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Archives of Appalachia NEWSLETTER

VOL. V, NO. 2



FROM THE DIRECTOR

J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, founder of the Southern Historical Collection at Chapel Hill, once described the four great enemies of documents as "fire, flood, rats, and overzealous housewives." Today we have a longer list of enemies which includes mold and mildew, air pollution, magnetic fields and scotch tape.

The archival profession has developed specialized techniques and materials for combating these enemies. We would like to share with you some of the steps we take to insure that materials entrusted to our care will be available to future generations.

Our basic tool is carefully-controlled temperature and humidity within our own quarters. We also use storage containers constructed of alkaline-buffered materials to counteract the effect of harmful chemicals in the air and in the documents themselves. We undertake a limited program of document repair and on occasions call on professional conservators in Nashville and Atlanta to restore valuable documents. Photographs are particularly fragile and require special care.

Unfortunately, we do not have complete control over the preservation of our cultural resources. We cannot combat the final enemy "overzealous housewives." So often we hear (too late) that homes and offices have been closed in haste and the letters, diaries, photographs, account books and other documents which are the "stuff" of history have been lost in the process.

Physical preservation of documents and books has become a leading concern of the library and archival professions, but we can succeed only with the help of citizens who care about our cultural and intellectual heritage.

Please help by contacting us if you know individuals, families, businesses, or organizations who are moving or whose space has become overcrowded and must be cleaned out.

PRESERVATION OF DOCUMENTS

When a new collection comes into the archives, we must decide which of several techniques to conserve and restore papers are the most cost-effective to use. Value and condition of the documents, expense of the treatment under consideration, availability of sufficient time and staff to accomplish the task--all must be taken into account. If the papers warrant such preservation efforts, techniques include removal of harmful substances, restoration of damaged papers whenever possible and prevention of further deterioration during storage.

To protect both new collections and materials already in storage, papers are fumigated if insects are suspected. If the documents are damp or show signs of mildew, papers are dried, brushed lightly to remove mildew and treated with thymol vapor. Incoming documents may have been damaged by vermin, mold, mildew, rubber bands, and rusty paper clips or staples. If feasible, these substances are removed during processing. Some damage to records, such as fire or silverfish, is irreversible except by a professional conservator.

Next, papers are cleaned and unfolded. Loose dirt is removed, using a camel-hair brush, wallpaper cleaner (such as Absorene) or an art gum eraser. To prevent tearing, papers are carefully brushed from the center to the edges. Documents are unfolded and bent-corners or folds straightened with a bone folder. Brittle papers are humidified and pressed flat under weights.

The final step is to provide protection of the papers for storage. For most collections, the use of acid-free folders and storage boxes is adequate. Items on low-grade paper, such as newsclippings or telegrams, are photocopied or segregated by enclosing in acid-free paper. Very fragile materials may be protected by deacidification or encapsulation.

The papers to be deacidified are placed flat on a work table, brushed lightly with Wei'To solution on both sides and left to dry. Encapsulation involves sealing a document between two sheets of transparent polyester film to give a fragile or frequently-used document added strength and durability. The document is placed on a sheet of film, surrounded by a double adhesive tape, covered with a second sheet of film, processed with a roller to remove all air and trimmed.

PRESERVATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

The ideal temperature range for storing photographs is 64^o-72^o, with a relative humidity about 50 percent. In most homes it is not possible to provide these conditions, but photographs can be stored on the main floor rather than the basement or attic where temperatures and humidity will be outside the recommended range most of the time.

Wooden shelves give off peroxide which damages photographs, as will other chemicals in the atmosphere and even in the human body. White cotton gloves should be worn when handling photographs. Ball-point or fiber-tip pens also contain chemicals which harm photographic images. Only a soft lead pencil should be used to identify photographs, preferably on the back in the margin outside the image.

Framed photographs on display can be damaged in a short period of time from direct exposure to sunlight or fluorescent lights. Popular albums with self-stick

backing are harmful, as are most glues and paper mounts. To insure permanent preservation, prints and negatives should be placed in individual acid-free or mylar envelopes and stored in enamel or steel cases or cabinets.

Since the life of black-and-white photographs is approximately 100 years and that of color photographs less than 20 years, valuable photographs should be copied. Damaged photographs can also be copied and sometimes even repaired by a qualified restoration photographer.

SUPPLIERS/BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Archival storage materials and conservation supplies provide a safe method for preserving and protecting valuable documents. "Acid-free" specially-manufactured paper, storage boxes, document cases and file folders are a few of the absolute necessities. The following list will help your materials and supplies search. Some companies provide catalogues and samples upon request.

