

CHEIRON'S ORIGINS: PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS AND A PHOTOGRAPH

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When the Cheiron Society convened at the University of New Hampshire for its thirty-fifth annual meeting in June 2003, members were returning to the site where the proposal to establish a new scholarly organization to promote research in the history of the behavioral and social sciences originated in the summer of 1968. I was witness to Cheiron's birthing and have been closely involved in its evolution over the years, and so was asked to comment on the circumstances that produced what has become a vibrant source of stimulation and support for those of us interested in the field. (For other published accounts of the Institute and Cheiron's founding see Brozek, Watson, & Ross, 1969, 1970; Goodman, 1979, 1982; Watson, 1972, 1975; and Weyant, 1968.) © 2004 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

I enrolled in the psychology master's program at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) in 1963 when my husband joined the UNH faculty. I held an undergraduate degree in psychology from a small liberal arts college and had started master's programs at two different institutions, each time being interrupted before completion because of family moves. I had no career ambitions but wanted to get closure on an MA just for the satisfaction of it.

The UNH Department of Psychology was already laying plans for the introduction of a PhD program, under the leadership of Eugene Mills, department chair. The program was designed to prepare college teachers with a broad range of expertise rather than specialized researchers. Mills had a strong appreciation for the history of psychology, having published a biography of G. T. Ladd. As plans for the advanced degree developed, there were four essential components in addition to the doctoral dissertation: a full year's seminar on history of psychology, a three-semester statistics/methodology sequence, a third-year teaching practicum, and an empirical "publishable" research project. Areas of study for the dissertation were necessarily limited to the expertise of the existing faculty.

The PhD program was approved and applicants sought for its inauguration in the fall of 1966. Many, perhaps most, of the MA-level graduate students applied to continue in the doctoral program but only a few were admitted. Three of us—Jaylene Summers Tilton, Barbara Ross, and myself (then Elizabeth Goodman)—were accepted at the third-year level, having completed the MA in spring 1966. As we moved through our PhD work, we were sometimes referred to as "Faith, Hope, and Charity," although we never knew who was which! As the first ones to be involved, we became pioneers in the teaching practicum under the guidance of Raymond (Roy) Erickson, who had replaced Gene Mills as department chair. At some time during that year, he called me into his office to discuss my choice of a dissertation area. I had no strong leanings toward any of the areas open to me, and he urged me to consider history of psychology. It seemed a "top man in the field" had been recruited by the department and he would "need a good student or two" when he arrived for the 1967–1968 academic year. My acquaintance with general history was quite limited, and I knew very little about history of psychology but realized that it could be advantageous to work with a leader in a new field.

ELIZABETH SCARBOROUGH received her PhD from the University of New Hampshire in history of psychology in 1972. She served as executive officer of the Cheiron Society (1973–1980), as secretary-treasurer of APA's Division 26 (History of Psychology) in the mid-1980s and as its president in 1991. In 2000, she retired as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University, South Bend.

That “top man” was Robert I. Watson. Because of the program’s emphasis on history and his recent promotion of history of psychology, Watson had been one of the two people sent by the American Psychological Association (APA) to consult as the PhD program was being proposed. He quickly saw that this new doctoral program had the potential to become a base for the training of historians of psychology and let it be known that he would favorably consider the possibility of moving from Northwestern University to New Hampshire, thereby also shifting his professional identification from clinical psychology to history. Fortuitously, just at that time, the UNH president issued a challenge to the faculty: he would grant a new position as a special presidential appointment to the department that could attract an appropriately attractive candidate. Psychology won the position with Watson.

During the 1967–1968 year, Watson collaborated with Josef Brozek of Lehigh University to secure funding from the National Science Foundation to conduct a six-week summer institute on teaching the history of psychology, to be held at UNH in 1968. An announcement of the program and a call for applicants was published in the first issue of the newsletter of the APA’s recently formed Division of the History of Psychology.

Thirty participants, including six predoctoral students,¹ and a select group of leading scholars gathered in Durham. In addition to Brozek and Watson, the instructional staff included Henry Guerlac (Cornell, history of science), Julian Jaynes (Princeton, comparative psychology), Robert MacLeod (Cornell, psychology), George Mora (Yale, psychiatry), and David Krantz (Lake Forest College, social psychology), each of whom had week-long assignments, delivering formal lectures and leading discussions during morning sessions. Other scholars, including Joseph Agassi, Mary Henle, Gardner Murphy, Robert Sears, Richard Solomon, and Thom Verhave, as well as Eugene Mills and Roy Erickson, dropped in for single presentations.

As expected, the dividing line between staff and participants was thin and frequently crossed. Participants shared their teaching experiences and concerns, read extensively, prepared and delivered seminar reports, and devised individual research projects to pursue following the Durham days. Most participants and staff were housed together on the fourth floor of Stoke Hall, the dormitory where sessions were held. Given the intense schedule, fun and social events serving as occasional breaks, and shared dormitory life during one of Durham’s rare heat waves, a warm camaraderie developed. Part of a piece written by Walter Bernard to be sung at the farewell party on July 24, 1968, catches the spirit of the gatherings:

One highlight of our stay was the picnic at the pond,
 Food, beer, conversation cemented our bond,
 Some mishaps occurred, some canoes were upset,
 And a number of scholars were found all wet.
 [Chorus]: We’re gonna toot this Institute.

