

Annual Report to the Advisory Board
Albert Gore Research Center
Dr. Lisa Pruitt, Director
FY 1999—2000

Introduction

The Albert Gore Research Center has an annual operating budget of \$4850, of which 50% is designated for telephone lines and the photocopier contract. We also have approximately \$1000 for student workers and \$1485 for travel. In the past, we have received additional funds from the budget revision process and TAF. Additional funds are always necessary because the operating budget is inadequate for the purchase of costly archival supplies and materials for exhibits. Our staff resources consist of Dr. Pruitt (director), full-time; Betty Rowland (secretary), full-time; two graduate assistants for the Gore Center and two graduate assistants for the County Archives; a varying number of undergraduate work-study students; and other student personnel as needed, within the \$1000 budget limit. In addition, the County Archives has one part-time (10 hrs. /wk.) employee. Developing the Gore Center's programs to their full potential will require additional full-time professional staff, including a public program/oral history coordinator and a university archivist. The County Archives also needs a full-time archivist and records manager. The Gore Center facilities consist of approximately 1200 square feet. The Center desperately needs significantly more space, including stack areas, reading room, staff work areas and offices, and classroom space.

Collections

Acquisitions

Newly acquired collections include:

- Band of Blue documents (30 lin.ft.)—Horace Beasley, donor
- Folk Festival records (20 lin.ft.)—Steve Cates, donor
- Political memorabilia (3 lin.ft.)—Robert Pickard, donor
- Civilian Conservation Corps (TN) materials (3 lin.ft.)—Cecil Flowers, donor (1 lin.ft.)—Patsy Weiler, donor
- Tennessee College for Women memorabilia (.5 lin.ft.)—Florence McFerrin, donor
- Tennessee College for Women Alumnae Association Records (.5 lin.ft.)—Florence McFerrin, donor

In addition, we received numerous small accretions to existing collections, primarily MTSU memorabilia, photographs, and yearbooks.

We have received firm commitments from two other donors. The Charity Circle of Murfreesboro will be designating the Gore Center as the official repository for their records. Richard Kiger, of Delaware, is donating a scrapbook documenting the Smyrna Air Base during World War II.

We are negotiating for the records of the Woman's Club of Murfreesboro and the Business and Professional Women's Club of Murfreesboro, as well as Shacklett Photography's historical photograph collection.

Processing

"Processing" consists of organizing a collection in a logical manner, rehousing the contents of the collection using archivally sound materials, and creating a descriptive guide to the collection. The following collections have been processed to some degree during this fiscal year.

- Photograph Collection. (8000 items) Each was scanned and information about each item was entered into a searchable database linked to the images. The individual items were then rehoused in archival enclosures and clearly labeled boxes.
- Jim Cooper Papers. (400 lin.ft.) Initial survey and preliminary organization scheme completed.
- Margaret Lindsley Warden Equestrian Collection. (30 lin.ft. of archival materials, 2500 monographs and serial publications) Archival materials organized, inventoried, and rehoused in archival folders and boxes. Publications database corrected and updated.
- James King Papers. (1 lin.ft.) Organized, refoldered, item-level database created. Ongoing effort to encapsulate the individual documents (which date from the early 1800s) in mylar film so that they will withstand frequent handling.
- John Bragg Papers. (60 lin.ft.). Organized, database of file headings created.
- Buford Ellington Papers. (28 lin.ft.) Organized; rehousing and guide in progress.
- Albert Gore Papers. Approximately 3000 files were rehoused using archival folders.

On a related preservation matter, Graduate Assistant Siony Flowers completed a Disaster Preparedness Manual for the Gore Center.

Technology

Website

- Redesigned website
- Installed two new online exhibits
- Posted four collection guides on the website

- Initiated a web-based newsletter

General technology issues

- Upgraded server software
- Installed tape backup system for server
- Installed uninterruptible power supply for server
- Developed a uniform set of software on each computer
- Reconfigured use of electrical circuits to protect electronic equipment

Outreach and Public Programs

Sergeant York VA Medical Center. Dr. Pruitt serves on the Archives Committee and is working with them to develop student internships and an oral history program and is helping them to identify sources for grant funding.

