1983

Entire Issue Volume 5, Number 2

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/theprimarysource>

Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(1983) "Entire Issue Volume 5, Number 2," *The Primary Source*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.

DOI: 10.18785/ps.0502.01

Available at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/theprimarysource/vol5/iss2/1>

This Complete Issue is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Primary Source by an authorized editor of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The Primary Source

A Quarterly Publication of The Society of Mississippi Archivists

Volume Five

May, 1983

Number Two

DISASTER STRIKES HATTIESBURG CITY ARCHIVES

(Ed. Note: On Wednesday, April 6, 1983, many areas of Mississippi experienced flash flooding caused by torrential rains. One of the archival victims of that flooding was the Hattiesburg Municipal Records Project. On the request of the Editor, Hattiesburg City Archivist Frank Walker wrote a letter describing the tragedy and its aftermath. Even as he wrote, another storm system was striking Mississippi that would produce even greater flooding in much of the state. While it is probable that more archival disasters will occur from this second flood, this one is especially sad: The NHPRC-supported Hattiesburg City Archives is the only municipal archival program in Mississippi.)

Dear Hank:

May 11, 1983

As I'm sure you've heard, the flood which struck Hattiesburg was called "the five hundred year flood." Approximately fourteen inches of rain fell on the afternoon of April 6 within about a four-hour time span, causing flash flooding along Gordon's Creek, which winds through town. Oddly, high water along the Leaf and Bowie rivers did not come until several days thereafter, but it was the inability of the Creek to handle so much rain in so short a span that brought grief to the Municipal Records Project. (Grief which to some extent is being alleviated, fortunately.)

At the time of the flood, I was just finishing the project. The historical records were in the basement archives area of City Hall, all in two hundred Holinger boxes, except the bound volumes, which numbered about 175. The more recent records, those I had scheduled for retention periods of three-to-seven years, were in the old city-owned bottling plant building. It was for these recent records that I had concern when the rains continued to fall on that Wednesday afternoon. The roof there had recently been repaired, but I was not certain that leaks would not develop under such an onslaught. As for the more important records in City Hall, well, it just never occurred to me that they could possibly be flooded, even in the basement. City Hall is about a block away and is on a higher elevation than the banks of the Creek. The creek is wide there, its banks high, and concreted where it flows through downtown.

At five o'clock, worried about records on the second floor of the bottling building, I headed downtown. Couldn't get closer than about two blocks, due to the flooding. Parked and walked the rest of the way, mostly through fast-rushing floodwaters waist deep, to the building. Inside, where water level was later measured at thirty three inches on the walls--thirty seven inches in the storage building out back--I waded down the hall, climbed the stairs, and found, on the second floor, that my records were dry and safe--assuming that the building did not collapse, or something of the sort, and that wasn't likely. In other words, I returned to my car, wading again, with the thought in mind that all was O.K. with the records project.

Continued on Page 16.

The Primary Source is a quarterly publication of news and ideas produced by the Society of Mississippi Archivists, a non-profit organization of professional archivists and interested persons. Subscription to *The Primary Source* is included in the Society membership dues. Membership information is printed on the last page of each newsletter.

Your contributions are welcome. Write *The Primary Source*, P. O. Box 1151, Jackson, MS 39205.

Deadlines for inclusion are:

- #1 (February) -- January 31
- #2 (May) -- April 30
- #3 (August) -- July 31
- #4 (November) -- October 31

h t holmes.....Editor
Martha Sparrow...Assistant Editor

STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTION UPDATE

While the demise of S.B. 2386, An Act to Establish an Advisory Local Government Records Commission, was reported in the February issue of *The Primary Source*, printing deadlines precluded any detailed account.

The Historical Records Assessment Project looked at four areas of archival activity in Mississippi. Of these four areas, there is one -- local government records -- where there is virtually no archival work being done. (The fine work of Frank Walker with the City of Hattiesburg is noted as the exception.) Despite the critical problems identified in the other three areas, there exists in each of those areas some kind of base for implementing solutions: There is an established state archives program, and there are established historical records repositories. Such is not the case with local government records.

In 1981, the State Senate passed the Mississippi Archives and Records Management Act. At that stage of the Act's legislative history, the bill contained provisions for the archival administration of state and local government records. The State House of Representatives, acting out of a fear of reducing local autonomy, removed the local government records provisions before final passage. (Your attention is called to Bill Minor's column in the March 27 *Clarion Ledger*, entitled "It's a pitiful mess when counties can push the state around," especially his comments:

The overriding issue involved here, however, is not what is planned, but whether or not a county which is a creature of the state can be permitted to thwart the state in serving the general welfare.... For years, the problem of the state in dealing with the counties has been one of getting county governments to adopt more efficient systems of records management to prevent the wide spread waste of taxpayers' dollars....)

