

Congressional Papers Roundtable Newsletter

Society of American Archivists

February 2000



MINUTES, 1999 ANNUAL MEETING PITTSBURGH, 26 AUG. 1999

Claudia Anderson (LBJ Library), chair for 1998-1999, commenced the meeting by introducing the steering committee members. Then Mark Greene (Minnesota Historical Society), of the nominating committee, announced the candidates for CPR office, and Jeff Suchanek (University of Kentucky) passed out the ballots. Candidates for vice chair/chair-elect were Jim Cross (Clemson University) and Cynthia Pease Miller (Sen. Moynihan's office), and for steering committee were Ben Rogers (Baylor University), Burt Altman (Florida State University), Karyl Winn (University of Washington), and Tim Pyatt (University of North Carolina). Later during the meeting it was announced that Miller, Altman, and Winn were the winners.

Anderson then stated that James Cartwright (University of Hawaii), Glenda Stevens (Texas Christian University), Pam Hackbart-Dean (University of Georgia), and she were developing a program proposal for next year's SAA meeting in Denver (see p. 9). She then made the following announcements: Greene had been elected to SAA Council and will serve as CPR's liaison, Altman was presenting a paper on web sites and electronic finding aids at a 1999 SAA session, and Karen Paul (Senate Historical Office) would like the roundtable to raise issues for inclusion in the third report of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress.

Anderson then apprized the roundtable on the situation of Miller, who had recently moved from the Office of the House Clerk to the office of Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) to serve as his archivist. Her departure from the Clerk's Office created a need for a representative from the House to interact with CPR. The steering committee will ask the Clerk to appoint such a person. Anderson stated that a letter had been sent to the Clerk expressing CPR's concern that the House lacked a professional archivist, but there had been no reply. The letter also expressed a need for a liaison between CPR and the House. A discussion ensued on the topic. Sheryl Vogt (University of Georgia) stated that CPR should continue to press for a trained archivist in the House but the roundtable should also build bridges with the Clerk's Office. Anderson agreed that this was the sense of the steering committee. Cross said that a contingency may need to be developed if

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FROM THE CHAIR

1 Feb. 2000

The Congressional Papers Roundtable enjoyed a good meeting in Pittsburgh. A very special thank you to Ed Galloway for providing a private tour of the Carnegie Mellon University Libraries and the HELIOS project for roundtable members. Very positive reports were received about the tour and the networking that occurred afterwards.

It is hard to believe that the next SAA annual meeting is not that far away. Planning has already begun. Naomi Nelson (Emory University) and Carla Summers (University of Florida) have agreed to present a program at our business meeting in Denver. Naomi will discuss a possible appraisal strategy for audio-visual recordings found in congressional collections. Carla will provide insight on appraising and accessioning strategies for ephemera that are acquired by political leaders. I look forward to learning more from Naomi and Carla and the discussion following their presentation.

In Sept. 1999, I wrote the House Clerk, Jeff Trandahl, requesting that he appoint a representative from the Legislative Resource Center of the House of Representatives to serve as an ex officio (non-voting) member of the Roundtable Steering Committee. I have not received any response. (The letter is reproduced on p. 6.)

On a more positive note, Glenda Stevens and Charlotte Brown's session proposal, "Assessing Preservation Needs: The Congressional Papers Roundtable 1999 Survey," has been accepted for the upcoming annual meeting. Also, Rebecca Johnson Melvin has updated the roundtable's web site—Thank You!! Readers can visit the site again at <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/congress.html>.

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UPDATE ON HOUSE HISTORIAN

The following is compiled from various editions of the *NCC Washington Update*:

At the 6 Dec. 1999 meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress, Clerk of the House Jeff Trandahl said that a proposal was being developed to reestablish the House Historical Office and that by the June 2000 meeting he hoped to have positive and specific news to report on this matter. He stated that the Legislative

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INSTITUTIONAL NEWS

In June 1999, the **University of Arkansas** Libraries received the papers of U. S. Sen. Dale L. Bumpers (D-AR). The collection is more than 1650 linear feet, and it includes correspondence, legislative files, speeches, photographs, videotapes, sound recordings, printed matter, and memorabilia.

Previously an AR governor, Bumpers served in the U. S. Senate from 1975 to 1999. He was a ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He fought to prevent mining interests from extracting valuable minerals from public lands without just compensation, to protect family farmers, to support rural housing and to promote rural development, and to preserve the country's natural heritage.

Southwestern Archivist

The family of former U. S. Rep. John V. Dowdy, Sr., (D-TX) has established the John Dowdy Memorial Congressional Research Endowed Fund as part of the Baylor Collections of Political Materials (BCPM), **Baylor University**. Dowdy's son and daughter created the endowment to encourage and enable researchers from outside Waco, TX, to utilize the resources of the BCPM. Awards will be made to qualified applicants to cover travel and/or lodging expenses while visiting Baylor. Further details regarding the application process for the annual award will be announced on the BCPM web site (http://www.baylor.edu/~Ben_Rogers/BCPM).

