

Archives, Libraries and Historians: Teaching Together: A long term collaboration

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- *The VSU Archives and Special Collections supports the University's commitment to scholarly and creative work, enhances instructional effectiveness, encourages faculty scholarly pursuits, and supports research in selective areas of institutional strength focused on regional need by collecting, preserving, and providing access to records of enduring historical value documenting the history and development of VSU and the surrounding South Georgia region and in support of VSU curriculum.*

Why do the Teaching Program for an Archives

- Mission of a University is teaching and research—center yourself to do both.
- Best for long term viability of the Archives and Library
- Academic archivists and librarians are faculty
- Stay within the academic portion of the University (Last place for budget cuts)
- College students need to experience this type of research and primary records.
- Without wide archival experience, people won't contribute stuff, won't save stuff, and won't support Archives.
- Bottom Line—It's worth the work.

How to Start a Teaching Program

- How to get them to come to you?
 - Visit the Faculty
 - What can you do for them
- Surround the History Department
 - Go where you are wanted—make sure others find out about it. (6th grade needs to know about archives too....)
 - Don't be proud. Teach when they travel.
 - Go for the new blood

Types of Teaching with the Archives

- The Archives Orientation—for those planning Archival Research—and who is that??? Like library BI only for Archives.
- Library Instruction with Primary Sources included.
- The longer term course-integrated instruction. Large research project centered in archives, may include several formal classes and individual meetings. Co-teaching.
- The internship or work project that may or may not include research component. Orientation for training. Sole supervisor.
- 2-3 credit semester long course, taught alone or co-taught

History and Archives

- The Archives is to a Historian like a lab is to a scientist



History Class Connection



- **Dr. Catherine Oglesby, Dr. Melanie Byrd, and Dr. John Dunn of the History Department and Deborah Davis of the VSU Archives have collaborated on archival projects for history classes for the past 16 years.**



The Beginning:
A meeting between a history
professor who wanted hands-on
experience for entry level
students and an Archivist with
188 boxes of presidential papers
to process...with little help.

**Archives
Apprenticeships
for
an Entry-Level
History Class:**

**A Win-Win
Situation**

The Solution



A several-part program to have history students learn about primary sources, learn about VSU, and gain extra credit. We started with the presidential boxes and the old archives room we had just vacated.



History Point of View: Three perspective on why come to Archives:

**History students need to
understand:**

- **Primary sources and secondary sources and what the differences are**
- **What an archives is and how it relates to the study and understanding of history**
- **The work necessary to make primary sources meaningful**
- **How working in an archives is a potential career path for historians**

Why would a professor want to do this?— Dr. Byrd



Already had experience with archives' "hands-on history."

How does it meet professor's goals?

- Because gives students a chance to do history instead of just reading about it.
- It is a way that students who have trouble with the abstract part of history can still be exposed to historical methodology, texts and artifacts
- It's a way to get students into the library and to see how vital a library and an archives are to the college experience.
- It is a fair and intellectually challenging way for students to truly earn extra credit.

Pt 2

- As a professor I want to help students achieve the grade that they feel they can earn.
-And this is a valid way of doing it.
- Opens their minds and makes the past come alive.
- Connects them to the heritage of the campus—see school history and culture

Pt. 3

- It is a way to get students interacting with other students and library faculty whom they might not ever meet.
- Shows them the foundation of research that maybe they can apply to different topics or other classes. Transfer of knowledge.
- Archives is competent to assess skill and easy to tell the credit from the spread sheet.

John Dunn's work from intro to intensive in Archives



VALDOSTA
STATE
UNIVERSITY
Building for Our Next Century
1908-2008

Summer Archival Field Experience



Undergraduate history students learn about and engage in hands-on archival research at the oldest military base in the United States.



FUSE
Faculty & Undergraduate
Student Engagement

11



John

- It will help students—Ways of learning
- Helps the library
- Learning history skills in a different way
- If they don't take tests well—can show what they are doing
- 60 hours guy took himself from a d to an a and aced the final
- History Career focus
- Focus on students who have gone on to work in Archives and for careers.

