

SCAMeL Librarian Exchange Professional Development Program
Final Report

VISITING LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

VISITOR

Tim Nutt, M.L.I.S., C.A.
Director of Historical Research Center
UAMS Library
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

INSTITUTION VISITED

Moody Medical Library, University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston

DATE OF VISIT: April 26, 2019

GOALS FOR VISIT

Three goals were identified:

- Tour Blocker History of Medicine Collection to learn more about its history and holdings
- Learn about Blocker History of Medicine Collection's collecting, access, and use policies and procedures, and programming activities, as well as how the collections are promoted
- Discuss avenues for possible future collaborative projects between the two institutions

PLANNED ITINERARY

April 25:

- Depart Little Rock; Arrive in Houston; Drive to Galveston

April 26

- 8:50 am Met by Bobby Marlin, Archivist
- 9:00 am-10:00 am: Meet with Moody Medical Library Librarians
- 10:30 am-11:00 am: Presentation on Historical Research Center, UAMS Library to UTMB Librarians
- 11:30 am-1:00 pm: Lunch with Bobby Marlin, Archivist
- 1:15 pm-2:00 pm: Meet with Kelly Caldwell about digitization projects and web sites hosting Blocker History of Medicine digitized collections
- 2:00 pm-3:30 pm: Tour of Blocker History of Medicine collections
- 5:00 pm Depart Galveston

April 27

- Tour Houston

April 28

- Depart Houston; Return to Little Rock

GOALS ACHIEVED

All of the stated goals were met during my visit to the Blocker History of Medicine Collections at the Moody Medical Library.

GOAL: Tour Blocker History of Medicine Collection to learn more about its history and holdings

Mr. Marlin gave me an extensive tour of his repository and highlighted selected archival collections and rare books. Before diving into the holdings, Mr. Marlin summarized the history of the archives and its namesake, Truman G. Blocker Jr., M.D. Dr. Blocker, who also served as UTMB's first president, was instrumental in building the early collection through promotion and fundraising. His personal History of Medicine book collection was donated to the Moody Medical Library after his death in 1984, and the special collections were renamed for him.

The archival collections showed the scope of the Blocker Collection—from University history to space medicine. The space medicine collection of Dr. Charles Berry was especially interesting. In archives, the acquisition of one archival collection sometimes leads to additional, similar ones. This was the case with the James Gaume, M.D. collection. Mr. Marlin received a call from Dr. Gaume's daughter after being referred to him from NASA. While Dr. Gaume did not have a connection with UTMB, Mr. Marlin accepted the collection because of its significance to the space program (lunar housing) and its complimentary value to the Berry collection (not to mention its coolness factor). Of course, one of the gems of the Blocker Collection is the Louis Pasteur collection. Seeing this collection was one of the main reasons I applied for the grant, and I was not disappointed. I will also note that the exhibits highlighting the Berry collection are exceptional. The artifacts and rare book collections, like the archival collections, are extremely impressive. From 2nd Century-Roman surgical instruments to 16th Century-German ivory manikins to a replica of the first X-ray machine used at UTMB, the artifact collection is amazing.

Mr. Marlin also highlighted some of the rare books from their collection, including the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486)—a work on witchcraft. In addition to the archives in the Moody Library, Mr. Marlin also showed me “Big Red”, the first building built on the medical school campus. There we saw oversized sculptures of famous doctors throughout history (smaller versions are in the archives). The sculptures make an impression on visitors as they enter the building. There were so many highlights during the tour that it is difficult to choose a favorite. Mr. Marlin did an excellent job of showcasing his collections.

Kelly Caldwell, the Library Services Manager, in the Blocker History of Medicine Collection gave a thorough tour of their digital collections. The Blocker Collection has broadened access to their collections through their digitization efforts. While we have digitized some of our holdings, seeing what the Blocker Collection has accomplished has energized me to go further in our efforts.

GOAL: Learn about Blocker History of Medicine Collection's collecting, access, and use policies and procedures, and programming activities, as well as how the collections are promoted

During my visit to the Blocker History of Medicine Collections, Mr. Marlin and I discussed their collection policy and how new materials were acquired. Mr. Marlin noted that he implemented new use policies and procedures soon after he was hired to bring the Blocker Collection in line with other archives. As far as promotion, materials are excellently presented through exhibits. I

was also interested to learn that the UTMB Development Office recognizes the importance of the Blocker Collection and that potential donors are given tours of the archives. Mr. Marlin frequently presents to University donors, groups, and organizations, which benefits the Blocker Collection. I consider this a primary responsibility for an archivist so it was heartening to see it in practice at UTMB.