BCPM has completed a number of projects commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of U.S. Rep. Bob Poage (D-TX). In addition to exhibits at the BCPM facilities, a number of pages have been added to the web site (http://www.baylor.edu/~Ben_Rogers/Poage/), including an anniversary web page highlighting the congressman's contributions, an online photo exhibit, information on his books, and a name/topic/place name index to the Poage Collection's 600 p. finding aid. Just for fun, there is also an online quiz, "Name the Grain," reflecting Poage's 38 years on the House Agriculture Committee, (http://www.baylor.edu/~Ben_Rogers/Poage/photos/name_the_grains.html).

Ben Rogers

On 24 Sept. 1999, **Boston College's** O'Neill Library opened a new exhibit commemorating the life and legacy of Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., (D-MA), who spent his career in public service, culminating in a record ten-year continuous tenure as Speaker of the U. S. House.

His political career began when he was elected to the MA House of Representatives while still a Boston College student, and he became Speaker of that body. In

1953, he began his career in the U. S. Congress, and he was elected Speaker in 1977.

After his retirement, O'Neill donated his papers and memorabilia to Boston College. The exhibit includes a sampling from the Speaker's large collection of gavels, as well as from his collection of donkey figures, symbols of the Democratic party. Other papers and artifacts are included, as is the Speaker's large desk. The display also contains a re-creation of a neighborhood campaign headquarters where O'Neill's volunteers practiced his philosophy of "all politics is local." The exhibit includes audio featuring O'Neill's voice, as well as a video highlighting his political career. A computer station provides a way for visitors to learn more about the Speaker.

Chronicle (Boston College)

The **Brandeis University** Library's Special Collections Department received the congressional papers of Rep. Stephen Joshua Solarz (D-NY). The congressman was elected as a Democrat to the 94th Congress and to 6 succeeding Congresses (3 Jan. 1975 - 3 Jan. 1993). Special Collections is in the process of organizing the collection. Currently, access is restricted.

Charles Cutter

The **University of Delaware** Library announces the opening of the Thomas R. Carper (D-DE) Congressional Papers. The papers document Carper's career as member-at-large for DE in the U.S. House, 1983-1993. The collection is 84 linear feet (with oversize and audio-visual material) and spans the dates 1979-1993. The bulk of the papers date from July 1982, at the end of Carper's term as DE state treasurer and when he announced his intention to run for Congress, through Nov. 1992, when he won the DE gubernatorial election.

The collection is arranged in three sub-groups: Official Work Files, Administrative Files, and Personal Files. The papers reflect the complex working relationship of the Congressman and his legislative assistants. Several large series of "Issue Files" reflect contemporary national and local issues that will be useful to students and scholars in a variety of disciplines.

The University of Delaware Library worked with the Office of the House Clerk and Carper's staff to prepare for the transfer of the collection in 1992, before the congressman left office. Case files were not included in the collection, and Carper's staff sampled constituent correspondence in Washington before the papers were transferred. Project archivist Rebecca Altermatt processed

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the collection between Dec. 1997 - Dec. 1999. There is an illustrated online finding aid (<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/findaids/carper/index.htm>).

L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin

CongressLink (<http://www.congresslink.org>), the web site maintained by the **Dirksen Congressional Center**, is a "classroom" friendly service for teachers and students of history, politics, civics, and related subjects in upper elementary schools through college who want to pursue the study of Congress as a springboard for learning activities related broadly to civic education. The program seeks to facilitate student-centered and inquiry-based learning through the use of a web site and involvement in an online learning community.

Drawing on the events of the day, CongressLink provides authentic decision-making and problem-solving activities guided by experts on Congress, including selected members of Congress and their staffs. Features include sample lesson plans, suggested student activities, access to original historical documentation from the Center's collections, an annotated list of more than 75 web sites on related topics, access to subject matter experts online, and collaborative communications.

CongressLink has been selected as one of the best web sites in the humanities by EDSITEment, a consortium consisting of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Council of the Great City Schools, MCI WorldCom, and the National Trust for the Humanities.

Cindy Koepfel

The **Florida State University Libraries** and the Claude Pepper Foundation are pleased to announce the release of the Claude Pepper Library web site and POLARIS (Pepper OnLine Archival and Retrieval Information System) at <http://pepper.cpb.fsu.edu/library/default.htm>. POLARIS, powered by Inmagic DB/TextWorks and DB/Text WebPublisher applications, enables local or remote users to search for specific names or topics within the holdings of the Claude Pepper Library. At present POLARIS searches at the folder level, but the goal of the first phase of the POLARIS project (scheduled to be completed in Jan. 2001) is to provide searchable access to the full text of a large portion of documents in the collection. In subsequent phases of the project, a digital archive of the photographs and audiovisual materials in the collection will be developed.

Congressman Claude Denson Pepper (D-FL) donated his collection to the Florida State University Libraries in the early 1980s. Containing 1200 linear feet, the collection includes official and personal correspondence; speeches; news clippings; legislative, committee, and campaign files; photographs; audiovisual recordings; and

memorabilia. The library also houses the personal papers of Pepper's wife and other family members.

The finding aid is currently available on the web in HTML format. Soon it will also be available as an SGML document using EAD.

John Nemmers & Burt Altman

The Williamson Stuckey (D-GA) Congressional Collection at the Richard B. Russell Library, **University of Georgia**, has been processed and is available for research use. This collection spans the dates 1966-1977, with the bulk of the papers representing Stuckey's ten years of service in the U. S. House of Representatives, 1967-1977. There are also some papers related to his business activities.

