

FRIENDS

OF CHAMBERS LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA
NEWSLETTER/FALL 2017

Collection Highlight: ROYAL AIR FORCE IN OKLAHOMA



#6 British Flying School, Course #7 Graduation, July 1942

Have you ever been to an estate sale and found a treasure? That is exactly what happened to Archives donor and author, Paula Denson. In 1997, she purchased a shoebox full of letters for \$2.00 at an estate auction. In the shoebox were letters postmarked from various places in Great Britain dated between 1942-1947. This box of letters would propel Paula on a nearly ten-year journey of discovery culminating in 2006 with the publication of her book, *"The Royal Air Force in Oklahoma: Lives, Loves, & Courage of the British Air Crews Trained in Oklahoma During World War II"*.

The letters were written by men who trained at Darr School of Aeronautics in Ponca City to the Hocker family. The Hocker family was one of many families who hosted British fliers when they were in Oklahoma for pilot training. Paula Denson, a native of Ponca City became obsessed with learning more about the men who wrote these correspondences and their time here in Oklahoma.

During her search, she had an opportunity to meet some of the men who penned these letters. She established lasting friendships with several making three trips to England to visit them and their families. As Paula's research accumulated, her little shoebox of letters grew into 16 cubic feet of records that she donated to the UCO Archives & Special Collections in November 2015.

So why, beginning in 1941 did the Royal Air force send their fliers to Oklahoma for pilot training? The United Kingdom had been at war with Germany since 1939. They were hard pressed to train Royal Air Force cadets since the skies over Britain had become an aerial battleground. They needed a place to train pilots without the danger of being shot down by Germans.

Forced to find other locations to train critically needed pilots, the Royal Air Force negotiated for the establishment of pilot training schools in Australia, South Africa, Canada and the United States.

Six schools were opened in the United States. The number of clear weather days in Oklahoma made it a good place to teach flying. Consequently, two flying schools were established in Oklahoma. The Darr School of Aeronautics or No. 6 British Flying Training School was established in Ponca City and Spartan School of Aeronautics also known as No. 3 British Flying Training School was opened in Miami, OK.

On a rainy day in 1942 as these 19 and 20-year-old British cadets began arriving in Ponca City on the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe train, Ponca City residents gave them a warm welcome. These boys mainly from England, Scotland and Wales had left a war torn country where rationing was heavy and nightly bombings were a regular part of life.

In their new American homes, they experienced culture shock, as things were very different in the Midwest. One cadet reflected that only 30% of the Brits enjoyed the luxury of an automobile, whereas in Miami, OK virtually everyone they met had one. The food was a constant source of thrills. Cadet Raymond Baxter wrote, "American meals could only be described as something else. I had never tasted a hamburger let alone a barbecue, and I had no idea what a "weeny roast" was and had only heard of hot dogs and Coca Cola was new and wonderful."



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Regular Library Hours:

Monday-Thursday
7:30 am - 2:00 pm

Friday
7:30 am - 6:00 pm

Saturday
10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sunday
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Spring Intersession Hours

December 18, 2017 - January 5, 2018

Monday - Friday
7:30 am - 6:00 pm

Saturday - Sunday
Closed

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We would like to acknowledge and thank those who support the Friends of Chambers Library.

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Executive Director's Report



Habib Tabatabai, Executive Director

We are closely monitoring our current political and budget realities and we are working diligently to steward the resources available to us with care and reason by being forward thinking and creative. In consultation with faculty/Deans/Colleges, we continue

to review our print and electronic collections. We are investing more in resources to ensure currency and full access. We continue to obtain individual journal title subscriptions, when embargoed in aggregated databases.

Over the last six months, we have seen many of our Learning Commons initiatives put into place including:

- ♦ “Daybreak Lounge”, our new redesigned collaborative space on the first floor is open for use and all signs point to a great welcome from the students.
- ♦ Our new Director of Learning and User Experience, Deborah Thompson, is hard at work reviewing our service models and engaging our researchers and students at a more one on one level.

♦ We are working with CFAD design students to create more collaborative user spaces, including a new coffee shop.

