Exhibit of Charles Elliott Gill Photographs Opens at the Archives

Archives Afie! Mary Simpson Dobbin

Archives Hosts National Conference Attendees

Volunteers Honored at Local Brunch

Freedom Suit Documentary Wins Mid-America Emmy

Basic Genealogy Workshop Held at Archives

Picture This: Missouri Prison Farms

Ozark Light: The Photographs of Charles Elliott Gill, a new exhibit designed by Greg Olson, is now open at the Missouri State Archives.
From the State Archivist

As with all other historical organizations, the Missouri State Archives relies on volunteers to augment staff efforts. Some of these volunteers assist staff with reference, tours and preservation of records. Others we have never even met, because they work as electronic volunteers from the comfort of their own homes.

The Archives currently has fourteen in-house volunteers who aid with answering reference questions and preparing archival materials for better public access. Much of this work is based on the volunteers’ interests, as well as their abilities. Some volunteers make photocopies. Others fill complicated research inquiries or process entire collections of historical records. Seven additional volunteers provide tours of the Archives every spring when students visit the capitol city. These tours reinforce the school curriculum, while educating students about the role that records and archives play in their lives and the development of their community. If you would like to volunteer at the Archives, please contact Patsy Luebbert at patsy.luebbert@sos.mo.gov or 573-751-4217.

The Missouri State Archives Local Records Preservation Program also relies heavily on volunteers in communities across the state. Since 2000, Local Records has worked with over 200 volunteers, most associated with local historical and genealogical societies, in at least 28 counties. The efforts of these volunteers have exponentially multiplied the productivity of our field archivists as they work with local officials to preserve, microfilm and index our counties’ oldest, most historically significant records. If you would like to volunteer in a particular county or if an organization you belong to would like to initiate one of these projects, please contact John Korasick at john.korasick@sos.mo.gov or 573-751-1819.

As we continue to add materials to our website, the indexing role played by electronic volunteers becomes increasingly critical. To date, at least 1,277 e-volunteers have helped the Archives. The Missouri Death Certificate Project, which indexed and provided online access to 2.1 million death certificates, is our largest venture thus far, but e-volunteers have also worked on pre-1910 birth and death records, coroners’ inquests and naturalizations. Data entry volunteers are currently working on indexes for the St. Louis Criminal Court, the Missouri Blue Books, the Reports of the Supreme Court and additions to the state’s early land records. If you would like to become an e-volunteer, please contact Brian Rogers at brian.rogers@sos.mo.gov or 573-526-6711.

To all of those volunteers who have worked so hard in the past and continue to aid the Archives, we can only say thank you for helping make Missouri’s records accessible to the world.

Sincerely,

John Dougan
State Archivist
Exhibit of Charles Elliott Gill Photographs Opens at the Archives

The Missouri State Archives launched its newest exhibit Ozark Light: The Photographs of Charles Elliott Gill at a public reception on October 7. Designed by Curator of Exhibits and Special Projects Greg Olson, the exhibit focuses on the photography of Charles Elliott Gill, an amateur photographer who documented life in the Ozarks for over thirty years.

Charles Elliott Gill was one of many talented amateur photographers who emerged in the 1880s with the advent of more simplified cameras and manufactured glass plate negatives. No longer forced to drag their darkrooms and dangerous chemicals around with them, photographers could easily capture places and events in their own communities that had never been photographed before. Gill spent years documenting life in the Upper Ozarks, and this exhibit shares over one hundred of the images he captured.

Gill was born July 8, 1869 to Joseph and Martha Gill. The family settled at the head of the Meramec River in Dent County where they raised wheat and cattle. Gill received his first camera when he was 18 but did not actively document life in the Ozarks until he was in his forties. Although he traveled extensively throughout his life, Gill always returned home to Dent County and the family farm. He married Myrtle Hayes in 1917, and they had a son, Edward Addison Gill, in 1918. The marriage ended in divorce in 1921, and Gill never remarried. He sold the family farm in 1943 and moved to Salem, Missouri. On July 15, 1962, Charles Elliott Gill passed away at age 93.

