

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to behind the circulation desk, a Wake Tech libraries podcast.

You'll learn about new items in our collection through lively discussions about new resources with faculty and staff, little-known stories about how things run behind the scenes at Wake Tech libraries, and, of course, stories that show how student succeed because of what we provide here at Wake Tech libraries.

I'm your host, Nicole Nichols, Instructional Services librarian at the Scott Northern Wake campus.

In this episode, we'll talk to Jennifer Mincey and Todd and uncles who are in charge of the college's archives, which are housed at the Scott Northern Wake Campus Library.

Then we'll delve into a discussion about one of our newest young adult books, a large expanse of seed by Tahereh Mafi, with library assistant Jasmine Smith.

Let's get started.

NICOLE NICHOLS: Welcome to behind the circulation desk today.

I'm here with two librarians who are in charge of the archives collection here at Wake Tech.

Jennifer Mincey and Todd Nuckolls, um welcome to the podcast.

TODD NUCKOLLS: Hello.

JENNIFER MINCEY: Hi.

Thank you for inviting us, Nicole.

NICOLE NICHOLS: So we're just gonna talk a little bit about the archives.

So the first thing I wanted to talk about is the history.

So tell us a little bit about the history of how the archives collection got started here.

TODD NUCKOLLS: I am going to let Jennifer talk, because she has more experience with that.

JENNIFER MINCEY: Alright, so the Community College of the North Carolina are subject to the public records and retention schedule. Sorry records and disposition schedule.

So for what you have to keep and what you have to get rid of, umm, around 1986, the records and

disposition schedule for the colleges added a clause that said that the community colleges should have their own on-site archives for records of historical and cultural importance to the college.

Any kind of permanent records that should be kept should be kept on site.

Some of those records also need to be kept at the state library, and so Wake Tech around that time is when they formally established the archives.

Although it wasn't until almost 10 years later that the archives as we know it started to develop.

TODD NUCKOLLS: I didn't have anything to add to that.

I think that that's pretty were you asking maybe like more specifically how the archive started here on this campus?

NICOLE NICHOLS: Yes.

TODD NUCKOLLS: I you know, I started out as a volunteer. Uh. A while back this was four years ago and it was ahhh... I think at that time we had had one intern work on it.

NICOLE NICHOLS: Yes.

TODD NUCKOLLS: There was there was a a person who was a library, MLS student..

JENNIFER MINCEY: Gabriel Granier. He was our first archives intern.

TODD NUCKOLLS: He had done some work. It was most of it was in the basement of B building.

JENNIFER MINCEY: Yeah.

TODD NUCKOLLS: And I think there had been some water damage and then not too long after I started to volunteer here, we moved to this building.

And so as far as at North campus, that's it. Then I would say about Ohh gosh just a couple of months ago I started a an archives team just trying to see who would be interested in working on because our new director Dr. Davis asked for an inventory of the and I knew that that would be a big task and so.

We worked on getting to inventory together, so we do have an inventory.

So, but it's been here, you know, I guess.

JENNIFER MINCEY: In Building F since 2015, when the building opened and I went out on leave for a little while.

So our wonderful then volunteer was in charge of making sure everything made it over appropriately.

So Needless to say, he was offered a position as soon as we were able to get one for an actual formal archives assistant at the time.

NICOLE NICHOLS: So the archives, they're here at North campus. Are they for the whole school or are there other collections in other places?

JENNIFER MINCEY: So the archives collection that we house is for all of Wake Technical Community College.

There are other departments that keep their own records in an archives fashion that either don't make it to us or that we only receive copies of.

But as far as the master location for where all items, if you don't have a place otherwise that it can store but it is necessary to keep, that's what we keep.

NICOLE NICHOLS: OK.

TODD NUCKOLLS: Yeah, who has... sorry, this can be edited out, but there's some thing that we keep trying to get and we can't.

JENNIFER MINCEY: The Health Science Campus is the exception because while we do have the records of Health Science campus, the board meeting minutes actually are kept at Health Science because there's apparently something in the bylaws that say that that's where it is stored at.

So they have all of the meeting minutes from the the the Board for Wake Tech.

We have some copies like we have the duplicate copy here, but we don't have a duplicate copy for every year, so they have the complete set, whereas we have the whatever they were extras made for.