The Hollinger Corporation. P. O. Box 6185, 3810 South Four Mile Run Dr., Arlington, VA 22206.

Conservation Resources International, Inc. 1111 North Royal St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

Light Impressions. P. O. Box 3012, Rochester, NY 14614.

University Products, Inc. P. O. Box 101, South Canal St., Holyoke, MA 01041.

The Paige Co., Inc. 432 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

The following books may also be of assistance:

Photographs

Eastman Kodak Company. Preservation of Photographs. Rochester, NY: Eastman Kodak Co., 1979.

Time-Life Books. Caring for Photographs: Display, Storage, Restoration. NY: Time-Life Books, 1972.

Weinstein, Frank A. and Larry Booth. Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1977.

Documents

Duckett, Kenneth W. Modern Manuscripts. American Association for State and Local History. Nashville, TN, 1975.

Kesner, Richard M. A Primer for Conservation of Books and Manuscript Materials. Archives of Appalachia, ETSU. Johnson City, TN, 1978.

Library of Congress, Preservation Office. Polyester Film Encapsulation. Washington, DC, 1980.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

ERNEST DANIEL ACKER (1913-1983) PAPERS, 1936-1983. 7 linear feet, volumes and audio tapes. Correspondence; newsletters; certificates of appreciation related to his work with veterans' organizations. Booklets concerned with the opposition to Masonic groups. Photographs; newsclippings; deed; manuscript; stocks; financial records; account and day books; minutes of the stockholders, incorporators and board of directors relating to the black walnut business of Ernest D. Acker. RESTRICTED IN PART. Willed to the Archives by Ernest D. Acker, Johnson City, TN.

DONALD RICHARD BEESON, SR. (1881-1983) PAPERS, 1861-1983. 1 linear foot. Architectural account books; albums with photographs and journals of hiking trips in western North Carolina and east Tennessee in the early 1900's and autobiography of D. R. Beeson, Sr., architect and civic leader of Johnson City, TN. Also correspondence; newsclippings; photographs; certificates of service and membership; postcards; programs; telegrams; poems; essays; stories; Christmas cards; map of Long Island of the Holston River; service awards for Boy Scouts, Kiwanis and Masons; scrapbook; games; puzzles; and photostats of front pages of Johnson City newspapers, 1884-1940, and the NEW YORK HERALD, April 13, 1861. Gift of D. R. Beeson, Jr. and family of Johnson City, TN.

ELMA LILLIAN RANKIN BEESON (1889-1979) PAPERS, 1904-1973. 1 linear foot. Diplomas; photographs; passport; East Tennessee Normal School class record books; newsclippings; correspondence; award plaque; 50th wedding anniversary invitation; certificates of membership and service; postcards; chapter two of a manuscript on the history of the Rankin family; programs and Tusculum alumni publications and diary (copy) of 1913 European trip of Mrs. Elma Lillian Rankin Beeson, musician, teacher and wife of D. R. Beeson, Sr. Gift of D. R. Beeson, Jr. and family of Johnson City, TN.

BRABSON FAMILY PAPERS, 1829-1936. 1 linear foot, incl. 12 volumes. Day books relating to the medical practice of Dr. A. W. Brabson. Deeds; land grants; correspondence; receipts; photographs; certificates of promotion and graduation; stocks; almanac; Sunday School quarterly; booklet of questions and answers on Tennessee history; account books and promissory notes of the Brabson and Barkley families, who were early settlers in Washington County, TN. Gift of Ms. Margaret Brabson of Knoxville, TN.

THOMAS BURTON PHOTOGRAPHS, 1983. 46 items. 4x6 color photographs of the Holiness Church of God in Jesus Name service showing members involved in snake handling. Gift of Dr. Thomas Burton, English Dept., ETSU, Johnson City, TN.

JOHN H. CRAWFORD PAPERS (born ca. 1809), 1855-1862. 1 folder. Personal correspondence of Col. John H. Crawford, who organized the 60th Mounted Infantry Regiment, C.S.A. and was also Washington county circuit clerk for a number of years. Donated to Sherrod Library in 1958 and transferred to the Archives in 1979. Removed from Washington County Court records May 1983.

