



State & Local Records News

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ADAH to celebrate opening of new west wing at open house on October 8

Following three years of construction, the new west wing of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) in downtown Montgomery is officially opening to the public. An all-day celebration—the “West Wing Fling”—is free and features a wide range of activities. It will be held on Saturday, October 8, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



The new west wing at ADAH

Among the activities will be talks by noted Alabama historians and journalists, storytelling and book exhibits, traditional Alabama music performed by bluegrass and gospel groups, and 18th-century and Civil War reenactments. **See pp. 5-6 for a complete schedule of events.**

“We’re so excited to be able to provide music, panel discussions, living history encampments, children’s activities, and an ‘antiques road-

show’ for identifying family heirlooms,” said Leona Stemple, co-chair of the “Wing Fling” planning committee. A highlight of the day will be a panel discussion featuring the renowned quilters of Gees Bend. The honor of cutting the new wing’s dedicatory ribbon will go to an Alabama fourth-grade student, to be chosen through a statewide contest.

Alabama’s state archives was created in 1901, the first such department in the country, and its west wing remains a work in progress. A major effort is now under way to raise funds for a new Alabama history museum, to be housed on the wing’s second floor.

For more information on the open house and a media preview event to be held on September 30, contact Sherrie Hamil at (334)353-4712.

ADAH completes move of staff and records into new wing

At the close of business on June 10, ADAH shut its doors to the public for three weeks, in order to move staff and collections into the new west wing. The first task was for the Public Services and Government Records Divisions to relocate their main offices in two of the original building’s third-floor galleries, while other staff moved into cubicles “down the hall” in the west wing. Our reference

staff has new quarters in the mezzanine above the new research room.

Next, volunteers assisted staff in transporting the reference, county, and Alabama book collections from the old reference room to the west wing's beautiful new research room. Thanks to book project director George Stewart, ADAH volunteers, and reference staff, this work was completed in one week. The new research room opened to visitors on July 5.

In mid-June, staff and inmates from the Department of Corrections began transferring archival records. Our local government collection (over 2,000 cubic feet of historical records from counties and municipalities) was placed on compact shelving in the new wing's basement, under better environmental conditions (60 degrees F., and 40% relative humidity) than have ever been available at ADAH before. The much larger collection of state records (30,000 cubic feet) was transferred to the basement storage area between mid-July and August 10.

Many other items (microfilm readers, map cabinets, surplus furniture) also had to be moved during this period, and new telephone and computer connections installed. Some former office areas still need carpet removed to make them suitable for artifact storage, and our museum and artifact collections are not yet in place. Even so, by relying on staff, volunteer, and inmate assistance, ADAH saved an estimated \$150,000 in professional moving costs. Stay tuned for further updates on our progress!

Contact GRD staff at these new telephone numbers

One benefit of our move to the new wing has been that each ADAH staff member now has a separate telephone line. You can still contact the Government Records Division office at the old number: (334)242-4452. Other staff can now be reached at the following numbers (area code 334):

Tracey Berezansky (assistant director)	353-4604
Frank Brown (legislative liaison/local records)	353-4609
Chris Davidson (state records center)	242-4306
Linda Overman (conservation/registrar)	353-4726
Tom Turley (local records program)	353-4607
Richard Wang (state records program)	353-4605

E-mail addresses for individual staff members have not changed. You may continue to send records-related questions to the division at records@archives.alabama.gov.

State and Local Records Commissions approve RDAs

Meeting on August 3, the **State Records Commission** approved new records disposition authorities (RDAs) for the Alabama Emergency Management Agency and the Alabama State Board of Respiratory Therapy. Members also approved revised RDAs for the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) and Public-Supported Alabama Universities. Finally, the commission reviewed RDA implementation reports from 27 state agencies.

Also meeting on August 3, the **Local Government Records Commission** approved major revisions to RDAs for county commissions, county probate offices, and local law enforcement agencies; and a minor revision to the municipal RDA. Both commissions agreed to adopt a special letterhead for use in future correspondence.

