



State & Local Records News

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HRAB funds second-cycle regrant projects

Meeting on November 9, 2010, at the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), Alabama's Historical Records Advisory Board (HRAB) awarded \$53,221.93 in grant funds to 29 local government agencies or historical repositories for records preservation projects. Funding for the awards was again provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) under a State and National Archival Partnership (SNAP) Grant.

For this cycle, the HRAB received 46 grant applications from localities across Alabama, compared to only 30 last year. Despite the stiffer competition, 63% of the applicants received full or partial funding.

Here is a list of the successful applicants, with the amount of funds awarded and a brief description of their projects:

Aliceville Museum. \$2,500 to continue its project to inventory, rehouse, and catalog historical documents and artifacts pertaining to a World War II German prisoner-of-war camp located near Aliceville.

Anniston-Calhoun County Public Library. \$1,000 to inventory, rehouse, and catalog unprocessed archival collections from its Alabama Room. After processing, the records will be converted to MARC format and uploaded to the library's online catalog.

Birmingham Museum of Art. \$890 to assist in re-binding accession registers and cataloging the museum's backlog of archival materials.

Clarke County Historical Society. \$1,000 to digitize and provide archival storage for 1,000 historical photographs taken by staff of local newspapers.



Dr. Ed Bridges meets with members of the HRAB

The photographs are held by the society's historical museum in Grove Hill.

Daphne Public Library. \$1,000 to collect, store, scan, and preserve materials pertaining to Daphne's "local history and folkways." Collections acquired or processed under the project will be made available through Alabama Mosaic.

DeKalb County Genealogical Society. \$2,650 to rescue 8,000 historical circuit court files from improper storage, arrange and rehouse them in archival containers, and place them in environmentally controlled storage at the court's new records center.

Fairhope (Marietta Johnson) Museum. \$3,000 to finish processing the archival collections of Marietta Johnson, an internationally known educator from Baldwin County. The museum will inventory, rehouse, catalog, and create finding aids for these materials.

- Gadsden Public Library.** \$1,000 to digitize oral history interviews of Gadsden and Etowah County citizens conducted in the 1970s. After reformatting, the interviews will be placed in a new Voice Library accessible on the library's website.
- Guntersville Public Library.** \$3,000 to digitize all previously microfilmed newspapers published in Guntersville between 1872 and 1957. The digital version will be searchable by keyword. The project will include newspaper issues held by the ADAH.
- Town of Hobson City.** \$3,000 to transfer endangered records to climate-controlled storage at the new city hall and to hire a consultant to assist with rehousing, cataloging, and scanning the historical records of Alabama's oldest African-American municipality.
- City of Irondale.** \$500 to assist in improving the city's records disposition program. As part of its project, Irondale will identify and destroy outdated temporary records.
- City of Leeds.** \$2,300 to continue a project to inventory and rehouse records at its newly renovated records center. Volunteers will also create a database of record information that will be integrated into the public library's online catalog.
- Town of Loachapoka.** \$843.45 to inventory, reorganize, and improve storage for its records. The town will hire two Auburn University graduate students to conduct the inventory, purchase new records storage boxes and shelving, and scan its current records.
- Madison County Probate Office.** \$700 to purchase a recording hygrothermograph to monitor environmental conditions at the Madison County Records Center, located in the Huntsville Public Library.
- Marengo County History and Archives Museum.** \$2,936.45 to inventory and catalog manuscripts, photographs, maps, and artifacts dating from 1832. Grant funds will purchase document cases, photographic supplies, shelving, and cataloging software.
- Mildred Harrison Regional Library.** \$3,000 to "conduct a records inventory of the 13 public libraries in Shelby County." The MHRL will institute records management programs at its libraries and catalog their local historical collections.
- City of Montgomery.** \$1,000 to assist in compiling a comprehensive inventory of historical records scattered in various area repositories. The city will employ student help and purchase archival containers and shelving for a new, central records storage area.
- City of Moody.** \$875 for rehousing and scanning historical city records. The city will employ a scanning vendor and continue a records disposition project begun several years ago.
- Morgan County Archives.** \$1,000 to assist in purchasing a portable digital camera to photograph early Morgan County Commission minutes and historical newspapers. The project will provide digital access to records not currently available.
- Ragland Historical Society.** \$700 to assist in preparing two new storage areas at the society's depot historical museum. The RHS intends to purchase air-conditioners, environmental monitors, and archival containers for its records and artifacts.
- City of Red Bay.** \$2,848 to purchase archival storage cabinets for 130 municipal maps and drawings that date back to 1907. The city will also obtain a hygrothermograph to monitor environmental conditions in its storage area.
- Shelby County Historical Society.** \$1,000 toward employing a vendor to digitize 101 oral history interviews with Shelby County residents conducted between 1974 and 1982. Society volunteers will also transcribe the digital versions into MS Word.
- South Central Alabama Development Commission.** \$3,000 to purchase microfilm of historical Lowndes County records and a microfilm reader-printer. These items will be placed at the Hayneville Public Library.
- Sylacauga Public Library.** \$3,000 to hire additional staff for collecting, cataloging, and preserving historical documents and photographs from several local industries that have recently shut down. The grant will also fund archival processing supplies.
- City of Talladega.** \$2,979 to scan, index, and preserve the city's four earliest surviving minute books. The grant will fund scanning equipment and software. City staff will also make transcriptions of the indexed minute books available online.

Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society. \$1,000 toward purchasing digital cameras and archival supplies for continuing its project to preserve, index, catalog, and place online historical circuit court volumes from the county courthouse.

Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center. \$3,000 to rehouse and improve storage for documents, photographs, audiovisual materials, and artifacts pertaining to “the history of Macon County and the East Alabama Black Belt,” ca. 1900-1970.

University of West Alabama (Tutwiler Library). \$2,000 to preserve, scan, and place online historical records from ten Sumter County churches. This is the first stage in a long-term project to collect church records from west Alabama’s Black Belt.

City of Valley. \$1,500 to inventory, catalog, and organize records, photographs, and artifacts at Valley’s new “Museum of the Cannery.” The museum’s collections document the local textile industry and Valley’s development from four mill villages.

For more information on the Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board’s grant program, contact Tracey Berezansky or Tom Turley at (334) 242-4452 or records@archives.alabama.gov. Grant-related information is also available on the HRAB’s web page: <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/hrb/hrbmainpage.pdf>.

Records commissions approve new, revised RDAs

Since our last issue (June 2010), the State and Local Government Records Commissions have approved new or revised RDAs for the following state, county, or municipal agencies:

State Records Commission. *October 2010:* Alabama Housing Finance Authority, Retirement Systems of Alabama (new), Office of the Attorney General, Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center, Board of Heating/Air-Conditioning/Refrigeration Contractors, (revised); *January 2011:* Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards

Commission, Office of Prosecution Services (new), Board of Heating/Air-Conditioning/ Refrigeration Contractors, Department of Labor, Department of Transportation (revised). The State Records Commission did not meet in July 2010.

The **Local Government Records Commission** did not meet in July or October 2010. In January, 2011, it approved revised RDAs for - county commissions and local law enforcement agencies. The commission also heard a report on RDA implementation by health care authorities during 2010.

The State and Local Government Records Commissions will next meet on **Wednesday, April 27, 2011**, in the Regions Board Room at ADAH, beginning at 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., respectively.

Records commissions awards approved at January meetings

At their meetings on January 26, 2011, the State and Local Government Records Commissions selected the winners of their annual awards for records management and preservation. The State Records Commission’s award went to the Office of the Attorney General, while the Local Government Records Commission recognized the Alabama Genealogical Society and the Baldwin County Archives. The awards will be presented at the commissions’ April meetings. More information on them will be included in the next issue of *State and Local Records News*.

Training to be held at ADAH for state records liaisons

Staff of the Government Records Division’s state records section will soon hold the first statewide training session for agency records liaisons. The session will be held here at the ADAH, 624 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, on April 29, 2011.

Training is available for records liaisons of state agencies and publicly-funded colleges and universities. Besides general records management-related issues, the session will also address electronic records management. All records liaisons please reserve April 29 for this important training. More information is forthcoming. If you have questions, please contact Richard Wang, State Records Archivist, at (334)353-4605 or Richard.Wang@archives.alabama.gov.

