

# Annotation

N H P R C  
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS  
COMMISSION

Vol. 30.3

NEWSLETTER

September 2002

## The State Historical Records Advisory Board of North Carolina

BY JEFFREY J. CROW



*R.D.W. Connor, first Archivist of the United States. Photograph courtesy of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History.*

NORTH CAROLINA ENJOYS A long record of service in the field of archives and records management. In 1903 the North Carolina General Assembly established the North Carolina Historical Commission, and next year the commission will observe its 100th anniversary. R.D.W. Connor, first secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission, became first Archivist of the United States upon appointment by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934.

The Governor of North Carolina, under authority granted by Federal legislation, established the State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) in 1975. Ten members, appointed by the Governor, compose the board. Members serve 3-year staggered terms. The deputy secretary of the Office of Archives and History (currently Jeffrey J. Crow) and the state archivist of North Carolina (currently Catherine J. Morris) hold permanent positions on the board. Other members of the board must exhibit experience in the administration of historical records or in a field of research that makes extensive use of such records.

The SHRAB serves as the central advisory board for historical records planning and project assistance in North Carolina. It also implements and carries out the objectives of the NHPRC. With the support of the NHPRC, the SHRAB provides services in at least four areas. The SHRAB solicits, reviews, and evaluates grant proposals from North Carolina to the NHPRC. Conversely, it receives project grant funding from the NHPRC that it administers and regrants to institutions in North Carolina. The SHRAB also conducts statewide

studies and surveys to assess the conditions and needs of the state's historical records. Finally, the SHRAB offers educational programs, sponsors conferences and training workshops, and promotes archival awareness and cooperation throughout North Carolina.

Over the years, the SHRAB has proven highly successful in sponsoring statewide examinations of North Carolina's historical records. Thornton W. Mitchell, former state archivist, prepared the first needs assessment study in 1983. One of the principal outcomes of that study was the formation of the Society of North Carolina Archivists to facilitate communication and cooperation across institutional boundaries.

A second needs assessment initiative a decade later produced *To Secure Our Legacy: The Future of North Carolina's Documentary Heritage* (1993) by then-state archivist David J. Olson. Among the recommendations of the conference that generated the report was a regrant program to help records-holding (*continued on page 15*)



*Rebecca McGee-Lankford of Records Services helping to recover records in the Princeville, North Carolina, Town Hall on October 13, 1999, after Hurricane Floyd. Photograph courtesy of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History.*

# Annotation

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ISSN 0160-8460

## FROM THE EDITOR

The June 2002 issue of *Annotation* focuses on projects the NHPRC has funded in the South. Our featured articles are:

"The State Historical Records Advisory Board of North Carolina," by Jeffrey J. Crow

"County Court Records and the South's Peculiar Institution," by Loren Schwenger

"Images of South Florida Old and New," by Steven Davidson

"John C. Calhoun, Southerner," by Clyde N. Wilson

"Electronic Records Training and Awareness in South Carolina," by Roy H. Tryon

"Much More Than Southern Belles: Preserving the Student Records of Tulane University's Newcomb College," by Kate Weber and Susan Tucker

"The Roorback Hoax: A Curious Incident in the Election of 1844," by James L. Rogers II

"We is come to the law now': Freedpeople, the Federal Government, and the Changing Face of Power in the South, 1861-1867," by Steven F. Miller

## NHPRC Application Deadlines

THE COMMISSION'S MEETINGS FOLLOW THE FISCAL YEAR OF OCTOBER 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30. CONSEQUENTLY, THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FISCAL YEAR IS IN NOVEMBER AND THE SECOND IS IN MAY.

### June 1 (for the November meeting)

Proposals addressing the following top priorities:

- The NHPRC will provide the American public with widespread access to the papers of the founders of our democratic republic and its institutions by ensuring the timely completion of eight projects now in progress to publish the papers of George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and papers that document the Ratification of the Constitution, the First Federal Congress, and the early Supreme Court

### OCTOBER 1 (for the May meeting)

Proposals not addressing the above priorities, but focusing on an activity authorized in the NHPRC statute as follows:

- collecting, describing, preserving, compiling, and publishing (including microfilming and other forms of reproduction) of documentary sources significant to the history of the United States
- conducting institutes, training and educational courses, and fellowships related to the activities of the Commission
- disseminating information about documentary sources through guides, directories, and other technical publications
- or, more specifically, documentary editing and publishing; archival preservation and processing of records for access; developing or updating descriptive systems; creation and development of archival and records management programs; development of standards, tools, and techniques to advance the work of archivists, records managers, and documentary editors; and promotion of the use of records by teachers, students, and the public

APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND FORMS MAY BE REQUESTED FROM NHPRC, NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION, 700 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW, ROOM 111, WASHINGTON, DC 20408-0001, 202-501-5610 (VOICE), 202-501-5601 (FAX), [nhprc@nara.gov](mailto:nhprc@nara.gov) (E-MAIL), OR BY ACCESSING OUR WEB SITE AT [www.nara.gov/nara/nhprc/](http://www.nara.gov/nara/nhprc/)

## *Camp Edit and Historical Editing after Thirty Years*

BY ROGER A. BRUNS, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*I recently returned* from the Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Historical Society, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the NHPRC, the annual Institute is known fondly by participants as "Camp Edit." Directed by Wisconsin State Historian Michael Stevens and coordinated by the NHPRC's Timothy Connelly, the Institute is a 1-week immersion in the philosophy and techniques of historical editing. Over the years, it has been remarkably productive.

The Institute is now 30 years old. Since its inception in 1972, the Institute has graduated over 500 individuals, many of whom have gone on to successful editing careers. In fact, Institute grads have served on the staffs of over 50 editorial projects. They also include college and university faculty, editors of historical journals, archivists, manuscript librarians, and government historians.

As I returned from Madison, I thought of how the field of editing has been transformed in the last three decades. Unlike their 19th-century predecessors, modern editors must meet very high expectations regarding textual accuracy and sound scholarship. Working under rigorous editorial standards, they are unearthing new information and providing authenticity and context. In many cases, they are changing the way we look at our history.

There's a passion for uncovering new material and a constant search for new ways to present it, to make it available not only to other scholars but to the public. Computer listservs permit editors to share information and opinions. There are web sites constructed by editorial projects that present authentic texts.

And there is evidence that the editing field is expanding its influence in many associated areas.

For example, it is enhancing genealogical research. For years, genealogists have made use of the documentary editions. But now, increasing numbers are discovering them. At a recent genealogical society meeting, a genealogy specialist named Claire Bettag pointed out the value of the editions, which she considers "finding aids," in the highest meaning that that term can take. She explained that the work of editors presents the most sophisticated analysis available and a wealth of indexed and footnoted information for the researcher. These volumes, she said, are a great untapped source in the field of genealogy.

The editing field is also expanding in the field of education. At last year's national meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, the principal professional organization for high school history teachers, several sessions focused on the value of using documents in the classroom.

Allida Black, the editor of the Papers of Eleanor Roosevelt at George Washington University, has been working with the National Council for History Education in training 600 teachers from New York, New Jersey, and Virginia to use Roosevelt documents in their classroom. Already, a number of school districts have asked the project to help shape their history programs. And other editorial projects have also produced curricular guides that are being introduced in the school systems.

New information and insights from editing projects have even found their way into the performing arts. On March 18 of this year, the *Boston Globe* published a review entitled, "Voices of Slavery Stir the Soul." A writer for the *Globe* staff called the performance "One of the great moments in the collective life of our musical community." It was the premiere of an oratorio called "Slavery Documents: A Cantata." Loren Schweningen, the editor of the Race and Slavery Petitions Project at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, served as librettist. It was performed in Boston's Symphony Hall with an orchestra, about 70 cantata

singers, and a number of African American soloists. Most of the words sung at the event were directly from the documents uncovered by Schweningen and his team of editors, words of freedom captured in legislative petitions and county court documents discovered across the country and now brought to life through the medium of theater. Twenty-three hundred people heard the performance. It received a 5-minute standing ovation.

This Boston event was the culmination of an 8-year run of theater performances based on these materials. A few years earlier, Schweningen had created a theater documentary titled "Let My People Go: The Trials of Bondage in the Words of Master and Slave." That theatre piece has been performed 70 times before about 15,300 people in 30 North Carolina counties and outside the state as far away as Nebraska.

Recent editorial work is providing the basis for public programming in a variety of media. Numerous television documentaries in the past few years have featured documentary editors—Barbara Fields on the Civil War, John Simon on U.S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln, Bobby Hill and Barbara Bair on Marcus Garvey, Ann Gordon on Stanton-Anthony, Allida Black on Eleanor Roosevelt, and many others.

The field of editing is also expanding its influence into areas of the judiciary. John Kaminski and Richard Leffler, editors of the *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, have conducted a series of seminars for Federal judges around the country to help fortify understanding of the relationship between the Constitution and contemporary legal issues. For example, Kaminski addressed about 60 appellate judges in a seminar sponsored by the American Bar Association, discussing how public opinion has affected American jury trials. The seminars help judges relate their own work to the nation's historical heritage and philosophical underpinnings. Through the seminars, many judges also find or renew an interest in history. What better service could the editors of the Ratification project provide than to connect the writings and thoughts of the Founding Fathers to sitting judges over two centuries later!

A number of Supreme Court decisions have referenced the *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* as well as other documentary editions. Just this past session, Justice Stevens and Justice Souter, in two separate opinions, used documents and information from the *Documentary History of the Supreme Court*, edited by Maeva Marcus.