One of the Assessment Project's short term recommendations adopted by the State Historical Records Advisory Board was "Creation of a local government records study commission to make specific recommendation for the implementation of long term solutions one to four," those solutions relating to regional storage, archival quality microfilm, and a conservation program. During the 1983 legislative session, Elbert R. Hilliard, Director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and State Historical Records Coordinator, persuaded Senator Robert Crook to introduce S.B. 2386. (Senator Crook was the guiding legislative force in the passage of the 1981 Archives and Records Management Act.) In an effort to eliminate the fear of diminishing local autonomy, the bill called for the Advisory Commission to include representatives from eight local government groups, as well as state agencies and other related professional groups, including this Society.

ACCESSIONS

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Falconer (Kinloch) Collection. 1862-1878. .5 linear feet.

The collection consists of Civil War letters. Falconer was a former lieutenant governor and secretary of state in Mississippi. He was from Holly Springs, Mississippi. The collection includes six letters to Falconer from General Joseph E. Johnston, as well as numerous field dispatches and official documents.

Presented by the descendants of Kinloch Falconer.

Campbell (Will D.) Manuscript Collection. 2 linear feet.

Typescripts, manuscripts, typesetting typescripts, and galleys for *Brother to a Dragonfly* and *The Glad River*.

Plumpp (Sterling) Collection. ca. 1970-1982. 12 linear feet.

This collection consists chiefly of writings of contemporary black writers which were collected by Sterling Plumpp, black poet and Clinton, Mississippi native. In addition to over one hundred small press publications of modern urban black poetry, the collection also contains some manuscript materials of dissident South African black writers.

Healy (George) Collection. ca. 1940-1970.

This collection contains memorabilia belonging to George W. Healy, Jr., the long-time editor of the *Times Picayune* in New Orleans, Louisiana. Memorabilia include framed, signed photographs, awards and plaques given to Healy as well as numerous presidential letters to Healy. An additional item in the collection is a film of the Nixon mission to Moscow in 1959.

The "Rowan Oak Papers". ca. 1920-1939. 2 linear feet.

Over 1,800 pages of Faulkner literary manuscripts. The collection includes the complete holographic manuscript for *Pylon* as well as numerous drafts of early Faulkner novels, short stories and poetry. A considerable portion of the manuscripts are in holograph.

William Faulkner's "The Marionettes". 1920.

One of six known copies of Faulkner's manuscript, a play entitled "The Marionettes". Faulkner hand lettered, illustrated and hand bound this work which was sold at five dollars a copy on the campus of the University of Mississippi in 1920.

Hannah (Barry).

Typesetting manuscript with holographic corrections for Hannah's second novel *Nightwatchman*.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Republican Party of Forrest County (MS) Records. 1959-1963. 5 inches.

Correspondence of the local chairman, Clarence E. Tolar, and reports from the state office. Collection is open.

Presented by Clarence E. Tolar.

A C C E S S I O N S

Willoughby (Mamie) / Rose Budd Stevens Papers. ca. 1948-1982. 3.5 cubic feet.
Copies of her newspaper articles and related correspondence which document Mamie Willoughby's authorship of the *Jackson Clarion-Ledger's* "Along the R.F.D." column under the name Rose Budd Stevens for more than 30 years.

Collection is open.

Presented by Mamie Willoughby.

United Daughters of the Confederacy, Nathan Bedford Forrest Chapter, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Records. 1908-1981. 3 cubic feet.

By-laws, rollcall and minute books, cash journals, financial reports, year-books, program booklets, correspondence and a scrapbook. The collection also contains minutes of the Kemper Park Commission, 1911-1981.

Presented by the Nathan Bedford Forrest Chapter of the U.D.C., Mrs. Naomi White, President.

deGrummond Collection Accretions.

Since the last reporting period the deGrummond Collection has received thirty-four titles which are the works of fifteen authors. A detailed accession report is available in *Juvenile Miscellany*, the collection's newsletter.

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Devine (Judith Meece) Collection. 1847-1907. 1 volume.

Records of the Serapta Primitive Baptist Church, a member of the Little Black Association of Primitive Baptist Churches. Collection is open.

Loaned for photocopying by Judith Meece Devine.

Malvaney (E. L.) Collection. 1914-1928. 3 cubic feet.

Architectural drawings of the following buildings: Humphreys County Courthouse and Jail, Walthall County Courthouse, Millsaps College Administration Building, South Mississippi Charity Building in Laurel, MSCW Home Economics Building, Bolivar County Courthouse, and Capitol Ice Company in Jackson; and records (photocopies) of the Mississippi State Board of Architecture (1928). Collection is open.

Presented by Emmett Malvaney.

Old Lebanon Presbyterian Church Records. 1840-1965. 3 volumes.

Session records, membership lists, and other records of the Choctaw County, Mississippi church.

Loaned for photocopying by Michael Ballard.

NEWS NOTES

STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD

The State Historical Records Advisory Board met on March 30 and considered two grant applications. The first application was from the Biloxi Public Library to microfilm selected records of the city of Biloxi. The second was from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to develop intellectual control over its Newsfilm Collection and to produce a computerized finding aid. The Board approved both applications and forwarded their recommendations to NHPRC in Washington, D.C.