Impressed by the intellectual excitement being generated, Julian Jaynes stayed on for a second week following his “assignment.” Toward the end of that time, at an after-dinner gathering in the dorm lounge, Julian spoke of the significance of what was being accomplished and suggested the group assemble a year hence to report on progress being made in the research projects and the application of teaching ideas, even going so far as to magnanimously offer to host the meeting at Princeton. Soon there was a suggestion that we should form an organization to “carry on.” As the idea began to take hold, the group decided to adjourn to the

1. Three of the graduate students continue active in the field and attended the 2003 meeting: Michael Sokal, William Woodward, and Elizabeth Scarborough (Goodman).

Brozeks' apartment for further consideration. Several of us were concerned that a new organization might threaten the recently created APA division devoted to the history of psychology, which Watson and Brozek had labored to bring into existence. While folks were on their way to the Brozeks', someone (Barbara Ross, I think) phoned Bob Watson to let him know what was afoot. Bob had already prepared to retire, but he too recognized the significance of what was being proposed, got dressed, and joined the group for further discussion.

It was decided that there was value in incorporating both international and interdisciplinary elements in the new organization and that these emphases would distinguish it from APA's Division 26. Although planned for psychologists, the institute staff and participants included disciplines other than psychology and even a few non-Americans. John J. Sullivan (New York University) organized a planning meeting that was held in New York City in October 1968, attended by some of the institute people along with other interested persons. Julian Jaynes secured support from Princeton, and he, Mary Henle, and John Sullivan served as a program committee for the first annual meeting. The new organization was first named the International Society for the History of the Behavioral and Social Sciences. That was appropriately descriptive, but the acronym ISHOBSS was less than pleasing, and Cheiron, the wise and knowledgeable centaur of Greek mythology, appeared for the second meeting, held in 1970 at the University of Akron.

John Updike's early novel *The Centaur* had appeared not long before this time, and it has always seemed to me that the second, one-sentence paragraph below—taken from Julian Jaynes's introduction to the inaugural meeting in May 1969—not only set the tone for what we were about, but also was peculiarly "Updikian" in style:

The behavioral and social sciences are at a significant and critical stage in their development. For one thing, their vast accumulation of data is divergently increasing beyond the scope of any specialist, with horizons uncoped with and interfield problems unfaced. And for another, the answers of these sciences to current personal, educational, social and political problems—valid, innocuous, or false—are influencing life on this planet with an increasing and often concern-arousing tempo.

This society has been organized on an international, interdisciplinary level to inquire into the historical origins of these disciplines and their concepts, to elucidate the variety and historical causation of past answers to their perennial problems and to survey the contemporary scene critically and evaluatively from these regards, that past truths unnoticed may be brought to discussions, that the successions of discovery that have led to present endeavors may be unraveled, and that by the assigning of importances, progress in the behavioral and social sciences may be more secure and the future projected with new wisdom.

THE PHOTOGRAPH

Figure 1 shows participants in the NSF Summer Institute on the Teaching of the History of Psychology, held at the University of New Hampshire from June 17 through July 25, 1968.

Row 1 seated, left to right: Michael Sokal (Case Western Reserve University, graduate student), Eugene Mills (University of New Hampshire, former chair, Department of Psychology), Audrey Skaife (Wisconsin State University, Oshkosh), Raymond Wolfe (State University of New York, Geneseo), Josef Brozek (Lehigh University, Institute co-director), Robert I. Watson (University of New Hampshire, Institute co-director), James Higgins (Fordham University), Vernon Kiker (California State College, Los Angeles).



FIGURE 1.

Row 2 seated: Norman Garrett (Los Angeles Pierce College), Barbara Ross (University of New Hampshire, graduate student), Keturah Whitehurst (Virginia State College), William Woodward (Princeton University, graduate student), David Krantz (Lake Forrest College, week-long lecturer), Frank Wesley (Portland State College), Robert Davis (Case Western Reserve University), Wayne Lazar (Rutgers University).

Row 3 seated: Albin Gilbert (West Virginia Wesleyan College), Noel Smith (State University of New York, Plattsburgh), George Zimmer (Grinnell College), Robert Arvidson (University of Alberta), Levy Rahmani (Jerusalem, Israel, graduate student), Chris Koronakos (Western Michigan University).

Standing, left to right: Sam Campbell (Texas Technological College), Robert Weyant (University of Calgary), Emmett Hinkleman (Chicago, Illinois, graduate student), Elizabeth Scarborough Goodman (University of New Hampshire, graduate student), John Huber (University of New Hampshire, graduate student), Charles Miley (Aurora College), Sarah Anders (Louisiana College), Sister Zacharewicz Misaela (Holy Family College), Willem van Hoorn (University of Leiden), Walter Bernard (C. W. Post College), Larry Hagen (College of Idaho), Roy Erickson (University of New Hampshire, chair, Department of Psychology), James Herrick (Hartwick College).

Not pictured: Arthur Blatt (Hunter College), Henry Guerlac (Cornell University, week-long lecturer), Julian Jaynes (Princeton University, week-long lecturer), Robert MacLeod (Cornell University, week-long lecturer), George Mora (Poughkeepsie, New York, week-long lecturer), Orlo Strunk (West Virginia Wesleyan College), John Sullivan (New York University).

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