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NEWSLETTER

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From the Associate Director:

A busy – some might say hectic – fall semester at the Clements Center demonstrates the reach and variety of work accomplished here. We sponsored three major public events: a symposium titled “Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History” in September, a major conference on “Islam in North Texas” in October, and a special lecture and photography exhibit on John Wesley Powell and the Colorado River in November. In our spare time we welcomed three new residential fellows to the Clements Center, who will use the year to revise their book manuscripts, and two short-term fellows who came to use the rich resources of the DeGolyer Library on Southwest-related research topics.

“Continental Crossroads” brought together a new generation of talented borderlands scholars. Following a now-established pattern for these Clements Center symposia, participants met for a day-long seminar, discussing one another’s work before presenting papers to a public audience the following day. As befits a new generation, they brought fresh perspectives on the meaning of “border” and an awareness that examining the histories of the American Southwest and northern Mexico **together**, provides much greater regional depth. Although each nation’s history retains importance, participants maintained it is also essential to look at relationships that are transnational. Further, in an increasingly globalized economy, border issues become important to everyone, not just residents of border states. Papers with titles such as “At Exclusion’s Gate: Chinese Identity, Citizenship, and Diplomacy along the U.S.-Mexico Border,” and “Think Globally, Resist Locally: Ignacio Martínez’s Journey Around the Globe” indicate the new issues these scholars are investigating. Duke University Press will publish these essays in a book edited by former Clements Center Fellow Sam Truett and Elliott Young. This volume will undoubtedly

become a “must read” for borderlands students for some time to come.

The “Islam in North Texas” conference continued this theme of thinking globally but looking locally. This public forum, expertly coordinated by Executive Director Andrea Boardman and co-sponsored by the William P. Clements Department of History, explored what it means to be Muslim and American in North Texas. Presenters discussed the breadth and diversity of the Muslim American experience, from the daily religious practice of Muslims living in a predominantly non-Islamic country to the perspectives of Muslim women, of converts, and of the growing numbers of African American Muslims. Some panelists discussed their experiences since September 11th. A panel of high school and SMU students shared experiences of practicing their faith while participating in academics, campus and social activities. Several hundred people attended the day’s conference, which brought the Clements Center to the attention of a new constituency. Many attendees sent letters of appreciation to Andrea. “The Muslim community in North Texas will always be in debt to you,” wrote one correspondent. Another said, “It is events like this that not only enlighten the attendees but also permeate an aura of hope and tolerance.”

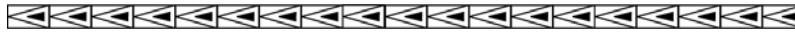
November’s main event changed the pace a bit. Donald Worster, a leader in the emerging field of environmental history and professor at the University of Kansas, received the William P. Clements Prize for the Best Non-Fiction Book on Southwestern America for *A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell*. Professor Worster presented a public lecture entitled “Watershed Democracy: Recovering the Lost Vision of John Wesley Powell,” and conducted a seminar on “The State of Environmental History” for faculty and graduate students. To further enhance the festivities, the DeGolyer

Library co-sponsored with the Clements Center, an exhibit, "A Colorado River Retrospective: 1869 to Present." It combined photographs from John Wesley Powell's 1871 voyage through the Canyons of the Colorado and Green rivers, with Hal Stephens' 1968-69 shots from the same locations while with the United States Geological Survey, and with Sam Walton's present-day photographs, taken while on commercial and scientific trips in the Grand Canyon. Walton, a professional photographer and boatman, specializes in spectacular panoramic photographs of the river and

canyon. As the spring semester commences, David Weber has returned from Harvard and reassumes Directorship.

Coming events include our ongoing brown bag lunch series (see insert for more information), manuscript workshops for our residential fellows, and planning for next year's events!

Sherry L. Smith
Associate Director



Perspectives on Bill and Rita Clements Research Fellowships for the Study of Southwestern America

Flannery Burke, "Finding What They Came For: The Mabel Dodge Luhan Circle and the Making of a Modern Place, 1912-1930."

