



State & Local Records News

Vol. 13, No. 4

Published by the ADAH Government Records Division

May 2009

HRAB awards records preservation grants to 22 localities and repositories

Meeting on March 25, 2009 at the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), Alabama's Historical Records Advisory Board (HRAB) awarded \$49,999.68 in grant funds to 22 local government agencies or historical repositories for records preservation projects. Funding for the awards was provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) under its State and National Archival Partnership (SNAP) Grant Program.

After the program was announced in mid-November, the HRAB received a total of 30 grant applications from localities across Alabama. With \$50,000 available from the NHPRC and a cap of \$3,000 on individual awards, 73% of our grant applicants received full or partial funding. Here are the 22 successful applicants, with the amount awarded and a brief description of their projects:

- *City of Aliceville.* \$1,000 to inventory and organize city records, apply disposition schedules, and prepare historical city council minutes for scanning.
- *Aliceville Museum.* \$1,509 to inventory, rehouse, and catalog historical documents and artifacts pertaining to a World War II German prisoner-of-war camp near Aliceville.
- *Anniston-Calhoun County Public Library.* \$1,960 to digitize over 1,000 historical photographs of Anniston (1946-1950) and make them viewable and searchable via the library's online catalog.
- *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.* \$2,770 for supplies and materials to process the W.C. Patton Collection. Patton was a legendary figure in the Alabama voting rights movement.
- *Black Belt African-American Genealogical and Historical Society.* \$2,290 to rehouse, catalog, scan, and index a collection of 500 historical photographs from Selma, AL.
- *Bryant Museum, University of Alabama.* \$3,000 for a consultant to advise on the care, management, and preservation of historical audiovisual collections documenting the Crimson Tide football program.
- *Collier Library, University of North Alabama.* \$3,000 to assess, organize, and rehouse manuscripts, research materials and photographs of Florence historian William Lindsey McDonald.
- *Elmore County Historical Society and Museum.* \$2,567.03 to inventory, preserve, and display family records, photographs,

and artifacts documenting the history of Elmore County and Wetumpka.

- *Eufaula Heritage Association*. \$2,000 to inventory, rehouse, and display historical documents and artifacts from Shorter Mansion. Included are portraits and memorabilia of six Alabama governors.
- *Florence-Lauderdale County Public Library*. \$2,750 to record and transcribe oral history interviews with elderly citizens in the Shoals area. The interviews will be posted on the library's website.
- *Guntersville Museum*. \$3,000 to inventory, rehouse, and shelve collections that include letters from the Wyeth Family and photographs of the TVA dam on Lake Guntersville.
- *City of Heflin*. \$2,000 to inventory and rehouse records and prepare historical city council minutes for scanning.
- *Town of Killen*. \$1,156 to purchase archival shelving and improve lighting and file arrangement in records storage areas.
- *Lee County Historical Society*. \$3,000 to organize, clean, and preserve historical maps, records, and photographs, based on a consultant's plan of action.
- *City of Leeds*. \$3,000 to sort, rehouse, and improve storage for city council minutes and other historical records, 1887-2009.
- *Town of Locust Fork*. \$683.22 to inventory, reorganize, and improve storage conditions for historical town records.
- *Monroe County Heritage Museum*. \$3,000 to reformat audio cassettes and VHS tapes, which include interviews with Truman Capote and Harper Lee's sister, as well as plays and musical performances, to CD or DVD.
- *Morgan County Archives*. \$3,000 to provide shelving, archival containers and a database index for historical estate files dating back to 1825.
- *Pond Spring (the Joseph Wheeler Home)*. \$2,000 to inventory, process, and catalog papers, artifacts, and photographs of the family of Confederate General "Fighting Joe" Wheeler.
- *Shelby County Historical Society*. \$2,225 to digitize and index historical marriage records, allowing the original volumes to be preserved.
- *Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society*. \$1,590 for archival supplies, shelving, and a computer to clean, rehouse, index, and catalog 19th-century circuit court records.
- *University of South Alabama Archives*. \$2,500 for processing 60,000 negatives of photographer Wilson C. Burton, which document 20th-century Mobile.

Most projects are already under way and are scheduled to finish by September 30. For more information on the HRAB grant program, contact Tracey Berezansky or Tom Turley at the ADAH Government Records Division, (334)242-4452 or records@archives.alabama.gov.

