LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As the academic year draws to a close, we look back with appreciation and forward with anticipation. In early fall 2008, MARBL Director Steve Enniss accepted a position as the Eric Weinmann Librarian at the Folger Shakespeare Library. We gratefully celebrate all that he accomplished at Emory. Enniss leaves MARBL with internationally recognized strengths in modern literature and African American history and culture, with a new building on the horizon, and with students and scholars beating a path to the MARBL Reading Room. An international search for a new MARBL director has begun; we will keep you apprised of our progress.

This issue of the newsletter highlights recent collaborations between MARBL and Emory faculty that have expanded and enhanced our collections. Recently, the first volume of The Letters of Samuel Beckett (covering the years 1929–1940) was published. MARBL has partnered with Lois Overbeck over the years to acquire works by Beckett to deepen the library’s collection and to support the work of the Beckett Project. We look forward to many more years of fruitful collaboration.

To support Ron Schuchard’s scholarship on The Collected Prose of T. S. Eliot, MARBL worked with Julius Cruse to move his T. S. Eliot collection to Emory. Schuchard and his international team of editors now have easy access to this extensive collection, which is also open to the public.

Vice President and Secretary of the University Rosemary Magee had a long friendship with Flannery O’Connor scholar Sally Fitzgerald. In the “Other Voices” column, she traces Fitzgerald’s relationship with O’Connor and with Emory, and describes the placement of Fitzgerald’s papers in MARBL as a homecoming.

This issue also features an article discussing the current exhibition “Slave, Soldier, Citizen: The Journey of William H. Scott” and a look at life at Emory a century ago through the letters of freshman William Lyle Bryan.

I hope what you read in these pages will tempt you to visit MARBL soon.

Naomi L. Nelson
Interim Director
The placement of Sally Fitzgerald’s papers in MARBL seems as much an act of fate as serendipity. For many years, Fitzgerald made Emory her home away from home. From 1981 to 1997 she ventured south from Cambridge, Massachusetts, on almost annual pilgrimages during the winter, staying for several months in a nearby apartment or graduate student housing.

I first met Sally Fitzgerald in 1979, shortly after the publication of *The Habit of Being*, her widely acclaimed collection of Flannery O’Connor’s letters. Together with some fellow graduate students in Emory’s Graduate Institute for the Liberal Arts (ILA), we put together a grant proposal and, to our surprise, received funding. Next, we invited Sally Fitzgerald to join a panel of scholars and teachers and, to our greater surprise, she accepted. We found her manner to be elegant and responsive to all of us who were trying to fathom the enigmatic writings of O’Connor.

In the ensuing years, she returned to Emory as a visiting scholar and research associate in the ILA. With Atlanta as her base, she pursued her research on O’Connor, writing articles and papers on her manual typewriter, participating in conferences, and interviewing O’Connor friends and associates in the area. She played a pivotal role in the acquisition of the Elizabeth (Betty) Hester letters (Hester was the anonymous “A” in *The Habit of Being*), placed at the Emory University library in 1987 and opened to the public in 2007.

Fitzgerald became close friends with O’Connor in 1949 after she and her husband, Robert Fitzgerald, were introduced to O’Connor by Robert Lowell. Subsequently, the Fitz吉rals invited O’Connor to join their family as a guest in their rural Connecticut farmhouse, where she stayed for two years while working on her novel *Wise Blood*. When they first met, O’Connor was twenty-five years old and Fitzgerald was nine years her senior. “She was like a younger sister and lovely company, wonderful company,” Fitzgerald once told me. Conversing at the kitchen table each evening, the Fitz吉rals and O’Connor affirmed their devout faith as Catholics as they conducted extensive theological and literary conversations. Thus began the relationship—one of the most important of its kind in twentieth-century American letters—that transformed both women’s lives and work.