TODD NUCKOLLS: You know, there's there's some kind of publication that there's some kind of publication.

When I did the, we went we were at it was a PD day and I set up and I had that stuff.

There was some kind of setup.

I have a bunch of like something along the lines of like news and records.

I have a bunch of these old news and records in and we've been trying to get them and I can't remember what they're called.

They're either it's like a student publication or some kind of...

JENNIFER MINCEY: News and Views?

TODD NUCKOLLS: News and Views... That's it.

There was a staff member or faculty... I have a bunch of old news and views and I gave her my card.

I actually remembered to bring my card and everything.

She never got back in touch with me.

JENNIFER MINCEY: No, we do have some copies of the news and views.

Unfortunately, that is actually the ones that were water damaged.

Some of the old news and views were water damaged over in building B.

Not all of them, thankfully.

We were able to salvage and we were able to digitize the ones that we didn't have duplicate copies of, but it is also an incomplete set.

So if there's a faculty member or administrator out there who has a complete set, or even better, a digital copy of those, as well as any other publication, we would love to have... Uh to take those and see if we can fill in the gaps in our collection.

And of course, make them available to anyone else.

TODD NUCKOLLS: Right. I gave her my card. But I didn't think to get her information.

NICOLE NICHOLS: So news and views as the was at the school?

JENNIFER MINCEY: So news and views was um lovingly referred to as the Brag RAG for staff and faculty.

NICOLE NICHOLS: OK.

JENNIFER MINCEY: And so that was... It had all kinds of things.

Some of them may be even inappropriate because it was be widely distributed, but you would have like birth announcements, marriage announcements, bowling teams, things like that. Umm.

And then there was also a student publication that came out as well and I cannot remember what that one was called though.

And and that one was like Eagle News or something and that one was for student newspaper.

NICOLE NICHOLS: OK.

JENNIFER MINCEY: So, we we had like two or three different series of publications that were being produced and printed out and then eventually they all went online.

First as online publications and now it's evolved into... If you look at the wake tech home page and you see the success stories or highlights that are on the home page, that's kind of what's replaced it.

NICOLE NICHOLS: OK.

So do you, each of you, do you have a favorite item in the archives? And if you do, what is it?

TODD NUCKOLLS: I have several favorite like I have.

We have... We have a Madmen ashtray from from Whims Holding Tech Institute... it was Holding Tech before it was... And we have a nurse's hat from a graduate from the 1960s.

That's really great.

But then I we have these and I think it's really the best thing that we have for a while.

I mean, this is very long ago, 60s, the 70s and 80s.

We had these things called... They were scrapbooks and you would you would you would subscribe to what was called a clipping service and they would go through, you would subscribe to clipping service and you would say I want every single article you would give them a series of magazines on every article on Wake Tech from these magazines... And these newspapers from these publications, and they would cut it out for you and then they would send you that.

And then when they would do is they would take this and the unfortunately they used not great glue but they put it into a big um..

JENNIFER MINCEY: Folio.

TODD NUCKOLLS: Folio. They're enormous and we've got them from the 60s up until they stopped doing it around 2004 and we have them all.

And The thing is that a lot of these lot of these publications, a lot of these newspapers are defunct.

So these copies that we may have, unless we dug through what they have and NC State, may be some of the only copies of these articles in like the Fuquay Caller whatever is long gone and those are really, really cool especially the I feel like the 70s is really good because there's just so much information.

And so those are great.

JENNIFER MINCEY: That's I would agree that for me, the folios with the news clippings are my favorite.

Because we have had a few people who come in and they ask questions about Wake Tech and history and things like that, and we have actually found some of the answers.

My favorite example is we had a few years ago umm... A call where someone was desperately trying to confirm that they had indeed gotten their GED from Wake Tech, and this was before it was digitized and they could not find the records at all in admissions or anything like that.

And what I what we wound up doing and I believe you helped me with this a little bit help pull down at least and start looking through we found old newspaper clippings that said this is the list of people graduating from that year.

So while we didn't have a graduation program for the GED program, we did have those news clippings and I could scan we we scanned the those clippings that at least listed OK... So these are the students who graduated from Cary because it was published in a Cary paper.

