News from the Midwest

Midwest Archives Conference

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ILLINOIS

Urbana Free Library

The Chanute Air Force Base, located in Rantoul, opened in 1917 to train pilots for WWI. For the next 76 years, the base stood as a premier technical training school for the US Army Air Corps and, later, the US Air Force. At the time of its closure in 1993, Chanute had trained more than two million men and women. Among those trained at Chanute in the 1940s was the 99th Pursuit Squadron, the first unit of the Tuskegee Airmen. The Chanute Air Museum opened in 1994 to preserve and interpret the history of the base and Illinois aviation history. The museum closed in the late fall of 2015, and staff moved quickly to identify appropriate heritage institutions to acquire the museum’s most valuable artifact holdings, including flight simulators and airplanes. The museum selected the Champaign County Historical Archives at the Urbana Free Library as the new home of its archival holdings, an estimated 700 cubic feet of materials, including blueprints and maps, base publications, oral histories, oversize and aerial photographs of the base, subject files, photographs, scrapbooks, over 200 videotapes, and archival donations from personnel connected to Chanute. The public will be informed when materials become available, and the Urbana Free Library website will soon feature highlights from the collection and updates. Please visit urbanafreelibrary.org.

INDIANA

Purdue Northwest University

With the Purdue Calumet and Purdue North Central campuses unifying to become Purdue Northwest University, the archives are needed more than ever. The archives will be separated into the Calumet Archives, the North Central Archives, and the new Purdue Northwest Archives. The current initiative is to preserve the history of both institutions, while still being committed to the day-to-day operation of the University Archives and Special Collections. The archives are currently looking for independent study students and graduate assistants to help. Look for them soon online at pnw.edu/library to follow their progress as they move forward.

Riley Hospital Historic Preservation Committee

The Riley Hospital Historic Preservation Committee (RHPC) observes the 100-year anniversary of the passing of James Whitcomb Riley on July 23, 2016. This celebration is the beginning of an effort to fund the James Whitcomb Riley Hospital for Children (today it’s the Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health) to honor the famed Hoosier poet’s memory. The RHPC will present an in-hospital historical display beginning July 22, 2016, to commemorate this historic milestone and promote the publication of two books on the early leaders of the Riley Memorial Association (today it’s the Riley Children’s Foundation), which led the building of the hospital.

IOWA

Iowa State University

Special Collections and University Archives has been hard at work making its collections available to the public this past year. A few highlights include the Center for Rural Affairs Records, Clair George Maple Papers, and the Maurice D. Helser Papers. The Center for Rural Affairs Records document the nonprofit organization’s work to improve the lives of rural Americans. Clair Maple served as the director of Iowa State’s Computation Center (1963–1985). In addition to documenting Maple’s work at Iowa State, his papers also include records related to what were called “IBM computer dances.” For these dances, the Iowa State Computation Center processed punch cards created from student questionnaires matching students up for the dances. The Digital Initiatives unit has digitized all volumes of The Bomb, the ISU yearbook, and they are available online at cdm16001.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/collection/p15031coll5.

Cover of the 1895 edition of The Bomb, the yearbook of Iowa State University.
KANSAS

Claretian Archive Workshops
Claretian Archive Workshops announces the seventh “Introductory Archive Workshop for Religious Communities” at the Marillac Center, Leavenworth, Kansas, July 24–29, 2016. The five-day intensive program is for religious archivists interested in learning theory and practice methods or who wish to update their training. Directed by professional religious archivists, the program includes lectures, tours, and discussion. Sessions focus on the unique records of religious communities and demonstrate best practices for managing those records. For more information, visit the workshop website at archiveworkshops.wordpress.com. Contact Workshops Coordinator Patricia Carroll (312-544-8174, carrollp@claretians.org) for registration information or other questions.

KENTUCKY

Filson Historical Society
The Filson Historical Society is pleased to announce online access to its architectural finding aids. Now with a dedicated landing page, users can quickly scan available collections, click the hyperlinked title, and gain access to the online finding aid. See filsonhistorical.org/special-collections/architectural-collections. Drawings of late-nineteenth-century railroad stations and outbuildings, mid-twentieth residential floor plans, and landscape designs are more accessible than ever before. Soon the Filson’s architectural collections will also be listed on the American Institute of Architects Historical Directory of American Architect’s wiki at public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki and its architectural archives page at public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/WikiPages/ArchitecturalArchives.aspx. For more information on the Filson’s architectural collections, contact Johna Picco at jpicco@filsonhistorical.org.