Academic Libraries and Volunteers—why haven't we done this before?

Volunteers long used in public library/historical society areas

- **Limitations for volunteers in Academic Libraries:**
 - Insurance
 - Parking
 - Administration

Students as Volunteers

- **Insurance: covered if a class activity or in library studying.**
- **Parking: already dealt with.**
- **Administrative Support: it's the educational mission of the unit.**
- **Motivation of the Students: grades primary, doing good secondary.**
- **Education: intimately teaches nature of primary source materials.**

Special Considerations of This Archives Program

- **How will they handle the materials?**
- **What can they do with little or no training?**
- **How to supervise without taking time from other patrons/research needs?**
- **Where to house program?**
- **How to make the project useful to us?**
- **How to make sure they learn and it applies to their studies?**
- **How to keep track of their time and effort?**

Assessment: Student Rewards

- **Grades, future classes**
- **Verbal appreciation**
- **possible jobs**
- **Archives now has a hiring pool of history majors only, with a 3.0 gpa, who have volunteered or taken a class with us.**



History Professor Evaluation

The project, along with Ms. Deborah Davis's presentations of the history of Valdosta State University, provides for the students a look at how micro-history or history at a very local level fits with the larger picture. Ms. Davis surveys the history of VSU through the Progressive Era into the 1980s. They get to hear and see what life was like

at VSU during the Depression, World War II, and the Civil Rights Movement, for instance. By working with and contextualizing archival sources, students come to understand something of both the art and the craft of the historian. Students work in micro-film, in university official's papers, such as those of the most recently retired Dr. Hugh Bailey, and at cataloging local newspapers from a specified time frame, for example. Although they take on the assignment obviously for extra credit, they discover and appreciate the value of hands-on learning.

Lessons Learned Over Time:

- **Planning and More Planning**
Handouts, schedules, hiring,
training manual
- **Orientation timing depends on professor
and class, not Archives**
- **History is. . . “older than me”—unless
it’s really cool.**
- **People can’t come in one week before
the program ends and do this....**
- **Record Keeping is constant.**

New Projects: New Partners

- **More Professors involved—separate record keeping—4-5 plus volunteer groups**
- **More levels of students: different complexity of projects**
- **New projects...”older than me”**
- **Appropriateness of projects to student level is key to success**

Odd and Short-term projects:





Results—Growth in teaching program

- **2-5 professors heavily enrolled in program—depending on semester.**
- **Opportunity to “team teach” with history professor for majors— History 3000 work project.**
- **MLIS program participates with online archives projects.**
- **Overall Archives Teaching program, including volunteer classes, has expanded to approximately 30 classes per semester from 3-4.**



Results—Growth

- Hiring options from student volunteers.
- Bringing friends in volunteer groups.
- Program recognized on campus and around state.
- Natural magnet for student workers and interns now.
- Raw work is done that we can use to process.
- Students come back to ask reference questions and get our help.
- We have opportunities to teach or team teach with different depts.
- We are now officially included in the history department's experiential learning and teaching curriculum
- *Now more necessary to teaching mission of university!*

Financial Considerations

- One semester students worked a total of 469.42 hours
- At 7.25 an hour, we would have had to pay \$3403.29 to get similar work from student assistants.
- Our paid student assistants worked on Archives projects and boxes while supervising, so costs directly related to the project were very small
- IT WAS LIKE GETTING A GRANT WITHOUT HAVING TO WRITE ONE!

The Babylonian Clay Tablets

Valdosta State University - 5,000-year-old treasure rediscovered in library storage room - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.valdosta.edu/news/releases/babylonian.tablets.101905/

- Public Info/Media Relations Trailblazer
- Publication & Design Services

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Mon-Thurs 8-5:30
Friday 8-3:00

Contact
Phone 229-333-5980
800-464-3638
Fax 229-245-3891
Email Charles Harmon

LEAVE A LEGACY®

RSS 0.91
What is RSS?

