



State & Local Records News

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ADAHCAT provides online access to ADAH collections

Since 1901, if researchers wanted to know what materials existed at the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), they had to write or visit the department in person. That fact will change when our finding aids go online after August 15, enabling us to provide access to information about ADAH holdings through the internet.

The new online catalog, ADAHCAT, will contain information about the Archives' permanent state and local government records, private papers, map and photograph collections, books, pamphlets, and serials holdings. For the first time, researchers will be able to search across these holdings in one search.

ADAHCAT is based on a library software called Voyager. It allows researchers to search not only by traditional library headings, but to query archival descriptive entries by a "free text search" or by "building a search."

So what will these searches be like? A free text search for a name like "Governor" will produce everything in the catalog where that name appears. A builder search combining "Governor" and "Graves" will yield only the materials where both names appear. The builder search may also be limited to works that are by Governor Graves or about Governor Graves.

Our online catalog will permit researchers to examine ADAH holdings without ever stepping through the door, possibly saving an expensive trip. It will also save time when researchers arrive at

ADAH, since they should already have a good idea of what they want to see. Finally, it will assist department staff by decreasing and simplifying mail inquiries about the Archives' holdings. For everyone with an interest in Alabama history, ADAHCAT will be a dream come true!

Records commissions approve RDAs and procedural leaflets

At their meeting on July 22, 2003, members of the **State Records Commission** approved the following records disposition authorities (RDAs):

- Alabama Department of Transportation (new)
- Alabama Department of Transportation—Field Divisions (new)
- Alabama Electronic Security Board of Licensure (new)
- State Board of Education/Department of Education (revised)

The commission also heard RDA implementation reports from 24 state agencies and approved two new procedural leaflets: "Guidelines for the Preservation and Transfer of Agency Website Records" and "Making a Case for a Records Management Program."

These two leaflets were likewise approved by the **Local Government Records Commission** at its July 22 meeting. The commission also reviewed a draft RDA for local health care authorities that will be presented for final approval at the October meeting.

The commissions' next meetings will be held on **Thursday, October 23, 2003**. The State Records Commission will meet at 10:00 a.m., and the Local Government Records Commission at 1:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the Milo B. Howard Auditorium at ADAH.

New leaflets focus on websites, justifying records programs

Two new leaflets approved by the State and Local Government Records Commissions meetings are now available on the ADAH website (www.archives.state.al.us) and should be of interest to most government agencies.

"Making a Case for a Records Management Program" examines the risks an agency incurs when it does not manage records properly. The leaflet takes a "business case" approach to justifying the need for good records management even when agency budgets are tight.

Websites provide important documentation of an agency's interaction with its public. The records commissions have therefore designated websites as permanent records. "Guidelines for the Preservation and Transfer of Agency Website Records" contains specific suggestions for preserving website information and—in the case of state agencies—transferring it to ADAH.

HRAB bill shelved as legislative session ends

A bill to reestablish Alabama's Historical Records Advisory Board (HRAB) narrowly failed to come to

a vote before the special session ended. Despite widespread support in both the House and Senate, the bill was ultimately preempted by the legislature's concentration on Governor Riley's tax proposals.

Fortunately, the sponsors of both versions of the bill (Senator Quinton Ross and Rep. Charles Newton) agreed to reintroduce it when the legislature reconvenes. The purpose of HRAB is to enable government and historical agencies to apply for records preservation grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) and to serve as a forum on historical records issues.

For more information about HRAB, contact the ADAH Government Records Division at (334) 242-4452 or records@archives.state.al.us.

New act expands ADAH board of trustees

On June 9—the last day of the 2003 legislative session—Senate Bill 392, sponsored by Senator Jack Biddle, and handled in the House by Rep. Neal Morrison, passed both houses of the legislature. The bill (later signed into law by Governor Riley) amended *Code of Alabama* sections 41-4-4 and 41-6-3 by enlarging the ADAH board of trustees. Under the new act, two representatives from each Congressional district, instead of one, will be chosen for board membership. Counting two at-large members chosen by the governor, and the governor himself, the board's membership now stands at 17.

ADAH is currently seeking to expand its educational programs, enlarge the Alabama History Museum, and secure private sector contributions to help support these programs. A larger board will allow a system of committees for more effective governance of the department, as well as providing for broader representation of the state at large.

