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Archives of Appalachia NEWSLETTER



Vol. X, No. 3

Spring/Summer 1989

FOUNDRY RECORDS DEEDED TO ARCHIVES

The Johnson City Foundry and Machine Works (JCFMW), one of Johnson City's oldest industries, donated many of its records to the archives. The archives received the foundry materials through the intercession of Diana Reilly Graves, treasurer of Tenetek Holding Company, the firm which bought JCFMW in 1984 from George and May Ross McDowell of Johnson City. Tenetek, which had more than \$1.6 million in mortgages on the foundry property, went into bankruptcy in March 1989. A Knoxville-based lending company, First Mortgage Corporation (FMC), in April purchased the company out of foreclosure.

The foundry began operations in 1883, either as the Johnson City Foundry and Machine Works, or as Miller and Crumley Foundry. Reputedly, two men [Jake?] Miller and [Wash?] Crumley, started the plant which was located across from the present site of the Ashe Street Courthouse. In April of 1884, five men, Thomas E. Matson, H.H. Carr, J.C. Hardon, W.J. Johnston and Columbus Powell secured a charter of incorporation from the state of Tennessee. Matson became the president of the corporation which was capitalized at \$20,000. Eight years later, in 1902, the plant secured a new

charter from the state. This time the incorporators were led by George W. and B.J. Sitton, both of whom remained active in the plant's affairs until 1912, when once again the company changed owners. At this time the plant's name changed to Johnson City Foundry and Machine Company (JCFMC). By the time of its second incorporation the foundry had relocated to Walnut Street. The plant's first location was near the tracks of the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad (ETVGR). When ETVGR expanded its facilities, the foundry moved to a more spacious site on Walnut Street, where it remained until the foreclosure of 1989.

The company entered a period of relative stability in regard to ownership after it again acquired a new owner in 1914. In the midst of financial difficulties, Glenn W. Setzer, a machinist at the plant, assumed ownership. Setzer retained ownership until his death in 1935, when his widow took over the company. In 1946 she sold the foundry to George McDowell, May Ross McDowell and Clarence W. Bralley, who restored the older name, JCFMW. The foundry remained in the hands of the McDowell family until 1984 when Tenetek Corporation purchased the facility. Tenetek's board of directors included David



Johnson City Foundry, date unknown. Photo by Burr Harrison.

Graves, president; Diana Reilly Graves, treasurer; and William Nunnally, secretary. Tenetek retained ownership until the sale in April of this year to FMC, represented by William G. Brownlow IV, a former board member of Tenetek.

Throughout its history the foundry made many different types of products. Originally, in the 1880s, the purpose of the company was to repair and rebuild locomotives for East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad, and to specialize in custom ironwork. In the 1920s the foundry expanded operations to include steel fabrications and ornamental iron work. During World War II JCFMC supplied the army with 200 carloads of heat resistant iron castings. For this, and other contributions to the war

effort, the foundry received a special Army-Navy "E" (excellence) award, the first

such award made in Northeast Tennessee. Other products made by the foundry have gone into farm and railroad equipment, and new plants. In addition, the foundry made the dome on the East Tennessee State University planetarium. The foundry worked in iron, steel and aluminum.

Downturns in the aluminum and coal industries adversely affected JCFMW, which numbered many aluminum and coal companies among its customers. A lingering strike in 1987 by its employees also hurt the foundry. The company had hoped to expand its markets in automotive and casting fabrication, but market slumps prevented such expansion, and as a result JCFMW's fortunes continued to turn downward, until the 1989 foreclosure and sale of the facility. FMC, the new owner, indicated that it desires to work with Johnson City, Washington County and East Tennessee State University

(owner of property adjacent to the foundry) to determine an acceptable use of the 3.7 acres of former JCFMW property.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN THE ARCHIVES

On April 6-8, the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill and the North Carolina Arts Council, cosponsored "Sounds of the South," a conference which focused on traditional music throughout the southern United States. The conference celebrated the official opening of UNC's Southern Folklife Collection (SFC), a unique collection which contains sound recordings and related research materials on folk music. A special working

session for archivists was included in the conference so that representatives from archives with traditional music collections could discuss common practices, problems and collecting strategies. The session also explored the findings of a survey which the SFC staff had sent to area repositories.

