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Volume 26

Number 1

# The Primary Source

A Semiannual Publication of *The Society of Mississippi Archivists*

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*The Society of Mississippi Archivists*

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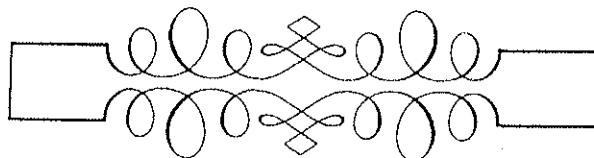
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# The 10 Most Basic Things I Can Tell You about Processing Literary Papers

by

Hans Rasmussen,  
Catalog Librarian, University of Southern Mississippi

A bit more than a year ago, as I neared the end of a two-year gig as an archivist at the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at USM, I finally completed the most tiresome, tedious, plodding archival processing experience I have ever endured. I organized the papers of an author—I won't name him for propriety's sake—who had produced a sizeable body of records resulting from his composition of about three dozen books. Its volume was not a problem, nor did it arrive as the hideous mess common to most literary papers. Instead, the yoke of these records came about from the type of books the author wrote—the type of books I would never read: science fiction novels, Gothic mystery and romance, pseudo-medieval fantasy.

He wrote a few rather good books for children, which was the reason for his inclusion in the de Grummond Collection, but most of the papers on hand were produced while writing books for adults. To me they were tired, uninteresting books, the kind that are written quickly for short-lived sale at discount stores and druggists before spending long retirements in cramped second-hand paperback exchanges with low ceilings, plywood shelves, and orange shag carpeting. The papers themselves reflected the industrial quality of the genres: photocopied guidelines for prospective authors of *Starlight Romances* (absolutely no illness or children allowed); typescripts of sci-fi novels written on the backs of engineering printouts made on that old green- and white-barred computer paper; and boxes and boxes of printed booklets for a fantasy roll playing game meant to mimic Eastern Europe during the later Middle Ages. Not surprisingly, my assistant noticed my repeated visits to the water fountain and routine afternoon strolls about the exhibit area ostensibly to stretch my legs.

Fortunately, I began working on the papers about a year and a half after I had begun working at the de Grummond Collection. By that time I had become so familiar with the nature of literary papers that I had developed procedures to process them quite efficiently. Mercifully, these little tricks allowed me to organize and describe the records almost mechanically, so I could become somewhat mentally detached from the content of the papers.

These little gems of knowledge that I gained over a couple of years spent exclusively processing literary archives got me through some pretty rough road. While the basic archival principles I learned in school still applied, I nonetheless perceived some unique qualities in authors' papers that required the adoption of special methods. So, in the spirit of state archival camaraderie, I'd like to share the ten most useful things I learned about processing literary papers for the benefit of those who haven't had to deal with them yet.

## 1. Archivaly speaking, all authors are the same

I'm sure if you actually asked them, every author on the planet would insist that he or she is a totally unique individual. If you really asked, they probably would get all indignant and insist that their work sprang from their own experiences with life and love and the land or whatever and that no one else could ever express the same feelings and attitudes and observations to a readership so eager and desperate to understand them like they could. Well, sure, okay, fine. Maybe there's something to that. I'm not a writer and I probably never had the same kinds of experiences they had nor do I particularly care anyway. Nevertheless, from a documentary point of view, I can attest that all authors fundamentally are the same. They all wrote their books in pretty much the same way and those books all passed through the same production process. They all hung on to ratty typescripts; they all dumped their cast off pages in the same incomprehensible piles; and they all saved the same patronizingly encouraging letters received from the same sycophantic editors. Archivaly speaking, the idea of authorial individuality is nonsense. One author's papers are the same as any others and it is this consistency that allows us to use the same procedures when processing literary papers for any author across the spectrum.

## 2. Don't read any books

Most likely, you will know the titles of the books for which you have production material. If you have ready access to them, retrieve copies of the books to consult while processing, but if you can't find them all, don't worry about it. The honest truth is that you don't always need a copy of a book to process its production material. Galleys, page proofs, and blues can serve you just as well, although they're not as convenient to use. Only very rarely will you need to order a copy of a book from a dealer to finish a processing job.

As for the books you do have, here's another secret. You won't read them. First, you usually don't need to read them and second, you haven't got the time anyway. Do not read any book organized into chapters. Authors who write books that long usually do some planning before writing, so the structure of the book during production usually varies little from the finished work. Just skim through it so you can understand what each chapter is about. Additionally, folder descriptions for chapter books (discussed below) employ only chapter numbers, so all you need to have for those is a general understanding of the contents of each chapter. The only times you will need to read a book are when the papers are very, very disorganized or when the book is very long and you have a huge quantity of material to sort. This will happen only about 1 percent of the time.

## 3. The books series is the only series you haven't seen before

Series identification for literary papers is pretty much the same as with any other type of personal papers. Authors create correspondence, financial records, and personal files just like everyone else. The only series really unique to literary papers is the Books Series. Creating material for published books is the most common and significant function there is among literary papers, so you will definitely have a series for books in your organization.

At the de Grummond Collection, we followed a simple alphabetical organization for the Books Series by just listing the titles for which we had material in alphabetical order. The only exception to this alphabetical rule is a case of a single book being reissued under more than one title. In this event, I always preferred to keep the items for these incarnations in close proximity to each other. To do this while still maintaining the integrity of the alphabetical list, I invented the expression "Titles derived from." In place of the normal title on the subseries level, write "Titles derived from" followed by the book's original title. This acts in much the same way as a uniform title in book cataloging. Under this heading, list each title for which you have papers in chronological order and give the place and date of publication in parentheses next to it. Here's an example of a Books Series from the Gloria Whelan Papers.

### A. Books (1976-2002)

1. *Angel on the Square* (2001)
2. *Are There Bears in Starvation Lake?* (2002)
3. *Bringing the Farmhouse Home* (1992)
- ...
27. *That Wild Berries Should Grow: The Story of a Summer* (1994)
28. Titles derived from *A Time to Keep Silent* (1979)
  - a. *A Time to Keep Silent* (New York, 1979)
  - b. *A Time to Keep Silent* (Grand Rapids, 1993)
  - c. *The Silence Trap* (Oxford, 1994)
29. *The Wanigan: A Life on the River* (2002)

30. *A Week of Raccoons* (1988)

31. *Welcome to Starvation Lake* (2000)

If you have several books that were written as parts of a multi-volume series, do not organize them together as a series. While there is nothing really bad about doing that, we always reasoned that anyone using literary papers would probably want to investigate individual titles before an entire series; thus, having a straight alphabetical list of all an author's books ought to be more user-friendly.

While we always avoided including overlong lists of subseries or sub-subseries in our organizational outlines, we still made an exception for the Books Series and gave a complete list of all the books for which we had material no matter how long it was. We always worked on the assumption that production material for published books would be the most popular material for patrons, so we wanted them to know right away for what books we held material. Visit the de Grummond Collection's website and look at the finding aids for Bruce Coville (82 books) or David Adler (148 books) for examples of monstrous lists of book titles.

#### 4. Writing precedes typing

The only sensible arrangement for literary production material is order of creation. Not surprisingly, correspondence, composition notes, and research notes usually will lead off the creative process. Arranging these types of material requires no special skills beyond basic archival knowledge. The greatest challenge to arranging literary papers in order of creation comes with manuscripts and typescripts. This is the place where close observation and repeated comparisons are most necessary to figure out which item came before or after which other ones.

When faced with an assortment of manuscripts and typescripts, I first look for obvious dates written on items. Most of the time authors do not date their drafts, but you do get lucky sometimes. I also check for numbers an author might have assigned to drafts, but these are even rarer. Designations like "new draft" or "revision" might have meant something at the time, but they seldom mean anything by the time the papers reach the archives. Even labels like "first draft" may be misleading. A "first draft" might have been the first draft made by the author or the first draft she sent to her editor, which could have been the third or fourth draft actually written. You might consider the size of an item, but don't rely on it. Since books can be both shortened as well as expanded during revision, shorter typescripts do not necessarily precede longer ones.

Most likely, you will have to do a bit of close observation when handling manuscripts and typescripts. My method for figuring their order of creation rests on one assumption: an author would have written something by hand before he typed it. No one types a chapter then revises it by rewriting the whole thing by hand.

Start by taking a quick look at the typescripts. One or two may be in better condition than the others. Typescripts that appear to be in good physical condition owing to less handling probably belong at the end of line because the last few typescripts always need the least tinkering. Furthermore, typescripts with publication marks on them always go at the end. Publication marks differ from content editing by being marks placed by a copy editor specifying how the text is to appear in published form. These include references to font size, spacing, margins, and so forth. For obvious reasons, copy editors don't mark up typescripts before the author is finished composing the content of the book. So, if you find any typescripts like this, put them at the end of the line for now.

Next, examine your manuscript material and compare it to the chapters in the published book. Be sure to remember what chapters in the finished book are covered by each manuscript because you will need to know this for the description. Don't worry too much about how chapter numbers might have changed from draft to draft. For description, we always referred to the chapter numbers as they ultimately stood in the published book because these are the only chapter numbers our patrons would be familiar with. So, if chapter 2 in the book was originally chapter 1 in the manuscript, then say that the manuscript covers chapter 2.

You likely will have only one real manuscript, so compare the remaining typescripts next. Keeping in mind my injunction about handwriting always preceding typing, look for a typescript that has a good deal of handwritten additions inserted into the text. Compare a passage from the typescript with the same passage on another typescript. If the inserted passage in the first typescript appears typed in the second, then the first preceded the second. If the second typescript doesn't feature the inserted text, then one of two things might have happened. Either the second typescript preceded the first or the second typescript is a copy of the first one. This probably seems all very simple and elementary and most of the time it is. Comparisons of handwritten and typed text will work for you in the majority of cases without too much confusion.

Naturally, you shouldn't rely on the comparison of just one passage to draw a conclusion about a whole typescript. Find more inserted handwritten passages elsewhere in the typescript and keep comparing them to the same portions in other typescripts. While you certainly don't need to read the whole draft, you will need to make several comparisons in this manner before you can confidently reach conclusions about order of creation. Once you have decided on a probable order of the typescripts, go ahead and physically arrange them in that order on the table. Now look at them again, following them from left to right, from earliest to latest. You inevitably will find something amiss about your arrangement and need to shift and re-shift items repeatedly as you reexamine them and refine the order. It's time consuming, but it's vitally important to figure out the exact order of the papers and eventually you will find it to your great satisfaction.

I want to stress again that it is very important to check the entire typescript when comparing different drafts because it is not uncommon for authors to change only small portions of a typescript and replace only the pages they have changed. Take this example, also from Gloria Whelan, from her novel about a young Ernest Hemingway, *The Pathless Woods*.

16/1-2

Typescript for front matter, chapters 1-11, and bibliography, contains revised version of chapter 1, edited and marked for publication, 145 pp.

16/3

Typescript pages for front matter, chapter 1, and bibliography removed from above typescript during revision, edited, 10 pp.

