

## Editorial

# Marking One Hundred Years of Geography at the University of Cincinnati: An Editorial Introduction

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Centennial celebrations are not common among departments of geography in the United States. Although Columbia University offered geography courses from 1784-1812, Princeton University from 1845-1880, Harvard College starting in 1848, and Yale University from 1863-1872 (Dryer, 1924; Koelsch, 2001; Martin, 1988, 1998; Schulten, 2001), it was not until 1898 that the first independent department of geography was opened at the University of California, Berkeley. By 1928 there were eight independent departments open, and some fourteen joint departments—geography and geology or economics—in existence. The department of geography at the University of Cincinnati was among the latter group. A joint Geology-Geography department was established in 1907, with the appointment of Nevin M. Fenneman as its founding member (Ryan, 1986)

But an early founding is but a necessary condition for a celebration a century later. Departments had to endure the tribulations and vicissitudes of professional politics, intellectual fashion, and university priorities if they were to survive. One key element in determining a department's survival was how well geographers got along with administrators and colleagues in other departments (Dunbar, 1985). As questions regarding the academic worth of geography as a discipline were raised (Glick, 1988; Schulten, 2001; Smith, 1987), prestigious, or "bellwether" (Dunbar, 1985) universities such as Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania all closed down their departments during the 1940s and 1950s. More recently the departments at Columbia University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Chicago were disbanded or reorganized as programs due to low enrollments and what was perceived as lack of focus on undergraduate education (Abrams, 1975; Koelsch, 2001). All of these closings left geography in a vulnerable position as a discipline and subject to marginalization within the academy as departments lost existing resources or were entirely eliminated due to budget cuts.

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## HOW TO CELEBRATE?

Having had both the good fortune of an early founding and the resilience to survive academic and fiscal crises, the department of Geography at the University of Cincinnati was faced with the happy choice of deciding how to celebrate its centennial. Three possible activities emerged: throw joint party with the Geology department, write a history, or assemble a *festschrift*.

### *We had a party*

It consisted of three days of meetings, presentations, and meals. On April 26, 2007 geography and geology hosted a late afternoon reception to welcome alumni and friends back to a campus that had vastly changed since most had finished their studies: both departments are in renovated quarters and the university campus in general has had a major face-lift, including both new and remodeled buildings. April 27 was a busy day that started with a lively and spirited lunch time round table featuring two geography and three geology alumni sharing their views on the future of the geosciences. This was followed by a public lecture given by Simon Winchester who regaled a standing room only audience with the story of his career change from a mediocre geology student at Oxford to a world renowned writer of books with geographic and geologic content including *Krakatoa*, *Korea*, *Hong Kong*, *Outposts*, *The Fracture Zone* and *The Map that Changed the World*. That evening some 200 alumni, guests, and community and university leaders enjoyed a festive evening in the Grand Ballroom of the renovated Tangeman University Center. The program included reminiscences by emeritus professors K. Bruce Ryan and Howard A. Stafford of geography, and Paul Potter of geology, as well as the awarding of the departmental Cincinnati and McNee awards and a newly established Centennial Undergraduate Scholarship. Activities on the following day started with five geography and five geology graduate students presenting the results of their research. The formal celebration concluded with the second annual Howard A. Stafford lecture in Economic Geography and the annual Geology department John Rich lecture. Barney Warf, Professor at Florida State University, delivered the Stafford lecture, speaking on his views of the history of 20th century economic geography under the title of "From Surfaces to Nodes"; Samuel Bowring of Massachusetts Institute of Technology delivered the Rich lecture on the topic of High Precision Geochronology and Earth History. Informal activities included a riverboat cruise on Friday evening and Saturday field trips on the geology of greater Cincinnati and the Upper Ordovician of the Greater Cincinnati Region.

### *We didn't write a new history*

For a number of reasons, the members of the Geography department were not inclined to take on the challenge of writing or even sponsoring the writing of a com-

prehensive departmental history in 2007. First, apart from Professors Fenneman (Ryan, 1986), Barbour (Selya, 2004b), and possibly McNee (Wolf, 2006), no geographers have deposited their personal or professional papers with the University of Cincinnati Archives and Rare Book Collections. As a result, the materials in the University Archives dealing with former members of the department and even the department itself are very skimpy and consist mainly of occasional press releases for appointments of new heads or announcing guest speakers. Second, minutes of departmental meetings are incomplete and often written in language so arcane as to defy interpretation or understanding. Third, the preparation of a poster for a display as part of the Association of American Geographers centennial celebration at its annual meetings in Philadelphia in 2004 (Selya, 2004a) was the subject of intense controversy after it was exhibited. Concern was expressed regarding the omission of some faculty, the inclusion of others, and what constituted either an academic, professional, or service accomplishment or an administrative or curricular highlight worthy of inclusion.

