S. Head	
Palm Beach: Utopia or Dystopia?.....	167
Kathleen Anderson	
Carol Frost as Floridian: Cedar Key Poet Speaks Nationally.....	173
Taylor Joy Mitchell	
Natural Florida	
"Rather Than Abide an Ordinary Life": <i>The Orchid Thief</i> – A Faustian Saga	183
Carole A. Policy	
Lumber Mills, Phosphate Pits, and Phantom Land: Polk County, Florida as a Literary Setting	191
Keith L. Huneycutt	
Zora Neale Hurston and the Hurricane of 1928.....	201
Valerie E. Kasper	

Creative Showcase

Something Lost.....	211
Jeff Morgan	
He Speaks the Language of Orchids.....	213
Jeff Morgan	
Recipe for Extinction.....	215
Jeff Morgan	
In the Joy of Bellicosity.....	217
Jeff Morgan	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2007 Annual Meeting of the Florida College English Association (FCEA) in Fort Pierce, Florida, was one of our most successful conferences to date. April Van Camp deserves kudos for her hard work at organizing the conference sessions and collaborating with Indian River Community College so that we were able to use one of their fine, high tech facilities. Thanks go to the administration, staff, and faculty of Indian River Community College for being stellar hosts. Everyone applauded the easy flow of the events and the excellent food provided. In addition, FCEA board members, in immeasurable ways, contributed to the planning and execution of the conference. Finally, credit is due to all the presenters and panelists who were vital to this stimulating, well-attended, and thoroughly enjoyable conference. We are all looking forward to FCEA 2008, which will be held in Tampa, Florida, under the leadership of vice president Donald Pharr of St. Leo University.

Several other individuals deserve credit here. FCEA President Steve Glassman chaired the Annual Meeting and the FCEA board meetings and is also the founder of Proceedings. His passion for Florida Studies, in general, and this organization, in particular, continues to motivate us all. Keith Huneycutt as executive editor helped me immeasurably with the editing of this Proceedings volume. Associate Editor Karen R. Tolchin, Associate Professor of English at Florida Gulf Coast University, also edited and encouraged us to continue our Creative Showcase section. Florida Southern College enabled me to dedicate time and energy to this project and provided me with production assistant Shay Lessman, who for the second year worked tirelessly as a magician — formatting and tinkering — not satisfied until all kinks had miraculously vanished. My husband Risdon Slate continuously serves as a model to me of a scholar and trail blazer with his motto: “If you don’t shoot, you don’t score.” With this volume, a rich collaboration of individuals has scored big for academic excellence.

PREFACE

The first year of Florida Studies Proceedings of the Florida College English Association Proceedings, I contributed an article, while this year and last I served as general editor; increasingly, I have gained an immense respect for my colleagues and their scholarly work. With all the teaching, committee, and administrative responsibilities that these individuals shoulder, they still go the extra mile to present papers on Florida topics and then submit them for this volume. Dozens of FCEA 2007 Meeting participants formatted their papers to the template provided on the FCEA website and submitted them for consideration. Some of the authors expanded on their papers while others stayed with the original length. After review by at least two scholars, the final selections were made, further edited, polished for publication, and organized into several categories.

Pedagogy, the first section, includes essays about the importance of stressing region in the classroom. One essay even focuses on teaching Florida crime writers, like Carl Hiassen and Tim Dorsey. The Old Florida section begins with an essay on the artist Helen Tooker and then continues with an analysis of picaresque novels dating back to 1831. Other essays in that section discuss writers Patrick Smith and Theodore Pratt, self-described cracker Iris Wall, poet Sidney Lanier, and the civil rights years at two of Tallahassee's universities. Of course, favorites Zora Neale Hurston and Ernest Hemingway are represented. The Contemporary Florida essays span topics as diverse as author Connie May Fowler, poet Carol Poet, and Palm Beach as a dystopia. The essays in Natural Florida highlight the literary use of the Florida setting: exotic flowers, the Florida hurricane of 1928, and lumber mills and phosphate mining in Polk County.

Creative Showcase, the final section, includes poetry presented at Poets Reading Their Work, a session of the FCEA 2007 Meeting. The poems speak of "shadowless seas" and "the language of orchids."