5,000-year-old treasure rediscovered in library storage room

Valdosta State University Odum Library has uncovered an ancient treasure that excites even the mildest Indiana Jones wanna-be.


The treasure is a collection of 5,000-year-old Babylonian cuneiform clay tablets, dating back from 2300 BC to 500 BC. Cuneiform is one of several writing systems of the ancient East, in which wedge-shaped impressions were made in soft clay tablets. These tablets, delicate in nature, literally fit in the palm of one's hand, measuring only 1.5 inches squared.

Dr. Richard Holmes Powell, first president of South Georgia State Normal College (now VSU) acquired a collection of ten of these tablets from Edgar Banks, an archaeologist working in Iraq in the early 20th century. Powell intended the tablets to provide learning opportunities for the school's students; however, over the years, the tablets remained preserved in a library storage room. It wasn't until a few years ago, that the tablets were found by Deborah Davis, Archivist. In an effort to make them available to the public without frequent handling, the tablets were scanned and made available for viewing on the web, even though, no one could interpret the inscriptions.

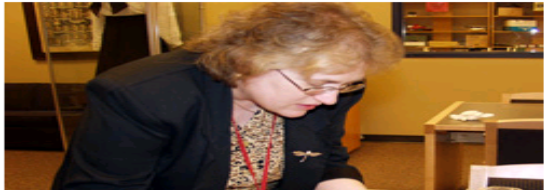
Before long, Cale Johnson, a cuneiform scholar from UCLA, saw the tablets on the web and offered to translate them. Through his translations, many things can be studied about this ancient time of history. A detailed interpretation of these tablets and an explanation of their significance can be found at <http://books.valdosta.edu/arch/Babylonian/babylonian.htm>.

Davis said these tablets are some of the earliest samples of writing, but just as important, they reveal a significant part of business exchange, religion, medicine, etc., of ancient everyday life. "And now, we have a part of it," said Davis.

For more information, contact Davis at 333-7150 or dsdavis@valdosta.edu.



Dr. Melanie Byrd, professor and coordinator of planning and program review in the History Department, holds a piece of the treasure in the palm of her hand.





BABYLONIAN CLAY TABLETS

Exhibit
Archives & Special Collections
c.2112 -2004 BC

[Home](#)[Archives](#)[Tablets](#)[Contact Us](#)