Finally, a history of the department had been written to mark its 75th anniversary (Ryan, 1982). Drawing on the first twelve issues of the department's newsletter the *Isoline* as well as archival material on deposit at the University, Ryan organized the history of the geography at the University of Cincinnati using eleven topics: personalities, departmental status, departmental working quarters and their renovations, foreign connections, the role of women, academic impacts, benefactors, ethnic and minority concerns, environmental quality and regional development, the University's urban setting and Cincinnati studies, and Fenneman's legacy. In his folksy, tongue-in-cheek style Ryan described the coming and goings of full-time faculty, part-time instructors, and students; the challenges of operating a department while its quarters were renovated; the richness that derived from faculty and student exchanges with Aberystwyth University as well as foreign field work conducted by faculty in Latin America, Africa, and Asia; the synergy generated by having four faculty (McNee, Wolf, Symansky, and Messinger) who received their PhD degrees from Syracuse University; the department's long standing commitment to social and environmental justice as well as environmental quality and regional development; and the fun of the annual Fenneman dinner, when prizes are awarded to the best undergraduate (Cincinnati Association prize), the best graduate student (the McNee Award), and where the faculty is roasted by the graduate students. Long out of print, this work has now been posted as a part of the department's website ([www.geography.uc.edu](http://www.geography.uc.edu)).

Rather than compose a new history, we could have updated Ryan's 1982 work. We could have extended Ryan's lists of individuals who have served on the faculty, or who have received their graduate degrees from the department. An updated list of faculty is included at the end of this essay (Table 1); a similar list of part-time faculty is included in Table 2.

Table 1: Faculty Appointments Since 1983.

| Name                 | Initial Appointment | Current Status                                         |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Kenneth Hinkel       | 1987                | Professor in Department                                |
| Nicholas Dunning     | 1989                | Professor in Department                                |
| Xia Zong-guo         | 1990                | Professor, University of Massachusetts, Boston         |
| Lao Yung             | 1993                | Associate Prof., California State University, Monterey |
| Charles Ehlschlaeger | 1996                | Associate Professor, Western Illinois University       |
| Byron Miller         | 1993                | Associate Professor, University of Calgary             |
| Liu Lin              | 1996                | Associate Professor in Department                      |
| Robert Frohn         | 1997                | Associate Professor in Department                      |
| Wendy Eisner         | 1998                | Associate Professor of Geography in Department         |
| Richard Beck         | 1999                | Assistant research Professor in Department             |
| Andrew Wood          | 2001                | Associate Professor, University of Kentucky            |
| Tony Grubestic       | 2002                | Assistant Professor, Indiana University                |
| Colleen McTague      | 2004                | Assistant Professor in Department                      |
| Kevin Raleigh        | 2006                | Visiting Assistant Professor in Department, 2006-08    |

A revised list of theses and dissertations completed in the department is available at our website ([www.geography.uc.edu](http://www.geography.uc.edu)). The impact of having three faculty (Selya, Dunning, and Miller) with degrees from the University of Minnesota could have been compared to the impact of the Syracuse Four. Similarly the difficulties and challenges of working with architects and university building officials on the renovation of Swift Hall in 1980 could have been compared to the renovation of Braunstein Hall and our move there in 2001. The addition of the annual Stafford Lecture in Economic Geography could be added to the list of enhancements provided the department by our alumni benefactors.

But, given the absence of a large body of research materials, it is not clear that an alternative conceptual framework to that used by Ryan would lead to new insights into the department as it now stands. What can be noted however is that the growth in the number of full-time faculty permitted the department to expand its course offerings and to develop specialized tracks in physical/environmental geography, urban-economic geography, and in computer related techniques for both our undergraduate and graduate degree programs. However, the retirements of K. Bruce Ryan (1999), Wolf Roder (2003), and Howard Stafford (2005), and the resignation of Tony Grubestic in 2006 has forced the department to eliminate some offerings—in historical, medical and population geography—and scale-back our courses in both economic and urban geography.

