

Annual Report to the Advisory Board
Albert Gore Research Center
Dr. Lisa Pruitt, Director
FY 2002—2003

Collections:

Acquisitions

Due to space limitations, the Gore Center has not actively solicited new collections. Nevertheless, a few things have come our way unsolicited.

Vickie Riggan Collection -- Ms. Riggan is a Nashville educator and researcher who had previously donated her extensive collection of books and videos on women in World War II to the June Anderson Women's Center. The material that she donated to the Gore Center comprises a major collection of memorabilia of women in World War II, including recruiting and movie posters, magazine covers and product advertisements, letters, photographs, scrapbooks, and sheet music. The collection is a valuable research resource on the war and complements the Center's growing oral history collection. An undergraduate history major in History 3010: The Historian's Craft is already using the collection for her research paper on military recruitment of women in World War II. (Nine linear feet).

Vocational Technical Education Files – Nine linear feet of files transferred to the Gore Center upon dissolution of the program by the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Elinor Folk Collection – Copies of 148 letters written to her mother by Elinor Folk while she was serving as a WAVE and a Link trainer in Pensacola, Florida, during World War II. Also includes digital copies of numerous photographs. Betty Rowland also conducted an oral history interview with Ms. Folk.

American Association for University Women – Regular annual accretions to their files.

Homer Pittard Campus School. Approximately twelve linear feet of photographs and scrapbooks documenting the Campus School's 75 years in its current location.

Processing

Albert Gore, Sr., Papers -- Student worker Casie Johnson finished a two-year-old project to replace the non-archival file folders in the Gore Senate Collection with acid-free folders. A total of approximately 15,000 folders were replaced over the term of the project. Casie is almost finished updating and correcting the collection database, which was originally created in the 1980s. Graduate Assistant Kevin Cason refoldered the Gore House Collection and updated the collection guide.

Homer and Mabel Pittard Collection -- The Pittard Collection of local history and Civil War research materials had been previously inventoried, but was very difficult to use. Graduate

Assistant Heather Bailey completed a year-long project to reorganize the collection, prepare a new guide, and carry out basic document repair and preservation procedures on some of the older material.

Vickie Riggan Collection -- Graduate Assistant Kevin Cason organized and created a guide to this valuable research collection of World War II memorabilia.

William Beasley Collection -- Graduate Assistant Kevin Cason organized and created a guide to this former English professor's papers.

Inmagic DBTextworks Database -- Academic Service Scholarship student David Mabry installed and customized all of the software necessary to create a searchable database of all Gore Center collections to run on our website. The first phase of the project involves downloading bibliographic records for the Warden equestrian book collection from the Library of Congress. Mabry trained other student workers to do this work and a few hundred records are now available for searching from the Gore Center website.

World War II Subject Guide – Graduate Assistant Kevin Cason created an online subject guide to Gore Center holdings related to World War II.

Reference Service

Since Dr. Andrew Gulliford's departure from MTSU and Dr. Emily Messier's retirement, use of the Gore Center by U.S. history survey students has declined. Dr. Jerry Brookshire continues to assign Gore Center projects to his summer school classes. In order to educate relatively new faculty members in the History Department regarding learning opportunities in the Center for their students, we developed course packets for U.S. history surveys, African-American history surveys, and upper level classes in women's history and Tennessee history. Each packet lists relevant collections and includes suggested course assignments. The packets were distributed in time for Fall 2003. In the future, we expect to offer custom digitization of primary source documents from the Gore Center for use on WebCT course websites.

Three hundred and four researchers used the Gore Center this year, not including several visits by Dr. Tony Badger for research on the Gore Biography Project and full-time research on that project by Michael Martin. Those researchers included four groups of AP English students (about 24 total) from La Vergne High School who came to the Gore Center for workshops on historical document analysis. The Gore Center designed the workshops and prepared all materials; students from Dr. Ron Kates's honors writing class conducted the workshops as a service-learning project. On June 20th and 27th, public school teachers participating in the Teaching American History Project primary source analysis workshops at the Gore Center.