For much of her life, Fitzgerald was preoccupied with Catholicism, her family, and Flannery O’Connor. After the death of O’Connor in 1964—and as Fitzgerald’s children grew up and her marriage collapsed—she turned more to research, writing, and lecturing. I once asked Fitzgerald if she ever had imagined that she would become so closely connected to O’Connor beyond those years in the farmhouse. She replied, “Not at all, but even in death, Flannery was a friend. She reached out to me when I needed work.”

Over the decades, Sally Fitzgerald was a friend and mentor to me as well, and on more than one occasion guided my work on a collection of O’Connor interviews. In April 2000, two months before her death at the age of eighty-three, she and I recorded a series of telephone conversations in which she talked about her “lurch through life,” which she described as being “almost entirely serendipitous.”* Her faith undergirded all of her relationships, even beyond death, divorce, and distance.

Whatever one’s own beliefs, it is tempting to see Sally Fitzgerald now in some state of ultimate grace—with Robert Fitzgerald and Flannery O’Connor, sitting around a celestial kitchen table discussing mysteries, manners, and meanings—while we mortal students and scholars have the privilege of listening in on their discussions by visiting her collection of papers at the library of Emory University, her home away from home.

*These interviews are published in the *Flannery O’Connor Review* 3 (2005).
SLAVE, SOLDIER, CITIZEN:

The Journey of William Henry Scott

By Randall K. Burkett, Curator of African American Collections
William Henry Scott recounted to his son that he did not know he was enslaved until he was eight years old. The shock of realization was so great and his anger so profound that he immediately began to plot his escape from Virginia to freedom. The opportunity he sought presented itself in April 1862 when he encountered Alexander Burkitt, a Union soldier who had been instructed by his superior officer to find a “bright” young slave to bring into the camp of their 12th Massachusetts Regiment, where the boy could be “improved.”

Snatched from oblivion, young Henry made the most of the opportunity, and he soon became a favorite of the officers and men. Scott would serve for three and a half years as aide-de-camp to Major Loring W. Muzzey, be taught to read and write by his comrades in arms, and also experience some of the most horrendous battles of the Civil War—from Cedar Mountain, Bull Run, and Antietam to Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Spottsylvania, and finally to Appomattox.

After the war, Henry Scott removed to Lexington, Massachusetts. There, under the tutelage of Muzzey and his family, he was further educated. Scott returned south to teach in Virginia, but his outspoken resistance to the resurgent racism of white Virginians in the early 1880s forced him to move to Maryland and then to the nation’s capital, where he studied for the ministry at the newly formed Wayland Seminary, a Baptist school for blacks established in 1865.

Scott was the first African American owner of a bookstore in Washington, D.C., was active in political and cultural affairs of the city, and became assistant minister at the prominent Shiloh Baptist Church. Upon the death in 1890 of William J. Walker, Shiloh’s senior minister, Scott was passed over for that position. This disappointment, coupled with the untimely death of his second wife, motivated him to move to the Boston area, where he would live and work until his death in 1910.

Scott was deeply involved in radical political activity and protest organizations throughout his career. One of the few African Americans centrally involved in the Anti-Imperialist League, he bitterly opposed annexation of Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Among the more vociferous opponents of Booker T. Washington, he was instrumental in founding a number of protest organizations, including the Massachusetts Racial Protective Association, the Boston Suffrage League, the New England Suffrage League, and the Niagara Movement, the latter of which led directly to formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The papers of William Henry Scott—containing manuscript sermons, correspondence, rare and unique broadsides and pamphlets, and an extensive collection of photographs—were donated to MARBL in 2007. An exhibition of these papers opened in the Robert W. Woodruff Library in January 2009, during Emory’s celebration of Martin Luther King Week. Julian Bond, chair of the board of the NAACP, gave the keynote talk. The exhibition marked the beginning of a yearlong celebration at Emory and throughout the country of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the NAACP, the most important and enduring civil rights organization in the United States.
The Julius M. Cruse Collection is the largest-known collection of printed materials related to T. S. Eliot, and it now has a permanent home at Emory. Numbering more than 3,000 volumes, the Cruse collection includes all of Eliot’s primary publications, as well as books, pamphlets, and periodicals to which he contributed. It also includes translations, broadsides, posters, playbills, programs, recordings, ephemera, and some manuscripts and letters. Many items in the collection are the only known extant copies.

