Looking Back: Highlights

The Special Collections Department’s most successful project this year was the launching of *Arkansauce: The Journal of Arkansas Foodways*. Years of planning for the journal came to fruition in early March when the first issue arrived in the hands of readers. *Arkansauce* proved to be a runaway hit. The department was nearly overwhelmed by fan mail and subscription requests.

A major project to digitize selected materials from the Brooks Hays Papers saw considerable progress this year and is nearing completion. Hays, a political, civic, and religious leader from Pope County, served eight terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, Fifth District, from 1942 to 1959.

*Index Arkansas* finished a major expansion project, funded by the Happy Hollow Foundation, to index county historical publications from 1986 to 2007.

Special Collections has labored for many years to preserve the Ozark Folksong collection gathered by Mary Parler. In a collaborative effort, the Department began working closely with Lora Lennertz Jetton, head of the Libraries’ Performing Arts and Media Department, to devise a plan to preserve this important collection and to provide access to the materials via the Internet.

One of the Department’s digital collections, the *Commonwealth College Fortnightly*, was recognized in July as “Digital Library of the Week” by AL Direct, the electronic newsletter of the American Library Association. *Commonwealth College* was a controversial socialist labor school located near Mena in Polk County.

The Department received a grant of $4,590 from the National Film Preservation Foundation to re-master, preserve, and digitize a fifty-year-old 8mm film produced in 1961 by Neil Compton in support of his campaign to keep the Buffalo River undammed and free-flowing.

In May, Special Collections received two awards of merit from the Arkansas Historical Association—one for the digital project, “Land of (Unequal) Opportunity: Documenting the Civil Rights Struggle in Arkansas,” and one for *Index Arkansas*.

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Mary Parler with students at the University of Arkansas, from the Mary Celestia Parler Photographs (MC 896)

Neil Compton on the Buffalo River Trail, from the Neil Compton Papers (MC 1091)
The manuscripts unit acquired forty-two collections, totaling 407.5 linear feet. Highlights of the year’s acquisitions include:

- The papers of Mary Nell Turner, a historian from Hope
- The papers of Charlie Cole Chaffin, a former state senator from Benton
- The Baker Family Music Collection, containing reel-to-reel and digitized audio recordings of their Madison County 1950s-era music
- The German POW Letters containing correspondence between Ernest D. Gregory, a prosperous Ashley County farmer and business man, and German POWs who worked on his farm during World War II
- The George F. Trapp collection of architecture prints
- The papers of Lindsley Smith, a former Arkansas state representative
- Materials from Rosa Heinke, an art instructor at the Rohwer Relocation Center in Desha County, including a diary documenting daily activities at the World War II-era internment camp built to incarcerate Japanese Americans from the West Coast
- Civil War-era correspondence between the family members of Edward Parker, a Little Rock banker and Civil War veteran
- The Halsey Prudden Correspondence, containing Arkansas territorial-era letters from Saline County
- The papers of Verna Cook Garvan, founder and benefactor of Garvan Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs

The manuscripts unit processed forty-six collections, comprising 162.69 linear feet. Highlights of collections processed during the year include:

- The Nannie Stillwell Jackson Diaries Addendum, obtained with the help of Margaret Bolsterli. This expands our existing Nannie Stilwell Jackson diaries that present a poignant account of this 19th century Desha County woman's daily existence on a small, low income farm in rural Arkansas.
- Materials of C.G. “Crip” Hall, who served as Arkansas’s Secretary of State from 1937 to 1961
- The German POW Letters described above
- An addendum to papers of Sidney McMath, who served as Governor of Arkansas from 1949 to 1953
- The records of the Ozark Society, a conservation group that played a major role in keeping the Buffalo River undammed and free-flowing. This project was aided by a gift of funds to help process the collection, so that it would be available for use by the 50th anniversary of the organization’s founding and the 40th anniversary of the Buffalo River’s designation as a national river in 2012.
- The records of the Arkansas office of Peace Links, documenting the women’s organization founded by Betty Bumpers that began in Arkansas and spread around the world. Peace Links was established in 1982 in response to fears of nuclear proliferation during the Cold War. It provided educational resources and opportunities for cultural exchange between American and Soviet women.

