



## Reconstructing Cartoon Music from AHC Collections

The Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra (CSO), under the direction of Maestro Stephen Alltop, brought two rare cartoon music scores from the American Heritage Center collections to life during the symphony's Movie Magic II concert October 18, 2003. The two scores, *Spider and the Fly* and *The Village Smitty*, are in the papers of composer Carl Stalling (1891-1972). Stalling was the first composer for cartoons with sound, specifically those produced by Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks in the 1920s and 1930s. He later composed for the Warner Bros. Merrie Melodies and Looney Tunes.

To create modern performance editions of the original 1931 pencil manuscripts, AHC archivist and composer Dr. Anne Guzzo and two University of Wyoming music students, Shaun Kelley and Michael Lange, translated the smudges, scribbles, cryptic notes, and even blank measures into sheet music for a modern orchestra. When the staves were completely blank in the middle of the music, the "reconstruction team" listened to old recordings of the cartoons and took dictation. For example, in *Spider and the Fly* an evil arachnid uses his web as a harp, luring a hapless fly into the trap. It was evident from the recording that Stalling wrote a long and lovely harp solo for this portion, but the notes were absent. Listening repeatedly, taking advice from the harpists, and incorporating the composers' dictation skills, the team recreated the solo the audience heard in October.

The scores chosen for the CSO are rare gems in the output of Stalling, most famous for his music for Warner Bros. While most Hollywood movie scores are easy to play, the quick musical changes of cartoon scores and exact timing to the screen provide a challenge. Not only were Alltop and the symphony up to the challenge, they also enjoyed playing the music as much as the audience enjoyed listening to it.



Composer Carl Stalling (at piano) working with the Walt Disney staff in late 1920s, American Heritage Center collections.



## From the Director



Mark Greene

In the last issue of *Heritage Highlights* I wrote of some of the complexities of our seemingly simple mission “to carefully and critically select documentary material that can provide meaningful and useful access to the history of the West and the United States.” I noted that the AHC acquires few collections through purchase, both because the collectors’ market often drives up prices out of all relationship to an item’s historical or research value, and because the AHC has limited funds for collection purchases. In the months between that column and this one, we have faced three instances where material offered for sale was of interest to us, but completely out of reach.

The first was three editions of an East Coast newspaper from the mid-nineteenth century, containing extensive reports from a correspondent traveling in Wyoming Territory. The second, an 1882 five-dollar bank note issued by the Stock Growers Bank of Cheyenne. Finally, and most significantly, the papers of a key figure in the movement to re-identify and preserve the Oregon Trail during the first half of the twentieth century, offered by his estate at more than \$140,000. We hope that our efforts to build an acquisition and access endowment will enable us, in the future, to acquire such collections and make them publicly available, rather than see them disappear into the hands of private collectors.

One additional update on my last column. In September, associate archivist Mark Shelstad represented the AHC at a national conference in Washington, D.C. called to discuss the problem of backlogs in special collections. A recent study reported that major manuscript repositories in the U.S. have on average processed only two-thirds of their collections. Mark will remain active in the discussions and working groups that evolve from the conference. In a closely related development, a colleague from Minnesota and I have been awarded a national research grant to develop a set of recommendations to speed and make more efficient the procedures used by archives to arrange, describe, and catalog collections.

Improving and devoting more resources to cataloging is one path to reducing backlogs. The other is to more clearly define acquisition (also called collection development) policies to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of material accepted into our collections. The AHC has begun to do this in earnest, by comprehensively reviewing our collections, collecting areas, and appraisal criteria. As I noted in my first column late last year, “prior to making collections accessible, our mission is to *carefully and critically select* documentary material that can provide meaningful and useful access to the history of the West and the United States.” The task of selection, what archivists call “appraisal,” is in fact the most contentious, and arguably the most difficult, function we perform. It is also the part of our work least often discussed in public.

Archivists are shy about speaking openly about appraisal in part because there is a possible use or user for literally any item or collection that a repository may decide not to keep, so criticism is not only easy--it is almost guaranteed. However, because we wrestle not only with hypothetical uses, but also with very real constraints of staff and space, as well as increasing demands by our extant users, archivists and curators are constantly forced to make difficult decisions. I have publically commented that the archival profession is difficult (and necessary) not because we are good at saving things, but because we are able to decide what *does not* get saved. Of course, we have a responsibility to explain as clearly as possible why we make the decisions we do.

