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### President's Column

2020 has, so far, proven to be a troubling year as we continue to grapple with the COVID-19 crisis, a never-ending spiral of negative, polarizing national politics, and the ongoing racial agony of yet another unarmed black man (and also sometimes a woman) killed by white police officers and the resulting protest demonstrations taking place nationwide. I do not intend for this to be a political column but I feel I must acknowledge the realities which we both as librarians and as American citizens are experiencing.

In regard to the virus crisis, as states continue, for better or worse, to relax restrictions libraries are to varying degrees responding as we continue to do our best to serve our patrons in a safe and responsible manner. Many of us have been working from home remotely, others (like me) have been coming to work all along but, in effect, working remotely with our patrons since most of us have had closed library buildings for at least some of the time since mid-March. It truly is remarkable how we have been able to function thanks to computers, electronic devices, and electronic resources ranging from databases to e-books, and more. Thanks to Zoom, many if not most of us have been able to still hold professional meetings and workshops and, in the academic library world, provide library instruction virtually. This may seem unremarkable to those of us under, say, age 40, but to those of us who grew up in an analog world and whose careers began in such a world (I got my M.L.S. in 1980), this is a truly amazing and wonderful thing. Even 20 years ago most of what we have been able to do to function professionally during this pandemic would not have been possible.

As you know, one consequence of the virus crisis is the transformation of the joint SELA/GLA conference from an in-person conference in Macon (hometown of the late great Little Richard) to a virtual conference. I know SELA President-Elect Melissa Dennis and Georgia Library Association President Laura Burtle and numerous others have been working very hard to make this adjustment. All signs are that the virtual conference will be a truly outstanding event featuring a number of great presentations and programs. Similarly, the SELA Centennial Committee, chaired by Camille McCutcheon, is working on a wide variety of initiatives with plans for special events and more to ensure our centennial anniversary gets celebrated both at the virtual conference and beyond. Watch for announcements and updates on the SELA listserv and on the SELA website!

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# Preserving and Publicizing Archival Collections

Ruth Elder, Jana Slay, Rachel Hooper and Lauren Keely Post

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## Introduction

Archival collections vary in content and scope, and how universities or archives handle those collections varies even more. When Troy University was gifted thousands of interesting and unique postcards, the librarians were unsure of how to handle these since no archivist was on staff and no one was trained in the preservation or organization of archival material. This forced librarians to educate themselves and discern the best way to move forward. The purpose of this study is to investigate ways to preserve archival collections while increasing the visibility and usage of the content. The first section will include a literature review of ways archival materials are handled in libraries and museums as well as best practices for preserving, organizing, and sharing special collections. The authors will then detail the way this information was used to establish digitization processes and storage options for managing an archival collection of postcards in their academic library. The last part of the paper will detail the way this academic library increased the visibility and usage of the postcard collection by collaborating with other academic departments to create both physical and online exhibits. This section will give practical details concerning the production of three multi-panel traveling exhibits, the methods used for generating interest and securing bookings for these exhibits, and the logistics of managing the exhibits.

## Literature Review

While many libraries and archives store materials from the surrounding community or state, collections vary drastically. Some veer towards the unique, while others seem odd – from collections of postcards (Collections, gateways, and tools, n.d.) to the bloody clothing worn by a former Alabama governor during a failed assassination attempt (Edgemon, 2014). How do these institutions preserve these collections? Are they accessible online, or must someone visit the library or archives to browse the contents? How do they market their collections to the public?

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) gives specific guidelines for special collections. These guidelines provide “best practices” for processing items, information on using appropriate descriptors, knowledge to improve the findability of items in the collection, and stated competencies for preservation and

conservation (Guidelines, 2017). The Library of Congress (LC) website, <https://www.loc.gov>, is another resource for those with preservation questions. In addition to preservation, the LC website covers collections care, conservation, digital preservation, and emergency management (Library of Congress, n.d.). The Digital Preservation Coalition (2019), a non-profit company based in the United Kingdom, also seeks to “secure our digital legacy” by providing a handbook to assist in the preservation process. According to Oya Rieger (2018), “The development and adoption of shared standards...have been instrumental in facilitating the access, discovery, management, and preservation of digital resources.” Although these have been created to help librarians and archivists use a streamlined process, each institution handles its collections according to staffing, budget, and the perceived needs of the patrons (Kersting, O’English, Passehl-Stoddart, Stoddart, & Velte, 2017).

“Reboxing is preservation in its most basic form,” according to Haley Aaron, Registrar at the Alabama Department of Archives and History (personal communication, February 28, 2019). In order to preserve something, archivists must think of several factors: ways to preserve the integrity of the items, the lighting, the climate, and fragility or potential damage from use. While some items may be perfectly fine once they have been “reboxed,” others may need additional attention, especially fragile items (H. Aaron, personal communication, February 28, 2019). Over the past two decades, more content is being preserved and accessed digitally than ever before (Rieger, 2018). In order to “save” those items that are fragile while still providing access to the public, institutions may try to digitize them. If people only want to read what is on a document, typically “a digital surrogate is enough” (H. Aaron, personal communication, February 28, 2019). While this may be costly and/or time-consuming to organizations, it does have many benefits, such as making items available to a wider community of users and providing additional preservation and backup of materials in case of natural disaster or damage to the original.

Once the preservation of the items has been taken into consideration, the next step to consider is the visibility of the collection. According to Purcell (2012), “The standard archival principle to preserve and protect materials sometimes adversely intersects the push for greater use of and access to original items” (p. 144). Whether or not an institution should exhibit its collection has been in the archival literature for decades. Many questions arise, such

as security of the exhibit, along with the proper temperatures, lighting, and humidity levels required for the preservation of the items (Powers, 1978). One way to work around many of these concerns is through digitization. Some of Altermatt and Hilton's (2012) research has focused on the digitization of ephemera and the importance of providing access to that type of archival item. Since *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera* (Rickards, 2000) classifies postcards as ephemera, Altermatt and Hilton's (2012) research was of particular interest to this institution since the objective of the archival project was to showcase a unique set of postcards.

As mentioned above, digitizing content allows institutions to provide electronic access to collections on their websites. Another way to showcase collections is by creating traveling exhibits. These can be sent to other libraries or institutions with the appropriate amount of space in which to display the exhibit, whether it be in panels, on digital devices such as iPads, or even the original items. The Louis Round Wilson Library Special Collections at the University of North Carolina (UNC) Chapel Hill is one example of a Special Collections library that incorporates this idea. They have a unique photograph collection that can be shared with institutions across the country. This traveling exhibit allows the work of a well-known North Carolinian photographer to be shared with others who may not be as familiar with his work or with his lesser-known photographs (Traveling Exhibits, n.d.). The National Library of Medicine (NLM) has a variety of traveling exhibitions that are sent throughout the United States and Europe, one of which is "Pictures of Nursing: The Zwerdling Postcard Collection." This collection is digitized, and banners of the postcards were created for institutions to borrow and display (Exhibition Program, 2016).

Another option is to create online exhibits (WKU, 2018; Cornell University Library, 2019; New York Public Library, 2019; Smithsonian Libraries, n.d.). According to Cornell's (2019) website, "Library exhibitions, both online and in person, help nourish and inspire intellectual curiosity and creativity." These online exhibits allow the collections to be shared across the world, not just locally or at the specific sites that receive the traveling exhibit. The Mississippi Gulf Coast Museum of Historical Photography (MoHP) is a prime example of an institution who has created digital content online to share with others. The MoHP has a collection of images and postcards from the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region that has been digitized and is available for viewing on their website. In addition to the images, they have added information on the collection and the historical restoration of items (Mississippi Gulf Coast, n.d.). The Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Public Library is another excellent example. This website hosts a collection titled "Albuquerque Historical Postcards," which displays "more than 2,000 postcards published throughout the 20th Century." The original intent was to celebrate Albuquerque's tricentennial celebration, so a traveling display was sent throughout the county, but now these postcards are displayed on their website for people

worldwide to visit and enjoy (Albuquerque Historical Postcards, n.d.).

Overall, it seems to be a balancing act for those working in archives and special collections. Which items need additional attention for preservation? How will displaying or providing access to this item affect its condition and "life-span"? What is the best way to reach an interested audience? Is it better to have a traveling display or a stationary one? If an institution chooses to create a traveling display, should the original items or digital surrogates be used? In the end, each institution must decide these things for its collection and for its patrons.

### Managing Archival Collections

In this study, the authors chose to investigate the best methods for managing the Wade Hall Postcard Collection. This collection is made up of over 25,000 vintage postcards which Dr. Wade Hall, an alumnus of Troy University, donated to the Troy University Library Archives. These postcards are from every state in the union and many foreign countries, and they range from the early 1900s to the 1960s. There are also topical postcards, such as holidays, patriotism, and humor.

he ability to group materials into logical categories is the first step in establishing intellectual control over collections (Hunter, 2003). The mission is to organize the materials in some systematic manner and then communicate that order to users (O'Toole, 1990). Therefore, the librarians started by putting the postcards in categories mainly by location. With the Alabama postcards separated out, it was easier to add them to AlabamaMosaic, a digital repository of materials dealing with Alabama's history, culture, places, and people whose purpose is to make Alabama materials electronically accessible to Alabamians and people throughout the world. Since this was the librarians' desire as well, it was a great fit. The other advantage of adding this collection to AlabamaMosaic was the best practices guidelines and support this organization provided. This support included librarians from NAAL (Network of Alabama Academic Libraries) member libraries who help new contributors learn to use the CONTENTdm (a digital collection management system) software.

The librarians at Auburn University were extremely helpful concerning digitization techniques and scanning equipment for postcards. They also taught the project leader how to upload postcards (compound objects) into CONTENTdm, which Dublin Core (a small set of vocabulary terms used to describe resources) metadata fields to use, and appropriate subject headings. The end result was a Metadata Application Profile (MAP) or data dictionary which consisted of 23 fields. Some of these fields pertain to the specific postcard and others to the entire collection. The fields include: Title, Description, Text, Creator, Contributors, Original Date, Digital Date, Publisher, Rights, four controlled vocabulary subject fields (Library of Congress Subject Headings, topical categories from the Encyclopedia of Alabama, topical categories from the

Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, and headings from the Thesaurus of Graphic Materials), Alabama Moments, Relation: Is Part of, Language, Transcription, Contributing Institution, Source, Identifier, File Type, and File Format.

Because of the excellent resources provided by AlabamaMosaic, there was very little research needed concerning the management of the Alabama postcards. However, since each AlabamaMosaic contributor has limited storage space and there are approximately 20,000 postcards not “related to Alabama,” the authors are looking into other digital management systems and storage options for those postcards. They are in the process of scanning the non-Alabama cards using the same specifications as the Alabama cards in order to maintain consistency and interoperability across the entire collection.