These are the ones who graduated from Fuquay because it was published in the local Fuquay paper.

We managed to find there was, like I wanna say, 17 people who graduated that year.

We were able to find 15 of their names and thankfully the person who was checking... their name was on that list.

While it's not an official document because it's not a graduation program and it's not an actual transcript, but we could at least say look at the time this newspaper published this person with these other names.

And so in our archives, we at least can show that there's something that that supports the claim that yes, they did in fact get their GED here.

TODD NUCKOLLS: Yeah, even though that stuff doesn't happen a lot, it does show that the archives and these kind of things have real value, you know, and I think that if we could promote it more to staff and faculty and everybody else, we had some way to do that.

Then I think you would see more people interested, you know, I mean, the in those folios is is a really great story.

You know, anyway... sorry.

NICOLE NICHOLS: And then leads into my next question, what is your vision for the Archives collection?

Like what... How... where you see it going in the future?

TODD NUCKOLLS: Well, unfortunately the thing is that after you know, we put together their team, we did the inventory. The team itself is dispersed.

You know Emily, who has a lot of archive experience. She's at a different library, and Holly, who has archives. So I think that if I only had her choice, that's what she would want to do is work in archives and she's, you know, she's good at it.

She's really into it, but she's at a different library now. So and also we don't really have a lot of time to schedule people up there.

The the situation is that we're at a point where you would go in the archives... Uh work.

Where you would be now is what's called arrangement and description, and this is.. this is something that that isn't can be can't be done, kind of haphazardly.

You have to have someone that does it and continues to do it until the project is done. Is that a correct

way of describing it?

So, and I think that because it's not really an institutional priority what we're going to do because we have more free time in the summer is we're gonna see what kind of projects we can get done in the summer and have like a definite beginning and ending summer project, uh, and that's about as far as we can go.

What I would like to do is try, you know, and it's I think this is actually a problem throughout a lot of archives is try and I'd love to try and digitize, Uh, as much as we could put it online and and make it, you know, more accessible, especially in students.

Everybody you know, because everything is digital and if we could get some stuff digital, I think that would be really I think that would be really cool.

But I don't know if that'll that'll happen. It not being a priority at this point.

JENNIFER MINCEY: Yeah, to look at what we're doing going forward, we kind of have to look back at the archives like you've like we've mentioned the history of while it was established in 1986, it wasn't for like years before anybody really started considering it being something that needed to be focused on and and collected.

So our first ten years of archives boiled down to just three boxes of resources that were sent by people who said, OK, well, these things went to the state archives. And here's the rest of it, we were told not to get rid of.

From there it started to develop a little bit, but it was at South campus where there was very limited space and there was no one specially dedicated to it.

Eventually, in the late 90s, early 2000s, library staff member named Chris Ann kind of really took it under her wing and started trying to at least organize things a little bit better and come up with a plan of what kind of things to keep.

And that's where we had our first finding aid outline. I don't... It's not necessarily a finding aid.

It's not as detailed or incomplete, but it does have a records of... These are the documents that the college should be keeping, and here are a few people to contact to try to see what we can do about it.

Umm. And then, after the North campus was built in 2007, the archives were eventually moved up here to the North campus.

But as was mentioned in a basement storage area of the old library in Building B and it was not the best of places to house it, it was protected against light. But during really heavy rain, sometimes water would

start pooling on the floor and if anything had been left out or left on the tables there, there was always the risk of high condensation and damage that way.

And of course, 3 moves equal a fire, so first move from small boxes to Chris Anne trying to developing to moving to north and then moving from one side of north to the other side of the North campus.

Umm. So everything is was very jumbled up and haphazard. Whatever was the focus of the year is what was being collected and so definitely this past two years I would say the big focus has been on trying to better organize separated out, get that complete inventory which started last summer for the item-by-item list of what we have.

And so, the push is to make those records little more consistent.

Try to get new materials added to the collection so that we have complete sets instead of just random... Whatever it is that we can manage to get ahold of and then go forward and try to get that information that's in them... The whole point for storing them is to get that information.

Make sure that it remains available, so to make it accessible digitizing certainly and getting at more robust complete finding aid available for any researchers so that they have a good idea before they come over.

What kind of things they might be able to find.

