

MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES SECTION NEWSLETTER

Manuscript Repositories Section of the Society of American Archivists

Spring 2003

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From The Chair: Spring Cleaning!

By Susan Potts McDonald, Emory University

The daffodils blooming in my yard are trumpeting that spring is on its way. Their cheery yellow heads overlook a somewhat overgrown perennial bed that I neglected during the winter. Soon I will roll up my sleeves, clean out the unwanted clutter, and transplant some flowers to more appropriate locations in my garden.

We have also been doing a bit of "spring cleaning" here at the Special Collections and Archives Division at Emory University. As is inevitable for any collecting institution, we will soon reach our storage capacity. Additional off-site compact shelving - onto which we moved some high volume-low use collections - has been helpful in temporarily alleviating our problem. Ultimately however, we realized that it was time to take a closer look at what we have been collecting over the past 30 years. To this end, we are reappraising our existing collections.

Over time and because of certain circumstances, we have acquired materials that no longer seem a good fit for our institution. Some programs within our University have either changed or been disbanded, leaving us with orphan collections in need of a more appropriate research environment. During a recent statewide collaborative cataloging project, we were also surprised to discover just how many collections of a particular person or organization had been divided between two or more repositories within the state.

In consultation with our research services staff, the processing staff put together a list of those collections that seemed to be better matches for other repositories or that form small parts of a larger whole held by another institution. I am happy to say that in all instances to date, the collections have found more appropriate gardens in which to grow.

"Peace Be To This House": A Newly Discovered Sermon Of Reverend John H. Livingston, 1784

In the spring of 2002, the Huguenot Historical Society discovered an intriguing document among their collections of historic records. Written in 1784, the document appeared as a loose collection of pages written in frugal shorthand. Upon further inspection the writing proved to be an ordered collection of symbols, seraphs and glyphs that highlight the notes for a sermon given by Dr. John H. Livingston, a well known minister of the Reformed Dutch Church in America. The sermon, loosely titled "Peace be to this House," in Livingston's own hand, concerns the reconsecration of the North Church of New York City. In writing this article about the sermon, I hope to portray one minor aspect of the role of religion in the war for American Independence.

Livingston, born in 1748, a native of Poughkeepsie, was the great-grandson of Robert Livingston, a prominent European settler and ancestor of the powerful Livingston family. At age twelve, John Livingston was admitted to Yale College where four years later he completed his study in law. Between 1764 and 1766, following a period of ill health, he decided to become a minister. After several years at the University at Utrecht, Netherlands, he completed his doctorate in divinity. His first cause, quelling the schism between the Coetius and Conferentia parties (an ideological rift within the Dutch Church, since mid-century), was a success.

The Reverend John H. Livingston had since 1770 been a minister to an English-speaking congregation of New York's Dutch Reformed Church. In the course of his short tenure, he became a proponent of the cause for Independence from Great Britain. In a letter to George Clinton in the Continental Congress (1775), Rev. Livingston advocated a day of fasting and prayer "from Nova Scotia to Georgia" in the hope that it would help 'heal the division between mother country and the colonies.' In light of his publicly held view and his preeminent position it is not a surprise that, at the outbreak of the war, he, along with the other Dutch ministers joined the Diaspora when the city fell. The opinions held by the domines of New York were a reflection of the political opinion of their congregations. Because of this, during the occupation, the edifice of their beliefs, the churches bore the brunt of English retribution. Livingston, like his mentor Rev. Archibald Laidlie and the ministers Ritzema and DeRonde, fled from New York at the conclusion of the Battle of Long Island to live and to preach in exile in the Hudson Valley.

In 1776, the impending attack on New York solidified allegiances. When the British achieved victory over Washington's Army, the revolutionaries would evacuate their city with alacrity on the heels of the retreating army. Washington's handbill, August 17, 1776 urged that "Persons exposed to great Danger and Hazard . . . remove with all expedition out of the said Town . . . Whereas a Bombardment and Attack, may be hourly expected" (Diamant, p. 38). In A Discourse on the North Reformed Church commemorating its last Sabbath, August 1856, a minister of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, Dr. Thomas DeWitt remarked:

Those acquainted with the annals of our revolutionary history vividly recall to mind the atrocities and cruelties committed by the British forces while in possession of the city of New York. The churches, the sugar-house, immediately behind the Middle Church, the jail, the Jersey prison-ship, and the thousands of Americans who fell victims to disease, hunger and cruelty, laid buried or bleaching on the shores of Long Island, recur to the mind as affecting memorials of this (DeWitt, pg.40).

