ILAS NEWSLETTER

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Nettie Lee Benson

A Legend in Her Time

Photo: Larry Murphy

Nettie Lee Benson has, in her own time, become a rich legend. There are many, especially in Latin America, who know her name, but are less sure of the name of the university that she has so magnificently served. Because she has done so much for the university, because she has been more responsible than any other person for the formation of the hemisphere's greatest collection of *Latinoamericana*, and because she is loved and admired by all who know her, we dedicate this *ILAS Newsletter* issue to her.

Dr. Benson's accomplishments have benefited countless scholars and influenced the entire field of Latin American studies. All who have come into contact with her during her long years at the university, as well as during her countless trips abroad in pursuit of the betterment of the collection and scholarship about Latin America, have been enriched by her manifest dedication, her incisive observations, her superb scholarship, and her elegant record keeping. The admiration and affection she has garnered through the years have been earned through being an honest, tough, understanding, uncompromising, and humane humanist, and in being indefatigable in the search for knowledge and in the promotion and protection of the Latin American Collection.

Nettie Lee Benson received a BA, MA, and PhD from UT-Austin and became a teacher and librarian, but along the way she collected a library for the university that she knows like a book. She directed the Latin American Collection at UT from 1942 to 1975 when it was renamed the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection in her honor. Student Brittmarie Perez described Dr. Benson in 1989 as "one of those tiny but doggedly determined pioneer women" whose "wispy figure still trods the halls, fiercely protective of the books."

Professor Benson taught in the history department from 1962 until she regretfully gave it up in 1989, and from 1964 to 1975 in the Graduate School of Library Science. In 1981 she received the UT Ex-Students Distinguished Alumnus Award, and in 1984 received a UT Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award. She taught the basics of modern Mexican history to most of the graduate students in Latin American history, many of whom have gone on to distinguished careers in scholarship and government service, in no small part due to her guidance, friendship, and encouragement.

In all her years at the university she never received university funding for research assistance or secretarial help. Even the Collection's secretary, finally assigned to the library during the last five years of her directorship, she considered to be library personnel and not to be used for her professional research. When asked if she had ever requested assistance she replied, "No. I knew the answer and I didn't want to give them the opportunity to say 'no'." By today's standards she was shortchanged in annual compensation as well.

She has, however, been little concerned

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with the inequalities she experienced. Many library acquisitions she made at her own expense. During the 1970s, coincidentally when she retired from the directorship, the university policy to reimburse employees for unused sick leave was being reversed as it cleared the records of indebtedness, and she received a check for more than $10,000. "I don't need that money," she said, and used it to create an acquisitions fund for Latin American materials, while across campus a dean resigned (later returning to the ranks) specifically in order to receive a hefty refund.

She longed to go to Mexico as a young woman and when she finally realized that dream, she embraced it like the *mariposa* that migrates each year, and returned again and again to search the country's shelves for acquisitions. "I had a wonderful time all the time," Dr. Benson closed a report to the ILAS Executive Committee about her trip to Mexico in 1954. Mexico responded to her love of its land and history by awarding her the highest honor given to a foreigner. In 1979, President José López Portillo presented her with the *Aguila Azteca*, Order of the Aztec Eagle.

Salud!

My Life with the University of Texas at Austin

by Nettie Lee Benson

In September 1924, as a transfer student from Texas Presbyterian College for Girls, I entered the University of Texas (UT) in my junior year of undergraduate studies with a major in history. During that year, two significant events occurred that influenced my life greatly: One, I registered for a course taught by Professor Charles W. Hackett, entitled the "History of Spanish North America," dealing primarily with the history of Mexico; second, I became a member of the Student Volunteers, which met monthly at the YMCA to discuss opportunities and students' interest in working in a foreign country.

At one of those monthly meetings in the spring of 1925, someone announced a high school teaching position available in the Instituto Inglés-Español, a school for girls under the direction of the Methodist church, in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico. I had been wanting to go to Mexico ever since 1914 anyway, so I immediately made an application for that position and obtained it—even though my parents were opposed to my going there. After two years of teaching history, mathemathics, and English courses in Monterrey, I returned to my home in Sinton, Texas, to be with my mother, who was ill. While there I taught the second grade in the Sinton Primary School.

My mother's health had improved by September 1928, when I reentered UT as a senior undergraduate and received my Bachelor of Arts. I was also employed half-time by the International House, a YWCA-sponsored institution, to be an assistant hostess in residence in their building located on the west bank of Shoal Creek between Fifth and Sixth Streets. This institution was a gathering place for the Spanish-speaking young people of Austin, especially high school and college students, and for Mexican Americans seeking help in learning English, in translating documents, and so on. After receiving my BA degree, I continued to work at the International House and as a grader for Dr. Charles W. Hackett while I worked toward an MA degree under his direction.

Running short on funds in the summer of 1930, I accepted a position as night hostess with the YWCA in Dallas, but before the end of the summer, I decided to return to teaching. In 1930–1931, I taught the fifth grade in the Hartley (Texas) Public Schools. From September 1932 to spring 1941—returning to UT in the summer of 1935 to complete my thesis and receive my MA under Dr. Hackett's direction—I taught all the English and Spanish courses offered in the Ingleside High School, acted as senior class sponsor during all those years, and annually took the senior class to visit Monterrey, Mexico, during the San Jacinto break.

Needing a break from teaching in 1941, I took a one-year leave from my position at the Ingleside High School to return to UT in the fall. I had no idea then of working toward a PhD degree. I simply signed up for any graduate course relating to Latin Amer-

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Photo: Walter Barnes Studio

Do You Have a Library for South America?

Leer es Poder

by Andrew Wheat

Inequitable distribution between the North and South assumes countless forms. One of the finest *Latin American* collections in the world, for instance, is in *North America.*

This *Newsletter* salutes **Nettie Lee Benson** and the library staff for chronic excellence. UT did not buy the Benson Collection lock, stock, and barrel like an Uzi or a Mercedes Benz. Librarians, staff, and students painstakingly built it—less with money than sheer tenacity. Still, money is involved, and south-of-the-border libraries must do without. Several UT professors have personally taken steps to help redress the widening north-south book gap by donating materials to libraries in Latin America. Since there are several ways to make such donations, and the process can get complicated, the *Newsletter* would like to share these professors' experiences with the hope of making it easier for you to follow suit.

The Library Exchange Program

The late Professor **William Hartwig's** (Electrical Engineering) technical library was a gift from **Mrs. Hartwig** to the BLAC to establish an exchange program with the **Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas**. How does the exchange program work? When you make a donation through the BLAC, our librarians will sift through the materials and extract what they need for UT. The leftover materials enter library exchange. In conjunction with ILAS, the masterminds of BLAC exchange, **Dr. Don Gibbs** and **Margarita Alejo**, maintain extensive contacts with nearly one thousand academic institutions in Latin America. Working with their foreign counterparts, Dr. Gibbs and Ms. Alejo arrange mutually beneficial swaps of surplus materials. In lieu of a swap, some UT librarians, like the Geology Library's **Dennis Trombatore**, ship exchange materials to foreign libraries that promise to reimburse UT for shipping costs.

The advantages of the library's exchange program are that it is painless and the materials go to institutions that specifically request them. Donors need only drop off their books at the BLAC and the library staff does the rest. Moreover, unlike the other donations discussed below, donations to library exchange are tax deductible since UT is a *United States–based, tax-exempt organization.* (The IRS requires form 8283 for tax-deductible, noncash contributions worth over $500.) For its part, unless the gift is worth more than $5,000, the IRS has no qualms about an individual making tax-deductible donations to a U.S. organization that then transships the materials to Latin America. Understandably, however, the UT library system cannot expend much staff time on activities that do not benefit our libraries. Consequently, most UT librarians encourage would-be donors to use the exchange program.

Shipping Direct to Latin America

Some donors, however, not motivated by tax deductions, wish to channel their books directly to a given Latin American library. ILAS Director, **Dr. Richard Adams**, is a veteran book donor and an enthusiastic supporter of this method. As a Fulbright fellow in Argentina, Dr. Adams took advantage of the complimentary shipping service that Fulbright offered to transport four crates of books to the **Universidad de Jujuy**. On another occasion, working with Mexican colleague **Guillermo de la Peña**, he donated a dozen boxes of books to **El Colegio de Michoacán**. In this case the Colegio took charge of transporting the books.

Despite the advantages, direct donations are more onerous than working through the UT library exchange program. In some countries customs procedures and import duties present exhausting barriers. In other countries, cautions Dr. Donald Gibbs of the BLAC, donors must be wary of donating politically sensitive materials. Finally, a direct donor usually assumes responsibility for transporting the books, either at his or her own cost or by working through other channels. We know of two ways to ship books to Latin America without assuming the full cost.

Dr. John Maxwell (Geological Sciences) is currently sending 80 boxes (some 3,000 lbs.) of books to the **Universidad de San José** in Costa Rica. Dr. Maxwell decided to make this gift as the result of a close friendship with an ex-student who is now a distinguished Costa Rican geologist. With the assistance of the U.S. Information Agency, Dr. Maxwell contacted a cultural attaché in the U.S. embassy in Mexico. The embassy has a truck that makes regular runs between Laredo and Mexico City, and other trucks linking Mexico City with embassies in Central America. Dr. Maxwell will ship the books to Laredo at his own expense; the embassy contact has agreed to see that the books make the rest of the voyage to Costa Rica.

By working through embassy personnel, a donor *may* encounter smoother sailing through foreign customs procedures. On the other hand, according to Dr. Maxwell, this method requires time-consuming negotiations with embassy contacts, negotiations that must be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

Finally, although no one that we know has taken advantage of it, the **Smithsonian's International Exchange Service** will cover the shipping costs of books from Washington, D.C., to Latin American libraries free of charge. Qualified donors simply wrap and address the books to their final destination, and then rewrap them, addressing the outer package to the Smithsonian. Upon receipt the Smithsonian will discard the outer packaging, shipping the inner bundle abroad at the government's expense. (For information contact Tina Lesnik, 202/357-2742.)

We encourage anyone considering donating materials to Latin American libraries to contact ILAS and the BLAC's bibliographer, Dr. Don Gibbs (471-3818).

(Andrew Wheat is an MA student in the ILAS joint degree program with community and regional planning, and is employed half-time at ILAS.)

My Life
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ica. I took courses that I thought would be interesting with Hackett in history, Dr. Jefferson R. Spell in literature, Dr. J. Lloyd Meacham in political science, and Dr. George I. Sanchez in education.

In the fall of 1941, Dr. Carlos E. Castañeda directed the Latin American Collection. Of course, with my graduate courses I was to be found in it daily; however, I never had thought of being a librarian or working in a library. When Dr. Castañeda was named to head the southern headquarters of the newly created Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) in Dallas, Drs. Hackett, Meacham, Spell, and Sanchez all suggested to me that, with my interest in and knowledge of Latin America, I should apply to take Castañeda's place while he was on leave. I was quite dubious about my ability to handle the position; however, with their insistence, I decided to give it a try and asked Ingleside for an extension of my leave for another year. I began working in the Latin American Collection in March 1942.