State Records Commission approves new, revised RDAs

At its meeting on April 29, the **State Records Commission** approved a new RDA for the Mobile County Health Department, as well as new disposition for

personnel files from the Governor's Office. The commission also approved a major RDA revision for the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners and minor revisions for the Alabama Board of Chiropractic Examiners, the Alabama Board of Heating and Air Conditioning Contractors, the Alabama State Board of Registration for Foresters, the Examiners of Public Accounts, and the Public University System. Finally, the commission reviewed annual RDA implementation reports from 38 state agencies.

The Local Government Records Commission did not meet on April 29. As noted in our last issue, the commission staff is working with the Secretary of State's Office on a complete revision of the RDA for county boards of registrars. It is expected to be ready for the July meeting.

The commissions will meet again on **Wednesday, July 22, 2009**, in the Region's Board Room at ADAH. The State Records Commission meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m., and the Local Government Records Commission will convene at 1:30 p.m.

Records commissions present first annual awards in records management and preservation

As reported in our March issue, the State and Local Government Records Commissions selected three agencies to receive the commissions' first annual awards in records management and preservation. They are the State Department of Transportation, the Marshall County Preservation Society, and the Mobile County Probate Court.

The three awards were presented at the State Records Commission meeting on April 29. Accepting the Department of Transportation's award (for implementing an agency-wide records management program, creating an archives, and digitizing agency records) were ALDOT director Joe McInnes; deputy bureau chief Terry Robinson;

and archivist Chris Davidson, formerly an archivist in the ADAH Government Records Division.

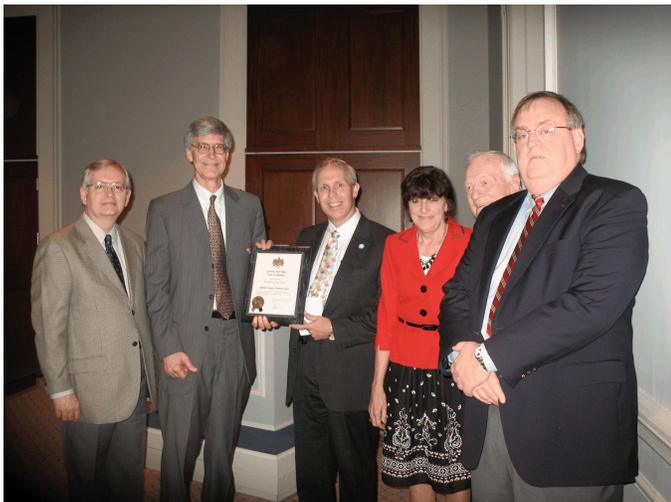


l-r: Mr. Robinson, Mr. Davidson, and Mr. McInnes receive the ALDOT award from Dr. Ed Bridges

Besides conducting a successful loose records microfilming project, the Marshall County Preservation Society helped to preserve old county newspapers. Three of its members (Betty Taylor, Margene Black, and Rosemary Darnell) serve as volunteer staff for the newly created Marshall County Archives. Marshall County Probate Judge Tim Mitchell accepted the award on their behalf.



Judge Mitchell accepts the Marshall County Preservation Society's award



l-r: Mr. McEarchern, Dr. Bridges, Judge Davis, Ms. King, Judge Noonan, and Mr. Johnson admire the Mobile County Probate Court's award.

The Mobile County Probate Court has had a records microfilming program since the 1950s and a county archives since 1989. Archivist Col'ette King has overseen the indexing and microfilming of hundreds of rolls of probate records, including the translation of French and Spanish colonial documents dating back to the founding of Mobile. Attending the award presentation were Ms. King, current and former probate judges Don Davis and "Red" Noonan, chief probate clerk Joe McEarchern, and assistant chief clerk Richard Johnson.

If your college, university, or state or local government agency would like to be recognized for an exemplary records management and preservation program, nominations for this year's State or Local Government Records Commission awards are due on December 1, 2009. Guidelines for the 2009 awards may be found on the ADAH website: <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/officials/guidelines-nominationform.pdf>.