Prompted by the UNC survey, a study of the sound recordings in the Archives of Appalachia revealed over 800 recordings of traditional music, of which only 1.3% are commercially produced. Special areas of strength in the collection are ballads, bluegrass, old-time, early country and religious music.



Kyle Creed, Center, and the "Camp Creek Boys," at the 1965 Galax, Virginia Old Time Fiddlers Convention.

The Burton-Manning Collection, the result of professors Ambrose Manning and Thomas Burton's efforts in recording traditional folk music, consists of 400 hours of recordings which include traditional ballad singing and a variety of instrumental music. The original video tapes of the Broadside Television Collection number over 600 and include performances of traditional music and occupational songs, particularly those relating to coal mining in Appalachia. A third collection, the Richard Blaustein Collection, reflects the work of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services director. The collection focuses on the history of early country music and old-time string bands. Yet another group, the WETS-FM Records, contains 604 audio recordings which concentrate on the programs produced by the public radio station at East Tennessee State University. The WETS-FM recordings offer a wide variety of musical performances, including, for example, old-time, bluegrass, early country and contemporary folk music. The archives maintains finding aids and special indices for its audio-visual collections. In addition, audio and video equipment is available for using these materials.

COAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECT VOTES TO PLACE RECORDS IN ARCHIVES

The Coal Employment Project (CEP) of Knoxville, Tennessee voted to place its documents at the Archives of Appalachia. CEP began in 1978 in response to concerns about discrimination against women in coal mining in Appalachia. For the past 11 years the organization has acted as an educational and advocacy group on behalf of women coal miners. Among its activities, CEP has sponsored ten national conferences which focused on women in coal mining.

The collection contains a variety of materials, including, for example, videotapes which document the aforementioned ten conferences, as well as coal mining strikes and interviews with women miners. Paper documentation includes publications, promotional materials, office files meeting minutes and photographic prints.

The CEP records will provide researchers with primary documentation on both the operation of advocacy organizations and the special problems which relate to coal mining in Appalachia. The collection will support studies of women in non-traditional work environments, the role of advocacy groups in supporting minorities, health and safety concerns of miners and the interaction of CEP with the United Mine Workers.

SLIDE/TAPE PROGRAMS CONVERTED TO VIDEO FORMAT

The archives' nine slide/tape programs have been converted to video format. One half-inch VHS tape will be available for loan both on and off campus, while the three-quarter inch U-matic master tape will be used only in the archives. The nine programs are: "Come All You Coal Miners" (history of mining in Appalachia); "Country Music in the Tri-Cities" (history of radio and recording in Bristol, Johnson City, Kingsport area); "Harvesting the Hardwoods: Appalachian Logging Camp Life;" "Holston Country Houses: Preserving the Past" (historic preservation); "Hands All Around" (social history of quilting); "Embreeville" (economic and social history of Embreeville/Bumpass Cove, Tennessee); "Long Steel Rail" (history of railroads in central southern Appalachia); "Pat Alderman: The Making of a Local Historian" (on late Unicoi county historian and naturalist); and "Johnson City Album" (history of Johnson City). The lengths of the tapes vary from 23 minutes to 43 minutes.

For a more detailed description of the programs and for information on borrowing the programs, please contact the archives at 615/929-5339.

STAFF NEWS

Norma M. Thomas, head of the archives, attended the April 6-8 "Sounds of the South" conference held at the University of North Carolina,

Chapel Hill, North Carolina. With technical services archivist Scott Schwartz, Thomas also attended the May 25-26 Tennessee Archivists meeting held in Nashville, Tenn.

Archivist Marie Tedesco had her article, "The Rayon Plants in Elizabethton, Tennessee: A Case Study of Appalachian Economic Development, 1926-88," published in the Spring 1989 issue of *Locus*. An *Historical Journal of Regional Perspectives and National Topics*. Tedesco also chaired a session on women in World War II at the March 9-11 Missouri Valley History Conference held in Omaha, Neb.