Outreach and Public Programs:

Exhibits

In July and August of 2002, graduate student assistant Nancy Morgan researched, designed, and mounted an exhibit for the 25th Anniversary of the June Anderson Women's Center in September. The Gore Center once again mounted the "Reflections in Time" exhibit for Founders

Day (September) and Homecoming (November). On Saturday, October 12, Graduate Assistant Heather Bailey and I took an exhibit using materials from the Warden Equestrian Collection to the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Middle Tennessee Pony Trials in Franklin. Miss Warden, as founder of both the trials and the Middle Tennessee Pony Club, was the honored guest. On October 19, graduate assistants Heather Bailey and Van Zbinden staffed an exhibit booth for Family Heritage Day at Tennessee State University. The exhibit depicted the work of the Gore Center and the Rutherford County Archives. The Tennessee State Library and Archives sponsored Family Heritage Day in honor of Tennessee Archives Week. In connection with Veterans Day, the Center mounted an exhibit on the Middle Tennessee history of World Wars I and II using materials acquired through the Veterans History Project, together with other collections.

Public Speaking

On Saturday, September 14, I was the featured speaker at the Nashville WAVES veterans monthly meeting. She discussed the Veterans History Project and recruited participants. I also spoke about the Veterans History Project at the Veterans Day celebration on Murfreesboro's Public Square. On March 19, at the request of Katrina Clinton in HRS, I gave a PowerPoint presentation on the university's history as part of a staff orientation program.

Student Projects

During the Fall semester, graduate students from Dr. Ellen Garrison's Archives Seminar undertook a class project in behalf of the Gore Center. The project was a documentation study to identify and assess the existing records regarding the use and removal of Confederate symbols at MTSU. The final project report will be extremely valuable for developing the University Archives – in part, because one of their main discoveries is that few, if any, records from the upper administration of the University (including the President's Office and the Provost's Office) have been retained as state law and TBR policy require.

Other Outreach Activities

In May, I requested a meeting with Tom Tozer, MTSU's Director of Media Relations, in order to come up with ideas for improving the Gore Center's profile on campus and in the community. The meeting took place on May 19 and resulted in some excellent PR ideas. One result of the meeting was a feature article on the Gore Center that ran in *The Record* on July 21. The Center also received good publicity for the bicentennial community oral history project, resulting in more than 20 interviews to date. As a result of Mr. Tozer's suggestions, I agreed to write a regular "Murfreesboro Memories" column for the *Murfreesboro Magazine* (commencing with the November/December 2003 issue) and to make regular contributions to the newsletter of the Rutherford County Historical Society.

Middle Tennessee Oral History Project

The Gore Center continues to serve as a partner in the Library of Congress American Folklife Center Veterans History Project. Since July 1, 2002, 31 interviews with WWII veterans have been added to the collection. Betty Rowland conducted most of these, although three undergraduates and one volunteer (himself a veteran) conducted several. Twenty-five have been transcribed. In addition, Betty Rowland had the rare opportunity to interview a 106-year-old veteran of WWI.

Undergraduate student workers transcribe the interviews under the supervision of Betty Rowland. Through December, a senior journalism major reviewed and edited the transcripts. Beginning in January, another upper-level student took over that responsibility, again under the direction of Ms. Rowland. This student, with the assistance of David Mabry, will create a Microsoft Access database of the oral history project, including biographical information, topics, excerpts, and photographs.

The Middle Tennessee Oral History Collection now contains 193 interviews. This is in addition to the previously existing 138 interviews from the Q.M. Smith project, as well as several dozen Vietnam veteran interviews conducted by students in Dr. Moser's and Dr. Staples's upper level history classes.

Technology

The Gore Center purchased a new server, a new high-speed scanner, a digital camera, and a cd burner, all of which have received heavy use. During the Fall semester, graduate students Heather Bailey and Kevin Cason completed a digitization project of manuscript materials from the James Moore King Collection that will appear in the University of Tennessee's online digital museum of Tennessee history, 1796-1850.

Rutherford County Archives

Exciting things are happening at the Rutherford County Archives. Graduate Assistants Van Zbinden and Jennifer Allen continue the work of assisting researchers and processing permanently valuable county records. (Taffey Hall left in May to become Archivist for the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archive in Nashville.) They are currently working on the loose records of the Chancery Court, which now extend from 1870 to 1985.

