MINING THE ARCHIVES,
EXHIBITING OUR PAST

Displays by World Civilization II Students
Spring 2013
Dr. Brian Hallstoos
Almost 20 years ago, Dubuque was not the quiet and friendly city we know today. Instead it was a place where tensions were high among those who did not agree with the slow movement into the city of African Americans, drawn here by job incentives. Tensions reached a high point when a series of crosses were burned throughout Dubuque and a brick was thrown through the window of an African American member of the community’s house. From this topic our group learned that many of the people who objected to African Americans moving to the city claimed that they did not have racial objections, but simply resented people taking their jobs. Some people also opposed becoming a racially mixed community, as they saw African Americans as a group who brought crime and gangs. The people who burned the crosses said that these burnings were not racially motivated, but rather were meant to send a message to the city that they did not want to change the community’s make-up. They were not racists, they claimed, and all they were trying to do was protect the city of Dubuque from forced change. Regardless of intent, cross burnings clearly evoked a long tradition of racial terrorism employed by the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups against African Americans.

Our exhibit includes an article about an African American man, who after 17 years forgave everyone who acted in a discriminatory way toward him in the 1990’s. Jason Greer moved to Dubuque in 1991 because his dad was hired as the city’s first black principal. The night he was introduced, a cross was burned in a lawn close to the district office of the school. Greer’s father got a gun shortly after someone broke into their apartment. When Greer would walk in the street, people would give him the “Heil Hitler” salute. His family’s coming to Dubuque was part of a May 1991 city-approved plan to recruit 100 black professionals over 10 years.
DUBUQUE’S FIGHTS BACK AGAINST THE KU KLUX KLAN
Chris Scott, Devon Smith, and Allyson Street

In 1865 after the Civil War, a group of white southerners decided to form a group known as the Ku Klux Klan. This group was formed to support white supremacy by terrorizing blacks in the South. The group grew rapidly by drawing in members who were white Protestants from small towns and cities. In Iowa, the Klan has had chapters in Davenport, Sioux City, Waterloo, Ottumwa, Des Moines, and even Dubuque. The Klan peaked in the 1920’s and began to influence elections across the state. They did anything and everything to stop African Americans from rising up, including killing black leaders. By the 1930’s the Klan died down only to be brought back to life in the 1980’s by protesting affirmative action programs that tried to create a balance between white and black students in college.

Our exhibit focuses on two incidences of Klan activity in Dubuque. In 1924 the Klan asked to assemble at Kane Heights football field on the University of Dubuque campus. UD President Karl Wettstone declined their request in a letter included in our exhibit. Ranked eighth in the category of “smallest metropolitan black populations” in 1983, Dubuque tried to diversify its population later in the decade by soliciting blacks to move here. This caused uproar within the Klan, leading them to burn several crosses, march through Dubuque, which the Telegraph Herald illustrates in an article, and rally for members. In response, a group that opposed the Klan wore ribbons symbolizing their desire for peace and equality for all and fair treatment of African Americans. This opposition has represented the views of most Dubuquers, who do not welcome the Klan, will not tolerate their acts of hatred, and anticipate the group becoming past history as the city moves forward.
OVERCOMING RACIAL BARRIERS:
UD & JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY
Cody Hirsch, Molly Bohannan, and Stacy Simmons

In the early 1960s the University of Dubuque twice teamed up with Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, NC to exchange students for one week. UD sent white students to JCSU and JCSU sent African American students to UD. According to records, this exchange first occurred in 1962 and again in 1964. These experiences gave students of each ethnic group a chance to see what it was like to be the minority and that barriers could be broken. When the JCSU students came to UD they attended classes as well as a dance. When UD students went to JCSU they attended classes and even went to a bowling alley that was for university students only.

The University of Dubuque was racially ahead of many schools in the 1960s. Discrimination and segregation were huge national problems. UD President Gaylord M. Couchman, was determined to break down racial barriers as much as possible. One of his tactics was the Johnson C. Smith exchange, which let students from different races and different parts of the country experience what it was like living in opposite worlds for a brief time. All the students who went on the trip came back with a new view on life and many wished for a longer trip because they enjoyed it so much. One of our exhibit photos shows students from both JCSU and UD arriving at their destinations after a flight. A 1962 yearbook shows the students from JCSU at UD. Interviews from the students in both groups all tell of welcoming environments and they have stories of new friends and good times. Through this one creative example of desegregation, viewers can see that UD was ahead of the curve on racial issues in the 1960’s.
German Immigration: Time for Unity

Rikki Dress and Reginald Richter

The history of German immigration to the United States goes back to the early 1800’s. In 1914 Germany invaded Belgium during WWI, which was referred to as the “Rape of Belgium.” This act of aggression led to anti-Germanism. According to June Granatir Alexander, “slightly more than 4.6 million people living in the United States in 1917 came from territories governed by the central powers, and nearly 2.5 million of these foreign-born inhabitants were German.” Life as a German living in America was not easy. Many restaurants did not allow German food to be on their menu for people to order, and German music was also banned because it spread their culture. It is important to remember that many Germans migrated for reasons connected to agriculture rather than for political reasons.