The commissions' next quarterly meetings are set for **October 26, 2005**. The State Records Commission will begin 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 members to join records commissions

Two incoming members of the State and Local Government Records Commissions were introduced to other members and ADAH staff when the commissions met on August 3.

Dr. Joe Turrini will succeed long-time member Dr. Jeff Jakeman as the representative for Auburn University; and Margie Toney, senior accountant of the Department of Revenue's Financial Operations Division, will replace Yolanda Caldwell as the department's representative.

Both new members will officially begin their service at the records commissions' next meetings on October 26.

Mobile County volunteer completes records indexing project

On July 29, 2005, the Mobile County Probate Court's records/archives/imaging department held a reception at its new headquarters in the old *Mobile Press* building. This event's purpose was to honor Mrs. Vivian M. Gordon, who recently completed a five-year project to index Mobile County's "Miscellaneous Record" books A-Z.

Conducting the work on her own time and at her own expense, Mrs. Gordon patiently read through 30 massive record volumes of about 600 pages each. Included were French and Spanish documents from Mobile's pre-statehood era, which had to be translated. In all, there are approximately 40,000 entries in Mrs. Gordon's index, which covers the years 1815-1909 and amounts to over 1,000 pages in printed form.



Mrs. Gordon receives her certificate from Mobile County Probate Judge Don Davis

Among records found in this collection are marriage contracts, foreign wills; steamship registrations; slave sales, auctions, and emancipations; estate records; divorces; Confederate pension records; and maps of Mobile's first land subdivision.

At the reception in her honor, Probate Judge Don Davis presented Mrs. Gordon with a plaque in appreciation of her "dedication to the preservation of the People's Records of Mobile County." She also received a resolution from the county commission and gifts from members of the archives' staff.

Now that this project is completed, Mrs. Gordon plans on "getting all of her family photographs scanned and in order." Coll'ette King of the probate court archives "would love to have her back to index the 1870 Census!"

For more information on the indexing project or other archives holdings, contact Coll'ette at (251)574-4941 or cking@mobile-county.net.

Jeri Corbitt retires as Jefferson County coordinator

Jeri Corbitt, who has coordinated Jefferson County's loose records project since 2001, officially "retired" on June 7, at a luncheon held in Birmingham. During the luncheon, she (along with Jefferson County probate judge Mark Gaines and ADAH archivist Tom Turley) presented certificates of appreciation to 45 veteran project volunteers. Tom, in turn, presented Jeri with a certificate from Governor Bob Riley to honor her leadership of Alabama's largest loose records microfilming project. Later, everyone enjoyed a hilarious "home movie" tribute to Jeri, produced by Jim Anderson and featuring many other project volunteers.

GSU camera operator Eric Olsen has already filmed over 100 rolls of Jefferson County loose records microfilm and will eventually complete two million images of historical records. Gary Gerlach, who succeeds Jeri as project coordinator, will oversee the next phase of the project, which will digitize historical records from the circuit and chancery courts.

More loose records program news

During the last quarter, the total of completed Alabama loose records projects rose to 37. Counties that finished microfilming recently include: Chambers (119 rolls), Chilton (23 rolls), Choctaw (57 rolls), Jackson (114 rolls), Lee (91 rolls), and Marshall (168 rolls). Many thanks are due to our retiring camera operators, the Clements and Larsens, and to the Raus, who continue filming in Bibb County. In July, a new volunteer couple, the Carliles, arrived from Salt Lake City to begin records preparation work in Bullock County.

Meanwhile, GSU camera operators Rod and RaNae Richards completed their filming work

at ADAH in June. Besides nearly 200 rolls of county records finished earlier, they filmed three rolls of Tuscaloosa County marriages, 11 rolls of ADAH private records (church records and genealogical collections) and 36 rolls of Methodist Church records from Huntingdon College. This work brought the total for our in-house project to 347 rolls and over 400,000 images.

