“FIRST IMPRESSIONS”

Our last newsletter announced my hire as the new director of the Wittliff Collections but in some ways it was, quite literally, premature. Although I had already been to the Wittliff several times over the years, first as a visitor to many exhibitions and then formally as a job candidate, I hadn’t yet worked here a day and I could only say how excited and honored I was.

Two days before I officially started I came to the Wittliff’s Open House, which was a terrific way to introduce myself to lots of fans of the Collections as well as to those who were walking in for the first time. There, I had the opportunity to both share what I already loved about the place as well as learn from others what makes it so special to them. I was also able to do this on a much grander scale at our Silver Anniversary Gala, held at the Four Seasons in Austin in November. Despite the differences between the events, however, the feelings expressed were identical.

A cherished phrase of ours, reflected in the gala’s theme, is “the Spirit of Place,” which serves as our guiding light as we collect, preserve and promote the study and appreciation of our unique and enduring artistic and cultural heritage. But the phrase means even more than that, and when you visit us you’ll find that it also reflects the spirit of our place, the Wittliff Collections.

When you walk into our space you are received by an aesthetic that is decisively different from the university library that supports us—it’s akin to stumbling upon an undiscovered plaza and having the opportunity to explore the culture and history of the area. The Wittliff’s architecture and design were inspired by the rich, diverse cultural heritage of the Southwestern United States, and the space’s warm, welcoming atmosphere is enhanced by the collection’s unique collection of objects and works of art. The result is a place that fosters the study and contemplation of unique and precious literary, photographic, and other artistic works that spring from and respond to our part of the world.

I understood and appreciated much of this before I began as director, but I didn’t really know much about the people who sustain and support the organization and its mission—the staff. As our physical environment receives the public on a human scale, it’s our staff that truly brings that welcoming spirit alive.

Since the Wittliff’s at their core, are about storytelling, I will give one example I hope illustrates my point. Shortly after Thanksgiving we experienced a power failure in the Alkek Library, affecting our side of the building and spanning all floors. The situation lasted for a little more than a week, and we were displaced from our offices to several different parts of the building that still had power. In the face of these difficulties the Wittliff staff was remarkably resilient. We relocated the reading rooms, operating the space with natural light so students and researchers could resume their studies; we continued to accept visitors to our Lonesome Dove exhibition (where the lights were still working); and we even provided tours of our darkened photography and literary exhibitions by flashlight. For me this first impression of the staff, charmingly rallying together under pressure, was truly inspirational. It’s good to be here. *

—DAVID L. COLEMAN
Director, The Wittliff Collections

THANKS TO THE STILL WATER FOUNDATION, you have an opportunity to double your donation when you make a gift to the Wittliff Collections this year.

The foundation has generously awarded the Collections a $100,000 challenge grant to support the purchase of a significant 13,000-volume library of Texas historical materials by tenured New Mexico historian MARC SIMMONS. The grant is contingent on our ability to raise a matching $100,000 by the end of 2012. PLEASE CONSIDER PARTICIPATING IN THE CHALLENGE. The combined $200,000 from our match will go a long way toward raising the $310,000 needed to purchase the Simmons library.

The author of some 45 books, Marc Simmons began donating his papers to the Wittliff several years ago, and he signed an agreement last year to sell his extraordinary library to us. With little duplication, the acquisition will double the Wittliff’s southwestern Collections book holdings and substantially enhance research opportunities.

The Wittliff became interested in Simmons several years ago because his archive contains not only his own material on the Southwest, but also documentation of close friendships with a number of prominent southwestern writers, including Tony Hillerman, Elmer Kelton, Edward Abbey, and John Nichols, and artists such as Jess Cisneros. One example of the importance of the Simmons library relates to Cormac McCarthy—whose major archive is held by the Wittliff McCarthy relied on some specific books for his research in writing the novel Blood Meridian. Or the Evening Redness in the West. Simmons has acquired all of them.