Too, 1941–1942 saw the creation of the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) under the leadership of Professors Charles W. Hackett, J. Lloyd Meacham, Jefferson R. Spell, George I. Sanchez, and Donald Coney, then director for the General Libraries. ILAS offered a PhD degree program in Latin American Studies. Professors Hackett and Spell frequently suggested to me that I had already met most of the requirements for such a degree and all I needed to do was to take the required examination for admission to candidacy under the PhD program and write a dissertation on an acceptable topic. I chose history for my major field and political science, literature, and education for my minors.

Dr. Casteñada returned from his FEPC position several years later briefly to the Latin American Collection, before becoming a full-time teacher in the history department. From that time I remained in charge of LAC until August 31, 1975. After my retirement, Laura Gutiérrez-Witt, who had served under me as assistant librarian for some ten years, became head librarian.

I thoroughly enjoyed my association with the LAC and with the students and professors of UT and the ever increasing number of visiting scholars of Latin America, the United States, and Europe who came to make use of its ever increasing valuable materials relating to the region lying to the south of the United States.

In 1943–1944, while working full time (fifty-four hours a week) in LAC, I began working on a biography of José Miguel Ramos Arizpe, the father of the Mexican Constitution of 1824. Wherever I researched, I found him in his early life involved with an institution called the Provincial Deputation. However, I could find nothing in any history text about such an institution. Dr. Hackett, though more interested in the twentieth-century history of Latin America, suggested that I might pursue that topic. When I had pursued it up to the fall of the Iturbide Empire in Mexico, Hackett suggested that perhaps that topic would be a contribution to the historical knowledge of Spanish America. Hence my dissertation, although still relating to many of the activities of Ramos Arizpe, was entitled "The Provincial Deputation in Mexico: Precursor of the Mexican Federal State." With its acceptance I received the PhD degree in Latin American Studies, in June 1949. I am still working on a biography of Ramos Arizpe.

Because of my position in the Latin American Collection, I was invited in the summer of 1956 to participate with nineteen other librarians and book dealers interested in the acquisition of Latin American printed works in the first and founding session of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM), brought into existence through the efforts and sponsorship of Marietta Daniels Shepherd of the Organization of American States (OAS) and of Prof. A. Curtis Wilgus of the Univeristy of Florida at Gainesville. After the fourth annual session of SALALM, held at the Library of Congress, and much correspondence and discussion, it was generally agreed by the membership of SALALM that the only way to assure a rather compre-

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The Benson Latin American Collection Needs Your Contribution

In recent years, the fiscal problems confronting the State of Texas have led to a reduction in funds available to the Benson Latin American Collection (BLAC) for acquisitions. In this same period, the number of books and periodicals on Latin America has continued to grow, and inflation has added an additional burden. In particular, the publication in Latin America of works concerning the regions has expanded at a rate that has made it impossible to keep up without an expanding budget. The Benson Collection is currently a major national and world resource; it cannot expect to continue to be so characterized if it fails to maintain a strong acquisitions policy.

Having for years given of herself in behalf of the collection, from 1975 through 1989 Dr. Benson gave $100,000 of her private savings to the University of Texas as an endowment for the acquisition of books. Currently, the BLAC staff, under its highly competent director, Laura Gutiérrez Witt, is seeking to duplicate the size of Dr. Benson's personal gift through soliciting individual contributions. Dr. Benson knows better than anyone how vulnerable is the future of a major collection that fails to keep up its level of growth.

Readers are urged to contribute to the endowment started by Dr. Benson, and to honor her by helping build on the remarkable tradition that she has established. (Make checks payable to the University of Texas at Austin, marked for the Benson Endowment Fund; send to Laura Gutiérrez Witt, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712.)

The Mythic Life of Nettie Lee Benson

by Henry C. Schmidt

Dr. Nettie Lee Benson belongs to the last generation of Texas frontier scholars. Natives, they are hearty, straightforward, often Old Testament in character and speech, and deeply rooted in their region. They were Texas leaders in the mid-twentieth century and founders of basic programs in their institutions. Dr. Benson directed uniquely the Latin American Collection and became a special presence in the university. To research in the Collection under her guidance had the quality of peak experience, like listening to Pixinguinha [Portuguese composer] or walking the Pacific Crest Trail.

Her life is noteworthy for its individualism, breadth, ingenuity, stamina, persistence, and vision. Her youth embodied her development. In high school she wrote a paper on the Philippines and used multiple sources in the state.[1] Her epistemology was based on "all our senses." Thus, "even the motion of writing impresses on the mind." Mingling with the Mexican families who worked in her father's produce shipping business in Sinton, she acquired a social philosophy of ethnic pluralism. Her personal credo was: "I like to take challenges and see what I can do with them. I always have." She would sit on her front porch, looking south, and say, "I'll get to Mexico, one way or another."

The chance came after college in 1927 when, against her parents' will, she took a teaching job in Monterrey. While she was crossing the bridge from Brownsville to Matamoros at 3:00 a.m., her escort informed her she would have to be vaccinated, although she had proof she already was. The procedure was done with a penknife, from which she "suffered misery for a long time."

Teaching and adventure tested her mettle. After Monterrey she endured winter rigors while teaching in the Panhandle: "I'd wake up in the morning and sometimes the bed would be completely covered with snow that had blown in around the window cracks and through the baseboards and keyhole."

In college her attitudes were idealist and nonchalant. She was "too busy having a good time" to be goal oriented, though she "had to study some." She played tournament-class tennis and in music excelled on the clarinet, flute, and mandolin. She participated in great issues programs.

As a graduate student at UT, she took every Latin American content course offered but was indifferent to obtaining degrees and only completed her PhD "to please some people." Later, as a professor, she did not submit a vita or seek grants, leaves, honors, raises, or promotions. She avoided academic politics and in-fighting and chose to live outside careerist competition, though she fully supported her graduate students in their professional advancement.

Naive she was not. She mastered the art of persuading university officials to match other libraries' acquisitions offers. Similarly, she accepted outside assignments in order to serve UT interests. By 1960 she held positions in the Latin American Collection, History Department, and the Library Science School, while publishing works that continue to be reprinted in Mexico. Her book, *La diputación provincial y el federalismo mexicano*, is fundamental for the postindependent period.

From 1942 to the present, Dr. Benson's special talents have been devoted to the Latin American Collection. She instituted such innovations as shelf lists and exchanges, and pioneered cooperative acquisitions programs like the Farmington Plan, Latin American Cooperative Acquisitions Program (LACAP), and Seminar on the Acquisitions of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). All rare books, in her judgment, should be microfilmed. She had the imagination to go beyond the conventional library catalog and acquire materials like laws that she knew do not always appear in *diarios oficiales*, old telephone directories, small cultural reviews, scientific studies of regions, and statistical abstracts. The Latin American Collection's diverse holdings were the result of ILAS director Charles W. Hackett's urging to buy in all fields, Dr. Benson's total agreement with Hackett, and Farmington agents who sent books that other, more specialized collections refused.

In her firsthand purchasing of materials in Latin America, her work was nothing less than heroic. Many summers she went to Mexico at her own expense, ultimately visiting archives and libraries in every state. Her more extended Latin American trips were successful because of her flexible approach of "just showing up and looking, looking, and looking." They also depended on laborious familiarization and correspondence with authors and publishers who she knew preferred to do business across the counter instead of through the impersonal deal.

The trips presented the challenges she loves, as on a tram ride from Quito to Guayaquil:

> As we went along, we all noticed that the driver of this machine—I guess you would call him the engineer—was rather nervous and wondering. He would stop every little while, and he and his assistant would get out and they would put an ear down to the track. We got the impression that they suspected a train was coming from one direction or the other and were concerned to know just how far off it was. From time to time we would come to a little way station—wasn't anybody there—and they would go in and apparently try to talk to somebody on down the way, and they'd always come out shaking their heads and go around and listen to the track sounds again and eventually get back and start again. But you could tell they were nervous and weren't sure whether they ought to keep going or not.[2]

The rewards were great, as when she collected ephemeral literature during elections: "At a time like this a lot of little journals start up. They are not only political organs but have other things in them, too, because this is one way people get published in those countries. I tried to collect as many of those as I possibly could, since as a rule they only last as long

as the campaign lasts." Usually she wrapped the materials herself, and if paper was unavailable, she sewed them in cloth. She was responsible for them to the last, at night writing them up on lists, by day mailing them: "And I carried many and many a package to the Ecuadorian post office."

Life in the Collection was infused with Dr. Benson's animating passion and became a ballet of leg and arm movements, of picking up, carrying, releasing, and bending over materials. For us graduate students it was a circular experience to go from her classes to the Collection and back, our universe momentarily secured by her no-nonsense demeanor tempered by her generosity and compassion. For me, Dr. Benson represents a unity principle in the fragmentary and opportunistic postmodern world. That is why for thirty-one years I have enjoyed the random meeting with her in the stacks, when for a minute or two we lock into an exchange over a publication.

About a year ago, I greeted her in the circulation area, and she asked me to accompany her to look for some uncataloged documents. We went into a back room, where two staff members joined us. After our search, she spoke about the Collection and Latin American Studies at UT, her voice conveying action, irony, color, and identification with the subject. We talked about Lota M. Spell's study of the origins of high culture in Mexico, and I mentioned how useful Octavio Paz had found Dorothy Schons's article on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Sometimes overlooked in the meaning of Latin American studies is that not only is knowledge of the internal civilization important but also consciousness of the area's place in the Western Hemisphere. Dr. Benson's life and work are central to the history of the idea of Latin America in the United States and the balancing of both cultures as a New World process. Thus, the BLAC is a key institution in inter-American history, and by extension has global significance, like the libraries at Alexandria and Córdoba had at one time. As Columbus and Vespucci carried European knowledge and dream into the possibility of America, so Dr. Benson opened access to its half-millennial ethos, teaching us through self-direction to see beyond the orthodox.

[1] Biographical data are taken from Charles R. Berry, "Interview with Nettie Lee Benson," 1981 and Lyle C. Brown, "Oral Memoir of Nettie Lee Benson," 1972, tapes and typescripts, BLAC. See also Nettie Lee Benson, "Latin American Collection," *Discovery*, 7:3 (1983), 54–61. In my direct quotes I made minor changes for editorial reasons, while preserving her voice.

[2] This and the following two direct quotes are from Nettie Lee Benson, "Buying Trip to Latin America 1961," an oral memoir in typescript, n.d., BLAC.

(*Henry Schmidt is professor of history at Texas A&M University.*)

Reflections on Nettie Lee Benson
Librarian, Scholar, Colleague

by Lewis Hanke
(*retired from the History Department at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst*)

The recent announcement that this is Nettie Lee Benson's last year of teaching has come as a shock. Although everyone knows that even she is not immortal, still she has been for so many years an indispensable part of the academic landscape in Austin that the idea of her retirement is hard to accept.

