



The Archival Spirit, February 2009 *Winter Issue*

Newsletter of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, Society of American Archivists

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Letter from the Chair: In Good Times and Bad

By Gwynedd Cannan

March 1, 2009

Here we are not far into 2009 and the prospects for the immediate future are bleak at best. Our stewardship will be tested but it is good stewardship that will sustain us. Sustainability is the theme of our coming conference. Let's consider how we can sustain ARCS as a potent, useful organization that brings us together to work through the issues and problems that concern us all.

How can we keep ARCS going? We need to be active, to participate, to contribute.

- 1 Are you listed on the ARCS directory? Sign up here online at <http://www.saa-arcs.org> on the easy-to-use Directory Update Form under "Membership"
- 1 Wake up the section listserv. Ask a question, start a conversation, make announcements. (We are switching from using the Yahoo groups listserv to the section listserv run by the SAA. Our list coordinator Dale Patterson will have instructions for the changeover available soon on this website.)
- 1 Develop a program regarding religious archives and present it to the ARCS steering committee for sponsorship. Great ideas for programs have been discussed in the past without coming to fruition. Let us know your ideas. Air them on the listserv. Submit a proposal.
- 1 Write an article for the newsletter about your archive, your institution, or about issues that are important to you.
- 1 Submit a virtual tour of your archives. This is simply a matter of answering a questionnaire and submitting pictures. It's a wonderful way for the members to learn about their far-flung colleagues.
- 1 Check out Models and Resources on your saa arcs website. Do you find it helpful? Contact Chris Doan at cdoan@pmvms.org and give her your thoughts. Chris will soon be updating the resources with models for digitization projects. Do you already have such a project going on at your institution? Contact Chris and let her know what you are doing.
- 1 We are shortly going to be adding a Steering Committee handbook to the website. Look it over once it is posted and volunteer where you feel you may be useful.
- 1 We are currently looking for a new website manager and newsletter editor. Come forward if you are interested or encourage someone you know.
- 1 What can you report on the issue of diversity? Do you have examples of inclusive practices, areas where diversity should be introduced?

These are just some ideas. I'm sure you can think of many more.

Good leadership complemented by active, aware, participatory membership will not only sustain ARCS but will make it worth sustaining. Let's work together to make ARCS matter. In good times, it's easy to go it alone. In

hard times, it's helpful to stand together.

New Acquisitions at Mercer Special Collections

By *Laura Botts*

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The Special Collections department of the Jack Tarver Library, Mercer University, is located in Macon, Georgia. The department houses the archives of Mercer University and Tift College (both former Georgia Baptist Convention institutions) as well as the holdings of the Georgia Baptist History Depository. Archivist, Laura Botts, works with her staff and a small army of student assistants to provide collections care and reference assistance to patrons both on- and off-site.

Recent acquisitions include a number of university files formerly housed in the attic of the university's Godsey Administration Building, promotional material from the Office of University Advancement, and items donated from alumni of the two schools. The Baptist collections continue to grow as churches and associations deposit their records and minutes with the Depository. The Georgia Baptist Historical Society holds its annual meetings in the archives and promotes the use of the materials for scholarship and research.

Current staff includes Botts as well as Senior Researcher for Baptist History, Robert G. Gardner, and Archives Assistants, Arlette Copeland and Peer Ravnan.

Images of Incarnation Conference

By *Terry Reilly, University of Calgary*

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The Anglican Diocese of Kootenay is hosting a major conference Images of Incarnation Histories of Anglicanism in Canada in Kelowna, British Columbia, June 24th - 28th, 2009. On the Images of Incarnation website <http://www.imagesofincarnation.ca/conference> organizer Dr. Bill Harrison outlines the purpose of the conference this way

We learn about the past, so that we can understand the present and prepare for the future.

Our history belongs to every Canadian Anglican -- and others touched by the Anglican experience in our country. That's why we want to include the voices of First Nations people, women, immigrants, laity and clergy, and regional stories that contribute to the rich tapestry which is the Anglican Church of Canada.

This major history conference is open not only to academics and professional historians, but to all persons wishing to know more about the Anglican Church of Canada. In addition to the five theme speakers, there will be papers on a variety of topics, with opportunities for discussion.

The conference sessions will be held on the campus of the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) in Kelowna. Accommodation and meals will be provided at the same site.

The campus is within easy reach of Kelowna airport, and perfectly located for tourism in one of Canada's most beautiful regions. Family members of participants who do not wish to take part in the conference can also be housed on campus, take part in worship and social events, and use the campus as a base for visiting the many historical sites, vineyards, parks, beaches, and other interesting places within easy reach.

