Grant saves South Dakota voices of the past

South Dakota Farmers Union records digitized

Historic audiovisual materials of the South Dakota Farmers Union (SDFU) are being preserved, thanks to a grant. The Council on Library and Information Resources awarded a $19,454 grant to the South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections this fall for “Rural Representation: Saving the Voices of South Dakota Farmers Union.” The project digitizes the audiovisual records of the SDFU, a non-profit advocacy organization of small farmers, ranchers and rural communities across the state. The SDFU formed in 1917 and promotes education, cooperation and legislation at local, state and national levels.

The SDFU recordings span from 1948 to 1992 and include 158 open reel audio recordings, 13 audio cassettes, 6 wire audio recordings and 34 16mm motion picture films. The films depict state camp activities, tours, picnics and parades. The audio recordings include both state and national conventions, speeches, radio programs and

SDSU women’s history recorded

A unique perspective of university history was recorded in 2018 by the SDSU Archives and Special Collections, thanks to a grant from the SDSU Women & Giving organization.

Briggs Library was awarded $2,000 for the recording and transcription of oral histories with distinguished women at SDSU. These women, whose time at the university date back to the 1970s, had roles as provost, deans, professors, first ladies, athletic coaches and supporters.

The grant allowed for the audio of the interviews to be outsourced for transcription, relieving the archives staff of the time-consuming task and making the materials accessible to the public and researchers at a much sooner date. Both the audio and transcriptions of this new body of study will be added to the Digital Library of South Dakota and the Digital Public Library of America.

Oral histories were completed with: Elizabeth Berg, Marcia Chicoine, Sharon Clay, Kathleen Donovan, Mary Kay Helling, Nancy Neiber, Linda Schumacher, Harriet Swedlund and Pam Weiland. Previously recorded oral histories with April Brooks, Roberta Olson, Carol Peterson and Vivian Voldorf were able to be sent for transcriptions as well.

“It was a pleasure meeting and hearing about the life stories of these distinguished women and their contributions to South Dakota State University. I feel truly blessed to have had the opportunity to spend time with Mrs. Elizabeth Berg and record her experiences before she passed away. She was an amazing woman and I will cherish the time I spent with her,” Christian said.

Christian said the project will be continued as more oral histories are able to be done in the future.

Notes from the Chief University Librarian

I recently completed the negotiations for a subscription to a library database; consequently, library finances are in the forefront of my thinking as I write this piece. This negotiation was a delicate procedure and made more complex because I was representing a multi-library cooperative venture as I talked with vendors. I get asked periodically, both within SDSU and by community members, about library funding and expenses: where does the money for library purchases come from and how is it allocated?

SDSU’s library funding comes primarily through the university and is a combination of tuition dollars and state allocations. We also receive direct funding, along with the other SD Board of Regents universities, for some specific STEM..
Two scholarships for library student assistants made possible by gift

Tuition wasn’t quite so much for two library student assistants this academic year, thanks to a donation from Dinus and June Briggs.

Morgan Brower was awarded a scholarship during the Fall 2018 semester, and Blake Gilkyson received a scholarship for Spring 2019. Both students work in the circulation department.

Supervisors nominate student assistants for the scholarship, and a library committee selects the recipients based on the students’ quality of work performance and positive attitude.

Brower, from Sioux Falls, is a senior majoring in human biology pre-dental, and has worked at the library since June 2017. Gilkyson, from Vermillion, is a junior double majoring in math and data science who has been at Briggs Library since September 2017.

“Any kind of scholarship is such an honor,” Brower said. “And to not even apply and have your boss nominate you is huge.”

“It felt amazing, and honestly am so honored to be chosen out of all my great coworkers,” Gilkyson said.

Both students said how much they enjoyed the people and work environment at Briggs Library.

“I have loved every second of working at Briggs. The people around me seem to make it a great environment to work that I never dread going to,” Gilkyson said.

“I’ve learned so much from all the people here,” Bower said. “I love working here. I’m sad I’ll be done in May.”

Dinus Briggs is the son of the library’s namesake, former SDSU President Hilton M. Briggs.

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Advertisements. There are also recordings promoting legislation, endorsing politicians in South Dakota and featuring speeches by national figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt, George McGovern and Hubert Humphrey.

Archivist Michele Christian said many of the audiovisual records were in a poor state or in an unknown condition due to the lack of available original information about the items and the proper equipment to play the materials without damaging them.

“It was urgent to digitize the SDFU Records because of the deterioration that was already occurring with some of the materials,” Christian said. “This grant will make the voices of those who contributed to the grassroots movement of South Dakota farmers and ranchers heard again.”