These selections reveal the richness of Florida and embrace a continuing conversation about all the state has to offer students, faculty, and the reading public.

Claudia Slate, editor
Karen Tolchin, associate editor

PEDAGOGY

FLORIDA CRIME WRITERS AND THE (CLASSROOM) ENVIRONMENT¹

KAREN CONNOLLY-LANE

Vanity Fair's May 2007 "Green Issue" credits the fiction of Carl Hiaasen with revealing his "deep-seated anger that [Florida's] alligators, burrowing owls, and blue-tongued mango voles . . . have been replaced by vicious predators—lobbyists, land developers, and lawyers" (259). With this observation, offered under the appropriate heading "The Pointed Pen," the magazine's editors capture all that I think makes Florida crime novels like Hiaasen's *Native Tongue* or Stuart Kaminsky's *Midnight Pass* ideal "textbooks" for use in our college classrooms. The genre from which they hail is rich with tradition and poised for invention. The issues they raise are prescient and familiar. The characters, the settings, and the language they employ are exotic and *ours*. After a brief discussion of the mystery genre in general and what makes it a ready vehicle for social and cultural commentary, I will review some of its pedagogical implications. My emphasis will be on using Florida mystery writers to teach college-level English or writing classes in Florida schools.

As keynote speaker for a major conference on detective fiction held in the late 1980s, "The Sleuth and the Scholar: Origins, Evolutions and Current Trends in Detective Fiction," Carolyn Heilbrun, who wrote her own popular series of mystery novels under the name of Amanoss, addressed the question of why a detective novelist might choose to write detective stories "and not 'real' novels" (7). Her answer, "that with the momentum of a mystery and the trajectory of a good story with a solution, the author is left to dabble in a little profound revolutionary thought" (Heilbrun 7), while correct, only covers part of the story. Another part is, of course, about numbers, about a popular form accessing as many readers as possible. A quick scan of the mystery shelves at my local Barnes & Noble yields over 5,500 mystery titles (stretching over 460 feet of shelf space) which feature an extraordinary range of detective types—from cats to cooks, from Vietnam vets to fashionistas, from professors to priests. But part of the story is also about acknowledging a formula—perhaps more

precisely, a process of reformulation—that allows for both familiarity and change. It is about reformulating again and again a thesis within particular generic constraints because that very formula helps to get ideas and issues noticed. Although some scholars continue to insist that the detective formula is, by nature, static,² my contention is that, on the contrary, it is in a constant and necessary state of flux. The key for the socially-minded—or environmentally-minded—mystery writer is to harness that capacity for change, to manipulate the genre (and, in a sense, the reader) toward new ideas and new realities without appearing to completely abandon the old and/or accepted ones. Mystery writer Raymond Chandler eloquently captures this notion in the introduction to his collection of short stories, *Trouble Is My Business*. Although his focus, in this particular context, is on early contributors to pulp magazines, the implication for mystery writers in general is undeniable: "To exceed the limits of a formula without destroying it is the dream of every magazine writer who is not a hopeless hack" (ix).

One important method for exceeding those limits is illuminated in the work of social theorist Richard Harvey Brown. In "Realism and Power in Aesthetic Representation," Brown contends that, through a process called "genre stretching," an artist can manipulate a familiar form so that it points to an alternative, even radical reality (136). Genre stretching is the term coined by Brown to describe a literary technique that involves the manipulation of a popular form in order to achieve a new, but closely related, form capable of conveying a new sort of message. The key, according to Brown, is that popular or familiar forms, especially those associated with the school of realism, are considered real precisely because they are familiar. (As fanciful as many Florida examples may seem, much of what our mystery writers portray is either ripped from the local headlines or can regularly be seen from our own lanais.) The object of genre stretching is to change the art form so that, although it appears new in some ways, it still *feels* familiar. In terms of social implication, in theory, one can adjust the "realist" features of a work of art so that it is no longer simply reflective of the status quo, but is instead suggestive of an alternative, even radical reality. As Brown explains it, "If the point is not to describe reality but to change it, then realistic art is a form of combat" (141). One important way for writers to "stretch" their genre is to craft finely textured characters who speak honestly of and to their time period. (Again, as fanciful as some Florida examples may seem, Hiaasen's recurring character Skink, an ex-Florida Governor turned part swamp rat and part eco-vigilante is one of the most admirable and down-to-earth characters the genre, local or otherwise, has to offer.) An important

related issue is the creation of trenchantly real "backgrounds" and settings which readers can recognize as persuasive and compelling versions of their own physical and cultural surroundings. Tampa-based crime writer Tim Dorsey, who talks of using his serial killer "hero" Serge Storms to "bump off the people he wants to bump off [himself]," captures the crazy mixture of pride and aloof familiarity that constitutes many a Floridian's sense of the real:

I love Florida. I'm passionate about the state. There's a constant renewable source of material if you have a newspaper subscription. As outlandish as some readers might think an idea is, people in Florida will say 'Oh, I know where that came from.' (qtd. in Collins 25)

Within the context of the Florida college classroom, and given the tenor of Dorsey's quote above, it is not difficult to imagine the benefits of a literature or cultural studies course based on a selection of local mystery writers. This semester (spring 2008), for instance, I am teaching an American Studies course called "American Culture and the Private Eye" for Eckerd College and the Program for Experienced Learners. The focus of the course, which begins with early hardboiled masters like Dashiell Hammett and traces the evolution of the genre through to contemporary examples like Hiaasen, is to examine how 20th century American writers have employed the detective story in the effort to effect, as well as to resist, political and cultural change. A similarly-minded course, with a tighter focus on how Florida crime writers have used the detective genre to communicate their concerns about Florida's changing natural and political environment, would offer a great way for an English department to contribute to other interdisciplinary programs like Environmental Studies. Specific assignments might begin by pairing Hiaasen's *Native Tongue* with his non-fiction text *Team Rodent: How Disney Devours the World*, or by incorporating Hiaasen's *Stormy Weather* and Dorsey's *Hurricane Punch* into an investigation of the environmental and economic impact of hurricanes—actual and/or anticipated—on Florida's coast. But benefits like these do not have to be limited to "just" the literature or cultural studies arena. I am equally as excited about opportunities to apply these materials in the writing classroom.

One obvious opportunity is the research paper. Year after year, section after section, I struggle with new ways to prompt students to think beyond the notion of producing a "report" on some broad, boring topic. I encourage them, instead, to join the conversation, to *use* other people's writing and other people's ideas to develop, to bolster their own. Texts and issues like those I have mentioned above might just offer students the

inspiration to research and write about something on which they already have opinions and for which we can prepare them to take a clearly articulated and well-supported stand. Hiaasen's blue-tongued voles are not really that much of a stretch. Recently, students in my Tuesday night writing class traded yarns about encountering the wild pigs that sometimes root along University Avenue, a main thoroughfare near Manatee Community College's Lakewood Ranch campus. Why not start with one of Hiaasen's texts, explore the issues it raises regarding preservation, and then invite students to investigate how the technically feral pigs were brought to the area, and whether or not, as some suggest, they should be eliminated as pests? Situations like these, as predictable as it may sound, present students with the valuable chance to become detectives, as well as to study them.

Another productive, pedagogical use for the Florida mystery novel might be in teaching various rhetorical or writing strategies, such as cause and effect or narration and description. A reading of Stuart Kaminsky's *Midnight Pass* might offer entry into the ongoing "chicken-or-the-egg" debate about why and how Sarasota's Midnight Pass was closed in the first place or what might result, both geographically and economically, if the Pass is reopened.³ "Smaller," yet no less promising, opportunities lie in seeing, discussing, even mimicking how writers like Hiaasen or Kaminsky use language and imagery to evoke certain attitudes or emotions. Consider this image, from *Stormy Weather*, of Skink lashed to a bridge, preparing to ride out the upcoming hurricane:

Back on the bridge, under a murderous dark sky, the kneeling stranger raised both arms to the pulsing gray clouds. Bursts of hot wind made the man's hair stand up like a halo of silver sparks. (Hiaasen 9)

Or how they use dialogue to reinforce such ideas or images: "'Crazy f***r,' Jack Fleming rasped" (Hiaasen, *Stormy Weather* 9). Or how they vary sentence lengths or sprinkle their prose with alliteration in order to create or change pace. One classic example that has been repeatedly praised, and artfully imitated, in more than one of my classes is Dashiell Hammett's mastery of the one word sentence. This famous string, "Smoke. Stink. Heat. Noise.", comes from *Red Harvest* and describes a prizefighting arena in a dirty mining town known as "Poisonville" (Hammett 74). Okay, so it's not the tropics. But, the realistic setting and the slang-inspired sound are important antecedents to those currently in vogue with Florida's modern day crime writer. Tracing that stretch, or the one from one south Florida master, say John D. MacDonald, to another, say Les Standiford, amounts to one last suggestion (at least in this context)

for how we might incorporate such material into our writing classrooms. On to my justification.