There are two levels of decision-making about what to keep and what to turn away. The first



## From the Director *(continued from Page 2)*

and arguably most important is the collection development policy, which sets out the broad strokes of a repository's collecting goals. It is at this level, for example, that the AHC has decided to only collect the papers of elected officials from Wyoming, but also to collect material relating to aviation history beyond the state. It is at this level, too, that we make decisions about certain types of documentation which experience suggests do not usually have research value comparable to their bulk or preservation needs. For example, daily financial records (ledgers and journals) for organizations and businesses will not normally be acquired beyond the 1920s. The AHC is working on a comprehensive collection development policy, which will be published on our Web site when completed in approximately two years.

The second level of decision-making is the individual collection that the collection development policy says we will consider. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. A few questions are: Is the information unique, or does it duplicate other holdings? Is the physical condition of the material such that it can be preserved within the resources of the repository? Is the collection coherent and complete or fragments of what was originally a much more complete set of materials? Would the researchers most likely to use this material be likely to come to the AHC to use it, or is there someplace else they would more likely go? Is it, in fact, material that researchers would be likely to use at all? It is important to note that when possible, staff members will try to refer to another logical repository a collection offered to, but not accepted by, the AHC. Some material, however, that may have substantial sentimental value to a family or an organization, simply does not have sufficient historical value for a wide audience to make preservation in a repository practical.

Once selected and processed, our responsibilities are to assist researchers in finding and using our collections, and to ensure that the collections are stored and cared for properly. I would like to speak about those two important activities in future columns. ▲

*-- Mark Greene*

## Kennet-Were Exhibit Opened

The AHC's exhibit, "Nine Months in the United States: The Travels of Thomas Kennet-Were, 1868-1869," opened in the UW Art Museum on September 19. The exhibit highlights many of the watercolors painted by Kennet-Were, an English artist and world traveler, whose nine-month journey by boat, train, and on foot from the East Coast to the West Coast is documented. During his trip he toured New York and Washington, D.C., and various civil war sites in the South. He also took a steamer up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, and from Omaha, Nebraska, he traveled by train across Wyoming, becoming delayed by a blizzard west of Laramie, and finally to California.

In 2002, Francis Spencer of New Zealand, a descendant of Kennet-Were, donated to the AHC the watercolors and a copy of the accompanying written account, which was published in an 1869 English newspaper. Visitors may enjoy the exhibit through December. Beginning next year it will become part of the AHC's traveling exhibit program. ▲



*"Railway Town on the Prairie", a watercolor by Thomas Kennet-Were, is one of the paintings featured in the exhibit. It shows the town of Carbon, WY. Other paintings feature scenes from New York, Washington D.C., and California, among many others.*



## Privy to Scandal: The Ralph O. Dietler Papers

One of the biggest scandals to ever rock the petroleum industry was the fraudulent leasing of United States oil reserves at Wyoming's Teapot Dome, and the discovery of the Continental Trading Company, a Canadian corporation organized in 1921 to funnel the profits into untaxed Liberty Bonds. Several prominent oilmen and government officials defrauded the government for significant personal gain. Henry M. Blackmer, head of Midwest Oil Company, was among them and was one of the key players in the organization of the Continental Trading Company. Ralph Dietler was Blackmer's private secretary at the time and in that role attended the meeting in November 1921 at New York's Vanderbilt Hotel during which plans were made to form the company. Dietler's papers have recently been processed at the AHC and are ready for research.



*Ralph Dietler and his wife, Christabel, Ralph O. Dietler Papers, American Heritage Center.*

Born in Denver, Colorado, on the last day of 1890, Dietler began his long career in the petroleum industry in 1919 when hired as stenographer and private secretary to Blackmer at Midwest Refining Company. In this capacity Dietler was privy to the inner workings of the Continental Trading Company as a vehicle for buying and selling oil while hiding the profits in Canada to avoid paying U.S. income taxes. He was present at the meetings between the principals in the Teapot Dome scandal. Later, after the scandal broke, Blackmer fled to France and Dietler became the assistant to the new president, Tom Dines. Later, Standard Oil Company of Indiana purchased and dissolved Midwest Refining Company.

Dietler then transferred to Tulsa to become vice president of Stanolind Crude Oil Purchasing Company, which was affiliated with Standard Oil. He served Stanolind as vice president from 1931-1940, president from 1940-1948, and chairman of the board from 1948-1955. Dietler retired in 1955 to work as a private consultant and independent oil producer. He died in September 1973.

