



Sharing the Past

SCHREINER UNIVERSITY'S SAM LANHAM DIGITAL LIBRARY

Schreiner University's William Logan Library is bringing the past to life for anyone with an Internet connection through the Sam Lanham Digital Library of Texas Hill Country History.

Posted online, the documents tell stories such as that of James B. Caywood, a soldier in Castroville in 1851, who was convicted of stealing and sentenced to a year in Huntsville prison. Or the story of The Knights of the Golden Circle—a secret antebellum organization that sought to establish a slave empire encompassing the southern United States, the West Indies, Mexico, and part of Central America; an area some 2,400 miles in diameter—hence the name Golden Circle.

crucial that we preserve them and that is what this digital library will do.”

Candice Scott, director of the William Logan Library and information technology, said that making the items available via the Internet contributes to the efforts of historians, teachers, students and general researchers by providing access to anyone with an Internet connection. At the same time, this will broaden Schreiner's presence in the academic world.

Sara Schmidt, special collections librarian for Schreiner, said the digital library provides a way for historical documents to be taken care of but still be accessible to the public.

The digital collection has been available on the World Wide Web since April, but she is optimistic that the process of entering the materials will be never-ending.

“Our hope is that people will continue to donate these precious pieces of history to us,” Schmidt said.

Kathleen Walker '94, director of technical support at Schreiner, said the idea for the digital library originated five years ago, while she was working on her master's degree in educational technology from Texas A&M. “We started working on it in earnest in October 2005,” she said. Digital libraries are increasingly relevant in today's world, Walker said.

“The study of the primary sources of history—the records and diaries and remembrances of our past—can illuminate the realities that inform today's news,” she said. “A digital library opens to the world the quiet, reflective corners of history.”

Lanham adds that the documents themselves will still be available to the public.

“There is something to be said for touching and feeling the actual document,” Lanham said. “The digital library serves to preserve, but you don't want to take away the experience of actually handling the items.”

Several factors influence the selection of items to be digitized in the digital library,

<http://digital.library.schreiner.edu/sldl/>

“These documents can teach us about who we are and where we came from,” said Sam Lanham '51, former Schreiner professor and retired Presbyterian minister, who donated most of the original collection.

Now the documents that tell these and other narratives are being preserved for future generations to see and learn from.

“It is too easy for these documents to be lost or destroyed,” said Lanham. “It is

“This is creating a depository of material about the people who helped shape the Hill Country,” Schmidt said.

Each document is scanned into the computer server, preserving it in its original state for viewing by the public.

“This is an amazing tool for anyone doing research or anyone who is just curious,” Schmidt said.



Left to right, Sara Schmidt, Kathleen Walker, Sam Lanham, Judy Glaze, Tim Ajax, Candice Scott

including preservation considerations, historical significance and value, and potential for digitization.

Scott said, "As an academic institution, Schreiner has an obligation to contribute as best it can to the accumulated knowledge of mankind. The Sam Lanham Digital Library will become one small way for Schreiner's library and technology departments to do just that. We have many rare manuscripts and monographs that document the history of the Hill Country, and we hope to collect more."

Scott added that the decision to have the library bear Lanham's name was an easy one.

"We are honored to name our digital library for Dr. Sam Lanham, a former faculty member and a life-long friend of the library and of learning," Scott said. "It is through Dr. Lanham's generosity that we have most of these rare documents. It is from his continuing support and encouragement that we are growing the Hill Country Collection. With his help, we are making a difference." For his

part, Lanham wants to see the collection continue to grow.

"We can learn so very much from the people that have come before us if we take the time to stop and learn," he said.

You can visit the Sam Lanham Digital Library at <http://digital.library.schreiner.edu/sldl/>.



make a gift
of history

Have you considered giving your family papers to an institution where future generations can learn about history through your family's own experiences? Schreiner University's William Logan Library

seeks donations of historical documents, manuscripts, journals, letters, hand-drawn

maps, etc. that reflect the history and cultural development of the Texas Hill Country and may currently be part of personal family archives.

Inquiries may be addressed to:

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Dr. Candice Scott, *Director*

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make a
financial gift

Monetary contributions to the Sam Lanham Digital Library of Texas Hill Country History or the Logan Library may be sent directly to the Office of Advancement, Schreiner University, CMB 6201, 2100 Memorial Blvd., Kerrville, Texas 78028.

make a gift
of your time

Logan Library offers opportunities for volunteers within many aspects of our digital library projects. Volunteer duties may include word processing, inventory and re-housing of items, preservation tasks, research and much more.

Volunteer assignments are based on the library's current needs and projects, and on each volunteer's expertise and interest. For more information, please contact Dr. Candice Scott, director of Logan Library.