A major project to digitize selected materials in the Brooks Hays collection is nearing completion. Brooks Hays was one of the most influential members of the state’s congressional delegation after World War II.
The Dale Bumpers processing project is in full swing, as processors are busy sorting the papers of the former U.S. Senator and Governor. This project is on schedule—about one-third of the three-year project has been completed.

In March, Adam Heien began processing the papers of Thomas F. “Mack” McLarty and his wife, Donna. Pamela Kirkpatrick was hired to assist Adam in processing the McLarty papers. Mack McLarty is an Arkansas business leader and Bill Clinton’s oldest friend. He worked in Clinton’s presidential administration in several capacities.

The manuscripts unit made impressive strides in implementing Encoded Archival Description (EAD) for finding aids. For more than a year, all new finding aids have been prepared in EAD. These attractive finding aids include an image from the collection, and the descriptive information is easy to search and retrieve. The workflow for creating the EAD finding aids was streamlined so that processors are able to create them with a template. Web services staff provide invaluable assistance in solving problems related to their display on the Libraries’ Web site.

Research Services Unit

Special Collections served 1,293 patrons during the 2010–2011 academic year. These researchers included 218 faculty members, 184 graduate students, 162 undergraduate students, and 729 members of the general public. Materials used included 7,671 manuscript/archival items, 1,504 items from the Arkansas Collection, 9 rare books, 22 theses or dissertations, and 647 cartographic or photographic items. The total number of items circulated was 15,038. The unit handled 4,151 reference transactions, of which 997 were in-person, 817 were by phone, 1,104 were by email, and 36 were by postal mail. This total number of reference transactions also included 964 research consultations.

Research Services provided bibliographic instruction to eleven University of Arkansas classes and provided instruction to seven groups outside of the Libraries.

The Department’s most heavily used collections in 2010-2011 were (1) the J.W. Fulbright Papers and associated international education and cultural exchange collections, (2) the Edward Durell Stone Papers, (3) the Fay Jones Collection, (4) the Billy James Hargis Collection, (5) the Margaret Smith Ross Papers, (6) the Orval E. Faubus Papers, (7) the Otto Ernest Rayburn Papers, and (8) the Daisy Bates Collection.

The Fulbright papers and related collections draw an especially diverse group of researchers from around the world, whom we serve via correspondence, telephone, email, and in-person. The unit assisted researchers from Chile, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, Poland, Pakistan, and France.

Research Services staff members have noticed a significant upward trend in the number of in-house researchers using their personal digital cameras to copy materials, as opposed to requesting photocopies.

University Archives

Spaces and Faces: Namesakes at the University of Arkansas is a new digital collection created with the assistance of University Archives and available on the Libraries’ Web site. It links buildings on the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville campus with the people who inspired their names. Researchers can view images of these people, along with historical photographs of the buildings that share their names. Images are accompanied by brief biographical information about the people and construction dates for the buildings.

In March, records of the Women’s Athletic Department were released as a part of Women’s History Month. This collection was donated by Ruth Cohoon, who served as the first Women’s Athletics Director, a position she held from 1972-1989. Cohoon was an administrator, teacher, athlete, and advocate for women’s athletics. The collection documents women’s athletics as it transitioned from “sports days” and intermural games to a funded intercollegiate athletic department.

Index Arkansas

Index Arkansas, a free online index of Arkansas sources, finished a major project funded by the Happy Hollow Foundation that involved indexing Arkansas county historical publications from 1985 to 2007. The project added almost 12,500 citations. The index now contains more than 102,500 citations searchable by subject, publication title, and keyword. Indexed sources include 80 important Arkansas-related biographical and historical books, 43 Arkansas general periodicals, and 45 county historical journals. The index will be continuously updated. Use of the index has grown rapidly, with 35,000 searches conducted from July to December 2010—nearly double the number of searches conducted during the same period in 2009. Project Director Joan Watkins succeeded a year, a twice yearly publication schedule is under consideration.

Events, Exhibits, and Outreach

The most exciting outreach activity of the year was the publication of Arkansauce: The Journal of Arkansas Foodways. The journal project was conceived by Tom Dillard and Tim Nutt and managed by Diane Worrell. John G. and Dora J. Ragsdale of Little Rock helped underwrite the project. Guest editor Rex Nelson, a veteran journalist and public relations expert, recruited entertaining articles from food writers all over the state. Arkansauce, which explores food-related history and customs in the Natural State, was an immediate success. Although Special Collections initially planned to publish Arkansauce once a year, a twice yearly publication schedule is under consideration.
The Arkansian newsletter, published in the fall and spring of each year since the fall of 2007, continues to be an important tool for telling our story to the citizens of Arkansas.

