

STA 2014 Annual Meeting In Review

**Accidentally on Purpose:
Acquisition, Care, and Promotion of Unusual or
Specialized Collections**



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Editors' Message

Andrea Fowler



Andrea Fowler

Greetings Tennessee Archivists,

Welcome to the latest STA newsletter!

Included in this issue are articles by two of our wonderful members, Melissa Barker and Jean Rushing, a review of October's annual meeting, and the dates and location for STA's 2015 meeting, which will take place at Pickwick Landing State Park. Also, make sure to fill out the STA membership form and send it in (with your check) if you have not done that this year. After attending a conference, such as the STA meeting in October, I always feel inspired to do a wide variety of activities in my archives, such as creating awesome exhibits with associated online guides, applying for multiple grants, and implementing every archives software program imaginable. Then reality sets in, and I get a little discouraged about how much I am able to accomplish and how many tasks are still to be accomplished. However, I recently read a book, *The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository* by Christina Zamon, which inspired me to give myself a little bit of a break and refocus on what is essential for a "lone arranger" to do in a small archives. I am continuing to pursue my "big dreams" on a much more realistic basis, but I am also focused on the essential tasks of organizing the materials in Trevecca's archives and making them as accessible to researchers as possible. While attending future conferences, I will celebrate and admire your talents and successful projects but also keep my expectations for myself in check so that I can continue to enjoy the fact that I am blessed enough to have a job that I love coming to (almost) every day. I hope each of you is able to give yourself the same "break."

Andrea Fowler

Co-Editor, Tennessee Archivist

Trevecca Nazarene University Nashville

President's Message

Susan Knight Gore

Greetings. I hope everyone kept warm and safe during our recent escapade with the Arctic vortex. I hope that 2015 will be a great year both for all Society of Tennessee Archivists members and your respective archives.

We seem to live in a time when the appreciation of archival collections is beginning to catch the imagination of the general public. Television programs like *Who Do You Think You Are?* and the *Genealogy Roadshow* expose millions of persons who might otherwise have lived their lives oblivious to the importance of archives. While the reason for their interest might begin as entirely self-centered, we must be ready to cultivate them as a potential army of vocal archival enthusiasts as well as for their financial support and the very real potential of previously unimagined materials they might bring to us.

2014 was particularly rewarding for me personally and for the Historical Foundation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America as we facilitated the celebration of 125 years of ordained clergy women. Kentucky's Louisa M. Woosley was the first woman ordained anywhere in the Presbyterian tradition, an event in which we take great pride and which we celebrated all year long. We are pleased to have her papers and regalia in the Archives.

The Archives for the Cumberland Presbyterian denominations is relatively small. We have one full-time employee (myself), one part time student worker, and one occasional part time worker, yet we accomplish quite a bit with our limited resources. With as little as we have, however, I realize that our resources are opulent compared to some "small shops." In 2015 and ongoing, I'd like to see us, as a society and archival professionals, reach out to the one-person operations and include them in the larger archival community. Perhaps even a society membership is beyond their budgetary limitations; you might consider providing a gift membership.

Our 2014 Annual STA Meeting: *Accidentally on Purpose: Acquisition, Care, & Promotion of Unusual or Specialized Collections*, took place at the Fogelman Executive Center on the University of Memphis campus from October 15-17, and was, I think, very enlightening and great fun. Although not without the occasional hiccup, conference attendees seemed to like the diverse panels and the conference location. We were particularly pleased to have participation from outside of Tennessee, namely from Alabama and Arkansas.

This year we will convene at Pickwick Landing State Park from October 21-23 with the theme *Information Central: Archives, Education, and Outreach*. It is certainly not too early to consider submitting a topic for the conference nor to promote the event to your colleagues including those in related disciplines. Remember, those persons presenting need not be STA members. I would be particularly pleased if we can broaden participation from within Tennessee while continuing to attract participants from other states.



Susan Knight Gore

Susan Knight Gore

President,

SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE ARCHIVISTS

Vice-President's Message

Gerald Chaudron

The 2014 annual meeting was my initiation into the world of STA, capped by being elected as vice-president. The meeting was a great opportunity to hear some interesting speakers and to meet members who made me feel very welcome. Not to mention the fact that my institution, the University of Memphis, was the venue, and it was a pleasure to show a group of you around our archives.

