



State & Local Records News

Vol. 15, No. 1

Published by the ADAH Government Records Division

January 2012

Second cycle of HRAB local records regrant program successfully concluded

Alabama's Local Historical Records Grant Program, which is funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), concluded its second regrant cycle on December 30. Between January and September 2011, 28 local governments or historical entities selected by the state Historical Records Advisory Board (HRAB) spent \$52,346.93 in NHPRC grant funds and contributed \$139,942.07 to their projects in local money or cost-sharing. Thus, second-cycle records preservation funding totaled \$192,289.00.

The January 2011 issue of *State and Local Records News* contained a summary of the regrant projects' plans. Several of them (Aliceville Museum,



City staff in Red Bay admire new storage cabinet for historical city maps



Hobson City records salvaged from old town hall ready for appraisal and preservation

Anniston Public Library, City of Leeds, Morgan County Archives, Shelby County Historical Society, and Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society) used grant funds to complete or build upon first-cycle projects. Others (Towns of Hobson City and Loachapoka, Cities of Montgomery and Red Bay) inaugurated or substantially improved their records programs. The Gadsden Public Library and the Shelby County Historical Society conducted oral history projects, while Sylacauga's public library collected, catalogued, and digitized records and artifacts from defunct local industries. Museums in Demopolis, Fairhope, Grove Hill, and Valley made substantial progress on cataloging and digitizing their collections.

With individual awards ranging from \$700 to \$3,000, nearly all grantees fulfilled their goals successfully. Their final reports celebrated real accomplishments and thanked the HRAB and NHPRC for their support:

We are particularly grateful to you for funding smaller, rural projects. Often time our institutions are overlooked for larger, better-staffed institutions. (Aliceville Museum)

The completion of 750 photographs gives our organization a sense of accomplishment in knowing we can tackle a project of this magnitude, where in the past, we probably would have been paralyzed and overwhelmed. (Clarke County Historical Society)

accomplishing goals from the previous year's grant. Thank you so very much for your support! (Shelby County Historical Society)



Student assistants with the Shelby County Historical Society's project

This project has been dear to my heart and thanks to the grant the City will be able to use the equipment to continue and finally complete the digitizing and accessibility of all our historic documents. Thank you! (City of Talladega)

Even the tornadoes that struck Alabama on April 27 could not halt grant projects' progress. In the hard-hit Town of Ragland, historical society members rehoused records and artifacts in their depot museum, pending transfer to a new public library that will be built with FEMA funds. Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society volunteers were back at work by early May, though much of their city lay in ruins.

In December, HRAB grant staff asked the NHPRC for a six-month extension to spend \$4,775 remaining from our grant award. These funds would be used to inventory historical Alabama circuit court records and consult with court officials on their preservation. More information on our plans will be forthcoming if the extension is approved.

Meanwhile, to learn more about the HRAB's recently concluded regrant cycle, contact the ADAH Government Records Division at (334)242-4452, or records@archives.alabama.gov.

L-R Marilyn Henderson, Glenda Houston, Sue Brandon, Claudine Wallace, Janice Gilbert, Betty Adams, Joseph Crowl

DeKalb County Loose Paper Project 2011

Volunteers at work



Laine Floyd, Chairman



Douglass Brandon, Treasurer



Tommy Guice, Co-Chairman



L-R Laine Floyd, Glenda Houston, Tommy Guice, Doug Brandon, Sue Brandon, Brenda Abbott, Carolyn Balingier, Janice Gilbert, Commissioner Ricky Harrow, Vickie Tombs

A collage of DeKalb County volunteers at work

When we attended the Project Training Workshop in Montgomery in January, we gained a much better understanding of the importance of processing the collection according to preservation guidelines. . . . We represent a "model" for archiving historical collections and would like to assist others in . . . Fairhope and Baldwin County. (Marietta Johnson Museum, Fairhope)

This project was well worth every penny and amount of time spent to accomplish. . . . We now have several members interested in doing oral history interviews with some of the older citizens of Shelby County. . . . [L]et me add that we are still reaping and

Another HRAB regrant cycle? Here's some good news. . .

With Washington mired in gridlock, prospects for granting agencies like the NHPRC have looked extremely bleak. This arm of the National Archives (NARA), which had been funded at \$10 million annually since 1964, was reduced to only half of that in President Obama's budget. Recent Congressional proposals threatened to cut NHPRC funding to a mere \$1 million, or even to abolish the agency altogether.