And so the impact of the editors and of their editions has reached far beyond the academic setting.

This is a growing field, one in which the first wave of professionally edited works is reaching its culmination. Several major projects have completed work in the last few years and numerous others will finish in the near future. But new and exciting projects are already taking their place—documentary editions that will uncover fresh materials on ethnic history, the arts, the history of science; new editions in new formats that will reach larger numbers of users, especially electronically.

Modern documentary editors are helping to undermine misinformation, distortion, tall tales and secondhand storytelling. They have dramatically changed the way we look at African American society under slavery. Editors are revealing new information about the role of women in society, about conditions on the American frontier, and about the evolving social and cultural patterns of various immigrant groups. They are challenging our assumptions, making valuable discoveries, opening new areas of study, and forcing re-evaluation. They are giving us answers, raising new questions, and providing a wealth of information that is offering us a better understanding of the country's past.

This is, all of it, a noble endeavor.

*On July 6, 1838,*

sitting in his study at Hays Mount, a plantation in Greene County, Alabama, slave-owner George Hays wrote his Last Will and Testament. During his life, he had accumulated an enormous estate. Among the wealthiest men in the state, he owned four plantations with cotton lands stretching as far as the eye could see. He also owned livestock that included "Cattle, sheep, mares, colts, Geldings, fillies, Jacks & Jinnies"; farm machinery; tools; furniture; stocks and bonds; and about 180 slaves.

In his will, Hays bequeathed his wife an annuity of \$1,500 (a substantial sum at a time when day laborers earned a dollar a day), their home plantation, three body servants, a carriage driver, and a gardener. He left the remainder of his vast holdings to his three children, one of them future Alabama Congressman Charles Hays, who was 4 years old at the time. Exactly 2 weeks later, George Hays died.

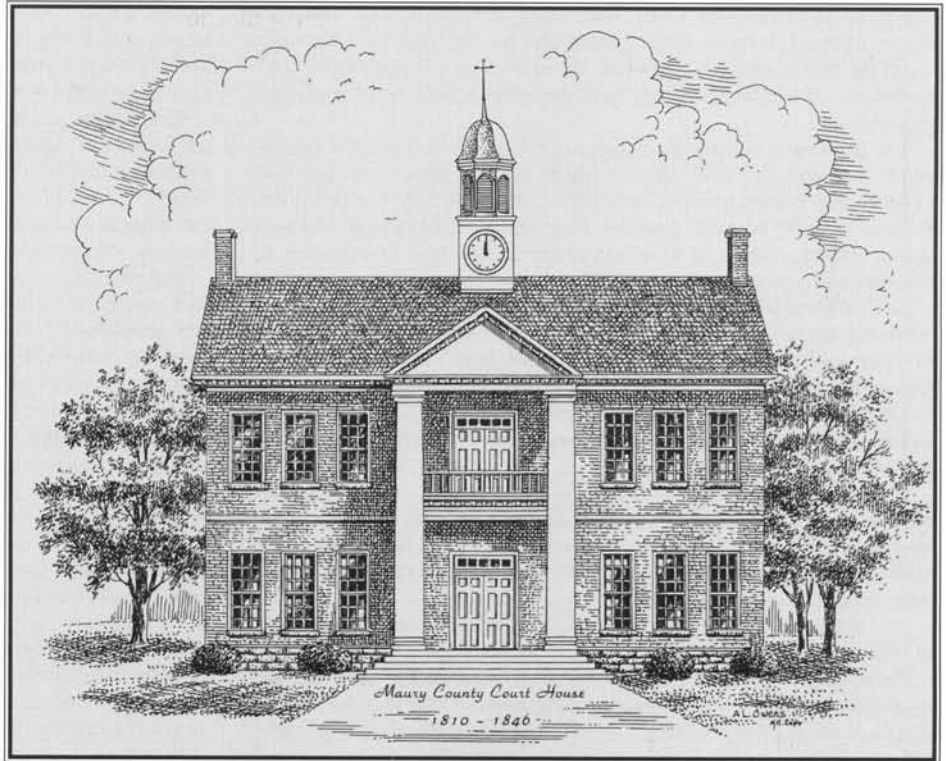
In early 1839, William P. Gould, a businessman who later became the director of the Bank of Mobile, qualified as executor of Hays' estate. In the months and years that followed, a remarkable story unfolded in the heart of Alabama's Black Belt, in a county where blacks outnumbered whites by more than two to one, and where the rich loamy soil along the Tombigbee River produced more than 6,000 bales of cotton each year.

It began when Hays' widow, Ann, opted to claim a dower rather than accept what her husband set aside for her in his will. She filed suit and won a judgment giving her one-third of Hays' landed estate, worth much more than what she would have received by the will. Gould then sued the widow on behalf of her children, but the court ruled in her favor. Sometime later, she remarried and took possession of 43 slaves.

During the next 5 years a number of new suits were initiated, with two cases eventually reaching the Alabama Supreme Court. The results proved to be disastrous

# County Court Records *and the*

BY LOREN SCHWENINGER



for Hays' children as well as for the slaves they owned. In 1852, the children (through legal counsel) charged that Gould had not only mismanaged their property but had hired a brutal and oppressive overseer, Joseph Carnathan, who "inflicted cruel and unusual punishments upon the slaves." He whipped a slave named George so viciously that he lost his right eye. He abused another slave named Claiborne, "getting him down and jumping upon his back with the heels of his shoes and by other great injuries, whereby the said Claiborne has been and is deprived of the entire use of his right shoulder and right arm." And he beat a slave named Sharper so savagely that he died.

The Hays children charged further that Carnathan and his young, inexperienced

*The courthouse in Greene County, Alabama, where so much of the Hays family saga was played out, burned in 1868. This drawing of the Maury County Court House in Tennessee depicts a typical Southern courthouse of the era, and is representative of the repositories that housed the documentary record of race and slavery. Photograph courtesy William Haywood of the Maury County Archives, Columbia, Tennessee.*

nephew, who also became an overseer, treated the female slaves even worse. They drove the women to the fields in the worst weather; compelled them to undertake heavy labor, such as lifting and rolling logs and erecting fence posts; and forced them to live in "miserable hovels not fit for horse stables." They even refused to provide them with blankets or bed clothing during the coldest nights of the winter.

As a result, virtually all of the "breeding women on said plantations were ren-

# South's Peculiar Institution

dered almost entirely barren, and worthless as such." The petitioners listed Hannah, big Judy, Inkey, Keziah, Nisha, Mary, Judy, Betty, Sillah, big Milly, Milly, and 19 other women who were in such a condition. Other women were "so injured that they are subject to continual miscarriages." Moreover, 15 slave children died from neglect and exposure, while a number of other children were lost to disease. A few black women had abortions. The Hays children won their case in the lower court, but eventually lost on appeal. In any event, the damage was irreparable.

The Hays civil suit in the chancery court of Greene County is one of approximately 15,500 cases (including 125,000 pages of documentary evidence) that will be published in a microfilm edition by the Race and Slavery Petitions Project at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro during the next 3 years. These cases represent a selected group of the total number of extant county court civil suits on the subject, but the petitions will come from all 15 states of the South and the District of Columbia and about one-third of the counties in the region (excluding west Texas and western Missouri).

Underwritten by the NHPRC, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the project is in its final stages. Assistant editor Marguerite Ross Howell and other members of the staff, including Kate Knight and Diana Sweatt, are currently checking and final-editing Petition Analysis Records (PARs), which summarize each case in the published collection.

The microfilming of the county court petitions for Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Mississippi was recently completed by University Publications of America, and the company will soon publish a 400-

page, frame-specific index and guide for these four states. Other groups of states (and one large collection for Louisiana) will be published in a similar fashion in the future. The recently completed 23-reel microfilm edition (University Publications of America, 1999), a book edition titled *The Southern Debate over Slavery: Petitions to Southern Legislatures and County Courts, 1778-1864* (University of Illinois Press, 2001), and a searchable web site for legislative petitions will serve as a prototype for the forthcoming collection of county court records.

County court petitions offer a remarkably rich and diverse documentary record concerning race and slavery. They reveal, as do few other primary sources, a local perspective of the South's "Peculiar Institution." They also tell us about the conflicts inherent in a system of human bondage, and especially about the struggles of women and children—both slave and free—who found themselves facing seemingly insurmountable difficulties.

Scholars and informed citizens have rarely used these records. In fact, some of the documents are in the same ribbon-tied packets in which they were placed a century and a half ago! The quantity and quality of this documentation is remarkable. These documents provide data that expand our knowledge in several research areas, including rare biographical and genealogical information about people of color; how slaves, as chattel, could and often did find themselves sold, conveyed, or distributed as part of their masters' estates; the impact of market forces on the slave family; and how slaves in some states could and did bring suits for their freedom. The guardianship and emancipation petitions present a vivid picture of the association between whites and free blacks, and the divorce

petitions provide a new picture of slaveholding white women.

These documents give a unique view of the workings of local court systems: who approached the courts and why; how they fared; how their pleas varied in different states and locales during different time periods; and how judges and juries responded to their pleas. They illuminate, in unexpected ways, intellectual history and religious experience, and contain references to debates over theology, ethics, law, social theory, and epistemology that occurred outside traditional academic, religious, and cultural institutions.