State Historical Records Coordinator has announced that Charlotte Capers has resigned from the Board in light of her recent retirement from the Department of Archives and History. Governor William Winter has appointed Billy V. Cooper of Canton to succeed Capers. He is the chancery clerk in Madison County. The Governor also reappointed Madel Morgan to the Board. She serves as director of the Archives and Library Division of the Department of Archives and History.

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Hilda Scholtes has resigned her position as Associate University Archivist.... The completed guide to the WLBT Archives (described in *TPS* August 1982) is now available to researchers.... The following guides to the John C. Stennis Collection are now available to researchers: "Guide to Pre-Senate Series" and "Guide to the Framed and Unframed Photographs."

EVANS MEMORIAL LIBRARY, ABERDEEN

During the last quarter researchers from ten states and from twenty-seven towns in Mississippi have visited the Historical Division. Employees responded to a mail request from the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum for information on gin inventor Benjamin D. Gullett, who once lived in Aberdeen.

Library staff members furnished information and photographs to those working on the Discover Aberdeen events. Historical Division materials were particularly helpful in the production of the play which was given in the renovated auditorium of the city hall and in the preparation of the tableaux for the candlelight walk.

MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

Carol Aiken, conservator of decorative arts and "W" graduate, presented a two-day seminar on the Preservation and Care of Works of Art on March 3-4. The seminar was held in the Fine Arts Building on the campus of Mississippi for Women.

Aiken has expertise in dealing with a wide range of museum and private collector's conservation problems. Upon leaving the "W", she received her training at Cooperstown Graduate Programs in Cooperstown, New York. She then served an internship at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore. Her next position was as conservator of decorative arts at the Collections Care Center of the New York State Parks and Recreation Department. Since 1976

NEWS NOTES

Aiken has operated her own practice in Baltimore. Her clients include the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress, Mount Vernon, the National Parks Service and the Corning Museum.

The seminar focused on the effects of humidity, light, and pollution on objects and materials and stressed measures which individuals and institutions can take to conserve their materials. Workshops included "What is Conservation?", "How to Find and Use a Conservator?", "Before and After Treatments", "Environment—Why Be Aware?" and "Housekeeping with Collectibles." Aiken also conducted clinics in which participants brought small objects for her analysis of condition and materials. She also gave an illustrated lecture on projects she has completed. The seminars emphasized conservation techniques since, as Aiken pointed out, restoration should only be undertaken by well-trained professionals.

SMA members attending various parts of the workshops were Anne Wells and Lynne Mueller from Mississippi State. Gloria Atkinson and Martha Sparrow represented the "W".

CHARLOTTE CAPERS RETIRES FROM DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Completing a forty-five year career in state archival work, Charlotte Capers retired from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History on April 1. During that time, she served the Department as secretary, acting director, director, public information officer and guiding light. Among her many accomplishments include planning and obtaining the Department's present building and working for more than twenty years to obtain a state records management law. She is a charter member of the Society of Mississippi Archivists and was elected a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists. Although she has officially departed the Department, she will continue to edit the *Mississippi History Newsletter*, the Department's popular tabloid she began publishing in 1959. In appreciation for her many contributions, the State Legislature authorized the Board of Trustees of the Department to rename the Archives and History Building in her honor. This the Board did, and the Charlotte Capers Building now stands as tribute to her. The impact of Charlotte Capers on Mississippi archival work will be felt for many years.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Division of Records Management

Since our last report, the State Records Committee has met twice. The committee met February 10 and April 28 in the Board Room of the Charlotte Capers Archives and History Building and approved 128 schedules bringing the total number of approved records control schedules to 146. The State Tax Commission and the Insurance Department are well on their way to scheduling the records series represented in their agencies. Other agencies which have a part of their records series scheduled are the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the State Department of Education, the Board of Architecture and the State Department of Health.

A factor which may increase agency participation in the state's records management program is the availability of records management liaison officers. Thus far, eighty-four agencies have records officers, and we expect

NEWS NOTES

additional appointments in the near future. These records officers will be our contact with the agency and the person to whom we shall rely to coordinate our work with the agency in creating formal records plans and preparing applications for records control schedules.

The recently completed alteration project of the Division of Records Management included the consolidation of our COM Operation into one room, the move of the microfilm lab to a larger area, and the creation of an environmentally correct (40% relative humidity and less than 70° F.) for storing microfilm masters, and the creation of an area for a staff lounge. These changes should improve work flow and efficiency at the center.

Archives and Library Division

All Department archival microform and photographic services have been consolidated into a new section of the Division. Head of the section is Meredith Tatum, who began his work as micrographics supervisor in May.... The Manuscript Curators have begun development of a computerized accession record. Utilizing a general data management system, specialized lists for location, title, volume, accession number, donor and year of donation can be generated when data entry is complete.... Special Collections Curator Martha McBee attended the SAA Administration of Photographic Collections Workshop held at Norman, Oklahoma, in December 1983.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Mr. Millard Wallace has joined the staff of the J. H. White Library at Mississippi Valley State. He will work as the archivist in the newly established University Archives.

