

Alabama Gallery Collection Assessment (ALA)

Compiled by Hanrong Wang

February 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Alabama Gallery consists of two divisions: the Alabama Collection and the Old and Rare Book Collection. The materials in these collections are both eclectic and catholic in their nature making it impossible to evaluate them using the various traditional methodologies employed in assessing the other subject collections for the Houston Cole Library Collection Assessments. The Alabama Gallery collection is adequate for the University's instructional and research needs. In addition to supplementing the curriculum, it serves the interest of local researchers, genealogists, and historians.

HOLDINGS

The Alabama Gallery collection (ALA) contains **14,656** titles consisting of archival documents/publications of Jacksonville State University (JSU) and publications on Alabama and with Alabama authorship. Featured categories/subject areas of the collection include, but not limited to copies of University theses and dissertations, Papers of JSU's previous presidents, other publications by the University, University photographic collection, Oral History collection, local newspapers, local maps, and miscellaneous vertical files.

The collection also contains **1,171** titles of Old and Rare books, five display cases containing special items such as including Woodland Indian Bowl and a Space Shuttle Tile piece, several framed paintings and photographs including two paintings of the Confederate soldier John Pelham, and a few antique furniture pieces.

The following table provides a snapshot of the collection's featured Categories/Subject Areas:

Categories/Subject Areas	Library Holdings
Old and Rare books	1,171
Alabama	14,656
Jacksonville State University	1,200
Jacksonville State University – Dissertations.	360
Jacksonville State University Photographic Collection	See the link to the catalog
Oral history collection (Jacksonville State University)	285
Clarence William Daugette papers	See the link to the catalog
McGehee papers	See the link to the catalog
Mimosa	See the link to the catalog
The Chanticleer	See the link to the catalog
Jacksonville (Ala.) – History.	19
Jacksonville (Ala.) -- Maps	7
Jacksonville (Ala.) – Newspapers.	4

NATURE OF THE COLLECTION

Built in 1988, the collection in the Alabama Gallery originally consisted of university archives and public donations, including archival copies of University newspaper --- *The Teacola/Chanticleer*, a local newspaper --- *Jacksonville Republican*; and some Alabama maps. The primary purpose of the collection is to support the research needs of those interested in Alabamiana. It also supports JSU's mission of providing educational, cultural, and social experiences for a diverse study population. JSU publications and in-print Alabamian publications receive priority. Selected retrospective materials are acquired as the budget permits. When possible, materials are duplicated in the general stacks.*

SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT

Holdings through the Library's other subject collections supplement material in the Gallery.

WITHDRAWALS

Currency of materials in the ALA collection is not a major criterion, so withdrawals are kept to a minimum.

SUMMARY

Strengthens/Advancement Since Last Assessment

9,195 titles were added since last assessment, which comprise 62.74% of the current ALA collection. 491 titles were added to the Old and Rare collection since last assessment, which comprises 41.93% of the current ALA Old and Rare collection. Every effort is made to collect one copy of newly published Alabamiana.

Continuous efforts have been put into processing those remaining un-cataloged materials, which was mentioned as one of the weaknesses in the previous assessment.

Starting with the Harry Strange Collection of Alabamiana in 2004, archives from the Alabama Gallery including University yearbooks, historical photographs, old newspapers, oral histories, etc. have been digitized and made publicly available at http://libguides.jsu.edu/digital_collections

Weaknesses:

The ALA collection is weakest in archival state documents, which is due to the lack of a statewide depository system and the irregularity of these publications.

The Old and Rare collection is relatively small as it serves as a storehouse for items found in the collection that are determined to be unique or old.

There are materials that remain unprocessed.

Recommendations/Future Outlook

On-going efforts are needed for collecting and processing all identifiable Alabamiana materials. Additionally, efforts are needed for identifying, prioritizing, and digitizing materials per the Library's Digitization Plan. Immediate attention is needed with regards to the processing of the master theses located in the filing cabinets in order to make them discoverable in the Library's catalog.

Due to the nature of the Alabama Gallery and with the growing digitization projects, the Library would benefit greatly from having a full time Archivist/Rare Books Librarian. Having this faculty position would ensure that the Library would be able to accomplish the mission of providing information services and resource to support the scholarly and informational needs of our community. This position would also ensure that the Library would collect Alabamiana materials in a timely manner and that high value materials receive priority for digitization. A full time Archivist/Rare Books Librarian would be able to address the recommendations made in this assessment as well as safeguard the quality of the Alabama Gallery and its collection.

*Many thanks to Mr. William Hubbard, University Librarian 1988-2007, for providing the information on the history of the Alabama Gallery.