

# History of Reading News

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## Why Johnny Can't Read: 50 years of Controversy

By Phyllis Schantz and Joseph Zimmer

I will admit that the book is doubtless quite unscientific . . . but then, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was not exactly a documented sociological treatise. When a public problem exists, it has to be presented in a way the public cannot only understand, but take notice of. And the fact is that, with all too few honorable exceptions, American education has gone to hell in the proverbial handbasket. . . . We are raising a generation of the barely literate. . . . ("Why Johnny Can't Read," 1955a).

Paul Anderson, in "Why Johnny Can't Read," in the July 4, 1955 issue of *New Republic*, was responding to criticisms of *Why Johnny Can't Read, and What You Can Do About It*, the educational best-seller by Rudolf Flesch (1955). While his comparison between the effect of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on slavery and Flesch's book on reading education may have been a bit exaggerated, Anderson's remark characterized the liberation from the bonds of progressivism *Why Johnny Can't Read* symbolized in the minds of many readers.

*Why Johnny Can't Read, And What You Can Do About It* arrived 50 years ago in the spring of 1955 and set off an educational war. The explicit objections to whole word methods of initial reading instruction and the arguments for a return to phonic methods were so strongly stated and compelling to popular audiences that the book soon appeared on best-seller lists. The title, and virtually every word after it, came to represent not only a reaction to whole word methods of reading instruction but also an indictment of the educational system as a whole.

To understand the impact and importance of *Why Johnny Can't Read*, one must view it within the context of reading education history. The book and other educational events had a certain synchronicity. From the late 1920s until the early 1950s, the teaching of reading had remained relatively unchanged. Whole word methods, borrowed from German educators in the 1840s, were used as part of reading education for decades. In the 1920s and 1930s progressive educators embraced a whole word approach in reading, beginning reading with whole words and then moving to phonics. As progressive educators gained control in teachers colleges, whole word approaches came into popular use in schools, and eventually became associated in popular consciousness with the immensely popular *Alice and Jerry* and *Dick and Jane* books. Hence, by the time Flesch's book came out in 1955, whole word approaches to teaching

reading were firmly entrenched. The book caused traditionalists and their new allies the Scientific Linguists to gain some grass roots control, and phonics approaches, which began with phonics methods, were re-examined.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Rudolf Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read, and What You Can Do About It* (1955) arrived when the time was right for an educational change. As babies born after World War II began to enter school and as anti-Communist sentiment raged, criticism of this modern education grew from a "barely audible rumble to an unavoidable roar" (Scott & Hill, 1954). Claims were made that the progressive philosophy of educating the whole child increased costs because schools attended to the child's social and emotional development, vocational training, and leisure-time activities (Woodring, 1952). Others claimed that Progressive methods were robbing children of "their self-reliance and substituting dependence, . . . undermining the Christian principles, . . . scoffing at everything American and exalting everything Communist" (How Red Are the Schools, 1950, quoted in Skaife, 1951, p. 29). The Cold War (Lippman, 1947) and impending "space race" also brought a certain urgency to the improvement of education.

In 1955, the same year Flesch's polemics reached the American public, Henry Lee Smith (1956), then at the University of Buffalo, was invited to present a lecture at Harvard University about the progress made by linguistic scientists and the extent to which their scientifically accurate analysis and description of the structure of American English could be applied to reading instruction. In the same year, James P. Soffietti, a professor of linguistics at Syracuse University, published "Why Children Fail to Read: A Linguistic Analysis" in the *Harvard Educational Review*, making claims similar to those made by Flesch, but clothing his assertions in the authority of science, as had many linguists since the formation of the Society for the Study of Linguistics in 1925 (Bloomfield, 1925).