Happily, we learned in mid-December that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees had agreed to retain the \$5 million figure for the NHPRC, despite other cuts in NARA's budget. Our thanks to everyone who "went to bat" for the HRAB's funding agency by contacting Alabama's representatives on the committees: Senator Richard Shelby and Representative Jo Bonner.

While it is too early to be sure that the full Congress will approve the appropriations committees' recommendations, or that the NHPRC's reduced budget will allow it to continue funding statewide regrants to localities, prospects for continuing our program look far brighter than they did a month ago.

. . . and some bad news

Unfortunately, there will be a year's delay. In preparing our application to renew the HRAB's State and National Partnership (SNAP) Grant, grant staff failed to recall that the deadline fell on September 8, not September 30. Accordingly, we were too late to request NHPRC funding for 2012-13—assuming that such funds will be available, which seemed less likely then.

That is no excuse, of course, and we apologize to all potential applicants. Rest assured that our application to renew the program for 2013-14 will arrive in Washington *before* the September 8, 2012 deadline. Meanwhile, please direct inquiries to (334) 353-4607 or Tom.Turley@archives.alabama.gov.

Records commissions again approve new or revised RDAs

At its meeting on November 2, 2011, the **State Records Commission** approved new or revised records disposition authorities (RDAs) for the Alabama Development Office, the Alabama Film Office, and the Russell County District Attorney's Office. The commission also reviewed annual RDA implementation reports from 23 state agencies.

The **Local Government Records Commission**, also meeting on November 2, approved revised RDAs for county probate offices, local law enforcement agencies, and municipalities, as well as a new RDA for the McClellan Development Authority.

The latest versions of state and local agency RDAs are always available on the ADAH website at: http://www.archives.alabama.gov/officials/state_rda.html or <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/officials/localrda.html>.

Neither the State nor the Local Government Records Commission will convene in January. The commissions' next meetings will be held on **Wednesday, April 25, 2012**, in the Regions Board Room at ADAH, beginning at 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., respectively.

Second training workshop held for state agency records liaisons

On October 28, 2011, Government Records Division (GRD) staff hosted our second training workshop for records liaisons of state government agencies and educational entities. Presented in the Joseph M. Farley Alabama Power Auditorium at ADAH, the session was designed for records liaisons who could not attend the April 29 workshop because of the tornadoes on April 27.

Accordingly, this workshop presented almost the same material covered in April. Tracey Berezansky, Assistant Director for Government Records,

started the day off with an overview of state public records laws, the State Records Commission's functions, the role and services provided by GRD state records staff, and the importance of agency records liaisons in the state records program. Richard Wang described procedures for developing or revising agency RDAs, RDA implementation training by ADAH staff, and the process of annually reporting RDA implementation.

Later sessions focused on preserving and transmitting agencies' permanent records; accessioning, arranging, and describing records once they arrive at ADAH; managing electronic record-keeping systems, e-mail, and other alternative formats; and preserving state agency publications and websites. ADAH archivists Alden Monroe, Christine Garrett, and Mike Breedlove provided instruction on these topics. Alden also demonstrated the department's online search and reference system, known as ADAHCAT. The day ended with a tour of the Archives' climate-controlled records storage vault.

A total of 46 records liaisons, representing 23 state agencies, nine colleges, and three publicly supported universities, attended the four-hour training session. The Government Records Division plans to hold similar training sessions on a regular basis in the future. GRD archivists will also continue to train staff of individual agencies on site. For information on these training opportunities, contact Richard Wang at (334)353-4605 or Richard.Wang@archives.alabama.gov.

ADAH to offer second IPER course in emergency response

As noted in our May 2011 issue, ADAH has been participating in a project sponsored by the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) to develop and deliver web- and CD-based disaster preparedness training to states and localities nationwide. The Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records project (IPER) is financed by a \$2.6 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Launched after the massively destructive hurricanes of 2005, CoSA's initiative has gained added relevance for Alabama since the tornadoes last April 27.

In August, GRD archivists offered the IPER online course "Essential Records" to Alabama state and local agencies. This month, we will offer the

IPER
INTERGOVERNMENTAL
PREPAREDNESS FOR
ESSENTIAL RECORDS

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING
FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

FREE ONLINE TRAINING!

