

**TO:** Sharmon Kenyon  
**CC:** Ray Wang  
**FROM:** Joan Berman  
**SUBJ:** SPECIAL COLLECTIONS 2005-2006

---

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

*Shuster Collection.* This year saw the culmination of work begun in 2001 when Edie Butler identified the enormous historical value of Merle Shuster's aerial photographs and worked with him to transfer his collection to the HSU Library. We spent the last few years bringing this project to its successful completion: 2,300 images plus the finding aid online on the Humboldt Room web site; an outstanding exhibit in the Library lobby, curated by Joseph Wilhelm, February 14-March 13, 2006; a cover story in the *North Coast Journal* February 9, 2006; and a reception honoring the collection and its creator/donor on February 24, 2006. We feel very fortunate that Merle was able to participate fully in the exhibit and reception; sadly, he died on June 4.

A major part of bringing this collection online was incorporating it into the web searchable Humboldt Room Photograph Collections database supported by Systems. This is the fourth collection, and by far the largest in terms of online images, to be included in the public database. A detailed history of the database was prepared on December 8, 2005 and submitted to the Library Dean and the Systems Librarian to document the development and potential future directions for the database; it is an integral part of this annual report.

There is an unfortunate addendum that must be made to this story, however. On June 2, 2006, just as we completed final editing of the Shuster records in the database and had retired the negatives to permanent archival storage in the Library basement, we discovered that the database had been corrupted on March 15, 2006. Recovering from this setback has very much overshadowed the project completion and leaves us still with both cleanup work to be finished as well as lost time of over a month at the end of the year that has seriously impacted completion of other projects.

- [HumCo DB, AKA Humboldt Room Photograph Collections Searchable Database, December 8, 2005](#)
- [RS&CA Shuster Grant Final Report](#)
- [Shuster Press Release](#)
- [Aerials Over Humboldt: A look at the Merle Shuster Collection, North Coast Journal, February 9, 2006](#)

*Northwestern California Forest Communities Collection.* The second major project involving Humboldt Room collections this year was the Local History Digital Resources Project (LHDRP) grant administered through the State Library. The goal was to select,

catalog and digitize 200 historical photographs to go on the California Digital Library/Online Archive of California (CDL/OAC). Seven Library staff members (George, Edie, Joan, Cheryl, Laurie, Gisela, Tom) plus a student volunteer and a community consultant actively participated in this project. At present, the images can be viewed on the public project website, but they have not yet been incorporated into the CDL/OAC site. In implementing the “forest communities” theme for this project, we selected 75 photographs from the Walter Warren Collection depicting the Little River Redwood Company and the company town of Crannell ca. 1908-1930, 25 maps comprising the Belcher Atlas of Humboldt County 1921-22, and 100 maps and architectural drawings from the LP/Hammond Lumber Companies Collection. As an important component of this project, we contracted with Suzanne Guerra, a local environmental history and cultural preservation consultant, to provide the historical context for the Forest Communities Collection and to select the items from the LP/Hammond Collection, primarily documenting the original buildings and infrastructure of the company town of Samoa. Thanks to a generous donation to Special Collections at the end of the year, Suzanne is continuing this summer to assess and document the collection in preparation for further processing and access, for which grant funding will be sought as needed.

As a bonus, at the end of the project, we were able to send 25 more photos to be scanned; we selected these from the already processed but not digitized Swanlund-Baker Collection showing tanbark logging in Southern Humboldt County ca. 1910. We will also have access to the CONTENTdm software for a continuing year.

- [OAC CONTENTdm HSU Collection](#)

***Humboldt Room use measures.*** The Humboldt Room collections are continuing to grow and to be used in both their physical and virtual forms. The primary physical use measure, reshelving count, is up from 5881 in 2004-2005 to 6391 in 2005-2006, returning to the level of the previous year. A new and growing virtual use measure, accesses to the Humboldt Room Photograph Collections database on the web site, showed phenomenal growth from the time of incorporation of the Shuster Collection with its 2,300 online images and publicity in February 2006. The first full year of the database, 2004-2005, showed a total of 2,264 accesses, averaging less than 200 per month. In 2005-2006 the total count jumped to 40,469. After the major spikes in February (14,191) and March (12,246), use appears to be settling down to approximately 2,500 accesses per month.

