2018

Annual Report, 2017-2018

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Libraries. Special Collections Department

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LOOKING BACK

The 2017-2018 year was full of movement as the department prepared for the opening of its new collections facility. In the fall, the department engaged in a three month implementation planning process to operationalize its 2017 strategic plan in order to meet the Provost’s 8 Guiding Principles. Developing, a departmental strategic plan proved to be a critical step toward ensuring the department’s alignment and support of university priorities. The subsequent implementation plan then provided the foundation for the department’s work. At the same time, four departmental teams were formed to guide the faculty and staff’s achievement of their strategic priorities: Collection Development, Exhibitions, Outreach, and Processing. To ensure a variety of perspectives to inform their work, the Collection Development and Exhibitions teams include faculty and staff from outside of the department. The Processing and Outreach teams each devised goals to achieve their team’s strategic priorities. At the end of the first and second quarters, a team member from those two team shared the progress made and how the team’s activities contributed to the department’s wider objectives.

In addition to the work of these teams, every member of the department contributed time and energy to preparing our holdings for the move to the new collections facility. Department-wide work began in earnest in February, but planning, rehousing, inventorying, and accessioning projects have been in the works for over 2 years. As a result of this department-wide effort, we now have greater intellectual control over our collections, which will facilitate their ultimate arrangement and description to prepare them to be available for research and teaching.

*Ribbon cutting on new library annex (LINX). From left to right: Provost Jim Coleman, Dean Carolyn Allen, Chancellor Joseph Steinmetz, Michael Smith, and Roger Boskus.*
STAFF NEWS

The department welcomed a new Head of Special Collections, Lori Birrell, and several new staff members this past year, including a University Archives Assistant, Processing Archivist, and Administrative Assistant. Heath Robinson, the University Archives Assistant, has hit the ground running and has made available three collections for research. Adam Heien, the Processing Archivist, began work to arrange and describe musician John Stubblefield’s papers. Deena Owens, the Administrative Assistant, dove into her work and in collaboration with Web Services began a review and revision of the department’s website— with more changes to come! The Librarian-in-Residence began her rotation in our department, and will be working on several different projects, including curating an exhibition showcasing the libraries’ collections related to the back-to-the-land movement. Welcome Marianne Williams! In addition to these new staff members, the department advertised for the position of Assistant Head of Special Collections. The strength of the candidate pool is a clear demonstration of the national reputation of University Libraries, and the work that we do. The department bid adieu to long-time library faculty member, Janet Parsch, who joined Special Collections in 2010. Two faculty members assumed new responsibilities this past year: Katrina Windon’s role evolved from Accessioning Archivist to Collections Management and Processing Unit Head. Joshua Youngblood’s position, changed from Research and Outreach Services Librarian to Rare Books Librarian and Instruction and Outreach Unit Head. Reading Room Supervisor, Geoffrey Stark’s position changed to become Research Services Coordinator in recognition of the vital role he plays in servicing our collections.
HIGHLIGHTS
Teaching 47 classes this past year and reaching 505 students, our instruction team is expanding the reach of our program to include traditional classes in the English and History Departments, to expose students taking Architecture, Anthropology, Art History, Landscape Architecture, Medieval Studies, and Music.

- For example, we offered two classes using rare books for special topics work by undergraduates outside of the humanities. Edmund Harriss’s Mathematics Literature class visited to work with several important books, including an 18th century Leonhard Euler, and Joshua Youngblood took a selection of Charles Darwin’s works, notably the first printing of *Origin of Species* offsite to the Honors College as part of William McComas’s “Reading Darwin” seminar.

- Architectural Archivist Catherine Wallack welcomed landscape design studio students working with Carl Smith for the first time to the department. The students had the chance to see different drawing types from the Neil Hamill Park Papers. Wallack selected these particular examples in order to illustrate the multiple means Park used to express materials.

- The department offered introductions to the rare books holdings of the libraries to beginning and advanced typography classes. Examples from the 15th century to the present illustrated the history and expressive possibilities of type in books, and our partnerships with Marty Lane and David Chioffi in the School of Arts continues to grow.
OUTREACH

The department actively engages with the greater Fayetteville community. In the past year, faculty and staff have led 11 programs with 330 participants. In addition, the department hosted an open house for library faculty in August to raise awareness about the collections, and to foster co-teaching with subject selectors to broaden the integration of materials into the curriculum.