Alabama Cultural Commons preserving cultural resources

Alabama Cultural Commons is a group of five organizations now developing a statewide plan to preserve and care for our state's diverse cultural collections. They are the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), the Alabama Historical Commission, the Alabama Museums Association, the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries, and the Society of Alabama Archivists (SALA). The project is being funded by a grant from the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS).

Beginning in 2009, ACC conducted a Connecting to Collections Survey of Alabama repositories and used it to create a comprehensive repositories database. This past November, ACC held five focus group sessions in Evergreen, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, and Moundville, where staff members from various repositories were invited to express their views. A follow-up meeting took place in Birmingham on January 24, 2011. Here, ideas from the focus groups were incorporated into Alabama's statewide plan. Details are available on the ACC's website (<http://alabamaculturalcommons.org>).

More information is also available from Clyde Eller at the Alabama Historical Commission (334-230-2668; clyde.eller@preserveala.org) or Tracy Berezansky at ADAH (334-353-4604; Tracy.Berezansky@archives.alabama.gov).

“Becoming Alabama”

Over the next five years, Alabamians will observe what Dr. Ed Bridges calls “a remarkable series of commemorations”: the 200th anniversary of the Creek War, the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, and the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement. Historical and cultural agencies across our state are coordinating plans to celebrate through an initiative called *Becoming Alabama*.

State and Local Records News will continue reporting on these plans as they develop. Meanwhile, more information on *Becoming Alabama* can be found on the *Alabama Heritage* website at: <http://www.alabamaheritage.com/BecomingAlabama/index.htm>.

New museum exhibits coming to ADAH

Work is under way at ADAH for the installation of two new museum exhibits that will open in July 2011. This work constitutes Phase I of the department's Museum of Alabama, which eventually will include five renovated galleries and an entirely new centerpiece exhibit, “Alabama Voices.”

Implementation of Phase I began on December 1 with the dismantling of two long-time exhibits, “Tattered Banners” and “Stilled Voices, Forgotten Ways.” Space preparation (which includes new plaster and paint, electrical improvements, and security upgrades) will be complete by late Winter, in time for exhibit fabricators to install new exhibit systems in the Spring.

“The Land of Alabama” will be installed in the gallery formerly occupied by Confederate flags. The new exhibit will include a multimedia introduction to the state's varied physiography and the natural resources that have helped shape Alabama's history. The flag collection will continue to



A mount fabricator measures a vessel to be on display in "The First Alabamians"

to be displayed in the museum, eventually becoming part of a consolidated Civil War exhibit.

"The First Alabamians" will tell the story of Native Americans, from prehistory through 1700, through the use of artifacts, interactive maps, ten newly commissioned murals, and a large diorama model of a Mississippian village. By covering a shorter period of time than the previous Indian exhibit, the new design will accommodate a larger number of pieces from the department's collections, plus artifacts on loan from other museums.

Funding for Phase I is provided by a 2007 state bond issue and private contributions. Fundraising for subsequent phases of the project is ongoing. To see photos of the museum in progress, go to the department's Facebook page: <http://www.facebook/AlabamaArchives>.

PeDALS electronic records project update

ADAH staff continue to work on the Persistent Digital Archives and Library Systems (PeDALS) project. PeDALS is a research project that has two technical goals: first, to develop a curatorial rationale to support an automated, integrated workflow to process collections of digital publications and records; second, to implement "digital stacks," using an

inexpensive storage network that can preserve the authenticity and integrity of the collections. In addition to those technical goals, PeDALS seeks to build a community of shared practice so that the system meets the needs of a wide range of repositories that could then support the ongoing development of the system and promote best practices. To further that end, PeDALS hopes to remove barriers to adopting the technology by keeping costs as low as possible. For more details on this project, please visit: <http://pedalspreservation.org/>.