Planning has begun for the 2015 meeting, and it is not too early to start thinking about putting together a proposal for a session related to how archives relate generally to education. Expect a call soon. Annual meetings are a means to show how much fantastic work is being done in Tennessee by our members and to inspire us to do things we are not already doing. I hope this year's meeting will be both enjoyable and inspirational.



Gerald Chaudron

The devastating fire at the Van Buren County administrative offices in early January was a reminder few of us needed of how vulnerable our precious records really are. Despite the best efforts of the people who work in archives, natural forces and man-made causes can combine to destroy what we work to preserve. Fortunately, such complete destruction is rare. For me, the greater issue is the more common small emergency which few of us can escape at our archives. State and local government and other administrators will respond to large disasters but leaky roofs, burst pipes and damp basements are not seen as serious enough to warrant spending scarce funds. But small emergencies still have the potential to damage our holdings and are often repeated.

If your institution has a disaster plan, and I know that is not a given, take some time to review its contents. More than likely, it concentrates on the big disasters such as fire, flood or storm. I suggest it is also important to know how to respond to a small emergency to limit the damage and to ensure everyone knows what to do. A couple of squeegees and some plastic sheeting may make all the difference. I look forward to this year and working with the other members of the executive committee to continue STA's work. I wish you all a safe and productive year.

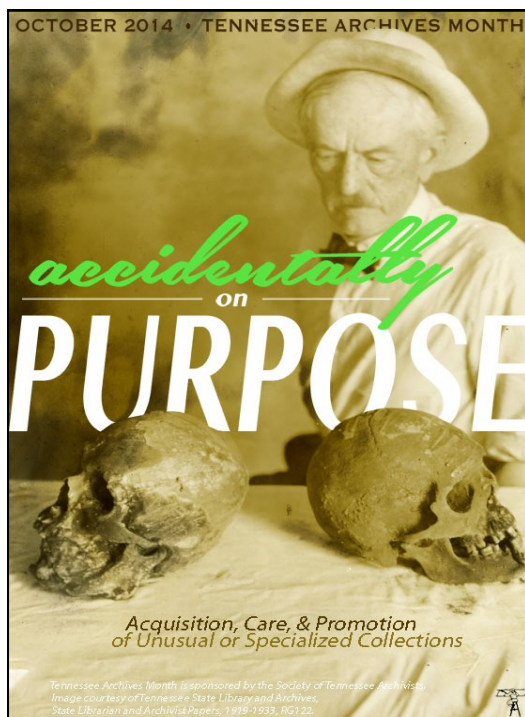
Gerald Chaudron
Vice-President,
SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE ARCHIVISTS

Tennessee Archivists

Accidentally on Purpose: 2014 Meeting

Meeting Review

The Society of Tennessee Archivists' Annual Meeting was held in Memphis, Tennessee from October 15—17, 2014. The theme was “Accidentally on Purpose: Acquisition, Care, and Promotion of Unusual or Specialized Collections.” Vincent Clark presented an informative pre-conference workshop on the digitization of paper records at the Shelby County Archives. Conference sessions focused on a range of unique topics, including documenting the history of the hearing and visually impaired, preserving and storing items related to Auburn University’s legendary poisoned oak trees, archival collections of unusual sound recordings, and the preservation and research value of comic books. There were also more traditional sessions on creating effective user-centered displays and information on applying for the grants available through the Tennessee State Library and Archives. A highlight of the conference was the tour of Special Collections at the University of Memphis given by Gerald Chaudron. The society banquet was on Thursday night and included an excellent presentation and performance by David Evans, a University of Memphis professor who specializes in American folk and popular music, particularly blues, spirituals, gospel, and African-American folk music.



Melissa Hope, representing the Hal Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, Cleveland, TN, – co-recipient of the John H. Thweatt Archival Advancement Award & David (Ralph) Sowell (2014-2015 STA President)