Many of the other subjects come straight out of J. Frank Dobie’s Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest: the Santa Fe Trail, Indian culture, Spanish Colonial presence, women pioneers, medicine, forts, guns, wildlife, horses, art, stagecoaches, cowboy songs, and nature. Simmons was also a great friend of Jack Schaefer, the author of Shane, who gave Simmons dozens of signed copies of foreign editions of his books in every language from Thai to Egyptian. Simmons also has many important individual collections within his library, including a large Kit Carson collection as well as a George Custer photography album with early images and tintypes. Some 70 books in his library are dedicated to the Apache Indians. There are many rare books, and about 400 Spanish-language books on the American Southwest originally published in Mexico and Spain.

Simmons’ specialty is Spanish Colonial history, and for his work in that area the King of Spain knighted him in 1990. What most people find unusual is that Simmons lives without electricity or running water—he likes to spend his days in the same deep rhythms as the people he writes about did in previous centuries. Simmons is a farrier and an expert mule packer, and he has taken several horseback journeys across the southwestern landscape. He even visited the land he writes about.

In 1963, Simmons built his first adobe house near Santa Fe. Since then he has expanded his holdings from one to 240 acres. The land was once home to the San Marcus Indians, a heritage Simmons cherishes as he was essentially adopted into that Indian group as a boy and spent several summers living with them. Simmons’ library will provide funds to ensure the permanent preservation and conservation of his books and multiple generations to experience and appreciate. Our sincere thanks to the Still Water Foundation for giving us this challenge, and for their support in bringing this important library to Texas.

Don’t miss this opportunity to DOUBLE YOUR DONATION! Every dollar counts. Thank you! *

Use the newsletter envelope provided, or contact Beverly Fondon Scott at 512.245.0058 or befo@utexas.edu for more information. Or, visit the “Support” section of the Wittliff website for details.

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION to the wittliff collections

Marc Simmons of New Mexico:
New Mexico

Marc Simmons of New Mexico:
Copyright Notice
KATE BREKEY and WITTLIFFS make significant gifts

OUR DEEPEST THANKS go to Kate Breakey and to Bill and Sally Wittliff for generously donating near-ly 300 photographs in 2011.

Breakey, who is best known for her Small Deaths series of large-scale, richly hand-colored photographs of birds, flowers, animals and insects, donated over 165 images. Mostly from her Las Sombras series, these new pic-tures are made using the camera-less photogram technique. Working solely in the darkness, Breakey makes con-tact prints of deceased animals that memorialize their haunting shadows. She then covers the photographic paper with translucent golden paint and seizes it on for a Victorian look.

The Wittliffs have a number of photographs on permanent loan to the Collections, and they formally donated nearly 200 photographs by artists Keith Carter and Kate Breakey.

The donation includes 42 photographs by Kate Breakey, mainly from her Small Deaths series, and 140 toned silver gelatin prints by Keith Carter. Carter is an internationally recognized artist and educator who holds the endowed Wallass Chair of Art at Lamar University. 

once between 1972 and 1988, the prints by Carter include portraits and images of children and animals. Of special note is Carter’s first published photograph, Girl with Basket, from 1972.

The Wittliff includes the world’s largest Keith Carter collection and archives—over 1,200 images—as well as the major holding of Kate Breakey’s photograph.Arts supported by the Wittliff—photographs, paintings, prints, drawings, letters and notes—total over 300,000 items.

THE SPIRIT OF PLACE

25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA raises more than $350,000

Funds generated by the gala support the acquisition and preserva-tion activities of the Collections. We are working to grow our major archive of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Cormac McCarthy and our holdings of work by five photographers—most of whose major collections are housed at the Wittliff. Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Kate Breakey, Keith Carter, Graciela Iturbide, and Marco Antonio Cruz.

Funds will also be used to support conservation work on the Buck Winn Castle Ranching mural. To accomplish these first two goals, we need to generate approximately $4 million.

