



EMORY

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## Friends of Pitts Library Newsletter

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Emory's Annual Sacred Harp Sing 2011

Jesse Pearlman Karlsberg

Emory hosted the annual Sacred Harp singing in Cannon Chapel on February 12<sup>th</sup>. This annual event has close ties to the Pitts Theology Library due to the library's special collections holdings of some of the earliest Sacred Harp tunebooks.

Sacred Harp singing is a form of shape note music, a music notation system where the note heads are printed with different shapes corresponding to their position on the scale. The system was developed around 1800 in the context of a sacred music education movement in the Northeastern United States. Tunebook compilers William Little and William Smith saw shape notes as a means of making it easier to read music and licensed the system, invented by Philadelphian John Connelly, for use in their influential

tunebook *The Easy Instructor*. *The Easy Instructor* was one of a number of tunebooks published by composer-compiler-singing masters between 1770 and 1850 as teachers followed migration from the Northeast to the West and South.

While *The Easy Instructor* and most of the tunebooks of the singing school period eventually went out of print, *The Sacred Harp*, first published in Georgia by B.F. White and E.J. King has remained in print and in active use since its initial publication in 1844. *The Sacred Harp* drew on the core repertoire of New England fugal tunes and hymn tunes, a body of spare, striking folk hymns from the Mid-Atlantic States, and a then-new selection of camp meeting tunes, drawn from the oral cannon of the religious revivals held during the Second Great Awakening. Like earlier tunebooks, *The Sacred Harp* was used for teaching purposes, but was also the "text book" for large, democratically organized singing conventions established in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Florida, and Tennessee in the 19th century. These events featured daylong singing from *The Sacred Harp* and in some cases drew singing "classes" of thousands from surrounding states.

2011 marks the 100th anniversary of the publication of Joseph Stephen James' *Original Sacred Harp*. To commemorate this important centennial, Emory University Libraries digitized the *Original Sacred Harp* and Pitts hopes to publish a commemorative print edition of the book.

You may access selections from the *Original Sacred Harp* at:  
[http://pitts.emory.edu/download/original\\_sacred\\_harp\\_selections.pdf](http://pitts.emory.edu/download/original_sacred_harp_selections.pdf)

Emory's annual singing is representative of the modern descendent of this form. A participatory event rather than a performance, Emory's singing features a rotating selection of song leaders directing the assembled singers in the rendition of songs from *The Sacred Harp*. The shared nature of leadership is what attracts many to this unique form.

Jesse Pearlman Karlsberg studies and practices Sacred Harp singing, a musical culture based on daylong community singings from *The Sacred Harp*, a tunebook first published in Georgia in 1844. He is a student in the PhD program at the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts at Emory University. Jesse's work focuses on Sacred Harp composers in the twentieth century, particularly the influence of religion, technology, and society in the genre's development.



## Snapshots in Time: Online Access to North Georgia Methodist Church History

By Monica Randolph

In the spring of 2010, Clayton State University instituted a new Master of Archival Studies (MAS) program specializing in digital archives. In collaboration with Clayton State, the Pitts Theology Library opened its doors to students of the MAS program to provide an internship opportunity in the Archives and Manuscripts Department. This past summer, as a first year MAS student, I had the privilege of engaging in a 400-hour digitization internship project at Pitts.

My digitization project focused on providing online access to the Library's collection of North Georgia Conference local church histories. Comprising 18.5-square-feet of material, the collection includes a wonderful series of individual church historical narratives collected by the Conference in the early 1950's and again in the 1970's. These narratives were developed by the local churches themselves and offer an unofficial glimpse into their development. The collection also includes photographs, bulletins, cemetery records, church directories, and other related materials that help to illuminate the history of each church. Social history is recounted in the documentation as far back as pre-Civil War days, and continues through Reconstruction, the Great Depression, both World Wars, and the pre-civil rights movement in the South.

Materials from each church file were scanned and uploaded to a user-friendly web interface specifically designed for the local church histories collection. While this collection was previously only available to patrons to view at the Library, it will soon be available to anyone around the world with internet access. The web site is set to debut officially in the coming weeks.

It was a privilege to be able to participate in the ongoing digitization work at Pitts Theology Library. The Pitts Theology Library is truly an extensive, vibrant repository of both history and theology. I look forward to seeing the Library grow and expand the digital presence of its collections.



## Digital Image Archive Volunteer Opportunity

By Kim Abrams

Pitts Theology Library is soliciting volunteers to contribute to the Digital Image Archive by searching antiquarian books for woodcut images. This opportunity would be of particular interest to many, because it involves handling rare books that include unique images to include in the archive. If you are interested, please contact Dr. Pat Graham at [m.patrick.graham@emory.edu](mailto:m.patrick.graham@emory.edu).

The DIA of the Pitts Theology Library offers access to more than 28,000 woodcuts and engravings from the library's special collections and adds another 3,000 images annually. These images are available at no charge in JPEG and PDF formats for teaching, research and other non-commercial uses via the library's website ([www.pitts.emory.edu](http://www.pitts.emory.edu)).

Images in the DIA are high quality reproductions of biblical illustrations, portraits of religious leaders, printers' devices and ornaments, title-page borders, coats of arms, architectural renderings, religious and political cartoons, maps, and music. These images range in date from the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and represent the talent of some of the world's greatest artists. Keyword and Scripture indexing has been provided, as well as a brief annotation, for each image.

This resource is provided to the church, academy, and general public in order to enrich teaching, research, and the public's general appreciation of the rich theological and artistic achievements of earlier generations. Our hope is that this archive will make accessible to millions internationally some of the oldest and rarest pieces from Pitts' collections and so advance the library's mission of service.

### **Other Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteer opportunities are available at the Pitts Theology Library and include tasks such as:

- Preserving antiquarian books or archival materials
- Working at the semi-annual book sale
- Contributing to library databases
- Helping library staff keep materials in order.
- Transcribing documents written by Newman and Manning

If you're interested in volunteering, please visit <http://www.pitts.emory.edu/community/friends/volunteer.cfm> for more information and to apply.

## **Friends of Pitts Theology Library**

Membership in the Friends of Pitts Library is accorded to those individuals making contributions to the library at the minimum level of \$50.00 (individual and family) or \$15.00 (student).

Friends receive:

- Friends semi-annual newsletter
- Invitations to receptions, lectures, and special events

To learn more about the Friends of Pitts Theology Library visit

<http://www.pitts.emory.edu/community/friends/index.cfm>.