Edward Addison Gill donated his father’s photograph collection to the Missouri State Archives in 2002. The Charles Elliott Gill Photograph Collection consists of 722 glass plate negatives and some original prints. The entire collection can be viewed online at www.missouridigitalheritage.com.

The exhibit based on the Gill collection is free of charge and will be open to the public at the Kirkpatrick State Information Center (600 W. Main Street, Jefferson City) through spring of 2008. Afterwards, the Gill exhibit will travel to venues throughout the state as part of the Archives’ traveling exhibit program.

For more information about the Gill exhibit or how your local institutions can participate in the traveling exhibit program, please contact Greg Olson at (573) 522-2705 or greg.olson@sos.mo.gov.

Archives Afield!
Mary Simpson Dobbin: Frontier Woman and Entrepreneur

Carolyn Collings
Local Records Field Archivist

For more than two decades, the Local Records Preservation Program has worked with court records around Missouri. During that time, a number of themes and personalities have emerged from these historic records. From the great entrepreneurs to the “common man,” nineteenth century court records detail all aspects of life. Among the emerging themes is the position of women on the Missouri frontier. A case in point is the story of Mary...
Simpson Dobbin, an English immigrant whose story is found in the records of Howard, Saline and Cooper counties.

Mary and Joseph Simpson, along with their young son Edward, arrived at the new Howard County settlement of Franklin, in the heart of the Booneslick, in 1819. Their naturalization documents were filed with the local court that summer. Franklin, the county seat, was emerging as an important commercial center, serving as the starting point for the Santa Fe Trail, and there Joseph Simpson developed a mercantile business. The records do not reveal how successful Simpson was as a business man. He did sue to collect a sizable debt, $293, in 1823, but, otherwise, he remains a shadowy figure. Joseph Simpson died in 1828, leaving his wife and three children.

Mary Simpson assumed control of the business, rebranding it as “Mary Simpson and Sons.” It can be speculated that business was good. Between 1829 and 1841, Simpson appears in forty-nine lawsuits, usually as the plaintiff. It must be remembered that this was an era before warranties, checking accounts and ubiquitous insurance; businesses routinely filed suits to collect on promissory notes and accounts. Out-of-state enterprises also routinely sued to collect on merchandise sent to the frontier. Simpson and Sons dealt with vendors as far away as Philadelphia. In addition to the store, Simpson appears to have been active in land speculation, with litigation involving numerous tracts of land.

In early 1833, Simpson married James L. Dobbin. The store name changed to “Mary Dobbin and Sons.” This set the stage for the most tragic episode in her life. Her eldest son, Edward, objected to the marriage. Edward, then about twenty years old, had already exhibited violent tendencies, having been hauled into court over the wounding of a man the previous summer. In July 1833, Edward Simpson was charged with the murder of James L. Dobbin. Depositions reveal that Simpson had threatened Dobbin on several occasions and had once pulled a knife, only to be disarmed and thrown out of the house.

On May 20, 1833, Edward, in some fashion, interfered with Dobbin’s business and refused to leave. Christian Keill, a friend of Dobbin, chased Simpson across the public square in Franklin with a spade; Dobbin followed with brickbats; Edward did not return. Later that day, Mary and James went to dinner. Edward entered the store, having been told to stay away; he had taken papers relating to the business and refused to return them. Upon returning from dinner, his mother and stepfather discovered him on the portico. Dobbin ran up the stairs to evict him. Keill, one of the bystanders, followed. Two shots were fired, one by Keill and one by Simpson, the latter killing Dobbin. Mary’s deposition is disjointed, nearly incoherent. Her signature is distorted, not the small neat writing seen in other documents. Witnesses agreed that Simpson had fired the fatal shot after being fired upon, so the jury acquitted him of the murder of his stepfather, setting him free.

Mary continued operating the business, relocating to Boonville. The business slowly began to decline. Her son, Augustus W. Simpson, editor of the Boonville Observer, came to her aid in 1843 and 1844 when she could no longer cover her debts. Dobbin closed her business shortly afterwards and lived with her son until her death, around age 70, in 1855.