Essential Records Webinar

The Essential Records (ER) Webinar is one of two courses developed by the Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records (IPER) project. Teams in each state and territory will be delivering these webinars to state and local governments.

Who should take this course?
State, local, territorial, and tribal employees who are responsible for creating and maintaining government records of any kind and in any format, both paper and electronic:

- City and county clerks
- COOP and emergency preparedness personnel
- Records
- Information technology staff
- Administrators

What is covered in this course?
This course prepares participants to:

- Identify an agency's essential records;
- Analyze and prioritize records, assessing specific risks and identifying protection strategies;
- Specify time frames for essential records availability in emergencies
- Develop procedures to ensure access to and security of essential records;
- Outline an essential records plan for inclusion in COOP;
- Become familiar with federal, state, and local COOP regulations and procedures.

Essential Records Webinar

- 7.5-hour course delivered in 4 sessions
- Offered as an instructor-led webinar with content specific to your state or territory
- Free of charge

For IPER training in your state or territory, contact:
Alabama Class - 4 Sessions - August 1, 8, 15, 22
To register immediately go to:
<http://rc.statearchivists.org/Courses/Course-Detail.aspx?ActivityID=7147115> - or contact
Tracey Berezansky, Tom Turley, or Christine Garrett @
334-242-4452 or records@archives.alabama.gov

Council of State Archivists (CoSA) - Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records (IPER) Project
<http://rc.statearchivists.org/Content/IPER-Project.aspx>

A flyer for the IPER "Essential Records" webinar

follow-up course: "Records Emergency Planning and Response". The eight-hour webinar will prepare participants to plan, develop, and maintain a Records Emergency Action Plan (REAP). A REAP allows agencies to assess damage to records after a disaster, and to develop and implement effective emergency response. The webinar will be presented in four two-hour sessions on January 10, 17, 24, and 31. For those who could not attend last summer's Essential Records course, ADAH plans to offer both courses on an annual basis in the future.

More information about IPER, nationwide, is available at the CoSA Resource Center: <http://rc.statearchivists.org/Content/IPER-Project.aspx>. For more information on plans in Alabama, or to register for January's REAP course, contact Tracey Berezansky, Tom Turley, or Christine Garrett at (334)242-4452 or records@archives.alabama.gov.

Preserving Alabama history on the web

Alabama state government communicates with citizens using web pages, social media, video, audio, and electronic state publications. Therefore, ADAH actively preserves state agency websites, social media, and political blogs, as well as those of multi-county agencies (such as regional planning commissions) and multi-state entities of which Alabama is a part. Since 1998, GRD staff has employed Archive-It (<http://archive-it.org>) to accomplish this task.

ADAH has so far created 25 active collections on Archive-It, gathering over 250 individual websites, or URLs. The result of this activity is a total of 23,562,536 web pages, amounting to 1.337.9 GB of data that documents Alabama state and local government over the past six years. The list of web collections can be found at: <http://www.archive-it.org/explore?show=Collections#explore?fc=organizationType%3AstateArchivesAndLibraries&show=Collections&fc=organizationName%3AAlabama+State+Archives& suid=909>.

The three Alabama Constitutional Offices collections on Archive-It focus on the State of Alabama portal and elected officials or agencies that include the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Agriculture and Industries, Education, and others. Another collection, documenting the other two branches of state government, is named the Alabama Legislature and Appellate Courts.

Nine Alabama State Agencies collections include various agencies, boards, commissions, and departments of state government, subdivided alphabetically by name. They are an especially rich resource for state publications; audio, video, and multi-media presentations, and even “how to” guides.

Also subdivided alphabetically are our four Alabama political BLOG collections. These cover the world of Alabama politics: elections and governing as seen through the eyes of bloggers of differing political perspectives. In addition, one

political blogger collects audio recordings of Alabama legislative sessions at: <http://www.politicalparlor.net/doc/audio-archives/>. They, too, are preserved in Archive-It.