♦ We have transformed the Northwest corner of the fourth floor, affectionately called “The Max”, into a presentation/flex space that can accommodate both research and learning activities but also events and presentations. The latest event was a VR and 3D Modeling Open House in conjunction with CeCE.

♦ Library spaces are transformed into flex spaces with emphasis on collaboration and access to tools that facilitate working together.

♦ We are developing a makerspace to offer special services, including 3D Scanning, 3D Printing, large format printing, and more.

As the result of our partnership with OU and OSU libraries, we are now an active member of SHAREOK, <https://shareok.org/>. SHAREOK is an institutional repository shared by universities and others across the state of Oklahoma. Our first collection added was the “Herland Voice”, newsletter of Herland Sister Resources.

Iwould like to thank Friends of the Library for their continued support of our Learning Commons, and our programming. Without your support, many of these improvements would not be possible.

ROYAL AIR FORCE IN OKLAHOMA CONTINUED...

In a letter Eleanor Roosevelt wrote to Mrs. Gladys Dutton of Ponca City, she requested the assistance of all mothers stressing the importance of breaking down barriers the men had due to preconceived notions that Americans were different from the English. She encouraged them to build lifelong friendships by inviting these men into their homes and hearts. She emphasized that she wanted the young British men to see a clear picture of what Americans were really like and that Americans did not live the lives of glamour portrayed on the Hollywood movie screens. Ultimately, Mrs. Roosevelt wanted these men to feel like they were at home with their hosts. As a result, invitations into homes, schools, and churches were continually extended.

Time spent in Oklahoma left an indelible mark on the hearts of these British cadets. After WW II some would return to marry Ponca City girls and raise their families in Oklahoma. Others would return to Ponca City for reunions. In a 1991 interview, Doug



*Josiah Cogan, Archives Processing Specialist
Paula Denson, Author and Archives Donor, 2017*

Londers who was in the 2nd pilot training course said, “The reason we come back after all these years is to say ‘Thank You’ to the citizens of Ponca City. I don’t think anywhere in the world you could find anybody who was more generous. They’re wonderful people.” While many of them are too old to travel now they still meet annually in England to talk of those days long ago.

To learn more about this collection on the Royal Air Force in Oklahoma contact the UCO Archives & Special Collections at 405-974-2882 or email Nicole Willard at nwillard@uco.edu.

<http://library.uco.edu/archives/>.

Fall Library Events

The Daybreak Lounge - The Library's New Space

Have you visited Chambers Library recently? The Library is renovating spaces, adding equipment, and updating our service model to better serve our UCO community. The most noticeable change is the renovation of the space just inside the south entrance. This area was updated with new seating options, including individual and group seating, more connectivity, and wall color. The focal point of the space is a colorful mural painted by Library Specialist and artist, Luci Seem. The space design was created by the Charles Evans Design Group in CFAD under the direction of Dr. Valerie Settles.

The space will be known as the Daybreak Lounge, as voted on by the UCO community, after a "Name That Space" contest was held in early September. The name describes the calming hues of blues, oranges, and yellows used in the mural, and throughout the space. A ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening celebration was held in early September, at which Dr. Betz expressed his sincere gratitude to Habib Tabatabai and the Library staff for their continued efforts to move the Library into the 21st century.

Watch for more transformations in the Library in the coming year, as we continue to move forward in innovative ways to serve our patrons.



Ribbon cutting for New Space



The Day Break Lounge



Mural painting by Luci Seem

BOOK SPINE POETRY CONTEST

Each Fall, Chambers Library hosts a student contest to promote the Library, and to encourage students to use the Library and all the wonderful services we have to offer. This year, we re-circulated a student favorite, by offering the Book Spine Poetry Contest. In this contest, students take the spines of books, and create original poetry. We received some very creative entries!

Through Friends of Chambers Library, we are able to offer cash prizes to the winners; first place receives \$300; second place; \$200; and third place \$100. This year's winners are David Horst, Sarah Davis, and Cheyenne Pickett, respectively.