The theoretical underpinnings for my pop culture-inspired pedagogy come, largely, from two key sources: bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* and Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary*. From hooks, I take the idea of teaching as performance. As a former development director and a pop culture enthusiast, I cannot resist the lure of a good pitch made with the right visual—or linguistic—aid. From hooks, I also take (to heart) the idea that one of our major responsibilities as teachers is encouraging students to know the rules first, and break them second. From Rose, I take (again, to heart) the idea that our students come to us as experts (at hunting, fishing, navigating Disney World) and that the responsible, successful promotion of literacy depends on our ability to acknowledge and to capitalize on their expertise. There is something at once reassuring and exhilarating about encountering something in a classroom, in a book that we already know something about. Even I confess to picking up Kaminsky's first Lew Fonesco novel, *Vengeance*, and becoming instantly smitten with the idea that the main character travels the 301 to work and eats breakfast at First Watch, just like me. I cannot imagine a better recipe—that elusive mixture of comfort and enthusiasm—for stirring the kind of deep critical thinking and graceful, informed writing that we all hope to inspire in our classrooms.

In an April 2006 NPR interview, Michael Connelly (former Daytona Beach and Fort Lauderdale crime reporter, current Tampa resident, and author of 12 novels featuring Los Angeles detective Harry Bosch) claims that one of the most important functions in the "evolutions of the crime novel" is "to be a mirror, a social reflection of what's happening in our society" (Collins 24; Connelly). He also provides a kind of golden rule for what it takes to produce a good detective novel, saying it should offer "an idea of how it [presumably, the world] works" and "how it *should* work" (Connelly). In many ways, this reminds me of bell hooks' advice regarding how we should conduct education in general, as well as what, specifically, we often try to accomplish when we teach academic writing—to help students identify and master basic strategies and conventions in hopes that they will apply them in ways both successful (i.e. "correct") and refreshing. By drawing on the wide selection of Florida-based and Florida-inspired mystery writers—writers who, by and large, have managed, and thus modeled, these same sorts of authorial athletics we expect from our students—we have a unique opportunity to capitalize on Connelly's golden rule in order to enrich our application of Florida's Gordon Rule.

Notes

¹ Portions of this essay have been adapted from my dissertation, "Politics and the Private Eye: Ideology and Aesthetics in the Hardboiled Tradition (University of Minnesota, 2006).

² One primary example is University of Minnesota professor Marty Roth who, as recently as 1995, has argued that, collectively, detective novels represent "a body of fiction that has no antecedents and can only fulfill its function by refusing to evolve" (249).

³ For more information on the migration and subsequent closing of Midnight Pass, and on the controversy that surrounds the question of whether or not to reopen the pass via dredging, see websites for The Midnight Pass Society (www.midnight.pass.net) and ManaSota-88, a local, volunteer-based environmental watchdog (www.manasota88.org).

Works Cited

- Brown, Richard Harvey. "Realism and Power in Aesthetic Representation." *Postmodern Representations: Truth, Power and Mimesis in the Human Sciences and Public Culture*. Ed. Brown. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995. 135-67.
- Chandler, Raymond. Introduction. *Trouble Is My Business*. By Chandler. 1950. New York: Vintage-Random, 1992.
- Collins, Mary Ellen. "Whodunit in Florida? A Backdrop for Murder." *Maddux Business Report* Apr. 2007: 24-27.
- Connelly, Michael. Interview. "Novelist Connelly Revisits His 'Crime Beat' Days." Host Scott Simon. *Weekend Edition Sunday*. Natl. Public Radio. 29 Apr. 2006.
- Dorsey, Tim. *Hurricane Punch*. New York: Harper, 2007.
- Hammett, Dashiell. *Red Harvest*. 1929. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- Hiaasen, Carl. *Native Tongue*. New York: Warner, 1991.
- . *Stormy Weather*. New York: Warner, 1995.
- . *Team Rodent: How Disney Devours the World*. New York: Ballantine, 1998.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn. "Gender and Detective Fiction." *The Sleuth and the Scholar: Origins, Evolutions, and Current Trends in Detective Fiction*. Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture 19. New York: Greenwood, 1988.
- hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Kaminsky, Stuart M. *Midnight Pass*. New York: Forge, 2003.
- . *Vengeance*. New York: Forge, 1999.