Tennessee Archivists

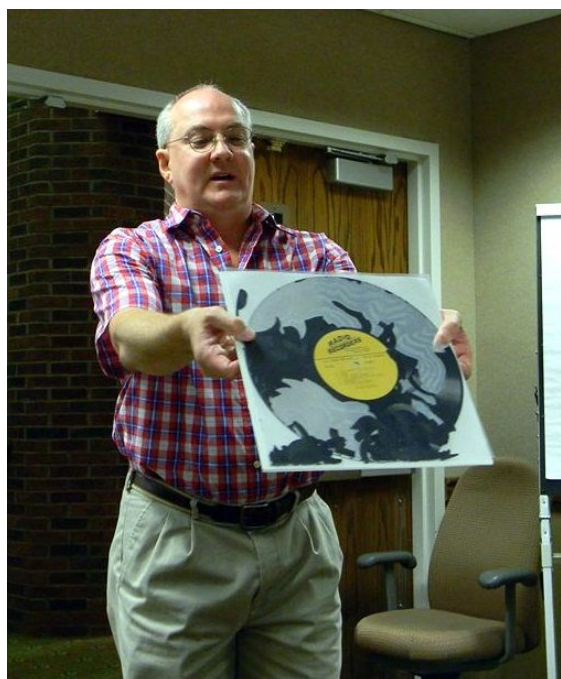
Accidentally on Purpose: 2014 Meeting



Taffey Hall (Southern Baptist Archives) presenting the STA student scholarship winners, Brittany Walker (MTSU) & Melissa Hope (MTSU), with their awards.



Matthew Gore: “Bam! Kapow! Preserving Comic Books and Why Research in Them Anyway?”



Martin Fisher (Center for Popular Music, MTSU): “Let the Music Play: Unusual Sound Recordings in the Archives”



Erin Fehr (University of Arkansas): “Noble Savages, Indian Princesses, Drunken Indians, and Vanishing Americans: Resources for Countering Stereotypes and Prejudices”

Tennessee Archivist

Article

Today In The Archives

By **Melissa Barker**

Houston County Archivist/Records Manager

The Houston County Archives came about in a most unique manner—a manner which included a local murder. I doubt there are many archives that were created because of a murder. In Houston County, TN, that is exactly what happened.

In August of 2010, a local resident was researching her family history and the murder of her great-grandfather in 1921 on a corner in downtown Erin. She found court records pertaining to the murder on microfilm at the local library; however, she really wanted to see the actual documents. She asked the local circuit court clerk where these documents could be found, and she was directed to the records vault in the basement of the courthouse. When she opened the vault door, she could not get in the room. The records were stacked to the ceiling and were blocking the door. This incident served as a call to action in the Houston County historical community and was the impetus for the birth of the Houston County Archives.

I was placed on a six-member committee tasked with saving these historical records. From the first day working on this project the members of the committee knew that we needed to create an archive to protect these irreplaceable county records. Therefore, on November 15, 2010, the Houston County Legislative Body passed legislation to establish the Houston County Archives. I was hired as the part-time archivist and records manager on February 1, 2011. At first I found the job to be quite overwhelming due to the fact that the county's records had not been archived, organized, or in any other way preserved in the county's 143-year history. One can imagine the stacks of boxes, record books, and loose papers that were stored not only in the records vault but also in the old highway department attic and even several old jail cells. It seems once we cleaned out one area we would be told of another area full of records.

The Houston County Archives' main purpose is to archive and preserve the county's permanent records and maintain temporary records until the end of their retention schedules. The archive is also a haven for historical records of all kinds pertaining to Houston County and its people. While our first priority is the county records, we are pleased to be the only repository in our county to collect and preserve historical records and artifacts.

As the county archivist, it is of primary importance to me that visitors get to see, feel, and touch history when they visit the archives. We display artifacts from many of our collections, including several exhibits of documents and artifacts in our Archives Office as well as in an off-site display at a local bank in Erin.

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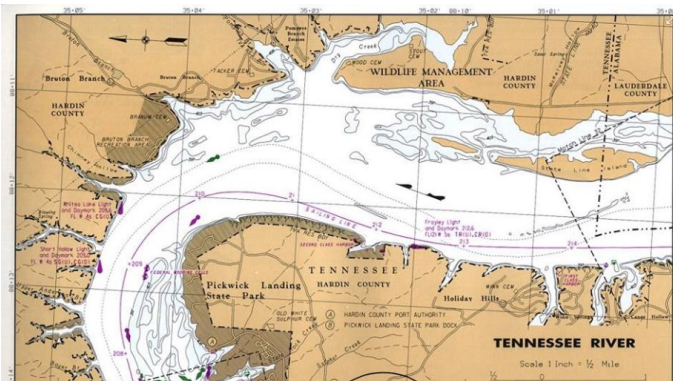
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(continued from previous page) Barker, *Today in the Archives*

In order to expand our audience, I decided to tap into social media in 2012 by creating our own Houston County Archives Facebook page. Since we come across so many interesting items in our daily work, I decided to start a “Today In The Archives” daily post where I post a scan of an interesting document or a photo of an artifact. We have had a wonderful response from our audience, as well as from the archives community. We have been recognized by the Society of Tennessee Archivists and the Tennessee State Library and Archives for our Facebook page and daily postings.

