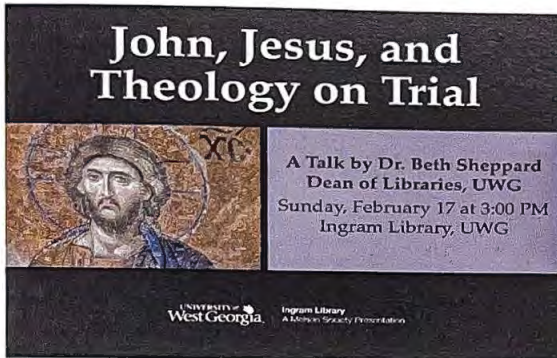


Penelope Melson Society

SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER



drama, explain, in part, why this Gospel is so different from the other biographies of Jesus represented by Matthew, Mark and Luke. Please mark this event on your calendar.

Is A New Era of American Politics Beginning?

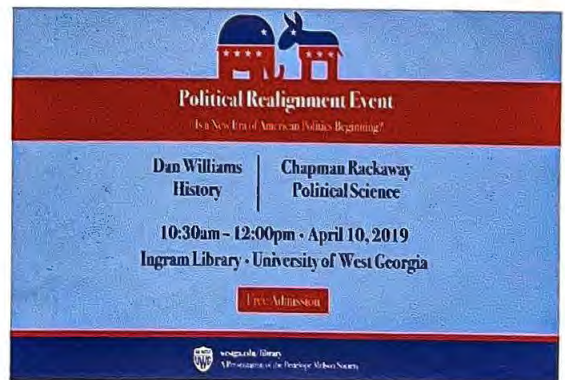
Professor Dan Williams (History) and Professor Chandler Rackaway (Political Science) will square off in what should be a lively and provocative discussion of whether the nation is on the brink of a historic political realignment. It has happened before. Beginning in 1932 the Democratic Party became the dominant party for more than forty years, but a more conservative and Republican dominated era began in 1980 and has largely continued down to today. Professors Williams and Rackaway will discuss whether all signs point to the imminent return of Democratic domination.

John, Jesus, & Theology on Trial

The annual meeting of the Melson Society will be on Sunday, February 17, at 2:30 p.m. in the Ingram Library. It will be a brief meeting followed by refreshments and, at 3:00 by what promises to be an exciting talk by Dean Beth Sheppard.

At 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 17, Dr. Beth Sheppard will speak in the Ingram Library on "John, Jesus, and Theology on Trial." Beth holds a PhD in Biblical Studies from the University of Sheffield where her research focused on the Fourth Gospel. Beth, a layperson, also holds an MDiv degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and early in her career served as the solo pastor of the Little River United Methodist Church in Little River, Kansas. As a theological librarian she regularly publishes in both the fields of Library Science and New Testament Studies and is author of *The Craft of History and Study of the New Testament*. In her Melson Society address, *John, Jesus and Theology on Trial*, she will highlight the Roman legal motifs that pervade the Fourth Gospel.

The presence of legal terms along with the Evangelist's casting the story of Jesus in a way that reflects a courtroom



The Magic of Papyrus

In a world where e-books are fast replacing print, it is sometimes helpful to reflect that innovation related to books is nothing new. History shows that scribes, illuminators, printers and publishers do occasionally make changes in the materials and techniques that they use. One example occurred when the scroll was superseded by the codex (the book format where pages are stacked and bound together on one edge). Despite changes to the medium by which words are conveyed, the central purpose for creating books stays the same: to make certain that we have a mode for recording human knowledge and memories.

To be sure, innovation related to books and writing is often gradual and new leaps and bounds may occur only after centuries have passed. Nevertheless, it was inevitable that we would see a time when new technology would begin to challenge the dominance of the print books that were a hallmark of the period between the Reformation's printing press and the start of our present century, beloved though they might be. Likely eBooks won't be the final format for transmitting information either. There will probably be something newer in a century or two. Nonetheless, it is sometimes fun to reflect on where we've been. In this piece, the focus falls on a writing medium known as papyrus. But before we talk about that, though, it might be helpful to quickly review other ways humankind has recorded history.



(Figure 1)

Back in earliest times, pictographs were painted on solid rock surfaces; inscriptions and ultimately hieroglyphics were carved into blocks and monuments. During the bronze and iron ages the ancient writing systems of Mesopotamia involved cuneiform, or wedge looking characters that were pressed into clay tablets by using a stylus cut on an angle to achieve a triangular shape. Once the impressions were made with the stylus, the tablets



were baked in kilns, which made them durable. Even so, that wasn't the end of human being's inventiveness concerning materials for writing and preserving information.

