In the fall of 2013, the Purdue Honors College presented twenty-two of its undergraduate students with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Higher academia has long celebrated the institution of scholastic publishing, which allows researchers and authors to disseminate their studies, findings, and perspectives to the greater public. Such scholarly publications are often restricted to graduate and postgraduate researchers, with few undergraduate projects reaching book form. However, two courses within the Honors College united to create and publish a volume of undergraduate essays written by current students about their predecessors, the Purdue class of 1904.

Professor Kristina Bross, director of the College of Liberal Arts Honors Program, developed an honors course intended to introduce undergraduate students to intellectual research and academic authorship. The class, designated Interdisciplinary Approaches to Writing, established the class of 1904 as a base for a variety of different research projects throughout the semester, which bridged the gap between electronic inquiry and archival exploration. In addition to perusing topical literature, the students’ survey of the past graduates included intensive examination of antique issues of the Exponent—the student newspaper—and comprehensive study of the 1904 yearbook—the Debris. The University’s archivists, including Sammie Morris and Neal Harmeyer, guided students through the Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections, which revealed scrapbooks and photographs that gave unique insight on campus culture and student backgrounds.

The course culminated in a demanding final project, the biographical analysis of a member of the class of 1904, which launched the writing class on an extensive journey through archives and records to uncover the lives of long-dead Boilermakers. Various academics and
researchers, all learned in biographic writing, spoke to
the students about appropriate processes, inspiration, and
style, and the class embarked on an investigation into
their subjects’ personal histories. Some of the earliest
female and African American pupils were researched,
along with international students, farm kids, and inter-
city teens. Each writing student uncovered a diverse
range of information, noting exploits, successes, and
upsets of Purdue students over a century ago, and
every author employed unique stylistic and thematic
approaches within the resulting biographical essays.

Meanwhile, Charles Watkinson, director of Purdue
University Press and head of Scholarly Publishing
Services, and Catherine Fraser Riehle, an associate
professor of library science, had been preparing to offer
an honors class in the spring of 2014 entitled Publishing
Bootcamp. This class would allow students to explore
the scholastic publishing industry and the process of
acquiring, editing, producing, and ultimately publishing
various types of scholarly works—in journal as well as
in book form. Watkinson and Riehle approached Bross
midway through the fall semester with an idea for a
potential partnership between their two classes.

“As we talked,” Bross states in the preface to the now-
published book, Little Else Than a Memory, “we realized
that a partnership between the two classes would be
an excellent fit and would support Purdue’s larger
goals of supporting undergraduate research across the
University.”

In the spring semester, the six students of Publishing
Bootcamp experienced firsthand both the ups and downs
of following a project from its beginning stages—the
trials of working with preoccupied authors to maintain
the integrity of their initial essays—to the satisfaction
of holding the printed-and-bound book in their hands.
Beginning with preliminary edits, the students were each
assigned a chapter written by a student author in Bross’s
class. Referencing the Chicago Manual of Style, they
independently edited the texts. Once the editing stage
was complete, the students worked extensively in Adobe
InDesign to lay out the finalized text drafts and deliver
them to the printer. Managing Editor Katherine Purple,
Production Editor Kelley Kimm, and Editorial Assistant
Jennifer Lynch from Purdue University Press provided
initial training in copyediting and offered constant support
throughout the editing and layout process.

In April, the publishing students were given the chance
to visit BookMasters, located in Ashland, Ohio, where
Little Else Than a Memory was printed. Upon arrival, they
were each presented with a copy of the completed book,
and after a tour of the production warehouse the class was
tasked with delivering a few dozen of the books to the
student authors and supporters.

As they watched their book grow from initial research
to final hard copies, the writing and publishing students
gained valuable perspective on the process of scholastic
investigation, biographical analysis, and publishing
methodology.

Little Else Than a Memory is now available for purchase

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**Student Authors**

**Eden Holmes** is a freshman studying history and law
and society. As a member of the Honors College,
she participated in the Interdisciplinary Approaches
to Writing course, and her biographical essay about
Howard Ernest Satterfield was published in Little Else Than
a Memory. Holmes intends to pursue a law degree
following her graduation.

**Abigael Johnson** is a freshman in exploratory
studies. She plans to declare a major in English and earn her
teaching license. Eventually, she aspires to earn more
than a few graduate degrees. Johnson’s love for writing and
editing was piqued by the idea of a Publishing Bootcamp,
and the experiences she accrued producing Little Else Than a Memory will
prove useful as she pursues publication for a novel of her own.