The woman looking for original documents about her murdered ancestor did find those records after we worked almost a year on cleaning out the records vault. In 2014 she was able to publish a book about the 1921 murder of Edward W. Rauscher. The book is *The Settling Place* by Ann Rauscher Smith Hagler. Ms. Hagler continues to serve our archives by being on our Archives Committee.

Our little archive in Houston County may be small, but we have a rich history. We are doing everything we can to save that history and share it with those locally and also sharing that history with the world through our daily postings on our Facebook page.



2015 STA Annual Meeting October 21—October 23 *Information Central: Archives, Education, and Outreach* Pickwick Landing State Park Counce, TN

The meeting’s theme, “Information Central: Archives, Education, and Outreach,” explores the archives as a central nexus for various forms of education and outreach. Topics covered may include avenues through which archival materials can be used as educational teaching tools in a K-12 setting, educational value of archives exhibits; and archives educational outreach relative to archival training, adult education, local history seminars, reality television shows, and genealogy instruction. Other areas of exploration may include changes in the way researchers use archives (digital collections, interactive-online, focus on visual), developing relationships with educational institutions (from K-12, college, post-graduate, or even less formal groups such as historical societies), and education opportunities available to people without formal archival training.

***A call for proposals and other updates will be posted to STA’s Facebook page and website.**

Tennessee Archivist

Article

Gendered Collections: The Case of Aubry Faulkner Jennings

By D. Jean Rushing, MA History

Graduate Assistant, MALS, Archival Studies

Archives of Appalachia, ETSU

Few events are as exciting to an archivist as receiving a new donation. Almost any archivist, even seasoned ones, displays delightful anticipation when digging through papers that researchers have yet to see. Once the processing is complete, we move on to the next set of boxes with fresh glee anticipating what we may discover. But what about collections processed two or three decades ago? Can established collections hold new delights for the archivist and new avenues of research to patrons? Archival institutions hold thousands of collections processed during a time when the social history movement was still in its infancy. Even though most archives are now staffed by modern archivists and historians, old collections remain unchanged on archival shelves. Today, archivists readily look for the feminist, minority, ethnic, and non-elite perspective when appraising a new collection. What if archivists reconsider existing collections in the legacy of the social history movement? Let me offer a case study.

In the Archives of Appalachia located on the campus of East Tennessee State University, in Johnson City, Tennessee, researchers can find the *Joe Jennings Collection, 1802 - 1967*. Opened for research in 1979, this perennially popular collection attracts researchers interested in Native American history, especially the Cherokee of western North Carolina. The Jennings collection primarily documents the work of Joe Jennings who served as a Superintendent with the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1931 – 1957. The collection consists of eight series stored in 190 document boxes, all organized around the career of Joe Jennings.

Recently, Laura Smith, the Education & Outreach Archivist, mused openly her suspicion that Jennings' wife, Aubry Faulkner Jennings, may have played a role in his career. Going on Smith's hunch, the Collections Archivist, Jennifer Bingham, allowed me to assess the collection to see if we could learn more about Aubry; no small feat due to the size and arrangement of the collection. As I reviewed the collection with a new perspective, it became evident that traces of Aubry Faulkner Jennings had been buried deep in the papers of her husband. One of the most promising finds is an extensive set of correspondence along with poems, essays, drawings, book manuscripts, and evidence of her involvement with the Native Americans among whom she lived. Not surprisingly, picking through the Jennings collection with a new purpose is just as fun as receiving a new donation.

In light of the new discoveries, our staff decided to move forward with reprocessing the entire collection. With new collections waiting to be processed, it is not a decision made lightly to allocate so many resources to an older collection. It is anticipated that the project will take several months but will be of immense benefit to researchers, especially those interested in feminist perspectives. At the Archives of Appalachia, we are eagerly anticipating the reintroduction of the newly titled collection, the *Joe Jennings and Aubry Faulkner Jennings Collection*.