- In January the department hosted a table sharing the history and legacy of J. William Fulbright at Southern Conference of Graduate Schools, held in Fayetteville.
- University Archivist Amy Allen offered two sessions on personal archiving this year. After the success of the first in the fall for the University of Arkansas Retirement Association, she was invited to offer another session at the Butterfield Retirement Village in Fayetteville in March.
- Joshua Youngblood was the featured guest of the Washington County Homemakers Extension Council in February 2018 meeting. After the talk, which emphasized the research significance of Homemaker Extension records, the department received renewed interest in donating.

Special Collections took part in two events as part of the City of Fayetteville’s Black History Month celebration. Joshua Youngblood and Librarian-in-Residence Marianne Williams exhibited at the kick-off event, January 29th, then Youngblood took provided a pop-up exhibit of the Libraries’ efforts to document Black authors at the first-ever Arkansas Black Writers Showcase.
EVENTS

Archives Month

Drawing over 80 people, the department’s annual Archives Month event in October highlighted new acquisitions and some of its favorite collections. A few weeks later, in partnership with Professor Joshua Smith, director of the Medieval Studies program, the community gathered at Carnall Hall for the reveal of the 1450 Psalter manuscript— the oldest complete manuscript volume in the state of Arkansas. Over 60 people attended and heard remarks from Professors Joshua Smith, Lara Walsh, and Mary Beth Long. The event also celebrated the generosity of Professor Smith and others to financially support this fantastic acquisition.

Opera in the Ozarks

In February, the department partnered with Music faculty to plan a master voice class, led by UofA alumnus, Joel Burcham, and a performance featuring undergraduate and graduate student signers to celebrate the opening of the Opera in the Ozarks Records. Over 75 people attended these programs, signifying the area’s growing interest in the arts.

Circulate!

In April, the department participated in a libraries-wide event to highlight our services and collections. Faculty and staff showcased favorites from our arts and music related collections, including the John Stubblefield Papers, Photography in Fine Arts (PFA) Exhibition V Collection, as well as documents from the university’s history such as drawings of Old Main. In addition, Cat Wallack, the Architectural Records Archivist partnered with faculty and staff from the University’s Tesseract Center for Immersive Environments and Game Design, to feature materials soon to be online as part of the Mid-Century in the Ozarks project, which creates a virtual tour and game of Fay and Gus Jones’s house in Fayetteville. Incorporating drawings, photographs, and materials from the collections, this project will go live in fall 2018.
Exhibitions

Each year the department produces a number of exhibitions to showcase stories documented in our collections. In FY18, a newly formed Exhibitions Team, including three members from outside of the department, came together to develop our program.

Letters Home

Co-curated by the University Archivist, Amy Allen, the display featured letters from the department written by former University of Arkansas students with dates ranging from 1878 to the 1950s.

Celestial Splendor

Co-curated by the Head of the Physics Library, Stephanie Pierce, this exhibitions highlighted the culture of astronomy and some of mankind’s most brilliant minds, such as Albert Einstein and Steven Hawking, who wrote on the endless mysteries of the heavens.

Rediscovering Florence Price

The Life and Work of the Composer: Recognizing the increasing scholarship related to Price, the department installed an exhibition highlighting the composer’s contributions to American music culture.

Lost Roads Press: The First Years in Fayetteville

Curated by the department’s Rare Books librarian, Joshua Youngblood, the exhibitions commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of Fayetteville poet and founder of Lost Roads Press, Frank Stanford, and included all of the Lost Roads Press books published in Fayetteville before the firm moved.
Collection Development

Bentonville Film Festival

Building on the department’s existing holdings in arts related collections, the archive has become the repository for the Bentonville Film Festival, which features works by underrepresented groups, specifically women film makers.

Charles Lee Hughes Fort Chaffee Photograph Collection: A collection of 1,500 photographic prints and negatives documenting the Cuban refugee crisis in Arkansas in the 1980s has been added to our holdings. Committed to preserving the history of migrant populations in the state, this collection serves as an important part of such narratives.