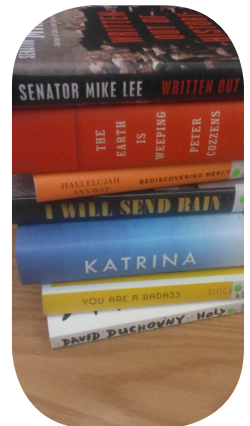
We received 43 total entries from 27 students, many of which will be used to promote future Library activities.



*1st Place
David Horst*



*2nd Place
Sarah Davis*



*3rd Place
Cheyenne Pickett*

Fall Library Events

HISTORY OF THE BOOK SEMINAR

The Archives & Special Collections hosted Professor of English Susan Spencer's Bibliography and Methods Seminar class on Tuesday, October 17, 2017. Special guest speakers included bibliography specialist Dr. Kit Kincade, Professor English and Gender Studies at Indiana State University, and Dr. Pam Washington former Dean, College of Fine Arts and Design.

Using 18th and 19th Century monographs in the Archives and Special Collections Dr. Kincade was

able to demonstrate information about the history of the book. Dr. Washington, an avid bibliophile, brought many of her own first edition, 19th Century books and shared information on several books that have played a critical role in the creation and expansion of books. Dr. Spencer brought her own cherished copy of Jacob Tonson edition of Ovid's Epistles from 1705, a seventh edition that first came out in 1688. It was a thrilling night for English students who are passionate about the book.



Dr. Pam Washington shares her 1st edition books



Dr. Kit Kincade demonstrate parts of an 18th Century book

Virtual Reality Has Arrived!

The world of virtual reality is here, and Chambers Library is well equipped to help students and faculty learn how virtual reality can be used to enhance learning. In early September, the Library took part in a multi-campus virtual reality tour of the Arivipa Cave System, presented by Archeology Southwest. This cave system features an array of native cave art dating back centuries. This event was streamed live in The Max Room.

In October, Chambers Library, in collaboration with CeCE, hosted an Open House to showcase both our 3D and our virtual reality capabilities here at UCO. Equipment was set up in The Max Room, where students, faculty and staff enjoyed learning how to use the various pieces of equipment. We will continue to offer these types of programs as they become available.



Ben Hardwick mans the virtual reality controls

Moving Up, and Moving Around..

Over the last six months, the Library has undergone many changes. Books have been moved, shelving has been rearranged, equipment has been added. Along with those changes, we have implemented some changes in our staff as well.

Deborah Thompson, our former Manager of Collection



Deborah Thompson, Director of Learning and User Experience

Development, was recently appointed to the newly-created position of Director of Learning & User Experience. Deborah has been a Librarian at UCO for over 15 years, serving in many different capacities. Throughout her tenure at UCO, Deborah's innovative ideas have helped reduce the Library's print costs and increase our electronic holdings. She has streamlined purchasing, eliminating wasteful practices, which has allowed us to purchase more databases and materials for student use.

Brian Buckley, formerly in our serials department, was recently appointed to the newly-created position of Resource & Acquisitions Librarian. Brian earned his MLIS from OU, and has worked as an archivist for the City Clerk's office, and as a Reference Librarian at

Southern Nazarene University. Brian's strong work ethic, coupled with his attention to detail, makes him the logical choice to move into this new position.

Both Deborah and Brian have moved their offices to the first floor, in the Research & Learning area. Welcome aboard!



Brian Buckley, Resource Acquisitions Librarian

Nicole Willard, Exceptional Performance Award Winner

The Library's own, Nicole Willard, Director of Archives, Special Collections, and Library Development was a recent recipient of one of Dr. Betz' Annual Exceptional Performance Awards. This award is given to only a handful of individuals each year during the Fall Forum, and represents outstanding contributions to the University in the areas of impact, effectiveness, innovation, and significance.

In presenting the award, Dr. Betz highlighted Nicole's knowledge and expertise in UCO Archival materials, and her endless hours of work to ensure that the history

of Old North was appropriately represented in the décor of this grand building. Nicole was the driving force in the selection, acquisition, and implementation of all the images and artwork that is now housed in Old North. A project that has been in the works for over three years.

Nicole is the first Library staff member to ever win this award, but that is no surprise to us! Her leadership skills within the Library and campus-wide are a clear indication of just what an asset she is to UCO.