It is not unusual for archaeologists of the Greco-Roman period to uncover ostraca or pottery shards upon which people scratched words, messages, and even business receipts because clever humans found uses for every last bit of a broken pot. School children at Pompeii in Italy carried wax tablets and a stylus to meet with their teachers in order to take notes—a writing medium that was super convenient because mistakes could be smoothed out and the tablet reused.

For their part, the Egyptians were known for a material called papyrus. It is, in a way, the forerunner of today's paper—a flat, light, easily portable, and relatively inexpensive writing surface.

The papyrus plant was harvested and used as a writing material as early as the bronze age, if not before, and the modern word "paper" is often linked with the term "papyrus," though in Egypt the plant was called by other names such as *wadj*. The papyrus plant was once native to the marshes of the Nile river delta, although it is rare now, likely because the marshy conditions that were its native habitat were largely eliminated with the Aswan dams (the upper and lower), controlled irrigation, and the urbanization of the delta region. The plant is essentially a reed and has a long stalk with a bushy/feathery plume on its tip. Papyrus plants are depicted in carvings on monuments throughout Egypt and its seeds are often found in the tombs of the Pharaohs, indicating the plant's importance to the way of life in Ancient Egypt. During a recent tour of that country I had an opportunity to attend a papyrus paper-making demonstration. First, the top is cut from the stalk. Then, the green outer layers of the stems are peeled away to reveal the white pith in the center (See Figure 1). The person



Kurt Stüber [1]- calliban.mpizkoeln.mpg.de/mavica/index.html, part of
www.biolib.de,CCBYA3.0.https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2606

undertaking the demonstration then used to hammer to pound the white, flexible rods into strips that ended up being about an inch wide and eight inches long (they pith seemed to have the consistency of a turnip before being pounded flat).

Next the strips are hammered together side by side. Finally, two layers are beaten together--first a horizontal layer, then

a vertical. This results in a writing surface where on one side of a piece of papyrus the lines run across and on its reverse, they appear up and down. The flattened sheets are put between pieces of linen and then pressed under a heavy weight. For this demonstration, a book press of the type that libraries use even **(Story continues next page)**

Papyrus Cont'd. today when making book repairs like

gluing covers back together was put into action (See figure 2). In ancient times, however, one might expect rocks were used to weigh down boards. Finally, the paper is removed from the press and soaked for several weeks to make it flexible and durable. The longer paper soaks, the darker yellowish/brown it becomes. Also, due to fibers in the stalk and where they are located, whether nearer the roots or the plume, the grain of the paper might appear alternately finer or coarser. Real papyrus paper has tiny brown flecks in it that appear when the sugar molecules that are in the pith turning darker during the soaking process. Imitation papyrus made from palm leaves is easy to come by from the vendors that frequent the tourist attractions and monuments in the country and lacks these brown flecks. Scrolls are simply long lengths of individual sheets (usually around 10 to 20), glued together side by side. Eventually, papyrus as a writing surface itself went out of fashion when it was eclipsed by parchment. Parchment comes from the skins of herd animals like sheep or cattle. One version of parchment that is made from calfskin is called vellum, though at times the words vellum and parchment are used interchangeably.

So, when you next fire up your Kindle or eBook reader, just remember that the materials used to record and communicate our thoughts, feelings, and learning today in the 21st century are bound to change again in the future. Yet, librarians will still be there to collect information, organize it, and make certain it is available. And for their part, students, like ours here at the University of West Georgia, will continue to study and absorb the wisdom of the words that are transmitted.

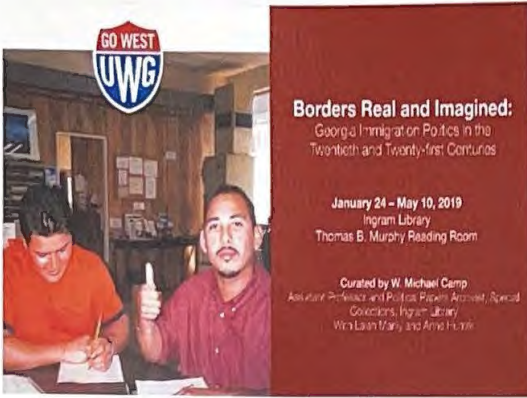


Figure 2

A Melson Recipe

- 1 pound of ground chuck
- 1 pound of ground pork
- 1 large jar of Publix spaghetti sauce (meatless)
- 1 large jar of Kroger spaghetti sauce (meatless)
- 1 box of lasagna noodles
- 2 eggs
- Ricotta cheese (large container)
- 8 oz. package of shredded mozzarella cheese
- parmesan/romano cheese (sold in plastic bottles)