My recollections of Nettie Lee are largely based on my experiences with her over a quarter of a century ago (1951–1961). Rarely does one find a scholar such as Nettie Lee who has made a significant mark both as professor *and* librarian. The only other one I know is George Hammond in Berkeley at the University of California.

It must be emphasized, too, that Nettie Lee has never been a parochial Texan. Today when the Latin American activities and accomplishments of the university are so many and so varied, it is difficult to believe that in the early years of this century a history department chairman named George P. Garrison prevented any courses being offered on Mexico. He was a powerful figure in those days, and when a young instructor named Herbert Bolton proposed to offer a course on Mexican history, Garrison is reputed to have proclaimed that so long as he was chairman such a course would never be given. So Bolton moved to Stanford and thence to Berkeley, where he soon attracted a thousand students to his undergraduate course, and directed so many doctoral dissertations that two *festschrifts* were eventually produced in his honor.

Long before my time in Austin fresh winds were blowing, and Prof. Charles W. Hackett had established an Institute of Latin American Studies in Garrison Hall. I still remember the peculiar pleasure it gave me to go daily to Garrison Hall. Already the Latin American Collection had become an outstanding institution with international connections. Nettie Lee and I had many bibliographical and historical discussions in that handsome room, then located in the Main Building with Texas cattle brands represented on its colorful ceiling.

Today the Collection has enormously increased in size and diversity, though I confess to a touch of nostalgia for its first home. What remains uniquely significant is the quiet devotion that Nettie Lee brought to the growth and expansion of its services. How she managed to achieve this while publishing those scholarly monographs and articles expected of professors remains a mystery. Her abiding influence will be felt, I am convinced, by the undergraduate and graduate students who are privileged to use the Nettie Lee Benson

Collection. Perhaps above all she will be remembered as one of the outstanding leaders who helped the University of Texas avoid the parochial view of Latin American culture and history that George Garrison held early in this century.

The scope of the university's concern with Latin America has been greatly enlarged during the last quarter century, as volume 23 of the *ILAS Newsletter* makes clear. Texas faculty are engaged in projects from the Río Grande to Tierra del Fuego in the natural sciences alone. My mind boggles at the imposing record of the many academic departments now conducting significant research with the cooperation of specialists in Latin America and elsewhere. Moreover, the University of Texas Press has published for some years the *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, one of the oldest and most distinguished annotated bibliographies in the world. Volume 50 will appear next year, as usual edited with the cooperation of the Library of Congress and many scholars, and ranging in subject matter from anthropology to philosophy.

The Nettie Lee Benson Collection has served as a kind of linchpin for all these developments, and surely will continue to do so for as long as the University of Texas endures.

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by Josefina Z. Vazquez
(professor of history at El Colegio de México)

I met Nettie Lee Benson in 1963. At that time, for the members of El Colegio de México, she and the Latin American Collection were already a legend extolled by Daniel Cosío Villegas. In the long drive between México and Cambridge, Massachusetts, Austin became a pleasant and convenient stop. Austin was a small town without parking problems; it had fewer students and not as many buildings. The city exuded typical traces of the southwest.

The Collection was still in the tower, and Dr. Benson, always occupied among the stacks of catalogs, papers, and new arrivals, and surrounded by students, did not neglect helping visitors who approached her to inquire about the subjects that interested them. The impression I had upon meeting her that morning one hot summer added a special dimension to my relationship with the University of Texas, which I have come to consider my home in the United States. From the first moment, I identified with her unique, direct, efficient, and casual manner. Her generosity allowed us to observe her incredible knowledge of the Hispanic world and in particular the Mexican world. As with everyone, what impressed me the most was her handling of sources, not only of the Collection, but also of the Mexican archives.

Fortunately, I returned to the university to spend many summers in the Collection, and for several semesters taught as a visiting professor. Given that my interest coincided with Dr. Benson's and I came from El Colegio de México, where she was the object of great respect, I had the privilege of going beyond an informal scholarly relationship to being her friend. Sometimes I attended her seminar, and it was evident why she was successful as a professor and thesis director. Her Latin Americanist vocation, deeply and profoundly rooted in her soul, pervaded her students. Her keen desire to understand and revise past and nationally biased interpretations could not have captivated the students more. I have never known another teacher like her, so devoted to her students, always prepared to ransack the Collection for materials for their research. Her profound knowledge of the Collection has saved students many wasted hours.

Nettie Lee has been even more generous with ideas she has accumulated as a result of rummaging for years through libraries, inspecting manuscripts, or conversing with researchers coming from the four corners of the earth to the Collection. Instead of converting them into her own books and articles, she has shared them with students who have developed them into often brilliant doctoral theses.

Besides her relentless travels throughout Spanish America tracking down rare publications or governmental documents so difficult to obtain to build the Collection, the Mexican historiographer is indebted to her for other reasons. Her dissertation, *La diputación provincial y el federalismo mexicano*, published by El Colegio de Mexico in 1952 [and reprinted by the Chamber of Deputies of the Mexican Congress in 1980] initiated a process of reinterpretation of the independence and the nation's first years, and became a sort of bible for the constitutionalists. The weight of its provocation has transcended the period in every direction. Her articles have corrected fundamental mistakes, such as considering Father Mier a centralist or confusing the Plan of Veracruz with that of Casamata. Her recent essay, "Texas as Viewed from México, 1820–1834," reveals ways to reconsider colonialization.

Like those of a true mentor, the majority of her ideas will remain in the dissertations that she has directed—her great capacity to give has made a bountiful contribution to the array. One of her first seminars inspired the classic book *México and the Spanish Cortes, 1810–1822, Eight Essays*

Photo: Larry Murphy
Spanish Prince Felipe (center) visits Benson Collection with Nettie Lee Benson (left) and Laura Gutiérrez-Witt (right).

(University of Texas Press, 1966), and other seminars have produced numerous master and doctoral theses that have left a profound impression on the Mexican historiographer in reinterpretating the first years of México's independence. Books such as those of Jaime Rodríguez, Charles Macune, Richard Lindley, Linda Arnold, Paul Vanderwood, Romeo Flores, Miguel Soto, and many others attest to it. One would only have to review the books of many other scholars that, enriched with her suggestions and comments, made us reconsider our conclusions.

For the Mexicans, she has been many things: an inexhaustible source of ideas and information, a guide to the marvelous Collection, a gentle ambassador and Texas hostess, and, above all, an inspiration to confront the passionate challenge that the history of nineteenth-century México represents.

by Laura Gutiérrez-Witt
(director of the Benson Latin American Collection)

Nettie Lee Benson is recognized as an outstanding scholar, teacher, and historian. In fact, her record of scholarship and her greatness as a teacher are surpassed by few others. But it should also be recognized that her library career has been every bit as intensive and distinguished as her academic career. Indeed, the two careers have seemed inseparable, indivisible.

Her library accomplishments are too numerous to list briefly, but it is generally well known that Nettie Lee Benson was the driving force for over thirty years behind the library that now bears her name. Through her efforts an already outstanding library collection of Mexican and other Latin American materials numbering approximately 67,000 volumes in 1954 became by 1975 a truly distinguished and astonishingly comprehensive research library of 305,503 volumes, a library that encompassed materials from every geographic region and about every area of intellectual endeavor in Latin America.

In her library career as in her academic life, Dr. Benson never kept her library knowledge and expertise to herself. She was one of the first to see the need for individual librarians to share their experiences in their task of acquiring Latin American books, and thereby learn from one another. Hence in 1956 she was one of the founding members of SALALM, the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, an organization now in its thirty-third year.

Dr. Benson was also a pioneer in establishing formal Latin American library studies. In 1964 she developed, with Robert R. Douglass, dean of the UT Graduate School of Library Science, a graduate degree plan for students planning to work as Latin American library specialists in U.S. libraries. That year she began teaching the courses in the library school dealing with Latin American books and the Latin American book market.

In the early 1960s, Dr. Benson traveled through South America searching for Latin American scholarly books as an agent for a cooperative project called LACAP, the Latin American Cooperative Acquisitions Program. Dr. Benson was one of the first librarians to perceive the need for shared responsibilities regarding Latin American acquisitions among libraries, and she was instrumental in the formation of LACAP. From 1960 until its demise in 1972, the LACAP program was highly successful in improving the distribution of Latin American books in the United States. In fact, LACAP was the means whereby many U.S. libraries began in the 1960s to expand their Latin American holdings; these libraries were able to purchase the LACAP books distributed through a major U.S. publisher, the Stechert-Hafner Book Company. It is therefore not farfetched to say that Nettie Lee Benson was the driving force behind the development of many Latin American collections in academic libraries in the United States, not only at the University of Texas at Austin.

During her early years at the Latin American Collection, minuscule budgets motivated Dr. Benson to develop a yet-to-be equaled exchange network with educational institutions, governmental agencies, and learned societies in South America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. These exchange agreements parlayed scholarly materials for Texas that were unavailable in the commercial book market. At the same time, U.S. books were obtained by these partners to fulfill scholarly needs in their particular libraries. The techniques and methodology for establishing and maintaining exchange programs that Dr. Benson developed are still used by many libraries collecting Latin American publications.

Over the years Dr. Benson put a lot of herself into the library, and continues to do so. In 1975 after her retirement as library director, Dr. Benson created the Nettie Lee Benson Fund for acquisitions of Latin American materials through an initial personal gift of $10,000. From 1976 to 1988, she gave additional annual gifts to bring her contributions to this endowment to $101,000. Other gifts and reinvestment have raised the total to $107,000. Earnings from this fund have been used to acquire various types of research materials, such as the collection of 275 microfilm reels of U.S. Department of State Records on Mexico for 1930–1944, the manuscript of the nineteenth-century novel by Ignacio Altamirano, *El Zarco*, part of the Julio Cortázar manuscript collection, and the four-volume manuscript draft of the "Memorias" of José Vasconcelos. A drive to raise the level of this endowment is currently under way.

Nettie Lee Benson's active library career covered the years 1942 to 1975, and in those thirty-three years her achievements were truly remarkable. They are even more remarkable considering that she also

The Venezuelan Amazon

The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection sponsored an exhibit of color photographs by **Gibbs Milliken** (Art) entitled "The Venezuelan Amazon" in October. The photographs were taken during Professor Milliken's mapping and data-gathering expeditions in the Venezuelan Amazon, where he visited several tribes of living Indians to record aspects of their vanishing lifestyles and to document recently discovered cave sites containing extensive pictographic art. Photographs were of the Piaroa Tribe and the Cave of the Dead.

distinguished herself as a historian and teacher. It is not an uncommon occurrence for local and visiting scholars often to find titles that have seemed almost unfindable in the Benson Collection. And, like a prayer of thanksgiving, heartfelt appreciation is expressed to whoever is around for Nettie Lee Benson, the librarian, and her breadth of vision in building such an incomparable resource.

by Angela Thompson
(teaches in the History Department at East Carolina University)

Nettie Lee Benson's graduate course in Mexican history was one I wanted to take in 1976 so I telephoned to ask permission—and my acquaintance with her began. However, the course was more than full so she refused admission. I realized then that her popularity as a teacher matched her reputation as historian. I persevered and took almost every history course she offered in the following four years, and was impressed by her sincere concern and enthusiasm for her profession. During that time, I learned the reasons for Dr. Benson's popularity and fine reputation as a teacher and mentor.