German immigration played a key role in the development of the University of Dubuque, especially in terms of campus growth and expansion. Our exhibit shows one of the ways that UD tried to raise money for such growth through what was known as “The Plan.” The plan was so significant because it shows that the population of students of foreign descent was growing at a rate that the campus couldn’t keep up by the late 1920’s. UD was trying to raise money through annuity bonds so that they could build new buildings. The photograph of students in our exhibit illustrates the high percentage of enrolled foreign students. In 1927 (approximately when these photographs were taken) five of the 31 seniors came from abroad, and four of these were from Germany.
Steamboating with Mark Twain & “Steamboat Bill”  
Alex Eckes, Jorge Bonilla, and Matt Sadler

Steamboating on the Mississippi River allowed for the transportation of people and freight and was very important because it was an efficient means of travel. In the early 1800’s, steamboats were considered a luxury and people who were able to ride them shared experiences that shaped the culture along the Mississippi, including in Dubuque. Through the years the cost went down and by 1859 the trip from Dubuque to St. Paul was $2. It is hard to talk about the Mississippi and steamboating without talking about Mark Twain. Twain was able to take his experience from the river and share it with others by talking about the scenery and different cultures he ran into on the Mississippi. The great increase in the number of railroads and trains around the 1860’s inevitably led to a decline in steamboating.

When Mark Twain made his journey up the river on a steamboat he directly mentioned the beauty of the Mississippi around the Dubuque area. “We noticed that above Dubuque the water of the Mississippi was olive-green—rich and beautiful and semi-transparent, with the sun on it.” After his journeys he addressed the people of Dubuque and many other cities and towns about his experience on the Mississippi River. Dr. William J. Petersen, also known as “Steamboat Bill,” was a graduate of the University of Dubuque and spent much of his life researching the history of steamboats on the Mississippi River. Steamboats are still a part of the culture in Dubuque and there are several on display at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium.
The University of Dubuque comes from strong German decent, which highlights the significance of our exhibit’s focus on anti-German sentiment that developed during the First World War. Our group reviewed propaganda cartoons of this era collected in a book where we found American resentment towards the German-American population because of Germany’s role in the war. Anti-German feelings were strong among Dubuquers, including those at UD. In the midst of this war and hostility, UD started to question their heritage and eventually changed the name of the school. The title of our exhibit, The German Expulsion, refers to this “cleansing” of German cultural influence across the nation.

Our exhibit features three items representing the anti-German sentiment during World War I. The first is a book of cartoon propaganda opened to an image of a newspaper cartoon showing the office of a German newspaper in America with a book entitled Deutschland uber Alles, which loosely translates to All about Germany. The accompanying caption suggests that German-Americans wave a false American flag allowing them to commit high treason in the interest of their fatherland. The second image depicts a King Kong looking figure that represents Germans and their barbaric behavior during the war. Appealing to Americans’ fear of invasion, this cartoon warns, “If this war is not fought to a finish in Europe, it will be on the soil of the United States.” The third and final item depicts the German Kaiser walking from row to row counting dead Europeans, with the fallen consisting of working men, housewives, and children.
Our project focuses on the Vietnam War, which was long, destructive, and cost a lot of American lives. More specifically, we focus on how this terrible war affected people from Dubuque. We learned from articles and pictures in the Myers Library archive what this war meant to local residents. The photographs and stories by Dubuque reporter Robert Woodward, Jr. gave the people back home in Iowa an inside look at what was really going on in the war. The articles focused on individuals from Dubuque who served and died in Vietnam, including University of Dubuque students Jeffrey B. Dodge, Michael Downey, Roger A. Meyers, and Ronald Sagers. They will never be forgotten for what they did for this country. We want to honor their sacrifice and express our appreciation for the involvement of every student from our university in this war.

