

rchivists

Fall 1990

Published by the Tennessee Archivists



Old Settlers' Day, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, ca. 1938; Conservation Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives



## ARCHIVISTS Editorial

Certification. Is it the new wave of professionalism sweeping over the cloistered world of the archivist, or a new and unnecessary, albeit expensive, fad? What can certification do for us? What should it be expected to do? Should we even bother concerning ourselves about it?

There has been much dissatisfaction with both the process and the standards set for certification. There has been much disagreement over the necessity or even the desirability of certification.

The point has been made that certification should be the last step in setting professional standards, not the first. Education should be the first. However, there is no institution in the state of Tennessee that trains archivists. Archivists follow in the great tradition of the Nineteenth Century when men like Lincoln learned a profession by "reading" or studying under someone who was already practicing that profession. Similarly, archivists become archivists by being archivists. In an age of specialization, such rugged individualism and personal accountability is more often than not a serious disadvantage when competing against formalized training of any sort. We have paid the price for our rugged individualism in reduced opportunities for employment and promotion.

My frustration with this situation prompted the following letter in regard to the advertised position in the "Classified" section on page 7.

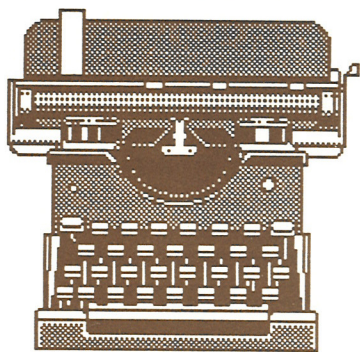
Jill Keally, Head  
Library Personnel Office  
The University of Tennessee Libraries  
Knoxville, Tn.

Dear Ms. Keally,

*I recently noticed your advertisement for the position of Project Archivist. One of the requirements that I must question is the insistence on an MLS degree.*

*By requiring an MLS, you have automatically disqualified more than half of the practicing archivists in the state of Tennessee. Furthermore, while an MLS may be some assurance of competence in librarianship, it is no guarantee of competence as an archivist.*

*I have been a professional archivist for nearly nine years. In that time I have known many fine archivists who have come into the profession via librarianship. Any of them can tell you that putting a librarian in an archives is not unlike going to the dentist to be fitted for glasses. They are two completely distinct and separate professions:*



*For one profession to impose its standards upon another is an injustice, but for an institution as respected and as admired as the state university to perpetuate that injustice is inexcusable.*

Sincerely,

Mancil M. Johnson  
Certified Archivist

A similar letter was sent regarding the position in Jonesboro, advertised in the last issue of ARCHIVISTS. There has been no response to either letter.

Certification may indeed be putting the cart before the horse. Instead of asking "What can certification do for us?" perhaps we should be asking ourselves, "What is an archivist, what training, what skills, what education should we be bringing into the profession?"

Certification will not answer these questions. However, until we can establish a system of training archivists in the state of Tennessee, certification remains the clearest evidence of professionalism to the outside world.

If we wish to control our own professional destiny, if we wish to be able to find jobs within our own profession, then we must establish a formal system of training the next generation of archivists.

We cannot depend on the Society of American Archivists to do this for us. They have their own agenda.

We cannot depend upon the Southern Archivists Conference to do this for us. Well-intentioned though they may be, they are just getting started.

We are on our own.

Archivists may well be the last of the rugged individualists. We seek those jobs that demand a tolerance for solitude and personal independence. In this matter, however, we must work together. We must regulate ourselves, or others will surely do it for us. Nothing less than the survival of the profession is at stake. ☒

## From the President

The plans for the fall meeting in Cookeville, October 18-19, 1990, are on my mind these days. Frankly, I have nightmares about it. In my dreams, the presenters sing long songs and perform acrobatic dances — very badly. I

promise that in Cookeville you will not get a song and dance routine, but rather two days when you can meet

with your fellow professionals to exchange ideas and to listen to informed presentations. The program includes a tour of the Appalachian Center for Crafts (with craft demonstrations by artisans) and sessions in grant writing, oral history projects and photographic collections in Tennessee. The meeting will be preceded by a workshop on disaster preparedness and recovery which is being coordinated by the Education Committee chaired by Carol Roberts. I hope that many of you can come in October.