We’re also working to raise $310,000 to acquire the 13,000-volume library of one of the foremost authors and historians of the Southwest, Marc Simmons. We’re off to a great start thanks to the Still Water Foundation, which awarded the Wittliff a generous $100,000 challenge grant toward the Simmons Library purchase (see p. 3).

Our special thanks again to Media Sponsor, Texas Monthly, and our Platinum Sponsors: AT&T, Eleanor Crook, Cinda Ferguson, H-E-B, Gloria and Bruce Ingram / Bonnie and Ed Longscope / Deedle and John Roberts / Cathy Supple / Bonnie and Lawrence Tilton, and Bill and Sally Wittliff.

We appreciate all the sponsors and donors who made the evening possible and extend our deepest grati-tude to everyone who donated items to what turned out to be a spectacular silent auction (see sidebar, left), which brought in more than $100,000 of the total raised. Thank you! *

CONGRATULATIONS, STEVE DAVIS!

We are excited to announce that Twelve Publishing is releasing the next book by Wittliff Collections curator, Steven L. Davis. He and Witt-liff donor Bill Minutaglio are co-writ-ing Dallas 1963, a riveting account of how a group of larger-than-life indi-viduals and events came together to become infamous for the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The book is sched-uled for release in the fall of 2013.

Dallas 1963 follows through three turbulent years, begin-ning with the Kennedy election in November 1960 and ending on November 22, 1963. A conspiracy that became infamous for the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The book is scheduled for release in the fall of 2013.

Dallas 1963 is unique among treatments of the assassination,” said Carly Goodstein, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Twelve/Hackett Book Group. “Through the biography of a city, the authors present a clear, cinematic and revelatory history of the twentieth century’s most significant event. So forget the shadowy conspiracies—no need to look no further than Dallas. It was all the whole time, justbrewing, waiting.”

Davis is the author of two critically praised books on Texas culture, including Texas Literary Outlaws: Six Writers in the Sixties and Beyond. His writing has appeared in Texas Monthly and the Texas Observer.

Minutaglio’s work has appeared in the New York Times, Esquire, Texas Monthly, and Newsweek, among other publications, and he has written for several Texas newspapers. His critically acclaimed books include biographies of George W. Bush, Molly Ivins and Alberto Gonzales, and a narrative retelling of the greatest industrial dis-aster in U.S. history (see p. 15). Both Minutaglio and Davis are members of the Texas Institute of Letters.

Twelve, an imprint of Grand Central Publishing/Hackett Book Group, was established with the objec-tive of publishing no more than 12 books a year, singular works of fiction and nonfiction by authors who have a unique perspective and compelling authority—works that explain our culture, that illuminate, inspire, pro-voke, and entertain. *

NEW & NOTEWORTHY PHOTOGRAPHERS

Selected books published during in 2011 by artists who worked in the Wittliff Collections. NO copy made / There Is No One by Graciela Iturbide (La Fabraca) From Uncertain to Blue Photographs by Keith Carter (University of Texas Press)


Rick Riordan’s World of Myth and Mystery

Bestselling author and literary superstar Rick Riordan, a native of San Antonio, has inspired millions of children across the globe to learn about ancient mythology. Riordan has also brought his hometown to life in his works of award-winning mystery novels for adults.

In recognition of Riordan’s distinctive achievements and his inspirational impact on young readers, the Wittliff Collections are presenting a special exhibition from their permanent holdings, Rick Riordan’s World of Myth & Mystery.

The exhibition showcases numerous artifacts from Riordan’s literary papers—which the author has been generously donating to the Wittliff since 2004. The result is a vivid look behind-the-scenes look at Riordan’s life and work.

What’s especially interesting about Riordan’s archive,” said exhibition curator Steve Davis, “is that you gain a really deep understanding of his work process: how his life as a middle-school teacher prepared him to write for children; how he gave up television in order to find time to write; and most important, how he is so adept at drawing from real-life and transmitting those episodes, spinning them into literary gold. Riordan, unlike many authors, is quite open about the real-life inspirations for his work, and I think fans will find it fascinating to see them revealed in this exhibition.”