### **Wade Hall Postcard Collection Traveling Exhibits**

In addition to preserving the postcard collection, the librarians wanted to promote its existence. The Kansas City Public Library’s award-winning exhibit “Greetings from Kansas City” was the inspiration for what would become the “Wade Hall Postcards” traveling exhibits (Malden, 2014). As the librarians assigned to this project began considering their assignment, they became convinced of two things: that the exhibit should be made available to venues statewide and that it should be tied into the Alabama bicentennial celebration. They also discovered three important facts that had to be dealt with in order to turn this idea into a reality, namely that creating a quality exhibit is expensive (the original estimate was over \$25,000), they needed to include someone with more insight into the state’s history than they possessed, and they needed to have a professional design the exhibit.

As for the first concern, Ericson (2003) pointed out that state humanities commissions were a good source of funding for public programming. This proved to be the case for this project when the library received two grants from the Alabama Humanities Foundation (AHF). AHF is the state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, with a long history of awarding grants to support public humanities programming. The Grants Director went out of his way to answer the librarians’ questions, make sure the proposal was strong, and ensure everything required was included with the online application. In August 2016, the library received the first grant for \$2,500. The monies were used to support the exhibit’s creation and publicity. Because the demand for these exhibits was so great, in 2019, the library applied for and received a second grant from AHF for \$3,750 to create a third exhibit. One of the conditions of receiving the funding was that the exhibits would be made available to the public. This condition coincided with the team’s decision for the project to be a traveling exhibit rather than a permanent one. As this project developed, the librarians became convinced that the exhibit should be shared statewide.

Ericson (2003) offered another piece of advice that the librarians applied to this project: “You will be judged by

the quality of what you produce. Don’t be reluctant to ask for help from someone with knowledge you lack” (p. 74). Therefore, the librarians requested a Troy University archivist/history professor, who is a native Alabamian with a doctorate in American History, to check all the exhibit’s content for accuracy. They also contacted a professor from Troy’s Department of Art and Design for design advice. Originally, an outside company was considered for the design and production of the exhibit panels. However, once the librarians began working with the “in-house” expert, it became obvious that they should work with him to design the physical panels as well as the complementary online exhibit. By doing this, they had greater opportunities for collaboration, and it gave the library more control over the final product.

Another reality concerning exhibits is that they have to attract people’s attention. It is easy for developers to get excited about a personal project, but would others throughout the state be interested? To gauge that interest, libraries throughout the state were contacted in person or via email. The end result was a list of seventeen venues who agreed to host the exhibit based on just the concept alone. They loved the idea of an exhibit centered around postcards because postcards help people fondly remember the past and the images associated with it. “The power of reminiscence brings to mind times in almost everyone’s life that were particularly meaningful, influential, or happier” (Ericson, 2003, p. 67). After the exhibits were created, displaying them at the 2017 Alabama Library Association convention garnered even more interest.

Now that the librarians had funding, experts ready to assist, and committed hosting sites, it was time to create the exhibits. The guiding principle came from Jessica Lacher-Feldman’s 2013 book *Exhibits in Archives and Special Collections Libraries*, which was quoted in Davy and Schinder’s 2015 article. She said, “Any good exhibit teaches, it requires research that might spark further research endeavors, and it creates goodwill and interest, which can be construed as service to the campus and to the broader community” (p. 31). As the Society of American Archivists’ (n.d.) Guidelines for College and University Archives points out, “the archives takes its mission from the mission of the institution, to educate.” For this reason, the librarians designated two of the panels in each exhibit for educational purposes. One panel introduced the collection and its donor and explained the postcard colorization process. The other panel displayed how postcards depict social history without words, compared postcards to today’s social media, and gave instructions for accessing the rest of the Wade Hall collection. Creating these panels was easy compared to the six “subject” panels.

Deciding which of the over 5,000 Alabama postcards to highlight on the exhibit panels was a daunting task. Therefore, the librarians developed criteria to use in the selection process. The first step was to determine the general themes. The librarians chose main streets for the first exhibit since they knew the collection had hundreds of “main streets” by many other names in cities and towns, big and small, throughout Alabama. Since creating exhibits

which would appeal to as many people as possible was one of the goals, they made some strategic decisions. First, the state was divided into five regions by counties making sure Birmingham, Mobile, and Huntsville were in separate regions and determined each region would have a panel. Second, they decided Montgomery would have a panel of its own because it is the capital. Third, with the help of the designer, they decided to only showcase eight postcards on each panel. The final step was choosing the eight postcards for each panel. This process included the location represented, how interesting the image was, and how the postcard would look enlarged. Practically, this meant taking all the scanned images and putting them into the six geographical regions, choosing at least one - but no more than three - from the major metropolitan areas, and then looking at where a town was located in the region and its city's size to make sure that it was a diverse grouping. The librarians also specifically chose postcards from Union Springs (Wade Hall's home town), Tuscaloosa (Wade Hall is an alumnus of the University of Alabama), and Troy because they wanted to promote their town and university.

This method of culling the cards worked great for the "main streets" exhibit. However, for the second exhibit, the librarians chose buildings as the theme and the number of building postcards in the collection was overwhelming. Therefore, they added the following limitations to the criteria. First, it was decided the buildings had to fall under the category of governmental, educational, medical, or religious. By excluding commercial buildings, all hotels, restaurants, factories, and so forth could be eliminated. Second, choices were made between courthouses, post offices, schools, hospitals, churches, and libraries so no one type of building would dominate. For the colleges, historical buildings that are still in use were specifically chosen. Troy University was the only exception because the librarians wanted their students to know about the original building. A lighthouse was also specifically chosen as a reminder that a part of Alabama is on the coast.

For the third exhibit, the librarians chose tourism for the theme. It quickly became apparent that the regional divisions used for the first two exhibits would not work for this one since Alabama tourist spots are not evenly divided throughout the state. Therefore, they chose postcards for this exhibit that would showcase the various aspects of tourism in Alabama, such as how people got here (roads, trains, pleasure ships, etc.), where they stayed (hotels, motels, lodges, etc.), and what they saw (natural and man-made destinations). The educational panels included the same information as the first two exhibits, but the postcards used to illustrate were different. As for the "subject" panels, the sub-themes were: Transportation and Restaurants; Lodgings; Historic Homes; Greetings, Museums, and Monuments; Natural Attractions; and Attractions, City Parks, and Events. Once again, the librarians wanted the exhibit to have wide appeal so they chose postcards from well-known and obscure places, large cities and small towns, and from locations throughout the state. Because of the nature of tourism, some locations have

greater representation, but the librarians did try for diversity.

Once the panels were completed, they needed to be printed. The librarians investigated "in-house" and commercial options to find high quality and economical choices for the printing. Ultimately, the exhibit panels were printed by an outside company on very durable fabric that has held up to the conditions of various venues as well as the installation and removal from each venue (a number that exceeded two dozen for each set of panels by the end of 2019). By using the "in-house" professional for designing and an outside company for printing, the library received three exceptional exhibits at a cost close to half the amount of the estimate from the original outside company.

Tying these exhibits to Alabama's three-year bicentennial celebration and offering them to venues free of charge increased their popularity and provided a service to Alabamians. "A centennial is a superb opportunity for an archives to reach its various constituencies: researchers, resource allocators, and the general public" (Kohl, 2003, pp. 125-126). In addition, "a series of events, perhaps extending throughout a centennial year, will draw a more diverse audience and ... keep you in the spotlight for a longer period of time" (Ericson, 2003, p. 74). This was definitely the case with these exhibits. The librarians knew that venues across Alabama wanted to be a part of the bicentennial celebration but budgets were tight and space was limited. Therefore, the exhibits were created so that they were easy to transport, took up little space, and could be displayed in a myriad of different ways. Hosting sites loved them and organizations contacted the librarians to request to host them. The costs were kept down by having the staff from the host sites work together to transfer the panels. The value of working together was obvious and everyone was very willing to cooperate. Having these responsible people move the panels also contributed to their endurance as they traveled around the state over the course of three years.

Connecting the exhibits to the bicentennial also helped with publicity. Each time an exhibit was displayed, the event was advertised on the Alabama 200 website's Community Events calendar (<https://alabama200.org/events/community-calendar/>).

Sniffin-Marino (2003) talks about the importance of publicity to archives, and Ericson (2003) reminds readers that when they can attach their activity to an existing event, much of the work will be done by others. The librarians are convinced that having the Wade Hall Postcards Exhibit events written up in newspapers, magazines, and on social media sites, as well as featured on radio programs and the weekly television show *Absolutely Alabama* (a program that highlights places, people, and things that make Alabama distinctive) helped to make this a very successful endeavor.

At its most basic level, this was an outreach project to promote the Wade Hall Postcard Collection and the Troy



University Library Archives. "Outreach can be called public programming, marketing, and selling. It is also teaching, training, building relationships, and thinking of customer needs" (Chute, 2008, p. 138). This book gives numerous outreach ideas. These are the ones used for this project: presentations, brochures, exhibits, anniversary events, promotional materials for the institution, and a webpage which included the digitized images of the postcards. All of these, except the brochures and presentations, have already been addressed. The library offered all venues a speaker free of charge if any of the venues wanted to host a presentation concerning the exhibits. One of the librarians has visited 32 of the exhibit venues to present talks to various audiences—high school students, historical groups, and the general public (including postcard enthusiasts). Each talk included information about the University, the postcard collection, and historical stories about towns located in the venue area. The librarians created informative brochures about the exhibits and assisted sites with creating promotional materials.

The traveling exhibits project has definitely been a success. The exhibits were booked solid for the entire three-year bicentennial celebration period and requests are still being received. It also fulfilled the goal of increasing the exposure of the postcard collection, and the number of requests to use particular images has risen significantly. These requests have come from authors, museums, magazines, documentary researchers, and commercial entities.

Since the third traveling exhibit was created in 2019, it provided the opportunity to put into practice some of the lessons learned from the original exhibits. Issues like who to include on the project team, how much time to allow for the development of the exhibit, and which vendor to use were known going into the third project. Other lessons that relate to the design of the panels eliminated much of the re-choosing of postcards. With this knowledge, the librarians were able to pick postcards that had enough variety to make the panels interesting (portrait and landscape orientation; black & white, colorized, and colored; colors that complemented the background of the panels; different architectural styles and time periods).

### Conclusion

"Digital and collaborative projects in academic libraries are redefining the roles of the campus library in the lives of students, scholars, and faculty" (Purcell, 2012, p. 47). This has certainly been the case for this academic library. The Troy University Libraries' mission is to provide resources, instruction, and programs that support Troy University. Those resources include the archival materials. To support this mission, the librarians created the traveling exhibits which provided resources while promoting the archives, educated through the exhibits and presentations, and created a webpage that allowed access. However, in today's technologically advanced world those steps are only the beginning. Users expect immediate and comprehensive access to materials. Consequently, anyone dealing with archival materials realizes the need to not only physically preserve these items, but also to preserve them in digital format.

