



Summer 2013

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Friends of Dacus Library

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Friends of Dacus Library Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 1

Summer 2013

Kitty Wilson-Evans Brings Slave Experience to Friends, October 7

Dr. Jack Weaver, chairman of the Friends of Dacus Library, noted that Kitty Wilson-Evans, a 1990 alumna of Winthrop University, born in Ft. Benning, Georgia and a resident of Lancaster, SC, has been reenacting the slave experience for over two decades. She started at Historic Brattonsville in 1991 and has since performed in many venues. On October 7, at 6 p.m., in the Tuttle Dining Room, McBryde Hall, she will bring her historical interpretation to the Friends of Dacus Library annual meeting.

Wilson-Evans has played a number of slave roles, but the one that has gained her the greatest renown is that of Kessie, one of 138 slaves on Brattonsville Plantation. In 2008, in conjunction with Lucinda R. Dunn, she published a juvenile book entitled *Kessie's Tales: The Adventures of an African-American Slave Girl in South Carolina* (Dunn Deal Publishing: <http://shop.dunndealpublishing.com/main.sc>).

As was related in the *Winthrop Magazine*, Spring 2006:

Wilson-Evans is spreading the message to others on the many contributions that slaves made to American history. But according to her, it's not about the personal attention, it's about the stories. . . "I'm doing this to make sure that people know that slaves left their mark in history, and that their contributions need to be told."

More about Kitty is available at the following website: <http://kessiestales.com/>.

In addition to Ms. Wilson-Evans presentation, there will be elections and Life Membership presentations at the annual meeting. This will be the meeting where the merger of the Friends and the Library Advisory Board (LAB) will be finalized. Below are the persons to be elected to the new combined Board. LAB designates those who come directly from the sitting Library Advisory Board and who still have time remaining on their terms. All terms end on December 31 of the year indicated.

- Alice Coleman (LAB 2015)
- Kay McSpadden (2016)
- Cindy Nigro (LAB 2015)
- Paul Nigro (LAB 2015)
- Joyce Plyler (LAB 2014)
- Ruth Webb (2016)

The following are proposed as officers for the combined Board:

- Jane White, Chair
- Janet Gray, Vice Chair

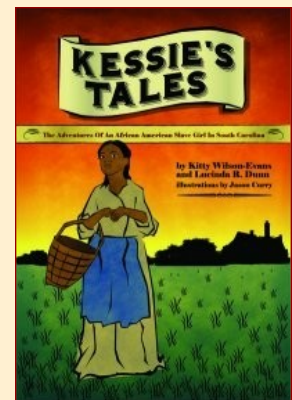
A large number of Life Members will also be designated at this annual meeting. The Life Members to be inducted include:

- Alice B. Coleman
- Caroline B. Cooney
- Cindy Nigro
- Paul Nigro
- Joyce Plyler
- Jack W. Weaver
- Ruth K. Webb

All members of the Friends may attend the annual dinner meeting at no charge. Others can also attend the event for a minimum of \$15.



Kitty Wilson-Evans Gives Presentation at Brattonsville, SC



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Bela and M. H. Herlong Book Talk Success on April 8



Bela Herlong Speaks at Dinkins Auditorium as Her Daughter, Madaline, Looks on



WELCOME TO

DR. JAYNE MARIE COMSTOCK

THE 10TH PRESIDENT OF WINTHROP UNIVERSITY, WHO ASSUMED HER NEW POST ON JULY 1, 2013

On April 8 approximately 40 persons gathered in Dinkins Auditorium on the campus of Winthrop for an entertaining Mother/Daughter Book Talk by Bela and M. H. Herlong. The authors were introduced by Dr. Jack Weaver.

Bela, age 82, taught in the Saluda schools for 43 years and at Lander University for 3. She spoke glowingly of Winthrop, which she attended 1947 to 1951. "Winthrop changed me," she said. "Winthrop gave me the courage to write." She later went to USC in Columbia to pursue a PhD in English.

Bela spoke of several books, but spent most of her time on one especially dear to her heart, *Padgett's My Name*, the memoir of her father Douglas Davenport Padgett, 1894-1989. She spent 13 years transcribing his recollections and published the book in 2008. She related a story from 1914, when her father hooked Kate, a mule, to a buggy to go to a church picnic.

"Thank God, I didn't drive too close," recalled Padgett, "but as soon as I stopped, Kate spread her legs and went to peeing. That urine twisted and twisted and was going under the dinner tablecloths. Some people pulled up the cloths and held up the rations. Pee went right smack under them... Everybody ate, and we just ignored the pee. People back then weren't as finicky as they are today."