16/4-5

Photocopy of above typescript for chapters 1-11, contains original version of chapter 1, edited, 136 pp.

16/6

Carbon copies of revised typescript pages for front matter and chapter 1, lightly edited, 5 pp.

Here's what happened. Gloria Whelan typed a complete typescript for the book: front matter, chapters 1-11, and a bibliography. Most of this original typescript is in folders 1-2, but not all of it. She made a photocopy of the typescript—at least the parts for chapters 1-11—and made some editing notes on it. The photocopy is in folders 4-5. Whelan next rewrote the front matter, chapter 1, and the bibliography and made a carbon copy of the first two parts while she typed them. The carbon copy is in folder 6. She then switched the original front matter, first chapter, and bibliography for the new versions of the three sections. The final typescript, composed of the original chapters 2-11 and revised front matter, chapter 1, and bibliography, is in folders 1-2. You can easily spot the revised first chapter because Whelan made it with a different typewriter. The typescript pages for the original front matter, first chapter, and bibliography ultimately landed in folder 3.



As you can see, putting manuscripts and typescripts in order of creation is frequently a process of reconstructing how an author worked. You discover that he wrote chapter 3 before he wrote chapter 1 or that she restored passages to a final version that she had deleted at some point before. By the time you finish arranging a lengthy line of production material, you ought to know exactly how your creator worked and wrote. You'll also have plenty of privileged information to pass on to your patrons.

One last thing about manuscripts and typescripts: occasionally you'll deal with a fuzzy-headed author who, every time he retyped a page, tossed the old page into a pile with other castoff pages, not caring a thing about them. Naturally, when he shipped his papers off to you, he considerably included his brimming mound of throw-away pages, figuring he was doing you a big favor by including them. If you come upon one of these literary mulch piles, cuss under your breath for a few moments but don't try to conquer it. You will never put these pages into a useable arrangement with any certainty. Just describe it as "typescript pages removed from several typescripts" and count the number of pages. That's about all you can do. Leave it to the user to figure out what the author did. They'll care more about his work to take the time to figure out the whole thing—or maybe not.

#### 5. There is printed material for every place and time

After an author has finished writing the text, she sends it on to her editors who prepare it for printing. The first bit of printed material the author receives from the publishers are galleys. Galleys are mechanically printed sheets used to preview how text will appear in a book. Galley sheets are narrow and long and, since they are the first version of how a book will appear in print, have no page breaks. Rather, the text appears in a long unbroken column. Traditionally, galley sheets measured about 7 x 25 inches, while some more recent ones are the size of legal size paper. The general rule of handwriting preceding typing applies to printed material as well, although any text added by hand is later printed rather than typed. A further advantage when working with galleys and page proofs (discussed next) is that these items frequently bear the date on which they were printed, thereby making arrangement far easier.

It is not unusual to find duplicate sets of the same galleys. Frequently, an author might put his comments on one set of galleys and mail them to the editor who would in turn write both her own and the author's comments on a second set of the same galleys. After the book is published, sold, remaindered, and forgotten, the author always receives any production material still in the possession of the publisher, including multiple sets of galleys. Don't discard duplicate sets of galleys or page proofs. It's all valuable information on a book's creation that must be preserved.

Once the text has been finalized by editor and author, the printers can impose page breaks on the text. Once these breaks have been added, the printers make sheets previewing how the text and any illustrations will appear on the newly numbered pages. These are called page proofs. Early page proofs were printed on long sheets of paper similar to galleys while more recent ones may appear on glossy paper anywhere from 8 ½ inches square to 11 x 17 inches. For books featuring illustrations, the page proofs may or may not contain printed images of the pictures. While it is hardly unusual for authors to make last-minute editorial changes to page proofs, they tend to be rather minor since too much time has already been invested in the page layouts to take the trouble to make major revisions. Like galleys, page proofs usually bear their dates of printing, making identification and arrangement rather easy.

Once the page proofs are finalized, three other forms of printed material are produced: blues, folded and gathered sheets, and advance reading copies. You can easily tell that they belong at the end of the line because they all look like finished book pages, only without a cover. Blues are the pages of a book printed by a cyanotype process giving them a distinctive uniform blue color. Blues are a cheap way for the publishers to check how the pages of a book will appear in their final published form. They might contain some editing, but usually very little. I have to admit that I have never seen blues for books published after about 1994. I don't know if publishers even use them anymore.

Once the appearance of a book is deemed well and acceptable, the publisher orders the printing of the book on large press sheets printed on the quality of paper chosen for the book. The sheets are folded and cut to make folded and gathered sheets. These are the printed and cut pages of a book in their final form for use as the text block, but not yet bound as a book.

You occasionally may find an advance reading copy among an author's papers. This is a set of folded and gathered sheets for a book, sometimes not yet featuring illustrations, bound in a simple paper cover for early distribution to reviewers before the official publication of the book.

#### 6. Indices at the end; dust jackets wherever

Naturally, indices always appear late in the production process. Since an indexer cannot prepare an index until he knows exactly on which pages every bit of text will appear in the published book, the typescript of an index is not prepared until after the last set of page proofs is approved. Sometimes you might find a duplicate set of page proofs with all the proper nouns underlined. These sets have been marked for indexing and should be identified as such.

Sometimes an author will file the typescript of the index with the final typescript for the book or the galley of the index with the book galley. Be assured that this is only a filing habit imposed at the spur of the moment when the author received a shipment of old production material for his failed book. The typescript and galley for the index were not created at the same time as the typescript and galley of the book. In such cases, separate the material for the index and put it in its proper place in the order of creation. Returning it to its appropriate place in the process is far more useful to researchers than retaining a meaningless filing method unthinkingly used by the author.

Conversely, the dust jacket usually is created rather early in production, often before the author finishes the typescript. As soon as the author pretty much knows the plot and characters of a book and conveys this to the editor, an artist sets to work on the dust jacket. As you probably know, dust jackets lie like politicians, so it is unnecessary for the artist to know very much about a book before drawing its cover illustration. Also, the author sometimes will momentarily set aside his main typescript for a book to quickly throw together some meaningless twaddle for the back cover.

About half the time you will find dates on the dust jacket proof material to confirm its early spotting in the production process, although typescript pages for cover copy are seldom dated. Nonetheless, the easiest way to deal with dust jacket material is simply to combine it all in one folder and describe it as "typescripts and proofs for dust jacket" or something like that. You will seldom have more than a half dozen items for a dust jacket anyway, so there's really no point in trying to place each item in its precise place in the order of creation. Just pack it all together and find an appropriate slot for it somewhere early in the process.

#### 7. You have time for eight elements in a folder description

After a prolonged effort at trying to achieve the right balance between detail and efficiency in a literary folder description, I concluded that eight is the maximum number of elements that I can cram into a folder listing without taking up too much time.

First, since the item in the folder is a tangible thing, begin your folder description with a clearly defined noun (e.g., typescript, galley, page proofs).

Second, carefully examine the item and determine if it is a copy of some kind. Users ought to know if they can expect an original item or a copy. You may have some difficulty identifying copies for people writing after the advent of word processing and photocopiers. Sometimes you really can't tell if an item is a printout or a very good photocopy, so don't call something a copy unless you're very sure of it.

Third and fourth, enhance your folder descriptions by noting the order of creation of a particular item and the range of chapters in the finished book covered by it. I think it's very helpful for patrons to know both of these characteristics because it lets them get an idea of how a book was created by only reading through the container listing. Number an item with ordinal numbers and describe the range by referring to chapter numbers (e.g., second typescript for chapters 1-4, third galley for chapters 1-6).

Fifth, include a verb describing anything significant that happened to the item, such as the editing of an item's content. If an item contains any publication marks—marks placed by a copy editor specifying how the text is to appear in published form—then write that it was "marked for publication." This is a catch-all expression I invented to describe all kinds of publication marking and copy editing. If a page

proof was marked up by an indexer, you can note that, too. Don't worry about who did the editing or marking. Some typescripts are touched by three or four different people and you don't have time to figure out who they all were.

Sixth, note any material accompanying the item, such as a cover letter.

Seventh, include the span of dates covered by the material in the folder, if you know it. Most manuscripts and typescripts will be undated, but probably more than half of printed material will feature a clearly printed date of manufacture. For undated material, estimate a date and put it in brackets. If you don't know the date and can't figure out one, then be safe and write nothing for the date. I always assume that a patron will take my word on estimated dates, so I'm very careful to be sure of my guesses before I put them to paper. Don't give dates for accompanying material, just for the main item in the folder.

Eighth, finish the folder description with a statement of volume. The statement of volume is not made for any security purposes, but rather to give patrons a rough idea of how big an item is. If pages are numbered, go ahead and trust them unless they're obviously poorly numbered. If you happen to notice that a page is missing, don't bother mentioning it in your folder description. To be honest, you will never have time to check if every page of every typescript and every galley is present, so you will notice missing pages only by happenstance. Under those conditions, alerting patrons to occasional cases of missing pages will only give them an unrealistic impression of your diligence. If sheets have no numbers or the numbers are woefully inconsistent, then count the number of sheets. You'll probably miscount them, but as long as you get close, that's okay. No one is ever going to count them again to disprove you.

#### 8. Control your impulse to apply cross references

You may find a few occasions to include cross references in your container listing. It's perfectly fine to do this, but I advise you to be very, very stingy with them. They can easily get out of hand and send everyone—including you—into a cyclone of confusion. I very nearly lost control of all the cross references I put in the Bruce Coville Papers and was rather lucky to have them all make sense in the end. I use cross references only to connect the main body of records for one literary work with other production material for the same work that happens to be filed in a different series. And that's it!! Don't be tempted to do more!! I don't care if an author happened to mention a particular title in a letter he sent to his publisher ostensibly for some other reason. Don't try to link the folder that contains that letter to the citation for the book itself in the Books Series. Those kinds of cross references will become simply overwhelming.

#### 9. The scope & content note is the same here as anywhere, except for one paragraph

The scope and content note for a body of literary papers is really no different from those for any other body of records. Here as there it gives a broad prose description of the contents of the papers. It lists the forms of material, describes the functions that led to the records' creation, details the organization and so forth. It's also your chance to show off what you've learned in the process of becoming the reigning world authority on the complete literary output of what's-her-name.

Whatever format you use for the scope and content at your institution should be just fine for literary papers as well, but I do have one thing to share regarding description of the Books Series. After offering an introductory paragraph for the series describing the forms of material, the date range, and any special information on organization and arrangement, I add this special paragraph to every note:

The quantity of material for specific titles varies tremendously, from a single typescript to a huge assortment of notes, typescripts, proofs, and correspondence. The container listing offers detailed descriptions of the holdings for each title and information on the material's process of creation may be gleaned easily from the container listing for each book. However, some additional explanation is needed to understand the arrangement and description of the material for several books.

This whole paragraph is boilerplate language that I use in almost every finding aid to excuse myself from describing the holdings for every single title in the scope & content note. I follow it with a few paragraphs

describing the holdings of only those titles that require special description. The container listing is sufficient to describe the holdings for the rest of the books.

