

# Oakland University Archives

## *Annual Report* 2012-2013

The year was very much like the previous one, a busy time in which we continued the basic operations of filing, indexing, accessioning and organizing new materials and, most importantly, responding to requests for information and materials, particularly photographs.

### ***This Year's Accomplishments:***

#### **Alumni Association and Alumni Relations**

Several boxes of new material arrived and these items were integrated with existing files.

#### **Archives Policy**

A year ago the Archives policy was updated. At that time the basic content of the policy didn't change but it was reworked to fit into a new format and a required procedures section was added. That policy and procedures document never was approved. The question came up again this year and an updated and very different, simplified Archives policy was submitted to the Administrative Group. It won approval in February 2013. The new policy replaced the iterative list of items with a more general statement of the types of materials that would be appropriate for historical preservation.

#### **Collection Maintenance**

There were a number of different collections of boxes that were straightened out, tidied up and reorganized.

Meadow Brook Festival and Theatre. One major job involved a group of boxes that came from Wilson Hall where they were cleaning out a basement storeroom. The boxes arrived unexpectedly and ended up temporarily stored in the work room under the tables. After figuring out what they contained (mostly a mélange of Meadow Brook Theatre, Meadow Brook Festival, the MBT Guild) the boxes were added to the existing overflow boxes on the floor in stacks area. At this time there is no room for additional Theatre and Festival materials in the stacks so materials are accumulating in the east and west aisles. Those overflow boxes, in turn were rearranged (dragged about and repositioned) to be in a less random and more organized order.

Student Life and Library boxes These were rearranged so that similar items are shelved together. Also, the Library boxes which were simply labeled 'Library,' were opened, reviewed and a more descriptive label was attached to the box. The boxes were then rearranged in rough chronological order.

#### Large Pictures

A number of the large pictures and posters that were stacked along the walls were finally hung using the new picture hanging system. Most of the remaining unframed large items are stored in the flat file cabinets.

#### **Commencement speakers**

A list, or rather an excel spreadsheet, of commencement speakers was created by looking at all the commencement programs and recording the data provided. The list provides both a chronological approach as well as an alphabetical list of all the speakers, and where available, the time, the place and the

academic units involved in the ceremonies. The list has been shared with Academic Affairs Office and may be eventually be available online.

### **Concourse d'Elegance**

These materials were sorted, organized and interfiled with existing items; an inventory list was created of the documents in the collection.

### **Deans' Council**

Several boxes containing the minutes and agendas from the Deans Council were organized and arranged in chronological folders.

### **Glyndebourne Picnic History.**

Jason Harris did a wonderful job of researching and creating Glyndebourne picnic history vignettes. The picnics were an annual event from 1983-1994 to raise money for the Library. The original plan had been to enhance the vignettes with images (photos, invitations, announcements) and to post it to the Archives website. Due to the revision of the Library's website, that plan did not come to fruition. However the document he created provides a quick reference guide to the picnics, their themes, chairpersons, dates, attendance and amounts raised. A print copy will be placed in the Glyndebourne boxes and the electronic version will remain on the Archives shared drive.

### **Meadow Brook Hall and Estate and Wilson / Dodge materials**

These materials were in a variety of places in archives. The impetus for finally gathering them together and organizing them arose with the creation of the Library/Meadow Brook Task Force, a group that was formed to identify possible joint grant opportunities. The MBH staff expressed an interest in seeing what was in the OU Archives related to the Hall and that led to the unification of items from different locations. Our intern, Samantha Lawrence, sorted through all the materials, winnowed out duplicates, and then organized the items. We also discovered additional Hall architectural designs which were boxed and labeled and stored with the other MBH architectural plans on top of section 4.