Padgett's wife Gladys, suffering dementia, died in 1979. Her last few months were spent in a nursing home. There was a visitor sign-in book in her room. One day her husband looked at it and saw in Gladys's shaky hand, "Mr. Padgett is a fine and worthy man. He is a grand man and I love him." Reading that, he recalled, "I tell you when I saw those words and knew

they'd come from Gladys even in the shape she was in, I just broke down and cried... I knew she didn't recognize that I was Mr. Padgett, but she knew somewhere in that mixed-up mind that she loved him..."

Bela's daughter Madaline, a resident of New Orleans, spoke after her mother. A graduate of William & Mary and holder of a J.D. from Virginia, she related the joy of growing up in a home where "reading and writing were always a part of my life." Her mother even told her as a child that she had "a third eye"--the ability to see things others might miss.

Madaline reviewed her two recent young adult fiction books published under the name M. H. Herlong: *The Great Wide Sea* (2008) and *Buddy* (2012). Her first book was about "love, grief and forgiveness." The father in the story takes 3 sons to cruise the Bahamas after the mother's death. The book is told from the perspective of 15-year old Ben, who has two younger brothers. The story begins: "One upon a time there was a family. Then a boat. And then islands. Once upon a time three boys were lost at sea. One almost drowned. One almost went crazy. One fell off a cliff."

Madaline's second book *Buddy* is a Hurricane Katrina tale. She related that as her family moved about without permanent housing after the historic storm, one of her sons said, "I hope if God has a T.V. he doesn't turn it to this station." That got M. H. to thinking of Katrina stories. This led to *Buddy*, a tale about Li'l T and his search to find his dog Buddy, left behind because there was no room in the family car when they fled the storm.

After their talks, Bela and M. H. sold autographed copies of their books.



Mergers, Mayhem and More ... Dean Herring

Our first combined library and Friends boards met in May of this year. A rousing time was had by all.

All kidding aside, it is good to have the two groups working as one. All along, both groups had the library's best interests at heart, the Friends board focused on books and author events, the Advisory board focused on everything else. With the persistent efforts of Dr. Faulkner, our Friends liaison, and me, we were able to forge the two groups into one. We are eager to see what this combined group can now do. It is certain to be an exciting year.

In conjunction with that merger was the establishment of a Friends of Dacus Library endowment Fund, the first of its kind. We surpassed our \$25,000 threshold for establishing the endowment and should surpass \$50,000 by the end of the summer, thanks to a most generous gift from the Al Lyles Humanities Endowment Fund. As I said in *Dacus Developments*, our library development newsletter, we're going to shoot for the moon and raise a million!

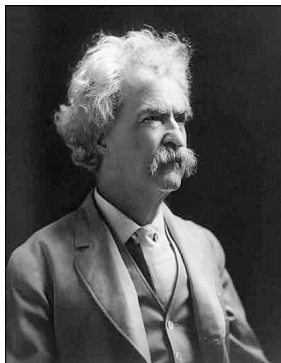
You don't want to miss a single event this fall as we have a great deal going on. Our annual Friends event will be in October, and details about it are in this newsletter. We will honor our growing list of lifetime members, those dear "Friends" who have contributed \$1,000 or more in a calendar year. Every single gift we get is important, but these sustaining gifts help us to our goals quickly and efficiently. If you can, we'd love to add your name to our list.

Arrgh, matey! In September, the Louise Pettus Archives will host "Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers of the Carolinas", a travelling exhibit from the State Li-

brary and Archives. When else would you have a pirate's exhibit but the very month of the International Talk Like a Pirate Day (September 19)? The exhibit will feature, among others, the notorious Blackbeard, a fierce and fearless pirate who was said to weave lit fuses in his beard to increase his already terrifying piousance demeanor. A life-size pirate manikin is sure to be a crowd pleaser among young males. Patches, skulls and crossbones will be welcome.

We are looking to launch our first annual Medlin lecture in honor of the late and esteemed Dorothy Medlin. We'll showcase her work and also feature a speaker. We will likely have more manuscript information to share later in the fall, too. In any event, you will want to keep up with us by following us on Facebook, Twitter, or simply by keeping an eye out for later dates and times.

It promises to be an exciting time for all.



"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them."

— Mark Twain



Dean Mark Y. Herring



The fully renovated new home of the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections was operational in the Spring of 2012.

"ONLINE READING

WILL NEVER REPLACE THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIVE DELIGHT OF A LOVELY FAT PAPERY BOOK."

