

## Appendix 9.1

### Archival Explorations and Short Paper Assignments

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For this upper-level course, students engaged in archival explorations and wrote short papers designed to give them practice developing the critical skills necessary to create an “edition” of their own for the final project. The materials below are organized to show how course readings were paired with archival explorations and/or paper assignments.

Rather than providing direct links to materials in digital collections, I explained to students that their “archival exploration” would involve locating the specified materials with some hands-on searching of their own. I also gave them this advice: “The archival explorations will sometimes ask that you read specific materials in their entirety, but often you will be reading as a researcher: skimming to familiarize yourself with the content and to find some texts of interest to read in full.”

The papers were designed as short and frequent writing exercises (eight over the course of the semester, 500 words each). These topics lend themselves to adaptation. A single archival exploration might be integrated into a course that is not explicitly dedicated to textual recovery; the assignment works well in other American literature courses and in gateway courses. The topics may also be repurposed for longer paper assignments, and the number of archival explorations and short papers assigned in a textual recovery course can be trimmed to far fewer. Archival explorations offer rich possibilities for creating collaborative in-class activities, and two such group exercises are included here.

#### **Archival Exploration and Paper #1**

##### **Read**

Burnham, “Literary Recovery in an Age of Austerity”; “Introduction” on *Welcome to Just Teach One* and *Amelia; or the Faithless Briton (Just Teach One)*.

### **Explore**

Examine *The Columbian Magazine* (1787), with special attention to October and the supplement to the first volume, the issues in which *Amelia* appears (*Internet Archive*)

### **Write**

Identify an aspect of the text that invites contextualization, do some preliminary research into the topic, and explain how your brief investigation has enriched your understanding and interpretation of the novel. Your topic should be very narrow: you may, for example, focus upon a specific word choice, social custom, historical event or circumstance, literary allusion, etc. Choose any detail in the text that piques your curiosity and leads you to discover information useful to readers and to the interpretation of the text.

## **Archival Exploration and Paper #2**

### **Read**

Davidson, "Introduction" to *Charlotte Temple*; Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*

### **Explore**

Read Schultz's introduction and examine documents in *How Did Susanna Rowson and Other Reformers Promote Higher Education as an Antidote to Women's Sexual Vulnerability, 1780–1820?*

### **Write**

Write a review of Schultz's document project on Rowson using Burnham's review of *Just Teach One* as a model but developing a paper that is sharper in its focus and shorter in length. Consider any of these questions as a starting point for your analysis: How does this document project compare to *JTO* (in its scope, purpose, approach, etc.)? How do specific documents (of your choice) in the project illuminate your reading of *Charlotte Temple*? How does Schultz's approach to the novel compare to Davidson's? Evaluate and respond to specific editorial choices and interpretive comments in your review.

### Archival Exploration and Paper #3

#### Read

Anna, *St. Herbert—A Tale (Just Teach One)*

#### Explore

Examine *The New-York Weekly Magazine, or, Miscellaneous Repository*, vol. 2, 1796–97 (*HathiTrust*)

#### Write

Choose one of the following topics: (a) respond to the prompt above for paper #1, this time focusing upon *St. Herbert—A Tale*, or, (b) draw upon your archival exploration of *The New-York Weekly Magazine, or, Miscellaneous Repository* to contextualize *St. Herbert—A Tale*, explaining how the content of the magazine enhances your understanding of the novel.

### Archival Exploration and Paper #4

#### Read

Foster, "A Narrative of the Interesting Origins and (Somewhat) Surprising Developments of African-American Print Culture" and "Forgotten Manuscripts: How Do You Solve a Problem Like Theresa"; Introductory comments to *Just Teach One: Early African American Print* and "Theresa: A Haytien Tale" (*Just Teach One: EAAP*)

#### Explore

Examine the links and contextual information provided for "Theresa" (*Just Teach One: EAAP*); Sommers, "Godey's Lady's Book: Sarah Hale and the Construction of Sentimental Nationalism," *Freedom's Journal (HathiTrust)*; antebellum issues of *Godey's Magazine (Internet Archive)*; and "Uncle Tom's Cabin" & *American Culture: A Multi-Media Archive*, <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu> (enter and use browse mode)

#### Write

Draw upon your archival exploration to develop an analysis on one of the following topics: (a) identify and analyze specific evidence in *Godey's Magazine* that supports and/or challenges a main point in Sommers's argument; (b) write a reflection upon

the ways that *Just Teach One: Early African American Print* and your exploration of any of the following digital resources have changed your understanding of nineteenth-century women and their involvement in war/politics/social activism: *Freedom's Journal*, *Godey's Magazine*, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and *American Culture*; (c) select a text from *Freedom's Journal* or *Godey's Magazine* to situate in relation to "Theresa," explaining how it provides a context for understanding the story.