A Clements Center Postdoctoral Fellowship is an excellent opportunity for scholars at all stages of their careers to take some time to focus on their research in an environment dedicated to studies of the Southwest. I was attracted to the Clements Center because its focus and goals seemed to match my interests so closely. My own work is on Mabel Dodge Luhan, a Greenwich Village socialite and art patron who moved to Taos, New Mexico, along with many of the preeminent artists, writers, and activists of her time. I stress in my work the importance of the Southwest to larger trends in U.S. political and cultural history, and the Clements Center is a place where scholars see the Southwest as an important site of intellectual inquiry.

By far, the most exciting feature of the fellowship for me, however, is the manuscript workshop, in which three prominent scholars from across the United States will come to SMU to discuss my work. I will hold my workshop in January. At this critical moment in the development of my manuscript, I believe that the input of these scholars who are most familiar with the issues that I discuss will enable me to produce a work of higher quality and sophistication than I could have done on my own. As a junior scholar, I also feel that this is a priceless opportunity to get input from established writers who have struggled with the challenges of researching and writing book-length, original work.

Many of my peers who have heard of the Clements Center Fellowships see the manuscript workshop as the Center's most alluring offering, and I couldn't agree with them more. I am quite certain that having the Clements Center experience behind me will aid me on the job market and bring me into contact with other new scholars in my field. As much as I am enjoying the present year, however, I am looking

forward to when my fellowship concludes and I can welcome next year's fellows into the family of scholars that is the Clements Center.

Colleen O'Neill, "Making a Living and Working Elsewhere: Navajo Workers in the Twentieth Century."

After spending five years primarily devoted to teaching, this postdoctoral fellowship could not have come at a better time in my career. I learned a great deal about teaching in those years, honing my pedagogical prowess by developing and teaching thirteen different classes and serving as a curriculum chair for my department. But, because of the challenging teaching load, my Navajo labor history research had unfortunately become a perennial summer project. The Clements Center fellowship has allowed me to rearrange my priorities for a year and has given me the time to make sense out of all the documents, interviews, and other materials I've collected on my many summer excursions to Arizona and New Mexico. I can now imagine those stacks of blue plastic file boxes in my office transformed into a book called *Making a Living and Working Elsewhere: Navajo Workers in the Twentieth Century*.

While the gift of time is helping me accomplish this intellectual alchemy, a wonderful community of scholars at the Center has provided an even greater blessing. Their insightful commentary and personal support has enriched my thinking tremendously. My manuscript workshop in February will add another layer to that conversation, and greater depth to the finished project. Returning to my teaching post in the fall will be difficult indeed. But, I will go back to my classes re-inspired by the work as well as the friendships I've developed here at the Center. Focusing on my scholarship during the year I am spending at the Clements Center will no doubt infuse my teaching with a greater enthusiasm and sense of purpose.

Tisa J. Wenger, "Savage Debauchery or Sacred Communion? Religion and the Primitive in the Pueblo Dance Controversy."

One of the best features of the Bill and Rita Clements Research Fellowship is the manuscript workshop, which the Clements Center sponsors for each of its Fellows. Through the Center, the Fellow is able to invite prominent outside scholars to come to SMU, along with local scholars interested in the topic, for an entire afternoon's discussion of the Fellow's manuscript in progress.

My workshop was held on October 26, and it provided invaluable assistance and encouragement for me in deciding what revisions I need to make on my manuscript, "Savage Debauchery or Sacred Communion? Religion and the Primitive in the Pueblo Dance Controversy." Everyone present had received a reading copy of the manuscript in advance, and the entire afternoon was devoted to a group brainstorming session, skillfully moderated by Clements Center Associate Director Sherry Smith. Most valuable to me were the variety of disciplinary

perspectives represented, and the depth of knowledge among workshop participants about Native American and Southwest studies.