While in Congress, Stuckey served on the Agriculture, District of Columbia, and Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committees. He was also a member of the Commerce and Finance Subcommittee and chair of the Commerce, Housing and Transportation Subcommittee. He was most proud of his bills that made Cumberland Island, GA, a national seashore and Okefenokee Swamp a federally protected wilderness.

The collection consists of 130 linear feet of materials, and it is divided into five series: Press Relations/Media Activities, Political Activities, Legislative, Office Administration, and Related Materials. Topics of interest include the environment, the Watergate affair, the Vietnamese Conflict, and the Energy Crisis, as well as agricultural, transportation and health related issues. There are materials related to his congressional campaigns, as well as his legislative work. The collection also includes photographs and audio-visual films. Access to this collection is available through an in-house finding aid.

Pam Hackbart-Dean

On 12 Nov. 1999, the Congressional and Political Research Center was established in **Mississippi State University's** Mitchell Memorial Library. The Research Center will contain the papers of Sen. John C. Stennis (D-MS); Reps. G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery (D-MS), David Bowen (D-MS), Chip Pickering (R-MS), Charles Griffin (D-MS), Mike Espy (D-MS); and aides Wiley Carter (for Sen. Thad Cochran, R-MS) and Wayne Weidie (for Rep. Gene Taylor, D-MS). Additions are expected. A web site is under construction. The first issue of a quarterly newsletter entitled *We the People* will soon be available; it is being co-published by the Research Center and the John C. Stennis Institute of Government.

The library, the Stennis Institute of Government, and the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service recently sponsored a symposium entitled "Legacy of Leadership: Mississippians on Capitol Hill." Guest speakers included

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Sen. Trent Lott (R-MS), Reps. Pickering, Bowen, and Montgomery, long-time Stennis aide Eph Cresswell, former Mississippi Gov. William Winter, and political newspaper columnists Sid Salter and Bill Minor. Future symposiums will be held on an annual basis.

The papers of former Rep. and U. S. Sec. of Agriculture Mike Espy were officially received on 13 Dec. 1999, and the collection will be opened after it has been processed. The John C. Stennis Collection is now open to researchers, except for certain case files and other materials.

Mike Ballard

Highlighting the activities over the past six months at the John Glenn Archives, **Ohio State University (OSU)**, was the opening on 20 Sept. 1999 of the exhibit, "A Tribute to Public Service: The Many Missions of John Glenn." Located in the Philip Sills Gallery of OSU's William O. Thompson Library, the exhibit uses documents, photographs, and artifacts from the archives to illustrate the various careers of John Glenn (D-OH), decorated military aviator, twice renowned astronaut, and four-term U.S. sen. The exhibit, which runs through 26 April 2000, is co-sponsored by the OSU Libraries and OSU's John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy.

Assistant Archivist Julie Petersen has made significant progress in the processing of the John Glenn Collection's audiovisual materials. Other recent processing work includes the appraisal and cataloging of artifacts and oversized audiovisual materials. Progress has also been made in processing the media relations and constituent services series.

Jeff Thomas

The **University of Scranton** created a graduate assistantship, and in Sept. 1999, a student from the university's history MA program began processing the 400 cubic foot collection of Rep. Joseph M. McDade (R-PA). On 12 April 2000, the university will host a dedication ceremony for the McDade Collection and for a library study room that has been decorated with photographs from the collection. For more information, contact Special Collections Librarian Michael Knies at (570) 941-6341 or kniesm2@uofs.edu.

Mike Knies

The Modern Political Collections division of the **University of South Carolina's** South Caroliniana Library again mounted a Christmas exhibit of holiday cards from its collections. This year's exhibit featured approximately fifty cards received from state, national and foreign dignitaries by Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (D-SC) and his wife in 1998. The exhibit, displayed from late Nov. 1999 to mid-Jan. 2000, was popular with both patrons and staff and featured in the university and local papers and on a local television

newscast. It is the third holiday exhibit mounted by Modern Political Collections. Earlier in 1998, Modern Political Collections began receiving the papers of Rep. Mark Sanford (R-SC). A term limits supporter, Sanford is foregoing almost certain reelection to keep his promise to serve only three consecutive terms in the House. He will retire at the conclusion of the current Congress.

Herbert J. Hartsook

The **Space Business Archives**, whose mission is to collect, preserve, and make accessible documents that trace the development of the commercial space industry, currently holds hundreds of congressional documents in the form of correspondence, legislative calendars, testimony, and other miscellaneous reports related to the space industry. Included are legislative calendars from the Senate Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences from 1958-1970 and Library of Congress Congressional Research Service reports and testimony concerning the development of COMSATS (communication satellites), space commercialization issues, and national space policy. Letters and correspondence include those with Sens. Robert Packwood (R-OR), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Frank Moss (D-UT), and Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX); Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA); and Gov. Michael Dukakis, among others. The Space Business Archives collection is accessible through a keyword search of abstracts on the World Wide Web at <http://www.spacearchive.org>, under the section entitled "Archives Abstracts."