In 1955, the Progressive Education Association dissolved, and many believed this symbolized a change in the predominant ideology. Fred M. Hechinger described the 1955 demise of the Association in the September 10, 1955, issue of *Saturday Review*:

In one sense the officers of the now defunct Progressive Education Association were right in saying that the "job" they had set for themselves quite some time ago--in the Twenties--has been completed. Through years of controversy and name-calling, traditional and progressive education (and their followers) have been battling and working and theorizing for the upper hand. In the end neither of the two won

## RUDOLF FLESCH AND WHY JOHNNY CAN'T READ

Rudolf Flesch, motivated by the case of a single child he taught to read, seized the opportunity and published *Why Johnny Can't Read, And What You Can Do About It*. Focusing on a chief remnant of progressive education, whole word approaches to initial reading instruction, and following the lead of the Scientific Linguists, Flesch struck a blow to the core of elementary education. Flesch's main arguments were well summarized by V. M. Rogers ("Why Johnny Can't Read," 1955b) in an early review of the book in the March 14, 1955, issue of *Time*:

Only in the U. S., reported Flesch, is there any remedial-reading problem. In Britain, kindergarten children read *Three Little Pigs*; in Germany, second-grade pupils can read aloud (without necessarily understanding all the words) almost anything in print. By contrast, average U. S. third-graders have a reading mastery of only 1,800 words. Why is the U. S. so far behind? Says Flesch: "We have decided to forget that we write with letters, and [instead] learn to read English as if it were Chinese." . . .

Under the word method, if a child comes up against a new word, all he can do is guess--not at its pronunciation, but at its "looks." As a result, says Flesch, word-method pupils make outlandish errors, reading "said" for "jumped," "caps" instead of "houses." One youngster who had successfully recognized "children" on a word-recognition card was unable to read it on the printed page. How did he get it from the card? His simple answer: "By the smudge over in the corner."

Flesch, who earned his Ph.D. in education from Columbia University in 1944, had authored several best-selling books for professional writers, including the well-known *The Art of Plain Talk* (Flesch, 1946). In *Why Johnny Can't Read*, Flesch attacked the "look-say method," a whole word method, and implored parents to teach their children by a phonics method. The book was organized in two parts: the first was a "little compendium of arguments against our current system of teaching reading" (p. xiii), and the second was a "home primer," which consisted of lists of phonetically related words for home instruction. Flesch contended that "the teaching of reading all over the United States, in all the schools, in all the textbooks is totally wrong and flies in the face of all logic and common sense. . . . Do you know there are no remedial reading cases in Germany, in France, in Italy, in Norway, in Spain -- practically anywhere in the world except in the United States?" (p. 2). He went on to declare, "We too could have perfect readers in all schools at the end of second grade if we taught our children by the system used in Germany. . . . It's very simple. . . . Teach the child what each letter stands for and he can read" (pp. 2-3).

In summary, Flesch felt the United States would soon fall behind other industrialized nations because it could not teach its children to read, and he proposed that the root of the problem was the absence of phonics in schools.

The situation that Flesch described appeared true to parents and the public. The books that children used in early reading instruction seemed simplistic; children appeared to "guess" at words rather than "sound them out"; and beginning reading was taught mostly through the use of visual cues. What Flesch failed to acknowledge was that most schools used more eclectic approaches for teaching reading than he claimed. In most cases, sight vocabulary methods were used to get students started in reading. Phonics was often introduced a short time later to help students identify words that were not in their sight vocabulary. Phonics was not missing from American classrooms, as Flesch asserted, but was included in the whole word approach in a variety of ways (Duker & Nally, 1957). As William S. Gray often put it: "There is no one best method for teaching reading" ("Lost Art of Reading," 1955).

## RESPONSES TO FLESCH

The responses to Flesch from two leaders in the field of reading were immediate. A. Sterl Artley (1955), at Mississippi Southern University, was direct: "Within the last year . . . have appeared articles extolling the virtues of the phonics approach to reading instruction. One of the writers contends that . . . all the teacher needs to do is teach the child what each letter stands for" (p. 197). Artley (1955) described this as the philosophy of the "old oaken bucket," explaining that "the point of view most widely accepted by reputable reading people today -- Gates, Gray, Witty, Durrell, Betts, and others -- is that phonics is merely one of several methods that the child may use to unlock words" (p. 197), and he contentiously added, "I will defend to the last the point that unless children see early that reading is an avenue to new and exciting experiences they are not going to turn to it in their free time" (p. 199). More cautiously, Nila Banton Smith (1955), at New York University, reviewed the research on phonics and stated the consensus position of reading specialists: not all children need phonics instruction, but some children are helped when phonics is taught functionally.