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY TO INITIATE FUMIGATION FEE

A careful evaluation of work being handled for other agencies and for private individuals indicates the necessity for setting a charge on the use of the fumigation chamber at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Considering the cost of maintaining the chamber, the gas used for the fumigation, and staff time involved in the operation, the Department feels that a charge of \$25.00 for fumigation is reasonable. The charge goes into effect May 15, 1983. A number of items can be fumigated at one time and this charge would be for each batch fumigated.

This decision was made reluctantly as the Department has the only fumigation chamber in the state. However, in order for the Department to continue offering the service, a minimum charge is necessary.

BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY NAMES SMA MEMBER FELLOW FOR RESEARCH SEMINAR

The Bentley Historical Library of the University of Michigan has announced additional fellowship awards to support research on appraisal problems of modern documentation. Dr. Paul Chestnut has been awarded a fellowship to study problems related to the papers of public officials on the state and local level. Dr. Chestnut is assistant state archivist at the Virginia State Library.

NEWS NOTES

For a related project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Bentley Library has invited SMA member Ms. Julia Young of the School of Library Service at the University of Southern Mississippi and Mr. Frank Boles of its own staff to assess the implications of the research done by the Fellows for the management of university records. In addition, they will conduct their own research on the nature of administrative files in the university. Julia Young serves as chairperson of the SMA Education Committee.

During the period May 1 to August 30, the seminar will meet once or twice a week. Archivists who will be in or near Ann Arbor can obtain the schedule of meetings by writing: Francis X. Blouin, Jr., Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, 1150 Beal Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109, (313) 764-3482.

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, continued

S.B. 2386, if enacted, would have authorized the Advisory Commission to:

1. Review in depth and study the present laws and regulations of the State of Mississippi relating to the creation, usage, management, retention and preservation of local government records;
2. Investigate and study, with a view toward implementing the recommendations therein specified, the recently completed State Historical Records Assessment and Reporting Project Report and investigate and study any alternative methods, programs and systems that will provide for the efficient archival records of local government records;
3. To prepare, publish and present a report to the Legislature, at its 1984 Regular Session, concerning its findings, recommendations and suggested legislation relating to the efficient archival records management of local government records.

The State Senate passed S.B. 2386 unanimously. When the bill reached the State House of Representatives, it was assigned to the Rules Committee. This committee took no action on the bill, and the bill died under legislative deadline rules.

It must be admitted that final passage of the bill was not really expected this year. Implementation of the bill would have cost \$80,000.00, and it is unlikely that the Legislature would have funded the Commission this year, even if the enabling legislation had been enacted. The underlying purpose of the bill was to provide local "grassroots" support and input for local government records management, but the short time between the adoption of the report by the Advisory Board and the legislative session precluded Hilliard from obtaining the endorsements of the local government groups. Such endorsements would have certainly improved the chance for House action.

From all the signs, this election year should produce some significant changes in both the State Senate and House of Representatives. An improvement in the economy and a changed legislative membership may significantly improve chances for the bill's enactment next year. - hth

FROM THE PRESIDENT -

In April, I was fortunate to be among those who enjoyed the annual meeting of the SMA in Jackson. The program was excellent, and I join with the rest of those attending in expressing appreciation to Terry Latour for his work as program chairperson and Linda Overman and Hank Holmes for their work on local arrangements.

If being president of an organization has no other benefit, it does allow one the opportunity to make observations or reflections at organization meetings or in organization publications. Not being one to pass up an opportunity, I would like to offer the following observations about SMA and the year ahead.

The past few years have seen a restlessness in the Society, a restlessness which stems from a desire to do more. There is a tendency in such small organizations to become dormant after a brief flurry of post-charter activity. This has not been the case in SMA during the past two years. Numerous committees and officers have been hard at work trying to focus energies on productive work in the Mississippi archival world and in planning and shaping the future of SMA. With this seemingly endless supply of energy, SMA has experienced some "pre-growth" pains. The finances of the Society have proven to be a constant worry to the Council. In efforts to do what we would like to do, SMA has had to face the cold, hard facts of living within a budget. Due to the work of several members, the Society adopted a formal budget last year and has learned to tolerate it.

There are numerous solutions to the budgetary problems, and during the coming year SMA will be investigating all possible avenues. One area which will receive much attention will be membership. The membership of SMA has dropped steadily since the early years and seems to have reached a stabilizing level. Regrettably, the level at which membership has chosen to stabilize is insufficient to allow SMA to offer all of the services that have been offered in the past and certainly far below the level needed to offer increased services. This is regrettable since it comes at a time when the services of SMA are receiving national attention, particularly through its publication, *The Primary Source*, and through the work of the Conservation Committee.