Australian-American Fulbright Commission Records: In 2017, the department committed to expanding its holdings to include global perspectives on the international exchange fostered by the Fulbright Program. This collection is the first—we hope—of such collections documenting the exchange from a non-US perspective.

Jeannie M. Whayne Papers

Whayne, a University of Arkansas history professor and nationally respected scholar donated her professional papers, representing decades of research in southern and agricultural history.

Other Notable Items

1931 Cantique des Cantiques de Salomon by Eric Gill is an extremely rare edition from Cranach Press by a leader of the “Fine Press” movement and early graphic design pioneer.

Edwin James’ Account of Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, performed the Years 1819, and ’20 Under the Command of Major Stephen H. Long (1823) continues the department’s work to grow its western expansion and Mississippi valley exploration.
Digital projects

Our partnership with the Digital Services Unit enables us to showcase collection materials and make our holdings available free of charge to the public through the libraries’ digital collections portal. The number of items available online grew to over 9,000 in FY18. We published five digital projects this past year, including:

Richard L. Holt, Sr. Papers
Florence Price Papers
Commonwealth College Fortnightly newspaper
Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletins
Miscellaneous Publications of the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
Research Services Unit and Processing Teams

The following report details the department’s progress on accomplishing its strategic objectives, which connects our daily activities to the broader university foci. Presented first are statistical highlights from our Research Services Unit and Processing Team.
Research services

As part of our commitment to support the research and learning mission of the University, we’re excited that the number of unique researchers using the collections increased from 765 in FY17 to 899 unique researchers. The increase in users is the direct result of the increase in classes taught using our materials, with 163 undergraduates, 154 graduate students, and 250 faculty members accessing collections this past year. The number of faculty more than doubled between FY17 and FY18, with only 104 faculty using collections the previous year.

As a result of our growing instruction program, the Research Services Unit saw a 9.5% increase over FY17 in user inquiries, responding to 2,278 questions. To the left is a breakdown of the variety of ways researchers get in touch with us.
So what kinds of materials were users doing research with? Users accessed 2,972 manuscript and archival collection materials. Researchers used 1,058 texts in our Arkansas Collections—materials published in and about our state. 449 rare books and 876 photographs and visual materials were used.

![Collection Materials Used](chart)

- Manuscripts/archives: 2,972
- Arkansas Collections: 1,058
- Rare Books: 449
- Theses & Dissertations: 31
- Maps, Photographs, Visual Materials: 876
Last year, the Florence Price Papers, Bureau of Educations and Cultural Affairs Historical Collections, and J. William Fulbright Papers were the top collections used. Taking a closer look, reveals the specific manuscript collections researchers used to further their interests and scholarly work:

![Collections Most Often Used FY18](image)

In addition, the department provided duplications of collection materials, reproducing over 10,000 pages of items. As part of this work, Research Services facilitated 35 permission to publish requests, drawing on collection materials as part of their work. Finally, the Unit provided access to 19 researchers seeking to use unprocessed materials.
Acquisition and Accessioning

In FY18, the University Archivist and Accessioning and Processing Archivist accessioned 104 new donations, totaling 368.78 linear feet of materials. Accessioning is work that happens when the department adds new collection materials. Our team reviews the materials, creates an initial description of them, and adds information to our content management system to track its physical location within our archive. Newly donated materials represented departmental negotiations and relationship-building with more than 60 unique donors, at least 23 of whom were first-time donors to Special Collections. Archivists traveled to Tulsa, Oklahoma; Goshen, Arkansas; and Gateway, Arkansas; to pick up materials, as well as coordinated shipments from as far away as Australia and Switzerland.

Additional accessioning work was done as part of preparing legacy collections for the move to the new collections facility.
Processing Team

57 collections, totaling 722.70 linear feet, were processed. The largest of these, the James D. Bales Papers (489 linear feet), represented the culmination of a multi-year processing project, led by Lead Processing Archivist Todd Lewis and Project Archivist Heath Robinson, that involved the assistance of more than a dozen student workers. New collections made available for research included:

**Donald E. Voth Papers:** Dr. Voth served as a faculty member of Rural Sociology at the University, retiring in 2003.

**Goshen Extension Homemakers Club (Ark.) Records:** Part of the department’s vast array of agricultural related print and archival collections, this collection documents the history of a club, first founded in 1945, that focused on providing agricultural and home economics education to community members.