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# Learning to Say “Yes, and” An Introduction to Improv Philosophy for Library Professionals

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## Introduction

The librarian stands in the warm glow of the projector light, whiteboard near at hand, seeking to command the attention of students in much the same way the actor on the stage sweats under the heat of stage lights, hoping to captivate the audience. The students, commonly seated in rows, mimic the audience in the theater. The audience squirms in their seats, awaiting intermission (or the end of class), feeling restless or dissatisfied.

The scene above highlights the similarities between librarians in their role as instructors and traditional stage actors. Discussions of instruction as performance most commonly center on the traditional classroom instructor. Many readers will be able to picture that favorite teacher from the past who has transformed rote instruction into something far closer to performance. In contrast, librarians have long suffered under the weight of perceived stereotypes. The librarian from Central Casting comes complete with bun and glasses and can shush at fifty yards. While these stereotypes have evolved over time, many do not view librarians in the same light as traditional instructors. However, they engage in many of the same roles, most prominently instruction. In this context, instruction is typically associated with a traditional classroom environment. However, instruction can also be individual, as in the case of a reference interview or reader advisory query.

The adoption of performance techniques can reinvigorate the instructional experience. The same goes for the library experience. There is robust literature linking performance theory to classroom instruction. There is a smaller but growing body exploring those same themes within librarianship. In *The Craft of Librarian Instruction*, Artman, Sundquist and Dechow (2016) present the most complete discussion to date regarding the practical application of acting techniques to library pedagogy. The work presents a thorough and enlightening treatment of the subject. The goal of this article is to build upon one particular area mentioned in this work, improvisational (improv) theater.

R. Keith Sawyer (2004) argues that the teaching as performance metaphor, while useful, is also problematic in that it suggests that the instructor working from a scripted lesson plan with the students serving in the role of a passive audience. He suggests that it would be more useful to reconsider teaching as *improvisation performance*, as it

better captures the idea of flow and unpredictability in classroom discussions. He also makes an important distinction. Teaching is *disciplined* improvisation, with a broad structure to work from and broad goals to work toward, as opposed to traditional improv performance that is typically unscripted and less focused on goals than telling a story.

According to Dr. Gisela Ewert (1986), librarians have performed instructional tasks as far back as the seventeenth century. Librarians emulate many of the functions of classroom instructors, especially when providing bibliographic instruction. Single library instruction sessions within a semester-long course embody Sawyer’s notion (2004). For example, if a librarian hypothetically had multiple sessions of a first year-experience course, those courses would typically have a similar set of informational goals; however, the specific method by which one might attain those goals may differ from session-to-session and librarian-to-librarian.

In this article, the commonalities shared by educators and stage performers will be examined, with a more specific focus on the improvisational aspects of performance. We will also present some of the basic tenants of improvisation with comparative discussion in the contexts of stage performance and library work.

## Commonalities of instructors and performer

The art of teaching and the art of performance have much in common. Instruction, like acting, is all about the conveyance of information to an audience. As Pagowsky and Rigby (2014) note:

Librarians are in the business of presentation. Whether we are presenting information or presenting ourselves in public, it is a constant of the profession. And all of our constituents—especially our served communities—judge our presentation, consciously or subconsciously as to whether they can see us as a reliable, authoritative source of information (p.1).

Although the content differs, the idea is the same. In the classroom, the instructor’s intent is to convey the content of the lessons for a specific session. On the stage, actors strive to tell an affecting story through physical, verbal, and emotional expression. It is important to note here that the actor and the librarian may be expressing “manufactured”

emotions. As professional literature has expressed, library work can be emotionally challenging. Not all librarians have positive feelings about their roles as instructors, and negative instructional outcomes can result (Julien and Genuis, 2009). Suppressing correlated negative emotions or expressing dissonant emotions through surface or deep acting can lead to negative outcomes. In Miriam L. Matteson and Shelly S. Miller's "A study of emotional labor in librarianship," the emotional burden of library work is studied. Librarians can experience a broad range of emotions that may seem inappropriate to express, according to job requirement perceptions (Matteson and Miller, 2013). To address the whole of librarian emotional labor moves beyond the scope of this article, but performance techniques can be effective in easing emotional burdens through mindfulness, physical preparation, and psychological preparation.

In a 2001 Gallup poll of the American public, 40% of respondents expressed fear of speaking to an audience in public, second only to fear of snakes (Brewer, 2001). Educators and stage performers are not immune to such fears. Andrew Salomon (2011) describes the work of researcher and professional actor Gordon Goodman in the occurrence and nature of stage fright. Goodman surveyed 136 professional actors. Of those surveyed, 84% reported experience at least one bout with stage fright in their careers. This experience was described as sudden instead of gradual, likening the problem to a frozen or overloaded computer. Former English professor Elaine Showalter (2003) provides a useful discussion of the factors that contribute to teacher anxiety. Among these is performance. She provides multiple anecdotes that range from the deep-seated personal need to maintain control of one's self and presentation, replete with descriptions of sweaty palms and fear of being exposed as a fraud to more broadly based concerns about the perceived need to "perform" for one's students to earn positive evaluations.

In her discussion of *commedia dell'arte* (an early precursor to modern-day improv) in the classroom, Ewald (2005) notes three specific elements that influence anxiety levels. First, the speaker's own perceived incompetence, which can manifest for any number of reasons. These might range from lack of skill to generalized fear of failure. Second, the audience itself can be a source of fear, particularly if it is unfriendly or unfamiliar. Third and finally, the context of communication is also a potential fear factor. This includes things such as audience status, setting, and size.

Preparation is key to reducing anxiety for both groups. Each spends years learning about and honing their respective crafts. Many traditional classroom instructors work to master pedagogic theory and practice, as well as varied subject matter. Librarians work to master search techniques, philosophy, and an ever-evolving set of tools and resources. For both traditional classroom instructors and librarians, determining the content and presentation for a given class or performance are keys to success. Each group spends time in lesson planning, determining objectives, considering the amount of material to be

covered, and the presentation level of the material. A simple library instruction session is not always so simple. Stage performers work to prepare physically and psychologically, continually refining control of their bodies, voices, and emotions to give compelling performances. They are often called upon to memorize content and practice the delivery of lengthy dialogue. They attempt to imbue that dialogue with emotion and gravity, connecting with fellow performers, all the while having to keep complex stage directions in mind. For each group, it takes great effort to put on a seemingly effortless performance.

## Improvisation

### What is it?

The veteran improviser Dave Pasquesi provides a useful if academic starting point:

**im·prov·i·sa·tion:** noun. *The act of making something up as it is performed. This term is usually used in the context of music, theater, or dance.*

**Im·prov·ise:** verb. *To fabricate out of what is conveniently at hand.*  
(Jagodowski and Pasquesi, 2015, p. xi)

Director Mick Napier's definition is somewhat more direct, though no less useful: *Improvisation is getting on stage and making stuff up as you go along* (Napier, 2015, p. 1).

Pasquesi goes on to express a fundamental difference with both the formal definition, as well as Napier's. He emphasizes performances are not created out of nothing but are the result of continual preparation by knowing and learning all that is possible about the world, in all its aspects, and to contemplate all of it (Jagodowski and Pasquesi, 2015, p. xii).

Bermant (2013) concurs, asserting that rehearsal, not of content, but of fundamental improv forms and exercises is the basis for spontaneous creation. Improvement in performance comes from the practice of form-building "games" emphasizing particular skills or structures until those forms are so deeply ingrained that they become natural.

Extending Pasquesi's idea beyond its performance context yields the conclusion that everyday life is, in fact, a continual exercise in improvisation. Many positive experiences arise daily reacting to information and events that are unplanned and unscripted. Shakespeare *and* Napier are correct: all the world is a stage, and we play our parts, making it all up as we go.

### "Yes and..."

If there is a cardinal rule for improvisers, it is the idea of "yes, and..." At its heart, "yes, and" is meant to foster trust and agreement. It is the tacit agreement that all performers

involved in the scene acknowledge and work within the same reality. It is among the first concepts presented in improv classes. Without a basis of trust and agreement in the reality of a scene, the scene tends to crumble and can become uncomfortable for the audience and performer alike.

When one is learning a new language, they often go through rigorous drills meant to drive home the linguistic conventions of the new language. The phrase “yes, and...” serves much the same function for fledgling improvisers, helping them recognize opportunities for character agreement and scene progression. “Yes, and...” exercises typically involve one player making an offer within a scene. “Offers” in improvisation are the fuel to start a scene, typically a phrase or idea, but offers may be physical as well, depending on the context of the scene. Countering the “offer” with “yes, and...” adds new information to build and extend the scene, creating additional opportunities for improvisers to further character development and raise the situational stakes of a scene.

As the improviser grows, the notions of acceptance and progression become second nature, the training wheels of “yes, and...” may be removed. It becomes far more important to respect the philosophy of “yes, and...” rather than the words themselves, according to veteran improvisers T.J. Jagadowski and Dave Pasquesi (2015).

In the library environment, an opportunity to practice the philosophy of “yes, and...” presents itself most readily in the form of the individual reference interview. Improvisers often receive “offers” in the form of a location, color, job, etc. Librarians receive “offers” in the form of reference and research queries. One or two-word suggestions can initiate an improv scene. In much the same vein, library patrons often begin their process with the seemingly simplest questions or scantest of ideas. In many cases, patrons may not know what they are truly seeking. This represents the chance for librarians to collaborate with the patron and a better understanding of their needs. In turn, this leads to the construction of more appropriate queries, and eventually to resources to address patron needs. In these cases, it is important to follow the spirit of “yes, and...” and ask questions that help draw out the true intent of the patron. For instance, a user may want to find an item for a report on a specific topic. Librarians can begin with a metaphorical “yes, and...” by asking relatively open-ended questions of the patron such as: *What is it about this topic that is important to you? Why did you pick this topic?* Open-ended queries like this allow an opportunity for the patron to respond on their own terms, without preconceptions on the part of the librarian as to what will help them achieve greater clarity and agency in the discovery process.

Improvisers are fortunate in that their “offers” are usually fresh and new. In the library environment, this is not always the case. Patrons or students often ask the same (or similar) questions throughout the day, to the point that responses can become pre-emptive, if not blatantly rote. Keeping the “yes, and...” philosophy in mind for each

transaction can help mitigate the potential for these problems to arise. Keeping a fresh vision and approach for each problem can be helpful in maintaining focus on the patron. This is especially important in high-traffic environments or situations where several users are asking highly similar questions. Even when a question has been asked ten times, for the person asking it the eleventh time, it can hold vital importance. Librarians owe the patron the respect to be as fully engaged and thoughtful as possible in all interactions.