Thus, the Dutch clergy and those families that could leave, did. The occupation of New York brought about considerable change in a very short period of time. The disturbing nature of British occupation and its consequences are reflected in the chaos following the war.

In the years of the revolution, Livingston ministered in exile to congregations at Kingston in 1776, Albany from 1776-1779, Livingston Manor from 1779-1781, and finally at Poughkeepsie and Red Hook from 1781-1783. Livingston's sojourn ended with a return to his North Church, New York City in 1783. The Dutch churches of New York were used by the garrisoned troops as barracks, a horse stable, a jail, and in the case of the North Church, a hospital, and storage facility whereas the Anglican/Episcopal churches were not and this is due to the

political inclinations of their congregations. The churches were found in great disrepair. The task of refurbishing the churches fell to Livingston, as he was the only minister to return to the beleaguered city.

On Sunday, September 26th, 1784, a sermon was delivered before an expectant congregation at the newly repaired North Church in the city of New York. The rededication of this Reformed Dutch Church in the year following the end of the British occupation of the city marked the end of seven years of exile for Reverend Dr. John H. Livingston and for the majority of its congregation, supporters of the American Revolution. Reverend Livingston had written his sermon as a testimony to the defilement and abuse suffered by his church. In the allusions of its text rests a powerful conceit concerning the subjection of New York's Dutch churches. Livingston writes:

...it is the glory of a nation and people to build and support Temples or houses dedicated to the worship of the true God. Religion is absolutely necessary for the existence and well being of a nation without confusing its importance with respect to our eternal state. Though it is the fear of God that restrains us from many enormities, what it is impossible for human laws to restrain. . . none but savages or men perverse and depraved as savages have ever profaned the houses which were solemnly dedicated to the service of the supreme-in all ages and among all people, places of worship were held sacred, and the horrors of war were limited to the threshold of the Temples...

With his own church in mind, Rev. Livingston likened its treatment to that of the Romans upon Judea and their defilement of the second Temple. Livingston's sermon notes portray an allegorical account of the short sightedness and sinful folly of those that did not support the Temple, in essence, the sin of not supporting the revolution, the sin of not supporting God. Such sentiments reveal passionate and deep felt emotions. This is useful in helping us understand one man's perspective on war.

Sources

DeWitt, Thomas. *A Discourse delivered in the North Reformed Dutch Church in the City of New York on the Last Sabbath in August 1856*. Published by the Consistory of the North Reformed Dutch Church, New York, 1856.

Diamant, Lincoln. *Changing the Hudson: the Fight for the River in the American Revolution*. Citadel Press, Carol Publishing Group, New York, 1994.

Byron Preston, Huguenot Historical Society Library and Archives

Theft Of Rare Faulkner Letter

A former lawyer previously convicted of stealing rare documents has turned himself in to face charges of taking six William Faulkner letters from a university. Robert Hardin Smith, 43, of Jacksonville, Arkansas, is accused of taking the Nobel laureate author's letters from Southeast Missouri University's rare book room and selling them to a Texas manuscript dealer.

He turned himself in December 2, 2002, and was charged with theft of property. Smith had earlier been convicted of the 1996 theft of historic letters from the University of Kansas library, including three signed by Civil War-era raid leader William Quantrill. He was also convicted of stealing manuscripts from the University of Arkansas, and served nearly two years in prison for that crime before being paroled in 1999.

Southeast Missouri State University police said a man who signed in at the book room as "R. Smith" viewed the Faulkner letters on September 30th. Officials learned the letters were missing on November 11th, after a Faulkner collector discovered they were being sold on the Internet.

Prosecutors said Smith sold the letters to a manuscript dealer who later told police that the man said he had inherited them from his grandmother's estate. All six letters have been recovered, school officials said.