### **Oakland Foundation treasures.**

Very early in the University's history the Oakland University Foundation was formed to raise money for the fledgling school. Very little information about the Foundation existed in Archives but there was a tantalizing clue in the Varner Collection; a note in the OU Foundation folder saying that the materials had been removed to the President's Office. However the staff in the current President's Office had no idea where the records were. This year, a phone call from a development office staff member in the John Dodge house asked if Archives would be interested in some old materials they had discovered in the attics. We obtained the boxes and delightedly discovered the files from the early days of the Foundation, e.g. minutes, financials, legal concerns, fund raising efforts and photos. Varner's files had been found.

### **Old OU Documents**

A number of Hollinger boxes of older documents had been gathering dust on the first range of shelves since before the move. These were examined and resulted in the relabeling of some of the boxes and the relocation of a number of materials found. It turned out that the labels on the boxes often did not match the content. One happy result of this activity was the discovery of a collection of minutes from the Educational Policy Committee, OU's first curriculum committee which were relocated to the Historic Documents Collection curriculum box where other curricular items were kept. Several weeks later these minutes provided the answer to a question posed by Graeme Harper, the Honors College Dean, and allowed him to verify the involvement of Honors College students at MSU in MSUO curriculum design process.

### **OUR@Oakland Transfers.**

We completed the transfer of selected archival records from the Dreamweaver site to the institutional repository, OUR@ Oakland. Using procedures and metadata standards determined by Meghan Finch, the Digital Assets Librarian, the *Minutes* from the Oakland University Board of Trustees (385 items) and the *OU Annual Reports* (29 items) were relocated to the repository. Both student workers as well as Shirley Paquette participated in this project. The *Minutes* from the MSU-O period (1957-1969) were not transferred since the 14 x 17 originals in the Board of Trustees office need to be rescanned and saved as pdfs.

### **Photo exhibit for Homecoming weekend, January 2012**

Kath Borg, Anne Switzer, Shirley Paquette all helped select and post historic OU photographs on columns in KL's lobby for visitors to enjoy during OU's homecoming weekend. Around 110 pictures were selected from the photo boxes, reproduced in various sizes, and displayed with accompanying captions where needed. The only downside was that so few people showed up to enjoy the exhibit.

### **Richard Stamps donations.**

Richard Stamps, anthropology professor, was the only retiree who responded to my request for any and all materials relating to OU history. He delivered several boxes of memorabilia to the Archives. Although there were some duplicates, his boxes were a treasure trove of useful items and were particularly rich in materials relating to student life, international study and early athletic endeavors on campus. He also provided several boxes containing paper records and media relating to Leonard Woodcock Seminars and various collaborations with Chinese scholars and educational institutions.

### **Student Writings**

For several semesters a class of writing students has been reviewing and studying student authored materials in Archives. This year most of the published but uncataloged items were cataloged and all the cataloged items were given the subject heading "College students' writings, American -- Michigan -- Rochester" so they would be more easily identified. Materials not appropriate for cataloging, e.g. single essays, were centralized into a Students' Writing box.

### **Subject Files**

The subject vertical file component of Archives continues to expand and had gotten to the point where some drawers were too full to add anything to them. We freed up some filing cabinets by relocating the Board of Trustees Minutes to boxes (all except the current two years) and then expanded the Subject Files from 15 drawers to 25.

### ***Other***

#### **Equipment, supplies, etc.**

The Atiz BookDrive Pro equipment continues to take up a lot of space and remains unusable. Under the leadership of Meghan Finch, multiple attempts were made to see if it could be made operational. However the attempts so far have been unsuccessful.

No new digitization projects were undertaken since it was deemed advisable to rethink and retool and to direct all future efforts to creating and archiving "high quality" images. Up until now all the digitization projects were focused on producing usable images and populating the Oakland University repository. The idea was to make the information available to the public and to preserve the originals from over-handling. However, with the new version of the Oakland University Repository software finally installed and set for future access, it is an opportune time to switch gears and focus on long term storage issues and archival quality images. Meghan Finch has been tasked with inventorying the current equipment and providing the library administration with recommendations.

