

CONGRESSIONAL PAPERS ROUNDTABLE NEWSLETTER

Society of American Archivists

July, 1993

Annual Meeting, New Orleans

ROUNDTABLE MEETING, September 4, 1993, 3:30-5:30

Following our normal period for conducting roundtable business and hearing announcements, Todd Kosmerick and Janice Mathews of the Carl Albert Center will make a presentation on Collection Policy and Deed of Gift. Time should allow for a thorough discussion of these issues. During our business session, we need to consider possible projects for adoption by the Roundtable and session and Roundtable meeting proposals for SAA's 1994 meeting, to be held in Indianapolis. Current proposals for projects include preparing a pamphlet on access. Pam Hackbart-Dean of the University of Georgia has expressed interest in putting together an SAA session on congressional scandals and how they have affected manuscript collections and collecting. One possible Roundtable meeting proposal is a discussion of the profession's progress in implementing the strategy outlined in The Documentation of Congress. If you have ideas or comments on any of these matters and cannot attend the meeting, please convey them to Herb Hartsook or any of our other Steering Committee members who will be attending the meeting--Jim Cross, Cynthia Pease Miller, and Karyl Winn, and we will be glad to see they are raised during the meeting. We will be asking those in attendance if you and your institution have changed the way you operate and/or your collection policy in reaction to the documentation strategy. Our next issue of the newsletter will highlight the responses we receive.

The Appraisal of Memorabilia and Museum Objects or 'What Do I do With This Rusty Samovar', Thursday, September 2, 1:15-3:15

This session is sponsored by the Roundtable. It will be chaired by Karyl Winn and feature presentations by roundtable member James Cross, Thurmond Archivist, Clemson University, whose paper is titled "Evaluating the Thurmond Memorabilia: Appraisal Standards for Political Memorabilia"; George Terry, Vice-Provost for Libraries and Collections, the University of South Carolina--"Through a Different Set of Eyes: Interpretation and Public Use of Material Culture Artifacts"; and James Morris, Archivist, Louisiana State Archives--"Archival Materials at Louisiana's Center for Political and Governmental History". The session will present guidelines for the appraisal of the ephemera and museum items often acquired with congressional and other manuscript collections, and discuss their historical significance and research use. It will build on a well attended session on ephemera presented in Montreal. Donor relations and outreach will also be discussed. Cross will discuss recently developed guidelines for the appraisal of the ephemeral items being received with Senator Strom Thurmond's papers. Terry will speak on museum collection standards and the research and exhibit value of these materials. Finally, Morris will discuss research in archives using archival records and related museum materials. We hope this session will be well received and draw a good audience.

ELECTRONIC MAIL FOR HOUSE MEMBERS

In June the Committee on House Administration began a pilot electronic mail program. Seven Members of the House of Representatives have been assigned electronic mailbox numbers that can be accessed by persons with home computers who are connected to the Internet computer network. The Member's mailbox numbers were made public in their districts, allowing constituents to file electronic messages directly into the Member's computers. Members participating are Representatives Jay Dickey (R-Ark), Sam Gejdenson (D-Conn), Newt Gingrich (R-Ga), George Miller (D-CA), Pete Stark (D-Ca), Melvin Watt (D-NC), and House Administration Committee Chairman Charles Rose (D-NC). The pilot project is expected to last three months. After any necessary modifications are made and the system is error-free, it will be available to all Members for a flat annual fee. *Contributed by Cynthia Pease Miller*

DISPOSITION OF HOUSE MEMBERS' PAPERS

The House Historian's office has recently prepared guidelines for the disposition of papers of Members of the House of Representatives. The quantity of papers associated with a congressional office is daunting, and it is virtually impossible for a repository to accept the entire holdings of a member's office. These guidelines are designed to assist repositories in evaluating papers and other historically valuable materials they may receive from a member. They should be particularly useful to repositories receiving or processing their first congressional collections and for repositories developing a collecting policy. Copies will be available at the Roundtable meeting. You may also contact Cynthia Pease Miller, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives, 138 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 (202-225-1153). *Contributed by Cynthia Pease Miller*

NEWS FROM THE CARL ALBERT CENTER

As many have heard by now, there has been a staff change at the Carl Albert Center. With the departure of John Caldwell and the expansion of the professional staff last summer and fall, Todd Kosmerick, Janice Mathews, and Judy Day are now the archivists. Within weeks of these changes, Oklahoma Congressman Mickey Edwards, ranking minority member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, lost the Republican primary. Todd and Janice immediately flew to Washington to arrange shipment of the congressman's papers. In November, 207 cubic feet, covering 1970-1992, arrived at the Albert Center.