From The Citizen, December 8, 2002

"Foot Soldier Project For Civil Rights Studies"

The "Foot Soldier Project for Civil Rights Studies" and the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at the University of Georgia have forged a partnership to chronicle Georgia's rich history in the civil rights movement. The new venture, focusing on the "unsung foot soldiers" of the movement, will establish UGA as one of the premier institutions in the nation for the study of civil rights

The foundation for the project is "Foot Soldier for Equal Justice: Horace T. Ward and the Desegregation of the University of Georgia," the award-winning documentary by UGA social work professor Maurice Daniels. Research from this documentary yielded more than 30 rare interviews of civil rights figures in Georgia and from around the country, including Ward and fellow federal judge Constance Baker Motley, attorneys Donald Hollowell and Vernon Jordan, U.S. Senator Herman Talmadge and former Georgia governor Ernest Vandiver. The vision of the Foot Soldier Project is to expand this endeavor to collect additional archival and documentary materials that can be used by researchers involved in issues dealing with civil rights, social justice and policy reform.

"Despite many significant events in Georgia and many Georgia trailblazers in the civil rights movement, there has been little consistent documentation or chronicling of these participants and events," Daniels said. "This project's focus on unsung foot soldiers in the movement for social justice and civil rights is also unique. While there exists a panoply of literature and archival materials on prominent civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, many persons in Georgia who played significant, powerful and historic roles in the movement have been overlooked and are largely unknown. The Russell Library is a quality facility with great resources, and these are materials that should and need to be preserved."

In addition to donating to the library the photographs, interview transcripts and other materials gathered in the process of creating the documentary, Daniels and other participants in the project have agreed to partner with Russell Library staff in the identification of archival materials, particularly from African Americans. The Horace Ward documentary, which aired on Georgia Public Television in 2000, has received local and national acclaim. Clark Atlanta University Press published a book by Daniels based on his research, "Horace T. Ward: Desegregation of the University of Georgia, Civil Rights Advocacy and Jurisprudence" in the summer of 2002.

Jill Severn, University of Georgia

Ida Pruitt and a Changing China At the Schlesinger Library

The Ida Pruitt Papers, a remarkable collection documenting the life and work of this daughter of missionaries, who devoted her life to China, is now processed and open to researchers at the Schlesinger Library. The 74 boxes of papers of Pruitt and her mother, Anna Seward Pruitt, and more than 5,500 photographs, are especially valuable because so many images of Chinese life were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. The collection covers nearly a century of change from the 1880s through the 1980s.

The first of six children, Ida Pruitt was born in the Shantung Province in China in 1888. The Pruitt children attended missionary schools in China, and then attended colleges in the United States. After graduating from Columbia University Teachers College in 1910, Pruitt returned to China, taught at a girls' school in Chefoo until 1918, then came back to study social work in Philadelphia and Boston. In 1921, she was hired by the Rockefeller Foundation to head the newly formed Department of Social Work at the Peking Union Medical College in Beijing. Pruitt left PUMC in 1938 and again returned to the U.S., where she helped launch Indusco, the American fundraising arm of the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives.

Raised in China by her "amah" or nanny, Pruitt grew up steeped in Chinese culture and strongly identified with the Chinese people. While in China she kept extensive notes about the people she met and the events in her life. These she turned into two biographies: *Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman* and *Old Madame Yin: A Memoir of Peking Life, 1926-1938*, and a three-part autobiography: *A China Childhood, The*

Years Between, and *Days in Old Peking: May 1921-October 1938*, the latter two unpublished. In summer 2003, the 175-page finding aid to the Pruitt collection will be available electronically at <http://oasis.harvard.edu>

Kathryn Jacobs, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute

Come On Up and See Them Sometime

The Schlesinger Library recently acquired a collection of the papers of glamorous film star, stage actress, comedian, and playwright Mae West (1892-1980).

West's salacious dialogue often drew the attention of police and censors. West was prosecuted for violating obscenity laws in her Broadway plays *Sex* (1926), in which she played a prostitute in a Montreal brothel who falls in love, and *Pleasure Man* (1928), which delved into the subject of promiscuity. She was jailed for eight days and fined five hundred dollars for *Sex*. In 1932, she began her film career. "Come on up and see me sometime," which she delivered in *She Done Him Wrong* (1933), is one of her many famous lines. West and W.C. Fields co-wrote and co-starred in the movie *My Little Chickadee* (1940)--their only film together. In 1959, she published her autobiography, *Goodness Had Nothing to Do With It*. The book's title is her character's reply in the film *Night After Night* (1932), when someone says to her, "Goodness, what beautiful diamonds!"

