Texas Map Society to Meet in the
Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex
by Katherine R. Goodwin

The Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex forms the background for the Annual Fall meeting of the Texas Map Society (TMS) on October 5th and 6th. The meeting begins on Friday evening with a visit to Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas and concludes at The University of Texas at Arlington on Saturday. The Metroplex is rich in cartographic resources and our speakers reflect the abundant expertise in the region. We also have imported a speaker from the greater Houston area just to keep them in line!

First up in the fall program is a visit on Friday to the Edwin J. Fosque Map Library at SMU in Dallas featuring a behind-the-scenes preview of their upcoming 65th anniversary exhibition and a presentation on their outstanding World War II map collection. Founded in 1942, the library has long been one of the largest map libraries in the Southwestern United States and holds more than a quarter million maps. Our host and speaker will be the library's award-winning Curator, Dawn Youngblood. A TMS member, she will speak on "Celebrating 65 Years of the Edwin J. Fosque Map Library." Our visit to SMU will also include a reception at the DeGoyler Library, the primary special collections repository for SMU.

Saturday morning, the meeting will continue with sessions at the Central Library at The University of Texas at Arlington. The dedicated Program Committee has selected speakers from Dallas, Arlington, Fort Worth, and Stafford, Texas to provide us with an engaging slate of topics ranging from Ramusio to Railroad Maps. The Committee is always on the lookout for outstanding graduate students in cartographic studies to bring to the attention of the membership and this year's young scholar is UT Arlington's Randy Barnes, a private school teacher from Fort Worth. His presentation is titled, "The Maps of Ramusio's 'Navigations et Viaggi.'"

Another speaker from Fort Worth is the renown Director of the Amon Carter Museum, Ron Tyler. The former Professor of History and Director of the Texas State Historical Association at the University of Texas at Austin, will be speaking on "Bird's-eye Views of Texas." Ron's original research for the topic was prepared for the Amon Carter's 2006 exhibition and he continues to work on a forthcoming book.

Dallas historian and Executive Director of the Dallas Historical Society, Michael Duty, will bring his expertise to the meeting as he discusses the maps preserved by the Society at their facility, the Hall of State in Fair Park. Michael also hints he will may let us in on some of the details of the forthcoming traveling exhibition, "Going to Texas: Five Centuries of Texas Maps," featuring items from the cartographic collection of TMS members Yana and Marty Davis of Dallas.

UT Arlington's, Professor of History and TMS past president, Dennis Reinhartz, returns to the podium to lead us on another merry chase as he explores, "What is a Map?" He promises to give us a brief introduction to his popular cartographic history classes and the Program Committee assures us we will never view a map in the same old way again.

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Center Fellows Update

M. Kathryn “Kat” Brown was on research leave during the 2006-2007 school year, and has been continuing her work on the Formative Maya of Belize. She has several forthcoming publications on the role of feasting and ritual ceramic use in the rise of complexity.

Chris Conway has received a book contract for his binational anthology on the U.S.-Mexican War.


George Green is continuing to research and write the history of the Texas labor movement, and continues to collect records for the Texas Labor Archives, on occasion. Last fall he submitted a chapter, “Crucial Decade for Texas Labor: Railway Union Struggles, 1886-1896,” which was accepted in an anthology, Seeking Civil Rights: Texas and the Quest for Social Justice, forthcoming with Texas A&M University Press. He recently turned in two chapters for a proposed Texas A&M University Press book of readings on Texas and the Left -- One entitled “Unions in Texas from the Time of the Republic through the Great War, 1838-1919” and he co-authored another chapter -- “Looking for Lefty: Texas Labor and Left-Wing Activism, 1920s-1960s.”

Sam W. Haynes recently served as a consultant and interviewee for the History Channel’s two-hour documentary, “The Mexican War.” This past year he presented a paper at the Western Conference for British Studies entitled: “Their Ways are not our Ways: British Travel Literature and the American Sense of Self,” and was a guest lecturer at the Hermitage in Nashville, Tennessee, where he spoke on “Manifest Destiny and the Meaning of Freedom.” In addition, he served as a panelist on American Cultural Landmarks for the National Endowment for the Humanities. He is currently completing his book project on anti-British attitudes during the Jacksonian era.