“Yes, and...” philosophy can be applied in intraoffice activities and interpersonal relationships as well. Dohe and Pappas (2017b) use the example of a project meeting where there is a discussion of various options regarding the adoption of a new product. They propose two scenarios. The first is perhaps the more typical project planning experience, wherein options are summarily dismissed for a variety of reasons and ultimately resulting in inaction. On the flip side, when the project team looks for ways to make things work, finding avenues that allow for progress and innovation, the result is a more motivated, engaged team of colleagues.

Author Patricia Ryan Madson (2005) asserts that it takes courage and optimism to say “yes,” allowing sharing of control. In those situations where those in decision-making positions can say, “yes,” there is an increased level of agency in the execution of projects on the part of staff and faculty. In turn, this may lead to greater enthusiasm and morale in the workplace and the generation of new ideas for other programs and services.

### Conscious listening

Next to “yes, and...” the next most emphasized aspect of improv performance is the idea of actively listening to your fellow performers. Conscious listening is the art and skill of becoming vulnerable and open to receiving not only verbal cues but nonverbal cues as well. It is paying attention to the content delivered and the context of delivery. What was the tone of voice? The volume? What messages does the body language send?

Due to the unscripted nature of improv, performers simply do not know one moment to the next what offers they will receive. They rely on the information provided to build scenes and stories. For this reason, developing one’s listening skills is paramount to the success of a scene.

Veteran improv duo T.J. Jagadowski and Dave Pasquesi offer a wonderful insight into the importance of listening in the context of performance:

TJ tells me everything. The way he looks at me tells me who I am. Tells me who he is by how he is standing, moving, sitting, talking. The way he behaves and what he says in front of me tells me about the nature of our relationship (Jagadowski and Pasquesi, 2015, p. 37).

Pasquesi also relates a lesson from improv pioneer Del Close that a line is never truly delivered until it is received. The performer relies on the reaction of their scene partners: “When we truly listen...we are taking in all that information and being affected by it (Jagadowski and Pasquesi, 2015).

In the library environment, we may not have the opportunity for the transcendent connection alluded to in the passages above, but there are chances to emulate the spirit of Pasquesi’s words. Because reference interactions resemble improv in that they are unscripted and unrehearsed, each one represents an opportunity for the patron to feel heard and understood.

Librarians often take for granted that library users are, in fact, not librarians. The typical user does not necessarily have the same reverence for the process or resources that information professionals hold so dear. Many may not even know what it is that they truly need. For these reasons, practicing conscious listening techniques becomes all the more important. If the reference interview is the “scene”, it is the librarian’s job to work with the library user to progress the scene to its close. In this case, helping the user to find the sources needed or providing some measure of clarity in the process allows the “scene” to be close.

The librarian needs to be “there” for the user, both in terms of location and attention. Paying attention to nonverbal cues can often provide more information than verbal cues. If a librarian sees a puzzled look or hears an exasperated breath, this can be a source of valuable information regarding potential approaches to the interaction. The librarian needs to be mindful and present for the patron during the inquiry process as well, paying attention to the responses and allowing expression of complete thoughts without judgment or interruption.

Improv performers change during the course of a scene with the introduction of new information. In much the same way, librarians must allow the course of the reference interview to change based on the information provided by the patron. They must do so while avoiding the dual temptations to interject prematurely and think ahead to the resolution of the query. Librarians spend their entire careers cultivating familiarity with wide ranges of resources and techniques and are often eager, or even overeager, to share their hard-won expertise. Librarians must resist the urge to interject themselves at inappropriate junctures. As Jo Henry and Howard Slutsky remind us, “Through mindful listening, proper, mindful responses result” (Moniz et al., 2016).

## **Blocking**

### **Intellectual manifestation of blocking**

If “yes, and...” philosophy encourages us to take chances, to be courageous, and embrace the spirit of possibility, blocking is its evil twin.

In the world of theatrical improvisation, a common definition for the term “blocking” is the denial of the established reality of a scene. For example, the premise of an improv scene has been established as an awkward first date between nervous teenagers. Another performer walks in and boldly announces he is leading the mutiny against the Pirate King. While sure to generate a reaction, it is likely to be interpreted as a complete and utter denial of the established reality of the scene. Blocking is among the most frustrating experiences one can have on stage, requiring some very deft maneuvering to integrate the dissonant ideas.

Blocking does not always manifest itself so blatantly. It frequently shows up in more subtle ways. Dohe and Pappas (2017b) note that some of the more insidious forms of denial come cloaked in the mantle of “yes.” The most common variation might be the phrase “yes, but...” At first blush, this seems to be a positive response but really amounts to little more than a “no” in disguise. They go on to describe other variations on the same themes, using so-called “stop words,” such as “because” and “whatever.” When coupled with “yes”, these words do little to encourage the development of ideas.

It is easy to find similar behavior in the library environment away from the classroom. Each of us has spoken to a colleague or superior, excited about an idea or suggestion, only to have it summarily dismissed. Dohe and Pappas (2017a) provide a lengthy discussion about the impact of the word “no.” When one hears the word enough, it creates an unwillingness to propose new ideas for fear of rejection out-of-hand. They also note that in some persistently toxic environments, “no” may be used as a power play to preserve one’s place or draw attention to oneself at the expense of the greater good. Bergren, Cox, and Detmar (2002) also address the impact of “no” within the workplace, asserting that the word only serves to halt progress, and damages the bonds of trust and integrity. They also assert that organizations that function with a “no” posture are bound to never truly achieve success.

It is not always possible to say “yes” to every idea or suggestion “offer” for a new library program or service. Libraries do not exist in a world with infinite resources to dedicate to various projects. Individuals develop habits and workflows over time and may be averse to or even threatened by change. Organizations present their own set of challenges, from arcane procedures and policies to shifting budget priorities. Operational realities impose upon best intentions, and some are compelled to reject or postpone projects. This differs from the idea of blocking in that denial is not necessarily out of malice or insecurity, but often comes from operational necessity.

Instructor and songwriter Melissa Talhelm (2015) notes that similar situations can take place in the classroom, observing that instructors are often, through behavior or perception, placed in the role of final authority, the oracle with all the answers, dismissing incorrect responses. She reinforces the idea that even when correction is needed,

instructors need to be more accepting of what students bring to the classroom, or in the case of librarians, what they bring to interactions at the reference desk.

### **Physical /nonverbal manifestation of blocking**

In improv, the notion of blocking typically relates to intellectual contributions. It is possible, though, to block one's stage partners physically. On stage, performers may ignore or miss the contributions of other players or deliberately perform physical actions or movements and potentially damage the reality of the scene. At the reference desk or in the classroom, physical blocks can manifest themselves in several ways, ranging from apparent apathy exhibited through body language to the erection of actual physical barriers. Who among us is not guilty of sinking our head behind a monitor when we spot a problem patron in our midst or using the lectern as an artificial barrier (and safe space) when delivering a lecture?

A student or patron is more likely to engage when the librarian uses apparently positive non-verbal cues, versus neutral or even aversive behavior (Quinn, 2001, p. 76). To lessen the impact of physical blocking gestures, librarians should strive to be mindful of their physical presence. In an office, at the reference desk or in front of a class, the librarian may physically position themselves in such a way to invite questions. Slouching denotes disinterest or irritation. They should adopt a more erect posture, denoting interest. They may even elect to lean slightly toward the student in order to show interest and a desire to hear more. When engaging in conversation, does the librarian make eye contact? Do eyebrows raise in interest or furrow in anger? Softer facial expressions, increased eye contact, and smiling even slightly can serve to lessen tension and increase comfort and trust in interpersonal interactions (Gamble and Gamble, 2017).

There are practical, easily accessible options for improvement of one's nonverbal communication. Practicing in front of a mirror, taking video recordings of oneself, or asking a trusted colleague to give feedback, can all be helpful practices to begin the process of being mindful of one's own physical gestures. Body language with negative connotations that denote anger or defensiveness, such as crossing one's arms across the chest, can be recognized and remedied.

There are also distracting physical habits that can block a library instructor's intended lesson. Nervous physical habits, such as nail-biting, hair twirling, lip biting, clothing straightening, and more, can detract from the focus on content. Body cues are frequently unconscious and take time and practice to change. Recognizing a negative or distracting behavior is the first step to stopping it. It is common in beginning this process to notice several behaviors that may need alteration. One should take time to examine each of these behaviors individually, so as not to feel overwhelmed with the need to change. Divorce these needs for behavioral change from judgments on personal character. Being mindful of and taking action to minimize distracting physical habits impacts how a librarian appears,

but no actual changes to one's character necessarily need take place.

### **Why blocking happens**

Blocking can manifest itself for any number of reasons. The easiest and most obvious is that the performer interrupting the scene is selfish. Digging a little more deeply, blocking is often rooted in insecurity. Programs such as "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" have done much to popularize improv. The program relies on performers taking part in short-form "games" with set parameters. The intent of the "games" is to be light-hearted and comedic. Performers illicit hoots, shouts, and laughter when stretching the parameters of these games in unexpected or outrageous ways.

Performers influenced by this program, or others like it, may become preoccupied, their attention diverted from fellow performers to the audience, wondering why the audience is or is not giving the desired reaction. In contrast to preoccupation with the audience's reaction, performers may also find themselves stuck in their own heads obsessing over their own ideas about how the scene could or should progress or about their place in the scene.

In the seminal work on improvisation, *Truth in Comedy*, improv pioneers Chana Halpern and Del Close eloquently describe one of the fundamental traps of improv performance:

An actor following each moment through to the next is constantly making discoveries... If a player is planning ahead and thinking about the direction he wants the action to go, then he isn't paying attention to what is going on at the moment. (Halpern and Close, 1994, p. 71).

Similarly, forms of blocking which occur in the library or classroom environment are broadly tied to insecurity. As previously noted, there is a level of anxiety in presenting or speaking to a group. This anxiety can extend into interpersonal interactions. Many librarians struggle with self-consciousness for a variety of reasons. Utilizing the blocking mechanisms previously noted, consciously or unconsciously, may very well serve as a protective barrier.

### **Freedom to fail**

Improv, like all artistic endeavors, relies upon failure to achieve eventual success. Improvisers make themselves vulnerable during every performance. Each scene, and each choice within those scenes, is the opportunity to make a mistake, which may lead to something wonderful. Where workers in other fields or students in the classroom might have a fear of those mistakes, improvisers embrace mistakes as springboards to opportunity. Corporate improv trainer Amy Lisewski (2016) asserts that improvisers not only risk failure often but are trained actively embrace it because it is in the mistakes that the greatest gifts are often found.