"The Pointed Pen: Carl Hiaasen." *Vanity Fair* May 2007: 258-59.

Rose, Mike. *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educationally Underprepared*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

Roth, Marty. *Foul & Fair Play: Reading Genre in Classic Detective Fiction*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1995.

USING FLORIDA LITERATURE— EVEN IN A CLASS FOCUSED ON PUBLIC WRITING

LINDA MOORE

The composition courses at UWF—ENC 1101 and ENC 1102—both required freshman composition courses—have undergone radical changes in the past few years. Now ENC 1101 is a course focused on academic writing. ENC 1102, on the other hand, is a course focused on public writing. Both courses require that students carefully evaluate the outside sources that they choose to use to support their own ideas about the course’s topic, both emphasize argument instead of literary content, and both use vastly different genres as writing modes.

I have taught ENC 1102, the second semester public writing focused class for several years. For the past few semesters I have chosen literacy as the main focus of my classes, having students use online published reports from such organizations as *Chronicle of Higher Education*, ProLiteracy Worldwide, Florida Literacy Coalition, American Association of University Professors, Poynter Online and others. This current information, along with the text *Public Literacy*, and Pearson’s *Academic Writer’s Handbook* provide students with an abundance of credible statistical information and information on writing pedagogy for the course. In addition to using two specific books off the *Chronicle’s* campus bestseller list (Mitch Albom’s *Five People You Meet in Heaven* and Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code*), this semester I used a personal project to emphasize real-world writing to my students. This project involved a biography I had written of a Florida writer—Florence Glass Palmer—that was submitted for publication in a reference book about Alabama writers. In using this project, I was able to emphasize several points covered in class through the semester about public writing.

Following steps in any research project is the first idea I emphasized to produce a better product. I discussed first identifying the task’s topic, purpose, audience, and format. Then I described the types of research that went into the project.

Topic

In 1995, I was asked to help compile a reference book entitled *A Biographical Guide to Alabama Literature*, being compiled by Dr. Bert Hitchcock and Elaine Hughes at Auburn University with entries being submitted by several Alabama writers. My specific topic was Florence Glass Palmer, an Alabama writer who published in the 1930's. I showed students the instructions from Dr. Hitchcock, which identified the audience, purpose, and format for the article.

Audience and Purpose

“For the curious ‘general reader’ and for scholars and students of many ages and degrees, *A Biographical Guide to Alabama Literature* should be a dependable repository of facts, an easily used reference book both concise and satisfying in its providing of information.

Format

The article should include bibliographical information of the author’s works, basic biographical facts, and descriptive and critical information. The instructions also gave formatting information.

Formation of Research Question

My next step in the research project was to ask myself several questions that my research should answer: when had Palmer published, what had she published, and how were her works received by the general reading public? Then I began my systematic research of the author, which I explained to my students.

Research Techniques

My first step in researching Palmer was a general overview step in UWF’s library’s files, where I found a reference that listed two books that she had published along with their publication dates. These books, *Life and Miss Celeste* (1937) and *Spring Will Come Again* (1940), were housed in the library, so I checked them out for later reading. In an article in the second edition of *American Women 1935-40*, I found a nice surprise. Palmer had a Pensacola address. This bit of information led me to another kind of research: local field research with the possibility of interviews.

Excited that she might still have ties in Pensacola, I set off to check local historical information. My second step in the research (field research and interviews) led me to phone Mary Dawkins at the Pensacola Historical Society, who invited me to search the historical files in downtown Pensacola. There I found a wealth of information, including an unpublished speech that Dawkins had delivered to the Pensacola Chapter of DAR in October 1989. From that speech and from Dawkins, I learned that Palmer's daughter and son still lived in the area. However, the son was in the hospital, close to death. Dawkins' speech referred to a journal that Palmer had kept, and I wondered if Palmer's daughter had the journal in her possession.