Babylonian Clay Tablets

at South Georgia State Normal College¹



From Babylon to Valdosta

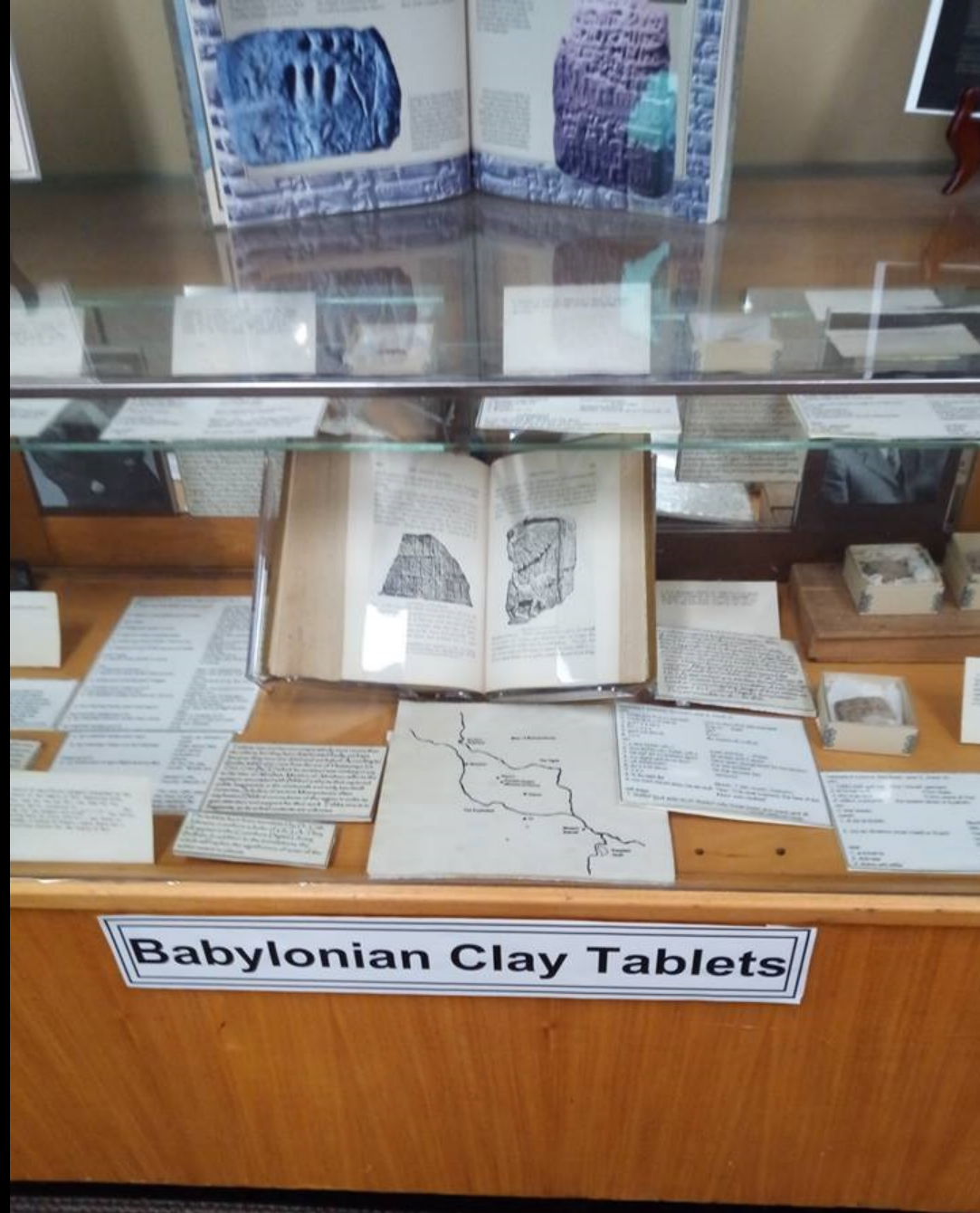
Dr. Richard Holmes Powell, first president of South Georgia State Normal College (now Valdosta State University), acquired ten Babylonian clay tablets for the school's students to