We acquired three 5 drawer flat file storage cabinets from the Education Resources Laboratory who needed to find alternative homes for them due to space limitations in the ERL. Although we could use the storage capabilities for many of the oversized items in Archives, the cabinets are problematic: they are big and bulky and we have not been able to find a good place for them. However, they are currently being used; two cabinets are in the stacks area and one is in the workroom. Note: Retail cost for these cabinets is around \$1250.

The budget allocation provided for archival folders and boxes along with general office supplies; also the special allocation from the Endowment Fund for student hours.

### **Shared Drive for Archives Staff**

Mitchell Roe set up a shared drive for archives so that files and documents could be easily access by all staff. This has useful in providing a space for student work, photo collections and various finding aids. Also a special email account, [archives@oakland.edu](mailto:archives@oakland.edu), was created to provide an impersonal access point for email queries.

### **Staff**

Archives was ably staffed by Shirley Paquette who split her days between Archives (mornings) and Technical Services (afternoons). She provided reference assistance to all units and individuals needing materials or information about the university's history. She also kept up with the daily routine, e.g. taking care of ongoing operations, sorting, filing and indexing as well as training and supervising the Archives students. We were fortunate to be able to use income from the Charter Class Archives Endowment Fund to hire Jason Harris to work both semesters. In addition we also had another English Department intern, Samantha Lawrence, during the winter term. Linda Hildebrand remained the librarian nominally in charge of the unit for the fall and winter terms. In April the Dean announced that Dominique Daniel would be designated a 10 month coordinator and would take over the responsibility for Archives (and Special Collections) as of May 1, 2013. With the advent of a new archivist coming on board, a number of finding aids were created to make locating items easier. These lists include

- a. a detailed shelf list and topical guide to the materials on the shelves in the stacks area
- b. listing of materials in the Vertical File drawers in both room along with detailed lists of folders in some of the drawers.
- c. lists of collections in the work room.

### **Telethon**

The Archives Reading Area again this year provided space for the Alumni Services OU Telethon both during the fall and winter terms. The fall term effort resulted in \$1790 being raised for the library. The amount for the winter term is not yet available but the Dean of the Library was able to negotiate a payment of \$5000 for the use of the room during the winter term.

### **Water Problems**

There were two water leaks that affected Archives this year.

The first occurred on Nov. 7, 2012 when the Telethon supervisor noticed that the floor was wet on the west side of the workroom public area. The water covered and puddled on the carpeted area from the wall to around 4 feet out into the room. The facilities staff vacuumed up the water and left fans running to help dry the floor. The second water leak came from the ceiling directly in the middle of the reading area in March, 2013. Again the Telethon supervisor noticed that water was dripping down on his computer table. In both cases it appeared that the Café directly above caused the water leaks into Archives.

The danger of water damage is going to be an ongoing concern. There are many possible problem areas: a) the sprinkler system in the ceiling area has leaked in other areas of the library although not yet in the new archives--it did leak in the former archives room in the past and damaged a number of archives filled boxes; b) the drains from the bathrooms have backed up and flooded the floor in the archives workroom, and c) the soffit running along the perimeter of the archives work room/study area contains water and drainage pipes.

### **Ongoing projects**

There are a number of ongoing activities, for example:

- collecting and indexing the student paper, the Oakland Post
- updating websites (OU Senate, Board of Trustees Minutes, Newsletters, etc. )
- sorting and indexing the photographic collection
- contacting retirees and asking for OU materials and memorabilia
- lots of sorting and filing and inventorying of new materials as they arrive.
- updating the buildings files, added information on barns, Health Bldg, faculty sub.

### **Conclusion**

All in all, a productive and rewarding and satisfying year. The fun part is always in the discovery of new bits of information or items and the serendipity of the process. Much of the credit for the smooth running of the unit and the successful fulfilling of requests belongs to Shirley Paquette and her dedicated and inspired work in the unit.

Submitted by  
Linda L. Hildebrand