The Southern Archivists Conference will be hosting a breakfast for its members attending the Society





of American Archivists meeting in Seattle. Dwayne Cox asked SAA for mailing labels for all meeting registrants from Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee so that individual notices can be sent about the SAC breakfast. Dwayne plans to distribute to those attending the breakfast the revised enabling document for SAC. The most recent draft of the revised document is in agreement with the ideas expressed among members at the Tennessee State meeting last spring. You will be kept informed of the progress of the governing committee's revision of the enabling document through our newsletter.

The agenda for the fall business meeting will include a report on the process for acquiring tax exempt status, news from the Southern Archivists Conference and, most importantly, the election of officers for 1990-1991. I want to thank the members of the nominating committee for their work in selecting the slate of nominees. The nominating committee consisted of Ken Fieth, Barbra Flannery, and Ned Irwin. The committee's nominations for officers are as follows:

Vice-President/President-Elect: Carol Roberts, Tennessee State Library and Archives  
Secretary: Michele Fagan, Mississippi Valley Collection, Memphis State University  
Treasurer: David McWhirter, Disciples of Christ Historical Society

James Lloyd, Curator of Special Collections at the University of Tennessee, will assume the office of President at the conclusion of the business meeting. Mancil Johnson will continue as the newsletter editor.

It has been an honor to serve as president of Tennessee Archivists this past year. The task was made much easier by the willingness of the membership to contribute ideas and advice and to work with the various committees towards the goals of the organization. I am confident that future presidents will find the same spirit of cooperation that I experienced this year. I hope that all of you realize my appreciation for your continued efforts.

Norma Thomas  
Johnson City  
August 8, 1990



## Words to live by

These bits of wisdom have been attributed to any number of people. Regardless of where they came from, they may provide some food for thought. Enjoy!

When in doubt, throw it out.

What's backlog is prologue; or, there are no temporary solutions.

Garbage is garbage, no matter how long you keep it.

If you've seen one archives, you've seen them all.

If it doesn't fit in a box, fold it; if you can't fold it, toss it.

The thoroughness of appraisal is inversely proportional to the remaining space.

## The Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board Seeks Grant

The Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board has received a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from the National Historic Records and Publications Commission to cover meeting and travel expenses for the Board. The grant is for a two-year period.

The Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board, working through the Tennessee State Library and Archives, has also applied for a \$40,000 grant from the NHPRC to undertake a one-year, statewide assessment of historical records. The project, if funded, would begin July 1, 1991, and would provide funds for one additional full-time person in the State Library and Archives to work with the Local Records Coordinator and other personnel in assessing the status of historical records in state and local government and in other repositories throughout the state. Most other states have undertaken such a study and have published reports of those studies which in turn serve as guides for the management and preservation of historical records.

The members of the State Historical Records Advisory Board are:

**Rachael Davis**  
Rt. 2, Box 39  
Hartsville, TN 37074  
Term Expires 11/21/90

**Marvin Downing**  
University of Tennessee at Martin  
Martin, TN 38238-5023  
Term Expires 11/21/90

**Edwin S. Gleaves**  
State Librarian and Archivist  
403 7th Ave. N.  
Nashville, TN 37219  
Term Expires 11/21/92

**Herbert Harper**  
Executive Director  
Tennessee Historical Commission  
701 Broadway  
Nashville, TN 37219-5237  
Term Expires 11/21/91

**Joanne Cullom Moore**  
Corona  
Frenchmans' Bayou, AR 72338  
Term Expires 11/21/90

**Elizabeth White**  
P.O. Box 533  
Pulaski, TN 38478

**Edwin Williams**  
Professor of English  
East Tennessee State University  
Johnson City, TN 37601  
Term Expires 11/21/91





# Spotlight on ...

## University Archives, Tennessee Tech

**Address:** University Archives, Box 5066, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN 38505 Telephone: (615)372-3537

**Parking:** University Parking — Visitors permits available from Safety and Security.

**Access:** The University Archives is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.

**Restrictions:** There are no restrictions on the bulk of the collections in the Tennessee Tech Archives.

**Copy Facilities:** Copying machines are in another area. Patrons may copy materials if accompanied by a staff member. Copies are 5¢.

**Major Subjects:** The bulk of the holdings concentrate on Tennessee Tech and the Upper Cumberland Region.

**Holdings:** The University Archives contains more than 1800 linear feet of materials, including books, maps and blueprints, audio and video tapes, pamphlets, manuscript collections, government documents and photographs.

**Accession Policy:** Tennessee Tech University Archives accepts materials related to the university, the region, the state and the nation.