Neil Dahlstrom

On 22 Nov. 1963, Pres. John F. Kennedy spoke to a crowd of supporters at a breakfast at the Hotel Texas in Fort Worth. As he joked with the crowd, laughter and joy spread throughout the ballroom. But hours later, sadness and grief spread across the nation as Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Those few hours in Fort Worth, captured on 8mm film, were discovered in the Mary Coats Burnett Library of **Texas Christian University (TCU)** among material donated to the university in 1990 by former Speaker of the House and current TCU professor Jim Wright (D-TX). Most work comes to the library with an identified creator, Archivist Glenda Stevens said. Books have authors and letters have signatures, but this film is different because no one knows who shot the footage, she said. "In the case of a piece of film like this, it could have been from someone who was in the district and at the breakfast," Stevens said. "Since Jim Wright was in the film, and it's significant, they could have just passed it along to him." Wright could not be reached for comment. Norma Ritchson, Wright's assistant, said Wright felt the issue was over-hyped. "We have a lot of stuff here on Kennedy," Ritchson said. "We have an entire film of the speech that

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day, but the film in dispute was filmed with a home movie camera." Stevens said the film, which is in color and runs about three minutes in length, was first noticed when an inventory was done a year or two after the material was donated. "It needed preservation, so it wasn't until two or three years ago that we took it to someone who could reproduce it for us," Stevens said. "We did it in case people wanted to use it, but there is [still] a copyright problem."

Daily Skiff (TCU)

The John Nance Garner House and Museum in Uvalde, TX, has become a division of the **University of Texas** (UT) Center for American History. The center is a special collections library, archive, and museum that facilitates research and sponsors programs on the historical development of the U. S. A 20 Nov. 1999 ceremony marked the transfer of the property from the City of Uvalde to the university.

John Nance Garner (D-TX) served as Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives from 1931 to 1933 and was vice president during Franklin D. Roosevelt's first two terms (1933-1941). Following Garner's retirement from politics and the death of his wife, he donated their two-story brick home to the City of Uvalde as a memorial to his wife. Since 1973, the Garner Museum has preserved and exhibited photographs, cartoons, paintings, sculpture, and artifacts documenting Garner's life and career.

The Center for American History recently sponsored performances of *The Speaker Speaks*, a one-man play dramatizing the personality, thoughts, and political life of Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn (D-TX). Written by Austin playwright and teacher Clay Nichols, the play is set primarily in the Speaker's Office in Washington, DC, and on Rayburn's front porch in Bonham, TX.

David Dettmer



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the Clerk does not appoint a representative. Herb Hartsook (University of South Carolina) indicated that the Clerk did respond to a letter he had sent and that the Clerk viewed CPR's stance as personal concern from Miller's friends. Ellen Garrison (University of Alabama) said that it was important the Clerk knows CPR's concerns.

Following this discussion, announcements were made by the membership. Hartsook announced that the congressional papers workshop would be held 17-18 Nov. 1999 in Los Angeles in conjunction with a meeting of the California Political Papers Consortium (CPPC). Charlotte Brown (UCLA) indicated that there was room for non-CPPC people to attend and that the workshop would be more focused on political papers in general and not just congressional papers. Vogt indicated that Naomi Nelson's

(Emory University) work on electronic records will be published in *Provenance*. Nelson had summarized her findings at the 1998 CPR meeting.

Then Greene and Suchanek reported on the results of the preservation survey conducted during the spring of 1999. Suchanek stated some of the findings: 54 people had responded (33% response rate), 66% of preservation work is being done in collections that are 75% or better processed, little microfilming is occurring, many repositories are experiencing problems with electronic and audio-visual records, and retrospective conversion is a problem. In terms of problems and attention paid, Greene indicated that there was little difference between political collections and all other archival collections in the repositories surveyed. Also, video materials appear to present more of a problem than electronic records. In order to provide congressional offices basic preservation information, he thought that CPR might develop a 20-30 page guideline for the House similar to that contained in Karen Paul's *Records Management Handbook for United States Senators and Their Archival Repositories*.

Anderson then asked Greene to comment on the Moynihan bill. The bill results from an inquiry that Sen. Bill Bradley's (D-NJ) office made to the IRS about the implications of restricted donations of papers. The IRS interpreted the tax laws as denying tax deductions for such donations because the donor retains an interest. This ruling made some senators nervous and may have delayed donations. In order to restore the older interpretation of the law, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan introduced a bill, which is in the Finance Committee and will probably be attached to a tax bill that will not pass. SAA Council wonders if SAA should support the bill and asked Greene to draft a letter that was discussed at Council's Aug. 23 meeting. Council asked five SAA groups, including CPR, to comment on it. Some Council members objected to the bill because it appeared to support unequal access to restricted archival collections and may contradict the SAA Code of Ethics. Greene said that he did not think these objections were valid. Cartwright stated his opinion that SAA should support the bill but could indicate in the letter its support for equality of access. Greene indicated he had already drafted such language into the letter. Others agreed with Cartwright's suggestion. Winn indicated that she was bothered by the charitable tax law, and Greene commented the letter should explain that the bill will not change deductibility and that the U. S. Treasury will not lose out. Winn agreed that this should be stated in the letter. Cartwright made a motion to support the bill but to also state ethical intent. The motion was seconded and carried.

The business portion of the CPR meeting ended and the presentation portion began. Mike Gillette of the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives spoke on fund-raising for public outreach. He started by

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saying that fund-raisers must consider three things: what to ask for, who to ask, and how to ask. Under "what to ask for," fund-raisers need to decide what they want to do with the money. The more public exposure, the better their ability to raise money. The Center for Legislative Archives has raised funds for exhibits and education packets, such as those done on the presidency of Thomas Jefferson and women writing to Congress. The Center was also working on a project focusing on Congress and great events in American history. Gillette recommended that fund-raisers develop projects that donors can understand.