Kenneth Roemer has two articles forthcoming on how readers make sense out of utopian literature, specifically how cultural and historical contexts, reading conventions, and personal experiences set them up to create meaning for utopias. One will appear in Utopia Method Vision (Ralahine [Ireland] Utopian Series), the other in American Reception Study (Oxford U Press). He is also on the editorial board for a forthcoming Cambridge U Press American literature anthology designed for Asia. He helped chose the selections and wrote a long introduction for oral American Indian literatures and thirty shorter introductions for specific Indian selections. In April the Executive Committee of the Modern Language Association appointed Ken to the Advisors Board for PMLA, the most prestigious scholarly literature journal.

Roberto Treviño received the T. R. Fehrenback Book Award from the Texas Historical Commission for his study, The Church in the Barrio: Mexican American Ethno-Catholicism in Houston (University of North Carolina Press, 2006). His volume of essays based on the 2004 Webb Memorial Lectures, Catholics in the American West: A Rosary of Hidden Voices, co-edited with Richard Francaviglia, will be published by Texas A&M University Press in December 2007. During 2007, Treviño continued his research and presentations on the role of religion in Mexican American history with support from the College of Liberal Arts and the Center for Mexican American Studies at UT Arlington.
In Search of Alexander von Humboldt at David Rumsey’s Map Library in San Francisco

by Robert Sherwood

As a graduate student of cartographic history at The University of Texas at Arlington, I had the opportunity to visit David Rumsey’s historical map library in San Francisco in June, 2007. The purpose of my visit was to conduct research for my doctoral dissertation. The Cartography of Alexander von Humboldt: An Enlightened View of the New World. I’d studied some of Humboldt’s maps and atlases here at the Virginia Garrett Cartographic History Library at UT Arlington’s Special Collections, and also at Southern Methodist University’s DeGolyer Library. Nevertheless, I realized that additional material in David Rumsey’s personal map library would add to my knowledge of Humboldt as cartographer.

David Rumsey’s world famous map collection focuses on rare 18th and 19th century North American and South American maps and other cartographic materials. Historic maps of the World, Europe, Asia, and Africa are also represented. The collection includes 15,800 maps online. Collection categories include antique atlas, globe, school geography, maritime chart, state, county, city, pocket, wall, children’s, and manuscript maps. Some examples are United States maps, New York maps, California maps, Arizona maps, America maps, New York City maps, Chicago maps, and Colorado maps. The collection can be used to study history, geography, and genealogy. Although many of the maps in this collection are on line at daviderumsey.com, I wanted to get a closer look at many of them.

As the recipient of a 2007 David Rumsey travel and research stipend, my goal was to meet David Rumsey and to study the materials in his library in light of my dissertation, which focuses on Alexander von Humboldt’s journey to the Americas in 1799-1804. Presented in the context of the European Enlightenment, I am studying Humboldt’s Romanticized view of the natural world as it affected his science and philosophy. I will interpret Humboldt’s maps and images as part of a transatlantic exchange, incorporating the theme of old Europe and the New World found throughout his work.

In his day, Humboldt was Europe’s greatest scholar, the icon of Enlightenment science. He was to his contemporaries what Albert Einstein would become to later generations. Humboldt embodied the spirit of the Enlightenment and its transition into the Age of Romanticism. He used the technological advancements of the era to better understand nature. His work idealized the science of Copernicus, the economics of Adam Smith, and the Romanticism of Goethe. My dissertation looks at Humboldt’s science and philosophy in a collection of historical vignettes — snapshots of Humboldt in the context of his time. The time of the Enlightenment is subjective. Historian Norman Davies uses 1650-1789 while Norman Hampson prefers 1715-1740. Others use “eighteenth century.” Humboldt’s time is less challenging. He lived from 1769 to 1859.

While at David Rumsey’s map library, I studied two of Humboldt’s maps in detail: the General Chart of the Kingdom of New Spain and Points of Separation and Communication Between the South Sea and the Atlantic Ocean are the focus of my study. The maps were prepared by Humboldt with the assistance of Mexican scholars, using documents that he found in the Mexican archives. Both maps were published in Atlas Geographique Et Physique Du Royaume De La Nouvelle-Espagne (Paris, 1808). A first-edition copy of the atlas can be found in David Rumsey’s library. The maps were also reproduced at a smaller scale and published with Humboldt’s Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain (1811), the primary source for my research. UT Arlington historian Douglas W. Richmond notes that Humboldt’s four volume Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain remains unsurpassed and is still the key source for early nineteenth-century Mexican history.