The value of these documents to scholars, students, and general readers of the humanities cannot be overemphasized. They reveal not only what southerners were saying, but also what they were doing; not only what happened to slaves, but how slaves responded to their condition. They show how complex political, economic, legal, social, and cultural conditions affected the lives of all southerners, black and white, female and male, slave and free. In seeking to understand the impact of slavery on the people of the South, perhaps no available primary source offers more topical, geographical, and chronological breadth, or penetrating depth of subject matter.

LOREN SCHWENINGER IS DIRECTOR AND EDITOR OF THE RACE AND SLAVERY PETITIONS PROJECT.

# Images of South Florida Old and New

BY STEVEN DAVIDSON



Ralph Renick of television station WTVJ reporting on the Korean War, 1951. Photograph courtesy of the Florida Moving Image Archive.

## *Local television newsfilm and videotapes*

constitute some of the most pervasive and fundamental records of 20th-century American life. The value of these collections lies in both the content of the images and in the more intangible moods, beliefs, and attitudes that they reflect. For viewers, the images provide a collective awareness. Although we may not like to admit it, our connection with society and our history is often through the television set. For archivists, researchers, and scholars, preserving these materials, particularly at the local level, is vital.

Television newsfilm and videotape collections contain unique images that document and reflect the time they were recorded in, and are an invaluable record of day-to-day experiences and specific events. From the most ordinary news stories to those that have changed lives, local television programs and newsfilm provide a daily chronicle of history and culture. They also provide regional perspectives on national and international events. And they often provide detailed coverage of issues before they become part of the national agenda.

On the local level, stories are often reported on or examined in greater detail and in different ways by stations with a direct community connection. The collections containing them are also large in size, often ranging in the millions of feet and thousands of hours of videotape. Once preserved and made accessible, they are invaluable primary source materials for researchers, scholars, and the public at large. Such images provide the chance to relive, or to see and hear for the first time, the issues and events that impacted communities and shaped their history and culture.

Beyond the content of a particular story, the sheer power of the visual image and the nuances of voice and facial expression can open up entirely new areas for analysis. So too does the careful examination of editing techniques and other aspects of local television news production over the decades.

Ironically, despite their importance for research and study, local television newsfilm and videotapes are also among the most endangered of moving images. Seen as ephemeral and not important enough to save, local television newsfilm and videotapes were routinely discarded, erased, or recycled around the country. This is still sometimes the case today. Such attitudes can be traced back to the earliest days of the medium, when there were doubts and questions about television's value in the scheme of things.

In South Florida, there was much speculation about the role television would play before the new medium even began broadcasting. An article in the February 14, 1948, *Miami News* observed that television "... comes to Miami like some spectacular circus clown—it is bubbling with optimism and it is certain to provoke curiosity." Similar speculation has continued over the years, and the debate is still ongoing. Since those first test patterns were beamed into the relatively few television sets in Miami, television news has come of age, reporting and documenting the evolution and development of this community, and with it South Florida's remarkable growth and transformation.

When television arrived on the scene in Miami in 1949, Florida's population ranked 27th in the nation. A recent article in the *Miami Herald* reporting on the 2000 census noted the dramatic growth of Florida's population. The state is now the 4th most populous in the nation. In the past half-century, the state's dramatic growth and change has been in South Florida, and all of it has been documented by local television. South Florida is a relatively young region. The cities of Miami, Miami Beach, and Coral Gables were incorporated in 1896, 1915, and 1925, respectively. Television has been around for most of the region's history.

Much of South Florida's visual record, as documented on newsfilm, kinescopes, and videotape, is now being preserved by the Florida Moving Image Archive, thanks to the generous support of the NHPRC. As an institution, our history with the NHPRC dates back to our first television newsfilm project in 1989. Experience from that grant, to preserve what was at the time one of the largest single collections of television newsfilm, was the basis for a second NHPRC-sponsored project in 1995, a

collaborative effort with the National Center For Film and Video Preservation to produce the publication *The Administration of Television Newsfilm and Videotape Collections: A Curatorial Manual*.

Our current project, which began on July 1, is to preserve and make accessible 1.1 million feet of 16mm newsfilm; 300 kinescopes of news and public affairs programs dating from 1950 through the mid-1970s; and 1,843  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch videocassettes of news stories, air-checks, and complete programs dating from the mid-1970s through the late 1980s. The materials are from WCKT, which began broadcasting in 1956; WPLG, which began broadcasting in 1957; and WTVJ, the oldest television station in Florida, and one of the oldest stations in the country, its first broadcast dating from March 1949. In particular, these records chronicle the impact and influence of Cuba and Latin America on Miami, from the waves of immigration beginning in 1959 through the 1970s, the Mariel Boatlift in 1980, and South



Ron Kovic, author of *Born on the Fourth of July*, and other veterans protest the Vietnam War outside the Miami Beach Convention Center, site of the 1972 Republican National Convention. Photograph courtesy of the Florida Moving Image Archive.

Florida's gradual emergence as a center of Latin population, culture, and commerce.

For researchers, scholars, film and video makers, and the general public, these preserved and accessible materials will be a visual treasure trove. Although all the newfilm and videotape is local, the images provide a Florida perspective on national events and news. The records contain information on such social topics as immigration, urbanization, integration, public housing, race relations, tourism, agriculture and the citrus industry, retirement, and senior citizens. Political topics include the Vietnam War, the rash of aircraft hijackings in the late 1960s, the Middle East conflict, the space program from its earliest days through the introduction of the Space Shuttle, the 1972 Democratic and Republican Conventions, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Cold War.

Among the political leaders and notable personalities represented are Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Robert F. Kennedy; Fidel Castro; Cassius Clay/Muhammad Ali;

the Beatles; Jackie Gleason; Dante Fascell; Claude Pepper; Marjorie Stoneman Douglas; and Janet Reno. There is material on neighborhoods and municipalities from the Everglades to Tallahassee, but all parts of South Florida are well represented, including Miami Beach's Art Deco district, Little Havana, and Key Biscayne. Florida's diverse population and growth is well documented, from Native Americans (the Seminoles and Miccosukes) to the immigration of citizens from all parts of the United States and the Western Hemisphere.

The materials also document changes in broadcast styles, the evolution of new technologies and their effect on news gathering, editorial style, and changes in the newsroom and in the field, such as the shift from largely white male staffs to more diverse ones that include African Americans, women, and Hispanics. In summary, the materials covered by the current NHPRC grant will provide an important resource for the study of history, social science, politics, economics, science and technology, the arts, cultural influences, urbanization, and immigration, with the emphasis on those fields within the South Florida area.

A representative listing of some of the kinescope titles to be preserved and made accessible further demonstrates the diversity and scope of the collection and its potential for scholarly research, public access activities, and general interest. "Crisis Amigo," produced by WCKT in 1960, took a critical look at the influx of Cuban exiles into Miami and the difficulty of the new arrivals' adjustment. "FYI: Miami Hits a Million," produced by WTVJ in 1962, profiled Miami's population on the basis of the 1960 census, recounted Miami's history, and heralded a landmark event, the population of Dade County reaching the one-million mark. "FYI: Miami, City of a Million Faces" (WTVJ, 1962) presented a breakdown of Miami's population based on regional origins, ethnic heritage, and occupation.

"Kennedy Assassination Special" (WCKT, 1963) provided perspectives of the Kennedy family's strong ties to South Florida. "This Is Wayne Farris: Moscow" (WCKT, 1959) chronicles reporter Wayne Farris' travels with a group of South Florida citizens on a fact-finding mission to the Soviet Union, and compares life in Miami with life in Moscow. "FYI: Scandal of Our Slums" (WTVJ, 1961) examined living conditions in several neighborhoods in South Florida. "Integration, Florida's Conflict Ahead" (WCKT, 1962) dealt with the civil rights movement and the racial situation in Florida.

The collection consists of news stories, features on public affairs, and cultural and documentary programs, all of which provide irreplaceable information on the social and political landscape of South Florida over the past five decades. Upon completion of the preservation process and production of Betacam SP and VHS reference copies, the collection will be a readily available visual record of the evolution of Miami and South Florida from small-town rural life into a regional powerhouse of finance, industry, and culture.

STEVEN DAVIDSON IS DIRECTOR OF THE FLORIDA MOVING IMAGE ARCHIVE, FORMERLY THE LOUIS WOLFSON II MEDIA HISTORY CENTER, IN MIAMI, FLORIDA.

# John C. Calhoun

## Southerner

BY CLYDE N. WILSON

MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, J. Franklin Jameson, a leading member of the pioneer generation of American professional historians, observed that the lack of an accessible edition of the correspondence of John C. Calhoun, who had been a major player in U.S. politics from 1811 to 1850 (and perhaps beyond), was a serious impediment to scholarship. This was a perceptive observation, and, for a born-and-bred Massachusetts man, a generous one. Jameson did more than observe: he produced two volumes of selected letters.

Unlike the Adamses, say, Calhoun did not make and keep copies of the letters he wrote. Nor did he take great care to preserve those he received. Jameson's main source of documents was the collection of Calhoun intra-family correspondence that had been inherited by Clemson Agricultural and Mechanical College, which was built on Calhoun's plantation and named for Calhoun's scientific son-in-law Thomas G. Clemson.

Somehow, Jameson persuaded the authorities of that day to allow him to take the Calhoun manuscripts to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore for transcription. He kept them for about 4 years during the 1890s, which was providential, because during that time the Clemson library suffered a major fire.