NICOLE NICHOLS: So that also... when you said wanting to collect more items, how could a student, a staff member or faculty member submit a item to be added to the collection?

JENNIFER MINCEY: So the OK, I'm gonna take this one. This was my baby, my pet project.

When I first started here at Wake Tech because I did not have direct experience with archives, of course I'd taken a class in it and I worked at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and I had many acquaintances.

And in the special collections and Archives department, but my personal experience wasn't there.

I actually did more with access from access services and reference services.

So and to not be overwhelmed, I had to organize my thoughts and I organized digitally better than I do physically.

So I created a library research guide, so it's the library guides from the homepage and it's for archives on that guide there is a section where you can, um... send suggestions for... I have this thing that I found and there's like a little... Well, there's an interactive PowerPoint, so that just goes to show how old it will, how low the technology was when I first started and tried to to figure out how to do this.

But uh, where it's one of those words, click yes or no, and also a flow chart that says, OK, so if you go through and you say yes, this was created by a Wake Tech staff, faculty, student or department.

And yes, it was with college funds. And yes, it is part of the records retention and disposition schedule or no, it's not part of the record retention disposition schedule, but it is of cultural or historical value.

Eventually you get to the point where it says OK, then fill out this form and the form is also there on the guide as well.

Print it out and either send it with the item or just send the form with the description so that we can review it and see if we are going to accept it and put it into our collection.

For the most part, we do have a few departments, communications being our big one. And they just send us items because just about anything that they send, we are of course going to keep.

Graduation programs. We get those each semester. And the Wake Review and Career Focus, we do try to keep at least one copy of each of those from each year.

So those things we don't really need this form for, but we would like to have it because it would, that form gives us the history of where did that item come from, which department, who sent it to us, what year is it from?

Because a lot of that information is in there and that'll help us out.

Worst case scenario, I don't feel like going through your list. I don't feel like filling out your form, I'm just going to throw this away.

Umm... Hold on... Just send us an email.

You can email the archives directly Wake Archive at waketch.edu or you can contact either a Jennifer Mincey or Jeffrey Todd Knuckles at our emails as well, or call our offices and just would rather go ahead and communicate with you and see what we can decide.

What we can determine, we may still have to say no, we can't take it.

But before you throw something out that may be a value or importance. Uh... Either use that online form or just contact us directly.

NICOLE NICHOLS: And lastly, if someone wants to come, a student wants to come and search through the archives with process where they go through to to be able to do that?

TODD NUCKOLLS: Contact either one of us, we would have to accompany them up there.

NICOLE NICHOLS: Well, that's all I had for today.

Thank you for coming and interviewing with us today. And we hope that everybody will come and check out our archive collection because it's something that's so special part of our history.

And again, thank you for coming.

TODD NUCKOLLS: You're welcome.

JENNIFER MINCEY: And thank you, Nicole.

NICOLE NICHOLS: So, in this segment, we're going to talk about one of the new books that we have in our collection.

And for this episode, we're going to talk about a book called A Very Large Expanse of Sea by Taherah Mafi. She is a Muslim author. She's a New York Times best-selling author.

She's the author of the Shatter Me series, which is another young adult series, and I chose this because it's a romance, but also it goes over some issues and Islamophobia and some different issues that we can, you know, talk about to find a new perspective of how people are living.

And also, today I have with you Jasmine Smith and we're going to talk about the book.

She is an avid YA reader. She's also a library assistant here at North Campus.

And so we're just going to have a short discussion about the book and hopefully get your interest up in checking this book out.

And welcome to the show, Jasmine.

JASMINE SMITH: Hi. Thank you for having me.

NICOLE NICHOLS: OK. So first question, we're gonna talk about umm talks about resistance and the book, the concept of resistance.

And in chapter six of the main character's name is Shirin.

She's a young girl, young Muslim girl and she talks a lot about how wearing the hijab and other aspects of our culture are certain things are... She has a hard time adjusting or fitting in, but one thing that saves her one thing that she kind of has an outlet for her, is break dancing and so umm, she talks about how the history of the break dancing battles is an alternative to violence.

Umm, so in the book Jasmine, do you remember? How does she umm, how did and when people are picking on her own people are doing this to her?

How does she fight and how does she protect herself? And how does music have a part to play in it?