As I turned the pages of Atlas Geographique, examining the legends, and checking the scale, I again marveled at how effectively Humboldt used these images in the presentation of his ideas. In fact, I’ve decided to adopt the concept throughout my dissertation for much the same reasons that Humboldt did: When combined with text, images permit a closer reading of the subject matter than text alone. The Enlightenment is not easily defined or understood, but this technique helps us better understand it. Just as the vivid and dramatic paintings of David and Goya provide clarity to the philosophical writing of the age, Humboldt’s maps and illustrations serve as visual images of the Enlightenment in early nineteenth-century America.

Another of my objectives at the Rumsey Library was to find out why Humboldt’s assessment of colonial agriculture did not coincide with statistics he published in Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain. Humboldt argued that agriculture did little for the Mexican economy. But the information he found in the Mexican archives in 1803 seemed to refute his argument. Mexican wheat was considered to be of better quality than European wheat. The statistics showed that Mexican growers produced large amounts of wheat — more than growers in Spain.

At the Rumsey Library, I also found Don Antonio de Alcedo’s Geographical and Historical Dictionary of the West Indies (1812).
Alcedo wrote that the agricultural fields of colonial Mexico were located near silver mines for the purpose of feeding the miners. This would seem to bolster Humboldt's argument that agricultural production did little for the Mexican economy, other than to support mining.

Sources other than Humboldt's are helping me better understand Mexico during this period. Another topic of interest was Humboldt's "map of errors," Carte de Fausses Positions de Mexico, Acapulco, Veracruz et du Pic d'Orizaba (1808), which I found in Atlas Géographique at the Rumsey Library. Humboldt prepared the map showing incorrect positions ascribed to Mexico City, Acapulco, Veracruz and Mt. Orizaba over time, and by whom. Acapulco Bay was misplaced by miles on some maps. Mexico City was similarly out of position. Humboldt wrote that British mapmaker Aaron Arrowsmith's misplacement of Mt. Orizaba presented a "hazard to navigators."

How, I wondered, could a mountain in the interior of Mexico be a hazard to navigators? I knew that Humboldt was critical of other mapmakers in Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain. He tended to rant about things that annoyed him. In a letter to Thomas Jefferson, for example, Humboldt complained that Arrowsmith had "rather ungraciously" copied his map without attribution. I was ready to dismiss the charge that Arrowsmith's map was a "hazard to navigators" when I read Arthur Herman's To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World (2004). The author writes that Mt. Orizaba is visible to navigators from many miles at sea. Perhaps Arrowsmith's map was the hazard to navigators that Humboldt claimed!

Henry Topple's Atlas Map of the British Empire in America (1796) is one of many first-edition atlases in David Rumsey's library. Topple admonished other cartographers not to cluter their maps with mis-information. Similar messages appear in Pinkerton's Modern Atlas (1815) and General World Atlas by Arrowsmith and Lewis (1804). Humboldt had never been to many of the places represented on his maps. Rather than copy information from unproven sources, Humboldt chose to leave vacant space on his maps. Subsequent cartographic historians chose to interpret the vacant space in a number of ways, including the view expressed in J.B. Harley's The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography (2000) that maps were full of erasures, that is, empty space created by Europeans anxious to appropriate native lands. Humboldt looked at the map as a source of knowledge, a tool used to inform and to entertain. Nowhere in his text does Humboldt suggest that maps were used to appropriate or plunder the land of indigenous populations. Humboldt left empty space on his maps because he did not know what was there.

Humboldt was politically astute. He acknowledged New World cultures and respected native traditions without condemning European colonists. Humboldt never forgot that his European education and wealth enabled him to travel the world and advance the cause of social, cultural, and economic progress. He understood the distribution of wealth to be an essential part of civilization and infused his maps and texts with this understanding. Humboldt mapped projected water routes through the Americas on Points of Separation and Communication Between the South Sea and the Atlantic Ocean (1811) hoping that would shorten navigational distances between China, Japan, and the West, thus creating vast new markets for European and American traders.

Humboldt and his General Chart of the Kingdom of New Spain are often cited in studies of the division of land between Mexico and the United States. Humboldt visited President Thomas Jefferson in Washington in 1804. With the purchase of Louisiana, Jefferson needed to become better acquainted with the region and its inhabitants. Humboldt loaned Jefferson a sketch of his map and provided him with a manuscript describing the population, geography, agriculture, mines, and military preparations in the northern provinces. Humboldt was a source for much information about the Spanish empire in Mexico and California. He wrote many years later that Jefferson discussed with him his ideas about the political future of America, "the project of a future division of the American continent into three great republics which were to include Mexico and the South American states which at that time belonged to the Spanish crown."

