On April 9 at 3:30 in Room 1260 in the Chemistry Building, Dr. Diane Dillon will present “The Devil is in the Details: History and the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893.” Held in Chicago, the Columbian Exposition “commemorated a historic anniversary (the arrival of Columbus in America), its buildings emulated the grandeur of classical and Renaissance architecture, and the halls were filled with exhibits that traced the history of the world and the progress of mankind. In the years since 1893, the history of the exposition has fascinated historians and the general public alike,” according to Dr. Dillon.

Because some attendees stayed in Kalamazoo, and many local citizens journeyed to the event, the Archives and Regional History Collections have artifacts from the Exposition which will be displayed to accompany Dr. Dillon’s talk. The exhibition will be on the Third Floor of the Upjohn Rotunda of Waldo Library.

Dr. Dillon is Director of Scholarly and Undergraduate Programs at the Newberry Library. Her research encompasses American art, architecture, and visual culture; world’s fairs; the history of cartography; and Chicago’s history and culture. She is the co-author of Mapping Manifest Destiny: Chicago and the American West and has served as co-curator of an exhibition marking the centennial of the 1909 Plan of Chicago entitled Make Big Plans: Daniel Burnham’s Vision of an American Metropolis in 2009 at the Newberry Library and co-curator, “A Century of Progress: Architecture and Chicago’s 1933-34 World’s Fair,” an exhibition at the Chicago Architecture Foundation, Fall 2004. Dr. Dillon will also be speaking to two classes in WMU’s public history program, Dr. Mitch Kachun’s graduate course in History and Memory and Dr. Sharon Carlson’s course in Archival Administration.

Dr. Dillon’s visit is supported by the Friends of the WMU Libraries, the Department of History and the WMU Visiting Scholars and Artists Program.
Behind the Scenes:

Two Upcoming Events

The new facility features compact shelving, small group meeting rooms with learning technology and a classroom equipped with projectors and computers for teaching library research skills. The Education Library opened in September 2012 and to record-breaking student activity.

Salute to a Grand Old Lady Tour
The Friends Annual Meeting will be on May 14, at 2:00 pm. We will gather at 111 East Hall (WMU Archives and Regional History Collections), as a final salute to the building which has housed the collection for a temporary 20-plus years.

In fall 2013, the WMU Archives and Regional History Collections and the remote storage of the University Libraries will move into the Zhang Legacy Collections Center. This is the final ‘behind the scenes’ tour of the current storage facilities in the East Campus. Gather at East Hall and be prepared to learn the original uses of some of the East Campus buildings and learn about the preparations for moving the collections.

Zhang Legacy Collections Facility Update

The new Zhang Legacy Collections building is more than 7% complete according to a recent report by the Christman Company to WMU’s Facilities Management. The footprint of the building is clearly evident. Ten inches of concrete provide a stable foundation for the mobile high bay compact shelving. Telecommunications components have been laid out to the building. Structural steel arrived in early December and is taking shape. Contracts for the shelving and other components have been approved. A substantially complete date (construction speak) is slated for August 2013 and move-in is projected for September 2013. The

general outline of the future building is visible.

The work of preparing the collections for the move is also underway and will be a major focus for the staff in 2013. Moving 28,000 cubic feet of archival materials requires planning, patience, flexibility and good humor. Most of the books and all of boxes holding archival collections have never been barcoded. The barcoding will be vital in locating materials in the new shelving and linking items to catalog records. Lynn Houghton and Pam Jobin are coordinating these efforts of barcoding all the materials.

Another crucial step in preparing material for the move is protective re-boxing or shrink wrapping. Deteriorated and non-standard sized boxes will be replaced with sturdy uniformly sized records storage boxes. An archival consultant has recommended shrink wrapping for moving fragile oversized materials. Re-boxing and shrink wrapping will begin in early 2013 and continue through the Spring semester and summer. Working across three buildings to prepare collections for the move, the Archives and Regional History Collections will be time consuming and challenging. As a result, the public hours of the branch will be slightly altered during Summer I and II (May-August). Hours will be Tuesday-Friday, 9-4 and Monday by appointment.

Beginning in early 2013, building progress photos will be featured on Facebook at the Western Michigan University Archives & Regional History Collections page. You may also follow the progress on twitter at @WMUArchives

Dean Reish enjoys the Charles C. and Lynn L. Zhang Legacy Collection Center construction in progress

For the Most Current Information

Events which are still in development will be posted at http://www.wmich.edu/library/about/friends. NOTE: the Friends URL for web information has changed as of December on the new library website.

We are working developing an email list for updates, so please send us email contact information at lib-rbr@wmich.edu