The University Archives will partner with George Blood L.P. to have the hundreds of hours of audiovisual materials digitized in high quality and sustainable formats. The digitized SDFU Records will be openly accessible online, and will be a scholarly resource for students and researchers focused on topics such as rural communities, farmers’ rights, agrarian education, cooperatives, and regional and local political advocacy.

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(Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) resources. Two smaller but no less important funding sources are from grants and from donors. Finally, we charge for general printing and copying, and for the printing and binding of dissertations and theses.

How are the funds allocated? Those dollars that come with specific purposes, like grant allocations, go directly to the intended purposes. Those are easy! The decisions regarding dollars we allocate for library collections are often much more complex. We are very thoughtful in our consideration of which products will best meet the needs of students and faculty. Since the vast majority of what we now provide is electronic, we also have to worry about interfaces, uptime, service, coverage and ease of access that each vendor may or may not provide. Within the university we look at past utilization, areas of research emphasis, accreditations, and new programs and courses. We also look at requests for interlibrary loans to gauge where we need to make further investments.

When possible we work with other libraries to obtain subscriptions that are of value to all partners. By doing this we typically are able to get better pricing than if we attempted to go it alone. We have strong partnerships within the state of South Dakota as well as across the border with Minnesota and North Dakota. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate to provide the most cost-effective resources for our library patrons.

One of the biggest hurdles we experience regarding library funding is the perception by the general public that everything is available for free on the Internet. This is certainly not true for the thousands of scholarly resources that we subscribe to in support of the teaching and research expectations of current and future Jackrabbits. Consequently, we take our collection investment responsibilities very seriously.
Nursing mothers room renovated, thanks to donors

A nursing mothers room has been available in Briggs Library for several years, but little changed about the space after it was transitioned from a study room. This fall, the room was updated to be a much more inviting space for its users. The renovation was made possible by the generosity of donors.

Added to the newly-painted room were a glider chair with a lumbar pillow and foot stool, storage, some basic supplies, new privacy curtains, mirror, clock, lamp and decorations to create a calm and relaxed atmosphere. There is also a notebook for the room’s users to write their thoughts or jot down notes for others.

The nursing mothers room is on the lower level in room 008. A key for the room can be checked out at the front desk.

The nursing mothers room was updated in 2018, thanks to a gift from library donors. A before photo (bottom left) shows a study table and chair as the room’s only furniture. The renovated room (top and bottom right) is now more suitably equipped for the purpose of the space. (Briggs Library photos)

The Impact of Friends

Gifts from Friends of the Hilton M. Briggs Library directly support the library’s efforts to advance scholarly excellence in a welcoming space for South Dakota State University’s students, faculty, staff and community.

To make a gift as a Friend of the Hilton M. Briggs Library, fill out and detach this portion of the sheet, and send it and the contribution to:

SDSU Foundation
(70760 SDSU Library Fund) Box 525
Brookings, South Dakota 57007

Name: ________________________________________________________________
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Enclosed: ___ $50   ___ $100   ___ $250   ___ $500   ___ $1,000   ___ other: _________

How would you like your gift to support the library?
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Would you like: ___ a digital bookplate   and/or   ___ a Jack Read poster

Please note any correction to the name or address as listed on the back:

Friends of the Hilton M. Briggs Library

Friends of the Hilton M. Briggs Library are people who support the library, whether through monetary or material donations, or as library advocates.

An annual Friends of the Library contribution includes benefits such as invitations to library programs and exclusive Friends events, a newsletter, a digital bookplate on the library website and a Jack Read poster.

For more information about Friends of the Hilton M. Briggs Library, donating or volunteering, please contact the Library Operations Manager at (605) 688-5564 or Emmeline.Weber@sdstate.edu.

Support Starts @ Briggs
Native concepts of health and illness explored in traveling exhibit

Briggs Library is pleased to host Native Voices: Native Peoples’ Concepts of Health and Illness, a traveling exhibition to U.S. libraries.

Native Voices explores the interconnectedness of wellness, illness and cultural life for Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians. Stories drawn from both the past and present examine how health for Native People is tied to community, the land and spirit. Through interviews, Native People describe the impact of epidemics, federal legislation, the loss of land, and the inhibition of culture on the health of Native individuals and communities today.

The public is invited to view this free exhibit while it is on display at Briggs Library April 24 — June 5.

An opening reception will be held at the library on April 25 at 5 pm, with a panel discussion beginning at 7 pm. The panelists will look at the topic of historical trauma based on Lakota history and the modern cumulative health effects.

Briggs Library was selected in a competitive application process as one of 104 grant recipients from across the country to host this exhibit.

The U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM) developed and produced Native Voices: Native Peoples’ Concepts of Health and Illness. The American Library Association Public Programs Office, in partnership with NLM, tours the exhibition to America’s libraries.

For more information on the exhibit and event, visit www.sdstate.edu/library.