Kelly Leonard (2016), Director of Insights and Applied Improvisation at The Second City theatre concurs:

This is perhaps the healthiest aspect of improvisational practice: it allows you to model failures over and over again, building up your ability to repeatedly make mistakes and then... to persevere. For most people, the “power failure” will serve to jolt them out of their complacency and provide them with a whole new set of fresh insights. For those who practice improvisation, you don’t have to rely on the major screw up to adapt your thinking. We are taught that mistakes are gifts and we use them as part of the story we are telling - a story, by the way, that is not just being told by us. (The Freedom to Fail, para. 8).

Library reference and classroom environments, like improv performances, present ample opportunities to embrace failure as a positive. High school teacher Andrew Miller (2015) posits that many teachers assume the mantle of infallibility, reflecting negatively on the school culture. He argues that instead of adopting this omnipresent posture, instructors should acknowledge when something is not working and use it as a tool for reflection. He also asserts that addressing problems presents a positive model of perseverance and can generate a greater level of trust with students.

The same goes for the library environment. In the classroom or at the reference desk, there are myriad factors that can cause a less than optimal interaction. Computers fail, websites go offline at inopportune times, or a slip of the tongue can throw off even the most experienced professional. In the course of the reference interview or classroom presentation, it is common to trace and retrace steps when assisting a patron or demonstrating a search strategy. Sometimes there is a struggle to develop an effective set of search parameters. When these situations occur, the librarian is humanized, the mantle of infallibility removed. For many library users, this will make the librarian more approachable. In addition, these situations help demonstrate that research is not always a cut and dried proposition. It is sometimes messy, even for a professional. Belben (2010, p.17) asserts, “Our jobs require accuracy, but there is also much room for trial and error...we are destined to err occasionally”.

Many strategies used to deal with mishaps and mistakes are strictly psychological. However, there are also physical tools that can help. Among the most effective is the “Transformative Failure Bow”, also known as the “Circus Bow” (DesMaisons 2012a).

Originated by improvisers Edward Sampson and Matt Smith, the Circus Bow takes the idea of berating oneself for making a mistake and flips it on its head. The perpetrator puts his arms in the air and proudly acknowledges the offending act. It accomplishes several positive purposes. The offending party takes responsibility, while their proverbial record is wiped clean. Quickly acknowledging a

mistake in a positive, open way, the performer can reset focus to the present moment. As Madson (2005, p.108) expresses it: “I did not let the miscue become the event, just one moment of it”.

DesMaisons (2012b) goes on to explore the work of social psychologist Ann Cuddy in relation to the psychology of body language. Briefly explained, Cuddy explored the dynamics of power and physical positioning as they manifest in non-verbal communication. Those who have power or feel powerful open themselves up, occupying space. Those without power or who perceive themselves as weak tend to compact themselves, physically manifesting their psychological smallness (Cuddy 2012). The allusion is clear. The Circus Bow allows us to assume a feeling of power and control over mistakes instead of allowing them to diminish the creative process.

## **Discussion**

In this work, we sought to acquaint the reader with the essential elements of improvisational performance as well as illuminate the connection between traditional classroom instruction, instruction in the library environment, and stage performance. In the midst of the research for this project, a robust discussion of performance theory and technique as it applies in the traditional classroom setting became apparent. However, there is a relative lack as it applies specifically to the field of librarianship. This lack represents an interesting opportunity to explore aspects of performance theory and application of techniques from multiple artistic disciplines within the field of librarianship to create the field of “Library Performance Studies,” if you will.

We also sought to demonstrate how adopting elements of improvisational theatrical performance into one’s professional practice yields positive results. Embracing a “Yes, and...” philosophy, avoiding blocking, and engaging in the practice of conscious listening clearly have applications within the field of librarianship. While most applicable in the classroom and at the reference desk, these practices also have a place at the meeting table. Adopting a flexible, welcoming attitude benefits everyone involved. Students and co-workers that feel truly heard are more likely to walk away with a positive outlook.

## **Conclusion**

Improv offers the chance to create outside the consequence of failure. Very few venues in our lives offer similar opportunities. Educating oneself in the techniques and philosophies behind improv and applying them in professional practice can reap positive benefits right away. Improv urges us to live and act in the moment whenever possible and to eschew overthinking. It pushes us to pay closer attention not only to the world-at-large but also in more focused and intimate settings. We are encouraged to listen and engage more thoughtfully than we might otherwise. At the end of the day, whether we are librarians, teachers, or actors, we are ultimately communicators.



In the dance of communication, we move together with another person gracefully, pleasurably, sharing the pure animal joy of community.

Not being able to communicate is the Siberia of everyday life - a place, crazily, we send ourselves to.

But the solution, in my view, isn't a formula, a list of tips, or a chart that shows where to put your feet. Instead, it's transforming yourself- like going to the gym- only a whole more fun.

Practicing contact feels good. It's not like lifting weights. It feels good while you're doing, not just after you stop.

When it clicks, when you're in sync with someone, even for the briefest moment, it feels like the pleasure of reconciliation. We're no longer apart. We have an actual two-way conversation. We go from "No you're wrong" to "oh. Maybe you're right." And boom. Dopamine.

It's a good feeling. I think we crave it (Alda 2017, p.195).

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## SELA NEWS

### In Support of Justice and Solidarity

The recent tragedies of the murder of unarmed African Americans by white police officers (George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Ky.) and white vigilantes (Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Ga.) are only the most recent examples of an ongoing crisis in American society. As a country, we still have not resolved the problem of racial oppression and violence, a legacy of a long history of racism and slavery.

The Southeastern Library Association stands in support of those peacefully protesting these grave injustices. As a professional organization, SELA stands in support of all library employees, all library patrons, and all members of our communities as we attempt to honestly and constructively face down the forces of racism and bigotry. There is a lot of work to do. Libraries can serve as a resource providing information in a safe and neutral place, whether physically or online, for people to find out what these recent tragedies mean and how they are simply the most recent manifestations of an old problem. As librarians, library administrators, and library employees in general we can support our African American and other colleagues and co-workers and let them know that they are all valued and included.

To quote Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., quoting from the Book of Amos, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Tim Dodge  
President  
Southeastern Library Association

### Georgia Libraries Conference Moves Online

Due to the health threat posed by COVID-19, the Georgia Libraries Conference committee has made the difficult decision to shift the 2020 conference to a virtual format. Moving to a virtual conference was a necessary decision based on the uncertainty about the likelihood of a Fall spike in COVID-19 cases, the lack of a vaccine for the illness, and the devastating impact of the current shutdown on the state budget that funds many of our library travel budgets. We look forward to seeing everyone in person for the 2021 conference.

Planning for a virtual conference is underway, and details will be forthcoming. Those who submitted proposals for the October conference will be contacted regarding the process for consideration for virtual presentations, and those still working on proposals are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues to submit panel presentations. We look forward to embracing this new format to allow even more participants to enjoy the conference this year. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we shift to a virtual 2020 GLC / SELA conference.

Though we feel it is the right decision to protect the health of our attendees, GLA will experience a significant financial hardship due to the in-person conference cancellation. If you value the opportunities for education, connection, and growth provided by GLA, please renew your membership, and consider making a donation to help keep our association financially sound for the future. Your support now will protect these opportunities for years to come.

Laura Burtle, J.D., M.S.L.S  
2020 President  
Georgia Library Association  
404-413-2706 | [lburtle@gsu.edu](mailto:lburtle@gsu.edu)

### Rothrock Award Call for Nominations

The Southeastern Library Association is seeking nominations for the prestigious Mary Utopia Rothrock Award to be presented at the joint Georgia Library Association/Southeastern Library Association All-Virtual Conference October 7-9, 2020. The purpose of the award is to honor a librarian who has contributed substantially to librarianship and library development in the southeast during their career.

Although nothing in the award criteria states that the award winner must be a SELA member individuals making the nominations must be SELA members.

The award criteria and nomination process is available at <http://www.selaonline.org/sela/awards/10rothrock.html>. Please submit nominations via email or U.S. mail to Sharon Parente by July 31, 2020.

Sharon Parente  
SELA Rothrock Award Committee  
MTSU  
P.O. Box 13  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
(615) 898-2549 (w)  
[Sharon.Parente@mtsu.edu](mailto:Sharon.Parente@mtsu.edu)

## LIBRARY NEWS:

### *North Carolina*

#### *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

#### **The Gift of Wonder: Rare Book Collection Coming to Carolina - Distinguished Alumna Florence Fearington Donates Rare Book Collection Worth \$6.2 Million to the University Libraries.**

Florence Fearington '58, one of the preeminent female rare book collectors of our time and a longtime supporter of UNC-Chapel Hill, has donated nearly 4,000 books and objects valued at \$6.2 million to the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill University Libraries, where they will become part of the Wilson Special Collections Library.

The collection includes 1,900 rare books, most on the subject of natural history, including beautifully illustrated books on malacology — the study of shells and mollusks — and books, catalogs and prints on Wunderkammern, or “cabinets of curiosity.” The collection also includes a number of pre-1915 children’s books, 13 color-plate costume books and thousands of reference books that complement the subject matter of the rare books.

All of these books will soon be available to patrons — students, faculty, researchers and the general public. Once catalogued, the collection will also be available online.

In addition, Wilson Library is planning an exhibition of the malacology books in spring 2021 — but this won’t be the first time Carolina will see books and ephemera from this intriguing collection. In 2012, Fearrington curated an exhibition, *Rooms of Wonder: From Wunderkammer to Museum, 1599–1899*, mostly drawn from her collection of books about Wunderkammern, at The Grolier Club in New York City. A version of this exhibition was displayed at Wilson Library in 2014.

Fearrington’s previous contributions to Carolina include gifts to University Libraries’ Rare Book Collection, and she established the Joseph Peyton Fearrington and James Cornelius Pass Fearrington Fund at the Health Sciences Library.

In 2016, she gave \$5 million in support of the Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, earmarking \$1 million to help update the grand reading room and adjacent exhibition areas in Wilson Library. The remaining \$4 million created the Fearrington Special Collections Library Fund. The University Librarian and the director of the Louis Round Wilson Library may use income from this endowment to meet emerging needs and pursue opportunities that benefit Carolina students and enhance the work of researchers. In recognition of this substantial gift, the grand reading room in Wilson Library was renamed the Fearrington Reading Room.

Fearrington grew up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and received a degree in mathematics from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1958. Unable to attend business school at Carolina because the program did not yet admit women, she earned a certificate from the Harvard-Radcliffe Program in Business in 1961. She moved to New York City, where she made her name in the male-dominated world of finance, establishing Florence Fearrington Inc., a highly successful money management firm. She sold the firm to U.S. Trust in 1997 — around the time she started seriously collecting rare books.