Jameson also expended great efforts in tracking down descendants of those to whom Calhoun wrote. He was pretty successful at that, too. He found a great deal of material, including an important series of letters to Calhoun's friend and kinsman Duff Green, which were in the possession of a Green descendant in Washington State and have since disappeared from the known world. Jameson's main impediment to recovering letters was the "liberation" of documents and the "mysterious" series of

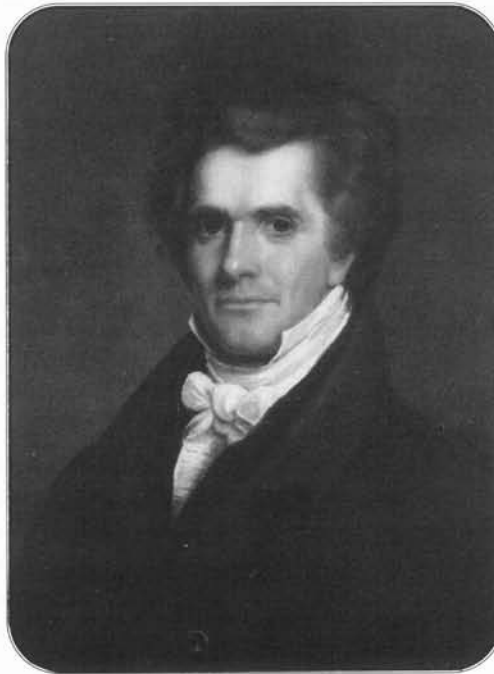
fires that swept the South from 1861 to 1865. Lost in this way were Calhoun's letters to William Lowndes, Langdon Cheves, Robert Barnwell Rhett, James L. Orr, and others.

Jameson beheld the two volumes of Calhoun letters that he had prepared for publication, and was pleased. He wrote in his introduction that he felt he had provided "materials with which others may elaborate the fabric of American political history." He was also pleased that in his time a renewal of "fraternal feelings" between the sections had created a "historic breadth of view, which enables all alike to do justice to the memory of a great and noble statesman who, whether his opinions be ours or not, is seen to have spent a long and laborious life in the conscientious service of our common country."

Fast forward to the 1940s, to the University of South Carolina and Prof. Robert L. Meriwether, Ph.D. Those were heady days. The National Historical Publications Commission (NHPC), as it was then, was getting under way and planning the creation of accessible, objec-

tively produced editions of documents of leading American statesmen. It was also a heady time for Calhoun scholarship. The works of Margaret L. Coit (Pulitzer Prize biography) and Charles M. Wiltse were under way and there was a mini-boom of prominent writers celebrating Calhoun as a farseeing thinker and prototype of American pluralism.

Meriwether inaugurated the *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, which he conceived as a comprehensive edition of documents, including Calhoun's speeches (perhaps his most important documents) and writings. In the process, with the aid of the NHPC and other institutions and individuals, he extended Jame-



*John Caldwell Calhoun. Portrait by Chester Harding, ca. 1820. Photograph courtesy of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*



son's document search and founded the private University South Caroliniana Society. The Society has aided the project for half a century with the purchase of documents as they came on the market and with other substantial help. More recently, another South Carolina institution, the Lucy Hampton Bostick Trust, has been a substantial supporter. The NHPRC, of course, has always been the mainstay of funding, supplemented during the 1980s by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Meriwether created Volume 1 in the face of hostile or indifferent administrators, with bootlegged time and hands-on editorial help from his family. On the eve of publication, he passed away. Volume 1 was welcomed by the scholarly world and public opinion, but the edition's future was thrown into doubt. It was saved only by Dr. Meriwether's friends securing an appropriation in the State General Assembly to continue work under the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, which was the sponsor until 1978. The editorship was assumed by Dr. W. Edwin Hemphill, an editor in the archives department.

Meanwhile, the NHPC searching activities in the National Archives had turned up an unexpected bonanza of Calhoun documents for the 7 years during which he had headed the War Department, which was the period that Volume 2 was to begin with. For more than two decades, Dr. Hemphill labored prodigiously in searching, collecting, and transcribing. He produced eight volumes of selected documents for the years 1817-1825.

Editor Shirley Bright Cook joined the staff in 1970, and editor Clyde N. Wilson in 1971. A byproduct of the South Carolina Archives' involvement in the project was Director Charles E. Lee's active and distinguished participation for a number of years in the NHPC during the movement to make it into the NHPRC.

At Dr. Hemphill's retirement in 1978, the University of South Carolina resumed sponsorship of the project under the direction of Yours Truly, tenured professor. The rest, as they say, is history. As I write, the 27th and final volume is in press. (Actually, there will be a 28th volume with Calhoun's *Disquisition* and *Discourse*, which will require no substantial documentary work.)

It has been all along a day-to-day and hands-on operation by Cook, Wilson, and for some years Dr. John Alexander Moore, who has gone on to become an editor with the USC Press. Several dozen graduate assistants have joined our labors over the years. Some of them are now conducting substantial careers of their own, and all of them will testify that their documentary editing work was a very valuable part of their formation as historians.

Academic reviewers have been kind to us. They have liked our editorial methodology, our concise annotations, our comprehensive searching, our fast progress, and our interpretive in-

roductions. I can recall only two unfavorable reviews among several hundred favorable ones. One criticized our indexes. We took this in stride, because we have created our index for each volume (an art, not a science) as a guide to research materials in context rather than as a detailed reference tool, as is appropriate for an expository work. The other critical review was by a youngster who seemed to be upset that we had allowed Calhoun to speak for himself rather than covering him with a veneer of Political Correctness.

Dr. Meriwether's purpose in founding *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, as expressed in his preface to Volume I, was to correct superficial and partisan interpretations of Calhoun that had persisted from the controversies of his time. This would assist in the larger purpose of understanding "Southern history, which is subject to the defects of interpretation usually attendant upon causes involved in defeat and continuing controversy."

This goal was praised at the time. It would not be today in mainstream academia. Our man does not have a good press, on the whole, these days. Yet we behold our handiwork and count it good. Our predecessors could not have foreseen the revolution in electronic information-handling that has overtaken us in recent years, but it is a pretty sure bet that books are not completely obsolete, nor ever will be. Those volumes are there, in the most important libraries of North America and in some libraries on four other continents.

Our books, we believe, are rich in materials for understanding in depth a great chunk of American history. Furthermore, John C. Calhoun, unlike most public figures of his own time and since, but like the Founding Fathers, wrote and spoke as a thinker and statesman who has drawn and will continue to draw the attention of the thoughtful of future generations. Those who pay attention will find much of permanent interest in regard not only to a pregnant period of history, but also in regard to economics, foreign policy, the nature and functioning of societies, constitutions, governments, and much else.

Professors Jameson and Meriwether could not have foreseen (but perhaps would not have been too surprised by) the social and political changes that have brought new interpretations of history that have cast John C. Calhoun back into the limited and negative role in American history that prevailed in the post-Civil War period. However, in a free society historical interpretations will always be changing, but the documents remain.

Clyde N. Wilson is the editor of *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*.

# Electronic Records Training and Awareness in South Carolina

BY ROY H. TRYON

THE CHALLENGES TO ARCHIVISTS AND RECORDS managers posed by the proliferation of information technology and electronic records are many and varied at Federal, state, and local levels of government as well as in the private sector. The South Carolina State Historical Records Advisory Board (SC SHRAB) identified electronic records as a major challenge in its state plan, *Into the 21st Century: A Plan for South Carolina's Historical Records, 2000-2005*, and set a goal to "encourage and promote the effective management of electronic records" in the state.

This goal is to be accomplished through encouraging educational opportunities and information sharing on standards and best practices, and promoting public awareness of the problems in managing electronic records over time. The South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), according to the SC SHRAB plan, should play a leadership role in electronic records management in the state.

The SCDAH took this leadership responsibility seriously in its June 2000 application to the NHPRC for support for an Electronic Records Training and Awareness Project. Thanks to a \$37,435 NHPRC grant, the SCDAH is making significant progress on the SC SHRAB plan as it relates to electronic records. The 2-year grant, which runs from July 2001 through June 2003, has the following goals:

1) To promote awareness among government agencies and institutions, colleges and universities, and repositories of



*Dr. Charles Dollar drives home a point during his "Information Technology Concepts and Tools" workshop. Photograph courtesy of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.*

non-government records concerning the issues related to the long-term preservation of and access to archival electronic records;

2) To increase the basic knowledge of archivists, records managers, information technology specialists, and other information professionals in the key concepts, strategies, and applications related to the management of, preservation of, and long-term access to archival electronic records; and

3) To enhance and improve the electronic records training efforts of the SCDAH.

The project consists of presentations at each of the annual conferences of the state's archivists, state and local government records managers, and state government information technology professionals, and at six workshops at the SCDAH. These workshops are grouped around three subject areas: information technology for archivists, records managers, and other in-

formation professionals; managing electronic records; and preserving and providing long-term access to archival electronic records. Each of these three subject areas is treated by full-day workshops at both the basic and the advanced levels.

## PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES

The SCDAH is already well along on this project. Two independent consultants led the way. In the fall of 2001, Rick Barry spoke at the South Carolina Information Technology Directors Association (SCITDA) conference and John Phillips addressed the South Carolina Public Records Association (SCPRA) meeting, both of which were held in Myrtle Beach, SC. SCITDA membership and conference attendance is made up of state government agency information technology directors and their staff members. SCPRA is composed of state and local government records management personnel.