JASMINE SMITH: Yeah, so Shirin faces a lot of blatant Islamophobia in this new town that she has just moved to. The kids kind of look at her differently because she does where the hijab and they, you know, don't really speak to her.

So she kind of protects herself by putting up a wall between her and other people.

Umm, she describes herself as an exotic specimen behind glass.

That's how she believes that people view her, that they just want to, that they're very curious about her, but they don't want to get to know her.

So in turn, she decides that she doesn't want to get to know them. She doesn't wanna build relationships.

Umm, but she does end up doing that through break dancing. She and her brother are avid break dancers.

They discovered a break dancing movie and that's how they got into it. And so her brother introduces her to some of his friends who end up... And they end up forming a break dancing team.

And she learned how to slowly open herself up to other people through break dancing.

You know, a hobby that they have in common.

NICOLE NICHOLS: Umm. And I also found it interesting that break dancing was what is, you know, like again they're outlet because it was kind of a demonstration of two cultures was... Break dancing is from African Americans.

JASMINE SMITH: Yeah.

NICOLE NICHOLS: Culture. And so I thought that was very interesting, that she was able to find refuges in another culture.

JASMINE SMITH: Yes, that's very interesting. And she's not kind of shying away from her culture.

She's, you know, mixing the two. And I think that's really cool.

NICOLE NICHOLS: So going on to the next question, there's a character, Ocean, who is, I guess, her love interest ends up being more of a love interest in the book.

He's a young he actually happens to be a young white boy and he has a failure to understand his own privilege, or sometimes that, you know, kind of conflicts with him, understanding the realities of Shirin's life as a young Muslim woman.

Umm, what are some of the consequences that Ocean and Shirin face as they come out as a couple at their school?

JASMINE SMITH: Yeah. So they're kind of out as a couple against their will.

Umm, there is a scene in which they are kissing in the car and someone sees them and sort of, you know, spreads the news against their will because Shirin initially did not want everyone to know that they were dating.

She felt like Ocean would be punished for their relationship just because it is, you know, a small town after 9/11 people were suspicious of Muslims and she didn't want him to face the consequences of dating her.

Umm, so they are, you know, outed against their will.

And, you know, Ocean didn't really fully understand what he was getting into. I don't think he did.

He seemed very surprised by the reaction that they got, which was a very negative reaction.

You know, there were people telling him that he should break up with her.

There were parents in the school district that wanted him off of the basketball team for dating a Muslim girl. Umm. And he was just shocked by it all.

Whereas Shirin kind of suspected that it would happen.

So I really think that, you know, he didn't understand just because he'd never gone through something like that before.

He wasn't perceived as being different in a negative way.

NICOLE NICHOLS: So, it's interesting that she was interested... She was more concerned about his consequences that he would go through were there any consequences that she had from her family or her, you know, completing a man that dating a boy that's outside of her culture?

JASMINE SMITH: Well, I don't think her family really knew about the relationship for the longest time, she kind of kept that a secret.

Not because they would look down on it for cultural reasons, but just because of who her parents were as people.

They didn't really want her dating umm, so eventually her brother did find out and he was pretty cool with it.

You know, there weren't really, you know, he he had the typical brother, Big Brother's reaction and, you know, wanting to make sure that Ocean didn't hurt her or anything.

But I think more so she was concerned about Ocean just because she had already gone through discrimination and such.

So I don't think that there's something that really scared her as much just because she had already gone through it.

But for Ocean, it was just completely new.

NICOLE NICHOLS: OK.

So then there's a part in the book where Shirin and her brother, Navid grow apart.

Umm... What's the ultimate thing that starts to make her feel closer to her brother?

Because I cause I'm... I know you know the beginning of the book, she talks about how close of a relationship she had with her brother and then as they became more undue as they went more into adolescence, they grew further apart.

What was her relation... What is her relationship like with her brother?

JASMINE SMITH: Umm, yeah. So Shirin and Navid... Like you said, they grew up very close, but just through, you know, growing up and going to adolescence, they kind of drifted apart, which I can understand.

I have a brother as well and it can be kind of difficult to relate to him. Umm, but I think break dancing is

really what brings them together.

