



Society of Florida Archivists

THE FLORIDA ARCHIVIST

Dear members,

I moved into a new house last year and already seem to have gathered enough stuff that my wife has declared, “You are a pack rat!” I had several boxes in our office that I hadn’t touched in a year, so she kindly suggested I get rid of them. Doesn’t she understand that I’m an archivist? This is what I do! Granted, since marriage is full of sacrifices, I complied. I organized my so-called “mess” into neatly arranged folders, complete with descriptive labels. I must say I was quite impressed with the results of applying my archiving skills at home. I’m not sure why it took me so long to organize those boxes, but at least that project is finished. Inspired by this success, I helped my parents organize their old photographs into neatly secured plastic sleeves and store them in archival boxes ordered from my favorite preservation store. Has it really come to this? Everything I have must be in preservation sleeves? Yikes! At least I’m putting my education to good use.



Michael Zaidman
President

If you’re as consumed with archiving as I’ve been lately, you won’t want to miss the annual meeting, which will take place May 4-6 in historic St. Augustine. If you would like to present a session, suggest an idea, or offer your assistance, contact Christine Wysocki (christine.wysocki@gmail.com), chair of the Local Arrangements Committee. Preliminary sessions look great, and it promises to be another outstanding conference. Final details will be confirmed within the next month and distributed via the newsletter, website and other forms of communication.

The Awards Committee is reaching out for input on the SFA Award of Excellence. Please consider submitting nominations for persons or organizations that have made an impact in the archival community. If you think you deserve the award, nominate yourself! Everyone likes to be recognized; why not get the recognition you deserve? Additionally, SAA has several awards for deserving nominees: <http://www2.archivists.org/recognition>. SFA members currently are serving on the committees for two awards in particular: the C.F.W. Coker Award and the J. Franklin Jameson Archival Advocacy Award. Nominations are due February 28.

In the last newsletter, I asked for members who were interested in participating in committees. I am happy to report that several members responded and were assigned committee duties at the January board meeting. Check out the SFA website and listserv for updates.

If you have ideas or suggestions on how to make SFA better, please don’t hesitate to give me or any of our board members an e-mail or phone call. We are here to help you search for new opportunities or make new introductions. I look forward to seeing you in St. Augustine!

Two Time Capsules in One Week

Submitted by Dottie Patterson,
Archivist for the Delray Beach Historical Society



Photo of Dottie Patterson courtesy of Paula Detwiller.

In October 2010, Dottie Patterson retired from the Delray Beach Historical Society after 20 years of service. During that time, she had been peripherally involved with organizations interested in planting time capsules but was, admittedly, not entirely fascinated with the contents which usually consisted of current newspapers, brochures and photographs. (She also had noticed that time capsules often were quickly forgotten.) But, then she discovered that contents from decades ago evoked a different response, especially when shown to the community within a one-week period.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TIME CAPSULE, 1924 AND 1930

Discovery

In January 2010, the historian at the Presbyterian Church on the barrier island called to say that a time capsule had been discovered – and, could I help? The capsule had been found as a result of the unusually cold weather coupling with rust on the church’s cornerstone bolts, causing the bolts to fail. When the cornerstone slid down the wall, a space containing a handmade copper box was discovered. The tight-fitting cover was not welded shut, and small insects, humidity, and mold had done a masterful job on the contents.

History of the church and time capsule

This box had some history. The church was built in 1924 as Gibson Memorial Baptist Church by 33 members who had left the First Baptist Church (organized in 1912) to start their own congregation. Fred J. Schrader, the builder and financier of the church– and a devout Baptist– moved to Delray Beach in 1911. An architect’s apprentice in New England, Schrader never registered in Florida. He built the city’s first jail, the 1913 Building at Old School Square, homes and other structures during his career. The church building, located approximately one block from the beach, survived the September 1926 and 1928 hurricanes. The Baptist congregation dedicated the beautiful, Spanish-style in 1924 and placed the time capsule behind the cornerstone.