**James D. Bales Papers:** Funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the processing of this collection adds to the department’s documentation of the conservative political movement’s growth in the mid-twentieth century.

**Opera in the Ozarks/Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony Records:** Established in 1950 by Dr. Henry Hobart and still a vital part of the arts community in Northwest Arkansas, this summer camp brings together professional and aspiring musicians to share opera through productions put on for the public each year.

**University of Arkansas Alumni Association Materials:** Begun in 1878, seven years after the founding of the University, this organization continues to keep alumni up to date on campus news and events. Go Hogs!

**Women of the Ku Klux Klan Collection:** As a repository committed to preserving the historical record of organizations and persons in Arkansas, this collection offers researchers the ability to analyze the KKK’s development in the state.
Student Projects

The Department worked with students and professors to offer two experiential learning opportunities in FY 2017-18: Professor Jim Gigantino’s graduate “Historical Methods” class processed the Women’s Action for New Directions, Arkansas Chapter Records (MC 2013) as part of a course project in Fall 2017, and student Laine McGinty processed the Thelma Mothershed Wair Papers (MC 1868) as part of a Spring 2018 internship. In addition, the Department’s work-study and hourly students independently processed five collections, as well as assisted in processing a number of other collections.

The team also continued its work on EAD conversion, enlisting the help of volunteers in other departments of the Libraries in pursuit of its work to enhance discoverability, make legacy finding aids compatible with its new content management system, ArchivesSpace, as well as to make available online for the first time a number of collections whose guides had only been available in paper format. 368 finding aids were converted (the longest of these, for a 703-box collection, contains more than 200,000 lines of code), 37 of which had not previously had an online representation.
Strategic Plan Progress

The eight “Guiding Priorities for the University of Arkansas” are the structure that guides the work for Special Collections. The following report details the Department’s progress in achieving these priorities. The department’s full strategic plan is available on the Special Collections website and by request.
1. Advancing student success

1.1 Participate in on-campus recruitment efforts. Give talks and tours, provide exhibit tables, and attend events to promote Special Collections to demonstrate our relevance and our collections’ strengths to students’ educational needs.

The Outreach Team partnered with the Conference for Southern Graduate Schools and tabled at their spring program, highlighting materials from the J. William Fulbright and Fulbright Program collections.

1.2 Collaborate actively with instructors for classroom support and teaching graduate and undergraduate students how to conduct college-level research. Provide class tutorials on archival use, hold special topic lectures for advanced instruction on archival collections. Provide instruction and research consultations to every level of students across disciplines.

Expanding our instruction program in the social sciences and sciences, students in an Honors College Anthropology class, and a math class worked with us.

1.3 Identify partnerships with campus departments for expanded student exhibiting, digitization, and processing projects.

In fall 2017, Professor Jim Gigantino’s graduate “Historical Methods” course students processed the Women’s Action for New Directions, Arkansas Chapter Records.

1.5 Offer not only employment but also research, critical thinking, and/or public service training to student staff, and mentor student employees interested in entering the library or archival professions.

The department hosted two academic interns this past year, including one undergraduate. Amanda White, a graduate student in the English Department focused on William Blake facsimiles in our collections. In addition to updating our exhibitions portal on our website, Amanda curated an exhibit explore the Blake facsimiles. She also led a curator talk in December to showcase these items to the public. In the spring she explored examples of family Bibles used during the Civil War found throughout our manuscript collections, and curated a second exhibition. A history major, interested in developing archival and digitization skills, Laine McGinty divided her spring semester between processing the Thelma Mothershed Wair Papers, and contributing to the Digital Services Unit’s projects.
2. Building a collaborative and innovative campus

2.1 Collaborate with academic faculty on writing grant proposals and actively participating on grant projects.

Partnered with Laurence Hare of the History Department, on a successfully awarded Chancellor’s grant to fund a graduate student to help arrange and describe collections related to the Fulbright exchange program.