The Ralph O. Dietler Papers contain biographical information, photographs of him and his wife Christabel, and memorials and resolutions given after his death by various groups in the oil industry. Of special note is a transcript of an interview conducted with Dietler in 1970, giving a first-hand account of his employment by Blackmer and his knowledge of the Continental Trading Company and the resulting Teapot Dome scandal. A personal scrapbook contains news clippings of Blackmer's self-imposed exile to France to escape having to testify in the senate investigations and federal court trials of Albert Fall and Harry Sinclair, as well as his eventual return to the U.S. The Dietlers had one son, Cortlandt S., who also enjoyed a long and admired career in the petroleum industry. ▲

*--Ronda Frazier, Archives Specialist*



## UW Office of Registration and Records Open for Research

The Office of Registration and Records is a familiar one for all collegians, for it directs and handles admissions, enrollment, and other student services. The office is responsible for university compliance for Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, which protects the privacy of student records and the release of information from these records. In addition, the office produces general bulletins and course schedules, verifies enrollment, and transcript, transfer, and graduation information.

Maintaining academic records, transcripts, and registration and enrollment statistics are all part of the registrar's responsibility. The role of the registrar has evolved with the introduction of new technologies, as well as changing social trends. Registrars have had to respond to the education benefits provided by the GI Bill, student rights protests of the 1960s and 1970s, civil rights, the influx of international students, and distance learning. These changes have had a profound effect on the records that need to be created and retained and on access constraints on the retained records.

In cooperation with the UW Archives, the Office of Registration and Records transferred to the AHC seventy-six boxes of transcripts and grade cards during the summer of 2002. Also transferred were the Course Review Committee Records from 1922 to 1992, which include minutes of meetings and information submitted by colleges and departments with course descriptions justifying the continuance, creation, or removal of courses, based upon student demand, current faculty interests, and cost.

The Office of the Registrar also has been imaging transcripts dating back to 1987, making it easier to provide copies of transcripts. Given the importance of student records as both vital and historical records, the AHC and the Registrar's office have been discussing the role each should play in maintaining and providing access to student records, particularly with electronic imaging and electronic systems. ▲ *-Mark Shelstad, University Archivist*

## George A. Rentschler Distinguished Visiting Lecturer

On October 2, 3, and 4, the AHC welcomed documentary filmmaker Mark Zwonitzer to campus as the eleventh George A. Rentschler Distinguished Visiting Lecturer. During his visit Zwonitzer spoke to several classes in the UW History Department, including Wyoming History and Public History. He also spoke to students in American Studies about the intricacies of documentary filmmaking, met with the AHC's advisory board, and presented a public talk..

Zwonitzer has produced, directed, and written several documentaries for Public Broadcasting. Last year he visited the AHC to research collections documenting the building of the first trans-continental railroad. The collection he found most useful, and which was featured in the documentary broadcast this past spring, was the John (Jack) Stephen and Frances Jennings Casement Papers. Jack, a Civil War veteran, took a contract to lay all of the track for the Union Pacific Railroad, which kept him away from home and his loving wife for a good portion of the 1860s as the railroad moved westward from Omaha, Nebraska, to Promontory Point, Utah. Zwonitzer featured the correspondence between the separated couple in the documentary.

The Rentschler Lecture series is made possible by an endowment by Frederick B. Rentschler and his mother, the late Rita Rentschler Cushman. ▲





## AHC Launches New Web Site

During early 2004, the AHC will release an updated design for its Web site at <http://www.uwyo.edu/ahc> to give users better access to the AHC's educational and outreach activities, online collections, catalog, and news and events. This is the fourth



The home page for the AHC's new Web site.

generation of the AHC's site, the first of which went online in March 1995, the second in December 1996, and the third in May 1999. The Web site is one of the AHC's most important outreach efforts. During 2002 the site received more than 126,000 visitors, seventh highest of all portions of the UW Web site.

A task force made up of AHC staff and faculty analyzed the structure and content of the current site and surveyed many sites of archives, museums, and historical societies in the U.S. and Canada. They reviewed the sites for content, complexity, visual appeal, and features not currently found on the AHC site, to develop a list of desirable features.

With the assistance of a Web development company, the task force created a series of templates for the creation of the site. Future visitors will find information about how to use the AHC collections, links, and guides

to collection information, finding aids and the online catalog, virtual exhibits, digital projects, educational and outreach programs and events, an online store, resources for teachers, and how to make a gift. Other features will be incorporated when available, including faculty member's presentations, more online forms and policy documents, and being able to browse through different parts of the AHC collections according to subject areas. For more information about the Web site contact Mark Shelstad at [shelstad@uwyo.edu](mailto:shelstad@uwyo.edu). ▲

## Majewski Lecture



Mark Greene presented Garrit Voggeser a framed Charles Belden print after his Majewski fellowship lecture.