Rick Riordan World of Myth & Mystery makes it clear that Riordan was interested in writing from a very early age. Among the items on display is his early manuscript, “Appointment with an Archangel,” which he completed at age thirteen. Next to that is a copy of the rejection letter he received after submitting the story to Asimov’s Science Fiction magazine. While that letter is extremely kind and solicitous, Riordan said that it left him so devastated that he didn’t write again for another year.

Riordan also received a pile of rejection letters before his first novel, Big Red Tequila, was published. But once the book appeared it won three major mystery awards and established Riordan as a major author. The exhibition highlights many facets of Riordan’s life as a mystery writer, including his awards, his snapshots taken of various San Antonio locations, and an elaborately constructed—and very detailed—plot map that he created to chart the action in his novel. Riordan burst into international fame in 2005 as the author of the New York Times #1 bestseller The Lightning Thief, the first book in his Percy Jackson and the Olympians series for young adults. This is the book that turned millions of kids on to Greek mythology. The exhibition features Riordan’s original manuscript for the book, his hand-drawn map of Camp Half-Blood, his essay describing how the series came into being, foreign editions of Riordan’s novels from many nations, and the actual sword, “Riptide,” used in the film adaptation of The Lightning Thief.

Also on display are manuscript and marketing materials for all of Riordan’s series for young readers, including the Kane Chronicles and the Heroes of Olympus. Samples from a few of the thousands of letters he has received from schoolchildren are also featured, testifying to the enormous impact Riordan has had across the nation and beyond.

A special section of the exhibition focuses on Riordan’s celebrated career as a teacher. Riordan taught middle school English and Social Studies for 15 years before he retired to concentrate on his writing full time. In 2002, Saint Mary’s Hall in San Antonio honored him with the school’s first ever “Master Teacher” award. On display is information about that award, along with photos of Riordan in the classroom and a commemorative book given to him by the students of his final class taught.

The Wittliff Collections host Rick Riordan for a public reading and audience Q&A. Riordan’s most recent publications include two from his Egyptian mythology series: The Kane Chronicles Survival Guide and The Serpent’s Shadow (Book Two of the Kane Chronicles), which is due to be released on May 1, 2012. Specifics regarding Riordan’s appearance are shaping up—please watch the Events page on our website for details, including TICKET information.
JESSE HERRERA

Born in Monterrey, Mexico, Jesse Herrera earned his B.F.A. in 1975 in Art and Design from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an M.F.A in photojournalism from the University of Texas at Austin in 1990. Herrera began his photography career in Chicago as a corporate photographer, then he relocated to Austin in 1978 where he worked as a staff photographer for several state agencies before retiring in 2004. He also taught photography at Laguna Gloria Art School from 1990 to 2009. Herrera documents the people and folkloric traditions of remote areas of Mexico, his native homeland. His recent subjects include religious celebrations in Spain and Guatemala, which parallel and contrast those in Mexico. Herrera's photographs have been featured in various journals and books: Borderlands, Texas Poetry Review, and Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain (Princeton University Press, 1998) are two of the most recent publications featuring his imagery.
was a very special evening at the Wittliff Collections, as a crowd of over 200 people came out for the panel discussion, Texas Literary Life. At the opening of the program, attendees were introduced to Dr. David Coleman, the new director of the Wittliff, who welcomed the audience. One of Coleman’s first undertakings as director was to introduce the panel’s moderator, Elizabeth Crook. Award-winning author of The Night Journal and other historical novels, Crook began donating her papers to the Collections in 1995.

Texas Literary Life marked a reunion of Crook and two other remarkable members of the Wittliff’s Texas Writers Collections family: Sarah Bird and Stephen Harrigan. The authors discussed a broad range of topics, including the inspiration behind their work, their ways of storytelling, and why they chose to write those particular stories.

