



Spring 2016

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Friends of Dacus Library

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Friends of Dacus Library Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 3

Spring 2016

GREGG HECIMOVICH TO SPEAK TO FRIENDS

Plans are proceeding for the Fall 2016 meeting of the Friends of Dacus Library. The meeting will be held on October 3 and Dr. **Gregg Hecimovich** has accepted an invitation to speak on his forthcoming book, *The Life and Times of Hannah Crafts: The True Story of The Bondswoman's Narrative* slated for publication by Ecco/HarperCollins in 2017.

Dr. Hecimovich is Professor and Chair of the Department of English at Winthrop University. He earned his BA at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where he won the Louis D. Rubin Jr. Prize for most outstanding creative writer in his graduating class and graduated Phi Beta Kappa and cum laude in both English Literature and Creative Writing.

He earned his MA and PhD at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. He is the author of four previous books.

The research Hecimovich has conducted on this latest project on Hannah Crafts has garnered front-page attention in *The New York Times*, a review essay in *The New Republic*, and support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

After a decade scouring government documents, diaries and other private family materials Hecimovich was able to deduce that the author of *The Bondswoman's Narrative*, who used the name Hannah Crafts, was actually Hannah Bond, a fugitive slave who escaped in 1857 from her N.C. owner, John Hill Wheeler. Wheeler was a well-known Tar Heel planter, attorney, politician, and amateur historian, best known for his book

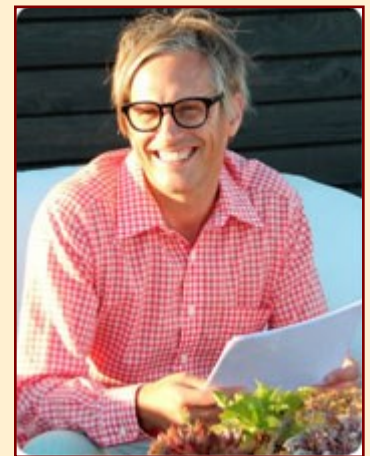
Historical Sketches of North Carolina, from 1584 to 1851.

Hecimovich, a Charlotte, N.C., native, related that he has obsessively researched the mystery surrounding the identity of the work's author who escaped from his home state. The slave to a family with an extensive library, Bond is believed to have educated herself. She escaped from the Wheeler plantation in eastern North Carolina in early May 1857 and made her way to central New York, Hecimovich said.

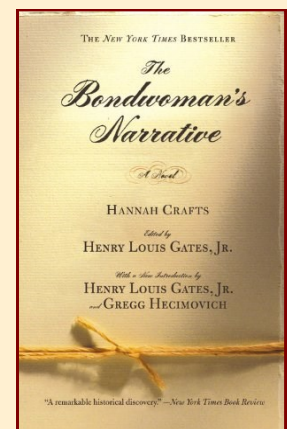
She took cover at the Craft farm, knowing that her owner was in pursuit. Hecimovich writes that Bond continued work on the novel and completed it the following year. She later settled in New Jersey where she became a school teacher.

In 2014-2015, Hecimovich was a Sheila Biddle Ford Foundation Fellow at the W. E. B. DuBois Institute at Harvard University. In 2015-2016, he is serving as the Josephus Daniels Fellow at The National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Additionally, in 2015-2016, Hecimovich holds a Public Scholar Fellowship appointment from The National Endowment for the Humanities.

Dr. Hecimovich has spoken widely on what is a fascinating bit of historical detective work. His presentation should be both informative and interesting. Final arrangements will be reported in the next newsletter issue.



Dr. Hecimovich



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Photographs of North Myrtle Beach House



BEACH HOUSE RAFFLE WINNER ANNOUNCED

On March 1 in the conference room of the Dean of Library Services, Dr. **Ronnie Faulkner**, Dr. **Antje Mays**, and Dean **Mark Herring**



JANE GORMAN

oversaw the drawing of the winner for the North Myrtle Beach House Raffle. To assure a fair drawing, Dr. Faulkner retrieved a Winthrop student without any connection to the raffle from the Main Floor of Dacus Library to actually physically draw the winning ticket.

The winner was **Jane Gorman**, a retired medical administrator, who formerly worked for Rock Hill GYN and OB Associates. Jane is active locally in the Rotary Club and is married to Bob Gorman, a former reference librarian at Winthrop. After Dr. Faulkner informed Jane of her good fortune, he sent a notice out to inform the members of the Friends of Dacus Library.