Valdosta Three

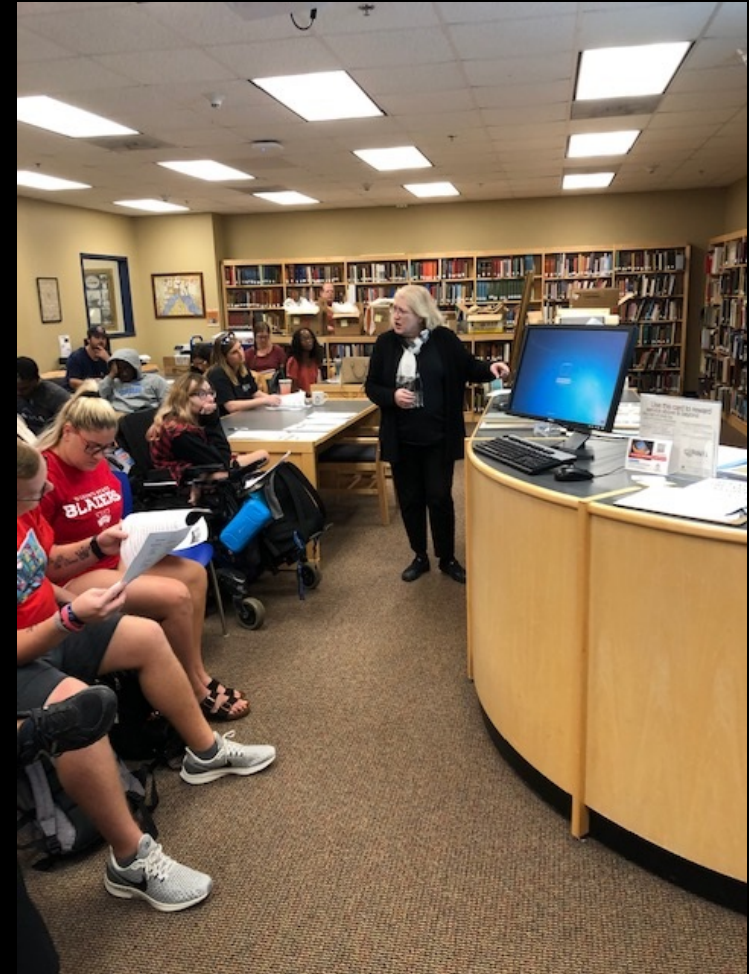
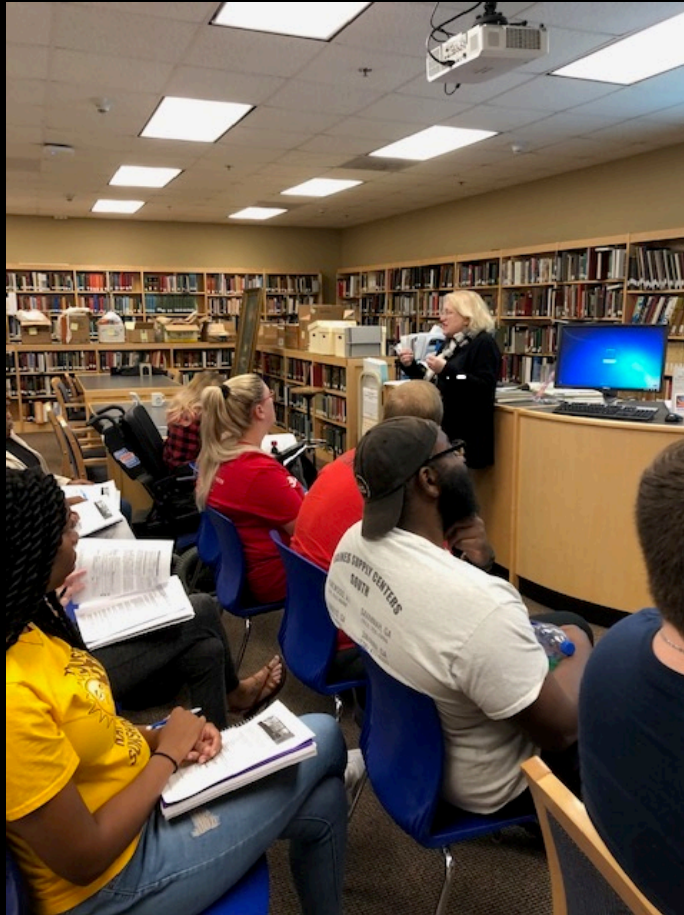
*A receipt (c.2350 B.C.) found at
Jekha for three lambs and
seventeen kids delivered on the
twenty- ninth day of the month.
The symbol denoting the number
thirty carved on the edge of the
tablet stands for the total number
of animals sacrificed.*

FRONT	Translations by line
3(diš) sila4	(For) three lambs and
1(u) 7(diš) 'maš2'	17 male goats
ša3 uri5ki-ma	in Ur,
u4 3(u) la2 1(dištenû)-kam	on the 29th day,
ki ab-ba-sa6-ga-ta	from Abba-saga
BACK	
1. na-lu5 i3-dab5	Nalu assumed administrative
(Line Blank)	(Line Blank)
iti ki-siki-dnin-a-zu	Month: "The ... of Ninazu" (4t



Babylonian Clay Tablets

Library Instruction





History of Food Library Orientation:

This class could be a very “fun” class; however it will take a good bit of preparation to find the books and sources needed to do your assignments. Our stacks here at Odum will not provide you all the materials you need. But they are a start:

Books are organized by subject headings or else searched for by key-words:

Common food history subject headings;