10. If none of this makes sense, look at some examples.

If I have only teased and confused you with my pretentious advice, visit the contributor index on the de Grummond Collection website (<http://www.lib.usm.edu/~degrum/html/research/remanuillust.shtml>) and look closely at our better finding aids. For authors' papers, see my finding aids for David A. Adler, Bruce Coville, Gene DeWeese, Charles Ghigna, Dan Halacy, Bill Severn, Whitney Stewart, and Gloria Whelan. For illustrators' papers (which I didn't discuss here), see Cheri Alder's finding aids for Merritt Mauzey, Jan Pienkowski, and Louis Slobodkin. And for the whole kit and caboodle, take your time savoring our mammoth finding aid for H.A. & Margret Rey. Everything we ever learned about anything came together there.

"Murder with Southern Hospitality: An Exhibition of Mississippi Mysteries"

by

Jennifer Ford,

Interim Head of Special Collections

The Department of Archives and Special Collections

J.D. Williams Library, The University of Mississippi

"Indeed murder is brutal. But there is a wonder to the human act which can only be approached through the mind, for it lies in the mind...Murder's fascination for the reader stems from wonder, and has nothing to do with what De Quincey in scorn expressed as, 'a knife, a purse, and a dark lane.'"<sup>1</sup> Eudora Welty wrote these words in an introduction to *Hanging by a Thread*, an anthology of suspense fiction. As a mystery fan herself, Welty had studied the art of suspense. To many it might be a surprise that such a gifted author enjoyed detective and suspense fiction. Indeed, popular murder mysteries have been long overlooked by the academic community, only recently enjoying a surge of scholarly interest. Authors, Ian Bell and Graham Daldry comment in their study of detective fiction that, "only a few literary critics have thought this immensely popular form worth serious attention."<sup>2</sup>

Special collections and libraries have been equally guilty of overlooking the collection of this genre. For many years, the University of Mississippi's Department of Special Collections was no exception to the general scholarly bias against murder mysteries. Historically, the collection focus concentrated on the products of traditional literary Mississippi. The department is well-known for collections relating to Ellen Douglas, Eudora Welty, Willie Morris, Barry Hannah, Larry Brown, Beth Henley, and many others. It is perhaps best known for the "Rowan Oak Papers," several thousand sheets of autograph and typescript drafts of poems, short stories, film scripts and novels written by William Faulkner during some of his most creative years, between 1925 and 1939.

In the process of gathering the papers of many of Mississippi's distinguished authors, Dr. Thomas Verich, then Head of Special Collections, noted a missing piece in the literary collections of the department in the early 1990s. Working with then Curator of Mississippi Collections, Debbie Lee Landi, Dr. Verich observed the burgeoning output of murder mystery fiction written by Mississippians.

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<sup>1</sup> Eudora Welty, introduction to *Hanging by a Thread: A New Treasury of Suspense Fact and Fiction*, edited by Joan Kahn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Ian A. Bell and Graham Daldry, *Watching the Detectives: Essays on Crime Fiction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), ix.

Dr. Verich and Ms. Landi approached University of Mississippi alumnus and award winning mystery author Julie Smith. She generously donated her papers and thus began the core of a new collecting interest of the department. The papers of Nevada Barr followed and the collecting continues today with the papers of Carolyn Haines being the most recent donation.

As mystery devotees themselves, the staff of Special Collections began to formulate the idea for an exhibition devoted to this genre. In early 2003, under the leadership of Dr. Verich, the staff of the department began to work to create an exhibition highlighting the collections, acquisitions, and donations of Mississippi-related mystery authors and mysteries set in Mississippi. It was impossible to highlight all of the related works and authors in the collection, but the staff attempted to blend many of the products of established and "up and coming" authors into the display.

The exhibition covers a broad range of topics and a time period from the middle nineteenth century through the present. After consulting much of the recent scholarship of this genre, the staff noted the many sub-categories. Categories such as the "cozy mystery," "the noir and hard-boiled mystery," the "golden age of the mystery," "women detectives," "true crime fiction," and others were taken into account during the initial formulation of the exhibition. The exhibition was finally divided into twenty-one categories, featuring titles such as "Mississippi True Crime," "Neo-Noir in Mississippi," "Modern Southern Female Detectives and their Authors," "Faulkner, Welty, & Mysteries," and "Early Mississippi Mysteries," and many others.

Each category contains items of interest, such as the much sought after 1953 edition of Elliot Chaze's cult classic, *Black Wings Has My Angel*, issued only in paperback. Manuscripts, correspondence, galleys, first editions in dust-jackets, photographs and other materials from Mississippi mystery authors such as Ben Ames Williams, Benjamin Hawkins Dean, Earle Basinsky, and Charlie Wells, are significant parts of the display. It would be impossible to cover all the pieces shown, but there are several items of particular note which capture a bit of the essence of the exhibit.

One might begin the category devoted to the works of William Faulkner's great-grandfather, W.C. Falkner, and the works of Joseph Holt Ingraham and his son Prentiss. This case offers access into the history of nineteenth century mystery writers and also a glimpse into the history of Mississippi. "Faulkner and Mysteries" contains an in-depth analysis of William Faulkner's relationship with the genre. True crime is a category which provides the onlooker with an overview of several journalistic accounts of Mississippi's violent past. A closer examination of the "female detectives" category highlights the department's first mystery collection, the papers of Julie Smith. A much debated addition to the exhibition was the work of reclusive author Thomas Harris. Although his work is usually placed within the realm of horror, we found his expert blending of the contemporary focus on psychological suspense and the earlier concept of the "weird tale" compelling and simply too good to resist.

#### *Early Mississippi Mystery Authors: W.C. Falkner, Joseph Holt Ingraham, and Colonel Prentiss Ingraham*

The controversial yet dashing life of Colonel W.C. Falkner haunted his Nobel Prize winning great-grandson, William Cuthbert Faulkner. Scholar Joseph Blotner illustrated this effect perfectly when he cited the story of a young William's response to his third grade teacher's question, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" According to a former classmate, the young Faulkner would always respond, "I want to be a writer like my great-granddaddy."<sup>3</sup>

Attorney, Confederate Colonel, duelist, railroad entrepreneur, and best selling novelist are all terms which apply to the life of W.C. Falkner. His life was the stuff of North Mississippi legend. As a young man he was part of a posse which captured Andrew J. McCannon, a man accused of the brutal ax-murder of a Pontotoc County family in 1845. Upon capture, McCannon avoided immediate hanging by agreeing to tell his life story and give an account of his grisly act. W.C. Falkner wrote the

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<sup>3</sup> Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, Volume I (New York: Random House, 1974), 105.

details of McCannon's life and had a pamphlet printed which he distributed at the execution, showing remarkable if not slightly morbid business acumen.

W.C. would later be taken to trial twice for murder. He was acquitted in both cases by juries who cited self defense. He fought in the Mexican War under Jefferson Davis, later writing a poem about his experiences. During the Civil War he fought as a Colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mississippi Regiment and fought in the battle of First Manassas, displaying extreme bravery while taking tremendous risks. His men later voted him out of his rank, due in part to charges of "recklessness" during the battle and his reputation as a tough disciplinarian.<sup>4</sup>

*The White Rose of Memphis*, released initially as a serial in the *Ripley Advertiser*, appeared in hardback in 1881. During the next forty years, the work went through thirty five editions and was still being reprinted well into the 1950s. Long considered a gothic tale of romance, the work also displays all the elements of a mystery and thriller. The melodrama is full of scenes involving concealed identities, murder, and life in the Reconstruction South.

Elected to the Mississippi legislature on November 5, 1889, W.C. Falkner was fatally shot in Ripley that same evening by an angry former business partner. Included in the display is an original telegram sent from Ripley to W.C. Falkner's son, J.W.T. Falkner, who lived in Oxford. The telegram urged J.W.T. to come to Ripley immediately as his father was "this evening badly shot." The exhibition also features a first edition of Falkner's *White Rose of Memphis*.

Maine native and later Mississippi churchman, Joseph Holt Ingraham, wrote over eighty novels between 1843 and 1847. During his early writing career he wrote lurid mysteries involving pirates and beautiful girls in jeopardy. The works were cheaply printed paperbound pamphlets called "story papers." Due to their fragility Ingraham's early works are tremendously difficult to collect in good condition. The exhibition features one of the most noteworthy, *The Beautiful Cigar Girl*.

Ingraham later became an Episcopal minister in Mississippi and turned his literary efforts to biblical themes. Reportedly, he attempted to destroy many of his earlier works, presumably due to their "scandalous" subject matter. He was accidentally killed in 1860 due to a self inflicted gunshot, sustained while cleaning his gun in the vestry of his church, Christ Church in Holly Springs, Mississippi.

Joseph Holt Ingraham's son, Prentiss, continued his father's tradition of publication by penning an astonishing number of publications, well over one thousand. Over two hundred of these titles were devoted to the legendary hero of the American West, Buffalo Bill Cody and featured Cody as a detective and fighter of evil. Ingraham became involved with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show in the late nineteenth century and was for a brief amount of time involved in its publicity and inner workings.

Ingraham was born in Adams County, Mississippi in 1843. After serving as an officer in the Civil War he became a mercenary, participating in the Mexican Revolution against Maximilian, the Austro-Prussian War, and several conflicts in Egypt, among others.

On exhibit is a 1902 reprint by *The New York Dime Library* of Ingraham's story entitled "Darkie Dan, the Colored Detective; or, The Mississippi Mystery." Originally published in 1881 by the famous "penny dreadful" publisher Beadle & Adams, this story features one of the earliest African-American main characters of the mystery genre. Although the story employs racial stereotypes and exhibits the many of the author's prejudices, it is historically important, as the character of Dan exhibits both agency and power in the work. This is highly unusual for nineteenth century work featuring African-American characters, even more so when one considers the history of its author.

#### *"Faulkner & Mysteries"*

In 1946, William Faulkner submitted a short story entitled, "An Error in Chemistry," to a short story contest sponsored by the *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. Faulkner's story won second prize. It is astonishing to think that only a few years after this event William Faulkner stood on the podium in Stockholm to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,24.

Even though he did not place first in the contest, Faulkner did not give up on this story. It later appeared in his 1949 collection of detective short stories, *Knight's Gambit*. There were other instances of Faulkner employing some of the elements of detective fiction into his work. He revealed in an interview that *Intruder in the Dust* was originally intended to be a detective novel. Upon being asked what precipitated the writing of this work Faulkner replied, "there was a tremendous flux of detective stories going about at that time and my children were always buying them and bringing them home...And I thought of an idea for one would be a man in jail just about to be hung would have to be his own detective, he couldn't get anybody to help him. Then the next thought was, the man for that would be a Negro. Then the character of Lucas--Lucas Beauchamp came along. And the book came out of that. It was the notion of a man in jail who couldn't hire a detective, couldn't hire one of these tough guys that slapped women around, took a drink every time he couldn't think of what to say next. But once I thought of Beauchamp, then he took charge of the story and the story was a good deal different from the idea that---of the detective story that I had started with."<sup>5</sup>

Faulkner's work in Hollywood also involved him with the mystery genre. He worked on the adaptation of Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* a film featuring the combination of actors Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Faulkner also worked on a film adaptation of the Irina Karlova mystery novel, *Dreadful Hollow*, although it was never released.

