Note from the Archives Manager

Hello Mount Community,

It’s hard to believe that the academic year is quickly drawing to a close. But time flies when you’re having fun, and we certainly did this year! Our fun has included:

- 90+ hours of student research conducted by 50 different students
- 360+ hours of work completed by 4 student interns
- 75+ information requests answered
- 6 exhibits, including 1 virtual
- 1 campus wide scavenger hunt

Several of these figures will continue to rise over the next two weeks, and I will provide a full report of our 2016-2017 AY statistics in the next edition.

I want to deeply thank the Mount community for your continued and enthusiastic support of the archives, without which all of the above figures would not be possible. It was a privilege to join the staff full-time as Archives Manager this year. I look forward continuing to serve the Mount community as we together explore and preserve the history of our Mountain home.

Jessica Whitmore
Spies on the Mountain

Leslie Thompson grew up in Galveston, Texas and journeyed to Maryland to begin studying at Mount St. Mary’s Prep in 1851. Thompson would graduate from the Prep School in 1854 and continue his studies at the College until 1856.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Thompson joined the 1st Texas Infantry. Another Mountie and former classmate of Thompson’s was part of his brigade as well. John B. Elliot attended Mount St. Mary’s Prep from 1852-1857 and then attended the College from 1857-1858.

In 1875, Thompson saw an article in the New York Herald about commencement at Mount St. Mary’s, and it inspired him to write to college president, Rev. John McCaffrey. Thompson writes that “the happiest days of my boyhood were passed there—the “Mountain” I look upon as my home.”

He then describes his espionage adventure at the Mount:

I was at Gettysburg on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of July 1863 – I was also at the Mountain. I saw the dear old Mountain—the loved old College. I saw you—but you did not see me. I wore the grey—I was in and among the Federals—and I dared not disclose myself. I drank from the fountains in the back Terrace, and knelt in the Mountain Church.

I did so long to make myself known to you, but my orders were imperative—I was spying, scouting. Do you remember John B. Elliot, of San Antonio? He was of my party, and together we went all over the College grounds; we visited Claire Vaux. We went all through the Yankee Army, talked with their generals, ate with their soldiers, and carried dispatches for General Meade, which we faithfully handed to our General Lee.

Thompson then describes how the Mount impacted his faith and spiritual journey:

Father, I shall never be able to thank you, Father McCloskey, dear old Father Xaupi and others at the dear old Mountain for the care you took to my religious education. I have not been a practicing Catholic (to my shame, be it spoken), but I have preserved my faith...The reverence and respect I have for the Priesthood were instilled into me by yourself. Whatever I am, or have been, whatever good I have been able to accomplish, whatever learning I have I owe, reverend Father, under God to you.

He concludes his letter:

Earnestly requesting your prayers for me and mine, and hoping that God will grant you many years yet of usefulness, and that dying your death will be as one beloved of God, permit me reverend and dear Father to subscribe myself devotedly yours,

Leslie Thompson,
Box 396
Galveston, Texas
Were you one of the 70,000 people who viewed this article on our Facebook page? We shared it on March 13th right before the Mount men’s basketball team took on Villanova in the March Madness Tournament. The article is from The Mountain Echo, March 20, 1957!

It even inspired one of our students to make a poster for the game! Even though the team lost, they put up a terrific fight, and we are always #MountProud!

Also, make sure to check out our Mount Men’s Basketball archival exhibit in Phillips Library, which will be up through July!

Featured items include:

- A photographs of the Mount’s first basketball team
- A scorebook from 1921
- A t-shirt from the 1985 Final Four game
- Poster from the 1995 NCAA tournament
- A photograph of Coach Jamion Christian and Coach Phelan together in the huddle during Coach Phelan’s last game
Students in Dr. Greg Murry’s Historical Methods course recently visited the archives to complete a week long archival unit. On the first day, students learned how historians use archives and about the archivist profession. They also took a tour of the Mount Archives.

On day two, students broke into groups and put on their gloves as they used primary sources from the archives to answer one of the following questions:

(1) Did the number of baptisms, confirmations, and marriages performed at MSM decrease during the Civil War?

(2) Why did Mount students boycott in 1969, and how was the conflict resolved?

(3) With potential bankruptcy imminent, what were the Mount's spending priorities in 1881?

(4) What can photographs of the Mount baseball team tell us about the history of them sport at the Mount?

(5) What can the daily log book if the Civil Aeronautics Authority training program tell us about the daily life of cadets in the program?

(6) What can the letters of Bill Lanahan tell us about student life at the Mount in 1930?

Students then spent the final class presenting their findings! This week-long unit will now become a permanent part of the Historical Methods course, which is a requirement for history majors.
Additional Updates

We recently worked with Grants Manager Angela Boseman to apply for the National Endowment of the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant for Smaller Institutions. If awarded, the grant would fund having a preservation assessment plan completed of the library, particularly the spaces that house our special collections and archives. It would also allow us to purchase a datalogger that will track the temperature and humidity of our archives space. We will hear if we were awarded the grant in December.

Join us for Reunion Weekend!

The Archives will be open from 1:00-4:00 on Saturday, June 3rd! Come take a tour of the archives and learn about the history of Mount St. Mary's University. The archives open house will feature a variety of artifacts from Fr. Dubois desk lamp to present day items. There will also be old editions of the yearbooks, *Echo*, and *Mountaineer Briefings* for you to enjoy!