The Vietnam War lasted from 1959 to 1975, and directly affected the lives of the University of Dubuque students who were drafted and the lives of their families and friends. Our exhibit honors Dodge, Downey, Meyers, and Sagers by offering brief details of their time at the University of Dubuque, as well as intimate details about their time in Vietnam until death. Each of them was involved at UD in different ways and had a different rank in the military. We picked several photographs to illustrate their diverse collective experience. Viewing these photographs by Woodward, Jr. may help observers comprehend where these soldiers were located and through what they endured.
VIETNAM WAR PROTESTS
Erik Orvis, Jasmine Thomas, and Jacob Volkey

The Vietnam War in its early years was a small issue to most Americans. It soon fueled a major nationwide political movement with a heart centered at college campuses, where a majority of the protesting occurred. The protests ranged from silent vigils to demonstrations to boycotts, and even incited vandalism. The protests gained prominence after the United States initiated a sustained bombing campaign in Vietnam in 1965. They increased after the Vietnamese army launched a successful offensive against American troops and the Ohio National Guard fired upon a crowd of anti-war protesters at Kent State University, killing four students on May 4, 1970. Protests across the country were important because they showed that Americans cared about the country’s national interests. Students voiced their opinions nationwide.

The Vietnam War protests relate to the University of Dubuque because students protested here like they did at many other colleges and universities across the country. Our exhibit includes two newspaper articles that explain students’ opinions on the war, along with pictures from the school yearbook, which show a demonstration going on in the middle of campus. We chose to put these objects together because they symbolize what was occurring nationwide at college campuses. Even a small campus like UD demonstrated their oftentimes conflicting positions on the war.
NAVY V-12 PROGRAM: A PIECE OF UD’S HISTORY
Michelle Finnegan, Ethan Hall, and Ben Rockwell

The Navy V-12 program was started back in 1940 to train future officers. The program helped the University of Dubuque stay open during the Second World War while many other colleges closed. It was the first of its kind to break through the racial barrier of segregation by allowing African Americans to join its crew of servicemen to fight. The Navy V-12 program instilled discipline in the men, which helped them to be more effective in the workforce after the war was over. There were a great number of men participating in the program. “Of the 125,000 men enrolled, among them 10,000 from the fleet, 60,000 completed the program.” The V-12 program ended on June 30, 1946 because naval officers were not in great demand seeing as the war was over.

For viewers familiar with the campus, the pictures in our exhibit on the Navy V-12 program reveal how things have changed, such as the addition of new buildings, the flagpole no longer residing in the Quad, and the anchor being moved towards the football field. The picture with Navy students was taken in the Quad, and close examination reveals the age of the photo. The sidewalks look made of gravel and certain trees in the photograph no longer stand, which illustrates additional physical changes over the last 70 years. A document in our exhibit contains officers’ signatures and reveals that UD had a successful Navy Program with a large number of participants. This document is significant because every single person on this list holds a piece of UD’s history during wartime.
UD DURING WORLD WAR II
Mariah Zwart and Michael Steffens

The world was a scary place in the 1940s because of World War II. America and the Allies were fighting the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan, attempting to keep them from taking over the world. But what was happening in Iowa? Like in many other states, residents of Iowa helped the war effort in many different ways, from serving as soldiers to making military supplies. Iowa lost many of its soldiers in the war. One of the more infamous cases was that of the Sullivan brothers from Waterloo, who were all killed in the sinking of the USS Juneau (CL-52). It is important to remember what all men and women in Iowa, not just the soldiers, went through to keep our country and our world free; it is also important to give all these people the respect and honor they deserve.

Our exhibit features a newspaper and a letter written by a soldier to an Iowa friend who went to the University of Dubuque. An article in The Cue notes how the rate of students enrolling at UD dropped 43% in 1943 from the previous year. The same happened with a lot of other universities in Iowa because of World War II. The letter a soldier wrote to his friend at UD explains how tough life was in the war. We placed these objects together because one explains what life was like at UD and the other explains what life was like as a soldier during this tumultuous period; together they help illustrate the link between the college and wartime experiences.
**EDUCATED FEMALE STANDOUTS**  
Jen Pohlman, Joe Shue, and Alicia Robinson

Women in higher education were uncommon in the United States before the 1920’s due to the fact that they were expected to marry, stay at home, raise their families and do housework, while men provided for their families. During World War II, though, things began to shift. In the 1930’s women-only colleges started to appear throughout the country because the men were overseas fighting in the war. Women started to enter college in higher numbers and make a big difference on campuses during the late 1940’s through the 1970’s. This demographic change in higher education is important because it marked bold steps toward women’s equal rights in the United States and paved the way for where they are today. Although women entered college and graduate programs at an increasing rate, few taught at the college level until the final decades of the century.