We congratulate Jane as our first winner and know that Jane and her husband Bob will enjoy their vacation at North Myrtle Beach this summer. It is reported that some friends might drop in on the vacationers.

As everyone knows, the funds raised on this activity go into the Friends of Dacus Library Endowed Fund, which was set up to support library services at Winthrop. However, we fell far short of our goal from this activity, raising only **\$3,800**. Dr. Faulkner observed, "We are very appreciative

of those who took part in the ticket sales, but we need to develop more ideas about how to reach our endowment goal of \$100,000 as established by the Friends of Dacus Library Board in 2013."

Anyone with any input on this matter should contact Dr. Faulkner by phone at 803-323-2262 or via email at faulknerr@winthrop.edu.

FITDESK BIKES AT DACUS

As this article is being composed, a student is on a FitDesk using a laptop while she pedals at a moderate pace. What is a FitDesk, you may be asking? Possibly our most unique and exciting addition to the library this spring, a FitDesk is an exercise bike that has a desk attached. These bikes allow you to study, read or comfortably type on a laptop while getting some exercise. Many studies have shown that physical activity is associated with improved cognition and memory – something all college students should be wanting more of, right? So like several other universities, we decided to buy a couple for the library, hoping that students would be able to boost their brain and their health at the same time.

We've already received praise from faculty in the Physical Education, Sport and Human Performance Department and staff at the Academic Success Center who are very excited that we've purchased FitDesks. Those in the Academic Success Center are even helping us promote them by borrowing one for a day and displaying digital signage and flyers advertising that the library now has FitDesks.

If we find the bikes are used often we might purchase a couple more. So, come by Dacus Library for a ride.



Running Digital Commons at Winthrop... DeAnn Brame, Digital Services & Systems Librarian

I manage the Digital Commons. That is what I do. On a regular basis I have to decide how best to sum up my job in one or two sentences. This usually entails explaining that Digital Commons @ Winthrop (DC) is an institutional online repository and houses scholarship from faculty, staff, and students from across campus. I manage the materials that go up on the web site. This may sound a little over-simplified. But, what I really want people to know is that DC is a vehicle for building relationships, which I believe the most important aspect of the job.

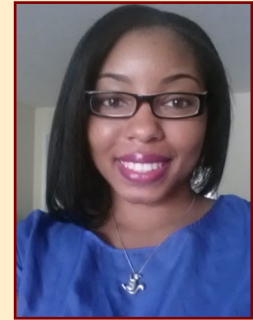
Digital Commons was brought to Winthrop for multiple reasons, including provision of adequate space where The Louise Pettus Archives could showcase their materials, whereas before there was not a designated online space that would do their collections justice. Another reason was to develop a digital space where people in the community and beyond could see the scholarship produced at Winthrop.

I came to Winthrop in October of 2014 and along with building relationships with a new city, co-workers and the campus community, I also started a new relationship with Bepress, the California-based company that owns Digital Commons. Each institution is assigned a Bepress representative who works one on one with the site administrator at the institution. This helps build a personal relationship between two large organizations. I talk with our representative almost every day—sometimes in a panic if I've inadvertently deleted something. Whether panicking or being super excited about a

new project I'm starting, I always feel that Bepress personnel are genuinely concerned about what's going on in Rock Hill, S.C., though 2700 miles away.

Closer to home are the relationships being built across campus through Digital Commons. These include library relationships as well as my own personal relationships with faculty, staff, students, and with entire departments and organizations. I have been able to introduce myself as well as DC to numerous people just by identifying a project that I think would be a great fit for our repository. I think those relationships are very apparent when you really start exploring DC. Faculty scholarship is showcased in our *Faculty Publications* series. You can find old issues of *The Johnsonian*, check out the research journal done by the Winthrop McNair Scholars in the *Winthrop McNair Research Bulletin*, and see what undergraduate and graduate students are exploring in through *SOURCE* and the *Graduate Thesis* series. Each new series or event added is a relationship built.

While there is quite a bit of technical work required to make sure Digital Commons runs smoothly, I also like to focus on the connections Winthrop as an institution makes by providing an avenue for all kinds of scholarly information to those beyond our campus. This past January we celebrated our 1 year anniversary with over 10,000 downloads. Currently that number is around 16,000. We have over 4,000 papers, projects, newspapers, oral histories, images and videos. We've reached people at 1,420 institutions in 138 countries, including China, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.