Kathryn Jacobs, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute

Florida State Archives and History Update

The initial budget proposal for FY 2003-2004 budget by Governor Jeb Bush would eliminate the Division of Library and Information Services, under which the Bureau of Archives and Records Management currently operates. The Bureau of Archives and Records Management would be split into two separate offices in two separate departments, with Archives moving to Parks in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (not EPA) and Records Management moving to the Florida Department of Management Services. It is the State Library of Florida, and NOT the State Archives, which is slated to be eliminated entirely.

These proposed cuts are most certainly not indicative of any lack of competence on the part of the managers of the Division or the Bureau, and any such implication is completely unwarranted, as their very supportive constituencies throughout Florida well know. These constituencies had no input into or knowledge about the formulation of these initial budget proposals; now that information has been released, they are actively demonstrating their support for these agencies. This is not final yet; the budget process is just beginning.

Regarding access issues, those familiar with the Florida State University campus in Tallahassee know the nightmare that faces visitors to the campus trying to find a place to park. Moving any collections to the FSU campus would have the de facto effect of decreasing access. Further, should the library collections actually become part of FSU's collections rather than just being administered by FSU, borrowing privileges would be limited to student and faculty, thus further eroding access.

As for the Election 2000 ballots, these in fact have not been transferred to the Division/State Archives but are still in the legal custody of the county election supervisors. Ballots in Florida do not have a permanent retention, but because of the special circumstances relating to these ballots, a committee including (but not under the direction of) Division/Archives staff has been actively receiving input and discussing options for their retention.

Mary Flekke, Archives Listserv

Websites of Interest: Take a Look

"Joseph Bellamy House: The Great Awakening in Puritan New England" examines the life and times of the Reverend Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790), a leading preacher, author, and educator in New England. In 1740 Bellamy and other ministers, including Jonathan Edwards, spent most of 1741-1742 riding about New England delivering impassioned sermons to bring sinners back to the fold of the church. They launched a movement

known as the Great Awakening. Tap into:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/85bellamy/85bellamy.htm>.

"The War Relocation Camps of World War II When Fear Was Stronger Than Justice" looks at the causes and consequences of President Franklin Roosevelt's executive order, signed two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, that moved nearly 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans into 10 isolated relocation centers. Tap into: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/89manzanar/89manzanar.htm>.

"Capturing the Phoenix" Project online

Georgia State University's Special Collections Department has placed approximately 10,000 Atlanta area photographic images online at <http://www.library.gsu.edu/spcoll/avcoll/atlphoto.htm>. These images, principally from the Lane Brothers and Tracy O'Neal collections, comprise the largest and most significant compilation of 20th-century Atlanta photographs available to students, teachers, scholars, historic preservationists, neighborhood groups and interested public. These collections provide a powerful representation of the economic, social and political forces that transformed Atlanta from a regional city into the commercial capital of the South.

Using established guidelines, negatives that have been determined to be of high historical value and in immediate need of preservation, have been selected for scanning, and then placed into cold storage. The project will continue to add more images to the website.

Georgia State University

Nominations Sought For Section Leadership

Elections for Vice Chair/Chair Elect and three Steering Committee members will be held during the section meeting in Los Angeles. The Nominations and Election Committee-Peter Blodgett (Chair), Joseph Anderson, Su Kim Chung, and Amy Cooper-currently seeks candidates to consider for these positions. Candidates must be members of SAA and the Manuscript Repositories Section. In forming the slate, the committee will strive to represent the wide range of repository types found in the section as well as different geographic areas. Duties of the offices are as follows:

Vice Chair/Chair Elect: Serves as the Vice Chair from the conclusion of the 2003 meeting through the 2004 meeting, at which time (s)he assumes the office of Chair for one year. Presides over the 2005 meeting. Also serves as newsletter editor while Vice Chair.

Steering Committee members: Serve for two years from the end of the 2003 meeting through the 2005 meeting. The three committee members elected in 2003 will serve on the Nominations and Election Committee and perform other section duties.

We should identify two candidates for each opening. Please take time to send suggestions to Peter Blodgett at pjblodgett@huntington.org or by fax (616) 449-5720. The deadline for nominations is May 2, 2003. Thanks for participating!

MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES SECTION

News items, articles, letters to the editor, and comments are welcome.

Next deadline: June 1, 2003

Send to Pam Hackbart-Dean ([see address below](#))

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