

2002

Reports

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Recommended Citation

(2002) "Reports," *The Primary Source*: Vol. 24 : Iss. 1 , Article 8.

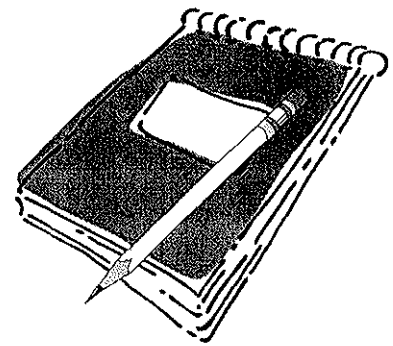
DOI: 10.18785/ps.2401.08

Available at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/theprimarysource/vol24/iss1/8>

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Reports

THE FORTY-THIRD RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS SECTION PRECONFERENCE



NEW OCCASIONS, NEW DUTIES: CHANGING ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

ALA CONFERENCE, ATLANTA

June 11-14, Atlanta, GA

Reported by Peggy M. Price, Special Collections Librarian, McCain Library & Archives,
USM

The 2002 RBMS Preconference took place in Atlanta, GA at the delightful Georgian Terrace hotel, site of the *Gone With the Wind* premier party. One might have expected a Southern, or at least regional theme, but such was not the case. "New Occasions, New Duties: Changing Roles and Expectations in Special Collections" attempted to capture shifts in the collection, preservation, and use of primary source materials and rare books.

Plenaries, seminars and short papers were held on site at the hotel, and at Emory University.

Every year, RBMS kicks off with a slate of tours, followed by an opening reception. The Atlanta area offered a choice of visits to: the Auburn Avenue Research Library, the Williams American Museum of Papermaking, the Special Collections Departments of the University of Georgia or the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Plenary sessions were both amusing and thought provoking. Carla J. Stoffle, Dean of Libraries and Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona Library initiated the preconference with a talk on economics and Special Collections. Other plenaries introduced topics on library education, African American materials, and Holocaust denial.

Seminars covered themes ranging from new reader services, offsite storage, teaching history of the book, cataloging, and collecting rare Afro-Americana. Other seminars included: using digital collections for k-12 audiences, the RBMS nonmember survey, and the poetry portal at Emory University.

A number of participants offered short papers on timely and important issues. Institutional collaboration, changing approaches to instruction and access, metadata, cataloging, and integrating special collections into the modern curricula were discussed.

One of the many highlights of the Atlanta preconference was the opportunity to spend quite a bit of time on the Emory University campus and at the Robert W. Woodruff Library, where the Special Collections Department graciously welcomed RBMS participants and installed the exhibit, *Reporting Civil Rights: Media and the Movement in Atlanta* especially for the occasion. Special Collections staff members were happy to share forms, policies, and philosophies with inquisitive colleagues, and were instrumental in facilitating comfortable, pleasant, and chaos-free local arrangements.

Robert L. Byrd, Director of the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at Duke University, delivered the closing plenary address. Mr. Byrd's comments referenced an ARL symposium on Special Collections held in June of last year, where special collections administrators were invited to attend with their deans in order to discuss "the future of special collections in research libraries."

An ARL Task Force on Special Collections grew out of the 2001 symposium, and task force members formed the panel for the closing session of the RBMS preconference.

The Task Force was asked to develop an action plan to:

Enhance access to collections and backlogs, surface "hidden collections." Advocate for and administer funding for projects, and collaborate with RBMS to develop and endorse guidelines for what constitutes adequate access.

Coordinate planning for collecting 19th and 20th century materials and those in new formats.

Coordinate information sharing regarding digitization efforts.

Define core competencies among special collection librarians and create training opportunities.

Promote special collections as fundamental to the mission of the research library.

Gather data on special collections operations.

