

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The Great Smoky Mountains region has a rich and inviting history. From the early Cherokee inhabitants to the European explorers and settlers who continued to develop the region, people have left their distinctive mark and cultural legacy on the Great Smoky Mountains. Home to some of the most rugged mountain terrain east of the Rockies, the Smokies harbor a biosphere unique on our planet. Yet historians, geographers, scientists, economists, sociologists, environmentalists and folklorists seeking research material about the Smokies often find this material scattered and difficult to access. Many books, journal articles, newspaper accounts, photographs, sound recordings, oral histories, and maps on the region that chronicle the history of these mountains are of limited availability. Their existence is largely unknown and their contents virtually inaccessible to many serious researchers of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Recognizing the need to fill this long-standing gap in historical and cultural documentation, librarians at the UT Libraries are developing a comprehensive collection and bibliography of the Great Smoky Mountains area. These librarians are committed to identifying, acquiring, organizing, preserving and making accessible a vast collection of materials about the entire region.

This collection will make UT the national center for written, visual and manuscript material about the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and its surroundings. In addition, the proposed bibliography will be the first comprehensive annotated account of

The Great Smoky Mountains Regional Project

books, newspaper and journal articles, manuscripts, government documents, photographs, films, maps, oral histories, dissertations, databases, and websites germane to the Smokies. Each bibliographic item will be fully cited and annotated. In its published form, the bibliography will be organized into subject areas with introductory essays for each section and accompanying information on manuscript and photographic collections.

Standing at the gateway of the Great Smoky Mountains, the flagship campus of Tennessee's land-grant university has both the responsibility and honor to preserve the written record of this unique region. It is often said that the reputation of a university is dependent on the quality of its faculty, students, and library. The opening of the renovated



350,000-square-foot John C. Hodges Library, the largest research library in the state, substantially strengthened the UT library system. The Great Smoky Mountains Collection and Bibliography will take the UT Libraries into a new realm of scholarly presence. Of the purpose of libraries, former Tennessee state historian Wilma Dykeman said,

“Here is gathered the essence of the human experience on this earth: the wealth and poverty of its responses to the natural world and its triumphs and failures of its own mind and spirit. Here is our lifeline between past and future.”

The library is soliciting support for this project in two areas: contributions of historical materials and contributions of financial resources. Materials in any form that are germane to the history, culture, literature, arts, folklore, music, recreation, geography, scientific and natural history of the Great Smokies are of interest. Monetary gifts to the project will fund material acquisitions and research to build, catalog, and preserve the collection and compile the bibliography. The University of Tennessee has an opportunity to become the nation's center for Great Smoky Mountains research, a place where scholars can find well-organized, accessible material on the Smokies' region. Commitments to this effort will make UT the gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains in every sense and will significantly enhance the reputation of the University. In addition, the benefits of this project will reach far beyond the University, preserving the history, heritage, and culture of the Great Smoky Mountains and the generations of families who have lived in the region.