Unfortunately, the Richards were not able to carry out their last intended project: digitizing historical case files from Montgomery County's circuit court. County archivist Lyn Frazer asked to postpone that project until October, in order to complete the installation of a new computer system. GSU has sent another couple, the Lovins, who will replace the Richards when the Montgomery County work gets under way.

Alabama Genealogical Society to meet at ADAH

The Alabama Genealogical Society will hold its fall seminar at the ADAH building in Montgomery on Saturday, October 1, from 9:00 until 3:30.

The meeting is open to both current and prospective members. Sessions offered will include: "Getting Ready for an Archives Research Trip—What You Can Do From Home"; "You're at the Archives—Now What?"; "Accessing the Records" and "Explore the Archives' 'Rare, Unusual, and Little-Known' Resources." ADAH staff members Nancy Dupree, Norwood Kerr, Mark Palmer, Debbie Pendleton, Frazine Taylor, and Tom Turley will serve as presenters.

Registration is \$30 for current members and \$35 for non-members. This fee will include lunch if registration is received by September 23. A registration form is available on the society's website, which may be accessed at: www.archives.state.al.us/ags/AGS_FALL_SEMINAR_2005_revised.pdf. For more information, contact Jyl Johnson Hardy at jylhardy@bellsouth.net.

“WEST WING FLING”
Saturday, October 8, 2005
Opening Ceremonies 9:00 a.m.

Schedule of Events

New Alabama Power Auditorium

Alabama History Talks

- 9:45 a.m. “The Quilts of Gees Bend” Panel discussion with William Arnett and quilters
- 11:15 a.m. “My Grandfathers’ Civil War” Dr. Leah Rawls Atkins
- 12:30 p.m. “Reflections on Studying and Teaching Alabama History” Dr. Wayne Flynt
- 1:45 p.m. “50 Years of Alabama Politics: A Reporter Remembers” Bob Ingram
- 3:00 p.m. “Viewing Alabama Through Photos: The Archives’ Top Twelve” Frances Robb

Milo B. Howard Auditorium

Book Dealers University of Alabama Press and New South Books

Storytelling

- 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. Susan Sessions
- 11:00 - 11:30 a.m. Joseph Trimble
- 11:30 - 12:30 Alison Williamson
- 12:30 - 1:00 p.m. Joseph Trimble
- 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. Susan Sessions
- 2:30 - 3:00 p.m. Alison Williamson

West Terrace

Traditional Alabama Music

- 9:30 a.m. The Sullivan Family (bluegrass gospel from Washington County)
- 10:30 a.m. Birmingham Sunlights (African-American *a capella* gospel)
- 11:45 a.m. The Sullivan Family (bluegrass gospel from Washington County)
- 12:45 p.m. Alabama shape-note singers from across Alabama join in a sacred harp singing
- 2:00 p.m. Lil’ Jimmy Reed (down-home juke joint blues)

Lobby

Ribbon cutting, Friends welcome/registration, volunteer recruitment

East Terrace or Lawn

Pizza and soft drink sales

Front Lawn

Living History (18th-century and Civil War) reenactments
Civil War Music: 5th Alabama Regimental Band (3:00 p.m.)

New Wing Second Floor

Children's/Hands-on Activities

Build a Quilt
Early Alabama Life
 Butter Churning
 The Ink Well
History Trunk
Mardi Gras Merriment
Native Americans in Alabama
 Gorget Design
 Pottery Place
Alabama Takes Flight

Old Government Records Office (Coley Wing Basement, Room 101)

9:30 a.m. -3:00 p.m. "Antique Corner–Show and Tell" (artifacts and antique identification and preservation advice)
Archives staff, antique dealers, archaeologists, and books and manuscripts specialists

New Reference Room and West Wing Basement Storage

Displays of quilts, records from the Archives' collections, and tours