When Navid starts their break dancing club at school, Umm and he brings in his friends and they all practice together and you know it's something that they can bond over and you know, they go to break dancing competitions on the weekends and you know, it just becomes a big part of their life.

And it's something that they can talk about.

NICOLE NICHOLS: Umm, so throughout the book Shirin talks about her, her hajib or her head scarf and different ways that the headscarf highlights her and and may cause her to be threatened or may cause people to single her out.

But there's still something about it that, umm... That, you know, is it's something that makes her feel sometimes that she doesn't have control over her, her own body, or what?

In what ways does she, umm, is she threatened with because of what she's wearing because of her faith that has her to wear this? And how does she regain control or regain some kind of autonomy about her body?

JASMINE SMITH: Herself. She states at one point in the book I dressed the way I did, not because I was trying to be a nun, but because it felt good.

Umm, and she really describes her clothes as armor, which is also similar to how the author, Tahereh Mafi, feels.

In an interview, she stated; I am an extremely private person, so clothing has always helped me armor myself for engaging with the world, and I really think that that's how Shirin feels that you know, by taking control and by allowing certain people to see her hair by, you know, being able to control who sees what.

You know she's taking control of her body and, you know, taking control of herself.

Umm. And that control is definitely threatened in the book.

There is a scene where Shiran is in the bathroom with her hijab off and another girl comes in and takes a photo of her with her hair out and spreads it across school.

So you know, in that moment, she really loses complete control over, you know, her image, and you know her body.

So and you know, I think that that's just, you know, more Islamophobia that she's had to face and deal with.

Umm, but you know she definitely you know, her hijab is definitely how she armors herself against the world and how she takes control of herself.

NICOLE NICHOLS: It's interesting. They, like we we've been talking about, the hijab for her, is simultaneously something that brings her some threat, but also it's it's her power as well.

JASMINE SMITH: Yeah.

NICOLE NICHOLS: It's it's really the power that she uses against the threat in a way.

JASMINE SMITH: Uh huh... Yeah.

Even though people may treat her differently because she's wearing it, you know she's still feels stronger for having worn it.

NICOLE NICHOLS: It's and in a final question, we're going to talk about, it's about some how some of the adults that Shirin was coming in contact with, how they treated her differently and how they treated her in ways that really were disappointing and that you wouldn't expect how an adult to be with a child because essentially, you know, she is still a child.

What are some of the ways?

What are some examples of that and and and how that play out in the book?

JASMINE SMITH: There are quite a few examples of that.

After sharing an Ocean's relationship, is added to the school. Parents in the school district get wind of it and because Ocean is on the basketball team, he's a very prominent player.

A lot of the parents complain about him being on the team.

They tell him that he needs to break up with her.

They threatened to remove him from the team, which would take away scholarship opportunities for his future.

So that's really unacceptable.

The coach of his basketball team actually corners Shirin, and, you know, tells her that she needs to break up with him or he's going to remove Ocean from the team.

And that was just really unacceptable. He should never have spoken to her in that way.

She felt very threatened in that moment by him, and he was, you know, he's a coach. He's a teacher.

He should be someone that students can trust.

In that moment, she did not trust him.

Umm... And another example is Ocean's mother actually confronts Shirin and tells her that it would be best for Ocean's future if they were to break up on and, you know, it really is, you know, none of her business.

It's between Ocean and Shirin, you know, it's a private relationship.

And for the mother to get involved was shocking to me.

Yeah, I think Ocean's mother had, umm, he had his best intentions in mind.

Umm, but the way she went about it was wrong. She kind of, you know, showed up while Shirin was walking home from school and was, you know, that's a bit threatening.

So it's just I, I just don't think that it was handled in the best manner and it really shows that adults don't always know what's best, that they can also be influenced by Islamophobia and bigotry.

Umm, so you know, you just have to keep that in mind when you're dealing with people that adults don't necessarily always have the best intentions in mind.

NICOLE NICHOLS: Well, thank you for speaking with us today about this book.

Again, this is a book. This book is called A Very Large Expanse of Seat Taherah Mafi and it's available at the North Campus Library.

If you'd like to check it out, we encourage you to come check it out.

If you wanna have a short or a, you know relaxing read between classes or you know just to for fun and we'll see you in the library and hope to again hope you do have some interest in this book.

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