

I have had a lifelong love affair with books and literature, so I was thrilled when I was offered a position as an editorial intern for NewSouth Books, an independent publishing company located in downtown Montgomery, Alabama. Having done a small amount of research before applying for the internship and a little more after accepting it, I knew that NewSouth was a small independent publisher with a number of its own fiction and non-fiction titles, a small staff, and a sign on the front shaped like a shoe (an homage to the shoe repair shop the building once housed); but I still wasn't sure what to expect. What I was delighted to find was a company composed of a group of people who were passionate about good literature, southern culture, history, and, most importantly, books. Despite the turmoil of the book industry evident in the recent merger of publishing giants Penguin and Random House and the ongoing "Amazon war," NewSouth continues to grow its list of titles and publish, as the company's website proclaims, "regional books of national interest."

My own work as an intern at NewSouth incorporated a variety of different aspects of the publishing industry and gave me the opportunity to do real, meaningful work for an independent general trade publisher. One of my tasks was to find, research, and log potential clients in the company's contact database, FileMaker Pro, for the promotion of the books *Bus Ride to Justice* by Fred Gray and *Voices Beyond Bondage*, an anthology of 19th century African American poetry. One night during the summer, I had the opportunity to work with the editor-in-chief, Randall Williams, on a direct from publisher sales event. The event involved a tour for law students conducted by Mr. Williams of important civil-rights landmarks and ended with a dinner, discussion with leaders of the civil-rights movement (several of whom have books published by NewSouth such as Fred Gray), and book signings and sales.

Of course, my most exciting, rewarding, and time-consuming work was editing, formatting, and designing books. The two books that defined my summer at NewSouth were the poetry anthology *Voices Beyond Bondage* and the biography *Tinsley Harrison, M.D.* The poetry anthology was the first editorial project assigned to me, and due to the complexity of stylizing poetry, I quickly learned the ins and outs of the Adobe InDesign layout software that the company utilizes. The book is an anthology of 19th century African American poetry culled from a variety of African American-owned newspapers of the time and focuses on how poetry affected and reflected the attitudes of a mostly voiceless people. I worked closely with both the anthology editors and the NewSouth editor-in-chief to proofread, edit, and typeset the introduction and opening essay; format, stylize, and arrange the poems in InDesign; and to gather and make location recommendations for the images used in the book.

The second editorial project I was assigned was the biography *Tinsley Harrison, M.D.* This book was an ongoing project made difficult due to the fact that the book's original author was elderly and no longer capable of continuing work on the project, and the original editor of the book, a former NewSouth employee who knew more about it than anyone else, now lives and works in Chicago. The book is about Tinsley Harrison, a pioneer of internal medicine, and involves extensive foot- and endnotes as it is largely concerned with his medical endeavors. As the book underwent edits, many of these notes became jumbled and incorrect in the later editions. While I did a significant amount of proofreading, formatting, and stylizing for this book in InDesign as well, my major task was to work with the former editor to organize and correct these notes. While I did make major headway for this gargantuan project, it will continue to be a project for future interns.

I was excited to find that I had taken *Voices Beyond Bondage* near the point of completion towards the end of my internship, and a little disappointed that I had not been able to work more with the editor of *Tinsley Harrison, M.D.* due to his hectic schedule and long distance telecommunication. I found that I thoroughly enjoyed working with these programs and, more surprisingly, the content. My own affinity lies more within the realm of fiction and literary criticism, but NewSouth pushed me out of that comfort zone. The academia involved in the research of the essays of *Voices Beyond Bondage* unexpectedly piqued my interest as I learned about the development of the African American owned press and the role poetry played in it. The medical precision and technicality of *Tinsley Harrison, M.D.* I also found surprisingly intriguing. This leads me to believe that, while I will certainly pursue a career in publishing, it may not necessarily be in the realm that I originally intended. If anything, my work this summer has shown me that nearly any aspect of the publishing business and any subject within it could make for an interesting career.

I certainly enjoyed my time at NewSouth Books, and I am glad for the experience and insight into the publishing field that it has afforded me. However, working for a small independent publisher is not in my career plan. While I got a lot of hands-on experience as an intern at NewSouth Books and I think that it has a lot of potential as a company, I think that individual opportunities at a very small company are limited. I would like to be a publisher, editor, or editor-in-chief myself someday, and reaching these sorts of positions is much more difficult in small companies like NewSouth. I am very grateful for the inside look that they gave me into the world of publishing and for the opportunity to hone editorial skills and develop new software skills such as Adobe InDesign. Whether books, literary reviews, magazines,

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4

newspapers, or whatever else may lie in my future, I will always cherish the experience I gained at NewSouth Books.