Civil War letters on library website

Before George Berry Davis was captured by Confederates in Alabama and taken to Andersonville prison, he fought for the Union with the Fourth Iowa Infantry in Missouri, Mississippi, and Arkansas. His letters home were donated to the library by his descendants in 1996 and were recently added to the library’s growing digital archives collection.

“These letters are unique historical documents and making them available on our website allows us to protect the originals,” said Curt Asher, coordinator of Special Collections, who managed the digitization project.

The letters can be viewed by selecting the Special Collections link on the library homepage.

Three library interns had a hand in making the collection available. Alex Castro did a lot of technical work, transcribed the letters, and designed the initial website. Marissa Pineda assisted with scanning. Daniel Sexton worked on the project as an archives employee and then as an intern.

With a small grant from the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center, Asher was able to employ Daniel, a history major, to assist him. Drawing on his research skills and with the help of Interlibrary Loan, Daniel located a number of documents that authenticated the letters. He then wrote a brief article that provided contextual and biographical information on the letters and its author. That article can be viewed on the website. In the fall, while he was employed as an intern, Daniel continued his research, developing an extensive, annotated resource list. Daniel also scanned letters, edited transcriptions and finalized the web design.

Research Corner brings innovation to library instruction

Librarians Johanna Alexander and Sarah Fay Philips have been working since Spring 2008 to design a new instruction and outreach space in the library. They have turned a former Government Document processing room into the Library’s new Research Corner, a dynamic space with exciting technology for librarians to work with students.

In addition to the new 24” workstations, the SmartBoard used for instruction is an interactive white board that provides an intimate and engaging learning environment. All of the librarians have received training on teaching with the new technology and will be conducting orientations or research sessions in the Research Corner this quarter.

Since opening the Research Corner for the start of Winter Quarter, there have been classes offered for students on topics...
Intern finds opportunity at conference
Taarna Long, one of the 2008-2009 Library Interns, had an opportunity to attend the California Library Association conference this year in San Jose.

A Reflection on the California Library Association Conference
by Taarna Long

This last November I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the 2008 California Library Association (CLA) Conference in San Jose and I found the experience to be very valuable. With a specialization in children’s literature already in mind and the goal of becoming a high school librarian, I set out with a mission to find out more about my area of interest.

The CLA conference was a close knit affair with many opportunities to meet fellow librarians-in-training and librarians. Networking was greatly emphasized in a conference orientation I attended.

I participated in socializing and networking and met a librarian who provided me with some valuable information on not just high school librarianship but also the teen specialization of a public library. She worked in a joint high school/public library and, luckily for me, much of what she spoke about tied in well to the two workshops I had previously attended.

The first workshop was entitled “Thinking Creatively about Teen Spaces in Libraries.” This workshop brought up some ideas about making teens more involved in libraries and how this is beneficial to both the teen and the library. Along the same vein, the second workshop I attended was “Beyond the Rainbow Canon: Books and Outreach for LGBT Teens.” It dealt with issues particular to these teens and how to make your library a haven for them.

In addition to the networking and workshops, the conference also offered a look at the latest in library technology. The most fascinating of which I found to be portable audio books and two different automated checkout systems.

Overall, the conference offered me some great insights into youth librarianship and many other aspects of the profession. I’m glad that I was afforded the opportunity to attend and gain valuable experience to help me on my path to a career as a high school librarian.

Letters (continued from page 1)
The letters and a portrait were donated to the archives by Fred Gifford and George Bertram Davis of Bakersfield. The originals are safely preserved in archival boxes in a light-free, acid-free environment, sheathed in non-reactive, archival plastic and acid-free paper.

George Berry Davis was an Iowa farmer who enlisted in the Army and fought in a number of battles in Arkansas, Missouri and Mississippi, including Pea Ridge, a bloody skirmish that left 6,000 men dead on the battlefield. The letters reveal stoic composure in the face of disease, violence, injury, and death. His letters end shortly before his capture. He was a survivor of Andersonville, a notorious Confederate prison, where 13,000 imprisoned Union soldiers perished. Davis lived until 1880.

Research Corner (continued from page 1)
ranging from “Learning Microsoft Word 2007” to “Developing a Literature Review” as well as library orientations for Geology and Music students and student athletes. From the Walter W. Stiern Library homepage, you can visit the Research Corner website. Check out the Research Corner website (www.csusb.edu/library/rcindex.htm) to see the other sessions that the Library will be offering to students this quarter including: “How to Use Citation Style Guides” and “Finding the full text of scholarly articles.” The 2008-2009 Library Interns, Daniel Sexton and Taarna Long, have worked with the librarians in developing the web site as well as other resources for the Research Corner.

The Library has received enthusiastic responses from students interested in taking advantage of personal instruction from a librarian. This initial quarter will provide librarians with information about which sessions prove the most popular and how best to present information in smaller settings. The library will add additional sessions to expand the opportunities for students, as well as offer refresher courses to faculty.

Contact Librarian Sarah Fay Philips (sphilips@csusb.edu), if you are interested in more information about the services offered at the Research Corner in WSL 107.
Stiern Library continues to support distance students

The Stiern Library has always worked to support CSUB students. However, the need to provide services for students located more than 90 miles from CSUB offers some specific challenges that the Library continues to work to meet. The Library has staff located at CSUB and a Librarian at the CSUB-AV distance site dedicated to meeting students’ needs. CSUB-AV students receive on-site reference help and instruction. They are also able to work via telephone and email with CSUB Subject Specialist Librarians in research related to their majors.

Distance students are able to access articles from the many electronic research databases that CSUB provides. This is important to support the variety of graduate and bachelors degrees that CSUB students are pursuing from a distance. At CSUB-AV, degree programs include such diverse majors as Education, English, and Nursing. CSUB-AV Business major Janet Pierson stated that “if it were not for the databases and the librarian’s help, I wouldn’t have been able to finish my report for my business class and be able to graduate this spring.”

Additionally, CSUB-AV students request articles and books from the Stiern Library and through Interlibrary Loan Request. Books requested from the Stiern Library are processed by CSUB distance services staff and shipped via courier to students at the CSUB-AV site usually within two business days. In the first four weeks of Winter Quarter 2009 CSUB-AV students requested more than 200 books!

CSUB-AV Psychology professor, Dr. Chuck Tate, noted that “my students are pleased with how fast they get information.”

Students located at a distance from CSUB comprise more than ten percent of the total CSUB population. Despite a harsh budgetary climate, the need to support all CSUB students including students located at a distance challenges the Library to find a variety of ways to offer this necessary research support.

The Walter W. Stiern Library Associates • Individual Membership Response Form

Please complete the form. Make checks payable to the Cal State Bakersfield Foundation and return with the completed form. Contributions are tax-deductible as provided by law. Membership covers one year from the date of contribution.

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☐ Associate - $100
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Please use the form of your name as you wish it to appear on bookplates, Library publications, and the Community Access Card. Only the named card holder will be able to use the card. The Community Access Card is not available to anyone under 18 years of age.

(for Community Access Card and/or credit card payment)

Please send completed form to:
The Stiern Library Associates, Walter W. Stiern Library
California State University, Bakersfield
60 LIB, 9001 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, California 93311-1022
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For more information about the Stiern Library Associates, please call the Director of Libraries at 654-3042.