After the devastating 1926 hurricane and the real estate bust, the congregation defaulted on their payments. According to newspaper reports, Schrader was approached to sell the building for a gambling casino on the beach. He refused, and a few weeks after the disastrous 1928 hurricane, he rented the church to Presbyterians who had long hoped to establish a church in Delray Beach. Other than a few broken window panes, the building was undamaged. This was amazing, considering that all the other churches in town were destroyed or heavily damaged. As a result, the Presbyterian Church is the oldest church structure in Delray Beach. In November 1930, the Presbyterians, after purchasing the church, re-laid the cornerstone by flipping over the Baptist one and putting their information on the reverse. They carefully left the original papers in the copper box behind it and added their own material.

Condition

When church historian Nancy Young showed me the material, I put it (as best I could) in separate, sealed containers. Much of it was soft—the consistency of ash—rather than being yellowed and brittle. Mold, dust, and paper particles easily floated into the air—and the church wanted to have an exhibit to show members what had been found in the time capsule! I was thinking nothing could be done to retrieve the information in these papers and put the curator’s box away in archives storage. But then I noticed that I could read the dates on the newspapers and that some white particles reminded me of special white, full-page inserts in the *Delray News* during the mid-1920s. I pulled these newspapers from Delray Beach Historical Society’s (DBHS) archived newspaper collection and photographed the front pages, where the church dedications had been reported. I found the insert about the new Baptist Church in a 1925 edition of the *Delray News*. It was a little treasure with ornate graphics, reprints of church photographs and over-the-top flowery language. I began to think that replicating the information would be as pleasurable as putting a puzzle together or reading a detective story.

List of contents and exhibit

The time capsule’s contents consisted of: A *Florida Baptist Witness* newspaper dated November 20, 1924; *Delray News* newspapers dated November 25, 1924, October 18, 1929 and November 29, 1930; the 1925 insert; eight newspaper clippings from various newspapers in Florida (the clippings were in fairly good condition); a 14-page sermon from the 1929 dedication; a Bible (in poor condition); two telegrams, three congratulatory letters to Reverend Frank Nelson; a fragment of a letter from the YMCA; two other fragments from separate letters; and a bag of small paper fragments that may be the remains of church dedication programs. All of the materials were replicated except for the last three items and the Bible. At the October 17 exhibit held in the historic church, I included three pieces of original material so viewers could see the condition. I put the Bible in the bottom of a rare book box (with a piece of Plexiglas over the top), and the white fragments were in a clear envelope next to the photograph of the 1925 newspaper page. One original page of the sermon was in a protective sleeve next to the replicated sermon. Reproducing the sermon using tweezers, a magnifying glass, and some guess work was the most time-consuming of all.

Church members decided to leave most of the fragile contents in the DBHS archives. The old Bible and some of the replicated materials were returned to the capsule along with the church’s designation report for the local Register of Historic Places (1990s) and newer materials from 2010. We found the Minnesota Historical Society’s and National Archives’ guidelines for building time capsules, but the Church decided to follow tradition and use the original copper box. The replaced contents now are protected in acid-free materials, and the top will be sealed with silicon.

THE SEACREST TIME CAPSULE, 1949

About two years ago the old Seacrest/Atlantic High School was scheduled for demolition. DBHS was working on the restoration of the 1908 Hunt House and building the attached archives storage bunker. Thinking that we might find some furniture or materials to use, the Society’s former president, Bob Ganger, and restoration contractor, Ken Blair, received permission to enter the school. They asked me to come along. Bob and Ken noticed the cornerstone and received permission to remove it. The wall was built solidly, and Ken spent roughly four hours removing the cornerstone. Behind it, he found a copper box; this one was larger than the one at the church and was welded shut. The time capsule went into storage. We considered using it for an educational program at the new high school, but the Delray Beach Preservation Trust was offered the opportunity

<CONTINUED ON PAGE 4>

Florida Connecting to Collections Update ...

Submitted by Burt Altman, C2C Steering Committee Member

Following several conference calls last fall, the Connecting to Collections Steering Committee, which includes members Burt Altman, Rivers Buford, Russell Dawes, Corinne Jorgensen, Melissa Kendrick, John Maseman, Graig Shaak, and Myriam Springuel, resubmitted an IMLS "Connecting to Collections" implementation grant application in December. The Committee reviewed the survey report prepared by Kathy Braun of the College of Communications, Florida State University. The report, based on feedback from a large number of Florida cultural institutions, contained information that would strengthen arguments in support of funding, including a statement regarding Steering Committee's decision to develop the project as it had.