Among others, theme speakers will include The Most Reverend Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Bishop Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Bishop (and former Bishop of Alaska), and Professors Wendy Fletcher, Norman Knowles and Alan Hayes. Several diocesan archivists will also be giving papers. Further information about the conference and registration and accommodation information is available on the web site.

We hope that many of our American colleagues will join us at this important event.

Before Power Point: Illustrating the Old Time Religion at Disciples of Christ Historical Society

By Sara Harwell

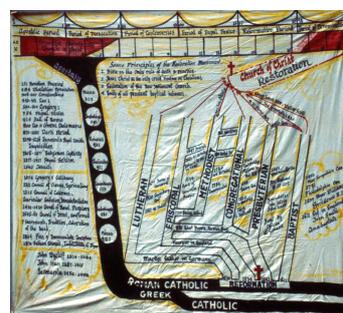
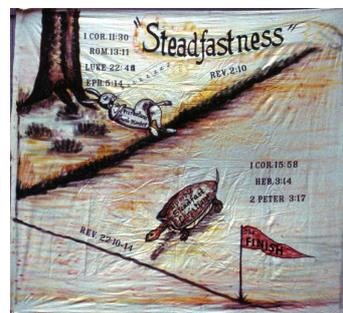
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In 2006, the personal papers of Appalachian evangelist, Noble Tester, were donated to the Historical Society by his heirs. Shortly thereafter, the sermon charts from the Tester Papers were placed on exhibit in the Society's lecture hall, where they received a great deal of interested attention from visitors and researchers.

The charts form the centerpiece of the papers, and, as a collection, are particularly fine examples of sermon illustrations, commissioned by Tester and painted and lettered by an artist known only by the initials on one of the charts – P.E.M. The signature is accompanied by the date 8-47. The artist is believed to have been a sign painter in Knoxville, Tenn. It appears that the works were created primarily in the 1940s. The charts provide an excellent opportunity to observe the structure and use of sermon illustration in the mid-twentieth century.

Noble Tester, a preacher in the independent Christian Church branch of the Stone-Campbell religious tradition, would send out lists of topics for sermons ahead of time to congregations for whom he was to hold a "gospel meeting." Prospective congregations were allowed to vote on the sermon topics they wished to hear, and Tester would take the charts illustrating those topics with him. The selected chart, usually a bed sheet, was mounted on nails driven into a wooden rod and suspended before the audience. It was not unusual for Tester to have six to eight charts mounted at one time to illustrate and emphasize points in his sermon. The collections of the Historical Society contain a number of illustrated publications describing and encouraging the use of sermon charts. Some of these publications provide examples of themes and illustrations from which Tester borrowed ideas for the execution of his own charts.

The use of illustrated charts as a homiletic aid dates back at least to the nineteenth century, as one published example, Chart of Universal Church History, published in 1890 by John H. Reese in Bangor, Mich., demonstrates. The history of Christianity was a popular topic, and the charts could become quite detailed. This theme was used more than once by Noble Tester in his sermons, and he



used a variety of approaches, though his church history charts always emphasized the triumphant flowering of the Restoration Movement – now commonly known as the Stone-Campbell Movement – resulting from historical and theological layers of the Protestant Reformation.

As an evangelist, Noble Tester employed a variety of eye-catching methods to get the attention of revival audiences; together he and the unknown artist created a vital form of folk art. In his charts, he used humor, pathos, encouragement and even threats to make his points and motivate his listeners. The illustrations on the charts reach the viewer with straightforward messages, vivid colors, and memorable, if sometimes primitive, images.

These charts are amazing in their variety, compelling images, and forceful messages, as can be seen in these examples. They are available for loan to exhibit to any interested archives, library, or museum. If your institution would be interested in borrowing any or all of the Tester Sermon Charts, please contact me at the email address in the article lead or 615-327-1444, and I will be happy to send you a CD with images of the charts for your consideration.

Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America Exhibit

By Sr. Mary Denis Maher, CSA, PhD

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The virtually untold story of Catholic sisters will be featured in a new traveling exhibit, "Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America." The exhibit is being developed by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, (LCWR) whose members represent approximately 60,000 women religious in the United States. The show will debut at the Cincinnati Museum Center on May 15, 2009 and will travel throughout the U.S. for three years. Other venues include the Smithsonian's International Gallery in the S. Dillon Ripley Center, located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The exhibit will be hosted there from November 2010 through January 2011.

"Women and Spirit" tells the story of the Catholic sisters who helped shape the nation's social and cultural landscape. First arriving in America nearly 300 years ago, throughout periods of struggle and controversy, sisters established schools, hospitals, colleges, and other social services that have served millions and have contributed to the growth of the Catholic church in the United States. Throughout their enduring legacy and persistent vision, the nation's promise of equality and opportunity continue to be extended to all Americans, regardless of faith, color, nationality, or economic status. More information is available at www.womenandspirit.org.