Fearrington was honored as a distinguished alumna at University Day in 2016 for her pioneering career in finance and achievements as a collector of rare books. She currently lives in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her most recent gift counts toward the University’s most ambitious

fundraising campaign in history, [For All Kind: the Campaign for Carolina](#), launched in October 2017. As of June 2020, the University has raised more than two-thirds of its goal to reach \$4.25 billion by December of 2022

## Virginia

### Virginia Tech Virtual VE Day Celebrates Volunteers and More Than 200,000 World War II Document Transcriptions

Edward Gitre, an assistant professor in the Department of History in the Virginia Tech College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, teamed up with University Libraries experts Sarah Mease, Corinne Guimont, and Joe Forte to host a VE Day virtual celebration in collaboration with Zooniverse. This event celebrated the completion of a crowdsourcing drive to transcribe handwritten survey responses from World War II soldiers as part of [The American Soldier project](#).

Victory in Europe Day, also known as VE Day, celebrates the Allies’ formal acceptance of Nazi Germany’s unconditional surrender in World War II on May 8, 1945.

The ultimate purpose of the project, funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant, is to become a part of a searchable site enabling researchers, students, and the public to easily find documents related to their interests.

The online milestone celebration took place on May 8, 2020, on the 75th anniversary of VE Day. The event celebrated the completion of The American Soldier project’s 65,000 transcriptions of uncensored reflections on war and military service and recognized the thousands of dedicated volunteers who made this possible. The one-of-a-kind records were transcribed in triplicate over two years, bringing the number of transcriptions to more than 190,000 pages.

These documents contain many fascinating, firsthand responses and unique perspectives. “When people read these they see the Second World War in a humanized way, and gain perspective from soldiers of all walks of life,” said Mease, University Libraries publishing services specialist. “They make it easier to see the realities of the war, instead of just viewing it as a historic event that happened a long time ago. That’s important, especially for those teaching and learning about the war.”

Originally scheduled to be held in the Newman Library Athenaeum, this 75th anniversary commemorative event moved entirely online. In March, an unexpected surge of traffic hit Zooniverse as people began staying home and teleworking became the norm. The project accelerated as volunteers invested more time in transcribing to meet the project’s ambitious goals. Although the transition to an online-only celebration was challenging, it

ultimately provided attendees with multiple levels of interaction.

“There are challenges all the time,” said Gitre. “But I do try to see them as moments for creative intervention and possibility.”

The University Libraries’ Virginia Tech Publishing became involved in the project several years ago, when it hosted the first of several transcribe-a-thons. Newman Library provided a space for transcribers to learn how to use the platform, collaborate on transcriptions, and discuss what they found in the original documents.

Three additional faculty members from the University Libraries joined Mease, Forte, and Guimont in becoming involved in the project, including Marc Brodsky, public services archivist; Nathaniel Porter, social science data consultant and data education coordinator; and Michael Stamper, data visualization designer and consultant for the arts.

Other major Virginia Tech contributors to The American Soldier project include Kurt Luther, the initiative’s technical director and an associate professor of computer science in the College of Engineering; Nai-Ching Wang, a project developer who earned his doctorate from the Department of Computer Science in 2018; [Michael Hughes](#), social science consultant and a professor in the Department of Sociology; and Jessica Brabble, a master’s student in the Department of History.

The American Soldier team is gearing up to move into the next phase, which is to clean and organize the data gathered from the transcriptions as well as other Army survey data. Then they will develop and launch the free, open access, searchable, user interface for scholars and the public, slated for a spring 2021 release. The team will be working with a Portland-based digital design agency, [Cast Iron Coding](#), to create the open access website so these documents can be shared with the world.

The team’s eagerness to share this information widely drove this project. “The inspiration of the project is the individual voices expressed through these handwritten, now-transcribed documents. These were written by soldiers in their own hands,” said Gitre. “They make you laugh and feel anger, pride, sympathy, and all sorts of other emotions. While reading these sources, you will encounter World War II in a way you’ve not before, no matter how much you know or have read about the war or how many museums or monuments you’ve visited.”

*Excerpts from an article written by Elise Monsour Puckett*

## PERSONNEL NEWS:

### North Carolina

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

#### **Project Archivist in the Wilson Special Collections Library**

The University Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to announce the appointment of **Meaghan Alston** as project archivist in the Wilson Special Collections Library.



In this position, Alston will lead efforts to provide access to a wide variety of legacy manuscript collections through close collaboration with colleagues in Wilson Library. She will appraise manuscript and archival materials; shepherd collections through accession and intake; support efforts to evaluate, appraise and improve access to backlog collections; and address outstanding questions about ownership, restrictions and access.

Prior to this appointment, Alston was prints and photograph librarian at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, in Washington, D.C. Before that, she was project archivist at the University of Pittsburgh.

Alston holds a M.L.I.S with a concentration in archives and information science from the University of Pittsburgh and a B.A. in history from Ohio State University.

#### **Health Sciences Librarian at the Health Sciences Library**

The University Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is also pleased to announce the appointment of **Emily Jones** as health sciences librarian at the Health Sciences Library.





In this role, Jones will respond to a range of search requests in a variety of health subject areas and provide client-centered information, education and research services. She will work with colleagues to advise clients on information sources, data management, scholarly communications and emerging library services. She will also collaborate with faculty to integrate critical thinking, critical appraisal of literature and information and digital literacy at key junctures throughout the curricula on and off campus.

Prior to this appointment, Jones was a research and education informationist and an instructor at the Medical University of South Carolina Libraries, in Charleston.

Jones holds an M.L.I.S. and a B.A. in liberal studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

**Associate Head of Software Development Department**

Lastly, the University Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to announce the appointment of **Emily Brassell** as associate head of the software development department.



Brassell’s management responsibilities will include the University Libraries’ core public web infrastructure; archival information management systems; library catalog discovery systems; and funded special projects that enable scholarly, research and teaching and learning partnerships in the community.

Brassell will advocate for and lead the implementation of robust web application portfolio management (APM) and systems analysis practices, including automated testing, software documentation, user-centered system design and the responsible stewardship of software inspired by DevOps practices and design.

She will provide leadership for cross-departmental initiatives with major technical requirements, collaborating closely with units across the Library and University that have related service missions. She will model an approach to user-centered design that values a range of contributions throughout the systems development lifecycle, and she will contribute to open-source software projects.

Prior to this appointment, Brassell was application development project manager for the University Libraries at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Brassell holds an M.S. in information studies from UNC-Chapel Hill and a B.A. in math and French from Guilford College, in Greensboro, North Carolina.

*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

**Samantha Harlow Awarded the DLS Routledge Distance Learning Librarianship Conference Sponsorship Award by ACRL**

**Samantha (Sam) Harlow**, online learning librarian and assistant professor for University Libraries has been awarded the 2020 DLS Routledge Distance Learning Librarianship Conference Sponsorship Award by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).

Sponsored by Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, Harlow will receive \$1,200 to attend the America Library Association’s (ALA) Annual Conference and a plaque to honor her accomplishments. The award acknowledges any individual ACRL member working in the field of, or contributing to the success of, distance learning librarianship or related library service in higher education.



The award is administrated by the ACRL Distance Learning Section (DLS). Nominees for the award must have demonstrated achievements in one or more of the following areas:

- Support for distance learning librarianship and library services, e.g., service to students and faculty, innovation and/or leadership
- Participate in the creation and/or implementation of distance library programs or services of exemplary quality
- Successful collaboration with faculty in support of information literacy and/or other aspects of library instruction or services for distance students
- Significant research, publication or presentations in areas of distance learning librarianship

Harlow holds a master of science in library and information science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a bachelor of arts in cinema studies from New York University. Prior to joining University Libraries, Harlow was an instructional technology consultant for the School of Education at UNC Greensboro. Prior to joining UNCG, Harlow was the media and digital resource librarian at High Point University and the digital production manager at Triangle Research Libraries Network.

**Steven Cramer Awarded the 2020 BRASS Excellence in Business Librarianship**

**Steven (Steve) Cramer**, business librarian, associate professor and Coleman Fellow for Entrepreneurship Education for University Libraries at UNC Greensboro has been awarded the 2020 BRASS Excellence in Business Librarianship by the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) division of the American Library Association (ALA).



Sponsored by Mergent by FTSE Russell, the BRASS Excellence in Business Librarianship Award was established in 1989 and offers \$4,000 and a citation to a librarian that has distinguished themselves in the field of business librarianship. The selection of a recipient is accomplished through a review of written nominations by the BRASS Award for Excellence in Business Librarianship Committee.

As a Coleman Fellow for Entrepreneurship Education, Cramer teaches, inspires and mentors students at UNCG who are in non-business disciplines to gain self-employment skills and experience in entrepreneurial ventures.

Cramer holds a master’s degree in library and information science from UNC Chapel Hill and a bachelor of arts degree in medieval and renaissance studies from the University of Michigan. Prior to joining UNCG, he served as the digital services librarian and business specialist at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina and as a librarian at Davenport College (now University) of Business in Holland, Michigan.

**Maggie Murphy Named as Library Journal’s 2020 Movers and Shakers — Educators**

**Maggie Murphy**, first-year writing, visual art and humanities librarian and assistant professor for UNC Greensboro’s University Libraries, has been named as one of *Library Journal’s* 2020 Movers & Shakers — Educators. With this recognition, Murphy joins a distinguished group of librarians that are creating strategies to make libraries more inclusive for everyone, while implementing groundbreaking approaches to literacy, learning and teaching. Movers & Shakers is sponsored by Baker & Taylor and SAGE.

In 2019, Murphy launched the “Uplifting Memes” project in an effort for students in all disciplines to think about art and visual media as sources of information along with textual information sources. Participants learned about copyright and public domain, visual rhetoric and more.



The project is the recipient of the 2019-2020 University Libraries Innovation and Program Enrichment Grant, and it is aimed at connecting students with library resources and spaces. At the same time, “Uplifting Memes” addresses critical, intersecting literacies that help students develop “transformative life skills necessary to be informed and engaged in society” and navigate “digital resources and content” (UNCG University Libraries Strategic Plan, 2018-19) through the theme of memes. Other University Libraries’ collaborators to the “Uplifting Memes” project

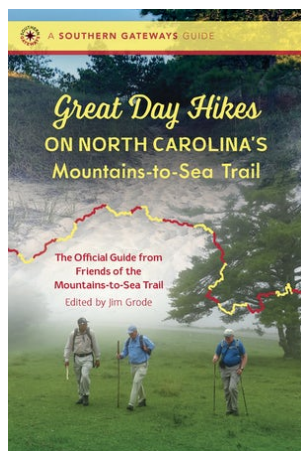


include Brown Biggers, systems programmer, and Jenny Dale, information literacy coordinator and associate professor.

Murphy holds a master's degree in library and information science from Rutgers University and a bachelor of arts degree in liberal arts from Sarah Lawrence College. Prior to joining UNCG, she served as a reference and instruction librarian at Georgia Highlands College, a visual resources curator at Queens College-City University of New York and an evening and weekend reference librarian at St. Francis College.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Great Day Hikes on North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail (Southern Gateways Guide).** Jim Grode. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-4696-5485-0. 232 p. \$24.00 (Pbk.)