2.5 Build relationships with other archives, libraries, and museums, and participate on joint committees of the Society of American Archivists, American Alliance of Museums, and American Library Association.

The department continues to be engaged at the national level. In FY18, faculty and staff served on a number of committees, including: Manuscript Repositories Section; College and University Archives Section; Reference, Access and Outreach Section; Co-chair of, Society of American Archivists.

3. Enhancing our research and discovery mission

3.1 Implement a digital preservation management system (e.g., Archives Direct, Preservica) for preservation of and access to born-digital archival materials.

As this will be a Library wide resource, the University Archivist worked with two faculty and staff members outside of Special Collections to write a digital preservation policy, with was sent to the Libraries’ administrative group for approval. Faculty and staff continue to plan library-wide workflows.

3.2 Define the scope and expand the size, promotion, and use of the Rare Books collection, collaborating with library and academic subject selectors to recommend titles to purchase, especially for classroom and research activities. Disciplines to emphasize might include history of science, agriculture, women’s studies, religious studies, fashion, interior design, etc.

This year we had the opportunity to add several notable titles to the rare books collection that enhanced existing strengths in the collection and marked the department’s commitment to supporting a wider variety teaching and research on campus. In anticipation of the expansion of the School of Art, the department sought works to further highlight typography and book arts. The 1931 Cantique des Cantiques de Salomon by Eric Gill is an extremely rare edition from Cranach Press by a leader of the “Fine Press” movement and graphic design pioneer. It is exquisitely beautiful as an object, and complements significant holdings already
in the Libraries’ rare books collection, such as the Cranach Press Rilke in the John Gould Fletcher library and the Ezra Pound first editions.

The addition of a preservation-quality, complete set of Edwin James’ *Account of Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, performed the Years 1819, and ’20 Under the Command of Major Stephen H. Long* (1823) continues the department’s work to grow its westward expansion and Mississippi valley exploration holdings. The two volumes of the narrative are finely rebound with near-perfect text blocks. However, the set added to the collection includes the exceptionally rare complete Atlas in its original binding, illustrating how the work was first published. When the account of Long’s expedition first appeared, the newly explored and described areas included the Arkansas territory, founded in 1819.

3.3 Work with building planning committees for the south campus storage facility to move materials and create service and research points. Work with building planning committees for the renovation and expansion of Mullins Library to improve the visibility and access to Special Collections and University Archives.

Each member of the department contributed to our preparation for moving selected materials to the new collections facility. Providing our materials with a superb preservation environment, this building can accommodate 20 years of collection growth. Specific projects included creating descriptions for all collection materials, barcoding over 27,000 boxes, converting our finding aids into the archival standard, Encoded Archival Description, and entering collection information into our new collection management system, ArchivesSpace. As a result of these efforts, the department has gained better intellectual control over our materials, and researchers can better discover our holdings.

3.4 In conjunction with the move to the new storage facility, migrate from Archivists’ Toolkit to a new collection management system (ArchivesSpace) to accurately track our collections.

After several rounds of data clean-up and review by our archivists, and our vendor, Atlas Systems, completed a complex migration of our accession file data from two separate systems into ArchivesSpace, and archivists began using ArchivesSpace as a unified accessioning platform in January 2018. The Accessioning and Processing Archivist and University Archivist began drafting a repository user manual for the system.

More than 700 EAD finding aids were imported into ArchivesSpace—the first time any of our finding aids have been in a content management system.

Working with the Web Services Librarian, the Accessioning and Processing Archivist established a workflow to allow the department to run custom reports on our ArchivesSpace data, and enable us to map ArchivesSpace metadata to the containers at our new collections facility in order to facilitate retrieval.
3.6 Monitor and improve our online research and discovery presence through social media, the website, etc., including the promotion of recently processed collections, for example, the James D. Bales and Florence Price Papers.

The department published 22 blog posts on the University Libraries feed, McIlroy. Each of the posts highlights a different aspect of the work we do, including: new acquisitions, instruction, arranging and describing collections, exhibition curation, and outreach events. The most popular blog post- with 35 pages views- written by one of our academic interns, Amanda White, celebrated the department’s William Blake holdings. Based on her research, Amanda curated an exhibition to highlight these items, and raised awareness about our collection.