Our exhibit focuses on two women who were prominent professors at the University of Dubuque in the mid-20th century. Dorothy Taylor, who taught physics from 1942 to 1977, and Hazel Roethlisberger, who taught math from 1943 to 1976 and continued to teach on a part-time basis after retirement, accomplished great things during their time here. A certificate and pin that Dorothy Taylor received from Kappa Delta Pi, an Honor Society in Education, attests to her outstanding contributions as an educator. A photo depicts Taylor teaching a class in physics here at UD, during a time when there were very few female teachers at the school. A registration for her book *General College Physics Laboratory Manual* published in 1950 shows her high level of success. A photo of Hazel Roethlisberger teaching a Math class in 1959-1960 and a letter by the Board of Directors showing their appreciation for her long service at UD illustrate how important was her presence. UD was ahead of the curve by employing female professors in the male-dominated fields of physics and math.
Fraternities and sororities were started by students who were bored because there were no extracurricular activities for them. Therefore, they started breaking up into groups and finding their own fun, which in the late-nineteenth century was a little bit different than what fun is now. In time they became very secretive and did things of which members were not allowed to speak. Administrators and teachers did not like the fact that fraternities and sororities had such control over students’ lives. They tried unsuccessfully to destroy these secretive cliques of people because they lacked control over what they did. When administrators realized that these groups were helping individuals with their academic and social success, however, they started funding and accepting them. Fraternities and sororities have been important because they give students a sense of security, loyalty, and fellowship.

In the early-twentieth century, a group of men at the University of Dubuque started the fraternity named The Thirteeners. Initially they were a small group without a lot of support, but eventually everyone started to see their importance on the campus. They started most of the Greek life traditions on campus, including the practice of giving “bids” to certain people so they can join their fraternity. They went on to develop “hell week,” which prompted active group members to be mean to the pledges and the initiation that every person has to go through to be in the fraternity and therefore part of the “brotherhood.” Shortly after the Thirteeners became a fraternity many other groups started following their ways and soon enough there were five more fraternities at the University of Dubuque. Without the Thirteeners, Greek life at UD would not have started nor would it have formed like it did.
The history of The University of Dubuque football team is linked with one name, and that name is Kenneth E. Mercer. Born in Albia, IA, Kenneth “Moco” Mercer was the greatest coach ever at the University of Dubuque. Coach Moco had an impressive winning record while coaching the Spartans from 1939 to 1960, with 99 wins, 54 losses, and 6 ties. He won three conference titles while coaching football, four more coaching basketball, plus another nine in track and field. Before coming to the University of Dubuque, Mercer compiled more points scored in four years coaching football at Simpson College than any other team in the conference. Coach Mercer was the 50th Iowan inducted into the Des Moines Register’s Iowa Sports Hall of Fame in 1964.

Coach Mercer had an incredible impact on all sports at The University of Dubuque with the lone exception of golf. Objects displayed in our exhibit relate to some of his career achievements. The signature piece is the 1949 championship game ball, signed by all the players. Another interesting and impressive piece is a 1932-33 ledger, which shows how much football equipment has changed and risen in price since the time “Moco” coached. Two photos give face to the famous name and show him coaching players on the team. Finally, a newspaper clipping from The Des Moines Register honors Coach Mercer and announces his nomination for the Iowa Sports Hall of Fame. This short article is valuable because it discusses his great coaching ability both before and after coming to UD.
SOL BUTLER’S DEFINING MOMENTS
Ainsley Billesbach, Jean Aquino, and Courtney Jones

Our group focused on the discrimination that some athletes faced during the 1910’s and 1920’s, with emphasis on the athletic experiences of Sol Butler. This was a period in time when blacks faced blatant discrimination in sports. Even though Jim Crow laws did not apply to northern states, many colleges and universities still condoned discrimination in sports in the North, including in the Midwest. University of Dubuque’s own Sol Butler faced discrimination in some of the sporting events that he participated in, although he did not receive it from UD, which preached and practiced equality. Black athletes often faced exclusion from games and sporting events. One newspaper article noted that Sol Butler was banned from playing in a post season basketball tournament simply because of the color of his skin. In turn, UD refused to participate and chose to forfeit the tournament altogether since he was not allowed to play.

The University of Dubuque challenged the prevalent discrimination of most collegiate athletic programs by allowing people of color to play. The school was pleasantly surprised to see how much of a role Sol Butler played when he won numerous awards in football, basketball, and his most successful sport, track. He participated in the 1920 Olympics in Track and Field, as well. Our exhibit includes a picture of Sol and his brother with all of Sol’s awards, a yearbook during his time as a student, opened to the page with information on the track team, and the book Sol and his trainer/brother wrote together, highlighting his running achievements. Sol was virtually the only black man to play sports at that time at UD, so our group thought that pictures showing diversity and his success were especially important. A newspaper article on the racial discrimination against the 1948 UD men’s basketball team illustrates that unfortunately the types of challenges Butler faced in collegiate sports continued for many decades.