Under "who to ask," Gillette said that fund-raisers must determine who best to approach: individuals, foundations, or corporations. Individuals are good because the approval process is quick. Also, they are good missionaries to their friends, and they don't want to put their logo on the sides of fund-raisers' buildings. On the downside, individuals are difficult to contact or even know about. Foundations are very accessible, and they have a long history of providing money and support to projects that lack "sizzle." Support from a foundation is an endorsement for the project. On the other hand, foundations have a lengthy approval process, and there are limitations in scope. Also, it is difficult to gain their initial support. Corporate donors are also accessible, and they generally give quick approval for donations. They frequently donate in the \$25,000-\$50,000 range, and Gillette commented it is hard to get \$1,000,000 from them. Corporations also expect a greater level of recognition through the project than foundations or individuals do. Fund-raisers need to approach potential donors who are good matches for the project. The key is finding ways to access to them.

Finally, Gillette talked about how to ask for donations. Fund-raisers need to find people who can get behind the projects and who are already connected to donors. They need to understand the motivation of donors and sell projects to potential donors. Gillette stated that using historical documents, especially those that are visually interesting, is the most compelling way to excite donors. Gillette believed it important to be a good partner to donors. He concluded his presentation by making the audience aware that more often than not they will probably be unsuccessful in their fund-raising attempts.

Hartsook then spoke about his fund-raising experiences at the Modern Political Collections of the University of South Carolina. He stated that in a small shop such as his, fund-raising is important; private support has been necessary to support graduate assistants and fund outreach and processing projects. For him, the typical donor has been someone also experienced at fund-raising and who is living, wealthy, and connected. Hartsook said that fund-raisers need to seek help directly from donors. He gave the example of approaching a donor who provided him with a list of more than 100 contacts, through whom he succeeded in raising \$9200. He recommended concentrating

on major donors because so much effort can be expended on small donors with little return. Fund-raisers must determine for themselves what constitutes a major donor, and they must have clear goals and long-term plans. Hartsook indicated that his fund-raising efforts will reach the \$1 million mark in a few years, and his long-term goal is \$1.75million.

When approaching potential donors, Hartsook indicated that fund-raisers must sell their need for money and do this in just a few sentences because they will only have a few minutes access. Any statement they prepare should indicate benefits to donors. They need to present a clear plan with specific objectives, show a passion for the project, and convey themselves as careful custodians of money already obtained. If fund-raisers are good at this, donors will repeat their message or provide access to other contacts. Repositories may be part of institutions that have development officers who can help contact potential donors, and library directors and deans may also be interested in becoming involved in the fund-raising.

Hartsook stated that fund-raising is time consuming because of the nature of finding donors. It may take more than one year to cultivate a donor. He recommended asking for funds when asking for donations of papers. Donors with political backgrounds are experienced in raising money, so asking for \$100,000 is not unreasonable, although there may be some downward negotiation to meet the level of the gift. Most contributors will make subsequent gifts, frequently greater than the original donation. Existing donors can be helpful in convincing prospective donors. Development officers recommend that fund-raising organizations create advisory committees composed mainly of people of affluence but including some people of influence.

Hartsook finished his presentation by talking about Modern Political Collection's oral history program. He has gained the attention of donors by interviewing them for oral histories. Oral histories insure that you get the attentions of donors. Through the program, he has succeeded in raising money and gaining access to people.

With the completion of the presentations, the CPR meeting was adjourned.



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The roundtable is your forum and everyone is encouraged to participate. If you would like to become more involved or have suggestions, please contact me, Cynthia Pease Miller, our vice chair, or any member of the steering committee (Glenda Stevens, Jeff Suchanek, Brian Williams, Burt Altman, and Karyl Winn; contact information can be found on p. 11). We look forward to hearing from you.

Pam Hackbart-Dean

THE CHAIR'S LETTER TO THE HOUSE CLERK

Below is a copy of the letter that Pam Hackbart-Dean sent to the House Clerk. She has not received a response to it.

Sept. 30, 1999

The Honorable Jeff Trandahl, Clerk
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Trandahl:

I would like to introduce myself as the new chair of the Congressional Papers Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists (SAA). The Roundtable's bylaws call for a representative from the Legislative Resource Center of the House of Representatives to serve as an ex officio (non-voting) member of the Roundtable Steering Committee. Your appointee would join ex officio representatives from the Senate Historical Office and the National Archives Center for Legislative Archives.

Your representative will become part of a Roundtable composed of approximately 160 individuals. These are members of SAA and others who work with or have an interest in the papers of the Members of Congress and the records of Congress. The Roundtable provides a forum for discussion and presentation of issues and developments and for setting standards and advocating action in the preservation and management of congressional papers and records.

As a member of the Steering Committee, your representative will participate in the direction and coordination of activities of the Roundtable. The committee also plans the Roundtable's annual program and SAA program sessions sponsored by the Roundtable. Steering Committee members are expected to attend the annual meetings of the Society of American Archivists.

Your representative will be encouraged to contribute to the Roundtable's newsletter, which is published at least two times a year. The newsletter includes news submitted by the members, repositories holding congressional collections, and ex officio members of the Steering Committee.