**Director:** Mancil Johnson, Archivist

The University Archives at Tennessee Tech began with a gift. In the Bicentennial Summer of 1976, Congressman Joe L. Evins contemplated retirement after thirty years in Congress and over four decades in public life. No doubt the thought of sitting on his front porch in Smithville and practicing a little law in DeKalb County's new courthouse (a courthouse he had helped win the appropriation for) appealed to him.

He was faced with a monumental problem, however. For three decades he had kept his congressional, constituent and personal correspondence, speeches, souvenirs, legislation, campaign papers and the thousand and one things that a congressman needs. The resulting stack of materials was indeed monumental.

Being a man who understood the value of primary evidence, Evins tried without success to establish a Joe L. Evins Congressional Library and Museum in his hometown. By the late 1970's, however, he had come to the harsh realization that a retired congressman has only a fraction of

the clout that a sitting one can command. Times were hard in the Upper Cumberland as recession became a common term and an even more common fact of life. In late 1977 Evins abandoned his plans for a library in Smithville and donated the materials and memorabilia of his life to Tennessee Tech, an institution he had shown great interest in over the years.

Over the remaining seven years of his life, Evins continued to send materials to Tech. At the time of his death in 1984, the bulk of the Joe L. Evins Collection was at Tennessee Tech, although materials have continued to come in ever since.

In January 1985, Mancil Johnson was hired as project archivist on a temporary two-year appointment. By the summer of 1986, the position had become permanent and in 1988 was upgraded to faculty status.

The Evins Collection forms the core of the University Archives. After nearly two years of processing, the collection was pared down to 600 linear feet of manuscripts, 1000 pieces of memorabilia, 300 volumes, 5000 photographs, 78

scrapbooks and the original furniture from the Congressman's Washington office.



Other collections include the papers of the University Presidents (1915-1980), the records of the Campus School (an elementary school operated by the university for the benefit of faculty and staff), the scrapbooks of Coach P.V. Overall, who taught at Tech from 1923 to 1962, and the papers of numerous departments and divisions. The most heavily used university collection is the Photographic Services Collection, which consists of over 150 linear feet of slides, prints and negatives documenting the history of the university.

The Disabled Veterans of World War I Papers document a time in the history of the university when Tech's survival was in question. In the late 'teens, Poly (as Tech was derisively called) was in serious hot water politically. Several older and more established schools questioned the need for a college in Cookeville. The flood of disabled veterans returning to school for vocational rehabilitation proved conclusively the need for a technological university in Tennessee.



One of the most interesting collections in the archives belongs to Dr. Sidney McGee. As a coal miner in West Virginia, McGee was drafted during World War I and sent to Europe with the army of occupation. While there he fell in love with the language and culture of France. Upon his discharge McGee went to college and eventually earned his doctorate in French. McGee came to Tech as a founding member of the language department. During his frequent trips to Europe, he took copious notes and hundreds of photographs. Chronicled in his collection is a fascinating glimpse of Europe between the wars.

Other collections include the Sgt. Alvin York Papers, the Harding Studio Collection, oral history tapes, university publications, the papers of retired faculty, the Burntstand Cemetery Collection and the music of legendary old time fiddler, Frazier Moss.





# Tennessee Archivists Fall Meeting

Holiday Inn,  
Cookeville, Tennessee  
October 18-19, 1990

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## Thursday, October 18

12:00 – 1:00 Registration

1:00 – 1:15 Welcome — President Angelo Volpe, Tennessee Technological University

1:15 – 3:00 **Oral History and the Archives** — Explores the benefits and problems of oral history collections for archives. Participants will present both the archivist's and the researcher's perspective.

"The Folklorist's Perspective" — Patricia Atkinson Wells, Middle Tennessee State University

"Getting a Project Started" — Marilyn Bell Hughes, Tennessee State Library and Archives

"Care and Storage of Audio and Video Collections" — Bruce Nemerov, Audio Archivist for the  
Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University

"Angels of Professionals: The Experience of Army Nurses During World War II" — Michele  
Fagan, Mississippi Valley Collection

"Industrial Work in East Tennessee: The Experiences of Rayon Plant Workers, 1940–1990"  
— Marie Tedesco, Archives of Appalachia

"Historical Experiences in Traditional Narrative" — Laura C. Jarman, Asst. Professor of  
English, Middle Tennessee State University