I am a historian of religion in America, without specific training in the Southwest prior to my dissertation research. I have looked to the Clements Center Research Fellowship to provide me with this additional grounding in Southwest studies, and the manuscript workshop was invaluable in that regard. I was also gratified by the positive interest in my work, and I received very practical advice aimed at improving the introductory framing, structure, and writing style of my manuscript, along with a few leads for additional research. I also appreciate the new contacts I made through the workshop, which are likely to benefit me in a variety of ways throughout my career. The manuscript workshop significantly advanced my thinking about my own work, and there is no doubt that my book will be better as a result. I cannot imagine a more useful event for a recent Ph.D. like myself than this workshop, and I am deeply grateful to the Clements Center for this opportunity.



"Reflections on the DeGolyer Library's Railroad History Collections"



by Richard J. Orsi

Every year the Clements Center for Southwest Studies, in partnership with the DeGolyer Library, offers five travel grants for researchers to make use of the rich holdings of the library. In December, Richard Orsi, professor of history at California State University at Hayward, received such a grant and offers this report:

I have been primarily researching Southern Pacific Railroad photographs and promotional pamphlet imagery in the U.S. West, from Louisiana in a crescent sweeping west and north through Texas, the Great Basin, California, and north to Oregon. I will be using the images in my book, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930*, to be published by the University of California Press in about a year. I have found at the DeGolyer a vast assemblage of railroad imagery, covering the entire world and from the beginning of the railroad era in the 1820s and to the present day. There are many Texas images, but even more depicting Southern Pacific lines, facilities, hinterlands, and the people associated with them in other states. What is impressive to me is that when investigated, indeed literally "read," en masse, these images disclose more than just the details of countless locomotives, for which the collection has become well known. Imbedded in the photographs

and other images, and evident to those who know how to use them, is valuable information about broader themes of social, economic, landscape development and change. Only some of these are related to machinery and technology (not just used on railroads), changing transportation systems (more than just railroads, but also automobiles, buses, trucks, and ships) and how they interacted with railroads, fashions and popular culture (including signage), changing architecture and the "stuff" around houses and buildings (tools, yards, etc.), practices in important industries like mining, farming, and lumbering, railroad workers and labor practices (including company hospitals, clubhouses, employee dwellings), engineering and construction, and changing landscapes and vegetation along rail lines.

Of special importance to my interests is the Everett Lee DeGolyer, Jr., Railroad Photographs Collection, well organized by railroad company and then categories under the company name, including locomotives, cars, buildings, locations, etc. But there are many other collections, only a few of which I needed to use for my purposes. Especially spectacular for its thoroughness as a time-period documentary on the state of rail lines and hinterlands are the Roland E. Collons Scrapbooks, some sixty

volumes of which I saw only the half-dozen on the Southern Pacific.

The Collons Scrapbooks that I read contained news clippings and clipped published photographs on Southern Pacific operations, accompanied by matched original photographs, apparently taken by the same skilled photographer, of operations along the rail line. Collons appears to have been that photographer and to have systematically photographed the rail lines himself. His negatives, numbered it appears to coincide with numbers handwritten on the prints, accompany the collection. The volumes are focused on geographic regions of the company's operations, and the great majority of the contents appeared to be 1920s-1930s in origin.

Altogether, this was the most impressive "photo documentary" I've ever seen on the Southern Pacific at a particular moment in its history, in fact a cross-section of the company's business and territory near its point of maturation and peak of influence. I haven't seen them, but there are similar sets of volumes for the other major railroads, worldwide.

There are many other such original resources in the DeGolyer's collections, along with vast numbers of secondary works and ephemera pertaining to American and world-wide railroads that I did not get a chance to inspect on this trip, but undoubtedly the Library is one of the major repositories of railroad historical materials for serious scholars.

For an email version of this newsletter or for more information about the Clements Center's grants, fellowships, publications and programs, please visit our Web site at www.smu.edu/swcenter or contact us at (214) 768-1233 or swcenter@mail.smu.edu.



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