Barry delivered the opening keynote address at the SCITDA conference on September 10 on "Recordmaking Systems that Aren't Recordkeeping Systems: Making Sure IT Doesn't Get Blind-Sided," and followed with an afternoon session on "Making the Distinctions Among the Management Modifiers: Enterprise, Process, Relationships, Content, Knowledge, Document, Records . . . So What?" Phillips' presentation to the SCPRA meeting on October 25 was "Challenges for Preserv-

ing Accurate, Authentic, and Trustworthy Electronic Records." Each presenter reached more than 100 attendees, most of whom had little prior knowledge or concern about archival issues in managing electronic records.

The third and final professional conference presentation is scheduled for October 8, 2002. Tom Ruller of the New York State Archives will address a plenary session at the South Carolina Archival Association (SCAA) conference in Columbia, SC. The SCAA is composed primarily of college and university, historical society, and museum personnel, but also has significant state and local government participation. Ruller will deal with archival issues in managing and preserving archival electronic records.

## WORKSHOPS

The workshops began in early 2002. Dr. Charles Dollar, an independent consultant formerly associated with the National Archives and Records Administration, the University of British Columbia, and Cohasset Associates, led the way on January 22 with a basic workshop entitled "Information Technology Concepts and Tools." He returned on April 18 to conduct an advanced workshop on that same topic. These first two workshops proved remarkably successful. Whereas the speakers at the professional conferences address somewhat "captive" audiences, the workshops require attendees to register well in advance and to commit an entire day to the workshop. The January 22 workshop had 154 attendees, and the April 18 workshop had 120.

Not only were these numbers as good or better than those of the professional association conferences, they also contained a good mix of individuals: archives, records management, and information

technology personnel, from both the government and private sector. Each of the workshop sessions is being videotaped, and copies are available upon request. The individual registration fee for the workshops is kept low, at \$20, enough to cover lunch and other refreshments.

The following workshops are scheduled through mid-2003:

### MANAGING ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Basic, David Stephens, August 22, 2002  
Advanced, Rick Barry, October 29, 2002

### PRESERVING AND PROVIDING LONG-TERM ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Basic, Tom Ruller, April, 2003  
Advanced, Anne Gilliland, May 2003

## PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

SCDAH staff had worked extensively with SCITDA, SCPRA, and SCAA to ensure good program placement and appropriate pre-conference publicity and information about the presenters and their topics. Considerable time and effort was also spent on publicizing the six upcoming workshops. This included placing notices in newsletters, sending e-mails to listservs and individuals, mailing brochures to over 1,000 individuals in advance of each workshop, and developing a project web site ([http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/armer\\_train.htm](http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/armer_train.htm)). The web site includes not only information about future workshops and presenters, but also summaries of already completed conference and workshop presentations.

## RESULTS

Though it might be premature to assess the project's impact and results, it is clear that by the numbers alone the project is

proving successful. The sessions have been very well attended and have drawn in many more than the "usual suspects." The NHPRC grant brought top-notch speakers to South Carolina to deal with the most important and timely aspects of electronic records, from basic understanding of concepts and processes through daily management to long-term preservation. Most of the state's archivists, records managers, and information technology professionals attending the NHPRC-supported sessions would not have been able to travel to the more distant and expensive conferences at which such speakers are most often found.

A likely result of this exposure is a broader base of understanding, or at least appreciation, in South Carolina of the importance and complexity of electronic records issues. This awareness is preparing the ground for action on electronic records sooner than would otherwise occur. More immediately, the presentations are informing the changes in the SCDAH's ongoing electronic records training offerings and our approaches to dealing with electronic records in state and local government agencies.

Later this fall, we will be launching a major records scheduling project for the South Carolina Department of Social Services. The current NHPRC-supported training project has contributed greatly to our understanding of what needs to be addressed in such a project and how to go about it. This builds upon the training project, taking us to a new level of activity. We have hopes for additional NHPRC support for this more direct and extensive foray into electronic records in South Carolina state government.

ROY H. TRYON IS THE STATE ARCHIVIST AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

# Much More Than Southern Belles

## Preserving the Student Records of Tulane University's Newcomb College

BY KATE WEBER AND SUSAN TUCKER

### Alhambra Bath House

214 OUACHITA AVENUE  
TWO BLOCKS FROM R. R. DEPOTS

W. L. BANCROFT'S SONS,  
PROPRIETORS

THE HEART OF THE ROOMING AND  
BOARDING HOUSE DISTRICT

ALL WATERS IN THIS HOUSE ARE DIRECT FROM THE HOT SPRINGS RESERVATION  
FURNISHED AND GUARANTEED BY THE  
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

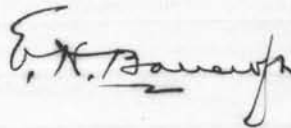
HOT SPRINGS, ARK., Decem. 23, 1912

My Dear Sir:-

Responding to your favor of 19<sup>th</sup> inst.,  
we are remitting our check for \$8.58 covering the  
items therein and would thank you for receipts  
according.

We appreciate the method of settlement  
and are especially grateful for deep interest and  
care shown our daughter Delie during that unfortu-  
nate visitation.

Very Truly,



Dr. Dixon, Prest.,  
Newcomb College,  
New Orleans, La.

IN 1911 ANNE DELIE BANCROFT applied for admission to Newcomb College. A resident of Hot Springs, Arkansas, she obtained a scholarship thanks to the intervention of Dr. Parker, a friend of the family who had once lived in New Orleans. Dr. Parker was familiar with the College, a coordinate college for women within Tulane University. He certainly knew the President of the University, Dr. Craighead, who wrote to Newcomb President Dixon of Miss Bancroft that "it would pay you" to provide a scholarship to Bancroft, "provided" she "ranks high."

Besides his intervention on her behalf, Parker also gave Bancroft a letter of introduction to carry to her registration day at Newcomb. Miss Bancroft, Parker noted, "is a scholar, has a good voice, plays well, draws and above all is anxious for an education." Her application lists 16 books she has read—*Macbeth*, *Ivanhoe*, *Hero as Prophet*, and *The Life of Johnson*, among others.

Bancroft's father also thanked the College in a letter written on his business stationery. According to its picturesque letterhead, he ran the Alhambra Bath House in "the heart of the rooming and boarding house district." In his letter to President Dixon, Dr. Craighead observed, in a message that now seems impossibly coded from another age, that Hot Springs was a "rather conspicuous place."

*One of many examples of letterhead stationery in the Newcomb College student records that reveal information about businesses in the South. This item relates to the Hot Springs, Arkansas, bathhouse run by Anne Delie Bancroft's father.*

Bancroft proved an adequate student at first, and eventually the promised scholar. Correspondence in her files documents this transformation, as well as continuing friendships between her and a number of faculty members and fellow alumnae. Various administrators, later in life, also affectionately wrote to her. We learn of her studies, illnesses, and friends. We learn that it was considered unladylike to say that one was "hot," even if the temperature was 98 degrees.

The file tells us that Miss Bancroft was subsequently a graduate student at Stanford. We know her thesis subject (Poe), and that she had plans for future study in England and France. In 1927 she turned down a job offer at Newcomb. Her job teaching English at Southwestern Louisiana Institute paid more and did not require other duties, such as living in a dormitory. In short, in letters to and from her, plus notations on grades, standards, and ultimately information on graduate school and pay scales—with certain restrictions about privacy and the passage of time—a researcher can learn quite a bit about Anne Delie Bancroft.

Hers is one life told in the bits and pieces of the student records within the Newcomb College Archives. We know much more about her and some 3,500 other students who attended Newcomb College from 1887 to 1925 thanks to a grant from the NHPRC to microfilm and preserve the early archives of the College.

Newcomb was founded in 1886 through a generous donation by Josephine Louise Newcomb in memory of her daughter, Harriott Sophie, who died in 1870 at the age of 15. Mrs. Newcomb decided upon a college for other young girls and women, a "work of the spirit" that would look "to the practical side of life as well as to liter-

ary excellence," as a fitting memorial to her daughter.

Her funds assured Newcomb College a secure foundation for its early years. Newcomb's donation also brought about an unusual arrangement for the education of women with the creation of the first degree-granting college for women to be founded within a university in America. This model was later adopted by several colleges, including Barnard College at Co-



*Anne Delie Bancroft, from the 1915 Jambalaya, Tulane's yearbook.*

lumbia University. Newcomb's specifications for the College made available to young women the same opportunity for a liberal education as was being offered to young men through Tulane's College of Arts and Sciences and, at the same time, provided an environment in which men and women did not attend classes together.

The College flourished academically, gaining national and even international respect. In 1895, Clara Baer, chair of the Physical Education department, published "Basketball Rules for Women and Girls," in which she described two shots, the one-handed and the jump shot, which were

not adopted in men's basketball until 1936. Perhaps even more noteworthy was the success of the Newcomb Pottery, an experiment, or model industry, to provide employment for women in a milieu where few opportunities existed.

Today, Clara Baer's memory lives in the Basketball Hall of Fame. Today, the Newcomb Pottery's products are favorites on "Antiques Road Show," fetching thousands of dollars. But until the late 1980s, Newcomb paper records themselves were spread over a number of offices throughout the Newcomb campus. Never regularly transferred to Tulane University Archives, they were brought together with the help of an NHPRC grant that ended in 1991, and are stored permanently within the Newcomb Archives, housed at the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women. Funds for microfilming were not part of this grant, so Newcomb again turned to the NHPRC in 1999 with a request concerning our growth and the fragility of the early records, which cover the registration of the first students from 1887 to 1925.