Other educators also criticized Flesch's views. In the June 1955 issue of *Parents*, Florence Beaumont and Adele Franklin of the New York City Public Schools argued that Flesch had blown the reading problems in schools out of proportion, and that schools were doing an excellent job teaching children to read (Beaumont & Franklin, 1955). Lois M. Rettie (1955) asserted that the question was not whether to teach whole words or phonics, but which to teach first, and that experience had taught us whole words were better for beginning readers. In "How Johnny Reads," an article in the June 20, 1955 issue of *Time*, Ruth Dunbar, an educator and reporter for the Chicago *Sun-Times*, was quoted as calling Flesch's argument "a straw man" and later stated that the teaching of mathematics should be of more concern than any debate over reading methods (Dunbar, 1956). In the August 15, 1955 issue of *Time*, "Why Johnny Can't/Can Read" illustrated the problems with any system based solely on whole word or solely on phonics instruction. Jhan and June Robbins argued in the September 1955 issue of *Reader's Digest*:

Without any doubt, the most progress is being made in those schools where the teachers are combining the best of both methods--and remain open-minded about further improvements.

The newspapers told a different story. *The New York Times* declared the battle lines over teaching reading had been drawn and went on to suggest that families would be setting aside time in the summer months “to get in points for the Phonic Method” (A Surprise for Johnny, 1955, p. 24). Exceptions to the negative reactions to Flesch were also found in the one hundred and twenty Hearst daily newspapers, which printed the book in serial form (A big row, 1955, p. 57), possibly contributing to widespread conversation and concern about Flesch’s charges.

“Why Johnny Can’t Read” (1955b) quoted Edna Lessing, who argued that teaching children a word recognition vocabulary before they were taught the principles of phonic analysis “can destroy the foundation of reading development for a considerable number of them.” D. C. King (“Why Johnny Can’t Read,” 1955b) showed the extent of Flesch’s influence on popular perceptions of reading when he stated:

It is the *excessive reliance* on word-shapes recognition, and the virtual elimination of phonetic analysis as a fundamental tool, that seems to be the root of the present decline in children’s reading-ability. For, what good is it to be able to read fast if your reading has to be limited to those words you have memorized in school? Such a situation is clearly extremely anti-educational; the child *has* to have phonics if he is to develop his own reading vocabulary.

By mid-1955 most of America was debating between “phonics” and “look-say.”

The July 30, 1955, issue of *Saturday Review* presented “Teaching Johnny to Read,” a debate about Flesch’s book between William Morris, a leading publisher, and Emmett Albert Betts, professor of psychology and reading at Temple University. The debate summarized the two sides of the argument. Morris wrote:

Mr. Flesch has done a more than reasonably thorough job of documenting his work -- frequently quoting passages from educational journals and from the published monographs of the reading “experts.” One suspects that the authors of some of the passages quoted by Mr. Flesch are now smarting at the revelation of their fundamental nonsensicality when exposed to the light of public print. As an example, note this statement from a university “expert” on reading: “Current practice in the teaching of reading does not require a knowledge of the letters [of the alphabet]. . . . In remedial work such knowledge is helpful.” In other words, try to teach the child to run before he walks. After he has fallen down sufficiently often that it becomes obvious that he needs “remedial work,” teach him to take one step at a time. . . .

Defending reading as a meaning-filled process, Betts replied:

In his effort to present his case for phonics Flesch has introduced confusion regarding what reading is. He quotes a dictionary definition, to “get the meaning of writing or printing.” He twists this definition by insisting that “reading means getting meaning from

combinations of letters.” He tells a native of Prague that he could not “understand a word” of the Czech newspaper – “I can only read it.” Throughout his book he says he teaches the child to “read words” when he means to identify, or pronounce them. He drills home his idea that reading is merely the identification of words by means of phonics: “Teach the child what each letter stands for and he can read.” If the teacher of reading could be reduced to this simple formula and if this formula could be applied to *all* children Mr. Flesch could become the Albert Einstein of reading instruction.

By August, sales of *Why Johnny Can’t Read* had reached 60,000 copies (“Why Johnny Can’t/Can Read,” 1955), and the “warfare between the entrenched ‘experts’ and the advocates of common sense” (Flesch, 1955, p. 10) had become a national obsession. Indeed, *Why Johnny Can’t Read* remained on the bestseller list for thirty-nine weeks (The First R, 1956, p. 52). The first mass market version sold an additional 144,000 copies (Monaghan & Saul, 1987, p. 106). The debate even spawned a television program, “Are Our Children Learning to Read?” in September (Robbins, 1955, p. 172).