Her various contributions as historian are well known. First, she has generously given her time and energy to develop and improve library and research facilities in the United States for the study of Latin America—efforts that are clearly evident in the collection that now bears her name at the University of Texas. Second, her respect for the interests and opinions of historians and archivists in Mexico and the rest of Latin America, as well as her insistence that sources go where they will be best utilized, are admirable. Third, her own research about the political formation of the independent Mexican republic has forced us to more carefully analyze the political experiences of Mexico's first years as a nation. Furthermore, her sensitivity to the Mexican point of view is as evident in her research as it is in her role as archivist and librarian, and she encourages her students to develop a similar sensitivity.

Her enthusiasm for students' interests and her willingness to give her time and to share her experience were of immense value to my graduate studies. She led me to numerous informative sources on education and cities in Mexico and Latin America during my first course with her on early nineteenth-century Mexico, which fostered an interest in Mexican urban and social history. Letters she wrote to archives in Mexico allowed me quick access to pertinent research materials. One archivist who directed one of the fine collections in Mexico City exclaimed, upon reading an introduction from her, "Ah, Professor Benson," and immediately—and eagerly—showed me the needed materials.

We owe profound gratitude to this devoted historian and teacher who has pursued her profession with honesty.

by Charles R. Berry
(professor of history at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio)

Her most memorable characteristics as a historian, librarian, and teacher, as I recall most clearly, are perseverance, tenacity, and thoroughness. Nettie Lee Benson dug into obscure, difficult-to-use, even more difficult-to-locate primary sources, but evoked patience and restraint upon a desire to jump to conclusions until all the evidence was in and examined in context with other documents, events, and personalities involved in the question at hand.

In January 1971, when I was interviewed for my present position at Wright State University, the Latin Americanist holding the position at that time met me at the airport. On the drive to the motel, the talk rather quickly turned to Nettie Lee Benson, whom he had never met but whom he had long admired. He considered Dr. Benson to be one of the two "hard scholars" in the Mexican history field—the other, Dr. France Scholes. He went on to explain: Benson and Scholes did "hard" research as opposed to "soft" research. That is, they worked in hard-to-use sources with painstaking tenacity, avoided the easy fix, labored over the minutiae of Mexican history that others shied away from to produce history of real veracity, history that could be relied on to be thorough, correct, and important.

I knew that firsthand. I was privileged to be in the first Mexican history research seminar that she taught at UT in 1962, which dealt with Mexico's role in the Spanish Cortes during the wars for independence. The seminar produced a volume of student essays, *Mexico and the Spanish Cortes, 1810–1822: Eight Essays*, edited by Dr. Benson (University of Texas Press, 1966; reprinted in Spanish by the Chamber of Deputies of the Mexican Congress in 1985). The high standards she set for the research projects were unforgettable as was the concentration the students gave their papers as they became immersed in the sources. The class theme became "You better look again at that source." So involved were the students that it came as a great shock to some one evening in October after a grueling seminar session to learn from the television news that the United States had been on the verge of war with the Soviet Union over missiles in Cuba. Many other Latin Americanist professors holding seminars and classes that day across the United States may have devoted their class to a discussion of the crisis, but not Dr. Benson. We were so caught up in the Cortes and Mexico topic that some did not realize the current situation had reached crisis proportions.

When the decision was made to publish our seminar papers, Dr. Benson let it be known that all those selected had to be rewritten. For another year or two, we produced revised drafts, revisions of revisions, and then yet another revision. We all breathed a sigh of relief when finally she accepted the third revision. That was one example of the high standards she set and the thoroughness with which she taught us to approach the task of writing history.

Under Dr. Benson's tutelage I learned much, as well, about historical methodology, hunches, and intuition. A few years later, as my doctoral work was winding down and I needed a small campus job to provide some extra money, Nettie Lee hired me as her research assistant to pursue additional work on Mexican legislators during the imperial period. My task was to identify the legislators and obtain as much biographical information as possible. At many points, I was ready to give up when

I had searched and searched and found nothing—or too little. At those points, Nettie Lee would intervene, and always found what I could not. She seemed to have some sixth sense about sources, some hunch as to where to look.

For the past ten years I have taught required graduate and undergraduate courses in historical methodology. My reputation among the students, I understand, is that I require an inordinate amount of work that should be stretched into two academic quarters instead of squeezed into one, expect work to be done to extremely high standards, am unwilling to accept quick and easy solutions, insist on absolutely correct writing, maintain a tough requirement of reliance on primary sources, and so on. Apparently Nettie Lee Benson placed her stamp on me during our close association in 1962-1967 that, like a ripple effect, is spreading. I wear that stamp proudly.

by Iyo Kunimoto
(full professor in the Faculty of Commerce of Chuo University in Tokyo, as well as one of the charter executive board members of the Japanese Latin American Studies Association, established in 1980; she is presently on the executive council of Japanese LASA)

My career in Japan as a Latin American historian began in Texas with Dr. Nettie Lee Benson. It is no exaggeration to say that the academic training I received in Dr. Benson's seminars, and her indomitably scholarly spirit, her rapacious librarianship, and her total dedication to her profession influenced my academicism as well as my career as a Latin American historian.

When I arrived at UT with a Fulbright fellowship to train as a Latin American studies specialist in 1969, my background was very weak. In fact, Latin American studies had not been established in Japan in those days. No Japanese university had the integrated Latin American studies programs, and there were no specialized library facilities in the field. The Fulbright fellowship was thus the only means for future Japanese Latin Americanists to study for a degree in this field. I chose UT over several universities in the United States simply because it looked very impressive—it offered more than one hundred courses on Latin America and had huge library resources—and appeared to be one of the major Latin American studies centers in the United States. I never thought of specializing in Mexican history, and of course, did not know Dr. Benson's name at that time.

But Dr. Benson's seminars decided my future course and made me what I am now. My first encounter with Dr. Benson was in the Latin American Collection, which was still located in the Main Building, where I only glanced at her as she worked. A year later I took her seminar "Mexican History of 1810–1910" and became more interested in Mexican history. I attended other seminars with her, studied very hard, and wrote my dissertation under her supervision. Dr. Benson was a strict, unconciliatory, demanding professor in the seminars. She was especially demanding to her students in the use of documents and source materials.

In the course of studying almost constantly with Dr. Benson for four years, I never exchanged conversations with her on private matters. When we met in the seminar rooms or in the library, we usually only exchanged greetings. She seemed to me an austere professor, and it seemed improper to speak to her informally. She was, indeed, a "real" professor to me in the Japanese sense of the word. Maybe I should explain that. In Japan the distance between professors and students is much greater than in the American universities. Respect and adoration always reserve a distance. The Japanese do not show such frankness as American students do to the professors even though they feel like becoming more friendly. Thus, merely glancing at her in the library was enough to encourage me.

It was in the course of completing my dissertation that I discovered her true warm personality. She was eager to see me complete my degree and return to Japan. She assisted me by introducing me to Mexican historians as well as research centers in Mexico. At the very last stage of completing my dissertation, she even invited me to her house to work together on correcting my English. I vividly remember that while we worked at the large table in her kitchen she murmured and sometimes shouted at me, asking why couldn't I understand the use of the article "the." I have forgotten what part of my research she liked most, but it still makes me very happy to remember the scene in her kitchen where the last touch was put on my dissertation.

by Richard Graham
(professor of history at UT-Austin)

When I arrived in Austin to begin my graduate work at the University of Texas in the mid-1950s, the Latin American Collection (as it was then called) was located in the Main Building. I had not been using the library for more than a week when, while sitting in the reading room, I overheard Dr. Nettie Lee Benson explaining the provenance of rare books to some visitor from Latin America. Her voice was strong, as it still is, her accent in Spanish unmistakably Anglo and south-Texan, and it was impossible to continue my reading; but I was richly rewarded for the interruption. She proceeded around the room pridefully pulling from glass-fronted cabinets the parchment-bound volumes that had once belonged to the sixteenth-century Bishop Zumárraga, or pointing to the massive exposed beams along the ceiling on which were inscribed the brands with which sixteenth-century men had marked their books with fiery *ex libris*. In those few moments I learned not only about the first library in the Americas but about the dedication and excitement of a librarian.

When I settled on a topic for my master's thesis, Lewis Hanke, my mentor, summoned me for a meeting with Dr. Benson. I would require collections of the sermons of António Vieira, the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary to Brazil. Could she acquire them for me? "I'll sure try," she replied. And within six weeks the first shipment had arrived. Little did I know what effort that must have cost her: I later learned that during those years the regular acquisitions budget was pitiful, so for each purchase of any size she would have to forcefully badger the president of the university himself. It is said he groaned when he learned she was coming, but that he

almost always gave in.

My relationship with Dr. Benson was not always cordial. She was famous for her public tirades about the careless use of books, the failures to observe the rules on checking them out to carrels, the sloppiness of referencing. One time I approached her about a book I could not find. It was not on the shelf and it had not been checked out. She strode to the stacks and my heart sank; what if it was there after all? I could already imagine the scorn with which she would hand it to me. But she could not find it there, and I sighed with relief. Then to the catalog: had I got the right call number? Again, my information was correct. Next she read the title. She knew everyone's research topic, and I was the only one whom this book would interest. She looked at me sternly. Was I sure I did not have it myself? I denied it with confidence. Finally she strode to my carrel, inspected the books on its shelf, then reached for a book lying face down over the shelf. There it was! How I wished the floor would open up and swallow me. But for once Dr. Benson was satisfied I had learned my lesson and did not make a public spectacle in berating me. From then on I approached her only after double- and triple-checking my information.

A few years later, now working on my dissertation, I saw a very different side of Dr. Benson. While at my carrel, I heard her footsteps approaching. She carried a Mexican journal in her hand, and she bent over to show me a recent review of her book. The reviewer had highly praised it, and she beamed with pride. Pride of scholarship. She was not just a librarian worried about the accuracy of call numbers, but a historian in her own right. And in sharing that moment she had conveyed a regard that pleased and honored me. Stern and demanding, but also encouraging, she thus accepted me into the fellowship of scholars.

In the 1960s, when I was teaching at Cornell University, Benson undertook several trips to Latin America. In each city she visited—and she did not limit herself to the capitals—she ferreted out government agencies, printers of telephone catalogs, sources of ephemeral pamphlets, any source of published material, and secured from them donations or low-cost exemplars. No one offered to mail these materials for her. So, despite 8,000-foot elevations or tropical humid climates, she lugged these publications to her hotel room, to which she also brought rolls of wrapping paper and string. There she spent her evenings carefully preparing the materials she had collected for postal shipping and the next morning invariably turned up at the post office, burdened with packages for dispatch to Austin. By dint of such manual labor, we have today the Benson Latin American Collection.

