

*Middle Tennessee
State University*

Albert Gore Research Center
Learning Resource Center
Room 111
P.O. Box 193
Murfreesboro, TN 37132



Fall 1999

From the Director



It's with great anticipation for the future that I begin my tenure as Director of the Albert Gore Research Center. Dr. Jim Neal, the Center's founding director, has laid a solid foundation upon which to expand and build programs and services in the future.

My first priority is to address the challenge of space. Anyone who has visited us knows that we are bursting at the seams! We will be unable to expand our collections and our services to students, scholars, and the community without room to grow, so we are tackling this issue head-on.

My second priority involves intellectual control--knowing what we have in our collections and making that information

accessible through guides, catalogs, and databases. An important issue related to intellectual control is physical control. This means "having a place for everything and everything in its place," but also entails physical preservation of materials by transferring items into archival boxes and folders.

Finally, I want to find new means of outreach and education--to find new ways that the Gore Center can serve MTSU students, faculty, and administrators as well as citizens in the local community.

Look for updates on our progress in all of these areas in the next issue of *Document*, which will appear in October!

Dr. Lisa Pruitt

Farewell to Jim Neal



Dr. Jim Neal, founding director of the Albert Gore Research Center, retired as of July 1, 1999, after many years of faithful service. Dr. Neal's greatest legacies to

the Gore Center are the outstanding relationships he has build with its principal donors and an abundance of state-of-the-art technology. He has laid a strong foundation from which the Center will benefit for many years to come.

Dr. Neal will not disappear, however. He will continue working for the university in a post-retirement contract, teaching in the History Department and working ten hours per week at the County Archives located in the Rutherford County Courthouse.

Roscoe Strickland Collection Available

Graduate Assistant, Siony Flowers, recently processed the Roscoe Strickland Collection. Roscoe Lee Strickland, Jr. was a former History professor at MTSU from 1949 until 1972. Strickland's, wife, Lucy, donated the materials to the Gore Research Center following his death in 1997. The Strickland collection documents his life as a professor, a family man, and a dedicated citizen. The collection includes:

- Teaching materials
- Text books
- Doctoral dissertation
- Directed graduate theses
- Personal photographs



Roscoe Strickland
1917-1997

Finally, this collection thoroughly documents *Strickland vs. Burns*. This lawsuit filed by the Stricklands in the 1960s was a landmark case. Before this suit, individual school board members had control over one school. This meant unfair distribution of money and materials among schools. *Strickland vs. Burns* changed the voting power of the school board. The entire school board had to serve the entire school district instead of an individual school. This lawsuit prompted other schools to take similar action.

Do You Remember Jefferson or Jefferson Springs?

Ron Kates, MTSU English instructor, is collecting documents, photographs, and oral histories on Jefferson and Jefferson Springs, Tennessee to be used in an Honors English course. Contact the Center if you can help with this project.



Q.M. Smith/MTSU Oral History Project

Participants in the Quintin Miller Smith/MTSU Oral History Project were honored recently with a reception at the MTSU Foundation House on Thompson Lane in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It was a day to see old friends, share memories, and make new acquaintances. Nancy Smith Moss presented a token of appreciation to four very special people: Regina Forsythe conducted the interviews and Mary Grace Rounion, Ruth Watson, and Rhonda Wimberly volunteered to type the transcripts from the recorded interviews.

In 1995 one hundred and thirty-eight interviews were conducted with students, staff, friends, and classmates associated with Quintin Miller Smith during his association with Middle Tennessee State University both as a student (1911 - 1913) and as president (1938-1958). The participants shared their stories and recollections to paint a picture capturing this time period for future generations. Pictures of the participants and excerpts from their interviews are now available on the Gore Center Home Page.



Q.M. Smith 1891-1976

Take time to visit the site and have stories that you can also contribute to this collection. Contact the Gore Center to share your memories such as the one below:

read through the transcripts. You may

"He [Q. M. Smith] had the foresight to acquire properties that were adjacent to this campus. We are reaping those benefits even today because he had the foresight fifty years ago."
Charles Pigg

The Rutherford County Archives Update

The Rutherford County Archives is located on the third floor of the County Courthouse, and is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 3:30. Our phone number is (615) 867-4609. Two graduate students from Middle Tennessee

State University, who receive a tuition waiver and monthly stipend through the county, staff the Archives. The cooperation between the county and university allows the Archives to maintain regular hours, offer

assistance to the public, and it provides the graduate students with a valuable learning experience.

The County Archives maintains records from county departments including, Chancery Court, Circuit Court, County Court, General Sessions, County Executive, County Judge, and the County Trustee. The dates of these records span the years 1804-1994. Other materials include birth and death records, obituary notices, county histories, and a copy of materials published by the Rutherford County Historical Society. Although all county records are not retained by the Archives, the Archives remains a reference point for research inquires. The Archives is used by patrons with a wide variety of purposes including lawyers, genealogists, college students, high school students, home school students, tourists, and researchers.

Several projects have been underway this past year. The most comprehensive project involves processing loose Chancery Court records. In order to insure that these records

are preserved and accessible to the public, we are identifying individual cases and entering relevant information into a database. Patrons will find these records a valuable source of readily accessible information. Presently we have identified over 4,000 cases.

The Archives staff recently applied and received a \$3000.00 grant offered through the Tennessee State Library and Archives. The money will be used to purchase supplies to complete the Chancery Court processing project, supplies for the conservation of records, as well as other archival supplies and equipment.

In the future the Archives staff looks forward to developing a web site that will promote the facility and its resources, and develop a closer association with other depositories of county and historical resources in the area. Finally, the staff wants to implement a volunteer program to aid in the preservation and cleaning of county record.

Genealogy Help

Walter King Hoover, retired Smyrna mortician and civic leader, recently donated his collection of area obituaries and death notices to the Albert Gore Research Center. The items have been photocopied, arranged alphabetically, and placed in three-ring binders that are available at the Linebaugh Library and the Rutherford County Archives. A list of all items in each binder may be found in the pocket inside the front cover of the binder.

Not all published obituaries included birth and/or death dates or place of burial. Researchers are invited to write in appropriate data of which they have knowledge. They may write on the list or, if they have more extensive information, they may write notes on the back of the pages on which the list is printed. Your help in completing these records will be helpful to other genealogists for generations to come.

Albert Gore Research Center Staff

Secretary - Betty Rowland

Graduate Assistants - Siony Flowers
Erin Toomey

The Center is open Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Our staff is always available to answer your questions. Please call (615) 898-2632 to talk with a member of our team.