Helen Robinson (1955), at the University of Chicago, reviewed *Why Johnny Can’t Read* in October of its publication year. She criticized Flesch for being selective in the research he reported, for limiting the definition of reading to word calling, and for basing his conclusions on visits to two schools and on experience teaching only two children. She asserted, “Research does not support the conclusion that *all* pupils can learn to recognize words by any single method” (p. 92). To this Paul Witty, professor at Northwestern University, added, “Many children do need help in the mastery of phonic skills although some appear to have made satisfactory progress in reading without formal instruction. Therefore, a system of careful diagnosis of individual needs should precede the introduction of instruction in word analysis” (Witty & Sizemore, 1955, p. 369).

By December, leaders of the field of reading had prepared their responses for a themed issue of *The Reading Teacher*, and they lined up against Flesch. Betts (1955b) explained there are three “facets” of reading instruction, i.e., interests, word recognition skills, and ability to think, and he added acerbically, “Over the years, zealots and charlatans have sold stupid and inane programs of phonics to parents and some teachers as a cure-all for reading ills” (Betts, 1955b, p. 68). Smith (1955) and Artley (1955) reminded readers that children are, indeed, taught phonics in school, and Gray (1955) reminded readers of the words of his mentor Guy T. Buswell, who in 1922 had written:

If the primary emphasis is placed upon word recognition, the outcome is the ability to follow the printed lines, to pronounce all the words, but to display no vital concern for the content. . . . On the other hand, when the chief emphasis is placed on the thought . . . the pupils do develop a vital concern for the content, but develop more slowly in word recognition (quoted in Gray, 1955, p. 105).

As Flesch's ideas gained momentum in the public's consciousness, the attacks went beyond the teaching of reading. John Gordon stated in the November 1956 issue of *American Mercury*:

To put it in "short, jerky" language, it means *Teaching School vs. Babysitting*. It is as simple as this: teaching reading with phonics demands real effort on the part of teacher and pupil; trying to teach reading by the word method licenses a classroom for fun and frolic, because any normal child can memorize two or three hundred words in a school year--even without a teacher.

*Why Johnny Can't Read* was not just a debate over reading methods, it called into question the integrity of all professional educators.

However, once the American people were convinced that education was declining, rebuttals made by educators sounded defensive and reactionary and seemed to find support only within the educational community. Criticisms of *Why Johnny Can't Read* could not stem the tide of public opinion created by the book, and research showing that children were learning to read and that phonics had never left the classroom went virtually unnoticed.

Under the circumstances, the leaders of the field of reading banded together. On January 1, 1956, they formed the International Reading Association (IRA) through a merger of the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction and the National Association of Remedial Teaching (Jerrolds, 1977). William S. Gray was asked to be the first president, and the first annual meeting was held in Chicago in May, 1956, "to define the nature of the progress made thus far in developing efficient readers and . . . consider the challenging problems and controversial issues still faced" (Robinson, 1956, p. 248).

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## IRA CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

This year's International Reading Association conference in San Antonio, Texas, celebrates 50 years of IRA conferences by presenting a number of sessions devoted to the history of reading. If you plan to attend the conference, we thought you might appreciate a collection of those sessions at the conference devoted to the history of reading.

### Institute 2 – The Past is Prelude to the Future: Reflecting Over the Past 50 Years

Sunday May 1, 2005 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

*Presenters:* Mary Jo Fresch, Matthew Zbaracki, MaryEllen Vogt, Janet Hickman, Sandra McCormick, Michael Opitz, Nancy Padak, Gay Su Pinnell, Irene Fountas, Tim Rasinski, Rob Tierney, Jerry Zutell, Allison Baer, KaaVonia Hinton, Lisa Mitchener, Karla LaPorta

**50 Years of Changing Images: Caldecott Award Winning Books Reflect Changing Conceptualizations of the American Child (1954-2004)**

Anacacho Ballroom, St. Anthony Hotel, Monday May 2, 2005, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

“This presentation provides insights into how, over time, changes in picture books reflect societal conceptualizations of childhood and the educational implications of these changes,” Bette P. Goldstone

**The International Reading Association at 50: A History 1955 to 2005**

Grand Ballroom – Salon K, Marriott Rivercenter, Monday May 2, 2005, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

“This session highlights IRA’s first 50 years of contributions to the reading profession,” Douglas K. Hartman, Lou Ann Sears