Mary Simpson Dobbin was part of the early migration to the Booneslick region, people seeking their fortunes on the Missouri frontier. She carried forward, and seemingly expanded, the business founded by her first husband. The enterprise survived nearly two decades. Her entire story would be lost if not for the work of the Local Records Preservation Program to preserve and make available public records. Mary Simpson Dobbin was lost to history, until the files in Howard, Cooper and Saline counties brought her story to life, a story of success and tragedy on the Missouri frontier.
Archives Hosts National Conference Attendees

The Missouri State Archives welcomed zoo registrars from across the nation to its Jefferson City facility on October 22. Members of the Zoological Registrars Association (ZRA), which held its annual conference in St. Louis this year, were given a behind-the-scenes tour of the Archives and educated on the retention of state and local government documents.

The ZRA is a not-for-profit association whose mission is “to enhance the value of zoos and aquariums through leadership, professional development, standardization and service to its members.” Registrars provide oversight for the shipping of animals, wildlife permit procurement and legal compliance. They also are responsible for animal record keeping and the management of any records produced. The documents and photographs registrars maintain are used in exhibits and in the study of the historical context of zoos.

The Archives’ Local Records Preservation Program (LRPP) worked with the Saint Louis Zoo for three years to develop its records management approach. The resulting Missouri retention schedule for zoos has become a model for the ZRA, stimulating a discussion among registrars regarding the preservation and identification of records held by zoos.

Lynn Morrow, Director of the LRPP, and Michael Shellman, Senior Records Analyst in the Records Management Department, presented “Missouri’s National Model: A Partnership of Local Records Preservation and State Records Management Programs and Agencies” to the group. This presentation discussed the reasons for retaining records; which ones should be kept permanently; how long to keep others; and the most effective methods for managing an institution’s documents.

The Local Records Grant Program, which funded much of the work with the Saint Louis Zoo to develop a records retention schedule, was also described. Grants are awarded to local governments, or political subdivisions with taxing authority, for projects such as records inventories, purchase of archival shelving, conservation of historically significant documents and microfilming of permanent records.

For more information on the Local Records Grant Program, please visit www.sos.mo.gov/archives/localrecs/grants/. If you would like to learn more about records retention schedules and records management, go to www.sos.mo.gov/archives/localrecs/schedules/ and www.sos.mo.gov/records/recmgmt/resources.asp.

Volunteers Honored at Local Brunch

A brunch was held on November 12 to recognize the dedicated service of the Archives’ “in-house” volunteers. State Archivist John Dougan welcomed the volunteers, presenting each one with a token of appreciation; and Secretary of State Robin Carnahan thanked the group, on behalf of the state of Missouri and the Archives, for all that they have accomplished.

The volunteers present played a key role in the completion of some of the Archives’ most notable projects, including the Missouri Death Certificate Project, which placed digital images of over two million death certificates from 1910-1957 online. Other records projects on which these individuals continue to volunteer include: World War I service cards, World War I bonus pay claims, pre-1910 Missouri birth and death records, Missouri...
Supreme Court cases, naturalization records and photograph collections.

However, the contributions of this group of volunteers do not stop with preserving and making available our historical record. Volunteers also help provide tours of the Archives to school children and respond to research requests submitted by patrons. Many of the services that the Archives offers to the people of Missouri are completed, in part, due to the commitment of these volunteers.

In the near future, volunteers will begin projects to index the United States land sale records, process death certificates from 1958 for placement online and scan historic photographs. If you would like to be a part of the volunteer program at the Missouri State Archives, please contact Patsy Luebbert at (573) 751-4217 or patsy.luebbert@sos.mo.gov. If you cannot come to the Archives but would still like to help, please contact Brian Rogers about the e-volunteer program at (573) 526-6711 or brian.rogers@sos.mo.gov.

Freedom Suit Documentary Wins Mid-America Emmy

Since 1999, the Missouri State Archives (MSA) Local Records Preservation Program has worked to preserve and make available over four million pages of original St. Louis Circuit Court documents. Within these case files, MSA archivists discovered the nation’s largest collection of slave freedom suits. HEC-TV, St. Louis’ leading producer of education, art, and cultural television programming, created a documentary to share the inspiring story of these early freedom fighters.