3:00 – 3:30 Break

3:30 – 4:00 Business Meeting

5:00 – 6:30 Craft Demonstration and Tour, Appalachian Center for Crafts

6:30 Dinner — Following dinner, entertainment will feature the Clusterpluckers

## Friday, October 19

9:00 – 10:15 **Photographs of Tennessee** — Through a presentation of slides, Tennessee's heritage will be examined through featured photographic collections

"Photographic Heritage of Tennessee" — Connie Burkhalter, Tennessee State Library and  
Archives

"James E. Thompson Photograph Collection" — Steve Cotham, McClung Historical Collection,  
Knoxville

"Overview of Collections" — Strawberry Luck, Photographic Archives, Vanderbilt University



**10:15 – 10:45 Break**

**10:45 – 12:00 Grant Writing**— An introduction to the grant-writing process with advice for the archivist who may be undertaking a grant project — William Goodwin, Vice President for Research, Tennessee Technological University

**12:00 TOUR** — A tour of the Tennessee Tech University Archives will be conducted for interested participants. To get to the archives, get off I-40 at Exit 286 and go 3 miles to the Tennessee Tech Campus. Turn right at the Tennessee Tech sign and go to the first stop sign. The Tennessee Tech Library is to your immediate left facing you. Parking in the back will be arranged. The archives is in Room 100.

## Pre-Conference Workshop on Disaster Planning and Disaster Recovery

A special pre-conference workshop in disaster planning and recovery will be offered on Thursday morning. The instructor, Mary Samples, Conservator Principal for Kentucky Library and Archives, will direct the program in how to develop disaster plans and recovery techniques. Ms. Samples works with Kentucky's Disaster Planning and Recovery Team, which assists local records groups in disaster preparedness.

Representatives from disaster recovery firms will explain their activities and the services that are available to archival repositories. Floods, fires and even earthquakes can be devastating for any archives. Whether it be a small leak in the plumbing or a major fire, the losses can be reduced by planning ahead and being prepared.

The workshop will be from 9:00 to 12:00, Thursday, October 18, 1990, at the Holiday Inn in Cookeville, TN. The registration fee is \$15.00.

## Hotel and Reservation Information

**Holiday Inn (615) 526-7125**

**Sparta Road (S. Jefferson)**

**Cookeville, TN 38501**

**Room Rates: \$33 + tax, state rate – single  
\$58 + tax, regular rate**

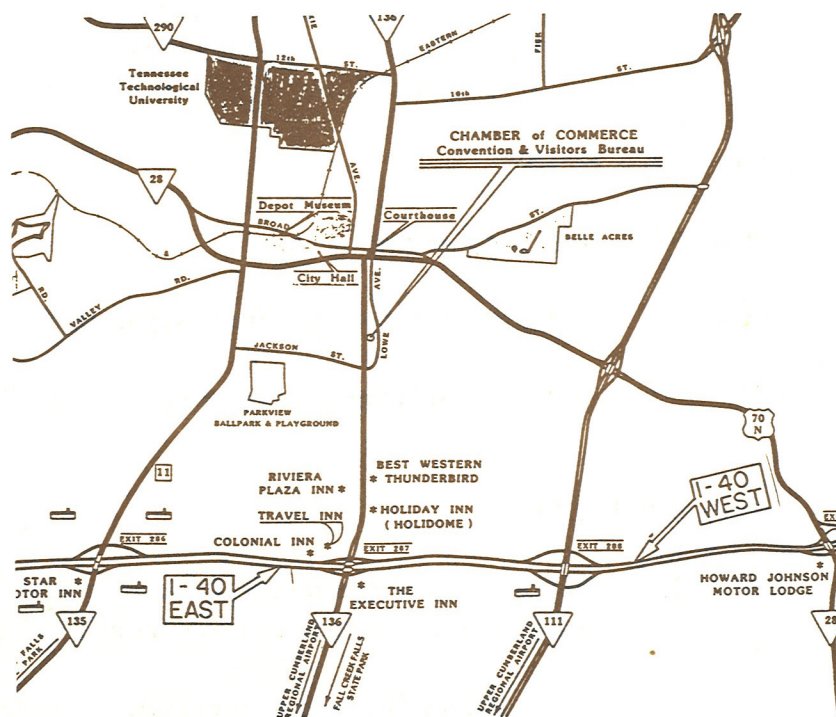
A block of rooms have been reserved for October 17 and 18, 1990. Please make reservations with Holiday Inn by October 4, 1990. Other hotels in the area are:

Best Western/Thunderbird	\$30 single room	526-7155
Colonial Inn	\$25 single room	528-2020
Econolodge	\$29 single room	528-1511
Executive Inn	\$30 single room	528-1040
Howard Johnsons	\$26 single room	526-3333
Riviera Plaza Inn	\$30 single room	526-9521
Scottish Inns	\$25 single room	528-5411
Star Motor Inn	\$24 single room	526-9511

All numbers are in 615 area code. Prices do not include tax. Double occupancy and double rooms will be slightly higher. All hotels offer state rates which will be slightly lower than the price quoted.

Holiday Inn will also be the site of the Tennessee Archivist Meeting and pre-conference workshop on disaster planning and response.

## Map





## Registration for Tennessee Archivists

The Fall 1990 Tennessee Archivists' Meeting and pre-conference workshop on disaster planning and recovery will be held in Cookeville at the Holiday Inn on October 18 and 19. Please complete this registration form and return it immediately. PLEASE NOTE: Reservations for accommodations must be made directly with the Holiday Inn by October 4, 1990. Hotel addresses and reservation information are on the preceding page.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

### PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP

Workshop on disaster planning and recovery.

# \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Tennessee Archivists Meeting

# \_\_\_\_\_ x \$35 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### DINNER

\_\_\_\_\_ Please check to indicate that you will be eating dinner at the Appalachian Center for Crafts. Dinner at the Craft Center is included in the cost of registration. Guests are welcome. Dinner for non-registered guests is \$10.00.

# of guests \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### TOUR OF TENNESSEE TECH ARCHIVES

Please indicate whether or not you are interested in going on the tour.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I will be able to tour the archives.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I will not be able to tour the archives.

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Return this registration form, with enclosed check for total amount made payable to  
*Tennessee Archivists*, to:

Mancil Johnson

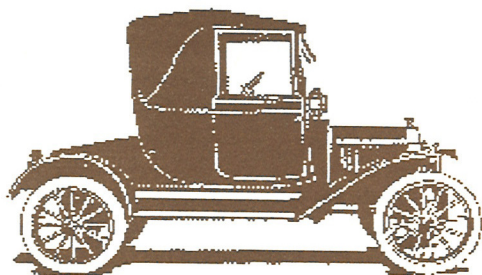
Box 5066

Tennessee Technological University

Cookeville, TN 38505



## Conferences



### Tennessee Archivists Fall Meeting Holiday Inn, Cookeville, TN October 18 and 19, 1990

A pre-conference workshop on disaster preparedness and disaster recovery will be offered from 9:00 to 12:00, Thursday, October 18. The fee for the workshop will be \$15.00.

Sessions at the Fall Meeting will include "Oral History and the Archivist," "Tennessee's Photographic Heritage," a seminar on grant writing and our annual election of officers, as well as dinner at the Appalachian Center for Crafts, craft demonstrations and live music. The registration fee is \$35.00.

### Archival Workshop, Rugby, TN September 8, 1990, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM EST

Featured speakers will be Connie Burkhalter, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, who will present a slide talk on "Preservation and Management of Photographic Collections," and Carol Roberts, also of the State Archives, who will speak on "Basic Paper Conservation Techniques."

The workshop will also offer opportunities for hands-on experience in conservation. Mancil Johnson, archivist at Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, and Pearl Cantrell, archivist at Historic Rugby, will comment on their respective archives. Participants will be able to tour Rugby's Hughes Library which contains rare books, as well as the new archives and research center in the Board of Aid Building.

A registration fee of \$5.00 will cover the cost of materials. Lunch may be purchased at the Narrow Road Cafe, which specializes in British Isles and Cumberland Plateau cooking. For more information, call Pearl Cantrell, archivist at (615) 628-2991.



### The 50th Anniversary Meeting of the American Association of State and Local History

Washington D.C., September 4-8, 1990. Workshops will be offered September 4 and 5, 1990. Subjects include photograph identification and conservation, security, how to get an NEF grant, preservation of historic sites, Black History and interactive videos as interpretive tools.

Sessions include designing exhibits, trusteeship and the law, historic music, targeting tourism and developing a marketing strategy for historic repositories. Tours include trips to Baltimore, MD, and Georgetown, Alexandria and Richmond, VA, as well as visits to the National Capitol, photo collections in Washington D.C. and archaeological sites around the District of Columbia.