This work is about the mountains-to-sea trail of North Carolina. The author resides in Asheville, North Carolina. He is the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail director. The writing style is easy to understand, and entertaining.

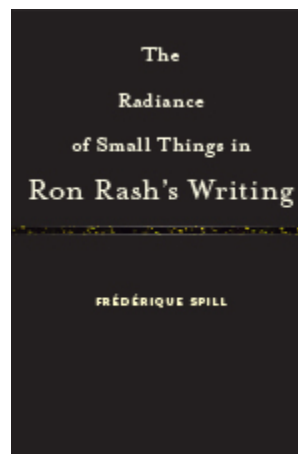
The guide describes forty hikes from The Great Smokies Clingmans Dome to Fork Ridge Trail Hike 1 to Hike 40 Jockey's Ridge State Park covering one thousand one hundred seventy five miles. Each description of a hike includes a beautiful vividly color photograph, distance, degree of difficulty, trail type, trailhead, trailhead 1 coordinates, trailhead 1 elevation, trailhead 2, trailhead 2 coordinates, trailhead 2 elevation, total elevation change, MST segment, highlights, dogs, hike overview, driving directions, hike directions, special considerations, for more information, and an excellent greatly detailed map. Very nifty and helpful to hikers is a Day hike locations and numbers map. The map shows all the cities along the mountains-to-sea trail including Asheville, Boone, Elkin, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Burlington, Durham, Raleigh, Clayton, Smithfield, Newton Grove, White Lake, Wilmington, Jacksonville, New Bern, Havelock, and Nags Head. A Hike table lists the forty hikes, MST segment,

One-way or loop distance, and difficulty. A Hike Finder provides nine types of interests including Birding and Wildlife, History Buffs, Unique Ecology or Geology, Waterfalls, Wildflowers, North Carolina's Small Towns, Water Lovers, Summer Cooldown, and Universal Accessibility, and the relating hikes. For example, a hike to see birding and wildlife is Moores Creek National Battlefield Loop.

Other intriguing things to see along the trail are ducks, waterfowls, pelicans, marsh wrens, turtles, kite flying, gliding, dwarf palmettos, nineteenth century Burgaw Presbyterian Church, songbirds, warblers, mid eighteenth century Harmony Hall Plantation, Beirut Memorial, the brick lighthouse at Cape Hatteras, three hundred sixty five types of birds at Pea Island, and the Croatan National Forest. The invaluable treasure on the mountains-to-sea trail of North Carolina is essential for academic and public libraries and excellent as a gift for hikers interested in North Carolina. The recommendation for audience is anyone interested in hiking or learning about the splendid mountains-to-sea trail of beautiful North Carolina.

*Melinda F. Matthews*  
University of Louisiana at Monroe

**The Radiance of Small Things in Ron Rash's Writing.** Frédérique Spill. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-64336-019-5. 296 p. \$49.99 (Hbk)



As a librarian that collects writings of a particular few authors, I am one of those who has collected all of the books I can acquire that are written by Ron Rash. My first experience with Ron Rash was when he accepted an invitation to serve as guest speaker at an Everett Library Friends of the Library Spring Event in early 2000. Ron was teaching a writing course at Queens College and his book, *One Foot in Eden* circulated among his students and librarians. After that first presentation and going forward through the years, it was my pleasure to invite him to other events to speak about his writings. Yes, I have followed his writing and speaking work for twenty years.

Though I was drawn to Frédérique Spill's new book, *The Radiance of Small Things in Ron Rash's Writings*, I did not know the richness of her observations and analyses would uncover unique clues to Ron Rash the "person". Particularly the Appendix (pp. 191 -200) is a fascinating and delightful look at Ron Rash the "person". From questions such as "what is your favorite color; your favorite flavor; your favorite flower; your favorite hero in fiction; what is the book you re-read most frequently; your chief characteristic; your idea of happiness; your idea of misery." On a serious note, Spill asks, "how do you come up with the titles of your books?; now comes a fishy question: what about the overwhelming presence of trout in Southern Writing; in your work, trout reoccur whatever form of writing you pick up, it seems to me a metaphor of resilience."

I recommend this excellent piece of research and writing for readers of college and university level collections, particularly anyone with a passion for "landscape and fiction" as I describe Ron's writings. 280 pages, with Notes, Bibliography and Index 225-273.

*Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D., MLIS*

**The War on Poverty in Mississippi: From Massive Resistance to New Conservatism.** Emma J. Folwell Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020. ISBN 978-1-4968-2739-5 (Hdbk: \$99); 978-1-4968-2744-9 (Pbk.: \$30) 312 p.



**THE WAR ON POVERTY IN  
MISSISSIPPI**

*From Massive Resistance to New Conservatism*

EMMA J. FOLWELL

In long ago school days, I remember spelling bees where I was always happy if one word I was to spell for the teacher was "Mississippi". I loved the sound of the word and enjoyed saying it. I knew little about the State of Mississippi but in those days I had an imagination created by stories I read of grand houses, beautiful ladies, riverboats, and magnolia trees. Such was my world as a 9 or 10 year old girl.

Crashing into reality later in my life and removing my rose colored glasses, I learned of a different Mississippi—one that suffered from abject poverty, citizen abuse and suffering, anger and overt discrimination between the peoples and institutions within the state of Mississippi. In her new book, *The War on Poverty in Mississippi: From*

*Massive Resistance to New Conservatism*, Emma J. Folwell leads us to see how attempts by governmental agencies, churches, and philanthropic organizations to right the "poverty" of Mississippi was at best minimally successful spanning the years of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Folwell helps us to see that the supposed War on Poverty actually turned out to be the War on the War on Poverty as both reformers and segregationist citizens of Mississippi battled for change or for enforcing the status quo.

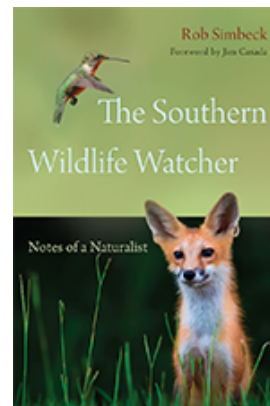
On page one of her Introduction, Folwell excerpts for us: "A paper for pariotic (sic) citizens," was a flyer distributed in the yards of Head Start teachers in Yalobusha County in the late 1960s. Its purpose was to discourage white children from attending the newly formed Head Start schools—a major effort to bring care and education to children in Mississippi. The flyer "declared that 'the worst thing is to mix with the (n---rs) by teaching in (N---) schools, and espailly (sic) those who are teaching in Head Start'". (Page 3)

Folwell challenges us to search for a meaning of "new conservatism" through the evolution and development of powers accrued to white men and black women in Mississippi. These individuals appear to have found comity through sharing leadership positions in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Their goal became to gain or to regain power and over time to subdue poverty in Mississippi.

Of great interest to explore is Folwell's Chapter Three "The Ku Klux Klan and the War on Poverty", page 72-99. Also see Folwell's final chapter, *The Demise on the War on Poverty*, page 196-211. There are a few black and white photos and some helpful map illustrations. You will find a Section Notes, a Bibliography and an Index. Recommended for public, school and academic libraries.

*Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D., MLIS*

**The Southern Wildlife Watcher: Notes of a Naturalist.** Rob Simbeck. Foreword by Jim Casada. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-164336-092-8. 168 p. \$18.99 (Pbk.)



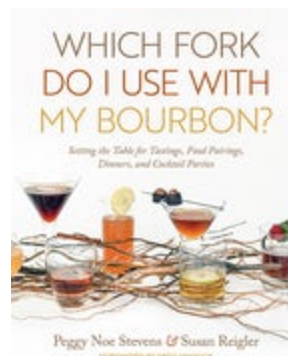
This work is about animals and plants of the South. The author resides in Nashville, Tennessee. He has written

three hundred articles for many periodicals like *Nashville Scene*, *Ducks Unlimited*, and *Field and Stream*. Three books Rob Simbeck wrote are *Tennessee State Symbols*, *Daughter of the Air: The Life of Cornelia Fort*, and *Fifty Seasons a History of the Nashville Symphony*. The writing style is entertaining, eloquent, and easy to understand. Each description is around three to five pages including an excellent quality picture, a description of the animal, range and habitat, and viewing tips.

The work reveals interesting facts about Southern wildlife. Luna moths are very green and titled after Luna believed to be the goddess of the moon by the Romans. Blue jays scream loudly together when snakes, cats, owls, hawks, or humans are around. Two types of rabbits are eastern cottontail rabbits and swamp rabbits. Approximately three hundred thousand years prior, red foxes crossed the Bering Strait to North America from Europe and Asia. Moles create and utilize tunnels that lizards, salamanders, frogs, snakes, toads, voles, shrews, and new moles also utilize. Three hundred million robins exist in North America. Robins go back to the north in spring sooner than the other birds. Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Michigan use the robin as their state bird. Benjamin Franklin preferred the turkey as the bird of the United States not the eagle. Other intriguing information about wildlife is also discussed as follows. Four hundred million years prior sharks existed. Monarch butterflies stay in pine trees of Mexico and cypress trees of California and create beautiful colorful trees in the winter. Crawfish Capital of the World, Breaux Bridge, Louisiana celebrates a Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival in May. Shrimp are pink, brown, or white and are on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. Coyotes are similar to German shepherd dogs. Recommended for anyone interested in the wildlife of the South. The book is superbly researched and a great accomplishment. All public and academic libraries should add the excellent monograph on Southern wildlife to their collections.

Melinda F. Matthews  
University of Louisiana at Monroe

**Which Fork Do I Use With My Bourbon? Setting the Table for Tastings, Food Pairings, Dinners, and Cocktail Parties.** Peggy Noe Stevens and Susan Reigler. Foreword by Fred Minnick. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-9496-6909-1. 203 p. \$29.95. (hdbk)



This work's connection to the South is due to its content Kentucky bourbon. Author Peggy Noe Stevens is the creator of Louisville Kentucky's The Bourbon Women Association and the head of Louisville Kentucky's Peggy Noe Stevens & Associates. She is in the Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame by the Kentucky Distillers Association in 2019 and in 2020 was named to the Whiskey's Hall of Fame. Peggy arranged world activities for Kentucky's Woodford Reserve. Co-author Susan Reigler is the author of *Complete Guide to Kentucky State Parks*, *Kentucky Bourbon Country: The Essential Travel Guide*, *Kentucky Bourbon Cocktail Book*, *More Kentucky Bourbon Cocktails*, *The Bourbon Tasting Notebook*, *The American Whiskey Tasting Notebook: Rye, Malt, Tennessee, and Others*, *Kentucky Sweet & Savory Finding: The Artisan Foods and Beverages of the Bluegrass State*, and *Compass American Guides: Kentucky*. Susan Reigler was also a critique of eateries in the *Louisville Courier Journal*.