The discovery of these suits revealed that Dred Scott was not alone in his effort to obtain freedom from the courts. Over three hundred slaves in antebellum St. Louis challenged their owners, arguing that the law gave them the right to control their own lives. Seeking Freedom is a forty-five minute program, narrated by Circuit Court Judge David C. Mason, that features onsite footage of the original freedom suits and interviews with historical and legal experts. The film, which was written and produced by Christian Cudnik and Aleta Harris and edited by C. Drew Unser, was recently awarded the 2008 Mid-America Emmy for Historical Documentary.

Several members of the advisory committee that supports the St. Louis Circuit Court Historical Records Project were featured in the documentary, including Kristin Zapalac of the Department of Natural Resources’ State Historic Preservation Office and Wayne Fields, Peter Kastor, and David Konig of Washington University’s American Culture Studies Program. Michael Everman, Supervising Archivist at the Missouri State Archives—St. Louis, was also interviewed for the film.

The entire video, along with educational curriculum for primary and secondary school students, is available online at www.hectv.org. If you wish to view digital images of the freedom suits, please visit www.stlcourtreCORDS.wustl.edu/about-freedom-suits-series.php.
a website made possible by a partnership between the Missouri State Archives; the St. Louis Circuit Court Clerk’s Office; and the American Culture Studies Program at Washington University. For additional information on the St. Louis Circuit Court Historical Records Project, please contact Michael Everman at (314) 588-1746 or michael.everman@sos.mo.gov.

Basic Genealogy Workshop Held at Archives

Senior Reference Archivist Patsy Luebbert taught over fifty people the basics of genealogy research during a workshop held at the Missouri State Archives on November 1. Luebbert instructed attendees on the variety of local and state institutions where family historians can locate information on their ancestors; the types of records that can be found; and how to organize family records once information about a family’s past has been discovered. The presentation provided a description of several types of historic records and how they relate to genealogy: cemetery records, state government documents, judicial case files, penitentiary records, newspapers, county histories, censuses and county records, many of which are on microfilm and available at the Missouri State Archives.

The next genealogy workshop will be held on Saturday, March 14, 2009 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. This half-day workshop at the Archives (600 W. Main Street, Jefferson City) will focus on the variety of judicial records available, including probate case files, and how one can find information related to family history within them. The Archives’ reference staff plans to continue expanding their outreach efforts with additional workshops to help genealogists discover all they can about their family’s past.

Picture This: Missouri Prison Farms

Erin Sehorn
Visual Materials Archivist

Prison farm industries in Missouri began on a small scale after the establishment of the Missouri State Penitentiary in 1836. During the 1920s and 1930s, farming operations expanded as a means to occupy the growing number of inmates. Missouri owned three farms where inmates tended to livestock such as chickens, cattle and mules and also grew crops like tomatoes, corn and wheat. In fact, mules raised on Farm No. 2 (later Renz Correctional Center) were well-known across the state. Prison Farm No. 3 (later known as Algoa) originally began as the prison dairy farm. It then expanded to include 779 acres for growing food crops, raising hogs and maintaining the dairy operations and herd.

Prison farms continued to flourish in the 1940s. Church Farm was an auxiliary prison built for prisoners nearing the end of their sentences. Church Farm inmates grew wheat, alfalfa hay and vegetables; a dairy operation was added in 1943. The dairy operation became quite sophisticated, winning three national dairy honor certificates for excellence in milk production. Church Farm and Dairy was later renamed as the Central Missouri Correctional Center in 1979.
By 1959, prison farm operations prospered. Six farms cultivated over five thousand acres. The harvests were canned and trucked to the various institutions, providing much of the food for the prisoners. Additionally, the milking herd at Algoa and prized Holsteins from Church Farm provided milk and dairy products for the prisoners. This productivity continued until the 1970s.

The 1980s proved an extremely difficult decade for farmers across America. Intermittent droughts, combined with over-extended credit for farmers, caused many farms to fail. Prison farms, while not part of the credit crises, had their own specific problems. At Church Farm and Dairy, years of internal corruption and mismanagement, combined with questionable feeding and breeding practices, led a legislative committee to fire the dairy herd manager and hire a new director. The highly esteemed farm would never recover.