The original Connecting to Collections planning grant, awarded to Florida in 2008, provided for a statewide assessment of the collection needs of libraries, museums, historical societies, and other Florida cultural heritage institutions through three statewide forums and a survey. In December 2009, the Steering Committee followed up the results of the forums and survey with an application for an IMLS grant, but Florida was not selected as a recipient. After careful reassessment of the survey results and responses from forum attendees, the application was resubmitted. If awarded, the implementation grant will provide funding for additional training to assist individuals for caring for collections and to assist in establishing priorities for disaster planning and preservation. In the long term, it is hoped that the funding provided for this grant will enable staff at small regional institutions to better preserve collections in their care, while developing a trusted statewide network of cultural heritage professionals.

Time Capsule Photos ...

(1) A well-preserved paper from the 1949 capsule (David Massey).



(2) 1949 capsule contents (Paula Detwiller).



(4) Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall (DBHS archives).



(3) Newspaper, 1949 capsule (David Massey).

<CONTINUED ON PAGE 8>

Communiqué

SFA Announcements

The SFA Board has announced the following committee appointments for 2011-2012:

- ♦ Judith Beale Memorial Scholarship Committee: Erin Santana (chair), William Modrow, Tracie Seurer
- ♦ Awards Committee: Leslie Siegel (chair), Boyd Murphree
- ♦ Nominations Committee: Katherine Fleming (chair), Laura Capell, Koichi Tasa, Burt Altman.

News from SAA

... Nominations for SAA Awards are due February 28:
<http://www2.archivists.org/recognition>.

Awards & Kudos

... Joe Knetsch and Dr. Nick Wynne recently published *Florida in the Spanish-American War, 1898* (History Press, 2011). Additionally, Mr. Knetsch has published a chapter in *Florida's Hundred Years War* (University Press of Florida, 2011).

Funding

... The University of Miami Libraries has received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to rebuild the technical and organizational infrastructure for the Cuban Theater Digital Archive (CTDA). The \$172,000 grant will support an infrastructure overhaul to sustain the ongoing contribution of content.

Conferences & Workshops

... "Archival Education and Research Across Communities," Simmons College, Boston, Mass. (July 10 – July 15) - <http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/aeri.htm>.

... Applications for the Western Archives Institute, being held at the University of California-Berkeley July 10–22 are due April 1:
<http://www.calarchivists.org/Default.aspx?pageId=704191>.

Events & Exhibits

... The Henry B. Plant Museum is featuring a collection of antique valentines from the late 19th and early 20th centuries as part of the exhibit "Hearts and Flowers: Victorian Valentines" being held February 1-28.

... "Racism and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Florida" has been added to the State Library & Archives of Florida's Florida Memory website:

http://www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/photo_exhibits/civil-rights/.

Publications & Projects

... The *Electronic Records and Records Management Practices* handbook (Florida Department of State Records Management Program) has been revised and updated:

<http://dliis.dos.state.fl.us/barm/handbooks/electronic.pdf>.

... The State Library of Florida and LYRASIS have partnered to digitize approximately 88 items, including Florida history titles and government documents printed between 1870 and 1970. Digitized content will be made available at <http://www.archive.org/details/statelibraryandarchivesofflorida>.

Requests

... Photographs of Allen R. Parrish/Parish currently are being sought by an historian. Contact Susannah Worth, Ph.D. (Worth Consulting) for more information:
sworth@consultant.com.

Are you socially connected? In addition to the website, SFA has web presences on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#). Updates are posted periodically, and it's free to join either (or both!) of these communities.

Sign up today to begin developing your social network of new and established colleagues.

SFA ANNUAL MEETING

Are you ready for some history? If so, then mark your calendars for this year's annual meeting, being held May 3-6 in the nation's oldest city.