Chicago Area Religious Archivists (CARA)

By Malachy McCarthy

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Chicago is rich in theological resources, with the Chicago-land area serving as home to more than 21 religious archives. Realizing the need for a professional group to promote networking among these repositories, a small group of interested religious archivists met in the Fall of 2007 and again in the Winter of 2008, to discuss forming the Chicago Area Religious Archivists (CARA), a separate group under the Chicago Area

Archivists. The first official CARA meeting was held on May 8, 2008 at the Chicago History Museum, and included a guided tour of the “Catholic Chicago” exhibit by the exhibit’s co-curators. At the meeting, a set of by-laws was also formally approved. The group’s second meeting was hosted by the Arlington Heights religious area archivists and CARA members toured each facility: Viatorian Community Archives, Sisters of the Living Word Archives and the Alexian Brothers Archives. About twenty archivists participated in the November 14th event. Our next meeting will be a SAA webinar on Content Management software programs on March 31, 2009 at the Divine Word Archives in Techny, Ill. CARA’s Spring Meeting will be hosted by North Shore Congregation Israel Archives in Glencoe, Ill. in May.

Through CARA, archivists for religious institutions and agencies, as well as curators for religious manuscript collections, share common concerns and information, become familiar with other religious archives in the Chicago area, and host educational programs for professional development. Membership is open to all individuals interested in the activities of religious archives and religious manuscript repositories in the Chicago area. Meetings are held twice a year, in the Spring and Fall, ordinarily during the day. For further information, consult the CAA website: <http://www.chicagoarchivists.org/cara.html> or contact the CARA Steering Committee Chair, Malachy McCarthy.

Online Collection on Historic Pictorial Catechisms

By Mark Thiel

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“Catholic Ladder Pictorial Catechisms” is a new online collection available from Marquette University. It features “Catholic Ladder” and “Two Roads” catechisms that Native American catechists and parents used widely in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and which still have creative uses today. For access, go to the “In the Spotlight” icon at <http://digitalmarquette.cdmhost.com/ITS/index.html>. Under “Digital Release date” select “January, 2009-Catholic Ladder Pictorial Catechisms” and make sure that your pop-up blocker is turned off. Individual catechisms are also accessible by keyword searching with the words “Bible,” “Bible illustrations,” and “prayer.” Companion narratives and other additional resources are available on request from the Marquette University Archives and Special Collections. For further information, contact archivist Mark Thiel.

Chicago Province Changes Name

By Marcia Stein

MStein@uscsvd.org On October 28, 2008 the Society of the Divine Word, Chicago Province Archives changed its name to the Robert M. Myers Archives in honor of the Divine Word missionary who established it in 1982. In the proposal to the Provincial Council to name the archives after Rev. Robert M. Myers, SVD, the archivist Marcia Stein, noted that Fr. Myers trained for archival work and promoted establishing an archives for the provinces of the Society of the Divine Word in North America. In 1987 he set up the archives facility and offices in the newly constructed province center.

The official naming took place during a ceremony and open house held at the archives in the Chicago Province Center, at Techny, Ill. Peter Gunther, archives specialist, conducted tours of the archives, which contain valuable historical materials relating to the Society of the Divine Word in North America and the papers of the missionaries it sent around the world. The event was well attended by Chicago Province missionaries, lay employees, and guests.

Archivist Recommends Preservation Site

By Joseph Coen

archive@diobrook.org I recently listened to a program on the preservation of manuscripts by the Hill Museum and Library at St. John's Monastery in Collegeville, Minn. I found it to be a fascinating program, both for the positive view it gave of efforts to help preserve endangered manuscripts, and for the view it gave into other cultures in which such handwritten works are still a part of people's lives and, indeed, are bearers of their culture.

The program was produced by Speaking of Faith and is available at <http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2009/preserving-words/>

I hope that you will take the time to listen to the program or to explore the other resources made available on the website. These include a slideshow on the digitizing work at the Hill Museum and Library, The Maltese Bookworm - a video about the effects of crude book repairs and bookworms tunneling through parchment, and information about the process of creating the St. John's Bible, a modern manuscript of the Bible being created by St. John's Monastery.

I thought it was a good example of the positive "spin" that can be put on preservation work and of the stories that can be told from and about manuscripts (and, I would argue) archives in general.

ARCS Officers and Editor's Notes

The Archival Spirit is published three times a year by the Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists. Feature pieces as well as announcements of acquisitions and projects are welcome. Send submissions to: Wesley W. Wilson at wwwilson@depauw.edu.

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