By the time I returned to the University of Texas, Benson was a highly respected member of the history department. Her sage advice on graduate admissions, on recruiting efforts, and on curriculum innovations guided us as the department grew and changed. And by then her graduate seminars—which had not been offered when I was a student—had become famous, virtually an unwritten requirement for anyone specializing in Latin American history. Once again, I could be proud, proud to be a member of the same department as she.

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by Sonia Merubia
(librarian in the Benson Latin American Collection)

I first learned about Nettie Lee Benson through my mother, who, in the mid-1960s, participated in Book Friends, a women's book review club in Austin. I recall that Miss Benson, as a guest speaker, had created quite an impression with a talk about an arduous book-buying trip to South America. My mother recounted Miss Benson's adventures seeking wrapping paper and string in Lima in order to mail some books she had acquired. Later on, as an undergraduate at the university who frequented the old Latin American Collection, I eventually had the courage to introduce myself to her. When I became a senior, Miss Benson asked me what my future plans were, and when I confessed that I had none, she told me to come back after I had my degree. I did and I joined the staff of the Latin American Collection in July 1969.

By this time Miss Benson had created a world-class library devoted to the study of Latin America. Her acquisition methods went beyond purchasing materials to include aggressive solicitation of gifts and a wide-ranging exchange program. The library's definition of what had research value was somewhat unorthodox. In fact, for purposes of processing, we paid very little attention to the format of a publication. Very often important materials had poor quality binding or were in pamphlet form. Because Miss Benson insisted that even these publications be given full cataloging, the catalogers jokingly called our Latin American materials "Benson slivers."

Visiting professors were encouraged to assist in acquiring titles that were difficult to obtain. I remember working for at least a year and a half with a Chilean ex-presidential candidate in order to acquire a set of Chilean congressional bulletins. By contacting his former colleagues, who, due to the overthrow of Allende, were no longer serving in the congress, he was able to obtain almost a complete run of this valuable research tool for the library. Miss Benson also encouraged Latin American students to try their hand at exporting their country's books when they returned to their homelands. In this way she provided for the library's future needs. José Noé Herrera, a student who began selling his personal library of Colombian books before he returned home, now is the head of a major book exporting business.

Since Miss Benson not only headed the library but was also a professor of history and library science, her library staff had opportunities to interact with her students. A dinner held in Miss Benson's backyard for the outstanding Mexican historian Daniel Cosío Villegas and her students particularly comes to mind. The collection librarians prepared and served the dinner and enjoyed the conversation that followed.

Miss Benson is often described as a person with a strong personality, but I think the word that best defines her character is tenacity. She was always willing to fight for her vision of what the collection should and could be. Her toughness, though, was tempered by an innate kindness that emerges once she is convinced of

an individual's willingness to do his/her best. I greatly appreciate the opportunity that I had to work under her. Although I was the youngest and the least experienced of her librarians, she always made me feel that my efforts were worthwhile.

by Patrick Carroll
(professor of history and director of the Social Science Research Center at Corpus Christi State University)

Most people see Nettie Lee Benson as a dedicated no-nonsense archivist. She has devoted the better part of her professional life to traveling throughout Latin America looking for materials and establishing acquisition ties for the Latin American Collection that now bears her name. As a result, this library attracts researchers from around the world.

Many see Ms. Benson as one of the foremost authorities on the Mexican early national period. She looks at Mexico from a Mexican rather than a U.S. frame of reference. Her writings reveal no condescension. Instead, they convey her deep respect and understanding of Mexico's historical richness, feelings arising from years as a resident in the country and an intimate knowledge of its people and their heritage. She produces sound scholarly works, letting the documentation write the history. Historical models do not interest Professor Benson much. Her publications present a wealth of information woven around cautious interpretation. She avoids speculation. Again, as a result, her essays have weathered the test of time.

Mexican students come to Texas to study with Dr. Benson. Conversely, she sends her students to study in Mexico. Those of us who have gone have found little difficulty in gaining access to archives or cooperation from senior Mexican scholars. On the strength of a Benson letter of introduction, the late Rubio Mane, former director of the Archivo General de la Nación, not only provided me, a graduate student, with excellent service during normal working hours, he also invited me to join him for research on Sunday afternoons when the archive was closed. A cryptic note from Dr. Benson usually proved enough to open almost any door.

No one knows and uses the Nettie Lee Benson Collection at UT for teaching purposes better than Dr. Benson herself. In the spring of 1969 I was a first-year graduate student at UT enrolled in one of Dr. Benson's readings seminars. We focused on state development during the first federal period (1824–1836). I had drawn Tamaulipas, and was having trouble getting a "feel" for the topic. Accordingly, I sought Dr. Benson's advice. An hour later she dropped four bound manuscript volumes on my carrel desk—the Ciudad Victoria town council minutes, 1824–1828. She said two words, "Read these!" and walked away.

I had never thought to start with primary source materials. As I pored over the documents, a feeling of real adventure aroused this MA graduate from a state teacher's college in western New York. I had never actually held manuscript works in Spanish before, let alone read them. I formed impressions of the time and place from the actors' own accounts. Time fled. I do remember Dr. Benson passing me on the way out of the library. Later, when she returned I realized just how engrossed I had been—she was returning from our class! I followed her to her office apologizing for my truancy all the way. She sat down at her desk and started reading a book. Without even looking up she said, "Don't worry about it. You were doing just what you were supposed to be doing."

Dr. Benson does not impose ideas on students; she introduces them to the information and lets them formulate their own opinions. When we showed initiative, she collaborated with us. Moreover, she does not discourage approaches to history different from her own. She demands only that we support our conclusions through primary research. She is the consummate teacher because she does not force learning; she facilitates it. In fact, I learned as much from her about myself as I did about Mexico.

One has the distinct feeling that Dr. Benson has a better appreciation of others' worth than of her own. If you ask her to describe her greatest achievement, she invariably credits the accomplishments of her students. She pushes us for our own sake. She wants all of us to realize our own goals and potentials. We accept her prodding because we understand her motives, and because we all know that she works harder and longer than any of us.

I too see Nettie Lee Benson as an archivist and a scholar. But I am also one of the fortunate few who knows her as a teacher, a mentor, and a friend.

by Frank de la Teja
(archivist at the Texas General Land Office)

From my arrival at UT-Austin in August 1981 to the graduation ceremony in May 1988, the one constant in my academic life was Dr. Nettie Lee Benson. In the course of those seven years, I not only learned an enormous amount about Mexican history from Dr. Benson, I also learned much about being receptive to new ideas and sharing knowledge with others.

Dr. Benson's seminars were sharing experiences. Everyone was expected to make a contribution. There was, however, complete independence as to what that contribution would be. The only thing she required was command of the sources and well-thought-out arguments. Discussion, give and take, and respect for dissent were expected from all members of the seminar.

These same qualities carried over into my dissertation work. The idea was mine, and I was responsible for whipping it into shape. Rather than leading, Dr. Benson followed along, helping with sources, making sure that my changes in direction made sense within the chosen subject matter. When she did not like something she let me know in her own blunt way, then suggested a possible alternative. She never forced her ideas on me, however; when Dr. Benson proposed something, she always let me know it was a suggestion, not a directive.

Originality was among Dr. Benson's foremost concerns. Having amassed tremendous historiographic knowledge, she was constantly checking to ensure that my dissertation covered new ground. I remember vividly how, after turning in my first three chapters, she asked me when I was going to say something new. I was devastated. Here I was, thinking that I was laying down a careful foundation for my

work, when, I was only being long-winded. I learned an important lesson then—the dissertation, not being a book for general consumption, did not require much setup. I reworked the material, turning three chapters into two, and distributed remaining material I thought to be important throughout the rest of the work.

Like all of us, Dr. Benson also has her pet peeves, the most constant of which were diacritics and correct bibliographic and notation forms. Dr. Benson read every footnote for content and style. I would often get back a chapter with more remarks on the notes than on the text. In drafting the dissertation, I used a word processing package that did not have diacritic capabilities, and even though I explained this to her, Dr. Benson carefully went through and placed accents and tildes where required. She was probably as annoyed with me for being lazy and not turning the chapters in with the diacritics as I was with her for spending time on them.

I cannot say that Dr. Benson always understood everything I was trying to do. She certainly had a difficult time understanding how I could be writing the dissertation from computerized notes and not from an endless stream of note cards. To her credit, however, she was willing to forego full understanding and judge only the results. In the end, she went from asking when I was going to say something new, to assuring me that more than one university press would be interested in my work and that I should publish it as soon as possible.

I defended by dissertation, "Land and Society in 18th Century San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier," in the spring of 1988. The committee was kind and supportive, none more so than Dr. Benson, who at various times during my defense forcefully interjected herself on my behalf. I can only end by saying that I am honored that her name is at the top of my dissertation's signature page, and am proud to have been one of her students.

by Joe B. Frantz

(Joe B. Frantz is professor in the History Department at Corpus Christi State University)

Away back in the middle 1960s I served a stint as chairman of the history department at the University of Texas, an administration more notable for my absence than my impact and presence. I proceeded on the thesis that my colleagues were either burgeoning or present experts in their particular disciplines and the less interference they had from me the better.

But one day when I was *in* my office, Nettie Lee Benson—a long-time favorite from the days when I researched in the Texas Collection, then combined physically with the Latin American Collection—came to me with a bemused look on her face. A foundation had offered her a position at more than twice her salary as director of the Latin American Collection, with several perquisites, one of which would be an annual trip throughout Latin America all the way to Argentina and Chile. One year she would traverse the west coast; the next year, the east.

As any Latin American bibliophile knows, editions from south of the border frequently appear in distressingly small print runs, don't get advertised, and disappear from the market before the library or collector even hears of their publication. This offer would enable Benson to stay on top of the Latin American book market better than any other person in the world. She had taken her offer to the UT librarian, a capable but timid soul, especially where monetary demands on the administration were concerned. He had apologized and then offered her a $200-a-year raise.

Benson, whose heart belongs to Texas, along with Latin America, scholars-in-need, and books, was correctly outraged. Here she had an outside offer for more than twice her UT salary plus perquisites, and her immediate superior had offered her a mere $200. I didn't need much persuasion. But I didn't have any loose money either. Then an idea, an oddity for me, seeped in. She was making slightly more than half what she would have received as a full professor—why not make her a part-time professor at the higher stipend?

I called the department budget council into session, and we agreed to offer her a one-sixth appointment as a professor—one seminar every other semester. Financially it would not raise her pay particularly, but it would show that her colleagues in the history world treasured her. She accepted, and Benson was saved primarily for the Latin American Collection.

The next year was riotous. Most of the Latin American graduate students, already familiar with her work in the Collection, wanted to take her seminar. She outlined for them a regimen of work that only she could have succeeded in completing. Nearly everyone took an incomplete. After one semester they knew that they had done more work, had been driven to do more work, than normally they would turn out in three regular seminars.