In the fifteen years since it was established, the Roundtable has enjoyed a close working relationship with the U. S. Congress and the Center for Legislative Archives. Together we produced the 1992 report, *The Documentation of Congress*, and developed the popular workshop on the acquisition, processing, and reference use of legislative collections. Roundtable members were vital resources for the Senate Historical Office, the Office of the House Historian, and later the Legislative Resource Center as those offices compiled and updated their guides to research

collections. In 1999, the Roundtable conducted a preservation survey of political collections that showed that there is more work to be done in preserving members' papers.

Continuing the House of Representatives' presence on the Steering Committee will be beneficial to your office as well as the Roundtable. We sincerely hope your office can support this position and the opportunity to continue working together effectively.

I hope to hear from you soon and anticipate that we can welcome a representative from your office to the next Roundtable meeting, which will be held in Denver, CO, at the SAA annual meeting in Aug. 2000.

Sincerely,

Pam Hackbart-Dean, Chair

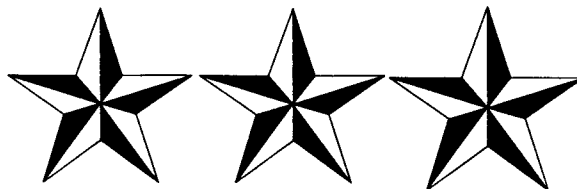


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Resource Center, which absorbed the Historical Office, recognized the important services that had previously been provided by the Historical Office and the archival staff. He is thus recommending the reorganization of the Legislative Resource Center, which would include, among other things, the reestablishment of the Historical Office. The Advisory Committee members strongly support this development.

After the Senate Historical Office announced its oral history project to create a record of the Clinton impeachment trial, a 17 Jan. 2000 article in the *Washington Post* noted that an official in the House of Representatives said that the House does not have the staff to make any special efforts to preserve the impeachment process. The article also stated that "the House has just begun the process of looking for a House historian."

By Feb. 2000, Rep. Bill Thomas (R-CA), the chair of the House Administration Committee, indicated that there were no plans to revive the position of House Historian. An article in the weekly publication *The Hill* quoted staff for the congressman as saying that new technology had rendered the old Historical Office obsolete and that the House Legislative Resource Center could document the history of the House without a historian. The House Administration Committee would have to approve any changes in the organization and staffing of the Legislative Resource Center. Despite Thomas's opposition, there still appears to be some support in the House for reestablishing the House Historical Office. (See p.8 for CPR's letter to Rep. Thomas.)



CPR LETTER TO REP. BILL THOMAS

*Richard B. Russell Library for Political
Research and Studies
The University of Georgia Libraries
Athens, GA 30602-1641*

Feb. 23, 2000

The Honorable William M. Thomas
Chairman, Committee on House Administration
2808 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Thomas:

On behalf of the Congressional Papers Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists, I am writing to register grave concern over recent events involving the House Historian. The Roundtable is composed of 165 members representing institutions across the U. S. and Canada that house the personal papers of members of Congress. In the past, all Roundtable members have benefited from and worked regularly with the Office of the Historian.

We are distressed to learn of your recommendation to abolish the position of the House Historian. This is a shortsighted decision that will have substantial ramifications for the history of the House. For the past two decades, the staff under the House Historian has ensured the preservation of increasingly voluminous and complex records of the papers of its representatives. Future generations of students, scholars, and indeed all citizens depend on it. The presence of a House Historian, as well as a qualified, skilled and experienced staff, is critical.

In addition to archival functions relating to the disposition of the personal papers of Members of Congress, new technology issues must be addressed. Therefore, the Office of the House Historian should not be considered obsolete but much more necessary than before.

As with many things, current technology has increased access to information dramatically. At the same time, it has made archival issues, such as arrangement, description, access and preservation, increasingly complex. For example, although the House members and their staff currently generate most of their work in electronic format, this does not mean that this information can be stored in this format more than a few short years. It will also become increasingly difficult to provide any access to this information.

In a report from the Technology Assessment Advisory Committee to the Commission on Preservation and Access, the experts identify problems that our new technology brings. The rash of new information technology has raised major problems for those faced with a flood of new kinds of media such as audio and video tape or

computer disks. Most of these technologies were designed and manufactured without permanence as a prime consideration. A more pressing problem is the obsolescence of the reading devices. Even tapes or disks, which are impermanent themselves, will outlive the specific equipment necessary to access them.

In order for citizens to have a complete understanding of the government of the U. S., they must have a thorough knowledge of congressional leadership. The U. S. House of Representatives makes history every day. Preserving this history is imperative. It forms the cornerstone of knowledge the public requires to understand this vital institution, and it is the right of every citizen to have access to this historical documentation. In order to maintain this flow of knowledge, the House Historian and staff should be reinstated.

In the past, the House Historian brought awareness to the need to preserve the historical record and encouragement for its research and study by the academic community. Cultural and social historians are now putting politics back into their writings. They are rediscovering the richness of congressional papers. Such collections are a valuable tool in the study of the U. S. Congress, as well as grassroots politics, regional history, and the sweeping social, political, and cultural changes occurring in our nation. As administrators of these collections, we relied upon the expertise of the House Historian in coordinating legal and ethical issues related to congressional collections. To provide this necessary service, this position should be reinstated.