In response, Harrigan broke from format to ask Crook about her own methods of writing. Crook revealed she is currently working on a novel concerning the Charles Whitman shootings at UT Austin in 1966, and she replied to Harrigan’s question by saying, “When I’m writing, there is a sense of panic at the end of every chapter because I think, ‘Oh something’s got to happen! Here’s that blank chapter starting. What are they going to say? What are they going to do? I have no idea.’”

Crook further remarked that each of these three writers goes through a very different process when shaping a story. This conversation triggered Crook to ask Bird, “How much of your initial concept of the book is what the book becomes?”

“This is an interesting thing for me to talk about in the company of Steve Harrigan and Bill Wittliff,” replied Bird, “because they were very formative in how I changed my way of doing this.” Bird recognized that her experience with screenwriting had greatly influenced her craft of writing novels.

Stephen Harrigan weighed in with his perspective on the topic by stating, “I think it’s deeper than that for me, in that I’ve always liked stories. I’ve always liked literature or fiction, or whatever with a plot… I just want someone to tell me a story… I just like a plain story.”

Following the program, the trio answered questions from the audience and stayed to meet their fans and sign copies of their novels.

McCarthy Scholar illuminates the research process

LAST FALL, the Wittliff Collections were pleased to host University of Hull doctoral candidate, ROB McINROY, for an extended visit to research the Cormac McCarthy Papers. McInroy was awarded a travel grant from the European Association for American Studies to conduct his studies at the Collections, and he spent the better part of October in our reading room.

Scholars from Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Israel, and Portugal, as well as several from the United Kingdom, have made the trek to study the McCarthy collection.

McInroy’s primary area of interest is the progression of McCarthy’s thought through his career. He states, “In earlier works, [McCarthy] explores an interest in society from the perspective of man in the City of Man. As his career develops, though, he begins to consider the world from the viewpoint of being a means (or not) of ascent to the City of God. In other words, there is a sense, as his career has progressed, that he has become increasingly concerned with metaphysical issues of natural theology. This trend can be seen in The Border Trilogy, most notably in its second novel, The Crossing, and I chose this novel, therefore, as the basis of my principal research, taking up the first week and a half of my studies.”

Since opening to research in the summer of 2009, the Cormac McCarthy Papers remain the Wittliff’s most heavily accessed archive—and certainly the one that has generated the most interest among the international community. Scholars from Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Israel, and Portugal, as well as several from the United Kingdom, have made the trek to San Marcos, Texas, to study the McCarthy collection. As McInroy points out “for a McCarthy researcher, access to the archive is essential.”

For students and others considering researching archives at the Wittliff, McInroy generously offers some tips:

• Be clear in advance what you wish to research, or you will become overwhelmed by the material available; however, be prepared to follow a line of inquiry if it presents itself.
• Make clear notes of WHY you are copying or annotating something; it will be obvious to you at the time, but later, once you have read three or four further drafts of the same material, you may find you have forgotten the original point you wished to draw out.
• Be prepared to have to keep going back to check and re-check things when new points of investigation emerge. Frequently this may involve returning to drafts you have previously finished with.
• Where the author dates individual pages of the manuscript (as McCarthy frequently does), make a note on any pages from which you are transcribing. Dating evidence can be invaluable later on, for working out the order of different drafts.
• Specifically related to McCarthy, be aware that within individual drafts there are, at times, three or four different sub-drafts interspersed. Again, use whatever dating evidence McCarthy provides to help establish the timeframes.

If you are planning a visit to research the McCarthy Papers or any of our writers’ archives, we strongly encourage you to contact the archives staff in advance so they can assist in your preparations. We hope to see you soon.
s ANTONIO COLLECTOR
SUSAN TOOMEY FROST
generously donated her comprehensive collection of HUGO BREHME’s work to the Witte Museum’s collection in 2000, including more than 1,800 postcards and other photographs as well as an extensive collection of books, magazine, and ephemera. Her book, *Timeless Mexico: The Photographs of Hugo Brehme*, is new in the Witte’s Southwestern & Mexican Photography series with UT Press. Series editor Bill Witteff designed the book with Ellen McKee. The foreword is by art historian Stella de Sá Rego, and Susan Frost wrote two essays. More than 120 of Brehme’s pieces are on view at the Witte Museum through August 5th in an exhibition curated by Carla Ellard with assistance from Ken Fontenot.