Returning to UWF's library, I learned from the archives director that a music scholarship has been established in Palmer's name. Checking the library's special collections section, I found more information about Palmer, including some letters. One was to Miss Occie Clubbs, a Pensacola resident from whom Palmer had first heard of the two Charbonier sisters, one of whom became Miss Celeste in Palmer's first novel. Miss Occie had asked Palmer to edit what Palmer referred to as "an impressive and scholarly piece of work" about Stephen Mallory that Miss Occie had written. In another letter to Lou E. Miller in 1939, Palmer mentions being at work on her second book, *Spring Will Come Again*, a book about her own background in Alabama. These letters gave me the opportunity to mention to my students that what was once intended as a personal letter had become a bit of public material, similar to the diary of Anne Frank. I continued to search for materials in the library and found book reviews for *Life and Miss Celeste* in the *New York Times Book Review* and in the *Pensacola News Journal* microfilm archives.

Presenting the research I had done on Palmer gave me a chance to emphasize several different research techniques and public writing genres to my students: library research (both as overview and as specific information gathering) using books and newspaper reviews of her books from respected newspapers such as the *New York Times*, local historical files from community societies and from the campus library, and phone and personal interviews from those who had known Palmer.

In reviewing my notes from Dawkins, I found Palmer's daughter's name—Emma Covington—and then found her phone number and address in the Pensacola phone book. Calling her, I described my interest in her mother's work and explained the part an article about her mother would play in Dr. Hitchcock's proposed book. Ms. Covington agreed to an interview and invited me to her home to see her mother's materials, which included a scrapbook, several letters, and her personal journal.

I met with Ms. Covington in July of 1995, where I took notes on Ms. Covington’s recollections of her mother’s courtship with her husband, her scholarly training and early teaching, and her writing. I looked through Palmer’s scrapbook and took notes. Ms. Covington would not let me take the scrapbook or copy any of its contents. However, my notes yielded a wealth of information about her mother, who addressed her journal as “Dear Book.” Her journal recorded events of Palmer’s life, of the death of her mother and father, and of her love for her husband. Emma Covington said that her mother constantly examined her life through her writing to make sense of things. Palmer’s journal added another valuable bit of research to the growing list of materials.

Drafting the article: from outline to draft

After months of interviews with Dawkins and Covington and reviews of the printed materials on Palmer’s life and books, I finished reading Palmer’s two novels and began an outline for my article. I emphasized to my students that I always work from a scratch outline that directs and helps me organize and limit my writing. I showed students the messy handwritten outline and draft; then I showed them a typed copy of the work. After several revisions, I mailed the manuscript to Dr. Hitchcock and to Palmer’s daughter, asking both to edit the manuscript for factual correctness. Both returned the copies, with letters.

This part of the research project gave me a chance to discuss argument tactics important to public writing, especially Rogerian tactics that mimic Carl Roger’s advice that writers must build a bridge of good will with audience.

Ms. Covington, Palmer’s daughter, was not pleased with the article and was concerned that the article referred to her mother by last name instead of Florence or Ms. Palmer. Finding Palmer’s daughter adamant about the use of her mother’s name, I sent her Dr. Hitchcock’s letter that stated that the academic society does not refer to “Mr. Shakespeare” or “Mr. Homer.” Showing my students Ms. Covington’s handwritten and emotional letter emphasized the sometimes dissatisfying aspects of working with interviewees. A few months later I received a phone call from Ms. Covington, saying that she had talked to several of her friends and understood that the treatment of her mother’s name in the article is standard treatment, but that she still found it “cold.”

After revising several drafts of the article and doing some careful proofreading, I finally sent the article to Dr. Hitchcock, satisfied that I had

done an adequate job of answering my initial research questions and of providing sufficient information for the Alabama bibliographical entry.