Since then there has been some fine-tuning of the acquisitions process. The collection policy and donor agreement have been revamped, and all members of the Oklahoma delegation approached and overtures made to the Sunbelt Caucus. Recently, Congressman Glenn English signed a gift agreement.

Alterations are also being made on the Center's journal, Extensions. From now on, all articles in an issue—including the "Archives Report"—will focus on one particular topic. This fall's topic is Congress and the War on Drugs, and the "Archives Report" will discuss how the Albert Center collections document the history of this topic: from constituent correspondence (such as that concerning peyote) to copies of legislation (such as a bill that would institute the death penalty for distribution) to pamphlets distributed by federal agencies. Through this article, the archivists hope to reveal to researchers the value of congressional papers for the study of broader historical issues, and in the future other repositories will be invited to include information about their holdings in the article. Topics to be announced. Of interest to anyone involved in congressional studies will be the Center's Julian J. Rothbaum Distinguished Lectures in Representative Government, October 19-21, 1993. Richard F. Fenno, Jr., the Kenan Professor of Political Science at the University of Rochester and author of The Making of a Senator: Dan Quayle and The Presidential Odyssey of John Glenn, will deliver a series of lectures on campaigns, elections, and representative government.

Finally, the Center continues accepting applications for its Visiting Scholars Program, which provides researchers up to \$1000 for work at the Center's Archives. Priority is given to post-doctoral studies, although graduate and undergraduate students and lay researchers may apply. For further information on any of these programs, contact: Janice Mathews or Todd Kosmerick, Carl Albert Center, 630 Parrington Oval, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019, (405) 325-6372.
Contributed by Todd Kosmerick

WORKSHOP--"THE ACQUISITION, PROCESSING, AND REFERENCE OF LEGISLATIVE COLLECTIONS"

The Roundtable has proposed to SAA a workshop, covering all aspects of work with congressional and other legislative collections, to be offered in Indianapolis prior to the Society's 1994 annual meeting. The target audience is archivists with little or no prior experience with legislative collections. The period 1992-1993 witnessed the largest turnover in Congress since 1948. Many archival repositories received congressional collections for the first time, some with little warning or planning due to the unexpected defeat of a member. Thus, the offering is particularly timely. A two day workshop will introduce the unique issues and problems encountered in working with congressional, legislative, and related collections. Aimed primarily at archivists working with congressional collections, the workshop will provide expert instruction on soliciting a collection, appraisal, the transfer of records to the repository, processing, and reference. While the workshop will focus on congressional collections, much of the material covered will apply to legislative and other related collections and archivists working with such materials will benefit from their participation.

The workshop will be taught by Herb Hartsook, Curator of Modern Political Collections, The University of South Carolina, Cynthia Pease Miller, Assistant Historian, Office of the Historian, United States House of Representatives, and Karen Paul, Archivist, United States Senate. If interest exists, additional presentations may be given at sites including Washington, D.C., and additional co-sponsors may be sought.

NEW CONGRESSIONAL STUDY UNDERWAY

The Task Force on the Documentation of Congress concluded that records of press organizations covering Congress can enliven interest in the history and workings of Congress. Journals that follow Congressional activities exclusively include such names as The Congressional Quarterly, National Journal, and Roll Call. Others devote a large portion of their investigative activities to congressional affairs. Op-ed journals such as The Nation, The New Republic, The National Review, and The Progressive, are a few in this category. Major news weeklies such as Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report also dedicate large press corps to the task of gathering Capitol Hill news. This investigative energy

likely produces internal records that can shed a revealing light on congressional members and events.

A project is underway to survey the periodical press organizations that cover congressional affairs. The survey intends to bring to light board minutes, correspondence files, files on editorial policies, family papers, subject files, photo archives, and Washingtoniana--and all such records that document the history of the organizations and their mission to cover Congress. Since many press organizations do not keep an archive, the project also seeks to uncover the location of the papers of correspondents, editors, and publishers whose interests included Capitol Hill coverage. The survey includes journals in and out of print.

The survey will give congressional archivists an overview of the archival activities within this focused publishing community. It will note the existence of important record series, the presence of finding aids, and terms of access to the collections. It will also benefit congressional archivists who may have an interest in soliciting collections.

