The Jo Ann Boydston Essay Prize

Dayton Haskin, Professor of English at Boston College, is the 2003 recipient of the biennial Jo Ann Boydston Prize for the best essay focused upon an edition of works or documents.

Boydston Committee members Benjamin F. Fisher, Peter L. Shillingsburg, and the 2001 winner of the award, Marta Werner, enthusiastically recommended this acknowledgment of the extraordinarily high quality of both Haskin's scholarship and his lively writing style in “No Edition Is an Island: The Place of the Nineteenth-Century American Editions within the History of Editing Donne's Poems,” Text: An Interdisciplinary Annual of Textual Studies, ed. W. Speed Hill and Edward M. Burns (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), volume 14, 169-207. In doing so, the members of this selection committee reaffirmed one of the firmly held convictions of the scholar for whom the award is named: there is no more ardent apologist for apparatuses in editions than Jo Ann Boydston; and Haskin's uses of and reflections upon the significance of the historical variants listed in the recently published three volumes of The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne fully confirm her wisdom, his acumen, and the value of a variorum edition to both scholarly editors and students of textual histories.

As Haskin also demonstrates, analysis of the data presented in the ongoing Donne variorum edition project serves yet another purpose, taking one beyond matters textual and editorial into a broader frame of reference wherein nineteenth-century editorial treatments of this seventeenth-century poet's works raise substantive questions pertinent to our understanding of not only John Donne but of those who have been drawn to the interpretation of his works since the first collected edition of Donne’s poems appeared in 1633. For example, Haskin's essay successfully argues that the twentieth-century installation of Donne by Modernists as a major seventeenth-century literary figure rivaling John Milton was not so much the belated restoration of a genius as it was a contingent result of a cultural investment made in the second half of the nineteenth century in New England. Shown by Haskin is that the editorial labors of two of the most prominent men of letters of the Victorian era account in large part for the Donne revival. Neither James Russell Lowell nor Charles Eliot Norton is today remembered as a textual scholar. But the fact that these two men bestowed more lavish
and sustained attention upon the text of his poems than had ever been afforded them previously contributed mightily to making Donne the major literary figure later celebrated by T.S. Eliot.

"In light of Haskin’s own editorial work" seen in his essay, reported Marta Werner, “the recent variorum appears less . . . an ‘iconic monument’ in the history of Donne studies and more . . . a ‘critical tool’ that we may employ to explore our own . . . relationship to Donne and to modern editorial theory and practice.” That is, Haskin’s “thoroughly engaging essay” shows us not only the value of the historical record presented in the Donne variorum edition but how such a record can stimulate new research, clarifying and enhancing what the edition that prompted it has already yielded.

Distinguished Service Award

Distinguished Service Awards are presented to individuals or projects which have made a significant contribution to furthering the aims of the Association for Documentary Editing.

Cathy Moran Hajo, of the Margaret Sanger Papers, receives her distinguished service award at the Chicago ADE meeting.

Theresa M. Collins with Cathy Moran Hajo
Lyman H. Butterfield Award
Presented to Ronald A. Bosco

Since 1985, the Lyman H. Butterfield Award has been presented annually to an individual, project, or institution for recent contributions in the areas of documentary publication, teaching, and service. The award is made in memory of Lyman Henry Butterfield, whose editing career included contributions to The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, the editing of the Adams Family Papers, and publishing The Letters of Benjamin Rush.

Past recipients of the Butterfield Award include Ann Gordon, C. James Taylor, Sharon Ritenour Stevens, David R. Chesnutt, and Joseph R. McElrath-all of whom served on the selection committee this year.

The 2003 recipient has-as his lengthy curriculum vitae demonstrates, and as those of us who know him personally can testify—performed in an exemplary manner as a contributor to the discipline of documentary editing. Ronald A. Bosco has served gladly and effectively on numerous committees within the ADE and other organizations to advance textual and editorial scholarship. His teaching in these and related areas, in the Department of English at the SUNY University at Albany and before his peers at conferences such as this one, has long been recognized as first-rate on the counts of both intellectual substance and the remarkably engaging personality that is his.

His contributions to the study of Colonial and Nineteenth-Century American Literature include his chapters in books, articles in refereed journals, and conference presentations. Most important, however, are the volumes he has produced as a scholarly editor. As Helen Deese wrote when nominating him for the Butterfield Award,

Over a long career Ron has achieved a remarkable record as a documentary editor in the field of American Literature. He is the editor or co-editor of nine volumes of documentary editions, including editions of Puritan sermons and the works of several literary figures, among them Cotton Mather, Michael Wigglesworth, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. For many years, in fact, he has been regarded as a leading editor of Emerson, having produced a volume each of The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks ..., The Complete Sermons and The Topical Notebooks, and most recently, two volumes of The Later Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson. ... A review by Gary Collison in the New England Quarterly calls this last work "a milestone in Emerson scholarship ... useful to the specialist" as well as "to any reader attracted by
Emerson's best-known writings." Indeed, such works as these various editions produced by Ron Bosco have reinvigorated and revolutionized Emerson studies, providing biographical and critical scholars with texts that were for practical purposes previously unavailable.

Ralph H. Orth, also a preeminent editor of Emerson's writings, echoed Deese in his nomination letter—as did another Emersonian, Joel Myerson.

"Over the course of nearly two decades of working on Emerson," Myerson explained, Bosco "has edited more of his writings than any active editor, and has had title page credit for volumes in more different editions of Emerson than any other editor"; and yet, he has found time to be "unwavering in his help of junior editors and other scholars." Myerson expressed his keen admiration for Bosco's "dogged pursuit of accuracy in scholarly work. At a time when many literary scholars 'channel' their authors, or view their writings selectively through the literature of other critics, Ron is a defender of the old-time religion: that authors write texts, and we are best serve in our interpretation of those texts by paying attention to what the author actually wrote, and how the text was written."

The Lyman H. Butterfield Award is the second recognition of the kind he has received from the Association for Documentary Editing. In 1999, he was the recipient of the Jo Ann Boydston Prize for the best recent essay or review dealing with an edition or editions.

Ronald A. Bosco, of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Papers, receives his Butterfield Award at the Chicago ADE meeting.

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Thomas Jefferson Prize
The Thomas Jefferson Prize is awarded by the Society for History in the Federal Government (SHFG) to documentary editions every other year in recognition for:

... editor(s) of a documentary history project publishing either a single volume or one or more volumes in a project that contributes significantly to our understanding of the history of the federal government. Entries will be judged on the editorial methodology employed, including accuracy of transcription, relevance and usefulness of annotation, selection and arrangement of documents, and indexing (http://www.shfg.org/tawards.html).

We are proud to announce that The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series was chosen to receive the prize in the Spring of 2003 under the auspices of the series editor Philander D. Chase and editor of Volume 11: August 1792 January 1793 (Charlottesville & London: University of Virginia Press, 2002), Christine Sternberg Patrick.

Christine S. Patrick receives the Thomas Jefferson Prize
Call for Nominations
The 2004 Lyman H. Butterfield Award

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The Chair for the 2004 selection committee is C. James Taylor. The deadline for nominations is 1 June 2004, and for submission of supporting documentation 1 July. Please send your nominations to him at the Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA, 02215. For additional information, contact him at jtaylor@masshistorg or 617-646-0516.