Ronald Schuchard, Goodrich C. White Professor of English at Emory and general editor of *The Collected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, calls it “the most comprehensive collection I’ve ever seen. This is a great complement to the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, which has the best collection of Auden items in the world,” Schuchard adds. “Now we have the best printed collection of Eliot anywhere. It’s just an incredible research collection.”

Julius M. Cruse is an eminent professor and doctor of immunology, pathology, and transplantation at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson. He first began reading and collecting the work of the renowned twentieth-century poet, critic, and dramatist while a student at the University of Mississippi in the 1950s. Eliot’s dramatic conversion from Unitarianism to Anglo-Catholicism intrigued and inspired Cruse, a devoted Episcopalian.

On loan since 2006 from St. Mark’s General Theological Seminary Library in New York City, the Cruse collection first came to Emory to aid in the collection, digitization, and editing of Eliot’s prose under the direction of Schuchard. The planned seven volumes of *The Collected Prose of T. S. Eliot* are forthcoming from Johns Hopkins University Press. In coordination with the Lewis H. Beck Center for Electronic Collections and Services in the Emory University Library, Schuchard is overseeing a digitized editorial collaboration by an international team of prominent Eliot scholars. Scanned images and editable, digital texts of Eliot prose items that Schuchard has gathered are created in the Beck Center and housed in a series of online databases that the editors are able to access from anywhere in the world. According to Schuchard, “In eight to ten years, the complete works of T. S. Eliot will finally be available and invite much new scholarship.”

Cruse helped arrange the permanent transfer of his collection to Emory after he realized how much more use it would be given by students and scholars as a part of the rapidly expanding literary collections in MARBL. “Emory has rescued an orphaned collection that was isolated and lost. I am ecstatic that it can be used in this international project and eventually be digitized so that it is available to even more people,” Cruse says.

by Erin Sells, PhD candidate, Department of English; SIRE graduate fellow; and project manager for *The Collected Prose of T. S. Eliot*
A student entering Emory College in fall 1908 paid tuition of $30 per term; board, consisting of “good and wholesome food,” cost $9 per month; and room, including fuel and light, required $11 per month. First-year students were required to study biblical literature, European history, rhetoric and composition, French or German, Latin and Greek, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, botany, and physical education—then known as physical culture. The first-year class in 1908 consisted of seventy students—all men—given that Emory College did not become coeducational until 1953. Sixty-six of the young men hailed from the state of Georgia and two students came from Alabama, with one each from Florida and Louisiana.

William Lyle Bryan, known as Lyle to his family and friends, was interested in all the usual things that college students are concerned about—grades, sports, activities, roommates, social life, and friendship. Throughout his first year, Lyle was worried about his grades; in April of that same year, he revealed his strategy for helping keep his grades up:

Dear Mamma,
[1909–before Apr 18]
I send you my composition which I want you please to correct and return at your earliest convenience.

The following week, he confessed his growing obsession about making not just good grades, but the best grades possible:

Dear Mamma,
[1909 Apr 18]
I got my composition alright and send many thanks for the corrections of same. I copied it again and handed it in. I hope it will get a good mark. Marks are my fetish.

Lyle’s letters also focused on another college pastime—intramural sports. While still in his first year, he wrote home:

Dear Mamma,
[1908 Nov 15]
Monday afternoon I went to see my first football game. It was between the Juniors and Freshmen. I was thoroughly disgusted with a game that knocks boys senseless and bruises them up like that does. I don’t think I shall try for the baseball team next spring as one has to spend so much time practicing that one’s lessons come up short.