The records cover both a time when young ladies exercised in long dresses and a time when their physical education teacher mandated a new garment—bloomers! Hair was almost universally swept up in a Gibson girl bun until 1919, when, photographs show, not one young woman hesitated to bob her hair. The records tell of women who entered politics, law, medicine, community service, and almost every other profession at a time when many broke significant barriers to do so within the conservative South.

The records also tell what didn't change. The story of segregation in the South, with tentative letters asking about enrollment for Creoles of color, appears now

and then in the records, providing glimpses of a sad aspect of the College's history that did not end until 1962. The letters of Newcomb administrators show changes in opinions and social mores that, despite segregation, made possible the diversity of the Newcomb population. There are also references to the yellow fever epidemics of the early years, and to hurricane threats nearly every year.

When the school was founded, its students came mostly from Louisiana. In time, the large number of scholarships awarded each year guaranteed that there were students from every economic background and from across the South, as well as always a handful of students from other parts of the United States and South America. Without a religious affiliation or quota, like some of the eastern women's colleges, Newcomb was always said to be  $\frac{1}{3}$  Catholic,  $\frac{1}{3}$  Jewish, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  Protestant. Included in the school population were married and single women, dorm dwellers and city dwellers, Northern and Southern girls and women, artists, athletes, scientists, and philosophers.

The records stand ready now for researchers interested in religious diversity in the American South, the lives of college and high school girls, family concerns, and much more. We have even found that through the letterheads and epistolary worries about money on the part of parents, one can learn much more about the history of business and agriculture in the South. And with such a diverse student body, the records tell more than just the history of traditional college women. They tell the story of a colorful spectrum of turn-of-the-century women.

The project included the photocopying of the student records, the microfilming of the records, and the creation of finding aids to make the records accessi-

ble to researchers. A microfilm copy is available for interlibrary loan, while within the library the photocopies are used for research. Finding aids include a database in Filemaker Pro, accessible only from the Women's Center, and information online, available through our web site, ([www.tulane.edu/~wc/](http://www.tulane.edu/~wc/)). Descriptions of the records have also been sent to national databases.

The grant has allowed us to plan for future preservation efforts and public planning around student records. We have scheduled future microfilming in 5-year increments, with records being opened to researchers in conformity with the release of census records. Privacy rules, of course, govern all student records and we have posted our policies about such rules. These records are closed for 75 years from the date the student graduates or withdraws from the University or upon death. Closed student records, however, may be used by the student herself; by a university official, when authorized to look for specific records; and by researchers whose work will only report on the overall student body, without the use of names, for a period of time at least 60 years before the current period. Requests for permission to examine any records in connection with cases at law or legal proceedings of any kind are referred to the Legal Counsel of the University.

At the same time we posted our statement about such policies, we celebrated the completion of the second NHPRC grant with a compilation of essays on the College for an anthology. These essays, to be published in 2004, were based on research conducted in our archives since our first NHPRC grant ended in 1991. Also in the works is a series of lectures on the history of Newcomb. Both events help us remember the historical value of the

records of Newcomb College, particularly to researchers of the American South. Both events allow us to further one of the original goals of the Newcomb Center for Research on Women: to foster and promote research on women's lives and experiences.

KATE WEBER IS A LIBRARY TECHNICIAN AND SUSAN TUCKER IS CURATOR OF BOOKS AND RECORDS AT VORHOFF LIBRARY, NEWCOMB COLLEGE CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN, TULANE UNIVERSITY.

institutions cope with what Edwin C. Bridges of Alabama in 1983 had labeled an "endless cycle of poverty." A survey of those institutions showed a multitude of problems, including insufficient staff, limited space, parsimonious funding, and inadequate conservation of records.

In November 2001, the SHRAB held its second statewide conference. *Charting Our Future* (2002) by Boyd D. Cathey, an archivist at the North Carolina State Archives, recorded the proceedings of the conference. Whereas the 1993 report had recognized the dawning (not to say daunting) revolution in records management created by the computer, by 2002 the full impact of electronic records and digitization had shaken the archival world. Yet old problems persisted. Staff training and development continued to pose irreducible challenges. One could not ignore the investment in human capital to sustain archives and records institutions.

Perhaps the most important accomplishment of the North Carolina SHRAB in recent years, growing out of the 1993 conference, was the Local Records Educational Assistance Program conducted between 1996 and 1999. That program, supported by two \$50,000 grants from the NHPRC and \$50,000 in matching funds from the State of North Carolina via the Friends of the Archives, Inc., provided \$150,000 in regrants to North Carolina institutions with records holdings.

The program had two component parts. The regrant component was directed at three major groups: units of local and county government; historically black colleges and universities, as well as other academic institutions; and local libraries, museums, religious institutions, and other historical organizations. The regrants also addressed three subject areas: preservation and reformatting projects affecting both traditional documents and newly created electronic records; institutional support to enhance internal operations, management, and staff training; and short-term consultancies to offer assistance in creating or

strengthening records management programs.

Without repeating each successful regrant project from 78 proposals, 30 of which were funded, a few examples might suffice:

☛ The North Carolina Library Association conducted a series of five daylong workshops across the state to deal with the problems of special collections. A total of 173 persons attended, representing historical, library, and genealogical organizations in 57 of the state's 100 counties.

☛ A regrant to the Halifax County Register of Deeds enabled that historic rural county to preserve 10 fragile grantor/grantee indices, 1732-1904, and 3 marriage registers, 1867-1903.

☛ North Carolina Central University in Durham hosted a training seminar in records and archival management for administrators, archivists, and records managers at historically black colleges and universities.

☛ Western Carolina University used its regrant to microfilm, index, annotate, and make available electronically the extant copies of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, a newspaper published from 1828 to 1834. The newspaper served as the organ of the Eastern Band of Cherokee before the Cherokees' forced removal to Oklahoma along the "Trail of Tears" in 1838.

A series of teleconferences and cable television programs broadcast by the North Carolina Agency for Public Telecommunications (APT) comprised the second major component of the Local Records Educational Assistance Program. The NHPRC furnished \$31,200 for this component. Among other topics, the programs offered advice on researching family history, including black genealogy; the management of electronic records; and perhaps most significantly, "Recovering and Restoring Heirlooms."

The latter program aired in the fall of 1999, 3 weeks after the most devastating natural disaster in North Carolina history, Hurricane Floyd. The panelists for the program included document and furnishing conservation specialists from the then-North Carolina Division of Archives and History, the North Carolina Museum of History,

the North Carolina Museum of Art, and Etherington Conservation, Inc. Audio portions of the program aired on the North Carolina News Network (radio), while a web site was linked nationally to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the National Archives and Records Administration. A full report on North Carolina's Local Records Educational Assistance Program is available in *A Legacy Preserved* (2000) by Boyd D. Cathey.

Entering a new century, the North Carolina SHRAB still has much work to do. The Local Records Educational Assistance program revealed a persistent need for staff training at all levels. The SHRAB received 205 requests from 165 entities with records holdings. Nearly half of those entities lacked archival or preservation programs and employed no professional archivist or records manager.

Not surprisingly, technology has made an enormous impact on most records-holding institutions for good and ill. If the abolition of an "endless cycle of poverty" has not been achieved, a dual challenge now confronts archivists and records managers. While managing and maintaining traditional paper documents, photographs, microfilm, and video- and audiotapes, they now must confront new media that change seemingly every few months. Without documentation, the scholars say, there is no history. What documentation and in what form will this generation pass on to future generations? Only through collaboration and cooperation can archivists and records managers hope to bring order to the mountains of data endemic to the Information Age.

R.D.W. Connor had a gift for aphorisms. Early in the 20th century he inserted into the third biennial report of the North Carolina Historical Commission an adage as resonant today as it was a century ago: "A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtue to make history that is worth recording."

DR. JEFFREY J. CROW IS THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE OFFICE OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY, NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND COORDINATOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD.

# THE ROORBACK HOAX

## *A Curious Incident in the Election of 1844*

BY JAMES L. ROGERS II

On August 21, 1844, the *Ithaca Chronicle*, a New York State Whig newspaper, published an account from an anonymous author, "An Abolitionist." The article contained a purported extract from *Roorback's Tour through the Western and Southern States in 1836*. The extract supposedly contained three paragraphs of Baron Roorback's description upon meeting a gang of slave traders and their victims upon the Duck River in Middle Tennessee. The extract contained the following critical passage:

Forty of these unfortunate beings had been purchased, I was informed, of the Hon. J. K. Polk, the present speaker of the house of representatives; the mark of the branding iron, with the initials of his name on their shoulders distinguishing them from the rest.