University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center
The University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center (UK SCRC) successfully completed an NEH Humanities Collections and Reference Resources digitization grant, resulting in online access to 132 cubic feet from the Bert T. Combs Appalachian Collection. The materials document the search for, extraction of, and distribution of coal, oil, and natural gas resources; the creation of railroads to transport raw materials to industrial manufacturers and electrical power generators across the United States; and the company towns, their services, and the individual lives that sustained this economic development. Additional details on the project and other Appalachian-related collections at UK SCRC can be found at exhibits.uky.edu/appalachian-resources.

Northern Kentucky University
Special Collections at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) has been a treasure trove for several researchers who produced exhibits that have just opened. NKU public history graduate student Katie Bramell researched the case of John Montjoy, an African American accused of the rape of a white woman in Covington, Kentucky, in 1935. The exhibit she created of this local, real-life version of To Kill a Mockingbird opened in Special Collections. NKU professor Robert Wallace cocurated Chasing the Whale, and Other Endless Pursuits, an exhibit at the Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center of art illustrating Melville’s Moby-Dick that includes 25 pieces from Special Collections.

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Western Kentucky University
An online exhibit featuring the history of the Gemini Jazz Bands is now available for viewing. It is made up of over 300 photographs, documents, and objects donated by members of the Gemini bands along with items housed in the Kentucky Museum and Western Kentucky University (WKU) Archives. The Gemini Jazz Bands were created by David “Doc” Livingston while he taught at WKU. The first iteration of the band appeared in 1966 as an all-girl band. After a few dropouts, the band added a male drummer and bass player and was known as Gemini 14. Adding a member, the band became Gemini 15 from 1968 to 1973. Budget cuts reduced the band size and the number became the year; Gemini ‘75, Gemini ‘77, and Gemini ‘79. To keep costs to a minimum, Doc Livingston contracted with the USO to tour military bases during school breaks. The bands toured the Caribbean, Europe, and the Pacific Command during their 13 years. Please visit digitalcommons.wku.edu/gjb.

MICHIGAN

Central Michigan University
The Clarke Historical Library has recently accessioned four scrapbooks created by Ernest Hemingway’s mother, Grace Hall Hemingway, for his sister Marcelline. The scrapbooks document the family and their vacation home near Petoskey. Central Michigan University’s University Communications transferred 200 cubic feet of photographic materials, videos, negatives, indices, and a beta reformatting station to the Clarke. The Morley Bros. Papers have been processed in sections by students since 2010 and are finally completed and cataloged. Morley Bros. was the second-largest hardware mail order store in the United States, second only to Sears. Based in Saginaw, the firm began in 1867 selling saddlery and tools, and later sporting goods, bicycles, and appliances. The collection spans 1833 through 2009 and includes both business records and personal papers. The Clarke’s current exhibit, Native Treaties—Shared Rights, runs until September 2016. See cmich.edu/library/clarke.

Wayne State University
Miniature reproductions from the Walter P. Reuther Library’s collections are featured among the accessories of Melody, a new American Girl doll, whose story tells that of a nine-year-old African American girl growing up in civil-rights-era Detroit. The doll’s project team discovered the items—a poster and bumper sticker from Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1963 Walk to Freedom in Detroit—in a Reuther blog post about the historic event and decided to incorporate them into the fictional Melody’s story. Read the blog post at reuther.wayne.edu/node/7858. This spring, the Reuther displayed an installation of Edward Stanton (1914–2006) photographs, a rich body of work that is a mixture of both portraiture and street photography. The images feature portraits of local children, both posed and at play, offering a rare glimpse into what it was like growing up in two of Detroit’s earliest black neighborhoods, Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, before they were lost to urban renewal projects in the 1960s. The Reuther is seeking community help to identify as many of these children as possible. Clues may be found in local family photo albums—Stanton provided prints of the images to the children’s families as a measure of gratitude. Please see reuther.wayne.edu/node/13225.