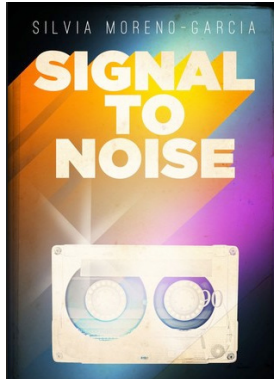
Congratulations Nicole, we are all so proud of you!



Nicole Willard, Director of Archives, Special Collections and Library Development

Book Reviews

Signal to Noise By: Silvia Moreno-Garcia



**Review by: Shay Beezley,
Manager, Metadata & Cataloging**

Call Number: PR9199.4 .M67 2016

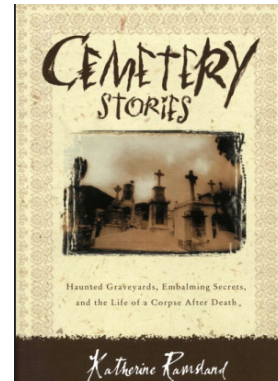
A good book with numerous music references can be hard to find. Oftentimes, it feels like the author is shoehorning in their favorite bands, songs, etc. But *Signal to Noise* is chock full of music references that don't feel cloying or jammed in while fitting in well with the story.

Signal to Noise is set in Mexico City and veers between 1988 and 2009—Meche (a nickname for Mercedes), the main character, is in town in 2009 for her father's funeral. She's not happy about returning to her hometown, having escaped Mexico City by way of a computer programming job in Norway. Through the interchanging time periods, we learn why Meche is not pleased about her return to Mexico City. I loved the device of switching between time periods—a story is not necessarily a linear one, and *Signal to Noise* is a great example of a well-done non-linear story. Without divulging too much, the book ends at the very beginning, a no better place to end for this story.

Aside from music references galore, *Signal to Noise* is a supernatural book but again, done so that it doesn't feel like magic is jammed down your throat. Meche and her friends discover that their vinyl records hold magic and they experiment casting spells with them. The supernatural is almost an afterthought as it's readily accepted by the main characters, and Moreno-Garcia gives us a plausible (as one can be with magic) explanation.

Needless to say, I really loved this book. At first, I found Meche difficult to like, but she grew on me throughout the book. It was compelling and the interweaving between the different time periods was written so well. The characters were also well-written—Meche, Sebastian, their friend Daniela, Meche's parents all felt like real people who were sitting right there in the room with me. Finishing a book with such good characters is bittersweet as you

Cemetery Stories By: Katherine Ramsland



**Review by: Jenan Alleman,
Library Technician III, Serials**

Call Number: GT3203. R35 2001

This time of year, all things spooky and macabre make their appearance. If you've ever been fascinated by cemeteries or wondered what happens to a body after death, Katherine Ramsland pulls back the curtain on the death care industry to give readers an inside view of what goes on not only in cemeteries but in the industries connected to and around them.

The book is divided into three parts with part one focusing on those who work with the dead and in the death care business. The second part of the book highlights cemetery origins and history and death traditions, while the third part of the book recounts stories of the strange, unusual and sometimes downright shocking.

Ramsland conducted many interviews with professionals who work in the various areas connected to death—from those who work directly with bodies such as embalmers, to those on the business side, like casket retailers. There are times when the truth certainly is stranger than fiction. Even though some of the interviews by embalmers and others who prepare corpses caused me to shudder, it was fascinating to learn about something that is often hidden from view. It was also enlightening to learn about what's termed the business of death and dying. In the past funeral homes were often family owned businesses, but in recent decades there has been a move of corporatization within the industry. Whether this is a positive development or not is debatable, but unlike other books which have portrayed the funeral business as predatory, Ramsland leaves this issue more or less for the reader to decide. Overall, I found *Cemetery Stories* an informative book on an issue that few really know about.

**For more staff book and media reviews go to:
url: <http://libguides.uco.edu/staffreviews>**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

December & January Hours
Closed - December 16 & 17
Closed - December 21-January 1
Closed - January 6 & 7
Closed - January 15, MLK Birthday