Registration is \$215.00. Workshops average from \$30.00 to \$70.00. Tours range from \$8.00 to \$45.00. ☒

## NHPRC Fellowships

The National Historic Publications and Records Commission is beginning the search for two candidates for their 1991-1992 Fellowships in Archival Administration. Two host institutions will be selected by November 1, 1990. At that time applications will be made available for those interested parties with two to five years experience.

Deadline for applications will be February 1, 1991. One candidate will be chosen to work in a university archives and one will work in a state archives. The fellows will have active, hands-on experience in administration and management.

Candidates will be notified of acceptance by the host institution. The Fellowship will begin September 1, 1991. In an effort to make the fellowship more attractive, NHPRC has raised the fellows' stipends from \$28,000 to \$35,000, with a benefit payment of \$7,000. ☒

## Legislative Update

House Bill Number 2219, Governor McWherter's obscenity bill, has been challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union on constitutional grounds. The controversial law, which was passed two days before the last legislative session ended, makes it illegal to publicly display

## Archivists

is a quarterly publication of the Tennessee Archivists. Members of the society and others are encouraged to submit brief articles, information on acquisitions, openings, publications, staff, exhibits, special programs and grant projects for inclusion in *Archivists*. The editor appreciates your suggestions and comments about the content and style of *Archivists*. Send materials to: Mancil Johnson, University Archives, Tennessee Technological University, P.O. Box 5066, Cookeville, TN 38505.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance, concern, advice and contributions: Connie Burkhalter, Pearl Cantrell, Ken Fieth, Ed Gleaves, Gene Hollars, Greg Poole, Carol Roberts and Jean Waggoner. I am especially grateful to Kandy Smith of the Tennessee Tech Media Center for computer assistance and Laura Clemons of Tech News Services for technical advice. Without them I'd still be staring at the blank computer disc. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to outgoing president Norma Thomas for her tolerance, patience and hard work. Thanks Norma. You've earned some rest. Enjoy your "retirement." If you see something you like in this issue, it's most likely to have been inspired by one of these people. Any mistakes are solely my own.

materials which may be "harmful to minors" even though legal for adults. The law also provides for the creation of separate standards for each of the 31 judicial districts in the state instead of setting up statewide standards.

The ACLU's lawsuit, filed on behalf of Davis-Kidds Booksellers, Mills Bookstore, Austin Periodical Services and five national trade groups, claims that the law is a violation of their First Amendment rights to disseminate constitutionally protected books, magazines and videos. ☒



# Preserving Photographs

By Connie Burkhalter

The inventions of Louis Daguerre, George Eastman and others gave the world magical images which link us to the past as no other medium. Obtaining a collection of photographs is exciting, yet requires unique preservation techniques and knowledge.

The first, and probably foremost, consideration which should be undertaken when handling such a collection is environment. The combination of high relative humidity and high temperature is one of the worst environmental hazards for photographs and negatives. Extreme fluctuations in relative humidity and temperature result in stresses and strains in the materials that comprise photographs, inducing deterioration. Maintain a storage environment with a relative humidity between 30-40% (+ or - 2%) and temperature at 65 °F (+ or - 2°F).

Light damage is most often a result of poor display and handling conditions. Daylight and unfiltered fluorescent light which contain concentrations of blue and ultraviolet light are the most damaging. Control of light exposure reduces damage to photographs which are frequently handled or exhibited. This includes filtering light sources in areas where the materials are stored and handled, and using low-intensity, incandescent light for displaying photographs. Following conservation recommendations using proper lighting (shielded of low UV fluorescent or incandescent, 50 lux or less, or UV component less than 75 microwatts per lumen—Rempel), limited exposure, and maintaining proper environment during storage can reduce the rate of deterioration.

The air quality within the storage environment should be examined. Internal and external pollutants can be controlled with effort. The regular inspection of filters and a filter replacement and maintenance program will be an important aid to overall environmental conditions. However, a serious look at the storage location may resolve future problems. Chemical deterioration can result from external pollution,

which may not be eliminated with the air filtering system attached to your storage area, or from internal gases released by cellulose nitrate collections or electrostatic copy machines. Also, particles suspended in the air cause a physical hazard to the sensitive materials when handled. Therefore, filtering of outside air before it enters the storage environment and filtering recycled air is important. Eliminate the hazard of exposure to dangerous ozone by removing electrostatic copy machines from within or outside the area housing photographic material. The use of housecleaning chemicals within storage areas should be reviewed, if not eliminated, because the chemical interchange with silver-based image materials can cause irreversible damage.