Garrit Voggeser, the 2003 Bernard L. Majewski Fellow, presented his talk, "Of Woods and Water: Negotiating Natural Resources on the Blackfeet and Flathead Reservations, 1900 to 1945," at the AHC on November 14. The Majewski Fellowship is funded by a generous endowment given to the AHC by the late Thelma Majewski in order to honor her husband, Bernard L. Majewski, a petroleum industry pioneer, and to encourage the use of AHC collections.

Speaking to UW students, faculty, and the general public, Voggeser described how the federal government clashed with the two tribes in the use and management of the timber and water resources on the reservations. Voggeser spent several weeks

*continued on page 7*



## Majewski Lecture *(continued from page 6)*

during the past summer in the AHC's reading room researching the collections of Vernon O. Bailey, employee of the Bureau of Biological Survey who worked on the Flathead Reservation; Arthur Edward Demaray, who worked for the National Park Service; F.H. Newell, a former director of the Reclamation Service; and Ray Palmer Teele, who investigated the economic impact of reclamation on various Indian reservations. Voggesser's talk was the sixth in the Majewski Fellowship series. A search for the 2004 fellow is now underway. ▲

## AHC Notes

**G**inny Kilander, reference archivist, and Leslie Shores, photo archivist, presented the program "Cone on the Range: Service and Resources of the American Heritage Center" at the annual conference of the Wyoming Library Association. Along with Bill Hopkins, coordinator of archival services, they also presented "Organizing and Preserving Your Family Records" at the Uinta County Museum in Evanston, Wyoming.

Mark Greene was a session chair/commentator at the fall meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference, and is serving as co-chair of the program committee for the Society of American Archivists' 2004 annual meeting to be held in Boston.

Rare Books Curator Anne Marie Lane attended the joint American Library Association/Canadian Library Association where she presented "Using Historic Reproductions for Teaching, Research, and Enjoyment of Book History." She also presented "Early Publications about Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery" to the Laramie Lyceum held at the AHC. The online newsletter of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy published her article, "Using Rare Books to Teach Pharmacy Students about the Healing Methods of the Past."

Associate Archivist Mark Shelstad presented at the UW Elbogen Center for Teaching and Learning's Teaching with Technology Colloquium a paper titled "Out of the Archives for Education and Research." He also attended the fall Midwest Archives Conference held in Dearborn, Michigan, where he gave a paper during a session about archivists as mediators in history. In October the Society of American Archivists appointed Mark to the Electronic Publications Working Group which will develop a plan for phased electronic publication of the society's periodicals, books, and meeting materials.

D.C. Thompson, manager of arrangement and description, traveled to Aberdeen, Scotland, to present her paper, "Amalia and Annie: Women's Opportunities in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in the 1870s," to participants in the Women's History Network conference. D.C. also participated in a panel discussion, "Researching Fiction and Nonfiction," at the June meeting of the Western Writers of America Convention. In October she toured the Park County Historical Archives in Cody, Wyoming, and advised the staff on archival management issues.

Reference Archivist Shannon Bowen presented "Wrangling Celluloid in the Cowboy State: Archival Frontiers in Film Collection" at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists held in August in Los Angeles. ▲



## Photo from the Archives



Among the AHC's many collections are approximately one million photographic images. Periodically we will share interesting photos with our readers in *Heritage Highlights*. This image is in the papers of Gill Robb Wilson, who had a varied career. Born in 1893, he served in the U.S. Signal Corps during World War I. After the war he returned to seminary school and then served as a Presbyterian minister in Trenton, New Jersey, from 1921 to 1930. A pilot and strong advocate of aviation, Wilson served as Director of Aviation for New Jersey from 1930 until 1944, when he became a war correspondent for the *New York Herald-Tribune*, traveling to Europe, Africa, and the Pacific.

This photo, taken in the Pacific, is inscribed: "PFC. Joseph A. Gonzalez, 363<sup>rd</sup> Service Groupo, suffering from gasoline fire burns, smokes a cigarette which has to be held for him by nurse Lt. Lila Mae Jorgenson of Minneapolis. This fellow Gonzalez is quite a case. Since he has been in the Service, his mother had died, his father has passed away, and while he was on Iwo [Jima], and just prior to his accident, he received word that his wife had also died. Gonzalez is from Brooklyn."

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