Familiar Faces at The Texas Collection

Mark Firmin (B.A., ’06, M.A., ’09) has been a fixture this semester as he has worked on compiling a history of The Texas Collection. Firmin also used our resources while working on his book: Waco, Texas’ William Cameron Park: A Long Love Affair with Nature’s Splendor: A Centennial History, 1910-2010.

Dr. Scott Lewis (B.A., ’83), Senior Research Fellow at De Montfort University in Leicester, England, has been researching in our collections for nearly 2 years as he has worked on a biography of Dr. A. J. Armstrong, founder of the Armstrong Browning Library.

The Pro Texana Society
An Annual Fund to Support The Texas Collection

The 2010-2011 academic year is coming to a close. It has been a year of excitement and change, excitement due to the inauguration of Judge Kenneth Winston Starr as the 14th President of Baylor University, and change because fresh ideas and innovative thinking are taking place on campus with the Strategic Planning initiative begun in the autumn of 2010.

The staff of The Texas Collection have been involved in the visioning process and enjoyed several opportunities to voice opinions and ideas, as well as engage in meaningful discussions. This exchange of ideas has helped forge a renewed commitment to provide outstanding user services and facilities in The Texas Collection. I think you will see some of this renewed commitment the next time you visit us.

Throughout the past year, your gifts to the Pro Texana Society have helped us create a new high-tech classroom in the basement and improve the aesthetics of the microfilm room. This coming year we will be working on a master plan to update the Guy B. Harrison, Jr. Reading Room. The goal of the plan is to stay true to the historic character of the reading room and provide comfortable, aesthetically pleasing, and practical user spaces for our researchers. Your gifts will be used to help update and revitalize this much loved and well-used room.

Contact John Wilson, Director of The Texas Collection, at 254.710.3457 or by email at John_Wilson@baylor.edu to join the Pro Texana Society.

Visit The Texas Collection online
http://www.baylor.edu/lib/texas/
From the Director

The Texas Collection is an exciting and vibrant work place. Every day I am amazed by the dedication of the staff and their love for all things Texas. The staff go out of their way to provide quality service to all who walk through our doors, send an email, or call. I am honored to work with such caring and talented professionals.

In my first director's column, I want share with you several exciting developments. The next time you are online, go to The Texas Collection homepage at www.baylor.edu/lib/texas and click on one of or all social media websites. These interesting choices are Flicker, The Texas Collection Blog, and Facebook. Each one of these sites is frequently updated. Each site is administered by different staff members and features different bits and pieces of Texana. I am amazed by the dedication of the staff and their love for all things Texas.

I am delighted to announce the addition of several new collections. These are but a few of the noteworthy collections we have received since the last issue of ¡Viva Texas!: The David P. Blakely Collection. The Nell Johnson Collection, The Murray and Mary Elisabeth Cagle Collection, The Adams-Blakley Collection, and the Laura Lee Adams Center Library in Houston, understands the value of her Texas cookbook collection as a historical resource and wants it to

Our latest exhibit, “The Good, The Bad and the Ugly: Characters from the Adams-Blakley Collection” features one of the many unique treasures of The Texas Collection. In 1971, Baylor University received a generous gift from William Blakley, former U.S. Senator from Texas, that included a library of close to 3,000 works that capture the excitement and struggle of the Westward Expansion. The collection was assembled for Senator Blakley by Ramon F. Adams, a Western bibliographer, lexicographer and author. It contains a wide range of books including historical and biographical books, works of fiction, texts on ranching and branding, promotional literature, collections of poetry, books on art and song, and works on hunting, trapping and roping. Many of these works are rare titles and first editions, often beautifully bound and signed by their authors. The exhibit is on display in The Texas Collection through July 2011 and is also featured online. Plan to visit us soon to experience these tales from the Old West!

A Few of Our Cast of Characters

“Buffalo Bill” Cody (1846-1917) was a U.S. soldier, skilled hunter and world-famous entertainer who gained his peculiar nickname because of his skill for hunting bison. Cody became a celebrity through his re-enactments of the Old West in his “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West” show.

Belle Starr (1848-1889) was a notorious outlaw who was originally from Missouri but was active throughout Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. She associated with Jesse James, was married to Jim Reed and ran with other known outlaws of the Old West. Her reputation as an “outlaw queen” was popularized by Richard K. Fox in his novel, Hella Starr.

Books, Biscuits and Gravy: Gifts from Elizabeth Borst White

Elizabeth Borst White knows cookbooks! Recognizing the value of cookbooks and the unique window into cultural history that they provide, White began a collection 25 years ago. Today, her love of Texas cooking and history has led to the creation of a nearly 1,600 volume cookbook collection. In 2005, White compiled a bibliography titled Sweets and Meats: Early Texas Cookbooks, 1855-1936. White is not alone in her interest in cookbooks. Scholars are now recognizing their importance as a primary source for research.

Cookbooks give a snapshot in time of a particular group or event. They inform us of food traditions in diverse communities: cultural, professional, religious, urban and rural. Sponsored by churches, restaurants or other businesses, cookbooks can provide great histories of the organizations, including everything from photographs to lists of committee members. The recipes themselves help us know what ingredients were available and enjoyed by a community. White says that her favorite types of cookbooks are “community cookbooks with lots of advertisements for local businesses because they give the reader a good picture of the community at that time. We just do not see advertisements for rifles and ammunition, or corsets and ladies’ hats in cookbooks today.”

While, who recently retired after nearly 40 years as a librarian for the Houston Academy of Medicine—Texas Medical Center Library in Houston, understands the value of her Texas cookbook collection as a historical resource and wants it to

First Cookbook published by an African-American highlights collection

The Texas Collection is home to myriad treasures from the cultural history of Texas. One of the gems of our extensive cookbook collection is The Lone Star Cook Book and Meat Special (From the Slaughter Pen to the Dining Room Table), which was written by A. Fillmore and published by the Lubbock Hotel where he served as chef in 1928. This cookbook, which was a gift from Elizabeth Borst White, has the distinction of being the first cookbook compiled by an African-American chef. Fillmore published the book in order to “make cooking a larger success for the young colored man.”

Fillmore was born in Cuero, Texas, on March 13, 1888, and grew up about 30 miles away in Victoria. He began cooking when he was still a boy, working alongside his father in the restaurant business. Fillmore worked in some of the finest hotels and cafes in Texas, and served as chef for two dining car service companies during his 30 year career.

The Lone Star Cook Book and Meat Special contains a collection of recipes along with bills of fare from the Lubbock Hotel. Some of the selections include “Brown Butter Pie,” “Mrs. Fillmore’s Special Raisin Fruit Dressing,” “Fricasséed Mutton with Carrots and Peas” and instructions on “How to Bone and Stuff a Cat Head.” The cookbook is quite rare. In fact, a search of WorldCat lists only four copies including the copy at Baylor University. The Texas Collection's acquisition of this volume enriches the cultural memory of Texas that remains the hallmark of our collection.

To hear a field recording of cowboy songs and poetry from the Adams-Blakley Collection, scan this QR Code with your smartphone. If you do not already have a QR Code scanner for your phone, you can download one of many apps available. Then, simply point your phone’s camera at the code above!