With her usual lugubrious manner, she

Embrittled BLAC Materials Preserved on Microfilm

Several thousand valuable books and pamphlets on Mexican history whose pages have become embrittled are being microfilmed to preserve the intellectual content while "those books themselves die a natural death," said Harold Billings, director of the General Libraries.

A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities of $142,947 together with a UT General Libraries $67,798 cost-sharing contribution have funded the project that is expected to continue for a year. The Mexican history materials at risk of disintegrating due to the acid content of the paper used from the mid-1880s until the early 1970s, a period when acid was used extensively in papermaking, were published all over the world. Books chosen for microfilming were those that failed an "embrittlement test" whereby a page in a book was purposely dog-eared twice and if the bent "ear" broke became a microfilm candidate, Billings said.

Four thousand other Mexican history pamphlets and small monographs will be encased in new chemically neutral binders that are much safer than older chip board binders that are highly acidic and lignin-ridden.

said to me with unfeigned astonishment: "They don't seem to be able to complete the work in one semester! I didn't think it was that much."

Meanwhile the graduate students had infiltrated my office with comments such as, "She's great, but she doesn't realize we're human!"

Back to the budget council.

Result: we sided with the students to an extent, and stretched her seminar into two semesters. Hers may have been the toughest course in the department, even strung out over nine months.

When later the rules of age caught up with her and she had to relinquish her directorial duties at the Collection, the history department made her a full-time professor until the next regulation caught up with her. When she retired, she received a retirement party at which, after encomia that seemed endless but deeply sincere, she rose to speak. Her talk, Bensonesque in its bluntness, said in effect: "Don't think you have seen the last of me." She told how one forebear had lived an active life until ninety-eight, and another had repeated the process for one hundred and two years, and warned that she planned to duplicate their feats. We believed her. She hasn't made one hundred yet, but don't count her out. She remains the sharpest scholarly mind I have run into.

Frequently I have taken visiting scholars, especially those with some concern about Latin American topics, to see her. After introductions the visitor asks her about a particular item. Singing the blues, she tells him why his request is ridiculous and turns away impatiently. I had forewarned the visitor. She will discourage you, but then she will work like a hill of ants to give you what you want, I would say. And so it happened every time. After she had discouraged the visitor, she would then say something like, "I tell you what we may have," and pull him along after her. Once seeing the visitor was properly entrapped, I would return to my office. Two hours later, three days later, a week later, he would drop by to say farewell, invariably ending with a declaration of scholarly devotion: "Most remarkable person I ever knew," would be the mildest of the assays of our treasured Benson.

In my unguided career, I have spent protracted periods in Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and Mexico, along with shorter visits to every Latin American country except the Guyanas. Almost always, when I was presented to a Latin American dignitary, scholarly or otherwise, and he learned that I was from the University of Texas, that person would ask whether I knew Dr. Benson. My affirmative answer would always act as a cachet into the person's esteem. Knowing Nettie Lee Benson beat knowing Ernest Hemingway, John F. Kennedy, or even Ronald Reagan. I often felt as if I were carrying letters of marque.

If this little tribute sounds as if I am in love with Nettie Lee Benson, that's the way it is supposed to read. Frequently when sloppiness attracts me, I remember Nettie Lee Benson and the fact that in the forty years I have known her I never heard her utter a careless word in a scholarly discussion. I pull my harangue up short, and usually just shut up till I'm sure what I'm talking about. The world should enshrine her for that contribution alone.

Maybe Shakespeare knew her when he wrote in *Henry VIII* that

> [S]he was a scholar, and a ripe and good one,
> Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading;
> Lofty and sour to them that lov'd [her] not;
> But to those . . . that sought [her] sweet as summer.

Lord, what a privilege to have lived in the same environment with her!

by John P. Harrison
(former director of ILAS, retired professor of history)

It was only a short while after my arrival at UT in 1962 that it became apparent to me that Dr. Benson's long experience with a broad spectrum of university professors left her with the conviction that the vast majority of them had, at best, a shallow understanding of libraries and how to use them effectively. Her encyclopedic knowledge of the substantive content of the Collection—not an attribute of her colleagues among professional librarians—made Dr. Benson critical of the scholarship of many well known historians, especially those writing about Mexico. Evidence for this is easily available in both her introduction and conclusion to *Mexico and the Spanish Cortes, 1810–1822*.

Neither did she have much confidence in faculty ability to evaluate any body of printed material that they thought should be purchased for the Latin American Collection. This was in part due to her conviction, based on experience, that they did not know what was already there. It is possible, however, that a privately put together collection could be so evidently unique in content that a faculty member knowledgeable about the subject matter did not need to have an intimate familiarity with the existing holdings of a library to recommend its purchase. This unusual situation existed with the uncataloged, disparately arranged Taracena collection in Guatemala, first brought to Dr. Benson's attention, I believe, by Professor Richard Adams. After considerable thought she took the time from her always overloaded schedule to go to Guatemala where she extended her planned stay to permit the making of a sufficiently detailed description to justify approval of its purchase by the university.

While Dr. Bensons' evaluation of scholarly competence could be severe, those who passed muster on the basis of publications and observed research habits found a creatively helpful colleague and often a long-term friend. Her knowledge of the literature supplemented their own and in addition she was aware of what was not in the Latin American Collection and where it could be found. Perhaps those most deeply appreciative of her assistance tended to be the Latin Americans, possibly because their cultural background put a greater emphasis on the significance of the individual, but also there were no comparable research collections in their own country. For reasons of proximity and the nature of the Collection, this was particularly true of Mexicans.

Of the many Latin American scholars who worked in the Collection perhaps the most eminent and certainly the most frequent visitor was Daniel Cosío Villegas. The close and beneficial association of

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My Life
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hensive coverage of Latin American printed works in the United States was to arrange with some efficient book dealer in foreign imprints in the United States to acquire copies of such books through a cooperative effort of the said book dealer and participating university libraries. Dominick Coppola and Mr. Hafner of Steckert-Hafner, Inc., working with Robert E. Kingery of the New York Public Library, and Marietta Daniels Shepherd drew up a project where the New York Public Library would finance the salary of a representative to spend six months annually in Latin American countries purchasing books printed within the previous five years and have them shipped to Stechert-Hafner for distribution to the participating libraries, at the expense of each library. This project became the Latin American Cooperative Acquisition Project, LACAP. The New York Public Library, besides hiring and paying for the salary of the agent, guaranteed to purchase annually $20,000 of such books.

Although I had participated in all of the sessions of SALALM, I was greatly surprised in late August 1959 to receive a call from the New York Public Library to make a prepaid visit to their library, and was even more surprised to learn that I had been selected to travel for six months in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Bolivia, beginning January 1960 as the agent of LACAP. I assured them that I could not possibly accept the position, because of my position in Texas. However, when I reported the offer to Alexander Moffit, then director of libraries at UT, he said at once that he would give me a leave of absence for the six-month period, because it would be valuable to UT to make the university's Latin American Collection known in those countries. The LAC's acquisition budget at that date was approximately $6,000. I then asked if it could be raised to the New York Public's $20,000. Mr. Moffit suggested that I check with President Harry Ransom, and he agreed that the university would meet the New York Public sum.

Hence for the next two years, 1960 and 1961, I traveled through all the South American countries during the months of January through June, buying books under LACAP. LACAP proved to be indeed a valuable project for not only libraries in the United States but also libraries in Europe and Canada that joined it. Needless to say, it was especially valuable to me and to the LAC at UT because of the fact that I was able to make known everywhere the interest of Texas in Latin American imprints. The UT association with authors and book dealers established then is still in place.

I had never thought of teaching again after having received my PhD degree, especially since my time was consumed with my work at the Latin American Collection. But, after his death in early 1957, I was asked to teach Dr. Castañeda's undergraduate class in Mexican history—which I enjoyed very much—and to be a member in 1958 and 1959 of one or two supervisory PhD committees of his. I was also asked by Dr. Robert R. Douglass, dean of the Graduate School of Library Science, to serve with him on the Supervisory Library of Science Thesis Committee for the Master of Library Science written by Ario Garza Mercado, who had come to UT on a Farmer Fellowship granted to him through the Institute of Latin American Studies. His thesis was "Manual de tecnicas de investigación para estudiantes de ciencias sociales." It was soon thereafter published in Mexico in Spanish and later revised and much enlarged, and is now in its fourth edition, having sold more than 200,000 copies prior to the fourth edition. Garza Mercado, after serving a brief time as librarian of the Biblioteca Alfonso Reyes in Monterrey, Mexico, became the director of the now Daniel Cosío Villegas Biblioteca of the prestigious Colegio de Mexico in Mexico City, a position he still holds.

In the early 1960s after the resignation of Dr. Luther Hanke as director of the Institute of Latin American Studies, Dr. John "Jack" Harrison was named director of ILAS with Richard N. Adams as assistant director. They were successful in obtaining a large grant of money from the Ford Foundation to initiate, along with Dean Douglass of the School of Library Science, a two-year program in 1964–1965 to bring a group of students from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma (UNAM) in Mexico City to UT to prepare them for librarianship at UNAM. Professor Douglass at that time asked me to offer and teach a one-semester course each semester in Latin American bibliography, acquisitions, and book publishing. Those students after completing their work returned to UNAM, where some are still active. At the same time, ILAS offered five scholarships for American students to prepare themselves as librarians with a specialty in the Latin American field to serve in libraries in the United States, and those students also entered the courses I taught, along with a course on Latin American archives, taught by Prof. Gunnar Mendoza of Boliva. After his return to Bolivia as Director of the Bolivian Archives in Sucre, I also taught that course. Thus, for the following ten years, I had the pleasure of actively participating in the School of Library Science and have fond memories of that satisfying and challenging experience.

Also about this time, in 1963, Prof. Thomas F. McGann, of the Department of History, asked me if I would be interested in teaching a one-semester graduate course on the historiography of Latin America and a one-semester graduate course on nineteenth-century Mexican history annually. This was a truly pleasing and challenging suggestion. I agreed to accept that challenge and continued to teach in the history department, one-third time, from then until August 31, 1989.

Through all these wonderful and ever changing years of my life with the University of Texas, my experiences have always been shaped by the many, many friends, professors, students, library staff members, and other university associates. They made all this possible for me and I wish to thank them all for the wonderful opportunities they opened up for me.

Now with complete retirement, I hope to finish several books and articles on which I have been accumulating material to write. At the same time, I hope to continue to aid in any way possible the improvement of the Latin American Collection at the University of Texas.

PROGRAM NEWS

Abstraccion-Figuracion, Figurative-Abstract: Selections from the Permanent Collection of Latin American Art is on view at the Harry Ransom Center. More than seventy-five selections are on display, some for the first time on campus.

One of the largest and most important collections of Latin American art in the United States, the Huntington Latin American art collection contains more than 1,500 paintings, sculptures, and installation pieces by 250 artists from Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. **Dr. Mari Ramirez**, curator, grouped the works into six categories: modes of realism, abstraction, figurative-abstract modes, geometric and constructivist trends, neo-expressionism, and concept and idea.