The scientific advancements of the European Enlightenment enabled Humboldt to use the information he collected in the interests of progress. Humboldt's maps and illustrations idealized the New World for readers on both sides of the Atlantic; incorporating modern science, with its emphasis on precise measurement and technological advancement; and the political, economic, and cultural life of the land they depicted. Thanks to my visit to David Rumsey's map library, and the guidance that Mr. Rumsey provided me, I understand even better Humboldt the man and Humboldt the mapmaker.

Editor's note: Robert Sherwood is a graduate student of cartographic history at the University of Texas at Arlington, and is writing his dissertation on Alexander von Humboldt as part of his studies in UT Arlington's Transatlantic History doctoral program.

Long time TMS member John Cobb from Stafford, Texas, near Houston, helps round out the program. John, a businessman, Texana collector, and avid Texas outdoorsman, will talk about "Texas Railroad Pocket Maps, Land Promotion Maps and Brochures of the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries; A Story of Texas." His topic is one of the all time favorites of TMS attendees.

Another favorite session of the annual fall meetings is the "Members Map Forum." Last year, TMS member and popular NBC-TV chief meteorologist, David Finfrock took on the task of hosting and moderating the 'show-and-tell' session. He will again be on hand this year and encourages attendees to bring along a map to share with others at the meeting—"something interesting, something unusual, something fun." Maps will be display in the Parlor meeting room of the Central Library on tabletops and easels throughout the day of the meeting to spark conversation during breaks between the presentations. During the Forum, each member will have a few minutes to discuss the map.

The 2007 Annual Fall Meeting of the Texas Map Society is sure to be a hit! Mark your calendars now for October 5th and 6th. Registration brochures will be mailed the end of August, but the TMS web site will have up to date detailed information on speakers, hotels and transportation for the meeting as it comes available: http://libraries.uta.edu/tmsociety. For information, or to add your name to the TMS mailing list, please contact Secretary-Treasurer, Kit Goodwin, by email at goodwin@uta.edu or by phone 817-861-1425.

Also coming this fall.....

2007
RMCA MAP EXPO and
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- Texas Road Maps and Motoring History Exhibit
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  Entry $5 (Free With Expo Entry)

- Map Expo Open To The Public
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Background map image courtesy of the Texas Almanac first published in the 1922 Texas Almanac
Graphic design courtesy of Cathy Heckman & Deedeh Davis Library, Southern Methodist University
Meet the Center Faculty

**Dr. Jonathan Campbell** is Professor and Chair of UT Arlington’s Biology Department. He has a long history of distinguished research and making scientific contributions in the fields of herpetology, biogeography, and systematics. He has published over 130 peer-reviewed papers, and has authored or edited five books. His recent book, *Venomous Reptiles of the Western Hemisphere* (2004), is a two-volume work that includes the Gila Monster and Beaded Lizard and all species of pitvipers and cobrasnakes of the southwestern United States, Mexico, and Central America. His many awards and honors include Herpetologists’ League as the Distinguished Herpetologist (worldwide) for 2000, the Texas Academy of Science Texas Distinguished Scientist for 2003, and the W. Frank Blair Eminent Naturalist Award by the Southwestern Association of Naturalists in 2007.

Coming in Fronteras …

In future issues of Fronteras, we plan to publish articles on:

- Using postcards for historic research -- an overlooked source.
- Historic Texas from the Air -- a new viewpoint on Lone Star History.
- Revisiting the First Transcontinental Railroad -- some new revelations from research.

For more information or to submit news items for publication in Fronteras, contact editor Richard Francaviglia at francaviglia@uta.edu. 817-272-3997, Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, University of Texas at Arlington, Box 19497, Arlington, Texas 76019.

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Kat Brown, Assistant Professor of Anthropology; Chris Conway, Associate Professor of Modern Languages; Robert Fairbanks, Professor of History; George Green, Professor of History; Sam Haynes, Associate Professor of History; David Narrett, Associate Professor of History; Dennis Reinhartz, Professor of History; Douglas Richmond, Professor of History; Ken Roemer, Professor of English; Roberto Treviño, Associate Professor of History

Associate Center Fellows:
David Buisseret, Jenkins and Virginia Garrett Endowed Chair in Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography (retired) Judy Reinhartz, Professor of Education, UTEP

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