

*Middle Tennessee
State University*

Albert Gore Research Center
Learning Resource Center
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Spring 2004

From the Director



Spring 2004 brings with it the promise of new beginnings in the coming year for the Gore Center and its staff.

In May, two of our valued student assistants, Jeff Jones and David

Mabry, will be graduating from MTSU, both with degrees in computer information systems. Jeff and David have served the Gore Center as Academic Service Scholarship students for two years. In that time, they have helped the Center to make significant technological advances. Jeff has specialized in website maintenance and restructuring and has also played an important role troubleshooting software and hardware problems. David helped us to design, set up, and maintain a new server, along with three other computer workstations. He has played a crucial role in developing searchable databases for our website and has designed several databases for our internal use. We wish both of them the very best! They will be missed.

Also this Spring, all four of the Gore Center and Rutherford County Archives graduate assistants will be completing their commitments after 1.5 to 3 years of service. Van Zbinden is the senior member of this group, having led the County Archives for three years. Heather Bailey and Kevin Cason are both completing two years in the Gore Center. Jennifer Allen will have completed 1.5 years in the County Archives by the end of June. All four will be completing the Master of Arts degree in public history within the next six months to one year. None of the four will be strangers to campus in the coming months, though, and we hope to see all of them frequently. Look for news on this front in the early summer!

Another important "beginning" that looms on the horizon is the Gore Center's relocation to Todd. Renovation of Todd is well underway and Betty Rowland and I recently had an opportunity to tour the Gore Center's emerging new facility. We are both excited by the prospect of a new home. We are told that the move will probably occur over winter break next year, barring major weather delays in the construction process.

Finally, the effort to secure a new home for the Rutherford County Archives is pressing forward. A final decision about the location of the new facility should be forthcoming soon.

Stay tuned!

Dr. Lisa Pruitt

Louise Daniel Rutledge Comes Home



This month (March 2004), Mr. John Rutledge of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, donated to the Gore Center a small collection of materials of his ancestor Louisa Daniel Rutledge (ca. 1830-1925). Louisa Daniel Rutledge was the sister of Jack Daniel of “whiskey” fame. This collection dates from the 1890s to the 1920s and consists of Louisa’s memoir, handwritten in 1899, several letters, copies of her husband’s and brother’s wills, and some miscellaneous documents. Mr. John Rutledge kindly provided transcriptions of most of the documents, as well as copies of two family photographs.

While small, this collection has much historical significance. Louisa recorded her memories of growing up and raising a family in middle Tennessee during the nineteenth century. Her memoir and letters also offer poignant insight into the plight of an aging widowed woman in the early twentieth century.

We are happy to have welcomed “Lou” Rutledge home to middle Tennessee. This gem of a collection is a welcome addition to the Gore Center’s holdings

Military Women of WWII

Inspiring Hope and Possibility



On Monday, March 8, the Gore Center sponsored a National Women's History Month event featuring women veterans of World War II who participated in our Veterans Oral History Project. Co-sponsors included MTSU's NWHM Committee and the Department of History. Dr. Amy Staples, Associate Professor of History, served as moderator.

When the United States entered World War II in December of 1941, the immediate demands of mobilization quickly produced critical personal shortages in all branches of the military. As a result, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps turned to women to fill essential roles, greatly expanding women's participation in the military over anything previously seen and opening the door to military careers previously unimagined. But this transformation did not occur without resistance. When the House of Representatives debated the Women's Army Corps in the Spring of 1942, one Southern congressman asked, "Who will then do the cooking, the washing, the mending, the humble homey tasks to which every woman has devoted herself; who will nurture the children?" The women who sought to serve their country in a time of crisis had to overcome narrow views of their abilities and societal roles. Upon winning places in the armed forces, some of those women had to bear with negative stereotypes and smear campaigns in the press. The government countered with publicity campaigns featuring positive images of military women and slogans such as "Free a man to fight!"

Vickie Riggan, a Nashville teacher and historian of women in World War II, gave the keynote address, exploring many of those themes. Elinor Folk of Nashville, who was in the Navy WAVES as a Link (flight simulator) Trainer in Pensacola from 1942-1944, read from letters that she wrote to her mother in California describing her experiences. Following the two feature presentations, the other women veterans participated in a panel discussion and question-answer session with the audience.