EAST TENNESSEE LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY RECORDS, ca. 1920-1945. 163 linear feet. Correspondence; contracts; annual reports; financial statements; tax reports; bonds; trust deeds; budgets; maps; meter orders; inventories; receipts; work orders; questionnaire; booklets; bulletins; insurance certificates; Social Security benefit and unemployment compensation records; photographs; blue prints; and petitions of the East Tennessee Light and Power Company, covering the region from Knoxville to Bristol. Given by Tennessee Valley Authority, Muscle Shoals, ALA and Knoxville, TN.

ETSU. B. CARROLL REECE MUSEUM SLIDES. 92 items. Color slides of B. Carroll Reece Museum exhibits by Tom Daniel, former ETSU photographer. Gift of Mrs. Tom Daniel, Bristol, TN.

ETSU. STUDENT ACTIVITY COMMITTEE RECORDS, 1946-1978. 2 linear feet. Correspondence; budget requests; memorandums and financial reports for University sponsored student organizations. Transferred to the Archives by Dr. James Loyd, Dean of Admissions and Records, ETSU, Johnson City, TN.

ETSU. UNIVERSITY RELATIONS PHOTOGRAPHS, 1967-1981. Ca. 43,000 items. B&W and color prints (various sizes); negatives; proof sheets and slides of ETSU campus views; faculty; buildings; students; sports; organizations; speakers and campus events. Given by Larry Smith, ETSU photographer, University Relations, Johnson City, TN.

TENNESSEE. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH. DIVISION OF SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT. BUMPASS COVE LANDFILL CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1971-1981. 1 linear foot. Xerox copies of maps; financial reports; correspondence and chemical analyses reports of the Bumpass Cove landfill. RESTRICTED. Deposited by Jeannette McLaughlin, Jonesborough, TN.

MARGARET NELMS WIMBERLY PAPERS. 1 folder, 1 volume. Xerox copies of two speeches and article concerning the history of Kingsport. Gift of Mrs. Margaret Nelms Wimberly, Kingsport, TN.

STAFF ACTIVITIES

Director ELLEN GARRISON has been asked to serve as chair of the heritage and folklife committee of the Appalachian Consortium for 1983-1984. The university appointed Garrison chair of its oversight committee for Appalachian Affairs and has approved her nomination as adjunct professor of history.

In April, Garrison served as a judge for the Appalachian Photographic Society's annual competition. In August she spoke to the Appalachian Writers Conference on the preservation of family papers.

MILDRED KOZSUCH AND SUSAN TANNEWITZ-KARNES participated in an August 18 workshop on preservation of family documents and photographs for the regional appalachian center, education division, Children's Museum of Oak Ridge. They discussed conservation measures and gave advice on preservation to persons who brought documents and photographs.

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Scholar-In-Residence Program. Welcome is extended to John Williams, scholar-in-residence to Tusculum College and East Tennessee State University. His office is located in the Archives of Appalachia on the first floor of Sherrod Library. Williams, currently completing his doctoral program in folklore/anthropology at Indiana University in Bloomington, is one of seven scholars-in-residence assigned by the Tennessee Committee for the Humanities to work with local heritage and local history projects.

This local heritage project is the largest single project ever sponsored by the Tennessee Committee for the Humanities. To date the committee has allocated

over \$330,000 for the program. Two additional scholars have been hired by the committee to work with high school social studies faculty to encourage student participation in local heritage/local history projects. Come by and meet John Williams when you are on the campus.

Ongoing Projects. In August, student assistants in the archives completed processing records of the chancery court, county court and superior court as well as miscellaneous papers of the Washington county court. The students are presently working on the East Tennessee Light and Power Company records and the ELIZABETHTON STAR negative collection. It is anticipated that the STAR negatives will be processed and available for use by January, 1984.

Displays. A display is planned for November and December using prints from the STAR's negative collection. The exhibit will depict scenes and activities in Elizabethton during the 1950's. This display will be available after December for exhibition by other groups. If your group would be interested, call or write the Archives of Appalachia to arrange to reserve it. Phone (615) 929-4338 or write Archives of Appalachia, Box 22450A, Johnson City, TN 37614.

Files Under Development. As always, we enlist your support in the development of our files. At present we are seeking additional material on the Melungeons and events leading up to the hanging of the elephant in Erwin. If you have knowledge of such material, please contact the Archives.

Treasures Stored in Archives. An article by Henry Samples, "Treasures Stored in Archives," appeared in the Johnson City PRESS-CHRONICLE July 6. The article highlighted the research collections housed in the archives and the staff's efforts to acquire additional material documenting the political, social, cultural and economic history of Appalachia.