A second observation concerns membership involvement. Too often it has been said that only a handful of members carry the load of the work of any small organization. This is clearly true in the case of SMA. It would be unrealistic to assume that we will ever have 100% participation. This assumption is logical when one considers that a number of SMA members are members because they have only a small interest in the profession, live 2000 miles away, and/or wish only to support the SMA through their membership dues. On the other hand, the SMA has members who have a major concern in the work of the Society (e.g., historians, archivists), yet repeated attempts have not secured their involvement. In my association with SMA, I have learned that we have more tasks than members. This, too, shall be a problem for which we seek a solution during the coming year.

I do look forward to serving as your president this year. If I can serve you in any way (or if you can serve the SMA in any way!), please call on me. My office is (601) 359-1424, and my home number is (601) 373-8503. -- WJH

Creating a rats' nest

Public record-keeping in disarray

It's understandable how records-keeping got into such dismal shape in Mississippi. First, as there are laws designed to keep track of every human living or dead and any sort of legal dealing between cradle and grave, it was inevitable that courthouses would be awash in records, licenses and deeds. Second, as requests for tax dollars for new systems or more space could well be a shortcut to political retirement, various officials simply decided to make-do.

Which may all be well and good, unless you're trying to chase down a vital record — perhaps to prove title to land, or to determine a marriage or a will. Nor would anyone advise smoking while conducting the search. Unless there are three inches of water on the floor, many of these storage places would flash up in a minute, generously fueled by their debris.

As the frustration is limited only to those in actual search of a record, then there's no massive rallying cry to take corrective action. And if a taxpayer is prone to blame the county, then county officials can blame the taxpayers. As a result, a sort of political mildew sets in.

There's no reason for it to continue

like this. Damage, disarray, destruction: These are not only records mandated by law for safe-keeping; often, they are also vital parts of Mississippi's history and heritage.

"Regionalization" of records-keeping would be one solution, where several counties could share the cost of a safe, fireproof records center. This would split the expense (and beat building new courthouses), and extra travel time would probably be negated by spending less time in fruitless search of a document.

And while microfilming may not be the best answer, it is at least *an* answer, and could keep records from rot and rats until records could be computerized.

The Legislature hasn't been much help in providing guidance here, although it could pass a law allowing counties to regionalize a records facility. One previous drawback — public failure to recognize that the situation even exists — should no longer be a factor. But the overall problem is going to continue to worsen unless something is done. These are current records. Many more are on the way. And one little match could keep courts and citizens tied up in knots for years.

Sunday, May 15, 1983

The Clarion-Ledger • Jackson Daily News

NHPRC GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINES

The National Historical Publication and Records Commission has announced that September 1 is the deadline for applications for grants for historical records programs. Applications for such grants should be received by the Commission by that date. One copy of each proposal should go to NHPRC, Washington, D. C. 20408, and one copy to the State Historical Records Advisory Board, address of which is below.

Guidelines for proposals may be obtained from Elbert R. Hilliard, State Coordinator, State Historical Records Advisory Board, Department of Archives and History, P. O. Box 571, Jackson, Mississippi 39205.

Government Records, Private Papers: How Safe Are They?

A seventeen-minute slide show
on the status of record keeping
and preservation in Mississippi

A presentation of the
State Historical Records Advisory Board
and the
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

To schedule showing, contact:

Madel Morgan
Mississippi Department of
Archives and History
P.O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205
359-1424

REPORT FROM THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STATEWIDE GUIDE TO HISTORICAL RECORDS

(Ed. Note: This report was submitted by Elbert R. Hilliard, Committee Chairman, to the Society of Mississippi Archivists at the 1983 Annual Meeting.)

The Department of Archives and History in 1982, with support funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, conducted a year-long study of the problems involved in the preservation of Mississippi's documentary heritage. One of the problems identified during the course of this project involved the matter of scholarly access to the collections of historical source material in the various archival repositories throughout the state. It was noted that although Mississippi has developed several fine archival programs, the fact exists that the programs, taken individually, remain basically unaware of the holdings of other institutions. We are all in agreement that this situation handicaps the acquisition and appraisal of archival records and offers a major detriment to the cause of scholarly research.

The desirability of developing a statewide guide to historical records to solve this problem was widely discussed during the course of the aforementioned study. The subject was thoroughly discussed and debated at the SMA Annual Meeting in Biloxi, the meeting at Lake Tiak O'Khata of representatives from historical records repositories, and the public meeting on publications that was held at Mississippi State University.