Beautiful vividly colorful photographs decorate the book. The pictures of the beautiful glasses, plates, parties, silverware, decorations, food, decanters, flowers, table settings, and trays relating to bourbon are extremely intriguing and magnificently enhance the discussion of Kentucky bourbon. On the sides of the text are Party Tricks offering ideas to make the festivity more successful such as putting the cocktail glasses and containers to mix the cocktails in the refrigerator will create extra cool drinks.

Fifty-three delectable recipes are easy to follow. Twenty-seven cocktail recipes, seven appetizers, snacks, and spreads recipes, eight sides and salad recipes, one bread recipe, five entrée recipes, and five dessert recipes look delicious. Yummy sounding drink recipes are Porch Swing with bourbon, orange juice, and lemonade, the Seelbach cocktail of the 1905 Louisville Seelbach Hotel mentioned in *The Great Gatsby* with bourbon and sparkling wine or champagne, and Dark and Blood Bourbon Mary with bourbon and Worcestershire sauce. Another luscious

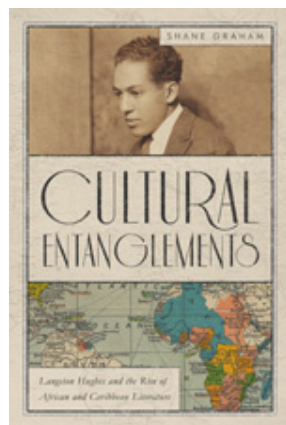
recipe is the Entrepreneur concocted of chocolate malt, chocolate syrup, and Bardstown Bourbon Company Collaboration Bourbon. The mint julep is the Kentucky Derby paramount beverage. In addition to a mint julep recipe, four other recipes add pineapple, peach and basil, strawberry, and chocolate to the mint julep. Recipes for the bourbon Old-Fashioned drink created at the Pendennis Club in Louisville and New York's bourbon drink Manhattan are tasty. Enjoyable dessert recipes are Kentucky chocolate bourbon pecan pie, bourbon pineapple pound cake, and bourbon brownies. A tasty pimento cheese spread includes green olives. Appetizing vegetable dish recipes are acorn squash with bourbon, corn pudding, and bourbon carrots with walnuts.

Three excellent entrée recipes are cold smoked smothered quail, delicious burgoo, and Granny Hunter's Bourbon Tenderloin. A recipe for stuffed mushroom hors d'oeuvres with Henry Bain's sauce of the Pendennis Club of Louisville is wonderful.

The glossary defines twenty-nine terms. Recommended Reading reveals other superb cocktail books and Kentucky cookbooks, Peggy Noe Stevens' website [www.peggynoestevens.com](http://www.peggynoestevens.com) and another wonderful book by Peggy Noe Stevens *Professional Presence: The Four-Part Guide to Building Your Personal Brand*. The recommendation for audience is anyone interested in Kentucky bourbon, how bourbon is made, the history of bourbon, the Kentucky Derby, and delicious recipes. This work reveals a monumental amount of interesting details on Kentucky bourbon, bourbon parties, and the Kentucky Derby. Recommended for all public and academic libraries.

Melinda F. Matthews  
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**Cultural Entanglements: Langston Hughes and the Rise of African and Caribbean Literature.** Shane Graham, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020. ISBN 9780813944098 (Hdbk: \$75); 9780813944111 (Pbk: \$37.50); 9780813944104 (Ebook: \$37.50). 320 p.



While a graduate student at the University of South Carolina, a professor said to me "Go abroad", and if you do you will never see your life the same way again. In the years that followed, I did as he said and he was right.

Much like the title of Shane Graham's book, *Cultural Entanglements Langston Hughes and the Rise of African and Caribbean Literature*, I began to see the country of my birth as a vastly different place from the ones I visited. My experiential knowledge of work, life and the environments of my birth country vied with the experiences I observed while traveling, challenging me to examine my beliefs, relationships and fears.

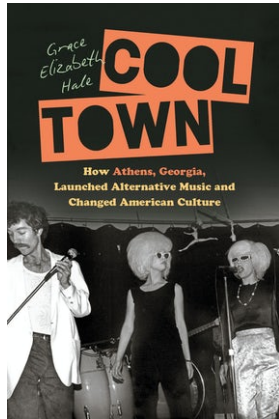
Graham takes us through Hughes' travels and his literary relationships with particular writers between 1920 and 1960, including Jamaican, Haitian, French, South African, and those of the Caribbean. Shane tells us that Hughes has been most associated with Harlem and his professed "professional debt to American poets as Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, and Paul Laurence Dunbar...and by his lifelong commitment to the cause of African American freedom and equality". (p.1)

Graham continues "recognizing him (Hughes) as globetrotting cosmopolitan, travel writer, translator, anthologist, and avid international networker, and maybe above all panAfricanist." (p.1) His 225 pages of text is followed by Notes on pages 227 through 272, a Bibliography on pages 73 to 290 and an Index on pages 291 to 307. This excellent research spans Hughes' life from birth in Joplin, Missouri in 1902 (?) to his death in 1967 in New York City. Learn why he was known as a jazz poet! See African-American writers, poets, and musicians that flourished in New York City in the 1920s. ... In fact, he founded the style of poetry called "jazz poetry," in which the rhythm of the poem when spoken aloud mirrors the sounds that jazz music make. See [www.Poetryteatime.com](http://www.Poetryteatime.com) Recommended for academic, public and historical society libraries.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D. MLIS



**Cool Town: How Athens, Georgia Launched Alternative Music and Changed American Culture.** Grace Elizabeth Hale. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020. ISBN 9781469654874 (Hdbk). 384 p. \$27.00.



Athens, Georgia has long been known as a party town, but in the 1970's and 80's the music scene in Athens exploded with a whole new kind of party. During these years, Athens blazed onto the national and international music scene, providing a nurturing environment for creative students and artists experimenting with alternative lifestyles, music and art. Helping to foster a bohemian culture were art students and faculty from the University of Georgia, musicians exploring innovative music, and Athens native, Jeremy Ayers, former star of Warhol's the Factory. The band, the B-52's, helped kick off the party.

Grace Elizabeth Hale, professor of American Studies and History at the University of Virginia, and observer of and participant in the independent scene in Athens as a University of Georgia undergraduate in the 1980's, brings a detailed and personal point of view to this history. Based on many interviews with band members, as well as scene participants, she recounts in depth the genesis, history and impact of the B-52's, Pylon, R.E.M., Bar-B-Q Killers, Love Tractor, the Method Actors and other influential Athens bands.

Dance music was the B-52's *raison d'être*. Keith Strickland, Fred Schneider, Kate Pierson, and Ricky and Cindy Wilson flamboyantly embraced drag and cross-dressing, bringing it onto the local stage with exuberance and a spirit of fun. Hale notes that the B-52's were generous to other local bands, even after moving to New York, continuing to extend a helping hand to upcoming Athens groups. Pylon expanded on the B-52's success with performance as art, creating original dance music appreciated by the bohemian crowd.

Hale covers many exceptional bands and musicians exhibiting a breakout style and sound, such as the Bar-B-Q Killers, Love Tractor, the Method Actors and Vic Chesnutt. Many received their due recognition in Athens, but few had the business acumen and musical talent R.E.M.

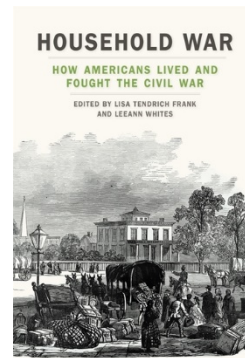
displayed. Ultimately achieving international renown, and making the cover of Rolling Stone twice, band members maintained their ties with Athens. Though only Michael Stipe was born in the South, they all benefited from the inclusive bohemian culture of this small southern college town as much as any regional musician.

The author largely devotes the second half of the book to regional folk art influence on the music, journalism that covered the Athens music scene and her own participation in the life of the town as an entrepreneur and member of the musical group Cordy Lon. Hale also addresses the difficult issues of race and gender. She notes the overwhelmingly white make-up of the Athens music scene reflected the predominant demographic of the campus at UGA where many of the band members were current or former students. Sexism, also, was evident, where, though there were many female musicians, too often women played the supporting role, collaborating in the creative process, but not getting recognition for their contributions.

If Roger Lyle Brown's book, *Party Out of Bounds: The B-52's, R.E.M., and the kids who rocked Athens, Georgia*, was in his words "a conjuration" generally based on oral history of the alternative music scene in Athens and told from a journalist's perspective, Grace Elizabeth Hale takes the historian's tack and delves into the documented specifics of the various bands and the cultural motifs of that musical era. A list of interviewees, photographs, copious chapter notes and a comprehensive index reflect the author's extensive research credentials. Both are enjoyable reads and worthy of shelf space in academic and public libraries.

*Melanie Dunn*  
University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

**Household War: How Americans Lived and Fought the Civil War.** Edited by Lisa Tendrich Frank and LeeAnn Whites. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020. ISBN 9-780-8203-5634-1 (Pbk: \$32.95); 9-780-8203-5631-0 (Hdbk: \$99.95). 316 p.



Selecting this book, *Household War: How Americans Lived and Fought the Civil War*, to read and review came about upon seeing its title. I thought this might be the first book

on the Civil War to pique my interest. What did the editors find fascinating about “households” and the Civil War?

In the past my brothers, my sons, and some male colleagues often commented on a variety of Civil War battlegrounds they visited or researched. To me mounds of dirt and monument markers were sad memorials to so many young men who fought and died in bloody scrimmages. So very tragic. Also, I found little interest in the Civil War as a passionate research topic.

However, when I saw Lisa Tendrich Frank and LeeAnn Whites 2020 book title, *Household War: How Americans Lived and Fought the Civil War*, I was eager to read it. To set the stage for their collection of essays, they said “This volume is based on a simple but important premise: that the Civil War can be read as a household war, a conflict rooted in, fought by and waged against households as a physical place and an ideological construct: households were the guiding principle behind many of the war’s causes”. (Intro, 1)

This 300+ page book holds a collection of essays by 12 writers on the following topics in:

- Chapter 1 “The Importance of the Household to Civil War Behavior”
- Chapter 2 “The Wartime View of the Household”
- Chapter 3 “The Household as the Site of War”
- Chapter 4 “Reconstructing the Household”.

Some particularly memorable essays are:

- “Householder and General Lee’s War as a Household War”, p. 35
- “The Soldier’s Dream of Home”, p. 77
- “Written on the Heart: Soldiers Letters, the Household Supply line and the Relational War”, p. 118
- “Afterword: From Household to Personhood in America”, p. 287.

This book is recommended for public libraries, academic libraries, historical societies, and theological libraries.

*Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D., MLIS*

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*The Southeastern Librarian*

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