Good Luck to our Graduating Student Workers!

Brooke Bonorden
B.A. in Anthropology,
minor in Middle East Studies
2.5 years at The Texas Collection

Brandon Cunningham
B.A. in Sociology
2 years at The Texas Collection

Jynnifer McClinton
San Antonio, Texas
B.A. in Psychology,
minor in Community Health
1 year at The Texas Collection

Mary Ellen Stanley
Fort Worth, Texas
M.A. in Museum Studies
1 year at The Texas Collection

In January, your gifts helped to purchase six new comfortable reading chairs for the Gay B. Harrison, Jr. Reading Room. Several donors stepped forward to help with this project, especially Collen Clark. Thank you for thinking about the comfort of our students and researchers.

In the coming year, work will begin on the renovation of the Ayresworth Foyer. A fresh coat of paint, new lighting and furniture will make a much more inviting entrance to The Texas Collection. Please continue to support these Texas Collection projects.

- John Wilson

Spring Lecture Focuses on Brazos River

As a 2011 recipient of the Wardlaw Fellowship Fund for Texas Studies, a research fellowship that allowed her to travel to Waco to undertake research at The Texas Collection, Dr. Archer was particularly interested in researching the people who lived along the river and used archival materials to “reveal the meaning of floods, droughts and other river issues for people engaging this river. That story of expectation vs. reality is entertaining and lively. It also says something about why people would choose to remain in a land so prone to river turmoils.”

With all the research Dr. Archer undertook, she discovered that the project wasn’t without its challenges. Though she found her topic fascinating, “it was sometimes difficult to determine if the exclamations of disaster and woe were realistic portrayals of loss,” she added. At The Texas Collection, Dr. Archer exhausted hundreds of resources, including the Ross Family Papers, De la Vega Land Grant Papers, photographs and maps, for scattered bits of information about the river. During the process, she discovered that her findings were “worth the time, the effort and the periodic headaches brought on by dust and nineteenth-century scrawls.”

The Texas Collection staff also became enthralled by Dr. Archer’s research and enjoyed finding new information for her to examine. “Kenna is the type of researcher that we love to have,” said Texas Collection Library Assistant Tiffany Sowell. “She is enthusiastic about her research and thorough in tracking down information.”

For more information about the lecture, call The Texas Collection at 254.710.1268 or email tcxcol@baylor.edu. Check out our YouTube channel for an interview with Dr. Archer about her research.
An Exhibit Featuring Dr. Colbert Held’s Landscapes of Middle East Patterns: Places, Peoples, and Politics

The Texas Collection is hosting an exhibit of 19 color photographs of Middle Eastern landscapes taken by Baylor alumnus Dr. Colbert Held. This unique collection of images is organized in chronological order beginning in Iraq along the Euphrates River in 1937 and ending in Jerusalem in 1997. This arrangement was chosen to show the progress and perspective of Held’s skills and to try to capture his Middle Eastern journey through his career as a foreign service officer. These photographs are a small fraction of Held’s body of work now on display in Doug Moody and the Armstrong-Rosati Atrium.

Held’s Middle Eastern photographs was an easy decision for The Texas Collection. His father Dr. John A. Held Jr., a venerated alumnus and the second in 1903, John was an influential member of Texas life and served as a minister and Texas governor. The father’s papers were given to The Texas Collection in May 1972.

Dr. Colbert C. Held also has a solid Baylor background. After graduating from Waco High School in 1934, he received a B.A. from Baylor in 1938. While at Baylor, he was a student photographer for the Round Up and was the editor for the O’2.4 edition. He also learned some photography tips from well-known Waco photographers Alyn Newton Schobel and also noted scholar, W. T. Bledsoe. Held served as class president and was a friend and dorm mate of Alon McCall.

Come to the Held exhibit and enjoy the breathtaking scenery of the beautiful cultures and mountains of Yemen and other compelling images of the Middle East.

Larger than Life Texan: Organizing Pat Neff

Pat Neff was a larger-than-life character, and we are certain that his life was well documented. With the financial support of Terrell Blaggott, who heavily researched the collection for the book Ane’s End: Baylor and the Ted Blaggott and the Land, The Law, and the Longhorn, the Pat Neff Collection is now processed—all 643 boxes—and ready for research.

The Pat Neff Collection includes correspondence between Neff’s parents during their early days in Texas, glimpses of Neff’s childhood and early married years, his service as Texas governor, and onward through Neff’s resignation as Baylor president in 1947. The Neff Collection is an amazing accumulation of records dealing with the life of a man who helped shape Texas in the early 20th century and guided Baylor University through some of the most turbulent years of the 20th century.

The records in the Neff Collection are arranged in five series: 1) Family Papers, 2) Gubernatorial Records, 3) Interns Years, 4) Baylor University Records and 5) Personal Documents and Items. The finding aid for the collection provides descriptions and outlines, as well as box and folder listings to assist researchers in navigating their way through the collection. The Gubernatorial Records reveal the workings of 19th and 20th Texas politics. The Baylor Series shows the struggles and triumphs of keeping Baylor alive during the Great Depression and World War II. The Personal Documents and Items Series contains three-dimensional items such as journals, books, Neff’s signature, correspondence, photographs and clothing a college contraband. Woven throughout the collection is the story of Texas Baptists.