Along with copies of works mentioned above, the exhibition features several of Faulkner's own worn copies of his favorite mysteries. These are on loan to Special Collections from Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak.

#### *Mississippi True Crime:*

A thin line separates truth from fiction between the lurid covers of true crime works. Phillip Rawlings, a scholar of the genre, defines true crime as "usually concerned with a particular crime or criminal and the process of detection. It is aimed at a non-specialist market, is cheap, easily available and easy to read."<sup>6</sup> Journalistic techniques are common. In fact, many former reporters become authors of true crime, but to create a spell-binding narrative, they also utilize fiction techniques.

Although the phenomenon of true crime has taken on new life since the early 1990s, its historical roots are much older. By the 1500's in England, accounts of dying speeches by condemned prisoners appeared on printed broadsides. In 1684, in order to quell the inaccuracies of these publications (and to share in some of the profits) the warden of Newgate Prison began to print coverage of trials, executions, and short biographies of prisoners in a widely popular series entitled *Accounts*. These accounts developed into sensational reports and finally evolved into the novel format that captured the twentieth-century American audience by storm. Considered one step above tabloid journalism, true crime began to skim the surface of respectability with Truman Capote's chilling 1966 work *In Cold Blood*.

Mississippi's past and present has provided many authors of this genre with a blood-red backdrop for accounts of sensational crimes. The 1869 printing of the trial of E.M. Yerger is a perfect example of early Mississippi forays into this genre after the Civil War.<sup>7</sup> Printed by the Clarion Book and Printing Establishment, this small pamphlet tells the tale of a trial which took place in the midst of the transition from Presidential to Congressional Reconstruction policies. Yerger, who had fallen behind on his taxes, a fact he disputed, was to have his piano sold by the then Mayor of Jackson and military officer,

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<sup>5</sup> Frederick Gwynn and Joseph Blotner, eds., *Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia, 1957-1958* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959), 142.

<sup>6</sup> Tim Newburn and Joan Bagg, eds., *The British Criminology Conferences: Selected Proceedings. Volume I: Emerging Themes in Criminology* (Loughborough University, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> W. S. M. Wilkinson, *Trial of E.M. Yerger, before a military commission for the killing of Bv't Col. Joseph G. Crane, at Jackson, Miss., June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1869. Including testimony of all the witnesses, arguments...Reported for the Clarion* (Jackson, MS: Clarion Book and Printing Establishment, 1869).

Colonel Joseph G. Crane. Crane attempted to seize the piano prompting Yerger to respond aggressively when the two eventually met to settle the problem. Yerger stabbed Crane to death. Tried in a military court, the Yerger case never reached a conclusion, as it was prolonged until Reconstruction ended. Inlaid into the pamphlet is a 1926 article from the *Clarion-Ledger*. The author asserts an interpretation of Reconstruction generally ascribed to former Confederates by declaring that eventually "the south reverted to the hands of its own people" thereby ensuring "justice" for Yerger. Accounts of post-Reconstruction Mississippi tell an even more tragic story of murder and racism. In the summer of 1955 Emmett Till, an African-American teenager from Chicago visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi, was viciously murdered. Although Till was known as a quiet, shy young man with a stutter, he was accused of making sexual advances to a white female. After a jury acquitted two white men of the brutal slaying, one of the accused bragged of his involvement to the national media. Featured in the exhibition are works published around the time of the crime which all feature aspects of true crime narrative. Of particular note is the piece entitled *Complete Photo Story of Till Murder Case* published by Ernest Withers, an African-American photographer from Memphis.<sup>8</sup> Offering graphic photographs and unprecedented access to Till family, Withers begins the work with the question "why such a pamphlet as this?" Withers answers his own question with the hope that his pamphlet would "serve to help our nation dedicate itself to seeing that such incidents need not occur again."

### *No longer just a "Belle": Modern Southern Female Detectives and their Authors*

Historians generally date the first mystery novel written by an American woman to the year 1866. *The Dead Letter* by Mrs. Metta Victoria Fuller Victor features the character Richard Redfield and a mysterious letter found in the New York dead letter office. The letter leads Redfield into the world of policemen and hired assassins and ends with Redfield exposing the murderer and rescuing his ladylove. From these distinctly melodramatic beginnings the history of women mystery authors in America evolved. By the 1970s women detective novels had established a hold on the genre in earnest with the mass success of authors such as Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton. Other subgenres of the mystery market: the police procedurals, the thriller, the "cozy" all became fair game for women authors. Julie Smith, Nevada Barr, and Carolyn Haines all trace their heritage from the early days of American female mystery writers.

Julie Smith, a native of Savannah Georgia, attended the University of Mississippi majoring in journalism. After college Smith worked as a journalist at the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* and soon after moved to San Francisco and the *Chronicle*. The author of a successful San Francisco based "Rebecca Schwartz" mystery series, Smith began publishing the New Orleans Skip Langdon series in 1989 beginning with her Edgar winning work, *New Orleans Mourning*. Skip, a physically powerful New Orleans cop outnumbered in a world of male policemen and estranged from her socially prominent New Orleans family, embodies the classical ideal of alienation. In a June 2001 interview for the online journal *Writers Write*, Julie Smith described how this alienation sprang from her own life "when I was young I always heard that Southern writers always write about the South-eventually. However, I never thought that applied to me because I never understood my hometown and never fit in. So how was I going to write about it...one day it came in a blinding flash—I could work with a character who was as alienated as I was. And thus was Skip Langdon born!"

On display from the Julie Smith Collection, are early drafts of *New Orleans Mourning*, police press passes for journalist Julie Smith, foreign editions of her works, and several first editions.

Nevada Barr clearly attributes a portion of her success to the earlier efforts of women authors and their female detectives. In an online interview for Doubleday's website "The Mystery Guild," she

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<sup>8</sup> Ernest C. Withers, *Complete Story of Till Murder Case* (Memphis, TN: Withers Photographers, 1955).



said, "I think that Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky laid the groundwork and started a golden age for women sleuths and by sheer dumb luck, I walked into the middle of it." Barr's character, Anna Pigeon, builds upon the traditions of those who have gone before adding to these a new emphasis on landscape and environment. Pigeon, a National Park Ranger, favors straight talk and action tempered with thoughtful decision making. Barr's plots revolve around Anna's work in various national parks and the powerful combinations of the beauty and wildness of their landscapes superimposed with human frailty, emotion, and murder. Her first mystery, the 1993 novel *Track of the Cat*, received the coveted Agatha Award sponsored by Malice Domestic, Ltd. and the Bouchercon World Mystery Convention's Anthony Award for best first mystery novel. Since that time her works have won numerous other awards and captured a loyal following of readers. Although not a native Mississippian, Barr has lived and worked within the state since her transfer as a Park Ranger to the Natchez Trace Parkway. Barr uses this location as a setting for two of her most recent works (*Deep South* and *Hunting Season*); marking the first time the author has set two mysteries in the same place. She reiterates that this does not mean Anna is settling down

Barr donated her collection to the University of Mississippi in the middle 1990s. The collection contains correspondence, ephemera, galleys, cover artwork, and manuscript drafts. Of particular note are her notebooks containing handwritten drafts of several of her works. On display is one such notebook for the 2000 work, *Deep South*.

Born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi on May 12, 1953, Carolyn Haines graduated from high school in George County. She received a B.S. from the University of Southern Mississippi in Journalism and a M.A. in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing in 1985 from the University of Southern Alabama. Carolyn Haines first published novel, *Summer of Fear* appeared in 1993 with *Summer of the Redeemers* appearing in 1994. Her popular detective series featuring the feisty Southern belle detective, Sarah Booth, began in 1999 with the publication of *Them Bones*. *Buried Bones*, *Splintered Bones*, and *Crossed Bones* followed.

The southern land bound quality of Haines' work is evident through her *Bones* series. When asked about this connection for this exhibition, the author replied "growing up in Mississippi has shaped my character, and it constantly shapes the character of my characters. I think 'place' is one of the strongest elements in fiction. It grounds the reader and gives characters a source. I may have had the last golden childhood, growing up in Lucedale, Mississippi. We played without fear, and we were surrounded by country and woods. It was a paradise. I grew to love the outdoors, the plants, the animals, and the people of my world. I was fortunate in that I met quite a few characters during my journalism days, which has helped me create my fictitious world. I have been truly blessed to live in a place which hasn't yet been homogenized to look and sound just like everywhere else. Mississippi is a writer's dream."

On display from Haines' collection is an annotated typewritten first page from *The Bones*, an advance reading copy of *Crossed Bones*, and several first editions of her works. In their work on the southern detective, J.K. Van Dover and John F. Webb elegantly described the connection between place and family for Southern mystery authors, "Southerners know the history of their family as well as of their place and of the relationships between the two histories. Such knowledge is both a comfort and a burden."<sup>9</sup> This sentiment applies well to the characters from the Tunica, Mississippi-raised mystery author Charlaine Harris. For Harris has created several series dominated by Southern women who feel deep ambivalence towards their family, history, and community. In her delightfully light Aurora Teagarden series, the main character is a feisty librarian "Roe" who finds herself in the most untenable situations; bodies falling from the sky into her yard and the like.

The intriguing yet darker character of Lily Bard appears in the "Shakespeare's" series. Lily, the victim of a brutal rape and torture, has abandoned her connections with her life in Memphis,

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<sup>9</sup> J.K. Van Dover and John F. Webb, *Isn't Justice Always Unfair? The Detective in Southern Literature* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1996).

Tennessee and moved to the small town of Shakespeare, Arkansas. Determined to cut her self off mentally from the world, Lily focuses on martial arts and bodybuilding while cleaning the homes of specifically chosen clients. Although wanting to live on the fringes of society, Lily is continually drawn into the life of Shakespeare through foul play. As the series progresses her attachment to the quirky characters and eccentric lifestyle of the town only increases.

### *Modern "Weird Tales": Psychological Horror and Thomas Harris*

What is a modern "weird tale"? The traditional definition includes what cult writer H.P. Lovecraft described as "a suspension of natural law" where the scientific method and order of society is inverted by the inexplicable. Author of *The Modern Weird Tale*, S.T. Joshi, describes the possibility of a modern weird tale, one devoid of the supernatural elements so prevalent in the earlier genre, "recently coined terms such as 'dark suspense' and 'dark mystery' suggest the fusion of the horror tale with the mystery or suspense tale as an entirely new type of writing."<sup>10</sup> In a vain attempt to place distinctions between the subtle categories of mystery, suspense, detective novels, and horror, this seems to be the closest approximation of the work of Thomas Harris. His novels combine all of these categories and fuse them into a masterful tour de force of terror, sex, intellect, beauty and extreme ugliness.