—"THE DEATH OF THE BOOK, AGAIN"

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Friends of Dacus Library



Supporting Winthrop's scholarly community since 1996: <http://www.winthrop.edu/dacus/friends>

WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

A Note from the Chair

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824 Oakland Avenue
Rock Hill, SC 29733

Phone: 803/323-2131
Fax: 803/323-2215
www.winthrop.edu/dacus/friends



Board Members Effective Jan. 1, 2013:

- Joye Berman
- Ronnie Faulkner
- Janet Gray
- Doris Leitner
- Marilyn Sarow
- Jack Weaver (Chair)
- Jane White

As an avid reader, even a confessed bookworm, I have often admired the “dialogue of one” that the more complex writers often give us in their poems and stories. Plato, St. Paul, Milton, Donne, Coleridge, Hopkins, perhaps Whitman, T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, W.B. Yeats, and James Joyce are in this category and one may suspect Hawthorne, Melville, and Emerson are, also. Shakespeare, Sophocles, and Dante certainly belong. Does it appear that I have mentioned many of the important Western writers? There are others, too — Virginia Woolf, Ralph Ellison, Tony Morrison come to mind. I would like to add a group of near great (Keats, Baudelaire, Willie Faulkner, O’Neil, some Hemingway), but I won’t because I don’t want to get bogged down in classifications. Like Frost, I’ll just be a swinger. As a noted defender of books and reading, though, Eliot furnished my topic for this effort. To the “Moderns” who said we didn’t need to read the “Ancients” because we know more than they did, Eliot replied, “Precisely. And they are what we know.” Tall Tom had a way with thoughts, as well as words. I have no trouble reading any of them (though understanding them is not the same), because I began reading about age four or five and I have continued. Most of them had no trouble doing the same. None of us were tempted to watch television when we began to read; for most of us, there wasn’t any. When it did appear, a number of years were needed to develop stations, companies, networks and programming. Schools and churches did offer plays, concerts, and occasional movies. Schools, churches, and many communities also had libraries, as did many individuals, and most were pleased to have others make use of their materials. Like many of you, I hope, I have benefit-

ted not only from doing the readings but from traveling to the collections I needed to read. I visited a lot of museums, cathedrals, and other artistically beneficial places while there. Within the collections, I not only found the materials I had hoped to find; I also frequently found items I had not imagined. While browsing the Henry A. Wallace papers in our National Archives, I found a handwritten note from FDR ; it was a masterful lesson in politics for both Henry and me, since it was a guide of how to deal with the Irish Republic while keeping Ulster and Churchill’s England reasonably content. In Ireland’s National Folklife/Folklore Collections in Dublin, I read not only the materials that united the cultures of rural North America and Ireland, but found and enjoyed a folklore about Jonathan Swift, “Jack and the Dane” (Jack being the nickname for John and “Dane” being the Dublin pronunciation of “Dean”). My experiences lead me to hope that others will only begin with Google and other search engines and go where the materials really are.

I am a lover of books, libraries, and reference librarians and hope that you are, too. The example of Dacus in making all easily accessible is to be admired and encouraged. I hope the “Friends” will continue to encourage the staff and students of all ages. Let’s continue to do so by attending the dinner meeting 7 October at 6 p.m. in the Tuttle Room. There is to be an election of new officers, presentation of awards, approval of changes in bylaws, entertainment by re-enactor Kitty Wilson-Evans, who will introduce us to “Kessie,” as well as a good buffet dinner, and a visit with your bookish friends.

Best regards,

Jack W. Weaver

Chair of Friends of Dacus
Emeritus Professor of English

Membership Application : The Friends of Dacus Library (Mail to address in box below)

Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Home Phone No.: _____
Cell Phone No. (if different than home no.): _____
Primary Email Address: _____

Class Year (if applicable): _____ Relationship to Winthrop (check one):
_____ Alumni ___ Faculty/Staff ___ Friend ___ Parent ___ Student

Amount of Gift: _____ **If you would like your gift to go to the Friends of Dacus Library Endowed Fund (Check):** _____

- Levels:
- Life (Individuals Only) \$1,000.00+
 - Corporate (Businesses/Organizations Only) \$500.00-\$999.99
 - Patron \$200.00-\$499.99
 - Sustaining Member \$100.00-\$199.00
 - Member \$50.00-\$99.99
 - Winthrop Student \$10.00-\$49.99

If you wish to make a gift _____ in honor of, or _____ in memory of someone, please indicate whom:

Name/address of person to be notified about honor/memorial in box below:

Make check out to:

**Winthrop University Foundation
302 Tillman Hall
701 Oakland Ave.
Rock Hill, SC 29733**

**On "For" line write:
Friends of Dacus Library**