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Leavenworth college acquires Civil War collection — including bone dice

The University of St. Mary is adding a 3,000 piece Civil War collection

The collection is a gift from a Leavenworth family

BY MIRANDA DAVIS

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The University of St. Mary in Leavenworth is adding a 3,000-piece Civil War collection, including bone dice and Confederate currency, to its library.

The Bobby D. Lawrence collection, which will include primary sources from the era as well as secondary research and books on the time period, was a gift from the Lawrence family of Leavenworth.

The collection has primary sources and artifacts from the Civil War era, including several memoirs, along with more than 2,000 books about the Civil War that will go into the library's circulation to be checked out by students and members of the public.

St. Mary's employees said they plan to display the collection for visitors and students as well as digitize it and make it available on the [library's website](#) and for use in classes. Lindsay Schettler, the school's special collection librarian, has also started [a blog about the acquisition](#) and the collection.

Librarians and curators from St. Mary's library said the collection has two significant areas of focus: women in the war and regional materials from Kansas

and Missouri. One of the pieces they are most excited about is a memoir from a Civil War nurse who also was a Union spy.

St. Mary's history professor Kyle Anthony said he plans to use the nurse's memoir for a crossover class about the history of American medical issues once it's digitized.

Bob Lawrence, who died in 2013, was an avid collector for about 25 years. The family chose to give the collection to St. Mary's after shopping around for a buyer who would appreciate the collection. The family struggled to find another collector and called the school's library recently after about two years of searching.

Danielle Dion, director of the library, said her interest was immediately piqued when Michele Brungardt described her late father's collection. Dion went to the house to view what Lawrence had and decided it would be a perfect addition to the library and a complement to the current Abraham Lincoln collection.

"We have so many Civil War enthusiasts around Kansas and Missouri," Dion said. "We can be a spot where those individuals want to come."

Dion said Lawrence took meticulous care of his collection and had detailed index cards with every item he purchased, which she called a "librarian's dream."

The library officially acquired the collection on July 11 and 12, and it will have a blessing and opening ceremony in September.

The Lawrence family said they were thrilled with the library's decision to take on the collection. Brungardt said that as a Catholic family, it was a blessing to have the Catholic university acquire the collection.

Jeanie Lawrence said giving away the collection was like giving away a part of her husband, but they were relieved it was going to a place where it would be appreciated.

"Bob would have been very, very pleased with what's happening to his collection," Lawrence said.

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