Born in Tennessee, as a young child Harris moved with his family to the small Delta town of Rich, Mississippi. The state of Mississippi, according to Harris, directly affected at least one of his works, *Red Dragon*. During its composition, Harris had to travel home to Rich and spent hours working on the manuscript in a shotgun house in the middle of a cotton field. In his introduction to *The Hannibal Lecter Omnibus*, Harris recounted, "I want to tell you the circumstances in which I first encountered Hannibal Lecter, M.D. In the fall of 1979, owing to an illness in my family, I returned home to the Mississippi Delta and remained there eighteen months, I was working on *Red Dragon*. My neighbor in the village of Rich kindly gave me the use of a shotgun house in the center of a vast cotton field, and there I worked, often at night...Sometimes at night I would leave the lights on in my little house and walk across the flat fields. When I looked back from a distance, the house looked like a boat at sea, and all around me the vast Delta night."<sup>11</sup>

"The vast Delta night" served as the conduit for Harris' first meeting with Dr. Hannibal Lecter and the creation of one of the best known characters in modern fiction. Author Tony Magistrale captured the essence of Lecter's appeal when he described the doctor as an "angel with horns."<sup>12</sup>

Through research and interviews, the staff of the Department of Archives and Special Collections gained a greater appreciation for the influence the history of detection had for the young Harris. According to a childhood friend from Cleveland, Mississippi, one of Thomas Harris' early essays for their high school English teacher, Miss Effie Glasgow, concerned the human ear. Reportedly, Harris' thesis purported that personalities of individuals could be determined based on the shape of the ear. It is likely that by this time, Harris was familiar with the works of noted criminologist Alphonse Bertillon.

Considered one of the first modern scientific criminologists, Alphonse Bertillon became Paris' Chief of the Department of Judicial Identity in 1880. He standardized a method of measurement of the features of criminals and of crime scenes into a formulaic theory called "anthropometry" or the Bertillon system. Anthropometry was based on the classification of skeletal and other body measurements and statistics. Bertillon was also noted for his detailed photographs of crime scenes and mug shots. By 1888 France had adopted the system but it later became obsolete due to the

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<sup>10</sup> S.T. Joshi, *The Modern Weird Tale* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Harris, *The Hannibal Lecter Omnibus* (New York: BCA, 2000), vii-viii.

<sup>12</sup> Tony Magistrale and Michael A. Morrison, eds., *A Dark Night's Dreaming: Contemporary American Horror Fiction* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 33.

much more precise science of fingerprinting. Harris would later use Bertillon's quote "One can only see what one observes, and one observes only things which are already in the mind" as the first epigram in *Red Dragon*.

On display in the exhibition are several first editions of his works, signed editions, photographs from Bertillon's examination of the human ear of criminals, and a rare in-person signed advance paperback of *Red Dragon*.

*Conclusion:*

Mississippi's traditional literary history is well known, its authors well documented and continuously collected by libraries and departments of special collections all over the country and the world. The collection of the manuscripts of these authors has understandably been an important part of the mission of the University of Mississippi's Department of Archives & Special Collections since the late 1970s. Through thoughtful acquisition, University support, and the wonderful generosity of donors, the Department built a strong collection of literary Mississippiana. It is vital to continue this tradition while also looking for other important new forms of Mississippi's literary culture.

It is important to note that several other departments throughout the state have also collected the work of particular mystery authors, such as the wonderful collection of the John Grisham papers at Mississippi State University, or the John Armistead Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi, to name a few.

It is our hope that this exhibition "Murder with Southern Hospitality" will bring attention to a previously unexplored aspect of our literary collections. We welcome visitors and appreciate comments and suggestions. The exhibition will remain up through the late spring of 2005. Our hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. through 5 p.m., except for University holidays. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Ford at 662-915-7639 or through email at [jwford@olemiss.edu](mailto:jwford@olemiss.edu)

Curating the Papers of Best-Selling Authors:  
A Preliminary Case Study of the John Grisham Papers  
by  
Mattie Sink,  
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Mississippi State University Libraries  
Guest Editor

In 1989, Mississippi State University (MSU) acquired the papers of alumnus, lawyer and Mississippi State legislator John Grisham, who was at the time selling his first novel *A Time to Kill* out of the trunk of his car. Though the first accession of papers was small, consisting of the early papers of Grisham's legislative career, the acquisition was an exciting one. Mississippi State University has long exhibited pride in its alumni, and the MSU Library's collection of papers reflected that pride and connection. Although University President Don Zacharias and Library Director George Lewis certainly had high hopes for Grisham's writing career, neither of them could have foreseen the influence of first novelist John Grisham on the future of the university, the library, and on the Manuscripts Division of Special Collections. For John Grisham's second novel *The Firm* and the subsequent film made from it launched a career which propelled Grisham and the Mississippi State University Library into an archival relationship which appears to be fairly unique in archival history: an archival relationship in which the manuscripts of a best-selling author are acquired as a complete body during the lifetime of the author, and in this case, during the period of the author's greatest celebrity. This article will document this archivist's experience in curating

the John Grisham Papers with special attention given to acquisition, donor agreements, research value, demand, exhibits and processing issues.

In thinking about writing this article, this author attempted to determine whether MSU's experience with the John Grisham Papers is a unique experience. Answering this question turned out to be not an easy matter. Searching various databases and the Internet for such papers in archives turns up wonderful collections of the works of literary figures whose works were acquired after the authors had built a literary reputation. However, the search has to date brought to light no significant and complete archives of current best-selling authors. Although no comprehensive search of best-selling authors was possible, this author ultimately concluded that there are no significant bodies of papers of current best-selling authors in archives, or if they do exist, they are archived under conditions of secrecy. Given the current collectors market, it is safe to say that many manuscripts of best-selling authors are in private hands and will come on the market in the future. So in the end, it was necessary to make a hypothesis that archiving the Grisham Papers is a fairly unique experience in the archival world. Readers and researchers are welcome and encouraged to challenge this hypothesis.

How does an archives acquire the papers of a best-selling author? Acquiring the papers of an author after the author has achieved best-selling status almost certainly necessitates planning, hard work, building donor relationships, and maintaining a high profile that ensures the prestige of the archives. It may also be a function of how much money the archives has to purchase the collections, since these papers acquire monetary value because of their connection with the celebrity author. Conversely, acquiring the papers of a best-selling author in the early stages of his career may be more a function of happenstance and circumstance. Such was the case with Mississippi State University's acquisition of the papers of John Grisham. Ultimately, luck and attention to detail in documenting the university and its alumni as well as the state and its writing heritage led the university into a new adventure: documenting the twentieth century phenomenon of the career of a best-selling author.

Archives acquire collections for use. But in the case of collections of current best-selling authors, several factors may require that the collection be closed, or partially closed. In honing the donor agreement, the archives would be prudent to take into account the author's point of view. The best-selling author will be rightly concerned to protect his/her livelihood by keeping his writing methods secret. Writers' collections may also contain manuscripts of unpublished books or scripts that have monetary value to the author, who may want to publish in the future. Moreover, the author's image and reputation are very much at issue in his/her ability to continue to attract an audience. Recent posthumous archival discoveries such as that of Martin Luther King's plagiarism may lead writers to be cautious about opening papers. Closing the papers may also serve to reassure the author that he and his publicist have control over the author's image.

Demand for a best-selling author's papers is driven by research value. What are some of the uses of literary papers? It is a given that writers of articles and books are going to be interested in the celebrity author's biography. In the case of Grisham, there has been a demand for information for adult and young adult biographies and articles, interviews and other products. While some scholars disdain the best-selling author as not worthy of literary criticism, others are not so discriminating. In fact, the author's celebrity will almost guarantee that there will be a demand for his papers by those who want to write literary criticism works. In Grisham's case, at least two book-length works of criticism of Grisham's works have been written despite the fact that his literary papers are closed. While there has been some demand for the use of the papers for biography and criticism, there has been just as much interest from budding authors who want to learn to write a best-selling novel. There has also been interest from teachers of writing who are looking for collections that teach the art of writing from the first creative idea to the last stages of the creative process. Perhaps the greatest and most surprising demand has been from elementary and high school readers who enjoy reading the novels and are writing papers on Grisham as an author. Testimony to the juvenile interest in Grisham are the many fan letters to Grisham which are a part of the Grisham papers. Fortunately for MSU, the recent explosion of Internet information on Grisham has freed the staff from much of the burden of providing answers to specific questions and sending copies of articles about Grisham.

In the case of literary papers that are closed to research, the matter of exhibit will usually be a non-issue. Circumstances were again different in the case of the Grisham Papers. Those circumstances were the creation of the John Grisham Room in the MSU Library, which opened in 1998 through a generous donation of John and Renee Grisham to the MSU Library. Intended as a Mississippi Writer's Room, the Grisham Room ultimately became the venue for the continuing display of portions of the Grisham papers. Since its opening, the room has hosted tours for individuals and groups who are interested in the John Grisham Papers. The Grisham Room has also been hugely successful as a place for holding library and university receptions, meetings and other events. The opening of the John Grisham Room has certainly contributed to the uniqueness of MSU's experience, since it has also created a demand for the papers. Readers and potential researchers from all over the world have discovered the John Grisham Room and learned of the existence of the Grisham Papers on the Library's Internet site. While the exhibit does fulfill the desire for knowledge of the casual viewer of the Grisham exhibits, it has served to frustrate those who have interpreted that they would be able to see all of Grisham's Papers in the room, despite the fact that the Internet site clearly states that the papers are closed. Three John Grisham exhibits have been mounted to date and each exhibit has placed on view a different group of materials. Anyone who has viewed all three exhibits could certainly have accumulated considerable knowledge of Grisham's writing methods. But because the literary papers have been officially closed, some strict policies had to be made about the use of exhibits. These policies are few but important: no papers are taken out of the exhibit cases either to be viewed or copied; and no literary papers are available for viewing other than on exhibit, even if they have been exhibited before. Adhering to these policies has enabled the Library to answer some of the demand for the papers, while still honoring the donor agreement by keeping the great bulk of the literary papers closed to researchers.

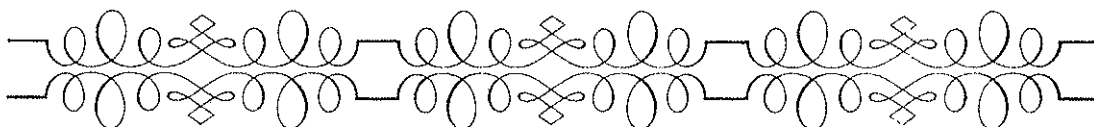
The necessity to continually exhibit the papers of John Grisham has had a decided effect on MSU's archival program. For one thing, it requires that the Library continually receive new material which can be used for exhibit. Part of this demand has been satisfied by an agreement with the publisher by which publicity materials for each new Grisham book are received as produced. These materials, together with recent articles, are exhibited in a case outside the room, which is easily changed and augmented. But to maintain some currency in the larger exhibit area, the ongoing body of Grisham papers must be regularly received, listed, identified and evaluated for exhibit purposes. Since Grisham has been producing novels at the rate of one per year since 1989, this task has proved quite challenging and has required the addition of staff and students.