SAN ANTONIO COLLECTOR
SUSAN TOOMEY FROST

In researching the history of tile making in San Antonio, I reasoned that vintage photographs of tiles could help me solve a puzzle. Which of the tiles installed in San Antonio were made locally, and which were made in Mexico or elsewhere? If I found a specific design pictured in a vintage postcard from Mexico, for example, I could be assured that the same tile was made in San Antonio. Soon I was buying images that didn’t picture tiles. Certain photographs stood out because of the inherent beauty of their subject matter and the quality of their execution. I began noticing that many of the better images were shot by Hugo Brehme, whose portraits can be expressive and full of emotion. When he does, however, the effect is striking and reveals the empathy Brehme must have felt for the Mexican people, particularly those who labored hard to make their living. Brehme’s portraits can be expressive and full of life. While he is best known for his scenic landscapes and portraits this lesser-recognized side.

Hugo Brehme (1882–1954) arrived in Mexico in 1908 with his German born wife, Wilhelmine. They had married in Paris as a city of palaces, while the majority of Mexico’s oppressed citizens were on the verge of starvation. The new nation no longer wished to look to Europe, but in its emerging national self-recognition, preferred to focus inward with pride. The new nationalism celebrated Mexico’s natural beauty, its indigenous heritage, and its pyramids and archaeological artifacts. Brehme created indelible images that reinforced Mexico’s identity and the search for its roots.

Throughout his published work, Brehme typically included human figures in the compositions to give a sense of size or perspective. He usually placed human subjects at a distance and seldom shot close-ups. By studying series of images taken at the same location and at the same time, we gain insight into how Brehme set up his shots, his method of composing, the elements of a scene, and the large differences even slight changes can produce in the making of the original negative and its printing.

Brehme rarely shows that he is emotionally involved with persons he photographed. When he does, however, the effect is striking and reveals the empathy Brehme must have felt for the Mexican people, particularly those who labored hard to make their living. Brehme’s portraits can be expressive and full of life. While he is best known for his scenic landscapes and portraits this lesser-recognized side.

—SUSAN TOOMEY FROST, from *Timeless Mexico*

Brehme did not consider himself a documentarian or news photographer but represented himself as an “artistic photographer.” His early photographs adhered to the academic style of Pictorialism, which dominated aesthetic taste in the late nineteenth century. The movement’s philosophy reflected an effort to elevate photography as a fine art form, making it equal to painting and drawing. In Photography an Art! is not only the title of a late nineteenth-century book but is also a question that continues to be debated today.

The 1910 upheaval in Mexico was profound. Porfirio Díaz’s regime had been Eurocentric, modeling its capital on Paris as a city of palaces, while the majority of Mexico’s oppressed citizens were on the verge of starvation. The new nation no longer wished to look to Europe, but in its emerging national self-recognition, preferred to focus inward with pride. The new nationalism celebrated Mexico’s natural beauty, its indigenous heritage, and its pyramids and archaeological artifacts. Brehme created indelible images that reinforced Mexico’s identity and the search for its roots.