MINNESOTA

Northwestern Health Sciences University
Northwestern Health Sciences University’s (NWHSU) Greenawalt Library (nwhealth.edu/library), including Archives and Special Collections, recently has begun documenting and sharing its exhibitions online at nwhsulib.tumblr.com. NWHSU has academic programs in chiropractic, acupuncture, and Oriental medicine; massage therapy; clinical nutrition; postbaccalaureate prehealth; and undergraduate health sciences. Archives exhibition topics have included iridology, chiropractic founders D. D. and B. J. Palmer, and Minnesota chiropractic college catalogs, among others. Exhibitions change each trimester. The next exhibition, celebrating NWHSU’s jubilee year, will run May through August 2016. NWHSU archives can also be found on Instagram (@nwhsulib).

MISSOURI

Missouri Historical Society
The Missouri Historical Society is pleased to be the recipient of an Access to Historical Records grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The grant will fund Picturing 1930s St. Louis, a two-year project to process 61 linear feet of negatives and photographs created by the Sievers commercial photography studio. Work will begin in September 2016 with a full-time project archivist and two interns. The project will produce an EAD finding aid, an index of approximately 4,800 photography assignments, and 3,000 cataloged and digitized images. All will be posted on the historical society’s website at collections.mohistory.org/search.
enhance detailed item and collection descriptions. For additional information about the digital archives, please call 605-274-4007 or e-mail feedbackNP3@augie.edu.

South Dakota State Historical Society-Archives

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation has received a $5,000 grant from the BNSF Railway Foundation to digitize photographs from the State Historical Society-Archives at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. In the process, a photo is converted to a digital image, cataloged, and placed into an archives available to the public on the Internet. The online photographs can be found on the State Archives’ website at sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm. The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is the nonprofit fund-raising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society. The BNSF Railway Foundation has been the BNSF Railway’s main vehicle for charitable giving since 1996, when the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe railroads merged to form the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, now known as the BNSF Railway. The BNSF Railway operates in South Dakota and 27 other states, as well as three Canadian provinces.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Augustana University

Proudly introducing Northern Plains Peoples and Places at np3.augie.edu, Augustana’s Center for Western Studies and Mikkelsen Library have created this unique digital archives of personal papers, photographs, and scholarly research. The continually growing resource presents primary source materials related to the Northern Plains and its inhabitants. Content ranges from local Sioux Falls and Augustana history to regional literary, religious, social, and political history. In-depth keyword search capabilities

OHIO

Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board

The Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board’s (OHRAB) History Day Award was developed to encourage projects that demonstrate exceptional use of Ohio primary sources. OHRAB selected two winners for 2016. Jane Nilson infused her paper, “A Violent Encounter: Cleveland’s Hough Riots,” with primary sources such as interviews, transcripts, articles, grand jury reports, and speeches to place the reader in the midst of the Hough Riots, while providing context about what was happening with the civil rights movement around the country. Elizabeth Coulter’s website, Ohio Penitentiary Fire, wove a tale of tragedy and how it led to modern reforms in Ohio’s prison system. She used primary source materials such as photographs, newspaper articles, and public records from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. Additionally, OHRAB awarded Ohio Archives Grants for 2016 to eight repositories in Ohio, distributing more than $13,000 for preservation and digitization projects. Award winners include historical societies, public libraries, museums, and a county government. The projects will cover a variety of activities, including preservation of pioneer records, newspaper digitization, improving access to government records and mayoral papers, and the preservation of the music catalog of a famous jazz-age performer. OHRAB is the central body for historical records planning in the state and is funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.
Wisconsin Veterans Museum

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) is excited to announce the implementation of the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS), a tool designed to enhance access to recorded oral histories developed by the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History (University of Kentucky). OHMS allows users to hear or watch the interviews while searching through a completed transcript and/or an interview index. The first batch of interviews to be included on WVM’s website feature veteran artists from WAR:RAW—Healing Military Trauma through Expressive Art, a temporary exhibit that was on display at the museum through the beginning of May. Please visit wisvetsmuseum.com/collections/oral_history/featured_interviews.