When he was a sophomore, Lyle developed a sudden and nearly all-consuming interest in participating in campus activities:

Dear Mamma,
[1911 Mar 19]
The student body has gotten up a new system of government. They are to have a student body government and have a president and everything done by committees. . . . I am anxious to get into politics and be a leader of men. I crave power. . . . I am going to use that same degree of skill to land what I want in politics that I have used to lead my class in marks. Sometimes I get so wrapped up with ambition that I can hardly sit still. I just feel I have got to do something.

In perhaps the most poignant series of letters, Lyle reflects on the larger meaning of his college experience:

Dear Mamma,
[1909 May 17]
What do you think of this question. . . . Do you think that to win [the highest honors] it is worth it to relinquish all hopes of debating honors [and] athletic honors and confine oneself to that one pursuit. I contend that it is and I believe that I would make nearly any sacrifice to get it and be the fourth man to ever make it, but lots of the boys say that it is better to make a lower grade and take part in everything. . . . My ambition, love of honors [and] pride tell me to sacrifice all and make first honor while the boys say to be more of an all-round man. But I believe that there is nothing to equal the idea of graduating with [highest honors] written on your diploma and to have all the underclassmen during your senior year to look upon you as one grand [fellow].

By his junior year, perhaps because he had those high marks well in hand and was beginning to realize that he was indeed missing something, he wrote:
Dear Mamma,
[1911 Mar 19]
There is something else in college life besides marks and that something I have missed to a large degree. I am finding it a hard row to try for highest honors. I made the mistake that a fellow [doesn’t] need many friends . . . but this year I have been trying to become more popular. Boys like a fellow better who takes more interest in their sports [and their activities] and now that I have time, I want to do it.

William Lyle Bryan compiled quite a college record. He was a member of the Few Literary Society, its champion debater and president; a member of the Alpha Epsilon Upsilon honor society; on the Honor Roll every year; a commencement speaker as a junior and senior; editor-in-chief of the Emory Campus yearbook as a senior; a basketball team member every year; and a relay race team member for two years.

It is reassuring to know that he did seem to find some meaningful balance in his college experience, making excellent grades while also excelling in sports, debate, and campus life. Lyle Bryan graduated from Emory College in 1912, taught school, served in the military, attended law school, practiced law, and founded a life insurance company.

Even though his letters are a century old, many of the things he wrote about are very similar to what today’s students communicate in email, text messages, Facebook postings, and cell calls. He wanted to make good grades but also be successful in athletics and campus activities. Lyle Bryan’s recognition that there is something else to college life besides just grades points to the transformative experience of his four years at Emory. His realization that he needed to take a balanced approach to his education reinforces the idea that the college experience is not just about academics but also about service, not just about intellect but also about imagination, not just about the mind but also about the heart. &
When authorized by Samuel Beckett to edit the letters in 1985, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and I began by gathering and consulting Beckett’s voluminous correspondence (more than 15,000 letters) in public and private collections. Beckett’s only proviso was to publish, after his death, those letters having bearing on his work, although he added: “You will get round and see these people, won’t you?”

Taking this cue, we did “get round” to meet Beckett’s correspondents, their colleagues and families, and we read collateral correspondence in archives and personal collections as well. Our research led beyond the literary. The letters show how the visual arts and music compelled Beckett’s attention; they reveal the influence that paintings had on his stage images and that musical forms had on the patterns of his prose. Although he claimed to be “in the dark” about his creative process, Beckett demonstrates in his letters his multilayered involvement in the realization of his work. Close associations with theater artists, painters, and musicians resulted in collaboration during his lifetime, just as his texts have continued to inspire artists, composers, and other writers to create new work.

From the beginning of our affiliation with Emory’s Graduate School in 1990, the staff of Woodruff Library and MARBL were active partners. Linda Matthews and Stephen Enniss asked how they might best support the research of the edition. By this time, the major Beckett manuscript collections were already held at Reading University in England (The Beckett International Foundation) and at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas–Austin, with additional significant collections at Washington University in St. Louis, Boston College, and Syracuse University. So we agreed to focus on augmenting MARBL’s collection of first editions and translations of Beckett’s writing. Over time, we also have included programs, special editions, and of some of the livres d’artiste that formed the core of the beautiful exhibition “Samuel Beckett: Word and Image” held in November 1999.