***Space for Humboldt Room/Special Collections.*** As noted in the Library Annual Report for 2004-2005, one of the three planning initiatives for the year addressed “review of space with special attention to Humboldt Room/Special Collections needs.” The January 2004 report *Special Collections – Space Requirements* documented the needs and continues to be relevant. Measures implemented since that report project 2-4 years growth in shelving space as we go into 2006-2007. Since it is clear that future space for Special Collections may not be available in the Library Basement in the foreseeable future, alternative planning is imperative. To that end, the following proposal has been developed in consultation with the Library Dean and the IS Department Chair.

**Relocate the Humboldt Room to a newly constructed space on the second floor adjacent to Library 208.**

- [Space Plan](#)
- [Special Collections - Space Requirements](#)

**Presentations, publications and more.** This eclectic mix of items reflects the continuing research and outreach activities of Special Collections staff, including professional development opportunities and articles highlighting Humboldt Room collections.

- *Southern Oregon University Library Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant Project Evaluation.* Formal evaluation of the Southern Oregon Digital Archive (SODA) prepared by Joan, May 2, 2005 (not included in last year's report)
- *Digital Collections at the Humboldt State University Library.* Article written by Joan for the *Humboldt Historian* vol. 54, no. 1, Spring 2006, p. 13. Also made brief presentation about the Shuster Collection at the Annual Luncheon of the Humboldt County Historical Society in February 2006.
- *Ethnography and Folklore of the Indians of Northwestern California.* Joan's 1986 bibliography is now online in SODA, as of May 2006.
- *Petition for Recertification by the Academy of Certified Archivists for Edith Butler CA.* Reviewed and accepted June 28, 2006, for another five years.
- *LITA National Forum 2005.* Library and Information Technology Association annual forum, San Jose, September 29-October 2, 2005 (Joan attended)
- *Shaken or Stored? Managing Archival Change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.* 2006 Annual General Meeting, San Francisco, April 27-30, 2006 (Edie attended)
- *Archiving 2006.* Fourth annual conference, Ottawa, Canada, May 23-27, 2006 (Joan attended)
- *Studying Humboldt,* by Jennifer Morey, *Times-Standard*, Sunday February 5, 2006 (front page story featuring the Humboldt Room)
- *Ricks to the Rescue,* by Jerry Rohde, *North coast Journal*, April 13, 2006 (cover story crediting all illustrations to the Humboldt Room)
- *Fountain of Knowledge: Who was Susie Baker Fountain and why is she so important to Humboldt County residents?* by Jennifer Morey, *Times-Standard*, Sunday May 28, 2006 (front page story featuring the Humboldt Room)
- *Arcata Plaza,* by Dean Hart and Vernon Felton, *Humboldt Stater*, Spring 2006 (features Humboldt Room photos)
- *Big Bang: The Deadly Business of Inventing the Modern Explosives Industry,* by Jack Kelly, *Invention & Technology*, vol. 22, no. 1, Summer 2006 (features an Ericson photo prominently)

**GOALS.** This section reviews accomplishments of objectives from 2005-2006 where not covered above. It also provides 2006-2007 objectives.

**Process collections.** In addition to the work on the Shuster Collection noted above, Edie completed processing and writing the finding aid for the Gladys Stroepe Mental Health Citizens Advocacy Papers. Submission of finding aids to the OAC has been delayed because the OAC has been revising its "ingest" procedures and consequently is not

currently accepting new finding aids. Work we anticipated completing in June (and July) which suffered from the database corruption time loss includes completing processing the Herrick Collection and initial planning for the Palmquist Collection (Edie) and the finding aids for the “forest industries” collections (Warren and Boyle collections, Joan).

The four 5-drawer map filing cases purchased through an NEH preservation grant quickly became additional consultation and storage (as well as preservation) space in the Humboldt Room facilitating work on the Herrick Map Collection and the map portion of the LHDRP grant activities.

In January Edie spent three days researching Humboldt County images and manuscript resources in the Ray Jerome Baker Collection pertinent to our Swanlund-Baker Collection at the archives in the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. She selected many photographs as well as portions of Baker’s “diaries” and correspondence to copy for further work with our collection that will add valuable information to our database and online finding aid.