Table 2: Instructors, 1983-2007.

| Name                 | Period taught        | 2007 Position                                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Robert Newcomer      | Fall 83              | Assistant Professor, Murray State College, Oklahoma            |
| Daniel Tevera        | Winter 84            | University of Zimbabwe                                         |
| Claudia Craig        | Winter 84-Spring 85  |                                                                |
| Jody Fabe            | Spring 84            | Retired                                                        |
| Tom Brown            | Spring 84            | ESRI                                                           |
| Karen Hasselman      | Winter 85            |                                                                |
| James Wilson         | Fall 87-Spring 90    | Retired                                                        |
| Sara Storjohann      | Winter 89            | Retired                                                        |
| Fred Mitchell        | Spring 89-Spring 00  | Private Real Estate Developr; Adjunct Assistant Prof. in Dept. |
| McGuire              | Spring 91            |                                                                |
| Margaret Zeigler     | Spring 92-Spring 94  | Deputy Director, Congressisonal Hunger, Washington DC          |
| Pat Farrell          | Fall 92-Spring 95    | Associate Professor, University of Minnesota, Duluth           |
| Evelyn Ravuri        | Fall 94-Fall 95      | Assistant Professor, Saginaw Valleye State University          |
| Joanne Blewett       | Winter 95-Winter 97  | Adjunct Assistant Professor in Department                      |
| Judith Davis         | Winter 95            | Real Estate Appraiser, Cincinnati                              |
| Allison Flege        | Spring 95-present    | Adjunct Assistant Professor in Department                      |
| Rafael Ortiz-Ramirez | Spring 95            |                                                                |
| Cynthia Berlin       | Spring 95-Spring 96  | Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin                   |
| James Nicholas       | Spring 95-Spring 97  | URS Corp., Adjunct Assistant Professor in Department, 04-06    |
| James Leonard        | Winter 96            | Assistant Professor, Marsahll University                       |
| Michael Troyer       | Autumn 96-present    | EPA, Cincinnati; Adjunct Assistant Professor in Department     |
| Christian Allen      | Winter 97-Spring 01  | Temporary Assistant Professor, University of Georgia           |
| Colleen McTague      | Autumn 97-Winter 02  | Field Service Assistant Professor in Departmnt                 |
| David Butler         | Autumn 97-Spring 01  | Assistant Professor, University of Southern Mississippi        |
| Susan Schock         | Spring 98            | EPA, Cincinnati                                                |
| Charles Button       | Spring 99            | Assistant Professor, Connecticut Central State University      |
| Connie Bruins        | Autumn 99-Fall 00    | Miami University                                               |
| Elizabeth Golden     | Spring 00- Winter 01 |                                                                |
| Claire Gomersall     | Spring 00-Spring 02  | Proctor and Gamble                                             |
| Nicole Duerrschabel  | Spring 02            |                                                                |
| Erika Meyers         | Fall 03              | Whittmanhart                                                   |
| Adam Parillo         | Fall 03              | ABD                                                            |
| Erica Schultz        | Winter-Spring 04     | ERSI                                                           |
| Jonathan Baker       | Autumn 04            | Instructor, Temple University                                  |
| Andrew Miller        | Fall 04              | Student in PhD program, Adjunct Instructor in Department       |
| Chen Ke              | Spring 05-Spring 06  | Assistant Professor, East Tennessee State University           |
| Kevin Raleigh        | Winter 06-Spring 06  | Visiting Assistant Professor in Department, 06-07              |
| Navendu Chaudhary    | Spring 06            | ABD                                                            |
| John Hurd            | Spring 06            | URS Corp.                                                      |

### *A Festschrift*

This dedicated volume of *Geography Research Forum* represents a festschrift, and it has many benefits over either a party or a conventional departmental history. The collection of articles will have a shelf life beyond a few days of celebrations followed by fading memories of a good time. Unlike a history, the articles included did not require value judgments on the part of an editor as a sparse historical record is sifted through. Rather, the articles represent a self-selected group of faculty who choose to

have their work represent the collective scholarly contribution of the department. Furthermore, each article can stand on its own, so that whatever its connection to the department may be, there is no narrow, parochial focus that would be of limited interest to only someone with a personal connection to the department or University of Cincinnati.

Nevertheless the articles represent different combinations of a set of nine themes that have long permeated the teaching and scholarship activities of our faculty. The first three reflect our home community. The first is the use of Cincinnati as an urban laboratory—virtually all department faculty have been engaged with the Cincinnati region, either as part of their teaching and scholarship or as a part of their commitment to community service. A second theme is concern over the quality of life in Cincinnati. The third is concern for environmental and social issues in Cincinnati. The fourth theme is the exploration of regions beyond Cincinnati and the United States. The fifth theme is the continual extension of previous research as improved technology, measurement, and theories allow for more refined and precise analysis and explanation. The sixth theme is a concern for the practical and applied over the purely theoretical. The seventh is an interest in maintaining a vibrant, current research program related to our curriculum. The eighth theme is a commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and research. And the ninth and final theme is an interest in continually assessing and evaluating our research against the background of broader changes in geography as a discipline.