Staff and volunteers working to preserve George and Lurleen Wallace Collection

The George C. and Lurleen B. Wallace collection was donated to ADAH through a deed of gift by the Wallace Foundation in 2006. It consists of approximately 1,100 cubic feet of records and a wide variety of artifacts. This collection will complement official gubernatorial and private records of the Wallaces already housed at the state archives.

While records donated by the foundation contain a large number of official gubernatorial papers, there are also many private records, photographs, and audiovisual materials. Of particular interest are the photographs, which contain early images of George Wallace, as well as Lurleen Wallace and her campaign, that have not been seen by the public before.

An initial survey of the Wallace Collection by Government Records staff began in January 2008. It focused on parts of the collection that had previously sat in a warehouse in Atlanta for several years, due to the potential importance of this group of records to researchers. With the completion of the initial survey, 100 cubic feet of Wallace Administrative Files from 1971 to 1979 have been arranged, described, and opened for research. Preparation work on another 250 cubic feet of records, encompassing George and Lurleen Wallace's gubernatorial terms from 1963 to 1968, will soon be completed, allowing them to be opened to the public sometime within the next few months.

Further time and effort, much of it provided by volunteers, is going towards arranging, identifying, and preserving various materials within the collection. Specifically, volunteers have been extremely helpful in further processing the gubernatorial records processed initially by Government Records staff. This work includes placing documents in acid-free folders to increase their life span, removing large pieces of metal from the

materials to prevent damage from rust, and notifying Government Records staff of materials that need to be photocopied and removed, due to their historical significance or for security reasons.

Furthermore, volunteers are helping to preserve audiovisual materials from the Wallace Collection by working on a new project: the Wallace Audio Visual Database. Due to the undetermined condition and usability of the collection's 149 cubic feet of audiovisual materials, coupled with the large variety of formats they encompass (including almost every audiovisual technology employed from the 1960s through the early 1990s), it would be extremely difficult and time-consuming for Government Records staff to arrange, preserve, and provide access to the materials as a whole. Instead, the Audio Visual Database allows ADAH volunteers to enter descriptive information about each cassette, reel-to-reel tape, beta tape, or other format into a computer database, thus creating a list of all identified audiovisual materials. Using this list, Government Records staff will be able to determine which materials merit conservation work, based on their historical significance.

Finally, a volunteer project is under way to preserve the Wallace's Collection's photographs and to identify people, places, and events they depict. This preservation and identification is possible due to the efforts of two volunteers, both of whom worked for and personally knew George and Lurleen Wallace in the 1960s. They are Ed Ewing and Paul Robertson.

Mr. Ewing served as director of the Bureau of Publicity and Information during Governor George Wallace's 1963-1967 term, as Press Secretary for Governor Lurleen Wallace during her term in office, and as national campaign coordinator for George Wallace's 1968 presidential campaign. Due to Mr. Ewing's deep involvement with the Wallace administrations and campaign, he is able to recall the names of a wide spectrum of people depicted in the photographs, including state lawmakers, United States congressmen, local celebrities, and many others who would be impossible to identify for anyone not present at the time.

Mr. Robertson worked as the official photographer for George Wallace's 1958 and 1962 gubernatorial campaigns. He also took several private portraits and event photographs for the Wallace family. While Mr. Robertson, like Mr. Ewing, has the ability to identify people and events from that era, his true value comes from his career as a photographer. As a seasoned professional, he has experience with the various types of film and photo paper used at the time and knows the best ways to care for them. Furthermore, Mr. Robertson personally took many of the photographs that he is now identifying, and he has been able to use first-hand experience in determining where and when the photographs were taken.

The work provided by Ed Ewing and Paul Robertson has proved invaluable. Their assistance is inspired by their belief that this information needs to be preserved for future generations of Alabamians. The Archives has been extremely lucky to have their help in this endeavor, and their commitment to the project has been and will continue to be extremely productive.

As work proceeds on the Wallace Collection, we will continue to open previously closed records to researchers, to identify and care for photographs, and to select audiovisual materials that merit further care and conservation work. It is the Department's hope that this new material will incite further questions about and research into George and Lurleen Wallace's governing style, political ambitions, and personalities.

—Drew Davis



McDowell Lee, Secretary of the Alabama Senate (center), examines photographs from the Wallace Collection with volunteer Ed Ewing (left) and Dr. Bridges