Honored guest panelists included Polly Harms of Nashville, who served in the Marine Corps; Harriet Howard of Smyrna, Sarah Lowe of Rockvale, Mary Eileen Gore Rotenberry of Cookeville, and Amelia Slayden of Nashville, who served the Navy WAVES; Barbara Robinson of Tullahoma who flew with the Weather Wing of the WASPs (Women's Airforce Service Pilots); and two women who served in the Women's Army Corps, Margaret Salm and Florence Slavin, both of Nashville.

Veterans History Project Expanded



For the past two years the Gore Research Center has been partnered with the Library of Congress to collect oral history accounts from veterans. Now the project has been expanded

to include the stories of those men and women who worked on the home front to support the troops during World War II.

Many industries in Middle Tennessee produced defense-related materials. Vultee Aircraft Company produced the Vengeance

dive-bomber, and the Nashville Bridge Company turned out sub-chasers and barges. Many smaller plants such as shirt factories and shoe companies were able to modify their existing product line and produce goods for the war effort. The tremendous need for troops left many industrial jobs to be filled for the first time by women. During the World War II years the number of working- women in Nashville increased by almost 50 percent.

The Center is interested in recording stories from people who worked in any war-related industry. Stories are also sought from people who worked to organize local war rallies, or with the Red Cross to support the troops.

If you are interested in participating in the Veterans History Project or if you can suggest others who might be interested, please contact Lisa Pruitt or Betty Rowland at 615-898-2632.

Collection Update

As part of an on-going effort to benefit users, Graduate Assistants at the Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center organize collections and prepare finding aids. Over the past Fall semester and the early months of the Spring semester, Graduate Assistants Heather Bailey and Kevin Cason, have processed several collections.

Heather Bailey has processed and prepared finding aids for the [Hayes Collection](#), the [Pickard Collection](#), and the [Rattle & Snap Collection](#). Currently, Heather is conserving materials in the Licker-Haney-Maxwell Collection and developing an accessions database for the Center.

Kevin Cason processed and prepared finding aids for the [John A. McFarland Collection](#) and the [Aaron Weise Collection](#). He also continues to manage the photograph collections and database.

Two undergraduate student workers have also helped process collections and prepare finding aids. Evan Zimmerman completed work on the [Battle of Nashville Monument Collection](#) and the [Donnell/Rucker Collection](#) and is currently conserving documents in the [James Moore King Collection](#) under Heather Bailey's supervision.

Student workers at the Gore Center also are helping with conserving and processing collections. Currently, Evan is helping encapsulate items in the James Moore King Collection, while Meagan Dotson is re-housing the [John Bragg Collection](#) using archival folders and boxes.

Kevin Cason

Gore Center Road Show

This Spring, I took some Gore Center collections on the road to local high school classrooms. Dr. Vanzant of Blackman High and Mrs. Alsup of Oakland High accepted the invitation to let me teach a workshop to their Honors U.S. History students. There were three classes at each school and most of the students were in their Junior year.

The workshop, adapted from primary source workshop developed last summer for the Teaching American History Grant, used Gore Center materials pertaining to the era of history that the students were studying at that moment. At Blackman, the students were learning about WWII, while Oaklands' students were focusing on the Great Depression. Dividing the students into groups, I distributed folders containing a wide range of primary sources: documents, photos, posters, songbooks, phone books, postcards, etc. Students then used worksheets downloaded from the National Archive's Digital Classroom to analyze the items in their folders. Afterwards, each group presented what they had learned from their items and how they could use them in studying history. Some of the items focused on events happening nationally, but the students' most enjoyed working with documents from and about Rutherford County.

The Gore Center hopes to return to these classrooms and possibly take this workshop to Riverdale and Siegel High Schools. Our goal was to connect the Gore Center into the local community, make our resources more accessible to the public, and attempt to make history come alive for high school students through the use of primary source materials. The students enjoyed the workshop, and I had a great time and appreciated the opportunity.

Heather Bailey

Jefferson and Jefferson Springs

Pamphlet and Resource Guide

This semester Graduate Assistant, Kevin Cason is preparing a pamphlet on the history of Jefferson Springs, Tennessee. Old Jefferson was the first county seat for Rutherford County and Jefferson Springs was a community resort area for many middle Tennessee residents from the late 1800s to the early 1960s. In the 1960s, the U.S. Corps of Engineers constructed the J. Percy Priest Dam and Reservoir and flooded most of this area. The following photographs from the Gore Center's collections depict scenes from the resort area.



In addition to working on the pamphlet, Kevin has prepared an on-line resource guide to showcase the collections and materials that the Gore Center has on the history of Jefferson and Jefferson Springs, Tennessee. Those resources include photographs, newspaper clippings, oral histories, and publications.

Kevin Cason