The Senate has such a position and has benefited from the on-site staff consultation in providing records management and archival administration and disposition for its official records and the personal papers of its members. This historian has also engaged in various projects including oral histories with current and former Members of the Senate.

The Congressional Papers Roundtable asks that the importance of preserving history, as well as the historical and archival services rendered to Members and their repositories, be taken into consideration as the reestablishment of the position of the House Historian is considered.

Sincerely,

Pam Hackbart-Dean, Chair
Congressional Papers Roundtable
Society of American Archivists



The editor would like to thank all who contributed to this issue of the newsletter. If you have news for the next issue of the *Congressional Papers Roundtable Newsletter*, please submit it to the editor by 14 July 2000. The next issue will be distributed later that month.

SENATE HISTORICAL OFFICE

Betty K. Koed reports:

The Senate Historical Office continues the online distribution of its oral history series with the publication of two additional interviews: William F. Hildenbrand, administrative assistant of Senate Minority Whip Hugh Scott (R-PA), and Jesse R. Nichols, the first African American hired as a clerical staff member of the Senate. Since 1976, the Senate Historical Office has conducted a series of oral history interviews with former senators and retired members of the Senate staff. To read the interviews, click on "Senate History" at the Senate home page (<http://www.senate.gov>).

The most recent publication of the Senate Historical Office, *Minutes of the U. S. Senate Republican Conference, 1911-1964*, edited by Wendy Wolff and Donald A. Ritchie (Washington: GPO, 1999), is now available online at the web sites of the Senate and of the GPO (http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/senate/index.html#senate_publications). The Senate Historical Office is offering a limited number of two free publications to scholars and others interested in the History of the Senate: *United States Senate: Election, Expulsion and Censure Cases, 1793-1990* by Anne M. Butler and Wendy Wolff (U.S. Senate Historical Office, 1995) and *The Senate, 1789-1989: Addresses on the History of the United States Senate* (1991).

For more information about these and other publications of the Senate Historical Office, please contact Betty K. Koed, Assistant Historian, Senate Historical Office, U. S. Senate, SH-201, Washington, DC 20510-7108, Betty_Koed@sec.senate.gov (e-mail), (202) 224-0753 (tel.).

(continued on p. 11, 2nd column)

CENTER FOR LEGISLATIVE ARCHIVES

Mike McReynolds sends the following news:

On 12 Jan. 2000, the National Archives opened in the Rotunda a new exhibition entitled "Treasures of Congress," which celebrates the 200th anniversary of the move of the Congress to Washington, DC. "Treasures of Congress" draws on the holdings of the Center for Legislative Archives and presents a sampling of the landmark documents created by, or delivered to, Congress. The records of Congress chronicle the course of American history, provide insights into the inner workings of the legislative branch, and remind us of the central role Congress has played in the history of the country. Bruce Bustard, NARA Public Programs Staff, was the curator for the exhibit. He and Ken Kato of the Center for Legislative Archives authored the catalog, "Treasures of Congress" published by and available from NARA. The exhibit will be on display through 19 Feb. 2001.

SESSION FOR 2000 SAA MEETING TO FOCUS ON CPR SURVEY

"Assessing Preservation Needs: The Congressional Papers Roundtable 1999 Survey" will be the title of a session at the SAA meeting in Aug. 2000. Paul Conway (Yale University Library) will be the chair and Mark A. Greene (Minnesota Historical Society) the speaker. In 1999, CPR surveyed the preservation needs of congressional collections in 54 institutions. This new study is important both for its multi-institution scope and for its innovative methodology. The chair of the session will provide the larger context of collaborative preservation needs assessment. The speaker will review the findings of the study, outline the implications for archival practice, and engage the audience in discussing practical follow-ups. For further information, contact Paul Conway, Preservation Department, Yale University Library, PO Box 208240, New Haven, CT 06520-8240, (203) 432-1714 (tel.), (203) 432-7231 (fax), paul.conway@yale.edu (e-mail); or Mark A. Greene, Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. West, St. Paul, MN 55102-1906, (651) 296-2620 (tel.), (651) 296-9961 (fax), mark.greene@mnhs.org (e-mail).



NOTICE: With the July 2000 issue, the editor's term of office will end. Anyone interested in becoming the new editor of the *CPR Newsletter* can discuss this with the current editor, Todd Kosmerick, or the current chair, Pam Hackbart-Dean.

If you know of people who would like to join CPR, please have them contact the editor.

CPR Newsletter editor: Todd Kosmerick, Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma, 630 Parrington Oval, Rm. 101, Norman, OK 73019, (405) 325-5045 (tel.), (405) 325-6419 (fax), kosmerick@ou.edu (e-mail).



QUEST FOR A SEARCHABLE ONLINE DATABASE

By Ben Rogers and Connee Duran
Baylor Collections of Political Materials

Last year, the Baylor Collections of Political Materials, Baylor University, acquired the papers of Bob Bullock, former Lt. Gov. of Texas. The size and scope of the materials are similar to those of a congressional collection. In the past, we had created finding aids for congressional materials in Microsoft Word and then converted them to HTML for the web. While performing initial processing on the Bullock papers, we decided to

(continued next page)

investigate ways of creating just one document which would serve both as a finding aid and a web database. We also wanted to create a searchable online database across all our finding aids.