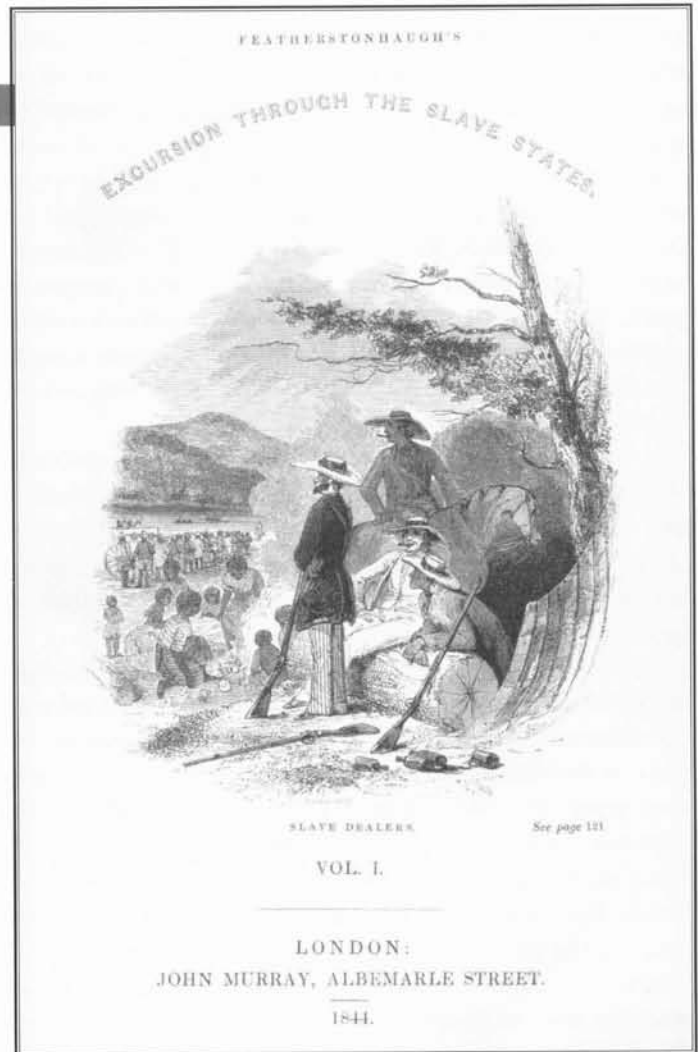
The publication of this account created a new term in the English language, embarrassed Whig partisans, and highlighted the desperation of Whigs late in the electoral campaign of 1844. A seemingly small incident of personal slander and political deceit, the Roorback Hoax illustrates some of the factors that led to a Democratic electoral victory in 1844, and the consequent elevation of James K. Polk to the Presidency.

The author of the extract from *Roorback's Tour* had fabricated the assault on Polk. *Roorback's Tour* had never been printed, nor had Baron Roorback ever existed. Instead, George W. Featherstonhaugh's *Excursion Through the Slave States*, a recently published travel memoir, served as the source of much of the extract. "An Abolitionist" surreptitiously added the account of Polk's branded slaves and the location of Duck River, which runs near Polk's home in Columbia, Tennessee, to Featherstonhaugh's text.

Featherstonhaugh's description of the event, which took place in 1836 on the New River of southwestern Virginia, delivered a distasteful view of slave trading and slave traders, but no mention of branding or particular slaveowners. The London edition of the memoir featured an illustration of the event on its title page (see illustration). Polk's name is never mentioned in Featherstonhaugh's memoir, and Featherstonhaugh revealed the sugarcane plantations of Louisiana as the destination of the slaves.

"An Abolitionist" obviously did not know that Polk owned few slaves in 1836, and that his plantation in Yalobusha County, Mississippi, was quite small and devoted to self-sufficiency through the production of corn, hogs, and cotton. The Roorback Hoax was clearly intended to smear the moral character of the Democratic candidate for the Presidency, and to emphasize the association of the Democracy with the worst aspects of slavery.

The circulation of the Roorback Hoax was greatly compounded



when Thurlow Weed's *Albany Evening Journal* republished the account from the *Chronicle*. Weed's newspaper represented the upstate New York Whig Party, and was widely read and circulated in Whig circles throughout the North. The hoax wound up repeated in Whig newspapers in New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, particularly critical battleground states in 1844.

The Whig press only discovered its error in publishing the Roorback Hoax when the Democratic press challenged the account and decisively refuted it. By early October, the Whig press finally announced its role in spreading the deception, blaming the hoax on an *Ithaca Democrat*, William Linn, who delivered the fraudulent passage to a gullible young Whig, Daniel McKinney, who then passed it on to the *Chronicle's* editor. Having publicly cleared themselves of the charge of fraud, the Whigs tried to bury the action with self-righteous proclamations of future caution and increased discretion. The Roorback Hoax disappeared from the Whig campaign newspapers, and apparently from the history of the Presidential election of 1844.



One might assume that Polk's "dark horse" status would lead to fewer personal attacks by the Whigs, but Democratic partisans rose to defend his character from a wide range of slanders. The widely circulated slogan "Who is James K. Polk?" represented the Whig charge of Polk's personal obscurity and insignificance, particularly compared to the national prominence of Clay. Whig partisans circulated an outrageous lie that Polk's father was a Tory during the American Revolution, when in fact Ezekiel Polk signed the Mecklenburg (NC) Declaration of Independence of 1775. Polk treated the charge against his father very seriously, and personally orchestrated a well-documented rebuttal.

The Roorback Hoax was therefore not an unusual example of political campaign excess, even given its blatant falsehood and the subsequent embarrassed retraction by the Whig press. But if the Roorback Hoax is fairly typical in the history of Presidential elections and personal assaults, why then would the Whig press so prominently retract its publication? Why widely publicize an unlikely scheme of deception and lack of discretion, when salutary neglect would serve the same purpose? What was so unique about this particular event that it caused the term "roorback" to enter the American lexicon as a synonym for personal slander during elections?

The content of the Roorback Hoax appears to provide little insight into its significance. The Whig press surely realized the party had little to gain by making Polk's connection to slavery obvious. Clay had very substantial slave-worked hemp enterprises in Kentucky, and owned significant numbers of slaves. Intimating that Polk would treat his slaves as cattle, rather than chattel, appears to be a blatant attack on Polk's moral character.

While the branding aspect of the hoax seems morally outrageous, most contemporary observers would have realized the unlikelihood that any slaveowner, particularly a prominent national politician, would mistreat valuable property in such a way. At the very least, branding would have made the transfer of slaves to other owners very difficult.

Moreover, the publicity surrounding the revelation of the hoax would destroy the moral focus of the character assault, and possibly redound upon the character of those who promulgated and promoted the slander. Whig newspapermen decided, rather than lose the moral battle, to try to deflect the moral outrage onto a Democrat officeholder.

Perhaps the Roorback Hoax served as an attempt to induce abolitionists to support the Whig Party? As many historians have noted, abolitionists opposed slaveholding on philosophical or religious grounds, and could not have been so easily convinced to support Clay over Polk. The Liberty Party existed solely as an expression of abolitionist political views, and its partisans certainly looked with disfavor upon both Whigs and Democrats in 1844. Abolitionists figured prominently in electoral politics in the critical states of 1844—New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The winning candidate in 1844 had to carry at least two of those states. Nevertheless, both Democrats and Whigs realized that, if they could draw large numbers of abolitionist votes, their chances of victory would increase significantly. Both parties tried various schemes to lure abolitionist voters, but evidence from 1844 indicates that neither had much success.

The significance of the Roorback Hoax more likely lies in another context of the 1844 campaign. By August, expansionism had

clearly become the dominant campaign issue of 1844. The Democratic Convention and its candidates issued clear and unambiguous campaign stands in favor of the immediate annexation of Texas and Oregon into the United States. Martin Van Buren's attempt to repeat as Democratic standard-bearer in 1844 had unexpectedly foundered upon this very issue, and Polk's nomination clearly tied his candidacy and the national party to expansionism.

Clay, and the Whig Party generally, repudiated any near-term action on the Texas or Oregon questions, favoring a "masterful inactivity" (borrowing a term from John C. Calhoun). The Democratic position on Texas and Oregon annexation captured the imagination of the American public, and every other issue quickly faded into the background of the campaign. Whigs felt that they had a stronger argument in domestic economic issues, and would have preferred to run on the prosperity and protection platforms of their convention. Victory in the key states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio depended upon a focus on Whig economic issues.

A number of events conspired to derail the Whig attempt to focus the campaign on the domestic economy. Polk's letter to John K. Kane of June 19, 1844, explained the Democratic position on a revenue tariff with incidental protection, and effectively nullified the Whig advantage on the tariff issue in Pennsylvania and New York. President John Tyler had openly embraced Texas annexation, which gave the issue both prominence and popularity among his partisans. Tyler's withdrawal from the 1844 contest left his officeholders and their powerful patronage posts, especially in New York City and Philadelphia, free to support the Democratic expansionist ticket.

While Texas annexation clearly meant the expansion of slavery into that territory, the annexation of Oregon would provide a complementary non-slave geographic balance to expansionism. It is no small irony that Clay, a prominent author of geographic compromise on slavery in 1820, found his Presidential aspirations threatened by an obvious, but not explicit, appeal to geographical balance in expansionism between new slave and non-slave territories. Such reasoning would not sway abolitionists, but, as already mentioned, they would likely support neither Clay nor Polk in 1844.

In light of the dominance of expansionism in 1844, and the political events surrounding it, Clay and the Whigs found themselves entirely on the defensive by August on this critical issue. The Roorback Hoax appears to be a desperate Whig attempt to move the electoral debate to some other issue, especially in key states like New York. If they could insert a change in subject to one that focused on character and morality, maybe the Whigs could regain the campaign initiative and emphasize economic policy. Despite Whig attempts to promulgate a roorback on the Democratic candidate in 1844, Polk carried New York and Pennsylvania and the electoral victory. And the term "roorback" thereby entered the nation's peculiar electoral vocabulary.

