

TO: Sharmon Kenyon
CC: Ray Wang
FROM: Joan Berman
SUBJ: SPECIAL COLLECTIONS 2004-2005

HIGHLIGHTS. This section includes notable activities not described below in the ongoing goals.

Presentations and more.

- “The Humboldt Room: Resources for Local Business.” Presentation for the (HSU) Business Partners Steering Committee, HSU Library, June 29, 2004. Included information about the Northwestern California Newspaper project and a brief overview of the Shuster Collection. (Joan and Edie)
- “The Northwestern California Newspaper Project.” Presentation for the annual conference of the California Council for the Promotion of History, Eureka, September 24, 2004. This was the well-received debut of the project’s web site: <http://library.humboldt.edu/nwcnews>. (Joan and students)
- “The California Newspaper Projects: A Regional Model.” Panel presentation for the California Library Association annual conference, San Jose, November 14, 2004. More acclaim for the web site! (Joan)
- “Shuster Aerial Photograph Collection.” Poster session/table display for Historic Preservation Ordinance Workshop, Arcata, June 24, 2005. Slideshow of about 500 of the 2,300 aerial photos in this collection; repeated on July 1 at Humboldt County Community Development Department office for staff and the director. (Edie and Joan)
- “Western Roundup.” Annual conference of the combined western archivist associations, Las Vegas, April 14-16, 2005. (Edie and Joan attended)
- “School for Scanning.” Workshop on digital library collections, Boston, June 1-3, 2005. (Joan attended)
- “Redwood National Park Archives Project.” First year of a two year grant funded by National Park Service. (Edie is the principal investigator on this grant which is a collaboration between HSU and RN&SP and, although this is not a Library activity, Edie notes it may lead to processing the Becking Collection at RN&SP and thus facilitate planning for the Library’s recently acquired Becking Collection.)

“HumcoCat”. The various Access databases for Humboldt Room photograph and map collections were normalized into a single database with individual collection work forms that can be created as a new collection is added; currently six collections and 7,467 items are included. The geographical subject headings were georeferenced using the Alexandria Digital Library to add the possibility of a geospatial approach to the material. The next update of the Humboldt Room searchable database will reflect this work and will be retitled to include aerial photographs and maps in addition to the photographs

currently searchable. A student, Nate Haas, enabled us to complete this effort; however Systems support is required to implement and maintain the searchable database enhancements.

New grant. We were successful in our application to the California State Library to participate in the Local History Digital Resources Project (LHDRP) as one of 19 libraries each contributing 200 scanned images to the California Digital Library. We will be focusing on our “Forest Industries” collections with 125 maps and architectural drawings of the Samoa based companies and 75 historical photos illustrating these companies. This could also result in the development of a major grant proposal to arrange and describe the largest of these collections.

GOALS. This section reviews accomplishments of objectives from both 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 where not previously covered either above or in the Highlights for 2003-2004. It also provides 2005-2006 objectives.

Process collections. The primary collection focus this year has been the Shuster Aerial Photograph Collection. Selection of a vendor to scan the negatives was a deliberate process, but the time spent on it is resulting in an outstanding product, as evidenced by the highly positive reaction of participants at the June presentations noted above.

In anticipation of receiving additional map filing cases through the NEH preservation grant, we began processing the Herrick Map Collection that has been dispersed in several locations in the basement for many years. The 249 maps have been cleaned and preliminary data has been entered into the HumcoCat database. In addition, Edie has been able to work on the Strobe Collection and, in preparation for adding the finding guide to the Online Archive of California (OAC), she has completed the template for the HSU Library to perform online entry of finding aids to the OAC.

2005-2006 priorities include: add finding guides for the Shuster, Strobe, Herrick, Hover and Clausen Collections to the OAC using the automated program; mount in the Library a major exhibit for the Shuster Collection, scheduled for February 14, 2006; prepare processing plans for the Palmquist and Becking Collections; complete processing of several of the “forest industries” collections in conjunction with the LHDRP grant; implement the LHDRP grant. In addition, there may be an opportunity to research Humboldt County images in the Ray Jerome Baker Collection at the Bishop Museum and obtain digital copies of their holdings pertinent to our Swanlund-Baker Collection.

Monitor cataloging of materials for Humboldt Room Collections. Regular addition of materials proceeded through February 2005, but then came to a halt as circumstances in the catalog and mending areas worsened. Some materials remain in processing, and a backlog has accumulated in my office of materials to be sent to cataloging.

This is a continuing goal for 2005-2006. In addition to getting back on schedule for cataloging Humboldt Room items, we plan to address the issue of collection

level cataloging for those collections which are on the OAC and/or for which there is access through the searchable HumcoCat.