**A Deeper Understanding of Louise Rosenblatt: Her Theory, Beliefs, and Politics. What is the most widely cited expert in the field of Education and Literacy Studies telling us?**

Room 212, Henry B. González Convention Center, Tuesday May 3, 2005, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

“Louise Rosenblatt holds a unique position in the fields of Education and Literacy Studies. She is the most widely cited authority of the leaders in our field. According to her, the literary work is not an object or an ideal entity. Reading is best understood as a poem or an event in the life of a reader, as a doing, a making, a combustion fed by the coming together of a particular personality and a particular text at a particular time . . .” Philomena Susan Marinaccio and Sharon Crawley

**Paul Witty and Learning to Read with Private Pete in World War II**

Exhibit Hall D, Henry B. González Convention Center, Tuesday May 3, 2005, 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

Poster Presentation, Thomas Sticht

**Fabulous Faces in Literacy – Then and Now**

Exhibit Hall D, Henry B. González Convention Center, Tuesday May 3, 2005 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

Poster Presentation, Carolyn P. Casteel

**Fifty Years of Learning to Read in New Zealand – The Changes, the Change-Makers, the On-Going Challenges**

Room 212, Henry B. González Convention Center, Tuesday May 3, 2005, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

“From Janet and John to Mrs. Wishy-Washy, from Sylvia Ashton-Warner to Marie Clay – what worked “down under,” what changed, and what challenges remain,” Alan Trussell-Cullen

**History of Reading Special Interest Group**

Conference Rooms 1, 2, Marriott Rivercenter, Wednesday May 4, 2005, 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

*Chair:* Marilyn McKinney

Welcome and Overview: George Kamberelis

“Ellen Cyr: Forgotten Author and Innovator,” Arlene Barry

“The Eating Fingers and Other Inuit Tales,” Eleanor B. English and Paul J. Schafer

“Adult Literacy Education in Post-Apartheid KwaZulu-Natal: A Chronicle of Frustration,” Ruth D. Farrar, Britt Sable, and Ivor Baatjes

“The History and Evolution of Informational Text: Changing Structures that Impact Reading Instruction,” Laurie A. Henry

“The Power of Oral Language in Literacy Development and Nation Building,” Sherry Schwartz

**Then and Now: Recurring Issues in Literacy Education**

Room Rio Grande E, Hyatt Regency, Wednesday May 4, 2005, 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

*Chair:* E. Jennifer Monaghan

“My Book and Heart / Shall Never Part’: Differing Portrayals of Literacy in Reading Instructional Texts, 1727-1950,” E. Jennifer Monaghan

“Re-Reading 19<sup>th</sup> Century Composition Books: Their Often Overlooked Similarities to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Texts,” Lucille M. Schultz

“Where Rollo Went, What Katy Wrote, and How the Tree in Brooklyn Grew: A Hundred Years of Submerged Writing Pedagogy/Learning to Write in Young Adult Fiction, 1840-1940,” Susan Streeter Carpenter

“Should We Let Children Choose What They Read? Views From Popular Magazines Throughout the Twentieth Century,” Joseph E. Zimmer

“How Far Have We Come? Recurring Issues at Meetings of the International Reading Association 1956-2005,” Phyllis Schantz

**Latino/a Literature Cien Años de Sabiduría**

Live Oak Room, Hyatt Regency, May 4, 2005, 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Presenter: Aurelia Davila de Silva

**Applying Fifty Years of Research: Practical Applications of the Connections Between Oral Language Proficiency and Early Reading Success**

Room 210, Henry B. González Convention Center, May 4, 2005, 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

“In this session, participants will learn how to interpret and use results from research on oral language competence and early reading success,” Dixie L. Winters

**Becoming a Reading Teacher Then and Now: A Father-Daughter Conversation on Traditional and Innovative Routes to Success in Our Profession**

Room 212, Henry B. González Convention Center, Wednesday May 4, 2005, 3:45 – 4:45 p.m.