If you are aware of collections that should be included in the survey, please contact Bryan Culp, Archivist to Senator Bob Dole, 231C Senate Hart Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510-1601, (202) 224-8941. *Contributed by Bryan Culp.*

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA'S POLITICAL COMMERCIAL ARCHIVE

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently profiled this rich collection ["Special Collection: Oklahoma's Archive of 50,000 Radio and TV Commercials for Political Candidates," Zoë Ingalls. , April 28, 1993, pp. B4-5.] The Archive was sold to the University in 1985 by its curator and creator, Julian P. Kanter. The archive includes commercials from presidential, congressional, and state campaigns. The oldest radio spot dates from 1936 and the oldest television commercial is from 1950. Recent additions include all television commercials from the 1992 presidential campaigns of Bill Clinton, George Bush, Ross Perot, and Andre Marron. *Contributed by Rebecca Johnson.*

NEWS FROM THE DIAMOND STATE

The Special Collections Department at the University of Delaware Library reports a busy year. Senior Assistant Librarian Rebecca Johnson made several trips to Washington in the fall of 1992 to oversee the transfer of the papers of former Congressman Thomas Carper (Dem., 1983-1992). Carper had staff and records in four places. Working with Cynthia Miller and Carper's staff, Rebecca identified records and their locations and received a roster of the staff with descriptions of their responsibilities. The latter should be helpful in identifying record series during processing.

Some appraisal decisions were made in Washington with the staff, especially with the assistant in charge of constituent correspondence. She reviewed her filing and indexing system with Johnson and they identified for retention several topics of relevant interest to Delaware, Carper, and Congress in the '80s. Many files were discarded but the indexing system documented the topics, dates, and volume of the original files. Although the office used an automated system for the constituent correspondence, only paper records were transferred. The system used was "archaic," not compatible with hardware available in Delaware, and the hardcopy index provided us with sufficient access to the selected files. It was a good thing that the University didn't want the case files from the district office; Carper's very protective office manager there would never have relinquished them.

The collection was transferred in four installments: one from the Wilmington district office and three from the Washington congressional office. Carper is the newly elected governor of Delaware, and we may expect his continued political activity, so his congressional papers are quietly waiting in our backlog.

The papers of Senator J. Allen Frear, Jr., have received only two requests for use in the last four years, but Senator Frear died in the past year and we anticipate more interest in the near future. Use of Senator John Williams' papers has been steadily increasing, and as Frear was his contemporary we expect that researchers may like to have the two collections available for comparison. Staffing has been unstable in the manuscript unit in the last year (three persons in the technician position which supports processing of political collections), but work should begin again on Frear in July.

We did accomplish an interesting preservation project related to the Frear collection. In collaboration with our preservation unit and the Media Department, we established procedures for the preservation reformatting of sound recordings in the Frear collection. Over 200 acetate discs of "The Week in Congress" from 1953-1959 were copied onto reel-to-reel tapes. Master and user copies were also made on cassette tapes. The weekly speeches (averaging 4-5 minutes each) were recorded by Frear in the Senate recording studio and mailed to Radio Station WDOV in Dover for air play.

As for the increasing use of the Williams papers, much of that can be attributed to the current research of a prominent

Delaware historian and UD faculty member planning a biography of the Senator. Two research assistants are pursuing related topics. We have talked about possible oral histories which they might conduct and contribute to the department.

Finally, I want to mention the papers of Harold Brayman, a noted journalist and pioneer in the field of public relations, whose papers are a surprising source with congressional connections. Brayman was a Washington correspondent from 1924-1942 who also covered every national political convention from 1928-1940. He crisscrossed the nation on the presidential campaign trains of A.E. Smith in 1928, Roosevelt in 1932, Alfred Landon in 1936, and Wendell Wilkie in 1940. Brayman served as president of the National Press Club in 1938 and president of the Gridiron Club in 1941. In 1942, he began a second career in the public relations department at Du Pont Company.

Brayman retired from his position as Director of Public Relations at Du Pont in 1965, but was active with teaching, consulting, writing, and many other activities until his death in 1988. Among those other activities was providing regular advice to local and nationally prominent politicians. Among Republican senators corresponding with Brayman were John G. Tower, William E. Brock III, Robert W. Packwood, Robert Dole, Orrin Hatch, Paul Laxalt, and John Heinz. As we consider all the different sources for documenting Congress, it is interesting to find these small traces in personal papers of non-politicians. *Contributed by L. Rebecca Johnson.*

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Richard Davis, Manuscripts-Archives Librarian with the University of Idaho Library, participated in processing the papers of James A. McClure. McClure served in the House and Senate from 1967 to 1990; his staff utilized the Files Handbook prepared for the House. Richard presented a paper on the processing project at the Northwest Archivists/CIMA conference this past April. He would like to hear from repositories which have received collections containing subject files arranged utilizing the Files Handbook: House Members (1965) and Files Handbook: Senate Members (1972); and collections containing CMS Daily Files. He can be contacted at the University Library, Rayburn St., Moscow, Idaho, 83844-2350, (208) 885-6534.

S.A.A. Congressional Papers Roundtable
c/o Herbert J. Hartsook
South Caroliniana Library Annex
The University of South Carolina
720 College St.
Columbia, SC 29208

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