The need to fully process large additions to the papers at regular intervals has been the most unanticipated effect of acquiring and exhibiting the papers of a best-selling author. The size of the manuscript material in the Grisham Papers have grown from one cubic foot in 1989 to more than seventy cubic feet of papers in 2004. Of this group, forty-two cubic feet has been processed in two groups. The first group of feet of papers was processed in fairly ordinary fashion by a talented student under the supervision of the Manuscripts Librarian. An advanced archival practicum student was able to take the inventory created by the student and write the scope and content note, biographical statement and assign subjects and personal names for the creation of the first finding aid.

With the need to create an exhibit in the Grisham Room, additional materials were solicited and received, and a new and equally talented student was assigned to the processing of the papers. In order to keep all manuscript materials for a single book together, the literary series was arranged in chronological order by book title. However, we were surprised to find that the new addition of materials contained manuscripts for books which had been processed in the first addition. Because it was anticipated that this might be the case with future additions, the Manuscripts Coordinator made the decision to use a finding aid technique that had been previously used for the records of organizations, where the continual addition of materials in ongoing series poses the problem of how to keep the organization logical without re-boxing materials. The method used is to arrange, list, assign folder numbers and box to each addition of the papers in established series order. After the addition is processed, rather than adding the new folder list as a separate inventory to the end of the previous folder list as was the past custom, materials were added into the computerized inventory in the series and

subseries to which they belong, regardless of folder and box number. A simple location guide gives the location of folders within boxes. This method requires a little bit of understanding on the part of the archives staff, but should yield benefits for the researcher since it allows the researcher to peruse the finding aid and see at a glance all materials related to a single literary product, no matter when the archives received it.

In summary, the acquisition of the John Grisham Papers by MSU has been a unique and worthwhile archival venture, benefitting the university, the public and the author. The university's reputation has been immeasurably enhanced over the fifteen years since the papers were acquired. The university has provided a service to the public during the period of greatest visibility of the author by making available a sampling of the papers on exhibit. At the same time, the larger body of papers is being continually processed, and will be ready for research when the papers are opened. Finally, by committing his papers to an archive at an early point in his career, the author has been relieved of the burden of caring for the papers, and has a guarantee that the papers will survive intact so that they can be used by future scholars.



Primary Sources Via EBAY:  
Building a Archival Postcard Collection  
by Reagan L. Grimsley  
Assistant Professor of Library Science  
Columbus State University, Columbus, Georgia

In 1898, Congress authorized the use of Private Mailing Cards, better known today as the postcard<sup>1</sup>. At the turn of the twentieth century, a postcard craze swept the nation, and sending, receiving, and collecting postcards became a favorite pastime of Americans. Early manufacturers such as E.C. Kropp, Arthur Livingstone, and the American Souvenir Company produced a wide variety of cards featuring a broad range of people, places, and events. Although designed to serve as a means of communication between parties, many of these cards were based on original photographs, and serve to document the culture and history of locales across the nation. Many libraries, archives, and special collections have postcard collections, but few actively pursue and purchase postcards as historical documents, although the cards are easily found on online auction sites such as EBAY. The purpose of this brief article is to share my experiences as a collector who also happens to be an archivist, in particular in relation to the acquisition of postcards of the city of Hattiesburg and Mississippi in general. A second but less significant purpose of the article is to document how the postcard can be used on the local level to interpret the past, and why archivists should strive to add postcards to their collections.

Prior written works on deltiology, or the study of postcards, have covered in-depth the postcard craze as it swept the nation after 1900.<sup>2</sup> Although the postcard fad abated somewhat during the First World War, many Americans continued to send, receive, and collect the three-by-five cards. Through travel, postcard clubs, and purchase from antiquities shops, postcards continued to circulate as collector's items even after their postal use. Every corner of the nation was touched by this craze, and local photographers took advantage by publishing photographic cards to hawk to visitors.

The nature of postcard collecting changed in September 1995, when Pierre Omidyar founded EBAY, heralded as "The World's Online Marketplace." Along with collectors of many other documents and artifacts, postcard enthusiasts soon found EBAY as a valuable source by which to build their collections.

Likewise, postcard sellers found an eager audience for their product, the postcard. Although the number of postcards offered for sale on the service varies daily, a sample survey for the period April 8 through May 13, 2004 found an average of 140,665 cards of all varieties and types were posted for sale. The range of topics are broad, and even a specific market such as scenes from Mississippi typically have several hundred cards for sale on any particular date. Narrowing the search to a particular town such as Hattiesburg still usually nets between twelve and thirty-one results.<sup>3</sup>

Developing a solid collection of postcards via EBAY can be fairly simple. The most common cards from Hattiesburg, for example, are offered at least once a month and within a few months the potential collector or archivist could easily collect a base group of fifty or so cards. The starting bid on a card is often less than \$5.00 per card, including shipping, which makes the cards relatively inexpensive. Rare cards, however, can be quite costly. Bidding on items frequently reaches \$10.00, \$20.00, and sometimes even \$50.00 for nicely illustrated cards, cards from the era 1900-1917, or unique photographic views. Although collectors interested in the locale are usually the main competition in bidding, genre collectors such as those who collect specific views, like train stations or libraries can sometimes also elevate the final price. Bids on postcard groups can sometimes net great bargains, but the bidder usually has to compete with dealers hoping to buy the collection and resell the cards one by one to achieve greater profit.

The physical condition of a majority of the cards offered for sale are excellent, although bidders should look closely at the scanned images for folds, feathering, or blemishes, which diminishes the value and makes preservation more difficult. Most sellers will gladly respond to questions, although it should be kept in mind that some sellers may know little or nothing about grading an image for quality, while others may be experts in the postcard field and be able to not only grade the card, but interpret its printing date and origin as well.

But why should archivists develop a postcard collection? First of all, images contained in picture postcards can divulge information such as the design and scale of buildings, the change of landscapes over time, and the rate at which new technologies were introduced into society. Postcard images can also be used to document regional variations in architecture and style. Since many postcards depict street scenes, a series of postcards from different time periods can literally give the researcher a time-lapse view of the same area, allowing for interpretation of change in the urban environment. Using Hattiesburg as an example, a view of Main Street looking north from Front Street was captured on postcards no fewer than five times between 1900 and 1960, each time from roughly the same camera angle. Specific details, such as change in mode of transportation from streetcar to the automobile, are readily evident.

Messages on postcards also help to link local events with those on the national level. A February 15, 1940 postcard from Mississippi Women's College, now William Carey College, reveals that although news of the 1939 movie *Gone with the Wind* had reached the area, the film had not. The sender states "Have you seen "Gone with the Wind" yet? I haven't but I [am] just crazy to see it. It has not come here yet."<sup>4</sup> From this remark we can infer that smaller markets such as Hattiesburg must have experienced a lag in premiering new movies, as *Gone With the Wind* had debuted some two months earlier in Atlanta.

Availability and coverage are another reason to collect the postcard as a primary source. Researchers are often surprised at the sheer number of images which have been recorded on postcards. One of the nation's largest postcard collections is located at the Curt Teich Postcard Archives in Wauconda, Illinois. From 1898-1978, the Curt Teich Company served as one of the world's largest postcard distributors, and the archives contain over 362,000 images documenting the output of the company.<sup>5</sup> Virtually every city in the United States is captured in this collection, and Hattiesburg is no exception, as over one-hundred and fifty of these cards feature images of the "Hub City." Combined with the number of postcards produced by smaller companies, somewhere between two-hundred and fifty and three-hundred postcards are known to exist of Hattiesburg and Camp Shelby, a narrowly focused geographic area. Since a majority of these postcards frequently appear for sale on EBAY, archivists in similar sized cities should find a similar number of postcards exist which document their locale.

Unique stories also emerge as the archivist delves into the usefulness of postcards as primary sources. Perhaps the best known card entrepreneur in the Hattiesburg area was D. B. Henley, whose views

date to at least 1903. Little is known of Henley, but in 1905 he is listed in the Hattiesburg City Directory as a photographer.<sup>6</sup> For reasons which are unknown, Henley produced a large number of cards in the first decade of the century, and then abruptly left the trade. Many of the early photographs of Hattiesburg in circulation today can be attributed to Henley and have remained for posterity because of the wide distribution which they achieved. Not only were Henley's black and white photographs made into cards, but many of the same images were reprinted using hand coloring techniques during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

In summary, the postcards of the twentieth century can prove to be valuable primary sources, both for the images they often contain and the messages with which they are inscribed. A wide variety of postcards depicting almost every city in the nation are available on online auction sites such as EBAY, often at nominal prices. Archivists, museum curators, collectors, and cultural researchers can use these online services as a place to procure primary source documents about the past. Once considered a token gift sent to a family member, researchers now utilize the postcard as a true primary source, ready to yield information if consulted, but only if they are actively collected by archival institutions.

Table One  
Average Number of Hattiesburg Postcards for Sale on EBAY

Date	Number of Cards for Sale
April 8, 2004	26
April 15, 2004	31
April 22, 2004	21
April 29, 2004	12
May 6, 2004	23
May 13, 2004	20

Table Two  
Number of Mississippi Postcards for Sale on EBAY

Date	Number of Cards for Sale
April 8, 2004	289
April 15, 2004	352
April 22, 2004	277
April 29, 2004	264
May 6, 2004	329
May 13, 2004	369



Table Three

**Average Number of Postcards Offered for Sale on EBAY**

Date	Number of Cards for Sale
April 8, 2004	150,005
April 15, 2004	145,774
April 22, 2004	140,101
April 29, 2004	140,346
May 6, 2004	133,634
May 13, 2004	134,127

<sup>1</sup> George Miller and Dorothy Miller, *Picture Postcards in the United States, 1893-1918* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. Publisher, 1976), 2.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of this era, see Chapter Two of Miller and Miller, *Postcards in the United States, 1893-1918*. For a brief introduction to postcard collection in general, see Valerie Monahan, *An American Postcard Collector's Guide* (Poole Dorset: United Kingdom: Blandford Press, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> Since most sales are multi-day, the author chose to compare the number of entries on a specified day of the week, in this case a Thursday, over a period of six weeks. Entries were compiled for Table One and Two by utilizing the category search on EBAY. Table One reflects the total number of postcards for sale. Table Two reflects postcards with views of Mississippi. Table Three was constructed by entering the search term "Hattiesburg" and narrowing the search to postcards via the category search capability of EBAY. All statistics were compiled using the website <http://www.ebay.com>.

<sup>4</sup> Postcard dated February 15, 1940, from Lois at Women's College in Hattiesburg Mississippi to Mrs. Harvey McPerson in Nashville, Tennessee. Postcard Collection of Reagan L. Grimsley.