The 1990s saw the severe decline and eventual elimination of prison farm practices. The influx of prisoners from urban environments through the years, declining interest in farming and shifting institutional priorities regarding inmate rehabilitation were just some of the causes. Natural disasters are also partially to blame. The Renz Farm, with its magnificent mule barn, suffered devastating losses during the flood of 1993. The damages to the farm were so great it never reopened.

Information for this article came from Somewhere in Time: 170 Years of Missouri Corrections by Mark S. Schreiber.

**Americanization of a German Immigrant Church**

**January 22, 2009, 7:00 p.m.**

German immigrants organized the German Central Evangelical Church of Jefferson City in 1858. By 1918, the church was thoroughly Americanized. The history of the church serves as an example of similar transformations undergone by other immigrant churches. Americanization can be traced through four aspects: strong support of free public education; patriotism during war time and development of democracy in church governance; increasing participation in civic life; and acceptance of English as the language of congregational life. To celebrate the German Central Evangelical Church’s sesquicentennial in 2008, the congregation, now the Central United Church of Christ, published a history of its role as a mainstream American church. Walter Schroeder will share the story of the German Central Evangelical Church and discuss how its history reflects the progressive Americanization of German immigrants.
Searching for Jim: Slavery in Sam Clemens’s World

February 26, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

Using a variety of primary sources including family papers, newspaper articles, court records, abolitionist and pro-slavery narratives, sermons and census records, Terrell Dempsey offers insight into what it meant to be an African slave in nineteenth century Hannibal, Missouri. Dempsey discusses the extent to which Samuel Clemens transcended this slave culture during his formative years and the struggles he later faced in dealing with race and guilt. Searching for Jim offers a new perspective on Samuel Clemens’s writings, especially his use of race in the portrayal of individual characters, their attitudes and worldviews. This book greatly expands knowledge of not only Samuel Clemens, but of Hannibal.

Family History Day Workshop: Missouri’s Judicial Records

March 14, 2009, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

For many years, the Missouri State Archives has worked with local court officials and the Missouri Supreme Court to help preserve, index and microfilm their records. Through the Missouri Digital Heritage Initiative, many of these court files are even being made available to researchers online. Historic court records offer tremendous insight into the lives of Missourians and provide a valuable window into the past. Because these files can be challenging to researchers, they are often overlooked in tracing family history. Senior Reference Archivist Patsy Luebbert will demonstrate the variety of court records available, including probate files; explain how to access these records; and teach participants how to interpret the information found for use in genealogy research.

No registration required.

Hardship and Hope: Missouri Women Writing about Their Lives, 1820-1920

March 26, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

Hardship and Hope brings to life the experiences of a diverse group of Missouri women, including known and unknown immigrants, slaves, prohibitionists and suffragettes. Carla Waal Johns will present dramatic readings from the diaries, letters and memoirs of these women, who wrote about the hardships they faced and the hope that sustained them. Interwoven with songs and piano solos, the selections will tell of family life, dedication to causes, achievement in careers and response to changes in society. Covering a little more than a century, from just before Missouri’s admission to the Union in 1821 to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment that gave women the right to vote in 1920, Hardship and Hope documents the important role women played throughout Missouri’s history.

Carla Waal Johns
Donations to Friends of the Missouri State Archives
as of October 31, 2008

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Recent Accessions
August – October 2008

The Missouri State Archives provides this listing for the research community to advise it of recent accessions of state and local government records. The reference staff at the Archives facility can provide further information on Missouri State Archives holdings.

Accessions are listed by the amount received in cubic feet or microfilm reels, with each cubic foot equaling approximately 2,750 pages of documents, and each microfilm reel containing between 1,500 and 2,500 images per reel.

Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Records

Department of Conservation. Resource Science Center.
Fisheries Research Final Reports. 1951-2006................................................................. 7 cubic ft.

