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Archives Annual Report, 2010-2011

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To: Karen Schmidt, University Librarian

From: Meg Miner, University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian

Date: August 10, 2011

Re: 2010-2011 Tate Archives & Special Collections Report

Service and Accessions Summary
Five student assistants helped me provide access to Tate Archives & Special Collections material during 2010/2011; I also employed two students over the summer. We had 187 requests for research services with 74 of them coming from faculty/staff/administrators; the majority of these requests came from walk-ins. Of 117 people who visited the archives for information that did not require in-depth assistance, 74 were alumni/students. Our total holdings grew by 163 linear feet but we also removed 12 linear feet of unsuitable material (described below), so our total holdings as of this year are 1,280 linear feet.

Archives Accessions and Activities
Three linear feet of duplicate video tapes were disposed of following collection processing, but a total of 157 linear feet of records were added to our holdings. A complete list of accessions is available upon request, but this report will highlight two atypical groups:

We accepted microfilmed back files of student records from the Dean of Students' Office. Access to this series is completely restricted at this time; Dean of Students' staff will either initiate or approve of all requests for research services, but this is the most complete record available for students who attended IWU for any time period after the 1940s and so has enduring documentary value. We will need to establish an end date for access restrictions in the future.

As a consequence of accepting this accession, I made a decision to have the partial card file index of names transcribed to a Excel. This name index is the fastest access point to this collection and an electronic file that can be manipulated by individual fields will be priceless. Some cards contain Social Security Numbers or other private data and having them on individual cards makes it difficult to guarantee their security. Since we are not transcribing this data, we will be able to destroy the cards and lessen the risk of losing private information. When we know which reels do not have an index, my students will take on that task.

Our biggest accession this year fulfills a need that was identified before my arrival on campus. Nearly all photographic negatives, contact sheets and slides formerly stored in the basement of Holmes Hall have been transferred for processing to Ames 401B. The entire collection was inadequately protected both because of the physical environment of the basement and at the item level: negatives were in legal-sized envelopes and contact sheets were in shoe boxes. My student assistants re-housed approximately one quarter of the total holdings at a cost to the library of a little less than $6,000. We are at a work stoppage until this year's budget allocations are made.

Also included in this photo transfer were some of the newer slides stored within the campus photographer's office in good-quality sleeves, so material from the mid-1990s only needed a stable physical space. Once processing is complete, we estimate the collection will occupy 130 linear feet. Filing cabinets would be better for storing the hanging-file sleeves but we do not have room for more cabinets, so we are hanging most of this material in standard records boxes.

It should be noted that other photographic material remains in the campus photographer's office. Additionally, sports material remains in the Holmes Hall basement because a different person needs to release those files. I will try to acquire this material this year.

Special Collections Accessions and Activities
Six linear feet of material was added via donations or outright purchases this year. Part of one collection was returned after processing resulting in the removal of nine linear feet of material (duplicate publicity files and concert programs plus artifacts of a more personal nature) from the Pratt Family Collection. All content removed was returned to Mrs. Pratt.

Several interesting additions are noted on our detailed files, but I will draw your attention to the following purchases made in support of faculty for their research and/or their classes:

- *Les Chansoniers des Troubadours et des Trouveres* (1964); 2 vols. of medieval manuscripts in facsimile.
- A two volume set of Alexis de Tocqueville's works (1861), signed by his earlier traveling companion Gustave de Beaumont.
- *Floating Bear* issue no. 9; the editor/publisher Diane diPrima eventually faced an obscenity trial for making this Beat Era work available to subscribers.
- Nine titles, many from a publication called McSweeney's Quarterly, were requested for an "avante garde" literature class. The faculty member's interest in this genre only recently came to my attention, and through our conversations I believe the artists' books we collect will also help.

Three classes used special collections material this year, and I am hopeful this new material will strengthen ties with old patrons as well as bring new audiences in.

Preservation and Digital Projects
Our biggest preservation effort was achieved with the transfer of the Communications Office's photographic collection to a stable environment and archival quality housings. We also created custom Mylar covers for several hundred leather volumes in-house. The library's financial support and my students' seemingly-infinite patience made these efforts possible!

Two projects mentioned in last year's report were also accomplished: the library budget's financial support for finishing the Wesleyana digitization project and for funding microfilm and digitization of the 1920s-30s IWU Bulletins are also appreciated. This material is still at Northern Micrographics but will be returned during the fall. At that point the PDFs will be added to existing online collections to increase access to this content.

Goals for 2011/12

- Complete transfer of photographic materials from Holmes Hall basement to the archives. Finish re-housing all transferred material.
- Progress was made in Records Management when three offices created retention schedules. Identifying a product for digital records creation remains a priority for staff; offices that have retention policies (*i.e.*, who've codified what they intend to keep so it can be measured) are the first I will explore this option with.
- Drafts of preservation policies for digital and analog materials are ready for review and discussion among library staff and Library Advisory Committee members. Approving and publishing these documents are the next step.
- Storage for digitized content remains a problem as both Digital Commons and CONTENTdm have strengths and weaknesses for different material types; additionally, neither are considered permanent preservation platforms. Monitoring professional practices and thinking about these issues are my only plans for this area.
- Technical advice for moving digital video content from disks to hard drives is not available in the library. Working with library IT on staff training or identifying other resources to resolve digital file management issues is a newly articulated priority.