Western's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented set of circumstances for the school. Historical records in the collections of Heritage Resources, many of which are now accessible online through the MABEL platform, give insight into how the school responded to previous pandemics, including the 1918-19 global influenza pandemic. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations.

Western's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented set of circumstances for the school. Historical records in the collections of Heritage Resources, many of which are now accessible online through the MABEL platform, give insight into how the school responded to previous pandemics, including the 1918-19 global influenza pandemic. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspended operations. During that crisis, the Normal School (along with all other schools in the state) suspen
Director’s Letter

Welcome to the spring issue of Heritage Highlights. Under normal circumstances, I would write words welcoming the change of season and the annual return to the outdoors. But, we no longer live in a normal world. The COVID-19 crisis and the “stay at home” reality has drastically changed our lives, and the ways we intersect with the natural world and with each other. This is truly a historic moment.

Drawing on wisdom gained from previous pandemics, Heritage Resources staff followed the University and other health directives by canceling classes and working from home, while doing our best to maintain connections with campus and the community. Staff have been creative in finding ways to support research and learning through online channels, allowing us to continue some basic operations during this challenging time. These include remote research services, records management assistance, support for online learning with primary sources, and new instructional videos including training in the use of our online digital collection database MABEL.

We will also be initiating a new collecting project tentatively entitled Western’s Response to the COVID-19 Experience. Over the summer, we will be seeking stories, photographs, official memos, directives, and other documentation that chronicles the pandemic through the voices of students, faculty, staff and community members. Stay tuned for a project website launching in the coming weeks.

In the pages of this newsletter you will find articles and selections from our collections that document previous pandemics and the efforts of past generations to maintain continuity in crisis. I extend my deep gratitude to the staff of Heritage Resources who have also quickly and effectively shifted gears to ensure continuing operations and service to the community. We look forward to reconnecting with you in person when we open our doors again to the public.

We will survive this crisis together, and as always, community support is critical to our sustainability. If you are able, please consider a donation in support of our programs and services.

Stay well and stay safe,
Elizabeth Joffrion
Director of Heritage Resources

Documenting COVID-19

~ Help Heritage Resources document the COVID-19 experience at WWU ~

Over the summer, we plan to collect, preserve, and share stories of how the Western community has adapted to life during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will be seeking photographs, official memos, directives, and other documentation that chronicles the pandemic through the voices of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members.

Students’ account of 1918 school closure. Excerpt from Klipsun yearbook, 1919, accessible online through MABEL.
Best Wishes to Tamara Belts!

Long-time Special Collections Manager Tamara Belts retired on April 1st after working at Western Washington University for over 42 years. Belts got her start at Western as a transfer student in 1974, and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in history in 1976. She worked for Western Libraries in many roles, including positions in Circulation, Serials, Cataloging, Acquisitions, Government Information, and Special Collections.

One of many transformative events during Belts’s tenure was the creation of a purpose-designed space for Special Collections in 2010. According to Belts, the new home on the sixth floor of Wilson “...completely transformed the work of Special Collections and our ability to engage in the teaching and learning that is our true purpose.”

Tamara will be greatly missed by her colleagues and we wish her all the very best in her many adventures to come. David Schlitt, Judaica Project Archivist for Heritage Resources, is currently serving as Interim Special Collections Manager. Contact speccoll@wwu.edu for more information.

Celebrating Records and Information Management Month in April

By Rachel Thompson, Records Management Specialist

One of the greatest challenges (and opportunities!) of this complicated and confusing time has been finding new ways to communicate with each other while staying far apart. University Archives and Records Management has been using this time to find new ways of reaching out to our university community remotely. Our hope is that we can continue these practices even once life returns to “normal.”

In honor of Records and Information Management month this past April, UARM held an “Ask Anything” session about the Records Management part of our unit for our Library colleagues over Zoom. The intent of the session was to give an overview of the work the Records Management Specialist does for the university, as well as provide a chance for people to ask questions about the unit. To encourage attendees to ask questions, we offered a prize for the best “stump the records manager” question. The session was a lot of fun and a great opportunity to share the sometimes-overlooked work of records management in an interesting and lighthearted way. It also sparked some ideas for ways to expand this kind of outreach to other parts of the university.

Additionally, we provided a webinar version of one of our usual in-person classes at the end of April. The format seemed to be a success, and we are looking forward to continuing to use it even after we pass this crisis. We have also created an online course module for our Introduction to Records Management class (a goal that has been on the to-do lists for quite a while!), and a webpage devoted to recording online meetings. While it has been tricky adapting our materials to new formats, we are hopeful that they will be beneficial beyond the short term and increase our ability to reach our university community once things settle back down.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our volunteers and student employees for all they do in support of Heritage Resources. We would also like to thank the many individuals, families, and organizations who have made generous monetary gifts and contributions of collection materials. To donate to Heritage Resources, please email Elizabeth.Joffrion@wwu.edu or phone 360-650-3283. Donations can also be made online or by mail to the Western Foundation, MS-9034, Western Washington University, 516 High St, Bellingham, WA 98225-9034. Please designate your contribution to Western Libraries and identify “Heritage Resources” as the program you wish to support.
The Western Front Historical Collection, also accessible through MABEL, contains several newspaper articles from that period which give a sense of the community response to the pandemic. There are familiar stories of people quarantining to care for themselves or for loved ones, tips from the Surgeon General on how to avoid contracting the illness (including chewing your food well and avoiding tight clothes), and updates from alumnae from across the county and the world.

One of the most often-mentioned officials in students’ accounts of the 1918-19 influenza pandemic is the school nurse, May Mead—more commonly referred to as “Miss Mead.” Since her appointment in 1914, Miss Mead had been a common figure attending the health and wellness education of Normal students. By the time the pandemic hit in 1918, she was already a recognized leader.

During the school’s closure due to the influenza outbreak in the Fall of 1918, several students fell ill before they could make their way home to stay with family. Miss Mead and other faculty members organized an effort to visit and care for those stranded locally. After the influenza, public health campaigns gained more support and initiative, and Miss Mead continued her strong advocacy. She took a leave of absence in the summer of 1919 to attend a course on public health at the University of Washington.

With regular mention in the school newspaper, she appears as a tireless advocate for public health—addressing Whatcom High School students on physical fitness, attending a state social worker conference in Seattle, taking part in many civic groups and campaigns, and of course admonishing students to wear proper rain gear.

During influenza outbreaks throughout the 1920s and 1930s, she reported on the regional and national prevalence of the disease, continuing her promotion of public health and good personal health practices. May Mead retired in 1947. Her tireless efforts and courage were memorialized by student W. O. Edson in his depiction of her in the 1919 Klipsun yearbook:

For more about Miss Mead, Western’s response to past public health crises or other disruptions of operations, and more, we encourage you to explore the online MABEL platform. You may also contact our staff directly at Heritage.Resources@wwu.edu.