“A first-year teacher and a teacher educator share their stories from 1974 and 2004. Presents evidence for the optimal elements in preparing excellent reading teachers,” John D. Beach, Margaret C. Beach

**History of Reading Instruction and the International Reading Association: the Nigerian and African Perspective**

Room 211, Henry B. González Convention Center, Thursday  
May 5, 2005 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Welcome and Overview: Obiajulu Emejulu

“Literacy in Nigeria Across Two Centuries,” Chukwuemeka  
Onukaogu

“The Organisational Structure of RAN: Looking Ahead,” Helen  
Oyeneeye

“Reading Association of Nigeria in the African Literary  
Landscape,” Adamma A. Emejulu

## READING PIONEERS PROJECT TAKES SHAPE

Under the able leadership of editors Susan Israel and E. Jennifer Monaghan, the Reading Pioneers project is nearing completion. The project, a book of biographical sketches of major contributors to the field of reading education, is currently being drafted by the authors, many of whom are members of the History of Reading SIG. More information on the project will be available in the fall newsletter.

## MEMBERS' NEWS

**Ronald J. Zboray & Mary Saracino Zboray**, Department of Communication, University of Pittsburgh, announce their new book:

Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Literacy Dollars and Social Sense: A People's History of the Mass Market Book* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

**LouAnn Sears**, University of Pittsburgh at Greenburg writes:

1. I am currently writing a chapter about Edward L. Thorndike for inclusion in *Reading Pioneers: Celebrating Earlier, Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Reading*. {italics}
2. Since 2003, I have been working with Dr. Douglas K. Hartman on the history of the International Reading Association.
3. For IRA 2005, Doug Hartman and I will present our work on the history of IRA.
4. For IRA 2005, I am preparing a research poster session on Sherwin Cody and his Nutshell Library.
5. For NRC 2005, I plan to do a research poster session about Edward L. Thorndike (if proposal is accepted).
6. In 2005, I am working on my dissertation: The International Reading Association Within the Context of American Educational History (early 1900s on).

**Richard Robinson**, University of Missouri-Columbia, recently published a new book titled, *Reading Instruction: Its History, Theory, and Development* (Allyn & Bacon, 2005). This book of readings show how current reading practices of today have developed over time through an historical selection of relevant articles and materials

**Barbara Ruth Peltzman**, St. John's University, Staten Island Campus writes:

I am currently completing a book for McFarland & Company Publishers to be called *Reading Instruction in America*. I presented a paper last May in Reno called “Noah Webster: America's First Reformer of Reading Instruction.” I am in the process of collecting *Alice And Jerry* readers published by Harper & Row from 1936-1966 and am in communication with a retired salesperson who

became an editor. She is relating information about Mabel C. O'Donnell, author of the series. I have located autographed readers and am on the trail of biographical information. This will provide insight into the life and work of a pioneer who delivered readers of quality.

Much of the work of women in the development of reading materials in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is less well documented than the work of more well known men in the field. I am also interested in the connection between content areas subjects and children's literature. I am collecting picture books.

Our SIG has a great potential for helping pre and inservice Educators make the connection to the past. Many tend to think ONLY in terms of “What's HOT and What's NOW.” Much of what we call “New” is reworking of past strategies and materials. Our strength lies in illuminating the value of the past. “The past walks at the heels of the present.” Our value is to identify that past. One problem is the way practitioners view reading instructions—as momentary problems to be fixed NOW. There is no look backwards.

**Allen Berger**, Heckert Professor of Reading and Writing at Miami University, is the co-author of a book, *Educators on the Frontline*, published by the International Reading Association (2005). He is also on a new IRA task force to examine IRA's involvement in program accreditation and to make recommendations to the board about IRA's optimal role in reading teacher program accreditation. For the 94th annual NCTE convention he organized and spoke at a session on Communicating with Policymakers: How to Do it, Indianapolis, November 19, 2004.

**Charles Monaghan** is senior author of a chapter on May Hill Arbuthnot in a collection of essays on the Early Reading Pioneers, a manuscript in preparation edited by Susan Israel and E. Jennifer Monaghan.

**E. Jennifer Monaghan's** book on colonial literacy instruction and acquisition, titled *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*, will be published by the University of Massachusetts Press this summer, 2005.

**Thomas Sticht**, International Consultant in Adult Education, writes:

During 2004 I conducted an invited speaking tour of 13 cities in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. I gave 18 presentations on adult literacy education called “Literacy Frees the World.” I also wrote and had published a chapter for a book, two book reviews, and two brief articles for journals in the United Kingdom. I served as a consultant on the U. S. Government's Adult Literacy Research Working Group in Washington, DC.

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