Led by the department’s Administrative Assistant, Deena Owens, we partnered with the Web Services department to revitalize our website’s design and layout.

3.9 Identify priorities for processing collections and provide non-classified and classified staff for same.

As part of the Processing Team’s work to establish its priorities, the group developed a criteria to evaluate collections to be used by all processors, and to date have evaluated 36 collections to be considered for FY19 processing work.

3.12 In planning for the University of Arkansas’s sesquicentennial in 2021, identify essential materials to process and opportunities to enhance use, access, and visibility of the University Archives.

With the addition of a University Archives Assistant, the formerly one person University Archives Unit can now begin to process some of the larger collections important to the history of the University. The University Archives Assistant began processing a collection of 194 linear feet, covering approximately 40 years of administrative records.
4. Enriching campus diversity and inclusion

4.1 Focus on working with individuals and organizations to build collections and programming activities that reflect diversity of populations, cultures, and ideas. Collaborate with UA and other programs in forming strong links to all areas of Arkansas, especially eastern and southern Arkansas. Seek ways to support and encourage community-archiving initiatives, e.g., with African-American, Hispanic, Marshallese, and Vietnamese populations.

As part of the University Libraries’ celebration of Black History Month, the department curated an exhibit in the Walton Reading Room, “Rediscovering Florence Price: The Life and Work of the Composer.” In collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Libraries’ Assistant Dean for Human Resources, we participated in a symposium held on February 16, 2018, which drew over 60 participants, and included a faculty panel led by a UofA Music faculty member. Later in the spring, the department showcased this collection further as part of a digital exhibit. Led by the department’s Research Services staff members in collaboration with the libraries’ Digital Services Unit, the project has received a wonderful response and is heavily used by researchers and music enthusiasts.

5. Investing in faculty excellence

5.1 Review the departmental organizational structure and staffing needs for servicing as well as processing collections, incorporating employees’ strengths and interests and taking into account emerging trends in archives.

Recognizing the need to cross-train department faculty and staff, as well as build our capacity to best respond to the growing need for instruction and outreach efforts on campus, the department’s structure underwent several changes in FY18. The newly formed Processing Team, includes two staff members, previously reporting to the assistant head, became its own unit under the Accessioning and Processing Archivist. The Research Services Unit began reporting to the Head of Special Collections.

5.3 Expand offerings for continuing education and certification for Special Collections personnel.

University Libraries hosted three Society of American Archivist courses this past year: Describing Archives- a Content Standard (DACS), Project Management, and Grant Writing. Six faculty and staff participated in these sessions. In addition, the libraries offered a Northeast Document Conservation Center webinars on caring for and digitizing scrapbooks. Two department faculty completed the University’s Supervisory Development Program.
7. Reaffirming our land-grant and flagship responsibilities

7.1 Be an advocate for archives in the state. Lead and participate actively in statewide organizations, including Arkansas Historical Association, the Council of University of Arkansas College and Research Libraries (CUACRL), Arkansas Society of Archivists, and ARKLink. Seek opportunities for peer support and innovative collaboration in regional and national organizations, including the Society of Southwest Archivists and the Society of American Archivists.

The department remains committed to serving at the local and regional levels. Leadership included:

Council on University of Arkansas College and Research Libraries: Digital Initiatives Committee Co-Chair

Society of Southwest Archivists:
Vice President/President Elect; Chair of Professional Development Committee; Board member

7.4 Increase efforts to actively promote Special Collections and University Archives through traditional and contemporary outlets: press releases; Arkansas Newswire; University of Arkansas brochures, campaign news, stories in campus publications; Arkansas Traveler; public media (print, radio, and video); social media; events in Special Collections.

Together with the libraries’ Communications Manager, each exhibition, event, and newly processed collection are publicized in Newswire, and through social media, as appropriate. The Lead Processing Archivist, Todd Lewis, submitted an article to the Archival Outlook magazine to promote recently processed collections.
Contributions to the Profession
Awards and Honors
Katrina Windon, University Libraries Rookie of the Year Award.

Presentations and Publications