GOAL: Discuss avenues for possible future collaborative projects between the two institutions

Although the Blocker Collection and the Historical Research Center's holdings do not have many subject areas that overlap, Mr. Marlin and I did discuss the possibility of collaborating on future projects. While we did not identify any definite projects during my visit, we did agree to research topics that might be germane to both institutions and lend themselves to collaborative projects.

LESSONS LEARNED

The special collections and archives at UTMB are just as impressive as I imagined they would be. The facilities are first-rate with attractive exhibit spaces, an accommodating research room, an impressive rare book room, and archival storage. It was interesting to learn that the Blocker Collections have a dedicated HVAC system, an electrical emergency back-up, and has been sealed to prevent water damage. All of these precautions were put in place in 2008 after Hurricane Ike hit Galveston. After the disaster, the then-University President, knowing the value and historical significance of the Blocker Collections, funded these projects to safeguard the collection against future hurricane damage. It was gratifying to see university officials recognize the importance of the collection and take concrete actions.

Likewise, it was interesting to learn about the history of the collection and the collection's namesake. Having ardent supporters and promoters like Dr. Blocker are godsend to archives, which are usually bereft of acquisitions and operations money. It was also gratifying to watch the interaction between the staff of the various units at the Moody Medical Library. It was evident that other library employees recognize the importance of the Blocker Collections and enthusiastically support it.

Digitizing collections is now an important aspect of archives, and Mr. Marlin and his staff have done a top-notch job of seeking grants and other funding opportunities to scan materials. I'm hopeful that I can take the information I learned during my visit to Galveston and expand our digitization program.

Overall, the visit was extremely productive as it allowed me to compare my practices at UAMS to those at UTMB. It is always beneficial to meet other archivists and learn how other archives operate. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting with Mr. Marlin and his staff and learn more about this famed collection.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

I have no suggestions for improvement. The visit to the Moody Medical Library was informative. In addition to Mr. Marlin and Ms. Caldwell, the library director and other employees were extremely welcoming and willing to share information and suggestions. I appreciated the opportunity to visit with Mr. Marlin and view the collections held by the Blocker History of Medicine Collection.

SITE REPORT

HOST SITE COORDINATOR

Tim Nutt, M.L.I.S., C.A.

Director of the Historical Research Center
UAMS Library

VISITING LIBRARIAN

Robert O. Marlin
Archivist
Blocker History of Medicine Collection
Moody Medical Library-NTMB-Galveston

DATE OF VISIT: May 3, 2019

PREPARATION TIME

Preparation began in March 2019 with an exchange of emails between Mr. Marlin and me to schedule the dates of his visit. Approximately 2 hours were dedicated to selecting a date and organizing the schedule. Subsequent emails were with archivists at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies at the Central Arkansas Library System to arrange of tour of their archives for Mr. Marlin. The Butler Center's facilities are impressive, and Mr. Marlin readily agreed when I offered the suggestion. Additional emails between Mr. Marlin and me concerned lodging and parking. A total of approximately 3 hours were spent preparing Mr. Marlin's visit to the UAMS Library.

HOST LIBRARY PERSPECTIVE

The UAMS Library was pleased to host Bobby Marlin, Archivist of the Blocker History of Medicine Collection at Moody Medical Library, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. His presentation to UAMS faculty and staff on the Blocker Collection was well-received. Since the Historical Research Center's collection is much younger and smaller than the Blocker Collection, we were interested in Mr. Marlin's perspective on our holdings. He had a favorable opinion of our collection as a whole and was particularly impressed with (and envious of) a few artifacts, including an infant carrier from the 1940s. Mr. Marlin also met individually with some of the Historical Research Center's employees. Our Digital Initiatives Librarian summarized our digital projects (past and future). With both Marlin and Nutt having backgrounds in history and previous work experience at non-medical archives, some of the conversation centered on how medical archives differ from other repositories. It was beneficial to have Mr. Marlin's perspective and hear about his work experiences.

HOST ANOTHER?

Having Mr. Marlin on campus and having the opportunity to show off our collection (and even impress him with an artifact or two) was extremely rewarding. The UAMS Library would welcome the opportunity to host another visiting librarian.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There are no suggestions for improvement.