One of the proposals for solving this problem that has been suggested repeatedly involves the creation of a statewide computerized data base for archival holdings in all Mississippi repositories. I submitted this recommendation to the Board of Trustees of the Department of Archives and History, and the Board authorized me to contact Dr. Aubrey Lucas, President, University of Southern Mississippi, for the purpose of discussing a joint effort between the Department of Archives and History and the University. Subsequently, I was asked by Anne S. Wells, President, Society of Mississippi Archivists, to chair an ad hoc committee that had been established by the Society's Executive Council for the purpose of studying the development of a statewide guide. The following individuals were invited by President Wells to serve on the Committee:

Onva Boshears, University of Southern Mississippi
Pat Galloway, Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Gloria Atkinson, Mississippi University for Women
Anand Gupta, Jackson State University
Terry Latour, University of Southern Mississippi
George Lewis, Mississippi State University
Steven Schoenly, University of Mississippi

The Committee held its organizational meeting on March 1, 1983, at the Archives and History Building in Jackson. At this meeting, Dr. Galloway recommended that we would be better advised to utilize a general purpose software, rather than attempting to develop a program from scratch. Dr. Lewis suggested that the MARC format be accepted as the minimum standard for the project. Madel Morgan, attending the meeting at the request of the committee chairman, was asked to send a letter to all repositories advising them of the proposed project and

requesting them to transmit to the Department of Archives and History representative samples of their various finding aids. Several institutions have already responded to Madel's letter. The director of one of the repositories reported in total candor that "Mrs. _____ is our finding aid, and we can't copy her!" One of the members of the committee said, "Lord have mercy on the person who will enter our information into the data base."

It was agreed that the committee chairman should move forward in contacting Dr. Lucas, and this meeting was subsequently scheduled for March 31 in Hattiesburg. We were accompanied by Dr. Galloway and Mrs. Morgan. Dr. Lucas was joined by Dr. Claude Fike, Terry Latour, and Billy Scruggs and another gentleman from the Computer Science Department.

The chairman provided Dr. Lucas with a quick summary of the background of the proposed project. We told him that we were of the opinion that the University of Southern Mississippi had outstanding programs in Computer Science and Library Science.

Dr. Lucas and I both agreed that the proposed project had a great deal of merit. The discussions then evolved into a technical dialogue between Dr. Galloway and Mr. Scruggs.

In response to Mr. Scruggs' inquiry concerning the volume of the proposed data base, it was pointed out that we would, in all likelihood, concentrate initially on private manuscripts. It was mutually agreed, however, that we are still looking at a tremendous project of data entry.

The discussions also led to agreement that initially we would not be talking about on-line entry, since this would be too complicated, and that it would probably be best to utilize computer output microfilm, which might be processed and duplicated at the State Records Center, which houses the Records Management Division of the Department of Archives and History.

Mr. Scruggs pointed out that it would be necessary to have someone overseeing data entry who was familiar with the information.

Dr. Lucas concluded the meeting by saying, "We need to make a determination on whether we can help. I think we can, and we are willing to explore our possible involvement in the project." He pointed out that it would be necessary to find new sources of funding to support the project. He asked his staff to determine what funding would be needed, and Terry Latour was delegated to coordinate the sessions that would be needed to compile this information.

It was agreed that the major costs would be data entry and archival supervision and that an appropriate grant application would be prepared to seek the funding that is needed.

The Committee recommends that at some point in the near future a "brainstorming" session be held for archivists in the state to discuss and critique the proposed format for data entry.

It is also our recommendation that the Society establish a standing committee to monitor the progress of the project.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to express our appreciation to Dr. Lucas and the Board of Trustees of the Department of Archives and History for the support and encouragement they have given us.

NARS / NHPRC UPDATE

(Ed. Note: Much of the following information has been provided by the Coalition to Save Our Documentary Heritage.)

NHPRC Reauthorization

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grants program remains unauthorized. Therefore, the Administration has not requested any appropriation for this program for the third year in a row. A new authorization bill (H.R. 2196) was introduced on March 21. This bill, which would reauthorize the grants program for five years (FY 84-88) at \$3 million a year, is sponsored by Representative Jack Brooks (D-TX) and has several co-sponsors.

State Historical Records Coordinator Elbert R. Hilliard contacted all members of the state's Congressional delegation regarding the reauthorization of NHPRC and reports that he has received from several of them assurances of their support for the Commission. Most notable of the responses was that of Representative Wayne Dowdy, fourth district Democrat, who wrote: "I appreciate your making me aware of the positive contributions of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to Mississippi. I have contacted my colleague in Congress, Representative Jack Brooks, to ask that my name be added as co-sponsor of H.R. 2196 to reauthorize the NHPRC grants program for five years. Please be assured that as a co-sponsor of this bill, I will be actively seeking support for its passage among my colleagues in Congress."

The House Government Operations Committee held hearings in April on H.R. 2196 and reported the bill out on May 16. Full House action can come at any time, or it can not happen at all. Supporters of NHPRC should contact their Congressman and urge support of an authorized level of at least \$4 million for the first two years and \$5 million for the next three.

NARS/NHPRC Appropriations

The FY 84 administration budget figure for the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) is \$87,105,000 and includes no grant funds for NHPRC. Essentially this amount represents a standstill at present operating levels for NARS. One of the most critical current problems is lack of staff. On September 1, 1980, NARS had 2,179 permanent employees nationwide. The figure today is 1,555, representing a decline of nearly 29%. Of course, some temporary and part-time staffers have been hired to fill a portion of this gap, but the fact remains that NARS has suffered a steady decline in experienced professional personnel since the beginning of FY 81. NARS was already understaffed for handling the steadily growing bulk of federal records when this decline began. The lack of staff is being felt in all areas, from declassification, where the staff has been cut by more than 50% and work is being accomplished primarily in response to requests rather than in a scheduled way, to the area of machine readable records, where the problems of dealing with computerized records created in the agencies become more overwhelming each day.