***2006-2007 priorities include: add completed finding aids to the OAC when that again becomes possible; prepare processing plans for the Palmquist and possibly Becking and Eureka Tidelands collections; complete the Hover, Herrick, Warren and Boyle collections finding aids; develop a web page for the “forest communities” collection, possibly to include an exhibit in the Library, and continue to work on the LP/Hammond Lumber Companies Collection; evaluate and incorporate Edie’s research on R.J. Baker into the collection database and guide; address the Gimbel Collection; establish a “collection” for Special Collections/Humboldt Room Finding Aids on Humboldt Digital Scholar.***

***Monitor cataloging of materials for Humboldt Room Collections.*** I am very pleased to note that a number of concerns in this area have been addressed this year because of the hiring of a cataloger, George Wrenn, who began work in July 2005. A small gift of books from Corkey Nordstrom was processed and regular cataloging of materials for the Humboldt Room resumed. In addition, the backlog of microform titles previously identified as pertinent to Humboldt Room collections was retrospectively converted. George was a major participant in the Humboldt Digital Scholar pilot project and in the process of beginning to digitize HSU theses, we were able to clean up several thesis cataloging problems regarding authority control for the name of the department in which the thesis is completed as well as recording the distinction between “thesis” and “project.”

George was also involved in the LHDRP grant and was crucial to our implementing the commercial software, CONTENTdm, and assuring consistency in assigning metadata to the images. He got a crash course in Humboldt County history as well as an introduction to cataloging photographs as Edie led the project team (George, Laurie, Gisela) through this intellectual process. George’s continuing cataloging of Humboldt Room materials is benefiting from this training which also began to address the question of collection level

cataloging for processed collections. Laurie and Gisela got a great opportunity to implement their photograph metadata learning, begun under Edie's tutelage to increase access to the Humboldt County Photograph Collection, by working on the metadata for the 200 images in the LHDRP "forest communities" grant project with continuing research help from Edie and Joan. They also worked closely with CONTENTdm and thus we have added experience to help us keep on top of options for database access to Humboldt Room photo and map collections.

A remaining concern with regard to cataloging materials for the Humboldt Room is in the end processing and binding areas; there continue to be long delays as well as problems implementing quality control of commercial bindery shipments. I continue to work with Wayne on this and am hopeful that we will resolve these issues in the near future.

***This is a continuing goal for 2006-2007. Two projects initiated at the end of the year will produce more materials to be cataloged in 2006-2007. Noelle and I implemented a long desired weeding of the Permanent Reserve Collection of no longer timely items which will now be cataloged for the Humboldt Room and I began evaluating a major unprocessed local technical report collection received by the Library in the 1980s which was just augmented by a donation of similar materials from the Redwood Region Economic Development Commission. Items selected from this group will be cataloged for the Humboldt Room. A continuing objective, and one becoming more imperative, is for me to clear my accumulated backlog of items to be sent to cataloging.***

***Humboldt Room procedures and staffing.*** We entered a new phase with student assistants this year as the last cadre of trained students all departed in summer 2005. We hired two new students, but due to the pressures of working with the Shuster digital images and the LHDRP grant, were not able to do much in the way of training them beyond the basic shelving level or to monitor them as effectively as we would have liked. One volunteer was very helpful in working on the Warren Collection photos which dovetailed with the LHDRP grant quite nicely. As noted in other places in this report, we have been delighted to have Laurie and Gisela working with us on the Humboldt County Photograph Collection as well as the LHDRP grant. Towards the end of the year we began a conversation with Adrienne Harling, a resident of Somes Bar and M.L.S. student through the San Jose State University distance education program, about the possibilities for one or more practicums related to special collections and archives.

Monitoring of the room continues to be a difficult area. 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."

***In 2006-2007 we will continue to solicit and train students, interns and volunteers to help with all aspects of Special Collections activities. We will supervise a SJSU student in a 3 unit practicum during fall semester. As Laurie***

*and Gisela have time available, they will continue to add metadata and new items to the Humboldt County Photograph Collection. I will continue to 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.* Little progress was made on last year's objective of developing a plan for assessing the value of the existing collections and updating the database of collections, although I did have a conversation about this with Robin Bailie from the Advancement Office in the context of the Shuster Collection reception and the estimated value of that collection. As noted last year, we are accumulating a growing backlog of small donations and hopefully can begin to address this in the coming year. A particular donation at the end of the year from University Media, from the "Steve Newman Dynasty," brings us closer to dealing with this format of material.

*We will continue to try to address the above objectives in 2006-2007. As part of the media donation, we would encourage depositing the Scholar of the Year videos into Humboldt Digital Scholar.*

*Develop the Northwestern California Newspaper web page and write grant applications in its support.* Work on most of the objectives of this goal, except for cataloging newspaper titles, was put on hold as all of us worked on the LHDRP grant project as noted above. The objectives from last year will be continued.

*Priorities for 2006-2007 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.* See discussion of this under "Highlights" above.

*Priority for 2006-2007: by the end of the year have a plan in place for meeting space needs for Special Collections/Humboldt Room for the next 10-20 years.*