St. Augustine's Flagler College serves as host for the 2011 Annual Meeting. The conference planning and local arrangements committees are organizing a number of events that promise a wealth of educational and networking opportunities for SFA members. Scheduled presentations currently include: exhibitions for small repositories, collaborative documentation of institutional histories, business archives, Haitian recovery post-Katrina, and the Save America's Treasures Grant. In addition, a photographic preservation and digitization workshop will be offered. Conference attendees also will be afforded the opportunity to tour St. Augustine via guided trolley and visit the historic Markland House, which has a long history with both Henry Flagler and his namesake college. Additional meeting information will be added to the SFA website as it becomes available: <http://www.florida-archivists.org/Annual-Meeting.php>.



Flagler College image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Questions, comments, ideas? Panel sessions, poster sessions, workshop topics? Contact Annual Meeting Chair, Christine Wysocki, at christine.wysocki@gmail.com.

We'll see you in St. Augustine!

Accommodations

The **Best Western Spanish Quarter Inn** (6 Castillo Drive, St. Augustine; 904-824-4457) has been reserved for conference attendees at the cost of \$89/night with a \$5 parking fee. Reservations must be made 30 days in advance.

Other hotels and inns within close proximity to the conference site include:

- ◆ Hilton Bayfront (904-829-2277)
- ◆ Monterey Inn (904-924-4482)
- ◆ Casa Monica (904-827-1888)
- ◆ St. Francis Inn (904-824-6068)
- ◆ Carriage Way Inn (904-829-2467)
- ◆ St. George Inn (904-827-5740)

(Mention Flagler, and you may receive a discount!)

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SFA is an organization of individuals and institutions who share a concern for the identification, preservation, and use of records of historical value.

It is dedicated to the dissemination of information about such records and about sound archival methodology.

TIME CAPSULES, CONT.

to host a fund-raiser at an historic building, during which a “movie,” *Delray Then & Now*, would be presented as the main attraction. The high school’s former athletic coach, Norm Price, remembered the capsule, and his daughter, a graduate of the school, asked if it could be opened as the movie finale. DBHS agreed. As many of those attending the event had connections to the school, it was a popular decision. First, I had to figure out how to open the capsule safely. After consulting with a plumber about the properties of copper, a local cabinetmaker with tools and a ventilated workshop agreed to cut through the weld, allowing me to open the capsule safely and quickly at the event. I taped up the opening and promised not to look inside.

Contents

The capsule was opened October 11, 2010, at the Arcade Building (Gols Restaurant). The opening was recorded by CBS-12 local news. Inside, and in remarkably good condition, were: a History of Boynton Beach Public Schools, compiled by school staff; the Board of Public Instruction’s and J. Hilbert Sapp, Inc.’s school building contract (in the architect’s envelope); *Palm Beach Post* newspaper, March 5, 1949 with front page story “New School Rites Today (Masonic ceremony)”; *Delray Beach Journal*, March 3, 1949; *Delray Beach News*, March 4, 1949; *Palm Beach Times*, March 4, 1949; typed list of all schools and teachers in Palm Beach County; a list of all Board of Public Instruction employees in Palm Beach County and mimeographed minutes of school board meeting on June 22, 1948 (purchase of school site); *Newshawk* student newspaper, February 16, 1949; an article about a Delray High graduate who died in WWII

leaving a portion of his insurance to the high school library; a copy of the new school law enacted by the Florida Legislature in 1947; and a 1935 Indian head nickel, 1945 dime, 1948 quarter, 1945 half-dollar, 1921 silver dollar and two 1948 pennies.



Time capsule opening at Gols Restaurant (D. Massey)

Conclusion

My favorite time capsule items include letters through time from their hands to mine, such as Lauren C. Hand’s “The Old Days of Delray High School” and C.H. Lander’s history of the Delray School in old school square. Hand was one of three graduating students in the class of 1915 and grew to be a well-educated and prominent member of the community. He was working on a Ph.D. in chemistry at Berkeley when he returned to Delray Beach for family reasons. Lander graduated from Harvard and the University of Michigan. He was the first principal of the 1913 school and 1925-26 high school. In addition to a brief history of the school, he also included images of manual arts class products that had been highlighted in the state school superintendent’s 1915-16 report. Since I had read so much about Hand and Landers in archives documents, I felt that these two men were old friends. These items from the 1949 time capsule will be retained in the DBHS archives and used for educational purposes.