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# "We is come to the law now"

## FREEDPEOPLE, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AND THE CHANGING FACE OF POWER IN THE SOUTH, 1861-1867

BY STEVEN F. MILLER

THE EMANCIPATION of 4 million Southern slaves during the American Civil War launched a revolution that reconfigured relations between black people and white, workers and employers, and citizens and the nation state. In becoming free people and citizens, former slaves entered into new relationships with officials of the Federal Government and recast their views about power and authority. The interaction be-



*Chaplain Joseph Warren of the Freedmen's Bureau presiding over the wedding of a black soldier and his wife at Vicksburg, Mississippi. Harper's Weekly, June 30, 1866. Library of Congress.*

tween freedpeople and Government agents in the South during the war and the ensuing political reconstruction shaped the course of emancipation. It also produced and preserved documentation that provides an extraordinary glimpse into the lives of a people in transit from bondage to freedom and citizenship.

In the antebellum world of slaveholders and slaves, power wore a human face: the face of the owner, who possessed the persons and commanded the labor of the slaves. Slaves experienced their owners' overwhelming power directly and personally, and it affected every aspect of their lives. The laws and governmental institutions of the slave states bolstered the slaveholders' prerogatives, and Federal officials usually avoided interfering with them. If national authority bore lightly on the everyday existence of most Americans before the war, that was even more true for Southern slaves.

The secession of 11 slave states and the outbreak of civil war in 1861 launched events that altered the balance of power. Although Union President Abraham Lincoln initially pledged not to wage a war against slavery, the mobilization of the Confederacy for war and the Northern invasion of the South unleashed disruptive forces that rendered that promise moot. Slaves fled to Federal lines seeking freedom and offering to work or fight for the Union. Soldiers and commanders grew increasingly willing to accept the offers and increasingly unwilling to remand runaways to bondage. By the summer of 1862, the Federal Government had committed itself to protecting the liberty of fugitive slaves and mobilizing their labor for the Union war effort.<sup>1</sup>

Affirming the transformation of the Civil War into a war for freedom, Lincoln's final Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, declared

free the slaves in the seceded states, announced the Union's intention to recruit ex-slave men as soldiers, and advised other freedpeople to "labor faithfully for reasonable wages." When the war ended in April 1865, about 200,000 African American men, most of them former Southern slaves, had served in the Union army and navy, and tens of thousands more had toiled as military laborers. Their contribution to

Union victory helped end slavery in the United States, and their continued presence in the South in the postwar army of occupation symbolized the new relationship between former slaves and the Federal Government that had been forged during the war.<sup>2</sup>

Freedpeople remained mindful of that relationship as they seized the possibilities opened by emancipation after the war. Repudiating the detested hallmarks of their owners' sovereignty under the old regime—particularly whippings and other corporal punishments, disruption of their family lives, long hours of uncompensated labor under close supervision, and restrictions on their ability to move about—ex-slaves fashioned new lives as free men and women. Their struggle proceeded on many fronts. Moving from their antebellum quarters to new homes untainted by association with their enslavement; addressing a former owner as "mister" instead of "master"; signing a contract for wage labor; sanctifying marriages that had been denied legal status; reuniting family members separated during slavery; organizing churches, schools, and other institutions befitting a free people—such seemingly ordinary acts took on special meaning for men and women learning to navigate the unfamiliar ground of freedom.

Freedpeople came quickly to understand that their newly won freedom would be insecure unless they enjoyed fundamental rights of citizens: to be secure in their lives and property, to enjoy justice under law, and to petition the officials who governed them. In contending for those rights, they cited their wartime service to the Union as well as the nation's stated commitment to the principle of human equality. "It is scarcely needful for us to say, that during the late Rebellion we have been true and loyal to the United States, Government," black leaders in

middle Tennessee assured Federal authorities in July 1865. "As in the past, we have by our labors enriched our masters, in many instances, besides supporting ourselves and our families. We now, simply ask that we may be secured as others, in the just fruits of our toil: protected from unjust, and illegal punishments, and we are sure we will keep our families from want, and do our part as good citizens of the United States to add to the wealth and glory of the Country."<sup>3</sup> Similar premises undergirded arguments to extend political rights, including suffrage, to African American men.

In their quest for legal equality, freedpeople recognized the changed basis of power and authority in the post-emancipation South. Power was no longer wielded unilaterally at the whim of a slaveowner; it was now mediated through impersonal law. "[W]e have no massa now—we is come to the law now," declared Florida ex-slaves soon after the end of the war, articulating a sentiment shared by their counterparts across the South.<sup>4</sup> For men and women who were accustomed to being under the personal dominion of their owners, being suddenly subject to abstract law—learning its language and understanding its obligations—entailed manifold changes in their everyday lives.

As freedpeople grappled with the opportunities and challenges of the new world of freedom, they faced opposition from former owners who regarded emancipation as a bane rather than a boon. Although weakened by emancipation and military defeat, ex-slaveholders still controlled the bulk of the South's productive resources and wielded substantial political influence. Almost universally, they denigrated the freedpeople's ability to support themselves in freedom, let alone enjoy the privileges of citizens. Point by point, they contested the ex-slaves' efforts to enlarge the scope of freedom and determined to deny the freedpeople liberties they and their white neighbors took for granted.

A Virginia planter spoke for many of his fellows when he insisted that "the negroes will not work unless they are forced to do so" and advocated "[a]n organized system of force labour" to replace slavery.<sup>5</sup> During late 1865 and 1866, after Lincoln's successor, President Andrew Johnson, made acceptance of emancipation and the extension of rudimentary civil rights to freedpeople a condition for restoring state and local governments in the former Confederate states, political leaders grudgingly met Johnson's terms while simultaneously enacting "black codes" that denied former slaves political rights and imposed Draconian new restrictions. That done, they demanded an end to military occupation and a return to self-government, with freedpeople excluded from the polity.

As the former slaves' enemies re-instituted state and local governments staffed heavily with former slaveholders, alarmed freedpeople looked to Federal authority as a counterweight. They turned especially to officers of the Union army and agents of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau), an agency established in 1865 to supervise the transition from slavery to freedom. Stationed at posts scattered across the South, army and bureau officials became personifications of Federal authority to former slaves, who flocked to them from miles around with questions, complaints, and grievances.

These agents in the field not only made decisions that affected the course of emancipation in their jurisdictions, they also provided freedpeople with conduits to the highest levels of authority in Washington. Vigilant in defense of their new and imperiled freedom, freedpeople scrutinized the agents' actions minutely, commending men they

deemed sympathetic to their interests and seeking the removal of those they judged to be unsympathetic or ineffective. Often they presented an official's dereliction as a betrayal of the Federal Government's beneficent intentions, as did former slaves on one Georgia plantation who, after objecting to the counsel of their local bureau agent, insisted "that a true Agent of the Government would be along about Christmas to tell them better."<sup>6</sup>

The duties of Freedmen's Bureau agents and army officers involved them, at one time or another, in virtually every area of the freedpeople's lives. Disputes between ex-slaves and their former owners or new employers, particularly over labor, were probably the most routine item on their dockets. But freedpeople also brought more private, personal concerns before Federal agents. Appeals for help locating and reuniting with long-lost kinfolk were common, since the broad geographical reach and bureaucratic structure of the agencies facilitated inquiries over long distances and across state lines. Federal authorities also adjudicated disputes between former slaves ranging from controversies over ownership of property to allegations of marital infidelity.

As such, historians and other students of emancipation are beneficiaries of the special relationship forged between former slaves and the Federal Government during the Civil War and early Reconstruction. The public records of the army, the Freedmen's Bureau, and other Federal agencies provide the fullest known documentation of the public and private lives of people passing from bondage to freedom.

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<sup>1</sup> On emancipation during the war, see the volumes of *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation*, a series based on documents from the National Archives and Records Administration: *The Destruction of Slavery*, ed. Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland (Cambridge, U.K., 1985); *The Black Military Experience*, ed. Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland (Cambridge, U.K., 1982); *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South*, ed. Ira Berlin, Steven E. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland (Cambridge, U.K., 1993); and *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Lower South*, ed. Ira Berlin, Thavolia Glymph, Steven E. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, Leslie S. Rowland, and Julie Saville (Cambridge, U.K. 1990).

<sup>2</sup> For the proclamation, see *United States Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America*, vol. 12 (Boston, 1863), pp. 1, 268–69. For the numbers of black Union soldiers and sailors, see *Freedom's Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War*, ed. Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland (Cambridge U.K., 1998), pp. 16–17, 20–21.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Lewis Bright et al., to General Fisk, 27 July 1865, B-36 1865, Registered Letters Received, series 3379, Tennessee Assistant Commissioner, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (hereafter, BRFAL).

<sup>4</sup> J. S. Fullerton to Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, 28 July 1865, F-123 1865, Letters Received, series 15, Washington Headquarters, BRFAL.

<sup>5</sup> M. Q. Holt to Col. Brown, 5 Dec. 1865, H-4 1865, Registered Letters Received, series 3798, Virginia Assistant Commissioner, BRFAL.

<sup>6</sup> Capt. C. C. Richardson to Capt. W. W. Deane, 28 Nov. 1865, Unregistered Letters Received, series 632, Georgia Assistant Commissioner, BRFAL.

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*This somewhat blurry photograph of a 1959 lunch counter sit-in at W.T. Grant's in downtown Miami was taken from newsfilm now being preserved by the Florida Moving Image Archive. A related story begins on p.6.*