ADAH staff recently met with representatives from the Governor's Office, the Court of Civil Appeals, and the Department of Agriculture and Industries regarding ingestion of some of their records. Ingestion is the process whereby electronic records are accessioned and accepted into the Archives for long-term storage and access. As a result of these meetings, Governor Riley's digital photographs, the Court of Civil Appeals' electronic case files, and Agriculture and Industries Commissioner Ron Sparks' e-mail will be ingested into the PeDALS system early in 2011. In addition, the Governor's Executive Orders in electronic form will be ingested in January. Once these records have been ingested and checked to ensure Social Security numbers are not present, and after the ADAH has created catalog records for the electronic records and linked them to the catalog, these new electronic records will be available for research use.

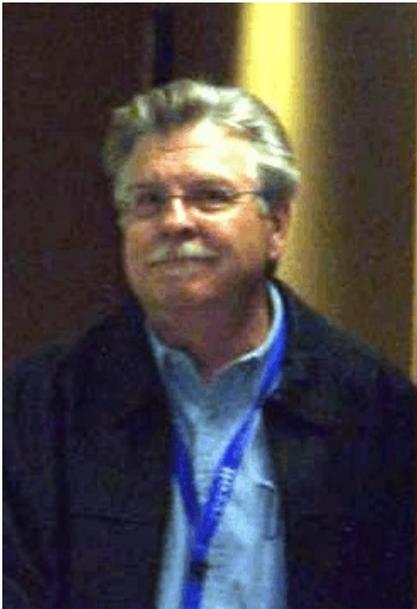
PeDALS' seven state partners (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, New Mexico, New York, South Carolina, and Wisconsin) received the unfortunate news that the PeDALS project did not receive a NHPRC grant for which it applied. The grant would have provided funding for two years following the expiration of our current Library of Congress grant at the end of March. The states are working on alternative ways of continuing the project with limited funding.

For more information on PeDALS, please contact archivist Christine Garrett at: Christine.Garrett@archives.alabama.gov

Birmingham records manager Jim Horn retires

Jim Horn, records manager with the City of Birmingham for over 23 years, retired from city service on December 1, 2010.

A party at city hall was held to honor the occasion, where he posed for the photograph below.



Jim began his career in Birmingham in 1987 and succeeded the late Preston Darland as head of records management in the mid-1990s. Although based in the office of City Clerk Paula Smith, Jim and his assistant Brigitte George served many city agencies and also cooperated with

Jefferson County on records management concerns. During the 1980s and 90s, Birmingham's records management division helped ADAH to develop its municipal retention schedules. Jim and Brigitte later assisted in the process of functional appraisal that led to our current records disposition authorities (RDAs).

At the party on December 1, ADAH staff members Tracey Berezansky and Tom Turley presented Jim with certificates of appreciation from the Local Government Records Commission and Governor Bob Riley. The governor's certificate noted that Jim's career had "contributed to more efficient records management and helped to preserve the city's records for future generations." ADAH likewise honors Jim Horn's "hard work and service to our state," and we wish him the best on his retirement. Fortunately, Brigitte George remains in Birmingham's records management division, so we look forward to continuing to work with her.

Mobile County dedicates new probate courtroom

A dedication ceremony was held for the new probate courtroom, located in the Mobile County Government Center Annex, on October 15, 2010. Special guests attending the dedication were descendants of past judges, who gave brief biographical sketches of their ancestors. Portraits of many former judges are hung in the handsome new courtroom. Recently retired Probate Judge Lionel W. "Red" Noonan also spoke.



*Ms. Judy Ramos speaks about her ancestor,
Judge John F. Everitt (1837-1842)*

Mr. Oliver Semmes spoke for his ancestor, Admiral Raphael Semmes. The Confederate admiral was elected as judge of probate in 1867, but federal authorities did not permit him to serve.

The Most Reverend Thomas J. Rodi, Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mobile, provided the keynote address. He remarked on the need for probate judges to have "the wisdom of Solomon" when making decisions, due to the nature of cases heard in Alabama probate courts and the inability to have a written statute applicable to every situation an Alabama probate judge will encounter. Indeed, the focal point of the new courtroom is a wooden sculpture entitled "The Judgment of Solomon," crafted by the late Craig Turner Sheldon for the old Mobile County Courthouse in 1958.