Cookery--History

Diets--History

Food--History

Food Habits--History

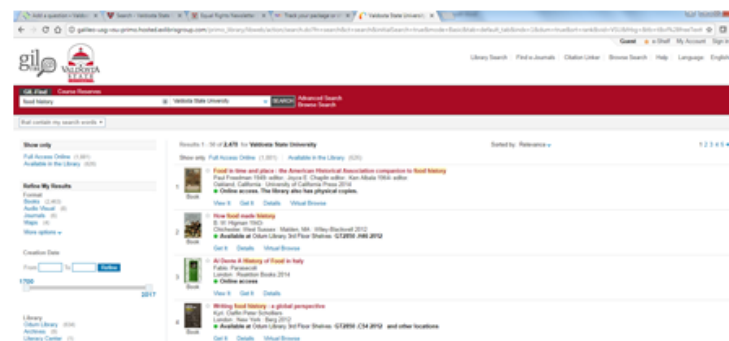
Gastronomy--History

Kitchens--History

su:Food habits united states History

su:Food habits Europe History

In the **Gil Find Catalog** search all of the above headings and browse to see if your topic is there. It is the widest net you can cast inside the library. These works will be here at ODUM.



4950 3 days: Books, Journals and Primary Sources



Ancient History in Film—Book Sources



1. Have you checked a reference source from your handout or an online encyclopedia for background material on your topic?
2. Using your handout, find the appropriate subject headings for history behind your film:

3. Search in Gil Find—[Valdosta State University](#) and Gil Find—[University System of Georgia](#).
How many in Valdosta _____ How many in University System of Georgia _____
4. Combine a general subject heading and a keyword, for example “Trojan war” and [Hittite](#). Were the results better? _____
5. Find a book in Gil Find on your topic in the VSU Library. Go get it, if you don’t already have it. 10 min to search in library.
6. Make an order in Gil Express _____
7. Search in [Worldcat](#) using a key-word search devised from what you know of the period and then using the subject. How many useful items on the first page? Keyword _____? Subject _____?
8. Combine a general subject heading and a keyword, for example “Trojan war” and [Hittite](#). Were the results better?



Complete Archives perspectives syllabus



PERSPECTIVES 2299 Pers 2299 A, Archives and Libraries for Historians

SYLLABUS

Faculty:

*Professor Deborah Davis, Director of University Archives. Office: Odum Library, 4th floor

Phone: 229 259 7756

Email: dsdavis@valdosta.edu

*Professor Melanie Byrd, Department of History. Office: 2118 Ashley Hall (south wing, second floor)

Phone: 333-5947

Email: mbyrd@valdosta.edu

Area B Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate knowledge of global and regional perspectives in areas such as the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

Complete Archives perspectives syllabus ▾



Sept 9, Day 6: How to find books--

- READ on Reserve *½ of chapter one of Understanding Archives pp. 1-21*
- **Meet in Room 2633 Odum library**

Sept 11, Day 7: How to find journal articles--

- READ: The information Literacy User's guide: Section Scope Knowing what is available: <https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/the-information-literacy-users-guide-an-open-online-textbook/chapter/scope-knowing-what-is-available/>
- **Meet in Room 2633 Odum Library**

Sept 16, Day 8: Virtual Tour of Archives—

- READ Reserve article: Foote – *To Remember and Forget* – AA Vol. 53, 1990, pg. 378-392
- **Meet in Archives, 4th floor Odum Library**

Sept 18, Day 9: Primary Sources --

- READ: *Evaluating evidence exercise* <http://www.learner.org/courses/amerhistory/interactives/>

Sept 23, Day 10: History Article-- Find the Thesis:

Librarians and Archives teaching with the History Department

- Work is critical to our mission
- Gets students into the Archives and the Library
- Information Literacy is a critical skill for professors to impart in their classes
- The Volunteer Program is part of the University's Retention efforts
- Experiential Learning is becoming more central to Universities' educational mission and we are a large part of that Experiential Learning—now part of the curriculum.

Need More Info? Contact Us

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