In October Special Collections hosted a reception and program celebrating American Archives Month. Filmmakers Sarah and Emma Bailin, teenage twin sisters from Little Rock, presented an entertaining program about their filmmaking process, including their use of Special Collections’ materials to research their documentary film topics. The event drew a standing-room-only crowd.

On May 19 the Special Collections Department sponsored the opening reception of the annual conference of the Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA) in Little Rock. SSA is a professional organization of archivists in Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona. Held at the Clinton Presidential Center, the reception paid homage to Arkansas foods and included behind-the-scenes tours of the Clinton Presidential Library. Additionally, three Special Collections Department members gave a presentation at the conference on the Department’s outreach and public relations program. Attendees gave high marks to both the reception and presentation.

The Department began improvements to the hallway leading to its entry door after the Libraries’ old card catalog was dismantled and removed. Two exhibit cases were installed, pictures and posters from the Department’s collections were hung on the walls, and a table with promotional literature was placed there, creating a more welcoming and attractive space.

Special Collections staff created a number of exhibits—including “Rural Arkansas,” “University of Arkansas Press Books,” and “Rare Books”—in the Special Collections Reading Room. The University Press exhibit/collection contains the most complete collection of books published by the University of Arkansas Press to be found. Exhibits in the hallway leading to Special Collections were “Arkansas Politics: Rivalries and Conflict, 1865–Present” and “Religion in Arkansas: History and Heritage.” Exhibits on the 2nd floor included “Sacred and Spiritual Treasures: A Selection of Rare Books from Special Collections,” “William Grant Still,” and “Miss America 1964: Donna Axum.”

The Future: Looking Ahead

Preserving and expanding access to the Ozark Folksong Collection gathered by Mary Parler is of paramount importance to Special Collections. The collection consists of more than 4,500 songs and related materials. A library-wide effort has been mounted to preserve this important resource and, equally important, to make it widely available. Working under the leadership of the Libraries’ performing arts librarian, Lora Lennertz Jetton, a task force is taking an expansive look at how to make the Parler materials electronically accessible in the Internet age.

Upon the completion of the Brooks Hays digital project, Special Collections plans to digitize selected materials from the George Fisher collection. Fisher was a legendary cartoonist for the Arkansas Gazette whose large body of work has become a part of Arkansas political folklore.
Personnel Accomplishments
Special Collections Department, 2010-2011

Non-Refereed Articles

Dillard, Tom. 48 weekly columns, “Remembering Arkansas,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.


Parsch, Janet. Grant proposal (funded) to National Film Preservation Foundation. “Opportunity for Arkansas – The Buffalo National River,” to clean, re-master, and preserve an 8mm film produced by Dr. Neil Compton, Bentonville, Arkansas, in support of the campaign to maintain the Buffalo River in northern Arkansas as an undammed, free-flowing river.

________. Co-written with Timothy G. Nutt and Molly Longstreth. Grant proposal on behalf of the University Libraries, the UA Survey Research Center, Global Campus Media Services, the Arkansas Alumni Association, and Spring International Language Center, “International Fellowships Program Archives and Post-Program Tracking and Study” was one of two finalists in a project proposal solicitation from the International Fellowships Program, a project funded by the Ford Foundation and administered by the International Fellowships Fund. The project was subsequently awarded to Columbia University and the Institute of International Education.


________. Special Collections Department Annual Report 2010.


Presentations


Wallack, Catherine (Special Collections). “Edward Durell Stone’s Fulbright Furniture,” presentation to humanities class at Northwest Arkansas Community College, Feb. 8, 2011.


Creative Activities

Lewis, Todd E. Exhibit, “Arkansas Politics: Rivalries and Conflict, 1865-present,” March 2010-March 2011, first floor exhibit cases outside Special Collections.


Lewis. Exhibit, “Sacred and Spiritual Treasures: A Selection of Rare Books from Special Collections,” May-July 2011, Location: 2nd Floor exhibit case.