My description of the real-world writing of an article gave students a great deal of information on such public writing projects. They learned the value of planning, of doing general and specialized library research, of conducting research in local areas such as the Pensacola Historical Society, and of conducting field research such as phone and personal interviews. They learned that interviews are good ways to gain information, especially if the informant is a close relative or a good friend of the subject being researched. However, they also learned that one must handle the informant carefully to avoid misunderstandings and hurt feelings. They also learned that writing takes time and cannot be done in one night. Students were amazed that I spent roughly two years writing the article. The book has still not been published, and I fear it never will, but I gained knowledge of an interesting part of Pensacola's history as I read Palmer's unforgettable story of Miss Celeste, a historical figure of Pensacola's past.

RITUAL AND REGION IN STUDENT WRITING

CHERELYN BUSH

I have freshman composition and developmental freshman students write about a family ritual. This assignment has many levels, and it is an interesting assignment to work on over several weeks. The assignment requires one to detail an important or significant family ritual which has been ongoing for several years. The paper requires use of sensory details and dialogue. Several workshops allow students to refine the use of these stylistic attributes and get peer feedback. The essay is short, under three double spaced pages in length. I provide a handout of previous students' sentences which illustrates multiple adjective uses so they must be concise in their writing. We also consider and discuss in class the best use of dialogue.

In using this assignment while teaching at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, I used it with both the regular freshman composition students and also with the Academic Development Program (ADP) students. My Writing 120 Effective Writing I course and English 020 Basic Writing course were two different sets of students. It seemed that the ADP students would enjoy the Family Ritual assignment, since it is an experiential essay. All the information is drawn from their own observation. The courses had very different enrollments as the students in Writing 120 had successfully passed a university entrance writing exam. The ADP students had not passed it and also had other potential indicators of lower writing skills, such as SAT or ACT scores. Also their high school GPA's were reviewed. West Chester University of Pennsylvania has a small African American enrollment. In 1996, it was 7.7% of the total enrollment. There are 57 African American students enrolled as of their The Diversity Transformation – Summary Report 2000-2006. There was a total enrollment of approximately 12,000 students. My ENG 020 classes were predominately African American. These courses are capped at 15 and two had only a sprinkling of white students. It initially surprised me that the courses were so heavily weighted with African American students. The ADP students do attend a summer session where they take classes and an orientation to campus life.

The students in my Writing 120 course detailed the typical family rituals around holidays such as Thanksgiving or Christmas. They would refine the one significant point, perhaps the scent of an aunt's musky perfume only smelled during a languorous Thanksgiving respite or their view of a red and green printed shiny paper with fluffy red ribbon put into their hands at Christmas and the rustling of the tissue paper as they lifted out their gift. Because of the proximity of the university to the Jersey shore, some would detail the elaborate 4th of July rituals, including being stuck in traffic. Students were encouraged to contemplate small rituals, and some detailed being part of a new family due to death or divorce. One student wrote an evocative piece about reading a bedtime story to her three-year-old half sister. She hoped that her reading brought them closer together and bridged a 16 year age gap. It was a ritual that she hoped to continue for many years. Students addressed in the conclusion of the paper what they expected might happen to the ritual or how they might later carry it on. Most of the students had commonalities in their description, and sharing the ritual memoirs allowed us to share in their significant tradition. These memoirs allow us to see the commonalities we share.

The African American students in one ENG 020 course detailed picking up their baby or children from a parent or grandparent, and some were single mothers. Some were fathers trying for involvement with the child they had fathered. These African American primarily first-generation college students had many everyday concerns that the other students did not. When we first started brainstorming the ritual, one white female student described an annual trip to Paris that her family enjoyed. Her peers' eyebrows went up and there were glances between the African American students. Her family ritual was quite meaningful and important to her, as her mother was of French descent and her maternal grandparents were there. One student joked with me after class, "Dr Bush, I have trouble getting to class on time since I don't have a ride; how's her whole family go to Paris?" The African American papers focused more on rituals of family, church and local activities. One student did detail a summer reunion in a southern state, with cousins, aunts and uncles pushing the attendance close to one hundred. Several students wrote about a Sunday meal and how their participation was expected. One did not disrespect the matriarch of their family by not appearing at Sunday dinner. The detailing of the food preparation played a large part in the ritual.

When I taught at Ferris State University in rural Michigan, there was another shift in the focus of the rituals. The college is located in Big Rapids, Michigan and is a state university with an enrollment of approximately 10,000 on campus students. The town is quite small, with a