We had minimal experience with databases. Several years ago, we processed one small collection in FileMaker Pro before web page creation was something archivists worried about. We knew the latest versions of both FileMaker Pro and Microsoft Word could be converted to HTML for the web. What we didn't know was what other possibilities existed for making large collections available on our web site.

First, we inquired through the Archives & Archivists ListServ to see what other archivists were doing. We received numerous replies which we grouped into four major areas: MARC, database, word processing, and EAD.

1. A small number of archives create MARC records at the folder level. This seems to be time consuming because of name and subject authority file verification.
2. A larger number of archives use various database software programs including FileMaker Pro, dBase III, DBTextworks, htDig for Linux, and customized DBs. These archives create their finding aids and web pages from the same database. A researcher must visit each web site, and, if there is no site search engine, search every collection to find a particular item.
3. Creating a finding aid in a word processing program and transforming it into HTML for the web seems to be the most commonly used method. While easy to do, this method also forces a researcher to visit every web site and every collection to search for a particular item..
4. The newest method used to create finding aids and web pages from the save input is EAD. Daniel Pitti began work on EAD around 1993 as the Berkeley Finding Aid Project. The objective was "to demonstrate through development of a draft DTD, as well as an Internet-accessible database employing the DTD, that an SGML-based encoding standard was both feasible and desirable."¹

We then compiled all the responses by topic, converted them in Microsoft Word to HTML, and posted them to a special web site on Baylor University's server (http://www.baylor.edu/~Ben_Rogers/DB/). This site also has links to samples of the four major responses.

Based on these responses, we decided to learn more about EAD—what it is and what it does. Since we were five years behind, we had to play catch-up just to know what Pitti and others were talking about. EAD, DTD, and SGML were new terms to us. First, we belatedly read both issues of the 1997 *American Archivist* devoted to EAD. Then we ordered the latest publications from SAA: *EAD Application Guidelines* and *EAD Tag Library*. We also searched the web for information, including the LC EAD site (<http://www.loc.gov/ead/ead.html>), the EAD

HELP site (<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/ead/>), and the EAD ListServ (<http://lcweb.loc.gov/ead/eadlist.html>).

After thorough investigation, we concluded that the best long-term solution to online searchable finding aids appears to be the EAD developed specifically for the creation of finding aids and web retrieval using a special SGML DTD. While this solution seems difficult to implement in a small staff archive and will need some creative adaptations for large congressional collections, new EAD software promises to make this solution workable. EAD seems to be the form of the future whereby all archives online could be as easy to search as OCLC currently is for books. Imagine the potential for researchers.²

ENDNOTES:

¹Daniel V. Pitti, "Encoded Archival Description: The Development of an Encoding Standard for Archival Finding Aids," *American Archivist*, 60 (Summer 1997): 279.

²This article also exists online at (http://www.baylor.edu/~Ben_Rogers/DB/cr_article.html).

PLAN NOW FOR 2001 ANNUAL MEETING IN DC

It is not too soon to plan for the 2001 annual meeting in Washington, DC. The Washington meeting is traditionally a popular one and well attended. Many SAA members come early and stay late to enjoy the monuments, museums, and historic sites. Some CPR members visit the offices of members from their state. What are your plans?

Would you be interested in a pre-SAA one-day conference on congressional papers? This would likely be held on Capitol Hill. The very successful Portland conference was in 1994. Some CPR members have expressed an interest in having such a conference every few years to explore issues in more depth. The Washington meeting perhaps presents such an opportunity. Would you attend such a meeting? (This is not a commitment.)

One suggestion is that we use such a get-together to follow up on Karen Paul's task force on the preservation of congressional papers for the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress. Would you rather have such a meeting on the task force finding in conjunction with the June 2001 meeting of the Advisory Committee? Would you be more interested in holding such a congressional papers conference later and somewhere else? Would your institution like to host such a meeting? Please let me know your thoughts.

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COMINGS AND GOINGS

Alan C. Burns was recently named Political Collections Archivist at the Special Collections of Clemson University Libraries. For the three previous years, he was a processing archivist at Clemson.

Joining CPR is Lea Uhre of the House Legislative Resource Center, Kim Butler of North Central College, Juliette Arai of Sen. Ted Steven's (R-AK) office, and Connie Cartledge of the Library of Congress.

If you know of people who would like to join CPR, please have them contact the editor or any member of the steering committee.

Karen Paul sends the following information:

The Senate Historical Office announces the online publication of its oral history series. An interview with Sen. George A. Smathers (D-FL) initiates the series. Further information is available on the Internet (http://www.senate.gov/learning/learn_history.html).

Repositories expecting to receive collections from senators retiring at the end of this Congress are invited to contact Karen Paul with any questions that arise. All repositories should be in contact with members' offices to monitor and collect information concerning electronic records that they may be receiving.

REQUESTS AND OFFERINGS

Herb Hartsook would appreciate receiving copies of recent finding aids, newsletters, processing guidelines, etc. to share in future workshops. Please send these to him at the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

The Carl Albert Center has extra copies of the *Congressional Pictorial Directory* for the following dates: Jan. 1963 (preliminary edition), Jan. 1967, Jan. 1971, Jan. 1973, Jan. 1975, and Jan. 1977. If you are interested in obtaining any, please contact the editor.

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