The works illustrate a gradual movement from the more traditional renderings of the human figure by Latin American artists to newer styles that reworked earlier realist themes in playful or ironic ways, that contained aspects of both the figurative and the abstract, or that employed different forms of distorted realism.

Included in the exhibit are: Colombian Fernando Botero's 1966 painting of a pudgy-faced saint, based on a motif of an eighteenth-century painting by Gregorio Vasquez, a colonial artist from Colombia; Nicaraguan Armando Morales' abstract-figurative work, "Nude, Horse, Incinerator"; and Brazil's Antonio Enrique Amaral's depiction of a banana (symbolizing Brazil) being tightly squeezed by a rope. Other styles seen in the exhibition include abstract landscape by the late Maria Luisa Pacheco of Bolivia; geometric abstraction as seen in the three-dimensional sculpture by Gyula Kosice of Argentina; constructivism by Marcelo Bonevardi of Argentina; and conceptual art, including Uruguayan Luis Camnitzer's "Leftovers."

A Sunday family tour designed for elementary and junior high students and their parents was given in November, and a lecture series delivered by several Latin American artists in conjunction with the exhibition includes:

October 4, "The Argentinean 'Otra-Figuración' Movement, 1963–1989: An Insider's View" by Luis Felipe Noé, a Buenos Aires, Argentina, artist.

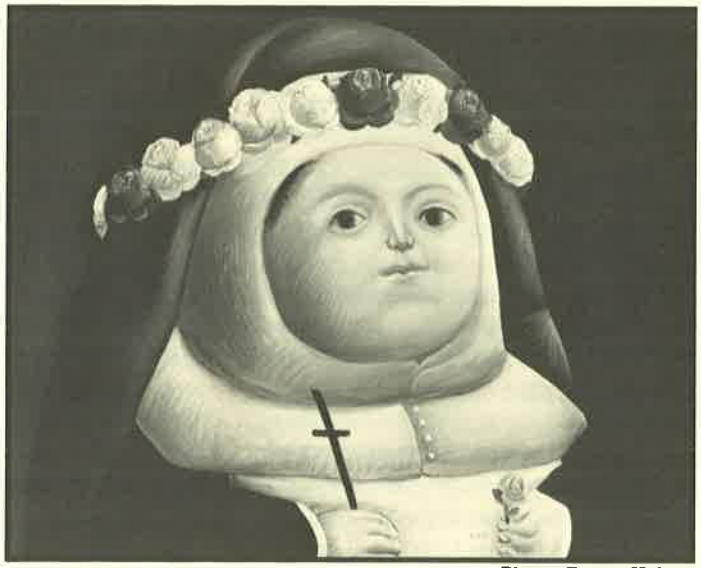

Photo: George Holmes

Santa Rosa de Lima Según Vásquez
by Fernando Botero, oil on linen canvas

December 5, "The Paths of Tradition: Latin American Abstraction" by Fernando de Szyslo, a Peruvian artist.

January 25, "'Modernismo' in Brazil" by Aracy Amaral, art historian and critic from the University of São Paulo, Brazil.

February 6, "A Search for Universalism: Geometric Abstraction and Kinetic Art in Latin America" by Belgica Rodriguez of Washington, D.C., director of the Museum of Modern Art of Latin America.

March 8, "From Tacos to Technology and Back, or What Happened to Humanism in Three Decades of Contemporary Mexican Art?" by Shifra Goldman, a research associate at UCLA.

Still to be scheduled is a lecture, "The Art Conservator's Challenge in Latin America" by Anton Rajer, conservator with Fine Arts Conservation Services, Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Photographs of Revolutionary Times

On exhibit through March is a collection of photographs showing rare scenes of Mexican revolutionary activities in northern Mexico as well as the development of the lower Rio Grande Valley in the early years of this century.

"La Tierra y Su Gente [The land and its people]: The Rio Grande Photographs of Robert Runyon, 1910–1926" has more than three dozen representative Runyon photographs that include a 1918 panorama of downtown Brownsville, a Mexican "boy soldier" holding a rifle almost as big as he is, President-elect Warren G. Harding standing on the beach at Port Isabel, and U.S. troops building a pontoon bridge across the Rio Grande.

Runyon was a commercial photographer in Brownsville from 1910 to 1926, shooting pictures of urban life in Brownsville and Matamoros that included business activities, school groups, sports teams, and such events as "first communions." He was allowed by Lucio Blanco, a noted revolutionary general, to move with Mexican troops from Matamoros far into Mexico. Many of his Mexican Revolution photographs have never been published. The photographer also snapped many images of military life and maneuvers at Brownsville's Fort Brown, which was activated by the United States in response to the Mexican Revolution. After giving up photography in 1926, he operated curio stores in Brownsville and Matamoros and, later, served as city manager and mayor of Brownsville. He also was an amateur botanist, and his botanical specimens were given to the herbarium at UT-Austin shortly before his death in 1968.

The collection was given to the Barker Texas History Center at UT about two

years ago, and displayed for the first time in the fall. The exhibition was opened on October 20 with lectures by Frank N. Samponaro of UT Permian Basin and Paul J. Vanderwood of San Diego State University, who are collaborating on a book on Runyon's photography, particularly as it pertains to the Mexican Revolution and the subsequent U.S. military buildup along the border at Brownsville.

Peaceful World?

ILAS cosponsored, with several other university units, a public discussion, "Are We Heading for a More Peaceful World?" held in November at the invitation from the United States Institute of Peace, a government agency created by Congress in 1984 to expand America's capacity to promote the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. The two-day meeting presented **David Little**, director, United States Institute of Peace, and professor of religious studies, University of Virginia, and **John Gilligan**, director, International Institute for Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, speaking on "Religion: A Source of Peace and a Source of Conflict." **Mark Katz**, peace fellow, United States Institute of Peace, and **Jiri Valenta**, director of Soviet and Eastern European Affairs, University of Miami, spoke on "Resolving Regional Conflicts: A Role for U.S.-Soviet Cooperation?" **Samuel W. Lewis**, president, United States Institute of Peace and U.S. ambassador to Israel 1977–1985, gave a public lecture, "Peace in the MIddle East: Problems, Prospects, and Potential."

Cosponsors were the Austin Council on Foreign Affairs, Texas Library Association, Austin Metropolitan Ministries, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Concordia Lutheran College, Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, Huston-Tillotson College, National Conference of Christians and Jews, St. Edward's University, Texas Conference of Churches, and at UT, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, the LBJ School of Public Affairs, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, General Libraries, Center for Middle East Studies, Center for Asian Studies, and Center for Soviet and East European Studies.

Successful Town Meetings Continue

The ongoing experiment in community service by ILAS, which is designed to encourage discussion on contemporary Latin American themes within the university and greater Austin community, launched the fall meetings with "Mexico under Salinas: Authentic Reform or Facade?" **Luis Javier Garrido**, Mexican political scientist and columnist for *La Jornada*, **Alan Knight**, UT professor of history, and **Bryan Roberts**, director of the Mexican Center (ILAS), and professor of sociology, were discussants. KLRU-TV Austin, who cosponsored the event, televised the meeting at the KLRU studio.

"A Festival of the Musical Instruments of Latin America," the second meeting this fall created and coordinated by graduate student **Douglass Sullivan-González**, encouraged participants to bring and demonstrate popular Latin American musical instruments. **Gerard Béhague**, professor of music and an acknowledged authority on Latin American music, and **Larry Crook**, graduate student in ethnomusicology, conducted the meeting.

Two sessions planned for the spring are: "Reflections on the Church in Latin America on the Tenth Anniversary of the Assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero," with **Father Leonard Boff** from Brazil and **Daniel Levine** from the University of Michigan, March 21–23; and "Ecology in Latin America" in late spring with plans for telecast by KLRU.

Reflections
continued from page 14

Cosío with the Institute of Latin American Studies and the university generally stemmed from the use of the university's research facilities and his working relationship with Dr. Benson.

I do not know the accumulated time that Don Daniel spent in Austin over the years while engaged in research for his five volumes of the *História Moderna de Mexico* and several of his monographs, but I do remember his remarking a number of times to the effect that a week in Austin with Dr. Benson produced more than a month moving from one library to another in disparate parts of Mexico City. Being away from home in a congenial ambience also had the great advantage for him and—although never commented upon—that his intelligent wife, Emma Salinas, could be available for full-time service as his effective research assistant.

Some years after Cosío's death, my wife Barbara and I paid a call on an ailing Doña Emma in San Angel. After awhile Nettie Lee inevitably became a focus of our reminiscences. Emma ended the conversation with moist eyes and the exclamation, "I *love* her!" And so do many others.

Elizabeth Wilder Weismann, preeminent historian and sensitive scholar of Mexican and Latin American art, died quietly in her sleep on December 14, 1989, in Austin, Texas. Her master's thesis, *The Forteguerri Monument*, was published in 1932. She held positions at the Library of Congress, Smith College, Wellesley College, and Ohio State University. A long-time resident of Austin, Texas, her other major works include *A Guide to the Art of Latin America* (with Robert C. Smith, 1948), *Mexico in Sculpture* (1950, 1971), *The Decorative Arts in Latin America* (1976), *Art and Time in Mexico: From the Conquest to the Revolution* (with Judith Hancock Sandoval, 1985), and a translation of Manuel Toussaints' *Colonial Art in Latin America* (1967).

Professor Emeritus **Loren Mozley**, 83, who assisted in forming the UT art department in 1938, died in Austin on September 21, 1989. Known primarily as a landscapist, Mozley produced canvases in the Cézanne and Cubist styles. His subjects came from the American Southwest, Mexico, South America, and Spain. He was a friend of such well-known artists as Georgia O'Keeffe, John Marin, Andrew Dasburg, Diego Rivera, and Frida Kahlo. Dr. Mozley served on the Executive Committee of ILAS from September 1952 to October 1955, and during that time as that committee's secretary for more than two years.

SCHOLAR NEWS

New Faculty

Adam Holzman (MA '84, Florida State University), Assistant Professor, is the first classical guitarist to join the Music Department faculty. Professor Holzman has been chosen to perform in master classes of the late Andres Segovia, world-renown guitar virtuoso. He has won prizes in five major guitar competitions.

Mari Carmen Ramirez (PhD '88, University of Chicago), former director of the University of Puerto Rico's museum, is the new curator for the Huntington Art Gallery's Latin American art collection. Dr. Ramirez was born in Puerto Rico and did her training in the United States after receiving her degree.

Visiting Professors

Raul H. Antelo (PhD '81, University of São Paulo), a native of Argentina, Visiting Tinker Professor, joins the Spanish and Portuguese Department for the spring semester to teach Nineteenth Century Literary Relations: Argentina and Brazil (graduate) and Literatura y Sociedad (undergraduate). Professor Antelo coordinates the graduate program in Brazilian literature at the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Brazil. His research emphasizes Brazilian modernism and the avant garde movements in Uruguay and Argentina. His many publications include *Literatura em Revista* (1984), a study of literary magazines of the 1930s and 1940s, and *Na ilha de Marapata* (1987) and *El paulista de la calle Florida* (1979).

