

Creative Collaboration for Collection Building: University of Tennessee's Special Collections and Center for the Study of War and Society

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Abstract: The concept of collection building for special collections through partnerships is certainly not new; however, many institutions focus on building relationships directly with entities creating their own records in hopes of one day acquiring those records. This poster takes a close look at a creative path for collection building between a special collections department and campus center with established community relationships. The University of Tennessee Libraries Special Collections department has partnered with a campus center outside of the library for over 25 years to acquire material from veterans of modern wars. The Center for the Study of War and Society networks with veterans and solicits material while Special Collections processes, houses, and makes the collections available for research. This partnership has resulted in 265 linear feet of material, including 300 oral history interviews, documenting over 900 individual veterans. Through this decades-long mutually beneficial partnership, we have fine-tuned collection priorities and workflows; formalized our relationship on paper; and collaborated on a variety of outreach projects including digital collections, exhibits, and events. This relationship increases the scope and diversity of collections while also enhancing the profile of both organizations and allowing each to maximize efforts despite limited resources. In addition to detailing our relationship and work thus far, this poster serves as encouragement for others to think more widely about potential partners for collection building.

About the Author:

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