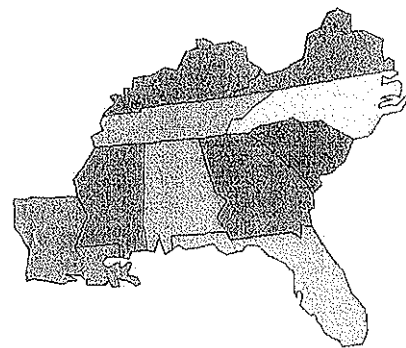
<sup>5</sup> Norman D. Stevens, Editor, *Postcards in the Library* (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Hattiesburg City Directory, n.p, 1905, 107. For a photograph of Henley's place of business, see Kenneth G. McCarty, Jr, *Hattiesburg, A Pictorial History* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1982), 43.

Reagan L. Grimsley a USM graduate, has contributed articles to both the *New Georgia Encyclopedia* and the upcoming *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, and reviews books on a regular basis for *Choice Magazine*. His image based book *Hattiesburg In Vintage Postcards* will be published in the fall of 2004 by Arcadia Publishing.

# Preservin' the South

Preservation News by Tina Mason,  
Education Officer, SOLINET Preservation Field Services.



## HERITAGE HEALTH INDEX QUESTIONNAIRE

Be on the look out for a Heritage Health Index questionnaire in your mailbox. Forms are being mailed to 15,000 archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, and scientific organizations nationwide in July 2004. This survey of the condition and preservation needs of collections will produce a national picture of the state of artistic, historic, and scientific collections held by the full range of institutions that care for them. The Heritage Health Index is administered by Heritage Preservation in partnership with IMLS. Heritage Preservation estimates that about 50,000 institutions hold collections, including books, manuscripts, paintings, photographs, archeological artifacts, natural history specimens, historic objects, audio-visual materials, and digital media. The survey will be distributed to collecting institutions of all types and sizes in all U.S. states and territories.

The results and recommendations that come out of the Heritage Health Index will be publicized and distributed widely and given to key national and state policy makers. The data will also give collecting institutions and their leadership a context in which to view their collections' condition and preservation needs.

For more information about the questionnaire, see  
<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/HHIhome.HTM>

## FEASIBILITY STUDY OF PROVIDING ONLINE ACCESS TO MICROFILMED NEWSPAPERS

The California Preservation Program has been coordinating a project to study the feasibility of creating online access to California historical newspapers by digitizing old preservation microfilm. The group used film of one of California's oldest newspapers, Alta California, to compare the strengths and limitations of various search and retrieval software products available; to analyze benefits and costs of digital content management service vendors and available commercial subscription products; and to estimate production requirements and costs to create a database of historical California newspapers.

The results of the feasibility study just went online at the project website, <http://cpc.stanford.edu/cndp/>. Included on this page is the plan of work for the study, outline for the next two phases of the project, and project participants.

## PROCEEDINGS OF SOUND SAVINGS: PRESERVING AUDIO COLLECTIONS CONFERENCE

In July 2003, a three day symposium on audio preservation was held in Austin Texas by the University of Texas at Austin, the Library of Congress conference the National Recording Preservation Board, and the Association of Research Libraries. The session featured presentations by experts in the field of audio preservation on topics ranging from assessing the preservation needs of audio collections to creating, preserving, and making publicly available digitally reformatted audio recordings. Many of the presentation papers are now available on the ARL website at <http://www.arl.org/preserv/> and more are expected to be added in the coming months.

## 2004 HURRICANE SEASON PREDICTIONS: POSSIBLE ABOVE NORMAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

Forecasters from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Hurricane Center expect an above normal activity for the upcoming hurricane season. Experts predict that the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season is likely to include twelve to fifteen named storms (average is 9.3), six to eight hurricanes (average is 5.7) and two to four intense hurricanes (average is 2.2), defined as Saffir-Simpson category 3, 4 or 5 with winds above 110 mph.

Hurricane season begins June 1st and runs to November 30. NOAA and Federal Emergency Management Agency officials advise Atlantic and Gulf Coast residents to be prepared throughout the season. It is time again to update, or develop in some cases, your institution's disaster plan. Most hurricanes are formed in August and September, however the first named tropical storm (Agatha) has already occurred in early May. Now is the time to inventory and replenish disaster supplies, update emergency phone lists, review recovery procedures, trim trees and remove loose debris around the perimeter of your building, and verify contact information for outside disaster recovery services.

Preparation and preparedness is the key to survival and protection of library and archival collections in the event of a hurricane. Although damage cannot be entirely prevented, it can be mitigated by preparedness. The potential for damage to library and archival collections is directly related to the construction of the building housing the collections. A structural engineer or architect can advise on building improvements such as roof bracing or installation of hurricane shutters to make a building more resistant to storm damage.

Since hurricanes usually approach with several days warning, an institution can stage its preparedness activities according to the level of warning. For example, when a hurricane watch is announced you have approximately 36 hours notice. At this time begin to brief employees, contact outside contractors and local freezer services, and identify shelters. When the announcement is elevated to a warning (hurricane is possible within 24 hours) the more labor-intensive precautions should be undertaken such as installing shutters, removing loose objects from building grounds, and covering and moving collections. These measures of protection will be impossible to implement in such a short period of time without advance planning. For more detailed information about what to do before, during, and after a storm see the excerpt from Mike Trinkley's Hurricane! Surviving the Big One on the SOLINET website <<http://www.solinet.net/preservation>>. Click on *Disaster Mitigation and Recovery Resources*, and scroll down to *Publications*. A full text Spanish translation, (Huracán!), is also accessible from this page.

In order to facilitate preparations the following websites may be of assistance:

Colorado State University, Department of Atmospheric Science <[typhoon.atmos.colostate.edu](http://typhoon.atmos.colostate.edu)>

Federal Emergency Management Agency <[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)>

National Hurricane Center <[www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)>

National Task Force on Emergency Response <[www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/taskfer.htm](http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/taskfer.htm)>

SOLINET Preservation Services <[www.solinet.net/preservation](http://www.solinet.net/preservation)>

Weather Underground <[www.wunderground.com/tropical/](http://www.wunderground.com/tropical/)>

## HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS PRINT PUBLICATION AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Preservation Services has reprinted one of its popular disaster preparedness publications, Hurricane: Are You Ready for the Big One? A Primer for Libraries, Museums, and Archive by Dr. Michael Trinkley, head of the Chicora Foundation. (Huracán!), the Spanish translation of Hurricane, has been an online resource since 2002. Now Preservation Services is pleased to announce the first printing of the Spanish version, an indispensable 95 page guide to preparing and responding to hurricane emergencies in your institution.

Like the English version, (Huracán! focuses on surviving a hurricane through appropriate planning. Sections include hurricane-resistant building design, retrofitting structures to improve survivability, necessary supplies, and actions to take prior to, during, and after a storm. (Huracán! is a revised translation of the 1998 edition of *Hurricane* with a new introduction by Hilda Abreu de Utermöhlen, M.Sc. Conservadora, Centro Cultural Eduardo León Jimenes Santiago, República Dominicana, and an appendix with information specific to Caribbean building structures by Maria Gonzalez, who has twenty-three years experience with two major construction companies, and is a 3rd-year doctoral student in the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin, with a specialization in Preservation Administration.

For more information, visit the publications section of the SOLINET Preservation section at <http://www.solinet.net/preservation>.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### Prevention and Recovery from a Mold Outbreak

The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) has published Technical Bulletin #26, Mould Prevention and Collection Recovery: Guidelines for Heritage Collections, by Sherry Guild and Maureen MacDonald. The 34 pages cover the nature of mold, preventions techniques, and dealing with an outbreak. Includes specific information on mold removal on all types of artifacts (books, paper, artifacts in boxes, parchment or vellum, photographs, magnetic media, film, art on paper, paintings, textiles, baskets, leather, wood, bone, glass, ceramics, metal, rubber and plastic), next steps after cleaning, health risks, and personal protective equipment. Supply and web resources are listed in the bulletin. The 34 page bulletin sells for \$20 and is available on CCI's website: <https://www.cci-icc.gc.ca/bookstore/index-e.cfm>.

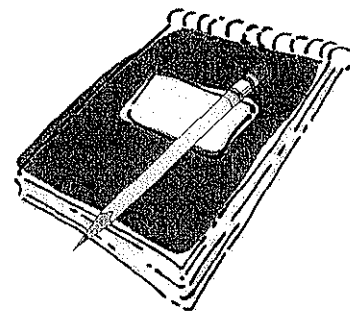
### Protecting Collections while Under Construction

SOLINET announces the online publication of Under Construction: Preservation and Collections Care Issues during Building Projects and Renovations, the proceedings from a SOLINET Preservation Conference held May 30, 2003, in Atlanta, GA. The six individually authored papers, plus an introduction, provide practical information from library administrators and preservation professionals. The papers address preservation issues in planning, design, construction, moving collections and disaster preparedness. The printable PDF proceedings are listed in the "Preservation Publications: Collections Care" section of the Preservation & Access web pages: [www.solinet.net/preservation/construction](http://www.solinet.net/preservation/construction).

## PRESERVATION EDUCATION DIRECTORY IS PUBLISHED

The 8th edition of the Preservation Education Directory, edited by Christine Wiseman and Julie Arnott, is now available on the American Library Association (ALA) website. Published by the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services Division of ALA, the directory lists graduate preservation and conservation programs, preservation courses at library schools, and opportunities for continuing education in preservation in North America. Programs and courses are also index geographically by state/province. The directory may be found by searching for "preservation education directory" on the ALA website: [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org).

# Reports



SOUTHERN ARCHIVISTS' CONFERENCE (SAC)  
APRIL 14 – 16, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

This year's meeting took place in the new building of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the House Chamber of the Old Capitol Museum.

Two pre-conference workshops were held on Friday. In the morning, John Dougan from the Shelby County Archives, in Memphis, Tennessee, offered advice on "Database Design and Management for Genealogical Records". In the afternoon, Alan Heath and Tom Reilly from the Genealogical Society of Utah and Tom Turley, Alabama Department of Archives and History, gave a presentation on "Archival Preservation and Access: How the Genealogical Society of Utah Can Benefit You." Both workshops were well attended and provided valuable insights.

Some conference attendees also took the one-hour architectural walking tour of historic down-town Jackson led by Todd Sanders from the Historic Preservation Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. A reception and tours of the new facility rounded out Friday evening.

## SESSION I

### The Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive: Providing Online Access to 20th Century Materials

Peggy M. Price & Diane DeCesare Ross,  
The University of Southern Mississippi

The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries began their digital program with civil rights materials in January 2000 because Mississippi was the focal point in the struggle for civil rights in America, and Hattiesburg (home of USM) had the largest and most successful Freedom Summer project in 1964. In September 2001, the Libraries received a \$204,687 National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The project archive now provides worldwide access to nearly 10,000 pages of civil rights-related manuscripts, photographs, and oral histories. The project has also resulted in the creation of a model for resolving intellectual property issues associated with digitizing archival collections of 20th century materials not in the public domain. An explanation of procedures and sample forms used to resolve these issues can be found at <http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/ipp/index.html>.