Scott Schwartz assumed the position of technical services archivist on March 1, 1989. A native of Rochester, New York, Schwartz earned a bachelor's degree in music education from State University of New York-Fredonia, and a master's degree in music education and history from Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich. At present he is a Ph.D. student in musicology at West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va. Schwartz is active in a number of professional organizations, among them the College Music Society, American Musicological Society and the Ethnomusicological Society. Schwartz is responsible for processing manuscript collections, supervising student processors and developing computer data bases and programs for use in the archives.

**RECENT ACQUISITIONS
ARCHIVES OF APPALACHIA**

CITY OF JOHNSON CITY RECORDS, 1943-88. ADDENDUM. ONE LINEAR FOOT. Contains photographs, annual reports, newspaper clippings, cancelled checks, community development plans, and Johnson City code books, 1943-88. Donated by Thomas McKee, mayor of Johnson City. The collection documents Johnson City's community development activities.

APPALACHIAN-SCOTTISH STUDIES COLLECTION, 1988. ADDENDUM. .5 LINEAR FEET, and 30 U-Matic Video Tapes. Includes two sets of completed survey forms compiled by Laverne Castillo, and a report entitled "Scottish Dancing in the Southern Appalachians," written by Castillo in March 1989. Also includes 30 three quarter inch U-matic video tapes of lectures and performances which were part of the Appalachian-Scottish studies program held at ETSU in the summer of 1989. Donated by Thomas G. Burton, English department, ETSU.

LESTER MOORE COLLECTION, 1930-69. COPIES. .5 LINEAR FEET. Includes 23 newspaper clippings and a brief Johnson family history published by Landon Smalling, copied from a scrapbook compiled by Lester Moore. The materials document the Johnson family and their activities, as well as some important events relating to the history of Johnson City. Donated by Jean Hagen, Johnson City.

SAMUEL D. JACKSON COLLECTION, 1934-64. 21 NOTEBOOKS; 3 FILE FOLDERS. Contains correspondence, game rule pamphlets, conference programs, survey forms, examinations and personal notes documenting Jackson's activities with the National Federation of High School Athletic Association. Donated to the Sherrod Library in 1966, presumably by Jackson. Found in Sherrod Library.

WHITING LUMBER COMPANY RECORDS. 1928-30, ONE MINUTE BOOK. One minute book for the board of directors, Whiting Lumber Company, Baltimore, Maryland, 1928-30. The minute book contains correspondence, certificate of incorporation, purchase agreements between Whiting and lumber companies in western North Carolina and east Tennessee, and minutes of meetings. Found in Sherrod Library.

JOHNSON CITY FOUNDRY AND MACHINE WORKS COLLECTION, 1902-83, 182 LEDGERS, PLUS 8 LINEAR FEET. Contains pamphlets, personal notes, office union contracts, OSHA files, tour information and photographs dating between 1902 and 1983 documenting the general operations and management of the foundry, union activities, general Johnson City history and the design of specialized foundry equipment. Donated by Diana Reilly Graves and David Graves, Tenetek Corporation, Johnson City.

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

WILLIAM FLINN ROGERS COLLECTION, 1854-1975, 55 LINEAR FEET, ADDITION.

Includes lecture notes, exams, local history files, ledgers, day books, graduate student research papers, nineteenth century newspapers, cash ledgers, East Tennessee county histories and research notes documenting Rogers's research activities, ETSU history department business, teaching, family history and Tennessee history. Donated by Agnes Rogers, (Mrs. W.F.), Johnson City.

UNIVERSITY CENTER RECORDS COLLECTION, 1964-83, FOUR LINEAR FEET, ADDENDUM.

Contains correspondence, bulletins, pamphlets, minutes, work orders, job descriptions, requisitions, reports and newsletters documenting the activities of the University Center and the University Club. Transferred to the archives by Jacque Hamilton, University Center.

UNIVERSITY SCHOOL RECORDS COLLECTION, 1950-69. TWO LINEAR FEET.

Includes general administrative files, correspondence, memoranda and a financial ledger documenting the day to day operation of the school. Subjects includes the reading clinic, library, summer school and teacher retirement. Transferred to the archives by Sam Humphreys, University School.

MISCELLANEOUS

The archives thanks the following donors for a variety of items relating to Appalachian culture and local history:

Thomas F. Stokes
Fairfax Harrison
Florine J. Garland

Johnson City Board of Commissioners
Ed Speer
Malone Young

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