DeAnn Brame

**AVAILABLE ON
DIGITAL COMMONS**



**THE TATLER
WINTHROP'S
YEARBOOK**



**THE JOHNSONIAN,
WINTHROP'S STUDENT
NEWSPAPER**

Our most popular items include images from the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections and papers written by our faculty, staff, and students. Our reach is growing every day and as more people are engaged and affected by what we do, we build more relationships. That is what makes Digital Commons @ Winthrop and what I do important.



Friends of Dacus Library



Supporting Winthrop's scholarly community since 1996: <http://www.winthrop.edu/dacus/friends>

WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

THE FRIENDS OF DACUS LIBRARY

Dacus Library
824 Oakland Avenue
Rock Hill, SC 29733

Phone: 803/323-2131
Fax: 803/323-2215
<http://libguides.library.winthrop.edu/friends>



Dr. Jane J. White

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A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR ON DR. HECIMOVICH AND HIS BOOK

Winthrop Professor Dr. Gregg Hecimovich has accomplished a major research coup.

It is not often that scholarly discoveries are reported on the first page of *The New York Times* newspaper! So mark your calendars this fall for Monday, October 3, 2016 when we will be honored to have Dr. Hecimovich speak to us about the solving and still evolving mysteries of the first African-American female novel written in America.

After going through several auctions of antiquarian papers, Dr. Henry Lewis Gates of Harvard University bought an obscure manuscript in 2001. Reviewers noted that "in 2002, ...this novel [*The Bondwoman's Narrative*] became a best seller, praised for its epic depiction of Southern life in the mid 1850s through the observant eyes of a refined and literate house servant." Gates wrote that, "Words cannot express how meaningful this is to African American literary studies... It revolutionizes our understanding of the canon of black women's literature."*

The first big mystery:

Dr. Hecimovich, Chair of Winthrop's English Department and a scholar of Victorian Literature, spent years researching who could be the author of the book. Assuming the author lived on a plantation in Carolinas, he asked and answered questions about the probable identity of the writer.

Dr. Hecimovich dug through court records, census data, letters, and wills. He conducted many interviews. From information in the novel correlated with his other research, Dr. Hecimovich believes he has found the name of the author. Many scholars agree with him.

Mysteries within the mystery of a semi-autobiographical slave novel:

How could a plantation house servant learn to teach herself to read and write? How could a plantation house servant learn about the form of the novel and write one herself? Was it from others around her reciting fragments of *Jane Eyre*, *Bleak House*, and *Rob Roy*? Was this woman assisted by members in the family to dress as a man and to become a fugitive slave? Did the author of this novel end up in the North as a married school teacher?

In the larger picture, what stereotypes does the novel make us reconsider in the lives of house servants?

So much is known and not known as to the narrative's authenticity.

Come out for what will be one of Friends of Dacus's most powerful and exciting evenings of literary mystery and forensics. Enjoy reading over the summer,

Sincerely, Jane White
whitejanej@gmail.com

* Bosman, J. "Professor Says He Has Solved A Mystery Over a Slave's Novel" *The New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2013, Media, Page 1.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

Many members of the Friends of Dacus Library are now inactive. If you are in this group and you wish to come to our Fall meeting and hear Professor Hecimovich talk about his forthcoming book, please renew today. Attached is a membership form. Please complete it and drop it in the mail. Your continued support is very much appreciated. —Ronnie Faulkner, Secretary-Treasurer, Friends of Dacus

Membership Application : The Friends of Dacus Library (Mail to address in box below)

Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Home Phone No.: _____
Cell Phone No. (if different than home no.): _____
Primary Email Address: _____

Class Year (if applicable): _____ Relationship to Winthrop (check one):
_____ Alumni _____ Faculty/Staff _____ Friend _____ Parent _____ Student

Amount of Gift: _____ If you would like your gift to go to the Friends of Dacus Library Endowed Fund (Check): _____

- | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Levels: | Life (Individuals Only) | \$1,000.00+ |
| | Corporate (Businesses/Organizations Only) | \$500-\$999.99 |
| | Patron | \$200-\$499.99 |
| | Sustaining Member | \$100-\$199.99 |
| | Member | \$50-\$99.99 |
| | Winthrop Student | \$10-\$49.99 |
- Your contribution receipt will provide specific information about any benefit that would affect your tax deductible gift.

If you wish to make a gift _____ in honor of, or _____ in memory of someone, please indicate whom:

Name/address of person to be notified about honor/memorial in box below:

Make check payable to:

Winthrop University Foundation

Mail to:

**Winthrop University Foundation
302 Tillman Hall
Rock Hill, SC 29733**

**In memo line of check write:
Friends of Dacus Library**