Additionally, the GSA administrator has instituted a 6% cut in funds for personnel costs throughout the agency for the current budget year (FY 83). Although the Senate Appropriations Committee last fall explicitly directed GSA not to impose such a cut on NARS, this direction has gone unheeded. NARS has become a victim of the Administrator's zeal to show OMB and the Administration that he can cut even more from his agency's budget.

Many NHPRC funded publications projects as well as the entire records grants program are again threatened with extinction. The Administration's assumption that private sources could be found to fund the publications projects has not been proven in the past two years, although many editors and sponsoring institutions have invested considerable time into efforts to raise such funds. Also, there is no guarantee of long term private support from sources other than sponsoring institutions for even the projects that have had some success at raising funds, such as the "Founding Fathers" projects. In the case of the records grants program, the loss of federal funding would be accompanied by an even greater loss in private funding, since it is the federal money which stimulates the contributions of states, localities, historical societies, foundations, etc., to a records preservation program.

It is imperative that everyone interested in NARS and the NHPRC be in touch with the appropriations subcommittees to express support for increased funding for NARS and an appropriation of at least \$3 million for the NHPRC. Last year a unified effort by the NARS/NHPRC constituency secured a supplemental FY 82 appropriation for NARS/NHPRC, managed to draw the subcommittees' attention to the FY 83 budget situation, and obtained FY 83 funding for the NHPRC without a corresponding reduction in the NARS budget. Since the NARS/NHPRC budget has not increased in actual dollars since FY 81, no case can be made that these agencies are contributing to the ever increasing deficit. On the contrary, an increased NARS appropriation could lead to real savings in government agencies and actually decrease the cost of government. The accomplishment of these tasks depends upon increased personnel, or at least restoration of NARS personnel to its former levels. Therefore, it seems that correspondence should stress the need for more staff in this labor intensive agency.

NARS Independence

On March 23, legislation to free NARS from GSA (S. 905) was introduced in the Senate by Senators Eagleston and Mathias, with thirteen co-sponsors. Next year is the fiftieth anniversary of the National Archives and Records Service. The ultimate birthday observation would be the celebration of the restoration of NARS to its original independent status. During the past two years, considerable progress has been made towards this goal. This is the year to put all out pressure on the Congress and the Administration in order to free NARS once and for all. Congress needs to be reminded that several study commissions since the Hoover Commission have recommended separating NARS from GSA; that the Archivist of the United States needs to have the ultimate authority over the documents in the agencies; of the importance of budget independence; of the interest that all three branches of the government, not just the executive branch, have in the health of NARS; and of the necessity to protect NARS from politicization.

DISASTER, continued

Along about eight-thirty, hearing reports over the television of worse and worse flooding, I got antsy and went downtown again. By this time I was beginning to worry about the historical records but still had not the slightest idea of the magnitude of the problem in that basement area. Had to park again several blocks away from my destination, and this time had to cross the Creek on the Southern Railway trestle. Some sight: behind the Community Center to my left I saw a truck (whose owner I knew) windshield deep. Water rushing through the area, and rain still pouring down. Damndest thing I've ever seen, in fact.

At City Hall I was greeted at the front door by a janitor who informed me that the records were "gone," to use his word, that the basement was flooded. Later, after the water was pumped out by the fire department, I measured it at 7' 3" down there. Everything had been immersed. At the time, I agreed with the janitor's choice of words: thought the whole shooting match was over, two years of work, etc.

Found Terry Latour out at the U.S.M. McCain Library that night and discussed the problem with him. He helped me plan for the next few days, and, just as important or moreso, solicited volunteer help. I shall be eternally grateful to Terry, to Julia Young and Henry Simmons, all staff at U.S.M; to student assistants Melissa Perkins and Bill Raymond from the McCain Library; and to Michael Monk, city employee; all of whom helped in the forty-eight hours following the flood to get records out of the basement and to the Merchant's Packing Company, where they were frozen. (I had gone to the packing company the first thing Thursday and asked them for help. They not only offered freezer space, but even provided a large truck and driver.)

I got some end rolls of newsprint from the *Hattiesburg American* on which to dry records and carried them up to the seventh floor of the Forrest Building across from City Hall. It is there that I am drying records, a few at a time. We have the entire floor, and there are no interior walls, so a good cross breeze flows at all times, and I have had pretty good success thus far.