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—SUSAN TOOMEY FROST, from *Timeless Mexico*
recent ACQUISITIONS

the SOUTHWESTERN WRITERS COLLECTION

Currently comprises over 6,875 linear feet of materials from the regions authors, screenwriters, and songwriters. Represented here are archives additions from August through December 2011. Not listed are the numerous gifts of books, magazines, films, CDs, and other supplementary materials. The success of this collection depends on the generous support of our donors. Thank you! * The New York Times described the short stories of Rick Demarinis as “tantalizing, if often brooding, artistry.” His archive traces his writing process through drafts, notes, and correspondence, and includes material relating to The Burning Women of Far City, Lovely Monster, The Martian’s Apprentice, Under the Wheat, and other novels and screenplays. * A significant addition to the Jim Hightower archive includes show commentaries, Lowdown newsletters, videos interviews, speeches, and artifacts. [Gift of Hightower] * Two gifts of correspondence and photographs relating to Mary Gray Hughes contribute to her literary archive. [Gifts of Benjamin Acosta Hughes & James Killman] * The in-depth research Bill Minutaglio conducted for his 2003 book, City on Fire, about the 1947 freigher explosion that killed 600 people and devastated Texas City (see p. 15) is revealed in the interviews, research files, and drafts that comprise this addition to his papers. Also included is his research and drafts for his 2010 biography, Molly Ivins: A Rebel Life. [Gift of Minutaglio] * Rick Riordan’s popular Percy Jackson & the Olympians series has been translated into dozens of languages, and he recently added to his archive over 140 foreign-edition books and audio books from Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Finland, Germany, Korea, Thailand, and many other countries. [Gift of Riordan] * An addition to the Rosen-Greens archive includes business ledgers, publications relating to Tom Lea, photographs, and correspondence that document the bookstores role in San Antonio’s literary community [Gift of Camille Rosengren] * September 2010 saw the end of the acclaimed KLUR show Texas Monthly Tales featuring TEXAS MONTHLY editor Evan Smith. In eight seasons, Smith interviewed over 200 newsmakers such as Hillary Clinton, Lytton Loyd, Salman Rushdie, and John Sayles, as well as many artists represented in the Wittliff including Elizabeth Creeks, Stephen Harrigan, Rick Riordan, and Bud Shure. DVDs of the full run of the show are available for viewing at the Collections [Gift of Texas Monthly]. * We would also like to thank the following for donating additional materials to their papers: Judy Alter, Celia Morris, Dick Reavis, Joyce Gibson Roach, and Bill & Sally Wittliff.

from the ARCHIVES

ON THE MORNING of April 16, 1947, in Texas City, Texas, an ocean freigher carrying over two thousand tons of ammonium nitrate fertilizer exploded offshore, killing hundreds of people and injuring thousands. Hours later, a second freigher carrying the same explosive fertilizer caught fire nearby and emitted a second massive blast. The explosions damaged or completely destroyed homes and businesses, shattered windows up to ten miles away, and left the city ablaze.

This catastrophe became known as the greatest industrial tragedy in United States history. The anguish of the Texas City disaster continued long after the explosions, culminating in the survivors launching the first-ever class-action lawsuit against the United States government.

In City on Fire: The Forgotten Disaster That Devastated a Town and Ignited a Landmark Legal Battle, Bill Minutaglio traces the experiences of the individuals who survived and sacrificed on that shocking day. Through interviews, oral histories, trial transcripts, congressional committee hearings, reports, and newspaper articles, Minutaglio reconstructs the events that lead up to the disaster at Texas City and the resulting lawsuit. Detailed interviews vividly reveal how spectators gathered near the burning freigher to watch the smoke, unaware of the dangerous cargo it carried and the impending threat to their lives.

After the initial explosion, the ordinary citizens of Texas City became extraordinary heroes as they collected the dead, assisted the injured, and helped their neighbors, friends, and families. City on Fire serves to remind the world of the sacrifices made by the people of Texas City and of the deadly consequences of paying insufficient attention to warning signs and sacrificing pre-catastrophic safety measures.

In 2011 Minutaglio donated the material from his years of extensive investigation for City on Fire to the Wittliff Collections. Now researchers, students, and visitors can view for themselves the stories of the survivors, see the photographs, read the newspaper articles, and trace the legal history through court documents in order to better understand the extent the Texas City disaster affected a community and the nation.