Incorporate some of these issues into agendas of RBMS, SAA, and other ARL standing committees (especially the Access Committee but also possibly Preservation, Scholarly Communication, Statistics & Measurement, Copyright, and Diversity).*

**ARL Task Force on Special Collections*

November 2001

<http://www.arl.org/collect/spcoll/tforce/charge.html>

The closing day was, by far, the most significant and informative time spent at RBMS in Atlanta. For those of us who were unaware of ARL's recent devotion of energies toward Special Collections, hearing about the "action agenda" from representatives of the committee was downright inspirational. Clearly, the nations leading institutions are recognizing the value of their archives and special collections departments in the 21st century library, and acknowledging the need for more definition, leadership, and communication both within the field and for our respective administrators, patrons and donors. For more information on the ARL Special Collections Task Force <http://www.arl.org/collect/spcoll/>

THE CAMPBELL CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION STUDIES

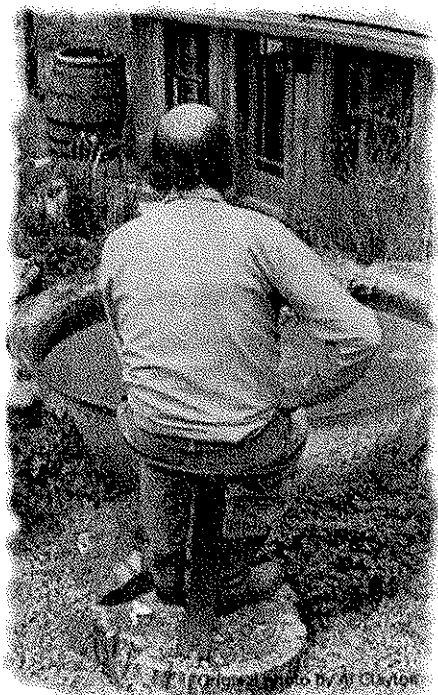
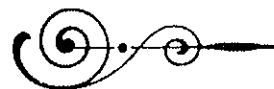
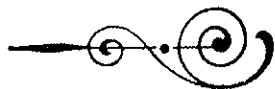
Reported by Diane DeCesare Ross, Digitization Librarian, McCain Library & Archives, University of Southern Mississippi

Nestled in the idyllic community of Mount Carroll, Illinois, the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies has been providing continuing education opportunities for cultural heritage professionals for nearly a quarter of a century. Classes are small and intense, taught by well-qualified people working in the field, and structured to include lectures, discussions, and hands-on experiences.

For example, a 3-day introductory course in August 2001 on the care of photographic collections was taught by Gary Albright, a photographic conservator for the Eastman House in Rochester, New York. The twelve students were from libraries and museums all over the country. Lectures were interesting and informative, focusing on the properties of various photographic materials, the effects of environmental conditions on them, and proper care for their preservation. Discussions grew out of personal experiences with collection issues, and often spilled over into shared breakfasts and lunches in the cafeteria. Time in the laboratory included microscopic examinations of different types of photographs to identify the photographic processes used.

If the current course catalog is any indication, other classes should be just as intellectually stimulating. Core curricula for several types of collections are offered: historical, natural sciences, and archaeological and ethnographic. More specific introductory and advanced topics include historic structures, ceramics and glass, masonry, furniture, books, works of art on paper, textiles, plastics, plaster, and wooden artifacts. There are also workshops in photographic documentation and digital imaging, packing and shipping, grant writing, emergency preparedness, exhibit design, book repair, and matting. The list of 2002 instructors consists of an impressive group of conservators and other professionals from the United States and Canada.

Course fees vary, but most range between \$500 and \$700 and include a private room in a dorm, as well as breakfast and lunch each day. Scholarships are available for some classes. For more information, see the Campbell Center website at <http://www.campbellcenter.org>.



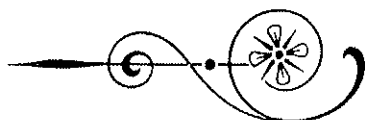
WILL D. CAMPBELL a man of the word

preacher writer speaker

The University of Southern Mississippi
Libraries' Special Collections presents
a virtual exhibit based on the Will D.
Campbell collection held at the McCain
Library & Archives.

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