Should archivists revisit older collections looking for new perspectives in the tradition of the social history movement? The potential for discovery is both enormous and vague at the same time. In the case presented, the focus on Joe Jennings' career obscured the presence of Aubry Faulkner Jennings. Only archivists can decide if the mission of their archives, available resources, and a multitude of other factors warrant reappraisal. However, this case study invites archivists to wonder, just what treasures an established collection may hold.

Tennessee Archivist

2015 Western Archives Institute

The 29th annual Western Archives Institute will be held at Santa Clara University from **July 5 – 17, 2015**. The Western Archives Institute is an intensive, two-week program that provides integrated instruction in basic archival practices to individuals with a variety of backgrounds, including those whose jobs require a fundamental understanding of archival skills, but who have little or no previous archives education; those who have expanding responsibility for archival materials; those who are practicing archivists but have not received formal instruction; and those who demonstrate a commitment to an archival career.

The Institute also features site visits to historical records repositories and a diverse curriculum that includes history and development of the profession, theory and terminology, records management, appraisal, arrangement, description, manuscripts acquisition, archives and the law, photographs, preservation administration, reference and access, outreach programs, and managing archival programs and institutions.

Denis Meissner will serve as Principal Faculty Member for the 2015 Institute. Meissner is the Interim Deputy Director for Programs at the Minnesota Historical Society, and a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists. He has participated in a number of SAA and international efforts focused on the arrangement, description, and management of archival materials, and presently serves on SAA's Encoded Archival Context Working Group, which is developing a global standard for encoding archival authority records.

Meissner has worked closely with the design, delivery, and management of electronic finding aids to archival collections, and has participated in numerous U.S. and international working groups in the development and delivery of collection descriptions and the standards that underlie them, including chairing RLG's EAD Best Practices Working Group. He has consulted and presented workshops on archival processing and description and has published largely in those areas, but also in the area of business records management.

In 2003, he and Mark Greene of the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming were awarded a yearlong NHPRC Archival Research Fellowship to study archival processing expectations and backlogs in U.S. repositories and to recommend changes to existing practices. That research led to an article in the *American Archivist*, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," which has since enjoyed a strong uptake within the archival community.

Tuition for the Institute is \$700 and includes a selection of archival publications. Other non-negotiable fees including program transportation, facility fees, opening dinner, and luncheon at the closing program are available on the institute's website. Housing and meal plans are available at additional cost.

The application deadline for the 2015 Western Archives Institute is **March 1, 2015**. For additional program information, see <http://www.calarchivists.org/WAI>

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STA Annual Meeting Voting Results

STA Annual Meeting Voting Results:

Elected Officers:

VP/President Elect: Gerald Chaudron - Preservation Librarian/Associate Professor, University of Memphis Libraries

Secretary: Albert Whittenberg - Director of Academic & Instructional Technology Services, MTSU

Treasurer: Carol Roberts - Conservation Manager, Preservation Services Division, TSLA

By-Laws Change:

Article 5: Dues: Voted to increase the annual individual dues and institutional membership dues to \$30.

In Memory of:

Allison DeFrieze

October 16, 1977—January 28, 2015

STA members are saddened at the passing of Allison DeFrieze. Allison was an active member of STA who worked for several years in the public services area of the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Allison received her MLIS from the University of Tennessee Knoxville. Allison will be remembered for her fun-loving ways and cheerful easy-going style.

Her friends in STA decided to remember her in a meaningful and helpful manner by making a small donation in her memory to Alive Hospice in Nashville.



Tennessee Archivist

Membership

Not a Member of STA? Then Join!

Membership is open to any individual or institution interested in the work of historical preservation. There are three categories of membership: *Regular, Associate and Institutional*.

Regular members are those who are employed in the field of archives, historical manuscripts, library special collections, or records management.

Associate members are those interested in allied disciplines, students and others who do not qualify for regular membership; they enjoy all the privileges and benefits of regular membership except voting at the Annual Meeting and holding office.

Institutions (ie. state, local and private archives, historical societies, libraries, businesses, government agencies and other organizations) are encouraged to maintain membership in order to receive STA publications and web updates.

Membership is on a calendar-year basis and dues are as follows:

- Regular - \$30.00 per year*
- Associate - \$10.00 per year
- Institutional - \$30.00 per year

Please include institution name, phone number, and email address (if applicable). Make checks payable to **The Society of Tennessee Archivists** and mail to:

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** regular and institutional dues increased to \$30 after approval at this year's business meeting.*