In large soup pot, boil quarts of water for lasagna noodles; add noodles and cook until tender. Meanwhile, brown beef and pork together in large skillet or Dutch oven: break up into smallest possible pieces. Drain fat. Add both jars of sauce. Heat and set aside. In medium mixing bowl, beat eggs. Add ricotta cheese and mix until smooth. Lightly spray bottom and sides of deep dish lasagna pan with cooking spray like Pam. Spoon a little sauce in bottom, then place a layer of noodles (3 strips side by side), spread a light layer of ricotta/eggs on the noodles, then a sprinkle of mozzarella, and a sprinkle of parmesan. Then spoon over a layer of meat sauce. Keep repeating layers of noodles, cheeses, and sauce in that order until noodles are gone (about 7 or 8 layers of noodles) or dish is full. Top with a final layer of sauce. Cover with foil and bake about 50 minutes at 350 degrees. Carefully remove foil, top with mozzarella and parmesan, and bake uncovered about 10 more minutes. Let rest a few minutes, then cut and serve. Good to cut individual servings and freeze them in leftover containers. (Recipe submitted by Ms. Shelley Rogers, Senior Cataloger, Professor, and Melson Board Member.



Library Exhibits

The University of West Georgia's Ingram Library will display an exhibit on the history of immigration in Georgia in the Thomas B. Murphy Reading Room from January 24-May 10, 2019. Titled *Borders Real and Imagined: Georgia Immigration Politics in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries*, the exhibit will examine anti-Catholicism in the 1910s, refugees from Eastern Europe resettled in the state in the 1940s and 1950s, the Mariel Cubans cases of the 1980s, immigration reform bills presented in the US Congress in the 1990s, and the activities of the Multicultural Community Alliance in Carrollton in the early 2000s.

The exhibit will reveal and illuminate the complex history of immigrants and refugees in Georgia, as well as the efforts of Georgia politicians to mold and shape national immigration policy.

In conjunction with the exhibit, Ingram Library's Special Collections will host a panel discussion at 3:30 pm on Tuesday, February 26. It will feature Priyanka Bhatt, staff attorney for Project South, Steve Goodson, Professor of History at the University of West Georgia, and J. Salvador Peralta, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of West Georgia. It will be moderated by exhibit curator W. Michael Camp, and will be followed by a reception and exhibit tour.

Every month the Ingram Library's Circulation department plans and implements displays that are relevant to our constituents. January's display asked the question, "What does it mean to think critically?" Our intent was to help patrons explore analytical thinking skills so they may generate their own informed opinions about the world around them. We introduced concepts such as logical fallacies, cognitive bias, and critical theories.

Our definition is as follows: "Critical thinking is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities, as well as a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism." Our Concept and Definition of Critical Thinking (2018, December 18). February's display will celebrate Black History Month. (Sarah Gourley, Circulation Manager, Contributed to this story and the source used was retrieved from <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/our-conception-of-critical-thinking/411>).

Recent Activities

This autumn the Melson Society sponsored two major programs. In early October, University Archivist Shaneé Murrain spoke on "A History of the University of West Georgia." Later that month and into November the Society hosted a large exhibit on "Americans in World War I." In addition to several panels and display cases that explained America's involvement in that pivotal war, Professor Jennifer Keene, a nationally recognized historian of the war, spoke in the Ingram Library.



Remembering Dr. Mel Steely

It is with tremendous sadness that the Ingram Library marks the passing of Dr. Mel Steely. Dr. Steely was part of our faculty for 40 years. He came to what was then West Georgia College in 1964 to teach Modern European and German History and served as local and state president of the American Association of University Professors.

He served multiple terms on AAUP national committees and was the recipient of their national Sumberg Award and the state Akin Award. He worked twenty years as the GA AAUP's lobbyist and also was active as the president for the southeast region of The Historical Society. He held the rank of professor of history at UWG where he was one of the longest serving members of the faculty, retiring in 2004 after 40 years of service from the University of West Georgia. After retirement he continued serving as director of the Georgia's Political Heritage Program which he founded in 1985. During the course of his work with the Heritage Program, he was a familiar presence in Ingram Library and worked tirelessly with our Special Collections staff to preserve, in audio format, the reminiscences of key movers and shakers on Georgia's political scene. His work is an amazing legacy upon which the Ingram is continuing to build. He will be missed but never forgotten. Thank you, Mel, and best journey.



Some Ingram Library Stats (FY 2017)

Equipment and Laptop Checkouts	5,583
Electronic Journal Titles	91,710
Volumes in the Collection	338,796

We Want to Hear from You!

The Library is always interested in learning what patrons, stakeholders, friends, retirees, and visitors from the community are thinking.

As a result, we will soon be distributing a survey to Melson Society Members. Please be on the lookout for it.

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