Post-Award Report, Provost’s Grant in the Humanities

“Writing Catholic Womanhood: Pauline Craven, 1808-1891”

Carol E. Harrison
History Department
777-6107; ceharris@mailbox.sc.edu

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I write to report on the completion of my project funded with the Provost’s Research Grant in the Humanities. I proposed to use the grant to begin a new book, a biography of the best-selling French writer Pauline Craven, née de la Ferronnays. Thanks to the grant, I was able to complete a research trip, process much of the material that I returned home with, and apply for several external grants, so this new book manuscript is off to an excellent start.

In May and June 2012, I traveled to Europe to visit archives related to Pauline Craven and her friends and correspondents. I began in Naples, where I was able to consult the Filangieri papers at the Museo Filangieri. I was looking for the papers of one of Craven’s closest friends, Teresa Ravaschieri, née Filangieri. The museum has been closed for renovation for the last decade or so, and the staff was generous in allowing me access to their archive. I found relatively little either there or in the small collection of letters at the National Library in Naples, but I believe that more materials may yet come to light as the museum renovations continue, and I have made excellent contacts who know that I am interested in the Craven – Ravaschieri friendship. Before this trip, I had virtually no experience of working in Italian archives, and none at all of working with Italian primary sources, so seed money was particularly helpful for this part of the project.

From Naples I traveled to Burgundy to consult the papers of Charles de Montalembert, a lifelong friend of Craven’s. Montalembert’s papers remain in his family, and there is no published finding aid, so I was astonished to discover how extensive a correspondence with Craven and other members of her family he kept. With the assistance of the Departmental Archives of the Côte d’Or in Dijon, I was able to obtain several thousand digital images of letters between Montalembert, his wife, Craven, and her siblings.

Finally, I spent the last several weeks of the trip in Paris at the Institut Catholique de Paris, where Craven’s own papers are housed. The Craven – La Ferronnays archive is enormous, and no researcher could work through it entirely in a month. I now have a good idea of the size and scope of the collection as well as of the extent to which portions of it remain un-catalogued and jumbled into no particular order – a challenge for a future visit. I was also able to consult and photograph the materials relating to the marriages of Pauline and her sisters.
In the fall of 2012 I enjoyed a course release, which freed up enough time for me to work through much of the material I collected, including most of the Montalembert papers. I focused in particular on reading the material relating to the La Ferronnays sisters’ marriages and I began drafting an essay on sibling bonds and companionate marriage in the romantic era. I will be presenting this material at the annual meeting of the Society for French Historical Studies this April.

During the fall I was also able to apply for several fellowships, including the Davis Center at Princeton and the Harvard Divinity School’s Women in Religion Program. When the National Endowment for the Humanities announced a summer seminar on Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento I applied to it as well, and my familiarity with Italian archives gained during the summer of 2012 contributed significantly to that application. Without the course release I doubt if I would have processed the images I brought back to the US, much less have been able to propose a coherent project of research and writing for a fellowship year.

I followed the budget that I initially submitted for the project fairly closely: $5,000 for a course release and the remainder to cover six weeks travel in France and Italy. Thanks to a lucky find in the Paris sub-let market, my housing costs for Paris were less than anticipated. I am using the roughly $500 dollars I saved on Paris lodging to purchase images and reproduction rights for my forthcoming book, *Romantic Catholics: Faith and France’s Postrevolutionary Generation*. Because this book relies on several illustrations from major French museum and library collections (the Louvre, the Bibliothèque nationale, the Maison de Victor Hugo) having a little extra money available to order images has helped me move more quickly to publication.