Middle Tennessee Oral History Project.

Reflections in Time. Founders' Day exhibit, sponsored by the Development Office. Susan Gear, guest curator.

Changing Faces: Civil Rights at MTSU, 1965-2000. Exhibit in conjunction with the Phi Alpha Theta (history honor society) regional conference held at MTSU in February. Also posted as an online exhibit on the Gore Center website. Co-sponsored by the History Department, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Office of Disabled Student Services, and Women's History Month. Erin Toomey and Siony Flowers, curators.

Jefferson Springs Display. A small photographic exhibit depicting Jefferson Springs and explaining Dr. Ron Kates's Honors Seminar this fall was on exhibit at the Smyrna Public Library during the months of May and June.

Woman's Club of Murfreesboro. Dr. Pruitt spoke at the Woman's Club's February 21st meeting.

Education

Eight history professors and one social work professor assigned student projects using the Gore Center.

Five students fulfilled practical requirements for their classes by doing processing projects in the Gore Center.

Dr. Pruitt's activities included the following:

- Addressed approximately fifteen classes on the subject of the Gore Center and/or the archival profession.
- Wrote the proposal for an archives track within the public history program, along with a course proposal for a new archives management seminar. The History Department approved the creation of the track and the seminar.
- Taught two classes: History 201 in Fall 1999 and History 430 in Spring 2000.

Gore Biography Project

The process of identifying a biographer has been completed. Dr. Pruitt's recommendations are being submitted for Vice President Gore's review as a courtesy.

When his response is received, an offer will be extended and a contract drawn up.

County Archives

The Director of the Gore Center also oversees the Rutherford County Archives. In this fiscal year, the two graduate assistants who run the Archives on a day-to-day basis served approximately 350 patrons, excluding tour groups and classes from MTSU and local high schools. The graduate assistants have also continued the process of preserving and indexing loose records from the Chancery Court. Earl Pleasant, a part-time assistant, has nearly completed processing the records of former County Executives.

Professional Development and Service Activities

Betty Rowland attended two two-part web workshops and received private instruction on website development from Digital Media Services. She also attended a two-hour workshop on the new telephone system.

Dr. Pruitt's activities included the following:

Fall 1999

MTSU Administrative Retreat

MTSU Women's Institute

Tennessee State Archivists' Conference

MTSU website development workshop

Spring 2000

American Historical Association annual meeting

Southern Archives Conference (including a two-day workshop on copyright and fair use)

American Society for Church History (delivered a paper)

Advance Placement History Exam—scored essays

Goals: FY 2000-2001

Collections

- Acquire Woman's Club and Business & Professional Women's Club records
- Continue negotiations with Shacklett Photography
- Develop a processing manual to aid in training student workers
- Complete the refolding of the Gore Papers
- Make significant progress in organizing the Cooper Papers
- Rehouse the Bragg Collection (partially)
- Process Band of Blue Records
- Begin planning process for developing the University Archives when space becomes available

Technology

- Purchase InMagic DB/Textworks software (TAF funds already allocated); install and begin learning the application (allows searchable databases of information on the website)

Outreach and Public Programs

- Staff booth at Uncle Dave Macon Days to publicize the Gore Center and the Middle Tennessee Oral History Project
- Implement the Middle Tennessee Oral History Project; seek grant funding to help with travel and transcription
- Install exhibit on political campaigning for fall semester
- Work with Development Office on Founders' Day Exhibit

Education

- Develop a Power Point presentation on the Gore Center for use in class presentations
- Develop a video conferencing program on using historical manuscripts in the high school classroom (received a faculty mini-grant)

Gore Biography Project

- Extend offer and set up contract, with target start date of June 2001

County Archives

- Develop website
- Continue the Chancery Court loose records project
- Bring some order to the physical arrangement of the Archives' holdings