STAFF UPDATE

The archives benefits from the services of many fine ETSU undergraduate and graduate students who carry on a wide range of useful functions for our programs. We could not do all that we do without the assistance of Norma Thomas, graduate assistant. She is assigned to the direct supervision of the team processing efforts of our student assistants.

New additions to the staff include Brent Harris and Tim Seaton, collection processors responsible primarily for preliminary processing. Returning are Lee Burrow, processing photographic collections; Lewis Cox, automated system for collection-indexing and retrieval; Patricia Lee and David Marshall collection processors for preliminary processing and inventories; Tona Scott and Greg Taylor, cleaning and processing newspaper negatives; and Sylvia Lewis, typing and vertical file material filing. We wish them well and thank them for their time and effort on behalf of our program.

Volunteer help is great! Evelyn Powers, retired associate professor from ETSU's sociology and anthropology department, has come aboard as a volunteer worker. She will be assisting with the editing and publication of this newsletter and other outreach acquisition activities. Thanks, Evelyn, for thinking of the archives.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Appalachian Studies Conference

March 26-28, 1984
Unicoi State Park, Georgia

"The Many Faces of Appalachia: Exploring A Region's Diversity"

In natural systems, diversity refers to the variety and heterogeneity of life forms. Diversity can be an indication of the stability and resilience of a region's population. The A.S.C. will address regional diversity as a philosophical concept and explore the cultural plurality of the region. Past conferences have applied international models of exploitation and powerlessness to Appalachia. In doing so, we may have overlooked the essential resilience and richness of Appalachian culture and ignored the reality of the many mountaineers who act rather than react, who lead purposeful and committed lives in an untold diversity of patterns. As we enlarge our horizons to include presentations on the varieties of farmers, politicians, preachers, fiddlers, craftsmen, town dwellers, journalists, writers, millhands, the middle-class, lawyers, artists, activists, merchants, mothers, healers, scholars, thinkers, teachers, and others, we successfully combat the old stereotype of the passive one-gallus mountaineer and celebrate the strength inherent in the region's diversity.

Presentation for the 1984 conference should reflect or address this theme in topic areas such as

- Science and technology
- Trends in Appalachian scholarship
- Geology/natural history
- Religion
- Arts/music/literature/performing arts
- Tourism/recreation/land development
- Migration/settlement patterns/demography
- Family life/childhood
- Folklore/folklife
- Urban and rural Appalachia
- Politics/geography/economics
- Education
- Handicrafts/cottage industries
- Ethnic/cultural/racial diversity
- Medicine/health care/human services
- Environment/bioregionalism

The program committee also recognizes and encourages those numerous voices within the A.S.C. who have called for sessions dealing with the cultural and natural history of the host area. The 1984 conference welcomes presentations dealing with the life and history of north Georgia.

In as many sessions as possible, we hope to integrate different forms of presentation. WE URGE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE WITH RESEARCH PAPERS, FILMS, VIDEOTAPES, PHOTOGRAPHS, EXHIBITS, SLIDE/TAPE PROGRAMS, POETRY, SONG AND STORY.

Deadline for submitting proposals is OCTOBER 17, 1983. For those proposing papers, please send a 250-400 word abstract. For those proposing other forms of presentation, please send a 100-300 word description of your presentation. Please do not exceed one page.

Mail proposals to: Sam Gray, Mountain Heritage Center, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC 28723.

BOOK REVIEW

AUNT ARIE: A FOXFIRE PORTRAIT. Linda Page and Eliot Wigginton (editors).
NY: Dutton, 1983.

Fans of Eliot Wigginton and the Foxfire Books will be delighted to learn of his latest publication, AUNT ARIE: A FOXFIRE PORTRAIT. Readers who have not already made the acquaintance of Aunt Arie in THE FOXFIRE BOOK can anticipate a unique experience. Although Arie Cabe Carpenter was a very real person who became part of the first Foxfire book, she was also a legend in her own time, the personification of high-touch in a high-tech world. To read AUNT ARIE: A FOXFIRE PORTRAIT is to experience more than a biographical portrait of a remarkable woman who was a relic of an extinct culture before she died. It is to be transported into that world and participate in that culture.

Aunt Arie has been immortalized in the play Foxfire, for her portrayal which earned actress Jessica Tandy a Tony award. You cannot read the book without feeling regret that Aunt Arie could not have known that. Perhaps she does.

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GIVE TO THE ARCHIVES FUND!!

All contributions are tax
deductible.

Please send your gift to
the Archives c/o the ETSU
Foundation.