Similarly, the two Alabama Regional, Multi-State, or Multi-County Agencies or Commissions collections cover activities of agencies and commissions that have authority over more than one county but generally are not statewide. Most of them are either regional planning commissions or water authorities. The collections also cover statewide organizations, such as the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, the Alabama League of Municipalities, the Business Council of Alabama, the Alabama Farmers Cooperative, the Alabama Coastal Foundation, and the Alabama Humanities Foundation; bi-state websites like the Historic Chattahoochee Commission (which works in Alabama and Georgia); and multi-state entities like the Southern States Energy Board, the Southern Growth Policies Board, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Authority, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Gulf States Regional Fisheries Commission, and others.

ADAH also documents Alabama state government and politics by preserving social media on Archive-It. We have several collections of Alabama state agency Facebook pages, News and RSS feeds, Twitter accounts, and YouTube channels. There is also a collection documenting Representatives and Senators from Alabama in the US Congress Twitter accounts.

For more information about Alabama collections available on Archive-It, contact Mike Breedlove at: (334)353-4614, or Mike.Breedlove@archives.alabama.gov.

AGS keeps indexing as the loose records program winds down

Back in 1998, ADAH began a cooperative endeavor with the Genealogical Society of Utah (or GSU, now FamilySearch), county probate offices and circuit courts, and local historians and genealogists to prepare and

microfilm unbound (“loose”) county records of genealogical significance, such as estate files, marriage licenses, divorces, and Confederate pension files. Envisioned as a two-year project, Alabama’s loose records program is now entering its 14th year.

Over that time, hundreds of local volunteers have contributed countless hours flattening, foldering, arranging, and indexing loose records. FamilySearch has dispatched over a dozen volunteer couples, and two professional camera operators, to help with document preparation and filming. In recent years, the agency has transitioned from microfilm to digital photography. Of our 53 completed projects, the last seven have been digitized, and this method will be followed in any future counties that undertake loose records work.

In 2006, a committee of the Alabama Genealogical Society began working to create a unified, statewide database of indexes from completed projects. Collecting and standardizing indexes produced by local or FamilySearch volunteers (or, for some counties, having its own members create indexes), the AGS has so far incorporated 24 loose records projects into its statewide database. It has enhanced the utility of an important genealogical resource.

“Web guru” Jim Anderson provides details on the latest index to be finished and explains how to search the AGS database:

From eleven microfilm reels, AGS member Caroline Horton has finished transcribing a twenty-five page index of 556 Walker County Probate Court estate files. Her computer file included 1,009 primary key names of decedents and estate administrators, and numerous heirs and legatees. They have been added to the L[oose]R[ecords] P[roject] W[eb] database that now has 57,322 searchable names culled from loose court papers of [24] Alabama counties.

Supplemental index keys are included to cover variations in spelling and to enhance the use of wild-card searches. As with other entries in the LRPW database, a found record will also report the probate date-range of each case and the reference number of the film reel available at the Alabama Dept. of Archives and History in Montgomery and FamilySearch Centers worldwide.

To read more about the LRPW project and to search the database visit <http://www.lrp.algensoc.org>.

For an example of a record, click on the Search index button in the banner at the top of the LRPW home page. On the search page enter the surname Hutto (in SEARCH ALL COUNTIES). From the list of “hits” click on Hutto, E.S. in Walker County.

Thanks, Caroline!

As noted above, 53 counties have completed projects, although three that microfilmed records from their probate offices (DeKalb, Jefferson, and Montgomery) are now preparing circuit court files to be digitized. Madison County also has records ready to be done, and there are perhaps four other counties that could still have loose records projects. The remaining nine counties either chose not to participate or had no loose records available to film.

Counting all loose records microfilmed or digitized so far, the project has produced just under nine million (8,922,205) images of historical Alabama county records. This total includes about half a million images of county, church, and private records held by ADAH or Huntingdon College in Montgomery. Moreover, the GSU had already microfilmed several thousand rolls of bound Alabama probate records (such as minutes, deeds, marriages, and early birth and death registers) in the 1980s-90s.

Loose records themselves predate statehood in some counties and, before 1865, hold almost the only genealogical material available on African-Americans. With copies now accessible at ADAH, in the participating counties, and (increasingly) online, loose records represent an invaluable, irreplaceable resource for researchers of Alabama history and genealogy.

A map showing the loose records program’s current status is found on the next page. For more information, contact Tom Turley at: (334)353-4607, or Tom.Turley@archives.alabama.gov.