A clinical professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin, Bill Minutaglio has written for numerous publications and received multiple awards for his work. He began donating materials to the Wittliff Collections in 2007, and in addition to those for City on Fire, his papers include research materials and drafts for several of his published books. Other books he has contributed include The Blas: A Journey to the Soul of Black Texas (published in the Wittliff’s Southwestern Writers Collections series); Molly Ivins: A Rebel Life; The President’s Counselor: The Rise to Power of Alberto Gonzales; First Son: George W. Bush and the Bush Dynasty; and Locker Room Muscle: True Tales of Supervisions in Sports, and in The Hidden City: Oak Cliff Texas.

exhibitions & events CALENDAR

exhibitions

JAN 23 – JULY 13, 2012 RICK RIORDAN’S WORLD OF MYTH AND MYSTERY Rick Riordan is the bestselling author of the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series—plus several other young-adult series—as well as the multi-award-winning Teo Naranjo mystery series for adults. On view from the Wittliff’s Rick Riordan Collection are his early journals, unpublished manuscripts, and first rejection letter (received as an eighth grader), story ideas, materials that illuminate his writing process, and the original sword, “Repulsa,” used in the 2010 film adaptation of The Lightning Thief (pp. 6–7)

JAN 23 – AUG 5, 2012 FACE TO FACE: Portraits from the Photography Collection More than 50 portraits by 33 photographers bring viewers face-to-face with a study in humanity—from the famous to the homeless (front cover & p. 12)

March

24 TIMELES MEXICO Reception & Book Party celebrates the exhibition based on the newest book in the Wittliff’s photography series with UT Press, Timeliness Mexico: The Photographs of Hugo Brehme. Susan Teomey Frost—a Brehme expert and the book’s author—will be guest speaker, along with Dennis Brehme, grandson of Hugo Brehme. 7:00 pm Reception / 7:30 pm Program & Book Signing. Books will be for sale during the event. Attendees are asked to RSVP to swatst@flocollections.txstate.edu

28 JIM KIMMEL, professor of geography at Texas State, discusses Exploring the Bruce River: From Beginning to End, his new book with photographs by his wife, Jerry Toucheieme Kimmel. Book signing to follow. 4:00 pm

April

5 LOUISE EIDRICH reads for the English Department’s TKL/KAP Series. Book signing and Q&A to follow. 3:30 pm

17 TEXAS STATE’S MFA STUDENTS read from their poetry and fiction. 3:00 pm

May

2 CYRUS CASSEL, professor of English at Texas State, reads from his fifth and latest book of poems, The Crossed-Out Sonnet. Book reading and Q&A to follow. 3:30 pm

11 RICK RIORDAN visits for a reading and Q&A to celebrate the World of Myth and Mystery exhibition from his archive. (pp. 6–7) Watch our website’s Events page for details on TICKETS.

accommodations

If you require accommodations due to a disability in order to participate, please call 512.245.2133 at least 72 hours in advance of the event for assistance.

events

March

24 TIMELES MEXICO Reception & Book Party celebrates the exhibition based on the newest book in the Wittliff’s photography series with UT Press, Timeliness Mexico: The Photographs of Hugo Brehme. Susan Teomey Frost—a Brehme expert and the book’s author—will be guest speaker, along with Dennis Brehme, grandson of Hugo Brehme. 7:00 pm Reception / 7:30 pm Program & Book Signing. Books will be for sale during the event. Attendees are asked to RSVP to swatst@flocollections.txstate.edu

28 JIM KIMMEL, professor of geography at Texas State, discusses Exploring the Bruce River: From Beginning to End, his new book with photographs by his wife, Jerry Toucheieme Kimmel. Book signing to follow. 4:00 pm

April

5 LOUISE EIDRICH reads for the English Department’s TKL/KAP Series. Book signing and Q&A to follow. 3:30 pm

17 TEXAS STATE’S MFA STUDENTS read from their poetry and fiction. 3:00 pm