Humboldt Room procedures and staffing. Students and volunteers continue to be indispensable to collections and services of the Humboldt Room. Our investment in training and mentoring these students and volunteers pays off handsomely. Nate entered metadata for the Shuster Collection and enabled the Shuster slide show and presentation as well as the new form of HumcoCat; he also cleaned, numbered and entered preliminary metadata for the Herrick Map Collection. With ongoing training, Dao and Christina nurtured the Pamphlet Collection to a dramatic increase in items added this year, from 985 last year to 2,311 this year; this has virtually wiped out our backlog of items to be added to this collection. Becky worked on the Hover Collection finding aid. All helped in monitoring patron use of the Humboldt Room.

This continues to be a difficult area. Despite updating and expanding the procedures manual for Humboldt Room desk staff last year, monitoring of the room continues to be problematic. Materials are leaving the room without checkout more frequently and photos from the Roberts and Schoenrock Collections are known to have disappeared this year. The photograph filing cabinet has been left unlocked on many occasions. Several obvious reference questions were missed. Beverage containers are found on the tables. To reiterate from my 2002-2003 annual report: “The redesign of the third floor service point by Information Services in 2002-2003 has highlighted the challenges in providing adequate oversight for the supervised use collections in the Humboldt Room as well as handling research referral questions.”

Use of the collections, as measured by reshelving counts, decreased for the second year, from 6,374 to 5,881, reflecting perhaps both our design to move more duplicate copies of materials to the main stacks (where they are more accessible to users) as well as the coverage of the service point by staff who are less familiar with the collections and thus less likely to bring more materials to the attention of users.

In 2005-2006 we will continue to solicit and train students, interns and volunteers to help with all aspects of Special Collections activities. I will provide refresher training sessions for 3rd floor desk staff and explore ways to mitigate the inconsistent reference service offered for the Humboldt Room.

Review the role of Special Collections gifts within the broader CSU/HSU development targets. Not much was achieved on the goal this year, although the importance of it was underscored for me by various sessions at the Western Roundup Archives annual conference, so the objectives continue. We are accumulating a growing backlog of small donations but hope with the increased processing space to be able to address these more expeditiously in the coming year.

Develop a plan for assessing the value of the existing collections and update the database of collections. Refine procedures for reporting gifts.

Implement the Amigos Preservation Report recommendations regarding Special Collections. We are continuing to purchase and use archival storage boxes and folders for cataloged items as well as collections as they are processed; this has been integrated into normal cataloging and processing functions. The NEH preservation grant provided funds for additional map storage cases and map preservation supplies. Some improvement in storage space has been achieved by closing in the hallway behind the former bathrooms on third floor and installing shelving and tables.

I believe we have gone as far as we can towards implementing the Amigos recommendations until additional space is secured to consolidate the disparate locations of Special Collections materials and services; this goal will be addressed in future under “space” and “long-range planning.”

Develop the Northwestern California Newspaper web page and write grant applications in its support. The web page went live in September 2004 to substantial acclaim. We are continuing to follow up on problems and opportunities identified through this project although I have not yet developed any further grant applications. Newspaper publishing in the county has taken several interesting turns this year that will require updates to the web page. Humboldt Room staff are working with Periodicals staff to implement the regional model for updating the California Newspaper Project. We have also begun to compile a list of local newsletters to be linked from the newspaper web page.

Priorities for 2005-2006 include: update the web page; catalog the new newspaper titles and update the California Newspaper Project database; facilitate microfilming of the Redwood Record; and finalize the report on newspaper indexing. All of these activities are part of implementing the model for updating the California Newspaper Project.

Prepare a long-range space plan for Special Collections. As anticipated in last year’s report, the shorter term needs for space did indeed reach crisis level this year. We resolved these needs in several ways. We compacted the two filing cabinets of aerial photos into one cabinet, thereby gaining 5 more drawers of space for the Pamphlet Collection and we removed approximately 20 shelves worth of selected pre-1992 theses from the Humboldt Room shelves to the newly created storage space adjacent to the two former bathroom/storage rooms on the third floor; these items will need to be paged if the circulating copies in the main stacks are not available. This will allow for 3-5 years growth space in the Humboldt Room.

As there has been no further movement since last year on the possibility of recovering all or a portion of the Basement (“BSS Phase 2”), I am again including the report I prepared last year on space usage and needs for the Humboldt Room and Special Collections.

I will update this report at the drop of a hat if/when there is indication it would be fruitful to do so.