The act also establishes a time line for the selection and confirmation of new members. *State*

and Local Records News will announce the names of new trustees when they are chosen.

Three more counties obtain loose records microfilm

In recent weeks, three Alabama counties received microfilm produced under the Alabama Loose Records Microfilming Program, a cooperative project undertaken by ADAH, the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU), county officials, and volunteers from local historical and genealogical societies. Each participating county is presented with a free copy of its film.

The first presentation took place on April 22 in Dallas County, where volunteers from the Central Alabama Genealogical Society had prepared estate files dating from 1820 to 1915, which yielded 129 rolls of microfilm. Probate Judge Johnny Jones and project coordinator June Carter accepted the county's copies from ADAH staff at a ceremony in the probate office.

At the Henry County Courthouse on May 8, Probate Judge Lamar Turner, county historian T. Larry Smith, and other volunteers received 60 rolls of microfilm containing estate files, marriages, divorces, circuit court files, and Confederate pension files. Henry County's volunteers had also assisted with loose records work in Barbour and Coffee Counties.

Barbour County prepared estate files from 1820 to 1915 and produced 79 rolls of microfilm. The presentation ceremony, held on May 30 at the Eufaula Public Library, was attended by both Probate Judge Nancy Robertson and her predecessor, Judge Anne Adams, who was in office when the project started. Ms. Margaret Slade accepted a governor's certificate honoring her late husband, Ed Slade, the project's first coordinator.

So far, 23 Alabama counties have completed loose records microfilming, and most other counties have projects under way. The program's future progress will be featured in forthcoming issues of *State and Local Records News*.

Civil Rights Era records returned to state custody

On July 21, a friend of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) e-mailed the department regarding two items offered for sale on eBay. The auction for the records, listed as "1960s Law Enforcement Civil Rights File," was to end at 7:30 that evening. Staff members visited eBay and verified that the documents were government records. Staff next contacted the seller requesting that the material be removed from auction. There was no response from the seller prior to the end of the auction. A bid attempt also failed.

The next day staff asked the Attorney General's Office to notify both the seller and the buyer that the records were government documents and that they needed to be returned to state custody. The seller quickly complied and returned the records to ADAH on July 31.

Ask the Archivist

Question: *How can I prevent pest infestations in my records repository?*

Insects are attracted to cellulose in paper and adhesives in books, while rodents are attracted to paper. Pests may also be drawn to clutter, dust, and food sources in untended records storage areas. Integrated Pest Management, or IPM (a pest control industry term for a systematic approach to pest problems), provides procedures for trapping insects to determine if they are harmful to collections and for eradicating insects, rodents, and other harmful pests. IPM includes the following steps:

Initial assessment of insects or other pests. Use small, adhesive-coated, cardboard insect monitoring traps (commonly known as "sticky traps") to pinpoint insect infestations, locate sites where insects enter, and identify insects after they are trapped. Larger sticky traps for rodents are also

available, but poisonous bait or traps are more desirable because they usually kill the rodent. Do not use sticky traps which contain a food source, such as peanut butter.

Control of entry points. To control insect entry points, place traps near doorways and windows and along walls. Routinely check the traps and replace them when the adhesive surfaces get dusty, or when trapped insects create a potential food source for other pests.

Inspection of materials. To avoid bringing insects into a repository inside newly acquired collections, thoroughly inspect the new material well away from processing and storage areas. Clean the incoming collection by either vacuuming closed volumes or using white-bristled brushes to remove dust and dirt. Re-box records as they arrive, and throw the old boxes away.

Procedures for ongoing pest eradication.

Contract with a pest control company for monthly service. Once the procedures above are in effect, it should not be necessary to spray the entire building with a pesticide. Spray only selected areas that are likely to attract pests: restrooms, boiler rooms, lounges, kitchens, etc. If insects should be found in other areas, the exterminator can spray there as needed.

Evaluation of pest control procedures.

On an annual basis, determine if measures taken to control pests remain effective. If the repository had a pest problem, is it now under control? Have new pests—or the same ones—appeared or reappeared since the last treatment?

For questions about this or other records conservation issues, contact Linda Overman at the ADAH Government Records Division, (334)242-4452, ext. 229; e-mail: loverman@archives.state.al.us.



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