Vivaldo Costa Lima (PhD '78, University of São Paulo) of Bahia, Salvador, Brazil, presented six seminar sessions early in the spring semester about Afro-Bahian traditional culture through issues of race relations. He also presented a public lecture.

Carolyn Hall (PhD '72, St. Hugh's College, Oxford) from the University of Costa Rica is teaching "Historical Geography of Central America," and coordinating production of *A Historical Atlas of Central America* during the spring semester.

Anthony Seeger (PhD '75, University of Chicago), Smithsonian Institution, offered a six-seminar session in February and March on various aspects of music and culture of Indian groups of the Xingu area in Brazil. Dr. Seeger is a Brazilian ethnomusicologist/anthropologist whose specialty is Brazilian Indian cultures.

Philip L. Wagner (PhD '53, UC, Berkeley), Professor Emeritus of Simon Fraser University, is teaching "This Human World," and "Frontiers in Geography" during the spring semester. His specialty is cultural geography—diffusion, geography of language, Central America.

Visiting Scholars

Noel Karl Samaroo (PhD '77, Stanford University), administrative fellow at the California State University, Long Beach, spent the fall semester at ILAS researching ethnicity and education in the Caribbean.

In early fall, visitors from Monterrey Tech (Monterrey, Mexico) consulted with **Jonathan Brown**, Associate Director about ILAS's cooperation with that institution's curriculum. The visitors were: **Laura Medina Peña, Pedro Treviño Moreno, Fidel Chávez Pérez,** and **Celita Alamilla.**

Faculty Honors

Ignazio Angelelli (Philosophy) was appointed to the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas y Tecnicas (Conicet) of Argentina as "miembro correspondiente" (corresponding member) from January 1989 through 1995, which includes a once-a-year travel expense and between one to five months of work at an Argentinian institute or university.

William P. Glade (Economics), former ILAS director, accepted a presidential appointment as the associate director for Educational and Cultural Affairs at the United States Information Agency. UT regents granted Professor Glade a leave of absence to accept the position. He began his teaching career in the University of Maryland's economics department in 1957 and is internationally recognized for his scholarly achievements in the field of Latin American economics. He was on leave serving as secretary of the Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution when he received this appointment.

Mari Carmen Ramirez (Huntington Art Gallery) was invited to be a guest in February at the ninth ARCO, Spain's International Contemporary Art Fair in Madrid. Dr. Ramirez, former director of the University of Puerto Rico Museum, joined the Huntington staff last year.

Teresa Sullivan (Sociology) has been appointed associate dean of graduate studies. Professor Sullivan, a demographer, specializes in labor force and immigration issues.

Patricia Wilson (Community and Regional Planning) was one of twenty speakers invited to address a recent United Nations technology conference in Santiago, Chile. She spoke on the effects of the booming maquiladora industry in northern Mexico.

Faculty Grants

Heywood "Woody" McGriff (Drama Department) received funding from Partners of the Americas and the U.S. Information Agency to teach two workshops and perform his choreography in Lima, Peru, during fall 1989. In workshops for the National Ballet of Peru and for a dance festival known as Contacto de Danza, he taught dance technique and repertory. He appeared with the National Ballet of Peru in solo performances of three of his choreographed works—one was the premiere of "Angelitos Negros." He is a nationally known dancer and choreographer who was associated with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane and Company in New York before joining the UT-Austin faculty in 1988.

Naomi Lindstrom (Spanish and Portuguese) received an ILAS-Mellon grant in 1983, and reports that the work supported by those funds has been completed and published with acknowledgments to ILAS and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: *Jewish Issues in Argentine Literature* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989).

Publications of Interest

Review: *The Independence of Mexico and the Creation of the New Nation*
edited by Jaime E. Rodriguez O., Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1989
ISBN 0-87903-070-4

by Alan Knight, Worsham Professor of History

The study of Mexican history has advanced significantly in the last twenty or so years: new archives, new methodologies, and new approaches have all helped to make Mexican studies unusually stimulating and challenging. In particular, our knowledge about the colonial period has grown exponentially. The nineteenth century, in contrast, remains relatively neglected (especially the crucial years 1821–1876). Yet, the nineteenth century is a crucial period in the country's history. It witnessed Mexico's birth as an independent nation, its territorial mutilation by the United States, and its arduous quest for a stable political order and a productive economy, goals which were only belatedly achieved, at considerable cost, with the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911).

A constant champion of and distinguished contributor to Mexico's nineteenth-century history is Prof. Nettie Lee Benson, who has furthered historical study not only by her own researching and writing but also—thanks to her pioneering creation of the Benson Latin American Collection—by providing historians with an outstanding research collection (and, in doing so, has brought many distinguished scholars to the UT campus). Meanwhile, Professor Benson's own work has greatly illuminated our understanding of a most obscure yet important phase in Mexican history: the first generation after independence.

Her most recent publication, "Territorial Integrity in Mexican Politics, 1821–1833," forms part of a valuable new symposium edited by Jaime Rodriguez, *The Independence of Mexico and the Creation of the New Nation*. The book results from a conference held at UC Irvine in 1987, and offers eighteen original essays and an introduction by the editor. Seven essays deal with the independence movement (1810–1821); a further seven with the neglected 1820s–1830s. A final four essays attempt—not altogether successfully—to compare Mexico's independence movement with other Latin American cases (chiefly Brazil's) and with the 1910 Mexican Revolution. Fourteen case studies, the real meat of the book, are written by acknowledged experts, and several essays represent years of research and reflection: by Christon Archer on the Bourbon Army, by Eric Van Young on the mentality and discourse of popular insurgents, by Barbara Tenenbaum on the independent Mexico's precarious finances, and by Nettie Lee Benson on the politics in the infant republic.

Professor Benson shows how converting the hollow frontiers in the colony into secure borders around the new nation proved difficult, politically contentious, and ultimately insuperable. In postcolonial Latin America, as in postcolonial Africa, the imperial powers' arbitrary demarcations could not be sustained in the wake of independence. To the south, Central America broke away—although Chiapas returned to the Mexican fold after a brief hiatus. More seriously, the vast expanses in the north remained vulnerable both to "barbarous Indians" and to yet more aggressive challenges: Czarist Russia on the Pacific coast and the new, lusty, expansionist American Republic to the northeast.

As Professor Benson shows, Mexico was scarcely constituted as an independent state when it faced a severe challenge to its territorial integrity. In 1823 the Mexican *chargé d'affaires* in Philadelphia reported with alarm how the press sniped at the U.S. government for recognizing Mexico's sovereignty over Texas; Andrew Jackson had no qualms about telling the *chargé* that "the United States should never have lost the opportunity to obtain it [Texas]." Soon, the egregious Joel Poinsett, the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, was canvassing the possibility of the U.S.'s acquiring "all of Texas, New Mexico, and Upper California, and parts of Lower California, Sonora, Coahuila and Nuevo León." Successive Mexican administrations, apprised of the peril, sought to strengthen their hold over the distant north. Above all, they looked to colonization.

Schemes were floated to encourage Chinese migrants to settle in the Mexican north, including Texas, a "veritable paradise," as a Mexican government committee in 1822 described it. The north would also be populated according to the Australian pattern: "criminals sentenced to die in the prison dungeons of Veracruz or to two years of presidential service might be given the choice of settling in California." No schemes came to fruition, however. Instead, the existing nomadic Indians mingled with go-getting Anglo colonists to establish the Texas settlement. By 1828, Mier y Terán reported, the Texas population—"a strange mixture unparalleled in Mexico"—combined "numerous tribes of peaceful but armed Indians . . . [with] foreign colonists, more aggressive and better informed than the Mexican inhabitants, but also more shrewd and unruly (among them fugitives from justice, vagabonds, and criminals); and slaves." Here was the raw material for autonomist and, eventually, secessionist movements.

The Mexican government, Professor Benson shows, was well aware of the dangers. But defending territorial integrity took second place to domestic factional quarrels, which racked the infant republic. Rebels—like Colonel José Codallos in 1830—charged the government with "not taking sufficiently energetic measures to preserve the integrity of the federation under attack in the Californias, in the fertile lands of Texas, and in the peninsula of Yucatan." The deposed President Vicente Guerrero was executed on the grounds (*inter alia*) that "he had offered Texas to the United States as a security for a loan to finance his government." The charge was almost certainly groundless, but it reflected the prevalent fears and tactics. It also reflected a virtually insuperable problem. Anglo settlement in Texas was accelerating, U.S. expansionism was gathering strength, and Mexican political infighting was growing more intense. When the Mexican govern-

ment sought to curtail the settlement and to impose firmer central control, it provoked resentment and resistance. The Texas "catastrophe" that Mier y Terán had foreseen in 1830 finally occurred in 1836.

As Professor Benson soberly concludes, "although all the [Mexican] actors supported the notion of territorial integrity, some were not averse to using the issue to achieve their own political goals." Furthermore, "the practice continued for many years to come" as conservatives threw in their lot with French invaders, and as successive political generations (enemies of Juárez in the 1860s, of Díaz in 1910, of Carranza in 1915) impugned their opponents' patriotism and (falsely) alleged their readiness to sell off chunks of the national patrimony to the United States. Political instability jeopardized national integrity, and threats to national integrity compounded political instability. Not until the later 1920s, we might say, was this vicious circle broken; in part because the threat of formal imperialism (land-grabbing) and territorial amputation had given way to the more subtle pressures of economic and financial dependency.

In her customary fashion, Professor Benson thus highlights a neglected, but revealing, episode in Mexican history. She tells a straight story; she demands and displays impeccable scholarship; and (in questioning some fanciful theses) she displays sound common sense. A generation and more of UT graduate students will recognize these distinctive Bensonian qualities, which have nursed them through their research and put them on their mettle in oral examination. Historians of Mexico and Latin America will benefit greatly from this model essay and from the others that accompany it in this important and original volume.

Schaedel Publishes Book on Bruning Archive

In 1875 German engineer Hans Heinrich Bruning went to Peru. He worked on sugar plantations, and whenever possible he studied the Muchik folk—a people with 2,000 years of cultural continuity. When he returned to Germany in 1925, he left more than 2,000 photographs of the Muchik as well as a study of the Muchik language and miscellaneous historical documents, which provided clues to the social organization of these people—about which nothing had been known.

After his death, the Hamburg Museum (Hamburgisches Museum fur Volkerkunde) published a few articles from and about Bruning's archive. But the material mostly remained untouched until 1976, when Richard Schaedel, an Andeanist with ten years' field research in Peru first became aware of the collection's scope and magnitude.

After researching for six years on various aspects of the Bruning archive, Schaedel has now published *La ethnografia muchik en las fotografias de H. Bruning, 1886–1925*, an ethnography built around Bruning's photography.

The book is available, by mail only, for $28 from SICAN, Box 596, Chiclayo, Peru; or Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138.

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