Research opportunities abound in the Neff Collection. This is an amazing and important resource for student and other researchers interested in this prominent Texan.

Two Wardlaw Fellowships Awarded for the Spring

The Texas Collection has granted two Wardlaw Fellowship Fund for Texas Studies awards for the spring.

Dr. Kathleen Johnson, Associate Professor in English at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, visited February 25-28. She conducted research for a book project about interracial artistic traffic between Broadway and Harlem during the early 20th century that recognizes the work of “frontier” or “wilderness.” If someone desires information regarding various destinations in the world, the idea of a wilderness is a popular search engine. But two centuries, Americans were largely unsure of what lay beyond the Mississippi to the west of the Mississippi River. Must love to dwell in the eastern states of their newly formed nation. However, a brave few chose to seek a new home to the west, in lands previously unknown to Anglo-Americans.

The Texas Collection recently acquired a map of great historical significance that highlights the westward expansion of the United States. A Map of North America, Constructed According to the Latest Information was created in 1822 by Henry Schenk Tanner on Philadelphia. Popularly known as a landmark map of North America, Tanner’s creation is one of the most significant portrait maps of 19th century United States.

Tanner’s map illustrates various discoveries made by the Lewis and Clark expedition, which was commissioned to “find a route from France to the Louisiana Purchase. Tanner also relied upon subsequent expeditions and surveys for basic descriptions of what would soon become the American West.

In addition to the new geographical information made available in Tanner’s hand-colored map North America, it is reportedly the first map to use the name “Oregon Territory.”

Landmark Map Documents U.S. Westward Expansion

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Exhibit Honors Waco African American History

The Texas Collection is pleased to present its newest exhibit, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot: The Musical Heritage of Jules Bledsoe and New Hope Baptist Church.” This fascinating exhibit traces the stories of Waco-native and internationally renowned jazz musician and the musical history of local New Hope Baptist Church. Visit us to explore this collection of sheet music, photographs of New Hope Baptist Church and more.

Bledsoe, one of the first major African-American opera stars in the United States, was approximately 19 years old and sang his first concert at New Hope Baptist Church age of 9. He originally went to college to study medicine but switched to music and gave his first professional concert at age 23.

Bledsoe became famous for singing “Of Man River” in the 1927 musical Show Boat, but he was also known for his love songs, spirituals and patriotic songs, some of which he wrote himself. His work took him around the world, with vaudeville, radio, television and movie performances. Unfortunately, the United Kingdom, Norway, Italy and New York City. After a career just 22 years old, Bledsoe died in Hollywood in 1943.

Bledsoe’s musical gifts likely were well-supported while he grew up at New Hope Baptist Church. A historically African-American church in Waco that has been in operation since 1866, has been a source of strength and support for the community through all its trials since its early years. Stephen Cobb, grandfather of Jules Bledsoe, was the first pastor, and under his leadership the church grew and flourished. The church continued to grow through both World Wars.

With a congregation of over 500, Dr. Marvin C. Griffin became pastor of New Hope in 1950. New Hope added a new adult choir in 1976 that quickly became another popular musical group at the church, in addition to the already existing adult choir and children’s choir. The church continues a vibrant musical ministry today under the leadership of current pastor Dr. Richard L. Johnson. The church celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2011.

Watch a short video about Jules Bledsoe on our Texas Collection YouTube channel, read about this exhibit on our blog, or take a look at some photographs of New Hope and Bledsoe on Flickr.

From the Director

2013 is a major milestone in the history of The Texas Collection and a cause for celebration. This is our 90th Anniversary! The Texas Collection was officially founded in 1923 with a gift of nearly 1,000 volumes of Texana from Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Haynes Ayres of Waco, Texas. Dr. Ayrenesw was an alumnus of Baylor, a scholar, and a local surgeon. In a statement made at the time of the gift, Dr. Ayrenesw said,

Because of the pride I have in the preservation of the noble heritage bequeathed to us by the daring and scholarly builders of Texas and because of the devotion I bear to Baylor, the older university on Texas soil, I cheerfully donate this collection with the hope that the coming years may reveal a rich culture and happier life because of the spread of knowledge of the history of our great state.

Up until his death on October 30, 1944, Dr. Kenneth Ayresw and his wife continued to donate books, papers and provide funds for the purchase of materials. The Texas Collection and Baylor University are deeply indebted to Drs. and Mrs. Ayrenes for their philanthropy.

The Texas Collection is planning a year-long celebration in honor of our 90 years serving the university and the great state of Texas. The celebration began with an exhibit on Jules Bledsoe and New Hope Baptist Church and continues with a March 19 lecture on the Brazos River by Dr. Kenna Lang Archer. Please check our website for additional 90th Anniversary Celebration information throughout the year.

-John Wilson

Map exhibits and vendors alike praise Tanner's work for the extraordinary detail manifested in his drawings of the Rocky Mountains, the Mississippi and Missouri River valleys and the Columbia River Basin. Tanner's unique work to include Canada as well as the newly formed nations of the Caribbean and Central America. The map illustrates two waterways, one rumored to flow from the mythical lakes of Timpanagos and Teguayo. The map, with measurements of 39 x 44 inches, was issued as a separate entity and was also bound in four sheets into Tanner's New American Atlas (1823).

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Tanner map courtesy

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