## Paper #5

### Read

Gates, "Black Studies at the Crossroads: A Discussion with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.;" "Introduction," *The Bondwoman's Narrative* and Appendixes A, B, C; Crafts, *The Bondwoman's Narrative*

### Write

Gates considers possible literary influences upon Crafts in his introduction, appendix C, and a note on the importance of Dickens. Identify elements of a specific literary genre (or subgenre) in *The Bondwoman's Narrative* and evaluate Crafts's use of the form. A number of genres will likely first come to mind as possible topics: the gothic novel, sentimental novel, or slave narrative, but you may find it worthwhile to search for elements of a literary form that may be less familiar to readers. To what extent does the text conform to and differ from literary conventions, and what is the effect? What insights can be gained through comparison of this novel to other texts in the same period? Support your analysis with textual evidence in *The Bondwoman's Narrative* and with specific references to the text(s) for comparison, whether from this or another class.

## Archival Exploration and Paper #6

### Read

*The Sound the Stars Make Rushing through the Sky: The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft* (ed. Parker)

## Explore

Compare versions of “Moowis” in *The Literary Voyager or Muzzeniegun* (Internet Archive); *The Columbian Lady’s and Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 1, 1884 (HathiTrust); and *Oneóta, or Characteristics of the Red Race of America* (HathiTrust)

## Write

Select a single text by Jane Johnston Schoolcraft and consider the annotations provided by Parker. In what ways do Parker’s annotations influence your understanding of the text? What other contextual materials would enhance your reading of the text? Point to specific ways you might conduct research and develop a new approach to the text beyond the contexts provided by Parker.

## Paper #7

### Read

Oakes Smith, *The Western Captive*, “Indian Traits: The Story of Niskagah”; “Beloved of the Evening Star: An Indian Legend” (in *The Western Captive and Other Indian Stories*, ed. Woidat)

### Write

Compare and contrast the character of Margaret in *The Western Captive* to the captive in either “Indian Traits” or “Beloved of the Morning Star” with attention to the ambiguity in each narrative’s conclusion. That is, try to identify a specific conflict in the text that is not neatly resolved. How are the characters and conclusions open to multiple interpretations? How does familiarity with more than one captivity narrative by Oakes Smith influence your reading of *The Western Captive*?

## Paper #8

### Read

Stern, "Introduction" and "Letters to Louisa May Alcott from Her Publisher," in *Behind a Mask: The Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott*; Alcott, "Behind a Mask, or, A Woman's Power"

### Write

In your study of American women writers this semester, you have now encountered a number of critical editions that vary in their design and the contextual materials that they provide. What distinguishes Stern's edition and introduction from others on our syllabus? Evaluate the frameworks and contextual materials that Stern provides, making comparisons to other editions to illustrate your points.

## Archival Exploration and Paper #9

### Read

Alcott, "Pauline's Passion and Punishment," "The Mysterious Key and What It Opened"

### Explore

Examine 1864, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* ([Internet Archive](#)) and 1868, *The Flag of Our Union* ([Internet Archive](#))

### Write

For your topic, choose either "Pauline's Passion and Punishment" or "The Mysterious Key and What It Opened," and turn in your paper on the date the text is assigned. Draw upon your exploration of the magazine in which Alcott's story was published to find a context for reading the story, and develop an analysis of the text that grows out of your approach. You'll want to look for ways that the magazine reveals significant details about the circumstances in which Alcott was producing the story, and explain how your research contributes to the interpretation of the literature.

## Archival Explorations Linked to Class Activities

### In-Class Activity #1

Work collaboratively in class with your group to transcribe, annotate, and provide a brief introductory note to a manuscript letter in the Henry Rowe Schoolcraft Papers (microfilm scans provided by instructor)

### In-Class Activity #2

Read (in advance of class) Oakes Smith's following stories and examine journals in which they appear: "The Sagamore of Saco: A Legend of Maine" in *Graham's Magazine* 33 (July 1848): 47–52 (*HathiTrust*); "Hokomok; A Legend of Maine in *The Rover* 2.2 (1843): 175–176 (*HathiTrust*); "The Crusade of the Bell" in *Potter's American Monthly* 4.43 (July 1875): 518–520 (*HathiTrust*)

### In-Class Activity #3

Editors are often forced to be selective, and it was not possible to collect all of Oakes Smith's "Indian stories" in an edition of this size. Dividing into three groups, each responsible for one story, you will analyze the text *not* selected for inclusion with the novel and stories that do appear in *The Western Captive and Other Indian Stories*. What arguments might you make to justify the story's exclusion and/or inclusion in the collection?