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Brigitte Bailey, Associate Professor of English, College of Liberal Arts, Travels to England

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Brigitte Bailey

Associate Professor of English - College of Liberal Arts

Professor Brigitte Bailey traveled to England in July to attend a conference she helped organize on "Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers in Great Britain, Ireland, and Europe," and to present a paper on her own research.



Brigitte Bailey (right) in Oxford, England, with research collaborator, Lucinda Damon-Bach from Salem State College.

I've just returned from an unusually sunny week in the UK, where I attended a conference I had helped to organize: "Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers in Great Britain, Ireland, and Europe," held at the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford University, July 16-19, 2008. The conference was an outgrowth and convergence of two burgeoning areas in American literary studies: the recovery and analysis of 19th-century women writers and the mapping of transatlantic literary and cultural relations. We conference organizers—Prof. Beth Lueck (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater), Prof. Lucinda Damon-Bach (Salem State College), and I—were very pleased with the high quality of the papers and the disciplinary and national range of the presenters; participants included literary scholars, art historians, museum professionals, historians, and gender studies scholars and hailed from 10 countries. Conference papers focused on writers from the 1790s to the 1910s and on the contexts that generated and shaped women's writing: tourism, international abolitionist circles, labor, reform, celebrity, comparative political economy, aesthetics, faith, contested representations of race and ethnicity and national identity, the business of publication, gender and the writing trade, etc. The conference prompted wonderful interdisciplinary conversations and may lead to a collection of essays which, we hope, will make a real contribution to transatlantic scholarship.

I was especially glad to forge a contact with the relatively new Rothermere American Institute at Oxford, which hosted the event. The RAI draws scholars from a number of nations and institutions to carry out research and create such intellectual exchanges on American politics and culture as this conference represents. As American Studies grows more international, these institutional connections will become more important for scholars. Finally, I was also able to pursue my own research interests in 19th-century American writers in Europe; I presented a paper at the conference on a New England writer, New York journalist, and foreign correspondent: "Margaret Fuller's New-York Tribune Dispatches from Great Britain: Modern Geography and Reform Rhetoric." Thanks to CIE for supporting both aspects of my work—the scholarship and the international conference—by helping to fund the trip!



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