On December 12, 2002, the Rutherford County Commission made the momentous decision to designate the old Health Department building as the new home for the Rutherford County Archives. The Archives has long since outgrown its space on the third floor of the Courthouse. When the new Health Department building opened, the old building became available. For a while, it looked as though the National Register building might be torn down to make way for a parking lot. A consultant's space study commissioned by the County, however, recommended rehabilitating the building as a new Archives facility. Graduate assistants John Lodl and Van Zbinden and I were able to give the consultant considerable input and County Executive Nancy Allen continued her strong support for the Archives. When Dr. E.C. Tolbert and Ernie Johns, leaders of the Rutherford County Historical Society, learned of the consultant's recommendation, they immediately began to apply pressure to the County Commission to follow the consultant's recommendation. They organized a meeting of the County Commissioners on November 21. I addressed the Commissioners regarding the work of the County Archives; Dr. Carroll Van West addressed the historical significance of the old Health Department building; and Dr. Wayne Moore, Assistant Archivist of the State of Tennessee, spoke on the suitability of the building for an Archives. Thanks to Dr. Tolbert's and Mr. Johns's efforts and connections, the meeting was a great success and provided the final push needed for the Commission to act as it did.

Immediately thereafter, County Commissioner Faye Elam requested that I establish and chair a committee to oversee the implementation of the move. The committee consists of Dr. West, Dr. Ellen Garrison, Nancy Allen, John Bratcher, Dr. Tolbert, Ernie Johns, Susan Daniel, Dr. George Smith, Van Zbinden, and me. A number of resource people will be involved, including Dr. Moore, John Lodl, and county employees from the property management, maintenance, and

technology divisions. The committee held its first meeting on February 4 and arranged for professional evaluations of the major building systems, preliminary to developing renovation plans and estimates to take back to the Commission. The Commission subsequently appropriated approximately \$6000 for an architect to develop a master plan for the site. HFR Design Associates was chosen for the job. With input from Van West, I developed a \$1.4 million grant proposal for Nancy Allen to submit to the Christy-Houston Foundation. Unfortunately, they declined to appropriate any funds for the project. Currently, we are in the process of developing a phased plan to submit to the Property Management Committee on August 28.

Gore Biography Project

Progress continues on the Gore Biography project. Dr. Anthony Badger spent approximately six weeks in residence over the course of the year, while Research Assistant Michael Martin completed his second year on the project. In March, Dr. Badger gave a public lecture on Gore at Vanderbilt and subsequently spoke at a private dinner hosted by Vanderbilt history professor Don Doyle and attended by notable figures connected with Gore. Attendees included John Seigenthaler, Jack Robinson, and Fleming Wilt (executor of the estate of Samuel Fleming, funding source for the project), among others. In April, Dr. Badger was featured speaker at an Organization of American Historians Roundtable focusing on Gore. The project is on track for completion in 2005.

[Note: Michael Martin successfully defended his dissertation at the University of Arkansas on August 5 and has accepted a tenure-track position with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.]

Teaching

In Fall 2002, I taught History 4620: American Medical History. In Spring 2003, I taught History 3010: The Historian's Craft. I am currently supervising a Masters Thesis and serving on a dissertation committee. I applied for and received full membership on the Graduate Faculty in January 2003.

Research

In October 2002, I was awarded a book contract by Mercer University Press for a book manuscript based on my dissertation, entitled "A Looking-Glass for Ladies': American Protestant Women and the Orient in the Nineteenth Century." It is slated for publication in the Winter of 2004. At the November 2002 meeting of the Southern Historical Association, I presented a paper entitled "The Development of State-funded Services for Children with Disabilities in Tennessee, 1920-1970." Dr. Steven Noll of the University of Florida was present at my talk and subsequently invited me to expand the paper for inclusion in a collection of essays on Southern disability policy that he is editing for the University of Georgia Press. I expanded the paper and submitted the manuscript in May. On February 22, I presented a paper on public health in North Carolina in the 1940s at the annual meeting of the Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science at Duke University.