The quality of storage materials for photographs and negatives is as important as any attempt to control environmental conditions. The results of poor quality storage products or display materials are evident in most collections.

Storage materials should conform to the requirements of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) PH1.53-1984. These accelerated aging tests have proven that not all products marketed as "acid-free" and "archival" meet these requirements. Choose storage materials carefully, using reputable products and supplies.

On most photographic materials, use non-buffered paper enclosures which are acid- and lignin-free. The exception is materials which emit gases or become acidic, as cellulose nitrate based materials. In this case use buffered paper materials. The alkaline buffering aids against the natural acidic deterioration of the nitrate materials. Conservators recommend that when using paper enclosures, use the four-flap enclosure which allows support with no adhesives in the construction of the envelope.

Plastic sleeves for housing photographic materials are desirable for the convenience of viewing the image without removing it. However, the use of only three plastic products is acceptable. These are polyester, polyethylene and cellulose triacetate. It is important that the type of plastic products used be specified and not substituted; for example, polyester products should meet the specifications of Mylar Type D or Melinex 516. A common plastic

used for photographic storage, particularly in the form of 35 mm pages, is polyvinyl or PVC. This plastic is not safe for long-term storage and should be avoided. Also, use caution with frosted plastics; some have an abrasive coating which will scratch the emulsion of photographic materials.

Each photograph and negative should have its own enclosure and be stored in appropriate archival boxes, shielded from light and dust. Storage arrangement includes shelving and cabinets of metal with a baked enamel finish. Wood shelving, finished or unfinished, is not acceptable as the gases emitted from the wood will cause damage to the materials.

When choosing enclosures, consider how frequently the material will be handled, the method of storage (flat or vertical), and the type of photographic process with which you are dealing. Each process, positive or negative, is composed of a layered structure. There is a support layer of paper, glass, metal, etc. The composition and chemical components of the layer determines the type of process. Identification of the process is important in determining long-term storage and handling techniques. Early processes such as daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and glass plates require storage enclosures and shelving which are adequate to support the materials. Some processes are more susceptible to light damage or chemical deterioration. And, as mentioned above, deteriorating cellulose nitrate materials can cause accelerated degradation within a collection which would otherwise be of stable material.

An in-depth overview of early photographic processes is thoroughly explained in Care and Identification of 19th Century Photographic Prints by James Reilly. This publication and the identification chart which is included could be an asset to anyone working with photographic collections.



Stressing the importance of properly handling a collection is essential. Safe handling is a skill which comes with recognizing the fragile nature of photographic materials and proceeding slowly with caution. Basic practices for handling are clean hands, a clean and adequate work space, never touching the print surfaces, handling the materials carefully with both hands and using clean white cotton gloves whenever possible. However, if original material is used,





proper support and protection of the photograph or negative should be provided. Use of fragile or damaged images should be restricted until they are stabilized.

Maintaining proper environment and storage, implementing safe handling practices, monitoring the collections for deterioration and providing preservation and/or conservation services are essential for the well-being of our photographic heritage.

For more information:

Care and Identification of 19th Century Photographic Prints, James Reilly and Constance McCabe.

The Care of Photographs, Siegfried Rempel.

Life of a Photograph, Laurence E. Keefe, Jr., and Dennis Inch.

The Keepers of Light, William Crawford.



## Nitrate: A Fire Waiting to Happen?

Working with photographic collections has an undeniable fascination, but it also has its share of headaches, one of the worst being the presence of nitrate film. Nitrate, or more properly, cellulose nitrate was first used in the 1890s and was marketed until 1951, although some examples can be found as recently as 1962.

Nitrate is highly unstable. It has been known to self-ignite at temperatures as low as 120 °F, although most nitrate fires have involved motion picture film or x-ray film. As nitrate film deteriorates it releases nitrogen dioxide which combines with the moisture in the air to create nitric acid. This will damage any material stored near it.

Nitrate film should be removed as soon as it is identified and stored separately until it can be copied and properly disposed of.

While there are several methods of identifying nitrate, perhaps the simplest involves burning a small piece of film. If it is safety film, it will burn slowly and with a great deal of smoke. Nitrate burns quickly with a bright, smokeless flame. It is accompanied by an acrid odor not unlike the smell of burning hair.