Kenneth Hinkel's article combines themes one and five. It is perhaps not well recognized that initial work on identifying and understanding the phenomenon of the urban heat island was completed at the University of Cincinnati. The research was done by Wilfred Bach, who had a joint appointment in Geography and Environmental Health (Bach and Patterson, 1969; Bach, 1971; 1972; Bryson and Ross, 1972). Hinkel has extended Bach's work by refining the data collecting process in two ways: first by using new forms of data collection; and second by expanding the number of data collection sites so that more subtle effects of topography and land use can be included in the understanding of urban microclimatology.

Lin and Eck's paper is likewise multi-dimensional in terms of our themes. It deals with a pressing social and political problem that actually contributed to the outbreak of riots in Cincinnati from April 10 to 15, 2001: alleged systematic police brutality and discrimination against Cincinnati's Afro-American citizens. Their paper uses the latest in statistical and computer/GIS techniques to analyze the data. Finally it employs an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis and generates a cautious interpretation of the data, the descriptive statistics, and the maps produced during the course of the study.

The paper by Varady, Wang, and Mittal at first glance does not seem to fit into this volume, since its authors are in the School of Planning at the University of Cincinnati. However, in 1959, when the Geography department was separated from the Geology department, it was organized as a Department of Geography

and Regional Planning (Ryan, 1982). In 1983 Regional Planning was merged with an existing planning program that stressed advocacy planning in the College of Design, Architecture, and Planning. The resulting new unit thus became a School of Planning. Since the separation, the extensive collaboration that began when the two departments were joined in 1959 has continued. We have offered joint graduate degree programs. We established the Joint Center for GIS and Spatial Analysis (GISSA) in 1992 to provide training and research opportunities in applied GIS. GISSA conducts workshops, offers a certificate in GIS, maintains a GIS data base, and is currently involved in fourteen research projects involving faculty not only from Geography and Planning but from the Colleges of Business Administration, Education, Medicine, and the School of Architecture, and the departments of Biology, and Computer Science among others. Professors Lin Liu and Wang Xinhao are the co-directors of GISSA.

Varday, Wang, and Mittal thus have strong historical, administrative and research links to Geography, and their article fits into the department's themes in a number of ways. Their paper also deals with another longstanding social problem: how to provide housing to low-income residents at a reasonable cost. Their method involves calculating average rents for different locations within a study area so that subsidies can be correctly calculated. Not only does it deal with the problem as it affects Cincinnati, it proposes a method that could be applied in any area within the United States with a housing subsidy program. Finally, it seeks to provide an approach to a solution to a classic problem in Geography, the modified areal unit problem (MAUP). It turns out that the areal unit used in geographic analysis has implications for statistical analyses of any data used because both the scale and zoning system of the areal units are unpredictable in their intensity effects on many types of statistical analysis (Fotheringham and Wong, 1991; Jelinski and Wu, 1996; Openshaw, 1983). Until the advent of GIS, the best "solution" to MAUP was to ignore it, since it was insoluble, and/or of trivial importance. Furthermore, if MAUP were acknowledged, doubts would be cast on the applicability of nearly all applications of quantitative analysis to zonal data (Openshaw and Taylor, 1981). There are now at least two reasons for not ignoring MAUP however: first, using GIS there is an opportunity to test the results of statistical analysis of data using different zoning systems. Second, government funding agencies require that some form of zoning system be used in order to establish base-lines for funding grants and projects.

Although Varady, Wang, and Mittal were asked to provide a means of calculating average rental costs, their solution turned out to be incompatible with the software purchased by local public housing authorities. Their article thus provides both a technical approach to a long-standing geographic problem, but also insight into the complicated relationship between applied work and the realities of local governments implementing national programs.

Selya's article represents several major themes. First, subject to staffing availability the department has long given research based courses in regional geography at

scales ranging from continents (Asia, Africa), regions (Latin America, Australia and the Pacific, The Middle East), countries (China), and even cities (Cincinnati and the Tri-State). Apart from focusing on Taiwan, the article also aims to improve our understanding of the local effects of globalization by focusing on alternative ways to define and measure whether or not de-industrialization has actually occurred in a successful mid-income country facing competition from newly developing areas close to it. Part of the analysis involves evaluating the effectiveness of governmental policies on both maintaining levels of employment in manufacturing, and in creating a mixture of new, high-end export products.

Stafford's article stands in sharp contrast to the other ones. It is unique in that its main concern is with identifying the practice of economic geography at the University of Cincinnati within a framework of the history of economic geography in the Anglo-American world. Stafford thus offers two perspectives: one on the history of economic geography, and one on changes in the department's teaching of and research on economic geography. If nothing else, Stafford's article demonstrates the challenges of maintaining a fresh perspective on a topic with a rich heritage and large classical literature which should be passed on to successive generations of geographers.

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