Department of Economic Development.
Division of Tourism. 105 slide binders, 35 mm. ................................................................. 105 items

General Assembly.
Senate Records. Veto Session of 94th General Assembly, 2nd session, 2008. ............. 0.1 cubic ft.

Secretary of State.
Board of Canvassers. Report for Primary Election held August 5, 2008. ................. 0.1 cubic ft.
Primary Election Returns for August 5, 2008. ................................................................. 9 cubic ft.

Supreme Court of Missouri.

County and Municipal Records

Adair County.
Circuit Court. Case Files. May 1875-December 1899. ........................................... 43 reels

Carroll County.
County Commission Records. 1833-1894. ................................................................. 2 reels
Probate Court. Records. 1849-1938. ................................................................. 19 reels

Cass County.
Winter 2009

Cole County.
Circuit Court. Case Files. 1820-1992. ................................................................. 37 reels

Gasconade County.
Probate Court. Case Files. 1825-1856. ................................................................. 0.33 reel

Harrison County.

Johnson County.
Circuit Court. Case Files. 1840-1880. ................................................................. 9 reels

Laclede County.
County Clerk. County Commission. School Records. 1870-1937. ......................... 0.33 reel

Lawrence County.

Lincoln County.
Probate Court. Case Files. October 1821-August 1852. ......................................... 34 reels

Macon County.

Macon County. City of LaPlata.
City Clerk. Records. .................................................................................................. 7 reels

Montgomery County.
Collector of Revenue. Records (Taxes). 1866-1899. .................................................. 18 reels

Morgan County.
Circuit Court. Case Files. 1834-1962. ..................................................................... 37 reels

Newton County.

Osage County.
Circuit Court. Case Files (Criminal). 1900-1948. ..................................................... 18 reels
Platte County.

Putnam County.

St. Francois County.

Sainte Genevieve County.

St. Louis City.
Probate Court. Records. 1816-1897. ................................................................. 21 reels

St. Louis County.
Probate Court. Case Files. 1804-1821. ................................................................. 0.33 reel

St. Louis County. City of Ellisville.
City Clerk. Records. 1947-2007. ................................................................. 18 reels

St. Louis County. City of University City.
City Clerk. Building Permit Index Cards. 1920-1980. ........................................ 7 reels

Warren County.

Washington County.

Manuscripts and Miscellaneous
Arvin, Mrs. Jane. Algoa Prison Farm Photographs. B+W. 1930s. .......................9 items
Donations to the Missouri State Archives
August – October 2008
Immigration, Family History and County Records

Bollinger County Archives

The Long Train: Cemetery Records from Bollinger County.

Central United Church of Christ


Chappell, Ross

The Ross Family: Beginning in 1734 in Hanover County, Virginia, by Ross Chappell.

Greene County Archives and Records Center


Hickory County, Missouri, 1917 Land Owners Plat Book.

Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church Minutes, 1838-1870, Greene County, Missouri.

Prospect Baptist Church Minutes, 1858-1910, Webster County, Missouri.

Reprint of 1895 Plat Book of Jasper County, Missouri.

Reprint of Plat Book of Bates County, Missouri, 1895.

Springfield is Connected to the Rails: The “Cars” Finally Arrive.

Henderson, F. F.


Kimsey, Shirley I.

Cemeteries [of Platte County], South of 92 Highway, Book A and B, by Shirley Kimsey.

Platte County Historical Society

History of Platte County, Missouri: A Proud Legacy.

St. Boniface Catholic Church


Missouri/United States History

Giffen, Jerena East

Mary, Mary Quite: The Life and Times of Mary Whitney Phelps, 1812-1878, by Jerena East Giffen.

New Book Accessions
August – October 2008
Immigration, Family History and County Records

The Daveiss-Hess Family, From Powhatan to the Present: Our Indian Ancestry, Davis, Hess, Burks, Campbell, Dunlap and Associated Lines, compiled by Lillian Johnson Gardiner and Marian Knowles Albright.

Missouri/United States History

Great Plains Originals: Historic Documents from America’s Heartland, by Brian Burnes.
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www.sos.mo.gov/archives
archref@sos.mo.gov

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Thursday
8:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.
Saturday
8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.