Early on, project participants recognized the limitations of available subject heading schema in meeting project needs for a controlled vocabulary. They constructed the Civil Rights in Mississippi Thesaurus based on Library of Congress Subject Headings, but with the addition of subjects more intuitive to today's researchers (i.e., "voting" rather than "suffrage") or more specific to Mississippi. These headings are being submitted to the Library of Congress through the African-American Subject Funnel Project for possible inclusion in future editions of the LCSH. The still-growing thesaurus can be accessed online at [http://www.lib.usm.edu/~techserv/cat/tools/crm\\_index.htm](http://www.lib.usm.edu/~techserv/cat/tools/crm_index.htm).

In September 2003, USM Libraries received a second National Leadership Grant from IMLS, this time for \$463,322. Through this grant, six Mississippi institutions (Delta State University, Jackson State University, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Tougaloo College, the University of Mississippi, and USM) are partnering in Mississippi's first attempt to establish a collaborative statewide digital library program. This initial phase will focus on providing access to finding aids and digital surrogates related to civil rights materials held at the participating institutions. However, future expansion

may lead to the inclusion of additional subject areas and participation from public libraries, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions in the state.

## SESSION II

### Paper Finding Aids for EAD: Creating Paper Finding Aids that Convert Easily to EAD

Dr. Elizabeth Dow  
School of Library and Information Science  
Louisiana State University

Dr. Dow began the presentation by giving a brief overview of the history of archival description and the paper finding aid. She then gave a short history of the impact of computers on the way archival institutions develop finding aids. Beginning in the 1960s with union databases, machine readable (MARC) cataloging in the 1970s, MARC for AMC in the 1980s, and then EAD in the mid 1990s, every step encouraged archival institutions to apply standards in order to share information.

Most paper finding aids are highly idiosyncratic, depending on the processor, the collection and the institution. These idiosyncrasies make it difficult for repositories to present information in an electronic format or to share information with other institutions. Ms. Dow strongly suggested creating a standard form for collection data and to present information in a consistent manner.

Finding aids should be developed from general to specific (think outline), the best finding aids are presented in layers of information. High-level information is collection applicable information that applies to all information below it and includes all name authority work and documentation. Mid-level information is component applicable, such as the series and the lower level is the folder or item description. Some helpful hints on low-level information were to avoid abbreviations and ditto marks.

Dow suggested that repositories >begin with the end in mind. = In other words, develop the paper finding aid so it can be easily converted to Encoded Archival Description (EAD). Creating paper finding aids with EAD in mind reduces the work of conversion, increases compatibility in union databases, and most importantly, provides researcher with information presented the same way across repositories. In the case of existing finding aids, Ms. Dow encouraged a careful evaluation of existing information. Many older finding aids are so poor that it is easier to begin again.

One of the more interesting comments of the session was in regard to the implication of intellectual priority; there is increasingly less reliance on the physical nature of the collection as a basis for the description.

Ms. Dow left the group with two pieces of advice: Be sure to indicate in the documentation file the authority work done and to remember--standards are our friends.

## SESSION III

### Publishing Local History

Richard Saunders, Curator of Special Collections and University Archives,  
Director of the University Museum  
University of Tennessee - Martin, TN

Dr. Saunders offered detailed advice on all aspects of publishing an archivist might wish to undertake ranging from finding aids to websites to books. In finding aids, archivists need to describe source materials succinctly, so researchers can decide what to use. They need to make notes and jot down observations when they first begin working with a collection and they should probably decide on a format early on also. Dr. Saunders is biased toward print and paper media, partially because of preservation issues. (Lower technology equals higher preservation potential but there are worrisome permanence issues concerning printers, toners and photocopies). He also pointed out that whereas online productions tend to work in

a linear fashion, printed items do not. The web works best as a distribution medium for Universities, government agencies and similar large entities, but not necessarily for small archives because of the cost of long-term maintenance. Many archives are now generating electronic data files. Dr. Saunders recommended that archivists use off-the-shelf software which will be supported by the manufacturer. Standards are essential, as is use of proper data formats. He suggested that too many bells and whistles may be counterproductive and pointed out the need for outside readers for finding aids and the like. Good design and thorough editorial review are essential for quality publications.

#### SESSION IV

##### Documenting and Preserving the Deep South

Dr. Shana Walton, Associate Director,  
Deep South Regional Humanities Center, Tulane University.

Dr. Walton began by briefly discussing the establishment of the regional humanities centers and their initial missions prior to the withdrawal of NEH funding. She then went on to discuss the abbreviated mission of the Deep South Center and talked about what they have accomplished so far.

Their main mission has been to address access issues to enhance the public awareness of archival holdings throughout the "deep South," in this case Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama. She showed the multi-media CD that they developed on the Louisiana Purchase, using archival material from a large number of repositories. She also talked about the CD, "Waking Up to War: The Shock of Pearl Harbor" and distributed copies to the institutions present in the audience.

Other projects she covered were:

Resource Database Collection – working with every state, university, college, and local archives and historical society to provide a portal web site of their on-line holdings and finding aids.

Culinary History Project – working to develop a comprehensive list of cookbook collections in the various regional archives.

The Center staff believe that they should be collecting information, and serve as an Internet portal to make this information accessible to the public.

Dr. Walton then turned the presentation into a discussion on how the various regional archives could help the Deep South Center fulfill their original NEH mission without the massive Federal and private funding they were to have. The discussion covered a wide range of topics, but no concrete proposals were made.

#### DINNER BANQUET KEYNOTE ADDRESS

##### A Grassroots Approach to a State-wide Digitization Initiative: NC ECHO

Kim Cumber, NC ECHO  
North Carolina State Library

Our NC ECHO Project is really five-fold:

1. Our needs assessment/statistical survey of cultural institutions in North Carolina
2. Our web directory of all cultural institutions in the state - libraries, archives, museums, and other collecting organizations
3. Our re-grant program in which LSTA funds are granted to libraries and their partner institutions for digitization projects

4. Our Continuing Education offerings - some foundation practices, digitization skills, and metadata
5. Our role as an information clearinghouse for cultural institutions across the state

We have broadly defined the term "cultural institution" for our purposes - Any cultural institution (library, archive, museum, historic site, or organization), which maintains a permanent, non-living collection of unique materials held for research and/or exhibit purposes and open for the use of the public will be surveyed. Denominational/associational collections will be surveyed, but individual church collections will not. Art museums will be surveyed but galleries will not. Zoos, arboreta, and parks will not be surveyed, unless as a part of their mission, they hold collections described above.

#### Project Vision

All of North Carolina's cultural institutions work together to make the state's unique cultural and historical resources accessible for the education and enjoyment of people of all ages in the state, the nation, and the world.

#### Purpose of the NC ECHO Portal

The purpose of the ASCWG portal is to provide a single point of entry for the citizens of North Carolina to the unique resources of North Carolina's cultural institutions in order to enhance education and learning.

Please go to our website <http://www.ncecho.org> and play around! There's a lot to see and we are continuing to develop the site and its (presently sub-par) searching function. Please send suggestions if you have them!

## SESSION V

### Starting an Archives: Decisions, Decisions, Decisions ...

Meredith Johnson, Child Nutrition Archives,  
National Food Services Management Institute, University of Mississippi;  
Susan Bzdell, Morgan County Archives, AL;  
Dennis Smith, National Agricultural Library, Washington, D.C.

Ms Meredith Johnson spoke on the challenges and problems associated with setting up a new institutional archives. She especially stressed the need to publicize archival institutions and provided examples of successful strategies, such as press releases, exhibits of recent accessions, speakers and especially web sites with interesting web exhibits. Ms Johnson also reminded everyone to collect user statistics.

Ms Susan Bzdell's talk entitled "Local Archives: Start-Up Decisions" described the challenges encountered when she had to deal with a totally unorganized and un-inventoried collection to be housed in a less than ideal building. She emphasized that anyone starting up an archives needs to understand clearly the mission of the institution, its funding and the available resources. An archives created by a legislative body will have a secure source of funding, but those funds can only be used for public records. (Ms Bzdell funds come from a \$ 3.0 filing fee, she cannot go back and ask for more). Ms Bzdell considers her county to be her service area; she collects local history items, but for those collections she has to rely on private donations of materials and money. With limited resources and limited time, it is crucial to have a precise policy of what to collect from the public – she focuses on photographs which have to be publicly accessible. She recommends forming a "Friends of the Archives" group and to form ties with civic groups. She also encourages people to put bequests in writing and to include them in their wills. Ms Bzdell does charge state agencies for services rendered, this helps with buying supplies for the county's records. This presentation stressed a practical, hands-on approach which the audience appreciated very much.



Dennis Smith described the collections in the archives of the National Agricultural Library, such as the rare book collection containing many rare works in botany, natural history, zoology and entomology as well as herbaria from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Other highlights are Thomas Jefferson Correspondence and the USDA Pomological Watercolor Collection. This beautiful collection contains more than 6000 paintings of fruits and nuts from the late 1180s through the early 1900s. Mr. Davis also pointed out the many nutritional resources on the NAL website.



# Hear ye! Hear ye!

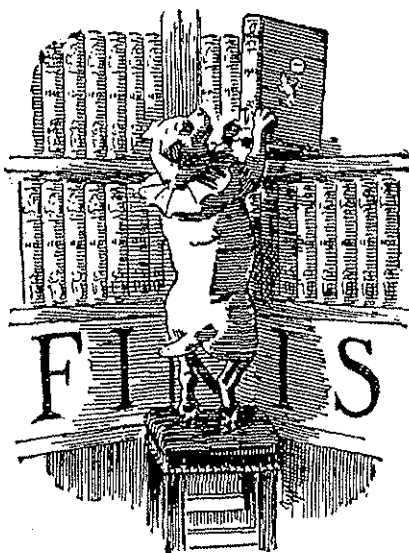


From Fall 2004 onward, the Newsletter will become an electronic publication. Nadia Nasr, SMA's web mistress, is setting up a special link on the SMA homepage. The newsletter will be in PDF format – this means that you will have to download Adobe Acrobat Reader from the internet.

The address is

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html>

Click on "Free Adobe Reader" on the left sidebar and then follow the instructions.



## Call for Papers

The editors of The Primary Source are seeking articles and reviews for upcoming issues of the journal. Submit articles etc. as files on diskettes or as e-mail attachments in WordPerfect (5.0 +) or Microsoft Word (3.1 +).

Please address questions about submitting articles and other materials to be published to

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2600 Sunset Drive  
Hattiesburg, MS 39402  
Phone: (601) 268-3134

e-mail: irmgard.wolfe@usm.edu

or

Sandra Boyd  
Mississippi Department of Archives and  
History

P.O. Box 571  
Jackson, MS 39201  
Phone: (601) 359-6889  
Fax: (601) 359-6964

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