MARBL’s holdings, already rich in modern Irish literary papers and twentieth-century publications, were deepened by the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library. Apart from its size, the special value of this library is that it is a “contextual collection” of rare editions of poetry and scarce, often short-run, periodicals that are seldom found together. As manuscript collections are added to MARBL, it is not unusual to discover letters from Beckett among the archives of fellow writers such as Derek Mahon, Matti Megged, Edna O’Brien, and Desmond O’Grady.

What may be surprising is that the Beckett Project also has research links to MARBL’s African American collections. Nancy Cunard’s Hours Press published Samuel Beckett’s first book, Whoroscope (a poem on time based on the writing of Descartes), and Beckett later translated many of the essays in Cunard’s landmark volume Negro, Anthology by Nancy Cunard.

The book as object and subject always has a story to tell, and this tome repays the curious reader. We knew that Beckett had translated Réne Crevel’s “Negresse in the Brothel,” yet it was not listed in the table of contents. By going page by page, we found it at last: printed in a different font on different paper and not numbered sequentially. Why? Apparently the British printer of the volume refused to set it, so Cunard—never one to let censorship circumvent publication—had this essay printed separately and then tipped into the binding of the book.

Even as we have worked in archives in Ireland, England, France, Germany, and Italy, this project is inextricably tied to the libraries at Emory. With the Reference Department and MARBL, we designed a series of training seminars for graduate fellows; we admit to being heavy users of interlibrary loan and circulation, and we appreciate the opportunity to help build the collections when the need or occasion arises. Emory’s librarians are often the first port of call (not just a last resort); they and colleagues across the campus truly have made the project a laboratory for humanities research at Emory.

Now The Letters of Samuel Beckett is poised for reception by the wider world. The first of four volumes (1929–1940) recently was published by Cambridge University Press—with a launch in the Long Room of the library at Trinity College, Dublin, in February and a celebration at Emory in March centered on an evening of readings from Beckett’s works and letters from this period. Anticipate the arrival of some very special guests.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan. 23- “SLAVE, SOLDIER, CITIZEN: THE JOURNEY OF WILLIAM H. SCOTT”
Aug. 8 Manuscript, Archives, & Rare Book Library

April 23- “A KEEPING OF RECORDS: THE ART AND LIFE OF ALICE WALKER”
Sept. 27 An exhibition celebrating the opening of the Alice Walker papers
Schatten Gallery and New Book Rotunda, Level 3, Robert W. Woodruff Library

April 24 “A KEEPING OF RECORDS: THE ART AND LIFE OF ALICE WALKER”
Symposium, Roberto C. Goizueta Business School Auditorium, 8:00 a.m. –5:30 p.m.
$20 registration fee; free for students

April 24 TALK BY ALICE WALKER
“REFLECTIONS ON THE TURNING OF THE WHEEL: LIVING A LIFE OF FREEDOM AND CHOICE”
Glenn Memorial Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.
Free tickets required

Call 404.727.7620 or visit marbl.library.emory.edu for the most recent details
on these and other upcoming MARBL-sponsored events.

Poetry Library Catalog Available
“Democratic Vistas: Exploring the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library”
This beautiful, 152-page volume offers photos and detailed background
information on almost 300 of the items in the 75,000-item Danowski Poetry
Library—including many of those featured in the poetry library’s debut exhibi-
tion in the Schatten Gallery during spring 2008. Cost is $45, which includes
$5 shipping charge. Proceeds go to the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library
endowment. To purchase with check or credit card, contact Denise Funk
at dmfunk@emory.edu or 404.727.6887 or Denise Funk, Senior Secretary,
MARBL, 540 Asbury Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30322-0879.

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