While this method is not foolproof, it does remain the least expensive method of testing nitrate. ☒

## State News

According to the Academy of Certified Archivists, Tennessee boasts twelve Certified Archivists. They are: Jane B. Alderfer, Carl Kenneth Fieth, Ellen B. Garrison, Sara J. Harwell, James M. Jean, Mancil M. Johnson, Virginia Reavis Lyle, Doris K. Martinson, Sally K. Ripatti, Bill Summers, Lexie Jean Brown Waggoner and Marice Moylan Wolfe. ARCHIVISTS wishes to congratulate these people on their commitment to the archival profession.

**CANDIDATES ANNOUNCED** — The Tennessee Archivists Nominating Committee has announced a slate of officers to stand for election at the fall meeting at Cookeville. They are: Carol Roberts (Vice-President/President-Elect), Michele Fagan (Secretary), and David McWhirter (Treasurer). The nominating committee was: Ken Fieth, Chair; Barbra Flannery and Ned Irwin.

**TSLA** — The Local Records Microfilming Program at TSLA has been terminated due to major budget reductions. Under the direction of Gene Hollars and Horace Blades, this program completed the micro-filming of bound court records in all ninety-one of Tennessee's non-metropolitan counties through 1950, and was well into the 1950-85 phase of the program. Grundy County's courthouse records were micro-

filmed a few months before the disastrous fire of May 1990.

Tom Turley, former Local Records Coordinator at TSLA, has taken a position with the National Archives in Washington. His position as Local Records Coordinator was originally part of the microfilming program. This position has been retained, despite the discontinuation of the micro-filming program. The new coordinator will be appointed later this year and will work with the statewide historical records assessment program that should be funded later this year by a NHPRC grant.

**DUES** — David McWhirter would like to remind you that now is a good time to pay your dues if you have not already done so. Simply fill out the form on the last page of this newsletter, make your \$10.00 check out to "Tennessee Archivists" and mail to: David McWhirter  
Disciples of Christ Historical Society  
1101 19th Ave. South  
Nashville, TN 37212

Due to the increased cost of the newsletter, we will no longer be able to mail copies of ARCHIVIST to non-dues-paying members. If you have not paid your dues in two or more years, you will be dropped from our mailing list after this issue. Get those dues in. There are some exciting times ahead for Tennessee Archivist. You don't want to miss out on them! ☒

## Classified

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, seeks an archivist for a two-year appointment. Duties will include management of the University archives, organization of a collection development policy, reference assistance and the supervision of student library personnel. The position requires an MLS from an ALA-accredited school, formal archival education with a minimum of 3 years of professional archives experience, excellent organizational and communication skills, knowledge of records management principles and familiarity with archival preservation techniques. Salary is \$25,000-\$28,000. For further information, write: Jill Keally, Head  
Library Personnel Office  
The University of Tennessee Libraries  
1015 Volunteer Blvd.  
Knoxville, TN 37996-1000 ☒

## From the Bookshelf

The Management of Archives, T.R. Schellenberg, published by the National Archives. \$15.00 (softcover only), order number 200054. Send all orders to: National Archives Trust Fund, NEPS Dept. 724, P.O. Box 100793, Atlanta, GA 30384

The Daguerrotype: A Sesquicentennial Celebration, John Wood. \$42.50, order number CCU1001H from Light Impressions, 439 Monroe Ave., Rochester, NY 14607-3717

Seeing the Elephant: Raw Recruits at the Battle of Shiloh, \$39.95, Greenwood Press, Incl, 88 Post Road W, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881. ☒



## Invitation

Tennessee Archivists invites membership from all persons interested in Tennessee's archives and historical resources. Membership is on a calendar-year basis. TA holds two meetings each year. The spring meeting includes the annual business meeting and is held in Middle Tennessee. The fall meetings are alternately held in East and West Tennessee. TA publishes a quarterly newsletter and invites contributions from members and non-members. Officers are elected at the spring meeting.

### Tennessee Archivists Membership Form

Enclosed is my check for membership in the Tennessee Archivists as a:

Full member (\$10 per year): \_\_\_\_\_

Association member (\$3 per year): \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional member (\$10 per year): \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is this your home \_\_\_\_\_ or business \_\_\_\_\_ address?

Please make checks payable to Tennessee Archivists and mail to:

David McWhirter

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