Of course, the project, funded in part by NHPRC, is over now, so I no longer have the two assistants I had until April 1 (five days before the flood), but the quantity of records is not so great that I cannot deal with it, thanks to the time which the freezer bought me. I was given a new contract April 1, fortunately, so am able to remain on the job and work toward recovery. I had expected to be able to move ahead with the gamut of records management in Hattiesburg, concentrating on additional acquisitions for the municipal archives and, particularly, (had planned) to improve--to broaden and deepen, so to speak--the municipal records retention schedules, but now it will be six months, I estimate, before we get to approximately where we were April 6. However, there is much for which to be thankful. The ink on most documents does not appear to be running. The Hollinger boxes will have to be discarded, of course, but they held together, so the folder order was retained--all those hours of arranging and labeling will not have been wasted after all. The papers will evidence their immersion, but it does not now appear that much of the documentation will have been lost. And, though evident in some places, mildew is not a major problem--yet, at any rate. My primary concern at present is for the bound volumes.

Work with the historical records has been slowed by requests from other persons in city government for assistance with their flood-soaked records. Since my

records were in the freezer already and their's were not and getting in a worse state all the time, I've had to work with the others first. Still, this has given me experience which, God knows, I'd not had before, and enabled me to see how some of these record types will react under the drying conditions I'm having to use.

I guess the lessons that can be learned from this are those which are already known throughout the profession: 1) Avoid utilizing basement areas for records storage if at all possible. (Incidentally, the rooms on the same level of the basement as the archives area were not flooded. Ain't that something?) 2) If a flood does occur, or similar water damage, all is not lost. In fact, little may be lost, depending on how quickly action can be taken and how many items are involved. (Incidentally, we had few photographs and sound recordings, which also is fortunate.)

Well, I've got to go, Hank. I'm going to hit the highway and forget about this for a week. However, I think, truly, that by, say, October or the first of the year, Hattiesburg will have the Municipal archives that it and the federal government paid for.

Sincerely,
Frank Walker

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

The Society of Mississippi Archivists held a very fine fifth annual meeting on April 11-12, 1983, at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson. Everyone in attendance at the meeting praised the local arrangements committee for selecting the art museum and its far-better-than-usual annual meeting cuisine. The first day of the meeting was devoted to a photographic materials workshop conducted by Gerald J. Munoff, director of administrative services in the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives. Sessions on archival appraisal, accessions reporting, and the feasibility of a statewide archival database were held on the last day of the meeting. Terry Latour and his program committee are to be commended for a job well done.

At the annual business meeting, William J. Hanna (Mississippi Department of Archives and History) was elected as the Society's president for the forthcoming year; Bernice Bell (Jackson State University) was elected vice-president; and, Alice G. Cox (Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission) was elected treasurer. Virginia Brock-Shedd (Tougaloo College) and Thomas W. Henderson (Mississippi State University) were selected to serve on the executive council for 1983-1985. Bill Hanna and Bernice Bell have worked diligently for the Society since its creation in 1977, and with them in the top two elective offices, the SMA is in excellent hands for the next two years. -- RJB

SOCIETY OF MISSISSIPPI ARCHIVISTS

P. O. BOX 1151
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39205

LEADERSHIP 1983-84

PRESIDENT

William Hanna
(Mississippi Department of
Archives and History)
P. O. Box 571
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
(601) 359-1424

VICE-PRESIDENT

Bernice Bell
(Jackson State University
Sampson Library)
2235 Margaret Walker Alexander
Drive
Jackson, Mississippi 39213
(601) 968-2123

TREASURER

Alice G. Cox
(Mississippi Baptist Historical
Commission)
Mississippi College Library
P. O. Box 127
Clinton, Mississippi 39056
(601) 924-6172

SECRETARY/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robert J. Bailey
(Mississippi Department of
Archives and History)
P. O. Box 1151
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
(601) 354-7326

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 1982-1984

Gloria L. Atkinson
(Mississippi University for Women
Archives and Museum Department)
Box W-369
Mississippi University for Women
Columbus, Mississippi 39701
(601) 327-0804

Terry S. Latour
(University of Southern Missis-
sippi McCain Graduate Library)
Southern Station Box 5148
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39406
(601) 266-4348

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 1983-1985

Virgia Brock-Shedd
(Tougaloo College Coleman Library)
3719 James Madison Road
Jackson, Mississippi 39213
(601) 956-4941

Thomas W. Henderson
(Mississippi State University
Architecture Branch Library)
700 Sycamore Street
(601) 325-2204

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Anne S. Wells
(Mississippi State University
Mitchell Library)
P. O. Box 5408
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762
(601) 325-3060

©Mark Morgan, Inc., Box 995, Newnan,
Georgia 30263. Reprinted with permission.

"... no other profession calls for more various talents."

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

1982 - 1983 Membership Year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

____ Student \$3.00 ____ Regular \$7.50 ____ Institution \$15.00

____ Patron \$25.00 or more

Please make checks payable to The Society of Mississippi Archivists and send this form and dues to Chairman, Membership Committee, The Society of Mississippi Archivists, P. O. Box 1151, Jackson, Mississippi 39205. The membership year runs from October 1 to September 30. Current members will receive a membership renewal notice in September.